

Ottoman Turkish Documents
About The History
of Hungary and the Hungarians:
17th - 19th century - Stoyan Shivarov, 2013.

Preface

This publication includes 25 comprehensive annotations of documents from archival fond 316 (Hungary) preserved in the ‘Oriental Collections’ Department of the ‘St. St. Cyril and Methodius’ National Library of Bulgaria. The collection consists of documents covering a wide array of topics and that span over a number of years. In the 316 (Hungary) archival fond the documents are mostly separate; as in many of them are single sheets though often semantic connections between them exist. *Hüccet*-s are particularly abundant. Still other types are also present: registers, requests and pleas, receipts, minutes, and sultans’ orders. With the notable exception of a single article by Boris Nedkov, these documents were in obscurity and completely outside the scope of researchers until now¹.

The annotations are ordered chronologically and this extends to single annotations where there are several documents with similar content grouped together. The earliest document is from 1658 while the latest is from 1861. One can easily see that there is a vast disproportion in the temporal distribution of the presented archival sources. 16 of the documents are from the 17th century and eight from the 19th century. There is only one *arzuhal* from the 17th century – a plea for an allowance from general *Çaki* (Csáky Mihály) at the time a supporter of the exiled Hungarian king Ferenc II Rákóczi. The documents from the 17th century are concentrated between 1658–1687, a period of merely 30 years and therefore represent only a fraction of this century. Still, these characterize the last years of Ottoman supremacy in Hungarian lands and understandably the main subjects documented are of a purely military nature: border fortresses, military supplies, payment for garrison troops, etc... The leading agenda of this time period was the struggle

¹ Employees of ‘Oriental Collections’ Department have published several articles on Ottoman Turkish documents related to Hungary from other archival fonds of Bulgarian National Library. See **Mravkova**, Maria, Bur, Márta. A Rákóczi emigráció Törökországban. – B: *Századok*, 1976, vol. 110, № 6, c. 1121–1130 and **Robev**, N., Sziljanova, E., Andreev, S. Bolgár Népköztársaság. Stefan Andrejev regesztáinak felhasználásával. – B: *Buda expugnata, 1686. Europa et Hungaria, 1683–1718: a török kiűzésének európai levéltári forrásai*. Budapest, 1986, c. 79–102

between the Ottomans and the Christian powers of the West led by the Habsburgs. This eventually culminated in a series of *hot conflicts* between 1663–1664 and especially in the 1683–1699 War of the Holy League. The latter put an end to Ottoman rule over Hungary for good. During roughly the same period another relatively large campaign took place. Despite the fact that the Polish-Ottoman war of 1672–1676 is not directly mentioned in any of the annotated documents, the presented materials are not enough to judge if or in what degree the Hungarian lands were collaterally affected. The annotations presented contain data not only on the supply and provisioning of military units and the maintenance of the fortification system, but could also be used as a foundation for socio-economical context of the age. The methods and scale of taxation, price of construction materials needed for the support and repair of defense fortifications and public buildings, transportation network, etc... are no less important than battlefield tactics. As a notable exception, some of the *hüccet*-s contain information on purely civic factors under Ottoman rule. This is especially valuable when compared with other sources from the same period.

With the exception of the last document, the documents from the 19th century deal with large scale emigration after the rout of the 1848 Springtime of the Peoples. More specifically it addresses the refuge which Lajos Kossuth and many of his supporters sought, and to some extent found, inside the Ottoman Empire. In August 1849 the leader of the Hungarian revolution together with his entourage arrived at the border of the Ottoman town of Vidin, where rebel generals Mészáros, Dembiński and Perczel had arrived just days earlier. Not long after that, survivors from the Polish and Italian legions also temporarily settled here. Other high ranking rebel officers, political leaders, and whole families, trying to escape from the reprisals of the reactionary regimes in Europe following the crumble of the popular uprisings, flocked to seek refuge in the oriental empire. Part of the emigrants converted to Islam, acquired new Muslim names and immediately gained a place in the Ottoman army. Some of those who resisted such proselytic aspirations were removed by the Ottoman government to the town of Şumnu (present day Shumen); a short distance from the border of the Austrian Empire. After several months the emigrant leaders were deported again, this time to Kütahya in Asia Minor. All these events are presented in the annotated documents, although they are registered with the dry neutral tongue of the Ottoman administrative machine. The facts recorded

here could be useful for verification and give further insight into the already available accounts and memoirs of prominent emigrants. Four of the documents mentioned above attracted the attention of the leading Bulgarian orientalist Boris Nedkov who in 1955 published their translation alongside facsimile copies. An important addition of the current work to B. Nedkov's article is the correct reading of the personal names of emigrant leaders of different nationalities.

The structure of the annotations presented is fairly standard. As was previously stated the main criteria is chronological. Without exception all the documents have been dated. The date is presented with both the corresponding Gregorian calendar date and with the original Hijri one. Documents 316/19/4, 5, 6 – are notable exceptions as these are written in German, Italian and Hungarian respectively and the original dates are based on the Gregorian calendar. The Ottoman Solar calendar, *Rumi*, is used only for document number 20. There are also several cases when a time interval, an *evahir* or *evasit*, instead of an exact date is used. It was deemed better to represent an interval with an exact numerical value.

The type of document, author, and recipient are defined at the beginning of the actual text of each annotation. Characteristic attributes particular to a certain type of administrative document are not specifically mentioned. In other words all the *hüccet*-s contain the signature of a *kadı*. The presence of administrative or personal stamps and watermarks is noted in the keywords and in the index, but no further commentaries on these subjects are given as they fall within the scope of Sphragistics and Filigranology. Special attention was put on an accurate reading of the proper names, Muslim or otherwise. The latter include mainly ones of Hungarian origin, but also Polish, Serbian, Bulgarian, etc... Proper reading and identification of the names of various functionaries of the Ottoman state, historical figures, high-profile people of different nationalities, as well as ordinary *raya*, is considered crucial during the preparation of the current work. The lack of patronyms in the sense of a hereditary family name is one of the characteristics of Muslim names. There is often only the first name of a person mentioned in the document. In the presented annotations, when an alias or occupational name is found in the original text, it is accepted as an integral part of the name (i.e. *Mehmed Çavuş* or *Hasan Beşe*). In case of other attributes such as *el-hac* or *el-seyyid* these are not accepted as an integral part of the given name. When the father of a person is designated as a part of the given name it is translated (i.e., *bin* and *ibn* as *son of*).

All the anthroponyms, toponyms, and keywords are included as an alphabetically sorted index after the main text body. The proper names of historical figures are presented as close as possible to their native script. The Modified Latin alphabet was used for the Hungarian and Polish names and even the Greek alphabet in the case of the Wallachian voivodes. This approach aims to provide the researcher with a way to circumvent traditional problems with various transcription and transliteration of foreign names. This is especially true for the Hungarian names. In the index these are written using the Hungarian name order (i.e. Kapner Ferenc, not Ferenc Kapner or Kapner, Ferenc). Where there was doubt about the correct reading of a name or term this was noted using a question mark.

Great care was taken with the proper and correct spelling and localization of populated places. In the text of annotations all these have been written as close to the Ottoman Turkish pronunciation as possible; while in the keywords and in the index the contemporary place names are also noted. In case there are different or alternative names for a single settlement the contemporary administrative name in the country it is situated is being used. Unofficial, but otherwise popular names in other languages are also shown, i.e. for the important fortress of Uyvar there is the contemporary formal Hungarian Érsekújvár, the historical name Újvár, but also the Slovak Nové Zámky. When using different languages these are indicated with three letter codes according to the ISO 639-3 standard. It was deemed unnecessary to explicitly show the exact location of well known settlements at least the size of a town that still exist today. For smaller populated places or localities geographic coordinates are presented, thus avoiding confusion between villages with similar names. The coordinates are presented in WGS-84 with a decimal accuracy of four places.

The presence of a considerable amount of specific terms led to the addition of a short glossary, that allows the current work to be accessible to researchers from all fields. The terms are not presented with their full range of meanings and development through the centuries, instead the focus is on the single exact meaning according to the presented documents.

The addition of facsimile copies, ordered according to the number of the corresponding annotation allows specialists to acquire even better information on the paleography and linguistic varieties of the original Ottoman Turkish text. Copies of the documents are also available in the Digital library at the website of 'St. St. Cyril and Methodius' National Library of Bulgaria.