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HUNGARY
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

HENRY MARCZALI

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON THE EARLIER HISTORY
OF HUNGARY

BY

HAROLD W. V. TEMPERLEY M.A.

FELLOW OF PETERHOUSE, CAMBRIDGE

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PREFACE.

I N 1878 the Hungarian Academy of Science invited me to write a History of Hungary in the time of Joseph II and Leopold II (1780–92).

I went to work with the purpose of not being content with superficial motives and results, but of getting to the bottom of the problems. The greatest problem, the adaptation of Western civilization to Hungary, in such a way as not to jeopardise the originality and independence of our nation, interested me most. I sought the solution of this problem—which dominates the epoch I desired to study—not in previously accepted conclusions, but in indubitable historic facts. In a word, my ambition was to write a genetic history, though at that time this term was as yet unknown to me.

A knowledge of the country and of its inner forces, of its economic, intellectual and moral qualities, was of more importance to me than the struggle of political parties. Therefore, before writing the history of the reign of the Emperor Joseph II, I wrote a volume on the state of Hungary at the time of his accession.

The principal aim was to exhibit a clear view of the home administration and of all the conditions of life connected with it. The Archives of the Royal Chancellery, which contain the

documents of this period, to the number of 8000—17,000 a year, were my principal sources. Then came the investigation of the more important facts in the Archives of the Royal Council and of the Treasury. To obtain further material, I also studied the Archives of the Archbishops, of several counties, and of the most prominent families of Hungarian magnates. For intellectual developments, the library and the large collection of manuscripts in the National Museum and in the Academy of Science at Budapest were my chief sources. State documents and folklore were of equal value for me.

I had no conscious bias at all, and no design except the furtherance of truth. If my book is patriotic, it is so because I think that what my country most needs is that the truth should be told to her.

If I worked hard, my best reward is the decision of the Cambridge University Press to publish my book in English.

The first Hungarian edition of this volume appeared in 1882, and was succeeded after some weeks by a second. For the present English edition I have not only revised the text, but I have also utilised the results of my recent studies in bringing it up to date.

For the translation I am much obliged to my colleague and friend, Dr Arthur B. Yolland, Extraordinary Professor in the University of Budapest.

The Essay of Mr H. W. V. Temperley on earlier Hungarian History will make it possible for the English reader to plunge at once *in medias res*.

HENRY MARCZALI.

BUDAPEST.

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I. LIST OF THE KINGS OF HUNGARY.

- I. *House of Árpád.*
 Prince Árpád, about 900.
 „ Géza, 972-997.
 „ Stephen (Vajk), 997-1000,
 then afterwards
 King Stephen (Saint), 1000-38.
 „ Peter, 1038-41.
 „ Sámuel Aba, 1041-44.
 „ Peter (re-established), 1044-46.
 Andreas I, 1046-60.
 Béla I, 1060-63.
 Salomon, 1063-74.
 Géza I, 1074-77.
 Ladislas I (Saint), 1077-95.
 Koloman, the Scholar, 1095-1116.
 Stephen II, 1116-31.
 Béla II, the Blind, 1131-41.
 Géza II, 1141-62.
 Ladislas II, 1162.
 Stephen III, 1162-72.
 Stephen IV (Anti-King), 1163.
 Béla III, 1172-96.
 Emeric, 1196-1204.
 Ladislas III, 1204-5.
 Andreas II, 1205-35.
 Béla IV, 1235-70.
 Stephen V, 1270-72.
 Ladislas IV (Kún), 1272-90.
 Andreas III, 1290-1301.
- II. *Kings of different Houses.*
 Charles Robert of Anjou, 1301-1342¹.
 Anti-Kings². Wenceslas of Bohemia,
 1301-4; Otto of Bavaria, 1305-8.
 Louis I the Great, 1342-82.
 [After 1370 also King of Poland.]
- Mary, 1382-85.
 Charles I of Anjou, 1385-86.
 Mary and her husband Sigismund
 of Luxemburg, 1387-95.
 Sigismund (alone), 1395-1437.
 [From 1410 also Emperor.]
 Albert (Habsburg), 1438-39.
 [Also Emperor as Albert II.]
 Wladislav I Jagello, 1440-44.
 [Also King of Poland.]
 Ladislas V, Habsburg, 1445-57.
 (John Hunyadi, Regent, 1446-53.)
 Matthias I Hunyadi (Corvinus), 1458-
 90.
 [After 1469 also King of Bohemia.]
 Wladislav II Jagello, 1490-1516.
 [Also King of Bohemia.]
 Louis II, 1516-26.
 [Also King of Bohemia.]
- III. *House of Habsburg.*
 Ferdinand I³, 1527-64.
 [Emperor from 1556.]
 (Anti-King John Zapolya, 1526-40.)
 Maximilian I, 1564-76.
 [As Emperor Maximilian II.]
 Rudolph, 1576-1608.
 [As Emperor Rudolph II.]
 Matthias II, 1608-19.
 Ferdinand II, 1619-37.
 Ferdinand III⁴, 1637-57.
 Leopold I, 1657-1705.
 Joseph I, 1705-11.
 Charles III, 1711-40.
 [As Emperor Charles VI.]
 Maria Teresa, 1740-80.
 Joseph II, 1780-90.

¹ Stephen V's great grandson in the female line.

² Both descending in the female line from Béla.

³ Wladislav II's son-in-law. N.B. Ferdinand and all the subsequent rulers of Hungary were also Kings of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperors except, of course, Maria Teresa, who could not succeed to the last dignity.

⁴ His son Ferdinand IV was crowned King of Hungary, but died (1654) before his formal accession.

II. LIST OF PRINCES OF TRANSYLVANIA.

- 1526-40. [John I Zapolya, also claimant to Hungarian Crown.]
 1540-71. John II Sigismund Zapolya.
 1571-75. Stephen I Báthory [after 1575 King of Poland.]
 1576-81. Christopher Báthory, regent.
 1581-1600. Sigismund II Báthory.
 1600-4. Emperor Rudolph II.
 1604-6. Stephen II Bocskay.
 1607. Sigismund III Rákóczi.
 1608-13. Gabriel Báthory.
 1613-29. Gabriel Bethlen (Bethlen Gabor).
 1630-48. George I Rákóczi.
 1648-60. George II Rákóczi.
 [Claimants, Francis Redei, Achatius Barcsai, 1658-61.]
 1661-63. John Kemeny.
 1663-90. Michael I Apafi.
 1690-91. Michael II Apafi, d. 1702.
 1691. Emperor Leopold I, recognised by the Estates of Transylvania, 1694.
 [Claimant, Francis II Rákóczi, 1703-11.]
 1764. Transylvania becomes a Grand-Duchy.

EXPLANATION OF THE MAP (1).

LIST OF THE COUNTIES IN HUNGARY

- Cis-Danubian District.*
- | | |
|------------|--|
| Bács. | Szabolcs. |
| Pest. | Bihar. |
| Nógrád. | Békés. |
| Zólyom. | Csongrád. |
| Hont. | Csanád. |
| Esztergom. | Arad. |
| Bars. | Krassó. |
| Nyitra. | Temes. |
| Pozsony. | Torontál. |
| Trencsén. | } The BANAT (outside Hun- garian administration till 1780, v. p. 318). |
| Turócz. | |
| Árva. | PARTIUM (PARTES REGNI HUN- GARIAE ADNEXAE), i.e. Cis- Tiszan Counties attached to Transylvania, v. pp. 332 note and 350. |
| Liptó. | |
- Trans-Danubian District.*
- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Moson. | Zaránd. |
| Sopron. | Kraszna. |
| Győr. | Közép-Szolnok. |
| Komárom. | Kövár vidéke. |
| Fejér. | <i>District of the Drave</i> (SLAVONIA- TÓTORSZÁG annexed to Hun- gary, 1750–51). |
| Veszprém. | Szerém. |
| Vas. | Verőcze. |
| Zala. | Posega. |
| Somogy. | |
| Tolna. | CROATIA (HORVÁTORSZÁG). |
| Baranya. | |
- Cis-Tiszan District.*
- | | |
|---|---|
| Szepes (Zips district, part of which was recovered by Hungary from Poland, 1772). | Körös. |
| Gömör. | Varasd. |
| Heves. | Zágráb. |
| Borsod. | |
| Torna. | PRIVILEGED DISTRICTS. |
| Abauj. | Jaszság (Íazygia). |
| Sáros. | Kis-Kunság (Little Cumania, v. pp. 104, 197). |
| Zemplén. | Nagy-Kunság (Great Cumania, v. pp. 104, 197). |
| Ung. | Hajdu-városok ("Hajdu" towns, v. pp. 104, 167–70). |
| Bereg. | Tenger-Part (Coast or Littoral, i.e. Fiume, Buccari, etc., annexed to Hungary, 1776, v. pp. 76–80). |
- Trans-Tiszan District.*
- | | |
|------------|--|
| Máramaros. | <i>The Military Frontiers</i> remained outside the jurisdiction of Hungary even after 1780 (v. pp. 318–9). |
| Ugocsa. | |
| Szatmár. | |

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EXPLANATION OF THE MAP (2).

LIST OF COUNTIES AND DISTRICTS IN TRANSYLVANIA (ERDÉLY).

| <i>Hungarian (Magyar) Counties (Megyék).</i> | <i>Szekler Seats or Districts (Székek).</i> |
|--|---|
| Hunyad. | Aranyos. |
| Belső-Szolnok. | Maros. |
| Doboka. | Udvarhely. |
| Kolozs. | Csik. |
| Torda. | Háromszék. |
| Küküllő. | <i>Saxon Seats or Districts (Székek).</i> |
| Alsó-Fehér | Köhalom. |
| Felső-Fehér. | Segesvár. |
| Fogaras vidéke. | Nagy Sink. |
| | Medgyes. |
| | Ujegyház. |
| | Nagy Szeben. |
| | Szerdahely. |
| | Szászszebes. |
| | Szászváros. |
| | Besztercze vidéke. |
| | Brassó vidéke. |

CORRIGENDA.

- Page 14, l. 4 from bottom, *for* George Rákoczy *read* Rákóczi and *for* Tököly *read* Tököli (*ib.* p. 162, l. 3).
 „ 105, last line but 3, *for* Geyza II *read* Géza II.
 „ 105, n. 2, *for* Frising *read* Freising.
 „ 117, n. 1, *for* Orczic *read* Orczi.
 „ 273, l. 5 from bottom, *for* Ladislas IV (1272–92) *read* (1272–90).

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

A GENERATION ago a Regius Professor of History at one of our ancient Universities could allude to the constitution of Hungary, and express regret that he was unable to discover the terms of its coronation-oath. To-day our knowledge is greater and a number of essays, pamphlets, romances or solid works, dealing with various aspects of Hungary, have been presented to English readers. But as yet there has appeared in English no work on Hungarian history—as distinguished from its politics—which bases its conclusions on study of unpublished authorities at first-hand, and which presents the results of original research.

The work of my friend, Professor Marczali of the University of Budapest, needs, therefore, no apology for its publication in English, since it is based on the labour of ten years among the official records at Vienna and Budapest, and in many private archives. Yet something may perhaps be said as to its contents and as to the subjects there treated in a manner which has been recognised as classical by historians of the Continent. The work deals primarily with the history of Hungary under Joseph II—the one Habsburg never crowned King of Hungary, that gifted and hapless ruler, whose wonderful energy and enthusiasm could not save him from becoming one of the most tragic failures of history. His relations with Hungary are at once the key to his whole life and policy. As Professor Marczali writes (p. 101), “The importance of Joseph II in the history of the world consists in the fact that he represented the conception of the unified State, which perceived a disavowal of its own existence in the privileges, restraints and classes of medieval society. As its representative he fought strenuously against the organisation that had previously predominated in his dominions, and sought the overthrow of the older Hungarian

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society as one of the principal objects in his life. His defeat was the greatest misfortune which he experienced, and the fact that his principles were carried out by other men and by other means, renders his failure all the more tragical.”

The point is that Joseph II viewed and treated Hungary—the home of all that was medieval, customary and traditional—according to the hard reason and doctrinaire theories of an eighteenth-century philosophy. Any work, therefore, which seeks to explain the stubborn and successful resistance which Hungary offered to him, must start by presenting a complete picture of Hungary in the eighteenth century and by carefully explaining the historic features of that strange medieval society. It is this portion of the work of Professor Marczali that is here presented to English readers. The peculiar circumstances enable us to behold a portrait of a medieval society, complete and finished in all its outlines, and drawn with a wealth of detail and accuracy of information that can hardly be paralleled elsewhere in Europe.

Even to-day in Hungary there are still many relics of an immemorial past. Traces of the most primitive savagery still abound in the folk-lore, the songs and the customs of the peasants. In the Eastern Carpathians bears, lynxes and wolves are still to be found, buffaloes may be seen in the marshes of Hungary, and in Transylvania men are still living who have seen horses tread out the corn in true Biblical style. Even to-day a hussar stands with drawn sword before the county assembly hall, ready if necessary to resist the King and his soldiers in the true spirit of medieval autonomy. Seventy years ago the peasants were still serfs, the nobles still wore the hussar dress (no uniform but their native costume) and the forms of Parliament were still medieval. Fifty years before that in the reign of Joseph (1780–90) the whole medieval society was, as it were, still crystallised in Hungary, and by a unique stroke of good fortune it was at this moment that bureaucrats set to work to analyse, to criticise, to describe and to report upon it. The result is an enormous mass of material which forms the groundwork of the present book. Instead of having to piece out our knowledge of this country in the Middle Ages from study of

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coins and portraits and inscriptions, from doubtful interpretations of parliamentary statutes or of monastic chronicles, we merely have to look in the pigeon-holes of a bureau. There we find complete tables of statistics of economic growth, memoranda on social and political subjects of all kinds, and the comments of Joseph and his bureaucrats upon every conceivable aspect and phase of the political and social institutions in Hungary. In the nineteenth century we have had ethnological and statistical surveys of many tribes in primitive conditions, and the resultant gain to anthropology has been enormous. A similar process applied to Hungary in the eighteenth century can hardly fail to be of great advantage to the fuller understanding of medieval conditions, even if Joseph's investigators had not always the patience or the accuracy of the compilers of an Indian Census Report. The picture of the medieval and the primitive system of economics, of the county assembly and its primitive autonomy, as drawn in their concrete reality by eighteenth century officials, is an advantage that it is difficult to overrate.

Professor Marczali's work opens with a sketch of the general conditions of Hungary at the beginning of the eighteenth century which is carried down to the reign of Joseph. Then the various separate forces and elements of society are analysed and fully described, with frequent references to their past history or origin. The whole treatment opens up numerous vistas into the older history of Hungary, and often takes us far back into the middle ages. As with every country of true historic traditions, the earliest origins and the remote past of Hungary's story are inextricably intertwined with her later evolution. Hence I believe that the best introduction to his work will be an attempt to give a broad general survey of some of the more striking facts in Hungarian history, hardly known to English readers and too little appreciated by English scholars, and to insist upon those aspects which are subsequently treated in the text.

The influence of physical conditions and of geography on historical and racial development cannot be more strikingly

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exhibited in any country than in Hungary. Few races have indeed more individuality than the Magyar, yet none have been more profoundly affected by natural environment¹. The map of Hungary shows an irregular square bounded by the Save and the Danube on the south, and by the gigantic and continuous wall of the Carpathians on east and north. The mountains contained within its borders comprise three large groups forming natural fortresses, which, in each case, secure the inhabitants against invasion. The smallest of these lies in the extreme south where the inland spurs of the Dalmatian Alps wall off Croatia from Hungary proper. The next in extent lies in the Tatra district of the north, where the high peaks of the Western Carpathians form a refuge and a barrier, behind which the Slovaks entrenched themselves. Thirdly, the Eastern Carpathians form a compact mass separating Transylvania sharply from the wide plains of the centre, and giving to it a character and population wholly different from the other parts of Hungary. For the rest the western part of Hungary is broken by hills, but fully one half of Hungary—the central part of the whole land—is flat, fertile, and well watered. Here are the characteristic Hungarian Lowlands (or Alföld), the little Alföld lying between Pozsony (Pressburg) and Budapest, the great Alföld comprising the vales of the Danube and the Tisza (Theiss), and the great watershed between them. The character of these great plains is singular, the eye beholds an endless flat, now covered by reeds and marshes, at times completely inundated with water, or now stretching away—bare and sandy—to a seemingly infinite distance. Nothing more monotonous or dismal can be conceived, though—as in the fens of England—there is a certain grandeur in its melancholy and a certain majesty in the endless

¹ Hungary still encloses within its borders the most extraordinary diversity of races and languages, and from A.D. 300—900 fragments of almost every people in Europe found refuge there. Since the ninth century the following have been the chief groups: first and foremost the Magyars and their kinsmen in Transylvania the Szeklers; then a number of different Slavonic races, the Slovaks, Rascians and Serbs, and the Croats; then the Roumans or Wallachs, who claim to be descended from Trajan's soldiers, but whom other authorities declare to have migrated into Transylvania in the thirteenth century from the Balkans; and last of all the Germans—divided into the Saxons who inhabit the towns of the North-West and Transylvania, and the Swabians of the South.

sweep of its horizon. To the historian as well as to the artist this part of the country is of the greatest interest and importance. Such a land invited invasion, for its fertility suggests wealth and its situation weakness; mounted invaders could pour up the valleys of the Danube and the Tisza, and sweep over its wide plains with ease. Like Sparta such a land has no walls, and its strength could only lie in stout hearts and strong hands. On the other hand, in the natural fortresses of the Tatra, of the Eastern Carpathians, and of the Dalmatian Alps, the original inhabitants could resist all invasions with ease. Therefore the race, which dominates the two Alfölds in Hungary, will either be at once overcome or else will become fierce and strong, steeled and disciplined by hard necessity. Such are the probabilities of the natural situation, and the historic evolution has tended to conform to them. The Magyars in the ninth, the Tartars in the thirteenth, and the Turks in the sixteenth centuries, overcame little and great Alföld with ease, but either could not easily conquer or were repelled with great loss from the three natural fortresses¹.

It was traditionally at the end of the ninth century (about 900) that the Magyars, led by Prince Arpád, descended upon Hungary from the north. His host of wild riders swarmed over the fertile plains from Debreczen as far as the Danube. In the Alföld was a great confusion of races, the loam deposited there by the streams of countless previous invasions, but the predominant element was Slav. These races now sank for the most part into the position of serfs, a lot eventually shared by a large number of the poorer and weaker Magyars. In the outlying parts and in the natural fortresses the other races preserved more

¹ The racial origin of the Magyars is an unsolved puzzle to which it would be impossible here to attempt any definite answer. The evidence of biology shows that their physical formations are Asiatic, but have been, to a certain extent, Europeanised, a process which has been carried much further in the case of their political and social systems. The best opinion appears to regard them as a mixed nationality, compounded partly of some race akin to the Turks, and partly of an Ugrian tribe possibly akin to the Finns. The Turkish tribe appears to have conquered the Ugrian, and—as is frequent with conquering races—to have adopted much of the language and customs of the conquered. This explanation disposes of some difficulties, particularly the undoubted fact that Magyars were described by the Greeks as Turks till late in the middle ages. But the whole problem is still in a very unsettled state.

individuality, such as the Croats in the lands near the Dalmatian Alps, the Szeklers and perhaps the Roumans (Wallachs) in Transylvania, and the Slovaks in Slovakia (the Tatra district)¹. In military respects the Magyars proved much the strongest and most effective of the races then in Hungary, and were strong enough to hold both Alfölds in force. It should, however, be realised that the centre of the power and rule of the Magyar was not the great Alföld, now their recognised home. The main seat of the Hungarian princes and kings lay in the western portion of their kingdom, and centred round Buda, Esztergom, and Fehérvár.

The wild Magyar riders were not satisfied with their victories in Hungary, and for half a century longer no part of Germany, or indeed of almost any country, was safe from their incursions. They were to inland states what the Danes were to maritime ones, and the celerity of their movements and the savagery of their raids make the parallel more close. Before the end of the ninth century they beat to pieces an Empire of Moravian Slavs, established beyond the Tatra mountains, and carried their victorious arms far into the heart of Germany. Eventually in 955 they were decisively beaten by Otto I of Germany, truly called the Great, in that victory on the Lechfeld, which is probably as memorable for Europe as the defeat of the Saracens by Leo the Isaurian. For Hungary at any rate, if not for Europe, this battle was a decisive and significant landmark. Henceforward the Magyars gave up wandering beyond their own borders, ceased to have an effective foreign policy, and concentrated every energy on internal organisation and development. In the tenth century Germany was only able to defend herself, though retaliation was to come in a short space. Hungary

¹ In the Danubian flats the Serb populations (though subsequently strengthened by later immigrations) preserved independent characteristics. Other tribes, such as Cumanians and gipsies, did the same thing. The German immigrations into Hungary took place chiefly after the reign of St Stephen (1000–38). Migrations after the fifteenth century are fully described on pp. 204–211 sqq. of the text. Transylvania was eventually occupied by Szeklers (akin to the Magyars) and also by German (Saxon) colonists and by Magyars. The Roumans (Wallachs), as has been said, may have migrated there in the thirteenth century. In any case they became the subjects of the three other nations, Magyars, Szeklers and Saxons (v. *infra*, p. xlviiii, note).

had a breathing-space, and meanwhile the energy and strength of the Magyars were well spent in organising and constructing their own institutions.

With the reign of St Stephen in Hungary (1000–38) we reach an epoch in her history that is from every point of view—both national and international—of unspeakable importance. After their disastrous overthrow at the Lechfeld the Magyars had withdrawn within their borders, and shut themselves off from Western influences, thus abandoning external warfare, and with it one of the best medieval means for obtaining new ideas. King Stephen, who realised their necessity for Hungary, devised another way—that of peace—by which he could introduce them. The influence of the Papacy was international, and it represented the highest traditions of culture in the West, though as a repository of learning and civilization it had a serious rival in the Byzantine Empire and the Greek Church. Stephen decided to make Hungary Christian by means of the Papacy, and by this decision he turned its development and civilization away from the East, freed it from the Oriental influences to which it was naturally prone, and brought it into contact with the new and vigorous West. The change was the more significant because the inhabitants of the Balkans, in so far as they were Christians, were usually Greek and Orthodox. Hence at one stroke the position of Hungary was changed, instead of being the bridge between the East and the West she became the outwork or advanced post of Rome. The surrounding nations of the Orient, and the Slavonic immigrants from them into Hungary, became hostile, and Hungary was drawn into the vortex of Occidental politics. That Stephen really received the famous Holy Crown of Hungary from the Pope is not very likely, but the legend that he did is as significant in its way as the famous “Donation of Constantine.” Like that celebrated fable it embodies a truth, and shows how subsequent ages read back the realities of their own age into the past. The Popes certainly showed special favour to Hungary, bestowed on two of her kings the title of Saint, and gave to all of them a position of independence quite unusual in the Middle Ages, feeling instinctively that Hungary was a proselyte worth having, and a valuable

guardian of the true faith against the hated Eastern rival in the Balkans.

That St Stephen was fully conscious of the advantages of civilization might be deduced from his connection with the Papacy, it is also proved by other actions of his. His energies were all devoted to introducing his subjects to the new civilizing agencies of all kinds, he expressly encouraged foreign (chiefly German) immigrants to settle, and explicitly promised them security and encouragement. A royal edict of his expresses the great advantages that Hungary will derive from foreign manners, customs, and ideas. Indeed, whatever may be said of Hungarians at a subsequent stage, it cannot be contended that they showed any aversion to foreign customs at this age. Slavonic influences played a large part at this early stage in the development of the government of the counties, German influences were important at this time and later both in the government of the towns and in other institutions. Moreover, the Magyar nobles were no exclusive caste, for both at this and at a much later time foreigners—Germans, Slovaks, Croats, Czechs, and Roumans—were freely ennobled and admitted into their ranks. The result was in the highest degree beneficial, the Hungarian nation gained a wholly unexpected strength and wealth of vitality from this absorption of new ideas and elements, and from the composite character of their institutions. That they borrowed feudal notions from the Germans and the system of the counties from the Slavs is no reproach to them, for they certainly improved them in the borrowing, a striking tribute to their singular political ability.

St Stephen appears to have been no less distinguished as an organiser than as a farseeing statesman. At any rate it is in his time that we first see definite traces of these Hungarian institutions, which can alike be so strangely compared, and so strangely contrasted, with our own. At this period the Hungarian King found means of asserting his power, which gave him a strength and authority almost unique in the early Middle Ages, and which is often and rightly held to resemble that of our own Norman kings. In centralising his power the King possessed two very great advantages—one spiritual, the other material. First the

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support of the Church and Papacy was given him with a readiness that was quite unusual and which had important effects. Nor was it only her spiritual thunders that made the Church formidable, the bishops would lend the King the Church *banderia* or feudal levies at need, and money could often be raised from vacant benefices or by loans from the clergy. Hence the King was soon able to consolidate his power and to extend his rule to the foot of the Eastern and Western Carpathians and to the Dalmatian Alps. Transylvania and Croatia were both subjected to the authority of the Hungarian King. Both retained provincial Estates but were governed in each case by a royal official appointed by the King, the Governor of Transylvania being termed the *voivode*, that of Croatia the *Banus* or *Ban*.

One obvious source of the King's power is the fact that the dominant Magyar nobility remained so numerous¹. Gradually there arose a distinction between the great lords or magnates and the lesser ones or gentry, and gradually also a large number of Magyars were degraded to the position of serfs. But none the less the gentry—as opposed to the magnates—were extremely numerous, powerful, and filled with a sense of equality. Their excessive number, and the important part they played in shaping the constitution, are the most singular features of Hungarian political development. They continued to be the dominant class, to which the King could always appeal in his struggle with the magnates. The King also possessed the advantage that the Magyars remained a nation of warriors, and were ever ready at the slightest provocation to rush to arms. Hence the old fyrd or national militia, the *posse comitatus* of each county headed by the *főispán*, in a word the *generalis insurrectio*, remained a living reality. It was not infrequently summoned by the King. The magnates or gentry did not

¹ It appears best to speak of Hungarian nobles and of nobility from the beginning, though the terms involve a measure of anachronism. The Hungarian *nemes* implies tribesman, *serviens*, for which freeman seems the nearest equivalent. The title and distinctions of the nobility do not really appear till the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. With this qualification I believe the description of the Hungarian *nemes* as noble is the most intelligible and convenient term that can be applied to him in English.

for some time begin to surround themselves with feudal levies of their own (*banderia*), and, even when they did, the fyrd was likely to prove the stronger. Of the fyrd the King was the natural leader and recognised chief, and he often used it with effect against the rebellious nobles with their *banderia*, in very much the same way as William Rufus once used the English national fyrd to crush Norman rebel barons (1088). Hence, so long as the fyrd remained in active existence, the King retained his advantage as against rebellious or turbulent nobles.

The administrative organisation of the whole land followed the models pursued in other countries, after the conquering race had thoroughly settled on the soil. The King sought to consolidate his power and to counteract feudalism by turning the chief local representatives into royal officials. The land was divided like England into counties, over each of which the King sought to set a high sheriff (*föispán*) who should be appointed by and solely responsible to the royal power¹. The attempt was not altogether successful, and, just as in England, some sheriffs managed to make their office hereditary. Moreover, the *föispán* who was the chief official in the county, was almost always a local noble. As commander of the county forces, he naturally exercised greater influence than he would have done among races whose instincts were less military. The King's only resource with the *föispán* was to select them from among the gentry rather than from among the magnates. In this way he pleased the gentry and played off their influence against the magnates. The result of all these causes was that, until the thirteenth century, the Hungarian King remained one of the strongest in Europe. This fact appears even more remarkable when we contemplate the great size of his kingdom, and remember that the monarchy remained elective, though confined to the Arpád family. As it was, royal control was so great that—in spite of much local independence in some districts—the rights of private coinage were never exercised by the noble, and those of building private fortresses and of engaging in private war were but seldom

¹ There was a further subdivision of the county into *járs* or hundreds.

claimed. It was the strength of the royal power that prevented disintegration and, during the confusion that came after the twelfth century, the unity that had already been obtained was too strong to be dissolved. None the less, in the thirteenth century a number of causes contributed to break down the power of the King in Hungary as in England. Some of these causes were more or less accidental; for example there was a series of weak kings, of minorities, and of disputed successions, which culminated in military and financial disasters. But there were other and deeper causes of the decline of monarchy, for the intense military spirit, which had once animated everyone in Hungary, had decayed. The fyrd had become antiquated and the King had thus lost his chance of making his most impressive appearance before his people as head of the nation. Henceforward he had to depend on his personal guards (who were limited in number) or upon the *banderia* lent to him by the nobles and the Church. In any case he had not the same power of asserting his authority, while dangerous privileges were constantly being extended to the nobles. The magnates naturally sought to evade his authority, to make offices hereditary, and to establish petty sovereignties; among the local gentry the spirit of liberty—often of turbulence—had always been strong, and, as the central authority weakened and war became more of a specialised trade, they developed both the strength and the theory of independence. This fact is of very great importance, much more so than if the lesser tenants in England had developed the same ideas, for the Hungarian gentry interfered in the national government in addition to controlling local affairs¹. In England the lesser tenants either did not attend the national Parliament at all or merely sent representatives, in Hungary every one of the gentry had a right to attend it in his own person, which many of them actually exercised. Hence the growth of ideas of independence among the Hungarian gentry had direct and immediate effects upon the national assembly.

¹ It is in the thirteenth century that the local autonomy of the counties first becomes apparent. Then the authority of the *főispán*, high sheriff, and the *alispán*, his sheriff—*vice-comes*—or representative, the two nominated officials, begins to be limited by the powers of the county assembly (*congregatio*).

They viewed with indignation the weakness of their kings and their disastrous foreign policy, and determined on their own remedy. In 1222—seven years after *Magna Carta*—the weak, extravagant, and militarily incompetent Andreas II was forced by the combined action of magnates and gentry to subscribe to a document entitled *Bulla Aurea*. This is, just as truly as *Magna Carta*, the first in a long line of statutes and customs which form an unwritten constitution. In the same way it, in a sense, expresses an aristocratic reaction and the *Bulla*, like the *Carta*, is the sign and seal of royal submission. Apart from this the two documents are very different. In theory, at any rate, *Magna Carta* was more for the whole people, but *Bulla Aurea* was a victory for the nobles only, though the latter were so numerous that they might for the moment almost think themselves the nation. *Bulla Aurea* is evidently not a victory for the magnates as against the gentry, in fact the very reverse is true. The gentry saw that it was to their interest that the King should not be too weak, and aimed alike at strengthening his power and their own against the magnates. The King's jurisdiction is admitted to be legal and supreme throughout the counties. Neither entire counties nor dignities of state are in future to be conferred as hereditary estates nor held in perpetuity—an evident blow at the magnates. At the same time the power of the *foispán* in each county was defined and restrained. Hence the county system still remains controlled by the King, though the gentry take care that they shall not have too little power or the magnates too much.

Other provisions aim at interposing the Palatine (the chief official of the realm corresponding roughly to the Norman or Arragonese “justiciar”) as intermediary between the King and the “nation.” Thus all law-suits concerned with the nobles are to be judged by the Palatine without knowledge of the King. Therefore the Palatine is really entrusted with the execution of the law, and here a distinct concession is made to the magnates, for the Palatine was usually a magnate. But the privilege of trial by the Palatine is the first of the great provisions erecting the nobles as a whole (i.e. both magnates and gentry) into a privileged class. A second of these provisions—also expressed

in *Bulla Aurea*—is that of immunity from extraordinary taxation, no noble or ecclesiastic is to be taxed. These and all other privileges are guarded by the famous article which contains the *jus resistendi*¹. In case of the King or his successors acting contrary to the provisions of the *Bulla*, bishops or nobles have each the right of resisting and opposing him by arms *sine nota alicujus infidelitatis*. It is characteristic of the military character of the gentry as a class that they close a compact otherwise remarkable for legality and tranquillity, by extorting an admission from the King that armed rebellion is, under certain circumstances, lawful.

The situation thus outlined in *Bulla Aurea* leads at once to the typical medieval system of restraint upon the King by an Assembly of Estates, to that system of government by contract between King and people (usually embodied in an assembly) which has become the root of every modern constitution through the agency of Locke. It is singular that Hungary and England are the only countries whose institutions still bear upon them the proof that Locke's theory was essentially a medieval idea. In Hungary the contract was enforced in a very definite form by the *jus resistendi*. A similar provision to it exists indeed in *Magna Carta*, but its operation was only temporary; in Hungary it was a permanent principle of public law and was a recognised basis of the constitution until its repeal in 1687¹. A breach of contract by the King was immediately followed by armed rebellion and, since the nobles attended Parliament on horseback and in armour, they could proceed to execute their threats of resistance directly they uttered them.

The relations of the King with the nobles find their best expression in the period when Hungary was ruled by the foreign Angevin kings (1308–85). Charles Robert (1308–42), the first of the line, had French ideas of dealing with rebellious barons and was arbitrary enough, but under his son Louis the Great (1342–82) a complete harmony was established between King and nobles. The splendours of his reign are surpassed in Hungarian history only by those of Corvinus, and we see in him the best type of

¹ The *jus resistendi* also existed in Arragon—and Professor Marczali has traced its adoption in Hungary to imitation of that country, but the point has been disputed.

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medieval monarch, who knew how to take the lead, and yet could work in thorough harmony with the system of government by Estates. The Palatine or premier stood at the head of the King's Council (*consilium regis*) and exercised great powers both as commander-in-chief and civil administrator, resembling the Anglo-Norman justiciar in power, and the Arragonese *justiza*, as being the intermediary between King and "nation." Both he and other ministers were admittedly responsible to the Parliament or National Assembly of Estates. Already in 1290 and 1298 it had been agreed that the King should be always accompanied by ministers, and that his Acts should be invalid without their counter-signature, and even before this in 1231 the Palatine was a responsible official. Thus we get even in the thirteenth century in Hungary a very fair realisation of the principle of ministerial responsibility, which was carried much further by Louis the Great.

It is characteristic of the constitution of this country, so abounding in contrasts, enshrining so much that is old with so much that is new, that while the principle of ministerial responsibility was more highly developed than in any medieval constitution, the system of government by Estates was the least advanced. Even under Louis the Great it was most imperfectly developed. Originally the National Assembly under Arpád had merely been the whole people in arms, the wild riders gathered on the *puszta* or prairie, whom Arpád harangued before leading into battle. Leaving the uncertainties of the early period we find definite evidence of the existence of the National Assembly under St Stephen in 1001. It bears a character very similar to that described above, for in theory at any rate every free man—that is every noble—could attend. In literal fact the Rákos—the plain near Pest where this Assembly met—was often covered with thousands of wild horsemen, who came mounted and armed to take part in the deliberations of the National Assembly. The special peculiarity of this Assembly was that it was not split into two or three Chambers, as in the case of other medieval legislatures. The magnates and the prelates and the numerous gentry all appeared in person and voted together and by heads not by orders. Hence the magnates,