

The Thököly Uprising in Hungary and the Timing of the Nine Years' War and the Glorious Revolution¹



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ABSTRACT

The Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 has been regarded primarily as an episode in English domestic politics and has rarely been considered as a European event. Since the tercentenary of the Revolution, a lot has been done to correct this picture. Now it is clear, for example, that without Prince William's powerful military intervention, which was carried out with the full support of the States General of the United Provinces, the Revolution would have been impossible. It should also be pointed out, however, that if William had succeeded in organising a powerful anti-French alliance during the early 1680s, he may not have intervened in England at the end of the decade. The timing and circumstances of William's intervention can only be understood within the context of European events, which should not be confined to Western Europe. This article seeks to explain the interrelationships between the parallel events of the 1680s in the eastern and western parts of the Continent. It argues that the Thököly Uprising played a major part in frustrating William's plans of organising a powerful anti-French coalition and delayed the Nine Years' War (King William's War) against France until 1688.

KEYWORDS

1680s; Louis XIV; William of Orange; Count Imre Thököly; Ottoman Empire; Nine Years' War; Glorious Revolution

INTRODUCTION

The Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 was one of the greatest turning-points in world history. The dethroning of the Catholic James II (1685–88) by his own nephew and son-in-law, William of Orange, the leading political figure of the United Provinces, was to have far-reaching consequences not only for Britain but the whole of Western Europe as well. The Revolution created a stable constitutional monarchy, brought

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religious toleration for Protestant Nonconformists, changed Anglo-Irish relations for the worse, led to union between England and Scotland in the long run, transformed Britain's financial system, and involved the country in a long coalition war against France.³

The domestic causes of this great event, the Catholic policies of James II, were less important than the external ones, Prince William's aim to protect the United Provinces against Louis XIV by changing England's foreign policy and by bringing it into his second long war against France. James II's military position was strong since the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 provided him with an excuse to maintain a large standing army. It is now absolutely clear that without William's determined intervention in England the Glorious Revolution would have been impossible.⁴

Prince William's intervention, however, had a number of different preconditions. Without the agreement and co-operation of all the seven provinces of the Dutch Republic, the Prince of Orange could not take action. Without having powerful allies, he was equally helpless. The Prince's chief ally was the Emperor. It was mainly with Leopold I's help that William was able to defend the United Provinces during the Franco-Dutch War of 1672–79.⁵ The Sun King's *Réunions* policy — making territorial gains by legalistic aggression and diplomatic intimidation — from 1679 onwards convinced William that the French ruler was still a threat to the balance of power in Europe. Until the end of the 1680s, however, the Prince of Orange could not expect effective help from the Emperor who was distracted in Hungary.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 has been regarded too much as an episode in English domestic politics and too little as a European event. Since the tercentenary of the Revolution, a lot has been done to make up for this deficiency. Now it is clear, for example, that the prime mover of this great event was William of Orange and that 1688–89 was an Anglo-Dutch Revolution.⁶ It should also be emphasised, however, that "William's intervention in England was not inevitable".⁷ If William had succeeded in countering the aggressive expansion of France by organising a huge anti-French alliance during the early 1680s, he might not have turned against his uncle and father-in-law, James II. The timing and circumstances of William's intervention "can only be understood within the context of European events."⁸ These, however, should not be confined to the western part of the continent. The European history of the

3 For details concerning the consequences of the Glorious Revolution see J. MILLER, *Seeds of Liberty. 1688 and the Shaping of the Modern World*, London 1988.

4 J. I. ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic, Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806*, Oxford 1995, p. 842.

5 In 1672, when England and France attacked the small United Provinces, the Dutch had to fight for survival. The revolution of this year brought to power the young William III who organised an anti-French coalition and rescued his country from conquest by Louis XIV. From this time on, William devoted his life to countering French aggression by diplomacy and war, and this programme eventually included the capture of the English throne as well in 1689.

6 See J. I. ISRAEL's *The Dutch Role in the Glorious Revolution*, in: J. ISRAEL (ed.), *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and Its World Impact*, Cambridge UP, 1991.

7 S. TAYLOR, *Plus ça Change...? New Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 1994, p. 465.

8 *Ibidem*.

Glorious Revolution cannot be complete without the detailed study of events in Eastern Europe, which considerably influenced those in the West. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to place the events of the 1680s into a much wider international setting.



THE CRISIS IN HUNGARY

In Eastern Europe Leopold I had been facing revolts since the making of the Treaty of Vasvár (Eisenburg) with the Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed IV (1648–87), in 1664. This was because, after the ‘great victory’ of the Christian forces at Szentgotthárd (St Gotthard, Mengersdorf) in Western Hungary on the right bank of the River Raab on 1 August 1664, everybody expected the Emperor to launch an anti-Turkish war of liberation. Instead, the Viennese court made a twenty years’ truce and even allowed the Porte to retain the conquests of the previous years, including Várad (Grosswardein) and Érsekújvár (Neuhausel).⁹ The outrage caused by the Treaty of Vasvár resulted in a poorly organised anti-Habsburg conspiracy led by the Palatine of Hungary, Ferenc Wesselényi.¹⁰ After the suppression of the plot, Leopold I suspended the Hungarian Constitution, abolished the office of Palatine, and appointed a seven-member ‘Gubernium’ to govern the country. A violent persecution of Protestants started¹¹, high taxes were levied, and Hungary was flooded with German mercenaries. The disbanded Hungarian fortress soldiers withdrew into the frontier zone and Transylvania, and

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- 9 In fact, neither side won the battle, and the Ottoman army remained intact. The Turks, however, were stopped and prevented from crossing the river, which was considered a great success. The ensuing Habsburg victory celebrations misled the whole of Europe. Thus, as Stanford Shaw has put it, “the treaty was a tremendous disappointment, but in fact it well reflected the political and military situation of the time”. See S. SHAW, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. I: *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280–1808*, Cambridge 1976, p. 212.
- 10 Hungarian historians (Gyula Pauler, Géza Perjés, Endre Marosi, Ágnes R Várkonyi and László Benczédi) have explained the Wesselényi-conspiracy mainly by the strong sense of betrayal among those nobles who had wanted to continue the war against the Ottomans. Georg B. Michels argues, however, that “the origins of the Hungarian initiative to secede from the Habsburg to the Ottoman Empire cannot be explained solely in terms of Hungarian nobles’ discontent with the Vasvár Peace Treaty. Previous historical interpretations have not adequately addressed the dimension of religion.” According to Michels, “the role of Protestant religion and the overriding concern for protecting religious freedoms need to be taken into account in understanding what motivated Hungarian nobles to join the principal power of the early modern Islamic world in the late seventeenth century.” For further details see G. B. MICHELS, *Ready to Secede to the Ottoman Empire: Habsburg Hungary after the Vasvár Peace Treaty (1664–1674)*, in: AHEA: E-journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association, Vol. 5, 2012, <http://ahea.net/e-journal/volume-5-201>
- 11 As Lucile Pinkham points out, “... the Habsburg policy toward the Protestants of Hungary was every bit as hostile as that of Louis toward the Huguenots. The United Provinces and Brandenburg sent protests to Vienna — and accepted Leopold as an ally.” L. PINKHAM, *William III and the Respectable Revolution. The Part Played by William of Orange in the Revolution of 1688*, Cambridge 1954, p. 88.



from 1672 onwards began to organise themselves. This was the *kuruc* movement, the leadership of which was taken over in 1678 by the young Hungarian aristocrat, Imre Thököly (1657–1705), who had lived in exile in Transylvania since 1670.¹² Thököly was only twenty-one at this time, the same age as William of Orange when he became Captain-General, Admiral-General as well as Stadholder of the United Provinces in 1672.

LOUIS XIV'S RÉUNIONS POLICY

In 1678 the Treaties of Nijmegen (signed between August 1678 and December 1679) ended the Franco-Dutch War, the Prince of Orange's first great struggle against the Sun King. The peace treaties, by which Spain had to cede Franche-Comté and territories in the Spanish Netherlands, considerably strengthened France. Louis XIV, however, was dissatisfied with the settlement in the east, where he controlled only one of the great fortresses that guarded the routes into Alsace, Breisach. Strasbourg was a free city, and the Emperor retained Philippsburg. The primary aim of Sun King's *Réunions* policy was to make up for this shortcoming.¹³ According to J. H. Shennan's definition,

This was an attempt, characteristic of dynastic methods, to employ legal arguments to extend the king's authority over areas of disputed and uncertain sovereignty. The king's chief judicial courts in the regions of Franche-Comté, Alsace, Lorraine, Metz, Toul and Verdun were commanded to determine what additional territories were dependent upon those already properly acquired by Louis at Westphalia and Nijmegen.¹⁴

France's eastern frontier was straightened and strengthened by this policy. The important city of Strasbourg itself, however, could not be gained by it, so in September 1681 Louis decided to use military force, which alarmed the whole of Europe.¹⁵

The initiative to build a new anti-French coalition came from Sweden, and the Association Treaty was concluded in the Hague in the spring of 1681. In the first half of 1682, Austria, Spain and Bavaria all joined the Association League, the declared aim of which was to uphold the peace settlements of Westphalia and Nijmegen and to take military action against countries that violated them.¹⁶

12 Although Imre Thököly's father, Count István Thököly, had played only a relatively minor part in the Wesselényi-conspiracy, he was deprived of all his large estates in Royal Hungary. He died of natural causes during the royal siege of Árva Castle in 1670. The estates of Zsigmond Thököly, Imre Thököly's half-brother, were also confiscated even though he was completely innocent.

13 G. SYMCOX, *Louis XIV and the Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, in: R. HATTON (ed.), *Louis XIV and Europe*, London and Basingstoke 1976, p. 181; G. LIVET, *Louis XIV and the Germanies*, in: HATTON, *Louis XIV and Europe*, pp. 64–65.

14 J. H. SHENNAN, *Louis XIV*, London 1986, pp. 38–39.

15 SHENNAN, *Louis XIV*, p. 39; SYMCOX, *The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, p. 181; I. PAPP, *A Napkirály [The Sun King]*, Debrecen 1989, pp. 169–172.

16 W. TROOST, *William III, the Stadholder-King: A Political Biography*, London 2005, p. 156.

THÖKÖLY'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUCCESSES

Meanwhile, Count Imre Thököly, relying on French and Ottoman financial assistance as well as his own income, successfully reorganised his *kuruc* troops in Hungary.¹⁷ In the autumn of 1678 — when, before the end of the war in Western Europe, he was still able to rely on the help of some French and Polish auxiliary troops as well¹⁸ — he captured several towns and fortresses and succeeded in establishing himself in Upper Hungary. Due to Thököly's spectacular military successes, the Court in Vienna decided to enter into negotiations with the rebels. Thököly's demands included the granting of the rights of the Hungarian estates, freedom of worship for Protestants, consent to his marriage to Ilona Zrínyi¹⁹, and that he should be recognised as the Prince of seven counties in the north-eastern part of Upper Hungary. The chances of agreement were not hopeless since there was a “Spanish Party” at the Viennese Court, which encouraged the ruler to make concessions to the Turks and the Hungarian rebels in order to preserve the peace in Hungary so that the Habsburgs could counter French aggression in the Spanish Netherlands and at the River Rhine.²⁰ Leopold I rejected Thököly's demands but requested him to act as mediator between Vienna and Istanbul. The Count used this position cleverly to strengthen his ties with the Turks and made military preparations for further conquests in Upper Hungary.

Peace between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in February 1681 enabled the Turks to devote much more attention to developments in Hungary. This, together with Thököly's new military successes, forced Leopold I to revise his absolutist policies and make concessions. In May 1681, the ruler summoned the Diet of Sopron (Ödenburg).²¹ The constitution was restored, a new Palatine was elected, and the new taxes introduced in 1671 were abolished, but the German mercenaries did not leave Hungary and

17 Hungary at this time was made up of three different parts. Western and Upper Hungary (Royal Hungary) belonged to the Habsburg Empire. The Principality of Transylvania in the east was a semi-independent vassal state of the Turks. The central parts of the country, including Buda, were controlled by the Ottoman Empire.

18 On 27 May 1677, France, Poland and Transylvania signed an agreement according to which, in return for financial help provided by the French Crown to John III Sobieski, the Polish king was to end his war against the Turks, and was to raise 4.000 irregular troops at France's expense. These troops were to be deployed in Hungary to support the anti-Habsburg rebels. See S. GEBEL, *A Thököly-felkelés kibontakozása és a Rzeczpospolita* [The Evolution of Thököly's Uprising and the Rzeczpospolita], in: *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, No. 3, 2005, pp. 412–419.

19 Ilona Zrínyi — whose father, Péter Zrínyi, Ban of Croatia, was executed after the Wesselényi-conspiracy of 1670 — was the widow of Ferenc I Rákóczi, and the mother of Ferenc II Rákóczi who was to lead the Hungarian War of Independence of 1703–11 against the Habsburgs at the time of the War of the Spanish Succession. It was on 15 June 1682 that Count Imre Thököly and Ilona Zrínyi eventually married in the fortress of Munkács.

20 J. J. VARGA, *Thököly Imre esztendeje, 1682* [1682, Imre Thököly's Year], in: *Történelmi Szemle*, Vol. XLVII, No. 3–4, 2005, p. 48.

21 It was because of a plague epidemic that the Diet was to be held in Sopron instead of Pozsony (Pressburg), the capital and legislative centre of the Kingdom of Hungary from 1536 to 1783.





freedom of worship for Protestants was not fully granted, so the war continued. At this point, Grand Vizier Kara Mustapha decided to take a more active role in the Hungarian insurrection. In September 1681, when Louis XIV was occupying Strasbourg, Thököly, cooperating with Transylvanian and Ottoman troops, started a new military campaign against the Austrian army. From the end of 1682 onwards, Thököly and his *kuruc* followers were the chief allies of the Turks in Hungary and not Transylvania.²²

Imre Thököly was more successful than any of the previous Hungarian anti-Habsburg freedom fighters. In 1682, at the height of his military successes, the Count came to control thirteen Upper Hungarian counties and an area of about 100.000 square kilometres from the River Vág (Waag) in the west to the town of Munkács in the east.²³ Negotiations between Thököly and the Habsburgs never stopped. The Count would have been ready to submit to Leopold I and even fight for him if he had recognised him as the Prince of Upper Hungary. Hoping to pacify Thököly, Leopold I eventually agreed to his marriage to Ilona Zrínyi, but he refused to grant *de jure* recognition to his rule in Upper Hungary. As opposed to this, the Turks recognised Imre Thököly in September 1682 as the King of Hungary. Thököly, of course, was to be a vassal of the Sultan according to the treaty that they signed who had to pay taxes to the Porte and come to the help of the Turks in military campaigns.²⁴

THE FAILURE OF THE ASSOCIATION LEAGUE

In September 1681 Louis XIV sent his troops into the Spanish Netherlands as well and started to encircle Luxembourg. William III was determined to come to Spain's help. He made an attempt at strengthening the Association League by bringing England and Brandenburg round to join it. Charles II, who was playing a double game and happy to be rid of Parliament after the Exclusion Crisis of 1679–81²⁵, could not be per-

22 Á. R. VÁRKONYI, *Thököly politikája és Magyarország esélyei a hatalmi átrendeződés idején* [Thököly's Policies and Hungary's Chances at the Time of the Transformation in the European Balance of Power], in: *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, Is. 3, 2005, pp. 374–378.

23 István Bocskai controlled four counties (April 1605–Dec. 1606), whereas Gábor Bethlen (Sept. 1619–Nov. 1629) and György I Rákóczi (March 1644–Oct. 1648) both had seven in Upper Hungary. These counties were incorporated into Transylvania by the three princes during the above-mentioned periods, Thököly's thirteen counties, however, formed a separate principality under Turkish protection between September 1682 and October 1685.

24 J. J. VARGA, *Válaszúton. Thököly Imre és Magyarország 1682–1684-ben* [At Crossroads. Imre Thököly and Hungary in 1682–84], Budapest 2007, pp. 176–179. European public reaction to Thököly's activities has been examined by B. KŐPECZI, *“Magyarország a kereszténység ellensége”: A Thököly-felkelés az európai közvéleményben* [“Hungary, the Enemy of Christianity”: The Thököly Uprising in European Public Opinion], Budapest 1976. As the title of the book reveals, commentators in Western Europe, except for those in France, were hostile to Thököly and accused him of betraying Christianity by his cooperation with the Muslims.

25 Taking advantage of the growing fear of Catholic absolutism in England, the parliamentary opposition (who at this time came to be called Whigs) tried to exclude Charles II's brother, the Catholic James from the succession. The king used his prerogatives of proroguing



suaded to summon it again to ask for funds. Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg, also refused to join the anti-French alliance. This was partly because he believed that Leopold I would not be able to resist the French since the Emperor was preoccupied with fighting the Hungarian rebels under Thököly. It was these developments that frustrated the Association League. What made military action against France completely impossible for a long time, however, was Leopold I's war with the Turks.²⁶ In the summer of 1683, Grand Vizier Kara Mustapha's huge Turkish army of about 100.000 besieged Vienna. At the same time, Thököly's *kuruc* troops attacked Pozsony (Pressburg).²⁷ The Association League was helpless, and in June 1684 Louis XIV occupied Luxembourg as well.²⁸

THE SIEGE OF VIENNA AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THÖKÖLY UPRISING

Why did the Turks decide to besiege Vienna in 1683? Several factors need to be taken into consideration in this respect. Due to the administrative, financial and military reforms of Grand Viziers Mehmed Köprülü (1656–61) and his son, Fazil Ahmed Köprülü (166–76) the Ottomans managed to overcome the crisis, which had started within the empire at the end of the sixteenth century.²⁹ The ensuing military successes of the

and dissolving Parliament cleverly to play for time and exhaust the Whigs. Charles II dissolved the third Exclusion Parliament in March 1681, and financial assistance obtained from Louis XIV in the same month enabled him to do without Parliament during the last four years of his reign (1681–85). For a full account on the Exclusion Crisis see J. R. JONES, *The First Whigs: The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis, 1678–1683*, London 1961.

²⁶ William of Orange would have been ready to stand by Spain and even go to war in spite of the obvious impotence of the Association League. Amsterdam and several other Dutch towns, however, resisted the Prince's suicidal policy, which led to a huge political crisis in the United Provinces. On all these developments see TROOST, *William III*, pp. 158–171; IS-RAEL, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 830–836.

²⁷ A contemporary source described the siege in the following way: "While the Turks press'd Vienna, which they did at first with Vigour enough; he form'd a design of Besieging with 20000 Hungarians and 8000 Turks, the Castle of Presburg, which held out against him, although the Town had been Surrender'd. The Duke of Lorraine having Intelligence of it, sent on that side 200 Foot, convoy'd with 300 Horse, to endeavour to enter the Castle; but the Convoy was beaten, and the 200 Men obliged to return." See JEAN LE CLERC, *Memoirs of Emeric count Teckely in four books, wherein are related all the most considerable transactions in Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, from his birth, anno 1656, till after the Battel of Salankement, in the year 1691 / translated out of French*. London 1693, p. 148.

²⁸ In March 1682, the blockade of Luxembourg was temporarily lifted by the French for tactical reasons and due to Dutch and English pressure. See V.-L. TAPIÉ, *Louis XIV's Methods in Foreign Policy*, in: R. HATTON (ed.), *Louis XIV and Europe*, London and Basingstoke 1976, pp. 8–9.

²⁹ Between 1604 and 1656 the grand vezirate was held by not less than forty-four different people. Compared with this, the Köprülü years (1656 to 1683, together with the grand vezirate of Kara Mustafa, the foster brother of Fazil Ahmed) was a period of stability. See P. FODOR, *Mi változott? Az Oszmán Birodalom Európában* [What Became Different? The Ot-



1660s and 1670s demonstrated that the Ottoman Empire still had considerable power.³⁰ It was the highly ambitious and militant Kara Mustapha Pasha (1676–83) who persuaded Sultan Mehmed IV to attack the Habsburg capital.³¹ The French also encouraged the Turks to launch the campaign and promised not to become involved in the conflict.³² The Turks did not expect the Poles to come to the help of Leopold I either.

Historians have also demonstrated that the Ottoman Empire had a long-term plan for the occupation of Vienna and the surrounding territories because they realised that without taking the Habsburg capital, they could not control the total territory of Hungary. From the 1530s onwards they had been searching for a powerful ally to cooperate with in Hungary. In 1682, at last, they managed to find the right man in Count Imre Thököly who had succeeded in capturing thirteen counties from the Habsburgs in the northern part of Royal Hungary. Thököly's principality served as a jumping-board to the Habsburg-controlled territories in the west.³³ Thus, it seems clear that without Thököly's remarkable military successes the Turks would not have attempted the siege of Vienna.

The Thököly Uprising, therefore, had a double international significance. First, it contributed to the outbreak of war between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires in 1683.³⁴ Second, in an indirect way it determined the timing of the Nine Years' War, as well as that of the Glorious Revolution, which was carried out by William of Orange at the beginning of this long coalition war.

The Battle of Kahlenberg close to Vienna on 12 September 1683 revealed the military weaknesses of the Ottoman army.³⁵ Here was the chance for the Habsburgs to drive the Turks out of Hungary. Pope Innocent XI also encouraged the Emperor to start a war of liberation, and eventually, in March 1684, the Papacy, Austria, Venice and Poland-Lithuania formed a Holy League against the Porte.³⁶ The long war for the reconquest of Hungary, however, meant that until the end of the 1680s the Habsburgs could not provide effective help in the west against France. Prince William was helpless and was bound to wait.

toman Empire in Europe], in: *Rubicon*, No. 11, 2019, p. 17. On the political and financial anarchy as well as the Janissary and Sipahi rebellions of the first half of the seventeenth century see SHAW, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 190–207.

30 The Turks completed the conquest of Crete (1667–69), which was followed by their successful military campaign against the Poles for the control of the Ukraine (1672–76) and a war against Russia (1677–81).

31 For Mehmed IV, who wished to spread Islam, the conquests and military struggles of his reign was a Jihad, or Holy War.

32 A. PAGDEN, *Turning the Ottoman Tide*, in: *The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, Summer 2008, p. 13; Troost, *William III*, p. 163.

33 VARGA, *Válaszúton*, pp. 160–180.

34 *Ibidem*, p. 185.

35 Charles of Lorraine and John III Sobieski of Poland, who came to the help of the Emperor with 21.000 troops, could hardly believe that they had so easily defeated the Ottomans at Kahlenberg. See E. LIPTAI (ed.), *Magyarország Hadtörténete* [The Military History of Hungary], Budapest 1985, p. 310.

36 Later on the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Malta also joined the Holy League.

William of Orange was not taken by surprise by these developments in Eastern Europe. This is what he wrote to Waldeck, his envoy to Leopold I, back in July 1682:

what concerns me most at the moment is the movements of the Turks and the rebels in Hungary. If the Emperor can deal with these questions, I have good hopes that our policy of not yielding to France will turn out well. If war comes, I fear that the Empire will be forced to make a shameful and disastrous treaty.³⁷

This “shameful and disastrous treaty”, the Truce of Regensburg (Ratisbon), by which Spain, the Emperor and the princes of the Empire accepted France’s occupation of Strasbourg and all the *Réunions* territories including Luxembourg for a period of twenty years, was signed in August 1684.

THE OUTBREAK OF THE NINE YEARS’ WAR AND THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

In 1684 Louis XIV was at the height of his power. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the following year, however, backfired and gradually changed the balance of power in Europe in favour of the Sun King’s enemies.³⁸ The persecution of the French Protestants changed the Elector of Brandenburg’s inconsistent foreign policy and made Frederick William a firm ally of William III and the Emperor. In England, the new ruler on the throne, the openly Catholic James II found himself in a much more difficult position owing to the unwise religious policy of his powerful cousin, and growing fear of Catholic absolutism prepared the ground for William of Orange’s successful intervention in the country. Most importantly, opposition to William’s anti-French foreign policy started to weaken in the United Provinces.³⁹ The Prince’s aims had been strongly opposed by the two commercial provinces of the Republic, Holland and Zeeland. The religious persecution of the French Protestants in itself would not have changed their attitude. As a result of the persecution of the Huguenots, however, Dutch commercial interests also suffered.⁴⁰

Stuart Prall sums up the significance of developments in 1685 in the following way:

³⁷ Quoted by TROOST, *William III*, p. 164.

³⁸ The Edict of Nantes was issued by King Henry IV in 1598 to end the French Wars of Religion. The document guaranteed the liberties of the Protestant towns and institutions and granted freedom of worship to the Huguenots.

³⁹ For a detailed account of the causes and consequences of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes see my *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Glorious Revolution*, in: V. RUTKAY — B. GÁRDOS (eds.), *HUSSE 11, Proceedings of the 11th Conference of the Hungarian Society for the Study of English*, Budapest 2014, pp. 553–557.

⁴⁰ ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 844. To top it all, in August 1687, the French played into William’s hands by introducing drastic protectionist measures and considerably increasing duties on all imported Dutch manufactured goods.



In retrospect 1685 appears to have been a remarkable turning point in the lives of England, France and the United Provinces, and in those of William, Louis, and James. The accession of James II and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes were to unleash thitherto pent-up forces that would show the basic unity of the European struggle. It is in William of Orange that we have the linchpin that holds the whole structure of England and Europe together. Without William it is difficult to see any such coming together of all the dynastic, religious and imperial elements that composed Europe.⁴¹

From 1686 onwards there was growing tension in Europe. Louis XIV would have liked to convert the Truce of Regensburg into a permanent settlement so that he could keep his new territories, developments in both parts of the continent made this increasingly unlikely. In April 1686 Thököly and the Turks were badly defeated by the Imperial troops at Szeged. In May, Peter the Great's Russia joined the Holy League and declared war on the Ottoman Empire. In July, the League of Augsburg was formed by the Emperor, several German princes, Spain, and Sweden.⁴² On 2 September Buda fell to Charles of Lorraine's besieging international army. Habsburg victory against the Turks at Nagyharsány in August 1687 meant that the Emperor would soon be able to turn against France.⁴³ Louis XIV was alarmed by Leopold I's victories and rising prestige and began to build a great number of fortresses to strengthen his eastern frontier with Germany.⁴⁴

Another source of tension between the French King and the Emperor was the election of a new archbishop of Cologne. Elector Maximilian Henry, France's ally, was now an old man. Since Cologne was the leading ecclesiastical state of the Rhineland as well as an important strategic point, Louis XIV was determined to keep it within the French sphere of influence. In January 1688 Louis managed to secure the election of one of his allies, William-Egon von Fürstenberg, Bishop of Strasbourg, as archbishop coadjutor, which was the first step towards his election as archbishop. The Emperor wished to prevent this by supporting Prince Joseph Clement, the brother of the Elector of Bavaria.⁴⁵

In November 1687 it was announced that James II's queen, the Catholic Mary of Modena, was pregnant. The news came as a great shock to William of Orange and

41 S. PRALL, *The Bloodless Revolution. England, 1688*, New York 1972, p. 169.

42 For tactical reasons William of Orange did not want the United Provinces to join the League of Augsburg immediately. His position at home, where he was often accused by the opposition of being a warmonger, was still uncertain. See L. PINKHAM, *William III and the Respectable Revolution*, Cambridge 1954, pp. 103–104.

43 This crucial military engagement, in which about 8.000 Ottoman soldiers died, has been called 'the second battle of Mohács' partly because Charles of Lorraine himself referred to it in his military reports as the 'battle near Mohács', and partly because contemporaries saw it as a revenge for the military defeat at Mohács in 1526. See SZ. VARGA, *Reváns. A második mohácsi csata. Nagyharsány, 1687. augusztus 12* [Revenge. The Second Battle of Mohács. 12 August 1687, Nagyharsány.], in: *Rubicon*, No. 11, 2019, pp. 66–73.

44 SYMCOX, *The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, pp. 186–187; TROOST, *William III*, p. 187.

45 PRALL, *The Bloodless Revolution*, pp. 21–212; SYMCOX, *The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, pp. 188–189; TROOST, *William III*, p. 189; ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 845.

his wife, Mary (James' Protestant daughter by his first wife), and the opposition in England. If the child was to be a boy, Mary would not come to the throne after the death of her father, and William would not be able to change the country's foreign policy with her help.

The next shock to William at the beginning of 1688 was his father-in-law's demand that the Anglo-Scottish brigade, which had been stationed in the Netherlands since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, should be returned to England. There had been rumours of an Anglo-French alliance in the United Provinces since 1686, and James' demand now confirmed these suspicions. William's fears were increased by the Anglo-French naval agreement of April 1688 according to which the French were to pay part of the English squadron in the Channel. To prevent what now seemed to be a formal alliance between the French King and James II against the United Provinces, William of Orange decided to intervene in England.⁴⁶

Two events in June 1688 brought the date of William's invasion of England and the outbreak of the Nine Years' War closer. On 10 June Mary of Modena gave birth to a son, which prompted William's allies in England, the 'Immortal Seven' as they came to be known, to send their *Letter of Invitation* to the Prince. A few days earlier, Maximilian Henry, Archbishop of Cologne, died. The Sun King's candidate, Von Fürstenberg, was duly elected but not by the required two-thirds majority, so the final decision passed to the Pope, who chose Prince Joseph Clement. Louis XIV refused to recognise the new archbishop and threatened to use force, which alarmed the William of Orange, the Elector of Brandenburg and the Emperor so much that they started to mobilize large forces on the Rhine.⁴⁷

Being aware of the weaknesses of France's eastern frontier, Louis XIV decided to take the initiative and to carry out a pre-emptive strike. News that the Imperial army was besieging Belgrade and the Turks were about to make peace made this step urgent. At the end of September, French troops marched into Cologne and across the Palatinate to besiege Philippsburg.⁴⁸ Louis' offensive in the Rhineland meant that the French army was some three hundred kilometres away from the borders of the Dutch Republic, and William was free to launch the Dutch invasion of England. The French King had been aware of William's intention to go to England, but he did not expect him to sail to the island so late in the year and believed that the outcome of the intervention would be either victory for James II or a prolonged civil war

46 PINKHAM, *The Respectable Revolution*, pp. 100–102; PRALL, *The Bloodless Revolution*, pp. 176–177; TROOST, *William III*, pp. 190–191; ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 84–846; SYMCOX, *The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, pp. 191–192.

47 PRALL, *The Bloodless Revolution*, p. 212; TROOST, *William III*, pp. 191–192; ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 845; SYMCOX, *The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, pp. 193–195.

48 At this time Count Imre Thököly — whose Upper Hungarian principality had collapsed by the end of 1685 — was the leader of a small army consisting of both Hungarian and Turkish soldiers, which put down a Bulgarian uprising close to Vidin. See I. BARISKA — GY. HARASZTI — J. J. VARGA (eds.), *Buda Expugnata 1686 — Europa et Hungaria 1683–1718*, Budapest 1986, Vol. I., pp. 81–85.; K. TELBIZOV, *Thököly Imre 1688. évi bulgáriai szerepéről* [About Imre Thököly's Role in Bulgaria in 1688], in: L. BENCZÉDI (ed.), *A Thököly-felkelés és kora* [The Thököly Uprising and the Age in Which It Occurred], Budapest 1983, pp. 173–177.



by which William would also be distracted. However, all this proved to be a serious miscalculation.⁴⁹

William of Orange landed in the south-west of England on 5 November 1688 and successfully carried out the Glorious Revolution at the beginning of the Nine Years' War. The timing of the Revolution was crucial. As Lucile Pinkham has rightly observed, "without the synchronisation of events England presumably would not have brought her supposedly indispensable aid to the anti-French coalition". At the same time, without William's military intervention "the uprising of 1688 might well have ended in an ignominious and disastrous failure rather than in a 'Glorious Revolution'".⁵⁰ William had done his best to make sure that the crisis on the continent and the one in England would coincide in time so that he would be able to take England and Scotland into the great war against France, which he had wanted for so long.

⁴⁹ PRALL, *The Bloodless Revolution*, pp. 216–217; TROOST, *William III*, pp. 192–193; SYMCOX, *The Outbreak of the Nine Years' War*, pp. 197–199.

⁵⁰ PINKHAM, *The Respectable Revolution*, pp. 75–76.