

# Habsburg–Ottoman Communication in the Mid-17th Century – The Death of Imperial Courier Johann Dietz. A Case Study

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*17. Yüzyılın Ortasında Osmanlı-Habsburg Muhaberatları: İmparatorluk Ulağı Johann Dietz'in Vefatı ve Doğurduğu Sonuçlar*

Öz ■ Zitvatorok Anlaşması'nın (1606) ardından Habsburg Monarşisi'nin şark diplomasisi İmparatorluk Askeri Konseyi (Hofkriegsrat) tarafından idare edildi. Bu dönemde ulaklar son derece ehemmiyetli vazifeler üstlendiklerinden, Viyana Paktı'yla (1615) güvenliklerinin her iki tarafın resmi ulaklarını da kapsayacak şekilde genişletilmesi emredildi. Bu anlaşmaya rağmen, ulaklar, yolculukları sırasında sayısız olayla başa çıkmak zorunda kaldı.

Johannes Dietz vakası da bu gibi hadiselerle bir örnek teşkil etmektedir. Dietz, Konstantinopolis'e bir takım belgeleri teslim etmek için gönderildi. 1651 Kasım ayında Macar haydukları tarafından saldırıya uğradı; kolundan vuruldu ve aldığı yaralar neticesinde öldü. Fakat ölmeden evvel başına gelenleri kağıda döktü. Ayrıca bu çatışmayı teyit eden başka kaynaklar da bulunmaktadır. Örneğin Budá'da gizli yazışmaları yapan kişinin, (mahlası Hans Caspar idi) ulağın vefatıyla ilgili malumatları içeren mektubu bunlardan biridir. Habsburg elçisinin (Simon Reniger) bir Osmanlı ulağı tarafından Dietz vakası hakkında gayri resmi yollardan bilgilendirildiği sırada, olayın Kutsal Roma İmparatorluğu'nun gazetelerinde basılması da enformasyon akışı bağlamında değerlendirildiğinde oldukça ilginçtir.

Suçlayıcı bir takım bilgiler ve Paşa'nın emriyle gerçekleşen akınlar hakkında şikayetler içeren mektupları daha da ileriye göndermek hiçbir suretle Buda vezirinin (Murad Paşa) çıkarlarına hizmet etmiyordu. Sonuç olarak başka bir ulak gerekiyordu. Bu ulak da 18 Ocak 1652 tarihinde Konstantinopolis'e varışından önce, kısa bir süreliğine Paşa tarafından alıkonuldu. Mektupların Konstantinopolis'e ulaşabilmesi için kral naibi (palatin Pál Pálffy), onları Erdel Prenslığı üzerinden gönderdi. En nihayet

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The research presented in this paper has been supported and facilitated by the work of the HAS–University of Szeged Research Group of the Ottoman Age. Ministry of Human

21 Ocak 1652 tarihinde mektupların Konstantinopolis'e varışıyla bu manevra başarıya ulaştı.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma Habsburg-Osmanlı diplomasisinin karmaşıklığını, zayıf noktalarını ve özellikle de Budin Paşası'nın rolünü tasvir etmektedir. Bu hadise aynı zamanda bir ulak kaybetmenin Habsburg ve Osmanlı İmparatorlukları arasındaki bilgi akışında kayda değer kesintilere yol açtığı gerçeğini de yansıtmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Habsburg İmparatorluğu, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Budin, hudut diplomasisi, ulaklar, casusluk, yolculuklar, bilgi akışı.

## Introduction

The Habsburg–Ottoman communication in the mid-17th century has not been thoroughly researched so far;<sup>1</sup> therefore, I present a case study which might

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Capacities, Hungary Grant 20391-3/2018/FEKUSTRAT is acknowledged. University of Szeged, Interdisciplinary Excellence Centre, Department of Medieval and Early Modern History of Hungary, HAS–University of Szeged Research Group of the Ottoman Age. This study is an extended version of a conference paper (The Death of Johann Dietz and Habsburg–Ottoman Communication in the Mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century) which was presented on 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 at the IV. Splendid Encounters Conference of the Premodern Diplomats Network in Budapest. For the former Hungarian version of this paper, see: János Szabados, “Habsburg–oszmán kommunikáció a 17. század derekán. Johann Dietz császári futár halálának körülményei és következményei,” Fanni Hende et al. (eds.), *Szóra bírni az újkort. A III. KoraiújkorÁSZ doktorandusz konferencia tanulmányai*, (Budapest: DOSZ – ELTE BTK TDI 2016), pp. 192–216.

- 1 For most important works on the Habsburg–Ottoman diplomacy of the early modern age, see: Bertold Spuler, “Die Europäische Diplomatie in Konstantinopel bis zum Frieden von Belgrad (1739). Teil 3: Listen der in Konstantinopel anwesenden Gesandten bis in die Mitte des 18. Jhdts.,” *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven*, Neue Folge, XI/3–4 (1935), pp. 313–342; Peter Meienberger, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn als kaiserlicher Resident in Konstantinopel in den Jahren 1629-1643. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und der Türkei in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, (Bern – Frankfurt am Main: Herbert Lang – Peter Lang, 1973; Georg Wagner, “Österreich und die Osmanen im Dreißigjährigen Krieg. Hermann Graf Czernins Großbotschaft nach Konstantinopel 1644/45,” *Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs. Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte. Festschrift für Hans Sturmberger zum 70. Geburtstag*, XIV, (1984), pp. 325–392; Markus Köhbach, “Die diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und dem Osmanischen Reich: Vom Frieden von Zsitva Torok bis zum 1. Weltkrieg,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, IV (1984), pp. 237–241; István Hiller, “A tolmácsper,” *Történelmi Szemle*, XXXIII/3–4 (1991), pp. 203–214; István Hiller, *Palatin Nikolaus Esterházy: Die ungarische Rolle in der Habsburgerdiplomatie 1625–1645* (Wien – Köln – Weimar: Böhlau, 1992); Gunnar Hering, “Panagiutis Nikusios als Dragoman der

provide an insight into some aspects of the communication between the two empires that have surfaced in recent scholarly discussions. After the Peace Treaty of Zsitvatorok (1606), the oriental diplomacy of the Habsburgs was controlled by the Aulic War Council (Hofkriegsrat) and seemed to be spontaneous. It means that the system was not centrally organized, but depended on the neatness of the resident ambassadors of Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> This peace should be considered as a

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kaiserlichen Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel,” *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, XLIV (1994), pp. 143–178; István Hiller, “Pax Optima Rerum,” Nóra G. Etényi and Ildikó Horn (eds.), *Portré és imázs. Politikai propaganda és reprezentáció a kora újkorban* (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2008), pp. 49–60; See also the papers of the two following volumes: Marlene Kurz et al. (eds.), *Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie. Akten des internationalen Kongresses zum 150-jährigen Bestehen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Wien, 22–25. September 2004* (Wien – München: Oldenbourg, 2005); Norbert Spannenberger and Arno Strohmeyer (eds.), *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2013.); For recent studies related to this topic see: Zsuzsanna Cziráki, “Habsburg–Oszmán diplomácia a 17. század közepén: Simon Reniger konstantinápolyi Habsburg rezidens kinevezésének tanúságai (1647–1649),” *Századok*, CXLII/ 4 (2015), pp. 835–871; Ágnes Kovács, “Habsburg–oszmán diplomácia a harmincéves háború utolsó éveiben. Alexander Greiffenklau von Vollrats rezidensi tevékenysége,” Dalma Bódai and Bence Vida (eds.), *Paletta. II. kora újkor-történeti tudományos diákkonferencia. Tanulmánykötet* (Budapest: ELTE BTK Közép- és Koraiújkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék, 2015), pp. 93–111; Sándor Papp, “Egy Habsburg-követ, Simon Reniger oszmán kapcsolathálózata,” *Aetas*, XXXI/3 (2016), pp. 40–53; Hajnalka Tóth, “Mennyit ér egy magyar lovas hadnagy? Egy rabkiváltás története diplomáciatörténeti kontextusban a 17. század közepéről,” *Századok*, CLII/2, (2018), pp. 247–284; Ágnes Kovács, “Der Einfluss kaiserlicher Diplomatie auf die osmanische politische Entscheidungsfindung: Zusammenhänge dem Feldzug von Georg Rákóczi I. von 1644–1645 betreffend,” Áron Tóthos (ed.), *Fejezetek Erdély történetéből* (Nagyvárad: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2018), pp. 279–290.

- 2 Until the Peace of Zsitvatorok (1606), the intelligence activity of the Habsburgs towards the Ottoman Empire had been quite spontaneous. During the Long Turkish War there had been no permanent intelligence which seemed to be disadvantageous for the Habsburgs. Only at the end of the 17th century were they allowed to build up an effective intelligence in Constantinople. cf. Géza Pálffy, “Hírszerzés és hírközlés a törökkori Magyarországon”, Tivadar Petercsák and Mátyás Berecz (eds.), *Információáramlás a magyar és török végvári rendszerekben*, (Eger: Heves Megyei Múzeumi Szervezet, Dobó István Vármúzeum, 1999), pp. 40–47., 52–54; Gábor Ágoston, “Birodalom és információ: Konstantinápoly, mint a koraújkori Európa információs központja”, Gábor Hausner (ed.), *Az értelem bátorsága: Tanulmányok Perjés Géza emlékére* (Budapest: Argumentum, 2005), pp. 38–43; Dóra Kerekes, “Kémek Konstantinápolyban: a Habsburg információszerzés szervezete és működése a magyarországi visszafoglaló háborúk idején (1683–1699),” *Századok*, CXLII/5 (2007), pp. 1218–1219, 1227–1257; Dóra Kerekes, *Diplomaták és kémek Konstantinápolyban* (Budapest:

watershed in the relations between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, because after 1606, Vienna and Constantinople regarded each other as equal participants in the field of diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the next treaty signed in Vienna (1615), the protection of the couriers was ordered by both empires.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, despite this agreement, the couriers who played an indispensable role in these decades had to experience numerous incidents during their journeys.<sup>5</sup>

In this paper, such an incident and its consequences are examined, which shed light on the debatable points of the Habsburg–Ottoman communication in this period. Firstly, I show the specific political relations of Ottoman Hungary. After that, a particular case of an imperial courier is investigated. In connection to that, the activity of the formal Habsburg spy (and so-called secret correspondent) at

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L'Harmattan, 2010), pp. 74–84; Dóra Kerekes, “Titkoszolgálat volt-e a Habsburgok 16-17. századi ‘Titkos Levelezői Hálózata?’,” Csaba Katona (ed.), *Kémek, ügynökök, besúgók: Az ókortól Mata Hariig* (Szombathely: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Vas Megyei Levéltára, 2014), pp. 106–107; About the intelligence of the Habsburg–Ottoman border see: Zoltán Péter Bagi, “A 16–17. századi határvidéki és diplomáciai kémkedés magyar nyelvű irodalmának áttekintése,” *Aetas*, XXVII/4 (2012), pp. 176–187.

3 Meienberger, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 15–71; Edeltraud Artens-Löckmann, “Simon Reningers Residentschaft in Konstantinopel 1649 bis 1665: Beiträge zu den österreichisch-türkischen Beziehungen in der 2. Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts” (doctoral dissertation), Universität Wien, 1984, pp. 1–214; Hiller, *Palatin Nikolaus Esterházy*, pp. 1–32; Ernst D. Petritsch: “Zeremoniell bei Empfängen habsburgischer Gesandtschaften in Konstantinopel,” Ralph Knauz and others (eds.), *Diplomatisches Zeremoniell in Europa und im Mittleren Osten in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), pp. 315–320.

4 For the Hungarian translation of this peace treaty, see: Ferenc Salamon “Két magyar diplomata a tizenhetedik századból,” (Pest: Ráth Mór, 1867), pp. 265–271; for the couriers, see: p. 270; for the Latin translation, see: Jean Dumont (ed.): *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens; contenant un recueil des traités d’alliance, de paix, de trêve, de neutralité, de commerce, d’échange, de protection, de garantie, de toutes les conventions, transactions, pactes, concordats, autres contrats qui ont été faits en Europe, depuis le Règne de l’Empereur Charle magne jusques à présent*, Tome V, Partie II (Amsterdam, unknown publisher, 1728), pp. 264–266, 280–282, about the couriers see: p. 265, 281.; *Treaties etc. between Turkey and Foreign Powers, 1535–1855. Completed by the librarian and keeper of the papers* (London: Foreign Office 1855), pp. 7–12, 12–19, for the couriers, see: 11, 18; The original text of the peace treaty was probably formulated in German, and it was later translated to Hungarian and Ottoman and lastly to Latin. Cf. Salamon: *Két magyar diplomata*, pp. XIX–XX.

5 For the significance of the regular breaches of the peace treaty of Vienna, see: Meienberger, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 57–58; Hiller: *Palatin Nikolaus Esterházy*, p. 63.

Buda (Hans Caspar)<sup>6</sup> is also explored. Then I look at the causes of the obstruction of the correspondence and the consequences of this case with regard to the communication between the two empires. Last but not least, I arrive at the conclusion that the loss of an imperial courier could cause considerable interruptions in the communication system between the Habsburgs and Ottomans. The main sources I used are found in the Austrian National Archives in Vienna (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv), and they can be supplemented by the relevant sources of the Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár). This case study provides a better understanding as regards the complexity and vulnerability of the flow of information between Habsburgs and Ottomans in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### The political relations of Ottoman Hungary in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Although there had been peace between the two empires for quite a long period (1606–1663), the Hungarian commanders as well as the Beys and the Pashas often incurred into enemy territory in order to garner taxes behind the frontiers. Both the Hungarian nobles and the Ottoman officials thought that they had the right to collect taxes in the areas which they had occupied earlier, at least for a while. The areas found behind the defence lines, and where the soldiers of both empires were plundering regularly were called by the renowned Hungarian historian, Ferenc Szakály, the “frontier strip of Ottoman Hungary” (Hung. “hódoltsági peremvidék”) which is not to be mistaken for the “core territories of Ottoman Hungary” (Hung. “hódoltság”).<sup>7</sup> The Peace Treaty of Zsitvatorok had to be prolonged five times till

6 About his activity see: Szabados: *Habsburg–oszmán kommunikáció*, p. 193, 197, János Szabados, “...Inquisition wider Emericum Balassa in puncto des erschossenen Diezens...” (Vizsgálat Balassa Imre ellen a lelőtt Dietz ügyében), *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* CXXIX/2 (2016), pp. 563–566; János Szabados, “Erdélyi vonatkozású levélmásolatok egy budai Habsburg kém (Hans Caspar) tevékenysége nyomán,” *Fons*, XXIII/2 (2016) pp. 262–263, 271–276; János Szabados, “A 17. századi Habsburg-hírszerzés “gyöngyszeme” – Hans Caspar budai titkos levelező (1646–1659) munkássága. Vázlat egy nagyobb összefoglaláshoz,” *Aetas*, XXXI/3 (2016), pp. 81–91.

7 For the Hungarian term “hódoltsági peremvidék”, see: Ferenc Szakály, *Magyar adóztatás a török hódoltságban* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), pp. 23–43; For the English translation of this term, see: Éva Sz. Simon, “Flight or Submission: Changing Identities in the Ottoman–Hungarian Borderlands. The County of Zala in the 1570s”, Robert Born, Andreas Puth (eds.), *Osmanischer Orient und Ostmitteleuropa: Perzeptionen und Interaktionen in den Grenzzonen zwischen dem 16. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), p. 35, 7<sup>th</sup> footnote; The latest works about the “frontier strip of

1648 (1615,<sup>8</sup> 1618,<sup>9</sup> 1625,<sup>10</sup> 1627,<sup>11</sup> 1642<sup>12</sup>), but in spite of these prolongations,

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Ottoman Hungary” see: Péter Illik, *Török dúlás a Dunántúlon: török kártételek a nyugat-dunántúli hódoltsági peremvidéken a 17. század első felében* (Szigetmonostor: WZ könyvek, 2010); Péter Illik, *Minden nap háború: a Magyar Királyságbeli török kártételek anatómiája: 1627–1642* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2013); Éva Sz. Simon, *A Hódoltságon kívüli “hódoltság”: Oszmán terjeszkedés a Délnyugat–Dunántúlon a 16. század második felében*, (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Történettudományi Intézet, 2014).

- 8 Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, 264–266, 280–282; *Treaties etc. between Turkey and Foreign Powers*, pp. 7–12, 12–19; Salamon, *Két magyar diplomata*, pp. XIX–XX, 265–273; Dávid Angyal, “Az 1615-iki bécsi török békének titkos pontjai,” Imre Lukinich (ed.), *Emlékkönyv Dr. gróf Klebelsberg Kuno negyedszázados kultúrpolitikai működésének emlékére: Születésének ötvenedik évfordulóján* (Budapest: Budapesti Hírlap, 1925), pp. 367–382.
- 9 Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, pp. 309–310; *Treaties etc. between Turkey and Foreign Powers*, pp. 20–23; Salamon, *Két magyar diplomata*, pp. 274–278.
- 10 Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, pp. 475–476; *Treaties etc. between Turkey and Foreign Powers*, pp. 23–26; Anton Gévay (ed.), *Az 1625-diki május 26-dikán költ gyarmati békekötés cikkelyei, deákiul, magyarul és törökiul* (Wien: unknown publisher, 1837); Pál Jászay, “A gyarmati béke,” *Tudománytár*, II/1 (1837), pp. 39–75.
- 11 Dumont: *Corps universel diplomatique*, pp. 501–503; *Treaties etc. between Turkey and Foreign Powers*, pp. 26–31; Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph von, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches: Großentheils von bisher unbenützten Handschriften und Archiven, Bd. 5: Vom Regierungsantritte Murad des Vierten bis zur Ernennung Mohammed Köprili's zum Grosswesir, 1623–1656* (Pest: Hartleben, 1829), pp. 95–98; Anton Gévay (ed.), *Az 1627-dik évi september 13-dikán költ szónyi békekötés cikkelyei, deákiul, magyarul és törökiul*, (Wien: unknown publisher, 1837); Pál Jászay, “A szónyi béke, 1627,” *Tudománytár*, IV/2 (1838), pp. 167–274; For the negotiations, see: Gergely Brandl et al., “Válogatott források az 1627. évi szónyi békekötés történetéhez,” *Lymbus: Magyarástudományi Forrásközlemények*, XV (2017), pp. 154–195.
- 12 Jean Dumont (ed.), *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens; contenant un recueil des traités d'alliance, de paix, de trêve, de neutralité, de commerce, d'échange, de protection, de garantie, de toutes les conventions, transactions, pactes, concordats, autres contrats qui ont été faits en Europe, depuis le Règne de l'Empereur Charle magne jusques à présent*, Tome VI, Partie I (Amsterdam, unknown publisher, 1728), p. 246; *Treaties etc. between Turkey and Foreign Powers*, pp. 31–35.; Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, p. 305; For the negotiations and edition of the documents, see: Majláth, Béla: *Az 1642-ik évi szónyi békekötés története* (Budapest: MTA, 1885); It is necessary to note that systematic and comparative analysis of the aforementioned Habsburg–Ottoman Peace treaties will be necessary in the future. This means not only the examination of the different text variants of the treaties, but also the circumstances of the negotiations. For this reason, a research group at the University of Szeged has been established (MTA–SZTE Oszmán-kori Kutatócsoport/HAS University of Szeged Research Group of the Ottoman Age) under the direction of Prof. Sándor Papp. As these examinations will take place in the future, I will use the term “prolongation” in the following.

the plundering was continued mutually. Although, both empires were interested in keeping the peace during the Thirty Years War, but after the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the political situation became more critical than it had been before, because after 1648, the garrisoning of the Imperial troops in the Kingdom of Hungary seemed to further aggravate the tensions in the frontier strip.<sup>13</sup>

The Habsburg and the Ottoman central governments intended to maintain peace, because they were not strong enough to be at war with each other due to their financial and political situation. Furthermore, the Ottomans were actually at war with the Venetians (the so-called Cretan War 1645–1669)<sup>14</sup>, and they also had internal conflicts, such as the rebellions of the *janissary* and *spahi*. As a consequence of such rebellions that threatened with political anarchy, the position of the Grand Vizier was occupied two times in the autumn of 1651, because the sultan (Mehmet IV) was still an infant and these military corps tried to increase

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13 For the garrisoning of the imperial troops, see: István Czigány, *Reform vagy kudarc? Kísérletek a magyarországi katonaság beillesztésére a Habsburg Birodalom haderejébe 1600–1700* (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2004), pp. 99–106; Anna Fundarek (Fundárková), “Egy királysági politikus és az erdélyi fejedelmi udvar a 17. század közepén: Pálffy Pál országbíró és nádor erdélyi kapcsolatai (1646–1653)”, *Századok*, CXLII/4 (2008), pp. 959–963; Anna Fundarek (Fundárková), *Ein ungarischer Aristokrat am Wiener Hof des 17. Jahrhunderts: Die Briefe von Paul Pálffy an Maximilian von Trauttmansdorff, 1647–1650* (Wien: Publikationen der Ungarischen Geschichtsforschung in Wien, 2009), pp. LV–LX; Although the original aim of the above mentioned garrisoning was the defence against the Ottomans, the Prince of Transylvania, György (George) Rákóczy II. (1648–1660) tried to hinder it, because he was afraid of an attack against his country. Thus, the executor of that procedure, the Hungarian Palatine, Pál (Paul) Pálffy (1649–1653), had quite good relations with the family of the prince, but the real aim of this relation has not been clarified exactly so far. For that subject and the relation of the Hungarian political elite to the prince of Transylvania, see: Katalin Péter, *A magyar romlásnak századában* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1975), pp. 81–103; Sándor Papp, “II. Rákóczi György és a Porta”, Gábor Kármán and András Péter Szabó (eds.), *Szerencsének elegendő forgása. II. Rákóczi György és kora* (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2009), pp. 135–136; Péter Szabó, II. Rákóczi György “discursusa az magyarországi dolgok felől” (1653. december 30.),” Kármán and Szabó (eds.), *Szerencsének elegendő forgása*, pp. 281–282; Gábor Kármán, *Erdélyi külpolitika a vesztfáliai béke után* (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2011), pp. 204–226; Lothar Höbelt, *Ferdinand III. (1608–1657): Friedenskaiser wider Willen* (Graz: Ares Verlag, 2008), pp. 366–376.

14 For the Cretan War, see: Eckehard Eickhoff, *Venedig, Wien und die Osmanen: Umbruch in Südosteuropa 1645–1700* (München: Klett-Cotta, 1973<sup>2</sup>), pp. 17–264; Setton, Kenneth M., *Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991), pp. 137–243.

their influence on the government.<sup>15</sup> For these reasons, when either side resorted to plundering, the Habsburg generals or the Pashas of Buda were complaining in Vienna or in Constantinople through their couriers. The Viziers of Buda sent their complaints to Vienna and Constantinople, and the Habsburgs sent theirs to Buda and, respectively, to Constantinople, where their resident ambassador in the 1650s, Simon Reniger (1649–1666)<sup>16</sup>, handed them over to the Grand Vizier.

The whole system of communication between Vienna and Constantinople was controlled by the imperial interpreter, Michel D’Asquier (1625–1664)<sup>17</sup> and Johann Rudolf Schmid, who was the former resident ambassador in Constantinople (1629–1643) and a Councillor of the Aulic War Council. Schmid negotiated about the peace in Constantinople in 1649, and also ratified the prolonged peace in 1650/1651 as an ambassador.<sup>18</sup> However, it seemed that all this prolongation had been for nothing, because of the above mentioned political situation.

In order to be kept better informed, the Aulic War Council has organised a network for forwarding letters and clandestine intelligence. The system of the so-called “Secret Correspondence” (Geheime Korrespondenz) had been established in the second half of the 1620s. The members of this net also supported the Habsburg correspondence between Vienna and Constantinople with their posts at Buda,

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15 Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, pp. 537–552; Eickhoff, *Venedig, Wien und die Osmanen*, pp. 106–111; János B. Szabó and Balázs Sudár, “Independens fejedelem az Portán kívül II. Rákóczi György oszmán kapcsolatai: Esettanulmány az Erdélyi fejedelemség és az Oszmán Birodalom viszonyának történetéhez. (2. rész),” *Századok*, CXLVIII/ 4 (2013), pp. 936–938, 943–944.

16 For the the final report of Reniger, see: Alois Veltzé (ed.), *Die Hauptrelation des kaiserlichen Residenten in Constantinopel Simon Reniger von Renningen, 1649–1666* (Wien: Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs, 1900); For his activity, see: Artens-Löckmann, *Simon Reningers Residentschaft in Konstantinopel*, passim; Zsuzsanna Cziráki: “Zur Person und Erwählung des kaiserlichen Residenten in Konstantinopel: Simon Reniger von Renningen (1649–1666),” *Wiener Archivforschungen: Festschrift für den ungarischen Archivdelegierten in Wien, István Fazekas*, hg. von Zsuzsanna Cziráki, Anna Fundárek, Orsolya Manhercz, Zsuzsanna Peres, Márta Vajnági (Wien: Institut für Ungarische Geschichtsforschung in Wien, 2014), pp. 157–164; Cziráki, “Habsburg–Oszmán diplomácia”, pp. 835–871.

17 Meienberger: *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 80–82; Hiller, *Palatin Nikolaus Esterházy*, pp. 71–75; Alastair Hamilton, “Michel d’Asquier, Imperial Interpreter and Bibliophile,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LXXII (2009), pp. 237–241.

18 For the activity of Schmid, see: Meienberger: *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 117–119; Cziráki: *Habsburg–oszmán diplomácia*, pp. 853–862.



Belgrade, and Sophia. These places lay along the route which the imperial couriers used, and most of the time, they collected the reports from the correspondents.<sup>19</sup>

In this period, the pseudonym of the correspondent at Buda was Hans Caspar (his original name was Alexander Fischer) who was born in Vienna, but the Ottoman officials called him Huseyn chiaus, because at that time he was the interpreter of the Pasha of Buda. In addition to this, the Habsburgs recruited him in the mid-1640s into their network of spies, and most of the time he delivered quite valuable pieces of information in his reports, which were signed as if they had been sent from Tata (Totiŝ). According to the sources, he also had contacts in Transylvania, because he could speak Hungarian as well.<sup>20</sup> He committed to paper several reports, which are quite important for understanding the political situation of the frontier stripes of Ottoman Hungary.<sup>21</sup>

### The case of Johann Dietz

At the beginning of October 1651, the Ottoman soldiers plundered Tokaj, and kidnapped several Hungarian nobles and their families. That is why the imperial courier, Johann Dietz, had to be sent with letters of complaint to the Pasha of Buda, Kara Murat Pasha (6 August 1650 – 9 September 1653)<sup>22</sup>, and the Sublime Porte.<sup>23</sup>

19 For the Secret Correspondence, see: Meienberger: *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*, pp. 83–86; István Hiller, “A ‘Titkos Levelezők’ intézménye,” Péter Tusor et al. (eds.), *R. Várkonyi Ágnes Emlékkönyv születésének 70. évfordulója ünnepére* (Budapest: ELTE Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 1998), pp. 204–216; Dóra Kerekes, “A császári tolmácsok a magyarországi visszafoglaló háborúk idején,” *Századok*, CXXXVIII/5 (2004), p. 1206, pp. 1212–1218; Kerekes, “Kémek Konstantinápolyban”, pp. 1219–1257; Kerekes, *Diplomaták és kémek*, pp. 138–148; Kerekes, “Titkosszolgálat volt-e”, pp. 106–128. The terms and functions (“correspondent” and “correspondence”) also need to be cross-examined with the sources.

20 For his Hungarian report to the prince György Rákóczi II, see: Huseyn chiaus to György Rákóczi II, Buda, the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1654. Sándor Szilágyi (ed.), *Erdély és az északkeleti háború I. Levelek és okiratok: Transylvania et bellum boreo-orientale. Acta et documenta* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1890), pp. 357–358.

21 For the literature about his activity, see the Footnote 6.

22 Antal Gévay, *A budai pasák* (Bécs: unknown publisher, 1841), p. 40.

23 Reply for Reniger and information for him about the mission of Dietz. Vienna, 25<sup>th</sup> of October. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Kriegsarchiv (KA), Protokollbücher des Hofkriegstats (HKR, Prot.), Band (Bd.) 304, 1651. Registratur (Reg.), folio (fol.) 164. Numero (No. 94.); Instructions for Dietz from the Aulic War Council. Vienna, 25<sup>th</sup> of

Dietz departed from Vienna at the end of October, and he arrived in Esztergom (Gran) a couple of days later. From there, he continued his journey to Buda. Nevertheless, along the Danube bend at Nagymaros, some plundering Hungarian herdsmen attacked his Ottoman convoy, and in spite of his warning, he was also shot at and hit in his right hand. After Ottoman soldiers from Visegrád had come to save them, he spent the night at Visegrád, where his wound was treated by an Ottoman paramedic. The following day, he travelled to Buda, where he wrote his report on what happened to him exactly.<sup>24</sup> He stayed at Buda for two more weeks in the hopes of healing. However, the courier died at the end of November of his gunshot wound, so he was unable to fulfil his mission. Thus, it was necessary to find another solution in order to forward the letters to Constantinople.

In one of his reports written from Buda to Johann Christoph Puchheim, commander of Comorn (1639–1651)<sup>25</sup> and vice-president of the Aulic War Council (1651–1657)<sup>26</sup> and to Johann Rudolf Schmid Dietz mentioned that he had been in contact with the secret correspondent, who also wrote about his conversations with the courier in his reports.<sup>27</sup> After the death of Dietz, Hans Caspar took care of the courier's personal properties, and tried to save the letters which Dietz had been charged to deliver to the Sublime Porte.<sup>28</sup>

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October 1651. ÖStA, Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA), Türkei I, Karton (Kt.) 124, Konvolut (Konv.) 1, fol. 209–210; For the letter for the Vizier, see: ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 213; For the letter of General Wesselényi from 10th October, see: ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 213; For the letter of the captain of the fortress Gyarmat from 3rd October, see: ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv.1, fol. 214; About Wesselényi see: Géza Pálffy, “Kerületi és végvidéki főkapitányok és főkapitányhelyettesek Magyarországon a 16–17. században,” *Történelmi Szemle* XXXIX/ 2 (1997) p. 273; The captain of Gyarmat was Francis (Ferenc) Esterházy at that time. Cf. Sándor Balogh, *Balassagyarmat története, 896–1962*, (Balassagyarmat: Balassagyarmat Városának Tanácsa, 1977), p. 35.

24 Dietz to Johann Christoph Puchheim. Buda, 13<sup>rd</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 32–33.

25 Pálffy, “Kerületi és végvidéki főkapitányok”, p. 284.

26 Henry Frederick Schwarz, *The Imperial Privy Council in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), p. 325.

27 Dietz to Schmid. Buda, 14<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 29; Dietz to Puchheim. Buda, 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 36; Hans Caspar to Puchheim. Buda, 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 73.

28 Hans Caspar to Schmid. Buda, 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 91–92.

### Why was this case important as regards the flow of information?

Simon Reniger, the resident ambassador in Constantinople, was informed about the injury of Dietz on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, and about his death on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December,<sup>29</sup> but these were unofficial news from Ottoman couriers sent by Murat to the Sublime Porte. Simultaneously, the news about the courier's case appeared in the columns of the Holy Roman Empire's weekly papers (*Ordentliche Wochentliche Postzeitung*,<sup>30</sup> *Ordinari Dienstags Zeitung*,<sup>31</sup> *Europäische Sambstägliche Zeitung*<sup>32</sup>), and later in the collection of sources called *Theatrum Europaeum*.<sup>33</sup>

29 Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 125; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 20<sup>th</sup> of December 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 148.

30 "Aus Wien von 6. Dezember. Vor wenig Tagen ist derjenige Courirer so von der Röm. Kayserl. Majest. nacher Constantinopel abgefertiget worden, auff der Türckischen Seiten von den Ungarischen Heyducken, welche auff die Türcken gestraiffet angegriffen und erschossen, hernachmahls aber diese von den Türckischen Guarnisonen ereylet, 5 niedergehauet und 5 gefangen worden, deßwegen Ihre Kayserl. Majest. an den Bassa zu Ofen geschrieben, ihro solche 5 gefangene Heyducken überlieffern zu lassen, dessen Erfolg noch zuerwarten stehet." *Ordentliche Wochentliche Postzeitung*, 1651. LI. 11. 18.–12. 16., Frankfurt (Accessed in May 16, 2015).

31 "Aus Wien vom 6. Decembris [...] Dieser Tagen ist Ihrer Kayserl. Majest. nacher Constantiopol abgefertigter vornehmer courirer herr Dietz off der Türckischen Gränz von etlichen Heyducken so auff die Türcken gestreiffi angegriffen und erschossen worden. Die seynd aber nachmahlen von denen in den Türckischen Guarnisonen liegenden Türcken ereylet, 5 davon niedergemacht, unnd 5 gefangen worden, weßwegen Ihre Kayserl. Majest. an den Bassa zu Offen geschrieben, Ihro die fünff gefangene Heyducken ohne Verzug lieffern zulassen. Man besorget, daß ein Practick darhinder stecke." *Ordinari Dienstags Zeitung prima* von No 51 Anno 1651. {01.12.1651 – 06.12.1651.} [02. 12. 1651– 16.12.1651], Frankfurt: <http://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/zeitungen17/periodical/pageview/955888> (Accessed in May 16, 2015).

32 "Prag vom 9. Decembris [...] Dieser Tagen haben etliche auff die Türcken gestreiffene Ungarische Heyducken ihrer Kayserl. Maytt. vormehmsten nach Constantinopel abgefertigten Courier Dietz genant auff der Gränz angegriffen, unnd erschossen, denen zwar die Türcken nachgesetzt, auch von gedachten Hayducken 5 niedergemacht, und so viel gefangen, weil man aber die Beysorge, daß eine Practicq hier mit unter lauffe, als haben Ihrer Käyserl. Maytt. deßwegen an den Bassa zu Ofen geschrieben, und die 5 Gefangene auszuliebern [!] begehrt." *Europäische Sambstägige Zeitung, Secunda* Nr. 51. 1651., [09.12.–17.12.], Hamburg <http://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/zeitungen17/periodical/pageview/1030249> (Accessed in May 16, 2015).

33 "Fast damahl, ist der Kaiserl. Majest. nach Constantinopel abgefertigter fürnehmster currier Dietz, auff der Türckischen seiten von etlichen Hungarischen Heyducken, so auff die Türcken gestreiffi, angegriffen und erschossen: Die aber folgend von den Türckischen garnisonen ereilet, 5. nidergehauen, und 5. gefangen worden, weßwegen Ihre Kaiserl. Majest. an den Bassa nach Ofen geschriben, und Ihro diese 5. gefangene Heyducken ohne verzug zu liefern begehren lassen."

However, these news items were quite unreliable, because they contradicted Dietz's own report. The origin of the news was not known, and it is also uncertain whose interest it was to present them in such a form. The Archbishop of Mainz, who was the Imperial Chancellor and also the protector of the Imperial post<sup>34</sup>, and who would later side with Louis XIV, seemed to be, at that time, a supporter of the Habsburgs.<sup>35</sup>

Simon Reniger was officially informed about the death of Dietz only on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1652 by another imperial courier, Natal de Paulo.<sup>36</sup> In addition to this, Paul Pálffy (the Hungarian Palatine) was also commissioned to send copies through Transylvania.<sup>37</sup> These letters seemed to have arrived on the 21<sup>th</sup> of January to Constantinople.<sup>38</sup> The demonstrated characteristics of the communication flow and the quite late arrival of the letters can be explained by more reasons which I shall relate in the following.

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*Theatrum Europeum*, Band 7 (1651–1657) (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Görllin, 1685 [1663]), p. 32.

34 Wolfgang Behringer, "Post, Zeitung und Reichsverfassung: Machtkämpfe zu Beginn des Zeitungswesens," Klaus Beyrer and Martin Dallmeier (eds.), *Als die Post noch Zeitung machte* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Postmuseum, 1994), p. 42. For the importance of the Archbishop of Mainz, see: Höbelt, *Ferdinand III.*, p. 281.

35 Georg Mentz, *Johann Philipp Schönborn: Kurfürst von Mainz, Bischof von Würzburg und Worms, 1605–1673*, Erster Teil (Jena: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1896), pp. 45–58.

36 The commission of courier Natal. Vienna, 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1651. ÖStA, KA, HKR, Prot., Bd. 304, 1651. Reg., fol. 180r. No. 1; "...Den 18. verwichenen monats gegen dem abendt ist der currier Natal glücklich ankommen, hiemit hab von EKM ich in tieffester reverenz undterschiedliche ksl. befehl empfangen. Und erstlich mit dem duplicat vom 25. Octobris wegen der excess in Ober Ungarn, vom 17. und ein duplicat sambt dem triplicat vom 27. Novembris. Item jedes mit seinem duplicat vom 2., 4., und 11. Decembris." Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 11<sup>th</sup> of Februar 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 125, Konv. 1, fol. 79.

37 Rákóczi sent a letter to the Prince, in which he asked him to forward some letters which originally had been committed to Dietz. Cf. Pálffy to Rákóczi. Malaczky, 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1651. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL), E 190, fasciculus (fasc.) 27. No. 6307. Sándor Papp referred to that letter in his paper related to György (Georg) Rákóczi II, cf. Papp, "II. Rákóczi György és a Porta", pp. 135–136.

38 "...So ist auch das triplicat vom 25. Octobris, wie ingleichen das duplicat sambt dem triplicat vom 17., und leztliches dero ksl. schreiben vom 27. Novembris den 21. passato durch Sibenbürgen zurecht eingelangt..." Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 11<sup>th</sup> of Februar 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 125, Konv. 1, fol. 79.

### The reasons of the letters' obstruction

When Dietz arrived in Buda, the Pasha asked him whether he had come only to him, or intended to travel to Constantinople. This question was definitely not accidental because Murat Pasha was well aware of the fact that the courier conveyed complaints against him, which he did not want to reach Constantinople. That is why he tried, at first, to advise the courier not to continue his journey, but, according to his reports, Dietz seemed to be uncompromising.<sup>39</sup>

The Pasha later offered the courier to take over the letters from him in order to preserve them until he would get news from Constantinople. In the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Gurgi Mehmet<sup>40</sup> acquired the position of the Grand Vizier, which rendered the post of Murat Pasha questionable, as the Pasha wanted to know whether he should stay there, or not, because he partook in the murder of Sultan Ibrahim in 1648 as the Aga of the *janissary*, and thus he was afraid of retribution.<sup>41</sup> However, Dietz obviously did not give him the letters. On the basis of Caspar's report, the other reason for obstructing the correspondence was that Murat personally gave orders to his subordinate Pashas and Beys to plunder in Hungarian territories. He had also been afraid of the consequences, for example, the revenge of Wenzel Eusebius Lobkowitz, the President of the Aulic War Council, or the probable retribution from Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> However, after Hans Caspar

39 Dietz an Puchheim. Buda, 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 36.

40 He was Grand Vizier between 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1651 and 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1652. Cf. Szabó and Sudár, “*Independens fejedelem az Portán kívül*”, p. 998.

41 For Murat Pasha, see: Lothar Höbelt, “Friedliche Koexistenz – unfriedliche Grenze: der Hintergrund der Schlacht von Vezekény 1652,” *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* LXXIII/1 (2012), pp. 8–21; For the transition of power in autumn 1651 and the uncertain position of Murat Pasha, see: Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 119–120.; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 126; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 187–189.; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 205; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 65; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 68; Reniger to Ferdinand III. Constantinople, 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 104; Hans Caspar to J. Ch. Puchheim s. l. (Buda?), 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 60–61.

42 Hans Caspar to J. Ch. Puchheim. Tata (Buda), 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 73–74.

had read the letter of Lobkowitz aloud, the Pasha declared in private, that if he was appointed Grand Vizier once again, he would call Ottoman and Tatar troops in order to ruin Hungary.<sup>43</sup>

This matter is also interesting, because Murat Pasha had been negotiating with Johann Rudolf Schmid in 1649 about the prolongation of the peace (he was the Grand Vizier at that time), and he made an effort to become Grand Vizier again. His efforts seemed to be successful, as he got the expected position in 1655 one more time, but, fortunately, he did not fulfil the promise he had made.<sup>44</sup>

After the death of Dietz, Hans Caspar, according to his report, took possession of the letters before the *defterdar* could have confiscated them. Caspar had also been commissioned by the Pasha to prepare the dead body to be delivered along with the letters to the fortress of Comorn (Komárom/Komárno) as well, which he did indeed perform.<sup>45</sup> With this solution, Murat Pasha could kill two birds with one stone. Not only was he able to demonstrate a fact related to Hungarian plundering, but he could also hinder the delivery of the letters to Constantinople.

It might be possible that finally the language student (Sprachknabe), Heinrich Julius Wachin, who was sent as a courier by Reniger and came from Constantinople, delivered both the dead body and the original letters to Comorn.<sup>46</sup> From there, the letters might have fallen into the hands of the Palatine, Pálffy, who then sent them to Prince Georg Rákóczi II, in order to forward them to the Sublime Porte.

Another imperial courier, the aforementioned Natal de Paulo, was tasked with the delivery of some duplicates and triplicates. He most likely received the letters only in Buda. According to Hans Caspar's report, the appointment of Natal was effective, because otherwise the letters would not have been forwarded to Constantinople. The Pasha did not want to send them to the Ottoman capital at all,

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43 Hans Caspar to Lobkowitz. Tata (Buda), 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 125, Konv. 1, fol. 60.

44 For the negotiations of the peace in 1649, see: Meienberger, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenborn*, pp. 117–121; For the next period of Murat es Grandvezier, see: Höbelt, "Friedliche Koexistenz," pp. 17–21.; Szabó and Sudár, "'Independens fejedelem az Portán kívül'", pp. 961–962.

45 Hans Caspar to Schmid. Tata (Buda), 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 91–92.

46 Reniger to Schmid. Constantinople, 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 240; Hans Caspar to Schmid. Tata (Buda), 27. November 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 2, fol. 91.

and it is also possible that Hans Caspar hindered the letters too, as he mentioned some imperial letters which he could not forward until that time. When the new courier arrived in Buda, Murat apologized for withholding the letters. Moreover, he declared he had not had any couriers who could have delivered the letters to the Porte.<sup>47</sup> That statement seems to be true. Though Reniger was informed by the Pasha's couriers about the occurrences connected to Dietz, Murat was still waiting for the return of his courier on the 21th of January.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the Pasha obstructed Natal's journey, and he told the courier emphatically that he should not complain about him at the Sublime Port at all, in order to avoid troubles on his journey back.<sup>49</sup> This statement can be considered as an unconcealed threat. Such procedures were usual at that time, despite the aforementioned agreement about the protection of the couriers signed in 1615.

### Conclusion

As it has been shown, the communication between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century was hindered by several problems. First, peace was an illusion in the area of the "frontier strip of Ottoman Hungary", since incursions from and multiple cases of plundering of both sides were quite regular. It might also explain why Dietz was so easily ambushed and shot by Hungarian herdsmen. Secondly, the correspondence between Vienna and Constantinople was obstructed by the Vizier of Buda. It indicates that the government of the Ottoman Empire at that time was not strong enough to regulate the governors of Ottoman Hungary and other territories.

Eventually, the assignment was completed nonetheless, partly due to the help of the secret correspondent, because the courier, Natal de Paulo, succeeded in delivering the letters to the Ottoman capital, and the ones sent via Transylvania

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47 Hans Caspar to J. Ch. Puchheim. Tata (Buda), 7<sup>th</sup> of January 1652. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 125, Konv. 1, fol. 54.

48 Hans Caspar to J. Ch. Puchheim. Tata (Buda), 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1652. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 125, Konv. 1, fol. 59.

49 Extract of the report of Hans Caspar from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1652. ÖStA, KA, HKR Prot., Bd. 303. 1651–1652. Exp., 1652. fol. 26r No. 73; Natal to J. Ch. Puchheim(?), Belgrade, 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1652. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 125, Konv. 1, fol. 65, 68. (extract in German). It was not the first case that Murad intentionally obstructed the letters between Vienna and Constantinople. Cf. Reniger to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 31. October 1651. ÖStA, HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 124, Konv. 1, fol. 245–246.

also seem to have arrived in Constantinople. In spite of this, it is remarkable that the news of Dietz's death was published in a couple of newspapers in the Holy Roman Empire, but, at the same time, the Habsburg resident ambassador in Constantinople had to receive this news unofficially from the Pasha's courier. What is more, the case of Johann Dietz, imperial courier, can be considered as an indicator of the complexities, and, coincidentally, the weak points of the Habsburg–Ottoman diplomacy. Furthermore, the case also reflects the fact that the loss of a courier could cause considerable interruptions in the flow of information between the two empires.

**Abstract** ■ After the peace of Zsitvatorok (1606) the oriental diplomacy of the Habsburg Monarchy was controlled by the Aulic War Council (Hofkriegsrat). As the couriers played an indispensable role as transmitters of vital information in that period, the Vienna Pact (1615) ordered the protection of the couriers to be extended to the official couriers on both sides. Despite this agreement, the couriers had to face numerous incidences during their journeys.

The case of Johannes Dietz was an example of such incidents. Dietz had been sent to deliver documents to Constantinople, when in November 1651 he was attacked by Hungarian Haiduks who shot him in his arm, and subsequently Dietz died of his wounds. However, he committed to paper what happened to him exactly. Moreover, there are other sources which also confirm this incident, for instance, the letter of the secret correspondent (his cover-name was Hans Caspar) in Buda which includes pieces of information about the death of the courier. Regarding the flow of information, it is quite interesting that while the Habsburg resident ambassador (Simon Reniger) was informed about Dietz's case in an unofficial way by the Ottoman courier, it was also issued in the newspapers of the Holy Roman Empire.

Forwarding the letters, which contained incriminating information and complaints about the raids had been ordered by the Pasha, was not in the interest of him (Murat pasha) at all. As a result, another courier was needed. He was also hindered by the Pasha for a short while before his arrival at Constantinople on 18 January 1652. So that the letters could be delivered to Constantinople, the palatine (Pál Pálffy) had to direct them through the Principality of Transylvania. This manoeuvre proved to be successful as the letters reached Constantinople on 21 January 1652.

Consequently, the study was to illustrate the case of the complexity and the weak points of the Habsburg–Ottoman diplomacy, especially the role of the Pasha of Buda. This case also reflected on the fact that the loss of a courier caused considerable interruptions in the flow of information between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires.

**Keywords:** Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Empire, Buda, frontier diplomacy, couriers, espionage, excursions, flow of information, media history.



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