

Yanova (220444)

Varad (210393)

Köprülü Mehmed Paşa (111280)



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KÖPRÜLÜ ENTERPRISES IN YANOVA  
([BOROS]JENŐ/INEU) AND VARAD  
([NAGY]VÁRAD/ORADEA): CONSOLIDATING  
OTTOMAN POWER AND ACCUMULATING FAMILY  
WEALTH (1657-1664)

ÖZGÜR KOLÇAK

I.

In the first half of the 17th century, the Ottoman political system was going through a period of unremitting crisis, which seemed for some irreversible. In these turbulent years, the Ottoman decision-makers adopted a rather balanced diplomatic approach at the northwestern frontiers of the empire. Avoiding a full strength military clash in the Hungarian theatre of war, the Ottoman government only permitted military endeavors of Ottoman provincial troops in small numbers. For various reasons, the Ottomans praised diplomatic agents and institutions as the primary means of interacting with the house of Austria who in the Thirty Years' War was badly crippled by a multi front war.<sup>1</sup> The enthronement of Mehmed IV in 1648 brought no immediate remedy to the problem. In the first eight years of his rule, the under-aged sultan was assisted by thirteen grand viziers who failed one after another in fulfilling the urgent needs of the empire both in domestic and foreign politics.

The Ottoman political society in the mid-17th century was craving for a capable government with exceptional powers to attain political stability within the empire. For many among the Ottoman ruling elite, the Köprülü Mehmed Paşa's coming to power in 1656 was a restoration of Ottoman political and military might which, the ensuing occurrences in foreign affairs would reveal, was coupled with a boosted mobilization of Ottoman armies along the frontiers of the empire.<sup>2</sup> In late 1656, Jakab Harsányi, the interpreter of the Transylvanian resident envoy in

- 1 Georg Wagner, 'Österreich und die Osmanen im Dreißigjährigen Krieg Hermann Graf Czernins Grossbotschaft nach Konstantinopel 1644/45', *Mitteilungen des Oberösterreichischen Landesarchivs* 14 (1984) 325-392; Petr Štěpánek, 'War and Peace in the West (1644/5): A Dilemma at the Threshold of Felicity?', *Archiv Orientální* 69:2 (2001) 327-340.
- 2 Özgür Kolçak, 'A Transylvanian Ruler in the Talons of the 'Hawks': György Rákóczi II and Köprülü Mehmed Paşa', in Florentina Nitu et al. (eds.), *4th International Annual Balkan Conference (IBAC)*, 15-18 Ekim 2014, Bükreş, International Balkan Annual Conference (IBAC) - 4. İstanbul, 2016, 342-346.