

The Fuggers, Hans Dernschwam, and the Ottoman Empire

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The first *Fugger* to settle in Augsburg was *Hans*, who in 1367 moved his family from Lechfeld to the neighboring prosperous community, which since 1276 had enjoyed the status of “free town”. Augsburg was famous for its textiles and its trade, the latter facilitated by the roads built by the Romans, by which the merchants of the town took their wares down to the Mediterranean. *Hans Fugger* was not a penniless newcomer; he was soon elected into the city council, which boasted twenty-nine members. The council had been created only a year earlier giving the guilds real clout in the political and economic life of Augsburg. *Hans* must have been a diligent worker; soon he owned a house for which he paid five hundred Hungarian gold florins, and by 1396, among the 2930 taxpayers his name was ranked forty-first. His descendants expanded the business from manufacturing to include trading, and his son *Andreas Fugger* earned the nickname “the rich Fugger”.

The family even received its own coat-of-arms from *Frederick III*. One side, later to become the “Polish side“, had the deer in its crest (the *Fukiers* in Warsaw); the other, the lily. This second branch became “Fugger von der Lilie”, merchants whose wealth soon surpassed the king’s. The fabulous rise of the family began with *Jacob*, who by 1461 was the twelfth richest man in Augsburg, and Augsburg was a very rich town. *Jacob*’s most brilliant move was to seek the favors of the Habsburgs by extending loans to them. When *Frederick III* married his son *Maximilian* to *Maria*, daughter of *Charles the Bold*, the court stopped in Augsburg on its way to Trier, and the young prince was readied for the event with money provided by the *Fuggers*¹).

With this beginning, the fate of the family was linked to the House of the Habsburgs, whom they also served by providing ever-increasing loans which financed the dynasty’s wars and rule. In turn, the *Fuggers* became magnates, owning the right to the richest ore mines and holding privileges in the metal trade (silver, copper, tin, quicksilver, etc.) in Tyrol and Carinthia, Thuringia, Bohemia, Slovakia and Spain.

¹) Quoted by Franz Herre, *Die Fugger in ihrer Zeit*. Augsburg 1985, p. 15.

They soon became an international company, diversified in mining, metalwork, textiles, banking, and trading in precious stones and spices. In 1484 the *Fuggers* received space in Venice's Fondacco dei Tedeschi and entered into partnership with the *Thurz*os of Breslau (Wrocław) who were also active in Hungary. In 1491 the *Fuggers* entered the Hungarian mining industry, and soon they held the copper monopoly for Europe. By then the business was headed by *Jacob* (born in 1459), under whose stewardship the *Fuggers* reached the zenith of their wealth and influence. *Melanchthon* declared Augsburg the German Florence, and the *Fuggers* its Medicis²).

The *Fuggers* developed a sophisticated credit system and a commensurate administration. Under Emperor *Maximilian*, the relationship between the imperial house and the merchant house became deeply entwined. The monarch soon realized that the *Fuggers* – by then a corporation with three brothers as co-owners, and a number of silent partners, including the bishop of Augsburg – were a power to reckon with: actually they were the first financial lords on German soil. By the turn of the century the *Fuggers* were carefully approaching the East Indian market, focusing on the spice trade.

In 1500 Augsburg had about twenty thousand inhabitants. It was a town in which renaissance architecture and learning were known to the citizenry. "The Sodalitas literaria Augustana" actively engaged in researching the city's past, and its members were in correspondence with *Erasmus*. While the *Fuggers* did not believe in ostentation, they are depicted in furs and gold on numerous portraits painted by fashionable artists.

Maximilian's election (he actually proclaimed himself Roman Emperor in 1508) could not have happened without *Fugger* support, and when they donated money for the Swiss Guard, the *Fuggers* were permitted by the Curia to mint their own currency³).

The increasing administration and correspondence with the several branches of the *Fugger* corporation required the work of dozens of clerks. One of them, *Matthaus Schwarz*, even wrote a textbook for merchants. This book was, however, never published. *Jacob Fugger* did not believe in giving away trade secrets, nor was he eager to tell the world about their sophisticated book-keeping system which, therefore, only modern scholars are permitted to analyze. From this material, one learns that in 1525, the year *Jacob* died, the firm had an annual 15.7 percent net gain⁴).

²) Herre, *Die Fugger*, p. 19.

³) Venice was their great competition, and later when vigorous trade began with the New World, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands were in a more favorable situation than the *Fuggers*.

⁴) The sixteenth century forced the *Fuggers* to reorient their business to Europe, where indeed they reached every corner. The firm established offices in Lisbon, Seville, Madrid and Saragossa, Paris, Lyon, London, Helsingör, Malmö, Danzig, Riga, Reval, Narva, Poznan, Warsaw, Cracow (Lvov), Kiev, Bres-

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The importance of up-to-date political and economic information was discovered early by the *Fuggers*. Their so-called “Fuggerzeitungen”, published for in-house use only, kept the branches informed about shifts in markets and warzones, about epidemics and droughts. Special couriers were employed for descreet or especially urgent communications.

The world also knows the *Fuggers* from the “Fuggerei”, a housing project of fifty-two single house units which the family built and donated in 1523 for the use of impoverished townspeople until they found new employment. The quality, size and amenities of these houses could make nineteenth-century liberals proud.

Charles V, the grandson of *Maximilian*, also relied on the *Fuggers*: 852,000 gulden were made liquid by the company for his election. At times the close connection entailed significant drawbacks. In the war between *Charles V* and *Francis I*, by supporting *Charles*, the *Fuggers* actually worked against their own interest. When Augsburg fell to the Protestants, the *Fuggers* had to leave because the radical Evangelical element considered them archetypal exploiters. As *Luther* put it, “Mann muste wirklichsch dem Fugger und dergleichen Gesellschaft einen Zaum ins Maul legen”⁵).

The fact that a landlocked town in the mid-fifteenth century could enjoy its golden period was due primarily to the *Fuggers*. But its primacy, as well as that of the family, started fading right after its greatest glory. Just before his death, *Jacob* lost sizable mining income owing to the Hungarian king’s arbitrary renegeing on his and the local nobility’s debts. The Peasant War cut into the company’s profit in banking and agriculture alike. There was unrest also in Augsburg proper. The weavers’ revolt of 1520 was put down, however, and two of their leaders were publicly skinned.

Away from home, the anti-*Fugger* feelings were combined with the rise of nationalism. In Hungary not only the workers but also the competition and the barons fought against the “foreign” influence. *Fugger*’s people were arrested and manhandled in Buda.

Following *Jacob*’s death, *Anton Fugger* took over the family business which, after a restitution from Hungary, had assets of over five million gulden. Subsequent to the battle of Mohács and the death of *Louis II* (1526), *Anton* financed *Ferdinand*’s bid against *Johannes Zápolya*, the national candidate for the Hungarian crown⁶).

lau (Wrocław), Vienna, Buda, Kolozsvár (Cluj), Zagreb and Trieste. In Italy, Venice, Padua, Florence, Milano, Genua, Pisa, Naples and Rome had *Fugger* offices. On German territory, Bozen (Bolsano), Innsbruck, Villach, Gastein, Fulda, Magdeburg, Berlin, Strasburg, Frankfurt, Mainz, Cologne had *Fugger* houses.

⁵) Herre, *Die Fugger*, p. 68.

⁶) For more on this see Gustav Wenzel, *A Fuggerek jelentősége Magyarország történetében*. Budapest 1883; and idem, *Magyarország bányászatanak kritikai története*. Budapest 1880.

The friction between Catholics and those of the *Augsburg Confession* (namely *Melanchton's* followers) did not help the company either. During the worst period, when all Catholic churches were forced to close, *Anton* escaped to Tyrol, and made his headquarters “temporarily” in Schwaz.

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On June 22, 1553, during times of great uncertainty, *Hans Dernschwam*, a trusted but by then retired employee of the *Fuggers*, undertook a long journey which took him to the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Dernschwam was born in Brux (Most, Czechoslovakia) in 1494, to a family of well-to-do burghers⁷). The town was known for its lively mining industry and trading. The family, possibly of Moravian origin, was ennobled at one point: *Derschwam's* coat-of-arms displays the title, “de Hradiczin”⁸). However, *Dernschwam* did not use his noble title during his years of study in Vienna, where he entered the university as a member of the *natio Hungarica* in 1507⁹). He continued his studies in Leipzig (with possibly two semesters in Prague in-between)¹⁰). After a brief stay with relatives in Olomouc, *Dernschwam* spent two years in Rome, together with *Stephan Taurinus* (*Stieröxel*, 1480–1519), who later became an important humanist in Hungary. The two also appeared together at the Lateran Council in 1512 in the entourage of Cardinal *Thomas Bakócz*, primate of Hungary. Thereafter *Dernschwam* moved into the service of *Hieronymus Balbi*, Provost of Pozsony (Bratislava, Czechoslovakia), who also served as ambassador of King *Wladislas II*.

Dernschwam's relations with the *Fugger-Thurzo* family enterprise began in Transylvania. He moved from the service of *Balbi* to the house of the *Thurz*os in 1517. *George Thurzo's* brother-in-law, *Jacobus Fugger*, must have heard of

⁷) There is at least one extant portrait of *Dernschwam*, a medal, published by Franz Babinger in *Mitteilungen der Bayerischen Numismatischen Gesellschaft* XXXI (1913), p. 46ff.

⁸) From *Dernschwam's* own marginal notes Tardy assumes that the Czech version of the family name was *Such Houba*. See the notes to Hans *Dernschwam*, Erdély, Besztercebánya, Törökországúti utinapló. Translated with an introduction by Lajos Tardy. Budapest 1984, p. 9. Since Tardy's is the latest edition of *Dernschwam's* Turkish diary, I decided to use it rather than Franz Babinger's publication, *Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien (1553/1555)*. München 1923. Henceforth all page numbers in the body of the text, unless otherwise stated, refer to the Tardy edition, and the translations are mine. All page numbers, following quotes in German, refer to the Babinger edition.

⁹) As is known, *natio* did not define the person's nationality. Ever since 1348, the University of Vienna had included Czechs, Poles and Hungarians in its Hungarian *bursa*, calling it *natio hungarica*.

¹⁰) There are no extant rosters from Prague for the year 1508, and by 1509 *Dernschwam* was in Leipzig.

Dernschwam while he was active in Besztercebánya (Banska Bystrica, Czechoslovakia). The region had been known since the Bronze Age to contain gold and copper. In the thirteenth century Banska Bistrica appears as “free town” in the phrase “hospites de nova villa Bistrica” whose privileges were granted or reconfirmed by a charter of *Béla IV*. In the late fifteenth century, King *Wladislaw II* leased the local mines to the *Thurz*os and used the revenues to buy out *Beatrice of Aragon*, widow of King *Matthias Corvinus*. In 1494 the *Fuggers* became partners in the *Thurzo* enterprise¹¹). *Dernschwam* traveled extensively in Transylvania¹²) and moved into *Anton Fugger’s* service, probably in 1525. But before that date, he worked as *Kassierer* in Buda under the local *factor*, *Hans Albers*¹³).

Pressed by the nationalist lesser nobles during the 1525 Buda disturbances, King *Luis II* froze the *Fugger* holdings and arrested *Hans Albers*. *Dernschwam’s* first major service to the *Fuggers* was his delicate negotiation with the Court. He succeeded in saving and transferring the *Fugger* fortune to Cracow. Soon the anti-*Fugger* measures were annulled and, with the exception of the mines, the *Fugger* holdings were returned¹⁴).

Dernschwam became the most trusted man of the family. He spent the next decade in Transylvania and at the Buda court as the representative of the *Fuggers*, carefully balancing between the two kings of Hungary. In 1531 he was personally responsible for freeing and returning the *Fugger* employees from Transylvania.

After the death of *Georg Mertz*, *Dernschwam* became the chief *factor* in Besztercebánya. The same year he married and purchased an estate in Cseszte near Nagyszombat (Trnava, Czechoslovakia). He viewed the renewed Turkish advances with great anxiety and visited Croatia and Slavonia for first-hand information. In his report, *Dernschwam* contended that the entire Hungarian kingdom would fall to the Turks because *Zápolya* (the king elected by the Hungarian National Party) was powerless. He also admitted that in many regions the native population sympathized with the Turks since the local nobles were unable to protect them from either the Ottoman army or the marauding Hungarian gangs roaming the countryside¹⁵).

¹¹) For more on this see Arnold Ipolyi, *Geschichte der Stadt Neusohl*. Wien 1875; and J. Ch. Engel, *Geschichte des ungarischen Reiches und seiner Nebenländer*. Halle 1797, I, p. 192.

¹²) It appears from his Transylvanian notes that *Dernschwam* had a great interest in antiquities, and wherever he traveled he collected epigraphs.

¹³) *Dernschwam*, ed. by Tardy, p. 18. The *factor* was the head of a local office.

¹⁴) For more on this see Friedrich Dobel, *Der Fugger Bergbau und Handel in Ungarn*, *Zeitschrift des historischen Vereins für Schwaben und Neuburg* VI (1879), p. 33–50.

¹⁵) Dated in Vienna, January 2, 1540. On August 29, 1541, *Suleyman* indeed occupied Buda. *Dernschwam’s* trip to Croatian and Slavonian lands has not

Dernschwam spent the years following the final fall of Buda to the Turks, in Besztercebánya. *Ferdinand* wanted to take the mines into royal possession and forced the *Fugger* company to share its trade secrets with his own representatives. *Anton Fugger* became fed up with the problems of his “Hungarian” holdings, and perhaps this was the time when the idea of extensive business with the Turks came to his mind. As *Fugger*’s representative, *Dernschwam* negotiated with *Ferdinand* in Prague and in Vienna. By then he was the undisputed expert in mining, banking and trade; and the *Fuggers* wanted to end their business relations with the Habsburgs in Hungary. In 1548 with the *Fuggers*’ business on the decline, *Dernschwam* received an offer to enter into Habsburg service. He resolved the delicate problem by retiring at the age of fifty-five.

Yet several years later, at the age of fifty-nine, he decided to join *Ferdinand*’s legates who, led by *Antonius Vrančić* and *Francis Zay*, set out on June 22, 1553, for the Porte. This was a dangerous journey on which the official representatives were not protected. As the legates left for Constantinople, the previous envoy was still a prisoner of the sultan.

Dernschwam’s reason for undertaking the Turkish trip is still an enigma. In his diary, he claims that this was a strictly private trip, and he completes his journal by reiterating that he had paid his own way. He even provides the reader with a summary record of his expenses and lists some of the purchases he made in connection with his journey. Yet, it is known that he requested permission to join *Vrančić* and *Zay* at a suspiciously late date: his letter to the Court is dated May 1, 1553, which must have left him with very little time for the preparations necessary for such a major undertaking¹⁶).

Also, is it possible that a man of his age, comfortably retired, would suddenly decide, simply out of curiosity, to make such a perilous journey to view the enemy on its own turf, or to collect some Graeco-Roman inscriptions which the delegation *might* come across on its way? It is true, however, that *Dernschwam*’s interest in inscriptions dates back to at least the year 1520. From 1520–1530 he collected material in Hungary. The volume of his manuscript, “*Inscriptiones Romanae lapidibus in territoriis Hungariae et Transsylvaniae a. 1520–1530 collectae*” is in the National Library of Austria¹⁷).

Or was it that *Fugger*, with his excellent contacts at the Court, wanted to use the opportunity to send his trusted man along with the official legates to

been carefully evaluated. He might have traveled there to find out about Turkish military plans, either for the *Fuggers* or for some other client.

¹⁶) The Wiener Gemeinsames Finanzarchiv had a copy of “Hansen Durnschwan in die Thurkei mitzunemben” in its Hofffinanzregistratur, Band 210, Bl. 113, dated May 1, 1553, but it is lost.

¹⁷) Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, *Tabulae Codicum Manuscriptorum*, VII, Band, VII, S. 269, Nr. 13821, suppl. 1601 d. XIX, 20, 8 (Vienna, 1875). Quoted by Babinger, Hans Dernschwam’s Tagebuch, p. XVIII, fn. 1.

check out the feasibility of entering into the mining business in the Balkans? *Dernschwam's* diary was found by *Friedrich Dobel* (1819-1890), a librarian of the *Fugger* family, who discovered it in Schloß Babenhausen. This made some scholars, among them Kiepert, believe that it had been written as a report for the *Fuggers*. Since then, it has turned out that this one was not the "original" manuscript. The earliest version extant seems to be the copy discovered in Wolfenbüttel¹⁸). I have also read Babinger's and Tardy's editions of *Dernschwam's* Turkish diary with both possibilities in mind. Yet I was unable to find enough material in the text to accept either thesis. Reddig's recent monograph on *Dernschwam's* journey does not shed further light on the question of "client" either¹⁹).

Of the four men who had visited the Porte together – *Vrančić*, *Zay*, *Busbecq* and *Dernschwam* – the latter, the one not on a diplomatic mission, renders some of the most fascinating details about Turkey. Jireček also claims:

An Reichhaltigkeit des Materials und an innerem Werthe werden alle früheren und späteren Reiseberichte von den gewissenhaft von Tag zu Tag gemachten Aufrechnungen des Hanns Dornschwamm (sic.), der mit Verantius nach Constantinopel reiste und mit Busbeck (sic.) zurückkehrte nicht übertroffen²⁰).

Dernschwam's description is most valuable when it comes to his private comments of the Turkish administration. He depicts a police state *par excellence*, in which the sultan is entirely removed from the masses. In addition to information which had reached the West, *Dernschwam* gives us an eyewitness report of the restrictions on the daily lives of the subjugated people. As an experienced businessman, he observes that the Empire's achievements are based on the fact that "all labor in Turkey is slave labor". He considers the country morally debased, an assessment he illustrates in his journal with several examples²¹).

¹⁸) For more on the subject, see, Friedrich Dobel, *Der Fugger Bergbau*, p. 13; Heinrich Kiepert, *Hans Dernschwams orientalische Reise 1553 bis 1555*, in: *Globus*. Braunschweig 1887, I, p. 184–190; II, p. 202–205; III, p. 214–220; IV, p. 230–235; and idem, *Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien*. Munich-Leipzig 1923. See also O. von Heinemann, *Die Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel*. II, Abt. 3. Wolfenbüttel 1898, p. 224, no. 2499. Quoted by Babinger, *Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch*, p. xxx.

¹⁹) Wolfgang F. Reddig, *Reise zum Erzfeind der Christenheit. Der Humanist Hans Dernschwam in der Türkei (1553–1555)*. Pfaffenweiler 1990.

²⁰) Constantin Josef Jireček, *die Heerstrasse von Belgrad nach Constantinopel und die Balkanpässe. Eine historisch-geographische Studie*. Prag 1877, p. 118–119.

²¹) For more on this see Marianna D. Birnbaum, *Humanists in a Shattered World. Croatian and Hungarian Latinity in the Sixteenth Century*. Los Angeles 1986, p. 225–228 and *passim*.

If one assumes that *Dernschwam* had been traveling for his own pleasure, some entries in the diary, especially the strongly anti-Catholic ones, could be easier explained; in that case, the entries would not have been written as a report, but merely as a series of private observations. The diary abounds in anti-Papist outbursts which the *Fugger* family would not have enjoyed or condoned. *Dernschwam* was not a man of “brutal honesty” who, disregarding his employers’ religious sensitivities, would have given vent to all his hostilities. On the contrary, he was known to be calculating and capable of flattery. *Dernschwam*’s enthusiasm for the teachings of the Reformation could have stemmed from Besztercebánya. That Besztercebánya was a town impacted by the ideology of the Reformation is proven by the numerous warning letters sent by *Ferdinand* to Archbishops *Várdai*, *Oláh* and *Vrančić*, in each communication ordering the town to reject Reformist ideas and the heretic synods, and to investigate those involved²²).

Dernschwam’s hatred of *Várdai* might stem from these times. And it was *Verbóczy*, another target of his criticism, who in 1526 sentenced the participants of the local miners’ revolt to death. The town had visiting students (*Thomas Mathias* and *Georg Baumhacker*) from Wittenberg, and had a number of clerics who were Protestants or Protestant sympathizers. The local school became a hotbed of the new teachings²³).

From his diary one can surmise that *Dernschwam* followed the Protestant credo – or possibly the teachings of the Calixtine Church. His bias toward the Reformed Church is obvious when he discusses his meeting with the Lutherans of Ráckeve (497), or refers with contempt to the Papist *Blasius Buti* of Pentele who, having received a benefice, “within a year turned many nuns into mothers” (496). While he sharply criticizes both the Catholic and the Lutheran clergymen of Buda for their ignorance, he considers it important that the latter preach in Hungarian vernacular, “because Christianity will survive due to the Lutherans” (500–501). Neither does he spare his own people’s clergy, whom he considers equally uneducated and undeserving (501)²⁴).

Dernschwam reports his visit with the Hungarians of Lasko (Laško, Yugoslavia) on his way back from Turkey: “In Laško we met an educated pastor. The entire community – they are all Hungarians – have services in both

²²) Ipolyi, *Geschichte*, p. 117.

²³) *Ibidem*, p. 119.

²⁴) It should be mentioned here that, although *Dernschwam* was not a native speaker of Hungarian, he wrote and spoke the language fluently. When criticizing the table manners of the Hungarians, he records an anecdote: “the Hungarians who like to bathe their fingers in the food” when teased, responded in Hungarian, claiming that their nails worked better than Viennese knives: “Jobb az en krme beczy keschnall” (p. 306). It is also known that at an audience with *Johannes Zápolya*, *Dernschwam* spoke with the king in Hungarian and in Latin.

faiths“ (491). Obviously, information of this kind would not have interested his earlier employers. He also displays his fury against Cardinal *Thomas Bakócz*, whom he holds responsible for the peasant uprising of 1514 and its bloody aftermath (238). In connection with his historical insertion in the diary, *Dernschwam* tells us his opinion of the pope, charging him with causing all discord in the world (239). He follows this with an expression of his own hopes for a future in which people would live according to the teaching of the Reformation, championed by *Jan Hus* and *Martin Luther* (241–243).

As is known, the exceptionally important “additional” yield of the ambassadors’ Turkish trip was the discovery of the *Ancyranum monumentum*, the political testament of Emperor *Augustus*. The world has ascribed this discovery to *Busbecq*, although he himself used the first person plural when, in his collection of letters, he related his journey to the Porte²⁵). *Dernschwam* has the following entry about this event in his diary:

We left Kutilina on March 28 for Ancira which the Turks call Angur. We arrived there at ten o’clock. We camped in the open and spent the 29th there ... and we looked at the town. On the lower hill, where the castle stands, our attention was called to an old Roman building. This must have been a huge theater or perhaps a palace. It must have been a solid edifice, tastefully constructed, which even the Turks could not totally destroy. The beautifully carved white marble gate of the palace, or rather its entrance, is twelve feet wide and as tall as two lances of a “landsknecht” on the top of each other. Before one reaches the gate, one faces walls on both sides, built of square stone blocks. They are as tall as the palace must have been. Roman antiquities [inscriptions – MDB] are built into them vertically: some are still legible²⁶).

The fragmentary text was copied on the order of *Dernschwam* and was incorporated into his diary. *Dernschwam* returned to Vienna with *Busbecq*, while *Vrančić* and *Zay* remained in Istanbul for two more years.

Dernschwam’s diary includes further epigraphical information in Latin and in Greek, as well as sketches of classical columns, some architectural details and entire floor plans of buildings. However, in each case it is obvious that the traveling party found those monuments of Antiquity by accident: no special effort had been made to visit the particular sights.

Had *Dernschwam* gone prospecting for the *Fuggers*, I submit, he would have chosen a different route to the Porte, one that would have taken him to Bosnia. He never even came close to that region. Srebrnica with its important copper mine (one of the first mines in the Balkans, mentioned in documents

²⁵) Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, ... *Legationes Turcicae Epistolae quator. Lipsiae 1589*. The ambassador joined *Dernschwam*’s group later and as mentioned in the text, left earlier. *Dernschwam* returned with him to Buda. For more on this, see *Birnbaum*, *Humanists*, p. 226–229.

²⁶) “... Daselbst seind schöne romane antiquitates zwirch vber noch der lenge eingehawen gewesen, die man zum thail lesen mügen.” (p. 190)

as early as 1352) lay closest along his journey, but even this was two hundred miles away.

The Turkish administration has preserved information on mining during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These records can also be culled for techniques and economic contacts²⁷). Most is known about the mines located in Bosnia and in the southern parts of Serbia. The Ragusan merchants who invested in the mines also kept records. Little data has survived outside these areas, but we know about Kratovo in Macedonia, where the mine was worked for over half a millennium, and about Sidero Kapsa (Siderokausia in Byzantine sources). The Greeks already had mines in Macedonia. Some remains also testify to mining in Bulgaria and there are a few scattered records on mining in Croatia. The Saxons, who arrived in the Balkans in the middle of the thirteenth century, brought along more developed techniques and introduced laws which governed mining for several centuries²⁸). One of the most prosperous mines Novo Brdo (Neueberghe) was also opened by Saxons²⁹). Although there must have been miners who searched for mineral veins by simply following traces of local Roman mining, all professional work followed Saxon tradition. One of the Bulgarian mines, that of Čiprovci (near Berkovica), also had relations with the Saxons. It is known that the Catholic colony was still producing silver, copper and lead there until the mid-seventeenth century³⁰). *Dernschwam* must have been aware of these Balkan mines, since about the same time *Sebastian Münster* too knows about them.

Had *Dernschwam* really been interested in developing contacts for the *Fuggers*, he would surely have visited Sidero Kapsa, the greatest mining center in the Balkans during the sixteenth century. Allegedly, six thousand people worked in the gold mine there, among them Turks, Armenians, Germans, Jews, Bulgarian, Serbs and Albanians. Spanish Jews leased the mine and, by all accounts, it was a lucrative enterprise.

But, in general, during the Turkish wars the once lively mining industry of the Balkans declined. Professional miners moved away, and businessmen who had leased the mines withdrew their investments. Although *Mehmed II* introduced legislation designed to revive mining, nothing seemed to encourage the investors. Consequently, techniques remained medieval and instead

²⁷) See F. Spano, Turski rudarski zakoni, *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu* 25(1913), p. 133–194.

²⁸) Those mines were regulated by customary law, but based on old Saxon legislation. See the *History of Yugoslavia*. Ed. by Vladimir Dedijer, et al. New York 1974, p. 179.

²⁹) See further Sima Ćirković, The Production of Gold, Silver and Copper in the Central Parts of the Balkans from the 13th to the 16th Century, in: *Precious Metals in the Age of Expansion*. (Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte) Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 1981, 2 p. 41–69.

³⁰) *Ibidem*, p. 43

of professionals, unskilled Serbian and Albanian laborers worked many of the mines. This created a vicious circle, for the decreasing yield turned away even those investors who would otherwise have found the short-term loans attractive. Also, the mines provided primarily for the Turkish army and the mint. There was some progress in Macedonia, but even such prosperous mines as the ones in Novo Brdo and Srebrnica could not reach the level of their pre-Turkish production. The Muslims shied away from mining and left the industry for the Christians. In the Kratovo's lead mines, however, the local peasants did not volunteer but were forced to work in the shafts³¹).

The larger mines were not *en route* to Istanbul, but *Dernschwam* left no record of a stop at any mining community along his journey. There were two mines on his way, in Kjustendil on the border between today's Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and in Buznik, the nearest one to the "via militaris", but he did not visit either of them³²).

Dernschwam must have known about all the mines mentioned above and must also have known that during Turkish rule there was a prohibition of free commerce and that the prices were fixed. These restrictions and the infamous Turkish bureaucracy further decreased the interest of outside investors. The sultan, however, derived sizable income from some of those mines, i. e., from Novo Brdo, Srebrnica, Kratovo, Priština, Serres, Salonika and Breznik near Sofia³³). *Dernschwam* did not stop on his way to visit Breznik either.

Copper and salt were *Dernschwam's* primary specialities. His detailed report of his visit to the Transylvanian salt mines testifies to his professionalism and expertise. Yet during his trip to the Porte, *Dernschwam* did not stop to visit Soli (a famous salt mine in Bosnia), which, although not entirely on his route, was not too distant from where the group crossed Bosnia. The only time *Dernschwam* refers to salt is when the company passes Smederevo where the "Imperial Salt Exchange" (Salzkammer) was located. In this context he writes about the carts and boats on which Hungarian salt was transported to Turkey (143–145)³⁴).

³¹) History of Yugoslavia, p. 220.

³²) As far as we know, he never visited the mines in the vicinity of Samobor either. Those were most probably connected with Alpine mining. The copper mine near Samobor was manned by German miners who emigrated there around 1565.

³³) It is noteworthy that *Dernschwam* does not refer to any of this in his diary, although he does not fail to mention his discovery of the sultan's selling produce and grain from his own storage.

³⁴) The sporadic references to salt being moved from Hungary to Nicopol are in connection with his group's meeting convoys, carrying salt to Turkey. Each time, however, *Dernschwam* mentions salt being taken from Hungary; once he even adds that it was the treacherous action of *Zápolya* that had permitted that to happen.

From his earlier reports on Transylvania and Besztercebánya, it is obvious that at that time *Dernschwam* undertook a business trip. His precise information about mining practices and working conditions – including negotiations and the mention of strikes – make it clear that his investigations were for the company and his reports for the eyes of his employers. He emphasizes entirely different topics in the diary describing his Turkish trip.

Also, by the mid-sixteenth century precious metals as well as copper from America brought the prices down in Europe and rendered many investments, especially those where old-fashioned technology was not replaced by modern methods, unprofitable. For that reason alone, it is highly unlikely that the *Fugger* family would have wanted to expand its mining business in Europe and into the Ottoman world, to boot.

As a marginal note to this subject, one may reach the conclusion that the *Fuggers* partly owed the decline of their wealth and international influence to their failure to recognize the importance of the discovery of America and the possibilities of colonizing and exploiting that new continent. It is known that *Marcus Fugger* tried to involve Spain in his business, but only to the extent of using Spanish routes and ships. The greatest local competition to the *Fuggers*, the *Welsers* of Augsburg, invested heavily on the side of the conquistadors, primarily in Venezuela. Their *factors* traveled to the New World, and the *Welsers* also dispatched boats with settlers and soldiers. The *Fuggers* were granted rights by the Spanish Crown (1532) in Chile and southern Peru, but instead of colonizing like the *Welsers*, they concentrated on trading and importing tomatoes, bananas, potatoes and maize to Europe³⁵).

Altogether, it is clear from the text that *Dernschwam*'s old professional interests were not rekindled during the Balkan journey. His statements about mining, or even trading, are limited to marginal remarks. He records the price of Transylvanian rock salt and of the two kinds of sea salts (black and white) available at the local markets, but he also lists the price of spices, cooking oil, rice, fruit, wine, and opium (197, 206, 303, respectively).

The only reference in the diary to the *Fugger* business is in connection with the traveling party's accidental sighting of a carriage transporting lead from Smederevo to Sofia. *Dernschwam* here remarks:

This lead is of the same shape and quality which the Fuggers ("die Fugger Herren") used to buy in Buda and transport to Besztercebánya. It was called Serbian lead: unsuitable for melting down. It is too hard, and when struck, it gives a dull sound (475)³⁶).

³⁵) The *Welsers*, however, lost the majority of their investments in Venezuela.

³⁶) "Ist solch pley vnd also gestalt, wie die hern Fugger von Zeitten zw Offen kaufft, in New Sol furen lassen, das man raczen pley genant, zum saigern, nicht getocht hot. Ist zw hart vnd klingt nutte." (p. 254)

The Fuggers, Hans Dernschwam, and the Ottoman Empire

Having described this chance meeting on their way back from the Sultanate, *Dernschwam* does not again return to the subject of lead. In another entry (July 19), he notes seeing some hundred carts transporting tin to Sofia or to Constantinople, with no additional comment (477). Only his personal nostalgia is expressed, when he writes that in Buda “a highway runs where earlier the Fugger house’s garden was” (497), or informs us that the house’s new inhabitant is a Turkish treasurer, and that the place is uglified by wooden stables stretching to the City Hall (499)³⁷).

There is, however, a third possibility for *Dernschwam*’s trip: instead of going on a private journey or working for the *Fuggers*, *Dernschwam* could have been gathering intelligence about Turkish plans concerning a new invasion against Hungary and Austria and about the status of Hungarian prisoners in Turkish captivity. Reading his diary, one is struck by the frequency of his references to Hungarian captives and by the painstakingly detailed description of their condition. While his travel takes him across the region which had previously belonged to Hungary, his observations and frequent comments are in logical connection with his journey; the landscape and the devastation the area had suffered from the ravaging Turks and gangs of *haiduks* provide a natural backdrop for his entries. But, as will be shown, throughout his trip he pays special attention to Hungarians, as if they had been the only ethnic group in Turkish captivity.

There is hardly a page without reference to Hungary, and what is even more striking, when describing a foreign region or explaining a particular Turkish phenomenon, *Dernschwam* uses Hungarian comparisons. He relates that Turkish officials presented the delegation with bread, wine, meat and fruit “according to Hungarian custom” (140)³⁸. He writes that Belgrade, on the Danube, has a fortress, “less tall than the one in Buda, and unlike the Buda castle, not built into the rocks” (141). *Dernschwam* also points out that Galata faces Constantinople as Buda faces Pest (199). He compares the towers at Smederevo to those of Nagyszombat, and stresses that the cannons there are from Szolnok (142). The rivers Morava and Niš are compared to the River Garra at Esztergom; the region of Kunovica reminds him of Transylvania (145). He compares the size of Istanbul buildings to the architecture of Pozsony – why not to Augsburg or another German town which would have meant more to his German employers? Describing a public bath in Sofia, he mentions that

³⁷) “In der herren Fugger haus wont der turkisch schaczmaister, vor dem hause bis zum Stathause ist ein hulczener ros stall gepawt”; immediately followed by “Vor Hans Preussen haus ist auch ein klaibter ros stall gepaut, vnd durch die weitte gasse, do der Haller gewont, lautter hutten an die heuser bis zw vnser frauen.” (p. 271)

³⁸) “Sunst schlecht man ainen auff vngerisch, mit 2 ader 3 prugeln, wohin man in trifft, das ers sein lebenslang nit vberwindt vnd zw einem geprechlichen menschen werdn mus.” (p. 69)

the benches are covered by Hungarian rush-mats. Would the *Fuggers* care? Turkish clothing is described by *Dernschwam* thus: “the Jannissaries wear wide pants, like the Hungarians ... their cloak, reaching their ankles is less narrow than the Hungarian *zsupica* (*czupicze*)”³⁹).

When *Dernschwam* tells about corporal punishment meted out to recaptured prisoners, he adds that it is following the caning custom of the Hungarians (226)⁴⁰. In a sketch in his diary, the headgear of Bulgarian women is compared to the “*parta*” worn by Hungarian girls (152). He mentions a young man in the entourage of the papal ambassador whom he recognizes as a Hungarian by his green felt stockings worn over his pants (233). He recalls that Hungarians wear narrow sleeves on their jackets (250).

When *Dernschwam* talks about Turkish wine making, information which he received from a Hungarian prisoner (270), he gives the name of the berry used in the process – a kind of elderberry – in German, Latin, and in Hungarian (270). Again, it is hard to believe that the *Fuggers* were eager to learn such vocabulary. On the other hand, it would make sense for *Dernschwam* to copy the name in German, his mother tongue, in Latin, the “*lingua franca*”; and in Hungarian, for those for whom the report was possibly meant. Another drink *Dernschwam* mentions in this section of the diary is a mixture of millet and water which, he remarks, is known in Hungary and in Transylvania (273). In the case of another berry, he gives the Greek, Italian and Hungarian names (304).

Dernschwam is quite familiar with Hungarian legal history before the Turkish occupation and recalls individual court cases and witnesses (236–237)⁴¹. In Nicaea he visits a small Greek Orthodox church and notes that two Latin works in its modest collection had been stolen from Hungary (443)⁴².

³⁹) The word is of South Slavic origin. For more information, see István Kniezsa, *A magyar nyelv szláv jövevényszavai*. Budapest 1955, II, p. 582.

⁴⁰) “Solchen falschen zeugen ferbt man auch mit kana den barth roth wie man den rossen den schwancz. Solche hab ich ir etlich gesehen hie vmbgehen. Solcher falscher zeugen findt man hie vmb 5 vnd, 10 asper genug, wie auch in Vngern der prauch ist.” (p. 77)

⁴¹) His information is not always correct: he dates the battle of Eger (175) to 1553, although it took place a year earlier.

⁴²) It should be mentioned, however, that *Dernschwam* was an avid book-collector, and such information could have reflected his own interest. According to Babinger, *Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch*, p. XXX, *Dernschwam*'s library included about two thousand titles (bound in 651 volumes), comprising many incunabula but primarily works of the first half of the sixteenth century. As is known from his diary, he also bought manuscripts in Constantinople. *Dernschwam* owned at least one volume from *Matthias Corvinus*'s collection, *Onkelos*'s work (known as the “Targum of Onkelos”), the Aramaic translation of the “Pentateuch” according to the Talmud. *Sebastian Münster* refers to *Dernschwam*'s copy in the Foreword of his “*Rudimenta mathematica*” (Ba-

The Fuggers, Hans Dernschwam, and the Ottoman Empire

In his diary *Dernschwam* seems to record each group of Hungarian prisoners whom the traveling party encounters. Some are mentioned in passing: “Smederevo has few Hungarians; they are all prisoners” (141). Others are described in detail. “We saw a few horses, young Hungarian boys were seated on them, about fifteen in number, all dressed in Turkish clothing, with their heads shaved” (143). Whenever possible, he tries to communicate with the prisoners. In a village he calls Jagoda (probably Jagodina, now Sretozarevo), *Dernschwam* talks to a Hungarian priest who, captured in Miskolc, was taking care of the household of a beg (144)⁴³.

While in Turkey, *Dernschwam* also paid ransom for a young Hungarian, claiming that he would get his thirty Hungarian florins back from the man’s father (322). At the same time he met a young man from Rügen (near Konstanz) who had also been captured by the Turks. This prisoner *Dernschwam* did not ransom (322–323).

The travelers were not always permitted to address the prisoners they encountered. *Dernschwam* mentions meeting a large group of Hungarian captives: “handsome young men, women and children who were moved in carts and in baskets tied to draft horses ... We were forbidden to talk to them ... nonetheless, they advised us that the majority of them had been carried away from regions where the population had much earlier succumbed to Turkish rule” (478). *Dernschwam*, who repeatedly states that women could not be seen publicly and complains throughout his diary about their virtual imprisonment, was obviously able to make contact with some Hungarian women, also captives. They allegedly lamented the moral decay of the cities, and claimed to have lost sons and daughters to prostitution (272, 354).

Another group of men whom the company met were chained by their hands and feet; they had been members of the Hungarian *haiduks*. From the sixteenth century on, “liberi haydones” in the frontier area were often Serbs. However, the ones in this group, were Hungarians. About twenty-five men, their heads shaved, were being transported in large, covered wagons. *Dernschwam* found out from them that they had served in Nádasdy’s army and, having been defeated in a skirmish with the Turks at Veszprém, were sent off to Constantinople by the Pasha of Buda⁴⁴.

binger, Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch, p. XXVIII). For more on his library, see Zsuzsanna Hermann, Hans Dernschwam könyvei között, *Az Egyetemi Könyvtár Évkönyvei* IV (1968), p. 167–177.

⁴³) “Vjl vngern mit weib vnd kindt aus funffkircher gegent haben sich mit weib vnd kindt herein gen Jagoda zogen auff obstandt beken zusagen, lest sy pleiben, haben ein vngerischen pfaffen, wie obstat.” (p. 259)

⁴⁴) *Thomas Nádasdy* (1498–1562), Banus of Croatia, Palatine of Hungary (he will be discussed later in the text). The German text reads: “Auff dato (July 21, MDB) seind vns raisige turken, an einem wasserle aushalttend, begegnet vnd auff 4 bedegtten langen wegen vngerische hajdokhen, an hend

Everything Hungarian held interest for this traveler. In Jagoda, *Dernschwam* discovered a red marble slab, a tombstone for a couple. The carving showed them in Hungarian clothing. “The man on the right wore a dolman-like caput, similar to a zsupica, in his left hand a lance, the kind the Hungarians used to have in my time, during the rule of King Wladislas; on his head a sable-trimmed cap, the kind the Hungarian magnates wore during Wladislas’ time” (487). *Dernschwam* also describes the gown of the woman and the two family crests. He had too little time to decipher the entire text on the stone, but he wrote down the names: “Magnificus Dominus Joannes de Alschem et Uxoris nomen Clara” (482) The date on the tombstone was 1430; it had probably been brought to Turkey from Pécs “because the beg of the district had previously served there” (482). Would such information be useful for the *Fuggers*? Or, why would the *Fuggers* be interested in the fact that a Hercules statue had been moved to an Istanbul square from Buda, as were two bronze “guardsmen” which earlier decorated one of the city gates next to the bridge (267)⁴⁵?

On its way back from Turkey, *Dernschwam*’s party met a *spahi* with two Hungarian children on his horse. According to *Dernschwam*, they were about four years of age, wearing black and red caps (465). His entry reads like a description written by a detective who later hopes to have the parents identify their offspring by their outfits. On the same day another entry relates to Hungarians: the group encounters Turkish soldiers transporting their Hungarian prisoners in large baskets attached to the sides of four large horses (465).

Dernschwam talks to a young man in another group of Hungarian prisoners, transported in this same fashion, who said that he had been captured at Mohács (471). This information again proved to *Dernschwam* that thirty years after the battle, the Turkish army was still carrying prisoners out from the occupied regions.

On the whole *Dernschwam* shows himself to be an astute observer of daily life in Turkey. In addition to the drawings of the manifestations of high culture, *Dernschwam*’s diary includes sketches of agricultural tools, descriptions of public baths, roadside hostels (caravan seraglios), and private dwellings. He writes about the clothing and customs of the Turks and also of the Bulgarians and Serbs living under Ottoman rule. One of his most interesting observations deals with the eating habits of the Turks. According to *Dernschwam*, most residences lacked kitchens; the Turks bought “fast food” on the street from stands equipped with grills, although some of their food, including oysters and snails, they ate raw. He also states that he could find out little about

vnd fussen angeschmidt, gefurt, ir 24 vnd 25 geschunttene kopff. Sollen dem Nadaschdi zugehort haben vnd von Papa auszogen, irncz bey Vesprim geschlagen vnd gefangen worden. Sollden aus inen allein 3 darvonkhommen sein, schigt der bascha von Ofen herein.” (p. 257)

⁴⁵) He relates at length the provenance of the statues. None of that would interest the *Fuggers*, but it would be of import to any Hungarian client.

The Fuggers, Hans Dernschwam, and the Ottoman Empire

the women's eating habits because they stayed inside. Only several centuries later have historians of the Ottoman Empire started contemplating the importance of such customs. The lack of a tradition of shared meals and the limited role of the home as the nuclear world were essential features of Turkish life, mandatory for the success of Ottoman military strategy which separated families for long periods of time, fostering alienation from home and from kinship ties. *Dernschwam* instinctively hit upon this phenomenon. As many European travelers had, he noted the sultan's habit of using non-Turks for the higher functions at court and in the military.

While satisfying the requirements of the *topos*, "traveling to Constantinople", *Dernschwam's* diary is enhanced by his lively personal comments and the manifestations of his private views. While expressing the obligatory hatred and mistrust for the Turks, he admits that he had been impressed with their deep religiosity. For that matter, *Dernschwam* has no love lost for Hungarians either, nor does he have much good to say about the earlier Hungarian representation at the Porte:

The previous ambassador, who had spent several years in Constantinople before 1553, lived in great pomp. The recent one, when he was still the subordinate of the earlier, once accompanied the Sultan as he traveled to Aleppo in Asia. All traitors of Christianity, and scoundrels – among them the ambassadors of Isabel, and Petrović [Petar Petrović, a relative of Zápolya, and one of the guardians of Johannes Sigismund, MDB], were allowed to accompany the Turkish Emperor to Asia. These, together with some good-for-nothing types from Hungary, were scheming to put Stephan, the son of **Voivod** Johann, often known as Stephan, the Son of a Bitch, on the throne of Transylvania by force. He and Petrović received flags from the Sultan. But soon the Sultan will reward them as he had rewarded Majláth, Valentin Tewrewk, Verbóczy and the rest who had all thought that the Turk would allow them to stay in Buda and go on ruling. They all perished in jail. Majláth and Tewrewk in Constantinople, Verbóczy the Chancellor and chief crony of **Voivod** Johannes, in Buda. When, in 1541 the Turks defeated Roggendorf, and chased away the Hungarians who had sold out their own country, they dragged along Tewrewk. Frater George, Isabel, and the son of the **Voivod** were returned to Transylvania, but the former also received his due reward: he was stabbed to death in 1551. Verbóczy was forced to become a **kadi**, that is a judge over the Christians. He wanted to get rid of the job, but died in Buda and was buried in the Jewish cemetery⁴⁶).

It also seems reasonable to translate a longer entry about Hungarian prisoners, in order to show the extent of *Dernschwam's* interest in them:

⁴⁶) Birnbaum, *Humanists*, p. 226. *Dernschwam's* views, as expressed in this quote, eliminate any Transylvanian group as his possible "patron", and his antipathy expressed toward a number of Hungarian noble families is helpful in narrowing the search. His critical remarks vis-à-vis *Majláth* will be examined later.

The same day we again met Hungarian prisoners who were transported to this country. Women, children, young girls, even infants in the baskets, tied to the horses. Two Hungarian peasants, chained by their necks [to the carts, MDB], followed the procession – made up of fifteen persons – on foot. Some of them were kidnapped from Berény – on the shore of Lake Balaton – persons who were already Turkish-ruled. Namely, if it came to a larger military campaign, they would deport the entire population. (481)⁴⁷⁾

The same kind of meeting is described by *Busbecq* on the way back from Constantinople:

«De tems en tems nous trouvions sur les chemins des bandes de pauvres Chrétiens de tous âges, chargés de chaînes, attachés les uns aux autres comme le sont les chevaux, que l'on conduisoit dans le plus dur esclavage»⁴⁸⁾.

The ambassador sees the prisoners as “Christians”; their nationality is of no importance to him.

It is not difficult to conceive of these observations as information-gathering. *Dernschwam* writes:

We also met a few horses which carried copper to Constantinople, in the shape of large logs. I don't know when they will get there. The *Buda kahja* who was supposed to accompany the ambassador [Busbecq, MDB] to Buda and was in our company for five days ... suddenly returned to Buda ... On July 20th I received a secret message: Johannes Tewrewk cut down six hundred Turks, and this should be the reason for the *kahja's* departure. (481)⁴⁹⁾

Dernschwam also comments on military objects which earlier were in the hands of the Hungarians, whom he blames for having lost Belgrade, “since Belgrade, at the confluence of the Danube and the Sava, was a key to Hungary” (1521). He contends that it was poorly fortified, “... an utter shame and disgrace that it was open to attack on every side to cause its fall. One side could even be hit by cannons from above” (488).

About Zimony (Zemun) he writes: “It was as unprotected as a church. The Hungarians had permitted their outposts on the Danube-Sava-Drava-Tisza-

⁴⁷⁾ Auff dato (July 22, MDB), seind vns wider vngerische gefangene begegnet, so man heringetrieben, weiber in sam korben mit knaben, magdlein vnd ainem sawgkindt auf den rossen. Auch 2 jung pawern zw fusse mit den helsen an einer ketten in allem 15 persson. Seind ains thails zw Berin gestolen vnd weggefurt worden, so neben dem see Balata ligt, der turken gehuldigt volk. Also, wan ein gewaldiger zug solt beschehen, Wurden sy das volk alles wegk treiben.” (p. 258–259)

⁴⁸⁾ Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq ... Lettres du baron Busbec ... Paris 1748, I, p. 196.

⁴⁹⁾ *Kahja/kyhay/tihai/kjaja* means interpreter, or a scribe, working for the Turks.

line to look like monasteries. That is why the Hungarians lost their country, almost deliberately” (489). *Dernschwam* also reports the treason of one of his Hungarian fellow travelers, *Imre Nagy*, who had joined the delegation in Komárom (417–418).

He considers the Turks lazy, shying away from work like “the Hungarian nobles” who were punished by the Lord for their laziness by the loss of their country (329). *Dernschwam* frequently mentions the Turks’ preferring to wage war against Hungary and Austria rather than most other countries because of the rich loot available there (177, 254, 439, 470). He repeatedly claims that Turkish soldiers had told him about a new campaign against Hungary planned for the following year.

Dernschwam concentrates his fury against those ethnic groups who, having been captured by the Turks, moved over to the side of the conquerors. He primarily refers to the Southern Slavs who, according to him, “because of an anti-Hungarian obsession acted against the whole of Christianity – but their master, the Turk or the Devil, will pay for their services . . . Had those foreigners, who earlier all belonged to Hungary not existed, the Turks would not have reached so far [west] to oppress the other Christian nations” (213–214). Are these private conclusions, or conclusions drawn also for those who had commissioned him to undertake this journey? The “treason of foreigners” was a popular theory of the National Party, expressed in its most extreme stance in the work of *Georgius Sirmiensis* (*György Szerémi*)⁵⁰.

One must, of course, consider a man’s own statements regarding his travels. *Dernschwam* provides us with a roster of his traveling party. About himself he writes “and I, Hans Dernschwam with my three horses, at my own expense” (192). This alone is, of course, no proof. Had he joined the legates as a clandestine “observer”, he would still keep his clients’ name a secret. The sixteenth century provides many examples of travelers to Turkey or to the Holy Land whom later research identified as spies for one or another power. A typical example is *Luigi Bassano*, an Italian agent born in Zadar, who wrote the popular work, “*Costumi e i modi particolari della vita de Turchi*”⁵¹). Later it came to light that he was in the service of the Spanish ambassador to Venice and, as “informatore” in Istanbul, drew an annual salary of two thousand *scudi*. Another businessman, doubling as Austrian agent, was the Florentine *Zouan Pastor*⁵²). The *Pastor* family moved from Florence to Zagreb. They were origi-

⁵⁰) *Georgius Sirmiensis, Epistola de perditione regni Hungarorum*. Ed. by Gusztáv Wenzel. Pest 1857 (*Monumenta Historica, Scriptores*, I.)

⁵¹) First published in Rome in 1545. For more on him, see Birnbaum, *Humanists*, p. 268–271.

⁵²) For more on the Pastors, see Igor Karaman, *Die Grosshändler in der Stadt Zagreb zur Zeit der Türkenkriege* (16. bis 17. Jahrhundert), in: *Beiträge zur Handels- und Verkehrsgeschichte*. Graz 1987, S. 75–81 (*Grazer Forschungen zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, 3).

nally in the cattle trade, selling hide in Hungary, Croatia and Venice. When business slowed down due to fighting, they spied on the Turks for *Ferdinand*. Perhaps a more persistent search in European libraries and archives would unearth further material on *Dernschwam*'s career as well.

After all these allusions to a potential Hungarian employer, I feel obliged to mention at least one possible candidate. My suspicion, so far unsupported by direct evidence, is that *Dernschwam* had some kind of an arrangement with Baron *Tamás (Thomas) Nádasdy*.

Tamás Nádasdy (1498–1562), studied in Buda, Graz, Bologna and Rome⁵³). In 1521 he was sent back from Rome by the pope to Hungary, accompanying Cardinal *Tomasso Vio* for whom he interpreted at the court of *Louis II*. By 1525, with the help of his patrons, *Szalkay* (bishop of Vác) and *Bornemissze* (treasurer), *Nádasdy* became a member of the Royal Secretary. On June 19, 1526, he was sent to *Ferdinand* and *Charles V* at the Speyer Diet in order to ask for immediate help against the pending Turkish invasion. Upon his return (empty-handed), *Nádasdy* was caught in the battle of Mohács and was unable to reach Buda. He joined the fleeing queen in Komárom and accompanied her into her exile. He returned later and, on August 20, he was appointed Captain of Buda. At the 1529 battle he was captured by *Suleyman*. Handed over to *Zápolya*, *Nádasdy* remained with the “national” king. Having defended Buda from *Roggendorff*, he received *Fogaras* (Fagaraș, Rumania) and *Huszt* (Soviet Union) and its salt mines. *Fogaras* was in wealth and power like a duchy. But *Nádasdy* collided with *Zápolya* over the election of General *Aloisio Gritti* to the regency, which *Nádasdy* strongly opposed. By then he was one of the wealthiest and most influential men in the country, and when he found out about *Gritti*'s plan to capture the entire government, including the king, and hand them over to the sultan, *Nádasdy* moved back to *Ferdinand*. This decision only added to his wealth. By royal permission, his bride, *Ursula Kanizsai*, was invested with the rights of a son, and thus *Nádasdy* received the entire *Kanizsai* property, including mines in Croatia which had been previously owned by Queen *Maria*, *Ferdinand*'s sister. He soon became one of *Ferdinand*'s top counsellors and in 1537 was appointed *banus* of Croatia and Dalmatia, sharing the office with *Peter Keglevich*. From that time on *Nádasdy*'s career soared. In 1540 he was appointed *Judex Curiae Regis*, the highest judicial position of the country, and treasurer of Transylvania. In 1554 he became palatine of Hungary.

When in 1541 his brother-in-law and friend, *István (Maylad) Majláth*, *voivod* of Transylvania, was captured by the Turks, *Nádasdy* tried everything,

⁵³) For details on *Tamás Nádasdy*'s life, see Mihály Horváth, *Gróf Nádasdy Tamás élete némi tekintettel korára*. Buda 1838. For a contemporary biography, the work of *Gábor Szentgyörgyi* (*Nádasdy*'s secretary), is recommended. See also Ferenc Buday, *Magyarország polgari történelmének lexikonja*. Buda 1805, vol. 2.

even offering his Fogaras estates as security, to gain his release. He stalwartly negotiated with *George Martinuzzi*, *locumtenens* of Transylvania, but with no result⁵⁴). *István Majláth*'s exact date and place of birth are unknown⁵⁵). His father, *Matthias*, moved to Transylvania around 1480 and settled at Fogaras. Surviving the battle of Mohács, *Majláth* joined *Ferdinand* who made him part-owner of Fogaras. Yet shortly after 1528 *Majláth* moved over to *Zápolya*'s camp. He too was *Gritti*'s adversary, and after the murder of *Czibak* he had the captured *Gritti* killed⁵⁶). In 1534 *Majláth* became *voivod* of Transylvania and soon thereafter led a campaign against *Martinuzzi*. The latter charged him with stealing from the treasury, whereupon *Majláth* retreated to the safety of Fogaras. At the 1540 Torda Diet, *Zápolya* called him a traitor, and the Diet sentenced him to death and to loss of property *in absentia*.

After the death of *Zápolya*, *Martinuzzi* tried unsuccessfully to break *Majláth*'s power. *Majláth* planned to have himself elected duke of Transylvania and even enlisted Turkish help to that end. Finally, on July 20, 1541, the *voivod* of Moldavia captured *Majláth* and turned him over to the Turks, who imprisoned him together with *Bálint Török* (*Tewrewk*) in the infamous *Jedikule*⁵⁷). There he spent almost ten years before he died in December of 1550.

Nádasdy first approached *Martinuzzi* in 1542, but several years later, with *Majláth* still in Turkish custody, *Nádasdy* became convinced that the *frater* actually was working against the release of his brother-in-law. This is evidenced by a letter to *Ferdinand* in which *Nádasdy* writes:

Now he writes me [*Martinuzzi*, MDB] in order to discuss the means by which my brother-in-law could be freed, and visit my sister. He only pretends, but he

⁵⁴) *Martinuzzi* (*Frater George Utješenić*, 1482–1551). A Paulist monk, *Frater George* used *Martinuzzi* as his last name. He was a follower of *Zápolya* and after 1527 became the king's most trusted man and chief advisor. He functioned as treasurer and was made bishop of Várad and one of the guardians of *Zápolya*'s son, *Johannes Sigismund*. After 1542 he served as *locumtenens* of Transylvania. He secretly negotiated with the Habsburgs, and supported by Habsburg troops, *Martinuzzi* was made *voivod* of Transylvania, and through the good offices of *Ferdinand* he received the cardinal's hat to boot. However, *Martinuzzi* also contacted the Turks, and General *Castoldo*, with the knowledge of *Ferdinand*, had him murdered.

⁵⁵) For more on him, see Béla Mailáth, *Maylád István*. Budapest 1889.

⁵⁶) *Imre Czibak* (d. 1534). *Zápolya*'s trusted man, member of his Royal Council and *voivod* of Transylvania during the last year of his life. *Aloisio Gritti*, *Ferdinand*'s regent of Hungary, had him killed.

⁵⁷) *Jedikule* was an ancient fortress on the Sea of Marmora. It was first used as prison by Sultan *Mohammed II*. *Bálint* (*Valentin*) *Török* joined *Ferdinand* after 1527, but moved over to *Zápolya* in 1536. He too was a guardian of *Johannes Sigismund*. In 1541 the sultan had him captured. *Török* survived *Majláth* by one year only; he died in 1551.

rather wants to know whether there are any avenues left to lead to his freedom, and by learning which they are, to step in and ruin things for us. Until now he made every effort to bar his release. With the help of God, we almost got him out twice, but he stopped that too, just as he will in the future, as long as he lives, he will be doing the same – I have no doubt about that⁵⁸).

Nádasdy, who desperately tried to help *Majláth*, then turned to Queen *Isabella* for help.

It seems that the queen was willing to intervene, but *Martinuzzi* sabotaged that plan as well. Nonetheless, *Majláth*'s wife remained in contact with her husband through messengers and legates from Transylvania who, while visiting the sultanate, carried mail between the spouses. *Majláth* and *Török*, imprisoned together, lived comfortably enough even to offer temporary lodging to the messengers at the Porte.

Nádasdy's letters (first published by Georg Pray, "Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae 1490–1711", Posonii, 1806) 2, 117, 142, 160, 171–173, 185, 187, 198, 202 and 250, in particular, refer to *Majláth*, showing concern about his fate and the fate of his widow and orphan. *Nádasdy* did not give up easily. He turned to *Giovanni Maria Malvezzi*, ambassador of France to the sultanate, and asked for his intervention on *Majláth*'s behalf. The prisoner's son, *Gábor*, became *Nádasdy*'s ward, and although *Gábor* never brought anything but trouble to his father's name, *Nádasdy* remained his caring guardian. Meanwhile *Malvezzi* also was imprisoned by the sultan, and in 1550 *Majláth* died in captivity.

On March 2, 1551, *Majláth*'s widow turned to her brother, asking him to help find out details about her husband's death. The person she had entrusted with the task never returned, she complains:

I believe that Pál does not come back, because he probably kept the 100 gold Florins which I have sent to my poor husband . . . It is sure that my poor husband died, but I would like to find out more about it . . .⁵⁹)

It seems that no one advised *Nádasdy* in a definitive manner about his brother-in-law's death. "Pál" brought the first news on March 2, 1551, and there is another reference to him in Mrs. *Majláth*'s letter, dated March 19, 1551. But it is clear from the same communication that also a certain *Máté*

⁵⁸) Horváth, Gróf *Nádasdy* Tamás, p. 85. It was rumored that *Nádasdy* had been involved in *Martinuzzi*'s murder. He was advised about it the day after it happened. This would not have been entirely out of character; he was also publicly accused (February 12, 1542), of having *István Istvánffy*, another nobleman, killed; and a number of contemporary historians believed in his guilt.

⁵⁹) *Pál* (*Paul*) *Székely* (referred to Mrs. *Majláth* in a letter to *Nádasdy* on August 17, 1545) might have been the same person with whom she had sent money to her husband to Turkey.

Daczó should have visited *Nádasdy* with more information. He never returned either⁶⁰).

In another letter, dated May 9, 1551, she again asks *Nádasdy* to find out how her husband had died, where he was buried and how. She informs *Nádasdy* of the rumour about a testament her husband had made before his death, and she begs him to help find out more about it. The widow, who had been married to *Majláth* for twenty years, ultimately succeeded in regaining parts of *Majláth*'s property, but only after extended negotiations with the court and with much help from *Nádasdy*. Had she been able to present her husband's testament, she would have won her case more easily. Also, *Majláth*'s widow set her heart on retrieving at least the body of her husband, and in a letter of June 26, 1551, she tells her brother about a "Greek" who had brought back the body of a mutual acquaintance. The man had visited her and promised to bring back *Majláth*'s remains for a Hungarian burial. But that promise too remained unfulfilled. In a letter, dated September 12, 1552, she repeats in desperation, "had they brought him back, he would be still alive" (*sic*).

Mrs. *Nádasdy* also wrote to *Rüstem Pasha* asking for her husband's body, but the letter was not delivered. The men "Ferencz, the priest, and the Jew, Abraham", claimed that the pasha wanted to see money before making any business deal⁶¹). She was told to wait until the ambassadors deliver the annual taxes to the sultan and then to enlist their help again. She tells her brother about an elaborate plan for hiding the body in a cupboard and smuggling the nailed cupboard out of the empire.

Vrančić and *Zay* were carrying tax money to the Porte, and *Dernschwam* traveled with them. Earlier *Vrančić* also refers to *Nádasdy*'s concern about his brother-in-law. In a letter to *Mihály Csáky*, he writes:

Nullum ei praestatur gratius officium, quam cum de ipsius Majladi vita atque carceribus scribitur, quem habet anima sua sane carriorem⁶²).

It is indeed plausible that *Nádasdy* entrusted *Dernschwam* with the delicate task of finding out more about the fate of his brother-in-law. Since the fiasco with *Malvezzi*, he probably had decided not to turn to official representatives, but rather to choose a safer person with no political alliances, someone who, while not a Hungarian, had knowledge about Hungary and the language and whose discretion he could trust. *Dernschwam* would have fulfilled such requirements. In addition, as a retired man, he had time to travel, and since he was known for his interest in antiquities, he would have been thrilled to go on such a journey in the company of the ambassadors. Of course, a trip like this

⁶⁰) The *Daczós* were an old Sekler family. One member, *Péter*, accompanied *István Báthory* to Poland (1576); another, *János*, was *Báthory*'s ambassador to the pasha of Temesvár (1575). Nothing is known about *Máté*.

⁶¹) Letter of June 26, 1551.

⁶²) Horváth, *Gróf Nádasdy Tamás*, p. 141.

had to be presented to the world as a private undertaking at his own expense.

Dernschwam first met *Nádasdy* before Mohács and again later in 1530 when the *Fuggers'* factor, *Conrad Mayr*, approached *Paulus Várdai*, then archbishop of Ezergetom, and *Nádasdy*, asking for their support of *Dernschwam's* mission regarding the *Fugger* salt mines in Transylvania⁶³). The *Fuggers* and the *Nádasdys* had an amicable relationship. At *Anna Sluny's* wedding to *Szalay*, organized and paid for by *Nádasdy*, the *Fuggers*, *Vrančić* and *Zay* were invited⁶⁴). While certainly not the only candidate, *Nádasdy* could be considered such an influential person who, owing to his contacts with *Vrančić*, could have easily arranged for *Dernschwam* to accompany the legates. Representing an entire faction of Hungarian nobles, *Nádasdy* was also eager to receive trustworthy general information about Turkey.

On his way back to Vienna, *Dernschwam* spent time in Turkish-occupied Buda. He describes the city's life and the condition of the abandoned houses and public buildings, including the state of the churches which had been turned into mosques. Such information, while of relatively little interest for non-Hungarians, would have been eagerly received by a person like *Nádasdy* who had been barred from visiting Buda since 1543, when it fell into Turkish hands. *Nádasdy* was deeply interested in the fate of all Hungarian captives. In a letter from *Busbecq* to *Nádasdy*, the legate promises that he will help in the case of two captives, *Thomas* ("literatus") and *Antal Backy* (*Baychy*). It seems that at the time of *Busbecq's* communication *Thomas* had escaped, but the other was still in captivity⁶⁵).

It is equally possible that *Dernschwam* was eager to work for a Hungarian nobleman whom he had known and respected for decades and whose Protestant affiliations were widely known. Two letters to *Nádasdy* from *Melanchthon* prove the latter's interest in contemporary Protestant culture and in the Reformation. In his first letter *Melanchthon* recommends *Mátyás Dévai Bíró* and *János Sylvester* to *Nádasdy's* attention⁶⁶); in the second he asks *Nádasdy's* support for *János Drugner*, a Transylvanian, whose home was occupied by the Turks. *Nádasdy* indeed supported *Sylvester*, whose "Grammatica

⁶³) Wenzel, *A Fuggerek jelentősége . . .*, p. 185.

⁶⁴) Árpád Károlyi – József Szalay, *Nádasdy Tamás nádor családi levelezése*. Budapest 1882, p. 51–52. *István Majláth* and *János Szalay* were *Nádasdy's* closest friends. While *Nádasdy* married *Ursula*, one of *Majláth's* relatives, *Anna*, married *Szalay*. Allegedly the three young men took an oath of brotherhood. See Martinus Kovachich, *Scriptores rerum Hungarorum minores hactenus inediti*. Buda 1798, I; p. 137. *Verbőczy*, possibly because of his court case against *Majláth* (1548), was not on the guest list.

⁶⁵) O. Gh. de Busbecq, *Legationes Turcicae Epistolae*, III, p. 40.

⁶⁶) Admittedly, having read *Sylvester's* translation of the New Testament, *Dernschwam* made furious comments about the scholar and his patron (see Zsuzsanna Hermann, *Hans Dernschwam könyvei között*, p. 174). However,

Hungaro-latina” (1539) and his translation of the New Testament (1541) were printed at Sárvár at *Nádasdy*’s expense. His own secretary and first biographer, *Gábor Szentgyörgyi*, also received his degree in Wittenberg⁶⁷).

As shown, *Nádasdy* was, in addition to being a political and military leader, a person proud of his humanist training. He spoke several languages – among them German, Latin and Italian – and had studied Greek. *Dernschwam* shared with his possible “client” the love of the humanities. He was not merely a businessman: his diary reflects intellectual and scholarly ambitions similar to some of the renaissance luminaries. Among the famous humanists, *Dernschwam* corresponded with *Sebastian Münster*, *Joachim Camerarius*, *Johannes Cuspinianus*, *Caspar Bruschius* and *Hieronymus Wolf*⁶⁸).

Admittedly, *Dernschwam* does not devote much discussion to *Majláth*. He mentions that he and *Török* were for a long time imprisoned in the *Jedikule*: “Alda is Torek Balindt vnd Mailadt lange zeit verwart gewesen in eysen.”⁶⁹)

But instead of compassion, *Dernschwam* has only contempt for the two prisoners and uses them as examples of those who, having sold out their country, got their “just reward” from the enemy.

Aber der turk wird inen gleich denselben lon geben, wie dem Maylad, Torek Balind, Werweczy und andern, die vormaint, der turk wurd sy zw Ofen und in Ungern gubernirer lassen pleiben; die alle in gefengnus gestorben⁷⁰).

This indeed speaks against *Nádasdy* as *Dernschwam*’s possible client; however, it is not clear how the baron felt about his brother-in-law by the time he had been captured. It is plausible that he wanted to get information about the exact time and manner of *Majláth*’s death, or even to arrange for his body to be returned for burial, merely as a favor to his sister.

Also, if one accepts the above to be *Dernschwam*’s “hidden agenda”, one must also assume that his report regarding *Majláth* was written separately and delivered to *Nádasdy* in secret. *Dernschwam* and the legates left for Istanbul shortly after the date of Mrs. *Majláth*’s last letter about her husband’s

the exact date of those marginal notes is not known. *Dernschwam* could have made them several years prior to his trip.

Dévai, called the “Hungarian Luther”, was persecuted by the Inquisition. His work “*Orthographia Ungarica*” (1539), influenced many sixteenth-century Bible translations. *Sylvester*’s most important work, “*Grammatica Hungaro-latina*”, renders the first systematized, descriptive grammar of Hungarian. For more on early Hungarian Protestantism, see the series *Humanizmus és Reformáció*, edited by Tibor Klaniczay, Budapest, 1973ff; and János Horváth, *A reformáció jegyében*. Budapest 1952.

⁶⁷) He became *Nádasdy*’s secretary in the second half of the 1550s. He is also the author of a number of Latin elegies.

⁶⁸) Babinger, Hans Dernschwams Tagebuch, p. XXVII.

⁶⁹) Ibidem, p. 51.

⁷⁰) Ibidem, p. 82

death. *Dernschwam* returned to Vienna on August 11, 1555, and while there is no mention about *Majláth*, on January 15, 1556, *Anna* writes the following note to her brother in her own hand:

... Further, I understand from your letter that you have taken care of what I have begged you to do; may God help me and my children that we can repay you for your help⁷¹).

By 1555 a fifty-fifty parity was established between the two revaling Christian creeds in Augsburg, and the *Fuggers* returned. But *Charles V* abdicated in 1556, and this signaled the end of the greatest period in the company's existence. After the death of *Anton* (1560), the two heirs, his son *Marcus* and his nephew *Hans Jacob*, were better known as patrons of the arts and learning than for their business genius. The War of Independence against Spain ruined trade in Antwerp and Brussels. It is estimated that, with the Habsburg losses, by the middle of the seventeenth century the *Fuggers* had lost about eight million ducats. But this is not the period under discussion.

Nádasdy's career reached its zenith in the 1550s. He was the key figure at the Pozsony Diet in 1552 and at Sopron in 1553. Therefore it was no surprise when at the Sopron Diet on April 15, 1554, he was appointed palatine. *Nádasdy* was the strategist of the successful battles against the Turks at Sziget and Babocsa in 1556. His career never suffered a setback, not even in 1561 when he got into conflict with *Ferdinand* over succession. However, by then *Nádasdy* was severely ill; he died at the age of 64 (June 2, 1562). He raised his family to rank and wealth and was the prototypical renaissance politician of that part of Europe⁷²).

Dernschwam spent his remaining years in a number of mining towns in northern Hungary and had the title *Oberzimeter*, i. e., chief gold-exchanger. His last known residence was Körmöcbánya (Cremnica, Czechoslovakia). He probably died before 1569 because in February of that year his nephew, *Marcus Dernschwam*, received five hundred florins for his uncle's library, which he had sold to the Austrian court.

⁷¹) Továbbá értem az kd leveléből, hogy az, miről én kenyeregtem valaknek, kd gon(d)ját viselte, ki adja Isten, hogy mind gyermekeimmel egyetemben megszolgálhassuk tek kdnek (Á. Károlyi–J. Szalay, *Nádasdy nádor* ...).

⁷²) *Anna Majláth* survived her brother. She wrote to Mrs. *Nádasdy* on July 23, 1562, shortly after her brother's death, lamenting over their common loss.