

Ottoman Plans of Expansion in Hungary in the Fifteen Years' War

1593–1606

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This study analyzes the plans of the Ottoman Porte in the so-called “Fifteen Years’ War” or “Long War” (1593–1606) waged in Hungary against the Habsburg Empire. Besides determining territories or targets (fortresses) of Ottoman expansion I intend to focus on a special problem, whether the Porte aimed at direct expansion, i.e. the gradual annexation of the whole of Hungary¹ or considering the huge distance from Istanbul it was content with just an indirect expansion, i.e. the creation of vassal provinces² as both forms of expansion were apparent in this war.³

For a better understanding of the Ottoman aims the antecedents and causes of the Fifteen Years’ War should be outlined. As a result of the Hungarian campaigns of Süleyman the middle parts of the Hungarian Kingdom fell under direct Ottoman rule (the vilayets of Buda and Temesvár). The eastern part of Hungary,

¹ For Ottoman methods of conquest consisting of 2 phases (vassal state, annexation) cf. H. İnalcık, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest” *Studia Islamica* (1954), 104–129; 4 phases (raids, decisive battle, vassal state, annexation) were supposed in the case of Hungary, cf. Gy. Rácz, “Zsigmond-kori Magyarország és a török veszély” [Hungary in the Age of Sigismund and the Turkish Menace] *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények XX* (1973), 410; F. Szakály, *Vesztőhely az út porában*. [Scaffold in the Dust of the Road] Budapest 1986, 114–115.

² It was supposed, that Süleyman wanted Hungary to be a “buffer” or “vassal state” against the Habsburgs (the “offer of Süleyman”), cf. G. Perjés, *Mohács*. Budapest 1979, 80–81, 124.

³ Both methods were used, cf. Á. Várkonyi, *Három évszázad Magyarország történetében, 1526–1790. I. A megosztottság évszázada 1526–1606*. [Three Centuries of Hungarian History 1526–1790. I. The Age of Division 1526–1606.] Budapest 1999, 180–181; S. L. Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata és a tizenöt éves háború*. [The Battle of Mezőkeresztes and the Fifteen Years’ War] Szeged 2000, 129–134.

Transylvania belonged to the Ottoman Empire as well, as a tribute-paying vassal state. The northern (Highlands) and western (west parts of Transdanubia) portions of the late Hungarian Kingdom remained under the rule of the Habsburg kings, although they paid tribute to the Porte from 1547. This division of Hungary between two confronting empires and the existence of fort-systems along the frequently changing borderlines resulted in unstable conditions. Even during the long period of peace in Hungary (1568–1593) after the death of Süleyman (1566) and the treaty of Edirne (1568) there were frequent raids from both sides. Both the Porte and the Habsburg court blamed each other for breaking the truce. Till the close of its long war with Persia (1578–1590) the Porte avoided a clash with its western opponent, the Habsburg Empire, although there were constant raids resulting sometimes in greater border conflicts.⁴

The tension increased after 1590, particularly along the Bosnian–Croatian borders, due to the activity of the new beglerbeg of Bosnia. Hasan Pasha raided the Slavonian and Croatian territories, occupied fortresses (e.g. Bihač) and fought battles with local troops (1591–1593).⁵ With these raids Hasan violated the truce and the Habsburg government asked for capital punishment or dismissal for the Bosnian governor and demanded the return of the occupied fortresses.⁶ Since Hasan had patrons in Istanbul, he just received warning letters but preserved his post.⁷ Emperor Rudolf's (1576–1612) reaction was to not send the yearly "honorary present" (Verehrung) or tribute of 30,000 ducats. So both sides violated the truce of Edirne recently renewed in Istanbul in November 1590. The crisis increased, when Koca Sinan became Grand Vizier again in January 1593. Sinan wrote a menacing letter to Emperor Rudolf in 7 February 1593, in which he demanded two years' tribute and the release of two captive begs taken prisoner in 1588.⁸ The Grand Vizier tried to intimidate ambassador Friedrich Kreckwitz by threatening him and isolating the building of the Habsburg embassy. At the same

⁴ For this "Kleinkrieg" cf. V. J. Parry, "The successors of Sulaiman." in M. A. Cook, ed., *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730*. Cambridge 1976, 116; C. Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare. The Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606*. Wien 1988, 8; G. Bayerle, *Ottoman Diplomacy in Hungary. Letters from the Pashas of Buda (1590–1593)*. Bloomington 1972, 10–12.

⁵ For Hasan's raids cf., Parry, *The successors of Suleiman*, 116; C. M. Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism during the Reformation Europe and the Caucasus*. New York 1972, 132–133; M. Jačov, *I Balcani tra impero ottomano e potenze europee (sec. XVI e XVII) il ruolo della diplomazia pontificia*. Cosenza 1997, 13–15; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 75–78.

⁶ For the protest of the Habsburg court in 1591 cf., Bayerle, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 113–114; in 1592 cf., *Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv* (Wien), *Turcica, Karton* (henceforth: HHStA Turcica, K) 78. fol. 5^r–6^r (letter of Emperor Rudolf to Grand Vizier Siyavus, 1 May 1592) "ille Bassa revocetur ac deponatur" etc.; in 1593 cf., *HHStA Turcica* I. K 80. fol. 32^{r-v} "Bosnensis Basa aliisque violatae pacis auctores puniantur sitoque loco ac magistratu amoveantur" (Emperor Rudolf to the Sultan, 8 February 1593)

⁷ Cf. Finkel, *The Administration*, 10–11.

⁸ Sinan's letter was published in Hungarian by G. Gömöry, in *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 8 (1894), 393–394; for its analysis cf., Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 68–69.

time orders of mobilization were sent to the beglerbegs of Rumili and Temesvár.⁹ The Habsburg court promised to send the tribute by July, but it demanded the return of the forts occupied by Hasan and the exchange of the captive begs for Christian prisoners.¹⁰ The crisis reached its peak, when the obstinate Hasan raided the Slavonian borders again in June 1593, but during the siege of Sisek he was defeated by a smaller Christian relief army in 22 June.¹¹ When the news of the defeat reached the Porte, a council (divan) was summoned by Sultan Murad III on 4 July. Grand Vizier Sinan proposed war, because the "infidels" endangered the "well-protected domain of Islam" and promised victory. The leader of the rival faction, Ferhad emphasized the lateness and difficulties of a campaign, while Seikh-ül-Islam Zekeriyye opposed the war for moral reasons.¹² The harem and the soldiers supported the war, so Sinan was appointed commander-in-chief (*serdar*) by the Sultan. The motives or causes of declaring war against the Habsburg Empire may be summarized thus:¹³

1. General tension, raids and refusal to pay taxes by the peasants to the Sipahis¹⁴ along the borders, which resulted from the divided possession of Hungary (*condominium*) and the crisis on the Slavonian–Croatian borders culminating in the Ottoman defeat at Sisek.

2. The deliberate delay of the tribute, which was interpreted by the Porte as an open violation of the truce.

3. The danger of an anti-Ottoman alliance urged by Pope Clement VIII and the Habsburg policy directing towards getting Poland and the Ottoman vassal, Transylvania.

⁹ For Kreckwitz and his relation with Sinan, see A. H. Loeb, "Der slesier Friedrich von Kreckwitz als Kaiserlicher Gesandter bei der hohen Pforte." *Vereins für die Geschichte Schlesiens* 18 (1914), 160–173; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 68–70, 82–83; for the orders to the beglerbegs cf. Finkel, *The Administration*, 11.

¹⁰ Cf., e.g. the letter of Emperor Rudolf to Grand Vizier Sinan (24 May 1593) *HHStA Turcica* I. K 80. fol. 153^{r-v}

¹¹ For the battle of Sisek see the report of Eggenberg on 22 June, *HHStA Hungarica, Allgemeine Akten* (henceforth: *HHStA Hungarica*) Fasc. 124. No. 9. fol. 179^r–180^r; the report of Eggenberg on 24 June, *HHStA Hungarica* Fasc. 124. No. 10. fol. 184^r–186^v; the latter was published by A. Hügyecz, *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* (1894), 264–266; for an analysis of the battle cf. G. Gömöry, "A sziszeki csata 1593-ban." [The Battle of Sisek in 1593] *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 8 (1894), 613–634; P. Tomac, "La Bataille de Sisak (22 Juin 1593)." *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire* (1981), 279–282.

¹² For the divan, cf., the historical works of Peçevi and Kâtip Çelebi, their Hungarian translation, *Török történetírók III. (156–1659)* [Turkish Historians III. 1566–1659]. tr., I. Karácson, Budapest 1916, (henceforth: *TT III.*) 94–95. (Peçevi), 203–204. (Kâtip Çelebi); cf., the report of Kreckwitz (4 July 1593), *HHStA Turcica* K 81. fol. 7–10.

¹³ For the causes of the war in general cf. Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism*, 216–217; S. L. Tóth, "Szinán nagyvezér terve 1593–94-ben." [The Plans of Grand Vizier Sinan in 1593–94]. *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* New Series 29 (1982), 159–165.

¹⁴ For the importance of the denial of the taxes to Sipahis, cf., Bayerle, *Ottoman Diplomacy*, 11–12.

4. The dominant faction led by the ambitious Sinan yearning for military glory demanded war to revenge the defeat of Sisek and the delay in paying the tribute.

These causes may explain the goals followed by the Porte and its main representative, Sinan Pasha in this war. Sinan wanted to achieve these aims partly by campaigns and partly by policy using military pressure or menace as well. The Grand Vizier may have realised, that his ambitious plans needed more time, than just the late campaign of 1593, but he would probably have liked to finish a successful war by 1595, i.e. within three years and to avoid a long war.¹⁵ Since the main cause of the war may be considered the Hungarian "condominium", Sinan wanted to end this. The Grand Vizier told the English envoy, Edward Barton in July while preparing for the campaign of 1593, that "if the Emperor chose to surrender all his possessions in Hungary it would then be possible to treat of peace, and to allow him to enjoy the rest in quiet; but if he were to offer thirty tributes he would find a deaf ear turned to his proposals."¹⁶ Sinan's words show, that the Porte preferred the possession of Royal or Habsburg Hungary to payment of the tribute by the Habsburgs. According to a report on a military council held by Sinan at Eszék in September 1593, it was decided, that they would take over the whole territory and bring the Hungarian kingdom under the rule of the sultan.¹⁷ Later, in February 1594 Miklós Pálffy referred in his letter to the Turkish demand, that Emperor Rudolf should remove his hand from the Hungarians, i.e. to give up Hungary.¹⁸ Even in the Ottoman peace conditions of February 1595 conveyed by Sinanpasazáde Mehmed the main point was, that the Emperor should leave Hungary to the Ottomans.¹⁹ On the basis of these sources one may say, that the "minimal program" of Sinan was the conquest of Royal or Habsburg Hungary.²⁰

At the same time Sinan did not seem to be satisfied with just the possession of Hungary. As early as July 1593 he stated while conversing with the English am-

¹⁵ Sir Paul Rycout observed in the 17th century, that the Ottomans had an old tradition of waging war for no longer than three years, see L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*. New York 1961, 121; for its application to the Fifteen Years' War cf. Tóth, *Szinán nagyvezér*, 171–172.

¹⁶ H. F. Brown, ed. *Calendar of state papers and manuscripts relating to English affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of Northern Italy*. vol. IX. 1592–1603. London 1897, (henceforth: CSP IX.) 84. (Mattheo Zane, Venetian Ambassador in Constantinople to the Doge and Senate on 24 July 1593.)

¹⁷ The report from 13 September 1593. cf. *HHSIA Hungarica* Fasc. 124. fol. 90^{r-v}: "universam hanc provinciam [...] deleant, Regum Ungariae in potestatem Imperatoris eorum convertant."

¹⁸ For Pálffy's letter see P. Jedlicska, *Adatok Erdődy báró Pálffy Miklós a győri hősnék életrajza és korához 1552–1600*. [Data to the Life and Age of Nicholas Pálffy, the hero of Győr]. Eger 1897, 498–501. (No. 852/a)

¹⁹ The Ottoman conditions of peace were published by M. Ivanics, "Friedensangebot oder kriegerische erpressung? (Briefwechsel des Kaisers Rudolfs II. mit dem Pascha von Ofen im Jahre 1595)." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 82 (1992), 183–199.

²⁰ Cf., Tóth, *Szinán nagyvezér*, 167–168; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 130–131.

bassador, that "this war would not end in Hungary but would spread to Vienna, and he himself would not be satisfied till he had levelled the walls of Rome."²¹ At the council (divan) held on 4 July the Grand Vizier promised the capture of Emperor Rudolf, which could be realized just by conquering the new Habsburg capital, Prague.²² Sinan himself emphasized in a letter in August 1593, that he was marching against the German king and his country.²³ The Grand Vizier mentioned to the Transylvanian envoy in September 1593, that next spring he would attack Vienna and Prague.²⁴ Even Emperor Rudolf knew that Sinan wanted to occupy not only the remaining parts of the Hungarian and Austrian borders, but to attack the capital of Austria, the "door" of Germany, i. e. Vienna.²⁵ We have information, that after the capture of Győr (Raab) in 1594, Sinan planned to attack Vienna next year, 1595.²⁶ The occupation of the centres of the Habsburg Empire, namely Vienna and Prague may be regarded as the "maximal program" of Sinan.²⁷ Considering the distance of these cities from Istanbul these plans seems to be unrealistic. At the same time it is evident from the sources, that the Ottomans had certain important goals as they conquered new territories. The important targets of their expansion were sometimes called "red apples" (*kizil elma*), i. e. "golden apples". First Constantinople (before 1453), then Buda (before 1541) and later Vienna, Prague and Rome were considered "golden apples" by the Ottomans.²⁸ At the time of the Fifteen Years' War the former capital, Vienna was the seat of a Habsburg archduke (Ernest and from 1594 Matthias) directing the military affairs of Hungary as a substitute for the Emperor. The capital of the Czech Kingdom, Prague became the centre of the Habsburg Empire in 1578, when Emperor Rudolf moved his court there. While the invasion of the two centres of the Habsburg Empire can be considered an evident, although an overambitious plan,

²¹ CSP IX, 84. (24 July 1593.)

²² TT III, 194–195. (Peçevi)

²³ For Sinan's letter of 9 August 1593 to Ferenc Nádasdy cf., *Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár* [National Széchenyi Library] (Hungary, Budapest) *Litterae Turcicae*, Fol. Hung. 934. 21r–22r.

²⁴ *Baranyai Decsi János magyar históriája 1592–1598*. [The Hungarian history of János Baranyai Decsi] tr., P. Kulcsár, Budapest 1982, (henceforth: Baranyai Decsi) 101.

²⁵ For the letter of Rudolf to Philip II on 10 June 1594. see in: M. Hatvani, *Magyar történelmi okmánytár a brüsseli országos levéltárból és a burgundi könyvtárból*. [Hungarian Historical Documents Collected from the National Archive of Brussel and from the Library of Burgund] III. (1553–1608). Pest 1859, (henceforth: Hatvani 1859.) 54–58. "Seinen Intent und Anschlag nach die Haupt Statt unsers Erzherzogthums Österreich Wien (welchen der Sinan Bassa zwar nit unphillicher das Thor zum Teutschlandt nennt) übergwaltigen und seine Macht bekhomen möcht."

²⁶ Cf., M. Istvánffy, *Magyarország története 1490–1606*. [The History of Hungary 1490–1606]. tr., Gy. Vidovich, Debrecen 1868, 722; C. Woodhead, *Talikizade's sehname-i hümayun. A History of the Ottoman Campaign into Hungary 1593–1594*. Berlin 1983, 360–361, 364.

²⁷ Cf., Tóth, *Szinán nagyvezér, 167–168.*; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 130–131.

²⁸ For an analysis of "kizil elma" concept see P. Fodor, *Magyarország és a török hódítás*. [Hungary and the Ottoman Conquest] Budapest 1991, 121–159.

the attack on Rome seems quite absurd. Besides Sinan's statement to Barton, a report from the Porte also testifies, that the Grand Vizier's intention was to reach Rome with his campaign.²⁹ Rome was the symbolic centre of Christendom (*res publica Christiana*), the seat of Pope Clement VIII, who tried to organize a new crusade against the Ottomans. These factors explain the fantastic plan of Sinan. So it seems very probable, that both the total conquest of Hungary and the occupation of Vienna and Prague (and perhaps Rome) were planned by Grand Vizier Sinan.

Besides these general, rather unrealistic goals the Ottoman leadership had more realistic plans, which were related to the aforementioned general aims. At the beginning of each Ottoman campaign the Porte fixed the goals, i.e. the occupation of certain fortresses. Later, during the campaign the leader (*serdar*) of the campaign held a council, which approved of or modified the goal(s) of the campaign.³⁰ In case of the first campaign of the Fifteen Years' War, in 1593 Sinan Pasha was warned at the council of 4 July, that it was too late for a campaign.³¹ He was ordered by Sultan Murad III to make winter quarters in Belgrade in order to start the new campaign earlier the next year.³² It seems, that the concrete plan of the 1593 campaign was formed at the council (*divan*) held by Sinan on the borders of Ottoman Hungary, at Eszék. Formerly the Ottomans thought of three attacking armies: one led by Sinan against Eger (Erlau) in the north, another led by the Pasha of Buda (Ofen) against three smaller forts in the west (Veszprém, Palota and Tata), and a third led by the Pasha of Temesvár with the help of the vassal prince of Transylvania in the southwest.³³ The attack on Eger was postponed and Sinan decided to attack the three fortresses in the west (Transdanubian region) with the cooperation of the beglerbegs of Rumeli and Buda.³⁴ Two of these forts (Veszprém and Palota) were occupied in October 1593, but Sinan was forced to renounce the siege of the third fortress, Tata.

Next year, in 1594 the Porte at first again planned a divided action against Eger in the north and Győr in the west.³⁵ In the end the attack against Eger was

²⁹ See the letter of Gergely diák to Péter Huszár, *Hadtörténelmi Intézet Levéltára* [The Archive of the Military Institute] (Hungary, Budapest) *Török kori Iratok Gyűjteménye* [The Collection of Documents from the Ottoman Period] 1593/13.

³⁰ Cf. S. L. Tóth, "Török stratégia a tizenöt éves háborúban." [Ottoman Strategy in the Fifteen Years' War] *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Historica* 69 (1981), 38–39.

³¹ Cf., Kâtip Çelebi, in: TT III, 204.

³² Kâtip Çelebi, in: TT III, 203.

³³ See footnote 17. (the report of 13 September 1593)

³⁴ E.g. *HStA Hungarica* Fasc. 125. fol. 2r–3v (a report to Emperor Rudolf in September 1593) "Ir Intent vor andern ietzt auf Wesprim, Pallotha und Tottis gericht sei"; fol. 8r–9r (report of 29 September) "Tottis, Pallatta, und Wesprim belagern und einnahmen woltten".

³⁵ A. Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei si Tarii-Românești*. [Documents on the History of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia] vol. IV. (1593–1595).

not carried out and Sinan's later plans included just Tata and Győr (Yanik).³⁶ In addition to the occupation of these forts the Grand Vizier invaded Szentmárton, Pápa and unsuccessfully attacked the fortress of Komárom. Since the occupation of Vienna and Prague was the general aim of the Porte, it is understandable, that most of the Ottoman campaigns of the war were directed against the fortresses of western Transdanubia: 10 out of 13 in fact.³⁷ As mentioned above, Sinan wanted to attack Vienna in 1595, but because of the death of Sultan Murad III and the accession of Mehmed III and the revolt of the vassal states (Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia) this plan was postponed and the Ottomans merely tried to defend their Hungarian territories in 1595, while their main forces attacked in Wallachia.³⁸ Because of the defeats on both fronts (fall of Esztergom, defeat at Gyurgyevo), the next campaign in 1596 was led Sultan Mehmed III himself. It seems, that Grand Vizier Sinan planned the attack on Vienna again, but he died in April 1596, and his successor, Ibrahim led the army against Eger (Erlau), which was conquered (October 1596) and retained due to the Ottoman victory in the largest battle of the war at Mezőkeresztes (22–26 October 1596).³⁹ In the remaining, ten years of the war – apart from the Habsburg reconquest of Győr (1598) and the Ottoman occupation of Kanizsa (1600) and recapture of Esztergom (1605) – the situation did not change much. At the end of the war Grand Vizier Lala Mehmed planned again to march against Vienna in alliance with the leader of the Hungarian revolt against the Habsburgs, István Bocskai, but this was refused by Sultan Ahmed I and Bocskai alike.⁴⁰ So in practice Sinan's ambitious plans were not realized: the Ottomans were not able to conquer even Royal or Habsburg Hungary (just the fortresses of Eger and Kanizsa) let alone of Vienna and Prague.

The last question is, whether the Porte planned to annex Royal Hungary or to establish vassal state(s). It cannot be decided which option Sinan preferred, because both forms of conquest were suitable for him. This alternative was reflected in his policy. Hungary was offered in 1594 and 1595 to Sigismund Báthory, the

Bucuresti 1932, (henceforth: Veress 1932,) 51. (No. 33. – the report of Mihály Szegödi to Farkas Kovacsóczy, 6 February 1594)

³⁶ The council held at Cankurtaran decided to attack Tata, then Győr, cf. TT III, 221. (Kâtip Çelebi); besides Tata and Győr the fort of Komárom was also mentioned by Abdul-kadir Efendi, cf., M. Ivanics, *A Krími Kánság a tizenöt éves háborúban*. [The Khanate of Krim in the Fifteen Years' War] Budapest 1994, 65.

³⁷ S. L. Tóth, "A török haditevékenység akciórádusza a 15 éves háborúban." [The Actio Radius of the Ottoman Military Activity in the Fifteen Years' War] *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 32 (1985), 773.

³⁸ For the campaign of 1595 cf., J. Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*. Band 4. Graz 1963, 248–254; Parry, *The successors of Sulaiman*, 118–119; S. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. vol. I.: *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280–1808*. Cambridge 1976, 184–185; Tóth, *A mezőkeresztes csata*, 165–185.

³⁹ For the campaign of 1596 and the battle of Mezőkeresztes cf., Tóth, *A mezőkeresztes csata*, 186–262.

⁴⁰ See TT III, 189. (Peçevi); Hammer, *Geschichte*, 384–385.

vassal prince of Transylvania possibly in order to keep him the vassal of the sultan.⁴¹ However, the vassal status was reserved for those territories, which the Grand Vizier did not want to attack. These territories were north of the main routes of the Ottoman attack towards Vienna and included the Hungarian Highlands (north of the Danube) and the Czech (Bohemian) Kingdom. Sinan renewed the policy of Sultan Süleyman, at the beginning of the war (summer and autumn of 1593) some territories were offered to certain Hungarian lords, if they accepted the overlordship of the Sultan and paid tribute. One of these planned vassal states was the *principality (voivodate) of Kassa* named after the most important city of the region, the centre of a military district, the Highland border (oberungarische Grenze).⁴² It would have included the eastern parts of the Hungarian Highlands, northeast of the river Danube. The other planned vassal state was the Czech Kingdom. These territories with vassal status were offered to at least three Hungarian lords: Ferenc Nádasdy, István Báthory (of Ecsed) and Ferenc Dobó.⁴³ It seems, that it did not matter for the Ottomans, which of these lords accepted the offer and which of them ruled one or the other vassal state.⁴⁴ From the Ottoman point-of-view the important point was, if the Hungarians accepted the "offer of Sinan" it would have been possible to concentrate the military efforts solely on the transdanubian front and perhaps to march against Vienna.

In my opinion Sinan wanted to annex the western transdanubian parts of Royal Hungary, where he established three new provinces (vilayets) in 1594, namely Győr (Yanik), Pápa (Papa) and Szigetvár (Sigetvar).⁴⁵ With these new

⁴¹ According to a Venetian report of 25 October 1594 Grand Vizier Sinan offered Prince Sigismund of Báthory, to make him the king of Hungary, cf., E. Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*. vol. III/2. (1576–1600). [Documents on the History of the Rumanians] Bucuresci 1888, 55; a contemporary Transylvanian historian, István Szamosközy mentioned, that in 1595 the Sultan offered Hungary to Sigismund Báthory and to enthrone him in Buda, cf., *Szamosközy István történelmi maradványai*. [The Historical Heritage of István Szamosközy] 1542–1608. vol. IV. ed., S. Szilágyi, Budapest 1880, 51.

⁴² Kassa is today Kosice in Slovakia; for the system of military and provincial districts cf., G. Pálffy, "A török elleni védelem szervezetének története a kezdetektől a 18. század elejéig." [The History of the System of Defense against the Turks from the Beginnings to the 18th Century] *Történelmi Szemle* (1996/2–3), 163–214.

⁴³ In the letter of Hasan Pasha (beglerbeg of Temesvár) to István Báthori (4 September 1593) the voivodate of Kassa was offered, for the Latin and German version cf., *HHSIA Hungarica* Fasc. 124. fol. 52r–54r; it was published in Hungarian, see Veress 1932, 104–106.; the voivodate of Kassa was offered to Ferenc Dobó, and the Bohemian kingdom to István Báthori in the letter of Hasan Pasha to Ferenc Dobó (4 September 1593), for the Latin and German version cf., *HHSIA Hungarica* Fasc. 124. fol. 56r–58r; the Bohemian Kingdom was offered to Ferenc Nádasdy by Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha in his letter of 9 August 1593, see *Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár* (Budapest) *Litterae Turcica*, Fol. Hung. 934. 21r–22r

⁴⁴ Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata*, 132–134.

⁴⁵ For the establishment of these vilayets in 1594, cf., G. Dávid, *Török közigazgatás Magyarországon*. Akadémiai doktori értekezés [Ottoman Administration in Hungary. Aca-

provinces the Grand Vizier probably wanted to lay the basis for the conquest of Vienna the following year. At the same time, north of this new conquest he would have preferred two vassal states under the guidance of Hungarian lords (voivodate of Kassa, kingdom of Bohemia). The Ottoman concept of conquest accepted both direct annexation and the establishment of vassal states: the territories of both types were called vilayets. It was legalized by Muslim theory, since according to the accepted Hanafite theory the dar ül-ahd (territory of treaty), i. e. the vassal state formed part of the dar ül-Islam (territory of Islam), i.e. the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶ Consequently the plans of expansion would seem to have been the conquest of whole of Royal Hungary and perhaps the Habsburg Empire (represented by Vienna and Prague) either by way of military force (occupation of fortresses in Transdanubia and Austria and converting them into Ottoman provinces) or by the Habsburg emperor's renunciation of his territories and/or by the voluntary cooperation of some Hungarian lords accepting Ottoman suzerainty (vassal states in the northeastern region of the Habsburg Empire). These goals existed simultaneously and the Porte tried to accomodate itself to the always changing realities and military circumstances of the Fifteen Years' War.

demic dissertation] Budapest 1995, 153–155, 156, 280–282, 381, 400–404; S. L. Tóth: "Vilájetek a hódoltságban." [Vilájets in Ottoman Hungary] *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Historica* 109 (1999), 67–70.

⁴⁶ For these categories of Ottoman (Sunnite) law, cf. M. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*. Baltimore 1955, 52–53, 64, 141, 143–145, 155–156; Tóth, *Szinán nagyvezér*, 159–160.