



WAR AND PEACE ALONG THE DANUBE: VIDIN AT THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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Source: *Oriente Moderno*, 2001, Nuova serie, Anno 20 (81), Nr. 1, THE OTTOMANS AND THE SEA (2001), pp. 149-175

Published by: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25817750>

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concerned six fortresses (*kale*) in the area: Vidin, Lomgrad (Lom, Bulgaria),⁴⁹ Belogradčik, Filordin, Svārlig and Arčar.⁵⁰ Other documents in the *sicils*, however, reveal Lom, Filordin and Arčar to have been *pa-lankas*, but various corps of the Janissaries and of *yerlū* troops were stationed in all of them, as we see from the names of their commanders which appear in the Vidin *Şeriat* court from time to time.

The gradual delimitation of the Ottoman border along the Danube was probably the main reason for the rise of new fortified places on the right bank of the river. In the close hinterland of these fortifications a second line was beginning to emerge. Most of these fortifications were only third-rate ones but they served as satellites to Vidin forming a relatively well-functioning defensive system, contributing to the stabilisation of Ottoman control over the region.⁵¹

Apart from the regular troops, Vidin was, during the war, the winter quarters of Imre Tököly and his Hungarian mounted troops in 1687-88, in 1692-93, and in 1696-97. It served as his base for incursions into Hungary in support of the Ottoman army.⁵² Immediately after the war an order from the sultan was issued to settle Tököly's men in Čiprovci and the villages around, a *hass* in the *Paşa sancak*. Soon, however, the authorities realised that the soil in these areas was not fertile and the Hungarians were reassigned to villages in the Şehirköy (Piro, Serbia) and Berkovitsa *nahiyes*, both in the *Paşa sancak*, and in Polomie, a *nahiye* in the Vidin *sancak*.⁵³

In spite of what has been said we probably do not have a very precise idea as to the extent to which the Muslim population in Vidin took part in the defence of the town and its surrounding area. More than a half of the instrumental witnesses in cases, the deceased, or simply the two sides in a law case were either explicitly cited as members of one of the above-mentioned corps or bore titles indicating an attachment to the military class, being, for example, *beşe*, *odabaşı*, *bölükbaşı*, *ağa*, *çorbacıs*, *çavuşes*. Of course, these indications should not be generalised, but our impression is strengthened even further by the estates left by deceased Mus-

49 – See Kuzev, A., “Лом” [Lom], in: *Български средновековни градове и крепостни*, I, p. 116-119.

50 – НБКМ, Оп. отд., S14, f. 31v, doc. II.

51 – For a similar situation in Hungary in the 16th century, see Hegyi, “Ottoman military force”, *cit.*, p. 135-136.

52 – See for example, НБКМ, Оп. отд., S345, f. 3v, doc. I, an order addressed to the Vidin kadı commanding that Imre Tököly be given two houses in the city and provisions for his own and his retinue's needs when he decided to make Vidin his winter headquarters in 1696-97. See also Pärvev, I., *Балканите между две империи. Хабсбургската империя и Османската държава (1683-1739)* [The Balkans between Two empires. The Habsburg empire and the Ottoman state (1683-1739)], Sofia, Universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1997, *passim*.

53 – Dorev, P., *Документи за българската история* [Documents on Bulgarian History], III. Sofia, 1940, doc. 73, 72-73, of 1699.