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BALKANLARDA
İSLÂM
MİADI DOLMAYAN UMUT

İSLAM IN THE BALKANS
UNEXPIRED HOPE

GÖNÜL FETHİNDEN ZİHNİYET TEMSİLİNE
FROM THE CONQUEST OF HEARTS TO THE
REPRESENTATION OF MENTALITY

EDİTÖR
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From the Conquest of Hearts to the Representation of Mentality

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Cisr-I Kebir-I Ösek A World Wonder

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Summary

It is very difficult to connect with certainty the construction of the great Ottoman bridge at Osijek, such as it was described in Ottoman and non-Ottoman narrative sources, as well as on graphic representations – all of them from the 17th century – with the campaign of Süleyman the Magnificent against Szigetvar. All what is undisputable in the 16th century Ottoman sources is the fact that the pontoon bridge had been used, perhaps continuously, since the conquest. In addition to that, in times of the Suleymanic Hungarian campaigns, improvised roads of planks were used to enable the troops to march over the marshy land for a mile or two, not more. This in turn entails the assumption that the „World wonder – bridge“ was erected in the period between 1590 and 1610, whereafter it had not the purely military role, but a commercial one as well.

Cısr-i Kebır-i Ösek Bir Dünya Harikası

Özet

Ösijek'teki muhteşem Osmanlı köprüsünün inşa edilmesini Osmanlı ve Osmanlı olmayan anlatı kaynaklarda tarif edildiği ve hepsi 17. yüzyıldan kalma grafik temsillerde gösterildiği şekilde Muhteşem Süleyman'ın Szigetvar'a karşı yürüttüğü sefer ile kesinlikle ilişkilendirmek çok zordur. 16. yüzyılın Osmanlı kaynaklara göre fetihten sonra dubalı köprü'nün belki de sürekli olarak kullanıldığının tartışılmaz oluşudur. Buna ilaveten Süleyman tarafından yürütülen Macaristan seferleri sırasında askerlerin bataklık arazide ilerleyebilmeleri için en fazla bir ya da iki kilometrelik kalaslarla geçici yolların yapılmasıdır. Böylelikle de 'Dünya harikası – köprü'nün' 1590 ila 1610 döneminde inşa edildiği ve salt askeri amaçlı olmayarak ticari rolünün de mevcut olduğu varsayımını getirmektedir.

The Great Bridge from the Turkish records

Numerous Ottoman documents refer to Osijek/Ösek and the surrounding area. Unfortunately, only a small amount refers to it directly. There is much more information about the army in the fortress, even in Darda, about inland navigation and boats, salaries, the fair, weapons and different types of jobs.

The Great Bridge whose construction was ordered by Sultan Süleyman I the Lawgiver (Kanuni), or Süleyman II the Magnificent in the West, is not mentioned a lot in Ottoman narrative sources. Besides a detailed description and additional commentaries by traveller Evliya Çelebi (1611 – after 1682), the bridge was also mentioned by several other authors, but it is not necessary to mention them here since they only offer laconic remarks that there is a bridge near Osijek.

Until recently, the known and used Turkish sources were almost entirely limited to the mentioned travelogue and a certain amount of references from the archives.¹

Today the available source we can use is the latest autograph edition of “The Book of Travels”², as well as a slightly larger number of new information which I have gathered during my research in the Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archive (BOA) in Istanbul (June – September/October 2012). To what extent can the new findings, together with what we already know, help answer a number of basic questions concerning the bridge, such as the time of construction, the time of reconstruction, technical characteristics and location, etc? Ottoman architects most surely made plans for the buildings they constructed but it was not common to archive such construction aid. There are various cost estimate registers, work logs and lists of people and materials for many undertakings, even for bridge repair and construction, but for Osijek there are only a few fragments, mostly referring to the last phase of the bridge. In this paper I would like to connect the results of the recent research with the new findings. Therefore, what needs to be taken into consideration is that some texts, meaning records, are translated, some summarized, and some presented in a partial reconstruction due to difficulties with reading from the sources.

The first important thing to mention is that as far as Ottoman-Turkish 16th century sources are concerned, not one explicitly and unambiguously mentions the construction of a “road on piers” from the time of Süleyman. Each time the word *köprü* (bridge; sometimes *cisr*, bridge, crossing) is used in such a way that it can be without much difficulty understood as pontoon bridge. In large defterler called *keşif* (construction and repair expenses) from the time of Süleyman’s rule, which contain cost estimate registers for reconstruction works on fortresses and

1 Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis* (transl. Hazim Šabanović), Sarajevo, 1979; Nenad Močanin, *Osijek u turskim izvorima*, Povijesni prilozi 16, Zagreb, 1997

2 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 6. Kitap, Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı, Istanbul, 2002.

traffic installations across the empire in Europe, there is no sign of Osijek (but interestingly, the repair of the movable bridge in front of the Vukovar fortress is noted down!).³ In the following text, until the analysis of the period after 1600, I will be using the word “bridge”, which does not exclude a number of uncertainties.

The beginnings

At the beginning of the paragraph about the bridge in “The Book of Travels”, Šabanović’s translation of the first sentence was shortened as follows: “It existed in the Christian times”. This was done by the publisher of the printed edition in 1900. However, according to the autograph, “the bridge existed before as well, in pagan times, but it was located a bit more downstream and it was used as a foot-bridge, so carriages couldn’t cross that way so they were transported on boats”.⁴ So, the pre-history of the bridge goes back a bit further, probably to the Late Middle Ages. However, the significance of such a crossing must have been slightly more modest, with no military purpose and with a much lesser commercial dimension. Nevertheless, the appearance of the bridge can be observed in the context of the change in raft maintenance on the Danube and the Drava, when in the 15th century the keepers of such crossings became the noble bearers of the defence against the Ottomans. They inherited the nearby estates so traffic became heavier and income increased.⁵

From what is known so far the conclusion is that the Süleymanic bridge was, not taking into account the Battle of Mohács, built and destroyed at least twice during his rule, and one more time afterwards, most probably during the reign of his successor Selim II. The bridge was probably constructed for the first time as an architectural project upon the Siege of Vienna in 1532. At least we know that at the beginning of the 1540s it was functional and must have been used during the 1541 and 1543 campaigns. However, already in 1545 the order came for the bridge to be destroyed. It was then rebuilt in 1566 and soon in 1568 it was destroyed, partly on Bali bey’s order and partly due to damage caused by severe weather conditions. Probably the last destruction of what had become a world wonder can be ascribed to Nikola Zrinski when he invaded the bridge in 1663, after which, it seems, it was functional again very soon because in April, 1665 the new Buda pasha was passing that way.⁶ The last repairs took place in the context of the last campaign to Vienna in 1683. Finally, the bridge was destroyed in the Habsburg defensive in 1686.

3 BOA, MAD 55, 157, 523.

4 The Seyâhatnâme VI, 108.

5 Peter Rokai, “Brodovi” na Dunavu i pritokama na području južne Ugarske u Srednjem veku, Plovidba na Dunavu i njegovim pritokama kroz vekove”, *SANU*, naučni skupovi XV, odeljenje istorijskih nauka 3, Beograd, 1983.

6 BOA, MAD. d 18223_00003.

Although there is information about the bridge before 1566, it is unclear what it was like, meaning we can be led to believe that there was no bridge on the Baranya side, so that until the siege of Szigetvár the pontoon bridge was used for all traffic. In summer when everything was dry the army could without any difficulty march towards the north and north-west. The great fair appeared only after 1600, and the town had altogether around three hundred houses. There is no final conclusion, but we shall see that there is strong indication that we can differentiate between two phases of the bridge: the first phase when the main task was to cross the Drava in the context of temporary military needs, and the second phase when, nonetheless, it was necessary to ensure a permanent and undisturbed crossing at any time in the context of economic needs.

In Mühimme defterleri from 1545, regesta nr. 30 says: (after the detailed instructions to the sancakbeyi of Smederevo concerning the cannons and a bridge which should be constructed near Belgrade) “how much wood is there for the bridge⁷ on the Drava, where is it stored, whether all the material is ready, and if not, whether anything is missing, and if so, then how much of what is missing is required, leave nothing to doubt, report on everything and make a list”. The regesta of the document was registered on the 22nd of January, 1545.

The regesta from the 1st of April, 1545 reveals even more information:

“A command to the sancakbeyi of Semendire, Toygun bey:

(...) when the wooden material for the Buda bridge was inspected, it was established that more than half of the beams and boards are missing, and that the trees necessary for the construction of the bridge are cut in the kaza of Nemçe (Nijemci) in the sancak of Syrmia. A letter and a man should be sent to the kadı so that enough trees are cut and transported to the bridge, and after the wood *from the fortress in Osijek⁸ and from the bridge⁹* is inspected, for elements which are required for the bridge (the Buda bridge) but missing, the wood needs to be urgently transported to the site. A dependable person should do the job. Before the state received reports concerning situations with bridges. All the wood necessary for construction is cut and delivered. May the order come about how the expense is to be covered.”

The style of the text was such as to suggest at least a partial “dismounting” of the bridge in Osijek, no matter what kind of bridge it was or what it looked like. However, it is possible to interpret the text in a way that it means Osijek only had the stored materials for the construction (!).

7 Of the bridge? Both readings are possible. This most likely refers to the pontoon bridge, since it was explicitly said “on the Drava” (*nehr-i Drava üzerinde*), and not “across the Drava” (and perhaps even further).

8 Perhaps the wood which was used for paving the streets, which could mean that the town was already more developed than how it seemed from the cadastres.

9 The Buda bridge?

The Bridge from 1566

Ottoman sources are quite scarce concerning the final (?) construction of the bridge in 1566. Mühimme defterleri (summarised regesta of imperial orders), where there is usually a lot of information concerning the 1566 campaign, reveal no quality information whatsoever about it, except for one order to the sancakbeyi of Pojega that he should decide whether thirty boats are enough for the pontoon bridge on the Drava (13. Zilkade 973/1st June, 1566).¹⁰ This record somehow escaped the attention of E. Kovačević, who included in his work all the material from that collection relating to Süleyman's last campaign, where there are lots of references to the bridge but they are too general to explain the key issues we are trying to resolve. However, one longer written record can be found in the MAD fund (an ahkam type of defter).

The entry from the Maliyeden Müdevvver fund reveals a regest which holds an important order from AH 973, unnoticed until now (Ramazan/ April, 1566).

The order was given to the sancakbeyi of Pojega, Nasuh bey.¹¹ Since it was important and necessary that there should be a bridge “before” Osijek, following the example of the existing bridge before Belgrade, the bey was ordered to commission the construction of a sufficient amount of bridges (!) and boats to the mentioned location. Moreover, enough pontoons should be supplied. *There is no sufficient wooden material from the old bridge at all*, but the imperial officer arranged for all the required material to be delivered. There was also a supply of boards for the deck, supports or beams and ropes for mooring (?).¹² The bridge at Osijek was destroyed in the same place where it was earlier built, so an imperial order is to be expected for an urgent bridge construction. In the first twenty days of this month (10th April, 1566) thirty-five chaikas and thirty-five boats were brought to the Drava to carry supplies, as well as fifteen boats for transporting horses. With God's help the remaining boats must not be ruined.....according to the firman..... (text is hard to decipher). The command: when the order is issued, the leftover pontoons from the bridge which is to be set up on the mentioned location (text in continuation is severely damaged).

The term “*ipler*” (ropes) requires some further consideration. The word can certainly not mean “chains”, as mentioned by Evliya, and still it refers to the pontoons.

This command is supplemented by a writted record which says the boats cannot be constructed nowhere else in the sancak of Pojega but close to Osijek. 2462 ducats was sent for the construction of forty pontoons (on a “narrow location of 160 feet”), a hundred and thirty supply vessels, twenty boats for transporting

¹⁰ V.MHM.d 005.A.DN

¹¹ MAD_d_02775_00664. Moreover, Nasuh-bey spent seven years in captivity in Szigetvár.

¹² In reference to the Buda in 1545 there is mention of large nails or wedges. Here that is not the case but it is probably implied in the frame of all other tools.

horses, fifty-six *şaykas*, including the wages for workmen and shipwrights. However, that amount was insufficient, so there was an order for more money to be taken from mukataa taxes (customs, etc.), the haraç and the filori.¹³

Besides the pontoons, along bridge there was always a permanent fleet of supply and battle vessels. Moreover, there is mention of ten “boats for crossing” (*geçit gemileri*), which were probably used as a reserve in case there are any problems with the pontoons.¹⁴

As for the qualified and unqualified work force which was employed at the time, there is no reliable information, except that non-Turkish sources mention very large numbers, up to 25000 people, which sounds improbable. Perhaps these are not too exaggerated data, since big undertakings in the area truly required suprisingly large manpower. In comparison, in 1540 the required workforce for rebuilding the Pojega fortress was 28234 people (with the addition of an unknown number of transporters).¹⁵ The enigma can be partially resolved if we deduct the persons registered as unqualified workforce (*cerahors*), whose jobs were cutting trees, excavating stone, clearing access paths and similar, and they constituted the majority of the employed people (in the case of Pojega they were one third of the entire workforce). A lot of people could have been employed on the construction of the Süleymanic bridge, for example people who cut trees in the Spačva forest, so that they were nowhere near the actual construction site but they added to the figures on the payroll in defterler, and therefore they added significantly to the total number of workers, which could have then come up in non-Ottoman chronicles. Finally, as can be seen from the accompanying table with transporter data from 1687, it is almost certain that the authorities had to have employed people from much broader area than lower Podravina (entire Slavonia and Syrmia, the nearby places in Bosnia and Serbia, all within the realm of the Eyalet of Buda). Even if only pedestrian access pathways were being built, it still meant complex works and a lot of workers. The total number was also increased by workforce required for military logistics. Moreover, the duration of works, with diversions and relocations, could be well up to three months, so it is not hard to imagine that large numbers of people were coming to work in shifts.

It is interesting that towards the end of the Ottoman rule (AH 1097) there is a record concerning an additional expenditure for repairing the bridge which amounted to 2500 gurus, which was in the official currency 300000 akçes. This money was used to pay 1643 craftsmen. This would suggest that they worked for three weeks and their daily wage was 9 akçes.¹⁶ Therefore, since the addition must have been quite small amount in comparison with the total cost, there could have been several times more workers, perhaps as many as five to six thousand.

13 MAD_d_02775_00686.

14 MAD_d_2775_00019.

15 MAD 523 - 31.

16 MAD_d_03992_00003. A number of people listed in the document were afterwards crossed out, but that probably means that they were paid less, or that the means were found elsewhere.

The conclusion is that between 1545 and 1566 there might not have been a bridge with a long lasting or integral function. We could almost think the same for the 1566 bridge, but non-Ottoman narrative sources about construction seem to have dispersed all doubt. Moreover, the entry from 9th June, 1566 explicitly says that the bridge near Osijek will not be constructed.¹⁷ Around that date it was mentioned many times that the Drava flooded over so it was not possible to act upon the initial idea. There was a lot of insecurity concerning the real location; there was talk of a location upstream or downstream of Valpovo.¹⁸ Perhaps the short period of time required for the construction of the bridge at Osijek could be afterall understood in the light of the order which was issued to sancakbeyis of Pécs and Mohács to build pedestrian access pathways (!) which lead to the pontoon bridge.¹⁹ Kovačević provided a summary of the original text which mentions the order to the sancakbeyis to commission *footbridges* to the (pontoon) bridge. Since the flooding occurred due to the river's course diversion of a *mile and a half* towards the Baranya side, the area needed to be made passable. Therefore, decks for infantry and cannons, as well as the listed cerahors and rowers. So, under any circumstances the eight kilometres to Darda could not have been crossed only on boards, as opposed to on beams, with trusses and towers!²⁰ Obviously at the time a normal march on Szigetvár was possible after 3.2 kilometres.

The work was finished in seventeen days.²¹ Are we left with making a guess that in the end result was improvisation, construction of a partial bridge, which was in fact much smaller than the one from the 17th century? Instead of forty pontoons which the bridge had later, now there were one hundred and eighteen. The inclarity here was resolved by Evliya's autograph, since it shows that there were forty pontoons positioned on the opposite side, at Darda, and that this 160-foot crossing is shorter than the crossing at Osijek.²²

The first bridge was on another location, perhaps a bit more downstream. The belief that the earlier bridge was destroyed (more accurately: that an order was issued for its destruction) probably refers to the first bridge which was in use between 1530 and 1545. Does the word "bridges" (a sufficient amount of bridges)

17 Eşref Kovačević, *Muhimme defteri – dokumenti o našim krajevima*, Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, Monumenta turcica III, 1/1, Sarajevo 1985, p. 154. The author made a quality and knowledgable resume of the documents' content, however, due to interpretation some important details were left out.

18 5 Numaralı mühimme defteri no. 5 (ed. Hacı Osman Yıldırım et al.), Ankara, 1994, 1912.

19 Kovačević, p. 145.

20 "Amma Drava tugyan üzere oldu, meyli Peçevi ve Mohaç sancakları caniblerine olup bir buçuk milde çıkıp yayılmıştır öte canibinden köprüye değin ayak köprülerin yapmak için Peçevi ve Mohaç beylerine emr-i şerif verildi ki yaya ve top döşemesi için tahtalar hazır olup ve çerahor ve kürekçi kulliyen yazılmıştır (.....)."5 Numaralı mühimme defteri, order regist nr. 1797.

21 This and other information from the Ottoman chronicles in: Atayi, Hada'ik'ul-Haka'ik fi tekmiyet'uş-Şakayik, (ur. Abdülkadir Özcan), s. 163; Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, Heft Meclis, 17. Lütü Paşa, Tevarih-i Al-i Osman, 280-281.; Muzaffer Erendil, Topçuluk Tarihi, Ankara, 1988., p. 71-72.; Tayyib Gökbilgin, Sigetvar Seferi, 13. However, according to Seyâhatnâme the construction lasted for six days (p. 108).

22 The Seyâhatnâme, p. 109.

suggest that at times a more solid ground was required for support, and since non-Ottoman sources contain expressions such as “ad pontes” or “die Brücken”? On the other hand, could we imagine a bridge as a composition of several parts, which would on its joints have movable parts in cases of emergency, as was suggested by the traveller (in continuation of the text)?

But this Süleymannic bridge for the Szigetvár campaign seemed to have been short-lived.

Obviously, after the fall of Szigetvár, the former sancakbeyi of Pojega, Hasan, (Hüseyin? The order was in 1568 passed on to the incumbent Malkoçoğlu Bali Bey) had a part of the new Süleymanic bridge pulled down (“the bridge constructed as the army crossing”). “Then winter came and the rest was destroyed by the floods, and eighty boats were stuck in the mud”. The Süleymanic bridge was, therefore, in ruins soon after it was built! There is further information about the need to repair “fortresses in Osijek” (sic!; probably those which were made of brick and the suburb palanka), and it is believed that (workers?) couldn’t have “stayed” in the area when the wetland expanded, so the (boats) rotted and no more work was done on them. Some (?) boats were guarded by “beys and Janisaries” and, because they were by the imperial order kept in the fortress, sixty-five of them were the boatbuilders’ responsibility, thirty were brought from “above” (downstream), and another thirty-five of them are guarded near the Osijek fortress. Three boats were damaged by ice and the ones under construction had to have steering wheels, seats and a few other parts replaced. Two boats were used as a raft, five are made of fir and belong to the merchants, as well as ten others, so the owners maintain them and use them for business. Recently sixty more boats were built and sent to Buda.²³

According to the data about the ten boats used for transport in 1565, as opposed to only two after the bridge was destroyed in 1568, we can assume that really until the Szigetvár campaign there was no bridge of colossal dimensions across the wetlands.

The third bridge (Mehmed III? Ahmed I?)

It is entirely unclear whether the third bridge was built straight away, or much later, until 1610 when it was first depicted in a drawing and 1616 when it was first recorded in the archives. There is no sign of it, though, in the cadastral defter from 1579, and the damage caused by the Hayduks in 1599 does not necessarily mean it was a kind of bridge which would impress travellers. It looks like the bridges from Süleyman’s time had primarily a military function, even if they were architecturally more modest than what Evliya recorded in his travels. It would

23 Meaning for transport across to the other side of the river. 7 Numaralı mühimme defteri II (ed. Hacı Osman Yıldırım et al.), Ankara, 1997, 2323 No 1565. Until 1565 ten boats were used for transport!

be logical to expect that the bridge achieved its final appearance after the period of stabilisation, meaning after the Long War (1591 – 1606) when commercial activities increased, when the big fair was established close to the entrance on the bridge, etc. With regard to that, the 1610 depiction of the bridge could also refer to the newly built “real” bridge.

Most archived records concerning the bridge from the 17th century refer to the last phase, the time of preparation for the 1863 campaign or just before leaving Osijek.

Evliya's description

Travel writer Evliya Çelebi described the bridge (constructed after 1580 the earliest, and probably at the time after the fall of Kanije, 1600 – 1610) in a way which is quite confusing in Šabanović's translation, but I believe an alternative interpretation can make the text more acceptable. Evliya ascribed the bridge, as he saw it, to Sultan Süleyman, just like everyone else in his time, already at the time of the campaign to Mohács. He believed the work was undertaken by the army under the command of the Grand Vizier Pargalı İbrahim Paşa; with regard to the first crossing of the Ottoman army across the Drava this is of course correct information. Here I would like to insert a summary with a commentary and a note about the required changes:

Length: two hours on foot. All around – beams made of oak (which “even two men can hardly embrace”). On the outside rail there are pedestrian passageways, two fathoms wide. More precisely: one fathom on each side.²⁴ Doors on both sides of the bridge, towers to accommodate weary travellers and a part of the bridge which rises for the length of ten feet are not the result of an unresourceful and fantasy-prone Ottoman travel writer. Evliya does not state that there are towers (not “kiosks”, H.Ş.) in “the centre of the bridge” (in translation), rather that they *stand* as a resting place for travellers passing on the left and the right side of the bridge *as opposed to the centre of the bridge* (an imaginary line along the length of the entire bridge). These would, therefore, be watchtowers in the non-Ottoman reports (the author writes nothing of these constructions).²⁵ The writer then says the following about the ten-feet rising of the bridge: “From here around ten feet of the bridge is movable” (“measuring from those kiosks” is not written and the translator's insertion is invented). Where is this location referred to as “here”? “From here” can only refer to one position, and not more, as if the bridge can be raised at every tower. The sentence which follows “This is the place where the town's soldiers stand and collect tariffs for the state budget from the

24 This does not contrast the non-Ottoman sources which say the width of the bridge was twelve feet or nine metres. Milan Vlainić, *Rečnik naših starih mera*, vol. III, Beograd 1968, pg. 440-441, entry word “carriage (as a measurement for width)”.

25 Evliya Çelebi, p. 373; *The Seyâhatnâme*, p. 187-188.

merchants.” So, the reference must be to one or both “strong gates” of the *pontoon bridge*, probably on both ends, both in Osijek and in Darda. If “from here” and “this is the place” referred to around twenty or more “watchtowers”, the entire crew would have had to stay on the bridge, and the merchants would almost be left without their assets by the time they reached the other end.

Furthermore, Evliya made a very interesting comment, which brings about one significant technical detail: “The people in charge of repairs on this bridge are those working under the pasha of Pojega and Mohács sancaks, so when a pier in the swamp underneath the bridge becomes rotten, meaning when the *base cylinders* which support the pedestrian deck (“the crowds”) become frail, they immediately have to replace it with another cylinder (post, pole, bar).²⁶ According to the data also mentioned here (see below), these could have been boards as well, but the final conclusion cannot be reached for now.²⁷

Positions, guarding, maintenance and else

It is possible to get a somewhat clearer idea of the scope of work done on the construction of the bridge and the repairs. There is only one direct mention of the construction works on the great bridge (just before it was destroyed) from 28th March, 1687. The kadı of Srebrenica sent a letter: the people of the Srebrenica kaza came to the court: under general mobilization 200 people are in charge of *rebuilding* the bridge in Osijek, the length of which should be 200 arşins, but they cannot carry out the order.

There is a preserved list of mercenaries and oxen for undertakings on the Osijek bridge from different kazas based on Vizier Hasan paşa's defter dated 30th May, 1687.²⁸

kaza	Payed workers (cerahors)	carts
Dimitrofçe	59	15
Gırgurefçe	9	3
Çernik	100	14
Pojega	96	20
Birod	50	9
Raça	9	2
Şabaç	144	48
Birçe	59	0
Yakova	55	15
Lozniçe	60	20
Nemçe	101	28

26 The Seyâhatnâme, p. 108.

27 “ve bu cisrin tâmir ü termimine Pojaga ve Mihaç sancaklarının cem’i re’âyaları amârına memûrlardır kim bir kazığı batakada çürüse ve memerr-i nâs olan döşeme direkleri eskise ol ân değışdirüp gayrı direk korlar.”

28 MAD_d_ 08479, 190. Also A.DVNS.ŞKT.d.10.

İzvornik	50	10
Beline	20	5
Vişegrad	15	0

Bosna Bırodı + Tıravnik	15	0
Tıravnik	6	1
Teşne with evkaf	41	5
Sırebreniçe	60	10
Çelebi Pazar	30	0
In total	979	205

The difference in figures in the case of the kaza Sırebreniçe (200 as opposed to 60) points to a possibility that work could have been in different ways imposed on a total number of subjects, which probably came to several thousand people.

To support this there is an expenditure record from 1579 according to which the works required 300000 akçes, which means up to 2000 individual daily wages in a month.

The bridge was in one very specific way connected to Osijek's communal needs. The records hold an order issued to Ali²⁹, the keeper of the Osijek bridge, and the Osijek kadı, dated 8th August, 1683, which goes as follows: "The dwellers of the Osijek kasaba have sent a man with a petition to the court: before, the inhabitants of the kasaba of Osijek "always" used to build a bridge³⁰ inside the city, as if it was a street. But since this year, due to frequent passing of the Islamic army, the bridge in question has become too damaged. So, after the request to issue an order for the upkeep of the wooden construction removed from the *great* bridge, it was ordered – so that the inhabitants of the said kaza (!) would build the mentioned bridge in their usual way by using the old boards from the *great* bridge, which need to be stored somewhere safe – that the old boards from the *great* bridge should be kept and numbered on a safe place inside the mentioned kasaba." Evliya Çelebi also wrote about paving the town's streets with boards, but he didn't know that it was at least partly the "recycled" damaged material of the great bridge.

Around 1679 the records mention a group of 60 *cerahors* twice. They were locals and supervised by Ahmed *mimarbaşı*, which is usually translated as "chief architect", but here it would perhaps be more suitable to use the term "construction supervisor." They were repairing the bridge in Osijek and, moreover, from Saint George's Day to Demetrius' Day they were "guarding (some other?) bridges".³¹ At the time they were asked to repair the bridge at Isaccea, close to the confluence of the Danube in the Black Sea. In total there must have been many more such

29 BOA, MAD_d_03130_00036.

30 A crossing decked with boards.

31 BOA, Mühimme defterleri 97.

specialised waged force because the orders were made so as to suggest that those 60 people are yet to be appointed, because on one occasion the addressee was the Pojega *mütesellim*, the other time it was a *kadı*, “*kethüda*” (we can assume they were *knezes*) and all of them were experienced experts (*ayans* and *iş erleri*). There is a possibility that many settlements and families of bridgekeepers from old tax lists kept that status.

In eastern Slavonia there were smaller bridges as well on the traffic routes south – north (perhaps the most famous one was the bridge across the River Vuka; at the end of the 16th century bridges were mentioned on fourteen locations). In order to fix them and make preparations so that the army could cross them and get to Osijek, it was necessary to hire a hundred highly qualified craftsmen (*ustad neccarlar*) in the sancak of Pojega.³² Here too the man in charge was *mimarbaşı Ahmed*.

It is also interesting to mention the order which was given to *kadıs*, *emins* and officials on the Sava in order to avoid crowds. The Islamic army would be crossing the bridge so both people on horseback and pedestrians were not allowed to cross without an order. This was a notice to all *kadıs*, *emins* and other officials on the banks of the Danube and the Drava from Osijek to Belgrade in the year of 1685.³³

At the beginning of the bridge, probably the pontoon one, there were cannons, possibly the parade examples for show, especially “the great Süleyman cannon” mentioned by travellers, which was transferred there after it had got stuck in mud in 1529. In 1685 when the war was raging it was taken to Belgrade and its further destiny is unknown.³⁴

Economic function

There are still several open questions concerning the economic function of the great bridge. First of all, the problem refers to the relation between the raft and the custom (*gümrük*) and the bridge toll as a separate duty. Can we interpret the entry about the raft custom from the 1579 *defter* so that it refers to the bridge?³⁵ *Evliya* says the merchants had to pay *bac* when crossing the bridge, using the most general term. The *bac*, this really ambiguous term, or simply “duty”, usually appeared as *bac-ı siyah*, which can be translated as “land custom” as opposed to “water custom” or *gümrük*.³⁶ *Bac* could be collected anywhere, in towns, villages,

32 MAD_d_02931_00035.

33 A.DVNS.ŞKT.d.10

34 IE.ML. 1203 – 3.

35 Sandžak Požega 1579. godine (ed. by Stjepan Sršan), Osijek 2001, p. 237.

36 Both terms include sub-taxes such as market *bac*, fair *bac*, *resm-i sergi* (a fee for displaying goods) and similar, like *resm-i öbür* and *resm-i geçit* (a crossing fee for commercial purposes and a fee for local inhabitants for wood, grazing, etc.) as a subdivision of *gümrük*. Compare *tricesima* and *telonium*.

and gümrük only at the docks where goods crossed international borders or at least regional borders. The bac is mostly a type of import custom, while the gümrük is export and transit custom.³⁷ According to examples from Hungarian towns of the time, as well as according to the kanun for the raft at Osijek from the 1579 list, the term bac is *more commonly* used for charges made on *food and beverages*, and gümrük for *live cattle and other merchandise*. There were many boats which transported, to and from Osijek, large quantities of wheat, livestock, wine, weapons and warfare materials, as well as other types of goods which wasn't always necessary, or possible, to transport across the bridge. It was more cost effective to ship goods to Buda via the Danube, for example, and for destinations downstream the bridge definitely couldn't have been of much use. The place where goods were "moored or unmoored" and where merchants payed gümrük for it did not necessarily have to be by a bridge (sometimes the defterler entries showing the amount of the tax also note "customs boats", where the first word is raft). If this, however, was taking place at the entrance of the pontoon bridge, which would have made sense since the centre, the market and the fair were close, there would still have been two types of tax, ways of transport, types and locations of the crossing. There must have been huge herds of cattle crossing the Drava at Osijek, and they would hardly ever, if ever at all, use the pontoon bridge, narrower than the "road on piers" and without direct contact with it.³⁸ Therefore, the construction of the bridge opened up new possibilities for land traffic, but it did not significantly influence the scope of activity at the docks. There the amount of business could have enlarged. The pontoon bridge could have taken over a larger part of the raft activity, such as transport to the opposite bank, which was termed *resm-i 'öbur*, but the boat traffic did not entirely die down. In the *kanunname* from 1579 the description of the term *resm-i 'öbur* is hardly considered as a bridge crossing. Towards the end of the Ottoman rule there were two gümrüks, one connected to the crossing and the other general one in case there was illegal tax collecting on the raft from the merchants who used to trade in saltpeter.³⁹ It is clear from the existing data from 1620 and 1674 that the traffic on the Drava, connected with the Danube navigation, still brought in much more profit than the land traffic (110500 akçes of maltarina on the bridge, or bac which Evliya talked about).⁴⁰ However, the bridge could earn much more, especially when there were large slave markets taking place. In 1663 there was mention of the amount of annual

37 For a more detailed explanation look in Bac and gümrük on the Middle Danube, 1540-1614: Terminological Elucidations, Comité International pour les études préottomanes et ottomanes, VIIe Symposium, Actes, TTK Basımevi, Ankara 1994, pp. 463-466.

38 For example, the cattle herded either from the Slavonian side, to be sold somewhere in Hungary or further away, or the Baranya side for the cattle fair, which was surely taking place outside the varos walls, had to have been "defiled" through the palanka first (comp. Plan from 1688) and again out of the palanka. Transport to place opposite the end of the "road on piers" seems like a simpler solution.

39 AS *gümrük-i 'öbur*, 110500 akçes. BOA, MMD 3289, 114; BOA, KK Evamir-i Maliye 2470, 109 from 1681. Emins, who governed these businesses as the collectors of customs duties, often committed illegal acts, such as collecting duty on state food supplies (for example rice).

40 Income collected from the Osijek mukataa, note 44; BOA, MMD 3289, 4.

income collected from the mukataa of the “bridge and its belongings”, which amounted to 400000 akçes . Those means were spent for paying the Pécs crew, as well as for paying the bridge keepers. This is the only possible explanation for the amount, that the above mentioned dues be understood as a quartal amount. A part of the amount payed for the crossing could have still come from transport across the river. The raft was often hired by all sorts of different people, commonly the members of the army, but not always.⁴¹ All in all, the conclusion is that the bridge, boat crossing and the raft (the docks) were largely one organic whole.

Conclusion

The bridge, as it was depicted on 17th-century illustrations, and described in numerous records, cannot be with certainty prescribed to the Szigetvár campaign of Süleyman the Magnificent (the Lawgiver). At best, the preserved sources from the 16th century give reason to think that some sort of work was taking place at the access paths, such as perhaps building a pavement. So for now, the hypothesis is that the construction of this “wonder of the world” took place after the the Peace of Zsitvatorok was established in 1606, the earliest upon the fall of Kanije in 1600, or immediately afterwards. However, Evliya said that “now” the bridge belongs to Sultan Süleyman’s evkaf, but the building might have been included in the later complex of his evkaf as well.⁴² Outside of the contexts of great campaigns, information concerning the construction of bridges did not so easily enter into collections of imperial regesta, and even less so into narrative sources. Such a bridge played a huge part in civilian – commercial life, and it was governed by a newly established eyalet of Kanije. In any case, research into the period around the year 1600 remains a true future challenge.

41 Income collected from the Osijek mukataa, note 44; BOA, MMD 3289, 4.

42 Seyâhatnâme, 108.

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