

PÉTER ILLIK

TURKISH RAIDS IN TRANSDANUBIA

*TURKISH PLUNDERING ON THE FRINGES OF THE TURKISH SUBJECTION
IN THE TRANSDANUBIAN TERRITORY IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 17TH CENTURY*

PhD thesis

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1. Research plan and the written primary sources

The research is based on two Hungarian historical terms and phenomenon. It explores the features of the “peaceful wartimes” in Western Transdanubia in the first half of the 17th century. From the Turkish-Hungarian Peace Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606) there was a peaceful period for Royal Hungary confirmed by several peace treaties after 1606. However, the Turkish armies continuously ravaged the fringes of the Subjection during the peace. They plundered those parts of the Hungarian Kingdom, which were behind the defence line of Hungarian fortresses. Even though they were integral parts of Royal Hungary but defenceless against the Turkish troops who could go through the gaps of the Hungarian defences.

This PhD essay analyzes the damages done by the Turkish army based on Hungarian sources and records in a Hungarian point of view. Its major aim is to summarise a massive amount of data consisting of every published and unpublished sources concerning the given topic. In this way, an objective evaluation of losses can be achieved without subjective exaggerations. In addition, the historical hiatus mentioned by Ferenc Szakály can be filled. (*„A hódoltsági peremvidék története, amely – s ezt nem árt még egyszer hangsúlyozni – a hódoltságétól merőben eltérő problematika, külön monográfiát igényelne, amelyhez a magyar történetírás már eddig is számtalan részletfeldolgozással és forráskiadvánnyal készült fel.”* Citation from Ferenc Szakály)

The records regarding Turkish activities of the Batthyány family gave the core of the research added up by conscriptions of the counties, lexicons, archives of the palatine and the *Urbaria et Conscriptiones*.

The most important sources:

Batthyány-család levéltára (Archive of the Batthyány family):

MOL Batthyány-cs. levéltára, Török vonatkozású iratok P 1313/248–249. cs.
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Magyar Kamara Archivuma (Archive of the Hungarian Chamber):

MOL Archivum Familiae Thurzó E 196/4. cs.
MOL Archivum Familiae Wesselényi E 199/6 cs.
MOL Urbaria et Conscriptiones (UC) E 156/1/16., 6/56., 9/62., 10/37., 10/77a., 10/78., 11/9., 14/35., 23/5., 23/14., 45/28., 110/4., 113/16 b., 116/4.
MOL Conscriptiones portarum E 158/9.cs. Jauriensis, 1531–1635. (Filmtár, 1636. doboz)
MOL Conscriptiones portarum E 158/12. cs. Castri Ferrei, 1598–1648. (Filmtár, 1632–1633. doboz)
MOL Conscriptiones portarum E 158/50. cs. Veszpremiensis, 1569–1696. (Filmtár, 1659. doboz)
MOL Conscriptiones portarum E 158/54. cs. Szaladiensis, 1609–1696. (Filmtár, 1664. doboz)

Az Esterházy család Hercegi ágának levéltára (Archive of the Prince's branch of the Esterházy family):

MOL Repositorium 71. Esterházy Miklós Nádor iratai P 108/479/26/a (Filmtár, 6564–6565. doboz)
MOL Repositorium 72. Esterházy Pál közügyekre vonatkozó iratai P 108/482/32 (Filmtár, 16199. doboz)
MOL Esterházy Miklós nádor iratai, P 123/6 cs. (Filmtár, 4686–4687. doboz)

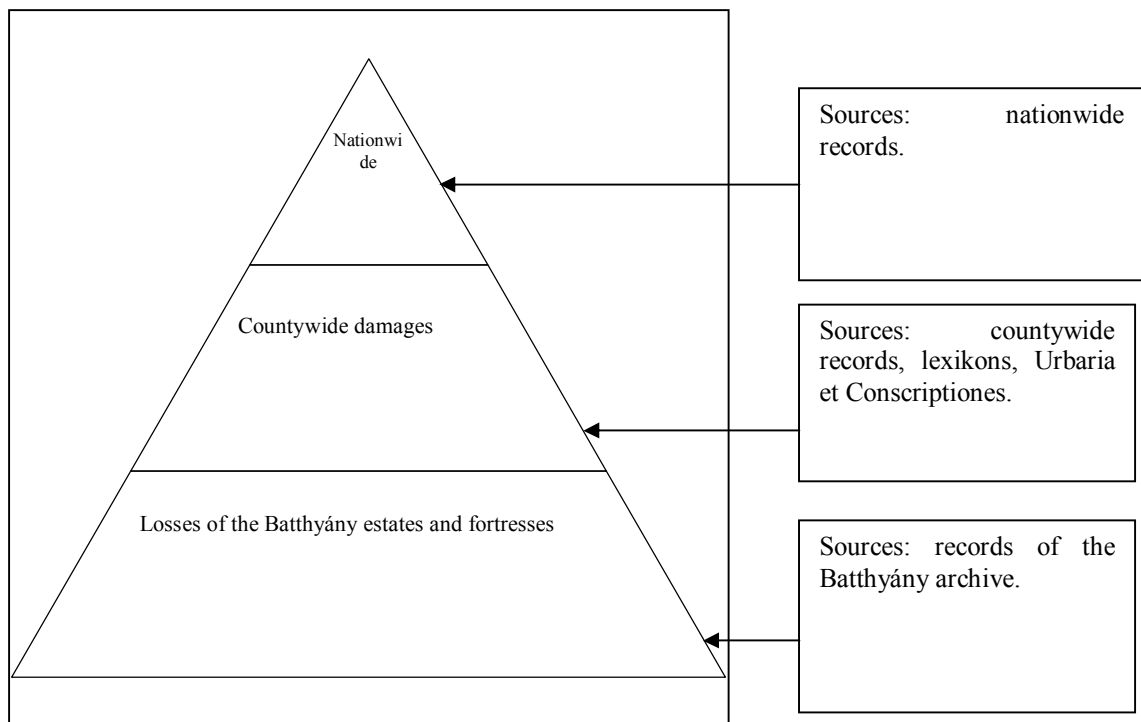
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2. Methods of the analysis

The sources were analysed and sorted in a hierarchical order. The unfolded items of data (numbers of killed, kidnapped people, etc.) were put into historical context and in the political situation of Hungary. I attempted to describe the features of the living conditions on the fringes instead of explaining the causes behind events. Because the causes behind the events cannot be explained based on these records, therefore, this dissertation is mostly descriptive



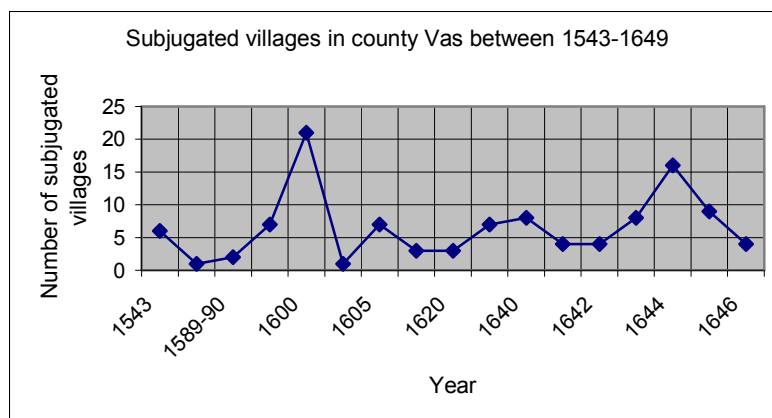
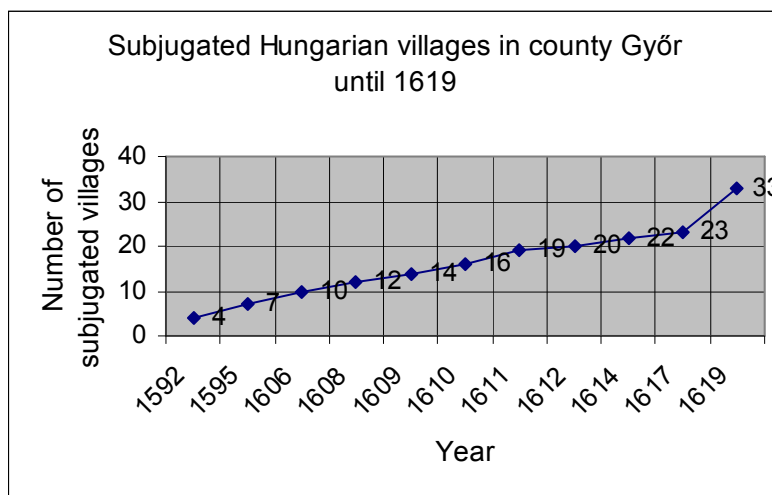
This synthesis raised several methodical problems. The most important one was the large number of different names of locations in different standards. The proper transcription and identification of names was very relevant but it was not the main objective of the dissertation. Therefore, I identified the villages as much as I could based on wide spread historical handbooks. In addition, I registered the names of villages of counties Győr, Vas, Veszprém and Zala in the Appendix. (Based on Ferenc Maksay: Magyarország birtokviszonyai a 16. század közepén I–II. Bp., Akadémiai, 1990.) In the Index, the names are in modern form.

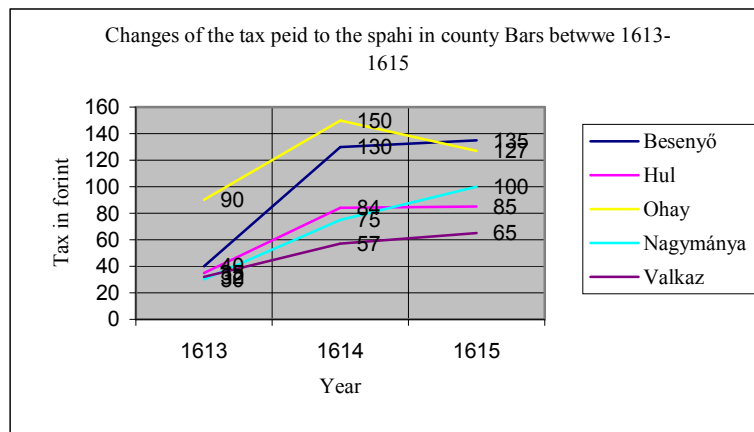
The records were analyzed mostly in statistic way. Therefore, beside the narrative analysis there are line and pie charts and tables. In addition, the expansion of the Turkish

Subjection and the regions of captured villages are illustrated on maps. The most important statistic tools are the followings:

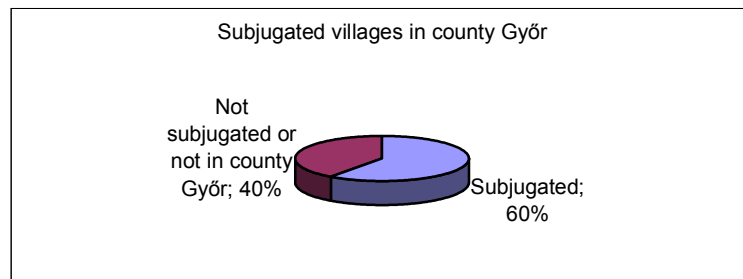
1. *Line charts:* 25 line charts represent the changes of different processes, like the Turkish expansion on the fringes of the Subjection. These charts illustrate how many villages were plundered and forced to pay tax to the Turks. During this process, Hungarian villages were forced into submission and terrorised. Therefore, they had to accept the Turkish authority over them and had to pay tax to their spahis. The swelling numbers of captured villages extended the borders of the fringes of the Subjection and the occupation of Hungarian fortresses expanded the Subjection itself.

These charts also analyse the increasing rate of the sums (=summa) of taxes. These taxes also devastated the conquered villages because they put heavy financial pressure on the inhabitants.





2. *Pie charts*: these charts represent ratios of sex or age range of captured villagers (male-female, adult-child) or ratio of the status of villages (captured-not captured).

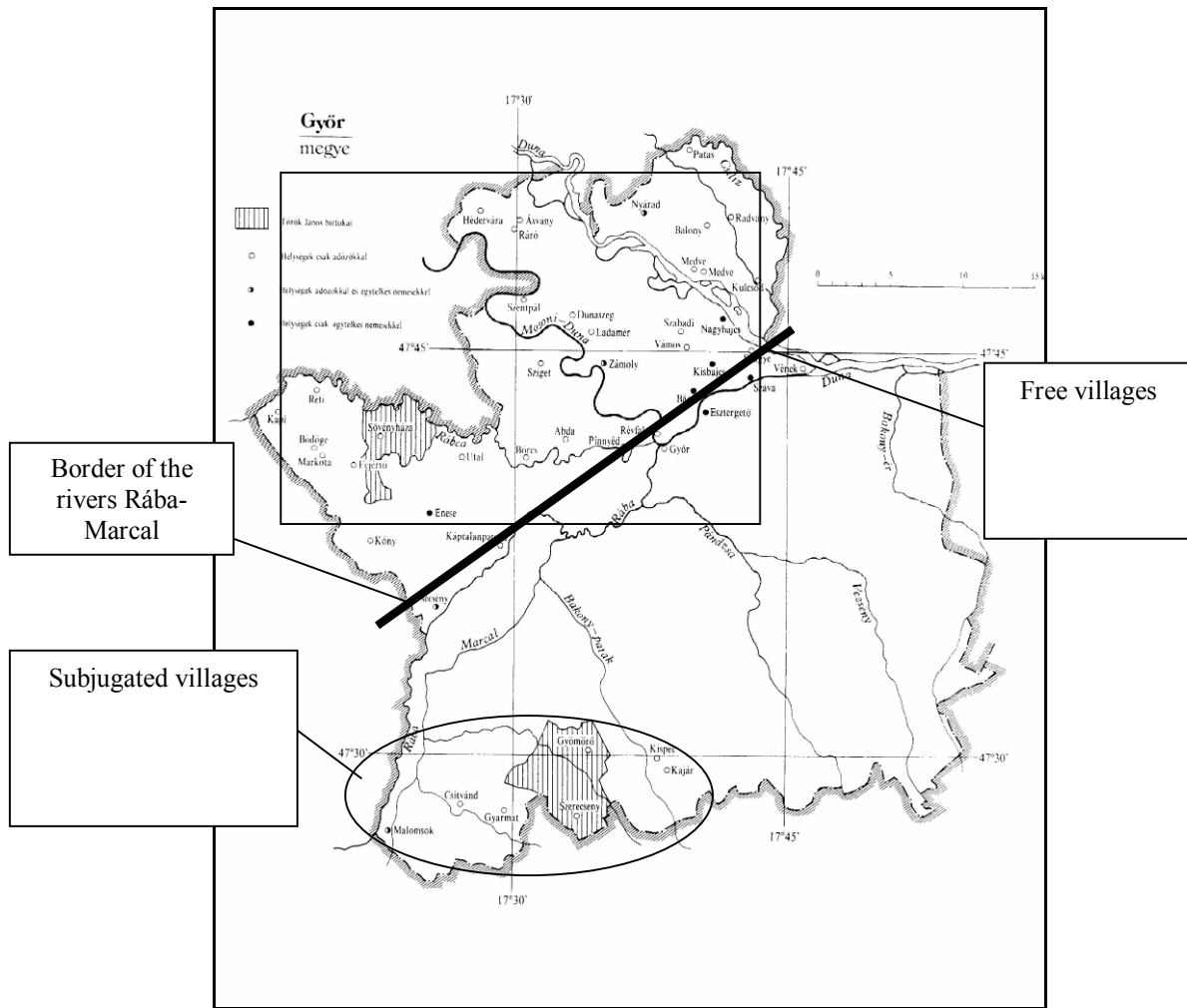


3. *Tables*: I used 54 tables to represent the damages done by the Turks. I constructed and organised to be clearly understandable and describe the major processes even without explanation. These tables show the losses of people, animals and financial losses of the countryside. Other tables describe the losses of the fortresses based on the same methods.

4. *Maps*: I used six maps on the counties and one group of military maps illustrating the borders of the Turkish Subjection.

The maps of “Magyarország birtokviszonyai a 16. század közepén.” (Szerk.: FerencMaksay. Bp., Akadémiai, 1990.) were redrawn and modernised.

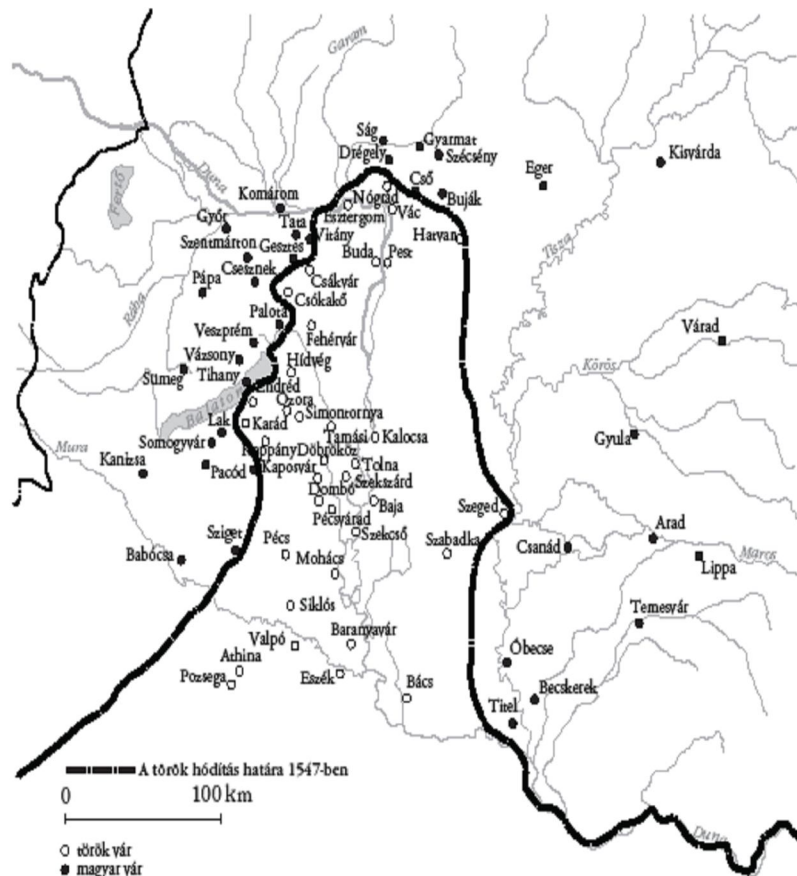
Győr megye területe (Territory of Győr)



I had to consider the fact that the fringes of the Subjection did not have static borders because it changed dynamically. However, there were geographical restrictions. For example in county Győr the border was along the rivers Rába-Marcal.



The maps illustrating the Hungarian fortresses were drawn based on Ferenc Szakály: Magyar adóztatás a török hódoltságban. Bp., Akadémiai, 1981.



Magyarországi várak 1541-1551

There are periods like black holes about which there are not records. Just like the 1610's and the period between 1660-1670's. Therefore, the analogous pieces of information from Northern Hungary (county Bars) can be considered.

Beside objective and statistic methods, I also analysed the life conditions on the micro levels of the villages. In this way, the effects of the Turkish military actions could be presented emphasising the fact that behind the cold logic of numbers there were personal lives and tragedies as well.

3. Results

The fringes of the Turkish Subjection shadowed the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom. It covered the major parts of Győr, Vas, Zala and the whole area of Veszprém. However, the exact extension of the fringes is not known because the Turks could capture the villages behind the Hungarian fortresses only temporarily. This means that they forced the countryside into submission and the Turks “visited” them irregularly to make peasants remember their bonds.

The Turkish spahis constantly conquered the Hungarian countryside, the conquest never ceased but there were more intensive periods. Sometimes they had to reconquer, re-subjugate those villages, which tried to break away. The conquest and capturing villages had certain methods: kidnapping women and children, burning houses or looting villages. They just rarely killed the peasants because it was not profitable. Sometimes the villagers could not bear their burdens so they fled their homes. Based on the sources the emigration of peasantry was serious in the most unfortunate villages.

The synthesis of previous researches and the revealed new records resulted in significant electrifying achievements. For example, the revision the conscription of county Vas, first published Ferenc Stahl based on the original records. The researches of Éva Simon on the Turkish expansion in Csernecség, county Zala were integrated with my collection of data proved that the Turkish expansion started in that region in the 1580's and continued even in the 1630's. Regarding the “problem of the 60 villages” of Bars, published and unpublished records of palatine Miklós Esterházy (1625-1645) were integrated with newly found items of palatine György Thurzó (1609-1616). It also underlined that this political scandal of the 17th century lasted during decades, from the palatineship of Thurzó to Esterházy.

Beside the losses of villages, there is massive amount of data on the Hungarian fortresses as well. (There are also some fragments about the northern fortresses, which are under processing.) Compared with the results of József Kelenik's research there was an 8% mortality rate among the Hungarian soldiers in Western Transdanubia.

This essay described the amount of conquered villages, taxation and other losses based on mostly the records of the Batthyány family archives. Nevertheless, the causes behind the events were not revealed. For example, there were short peaks of periods in which the Turkish military effort was more intensive, than before or after. I do not know for sure that there is a concrete political explanation or it is only the lack of sources. For instance, after the 1660's

lists of losses do not exist but it seems impossible that there were not Turkish raids or the rate of losses decreased.

Finally, determined by the characteristics of the records and sources, the losses and the features of life conditions on the fringes (caused by the Turkish army in the first half of the 17th century in Western Transdanubia) could be evaluated and described.

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