

The Impact of the Ottoman Rule on Hungary

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One of the most crucial events of European significance in Hungarian history was the battle at Mohács on 29th August 1526 when the army of Süleyman I (1520-1566) won a decisive victory over Louis Jagello II's (1516-1526) troops. The complete defeat and the death of the king who ruled Hungary and Bohemia brought about fundamental changes in the strategic realities of Central Europe.¹ In the 14th and 15th centuries all significant dynasties of the region, including the Luxemburgs, Jagellonians, Habsburgs and even the Hungarian king Matthias Hunyadi (Corvinus, 1458-1490), aimed at establishing a salient European power in the Middle Danube Basin. After the death of Louis II, Austrian archduke Ferdinand was elected king of Bohemia, (Prague, 23 October 1526), Hungary (Pozsony, [today's Bratislava, Slovakia], 17 December 1526) and Croatia (Cetin, 1 January 1527) and, finally, was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (Frankfurt am Main, 24 March 1558). Thus, during his reign, the Habsburgs succeeded in gathering under their hegemony more possessions (the Austrian hereditary provinces, as well as the lands of the Czechs, the Hungarians and the Croats) in Central Europe than any of their predecessors. However, they could still not take possession of the entire Carpathian Basin.²

This study is accompanied by two maps. The first, entitled "Ottoman campaigns in Hungary (1526-1683)," is on page 113, and the second, "Fortresses in Hungary about 1582," can be found on page 115.

After 1526, a new participant joined the struggle for European hegemony: Sultan Süleyman I who believed that the time had come to accomplish his world-conquering ambitions and to crush his main rivals, the Habsburgs. From this time on, for more than a century and a half, the presence of the Ottomans in Central Europe constituted a major and constant threat to the whole of Europe. At the same time, their formidable fleet also menaced the provinces of the Spanish Habsburg Crown in the Mediterranean. The advance of the Ottomans, economically strong and boasting the only regular army in the world, could only be contained by a close political, military and financial co-operation among the Habsburg possessions in Central Europe, governed from Vienna.³

The Consequences of the Battle at Mohács

The defeat at Mohács marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Hungary. The decisive factor was not the almost complete destruction of the royal forces but the change in the country's strategic position. From this time on, the fate of Hungary was to be decided almost exclusively in the capitals of the two Great Powers: Istanbul and Vienna. Hungary alone had no chance of resisting the Ottoman Empire for the latter's economic, military and human resources exceeded those of Hungary by far. Under these circumstances Hungary's very existence was at stake.⁴ In 1529 and 1532, when Süleyman marched against Vienna, he assumed that the whole of Hungary would automatically fall under his sway. But after having realised that even his unequalled might was insufficient to achieve his objectives, the Sultan adopted a new strategy: a gradual, piece-by-piece incorporation of Hungary in his empire, which in time would open the way to the Austrian capital. The first step in the realisation of his new conception was the capture in 1541 of Buda, the capital of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom.⁵

With this event the territory of Hungary was torn into three parts for a long time to come. In fact the dismemberment had already started in the months following the battle of Mohács. Contrary to commonly held beliefs, Sultan Süleyman did not completely withdraw from Hungary in 1526 but took the fortresses of the so-called Szerémség (*Sirmium*, the eastern territory of the region between the rivers Drava and Sava) into his possession.

Hungary's nobility became divided over the question as to how to cope with the crisis. A large group of them elected (on 10 November 1526) and then crowned (on 11 November 1526) János Szapolyai, one of Hungary's most influential landowners, king of the country. A smaller group of nobles, who perceived the situation more realistically, elected and then crowned Ferdinand Habsburg (on 17 December 1526 and 3 November 1527 respectively). From the juridical point of view, the double election and coronation was not illegal. Nevertheless, it was an unfortunate development as it enabled Süleyman to take advantage of the division within the Hungarian political elite. While Szapolyai was twice defeated by the troops of King Ferdinand (1527-1528) and then became isolated diplomatically, the *Porte* had no difficulties in making him its vassal. Thus, against his original plans, Szapolyai became the first representative of the Turkish orientation in Hungary and paved the way for Ottoman rule in much of the country.⁶

The political and territorial division of the Hungarian Kingdom constituted one of the most serious and long-lasting effects of the Ottoman conquest. By 1566, a series of military campaigns (1543-1545, 1551-1552, 1554-1556 and 1566) had made it possible for the Ottoman leadership to incorporate about 40 percent (that is to say about 120,000 km²) of the territory of the medieval Hungarian state. This central region, as well as the ones that were conquered later (1596: Eger, 1600: Kanizsa [today's Nagykanizsa], 1660: Nagyvárad [Oradea, Rumania], 1663: Érsekújvár [Nové Zámky, Slovakia]), remained under Ottoman rule. Contrary to his previous plan, Sultan Süleyman did not seize Transylvania and the counties bordering on it in the west (this region soon came to be called *Partium*). Having realised that these territories were of no use to him in any future campaign against Vienna, and also having recognised the advantages that Hungary's division granted him in diverting some of the Habsburgs' military power towards Transylvania, in 1556 he decided to launch the eastern parts on a separate route of development. Thus the Principality of Transylvania came into existence, which remained an Ottoman vassal until the end of the 17th century. The Principality was obliged to pay an ever-increasing yearly tribute to Istanbul and was subordinated to the Sultan in its external affairs. In return, it enjoyed almost total autonomy in its internal affairs and was referred to in Ottoman sources as "Sultan Süleyman's work (invention)." As regards its political, economic and social conditions, Transylvania had always been the least developed region of medieval Hungary, therefore its forced

secession from the other Hungarian territories and the Ottoman rule resulted in its further decline.⁷

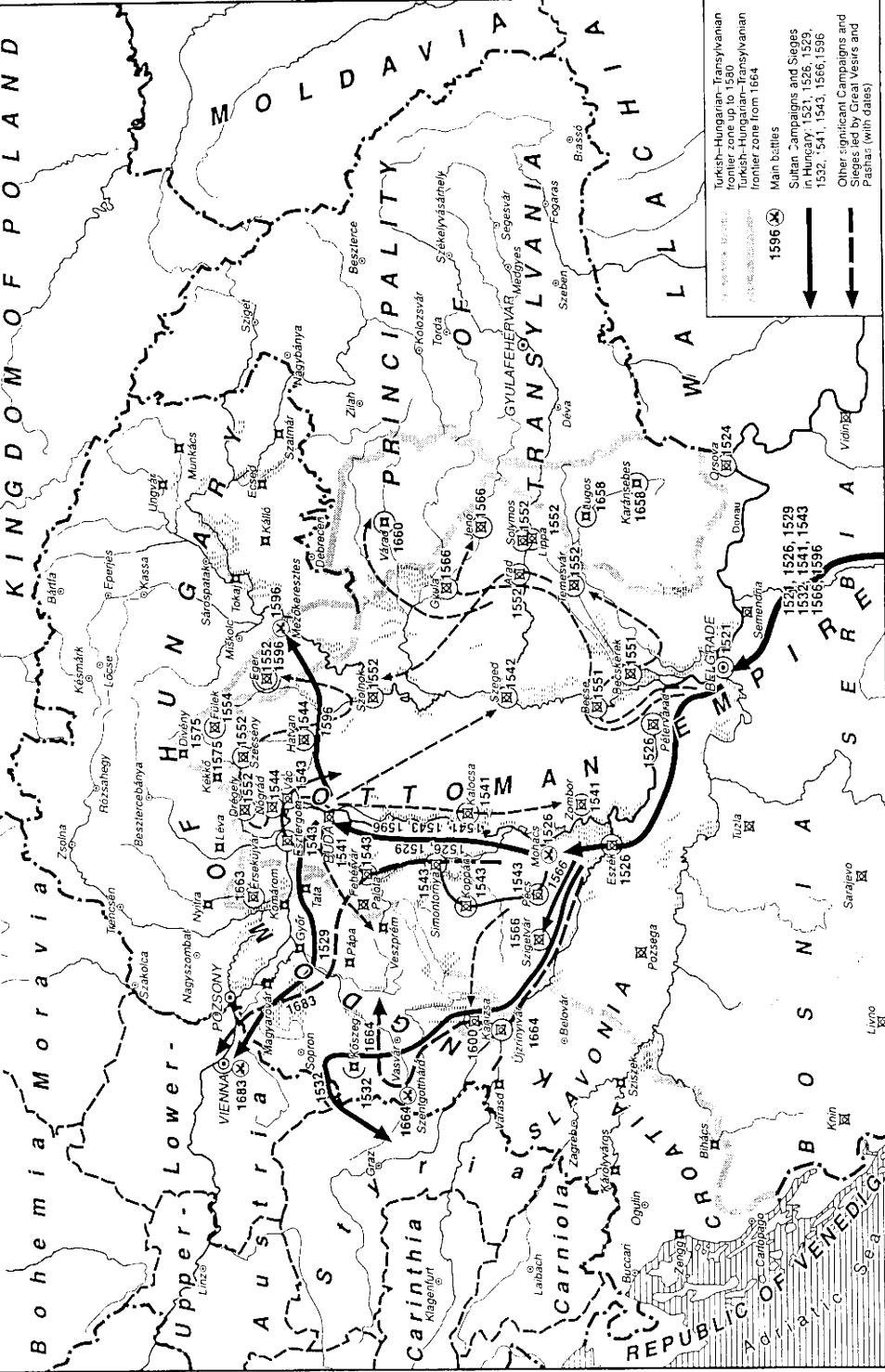
In addition to the Ottoman military leadership, the nobility of the considerably diminished Royal Hungary also benefited from the existence of the separate Transylvanian state. From the end of the 16th century onwards, Royal Hungary's Estates realised that their own privileges could be protected from the centralising attempts of Vienna by veiled threats of the transfer of their allegiance to the rulers of Transylvania.⁸ It is worth mentioning as an analogy that the Estates of the Holy Roman Empire, in their negotiations with the emperors over questions of noble privileges, also took advantage of the issue of defence against the Ottomans, which from the middle of the 16th century was invariably on the agenda.⁹ Due to their shrewd policy, in the 17th century the Hungarian Estates succeeded in preserving their privileges and the relative autonomy of the Hungarian Kingdom within the Habsburg Empire. This meant that the country's nobility managed to turn Hungary's dismemberment to their advantage.

This political chess-game had rather grave consequences by the beginning of the 18th century. After the Ottomans were driven out of the Carpathian Basin, Transylvania was not reannexed to Hungary, but was ruled directly from Vienna. Its reunion with Hungary would take place only after the Compromise of 1867. In sum, in the long run the establishment of the Principality of Transylvania had done more harm than benefit to Hungarian national interests. Furthermore, for a long time the separation of Transylvania served as a dangerous precedent for Hungary's further dismemberment. Indeed, in 1682 a new Ottoman vassal state came into being in the northern part of the country, stretching from Gömör county to the Transylvanian border. This was the Principality of Upper Hungary (in Turkish: *Orta Macar*) ruled by Imre Thököly. For a few years (1682-1685) then, the country was in fact divided into four parts.¹⁰

Hungary as a Battleground: The Impact of Warfare

Unlike in numerous regions of the Balkans which had been completely incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, the settlement of Turkish-speaking populations in Hungary was not very successful;¹¹ nevertheless, Ottoman rule in Hungary had long-lasting and very negative consequences. What brought about such results was not so much the division of the Hungarian Kingdom but the fact that, for much of the century and a half, Hungary

OTTOMAN CAMPAIGNS IN HUNGARY (1526-1683)



Turkish-Hungarian-Transylvanian
frontier zone up to 1540

Turkish-Hungarian-Transylvanian
frontier zone from 1684

Main battles

1596

Sultan Campaigns and Sieges
in Hungary: 1521, 1526, 1529,
1532, 1541, 1543, 1566, 1596

Other significant Campaigns and
Sieges led by Great Vessirs and
Pashas (with dates)

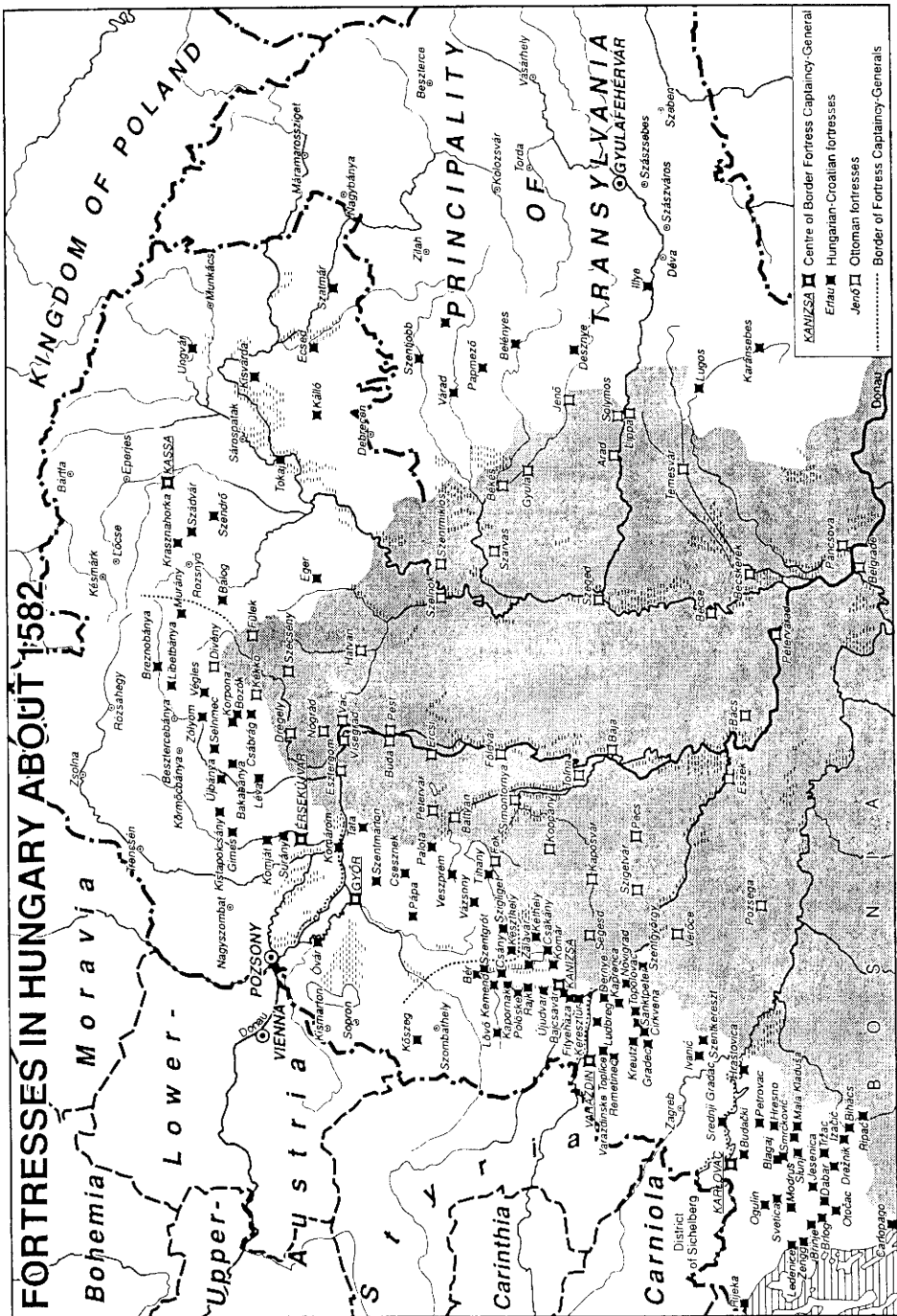
served as a battleground in the struggle between the forces of the great powers. Many of the negative consequences of this struggle would not be erased until long after the Ottomans had left Hungary and some were never eliminated.

Although there was hardly a year in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe that elapsed without a war being fought somewhere, Hungary stands out in this respect: there the military struggle persisted throughout the entire period of the Ottoman rule. From 1521 till the Peace of Adrianople (today's Edirne in Turkey) of 1568, the country endured a great number of Turkish military campaigns and sieges, just at a time when Hungary was on the brink of a civil war due to the ongoing struggle between its two kings. Between 1591/1593 and 1606, during the so-called Long Turkish War, there were conflicts involving large military forces even by European standards. Between 1660 and 1664, as well as during Hungary's War of Liberation from the Ottoman occupation (1683-1699), each of the opposing sides annually fielded armies of almost 50,000 men.¹²

Furthermore, not even the relatively calm periods (1568-1591, 1606-1660 and 1664-1683) that passed between the open conflicts, can be described as completely peaceful. The ongoing wars at the border, as well as the daily raids aimed mostly to collect taxes and to plunder, caused serious damage by disrupting production and settlement networks, by material destruction and by driving away, kidnapping or killing people.¹³ In the 17th century similarly significant losses were caused by the campaigns waged by Transylvanian princes who, using the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) as an opportunity, tried to strengthen their strategic position against the Habsburgs.¹⁴ These campaigns also brought about the threat of a civil war in Hungary. Although recent research pointed out that the population of the country manifested an almost unbelievable ability of regeneration for a long while, regions that were victims of all-out military operations and incursions, were incapable of complete — or, in some cases, even partial — demographic and economic recovery.

The decay of Hungary's southernmost counties had started long before the battle of Mohács, as the Ottomans had already invaded the country's southern parts as early as the late fourteenth century (more precisely, between 1390-1400). By this time they had also looted the Austrian province, the so-called Carniola (*Krain*) region.¹⁵ Later on, in the repeated unsuccessful campaigns to capture Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) in 1440 and in 1456, as well as during the local clashes which started in

FORTRESSES IN HUNGARY ABOUT 1582



- KANIZSA Centre of Border Fortress Captaincy-General
- Erlau Hungarian-Croatian fortresses
- Jeno Ottoman fortresses
- Border of Fortress Captaincy-Generals

1464 and lasted for more than half a century, the Ottomans gradually destroyed the region stretching from Temes county up to Valkó. The settlements there, which somehow had managed to survive the pre-1526 assaults, were sentenced to annihilation during the Sultan's great campaigns following the battle of Mohács. According to recent research, in the southern part of the country the original population had died out in the astonishing extent of 70 to 90 percent by the middle of the 16th century. With this rate of extinction — and the resulting change in the population — the region's settlement network also suffered immeasurable and irreversible losses.¹⁶

Due to the Ottoman expansion, by the 1560s frontier fights moved from the earlier borders to the central areas of the country. However, according to data at our disposal, in the above-mentioned calmer periods destruction did not go as far as it previously had in the southern parts of the country. This can be explained by the establishment, in the regions not yet conquered by the Turks, of a new defence system consisting of border fortresses. This came into existence in the 1560s and '70s, under the direction of the Aulic War Council (*Wiener Hofkriegsrat*, founded in 1556).¹⁷ However, organising this system in the midst of intermittent warfare imposed a huge financial burden on the whole Central European region. As the income of the ever diminishing Hungarian Kingdom could only cover about a quarter of the pay of the 20,000 to 22,000 soldiers needed to man approximately 120 border fortresses, the rest had to be raised from the Austrian and Czech provinces, as well as from the Holy Roman Empire. The support amounted to approximately 1,000,000 guilders a year, which was about one-and-a-half of all the income Royal Hungary had at that time. This implies that for a 150 years the country survived only on a huge subsidy from abroad.¹⁸

Despite this help, the gradual decay of much of Hungary could not be thwarted. Just to mention some concrete data from a relatively peaceful period: west of Lake Balaton, by the Zala river, on the lands of the so called border fortress captaincy opposite Kanizsa (organised after the fall of Kanizsa in 1600) the Ottomans caused the following damages during their 1633-1649 invasions:

45 villages were attacked
4,207 persons were killed or taken into captivity
4,760 cattle were driven off

66 houses and 2 wine cellars were burnt down and even some beehives were taken away,

while the ferry in Zalahídvég was destroyed on two occasions, and this is only to mention the concrete examples of the devastation that was recorded.¹⁹ Although the frequent destruction of buildings, the means of production, and of other material possessions, caused appalling damage, this kind of losses could sometimes still be repaired, especially in the neighbourhood of the border fortresses. For, in spite of all the difficulties, the inhabitants of the military frontier did not lose heart, but adapted their lifestyle to the constant state of war. After the assaults by Ottoman forces, they would always return from the places where they had taken refuge during the hostilities: castles, woods, or marshlands, in order to re-build their houses, cultivate their fields, and to acquire new animals in place of those that had been stolen. This exemplary ability to persist in the face of adversities, and to regenerate life, greatly contributed to the country's surviving the long Ottoman occupation.²⁰

However, during the time of the frequent great campaigns, the resumption of life in the countryside was often simply impossible. Armies numbering in the tens of thousands every year caused destruction different from that of the usual incursions. The real turning points in the development of Hungary were therefore the Long Turkish War (1591-1606) and the Great War of Liberation (1683-1699).²¹ For wherever the sultan's or the emperor's troops repeatedly crossed for several years running, everything was reduced to ruins. At the same time it is important to realise that in this respect there was no basic difference between the emperor's foreign mercenaries or the Hungarian Haiduks on the one hand, and the Tatars of the Crimea or other Turkish light cavalry formations — referred to in the contemporary Christian sources as "dreaded devastators" — on the other.

Ottoman studies suggest that the Sultan's troops had a better system of supplying themselves with food and basic necessities than did the Emperor's.²² This in part explains the fact that the Christian "armies of liberation" had to rely heavily on forcible requisitions when campaigning in the Hungarian countryside. In fact, European mercenary forces would not have as good a supply system as did the Sultan's, until the following century.²³

The periods of massive campaigns had devastating effects for many regions of Hungary. The production of food in these war-zones

soon became paralysed and sooner or later large areas became completely exhausted. As a consequence, both the troops involved in the fighting and the local population were easily struck by famine. The weakened soldiers and civilians were often decimated to an incredible extent by diseases such as the plague, dysentery, typhoid fever, malaria and even a particular combination of typhoid fever and malaria, the so-called *morbus Hungaricus*.²⁴

Due to the human and natural calamities, the zones of constant warfare became virtually uninhabited and uninhabitable for years, even decades. Just to mention a concrete example: between 1593 and 1595 one of the most important military routes along the Danube in Western Hungary, and the area surrounding this route was totally laid waste and depopulated in the wake of the Ottoman and Christian sieges of Győr and Esztergom. This explains why, after recapturing Esztergom from the Turks in 1595, Miklós Pálffy, the new captain-general of the fortress, had to resettle by force of arms Hungarian and Serbian villages from the territories formerly occupied by the Ottomans (e.g. from around Buda, and even from the remote Tolna and Baranya counties) in order to restore — at least in part — the local settlement network, as well as the population and the economic life of the affected area.²⁵

Similar losses were suffered by other regions of the country during the Great War of Liberation. Many villages in the neighbourhood of the Turkish border fortresses (e.g. Kanizsa, Székesfehérvár, Várad, Gyula), had endured the long Ottoman occupation. However, they were hardly able to survive the billeting of the imperial troops during the winters. Furthermore, the emperor's military leadership on occasion insisted on the temporary resettlement of the local population, in order to assure the imperial forces' security.²⁶ Interestingly, the regional military leaders were not always unsympathetic towards the local population. We know of cases when, during these hostilities, Ottoman military officers warned the Christian population of the neighbouring villages against expected assaults on them by the cavalry of the dreaded Crimean Tatars, the allies of the Turks.²⁷ All in all, the Great War of Liberation had an impact on Hungary similar to the devastation that had been caused by the Thirty Years' War in other parts of Europe. In Hungary, however, the great wars were just the continuation of the type of struggle that had prevailed in the relatively peaceful periods, one that might be described as "static warfare."

Economic and Other Losses

As a result, Hungary's settlement network suffered substantial losses in all but the country's northern counties. The most fundamental changes occurred in the southern and central parts of the country, in particular in the areas adjoining rivers and military routes. In these regions up to 70-80 percent of the original settlements were laid waste — and stayed that way for shorter or longer periods of time. It has been estimated that in the zones of frequent conflict and along major invasion routes, close to 50 percent of the settlements became depopulated.²⁸ At the same time, a few villages and market towns grew in population as people congregated in places that were regarded as relatively safe. By the 18th century this restructuring had resulted in a new type of settlement network that is still typical of today's Hungarian Plain.

The age of the Ottoman rule brought about not only changes in the population distribution throughout the Kingdom's countryside, but also resulted in a dramatic alteration of its urban settlement patterns. Of the seven regional centres that had existed before the conquest (Buda and its twin-city Pest; Pozsony and its subcentre Sopron; Körmöcbánya [Kremnica, Slovakia], Kassa [Košice, Slovakia], Várád, Szeged and Pécs), three (Buda, Pécs and Szeged) became Turkish frontier fortresses, whereas Várád fell under the jurisdiction of the Transylvanian princes. The German and Hungarian town-dwellers — who used to play a major role in the country's economic life — left the royal cities in the affected areas and sought refuge, in most cases, in Royal Hungary.

During the long Ottoman occupation, economic activity in Hungary shifted from the formerly powerful royal cities to second- and third-order centres, in particular to some of the market-towns that came to prosper as centres of livestock-trading. At the same time, the size of Hungary's bourgeoisie underwent a decline in this period. This trend had a negative impact on the evolution of Hungarian handicrafts and cottage industries — which had been underdeveloped formerly. Not all the royal cities suffered a decline. Pozsony, Kassa and Nagyszombat (today's Trnava, Slovakia) — which were geographically peripheral — grew into political and financial centres, precisely because they were on the whole removed from the zones of frequent conflict. Other places, especially some of the market-towns such as Győr and Debrecen, also in areas that were usually spared of fighting, took advantage of their strategic situation, made economic progress and accumulated wealth.²⁹ In spite of all these

changes, in some respects Hungary's economic structure did not change greatly during the Ottoman rule. Agriculture, which had played an important role in pre-Ottoman Hungary, retained — in fact increased — its pre-eminent place in the country's economy. The economic development in Europe, with the West becoming more and more a place for the processing of resources and the East a provider of foodstuffs and raw materials, also increased. This situation had many disadvantages for Hungary but it also had some incidental benefits, which will be mentioned briefly at the end of this study.

The fundamental restructuring of Hungary's settlement network was accompanied by the decay of the courts of the nobility as well as the decline of the centres of religious and cultural life. Similarly to the urban population, by the end of the 1560s the nobility — suddenly and virtually without exception — had left the territories under Ottoman occupation. At the same time the constant warfare doomed the country's monasteries — the centres of spiritual and cultural life in medieval times — even if they happened to be on the Royal Hungarian side of the military frontier. By the 1570s, the approximately 100 medieval monasteries in the diocese of Veszprém had all disappeared, while out of the area's 600 parishes only a few dozen remained functioning.³⁰ By this time it was only the Franciscans (in Jászberény, Szeged, Gyöngyös and in the Transylvanian Csíksomlyó [today's Șumuleu-Ciuc, Romania]), the Paulines (in Slavonia) and the nuns taking refuge in Pozsony and Nagyszombat who succeeded in maintaining — or resettling — some of their monasteries.³¹ The Peace of Karlowitz (Karlóca, today's Srijemski Karlovci, Yugoslavia) in 1699 — that signified the end of the Ottoman rule in most of the Carpathian Basin — came too late to allow a rapid reversal of the substantial losses that Turkish rule had brought for the Catholic Church in Hungary. The truth of this statement is illustrated by the fact that, while in Austria and Italy a rich monastic network is to be found even today, there were only traces of it in pre-1945 Hungary — traces that were then nearly wiped out by the country's communist rulers. It is worth mentioning in this connection that, contrary to common belief, the Ottomans contributed to the rapid spread of the Reformation in the 16th century-Hungary by their having weakened the position of the Catholic Church rather than by their religious tolerance.

Changes in the Demographic and Ethnic Map

The wars of the Ottoman period brought about major changes in Hungary's demographic and ethnic map. While earlier demographic research concluded that Hungary's population had significantly decreased due to these wars, the latest research shows a much more favourable picture. At the end of the Middle Ages the total population of Hungary amounted to 3.3 millions. This further increased to 3.5 millions by the end of the 16th century, and to 4 millions almost a century later.³² This suggests that, in spite of the constant warfare, the number of people did not decrease, but stagnated and, later on, it even increased. However, when placed in a European context and viewed in the light of the large-scale immigration Hungary was experiencing at the time, the situation appears no longer that favourable.

In Europe, the end of the 16th century witnessed a major population boom followed by a sudden stop and a considerable decline in the areas affected by the Thirty Years' War. All in all, in the period between 1500 and 1700 in the Central European countries comparable with Hungary, the increase of population was approximately 120 to 130 percent.³³ Considering this ratio only, the demographic development of Hungary seems to be greatly lagging behind. But it is important to note that while in neighbouring countries the population increased without any replacement, the situation was different in Hungary. Although contemporary sources do not allow us to establish the number of South Slav (Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, etc.), Rumanian and Ruthenian immigrants to the country, we may be safe in estimating their number as at least half a million. We can state that during the 16th and 17th centuries the population of Hungary would have not increased without this immigration. Thus, the European trend of population growth did not reflect itself in Hungary because of the wars that went on for years.

For Hungary the most tragic consequence of the wars was that they affected mainly the Kingdom's Hungarian (i.e. the Magyar) population. At the time of their settlement in the Carpathian Basin the Hungarians occupied the geographically most favourable river valleys and plains. The Ottomans led both their great campaigns and minor expeditions precisely in these territories. The ensuing material losses and human casualties were suffered predominantly by the Magyars. Furthermore, the troops who sustained severe losses in the fortresses of the military frontier were also primarily Hungarian. On the other hand,

the losses suffered by the Kingdom's ethnic minorities — who tended to live on Hungary's periphery, often in more sheltered mountainous regions — were considerably smaller. While Hungary's Magyar population declined during the time of the Turkish wars, some regions inhabited by her minorities even managed to enjoy the population boom that was common to Central Europe of the times.

The wave of South Slav immigrants — themselves refugees from the Ottoman wars — settled mainly in the depopulated regions of southern and central Hungary.³⁴ The first of these immigrants had arrived already before 1526. By the time of the collapse of the medieval Hungarian state in the second quarter of the 16th century, some 200,000 Serbians had settled in the southern parts of the country. The Hungarian landlords there were actually anxious to receive and settle these Serbs on their estates in order to compensate for the loss of their own serfs who had fallen victim to the conflicts with the Turks or had been driven away. In the second half of the 15th century, for example, the well-known captain-general Pál Kinizsi “brought” to his lands thousands of South Slav immigrants from among the troops that had served him in his campaigns against the Turks in Serbia.

The tendency to welcome Serb and other Balkan refugees increased during Hungary's Ottoman occupation. Owing to this, the Temesköz (*Banat*), became inhabited almost exclusively by Serbs within a few decades after its occupation by the Turks in 1552. This development was acknowledged internationally. On the map of Hungary that was published in Antwerp in 1577, the Temesköz appeared under the Latin name of *Rascia*, i.e. the country of the Serbs.³⁵ The devastations caused by the Long Turkish War gave a further impetus to South Slav immigration. As a result of this, by the middle of the 17th century, large populations of Serb Orthodox and Bosnian Catholic refugees had settled in central Hungary, between the Danube and the Tisza rivers, while in the Transdanubian part of the country — up to Tolna and Fejér counties — there came to live the so-called Wallachians, a population of Orthodox faith, related to the Serbs. (They are not to be mistaken for Rumanians, also referred to as Wallachians [lat. *vlachi* or *olachi*] in contemporary sources.) The concentration of this population in certain places is indicated by the fact that in 1585 in Grábóc (close to Szekszárd) a Serb Orthodox monastery was founded in order to cater for these settlers' spiritual needs.³⁶

The religious and cultural traditions of these South Slav newcomers were quite different from those of the Hungarians, a circumstance which made natural assimilation unlikely. During the Great War of Liberation a further wave of South Slav immigrants — about 200,000 people — arrived in Hungary, reinforcing their settlements there and making their assimilation even less likely. As a result, some of the affected Hungarian territories lost their Hungarian character completely.³⁷ Along with the Serbs and Wallachian-Serbs, considerable numbers of Croats, Rumanians and Slovaks also settled in the regions affected by the Ottoman conquest. The Croats came by the tens of thousands to the western part of Hungary in the 1530s, '40s, and '50s, and settled from Muraköz (the region between the rivers Drava and Mura) in the south to Pozsony (Bratislava) county in the north, in a wide zone. As the Hungarian landlords in this part of the country (the Batthyánys, the Nádasdys, the Erdődys, the Keglevicses, the Zrínyis, etc.) were inclined to settle them on lands uncultivated before, more often than not, new villages — or new parts of villages — were established. By the beginning of the 17th century the Croats had also received considerable reinforcements, which hindered their assimilation as well. The extent of the Croatian immigration to these regions is illustrated by the fact that in the Burgenland region of Austria — before 1920 a part of the Kingdom of Hungary — the proportion of the Croatian population amounts to ten percent even today.³⁸

Hungary's landlords played a major role also in settling Rumanians and Slovaks on lands depopulated during the Long Turkish War (a conflict that deeply affected Transylvania as well), Rumanians gradually descended from their mountain habitats to territories previously inhabited by Magyars. At other times the relative safety and prosperity of Transylvania attracted masses of Rumanians from neighbouring Wallachia and Moldavia, a movement that constituted a continuous reinforcement for Rumanians in this eastern part of the Carpathian Basin. As a result, by the end of the 17th century, a relatively unbroken belt inhabited by Rumanians had come into existence both in Transylvania and on its western borderlands (i.e. in the *Partium*).³⁹ In the case of the Slovaks, the migration to and resettlement in central and southern Hungary took place largely after the Great War of Liberation.

To sum up, during the 150-year Ottoman rule in Hungary, the ethnic map of the country underwent fundamental changes. While in the Middle Ages Magyars accounted for approximately 75 to 80 percent of

the Hungarian Kingdom's population, during the 16th and 17th centuries they gradually became a minority in their own country. The situation deteriorated further in the 18th century by the resettlements designed to revive the country's economy and stimulate its demographic growth. It appears that with the exception of minor changes, the ethnic boundaries that existed at the beginning of the 20th century — and which played a part in the decisions made about Hungary by the victorious Great Powers after the World War I — had already taken shape by the end of the Ottoman occupation. It has to be emphasised, however, that in the early Modern Age the coexistence of different ethnic groups did not cause any minority problems in Hungary, as society's demarcation lines at that time were not drawn between ethnic groups but primarily between social strata. In this period all the subjects of Hungarian Kingdom counted as *Hungarus*, whether they knew Hungarian or not. In this respect it is only in the 19th century that things changed and the earlier transformation of Hungary's ethnic map began to threaten with grave consequences.

Considering the Ottoman conquest's numerous and long-lasting negative effects, it is rather hard for the historian to find positive impacts. There is no doubt that Hungarians owe the Ottomans several loan-words, poems written on Turkish melodies, oriental garments, flowers, and last but not least mosques and baths (in Pécs, Siklós, Szigetvár and Budapest) that are rightly considered rarities in Central Europe.⁴⁰ However, the significance of these is hard to compare with the negative effects that determined the country's fate for many centuries. Given this knowledge, we can safely conclude that for Hungary the Ottoman rule had been an unmitigated tragedy.

Hungary and Europe

Having said all this it may seem strange to state that, in spite of its tripartite division, Hungary remained an essential part of Europe both during the Ottoman era and thereafter. Although it would certainly require another study to give a detailed explanation for this generalization,⁴¹ I would like to refer briefly to the fact that it was not only Hungary that needed a yearly financial subsidy from Central Europe in order to survive. The Habsburg Empire also needed the Hungarian Kingdom, first of all as a buffer state against potential Ottoman onslaught,⁴² and secondly as an important source of food supplies. The former role secured Hungary's

place in the Habsburg political-military system. In the latter role Hungary served as the major supplier of meat, i.e. cattle, for the increasing population of Central Europe's Austrian and German territories. In this connection it should be stated that Hungary's partial occupation by the Ottomans — as well as her political dismemberment — did not bring about a large-scale disintegration of trade patterns in the Carpathian Basin, as the Hungarian economy continued to play a major role in the commercial affairs of Europe.⁴³ Due to the spread of humanism, and of the Reformation, as well as to the growing number of Magyar youths attending universities in Central and Western Europe (*peregrinatio academica*), Hungary also retained its place in the cultural and spiritual life of Christian Europe. It appears then that Hungary, although it became subordinated to the will of the region's two superpowers, survived one of the most critical periods of her history in a much more positive manner than might have been expected. For the country achieved almost everything that was possible under the given circumstances. It was by no coincidence that one of Europe's most prominent Aristotle experts, the Flemish humanist Nicasiaus Ellebodium, had settled in 16th century-Hungary, in Pozsony. His words are a testimony to the contemporary Hungarian Kingdom's potential: "Should God grant peace to this country, it may become the most suitable place for accomplishing academic plans as well."⁴⁴

NOTES

¹ Jenő Gyalóky, "Die Schlacht bei Mohács," *Ungarische Jahrbücher* 6 (1927) 228–257; Ferenc Szakály, "The 1526 Mohács Disaster," *The New Hungarian Quarterly* 18 (Spring 1977): 43–63; the same author's *A mohácsi csata* [The Battle of Mohács] (Budapest, 1981; 3rd ed. in the series *Sorsdöntő történelmi napok*, 2); and Géza Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary: Mohács 1526 – Buda 1541* (Boulder, Colorado: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1989).

² Domokos Kosáry, "Magyarország a XVI–XVII. századi nemzetközi politikában [Hungary in international politics in the 16th and 17th Centuries]," in Domokos Kosáry, ed., *A történelem veszedelmei: Írások Európáról és Magyarországról* [Dangers of history: Studies on Europe and Hungary] (Budapest, 1987), 20–27. On Habsburg policies toward Central Europe in the 16th century cf. Victor-Lucien Tapié, *Monarchie et peuples du Danube* (Paris, 1969); Robert A.

Kann: *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526–1918* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1977); and Jean Béranger, *Die Geschichte des Habsburgerreiches 1273 bis 1918*, 2nd ed. (Cologne, Vienna, Graz, 1996).

³ Winfried Schulze, *Reich und Türkengefahr im späten 16. Jahrhundert. Studien zu den politischen und gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen einer äußeren Bedrohung* (Munich, 1978).

⁴ On the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 16th century cf. Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London, 1997), 35–40; Josef Matuz, *Das Osmanische Reich* (Darmstadt, 1985); and *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Lille, 1989), 145–155; and the comparative study of Gábor Ágoston, "Habsburgs and Ottomans: Defense, Military Change and Shifts in Power," *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 22:1 (Spring 1998): 126–141.

⁵ Pál Fodor, "Ottoman Policy Towards Hungary, 1520–1541," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45: 2–3 (1991): 285–305; and the new edition of the same author's *In Quest of the Golden Apple: Imperial Ideology, Politics, and Military Administration in the Ottoman Empire*, *Annalecta Isisiana* XLV (Istanbul, 2000), 105–169.

⁶ Gábor Barta, *La route qui mène à Istanbul 1526–1528*, *Studia Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 195 (Budapest, 1994) and the same author's "A Forgotten Theatre of War 1526–1528 (Historical Events Preceding the Ottoman–Hungarian Alliance of 1528)," in *Hungarian–Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent*, eds. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Budapest, 1994), 93–130.

⁷ Gábor Barta, *Az erdélyi fejedelemség születése* [The birth of the Transilvanian Principality], 2nd ed. *Magyar história* (Budapest, 1984); *Kurze Geschichte Siebenbürgens*, ed. Béla Köpeczi (Budapest, 1990), 243–268; and Cristina Fenesan, *Constituirea principatului autonom al Transilvaniei* [The making of the independent principality of Transilvania] (Bucharest, 1997).

⁸ Kálmán Benda, "Absolutismus und ständischer Widerstand in Ungarn am Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Südostforschungen* 33 (1974): 85–124; the same author's "Habsburg Absolutism and the Resistance of the Hungarian Estates in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Crown, Church and Estates. Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, eds. R(ober) J. W. Evans and T. V. Thomas (London, 1991), 123–128; and Géza Pálffy, "Der Wiener Hof und die ungarische Stände im 16. Jahrhundert (Eine Zusammenfassung)," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 109:2 (2001) (in press).

⁹ Winfried Schulze, *Reich und Türkengefahr*, and Rosemarie Aulinger, *Das Bild des Reichstages im 16. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zu einer typologischen Analyse schriftlicher und bildlicher Quellen* (Schriftenreihe der Historischen

Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Schrift 18) (Göttingen, 1980), 207–209.

¹⁰ A *Thököly-felkelés és kora* [The Thököly Revolt and its age] ed. László Benczédi (Budapest, 1983) and idem, "Imre Thököly und das oberungarische Fürstentum," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33: 2–4 (1987): 223–227.

¹¹ Gábor Ágoston, *A hódolt Magyarország* [Hungary under Ottoman rule] (=Magyarország Krónikája) ([Budapest,] 1992), 75–82; and Klára Hegyi, *Török berendezkedés Magyarországon* [Establishing Ottoman rule in Hungary] (=História Könyvtár. Monográfiák 7) (Budapest, 1995).

¹² On the wars against the Ottomans in Hungary in generally cf. *Die Türkenkriege in der historischen Forschung* (=Forschungen und Beiträge zur Wiener Stadtgeschichte Bd. 13) (Vienna, 1983), *passim*.

¹³ The Ottoman advance is described by those reports which were prepared by the captains of the border fortresses and the military administration in Vienna. These descriptions of damages by the enemy were then sent to the Viennese ambassadors in Constantinople for the purposes of making complaints to the Sultan. See for example: Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien, Türkei (Turcica) Karton 43 Konv. 1, 1580 Nov.–Dez. fol. 25–32 and Kriegsarchiv, Wien, Akten des Wiener Hofkriegsrates Exp. 1589 Aug., No. 88; and, Gustav von Gömöry, "Türkennoth und das Grenzwesen in Ungarn und Croatien während sieben "Friedensjahren" von 1575 bis 1582. Nach Quellen des k. k. Kriegs-Archivs," *Mitteilungen des k. k. Kriegsarchives* 1885, 155–178.

¹⁴ *Kurze Geschichte Siebenbürgens*, 319–334, and László Nagy, *Magyar hadsereg és hadművészet a harmincéves háborúban* [Hungarian army and strategy in the Thirty Years War] (Budapest, 1972).

¹⁵ Bódog Milleker, *A törököknek első betörései Dél-Magyarországba Zsigmond és Albert királyok idejében és Keve és Krassó vármegyék megszűnése 1393–1439* [The first incursions by the Ottomans into southern Hungary in the time of kings Sigismund and Albert, and the end of the Counties Keve and Krassó, 1393–1439] (Temesvár, 1914); Hans Pirchegger, "Die ersten Türken-einfälle (1396, 1415, 1418)," *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark* 18 (1922) 63–73; and, recently, Vasko Simoniti, *Vojaška organizacija na Slovenskem v 16. stoletju* [Military affairs in Slovenia in the 16th Century] (Ljubljana, 1991), 5–23.

¹⁶ Pál Engel, "A török dúlások hatása a népességre: Valkó megye példája [The impact of Ottoman incursions on the population: The example of Valkó County]," *Századok* 134:2 (2000): 267–321.

¹⁷ Gunther Erich Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia, 1522–1747* (=Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences 48) (Urbana, 1960); Milan Kruhek, *Krajiške utvrde i obrana hrvatskog kraljevstva tijekom 16. stoljeća* [Border fortresses and defence of the Croatian Kingdom in the 16th Century]

(=Biblioteka Hrvatska povjesnica: Monografije i studije) (Zagreb, 1995); and the most recent study, Géza Pálffy, "The Origins and Development of the Border Defence System Against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary (Up to the Early Eighteenth Century)," in *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe: The Military Confines in the Era of the Ottoman Conquest*, eds.: Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (=The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage, Politics, Society and Economy 20) (Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2000), 3–69. On the history of the Aulic War Council cf. Oskar Regele, *Der österreichische Hofkriegsrat 1556–1848* (=Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs Ergänzungsband 1:1) (Vienna, 1949).

¹⁸ Géza Pálffy, "A magyarországi török és királyi végvárrendszer fenntartásának kérdéséhez [The costs of the Ottoman and the Habsburg Border-fortress systems in Hungary]," *Keletkutatás* (spring 1995): 61–86; and idem, "A magyarországi és délvidéki végvárrendszer 1576. és 1582. évi jegyzékei [The registers of the Hungarian and Croatian–Slavonian borderfortresses of 1576 and 1582]," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 108:1 (1995): 114–185.

¹⁹ Török vonatkozású iratok [Document connected with the Ottomans] No. 230. folders 168 and 173., in *A herceg Batthyány család törzslévéltára* [The basic archives of the family Batthyány], in the *Batthyány család levéltára* [The archives of the family of Count Batthyány], in the records known as *Családi levéltárak* [Family archives] (P 1313), Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest.

²⁰ Ferenc Szakály, "Die Bilanz der Türkenherrschaft in Ungarn," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 34:1 (1988) 63–77; idem, *Gazdasági és társadalmi változások a török hódítás árnyékában* [Economic and social changes in Hungary in the period of the Ottoman Conquest] (=História Könyvtár: Előadások a történettudomány műhelyeiből 5) (Budapest, 1994); and István Rácz, *A török világ hagyatéka Magyarországon* [The legacy of the Ottoman rule in Hungary] (Debrecen, 1995).

²¹ On the "Long Turkish War" against the Ottomans (1591–1606) cf. Alfred H. Loeb, *Zur Geschichte des Türkenkrieges von 1593–1606*. Bd. I. *Vorgeschichte* (=Prager Studien aus dem Gebiete der Geschichtswissenschaft Heft VI) (Prague, 1899); Jan Paul Niederkorn, *Die europäischen Mächte und der "Lange Türkenkrieg" Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1593–1606)* (=Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte Bd. 135) (Vienna, 1993); and, recently, Sándor László Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata és a tizenöt éves háború* [The Battle of Mezőkeresztes 1596 and the "Long Turkish War"] (Szeged, 2000). On the War of Liberation in Hungary cf. Ferenc Szakály, *Hungaria eliberata: Die Rückeroberung von Buda im Jahr 1686 und Ungarns Befreiung von der Osmanenherrschaft (1683–1718)* (Budapest, 1987).

²² Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: the Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606* (=Beihefte zur Wiener Zeitschrift für die

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²³ Eugen Heischmann, *Die Anfänge des stehenden Heeres in Österreich* (=Deutsche Kultur. Historische Reihe Bd. III) (Vienna, 1925); *Militärverwaltung und Heeresaufbildung in Österreich bis 1806*, ed. Jörg Zimmermann (Frankfurt am Main, 1965); and, especially for the "Long War" in Hungary, cf. Géza Pálffy, *A pápai vár felszabadításának négyszázéves emlékezete 1597–1997* [The four hundred year anniversary of the liberation of Fortress Pápa from the Ottomans 1597–1997] (Pápa, 1997), 77–81.

²⁴ J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450–1620* (London, 1985); and, especially for Hungary, Gábor Ágoston: *A hódolt Magyarország*, 92–125, and Tibor Győry, *Morbus Hungaricus* (Budapest, 1910).

²⁵ Sándor Takáts, "Telepítések Esztergom vidékére a XVI-ik század végén" [Trans-settlements to the region of Esztergom at the end of the 16th Century], *Századok* 37 (1903) 531–536; and Géza Pálffy, "Elképzelések a török hódoltság elpusztításáról a 16–17. században. (A Habsburg Birodalom magyarországi hadszínterének néhány főbb sajátosságáról) [Conceptions about the liquidation of Ottoman rule in Hungary in the 16th and 17th Centuries: About the Characteristics of the Hungarian Frontier of the Habsburg Empire]," in "... quasi liber et pictura ..." *Régészeti, írott és képi források a múlt rekonstruálásában. Ünnepi tanulmányok Kubinyi András 70. születésnapjára* [Archeological, written and pictorial sources in the reconstruction of the past. Festschrift for the 70th Birthday of András Kubinyi], ed. József Laszlovszky (Budapest, 2000, in press).

²⁶ *A törökök kiűzése a Körös-Maros közéről 1686–1695* [The expulsion of the Ottomans from the territory between the rivers Körös and Maros], ed. László Szita (=Forráskiadványok a Békés Megyei Levéltárból 19) (Gyula, 1995), 17–18 and 122–124 (Doc. nos. 48–49).

²⁷ Ferenc Szakály, "A felszabadító háborúk történeti helyéről (Ki felelős a hódoltsági terület pusztulásáért?)" [Role of the War of Liberation against the Ottomans in Hungarian history (Who is Responsible for the Destruction of the Ottoman Territories in Hungary?)] in *Előadások és tanulmányok a török elleni visszafoglaló háborúk történetéből 1686–1688* [Lectures and studies from the history of the War of Liberation against the Ottomans, 1686–1688], ed. László Szita (Pécs, 1989), 44.

²⁸ Pál Engel, "A török dúlások hatása," and Ferenc Szakály, "Die Bilanz der Türkenherrschaft," 67.

²⁹ Jenő Szűcs, "Das Städtewesen in Ungarn im 15–17. Jahrhundert," in *La Renaissance et la Réformation en Pologne et en Hongrie: Renaissance und Reformation in Polen und Ungarn, 1450–1650*, ed. György Székely (=Studia

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³⁶ Mihály Szilágyi, *A grábóci szerb ortodox kolostor története* [History of the Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Grábóc] (=Tolna Megyei Levéltári Füzetek 7) (Szekszárd, 1999).

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³⁸ Joseph Breu, *Die Kroatensiedlung im Burgenland und in den anschließenden Gebieten* (Vienna, 1970); and the most recent edition of sources, Géza Pálffy, Miljenko Pandić, and Felix Tobler, *Ausgewählte Dokumente zur Migration der Burgenländischen Kroaten im 16. Jahrhundert/Odabrani dokumenti o seobi Gradišćanskih Hrvata u 16. stoljeću* (Eisenstadt, 1999).

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⁴⁰ Gertrud Palotay, *Oszmán-török elemek a magyar hímzésben* [Ottoman Turkish elements in Hungarian embroidery] (Budapest, 1940); Zsuzsa Kakuk, *Cultural Words from the Turkish Occupation of Hungary* (=Studia Turco-Hungarica 4) (Budapest, 1977); Veronika Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costume in Eastern Europe* (Toronto, 1982); Tamás Hofer, "Der Einfluß der Türkenherrschaft auf die ungarische bäuerliche Kultur," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 34:1 (1988): 89–101; and Győző Gerő, *Az oszmán-török építészet Magyarországon (Dzsámik, türbék, fürdők)* [Ottoman Turkish architecture in Hungary: mosques, turbs, baths] (=Művészettörténeti füzetek 12) (Budapest, 1980).

⁴¹ Cf. our most recent summary of the Hungarian history in the 16th century: *A tizenhatodik század története* [History of Hungary in the 16th Century] (=Magyar Századok) (Budapest, 2000).

⁴² See the works cited in note 17.

⁴³ Othmar Pickl, "Die Auswirkungen der Türkenkriege auf den Handel zwischen Ungarn und Italien im 16. Jahrhundert," in *Die Wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen der Türkenkriege*, ed. Othmar Pickl (=Grazer Forschungen zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Bd. 1) (Graz, 1971), 71–129; László Makkai, "Der ungarische Viehhandel, 1550–1650," in *Der Außenhandel Ostmitteleuropas, 1450–1650. Die ostmitteleuropäischen Volkswirtschaften in ihren Beziehungen zu*

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⁴⁴ *Hortus Musarum: Egy irodalmi társaság emlékei* [Documents of a literary society], ed. Ágnes Szalay (Mrs. Ritoók) (Budapest, 1984), p. 8.