

Eszterházy Catholic University of Applied  
Science  
Doctoral School of History

**Gábor Benkő**

**The career strategy and rise of the Forgách  
family in the 16th century with focus on  
Simon Forgách's /1526-1298/ career**

**Thesis of doctoral (PhD) dissertation**

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After the battle of Mohács a new era started in the Ottoman-Hungarian conflict: the relatively peaceful period starting from the middle of the 15th century has come to an end and the frontlines were moving to the inner territories of the Kingdom of Hungary. This stated new obstacles and challenges to the inhabitants of the Kingdom and overall Christian Europe itself, as the events of the war were observed internationally. After 1526 this attention and observation was growing since the Ottoman conquests got closer to the Habsburg ruled territories and overall to the western parts of the continent. The Kingdom of Hungary became a part of the Habsburg Monarchy and also became a clashing zone where the Ottoman Empire's conquests stopped in one's track in 1568 after the unsuccessful siege of Malta and before the 1571 loss of Lepanto which is another landmark of the Ottoman Empire's conquering zenith.

It is hard to observe the main and dominating conflict for the Kingdom of Hungary without paying close attention to the aristocracy of the kingdom since this social group provided the political and military elite of the

country torn to three parts during the century. In wartimes the aristocracy played a key role in the fate of the Realm. I've marked out my research based on this, and my goal was to enrich further our picture of the Hungarian Aristocracy of the 16th century. In my dissertation I observed how the societal mobility opened up after the battle of Mohács especially with military and political careers, based on the Forgách family's example, and especially the most successful 16. century member of it: Simon Forgách.

What kind of career opportunities were present for the Hungarian nobility and aristocracy? What kind of personal and family strategy were required for the success? These questions were in the focus of my research.

My dissertation presents how the Forgách family based its members' careers in their 11th, 12th and 13th generations. Since the most successful member, Simon had a military career, I've put a great emphasis on that. However he played political roles too, so it was necessary to observe how his military career and past related to that, was it any help in that field? Besides these questions, family

strategy was also a key aspect for research, especially what kind of strategy Simon favored for his children. This helps us to get a picture of how the family's generations relates to each other careerwise and with strategical thinking, how they followed or changed their models, how they reacted to challenges. The family strategy's examination also gives us opportunity to see: in what ways the hungarian elite tried to adapt to the dangers and challenges of the Ottoman conquests. Religion and confessionality were also important topics in my dissertation as during the 16th century, most family members were protestants but at the same ime some members were converted to Catholicism and made ecclesialistic careers, such as Simon's younger brother Ferenc, then his second born son, a namesake of his uncle. In my dissertation I payed attention to the way Simon found his place in the hungarian aristocracy, how he adapted to the behaviour of this group and how all this appeared in self- and family representation.

To answer the aforementioned questions, I observed the family strategy and Simon's career model, adding the marriage strategy to my research focus as well. I paid attention to the role of religion in the family member's

careers and also what kind of connections the family built up during the years. The analysis of Simon's connections are focused on social, and geographical aspects, showing the qualities and effects of his connections and how he managed to build them up, both positive and negative ones, especially his conflicts. make an evaluation of the success of the family's and Simon's career and rise, it was also important to pay attention to their holdings and estates, how it changed or grown during the years and how it was connected to the deeds of the family members.