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Madjaristan: The Ottomans in Hungary 1520-1686

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The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe has traditionally been viewed in terms of conflict. History books are full of accounts of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and of Constantinople, as well as the conquest of Hungary and the ensuing conflict with the Habsburg Empire, which would stretch into the twentieth century. When the topic turns to questions outside the realm of warfare, however, things become murkier. While the many wars—as well as the occasional bout of peace—between the Ottomans and the West are focused on in detail, the role of the Ottomans in Europe outside of war is often seen in much broader terms. Often the focus is on Turkish attitudes towards their Christian subjects, with a special focus on the Turkish practice of enslaving Christian children for military service. In reality, the relationship between the Ottomans and the Christian peasantry they ruled was much more complex. The intricacies of this relationship, however, are often lost behind the politics and war, which dominated Turkish-European relations.

When the topic of the Ottoman occupation of Hungary is brought up, the facts become even more vague. The Turks ruled the Balkans for five hundred years, so it is really impossible to ignore the profound impact they had on the societies living there. Modern historians, however, often view the occupation of Hungary, almost totally within the context of the wars and political machinations between Istanbul and Vienna. The Ottomans ruled a majority of Hungary, however, for almost 150 years, and during that time neither the Turks nor their Hungarian subjects were standing around waiting for the Austrians to get around to reconquering the kingdom. The Turkish occupation initiated a period of great change for the kingdom of Hungary. In the space of fifty years the Ottoman Empire conquered and annexed one of the greatest kingdoms in Europe.

Furthermore, the Ottoman's did not intend for Hungary to merely be a buffer area between them and Austria. Instead they wanted it to become a functioning province of their empire, and in attempting to do this Hungary came to be Islamified in a way not seen in the heart of Europe since the Spanish Conquest eight centuries earlier.

This was a dynamic time for both the Ottomans—who both reached the zenith of their power in Hungary and began their precipitous decline there—and the Hungarians—who found themselves conquered by a foreign power and their homes turned into battlefields. The Ottomans reached their greatest power and entered into a slow decline that would continue into the twentieth century. For the Hungarians the Ottoman conquest signaled the loss of independence. The struggle of the Hungarians to reestablish their own independent Kingdom would dominate the history of Hungary up into this century.

The Fall of the Kingdom of Hungary

The Ottoman conquest of Hungary is remarkable in that it would have been unthinkable fifty years earlier. In the latter third of the Fifteenth Century, Hungary had emerged as one of the great powers of Europe. Under the kingship of John Hunyadi and his son Matthias Corvinus Hungary emerged from the Middle Ages to become a major force in the Central European Renaissance. These two kings had centralized the traditionally fractured internal politics of their kingdom. This had allowed Hungary's economy to strengthen and the people prosper by lessening the threat of both external invasion and internal strife. By the latter part of Matthias Corvinus' reign, Hungary was strong enough to provide its king with the power base to stand for the title of Holy

Roman Emperor against the power of the Habsburg family. The capital city of Buda was becoming one of the major cities in Central Europe, and despite lacking both a university and a bishopric it came to rival some of the Imperial Free Cities through the patronage of the Hungarian Royal Family.[1]

During this period of unprecedented strength for the Kingdom of Hungary, however, the threat of Ottoman invasion was always present. Matthias Corvinus built a strong standing army— known as the "Black Army"—to defend against the Turkish threat. This mercenary army was, however, extremely expensive to keep in the field, and king Matthias had to levy a high and unpopular poll tax on his subjects to pay for it. Even this modern, expensive, standing army could only accomplish so much against the rising Ottoman threat. After a war against the Turks in 1476, King Matthias came to realize that no matter how strong, Hungary would never be able to mount any significant offensive campaign against the Ottoman Empire. Instead, he chose to concentrate his resources towards building a solid defensive line of fortresses, and with maintaining peace with the Ottomans whenever possible.[2]

Why in 1521, less than fifty years after the reign of Matthias Corvinus, did the Ottomans choose to attack Hungary, a strong nation on the rise in Europe, and which posed no immediate threat to the Ottoman holdings in the Balkans? By 1521, when the Ottomans began their conquest with the capture of Belgrade, Hungary was a shadow of its former self. Two weak monarchs, Wladislas II and Louis II had succeeded Matthias Corvinus. Neither of these kings could unify the various factions among the Hungarian

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[1] Domonkos, Leslie: The Battle of Mohacs, as a Cultural Watershed. *From Hunyadi to Rakoczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Edited by Janos M. Bak and Bela K. Király. Brooklyn College Press: New York. 1982: 203

magnates the way their predecessors did, and as a consequence Hungary swiftly declined in strength. The unity of the Hungarian Kingdom, which Hunyadi and Corvinus had worked so hard to forge, proved too fragile to survive their deaths. The leadership of the kingdom quickly broke up into three main groups—the royal faction, the magnates, and the lower nobility and urban bourgeoisie.[3] None of these factions could gain the upper hand, however, so the Kingdom of Hungary soon returned to the divisive internal squabbling, which had plagued it before the reign of John Hunyadi.

In an effort to curry favor with the great magnates, Wladislas did away with the unpopular taxes that paid for the Black Army, and consequently had to disband the force. In its place he shifted the burden for defending Hungary onto the *bandaria*, or feudal levies. These levies, based around individual magnates' private forces, were often poorly trained and very hard to mobilize. Only a very small force of mercenaries, which numbered less than 7,000 backed up the *bandaria*.[4] By the year 1518, the deficiencies of these defenses were clear to the Hungarians, and they concluded a peace treaty with the Sultan Selim I.

A weakened Hungary posed even less of a threat to the Ottomans than it had under Matthias Corvinus, so why did they choose to invade such a large and distant territory? The traditional answer is that King Louis II insulted the sultan Süleyman II—known generally as Süleyman the Magnificent—soon after the latter came to the throne. This insult arose when Süleyman sent an emissary to Louis to affirm the peace treaty that Selim I had signed two years earlier. Instead of receiving this emissary as an honored

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[2] Kubinyi, Andras: The Road to Defeat: Hungarian Politics and Defeat in the Jagiellonian Period. *From Hunyadi to Rakoczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Edited by Janos M. Bak and Bela K. Király. Brooklyn College Press: New York. 1982: 160

[3] IBID 172

guest, Louis and his court went out of their way to humiliate the messenger, and sent him back to Süleyman without renewing the treaty. The story goes that Süleyman was so enraged by these actions that he immediately prepared to launch his campaign against Belgrade and the other fortresses along Hungary's southern border.[5] While this story makes a nice tale, there is more behind Süleyman's decision to invade than a mistreated ambassador.

The invasion of Hungary, in fact, marked a major turning point in Ottoman expansion, and took more than an insulted ambassador to cause Süleyman to set the Ottoman Empire in this new direction. Since the capture of Constantinople in 1457 the Ottoman Empire had focused on naval superiority in the Eastern Mediterranean, not on land conquests. The Turkish navy became the dominant power in the Mediterranean, with all the economic and military benefits that that entailed. By the end of Selim I's reign, however, forces within the empire pushed the Ottomans towards a policy of territorial conquests. The need to provide new land for the Sipahi Class within the Empire played a major role in this. The Sipahis were a group of landed gentry roughly equivalent to European nobility, except that they did not hold their land directly but only through a grant from the Sultan. Like the European nobility, however, they made up the cavalry of the Ottoman armies, and formed one of the pillars of Turkish strength. Sipahis did not inherit their land from their fathers; instead each Sipahi son had to earn his own land by somehow proving himself to the Sultan. In addition to the Sipahis, by this time many imperial civilian bureaucrats and military officers expected similar grants of land as a reward for their services. This demand for land resulted in pressure for the Empire to

[4] The actual figure for the year 1515, as given in Kubinyi 169, are 1,657 horse and 770 foot on the Croatian border and 3,590 horse, 400 foot, and 1,100 Danubian boatmen along the Ottoman border.

expand its borders and open up new areas for the Sultan to give to those demanding land.[6]

The Janissary Corps made up another major force pushing for renewed land conquests. This group of highly trained professional slave-soldiers had become the backbone of the Ottoman military, but this military excellence caused certain problems. When not actually at war, the Janissaries had a tendency to revolt, or at least cause havoc in the cities where they were stationed.[7] To prevent outbursts like these the Sultans kept the Janissaries occupied fighting wars on the frontier.

While these general forces were pushing the Ottoman Empire towards military conquests, one of the major reasons that Hungary became its first major target was that it stood in the way of further Ottoman conquests in Europe. Sultan Mehmet II had conquered Constantinople in 1457 and won for himself eternal fame. To a young, ambitious sultan like Süleyman the next great target for conquest was the city of Vienna, and Hungary stood in his way.[8] Previously, Hungary stood as a strong bulwark against further Turkish advances into Europe, but by the beginning of the Sixteenth Century it was very weak, and Süleyman knew this. The poor treatment of his envoy by King Louis II served as a perfect excuse to begin a war that would lead to his conquest of the greatest city in Central Europe, Vienna.[9]

Sultan Süleyman's campaigns against Hungary went spectacularly well, and perhaps the Ottomans ended up suffering from too much success. In 1521 the Ottomans launched their first major campaign, which resulted in the capture of Belgrade, the key to

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[5] IBID 171

[6] Fodor, Pál: Ottoman Policy Towards Hungary, 1520-1541. *Acta Orentalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* Tomus XLV (2-3), 271-345 (1991). 282

[7] IBID

Hungary's southern defenses. The Sultan's armies achieved this unprecedented success, unthinkable just a few years earlier, because of the divisions within the Hungarian Kingdom. With no one person willing or able to step forward to lead the defense against the Turks, and not nearly enough money available to pay for an adequate mercenary army along the lines of the Black Army, the Hungarian defenses suffered greatly. The defeat at Belgrade threw the kingdom into chaos and laid it open to an Ottoman advance.

Hungary gained a temporary reprieve when the Ottomans turned their attention towards campaigns against Egypt, Persia, and the island of Rhodes. In the spring of 1526 Süleyman again mounted an expedition against Hungary. The Sultan planned to capture the Hungarian fortresses along the Drava and Danube rivers and to annihilate the Hungarian army, severely weakening Hungary's position in regards to the Ottomans forcing King Louis II into some form of vassalage to the Ottomans, along the lines of Walachia and Moldavia.[10] Süleyman wanted to make Hungary secure for a Turkish army to march through on its way to Vienna.

The Kingdom of Hungary, however, did not become a vassal state of the Ottomans. Instead, the kingdom descended into a state of disorder that made it impossible for the Ottomans to deal with it at all. This happened because the Ottoman army was so strong, and the Hungarian forces so disorganized, that their defeat proved far more decisive than the Ottomans intended. The Turks captured the Drava River without any fight, and at the battle of Mohács so thoroughly defeated the Hungarians that the kingdom itself disintegrated. A large chuck of the nobility and the ecclesiastical

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[8] IBID 271
[9] IBID

hierarchy died as well as King Louis himself. Süleyman succeeded in capturing the territory he wanted and in crushing the Hungarian army, but when this was done, no one remained to surrender.[11]

The Surviving Hungarian nobles divided into two factions after the battle of Mohács, with each side nominating their own candidate to succeed Louis as King of Hungary. One side chose John Zapolyai—Voyvod of Transylvania and the most prominent surviving Hungarian—as king, and the other chose Duke Ferdinand Habsburg of Austria. The two factions refused to find a compromise, and a fifteen-year period of civil war began control of the Kingdom of Hungary. Sultan Süleyman opposed Ferdinand becoming king, because that would bring the Habsburg Empire right to his doorstep. Instead, the Ottomans gave significant support to John Zapolyai, who while being anti-Turk had no choice but to accept any help he could get against the much more powerful Ferdinand. Twice the Ottomans marched against Ferdinand in support of John, in 1529 and 1532, and in 1529 John gave them the opportunity to besiege Vienna. While the Austrians just barely beat back the Ottomans, John became the status of Turkish vassal.[12]

At this point Süleyman had what he wanted. He turned Hungary into an allied buffer state, and opened the way for further campaigns against the Habsburgs, but events forced the Ottomans to take a more active role in Hungary. John Zapolyai had formed a secret agreement with Ferdinand that he would have no children, and when he died

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[10] Alföldi, László M.: The Battle of Mohacs, 1526. *From Hunyadi to Rakoczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Edited by Janos M. Bak and Bela K. Király. Brooklyn College Pres: New York. 1982: 192

[11] Bayerle, Gustav [1]: One Hundred Fifty Years of Frontier Life in Hungary. *From Hunyadi to Rakoczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Edited by Janos M. Bak and Bela K. Király. Brooklyn College Pres: New York. 1982: 227

[12] Domonkos 213

Ferdinand would become sole claimant to the Hungarian throne. Just before he died, however, John did father a son, and a Zapolyai faction remained. The Ottomans saw how precarious this faction was, however, with an infant as their leader and Ferdinand looking to seize all of Hungary. Therefore, in 1541 the Ottomans again invaded Hungary, ostensibly to support the infant king John II, but in reality to stabilize a situation that they saw as far too unstable for their comfort.[13]

This time, when they seized the capital city of Buda—which they had temporarily held three previous times—they stayed. "King" John II was soon sent east, where he was crowned Prince of Transylvania, and the Ottomans took over direct control of most of Hungary, leaving Transylvania as a client state under Ottoman supervision. Süleyman decided that it would be better to annex Southern and Central Hungary directly into the Ottoman Empire rather than rely on any local proxies, and therefore set out to sweep away the old Kingdom of Hungary and replace it with several new Ottoman provinces collectively known as Madjaristān. The Turks converted major cities of the Kingdom, which had been mostly German and Hungarian in makeup, into Muslim centers of administration. The Ottomans forced local German and Hungarian merchants and craftsmen to totally evacuate these cities, or at best forced them to live on the fringes of them, beyond the city walls. Outside of the cities the Hungarian nobility fled north to Austrian controlled territory. The few who tried to remain did not fair well, and soon faded into the masses of displaced Hungarian peasants within Ottoman territory. In this fashion what had been the Kingdom of Hungary quickly became another province in the Ottoman Empire.

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[13] Szakály, Ferenc: The Early Ottoman Period Including Royal Hungary 1526-1606. *A History of Hungary*. Edited by Peter F. Sugar. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. 1990: 85

An Austrian army attacked Buda next year, but could not drive the Ottomans out of Hungary. The Ottomans themselves, however, had stretched their military to its limit just occupying central and southern Hungary, and could not capture the northern part of the country controlled by Ferdinand.[14] In the end, in 1547 Sultan Süleyman and Emperor Charles V signed an armistice, which recognized Turkish control over Hungary, and forced the Austrians to pay an annual tribute to the Ottomans as payment for the sliver of Hungary under Austrian control. For the next 150 years Hungary would be divided into three parts: A small area in the north was under Austrian control, Transylvania was an vassal state of the Ottomans, and central and southern Hungary—the vast majority of the historical Hungarian kingdom—was annexed directly into the Ottoman Empire.[15]

Just because the Habsburg Empire recognized the reality of Ottoman control of most of Hungary did not mean they accepted the situation as permanent. Duke Ferdinand realized the vulnerability of Vienna, now that no major fortresses stood between it and Buda. Consequently he turned the section of Hungary under his control into a heavily armed buffer state. The Hungarian nobles, most of who now lived in Austrian Hungary, were converted from a medieval-style heavy cavalry into a more mobile light cavalry along the lines of the Ottoman *ghazi* raiders.[16] The area between Vienna and Buda quickly became a no-mans land, as these Hungarian raiders and their Ottoman counterparts continually fought with each other, ignoring any truces between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. In addition to these constant border skirmishes, several large-scale wars erupted between the Turks and the Austrians, which transformed

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[14] Sugar, Peter F.: South Eastern Europe Under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804. University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1977: 70

[15] Szakály 86

[16] Bayerle [1] 231

Hungary into a permanent battlefield for the Austrians and the Ottomans for the next 150 years.

The Ottoman Administration of Madjaristān

Collectively, The Ottomans referred to their Hungarian territories as Madjaristān, but for the purposes of administration Sultan Süleyman divided Hungary into two *vilayets*—or provinces—Buda and Temesvár.[17] Later, after the Ottomans captured some more territory in the early seventeenth century, they created two small *vilayets* were created: Eger and Kanizsa. Buda was by far the largest of these, stretching from Buda in the north as far south as Belgrade, and was itself divided into twelve *sanjaks*. A Pasha governed each *vilayet*, with the Pasha of Buda being the overall ruler of Madjaristān. The Ottomans built the governmental structure of Madjaristān on a military model. At the top was the Pasha, below him were the twelve Beys, one for each *sanjak*. Finally, on the local level, the Ottomans ruled through the Sipahis.[18]

The central Turkish government set up the provinces of Madjaristān as *timar* provinces. This meant that all of the land officially belonged to the Sultan in Istanbul, who only loaned it to the local Ottomans on a temporary basis. All of the income from these land grants went directly to the grant holder, without anything being paid to the central government. In return, the local Ottomans were expected to pay for a significant portion of their defense out of their own pockets. The civil administrators of Madjaristān

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[17] Madjaristān. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*. Compiled by J. van Lent; Edited by P.J. Bearman. E.J. Brill: New York, 1995: 1010

[18] Sugar 42

received their pay through income set aside specifically for that purpose.[19] The Ottomans conducted a very detailed census survey to determine how the land would be allotted. This survey not only noted how many people lived where, but how much in tax revenue each town and village could be expected to produce, as well as how much taxable trade took place across the provinces.[20] The Ottomans first conducted this survey soon after their annexation of Hungary in 1541, and updated it regularly, as needed, to maintain an accurate estimate of the value of each village and farm.

The Ottomans used this census information to divide the land between all the various groups who wanted a piece of the income from the new provinces. The most profitable lands, as well as all of the major urban centers of Madjaristān, became *khass* estates. The Sultan held most of these directly, and their income went straight to Istanbul. The rest of the *khass* estates paid the salaries of the local Pashas and Beys, and were called *sanjakbeg khasses*. The Ottomans designated about twenty per cent of Madjaristān as some form of a *khass* estate. Another ten per cent of the provinces became *zi'amets*. The Sultan gave these estates, with total revenues of between 20,000 and 100,000 *aqče* per year, as rewards to high-ranking administrators and generals.

While the *zi'amets* supported some of the most powerful people in Madjaristān, the majority of the land—some forty per cent—supported the backbone of the Ottoman presence there: the Sipahis. These people, who were the traditional land holding class among the Ottomans, and formed the cavalry wing of the imperial army, received small estates across the whole of Madjaristān. These *timar* estates, with yearly incomes

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[19] Shaw, Stanford: History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. *Volume I: Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808*. Cambridge University Press: London, 1976: 122

between 2,000 and 20,000 *aqče* were often little more than one or two agricultural villages. From this revenue a Sipahi not only supported himself, but also a number of soldiers ready to accompany him into battle. It is important to realize, however, that the *zi'amets* and *timars* differed fundamentally from the estates held by the Hungarian nobility. The Ottoman Sipahis and Zaims did not have any actual title to the lands they controlled. The Sultan had merely granted them the right to collect the revenue from these estates. The Sultan reserved the right to change who held what estates at any time, and in fact did so very often. This system resulted in a very different style of government from that demonstrated by the previous Hungarian rulers. The Sipahis and Zaims—those who held *zi'amet* estates—saw their land as nothing more than a revenue source, which could be taken away at any time and could not be passed on to their sons. Because of this, the local Ottoman rulers were much more focused on short-term profits than their Hungarian predecessors had been.[21]

The remaining thirty per cent of the land in the Ottoman provinces supported troops and fortifications, sustained *wakf* endowments, or provided funds for other miscellaneous purposes.[22] By the 1550s, after the Ottomans had been in control about ten years, this system of land holding had almost completely replaced the older Hungarian system.[23]

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[20] Káldy-Nagy [1], J.: The Administration of the Sanjaq Registrations in Hungary. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* Tomus XXI, 181-223 (1968): 183

[21] Káldy-Nagy [1] 183

[22] For information on the percentage breakdown of the land, see 11—38, and for information on the general revenue of the different estates, see Bayerle, Gustav [2]: Ottoman Tributes in Hungary. Mouton: The Hague, 1973: 13

[23] Bayerle, Gustav [3]: The Kânûn-Nâme of the *Sanjak* of Segedîn of 1570. *Archivum Ottomanicum* [Germany] 13 (1993-94): 55

To the Hungarian peasantry, the Ottoman property financial and administrative systems—based on Islamic Sha'ria Law—appeared completely foreign.[24] The Ottomans sought to impose this new system, rather than adapt the indigenous Hungarian laws, because they hoped to integrate Madjaristān into the Ottoman Empire by Turkifying the provinces' laws and practices.[25] Initially the Turks put off any attempts to impose Ottoman laws on Madjaristān in the hopes that it could be done after they conquered Vienna.[26] The Ottomans hoped that Vienna would fall quickly, and that they could integrate the Hungarian provinces into the empire while in a relative state of peace. After the first siege of Vienna, however, it became apparent to the Sultan Süleyman that the Austrians would not be defeated any time soon, and therefore he began the process of integrating Madjaristān by annexing it in 1541.

Ottoman power was represented in Madjaristān through two main branches of power. The military/ bureaucratic element represented by the Pasha of Buda and the various Sipahi families below him made up the primary branch. Within the Ottoman bureaucracy the office of Pasha of Buda was considered a very prestigious one to hold because the distance between Buda and Istanbul meant that the Pasha could exercise quite a bit of personal power. Because of this, many leading men in the empire became Pasha of Buda.[27] Also because of the power of the post, the Sultans made sure to appoint new Pashas every few years, to keep one person from accumulating too much of a base of

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[24] Káldy-Nagy [1] 182
[25] IBID
[26] Fodor 272
[27] Budun. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition.* compiled by J. van Lent; edited by P.J. Bearman. E.J. Brill: New York, 1995: 1285

support in Madjaristān. Over the 145-year life of the *vilayet* of Buda, seventy-five different people held the office of Pasha, some several times.[28]

While the Pasha of Buda represented the Sultan in Madjaristān, the Sipahis—who made up the local ruling class across the countryside—represented the Sultan to the local Hungarians. Ideally, the Ottomans hoped that the Sipahis would act as an integrating force that would help bring rural Madjaristān into the Ottoman Empire proper. By tying them to the land through their *timars* the Sipahis would get to know the region and become responsible local representatives of the Sultan. This ideal situation did not become the norm, and in the end the Sipahis did little to help integrate their *timars* into the empire. The Sipahis, for a number of reasons, never made any serious attempts to become more than foreign conquerors to their new Hungarian subjects. They generally did not learn Hungarian, and many never even visited their estates in person, choosing to instead communicate with them solely through writing.[29] Very few of the Sipahis actually lived on their estates with their subjects. Instead, most lived in fortified, totally Islamic towns for security. They only ventured out to their lands when it was time to collect tithes. Because they did not live on their estates, the Sipahis failed to fill the void left by the departed Hungarian nobles in regulating the daily lives of the Hungarian peasantry. The old Hungarian lords had acted as judges and arbiters for their peasants, and through this had had a connection to their lands that went beyond profits and losses. The Sipahis, perhaps because of the constant threat of transfer to a different *timar*,

[28] IBID
[29] Bayerle, Gustav [1] 232

remained almost totally focused on gaining as much profit from their land as quickly as they could, without regards to the livelihood of their peasants.[30]

Alongside the Pasha of Buda and Sipahis in Madjaristān, the Mufti of Buda and the Qadis below him represented the religious and judicial elements of the Ottoman Empire. The Mufti and the Qadis presided over the enforcement of the Sha'ria law in Madjaristān. The Mufti of Buda's court became the court of last appeal, not only for the local Muslims, but also for the Catholic Hungarians because of this, the Muftis had to be familiar not only with Islamic law but with the Christian laws that governed most of the Hungarians.[31] This knowledge of Christian laws made the Mufti a key player in the constant diplomatic negotiations between the Ottomans and the Austrians.[32] Because of this, the Mufti of Buda became one of the most powerful officials in Ottoman Hungary. The Qadis represented Ottoman law and order on the local level. Every city and town where Muslims lived had a Qadi who served as the judge for both the Muslim and Christian communities.

Neither of these two branches of Ottoman power succeeded in integrating effectively Madjaristān into the empire because they could not effectively consolidate local power. The Hungarian nobility had fled to Austrian Hungary almost to a man, but they had not stopped taking an active interest in the estates they abandoned. Through agents and occasional personal visits across the border, Hungarian nobles continued to exercise a significant amount of power on their former estates in the form of continued

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[30] IBID 233

[31] Ágoston, Gábor: Muslim Cultural Enclaves in Hungary Under Ottoman Rule. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* Tomus XLV (2-3), 181-204 (1991): 194

[32] IBID 195

feudal privileges.[33] They never allowed the Ottoman Sipahis who replaced them to become the sole source of authority. Even though the Hungarian nobles were in exile, they stayed in contact with their former estates through agents and occasional direct visits in conjunction with raids. While the Ottomans ruled the daily lives of the peasantry, the Hungarian nobility remained a constant presence in the peasants' lives. Eventually, as the Ottoman power weakened, the exiled nobility forced their peasants to choose between following their exiled hereditary lord and their appointed Ottoman ruler; generally the peasants sided with the exiled noble. Also, unlike the Balkans, nearly all of the Hungarians under Muslim rule remained Christian. The widespread conversions that helped weld Balkan society to the Islamic society of the Ottoman Empire never took place. Consequently, Sha'ria law and the Qadis never penetrated into Hungarian life outside of the few cities where Muslims and Christians lived together.[34]

In effect, the Muslim rulers of Madjaristān isolated themselves in their own towns and fortresses, while the countryside got caught in a state of limbo, with the occupying Ottomans and the exiled Hungarian nobles both vying for control. This contest played itself out politically, economically, and militarily between the two sides, and would be one of the dominating factors in determining who would ultimately control the nation of Hungary. The Ottomans inability to secure the countryside kept Madjaristān a large border region, and eventually this resulted in the Ottomans retreat from their westernmost provinces.

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[33] IBID 181

Taxation

While the Ottomans and the Austrians played power politics and fought wars to see who would control the fate of Hungary, they did not have to live in the territory they fought over. While the Sultans in Istanbul and the Emperors in Vienna fought and maneuvered the Hungarian peasants had to live in a land that had been turned into a battlefield. Hungarians in Ottoman Hungary faced the additional burden of adjusting to completely new rulers. While in the cities the Ottomans made their presence felt in many ways, in rural Madjaristān—aside from the occasional army on the march—the Ottomans entered into the Hungarian peasant's life through taxation more than anything else.

Soon after the conquest of a new territory the Ottomans conducted a detailed tax survey to determine where the revenue sources were in their new province, and to assign these revenue sources to various deserving soldiers and administrators.[35] The Ottomans did this in Madjaristān within a decade of the establishment of the *vilayet* of Buda. The Ottoman based their tax system in Madjaristān on the number of taxable residents in a village rather than on the total productivity of that village.[36] A poll tax—where all non-Muslims who owned over 300 *aqčes*[37] of property had to pay a tithe—made up the bulk of the income to the Ottoman treasury. By the end of the sixteenth century, about sixty per cent of the peasants of Madjaristān owned enough property to have to pay this poll

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[34] Bayerle [1] 233
[35] Bayerle [2] 14
[36] Káldy-Nagy [1]192
[37] The *aqče* was the standard coin of the Ottoman empire at this time. One *aqče* was roughly equal to fifty Hungarian *forint*s by metal weight. By the seventeenth century the *aqče* had been devalued several times and was worth significantly less.

tax.[38] Each of these taxable families also had to pay a property tax of twenty-five *aqčes* on each door to each building they owned.[39]

While these two taxes represented the most standard across Madjaristān—individual landlords had little discretion in raising or lowering them—the taxes on agricultural produce, while generally less severe than the poll and property taxes, could be the most oppressive to the peasants. The peasants had to pay these taxes in-kind, and when income from the poll and property taxes decreased these would often go up to compensate. Generally, peasants turned over 1/30 of the total crop to their landlord, but this could go as high as 1/10 when the landlord tried to squeeze as much out of their land as possible.[40] In addition to these taxes, the Ottomans assessed taxes on everything from firewood to candles, and on sheep and pigs, and amount of land used as pasture. Individual families paid all of these taxes, not whole villages or individuals, and the Ottomans collected payment in kind, not in cash.[41] The Ottomans also maintained the old Church tithe of ten per cent of total agricultural output as another tax due to them from the peasantry, except now the tithe went to the Ottoman treasury in Buda rather than to the Catholic Church.[42] Also, those who had not paid taxed under the Hungarians—such as priests and laborers working for the military—remained untaxed under the Ottomans.[43]

While these taxes could be burdensome to the peasants, they actually paid somewhat less than they had paid under their old Hungarian nobles. The Ottomans also did not impose work-levees on the peasants to the degree that the Hungarian magnates had. Unlike the Hungarian nobles, the Ottomans did not consider the Hungarian peasants

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[38] Bayerle [2] 20
[39] Káldy-Nagy [1] 194
[40] IBID 199
[41] Bayerle [2] 22

serfs, and under the Ottomans peasants had limited rights to their land, such as the ability to pass it on to their heirs.[44] What the Ottoman landlords made up in even lighter taxation and limited freedoms, however, they squandered in shortsightedness. As has been said before, the Sipahis, who made up the majority of landlords in Madjaristān, could not pass on their land to their sons. Furthermore, the Sultans and Pashas often shifted the Sipahis from *timar* to *timar* every few years, as the revenues from them changed. This discouraged the Sipahis from looking towards any long-term development of their *timars* in favor of squeezing as much short-term profit out of them as they could. The peasants often ended up getting strong-armed for as much as they could pay without receiving any of the benefits they had gotten from their old Hungarian rulers, such as protection and someone to arbitrate disputes.[45]

Tolls on trade passing through the provinces made up the other main source of revenue for the Ottomans. The central government carefully outlined toll levels, but the Ottomans farmed out the right to collect those tolls to independent contractors. These contractors purchased the to collect the tolls in certain towns in exchange for a cash payment to the treasury in Buda.[46] Similarly, some villages could buy the right to tax themselves from the treasury. Instead of being taxed per household by the Ottoman government, the town would pay a single lump-sum payment to the Ottoman treasury. This was a coveted right, because it meant that the Ottomans could not conduct their census surveys in those towns, and consequently the Ottoman government left these

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[42] Bayerle [2] 22
[43] Káldy-Nagy [1] 195
[44] Zimany, Verai: Economy and Society in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Hungary. Akademiai Kiado: Budapest. 1987: 37
[45] Szakály 88
[46] Bayerle [3] 59

towns pretty much on their own.[47] Most of the towns that gained fell under direct Sultanic control, rather than under the control of local Beys or Sipahis, because the Sultans—due to the distance to these possessions—often felt more at ease letting the locals on their lands govern themselves.

Although the Ottomans collected their taxes and fees in the provinces of Madjaristān thoroughly the total amount of income gained never equaled the money spent by the Ottomans in Madjaristān. All of the provinces of Madjaristān remained constantly on a war footing, and skirmishes between the Turks and the Austrians happened daily. The price tag for maintaining the necessary forces in Madjaristān far outstripped the Ottomans tax income. In the Islamic year 966 (1558-1559) the total income from the Sanjak of Buda—the largest section of the Vilayet of Buda—came to 6,348,578 *aqčes*, while the total expenses for defending the border came to 23,347,565 *aqčes*.[48] This was just one section of all of Madjaristān; the Ottomans absorbed very high losses for maintaining their presence in Hungary. In general, year in and year out the provinces of Madjaristān only paid for a third of the cost of their own defense with the rest being paid by the central government in Istanbul.[49]

Economic Development in Madjaristān

If Madjaristān was to ever be more than a drain on the imperial treasury, the Ottomans had to have to turn the territory they had conquered into more than a buffer state. When they came to power in 1541 the economy of Hungary lay in ruins and what

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[47] Káldy-Nagy [1] 213

[48] Káldy-Nagy, J. [2]: The Cash Book of the Ottoman Treasury in Buda in the Years 1558-1560. *Acta Orentalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* Tomus XIV (1960): 182

[49] Madjaristān 1022

the Ottomans did to revive that economy would be crucial to whether they could integrate Madjaristān into the empire. Their results were overall, mixed. Considering the state that Madjaristān was in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans did some good things, but with only one real exception Ottoman Hungary never recovered to where it was at the end of the fifteenth century.

In the first fifty years of Ottoman rule, basically up to the turn of the century, the economy of Madjaristān regressed dramatically. Prior to the Turkish invasion the Hungarian economy revolved around very intensive farming of wheat and other staples on the Hungarian plain, with copper and gold mining in the north playing another important role.[50] After the conquest the mineral resources of the north came under Austrian control, while war devastated the farms of the Hungarian plain. The plain is not especially fertile, and for the Hungarians to get as much production out of it as they did took very careful and intensive farming. The constant strife of the sixteenth century severely disrupted this system, and once disrupted it proved impossible for the farms on the plain to regain their former productivity. With no significant stretches of forest to protect the land, as soon as farms were left fallow for a couple of years erosion would wash away the soil. This wide-scale erosion across the Hungarian Plain turned large swathes of what was farmland into infertile desert, and even the areas that remained farmland did not regain the production levels of the fifteenth century until very recently.[51]

The Ottomans responded to the decline of the Hungarian Plain by introducing large-scale stock breeding to the area. While the Hungarian Plain may have become poor agricultural land, the abandoned fields made perfect pastures for grazing cattle, and

[50] Szakály 88
[51] Sugar 88

herding soon became the economic mainstay of Madjaristān.[52] The boom in stock-breeding centered around the small, Hungarian towns on the Hungarian Plain, such as Kecskemét and Vác. The burghers of these towns seized on the fact that many of local peasants had abandoned their farms and fled to acquire huge amounts of land to form ranches.[53] During the second half of the sixteenth century the towns on the plain managed to increase their land-holdings to as much as four times what they had owned before the Ottoman conquest.[54]

While local Hungarians sparked the rise in stockbreeding, Ottoman policies helped to promote the industry. Many of the towns on the Hungarian plain gained the right to collect their own taxes. By doing this, the plains-towns achieved a measure of local independence, and they became refuges for Hungarians fleeing the Ottoman takeover of the rest of Hungary. The towns also benefited large numbers of refugees emigrating from other parts of Hungary. These refugees helped the towns to grow rapidly, which helped fuel the growth in the cattle-industry. The Ottomans also taxed cattle differently from other livestock. The Ottomans taxed animals such as sheep, goats, and pigs twice, with both a head-tax and a tax on their pastureland. The Ottomans, however, did not have a head-tax on cattle, making them much more profitable.[55]

Cattle soon became the major source of food for Madjaristān, as well as the single largest export for the provinces. By the end of the sixteenth century the Hungarians drove an average of 100,000 head of cattle west into Austria and Germany each year.[56] Livestock exports made up approximately ninety-four per cent of the total exports from

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[52] IBID 284
[53] Zimany 45
[54] Sugar 90
[55] Káldy-Nagy [1] 207

Madjaristān, and Hungarian cattle made up some sixty-four per cent of all the cattle sold in all of Europe.[57] The Hungarian towns that engaged in stock raising did very well economically. Despite the constant warfare between the Ottomans and the Austrians, which sometimes made its way down into the Hungarian plain, these towns came to rival some of the Free Imperial Cities of the Holy Roman Empire in wealth.[58]

The astronomical growth of stock raising did come with a heavy price for the economy of Madjaristān, however. Despite its success, cattle raising transformed the economy of the Hungarian plain from one that produced locally needed commodities into a cash-crop economy. As stockbreeding grew, the agriculture of Madjaristān fell farther and farther into decline. While Madjaristān exported a huge number of cattle, it became a net importer of grain.[59] Stockbreeding also came at the expense of another Hungarian agricultural staple: wine production. Before the Ottoman invasion, Hungary had been one of the major wine producers in Europe, but after the invasion, as ranches took over vineyards, wine production dropped off precipitously. In the town of Tolna, which had been a major wine center up through the mid-sixteenth century, wine output dropped from 150,000 gallons per year in the 1560s to almost nothing by the seventeenth century.[60] In the end, this turned Hungary into the source of most of Europe's beef while stunting sectors of the economy which would have proven more locally beneficial in the coming years.

Just as the Ottoman invasion caused a shift in Hungarian agriculture from farming towards stockbreeding, Hungary's position in international trade also changed. Despite

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[56] Szakály 88
[57] Zimany 22
[58] IBID 64 and 67-68
[59] IBID 22

the Ottoman invasion, the cities of Hungary never lost their trade ties to the west. With the coming of the Turks, however, Hungary no longer formed the eastern border of the Christian world, but the bridge between the East and the West. The older trade ties to Austria, Germany, and Poland became tied into trade with the Ottoman Empire through Hungary.[61] The main source of income for the Ottoman government in the major cities of Madjaristān, such as Buda and Szeged, came from trade. In Szeged in 1548, for example, total income from taxes was 85,900 *aqčes*, while income from tolls reached 373,550 *aqčes*.[62]

The major difference between the boom in stock raising and the boom in East-West trade, however, lay in that Hungarians ran the stockbreeding trade, while most trade in Madjaristān came to be the exclusive territory of local Muslims. Prior to the Ottoman invasion, Germans had controlled most of the trade in Hungary, but after the Sultan Süleyman had massacred all of the Germans in Buda in 1529, most fled to Austria and Austrian Hungary.[63] Muslims coming up from the Balkans soon filled the vacuum created by this in Madjaristān. By the seventeenth century Muslim merchants—mostly recently converted Bosnians who moved north—conducted virtually all of the trade in Madjaristān.[64]

While trade passing through Madjaristān between the Austrians and the Ottomans grew to be a major source of income for the Ottomans, it never grew to such a size that it compensated for the destruction of the local Hungarian trade-based economy. The Ottoman conquest shut down nearly all of Hungary's textile and craft production, which

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[60] Madjaristān 1023
[61] Zimany 67
[62] Bayerle [3] 59
[63] Zimany 49

fell to the point where the local Hungarians could barely supply their most basic needs.[65] With the Ottoman invasion many of the local Hungarians who had produced craft goods fled, and the Ottomans replaced them with soldiers and administrators. The Ottomans failed to replace the lost local craft production. They were not interested in promoting the local Hungarian crafts but instead imported Turkish-style goods from the East. Textiles and finished goods—mostly from elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire—made up eighty eight per cent of the imports in Madjaristān.[66]

The Hungarian Peasantry Under Ottoman Rule

Due to the Ottoman conquest, the decades of endemic warfare, and the Turkish attempts to integrate their new provinces into their empire, the lives of the Hungarian peasantry and urban bourgeoisie in Madjaristān changed dramatically. During the period of Ottoman rule, from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, the Hungarians who lived under Ottoman rule lived a very precarious existence. On the one hand they found themselves subjects of the Ottoman Empire, but on the other the exiled Hungarian nobility never gave up their claims of lordship. The Hungarian peasantry also suffered from constant raiding and occasional wars that engulfed the countryside as well as religious stresses associated with the rise of the Reformation. All of this served to severely destabilize the lives of the peasants in Madjaristān.

The initial Ottoman occupation of Hungary in the mid-sixteenth century caused a massive shift in the population of Madjaristān. Soon after the conquest, the population of Ottoman Hungary dropped significantly. Some of the drop can be attributed to the

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[64] IBID
[65] Szakály 88

destruction of the wars during that time, but most of it resulted from many Hungarians fleeing to Austrian Hungary or Transylvania to escape Ottoman rule.[67] Many fled due to a genuine fear of the Turks. In addition to the destruction caused by the various armies marching across the country, the Sultan Süleyman took almost 100,000 Hungarians—mostly women and children—and sold them into slavery in Istanbul as an example for those who would resist the Ottoman conquest.[68]

In general, however, the depopulation of the Hungarian countryside can not be blamed completely on the Ottomans. In fact, the Ottomans would have much preferred to rule over a well-populated countryside, one that would have provided them the same revenue that had been provided to the Kings of Hungary a century earlier. Peasants fled to escape the war. The Ottoman invasion resulted in widespread devastation of farmland as armies foraged for food and destroyed crops to keep them out of other armies' hands. This explanation, however, does not adequately explain why the so many Hungarians fled, because the places they fled to—Austrian Hungary and Transylvania—suffered just from the war as Ottoman Hungary. In fact, while the population centers in Hungary shifted due to the invasion, the total population of the old Kingdom of Hungary remained steady at around 2.5 to 3 million. The real change was within the borders of the old Kingdom. The Ottoman territories, which had been the most populous, suffered from a significant population drop, while in Transylvania and Austrian Hungary the population rose.

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[66] Zimany 22
[67] Madjaristān 1023
[68] Bayerle [1] 239

Estimated Population of Hungary in 1598 (In Thousands)[69]	
Austrian Hungary	1320-1620
Madjaristān	600-700
Transylvania	600-700
Free Imperial Cities (Austrian Hungary)	120-140
Total	2640-3080

Many peasants fled because their noble lords, who themselves fled almost to a man, encouraged and sometimes even forced them to escape from Ottoman controlled territory. Most of the noble families of Hungary fled to Austrian Hungary, where they set up shadow-versions of their estates, complete with county courts for their exiled subjects. Because of the encouragement of the nobility, thousands of Hungarian peasants fled from Ottoman ruled territories.[70]

While many peasants did flee, the majority remained and fell under Ottoman rule. For them, life proved particularly difficult, mostly due to the constant state of war in Madjaristān. While these peasants did not flee from Ottoman rule, many still left their original homes. Constant raiding by both the Ottomans and the Austrians put the peasants in continual danger of having their villages and crops destroyed. To avoid the armies and raiders many peasants abandoned their old villages for more defensible locations. Many villages moved from lowland sites to more defendable hilltop locations, and many other villages simply disappeared.[71] By the early seventeenth century, up to

[69] Zimany 15
[70] Sugar 284
[71] Zimany 15

thirty per cent of all pre-war villages in Madjaristān had vanished due to war.[72] Even by 1570, just thirty years after the Ottoman conquest, in the district of Novigrad near Buda 32 of the 166 villages (twenty per cent) lay abandoned.[73] The area along the border between Austrian and Ottoman Hungary had suffered so much from continual raiding that it became a virtual no-mans-land.[74] John Dernschwam, a traveler in Madjaristān in 1555 said of the Hungarian countryside that:

> . . .this beautiful and fertile land has become a desert; the thickets and forests serve as lurking-places for robbers and marauders, one can see the traces of many devastated villages, the arable land is scarcely cultivated and the region is getting more and more deserted every day.[75]

The Ottoman conquest definitely caused some of these problems. In their effort to construct a huge network of fortresses along the border with Austria they used the peasants as a source of free labor, and even after these fortresses were finished the peasants had to provide food and free transportation to the garrisons.[76] Furthermore the Ottoman armies that constantly moved though the countryside on the way to and from the Austrian border sucked the peasants dry. While seldom openly looting and pillaging, they requisitioned whatever they needed from the local farmers and often paid well below market value, if they paid at all. An Ottoman army on the march could sometimes leave a trail of abandoned villages in its wake.[77]

The Ottomans, however, did try to help their Hungarian peasants. In an effort to stem the tide of fleeing farmers, the Ottomans worked hard to protect the peasantry from

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[72] Bayerle [1] 235
[73] Bayerle [2] 19
[74] IBID 13
[75] *Tagebuch einer Reise nach Knostantinopel und Kleinasien, 1553-1555*, as quoted in Zimany 14
[76] Bayerle [1] 232
[77] Bayerle [3] 60

Austrian raids.[78] The Ottomans also sought to appear as more benevolent to the peasantry rulers than their Hungarian lords. The Ottoman Empire had no serfdom, and the Ottomans hoped that, by granting the peasants a greater degree of personal freedom—such as rights to their own property and the right to pass their property down to their sons, as well as limited freedom of movement—that the peasantry would slowly become more loyal to the Ottomans.[79] Also, Ottoman landlords—the Sipahis—did not have as much power over their peasants as Hungarian lords had had. Hungarian peasants in Madjaristān could even seek legal redress from their Sipahi lords in the Qadi courts if they felt mistreated.[80]

This strategy worked for the Ottomans in the Balkans, where the peasantry accepted the supremacy of the Turks, and where some had even converted to Islam. In Madjaristān, however, the Hungarian peasantry never fully accepted Turkish rule. The influence that the exiled Hungarian nobles still exercised over their occupied estates played a major role in undermining Ottoman authority. Unlike in the Balkans, the Ottomans had not been able to destroy the local nobility, just drive it out; so unlike the Balkans, the local peasantry had another power contesting for their loyalty.

The Hungarian nobility never accepted the Ottomans as permanent conquerors of their territory, and consequently acted as a government-in-exile in Austrian Hungary and continued to hold influence over their estates. Many Hungarian lords sent agents across the border to watch over their estates and keep tabs on what the Ottomans were doing with them. These agents also served to remind the peasants that their Hungarian lord still

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[78] IBID 59
[79] Zimany 37 and Sugar 96
[80] Bayerle [3] 59

considered himself to be their rightful ruler, despite the Turkish conquest.[81] These Hungarian nobles also refused to relinquish their right to the income from their estates, which they expected their peasants to pay on top of the taxes levied by the Ottomans. The Hungarian nobles demanded the same taxes that they had received before the Ottoman invasion, plus the tithes due to the Catholic Church. This amounted to a one-*forint* poll tax and up to a twenty per cent tax on agricultural produce.[82] Hungarian raiders enforced their nobles' demands for taxes by attacking villages that did not pay their feudal taxes. By the early seventeenth century the bulk of the villages in Madjaristān as far south as Szeged paid taxes to both the Ottomans and the Hungarians.[83]

Paying this double taxation proved extremely difficult for the peasants of Madjaristān, who were already dealing with a lot of problems. Avoiding paying one tax or another meant choosing sides between the Ottomans and the Hungarian exiles, however, and this could prove dangerous. In a letter from Sinan, Pasha of Buda, to Archduke Ernest dated October 27, 1591 the Pasha stated that unless the villages refusing to pay their taxes to the Ottomans relented he would be "seize some of them [e.g. sell the residents into slavery] to set an example for the rest."[84] On the other hand, if villages refused to pay their taxes the Hungarian nobles could be just as cruel. In another letter dated July 21, 1591, Sinan Pasha complained that "Habsburg captains threaten with impalement those villagers who would pay taxes to their spahis [sic]."[85] In the end most peasants could not avoid paying either set of taxes, so through the beginning of the

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[81] Bayerle [1] 233
[82] Bayerle [2] 23
[83] Bayerle [1] 234
[84] Bayerle, Gustav [4]: Ottoman Diplomacy in Hungary: Letters from the Pasha of Buda. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. 1972: 131 (only an abstract is given in English, the reference to selling into slavery is from the introduction, page 11)
[85] IBID 96

seventeenth century double taxation became very common for the peasants of Madjaristān.

Urban Growth on the Hungarian Plain

While those peasants who could responded to these oppressive conditions by fleeing Madjaristān, most could not do that. Within Ottoman territory, however, Hungarians fleeing the countryside found one area of refuge: the cattle-towns of the Hungarian Plain. These towns—located on Sultanic *khass* estates—did not fall under the control of the local Sipahis or Ottoman bureaucrats, and these towns had also arranged to collect their own taxes, and in doing so freed themselves from most Ottoman administrative interference. In effect, these towns formed islands of Hungarian autonomy within Madjaristān, and consequently they attracted a large number of rural refugees.[86]

These towns had initially remained Hungarian when most other urban centers in Madjaristān became Muslim enclaves because of their proximity to the Ottomans' initial invasion. After the battle of Mohács they had quickly fallen under Turkish rule and therefore the population never had time to flee. These towns had also always been centers of opposition to the Hungarian magnates. In 1514 they had been the center of a large peasants' revolt and had consequently lost many of their privileges to the local magnates. When these magnates fled the residents of these towns did not feel as much of a desire to flee with them, as had much of the rest of the country.[87]

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[86] Sugar 91
[87] IBID 89

The boom in stock raising, however, is what made these towns into such attractive places for Hungarian refugees. The economic prosperity generated through the cattle trade created many jobs for the refugees, both in the cattle business and as servants and laborers for the Hungarian families that had prospered from the cattle trade.[88] As these towns grew, they also attracted refugees due to the protection they offered from the constant raiding and wars between the Ottomans and the Austrians. Finding strength in numbers, these towns avoided much of the destruction visited on the rest of Madjaristān.[89]

Christianity

The cattle towns of the Hungarian Plain also served as a refuge for the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After the Ottoman conquest Hungary was ripe for the Reformation. The Catholic hierarchy had been destroyed at the battle of Mohács, where most of the prominent bishops of Hungary had fought and died. With the head of the Catholic Church in Hungary removed, and the Ottomans not anxious to allow new, Rome appointed bishops into Madjaristān, the local priests found themselves free to break with Catholicism. Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Reformationism all found large followings in Madjaristān.[90] By the beginning of the seventeenth century

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[88] Zimany 46

[89] Péter, Katalin: The Later Ottoman Period and Royal Hungary 1606-1711. *A History of Hungary*. Edited by Peter F. Sugar. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. 1990: 102

[90] Rúzás, Lajos: The Seige of Szgetvár of 1566: Its Significance in Hungarian Social Development. *From Hunyadi to Rakoczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*. Edited by Janos M. Bak and Bela K. Király. Brooklyn College Pres: New York. 1982: 257

up to ninety per cent of the Hungarians under Ottoman rule had converted to some form of Protestantism.[91]

The growth of Protestantism provided for some of the few bright spots in Hungarian literature during this period. In the fifteenth century Hungary had developed a rich literary tradition geared almost totally towards religious writings. The Ottoman invasion destroyed this tradition, and in general Hungarian literature would not begin to recover until well into the seventeenth century.[92] The Protestant reformation, however, did provide for a few literary achievements during this time. In 1541 the first Hungarian Bible in the world appeared in Madjaristān, and in 1585 a Protestant priest named Istvan Kis published the first systematized grammar of the Hungarian Language.[93]

The Protestant Reformation also had another important effect in Madjaristān; it kept Christianity vigorous despite the Ottoman conquest and the destruction of the church hierarchy. In previous centuries these same events in the Balkans had opened the door for relatively large-scale conversions of the local population to Islam, but this did not happen in Madjaristān. Instead, the local Hungarians remained almost totally Christian. Instead of converting to Islam they converted to Protestantism, and when the Jesuits entered Madjaristān in the seventeenth century they converted back to Catholicism. Islam never gained a foothold among the Hungarians.[94]

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[91] Szakály 94
[92] Domonkos 217
[93] Szakály 94

The Muslim Community in Madjaristān

Perhaps the greatest reason that so few Hungarians converted to Islam, however, lay in the weakness of the local Muslim community. For a territory in which the Sultans in Istanbul had invested so much effort to take and hold, it is remarkable how unsuccessful they were in establishing a large Muslim presence. When the Ottomans had conquered the Balkans in the fourteenth century they settled their new acquisitions with a significant number of Turkish colonists from Anatolia. These Turks formed a nucleus around which a local Muslim community could form, and consequently served to Turkify at least the upper classes of the Balkans and integrate these territories into the Ottoman Empire. This did not take place in Madjaristān. Perhaps because of the distance of the Hungarian provinces from Istanbul, or perhaps because the Ottoman Empire no longer had the manpower reserves necessary—very few Turks settled in Ottoman Hungary. Instead, the vast majority of Ottomans in Madjaristān were Bosnian converts, while only the most important imperial officials were ethnic Turks from Anatolia.[95] The Bosnians, while being loyal Ottomans and Muslims, were not Turks and they proved unable to form that nucleus for a local Turkified community could form. Because of this, the general society of Madjaristān never integrated in the larger imperial society. Instead, the Muslims existed as an imported society almost totally cut off from the culture of the vast majority of people around them.

While the Muslim community in Madjaristān did not integrate itself with the local Hungarian culture, it became a very vibrant and successful frontier community in of itself. Considering their relatively brief rule and the constant warfare they had to deal

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[94] Ágoston 182
[95] Sugar 71

with, the fact that Ottomans created a viable Muslim society in Madjaristān was quite remarkable. This community took root in the major cities of the former Kingdom of Hungary: Buda, Pest, Pecs, and Szeged.[96] During the Ottoman conquest these cities had been sacked and ruined and whatever residents had not fled to Austrian Hungary or Transylvania were removed by the Ottomans. In their place came the Muslim soldiers and administrators who ruled the provinces. In the city of Buda the Christian population dropped from 5,000 in 1500 to 1,000 in 1547, to only 70 by 1627, while two thousand Ottoman soldiers and functionaries moved in to take their place.[97] When the Ottomans captured Szeged the forced all of the inhabitants to move outside the walls, and reserved the inner city for Muslims alone.[98] In this way urban Muslim enclaves were carved out in Madjaristān.

The local Muslims concentrated themselves in their own separate towns for their own security. Even in the countryside, the local Sipahis and their retainers lived in fortified villages or in garrison fortresses. They dared not live on their estates and seldom even visited them. The need for elaborate security precaution also extended to travel between settlements; the local Ottomans always traveled in well-armed convoys when they moved from fortress to fortress.[99] Despite the fact that the Hungarian and Austrian armies had been driven out of Madjaristān several times, the Ottomans never securely held the territory outside their fortresses and cities. Not only did they have to fear raiding parties from Austrian Hungary, but also their own Hungarian subjects, for many peasants

[96] IBID 88
[97] IBID
[98] Bayerle [3] 15
[99] Szakály 88

had turned to banditry to survive.[100] The diplomatic letters between the Pasha of Buda and Vienna are filled with complaints about Hungarian attacks on Muslims. In a letter dated June 10, 1592 the Mehmed Pasha filed a protest regarding a merchant named Ali being robbed of 4,000 Florins by raiders while attending a county fair.[101] In a letter dated October 24, 1591 the Sinan Pasha complained that "Christian raiders scurry in all directions or lie in ambush over the main highways." He went on to say that "soon the Turkish garrisons will not be able to open their own gates lest they are attacked by these raiders."[102]

Muslim Religion and Education

While life outside of their Muslim enclaves was dangerous, inside these towns Islamic society flourished. This society, as was to be expected, came to center around religious life, and more specifically the *câmís*, or cathedral mosques. In the *câmís* the Muslim communities gathered for Friday prayers, and in the *câmís* most major community events took place.[103] The Ottomans located most of the *câmís* in Madjaristān either in converted churches or in rather hastily built wooden structures, nevertheless several new structures were built in Madjaristān, mostly in Buda. Sokollu Mustafa, Pasha of Buda between 1566 and 1578 sponsored many of the public buildings in Buda. In addition to endowing several religious institutions and building some public baths, Mustafa Pasha hired the architect Mi'mar Sinan—the builder of the Sinan Mosque in

[100] Bayerle [3] 59
[101] Bayerle [4] 145
[102] IBID 128
[103] Ágoston 183

Istanbul—to design and build the *câmí* of Buda.[104] In general, however, unless a private benefactor presented himself, most communities had to make due with much less grandiose buildings, because the Ottoman government made very little public money available for constructing buildings in Madjaristān.

While not usually grand buildings, the *câmís* did serve their purpose as anchors of the Muslim communities well. In addition to serving as the central mosque for their community, most *câmís* also attached *mektebs*, or primary schools for the children of the Ottoman soldiers and administrators. The Ottomans guaranteed every Muslim child in Madjaristān—as in the rest of the empire—a free basic education that covered reading in Arabic the Qu'ran and the Hadiths, simple math, and reading and writing Turkish.[105] By the years 1660-1666 the Ottomans established approximately 165 separate *mektebs* in Madjaristān.[106] While most *mektebs* concentrated on providing the basic knowledge needed by all Ottomans, some like the *mekteb* in Mitrovica also covered the basics of Islamic law (*fikh*) and Ottoman inheritance law (*farâ'iż*).[107]

For a more in depth study of these subjects, however, most students attended *medreses*, or secondary schools. Each of the major Muslim cities in Madjaristān had several *medreses*, mostly of the lower ranking *medâris-i resmîye* type. The teachers in these schools received a very low wage, from twenty to forty *aqčes* per day. This did not attract many good teachers, and the level of education available did not go beyond the bare basics. Most of these *medreses* relied on local *wakf* endowments for support, but often the *wakfs* did not usually provide enough money to hire quality teachers. Ideally,

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[104] IBID 184
[105] IBID 187
[106] IBID 188
[107] IBID 183

the state would have then stepped in to help fund the schools, but because virtually all of the money collected in Madjaristān went towards defending the border, the schools were unable to get much support.[108]

A few higher ranked *medreses* existed in Madjaristān, however; all located in Buda and endowed by Mustafa Pasha. The *medrese* attached to the *câmí* built by Mi'mar Sinan became the most prestigious *medrese* in Madjaristān. The head instructor there doubled as the Mufti of Buda—one of the most important people in Ottoman Hungary. Despite the distance from Istanbul the instruction in religious law remained current with the latest imperial trends, and in addition to the standard curriculum of law and theology students could study subjects such as geography, astrology, music, medicine, and architecture.[109]

Despite the modest educational opportunities in Madjaristān for the local Muslims a small intelligentsia did exist. The Qadis and religious leaders in the provinces had reasonable access to both religious and secular literature from Istanbul, and several wrote religious tracts that gained some circulation outside of Madjaristān.[110] A relatively large amount of Persian scholarship took place in the south, especially around the city of Pecs, where a number of the residents spoke Persian.[111] Finally, while it may not have been on the cutting edge of imperial style, local Muslims could watch performances of a great number of Turkish folk songs and epics in the coffee shops of Buda, showing that at least in a few places, traditional Ottoman culture did take root in Madjaristān.[112]

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[108] IBID 190
[109] IBID 192
[110] Budun 1286
[111] Ágoston 202
[112] Budun 1286

In Madjaristān a very strong Sufi community existed alongside of the mainstream Islamic culture. Originally the Sufis had come to the frontier with the goal of converting the Hungarians to Islam, and while they did not succeed in this they did play a very important role in keeping Islamic culture strong among the local Ottomans.[113] All of the major *tarikats*, or Sufi orders, were represented in Madjaristān, and three major sites rose to prominence among the local Sufis. The first, located in Buda, was the Gül Baba *tekke* (monastery) of the Bektâsî Dervises. Mehmed Pasha founded the *tekke* some time between 1543 and 1548 around the *türbe* (mausoleum) of a Sufi named Gül Baba. This site became an important local Muslim pilgrimage site, and the attached *tekke* served as a hostel for needy travelers who needed a bed and a hot meal.[114]

The second major Sufi site in Madjaristān grew up around the *türbe* of Süleyman, near the town of Szigetvár. Sultan Süleyman died there in 1566, and before his advisors took his body back to Istanbul, they buried his internal organs there. Because of this, a major holy site drawing people from all over the Ottoman Empire near Szigetvár. The Ottomans built both the tomb and an accompanying mosque in 1576. This was the holiest site in Madjaristān, and the Turks considered it so important that a special garrison of troops was paid to guard the *türbe* and mosque from anyone who might try to vandalize it.[115] Because of the holiness of the site, and also probably because of the protection to specially garrison provided, the *türbe* of Süleyman attracted Sufis from all over Madjaristān, as well as the rest of the Empire. While most of the Sufis at Süleyman's Tekke were of the Halveti order, the most famous Sufi to live there was a

[113] Ágoston 204
[114] IBID 197
[115] IBID

man named Mirek Muhammed of the Naksbendî[116] order. While staying at the *tekke* in 1613 he wrote a commentary on some Persian poetry that was an immediate hit throughout the Ottoman Empire, and was periodically reprinted up through the 1800s.[117]

In the mid-seventeenth century, the city of Pecs became the third major Sufi site in Madjaristān. As Ottoman power began to fade in Hungary, the Mevlevî-hâne order of Sufis founded a chapter in the city. In the year 1680 a man named Ahmed Dede became *şeyh* of the order. Dede wrote several widely read books, including one discussing the beginning and the end of the universe that proved popular enough to be printed as far away as Egypt. Eventually, Dede left Pecs to become the chief *şeyh* of the Yenikapi Mevlevî-hâne order in Istanbul.[118]

While these Sufis failed in their original mission to convert the Hungarians to Islam, they did succeed in implanting a strong—if small—Islamic presence in Madjaristān. Without these Sufi centers, the local Muslims would have been almost completely detached from the greater Islamic World. As it was, the Sufis managed to established Islam in the provinces to a great enough extent that in certain places, such as the Gül Baba shrine, the Islamic presence survived the withdrawal of the Ottomans in the seventeenth century.[119]

Conclusion—The Decline of Madjaristān

As the Ottoman occupation of Hungary entered the seventeenth century, it began to crumble quite fast. Despite having defeated the Austrians a number of times, and even

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[116] The Naksbendî Order was a major Sufi order in the Ottoman Empire, and remains very strong up to the present.
[117] IBID 200
[118] IBID 202

adding territory in 1608, the Ottoman hold on Madjaristān was very weak. The Ottomans inability to solidify their position in Madjaristān led to this weakness. The Hungarians never accepted their position as subjects of the Turks, so in addition to defending the border against the Austrians they had to occupy the whole country to keep it under their nominal control. Madjaristān was also very far away from the Ottomans power base in Anatolia, which made it very expensive for them to defend it. Eventually the stress on the Ottoman military presence in Madjaristān intensified, and the Turkish occupation of Hungary crumbled nearly as fast as it had occurred one hundred and fifty years earlier.

The difficulty that the Ottomans would face in defending Madjaristān became evident quite soon after their initial conquest. Technically, the Sipahis made up the backbone of the Ottoman garrison. They made up the cavalry of empire, and that was their major reason for existing. Not enough Sipahis immigrated to Madjaristān to adequately defend the border against Austrian raids, much less the occasional full-scale invasion. Because of this the Ottomans had to post, at great expense, a large contingent of mercenary troops along the border. Through the last half of the sixteenth century the number of Bosnian and Albanian mercenaries continued to rise in response to the increasing devastation caused by the constant Austrian raiding. By the 1593 the number of mercenary soldiers totaled at least 18,000 men. Add to this seven thousand mounted Sipahis and their retainers and the total military presence in Madjaristān was over 25,000 soldiers.[120] By the early seventeenth century, after the end of the Fifteen Years War, the total garrison had dropped to around 19,000, but now the Ottomans had to station several

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[119] IBID 197

[120] Hungarian-Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent. Edited by Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor. Hungarian Academy of Science, Institute of History: Budapest. 1994: 143-45

thousand Janissaries in Madjaristān to make up the difference. Considering that the total military in the Ottoman Empire (excluding Egypt) numbered approximately 38,196 at this time, the huge military commitment to Hungary becomes apparent.[121]

The number of troops in Madjaristān grew continuously throughout the Turkish period, the money that the Ottomans tried to keep from spending more money than was absolutely necessary. In the sixteenth century the central government in Istanbul only provided the money for 10,000 soldiers, the rest had to be paid for locally. The local provinces, however, did not have the cash on hand to pay all of the necessary soldiers, so the Pashas of started granting *timars* to soldiers in place of regular pay.[122] By the 1570s the practice of paying infantry soldiers with *timars* had become widespread, and the Sultan even made it official policy to pay as many soldiers as possible with land. Eventually, almost 40 per cent of all soldiers received their pay in this fashion.[123]

While paying mercenary soldiers with *timars* solved the problem of how to pay for all of the necessary soldiers, it did this at the expense of the Sipahis. The granting of land to so many infantry mercenaries undermined the confidence and military readiness of the Sipahis, who saw their hereditary rights being eaten away. The giving of *timars* to mercenaries signaled the beginning of the collapse of one of the two pillars of the Ottoman army. After the Fifteen Years War in 1608 the Ottoman administration realized this and reverted to paying the mercenaries in cash, but by then the Sipahis had almost collapsed as an effective military force.[124]

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[121] IBID 148
[122] IBID 141
[123] IBID
[124] IBID 146

The disintegration of Ottoman control in Madjaristān began with the end of the Fifteen Years War. Despite being the nominal winner, from that point onward the cost to the Ottoman Empire to defend the border became prohibitively expensive. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the expense of defending Madjaristān equaled the total income from the province of Egypt.[125] Furthermore, the amount of income the Ottomans received from Hungary dropped off significantly. The Ottomans became too weak to make good on their threats against the peasantry, and increasingly peasant villages refused to pay their taxes to the Ottomans, and instead only paid the taxes due to their Hungarian lords.[126] Because less money was coming in, the Ottoman administration took more directly from the Sipahis. Both the drop in tax income and the increased assessments from the government served to crush the Sipahis as an effective military force. Many fell into poverty, and many others abandoned their status as Sipahis to become private mercenaries themselves.[127]

As the Sipahis disintegrated the Ottomans turned to the Janissaries to serve as the backbone of the border defense. The Janissaries, however, proved to no longer be the crack force that had spearheaded the conquest of Hungary a century earlier. The increased responsibilities given to the Janissaries meant that the corps had to be expanded significantly, but again the Ottomans did not have the money to pay for the expansion. As early as 1590 the Ottoman government in Buda had problems paying the Janissaries stationed there, which resulted in a brief mutiny and the murder of the Pasha.[128] By the middle of the seventeenth century the Ottomans had resorted to paying the Janissaries

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[125] Madjaristān 1022
[126] Péter 106
[127] Bayerle [1] 235
[128] IBID 236

with *timars*, which only served to further weaken the Sipahis. Also, by this time the Janissaries had lost their edge over the Austrians as an elite fighting force. Because of the high losses they experienced defending the border the Ottomans loosened the requirements on who could be a Janissary.[129] As the Austrian threat grew in the latter half of the seventeenth century the Ottomans had no effective military force to act as the backbone of their army.

As the Turkish army weakened, the rest of Ottoman society in Madjaristān also started to fall apart. By the 1630s the majority of the mosques in the provinces had fallen into serious disrepair, and those that remained in decent shape often became barracks or warehouses for the military.[130] The collapse of the Ottoman administration manifested itself most noticeably in the upkeep of the *sanjak* registers. Since the establishment of the *vilayet* of Buda in 1541 the Ottomans meticulously kept these registers, and constantly updated them. By the seventeenth century, however, the Ottoman provincial government lost the ability to update the registers. The Ottomans conducted the last complete census of Madjaristān in 1591. After that point whenever the Ottoman government conducted a census, they merely copied the results of the 1591 register.[131]

Towards the end of the seventeenth century only Austrian incompetence allowed the Ottomans to remain in Madjaristān. In 1682 the Turks second siege of Vienna ended in total disaster and the destruction of much of the Ottoman army. This made it very clear to the Austrians that Hungary could be taken back from the Ottomans. Soon after the defeat at Vienna, the Austrians drove the Ottomans out of Buda (1686) and Belgrade

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[129] IBID 237
[130] Ágoston 185
[131] Káldy-Nagy 189

(1688). While the Turks gained back some territory later, all vestiges of Madjaristān disappeared by the early 1690s.[132]

After the Austrian reconquest of Hungary nearly all evidence of the 150 years of Ottoman rule disappeared. The Hungarians destroyed virtually all of the Turkish-built buildings, including the mosque built by Mi'mar Sinan. Almost every Muslim in Madjaristān either fled south into the Balkans or died at the hands of the invading Austrian and Hungarian nobility. While it would be some time before the threat of another Ottoman conquest completely subsided, from this point onward Austria ruled the Kingdom of Hungary as part of its empire. The era of Ottoman rule in Hungary, which marked the end of a great kingdom and the zenith of Turkish power, had ended.

[132] Sugar 199