

PREFACE

This book is the fruit of a collective effort by Hungarian scholars specialising in Ottoman and Habsburg-Hungarian history of the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries.

The idea that experts of the two sides should work and publish together in English the results of their respective and complementary research into the conflict of the two great powers of the age, was raised in 1995. Two major considerations lay behind the formulation of such a plan. On the one hand, it was thought that a two-sided, collective approach could considerably contribute to a more realistic assessment of the significance of the Habsburg-Hungarian-Ottoman frontier. On the other hand, we realised that while Hungarian historians achieved a great progress in the study of the subject, due to linguistic barriers, their results mostly remained unnoticed or unknown in non-Hungarian scholarly literature.

In order to translate the idea into practice, a project has been launched at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences under the direction of Pál Fodor. With the participation of both Europeanists and Ottomanists, four thematic volumes have been produced in the second half of the nineties. The first of these is now published in this book and is concerned with the border defence systems established on the territory of Medieval Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The other three volumes will also be dealing with issues which were vital in the functioning of frontiers, including ransom slavery, information gathering and trade between the two worlds.

The project could not have been realised without the generous assistance of two Hungarian scholarly institutions. OTKA, Hungary's biggest scientific research foundation, has supplied considerable sums in the last four years thus enabling us to produce texts of acceptable standards in English and to employ competent professional editors. I am grateful to the foundation for their appreciation of our undertaking. The Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy not only provided the infrastructure to our work but its publishing section undertook to produce the camera-ready version of this volume. I would like to thank

Ferenc Glatz, President of the Hungarian Academy, Zoltán Szász, Director of the Institute of History, and Kornélia Burucs, the head of the editorial staff at the Institute and Attila Csányi, the technical editor for their wholehearted support. I express my gratitude to Andrew Gane, Judit Pokoly and Vera Kovács Fodor for their invaluable linguistic assistance.

My deepest thanks are due to my colleagues who spared no pains to complete their contributions in time and in the form required by the editors. I should also note that although I was in charge of the project, right at the early phases of it I asked Géza Dávid to collaborate in editing the material and preparing it for publication. The idea of inviting him came naturally as during an earlier project, when I was invited by him to participate, we could co-operate perfectly well together. Thus, in a sense, the present book can be regarded as a successor to our earlier collaborative work entitled *Hungarian-Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent* (Budapest, 1994).

At last but not least, we all (contributors and editors) are indebted to the Brill Publishing House and its series' editors of the 'Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage'; especially to Professor Suraiya Faroqhi who kindly undertook the painstaking work of commenting on our manuscript. We owe Trudy Kamperveen special thanks for her prompt and effective arrangements and proposals during the entire editorial process.

Budapest, March 2000

Pál Fodor