

**MIKLÓS ZRÍNYI
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
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The Hungarian Merchant Marine During WWI

Doctoral (PhD) dissertation
Executive Summary

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Stating of problem and the aim of the work

During the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy there was a separate Hungarian merchant marine, independent of the k. und k. navy, the history of which has not yet been researched. At the outbreak of the WWI in the register of the Hungarian naval ships there figured not less than 549 vehicles, 137 of which were steamships. 17 % of Hungary's export and 9 % of the import was managed by the Hungarian marine in Fiume. The only Hungarian seaport was the tenth among the most frequented European ports after Amsterdam and preceding Venice. The establishment and usage of this amazing infrastructure, the history of the Hungarian merchant marine has not been processed or introduced so far in the Hungarian reference literature to this day. Essays concerned with the navy sometimes mention the subject, but only to the extent of noting that escorting merchant ships was among the tasks of the naval ships.

The topic has very scarce Hungarian and some foreign (mainly German and Italian) references, few of which is scholarly writing based on original source materials. Sound knowledge of the afore mentioned materials could provide merely a basis for a thorough research. Therefore, the preparation of this dissertation had to be started with basic research, and later continued based on primary source material. The preparation of the dissertation was especially made difficult by the fact, that Hungarian Archives barely contain related documents, since part of the documents of the Ministry of Commerce were annihilated in WWII another part destroyed in the Archive fire of 1956. To compensate for the missing data it was necessary to perform research in foreign archives, in order to find detailed and relevant facts about the role of the Hungarian merchant marine during WWI.

I supposed that during WWI marine routes had to play a significant role in the supply of the Austro/Hungarian army units, since especially on this part of the Balkan peninsula poor rail and road transport capacity was available. The Hungarian marine with its center in Fiume and naturally the Austrian commercial fleet separate from the point of view of public administration had to be involved in performing the transport of high scale reserves of the Austro Hungarian army as well as the transport of masses of the injured.

It was a general view of the age that ships of the navy were not appropriate for performing tasks of army logistics, while up-to-date supply systems of marine logistics had not yet formulated, since these were born as a result of the bitter experience provided by World War II.

To use the passenger and transit steam ships of the merchant fleet (that received a significant subsidy from the Hungarian state) for military purposes was among the plans and figured in the education materials of military higher education as early as the years preceding the war.

I wished to elaborate on the possibilities of the Hungarian merchant marine to be used for military purposes as well as the operation thereof during the war.

I set as a purpose of my dissertation the findings as follows:

1. To introduce the operation of the Hungarian merchant marine during World War I, the development of the fleet stock of the different companies, the system of the military application of ships, losses that occurred in maritime navigation (both as far as companies or maritime administration is concerned), the possibilities of military use of ships.
2. To reveal details not or only partially known so far through the processing, systematizing and critical comparison of the primary archive sources, the available domestic and foreign sources and reference literature, as well as through the utilization of my own findings and results, and thus to enlarge the existing knowledge about Hungary's role in World War I.
3. To point to the fact, that with the nearing 100th anniversary of the breakout of World War I the operation of maritime navigation is to be considered when new evaluations are expected to deal with Hungary's role and losses. My aim is to give a detailed presentation of maritime navigation's losses and role for each Hungarian steam ship and company through the means of statistics and tables.

Applied method of research

1. Beside going over the domestic and foreign (mainly German, Italian, Croatian and English language) reference material, archive sources, brochures, company annual reports and statistics I performed detailed and thorough research in the Archives of Budapest, Vienna and Rijeka. While doing that I also consulted with Hungarian specialist of the Vienna Archives, as well as with the archivist of the Rijeka Archives who is responsible for the Hungarian materials. The thorough research of the official documents of the Hungarian Royal Marine and the port authority in the Rijeka Archives provided the backbone of my

dissertation. The exploration, systematization, analysis and evaluation of the only partially systematized material meant the greatest challenge for the preparation of the dissertation. The significance of the Croatian documents lies among others in the fact, that earlier, during the South Slavic Crisis, and before that, it caused serious difficulties to organize local research in the Archives. Beside that I also performed the detailed examination and processing of the documents that could be found in the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna. Beyond those documents I succeeded in finding relevant original sources in the Central Library of the Waseda University about the losses of the Hungarian merchant marine before WWI and the two ships confiscated by the Japanese Booty Court during the Russian-Japanese War. It was my aspiration to give a detailed presentation of non recorded marine aspects of the Hungarian efforts and losses during WWI through the exploration, objective analysis and summary of so far non processed archive sources, taking into account the aspects of military science research.

2. I asked for and was granted regular consultation possibilities by the lecturers of the ZMNE (Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University) Military History Department, the Security and Protection Politics Department, as well as the Transport Engineering Department of the Institute of Military Logistics at the Bolyai János Military Engineering Faculty.
3. I also analyzed contemporary news for the dissertation. That research method provides appropriate possibility to clarify certain details only together with research based results, but enables us to better understand the issues handled by the contemporary observers emphatically. Thus I examined in detail the significant newspapers and professional magazines of the era, and evaluated and applied their data from the system of aspects of military history.

The structure of the dissertation

In the structure of the dissertation I applied the basic rules of historical chronology. I highlighted the events that had the greatest significance in the given year according to the sources and the news. I present the transport, the story of Hungarian ships confiscated abroad and the units captured by The Entente. Besides the companies I handled emphatically the role of the military management and the marine administration, presenting the existing

differences in views. I gave special emphasis to the military use of the stock of steam ships, since the application of sailboats and smaller vessels could be experienced at the time only locally. I finished my dissertation with the presentation of the history of Hungarian marine after WWI as well as the loss of Port of Fiume.

1. Historical antecedents

It seemed particularly justified to give a short introduction about the formulation and development of the Hungarian marine in the first chapter, since our topic is actually the termination thereof. In this part I present Hungary's connections to the Adriatic and Fiume, as well as the companies participating in the war, the size of the Hungarian marine fleet touching upon the international surroundings. That is significant from the point of view of the indices of Hungary's marine power and the preparation thereof for the war, and it can be noted that no real fallback could be experienced on any of those fields. Within the first chapter I present in three separate subchapters the coherent system of relations between Hungary and Fiume, the establishment of Fiume and the Hungarian marine (1867-1914) and the preparation of the Hungarian marine for WWI, the organization and the technical background of the system of maritime transports.

2. The first months of the war (July 28, 1914 – December 31, 1914)

Within the second chapter I present in five subchapters the introduction of the first military protective measures on the coast and give a detailed account about the application of marine mines considered fairly new weapons at the time, and meaning a real danger to the coastal transport. I devoted a separate subchapter to ships that succeeded in reaching domestic ports and to those that stayed in foreign ports and foreign territorial waters, giving a special emphasis to the more significant long distance ships beside the coast line units.

3. Events of 1915

I divided the third chapter into four subchapters. Here I present the new difficulties having occurred as a consequence of the Italian proclamation of war, which increased the risks of maritime navigation. I examine separately the case of steamers confiscated in Italy or trapped in other alien enemy ports and the business losses of greater shipping companies due to the war.

I also present here the operation of the Fiume Port Authority during the war.

4. Events of 1916

In the fourth chapter I present the losses of 1916, as well as the development of marine history and the case of the ships trapped in alien enemy ports, highlighting the imprisonment and the release of the crew of the Attila and Kárpát interned in Great Britain. A separate subchapter is devoted to the disagreements between the ship owners and the Marine Transport Management concerning the estimation processes of ships used for military purposes.

5. Events of 1917

In the fifth chapter I present the history of steamers on domestic and foreign territorial waters and the difficulties of the organization and execution of marine transport and the supply of Austro-Hungarian troops on the Balkans as well as Fiume in line with the system used in the previous chapters. A separate subchapter is devoted to the presentation of wartime aims and plans concerning the coastal territories which changed and formulated during the war and affected Fiume as well as the Hungarian-Croatian coast.

6. Events of 1918 and the termination of the Hungarian marine

In the sixth chapter I present the Hungarian marine steamer losses and other damages having affected the Hungarian marine, and sketch the Fiume political crisis that at the end led to losing Fiume and the Hungarian marine.

The chapters are followed by a summary of the dissertation, a description of its new scientific results and findings, the recommendations of utilization and the list of used references and sources. In the appendices of the dissertation summarizing tables, maps and pictures are presented.

The summary of the dissertation, its new scientific results and findings

The Austrian and Hungarian merchant marine with its appropriate theoretical background and beside a continuous attention devoted to the international events had appropriately prepared for the military purpose transport. That can be stated in spite of the fact that before the war only two ships were considered as the wartime loss of the Hungarian marine which – according to foreign sources presented in the dissertation and previously not published in Hungarian – were captured and confiscated during the Russian-Japanese war. At the same time the Hungarian marine having no real wartime experience whatsoever was successful in performing the military tasks imposed upon it from the very first day of WWI under the supervision of the common Ministry of War.

The greatest merit of military marine beside the attack of Italy in May, 1915 and the battle of Otranto in May, 1917 was the escort of merchant ships and the safeguard of transport. The contact between their own coast and those of Montenegro and Albania could be maintained by the Austrian and Hungarian steamers in view of both military transport and the supply of civil inhabitants. The coast line transport could not only ensure the supply of the southern Cattaro base but it could perform the support of troops fighting in the West Balkans and the transport of the injured to the homeland. The merchant marine performed its tasks ranging from the Italian front to the Albanian Durazzo almost along the entire eastern Adriatic coast. Among the military protective measures, the danger of mines and alien enemy attacks that performance presented a great risk for the ship owners, and demanded endurance from the crews. At the same time the allotment of crews of the ships trapped abroad – mainly the valuable, long distance ones – was hardship and internment. Part of the ships flew to neutral ports, another part participated in the military transport of The Entente in certain periods of WWI.

The quest for and the classification and analysis of Hungarian marine efforts and losses are the greatest results of the dissertation, since it describes Hungary's maritime role in WWI mostly based on so far non researched domestic and foreign archive sources. While the imperial and royal military marine of the Monarchy terminated after the war, the independent Hungarian (royal) merchant marine survived the war caused crisis and was reorganized in Budapest. Later the Hungarian merchant marine participated in WWII, but Hungarian corps performed marine transport in later periods as well, although with foreign ships, e.g. from Port Koper to Kuwait in 2003. The dissertation may provide a basis and starting point for further research in the analysis and presentation of Hungarian marine transport with its providing exact data concerning the marine transport during WWI.

Based on the research work performed in the field of the dissertation's subject, and the classification and analysis of the sources I conceive the scientific results as follows:

1. I was the first to present the operation of the Hungarian merchant marine during WWI, the development of the companies' fleet, the system of ship use for military purposes, the marine losses (both those of the companies' and the marine administration) and the possibilities of the use of ships for military purposes. I searched for, analyzed and

classified the related and mostly non-processed documents available in Hungarian and foreign archives and with the exploration, objective analysis and summarizing thereof I revealed and presented the system of using the Hungarian marine for military purposes, the so far unregistered aspects of the Hungarian efforts and losses.

2. I flashed light upon so far not known details, thus enlarging the overall professional knowledge concerning Hungary's role in the WWI Through the thorough research of the available resources I clarified the details and mistakes of the scarce documentation published so far in Hungary and abroad related to the subject.
3. I flashed light on and proved the fact, that the independent Hungarian merchant marine made significant efforts and suffered serious losses during WWI and following that in the system of peace treaties that closed the war. I gave a summary of the most important statistical data in the form of tables.

Suggestion for the use of the dissertation

1. The results of the research can be used by ZMNE and by other high level institutions, history research facilities, faculties of art, teacher training colleges as well as military secondary schools for the purpose of teaching history and military history. The findings of the dissertation can be built in the teaching material related to the subject.
2. New scientific results provide possibility for international debates in the field of history, primarily in scientific workshops of the affected belligerent countries or their successor states. The dissertation provides information concerning the role of Hungary in WWI and certain details of Hungarian marine for domestic and foreign researchers.
3. The Hungarian marine having operated in Fiume existing as a corpus independent of Austria is also to be counted among the WWI efforts and losses of Hungary, thus the results of the research can be used as part of new evaluations, analyses and accounts especially because we are nearing the 100th anniversary of the breakout of the war.
4. The dissertation serves as a starting point for further research concerning the participation of Hungarian marine in military operations following WWI.

Publications

In Hungarian:

2011

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2010

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2008

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2008

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http://www.biztonsagpolitika.hu/documents/1277413772_zsigmond_gabor_biztonsagban_a_tengereken_a_nemet_tengeri_mentes_50_eve_-_biztonsagpolitika.hu.pdf

2007

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2007

The Development of Hungarian Commercial Steamshiping at the Sea of Fiume. in.: KÚT 2007/1-2. szám, ISSN 1589-1445 pp. 56-74.

2007

The Story of the Local Shipping in Budapest II.- The MFTR- and BKV-period. in: Városi Közlekedés 2007/6 ISSN 0133-0314 pp.361-367.

2007

The Story of the Local Shipping in Budapest I. – From the Beginning till. The First World War. in.: Városi Közlekedés 2007/5 ISSN 0133-031 pp. 301-306.

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2006

Role and Importance of sailing in the forming of interregional relationship of South-Alfold and Banat. in.: A Délvidék történeti földrajza (ed. by: dr. Kókai Sándor), Nyíregyházi Főiskola Földrajz Tanszéke, Nyíregyháza, ISBN 963-9385-99-9 pp.301-311.

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2006

The Reformed Church in Fiume and the Adriatic– economical and cultural Relationships. in.: Confessio 2006/1. ISSN 0133 8889 pp. 109-116.

Foreign Language:

2009

Ungarn und der Österreichische Lloyd. in.: Hajózástörténeti Közlemények 2006/3. OM által 2.9/8-1/2006-os szám alatt jegyzett internetes folyóirat. <http://www.kriegsmarine.hu/hk/zsg00902.html>

Curriculum vitae

Name: Zsigmond Gábor
Mother's name: Kovács Erzsébet
Place and time of birth: Sárvár, 12th May, 1982.
Nationality: Hungarian
Marital status: married with one child

Studies:

2006-2009 Miklos Zrinyi National Defence University – Doctoral studies
2000-2005 Károli Gáspár Reformed University, MA in History (Summa Cum Laude)
2000-2005 Károli Gáspár Reformed University Military History studies (HT-13/2005 insert)
1995–2000 Tourism, External Trade, Commerce and Catering High School, Graduated from Faculty of Commerce

Work experience:

2007- Head of Museums at Városi Tömegközlekedési Múzeum és a Földalatti Vasúti Múzeum
2005-2009 Lecturer at Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Department of Economy and Culture-history
2005-2007 Press Officer, BKV Rt.
2005-2006 Seminars in History of Seafaring at University of Szeged

Exhibitions organized:

2010: - 40 years of the Chair-lift in Budapest. Venue: Underground Railway Museum
- Public Transport Nostalgia in Budapest. Venue: Underground Railway Museum
2009: - Paris-Budapest, Pictures Underground. Venue: Underground Railway Museum
- Public Transport in Budapest before the Metro Constructions. Venue: Bocskai Metro station

2008: - City Transport on European and Hungarian Stamps. Venue: Underground Railway Museum (Together with the Budapest Stamp Museum)

- BKV is 40 Years Old, Venue: Hungarian Photographers' House

2007: - Life scenes from the Public Transport of the 50's and 60's. Venue: Underground Railway Museum

Leaflets for season exhibitions and other materials:

- *40 Years of the Metro Transport in Budapest.* Bp. BKV, 2009

- *Extracts from the History of Szabadsag Bridge.* Bp. BKV, 2008

- Life scenes from the Public Transport of the 50's and 60's. Bp. BKV, 2008

- *120 Years of the Suburban Railway.* Bp. BKV, 2007

- *120 Years of the Tram in Budapest.* Bp. BKV, 2007

- *190 Years of Sailing on the Danube and the Pest-Buda is 20 Years Old.* Bp. BKV, 2007

Other professional and research activities, not related to the subject of the dissertation:

- Participation in the NKA program entitled: „*Városi tömegközlekedési tárgyi emlékek a közgyűjteményekben*” (descriptions of works of art, preparation of the concise history of sailing in Budapest).

- Historical and other vehicles' restoration, management of restoration of two historical vehicles through the compilation of electrical and authenticity documentation

- Public transport related informative articles in magazines, periodicals and newspapers, as well as radio and TV interviews in the same topic.

- Participation in the documentary „*Akkor még más volt minden*”, about the public transport of Miskolc as an expert.

Other publications:

2010 - *Számos villamos.* (with Legát Tibor and Nagy Zsolt Levente) Bp., 2010. József Műhely, ISBN 9786155009150

2008 - *Utazz.../Let's travel...* (ed. by: Kincses Károly). Bp., 2008. Magyar Fotográfusok Háza, ISBN 978-963-87620-4-7

- Consultant: *Legát Tibor: Közlekedik a főváros.* Bp., 2008. Józseveg Műhely, ISBN 978-963-7052-77-4

- Consultant: *Secret Life of the Samurai.* History Channel DVD