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**BETWEEN THE BALKANS AND HUNGARY:  
BAČ AS THE SECOND SEAT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF  
KALOCSA-BAČ UNDER OTTOMAN RULE  
DURING THE 16<sup>th</sup> AND 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES**

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**Abstract:** After the campaign of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1526, the medieval Kingdom of Hungary effectively ceased to exist. Ferdinand of Habsburg and John Szapolyai fought for supremacy in Hungary and a series of Habsburg-Ottoman wars began, which would last, with minor and major interruptions, for almost 150 years. In this article, I will introduce to Serbian historiography how the fortress of Bač (which was owned by the archbishops of Kalocsa) and the town of Bač, as the second centre of the archdiocese, came under the rule of the Ottomans. The second aim is to present how the archbishops of Kalocsa dealt with the Catholics in Bač and its surroundings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Last, we will present and summarize our research into how the archbishops of Kalocsa taxed the former archbishop's estates in Bačka. I will also touch on the beginnings of missionary work in Bač, which was organized in Rome by the Congregation for Propagation of the Faith.

**Keywords:** Bač, fortress of Bač, Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bač, archbishops of Kalocsa, Ottoman Empire, Catholics in Ottoman Bačka, Catholic taxation in Ottoman Bačka, church history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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## 1. The Bač Fortress falls to the Ottomans

In the first decades of the sixteenth century, Ottoman pressure increased on the defensive lines of the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>1,2</sup> In 1526, after the successful conquest of Belgrade and the surrounding fortresses,<sup>3</sup> Suleiman the Magnificent decided to strike a final blow against Hungary. Despite repeated and unheeded warnings from Pavle Tomori, the archbishop of Kalocsa and Bač, to King Louis II (1516–1526) that the sultan had left Istanbul in March 1526, Hungarian troops were slow to muster.<sup>4</sup> On July 15, 1526, Grand Vizier Ibrahim launched a siege of Petrovaradin. Archbishop Tomori had effectively prepared the fortress's defenses. The defenders fought to the last man, but the fortress nevertheless fell on July 27. Tomori withdrew to Bač to defend the county of Bačka if the Ottoman army decided to cross over to the left bank of the Danube.<sup>5</sup> When King Ludwig II arrived in Tolna, he sent Đorđe Paližna to Tomori with orders to lead his army to Mohács.<sup>6</sup> The archbishop and his army crossed the Danube at Kolut and set off for Mohács, where he fought and died in the fatal battle on August 29.<sup>7</sup>

After the Battle of Mohács, Suleiman entered the medieval capital of Hungary unopposed on September 9, 1592.<sup>8</sup> On September 25, he put Buda and Pest to the torch. He then divided his army into two parts, and both headed south. After taking Baja, Suleiman's army continued on toward Bač. According to the accounts of contemporary Ottoman historians, the inhabitants of Bač offered strong resistance, but the city and the fortress nevertheless fell to the conquerors. During the siege, the Christian population sought asylum in "that church",<sup>9</sup> which, according to the Ottoman historian Celālzāde Muṣṭafā, "was a great

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<sup>1</sup> The defensive line is especially significant for the late medieval history of Hungary (from the early fifteenth century on). It comprised a line of fortresses meant to provide defense against the Ottomans. After the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, which ended disastrously for the Crusader army, King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437) opted for defensive tactics. Using the great Ottoman defeat at Ankara in 1402, he began building a defensive line made up of a series of fortresses. The first line of defense ran from Severin and Orșova, through Belgrade, Šabac, Srebrenik, Banja Luka, Jajce, and Knin, and ended at Klis. On the emergence and construction of the Kingdom of Hungary's defensive line, see: Engel, Kristó, Kubinyi 2005: 154–158; Szakály 1990: 56–59, 108–113; Hermann 2017: 243–244, 271–283.

<sup>2</sup> The second defensive line, which emerged during the period between the end of King Sigismund's reign and the end of Matthias Corvinus's reign, extended from Timișoara, Lugoj, and Caransebeș, through Srem and Dubica, Krupa, and Otočca, and ended at Senj. The fortress at Bač was also considered an integral part of a second defensive line. A source from 1522 states that the archbishop of Bač's fortress was considered the border fortress for the Archdiocese of Kalocsa: *castra finitima archiepiscopatus Colocensis*. DL 37162; Udvardy 1991: 424; Pfeiffer 2019: 362; Hermann 2017: 396.

<sup>3</sup> For more on Suleiman's 1521 campaign against Hungary, see: Hermann 2017: 353–356; Szakály 1990: 110–111; Engel, Kristó, Kubinyi 2005: 370; Pálosfalvi 2018: 372–392; Elezović 1956: 30–37; Kalić 1967: 239–268; *Ibidem* 1995: 82–84; Popović 2006: 20–21.

<sup>4</sup> Hermann 2017: 356–360; Udvardy 1991: 446–456.

<sup>5</sup> Udvardy 1991: 452.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> Szakály 1990: 114.

<sup>9</sup> Up until a few years ago, the prevailing opinion was that Celālzāde Muṣṭafā was referring to the Franciscan church in Bač. However, new archaeological excavations that uncovered the archbishop's palace in Bač (Stanojević 2019: 197–218) confirmed there had to have been a lower town that was entered through the tower

fortress.”<sup>10</sup> The Christians in the church fought long and hard, with many rifles and much gunpowder, but the Ottomans kept firing their cannons until the church was destroyed and its defenders killed. The Ottoman army seized a great deal of plunder, and many people were carried off as slaves.<sup>11</sup> The Ottoman chronicler Kemalpaşazâde wrote about the siege and the seizure and pillaging of the town and fortress and claimed that Suleiman had taken the fortress without much resistance because the fortress captain<sup>12</sup> had surrendered to the sultan.<sup>13</sup>

The Ottomans left Hungary in early October. Interestingly, they did not leave behind garrisons at any of fortresses in the defensive line, such as, for example, Slankamen, Zemun, Bač, Osijek, Vukovar, or Erdut. Even more interestingly, the Hungarian army returned, but only to Bač, leaving the other fortresses empty until the spring of 1527.<sup>14</sup>

John Szapolyai was chosen as king (1526–1540) at the Hungarian Diet at Székesfehérvár, and was soon crowned.<sup>15</sup> One by one, the nobles knelt before him. Among them was also Radič Božić, leader of the Serbs in Bačka and of the Šajkaši. Thanks to Szapolyai, Jovan Nenad<sup>16</sup> occupied the county of Bačka, which had become desolate and sparsely populated in the wake of the Ottoman army’s withdrawal in 1526.<sup>17</sup> Historians assume that, around this time, Jovan Nenad also held the fortress in Bač, although there is no confirmation of this in the sources.<sup>18</sup>

Soon after John Szapolyai was elected, a part of the Hungarian nobility from the western part of the country chose Ferdinand Habsburg (1526–1564) as king of Hungary.<sup>19</sup> Despite King John Szapolyai’s attempts to reach an agreement, Ferdinand I chose to go to war and launched an offensive against Szapolyai in 1527 that drove him out of Hungary (Szapolyai withdrew first to Transylvania and then later to Poland), after which he was crowned king of Hungary on November 3, 1527. The Serbian leaders (Pavle Bakić, Radič Božić, and Jovan Nenad and his followers) then switched their allegiance to King Ferdinand I.<sup>20</sup> Jovan Dolić, the castellan of the Bačka fortress and a supporter of Jovan Nenad, did the

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gate (Stanojev 2019: 163–164), which would strongly suggest that he may have been thinking of the church of the archdiocese, which, in my opinion, would have been in the lower town of late medieval Bač. This has not yet been supported by archaeological findings, but we know there was a cathedral in the Middle Ages (Pfeiffer 2020: 173–243), and cathedrals only existed in medieval Hungary in the seats of bishoprics or archdioceses, so logically there would have been a church of the archdiocese, which could have been “as large as a fortress,” as the Ottoman chronicler described it. After all, the cathedral ruin in Bač, of which one half was demolished and the other used by the Ottoman army, along with the Kalocsa archbishop’s former residence of the in Bač, which the Ottomans held and which was falling into disrepair, was described by Matija Benlić, the bishop of Belgrade in a report from 1653. (Zach 1986: 16; Borsá, Tóth 1989: 107).

<sup>10</sup> Thúry 1896: 170–171.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Most likely the Bač castellan or the Bačka vice-zupan.

<sup>13</sup> Thúry 1893: 272–273; Pfeiffer 2017: 90.

<sup>14</sup> Barta 1983: 19–20.

<sup>15</sup> R. Várkonyi 1987: 159.

<sup>16</sup> For sources and literature regarding Jovan Nenad and his movement in southern Hungary, see Boris Stojkovski’s latest monograph: Stojkovski: 2018.

<sup>17</sup> R. Várkonyi 1987: 172.

<sup>18</sup> Györe, Pfeiffer 2019: 294.

<sup>19</sup> Rokai, Đere, Pal, Kasaš 2002: 190.

<sup>20</sup> R. Várkonyi 1987: 180.

same.<sup>21</sup> This was mentioned in a letter from Johann Habardanec dated May 26, 1527: "...and Jovan, the castellan of Bač...Castellan Jovan will truly hold fast to our kingdom."<sup>22</sup>

It can be ascertained, based on this source, that Christians were in possession of the Bač fortress in the summer of 1527. The Bač fortress was particularly important to King Ferdinand because it defended the road between Petrovaradin and Pest. There is evidence based on letters from the years 1528–1529 that Ferdinand and his supporters controlled the fortress and its surroundings.<sup>23</sup>

In the first letter, dated March 31, 1528, the treasurer Nikola Gerendi and other advisers from the Hungarian Chamber of Accounts complained to King Ferdinand I about insufficient funds, badly provisioned border fortresses, late payments for the Šajkaši, and Ottoman raiding parties that had penetrated as far as Szeged. They also pushed for a captain of Bač to be named.<sup>24</sup> The second letter, dated April 29, 1528, informed King Ferdinand that the financial situation was troubling, there were no funds available to pay the Šajkaši, and that a captain for Bač needed to be appointed.<sup>25</sup> The third letter is dated July 6, 1528, in which the despot Stjepan Berislavić informed the palatine Stephen Báthory that the sultan's army was gathering in Srem, and only László Morea and Palatine Báthory's troops could stand against them, although they would not be nearly enough for a proper defense. Berislavić also mentioned the fortresses at Bač, Félégyháza, and Zata. He said they were under his control but would be in considerable danger if they did not receive aid and reinforcements from King Ferdinand. If they came under threat, he would have to either surrender, return them to the king, or leave them empty.<sup>26</sup> In a fourth letter, dated July 17, 1528, Palatine Báthory said that he had sent 1,000 mounted cavalry and 500 Šajkaši on the river Tisza who were ready to fight against the Ottomans. The letter also stated that Berislavić had asked King Ferdinand to take over the fortresses of Bač, Félégyháza and Zata because he had no funds to maintain them. The despot asked the king to provide money to pay those living on the southern borders or else he would have to abandon those fortresses.<sup>27</sup>

The next turning point for the Bač fortress occurred in 1529, most likely associated with Ottoman border troops' preparations before Suleiman's attack on Vienna in 1529. Letters from early 1529 tell of the fortress's fate. A letter from the Tamás Szalaházy, bishop of Eger, to King Ferdinand, dated January 23, 1529, conveys that the Serbian despot had handed over the fortresses at Bač and Félégyháza to the Ottomans.<sup>28</sup> In the letter, the bishop claims he received this information from Pavle Bakić.<sup>29</sup> We also know from Ferdinand's answer, dated February 1, 1529, which informed Palatine Báthory that Bač and Félégyháza had been lost.<sup>30</sup> That same day, King Ferdinand sent a letter to the Hungarian Chamber of

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<sup>21</sup> Stojkovski 2018: 123, 133, 203; Krstić 2014: 58.

<sup>22</sup> Stojkovski 2007: 157; Id. 2018. 126.

<sup>23</sup> Györe, Pfeiffer 2019: 294–295.

<sup>24</sup> HHStA,AA, Fasc. 8. Konv. A. 93–94.

<sup>25</sup> HHStA,AA, Fasc. 8. Konv. A. 131–132.

<sup>26</sup> HHStA,AA, Fasc. 8. Konv. B.15.

<sup>27</sup> HHStA,UA, AA, Fasc. 8. Konv.B. 49–51.

<sup>28</sup> Pfeiffer 2017: 92.

<sup>29</sup> Gévay 1840: 58.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 42.

Accounts also confirming the loss of these fortresses. Then he asked the Chamber and his subjects organize a more effective defense because he was preparing for war with the Ottomans.<sup>31</sup>

There is also an intelligence report from April 30, 1529, in which the fortresses under Ottoman control were listed, along with the number of troops at each one. This report, however, does not mention Bač, which is interesting because the fortresses at Ilok, Petrovaradin, Titel, and others were mentioned as being under Ottoman control.<sup>32</sup> Since it is known that the Ottomans had taken possession of Bač by January 1529 at the latest, this raises a question about whether the person who wrote the report lacked information or if there was another reason for its omission.<sup>33</sup> It is possible to assume that this was related to the Makó agreement, signed on October 12, 1528, in which King John Szapolyai and the sultan Suleiman had agreed to turn over the fortresses to King John Szapolyai as Suleiman's vassal.<sup>34</sup> There seems to be a slight chance that this took place before the treaty was signed, and that the fortress had been passed to the eastern Hungarian king sometime between when it was seized and the following spring, and perhaps as early as April 1529. The fortress was once again under Christian control, which would be the reason why the scouts did not mention Bač as one of the Ottoman fortresses.<sup>35</sup>

What we do know for certain is that on November 4, 1529, while on his way back to Istanbul after the siege of Vienna failed, Suleiman the Magnificent found himself in front of the Bač fortress. This information can be found in a collection of letters about the sultan's military campaigns.<sup>36,37</sup> The diary does not mention the siege against Vienna, or that the sultan had ordered the formation of an Ottoman garrison at the fortress.<sup>38</sup>

If Bač was in Christian hands in the 1530s, then it can be assumed, based on the 1536 travel writings of the great humanist and archbishop of Kalocsa, Nicolaus Olahus, who claimed, among other things, that Bač was the second seat of the Archbishopric of Kalocsa, and the area around the city was teeming with fish, the horses were excellent, and the local population drank wine from Srem.<sup>39</sup> This would suggest that the area was under Christian control. At the very least, however, this information raises some doubts: it includes towns, grain, and consumption of wine from Srem,<sup>40</sup> and it gives the impression that the author was

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 62–63.

<sup>32</sup> Laszowski 1914: 151–153.

<sup>33</sup> These reporters were people from Dubrovnik who sent important information to the Hungarian Chamber of Accounts regarding the number of garrisons stationed at the Ottoman fortresses located between Ilok and Nicopolos. The report contains not only the number of Ottoman troops in the occupied fortresses, but also the types of Ottoman troops and the names of the fortress captians. For more detailed information, see: Laszowski 1914: 151–153.

<sup>34</sup> Vass 1979: 9.

<sup>35</sup> Györe, Pfeiffer 2019: 297–298.

<sup>36</sup> Collections of letters were regularly kept about the campaigns of the Ottoman sultans (Thúry 1893: 277; Katona 1976: 157). This is also known from the Letters of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) from 1529.

<sup>37</sup> Thúry 1893: 345; Szentkláray 1885: 119; Reiszig 1909: 96; Csorba 1972: 188; Šmit 2008: 308; Zirojević 2008: 147; Đekić 2014: 856.

<sup>38</sup> Györe, Pfeiffer 2019: 298.

<sup>39</sup> Szamota 1891: 536.

<sup>40</sup> Here, however, it should be pointed out that, according to more recent research, wine production in Srem did not stop after Ottoman rule was established, but whether the inhabitants of Bač and its surroundings consumed

describing Bačka as it was in the late fifteenth century. Contrary to Archbishop Olahus, writers from both sides usually described Bačka after the Battle of Mohács as a devastated and impoverished region crisscrossed by various armies. It seems Nicolaus Olahus had taken a description of Bač and its surroundings from another work (travel writings or a report) written at an earlier time. István Fodor, the author of a monograph about Archbishop Olahus,<sup>41</sup> takes a similar view, as does Ferenc Szakály, who noted that Olahus often took information from before 1526, when Hungary was controlled by the Jagiellonian dynasty.<sup>42</sup> Was Bač under Christian control in the 1530s? Based on these two sources, this cannot be determined. However, there are strong indications supporting this supposition, which indicates the need for further research—especially of Ottoman historical records—in order to directly confirm it. The available sources indirectly indicate that, during the years after Hungary broke into three parts in 1541, the fortress in Bač was in Christian hands and under the rule of King Ferdinand I.<sup>43</sup>

As part of this hypothesis, more recent Hungarian historiography mentions two possible dates: 1541 and 1542–43. The well-known Ottoman scholar Előd Vass holds that the final Ottoman occupation of Bač occurred during Suleiman's great campaign of 1541. According to his interpretation, in August 1541, Suleiman secured control over significant military routes between Osijek and Buda and between Petrovaradin and Pest. According to Vass, at this time, Ottoman garrisons were stationed at Bač, Sombor, Baja, and Kalocsa.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, based on a particularly important document, Ferenc Szakály places Bač's final fall to the Ottomans in 1542. The historical source Szakály points to is dated October 6, 1552, and it likely discusses the period when Szeged and Bač fell.<sup>45</sup> This source is interesting because it suggests that the Bač fortress was still under Christian control in the fall of 1542, and that Szeged and Bač were controlled by Ferdinand I; but this assumes that, at some point, the fortress had passed from Szapolyai's supporters to Ferdinand I and his subjects. Two nobles, Baltazár Bornemissza and Urbán Batthyány were tasked with defending the fortress from the Ottomans.<sup>46</sup>

Additional sources, these now Ottoman, also seem to suggest that Bornemissza and Batthyány had failed to complete their mission,<sup>47</sup> or at least not with any lasting effect, and—given there is a census from the following year with the first list of the Ottoman army in Bač—that sometime after Ferdinand's letter appeared, Bač had, for the last time, come under Suleiman's firm control. The well-known Ottoman scholar and expert researcher of Ottoman military organization in Hungary, Klára Hegyi, holds that this list is a record of the Ottoman garrison, changes in the number of soldiers at the Bač fortress, and represents the

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wine from Srem is a question that requires further investigation. For more detail regarding wine and viticulture in Srem during the period of Ottoman rule, see: Vlašić 2020: 163–183.

<sup>41</sup> Fodor 1990: 56–96.

<sup>42</sup> Szakály 1995: 458.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem* 298–299.

<sup>44</sup> Vass 1979: 9.

<sup>45</sup> MNL, OL, MKr, B. r. orig. W 15721; Szakály 1995: 467.

<sup>46</sup> Györe, Pfeiffer 2019: 299–300.

<sup>47</sup> Baltazár Bornemissza and Urbán Batthyány were nobles in service to Emperor Ferdinand, according to a source dated October 6, 1542. (MNL, OL, MKr, B. r. orig. W 15721; Szakály 1995: 467).

state of affairs between September 30 and October 27, 1543. According Hegyi, an imam and 103 soldiers are listed, of which 72 reported for muster and collected their wages.<sup>48</sup> Information from this list shows that the Bač garrison had only been recently assembled.<sup>49</sup>

As a result of, among other things, new historical sources, we know that the Bač fortress had several owners (King Jovan I, Jovan Dolić, Stjepan Berislavić, King Ferdinand, the Ottomans), and that it was held by the Ottomans at least three times. An important difference during the period preceding the Battle of Mohács is that the Bač fortress was not under the control of the Kalocsa-Bač Archbishopric, as it had been before 1526.<sup>50</sup> The archbishops of Kalocsa-Bač never reacquired the rights to the fortress. However, they retained ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the town of Bač after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699.<sup>51</sup>

## 2. An issue for Catholic survival in Ottoman Hungary

An issue for Catholic survival was that the Porte generally had little tolerance for religious communities whose religious centers were located outside the empire, which was certainly the case for the Catholic faith.<sup>52</sup> Because it was centered in Rome, only an agreement between the pope and the sultan could regulate the Catholics' position within the Ottoman Empire, which never happened.<sup>53</sup> Unlike Catholicism, the Orthodox and Armenian churches and the Jewish faith were legally recognized within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>54</sup> The Catholic faith and the Catholic community were not recognized until the nineteenth century during the period of reform known as the *Tanzimat* (1839–1876), when the Catholic millet was created.<sup>55</sup> Until then, unlike the Orthodox Christians, the Catholics had no ecclesiastical hierarchy confirmed by *berath* from the sultan with precise jurisdictional rights and tax obligations. Life for the Catholics was further complicated by laws enacted by the Hungarian Court Chancellery that Hungarian inhabitants in Ottoman-controlled territories were expected to abide by and which prohibited them from surrendering towns, exporting or trading in military goods (gunpowder and arms).<sup>56</sup> Pressure from the Hungarian authorities in Hungary from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth fostered strong opposition against the Ottomans among the Hungarian population. As can be seen from several examples (Kecskemét, Ráckeve, Makó, Jászberény, Tolna, and even the seat of the sancak of Szeged), the population's passive opposition (for example, interfering with the Ottoman administrative officials' attempts to convert Christians to Islam) provoked a strong reaction from the Ottomans. There is even an example from Tolna in which the

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<sup>48</sup> Hegyi 2002: 202.

<sup>49</sup> ÖNB Mxt 550, 68–70; Hegyi 2007: 929–930; Velics 1886: 22; Šmit 1939: 393–394; Vujović 2016: 85.

<sup>50</sup> Engel 1996: 270; Csánki 1894: 135; Hermann 2017: 396.

<sup>51</sup> Györe, Pfeiffer 2019: 296.

<sup>52</sup> Frazee 1983: 31–45, 88–126.

<sup>53</sup> Molnár 2002: 33.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>56</sup> The following laws prohibited relations with the Ottomans: Article 16 from the law of 1613 (Márkus 1900: 105.); 20th article of the Law of 1622 (Márkus 1900: 195); Article 11 of the law of 1635 (Márkus 1900: 315.). On the Hungarian resistance against the Ottoman government and its administrative system, see: Szakály 1985: 52–62; Hegyi 1995: 24–26.

Ottomans presented the Christian population with the choice of conversion or death.<sup>57</sup> To appease the local population as much as they could, over time, the Ottoman authorities permitted church bells to be rung in villages that were exclusively Christian, and even allowed new churches to be built.<sup>58</sup>

The constant wars of the sixteenth century, which were largely fought in the central parts of the Kingdom of Hungary, along with the expansion of the Reformation, effectively destroyed the Catholic Church in southern Hungary, both financially and spiritually. The Kingdom of Hungary could theoretically have compensated for these losses, but there the emphasis was on fighting the spread of Protestant teachings, so missions were secondary if not tertiary goals. Catholicism did not disappear from the southern regions due to the Franciscan monasteries (Jászberény, Gyöngyös, Szeged), the remains of the secular clergy, and the South Slavic Catholic missionaries (who came from Dubrovnik or were Bosnian Franciscans), who moved into vacant areas, including Bačka, during the migrations of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>59</sup>

Historiography had previously held that, in the decades after the defeat at Mohács, Catholics had all but disappeared from the southern parts of the Kingdom of Hungary, and that the Protestants had prevailed over the Catholics.<sup>60</sup> If this is correct, it raises questions about how and to what extent the Catholic Church survived in occupied Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Pecs remained as the most important Catholic stronghold.<sup>61</sup> In this town and in its wider surroundings (the former county of Baranya), Protestants and Catholics fought fiercely with each other.<sup>62</sup> The next large Catholic center was in the county of Somogy, where the Jesuits successfully remained active during the seventeenth century.<sup>63</sup>

Catholics in the central part of Hungary managed to survive. This was due to the Franciscans in Jászberény, Gyöngyös, and Szeged, who carried out pastoral and spiritual duties within their surroundings beyond the monastery walls. The same was true for Kecskemét, where Catholics, in a 1564 agreement with Protestants, maintained the Church, and from 1638 the Jesuits (and the Franciscans from 1644) enabled the Catholics in the town and its surroundings to persevere. There were similar successes in the Diocese of Vác. According to a report from 1675, the bishop of Vác, György Pongrácz, maintained Catholics as the primary group in his diocese, which was located in the northwestern part of southern Transdanubia.<sup>64</sup>

As for the rural population, they were quite flexible in their view of Protestantism and Catholicism. Why did this trend emerge? For the villages in Ottoman Hungary, it was

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<sup>57</sup> For more on these kinds of situations, see: Fodor, Dávid 2002: 271–277.

<sup>58</sup> Szakály 1998: 232–250, 223–231; Molnár 1998: 245.

<sup>59</sup> Molnár 2002: 101.

<sup>60</sup> This paper will not deal with the spread of the Reformation in southern Hungary in detail. The most important literature connected to includes: Földváry 1898.; Földváry 1940.; Bartha 1965–1973.; Szakály 1995 a.; Idem 1987.; Unghváry 1994.

<sup>61</sup> Molnár 2022: 64.

<sup>62</sup> Molnár 1999: 195, 234–238.

<sup>63</sup> Karácsonyi, Kollányi, Lukcsics 1912: 544.

<sup>64</sup> Szakály 1983: 648–655; Szántó 1972: 49–58; Hornyik 1861: 112–121, 124–138.



most important to remain within a Christian faith, and they did not differentiate much between the Protestant and Catholic confessions. This tolerance could be attributed to the small number of priests, and since these settlements strictly adhered to religious customs, theological differences meant little to them: it made no difference if the gospel was preached by a Protestant or Catholic. Of course, this was not the case in the towns, where merchants and craftsmen were more educated than the rural population and were more well-disposed to Catholic priests who, in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were Franciscans or Jesuits.<sup>65</sup>

Here we must also ask the question of what position the Ottomans took regarding the Protestants. Did they tend to favor them or the Catholics? This issue is quite complex. It would appear from the literature that they favored the Protestants at the beginning of the Hungarian conquest, or at least they did not prevent the spread of the new faith because they believed it would be easier to expand in a Christian land. In the first few decades after the Battle of Mohács, they primarily favored the Protestants in court proceedings.<sup>66</sup> According to Catholic historians, the Ottomans favored the Protestant faith and assisted in its expansion for political reasons (they were enemies of the Habsburg Empire and it divided the Hungarians).<sup>67</sup> On the Catholic side, only József Balogh dealt with this topic in more detail. He claimed the Ottomans tolerated both confessions for pragmatic reasons; but this, of course, did not mean there was recognition of either. For religious reasons, they certainly did not support Protestantism, so when they favored Protestantism, it was based on a policy of “divide and conquer.”<sup>68</sup>

Protestant historians more or less share the opinion of their Catholic counterparts, but they draw even fewer parallels between the spread of the Reformation and Ottoman rule. They view this Protestant “favoritism” as part of an anti-Habsburg policy and a desire to keep the population within the conquered lands by preventing them from abandoning them through migration.<sup>69</sup> The Ottomans permitted the profession of faith demanded by this population. When they saw the new faith was gaining popularity and could help retain the population in the newly conquered lands, they did not oppose it; indeed they permitted the Hungarians to choose the new confession or to remain within the Catholic faith.<sup>70</sup> However, it is clear from the literature that the number of Catholics among the Hungarians was in a steady decline, and that this trend was more pronounced in Ottoman Hungary than in the lands within the kingdom.<sup>71</sup> Szakály holds a similar opinion. Using Turkish defters, he confirmed that 60 to 70 percent of the Catholic clergy was destroyed during the Ottoman conquest, and throughout the 1630s and 1640s, those still left were reduced by another 30

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<sup>65</sup> Molnár 2002: 107.

<sup>66</sup> According to Hungarian historiography, sources dated during the period 1541–1552 support the assertion regarding aid for and favoritism of Protestants over Catholics. This is discussed in a letter from Batizi András, Gyulai Torda Zsigmond, Fehértói János, Széki Szigeti Imre, Sztárai Mihály: *Földvár* 1940: 153–192; Szakály 1985: 447–455.

<sup>67</sup> König 1931: 125–126; Hermann 1973: 227.

<sup>68</sup> Balog 1939: 29–35.

<sup>69</sup> Zoványi 1922: 210–217; Bucsay 1985: 44.

<sup>70</sup> Csohányi 1973: 896–898.

<sup>71</sup> Salamon 1885: 311.

percent. He concluded that this Ottoman inclination toward Protestantism was only relevant between 1541 and 1552 because they saw the new teachings as a tool for consolidating their power over the Hungarian lands (as was also the case with the Orthodox Church). After 1552, however, this positive inclination toward the Protestants almost completely disappeared, and they began using conflicts and disputes between Catholics and Protestants to their advantage.<sup>72</sup>

### 3. The effect of migration on changing ethnic structures in southern Hungary under Ottoman rule

From the sixteenth century onwards, South Slav migration was a contributing factor in the reduction of Catholics within the Ottoman-controlled areas of Hungary. These migrations had begun in the fifteenth century, but during the Ottoman conquest and certainly after the Long Turkish War (1591–1606), they became increasingly significant. During the fifteenth century at the earliest, the area between the Sava and the Drava rivers, which included the region of medieval Srem around Vukovar and Požega, became increasingly Slavic.<sup>73</sup> Of course, Orthodox Serbs settled first in eastern Srem west of the Voćin–Cernik line in increasingly larger numbers, while Catholic Bosnians moved into western Srem between the Požega–Velika line in the medieval county of Vukovar and within the Valpovo–Osijek–Našice triangle. Notably, there were also settlements in Slavonia that were majority Protestant. Protestants could be found in cities as well as in villages and small towns, and Croatian Protestants lived south of the Drava in the lands around Valpovo, Osijek, and Vukovar.<sup>74</sup>

By the mid-sixteenth century, Serbs had become the majority in Banat; in the area between the Mureş, Tisza, and Danube rivers; and in Bačka.<sup>75</sup> A smaller number of migrants were soldiers attached to units of irregulars from the Ottoman army (*martolos*)<sup>76</sup> or Vlachs from Transylvania. They had privileges regarding tax payments, but in return they had to serve in the army, often in border fortresses. As the borders shifted in the sixteenth century, they slowly moved into parts of Ottoman Hungary.<sup>77</sup> Another group of South Slavic origin moved into abandoned and unsettled areas in Hungary, and they were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, but they were also a significant presence in the cities, where they were craftsmen and merchants.<sup>78</sup>

The historiography generally referred to the South Slav settlers as *Rac*, which had been used as a name for the Serbian population since the late Middle Ages. However, one must consider the nuances among the South Slavic peoples in southern Hungary, who belonged to various ethnic groups that differed primarily according to religion.<sup>79</sup> Over time, research has shown they need to be differentiated from one another. Here I refer specifically

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<sup>72</sup> Szakály 1984: 51–59.

<sup>73</sup> Engel 2000: 267–321.

<sup>74</sup> Buturac 1970: 25–56.

<sup>75</sup> Szakály 1991: 21–25; Rácz 1995: 119, 112–124.

<sup>76</sup> Pavlović 2017: 386.

<sup>77</sup> Fenyvesi 1985: 199–218; Hegyi 1995: 100–109; Idem 1998: 229–256.

<sup>78</sup> Hegyi 1995: 197–198.

<sup>79</sup> Dávid 1997: 169; Miskei 1998: 109–110.

to the Catholic South Slavs (Šokci, Bunjevci, Bosnians and Croats), large numbers of whom settled in southern Hungary during this period. Their numbers cannot be compared with the number of Serbs (especially after the Great Migration of 1690), but they are certainly worth noting.<sup>80</sup> This population would have also included merchants from Dubrovnik, who were active in larger cities where they had their own shops and colonies (Budim, Pest, Timișoara, Pecs, Székesfehérvár, Osijek, and Požega).<sup>81</sup> Here, it is particularly relevant that these Catholics also settled in Bačka, where they were referred to as Šokci and Bunjevci.

According to missionary reports, in the mid-seventeenth century, there were Catholics living in Bač, Baja, Bajmok, Đurđin, Breg, Bukin (today Mladenovo), Gara, Santovo, Jánoshalma, Kolut, Mélykút, and Sombor.<sup>82</sup> However, it is not possible to make reliably estimate the total number of Catholics in Ottoman Hungary in the seventeenth century. In the mid-seventeenth century, when Matija Benlić, the bishop of Belgrade, conducted canonical visitations, the number of Catholics was estimated at around 170,000, of which 50,000 lived in Slavonia, 52,000 in Transdanubia, 9,000 in Bačka, 11,000 in Banat, 2,000 between Buda and Esztergom, and 30,000 in the dioceses of Vác and Egar.<sup>83</sup> Of course, these are only estimates and are by no means accurate censuses of Catholics in Ottoman Hungary. However, it would not be incorrect to say that the Catholic population within the Ottoman Empire was primarily located in these areas.

#### 4. Taxation in Bač and the surrounding area by the archbishops of Kalocsa during Ottoman rule in Christian sources

The title of Archbishop of Bačka during this period was only a formality, and there were eighteen archbishops between 1526 and 1683. In the late sixteenth century and for most of the seventeenth, many were given this title toward the end of their careers because, in practice, the title of archbishop meant this person was an ecclesiastic trusted by the Vienne court and had served faithfully within the Catholic church for years, and were thus worthy of the title Archbishop of Kalocsa-Bač.<sup>84</sup> In the rest of this article, I will consider the sources compiled by Christians containing information about how the archbishops went about taxing the diocese during Ottoman rule. I will also look at whether they “gave consideration to the spiritual survival of the Catholic faithful” or if they only used “their ecclesiastical estates” to collect taxes.

The earliest source suggesting the archbishop of Kalocsa-Bács collected taxes is from 1623. Archbishop Bálint Lépes (1619–1623)<sup>85</sup> entrusted the administration and taxation of the diocese’s estates to János Kutassy, a cavalry lieutenant from Komárom. He was responsible for disciplining unruly serfs and protecting them from harassment.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Unyi 1947.; Vanyó 1973: 88–97. However, Borsa and Tóth’s opinion that Catholic South Slavs were Serbs should also be mentioned: Borsa, Tóth 1989: 88.

<sup>81</sup> Molnár 2002: 106.

<sup>82</sup> Molnár 2000: 117–140; Idem 2002: 106; Pfeiffer 2019: 455–476.

<sup>83</sup> Borsa, Tóth 1989: 141–142.

<sup>84</sup> Tóth 2014: 31.

<sup>85</sup> For more detail on this, see: Katona 2003: 57–60; Tóth 2014: 37.

<sup>86</sup> MNL, OL, E 41 1623 Nr. 79; Molnár 2004: 69.

Archbishop János Telegdy (1623–1647)<sup>87</sup> continued with a systematic inventory of the archdiocese's estates. In 1626, he compiled a list of the archdiocese's estates in the county of Solta.<sup>88</sup> In 1629, he compiled an inventory of the villages belonging to the archdiocese, and called witnesses who were nobles from the area around Kalocsa.<sup>89</sup> However, taxation on the archdiocese's former estates did not go easily or smoothly. The nobles occasionally protested outside their county courts, claiming that the archbishops were violating their rights to certain villages and estates. For example, Pál Bornemissza of Buda protested before the Pest–Pilisa–Solt County Assembly because Archbishop Telegdy had unfairly taxed his Serbian villages of Radonić and Perlković in Bačka county.<sup>90</sup> In 1642, Telegdy needed to address the same assembly because the nobles had unjustly occupied his estates in county of Solt.<sup>91</sup>

Also relevant is one of the first taxation censuses of the archdiocese's estates, which has been dated to 1543. However, this date has recently been disputed by Hungarian and Serbian historians, who consider the census to be either younger or older by a full century, if not more.<sup>92</sup> So too is the inclusion of the town of Bač, which was responsible for a tax of forty forints paid to the archdiocese—one of the highest sums in the census. Interestingly, some of the settlements paid part of their taxes in shoes and boots.<sup>93</sup>

Taxation of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa's estates during Ottoman rule reached its highest point under János Püsky (1649–1657), György Szelepcsényi (1657–1666), and György Széchényi (1666–1685), in the mid- and late-seventeenth century.<sup>94</sup> These archbishops invested a great deal of effort into restoring the archdiocese's estates with considerable success, as will be seen later. The first step was to complete an inventory of these estates and estimate the tax liability for each settlement. Around 1650, János Püsky compiled a detailed list of towns and villages with the amounts of tax to be collected. There are 179 towns and villages on the list, and the total tax was estimated at around 2,500 forints.<sup>95</sup> This list also mentions Bač, which paid forty forints to the archdiocese. Sombor also had to pay the same amount, and only Subotica paid more (50 forints).<sup>96</sup> His successor, György Szelepcsényi, collected all the information from Telegdy and Püsky, and compiled a list of 300 towns and villages, including former estates. King Leopold I (1657–1705) issued him a charter on April 12, 1662. Sometime later (December 12, 1665), another charter was issued confirming the archbishop owned the rights to these settlements and estates. The list, of course, included Bač and located it within the former county of Bačka, so Archbishop Szelepcsényi had a sense of where former archbishops' residence had been.<sup>97</sup> However, protests against the taxation of estates came from the nobles of Pest–Pilis–Solt

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<sup>87</sup> For more detail on this, see: Katona 2003: 60–66; Tóth 2014: 37–38; Pfeiffer 2019: 108.

<sup>88</sup> Gyetvai 1992: 89.

<sup>89</sup> Katona 2003: 81.

<sup>90</sup> MNL, OL, P 1744 fasc. 1. Nr. 108.

<sup>91</sup> Borosy 1985: 39–40.

<sup>92</sup> Szakály 1981: 266–267; Wicker 2008: 46, 47; Ćirković 2017: 182.

<sup>93</sup> MNL, OL, E 156 - a. - Fasc. 103. - No. 047.

<sup>94</sup> For more on these three archbishops, see: Katona 2003: 66–75, 77–82; Molnár 2004: 67–76; Tóth 2014: 38–39.

<sup>95</sup> Molnár 2004: 70; Dudás 1896: 259–261.

<sup>96</sup> Dudás 1896: 261.

<sup>97</sup> Katona 2003: 70–73; Molnár 2004: 70; Szakály 1981: 266–267; Gyetvai 1992: 91–92.

county, who also regularly taxed the settlements in Bačka and where apparently all the Hungarian and Serbian villages had their own master.<sup>98</sup> There is information from the period 1657–1679 that noble families and the archbishops were not infrequently engaged in disputes over estates in Bačka as well. However, there is almost no information about the outcome of these disputes.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, according to a document from 1703 listing all the settlements that regularly paid taxes to the archbishops, states that even the Serbian villages paid taxes, or at least those in northern Bačka did.<sup>100</sup>

A system for tax collection in the regions under Ottoman rule was determined during the reign of Archbishop Szelepcsényi. Direct tax collection was handled by the officers from the border fortresses. Their task was to collect taxes (even through violent means), defend the boundaries of the estates, protect the serfs primarily from the hajduks and border knights. The administrators of the estates, and especially of the Church's estates, had broad powers that ranged from arranging tax collection to the managing the archbishop's estate.<sup>101</sup> After his appointment in 1657, Szelepcsényi immediately began arranging for the taxation of the archdiocese's estates. Based on threats he had made in a letter dated September 1, 1657, it is clear the archbishop took paying taxes very seriously: "We will destroy you by fire and sword, and those we capture will be heavily taxed, and soldiers will be sent to steal from you."<sup>102</sup> His estate manager was György Légrádi, who had broad management privileges. His job was to collect taxes and run the estates. He entrusted the defense of these estates to Mihály Gálffy, a lieutenant from Nyitra, whose primary duty was to defend the archbishop's estates from raids by soldiers at the border fortresses.<sup>103</sup>

The fact that Szelepcsényi collected a part of these taxes even after he became the archbishop of Esztergom shows just how important these taxes from the Bačka villages were. According to Szelepcsényi's account during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Bishop Giacinto Macripodari of Csanád conducted negotiations in Baja with representatives of villages in Bačka (Mélykút, Gara, Vaskút, Csátalja, Salašić, Ridjica, Ledjen, Katymár, Aranyos, Ivanka, Istvánmegye, and others), who complained that Széchényi, the new archbishop of Kalocsa, was demanding unjustifiably high taxes because he was asking for his share from settlements Szelepcsényi was also collecting from. Interestingly, two Janissary aghas were also present at this meeting. They complained about raids by border soldiers, which had increased significantly, especially in the south of Bačka where Serbs were living. These aghas sought protection from Szelepcsényi and his soldiers, and to free captured serfs from the Hungarian border knights, who had carried them off into slavery.<sup>104</sup> Szelepcsényi made serious threats to his villages in Bačka on January 22, 1678: If they did not pay their taxes within seven months, they would be attacked by the knights from Fülek.<sup>105</sup>

According to Molnár and Szakály, it became clear from these raiding parties that

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<sup>98</sup> For more on this topic, see: Dudás 1896: 247–255.

<sup>99</sup> Molnár 2004: 70.

<sup>100</sup> Szakály 1981: 268–270; Gyetvai 1992: 92–93.

<sup>101</sup> Szakály 1981: 174–211.

<sup>102</sup> MNL, OL, E 150. Regestrata fasc. 29. Nr. 30.

<sup>103</sup> Molnár 2004: 71.

<sup>104</sup> Molnár 2001: 65–75.

<sup>105</sup> Id. 2004: 71.

soldiers from northern Hungary were extremely hostile toward the Serbian population. The sources indicate they regularly paid taxes, so this did not change the fact that Serbian villages in Bačka had recognized de facto Hungarian interests and the rights of Hungarian nobles and prelates.<sup>106</sup> Research into this topic conducted over the past decade only confirms that the South Slavic population was treated neglectfully in the same way as the Turkish population.<sup>107</sup> These areas were thus treated by the Hungarian authorities as an extension of the Balkans rather than as southern parts of the lands of the Hungarian crown. The population belonged to the Ottoman state with all of its administrative apparatuses, while the Kalocsa-Bač archbishops and Hungarian feudal lords levied taxes on Turkish territory not only for the income but also because they wanted their jurisdiction recognized and the power of the Turkish institutions reduced. The Serbs, however, were Ottoman subjects who were active in the Turkish administration and military system. This system of double taxation says much about the power of the Hungarian system and the weaknesses of Ottoman rule. Nevertheless, there is no trace of an agreement between the Hungarians and the Ottomans regarding the collection of revenues. However, as seen here, some of the nobles (such as the archbishops of Kalocsa), in protecting their own rights also protected their serfs. Interestingly, this mechanism was taken over by the Ottoman spahis to defend themselves against attacks by the hajduks and soldiers from the northern border fortresses.<sup>108</sup>

It is necessary to explain what is meant here by the term double taxation. Ferenc Salamon was the first to draw attention to this system in an extensive monograph about the Ottoman conquest of Hungary.<sup>109</sup> After Salamon, Ferenc Szakály, whose monograph was cited earlier, further explored and expanded on this topic.<sup>110</sup> The hypothesis essentially holds that the inhabitants of the former lands of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, which was ruled by the Ottoman Empire from 1541 to 1699, continued paying taxes to the Hungarian nobles who were taxing these lands during this period.<sup>111</sup> The Ottomans did not formally recognize the Hungarian nobility (barons and prelates) or the Hungarian king, who owned the land as part of the Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen, and instead considered the land to be under the sultan's control.<sup>112</sup> But in reality, they never managed to prevent the Hungarian nobles or the Hungarian Chamber of Accounts from collecting taxes (ninths, tithes, in kind, or in currency).<sup>113</sup>

The Habsburg rulers, however, adopted the idea of immunity for the lands of Saint Stephan from the Hungarian nobility and made this known to the Ottomans during peace

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<sup>106</sup> Szakály 1981: 272–275; Molnár 2004: 72.

<sup>107</sup> In addition to Serbs, these pillagers also harassed and oppressed the Bunjevci and Šokci. An instance from 1653 was noted in which they kidnapped a Franciscan who was later freed by Catholics with help from the Ottomans. Although Bačka was fertile, it was sparsely populated due to this uncertainty, according to Benlić, a missionary bishop: Borsa, Tóth 1989: 89–142.

<sup>108</sup> Hegedűs 1981: 147–169.

<sup>109</sup> Salamon 1886: 316.

<sup>110</sup> Szakály 1981: 59–140, 449–479.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* 23–59.

<sup>112</sup> For official policy and understandings of the sultan and the Sublime Porte, see the peace treaties of 1547 and 1568. For more detail, see: Thúry 1896: 397., Szalay 1860: 118; Salamon 1886: 316.

<sup>113</sup> Szakály 1981: 449.

negotiations, primarily in the early seventeenth century.<sup>114</sup> Interestingly, this right to immunity for the Kingdom of Hungary was not recognized even during the payment of 30,000 ducats between 1547 and 1606. The Sublime Porte interpreted this as an indication that the “Viennese king” had recognized the superiority of the Ottoman sultan and the Hungarian king.<sup>115</sup> Also of interest is that, after the Treaty of Vienna (1606), the Ottomans no longer disputed the the Hungarian nobility’s right to tax these lands, where the Hungarians were the majority. They only took issue with areas where there was a primarily South Slav population. The Hungarians could take advantage of the peace treaties’ shortcomings because the treaties did not address the issue of taxation in Ottoman-controlled lands. But what is even more interesting is that the Ottoman spahis were able to expand their power behind the Kingdom of Hungary’s defensive lines. What really mattered was what actually happened on a day-to-day basis, or rather, who was more successful at asserting their authority without making use of their larger military forces.<sup>116, 117</sup> It so happens that, in this instance, the Hungarian nobility had the upper hand.<sup>118</sup>

It should also be mentioned that the Hungarians failed to tax the entire area of Hungary controlled by the Ottomans. For example, they never managed to collect taxes in Srem, Slavonia, and the area between the Timiș and Mureș rivers.<sup>119</sup> Likewise, it should be noted that the nobility from the Kingdom of Hungary claimed the right to all types of taxes (ninth, tithes, land tax, etc.), which were claimed not only from the settlements primarily inhabited by Hungarians but also from those in which there were South Slavs (Serbs, Šokci, Bunjevci, and Croats).<sup>120</sup> In the beginning, from the late 1640s to the end of the 1650s, the key fortresses along the Hungarian defensive line against the Ottomans (Siget, Eger, Đula) taxed the population in the eyalet of Buda. These “campaigns” were organized by the captains of the fortresses to support their garrisons and prepare the fortresses for defense against sieges by the Ottoman army.<sup>121</sup> After these fortresses fell under Ottoman rule (Szigetvár and Gyula fell in 1566, and Eger in 1596), taxation passed to the barons, prelates, and Hungary’s Chamber of Accounts.<sup>122</sup>

One of the most important sources regarding taxation of what is now Bačka by the Kalocsa archbishops at the end of Ottoman rule is a record compiled on the orders of Archbishop Pál Széchenyi. It was compiled in 1698 by Matija Bubnić, a canon from Győr, and György Lendvai, the royal commissioner, after careful examination in the field. Bubnić and Lendvai questioned forty witnesses, including officials in the county of Bačka, older serfs from Baja and its environs (Santovo, Breg, Kolut, Sombor, Bač, Baračka, Borsod, Leđen, Mélykút, Borota), and an allegedly 111-year-old monk from the Bodjani monastery

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* 450.

<sup>115</sup> Salamon 1886: 321–322; Szakály 1981: 44–59.

<sup>116</sup> Szakály 1981: 451.

<sup>117</sup> The assumption that double taxation was also practiced by the Ottomans was first mentioned by Ferenc Szakály. However, in recent years, Eva Simon S. in Hungary has done more detailed research on Ottoman taxation of the population in the west and northwest parts of Hungary. Sz. Simon 2014: 64–132; 207–217.

<sup>118</sup> Szakály 1981: 23–59.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* 452–453.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* 455.

<sup>121</sup> Szakály 1981: 456–457.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

named Stefan Subota, and an officer named Stefan Husar. The witnesses unanimously stated that, in the last decades of Ottoman rule, during the reigns of the archbishops Szelepcsényi and Széchényi, the settlements, and especially those around Kalocsa, Baja, and Somobor, regularly paid taxes to the prelates of Kalocsa, but the hajduks sometimes traveled to Petrovaradin to collect taxes.<sup>123</sup> One settlement with an Ottoman garrison did not pay taxes, but the spahis encouraged the villages to pay so the soldiers from the north would leave them in peace. Stefan Husar and his soldiers from Füleke and Léva had to repeatedly persuade the recalcitrant settlements to pay taxes to the archbishop. It is also interesting that the monk Subota claimed that the Ottomans sometimes lent money to the serfs so they would have protection from Hungarians troops attacking from the north. The taxes collected from Bačka were later taken to Ferenc Wesselényi and his commanding officer János Gombkötő in Füleke, who handed the money over to István Koháry, the commanding officer but they also took this tax money to Győr, Nyitra, Érsekújvár (until 1663) and Komárom.<sup>124</sup> Also relevant here is that in this source, there is mention of a witness from Bač, Georgi, a fifty-six-year-old Catholic and a fur trader. He stated that the settlements around Baja and Sombor regularly paid taxes to the archbishop of Kalocsa:

The seventeenth witness, Georgije the fur trader, who was fifty-six and a resident of the town of Bač. He admitted to the panel that he had been questioned and that all the villages and estates...of the upper districts, such as Baja and Sombor, paid taxes annually to the archbishop of Kalocsa.<sup>125</sup>

Now that we have seen how the archbishops managed to return a part of the former estates and to tax these settlements, we should look at how much they were able to collect and what revenues they could rely on. It is not possible in practical terms to determine the total amount because payment records only indicate how much a settlement in a particular geographic area paid.<sup>126</sup> However, to explore this area in more detail, it is necessary to look carefully at the canonical visitations.

In Vatican archives from the seventeenth century, there are records of seven proceedings<sup>127</sup> carried out by the archdiocese between 1649 and 1696, in which witnesses reported, among other things, on the archdiocese's revenues.<sup>128</sup> Annual revenues in 1649

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<sup>123</sup> Molnár 2004: 73–74.

<sup>124</sup> Transcripts of this record from the eighteenth century: KÉGL Birtokjogi iratgyűjtemény fasc. 1. Nr. 1. fasc. 6. Nr. 455. Gyetvai 1992: 92–93. Molnár 2004: 73–74.

<sup>125</sup> KFL. III. 5.a. Nr.1.

<sup>126</sup> Szakály 1981: 270.

<sup>127</sup> According to Council of Trent, candidates for higher ecclesiastical offices had to undergo an examination (known as a canonical investigation or *processus informativus*), in which witnesses gave their assessments of the candidate by answering thirteen questions from a list (or ten if the bishop was being transferred), and the candidate himself had to answer thirteen questions related to his future diocese. This canonical process was stipulated by Popes Gregory XIV and Urban VIII (1591, 1627). Notes connected to the proceedings of the Hungarian bishops and archbishops have been kept in the Vatican archives since 1612 and are located in the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano* in three fonds: The *Archivio Consistoriale*, *Processus Consistoriales*; the *Dataria Apostolica*, *Processus Datariae*; and the *Archivio della Nuntiatura in Vienna*, *Processi dei Vescovi e degli abbatì*. For more about these fonds and diocesan proceedings, see: Molnár 2001: 149–163; Ritzler 1958: 204–220; Id. 1955: 95–101; Tusor 1999: 23–25.

<sup>128</sup> Molnár 2004: 74.



were estimated to have been between 300 and 500 forints that were collected from the serfs in the archbishop's estates, who paid their taxes in fish, carpets, and currency. Due to the organization of his estates, György Szelepcsényi was able to significantly increase his income. These records also indicate that the archbishop's income, collected in kind, in currency, and in Turkish carpets, amounted to between 1,000 and 3,000 forints. However, toward the end of Ottoman rule, the archbishop's revenues once again fell. At the time, György Széchényi complained that, for ten years, he had collected 500 forints, but that for the year 1682–83, he had barely managed to collect anything, and in 1684 he had received almost nothing from the serfs. Ten years later, Antal Péter Rátkay reported that during Archbishop Széchényi's tenure, his income was, in fact, approximately 700 forints annually. This amount did not increase much in the first few years after the Treaty of Karlowitz either.<sup>129</sup>

Looking at the 160-year period between the Battle of Mohács and the Great Turkish War, there were certain events that can be attributed to the actions of the archbishops of Kalocsa. Some of them, such as Kutasy, Pethe, Szuhay, Szelepcsényi, and Széchényi, believed the Catholic Church could only be restored through the Counter Reformation. Throughout the seventeenth century, they focused on suppressing the Protestant Church, sometimes through radical measures. Evidence for this is the appropriation of estates and the Extraordinary Court in Pozsony (now Bratislava).<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, the archbishops certainly had their own merits regarding art and culture within their diocese. They were far less successful, or rather almost completely unsuccessful, in carrying out reforms or re-Catholicizing the part of their diocese under Ottoman rule.

Yet it also cannot be said that the archbishops of the Diocese of Kalocsa-Bač took no action regarding the lands under Ottoman rule. Demeter Naprágyi appointed vicars (1612–1618) for the first time to head this church, with the goal of finding a way to tax the archdiocese's estates controlled by the Ottomans. The first steps toward this were taken in 1623. A few years later, Archbishop Telegdy attempted to take an inventory of the lands that had been lost. Püsky, Szelepcsényi and Széchényi continued in this direction, and Szelepcsényi was the first to appoint an administrator to run the archbishop's estates that were formally and legally under Ottoman control.<sup>131</sup>

There is a relatively large number of sources dealing with taxation in the Ottoman part of Hungary that favored the archbishops of Kalocsa and inventories of the diocese's former estates and settlements; however, the same cannot be said for the archbishop's pastoral work in these areas. There are various reasons for this: There were relatively few Catholics in these lands and the archbishops had other, more important dioceses where there was much for the prelates to do, leaving the Archdiocese of Kalocsa as only a place to collect taxes.<sup>132</sup> There is some information about the archbishops' pastoral work regarding the appointment of vicars to represent them. The first known vicar was György Vásárhelyi, a Jesuit from Pecs and a missionary who was authorized by Demeter Naprágyi in 1612 with

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<sup>129</sup> Id. 2001: 156.

<sup>130</sup> On the Extraordinary Court in Pozsony, see: Varga 1973: 232–239; Benczédi 1975: 199–206.

<sup>131</sup> Tóth 2014: 46.

<sup>132</sup> Molnár 2004: 74.

several pastoral and legal privileges and tasks.<sup>133</sup> After three years, in 1615 he appointed György Nagyfalvi, the vicar of Győr, as his representative.<sup>134</sup> Apart from these Jesuits, Archbishop Naprágyi maintained a relationship with Paolo Torrelli,<sup>135</sup> an abbot in Bač whom he had appointed as his vicar in 1618.<sup>136</sup>

However, here it should be pointed out that, shortly before this, the title of “abbot of the Benedictine abbey in Bač” was fictitious. The Benedictine missionaries from Dubrovnik wanted to legitimize their work and presence in southern Hungary, so they sought a local title for themselves. This proved to be a rather difficult task because Church titles were bestowed by the Hungarian king, and the titles of smaller ecclesiastical institutions disappeared temporarily. They bridged this gap by creating a fictitious title which had never existed before. This was the Bač Abbey of the Virgin Mary. The first to hold this title was Pietro di Vicenzio, a secular priest from Dubrovnik whom the pope granted this abbey on May 30, 1592, through a donation.<sup>137</sup> This is problematic because the Benedictine Abby of Bač had never existed. During my research I found no trace of the Benedictines ever having had an abbey in Bač. There is no mention of one in the Hungarian literature either.<sup>138</sup> However, during our research of charters and letters from the Bačka chapter, we came across a charter dated October 1, 1473, in which there is mention of Filip, a member of the Bač chapter, who completed an investigation by order of his chapter. According to this charter, he was the presbyter of the Church of the Virgin Mary. Thus it is possible that this church did indeed exist in Bač, and Rome was already aware of this it, but it was mistakenly believed to have once been Benedictine.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, in reviewing the chapter charters from the 1470s up to 1525, I came across provosts minor (*praepositus minor*) in several places at the end of charters in lists of elected canons of the elected canons of the General Chapter of Bač. This is, in fact, evidence that in Bač, in addition to the cathedral, there was also a collegiate chapter church led by the provost of the Church of the Virgin Mary: *Prepositus beate Marie virginis Bachiensis*.<sup>140</sup> This is also the opinion of the Hungarian scholar, C. Tóth Norbert.<sup>141</sup> Thus, it is very likely that the Holy See associated the name of the collegiate church with incorrect information about a Benedictine monastery in Bač in the Middle Ages. In fact, there are sources about filling the fictitious title of a Benedictine abbey in Bač that date up to the 1630s. Furthermore, in 1597, Mavro Orbini, a Dubrovnik historiographer, bore the title of Abbot of Bač.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Id.* 1999: 171–263.

<sup>134</sup> Szabady 1932: 212–232.

<sup>135</sup> The names of two seventeenth-century abbots are known. One is Paolo Torelli, a secular priest from Dubrovnik, who bore the title in 1625. The other is don Simone Matkovich, who was given the title of this position in 1631. (Molnár 2004: 53–55). Torelli was the nephew of Bonifacije Drakolica, a former papal visitor to southern Hungary, so it is likely he was chosen for missionary work in southern Hungary because of his uncle. (For more about Drakolica and his work, see: Tóth István 1997: 447–472; Molnár 2002: 125–136).

<sup>136</sup> Tóth I. Gy. 2002: 131–133.

<sup>137</sup> Molnár 2004: 52.

<sup>138</sup> Sörös 1912; Sekulić 1978: 11–34; Hervay 2001: 461–547.

<sup>139</sup> DL 17465

<sup>140</sup> Theiner 1860: 496; Lukesics 1902: 291; Pfeiffer 2019: 173.

<sup>141</sup> C. Tóth 2019: 35–36.

<sup>142</sup> Molnár 2022: 64.

Bálint Lépes, Naprágyi's successor as head of the archdiocese, however, was not particularly concerned with spiritual life in Bačka. At the 1622 Diet held in Sopron, Carlo Carafa, a Viennese nuncio under the authority of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (or Propaganda Fide),<sup>143</sup> examined the activities of the priests in Bačka. Of all of the archbishops, Lépes seemed the most unprepared to answer the questions posed to him.<sup>144</sup> It was evident in a letter Archbishop Telegdy sent from Nyitra to the Szeged monastery on August 5, 1626, that the archbishop had been counting on the Szeged Franciscans' missionary work. In this letter, he informed the abbot that they had been selected to undertake missionary work in Ottoman territory, and that they were to obey only him.<sup>145</sup>

Telegdy wanted the pope to grant permission to deploy priests with at least twelve years of pastoral experience in the former lands of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa and the Diocese of Nyitra.<sup>146</sup> Since the archdiocese had been vacant for two years, György Lippay, the archbishop of Esztergom, named Đuro Vaić, a Franciscan from Olovo, as head of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa.<sup>147</sup> Archbishop Szelepcsényi also appointed Petar Guganović, a Bosnian Franciscan, as the head of the Diocese of Kalocsa, but Guganović became an abbot on the coast in 1666, and so the new archbishop Petretić had to find a new vicar. He was assisted in this by Petar Nikolić, a Slavonian Franciscan, and Marijan Matković, the vicar of Srem. They wrote to the priest in Bač and the abbot of the Olovo monastery, who looked after the priests in Bačka, to choose a new vicar for the Archdiocese of Kalocsa.<sup>148</sup> This probably never happened because Petretić died on October 12, 1662.<sup>149</sup>

It should also be mentioned that the high clergy in the Kingdom of Hungary knew very little of the geography of the former archbishop's estates. We had the chance to take note of this in the records of the archbishops' visitations during the seventeenth century. Witnesses provided very general information. For example, Mátyás Tarnóczy stated that Kalocsa was most likely located on the other side of Buda in a plain rather than up in the

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<sup>143</sup> Pope Gregory XV founded the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) on January 6, 1622. The purpose of this institution was to spread the Catholic faith and conduct Catholic missions outside of Europe and on the old continent in the spirit of the canon law and the provisions of the Council of Trent (For more about Propaganda Fide, see: Tóth István 2000: 19–68; Molnár 2002: 199–216; Metzler 1971: 79–111) The Congregation was, of course, interested in the Hungarian lands occupied by the Ottomans.

<sup>144</sup> In 1622, the papal legate in Vienna asked the Hungarian prelates to provide reports on the current situation for Catholics throughout the fractured Hungarian region, and to submit them to the Diet of Sopron in the summer of 1622. (Molnár 2004: 12–14) Carafa was not satisfied with the report and asked for more detailed information, along with some other items, from the current archbishop of Kalocsa, Bálint Lépes. Lépes complained that he knew almost nothing about the state of the Catholics in his diocese because the priests he had sent preached in dangerous areas and had been repeatedly beaten by Ottoman officials or even killed. (*Idem*). The Vatican understood that the Hungarian prelates would not be able to return to the seats of their dioceses, and it would therefore be impossible to organize more missions. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Congregation decided to continue its work through missions carried out by Franciscan friars and priests from Dubrovnik and Bosnia. (*Idem* 75; Pfeiffer 2019: 446)

<sup>145</sup> Katona 2003: 494–495.

<sup>146</sup> Molnár 2004: 75.

<sup>147</sup> Molnár 2004: 75, Katona 2003: 87.

<sup>148</sup> Molnár 2004: 75–76.

<sup>149</sup> Kolarić 1995: 339.

hills (“...*ultra Budam, puto esse in campis, non autem in montibus*”)<sup>150</sup> It is no wonder that György Széchényi did not know which former county his seat was located in. In 1649, as bishop of Pecs, he claimed before the papal nuncio in Vienna in 1649, and then again in 1685 as the archbishop of Esztergom, that the town of Kalocsa was located in the county of Bačka rather than the county of Fejér.<sup>151</sup> The biggest error, however, came from two witnesses named István Dolny and György Náray, who believed the other capital of the archdiocese was in Transylvania.<sup>152</sup>

It is clear from these sources and literature that proceedings carried out at the archdiocese are important sources, but the information available in them is rather modest. Emphasis was placed on describing the situation in Kalocsa, the primary seat of the archbishopric. Due to specific circumstances in the Ottoman-controlled territory, these reports were rather routine and contained general information, which is why the visitation records are more informative than other sources from the former Kalocsa diocese and the Bačka churches. These records included letters from missionaries, visitations by bishops and missionaries, etc. Despite the shortcomings of these types of reports (superficial information about secular and Church leaders in the Kingdom of Hungary, connections between the archbishops of Kalocsa and the occupied diocese, income and taxes from the former seat of the archdiocese, what happened to buildings and institutions in the archdiocese, the number of clergy, new appointments of the office of archbishop), these sources nevertheless yield valuable information for scholars studying the history of the archdiocese and the history of the Ottoman administration in seventeenth century Hungary.

The archbishops of Kalocsa knew very little about the religious circumstances in their former archdiocese. So, for example, at the time of the installment of Archbishop György Széchényi, it was claimed that he was the best candidate for this position because he was the bishop of Győr, which neighbored Kalocsa.<sup>153</sup> Széchényi headed the Archdiocese of Kalocsa for eighteen years, of which seven were spent as the confirmed bishop from Rome. Thus it is rather odd that in 1685 he was so uninformed about his own diocese and that he thought Kalocsa was located in the county of Bačka, and that all he knew about the clergy and the religious circumstances was that a few monks and Jesuits were looking after the faithful. As for his work as the leader of his flock, he said nothing.<sup>154</sup>

## 5. Final considerations

Finally, I would like to draw a conclusion about the Kalocsa archbishop, the Kaločko-Bač Archbishopric, the general religious circumstances, and taxation during the second half of the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century. First, in the seventeenth century, it was quite “Balkan,” in the sense that it was located below the Kalocsa-Szeged line, the former Hungarian settlements had disappeared during the period between the Fifteen Year War

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<sup>150</sup> Molnár 2001: 154.

<sup>151</sup> Tóth 2014: 46–47. However, Kalocsa was part of the county of Pest in the eighteenth century.

<sup>152</sup> Molnár 2001: 154.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibidem* 76.

<sup>154</sup> Id. 2001: 154–157.

(1591–1606) and the Great Turkish War (1683–1699), so the settlements were predominantly South Slavic (Serbs, Bunjevci, and Šokci). In historical Church sources, these lands were considered “Balkan territory,” in which the institutions of the Catholic Church did not function well at all. Furthermore, the majority of Catholics were South Slavic Catholics who moved into this region during this period. Between 1630 and 1670, they increased from 4,000 to 13,000. It had not been previously known that the archbishops had vicars in these areas controlled by the Ottomans. These vicars were Franciscans and Jesuits, whom we mostly know about from Vatican sources. Taxation in Bačka on behalf of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa began in the early seventeenth century, and by the end of Ottoman rule in Hungary, it had become quite lucrative. At the same time, this was a sign that the Hungarian authorities (religious and secular) had never reconciled themselves to the loss of the central lands in the former Kingdom of Hungary, and that they had persisted in trying to implement taxation of the settlements under Ottoman control, regardless of the ethnic or religious makeup of the population. We have also seen that Orthodox Serbian settlements paid duties to the archbishops of Kalocsa in northern and central Bačka.

Translated by *Elizabeth Salmore*

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**АТИЛА ПФАЈФЕР**  
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**ИЗМЕЂУ БАЛКАНА И УГАРСКЕ – БАЧ КАО ДРУГИ ЦЕНТАР  
КАЛОЧКО-БАЧКЕ НАДБИСКУПИЈЕ ПОД ОСМАНСКОМ ВЛАШЋУ  
У 16–17. ВЕКУ**

**Резиме**

У овом раду желели смо са утврдимо какав је био положај католика у османској Угарској, односно приступ калочких надбискупа према својој некадашњој надбискупској дијецези. У нашем фокусу биле су територије око града Бача и јужне Бачке. Новија истраживања показала су да су османске власти биле много толерантније према католицима на овим територијама у случају верских прописа, него што се то раније мислило. Да би одржали локално становништво дозволиле су, временом, црквено звоњење, па и градњу нових цркава. С друге стране, мађарски краљеви и врховни свештеници полагали право на изгубљене територије, које су сматране за саставни део круне Светог Стефана, те су зато и именовани бискупи и надбискупи, иако нису имали своје центре на османским територијама. Ову претензију су прихватиле и папе, мада је често долазило до неспоразума између мађарских краљева и папе у вези постављања врховних поглавара угарске цркве. Однос католичке цркве из Краљевске Угарске према окупираним територијама такође је био различит. То смо тумачили и интересовањем врховних пастира само за опорезивањем бивших поседа. Могли бисмо рећи да су доста дуго и католичке институције биле у опасности, првенствено због експанзије реформације у 16. веку (не може се закључити да су Османлије користиле протестанте против католика јер тамо где су католици представљали већину становника и власти су најчешће биле на њиховој страни). Исто тако можемо рећи да је католичка црква из Краљевске Угарске била заинтересована у одређеној мери за католичке вернике у османској Угарској, али да ће право интересовање показати католички мисионари, који ће бити послати од стране Рима, односно босански фрањевци на територијама некадашње Јужне Угарске.

**Кључне речи:** Бач, бачка тврђава, Калочко-бачка надбискупија, калочки надбискупи, Османско царство, хришћанство у османској Бачкој, католичко опорезивање у османској Бачкој.