

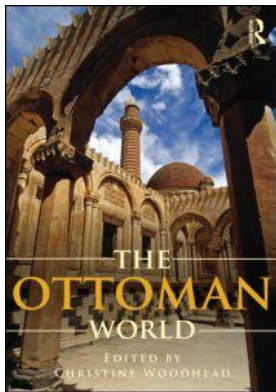
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The Ottoman World

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Defending and Administering the Frontier

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DEFENDING AND ADMINISTERING
THE FRONTIER

The case of Ottoman Hungary



Gábor Ágoston

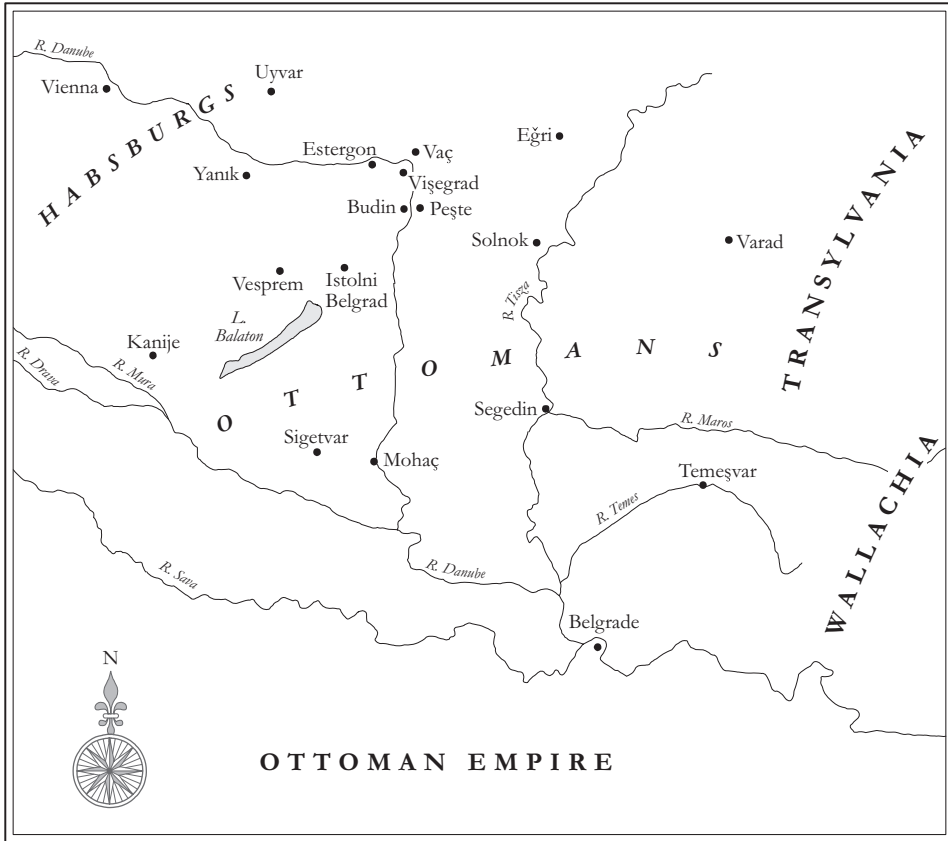
GEOPOLITICS AND THE CREATION OF THE
OTTOMAN–HABSBURG FRONTIER IN HUNGARY

On 29 August 1526, at the battle of Mohács in south-western Hungary, Sultan Süleyman's army of 60,000 to 70,000 men annihilated the badly organized and obsolete Hungarian royal army of 25,000 to 30,000 men. The battle of Mohács proved one of the most important events in European history of the early sixteenth century, since it led to the direct confrontation of the Ottomans and Habsburgs, the two superpowers of the time in East-Central Europe. King Louis II (1516–26) of Hungary and Bohemia, along with most of the magnates and prelates of Hungary, perished in the battle. Although the sultan had withdrawn from Hungary by the autumn of 1526, his victory and the death of the childless Louis II led to major geopolitical upheaval in the region. Hungary was at the time an elective monarchy, and the competing Hungarian noble factions could not agree on a successor to Louis II. They thus elected two kings: János (John) Szapolyai (r. 1526–40), Hungary's richest aristocrat and royal governor (*vajda*) of Transylvania, and Ferdinand of Habsburg (r. 1526–64), archduke of Austria and younger brother of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1519–56). Szapolyai controlled the eastern parts of Hungary – with Ottoman military assistance – while Ferdinand ruled the country's northern and western parts. Süleyman secured Ottoman influence over Hungary by stationing troops in southern Hungary and by supporting Szapolyai militarily against his Habsburg rival. When Szapolyai's death (17 or 21 July 1540) and Ferdinand's military campaigns (October 1540 and May–August 1541) to annex Szapolyai's realms upset the military balance between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, Süleyman occupied central Hungary and its capital city, Buda (29 August 1541), which controlled the Danubian waterways leading to Central Europe.¹ Buda became the centre of a newly established Ottoman province, the *beylerbeylik* or *vilayet* of Budin, which remained the central Ottoman province in Hungary until it was reconquered by the Habsburgs in 1686. Ferdinand's attempt in 1542 to expel the Ottomans from Buda ended in humiliation, and lack of adequate commitment of Habsburg resources in the 1540s turned the country into the main continental battleground between the two major empires of the age, the Ottomans and the Habsburgs.

Since eastern Hungary lay outside the main military route leading from Ottoman Belgrade through Budin to the Habsburg capital city of Vienna, the Ottomans did not consider its imminent conquest necessary. They left it, as Ottoman *sancaks*, under the control of Friar Georgius and Péter Petrovics, leaders of the pro-Ottoman Szapolyai party in Hungary. Although the status of these *sancaks* was somewhat ambiguous at first, it is significant that both Friar Georgius and Péter Petrovics were appointed by a *berat*, the usual type of certificate used for appointments of regular *sancakbeyis* (and some vassal rulers), rather than by *ahdname* or *temessük*, which were usually given to the *beys* of the hereditary *sancaks* in eastern Anatolia.² Due to its strategic location, Péter Petrovics's *sancak* soon fell under direct Ottoman rule, and in 1552 it became the second Ottoman province in Hungary, the *vilayet* of Temeşvar. This process thus showed a gradual incorporation similar to that followed by the Ottomans both in the provinces of Dulkadir and Adana in southern Anatolia and in several *sancaks* of the eastern Anatolian *beylerbeyilik* of Erzurum. However, the *sancak* of Friar Georgius, which lay far to the east of the principal routes of Ottoman expansion in the west, evolved into an Ottoman vassal state, the Principality of Transylvania, which enjoyed considerable freedom regarding its domestic affairs.

Ferdinand retained only the western and northern parts of the Hungarian kingdom, also known as Royal Hungary. The king and his Hungarian supporters faced the challenge of preventing further Ottoman inroads into Central Europe and protecting Habsburg hereditary lands and kingdoms. Since Vienna – which following Charles V's abdication in 1556 also became the capital of the Holy Roman Empire – was dangerously close to the main Ottoman garrisons in Hungary, the Habsburgs fortified and manned their remaining forts in Hungary and Croatia, integrated them into their newly organized border defence system, and centralized and modernized their military, finances and bureaucracies.³ This Hungarian/Croatian border defence system was an integral part of a long defence line that the European powers built against the Ottomans and their Muslim vassals, stretching from the Spanish *presidios* of Algiers and Tunisia, through the islands of the Mediterranean, Dalmatia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland–Lithuania and Ukraine, to the Belgorod defence line of Muscovy.

The tripartite division of the medieval kingdom of Hungary and the resulting geopolitical realities had major consequences for both imperial centres. In the Habsburgs' Central European empire, the limits to imperial authority were most obvious in Hungary, the frontier charged with the task of halting further Ottoman expansion. Although Hungary depended on Vienna for its defence against the Ottomans, the Hungarian nobility was reluctant to give up its centuries-old rights and privileges with regard to the administration and financing of warfare. Vienna lacked appropriate funds and expertise to finance and operate the anti-Ottoman defence system alone, and was thus dependent on the Hungarian estates and their economic and administrative resources. As a consequence, the estates not only played an important role in manning, supplying and administering the border forts, but also possessed a significant military force, and retained their control over county-level administration.⁴ The estates' position was further strengthened by Transylvania, which by 1600 had become an anti-Habsburg Hungarian stronghold and played a crucial role in protecting the privileges of the estates against Vienna's absolutist and centralizing policies.



Map 5 Ottoman Hungary

PROVINCES, SUB-PROVINCES AND GOVERNORS

After the conquest of Buda in 1541, Istanbul's main goal was to secure the province militarily and to organize its administration. To that end, the Istanbul government undertook several crucial steps. First, as in other provinces, Hungary's conquered lands were divided into sub-provinces or districts (*sancak*) and into larger provinces (*vilayet*, *beylerbeyilik*), headed respectively by district and provincial governors – that is, *sancakbeyis* and *beylerbeyis*. Second, Istanbul also ordered the strengthening of the strategically important frontier forts and deployed significant numbers of salaried troops to man them. Third, the Ottomans carried out systematic cadastral surveys (*tahrir*) in order to estimate the revenues that the treasury could collect from its recently occupied lands. Fourth, cash revenues were paid to the salaried troops, while a good part of the revenue was allocated to the land-based cavalry forces as military fiefs (*timar*, *zeamet* and *has*) through the Ottoman prebendal *timar* system. Not counting the short-lived provinces of Yanık (1594–8), Papa (1594–7) and Sigetvar (1594–7?), Ottoman Hungary was divided into six long-standing provinces: Budin (1541–1686), Temeşvar (1552–1716), Eğri (1596–1687), Kanije (1600–90), Varad (1660–92) and Uyvar (1663–85).

Initially, revenues from territories around Budin could not finance the new province. Consequently, several *sancaks* that lay at a great distance from Budin to the south of the River Drava were made subordinate to the *beylerbeyi* of Budin. Following new conquests closer to Budin, new *sancaks* were established, and the number of these subdivisions under the command of the governor of Budin grew from ten in 1545 to twenty in 1568. Further conquests and the creation of new provinces resulted in administrative adjustments. Several *sancaks* originally belonging to the province of Budin were attached to the newly created provinces of Temeşvar (Semendire and Alacahisar), Eğri (Solnok, Hatvan, Segedin and Filek) and Kanije (Peçuy, Sigetvar and Pojega).⁵

Compared to the much larger Balkans, which until the creation of the *beylerbeyilik* of Bosna in 1580 was governed by a single governor, the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli, the number of provinces and *sancaks* established in Hungary seems rather high. This density of administrative subdivisions can be explained in part by the geostrategic location of Ottoman Hungary. As the empire's key military frontier in Central Europe, standing face to face with the Habsburg arch-enemy, this region required a large concentration of forts and garrisons, and thus of provincial and district governors to command these troops. These Ottoman administrative strategies were not unique to Hungary; similar patterns can be observed along the empire's eastern frontiers during its gradual expansion.⁶ In fact, the process of increasing the number of provinces and sub-provinces was an empire-wide phenomenon under Süleyman, aimed partly at consolidating Ottoman rule in newly conquered territories. In the 1520s, in the empire as a whole, there were eight provinces consisting of some ninety *sancaks*. By the 1570s, these numbers had grown to twenty-four and 250, respectively. The fluctuation in the number of sub-provinces and the practice of transferring their administration from older to newly established provinces was also a general administrative technique, observable in other frontier regions of the empire.⁷

The geographical distribution of *sancaks* in Hungary reflected geostrategic considerations but was also shaped by existing geographical conditions. Both the Ottomans

and the Habsburgs built and reinforced their forts along major rivers and in the hills of Transdanubia and northern Hungary. The Ottomans established nine *sancaks* in the territories to the west of the Danube and six along their northern border, in regions which faced Habsburg Hungary and thus were heavily dotted with forts and garrisons. On the other hand, there were only two *sancaks* in the much larger but better protected region between the Danube and Tisza rivers. Five *sancaks* were formed in the trans-Tisza region and around the castles of the rivers Temes and Maros, while only two were established in the Hungarian Great Plain, a large area poor in forts.⁸ Of the six provinces, Budin, Kanije and Uyvar were the main bases for further Ottoman expansion against the Habsburgs and faced the strongest Hungarian/Habsburg garrisons on the other side of the military border. Their strategic significance affected the size and composition of their garrisons, weaponry and equipment, as well as the everyday life of the soldiers and their families.

As part of a larger Ottoman strategy of burden-sharing, the government expected the frontier authorities to meet most of the costs relating to the maintenance of their respective border regions from local revenue sources. Thus Istanbul designated part of the *sancak's* agricultural revenues as fiefs (*timar*, *zeamet* and *has*) to be assigned to cavalymen (*sipahi*) and to their military commanders, the *sancakbeyis*. *Timar* revenues assigned to ordinary *sipahis* usually yielded a revenue up to 20,000 *akçe* annually; *zeamets* were usually remunerated officers and yielded an annual sum between 20,000 and 99,999 *akçe*, although the upper limit could be and often was considerably higher, in rare cases reaching up to 300,000 *akçe*.⁹ High officials, such as *sancakbeyis* and *beylerbeyis*, were remunerated by *has* prebends, which yielded over 100,000 *akçe* revenue annually. In the sixteenth century, the starting salary for *sancakbeyis* in the European part of the empire was 200,000 *akçe*.

The best paid *sancakbeyis* along this frontier often received *has* grants yielding 400,000 *akçe* or more annually, and some managed to obtain prebends worth as much as 600,000 *akçe* per annum. Ali Bey and Mehmed Bey, who held the post of *sancakbeyi* of Sigetvar in 1573–9 and 1581–2 respectively, were compensated with *has* prebends worth 590,000 *akçe*, while the *hases* of Sinan Bey, *sancakbeyi* of Gyula (1586–9), were reported to yield 638,000 *akçe*. However, these figures reflected the nominal or estimated value of the *hases* to which the *sancakbeyis* were entitled; the actual, collectable income was probably much less. Although the case of Sinan Bey might be unique, it is worth noting that, while he was entitled to a nominal *has* of 638,000 *akçe*, he managed to lay claim to only 289,941 *akçe* – that is, less than half of his nominal revenue.¹⁰ These figures illustrate the everyday realities along the frontier, where, following the slowing down of conquests in the latter part of the sixteenth century, offices and revenues were more difficult to come by than in mid-century, and officers and officials were content with less revenue than they were entitled to.

In addition to his military service as commander of the *sipahi* cavalry forces in his *sancak*, the *sancakbeyi* was responsible for maintaining law and order within his sub-province with the help of the timariot *sipahis* under his command. He and the judge (*kadi*) of the *sancak* were responsible for collecting taxes, managing revenues, and assisting the officials appointed by Istanbul to carry out taxation surveys (*tabrir*). Surveys were done in a new *sancak*, and repeated every ten to thirty years or so to reflect changes in the size and composition of the population and the economic situation in the region, according to which facts taxes were then levied. One copy of the

survey remained in the province, while the other was sent to the imperial capital and was archived near the imperial council so that it could be consulted whenever needed. These surveys, along with the provincial law codes (*kanunname*) that summarized tax regulations and the registers that contained recordings of bestowals of military fiefs, testify to the Ottoman government's capabilities regarding data collection and processing. Of the *tahrir* surveys compiled in Hungary, the most famous were the survey books of the *sancaks* of the province of Budin, prepared by a certain Halil Bey in 1546. Known in contemporary Hungarian parlance as 'Halil Bey's *defiers*', these surveys were often consulted during later border disputes, for all concerned parties regarded villages which had been included in Halil Bey's surveys as settlements under Ottoman rule and taxation. When in later years Ottoman officials tried to include further villages in these *defiers*, the Hungarian and Habsburg authorities protested vehemently, considering such attempts as an unlawful expansion of Ottoman influence. In Ottoman Hungary the authorities prepared further *tahrirs* in 1552–4 and in the 1560s, as well as a complete survey of all the *sancaks* of the *vilayet* of Budin in 1570, which they repeated in 1579/80 and 1590/91. The last *tahrirs* of the province of Temeşvar date from 1579. Surveys compiled after 1579/80 and 1590/91 are often unchanged copies of earlier registers, and thus have limited value for economic and demographic studies, except for the first survey books of newly established provinces – such as those of Uyvar in 1664 – which were prepared with care.¹¹

After the conquest of Buda in 1541, the Ottomans had only limited financial resources at their disposal in their newly conquered territory and had to rely on revenues from faraway lands. As indicated above, the *has* revenues assigned to the first two governors of Budin, Süleyman Paşa (1541–2) and Bali Paşa (1542–3), lay more than 200 kilometres south of their seat, and were scattered in the *sancaks* of Pojega, Semendire, Vidin, İzvornik and Alacahisar. Furthermore, Bali Paşa's relatively high income of 1,000,391 *akçe* came from nineteen different financial resources, of which only two had previously been *has* prebends. The remaining seventeen revenue blocks had been *zeamets* and *timars*, and were turned into *hases* in order to pay Bali Paşa. Since the villages and other settlements assigned to him were poor, his *has* comprised more than 450 settlements. Later, as the Ottomans consolidated their administration and revenue management in Hungary, the *hases* granted to the Budin pashas lay closer to Budin, and by the 1580s all were located north of the Sava river. By 1559, more than 40 per cent of Rüstem Paşa's 900,000 *akçe* revenue came from his own Budin *sancak*, and by 1562 this figure had risen to 55 per cent, reaching almost half a million *akçe*. This amount of revenue from the *sancak* of Budin remained more or less constant to the end of the sixteenth century. Since Rüstem Paşa's successors collected between 800,000 and 1,000,000 *akçe* annually from their *has* prebends, this meant that the pashas of Budin amassed some 50 to 60 per cent of their income from the central *sancak* of their province.¹²

During 145 years of Ottoman rule, seventy-six *beylerbeyis* served in Buda, and, since several of them held the post more than once, the total number of appointments is about one hundred. The longest-serving governor was Sokolluzade Mustafa Paşa, who held his post for twelve years (1566–78) thanks largely to the protection of his uncle, the grand vezir Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (1565–79). Two more Sokollus, Gazi Ferhad Paşa (1588–90) and Şehid Hasan Paşa (1593–4), who were appointed after the execution of the grand vezir in 1579 and thus could not count on his support, served

much shorter periods. Mustafa Paşa was also the first *beylerbeyi* of Budin to be granted the rank of vezir, in 1574. Among his successors only a few attained this title, at least until the 1620s, when because of the depreciation of titles, almost all the pashas of Budin were also vezirs. With his new title, Mustafa Paşa's yearly revenues increased to 1,200,000 *akçe*. This was the largest known *has* revenue given to a Budin governor in the sixteenth century, and was a twentyfold increase in Mustafa's annual salary since the start of his career on the Hungarian frontier two decades previously, when he had earned 60,000 *akçes* yearly as *defter kethüdası* (keeper of prebend registers/records) in Temeşvar in 1553. He converted most of his wealth into religious endowments (*vakıf*), which paid for the upkeep of four congregational and six smaller mosques, two secondary schools (*medrese*), twelve hostels for travellers, and sixteen bathhouses whose construction the pasha had commissioned.¹³

Sokollu Mustafa Paşa was also instrumental in reducing the deficit in the provincial treasury, which dated from the beginning of Ottoman rule. In 1559, local revenues covered only 28 per cent of the pay of the garrison forces guarding this frontier province. However, by the late 1560s, the province had become largely self-sufficient. It remained so for about a decade, meeting the expectation of Istanbul that each province would cover as much of its expenses as possible. Between 1571 and 1581, the province's revenue (a ten-year annual average of 21 million *akçe*) covered 90 per cent of the soldiers' pay (a ten-year annual average of 22.5 million *akçe*). The rise in revenue can be explained partly by a substantial increase in territory following Süleyman's conquests of 1566 (the capture of Szigetvár and Gyula) and the resulting expansion and consolidation of Ottoman taxation in Hungary by the end of the 1560s. Improved taxation and financial management under Sokollu Mustafa Paşa and his successor, Kara Üveys Paşa (1578–80), also played a major role in balancing the province's budgets.¹⁴ This achievement of Ottoman administration was particularly remarkable when compared with the situation in Royal Hungary under the Habsburgs, where incomes hardly covered 30 to 50 per cent of defence-related expenses. The Habsburgs regularly depended on financial aid from the Holy Roman Empire and from their Austrian Hereditary Lands.¹⁵

However, from the end of the sixteenth century, the *beylerbeyilik* of Budin again ran a deficit, and became dependent on financial aid from the neighbouring province of Temeşvar; in the seventeenth century, the bulk of financial aid came once more from distant Balkan *sancaks*. These financial difficulties were not exceptional, for by the second half of the sixteenth century several frontier provinces of the empire were unable to pay their garrisons and finance the defence of their respective frontiers from local sources. The situation was especially dire in the eastern border provinces of Basra and Baghdad, which faced the Safavids. As in the case of Budin, Istanbul tried to finance the deficit of these border provinces also with the help of the more prosperous neighbouring lands¹⁶

The financial difficulties of the frontier affected everyone, from ordinary soldiers, whose pay lagged behind, to *sancakbeyis* and *beylerbeyis*, who had to be content with less revenue than was their due or with revenues assigned to them along the dangerous border regions, or even in territories which lay beyond the Hungarian forts in Hungarian-controlled lands. The aforementioned Sinan, *sancakbeyi* of Gyula, was not the only high Ottoman official in Hungary who could collect only part of the revenue he was entitled to. For example, in 1552 Mehmed Bey, the first *sancakbeyi* of the newly

established *sancak* of Vesprem, was given *has* revenues which on paper had a nominal value of 201,100 *akçe*. However, according to previous Ottoman survey books, the villages from which Mehmed had the right to collect his revenues yielded much less, and thus the *sancakbeyi* could realistically expect to collect less than half this sum (92,650 *akçe*). While it is not known how much Mehmed managed to squeeze out of his taxpaying peasants, one suspects that it was not the *sancakbeyi*, but rather his *reaya*, who paid the price for Istanbul's financial machinations.¹⁷ There are several reasons why *sancakbeyis* and other officials accepted prebends with lower real value than they were entitled to. Having an office meant stable revenue and, perhaps more importantly, the opportunity to enhance that revenue through taxation, gifts and participation in the local economy. It also offered the opportunity to build and strengthen further one's network of supporters, amassing political and social capital, which then also translated to more revenue, as the examples presented in the last section of this chapter will illustrate.

DEFENDING THE BORDER: FORTS AND GARRISONS

Each Ottoman province in Hungary was guarded by one or two major forts with 1,000 to 4,000 soldiers in each, several smaller second-tier forts with garrisons numbering 200 to 500 soldiers, and much smaller, third-tier castles, usually *parkans* and *palankas*, in which typically fewer than 100 troops served. The number of forts in Ottoman hands grew steadily, from twenty-nine in 1545 to sixty-one in 1569, and to about 130 by the mid-seventeenth century. Most of the castles had originally been built by the Hungarians and Habsburgs, with relatively minor architectural updates carried out by the Ottomans. The few new castles built by the Ottomans in Hungary were *palanka* or *parkan*.¹⁸ In 1545 the Ottomans stationed 15,000 to 16,000 soldiers, including Janissaries of the Porte, in their twenty-nine forts in Hungary. As figure 15.1 shows, this number rose to about 19,000 to 20,000 men by 1591 and 21,000 men in the 1620s, following new conquests and the establishment of several new provinces. In the 1660s, around 17,450 local troops and 6,500 Janissaries of the Porte served in the now six Ottoman provinces in Hungary, giving a total of 24,000 men.¹⁹

Following the Ottoman conquests, most Hungarian nobles and aristocrats left their possessions in Ottoman Hungary and fled to the kingdom's northern and western parts under Habsburg rule. With help from Vienna, they strengthened the remaining forts in their possession and were integrated into the Habsburg defence system. In the 1570s and 1580s, some 22,500 Hungarian/Habsburg soldiers guarded the entire border, a force comparable in size and composition to the Ottoman garrison troops in Hungary as a whole. The new crescent-shaped Hungarian–Croatian–Habsburg defence line stretched some 1,000 kilometres, from the Adriatic Sea to northern and north-eastern Hungary, comprising 120 to 130 large and small forts and watchtowers in the late sixteenth century and, as a result of losses to the Ottomans, some eighty to ninety forts in the seventeenth. The strategically significant sections of the Hungarian border were heavily fortified. In 1607, the important section, 400 kilometres long, between Muraköz Region (the area between the rivers Drava and Mura in southern Hungary, now Medimurje in northern Croatia) and Murány was protected by sixty garrisons, which meant fifteen forts per 100 kilometre section.²⁰ Unlike Ottoman gar-

risons in Hungary, whose military strength increased in the seventeenth century, the Hungarian/Habsburg castles had fewer soldiers in the seventeenth century than previously. This was due to financial constraints and multiple Habsburg military commitments, as well as to the complicated and often strained relationship between Vienna and its Hungarian nobles, who often rebelled against the absolutist policies of their Habsburg rulers. In 1607, following the long Ottoman–Habsburg war of 1593–1606, in the forts of the four border areas (*Grenzgebiet*) or captaincy-generals, 11,947 Hungarian and 6,245 German soldiers served, which gives a total of 18,192 men. According to official accounts, their number decreased to 16,882 men in 1641. However, even these were paper numbers, and it seems that thousands of men were missing from the forts. In a memorandum, *palatinus* Miklós Eszterházy complained that there were only 9,900 Hungarian and 2,631 German soldiers serving in the border forts of the Hungarian defence line. Their number continued to decrease during the rest of the century: to 14,094 men in 1661 and to 11,991 men in 1683.²¹

The figures given in figure 15.1 do not include the Ottoman cavalrymen or *sipahis* remunerated through *timar* prebends, whose number is difficult to estimate due to the fragmentary nature of the relevant *timar* registers. Also missing are the private armies of the *beylerbeyis* and *sancakbeyis*, who often had under their command more troops than their revenues required them to pay. On the Hungarian side, the figures exclude the soldiers serving in the private armies (*banderia*) of the Hungarian aristocrats. In the seventeenth century the importance of such private armies increased substantially, for the Hungarian nobility had to assume a larger share of the burden of defence in order to compensate for the diminishing number of garrison soldiers paid by the Viennese

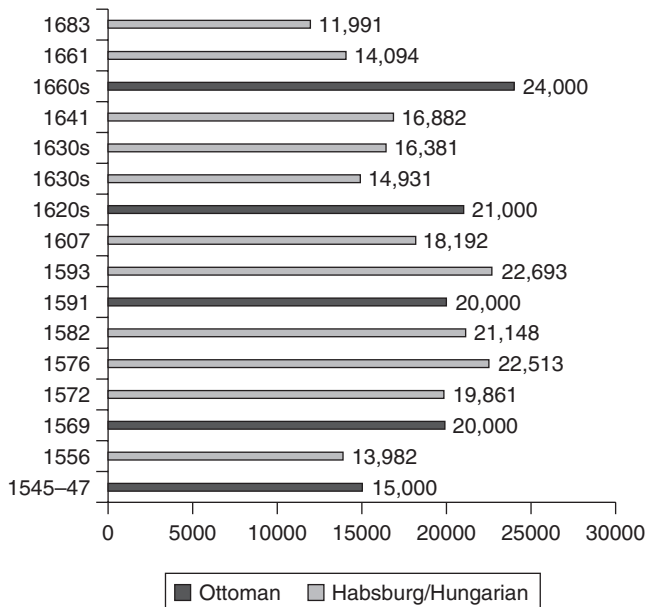


Figure 15.1 Ottoman and Hungarian/Habsburg garrison troops in border forts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

government. Recent estimates put the number of these troops in Hungary at about 10,000 to 12,000 in the seventeenth century.²²

It should also be noted that most of the sources upon which the above estimates are based are treasury accounts and pay registers, which, in addition to human error, often reflect the paper rather than the actual numbers of soldiers. It was a general practice throughout Europe to keep missing soldiers on payroll so that the soldiers' officers and comrades could cash their pay. However, despite the limitations of our sources, some trends regarding troop size and composition can be detected. One noticeable trend is the fact that the number of Ottoman garrison soldiers usually fell considerably as the Ottomans consolidated their rule in the new province. The number of soldiers in the four most important Ottoman frontier forts in the *vilayet* of Budin had decreased by 50 per cent between 1543 and 1558 and by an additional 20 per cent by the 1610s, militarily a relatively inactive period (see table 15.1).

Another feature of the Ottoman frontier was that the garrisons of the strategically most important forts contained substantial numbers of central Janissaries paid by Istanbul. However, as the Ottomans managed to man the newly conquered forts with local troops (often transferred from other parts of the frontier), the number of central troops decreased. In Kanije, for instance, by 1615 there were 1,325 local troops, whose number increased to about 1,650 in 1627–31. At the same time, the number of Istanbul Janissaries dropped from 1,838 in 1603 to 170 in 1629.²³ A similar trend occurred in Uyvar.

The most important forts were also better fortified and had more weaponry. Of the 216 cannons and 3,535 handguns listed in the castles of the *vilayet* of Budin in 1565, 119 cannon (55 per cent) and 3,400 handguns (96 per cent) were in the province's three key forts, Budin, Estergon and Istolni Belgrad.²⁴ The number of weapons does not seem very large, especially if we compare the above figures with the 255 cannons listed in a 1536 weapons inventory of the castle of Belgrade.²⁵ Thus it is hardly surprising that the Ottomans increased the number of their cannon in Hungary and deployed substantial numbers of weapons in their key forts, especially just after conquest, while also making good use of all the available arms found in newly captured forts. For example, after its conquest in 1663, Uyvar had 109 guns and 17,330 cannon balls of various sizes. Of these, forty-three guns and 12,000 cannon balls were allocated to the fort following its capture. Another sixty-six guns and 5,330 cannon balls, described as 'old', were presumably left in the fortress by its Hungarian defenders.²⁶ Four days

Table 15.1 Decrease in the number of Ottoman soldiers in frontier forts in the *vilayet* of Budin, 1543–1613

<i>Garrison</i>	1543	%	1558	%	1569	%	1579	%	1591	%	1613	%
Budin	2,863	100	1,713	60	1,655	58	1,624	57	1,597	56	1,019	35
Peşte	1,426	100	1,069	74	939	65	932	65	887	62	572	40
Estergon	3,237	100	1,178	36	1,317	40	1,137	35	1,194	36	1,094	33
Istolni Belgrad	2,978	100	1,191	39	1,387	46	1,312	44	1,273	42	506	17
Total	10,504	100	5,151	49	5,298	50	5,005	47	4,951	47	3,191	30

Source: Hegyi 1995: 91.

after its conquest, the campaign armoury also allocated to Uyvar 9,000 handguns, 500 Tatar bows with 50,000 Tatar arrows, along with 1,336 unfinished stocks (*kundak*), as many of the muskets sent to Uyvar lacked stocks.²⁷

The Ottomans also established cannon foundries (*tophane*) and gunpowder works (*baruthane*) in Hungary, as in other frontier provinces, in order to supply their frontier forts with weapons and ammunition. The gunpowder works in Budin produced some 54 metric tons annually in the sixteenth century. Accumulated stocks of the local *baruthane* ranged between 54 and 162 metric tons. Other powder works in Hungary produced less than Budin, but they seem to have been able to meet local demand, and even to assist imperial campaigns against the Habsburgs. The cannon foundry of Budin also cast several cannon both for local use and for imperial campaigns, mainly basilisks which fired cannon balls between 5 and 25 kg.²⁸

Forts along this frontier also needed upkeep and repairs as a result of long sieges (especially during the war of 1593–1606) and frequent skirmishes. One of the most comprehensive repair efforts was undertaken by Murteza Paşa of Budin (1626–30), at the pasha's own expense. The work had two goals: first to strengthen the key forts facing the strongest Hungarian castles, and second to fortify the Belgrade–Budin section of the famous 'royal road' leading to Vienna. The first goal was achieved by repairing and strengthening the forts of Budin, Peşte, Estergon, Vaç, İstolni Belgrad, Palota, Eğri, Hatvan, Gyula and Kanije, while the second was met through repairs at the forts of Belgrad, Ilok, Varadin, Valkovar and Ösek, on the *palanka* of Erçi and on eight and six *palankas* of the *sancaks* of Koppan and Şimontorna, respectively, as well as on several bridges in the region.²⁹

LIMITS TO SULTANIC AUTHORITY AND THE HUNGARO-OTTOMAN CONDOMINIUM

Geopolitical realities, most importantly the armed strength of the Hungarian border garrisons, substantially limited Istanbul's authority with regard to administration, taxation and jurisdiction and led to condominium – that is, joint Hungarian–Ottoman rule and taxation. Most villages under Ottoman rule had two lords – an Ottoman *sipahi* and a Hungarian landlord – and paid taxes to both. Contemporaries considered the situation natural, as seen from a letter of the Ottoman *dizdar* of the castle of Koppan addressed to his Hungarian counterpart, Ádám Battyány, the commander of the Hungarian forces in southern Transdanubia: 'Your village, Nagyegrös, is in my possession in Turkey, [however] it is in your possession in Hungary'.³⁰ As a consequence of this condominium, apart from the Serb-populated Syrmium in southern Hungary, there was hardly any part of Ottoman Hungary that was not paying taxes to the Hungarian side. Since the Hungarian landlords could mobilize the military forces of the Hungarian border garrisons when demanding their dues from their villages now under Ottoman rule, they were the most successful in collecting taxes from Ottoman Hungary. State and church taxes, on the other hand, could be collected only from two-thirds of Ottoman-held territories in the sixteenth century and from only half in the seventeenth century. Stephan Gerlach, a Lutheran priest visiting Hungary in 1573 in the company of the Habsburg envoy to Istanbul, David Ungnad, was amazed at the loyalty of the Hungarian peasants who, though under Ottoman rule, continued to pay

their taxes to the Habsburg king and Hungarian lords. However, the good Lutheran priest was mistaken. It was not heartfelt allegiance to their king, church and native landlords that convinced the Hungarian peasants to continue paying taxes to the Hungarian side over and above the poll tax (*cizye*) and tithe (*öşr*) they owed to the sultan and their *sipahis*.³¹ Rather, it was the military force of the Hungarian border forts.

Besides taxation, the Hungaro-Ottoman condominium extended to jurisdiction and administration. The weakest of all the former Hungarian institutions which continued to exert some influence in Ottoman-ruled territories were the noble counties. Most fell apart shortly after the conquest, and the few remaining operated from Royal Hungary, being known as 'refugee counties'. Their work was confined to legal transactions between the members of the Hungarian nobility. Although these counties passed regulatory decrees or statutes in any affair not governed (or insufficiently governed) by the laws and decrees of the kingdom, their role should not be overvalued, as they did not replace Ottoman authorities: 'Even in the best of cases, Turkish jurisdiction was not squeezed out, but just squeezed back, for the Turks debated the same affairs, inasmuch as they had an interest in them'.³²

Hungarian market towns in Ottoman-held lands were more successful than the counties in administering justice independently from the Ottoman authorities. In the handful of Ottoman garrison towns it was the *kadı* who administered justice. However, in the more numerous Hungarian market towns (sing. *oppidum*) that had no Ottoman garrison, *kadis* were rare, and all had left these towns by the 1620s. Thus, the task of maintaining law and order, crime prevention, inquiry and judgement remained the prerogatives of the local Hungarian authorities, for local Ottoman officials residing in faraway forts which also served as district and provincial centres were unable to fulfil these tasks. In this border zone, where raiding and pillaging were part of everyday life, robbers, criminals, marauding Hungarian and Ottoman soldiers, and German, Spanish or Italian mercenaries in Habsburg service posed a constant threat to these market towns, unprotected by walls or garrisons. This was especially true during and after the long war of 1593–1606, which resulted in the total collapse of the traditional public safety agencies and thus led to the creation of various local self-defence mechanisms throughout Hungary.

The surviving municipal records show that, in the decades following the Ottoman conquest, many towns in Ottoman Hungary had already obtained the right to pursue and arrest looting soldiers and other criminals, and to pass justice and even issue death sentences. Towns that lay closer to Royal Hungary or Transylvania but were still under Ottoman rule acquired these rights more swiftly than those located in the heart of Ottoman Hungary. Debrecen, one of the largest market towns in Hungary, with some 12,000 inhabitants in the second half of the seventeenth century, accepted Ottoman suzerainty and the paying of an annual tribute of 50,000 *akçe* in 1555. The town was classified as crown land or sultanic *has*, and its revenue was usually allocated as *ocaklık* for the payment of the garrisons of Budin, Eğri, Solnok, and, following its conquest in 1660, Varad. Less than ten years after its submission to the Ottomans, in 1564, however, the town acquired from the pasha of Budin, Zal Mahmud, the right 'to punish trouble-makers and malefactors according to their futile laws'.³³ The privilege included capital punishment, and municipal records demonstrate that the town repeatedly exercised these rights in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For towns which lay in territories that the Ottomans could better control, the process that led to

fully fledged judicial autonomy lasted longer. These towns first acquired the right to pursue, capture and try in their own courts malefactors who harmed their citizens or caused damage to their property. At this early stage, however, many towns had to get permission from their respective *sancakbeyis* and *kadis* to exercise these juridical rights. At a later stage, the towns obtained the right to hang convicted criminals, mostly robbers and looting soldiers, according to their own laws. In such cases, the Ottoman officials had no right to demand blood money. At a later stage still – for example, in the case of the Jász towns to the north of Ottoman Solnok only in the 1640s and 1650s – several market towns obtained the right to exercise these juridical rights over their own citizens and not just over foreign criminals and looting soldiers. In addition, these municipal authorities administered disputes concerning guilds, artisans and matters of probate and imposed and collected fines.³⁴

Although Istanbul initially rejected the idea that the Habsburgs and the Hungarian estates might collect taxes and administer justice in Ottoman-held areas, over time the armed strength of the Hungarian border garrisons made Hungarian taxation a day-to-day practice. Double taxation and the survival of pre-Ottoman institutions are also found enduring for varying periods of time in other areas of the empire that were never fully conquered or absorbed by the Ottomans and/or where the former elite could preserve its positions and strength in arms. Many such areas existed in the Balkans, in eastern Anatolia and in the Arab provinces. However, unlike in those areas, the condominium existed in Hungary throughout the Ottoman era. This was due to the survival of the former Hungarian political elite and its institutions in Royal Hungary under Habsburg rule. The Hungarian estates found refuge on the far side of the military border. From their base in Habsburg Hungary, with the assistance of the Hungarian border garrisons and the support of Habsburg diplomacy, the Hungarian estates were better able to defend their interests vis-à-vis Istanbul and its local representatives than many of the local power-holders in the Balkans, Anatolia or the Arab lands, who lacked such backing.³⁵

MAKING A LIVING: REGIONAL-SOCIAL NETWORKS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The population of Hungary at the end of the fifteenth century is estimated at between 2.9 and 3.3 million people. Recent research has demonstrated that, contrary to earlier claims, the population did not decline following the Ottoman conquest in 1541, and that until the devastating long war of 1593–1606 it even grew to about 3.5 million. Of this number, Royal Hungary had about 1.8 million inhabitants, Transylvania about 800,000 and the Ottoman-ruled central parts of the country some 900,000.³⁶ Of the 900,000 inhabitants of Ottoman-ruled Hungary, the number of Ottoman garrison troops, administrators, merchants and their families numbered probably about 50,000.

While earlier Hungarian historiography talked about Turks and Turkish rule in the country, it is obvious from our sources that the overwhelming majority of Ottomans in Hungary came from the Balkans. Many of the governors of the Hungarian provinces were natives of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Albania, although, especially in the seventeenth century, we find several pashas of Abkhazian, Circassian and Georgian

origin. Most members of the Ottoman religious establishment (*ulema*) serving in the administration in Hungary as judges (*kadi*) and jurist and jurisconsults (*mufti*), or in mosques, schools (*mekteb* and *medrese*), and dervish convents or lodges (*tekke*, *zaviye*), also came from the Balkans.³⁷

The Balkans, especially Bosnia and Serbia, were the main source of Ottoman soldiers serving in Hungary. In 1543, 89 per cent of the 812 *müstahfiz* soldiers serving in Ístolni Belgrade came from the Balkans, and less than 1 per cent was recruited from Hungary. In 1558, more than 90 per cent of the newly recruited 814 garrison soldiers of Budin originated from the Balkans. The majority (63 per cent) of these recruits were Muslims, but new converts and Christians were also well represented – 22 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.³⁸ These data are also in accordance with archaeological finds and with the architectural characteristics of Ottoman buildings in Hungary, which all point to heavy Balkan influences.

While Ottoman Turkish was the official language of administration and record keeping, in their communications with the Hungarian and Habsburg authorities local Ottoman officials often used Hungarian. This was a convenient solution, for it was easier to find Hungarians with knowledge of Ottoman Turkish than Turkish interpreters in Vienna or Ottoman scribes with German and/or Latin language skills. The Hungarian scribes and interpreters of the *beylerbeyis* of Budin thus played a crucial role in cross-border diplomacy. Thanks to their work, we now possess hundreds of Hungarian-language letters of the pashas of Budin, which give us unique glimpses into the lives of the pashas and their interactions with their Hungarian and Viennese counterparts. From such sources and the relevant literature it is apparent that many of the Ottoman governors coveted appointments on the Hungarian frontier. Kadızade Ali Paşa was governor of Budin several times between 1602 and 1616, with brief interruptions. He was instrumental in concluding the Zsitvatorok peace treaty in 1606, which ended the war of 1593–1606 and produced a relatively tranquil period until the 1663–4 war. Ali Paşa must have enjoyed his office, for when he was reassigned to the eastern frontier to fight against the Safavids he made a plea, through his deputy Ahmed *kethüda*, to King Matthias II (1608–19) to intervene on his behalf in Istanbul and request his reappointment at Budin. He also contacted the dragoman and envoy Andrea Negroni, with whom he and his father, Habil Efendi, then mufti of Budin, had worked closely during the negotiations that led to the peace treaty of Zsitvatorok. Ali Paşa's deputy reminded Negroni of his promise that the latter would intercede with the king on his patron's behalf so that Ali Paşa would be reappointed to Budin. He emphasized his patron's role in concluding the peace between the two empires. Since recent raids and skirmishes threatened the peace, he argued that it was important that Ali Paşa return to Budin. These lobbying efforts were successful, and Ali Paşa was reinstated as governor of Budin in October/November 1614. Quick to inform his Viennese and Hungarian counterparts, Johann von Molart, president of the Viennese War Council (1610–19), and Ferenc II Batthyány, captain-general of the Transdanubian District, about his return to Budin, Ali Pasha promised: 'I will do my best to uphold the provisions of our covenant so that sacred peace will be maintained fully and without any flow'.³⁹ His remaining two years until his death in 1616 were devoted to preserving the 1606 peace. In one of his letters to Molart, Ali Paşa informed his Viennese colleague that, upon his recommendation, the Sublime Porte had dismissed the pasha of Kanije from his post 'for disturbing the peace'. However, the fact that the

new governor of Kanije, Ahmed Paşa, was none other than Ali Paşa's aforementioned deputy suggests that he might have had other motives in arranging the sacking of the former *beylerbeyi* of Kanije beyond the noble goal of 'striving for increased friendship and amity between us'.⁴⁰

As the above examples taken from the career of Ali Paşa illustrate, social capital and networks, both in the Ottoman and Ottoman–Hungarian–Transylvanian–Habsburg contexts, were instrumental in attaining offices and thus accumulating wealth along the frontier. In the Ottoman–Transylvanian context one could mention the careers of several members of the Sokollu family, who spent most of their lives in Ottoman Bosnia and Hungary. Sokollu Mustafa Paşa had friendly relations with the Transylvanian princes from his time in Temeşvar. Indeed, János Zsigmond and Kristóf Báthori donated four villages to him, which Mustafa Paşa then converted into private property (*mülk*) and later made part of his endowments in support of his *medrese* in Peşte. Two other Sokollus, Sarhoşoğlu İbrahim and his son Hasan Paşa (known also as Yakovali or Memibegović), also had cordial relations with the Transylvanian princes. İbrahim, whose mother was grand vezir Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's sister, headed both the Kanije and the Eğri provinces in the early seventeenth century and belonged to the Ottoman faction which supported prince Gábor Bethlen (1613–29) against Vienna. His politics temporarily cost İbrahim Paşa his position, for Kadızade Ali Paşa of Budin, who headed the anti-Bethlen Ottoman faction in Hungary, had him dismissed from Eğri. Having later returned to Eğri, in 1623 İbrahim Paşa led the Ottoman troops in support of Bethlen against the Habsburgs. His son Hasan was appointed in 1633 to the governorship of Kanije, at least partly as a result of the lobbying of the Transylvanian princes and their envoys in Constantinople.⁴¹

Members of the local Ottoman administration and garrisons were also engaged in trade and moneylending. Through these activities, they were capable of accumulating substantial wealth in money and merchandise, the value of which often exceeded their annual salaries or revenues from prebends. Sources relating to the liquidation of a Ragusan trading company, established in 1573 by Scipione Bona and Marino Bucchia and active in Ottoman Budin until its bankruptcy in 1591, shed light on such activities. From one document we learn that Ottoman officials and garrison soldiers possessed substantial sums from which they made loans to Bucchia, the Ragusan merchant who managed the company's businesses in Budin. Among Bucchia's creditors we find the *mufti* of Budin, Janissaries, *sipahis*, *çavuşes* and a *voyvoda* (see table 15.2).

Financial and administrative services also offered lucrative opportunities for talented and ambitious soldiers. The career of Osman Ağa is a case in point. In 1564 Osman, then *ağa* of the *beşli* cavalry forces of Filek, gained the right to collect the taxes from three neighbouring villages as tax farmer. Later he managed the sultan's *has* estates of Filek. In 1568 he and his business partner obtained the right to manage the revenues (*mukataa*) of Vaç, one of the most lucrative revenue sources in Ottoman Hungary. Osman agreed to collect 15,800,000 *akçe* during his three-year term, which was almost 1 million *akçe* more than his predecessors promised (but failed to deliver). Although he temporarily lost his position to a five-member consortium in the 1570s, he later resurfaced as tax farmer (*mültezim*) of the same *mukataa*. In return for his services, his former salary was converted into a *zeamet* prebend, yielding almost 13,000 *akçe* annually. By 1581, he had become the *nazir* or fiscal inspector of the Vaç *mukataa*, with the tax farmers under his supervision offering to collect 20,700,000 *akçe* in three

Table 15.2 Ottoman creditors of the Ragusan merchant Bucchia and sums he owed to them at his death

<i>Creditors</i>	<i>Bucchia's debt in taller</i>	<i>Bucchia's debt in akçe</i>
Mufti of Budin	1,200	72,000
Ali, Janissary <i>bölükbaşı</i>	280	16,800
Kurd Çelebi, <i>tezkereci</i>	112	6,740
Şaban, Janissary	500	30,000
Piri, <i>sipahi</i>	320	19,200
Mehmed <i>sipahi</i>	400	24,000
Mehmed Voyvoda	300	18,000
Abdi <i>çavuş</i>	260	15,600
Abdurrahman <i>çavuş</i>	205	12,300
Hasan <i>çavuş</i> , guardian of Andela's son	1,416.40	84,984
Hasan <i>çavuş</i> and Ali of Foca	312.55	18,753
Ali Bali, <i>veznedar</i>	200	12,000

Source: Molnár 2009: 328–30, 369–71.

years. In other words, Osman managed to raise the revenues by almost 6 million *akçe* since 1568. In 1586, the Porte rewarded his financial and military services by appointing him *sancakbeyi* of Seçen, although he only managed to get his *has* estates, which yielded more than 240,000 *akçe* annually, three years later. In 1588 he was appointed to head the *sancak* of Hatvan and in 1590 that of the militarily more prestigious Solnok, where his *has* revenues rose to 385,000 *akçe*.⁴² This former cavalry soldier had become one of the most powerful men in Ottoman Hungary.

NOTES

- 1 Bárdossy 1943; Perjés 1989; Fodor 2000a; Obomi 2003.
- 2 Berindei and Veinstein 1987: 177; Fodor 2000a: 157.
- 3 Pálffy 2000; Ágoston 1998, 2009a.
- 4 Pálffy 2009.
- 5 Káldy-Nagy 1977: 9–10; Kunt 1978: 134–5; Dávid 1992: 347; Fodor 2001: 282.
- 6 Ágoston 2003.
- 7 Pitcher [1972] 2001; Kunt 1983.
- 8 Hegyi 1995: 118–30; Ágoston 2009b.
- 9 Dávid 1997d.
- 10 Dávid 1997b: 127, 130; 1997c: 155–6.
- 11 Káldy-Nagy 1968; Blašković 1993.
- 12 Dávid 1997e.
- 13 Káldy-Nagy 1990; Dávid 2005.
- 14 Ágoston 2000a.
- 15 Kenyeres 2003, 2005; Pálffy 2009: 119–34.
- 16 BOA, MD 5, nos. 823, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1968; Özbaran 2004.
- 17 Dávid 1997f: 165–6.
- 18 Hegyi 1995 and 2007, the most comprehensive discussion of the military organization of an Ottoman frontier; in English, see Hegyi 2000. Stein 2007 deals only with Kanije and Uyvar, and is of limited value (see my review in *JESHO*, 52 (2009): 159–63).
- 19 Hegyi 2007: I, 157–72.

- 20 Comparable numbers were 11.5 forts per 100 km on Spanish borders in the Netherlands, and eight on French and other Holy Roman Empire borders (Czigány 2004: 67–8).
- 21 Czigány 1997; 2004: 73–9.
- 22 Czigány 2004: 85–94.
- 23 Hegyi 2007: III, 1537, 1543, 1547.
- 24 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Mxt. 599. The detailed data for Budin have been published in Ágoston 1994; summary data in Hegyi 2007: I, 126–7.
- 25 Ágoston 1994.
- 26 BOA, MAD 3279, p. 100. On the different types of guns, see Ágoston 2005: 61–95.
- 27 BOA, MAD 3279, p. 172.
- 28 Ágoston 2005: 79–80, 135–8.
- 29 Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi E 895, published in Hungarian translation in Fodor 1985.
- 30 Quoted in Tóth 1992: 18.
- 31 Szakály 1981.
- 32 Szakály 1997: 376, and generally 315–29.
- 33 Fekete [1925] 1993: 308, 310; see also Hegyi 1995: 132.
- 34 Several such cases are documented by the correspondence between these towns and the local Ottoman authorities. See, for instance, the ‘Turkish letters’ of Jászberény (Hegyi 1988: 16–17, 64–9, 71–2, 79, 108, 126, 144–5).
- 35 Ágoston 2003.
- 36 Kubinyi 1997; Dávid 1997g.
- 37 Ágoston 1991.
- 38 Hegyi 2007: I, 239–43.
- 39 Bayerle 1991, x.
- 40 Ibid.: x, 186–8, 255–7.
- 41 Sudár 2009.
- 42 Fodor 2010.