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Szombathely katonai helyőrsége és katonai kultúrája
a dualizmus idején (1867–1914)

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THE RESEARCH TOPIC AND ITS AIMS, MAIN QUESTIONS

The research with social history approach is still rare in Hungarian military history. This is particularly true for the peacetime years: we know little about the relationship between the armed forces and the Hungarian society, and almost nothing about the effects of military service on the civil society.

The aim of the present dissertation is to examine the relationship between Hungarian civil society and the Imperial and Royal Army in the period of Dualism, following the example of Szombathely, a significant Hungarian town. The dissertation is concerned mainly with the officer corps, the urban bourgeoisie and the middle class, so it does not cover the common soldiers and lower social classes.

There are several advantages to study this topic locally. On the one hand, we can point out how political events related to the Imperial and Royal Army appeared, how the institution of the Common Army was thought of, and what issues dominated the question of the armed forces locally. On the other hand, it may draw attention to a hitherto less studied duality: while the Common Army with supranational ideology undoubtedly remained a foreign institution within the Hungarian Nation-State, and the lack of a national army was a constant source of political conflicts, a large part of the society came into contact in everyday life with this army, mainly through Hungarian and even locally recruited house regiments (especially after the introduction of the territorial system in 1882). That is why the relationship between the regiments and their stations could say much more about the relationship between the Imperial and Royal Army and Hungarian society, than just the major political events.

In the dissertation we seek answers to the following main questions. What role did the regiments play in the social life of the town? To what extent could they become an integral part of it? How did the station affect on composition of the officer corps? Where were the boundaries of this relationship? What effect (if any) had the ideological opposition on this relationship and what conflicts did it contain? How did the two sides cope with this ideological difference at all? Did the major political events related to the Common Army have impact on local relations, and if so, in what way? What is the difference between the attitude of the local society towards the Common Army as an imperial institution and its house regiments? In other words, how did the local society think about its house regiments, and the regiments about their recruiting area and station? What were the social advantages and
disadvantages of a military garrison, and how the local society thought about the military in terms of representation, urban development or culture?

With these questions we also want to put the problem in a broader context. One of the fundamental phenomena of the development of European societies in the 19th century was the militarism, which appeared every European society in some form and extent. However, this problem has not been researched in the Hungarian historiography, and in general, there are serious shortcomings in the study of the army’s effects, and the military service on civil society. That’s why, just to raise the issue without trying to draw far-reaching conclusions, we will try to capture some aspects of the social militarisazion’s appearance in Hungary. We do this primarily through the term of military culture.

**METHODS, STRUCTURE AND SOURCES**

Answering the raised problems and questions requires the examination of different scales and, accordingly, the use of different methods, which also determines the structure of the dissertation. The dissertation basically moves between three levels: imperial, national and local. It consists of six main parts. In the first two parts we outline the general frameworks: in what socio-political and institutional environment came into contact each other the Imperial and Royal Army regiments and the society of Szombathely. In the first part, we present the military system of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, focusing on points relevant to our topic. We discuss separately the major changes that defined the relationship between armies and societies in the 19th century Europe (especially in terms of universal conscription and nation-building), and how these changes appeared in the army of the multi-ethnic Habsburg Monarchy, and what place did this army occupy within the emerging Hungarian nation-state. In the second part of the dissertation, we deal with the development of Szombathely in the age of the Dualism, its place in the Hungarian urban network and the main social characteristics of its society, above all the bourgeoisie and the middle class.

Following the general frameworks, we get on the main topic of the dissertation: the relationship between Szombathely and its military garrison, and the problem of military culture. In the third part, we seek the answer how the political events related to the Imperial and Royal Army appeared in local politics and publicity, and how the institution of the Common Army was thought of locally.
We deal with the relationship between Szombathely and its military garrison in the fourth and fifth part. However, it was necessary to draw an internal border. The permanent military garrison in Szombathely was established in 1889, before that (except for a short period) only temporary and small troops were stationed in the town. In the fourth part we review this two decades following the Austro-Hungarian compromise. During this period, the town’s relation to the military can be approached primarily from the point of view of urban policy. The most important issues were the military quartering, policing and the establishing the permanent garrison, i.e. military barracks.

In the fifth part, we turn to the detailed analysis of the relationship between the permanent garrison and Szombathely. First, we examine the sociological characteristics of the officers of the two house regiments, the 11th Hussar Regiment and the 83rd Infantry Regiment: their origin, social composition and marriage habits. With the help of this, we try to capture the impact of the garrison to the town and the recruiting area on the composition of the officer corps, as well as the relations of the officers with the local elite. Next, we examine the role of the officers in the daily life of the town along two aspects. On the one hand, how their role in local social life developed, and on the other hand, what conflicts burdened these relations. In the case of the latter, we discuss separately the development of the local duel culture and the maintenance of public order.

In the sixth part, we examine the military culture as both an institutional culture and a social phenomenon. First, we examine the culture of the two house regiments of Vas county stationed in Szombathely: what culture they conveyed, how they represented themselves locally and whether the recruiting area could become part of their identity. In one word, was the locality (regionalism) able to bridge, or at least alleviate, the contradictions at the imperial and national levels. To answer this, however, it is also necessary to examine how the town thought about its military garrison in general and about its house regiments in particular. Such an approach to the topic can also help to understand what possibilities and boundaries (beyond everyday relationship) the town and its house regiments had for a deeper, symbolic identification. We try to capture these mostly by analyzing the festive rites.

Finally, we also examine the military culture from the perspective of civil society: how the culture mediated by the army appeared, and what changes did it go through in civil society. Above all, we aim to capture this through the associations (veterans’ associations, reserve officers’ association, Red Cross Association), as well as the pre-military training that appeared and spreaded at the turn of the century. Military culture also provides an opportunity
to make some cautious remarks about the presence, possibilities and limitations of social militarization in Hungary.

The main sources of the dissertation are the material of the rich local press, the Vas County Archives, the Military History Archives (Budapest), the National Archives and the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna. In addition, we carried out minor research in the Savaria Museum (Szombathely), in the Branch Archive of the Vas County Archive in Kőszeg and in the Pannonhalma Archabbey Archives.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

Until the first half of the 1880s, the relationship between Szombathely (Vas County in general) and the military was mainly focused on the problem of quartering. The nomadic lifestyle of the cavalry, the quartering problems, the lack of barracks and service rooms, the shortcomings of the existing ones, the unequal bearing of the burdens around the military quartering (i.e. violation of the principle of public burden-bearing), the persistence lack of resources, inconsistencies in legislation and competencies, and protraction of the military quartering reform had left behind almost every other area about the military.

Issues related to the independent Hungarian army and the spirit of the Imperial and Royal Army only came to the fore in the 1880s, for two reasons. On the one hand, in Vas County, dominated by the Liberal Party, had developed the multi-party political publicity by then, on the other hand, thanks to the quartering reform in 1879, the problems related to military placement had gradually been resolved. In the turbulent 1880s, however, the army issue did not have serious political mobilizing power in Szombathely, despite the advancement of the independence opposition. Probably the reason for this was that although the scandals connected the army reached the public in Szombathely and Vas County, such events did not take place locally. Szombathely did not have a garrison at that time, the 14th Dragoon Regiment and then the 5th Hussar Regiment, stationed in Kőszeg and Rohonc, maintained a particularly good relationship with the local population, and no serious conflict took place. In this sense, the national scandals picked up by the press were exceptions rather than showing the general everyday experience. The appearance of the independence opposition in Vas County was a consequence of the occupation of Bosnia in 1878, but it could not forge political capital on the issue of the army, and neither the Janski scandal nor the great army debate of 1889 could prevent their decline and end.
Of course, all this did not mean that the idea of the national army did not appear in Vas County. This was already evident at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and the debate of the Defense Forces Act of 1868. Although the idea of an independent Hungarian army (accepting the realities) had little support in Szombathely. The breakthrough came only at the turn of the century, when the realization of the fiction of the Hungarian army existing in the Common Army became more and more popular idea in Hungarian political thinking, including at the local level. This meant primarily the claim of the education of the officers in Hungarian spirit, the validation of the Hungarian language, the Hungarian symbols and the Hungarian nation-state-idea in the Hungarian regiments, in short, the realization of dualism within the Imperial and Royal Army. As a result, until the Great War, the issue of the army was constantly on the agenda in both the press and public discourse.

National demands unfolded most in the army dispute in 1903, which then culminated in a permanent domestic political crisis. During the political crisis, however, like in 1889, it became clear that Emperor Francis Joseph was unwilling to compromise on the issue of army unity. The political opposition, which came to power at the cost of great sacrifices, also had to give up its military program. The example of Vas County shows that society is finally tired of the political upheaval caused by the army issue. The army debate of 1911–1912 clearly showed that national demands (especially that not one of them had been realized over the years) alone no longer move the wider society, and in Vas the local politician now opposed to obstruction. Tisza’s violent policy against the opposition (unlike the events of ten years ago) did not provoke any reaction. The opposition itself was forced to link the military demands to other issues (social issues, suffrage), while, especially as a result of the events in the Balkans, the need for army development came to the fore.

Probably one of the main reasons for the fact that the army issue in Vas County moved less and less the local society and politics was that the relationship with the stationed troops actually took a completely different path. To the pre-war years the relationship between the house regiments and Szombathely was particularly close and fruitful. In one word, there were rather serious contradictions between local experience and politics.

Szombathely, a dynamically developing and prosperous middle town of the country, was not one of the traditional military centers. The establishment of its military garrison was inseparable from its rise in the age of Dualism. Although Szombathely could not get close to the most important garrison towns in size (although it had a chance in the early 1900s), it was still one of the larger garrisons. With the introduction of the territorial system in 1882, the Szombathely garrison consisted largely of local (or at least recruited in the narrower region)
troops. For this reason, the social composition of military garrison, established in 1889, showed a high degree of similarity with the civilian population of the town in terms of language, ethnicity, religion and literacy. This was further strengthened by the fact that the house regiments gradually recruited in Vas and Zala counties. This only changed before the war, when the 11th Hussar Regiment was replaced by the Croatian 5th Ulan Regiment in 1912.

A much more complex picture emerges in the case of the professional officer corps, even if its composition was also influenced by the station and the recruiting area. However, there is a significant difference between the two house regiments, the 11th Hussar Regiment and the 83rd Infantry Regiment. The main part of the Hungarian officers was concentrated in the highly prestigious hussar regiments, so the officers of the 11th Hussar Regiment gradually came from Hungary, especially Transdanubia and Western Transdanubia. In the case of the 83rd Infantry Regiment such dominance could not develop, its officers came from all over the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In contrast to the professional officers, most of the reserve officers came from the narrower region. Permanent, local stationing had also significant effect on the family relationships: not only local but also officers from other regions were often married locally.

The high prestige of the army and officer corps at the turn of the century was due above all the regiments. In Szombathely, the two house regiments became an integral part and active shaper of the everyday life of the local society. The officers were indispensable participants in balls and social gatherings, played an important role in sports, and did charities. Cafes, restaurants, and the public places were unimaginable without military music. The military participated at most celebrations and official events and played an important role in shaping the local duel culture. The regiments consciously sought to convey a positive image of themselves (and thus of the army) and to maintain a good relationship with the civil population of the town, which was facilitated by the fact that locals could more easily identify with them as house regiments.

Due to the close relationship between Szombathely and its house regiments, the political disputes related to the army had no effect on the relationship between the two of them. And this is not only true by the turn of the century, but even in the 1880s. The national scandals, for example, did not affect the relationship between the Dragoons, the Hussars, and the county (above all Kőszeg). Emerging, fundamentally ordinary conflicts throughout the era were able to be properly handled by both parties, which both civilians and soldiers consciously sought. There were no major clashes during the military policing, and although there was an effort to
do so, the army resisted the use of its troops in elections for political purposes. As a result, during the crisis of 1903–1906, when the question of the army came to the forefront of political debate in a more serious form than ever before, the Hussar Regiment or the Infantry Regiment were never the object of political attack. While the institution of Common Army, its leadership and spirit were repeatedly attacked by the opposition and then even the pro-government press in a serious, sometimes harsh tone, they were never allowed to do so against the house regiments. Although journalist expressed their displeasure in particular cases (officer scandals, military arbitrariness, the use of the German language, the Gotterhalte or the imperial flag), no one wanted to disrupt the peaceful and even fruitful coexistence for current political purposes.

However, the relationship between the Szombathely and its house regiments had limits. Because of its supranational and patriotistic ideology (unlike most European states), the army could not become an instrument of national integration, and even, in the opinion of nationalists, explicitly hindered it. The Hungarian nation-state-idea did not prevail in the army, on the contrary, it propagated an idea of the opposite state-idea. This problem also leads us to the issue of military culture and social militarization in general.

In the second half of the 19th century, military culture and tradition flourished in the Habsburg Monarchy too, and this could not escape either Hungarian society or the single regiments. At the heart of the regimental cultures or regimental ideologies was the supranational, patriotic ideology of the army. However, the regiment’s culture and past view were in stark contrast to the Hungarian nationalists’, above all in the interpretation of 1848–49. In other words, the heroic past of the Habsburg Monarchy was largely not part of the Hungarian national heroic past. The boundaries were most clearly seen in the case of the festivities: while Szombathely and its house regiments successfully found each other in the dynastic, church and local festivities, and the militarization of these could take place, in most national festivities (since they were mainly tie to 1848) this was not possible. The reverse is also true: the regiment’s own festivities, with a few exceptions (such as the visit of Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand or the regimental jubilee), did not become the town’s festivities. That is, while the regiment was able to exert an influence in increasing the prestige of the army, loyalty to the ruler, or spreading military ideals, the common homeland or supranational idea did not affect the local Hungarian society at all.

However, locality seems to have been able to resolve to some extent the contradictions between supranational and national ideology. On the one hand, the regimental ideologies gradually embraced the heroic past of the recruiting area, and, on the other hand, they gave
the town the opportunity to display its house regiments as “Hungarian” and “Vas” regiments. In other words, locality allowed for the development of closer emotional identification.

The successful bridging role of the locality already had its signs in the 1870s. During the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (although the war was not supported by the Hungarian society), local society lined up alongside its regiments and supported them unconditionally both morally and financially. A similar gesture was manifested during the war crises and mobilizations of 1908–1909 and 1912–1913. The same can be seen at the moment of the outbreak of the Great War, when the local society and its house regiments found each other in an unprecedented way.

However, the ideological differences had a serious consequence: the Hungarian national military culture and tradition remained distorted, which is well illustrated by the case of the military and veteran associations. On the one hand, the activity of Honvéd Associations was strongly restricted for political reasons, and on the other hand, the ideology of the army hindered the social acceptance and wider spread of veteran associations. Nevertheless, many factors show that social militarization appeared in pre-war Hungarian society (more precisely in the middle class). The military garrison was an important urban attribute, symbolizing the town’s sacrifice for the fatherland and the king. Military was an essential part of much of the festivities, the officers played a central role in the development of the middle class, and house regiments became an integral part of the social life of the towns. However, the turning point came at the turn of the century. The long-term effects of universal conscription, the growing popularity and prestige of the local regiments (and thus the army), the proliferation of Hungarian chauvinism, the European arms race, and the Balkan wars brought the increase in the nation’s defense to the forefront. The need for army development was now less and less questioned, pre-military training was supported much of the society, the Red Cross movement gained new impetus as preparing the hinterland for war, and reserve officers, as one of the main branches of social militarization, began their active organization. Moreover, the use of violence has become increasingly accepted in solving social problems. In one word, the lack of a national army hindered the process of social militarization in the age of dualism, but it could not prevent it. A kind of militarization process began to emerge at the turn of the century, although it was incomplete and belated, and its peaceful development was eventually halted by the Great War.
**THE AUTHOR’S PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC**


