

The Habsburg succession, the Holy See and Hungary in the 1610s



University of Graz, May 2015

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1. The key figure: Péter Pázmány (1570-1637), Jesuith, Archbishop of Esztergom (1616-1637), founder of the first Hungarian university, professor of the Graz university
2. The ,story' will be analysed out of the point of view of his carrier
3. Meanwhile we can be familiarized with the his life and works; with the peculiar features of Catholic confessionalisation in Hungary; with the European ,Macropolitik' in the mid of 1610s; and with the theory of ,Micropolitik' and its special adaptation in the Imperial and Papal Courts. I.e. a micropolitical clientele-building and its macropolitical aims and consequences
4. The source-basis: ASV Fondo Borghese; ARSI, Fondo Austria; HHStA Handschriftensammlung (reports of Lodovico Ridolfi imperial agent in Rome); Korrespondenz of Kardinalprotektor Franz von Dietrichstein (reports of his Roman agent, Jacomo Olivieri)

Life and works of Péter Pázmány



- ✧ Jesuit from 1597, professor of Phil. in Graz until 1601, missionary in Upper-Hungary, 1603–1607 professor of Theology in Graz
- ✧ From 1607 confessor of Cardinal Ferenc Forgách, archbishop of Esztergom († 1615), in 1608 legate of the Jesuit Order in the Hungarian Diet
- ✧ Established a reputation through his statements to the Diet, his efforts to convert notable Hungarian families to Catholicism, his sermons and Hungarian writings (*Reply* 1603, *Ten certitudes*, 1605, *Five beautiful letters*, 1609, and his main work: *A Guide to Divine Truth*, 1613)

The beginnings of Tridentine Catholicism in Hungary

- ❧ Only sporadic initiatives in the second half of 16th century
- ❧ Religious war (,Bocskai-war') 1604–1606, total victory of Protestants
- ❧ Peace of Vienna (1606), Diet 1608: ,freedom of religion' (= the right *to influence* a person's choice of confession was placed in the hands of the feudal estates)
- ❧ Anti-catholical laws

Power balance between Protestantism and Catholicism

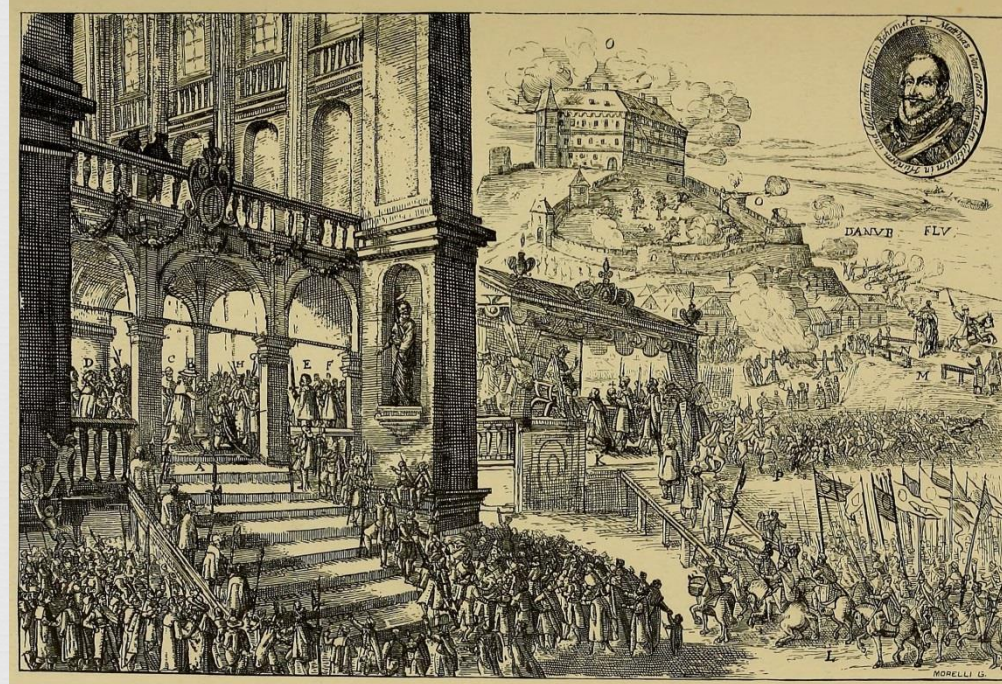
- ❧ Catholic change of strategy: building from the bottom up (provincial synod in Tyrnau, 1611)
- ❧ The intervenue of the Holy See: excommunication of Matthias referred to the bull *In Coena Domini* (*fautor haereticorum*): Several anti-catholical laws of 1608 will not be executed
- ❧ Power balance: Catholicism not strong enough to make a 'Counterreformation' with the State „from above”; Protestantism despite the total victory is not able to enforce the catholic King (and State) to execute the anti-catholical laws and eliminate the catholic hierarchy. The catholic episcopate remains one of the state building factors (in consequence of the special Hungarian royal patronage and supremacy)

The political and constitutional structure in the 1610s

- ❧ From 1608 no absolutism, but a well regulated „feudal dualism”: the Hungarian King is forced to share power with the feudal estates
- ❧ The estates consist of 2 components: *Status Ecclesiasticus* (exclusively Catholic, bishops, abbots, provosts and envoys of chapters), led by the Archbishop of Esztergom, Primate of Hungary; *Status Saecularis* (aristocrats, and envoys of the counties, *i.e.* self-governance unities of the nobility), 90% Protestant, led by the Palatine of Hungary

The political and constitutional structure in the 1610s

- ✧ The main constitutional rights of the estates: 1. new laws on diets; 2. the election and the coronation of the King (the latter one is made simultaneously by the Primate and the Palatine in frame of Catholic ceremony)



Melchior Klesl and his ‚Ausgleichpolitik‘

✧ The main aim of Matthias and his first minister Melchior Klesl (who was exercising power in place of the depressive ruler) to preserve the fragile *status quo* (both in Hungary and in the German and Bohemian lands of the Empire).

✧ This is the famous ‚*Composizione*‘ of Klesl, a determining political principle in Hungary as well



The Habsburg succession in the mid of the 1610s



- ❧ The main challenge of Klesl's Ausgleichpolitik: the succession of Emperor and King Matthias
- ❧ 3 elements: Bohemian, Hungarian and Imperial Crown

The Habsburg succession: Klesl's aims

- ❧ 1. To resolve the problem of the succession of Matthias, and meanwhile preserve the power balance both in the Empire, Bohemia and Hungary
- ❧ 2. To ensure all the 3 crowns to the Habsburgs
- ❧ 3. To guarantee the survival of his personal power, influence
- ❧ Klesl clearly understands, that amid the great confessional tensions even the smallest error could result in a general war...

The Habsburg succession and Hungary

- ❧ In 1608 (Matthias II) and 1625 (Ferdinand III.) the Hungarian Crown is the first in order of succession. It could have been planned before 1618 as well
- ❧ The key figures of the Hungarian royal election: the Palatine and the Primate
- ❧ After the unexpected death of the 55 years old Cardinal Ferenc Forgách (October 1615) a new Archbishop of Esztergom is to be appointed

The planned key figure of Ferdinand's succession in Hungary: Péter Pázmány

- ❧ The most suitable ecclesiastical person as an important guarantee of Ferdinand's succession as King of Hungary (and as a guarantee of continuity of Klesl's policy): Péter Pázmány
- ❧ Pázmány had many positive qualities: his role in the Diets, his religious political views (in 1608 Diet gives a theologian's opinion that concurred with Klesl's interpretation of religious freedom); his ten years of experience at the primate's court, his exceptional capabilities as an orator
- ❧ Pázmány had been personally acquainted ever since his Graz years with Archduke Ferdinand

Pázmány as Archbishop: Klesl's client

- ❧ Severe problems in the Jesuith Order: since 1614 Pázmány is about to leave the Society; his superiors want him take away from Hungary (to Olmütz)
- ❧ After Cardinal Forgách's death Pázmány remains without patron
- ❧ Klesl's goals with his new client: to ensure Ferdinand's Hungarian crown, but in a suitable time for himself; in this way to guarantee the survival of his personal power, influence (not only in Hungarian affairs)

Rom and the Habsburg succession

- ❧ Habsburg succession is the main priority of papal foreign policy in the mid 1610s
- ❧ Until 1617 the Papacy took *every opportunity* to motivate Klesl to resolve the problem of the succession
- ❧ The issue of Habsburg succession had been long at the focus of Habsburg–papal negotiations (imperial envoys in Rome, apostolic nuncios in Prague); meanwhile the Papacy shows special interests to the Hungarian affairs as well

Pope Paul V and Pázmány

- ✧ Pázmány's papal audience on 5 January 1615
(He urges the Holy See to give special attention to the Habsburg succession)
- ✧ Pázmány enjoys full personal confidence of the Pope (secondary clientele): a person the Holy See could trust to accomplish the succession in Hungary, *whether through his influence on Klesl or directly as Primate of Hungary*



Pope Paul V and Pázmány

- ❧ In November 1615 nuncio Placido de Mara proposes Pázmány's appointment in Prague
- ❧ In spring and autumn Pázmány 1616 receives all dispensations (claimed by the Habsburg diplomacy in Rome) to be Archbishop (despite of the canonical impediments and the protests of his Jesuith superiors)
- ❧ In summer and September 1616 Rome urges his rapid appointment as Archbishop, and in November and December gives the confirmation rapidly. (Klesl on 12 March 1617 consecrates Pázmány in the Prague Cathedral)

Pázmány and Ferdinand, Archduke of Graz

- ❧ Natural clientele to the dynasty (subject loyalty)
- ❧ Some personal relation (6-7 years spent in the Graz Jesuith College)
- ❧ As archbishop organizes successfully Ferdinand's election to the King of Hungary on 18 May 1618 against the will of his main patron, Klesl, but without breaking with him
- ❧ The fall of Klesl does not undermine Pázmány's influence at the Viennese court. The Primate will be the most important representative of Ferdinand's power system in Hungary



Thesis

❧ Péter Pázmány, the former Graz Jesuith, was not only a decisive actor in the consolidation of the Habsburg dynasty in Hungary, which would last for centuries; but his own appointment was linked with this goal on the eve of the Thrity Years' War too. Specifically his appointment was a solution to the issue of Habsburg succession, which led to an exeptional interdependence of Habsburg and Papal policy. The deficiencies in the solution of succession (but not in Hungary!) resulted in the outbreak of the last major religious war in Europe



Some final remarks

- ❧ Ferdinand II benefited the most from Pázmány's appointment as Archbishop. But owing to his close relationship with the Society of Jesus and the opposition of the Jesuits to his promotion, the Graz Archduke would never have risen Pázmány to Archbishop
- ❧ The idea of his appointment was primarily Klesl's (main political opponent's of Ferdinand), secondly the Pope's idea, motivated by their belief in Pázmány's unconditional loyalty.
- ❧ The calculation of Paul V was realised: Pázmány not only resolved the issue of Habsburg succession in Hungary in line with the expectations of the Curia, he also scored an unmatched success in the religious field. Only few of Klesl's (the main actor's) expectations were fulfilled...

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