

Sudár, Balázs, Szabolcs Varga and János J. Varga. 2020. *Pécs története III. A Hódoltság korában (1543–1686)* (‘History of Pécs vol. III: The Age of Ottoman Rule [1543–1686]’). Pécs and Budapest: Pécs Története Alapítvány and Kronosz Kiadó, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont. 383 pp. Illus.

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After two previous volumes dedicated to the more remote history of the Hungarian city of Pécs (since the prehistoric settlement to the Catholic era and thereafter the medieval era of the city), the present book is the third volume in an eight-volume historical series focusing on the Hungarian city of Pécs (Latin: Quinqueecclesiae, German: Fünfkirchen, Turkish: Peç). The present volume, as the inclusive series, is a high-quality scholarly contribution of the research program coordinated by the History of Pécs Fund. This volume offers the work of two authors: the Ottoman viewpoint is presented by the well-known cultural historian of Hungary under the Ottoman rule, Balázs Sudár, while the Christian perspective is provided by Szabolcs Varga, historian of the Early Modern Hungarian Church and of Slavonia and Southern Transdanubia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The topic of the third author, János J. Varga, is the political, economic and military aspects of the Hungarian wars against the Ottomans in the seventeenth century and more specifically the role of Imre Thököly, the leader of anti-Habsburg uprisings. Accordingly, János Varga has written only a short chapter on the liberation of the city of Pécs from Ottoman rule (94–108). The authors, as well-established scholars of the given period, describe, on the basis of authentic Ottoman and Christian sources, the changes that took place in Pécs between 1543, when the army of Kasim bey occupied the city, and 1686, when the troops of Emperor Leopold I recaptured the city.

The authors provide us with a fairly vast summary of previous historiography, and they list various Muslim and Christian sources, including also visual evidence (such as drawings, maps and engravings) as well as representations of Pécs during the era of Ottoman domination. Furthermore, Szabolcs Varga surveys the existing research on the local history of the city (15–36). These preliminary surveys are the point of departure of the general historical analysis of the present volume, after which the authors delineate the history of the city during the Ottoman Era (37–108). They provide us with a global analysis, describing the three major phases of this

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history of a century and a half: the conquest (1543–1566), the consolidation (1566–1683) and finally the liberation of Pécs (1686). After liberation, the city became an important logistic center for the Christian troops completing the military campaign against the Ottomans. Far from offering only a list of successive events, such as the phases of the winter attack of the Habsburg army led by Miklós Zrínyi, Sudár and Sz. Varga also shed light on everyday life in Pécs and its suburbs, as well as on the lives of several important Ottoman families of the city. For example, they trace the careers of key figures such as Kasim Bey, Dervish Bey, the Yahyapashazade Dynasty, Tiryaki Hassan Pasha and Ískener Pasha, Yakovali Hassan and the Memibegovic Clan. These accounts help the readers realize not only the local events but also the larger structure and mechanisms of the Ottoman political system.

Sudár and Sz. Varga then examine the importance of Pécs within the inclusive urban network of the Carpathian Basin, and even more generally among other Hungarian cities. It turns out that even after falling under Ottoman domination in 1543, this important city of Southern Transdanubia managed to maintain its central role among Hungarian cities and became central within the Ottoman urban network as well. These findings are supported by evidence such as the relations of Pécs – even while being part of the Ottoman Empire – with other centers of the Hungarian Kingdom and Transylvania; moreover, these findings show that Pécs was actually the strongest and most important cultural and economic center of the region. Although usually the Ottomans demanded of their subjects only taxes and loyalty, at Pécs the conquerors had some elite Muslim citizens, for whom they built various institutions and facilities (for example mosques, dervish monasteries, religious foundations, high schools and baths). Because of its geographic and cultural location on the route leading from Buda to the Balkan cities, Pécs gradually became part of the Ottoman urban network.

During the Ottoman rule, the urban society of Pécs changed radically in its ethnic, religious and social structure. Situated at the meeting area of two worlds, a Christian and a Muslim, the city soon became populated by a dual society. This change of population started with a decrease in the number of the Christians and continued with the gradual arrival of Ottoman military forces, which were soon followed by craftsmen and tradesmen. The records of that time show that there were between one hundred to a hundred and twenty shops in the city. Among the Muslims there were also dervishes, poets and musicians (minstrels as well as military musicians). The former of these included the Halvetis, the Mevlevis and the Bektashis. The sanjak-beys were responsible for maintaining order. They were often replaced, but their foundations enriched the city significantly. Another important authority was the qadi, who acted as both notary and judge. According to a 1579 census of the city, these figures managed and actually controlled the life of some four to five thousand Muslim residents. As for the shrinking population of Christians in the city, these settled mostly in the western suburbs, where they were soon joined by newcomers from Bosnia and Croatia, and they engaged in agriculture and viticulture. At that time – as a consequence of the fear of the Ottomans and the rapid spread of Lutheran ideas – the power of the bishop of Pécs and with it that of the Catholic Church weakened, but they always remained a significant part of the city. Even in 1612, when the Jesuits settled in alongside the Bosnian Franciscans, Pécs remained the stronghold of the Catholics of the entire area. In addition, there were many Reformed communities in the city, the strongest and

most effective of which was that of the Unitarians, who took an outstanding position in Hungarian Antitrinitarianism.

The long Ottoman domination practically changed the vista of the city of Pécs. The city center did not change significantly, but many churches and monasteries were replaced by mosques and baths. The suburbs developed, with their architecture completely modeled on the Balkan style. Probably because of the use of wood as raw material for these buildings, eventually none of them survived. In 1686, the year when the Christian troops recaptured Buda, Pécs was also liberated. Many of the former, Ottoman inhabitants fled, and the city soon regained its Christian majority and character. There did remain some Ottoman monuments (türbe, mosque, minaret), which became the unique and consequently main touristic attractions of the city. In addition, the influence of the Balkans and the almost one and a half century of Ottoman domination are still evident and perceptible in the so-called “town of a Mediterranean atmosphere” of Hungary.

The main text of *Pécs története III* is followed by several methodological aparati: notes for every chapter, a very detailed bibliography, and an index of persons and place names. Finally, the list of figures, tables and maps is followed by a detailed summary in English and in Turkish. Perhaps the main contribution of this volume is that not only does it offer a complete, accurate and clear overview of the life and destiny of the city of Pécs during the Ottoman rule, but also that the readers can get a comprehensive picture of the entire era of the Ottoman occupation of Hungary. This volume on the History of Pécs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can serve as an example of a lively and compelling rendering. This spectacular, rich book should be on the bookshelves of anyone – scholar or other – interested in the topic of the Ottoman period in the history of the city of Pécs, as well as, more generally, in the history of Ottoman Hungary.