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A Breathing Space for Vienna? The 1677 Ottoman Invasion of Ukraine and its Impact on Hungary and the Habsburg Empire

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Abstract

The 1677 invasion of Ukraine got the Ottoman Empire embroiled in war with Russia. Scholarship on the 1683 siege of Vienna rarely mentions the Ukrainian campaign although it significantly weakened Ottoman military capacities and may have saved Vienna. This article examines how the Porte's decision to invade Ukraine came about. The sultan's grandiose imperial visions and false intelligence of Russian military strength were key factors. Easy victory was expected and the original plan to seize Hungary and Vienna was not given up. Only a catastrophic defeat by the Russians in August 1677 challenged the Porte's strategic priorities. But Kara Mustafa did not give up his preference for a Hungarian campaign. He promised the Hungarians that the Ottoman army would join the ongoing anti-Habsburg rebellion in spring 1678. Meanwhile he allowed them to attack the Habsburgs with French and Polish support. The analysis draws on German, French, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish sources; they reveal that the invasion of Ukraine was not planned in advance and greatly contested among Ottoman leaders. The Habsburgs understood the geopolitical significance of the Ukrainian campaign but could not breathe a sigh of relief before the sultan finally declared war against Russia in April 1678.

Keywords: Russo-Turkish War (1677–81); Chyhyryn Campaign 1677; Hungarian revolt; Yuri Khmelnytsky; Imre Thököly; Kara Mustafa; early modern Ukrainian history; early modern Hungarian history; Ottoman Empire, 17th century; 1683 Siege of Vienna

On 16 October 1677, Johann Christoph von Kindsberg, the Habsburg resident in Istanbul, reported what he considered to be very good news: the Ottomans had suffered a catastrophic defeat against the Russian army in Ukraine. In the attempt to seize Chyhyryn, the Russian-occupied capital of the Ukrainian Cossack state, they had lost half their army, all their artillery, and their entire baggage train. Kindsberg praised the extraordinary resilience of the Russian defenders of Chyhyryn, who had rendered a great service to the world of Christendom which “must rightly rejoice ... that to everyone's surprise the Muscovites demonstrated such courageous resistance ... against the Turks.”¹ But most importantly, Kindsberg believed that the Russian victory signified the end of Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa's designs against Hungary and the Habsburg Empire.² Throughout the previous summer, the grand vizier had

¹Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA) [House, Court, and State Archive, Vienna, Austria], Staatenabteilung, Turcica (Türkei I.) [hereafter Turcica] 148/1, fols. 14r–v, 22–35v, Kindsberg to Aulic War Council (16 October 1677), esp. 24r (quote), 24v (“Solchen glücklichen success der Christen”), 26 (“Mit Verlust der Helfft der Armee, völligen artigleria, und bagagi retiriert”). To underscore the importance of this news Kindsberg also wrote privately to Emperor Leopold and Count Raimondo Montecucoli, the commander-in-chief of the Habsburg army (*ibid.*, fols. 49–51v, 52–53v). I thank Elizabeth Lobenwein (German Historical Institute, Rome) for generously sharing digital copies of fasculi 147–48.

²Turcica 148/1, fol. 29v (“Welche schädliche intention des Vesiers ... durch diese Moscovitische diversion von selbst en erloschen”).

encouraged Hungarian rebels who had assembled a formidable army in Transylvania and the Ottoman vilayets of Várad and Eger. They had just been waiting for the signal to invade; Ottoman troops had been standing by to help them. The expectation was that “all of Upper and Lower Hungary would voluntarily submit to the Ottoman Porte.” This would have been “the prelude to war” with the Habsburg Empire.³

In the voluminous literature on the 1683 siege of Vienna, the so-called Russo-Turkish War (1677–81) is mentioned in only a few sentences.⁴ There is no reflection on the deeper implications of this war for Habsburg, Hungarian, and European history.⁵ Yet, Onno Klopp, whose *opus magnum* remains the unsurpassed masterpiece on the siege of Vienna, pointed out almost 150 years ago that the plan for the invasion of Hungary and the seizure of the Habsburg capital was already in place in early 1676.⁶ Romanian historian Marie M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru seconded Klopp 100 years later, citing Ottoman and Venetian sources. Indeed, my own work has recently provided evidence from Austrian and Hungarian archives that the plan began to be implemented in the spring and summer of 1676.⁷ It is therefore legitimate to examine why the Ottomans abandoned a plan that had already been initiated by Kara Mustafa’s predecessor. Was it the sudden death of Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü (1661–76) who had promised Hungarian rebels for years that he would come to their rescue? Was it the takeover of the grand vizierate by Kara Mustafa whom the Habsburg court initially considered a peacemaker? Or was it the growing Russian threat on the northern flanks of the Ottoman Empire and in the Black Sea region? Or was it perhaps the defection of Ottoman-anointed Ukrainian Cossack leader Petro Doroshenko to the Kremlin in September 1676? Or were there other reasons?

This article focuses exclusively on the year 1677, the crucial period when the Ottomans began to shift their attention away from Hungary to Ukraine. How did it come about that the Ottomans invaded Ukraine? What led to their disastrous defeat at Chyhyryn? A detailed examination of these questions is the first purpose of this article. The intention is to meticulously reconstruct the stepping stones that had to be put in place before the Ottomans got stuck in the Ukrainian quagmire. The second purpose of this article is to explore how the decision to invade Ukraine and the Chyhyryn debacle affected the Hungarian insurgency that had been burning into a massive popular rebellion by 1676.⁸ I will trace the internationalization of this insurgency as Hungarian rebels, desperate after the sudden death of their patron Köprülü, turned to French King Louis XIV and Polish King Jan Sobieski in despair. But most

³Ibid., fols. 29v, 49, Kindsberg to Emperor Leopold (16 October 1677).

⁴Bernhard R. Kroener, “Wien 1683: Internationale Politik und Kriegführung im 17. Jahrhundert — Probleme der Forschung,” *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 12, no. 2 (1985): 181–216, esp. 181–82 (“Eine kaum mehr überschaubare Flut von Druckerzeugnissen”).

⁵See John Stoye, *The Siege of Vienna* (London, 1988), 19; Thomas M. Barker, *Double Eagle and Crescent. Vienna’s Second Turkish Siege and its Historical Setting* (Albany, 1967), 55; Walter Leitsch, “Warum wollte Kara Mustafa Wien erobern?” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 29, no. 4 (1981): 494–514, here 499; Onno Klopp, *Das Jahr 1683 und der folgende grosse Türkenkrieg bis zum Frieden von Carlowitz 1699* (Graz, 1882), 52, 59. Klopp noticed enormous relief in Vienna citing the Venetian ambassador: “Wie ein Sonnenblick, der den kaiserlichen Erbländen noch für lange Zeit Ruhe verhieß.” Even the best authorities on late seventeenth century Habsburg and Hungarian history mention the Russo-Turkish war only in passing. Cf. Oswald Redlich, *Weltmacht des Barock. Österreich in der Zeit Kaiser Leopolds I.* (Vienna, 1961), 238–9; László Benczédi, *Rendiség, abszolútizmus és centralizáció a XVII század végi Magyarországon (1664–1685)* (Budapest, 1980), 82.

⁶I base my opinion on Walter Leitsch’s strong reliance on Klopp’s findings, in his “Warum wollte Kara Mustafa Wien erobern?” esp. 501 (“Einschlägige Argumentation”); Leitsch and Max D. Peyfuss, “Dreihundert Jahre seit dem Entsatz von Wien 1683: Tagungen, Publikationen, und Ausstellungen,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 32, no. 3 (1984): 392–408, esp. 408.

⁷Klopp, *Das Jahr 1683*, 51–52; Marie B. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, “Sur les relations entre Habsbourg et Ottomans (1681–1683),” in *Habsburgisch-osmanische Beziehungen. Relations Habsbourg-ottomanes*, ed. Andreas Tietze (Vienna, 1985), 193–207, esp. 193, 202–3; Georg B. Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege. Ottoman Expansion and Hungarian Revolt in the Age of Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü (1661–1676)* (Montreal, 2021), 3–4, 305–7, 315–18, 335–38.

⁸Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 334–38, 532–33 (notes citing substantial evidence). The depth of the crisis of Habsburg rule is powerfully illustrated in the reports of imperial commissars from December 1676 and January 1677, in HHStA, Hungarica (Ungarische Akten), Specialia, fasc. 328, Konv. D, fols. 13–26v, 54–58v, Memoranda of Baron Zehetner and Wallseg (December 1676 n.d., 17 January 1677), esp. 25 (“In einem lande Krieg führen, alwoh der landmann dem feind affectioniert und zugethan ist”).

importantly, I will focus on the Hungarian envoys who flocked to the Porte to lobby for the Ottoman invasion of Hungary and the destruction of the Habsburg regime. The surprisingly cordial relations they developed with Kara Mustafa had long-term consequences for the Habsburg Empire. While these close relations could not prevent the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, they guaranteed that Kara Mustafa remained committed to protecting, sheltering, and arming the Hungarians. He maintained the legacy of his predecessor: the goal of seizing all of Hungary and Vienna (“The Golden Apple”) never receded from Kara Mustafa’s mind.

The historiography of the 1677 Ottoman invasion of Ukraine and its impact on Hungarian and Habsburg history is very scarce. Among Central European and Habsburg historians, almost complete silence prevails.⁹ One finds hints in Zsolt Trócsányi’s work on the Transylvanian grandee Mihály Teleki, who stood in close communications with Hungarian and Transylvanian envoys at the Porte. László Benczédi has delved into the Hungarian archives, which unfortunately resulted in only one short posthumous article. It demonstrated that the year 1677 was a game-changer in Hungarian history. Hungarian envoys, Benczédi showed, stayed at the Porte for months against the backdrop of the Ukraine invasion. They met frequently with leading Ottoman dignitaries, who treated them amicably. When the devastating news from Chyhyryn arrived, Kara Mustafa received them and vowed that he would not abandon them and would provide help “no matter if there would be peace with the Muscovite or not.”¹⁰ It is important to examine more closely these persistent Hungarian-Ottoman encounters and in particular the Hungarian envoys’ ties to Kara Mustafa.

Eastern European and Ottoman historians have also remained largely silent on the topic. Lubomyr Hajda, Andrzej Witkowicz, and Kahraman Şakul have written significant studies of the much larger, second Ottoman invasion of Ukraine, the so-called Chyhyryn campaign of 1678.¹¹ By comparison, the events of 1677 have remained a neglected stepchild of historical research.¹² Russian interpreters tend to see the 1677 invasion only as a prelude to the 1678 campaign. Tellingly, Boris Floria and Nikolai Smirnov, arguably the most knowledgeable interpreters of the period, cover the events of 1677 only in a few pages. A 2002 *kandidatskaia dissertatsiia* by Iafarova M. Rashidovna and a book chapter by Pavel V. Sedov are two notable exceptions. But they focus almost exclusively on Russian military mobilization and the battle for Chyhyryn.¹³ This is a tradition that goes back to the great nineteenth-century Russian

⁹One of the few to break this silence is Ekkehard Eickhoff but he gets it completely wrong in his *Venedig, Wien, und die Osmanen: Umbruch in Südosteuropa 1645–1700* (Stuttgart, 1988), 301 (“[Doroschenko] wurde 1677 von Tataren und Türken unter Ibrahim [in Tschigirin] befreit”). Doroshenko had in fact defected to the Russian tsar in September 1676 and left Chyhyryn shortly afterwards.

¹⁰Zsolt Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály. Erdély és a kurucmozgalom 1690-ig* (Budapest, 1972), 203–4; László Benczédi, “Thököly Imre a francia és a török szövetség között (1677–1680),” in *Bécs 1683. évi török ostroma és Magyarország*, ed. Benda Kálmán and Ágnes R. Várkonyi (Budapest, 1988), 171–80, esp. 173, 179; Sámuel Gergely, ed., *Teleki Mihály levelezése. A Római Szent Birodalmi Gróf Széki Teleki család oklevéltára* (hereafter Gergely), vol. 7 (Budapest, 1916), no. 391, Mihály Teleki to Daniel Absolon (4 November 1677), 561 (“Hogy békéllik meg, vagy nem az muszkaval”).

¹¹Lubomyr A. Hajda, “Two Ottoman gazanames concerning the Chyhyryn campaign of 1678” (PhD Diss., Harvard University, 1984); Andrzej Witkowicz, *Kara Mustafa nad Dnieprem. Geneza, przebieg i skutki wojny czechryńskiej 1678* (Zabrze, 2017); Kahraman Şakul, *Çehrin Kuşatması* (Istanbul, 2022). For Ukrainian research on the 1678 campaign, see V. M. Zaruba, “Pokhid osmans’koho viys’ka na Chyhyryn vlitku 1678 r. v shchodennnyku pol’skoho posla S. Pros’koho,” in *Ukraina v Tsentral’no-Skhidniy Yevropi 12–13* (2013): 412–27.

¹²For a typical example of neglect, see Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam. Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford, 2008), 171–73 (no mention of 1677). For an important exception, see Hajda, “Two Ottoman gazanames” which makes valuable references to the 1677 campaign. A summary of the most important events is found in Metin Aydar, *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa. Hayatı, siyasi ve askeri faaliyetleri* (Istanbul, 2022), 147–53 (based on Ottoman chronicle accounts).

¹³Boris Floria, “Voyny Osmanskoi imperii s gosudarstvami Vostochnoi Evropy,” in *Osmanskaia imperiia i strany Tsentral’noi, Vostochnoi, i Iugo-Vostochnoi Evropy v XVII veke*, ed. G. G. Litarvin, 2 vols. (Moscow, 2001), 2: 108–48, here 126–28; Nikolai A. Smirnov, *Rossiia i Turtisia v XVI–XVII vekakh*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1946), 2: 135–42; Pavel V. Sedov, “Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.,” in *Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo v XIV–XVII vv. Sbornik statei, posviashchennii 75-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Iu. G. Alekseeva*, ed. A. G. Man’kov, N. N. Maslennikova, and A. P. Pavlov (St. Petersburg, 2002), 485–508; Iafarova Madina Rashidovna, “Russko-Osmanskoe protivostoianie v 1677–1678 gg.” (PhD Diss., Moscow State University, 2002), 115–89.

historian Sergei Solov'ev.¹⁴ Polish historians in contrast have written primarily on the Polish-Ottoman War (1672–76) and the subsequent peace negotiations at the Porte.¹⁵ Zbigniew Wójcik's work, however, unravels the complicated geopolitical nexus of the Ukraine invasion, in particular the French-Habsburg conflict over Hungary, the Polish-Russian conflict over Ukraine, and the Ottoman-Polish peace negotiations (and the possibility of a joint Ottoman-Polish invasion of Ukraine).¹⁶ Ukrainian historians also have almost completely neglected the study of the first Chyhyryn campaign. While there are several excellent studies of Hetman Petro Doroshenko (1665–76), arguably the Ottoman Empire's most important Christian vassal in Eastern Europe, there is no focused study of Doroshenko's successor Yurii Khmelnytsky, who played an important role in the 1677 Ottoman invasion.¹⁷ The best study of the period remains the masterly monograph of the great Ukrainian historian and revolutionary Mykola Kostomarov.¹⁸

Despite its scholarly neglect, I will argue that the 1677 invasion of Ukraine was a pivotal historical event with long-term consequences for Ukraine, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire, and Hungary. I build my case on a large volume of sources from the Turcica Collection of the Habsburg Court Archives as well as little-studied document collections published by late nineteenth-century Hungarian, Polish, and Ukrainian scholars. To these one must add two remarkable volumes by the Romanian historian Ioan Hudita: a 1926 collection of documents from French archives and the French National Library, and his 1927 Sorbonne doctoral dissertation on Transylvanian-French and Hungarian-French relations. Hudita's work holds some of the keys to the questions asked in this article.¹⁹

The article comprises three parts: first, I explore how the Ottoman decision to invade Ukraine rather than Hungary came about (January–June 1677). Second, I examine what happened between the time when the Ottoman army invaded Ukraine and when news of military defeat arrived in Istanbul (June–September 1677). Finally, I will look at how the news of the disaster affected the future of Hungarian-Ottoman and Habsburg-Ottoman relations. Was the optimism that Habsburg resident Kindsberg expressed in his dispatch of 16 October 1677 justified?

Hungary or Ukraine? Months of Uncertainty

The Żurawno Armistice (17 October 1676), which ended more than four years of warfare between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, constitutes a major but unacknowledged juncture in European history. European courts and the wider reading public were eager to learn where the victorious Ottoman army would turn next. There was much speculation.²⁰ Some suggested Venice, others Russia, and yet others Hungary. Not a few believed that the war with Poland would be resumed in the spring as it was considered doubtful that the Polish court would be willing to accept the loss of

¹⁴Sergei M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, vol. 7 (Moscow, 1962), 208–11. For a synopsis of the Russian state of research, see Brian L. Davies, *Warfare, State, and Society on the Black Sea Steppe* (London, 2007), 159–61, 219n5–7.

¹⁵For a brief synopsis of the Polish state of research, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish diplomatic Relations (15th–18th century). An Annotated Edition of 'Adhnames and Other Documents* (Leiden, 2000), 143–52. On the 1672–76 Polish-Ottoman War, see most recently the excellent Marek Wagner, *Wojna polsko-turecka w latach 1672–1676*, 2 vols. (Zabrze, 2009).

¹⁶Zbigniew Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita wobec Turcji i Rosji 1674–1679* (Wrocław-Warsaw, 1976), 53–59; 93–123, 143–45; Zbigniew Wójcik, *Jan III Sobieski* (Warsaw, 2021), 241–71.

¹⁷For a short synopsis of the Ukrainian state of research on the 1677 campaign, see Taras Chukhlib, *Kozaky i monarchy. Mizhnarodni vidnosyny rannomodernoi Ukrainskoi derzhavy 1648–1721 rr.* (Kyiv, 2009), 256–63. On Yurii Khmelnytsky, see Taras Chukhlib, *Het'mani pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy v istorii tsentral'no-skhidnoi Evropy (1663–1713)* (Kyiv, 2004), 135–48.

¹⁸Mykola Kostomarov, *Ruina. Istoricheskaia monografiia 1663–1687. Getmanstva Briukhovetskogo, Mnogogreshnogo, i Samoilovicha* (Moscow, 1882), esp. 550–60.

¹⁹Ioan Hudita, *Répertoire des documents concernant les négociations diplomatiques entre la France et la Transylvanie au XVIIe siècle (1636–1683)* (Paris, 1926); Ioan Hudita, *Histoire des relations diplomatiques entre la France et la Transylvanie au XVIIe siècle (1635–1683)* (Paris, 1927).

²⁰German newspapers closely followed the Polish-Ottoman peace negotiations, in *Archiwum Spraw Zagranicznych Francuskie do dziejów Jana III*, vol. 1 (Cracow, 1879), ed. K. Waliszewski. Vol. 3 of *Acta Historica Res Gestas Polonia illustrantia* [hereafter *Archiwum*], 335–36, Béthune to Louis XIV (16 December 1676).

Podolia and most of western Ukraine.²¹ The Kremlin was almost certain that Russia would be the next target; in fact, Russian military preparations had already started before the armistice. Large troop contingents were deployed to Kyiv and the eastern parts of Ukraine. And in August 1676 Russian troops crossed the Dnipro River to seize Chyhyryn, the capital of Ottoman-supported Cossack Ukraine. The troops forced the Ottoman-appointed hetman, Petro Doroshenko, to abdicate and swear allegiance to the tsar. For almost ten years Doroshenko had been a loyal servant of the Porte; it seemed unlikely that the Ottomans would accept his removal.²²

The Habsburg court in contrast anticipated that the Ottoman army would now turn against Hungary. For years its agents had gathered intelligence about the intentions of Grand Vizier Köprülü; he had entered the Polish war reluctantly as his real goal was to fulfill the dream of Süleiman the Magnificent, that is, to seize Vienna and destroy the Habsburg Empire. He regularly met with Hungarian rebel leaders and promised them military support once the Polish war was over. French intelligence agreed with this assessment; in fact, the French court became convinced that Köprülü had initiated peace negotiations with Poland in preparation for an invasion of Hungary.²³

Hungarian rebels also anticipated that the Ottomans would now finally come to liberate them from the Habsburg yoke. For more than ten years they had resisted the imposition of a brutal Counter Reformation, military occupation, war taxes, mass arrests, and the random confiscation of estates. Indeed, Habsburg rule had already been overthrown twice in the eastern parts of the Hungarian Kingdom in major popular revolts. The Ottomans had encouraged these revolts, and Ottoman troops had in fact participated covertly in the second revolt, which had led to a veritable war of extermination against Catholic clergy, Habsburg soldiers, and Vienna-appointed officials. Some compared the Habsburg reconquest of these provinces to the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands during the sixteenth century.²⁴

Unlike the Hungarians, the Ukrainians no longer viewed the Ottomans as liberators in late 1676. Formerly they had welcomed Ottoman troops with bread and salt; Orthodox clergy had prayed for the sultan's well-being; and the Ottoman-anointed Petro Doroshenko had been a folk hero. In the late 1660s, his Ottoman-backed invasion of the Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine led to the collapse of the Russian regime and the mass slaughter of Russian soldiers and administrators. However, the Ottoman invasions of western Ukraine in 1674 and 1675, which pushed out both Russians and Poles, had brought untold suffering such as the massacres and enslavement of towns that had recognized the tsar. When Doroshenko abdicated as hetman of Ukraine in September 1676 he was no longer a popular figure, or at least this is how it seemed to most Ukrainians and outside observers. This was not true in large parts of Hungary, where the Ottomans were still seen as saviors, and thousands of refugees had fled into Ottoman territory for protection. In late October 1676, many flocked to a rebel army that stood poised to invade Habsburg Hungary with Ottoman and Transylvanian support. It was commonly understood that this invasion would be followed by a major Ottoman campaign against the Habsburg Empire in the spring of 1677.²⁵

This most likely would have happened had Grand Vizier Köprülü not died suddenly on 3 November 1676. Upon his death, a cloud of depression, despair, and anxiety descended upon Hungarian exile

²¹Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 93, 100, 106–7; Anna Maria Travellini, *Il Cardinale Francesco Buonvisi nunzio a Vienna (1675–1689)* (Florence, 1958), 26–27.

²²Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, 7: 203–4; Kostomarov, *Ruina*, 506–13; Sedov, "Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.," 487. On the Porte's abiding commitment to Doroshenko, see Georg B. Michels, "Replacing Tsar, King, and Emperor with the Sultan: Ukrainians, Hungarians, and the Ottomans (1660–1680)," *Central European History* 57, no. 2 (2024): 137–62 and Georg B. Michels, "New Data on Hetman Petro Doroshenko and the Ottomans from the Habsburg Archives (1666–1672)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* (forthcoming, 2025).

²³Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 299–307; Kurt Koehler, *Die orientalische Politik Ludwigs XIV: ihr Verhältnis zu dem Türkenkrieg von 1683* (Leipzig, 1907), 67–68.

²⁴Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 122–37, 251–89, 337.

²⁵Michels, "Replacing Tsar, King, and Emperor with the Sultan," esp. 152 (Orthodox clergy praying for the sultan), 154–56 (Doroshenko's popularity), 157 (peasants welcoming Ottomans); Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 3–4, 272–74, 339.

communities in the vilayets of Várad and Eger as well as the Ottoman vassal state of Transylvania. The exiles' Transylvanian supporters, including the Ottoman-appointed Prince Mihály Apafi, shared this sense of gloom and doom. Daniel Absolon, the Hungarian exiles' emissary to Poland, captured the mood in a series of letters from December 1676: "I cannot describe ... how much sorrow has taken hold of our hearts. Due to the death of the [grand] vizier, the Transylvanian prince has changed his resolution which has thrown everything into confusion ... The nobility is in despair and the soldiers are furious; they will now return as victims to the meat market of Austrian cruelty (*macellum Austriacae crudelitatis*) ... The suspect substitution [of Köprülü] with a new and hostile [grand vizier] and the suspension of an operation that was already under way have left everyone in a state of grief and conturbation."²⁶ The Transylvanian Calvinist Ferenc Rhedey, a strong supporter of the Hungarian exiles, put it this way: "My mind has gone dead seeing the change at the Porte and I confess that I see only a great misfortune for us ... The prince is completely terrified ... and the poor Hungarian compatriots are all in confusion and chaos."²⁷

Everything now depended on the new grand vizier Kara Mustafa. The French court remained convinced that the new vizier was as eager to invade Hungary as his predecessor; information that suggested otherwise was registered but French diplomats thought that Kara Mustafa could be won over quickly by Hungarian emissaries, the French Ambassador Charles Francois Olier Nointel, and Transylvanian bribes. At first glance, this assessment seemed much too optimistic.²⁸ Russian observers, for example, saw that the victorious Ottoman army was not moving in the direction of Hungary but remained camped over the winter along the Danube River facing Ukraine. And intelligence from Kyiv, the eastern parts of Ukraine, and Crimea seemed to confirm that the Ottomans were determined "to go to war with all forces at their disposal over the Little-Russian province" of the tsar's empire.²⁹ Habsburg assessments of the situation were carefully optimistic: the Ottoman army was so exhausted after four years of war against Poland that an attack on Hungary was unlikely before 1678. Also, Resident Kindsberg was pleasantly impressed by Kara Mustafa's friendliness: "[The new grand vizier] let me know that I was the first among all [foreign] representatives ... and he would be happy to see me any time ... My first impression is ... that he seeks to demonstrate peace-loving thoughts." But Kindsberg also warned that Vienna must not trust the Porte, remain well-armed, and maintain strict vigilance along the Hungarian borders. It was worrisome that the French were prodding the Porte to invade Hungary. No one doubted that war in Hungary was inevitable but now at least the Vienna court could dare to hope that it would not occur immediately.³⁰

The Hungarian exiles were—contrary to their initial expectations—in a better position than they thought. Kara Mustafa allowed them to have a resident ambassador; this had not been permitted by his predecessor. While Ukrainians had had their own resident for almost ten years, Hungarian emissaries

²⁶Samuel Gergely, ed., "Thököly Imre és a francia diplomácia. A francia külügyminisztérium levéltárában levő 'Hongrie' című hét kötetes gyűjteményből," *Történelmi Tár* (1886), 333–53, here 343, Absolon to Canon Voienski (18 December 1676); 344, Absolon to Marquis de Béthune (December 1676, n.d.).

²⁷Gergely 7, no. 229, Ferenc Rhedey to Mihály Teleki (28 November 1676), p. 315–16.

²⁸Koehler, *Orientalische Politik*, 68 ("Zeigte sich Kara Mustafa als ein äußerst kriegsfreudiger Vezier... Er [war] entschlossen, den geplanten Einfall in Ungarn unverzüglich ins Werk zu setzen"); Hudita, *Histoire*, 278 (optimistic letter by Louis XIV from 11 December 1676); Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 123, Béthune to Simon Arnauld de Pomponne (27 December 1676); no. 124, Béthune to Louis XIV (15 January 1677).

²⁹Smirnov, *Rossia i Turtsiia*, 2: 135; Floria, "Voiny Osmanskoi imperii," 126–27; Sedov, "Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.," 489; Akty, *otnosheniia k istorii iuzhnoi i zapadnoi Rossii, sobrannye i izdannye Arkheograficheskoi Komissiei*, vols. 1–15 (St. Petersburg, 1863–92) [hereafter *AIUZR*], 12: 812–16, Hetman Ivan Samoilovich to Tsar Fedor Alekseevich (22 November 1676), esp. 813 (Samoilovich was the Kremlin-appointed Cossack ruler of eastern Ukraine). *AIUZR* was compiled by Ukrainian historian Mykola Kostomarov who had been banned from Ukraine but was allowed to join the Imperial Archeography Commission.

³⁰Turica 147/2, fols. 145v, 146v, Kindsberg to Leopold (25 November 1676) [arrived in Vienna 8 March 1677]; 147/3, fols. 2r–v, Leopold to Kindsberg (3 February 1677) (expressing great uncertainty about the Porte's designs (*dissegni*) after not receiving any news from Kindsberg for four months [sic]); 4–5v, Leopold to Kindsberg (8 March 1677) (thanking God that war with the Turks was no longer imminent, hoping for peace with French in Nijmegen).

constantly had to come and go.³¹ The Hungarian resident was none other than László Kubinyi, one of the principal leaders of the anti-Habsburg revolts of the early 1670s. He was a radical anti-Catholic ready to fight the Habsburgs to the death. He also had good relations with Ottoman dignitaries in Várad and Eger who likely recommended him to Kara Mustafa. Kubinyi quickly became the linchpin of Hungarian lobbying at the Porte. He briefed other Hungarian emissaries, who started flocking to the Porte almost immediately after Köprülü's death. He also got them in touch with Ottoman dignitaries who were sympathetic to the Hungarians' cause. Kubinyi worked in tandem with Transylvanian resident János Buda, other Transylvanians at the Porte, and Transylvanian emissaries.³² Their joint promotion of the Hungarian cause paid off; in January 1677 they could already report that the original plan for an invasion of Hungary was not off the table: "As far as the state of Hungarian affairs is concerned the grand vizier is governing the territories (*habenas*) of this vast empire according to the rules and dispositions of his predecessor. He is most inclined to expand these [territories] with the help of the Transylvanian prince and would not be opposed to the operation if the Polish king did not still have some second thoughts about the peace ..."³³ In other words, Kara Mustafa had not rejected the Hungarian exiles' plans; he was only waiting for the opportune moment to implement them. This moment would come once he could be sure of the stability of the Żurawno Armistice.³⁴

Habsburg resident Kindsberg was well aware of the ongoing danger of war in Hungary. He did everything possible to discredit the Hungarian rebels in the eyes of Kara Mustafa and the Ottoman elite. They were not the Porte's true friends, he insisted, but preferred to become subjects of the French crown. This explained why they were conspiring with the French court and had just offered the Hungarian crown to the Marquis de Béthune, Louis XIV's ambassador in Poland and the Polish king's brother-in-law. Also, they caused bloodshed and destruction not just through their constant raids into Habsburg Hungary but also inside Ottoman Hungary where many of them lived in the vilayets of Várad and Eger. He demanded that the Porte cut all its ties with the Hungarians and that Resident László Kubinyi be removed. It seemed that the Porte was receptive: Kubinyi was denounced in a public ceremony and chased away; the pasha of Eger was ordered to lend no further support to Hungarian rebels; and a special emissary was sent to the border region to investigate whether the French were actually colluding with the Hungarians and whether Hungarian refugees living on Ottoman territory had harmed the sultan's subjects.³⁵ Kindsberg felt reassured by these measures and came away believing that Kara Mustafa was genuinely invested in peace. His first audience with the new grand vizier on 22 February 1676 was an astonishingly positive encounter after the rude treatment Kindsberg had experienced by the previous grand vizier. As he reported to Vienna, "the vizier proved himself to be really friendly and demonstrated a better and more sincere mental disposition than his predecessor."³⁶

³¹Based on data from the Habsburg archives—gathered by Kindsberg's predecessor Giovanni Baptista Casanova—the first Ukrainian resident arrived at the Porte in December 1669, in Michels, "New Data on Hetman Petro Doroshenko and the Ottomans."

³²Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Monumenta Comitalia Regni Transylvaniae/Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek* (hereafter *EOE*), vol. 16 (Budapest, 1893), no. LXIII, Apafi to János Buda (2 February 1677), p. 357 (Kubinyi); Áron Szilády and Sándor Szilágyi, eds., *Török-magyarkori állam-okmánytár* (hereafter *TMAO*), vol. 5 (Pest, 1871), no. CCLXXV, János Buda to Apafi (28 February 1677); no. CCCV, Kubinyi to Apafi (Istanbul, 2 October 1677). Other Transylvanians who contributed included the envoy László Baló and the secretary (*deák*) György, in Farkas Deák, ed., *A bujdosók levéltára. A Gróf Teleki-család Maros-Vásárhelyi levéltárából* (Budapest, 1883), 156–57, Apafi to Hungarian exiles (25 November 1676). On Kubinyi, see Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 94, 212, 513n21, 518n59, 518n63.

³³*EOE* 16, no. LXII, p. 355 and Gergely 7, no. 240, Teleki to Béthune (28 January 1677), p. 330. In fact, Sobieski was committed to the Żurawno Armistice but he faced strong opposition which was largely due to Habsburg intrigues, see Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 58–60, 93–101.

³⁴*EOE* 16, no. LXIII, Apafi to János Buda (2 February 1677) expressing his trust in God that Buda's collaboration with Kubinyi would soon result in a positive answer (*jó válasz*).

³⁵*Turcica* 147/3, fols. 12–13v, 15, 17–18 (16 March 1677); 31v, Leopold to Kindsberg (9 April 1677).

³⁶*Ibid.*, fol. 16v ("Der Vezier hat sich gar freundlich erwiesen, und ein besseres undt aufrichters [sic] Gemüth alß der vorige gezeigt"). This impression was confirmed by Kara Mustafa's purge of Köprülü's clients (*ibid.*, fol. 18v).

However, it is doubtful that Kindsberg's interventions made any real difference. László Kubinyi may have left, but he soon returned and continued lobbying for Ottoman military intervention. Also, nothing changed on the ground along the Habsburg-Ottoman borders. The Vienna court was puzzled by Kindsberg's optimism; intelligence from the Hungarian borderlands told a different story. As Emperor Leopold put it in a letter to Kindsberg on 9 April 1677, "the offers of the new grand vizier sound good ... but they are of little use for observing calm and good neighborly relations." The rebels remained in their living quarters across Ottoman and Transylvanian lands surrounding Upper Hungary.³⁷ Kindsberg was told to push harder urging "the complete removal and extermination (*Vertilgung*)" of the Hungarian rebels.³⁸ On the same day, Count Raimondo Montecuccoli, the President of the Aulic War Council and commander-in-chief of the Habsburg army, wrote to Kara Mustafa, demanding that the Porte not provide any support to the Hungarians. Their continued presence on Ottoman territory was a troubling violation of the existing peace treaty.³⁹

Montecuccoli had good reasons to be worried. The danger in the Hungarian borderlands had not decreased after Köprülü's death despite the great relief that his demise had caused in Vienna. In fact, within a few months, the situation seemed to have become more dangerous than ever. This was largely due to the close contacts of Hungarian rebels with France and Poland (about which Kindsberg complained to Kara Mustafa). These contacts were not new but they had evolved secretly in the past because Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü had not permitted them. Kara Mustafa, by contrast, either did not care or actually welcomed them;⁴⁰ it certainly was a blatant lie when he told Kindsberg that he had never heard about them. These contacts occurred right under his nose at the Porte where Hungarian and Transylvanian emissaries met regularly with the French ambassador Nointel.⁴¹ Nointel in turn communicated with the French ambassador in Poland and the French court. Louis XIV himself took an astoundingly active interest, as did the Polish King Jan Sobieski. They hosted Hungarian rebel leaders at their courts and regularly wrote letters to Prince Apafi and other Transylvanian supporters of the Hungarians. On 11 December 1676, Louis XIV ordered Béthune to "carry the war against the [Habsburg] emperor into Hungary." Given the state of military affairs in the Rhineland and the Netherlands this was of pivotal significance.⁴² Enormous logistical planning went into this undertaking: the transport of large amounts of silver and gold coins (via Gdańsk), the recruitment of soldiers from the disbanding Polish army, the dispatch of French officers, and the embedding of these officers and French undercover agents among Hungarian rebels. Louis XIV instructed Béthune "that you must do everything that can make it possible for the diversion in Hungary to succeed." The goal was to launch an invasion through Hungary in the direction of the Habsburg Empire's hereditary provinces "so that [the House of Austria] sees itself obliged to withdraw ... the largest part of the army which is currently engaged on the Rhine."⁴³

More research needs to be conducted on French and Polish involvement in the Hungarian revolt against the Habsburg Empire. What is important here is that French agents closely observed the Porte's

³⁷The military-administrative province of Upper Hungary (*Hungaria Superior*) comprised the easternmost thirteen counties of the Hungarian kingdom.

³⁸Turcica 147/3, fols. 31–33v, Leopold to Kindsberg (9 April 1677), esp. 31v–32.

³⁹Ibid., fols. 34r–v, Montecuccoli to Kara Mustafa (9 April 1677), esp. 34v ("Rebelles hucusque ... in ditione vestra recepti atque protecti").

⁴⁰Turcica 147/4, fols. 79v–80, Leopold to Kindsberg (18 June 1677).

⁴¹Turcica 147/3, fols. 13, Kindsberg to Aulic War Council (16 March 1677) (pleading ignorance), 19 ("Daß der Sultan umb diese Rebellen nichts wisse"); 147/4, fol. 113v, Kindsberg to Aulic War Council (23 July 1677) ("Er ... bey gehöriger orthten inquirieren lassen, aber das geringste anzaigen von dergleichen machination nicht gefunden"); Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 123, Béthune to Pomponne (27 December 1676); TMAO 5, no. 278, p. 410; Gergely 7, no. 355, p. 261.

⁴²*Archiwum*, 1: 206–7, 248–49, 268, 275, 289, 308–10, 315–17, 320–21, 329, 336–37, 346 (quote), etc. (correspondence of Louis XIV); Hudita, *Histoire*, 278, 294–95, 300; Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 50–51, 53, 64–65, 117n98; Wójcik, *Sobieski*, 256–57, 267–68; Otto Forst de Battaglia, *Jan Sobieski. König von Polen* (Einsiedeln and Zürich, 1946), 100.

⁴³*Archiwum*, 1: 347, Louis XIV to de Béthune (St. Germain, 17 December 1676). See also Jean Bérenger, "A francia politika és a kurucok (1676–1681)," *Történelmi Szemle* 1976, no. 2: 273–93, esp. 279–81.

intentions via-a-vis Hungary and Ukraine. Given their embeddedness at the core of Hungarian resistance and Nointel's close relations with Hungarian emissaries, they were in many ways better informed than the Habsburgs. The French court understood very well that nothing could be achieved in Hungary without the Porte's support. Ideally, the Ottoman army itself would move against the Habsburg Empire; this would avoid the challenges of regularly supplying and paying an army in the remote reaches of Hungary. Clearly, before French and Polish soldiers crossed into Hungary the priority was to "stop the [Turk] from taking false steps" in the direction of Ukraine.⁴⁴ This approach seems to have yielded results. On 12 February Béthune reported that the Porte would invade Hungary immediately after it was assured of the firmness of the Polish peace.⁴⁵ And on 3 April 1677, the French foreign minister in Paris acknowledged receipt of good news from Nointel (dispatched in the first half of March): "It seems that the Prince of Transylvania has arranged things with the new grand vizier One could [therefore] believe that the Porte favors [the Hungarian malcontents] and, having finished the war with the King of Poland, is willing to support this [new war] which naturally offers itself against the [Habsburg] Emperor."⁴⁶ Even when Nointel reported shortly afterward that Ukraine would be the target of an Ottoman invasion, he also emphasized that the bulk of the Ottoman army would invade Hungary under the leadership of Sultan Mehmed IV.⁴⁷

French, Polish, Habsburg, Transylvanian, Ukrainian, and Russian sources reported for the first time in March 1677 on the Porte's interest in Ukraine. News that the sultan had made Yurii Khmelnytsky "Prince of Little Russia and Zaporozhia"⁴⁸ suddenly emerged seemingly out of nowhere; until then nobody at the Porte had talked about Khmelnytsky, who had been wasting away in an Ottoman prison since 1670.⁴⁹ Khmelnytsky's appointment was accompanied by increased talk about liberating Ukraine from the Russian occupation. Did the Porte want foreign courts to think that the invasion of Hungary was definitely off the table? This certainly was the hope of the Habsburg court and the fear of everyone else involved in the Hungarian crisis. Khmelnytsky, son of the legendary founder of the Cossack Hetmanate, was a surprising choice: he was largely unpopular in Ukraine. As a defrocked monk he did not command much respect among Ukrainian Orthodox clergy (who played pivotal roles in the anti-Russian resistance). But more importantly, he had alienated Ukrainians of all ranks by plotting with the Crimean Tatars to overthrow the well-liked Hetman Petro Doroshenko. Nevertheless, the sultan believed Khmelnytsky's bold promises that all of Ukraine would welcome the Ottomans as liberators, the Russians would not offer any resistance, and both western and eastern Ukraine would be united under the sultan's auspices.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *Archiwum*, 1: 368, Béthune to Pomponne (12 March 1677).

⁴⁵ Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 125, Béthune to Pomponne (12 February 1677)

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 126, Pomponne to Nointel (3 April 1677).

⁴⁷ Béthune to Louis XIV (Warsaw, 22 March 1677) as cited by Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 107n63. The invasion of Ukraine was to be led by Polish [sic] and Crimean Tatar armies, that is, Ottoman participation would be minimal.

⁴⁸ "Prince de la Petite-Russie et des Zaporogues" (*Archiwum*, 1: 377–78, Béthune to Louis XIV [Warsaw, 8 April 1677] based on information from Nointel and the Polish court. Several other variants of this title have been recorded in Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian sources (e.g., "Prince of Sarmatia," "Prince of Sarmatia, Little Russia, and Ukraine," "Prince of Ukraine," and "Prince of Rus" [*kniaz' Rus'kyi*]), in Chukhlib, *Kozaky i monarkhyi*, 260. Ottoman chroniclers referred to Yurii Khmelnytsky as "Prince of Ukraine (*Fürst der Ukraine*)," in Christa Hilbert, "Osteuropa 1648–1681 bei den zeitgenössischen osmanischen Historikern (Ukraine-Polen-Moskau)" (PhD Diss., Universität Göttingen, 1948), 92. Kindsberg described the new Ukrainian hetman as "Fürst über die Cosaken" and "Fürst in Ukania" (Turcica 147/3, fols. 9v, 46 [16 March, 17 April 1677]).

⁴⁹ According to Russian sources the sultan liberated Khmelnytsky from prison already in January 1677 but apparently this was kept a secret. See Vasilii Tiapkin to Kremlin (3 March 1677) cited in Kirill A. Kochegarov, *Ukraina i Rossiia vo vtoroi polovine XVII veka: politika, diplomatiia, kul'tura. Ocherki* (Moscow, 2019), 32; AIUZR 13, no. 12, Samoilovich to tsar (15 March 1677). Other evidence points to Kara Mustafa, in Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish diplomatic relations*, 151n75 (citing Kara Mustafa's order to find out if Khmelnytsky was still alive; this could very well have been the sultan's initiative); Aydar, *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa*, 149–50.

⁵⁰ *Archiwum*, 1: 377–78, Béthune to Louis XIV (Warsaw, 8 April 1677) based on information from Nointel and the Polish court. See also Gergely 7, no. 248, János Haller to Teleki (13 March 1677); Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 106 (undated conversation of Kara Mustafa and Polish envoy Andrzej Modrzejewski about Russian intentions in Ukraine), 114–15, 120; Turcica 147/3, fols.

Habsburg resident Kindsberg described in vivid detail how the Porte became engrossed in grandiose imperial visions of an Ottoman-ruled Ukraine.⁵¹ Kara Mustafa probably shared these visions but he treaded carefully. When the sultan essentially declared “war against the Muscovites” by decreeing the empire-wide collection of the war tax (*sursat*), Kara Mustafa hesitated: he asked the Crimean khan to intercede with Moscow and convince the Kremlin to voluntarily leave the Ukrainian lands that had once been ruled by Doroshenko. Unlike the sultan, who blindly believed in the superiority of the Ottoman army, Kara Mustafa knew that Greek merchants returning from Kyiv had warned about massive deployments of Russian troops.⁵² Still, Ottoman military preparations for a potential invasion of Ukraine were already under way in March 1677. Ottoman agents deployed to Ukraine to explore the difficult logistics of supplying a large army moving over vast distances. These same agents distributed proclamations by Hetman Khmelnytsky calling on Ukrainians to rise against the Russians in the name of the sultan; the Kremlin and its local supporters feared that these agents would make contact with the popular Doroshenko who was then under house arrest in Baturyn (ca. 130 miles northeast of Kyiv). In mid-March 1677 Doroshenko was promptly removed from Ukraine to Moscow.⁵³

Despite the sultan’s enthusiastic support of Khmelnytsky and Russian fears of an imminent invasion, the final decision to move the Ottoman army into Ukraine rather than Hungary was not taken before May 1677. The decision was the result of factional disputes that appear to have pitted the sultan (who favored war in Ukraine) against Kara Mustafa and his supporters (who wanted to turn attention to Hungary). We only get glimpses of these conflicts in the non-Ottoman sources.⁵⁴ But we can clearly identify some of the pressure groups that tried to influence the outcome of the Porte’s internal power struggle: on the one hand the Hungarian exiles, their Transylvanian protectors, and their French supporters; on the other hand the Habsburg court and its Dutch General Estates (both crucial parties in the French-Habsburg war [1673–78]). The Polish emissaries at the Porte took a somewhat ambivalent position: they did not contradict the Hungarians and their sympathizers, but they also suggested to Kara Mustafa and other Ottoman dignitaries that an invasion of Ukraine would be a good idea. While hesitant to join such an invasion (which the Żurawno Armistice obliged them to), they believed that the Ottoman army would be able to push the Russians out of Ukraine once and for all. This would allow the Poles to reclaim the parts of Ukraine lost in the Russian-Polish war (1654–67). Historian Zbigniew Wójcik described this position as a naive fallacy. Did the Polish court really believe the Ottomans would share parts of their Ukrainian conquests without Polish military participation?⁵⁵

In spring 1677 the mood of Hungarian emissaries at the Porte was optimistic. On 29 April Menyhért Keczer and Gábor Kende, prominent leaders of the Lutheran and Calvinist resistance,⁵⁶ had a promising meeting with Kara Mustafa’s majordomo (*kahya*, *kihaja*): “After we showed him our letters of accreditation he treated us with great humanity and inquired about everything. He left us with the answer that we should wait a little, he would take us in front of the grand vizier ...” On 5 May, they met

8v–11, Kindsberg to Aulic War Council (16 March 1677). At this time rumors began circulating among Crimean Tatars that the sultan himself would lead the invasion of Ukraine, *AIUZR* 13, no. 34, Ivan Samoilovich to Tsar (13 May 1677), cols. 147–48 (interrogation of Tatar captives).

⁵¹This Ukraine no longer would be a free vassal state as it had been under Doroshenko but a colony. See Turcica I. 147/3, fols. 10r–v (“Sie ganz Ukranien in ein allgemaine contribution und tribut bringen wollen ... auch Podolien mit Ukranien in wenig Jahren also mit Türkhen anzufüllen”).

⁵²*Ibid.*, fols. 8v–9, 10v (“Daß dies und jenseits des Boristenne [Dnipro] grosses Volk vorhanden”).

⁵³Kochegarov, *Ukraina i Rossiia*, 34–35; *AIUZR* 13, no. 10, Ivan Samoilovich to Tsar (6 March 1677), col. 35 (“To preserve the peace among the common Ukrainian people ... [I ask] that you order Doroshenko to Moscow”); no. 14, Report of Little Russian Office about Doroshenko’s removal to Moscow (15 March 1677).

⁵⁴Ottoman chroniclers omitted these factional conflicts. Instead, they suggest that the defection of Petro Doroshenko to the Kremlin left the Porte no choice but to go to war with Russia. See Aydar, *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa*, 148–49.

⁵⁵Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 111–12; Wójcik, *Sobieski*, 259–60.

⁵⁶The Lutheran Keczer and the Calvinist Kende, both prominent nobles and declared enemies of the Habsburg monarchy since the early 1660s, played vital roles in the 1670 and 1672 revolts that led to the collapse of Habsburg power in the easternmost provinces of Hungary. Both had developed close ties to powerful dignitaries in Ottoman Hungary. Kende met with Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü at least once. For more detail, see Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 585 (index).

again with the majordomo and learned that Kara Mustafa was still awaiting the return of a special emissary “whom he had sent to the [Hungarian] border pashas in our cause.” In the meantime the majordomo “greatly assured, consoled, and encouraged us while urging us to trust fully in him because we would receive with all certainty an answer according to our wish. We will come to your help within a short while.” The Hungarian emissaries rejoiced. Finally, they could hope for the preservation of their “once very glorious and now already waning and poor nation in exile that had suffered so much.” They were “convinced that God will bring an end to the days in which our liberation was in darkness: today or tomorrow the sun will rise.” Great hope took hold of them especially as “anybody [at the Porte] who can open his mouth is giving us only encouragement.” The signs were all positive. They simply had to trust in God that everything would turn out according to their wishes.⁵⁷

The Hungarians had good reason to be optimistic. This is further illustrated by Gábor Kende’s chance encounter in the sultan’s stables with Agha Süleiman, the former majordomo of Grand Vizier Köprülü and still a leading figure at the Porte.⁵⁸ Agha Süleiman “met [Kende] with affection and asked [him] to sit down right next to him.” He then assured Kende that even the sultan was positively inclined to support the Hungarians. “I have talked a lot with the emperor about your affairs and we have come to a positive resolution ... Be in good spirits! Until now I have been like a father to you and I will remain so from now on.” Yes, Ukraine was a problem. Doroshenko had created a real mess by defecting to the tsar; he was “a dog and behaving like a dog (*ebelkedik*).” But it was really nothing. They should not worry about it.⁵⁹ The Hungarian emissaries were also encouraged by Kara Mustafa’s response to the Dutch resident’s complaints about the support they were receiving from the French crown. On 3 May the resident demanded that the Porte stop the French from infiltrating Hungary. This was not just a maneuver to deflect Habsburg troops from defending the Netherlands. No, it was an existential threat to the Ottoman Empire: “When the French establish themselves in Hungary and Transylvania they will not be satisfied ... they will want to advance through Wallachia into Turkey It is therefore necessary that Your Excellency takes the opportune remedy, that is, to chase away Gabriel Kende and the other [Hungarian] rebels.”⁶⁰ The Hungarians learned about the meeting several days later: Kara Mustafa not only had rebuffed the Dutch warning but he had broken out laughing: “[Louis XIV] is only a king. Why should I be afraid of him? So many are standing against him: the German emperor, kings and princes, and you as well. And that is how things stand, and thus they told him to leave.”⁶¹ Clearly, there was no reason to worry. Kara Mustafa was still on the Hungarians’ side and apparently did not mind the increasingly intense Hungarian-French involvement.⁶²

There are two noteworthy, though puzzling, pieces of evidence that confirm the Hungarians’ assessment of the situation: first, the assignment of Khalil Pasha, who had been the governor of Kamenets (and formerly Silistria) until early 1676, to the vizierate of Buda in March 1677; and second, the decision to appoint Ahmed Pasha, governor of Silistria, as beglerbey of Bosnia. These were arguably the two most important Ottoman players in Ukrainian affairs. Ahmed Pasha had overseen Ottoman communications

⁵⁷Gergely 7, no. 261, Gábor Kende to Teleli (Istanbul, 4 May 1677), pp. 355–56; no. 264, Menyhért Keczer to Teleki (6 May 1677); TMAO 5, no. 278, Gábor Kende, Menyhért Keczer, and László Kubinyi to Apafi (Istanbul, 12 May 1677), pp. 411, 414 (“Nagy biztatással vigasztalt és bátorított is bennünket, intvén, hogy legyünk teljes hiedelemmel, mert minden bizonynyal kívánságunk szerint való választ vévén, meg fogunk rövid időn segítettnie”).

⁵⁸Agha Süleiman had been promoted to the rank of Chief Stablemaster (*Oberster Stallmeister*) at the sultan’s court, in Turcica 147/2, fol. 145 (25 November 1676). The fact that this powerful player survived Kara Mustafa’s purges and acted as the Hungarian envoys’ protector suggests continuity with the pro-Hungarian policy of Ahmed Köprülü.

⁵⁹Gergely 7, no. 261, p. 357 (“Szeretettel látott, épen mellé ültetett ... Én az császárral sokat beszéltem az ti dolgotokról, és jól el is végeztük ... Vigan legyetek, mint eddig édes apátok voltam, ezután is az lesznek”).

⁶⁰Turcica 148/1, fols. 164–165v, Dutch envoy Justinus Colyer to Kara Mustafa (6 May 1677), esp. 164v.

⁶¹Gergely 7, no. 264, p. 362.

⁶²See the rather optimistic correspondence between de Béthune, Louis XIV and French foreign minister Pomponne, in *Archivum*, 1: 382, 384–88, 390–94 (7 March–23 May 1677). One finds a similar optimism in French-Transylvanian (Gergely 7, nos. 258 [Louis XIV], 259–60) and Polish-Transylvanian correspondence (Gergely 7, nos. 257 [Sobieski], 266, 267 [Sobieski], 270) from 21 April to 1 June 1677.

with Ukrainian Cossacks and Khalil Pasha had been pivotal in organizing the 1672, 1673, and 1674 Ottoman invasions of Ukraine. Why would these experienced veterans of past invasions be appointed to the two most important Ottoman governorships facing the Kingdom of Hungary (including Croatia)? Habsburg resident Kindsberg feared the worst: “Khalil Pasha of Buda is the most evil of all border pashas. When he was in Silistria, he fomented war with Poland. We must remain vigilant to ensure he does not start a fire.”⁶³ This is precisely what seemed to be happening: Khalil Pasha was still on his way to Buda when Hungarian and Croatian rebel leaders flocked to him in Belgrade.⁶⁴ Neither Khalil Pasha nor Ahmed Pasha acted according to the official Ottoman rhetoric of peace and friendship. Instead of curbing Ottoman and rebel raids into Habsburg territory—as purportedly instructed by Kara Mustafa—they allowed them to continue. In fact, the Janissaries and Hungarian rebels coordinated operations and combined forces.⁶⁵

Habsburg resident Kindsberg observed these developments with increasing apprehension. He was outraged that the Porte wine and dined the Hungarian emissaries “while at the same time promising me ... that they will be punished for their crimes.”⁶⁶ He was worried that the pashas of Várad and Eger, long the Hungarians’ advocates at the Porte, were taking the emissaries’ side: they complained bitterly about a brutal Habsburg raid against the Ottoman tributary town of Debrecen, a major refuge of Hungarian fugitives. The screams (*Geschrei*) of the victimized residents of Debrecen and the pashas’ complaints had the effect “that the grand vizier has gotten a bad impression of the Germans.”⁶⁷ Moreover, a trusted informant at the Porte warned Kindsberg that Kara Mustafa was not serious about invading Ukraine. The differences with Moscow would be resolved by negotiation. A significant portion of the Ottoman army would, therefore, deploy along the Hungarian borders: “They will take such positions that they can advance against [the Germans] at the suitable time with the rebels leading the way. The unruly Janissaries and sipahis who are in the habit of creating tumults in Istanbul will be added to [existing] border regiments and one wants to see what they can do.” In brief, the Ottoman Porte was ready to launch an attack on the Habsburg Empire. This would not be a major military campaign but undoubtedly a prelude to war. Kindsberg urged the Vienna court to send reinforcements to Upper Hungary and he begged God “to grant a general peace in Christendom and humiliate the Turks’ arrogant threats.”⁶⁸

It seems that his informants misled Kindsberg. Hungarian, Transylvanian, and French sources tell a more complicated story. A military campaign against Hungary was certainly considered well into May 1677, but by the end of the month, the sultan’s determination to go to war in Ukraine had won out. In early May the Hungarian envoy Gábor Kende observed that the Ottoman Imperial Council, which included top military leaders and ministers, was assembling in regular sessions of major importance (*nagy divánkozások*). He had no idea what was being discussed but remained hopeful that the decision would be in the Hungarians’ favor. He observed that the sultan was present in all meetings.⁶⁹ At about the same time a French agent in Transylvania reported to Béthune in Warsaw that “the prince of

⁶³Valerii Smolyi and Valerii Stepankov, *Petro Dorshenko: osobist' v realiakh epokhy* (Kyiv, 2021), 545, 559, 578, 645–46; Dmytro Doroshenko, *Het'man Petro Doroshenko. Ohliad ioho zhittia i politichnoi diial'nosti* (New York, 1985), 411; Turcica 147/3, fols. 18v, 26 (“Li Passa comandanti alli confine sono al presente li sequenti”). There is evidence that Khalil Pasha was first assigned to Bosnia and then to Temesvár; this would have given him a good overview of the situation along the Habsburg-Ottoman frontier before ascending to the most important post in Buda. See Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Podole pod panowaniem tureckim. Ejalet Kamieniecki 1672–1699* (Warsaw, 1994), 78, 80, 82.

⁶⁴The Habsburg spy who reported this was told that Khalil Pasha refused to meet with the rebels which is unlikely in light of the worsening situation in the Hungarian borderlands, in Turcica 147/3, fol. 54, Courier Philipp Wolfroomb to Aulic War Council (March 1677, n.d.).

⁶⁵Turcica 147/3, fol. 31v; 147/4, fol. 76v, Leopold to Kindsberg (9 April, 18 June 1677). Cf. the rhetoric of peace and friendship in Khalil Pasha’s letters to Vienna, in Turcica 147/3, fols. 29r–v, Khalil Pasha to Montecuccoli (22 April 1677), esp. 29r (“Per promovere et assicurar l’alma pace habbiamo spedito rigorosi ordini alli commandanti et officiali delle piazze e castelli ... [che] non presuma alcuno far...attion veruna pregiudiziosa alla pace”).

⁶⁶Turcica 147/3, fol. 68r–v (28 May 1677). This report covers the period from April 18 to 27 May 1677.

⁶⁷Ibid., fols. 68v–69.

⁶⁸Ibid., fols. 72v–73v (28 May 1677).

⁶⁹Gergely 7, no. 261, pp. 355–56.

Transylvania had received secret orders to assist the Hungarians.” This Ottoman- and French-supported invasion of Hungary would “not only change the affairs of the [Habsburg] emperor but ruin all of his projects along the Rhine.”⁷⁰ Meanwhile, French ambassador Nointel intensely lobbied Kara Mustafa for war against the Habsburg Empire. It was a unique opportunity that must not be missed: Hungarian malcontents, the prince of Transylvania, and neighboring pashas were ready to invade; they just needed minor reinforcements. Unlike Kindsberg, however, Nointel grasped that the Porte was gradually moving away from war “against the House of Austria.” On 17 May he reported that the behavior of the Porte’s leading ministers had become mysterious; there was now even talk about deposing Prince Apafi, the Hungarians’ principal supporter. A week later Nointel recorded the Porte’s fear that an Ottoman invasion of Hungary would generate peace in Christendom and “turn all the [military] forces of Germany against it.”⁷¹ He sensed that the Ottomans had chosen Ukraine as their next target and proposed to Kara Mustafa on 27 May that he allow the French to take charge of the Hungarian question.⁷² On 1 June Transylvanian resident János Buda reported that the Ottoman army stood poised to invade Ukraine.⁷³

What exactly transpired behind the scenes during the divan sessions and in the larger factional struggles at the Porte may never be known, as Ottoman documentary records and letters that could provide insights likely no longer exist.⁷⁴ All we have are chronicle accounts written ex post facto, often many years after the Ottoman invasion of Ukraine.⁷⁵ The chroniclers’ narratives do not mention the possibility of an invasion of Hungary; this is quite a contrast to the evidence cited here, which strongly suggests that the Ottoman Porte was committed to helping the Hungarian insurgents overthrow the Habsburg regime. If we can trust the conversation between Gábor Kende and Agha Süleiman, even the sultan was inclined to prioritize Hungary. Was Kara Mustafa outvoted in the divan sessions? Was he put in his place by the sultan? This is unlikely, given the superior power he enjoyed after systematically placing his clients in positions of influence, both at the Porte and in Hungary.⁷⁶ Was Kara Mustafa afraid that an invasion of Hungary would lead to a universal peace in Christendom, as suggested by French ambassador Nointel? Was he taken in by the grand visions of Ottoman imperial expansion that Kindsberg found circulating at the Porte? Or was he concerned about the intensifying Russian military deployments in eastern Ukraine, about which he had been informed by Greek merchants?

⁷⁰Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 130, Béthune to Louis XIV (Warsaw, 15 May 1677) based on his secretary Abbot Reverend who was on his way back from Transylvania with several Hungarian exiles in tow.

⁷¹Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 129, Nointel to Béthune (5 May 1677); no. 131, Nointel to M. de Forval (17 May 1677); nos. 132, Nointel to Louis XIV (23 May 1677). On 24 May Nointel intercepted an order by Kara Mustafa to the pasha of Várad to provide only secret assistance to the Hungarian insurgents, in Hudita, *Histoire*, 299.

⁷²Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 133, Nointel to Louis XIV (27 May 1677), esp. p. 155 (“J’avois la visée de pousser la chose plus loing, faisant entendre indirectement au Vizier que Votre Majesté Sire pourroit bien se resoudre d’assister puissamment les Hongrois”).

⁷³TMAO 5, no. 282, János Buda to Apafi (1 June 1677).

⁷⁴For thoughtful discussions of the scant documentary material that might be gleaned from Ottoman manuscripts, see Jan Rypka and Dmytro Doroshenko, “Hejtman Petr Doroshenko a jeho turecká politika,” *Časopis Národního muzea* 1–2 (1933): 1–55, esp. 1, 3; Il’ja V. Zajcev, “La politique Turque de Petro Dorošenko. Documents du fonds de Wojciech Bobowski à la BNF,” *Cahiers du monde russe et post-soviétique* 50, nos. 2–3 (April–September 2009): 511–32, esp. 516–19. These scholars worked on the Ukraine policy of Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü (1661–76). One can only hope that Ottomanists will undertake similarly painstaking work to glean Ottoman manuscripts for documentary data about the pivotal 1676–83 period.

⁷⁵For a lucid assessment of the limitations of Ottoman chronicle accounts about the year 1677, see Hilbert, “Osteuropa 1648–1681 bei den zeitgenössischen osmanischen Historikern,” 92–93, esp. 93 (“Über den für die Osmanen katastrophalen Verlauf des Feldzuges berichtet die Reichschronik [Rašids] nur lakonisch”). For a synopsis of available chronicle accounts, see Aydar, *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa*, 149–52.

⁷⁶On Kara Mustafa’s systematic—and often brutal—replacement of his predecessor’s clients with his own loyalists, see Merlijn Olon, “‘A Most Agreeable and Pleasant Creature’? Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa and the Dutch in the Levant (1668–1682),” *Oriente Moderno* (2003): 1–28, esp. 8, 14, 21; Turcica 147/2, Kindsberg to Leopold, fol. 145 (“Der Vesier sein creaturas eingesetzt, mit vermuethen, daß er auch nach und nach etliche Bassen, die ihm nicht anstehen, neben anderen verändern möchte”); discussed in Secret Conference on 6 March 1677 (ibid., 148v).

We do not know the answer. However, a closer look at the circumstances under which the Ukraine invasion was launched and developed provides some clues. Two issues in particular stand out: first, the poor intelligence that was guiding the invasion and led the Porte to greatly overestimate its own military capabilities; second, the failure to allocate maximum military resources to the campaign. It is telling that Ottoman troops stationed in Hungary were not redeployed to Ukraine (as they had been during the 1672 invasion of Poland). It seems that the invasion of Ukraine was undertaken because the Porte was unable—or unwilling—to comprehend that it would be facing a major military power in Muscovy. The assumption was that the Kremlin would cave in and abandon Ukraine without a fight; if not, an easy military conquest would follow. This double illusion of a quick Russian withdrawal or a swift Ottoman victory was likely the principal driving force behind the decision to launch the Ukrainian campaign. The invasion of Hungary was never called off; in fact, it could have been launched at any moment. Nobody at the Porte seems to have expected that the Russian army would defend Chyhyryn.

The Ottoman Invasion of Ukraine and What it Meant for Hungary

On 16 June 1677, Vizier Ibrahim “Shaitan” Pasha, the victor of the Polish campaign, led 45,000 Ottoman troops across the Danube. The invasion of Ukraine had finally commenced, more than six months after the sultan and Ottoman strongmen in the periphery of Ukraine had started pushing for it. At about the same time, an army of approximately 20,000 Tatars, led by Khan Selim Girei, left Crimea and began moving north.⁷⁷ According to Russian historian S. F. Oreshkova, the invasion did not have the character of a well-organized Ottoman campaign but of a large punitive expedition. There was no declaration of war. The principal purpose was to regain control over the western parts of Ukraine (which had formed an Ottoman vassal state under Hetman Doroshenko since 1669).⁷⁸ Contrary to rumors circulating in Poland, the Porte had no intention of pushing into eastern Ukraine. For example, the Ottoman garrison of Azov did not participate in the campaign; if the Ottomans had been eager for a major war these troops would have pushed in the direction of Astrakhan to prevent the conjunction of Russian and Persian troops.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, one must consider that the Ottomans placed at least some of their garrisons along the Black Sea on high alert. The commander of Kyzykermen (Gazikermen),⁸⁰ Beg Huszein Muravev, achieved a remarkable stunt (with loads of money): he convinced the Zaporozhian Cossacks, the independent Ukrainian warrior communities along the southern reaches of the Dnipro, to cut their ties with Moscow. It seems, therefore, that the Ottoman leadership at least left open the possibility of advancing into eastern Ukraine or, as the Kremlin feared, into the Russian heartlands.⁸¹

The invading army was, from the beginning, guided by misleading assumptions and false intelligence. It was commonly assumed that the inexperienced new tsar, Fedor Alekseevich, who had just ascended the throne at the age of eighteen, would not be willing to go to war against the mighty Ottoman army. Additionally, Ottoman commanders vividly remembered that Russian troops had previously avoided combat. In 1674, for example, the Russian army had rapidly withdrawn to the other side of the Dnipro when Ottoman troops, under Kara Mustafa, had advanced into western Ukraine.⁸² Again and again, Ottoman dignitaries at the Porte told Hungarian, Habsburg, Transylvanian, and French observers that

⁷⁷Davies, *Warfare*, 159. Other scholars give smaller numbers (between 49,000 to 53,000) for the entire invasion army including Ottoman, Tatar, Wallachian, and Moldavian troops, in Aydar, *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa*, 151; Witkowicz, *Kara Mustafa nad Dnieprem*, 77.

⁷⁸S. F. Oreshkova, “Osmanskaia imperiia vo vtoroi polovine XVII veka,” in Litarvin, *Osmanskaia imperiia*, 2: 5–24, here 21 (for full citation, see [note 13](#)).

⁷⁹Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 107.

⁸⁰One of three strategic fortresses (with Islamkermen and Sahinkermen) on the lower Dnipro River built to keep Cossack flotillas out of the Black Sea. Kyzykermen is located near Beryslav (Kherson district) in southern Ukraine.

⁸¹Kochegarov, *Ukraina i Rossiia*, 43, 55–56, 58; Rashidovna, “Russko-Osmanskoe protivostoianie,” 124.

⁸²Turcica 147/3, fol. 10v (16 March 1677); Rashidovna, “Russko-Osmanskoe protivostoianie,” 127.

the Russians would quickly cave in and withdraw.⁸³ No one could imagine that the Kremlin would confront the seemingly invincible army of the padishah that had recently defeated Habsburgs, Venetians, and Poles. This wishful thinking was fostered by the fabulist Yuriĭ Khmelnytsky, who had apparently convinced the sultan that Ukrainians would flock to him—after all he was the son of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the founder of the Ukrainian Hetmanate. The people were reportedly eager to be liberated and would welcome the Ottomans with open arms.⁸⁴ Ottoman spies in Ukraine did not correct this misapprehension; they failed to report the presence of Russian troops and the Kremlin's wider mobilization. The garrison of Chyhyryn, they claimed, was small and could be overwhelmed in three days. Hearing this Ibrahim Pasha predicted that he would continue the advance into Ukraine and seize Kyiv (which was allegedly even more poorly defended).⁸⁵ In short, the Ottomans blundered into Ukraine in an almost complete information vacuum.⁸⁶

Everything seemed to go according to expectations for the next six weeks. Russian troops did not engage, one Ukrainian town after another swore allegiance to the sultan, and Cossack garrisons surrendered their fortresses without a fight. There were warning signals, such as the failure of Yuriĭ Khmelnytsky to enlist more than a few hundred Cossacks and the mass desertions of Ottoman soldiers.⁸⁷ The rank-and-file of the Ottoman army did not close its eyes to reality. Had they been told by Ukrainian Cossacks what was in store for them? As one Turkish prisoner told his Russian captors: "Many Janissaries fled on their way from the Danube to Chyhyryn because they knew that the city of Chyhyryn was heavily fortified and [the Russians] would not surrender. They would offer brutal resistance of the kind that never happened in Poland."⁸⁸ If Ottoman intelligence had yielded better results, Ottoman army leaders would have known that the Kremlin had ordered large-scale mobilizations. An army of 52,000 Russian and Ukrainian troops was on its way to defend Chyhyryn; many thousands of additional soldiers were standing nearby in reserve.⁸⁹ From the Kremlin's perspective, the Ottoman invasion was a major threat to the survival of its emerging empire. Tsar Fedor Alekseevich called for a crusade to defend the "Little Russian people" (*malorossiiskii narod*) against "the enemy of the Holy Cross." He declared a veritable holy war against the forces of Islam that were coming to exterminate the Orthodox faith.⁹⁰

⁸³Gergely 7, nos. 261 (4 May 1677), p. 357; no. 273 (18 June 1677), pp. 374, 377; no. 329 (6 September 1677); Turcica 147/4, fols. 103v, 104v–105 (25 June 1677); 116v–117 (23 July 1677); 135r–v (13 August 1677); 144v (28 August 1677); Hudita, *Repertoire*, nos. 137–38 (18, 22 July 1677); *Archiwum*, 1: 423, Béthune to Louis XIV (21 August 1677); TMAO 5, nos. CCLXXXII (1 June 1677), CCLXXXIX (2 August 1677).

⁸⁴Kostomarov, *Ruina*, 550–52. The extent to which Khmelnytsky was mistaken needs to be investigated. Yes, many Ukrainians deeply resented the Russian occupation but they also remembered the trauma of past Ottoman invasions. Ottoman chroniclers assumed that "a large part of the Cossacks ... stubbornly refused to submit to the tsar: it therefore was appropriate to appoint [a new] leader on the Sultan's behalf" (Józef Sękowski, ed., *Collectanea z dziejopisów tureckich rzeczy do historii polskiej służących*, 2 vols. [Warsaw, 1824–25], 2: 124).

⁸⁵Rashidovna, "Russko-Osmanskoe protivostoianie," 126–28; Sedov, "Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.," 490; Smirnov, *Rossia i Turtsiia*, 2: 136 (3,000 Ukrainian Cossacks, 1,500 Russian soldiers); Turcica 147/3, fol. 64 (28 May 1677) (3,000 Cossacks, 2,000 Germans). In fact, 7,000 *soldaty*, 2,400 Russian musketeers, and 3,100 Ukrainian Cossacks were in the fortress (Davies, *Warfare*, 160).

⁸⁶Better intelligence was actually available at the Porte but it appears to have been ignored. As mentioned, Greek merchants traveling through Ukraine had reported large Russian troop contingents (Turcica 147/3, fol. 10v).

⁸⁷AIUZR 13, no. 12 (15 March 1677), p. 48 ("There were about 400 Cossacks with Yurasko Khmelnytsky and they were given to him by the sultan upon his petition"). These Cossacks were paid from "the sultan's treasury" (*ibid.*); no. 53 (15 July 1677), p. 213 ("There are 150 Cossacks with Khmelnytsky").

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, no. 89, col. 369 (October 1677 n.d.). See also Sedov, "Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.," 490.

⁸⁹Davies, *Warfare*, 160. Witkowicz estimated the total number of Russian forces (including troops led by Left-Bank Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Samoilovich) at between 64,000 and 74,000, in Witkowicz, *Kara Mustafa nad Dnieprem*, 89. Sedov described different phases of mobilization starting in March 1677 and reminded scholars to be careful when relying on numbers listed in recruitment registers. He found that significant numbers of Russian soldiers never showed up (just as during the most recent Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022). For example, of the 34,536 troops mobilized on 26 July 1677 for Commander-in-chief Grigoriĭ G. Romodanovskii's expeditionary army 6,206 never appeared. The absentees (*netchiki*) included ca. 5,000 cavalrymen and dragoons. See Sedov, "Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.," 490–92.

⁹⁰AIUZR 13, no. 41, Tsar to Samoilovich (23 June 1677), col. 162 ("Nepriatel' kresta sviatogo"); no. 92, col. 384, Tsar to Commander-in-Chief Romodanovskii (28 October 1677); Smirnov, *Rossia i Turtsiia*, 2: 125–26. Cf. the crusading language in

Few sources reveal the disconnect between glorious imperial fantasy and grim reality more than the order of surrender that Ibrahim Pasha issued to the defenders of Chyhyryn on 5 August 1677, the day after his troops had surrounded the fortress. This remarkable document is worth citing in detail; it was crafted in bookish Church Slavonic (with East Slavic elements) and may have been composed by the defrocked monk Khmelnytsky:

“Let it be known to you that the Most Sublime and Most Powerful Emperor among the monarchs of the universe, my merciful master, has [in the past] conquered Ukraine with his saber and [military] force. When Doroshenko defected to the Muscovite state you found the town empty and entered Chyhyryn castle. The Most Sublime Emperor ... has now sent Yurii Khmelnytsky, [son] of a proper progenitor (*vlasnogo dedicha*),⁹¹ that he rule and be the master over all of Ukraine from border to border Do not fight with us and surrender the town. Take along everything that you arrived with including your people and return to your own homeland (*v svoiu zemliu*). Be assured ... in the name of the Crimean khan, ourselves, and the entire army, that you can leave in good health and without any humiliation. But if you do not obey us you will be defeated by sword and fire with God’s help. Do not be angry later that you did not announce [your surrender] in time.”⁹²

Ibrahim Pasha could not imagine that he would become engulfed in three weeks of siege warfare and that a large Russian army was on its way to relieve Chyhyryn.

The Ottomans did not suffer similar illusions about Hungary. They were accurately informed about the miserable state of the Habsburg army and the seething discontent of the Hungarian population. Hungarian pashas had opened their lands to peasants, townsmen, Protestant clergy, and nobles fleeing army terror, high war taxes, and religious persecution. Settlements of Hungarian fugitives could be found not only in the border regions but also in the heartlands of Ottoman Hungary. Many of the soldiers who had escaped from Habsburg border garrisons (including German soldiers) had flocked to warrior communities such as Mezőtúr and Dévaványa, more than a hundred miles south of the Habsburg fortress line.⁹³ These soldiers formed the backbone of the Hungarian resistance; their mass mutiny in 1672 had forced the Habsburg regime to surrender nearly all important fortresses in Upper Hungary. They regularly raided deep into the heartlands of Habsburg Hungary, often accompanied by Ottoman troops with whom they had developed close relations. In June 1677, for example, major raids engulfed the hinterlands of Kassa (Kaschau, Košice), the Habsburg military and administrative capital of Upper Hungary.⁹⁴ The names of these soldiers’ commanders, many of whom were veterans of the 1672 revolt,

letters of Kremlin-appointed Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Samoilovich, in *AIUZR* 13, no. 22, Letter to Sirko (9 May 1677), cols. 108–9; no. 32, Letter to tsar (9 May 1677), cols. 138–39.

⁹¹ Bohdan Khmelnytsky who founded the Ukrainian Hetmanate after defeating Polish armies in a 1648–49 revolt.

⁹² Smirnov, *Rossia i Turtsiia*, 2: 139 based on RGADA (Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, Moscow), fond 210, Belgorodskii stol, stolbets 855, fols. 81–82. We know that Khmelnytsky directed several appeals for surrender to the Ukrainian Cossack defenders of Chyhyryn, promising them all kinds of freedoms and privileges. These appeals must have found sympathetic ears among both Cossacks and townsmen who resented the removal of Petro Doroshenko and expressed open hostility toward the Russian occupiers. But the overwhelming presence of troops loyal to the Kremlin made the voluntary surrender of the town and its fortress impossible. See Chukhlib, *Kozaky i monarkhyi*, 262–63; Sedov, “Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.,” 488–89, 494.

⁹³ Zsolt Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály. Erdély és a kurucmozgalom 1690–ig* (Budapest, 1972), 198, 225. Most runaway soldiers settled closer to the border in the Várad and Eger vilajets. The most important Hungarian warrior community was Biharpüspöki located close to Várad Fortress (*ibid.*, 223). On the intensifying flight to Ottoman Hungary, see Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 86, 149, 211–13, 222, 288, 310–11.

⁹⁴ *TMAO* 5, no. CCLXXXIV, Ferenc Olosz to Apafi (14 June 1677); Turcica 147/4, fol. 76v, Leopold to Kindsberg (18 June 1677) (“Die Türkhen denen Rebellen nicht allein Unterschlaiff, sondern auch bey den strayffen wirkliche Assistenz laisten”); Tihamér A. Vanyó, ed., *A Bécsi nunciussok jelentései Magyarországról 1666–1683/Relationes Nuntiorum Apostolicorum Vindobonensium de Regno Hungariae 1666–1683* (Pannonhalma, 1935), no. 129, Vienna Nuncio Francesco Buonvisi to Rome (13 June 1677) (killing 300 German cavalymen and abducting Catholic priests); Gáspár Hain, *Szepességi vagy löcsei krónika (Zipserische oder Leutschaverische Chronik vndt Zeit-beschreibung)*, eds. Jeromos Bal, Jenő Förster, and Aurél Kauffmann (Lőcse, 1910–13), 452; Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 251, 259, 307–18. The growing danger forced Vienna to recall

often appear in Hungarian and Transylvanian correspondence;⁹⁵ if one could organize these runaway soldiers and raiders into a disciplined army, Habsburg power would collapse like a house of cards. This was precisely the plan of Louis XIV and his agents in Poland and Transylvania. As the Porte's attention swung from Hungary to Ukraine the French invasion plans became increasingly attractive. The key question, however, was if Kara Mustafa would allow such an undertaking.

There cannot be any question that Hungarians, Transylvanians, Poles, and French were getting ready for the invasion of Habsburg Hungary just as the Ottoman army started moving into Ukraine. On 2 June, Prince Apafi ordered the mobilization of Transylvanian troops to defend the country's borders against "the German predator [that] keeps biting our faithful residents every day." Cavalry and infantry units soon gathered near the Hungarian border; they were well-equipped with weapons and other provisions.⁹⁶ On 15 June Daniel Absolon, the Hungarian envoy to Poland, announced that 3,000 Polish troops were ready to cross the Carpathians with a strong mandate from King Jan Sobieski, "whose heart's wish was to move Hungarian affairs forward" as soon as possible. The troops were well-equipped and paid with French money.⁹⁷ 4,000 additional troops were promised by Duke Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, a Polish magnate who was the overlord (*starosta*) over thirteen Upper Hungarian towns which the Habsburg court had pawned to the Polish Crown. The placement of Polish troops in Habsburg Hungary was a frightening prospect to the Vienna court, which promptly dispatched vast amounts of money to hire soldiers away from Lubomirski.⁹⁸ Yet, thousands of Hungarians, both within Habsburg and Ottoman territory, were already armed and ready to move. According to a secret Warsaw treaty negotiated in late May 1677 between Louis XIV and the Hungarian exiles, the French crown was committed to paying about 10,000 armed Hungarian malcontents with good money. The treaty stipulated that 9,000 cavalry and 6,000 infantry "must be ready in the month of July to take action against Austria."⁹⁹

The Ottomans were informed about these dramatic developments. The first to complain was the pasha of Várad; he was not happy that the Hungarian rebels he had sheltered on his lands were now being recruited with French money. Shortly afterward, Vizier Khalil Pasha of Buda warned Prince Apafi not to act against an edict (*ferman*) of the sultan which had granted the Hungarians hospitality but not permission to launch an invasion without the Porte's consent.¹⁰⁰ By mid-June 1677, the news reached the Porte, and the Habsburg resident intensified his efforts to discredit the Hungarian envoys still residing in Istanbul. In particular, he denounced their ongoing visits to the French ambassador Nointel.¹⁰¹ The

troops sent to assist Brandenburg against Sweden. See also Ferdinand Hirsch, ed., *Urkunden und Actenstücke zur Geschichte des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*, vol. 18 (Berlin, 1902), 411, 481, Brandenburg resident to elector (13 June 1677) ("Wegen des üblen Standes der Dinge in Ungarn"); 482–83, Letters by emperor and elector (21 June, 10 July 1677).

⁹⁵These veterans included Pál Chernel, Fábíán Farkas, Izrael Pap, Pál Szalay, Gáspár Szuhai, and the males of the Apagyi clan, in Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 192, 197–98, 200.

⁹⁶EOE 16, no. LXXI b and c, Apafi's instruction to Gáspár Kornis and Kornis' response (2, 10 June 1677); Vanyó, *A Bécsi nunciusok jelentései*, no. 129, Letters from Upper Hungary, copied to Buonvisi (7, 10 June 1677) ("Large military preparations in Transylvania" and rumors about the mobilization of 10,000 Wallachian and Moldavian troops).

⁹⁷Gergely 7, no. 272, Absolon to Teleki (15 June 1677). A few days earlier Absolon had been received by Sobieski and the Polish crown's grand marshal in "a very solemn audience" (*nagy solennis audientia*) and a private audience with only the king. On Sobieski's meetings with Hungarian envoys, see *Archiwum*, 1: 393–94, Béthune to Louis XIV (23 May 1677); Otto Forst de Battaglia, *Jan Sobieski König von Polen* (Einsiedlen, 1946), 100.

⁹⁸*Archiwum* 1: 402, Béthune to Pomponne (23 June 1677). The Lubomirski plan did not rely on French money, *ibid.*, 386–88, Louis XIV to Béthune (7 and 16 March 1677). On Lubomirski's ties to Hungarian exiles, see "Titkos jelentés a bujdosók tervéről," EOE 16, no. XXXIII (1676, n.d.), 244–46, esp. 244. The pawned towns played important roles in the Hungarian revolts, see Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 42, 194–95, 448n85, 499n153. On the peculiar legal status of these towns, see Horst Glassl, "Der Rechtsstreit um die Zips vor ihrer Rückgliederung an Ungarn," *Ungarn Jahrbuch* 1 (1969): 23–50, esp. 23, 27.

⁹⁹Hudita, *Repertoire*, 291, 293. Louis XIV reserved the right to move this army wherever he wanted ("Le Roi fera agir cette armée, là où il voudra, en Moravie, en Silésie ou dans la Hongrie impériale," *ibid.*, 293). The invasion plan was endorsed by the Transylvanian diet on 7 July 1677, in EOE 16, no. LXXIV, 379–80.

¹⁰⁰TMAO 5, no. CCLXXXI, Khalil Pasha to Apafi (June 1677, n.d.). The editors presumed that Khalil's letter was written between April–October 1677 but French-supported mobilizations started in early June 1677.

¹⁰¹Gergely 7, no. 275, Kende, Keczer and Kubinyi (21 June 1677), p. 379.

Porte's Hungarian interpreter warned the envoys to be careful and they decided that "French matters must [now] be handled with great care and secretly." However, there is no evidence that they had anything to fear from Kara Mustafa. Gábor Kende certainly anticipated the worst and on 18 June observed that yet another powerful pasha had been executed on order of Kara Mustafa.¹⁰² He was terrified that a similar fate was in store for the Hungarian emissaries. Yet, nothing happened. In fact, three days later the envoys reported that they were treated "with satisfactory esteem ... and believe [d] with complete certainty that [they] would no longer be deprived of their hope which [they] had placed in the mercy of God."¹⁰³ Had Kindsberg been wrong when he reported that Kara Mustafa despised the French king and his ambassador Nointel? Emperor Leopold, who was well informed about French machinations in Hungary, wondered whether this new grand vizier "did not share the antipathy of his predecessor toward the French?" He urged Kindsberg to use bribes. Perhaps this was the best way to get real results with Kara Mustafa.¹⁰⁴

It is interesting that Kara Mustafa claimed ignorance about the French-sponsored mobilizations on the Habsburg-Ottoman borders when he received Kindsberg in audience on 18 July. He insisted that Prince Apafi would never dare to get involved in such an attack without his permission; in fact, he had followed up on Kindsberg's earlier complaints and given orders to investigate but reported that "not the least indication of such machinations had been found."¹⁰⁵ Kara Mustafa's behavior is puzzling. If we can believe the sultan's translator, a friend of the Hungarians, he was ready to receive the Hungarian envoys in audience on 20 or 21 July. They would surely be dispatched to Hungary with a positive answer. But the audience was promptly canceled after the meeting with Kindsberg. Gábor Kende feared the worst. But again nothing happened to the Hungarians.¹⁰⁶ Interestingly, however, the Transylvanian resident was threatened with decapitation if he did not tell the truth about French intentions.¹⁰⁷ Alexander Maurocordatos, the powerful dragoman of the Porte, warned Prince Apafi in no uncertain terms "that it was not proper to undertake anything without the Most Sublime Porte's consent." French claims to the Hungarian crown and a foreign army on the sultan's territory were absolutely unacceptable. Apafi must immediately send a high-ranking emissary to Kara Mustafa to provide "clear and lucid information." Kara Mustafa's majordomo followed up with similar warnings.¹⁰⁸ This barrage of threats put the Transylvanian court into a state of panic. Apafi and other Transylvanian grandees who had been strong supporters of the Hungarian exiles suddenly froze and demanded an immediate stop to the invasion set to commence on 27 July.¹⁰⁹

Apafi's order to stop the French-sponsored invasion angered the Hungarian insurgents, French officers, and Polish soldiers. To be more exact, the invasion was indefinitely postponed.¹¹⁰ But why? Did the initiative come from Kara Mustafa? Or were Apafi and his Transylvanian clients afraid that their plan

¹⁰²Ibid., no. 273, Kende to Teleki (18 June 1677), pp. 375–76. Cf. the decapitated heads of top officials "displayed in front of the palace and in Istanbul's public places" [Olson, "A Most Agreeable and Pleasant Creature?" 14].

¹⁰³Gergely 7, no. 275, Kende, Keczer and Kubinyi (21 June 1677), p. 379 ("Hiszszük minden biztonnyal, hogy tovább sem fogyatkozunk Istenünk jóvoltában vetett reménységünkben meg").

¹⁰⁴Turcica 147/4, fol. 80 (18 June 1677) ("Alls ob dieser Vesier nicht wie der vorige, eine Antipatia wider die franzosen haben solle"). On Kindsberg's negative assessment of Nointel's status at the Porte, see Turcica 147/3, fols. 65v–66v (28 May 1677). Cf. the Dutch resident's similar conclusion, in Olson, "A Most Agreeable and Pleasant Creature?" 13–14.

¹⁰⁵Turcica 147/4, fol. 113v (23 July 1677). Afterwards Kindsberg spoke to the Reis Effendi and the grand vizier's *kahya* expressing his puzzlement "that the vizier contradicted me and did not want to believe it" (ibid., fol. 115).

¹⁰⁶Gergely 7, no. 282, Gábor Kende to Teleki (18 July 1677), pp. 385–86.

¹⁰⁷TMAO 5, no. CCLXXXVII, János Buda to Apafi (Istanbul, 20 July 1677).

¹⁰⁸Ibid., no. CCLXXXVI, Alexander Maurocordatos to Apafi (18 July 1677). Misdated to 8 July by the editors; Kara Mustafa received Kindsberg on 18 July (Turcica 147/4, fol. 113).

¹⁰⁹On the resulting tensions between Hungarian exiles (who remained eager to invade) and Transylvanians, see Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 191–204; Benczédi, "Thököly Imre," 174–76; Hudita, *Histoire*, 303–5.

¹¹⁰This raised enormous logistical problems. Apafi did not want to disband the large troop contingents that had been gathering along the borders of Upper Hungary. They had to be provided with living quarters, food, and most importantly courage to counter the sense of despair that was taking hold of many Hungarian soldiers. See TMAO 5, nos. CCXC, CCXCIV–VI, Apafi to Teleki (6 August–4 September 1677); Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 193–94.

would be used as a pretext to depose them? These questions remain to be investigated. I have found no evidence that Kara Mustafa was intimidated by Kindsberg's threat to end the Habsburg-French war and turn the Habsburg army against Hungary, nor that he was afraid that the French would establish a beachhead in Hungary, as the Dutch resident had warned. Was he concerned that the Russians would declare war? Did he know that European diplomats in Moscow were pushing the Kremlin to do precisely that? There is little evidence that the Porte was concerned about the outcome of the Ukrainian campaign. The Hungarians were told not to worry. The majority of the Cossacks had reportedly joined the Ottoman-appointed hetman, and "the Muscovite (*az muszka*) did not want to get into a fight with the Turkish emperor."¹¹¹ Habsburg resident Kindsberg also reported that the Ottomans were confident the Russians would give in and avoid combat. Indeed, a Transylvanian envoy was told in late July 1677 that the Muscovites had withdrawn their troops from Chyhyryn.¹¹²

Kara Mustafa may have stopped the French invasion plan because he was still contemplating an Ottoman attack on Hungary. On 26 July 1677, Prince Apafi, who had been briefed on the latest intelligence from the Porte, expressed suspicions that "the Porte itself was beginning to embark on this undertaking; they keep mentioning Győr."¹¹³ Kindsberg learned that Kara Mustafa had commissioned a Venetian architect to prepare large plaster models of Győr (Raab) and Komárom (Komorn) fortresses, the two most important border castles protecting Vienna.¹¹⁴ Habsburg military intelligence picked up similar talk in Upper Hungary which was likewise eager for Ottoman intervention. The Aulic War Council's analysts explained the importance of this information to Emperor Leopold: "The safety of the [Austrian] lands and Vienna depends mostly on [these fortresses]. During the last century when the Turks laid siege to Vienna, they had previously seized [them]." A note scribbled in the margins, possibly written by Leopold himself, commented: "We know very well that these are the bulwarks designed to preserve Vienna."¹¹⁵

In early August 1677, Kara Mustafa threatened to go to war if Vienna did not promptly compensate the population of Debrecen for damages suffered in the spring raid. It seems that he was fishing for a *casus belli*, as the Habsburg court had done nothing to provide restitution.¹¹⁶ Instead, administrators of the Aulic Court Chamber, the Hungarian Chancellery, the Hungarian Chamber, and other offices assembled documents (such as old charters and tax receipts) to prove that Vienna had legitimate jurisdiction over Debrecen.¹¹⁷ Kara Mustafa could not care less, claiming that the Habsburg emperor had no jurisdiction whatsoever in Debrecen, which had belonged exclusively to the Porte since the times of Süleiman the Magnificent.¹¹⁸ According to Kindsberg "the vizier has completely changed in mood and behavior ... His inclination is evil and one must assume that he will find reason and occasion to break

¹¹¹Gergely 7, no. 273, pp. 374, 376–77; no. 282, p. 387. On the efforts of Habsburg, Vatican, Danish, and Polish diplomats to recruit the Kremlin for a league against Turkey and France, see Wójcik, *Rzeczpospolita*, 141–45.

¹¹²Turcica 147/4, fols. 103v, 104v (25 June 1677); 116v–117 (23 July 1677); TMAO 5, no. CCLXXXIX, László Baló to Pal Beldi (2 August 1677) written after his return to Transylvania.

¹¹³Gergely 7, no. 290, Apafi to Teleki (26 July 1677), p. 398.

¹¹⁴Turcica 147/4, fols. 117r–v (23 July 1677) ("Bevolchen bedeuete Voestungen etwas deutlicher von Gips zu formieren"); 144, Kindsberg to Leopold (28 August 1677) ("[Das Gipsmodell] von grossformierten zwei Vestungen Raab und Komorn fertig worden, welche arbeits dem Vesier sehr wohl gefallen").

¹¹⁵Ibid., fols. 118–120, Opinion of the Aulic War Council (mid-September 1677, n.d.), esp. 118v–119.

¹¹⁶Turcica 147/4, fols. 128–31, Kindsberg to Aulic War Council (13 August 1677), esp. 128 ("Immerfort wegen der Debrecziner mit dem Krieg troelich ist"). In late July 1677 it dawned on Kindsberg that ignoring Kara Mustafa's repeated demands had been a grave mistake. Cf. *ibid.*, fols. 70, Kindsberg to Montecuccoli (31 July 1677); 72–73, Kindsberg to Aulic War Council (25–26 July 1677).

¹¹⁷It was an elaborate operation which started in June 1677. For examples of the documentation forwarded to Kindsberg, see *ibid.*, fols. 1–69, 86–99, Unterschiedliche Schrifften wegen Debreczin (1675–77).

¹¹⁸This means Kara Mustafa rejected the condominium, that is, the practice of shared taxation which had long been a tradition in the Hungarian borderlands. See *ibid.*, fol. 115v (23 July 1677) ("Daß diese Statt von Sultan Solimans Zeiten immediate der Porten unterthänig"). On the condominium and its breakdown, see Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 577 (index).

with Your Majesty with the help of the Hungarian rebels.”¹¹⁹ Kara Mustafa was likely urged by Ottoman commanders and pashas in Hungary to invade as soon as possible.¹²⁰

According to Kindsberg, the Hungarian insurgents on Ottoman and Transylvanian territory played a crucial role in Kara Mustafa's thinking. He believed that their envoys' continued residence in Istanbul explained why the Porte was becoming engulfed in “a general cry for war (*allgemeines Kriegsgeschreij*) against Hungary about which [Ottoman] border soldiers are jubilant.” The only way to stop the outbreak of war was “to remove these evil people from the Porte.”¹²¹ Kindsberg tried everything to discredit them in the summer of 1677 but without success.¹²² The fact that the Hungarian exiles had offered the Hungarian crown to different Polish candidates and finally to Louis XIV's ambassador in Warsaw did not diminish their good standing.¹²³ While Kindsberg and other European ambassadors became disgusted with Kara Mustafa's “inhumane capriciousness” there is no sign that the Hungarian envoys shared this opinion.¹²⁴ They were increasingly impatient and complained about their high expenses, but they understood that the future of Hungary hinged on their presence in Istanbul. They continued to believe that a positive answer would soon come. After all, the Porte had promised that it “would dispatch them as quickly as possible with sufficient help.”¹²⁵ On 23 August 1677 French ambassador Nointel, with whom the Hungarian envoys were in close touch, reported they had been told that “they would receive satisfaction within five days.”¹²⁶

For Kindsberg, Kara Mustafa was leaning toward invading Hungary in the summer of 1677.¹²⁷ Why did this not happen? One important answer must be sought in the arrival of increasingly troubling news from Ukraine.¹²⁸ The first signs came already in mid-July. On 18 July, French ambassador Nointel reported that the Ottomans were in communication with the Swedes in an apparent attempt to push them into attacking the Muscovites. Clearly, the hope that the Russians would quickly sue for peace had not come true.¹²⁹ On 25 July, a Transylvanian nobleman reported rumors that the Muscovites had inflicted a serious defeat on Turkish and Tatar troops.¹³⁰ The Porte made every effort to maintain a wall

¹¹⁹Turcica 147/4, fols. 130, 133v (13 August 1677). What likely triggered Kara Mustafa's rage was the Habsburg army's continuing requisition of grain and cattle from Debrecen residents (ibid., 132). Cf. the written denial by Habsburg officers (dated 26 July) which the Aulic War Council sent to the Porte (fol. 32).

¹²⁰A memo signed by “the Council of Eger Turks” proposed to make a beginning with 500 Janissaries and 1,000 Hungarian rebels (ibid., fol. 134).

¹²¹Turcica 147/4, fol. 176 (13 September 1677).

¹²²Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 138, Nointel to Louis XIV (22 July 1677); Turcica 147/4, fols. 144, 150v (28 August 1677) (“Kann ich auf mein so inständiges anhalten wegen der Rebellen weder eine schriftliche noch eine mündliche antwort erhalten”).

¹²³The envoys closely observed Kindsberg's intrigues but did not seem too concerned, in TMAO 5, no. CCXCIII, Kende and Keczer to Apafi (9 August 1677), p. 437 (“The German resident tells everyone at the Porte and all the Christian emissaries that the Hungarian exiles have elected Margrave de Béthune as the King of Hungary and that Béthune is already in Hungary with 6,000 Polish troops”). The Hungarians also offered the crown to Sobieski, his son Jakub, and the Polish magnate Stanisław Lubomirski, in Wójcik, *Sobieski*, 256–57; *Archiwum*, 1: 270, Mémoire ... au Sieur Marquis de Béthune (St. German, 14 April 1676).

¹²⁴Turcica 147/4, fols. 130 (“Ein unmenschliches capricium”), 133v (“Ist mit Christen und Türkhen vehement, procediert mit allen hart, und eigensinning, befriedigt keinen, disgustiert alle”). On Kara Mustafa's “exceedingly terrible reputation,” see Olon, “A Most Agreeable and Pleasant Creature,” 1–2, 14–15.

¹²⁵TMAO 5, no. CCXCIII, p. 437 (“Everything is very expensive here”); EOE 16, nos. LXXV, Gábor Kende to Teleki (10 August 1677), LXXVI, Teleki to Absolon (14 August 1677), p. 383 (“Porta peregrina auxilia admittere non vult, sed promittit, quod nos quam citissime cum sufficienti succursu dimittet”). See also the optimism of exile envoy András Radics who left the Porte in late August, in Gergely 7, no. 335, Teleki to Absolon (11 September 1677).

¹²⁶Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 141, Nointel to Béthune (23 August 1677).

¹²⁷Turcica 148/1, fol. 29v (16 October 1677) reflecting in hindsight after receiving news of the Chyhyryn disaster.

¹²⁸We know near to nothing about the progress of the invasion army as Russian and Ukrainian historians have focused almost exclusively on the defense of Chyhyryn and the Ottoman defeat. See Rashidovna, “Russko-Osmanskoe protivostoianie,” 153–77; Floria, “Voyny Osmanskoi imperii,” 127; Sedov, “Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.,” 492–99; Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii*, 7: 209–11.

¹²⁹Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 137, Nointel to Bishop of Marseille (18 July 1677).

¹³⁰Gergely 7, no. 289, Márton Sárpataki to Teleki (25 July 1677), p. 396. The letter was dispatched from Sárpatak (Nagy-Küküllő County). The news undoubtedly originated in the Ottoman vassal states of Moldavia or Wallachia which were heavily involved in the logistics of the Chyhyryn campaign and forced to provide soldiers. Cf. L. E. Semenova, “Moldavia i Valakhia v

of silence about any setbacks. The Hungarian envoys and Kindsberg continued to hear only success stories and not that much of Ukraine had been laid waste after years of warfare. Khmelnytsky understood this; according to a Russian informant he stated: “I’d rather sit in prison than to live in a desert, because all of Ukraine has been devastated.” This meant that food supplies for the army had to be transported in long wagon trains; ships likely carried grain from the fertile Danube region along the Prut and Dnistro Rivers. These were time-consuming and complicated operations.¹³¹ Other troubling realities were also kept secret:¹³² Khmelnytsky’s failure to attract more than a small number of Cossacks, the refusal of the Tatar khan to participate in the campaign (he feigned illness), the lack of battle-readiness and low morale of many Ottoman soldiers,¹³³ and the massive mobilizations of Russian and Ukrainian [!] Cossack troops to defend Chyhyryn.¹³⁴

Under these circumstances, an invasion of Hungary would have been a very risky undertaking. However, it is important to emphasize that it was not canceled but only temporarily postponed while the Porte carefully monitored the outcome of the Chyhyryn campaign. Polish and French observers still believed that the invasion of Hungary could happen at any time and agreed with Kindsberg. Nointel meanwhile continued to feed Louis XIV information about Kara Mustafa’s eagerness to invade Hungary. On 27 August 1677, the Polish King Jan Sobieski, who relied on Hungarian and French informants, wrote to the Habsburg resident in Warsaw that “assisting [the Hungarians] is so dear to [the Ottomans’] hearts that the Muscovite wars make less progress.”¹³⁵ Sobieski’s observation is interesting, as he seemed to attribute the news of alleged Ottoman setbacks in Ukraine (first circulating in July) to the Porte’s lack of commitment. He appeared to agree with the opinions of Habsburg and Hungarian observers that the real target of Kara Mustafa’s imperial ambitions was Hungary and not Ukraine. Yet, nobody seems to have anticipated the possibility of a major military disaster for the Ottoman army. Minor setbacks by a relatively small and under-equipped invasion army were to be expected. But what if the Russians gained a major victory? Could Kara Mustafa still go ahead with the invasion of Hungary?

Terrible News: The Chyhyryn Disaster and its Meaning

The first inklings of the unfolding disaster arrived at the Porte in early September 1677 after at least three weeks en route. Even before the siege of Chyhyryn had begun, the Ottoman army was already in trouble. Food supplies were low and expected bad weather raised the fear that the entire army could perish due to hunger and rain.¹³⁶ By mid-September, all Ottoman illusions that the Russian army would surrender Chyhyryn without a fight had collapsed. On 12 September 1677 French resident Nointel informed Louis XIV that “there was no way to turn back anymore”; the Turks were stuck in the Ukrainian quagmire.¹³⁷

mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniakh v vostochnoi i iugo-vostochnoi Evrope (50–70-e gody XVII v.),” in Litarvin, *Osmanskaia imperiia*, 2:202–14, here 211 (for full citation, see [note 13](#)).

¹³¹ *AIUZR* 13, no. 52, cols. 210–11, Stefan Kunitskii to Innokentii Gizel (6 July 1677), here 210 (“Lutche mne v nevole sideť, nezheľi na pustyni zhit’, potomy chto vsia Ukraina razorena”). On the shipment of foodstuffs via the Black Sea, see *ibid.*, no. 51, col. 206; no. 53, col. 214.

¹³² I find it hard to believe that the Porte was not informed about these realities. One might, of course, assume that it was in denial as no one expected that the sultan’s victorious army was blundering into disaster.

¹³³ See a snapshot taken shortly after the army crossed the Dnistro on 13 July, in the testimony of the starosta of Nemirov: “There are more tradespeople than [soldiers] ready for battle. They are very hesitant (*zelo sumniatsia*) and [I wish] they would be beaten” (*AIUZR* 13, no. 58, Stefan Kunitskii to Kremlin (July 1677, n.d.).

¹³⁴ *AIUZR* 13 [on Khan], no. 51, col. 205–6 (15 July), no. 53 (15 July), col. 212, 214; [defense of Chyhyryn, mobilization], no. 52 (15 July), col. 208–9; [Khmelnytsky] no. 53, col. 216, no. 58, col. 227; [mobilizations], no. 55, Order of Razriad to Hetman Samoilovich (18 July); no. 63, Tsar to Samoilovich (3 August); Sedov, “Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.,” 490–92.

¹³⁵ *Archiwum*, 1: 423, Béthune to Louis XIV (21 August 1677); 426, Béthune to Louis XIV (26 August 1677); 432, Sobieski to Habsburg resident in Poland (27 August 1677) (“*Adeo est cordi, ut faciant minoris moscovita bella et progressus*”).

¹³⁶ *Turcica* 148/1, fol. 176v–177, Kindsberg to Leopold (13 September 1677). Commander Ibrahim Pasha later attributed the disaster in part to rainy weather (*Regenwetter*), *ibid.*, fol. 26 (16 October 1677).

¹³⁷ Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 143, Nointel to Louis XIV (12 September 1677).

News of the full scope of the disaster did not arrive before the end of September; in a three-day battle in late August, the Ottoman army had suffered almost 12,000 casualties, with thousands more taken prisoner.¹³⁸ Crowds of Turkish captives were marched along the roads in chains. According to Russian eyewitnesses, the rest of the Ottoman army beat a hasty retreat: “[They] burnt their camp, abandoned their grenades, their entire food supplies, their artillery train, and fled.” Herds of buffaloes and oxen were left behind; the gravesites of nearly 2,000 fallen Ottoman soldiers were found nearby. Thousands more perished in the Ukrainian steppe during the retreat.¹³⁹ News of the catastrophe was hidden from Habsburg resident Kindsberg for more than two weeks until mid-October; he then wrote immediately to Vienna and triumphantly described the defeat in detail.¹⁴⁰

Kindsberg and the Vienna court breathed a sigh of relief, as the Ottoman disaster had prevented a Habsburg military catastrophe in Hungary. Both Kindsberg and Emperor Leopold believed, or at least hoped, that the aggressive Kara Mustafa had permanently disqualified himself and would be replaced by a friendlier grand vizier. Kindsberg invoked God’s help to bring about a change that “would lead to a completely different and calmer government.” He reported on 16 October that there were indeed strong signs that Kara Mustafa was greatly disliked. The outbreak of a fire in Istanbul that destroyed 2,000 houses and damaged Kara Mustafa’s residence was taken as a bad omen. An astrologer predicted that the grand vizier would die on 17 November.¹⁴¹ Two weeks later, things seemed to have gotten even worse: “One [now] hears public lamentations against the grand vizier for carelessly leading the Ottoman Porte into a confused war. [They complain] that it was irresponsible to have thrown away many millions for provisions and munitions because of Chyhyryn which is merely a stone rock (*ein blosser Steinfelsen*).”¹⁴²

It is stunning how differently Hungarian envoys and their French supporter, Ambassador Nointel, perceived the Chyhyryn disaster. Although this should have ended their hopes for an Ottoman or at least Ottoman-supported invasion of Hungary, this was not the case. On 28 September, several days after news from Ukraine had arrived, Kara Mustafa received Gábor Kende and Menyhért Keczer in a private audience (without the Transylvanian resident).¹⁴³ The meeting was so secret that it was missed completely by Habsburg spies and Vienna’s supporters at the Porte.¹⁴⁴ Transylvanian sources also remain largely silent about the meeting.¹⁴⁵ The full scope of the surprisingly friendly, even warm, encounter with the grand vizier is only revealed in a letter of the French ambassador Nointel to Louis XIV and the diary of Imre Thököly (who quotes from a letter from the Hungarian envoys). According to the version in the Thököly diary Kara Mustafa gave the following speech:

¹³⁸Ibid., no. 146, Nointel to Forval (31 September 1677); *EOE* 16, no. LXXXI, Moldavian Prince to Apafi (30 September 1677) [with a detailed description of disaster]; Gergely 7, no. 351, Miklos Bethlen to Teleki (28 September 1677), p. 505. According to the Ottoman Silahdar Chronicle, the news arrived on 23 September 1677, in Aydar, *Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Paşa*, 152.

¹³⁹Floria, “Voiny Osmanskoi imperii,” 127 (quote and an estimate of “more than 10,000 losses, many of them captives”); Sedov, “Oborona Chigirina 1677 g.,” 498–99; *EOE* 16, no. LXXXI, pp. 397–98 (Moldavian account of the mass burials and burnings of corpses, estimate of 12,000 losses); Davies, *Warfare*, 160–61 (20,000 casualties including Tatar losses); Rashidovna, “Russko-Osmanskoe protivostoianie,” 170–73 (more casualties inflicted by Russian pursuers during retreat).

¹⁴⁰Turcica 148/1, fols. 24–26. A Moldavian account noted the loss of top military leaders, in *EOE* 16, no. LXXXI, p. 397 (“Almost 12,000 were lost together with the Turkish elites [*az törökök főrendekkel együtt*]”).

¹⁴¹Turcica 148/1, fols. 51r–v, Kindsberg Addendum to Leopold (16 October 1677).

¹⁴²Ibid., fol. 74, Kindsberg to Leopold (28 October 1677). For Leopold’s hope that Kara Mustafa would be removed, see *ibid.*, fol. 115, Leopold to Kindsberg (16 November 1677).

¹⁴³This was not the first audience with Kara Mustafa; Kende and Keczer had been summoned on or just before 5 September for a secret meeting (the Transylvanian resident was explicitly excluded). The grand vizier asked them to be patient and not start any negotiations with the Germans. They “would be helped by all means and with complete certainty.” The two envoys were dressed in kaftans and each given a hundred thaler. See Gergely 7, no. 352, Teleki to Daniel Absolon (24 September 1677); no. 355, Teleki to Imre Thököly (25 September), p. 512; no. 357, Teleki to László Baló (25 September 1677), p. 514.

¹⁴⁴Kindsberg thought that “the Hungarian rebels ... were gotten rid of on 30 September without having achieved anything” (Turcica 148/1, fol. 28v).

¹⁴⁵The envoys apparently revealed parts of their conversation with Kara Mustafa when they arrived back in Transylvania in early November, in Gergely 7, no. 391, Teleki to Absolon (4 November 1677), p. 561.

“Your cause had already been prepared and you would very definitely have been helped last summer, but the relationship between the Cossacks and our soldiers broke down.¹⁴⁶ It pleased God to arrange it in this way and we cannot do anything about it. But in accordance with your wishes we will order the prince of Transylvania to be ready in the spring to help you; and we will also help. Until then we will take care of you, your wives, and your children. We have given orders to the pashas of Temesvár, Várad, and Eger to provide you with living quarters augmenting [these] with the sancaks between Gyula and Temesvár.”¹⁴⁷

Kara Mustafa also gave permission to carry out the planned French-supported military operations that had been hanging in the balance since early summer.¹⁴⁸

Months of Hungarian and French lobbying had paid off.¹⁴⁹ The Hungarian envoys departed on 30 September; the next day Nointel was summoned by the Reis Effendi, an intimate of Kara Mustafa, to discuss the conditions under which the Ottomans would be ready to invade Hungary. If we can believe the Reis Effendi the sultan needed to be convinced to go to war against the Habsburg Empire instead of Russia.¹⁵⁰ This would require 150,000 silver and gold coins (*escus*) of French money and a commitment not to make peace with Vienna along the Rhine without the Porte’s consent. The Reis Effendi, who insisted that he had always personally been in favor of an Ottoman invasion of Hungary, tried to convince Nointel that such an arrangement would be so advantageous that the French king could not reject it.¹⁵¹ Perhaps the Reis Effendi’s proposal was not more than one of Kara Mustafa’s extortion schemes. But there can be little doubt that Kara Mustafa had not given up his intention to go to war against the Habsburg Empire in Hungary.¹⁵²

The humiliating defeat of the Ottoman army had interrupted but not erased Kara Mustafa’s plan to invade Hungary. The question was if this plan could be reactivated as he had promised the Hungarian envoys. News from Ukraine revealed that the Russian army was consolidating its positions in and around Chyhyryn, upgrading the citadel’s fortifications, and recruiting fresh troops. Clearly, the Kremlin seemed to be getting ready for a showdown with the Porte.¹⁵³ Could this be ignored? And could the great humiliation and shame of the Porte be left without a response?¹⁵⁴ A debate was raging behind the scenes and Kindsberg was determined to influence the outcome in favor of the Habsburg Empire.¹⁵⁵ He distributed large bribes to the Reis Effendi, Kara Mustafa’s majordomo, the Porte’s dragoman, and other leading dignitaries. But he also used scare tactics: if the Russians were not stopped in Ukraine, he claimed,

¹⁴⁶By contrast, see Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 146, Nointel to de Forval, p. 164 (“À cause de la diversion des Moscovites”).

¹⁴⁷Károly Torma, ed., *Késmárki Tökölly Imre naplója 1676–1678 évekből*, vol. 15 of *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Magyar Történelmi Emlékek* (Pest, 1866), 95 (29 October 1677).

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 95; Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 147, Nointel to Louis XIV (1 October 1677); Hudita, *Histoire*, 301.

¹⁴⁹For additional insights, see Benczédi, “Imre Thökölly,” esp. 173, 179 (which reference to unexplored holdings in the Hungarian National Archives).

¹⁵⁰Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 147; Hudita, *Histoire*, 301 (“[Reis Effendi] le répondi que le Sultan pourrait se décider à cette guerre si la France s’engageait à lui payer une somme d’argent”). Two letters from Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, reported in late October 1677 that the sultan had given orders to make preparations for war with Russia (see below note 153).

¹⁵¹Hudita, *Repertoire*, no. 147; Hudita, *Histoire*, 301–2.

¹⁵²According to Polish King Jan Sobieski “the declaration of war against Austria by the Turks was almost certain (*prawie pewne*) in the next year” (*Archiwum*, 1: 440, Béthune to Louis XIV [14 September 1677]).

¹⁵³TMAO 5, no. CCCXVI, Sztolnik Paulus Kontos to Apafi (Jassy, 23 October 1677); no. CCCXVII, Peter Capitan to Apafi (Jassy, 23 October 1677).

¹⁵⁴Jan Sobieski began to doubt that the Turks could afford to go to war in Hungary after Chyhyryn: “Après le désavantage et la honte qu’elle [la Porte] vient de recevoir à Cherim [sic], elle changera le dessein déjà formé d’attaquer l’Empereur” (*Archiwum*, 1: 444, Béthune to Louis XIV [18 October 1677]). It is interesting that Ottoman chronicles did not attribute much importance to the defeat: “On the 25th [of September] letters of [Ibrahim Pasha], the commander (*serdar*), arrived reporting that the capture of Chyhyryn had to be postponed to the next year ... [He] was ordered to winter with his troops at Bender” (Sękowski, *Collectanea z dziejopisów*, 126). There is no word of Ibrahim Pasha’s punishment.

¹⁵⁵According to the secretary of the French legation, F. de la Croix, many members of the divan opposed a war in Ukraine, in his *Guerres des turcs avec la Pologne, la Moscovie et la Hongrie* (Paris, 1689), 119, 122. The sultan, however, was eager to confront the Russians (Turcica 148/1, fol. 72r–v [28 October 1677]).

they would inevitably advance into Podolia, Moldavia, and Wallachia. In fact, the Orthodox populations of these territories were eagerly awaiting their liberation, and “the Turks would be driven back across the Danube.” That this dire scenario was not a entirely invented is suggested by the fact that Wallachian and Moldavian elites had only recently begged the Kremlin for assistance. Still, Kindsberg must have sensed the limits of what he could achieve at the Porte. He therefore urged Vienna to do everything possible to convince the Kremlin to continue the war against the Ottomans. Habsburg diplomats should warn the Russian tsar that the Turks were not only determined to seize Kyiv but also to advance on Moscow.¹⁵⁶

The future of Hungary and Ukraine would be decided at the Porte, and neither France nor the Habsburg Empire could influence the outcome. Kindsberg and the Vienna court continued to face uncertainty. War in Hungary remained a real possibility, especially when it appeared that the Kremlin was eager to avoid wider war with the Ottoman Empire. In November 1677 Tsar Fedor Alekseevich dispatched a special ambassador to Istanbul “in order to renew diplomatic relations which had been interrupted at the beginning of the 1670s.” In a personal letter, the tsar assured Sultan Mehmed IV that he wanted a return to “the age-old friendship (*iskonnaia družhba*)” that had existed between the two realms in the past.¹⁵⁷ The Habsburgs thus had good reason to remain nervous. As Emperor Leopold put it in a letter to Kindsberg dated 17 November 1677, “when they complete a peace agreement with ... the Muscovites such a large multitude of troops [already assembled] cannot remain inactive. Instead, according to the grand vizier’s primary intention ... they are simply to pour out into our Kingdom of Hungary which likely would mean the outbreak of open [war].”¹⁵⁸ Kindsberg concurred: a Russo-Ottoman compromise (*Vergleich*) would “immediately prompt [the Turks] to turn their entire military power against Hungary.”¹⁵⁹ The next six months would show, however, that the Chyhyryn disaster haunted the Porte to such an extent that Hungary receded into the background. In April 1678 Sultan Mehmed IV declared war against Muscovy instead of the Habsburg Empire. How this came about must be explored elsewhere.

Conclusion

The Ottoman invasion of Ukraine in June 1677 was a significant historical event not just in the histories of Ukraine, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, but also in the histories of Hungary and the Habsburg Empire. With it, the Ottomans missed a unique chance to seize all of Hungary and advance against Vienna at a time when the Habsburg court was unprepared. Its best troops were deployed along the Rhine, those remaining in Hungary were overstretched and exhausted after years of confronting a hostile population and constant raids from Ottoman territory. The Habsburgs’ position in Hungary reached its nadir just as Ottoman troops entered Ukraine: thousands of Hungarian rebels who had fled to Ottoman and Transylvanian territories stood poised to go on the offensive against the Habsburg army. They had the support of Ottoman pashas, Transylvanian rulers, and the French government, which dispatched large amounts of money and recruited thousands of soldiers in Poland. Hardly ever before did the Habsburgs face such a serious threat in Hungary. If the Ottomans had invaded Hungary instead of Ukraine, Habsburg rule would likely have collapsed like a house of cards.

This finding challenges Russian historians’ standard claim that the invasion of Ukraine was inevitable.¹⁶⁰ The Russian threat to the Ottoman Empire was undoubtedly growing in Ukraine and the Black

¹⁵⁶Turcica 148/1, fols. 30, 73–74 (see also bribes paid to the same individuals in August 1677, Turcica 147/4, fol. 126). On Wallachian appeals to the Kremlin in 1674–75, see Semenova, “Moldavia i Valakhia,” 210–11.

¹⁵⁷Floria, “Voyny Osmanskoi imperii,” 127.

¹⁵⁸Turcica 148/1, fols. 126r–v, Leopold to Kindsberg (17 November 1677) (“Des Groß Vesiens führenden intention nach ... leicht in unser Königreich Ungarn sich diffundiere, und es also zu offenen ruptur aussbrechen möchte”).

¹⁵⁹Ibid., fol. 73 (28 October 1677). Kindsberg also mentioned that much depended on the ratification of the Żurawno Armistice between the Porte and Poland.

¹⁶⁰Smirnov, *Rossii i Turtsiia*, 2: 115; Floria, “Voyny Osmanskoi imperii,” 126. For a synopsis of Russian pre-revolutionary studies, see Hans Uebersberger, *Russlands Orientpolitik in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten* (Stuttgart, 1913), 31 (“Ein Zusammenstoss zwischen Russen und Türken [war] unvermeidlich”).

Sea region. Nevertheless, Kara Mustafa intended to follow his predecessor's disengagement strategy in Ukraine. The problem was that, unlike the open-minded Köprülü, Kara Mustafa was less well-informed, or willing to be informed, about realities on the ground in Ukraine. For example, he ignored the large Russian troop contingents stationed in and around the Cossack capital. More importantly, however, he failed to see that the Ukrainian people, unlike the Hungarians, were no longer eager for the Ottomans to come to their rescue. Ten years earlier they had risen en masse but more recently they had experienced the devastations inflicted by repeated Ottoman campaigns.

The decision to invade Ukraine instead of Hungary was the result of a gradual and contested process; it was opposed by many at the Porte and even Kara Mustafa was ambivalent. The sources examined here do not mention Ukraine before March 1677; Yuri Khmelnytsky, the new Ottoman-anointed "Prince of Little Russia," appeared suddenly out of nowhere. He told tales about the ease with which all of Ukraine, not just the western parts, could be taken by the Ottoman army. It seems that Kara Mustafa shared the sultan's imperial visions for Ukraine but lacked his eagerness to invade. For example, he entrusted the Crimean khan with a mission to Moscow to convince the Kremlin to abandon the Cossack capital; he seemed invested in a peaceful resolution. Also, Kara Mustafa never wavered in his support of the Hungarian rebels, allowed them to seek help in France and Poland, and welcomed their emissaries to the Porte. That Kara Mustafa considered pursuing military intervention in Hungary is further suggested by the transfer of the pashas of Kamenets and Silistria to Buda and Sarajevo. Both pashas had played crucial roles in past Ottoman invasions of Ukraine. But they were transferred from the Ukrainian to the Hungarian borderlands because that was where their military experience was needed. In the end, the sultan's vision of an easy campaign in Ukraine won out.

When the Ottomans invaded Ukraine, they did not expect the Russians to fight. This means that the sultan's opinion which was not based on good intelligence but the unrealistic visions of Khmelnytsky had prevailed. Why Khmelnytsky's views were accepted remains a historical puzzle. Was it imperial hubris after more than a decade of victories over the Habsburgs, Venetians, and Poles? Paradoxically, the Porte's relegation of Ukraine to a sideshow likely explains why Kara Mustafa continued to promise Hungarian rebels that Ottoman help would soon come. There are strong indications that he planned to launch an invasion of Hungary in the summer of 1677, despite the fact that 45,000 Ottoman soldiers were already in Ukraine. It is unclear how many Janissaries and sipahis would have participated; at a minimum, the pashas and fortress commanders of Ottoman Hungary could have gone on the offensive. This would have transformed the undeclared border war into a full-blown conflict. Hungarian emissaries had long assumed that a few thousand Ottoman soldiers would be enough to help them overthrow the Habsburg regime. The common understanding was that the bulk of the Ottoman army would then occupy Hungary and advance upon Vienna.¹⁶¹

Perhaps the most surprising discovery in my data is the close relationship between the Hungarian envoys and Kara Mustafa. Kara Mustafa treated them much better than the diplomatic representatives of major European states; he met with them at least twice in private audiences, had them dressed in kaftans, and provided them with money for their sustenance. They maintained regular communication with Kara Mustafa through his majordomo and other court dignitaries, who treated them with remarkable respect. The friendly relations between the envoys and Kara Mustafa disconcerted Habsburg resident Kindsberg, who tried everything to discredit them and have them expelled. The French ambassador Nointel in contrast supported the Hungarian envoys' contacts with Kara Mustafa; it is interesting that Kara Mustafa, who is known to have despised Nointel, did not prevent these envoys from regularly meeting with the Frenchman. In fact, after the Chyhyryn disaster, the Hungarians convinced the grand vizier that French support for their liberation struggle did not mean that they would stop considering themselves subjects of the sultan. When they left the Porte in late September 1677, they had the grand vizier's permission to accept French money and military support. This would have been inconceivable under Kara Mustafa's predecessor Ahmed Köprülü.

¹⁶¹Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 220, 273–74.

Kara Mustafa embraced the Hungarians more closely than Köprülü. The grand vizier had hardly taken power in November 1676 when he allowed the Hungarians to send a permanent resident to the Porte. This enabled them to keep the grand vizier informed about the precarious situation of the Habsburg army, the successes of Hungarian raids, and the readiness of Hungarians to rise again in revolt. They were suddenly in a much better position to lobby for Ottoman intervention. While they still drew on the support of Transylvanian diplomats, their status had been significantly upgraded. This became obvious when Menyhért Keczer and Gábor Kende, respected veterans of the fight against the Habsburgs, arrived at the Porte in April 1677. They essentially moved in and stayed until the end of September 1677 and were present when crucial decisions about the future of Hungary and Ukraine were debated. They tried to influence Kara Mustafa and likely contributed to the grand vizier's readiness to consider the invasion of Hungary, despite the fact that a significant portion of the Ottoman army was already in Ukraine. When Ottoman intervention was no longer possible after the Chyhyryn disaster the Hungarian envoys nevertheless received the grand vizier's commitment that the Ottoman army would assist them in the next spring.

The influence of Hungarian insurgents and their diplomatic representatives on Kara Mustafa's unflinching determination to seize Vienna was noted many years ago by Walter Leitsch. He pointed out that Imre Thököly, whom the Porte recognized as the leader of the Hungarian revolt in 1681, revealed the unvarnished truth that the Habsburgs had been unable to put down a massive rebellion for more than a decade; this "was bound to lead the grand vizier to the conclusion that the emperor was extraordinarily weak."¹⁶² But it is important to recognize that Imre Thököly and his envoys could never have been so successful without benefiting from connections that were already in place. The figure of the Hungarian envoy Menyhért Keczer stands out in this regard: according to Nointel he singlehandedly won over Kara Mustafa with "his powerful mind, wisdom, and great eloquence."¹⁶³ Keczer happened to be Imre Thököly's guardian and mentor, and few, if any, had a stronger influence on the young magnate's mind.¹⁶⁴ Keczer was an avid Turcophile¹⁶⁵ who knew how to please Kara Mustafa; he undoubtedly made Kara Mustafa aware that Thököly was a much more reliable ally and more popular leader in Hungary than the fickle Transylvanian prince Apafi.¹⁶⁶ Thus, the Hungarian mission of 1677 laid the foundation for the ascendancy of Thököly after the end of the Russo-Turkish War.

For the Ottomans, the invasion of Ukraine was a blunder of world-historical proportions. A little-known diplomatic struggle unfolded over the winter of 1677–78: on the one side stood the Habsburgs and the Vatican who were pushing the Kremlin to give up its peace initiative; on the other side stood France and its European allies, who tried to push the Ottomans to war in Hungary.¹⁶⁷ Imre Thököly was not optimistic; when he received the news of the Chyhyryn disaster in October 1677 he wrote in his diary that all hopes for a serious Ottoman engagement in Hungary had been indefinitely postponed.¹⁶⁸ This was not at all clear to the Habsburgs who had to wait many more months before it emerged that the Ottomans could not extricate themselves from conflict with Russia. This war assumed continental

¹⁶²Leitsch, "Warum wollte Kara Mustafa Wien erobern?" 498, 504–5, 509–10.

¹⁶³Benczédi, "Imre Thököly," 179n3, Nointel to Hungarian exiles (1 October 1677) ("Erős lélekkel, bölcsességgel, és nagy ékesszólással"). The letter, which Benczédi found in the Hungarian archives, appears to have been written in Hungarian.

¹⁶⁴As a trusted friend of Imre's father, Lutheran magnate István Thököly (1623–70), Menyhért had known the much younger Imre since his early childhood. He was a constant visitor at the Thököly family castle and probably lived there for extended periods. See Dávid Angyal, *Késmárki Thököly Imre 1657–1705*, 2 vols. (Budapest, 1888), 1: 121. The diary of Ambrus Keczer documents the astounding frequency of Menyhért Keczer's stays at the Thököly mansion, in Gyula Tasnádi Nagy, ed., "Lipóczi Keczer Ambrus naplója 1663–1669," in vol. 2 of *Magyar történelmi évkönyvek és naplók*. Vol. 33 of *Monumenta Hungariae Historica/Magyar Történelmi Emlékek* (Budapest, 1894), 81–630, here 619 (index).

¹⁶⁵Angyal, *Késmárki Thököly Imre*, 1: 121; Michels, *Habsburg Empire under Siege*, 227, 283, 335, 465n74.

¹⁶⁶According to Transylvanian magnate Mihály Teleki who resented Thököly's popularity among Hungarian insurgents—Teleki was despised for his inconstancy—Kara Mustafa called Thököly to the Porte in August 1677; see *EOE* 16, no. LXXVI, Teleki to Absolon (14 August 1677), p. 384. I have not found any proof for this in Thököly's diary.

¹⁶⁷Hudita, *Repertoire*, nos. 151, 153, 159, 161, 170, 180, 182, 184 (17 December 1677 to 1 June 1678); Wójcik, *Sobieski*, 257–71; idem, *Rzeczpospolita*, 143–52.

¹⁶⁸Torma, *Késmárki Thököly Imre Thököly naplója*, 82 (9 October 1677), 84 (12 October 1677).

proportions and drew in Kalmyks, Uzbeks, Tatars, and other steppe peoples; it also provided the breathing space that the Habsburg Empire so desperately needed to hold onto Hungary. By the end of the Russo-Turkish War in 1681 the Habsburgs had repaired their fortresses, made peace with France, upgraded their manpower, made major concessions to the Hungarians, and formed an international alliance to defend Vienna. One wonders what would have happened to Hungary and the Habsburg Empire had the Ottoman army not become bogged down in the Ukrainian steppe. What if Kara Mustafa had given the green light for an invasion of Hungary in the summer of 1677?