



Administration and War Finance: Extraordinary Taxes in Hungary at the Beginning of the Reign of King Matthias (1458–1466)*

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In the first decade of the reign of King Matthias Corvinus, extraordinary taxes were imposed to provide revenues with which the state could recover the Holy Crown, fund the campaigns against “Czech” mercenaries who were causing upheavals in the northern parts of the kingdom, and make preparations for imminent conflicts in the south because of the continuous threat of Ottoman attacks. The extraordinary taxes were mostly used for military purposes, more specifically, to finance the wars and military campaigns against the Czech warbands and the Turks. However, the manner in which these taxes were administered varied considerably, as did their scope. During the period in question, there were particular taxes for some counties or rather regions (especially for the northeastern) and countrywide levies. Furthermore, it was possible for the nobility to be granted an exemption from the obligation to serve in the military in person or provide soldiers for the military (the so-called *militia portalis*) by paying an extraordinary tax (and thus essentially purchasing this exemption). There was a close connection between the administration of the extraordinary tax and the process of recruitment. Members of the royal court who served as officers in the royal army often took part in the taxation as tax collectors, and they probably used these taxes directly to pay their mercenaries.

Keywords: Taxation, extraordinary tax, medieval Hungarian Kingdom, Matthias Corvinus, *militia portalis*, military obligation of the nobility, royal campaigns

When Hungarian King Matthias Hunyadi took the throne in 1458, the most pressing problem he faced was not simply the need to regain the Holy Crown, which was essential to his claim to power and important as a symbol that would ensure some measure of stability, but also to end the rule of the “Czech” mercenaries in the so-called Northern Parts (*Partes superiores*) of the kingdom.¹

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1 See Pálosfalvi, “Szegedtől Újvárig,” 352–53. I use the term Northern Parts to refer essentially the northern region of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. It was in this region that Jan Jiskra established his influence, and the counties or occasionally designated groups of counties were under the jurisdiction of the captain generals of the Northern Parts. Horváth, “A Felső-Részek,” 935–36.

Furthermore, the threat of Ottoman incursion remained a constant issue. In order to finance the campaigns, pay his soldiers, and regain control of the castles (and the crown) by paying the ransoms which had been put on them, he needed money, money, and more money, the primary source of which was various taxes. In this essay, I examine the methods used to finance war between the accession of Matthias to the throne and the treasury reform of 1467, including an array of extraordinary taxes. The year 1466 and the beginning of 1467 can also be seen as a pivotal moment in terms of military finances, as the later sources no longer make any mention of the captains in the Northern Parts,² and it was also a turning point in Matthias' policy towards the Turks.³

The *lucrum camerae* or chamber's profit, which was the usual annual tax in the kingdom, was of course continuously collected during the period in question at the rate of one-fifth of one gold forint per serf plot,⁴ and the tax was usually levied and collected at the beginning of the year.⁵ This tax also played an important role in military financing before and after the launch of a campaign, with individual barons and knights of the royal court often receiving the tribute from certain counties to pay for their military expenses.⁶ The ordinary and extraordinary taxes paid by the royal towns also played a key role in providing finances for war. The cities contributed to the campaigns with military equipment, soldiers, money, and various extraordinary taxes, but they also paid extraordinary taxes to the Holy Crown.⁷ The extraordinary taxes levied on the serfs of the kingdom were also generally justified with reference to the military situation (the Czech and Turkish questions), and the recovery of the Holy Crown was another matter of national importance for which taxes were offered.

The extraordinary tax is most commonly referred to in the sources from the period as *contributio* (contribution), the term *subsidiium* (aid) being applied to the extraordinary portal tax from 1468.⁸ It was often simply referred to as *taxa* (tax),

2 Horváth, "A Felső-Részek," 950.

3 Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis*, 228.

4 July 20, 1464. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseb-buszjita mozgalmak*, 446–47.

5 January 1, 1466. MNL OL, DL 28 285. See December 17, 1447. MNL OL, DL 31 570. Additional data: January 10, 1458 (Sopron County): Házi, *Sopron*, vol. 1/4, 255. February 28, 1461 (Szabolcs County): *Zichy* 10:137. February 14, 1463. (Vas County): MNL OL, DF 262 566. February 10, 19, 1465. (Zemplén County): MNL OL, DF 234 787, 223 087.

6 Kubinyi, "A Mátyás-kori államszervezet," 98–99. See Pálosfalvi, "Monarchia vagy rendi állam," 147.

7 Kubinyi, "Városaink háborús terhei"; Kádas, "Késmárk visszavétele," 24–26.

8 For instance, to the *subsidiium*: December 1471: MNL OL, DL 45 482. December 16, 1474. MNL OL, DL 17 628. July 10, 1477: MNL OL, DF 270 404. The term *contributio* was also in use, for instance March 2, 1475. MNL OL, DL 85 05 4. May 30, 1475. MNL OL, DL 17 696.

however, a term which was also used as a synonym for *contributio*.⁹ The levying of a *contributio* was very common in the period in question, with records of some kind of extraordinary contribution, usually to provide financing for military campaigns, surviving from every year between 1458 and 1467. In some cases, the sources indicate that several different taxes were levied in a single year. However, though one might be tempted to associate this with King Matthias' burdensome tax squeeze, it is worth first taking a closer look at the individual taxes levied. In addition to the nationwide taxes which were levied on all counties, there were also frequent individual taxes covering only certain counties or groups of counties. This was particularly the case in the Northern Parts, where the county nobility repeatedly offered the captain general some kind of extraordinary contribution to suppress the Czech presence and ultimately drive the Czechs from the region. Also, on many occasions during the period in question, the county nobility offered sums of money in exchange for not having to take part in the military campaigns personally (noble insurrection) or not having to send soldiers, the number of which depended on the size of the nobleman's estates (*militia portalis*).¹⁰ The sources which contain records of the various taxes that were collected are uneven from one area to another, depending on the family or town archives where these non-legal documents were held. Perhaps not surprisingly, in the case of the northeastern region and Szabolcs County many such sources have survived, while for other regions we have only scattered bits of information.

Regional Taxes Levied in the Northern Parts

The "Czech" mercenaries arrived in the Northern Parts during the civil war of the 1440s, fighting in the service of Jan Jiskra, the *ispán* (*comes*) of Sáros,¹¹ who had been appointed captain by Queen Elizabeth in 1440. The influence of Jiskra and his captains extended from roughly Zólyom to Zemplén and Ung, and they commanded many of the castles.¹² When Jiskra refused to submit to

9 October 18, 1459. MNL OL, DL 44 929. September 8, 1465. *Sopron*, vol. 1/5, 203.

10 The *militia portalis* was first decreed by King Sigismund and the Diet of Temesvár (today Timișoara, Romania) in 1397. The decree obliged the nobility of the country to provide soldiers depending on the sizes of their estates, according to a predetermined quota. This quota at the time was one archer for every 20 serfs, but later the number to which the nobility was held changed frequently. Bárány et al., "A késő középkor hadtörténete," 237–39; Borosy, *A telekkatonaság*, 15–63.

11 The *ispán* was the head of the county authority appointed by the king.

12 Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-busziita mozgalmak*, 182–84.

Matthias in 1458 but recognized instead the Polish King Casimir IV and then the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III as the Hungarian king, Matthias had to reconquer the castles and settlements that had fallen into Czech hands with arms and money.¹³ Jiskra finally surrendered and recognized Matthias as king in the spring of 1462, but some Czech captains and mercenaries continued to hold sway in the region, and thus the campaigns for control of the territory (and its castles) continued for a few more years.¹⁴

Military operations in the Northern Parts were led by persons holding the rank of captain and captain general. Richárd Horváth has examined this institution in considerable detail, including its financial aspects. His research reveals that local sources, meaning incomes from county and towns taxes, were often used to finance military operations and pay soldiers in the Northern Parts.¹⁵ For the most part, this meant that certain sums from the ordinary and extraordinary taxes of the counties concerned were paid to the captains or a captain received the entire county tax to cover his expenses. In August 1461, for example, Imre Szapolyai, the royal treasurer and captain general, gave receipts to two tax collectors in Sáros for the 106.5 gold forints he had received from them to pay his soldiers and for the 76 gold forint paid to Captain István Szapolyai by the tax collectors during the siege of Újvár (today Hanigovský hrad, Slovakia).¹⁶ In addition to the monies thus provided by the county of Sáros, the one forint tax collected in the neighboring Szepes was also used to pay Szapolyai's soldiers, and in September 1461, King Matthias ordered that the entire tax income of Sáros and Szepes be paid to István Szapolyai.¹⁷ At the diet in Buda in March 1461, an extraordinary tax was levied on every county of the kingdom for the benefit of the public to provide funds for military campaigns against the enemies of the country.¹⁸ This national tax was also used to finance military operations in the Northern Parts (the sieges of the castles of Sáros [today Hrad Šariš, Slovakia] and Újvár).¹⁹

13 Pálosfalvi, "Mátyás: az ország koronázatlan királya," 44, 46. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-buszjita mozgalmak*, 311–13.

14 Horváth, "A Felső Részek kapitánysága," 930.

15 Ibid., 947–48.

16 August 23, 1461. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 56.

17 September 14, 1461. MNL OL, DL 70 261; March 12, 1462. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 58–59.

18 April 19, 1461. *Zichy*, vol. 10, 144; May 5, 1461. MNL OL, DF 275 441.

19 The tax was of course also intended to provide funds for the protection of territories to the south, and in March of that year the king sent Péter Szakolyi, a royal captain to the southern regions, and Szakolyi also took part in the collection of the tax. *Zichy*, vol. 10, 139. See Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis*, 203.

In addition, the lords, prelates, and nobles of the counties concerned in the Northern Parts sometimes offered special taxes to the captain general. It is worth mentioning the decisions reached by the 1454 assembly in Terebes (in Zemplén County, today Trebišov, Slovakia) as a kind of precursor to such extraordinary taxes. The barons and nobles gathered at Terebes made Osvát Rozgonyi captain and charged him with the task of restoring order. They levied a tax of a quarter-forint per plot of land on their serfs to pay his army. The administration of the tax was carried out by the counties through elected tax collectors, and the counties were allowed to dispose of any remaining monies after the army had been paid.²⁰

In the spring of 1459, an extraordinary tax was again levied in the Northern Parts. At the end of March 1459, Master of the Doorkeepers Simon Cudar and Judge Royal László Pálóci were appointed to the head of the army, both as captains general.²¹ The two captains levied a tax in the counties of the Northern Parts which they referred to with the term *contributio exercitua*lis. This tax was one gold forint per four serf plots, or again, a quarter-forint contribution per plot.²² The sources reveal that this tax was also offered by the prelates, barons, and nobles of the counties of the Northern Parts for the defense of their part of the kingdom, and it was used primarily to pay and supply the soldiers defending the town of Eperjes (today Prešov, Slovakia).²³ The task of collecting this tax was left to the liegemen²⁴ of the captain generals, which in the case of Ung County meant Zsigmond Csicseri, a loyal adherent to Pálóci, while in Sáros, Simon Cudar was in charge of the tax on the estates belonging to the Bártfa estate (today Bardejov, Slovakia).²⁵

The spring-summer campaign of 1459 ended with a short peace, but in the meantime the Czech mercenary captain Jan Talafúz, Jiskra's lieutenant, built a fortress at Komlós (today Chmeľovec, Slovakia) on the Tapoly River. Thus, in October of that year, the nobles of Zemplén went to war again. At the request of the people of Zemplén, the king made László Pálóci the leader of the army

20 November 22, 1454. *Hazai okmánytár*, vol. 7, 470–75; Kádas, “Az adószedés megyei kezelése,” 137.

21 March 27, 1459. MNL OL, DF 270 349.

22 May 10, 1459. MNL OL, DL 31 711.

23 July 19, 1459. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-busziita mozgalmak*, 422–24.

24 These liegemen were, more specifically, so-called “familiáris.” The “familiáris” was a sort of vassal or liegeman to a feudal lord in Hungary, but unlike vassals in the feudal hierarchies of Western Europe, the “familiáris” was not necessarily rewarded with estates but rather was paid in money or in kind, and he was able to break the relationship with his lord if he no longer saw it as in his interests.

25 April 23 and 25, 1459. MNL OL, DF 213 795, 213 796.

and ordered the towns of Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia), Bártfa, and Eperjes to join the campaign with their troops.²⁶ The noblemen of the counties that had gone to war with Pálóci offered the captain general a new tax to provide money to pay the soldiers, and Pálóci sent his own liegemen to the counties to impose and collect this tax.²⁷ In April 1460, Pálóci and the barons who had joined him in the campaign (István Perényi and Bertalan and István Homonnai) reached an agreement with the Czech captains of Komlós to destroy the castle and to keep a ceasefire until Christmas.²⁸ The captains of Komlós concluded this truce with five counties (Abaúj, Sáros, Szepes, Zemplén, and Ung) and three cities (Kassa, Bártfa, and Lőcse, today Levoča, Slovakia). Their troops were allowed to take part in the campaign. Pálóci and the others promised the Czechs 4,250 gold forints, 250 of which were immediately turned over to the Czechs, while the remainder was paid in installments, with the last installment to be paid four weeks later. This money may well have been generated from the tax.

In early July 1460, some kind of tax was collected in Sáros County to pay the Czechs (*ad solutionem Bohemorum*). The brief *missilis* offers no other information concerning the purpose of this tax, though we know that it was levied on all estates, including those of Bártfa, by order of King Matthias.²⁹ By this time, King Matthias was personally waging war against the Czechs, and at the time at which the letter was composed and in the preceding weeks, he had been laying siege to the Hussite fortress built in Pata (today Gyöngyöspata, Hungary) in Heves County.³⁰ The aforementioned charter, however, makes no mention of military action against the Czechs but refers, rather, to payments made to them. Thus, it is more likely that the document is related to the abovementioned payment to the captains of Komlós or to the ransom for the redemption or destruction of another fortress.³¹

In the Northern Parts of the country, the national tax may also have taken a distinctive form. The monies were generally used in this part of the country to finance war or to redeem castles in Bohemian hands. In November 1458, at

26 *Bártfa*, vol. 1, 179–80 (nos. 1141, 1145, 1146).

27 November 15, 1459. MNL OL, DL 31 728. In November 1459, an extraordinary tax was levied in Zala County in the other half of the country. November 10, 1459. MNL OL, DL 15 418. The two taxes may have been independent of each other, however.

28 April 15, 1460. *Diplomatarium*, 66–69. The peace talks may have begun as early as December: December 19, 1459. *Bártfa*, vol. 1, 181 (no. 1157).

29 July 4, 1460. MNL OL, DF 213 904.

30 Horváth, *Itineraria*, 66.

31 See June 6, 1460. MNL OL, DF 213 898; July 29, 1460. MNL OL, DF 213 917.

the beginning of the reign of King Matthias, the extraordinary contribution, which was originally issued to cover the costs of the military operations in Serbia against the Ottomans,³² was definitely collected in this region for the defense of the Northern Parts.³³ The money was presumably used to cover a military campaign against the Czechs, which was led by Bishop László Hédervári of Eger and Master of the Doorkeepers Simon Cudar.³⁴ In 1462 the extraordinary tax to reobtain the Holy Crown was also used to redeem Késmárk (today Kežmarok, Slovakia) and other places in the counties in the Northern Parts.³⁵

In 1464, however, another tax was levied in the Northern Parts which was certainly not the same as the tax paid in the same year by the nobility to avoid having to serve in the military campaigns (I address this in detail in the next chapter), but which, rather, was levied in addition to it. As had been the case in 1454 and probably 1459, it was offered by the local nobility of the counties which belonged to the Kassa chamber district, this time for Captain István Szapolyai, who could then use it to hire mercenaries. The offer was in fact a response to a specific military threat, as in the autumn of that year, Czech soldiers threatened the Szepesség region and occupied the monastery of Stóla (today Štôla, Slovakia).³⁶ This extraordinary tax amounted to one gold forint per five serfs and was presumably collected by the county nobles.³⁷

These regional taxes (1454, 1459, 1464) offered by the barons, bishops, and nobles of the Northern Parts usually did not amount to a whole forint, but rather were contributions of a quarter or a fifth of a forint. They were intended to provide finances for a specific purpose, a specific military campaign, and they were also intended to be used in a specific area, the Northern Parts, and in particular for campaigns and undertakings in the eastern counties (or at least, sources regarding these campaigns and undertakings have survived). Essentially, these extraordinary taxes were intended to cover the wages of soldiers fighting in the armies of the captains in the Northern Parts. They were “supplementary” taxes, but in addition to them, a share of the national tax collected from the region was also diverted to cover “regional” purposes, for instance in 1462. The administration of the tax was also carried out in different ways in these few cases.

32 Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis*, 196–97.

33 November 12, 1458. MNL OL, DL 31 696.

34 October 3, 1458. MNL OL, DF 213 732.

35 Kádas, “Késmárk visszavétele,” 15–16. See Pálosfalvi, “Koronázástól koronázásig,” 155–57.

36 September 14, 1464. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 98–99; December 13, 1464. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 100–1.

37 December 30, 1464. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 103.

The sources clearly reveal that in 1454, the counties chose their tax collectors themselves, and this was probably also the case in 1464. In 1459, in contrast, the tax was collected by the captain generals' men.

The “War Tax”

These extraordinary taxes, thus, were specifically “war taxes,” and they were generally used to pay mercenaries and feed soldiers. In essence, the same could be said of all the extraordinary portal taxes of the period, probably including even the 1462 *contributio*, which, admittedly, was levied nationally to redeem the Holy Crown in principle, but the monies were probably used in the end for military supplies in Transylvania to secure the position of Wallachia.³⁸ However, in the secondary literature, one finds references to a specific “war tax” for this period, the so-called *taxa exercitualis*, which was also used as war money.³⁹ In his seminal study on the state organization of the period, András Kubinyi wrote the following about this tax: “the surviving sources contain data referring to a war tax (*taxa exercitualis*) that was levied five times between 1459 and 1471 which was not the same thing as ‘aid’ (*subsidium*) but which, rather, was used to cover the costs of providing soldiers or, more precisely, the costs incurred by the nobility in exchange for not having to provide soldiers according to the size of their estates for the royal army.”⁴⁰ Kubinyi did not aim to analyze this type of tax in detail. Rather, the contention cited above is offered merely as a general, summary statement. This contention can be modified on several points. As the sources from the five years cited (1459, 1463, 1464, 1467, and 1471) clearly reveal, the use of terminology was hardly consistent. The term *taxa exercitualis* occurs in only two cases, and these taxes are referred to as *contributio exercitualis* or simply *contributio* or perhaps *subsidium* (after 1468), similar to the “classical” extraordinary taxes.⁴¹ Furthermore, the sources cited by Kubinyi for the most

38 Pálosfalvi, “Mátyás: az ország koronázatlan királya,” 48; Horváth, “Mátyás és Havasalföld,” 5–6.

39 Bárány et al., “A késő középkor hadtörténete,” 239.

40 “1459-től 1471-ig bezárólag öt alkalommal maradt fenn adat hadi adóra (*taxa exercitualis*), amely nem azonos a ‘segéllyel,’ hanem a katonáskodás, pontosabban a telekkatonaság megváltására szolgált.” Kubinyi, “A Mátyás-kori államszervezet,” 110.

41 May 10, 1459. MNL OL, DL 31 711. July 19, 1459. Tóth-Szabó, *A cseh-buszgita mozgalmak*, 422–24. July 18, 1463. MNL OL, DL 59 498. June 21, 25, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 74–75. September 24, 1463. MNL OL, DL 31 811. April 15, 1464. MNL OL, DL 67 000. June 29, 1464. MNL OL, DL 74 679. 35. July 18, 1464. *Zichy*, vol. 10, 319. November 9, 1467. MNL OL, DL 67 837. December 1471: MNL OL, DL 65 105. DL 45 482. The term *taxa exercitualis* was already used in the case of the extraordinary tax of 1443. István

part did not concern (or not only) taxes paid by the nobility to avoid having to provide soldiers depending on the size of their estates.⁴² One of these taxes was the aforementioned extraordinary tax collected in the Northern Parts in the spring of 1459, which, although it was intended for a specific war purpose (the payment of mercenaries stationed in Eperjes), was not used in exchange for the military service or the *militia portalis*. The 1467 source refers to a tax paid by the Romanians of Fogaras, while the data from 1471 refer to the tax offered by the nobility to avoid having to participate in the military campaigns themselves.⁴³

There were earlier examples of the nobility paying taxes to avoid having to take part in the military campaigns themselves. In the summer of 1460, King Matthias personally led a campaign against the Czech fortifications in Heves, Borsod, and Gömör Counties. The royal army won a victory at Pata (in Heves County) in July and then captured Sajónémeti (in Borsod County) in August and Serke (in Gömör County, today Širkovce, Slovakia) in September.⁴⁴ The battles continued in October and November in Abaúj and Sáros Counties in the north until late November,⁴⁵ when the Transylvanian Voivode Sebestyén Rozgonyi, the army's captain general, concluded a ceasefire with the Czech captain of Újvár.⁴⁶ The nobility of Szabolcs County also took part in the campaign at the order of the king, and from the Pata military camp, the king called on the nobility of Szabolcs and ordered that each nobleman join the campaign in person with their cavalry and infantry without delay.⁴⁷ At the end of August, however, during the siege of Sajónémeti, the nobles of Szabolcs decided to return home, and instead of continuing the war, they promised the king a one-forint tax for successful battles against the Czechs. This tax, which was clearly offered as a substitute for participation in the fighting, is referred to in the sources as a one-forint *contributio*, like any other extraordinary tax.

King Matthias sent his tax collectors to collect the promised contribution, of course, and he called on the county authorities and especially Miklós Várdai,

Bicskele of Zelnávár, who collected taxes in the areas south of Sava River, used this term to refer to the tax administered by László Töttös of Bátmonostor in Slavonia. June 10, 1443. *Zichy*, vol. 12, 197. The decree issued by the national diet, however, referred to this tax only as a *contributio*. March 1443: *DRH*, vol. 1, 318.

42 Kubinyi, "A Mátyás-kori államszervezet," 144, note 394.

43 November 9, 1467. MNL OL, DL 67 837. December 1471: MNL OL, DL 45 482, 65 105.

44 August 30 and October 2, 1460. *Bártfa*, vol. 1, 192 (nos. 1226 and 1228).

45 October 15, 1460. MNL OL, DF 213 929.

46 November 19, 1460. MNL OL, DF 213 938. *Bártfa*, vol. 1, no. 1241.

47 June 17, 1460. MNL OL, DL 88 351.

the *ispán* of Szabolcs, to assist in this.⁴⁸ The taxes began to be collected at the end of August, but the process went slowly, and at the end of October, the king had to call on the people of Szabolcs to allow the tax collectors to perform their function and gather the taxes.⁴⁹ According to the charters, this tax was offered specifically by the nobility of Szabolcs County as a substitute for active participation in the fighting. Thus, it can be regarded as an extraordinary tax. The nobility of Szabolcs, however, was not alone in adopting this solution. In September 1460, a one-forint tax was also collected in Heves County, which was also affected by the military campaign. King Matthias used the monies from this tax to pay certain sums to Detre Gyulafi of Kaza, presumably for his war expenses.⁵⁰ Probably after the front had moved somewhat to the north, the nobility of Heves County also preferred to pay taxes than to participate in the fighting. In addition to Szabolcs and Heves Counties, the nobility of Ung and Pilis may also have been among the noblemen who went to war but returned home early. In the case of these counties, we also know of an extraordinary tax of one forint, although the reference to the collection of this tax in Ung County is from a source five years later,⁵¹ while the source for Pilis dates from December 1460. At that time, the tax collector Miklós Jenkei had to find a way to make a payment from the taxes that had been collected to a certain Master István⁵² at the order of Palatine Mihály Ország. Considering that in the case of Szabolcs County there were still problems with the levying and payment of the tax at the end of October, we can perhaps also link the one-forint tax paid by the nobility of Pilis to the military campaign. In other words, this tax may have been paid as an alternative to active participation in the campaign.

If we wish to take a closer look at the practice by the nobility of paying taxes to avoid having to take part in military campaigns or send soldiers depending on the size of their estates, we should consider the data from 1463 and 1464. In both years, the nobles were called on to participate in the fighting and send soldiers, and the sources from both years contain references to a one-forint *contributio*. Furthermore, the term *taxa exercitualis* comes from the sources from

48 August 28, 1460. MNL OL, DL 81 396, DL 81 397. September 25, 1460. *Zichy*, vol. 10, 117.

49 October 21, 1460. MNL OL, DL 88 357.

50 September 11, 1460. MNL OL, DL 90 032. In 1461, Detre got the chamber's profit from his own estates. June 30, 1461. MNL OL, DL 90 034.

51 March 23, 1465. MNL OL, DL 31 840. The charter only mentions the year, and it could even be linked to the extraordinary levy in mid-November 1459.

52 December 19, 1460. MNL OL, DL 15 529.

these two years.⁵³ In the spring of 1463, Sultan Mehmed II invaded Bosnia and executed Bosnian King Stephen Tomašević. The Ottoman armies also ravaged the region known as Temesköz (roughly, the flatlands between the Maros, Tisza, and Danube Rivers) and the Szerémség (the region between the Danube and Sava Rivers, also known as Syrmia), and King Matthias feared that they might lay siege to Nándorfehérvár (today Belgrade, Serbia).⁵⁴ In response to the attacks by the Ottomans, in March, a diet was held in Tolnavár (today Tolna, Hungary).⁵⁵ The diet ordered nobles with less than ten serf plots to take part in the military campaigns in person, and nobles with more than ten serf plots were to provide one mounted soldier for every ten plots on their estates. The counties were responsible for recruiting and mobilizing soldiers for the army, a task which was assigned to the *ispán* or his deputy (*alispán, vicecomes*) and also to a local nobleman chosen for this purpose by the nobility. The serf plots only had to be recounted for the *militia portalis* in places where no extraordinary tax was collected or the Turks had already removed part of the population. Otherwise, the numbers recorded when the one-forint tax was collected were used.⁵⁶ The one-forint tax was the *contributio* that had been levied a year earlier to recover the Holy Crown (and which was slowly trickling down), which the tax collectors from Ung County, for instance, only offered an account of at the Tolnavár diet.⁵⁷

The measure makes no mention of offers of money to avoid having to provide soldiers, but the term “*taxa exercitualis*” does appear in the sources from that summer and autumn. The decree also does not mention that an extraordinary tax was levied in Tolnavár, but we know from a receipt issued in June that the king and the royal council (*prelati et barones*) decided to levy a new one-forint *contributio* at the diet or at least that in Sáros County this tax was to be given to István Szapolyai.⁵⁸ It is worth comparing the data concerning the collection of the taxes referred to as *taxa exercitualis* and *contributio*, as well as the data relating to recruitment.⁵⁹

53 September 24, 1463. MNL OL, DL 31 811. July 18, 1464. *Zichy*, vol. 10, 319.

54 Bárány et al., “A késő középkor hadtörténete,” 277.

55 King Matthias stayed in Tolnavár between March 15 and April 2, to which period the diet can be dated. Horváth, *Itineraria*, 73.

56 March 29, 1463. *DRH*, vol. 2, 134–36.

57 April 2, 1463. MNL OL, DL 31 807. See Kádas, “Késmárk visszavétele,” 34–35.

58 June 21, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 74.

59 It is worth noting that in the summer of 1463, while the preparations for the war were underway, negotiations were also held on the Holy Crown, which was finally received by the Hungarian delegation on July 24. Pálosfalvi, “Koronázástól koronázásig,” 158–59. In May 1463, treasurer Imre Szapolyai agreed

According to the decision of the diet, armies from the southern counties had to arrive in Pétervárad (today Petrovaradin, Serbia) on May 29, while the inhabitants of the more distant part of the country were given two weeks to come. The assembly of the army and the collection of taxes took place almost simultaneously, one right after the other, with the usual slowness, of course. On June 5, 1463, the king, who had already gone into war and was staying in Bács (today Bač, Serbia), relieved Miklós Schlick of the obligation to take part in the campaign. A royal order from the following month reveals that Schlick was exempted not only from the obligation to go to war but also from the one-forint contribution collected at the time from his estates in Nyitra County.⁶⁰ A letter from Schlick has also survived, which reveals that János Forgács (from Nyitra County) sent his man with the king's man (or rather, Captain Balázs Magyar's man)⁶¹ to collect the *contributio*.⁶² Forgács was cautioned by several people, however, to stop collecting taxes from people who had gone to war.⁶³

By the end of June 1463, the first part of the contribution had been collected in Sáros County, or at least János Szinyei and Simon Sós, the two tax collectors of Sáros County, handed over a significant amount of money from the collected tax to István Szapolyai for the first time.⁶⁴ The tax flowed in slowly (summer work in the fields undoubtedly hampered the process), and between June 21 and September 24, Szinyei and Sós handed over the monies collected in several instalments.⁶⁵ The figure at the end of September can definitely be seen as a tax arrears. From the same region, on June 25, we have the first record of a contribution referred to as *taxa exercitualis*, when Imre Szapolyai disposed of the tax from Abaúj County. Szapolyai asked for the money to be sent to Buda so that he could use it to pay his mercenaries.⁶⁶ On September 24, King Matthias called on the tax collectors of Ung County because of a delay in the payment of the *taxa exercitualis*. This too can be thought of as arrears.⁶⁷ In Zemplén County,

with the city of Pozsony on an extraordinary tax of 2,000 forints for the redemption of the crown. May 15, 1463. MNL OL, DF 240 480.

60 June 5, 1463. MNL OL, DL 59 498.

61 June 29, 1463. MNL OL, DL 59 499.

62 July 28, 1463. MNL OL, DL 59 401.

63 July 26, 1463. MNL OL, DL 60 132. August 11, 1463. MNL OL, DL 59 502.

64 June 21, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 74.

65 August 2, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 76–77. August 24, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 78. September 24, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 82.

66 June 25, 1463. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 74–75.

67 September 24, 1463. MNL OL, DL 31811.

taxes were still being collected in September.⁶⁸ Moreover, in the case of the Kassa tax district, the taxes seem to have been collected in a similar manner, whether the tax was called contribution or *taxa exercitivalis*. Here, the tax was administered by two or three wealthy or middle-ranking nobles from the county who had probably been elected by the county community.⁶⁹ Thus, it seems that the eventual military levy and the contribution were paid at the same time and in the same way and to the same people. This suggests that the same taxes were paid under both names. Recruitment was also taking place at the time, carried out by the counties on the basis of numbers gathered earlier concerning serf plots, so the tax collectors and the recruiters (*sollicitatores*) may have worked together.

There are also indications in the sources of some one-forint taxes that were partly collected and partly in arrears in November 1463 in Szatmár County and January 1464 in Bodrog County.⁷⁰ A second tax may even have been levied, as Matthias was expecting some kind of new *subsidiium* in the autumn of 1463.⁷¹ However, considering the terminology used at the time and the long delays in the collection of taxes, which could last up to a year, I think it is more likely that this was the same tax and *taxa exercitivalis* of one forint that was levied in Tolnavár. The identities of the tax collectors in Szatmár also suggest that this was the case. Péter Tegzes of Anarcs and Gergely Ders of Petri, two wealthy noblemen and acting *alispáns* from the county,⁷² were the *dicators* of Szatmár County, which also indicates that the tax was administrated at the county level.

The 1463 data therefore show that the same tax that elsewhere was referred to as a one-forint *contributio* was collected as *taxa exercitivalis*. The latter name obviously refers to the use of the tax for military purposes, just as the 1459 extraordinary tax for mercenaries stationed in Eperjes in the Northern Parts was called *contributio exercitivalis* for the same reason. The term itself does not reveal whether the tax was paid as an alternative to serving in the campaigns or to providing soldiers, the aforementioned data from Nyitra County confirm that the tax collector could not claim the one-forint contribution from the estates of those who had gone into battle. Furthermore, as we know from the Tolnavár

68 September 2, 1463. MNL OL, DF 234 371.

69 Abaúj: János Kornis and Miklós Korlát; Sáros: János Szinyei and Simon Sóvári Sós. Kádas, "Az adószedés megyei kezelése," 149–51. Zemplén: Simon Szécsi and Mihály Kazsui. September 2, 1463. MNL OL, DF 234 371.

70 November 5, 1463. Kádas, "Az adószedés megyei kezelése," 157. January 26, 1464. MNL OL, DL 81 545.

71 January 27, 1464. *Mátyás király levelei*, vol. 1, 46.

72 November 5, 1463. Kádas, "Az adószedés megyei kezelése," 157.

decree, no new census was taken of serf plots in 1463. The *militia portalis* was based on the lists from the extraordinary tax collected the previous year.

The tax collection from 1464 shows a clear picture. Following the coronation of King Matthias on March 29 in Fehérvár (today Székesfehérvár, Hungary), the estates were again ordered to provide soldiers. Although Jajca (today Jajce, Bosnia and Herzegovina) had been captured after three months of siege during the campaign the previous year and other Bosnian fortresses had surrendered by the end of January 1464, there was a well-founded fear that Sultan Mehmed II would soon launch an army to retake Bosnia.⁷³ Thus, it was important to have a properly equipped army on hand. This time, the sources with the precise regulations concerning the *militia portalis* have survived, indeed in multiple editions and addressed to two different counties, Heves and Ung (which unfortunately both belonged to the Kassa chamber district).⁷⁴ According to the regulations, estate owners had to provide one mounted soldier for every twelve serf plots or pay ten forints. This regulation encouraged the nobles to choose taxation, as the one-off payment of ten forints was probably cheaper than the cost of a soldier's salary for months. The framework for the assembly of the army and the collection of the tax was the chamber's profit districts, or the so-called *cultelli*.⁷⁵ Two or three people were appointed from among the prelates and barons to each district, and a local nobleman from each county was selected by them to assist them. Given the sources which have survived, from among the chamber's profit districts (or *cultelli*), we again have the most data from the tax district of Kassa, and we know that Judge Royal László Pálóci and the aforementioned Master of the Doorkeepers Simon Cudar of Ónod were responsible for the census of plots and the administration of the tax. The king contacted the counties concerned from Fehérvár on April 6 and informed them of the method of counting the serf plots and collecting the tax and also of the appointment of Pálóci and Cudar.⁷⁶

The next data we have comes from Zemplén County. Pálóci and Cudar wrote a letter to the county nobility on April 15 about the tax referred to as *contributio*. This tax is unquestionably the money that was paid by the nobility to avoid having to take part in the campaigns or send soldiers depending on the size

73 Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis*, 212–13.

74 April 6, 1464. *DRH*, vol. 2, 152–54. 1464: MNL OL, DL 31 837.

75 Engel, *Kamarabaszna-összeírások*, 6. The chamber's profit districts were erected between 1375 and 1383. They corresponded to the districts of the fourteenth-century chambers. Weisz, "A váradi kamara," 108.

76 April 6, 1464. *DRH*, vol. 2, 152–54; 1464: MNL OL, DL 31 837.

of their estates. Pálóci and Cudar referred to the decree of Fehérvár and the fact that the king and the diet had appointed them to implement it. The document is incomplete, but it also names the tax collectors who were used by the lords, who were chosen from among their liegemen.⁷⁷ Thus, the term *contributio* could and did mean money paid to avoid having to serve or send soldiers as part of the *militia portalis*.

Not surprisingly, the collection of this tax also went slowly. According to an order sent by King Matthias to Szepes County on May 27, the county nobility had not yet decided whether to send soldiers or pay taxes.⁷⁸ In the end, the king tired of waiting, and on July 17, he sent his own man, Lőrinc Temesvári, the chancellery notary, to the Kassa district to speed up the process. The royal order reporting this draws a distinction between the nobles who chose to pay taxes and those who chose to go to war, a decision each nobleman was able to make for himself. Those who chose to serve had to present themselves ready for war, with their troops, to Lőrinc and the barons so that they could go to the military camp at Futak (today Futog, Serbia) on the feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major (August 5).⁷⁹ The barons thus also had the mandate to collect taxes because they led the army that was assembled and they (or more precisely their men) hired the mercenaries from the monies collected. Tax collection went slowly not only in the north, but also in the south, or at least in Bodrog County the payment of taxes was still underway in the summer months.⁸⁰

The other surviving data takes us to Slavonia, to Zagreb County. The source which offers any information concerning tax collection in the county is a complaint from January 1465. According to this complaint, around Easter 1464, László Grebeni Hermanfi and Tamás Roskoványi collected a one-forint tax in Zagreb County.⁸¹ Easter in 1464 fell on April 1,⁸² so from a perspective of a half year later, it can certainly be linked to the tax collection in early to mid-April. The mention of the one-forint tax can also be explained by the same six-month time

77 April 15, 1464. MNL OL, DL 67 000. Two names are mentioned: the deputy of Judge Royal Pálóci, András Butkai from Zemplén County, and Gergely Csobádi from Abaúj, but the latter's name is crossed out. Butkai was clearly a trusted liegeman or "familiaris" of Pálóci, while Csobádi, if he was indeed a tax collector, was related to Simon Cudar, who had served alongside him in the past. November 9, 1452. MNL OL, DL 14 590.

78 May 27, 1464. MNL OL, DL 45 095. See Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis*, 215.

79 July 17, 1464. MNL OL, DF 223 007.

80 July 18, 1464. *Zichy*, vol. 10, 319.

81 January 20, 1465. MNL OL, DL 107 576.

82 Szentpétery, *Oklevéltani naptár*, 78 (11th calendar).

span, as the regulation for providing soldiers and/or paying taxes was also in effect in Slavonia.⁸³ In the Slavonian counties, which were of particular importance from the perspective of the Bosnian campaign, Imre Szapolyai, governor of Bosnia and *bán* (*banus*) of Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Croatia, was responsible for collecting taxes.⁸⁴ At the beginning of April, Szapolyai even retained the office of treasurer,⁸⁵ and the aforementioned Tamás Roskoványi was one of Szapolyai's liegemen (although according to the charter, the king ordered him to levy the tax in Zagreb).⁸⁶ In addition to Roskoványi, who was from the northern part of the country, Hermanfi from Slavonia provided knowledge of the local conditions.⁸⁷ In the case of Pozsega County, we also learn about the 1464 tax in connection with an abuse. Allegedly, István Dezsőfi of Csernek did not levy the royal contribution against the estates of the abbey of Rudina according to the king's order, rather had them pay one gold forint per household.⁸⁸

A source survives in the archives of the city of Sopron that is interesting from the perspective of the 1464 *taxa exercitualis* or one-forint tax. The document is dated September 8, 1465, and it concerns the extraordinary tax of that year. The king informed the authorities of Sopron County, the *connumeratores et sollicitatores* who were counting the serf plots on the estates and recruiting soldiers for the campaign that was underway that, given that the city of Sopron was poor, he had waived the current tax, or one-forint *contributio* (*taxam presentem seu contributionem unius floreni auri*), which the royal council had levied because of the campaign in accordance with the provisions of the decree of Fehérvár.⁸⁹ The Fehérvár decree clearly refers to the coronation diet of the previous year and the decisions reached there,⁹⁰ so in 1465 soldiers again were recruited in accordance with the provisions of the previous year and those who did not wish to fight or send

83 DRH, vol. 2, 153. According to a charter from October 1464, at the request of the Slavonic nobility, Matthias exempted them from the obligation to fight in the war in exchange for half-forint contributions and twice the amount of the so-called marten's fur, a tax collected in the region to the south of the Drava River in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. October 11, 1464. Kaprinai B 64/138. 568–69.

84 See October 11, 1464. Kaprinai B 64/138. 568–69.

85 C. Tóth et al., *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, vol. 1, 129.

86 Ibid., vol. 2, 20, note 8. Kubinyi, "A Szapolyaiak és familiárisaik," 247; Horváth, "Adalékok," 104. For more on the family, see Kádás, *A megye emberei*, 100–2.

87 Pálosfalvi, "Grebbei Hermanfi László," 278–79.

88 June 29, 1464. MNL OL, DL 74 679. 35.

89 September 8, 1465. *Sopron*, vol. 1/5, 203. The fact that in March of that year King Matthias had already asked the city for 2,000 forints in aid for his upcoming campaign may have played a role in the king's decision to grant Sopron an exemption. March 10, 1465. *Sopron*, 1/5, 168.

90 Pálosfalvi, "A középkori magyar országgyűlések," 54.

soldiers could pay a one-forint tax.⁹¹ This suggests that in this case too, the one-forint tax was paid specifically as a means of being granted an exemption from military service. Furthermore, it also offers support for the conclusion that this tax was called a one-forint tax even though only 10 forints were paid for every 12 plots. The charter is also interesting because it suggests that the tax was collected by the *connumerators* and *sollicitators* who were responsible for military mobilization. The aforementioned 1464 tax was also collected by the *connumerators* of the *militia portalis*.

In September 1465, the king set out on a campaign, and he set up military camp at the ford of the Sava River.⁹² Tax records from the northern counties have also survived alongside the sources found in Sopron. A letter written by Imre Szapolyai to Balázs, the provost of Lelesz (today Leles, Slovakia), in November 1465 reveals that the count of Szepes was acting on royal orders and with the approval of the royal council in the collection of taxes. The letter is regrettably terse, but it may well refer to this extraordinary tax, which was administered by Imre Szapolyai's men some of the counties in the Northern Parts.⁹³

There may have been a link between the extraordinary tax and the obligation to provide soldiers in 1466 as well. The diet discussed the possibility of a summer campaign against the Ottomans in early February and March 1466. In response to a request made by the nobility, the king ordered the nobles, in accordance with their old privileges, to fight in person. Shortly after the diet, however, because of the threat of a Turkish attack, the king and the royal council reorganized the army. The barons and nobles had to provide soldiers according to sizes of their estates.⁹⁴ The imposition of the new tax may have been linked to this change by the royal council.⁹⁵ Although the surviving sources which contain mention of abuses committed by the tax collectors were issued only in November 1466,⁹⁶ recruitment of soldiers and the collection of the extraordinary tax may have

91 In the case of Slavonia, a different kind of regulation was used to determine a nobleman's obligation to provide soldiers for the king's army. Here, in addition to the nobleman himself, one armed man had to be provided for every 20 serfs. August 9, 1465. MNL OL, DF 256 102.

92 Horváth, *Itineraria*, 79–80.

93 November 29, 1465. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 112. At the same time, Máté Kamolyi, who was a liegeman of Szapolyai, received 250 forints from Bártfa. The receipt does not mention the legal title of this payment, but it could be linked to this tax. November 23, 1465. MNL OL, DL 214 299.

94 April 12, 1466. DRH, vol. 2, 159–60; Borossy, *A telekkatonaság*, 39.

95 See: "presentis contributionis pro communi necessitate regni nostri ex deliberatione prelatorum et baronum nostrorum institute." November 13, 1466. DRH, vol. 2, 157, note 5.

96 November 1466: *Mátyás király levelei*, vol. 1, 153–55. November 15, 1466. MNL OL, DL 16 435.

taken place simultaneously. King Matthias wanted to go to war as early as the beginning of May, and tax collection in the county of Szabolcs may have begun as early as April. The tax collectors, however, ran into problems in the Transisza counties. The serfs fled rather than pay taxes. The situation was resolved by the royal captains László Upori and Gergely Horvát of Gáj. They seized estates (Berkesz, Szabolcs County) and called on the runaway serfs to return and pay their taxes.⁹⁷ In Margittafalva (today Marghita, Romania) in Bihar County, Upori and Horvát even went into battle with the serfs who were refusing to pay taxes, and in the course of the conflict the settlement itself was set ablaze.⁹⁸ The 1466 tax may also have been intended as an alternative to the obligation to provide soldiers, which justified the swift action taken by the royal captains.

The data from 1467 and 1471 referred to by Kubinyi are both related to obtaining an exemption from the obligation to go into battle in person.⁹⁹ There is also evidence of a one-forint tax that was levied after 1471, again to free the nobles of the obligation to fight in person. In 1477, for example, a *subsidium* was levied to cover the costs of mercenaries instead of requiring the nobles to fight.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, the nobility again “appealed to” the monarch to allow them to pay a one-forint tax instead of having to take part in the fighting, as the nobility of Szabolcs County had done in 1460. The royal orders addressed to the counties of Tolna and Közép-Szolnok in 1471 also indicate that the counties offered the tax in lieu of going to war, asking the ruler in return to release them from the obligation to wage war for a year.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the possibility of using taxes as a way to avoid having to fight existed even before the reign of King Matthias.¹⁰²

However, Kubinyi’s statements cited above cannot be completely dismissed. Sometimes, extraordinary taxes were also collected from the serfs of members of the landowning nobility who served as soldiers, so sometimes the one-forint tax and the monies paid in exchange for an exemption from the obligation to

97 April 20 and May 13, 1466. MNL OL, DL 31 857, 31 858.

98 November 26, 1473. *Csáky*, vol. 1, 438–40. March 26, 1478. *Zichy*, vol. 11, 211–13; See Kádas, “Lázadó parasztok.”

99 November 9, 1467. MNL OL, DL 67 837. December, 1471: MNL OL, DL 45 482, 65 105.

100 July 10, 1477. MNL OL, DF 270 404. According to Kubinyi, after 1471, King Matthias did not order the nobility to send soldiers (the number of which would depend on the size of their estates), but he did sometimes mobilize the nobility. Kubinyi, “Mozgósítási és hadseregellátási problémák,” 50–51.

101 December, 1471: MNL OL, DL 45 482., 65 105.

102 September 2, 1455. MNL OL, DF 267 763. King Sigismund had already made it possible to “buy” an exemption from having to fight. Bárány et al., “A késő középkor hadtörténete,” 239.

fight were collected in parallel. This was not a separate tax collection, however. It was handled by the same administration. The only difference was that those who did not go to war had their serfs taxed twice as much as those who took on the burden of going to war. This was true, for instance, in the case of the tax offered to László Pálóci by the nobility of the northern Hungarian counties in the autumn of 1459. The noblemen who had gone to war also decreed, when offering taxes in the war camp, that their fellow nobles who evaded the obligation to go to war would pay twice as much tax.¹⁰³ In 1467, according to the sources, the tax collected from the Romanians of Fogaras was to be one forint if they were soldiers and two forints if they were not.¹⁰⁴ But in these cases, too, the taxes were administered by the same people. Thus, in the period under discussion, no separate extraordinary tax or separate military tax was collected. Rather, a single extraordinary military tax was levied.

The Administration of the Extraordinary Tax

In the case of tax collection, the administrative system varied from year to year, from one tax collection to the next. Furthermore, the administration of the extraordinary tax was closely connected to the recruitment of soldiers. Extraordinary taxes offered by the Northern Parts were collected for the captains and the captain generals, to whom they were given by the *dicators*, who were either a captain's liegemen or local noblemen selected for this task by the counties. The tax collectors usually took part in the military campaigns themselves, and they hired soldiers. Zsigmond Csicseri, who collected the extraordinary taxes in Ung County in 1454, 1459, 1460, and 1462 (and possibly also in 1463), was in the military camp during the 1458 tax collection, and he definitely took part in the battles against the Czechs in 1465.¹⁰⁵ János Szinyei, who collected the ordinary and extraordinary taxes in Sáros County on several occasions, also may have taken part in military campaigns, and in 1462, Imre Szapolyai promised that he would write to his brother about the monthly wages for his ten to twelve mounted soldiers.¹⁰⁶ Szapolyai was both captain general and treasurer at the time, and the fact that he held both of these positions certainly made the financing

103 November 15, 1459. MNL OL, DL 31 728.

104 November 9, 1467. MNL OL, DL 67 837.

105 April 15, 1465. MNL OL, DL 31 822. In spite of the fact that King Matthias exempted him from military service in 1461 because of his old age and his merits. July 27, 1461. MNL OL, DL 31 770.

106 March 17, 1462. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 59–60.

of the campaigns go more smoothly.¹⁰⁷ The sources also clearly indicate that Lőrinc of Bajoni,¹⁰⁸ who served as vice-treasurer, played a role in the case of the extraordinary taxes: in 1461 he passed on the order to the chancellery to issue a royal charter addressed to the tax collector János Szinyei to hand over the taxes of Szepes and Sáros Counties to István Szapolyai,¹⁰⁹ and in 1463, the receipts for the tax collectors of Ung County were issued on the authority of Bajoni for their account of the contribution of 1462.¹¹⁰

The royal council or at least certain barons and prelates also played a crucial role in the administration of the extraordinary tax. In March 1461, King Matthias ordered István Várdai, archbishop of Kalocsa and Bács, to use the one-forint *contributio* to pay the monthly salary of 32 forints for the ten mounted soldiers of George Balai, who was fighting at the siege of Sáros.¹¹¹ Balai had estates in Külső-Szolnok, Heves, Abaúj, and Borsod Counties,¹¹² and the fact that the king entrusted the payment to Várdai was presumably because the administration of the extraordinary tax of 1461 was handled, at least in part, by the archbishop of Kalocsa.¹¹³ The tax collectors had to account for the 1462 tax (which as noted earlier was levied to recover the Holy Crown) to certain members of the royal council, presumably to the barons and prelates who also gave a guarantee that King Matthias would not levy any more extraordinary contributions. Although the charter itself has not survived, a later reference suggests that the orders that were issued to the counties concerning the method of tax collection for that year were given not in the name of the king, but in the name of the prelates and barons.¹¹⁴ Later, at least in the case of the Kassa tax district, a baronial delegate (one of the aforementioned László Pálóci's men) was given a role in the middle-level administration, alongside the king's envoy.¹¹⁵ In the case of the 1464 tax paid to free a nobleman of the obligation to provide soldiers or serve

107 Horváth, "A Felső Részek kapitánysága," 948.

108 C. Tóth et al., *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, vol. 1, 129.

109 September 14, 1461. MNL OL, DL 70 261.

110 April 2, 1463. MNL OL, DL 31 807. Bajoni also appears as a *relator* in the collection of the extraordinary tax from the royal towns: June 23, 1463. MNL OL, DF 270 379, 214 160.

111 March 26, 1461. *Zichy*, 140.

112 December 28, 1461. MNL OL, DL 95 374. October 15, 1466. MNL OL, DL 83 772. October 17, 1465. MNL OL, DL 90 064.

113 It is possible that Demeter, the prebend from Bács who collected taxes in Sáros, also acted as a man of the archbishop of Kalocsa-Bács. August 23, 1461. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 56; C. Tóth, *A kalocsa-bácsi főegyházmegye*, 63.

114 Kádas, "Késmárk visszavétele," 17. See Pálosfalvi, "Koronázástól koronázásig," 156–57.

115 Kádas, "Késmárk visszavétele," 24–29.

in the military, two barons or prelates were appointed for each chamber district, and the king could also send his own men to accompany them. These barons, who were in charge of collecting the tax, undoubtedly used the money collected from the territories assigned to them by their men to hire soldiers. The king also justified the practical solution of levying the war tax on the grounds that it would not constitute a violation of the promise of 1462 not to levy an extraordinary tax, nor would it mean breaking the oath taken by the prelates and barons to that effect.¹¹⁶

The (earlier) chamber districts seem to have played a decisive role in the middle-level administration of the extraordinary taxes. In particular, the Kassa district,¹¹⁷ which included Abaúj, Borsod, Gömör, Heves, Sáros, Szepes, Torna, Ung, and Zemplén Counties, is mentioned several times in the sources in connection with extraordinary taxes.¹¹⁸ In the case of the 1462 tax, the tax was levied in the counties of this district and the monies which came in were used to redeem Késmárk. The tax was administered in the center of the district, in Kassa, where Domokos Kálmáncehi, the provost entrusted with this task by the king, and László Pálóci's liegeman were given the money from the county tax collectors.¹¹⁹ In 1464, the counties of the chamber district offered an extraordinary tax in Kassa,¹²⁰ and in all likelihood, the aforementioned extraordinary taxes of the spring and autumn of 1459 were also levied in this area. The Kassa and Körmöcbánya (today Kremnica, Slovakia) districts also had a defensive-administrative function at the time.¹²¹ This kind of expansion of the role of the chamber districts can also be assumed for the other districts.¹²² The regulation mentions six chamber districts, which were probably the districts of Buda, Kassa, Körmöcbánya, Lippa (today Lipova, Romania), Szatmár (today Satu Mare, Romania) and Szerém, which existed as administrative districts in the period of King Sigismund and the mid-fifteenth century.¹²³ In addition to these units, in the counties of Slavonia, Transylvania, and even Croatia, a similar

116 April 6, 1464. *DRH*, vol. 2, 153.

117 September 8, 1457. MNL OL, DF 213 674.

118 "sub cultello Cassoviensi." August 17, 1462. MNL OL, DF 270 551. "in cultello Cassoviensi." December 30, 1464. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 103.

119 Kádas, "Késmárk visszavétele," 23–24.

120 December 30, 1464. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 103.

121 Horváth, "A Felső Részek kapitánysága," 925.

122 April 6, 1464. *DRH*, vol. 2, 153–54.

123 See Weisz, *Archontológia* (manuscript).

system of providing soldiers and collecting taxes was used in 1464 (and perhaps also in 1465).¹²⁴

Data on tax collectors are scattered and varied. Tax collectors could be sent by the royal court or the baron in charge of tax collection or even of putting the monies collected to use, or they could be selected by the county itself. According to Kubinyi, in the period under discussion, the tax collectors were usually a chancellery notary and a nobleman from the given county.¹²⁵ The county noblemen were also important in this process because of their knowledge of local conditions, but as far as the question of who selected them is concerned, the picture is strikingly varied. The scattered sources from the second half of the fifteenth century reveal that in some cases a tax collector was chosen to accompany the only royal tax collector of the county,¹²⁶ and in some cases, the two centrally appointed tax collectors were accompanied by other elected nobles, in addition to the noble judges.¹²⁷ The 1464 regulation also mentions an elected county nobleman tax collector,¹²⁸ while in the case of the 1467 royal treasury tax (*tributum fisci regalis*) and the extraordinary tax of that year, there is data indicating that the king or, more precisely, the chancellery asked a nobleman with knowledge of local conditions to assist.¹²⁹ In addition, on some occasions, both tax collectors were chosen by the county.¹³⁰ Thus, in many cases, it is not possible to determine whether the county chose the local tax collector or not. Much as the county could choose a tax collector who had access to the royal court, the court could also appoint a tax collector with knowledge of local conditions to the county.¹³¹

With regards to the extraordinary tax collectors of the period in question, we find among them some who belonged to the wealthy or middle-ranking nobility of the given county and some who were also the deputy *ispán* of the county at the time of tax collection, but we also find liegemen of barons from within the county or arriving from outside the county.¹³² In the case of the

124 April 6, 1464. *DRH*, vol. 2, 153.

125 Kubinyi, “A Mátyás-kori államszervezet,” 98–99, 110; Kubinyi, “A kincstári személyzet,” 26.

126 1455: MNL OL, DL 31 671.

127 March 29, 1478 and March 29, 1482. *DRH*, vol. 2, 239, 257.

128 April 6, 1464. *DRH*, vol. 2, 154.

129 April 17, 1467. MNL OL, DL 31 889. November 9, 1467. MNL OL, DL 67 827.

130 Kádas, “Az adószedés megyei kezelése,” 132–42.

131 See Pálosfalvi, “A középkori magyar országgyűlések,” 113–14.

132 Kádas, “Késmárk visszavétele,” 29–34; Kádas, “Az adószedés megyei kezelése,” 138, note 45, 142–44, 150–52.

rare treasury liegemen, one finds for the people entrusted by Imre Szapolyai to handle military affairs and issues concerning military finances, and not any kind of “treasury apparatus.” A good example of this is Tamás Roskoványi, one of Szapolyai’s liegemen from northern Hungary who collected an extraordinary tax in Zagreb County in 1464.¹³³ Roskoványi, who performed various military and administrative tasks alongside Szapolyai, collected taxes in Zagreb at a time when tax collection and the assembly of soldiers provided by the nobility were supervised by barons appointed for each region. Imre Szapolyai was a clear candidate to oversee recruitment there, and Roskoványi’s role can probably be traced back to this time.

The people who levied and collected the extraordinary taxes acted in the name of the king, even if they were appointed by the county or a baron, they were still “royal tax collectors.”¹³⁴ In the case of the tax collectors of the period, however, many of them belonged to the royal court. Bertalan Sitkei, the tax collector of Zala county in 1459, was a knight of the court,¹³⁵ and Józsa Tímári, who collected taxes in Bács in 1461, and Mihály Zsuki, who were responsible for collecting taxes in Transylvania in 1464, were royal *familiars*,¹³⁶ but we can also assume that János Szinyei, the *ispán* of Sáros, and István Dezsőfi of Csernek, who collected taxes in Pozsega, were in the service of the court.¹³⁷ As Kubinyi has pointed out, the tax collecting duty of the chancellery notaries can also be explained by their affiliation with the court,¹³⁸ as indeed is confirmed by the later mention of Mihály Debreceni, the chancellery notary who collected the tax of Szabolcs county in 1460, as *aulicus*.¹³⁹ In the case of the members of the royal court, it can also be assumed that they were responsible for the use of the money after the taxes had been collected and that they were able to hire mercenaries directly from these funds. The chancellery notaries and *aulices*, furthermore, ensured tighter royal control, with King Matthias sending Provost Domokos

133 January 20, 1465. MNL OL, DL 107 576.

134 See Kádas, “Késmárk visszavétele,” 30–31.

135 Sitkei: November 10, 1459. MNL OL, DL 15 418. April 8, 1462. MNL OL, DF 214 104.

136 Tímári: March 24, 1466. MNL OL, DL 16 323. September 1, 1458. MNL OL, DL 106 551. Zsuki: December 4, 1464. MNL OL, DF 255 167. December 14, 1462. MNL OL, DF 255 166. See Nógrády, “A lázadás ára,” 133.

137 Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, vol. 1, 509; C. Tóth et al., *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, vol. 2, 184, 201–2. Éble, *A cserneki és tarkeői Dessenyfy család*, 18.

138 Kubinyi, “A Mátyás-kori államszervezet,” 82.

139 February 24, 1466. MNL OL, DL 100 753. See Kristóf, *Egyházi közélet*, 59, 200; C. Tóth, “Debreceni Mihály,” (manuscript).

Kálmáncsehi in 1462 and chancellery notary Lőrinc Temesvári in 1464 to the Kassa district, where they worked alongside the barons' men.¹⁴⁰

As with the collection of taxes, in order to determine the number of soldiers that a given nobleman would have to provide based on the size of his estates, it was necessary to do a census of the serf plots, which was carried out by enumerators (*connumeratores*). In the case of the 1459 order to provide such soldiers, the sources contain no reliable data concerning any money paid in exchange for an exemption from this obligation, but the serf plots still had to be counted, so the royal court sent out *connumerators* in much the same way as it sent tax collectors in other cases. The serfs of Veszprém County were counted by Mihály Váti and Pál Essegvári,¹⁴¹ the former a tried and tested Hunyadi liegeman and earlier a chancellor to the governor, the latter a wealthy local and one of Miklós Újlaki's men.¹⁴² In 1464 and 1465, with some help of the military recruiters (*levatores et sollicitatores*), the *connumerators* of the *militia portalis* also collected the one-forint tax paid in exchange for an exemption to the obligation to provide soldiers. In 1466, it is likely that László Upori, a court liegeman, and Gergely Horvát of Gáj, *ispán* of Gömör and Heves Counties, as royal captains, were responsible for the recruitment of soldiers and the hiring of mercenaries in the Transtisza counties (the area of the Szatmár tax district¹⁴³) and were therefore able to take immediate action against anyone who tried to avoid paying the tax. They were not the tax collectors, the court also sent special *dicators* to the counties in question.¹⁴⁴ Presumably, these tax collectors later handed over the money that had come in to the two captains.

It is also worth dwelling for a moment on the length of the tax collection period. Based on the scattered evidence, the collection of extraordinary taxes seems to have been a slow process, much slower than the collection of the chamber's profit. Naturally, this was due to the "exceptional nature" of the tax payments, and also to the fact that they were collected more often in the summer months, when work was being done in the fields. The slow inflow of arrears can be best examined in cases in which several consecutive tax records from a county from different stages of the process have survived for the same year. The one-

140 Kádas, "Késmárk visszavétele," 24–27. Chancellery notaries and royal lieutenants could also take part in the collection of extraordinary taxes levied on cities. June 23, 1463. MNL OL, DF 270 379; *UGDS*, vol. 6, 150–51.

141 January 9, 1459. MNL OL, DL 102 541; Borosy, *A telekkatonaság*, 38.

142 Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség*, 165–66, 170, 173, 220. Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, 327.

143 Weisz, "A váradi kamara," 110; Weisz, "A szatmári kamara," 85.

144 May 13, 1466. MNL OL, DL 31 858.

forint tax collected in Szabolcs County in 1460 is one such case. This tax was offered by the county nobility at the end of August in lieu of military service. Two months later, the king was still having to call on *ispán* Miklós Várdai because some of the noblemen of Szabolcs County refused to allow the tax to be levied on their estates and refused to pay it.¹⁴⁵ In the case of the tax of 1461, the tax arrears of Sáros County came in even more slowly. The extraordinary tax for 1461 may have been offered in March, and in April, the process of collecting this tax began.¹⁴⁶ As noted earlier, the tax collectors of Sáros County got a receipt from Imre Szapolyai on August 23 for the money they had given him,¹⁴⁷ which, with the taxes collected in April, suggests a period of five months. However, even then the tax had not been collected from everyone in the county, and on March 12, 1462 (almost a year after the tax had been levied), János Szinyei handed over tax arrears to István Szapolyai.¹⁴⁸ And in May, the extraordinary tax of that year was already levied in the county, so the collection of the extraordinary tax of 1461 and 1462 almost overlapped.¹⁴⁹ The process of collecting the 1462 tax was similarly slow. Despite the fact that it was levied in May, the collection of this tax in the counties of the Kassa tax district only began to go a bit faster in August, while in the case of Borsod, Heves, and Abaúj Counties, the monies paid only ended up in the hands of the people appointed to administer the tax towards the end of August. Ung County was called on pay the tax as late as the end of September, and the two tax collectors from Ung only provided an account of these monies in April 1463, at the next diet.¹⁵⁰ True, both Sáros County and Ung County were in the Kassa tax district, where the consequences of the war and the destruction it had caused slowed down the process of collecting taxes.

Conclusion

The extraordinary taxes levied between 1458 and 1467 reveal a varied approach. These extraordinary taxes could be offered and levied on the national level, in the diet, or, even more so, at meetings of the royal council, but there were also particular taxes in the Northern Parts at the time which were offered to the

145 October 21, 1460. MNL OL, DL 88 357.

146 March 26 and April 19, 1461. *Zichy*, 140, 144.

147 August 23, 1461. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 56.

148 March 12, 1462. Neumann, *Szapolyai*, 58.

149 Kádas, "Késmárk visszavétele," 16.

150 *Ibid.*, 34–35.

captains general by the counties concerned in order to facilitate the elimination of the Czechs from the region. The military campaign against the Czechs and the threat of the Ottoman incursions justified the levying of various military contributions. Noblemen could be granted exemptions from the obligation to go to war in person and provide soldiers by paying taxes, and the extraordinary taxes levied between 1463 and 1466 mostly served this purpose, i.e. they were paid by a nobleman in exchange for not having to take part in the military campaigns or provide soldiers. There does not seem to have been a separate extraordinary tax and a separate war tax during this period, but rather just an “extraordinary war tax.” Although various methods seem to have been used to administrate the collection of taxes depending in part on the roles played by the barons or the counties in the process, in general, the collection of the extraordinary tax during this period was closely linked not only to the actual military event but also to recruitment and the provision of soldiers. The practice of paying a tax instead of taking part in or providing soldiers for a military campaign was facilitated by the creation of a mercenary army. The monies that were collected with these taxes were openly used for this purpose. However, the extraordinary tax often came in only very slowly. The administrative process was not smooth, and sometimes, the royal captains had to be entrusted with the task of providing the necessary manpower to ensure that these taxes were collected.

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