

# THESIS OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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## Relationship of John Szapolya and Henry VIII

### 1. *Circumscription of the matter*

The young Louis II was the King of Hungary before the battle. He was a member of the Polish Jagello-dynasty. Wladislaw II's son born 1 July 1506 in the castle of Buda. Louis's mother – the French princess and Hungarian Queen – Anne of Candale died after the difficult birth (on 26 July). Louis's father lived to see, when his son was crowned as the King of Bohemian (in 1508) and Hungarian (in 1509). The nine-year-old child king engaged to Mary of Habsburg. Louis II accedes to the throne at the age of 10 in 1516, upon the death of his father, Wladislaw II. The young king became orphaned, nobody cared for him and he was unaided. Sigismund I King of Poland tried to withdraw him from orientation of Habsburg, but the Polish king was far from Louis's court.

The Turkish menace increased year by year. The treasury of Kingdom was empty, the gallant warriors of the border ran away from the royal palaces because of the back pay. Suleyman the Magnificent with his great army captured the fortress of Belgrade in 1521. The Hungarian army passively stood at field of Mohács (ca. 135 miles from Belgrade). In the Kingdom of Hungary were hostilities between the gentrys and aristocrats. Some privileged person looted the state free of inhibitions, while the royal court starved.

The danger of Turkish offensive grew from strength to strength. Louis called the Christian princes and the pope to help of Hungary, but they were busy because of the Italian war. Henry VIII, the English King sent subsidy with Sir John Wallop in September month of 1526, but too late. Louis II was defeated by Suleyman's army at field of Mohács on 29 August 1526. The young king died after the battle. Most likely he drown in a marsh. Henry VIII got to know quickly, what happened in the Hungarian Kingdom. The court of Henry received many letters, reports and information about the situation of Hungary, but many of them were false sometimes.

Louis II sent some letters to Henry VIII before the battle, in which he implored help, however the English King had very important cases in Italy. Henry's ambassadors followed with attention most of all the eventful Italian cases too. Louis II encamped at Tolna, waiting for aid from Poland, Bohemia, Germany, England, but his army came dilatorily. Lot of Hungarian nobles still weren't under arms, example John Szapolya vaivode of Transylvania was late as well. Louis's army made raise difficulties against the enemy's crossing.

The events in Hungary shortly influenced on the Italian war, because Ferdinand of Habsburg entered into competition with John Szapolya for the royal power. Therefore the Archduke redeployed his Italian army on Bohemia, and later on Hungary. He explained that with his army wanted to fight against the Turk — and this was promised for the Hungarian nobles too —, but Ferdinand did not lifted a finger in this case, he was satisfied with occupation of Hungary, and his ambassadors initiated armistice negotiations with Suleyman.

## *2. Assumptions*

- John Szapolya might depend on Henry VIII's court in his consolidation plan;
- The divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon might influence the Anglo-Hungarian relationship;
- Henry VIII might supply secretly his Hungarian allied;
- The English court might intend the subsidy for John Szapolya, and this grant had not given only for defend against the Turk but also against Ferdinand of Habsburg;
- John Szapolya and Henry VIII are excommunicated by the Pope, this case might cause community of fate between them.

## *3. Results of the research*

Sir John Wallop started from London to Hungary in early September 1526 to meet with the King of Hungary and the Hungarian nobles. Wallop's task was the permanent intelligence about the true news of Hungary. He direct reported to Wolsey. Wallop arrived to Antwerp in the middle of September, and then he went on toward inland of Germany. Mary of Habsburg, the dowager queen could issue order to search for the corpse of her husband just

after the retreat of the Turkish (towards the middle of October). The dead body was found by the Bohemians royal chamberlain of Louis II. In the middle of October in 1526, the death of the young king was turned into obvious to all the world by Francis Sárffy's report, which fact is misdated in the Hungarian historiography. The young King was buried at Székesfehérvár.

The Polish court could not know Louis was dead at that time. Poland renewed the relations with John Szapolya — after Louis had lost the battle of Mohács —, Sigismund I sent a letter to his nephew in which he wrote that he could rely on Szapolya as onetime relative. John took the opportunity and he had crowned himself king on 11 November 1526 and made a promise to the Polish King that Sigismund August would succeeded him on the throne – if he would died without any male heir. Hereupon the Polish helped John I King of Hungary a lot: organized peace conferences for him; gave a well-educated diplomat to him as an assistant (Hieronim Łaski) and supported with army as well against Ferdinand of Habsburg. The Archduke kept up a claim to the Hungarian Kingdom. (Eventually the Jagello's entered into a domestic relationship with the Habsburg dynasty in 1515. This agreement practised influence in 1526 of — not only — Poland — but also — Hungary.)

A league was formed at Cognac on 22 May 1526, composed France, England, the Papacy, Venice, Milan and Florence. John I joined the league on 2 July 1527. So the Kingdom of John in King John's days was allied with England. John I called Henry VIII to help of him against the Turk and later against Ferdinand of Habsburg. Henry VIII and his court recognized the Hungarian situation that the Emperor would be weakened in Italy when the Turk would launch an attack against Austria. The French King and the League took advantage of the opportunity. John I of Szapolya, the newly elected and crowned King of Hungary, wrote to Krzysztof Szydłowiecki chancellor on 11 November 1526. This letter arrived at London somehow certainly from Poland. Henry VIII made up his mind to that he would send 25,000 gold to the Hungarian King. But who which one of them? To the Archduke or to the vaivode? That was a very difficult question, but the English court better preferred policy of John I than Ferdinand.

The Emperor Charles V confirmed Lee that the Bohemians had accepted the Archduke to be their King. Wallop met Ferdinand, and the English ambassador wrote about his meeting to Wolsey chancellor. That was a very interesting and important meeting. So the King of Bohemia stopped Wallop, and it was obvious that the English ambassador was a persona non grata at Prague. Wallop realized that he had no chance whatever to depart from Bohemia to Hungary or Poland. He corresponded in a great secret with John Szapolya, because

Ferdinand's court shadowed him. Wallop wrote to Wolsey, that "if the king of Beme (see: Ferdinand) makes war, the king of Hungary will be obliged to make peace with the Turk, and ask his aid, which he is quite sure of obtaining, but he says he will not make peace unless compelled." Under the circumstances, Wallop handed the aid to the Polish King or John Szapolya. It looks like, but in secret.

The English Cardinal was taken aback, when he met with John Szapolya's ambassador in England. No one informed him that an ambassador would arrive in England (from Hungary). William Knight also met Hieronim Łaski, the ambassador of the King of Hungary. But these days Ferdinand's army at Tokay defeated John Szapolya on 27 September 1527. Ferdinand of Habsburg acceded to the throne after defeating John I. Ferdinand I divided in two parts the Hungarian Kingdom with his German and Spanish soldiers. John of Szapolya made an alliance with the Turk. He was excommunicated by Clement VII in 1530. Henry VIII was also excommunicated by the Pope because of his scandalous royal divorce.

John of Szapolya wanted to marry with someone of his alliance king's daughters and Henry VIII offered Mary of Tudor (later named Bloody Mary, Queen of England) to him. But John I was chosen Izabella of Jagello, the Polish princess. John died in 1540, all his life he was in excellent relationship with the English court.

#### *4. The author's publications in this subject*

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