

B 84739

**LAJOS TARDY**

**BEYOND THE  
OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

**14th—16th CENTURY  
HUNGARIAN DIPLOMACY  
IN THE EAST**

Translated by  
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**SZEGED  
1978**

SZTE Egyetemi Könyvtár  
Egyetemi Gyűjtemény  
2

**HELYBEN  
OLVASHATÓ**

Editionis curam agit  
**KLÁRA AGYAGÁSI**



**B 84739**

JATE Egyetemi Könyvtár



J000131926

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## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The wide appreciation of my work, published in 1971, Régi magyar követjárások Keleten,<sup>1</sup> raised the idea that the results of my research work should appear in English, too. The authors of the reviews<sup>2</sup> already published all thought that the publication of the work in a widely known language would be useful.

My book was preceded by various preliminary studies which were published partly in Hungarian and partly in other European languages.<sup>3</sup> I was still interested in this theme after 1971 and some of my recent results appeared in two articles which came out in 1975.<sup>4</sup>

This present English edition is an extended version of the above book. It includes, among other things, the questions dealt with in my later articles. I am grateful to Prof. L. Ligeti, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, for his encouragement in the preparation and compilation of the original Hungarian edition. I am also grateful to Prof. A. Róna-Tas for editing the English version.

The National Kingdom of Hungary disintegrated after 1526, i.e. after the Battle of Mohács. A part of the country was occupied by the army of the extending Ottoman Empire; the western and northern parts of the country came under the rule of the Habsburg Dynasty in Vienna; the principality of Transylvania was formed in the eastern region. Attempts were made by both the Transylvanian princes and the Habsburgs to take over and develop the old Hungarian eastern

conception and to organize alliances which could halt the extension of the Ottoman Empire. In this book all this is followed up to the end of the 16th century; further material, which has already been gathered and which first of all monitors the relationships of Hungary and Transylvania with the Crimean Tatar State, is still being worked on.

My aim is to present in what way and to what extent Hungary, which was one of the leading European powers for centuries before the Ottoman invasions, took the initiative in diplomatic relationships with eastern states with a view to setting up an anti-Ottoman alliance. The presentation and evaluation of archival and other documents may illustrate the aim of the author and may contribute to the understanding of the peculiar role played by Hungary between East and West at that time.

November, 1977

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#### Notes

1. Hungarian oriental diplomacy in the late Middle Ages. Budapest, Akadémiai kiadó, 1971, p. 221.
2. Bogyay, Thomas v.: *Südost-Forschungen*, XXXIV (1975), pp. 321-322; Aubin, Jean: *Turcica*, *Revue d'Études turques*, VIII/2, (1976), pp. 274-275; Vajda, Georges: *Journal Asiatique*, CCLXIV/3-4 (1976), p. 473, etc.
3. Magyar utleírás a Szentföldről és Egyiptomról a XVI. században (Hungarian travel book about the Holy Land and Egypt in the 16th century): *Magyar Nemzet* 23 Dec., 1967; *Relations entre la Hongrie et la Géorgie aux XIIIe - XVIIIe siècles: Bedi Kartlisa*. *Revue de Kartvélogie*, XXV 1968, pp. 111-128; Caterino Zenonak,



- Uzun Haszán követének utja Gruzsián át Mátyás udvarába (The journey of Caterino Zeno, the envoy of Uzun Hassan, to the court of King Matthias via Georgia): *Filológiai Közlöny*, 1968, pp. 471-479; Johannes der Ungar, *Weltenbummler für Venedig: Budapester Rundschau*, 1969, no. 15; Izsák zsidó orvos a perzsiai uralkodó és Corvin Mátyás összekötője a törökellenes világliga megszervezésében (Isaac the Jewish doctor, the go-between of Matthias Corvin and the Persian ruler in the organisation of an anti-Turkish world alliance): *Magyar-zsidó oklevéltár*, XII (1969), pp. 27-44; *Rapports d'Antal Verancsics, ambassadeur du roi de Hongrie a Stamboul 1553-1557, 1567-1568: Bedi Kartlisa Revue de Kartvélologie XXVIII* (1971), pp. 208-230 etc.
4. Il ruolo di Venezia nei rapporti persiani e georgiani dell'Ungheria: *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*. Ed. T. Klaniczay. Budapest, 1975, pp. 257-267; Hunyadi János kapcsolatai a Krim-félszigeti városokkal és ennek előzményei (The connections between János Hunyadi and the towns on the Crimean Peninsula and their antecedents): *Keletkutatás*, 1975, pp. 117-138.



## INTRODUCTION

This book is an attempt to outline the anti-Turkish policies of Hungarian diplomacy in the east from the emergence of the Ottoman threat to the end of the 16th century. Original sources available in print and numerous studies give a clear picture of the plans, initiatives and actions of medieval Hungarian foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> These works, however, deal almost entirely with attempts to form alliances in the west, and it is not apparent from them that Hungary, menaced by the Turks, was also trying to find allies in the Muslim and non-Muslim east.

The threads of foreign policy connecting Hungary to the west were without doubt stranger and more densely woven; this was necessarily so because of the country's geographical position, its dynastic links, the role of papal power and authority, developing trade relations and a number of other factors. Yet at the same time the idea, encouraged by then existing precedents as well<sup>2</sup>, that allies against the approaching danger should also be sought in the east, viz. in those countries of Asia and Africa which were similarly threatened by the Ottoman expansion, was persistent and manifest all along.

Hungary was the country which initiated the idea of an anti-Ottoman alliance with the Asian powers and the "Golden Horde of the Volga" who had established themselves in Europe. This policy, from the time of King Sigismund onwards, had been an integral part of the strategic plans for checking the Turk-

ish advance, revived time and again up to the battle of Mohács (1526) and even afterwards. These efforts, although they did not have a decisive influence on the country's history, are still part and parcel of Hungary's past, and represent a tradition of eastern diplomacy worth remembering. They were manifestations of the classic policy of "encirclement", supported at times by papal power which acted as coordinator in the struggle against Ottoman expansion, and at other times also by Venice, France Burgundy, Spain and other countries.

In dealing with this subject, the concept of "the east" had to be both narrowed down and extended. The book concerns itself with Hungarian missions operating in the Ottoman Empire only in so far as their activity extended beyond the borders of the European Turkish empire. This is not only because the activities of Hungarian and Transylvanian missions to the Sublime Porte are amply documented and well known from published sources and studies, so their memory is vivid enough, but also because the main topic of this book is the diplomacy aiming for alliances against the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, however, it was necessary to touch, however briefly, upon relations with the Golden Horde, and the Crimean Tatar State, even though it was one of the European powers, so it does not legitimately belong to the concept of "the east".

Besides diplomatic missions the travel diaries of the most important Hungarian travellers of the age are also briefly dealt with.

No comprehensive book has so far been written about the permanent, characteristic features and established practice of eastern diplomatic journeys. Most information can be gathered from the

monograph of B. Picard who, however, deals almost exclusively with the events and observations related to the journeys of Sigismund Herberstein and especially with his missions to Istanbul. Diplomats travelling in Europe at that time were already using well-trodden roads, whereas the author of the aforementioned book places a remarkable amount of emphasis - well justifiedly too - on the dangers threatening the travelling emissaries, especially in so-called "third" states, i.e. between the sending and receiving countries. Naturally the Hungarian diplomats travelling in unknown lands were in much greater jeopardy and had to tackle greater difficulties. Picard also stresses that in those times only the Muscovite state was fully safe for passing diplomats, whose immunity there was respected beyond question.<sup>3</sup>

#### Notes

1. This does not include the history of diplomacy dealing with the technical side of Hungarian foreign policy. The only monograph on the history of Hungarian diplomacy (HORVÁTH, J.: Magyar diplomácia, magyar diplomaták /Hungarian diplomacy, Hungarian diplomats/, Budapest 1941), although worthy of respect for its sheer size was already superannuated in its approach at the time it was published, and it completely ignores the country's eastern relations.
2. György Györffy convincingly argues that the rulers of the Árpád dynasty were always better informed about conditions in the east than western kings and princes (GYÖRFFY, GY.: Napkelet felfedezése /The discovery of the Orient/, Budapest, 1965, p.8).
3. PICARD, B.: Das Gesandtschaftswesen Ostmitteleuropas in der frühen Neuzeit. Graz-Wien-Köln, 1967, p. 107.

C H A P T E R   O N E

*The beginnings of Hungary's eastern diplomacy. Sigismund's "opening of the door" to the east: the foundations of the anti-Ottoman coalition. Miklós Saerecsen and Józsa Török with the Turkomans and Karamanians. The descendants of Genghis Khan and Timur and the Hungarian King.*

During the rule of the Árpád dynasty (1001-1301) Hungary conducted a vigorous, active foreign policy which went far beyond the arrangement of dynastic marriages. Under the rule of King Stephen I, the country's founder, and his direct successors, contacts were more or less limited to the countries lying near or bordering on Hungary, and the Holy See but they very soon extended to Byzantium, Kiev, to practically the whole of Europe and even beyond.<sup>1</sup> The first oriental mission was that of King Andrew II (1205-1235). Although the fifth Crusade led by him<sup>2</sup> was a purely military and ecclesiastical affair, his activity on the way back from the Holy Land was undoubtedly diplomatic in nature, even if influenced by dynastic considerations. His journey - of which he made a personal report to the Pope<sup>3</sup> - took him from Tripolis to Armenia in Asia Minor<sup>4</sup>. There King Leo II "in order to destroy his neighbours and to be freed from the Turkish yoke, and also to increase his strength, promised his daughter in engagement to our son (i.e. Andrew, the third-born) and ensured the whole of Armenia with its crown to our son and his heirs with the full approval and testimony of his chief nobles" after his death. Andrew continued his journey on the territory of the sultanate of Iconium, the then ruler of which, Izz ed-din Kaikaus, asked him if he had another daughter or a female

relative whom he could marry, in which case he would be ready to embrace Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The missions of the Dominican Friar Otto and his three companions, and those of Julian, Gerhard and the two other members of their order, were not without certain diplomatic aspects either.<sup>6</sup> Another telling document from our point of view is the deed of gift issued by King Béla IV in 1251 to a member of the Bánó family. Gyármán Bánó, says the deed, "served us faithfully as our envoy to Russia" (which must have been far from easy at the time, under constant threat from the Tatars) in return for which the King conferred considerable estates on him with the provision that Gyármán Bánó or his descendants must, whenever necessary, serve faithfully again as envoys to Russia. At the time this inevitably meant contacts with the Tatars as well.<sup>7</sup>

As long as rivalries in power, and political and military tests of strength were limited to Europe, the foreign policy of the Hungarian Kingdom did not involve the formation of an alliance with one or more distant, non-European powers for the prevention of any approaching or actual threat. News of the Mongol expansion reached Hungary a good many years before the actual "Tartar" invasion. It is certain that King Béla IV (1235-1270) tried to ally himself with not only the neighbouring countries but also with more distant, Asian powers. This was one of the motives of the mission of Friar Julian.<sup>8</sup>

Already at the time of the Angevins (1308-1385) an oriental mission was received in Hungary, but its members were only passing through the country, their destination being Venice and France. As stated in a letter by Marino Sanudo the elder,<sup>9</sup> this mission was sent by the Tatar khan Uzbeigh sometime around 1335, and it consisted of two monks. According to the letter, King Charles

Robert (1308-1342) received the envoys of the ruler of the Golden Horde with due respect, gave them lavish gifts, and sent them on to Austria with a strong escort to ensure their safety.<sup>10</sup> It would be interesting to know how far this transient mission can be regarded as an antecedent to later contacts between the Golden Horde and Hungary.

It is reasonable to suppose that other, similar missions also reached Hungary in those times, but it is also certain that the country was rarely the destination of missions from the east passing through its territory; at that time it had no active eastern policy to speak of.

Intercontinental efforts and diplomatic initiatives to seek alliances started in fact during the long rule of King Sigismund (1387-1437). The Byzantine Empire still existed and the cross on the top of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople had not yet been replaced by the crescent. But the drive of the Ottoman Empire towards east Europe was so powerful that it could easily tolerate the fragile existence of a shrunken East Roman Empire in the back of its victorious armies.

The Turkish threat, still distant, was nevertheless very real for the Hungarian state. The Turks gained their first permanent foothold in the Gallipoli peninsula in 1352. By 1365, mainly because of internal strife, the Serbian empire disintegrated, which meant that a mighty stronghold had been removed from the way of the advancing Turks. The fact that they did not increase their possessions in the Balkans and at times were forced to give up lesser or greater areas did not mean that their plans failed or that their resources were weakened. They were in fact methodically increasing the territory of their empire, grown vast in a mere



hundred years, by pushing its frontiers forwards in differing directions, now to the south, now to the east and then again to the northwest.

Sigismund's accession to the throne was also preceded by such a ten-year Turkish "standstill" in the Balkans; Sultan Murad was engaged in Asia Minor. The Serbian principality of Zeta was already in Turkish hands, just as the coastal part of Serbia had been almost completely swallowed up by the Ottoman Empire. In the absence of Turkish troops the oppressed peoples' desire for freedom flared up intensely. But the great early successes of the revolt were followed by complete defeat and, after a heroic fight, the battle in the Kosovo plain resulted in the whole of Serbia falling under Turkish rule. Prince Stephen Lazarevich succeeded his father on the throne already as a tax-paying vassal of the Sultan. With that the Turks reached the very frontiers of Hungary and still in the same year, Turkish vanguard troops made their first incursions into Hungarian territory by crossing the Danube and the Sava. Their raids served also as reconnaissance missions. The pro-Turkish King of Bosnia, Tvartko, conquered one Dalmatian town after another, making Sigismund's prospects for a successful stand against the Turks all the grimmer. Although Sigismund's soldiers won several victories and reoccupied important towns, these successes were short-lived. The situation became further complicated by the appearance of a pretender to the throne, Ladislav of Naples, who went as far as to send emissaries to Sultan Bayazid and, asking for his daughter's hand, appealed for his assistance against Sigismund.<sup>11</sup>

The cynicism of this attempt, outrageous even by the rather low moral standards accepted in politics at the time, created such

an uproar both in Hungary and Bosnia - which, in the increasing danger, had been contemplating a large-scale crusade - that at last they realized their common interests and entered into a mutual agreement. Having put down a revolt by some aristocrats led by the Horvátis, Sigismund could now start full-scale preparations for war against the Turks. It was high time too, since the latter had meanwhile completed their conquest of the Bulgarian empire of Trnovo. Early in the year, Hungarian envoys returning from the Sultan's court had brought the news that Bayazid was now preparing for the conquest of Viddin, Wallachia and Moldavia. If he were to succeed, Hungary would be caught in a pincer of Ottoman forces.

It was at that time that King Sigismund's special talent for foreign policy really started to develop. He succeeded in persuading the King of Poland to declare himself neutral, so he no longer had to fear an attack on Hungary from Wladislas while he was trying to drive back the Turks. He defeated the combined armies of the Turks and their vassals at Little Nikopol on the left bank of the Danube, but it was barely six months before Turkish troops were once again raiding the Hungarian county of Temes.

The diet convened in December 1395 called the whole nation to arms, and the King, aided by his diplomats - mainly by Miklós Kanizsai - worked at a feverish pace to conclude military alliances and to obtain foreign troops to assist his army. Sigismund, the military leader, however, was much weaker and less fortunate than Sigismund, the gifted diplomat. His decision to give his armies into the control of the commander of the French knights in the decisive battle at Nikopol had fatal consequences. Discord within the Christian armies, the lack of a united leadership, made it impossible to win against the well-disciplined forces of the Turks. That was when the Turkish threat - which was to become the central

problem of Hungarian life, politics and diplomacy for centuries - emerged for the first in its full magnitude and gravity for Hungary. Also at that time, with the weakening of the belief in European alliances, diplomacy aimed at organizing joint military efforts with distant little-known oriental countries had its beginnings. This new diplomacy had the strategic concept of crushing the Ottoman Empire by concerted attacks from two sides. It was an idea which, even if at times it faded into the background, survived and had a certain influence throughout several centuries. The originator of this truly large-scale concept, preceding the initiatives of Venice, and best-known creator of such grandiose plans, was King Sigismund. Thallóczy<sup>12</sup> was right in saying that it was under his rule that Hungary played the greatest part in international diplomatic relations. In that century permanent missions abroad were still completely unknown - they were brought into being one by one only in the second half of the 15th century<sup>13</sup> but Sigismund made good use of the ancient, internationally accepted institution of temporary and occasional diplomatic missions, extending it for the first time in Central Europe and also to the Moslem states of the east. His talent for the art of diplomacy, which far exceeded the military abilities and human virtues of this king (whose controversial personality was so aptly characterised by Marx<sup>14</sup>), could not be exercised after the defeat at Nikopol, when he was forced into hiding, or, after his return, in the turbulent conditions at home. His over-ambitious plans and the internal struggles of the baronial leagues for a long time diverted his attention from the real danger. Had he begun to pursue his large-scale diplomatic plans earlier, they might have come to fruition.

For the fact was that the Sultan's offensive, expected for 1399, was postponed because events in Asia Minor forced him to



return home. Timur Lenk, set out to renew the conquests of the great Mongol emperors with the aim of establishing a new world power in the east. In the course of his military campaign, in which he reconquered part of the one-time Mongolian Empire, in the last years of the 14th century he reached the area bordering on the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor. He defeated and captured Bayazid, "the Invincible", at Ankara in 1402. This event, the ensuing fratricidal struggle between the sons of Bayazid and the more peaceful policies of Mohammed I (1403-1421) brought a lull in which the danger of a rapid Turkish advance was temporarily lifted. This would have been the right time to check the Turkish expansion and even to overthrow the Ottoman rule in Europe. In these decisive years, however, Sigismund's interest in the Turkish threat diminished. He turned all his attention to the west, to the Czech and German throne, and looked upon Hungary more and more as merely a source of manpower, money and arms with which to win the imperial crown. In 1410 he was elected King of Germany; only then did he begin to make efforts to conclude the alliances in the east which would serve Hungary's interests.

In the autumn of 1411, prior to a meeting between Sigismund and the King of Poland, a Polish delegation asked Pope John XXII to declare a Crusade against the Tatars who were continually raiding their country. Sigismund's envoys to the Holy See, however, convinced the Pope that this would be a grave error, since Sigismund, reasonably enough, regarded the Tatars as natural allies against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>15</sup> King Wladislas of Poland himself was soon to share Sigismund's view, for, in 1412, when the envoys of the Tatar Khan arrived in Buda and offered an alliance against all his enemies to the Polish king who was staying there, he accepted

the offer as did King Sigismund.<sup>16</sup> But the composition of those delegations present at the festivities held in honour of the visiting Polish King also indicates the orientation of Sigismund's future eastern policies, for, besides envoys from neighbouring states and Russians, Germans, French and English, there were also Tatars and "representatives of other pagan nations in long beards, baggy trousers, high hats and caftans reaching almost to the ground".<sup>17</sup> A renewed Turkish campaign represented an equal threat to all, Christians and Moslems alike, and there can be little doubt that they made use of the opportunity to talk about the measures to be taken and about the possibility of alliances. Sigismund had new crusades in mind but these crusades, strange as it may sound, were to be fought, mainly by Moslem troops,<sup>18</sup> alongside the Christian armies.

Sigismund's Hungary was the first among the countries of Europe to seek allies against the Turks in distant countries. This is all the more interesting as Hungary, though it still had a weak hold on its Adriatic possessions, could not be regarded as a sea power, much less a Mediterranean one. It would have been, in a way, more logical to expect initiatives of this kind from Venice and Genoa, which had trade links with every part of the world known at that time as well as colonies or settlements at every major point on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and, furthermore, had had consuls in Syria, Egypt, Armenia and Kaffa since the early years of the 13th century. In Sigismund's time, however, the two merchant republics did not feel as threatened as Hungary did. They were involved in struggles against each other, and they were both busy increasing their power and wealth on land and sea. Nevertheless, at roughly the same time as Sigismund began his efforts to seek allies in Asia, Venice, too, sent Luca Bragadino

and Jacopo Suriano to the Sultan of Egypt to prevent a rapprochement between him and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>19</sup> Sigismund, however, started on a much more ambitious diplomatic venture when, in the last quarter of his rule, he sent off Miklós Szerecsen and Józsa Török to make contact with "Mesopotamian" and other rulers - whose countries were also in danger of being swallowed up by the Ottoman Empire - and to conclude close military alliances with them.<sup>20</sup> The journey of the two Hungarian envoys is described in a deed of gift issued by Sigismund in the town of Nagyszombat on 6 February 1428.

"... In Our thoughts we paid due consideration to the faithful services of Our favoured subjects, Miklós Szerecsen, son of Fülöp, a man from the class of soldiers, and Józsa Török, servant of Our court. ... Miklós Szerecsen...as Our envoy, visited the Turks and other barbarian nations in matters of no small, but, indeed, very great, consequence to Us and Our countries as was necessary and timely...Making...diligent inquiries, We have learned that he proceeded, worked and acted most faithfully according to the wishes of Our royal heart. But he did so principally when, at an earlier date, We sent the same Miklós Szerecsen as Our solemn representative in those affairs which so greatly concern the good of our countries, namely to Prince Kara-Yuluk, the ruler of Mesopotamia, and amidst the greatest hazards of travel on both sea and land Miklós Szerecsen carried out his mission with such zeal and diligence...with Prince Kara-Yuluk himself that - as is well known - the latter sent his armies from his own land against the aforesaid ferocious Turks - and so, together with this prince, did Sacheomerze, the son of Timur Lenk, and Chakaray, queen of the Tatars, all coming with their full force and might to the aid of Our Majesty and of Christendom. ... - The aforesaid Józsa Török...was sent as Our envoy to Prince Mahommet,

lord of the Tatars of the Horde, and that Prince similarly set out against the vile Turks with his full might, so that, in similar fashion, he brought from this Mahomet the answer desired by Us..."<sup>21</sup>

Before investigating the question as to which countries the Hungarian envoys visited, as indicated by the laconic and very imprecise wording of the deed, and with what results, let us briefly summarize what we know about the envoys themselves.

These early Hungarian diplomats did not leave any account of their travels to posterity, and we have rather scanty information about their persons as well.

The Szerecsen family of Gorecz and Mesztegnýő had originally held lands in the county of Varasd and later in the county of Somogy. The rise of the family began in fact with the activity of Sigismund's envoy, Miklós Szerecsen,<sup>22</sup> who was made the owner first of Mesztegnýő and then of Gorecz by the King. György Szerecsen of Mesztegnýő took part in the 1447 Buda diet. Lajos Szerecsen was Deputy Lord Chief Justice in 1505, and at the same time György Szerecsen served in the Diet of Rákos as deputy for the county of Tolna, and was himself given diplomatic assignments afterwards. He represented Hedvig, Princess of Teschen and János Szapolyai as plenipotentiary on a mission to the widow of János Corvin.<sup>23</sup> By that time the family had become one of the most influential in the country, as is indicated by their close family ties with such illustrious families as the Patócsys, the Drugeths of Homonna and the Bornemisszas.

The deed shows that Sigismund was well aware of, and could appreciate, the extreme hardships of missions to Asia and their importance, and it was as a direct consequence of this mission that the Szerecsen family began its rise to the highest ranks of the country's barons.<sup>24</sup>

There is even less information on Józsa Török, the Hungarian diplomat of Turkish descent, and the family he founded. According to Iván Nagy<sup>25</sup> he may have been the ancestor of Bálint Török, János Szapolyai's general, and of the Török family which bore the title of Count. All we know about his later life is that he was in all certainty identical with the man named Józsa Tarkasis (properly spelt it must have been Turcuisis) of Krisztalócz, who, as High Justice of the Cumans living in Hungary received from King Sigismund in the year 1431 a letter patent of nobility in return for his earlier achievements and his missions.<sup>26</sup> In another letter dated 2 January, 1437, King Sigismund orders the Ban of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, Matkó of Thallócz, to return the possessions - including documents and a copy of the Koran - taken from Józsa Török's castle at Kristalócz.<sup>27</sup>

Which countries were visited by these two envoys and who were the rulers who, as a result of their mission, complied with King Sigismund's request and sent their armies against the Turks?

Hungarian scholars following the great 18th century Hungarian historian István Katona, obviously had difficulties in deciphering the names of these exotic countries. The scribes at Sigismund's Chancellery had similar problems in coping with the names of the Asian rulers. Some of these names therefore need an explanation.

There is little difficulty regarding "Prince Kara Yuluk, the ruler of Mesopotamia".

His real name was Baha ad Din Kara Osman, but he was better known as Kara-Juluk. The Turkoman dynasty of Ak-Koyunlu had been for some generations rulers of lesser principalities in Asia Minor<sup>28</sup> but the rose in importance during the reign of "Kara Yuluk", Sigismund's contemporary. His country, the capital of which was Diyarbekr, often fought with the Kurds, with the kin tribe of



Kara-Koyunlu and with other neighbours, but it waged its most serious wars against the Ottomans. Kara Juluk owed his great power to his having recognized the military genius of Timur Lenk at the right moment. He joined Timur voluntarily and received considerable territories in return, which resulted in a sudden growth in the prestige and power of the Ak-Koyunlu dynasty.

The success of Miklós Szerecsen's mission is proved not only by the high appreciation shown by the terms of Sigismund's deed of gift but also by the fact that following his appearance at Dyarbekr, contacts were repeated and became mutual. Already in 1413, a "Tatar" mission arrived in Buda and Sigismund was able to put pressure on Venice with their help.<sup>29</sup> In September 1430, Kara-Yuluk sent a letter to Sigismund, which has come down to us in a contemporary German translation. Knowing the antecedents - on which the author publishing the letter has no information<sup>30</sup> as well as the events that followed, this somewhat fragmentary letter gives even more weight to the argument that Sigismund had a well planned and consistently pursued eastern policy, and that his diplomatic operation involving a number of rulers, from Kara Yuluk to Shah Rukh, the Timuride ruler of Persia, was not a random attempt.

"A copy of the letter written by Kara Yuluk, the Tatar, to our Sovereign, the King of Rome, translated from the Turkish language into German. To Emperor<sup>31</sup> Sigismund, ruler of all Christians professing the faith of Jesus. I wish God's blessing on you, the Master, on your subjects, on all faithful Christians and on all your present and future kingdoms. And after this salute Osman, Kara Yuluk by his other name, greets you thus, and places himself as your service, by his envoys and also by your envoys, whose names are Miklós and Török<sup>32</sup>, who brought to me news of your Majesty's health and well-being, news that gave me great joy and for which I thanked

God. I am now sending you fresh news from this country, and I let you know that Shah Rukh, the King of Persia<sup>33</sup> has attacked Kara Yusuf also known as Iskender, with his armies and brought him under the rule of Persia. Shah Rukh left his son, Gerogemertz, in Persia with twenty thousand men; Iskender, also called Kara Yusuf, was idling with his army in the town of Ardelgardewaro<sup>34</sup>. Gerogemertz made a surprise attack with his twenty thousand men on this army, and defeated it. Iskender's fate, whether he died or disappeared, is not known. I also let your Majesty know that Shah Rukh has reorganized and strengthened his army in such a way that no one there will be able to resist it, and in the spring or summer of next year Shah Rukh will turn against the Turks with his forces, and will afterwards march on the country of Syria, where Damascus also lies. Similarly, I also send your Majesty the news that my Arabian friend, Krahmes, son of Nir,<sup>35</sup> waged war on an Arabian ruler named Medelchgar,<sup>36</sup> whom he defeated, deprived of his country, and brought that country under his own rule. Having learnt this, the Sultan<sup>37</sup> sent the rulers of Aleppo and Damascus against Krahmes. They laid siege to Krahmes, but he won a victory over them, cutting down many great lords and capturing others... And it would not be in vain, but rather very good, if your Majesty could send one of your men experienced in the carrying of news and giving of advice to Shah Rukh along with my own men - - - - And the way in which I have acted against the two mentioned above<sup>38</sup> will no doubt be related to you by Miklós, your Majesty's envoy."

Thus there is no doubt that Miklós Szerecsen and Józsa Török paid at least two visits to Kara Yuluk on behalf of King Sigismund. Kara Yuluk's letter clearly indicates that he was trying to win over also the Persian ruler Shah Rukh, the son of Timur Lenk, to the alliance developing between him and Sigismund, which would

have meant the creation of a league of world-wide importance against the Ottoman Empire. Negotiations continued; a "Tatar prince" made his appearance in an ambassadorial capacity at the Imperial Diet of Nuremberg in March 1431,<sup>39</sup> and he - or his successor - continued his mission in Hungary a few years later. This is known from Sigismund's instructions to the Magistrate of the town of Pozsony whom he ordered in 1435 to provide "the envoy of Karayluk, Prince of Mesopotamia" with all that he needs, and to carry him by carriage to the town of Nagyszombat, where he would be awaited by the King.<sup>40</sup> There he would be received by the King himself. All this was communicated also to "Johannes Tartarus", the envoy of Kara-Yuluk, in a special message.<sup>41</sup> At that time Sigismund, despite his old age, was planning a new campaign in the Balkans, and his Asian allies were to act simultaneously. This campaign, however, failed to materialize, and it was in fact the Turks themselves who came to the siege of the fort of Szendrő with a large army.

Both Sigismund and Kara-Yuluk died soon after, but the contacts established by them survived for a long period. Their alliance served as the basis for an enduring, though never fully realized, concept, the next, highly remarkable chapter of which - the alliance between their successors Matthias Corvinus and Uzun Hassan - will be discussed later.

According to Jorga<sup>42</sup> "Sacheomercze" was identical with Shah Mirza, or Jalaladdin Miran Shah, the third-born son of Timur Lenk, who inherited the western part of his father's vast empire.<sup>43</sup> The alliance between him and Sigismund was an actual fact, and indeed, cautious Venice also tried to profit from it.<sup>44</sup> Since, however, Shah Mirza, better known as Miran Shah, was defeated and killed by Kara Yusuf, the great military leader of the Kara-Koyunlu dynasty in 1417, in the years indicated by Jorga the only potential ally among Timur's sons could be the second-born, Shah Omar, for

this latter - despite the chart of descent of Zambaur referred to - was still the ruler of his country in 1427.<sup>45</sup> In any case, the name used by Sigismund's chancellery also makes the latter variant the more likely of the two.

"Chakaray, Queen of the Tatars" is in fact Chakra,<sup>46</sup> also known as Chekre, ruler of the Golden Horde.<sup>47</sup> Timur Lenk ousted Tokhtamish, who tried to resist him, and replaced him, as leader of the Horde, by Timur Kutlug Aglen, a descendant of Genghis Khan. He was followed, amidst some rivalry, by Chakra. King Sigismund's Bavarian-born armour bearer, John Schiltberger, was taken prisoner after the defeat at Nikopol together with Miklós Szerecsen, and during his long and hard years of captivity - to which we shall return briefly later - he spent considerable time in the service of Chakra. He described his experiences in some detail.<sup>48</sup> After Chakra fell in the battle against Ulu-Mohammed, Schiltberger ended up in the retinue of the latter.<sup>49</sup>

Sándor Márki also noted the document in question and concluded from it that "Miklós Szerecsen...was bargaining with the Tatars of Karacha".<sup>50</sup> In view of the above, however, the name "Chakaray" clearly points at Chakra, the ruler of the Horde, also mentioned by Sigismund's armour-bearer, who, for geographical reasons too, could indeed be considered as a potential ally in the campaign against the Ottomans. The same cannot be said of the Karachai tribe which lived in the Caucasus and had never had more than local significance, so it is obvious that Sándor Márki's assumption is based on a mere similarity of names.

"Prince Mahommet, Lord of the Tatars of the Horde", according to Gyula Schönherr, was "the ruler of the Tatars of Aborda".<sup>51</sup> This is based on a mechanical adoption of Katona's text where we

can find the word "Ahorda" which, because of poor printing, may also be read as "Aborda". The Mohammed in question - or more exactly Ulu-Mohammed - had ruled over part of the Horde as a rival of Chakra before finally defeating her. He subsequently became sole ruler of the Horde and won several important victories. He was a descendant of Genghis Khan.<sup>52</sup>

Before ending our brief tribute to Miklós Szerecsen and Józsa Török, let us mention that the names of the Venetian envoys Giosafatte Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini, who set out on their way three-quarters of a century later than the two Hungarians, have gone down in shining letters in the annals of diplomacy as pioneers of oriental diplomatic missions. It is true that the two Venetian diplomats undertook a longer and more difficult journey, but at the same time, for most of it, they were able to rely on the support of Italian merchants who had reached as far as Tabriz, and also on the goodwill of the Persian ruler's wife, whose mother was Italian. The Hungarian envoys had only their own ingenuity to help them as they proceeded through hostile lands towards their destination. Both the Venetian and Hungarian diplomats fulfilled their tasks to the best of their abilities, and it was not their fault that the military alliance ultimately failed to produce the expected results. But, while the Venetians left magnificent travel descriptions to posterity, concerning the mission of Miklós Szerecsen and Józsa Török there is even less written information to be found than about the journey of Friar Julian and his companions, the Hungarians who had visited the east two hundred years earlier for very different purposes. Nevertheless, they should be remembered among the pioneers of Hungary's eastern contacts.

Notes to chapter 1

1. Cf. GYÖRFFY, GY.: Napkelet felfedezése (The discovery of the Orient), Budapest, 1965, passim; CZEGLÉDY, K.: Az Árpád-kori mohamedánokról és neveikről (On the Mohammedans of Árpadian-age and their names), Nyelvtudományi Értekezések, 1970. pp. 254-259; WENZEL, G.: Árpád-kori új okmánytár (New collection of Árpadian-age documents), Vol. II, Pest, 1861, p. 238.; SPULER pp. 117, 238-239, 409; LIGETI, L.: A magyarság keleti kapcsolatai. Egy készülő szintézis alapelvei (The eastern contacts of the Hungarians. Basic principles of a synthesis in preparation), Minerva, 1932, pp. 69-70; ALTANER, B.: Sprachkenntnisse und Dolmetscherwesen im missionarischen und diplomatischen Verkehr zwischen Abendland und Orient im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, 1936, p. 104; WMDA Vol. III, p. 690; MÁRKI, S.: Magyarok a Szentföldön (Hungarians in the Holy Land), Földrajzi Közlemények, 1881, p. 147, etc.
2. Urged by the Pope, King George IV of Georgia also joined in the same crusade (See DZHANASIA p. 225; MANVELICHVILI, A.: Histoire de la Géorgie, Paris, 1951, p. 218); obviously there must have been certain contacts through envoys between the two rulers.
3. FEJÉR Vol. III, Part I, pp. 250-264.
4. With the Armenian branch of the Bagratids becoming extinct, the Rupenid dynasty, after the loss of Cappadocia, moved with their people to the area above northern Syria. They extended their rule gradually to a considerable part of Cilicia as well. During the time of Andrew II's crusade, the rule of King Leo II (1186-1219), eminent both as a statesman and a military leader, brought a new prosperity and prestige to his nation. Cf. TOUMANOFF, C.: Armenia and Georgia, The Cambridge Medieval History, London-Cambridge 1966, Vol. 4, Part I, pp. 628-37, and RAYNALDUS (Barle-Duc, 1870, Vol. XX, p. 417).
5. FEJÉR Vol. III, Part I, pp. 253-4; Cf. WASSHEGYI, E.: II. Endre keresztes hadjárata (The crusade of Andrew II), Budapest, 1916, p. 56; GROUSSET, R.: La Hongrie et la Syrie chrétienne au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie, 1937, pp. 232-7.
6. GYÖRFFY, GY.: op. cit. p. 16.
7. "Ita tamen, quod in deferendis legationibus ad Russiam nobis

sicut hactenus fideliter servire teneantur" (NAGY IVÁN Vol. I. p. 173). The institution of permanent missions or embassies emerged only in the middle of the 15th. century in the inter-relationship of Italian states. Cf. ERNST, F.: Über Gesandtschaftswesen und Diplomatie an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit, Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, 1950, p. 65. - In the early 1500's it became customary all over Europe. Cf. BERNAYS, I.: Die Diplomatie um 1500, Historische Zeitschrift, 1928, pp. 1-23. Neither these studies nor others make mention of diplomatic contacts with the eastern states.

8. ISTVÁNYI, G.: XIII. századi följegyzés IV. Bélának 1246-ban a tatárokhoz küldött követségéről (A 13th-century note on Béla IV's mission sent to the Tatars in 1246), Századok, 1938, pp. 270-2. Cf. MÁTYÁS, F.: Historiae Hungariae fontes domestici, Vol. IV, Pécs 1885, pp. 88-89; GOMBOS, A.F.: Catalogus fontium historiae Hungariae, Vol. III, Budapest, 1938, p. 2030.
9. KROPF, L.: Uzbegh tatár khán egy követsége a magyar udvarnál (A visit of the Tatar Khan Uzbegh as an envoy to the Hungarian court), Századok, 1899, pp. 51-2.
10. HGPH contains interesting information on Uzbegh Khan, an eminent figure of his age, and his foreign policy (p. 281). - It should also be noted that Pope Demetrius XII sent a delegation to Uzbegh Khan in 1340. This mission included a Hungarian, the Minorite monk Elias (KROPF, loc. cit.). - On friar Elias see also LIGETI, L.: A magyarság keleti kapcsolatai (The eastern contacts of the Hungarians), Minerva, 1932, p. 70 and SPULER, pp. 238-9.
11. WMDA, Vol. III, pp. 720-1.
12. DELI: Tudákos levelek 1912 (Learned letters 1912), Budapest, 1913, p. 71.
13. SCHAUBE, A.: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der ständigen Gesandtschaften, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Bd, 10 (1889), pp. 501 and following (és köv. lapok).
14. LÁNDOR, B.: Marx jegyzetei a magyar történelemről (Marx's notes on Hungarian history), A Történettudományi Intézet Értesítője, 1950, Nos. 10-12, pp. 129-31.
15. There is sufficient ground to suppose that he had already had contacts with the Tatars at an earlier date. On 11 August 1401,

the governor of Crete reported to the Signoria of Venice that, according to his information, the Transylvanians, the Hungarians and the Tatars were marching against Bayazid from the western part of Transylvania, and that they had seized the river-crossings. (MÁLYUSZ, E.: Zsigmond-kori oklevéltár /Sigismundian documents/, Vol. II, Part I, Budapest, 1956, p. 141.) On 12 June 1404, King Sigismund complained to the cardinals that Pope Boniface IX was trying to overthrow him despite the fact that Hungary was the shield of Christendom and despite his own full loyalty to him. He had incited the prelates to rebellion, supported the claim of Ladislas of Durrazzo to the throne, and prevented him from breaking the rule of the Turks with the help of the Tatars. (Ibid. p. 386.).

16. Dlugoss Ioanni seu Longini...Historiae Poloniae Lib. XI., Lipsiae, 1712, p. 328; CARO, J.: Geschichte Polens, Hamburg-Gotha, Vol. III, p. 386.
17. "... Item ist gar vil Fürsten Heren Ritter vnd Knechte gewesen zu dem hoffe zu Oven inn Vngern mit namen III konige, III hauptlude drier lande Dispot der Servoy, Item XIII Herzogen, XXI grauen, XXVI Herren on die vngerischen Herren vnd XV<sup>c</sup> Ritter, III<sup>m</sup> knecht geschetzt, ein kardenal, ein legat, III Erzbischof, XI ander bischoffe, LXXXVI pffiffer vnd Bosimer, XVII Hervolt vnd uf XL<sup>m</sup> pferde geschetzt an allen Arten. Item von XVII landen sprache und lute alz Vngern, Beheymer, Bolander, Prussen, Russen, Litauwen, Krichen, Dattaren, Dürken, Walachien, Bossen, Sirsien, Winden, Walhen, Dutschen, Franzosen, Engelsche, Albanesen, Abrahamsche lüte von heiligen grabe vnd sunst vil hesslicher Heiden mit langen Berten, grossen Brüchen, kohon Hüten und langen golttern." Aschbach pp. 325, 441-442.
18. Cf. BECKMANN, G.: Der Kampf Kaiser Sigmunds gegen die werdende Weltmacht der Osmanen, Gotha, 1902, p. 72.
19. SILBERSCHMIDT, M.: Das orientalische Problem zur Zeit der Entstehung des Türkischen Reiches nach venezianischen Quellen, Leipzig-Berlin, 1923, p. 189.
20. Pope Pius II, whose ideas concerning a broad international coalition against the Turks were quite similar or even identical, wrote in a tone of approval: "Idem Sigismundus cum rege minoris Persiae foedus habuit, ut Homorat Turcorum imperatorem Europa expelleret" (Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae Pii. II. P. III. Ed. J. Mansi. Lucca, 1759, p. 112). Cf. Magyar Tudós Társaság



- Évkönyvei (Annals of the Hungarian Learned Society), 1834-1836, Buda, 1838, pp. 177-8.
21. KATONA, S.: *Historia critica regum Hungariae* Vol. XII, Buda, 1790, 503-7.
  22. Relying on Johann Christian ENGEL (*Geschichte des ungarischen Reichs*, Wien, 1813, Vol. II, p. 296) and FESSLER, Vol. II. p. 365, J. Aschbach, King Sigismund's biographer, refers to Miklós Szerecsen by the name Miklós Szentpály. This is all the more curious as the deed of gift makes his identity perfectly clear. See also MÁRKI, S.: *Magyar utazók a középkorban* (Hungarian travellers in the Middle Ages), *Földrajzi Közlemények*, 1890, pp. 145-61.
  23. IVÁNYI, B.: *Adalékok a nemzetközi jog történetéhez a Jagello-korban* (A contribution to the history of international law in the Jagello period), Budapest, 1906, p. 33.
  24. NAGY IVÁN, Vol. X, p. 683-4; KEMPELEN, B.: *Magyar nemes családok* (Hungarian noble families), Vol. X., Budapest, 1931, p. 156; HÓMAN, B. - SZEKFÜ, GY.: *Magyar történet* (Hungarian history), Vol. II, Budapest, 1942, p. 272. - the Szerecsen family is mentioned here among the two hundred biggest land-owning families of the country. Cp. MT, Vol. I, p. 115.
  25. NAGY IVÁN, Vol. XI, p. 290.
  26. NYÁRY, A.: *Krisztalóczi Tarkasis Józsa czimere* (The coat-of-arms of Józsa Tarkasis of Krisztalócz), *Turul*, 1984, pp. 156-8.
  27. THALLÓCZY, L. - ÁLDÁSY, A.: *A Magyarország és Szerbia közti összeköttetések oklevéltára* (Collected documents of the contacts between Hungary and Serbia) Budapest, 1907, CLXXXI. I.
  28. ZAMBAUR, E. de: *Manuel de Généalogie et de Chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam, Hanovre*, 1927, p. 259. Cf. HGO, Vol. I, p. 807.
  29. TIMON, S.: *Epitome Chronologica rerum Hungaricarum*, Kolozsvár, 1764, p. 122.
  30. STROMER, W.: *Diplomatische Kontakte des Herrschers vom Weissen Hammel, Uthman genannt Qara Yuluq, mit dem Deutschen König Sigismund*. *Südostforschungen*, Bd. XX., 1961, 267-72.
  31. At the time the letter was written, Sigismund was not yet Emperor. We can agree with Stromer that this form of address must be regarded as diplomatic courtesy, or - which is even more likely - it is due to the arbitrariness of the translator, all the more so as Sigismund had indeed received the imperial crown by the

time the translation was made.

32. Unacquainted with the Hungarian sources, Stromer could naturally not be aware that the names "Niclos" and "Türck" referred to Miklós Szerecsen and Józsa Török. His mistaken conclusions are therefore quite understandable (p. 269).
33. Shah Rukh, the son of Timur Lenk. He had intensive diplomatic relations also with Russia, namely with the Grand Duke of Tver, which makes it likely that Sigismund's planned league included the Russian Grand Duchies as well. Cf. BEGUNOV, Yu. K.: *Drevnerusskoe opisanie Derbenta i Sirvana, Trudy otdela drevnerusskoj literatury*, XXI. - Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, p. 130, and LIHACEV, N. P.: *Inoka Formi Slovo pohvall'noe o blažennom knjaze Borise Aleksandroviče*, Spb., 1908, pp. 37-38.
34. Ardas Sirwan? STROMER op. cit., p. 270.
35. Krachmess = The arab ruler Kurkmas ibn Hussein. STROMER, op. cit. pp. 270-1.
36. According to Stromer the chieftain of a nomadic Beduin tribe (op. cit. p. 271).
37. I. e. Barsbay, the Egyptian ruler. STROMER, op. cit. p. 270.
38. Kara Yuluk was obviously referring to the Ottoman and Mameluke Sultans.
39. "Herczog aus Tatern". *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, Bd. II, Leipzig, 1864, p. 22. Cf. STROMER, op. cit. p. 269.
40. Sigismundus etc. *Providi fideles dilecti! Fidelitati Vestra firmiter mandanter praecipuimus, quatenus statim visis praesentibus fideli nostró Johanni Tartaro, Nuncio Illustris Karayluk Domini Mesopotamiae, qui nunc in Posonio existit, de uno Curru recentibusque equis, in quibus huc ad nostram Maiestatem venire possit, providere debeatis, secus facere non ausuri. Datum Tyrnaviae in vigilia festi Sacratissimi Corporis Christi Anno eiusdem MCCCCXXX quinto etc.* FEJÉR, Vol. X, Part VIII, Suppl., p. 648.
41. *Mandatum eiusdem Nuncio regis Mesopotamiae Karayluk sonans, ut Posonio ad se Tyrnaviam veniat. Comissio propria Domini Imperatoris. Sigismundus Dei gratia Romanorum Imperator semper Augustus, ac Hungariae, Bohemiae, Dalmatiae, Croat. etc. Rex. Fidelis nobis dilecte! Fidelitati firmiter mandantes praecipuimus, quatenus statim habita praesentium notitia ad nostram quantocius huc venias Maiestatem in Curru per Judicem et Juratos Cives Posonien-ses tibi de nostro mandato assignando. Mandavimus enim per alis Litteras nostras ipsis Judici et Juratis civibus, ut iidem de uno*

Curru tibi debeant modis omnibus providere; secus ergo non facturus. Datum Tyrnaviae... A. MCCCCXXXV Fideli nostro Johanni Tartaro Noncio Illustris Principis Carayluk, Domini Mesopotamie etc. nobis dilecto.(FEJÉR, loc. cit.) - It was part of the envoy's privileges in those times that the local authorities - the towns and counties - were duty bound to provide for the transportation of the envoy passing through on his way to his destination as well as on his return trip. They were obliged to keep horses and carriages ready so that the envoy should not be delayed. They also had to provide armed escorts if they were needed.

42. IGOR, Vol. I, pp. 405-7.
43. ZAMBAUR, op. cit. Suppl. "T".
44. IGOR, Vol. I, p. 406.
45. BRUN, F.: Putešestvie Ivana Siltbergera po Evropu. Azii Afrike, s 1394 goda po 1427 god. Zapiski imp. Novorossijskogo Universiteta, god. I., vyp. 1-2., Odessa, 1867, p. 28, note 2.
46. ZAMBAUR, op. cit. p. 246.
47. HGPH, pp. 377, 383.
48. Reisen des Iohannes Schiltberger aus München, München 1859. Cf. BRUN, F.: op. cit. pp. 30, 34, 36, 37, 38, 134.
49. Thus in the relevant part of the document cited by Katona the word "domina" should be read properly as "domino".
50. MÁRKI, S.: Magyar középkor (Medieval Hungary), Budapest, 1914, p. 262.
51. SZILÁGYI, S. (ed.): A magyar nemzet története (The history of the Hungarian nation), Vol. III, Budapest 1895, p. 562.
52. HGPH, p. 382.

C H A P T E R   T W O

*Karamania: Hungary's ally in the 15th century. Co-ordinated military moves, diplomatic contacts. Ferenc Szécsenyi. A close look at the Ottoman conquerors by the Anonymous writer of Szászsebes. King Sigismund's shield-bearer in Asia and Africa*

These attempts to seek allies, exploratory in nature, were outdone in significance by the country's contacts with Karamania, which proved no less enduring.

Karamania, a country in Asia Minor, was for a long time the toughest rival of the Ottoman empire. The rulers of the Karamanoglu dynasty were gifted statesmen and military leaders who had to hold their own in perpetual wars against the Armenians, Syrians, Persians and Turkomans - these last were their relatives - let alone their conflicts with the Ottoman Turks. The territory of their country varied a great deal. Most of the time its capital was Ermenek, but sometimes it was transferred to Konya. In 1386 and 1390 they suffered two major defeats by Murad I and Bayazid I, respectively. But after Timur had routed the Ottomans at Angora, Karamania gained new strength. Timur released Mohammed, the son of the Karamanian ruler who had been killed, from captivity under Bayazid I. Mohammed ruled for a time as governor of Timur, then he entered into new conflicts with the Ottomans, against whom he fought with alternating success up to his death in 1423. His successor - the man who became King Sigismund's ally - was Ibrahim bin Muhammed Tadj ad-Din, the brother-in-law and bitterest enemy of Murad II. His reign lasted from 1423 to 1463. It is not known exactly when the Karamanian-Hungarian contacts began, nor do we know the name of the diplomat

who forged them. On 19 May, 1396, Ferenc Szécsényi, the former Voivode of Transylvania, rewarded the services of Master Bertalan Sóji with a gift of considerable estates. "While we, Voivode Frank, were making our voyage in good fortune in lands over the sea, in the country of the Saracens,"<sup>1</sup> Bertalan Sóji took good care of the interests of the envoy on a far-away mission. The term "Saracen", which had earlier meant the inhabitants of Arabia Felix only, now covered all Moslem peoples, so it may have been Frank Szécsényi, a high-ranking member of one of the country's leading families, who established contacts with the Karamanians. In any case it is characteristic that the person entrusted by Sigismund with the task of winning over the anti-Turkish believers of Islam was not a lower-ranking official or a man of the Church but a high dignitary like Voivode Frank.

The relationship went beyond the usual assurances and figures of speech. The notes of the Ottoman chroniclers testify to this<sup>2</sup>.

By the time Ibrahim came to power, the Ottomans had almost completely disposed of the neighbouring smaller states. Karamania, a country rich in natural resources, which had lively trade links with Genoa and Cyprus, and possessed a warlike population as well, was the last remaining obstacle to the complete hegemony of the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor. Ibrahim, however, was himself an ambitious politician and soldier, who relied as much on cunning as on his powerful and well-equipped army to ensure superiority for his own country. He welcomed Sigismund's offer of an alliance. That, according to Jorga,<sup>3</sup> took place in 1428. In any case it is a fact that in spring 1436, when the campaign planned by the aging Sigismund should have unfolded, came the news that the Karamanian troops had laid siege to Candelore, the seat of the former principality of Alaya, as they were obviously bound to do by the

alliance.<sup>4</sup> There is evidence that János Hunyadi was also involved in these contacts. An Anonymous Turkish chronicler,<sup>5</sup> for instance, relates the following story. When "the infidel", i.e. King Sigismund, sent his army against the Ottoman Empire, Ibrahim, the ruler of Karamania, who was of course as devout a follower of Mohammed as the Ottomans themselves, wanted to follow the giaour's example. Then his court jester stood before him and said: "Very good, my Lord, that you should attack the Ottoman. You are right indeed." "Why", asked the ruler. "Because," went the answer, "if you, my Sultan, attack from here, and Janko (i.e. Hunyadi) from over there, the two of you will perhaps manage to stamp out the true faith together."

As for Sigismund's diplomats in the east, the Crimean Tatar Empire and the Crimean towns of the republic of Genoa were visited in 1412 by Miklós Szerecsen, László Szalmaváry and Jakab Haug, and in 1418 by John and Konrad Vischer.<sup>6</sup>

In 1443, six years after the death of King Sigismund, a truly life-and death struggle began against the Turks under the leadership of János Hunyadi. Already in 1440, the year Wladislas I of the Jagello dynasty acceded to the throne, Sultan Murad had besieged Belgrade - Nándorfehérvár as it was then called in Hungarian - without success, and another larger Turkish force which entered the country in 1444 was also defeated. Hunyadi won a brilliant victory over the Sultan's forces in Transylvania in 1442, and the view became predominant that by uniting the country's forces, the Turkish problem could ultimately be overcome. Therefore, internal disputes having been settled preparations for an all-out offensive had to start at once.

Peace within the country having been temporarily restored, (the great army of Wladislas I set out from Buda in July 1443,

marching rapidly to Belgrade where it joined up united with Hunyadi's forces), the entire nation hoped for, and expected, the final elimination of the Turkish threat.

This was also the hope of Ibrahim bin Muhammad Tadj ad-Din, the Karamanian ruler, who was encouraged by Hunyadi's magnificent victories, and who took the alliance concluded with Sigismund 15 years earlier quite seriously. He was not content with words but took action to fulfil his obligations under that agreement. The support provided by the Karamanian ruler and his forces and the activities of his diplomats are described by the 16th-century historiographer Leunclavius,<sup>7</sup> a friend of János Zsámbocky-Sambucus.

Neglecting his duties as a ruler, Murad II gave himself over to a life of idleness and pleasure-seeking. King Wladislas I and János Hunyadi then obtained the support of the Germans, the Latins, the Bosnians, the Herzegovinians, the Wallachians and the Franks as the comrades-in-arms of the Hungarians. But the ruler of Karamania was also bound legally, by a treaty of alliance, to go to their support, and to commit his considerable forces against the Turks.<sup>8</sup>

Leunclavius describes the arrival of the envoy of the Karamanian Sultan, who found the King among his army. "The task of the Karamanian envoy was to set forth to the King the intention and advice of his own sovereign, he himself being the author of the plan that the Ottoman should be attacked from two sides at the same time. He also explained to the King what the fruits of their victory would be. European Rumelia - so he said - will be yours to annex to your country; Anatolia will be occupied by my sovereign for himself; furthermore, driving the Ottoman out of the country of Vulkogli (i.e. Stephen Vukcic, Prince of Bosnia), we shall

return that country to its own ruler. And when all this has been successfully completed, we shall root the Ottomans out of our own territories. So, after the conclusion of this agreement between the Hungarians, Karamanians and Vulkogli, in the year 848, following the death of Mohammed,<sup>9</sup> the Hungarian King, accompanied by János Hunyadi, at last united his forces with Vulkogli's troops, and set out against the Ottomans via Belgrade."<sup>10</sup>

Leunclavius' description reveals that the allies attached exaggerated hopes to Sultan Murad's apparent retirement and belittled the military abilities of his son, who was later to become Mohammed II. "On hearing this the ruler of Karamania and Vulkogli were overjoyed, because they hoped that they would fare better afterwards. The ruler of Karamania hastily dispatched an envoy to the Hungarian King and Vulkogli, so that the envoy would ask them on his behalf: 'I ask you: why are you so calm and idle in the face of your enemy? Fate itself has presented us with an excellent opportunity to carry our cause to its utmost success, and we must be careful not to let this opportunity slip out of our hands because of our own negligence. Behold how Murat the Osmanli has lost his mind. He has yielded power to his son, while he entertains himself with games and gives free rein to his nature in revelries in the company of harlots. He carouses in the arbours of vineyards and neglects his country. So rise up at last, and with a courageous soul, take vengeance for all the many insults done to you by the enemy.' Fired by this battle call by the Karamanian ruler, the kings and other rulers mentioned above then gathered their forces and set out towards Varna."<sup>11</sup>

It is not known whether the message of the Karamanian ruler really contributed to the unfortunate breach of the Szeged peace agreement and its consequence, the Varna disaster. It is a fact,



however, that while the Ottomans were fighting the Hungarians and their allies, the area of Turkey between Kutahia and Angora was devastated by the armies of the Karamanian Sultan,<sup>12</sup> who thus made good his promise. Murad and Mohammed were forced to transfer part of their troops to Asia in order to stop the Karamanians and to revenge their losses by setting fire to Iconia and Larenda. Peace between the two Moslem powers was made only in 1444. There is no evidence of any attempt to revive the Karamanian-Hungarian alliance during the rest of the reign of Ibrahim. His country lost its power and independence after his death; it became integrated into the Ottoman Empire, and Hungary, increasingly threatened by the Turks, lost a potential ally.

x

Apart from the contacts with the Timurides and other anti-Ottoman rulers of the east, three other important oriental journeys took place in the same decades. One of these, described by the anonymous writer of Szászsebes, is especially interesting from a Hungarian point of view.

This anonymous writer was taken into Turkish captivity at the age of sixteen in 1438, when the troops of Sultan Murad invaded Transylvania. Having put up a heroic defence, the town of Szászsebes finally surrendered when its position became hopeless. The young student was taken in chains to Adrianople, where he was sold at the slave market. As he wrote in the preface of his work, the hardships he suffered until 1458 were often close to being unendurable. After his lucky escape he entered the Dominican Order. He lived in Rome, and it was there that he wrote his pioneering work which, first in Latin, then in German, saw innumerable editions. His "Treatise on the Customs and Morals of the Turks"<sup>13</sup> is one of the most important and least biased accounts of the age.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond its pioneering significance, the greatest merit of the book is the objective tone in which it discusses the characteristics, the past and the present, the Spartan mores and often exemplary humaneness of the Ottoman Turks, who were otherwise justly feared and hated as conquerors. His long years of captivity gave the one-time Transylvanian student enough opportunity to learn about the ways of the Turkish people - of rich and poor, officers and soldiers, priests and humble believers, the learned and the uneducated - and he saw their virtues as well as their faults. The task he set himself was to awaken and stir into action the indifferent Christians of the west, and his work fulfils this objective with a humanistic clarity and a simplicity telling of wide learning. It was indeed largely from his book, unprecedented in popularity, that the century's western public opinion learned with amazement about the real background of the military successes of the Ottoman Empire which kept moving closer and spreading fear in Europe. The book related what the Spartan discipline, defiance of death and almost infinite endurance of the Turks meant, and what a fatal error it would be to underestimate the Ottoman threat. After all the obsolete descriptions left from the time of the Crusades, containing more fantasy than fact, after so much rumour and misinformation, Europe - preparing hesitantly for a fight - had for the first time a clear picture of the enemy, a picture that was impartial, objective and therefore much more effective than anything before.

The work of the anonymous writer of Szászsebes (or "Captivus Septemcastrensis Georgius de Hungaria" - which shows an understanding and appreciation of the Turkish military society forged by the doctrines of Islam, and indicates the right way to prepare

to counter it - does not define exactly which parts of the vast-grown empire were visited by the author during his long captivity. But it is certain that he spent a considerable part of those two hard decades in Asia Minor.

Writing in an age when even the most serious publications as well as the "newspapers" of the time - bulletins bearing titles such as "Neue Zeitung" or "Relation" - referred to the Turks simply as "Bluthund" or "Erzfeind", the insight and courage of the anonymous Transylvanian writer can only be admired. So also can his narrative talent. The part which is especially relevant from our point of view, besides his description of the siege of Szászsebes, is his reference to the events in Karamania, Hungary's ally, in the year 1444. He describes the feeling of the Turks and their thirst for vengeance when they set out to punish the Karamanians for their alliance with Wladislas I and John Hunyadi, as follows: "...fired with great anger and apprehension, they set out in pursuit of the Karamanians with an army of enormous multitude, so as to exterminate them. Rumour had it that their army consisted of some twenty thousand foot soldiers, all equipped with hatchets and other tools in order to devastate their land, to cut down their trees and vines, in other words, to make the country uninhabitable. And yet they returned with peace concluded, and everything remained intact."<sup>15</sup>

Nor did the other traveller, John Schiltberger, traverse the vast empire of the Ottoman Turks of his own free will, when he did so following the battle of Nikopol. His connection with Hungary consists in the fact that, like many other young knights, he listened to the appeal of the Hungarian King, and left his native Munich for Buda full of enthusiasm. The fifteen-year-old youth took part in the disastrous battle of Nikopol as a shield-bearing page. But,

while the king managed to escape, the luckless shield-bearer fell into captivity. Sultan Bayazid I kept him at his own court, and after the Battle of Angora, when Bayazid himself was captured by Timur Lenk, Schiltberger had to share the lot of his new master. Schiltberger also spent more than twenty years in captivity in the east, and it was only in 1417 that he made his escape. He followed his masters to a number of countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. His descriptions of the countries under Timuride domination are especially valuable and sometimes relevant also as source material. He made his notes, containing much interesting information, after he regained his freedom. He was, however, a great deal less erudite and critical an observer than the anonymous writer of Szászsebes, and the value of his work is sometimes diminished by his lack of knowledge and his naivety.

F. Brun's already cited Russian translation and commentary,<sup>16</sup> complete with a rich critical apparatus, is much more useful than the German editions. As opposed to the profound, analytic character of the work of the anonymous writer of Szászsebes, grasping the general features and concentrating, as it were, on the ethnography of the Ottoman Empire, Schiltberger's work is worthy of attention for its continuously changing scene and its somewhat superficial but very broad picture of the whole world of the Timurides.<sup>17</sup>

The middle-eastern journey of Oswald von Wolkenstein, one of King Sigismund's favourite men, is even less relevant from a Hungarian point of view than that of Schiltberger, although he was one of the direct ancestors of the Rákóczi. Unlike the other two Wolkenstein, who spoke Hungarian, visited several middle eastern countries as a free man, probably as King Sigismund's diplomat. He left no records of his travels but his poems indicate the areas he visited, and contain information relevant to research into the

history of international contacts.<sup>18</sup>

Notes to Chapter 2

1. "...dum nos videlicet Frank wayouda in partibus transmaritimis in regnis Zerechinorum iter saluteferum agebamus..." MÁLYUSZ, E.: Zsigmond-kori oklevéltár (Sigismundian documents), Vol. I. Budapest 1951, p. 485.
2. Enzyklopedie des Islams, Vol. II, Leiden-Leipzig, p. 804. - Cf. MORAVCSIK, Gy.: *Studia Byzantina*, Budapest, 1967, pp. 372-381.
3. Enzyklopaedie des Islams, Vol. I, p. 406. - Cf. ELEKES, L.: Hunyadi, Budapest, 1952, p. 175.
4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 417.
5. GIESE, Fr.: *Die altosmanische Chroniken*, Part II, Leipzig, 1925, p. 91.
6. HEIMPEL, H.: *Zur Handelspolitik Kaiser Sigismunds*, in: *Vierteljahrschr. für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgesch.* 23 (1930), pp. 145-146; STROMER v. REICHENBACH, W.: *König Sigismunds Gesandte in dem Orient*, in: *Festschrift für H. Hempel*, Bd. II, Göttingen, 1972, p. 603.
7. *Historiae musulmanae turcorum, de monumentis ipsorum exscriptae libri XVIII.* Francofurti, 1591. Cf. GERSTINGER, H.: *Die Briefe des Johannes Sambucus*, Wien 1968, *passim*.
8. Ibid., p. 513.
9. 1443.
10. LEUNCLAVIUS, p. 558.
11. Ibid., p. 560. - Cf. *Revue des études Sud-Est Europ.*, 1965, p. 459.
12. HGO, Vol. I, p. 455.
13. APPONYI, Vol. III, *passim*; KEMÉNY, J., count: Szász-Sebes XV. századbeli tanodája, török általi ostroma és történetírójának emlékezete (The 15th-century school of Szászsebes, its siege by the Turks and the memory of its chronicler), *Uj Magyar Múzeum*, Vol. VII, pp. 45-52; CAPESIUS, B. - GÖLLNER, C.: *Der ungenannte Mühlbacher. Leben und Werk*, Sibiu, 1944; "The most important publication dealing with the Turks which appeared in France during the first two decades of the sixteenth century

was a Latin treatise, the work of a young Transylvanian Student, who was captured in Hungary in 1436..." (Rouillard, C. D.: *The Turk in French History, Thought and Literature*, Paris 1938, p. 47.) - Cf. TARDY L.: *Rabok, követek, kalmárok /Slaves, ambassadors, merchants/* Budapest, 1977. pp. 49-153.

14. In the first edition of the book, Martin Luther speaks of the author and his work in terms of the highest appreciation.
15. CAPESIUS, B. - GÖLLNER, C.: op. cit., p. 31.
16. BRUN, F.: op. cit., p. 156.
17. Neither the person of the author nor his work involves enough Hungarian connections to call for a more detailed treatment here; it should be mentioned, however, that a Hungarian edition of Schiltberger's work complete with F. Brun's notes would certainly be interesting to researchers and would appeal to the reading public as well.
18. WOLKENSTEIN--RODENEGG, A.: *Oswald v. Wolkenstein*, Innsbruck, 1930; MOTZ, A.: *Oswald von Wolkenstein élete és költészete* (The life and poetry of O. v. W.), Budapest, 1915; KARDOS, T.: *Középkori kultúra, középkori költészet. A magyar irodalom keletkezése* (Medieval culture, medieval poetry. The origins of Hungarian literature), *A Magyar Történelmi Társulat Évkönyvei*, s.a. Vol. VIII, pp. 173-4.

C H A P T E R   T H R E E

*János Hunyadi's contacts with the Crimean towns and their antecedents*

As a consequence of the Mongolian conquests, the Crimean peninsula became part of the Mongolian Empire, then, after the disintegration of the empire, it came under the rule of the Golden Horde which gained control of the empire's western areas. In the process of the gradual disintegration of the Golden Horde itself, an independent Crimean Khanate was established by Hadji Devlet in 1428.

At that time one of the Italian republics, Genoa, which had become a major power in world trade, was still flourishing. Having helped Michael Palaeologus in his successful bid for the Byzantine throne, it handed in a heavy bill on 13 March, 1261. It received Pera, a town adjoining Constantinople, the island of Chios, and was given the right to trade freely on the Black Sea. Colonial settlements sprang up all round the shores of that sea, especially in the Crimea. These settlements grew into wealthy colonial towns, "emporìa" under regular Genoese control, living, with some measure of autonomy, in the protective shelter of huge forts. The Crimean Peninsula itself gradually came under Mongol rule. Following a few unsuccessful attempts to seize them, however, the Khans realized that the Genoese settlements established in certain sections of the coastal area posed no threat to their control over the Peninsula. On the contrary, the inflow of Genoese gold as a gift to their treasury and the developing trade links were a major source of income contributing to their wealth. The Ottoman Empire was not yet reaching out to grasp

the Khanate, and the coastal colonial towns were growing immensely rich. These towns - especially Kaffa, today's Feodosiya, the most important of them all - carried on a vast trade between the Asian countries, rich in spices, silk and other oriental goods, and the mother town. Passing freely through the Bosphorus, Genoese ships ensured trade on a world-wide scale as well as supplies needed by the colonial towns.

Due to the rapid development, the population of Kaffa became increasingly heterogeneous. It grew vast in numbers with the arrival of merchants from all over the world, not to mention seamen and carriers coming by the thousands. Besides the original Italian inhabitants, the new settlers, according to Genoese records, included Tatars, Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Georgians, Transylvanians and, most important from our point of view, Hungarian immigrants as well. Evidence of this, found in Genoese archives, has come down to us from as early as the year 1289. On 1st June of that year an agreement was concluded in Kaffa between Saladino d'Ovado and Cristiano Alamanno for the sale of a house. Defining the position of the house, the contract mentions that it is bordered on one side by the estate of Janus Sarracenus, on the other by that of Jurgus Graecus, and on the third by the property of Matheus Ungarus (Hungarian).<sup>1</sup> In another document from Kaffa, dating from 25 April, 1290, Pietrucciolo de Cremona acknowledges receipt of the dowry worth 1000 Aspers of his wife Maria Ungara.<sup>2</sup> Hungarian names crop up also in documents related to the slave trade.<sup>3</sup> There are, in fact, quite a number of such legal and fiscal documents all testifying to the presence of Hungarians in Kaffa at the end of the 13th century and later.

Relying on the evidence of Alberto Alfieri, who visited Kaffa around the middle of the 13th century, Roberto Lopez, the distin-



guished historian of the Crimean colonies of the Genoese Republic, writes: "There were Greeks living there, Armenians, Jews, and Tatars in especially great numbers; the last-mentioned had their autonomous community in Kaffa under the leadership of their own "Tudun".<sup>4</sup> But there were also a great number of Circassians, Cumanians, Bulgarians, Georgians, Transylvanians as well as Hungarians in the 14th century."<sup>5</sup> We may add that most of these people were involved in trade. Since a considerable part of this trade proceeded along a land route through Lwów - called variously Leopoldis, Lemberg and Lamburg in the documents - or on a combined land-and-sea route through Transylvania via Moncastro-Neszterfejérvár,<sup>6</sup> which was under Hungarian rule until 1412, there can be little doubt that this trade extended to Hungary as well. And the Kaffa merchants carried on a lively trade with the whole of Asia, including China itself.

In fact, the trade relations between Genoa, the Genoese colonies and Hungary had very deep roots.

In 1379, as a natural condition for political cooperation, a charter was granted by King Louis the Great of Hungary to the Genoese merchants,<sup>7</sup> certain details of which, and especially its antecedents, are worth investigating. In the common view Florence was Hungary's most important trade partner at that time. Yet the fact is that a letter written by Coluccio Salutati to the Hungarian King on behalf of the Republic of Florence asks for the same privileges to be granted to Florentine merchants as were held by those of Genoa in Hungary.<sup>8</sup> The Genoese occupied Kaffa in about 1266, and very soon they were shipping their goods across the Black Sea and up the Danube to Hungary, as is proved in G. Canestrini's<sup>9</sup> work. These contacts were made a great deal more intensive by the treaty concluded between Genoa and Hungary in 1352.

This is evidenced by the 1379 charter granted by King Louis the Great.<sup>10</sup>

The charter states, among other things that the Genoese arriving via the Danube from the east do not have to pay any duty, are not obliged to unpack their goods, except at Buda, where they are liable to only half of the legal thirtieth. The Genoese were also required to pay duty on goods bought in Hungary only in Buda, whether they left the country by the Danube or through Dalmatia. Thus it is obvious that the links between the Black Sea towns and Hungary were quite strong long before the time of the Hunyadis and, along with Dénes Huszti, we may confirm that the Danube was in fact the main artery of the intensive trade between the Genoese colonies and Central Europe. Another highly important article of the charter indicates even more clearly the special and extraordinary importance of the Hungarian-Genoese trade links. The Genoese, according to this article, were entitled to keep one or more consuls in Buda or in any other town. These consuls had full power to act as judges in trade disputes as well as criminal suits concerning the Genoese, and did not come under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian King. As Dénes Huszti points out, this was the only known case of consular jurisdiction in Hungary in those times.

The next part of the story can be found in Elemér Mályusz's excellent edition of sources. Investigating some of his extracts from our view point, we may find traces of a very interesting lawsuit which took place in the first years of the 1400s.<sup>11</sup> The dispute concerned merchants of Kassa and Captain Bartolomeo Grimaldi of Callatrea, a minor Genoese fortress and port which stood on the site of today's Jalta.<sup>12</sup> This also shows that the trade links existing between Hungary and Genoa during the rule

of the Angevins were never severed, or had been revived. All this corroborates Wolfgang Stromer's recent findings, according to which Peter Kraft, who conducted vigorous business with Kaffa, ran this trade from the town of Kassa.<sup>13</sup>

Although the colonial towns in the Crimea had to fight for their prosperity anew in every decade against neighbours envious of their wealth - the Trebizond Empire, for instance, caused a great deal of trouble - the ultimate danger to their existence was posed by the fall of Constantinople and the new wave of Ottoman expansion that followed.

The Ottoman fleet first attacked Moncastro, one of the most important Black Sea ports. Then it laid siege to Sebastopolis, today's Sukhumi (Georgian SSR). However, in 1454, after the fall of Constantinople, when the Khan of the Crimean Tatars also made his appearance under the city's walls, Kaffa itself was directly threatened. At that time actual siege was avoided at the cost of considerable financial sacrifice and various concessions, but the town's leaders saw clearly that the greatest trial of strength was approaching. The Turks sealed off the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and the colony was threatened by starvation because of drought. The food and arms necessary for defence had to be secured from a different source and in a different way. That meant a land route. Both the town of Kaffa and the mother town turned for support to their old friend, John Hunyadi's Hungary.

Today we still have only a few documents from which to reconstruct, or rather indicate, the depth and extent of these contacts. But even the existing material is enough to illuminate the relationship between the Crimean merchant town and Hungary

in those times.

Demetrius de Vivaldi, the mayor - or consul, as he was then called - in charge of Kaffa, sent a desperate letter to the mother town on 21 October, 1454. He requested help from Genoa to be sent both by sea and land, but he also voiced the hope that the Kings of Hungary and Poland and János Hunyadi would dispatch both food and experienced soldiers needed for the defence.<sup>14</sup>

Sultan Mohammed II, however, was in no hurry to conquer the Italian towns in the Crimea. First he wanted to inflict a severe blow on Hungary. However, he was heavily defeated at Szendrő, Kruzevac and Pirót. The news of the Hungarian's victory cheered up the desperate Genoese who made increased efforts to prepare for the defence of Kaffa. They sent off Consul Damiano Leone to purchase large quantities of supplies for the colonial towns in Hungary and Transylvania and to ship them to Kaffa from the port of Moncastro.<sup>15</sup> Having successfully accomplished his mission, he arrived back in Genoa from Kaffa on 2 April, 1455.<sup>16</sup> Other Genoese efforts were also successful but now the preparations of the Turks seemed increasingly dangerous. This time Pole Calixtus III also appealed to the Hungarian and French King for help on behalf of Kaffa.<sup>17</sup> An exchange of envoys and letters began between the Genoese leaders and János Hunyadi. Hunyadi's reply drew the following response from the rulers of the Ligurian republic:

"To the eminent and illustrious Prince and Lord, the Voivode John Hunyadi, hereditary Count of Beszterce, Captain-General of Hungary, etc. Eminent and illustrious Prince. Our noble fellow citizen, Tomaso Senarega has delivered to us your Highness's letter dated the fourth day of December of the past year in the locality Fekethe Nohal (a misspelt form of Feketehalom. LT), and he has told us many other things as well, of which he professed that they had<sup>o</sup> been said to him by your Excellency. Both the letter

and Tommaso's report were so dear to ourselves as well as to our whole town that anything dearer would be hard to hear these days. For when we learned about your magnanimous goodwill in deciding that you will generously render all financial and military help for the defence of our town Kaffa and the other towns in the territories on the Black Sea coast - since support on a sea route can hardly reach these towns because of the great number of guns set up on both sides of those straits by the ruler of the Turks, that evil enemy of Christianity - we were now able to see with full certainty that these towns, which such a great and magnanimous prince decided to help, will no longer perish. That is why we ask your goodness from deep in our hearts that, should the people of Kaffa request it, your Excellency should order that they be given all kinds of supplies, food and military assistance, as was so generously promised in your Highness's letter. - Furthermore: knowing that your Highness showed willing to put your own person, all your might and possessions at stake, in the fight against the enemies of the Cristian faith...we were overjoyed, especially as we heard that our Holiest Lord the Pope, putting all his other cares aside, had turned all his attention to this matter... - Furthermore: when we recently heard that our town Kaffa was suffering hunger in grain, but also that the King of the Turks had allied with the Emperor of the Tatars for the battle against Kaffa, we hired two more ships rapidly and at a very high rent, and these ships will set out from here with soldiers, weapons, and other necessary supplies within a few days, to land directly at the town of Kaffa. We now refrain from speaking about how many ships, how many soldiers, what amount of money, and what quantities and numbers of supplies we have already sent there, for the help of those eastern Christians, ever since the fall of Constantinople, that

unhappy town. Your Highness will now be able to see in your wisdom whether we were negligent or not in helping those unfortunate eastern Christians.

And as your Excellency wishes to be provided with two or three galleys to sail for Kaffa, to this we reply that we are so overwhelmed with feeling toward your Highness that there is nothing we would like more than to make these feelings and goodwill of ours apparent in actions. However, as at the present time there is only one such galley in Kaffa which defends those places from the Turkish pirates and helps in easing the misery and hunger of the people living their wretched lives there, we do not know in what manner we could satisfy your Excellency's wish in the way we would like to...

On 3 March, 1456.<sup>18\*</sup>

The letter's last paragraph has a close bearing on Gyula Moravcsik's findings in evaluating and summarizing the contemporary accounts of Ubertino Pusculo of Brescia and the Byzantine Sphrantzes,<sup>19</sup> as well as on the investigations of István Kapitánffy.<sup>20</sup> The letter's aim was to establish the interest János Hunyadi may have had in obtaining the Black Sea port of Mesembria and in the use of warships.

János Hunyadi's letter of 4 December, 1455 was carried by Tommaso Senarega, the envoy of the Genoese Republic, from the township of Feketehalom in Transylvania. On the same day as the letter to Hunyadi was written, The Genoese Signoria also informed the magistrate of Kaffa of the generous offer of the great Hungarian general and statesman to provide all the necessary support in troops, equipment as well as food.<sup>21</sup> Nicolo Lamberti, plenipotentiary of the Ligurian republic, left Genoa for Kaffa - once again via Hungary. He carried a letter to Antal Száti (or Száti), a Kolozsvár nobleman, who must have been one of the chief contacts of the Genoese in Hungary.

\*Eminent and esteemed Sir, our respected brother! Your Lord-

Illustrissimo & preclarissimo principi domino Johanni & humad  
varuod prepetuo comiti bithunio regni hungarie  
summo capitulo

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Raddidit nobis Illustrissimo & preclarissimo principi et dno: orz  
Eugenio & bonas & senatoga civis m. leas altitudinis vni scriptas in  
villa fette nobilium die quarta Decembris supioris: et nonnulla alia  
non exor nobis retulit que sibi a sublimitate vna commissa fuisse  
affirmavit. Lxx ipse acclamationis eiusdem eboris: adeo nobis et toti  
civitati nre gratia fuerunt: et nihil hoc tempore gratius affari poterit.  
Nam cum malleximus summa illam benignitatem vnam statuiste  
omnia auxilia ac personam libere ac pcedere p & fensione civitatis nre  
capituli aliaq; orbis et terrarum maris pontica: quibus difficillimu  
est maxime subventionis transmitti pp magni bombardarum  
num: quas immanissimus Turcorum rex hostis nre christianam in  
vocat litteris illius angustis facti disposuit: visum profecto nobis est  
ciuitatis illas quare conservacionem tantus tam magnanimus princeps  
opem prebere decreverit. vltima iam preter no possi. pp vna  
vramus vno ano benignitatem vnam et si caput vntis postulaverit  
Ex vna omnes subventionis victualium: omniumq; provisionum illis pbeci  
iubuit: quod admodum altitudinis vni lxx libere dicitur pollicent.

Preterea cognito p altitudo vna parata si offret q; hostes sibi christianam  
se vnaq; suas et sua omnia exponere: dum reliqui christiani princeps  
rem ipam adiuvant: maiorem in modum gauisi sumus: persistet cu  
malignamus Sancti dno nre summi pontificis postpositis alijs  
civis ad executionem vntis vni omnes cogitationes suas ita comuro est.

Ad Ex<sup>m</sup> princeps: et ex vna intelligat q; pro & fensione sibi et illo q;  
miserabiliu ptores christianorum orientaliu vna supra vntis eritimur:

q; pmi cognovimus turcorum classem & nassu: oppugnatione civitatis  
hvi: statim magna nra & conduximus naves duas peregrando vnaq;  
ad portum illius vntis cu vntis. dnm. taitico et munitione

lano supioris transimus. Parera cum imp munitione  
nobis fuisse civitatis nre caput: nopia taitici laborare:

2 legatum regis turcorum tunc imperator tartarorum & oppugnanda  
vntis sibi missi: aliter multo maiore nra & condignius

alias vna omnia duas: que cu militib; armis taitico et alijs  
munitione maffari in ea pauculos dies nre disant

ad ipam vntis caput recto ca nra: accessit. Etiam nunc  
quot naves: quot vntes: quot expnas quibundq; provisione vntis  
missimus p salute illorum christianorum orientaliu: quot q; nra

Letter of the Genoese Signoria to János Hunyadi. 3 March 1456.

/Archivio di Stato, Genova, 34/2319 fol. 230 r-v/





ship's eager help to us and your support to our citizens and emissaries is well known to us. First of all we express our gratitude for your goodwill, and we ask you to give your kind support also to our envoy Nicolo Lambertini, so as to enable him to deliver the Pope's letters written on our behalf to those to whom they are addressed, namely to the Most Respected Governor of Hungary and the Legate in Hungary of His Holiness, the Pope.

Genoa, 6 March 1456.<sup>22</sup>

The letter brought by Nicolo Lambertini to the Papal legate, Cardinal Giovanni Carvajal, has also come down to us.<sup>23</sup> It shows that Genoa wanted to put pressure on Hunyadi also in this way, to get the greatest possible support.

Contacts between Hungary and the Crimean towns did not cease after the death of János Hunyadi. In certain respects they in fact became even more intensive. It is mainly on the strength of the exchanges between Pope Pius II and the Republic of Genoa that Amedeo Vigna points out how much Kaffa, still maintaining its good relations with the Tartars but increasingly threatened by the Turks, owed to the Hungarians whose sacrifices and support of various kinds made it possible to rebuild the forts around Kaffa.<sup>24</sup> On 29 June, 1463 Pope Pius II declared an indulgence for those people of Brassó, Nagyszeben, Beszterce and the Seklers or Székelys (a Hungarian ethnic group in Transylvania) who made the lion's share of these sacrifices.<sup>25</sup> Galeazzo Pinelli, Bartholomeo Gentili and the other Kaffa leaders laid all their hopes in the diversionary, relieving effect of the Hungarian army moving against the Turks.<sup>26</sup> Mihail Volkov, the eminent Russian historian of the Crimean colonial towns had good reason to write a hundred years ago that without such powerful allies as the Hunyadis the towns in the Crimean peninsula would have fallen to the Turks much earlier than they did.<sup>27</sup>

Speaking about the Hungarian presence in Kaffa we must also mention that the spiritual needs of the town's Catholic population were attended to, not only by Dominicans but also by Franciscans. These Franciscans were Hungarians, sent there by the Hungarian province of the order. Already in 1287, a Hungarian monk by the name of László reported having converted the Tatar Princess Yaylak, who founded a monastery in the Crimean peninsula.<sup>28</sup> There are a series of similar reports about their activities among the Kipchaks.<sup>29</sup> Their long presence in the land of the Tatars ended, or diminished, only five years before the fall of the town. For it was then, on 26 October, 1470, that the town's leadership turned to Cardinal Francesco della Rovere, the General of the order, who was later to become Pope Sixtus IV, with the request that the vacancies in Kaffa should be filled with Italians instead of Hungarians.<sup>30</sup>

And that already leads us to the siege and subsequent fall of Kaffa.

The concern felt in Hungary about the fall of Kaffa is illuminated by the dramatic report written in June 1475 by Domonkos Kálmáncsehi, Provost of Székesfehérvár, and Gáspár Hatvani, King Matthias Corvinus's envoys sent to Voivode Stephen of Moldavia:

"It was on the way, at the town of Beszterce, that we were overtaken by the messengers of Sir Stephen, Voivode of Moldavia. These messengers told us in their own words about the horrible deeds committed by the Turks and Tatars during the siege and capture of the town of Kaffa. In the course of these only the Italians had been dragged off, along with the most well-to-do of the sons of other nations, while the rest had been left in their ancient customs. Voivode Stephen, however, feels his country is in great danger, for he has been informed that after the conquest of Kaffa the united Turkish-Tatar armies are preparing for the invasion of

Moldavia, and therefore he asks your Majesty to turn his face to Moldavia and go to war against the Turks immediately."<sup>31</sup>

The contacts between Hungary and the colonial towns in the Crimea were at the same time also Hungarian-Tatar contacts, since relations between Kaffa and the Khan were friendly nearly all the time, and also because travellers on their way to Kaffa from Hungary or Transylvania, whether they were merchants or diplomats, usually reached their destination by crossing the territory of the Khanate.<sup>32</sup>

Gergely Berzeviczy, the great 19th-century Hungarian economist, was right in assuming - although he had no documents at the time with which to prove his theory - that, in the 15th century, goods from China, India, etc. were transported from the Black Sea coast to Hungary and Transylvania partly overland and partly by sea, and part of these goods moved on from there to the western countries. This means that the flow of world trade at the end of the Middle Ages also passed through Hungary and Transylvania.<sup>33</sup> De la Primaudière pointed out in 1848<sup>34</sup> that part of the trade between the colonial towns in the Tatar area and the west passed through the Black Sea port of Moncastro, under Hungarian influence till 1412,<sup>35</sup> and another part through Lwów, from where an extremely busy route branched off towards Hungary and Transylvania.<sup>36</sup>

Let us finally add that Hungary's help to the Black Sea colonies of the Genoese republic served very practical purposes, namely keeping the Ottoman power at a safe distance and maintaining the highly lucrative transit trade from the land held by the Tatars. Thanks to the Hunyadis and the Hungarian and Transylvanian merchants who were wise enough to make the necessary sacrifices, these efforts were completely successful over a period of nearly twenty-five years.

Notes to chapter 3

1. "...in quibusdam domo, stropariis tribus in vachuo, posita extra Caffam iuxta fontem quod est de super macellum, cui vachuo, dictarum domus et stopariorum coheret antea strata publica, retro cachuum monimentorum Sarracinorum in parte et in parte vachuum Jani Sarraceni, et ab uno latere vachuum terre Mathei Ungari et ab alio vachuum Jurgi Greci... Actum in Caffa, inlogia Januensium, anno Dominice Nativitatis Mo. CC-o, LXXXVIII-o, die prima junii..." /Bratianu G.I.: Actes des notaires génois de Péra et de Caffa de la fin du treizieme siecle. 1281-1290. Bucarest, 1927, p. 203./
2. Ibid., p. 267.
3. Thus, for instance, Paulus Ungarus, see BALARD, M.: Genes et l'Outre-mer, Vol. I. Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto, Paris 1973, p. 87.
4. Cf. MUSTAFA A. MEHMED: La politique ottomane a l'égard de la Moldavie et du Khanat de Crimée vers la fin du Regne du Sultan Mehmed II, in: Revue Roumain d'Histoire, 1974, 3, p. 524.
5. "...L'abitano Greci, Armeni, Giudei, Nabatei: ogni razza di gente si trova in citta. E la lista delle popolazioni non e completa: ci mancano i Tartari numerosissimi /che formano una comunita autonoma sotto il loro tudun, luogotenente, che in genovese diventa cittain/, i Circassi, i Cumani, i Bulgari, i Georgiani, i Rumeni, i Turchi, gli Ungheresi, gli Occidentali d'ogni nazione di cui troviamo i nomi nei libri dei conti della colonia." /LOPEZ R.: Storia delle colonie genovesi nel Mediterraneo. Bologna, 1938, p. 358./; "Ces derniers appartenaient aux races et aux religions les plus différentes: la population dominante des Italiens, les Grecs, ancien maires du pays, des Arméniens réfugiés, des Juifs, des Cumans, des Bulgares, des Sarrasins, des Géorgiens, des Valaques, des Turcs, des Hongrois, des Plonais..." /IORGA N.: Notes pour servir a l'histoire des croisades. Vol. I. Paris, 1899, p. 5./
6. PACH (Zs.), S. P.: La route du poivre vers la Hongrie médiévale. (Mélanges en l'honneur de Ferdinand Braudel, Histoire économique du monde méditerranéen 1450-1650, Paris 1973), p. 454. - See also note 33 below.

7. HUSZTI, D.: op. cit., p. 75.
8. WENZEL, G.: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek az Anjou-korból (Relics of Hungarian diplomacy in the Angevin era), Budapest 1876, Vol. III, p. 187.
9. "... Già da molti anni si trovavano in Ungheria grandi mercatanti Fiorentini, i quali esercitavano il traffico in quel paese, e tenevano banco in tutte le principali città. Sembra che questi si fossero estesi in Ungheria della parte di Ragusa, con la quale da lungo tempo mercanteggiavano; ovvero, che avessero seguitati i Veneziani i quali s'erano già stabiliti alla Tana, e i Genovesi che fino dal 1266 tenevano Caffa, e che da questa scale del Mar Nero navigando alla foce del Danubio e rimontando quel fiume che attraversa più sopra tutta l'Ungheria, portassero il loro commercio nelle più cospécue città di quel regno, la maggior parte delle quali è posta sulle rive del Danubio." CANESTRINI G.: Discorso sopra alcune relazioni delle Repubblica Fiorentina col Re d'Ungheria e con Filippo Scolari (Archivio Storico Italiano, vol. IV., 1843) p. 187.
10. Historiae patriae monumenta edita iussu regis Caroli Alberti. Liber iurum reipublicae Genuensis, Torino, 1857, Tom. II, pp. 854-858.
11. The burghers János Elempek of Buda and Meynhardus of Lőcse obtained a salvus conductus from Melchione de Spinola, the Podesta of the town of Pera, a possession of the Republic of Genoa. Despite the salvus conductus, their property was taken from them by Captain Bartholomei Grimaldi of Callatrea, so they obtained a warrant from King Sigismund to collect their demands from Genoese persons. On the authority of the Warrant they had 646 Florins belonging to a man named "Frank of Ianua (Genoa) impounded. King Sigismund ordered the amount confiscated to be paid out to the two burghers and instructed the Lord of the Treasury not to intervene in the affair. The date of the order: Dévény, 8 September, 1402. (MÁLYUSZ, E.: op. cit., p. 223, 1882, reg).
12. KEPPEN, P.: O drevnostjah juznago berega Kríma i gor tavričeskih (Krimskij Sbornik), St. Petersburg, 1837, pp. 101-106, 181-194.
13. "...Der Gesellschaft Kraft v. Locheim - Stark sind mit grosser Wahrscheinlichkeit die 1418 von König Siegmund nach Kilia, Kaffa und Pera entsandten Brüder Johannes und Conrad Vischer zuzurechnen. Damals nämlich war ein Hans Vischer Teilhaber der Firma und Thomas Vischer einer ihrer im Fernhandel und Geldgeschäft rührigsten und politisch stark engagierten Repräsentanten. Bertold



Kraft war schon 1392 juratus, Ratsherr in Siegmunds Hauptstadt Ofen und dort seinem monumentalen Epitaph sen Grab, während 1402 Peter Kraft in Kaschau die Geschäfte des Marcus von Nürnberg wahrnahm... So lag es nahe, dass der König (i.e. Sigismund) von Konstanz aus, wohin ihn aus Ungarn sein wirtschaftspolitischer Berater Marcus von Nürnberg begleitet hatte, aus diesem Unternehmens und Personenkreis die Brüder Vischer für die Schwarzmeer-Mission wählte" (STROMER v. REICHENBACH, W. Frh.: König Siegmunds Gesandte in dem Orient. Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel. Göttingen, 1972, pp. 605-606). - Regarding Marcus v. Nuremberg, see MÁLYUSZ, E.: op. cit., passim.

14. Magnificis et spectabilibus dominis protectoribus venerandi officii Sancti Georgii excelsi comunis Janue... Insuper si impossibile esset vobis, ut ita loquamur, provisiones scriptas ac classem via maritima ad nos non posse transmittere, quod tamen credere non possumus et si hoc contingeret nobis spes multum decideret in possendo hanc civitatem a tot molestiis deffendere, saltem terrestri via possetis cogitare ad nos mittere illa auxilia que possibilia forent, scribendo regi Ungariae et Poloniae ac Domino Blancho ut via ipsorum possemus quamplures homines aptos habere pro hujus civitatis necessitatibus et defensione... Ex Caffa die XXI octobris MCCCCLIII. Demetrius de Vivaldus consul Caffae etc., massarii, concilium antianorum et officium baliae ejusdem. (Genova, Archivio di Stato, Filza di Caffa, No.6. Cfr. Atti, Vol. VI. pp. 114-115.) - As a matter of fact, Volkov (op. cit., p. 116) raises the question of who the above Sir Blancho was, and - presuming that the people of Kaffa were ill-informed - he thinks it possible that the name refers to earlier Lithuanian princes. On the basis of the evidence available today, it is certain that Blancho was none other than János Hunyadi (see note 21).
15. "... Ešče menee polagali, čto pod načal'stvom tret'jago konsula Damiano Leone, otpravlen suhim putem, otrjad skvoz' Vengriju u Valahiju, s poručeniem spustit'sja v Monkastro, a ottuda otplyt' v Kafu". VOLKOV: op. cit., p. 121. Cfr. ATTI, vol. VI. Genova, 1868, pp. 146, 147, 166.
16. "... e mentre il terzo console, Damiano Leone, con poca e valorosa comitiva valicava le erte montagne dell'Ungheria e della Valachia per scendere alla marina di Moncastro e recarsi a Caffa, è prezzo dell'opera il rintracciare come volgessero le cose in detta città" (ATTI, vol. VI., p. 170.). - "... e Damiano Leone

terzo console, il qual sin del 2 aprile era giunto per via di terra in Caffa e aveva assunto il comando della colonia" (ibid., p. 183.)

17. "... Obsecramus in Domino et per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri exhortamur atque requirimus, ut pro civitatum, insularum et locorum defensione auxilio et favore opportunis velint personaliter, sive de bonis et facultatibus, sibi a Deo collatis, larga manu et libenti animo providere" etc. (VOLKOV: op. cit., p. 136). But already in January 1456, Genoa appeals to the Pope to urge Hungary ("Dominum Blanchum") to support Kaffa. (Ibid., p. 137.)
18. Archivio di Stato, Genova, Litterar. offic. s. Georg. ann. 1454-1457, fol. 230 r.-v.; Cf. ATTI, Vol. VI. pp. 536-540.
19. MORAVCSIK, Gy.: *Studia Byzantina*, Budapest 1967, pp. 375-381; Idem: *Byzantium and the Magyars*, Budapest 1970, p. 100.
20. His lecture entitled "Hungarian envoys in the camp of the Turks besieging Constantinople" delivered at a special meeting of the Society of Antique Scholarship to commemorate Gyula Moravcsik, held on 22 February, 1974.
21. "Spectato et praestantibus viris consuli et massariis civitatis Caffae, dilectissimis nostris... Ceterum ut intelligatis nos nihil omittere eorum que ad salutem et conservationem illius civitatis pertinent, significamus vobis quod nuper ab illustrissimo domino Johanne vayuoda regni Hungariae capitaneo literas accepimus, quibus benigne offert se paratum vobis prebere omnem subventionem tam victualium quam virorum que sibi possibilis sit, et preterea mittimus per hunc Nicolaum ei litteras summi pontificis et lias etiam sanctissimi domini nostri directas reverendissimo domino cardinali legato apostolico in Hungaria. Quarum litterarum exempla his includi jussimus, ut planius intelligatis quam benigne et quam ex animo sanctissimus dominus noster salutem vestram illis commendat... Ceterum secessarium fuit dare huic Nicolao Lamberto nuncio aureos latos trigintaquinque et solidos viginti ut restituere posset pecunias mutatas sibi in itinere, et etiam haberet unde posset sumptibus redeundi ad vos supplere. Nescimus sub quibus pactis et conditionibus eum ad nos transmiseretis, propter quod volumus ut hanc summam pecunie de qua illum fecimus debitorem, in ejus rationem computetis: si hanc summam vel aliquam ejus partem ex pactis secum initis restituere teneatur, ejusmodi restitutionem vobis fieri faciatis et nobis postea rescribatis in qua ratione dictos aureos trigintaquinque et

solidos viginti cassare debeamus. - De remis impresentiarum nihil vobis rescribimus, per dictas naves duas que nunc cum tritico expediuntur, vobis super ea materia opportune respondebimus. Data die III martii. Sigillata die VI ejusdem mensis. - Post scripta. Ut presentaret litteras illustrissimo domino Blancho et reverendissimo domino legato, de quibus supra fit mentio, dedimus aureos duos prenominato Nicolao. (Archivio di Stato, Genova, Litterarum offic. s. Georg. ann. 1454-1457, ff. 241 r.-v.) - This postscript - together with the activity of Nicolo Lamberti - proves beyond doubt that Blanchus, or Blancho, was identical with János Hunyadi, to whom Byzantine sources refer as Janko, Iankos, Iangos and even Pianko and Piango (See MORAVCSIK, Gy.: Byzantinoturcica, 2. Aufl. Bd. II., Berlin 1958 pp. 347-348; HADZISZ, D. - KAPITÁNYFY, I.: A bizánci irodalom kistükre (A short survey of Byzantine literature), Budapest 1974., pp. 801, 810.

22. "Spectabili et prestanti viro domino Antonio de Sati ceu fratri honorando in Collisvaro. - Spectabilis et prestans vir ceu frater honorande. Siando noi informati quanto affectionamenti la spectabilita vostra e sempre uzata dare a tuti li cittadini et nuncii nostri ogni adjutorio et favore, primum reingratiamo la benignita vostra et vi preghiamo che se intendeti noi poteire adoperare qualche cosa per honore et commodita della spectabilita vostra re requeriatu cum grande confidentia, percioche sempre ne trovereti cum buono animo prompti et apparecchiati. Preterea percioche a lo presente havemo dato a Nicolao Lamberto nuncio nostro doe lettere de nostro signore lo papa, preghiami la benignita vostra che habia lo dicto Nicolao arricomandato, et se bisognase lo aiute a mandare vel presentare le dicte lettere, le quale se adritiano luna a lo illustrissimo signore governatore de Hungaria, et l'altra a lo reverendissimo in Christo padre monsignore legato de Hungaria. La quale cosa accepteremo in loco de singulare beneficio. Parati semper cupidissime in omnia concernentia decus et amplitudinem magnificentie vestre. Data die VI martii" (Archivio di Stato, Genova, Litterar. offic. s. Georg. ann. 1454-1457., ff. 245 r.-v.)
23. Archivio di Stato, Litterar. offic. s. Georg. ann. 1454-1457. fol. 233. v.
24. "Ricorse adunque al capo della cristianità, e dal Pontefice Pio II ottenne un grazioso breve all'Ufficio di S. Giorgio diretto,



col quale s'invitavano e calorosamente esortavansi i fedeli di molte città e provincie dell'Ungheria, a concorrere coll'opera e con danaro al ristauo e rifacimento delle mura e annesse fortificazioni di Caffa, mediante il tesoro delle sacre indulgenze elargite ai pietosi soccorritori." (Atti, Vol. VII., p. 164.)

25. "... Cum igitur fide digne dignorum relatu intellexerimus inhumanissimos christiani nominis hostes turchos et tartaros unanimi consensu deliberasse et statuisset preclaram urbem Capham, aliaque loca orientalia domino Januensi subjecta, de proximo invadere et occupare, ut fideles ex illis partibus eradicentur, vosque ad civitatum et locorum eorundem defensionem terra marique provisiones possibiles continuo faciatis, ceperitisque civitatem ipsam cingere muro fussa et barbacana, ut magis secunda ab hostium impetu reddatur, in quibus maximis expensis opus est, nec ad presens in totum supplere valeatis propter afflictiones vivitatis vestre: Nos quantum possumus de thesauro Christi Jhesu domini et redemptoris nostri vobis providere volentes, universos et singulos de locis et provinciis Brasovii, Sabini, Bistricie, Sacole et Septemscamini et in dictis locis commorantes seu negotiantes incolasque et habitatores dictorum locorum et provinciarum utriusque sexus, etiam clericos seculares et regulares, tam in dictis locis et provinciis, qual alibi ubicumque terrarum habitantes vel negotiantes, cujuscumque dignitatis, status, gradus, ordinis, conditionis et preheminentie existant, obsecramus in domino et per viscera misericordie dei nostri exortamur atque requirimus, ut pro civitatis illius et locorum suprascriptorum defensione auxilio et favore, et maxime pro constructione dictorum mienum velint personaliter, sive de bonis ac facultatibus sibi a Dei collatis larga manu et libenti animo providere, recepturi a piissimo Deo nostro bonorum omnium remuneratore in presenti seculo habundantiam gratiarum et post finitum humane conditionis cursum gloriam felicitatis eterne... Datum Rome apud Sanctum Petrum anno etc. M.CCCC. LXIII, tertio kalendas julii pontificatus nostri anno quinto."
- THEINER A.: Vetera monumenta slavorum meridionalium historiam illustranti etc. Tom. I. Zagreb, 1863, p. 464.
26. VIGNA: op. cit., pp. 226-246. Letters replying to the Pope by Galeazzo Pinelli, Francesco Marchese, Gerolamo Savignone, Carlo Cicala, Andrea Sinistraro, Egidio Carmadino and Fabiano da Montepulciano.
27. "... a very sad fate would have befallen the Genoese settlements

- on the Black Sea coast if Genoa had failed to secure two powerful allies, Pope Calixtus III and the famous János Hunyadi..." (VOLKOV: op. cit., pp. 142-143), "We have already pointed out above that without the Bank of St. George and such powerful allies as Calixtus III and János Hunyadi they would have obviously lost their Black Sea colonies earlier than that..." (Ibid., p. 142.).
28. A full account of this event is given, on the basis of a report by "Ladislaus Custos Gazariae" dated from Kaffa, on 10 April, 1287, by GOLUBOVICH, G.: Bibliotheca Bio-Bibliographica della Terra Santa e dell' Oriente Francese, Tomo II. Quaracchi presso, Firenze, 1913, pp. 443-445. According to this account, Yaylak was an "imperatrix", the wife of Nohay. See also LEMMENS, L.: Geschichte der Franziskanermissionen, Münster i. Westf., 1929, p. 56. - It is characteristic of the Franciscan mission in Kaffa that it even kept a Hungarian interpreter by the name of Karichinus (Karácsony?): GOLUBOVICH, op. cit., pp. 444-445.
29. GOLUBOVICH: op. cit., pp. 62, 136, 144-145, 429; Analecta Franciscana, Tom. III, Quaracchi presso, Firenze 1897, pp. 515-524, 529-530.
30. Archivio di Stato, Genova, Litterar. off. s. Georg. ann. 1466-1471., fol. 334 r.-v.
31. NAGY, I. - NYÁRY, A.: Magyar diplomáciai emlékek Mátyás király korából (Relics of Hungarian diplomacy from the age of King Matthias Corvinus), Vol. IV, Budapest 1898, pp. 306-307. This is followed by a somewhat fragmented reproduction of the text of the letter in question by Voivode Stephen. (pp. 308-309.) The Russian historian YURGEVICH, V., on the basis of Romanian sources, discloses a longer, more detailed account by Domonkos Kálmáncsehi, in Russian: "Pis'mo nastojatelja cerkui v Al'ba-Julia Dominika, protonotarija papskago s doneseniem v 1475 godu, čto Kaffa vzjata turkami i voevody Stefan Moldavskij i Božorad Valahskij prinesli prisjagu na vernost' korolju Vengerskomu (Žapiski Odesskago Obscestva Istorii i Drevnostej, tom XVII, č. IV. Odessa, 1894, str. 1-2.)
32. "... Des ambassades en partaient et y arrivaient sans cesse; tantôt c'étaient des prélats russes se rendant en pèlerinage à Constantinople, tantôt des messagers, des molona tatars, qui venaient recevoir les cadeaux habituels, ou bien des parents de l'empereur, désireux de vois dans cette oasis de civilisation les richesses et les raffinements des pays occidentaux, des seigneurs

de Sorgat venant y prendre, selon l'usage, leurs repas avec les nouveaux consuls, des envoyés de Valachie, de Moldavie, de Lithuanie, des rois de Hongrie et Pologne" (IORGA N.: Notes pour servir à l'histoire des croisades. Vol. I. Paris, 1899, p. 6.)

33. GAAL, J.: Berzeviczy Gergely élete és művei (The life and works of Gergely Berzeviczy), Budapest, 1902, Part II, pp. 285-287; Cf. PACH, Zs. P.: Egy évszázados történésvitáról (On a century-old dispute between historians), Századok, 1972, Nos. 4-5, pp. 849-888, a treatise based on a wealth of sources and the author's own research, which fully illuminates background to the present work from the point of view of trade history.
34. PRIMAUDAIE, F. E. de: Études sur la commerce au Moyen-âge, Histoire du commerce de la mer Noire et des Colonies Genoises de la Krimée, Paris 1848. In chapter VIII of this work the author explains in detail that the Genoese, with the approval of the local rulers, established settlements in the coastal area of Mingrelia, in Sukhumi, Anakria and even in Georgia, mainly in Kutaisi. They traded on an immense scale with Russia through Tana and with Poland through Moncastro-Neszterfejevár. The following chapters discuss Genoese trade with India and China.
35. "Wladislaus Rex Poloniae cum Sigismundo Rege Hungariae pacem, treugas, pactis ratione Russiae rubrae, Podoliae ac Moldaviae sancitis, solemniter conficit. A. 1412. - Nos Wladislaus, Dei gratia etc. ... Bukowina dictam, usque ad fluvium Pruth debent per medium dividi seu dimidiari; et quod forum Jaszkytarg (alias Jasznasater, hodie Jasszi) in sinistra parte situm, maneat pro nobis et terris Russie: forum vero seu villa Berleth, in dextra parte sita, maneat domino Sigismundi regi et corone regni ipsius Hungariae. Transcenso autem fluvio Pruth, residue silue directe precedendo per campos desertos, vsque ad mare, pari modo cum eisdem campis desertis per medium dividuntur, ita quod Felierwar, alias Bielgorod cum equali medietate pro nobis et terris Russie, et Kilia cum alia medietate pro Domino Sigismundo et corona regni Hungariae, maneant taliter dimidiatae et divise...". Lublo, the 15th March 1412 (FEJÉR G.: Codex diplomaticus Hungariae etc. Tom. X., Vol. V., Budae. 1842, pp. 272-277.) - Moncastro later came into the possession of the Senarega family of Genoa; they were pushed out subsequently by a Moldavian attack. Tommaso Senarega led a Genoese-Kaffan mission to János Hunyadi (see not 18). The town's Hungarian name can be found not only in Dlugoss's work but also

in that of Georgius a Reichersdorff Transsylvanus (Transsylvanicae ac Moldaviae, aliarumque vicinarum regionum succincta descriptio etc., Coloniae Agrippinae 1595, p. 49.) "... qui fluvius primo statim in Moldaviam tractu descendit, atque in Mare album prope arcem Nester Fejirvar munitissimam continuo cursu influit..."

See also KATONA, (I.) St.: Hist. Crit. Tom. XII. p. 87. - Concerning the old name of the town, it is interesting to quote the work of Brun, F.J. (1804-1899), the eminent Russian historian.

"... At the same time as the Bulgarians, together with the Slavs, extended their power to the Balkan peninsula, their place in our steppe regions was overtaken by the Magyars descending from the same tribe. The Magyars later moved on to Pannonia, from where they terrorized western Europe with their raids for about half a century, until they were stopped by the German king Otto the Great. From that time on the Magyars took an even greater part in the military campaigns of south-east Europe than before, and managed to extend their power to the river Dniester. In those circumstances it would have been unusual if the Magyars, proud and patriotic as they were, had not translated the name of Bieliy-gorod, a town by the above-mentioned river, which was under their rule, into their own language. They would be hard to blame for doing so. In the agreement of 1412 in which King Sigismund of Hungary resigned supremacy over the northern part of Moldavia in favour of Poland, the town of Akkerman is referred to by the name of Feriewar, alias Bialagrad. There is no doubt that Feriewar is the same town which is mentioned by Reichersdorf in his Chorographia Moldaviae, as the name means 'white town' in Hungarian. It would be out of place to deal here with the problem as to when the Hungarians began to use the name Feriewar for Akkerman; all I should like to note is that there are many other names as well which remind us of the stay of the Magyars in Russia. That memory must have lived on with the Magyars too, when they built the town of Feriewar (Stuhlweissenburg), the burial place of their early kings, in Pannonia. - Finally, I cannot conclude my remarks concerning Akkerman without mentioning the error made in connection with this by Cantemir, an error which proved to be catching, because it has been repeated every now and then ever since. I wish to mention the name of Alba Julia, given, it is alleged, by the Romans to the colony they established there. It

is most likely that Cantemir sought in this place the Roman colony of Apulum, which, however, was in Transylvania, as evidenced by the Tabula Peutingeriana and other inscriptions. This town received the name Alba Julia later on after Julius, Prince of Transylvania." (BRUN, F.: Putešestvija i posol'stva gospodina Gil'bera de Lannua, kavalera solotogo runa v 1339-1405 godah: Zapiski Odesskogo Obsčestva Istorii i Drevnostj, Tom. III, Odessa, 1853, p. 454.) Another fact to be mentioned here is that in those times Moncastro, thanks to the voivodes of Moldavia, had already permanent duty-free or preferential goods exchange relations with Lemberg, and this was another route by which goods sent from Kaffa reached Hungary. (BOGDAN, I.: Inscriptiile dela Cetatea-Alba, Bucuresti, 1908, Analele Acad. Romane, Ser. II, Tom. XXX, p. 30.) - The same author on the Lublin agreement: Dupa 1408, tratatul dela Lublau din 15 Marti 1412 o considerata ca parte din Moldova și o trece sub sfera de actiune a Poloniei (aci e numita "Fehér-vár alias Bilagorod" cfr. Ulianickij, Materialy p. 24., sau Hurmuzaki, Documente I.2., p. 496) pe cand Chilia, pe atunci a Muntenilor, e rezervata Ungarie" (Ibid.: p. 341.)

36. Cf. SZÉKELY, Gy.: A kereskedelem és a kereskedelmi utak Közép-Kelet Európában a kései feudalizmus korában (Commerce and trade routes in East-Central Europe in the later period of feudalism), Századok, 1972, No. 3, pp. 802, 807; (with a rich list of sources in note 9.)

C H A P T E R   F O U R

*Uzun Hassan, the ally of King Matthias. Persia and Georgia, the Asian members of the anti-Ottoman coalition. The début of their envoys in Matthias's court. Isaac Beg, "contact man" between Persia, the Holy See, Venice and Hungary.*

The death of Ibrahim bin Muhammad Tadj ad-Din was quickly followed by the fall of his country and its absorption into the Ottoman Empire. His son and heir, Pir-Ahmed, although he had earlier been in the favour of the Ottoman Turks, was soon forced to escape from Karamania to his relative and ally, Uzun Hassan, the ruler of Persia.

Who was Uzun Hassan?

The work of the restoration of the one-time Persia under Turkoman leadership was successfully continued by the descendants of Bahā ad Din Kara Osman, better known as Kara-Yuluk, of the Ak-Koyunlu dynasty, the ruler who gave such a friendly welcome to Miklós Szerecsen and made an alliance with King Sigismund of Hungary. With a dogged perseverance and determination characteristic of him both as statesman and a military leader, Uzun Hassan had fought for a full decade to become ruler of Persia and, after a series of military and diplomatic victories, he emerged as the most dangerous rival to the Ottoman Empire. One of the most important periods of the centuries-long struggle between the Sunnite Turks and the Shiite Persians is connected with his reign. In 1458, David Comnenus, the last emperor of Trebizond, married the daughter of his brother and predecessor Kalo-Johannes to Uzun Hassan. Thus the ties between the small Hellenic country and the Turkoman Khan

occupying the throne of Persia became especially strong.

The Persian ruler's willingness in this marriage was welcomed by the Christian powers of Europe, although the prospects of a united stand, if any, were very faint, since these powers were once again preoccupied with rivalries among themselves. The powerful Republic of Venice, however, whose vital interests in world trade were fundamentally threatened by the Ottoman conquests, immediately recognized the realistic aspects of the alliance offered, and decided to act as well.

In the summer of 1454 Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena, the future Pope Pius II, wrote in a letter to János Vitéz, then Chancellor and Bishop of Nagyvárád, that the time was ripe for establishing an anti-Turkish league covering two continents. Besides Hungary, Bohemia and Germany, the alliance could count on the help of the Papal navy, Venice, Genoa, the Kings of Aragon and Sicily, the Karamanians,<sup>1</sup> the Emperor of Trebizond, the King of Georgia and the Albanians.<sup>2</sup> Thus the letters between the future Pope and great Hungarian humanist once again gave voice to the idea that not only the Christian nations of Asia but also the Mohammedan powers hostile to the Turks should be brought into the same camp as the Hungarians and the other European powers.

Spurred on by the idea of a crusade planned by Popes Calixtus III and Pius II, the Christian states of Asia (the kings of the divided land of Georgia the princes of Mingrelia and Guria, the Emperor of Trebizond and some minor sovereigns) along with the Persian ruler, Uzun Hassan, dispatched a high-ranking delegation to the Pope and the most important European rulers in order to coordinate the details of the great venture. The Kingdom of Kartli (Central Georgia) was represented by Nikoloz Tbileli, Metropolitan of Tiflis, and Kassadan Karchehan.<sup>3</sup> Lodovico da Bologna, a monk of the observant Franciscan order, who had already acted in Georgia on an

earlier occasion on behalf of the Holy See, played a major part in reconciling the quarrelling princes and feudal lords of the country with one another. They finally realized that their interests were the same. When the agreement had been made, the envoys of the oriental rulers and their suites boarded a ship in the company of Lodovico da Bologna in Mingrelia. After a long journey they sailed up the Danube to Hungary.<sup>4</sup> The mission sojourned in Hungary for some time. This can be concluded, among other things, from the fact that Lodovico da Bologna, who was to become Archbishop of Antioch only three years later, carried out in Hungary certain Church functions for which he had no authority, and was also reprimanded by the Pope for this.<sup>5</sup> In the first two years of his reign, King Matthias had little time to study the delegation's aims in detail, since he was still preoccupied with the internal and external consolidation of his power. At the same time it is quite certain that the special relationship which was to develop between him and Uzun Hassan in the later years of his rule started with his reception of this mission.

After Hungary, the envoys of Uzun Hassan and the Georgian sovereigns travelled on to the court of Emperor Frederic and to Venice. In Rome they were received by Pope Pius II.

In 1459 Aeneas Silvius - now Pope Pius II - convened the Congress of Mantua in order to discuss the united action. On the basis of contemporary sources, the Hungarian historian Ignác Aurél Fessler described the willingness of the anti-Turkish Asian powers to join forces with Hungary, Venice and other European powers as follows: "A powerful alliance developed in Asia against Mohammed, which was ready to make a concerted action together with the sovereigns of Europe; they were joined by David, Emperor of Trebizond, and his thirty galleys and twenty-thousand men; the husband of the latter's niece, the courageous Hassan Beg (Uzun Hassan. L.T.), a



man feared by the Sultan, with fifty-thousand men; the Georgian ruler Gorgora (properly Kvarkvare. L.T.) with twenty-thousand men; Rabia, the ruler of Abkhazia, with thirty thousand; Bede-Beg, the prince of Armenia Minor, with ten thousand; and also the Sultan of Karamania and the Prince of Sinope. They brought all this to the knowledge of Prince Philip of Burgundy, making the most solemn promises, and the same things were read publicly at the congress of Mantua. Roused to great enthusiasm by this, the Hungarian delegates offered forty-thousand and the Germans forty-two thousand men."<sup>6</sup> The grand scale of King Matthias's pledge shows that the negotiations of the Asian envoys in Hungary - who, as a matter of fact, travelled from Venice to Burgundy and arrived in Rome only after the congress of Mantua had ended - were anything but unsuccessful. Ignác Aurél Fessler describes the talks of the envoys from the Asian states in Hungary, with King Matthias, as follows: "In Hungary they were received with great hospitality by the King, and after their consultations with him on the subject of the joint undertaking, they were filled with optimism and hope regarding the desired outcome."<sup>7</sup>

Although the figures cited by the Asian ambassadors to describe the extent of the military help they were offering were exaggerated, recent research has proved beyond doubt that the plan of the military alliance - the aim of which was to encircle and crush the Ottoman Empire by concerted action - was fully realistic. The main reason why nothing came of the joint plan, reasonable as it was, was once again the rivalry between the states of Europe, especially on the part of Italy.

The failure, however, did not shake Uzun Hassan's faith in an alliance with Europe. At that time he already stood at the helm of a vast empire covering a large part of Persia, Mesopotamia and Ar-

menia. Every state in the area, Moslem or Christian, which managed to retain some degree of independence, turned to his new and solidly based power for support against Mohammed II. With his strength increased by a number of allies, Uzun Hassan soon began to harrass the Turkish territories. Two of those which his troops raided and occupied were Tokat and Amasia. Mohamed II, who had just disposed of Sinope as an independent state, then turned against Uzun Hassan. He took Trebizond, dealing a severe blow to the army of the Persian ruler.

The ensuing peace was short-lived. The rivalry between the two Moslem rulers went on and became even fiercer, as Uzun Hassan, having defeated his Indian adversary, could now turn his full force against the Turks. Through his wife Despina, also known as Theodora and Catherina, he had family relations not only with the Comnenus dynasty of Trebizond but also with several patrician families in Venice - the houses of Crespo, Cornaro, Priuli, Loredano and Zeno - so he had precise information on the position and interests of Venice. The Italian city-state, although flourishing, was increasingly threatened by the Turkish expansion. Through a number of sources, Uzun Hassan also received information about the highly successful military campaigns against the Turks led by Prince Stephen the Great on Moldavia. He was, as we shall see later on, also well aware that an alliance had once existed between his grandfather, Kara-Yuluk, and King Sigismund. It was mainly on these three states - Venice, Hungary and Moldavia - that Uzun Hassan based his new plan of an alliance. The man he sent to Europe to negotiate was Isaac Beg, his trusted court physician, "Spanish by nationality and Jewish by religion".<sup>8</sup>

Uzun Hassan's chancellery functioned in a completely European manner. This is well shown by the fact that his envoys' credentials,

although written in Persian, almost completely satisfied the requirements of similar documents used in Europe at that time. All three letters of credence were translated, with the help of a local interpreter, from Persian to Latin by the Kaffa notary Constantius de Sarra in the spring of 1472.

The document was found by the Hungarian historian Albert Nyáry in the state archives of Venice in 1859.<sup>9</sup> How it had found its way there is unknown. The document itself was quite considerably worn, so the text<sup>10</sup> is fragmentary, at times rather incoherent. Nyáry's difficulties in reading it are quite apparent from the fact that he mentions the name of the envoy first, with a question mark, as "Bornbek", then as "Bahabeg", whereas in fact it was Isaac Beg, as has been proved beyond doubt.<sup>11</sup>

The essence of the Persian ruler's letter to King Matthias, a rarity of not only Hungarian but European diplomatic history, is as follows: "In the name of the merciful God whose names are infinite in number, Hassan, the son of Ali, the grandson of Osman, speaks to you, mighty lord, mighty lord of lords, King Matthias. You are an eminent and wise lord whom all obey. I speak to you as a true friend. You will see my emissary, Isaac Beg, who has an excellent knowledge of our secret affairs, so all that he will say in his own words should be given the same credence as if it were said by ourselves. At the head of their armies my sons and my brothers' sons are harrassing and ruining the territories of the Ottoman from all sides. I myself am gathering my forces to lead them against the Turkish Sultan. You and the other Christian sovereigns must join us. Gather your armies, then, uniting them, go to war against the Turks as our good friends and European allies. I shall also set out from here to drive him off his throne. I hope that by the grace and mercy of God it will succeed as we wish and hope for. Let us

ask God that His omnipotence should carry these plans to success and remove all obstacles.<sup>12</sup>

Our knowledge of Isaac Beg's work in Hungary comes from Venetian, Polish and Romanian sources.

He stayed in Buda first in 1471, then not yet in the capacity of a full envoy but as the travelling companion and interpreter of the Venetian agent Lazzaro Querini. The latter had been asked by Uzun Hassan to investigate, among other things, whether there was a willingness in the countries visited to start joint operations.<sup>13</sup> Isaac Beg returned to Hungary as a "legatus", or "orator", in 1472.<sup>14</sup> He arrived after 15 July, to urge King Matthias to take part in the anti-Turkish coalition. At that time King Matthias still accepted Uzun Hassan's proposals, because the papal nuncio Marco Barbo, commissioned in the previous year to call Germany, Poland and Hungary to arms, began his mission in 1472 and stayed in the above countries till 1474. Since at that time there was a one-year truce in force between Matthias and Poland, and the mere presence of the Pope's envoy was in itself enough to prevent the resumption of hostilities, Isaac Beg came to King Matthias at the right moment and probably received royal approval of the alliance with all the necessary guarantees. On 13 November, 1472, the Venetian Council still expressed its satisfaction to the Hungarian envoy at King Matthias's position concerning the alliance offered by Uzun Hassan.<sup>15</sup> But the situation soon changed.

From Buda Isaac Beg returned in a hurry to Venice, then travelled on to the Pope. Despite the tremendous welcome he was given there, the Persian ruler's envoy noticed the differences between the Italian powers. The first signs of the approaching rift were already showing. This is apparent from the fact that, on returning to Buda once again, Isaac Beg openly voiced to King Matthias<sup>16</sup> his

dissatisfaction with the Pope's reply. This latter visit by Isaac Beg to Buda is referred to in one part of the instructions given to Giosafatte Barbaro on 28 January, 1473. According to this, "the physician Isaac, the first ambassador of Uzun Hassan, returned from Rome, and of his own will, but also with our full approval, went to see his Majesty the King of Hungary to persuade him once again to go to war against the common enemy."<sup>17</sup>

It is hardly conceivable that, returning to Persia, Isaac Beg could have reported on King Matthias and his power in anything other than a tone of appreciation or even admiration, since all other ambassadors to the Hungarian court did so. Matthias had developed the art of impressing foreign diplomats to a high degree, as is evidenced by the diplomatic reports that have come down to us. He especially liked to dazzle diplomats used to the glamour of oriental courts with the brilliance of his own. Envoys were often received by the King himself in the middle of the night with the greatest pomp. Thousands of wax torches illuminated even the darkest winter night with a light as bright as day. The reception of a Turkish ambassador described by Miklós Oláh must have been fairly typical. At the time of the diplomat's arrival King Matthias was staying at Visegrád. He took special pride in being able to amaze even a Turk accustomed to the splendour of Istanbul's Golden Gate. With its magnificent terraced gardens, Visegrád, in those days often referred to as the "earthly paradise", was especially suited to the occasion. The ambassador was led by courtiers from his quarters to the welcoming ceremony. When the castle gates opened, he was at once struck by a splendid sight. There stood the King on one of the higher terraces of his gardens. He was surrounded by his courtiers, some standing above him, some below, all dressed

in the finest silk and velvet, bedecked with silver and gold, their weapons shining.<sup>18</sup>

We have scant information on the life and career of Isaac Beg. He had emigrated from Spain with his family to escape the persecution of the Inquisition and first found refuge probably in Trebizond,<sup>19</sup> and then, like many others sharing the same fate, in Persia. As a well-trained doctor, he became one of the court physicians, reaching later the position of Uzun Hassan's "archiater", or personal court physician. It was quite customary in those days for sovereigns to entrust important foreign matters to their closest and most trustworthy servants, namely their personal doctors.<sup>20</sup> King Matthias himself often did the same, and so did Uzun Hassan, adhering to a custom which was probably of oriental origin.

Isaac Beg carried out his European mission with great aptitude and tact. This is witnessed by the documents of the Venice state council dealing with the conclusion of his mission. He returned to Persia, but, after carrying out some other similar missions, he settled down in Poland with his family.<sup>21</sup>

Notes to chapter 4

1. Although somewhat weakened, Sultan Ibrahim of Karamania still had a firm grip on his country.
2. "...sanctissimus Romanae urbis presul classem adversus Turchos mense aprili proximo in Egeo mari instructam habeto; Turchiam ex Metelino insula inquietam reddito. Alphonsi Aragonum et Sicilie regis simulque Venetorum et Genuensium vires ad eam rem advocato. Caramanum|Saracenum contra Turchos provocato; imperatorem Trape-sundarum Hybereorum regem, Albanos, Bulgaros, Ragusinos atque universos Dalmatas sub eodem tempore arma corripere atque invadere hostes exhortato. Hungari et Bohemi exercitum simul cogunto atque unum corpus cum Theutonibus efficiunto..." /Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini. Hrsg. R. Wolkan. III. Abt., Bd. I. Wien, 1918, p. 551./
3. "...His per Colchidem et Scythiam transmisso Tanai, in Hungariam iter fuit." (RAYNALDUS, Vol. XIX, anno 1460, Nos. 101-102.) Cf. also TAMARATI, M.: Istoriya katolikobisa kartveltha shoris. Tbilisi, 1969, p. 72.
4. BRYER, A.: Ludovico da Bologna and the Georgian Embassy of 1460-1461, Bedi Kartlisa, Vol. XIX-XX, Paris, 1965, Nos. 48-49, 181. KEKELIDZE, K.S.: Etjudy po istorii drevnegruzinskoj literatury. Tom III, Tbilisi, 1955, str. 93, DZHANASHIA, 306
5. WADDINGUS: Annales Minorum, 2nd ed., Rome, Vol. XIII, p. 154: "Constat quoque, eum in Hungaria eas dispensationes fecisse, quas nec Legati de latere absque mandato speciali ausi fuissent admittere..."
6. FESSLER: Vol. V, pp. 65-7.
7. Ibid., p. 77.
8. "Fuit ad presentiam nostram unus orator illustrissimi domini Ussuni Cassani natione hispanus fide autem hebreus..."(CG p.39.)
9. When publishing the text, Albert Nyáry failed to indicate the archival number of the document. Our efforts to locate it again were unsuccessful.
10. NAGY-NYÁRY: Vol. IV, p. 293.
11. TARDY, L.: Izsák zsidó orvos, a perzsi uralkodó és Corvinus Mátyás összekötője a törökellenes világliga megszervezésében (Isaac, the Jewish doctor, liason man between the Persian ruler and Matthias Corvinus in the organization of an anti-Turkish.

world league), Magyar Zsidó Oklevéltár (Hungarian-Jewish documents, ), Vol. XII, Budapest 1969, pp. 27-44.

12. "Hec est traductio quarundam literarum Serenissimi Domini Husum Hassan, directarum Serenissimo Domino Mathie Regi Ungarie etc. de lingua persica in linguam latinam facta ad requisitionem Bornbek (here the publishers of the text themselves indicated their uncertainty in reading the word by the insertion of a question mark.) magni Oratoris predicti Husam Chasan. Per me Constantium de Sarra magistrum artium et in hac parte notarium publicum de verbo ad verbum, nihil addito vel immutato, quod sensum mutet, vel variat intellectum, nisi forte forent aliqui dictiones in illa lingua persica, que per propriam dictionem latinam que potuerit confirmari tali per me dictioni interpretante Coratolli Armenio, perito in dicta lingua persica, et me traducente in lingua latina, quarum literarum, que sequitur |tenor| talis est.

In quinta linea videlicet in parte dextra dictarum literarum Persicarum sunt verba infrascripta literis aureis. In Nomine Dei misericordis, qui infinitus nominibus nominatur Assam filius Aly filij Othman (The real name of Kara Yuluk, the ruler who made an alliance with King Sigismund, was Baha al Din Kara Osman. - L.T.). Loquor vobis potenti Domino humiliter, cujus imperio omnes obediunt tanquam eximio Domino sapienti ac Domino potentium Dominorum Mathie Regi Hungariae, cui loquor cum affectione, tanquam vero amico nostro. Has literas nostras, obsecro, perlegito cum maxima attentione ac studio, scitote, quod Bahabeg mittimus cum magna porta nostra ad vestram potentissimam Dominationem. Ipse secreta nostra optime permovit, itaque tanquam nobis propriis fidem prebeatis, et omnibus per eum exponendis parte nostra, scitis enim et ea, que anno elapso contigerunt, dum veniremus in partibus Sami; nam tempore illo meus major filius cum exercitu, et magnis Dominis arat in partibus de Soras et Ofras et unus alius de filiis meis etiam erat cum exercitu infinito in partibus Babiloniae, ubi est locus precipuus Saracenorum, et quatuor nepotes mei ex majore fratre meo, erant in Zei juxta Cornaam et Masedram (illegible words, then:)...exercitus supradictos maximus exercitus meus et populus (illegible words, then:) hominum erant in circumstanciis Sammi. Quibus omnibus exercitibus dimissis in locis prenomminatis, ego cum paucis visitavi partes Othomani, et cum voluntate Omnipotentis Dei, qui nobis bona eribuit, primum homines Othomani rupi, qui homines esca fuerunt gladiatorum et sagitarum nostrarum. Verum quidem post ille Othomanus



parvum particulam nostrorum fregit. Sed ubi fuit interemptus unus ex nostris, ex suis fuerunt interempti decem, et predicta notificamus vobis, quia nulla mala causa erat inter ipsum et me, idcirco primo tempore congregabo omnes bellicosos fortes, armigeros et totam meam potentiam coadunabo, dirigendo ad partes Othomani. Ideo necesse est, quod vos hujusmodi causas notificetis magnis Dominis Christianis, et illos certificetis de voluntate nostra, illos hortando, ut se parent et disponant, exercitus congregent, et se ipsos uniant super Othomano, tamquam amici nostri ex illa parte Europe, et ego pariter super illum ibo ex ista parte et sic utrum debemus deponere de sede sua; spero enim quod cogitationes nostre gratia et misericordia Dei perficientur, prout desideramus et volumus, in hoc simul rogamus Deum, quod has res nostras ad bonum fidem perducatur et omnia mala perdat.

Constantius de Sarra artium Magister in hac parte publicus Imperiali autoritate notarius, supradictam traductionem feci de lingua Persica in latinam in omnibus per omnia, prout superius continetur, et ad robur premissorum signum meum apposui consuetum. (NAGY-NYÁRY, Vol. IV, pp. 293-5; CF. TARDY, L.: Izsák zsidó orvos, a perzsi uralkodó és Corvin Mátyás összekötője a törökellenes világliga megszervezésében) (Isaac, the Jewish doctor...) XII, pp. 27-44, 48-51, 53-54.

13. CG 28, 40.
14. CANCEL, P.: Data epistolei lui Uzun Hassan catre Stefan-cel mare, Bucuresti, 1912, p. 32.
15. "Quod oratori serenissimi domini regis Hungariae ad ea que domino exposuit circa inferendo tuco bellum et utendum temporis et rerum opportunitate ob descensum domini Ussoni Cassani sicut per serenissimum dominum duce huic consilio relatam est respondeatur, tum replicatione generalium et humanorum verborum ad illius generalia et bona verba et laudetur magnanima et pia mens et propositum regie sublimitatis sicut dominio visum fuerit etc." (CG, p. 55.) Cf. the relevant parts of the instructions concerning the alliance with Hungary sent to ambassadors Zaccaria Barbaro in Naples and Frederico Cornaro at the Holy See (CG, pp. 56-58.)
16. "...Intelleximus quod regia sublimitas tibi dixit de oratore illustrissimi domini Ussoni Cassani Bude existente et de summo pontifice non bene contento, quod nobis ut regie sublimitati plurimum displicet eisdem rationibus que maiestatem ipsam movent etc. (CG pp. 73-75.) - "...Solicitationum illum fuisse ab Usumcassano, ut

foedus cum ipso adversus Mahometem sanciret, refert Ioannes Petrus Arrivabenus in literis ad Iacobum Cardinalem Papiensem: Venit, inquit, cum Hungaro orator Ussoncassam, qui ingentem exercitum pollicetur, modo Hungaro ad suscipienda quoque arma pecuniae hic dentur nil se velle praeter dominium, quod uxori debetur etc. Romae III Septembris MCCCCLXXIV." (RAYNALDUS, Vol. XIX., anno 1474, No.9.)

17. "Isach medico, primo ambassador suo ritornato da Roma è andato per la sua deliberation et per nostro conforto item al serenissimo rè de Hungaria per iterum suadaerlo et confortarlo a far animo-  
xa et potentemente contra el comun inimico..." (CG p. 72.)
18. CSÁNKI, D.: I Mátyás udvara (The court of Matthias I), Budapest 1884, p. 95.
19. RAYNALDUS, Vol. XIX, anno 1474, No. 9.
20. SCHULTHEISZ, E. - TARDY, L.: Olasz orvosok Magyarországon (Italian doctors in Hungary), Orvosi Hetilap, 1965, p. 660.
21. Cf. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, New York-London 1906, p. 622 and Encyclopaedia Judaica, Das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Vol. VIII, Berlin 1931, p. 499. - He became the personal doctor of King Sigismund, then, at the recommendation of the Archbishop of Gniezno, went to serve King Alexander Jagiello and carried out diplomatic missions again, mainly as an ambassador to the Tatar Khan (SPULER, p. 225). In a deed signed on 12 May, 1507, King Sigismund recognizes Isaac's ancient Jewish nobility and decrees that the Jews of Cracow should pay a tax to "The physician of the King, the Spanish Jewish doctor Isaac" till the end of his life" (Russko-Evrejskij Arhiv. Dokumenty i materialy dlja istorii evreev. S. Peterburg, tom III, 1903, str. 47-48, 63-65, 80-81.)

C H A P T E R   F I V E

*Caterino Zeno, the forger of the alliance between Persia, Venice and Hungary. The battle of Terdjan. Caterino Zeno and his companions return home through Georgia. His reception at Buda; he is knighted by King Matthias.*

At about the same time as Isaac Beg, the envoy of Uzun Hassan, was continuing his protracted negotiations with King Matthias, the Signoria and the Holy See, negotiations were going on in Persia itself. Caterino Zeno, the ambassador of the increasingly threatened Republic of Venice had been sent there to urge on the conclusion of the much-desired alliance so that it could be at last translated into actions.

The conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 was a heavy blow for the republic of St. Marcus which had so far let the Balkan states and Hungary fight the Turks on their own, while it continued to prosper undisturbed through its sea trade. For a long time afterwards, Venice hoped to break the power of Sultan Mohammed II by the help of Pope Pius II's crusade, and had been in a state of war with the Turks since 1463, but had very little success to show. In 1469 the town of Euboa, also known as Negroponte, so important for Venice, also fell to the Turks, and the Signoria's sense of danger became more acute. Hungary, treated earlier in a very unfriendly manner, suddenly became a desirable ally, and the Italian city-state was looking for potential comrades-in-arms everywhere.

It was in this difficult hour of their history, that Venice's state council was called on by the envoys of King Constantine of

Cartalinia<sup>1</sup>, who had come to offer an alliance against the common enemy i.e. the Turks, on behalf of their master and Uzun Hassan, the ruler of Persia.<sup>2</sup> Constantine's representatives were soon followed by Uzun Hassan's own envoy.<sup>3</sup>

On 7 March, 1471, the Signoria of Venice appointed Caterino Zeno<sup>4</sup> to lead the embassy to be sent to the Kings of Persia and Cahetia.<sup>5</sup>

Zeno, however, was not allowed to leave as yet. Cautious as it always was, the state council of Venice made its final decision only when it became clear that the Sultan would not even consider Venice's proposals as a basis for negotiations and declined to see the Venetian envoys. Uzun Hassan and King Constantine had to send another embassy to persuade the Signoria finally to dispatch its own envoy. The members of this latter mission from Uzun Hassan and Constantine arrived in Venice via Poland and Hungary.<sup>6</sup>

Zeno was given a letter of credence to Uzun Hassan and King Alexander of Georgia, which gave detailed information on the alliance planned with Hungary and other countries.<sup>7</sup>

Caterino Zeno's journey to Persia, fascinating as its description is, was an entirely Venetian affair, discussing what would be outside the scope of the present book. His return trip, however, is another matter. His mission becomes important to us in two respects from the moment he leaves Persia, having concluded his task.

These respects, to be discussed in some detail later on, are sufficiently important to justify a short summary of the life and career of this eminent diplomat and travel-book writer.

Like the Contarinis, Foscaris, Badoaros, Mocenigos and others, Caterino Zeno was descended from a family of Venetian merchant-aristocrats which produced a line of outstanding writers, poets, statesmen, soldiers and travellers both before and afterwards. One of them, Carlo Zeno owed his fame precisely to his military successes

against the Hungarians. The exact date of Caterino's birth is not known. The only thing certain is that he was born some time before 1450. His father, Dragone Zeno, besides providing him with a good education, also gave him a good practical start to the typical life-style of Venetian patricians, of which travelling was an important part. He took Caterino along on his journeys to distant lands, introduced him to oriental customs, and taught him the art of navigation as well as commerce. It was during one such trip, in Damascus, that Dragone Zeno died, and Caterino assumed his legacy at a young age. He soon married Violante, the daughter of Prince Niccolo Crespo, which brought him into kinship with not only Venice's most powerful circles but also several ruling dynasties. Violante's aunt had been the wife of the last-but-one Emperor of Trebizond; Despina, the wife of Uzun Hassan had been born of this latter marriage.

It was these family relationships and Zeno's oriental experiences that made him the republic's choice for preparing the ground for the Persian and Georgian alliance.

While the Persian and Georgian travel descriptions of Giosafatte Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini, who followed directly in Zeno's wake, have come down to us in full, and deserve to be called classics of travel writing as well as invaluable relics of the history of diplomacy, Zeno's own writings, probably even more interesting because of their pioneering character, suffered a much unluckier fate. Most of his notes were lost, and all that has come down to us is the rather meagre volume which, based on the fragments found, was published a few generations later by Niccolo Zeno, one of Caterino's descendants. The title of the volume is "Dei Commentarii del viaggio in Persia di M. Caterino Zeno il K. et delle guerre fatte nell'Imperio Persiano dal tempo di Vsuncassano". It appeared in Venice and its authenticity is verified beyond doubt.

by the contemporary documents kept at the Frari archives in Venice.

The chronology of the events of his mission can be easily reconstructed from the pertaining diplomatic documents extant nearly in full; here, however, we shall deal only with the concluding part of his travel description, where the parts relevant from a Hungarian point of view can be found.

Caterino Zeno spent a long time at the court of Tabriz, and went on weaving the threads of diplomacy quite successfully with the help of Uzun Hassan's wife, his relative. Despina had already persuaded her husband to encourage the Georgian prince, Kvarkvare, to begin fighting against the Turks. The Venetians, however, remained idle throughout the winter and their material help also arrived only twenty months after Zeno had left. They sent cannons, guns, experienced artillerymen to handle them, and also ammunition-makers. Uzun Hassan, however, did not rely exclusively on Venice but counted also on Hungary's effective help. This is corroborated in several places including an interesting part of a letter dated 27 October, 1472, in Istanbul. According to the letter, on 13 September two envoys of Uzun Hassan, carrying a letter from him to the Hungarian King, were brought to the Sultan. He questioned them thoroughly and promised them not to take their lives if they would tell the truth. The envoys confessed that Uzun Hassan was now ready to support the Hungarian King in any way against the Sultan; he had made an agreement with the King of Hungary and the Signoria of Venice, and at a suitable time all three powers would attack.<sup>8</sup> But the same is witnessed by Uzun Hassan's words addressed to Caterino Zeno in those hope-filled days before the defeat in the battle of Terdjan. "Ambassador", the ruler said, "you must know that the Sultan has turned with all his power against me; he has even brought his western armies up against me so that he could concentrate the greatest possible force.

Write to the Signoria, the Emperor and the King of Hungary that they should do all they can to destroy the Sultan's European forces. For I shall go to war against him here in Anatolia, and will, with the help of God, destroy him, too. I wish the sovereigns of the West to do the same, so that the Sultan would never be able to rise up again, so that his destruction would be total, and not even his name would be mentioned again."<sup>9</sup> All this shows that the Persian ruler counted Hungary among his three mightiest western allies.

With that, the greatest military trial of strength in Asia in the 15th. century made its start. Zeno reviewed Uzun Hassan's armies and described their almost incredible number and superb equipment in terms of amazement. In September, the Persians and the Georgians, Tatars and Kurds fighting on their side took Sivas, then Ersindjan and Tokat. The Ottoman Empire was on the verge of complete defeat, and Uzun Hassan could already regard himself as the master of the world's vastest empire.

It was in this extraordinary moment of world history, after an uninterrupted series of victories, in the year 1473, that the battle of Terdjan, of which Caterino Zeno was an eyewitness, was lost.<sup>10</sup>

In his bitter mood following the defeat, Uzun Hassan, who, only a few days earlier had had every reason to think himself invincible and the master of Asia, came to an important decision. As was quite customary in diplomacy in those days, he made Caterino Zeno, whose original mission had been concluded, his own ambassador, and sent him in that capacity to the Kings of Hungary and Poland as well as to the Doge of Venice, to seek their support so that he could re-start the war at a suitable time with renewed strength.<sup>11</sup> The Persian ruler provided Caterino Zeno with proper credentials, and Zeno started on his new mission without delay. He boarded a ship in the Georgian port of Sukhumi and arrived in Poland via Kaffa after

a journey full of various vicissitudes. That was when the part of his diplomatic mission most important from the point of view of Hungary began.

His great-grandson Niccolo, who published the documents summed up this period of the mission as follows: "Having endured much hardship and great dangers, Messer Caterino arrived in Poland, where he was received by King Casimir who had got entangled in a serious war with the King of Hungary. Messer Caterino explained to him the essence of his diplomatic assignment from Uzun Hassan. He asked the King to consider the enormous danger that would ensue for the whole Christian world if Sultan Mohammed, having defeated the eastern countries, turned against the west. His Majesty should therefore make an alliance with, and become the friend of, the Hungarian king, and harrass the enemy on his own part as well, as Matthias would certainly do. The King heard him through graciously, and answered that, because of the war against the Hungarians, he had been unable to fight against the Turks, with whom, for the same reason, he was actually in alliance. From this answer, Messer Caterino learned his Majesty's opinion on this question as well as the reason why he was unable to send envoys, or even a letter, to Uzun Hassan. Therefore in a lengthy speech he urged him to make peace with the Hungarians, so that he should not be the cause of Hungary's failure to fulfill its duty in these trying times of Christendom, when it in fact had fulfilled it several times in the wars against the Turks. His words were so impressive that Casimir, after having also seen the envoys of Hungary, made peace with them in three days. Having carried out his task so successfully, Messer Caterino then left for Hungary. King Matthias - who was not only the most eminent among Hungary's old kings but also among all European sovereigns in the art of war as well as the patronage of the arts - received him with due friendship. Caterino Zeno told the King so many fa-



vourable things about the assignment he had received from Uzun Hassan that Matthias - who had himself been rather inclined to make war on the Turks - promised that he would fully comply with the request of Uzun Hassan who had shown such goodwill to the Christians.<sup>12</sup> Having had confidential talks with Messer Caterino and having learnt about his human virtues, the King knighted him with the greatest honour, as is certified by a deed dated 20 April, 1474, in Buda."<sup>13</sup>

Another, incomparably more important Hungarian aspect, is also to be found in Caterino Zeno's travel description. When Caterino Zeno was seen off by a gloomy Uzun Hassan, the envoys of two other countries, Poland and Hungary, left for Europe together with him.<sup>14</sup> The three diplomats made the difficult trip from Terdjan, the scene of the battle, to Georgia together. There they parted; Caterino Zeno embarked at Sukhumi, while the Hungarian and Polish envoys returned to their countries by a different route.<sup>15</sup> However - similarly to King Béla IV, who, between 1235 and 1237, sent Friar Julian and his companions to the east on two occasions in order to bring back the Magyars remaining in the east and to find out about the approaching Tatars - King Matthias entertained similar ideas. Some facts seem to indicate that he may even have begun to carry out his plan.<sup>16</sup>

Notes to chapter 5

1. Cartalinia = Kartli (Central Georgia)
2. Sono etiam venuti Ambassadori del re Constanzo de Zorzama ala Signoria, hanno exposto el detto Re per haver bona confederatione de Uson Cassan parentato, sarà a questo tempo in campo contro el Turco con cavalli 30 000. Ultra quelli li metterà Uxon predicto, che dicono sarà grandissimo numero. Se gli effetti seguirano, sarà una grande facenda (NAGY-NYÁRY, Vol. II, p. 212; Cf. IORGA, N.: Istoria lui Stefan cel Mare pentru poporul roman. Bucuresti, 1904, p. 134.)
3. CG p. 231.
4. CG p. 24.
5. Cahetia = Kakheti (Eastern Georgia.)
6. Archivio di Stato, Venezia, Frari, 1471, die 22 Aprilis, t. 25, fol. 15 so.
7. TARDY, L.: Caterino Zenonak, Uzun Hasszán követének útja Gruzian át Mátyás udvarába (The journey of Caterino Zeno, Uzun Hassan's envoy, through Georgia to Matthias's court), Filológiai Közöny, 1968, Nos. 3-4, p. 473, note 14.
8. NAGY-NYÁRY, Vol. II, p. 242.
9. "Ambasciator, tu intendi, l'Ottoman vien con tuto el so poter contro de mi, et ha abandonà tutti li luoghi che tiene in ponente per venir più potente contro di noi. Scrivi alla tua illustrissima Signoria ed all'Imperator et al re d'Ongheria, che facciano tutto el so poter die andar a distrugger l'Ottoman in Europa, perchè in questa parte d'Anatolia vojo andarlo a trovar, et coll'aiuto di Dio distruggerlo, et cosi voglio che faccian quelli Signori di ponente acciò el dito Ottoman non si possa più refar, et che totalmente el sia distrutto et che il suo nome no se abia più a menzionar..." (BERCHET p. 131.)
10. The effect of the defeat at Terdjan on Hungary is illustrated by Zeno with the description of a dramatic episode. According to this, during the weeks following the battle, the Sultan met King Matthias's envoys. "...he returned rapidly to Sivas, then to Tokat, where Hungary's ambassador was staying. He held back the ambassador on the perfidious pretext that he first wanted to rid himself of the war with Persia, and would make peace with the King, who himself desired that peace, afterwards. He did this with the deliberate intention of avoiding an attack by the Hungarian army while

he was in a threatened position. Having won, however, he sent the Hungarian on his way empty-handed. With this trick he caused great harm to the King of Hungary and deceived the whole of Christendom. Whereas, if the Hungarian King had made use of the opportunity, there can be little doubt that with a minor force he could not only have driven the Turks out of Greece but threatened the whole of Asia as well." (RAMUSIO, Vol. II, 223-224.) This comment by Zeno, who had the closest knowledge of the seriousness of Uzun Hassan's intentions, infers, which is a considerable charge that King Matthias let the great historical opportunity slip, and allowed the Sultan to concentrate his forces against Uzun Hassan.

11. Ibid., 224. let.
12. Cf. ELEKES, L.: Nagy István moldvai fejedelem politikája és Mátyás király (The policy of Prince Stephen the Great of Moldavia and King Matthias), Budapest 1937, pp. 50, 52.
13. "...ricevuto honoramente dal Re Matthia Corvino, che fu il più illustre Re in arme, et in lettere, che havessero mai non solo gli Vngheri, ma tutti Regni della Christianità, gli parlò tanto bene sopra le commissioni havute de Vssuncassano, che il Re, che era pur da se troppo inclinato a far guerra à i Turchi, promise, che non mancherebbe mai a vn Re così benemerito Della Republica Christiana, et face con molto honore cavaliere, come nel privilegio fatto in Buda alli 20 d'Aprile 1474..." RAMUSIO, fol. 224 v.
14. "...Ussuncassano, che in pochi dì haveva havuto la fortuna con lietissimo aspetto contra, et dappoi col più turbato, che mai gli paresse haver havuto per la rotta passata si trova in gran travaglio d'animo: perchè tutta quella opinione, che egli s'haveva in tante guerre acquistato d'esser invincibile, parve, che à una sola percossa la perdesse: L'ò onde, havendo appresso di se due ambasciatori, un Polono et l'altro Unghero, acciò che non vedessero le sue miserie, et per conseguente non glielle accrescero, diede all'uno, et all'altro buona licenza." (RAMUSIO f. 224 r.). - King Matthias had ambassadors stationed simultaneously with the Turkish Sultan and the Persian ruler, as is indicated by a report by Leonardo Botta, the Milanese representative in Venice, dated 14 November, 1473. Botta sent the following information on this to the Prince of Milan: "El Rè de Ungaria haveva ordinato da mettere gravezze a tutti li populi soi, uno ducato per focho et pare havebbe animo de fare iterum contra el Rè de Polonia per respecto de Boemia. Sed li Baroni suoi non hanno voluto aconsentire se metti dicta

gravezza per questa specialità; ma che se el vora fare contra el Turco, saranno contenti dicto spexa se metti, questa Signoria biasima li modi del dicto Rè Hungaria et dice, che questo anno ha sempre tenuto uno Ambasciatore appresso al Turco et un altro appresso ad Uson-Cassan..." (NAGY-NYÁRY, Vol. II., pp. 245-246.)

15. "...et così tutti questi Ambasciatori partitisi di compagnia da quel Re passarono in Gorgora: et M. Caterino lasciati andar a lor viaggi gli altri due, venne in Salvatopoli sopra il mar Maggiore, di dove passo in Cafà con un Naviglio..." RAMUSIO, fol. 241.r.
16. From Bonfini (Antonii Bonfinii Historica Pannonica, sive Hungaricorum Decades IV., Coloniae Agrippinae, 1690, p. 28) we have the following information: "...Deinde sacrosanctus ille pater cujusdam Veronensis testimonium adducit, qui quum ad Tanais ortum penetrasset, gentem Ungarica lingua loquentem se invenisse dicebat. Divus quoque Matthias noster, hujusce rei non ignarus, qua à Sarmaticis quibusdam mercatoribus acceperat, legatos illuc et exploratores misit, quibus cognatam gentem si posset, in Pannoniam populis diuturno bello haud parum exhaustam alliceret; quod etsi hactenus assequi nequivit, si vixerit, tamen, fortasse praestabit. Quare Ungaros, Unnis per Asiaticam Scythiam effusis, et adhuc Tanais ortum accolentibus, cognatos esse credendum est". This means that King Matthias did not rely only on second-hand information from Enea Silvio Piccolomini (the future Pope Pius II), but had knowledge about the Magyars remaining in the east himself, and he dispatched his diplomats to have them re-settled. Whom he sent to locate these Hungarians - and whether they were laymen or ecclesiastic persons - is unknown.

C H A P T E R   S I X

*King Matthias's ambassadors in the Persian court. Giosafatte Barbaro's reports on the Hungarian diplomats. Paolo Ognibene as a Persian envoy in Buda.*

It has been known that King Matthias's large diplomatic apparatus also covered Persia, and Zeno's visit to Buda as a Persian envoy is also documented by indirect data. A monograph published in Venice in 1818<sup>1</sup> mentions that a Hungarian and a Polish ambassador were active at the court of Uzun Hassan. At the fourth lecture session of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 4 February, 1867, Armin Vámbéry, among others, set forth the following:

"Before speaking about the Hungarian-Persian embassy, I must refer to that period of the history of the Persian Empire in which the Sofi family, professing Shiism for the first time and thus bringing to a head the great schism of Islam, took the throne of Iran for their own dynasty. In the person of Uzun Hassan they found the ambitious and brave soldier and ruler who, flinging the glove to the Ottoman Empire, which had risen to great power by that time, would provoke perpetual war. - Mohammed II, inebriated with his victories in Europe, reacted with incredible anger when his eastern rival offended him first by an arrogant letter, then attacked his own empire."

"At the end of March 1473, he personally led against Uzun Hassan a hundred-thousand-strong army, the command of which he gave to Khas Murad Pasha, a descendant of the Palaeologus dynasty. The two armies clashed on the bank of the Euphrates. By a ruse, as the Turks say - or by his extraordinary courage, as the Persians say - Uzun Hassan

defeated the Osmanlis very badly. Three of the chief commanders fell into the hands of the enemy, who continued their victorious advance right up to the mountains of Pontus."

"During and before this campaign, however, they also used diplomatic methods besides their armed force, so that by breaking the Ottoman Empire, representing the power of the Sunnites, they would be able to lay the ground for the power of their own Shiite sect. The Persians at that time were already well aware that Europe, afraid of the power of the Sickle-Moon, would use every opportunity to do harm to its dangerous enemy, now in the possession of Constantinople. - Like the Karamanian rulers in earlier times, the Persians now invited the European Christian princes to join an alliance against the Turks. - The first embassy to set out towards the west for this purpose consisted of an ambassador sent to the Republic of Venice, who went on to Rome from the Adriatic island town in order to win over the Pope, or rather his influence."<sup>2</sup>

"Although in the manuscript entitled *Tarikhq-i-Sefevi*, in which Uzun Hassan's life is described in detail, mention is made of envoys coming from Venice, France and Hungary, I rather thought this was a sign of some kind of oriental boasting. It is only now, having come across a collection of documents published by G. Berchët under the title "*La Republica di Venezia e la Persia*", that I can say something certain about the Persian embassy of our King Matthias."

"Here under the number documento XII, we can find a letter entitled "*Relazione della bataglia di Terdshan*", written by Catarinus Geno to the Signoria, from Erzingan, on the 8th of August, 1473. Geno first relates the course of the battle of Terdjan, unfortunate for the Persians, continues with an account of the future plans of the Persian King and, while discussing the events of the court dwelling in the camp, tells the following:"

"On the seventh of this month (July) two envoys of His Majesty the King of Hungary arrived in the camp, with whom I was together at the audience. Since I also heard the reply given to them, I asked His Majesty's permission to send one of my men to the Captain-General's headquarters (Venice), to whom His Majesty might also give the orders he pleases. His Majesty answered that he would not send anyone but wanted me to set out together with the Hungarian king's ambassadors myself. As you all know, my own plan was to stay on for another year in order to see what the King could be persuaded to do. But now, since I was being dismissed, I could not do anything else than to leave, and so I did, together with these eminent ambassadors of the Hungarian King."<sup>3</sup>

Zeno's report, as quoted by Vámbéry, or rather by Guglielmo Berchét, complements the text of the travel description in several respects. It makes no mention of the Polish envoy but speaks of two Hungarian ambassadors; this latter fact is corroborated by several other sources. Vámbéry's paper contains a few inaccuracies. Uzun Hassan was not descended from the Sofi dynasty, and the power of the Turks at that time did not extend to the whole of Transcaucasia. It is also wrong that in the periods following the reign of King Matthias, the governments did not resort to "means of this kind" for the purpose of an alliance with Persia; on the contrary, there were renewed efforts for the creation of such an alliance up to the end of Turkish rule in Hungary.

Caterino Zeno was still in Persia when a new embassy arrived there, headed by Giosafatte Barbaro. Barbaro sent a whole series of reports dealing with the Hungarian embassy staying there, or more exactly with its two members. In a letter to the Doge of Venice, dated 23 September, 1473, he reports about two Hungarian ambassadors active in the court of Uzun Hassan.<sup>4</sup> The same is indicated also by

Barbaro's letter to Uzun Hassan.<sup>5</sup>

All in all, it is fair to say that Uzun Hassan's Persia was bustling with diplomatic activity. Apart from the Hungarian, Polish and Venetian missions, there was also a Russian envoy delegated to the ruler.<sup>6</sup> It is quite certain that the powers primarily interested in curbing the Ottoman expansion kept close watch on the events in Asia which, in the case of a favourable outcome, might also have decisively changed the course of development in Europe.

As a matter of fact, besides Isaac Beg and Caterino Zeno, King Matthias's court at Buda was visited by other envoys of Uzun Hassan. One of these was Paolo Ognibene, an Albanian-born diplomat of the Republic of Venice, who had acted originally as a Venetian ambassador in Uzun Hassan's court, then, similarly to Zeno, visited King Matthias, Voivode Stephen the Great and several other sovereigns on behalf of Uzun Hassan.<sup>7</sup>



Notes to chapter 6

1. ZURLA, PL.: Di Marco Polo e degli altri viaggiatori veneziani, Venezia 1818, Vol. II, p. 202.
2. This, as was seen earlier, was Isaac Beg, Uzun Hassan's court physician.
3. "A dì VII. di questo, vene in campo do ambadori del serenissimo signor rè de Hungaria con i qual fui a la presentia de questo Ill<sup>mo</sup> signore, et udita la sua ambassada, dissi a la sua ill<sup>ma</sup> signoria voleva mandar uno mio homo a la mag., del capetanio general, e quel piacesse commandar a sua ill<sup>ma</sup> signoria che la commandasse. Sua serenità me disse non mandar el tuo homo, ma voglio tu davi da la to ill<sup>ma</sup> signoria insieme con questi ambadori del serenissimo rè Hungaria. Mi come tuti i miei sano, haveva deliberado remagnir infina uno altro anno ad intender e veder quello ero per far questo ill<sup>mo</sup> signore. Habliandome da licentia questo signore non posso far manco de non me partir, et in nome di Dio, con questi mag. Ambadori del rè de Hungaria toro el mio chamin". Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Értesítője (Bulletin of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 1867, pp. 57-60. - It was published with a nearly identical text also under the title "Matthias's envoys in Persia", in MÁRKI, S. (ed.) Mátyás király emlékkönyv (King Matthias Memorial Book), Budapest 1902, pp. 105-7. See ibid. KUUN, G.: Mátyás keleti politikája (Matthias's eastern policy), p. 89.
4. ...con una altra averta de do ambadori del Serenissimo Signor Rè de hungaria, i quali se atrovano apresso el soprascripto Serenissimo Signor Ussun Cassan (CL, pp. 85-6).
5. ...havemo intenduto, che la manda el soprascripto magnifico misser Chaterin a la presentia de la prefata nostra Illustrissima Signoria, con tre altri magnifici ambadori, uno de la excellentia vestra, et li altri do del Serenissimo Signor Rè de hungaria (CL, pp.85-6).
6. BELOKUROV S.A.: Snošenija Rossii s Kavkazom. Materialy, izvlečennye iz moskovskogo Glavnago Arhiva Ministerstva Inostrannyh Del. Vyp. 1. 1578-1613. gg. Moskva, 1889, XII, XIV pp. - His journey from the Shah's camp to Moscow took five months. - At that time also the Crimean Tatars were still greatly interested in an anti-Turkish alliance, and so were Moldavia and Valachia. Cf. IGOR, p. 168.
7. HURMUZAKI, Vol. VIII, p. 6. - Ognibene, Uzun Hassan's envoy saw King Matthias on 19 May, 1475, in the new palace in Buda Castle. The ambassadors of Ferrara reported on this event as follows:

"Siando arrivato questo Ser<sup>mo</sup> Sig<sup>re</sup> Rè in questa terra, ce trovò uno ambasciatore de Usson Cassano, homo da bene per quello monstrò preter fidem. Lo dì de S. Michele, che fu lo octavo del presente gli dette audientia publico in una sala grande del castello. La ambasiata fu quella, dh'el se contene in una copia de certe littere di Ussu Cassan drizzata ad questo Ser<sup>mo</sup> Rè in lingua persica et caractere traducte in latino, la quale, introdusa ala presente, mandemo ad V. Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signoria, rendendone certi che haverà piacere de vederle". (BERZEVICZY, A.: Aragóniai Beatrix magyar királyné életére vonatkozó okiratok (Documents concerning the life of Beatrice of Aragon, Queen of Hungary), Budapest, 1914, p. 17. Mon. Hung. Hist., 1st class, Archives, Vol. XXXIX.)

C H A P T E R   S E V E N

*King Matthias's new embassy in Persia. Its contacts with the Venetian and Indian ambassadors staying there. The adventurous journey of John the Hungarian to Persia and Georgia in 1473. László Vetési on the Persian alliance.*

Caterino Zeno tells us that he travelled together with the Hungarian envoys from Persia to Georgia. There they said farewell to each other and continued their journey on different routes. Thus, in accordance with Uzun Hassan's wish, this Hungarian mission returned home after the battle at Terdján had been lost.

This mission, however, was not the only one sent by King Matthias to Persia. Two reports by the Venetian secretary of embassy Giovanni Dario - who was sent to Persia by the Bailo<sup>1</sup> residing in Constantinople - dated 10 and 11 July respectively, contain interesting and lively information on the stay of the Hungarian embassy there. They tell a great deal less about the actual political activity of the Hungarian envoys.

Giovanni Dario starts his account by saying that he appeared at a reception given to the Turkish envoy. "Then I was approached by one of the Hungarian envoys who had arrived recently with an imposing escort."<sup>2</sup> Then, after a description of the magnificent presents meant for the Sultan, he goes on to relate the events of the banquet following the ceremony. Eight china plates were laid before the Venetian envoy with a variety of food on them. "The Hungarian ambassador was called there and was seated after me. After the plates had been taken away, the attendants came and asked the Hungarian envoy to take the first place. So he did."<sup>3</sup> "The heat is unbearable

in the gala tent; never before have I felt the same thirst for fresh water that I do now. This is all a great honour for me but it also involves extreme hardship. The Indian ambassador will leave tomorrow, and I shall rest for what remains of the day."<sup>4</sup>

Next day's account begins with the farewell visit of the Indian ambassador. Dario wanted to rest but a chiaus came to him with the message that he was expected at the court again. He again took his place in the gala tent. "About two or three steps from me, in front of the gala tent, there sat three gentlemen from among the Hungarians, with two of their servants behind them..."<sup>5</sup> After a good deal of time, the Indian ambassador arrived and was greeted with great respect. Here another endless list of splendid gifts follows, all described in minute detail, then a new banquet starts. "The Hungarians were served their food outside the gala tent, and these gentlemen, having started to eat, invited me to their table. I let them know that I should like to drink. So we attacked the dishes together with a hearty appetite and great pleasure... When the Indian ambassador departed from our company, I also asked to be excused, and hurried to my quarters."<sup>6</sup>

Dario's rather superficial account tells us, if nothing more, that the Hungarian delegation consisted of at least three members and a retinue of servants, and that they had contacts with the Indian delegation as well.<sup>7</sup> It is, nevertheless, quite certain that, through direct sources, King Matthias had much better information on the conditions in the East and Far East than any west European ruler of the time.<sup>8</sup>

Before taking our leave of King Matthias's Persian mission, we must naturally try to answer the question as to who these envoys were and what they achieved in Persia?

The latter part of the question is probably clear from the

above. The former is a much more difficult matter.

Vilmos Fraknói devoted a full book to Matthias Corvinus's diplomats<sup>9</sup> but he does not unveil their identity, and makes only a brief reference to the whole Persian mission.<sup>10</sup> Neither Zeno nor Barbaro mentions them by name, nor does Ambrogio Contarini. The collections dealing thoroughly with King Matthias's diplomatic correspondence do not contain enough evidence to settle the question either, so it must be considered open to this very day.

Thus, both of King Matthias's embassies to Persia involve a number of problems still to be solved.<sup>11</sup>

One particular Hungarian, however, saw Uzun Hassan in the period between the two missions sent there by King Matthias. He travelled there as a member of a Venetian mission, and his name was Zuanne Ungaretto, meaning John the Hungarian. It is unlikely that he participated in the mission led by Ambrogio Contarini as King Matthias's representative or observer, but the possibility cannot be altogether excluded, since the outlines of a very close cooperation between Venice and Hungary were emerging just at the time of Contarini's embassy.

Caterino Zeno's mission was followed by a series of Venetian embassies. One of the most important of these was led by Ambrogio Contarini, who came from a patrician dynasty as old and distinguished as that of Caterino Zeno. Contarini's account of his mission, regarded as a masterpiece, ranks among the classics of travel writing.

"I set out from Venice on 23 February, 1473 with my suite, the members of which were Father Stefano Testa, my confessor and secretary, Demetrio de Setinis, my interpreter, and my two assistants, Maffeo da Bergamo and Zuanne Ungaretto." That is the start of Contarini's account<sup>12</sup> which is rather dry and laconic as far as the

European part of his mission is concerned - "these lands are all too well known by my compatriots," the author remarks - but becomes fascinating as soon as it goes on to describe the adventures and deadly dangers experienced by the author.

After Nuremberg, Frankfurt and Poznan, he is received by the Polish king to whom, in accordance with his instructions, Contarini discloses the purpose of his journey. They are led to Kiev by a Polish guide, and travel on from there to Kaffa together with a Lithuanian envoy on his way to the Tatar Khan, in relative safety, since the Tatar ruler provides them with a 1200-strong escort to shield them from marauders' attacks. The Tatars soon realize that Contarini must be an important person, so they want to take him to their master by force. The diplomat gives his precious sabre to the Tatar headman as a "present", and the Venetian mission is allowed to move on. In Kaffa, the Genoese colony,<sup>13</sup> they hire a small galley which they load with ten saddle-horses and a large quantity of food supplies. The wind drives them off course and they land at Batumi, where they learn that Ortuna, where their galley was headed, has meanwhile fallen to the Turks. Had the wind not intervened, they would all have ended up in Turkish captivity.

They reach the Mingrelian port of Poti on 2 July, 1474, where they stay as the guests of a Circassian woman called Martha. Three days later they are already dining at the table of Bendian, the ruler of Mingrelia.

They cross the frontier between Mingrelia and Georgia on 9 July. In Kutaisi they are first the guests of the city's governor. Contarini praises Georgian hospitality, but complains that his hosts tried to get him drunk against his will. Next day he is received by King Bagrat.

The king lends them a Georgian guide who leads the group through a relatively safe area. Nevertheless, the nights spent bivouacking deep in the forests at the foot of gigantic mountains filled the hearts of the Italians with terror.

They continue their journey in the valley of the Ararat - this is already the territory of Uzun Hassan's empire - where there is plenty of food and drink but also plenty to worry about because of the raids of the nomadic Turkomans. However, on learning that the strangers are headed towards the court of their ruler, even the Turkomans give up their evil intentions.

The Venetian embassy is well inside ancient Persia when they get entangled in an incident which proves almost fatal. They find the city of Tabriz in a state of turmoil. One of Uzun Hassan's sons has revolted against his father, and is approaching with a large army to take the town, whose inhabitants are in a panic. They attack the strangers amid shouts of "You dogs! You've come to reap the fruits of our discord!", and want to kill them. It is only thanks to their fast horses that they can escape from their pursuers. They are given shelter by the generous owner of a caravansaray. They spend a long time hiding in constant fear, until they learn about the arrival in town of one of Uzun Hassan's top men. John the Hungarian makes friends with the Persian lord's two Croatian-born servants who persuade their master to allow the Venetians to join their caravan headed towards Isfahan.

There follows a safe but nerve-racking period of wandering in the desert. After his recovery from a serious illness, on 4 November, Contarini is already negotiating with Uzun Hassan. The talks, about the substance of which the well-disciplined Venetian diplomat keeps silent even in his memoirs, last for months. He is

much more talkative concerning the wealth and pomp surrounding them and the strange but attractive customs of the court.

On 28 June, 1475 Contarini and his men leave for home. On 12 July they are already banqueting at the table of King Bagrat of Georgia. Once again, there is no information about the substance of the talks they had, but in any case we learn that Contarini's moderation in drinking is again disapproved of by his royal host. They do not stay long at the court but continue their journey, during which they are attacked several times by robbers and lose most of their Ducats. They get a little rest at last in the castle of the Mingrelian prince's younger sister. Then they are on their way again, and are, before long, stricken with hunger, thirst and sickness. Contarini is nursed back to health from his grave illness by the medicinal herbs of Martha, the Circassian woman.

Back in Tiflis, Maffeo of Bergamo falls victim to the plague. Contarini describes the ravages of the epidemic in dramatic terms. Now it is only John the Hungarian whose strength still defies the renewed trials.

They pass the winter in Derbent before being able to hire a galley, and reach Astrakhan after several shipwrecks, where all members of the mission are declared slaves by the Tatar Khan. They are about to be sold off at a public auction when the Russian ambassador intervenes on their behalf, and Khazim Khan sets them free in return for an enormous ransom. They borrow the money, at an exorbitant interest, from Tatar merchants. They join a Tatar trade caravan headed for Moscow, and are almost constantly tormented by hunger along the way, since the only item on the Tatar diet they can digest is a cottage-cheese-like food called "thur".

The terrifying experience of crossing the Volga coincides with the visit of another Tatar chief and the renewed threat of falling



into slavery. Contarini hides up for a few days. He is informed of the passing of the danger by a loyal Tatar, and returns to his companions. "Father Stefano and John the Hungarian, who thought I was dead, welcomed me with extreme joy," the diplomat writes in his diary which, laconic as it is, praises the faithfulness and selflessness of his Hungarian companion several times.

The adventurous part of Contarini's report ends there, but John the Hungarian still had a number of interesting experiences. The Venetian mission was received by the Czar, and in Moscow they met Ridolfo Fioravanti, the former court architect of King Matthias. He had built a magnificent bridge in Hungary, then travelled to Moscow at the invitation of Semion Tolbuzin, the Russian ambassador, and made his name memorable there by important works of architecture. On Zuanne Ungaretto - or John born in Hungary, as he is called in the bi-lingual Russian edition of 1836 - we have no more information.<sup>14</sup>

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The fact that King Matthias attributed a very great significance to the Persian alliance both from a Hungarian and European point of view is witnessed by one of the earliest printed books relating to Hungary, the work of László Vetési, King Matthias's diplomat. The small book, published in 1475, bears the title "Ladislai Uetessi Pannonii Cubicularii apostolici oratio ad summum Sanctissimumque Pontificem Sixtum quartum, pro prestanda obedientia nomine Invictissimi principis diui Mathie serenissimi Hungarorum et Bohemorum Regis."<sup>15</sup> The work, short but highly interesting, contains a speech by László Vetési, a former Ferrara student and friend of Janus Pannonius and Filelfo. The speech was delivered on the occasion when the Hungarian embassy reaching Rome in the

first days of January 1475, "paid homage and expressed its obedience to the newly elected Pope". Vetési explains that his King had wanted to send his delegation to pay reverence earlier but was delayed in doing so by a plot against him and by reasons of war. But this is not the sole reason of his sending a delegation. He also wants to ask for help against the Turks. Christendom has never been threatened as gravely as it is now. His Holiness is asked to help Matthias by appealing to all Christian sovereigns to follow his example. If everyone does his duty, all that has been lost can soon be recovered, and moreover the whole Turkish Empire can be conquered. But help is needed, and fast, too, for the threat is growing day by day, and the alliance of Uzun Hassan, the Persian King, will hardly be available at a later date.<sup>16</sup>

This speech by László Vetési - who was a member of a delegation led by his uncle, Albert Vetési - is usually treated by Hungarian scholarship only from the point of view of the history of Hungarian humanism. It is relevant to us mainly because it emphasizes the importance of the alliance with Uzun Hassan in Asia at a time when Matthias Corvinus already had reliable information from his envoys, or the messengers sent by them, on the value of these contacts. When László Vetési delivered his urging appeal, the message came not only from the Hungarian King but also from the Persian ruler.

Notes to chapter 7

1. Bailo = the Venetian ambassador to the High Porte.
2. ...e venne da mi un ambasciatore di questi Ungheri, che venne ultimamente con una bella compagnia (BERCHËT, pp. 150-151).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. ...e dietro di me per tre o quattri passi fora del pavione erano sentati tre di quei signori ungheri, e dietro di loro due servitori (BERCHËT, pp. 152-3.).
6. Ibid. - On Giovanni Dario see BABINGER, Fr.: Johannes Darius und sein griechischer Umkreis, München 1961 (Bayerische Akad. d. Wissensch. Philosophische-Historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte, Jgg. 1961, Heft 5) and Manuscripts of the University Library of Budapest, Ms no. 35. f. 145 o.
7. Some 170 years later, in 1656, a similar Indian contact was reported to Prince George II Rákóczi by his ambassador to the Porte, Jakab Harsányi: "...The Indian envoy, one of the Indians told me the other day, has not come to ask for help but only to continue their friendship with the mighty emperor, for, he says, it would be a shame if their emperor, Shahi Gsihan (the Grand Mogul Shah Dshehan, who reigned between 1628 and 1658. - L.T.) sought anyone's help..." (Okmánytár II. Rákóczi György diplomáciai összekötetéseihez (Documents of George II Rákóczi's diplomatic contacts), ed by. SZILÁGYI, S., Budapest 1874, p. 390.)
8. We must agree with Éva Sz. Koroknay's interesting hypothesis according to which the origins of the bindings of King Matthias's codices, called Corvinas, were related to the king's diplomatic apparatus operating in the east. Cf. Sz. KOROKNAY, É.: A magyar reneszánsz kötések keleti kapcsolatai (The eastern relations of Hungarian renaissance book bindings), Művészettörténeti Értesítő, 1968, Nos. 1-2, pp. 1-17.
9. FMD
10. FMD, p. 146
11. We have no direct information on this, but the route itself makes it more than likely that the Hungarian delegates - like the Venetians - had letters of credit to the Georgian kings as well. Cf. CG, p. 30.
12. VIAGGI, ff. 65-107. The best edition: I viaggi in Persia degli ambasciatori Veneti Bárbaro e Contarini. A cura di L. Lockhart,

R. Morozzo della Rocca - M.F.Tiepolo. Il Nuovo Ramusio VII. Venezia, 1973, pp. 175-234, 303-326.

13. In today's Feodosiya.
14. Hungarians living in Italy in those days were usually called Ungaro instead of, or rather as a substitute for, their family name. In the 1480s. for instance, a Neapolitan list of mercenaries includes a number of Hungarian soldiers simply as Andrea Ungaro, Demitro Ungaro, Tamasi Ungaro, Blase Ungaro, etc.; the list goes on for several pages like this. (NAGY-NYÁRY, p. 3-5.) The name Ungaro here means only that its bearer, or his father, or sometimes only his grandfather, were born in Hungary. "Ungaretto", however, meant, that its bearer himself was definitely Hungarian-born. The translator of the bi-lingual edition by Kalistratov, M. and Semenov, V. (Biblioteka inostrannyh pisatelej o Rossii, St. Petersburg, 1836) also calls him "vengerskij uroženec", i. e. Hungarian-born. (p. 13.) But even our remaining doubts are fully dispelled by the fact that Contarini capitalizes only the first letter of his Christian name, Zuanne, whereas the adjective referring to his origins is written only as "ungareto" (fol. 94.) or "ongheretto" (fol. 96) (VIAGGI). Cf. also BALOGH: Adatok Miláno és Magyarország kulturáli kapcsolatainak történetéhez (Data on the history of the cultural relations between Milan and Hungary), Budapest 1928, pp. 36-38.
15. Cf. APPONYI, Vol. I., pp. 39-40.
16. ...et si Uso ille Cassanus, potentissimus rex persarum acerrimus Calabei onmiumque Turchorum iustis de causis hostis, militem christianum in expeditionem adversum Turchos duci senserit, alacrius atque promptius rem geret. Si vero languentes vos et tantam occasionem negligentes, tantasque opportunitatis corrumpentis cognoverit; forsitan et ipse animum ab his avocabit. Cf. Analecta nomenclatorum Hungariae historica. Ed. F. Toldy, Pest, s.a., p. 163 and FMD, pp. 46-48.

C H A P T E R   E I G H T

*Hungarian missions in Egypt, Egyptians in Hungary. Magnificent gifts, common political interests. János László and Gábor Pécsvradai: pilgrims or diplomats? Hungarian Mameluke soldiers.*

At about the same time as King Matthias's second mission visited Persia, a Hungarian embassy made its appearance also at the court of Sultan Kaitbai of Egypt. The reason was that the Egyptian ruler was at war with the Turks and was quite ready to enter into an alliance with the Christian powers.<sup>1</sup>

The Hungarian envoy, whose name has not been preserved in the documents dealing with his mission, reached Cairo with all good fortune, where he received the reply and valuable gifts of the Egyptian ruler, and also made large purchases in Cairo's bazaars on behalf of King Matthias. His mission completed, he boarded a Venetian galley in Alexandria and headed for home, but he died on the way. His younger brother, travelling along as his fellow ambassador, took over the documents and the valuables he had been carrying, but he also fell ill and had to get off at Ragusa. The documents and valuables remained on board in sealed boxes while the ship sailed on towards the port of Venice.

King Matthias received the erroneous information that the ship's captain had carried the deceased ambassador's possessions to Venice against the will of his companions. Being afraid that the Signoria might open the letters and inform the Turkish Sultan of their contents, the King lodged a complaint with the Papal Legate, charging Venice with a violation of international law. On the last day of the year 1488 King Matthias sent an envoy to Venice, who collected the well-

sealed chest containing the documents from the Signoria unopened and entirely intact.<sup>2</sup>

The further developments of the Egyptian connection are also well known. In the summer of 1488, another Hungarian envoy paid a visit to the Egyptian court<sup>3</sup>, laden with gifts so valuable that even the contemporary Arab chronicler commented on their extraordinary splendour.<sup>4</sup> Kaitbai, the Egyptian ruler, dispatched his own envoy to Hungary, in the person of the Raguzan patrician Junius, in 1489, and next year the Patriarch of Jerusalem made a visit to Hungary on his behalf, also laden with rich presents.<sup>5</sup>

These data, however, reveal hardly more than the merest outlines of the lively diplomatic relationship between King Matthias's court and the Sultan of Egypt. As a result of Éva Sz. Koroknay's research,<sup>6</sup> we have a vivid picture of the exchanges beyond these contacts which must be mentioned here, even if, for certain reasons and circumstances, they could not take the form of proper diplomatic missions.

János Lázói<sup>7</sup>, born in 1448 probably in the village of László in county Torna (on 16 November, 1489, he received a letter patent of nobility together with his older relative Antal Sankfalvi,<sup>8</sup> an outstanding diplomat in the service of King Matthias, and became Archdeacon of Transylvania), set out on a pilgrimage in the first days of June, 1483.<sup>9</sup> He boarded a ship in Venice, then, making stops at Cyprus and Rhodes, he landed at Jaffa. With his fellow pilgrim, Friar Felix Faber, a Dominican monk from Ulm, they did not only visit the usual places of pilgrimage such as Jerusalem or Bethlehem, but spent some time also on the shores of the Dead Sea, in Hebron and Gaza, and afterwards paid visits to the monasteries and churches at the foot of Mount Sinai. Having visited the tomb of St. Catherine they set out on another desert trip. They spent a long time in Cairo, saw the pyramids and sailed on the Nile. Then they returned to

Alexandria and sailed back to Venice on more or less the same route as they came. They arrived there on 8 January, 1484. Lázóí made another pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1500 but the events of this second trip are even less known than those of the first. He died on 17 August, 1523; his remains lie in the church of Santo Stefano Rotondo in Rome.

As we have mentioned above, János Lázóí and Antal Sankfalvi were close relatives. Matthias employed many diplomats, but the most complicated jobs, usually secret, may have been entrusted to Sankfalvi, who rose to become a bishop. After a number of missions which took him to Poland, Rome and Naples, he was sent by Matthias to the Prince of Milan in 1486. This, however, was only a pretext for his real mission. He was to go from Milan to France to negotiate the surrender of the Turkish prince Djem to Matthias (the prince had earlier found refuge in the court of his relative, the Sultan of Egypt) which, if it had succeeded, could have turned the tide of the war against the Ottoman Empire. As pretender, Prince Djem's claims to the throne were rather debatable, but they would have been good enough to cause a severe struggle for the succession. These diplomatic efforts failed but Matthias was unwilling to give up. When Prince Djem was handed over by the French, instead of to Matthias, to the Pope, Matthias tried to persuade the King of Naples to capture the Turkish pretender by deception or by force, and to send him to Hungary afterwards. This task, too, was given to Antal Sankfalvi, and, as Matthias's continued favour proves, it was no fault of the diplomat that it failed.<sup>10</sup>

A closer look at the diplomatic customs of the period - or rather at the personnel of the diplomatic services - reveals that external services were carried out not only by the successful diplomats, but also by the members of their families, and, more

correctly, in their wake. There were whole "diplomatic families". We have seen that ambassadorial duties in the Bánó family descended from father to son. Albert Vetési's niece, László Vetési, was also a diplomat. As for the Szántay family, three generations of Szántays served in Hungary's foreign service. János Szántay<sup>11</sup>, Zsigmond Szántay<sup>12</sup>, and Mihály Szántay<sup>13</sup> were all distinguished Hungarian diplomats. The brothers Czobor of Czoborszentmiklós, Imre and Márton,<sup>14</sup> were among the best diplomats of Wladislas II. Thus it was under the guidance of old well-trying ambassadors that their sons, nephews or other relatives were trained to become clever and trustworthy diplomats. János Lázói, who perhaps dispensed also certain diplomatic duties in Cairo, may have been initiated in to the intricacies of oriental diplomacy by his uncle, Antal Sankfalvi, a diplomat well versed in eastern affairs. (In King Matthias's time a mission like the one concerning Prince Djem was a genuinely oriental affair.)

János Lázói's Egyptian journey, however, is important from another point of view as well. He was the discoverer of the Hungarian-born Mamelukes in Egypt.

The detailed travel description of his friend and fellow pilgrim Felix Schmid - Felix Faber by his humanist pseudonym throws light on the activities of János Lázói Egypt.

Faber's account had been originally published in German<sup>15</sup>, and its last German-language edition appeared in 1964.<sup>16</sup> As the latter's postscript explains<sup>17</sup>, even the first, 1556 edition comprised only part of the original Latin manuscript. The first complete Latin edition went into print only in the middle of the last century.<sup>18</sup> The texts of the various German editions, however, in places reveal more about János Lázói, so they are also worth investigating.

Felix Faber gives a vivid, fascinating account, written in



a humanist spirit, of the 1483 pilgrimage original participants of which were four German nobles and their eight-member suite (a cook, a cobbler, a barber, servants and the author as travelling chaplain). They spent a long time waiting for embarkation in Venice. During this time pilgrims kept coming in from England, France, Spain, Italy and other countries. Honourable, learned gentlemen and lay priests came also from Hungary, among whom was "the court chaplain of the Hungarian King, John Lazineus, a very erudite man, who remained my companion also when I went to visit the tomb of St. Catherine."<sup>19</sup>

The pilgrims were divided into three groups. János Lázói, along with the author, took his place in the third group, a group of six.<sup>20</sup> Having told how he introduced Lázói to the company, Felix Faber characterizes him in a few words. "...he was a true-born Hungarian, who could not speak a single word in German but had a fair knowledge, besides Hungarian, of Latin, Slavonian and Italian. He was a noble, virtuous man, an excellent orator and astronomer."<sup>21</sup> From this time on the two men became inseparable companions. Felix Faber's experiences were all shared by János Lázói. They disembarked in Jaffa on 5 July, setting out on the real part of a pilgrimage rich in adventures, dangers and funny episodes as well. Felix Faber was a genuine humanist. There is no trace of contempt or derision in his notes concerning the "infidel", and though he does not restrict himself in the description of offenses suffered, he is just as generous in dealing out words of appreciation.

It took three days before they were allowed to land at Jaffa, because the examination of their travelling documents and customs control lasted so long. The names of every single pilgrim, and even their fathers' names were recorded on a list, then they were crowded

into a small building as their temporary quarters. They were forbidden to leave it, and to go outside even to relieve themselves cost one Venetian bagattino each time, which had to be paid to their custodians. The old "heathens" were kind and benevolent, the young ones much less so. They were soon over these initial difficulties, and all the pilgrims continued their journey on donkeys. In the town of Rama they were given good food and accommodation at the hospice for pilgrims. They were all given instructions on how to conduct themselves. The compulsory rules of conduct were comprised in ten points. These included the warning that nothing must be broken off from either the Holy Sepulchre or any other place of pilgrimage; they were not to write on the walls with coal or any other writing instrument, refrain from quarrelling among themselves and show restraint in their conduct towards women.

In Jerusalem they were put up in a pilgrims' home named after St. John. Faber's description of the Biblical places, interwoven as it is with the events of their everyday lives, makes especially interesting reading. After Jerusalem came Bethlehem, then Mount Zion, and the Valley of Josaphat. After Bethania and Jericho they reached the banks of the river Jordan.

By then the rather large group was greatly diminished in numbers. The visit to the grave of St. Catherine was an exhausting and dangerous venture. Only eighteen men presented themselves, including Faber and János Lázói.<sup>22</sup>

There followed a difficult trip through the desert, during which Friar Felix fell from his saddle and dislocated his limbs which were reset by Ahmed, the drover. "Heathen though he may be, God have mercy upon him for this deed of his", the author remarks.

After Hebron, Gazara was the next stop, where the local feudal landlord gave them a magnificent welcome. They could refresh them-

selves in a white marble bath. János Lázóí then had an unexpected, quite dramatic encounter. Some Mamelukes began to inquire whether there were Hungarians among the pilgrims, because they were Hungarians themselves. "...And having made the acquaintance of János Lázóí, they were greatly rejoiced and ate together with the pilgrims, even drinking some wine, although in secret only."<sup>23</sup>

In the church named after St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, there were tablets on the wall on which the pilgrims visiting the place had recorded their respect. János Lázóí, at the request of his companions, improvised a poem for this occasion, which was so much liked by Faber that he copied it into his travel diary.<sup>24</sup>

Then the travellers went on to Cairo which is described by Faber colourfully and with great gusto.

The exciting, eventful book ranks among the classics of travel writing and is interesting throughout. Here, however, we must restrict ourselves to its account of another encounter between János Lázóí and the Mamelukes.

In the 13th. century Sultan Nedshem Eddin of the Eyubide dynasty had bought twelve thousand prisoners of war of Caucasian origin from the Mongols. These men, widely feared because of their warlike nature, became the core of the powerful army of the Mamelukes. It did not take long for these soldiers, mainly Kipchaks from southern Russia but also Georgians and Circassians converted by force to Islam, to seize state power, and even the dynasty of the Sultans came from their ranks.<sup>25</sup> Still, even in the second half of the 18th century the Mamelukes made up their numbers mainly with Georgians.<sup>26</sup>

It was not merely a few luckless compatriots who had by chance ended up in a faraway land that János Lázóí encountered in Cairo; he found a whole mass of Hungarians taken from their country. The sons of no other Christian nation are as numerous among the Mamelukes as

the Hungarians, Faber wrote, and he added that the Mamelukes were secret Christians.<sup>27</sup> "On 11 October my friend, Sir John from Hungary was visited by important and respected Hungarian Mamelukes, and they had talks with him throughout our stay in Cairo. As they knew Sir John's nationality, they lavished on him regal gifts according to pagan custom. He did many beneficial things for them, since as a devout, thoughtful and learned gentleman he had great sympathy for his countrymen. Many of them pledged to return to the true faith as soon as they are able to do so, and to do public penance. So he wedded these Mamelukes to their women according to the Church rite, and if they had two or more wives, he let them have one, and helped to make an agreement with the others. He baptized children, preached to the Mamelukes, and spent much time in discussions with them in the house of a Christian gentleman. The latter was also Hungarian, and a distinguished, highly intelligent man, too. He got to Cairo in the following way. Once, when the King of Hungary was at war with the Turks, this man fell into Turkish hands. But before being captured, he had defended himself with such valour and chivalry that the Turks were all astonished, and led him to the Sultan as a man of extraordinary strength. He spent a few years in the Sultan's service, who then gave him, as a gift of special value, to the ruler of Egypt. He is now serving the latter but has not yet been circumcised and has not renounced the Christian faith and will not do so. But he has the rank of a very high chief Mameluke, even though the Sultan knows that he is a Christian."<sup>28</sup>

Faber later describes their visit to the pyramids. Their companions and guides there were the Hungarians Mamelukes.<sup>29</sup>

\*

There is no direct evidence that János Lázó's journey also

served diplomatic purposes. However, Gábor Pécsváradi, the author of the first Hungarian pilgrim's account of the Holy Land to appear in print, who visited those Biblical scenes in 1514,<sup>30</sup> is also regarded generally as only a pious Franciscan traveller. In fact, even before his return, Pécsváradi sent a very accurate military survey and concrete suggestions to János Bánffy of Lendva, Chief Warden of the King, the future Palatine of King János Szapolyai.<sup>31</sup> Knowing this, the possibility can hardly be excluded that the journey of János Lázói - a relative of Antal Sankfalvi, one of the most erudite of Hungarian humanists - may also have had the obtaining of diplomatic information as its secret purpose.<sup>32</sup>

Notes to chapter 8

1. The Egyptian ruler's willingness was something entirely new. His threats addressed to Rome had been answered in 1460 by the Pope who had pointed out the military superiority of the European powers, mentioning Hungary among those most important. "An ignoras imperium Romanorum fore invictissimum. Francorum regnum Christianissimum, Anglieae ditissimum, Hispaniae, Portugaliae, Navarrae, Hiberniae, Cataloniae, Aragoniae, utriusque Castiliae, Siciliae, Cypri, Neapolis, Noruegiae, Suediaem Daciae, Cracoviae, Frisiaeque regna latissima signaculo crucis adornata? An despicias Hungaros homines feroces arcibus et sagittis invictissimos, homines in equis eorum aera transvolantes?..." (Raynaldus, Vol. XIX., anno 1460, Nos. 97-100.)
2. FMD pp. 150-151.
3. One of the main subjects of this visit was the fate of Prince Djem. In January 1489 Queen Beatrice had the following to say about this: "...If the prince is given to him, my husband, with his aptitude in military matters and by the suitability of local conditions, will chase the Turk out of Constantinople and the other Christian countries within three years. Prominent Turkish lords have often written to His Majesty the King, promising to go over to his side as soon as he goes to war together with the Prince. It has been reported by the King's envoys sent to Egypt that the Sultan of that country and the Prince's mother also wish that Prince Djem be handed over to His Majesty the King." FRANKNOI, V.: Egy pápai követ Mátyás udvarában (A Papal envoy in King Matthias's court), Budapest 1901, p. 42.
4. "Un ambassadeur du roi de Hongrie se présente à la Cour, porteur de magnifiques présents; le Sultan l'accueillit avec beaucoup d'égards et l'hébergea dans un hotel préparé pour le recevoir." IBN IYAS: Histoire de la Dynastie des Mamelouks circassiens, trad. de G. Wiet, Vol. II, Cairo 1945, p. 284. (Publications de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, Vol. VI.). - It may be mentioned that at the same time the envoy of King Constantine II of Kartli was also negotiating in Cairo with the objective of seeking allies against the Ottoman Empire (GABASHVILI, p. 65).
5. Bonfini reports on these visits as follows: "Paucis post diebus, honestissima Turcorum legatio adfuit, qui non modo inducias, sed pacem instantissime postulabat, ut acceptam et sane gravissimam, eo

anno à Solodano in Syria cladem, compositis cum Pannone rebus ulcisceretur. Nondum ista honorifice dimissa, cum patriarcha Hierosolymitanus, Solodani Assyriae principis orator, diu expectatus advenit. Superiore namque anno, per Junium patricium Ragusinum, varia Solodanus ad regem munera vestesque Tyrias miserat. Is de iucunda cum eo societate in Turcos diligenter egit, multaque pollicebatur, si communi ductu et auspiciis expeditio ista susciperetur. Nam cum paulo ante, terra marique insigni sane clade Turcum in Syria afflixisset, ut a tergo Matthias instaret, Assyrius tyrannus nimis appetebat." (Antonii Bonfinii Historica Pannonica: Hungaricarum Rerum Decades IV. Colonia Agrippina, 1690, p. 47.

6. SZ. KOROKNAY, É.: op. cit.
7. His name is mentioned in a variety of forms: Johannes de Lazó, Johannes Lazo, Johannes Lazoynus, Johannes Lazynus, Johannes Lazimus, Laszói, Lazói, Laszai, etc.
8. NAGY, Gy.: Lazói János czimere (The coat-of-arms of János Lazói), Turul, 1890, pp. 208-10.
9. At times these journeys to the Holy Land took large-scale forms, as for instance the 1386 trip to Jerusalem of Voivode István Laczfi, Hungary's (WMDA, Vol. III, p. 613). Cf. also PÁSZTOR, L.: A magyarság vallásos élete a Jagellók korában (The religious life of the Magyars in the Jagellonian period), Budapest 1940, passim.
10. FMD, pp. 76-82.
11. WMDA, Vol. III, p. 627.
12. Finding it undesirable that Mengli, the ruler of the Crimean Tatars should grow too strong at the cost of the Golden Horde, thus upsetting the balance, Tsar Ivan III heartily welcomed Zsigmond Szántay, the envoy of Wladislas II. Szántay reached him in September 1502 with the purpose of negotiating an alliance between Russia and Hungary against the Turks and the Tatars. Cf. SPULER, p. 206.
13. FMD, pp. 72-4.
14. FOGEL, J.: II. Ulászló udvartartása (The court of Wladislas II), Budapest 1913, p. 122.
15. Eigentliche beschreibung der hin vnnd wider farth zu dem Heyligen Land gen Jerusalem etc. Ulm, 1556.
16. Die Pilgerfahrt des Bruders Felix Faber ins Heilige Land Anno MCDLXXXIII, Berlin, a.a.
17. Ibid., postscript, V. 1.
18. Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrationem ed. C.D. Hassler, Stuttgart, Vol. I, 1843.

Vol. III, 1849.

19. "...unter denen was des Königes von Hungern Capplan, Herr Hans Lazimis ein hochgelerter man, der auch zog zu S. Catherina mit mir" (1556 ed., fol. 12 vso. - fol. 13.).
20. "In tertia societate erant sex peregrini, quorum haec sunt nomina: Dominus Hainricus de Schauenberg, miles. Dominus Caspar de Siculi, miles, Dns. Sigismundus de Morspach, miles, Dns. Petrus Velsch, miles, Dns. Johannes Lazineus, archidiaconus et canonicus ecclesiae Transsylvaniensis in Hungaria, Frater Felix, Ordinis Praedicatorum de Ulm, hujus evagatorii expositor, qui praefatum dominum archidiaconum societati nostrae inserui" (Evagatorium, Vol. II, p. 108.).
21. "Non enim peregrinationem illam assumsisset, nisi sub mea confidentia, quia erat purus Hungarus, non unum verbum teutonicum sciens, sed in lingua latina et sclavonica et hungarica peritus erat. Fuit autem vir nobilis, virtuosus et doctus, orator magnus et mathematicus, qui, ut praemisi, mihi adhaesit semper, ut patebit in sequentibus" (Ibid.)
22. "Surrexerunt vero decem peregrini robustiores ad ascendendum parati in intensissimis aestibus, quorum haec nomina: dominus Johannes comes de Solms, miles ... dominus Lazineus, Archidiaconus et canonicus ecclesiae transsylvaniensis in Ungaria, frater Felix de Ulma, ordinis Praedicatorum, pater Paulus Guglinger, ordinis Minorum, frater Thomas, conversus ejusdem ordinis, et duo comitis servi, Johannes et Conradus. Hi assumtis secum aliquibus Arabibus montem arduissimum S. Chatherinae aggressi sunt." (Evagatorium, Vol. II, p. 461.).
23. "Tertia die praeparavimus nos ad recessum, sed impedimentum grande intercessit. Venit enim exercitus multorum millium Mamaluccorum de Aegypto in regionem, ita quod tota civitas erat plena armatis et regio, et tentoria fierunt per circuitum Gazarae, et dicebatur numerus eorum esse octo millia. Hos miserat rex Soldanus contra Turcomannos in Syria, ad humiliandum eos. Vagabantur autem per civitatem et multi ad nos sunt ingressi ad nos videndum, inter quos quidam Ungari venerunt, interrogantes, an aliquis peregrinus adesset de Ungaria. Et invento domino Johanne socio nostro laetati sunt valde et sub tentoriis nobiscum sederunt et nobiscum comederunt et biberunt, etiam vinam, sed occulte." (Evagatorium, Vol. II, p. 371).
24. "In tertia societate nostrae peregrinationis erat venerabilis dominus Johannes Lazineus, archidiaconus Septemecclesiastensis, doctus



orator; hic confecit sine praemeditatione subito subjectum carmen pro suis sociis:

Suscipe virgineae decus immortale coronae,  
Martyr et insignis te Catherina precor.  
Sume tui causa susceptos diva labores,  
Et licet indignis propitiare tuis.  
Pannonius primum tibi fert obsequia libens  
Julia Johannes urbe Levita procul, etc.

(Evagatorium, Vol. II, p. 499).

25. At that time the Burdjite dynasty of Georgian origin was reigning. Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, Vol. 26, p. 191.
26. Cf. Enzyklopaedie des Islams, Bd. 3., Leiden-Leipzig, 1936, p. 235.; Macaradze V.G.: Gruzinskie dokumenty iz istorii russko-gruzinsko-egipetsko-efiopskih otnoshenij 80-h godov XVIII veka. Tbilisi, 1967, str. 10-11. TOUSSOUN OMAR: La fin des Mamlouks, Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Tome XV, Session 1932-1933, 2. fasc. p. 187-215.
27. In the age of the Reformation the Mamelukes were regarded - quite erroneously - as heretics, "secret Christians".
28. "Am elften Tag Octobris kamen zu uns viel Mamelucken, das sind verleugnete Christen, und suchten, ob sie bei uns Landsleute fänden... Gar viel Ungern sind da Mamelucken, die kamen zu Herrn Hansen von Ungern, meinem Gesellen, und hatten alle Tage, dieweil wir zu Kairo waren, ihre Gespräche mit ihm. Denn sie sein Geschlecht wohl kannten und schenkten ihm herrlich nach heidnischen Sitten. Viel Guts schafft er mit ihnen, denn er ein frommer, sanfter, gelehrter Mann war, mit dem er seine Landsleute an sich zog, wohin er wollte. Viel waren unter ihnen, von denen er Versprechen nahm, die schworen ihm, dass sie gleich sobald sie könnten, wieder wollen kommen in die Christenheit und da öffentlich büssen. Auch so macht' er zwischen ihnen und ihrem Weibern christliche Ehe und gab sie recht zusammen, und wenn einer zwo oder drei Ehefrauen hatte, so liess er ihm eine und machte eine Verhandlung mit den andern. Und ungetaufte Kinder taufte er und hatt' viel Mühe mit ihnen in eines Christenmannes Haus heimlich. Derselbe war auch ein Unger und war gar ein fürnehm, vernünfftig Mann. Und war also gen Kairo kommen: Als der König von Ungern mit den Türken einmal gestritten hatt', da kam der Mann dem Türken in die hände. Aber eh' er sich fangen liess, da wehrt' er so mannhaft und ritterlich, dass alle Türken ein gross Verwundern drob hatten, und ward dem gross Türken fürbracht

als ein besonderer starker Mensch. Da hat er nun etliche Jahr gedienet dem Türken, danach hat der Türke ihn geschickt gen Kairo als eine grosse Gabe dem Sultan, dem dienet er jetzt und ist noch nicht beschnitten und hat noch nie verleugnet und will auch nicht verleugnen. Doch gehet er eben als ein gewaltiger Mameluck, und der Sultan weiss, dass er Christ ist." (1964 edition, pp. 121-122). "De nulla autem gente Christiani tot Mamaluci erant in curia Soldanis sicut de Ungaris, de quibus multi potentes et notabiles venerunt ad dominum Johannem socium nostrum de Septem Castris, quos novit et cognitus fuit ab eis" etc. (Evagatorium, Vol. III, p. 34.). Cf. POLJAK A.N.: Novye arabskie materialy pozdnego srednevekov'ja o vostočnoj i central'noj Evrope. (Vostočnye istočniki po istorii narodov jugovostočnoj i central'noj Evropy. Red. A.S. Tveritina. Moskva, 1964, str. 51.)

29. The Hungarian Mamelukes did their best to please their compatriot, János Lázói, and so that the group of pilgrims would spend the best possible time in Cairo and its surroundings. "Ob gratiam ergo domini Johannis, in qua partem meriti non minimam spero me habiturum; per me enim on hanc peregrinationem venit et nunquam eam aggressus fuisset, nisi ego eum animassem et juvissem. Ob gratiam ergo domini Johannis is praefatus Mamalucos humaniter se nobis exhibens ad multa nos loca per civitatem duxit, et secreta pleraque ostendit." (Evagatorium, Vol. II., p. 35.). "Nos autem de speciali amicitia Mamalucorum fuimus trans Nilum ducti ad pyramides" (Ibid., Vol. II., p. 43.). - In connection with János Lázói's journey see also HOVÁNYI, F.: Néhány hét a Szentföldön 1586-ban (A few weeks in the Holy Land in 1586), p. 346; PÁSZTOR, L.: A magyarság vallásos élete a Jagellók korában (The religious life of the Magyars in the Jagellonian period), Budapest 1940; pp. 115-18; 132.; MÁRKI, S.: Magyarok a Szentföldön (Hungarians in the Holy Land), Földrajzi Közlemények, 1881, pp. 147-54.
30. GABRIEL DE PECHWARODINO: Compendiosa quedam nec minus lectu iocunda descriptio vrbis Hierusalem etc. (1520) s. loc., s.a.; Cf. APPONYI, S.: op. cit. Vol. III, p. 93-5; SZÉCHY, K.: Péchváradí vagy Farnádi (Péchváradí or Farnádi), Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények 1897, pp. 143-157.
31. Liter. Fr. Gabrielis de Petriveradino ad Joann. Bánffy de Lindvadat. in littore Maris Cypri in Vigil. Assumptionis. 1517 (PRAY, G.: Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae, 1490-1711, Pozsony, 1806, Vol. I, p. 121.

32. Árpád Bitay was the first to call attention to János Lázó's journey to the Holy Land. (Az Alba Iuliai R. Kat. Székesegyház és környéke (The Roman Catholic cathedral of Alba Julia and its environment), Alba Iulia 1936, p. 10.) Lázó's life-work was discussed in an excellent monograph by Jolán Balogh: Az erdélyi renaissance (The Transylvanian Renaissance), Vol. I., Kolozsvár, 1943, passim, and Idem: A művészet Mátyás király udvarában (The arts in King Matthias's court), Budapest 1966, Vols. I-II.

C H A P T E R   N I N E

*An involuntary visitor to the Asian and African theatres of war in the 1610s: Barnabds Bélay. The participation of Hungarian "auxiliary troops" in the Turkish wars against the Persians and Egyptians.*

King Matthias, the great Hungarian renaissance ruler, the king who carried on and developed the diplomatic efforts in the east initiated by King Sigismund, died in 1490. Immediately before his death, his diplomats, trying to forge a large-scale policy of encirclement, were still operating behind the back of the Ottoman Empire, in Persia and Egypt. This little discussed fact being known, it seems fairly certain that King Matthias - who, from 1464 to the day of his death, had only made pledges to go to war against the Turks - had indeed been waiting only for conditions to come to fruition in order to make good his promises, and was prevented from doing so by his premature death. Matthias had never initiated diplomatic contacts for their own sake, without concrete interests and plans. If his objective had been only to collect information, he would not have sent large delegations to Central Asia and Africa at enormous costs. His early death broke off these probably quite promising contacts. They were resumed pretty soon, but at that time it was already a fatally weakened Hungary and a Persia in the throes of a stretched-out though temporary internal crisis which tried to find each other's helping hands across a distance of many thousands of miles.

During the reign of Wladislas II and Louis II Hungary's prestige abroad - and with it, its diplomatic initiative - declined rapidly, to vanish completely in a few years' time.

The achievement or at least initiation of diplomatic efforts

concentrating on minor objectives had been, for a good many years, still ensured by the humanist legacy built up during the decade of King Matthias. In subsequent years, however, these foreign contacts took on an entirely passive character. The initiatives came from outside and were soon bogged down in a morass of indifference and incompetence.

The great king's death was followed by rivalry for the throne, and the country's feudal lords elected Wladislas II, the contestant they presumed to be the weakest of all, to become king. Matthias's standing "Black Army", indispensable for the fight against the Turks, was disbanded. The aristocracy and middle nobility began an endless struggle for power, while the people of the land sank into unprecedented misery.

Amid the general deterioration of conditions, those on the southern frontier naturally also changed for the worse. Nine years before the death of Matthias, Mohammed II, the brilliant military leader, was succeeded on the Turkish throne by Bayazid II. Bayazid was not one of the great conquerors and did not start any large-scale offensive against Hungary, but neither did he prevent his Begs from harrassing the frontier area by constant raids into the country. In the first years of Wladislas's reign these raids were still being successfully contained; in 1501 John Corvin even managed to relieve Jajca from being constantly threatened. But the signs of impending doom were manifold, and could be discerned in the absence of supplies for the frontier troops as well as in the bad and worsening news coming in relentlessly from abroad. In 1500 war broke out between the Sultan and the Signoria of Venice, during which the Ottoman Empire conquered a further series of important Venetian possessions. Then, under the leadership of the Pope, a new grand alliance to stop the Turks was in the making. Goaded by Alexander VI, Wladislas re-

luctantly joined the alliance but this was never translated into a single action. After Venice had made a separate peace with the Sultan in 1502, Wladislas II was more than ready to follow its example, and made his own truce with the Sublime Porte in 1503 for a period of seven years, and in 1510 for another three.

For a short period, Wladislas II still tried to maintain King Matthias's world-wide diplomacy. His ambassadors, however, no longer represented a powerful, flourishing country, alliance with which was being sought by every court in the world, but a country on the verge of total collapse, torn by internal strife, in need of all support, wherever it came from.

Wladislas's diplomats also turned up in distant regions of Asia and Africa. They travelled thousands of miles on the orders of the King and his advisers amidst all kinds of vicissitudes and dangers. But there was one among them whose visit to these far-away lands was neither voluntary nor ordered by the King. We shall deal with this ambassador first. Who was he and how did he become - similarly to Matthias's Persian envoys who had seen the battle of Terdjan in 1473 - an eyewitness to the greatest African and Asian battles of the 16th century?

In 1512 the ambitious and ruthless Selim had had enough of the relatively "peaceful" rule of Bayazid II and, having had his father and brothers ruthlessly murdered, occupied the throne himself. With his unprecedented conquests, Ottoman power became stronger and more invincible than ever. First he defeated Shah Ismael of Persia who was descended from the Safavid dynasty, then annexed the countries of the Mameluke Sultan ruling in Egypt. He occupied the northern part of Persia, took Tabriz, Dyarbekr, Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo, then assumed the title of Caliph. All these campaigns were directly and uninterruptedly observed, as it were, on the spot, by Barnabás

Bélay, Wladislas II's ambassador to the Porte.

As Ban (i.e. governor) of Szörény, Barnabás Bélay had held his own in the continuous fight against the raiding Turkish begs but, as a man of great experience who also spoke foreign languages<sup>1</sup>, he was ready to serve his country in a diplomatic capacity as well. He had already made a visit to the Porte, along with Mihály Paksy, in 1503 to negotiate the terms of the seven-year truce. Following this mission he resumed his post as Ban, in charge of Szendrő and the frontier region. During this time Hungary was represented at the Porte by Máté Jurisich Horváth, followed by Pál Tomori and then Felix Petantius. Then in 1510 Bélay was sent to King Sigismund of Poland to make peace between Poland and Walachia. He accomplished his mission successfully.<sup>2</sup> Next, when it came to bargaining once again in connection with the renewal of the three-year truce of 1510 nearing its expiry, Wladislas's choice fell on him again.

He arrived in the Sultan's capital with an escort of eighty magnificently equipped Hungarian cavalymen in the year 1513.<sup>3</sup> His mission, extended for many years and is dealt with in several sources, of which the accounts of Ferenc Zay and Miklós Istvánffy are the most outstanding. Both of these authors were more or less contemporaries of Bélay. They made up their reports with the help of persons who had themselves been in touch with Barnabás Bélay.

Ferenc Zay, Captain-in-Chief of Kassa, whose own diplomatic role will be discussed later on, speaks of the mission of Barnabás Bélay in one of his works written in Hungarian<sup>4</sup> - putting the mission in a general historical context - as follows: "On seeing that he would be unable to defend Hungary by war and weapons, he himself being unfit to wage war, while the Hungarian lords (with whom he could do nothing) did not care about the defence of the country but were hating and fighting each other, while the Turk was growing in strength day

by day. King Wbdislas thought to himself that he might make a pact with the Turk and make peace with him. He sent a few prominent noblemen as ambassadors to Constantinople to the emperor Sultan Selim to conclude an agreement with him, so that there might be peace between them. The last man to be sent was Borbás Bélay, well equipped and with many companions through whom he wanted to renew the peace. But soon after Bélay had left, the King died and the country went to his son, who was very young and ignorant, in fact, still a child. When the Turkish emperor heard about this, he sent two of his men as ambassadors to the young King so that there might be peace between all future Turkish Emperors and future Hungarian Kings, he wished and asked for taxes to be paid by the country and the King. Meanwhile he made Borbás Bélay stay with him and took him to the battle he fought with Kuzul Bassa shaah Zmail (i.e. Shah Ismail of Persia - L.T.), so that he would see his might and the vast number of his men, and report it to his master and the lords of his country. And then, he started to make war on the King of Egypt, called Sultan in these parts, whom he had earlier adopted for his father so that he would not fear him, and whom he defeated by cunning, then captured and hanged, seizing in that way the whole of Egypt, Alexandria and Misr as well as a part of the country of the Saracens; during all that time he carried Bélay along, calling him, and having him called, the King of Hungary before all the people living there. He had some six thousand men, Bosnians and Serbians, dressed in Hungarian fashion, with flags written in Hungarian, to show that the Hungarian King was on his side and had come to his help, that he had been persuaded to do so. Meanwhile the intention of the Emperor was not to release Borbás Bélay but to keep him waiting for the Hungarian King's reply concerning the taxes, so that if the King agreed to the taxes, he might wage war against Kuzul



Basha and let Bélay return home with a favourable reply, and if not, he might turn against Hungary, but he was prevented from carrying out his plans by his death."

To discuss and evaluate the consequences, interesting as it may be, would be outside the scope of this book. Even so, it is clear enough from Ferenc Zay's account that Sultan Selim showed quite a feeling for psychological warfare, when he made Bélay appear in Egypt, Syria and the other oriental countries as King of Hungary, and had his six thousand Bosnians and Serbs marching around dressed in Hungarian clothes, as if they were his Hungarian auxiliary troops. But, more important, it is also clear that in the case of a greater flexibility on the part of Hungary he would have been quite ready to turn against "Kizilbash", the Persian ruler, once beaten but not yet totally defeated, and to spare Hungary. In that case also his successor, Suleiman II would have had a fait accompli on his hands and, instead of making an offensive against Hungary, his forces would have continued to be tied down in Asia for a long time.

The account of the other eminent representative of Hungarian humanist historiography, the Lieutenant-Palatine, Miklós Istvánffy, enriches our knowledge, in contrast to the account of Ferenc Zay, mainly from a subjective point of view. "Barnabás Bélay was Prefect of Szörény, situated on the banks of the Danube, at the frontier with Walachia", Istvánffy writes, "that is where the remains of the marvellous bridge built by Empéror Traian are to be found. Bélay arrived in Constantinople after Selim had seized power criminally, murdering his father, and begun a fratricidal war. His first answer to Bélay was that he could not make a decision on the question of the truce he had asked for until he could see how his war efforts were shaping up. So Bélay was to go to camp with him, and if the outcome of the campaign were decided, it would be easy to see who was to be talked

to concerning the truce. The victories were duly won but he refused to let Bélay go even after that, as long as he had not defeated the Sultan of Egypt and Syria and made him obey his rule. During these campaigns Selim took Bélay along everywhere. He was present at the famous battle in which he (Selim) occupied the town of Cairo and erased even the very name of the Mamelukes. It was only after seven years - during which he always treated Barnabás Bélay with respect and ensured pleasant circumstances for him - that he released Bélay, having given his consent to the eight-year truce. This truce covered Venice, the Polish King, the Emperor and other Cristian sovereigns as well; all except the Knights of Rhodes, against whom he was openly preparing for war. However, half a year after the departure of Barnabás Bélay, the Sultan died in Civilium, in Thrace." Istvánffy ends his discussion of Bélay's role by relating that he returned to the court of King Louis II, where he occupied important positions and enjoyed general respect till the end of his life. "He told many things to the King and the prominent people at the court about the customs and history of the Turks and the Mamelukes, known also as Circassians. These latter had been unknown before. He spoke of the fertility of the Egyptian soil, the beneficial nature of the Nile, and the like. He kept on insisting that the Nile was no bigger than the Danube, its bed no wider, nor had its delta more branches than the Danube at its mouth."<sup>5</sup>

The adventures of Barnabás Bélay in Asia and Africa lived on vividly for a long time in the minds of the Hungarian diplomats of later times, and the story of Wladislas II's ambassador, complemented with fresh details, was often revived.<sup>6</sup>

Despite a few differences between them, both versions agree that Barnabás Bélay was only an involuntary companion to Sultan Selim during his campaigns, and not, as certain sources<sup>7</sup> suggest, a prisoner.

Barnabás Bélay's last diplomatic action by the way, was to sign

the three-year truce with the Turkish ambassador Kamal at Buda on 28 March, 1519. The agreement came into force on 1 April of the same year.<sup>8</sup>

The country's humanist historians did not generally include very many subjective or personal details in their works dealing with Hungary's history. It is therefore all the more interesting and important that Istvánffy devotes considerable space to Barnabás Bélay's account of his experiences, lending special emphasis to the fact that "he told many things...about the customs and the history of the Mamelukes, also known as Circassians." And he also adds that nobody had heard of these things before. It is quite obvious, however, that all the information brought back from Egypt by the great king's official and unofficial diplomats could not have been entirely forgotten at the court less than three decades after Matthias's death, when there were a number of people still around who had served under Matthias as well. Istvánffy himself, however, was removed by two generations from Matthias's age, so it seems more likely that this information was new to him only, as he had obtained it at second hand.

Beyond Zay's and Istvánffy's rather abridged descriptions, the story that Barnabás Bélay was able to tell at the court was in all likelihood the most exciting war account of the age, an account which ought to have had a mobilizing effect on the King and the people around him, jolting them out of their lives of idleness and pleasure-seeking.<sup>9</sup>

Selim was one of those Turkish rulers who realized that it was unreasonable to expand their power simultaneously in Europe and Asia. First he wanted to settle his account with Persia re-established on an enormous scale under the Safavid dynasty, and with Georgia, whose war of self-defence disturbed his plans for expansion. His janisaries, hungry for booty, also urged him to go after the riches of Persia.

Having captured his brothers and their children partly by force, partly by trickery, and having had them executed, Selim marched against Persia and Georgia through Amassia and the Armenian mountains in the spring of 1514. With a rebellion of the janissaries, the campaign got off to a bad start but Selim soon reasserted his control. The decisive battle, one of extraordinary dimensions, took place on the Chaldiran plain. It started badly, too; according to eyewitness accounts, the well-rested, armoured cavalry of the Persians already had victory at their fingertips. The superior fire-power of the otherwise exhausted Turks, however, won the day, and after the Shah himself had been wounded, the Persian army deserted the field.

Selim was wise enough to know that he had won a single battle only, enormous as the booty was. He marched triumphantly into Tabriz - the town remained in Turkish hands for some time afterwards - but then the most difficult part of the campaign followed, the return home through wild mountains alive with enemy soldiers. The army was suffering from hunger and from the constant raids of the Georgians.<sup>10</sup> After Selim had managed to blackmail the ruler of Samtzhké (southern Georgia), a country bordering on Armenia, into providing him with enough food, the army continued on its way and marched into Constantinople with its rich booty.

Next spring he was off again on a new campaign, conquering another part of Armenia. Then he took a year's rest - he continued to keep Barnabás Délay with him - after which he went to battle again, this time to dethrone the Egyptian Sultan, the moral leader of the Moslem world, the custodian of the holy places, who also bore the title of Padishah. Kanshu el Gauri, the last but one Mameluke Sultan, put up a heroic defence at the head of his army, but his forces were overwhelmed by the superiority of the Turks. The Emir of Aleppo was defeated first, then, after several bloody battles, the last Sultan

of Egypt, Tuman Bey, was captured, publicly humiliated and finally executed by Selim.

His enormous Asian and African conquests made, Selim returned home in order to gather new strength before turning to Europe. His death prevented him from carrying out his plans, but his son and heir, Suleiman, continued his father's work.

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Barnabás Bélay was a direct witness to the process during which the territory and power of the Ottoman Empire were doubled within a few short years.

There are two explanations of the question as to why Sultan Selim kept the Hungarian ambassador with him, and with signal favour at that. He wanted to prevent Bélay, a man quite familiar with the affairs of the Porte and with a great deal of first-hand experience, from delivering his information earlier that was desirable. On the other hand, we know from Verancsics that Selim, well versed as he was in the art of oriental diplomatic designs, counted also on the effect of the reports of the Hungarian envoy, giving his account of the enormous Turkish victories afterwards, undermining any faith in successful resistance, thus preparing the ground for some kind of peaceful surrender.

These, of course, are mere hypotheses even if they derive from Zay and Istvánffy. It is a fact, though, that Bélay's reports convinced neither King Louis II nor his advisers.

Let us next turn to the court of Buda to see how possessed of King Matthias's diplomatic legacy in the orient, his successors, Wladislas II and Louis II and their advisers, tried to revive his anti-Turkish policy of encirclement.

Notes to chapter 9

1. FOGEL, J.: II. Ulászló udvartartása (The court of Wladislas II), Budapest 1913, p. 123.
2. PESTY, F.: A szörényi bánság és Szörény vármegye története (The history of the Banat of Szörény and County Szörény), Vol. I, Budapest 1877, p. 386.
3. HURMUZAKI, Vol. VIII, pp. 42-43. Document No. LIII.
4. "Az Landorfejevárvár elvesztésének oka e vót és így esött (The cause of the loss of Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) and the way it happened)", in: VERANCSICS, Vol. II, pp. 123-7. Its authorship was for a long time attributed to Verancsics. However, the chronicle "Memoria rerum quae in Hungaria a nato rege Ludovico ultimo acciderunt", written in Hungarian and dealing with Bélay in a similar way, is undisputably the work of Verancsics. (VERANCSICS, Vol. II, pp. 3-118.)
5. "Barnabas in Ludovici aula deinde multis annis clarus, amnibusque gratus vitam transegit, multaque ei et Proceribus aulae de Turcarum atque Mamalucorum seu Circassorum (utroque enim nomine appellabantur) rebus et moribus, qui ante apud eos erant obscuriores, foecunditateque Aegypti soli, et Nili incrementis, atque aliis talibus narrare solebat; quem quidem Danubio majorem esse, aut latiori alveo, pluribusque quam Danubium ostiis decurrere, et mari misceri, constanter negabat." (ISTVÁNFY M.: Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis libri XXXIV. Viennae, 1758, p. 54.)
6. Dávid Rozsnyai, Michael Apafi's ambassador to the Porte, who visited Constantinople first in 1663 as "Turkish cleric, then returned there several times between 1669 and 1675 as a "dispatch bearer" refers to the famous Hungarian commander and diplomat by the Croatian nickname "Barba Babla" under which he was well known in the southern frontier area. He relates the events as follows:

"At that time the King of Hungary was Ladislas, the Father of Louis who was lost at Mohács. To set things right, or to make a new peace, the King sent the famous captain of the fort of Szörin in Vég-szenderő, Barba Babla, as his envoy to the Porte.

"The envoy arrived at the Porte when the emperor had just died. Still in his life time, he had designated his elder son Ahmed as his successor. His above-mentioned younger son, however, whose quality was fixed in his cognomen and was called Sultan Se-

lim the Evil, revolted against his father's will, and against the succession of his brother, still in the life of his father, and occupied the throne. The father fell ill and died; to the violent son was reported the arrival of the Hungarian ambassador, at which he replied that the envoy should wait until the Empire was stabilized. In a short time he exterminated his younger brother with all his adherents and made himself plenipotentiary ruler, but he still did not give his reply to the Hungarian ambassador but sent him word to prepare himself for going to war together with him. Gathering an enormous army, he set out against Egypt.

"In this war he dispensed with two great and famous royal Sultans, one of whom was cut down in battle and the other hanged in Egypt. Eliminating them, he overran and occupied Egypt, Beth-lehem, Damascus and Jerusalem.

"After that he killed those great and famous Máma Lukay (i.e. Mameluke - L.T.) or Circassian people almost to the last man, and occupied their great metropolis called Menkes, which is now Mesopotamia. During all this time, whether he was at home or going to battle, he took the Hungarian ambassador along everywhere. The latter spent seven years at the side of Emperor Selim who, after seven years of reign, granted peace to the Hungarians through the ambassador for eight years, a peace in which the Germans, Poles and Italians were all included, exceptis Rhodensibus, whom he attacked and conquered. After all this he sent Barba Babla back to the King with great honour, and with great gifts for the King. But before he could arrive in Buda the King died and was succeeded by Louis." (Rozsnyai Dávid, az utolsó török deák történelmi maradványai (The historical papers of Dávid Rozsnyai, the Turkish cleric), edited by Szilágyi, S., Pest, 1867, p. 27.)

7. GELCICH, J.: *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum regno Hungariae, 1358-1535*, Budapest 1887, pp. 677-8.
8. THALLÓCZY, L. - HORVÁTH, S.: *Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár (Lower Slavonian Documents), Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára, Vol. III*, Budapest 1912, pp. 279-86.
9. "Emperor Selim of Turkey returned from the country of Egypt, having defeated Egypt, killed its Sultan together with his son, occupied his empire with all its countries, including the country of the Jews with Jerusalem and the country of the Saracens. In this war the ambassador of Hungary, Barnabás Bélyay was with him all along."

"Returning from war, Sultan Selim released Borobás Bélay. He came home in the year 1518 and foretold all the great disasters that would come to the Hungarians because of the Turks." (Memoria rerum quae in Hungaria a nato rege Ludovico ultimo acciderunt, qui fuit ultimi Ladislai filius, VERANCSICS, Vol. II, pp. 14-15.)

10. This is described in a very interesting way by LEUNCLAVIUS, pp. 701-704.



C H A P T E R   T E N

*The joint war plan of the Shah, the Pope and the King of Hungary against the Ottoman Empire. Shah Ismail's letter to Louis II three years before the Battle of Mohács. Peter Maronite, ambassador at large of the Shah, Louis II of Hungary and the Emperor.*

Around 1507 Europe, well aware of the Turkish threat but torn by profound conflicts, still pinned all its hopes on the re-established and expanding Persia of the Safavid dynasty, or rather on its ruler Ismail Safi. Matthias's contacts with Persia must have been well remembered in the west, especially as these contacts, although they naturally lost some of their intensity, continued to exist.

In 1507 Pope Julius II, having learned that Shah Ismail Safi was at war with the Turks and showed goodwill towards the Christians, wrote to the King of Portugal: "Here is a great opportunity to engage in a large-scale venture against the damned Turks, since their force has been greatly weakened by the Persian King, and goes on growing weaker day by day."<sup>1</sup> The Pope wanted to win this powerful oriental ruler over to both the Church and the anti-Turkish military campaign. To be able to carry out his plan, he sought the advice and help of King Matthias's successor, Wladislas II. His letter, dated 16 June, 1508 in Rome, reads as follows:

"To his Majesty, the King of Hungary. Part of the industry of our office as Pontiff being to arrange not only the affairs of the present but also to care diligently for the future, as well as to promote the spreading of the true faith at all times, having heard about the power which, according to the news, the false

prophet Safi has in plenty, and which power is growing stronger from day to day by his victories, moved by our desire to call him back to the light of the true faith, we have made it our intention to send a virtuous and learned monastic to him, whose activity and speech may move him. But, since we have been informed by Peter Cardinal Rheginus, the protector of your countries<sup>2</sup>, and your ambassador, that your Majesty - moved by your unsurpassed zeal concerning the Christian faith - has already sent one of your trusted men there, to receive news about the successes of the Safi from day to day; it is our firm intention that we shall decide nothing in this matter without your advice; therefore we urge your Majesty with love to inform us of the life, customs, power and intentions of the above-mentioned Safi, and to tell us whom you judge fit to be entrusted with this great task. Your Majesty will be informed about this matter in more details by your ambassador, with whom we have in fact discussed this matter at length and on many occasions. Dated from Rome, on the 16th of June, 1508, in the fifth year of our pontificate."<sup>3</sup>

Pope Julius II's letter tells us that in this period the Hungarian King had already sent one of his trusted men to Persia, and also that the Holy See, too, wanted to send its own representative to the court of Ismail Safi.

The name of the Hungarian diplomat staying at the Shah's court on the order of Wladislas II at that time is not known. However, it is certain that his reports to the King's advisers could only speak about the encouraging growth of the Persian power. It was in these years that Ismail Safi occupied Transoxania and Horassan, and in 1510 he defeated Sheibani Khan, the ruler of the Uzbek Empire.<sup>4</sup> There can be little doubt that these reports contributed to the erroneous view, long predominant in the Hungarian court, underrating the imminent Ottoman threat and hoping for too much from the power

of the Asian enemies of the Turks.

These hopes, however, were soon dispelled, albeit temporarily. After Bayazid's relatively peaceful rule, Selim occupied the throne. Selim did not engage in any large-scale military venture in Europe, but those who were far-seeing - first and foremost Pope Leo X who took office in 1513 - were fully convinced that, after having conquered the East, the Ottoman Empire would immediately turn its weapons against the West. At the eighth session of the Lateran Council a Bull was read by the Archbishop of Siena, demanding a crusade to help the two most threatened countries, Hungary and Poland. The Pope sent ambassadors to the European sovereigns to bring about a general agreement so that the campaign could start as soon as possible. Concerning Hungary, on the basis of a less than accurate knowledge of the facts, he stated that "although that country is strong enough in itself and ready for battle, it will not be able to stand fast in such a great storm alone", so the Emperor should ally himself with Hungary.<sup>5</sup> However, Hungary, which he thought to be strong, was going downhill rapidly because of internal strife, and soon received a terrible blow. The crushing of the 1514 peasant revolt and the ensuing bloodbath not only deprived the country of manpower and soldiers ready to fight but made the nation's majority, now outcasts without rights, completely indifferent to the country's fate.

Hardly three months after the peasant movement led by György Dózsa had been liquidated with an unprecedented cruelty, a suicidal move fatally weakening the country's military power, Persia, preparing to crush the Ottoman Empire, was also dealt an enormous blow. The battle of Chaldiran on 23 August, 1514, ended in a defeat of the forces of Shah Ismail Safi.

Reasonably enough, however, the Shah thought that he had lost only a battle, and that his power was still intact. The persecution

of the Shiites by Sultan Selim only strengthened his determination to continue his struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Once again, he looked for a European alliance as the way out.<sup>6</sup>

In 1515 Giovanni Rotta, the physician of the Venetian consulate in Aleppo, a man with a great knowledge of the orient, had the following to report to Leonardo Loredan, the Doge of Venice: "it is less than a month since the bearers of fresh news coming from the spot arrived here. One of them reported that the Shah of Persia had sent an ambassador to his Majesty the King of Hungary with the message that the fight against the Turks had begun, and he would soon commit a large force to fight on the other side. The mission, however, had been discovered and its members captured in the area of Angora. The ambassador was taken to Constantinople and massacred together with his suite."<sup>7</sup>

The Pope became enthusiastic about the Persian offer, and his dogged organizatory work also seemed to be successful; he brought about peace between Emperor Maximilian and the French King. His energy remained unbroken even when he received word that Selim's forces had overrun Egypt in 1517. In fact he redoubled his efforts at organizing a crusade. Interestingly enough, this great Turkish military success created a new wave of deceptive hope in Europe's royal courts - including that of Hungary - for the word was that because of the Mamelukes' bitter resistance Selim's triumph was only a kind of Pyrrhic victory, and his army lost so much blood that it would not be able to turn against Europe for a long time to come. The Franciscan monk Gábor Pécsváradi, who travelled to the Holy Land as a pilgrim, sent detailed information on the events in one of his reports to János Bánffy of Lendva, the future Palatine. Friar Gábor left for the Holy Land in the year when Hungary was in the throes of the great peasant war. He was in Jerusalem when the

master of the Holy Land, the Egyptian Sultan Kansu Gauri, was defeated by Sultan Selim near Aleppo, on the plains of Dabik, on 24 August, 1516, and lost his life while trying to escape. Aleppo, Damascus and the whole of Syria fell into Turkish hands. He was also there when the forces of Tuman Bey, the last Egyptian Sultan, were destroyed on 28 October, 1516, and Tuman Bey himself was captured and hanged by a triumphant Selim. Indeed, Friar Gabriel stayed close to the events throughout, and his accounts complement the other sources in a very interesting way. His information was based on those of the Hungarian Mamelukes in Jerusalem, with whom he had close contacts. According to them, Selim had set out from Constantinople with three hundred thousand troops, of whom no more than sixty-thousand remained. So if the English, Spanish, French and other European sovereigns rallied together, they could wipe out the remaining Turkish forces completely, all the more so as the Mamelukes themselves would much rather live under Christian rule than serve the Turks. The remaining Mamelukes in fact had already made contact with the Persian ruler, and would soon strike at the Turks together. "Take up arms at once against the Turks", he writes, "for a favourable opportunity like this will never come again!" He closes his letter with the promise that he will speak about all this in much greater detail personally.<sup>8</sup>

The finished plan containing all the details was sent by the Pope to every sovereign. Each and every country received thorough instructions on the ways in which it was to participate in the grand venture. Louis II, who had meanwhile become King, was warned by the Pope to be the most prepared, as the one closest to the danger. The plan - and the counter-plan of the German princes as well - counted on the Persian alliance to a very large measure. Accordingly, the Emperor and the Kings planned to begin the cam-

paign in the summer of 1518. They would start the operations in Africa, where they expected to be joined by the subverted rulers and nations, march through Egypt and coordinate their strategy with the Shah of Persia. At the same time, King Sigismund of Poland would attack the neighbouring Turkish provinces with his Hungarian, Polish, Walachian, Silesian and Austrian forces. In the second year - in 1519 - the African expedition would be continued by Emperor Maximilian and the King of Portugal, who would then be joined by the King of England as well. After they had crossed the Nile, the Shah of Persia would enter the war. At the same time, Francis, the King of France would invade Bosnia through Croatia, while the Polish King would continue the previous year's offensive, then join forces with the French. They would lay siege to Philippopolis and Adrianople together, and then, using the latter as their base, destroy the Turkish territories. In the third year of the war the African campaign would end and the army would return; by that time a suitable port should be seized, where the two armies could unite, attack Constantinople, cross over into Asia Minor and conquer it jointly with the Persian forces, thus finishing the war. Half of Anatolia, the whole of Karamania and Armenia would be given to the Shah, while the rest of the conquered provinces would be divided among the Christian rulers by an elected tribunal...<sup>9</sup>

The whole of Europe, including Hungary was in an enthusiastic mood. In his letter to Balacco Balacchi, dated 1 July, 1518, Louis II still wrote: "I hope that I shall erase the very name of the Turks."<sup>10</sup>

Several studies suggest that the idea of an anti-Turkish alliance between the Shah of Persia and the western powers had actually been conceived by the advisers of King Louis II, or rather revived by them. Louis II had already become engaged to Maria, the sister of the

future Emperor, on 20 May, 1515. With that he became a close relative to the Habsburgs, thanks to which the diplomatic initiative of Hungary, now at the front line - or, more exactly, in extreme danger - could take on world-wide dimensions.

In 1523 the following letter was brought to King Louis II from Shah Ismail Safi by a Lebanese Maronite, Friar Peter by name, the date of whose first visit to the Hungarian court is not known.

"To the King of Hungary.

"Praise be to the great God, the glorious, the pure and the good, who has no equal among kings, to the supremest, matchless in His creations, who brightens the day by the Sun and ornates the night by the Moon which reflects the light of the Sun; and who, from the mud of the earth, created Adam in the best form that there is, and who, putting the world and all beings to order, sent Kings and princes to the Earth, so that they should do right in the world and its farthest parts as well. And may this God save us from all evil and make us immortal by our seeking and desiring Him, amen, amen, amen.

"As you know, wisest King, we have sent you letters several times, and informed you how the King of the Turks and the descendant of the Ottomans, wrote to us more than once that he had decided to conquer the whole of Hungary, for - as he says - if he has it subjugated, he will easily overwhelm the other Christians as well. So I must not be missing from his side in this magnificent action, rather I should occupy that country together with him; he urges and asks me very much to do so. And in order to lure us into participating in this affair, he often writes to us also about the conditions of Hungary and its state of affairs. But as my intention is far from being the same as his, he has not even succeeded in making me give an open answer in this matter; on the contrary, it is you that I wish to help at all times, and I want forever to share your destiny, be it in peace or

war. I pledge therefore to aid you against the King of the Turks as well as against any other enemy of yours, if, in the month of April, you will take care to attack the enemy from the far side, as we shall do from our side. Moreover, we have learned that a town, and a very rich town in your territory, too, has been besieged and captured by the enemy, which is painful and hard to endure for us, too. Yet although we have written to you earlier already about this matter, we have not received any reply; we are nevertheless giving this letter now to the monk Friar Peter; and by this letter we urge you very strongly and beg you: rise up at last and - as befits strong men - go to war and turn your weapons at last against the enemy. And do not expect any further letter on this subject from me in the future; for we are separated by an enormous distance from each other, and it is not easy to find trustworthy envoys who could carry our letter to you, to urge you to start the war.

Also, I have received word about the war which you have been waging among yourselves for a long time; this thing has caused us great pain, and that pain will make us suffer as long as peace is not made between the Christian kings. But let this suffice, for I believe that it is concise and unambiguous speech that befits your royal highness most. The end. Written in the month of Sewwal, in the 929th year of the Arabs. Glory be to God, the Lord of both worlds, till Eternity, amen, amen, amen.

The humblest of servants, the greatest of friends, Kaba Ismail Safi, son of Kaybi Haidar."<sup>11</sup>

Ismail's letter thus tells us that he sent envoys to the Hungarian court several times.

Peter of Lebanon turned up next at the Imperial Diet in Nuremberg. On 15 January, 1524, the following report was sent from there to the Emperor by J. Hannart: "An envoy has arrived here from Safi,



the King of the Persians. He says that he has been instructed by his master to visit your Majesty...This man has brought letters written in Arabic which have been taken to Rome to be translated so that their contents can be learned. The vicomte had many discussions with him and found him extremely intelligent. This man says that there is nothing the Persian Shah desires more than to find sympathy and to become friends with the leaders of Christendom so that they can start a war against the Turks together. As he says, he has come here to find out about the intention of these leaders of Christendom. - This man is regarded as a virtuous and honest man, not a spy, and it has been recognized that he has already visited Rome and Hungary at other times as the emissary of the Persian ruler. Here he met the ambassador who had visited the Shah six years ago, and he proved that he had seen him there and that he really stood in the service of the Shah."<sup>12</sup> After this the Persian envoy was dispatched to Charles V, and the Shah's message - after having been translated in Rome - was also sent to Burgos.

This letter points out two important facts above all. Ismail Safi's letter - a letter whose preamble, indicating a wealth of astrological knowledge, and in a general humanistic tone with an oriental touch, are worlds apart from the well known verbosity and double-talk of Turkish court correspondence - had really been written in Persia and in Persian, and was translated into Latin in Rome. But, more important, the identity of the envoy was established beyond doubt at the Nuremberg Imperial Diet, in which Hungary's representatives also took part; he had been seen in earlier years at the Shah's court as well as in Hungary.

We already know that Pope Julius II, as indicated by his letter to Wladislas II, had wanted to send his own representative to Persia. His successor, Leo X, established very close relations with the

Syrian Maronites, organizing something like an observation post there. He sent an internuncio to them in 1514<sup>13</sup>, following which the Maronite Patriarch pledged obedience to him,<sup>14</sup> and in 1516 the Maronites pledged obedience even to the internuncio.<sup>15</sup> Thus it was quite reasonable for the Pope, keeping close watch on the events in Persia, to choose an intermediary from among the Maronite monks, who were completely familiar with oriental matters. This choice must have been Peter of Lebanon, who visited the Pope, Louis II, the Diet of Nuremberg and then Charles V as the diplomatic representative of the Persian ruler.

At the 1524 Imperial Diet in Nuremberg Hungary was represented by János Gosztonyi, the Bishop of Győr, and Ambrus Sárkány of Ákosháza, the Chief Justice. Both were very close associates of Louis II. They knew every ambassador ever to appear in his court, so they were the right persons to dispel any doubt concerning the identity and mission in Buda of Peter of Lebanon.

From the Imperial Diet of Nuremberg, Peter of Lebanon continued his journey to Charles V.

As a report by Simpson, the English ambassador, indicates, Peter of Lebanon appeared at the court in Burgos on 1 July, 1524.<sup>16</sup> He delivered Shah Ismail Safi's letter to Charles V. The letter, beginning again with an eloquent preamble convinced in the choicest oriental style, informed the great sovereign of the west that "Friar Peter has brought us the letter of the Hungarian King, the contents of which we have understood. We are giving the present letter of ours to this Friar Peter, and we believe that you will be glad to receive it. We ask you most emphatically to fulfil what is contained in it, so that we shall attack our common enemy, you from there and myself from here, simultaneously in the month of April. I wonder why the Christians wage war against each other when that encourages the enemy. That is why we wrote to the Hungarian King of Kings, that he

must beware of this enemy, who has begun large-scale military preparations, for he wants to attack you, and has often urged me in letters and through his envoys to ally myself with him for this outrageous crime."<sup>17</sup>

This letter by Ismail Safi proves beyond doubt that Peter of Lebanon completed at least two, but in all likelihood more, missions between the Persian and the Hungarian court.<sup>18</sup>

The Shah's letter was taken by the Emperor with all the respect due to a sovereign of equal rank<sup>19</sup>, but this act was not followed by any immediate, concrete measure. For, despite the information he had received, the Emperor, a man of a suspicious nature, still had doubts whether Friar Peter coming from Buda was indeed an ambassador or just an adventurer, or perhaps a spy, equipped with clever forgeries. He let more than a year go by - a vitally important year perhaps - without doing anything. It was on 25 August, 1525, a year before the Battle of Mohács, that he finally made up his mind to write a letter which, however, contained nothing but vague generalities about his willingness to cooperate.<sup>20</sup>

That, of course, could no longer influence the course of events. When Charles V. was writing his reply in Toledo, Ismail Safi was already dead. His successor, Shah Tahmasp, realized that he could not rely on his far-away allies who were dissipating their forces in wars against each other anyway, and he refrained from starting any offensive against the Ottoman Empire throughout his reign.

Peter of Lebanon went on operating as liaison man between Persia and the European powers for a long time afterwards, but his role from that time on, was less important from the Hungarian point of view. On 18 February, 1529, Charles V, moved by the events in Europe, made an attempt, now on his own initiative but also on behalf of Ferdinand I of Hungary, to revive the alliance offered by the Shah of

Persia years before. Among other things, the letter of credence written for his envoy, Jean de Balby, contains the following: "Impart it to the great King of Persia that in 1525 the Lebanese Maronite, Peter, was here before us in our town of Toledo, with his Majesty's letters, These letters urged that we should join forces against the Turks, and that we should be ready by the April following the date of these letters, which, however, had already passed when the letters were received. This circumstance, as well as the fact that the above-named King had meanwhile died, compelled us to consider our position. That is the reason why we put off replying, in order to become more certain about the intentions of the great Persian King, and also because we were gravely ill at the time and were engaged in a great war with the King of France. In the meantime, by the grace of the Almighty, the King, after our great victories over him, became our captive. Seeing however, that no other news was forthcoming from the King of Persia, we sent the above-named man, asking the Persian King to resume this good, just and holy endeavour. And in order to be able to devote all our strength to this cause, we began peace talks with the French King, and sent him back to his country, so that in return for peace he might aid us in the war against the Turk. This King, however, broke his word and made contact, together with the Venetians, with the Turks. And the Turks broke into Hungary, with such an enormous force that they defeated our late royal brother-in-law, who lost his life in the battle. And after his death he was succeeded by our younger brother on the throne of Hungary, who drove out the Voivode (i.e. King János Szapolyai), who had invaded the country under Turkish protection. Because of these troubles neither myself nor my brother the King of Hungary have yet found the opportunity to make an offensive against the Turks. That is why we postponed resuming contact with the King of Persia until now, when we have made up our mind to

tie down the Turks in every possible way, by deploying our forces in Italy. Our younger brother, the King of Hungary will do the same in the Hungarian regions."<sup>21</sup>

Balby's mission, however, was a failure. Shah Tahmasp had by that time made peace with the Turks, and was unwilling to break it. On the further activities of Friar Peter of Lebanon, the tireless traveller between Persia and Hungary, our sources are silent.

Notes to chapter 10

1. ZINKEISEN, Vol. II, p. 557.
2. Peter Isvalies, Archbishop of Reggio (Calabria), Cardinal of the Church of S. Ciriacco of Rome, Papal Legate in Hungary from 1501; in 1503 he became Bishop of Veszprém by commendment. He died on 11 September, 1511 in Cesena in Italy. - FRAKNÓI, V.-LUKCSICS, J.: A veszprémi püspökség római oklevéltára (The Roman documents of the See of Veszprém), Budapest 1896-1907. Intr. p. 253, Vol. IV, pp. 100, 102, 104, 112, 117 and following 1.
3. RAYNALDUS, Vol. XX, anno 1508, n. 14.
4. MEDZIBRODSZKY, E.: A XVI-XVII. századi török-perzsa háborúk történetének kérdéséhez (On the problem of the history of the Turkish-Persian wars of the 16-17th centuries), Acta Historica, Tomus X, Szeged, 1962, p. 24.
5. MISKOLCZY, p. 42.
6. RAYNALDUS, Vol. XX, anno 1514, num. 42, anno 1515, num. 53.
7. "...warlichen von denen haben wir newe vnd frische, von eim Monet her vnd minder die von den orten kumen. Einer sagte das der Sophi hette geschickt einen von seinem potschafften zu der majestat des Königs von Vngern das er kriegte wieder den Turcken warumb der gesprochen Sophi wurde im bald sein auff der andern seyten mit eim grossen here. Welche pottschaftt wurde entdeckt nahe in Angori vnd wurdt gefangen vnd gefurt in Constantinopoli vnd von stundan wurdt er zu stucken zerhawen mit aller seiner geselschaftt."  
(ROTTA JOHANNES, de Ertzney doctor: Das Leben vnnnd gewonheyt vnd Gestalt des Sophi Kunigh der Persien vnd der Medier vnd von vill andern Kunigreichen vnd Landt etc. S.l., 1515 (fol. A<sub>6</sub> v.). Cf. Tractatus de differentiis schismatum et conciliorum ... ab Iohanne Maierio. Lipsiase, 1572, p. 154.
8. PRAY, G.: Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae, Pozsony 1806, Vol. I, pp. 121-125. Cf. HATALA, P.: Pécsváradi Gábor utazása a Szentföldre, (Gábor Pécsváradi's journey to the Holy land) Magyar Sion, 1886. - Hatala's work, in fact does not tell a single word about Gábor Pécsváradi's letter to János Bánffy, published by Pray.
9. ARTNER, pp. 43-46.
10. Miskolczy, p. 53.
11. "Sophi Regis persarum Epistolae ad Carolum Imperatorem et Ludovicum Regem Hungariae, quibus perpetuum foedus pollicetur, eosque

- ad arma socia in immanissimum Turcarum regem capienda summpore hortatur, dolens vices Christianorum qui se continuis bellis dilanient, und Otthomanicum imperium latius propagare possit. S.a., s.loc., (2 fol. vso), National Széchényi Library, Budapest, BRK Ant. 3055. Cf. WENZEL, G.: Marino Sanuto világkrónikájának Magyarországot illető tudósításai (The accounts concerning Hungary of Mario Sanuto's World Chronicle), Budapest, 1878, Vol. III, pp. 312-4. Shah Ismail Kaba's above letter with slight variations in the text. See also EFENDIEV O.A.: Obrazovanie azerbajdzanskogo gosudarstva sefevidov v načale XVI. veka. Baku, 1961, str. 123, 140-142.
12. "Il est icy venu vng homme de par Sophi, roy de Persia, lequil dit auoir charge de son maistre, pour aller deuers sa majesté. Et a prié a mons<sup>r</sup>, quil y puisse estre guyde et mene. Ledit homme apporte lettres escriptes en langaige arabique, lesquelles lon a enuoye par poste a Romme pour les translater et entendre le contenu. Ledit visconte a tousiours parle audit homme, que ledit Sophie ne desire riens tant que dauoir intelligence et amitie avec les shiefs de la christiennete, pour faire guerre paresemble au Turcq, et que a cest effect il est venu pardeca, pour entendre la volunté desdits chiefs de la christienneté. - Iceluy homme est repute pour homme de bien et veritable et non espye, et a este recongnu par ce quil a autrefois encoires eu charge depar ledit Sophie a Romme et Hongrie, et y a icy avec le legat qui a este depuis VI ans vers ledit Sophie, et a certiffie lauoir illecques veu, et quil est seruiteur dudit Sophie. Et a ceste cause mondit seigneur lennoye presentement deuers sa majesté, affin quelle verra estre necessaire." LANZ pp. 132-133.
13. RAYNALDUS, Vol. XX, anno 1514, num. 87.
14. Ibid., anno 1514, num. 88.
15. Ibid., anno 1516, num. 8.
16. MERRIMAN, p. 301.
17. "...facimus te certiozem, fratrem Petrum ad nos peruenisse cum litteris regis Hungariae, in quibus contenta intelleximus. Eidem igitur fratri Petro ad uos presentes damus, haud ingratas (ni fallor) vobis futuras. Quibus quam vehementissime obsecro satagatis, et exeuntes in comunem hostem, vos idem isthac, nos vero hac, simul in Thurcarum regem Othomanum impetum mense aprilis faciamus. Itaque tempus decretum inter nos ad bellum gerendum erit a mense aprilis, quo ad eo negocio deo iuuante penitus nos absoluamus. Ora-

tor regis Lusitaniae ad nos olim per Theurim venit, cum prefato regi scripsimus, neque tamen vllvm responsum regium hucusque suscepi. Ex plerisque subditis Thurcarum christianos sese simulantibus hic intellexi, inter christianorum reges bella vigere. Quod equidem miramur; adauget namque ea res hosti animos. Idcirco scripsimus regi regum Hungariae, caueat hostem prefatum, qui delectum ingentem habet, decernens vobiscum manum conserere, et sepe me literis legatisque sollicitare omni diligentia curauit" etc. LANZ, Vol. I., pp. 52-53. - According to Lanz's transcription the letter was written in the month of shewal of the 924th year after the Hegira. However, knowing this letter's counterpart written to Louis II, the variant of the letter addressed to Louis II as included in Sanuto's chronicle, as well as print no. 3035 of the National Széchenyi Library (RRK Ant.), we must completely agree with Piot who, without any knowledge of these, places the letter in question in the year 929 after the Hegira, i.e. 1522. PIOT, C.: Relations diplomatiques de Charles-Quint avec le Perse et la Turquie. Messenger des Sciences Historiques de Belgique, 1843, pp. 44-70.

18. "Es war daher nicht verwunderlich, wenn man dem Gesandten Petrus, einem Maronitem aus dem Libanon, der schon für mehrere diplomatische Missionen des Schas und des Patriarchen von Antiochia nach Rom und Ungarn verwendet worden war..." (NECK, p. 67.)
19. Ibid., p. 68.
20. LANZ, pp. 168-9.
21. IBID. pp. 294-5. (Abridged translation.)



C H A P T E R   E L E V E N

*In the footsteps of the Anonymous writer of Sadszebes: Bartholomaeus Georgievics. Archbishop Szalkai's page is captured by the Turks at Mohdos. Asia Minor through the eyes of a slave. His work as a writer and his influence on European public opinion.*

Besides professional travellers, i.e. diplomats and couriers maintaining contact with them, in this century we again find many Hungarians in the distant lands of Asia and Africa, who did not traverse those distances as privileged diplomats or pilgrims protected by the law of hospitality but trod the paths of these regions painfully in chains, prodded along by guards. For more than a century now, the Turks had been taking prisoners, both soldiers and civilians, whom they carried into slavery. Few of them ever returned from captivity, even fewer put their experiences on paper, and there are hardly any whose notes survived through the centuries.

At first sight these luckless Hungarian travellers have little to do with diplomacy, or with diplomats sent to each other by kings and princes. In these centuries, however, the local and linguistic knowledge gained in captivity was at least equal to the best practical and theoretical education, and, in fact, provided future diplomats with a great deal more useful information than the scholarly learning offered by the Italian universities. Miklós Szerecsen, captured after the battle of Nicopol, was able later on to make good use in the service of his country of the experience and linguistic knowledge he had acquired during his long, bitter years of captivity. On the other hand, ambassadors about to leave for distant

lands could, and often did, prepare for their mission by studying the notes of former captives who spent years in a dozen countries belonging to the Ottoman Empire.

We shall deal with two such Hungarian travellers, both of whom became prisoners after the disastrous battle of Mohács and recorded their experiences and sufferings in Turkish captivity in great detail. However, while the work of one - Bertalan Georgievics - became one of the great literary successes of the age just as the book of the Anonymous writer of Szászsebes had done a century earlier, the travel diary of the other, György Huszti of Raszinya, remained hidden in Italian archives for centuries until, in the middle of last century, it was published by the Academy of Sciences of Zagreb in Latin, in its original form.<sup>1</sup>

\*

On 29 August, 1526, the day of the battle of Mohács, when he was captured by the Turks, Bertalan Georgievics - or, as he called himself - Bartholomaeus Georgius Pannonius or Barptolomaeus Georgievich Hungarus - was not even of arms-bearing age. According to F. Kidrič, the author of the best monograph dealing with him<sup>2</sup>, Georgievics, a man of Croatian descent who spoke of himself as a Hungarian in most of his works, was born between 1505 and 1510. Kidrič assumes that he was either born in an area populated purely by Hungarians or moved there at a very young age. The fact that he took part in the battle as the page of László Szalkai, the Archbishop of Esztergom, and always referred to him in terms of deepest gratitude and fondness, indicates that his birthplace must have been somewhere in the Archbishop's diocese. Archbishop Szalkai, as can be learned from Georgievics's somewhat fragmentary autobiography<sup>3</sup>, provided him with a first-rate education and schooling in Latin. His fondness

for Szalkai made him stay close to him in the battle, where the Archbishop lost his life and Georgievics was taken prisoner.

He describes his own trials in several versions which, however, are basically in agreement with each other.<sup>4</sup>

Deprived of all his possessions and put in chains, he was marched through the wildest and most dangerous areas of Turkey and Asia Minor, through desolate lands, cities and villages, to be sold into slavery. He was sold and bought seven times for the most menial kinds of agricultural labour. He lived under the harshest discipline, in constant fear of the cane, in hunger and thirst, sleeping out of doors virtually naked in freezing cold. He guarded sheep, tended horses, tilled the soil, but was also trained as a soldier. Then he escaped; he ate acorns, wild plants and their bitter roots to quench his tormenting hunger. He wandered alone, guided by the stars, in fear of dangerous animals. He tried to cross the Hellespont on timbers tied together by a rope, but was caught, taken back to his masters where, with his hands and feet tied, he was laid on the ground and beaten terribly with sticks. Then he was given over to slave traders. He spent thirteen years tossed about on the waves of ill fortune, in permanent suffering.<sup>5</sup> In another work he gives a less dramatic but more detailed account of his years in captivity.<sup>6</sup> He was led along in ropes for seven days; later he was taken by slave traders to Macedonia where he was bought for forty thalers by a former Christian converted to the Moslem faith, and used for carrying water. His master, however, suspected that he was planning an escape, and returned him to the slave traders. They took him to Brussa across the Hellespont but his service with a new owner ended in the same way. After several changes of masters and escape attempts he was taken over by a wealthy, greedy Turk, as a shepherd. There he made friends with a Viennese-born fellow slave, and one night they escaped together. They wandered

about for nine days, hiding in desolate places, then took to the sea. But their boat was driven back by contrary wind, and they were recaptured by the Turks. After three months in prison, they were sold by their former owner to a farmer for 57 thalers. There at last Georgievics found a more benevolent and kind-hearted master with whom he spent five years, during which he became a competent farmer. But his homesickness and yearning for freedom got the better of him again. He made a new attempt at escape and failed again. His master then sold him to the chief tax-collector of Anatolia, who took him along on his tax-collecting tours in Europe and Asia. He accompanied his master also in the war against Persia, where he had to endure all the vicissitudes of war. Then he made a vow to visit the holy places once he regained his freedom. In the confusion of the war he made another escape. He hid for thirty-seven days in the mountains of Armenia, living on grass and sleeping in trees. When he ventured out of the mountains, the Turks wanted to capture him again but he managed to make them believe that he was a free Greek. They became convinced on seeing that he had not been circumcised, whereas prisoners of the Turks usually had to undergo the operation. He lived afterwards among Greek Christians, pretending that he was of Greek Orthodox faith himself, while thoroughly observing their religious customs.

In other places he mentions that as a servant he often accompanied his master to the temple, and lived for some time in the court of the Turkish emperor as well.

Having regained his freedom he escaped through the deserts of Karamania and Syria to Jerusalem, to the Franciscans of Mount Zion, where he spent a year guarding the monastery against robbers.

Remembering his captivity later, he wrote: "As with seamen who gladly relate the hardships of a shipwreck afterwards, it is pleas-

ant for me to remember the dangers endured in the Hungarian war, the hardest fetters, a captivity more severe than the Babylonian, a slavery full of all kinds of torture, and the changing fortune of my escape."<sup>7</sup>

Although Georgievics's studies were interrupted by no less than thirteen years of captivity, his intellectual horizon broadened immeasurably during those same years. On the side of his last owner who, as a tax-collector, travelled widely in the whole Empire, he had a unique opportunity to learn about the various peoples of the Ottoman Empire. He was also able to increase his knowledge of languages to an extraordinary degree; he added Greek, Turkish, Arabic and Hebrew to his earlier knowledge of Croatian, Hungarian and Latin.

Before his last attempt to escape, Georgievics pledged not to return to Hungary until he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, to Santiago de Compostella and Rome. After his year spent on Mount Zion he did indeed make his way to Santiago de Compostella. But his next journey took him to the Low Countries instead of Rome. He stayed in Antwerp and Louvain for some time. He made a visit to Wittenberg in 1544, where he received letters of recommendation from Luther and Melancton, and set about publishing his works, the first of which, on Turkish customs, appeared early in 1544,<sup>8</sup> complete with texts in Turkish, transcribed in Latin characters. In March he published his short treatise on the life of Christian prisoners held by the Turks<sup>9</sup> and another work dealing with the religion of the Greeks and Armenians.<sup>10</sup> His works appearing the next year exhorted his readers to war against the Turks and dealt with forecasts concerning the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

He left Louvain after April 1545. He travelled to Worms via Cologne and Mainz, making arrangements for new editions of his works.

But before being able to "see Pannonia again"<sup>11</sup> he had to complete his avowed pilgrimage and visit Rome. This, however, followed only later, since he made a visit to his home nevertheless. On 29 May, 1547 he was already in Nagyvárád where he entered into a public debate on religion with a Turkish dervish.<sup>12</sup> He turned up in Poland next, from where in all probability he travelled on to Sweden.<sup>13</sup> Then he spent some time with the future Emperor Maximilian, preparing his earlier and latest works for publication. He made good his pledge at last in 1552, combining his Roman pilgrimage with the publication of his books. In 1554 he published a handbook for pilgrims to Jerusalem in Italian, with texts in Arabic, Chaldean and Hebrew. After his stay in Rome he no longer referred to his Hungarian origin on the title pages of his books. He died after 1556, but his works went on being published in new editions, in more and more languages, for another 120 years.<sup>14</sup>

All Georgievics's works were published first in Latin, so they were soon available for Hungarian readers as well. They all described the oriental world and exhorted readers to a common stand against the Ottoman Empire. They all contain references to his sincere patriotic feelings for Hungary. He bemoans "the ruin of Hungary"<sup>15</sup>, "his native country which, like other soldiers and noblemen, he wanted to defend against the Turks,"<sup>16</sup> the country "which once extended from the Baltic to the Meotis and which may still be resurrected."<sup>17</sup> He had accurate information on Hungary even in captivity. He knew who among the Hungarian high nobles was for or against the war with the Turks,<sup>18</sup> that Bálint Török and István Majláth were in Turkish prisons,<sup>19</sup> and identified himself with those who, at home, made Hungarian policy and spoke Hungarian.<sup>20</sup>

Georgievics also took a stand on the most important problems of contemporary Hungary, among which was the conflict between the two

rival Hungarian kings. In 1545 he was still fully in favour of Ferdinand, but a few years later - when he was hoping for the cooperation of John Sigismund in the expected crusade - he suggested that from the territories recovered from the Turks, Bulgaria, Moldavia and Transylvania should be given to Ferdinand, while Hungary, Slavonia and Illiria should go to the young Szapolyai.<sup>21</sup>

As his distinguished predecessor, Georgius de Hungaria, the "Anonymous writer of Szászsebes", he exposed the well-organized, menacing military power of the East in order to promote unity in the West against the Ottoman Empire and to influence public opinion towards accepting the necessity of armed struggle.

His conclusions are also the embodiments of crusade plans proliferating during the reign of King Louis II. On the Asian side of the "great encirclement" he counts Georgia, Persia and India as the eastern allies of the European camp, including Russia, under the leadership of Charles V.<sup>22</sup>

His general view emerges in its clearest form in the short work "Epistola exhortatoria contra infideles".<sup>23</sup> There he explains that the Europeans are unable to cope with the Turks although they are superior to them in religion, intellectual gifts and military virtues alike. But the Christians cannot triumph because they are all selfish, whether they be villagers, townspeople, officials, noblemen or soldiers. Not even the clergy is interested in anything other than the pomp of the Church. There is no solidarity among the nations of Europe, the soldiers fight for pay only, whereas in the Turkish army morale and discipline are high. Europe's nations must unite for a joint campaign against the Turks; there is no doubt that the laurels of victory will be theirs if they do so.

And, in the hope of success for the imminent crusade, when all Moslems would be converted to the true faith, he prints the Lord's prayer in the appendix of his work - in Arabic.<sup>24</sup>

Notes to chapter 11

1. Rad Jug. Akad., Zagreb 1881, Vol. 55.
2. KIDRIĆ
3. IBID., pp. 12-18.
4. GROSZMANN, pp. 6-7.
5. According to the preface of his work "De Turcarum moribus", RMK, Vol. III, 350.
6. De ritibus et differentiis Graecorum et Armeniorum. RMK, Vol. III, 969.
7. GROSZMANN, p. 8, notes 1, 2.
8. "La manière et Céremones de Turcs." RMK, Vol. III, 353.
9. De afflictione tam captivorum quam etiam sub Turcae tributo viventium Christianorum, etc., RMK, Vol. III, 349.
10. De ritibus et differentiis Graecorum et Armeniorum, RMK, Vol. III, p. 969. In its subtitle he calls Hungarian his mother tongue. :  
"...Additis nonnullis vocalibus et salutationibus in lingua vernacula Hungarica sua, cum interpretatione latina." Referring to a work by Klaić V., (Prilozi za zivotopis Bartola Georgijevica. Vjesnik hrv.-slav.-dalm.-zem. arkiva, Tom. III, Zagreb, 1911, p. 138), Kidrić adds the following to his bibliographic description of this work: "Die Holzschnitte erwecken den Anschein, dass sie von stärker benützten Platten als die Holzschnitte des Wormser Druckes herrühren, womit man wenigstens schon in das Jahr 1545 käme. Dieser Annahme scheint aber ein anderer Umstand zu widersprechen. Die Widmung ist datiert: Lovanii Idibus Mart. Nun setzt aber ein Brief Luthers und Melanchtons vom 11. August 1544 die Schrift offenbar schon als gedruckt voraus: "Venit in academiam nostram hic Pannonius Hospes Bartholomaeus Georgievitz... Item autem locorum appellationes et gentium et mores cum Turcicae gentis tum Armeniorum ut Graecorum erudite recitat, ... et virum honestum esse ... existimemus" (KIDRIĆ p. 19.)
11. "Pro fide christiana cum Turca disputationis habitae descriptio", RMK, Vol. III, 375.
12. Ibid.,
13. KIDRIĆ, p. 27.
14. Kidrić enlists 82 items on the bibliography of Georgievics's works. According to Rouillard (op. cit., p. 189), "the next



authority on the Turks to claim attention in this period is a Hungarian pilgrim, Bartholomew Georgiewitz, who spent thirteen years as a slave in Turkey and whose writings attained a phenomenal European popularity..."

15. RMK, Vol. III, 360, fol. C<sub>2</sub> vso.
16. RMK, Vol. III, 457, fol. 3 vso.
17. RMK, Vol. III, 360, fol. C<sub>2</sub> vso.
18. RMK, Vol. III, 360, fol. C<sub>3</sub> rto.
19. RMK, Vol. III, 406, fol. O<sub>2</sub> vso.
20. KIDRIC, p. 29.
21. Ibid., p. 30.
22. RMK, Vol. III, 375, fol. L<sub>3</sub>, vso. - fol. L<sub>4</sub>
23. RMK, Vol. III, 959.
24. GROSZMANN, p. 31.

C H A P T E R   T W E L V E

*In the footsteps of the Anonymous writer of Szécseseben: György Huszti. Captured and taken to Istanbul six years after the battle of Mohács. An unsuccessful attempt to escape. The first Hungarian to describe the burial vaults in the pyramids. His travels in the Holy Land, in Egypt and India.*

György Huszti of Raszinya was also taken prisoner by the Turks in consequence of the Mohács disaster, although he was actually captured six years after the battle. His travel book, beginning with an autobiographical note, gives us some idea about his origins, earlier situation and education.

The young Huszti was taken prisoner by the Turks in 1532 when their troops, returning from an unsuccessful campaign, marched through the village of Raszinya in county Kőrös. Thousands shared the same fate. He gives a moving account of the first period of his captivity, which also reveals that he had a classical education and he had studied at the school of the Pécs chapter. "I was taken directly to Constantinople where I endured much peril, beating and other injustices. I lived for four years as a miserable slave in the palace of Skender Celebi, the chief treasurer - or as they say, defterdar - of the Turkish Emperor. Then my patron - if such a barbarous tyrant deserves to be called one at all - learned that I knew Latin on account of my earlier occupation in Pécs, and gave me at once over to the Hodjas to learn the writing of the Mohammedans from them." Huszti, however, realized that this was only to lure him to the faith of Islam, so, in order to be able to escape at the first opportunity, he preferred to accept a different offer and

became a bugler instead. The training he had to undergo was cruel. "It was the fruit of what I was determined to do which helped me to endure these trials, and the hope of the reward lessened the pain of the whiplashes I was suffering." And the reward seemed to have come quite soon. "For in the following year of 1533 an ambassador came with considerable pomp from Hungary, from King John, István Werbőczy by name, whose tents were set up near the top-hane (that is the name of the arsenal in which the cannons cast from metal are kept). I visited Werbőczy secretly and begged him to take me out of the hands of the Turks into his own service. He answered, however, that he could not do so, much as he wanted to, because I was the slave of such a high dignitary who had no need of money and would be most unlikely to sell me...Finally I consulted his two chaplains and Jerome Adorno, the doctor in his suite, and asked them to let me hide in their carriage and depart with them secretly when their mission ended. So they did. One night they hid me in their carriage, and we left on 21 October. On 22 November we were already quite near to Hungary, in the vicinity of Szendrő, together with the commissioners delegated by the Sultan to Werbőczy's escort, who were to guard us and to provide our food. Since they were in our escort all along, my pursuers did not dare to lay their hands on me either on the way or in the carriage, and I was beginning to think that I was past all danger. For we always camped in tents in the close vicinity of villages or towns, and no Turk except the commissioners dared to enter our tents. But when we had reached the town of Szendrő on the bank of the Danube, all the Turks, including my pursuers, started to shout that I was the fugitive slave of the chief treasurer, and that I was the one whom they had been sent to capture. Then, pushing the Hungarians out of the way, they rushed on me. I was caught, beaten up, chained

and put in iron fetters, then handed over to the guards."<sup>1</sup>

Back in Istanbul, Huszti suffered badly once again. First he was thrown into jail, then led to the kihaya who condemned him to be beheaded and had him beaten nearly to death right away. After a few repetitions of the same treatment, his life was spared but he was circumcised by force and taken back to the place where he had been learning to play the bugle.

Soon the war with Persia broke out. Huszti's cruel master, the defterdar, also took part in the campaign, but it was his undoing. He drew the Sultan's wrath upon himself, who had him executed. His dead body was hung on the gate of Baghdad. The misfortune of the evil slave-owner made the life of his slave somewhat easier. The new grand vizier took Huszti, who had meanwhile been trained as a first-class bugler, into his own service. Along with some of his companions, it was Huszti's bugle which announced the great victory over the Persians to the people of the Sultan's capital.

From that time on, Huszti enjoyed relative freedom, and - also beginning with that period - his notes contain a wealth of information on the lifestyle, customs and properties of the Turks, rich and poor alike. His notes are, at the same time, a true mirror of all the important events which took place in Constantinople in those years.

The Persian war had ended and the Sultan's army had just returned when, as Huszti writes, "a terrible and tragic event happened." His benefactor, the Grand Vizier, Ebrahim Pasha, was unexpectedly executed at the Sultan's orders. "Words cannot describe the fear that I felt; they began to search for those slaves who had some kind of trade, and I myself was interrogated for the third time. "This time, however, Huszti's fears turned out to be groundless; his position in fact improved quite unexpectedly. In 1536 he was transferred to the emperor's service as a bugler. "Thus did I, with the help of God,

win the Sultan's deed as well as freedom,<sup>2</sup> moreover I even obtained an income."

He signed up with an Arab ship captain who had arrived recently from Egypt bringing news to the Sultan about the events in India and who was about to return with a secret order to the Pasha of Cairo. "I became the bugler of this captain, not so much for the better wages, and not even to be able to reach Egypt easily, but rather to make my escape once we reached the islands."

However, he could not carry out his plan either on the island of Chios or on Rhodes, and he soon found himself in Alexandria. Here, "in the changed climate we spent some time restoring our strength." The captain was a very wealthy man. He put up his bugler, who seems to have won his confidence, in his palace in Alexandria. They continued their journey on camels, and Huszti saw the castle of Damietta from a distance but they stopped only in Raesetum<sup>3</sup>, where they relaxed after their tiring trip in a splendid marble bath. From Raesetum they sailed to Cairo on the Nile. The discussions at the court of the pasha began as soon as they arrived.

"I had to spend two years in the land of Egypt until the ships of the navy were finished on the coast of the Red Sea. During that time we made frequent trips to see how the building of the ships was proceeding. We always travelled at night because of the unendurable heat of the sun and the lack of water."

The cultivation and miraculous power of the balsam fruit intrigued Huszti as much as it had János Lázó and friends before him. He discusses this topic at length, citing, as he often does, the works of various classical and contemporary authors. This time he refers to Pliny and Erasmus of Rotterdam. "The leaves of the balsamine are, as far as I can make a comparison, similar to those of ripe tarragon in our flower gardens, which is called 'tharcon'<sup>4</sup> by Arabs

and Hungarians alike..." He devotes much space to Egypt's flora and fauna, then follows an equally lengthy but nevertheless interesting discussion of Egyptian customs and institutions. He depicts the near-ecstatic, week-long festivals and rejoicing of the population in exaggerated colours and - with an eye to his future Church censor - he starts on a moralistic discourse (he probably meant to publish his work). But if we disregard the disapproving remarks, often rather forced, with which he spikes his observations, we find a highly original description of the life and customs of Egypt, which is much more realistic than the works of Huszti's contemporaries.

In the course of an excursion Huszti made a visit to the pyramids. The one-time classical scholar who displays an uncommon virtuosity in citing old and new authors, was fully aware of the extraordinariness of this experience. "Not everyone is granted the opportunity to see all this; it was worth the trouble," he starts his description of the wonders of the ancient world. "We mounted donkeys and, carrying arms, rode slowly up to the six high edifices which are called pyramids, and which lie in the plain two miles from the town. Some said that these had been built by Simon Maccabee over the graves of his father and brothers; others, however, maintain that they had been built a long time ago by the kings of Egypt for their own graves, and this latter is truer. For the Turks call them "phiraon daglar", which means "the pharaoh's mountain". Two of them are gigantic in size and can be seen from a great distance; the other four are smaller and were built from polished stones. All are quadrangular, are broader at the base than at the top, and their peak runs into a point. A few of us, before entering one of the huge structures, measured its width on each side, which (as far as I can remember) was equal to 146 steps. At the bottom of this pyramid - it is called "Yuz krok" in Turkish - there is a small gate from which a narrow passage opens. We entered

there and pulled a thin rope, which we had brought with us, behind ourselves. But we were also equipped with lamps. We made our way through dark passages, now climbing, now descending through sloping paths, and when we reached the centre part inside the pyramid, we suddenly saw a stone slab, similar to a tomb, under a huge vault. It was made of incredibly smooth white marble and gave a clang when we touched it with our hands; it made a sound like steel or glass. We were worried that our lamps might go out. Without them we could not have found our way out, even though we had our rope to guide us. Our lamps were often hit by bats. We stayed in the pyramid for two hours. Afterwards some of us climbed up to the high peak over the rectangular steps which were all made of polished stone. The height of the pyramid probably equals, or even exceeds, its width. The plateau at the top is so broad that anyone might quite comfortably erect his tent there. Reaching it, I played my bugle for my companions. After all this, we returned to Cairo; thus let it suffice what I told in simple words about this land," Huszti ends the Egyptian part of his work to which he adds a sketch of the frontal view of the pyramid.<sup>5</sup>

During his two years of undisturbed observation Huszti also toured the holy places,<sup>6</sup> then set out for the other extraordinary part of his travels as a participant in the Indian campaign of the Turkish navy.

In 1535 the province of Diu near the Kathiawar peninsula in east India had been conquered by the Portuguese who fortified it enormously. Diu had an extreme strategic importance for the possession of all India and was a great obstacle to the Sultan's planned conquest of India. This key position was to be seized by the Sultan's formidably armoured navy with the help of a considerable contingent of elite troops trained for landing operations which was being carried on board. It was one of the most famous naval ventures of the age and

Husztli's account of it has the thoroughness and vividness of the intelligent and educated eyewitness.

The Turkish fleet lay up in front of Aden so long that in the end the local ruler sent an envoy to its commander to inquire about his intentions. Then the commanding pasha sent his own delegates to the ruler and, with flattering words and promises of gifts, asked permission for the fleet to anchor in the inner harbour and to purchase food in the town.

This, however, was a treacherous trick. "Aden, the first city of Arabia Felix in those times, was protected not only by its fortunate geographic position but also by fortifications. It is surrounded by bastions; to the east there are high, barren, rocky mountains, and the town itself was built at the foot of these mountains. To the west it has a safe sea port. A bastion emerges from the southern side of the very high cliff. Before the Turks occupied it, the Arabs sent up a blazing, sparkling fire from this bastion every night, stirring it up high so that it could be seen from far away, in order to signal the presence of the enemy."

The ruler, being a Moslem himself, finally permitted the Turks to enter the town. At the banquet the pasha greeted him with pretended kindness and gushed about his friendly feelings, praising the wealth of the monarch's table. But after the banquet he lured the ruler to his ship on some pretext, and had him hanged with four others from the mast right before the eyes of his subjects. The town's population made no attempt to resist after this but abandoned themselves to their fate. While unsparing in his condemnation of this act, Husztli nevertheless adds: "all this was done according to the pasha's foresighted plan, so as not to find himself without refuge in case he were defeated by the Portuguese."



Having seized Aden the pasha declared the property of the townspeople inviolable and, as a warning, had one of the looters beheaded at the city's ornate gate. Afterwards they all came forward with their wares and the Turkish fleet was well filled up with supplies.

After this episode Huszti relates his encounter with the Abyssinians, describes their customs and characteristic features, and then goes on to the further events of the sea campaign. They sailed past the island of Hormuz. Huszti reports briefly on the route of the fleet, then gives a detailed account of the siege of the fort of Diu which ended in a failure. For two months, the rather weak Portuguese garrison withstood the attacks of the Ottoman troops which had been put on shore. "But after two months, when the armada of the Portuguese came in sight bringing help to their people, the pasha was overcome with great fear, especially as he saw that they were greater in number and stronger than he was. The guns were already roaring on both sides, both wanting to inspire fear in the other, and it seemed that a bloody battle of unforeseeable outcome would follow. We were all overwhelmed with the great peril we were facing, when the pasha gave orders to put the guns on board and to fill up the water tanks as if he were going to join battle at sea. In reality, however, the Turks abandoned the siege and took flight. We participated in this campaign with fifty warships and four galleys, for a full year, from the day of St. John the Baptist in 1538 till the same day of St. John the Baptist in 1539."

Huszti's long journey ended in a lucky escape. He returned to his native country through Rome, Loretto, Ancona, with a stop in Fiume, in 1542. He spent the last decades of his life in Pozsony,<sup>7</sup> and, although his work remained unpublished in his lifetime, it un-

doubtedly had an influence on his contemporaries. Miklós Istvánffy, for instance, writes: "It was here (at the battle of Raszinya in 1532) that György Huszti was captured and taken prisoner. Afterwards he travelled all over the Orient and got as far as India. He left the records of his wanderings to posterity."<sup>8</sup> Péter Bod has the following to say: "György Huszti. He fell prisoner in Croatia in the year 1532 when Emperor Suleiman came with a great army to Hungary. He was taken to Asia and travelled all over the Oriental countries including India itself, and described his journeys for the edification of all those coming after him."<sup>9</sup> However, neither Bod nor the following generations actually saw Huszti's travel diary which was known only from hearsay. The outstanding, undeservedly forgotten work was discovered in the middle of the 19th century by Iván Nagy during his researches in Italian archives. He reported about it briefly in a Hungarian specialist journal,<sup>10</sup> ending his description with the following words: "It would be most interesting to have the writing of this southern traveller of ours in print." More than a hundred years later we must still regard this as a debt long overdue.

Notes to chapter 12

1. Escaped Hungarian prisoners hiding in the Transylvanian House - the residence of the Transylvanian embassy in Istanbul - usually made their way home safely in the company of the Transylvanian ambassador. Freeing prisoners was a troublesome business but was nevertheless quite frequent. (BIRÓ: p. 111.)
2. It of course did not mean freedom to return to Hungary, only free movement within the Turkish Empire.
3. Rashid or Rosette.
4. Spelt "tárkony" in modern Hungarian.
5. Huszti attached several other sketches to his notes, mainly of the holy places.
6. He describes them in great detail.
7. SZINNYEI, Vol. IV, 1467-1468 col. - The Huszti family of Raszinya later settled down in Pozsony (Bratislava). On the life and work of Teofil Z. Huszti, a famous doctor in Pozsony, see the work of Norbert Z. Duka edited by the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He is not included in the four-volume "Index literalium documentorum" of the Bratislava archives. The Pozsony period of his life needs further research.
8. ISTVÁNFY, M.: Historia Regni Hungariae, Cologne. 1685, p. 122.
9. BOD, P.: Magyar Athenás (Hungarian Athenas), Nagyszében, 1766, p. 117.
10. NAGY, I.: Római magyar regesták (Hungarian chronicles in Rome), Magyar Történelmi Tár, 1857, p. 242.

C H A P T E R   T H I R T E E N

*The mission of Verancsics and Zay. Verancsics and the Georgians. A plan to liberate Hungary - with Russian, Mingrelian and Circassian help. The Mingrelian monarch Dadiani and Verancsics.*

Although Antal Verancsics and Ferenc Zay had been sent by Ferdinand I on an embassy to Istanbul. their mission, or at least some of its important parts, belong within the scope of this work (as does that of Barnabás Bélay who had also been sent only to the Sublime Porte by Wladislas II but was forced to make a far longer journey.) Verancsics and his fellow ambassadors were also compelled to leave their residence in Constantinople for a time in order to be able to negotiate with the Sultan who was camping in the distant town of Amasia in Asia Minor. This difficult trip was important not only from a diplomatic point of view, but, in fact, had a far greater importance from the aspect of cultural history. It can be safely said that this Hungarian mission to the orient represents one fo the brilliant chapters of the world's cultural history, even though its scientific achievements are somewhat one-sidedly attributed by posterity to only one of the three envoys, the Belgian Busbecq.

The first Habsburg kings still appeared to follow the Hungarian traditions of seeking allies in the east. These efforts were to be intensified later during the reign of Emperor Rudolf but had been part and parcel of imperial foreign policy ever since Charles V. To a certain extent both missions of Verancsics and his companions fit into this picture. But the situation had changed. The

Persian connection - about the development of which there will be more later - temporarily lessened in intensity, so Verancsics and the others were given the job of diverting the Turkish drive once again to Asia by money, gifts and persuasion.

But there is another reason why this mission must be dealt with in this book. In Istanbul, despite all the surveillance and control, Verancsics and his companions made the acquaintance of representatives of a dozen Asian nations belonging to the enormously overgrown Ottoman Empire. Having lost their independence quite recently most of these nations harboured a deep resentment against the Turks and were in a state of constant revolt. The envoys were trying to gather information on the development and war efforts of the anti-Ottoman Georgian states in particular. But they learned about the movements of the Kurds, Egyptians and Syrians as well. They passed on their information to the king and his advisers and were constantly on the lookout for news of revolt in Asia and Africa. They used all the channels open for diplomats to obtain intelligence. They evaluated the seemingly simple and narrow information coming from street vendors or galley slaves as carefully as they did the more comprehensive views and news gained from statesmen and their suites. (In the latter case we might aptly speak about indirect inter-state contacts.) The surviving documents of course do not allow us to draw any conclusion as to whether they themselves supported, financially or otherwise, the movements of the discontented nations. Their reports are limited to the description of events, various plots and their evaluation. It is, however, quite certain that they made the best use of all the accepted and not quite accepted diplomatic means of the age to prevent peace between Turkey and Persia and thus to relieve Hungary as far as possible.

The family of Antal Verancsics (1504-1573) had originally lived in Bosnia but they moved to Dalmatia to escape the advancing Turks. He was educated under the guidance of his uncle, John Statileo, the Provost of Buda, who helped him to finish his studies, begun in Hungary, at the university of Padua. In his youth he had personal contacts with some of the most famous humanists of the age, including Erasmus and the eminent historian Paolo Giovio.<sup>1</sup> The Mohács disaster befell Hungary while he was studying abroad. Returning home he joined the diplomatic service of King János Szapolyai. He saw the Pope, visited Venice and appeared at the royal courts of Bohemia, Poland, France and England. After the occupation of Buda by the Turks he followed the dowager queen to Transylvania but did not enjoy the confidence of George (George Martinuzzi, the leading Hungarian statesman of the period). He spent several years in various west-European countries, then came back. He realized that as long as Friar George stood at the helm of the country, he would be unable to improve his position, so on a quick decision he left Transylvania and hurried to Vienna, to the court of Ferdinand I.

There at last he found what he wanted so badly: recognition of his abilities and a chance to succeed. After the assassination of Friar George, when the Sultan began to seize Hungarian forts one after the other, Ferdinand I decided to make use of Verancsics's diplomatic skill. He sent him first to the Pasha of Buda to negotiate a truce. Verancsics carried out his task with complete success. However, Ferdinand wanted more than a temporary agreement. He wanted a permanent solution at all costs, especially with regard to the possession of Transylvania. He sent an embassy to Emperor Suleiman for this purpose,<sup>2</sup> although there was little hope that they could bring it off. The mission was led by Antal Verancsics, the future

Archbishop of Esztergom and royal lieutenant, also an eminent historiographer, and Ferenc Zay, the commander of the Hungarian Danube fleet, who had earlier won fame as the captain of a fort.

With a magnificent suite of sixty-two, Verancsics and Zay set out on their long and hard mission on 3 July, 1553. It turns out from the diary of Dernschwam,<sup>3</sup> that the composition of the mission was almost one hundred percent Hungarian. The mission was divided into two groups, one led by Verancsics and one by Zay. Besides the two leaders and John Dernschwam of Érsekújvár who "joined up voluntarily" on behalf of the Fuggers (but probably acted also as a kind of commercial adviser), the list of personnel included the marine voivodes Mihály Dőry, Tódor, Imre Nagy, Benedek Kun, and László Szabó, five hussars: Gábor Godócsy, György Oláh, Lukács Balagi, Farkas Gáspár and György Simai, the drivers Tamás Vajkay, Urbán, Demeter Lippai, Mátyás Molnár, Márton Tóth, Iván Oláh, and Mátyás Tolnai, the chaplain Miklós and Gáspár, a priest, and also a number of stable-boys, cooks, tailors and other craftsmen, likewise Hungarians. Another member of the mission was János Belsőy of Eperjes - or, as Dernschwam writes, "Johann Belsius, a student" - who, as we shall see, came to play an important part later on.

They arrived in Constantinople on the 25th of August.

Verancsics and Zay spent years there in negotiations which were largely futile. During that time they also suffered severe hardships. On one occasion, for instance, the Sultan was so much angered that he placed the Hungarian envoys under house arrest.<sup>4</sup> But there were also quiet periods during which Verancsics, a man of wide interests who had an excellent eye for important facts, was able to gain a unique insight into the affairs of the Ottoman Empire and its eastern neighbours.

Verancsics constantly watched for new developments in the now developments in the now fifty-year-old contest between Turkey and Persia, which he weighed up and evaluated very carefully, always with a view to the state of affairs in Hungary and the possibilities these events might eventually raise for the country. In the overall view emerging in this way, Hungary and Transylvania and, on the other side, the Georgian states, Shirvan and the Circassians figured together, all seen in the context of the Turkish-Persian war.

Verancsics was the kind of historian who is not content with being a mere chronicler of events long past but takes an active role and makes things happen himself. Some of his letters and reports show him to be too much of the Viennese courtier, which influences his views about the oriental world. But this is amply made up for by the freshness of his approach, his vivid, direct description of events, and his careful collection of personal observations. In this respect his writings seem to anticipate the tone and style of his best successors.<sup>5</sup>

The central topic of Verancsics's reports is the prospect of the Turkish-Persian war, the chances of peace and the attitude of the neighbouring minor nations, especially the Georgians. The reason why the successor states on the former territory of the dismembered Georgia - Kartli, Kakheti and the rest - had such a great interest in the continuation of the war is perfectly clear from Verancsics's account. They had the same objectives as the Hungarian envoys. In the interests of their nations' survival both the Hungarians and the Georgians did their best to keep the two Islamic powers weakening each other. Otherwise they might turn against their satellite states, weakening and ultimately destroying them.

In a letter to his younger brother, Mihály Verancsics explained why the Turks accepted the truce with the Hungarian King. "The Turkish



monarch wanted to start war against the Persians, and for this reason he wanted to leave peace behind in Hungary. He was about to depart for Asia with his army, so he wanted to concentrate on a single enemy, free from any other trouble."<sup>6</sup> This awareness appears in all of Verancsics's arguments, and, concerning both Hungary and Georgia, he repeatedly stresses that their position depends directly on the relationship between the two Moslem states.

On the basis of Verancsics's reports the foreign affairs advisers of Ferdinand I had a full picture of the Asian developments, especially of the events in Persia, just as King Matthias had had from his own emissaries to the east half a century earlier.

Verancsics refers to the Georgians for the first time in connection with the Turkish-Persian war in his report of 5 October, 1553.<sup>7</sup> He calls them important allies of the Persians,<sup>8</sup> who are "neither small nor weak." On 1 November he reports that "the Persian king has a certain province called Shirvan in his possession, which the Turkish emperor claims for himself, and in return for which he promises peace to the Persian king. The latter, however, said that he would not give up Shirvan, except with his own neck...Those who brought us this news told us that the Turkish emperor has the same problem with the Shah of Persia concerning Shirvan as he has with your Majesty concerning Transylvania."<sup>9</sup>

The dependence of Hungary's and Transylvania's fate on the Persian war emerges most vividly from his report of 3 December 1553, where Verancsics explains<sup>10</sup> that the purpose of all the efforts of the Turks is to take Transylvania completely from Ferdinand. They are working to that end also under the pretext of peace negotiations. The only thing which can save Transylvania is the war between the Turks and the Persians. This opportunity must be seized for "the destiny of the whole of Hungary also depends on it, since the Sultan

does not have the strength to wage war in both directions at the same time." Then, with noticeable pleasure, he reports to the King that in the first skirmishes the Persians did much more damage to the Turks than vice versa.

On 3 May, 1554 he reports that the Sultan is soon to send fifty triremes to the Aegean. "If our informers do not deceive us, he will also send ten galleys to the Black Sea for the transportation of the Crimean Tatars to Cappadocia against the Georgians who, as they say, will not number more than fifty thousand."<sup>11</sup> From his next letter we learn that the Sultan's fleet suffered heavy losses from the Mingrelians "who are living north of Colchis and used to be called Manruls in earlier times."<sup>12</sup> His report of 12 September, however, admits that these naval movements served merely as a decoy, and the news of the Mingrelian victory were at best exaggerated, but he comforts Ferdinand with the news that a considerable part of the Tatar army has been destroyed by the Persians and Circassians. This information did indeed turn out to be correct.<sup>13</sup>

His report of 1 October, 1554 is evidence to the fact that Verancsics and his companions did not shrink from taking the most risky steps, quite incompatible with diplomatic custom, when it came to obtaining information concerning the Sultan's intentions. "On the 28th and 29th of September two couriers came from the army...and we have got hold of a copy of their reports."<sup>14</sup>

On 27 November, 1554 he regretfully remarks - hinting at the indecision of the court - that the peace between the Sultan and Ferdinand I could have been achieved a long time ago, but two great opportunities had already been missed. A third opportunity is still open "provided we can reach an agreement regarding our peace before the Turks succeed in persuading the Persians to make peace (something which the Turks make the greatest efforts to achieve); for it is the hope of the Turks that, as soon as it becomes obvious that

they no longer have to fear our weapons, they can inspire greater dread in both the king of the Persians and the Georgian nations."<sup>15</sup> On 1 December he already reports to Ferdinand that the peace negotiations with Hungary and Persia are seen in Istanbul as being equally hopeless. Therefore "the beglerbeg of Greece and Thrace is going to be sent with an army to Hungary, while another army, under the Sultan's personal command, will move against the Georgians who represent a great obstacle to the Sultan's plans to subjugate Persia."<sup>16</sup>

On 20 January, 1555 the mission of Verancsics and Zay was joined by a third diplomat, a Belgian by the name Augerius Gislenius Busbecq, regarded at the time as King Ferdinand's best foreign affairs expert. The Sultan had set up his headquarters in the Asian town of Amasia, and Busbecq (who had brought a new proposal) and his two fellow-ambassadors were to see him there. This special mission is going to be dealt with in the next chapter. Here we shall refer only to its contacts with the Mingrelians.

The members of the Verancsics-Zay mission appear to have overestimated the military successes achieved with Russian help during the previous year by the Circassians and Mingrelians. This is evidenced by a letter written in Hungarian (according to Kálmán Thaly, probably by Ferenc Zay) sent home from Istanbul in 1555. "I am letting your Lordship know that the Duke of Moscow and the head of the Cossacks, who are neighbours and relatives of each other, have dispatched their forces against the Tatars. The Circassians and Mingrelians, whose land borders on that of the Russians and Cossacks, already went to war earlier. They number more than two hundred thousand. Their commanders and lieutenants are the Mingrelian and Circassian nobles who swore by their lives to conquer the land of the Great Tatar Khan. They have so far advanced in fulfilling their

promise that they have burnt up and destroyed the greater part of the country already. They will not return home until they have finished their work completely. They are already saying that their forward troops are not far from the sanjaq where the Danube runs into the sea. They have now conquered the entire area of the river Don. This is all the work of the poor Christians living there, who are all of the Greek faith, Russians, Circassians and Mingrelians alike. And if they have finished with the Tatars there, they will soon be able to march on to Moldavia and Wallachia, then, crossing the Danube, they can start against Turkey. To my knowledge that is what they mean to do if God helps them."<sup>17</sup> In 1557 Verancsics - who, by that time, was able to make a clear distinction between the anti-Turkish attitude of the Georgian kings and the selfserving policies of the Mingrelians - sobered up those who might have been overly hopeful through a very different appraisal of the situation. In a letter dated 16 February, 1557<sup>18</sup>, he reported that the arrival of the ruler of the Mingrelians ("who used to be called Colchians in earlier times") and his 300-member suite was expected during the next few days. His letter of 1 March already contains a detailed account. "The ruler of the Mingrelians arrived here a day after we had dispatched our previous letter. Now we report his arrival and describe his position so that our people should not regard him as a more important person than he is in reality. He arrived here as "the king of all Mingrelians" but let no one attribute a truly great power to this enemy of ours. Your Majesty should know that this person, although the ruler of a sizeable land and a large number of people, has nevertheless no power to speak of. His wealth, too is next to nothing. Nor is his behaviour any different from anybody else's among his people. He shows himself to be a common man before everybody, and not only before his suite consisting of common peasant folk

and men of the forests. If he did not use the royal title no one would believe that he is a king. There is no order in the way he holds court, no sense of authority in his behaviour, and he does not even take care to assert his dignity; his manners are free and easy towards everyone. We gave instructions that one of his men should be led to us so that we might learn something about this country. When this request of ours was submitted to him he ordered the following to be brought to our knowledge: he is a Christian himself and is not only ready to send anybody to us but would be glad to visit us himself if he were permitted to do so by the governor of the city. For he is under the same strict guard as we are. In judging his importance, however, it must be taken into account that this monarch has come here in deputation himself without being compelled to do so either by force or by necessity, only to be able - as they say - to take revenge upon the people neighbouring to him, the Circassian nation, because to his knowledge his father was killed by them. He wants to send an army against them this following summer, and he has realized that he can scarcely trust his own land forces to defeat the Circassians who are stronger than the Mingrelians. He can expect success only if he has a naval force as well. His objective is to obtain triremes from the Sultan, for the sake of which he has brought him a gift, some kind of a cup made of a precious stone the very name of which is unknown to us. This was immediately locked away under the Sultan's seal. Rumour has it that it shines so brightly that emits a brilliant light even in the darkest night... It is also rumoured that he has even undertaken to pay taxes, something from which he was so far exempt. This, however, has not been confirmed as yet. In any case, after the foregoing, it would not have a great significance either... Only the future will tell us what this Mingrelian ruler called Dadian will take home in return - or

as a grant - for the precious cup - and for selling an even greater treasure, freedom."<sup>19</sup>

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the Mingrelian ruler is considered by Verancsics an "Enemy", since from the point of view of Hungary any country that took the side of the Turks came automatically under that category, regardless whether it was Christian or not. On the other hand, any Moslem country which fought against the Ottoman rule - especially Persia - qualified as an ally in Verancsics's opinion. His sympathy, however, is most manifest towards the Georgians who sacrificed the most blood in the fight against the Turks. He describes their military successes often and at length.

During his second mission to the Porte (1567-1568) Verancsics did not travel to Asia again. Most of his attention was once again taken up by the foreseeable developments of the Turkish-Persian relationship. He kept on sending his incisive reports on this subject to the king, with conclusions which in most cases turned out to be correct. After protracted negotiations his diplomatic work was finally crowned by success in 1568. An eight-year peace agreement was concluded which ensured the continued inviolability of the Hungarian territories unoccupied by the Turks, although the raids and minor expeditions did not stop. The agreement also declared that eventual differences would be settled in the future peacefully by a joint commission chaired by the Pasha of Buda and the Hungarian general-Captain.

The mission of Antal Verancsics and Ferenc Zay, although originally limited to the Sultan's capital, could still be regarded as the continuation of the earlier eastern policy of Hungary. Not only because nearly all its participants, leaders as well as sub-

ordinates, were Hungarians but also because their activities were not restricted to negotiations with the Turks with whom they bargained for peace. They looked for, and found, an opportunity to get an insight into political and military developments taking place in distant Asian countries, behind the back of the Ottoman Empire. They were scrutinizing the chances of the traditional strategy of encirclement from within the capital of the enemy, a reasonable enough idea although - once again- it did not bring real results. The mission of Verancsics and Zay is, at any rate, an important part of Hungary's diplomatic history, especially from the point of view of its traditions of oriental diplomacy.

Their activity could not influence the events in any decisive way. All the more important, however, were the achievements of their mission from the aspect of universal cultural history.

Notes to chapter 13

1. 1483-1552. Originally he was a doctor, later a priest, and from 1517 onwards Bishop of Nocera. His historical works are highly important also from a Hungarian point of view.
2. VERANCSICS; DERNSCHWAM
3. DERNSCHWAM, pp. 43-44.
4. Hungarian ambassadors delegated earlier to the Sublime Porte suffered the same fate (TÖRÖK, P.: A Habsburgok első stambuli rezidense (The first resident ambassador of the Habsburgs in Istanbul), Budapesti Szemle, 1929, pp. 99-103; KROPF, L.: Malvezzi elfogatása (The arrest of Malvezzi), Századok, 1896, pp. 389-93) as well as later (ALBERI, E.: Le relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti, Ser III, Vol. 3, Florence 1855, p. 308). - An artistic memento to this critical period of the mission of Verancsics, Zay and Busbecq was created by Melchior Lorichs, an eminent draftsman born in Flensburg around 1527, who as a "künstlerischer Adjunkt die drei Gesandten begleitet hat...Melchior Lorichs hat in Guten und Bösen die Geschichte der Gesandtschaft, der er angehört hat, geteilt." (HARBECK, M.: Melchior Lorichs, Hamburg 1911, p. 15.) He portrayed the mission's captivity at their Istanbul residence in drawings, under which he wrote the following text: Rom. Kay. Matt'. Botschaft (Herberg darin auch ich ML) mit Inen gefangen gelegen" (OBERHUMMER, E.: Konstantinopel unter Suleiman dem Grossen, Munich 1902, Tafel VIII.). Lorichs, who joined the mission mainly because of his interest in architectural and archeological relics, made excellent etchings of the portraits of Verancsics and Zay.
5. BERDSENISHVILI, N.A. - DONDUA, V.D. - DUMBADZE, M.K. - MESHIA, S.A. - MELIKISVILI, G.A.: Istoriya Gruzii, Tom. I, Tbilisi, 1962, p. 288.
6. VERANCSICS, Vol. III, p. 2.
7. VERANCSICS, Vol. III, p. 107.
8. Cf. BERDSENISHVILI, pp. 115-6.
9. Ibid., p. 127. - Shirvan was a tributary province of Georgia until 1538 when it came under Persian rule. Cf. GABASHVILI, p. 59.
10. VERANCSICS, Vol. III, p. 153. - The situation was seen much in the same way in these years by Antonio Erizzo, the ambassador of the Venetian Republic to the Sublime Porte. (ALBERI, Ser. III, Vol. 3, p. 132.)



11. VERANCSICS, vol. III, pp. 325-356.
12. Ibid., p. 306.
13. Ibid., p. 339.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 378.
16. Ibid., pp. 385-7.
17. Történelmi Tár, 1878, pp. 188-9.
18. VERANCSICS, Vol. IV, p. 244.
19. Ibid., pp. 249-51.

C H A P T E R   F O U R T E E N

*Verancsics, Zay and Busbecq in Asia Minor. The representative of the Fuggers and his archeological interest. An encounter with Hungarian prisoners. The Ancyra inscription: the greatest archeological discovery of th 16th century.*

The otherwise splendid military record of the Turks for the year 1552 became severely tarnished by the failure of Ali Pasha of Buda and Ahmed Pasha to take the fort of Eger. The Shah of Iran was nevertheless envious of the Sultan's conquests and, as many times both before and after, he set about ravaging the Turkish frontier provinces. The son of the Shah, Ismail Mirza, was raiding the area of Erzerum with his troops Sultan Suleiman, who had his rebellious son Mustafa strangled, was enraged and decided to settle his account with the Shiite heretics personally. Ferdinand I saw this as a fit time to try his luck once again with the Turks. His previous envoy, Malvezzi, had been imprisoned by the Sultan who thus expressed his anger and dissatisfaction with Ferdinand's proposals which he was unwilling to consider even as a basis for negotiations.

Ferdinand instructed Verancsics and the others to ask the Sultan, before anything else, for an undivided, unified Hungary, recognizing that the Turks possessed the occupied parts by right of conquest. They offered an annual tax of one hundred and forty-thousand pieces of gold if the Sultan were willing to return these parts. If he would not return them- which was virtually certain -

they must make him recognize Ferdinand's claim to Transylvania. For his present possessions, Ferdinand undertook to pay forty-thousand ducates a year. The Sultan, negotiating from the stronger position, rejected the entire deal. The two ambassadors asked for new instructions and proposals from Ferdinand.

As Thallóczy, Ferenc Zay's biographer,<sup>1</sup> aptly wrote, in the mission brain was represented by Bishop Verancsics, drawn by Zay. The mission became complete when it was joined by Busbecq, the Belgian diplomat, who added tactics and a great sense for bargaining, to the qualities of the other two.

However, while waiting for the new instructions to be brought by their fellow-ambassador, Verancsics and Zay made use of the period of calm in their own way. They had plenty to do. Their frequent reports to the King and letters to their friends reached their destination via Adrianople or, by sea, via Venice, and usually contained lengthy reports on events of world importance as were seen and felt in Constantinople. Their job was difficult enough; the Sultan was completely under the influence of Roxolana; Roxolana's actions were dictated by Rustem Pasha, and Rustem Pasha's in his turn by the gold of the French King. The actions of the Transylvanian envoys who were unwilling to accept Ferdinand's rule also made a great deal of trouble.<sup>2</sup> But they were nevertheless able to devote some time to their personal hobbies as well. Ferenc Zay, the captain-in-chief of the Danube fleet, spent his time fishing or rode out, trying to win the favour of the Pashas while hunting and feasting with them. Verancsics, the humanist scholar, who had earlier recorded and described Roman relics everywhere from Sitke in western Hungary to the eastern end of Transylvania,<sup>3</sup> and continued to examine every archeological object he saw,<sup>4</sup> found ample opportunity to satisfy his interests in Istanbul as well. He toured the surroundings of

the Turkish capital in search of archeological relics.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, on 20 January, 1555, the new fellowambassador of Verancsics and Zay, Augier Ghislan de Busbecq, born in Flanders in 1522, arrived in Istanbul.<sup>6</sup> He brought the new instructions they had been waiting for, which, however, were found disappointing both by the members of the mission and the pashas sympathetic to their cause. The gist of Ferdinand's new proposals, more modest as they were, still was that Transylvania should be kept at all costs and peace must be made. To which he added that if the ambassadors should run out of legal and historical arguments, they should appeal to the Sultan's generosity and ask for Transylvania as a gift,<sup>7</sup> offering of course a high tax rate as well...

The Sultan was spending the winter in Amasia with his army. They immediately dispatched a chiaus to his camp to report that Ferdinand's ambassadors wished to submit their sovereign's new proposals to him.

Having received the message, the Sultan, victorious against the Persians, ordered at once that King Ferdinand's envoys come to see him in Amasia.<sup>8</sup> They set out, virtually without preparations, on their journey to "even wilder parts of the world completely unknown to us", on 9 March, 1555.<sup>9</sup> Busbecq remarks that "many people know the way to Constantinople but hardly a one to Amasia, therefore I shall record every place."<sup>10</sup>

The events of this journey to Asia can be reconstructed from two sources. One is the work of Busbecq, the new fellow ambassador of Verancsics and Zay. The Belgian diplomat had studied at French universities; he was a lover of antiquities, a botanist and zoologist. Opinions differ as to his philological reliability.<sup>11</sup> Despite his youth he had considerable experience in foreign affairs; he had recently returned from a mission to England. His works on his journey

to Turkey,<sup>12</sup> written in a highly polished Latin and rich in information concerning Hungary, were published in several languages and did not undeservedly belong with the most widely read books of the age. As an archeologist, however, especially compared to Verancsics's great experience in this field, he was a beginner.

The author of the other travel diary was John Dernschwam, the learned chief representative of the Fuggers, who was born in 1494 in the town of Brůx in Lausitz but lived for most of his life in Upper Hungary. At the time of the embassy he was a wealthy, independent man devoted to scholarly interests who joined the mission on his own money with two servants, one Hungarian and the other Austrian, to accompany him.<sup>13</sup>

Like Busbecq and Verancsics, Dernschwam was also a genuine humanist. His collection and library are the subject of studies up to this very day,<sup>14</sup> and his archeological and epigraphical interests and knowledge stood on a particularly high level.

To Hungarians, however, a third description of the journey would have been the most interesting, the one by Antal Verancsics who, as an archeologist of humanist inspiration, was not an inch behind his two above-named travelling companions.

He also wrote a diary about his journey. Unfortunately, however, it is precisely his manuscript, or more exactly its most interesting part from our point of view, which got lost, or lies hidden to this very day.<sup>15</sup> As is amply testified by his twelve-volume manuscript (published in the last century by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Verancsics belonged to the same humanist type as Busbecq or Dernschwam, with the difference that he sacrificed all that he had - especially his time - to his country. Busbecq did not consider it his personal duty, like Verancsics, to work doggedly without any respite for the bettering of the lot of a Hungary facing utter

destruction. He put his time and diplomatic skill into the service of the King for pay and promotion, and had - then as well as later in the safety of the west - ample time to describe his journeys and the Roman relics he had seen. Nor did Dernschwam set out on his journey for the sake of the future of his second country, Hungary, but in order to satisfy his own scholarly ambitions and probably to inform the Fuggers. The three, however, were one in their common passion, inspired by the ideas of humanism, for archeology and epigraphy. Verancsics, with his background of Italian universities, was probably the most experienced of the three in these fields. But he himself pointed out more than once<sup>16</sup> that he could no longer devote himself to his science since running the country's affairs did not leave him a single hour of leisure in which to listen to the call of the Muses.

Ferenc Zay did not share their passion for archeology but he also stood far above the average Hungarian nobleman of his age. He was a lover of books, and a widely-read man with a good classical education who, however, served his country now as the captain of a fort, now as a diplomat, now as the chief captain of the Danube fleet, and had no time to cultivate the Arts. But he also wrote, and with considerable aptitude as well, as is shown by his work on the causes of the loss of Nándorfejevár.<sup>17</sup>

"Adi 9 Marzo seind wir von Constaninapol per Skutar vbergefaren vnd alda vber nacht gelegen," begins Dernschwam's account of the expedition to Amasia. His diary is more detailed than Busbecq's. We shall combine the two as we reconstruct the story of this over four-hundredyear-old mission.

They separated into two groups once again; Dernschwam and his companions were detailed to Verancsics. Some of the mission's personnel remained in Istanbul. Verancsics's and Dernschwam's group consisted of the following persons: Father Miklós, the priest, Mihály

Dőry, Benedek Kun, Gábor Godócsy, Balázs Velky, János the scribe - that is, János Belsey who soon found himself in the centre of events - Mátyás Nagy, Urbán, Simon Lovas, Miklós the cook, Lukács, the tailor, András, the barber, and another András, a valet, and also a Dalmatian, a Spaniard and an Austrian. The group's comfort was to be ensured by the chiaus Djafer and a janisary named Mehmet.

Their first stop was Scutari, followed by Kartali,<sup>18</sup> the one-time seat of the kings of Bythinia. Both authors agree that its ancient glory was now reduced to a few ruins. They crossed Mount Olympus which reminded Dernschwam of the mountains of Transylvania,<sup>19</sup> and reached Nicea, the scene of the famous synod, where they studied Latin inscriptions. Busbecq only mentions this in passing; Dernschwam, however, completed his diary with sketches of what he had seen, and made precise records of every epigraphic find he had encountered throughout his journey. In this place there were many antiquities, inscriptions and sculptures. One was smashed up before the eyes of the humanist travellers by their escort. Their protest were answered by a roar of laughter.<sup>20</sup> They met slaves captured in Hungary everywhere.<sup>21</sup> During the night their sleep was disturbed by the howl of the jackals which ventured close to their tents. They were consoled for their bad night by next day's finds of many rare coins.<sup>22</sup>

Passing through the villages Akbuyuk, Bazardjik, and Kasumbasha, they descended from Mount Olympus. They spent their nights in caravanserais everywhere, where soup, mutton and rice was provided to every traveller by charity foundations.<sup>23</sup> In the village of Kasumbasha Mihály Dőry conversed with captive Hungarian women on Turkish mores.<sup>24</sup>

Compared to the diary of Dernschwam, a man of many parts but mainly interested in archeology, the notes of Busbecq contain much more botanical and zoological observations.

Still before reaching Ancyra - today's Ankara - they learned that their arrival would coincide with that of the Persian Shah's embassy. Playing the two opposing parties off against each other in a spectacular way was part of the diplomatic style of Emperor Suleiman.<sup>25</sup>

Dernschwam spares no amount of complaint over the various hardships but is discernibly consoled by the beauty of the landscape which, to him, recalls Hungary and especially Transylvania.<sup>26</sup> He took great delight in the work of carpet-makers, was annoyed when the wheels of his carriage broke, and made observations concerning the diet of the population.

They arrived in Ankara on 28 March.

The target of the mission - diplomatic and political - was Amasia. But they did their greatest service to the world and its cultural history during their stay, hardly more than one and a half days, in Ankara.

In the pages of the two travel diaries the entries for those two days begin like all the others. First they describe the city's surroundings, the desolate mountains, the river, a stone bridge and a water mill. Then comes the composition of the population, with a few words on its large number of weavers. The commanding pasha rode out to meet them with his cavalrymen, then the members of the mission turned in for the night in their tents.<sup>27</sup>

On 29 March, the day after that night's rest, they discovered a marble tablet with inscriptions in Latin and Greek among the ruins of the Roman temple in Ankara. Called the "Ancyranum monumentum", it contained Emperor Augustus's account of his reign and his political testament. One of the most precious relics of the history of imperial Rome came to life after a thousand years of silence.



Notes to chapter 14

1. THALLÓCZY.
2. Their sharp differences, however, did not prevent good personal relations between them. This remained so later on also. Verancsics and his companions made several visits to the Istanbul residence of the Transylvanian mission. As a royal ambassador, György Szepcsényi also saw the Kapitihá István Rácz frequently. Cf. BIRÓ, pp. 6, 86.
3. *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, Roma, Vol. IV, 1874, Passim.
4. *Iter Buda Hadrianopolim Anno MDLIII exaratum ab Antonio Verantio. Viaggio in Dalmazia dell'abbate A. Fortis, Venezia, 1774, Vol. II, Appendix XXII-XXIV, I. Cf. CIL Vol. III. Pars I. Berlin, 1873, p.4; THALLOCZY, pp. 69, 80.*
5. THALLÓCZY, p. 89.
6. "Zu Konstantinopel bin ich eingezogen den 20 Januarii, vnnd hab daselbst gute Herrn, Freundt vnd Befehlsverwandten angetroffen nemlich Antonium Wrantium und Frantzen Zay." BUSBECQ, p. 50.
7. THALLÓCZY, p. 92.
8. BUSBECQ, p. 78.
9. THALLÓCZY, p. 93.
10. BUSBECQ, p. 80. - Dernschwam's diary is nevertheless a great deal more accurate and lucid also from this point of view, let alone its greater philological reliability.
11. BABINGER, F.: Hans Dernschwam, ein Kleinasienforscher des 16. Jahrhunderts. *Deutsche Rundschau für Geographie*, 1913, Vol. XXXV, p. 543.
12. BUSBEQUIUS AUGERIUS GISLENIUS: *Itinera Constantinopolitanum, Antverpiae 1581; Idem: De re militari contra Turcam instituenda consilium. Bardi, 1594; Idem: Epistolae quatuor, Parisiis, 1595.*
13. Knowing the expansive economic policies of the house of Fugger as well as its interests in regions far beyond central Europe, it is hard to believe Dernschwam's statement that he left the service of the world company. It is much more likely that the hidden motive of his journey was the Fuggers' interest in mines in Turkey. The fact that Dernschwam's manuscript of his journey to Turkey was also found in the Fugger archives also contradicts his claim to have left the firm. Cf. Babinger's already cited paper in *Deutsche Rundschau für Geographie*, 1913, p. 536.

14. BERLÁSZ, J.: Dernschwam János könyvtára (The library of John Dernschwam), Magyar Könyvszemle, 1963, pp. 301-16; 1964, pp. 1-32; HERMANN, Zs: Hans Dernschwam könyvei között (In the company of Hans Dernschwam's books), Egyetemi Könyvtár, Évkönyvei Vol. IV, 1968, pp. 167-77.
15. "Iter Buda Hadrianopolim anno MDLIII exaratum ab Antonio Verantio" was the title of the first edition, published in Venice in 1774 by Alberto Fortis, of the fragment which had been found in the Split archives of the courts Draganich-Verancsics. The editor himself remarked on p. 141 of the first volume that "the most interesting part of the description of the long and hazardous mission" - la più interessante parte delle memorie della lunga, e pericolosa spedizione - had been taken possession of by a Jesuit called Filippo Riceputi (1663-1742) on whose hands it got lost. DERNSCHWAM, XXXIII-XXXIV. I.
16. SÖRÖS, P.: Verancsics Antal élete (The life of Antal Verancsics) Esztergom, 1898, p. 88.
17. OSZK (National Széchényi Library) Manuscripts, Fol. Hung, 96. Cf. THALLÓCZY, pp. 74-75; Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon (Encyclopedia of Hungarian Literature), Budapest 1965, Vol. III, pp. 581-582.
18. Dernschwam, as often, shows off his knowledge of Hungarian and observes that the word "Kartal" means eagle in Hungarian. DERNSCHWAM, p. 151.
19. DERNSCHWAM, p. 154.
20. BUSBECQ, p. 89.
21. "Alda seind vjl verkaufft ungernd...vnd aller nation." DERNSCHWAM, p. 159.
22. BUSBECQ, p. 89.
23. DERNSCHWAM, p. 165.
24. "Haben alda vngerische weiber gefunden, die mit vns durch den zaun geredt, welche Dywry Mihal gefragt, worumb die turkhen ire weiber also verhutteten. Darauf sy geantwortet, das die knaben vjl mer hutten bedurfften, alsbald sj erwachsen, das sy selbs der schelmerej noch lieffen, wie zw Sodoma vnd Gomorra beschen." DERNSCHWAM, p. 167.
25. "...dieweil des Persischen Königs Orator auch noch gehindert war, mit welchem wir zu einer Zeit sollten zu Amasia einziehen." BUSBECQ, p. 86.
26. "...Weingarten auff bajden sejtten, die man zwischen den

stoken, so noch der zejl gesezt, akert in der mitten...Vnd  
vberall als zwischen gepirgen in der mitten zogen, berg auff  
und ab." DERNSCHWAM, p. 180.

27. DERNSCHWAM, pp. 186-187.

C H A P T E R F I F T E E N

*Who found Emperor Augustus's testament? On János Belsey, the secretary of the embassy, who deciphered and copied the stone table, and was granted nobility for his scholarly achievements.*

In the 1596 German translation of Busbecq's notes - a perfect translation of the Latin original, by the way - the following can be read about his most important archeological experience in Ankara:

"In this place we saw a very beautiful table on which there was a description of the substance and summary of the things which had been conducted and accomplished by Emperor Augustus in a majestic and very remarkable way. We had it copied by our men, that is as much of it as could be seen and read. It is on the side of a building which must have been a council meeting-hall<sup>1</sup> in older times; today it is ruined, and the walls of marble stone are not covered by a roof, so the inscription is partly to the left and partly to the right for those entering. The top part of these stones is completely intact, the middle part badly damaged, while the lower part is so bad that it cannot be read, which is rather regrettable since it hinders art-loving, educated people."<sup>2</sup>

The book appeared some forty years after the journey to Amasia. To appraise the significance of the Ankara find is not within the scope of the present work<sup>3</sup> but, since it was an integral part of the journey of Ferdinand I's envoys, a few important yet little discussed circumstances are worth pointing out.

Both in the Latin original and the German translation of his work, Busbecq admits with appropriate modesty that the marble tablet

in question was not discovered by him, but that he was one of those who discovered it.<sup>4</sup> It also shows his honesty that he quite openly states that the transcription of the text, a work requiring a high-level knowledge of classic Greek and Latin as well as palaeography, was not his personal achievement either. "We had it copied", he wrote, which can only mean that the three humanists of the embassy, Verancsics, Busbecq and Dernschwam, had the tables transcribed by classically educated subordinates. (It may actually have been one of these officers who first found it; we do not know.)

One thing is thus certain; the leaders of the mission did not transcribe the Monumentum Ancyranum. But who then did it?

Today there is no longer any doubt that one of these copiers was János Belsey, Johannes Belsius by his humanist pen-name a citizen of Eperjes, and it is precisely the parts transcribed by him which have proved to be the most lucid and enduring.

In 1548 János Belsey was still a student in Wittenberg,<sup>5</sup> after which he became an official of the Szepes Chamber.<sup>6</sup> As a man with an exceptional knowledge of languages he was repeatedly employed for diplomatic missions; that is how he got on the staff of the mission led by Verancsics as well. He was employed as the secretary of the embassy.

In his study on Dernschwam,<sup>7</sup> F. Babinger, the outstanding orientalist, remarks that "Busbecq, as is evident from his travel diary, did not devote too much attention to archeological finds, while Verancsics - as can be seen from the fragment of his work "Iter Buda Hadrianopolim" - and Johannes Belsius, a travelling companion of both, made thorough notes of them. It is beyond doubt that the Latin and Greek inscriptions were noted down in Dernschwam's travel diary in a fine hand by Johannes Belsius, a learned former student of Wittenberg.<sup>8</sup> But the mass of Greek and Latin inscrip-

tions attached to Dernschwam's book as an appendix are also Belsius's handiwork. I shall forego publishing this appendix because of the high printing costs of reproducing this text, written with innumerable ligatures; in any case its greater part is not Dernschwam's work." Another evidence of the relationship between Dernschwam and Belsey as archeologists is their correspondence.<sup>9</sup>

János Belsey himself had the following to say about the circumstances of his work in Ankara: "In the Galatian city of Ancyra Augustus had an enormous palace; there were Emperor Augustus's deeds engraved at the entrance on both sides. They are not completely legible, and we were also hindered in reading them by the crowd of Barbarians."<sup>10</sup>

Mommsen writes in his above-cited work that the mission which travelled to Amasia on Ferdinand's instructions was remarkable in every respect, and won ever-lasting fame for finding the Monumentum Ancyranum.<sup>10</sup>

All literate persons on the embassy's lower-ranking staff were Hungarians. So was János Belsey and so were the two priests, Miklós and Gáspár, as well as the scribe Márton, "ein Schreiber". They were all Latinists and genuine humanists who carried on their work undisturbed by the hostility of the unfriendly locals. The contribution of János Belsey is preeminent among them, not only because the third part copied by him has proved to be the most complete and contains the least errors,<sup>12</sup> but also because, in a way still unable to be proved by hard facts but nevertheless distinctly discernible from the sources, he had a leading role in the whole Ankara venture.

Cultural history, especially the history of epigraphy, has preserved only the name of Busbecq as the sole discoverer of the Ankara find. We have no reason to deny him credit as one of the

discoverers (we have seen that he did not claim more himself), but nor is there any reason to forget about Verancsics (even if the relevant part of his diary is lost), Dernschwam and the Hungarians no longer remembered, who deciphered and transcribed the marble table. In a monograph on the world-famous find published in 1845 we can still read: "the inscription, or monument, of Ancyra was first discovered in 1554 by Bishop Antal Verancsics of Eger and Augerius Ghislanus Busbecq, ambassadors of Ferdinand, the King of Rome."<sup>13</sup> The contribution of Verancsics, the experienced archeologist and humanist scholar, has since been forgotten, let alone the contribution of János Belsey who also had a share in the important discovery.

The latter's work as a scholar seems to have been highly appreciated after his return from Turkey, too. As soon as he arrived home, in 1557, he was granted nobility, a rare prize, since in Hungary in those times entry to the privileged order was granted almost exclusively in appreciation of military merits. All the literature emphasizes that János Belsey-Belsius received his letter of nobility, dated in Vienna, 1 December, 1557, not for military but for diplomatic and scholarly achievements from King Ferdinand I of Hungary.<sup>14</sup> His nobility was announced on 9 November, 1569 at the general assembly of county Sáros.<sup>15</sup> According to a monograph on the history of county Sáros, János Belsy (Belsey) de Eperjes won nobility for his scientific merits.<sup>16</sup>

The letter patent itself is quite unique in every respect. Its classical Latin style, quite different from the usual run-of-the-mill chancellery document, and its inspired, eloquent humanistic praise of scholarship can be attributed to Archbishop Miklós Oláh who, as can be verified from the text, recommended the young Protestant diplomat for nobility. He obviously did so with the full approval of Verancsics and Zay. Antal Áldásy<sup>17</sup> also observed that "the letter

of nobility mentions that the grantee is well versed in the sciences, especially in the Latin and Greek languages", the speaks of his outstanding public services. However, he fails to mention the scholarly references of the letter of nobility from which it is clear that Belsey was one of the first, if not the first, to be awarded nobility for diplomatic and scientific, in this case archeological, merits.

The deed describes his diplomatic services in the following terms: "...When we sent our honourable subject, Antal Verancsics, formerly Bishop of Eger, and now of Pécs, and our advisor, five years ago as envoy extraordinary to the Porte of the Emperor of the Turks, Sultan Suleyman, together with His Honour Ferenc Zay of Csömör, Captain-in-Chief of our fleet at Komárom, and our adviser, in order to negotiate about the peace and the agreement to be concluded between us. You, holding the office of secretary,<sup>18</sup> spent a full four years in devoted and diligent work putting the public and private affairs of our embassy in writing, exposing your life and safety, according to creditable witnesses, to obvious and visible dangers and harrassment..."<sup>19</sup>

Belsey's scientific, especially archeological, merits are described at great length. We shall only mention a few of these statements. "Just as men of noble birth seek glory and often an immortal name by soldiering and by the use of weapons" - argues the letter - "many say that those who cultivate the sciences, and combine this with great loyalty, must be ranked with them. For the more superior the mind is to the body, the more necessary it is that this should be regarded as even more outstanding, and deserving greater praise, than the above merits. That is why this man, blessed with knowledge and wisdom, who, by the clarity of his mind and eminent diligence, brought to life also that which was in



fact hidden in the depths of the earth, has risen up. And he has recorded all this, in order to serve posterity, so that it can be drawn from as from a well abounding in water... You rose from the ranks of the common order. When we learned that in your early youth you had completed the gifts you luckily received from nature with higher knowledge - with learning in Greek and Latin literature as well as other arts - and you rose so high that, by the right handling of affairs and by your talent, you won uncommon fame among many an eminent men in your country, Hungary... when you were recommended to us, we placed you in a high position, and it is desirable to us to reward you with our favour and generosity."<sup>20</sup>

The details of his life are still to be uncovered. His son-in-law was János Bocatius, chief justice of Kassa, who was renowned both for his literary activities and his celebrated escape from the prison of Prague. Later, besides directing the Gyulafehérvár (Transylvania) library, he also served on important diplomatic missions. Belsey's epitaph was composed in verse by Bocatius; it tells so much at least that the outstanding Hungarian diplomat carried out missions abroad on behalf of three emperors and beside Hungarian he also spoke Italian, Hebrew, Greek, Polish, German and Turkish.<sup>21</sup>

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Aware as the learned diplomats were of the significance of their discovery in Ankara, from the point of view of their diplomatic mission it was merely a brief interlude.

Busbecq's diary continues with a description of the first-rate wool of the area and the way it is processed, discussing this topic at much greater length than the just discovered testament of Emperor Augustus. Dernschwam, who treated the Ankara find in much more detail in his diary, devotes more attention to the land-

scape and the ancient ruins to be seen.

They reached the banks of the river Halys which, both diaries point out, was once the frontier between Media and Lydia. Busbecq was surprised that the Turks had no idea about fishing and watched with great amazement as Ferenc Zay caught a lot of fine-tasting fish in a very short time.<sup>22</sup> Both diaries deal with the Turkish diet and its poverty. It is quite apparent that Busbecq and Dernschwam (and obviously also Verancsics) observed things together or exchanged views, hence the similar tone of certain of their remarks.

They arrived in Amasia on the 7th of April. They also met the emissaries of one of the Georgian kingdoms there,<sup>23</sup> which gave them an opportunity to write a few interesting sentences about the fate of this nation.

Immediately after their arrival the envoys first saw Ahmed Pasha, then were granted an audience with the Sultan. He was sitting on a low, richly embroidered throne, resting his feet on a carpeted cushion. His face was grim and angry. Watchful, silent janisaries in white turbans stood guard on his side.

The three envoys were taken by the arm by two chiauses each, who led them before the Sultan. The salutatory speech was delivered by Busbecq who asked for the recognition of Ferdinand's rights in Transylvania. The Sultan's face became grimmer and grimmer as he heard him through, and when the speech was finished, he only said "gyuzel, gyuzel"<sup>24</sup> in a sarcastic tone. That was the end of the interview.<sup>25</sup>

They spent four weeks in Amasia. They visited all the influential people, promising an enormous amount of gold if they would influence the Sultan in a favourable direction, but achieved no result.

On 10 May the embassy of the Shah of Persia paid their respects

to the Sultan. They brought splendid, colourful Babylonian tents, embroidered quivers and horse-cloths, Damascene sabres mounted with precious stones, and an invaluable manuscript of the Koran. Also they achieved their peace, and the Hungarian envoys could enjoy the sight of the banquet celebrating the agreement - from a distance, since they found themselves excluded. They described it in detail and with some annoyance.<sup>26</sup> The Belgian diplomat later remarked in an offended tone that they were not even granted the honour of a farewell banquet to which departing embassies are always treated.<sup>27</sup>

The only achievement of Ferdinand's obstinacy was that the Sultan preferred making peace in Asia in order to be able to retain a greater freedom of movement in Hungary. The Hungarian envoys, although they too brought presents and paid tax for Transylvania, could not achieve more than a six-month truce and a relatively benign letter from Suleiman in which he appealed to Ferdinand to restore John Sigismund in his legacy.<sup>28</sup> All that remained for them to do was the farewell visit. There the Sultan expressed his hope that Ferdinand would make a sensible decision. As a gift, Verancsics and his fellow ambassadors were given ceremonial caftans while the diplomats of lesser rank received silk clothes. They departed for Constantinople on the 2nd. of June.

The uneventfulness of the return trip was broken by one moving incident, an encounter with a large number of captive Hungarians.<sup>29</sup>

Back in Constantinople they still had much anxiety to endure and there were times when their very lives were in danger. Finally in 1557 when Ferdinand, having lost his Transylvanian fortresses, had no other choice but peace at any cost, Verancsics, Zay and Belsey could return home to work out the text of the peace agreement.

Notes to chapter 15

1. "Ratshauss" in the German translation, "praetorium" in the Latin original; in fact it was a temple dedicated to the genius of Rome and to the worship of Augustus.
2. BUSBECQUIUS, A.G.: Legationis Turcicae epistulae quattuor. Francofurti 1595, p. 65; Idem: Reyssen, p. 91. - Cf. TARDY, L. - MOSKOVSZKY, É.: Zur entdeckung des Monumentum Ancyranum, In: Acta Antiqua Acad. Scient. Hungariae. T. XXXI (1973), pp. 375-394.
3. Cf. PAULY - WISSOWA Realenzyklopaedie, Bd. XVI, pp. 211-31.
4. On 29 March, 1555 Busbecq - who was later to use expressions like "we found", "we had it copied" in his book - was not yet aware that what he saw amongst the ruins in Ankara, in the neighbourhood of dirty mud huts, was nothing other than a scientific sensation. Without trying to lessen his merits in popularizing the inscription later, one is apt to ask why, if he had had the text copied, was he unable to show that copy to Pighius twenty years later? Busbecq in fact never said that he ever had one (Acta Minora Academiae Berolinensis, 1866, p. 419 seq. 1.). According to this, "Busbecq convinced me that the great monument with a brief summary of Augustus's deeds was still existing in Ancyra in Galatia - and he had seen it (seen it but not copied it - L.T.), and he gave me hope that these might be copied down" (thus he knew neither that Belsius and his companions had transcribed it, nor the way to obtain a copy of this transcription. - L.T.), and he asks Rimius to investigate that possibility. He is willing to cover the costs estimated by Busbecq at about 20-30 ducats. He adds that John Sambucus will write about this to Ungnad, the ambassador in Constantinople. (MRG p. 16.)
5. Album Academiae Vitenbergensis. Ed. C. Foerstemann, Bd. I, p. 243; BARTHOLOMAEIDES, I.L.: Memoriae Vngarorum qui in alma condam Vniversitate Vitebergensi...confirmarunt, Pest 1817, p. 22; RÉVÉSZ, I.: Magyar tanulók Wittenbergben (Hungarian students in Wittenberg, M.Történelmi Társ., 1869, p. 221; FRANKL, V.: A hazai és külföldi iskolázás a XVI. században (Education in Hungary and abroad in the 16th century), Budapest 1873, p. 299.
6. BOD, p. 346.

7. DERNSCHWAM: op. cit., XXXV. I.
8. One of the most important relics of the ancient Hungarian runic script, belonging to the family of Turkish scripts (NÉMETH, Gy.: *A magyar rovásírás (Hungarian runic writing), A magyar nyelvtudomány kézikönyve (Handbook of Hungarian Linguistics), Vol. II, Budapest 1934, p. 26*), is doubly interwoven with the history of Hungary's oriental diplomacy. - Dernschwam saw a strange script on the wall of the stable at their quarters in Constantinople. He recorded the unknown characters in the appendix of his diary together with all the other epigraphic finds. From Babinger we know that the majority of these were noted here in the fine, experienced hand of János Belsey (...von ihm stammen dann auch die meisten am Schlusse der ganzen Handschrift beigefügten Inschriften in lateinischer und griechischer Sprache). In this case, however, Dernschwam noted that these strange characters had been recorded by himself. (DERNSCHWAM, p. 40.) Nevertheless there is no doubt that Belsey, who had copied most of the inscription into Dernschwam's diary, saw both the original inscription and Dernschwam's copy of it. Centuries had to pass before the inscription could be deciphered, since the original did not survive; it perished when the Elji-Han, the ambassadorial residence in Istanbul burned down in 1865. The inscription in Dernschwam's diary was discovered by Babinger in 1913. He sent it to the Danish Scholar Wilhelm Thomsen who established that Dernschwam's diary contained a monument of the Hungarian runic writing. He also deciphered most of it (Németh, Gy. op. cit, p. 9.). The fragmentary text is the following: ezer öcáz tizenöt esztendőben irtáq eszt; László király öt követét várattáq itt; Bilaji Barlabás kettő esztendejik it valt; nem tön császár...; Keteji Székel Tamás irtán eszt; Szelimbök császár itt té ben száz lóval ("this was written in the year 1515; King Ladislas's five envoys were kept waiting here; Barnabás Bélay was here for two years; the Emperor did not...; Tamás Székely of Kede wrote this; Emperor Selimbeok was here with a hundred horses") (Ibid.; Cf. LIGETI, L.: *A magyar rovásírás egy ismeretlen betűje (An unknown character of the Hungarian runic script), Magyar Nyelv, Vol. XXXI, 1935, pp. 184-5; Idem: A felelin-féle igealakok az erdélyi régiségben (Verb forms of the type 'felelin' in old Transylvanian speech), Magyar Nyelv, Vol. LIV, 1958. pp. 334-5.*) Thus it was a member of Barnabás Bélay's mission - Tamás Székely of Kede by

name - who, forty years previous to the Verancsics-Zay-Busbecq embassy, expressed the deep anxiety he and his companions were sharing by writing it on the marble wall of the stable in letters "which no one but his countrymen could read" (SEBESTYÉN, Gy.: Op. cit., p. 26). - From a scientific point of view, the problem must be considered settled; at the same time, however, we have no answer as yet to the question whether János Belsius-Belsey recognized the characters for a Hungarian runic script, and whether it was he who called the attention of Dernschwam and Verancsics to the find. These questions can be answered only when details of Belsey's life and his legacy will have been revealed.

9. Cod. lat. 9216, Bl. 7. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München; Cf. DERNSCHWAM, loc. cit.
10. CIL III., p. 4.
11. Ibid.
12. MRG XVIII. 1.
13. FRANZIUS, I. - ZUMPTIUS, A.W.: *Caesaris Augusti Index rerum a se gestarum sive monumentum Ancyranum*. Berlin, 1845, p. 6.
14. NAGY IVÁN, Vol. I. p. 288.
15. KEMPELEN, B.: *Magyar nemesi családok (Hungarian noble families)*, Vol. II, Budapest 1901, p. 54.
16. TÓTH, S.: *Sáros vármegye monográfiája (A monograph of the county of Sáros)*, Vol. I, Budapest 1909, p. 257.
17. ÁLDÁSY, A.: *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum czimereslevelei, 1200-1868 (The letters patent of nobility of the Hungarian National Museum, 1200-1868)*, Vol. I, Budapest 1904, pp. 38-9.
18. "secretarius officio fungens"
19. ÁLDÁSY, A.: op. cit., pp. 38-9.; SVÁBY, F.: *Közlemények Szepes vármegye levéltárából (Documents from the archives of Szepes county)*, Turul 18889, p. 36.
20. Hungarian National Archives, Hungarian Letters Patent, post-1526 collection, Copies. Dec. 1, 1557, I. R 64.
21. Ore uno Linguas tenuit septem: Hungarus Auson,  
Hebraeus, Graecus, Sarmata, Teuto, Getes.  
Trinus eum varias Caesar legavit in oras  
Bizanti longas traxit in Urbe moras
22. BUSBECQ, p. 94.
23. DERNSCHWAM, pp. 211-2.
24. "fine, fine" (VERANCSICS, Vol. IV, p. 43.)
25. THALLÓCZY, p. 95.

26. BUSBECQ, p. 110.
27. BUSBECQ, p. 112.
28. THALLÓCZY, p. 97.
29. BUSBECQ, p. 162; Cf. DERNSCHWAM, p. 233.

C H A P T E R   S I X T E E N

*The envoys of Ferdinand I in Persia and Georgia. Georgians and Circassians in István Báthori's plans against the Turks. The efforts of Cumuleo, the Papal nuncio, to create an alliance involving Transylvania, Persia, Georgia, the Circassians and the Tatars.*

Ferdinand I had been the ruler of Austria, the Tyrol, Styria, Carinthia and Kraina since 1521 but, even after he had been elected King of Rome, in the eyes of the Turks his authority derived from his being King of Hungary, and they continued to deal with him as such until he became Emperor in 1558. It was also in that capacity that he sent his envoys to Asia to keep the old contacts alive, or to revive them. His diplomats operating in Persia, however, were not Hungarians, so their missions will be treated only briefly.

The mission of the Levantine Petrus da Negro between 1527 and 1529 is known from a note. After the ambassador had delivered Ferdinand's message to the Shah, the Persian ruler answered that he was firm and unwavering in his loyalty and would never make peace or a truce with the Turks unless Ferdinand should do so before him. If the Hungarian king attacked the Turks on land, he would be ready to break into Syria with his army. And if they could be fortified with a few war galleons, the Persians would attack the Turks in Egypt. The allegation that he had made peace with the Turks was untrue, he only remained neutral during the Baghdad rebellion. This happened in June, "during the last stay of the Turkish Emperor in Hungary," when the Turks were besieging Vienna, he instructed some



of his commanders to enter Greater Armenia and attack Turkey. When, however, they received the false information that Vienna had been captured, they stopped their advance, especially as they had to turn their weapons against the rebellious Kurds.<sup>1</sup>

In the same years a Dalmatian, Simon de Lillis also saw the Shah, then staying in Baghdad, on behalf of Ferdinand. Having taken, or rather heard out, the ambassador's letter of credit, Shah Tasmasp, who was accustomed to receiving rich presents from Asian rulers, was rather surprised that the King sent him none, which did not exactly enhance Ferdinand's reputation. Nevertheless the Shah let the ambassador know that he would remain King Ferdinand's faithful ally and would prepare himself strongly for the fight against the Turks, just as his father and predecessor, Ismail Safi had done. According to the documents Simon de Lillis had also visited one of the Georgian rulers, "the Emperor of the Georgians," as he wrote.<sup>2</sup> This was in all likelihood the Kakhian (east Georgian) king Levan. The Georgian sovereign gave a hearty welcome to the envoy. He sent his best wishes to Ferdinand; moreover he promised that if the Hungarian King were to move against the Turks, he would incite a revolt against them in Trebizond.<sup>3</sup>

These rather weightless, tentative negotiations in Persia and Georgia, however, were a far cry from the earlier oriental contacts of Hungary which, though they never came to fruition, were much more imaginatively built and enduring as well. The diplomatic initiative concerning the east beyond Turkey, the concept of encircling the Ottoman Empire, did not pass from Turkish-held Buda to Vienna (which was after all the seat of the Habsburgs, now Kings of Hungary) but farther to the west. It found new centres in other European capitals, in countries which had had practically no contacts with these eastern powers during the times of Sigismund and Matthias,

and especially in Rome. The Holy See did not abandon the idea that it might still be able to convert the Persians, who had once shown such goodwill to Christendom.

For a long time the foreign policy of Transylvania, achieving independent statehood under the guidance of Friar George, did not range beyond Moldavia, Walachia, and especially Istanbul. The closeness and frequency of this small state's contacts with the Porte are well known and have been thoroughly treated in a few monographs.<sup>4</sup> However, these works, dealing with their subject mainly from the point of view of cultural history, while covering even the minutest details in this respect, have left the most relevant - political - substance of the various ambassadorial reports and diplomatic records unexploited. There can be little doubt that these would yield a great deal of interesting information on the way in which the events and developments of the eastern frontiers of the Ottoman Empire were seen by the Transylvanian ambassadors. These reports and confidential notes must have been one of the chief sources of the Báthoris' later ideas concerning alliances to be made.

For nearly one and a half centuries (from 1543 to 1668) Transylvania's most learned and experienced politicians regularly served as chief ambassadors, envoys extraordinary, post envoys or "kaptihas" (resident ambassadors) to the Porte. Their task, important and dangerous as well, was to keep in touch with the Sublime Porte, to ease, as far as possible, the pressure due to the country's dependent position and to counter the actions of the envoys sent from Vienna. On the other hand, similarly to the diplomats of the "Viennese kings" such as Verancsics and the others, they were to establish contacts with the ambassadors of other nations and to gather information on European developments as well as on the movements occurring almost regularly on the farther frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, which tied down the military forces of the Turks.<sup>5</sup>

These works repeatedly mention that the Transylvanian diplomats kept contacts with Persians, Arabs and Tatars<sup>6</sup> delegated to the Porte, but these contacts were of small significance, mainly commercial in nature. These monographs are silent on the issue of political information and combinations.

During the reign of John Sigismund, following those of Isabella and Ferdinand, no independent eastern policy could develop in Transylvania. The chains linking it to Istanbul were too strong for that. But the position of their successor, István Báthori, a man of immense wealth and broad vision who had been educated in Italy and was gifted both as a statesman and a military leader, was entirely different. He became Prince of Transylvania in 1571, the year when the Turkish fleet was nearly wiped out by the Spanish and Venetian navy in the battle of Lepanto. This was another reason why the Sultan grew to be weary of his powerful vassal who, after he defeated Gáspár Békés who tried to overthrow him, began to build an independent Transylvanian foreign policy with vast energy and great caution. He occupied the Polish throne in 1576 but, through his brother Kristóf Báthori, he retained his full influence over the affairs of Transylvania as well.

A few important studies<sup>7</sup> dealing with the sources give us a view of those main aspects of István Báthori's foreign policy which are relevant to our topic. They reveal that his policy after the death of Ivan the Terrible was not merely self-serving; to some extent under the aegis of the Possevino plan, he wanted to bring Russia into his grand design aimed at a complete destruction of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> His ideas concerning the Persians and the Georgians pour forth abundantly from Possevino's reports from his journey to Poland.<sup>9</sup> At the end of August 1584 King István Báthori declared

that he needed an army of 50,000 cavalrymen and 40,000 foot soldiers, equipped with a strong artillery. This army should first conquer Moldavia, Wallachia and a few fortresses in Bulgaria to ensure its supply lines, then advance straight on Adrianople and Constantinople, to strike at the very heart of the Ottoman Empire. Then, by being forced into battle, the Turks could be completely cut off from their food supplies, and the Russians, Persians and Georgians might also join in the campaign.<sup>10</sup> In 1586 there were already hopes in the Papal court that, on the basis of Báthori's plans, "the Georgians and Persians will resume their old contacts with the Holy See, and the Persians will redouble the strength of the Christian allies."<sup>11</sup>

That Báthori's plans were built on solid foundations, and that he had already made a deal with the rulers of those far-away countries, can also be ascertained from a letter written by the Shah of Persia to the Pope. Among other things, the letter contains that despite the death of the Polish king the anti-Ottoman league must be maintained and carried to victory.<sup>12</sup>

To sum up, Báthori wanted to resurrect the great strategic design which had been without real foundations since King Matthias, and which included Asia as well as Europe: to enclose the Turks "in a ring of fire and iron"<sup>13</sup> with a concerned attack by the Polish, Imperial and Transylvanian forces on one side and the Russians, Persians, Georgians and Circassians on the other. In maintaining the necessary contacts, an important part was played by János Bengyeri, a diplomat whom Báthori brought from Transylvania and whom he sent alternately to the Circassians and the Georgians nearly every year.<sup>14</sup> A Circassian named Aurelo also spent a long time in Stephen Báthori's court, keeping him informed on developments in Persia as well as in the Caucasus.<sup>15</sup>

On receiving the news of Stephen Báthori's death, Pope Sixtus V



declared: "we followed with great hope, and supported with considerable financial means, his undertaking that he would set out to defeat the Sultan hand in hand with the Tatars and Persians."<sup>16</sup>

All this, however, was essentially Polish policy and a Polish effort, even though its initiator, István Báthori and his aides were Hungarians and Transylvania figured prominently in their combinations. The plan of a world-wide league, never fulfilled because of the great king's death, had nevertheless to be mentioned here, if only because a few years later, when Transylvania was ruled by Zsigmond Báthori and the Habsburg Empire by Emperor Rudolf, new efforts were made to revive it.

At the Asian end the conditions were suitable for such a revival. After a period of internal strife the Persian throne was once again occupied by a strong, militant personality in the mould of Ismail Safi or Uzun Hassan. He was Abbas I, who acceded to the throne in 1587. The civil war which had been consuming the country's strength ceased, and Persia again became the potential helper of Asian and European countries in their defence against the Ottoman Empire. Among the Georgian states, the position of Kartli and Kakheti became consolidated. Between 1558 and 1600 Kartli was led by an active, far-sighted ruler in the person of King Simon I who, although hindered for fifteen years by a rival king (King David XI, known as Daut Khan), had a great appreciation for distant allies,<sup>17</sup> and was celebrated at the time as the scourge of the Turks in Europe also. King Alexander II (1574-1605) of Kakheti was also an important personality. Both were ready to join the Persians and, in alliance with the European powers, to crush the Ottoman Empire.<sup>18</sup>

On the other side, in Europe, however, conditions were much worse. The new King of Poland was preoccupied with the war against the Swedes. Zsigmond Báthori was highly educated and courageous but unstable, with a volatile temperament. He inherited from his

uncle neither the combined power of Poland and Transylvania nor the virtue of caution and circumspection. Emperor Rudolf, on the other hand, who had withdrawn to the Hradcany of Prague, was, by his character as well as by his illness, inadequate to be leader of a world-wide league. He proved to be unfit even for governing his own empire.

The alliance of the anti-Turkish powers of the east and west nevertheless got off to an encouraging start, mainly because it received strong support from Spain and because the Holy See, under Popes Gregory XIII, Sixtus V and especially Urban VII, continued to work persistently behind the scenes for the resurrection of the old league.

The spiritual leader of the league about to realize István Báthori's legacy and his world-wide plans was the Curia of Rome. No longer the central driving force but one of the minor though important wheels of the league, truly intercontinental in its dimensions, was still Hungarian; it was the Transylvania of Zsigmond Báthori. Let us add at once that the particular role it was to play was, from a diplomatic point of view, a great deal more complex and far-reaching than the contemporary Transylvanian and Hungarian sources would seem to indicate.

Born in 1572, Zsigmond Báthori, one of the most controversial personalities of the age, was still a child when he became Prince of Transylvania, and the country's affairs were run for several years by a governing council on his behalf. But already in 1588, at the age of sixteen, he took full control of the principality, then at peace, only to be plunged into disaster under his rule. At the recommendation of the Holy See, Zsigmond Báthori chose the Spanish Jesuit Alfonso Carrillo as his confessor. Carrillo's character and role are well known from some outstanding studies in-

investigating the sources. His activity signalled the start of the new orientation which, neglecting the real balance of forces, broke with the earlier policy of gradually increasing independence from, but relatively peaceful relations with, the Turks. Instead, the country rushed headlong into the league sponsored by Rome and run from Prague, a league which had been feasible enough during István Báthori's ten-year reign in Poland but was doomed to failure after his death.

The peace between the Habsburg empire and the Porte became increasingly precarious; both sides were preparing for war.

Pope Clement VIII acceded to the papal throne at the end of January 1597. The agents to implement his will were well-trained, fearless and untiring, and had every means of persuasion, financial as well as moral, at their disposal. Immediately after his succession, Clement VIII dispatched a nuncio to Transylvania, a territory forbidden to papal legates hitherto. Attilio Amalteo arrived in Kolozsvár on 1 May, 1592 but his arrival had to be kept secret; the Sultan's envoys were staying in town and, knowing the circumstances, they would soon have put two and two together. Amalteo was aware that the Prince would be unable to break with the peace party just then; he only asked him to remove the representatives of that view from his council.

During the summer of next year Sultan Murad II made up his mind to attack, and declared war on Emperor Rudolf. He also sent orders to Zsigmond Báthori to put his troops and artillery on the alert and join the Turkish forces as soon as the word was given.

It was in this situation that Pope Clement VIII wanted to unite all anti-Ottoman forces in an alliance that was to be the widest ever.

Alessandro Cumuleo, a Dalmatian born in Split in 1548, was

assigned the job of visiting the Prince of Transylvania, the Voivode of Moldavia and Wallachia as well as the Tsar of Russia, the King of Poland and the Circassians, and to persuade them to ally up with the Emperor.<sup>19</sup>

Cumuleo received his credentials and instructions on 21 November, 1593. His first destination was to be Transylvania.<sup>20</sup> On 16 February, 1594, as indicated by a report sent from Gyulafehérvár, he had already been staying there for a month, completely incognito, so as not to arouse anybody's suspicion.<sup>21</sup> He had had two audiences with the Prince who declared his willingness to comply with His Holiness's will in every respect.<sup>22</sup> He does not elaborate on what this consisted of; future developments, diplomatic ones as well, he wrote, would answer that question. Cumuleo talked over every detail with Carrillo, the mainspring behind the prince's actions, and the first result was soon visible: Zsigmond Báthori started negotiations with Emperor Rudolf on the alliance, sending Alfonso Carrillo to Prague as his envoy.<sup>23</sup>

Cumuleo's next letter a week later indicates clearly that a full military alliance involving Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia under the leadership of Zsigmond Báthori was imminent. Báthori's troops stationed in Moldavia were expected to be joined by Cossack, Circassian and Polish auxiliary forces. These together, Cumuleo wrote, represented a force which - if, for some reason, the Imperial troops operating in Hungary were prevented from joining in - was fully sufficient in itself to take Constantinople.<sup>24</sup>

With Zsigmond Báthori Cumuleo achieved everything he had been instructed to do by Clement VIII. He could now move on to the Romanian principalities and Poland. The fruits of his mission became ripe while he was on the way. On 27 August the new diet of Transylvania declared the pact with the Turks null and void. At



the cost of great terror and a bloodbath, Transylvania returned to the western alliance. In accordance with the agreement made between Rudolf and Zsigmond Báthori on 28 January, 1591, the Transylvanian troops began their advance. Tergoviste and Bucharest were taken by the united forces of Transylvania and the Romanian voivodes, then, after the Giurgiu victory, the whole of Wallachia was liberated from the Turks. European public opinion was already hoping for the imminent reconquest of Constantinople, and Zsigmond Báthori became one of the most celebrated heroes of the western pamphlets and newsheets of those years.

However, the diplomatic activity also connected with Zsigmond Báthori's name, which went on until his abdication in 1598, is not sufficiently known even by those who have a full picture of the military and political developments, of the halts and defeats which followed the initial successes. It was the undisputable talent of Zsigmond Báthori as well as the geographic position of his country that compelled the Holy See to entrust the fulfilment of part of its eastern diplomatic plans to him.

Notes to chapter 16

1. NECK, p. 85.
2. "...imperator Giorgianis Vicino Perse."
3. NECK, p. 86.
4. BIRÓ; MÜLLER, G.: Die Türkenherrschaft in Siebenbürgen, Hermannstadt-Sibiu, 1923.
5. Such news reached Hungarian dignitaries sometimes amazingly fast; they were often very well informed about the events in Persia. Tamás Nádasy, for instance, wrote to his wife from Pozsony on 2 January, 1559: "...that the Persian King who defeated the Tatars is also in our favour, but it is harmful to us that the Turks cut down ten thousand Spaniards in Africa." (KÁROLYI, A - SZALAY, J.: Nádasy Tamás nádor családí levelezése (The family correspondence of Palatine Tamás Nádasy). Budapest, 1882, p. 31.) The situation was the same in Transylvania; László Kendefy, for example, knew in 1552 that the Turkish emperor did not attack Transylvania because "aúia magnam curam habet et apparat se adversus Persam kazu" (HURMUZAKI, Vol. II/1, pp. 273-4.).
6. BIRÓ, pp. 87, 88.
7. PSPM, etc.
8. PSPM, pp. 78, 101-102; BORATINSKI, L.: Stefan Batory i plan Ligi przeciw Turkom 1576-1584. Rozprawy Akademii Umiejetnoscy, Wydział Hystoryczno-Filozofyczny, Ser. 2., Vol. 19, Kraków 1903, pp. 197-347.
9. PSPM, p. 123.
10. Bibl. Vat., Roma, Urb. 1149, p. 34. Noted down probably by Possevino. VBI Vol. II, p. 278. Cf. PBP, pp. 96-97, 132.
11. PRS, Vol. II, p. 292; Cf. KUNTZE, E.: Les rapports de la Pologne avec le Saint Siège à l'époque d'Étienne Bathory (Étienne Bathory, Roi de Pologne Prince de Transylvanie, Cracovie, 1935, pp. 198, 204.).
12. CUGNONI, D.: Autobiografia di Mons. G. Antonio Santori, Roma 1890, p. 186.
13. "Dans l'espace de trois ans, il comptait s'emparer de la Moscovie, tendre ensuite sa main victorieuse aux Géorgiens, aux Circassiens et aux Perses, enserrer les Turcs dans un cercle de fer et de feu." PSPM, p. 22.
14. "1580, 5 Maii. János Bengyeri...received 40 florins for the travelling expenses of his mission to Circassia." VERMES, E.:

- Rationales Curiae St. Báthory regis Poloniae, Budapest 1918, p. 125 and passim. Concerning Bengyeri see also GOLOBUCKIJ, V.A.: Zaporozskoje kazacestvo, Kiev, 1957, p. 92.
15. VBI, Vol. II, p. 169.
  16. PASTOR, L. v.: Geschichte der Papste, Freiburg i/B, 1926, Vol. X, 99. 390-1.
  17. On the life of King Simon see KARÁCSON, I.: Török történetirók (Turkish historians), Vol. III, Budapest, 1916, p. 85; THURY, J.: Dsáfer pasa (Jaafer Pasha) Hadtört. Közl., 1892, p. 403; HURMUZAKI, Vol. III/2, pp. 524, 527; SZTM, Vol. IV, p. 208.
  18. After the death of Bagrat Imeretia became a vassal of the Turks for a prolonged period.
  19. Cardinal Lodovico Madruzzo travelled to Germany on a similar mission, and Cardinal Camillo Borghese to Spain (BAZYLOW, L.: Siedmigród a Polska, 1576-1613, Warsaw 1967, p. 63).
  20. Thorough as the instructions were, the most confidential details are not to be found there, since he was carrying separate letters from the Pope to the Prince, to Balthazar Báthori and Alfonso Carrillo. Their contents are not known.
  21. "...più d'un mese, che son arrivato in Transsylvania talmente incognito, che nessun habbi potuto pigliare veruna suspicion." (PKIL, p. 89.)
  22. "...s'ha mostrato prontissimo a far tutto quello che sarà di volontà et mente di Nostro Signore." Ibid.
  23. VEPK, VI-IX, I.
  24. Ibid., p. 93.

C H A P T E R   S E V E N T E E N

*The antecedents of the anti-Ottoman alliance between Prince Zsigmond Báthori of Transylvania, and King Simon I of Georgia. Talks in Madrid, King Simon's letter on the alliance. New Georgian and Persian missions to Emperor Rudolf. The failure of the alliance between Zsigmond Báthori and the Khan of the Crimean Tatars.*

The only alliance with Georgia in Hungarian history is connected with Zsigmond Báthori's name. Since no direct records of its conclusion survive, we can only investigate the antecedents and the circumstantial evidence pointing to the alliance, until we reach King Simon I's letter to Madrid which testifies to its existence.

According to his credentials and his instructions from the Holy See, Cumuleo's main task after his talks with Zsigmond Báthori was to mobilize the Christian nations "of the Greek faith" enslaved by the Turks, or endangered by them, along with the Persians for the fight against the Ottoman Empire. He was definitely instructed to investigate, after he had persuaded the Moldavians, Wallachians and Circassians, the ways in which the Tatars of Perekop and the Mingrelians could also be brought into the alliance.<sup>1</sup> Cumuleo's letter dated 14 October, 1594, from Cracow tells us about the contacts he wanted to establish in Moscow beyond his negotiations with the Tsar. "From there (i.e. from Moscow) one can negotiate with the Circassians, Georgians and Persians very well through letters and emissaries."<sup>2</sup> In another letter from Cracow, dated 11 November, he considers the possible consequences of the alliance he was preparing, also from the point of view of the Russians: "the Tsar will be able

to make his way to the part of Asia between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, and reach out to the Circassians, Mingrelians and Georgians as well as to the other nations of the Greek faith in Asia, who all wish it fervently to be so."<sup>3</sup> A few days later, on 17 November, he again contemplates the chances of the alliance seemingly on the verge of being brought off, this time in connection with the approaching Polish diet. The latter ought to work firmly for the establishment of the league involving the Emperor, Poland, Russia and Transylvania. Then His Holiness would create an alliance between the Emperor, the Tsar and the King of Spain, which would then be joined by the Shah of Persia and the Georgians.<sup>4</sup> The results which followed in Moscow - where Miklós Varkocs was negotiating on behalf of Emperor Rudolf with Boris Godunov, the "protector" of Tsar Fjodor Ivanovich<sup>5</sup> - seemed even to surpass his rather bold expectations. In a letter to Pope Clement VIII the Tsar, now a member of the alliance, announced that he had made a solemn appeal to Shah Abbas, with whom he was having regular contacts, to join the alliance. He had waited for Rudolf's envoy to pass through Moscow on his way to Persia, but since the latter did not arrive, the Tsar's ambassador set out on his way to the Shah on his own. It was also the achievement of Cumuleo's mission that the Tsar appealed to Girey Khan of the Crimean Tatars to refrain from attacking Hungary.<sup>6</sup> These diplomatic successes, however, were illusory; nothing came of them.

In the meantime Cumuleo had taken Pope Clement's new instructions, dated 29 April, 1595, according to which he was to leave Moscow for Circassia,<sup>7</sup> to establish direct contacts with the rulers of Trans-Caucasia. The events of that journey are not known but its consequences are common knowledge.

All this - the victories and defeats, the amazingly bold plans to hasten the liberation of Hungary and other countries from the

Turkish yoke by Asian help - took place within the five closing years of the 16th. century. In these years, so rich in political and military developments, however, the signs of diplomatic activity in the east - in Persia and Georgia - can, to a certain extent, also be traced from Hungarian sources beside the news and reports coming from distant royal courts.

It was on 22 November, 1587 that Zsigmond Báthori, the Prince of Transylvania and the future ally of the Georgian king, received the following letter from Sultan Murad III, delivered by Mustafa Chiaus, a special envoy for a solemn occasion: "To the Voivode of Transylvania, my son Zsigmond Báthori, I send my greetings. The army I have against Kazul Basha, which is commanded by Ferhat Pasha, went to war against the Georgians and made a great victory, because the Georgians were slain or captured, so that the Lord gave us a great triumph... Since everywhere in my empire the victory over the Georgians is celebrated with great joy and happiness, it is proper that you, too, should rejoice greatly with your court and all your people, so that it should be known in other countries as well. You must know about it. God save you."<sup>9</sup>

To which Prince Zsigmond Báthori, i.e. the council at that time still governing on his behalf, replied: "Your Majesty's message was brought to me a few days ago by Mustaffa Chiaus, which I received humbly and understood. In it your Majesty told about the great victory God gave you by Ferhat Pasha over the Georgians. I also heard this news with great joy and hope, praising God that He visited such good luck on you, and cast such a chief enemy under your Majesty's feet."<sup>9</sup>

The news of the tremendous victory over the "chief enemy", the Georgians, was at best an exaggeration. On 5 November, before Zsigmond Báthori would have received the Sultan's letter - the obvious purpose of which was to demonstrate the power of the Ottoman Empire before a

vassal beginning to grow too independent - the clever imperial ambassador Bartholomaeus Pezzen had already reported to the court in Prague: False news has been sent to the three Danubian principalities through Mustafa Chiaus about the conquest of the Georgians and the Persians' wish for peace."<sup>10</sup>

In 1589 two Circassian princes, Mamstruk Murza and Kutu Murza, made their appearance in Moscow. They informed the agents of the Posolskiy Prikaz that an Armenian had visited the Pope in Rome on behalf of King Alexander II of Kakheti (Eastern Georgia). The Pope had sent a letter in return for the message. The Georgian King now wanted to assume contacts not only with the Pope but also with the King of Spain and Emperor Rudolf, and his intention was to dispatch his Armenian diplomat to these sovereigns as soon as possible.<sup>11</sup> This, as we shall see, actually happened a few years later.

Although the 1590 Turkish-Persian peace agreement had put the whole of Georgia under Turkish domination, the Georgian kingdoms all continued their struggle against the Ottoman Empire.

On 23 February, 1594, Cumuleo reported to the papal secretary of state Cinzio Aldobrandini that he had managed to establish the alliance of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia against the Turks, and he was hoping for the joining of Circassian and Cossack troops.<sup>12</sup> The report of Mátyás Kis, who had arrived from Gyulafehérvár to Kassa on 6 February was written the next day, on 24 February. Mátyás Kis had been instructed to watch the developments in Transylvania by Christopher Tiefenbach, the captain-general of Kassa. In his detailed account he wrote among other things, that Zsigmond Báthori was receiving regular reports on the Tatars from his permanent observer, and he was informed of the revolt of the Georgians and Circassians against the Turks as well as of the fact that the Persians were also preparing for war.<sup>13</sup> On 18 August, 1594, Tommaso Contarini, the

ambassador of the Republic of Venice, reported some interesting facts from Regensburg concerning the alliance between the Prince of Transylvania and the Emperor. The Transylvanians, he wrote, were arming themselves on the pretext of defence against the Tatars about to attack the country. The Prince had received information from a diplomatic agent of his in Constantinople that the Turks were under great pressure from the Georgians and Persians, and were therefore concentrating their best forces in that area. To the Hungarian theatre of war they could only send inexperienced troops who had not yet seen combat.<sup>14</sup>

The Papal nuncio in Transylvania, Bishop Visconti, also relied on the diplomatic sources of Zsigmond Báthori. His report to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, written on 10 June, 1595 at Gyulafehérvár, contains an account of the news coming from Istanbul to Transylvania. Constantinople was struck with famine, and the situation was worsened by the courageous raids of the Georgians.<sup>15</sup> He sent the same information to Nuncio Malaspina to Poland.<sup>16</sup>

Carrillo's letter to Speciano, the nuncio in Prague,<sup>17</sup> was written on the same day and used the same source of information; it also contains the news that the Georgians had risen up against the Turks.

Zsigmond Báthori and his supporters could now hardly leave the path which they were treading but Chiaus Hussein, the Sultan's envoy, still made an effort to turn the tide. In a letter he warned the prince to return to loyalty to the Turks and to remember what happened to the disobedient Georgians. "Think everything over very well. What I am saying is not in the form of a joke but serves the survival of your country. Inform the Pasha of Temesvár, Ahmed Pasha, of your affairs. For when Ferhat Pasha went to battle against the Kazals<sup>18</sup> and Gurdjians<sup>19</sup>, taking their land and their main cities,



this Pasha of Temesvár acted as an intermediary; he reconciled the Kazals and Gurdjians with Ferhat Pasha. He has sufficient standing with the mighty emperor as well as with the vizier; his word is influential."<sup>20</sup> Zsigmond Báthori, however, did not accept the mediation of Ahmed Pasha but set out "to give a hand to the nations oppressed by the Turks."<sup>21</sup>

In Moscow at about the same time, Cumuleo, the envoy of Pope Clement VIII, was handed the Tsar's rather complicated but friendly reply. "You asked that we could write to the King of the Persians and the King of the Georgians on the issue of an attack against the Turks...we wrote already last year to the Persian King that he should not make peace with the Turks but, on the contrary, make a stand against them...Now we shall send another envoy to him and inform him of all that we have done. To King Alexander of Georgia we shall suggest the same, that he should act in concert with the King of Persia."<sup>22</sup>

In 1596 Alfonso Carrillo, as Zsigmond Báthori's envoy, travelled to Rome and to Toledo, to King Philip II of Spain, in the company of Sándor Dobokai and Ferenc Karánsebesi.<sup>23</sup> The main purpose of their mission was to secure financial and other support for the continuation of the campaign waged by the Prince, then at the peak of his successes. They embarked in Genoa and sailed for a week to reach Barcelona, from where their journey to Madrid took ten days.<sup>24</sup> They were only able to see the sick king in the first days of June in Toledo.

The king listened to Carrillo but the only known result was that he ordered aid of 80,000 thalers to be transferred to the Venetian bank of the Fuggers. The details of the talks of Carrillo, Dobokai and Karánsebesi in Spain are not known. Carrillo's proposal,<sup>25</sup> based on Cumuleo's arguments, is interesting to us only

in so far as it pointed out clearly that the news of the Transylvanian victories generated uprisings in several of the countries absorbed by the Ottoman Empire.<sup>26</sup>

An account of the achievements of Cumuleo's mission- and perhaps Carrillo's as well - can be read in a nearly contemporary work which describes how the Persians, Georgians and Russians made an alliance against the Turks.<sup>27</sup> The Russians and the Georgians were prompting the young Shah, recently enthroned, to make an effort to regain the territories taken from his father by the Turks, now that the latter were under such heavy attacks from Hungary and Transylvania. The Shah argued that the Turks had built many fortresses in that area, to besiege which he would need guns and men trained in their use. At that, the Georgian and Spanish king<sup>28</sup> promised to send guns, while the Russian Tsar promised to furnish the troops needed.<sup>29</sup> It seems, the work continues, that the Turks are more afraid of the war there than of the one in Hungary and Transylvania, so the troops dispatched this autumn to Hungary from Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo will now be used against Persia.

At the end of 1596, or early in 1597, a Georgian envoy made his appearance at the royal court of Spain. His identity can no longer be established but the letter written by King Simon of Kartli, also on behalf of his brother, Alexander II of Kakheti, has survived. It proves that for some time an actual alliance had existed between Transylvania and Georgia, brought into being doubtlessly through the offices of Cumuleo, but there may have been direct contacts as well. Most of King Simon's diplomatic correspondence was written in Armenian, mainly because by that time Armenian tradesmen had been living in many countries of Europe, and their help could be counted on in vouching for the envoy and his mission, but also because most of the persons he employed for diplomatic missions were

Armenians. The letter, written originally in Armenian (of which we have a contemporary Spanish translation) is as follows:<sup>30</sup>

"In the name of Jesus Christ, the omnipotent God. I have written two such letters - one in Greek and the other in the Armenian language - most humbly and amid sighs, to your Majesty, the King of kings and the head of all Catholic Christian kings, Philip, King of Spain, whom God should save and enrich in years and might. Take this letter from your Majesty's humble servant who, with all the humility and respect he can offer, places his head on the foot of the most Catholic king. I open my mouth to speak with great humility, as your Majesty's servant. Allow me, your Majesty, to tell how much trouble I, Simon Khan, the king of the Georgians, have had for fourteen years with the Turkish Emperor. So far I had no opportunity to turn to your Majesty in a letter and to ask you to extend your grace and help to me against the Turks. And now I humbly ask your Majesty to make an alliance with the Holy Father and the Emperor, because the ruler of Transylvania has offered to me that he will start war from his own territory, so waging war from all sides, he from his side, your Majesty from yours and we from ours, can break the power of the Turks. - I also ask your Majesty not to allow the Emperor and the ruler of Transylvania to make peace with the Turks. This is the moment when the Holy House<sup>31</sup> can be rescued from the power of the enemies of the holy faith of Jesus Christ. - We the three kings, the two Georgians and Shah Abbas, the Persian, have pledged our lives in an alliance for the defence of the faith of Jesus Christ, and also to be able to see the Holy House with our own eyes. - Your Majesty, being the most Catholic king, has always helped the Transylvanian emperor. Your Majesty should know that the Transylvanian emperor has written his letter to us, and in it he has promised that he will always help us in the way that he will start war from one

side, and we from the other. - I have written the letter concerning our own alliance to you because we wish to know your Majesty's will. We already know the will of the emperor of the Transylvanians and we greatly trust that he will help us as he promised. - For the same reason we wrote letters to the Holy Father and the Emperor of Germany. - For the love of God, do not deny your Majesty's reply and favour to us. It may be the will of God that we should write letters and receive replies so that in this way we might learn the will of the Christian kings. - The Persian king has firmly decided to serve the Christian kings with great determination and industry. - Reply to this letter should be given to the one who has brought it. - Your Majesty should write a letter to the Emperor to make certain that what we have said is the honest truth. - I have written to your Majesty, the most Catholic king, who, by his fame, power and respect, stands above all Christian kings, a letter in Armenian and one in Greek. Tiflis, the 25th of August, 1596."<sup>32</sup>

King Simon's letter proves beyond doubt that the initiator of the alliance, quite an unusual thing in those times between two small states separated by thousands of miles, was Zsigmond Báthori. Báthori's letter suggesting the alliance found its way to the Georgian king probably through Cumuleo (Cumuleo's letter of 14 October, 1594, from Cracow contains a passage which strongly suggests so), but it might also have arrived there via the Transylvanian envoys who made regular visits to the court of the Tatar Khan. But King Simon, as his letter seems to indicate, must have had good information on the volatile temper and inconsistent character of Emperor Rudolf and Zsigmond Báthori, if he asked the King of Spain to prevent them from entering into peace negotiations with the Turks.

On 17 July, 1597 another embassy from the Persian Shah and the two Georgian kings made a visit to the court of Rudolf in

Prague. A Hungarian and Transylvanian chronicle printed years later gave the following account of the event: "The Persian king and two Georgian monarchs sent two envoys to his Majesty the Emperor of Rome, to urge him to continue the war launched against the Turks. In the evening of 10 July, two Armenian gentlemen, Don Jacomo of Djulfa and his son, who had already visited Germany 14 years ago, arrived in Vienna via Venice<sup>33</sup> and Graz, dressed in the Turkish fashion. They were received by Archduke Matthias the very next morning; then they continued their journey to Prague where they arrived on the 17th of July. They handed over their credentials from the Persian king and from Simon Khan and Alexander Khan, and delivered their verbal message. They warned his Majesty not to let the long-awaited opportunity slip away, but to continue the war begun against the Turks. They promised that if the Turkish emperor marched on Hungary personally, the Persians, Georgians and Armenians - since no final peace had yet been concluded between the Persians and the Turks - were determined to attack the countries of the Turks right up to Constantinople and to pursue them to the end."<sup>34</sup>

The visit of Don Jacomo and his son did not remain unanswered from the side of the Prague court. We shall return to this shortly. But the plans of King Simon I, the courageous soldier and far-sighted statesman, did not come to fulfilment, even though in 1598 he dealt an enormous blow to Turkish power beyond the Caucasus with the occupation of Gori.<sup>35</sup> Hardly two years later, in 1600, out of carelessness rather than military defeat, he fell into the hands of the Beglerbeg, Djaafer Pasha (who was of Hungarian peasant stock, born in Gyula<sup>36</sup>). The Pasha treated him with proper respect but transported him to Constantinople, where he died after several years of imprisonment in the infamous Yedukula jail.<sup>37</sup>

Cumuleo's instructions from the Holy See also made it his task to incite the Tatars of the Crimea (of Perekop) to fight against the Turks. The instructions referred to the fact that Mehmed Girey Khan, the ruler of the Tatars of Perekop, had earlier been reluctant to render proper help to the Turks against the Persians as had been demanded of him. He procrastinated until he received serious threats. Then, in 1584, he did set out with his considerable army but as soon as, together with the Turks, he reached the Don area which bordered on his territory, a messenger came to him on his own secret orders, who had been instructed to report that the Poles had attacked his country in his absence. On that pretext he withdrew from the war to be fought against Persia alongside the Turks.<sup>38</sup>

Following this, Zsigmond Báthori also took part in the diplomatic efforts to win over the Tatars. It can be presumed that, similarly to the Georgian alliance, Cumuleo was instrumental in these contacts as well.

Early in 1598 Báthori sent János Bernárdffy and János Posoni to the Crimea to separate the Tatars from the Turks.<sup>39</sup>

Bernárdffy, who went on his mission together with his fellow envoy and with the emissary of Voivode Michael of Wallachia, György Rácz, sent the following report to Voivode Michael on 3 April, 1583: "we have seen his Highness the Tatar Khan and have good answers from him, thank God...The Tatar khan has sent his high dignitaries to your Highness and to our lord; they are with us... And the reason why it took so long was that we could not find a galley to take us at once across the sea to Tatar, since, as your Highness knows, no ship sails the sea in winter, but we hired a galley at Kyllie<sup>40</sup> for three hundred thalers and crossed the sea in that. We were very fortunate, for a great storm rose over the sea which once drove us back almost to where we had started from."<sup>41</sup>

In a letter to Gáspár Kornis, Zsigmond Báthori's closest advisor, written on 21 April, 1598, Bernárdffy again explains his long absence, then continues: "The Tatar Khan saw us on behalf of His Majesty with goodwill, great hospitality and respect, and sent us back with a good reply. It would be to the advantage of Christendom, and especially to Hungary, Transylvania and Wallachia in their despair, if a certain sum of money could now be sent to the Tatar Khan; we have done our best to draw them away from the Turks and to bring them to the Christian side, and as far as I can see, they are not at all averse to the idea..."<sup>42</sup>

The reports continued because of Zsigmond Báthori's inconsistency. On the way home, in Wallachia, the envoys learned that the Prince had abdicated. The Tatars wanted to turn back, and it took a great deal of persuasion to make them continue the journey. In Transylvania they negotiated with the royal commissioners sent there, but their talks remained without real results, the consequences of which soon became apparent.<sup>43</sup>

Notes to chapter 17

1. PNIK, p. 227; Cf. HURMUZAKI, Vol. III/2, p. 36.
2. "...D'inde anco si potrà trattare benissimo con lettere et ambasciatori con li Circassi, con gli Ghiorgiani, et con li Persiani" (PKIL, p. 110).
3. "Il Moscovita potrà pigliare il cammino per andarsene in Asia, fra il mar maggiore et il Caspio, congiungendosi con li Circassi, con gli Mingreli, con li Giorgiani et con gl'altri Greci d'Asia, che tutti lo aspettano con gran desiderio." PKIL, p. 116.
4. "...che fra l'imperatore, questo regno, il Moscovita et il Transilvano la Santità di Nro Signore in questa dieta concluda la liga; che poi il tempo servirà...di far entrare gli altri principi christiani in detta liga...Un altro modo d'unire i principi christiani...che la Santità di Nro Signore unisca is Moscovita col l'imperatore et con il re di Spagna, con li quali si potrebbe anco far unire il Persiano et li Giorgiani." PKIL, p. 122. For the antecedents in 1592 see PRS, Vol. II, pp. 355-6.
5. PNIK, pp. 236-7; Cf. SMIRNOV, N.A.: Rossija i Turcija v XVI-XVII. Vol. I, p. 140.
6. Ibid., pp. 245-8.
7. GDP, Vol. XI, p. 210.
8. VERESS, E.: Báthori Zsigmond lengyel érdekü levelezése (1586-1594) (Sigismund Báthory's correspondence concerning Poland), Manuscript, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Science (MTAK), Ms. 424, 14.
9. Ibid., Ms 424, 16.
10. HURMUZAKI, Vol. XI, p. 702.
11. BELOKUROV, S.A.: Snošenija Rossii s Kavkazom, Vyp. I., Moscow 1889, p. 205.
12. VEPK, p. 47.
13. Carrillo, Vol. I, p. 448.
14. HURMUZAKI, Vol. III/2, p. 44.
15. VEPK, p. 84.
16. Ibid., p. 86.
17. Carrillo, Vol. I, p. 159.
18. = Persians.
19. = Georgians.
20. Török-magyarkori állam-okmánytár (State documents of the Turkish-Hungarian era), Ed. Szilády, Á. - Szilágyi, S., Pest, Vol. I,



- 1868, p. 35.
21. KÖVÁRI, L.: Erdély történelme (The history of Transylvania), Pest 1863, Vol. IV, p. 65.
  22. Elementa ad fontium editiones XIX. Ed. V. Meysztowicz, Roma, 1968, pp. 74-6. Cf. GABASHVILI, pp. 92-3.
  23. Carrillo, Vol. I, p. 623; Cf. Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Manuscript, Ms. 429/1, f. 375 r. and Ms. 760/d.
  24. Ibid., XXXIV.1.
  25. Ibid., pp. 180-5.
  26. Ibid., p. 185.
  27. On the Persian-Georgian alliances see BERDZENISHVILI, pp. 115-6 and GABASHVILI, p. 68.
  28. King Philip II of Spain and Simon I, King of Georgia, had already exchanged letters as early as 1594. MACLER, p. 70-4. - Cf. TARDY, L.: Le roi Simon I<sup>er</sup> à la lumière des sources d'Europe Centrale contemporaines de son époque. Bedi Kartlisa, Revue de Kartvéologie, vol. XXXI, 1973, pp. 187-206, Vol. XXXII, 1974, pp. 147-174.
  29. "Anno 1596. Der Persianer, Georgianer und Moscovitter verbinden sich miteinander wider den Türcken... Demnach aber unlangst der alte König in Persia mit Todt abgegangen, haben so wol die Persiatischen Räth als der Moscovitter und Georgianer den Jungen König in Persia ... dahin ermahnet, dasz er bey jetziger Gelegenheit da der Türck in Ungern und Siebenbürgen häfftig angefochten wird ... die Länder, so desz jetzigen Türkischen Keysers Vatter seinem Vatter mit Gewalt abgetrungen, widerumb an sich zubringen trachten solle. Und ob wol der Persianer sich anfänglich entschuldigt, dasz der Türck in seinem Landt viel starcker Vestungen erbawet, zu welchen er keine Macht noch Geschütz solche zu erobern, so haben ihm doch der Georgianer unnd König aus Spania Geschätz, wie auch der Moscoviter Volck zugesagt... Deszgleichen haben der Georgianer und Moscovitter biszhero auch nicht gefeyrt, den Türcken nach Ihrer Gelegenheit anzugreifen und Schaden zuzufügen. Daher sichs ansehen lässt, dasz die Türcken sich mehr derselben Orthen dann vor dem Krieg in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen beförchten... Darausz erfolgt, dasz die Macht und Hülffen so ausz Cayro, Damasco, Alepo und andern Orthen auff diesen Frülینگ herausz gegen Ungern geschieckt jetzt wider Persia gebraucht werden solle" Ungarischer und Siebenbürgischer Kriegshändel. Frankfurt a/M, 1596, pp. 322-323.
  30. "En el nombre de Iesocristo dios poderoso. Escribo dos papeles

destos uno griego y otro armenio con mucha umildad y suspiros a vuesa magestad rrey de los rreyes y caueca de todos los rrejes cristianos catolicos rrey felippe despana que dios guarde y aumente en uida y estado rreciua vuesa magestad este papel de un umilde esclauo de vesa magestad que con aquella umildad rreuerencia que puedó pongo mi caueca sobre los pies de tan catolico rrey abriere mi boca ablar con mucha umildad como un criado del seruiçio de vuesa magestad dandome licencia para ello vuesa magestad a das cuenta como con el gran turco a catorce anos que paso con el con mucho trauaxo yo simeon can rey de gorgianos no e tenido lugar astagora descriuir a vuesa magestad me diese fauor y socorro contra el turco y agora yo y alegrandro rrey de gorgianos mi primo xuntamente con el rrey de persia gachaabas emos echo liga todos tres contra el turco agora suplico umilmente a vuesa magestad que tambien aga liga con Su Santidad y con el Emperador que tambien el trasilbano me tiene ofrecido quel por su tierra le ara guerra y ansi el por otra y nosotros por otra podemos quebrantar la fuerca que tiene el turco. Otro suplico umilmente a vuesa magestad que no dege azer paces al Emperador y al trasilbano con el turco queste es tiempo que se puede sacar la casa santa del poder del enemigo de la santa fe Iesucristo y uer con nuestros ojos la casa santa por amor de dios por amor de dios que no lo oluide vuesa magestad pues siempre vuesa magestad ayudado al Emperador trasilbano como tan catolico rrey sepa vuesa magestad quel emperador trasilbano nos a escrito su carta y prometido que sien /sic/ nos fauorezera dandole guerra por una parte y nosotros por otra. Las cartas qui escriui a vuesa magestad era sobre esta liga que tenemos echa entre nosotros para sauer la boluntad del emperador de trasilbanos ya la sauenos y estamos muy confiados que que nos fauorecera como tiene dicho sobre la misma rracon. Emos escrito otra carta a Su Santidad y otra al emperador de alemania por amor de dios que no nos olvide vuesa magestad a nosotros con sus cartas y con su fauor por uentura sera dios seruido que uayan cartas y vengan en que sepamos la boluntad de los rreyes cristianos. El rrey persiano tiene gran boluntad de seruir a rreyes cristianos con mucha boluntad y amor la rrespuesta desta carta se dara a quien lleba esta. Escriba vuesa Magestad una carta al Emperador y saura vuesa Magestad si es verdad lo que tratamos. Escriuirme a vuesa magestad una carta en lenqua armenia y otra en griego a tan rrey catolico sobre todos los rreyes cristianos en fama y poder y mucha onrra dios guarde muchos anos

los principes que no sabemos sus nombres." Macler, pp. 77-78. Cf. also GABASHVILI, pp. 93-101.

31. I.e. Jerusalem.
32. According to the surviving draft of the Spanish reply the King of Spain instructed Don Guillén San Clemente and Prince Sessa, his ambassadors to Prague and the Holy See resp., to take the necessary steps in accordance with King Simon's letter at the courts concerned. (Archivo general de Simancás, Secretaria de Estado, Legajo 703.)
33. Archivio di Stato, Venezia, Senato, Constantinopoli, Filza 9, allegati al decreto 1597, 21 giugno and ibid., Senato, Constantinopoli Registro 9 Carta 64 v. - Here I wish to express my gratitude to Ms. Maria Francesca Tiepolo, Director of the Venice state archives, for her kind support. - See also TARDY, L.: Relations entre la Hongrie et la Géorgie aux XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, *Bedi Kartlisa*, *Revue de Kartvélogie*, Vol. XXV, Paris 1968, pp. 124-5.
34. Chronologia oder Historische Beschreibung aller Kriegsempörungen unnd Belagerungen der Statt und Vestungen auch Scharmützel und Schlachten so in ober und Under Ungern auch Sibenbürgen...durch Hieronymum Ortelium. Nürnberg 1615, p. 385. - Cf. TARDY, L.: Il ruolo di Venezia nei rapporti persiani a georgiani dell'Ungheria, In: *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all' epoca del rinascimento*, Budapest 1975, pp. 265-267.
35. Cf. DZHANASHIA, p. 338.
36. Cf. TARDY, L. Iz istorii gruzino-vengerskih svjazej. "Literaturnaja Gruzija" 1970, No. 1, pp. 88-89.
37. Ample reference to his victorious battles and tragic fate can be found in contemporary European pamphlets and newsheets. His son-in-law was the great Shah Abbas, who, influenced by his Georgian wife, had great sympathy for Europe. Cf. A chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries, London 1939, Vol. I, pp. 43, 60-65, 153.
38. *Starine*, Vol. XVI, Zagreb 1884, p. 223.
39. KBJ, pp. 563-76. Not long before, Tatar, or more exactly Circassian, troops were still raiding parts of Transylvania as allies of the Turks: "Tartari, qui nos hisce annis et maxime sub Temesvár infestarunt, Circassi sunt..." (SZTM, Vol. IV, p. 73.) In the years following Bernárdffy's mission they reappeared. "...After this the Tatar Khan went to the Serdar in Hungary. The Tatars number eighteen thousand, they all have guns and crossbows. The majority are Circas-

sian Tatars. The Tatar Khan has his eighteen-year-old son with him. Some say, and it may be true, that the Tatars do not number more than six thousand, of whom five thousand are Circassians..." (Ibid., p. 228.) Cf. Kumykov, T. (ed): *Istoriya Kabardino-Balkarskoj ASSR*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1967, pp. 110-3.

40. = Kilia.

41. KBJ, pp. 563-4.

42. Ibid., p. 565. Of all this, Szamosközy gives the following account: "Eodem omnino tempore Ioannes Bernátfius, Sigismundi Principis secretarius, vir summo ingenio, rerumque usu praeditus, cum Ioanne Posonio, viro peraeque acri et industrio, e Tartaria Tauricana, quae ultra Bosporum Cimmerium spatiosis in campis late fusa est (unde et nomen Cremmiorum accolae habent) reversi sunt. Missi erant hi superiore bruma a Sigismundo Principe, conciliandae amicitiae, foederisque sancienti gratia, ad Alipem Keraium Tartarorum hoc temporis Hanem (sic illi regem vocant) qui ab opinione fortitudinis Gezi, id est miles animosus cognominatur, Haec Tauricana Tartaria Europae atque Asiae colliminio includitur, ac cis et ultra Boristhenem, ad Tanais usque ostia evagatur. A Selimo Turcarum Imperatore, Solimani patre subiugata, imperioque Turcarum iam fere centum annos obnoxia facta. Regia stirps antiquissima et nobilissima istic Kerai est, alii Kirai sive Girai pro soni affinitate pronunciant...". Then, having discussed the internal affairs of the Tatars, he explains that the alliance had in fact been initiated by the Tatars a year earlier: "Huic legationi mittendae occasione ipse Alip Tatar Han suppediverat. Nam Sigismundo Principi praevalentem equum glaucum, una cum stratis pretiosissimis, anno superiore mense novembri dono miserat, cum literis, in quibus, forte an studio, Sigismundum fratrem et consanguineum suum scripserat. Tum Sigismundus eam rem in iocum vertens, laetari, exultare, hratulare sibi tan insperata consanguineitate. Proinde vicissim literas ad eum dedit, benevolentis plenas, et sacrarum literarum exemplis refertas. Eae a Luca Varadino secretario Principis erant contextae, eodemque idiomate Vngarico ad Hanem missae." Sigismund's reply cleverly adopted the Khan's idea and his style and managed to win the Tatar ruler's confidence." Ergo Bernátfius et Posonius, Moldavia superata, Boristheneque transmissio, ubi ad Baxezarai, regiam Tataris civitatem, quae gentili illorum lingua hortense palatium significat,

adpulissent, comiter, uti par fuit, accepti sunt; nihil illis nonmodo ad honestum victum, sed nec ad laetitiam quoque defuit. Cibus illis arietino caro potissimum data est. Nam equinam, quae indigenis in deliciis est, ne attigerunt quidem. Ioculari sermone, ut reor relatum est, veretrum caballinum, nervis omnibus et tendinibus evisceratum, atque inde uva passa, butyro, allisque condimentis fartum, botuli vice, regiae mensae, et legatorum, illatum, atque inter opiparas epulas rehabitum. Caeterum Bernátfius et Posonius eo rem apud Alipem deduxerunt, ut pollicitus fuerit fore, ut si penitus a Turcarum societate se subducere non posset, tantopere illius potentiae obnozius, daturus tamen esset operam, in eamque rem fidem suam interpositurus, ut nullo unquam tempore Transsylvaniae esset nociturus, haecque promissa sancte servaturus. Aliorum quoque Christiani nominis principum amicitiam, si ita res ferrent eorum secundoiores, pollicitus est se culturum, utque omnia illi de se meliora sperarent, enixe elaboraturum. Haec summa totius legationis, aut non multum his diversa." (SZTM pp. 76-80.)

43. SZTM, Vol. II, pp. 246-7.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*István Kakas, a Hungarian diplomat at the end of the 16th century. His visit to Queen Elisabeth of England. Changing masters: from the service of the Báthoris to the service of Emperor Rudolf. His journey to Persia, his death in Lahidjan. His work is finished by his secretary. His encounter with King Alexander II of Georgia.*

After the visit of Don Jacomo and his son, the envoys of the Persian Shah and the two Georgian kings, which was followed by other Persian embassies,<sup>1</sup> at the court of Rudolf - but also in other European courts - interest in Persia suddenly increased greatly. Tsar Fyodor's letter to Cumuleo, inspired by Boris Godunov, also indicated that Rudolf's envoys were already expected in Persia; the value as an ally of the country, once again a major power, was now recognized throughout Europe.

After his usual period of hesitation, Emperor Rudolf finally dispatched his envoys to Shah Abbas. It was a mission of the Habsburg Empire, not of Hungary, truncated and reduced to a mere province. But the head of the mission was Hungarian. He was István Kakas of Zalánkemény, formerly a trusted servant of the Báthoris, a highly educated, experienced diplomat.

Although his mission to Persia - his last - occurred already in the first years of the 17th century, his activity still belongs here, for this mission of his was undoubtedly a return and continuation of the Persian and Georgian diplomatic initiatives of the end of the 16th century.

The biography of István Kakas is well known,<sup>2</sup> but it does not cover the full journey of the mission headed by him, since the ambassador could no longer cope with the hardships of the last leg of the exhausting journey and with his sickness, and died as soon as they reached the territory of Persia. The final developments of the mission led by Kakas which reached its destination without him, in fact the closing chapter of the history of Hungarian diplomacy in the east in the 14-16th centuries, can be reconstructed from an extant source.<sup>3</sup>

Born sometime in the mid-1500s in Kolozsvár, of the marriage between András Kakas, a well-to-do nobleman and Anna Sarlay, István Kakas went to study to the university of Vienna after grammar school. There he added to his knowledge of Hungarian and Latin that of German. After seven years and two doctor's degrees he still felt his studies incomplete, so he went to Padua where he read law. He returned to Kolozsvár in 1586 and entered the service of Zsigmond Báthori, first as a simple "cubicularius" (page) but in two years he became a treasurer. In 1590 he was promoted to justice of the princely court. His diplomatic career began in August 1593 when the Prince, whose confidence he had won completely, sent him off on a mission to Poland and England. It was a difficult assignment; he was to persuade Queen Elizabeth to use her influence with the Porte to help Transylvania obtain a kind of neutral status. If this failed, he had to win England's support to the fight against the Turks.

In Poland he received a letter of recommendation from Chancellor Zamojski to the Queen, then travelled on through Cracow and Silesia to Stettin, and from there, along the coast, to Hamburg. In Hamburg he boarded an English ship and arrived in London in January 1594.

He was soon granted an audience with the Queen. He put forth his appeal on behalf of Zsigmond Báthori and Transylvania in Latin and made such an impression that Queen Elizabeth sent a letter to Sultan Murad, asking him to exercise goodwill towards Transylvania. She also instructed her ambassador to the Porte to give his full support to the cause of Transylvania. In her letter to Zsigmond Báthori the Queen of England made special mention of Kakas's tactfulness and skill.<sup>4</sup>

By the time István Kakas had made his way back, it was to see that his successful mission had been in vain; under the influence of Carrillo, Zsigmond Báthori had already decided on war against the Turks despite the fact that the Sultan could be expected to treat the case of Transylvania with sympathy.

When Sigismund Báthori married into the Habsburg family, Kakas became the steward of the estates of the Prince's wife, but time and again he was also given difficult diplomatic assignments.

When Zsigmond Báthori's abdication appeared to be final, István Kakas continued in the service of Prince András Báthori. First he was sent to Poland on a rather complicated mission,<sup>5</sup> then went to the imperial court with proposals on a wideranging settlement from the prelate-prince.

While he was negotiating at the Prague court, news came about the incursion of the Voivode of Wallachia, Michael into Transylvania, then he was informed of the death of Prince András, who lost his life while escaping.

István Kakas, although he still visited Kolozsvár, never moved house. When, having made his arrangements and settled his affairs, he reappeared at the Prague court after Easter in 1602 to offer his services to Emperor Rudolf, his request was granted in an unusually



short time. Not long ago in an appeal he had written that he was prepared to go as far as India if it were on behalf of Zsigmond Báthori's wife and the House of Habsburg. This was of course meant as pure rhetoric at the time. Now he suddenly found himself on the road towards, if not India, a country almost as distant; he was being sent to Persia, "where it was not less hazardous to go."<sup>6</sup>

That Rudolf intended to send an embassy to Persia could hardly have surprised Kakas; he knew about the 1597 visit of Don Jacomo and his son as well as about the visit of Anthony Shirley and his Persian travelling companion in the year 1600. Also in 1600, Rudolf had sent letters to the Shah and ordered Voivode Michael of Wallachia to provide for their delivery. Michael, however, had answered that the present conditions prevented him from doing so.<sup>7</sup> At the end of 1602 the court council decided that a return of the earlier embassies was now urgent, and ruled that the mission should be led by a Hungarian nobleman.<sup>8</sup>

Emperor Rudolf himself deemed Kakas's mission important for the whole of Christendom and also dangerous.<sup>9</sup>

Having made a detailed will concerning his considerable fortune, and collecting his travelling expenses, Kakas set out on his way on 27 August in the company of his secretary, George Tectander, and a five-member suite.

Making stops at Schweidnitz, Wroclaw, Cracow and Grodno, they reached Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Their journey in this area was already very difficult; because of the plague they usually avoided the settlements and often camped for the night in the woods.

The hardships came to an end for a long time when they reached the Smolensk area. At the Russian frontier they were received with great pomp by a delegation of dignitaries sent by the Tsar. Prince

Trubetskoy provided a comfortable carriage for them; they suffered no want whatever.

Their audience with the Tsar came on the 27th of November. At the reception organized with enormous pomp Kakas delivered his speech in German: "My most gracious lord, Emperor Rudolf, King of Hungary, sends his brotherly greetings to your Majesty...In his name I ask you to provide a passport an escort and a letter of recommendation to be able to cross your empire and those of the neighbouring rulers without difficulty; also a Persian-speaking travelling companion, whom I shall keep at my own expense and shall love as a brother...be graciously pleased to ask the Sultan of Astrakhan in a letter to provide a good ship and a clever helmsman for my money, so that I be able to cross the Caspian Sea by the help of favourable winds."<sup>11</sup>

Boris Godunov was extremely helpful in deeds as well as words. He granted all his requests and also presented him with lavish gifts.

Kakas and his companions continued their journey by sleigh on 7 December. They were well protected against the cold by the first-class equipment they had obtained in Moscow. Travelling along the Volga they reached the town of Kazan on Christmas Eve. They had to spend several months waiting in Kazan; the river froze up, and they dared not risk travelling on land because of the Tatar marauders.

On 11 May they were at last able to travel on. The mission and its luggage was carried by a small fleet of seventy barges. They arrived in Astrakhan on 27 May, where, despite all their urging, they had to wait another two months before the Tatars finished rigging out three ships. On 25th July they were at sea. They were tossed about on the stormy Caspian for three weeks until they were at

last able to land on the Persian coast, near Langerud.

All the members of the mission were ill because of the hardships of the journey and the unusual diet. Kakas felt that his strength was failing. He summoned his secretary, Tectander, and dictated his last will. He had still a few weeks to live, indeed, he even tried to continue the journey, but on 25 October, 1603, hardly two miles out of Langerud, in Lahidjan, he died. He was buried, as he had wished, in the garden of their quarters, under a beautiful tree in leaf. But the disease attacked also the other members of the mission. Only Tectander was to make it to the court of the Shah; the remaining part of the journey is known from his notes.

The Persians - and Robert Shirley who was with them - cared for the sick gently and nursed them to the best of their ability, but on reaching Kazvin, more members of the mission died. Concerning Kazvin, Tectander noted that its dimensions and density of population reminded him of Wroclaw. He replaced the interpreter who had also died with a Persian called Murad, who also spoke Russian. They communicated in that language.

He came face to face with the Shah after twenty-two days' journey, in Tabriz. He was led into a large ceremonial hall full of ornately dressed high dignitaries among whom he was unable to recognize the Persian ruler. Finally he was led before the person wearing the simplest clothes. His words were translated into Persian by an Italian renegade - first of course he had to kiss the Shah's hand - then followed the rather elaborate ceremony of handing over Rudolf's letter.<sup>12</sup> After that a Turkish prisoner was brought in, whom the Shah beheaded personally with a single blow. Then Shah Abbas turned to the ambassador, who was frightened to death, and told him with a smile that this was the way in which the Christians should treat all Turks.<sup>13</sup>

The following days were no longer overshadowed by such terrible acts. Tectander was handed the Shah's reply, and went to see the city, whose fine houses, gardens, mosques and baths he describes with great appreciation. He also mentions the Shah's Georgian wife, the daughter of King Simon of Kartli, and their two children.

For a considerable time he travelled along with the Shah and his army, marching through Djulfa and Yerevan. His observations are of a general character and deal for the most part with the causes of the hostility between the Persians and the Turks and with the religious rites, morals and customs of the Persians. He discusses the Armenians often and at length praising their hospitality.<sup>14</sup> He even visited the head of their Church. The Shah, despite the gruesome introduction, is described by him as a good-natured, merry man with a special liking for Europeans.

He said farewell to the Persian monarch in Yerevan. The Shah presented him with his own ceremonial costume, an Arab steed, a Persian sabre and a large amount of thalers, and sent his own envoy, Mehtli Kuli Beg, along with him to Rudolf's court.<sup>15</sup>

Having nearly fallen prisoner to a roaming Turkish unit, they met at Derbend with a ten-thousand strong Kakhian army which, led by King Alexander II, Zsigmond Báthori's one-time ally, was marching to the aid of the Shah. When the Georgian king learned about the identity of Emperor Rudolf's emissary, he summoned the envoy and, having thoroughly interrogated him through an interpreter, turned to him with the words: "why does the Roman Emperor not send an ambassador to him too? He is a Christian king, whereas the ruler of the Persians is a pagan. Did his Majesty the Emperor not want to conclude an alliance also with him? To which I answered that my master the ambassador, who had been sent by his Majesty the Emperor to the Shah, had died on the way, and I did not know what his instructions had been."<sup>16</sup>

He crossed the Russian frontier in the company of the Persian envoy in January 1604. From there he made his way home without any special difficulty.<sup>17</sup>

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From the 17th century onwards diplomatic initiatives in the east became scarce; the number of journeys of a different character, however, greatly increased. The reasons for this change and the examination of these journeys, different in character and significance, need separate investigation.

Notes to chapter 18

1. Cf. PASTOR, L.: op. cit., Vol. II, p. 221; A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia, passim.
2. VERESS, E.: Zalánkeményi Kakas István (István Kakas of Zalánkemény), Budapest 1905.
3. Iter Persicum ou Description du voyage en Perse entrepris en 1602 par Étienne Kakasch de Zalonkemény. Traduction publiée et annotée par Ch. Schefer, Paris 1877; Tectander, G.: Reise nach Persien. Neudruck der Ausgabe vom Jahre 1610 besorgt durch R. Wolkan. Reichenberg 1889; NYIREŐ, I.: Kakas István utazása Moszkván át Perzsiába (The voyage of István Kakas through Moscow to Persia), Földrajzi Közlemények, 1955, pp. 65-73.
4. "Caeterum per egregium hunc virum lgatum vestrarum statum prudentissime nobis exposuit, seque in omnibus graviter et moderate gessit Excellentia Vestra optime intelliget." VKI, p. 51, note 21.
5. "Sub idem tempus Cardinalis Princeps misit etiam ad Poloniae Regem Sigismundum, Gabrielem Banfium...cui adiunxit Stephanum quoque Cocosum Claudiopolitam, virum eruditione praesentem et ad legationes dextre obeundas ob ingenii elegantiam imprimis idoneum." SZTM. Vol. II, p. 253.
6. VKI, p. 126.
7. SZÁDECZKY, L.: Erdély és Mihály vajda története (The history of Transylvania and Voivode Michael), Temesvár, 1893, p. 400.
8. VKI, pp. 128-9.
9. "in einer uns und ganzer gemeiner Christenheit hochangelegnen wichtigen Sachen verschickt, und ihme ein weite gefährliche Reis zu verrichten aufgetragen." Ibid., p. 129, note 8.
10. Cf. JAJCZAY, J.: Egy kiállítás szőnyegei (The carpets of an exhibition), Művészettörténeti Értesítő, 1968, Nos. 1-2, p. 37, note 34.
11. VKI, pp. 141-2.
12. TECTANDER, pp. 87-8.
13. Ibid., p. 90. - On the policies of Abbas, changing later, see NAKASHIDZE, N.T.: Gruzino-russkie političeskie otnošenija v pervoj polovine XVII.veka. Tbilisi, 1968, str. 77-80.
14. TECTANDER, p. 113.
15. Ibid., p. 117.

16. "Sind derowegen noch dieselbige Nacht auffgebrochen vnnd durch einen andern Weg auss Asia majore durch Armenien in Alexandriam (so ein ödes Ländlein ist) kommen darinnen vns der König auss Georgia mit 10000 Man dem König aus Persia zu hülf ziehend begegnet mich sampt den Gesandten (i.e. with Mehti Kuli beg. LT) zu sich gefordert vnd unter andern reden mich durch einen Dolmeltzer fragen lassen Waarumb jhre Röm. Key. May. zu ihme auch nicht schicketen sintemal er ein Christ der Persianer aber ein Heyde were; er wolte auch mit jhrer May. freundschaftt machen. Darauff ich geantwortet das mein Herr so von Römischer Keyserlicher Majestet zum Könige in Persia geschickt gestorben were vnnd wüste nicht was er für befehlich gehabt hette" (Ibid. pp. 120-121.) Almost at the same time, interesting things were also reported about another Georgian country - but also about King Simon I, Zsigmond Báthori's former ally - by Farkas Kamuti, the Transylvanian ambassador stationed in Constantinople. Kamuti's information was handed down to posterity by István Szamosközy. "All kinds of envoys from many countries were coming to the Porte. When Farkas Kamuti was staying at the Porte of the Emperor, 1603. mense septembri, an ambassador arrived there, the envoy of Atsik Bash (Atsik Bash = Bashatshuk, Imeretia, East Georgia. - L.T.) He was an ambassador from a far-away land, a Christian by religion. This ambassador was dressed in an attire similar to what priests wear in our parts. He was not subject to the Turks, only in so far that he brought presents to pay homage; he brought to the emperor twelve falcons, five bundles of pine-marten hides, six slave children dressed in red damask. One might have said that he was the ambassador of the Georgian monarch. But he was not, for the king of the Georgians had been captured at about the same time by a serdar vizier-pasha (this was the above mentioned Djaifer Pasha, born in Gyula - L.T.), sent against him by the emperor, and he is still being held prisoner in Constantinople. What is remarkable is that the emperor has allowed his son to remain in Georgia, and he is now a subject of the emperor. Another thing is that soon after the king had been captured, forty of his headmen came after him voluntarily, who had served him there, and are now soliciting for his release." (SZTM, Vol. IV, p. 208. - Cf. FEKETE, L.: Zur Geschichte der Grusiner des 16. Jh, (Acta Orient. Hung., Tom. I. fasc. 1, 112), - On King Alexander II of Georgia see SARKISYANZ, E.: Geschichte der orientalischen Völker Russlands bis 1917. München 1961, p. 76.

17. In the years following the mission of István Kakas, visits by Persian embassies to Hungary became quite frequent. As Sándor Takáts writes (*Rajzok a török világból* (Sketches from the Turkish era), Budapest 1915, Vol. II, p. 378), in 1609 a Persian mission travelled through Hungary on the way to Vienna. They numbered 43. In 1610 another embassy came from Persia. "This time they also brought presents to his Majesty. Among these was a fine gold cross from King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem (?), and a piece of an Indian wood, of which a small amount is enough to clean and strengthen the stomach. This wondrous wood had been given by the King of India. Beside these, the mission brought a stone which keeps the plague away, and also precious stones and Damascene swords. Another item on the official list of presents is described as 'ein Gall von einem Pelikan', good for curing side-pains, stroke and fever. Finally, they also brought a gift of a more delicate nature to His Majesty, of which the official list only says: 'Ein Schlangenhorn, so von dem Schlangenkönig abgebrochen wirdt. Hat allerlei Tugend in sich, das nicht zu schreiben is.'" See also SZTM, Vol. IV, XV-XVI.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to Professor Gian-Giacomo Musso (Genoa), Professor Maria-Francesco Tiepolo (Venice), Professor Ilya Tabagua (Tiflis), Professor Ambrosius Eszer (Rome) for their kind help. I am obliged to Éva Csáki (Szeged) for her kind assistance in preparing my work for the press.



ABBREVIATIONS

- Albèri            Albèri E.: Le relazioni degli ambasciatori venti al Senato. Firenze, 1839-1863. Ser. I-III.
- Apponyi         Apponyi S. gr.: Hungarica. Magyar vonatkozású külföldi nyomtatványok (Hungarica. Foreign prints relating to Hungary), Budapest - München, 1900-1907. I-IV.
- Artner          Artner E.: Magyarország és az apostoli Szentszék viszonya a mohácsi vést megelőző években (The relationship between Hungary and the Apostolic Holy See in the years before the Battle of Mohács), Mohácsi Emlékkönyv (Mohács Memorial Book), Budapest, 1926.
- Aschbach        Aschbach J.: Geschichte Kaiser Sigmund's. Hamburg, 1838-1845. I-IV.
- Berchèt         Berchèt G. La republica di Venezia e la Persia. Torino, 1865.
- Berdzenishvili Berdzenishvili N.: Ruseth-Sakarhvelos urthierthobis istoriidan XVI-XVIII saukouneta midshnaze. Materialy po istorii Kavkaza, vup. 1. Tbilisi, 1944.
- Biró             Biró V.: Erdély követei a portán (Transylvanian ambassadros at the Sublime Porte). Kolozsvár, 1921.
- Bod              Bod P.: Magyar Athenás (Hungarian Athenas). Nagyszében, 1776.
- Busbecq         Busbecq A.G.: Reyssen und Bottschaftten. Frankfurt a/M., 1595.
- Carrillo         Veress E.: Carrillo Alfonz jezsuita atya levelezése (The correspondence of the Jesuit priest father Alfonso Carrillo). Budapest, 1906-1943, I-II.
- CG               Cornet E.: Le guerre dei veneti nell'Asia. Vienna, 1856.
- CIL               Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum. Berlin, 1863-1959. I-XVI.
- CL               Cornet E.: Lettere al senato veneto. Vienna, 1852.

- Dernschwam Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien. Hrsg. F. Babinger. München - Leipzig, 1923.
- Dzhanasia Berdzenišvili N. - Džavahišvili I. - Džhanašija S.: Istorija Gruzii. P. 1. Tbilisi, 1946.
- Evagatorium Fratr<sup>i</sup>s Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem ed. C.D. Hassler. Stuttgart, 1843-1849. I-III.
- Fejér Fejér G.: Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus et civilis. Buda, 1829-1844. I-XI.
- Fessler Fessler I.A.: Die Geschichte der Ungern und ihrer Landsassen. Leipzig, 1815-1825. I-X.
- FMD Fraknói V.: Mátyás király magyar diplomatái (King Matthias's Hungarian diplomats). Budapest, 1900.
- Gabashvili Gabashvili V.: Kartuli diplomatiis istoriidan. Materialy po istorii Kavkaza. Vyp. 31. Tbilisi, 1954.
- GDP Pastor L.: Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters. Freiburg i.B., 1886-1933. I-XVI.
- Groszmann Groszmann Zs.: Georgievics Bertalan XVI. századbeli magyar író élete és művei (The life and works of the 16th century Hungarian writer Bertalan Georgievics). Budapest, 1904.
- HGO Hammer-Purgstall J.: Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches. Pest, 1827-1833, I-X.
- HPGH Hammer-Purgstall J.: Geschichte der Goldenen Horde in Kiptschak. Pesth, 1840.
- Hurmuzaki Hurmuzaki E.: Documente privitoare la istoria Romanilor. Bucuresti, 1877.
- IGOR Iorga N.: Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches. Gotha, 1908-1913. I-V.
- IP Iter Persicum ou Description du voyage en Perse entrepris en 1602 par Étienne Kakasch de Zalonkemeny. Traduction publiée et annotée par Ch. Schefer. Paris, 1877.
- KBJ Károlyi Á.: Bernárdffy János krimiai követsége 1598-ban (János Bernárdffy's Crimean mission in 1598). Történelmi Tár, 1878.
- Kidric Kidrič F.: Bartholomaeus Gjorgjevic. Biographische und bibliographische Zusammenfassung. Wien - Prag - Leipzig, 1920.

- Lanz Lanz K.: Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V. Bd. I. Leipzig, 1844.
- Leunclavius Leunclavius J.: Historiae musulmanae turcorum de monumentis ipsorum exscriptae libri XVIII. Francofurti, 1591.
- Macler Macler F.: Notice de manuscrits arméniens ou relatifs aux arméniens etc. Revue des Études Arméniennes, 1920.
- Merriman Merriman R.B.: The rise of the Spanish Empire in the old world and in the new. Vol. III. New York, 1962.
- Miskolczy Miskolczy I.: Keresztes hadjárat terve a mohácsi vész előtt (The plan of a crusade before the battle of Mohács). Mohácsi Emlékkönyv (Mohács Memorial Book), 1926.
- MRG Mommsen Th.: Res gestae divi Augusti ex monumentis Ancyrano et Apolloniensi. Ed. II. Berlin, 1883.
- MT Molnár E. - Pamlényi E. - Székely Gy.: Magyarország története (The history of Hungary). Budapest, 1967, Vols I-II.
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