

# *The Memorial Site of Sultan Suleiman in Szigetvár Commemorating His Death in Hungarian-Turkish Cultural and Political Relations\**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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In 1994, at the initiative of the Turkish government and with the support of Szigetvár Municipality and the Hungarian government, a Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park was

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established in the “Turkish cemetery” at the Sultan Suleiman’s presumed place of death. The park, which was leased to the Turkish state first provided home to a bronze statue of Sultan Suleiman and a memorial türbe. Couple of years later a bronze statue of Miklós Zrínyi, commander of Sziget in 1566 was erected next to the other one. The paper describes the story of the “Turkish cemetery”, the establishment of the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park in 1994, its recent developments, and the Hungarian and Turkish remembrance and cultural diplomatic efforts. The methodology of this research is based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources on regarding subject and interviews.

*Keywords:* Szigetvár, Suleiman the Magnificent, Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park, remembrance politics, cultural diplomacy

### ÖZ

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1994’te, Türk hükümetinin girişimiyle ve Zigetvar Belediyesi’nin ve Macar hükümetinin desteğiyle, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’ın varsayılan ölüm yerindeki “Türk mezarlığı”nda bir Türk-Macar Dostluk Parkı kurulmuştur. Türk Devleti’ne kiralanana park, ilk olarak Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’ın bronz heykeline ve bir türbeye ev sahipliği yapmıştır. Birkaç yıl sonra, 1566’da Ziget’in komutanı olan Miklós Zrínyi’nin bir bronz heykeli diğerinin yanına inşa edilmiştir. Bu makale, “Türk mezarlığı”nın hikayesini, 1994’te Türk-Macar Dostluk Parkı’nın kurulmasını, bunun son yıllardaki gelişimini ve Macar ve Türk anma ve kültürel diplomatik çabalarını anlatmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın metodolojisi, ilgili konu hakkındaki birincil ve ikincil kaynakların ve mülakatların incelenmesine dayanmaktadır.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Zigetvar, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman, Türk-Macar Dostluk Parkı, anma siyaseti, kültür diplomasisi.

## Introduction

The first three hundred years of the six-hundred-year-old history of Hungarian-Turkish relations were characterised by wars, while the second three hundred years by cooperation and, occasionally, friendship between the two nations. One hundred and fifty years after the Peace Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, leaders of the anti-Habsburg insurgency found refuge in the Ottoman Empire<sup>1</sup>, which helped to turn the relations between the two nations positive. Several serious clashes that took place over these three centuries of war are still remembered today.<sup>2</sup> One of the most serious events was the bloody siege of Szigetvár, which had a strong impact on identity building.

<sup>1</sup> The groups of emigrants led by Imre Thököly (1699–1705) and Ilona Zrínyi, by Ferenc Rákóczi II (1717–1735) and by Lajos Kossuth (1849–1851) also found refuge in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>2</sup> The most important memorial places of the Turkish wars that are still remembered even in Turkey: Mohács (1526); the Tomb of Gül Baba, which commemorates the seize of Buda in 1541;

In 1566, the Hungarian and Croatian defenders of Szigetvár, having to face superior numbers, resisted the siege of the Ottoman troops for a month. At dawn on September 7, just before the castle was taken over, the old Sultan Suleiman had died and a few hours later that day, Captain Miklós Zrínyi and his remaining troops, who broke out from the castle, died the death of heroes.

A memorial park was established in Szigetvár in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which originally had a statue of Suleiman the Magnificent, and later, a statue of the defender of the castle, Miklós Zrínyi was also erected there. The Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park thus created and later renewed for the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the siege is a monument almost unique in the world, representing the collective memory of the two nations, which used to be opponents and enemies in the past. The memorial site commemorating perhaps greatest ruler of the Ottoman Empire, the victor at Mohács, who occupied a significant part of Hungary, as well as the Hungarian-Croatian national hero was supported by the Hungarian government<sup>3</sup>. Implementation was funded by the initiator, the Turkish party, which also determined how the park should be presented to the public.

This paper discusses 20<sup>th</sup>-century changes in Hungarian and Turkish politics of memory, efforts in cultural diplomacy, the circumstances under which the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park was created and developed further, as well as the location itself as an important litmus paper of Hungarian-Turkish relations. It introduces the efforts that ultimately led to the system of memorial sites established in connection with Szigetvár and to how the park looks like today.

### **Milestones of Hungarian-Turkish relations in the modern age in terms of memory of politics**

In the First World War, Hungarians and Turks fought together as part of the alliance system of the Central Powers, and lost the war together, too. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Atatürk's war of independence from 1919 to 1923 and the social revolution thereafter created a secular Turkish Republic, which was a unique model in many respects. The multinational empire developed into a Western-like nation state. The period between the two world wars was characterised by introversion and endeavours to build a nation, also including a system of national symbols.

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Esztergom, which was taken by Szigetvár in 1543; the tomb of the last Pasha defending Buda in the Castle; and Szigetvár, which is especially famous for the 1566 seize and Suleiman's death.

<sup>3</sup>Although the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park was built on the basis of an agreement between the Municipality of Szigetvár and the Republic of Turkey, the Hungarian Government was also represented at the inauguration ceremony by Gábor Fodor, Minister of Culture and Public Education.

With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Hungary became independent and a nation state following the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. At the same time, in contrast to the Turkish success in gaining national independence, due to a significant loss of territory and population, Hungarian society saw this period as a serious trauma, and the idea of border adjustment and revision had become a political priority. The country had become isolated and was able to resolve this problem only gradually. The successful Turkish War of Independence provoked sympathy among Hungarians, and Hungary was among the first to recognise the new Turkish state.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the attitude of Hungarians in memory culture was determined by the idea of (pan-)Turanism. The Turanian Society was established in 1910, which became one of the most important civil organisations of contemporary Hungarian political elite, doing research on the Turkish origin of Hungarians and promoting cooperation with the Turks. The political legitimacy of Turanism and, equally importantly, its significance for memory of politics, is shown by the fact that the Society played an important part in the organisation of a symbolically key event in Hungary: in 1926, it was one of the main organisers of the event celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Mohács.

The only foreign government that was represented at the Mohács celebration by a delegation was the Republic of Turkey. Although the defeat at Mohács is regarded as the biggest disaster in Hungary's history by both historians and national collective memory, the speeches delivered at the event all emphasised kinship with the Turks and the fact that the relationship between the two nations had become friendly over the past 300 years.<sup>5</sup>

The Turkish ambassador, Hüsrev Gerede called the two nations brother nations. He emphasised:

“If we look at the history of the age four hundred years ago with objective impartiality, we should note that while European nations were waging a bloody religious war, the Turks advancing in Europe were not led by any anti-religious intentions (aspirations). Wherever the Turks had set their feet firmly, they showed utmost religious patience. And as far as their stay in Hungary is

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<sup>4</sup>In this connection see: János Hóvári, *Atatürk öröksége magyar szemmel*, [Atatürk's heritage through Hungarian eyes] in: Ceyhan Atuf Kansu: *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk*, Transl. Edit Tasnádi, Nap Kiadó, Budapest, 2017, pp. 135-150.

<sup>5</sup>Governor Miklós Horthy delivered his speech at the Louis II monument next to the Stream Csele on 29 August 1926, which was the most important and lasting moment of the celebrations. The Governor recommended cooperation with the South Slav state. The event was organised by the Turanian Society. Gyula Pekár, president of the Society gave the opening speech. Then, before Miklós Horthy, the Turkish ambassador spoke. Hüsrev Gerede gave his speech in Turkish, with interpretation.

concerned, the Turks respected the Hungarian language during the entire period. As Takáts [i.e. Sándor Takáts, a Piarist teacher and historian dealing with the period] and other historians noted in their works, the Pasha of Buda constantly corresponded in Hungarian with the people.”<sup>6</sup>

He also mentioned Ferenc Rákóczi II, who was still highly respected in Turkey.<sup>7</sup>

In the case of Hungary, attaching more importance to the Turkish heritage and turning to Asian nations were largely due to Trianon, i.e. the breaking up of the country, and the feeling of abandonment of the Hungarians, betrayed by the West. By embracing a common fate with the Turanian nations, the memory of the fights in the Ottoman times had become distant and somewhat more positive. Although Hungarian society continued to regard itself as the bastion of Christian Europe, the image of the enemy in this context was no longer represented by the Muslim state, but by the atheist Soviet power.

The relationship between the two nations, which were geographically distant from each other, changed when Hungary came under Soviet rule. In 1952, Turkey became a member of NATO, an extremely important part of the Western military and political alliance, the “Bastion of the West”. Hungary, on the other hand, became a member of the Soviet alliance system. Although Hungary continued to preserve the memory of Turkish memorial sites and battlefields, the period was considered part of national romance, they did not enjoy the supportive attention of the socialist party state. They were treated in accordance with local interests and only in the context of local affairs.

For the party state, the crucial event in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the peasant uprising in 1514 led by György Dózsa<sup>8</sup>, highlighting social progression, elements of class struggle and the serious irresponsibility of the ruling class. The Mohács debate<sup>9</sup> emerging in the 1960s raised the responsibility and

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<sup>6</sup> János B. Szabó (ed.), *Mohács. Nemzet és Emlékezet*. [Mohács, Nation, Memory.] Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2006, 532 p.

<sup>7</sup> János Hóvári, *A mohácsi csata két emlékéve: 1926 versus 1976* [The two memorable years of the Battle of Mohács: 1926 versus 1976], in: Pál Fodor, Szabolcs Varga (eds.), *Több mint egy csata: Mohács. Az 1526. évi ütközet a magyar tudományos és kulturális emlékezetben*, [More than a Battle: Mohács. The 1526 Encounter in Hungarian Scientific and Cultural Memory], MTA BTK, Budapest, pp. 539-562.

<sup>8</sup>The starting point of the peasant war was that the Pope proclaimed a crusade against Muslim Turks in Hungary. Meanwhile, the army, organised and led by Franciscan monks and soldiers in border fortresses, had a sense of liberation and aversion to the nobility. The crusaders who had gathered together were therefore sent home, but they refused to do so, and a war broke out. The peasant troops were defeated only in heavy fights.

<sup>9</sup> The first edition of István Nemeskürty’s book, „Ez történt Mohács után” [This Is What Happened After Mohács] was published in 1966. Thereafter, the book has been published again several times. This work, which evaluated the 15 years after Mohács, generated widespread

incompetence of the nobility in the Jagiellonian age. In 1976, when a number of commemorations were held to mark the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Mohács, the memorial park established next to the mass grave near Sátorhely served this purpose. Representatives of the Turkish state were not invited to the ceremony, but no other foreign delegates were present either. The Turks were not mentioned at all at the event. The speeches at the commemorations condemned the nobility fighting at Mohács and depicted a picture of the country that had lost popular support due to the suppression of György Dózsa's uprising. Religious symbols were not present or were hidden in the park's symbol system. In addition, Hungarian party and state leaders tried to pass over the anniversary in silence. There were no national commemorations and no commemorative year was announced, as they were afraid of a renewed outburst of national emotions and nationalism.

In 1966, the interpretation of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Szigetvár Battle was largely dominated by considerations based on class struggle, as mentioned above. The socialist regime tried to present Miklós Zrínyi, the defender of the castle, as a hero living for the people and used the celebrations to strengthen the national legitimacy of the Kádár regime. It was not possible to give the Turks a formal role in these actions and aspirations.<sup>10</sup>

In the state-socialist system, it was possible to put the issue of Turkish cultural relations and cooperation regarding the Ottoman heritage of Hungary on the agenda only in the softer period of the Cold War. The beginning of the 1970s was such a period, when the idea of setting up a Suleiman I monument in Szigetvár was first raised, initiated by the Turks.

Another major change in Turkish-Hungarian relations took place only after the end of the Cold War, when Hungary could be reintegrated into Western structures. In this period, Hungary took an orientation to the West again. Accession to the European Union and NATO had become a major priority of foreign policy. Getting closer to Turkey as an important member of NATO had thus become desirable. The previously sharp confrontation was replaced by

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debate. See: István Nemeskürty, *Ez történt Mohács után*, [This Is What Happened After Mohács] Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1966, 348 p.

<sup>10</sup> Historian M. Tayyip Gökbilgin (1907–1981), who studied in Budapest at the end of the 1930s, was an unofficial Turkish representative attending the celebrations in 1966. He was not invited by the party state, but by one of his fellow students at Eötvös College, Kálmán Benda (1913–1994), an archivist and historian, who was supported in the background by Imre Molnár, an expert of local history in Szigetvár, to join forces with researchers studying the 1566 siege of Szigetvár. Some of the correspondence between M. Tayyip Gökbilgin and Kálmán Benda have been preserved by Altay Gökbilgin, the son of the Turkish professor of history, and the rest are kept in the archives of the Ráday Collection.

cooperation in the Balkan and Central European territories neighbouring on Turkey.

In the early 1990s, the new situation created by the disintegration of the Soviet Union initially gave an important role to pan-Turkish political ambitions targeting the Eurasian region ranging from the Adriatic to China. In the early 2000s, another change occurred: under the AKP governments, there was strong demand for playing a greater role by Turkey in the Islamic world, which coincided with aspirations for a kind of Ottoman cultural rebirth. One of the impacts of the latter in foreign policy was that the Turks emerged in a new role in the Balkans as a soft power, which the Balkan Christian states interpreted as neo-Ottomanism. This was, however, consistently denied by Turkish government officials. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu delivered his famous speech in Sarajevo in October 2009, which, despite his intentions, provided further ammunition to those who accused Turkey of neo-Ottomanism. He suggested that in the period of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans were the centre of world politics, and considered it important to emphasise that the nations of the Ottoman heritage were connected to Turkey.

“The Turks, Bosnians, Macedonians and Albanians in the Balkans are turning their faces towards Turkey because there is a historical link between Turkey and these nations. Whatever happens in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, we are affected by it (...) our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is trying to resolve problems in the areas that are in need of our help.”<sup>11</sup>

The speech found strong response not only in the Balkans and other European countries, but also in Turkey. In several respects, this was a message to home, to Turkey from Sarajevo, partly because nearly one-third of Turkish families had been refugees from somewhere, from the Balkans, the Caucasus or elsewhere.

The references to the Ottoman period by Davutoğlu and other politicians applied to Hungary as well.<sup>12</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of Suleiman I, the golden age of the empire, Hungarian territories came under Ottoman rule, and that was the time when the Principality of Transylvanian, dependent on the Sultans, came into being.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the specific policy of the

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<sup>11</sup> Zoltán Egeresi, *Európa és az EU török szemmel [Europe and the EU through Turkish eyes], Méditerrán és Balkán Fórum*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2013, pp. 10-18.

<sup>12</sup> References to the Suleiman period were constantly present in Turkish domestic policy. The present case study and paper on the place and political significance of Sultan Suleiman's death in Szigetvár also offers important lessons for the development of Turkish soft power, the considerations of the Turkish state for the region, as well as Turkish political practice in Hungary.

<sup>13</sup>In this case, the situation is differently interpreted by the Hungarians and the Turks. Hungarian historical memory of the Ottoman conquest remembers the destruction of the medieval Hungarian state as a national disaster. Although there is consensus on this in Hungarian history

Principality of Transylvanian and its effects in royal Hungary, as well as the flourishing of Hungarian national culture, were all made possible under Ottoman weapons, which was a peculiar contradiction. The ideas of Reformation spread in Hungary and Transylvania in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the Turkish expansion. As the jurisdiction of the Catholic bishopric ceased to exist and the Turkish central power showed religious patience, much of the conquered country became Protestant. The Reformers preached in Hungarian, translated the Bible into Hungarian, and their activities greatly contributed to the development of Hungarian literary language. Supported by the Sublime Porte, the Protestant, religiously tolerant princes and noblemen of Transylvania established a number of printing houses and colleges that promoted Hungarian education and culture.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Turkish economy was experiencing an extremely successful phase of development, which apparently increased the importance of the country in both the Middle East and the Balkans. Istanbul, the most important Turkish city, which is also the largest city in the Balkans, had (and still has) a major influence on the economy and cultural life of the whole region. The Turkish capital is a global metropolis with its complex effects across the Balkan borders up to Hungary. Increasing soft power improved Turkey's acceptance in the region. According to a Gallup survey, the perception of the Turks among the nations of the Western Balkans improved significantly between 2006 and 2011.<sup>14</sup> Turkish soft power aspirations also appeared in Hungary. After 2012, the Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Development (TİKA) funded a number of projects related to Turkish monuments. In 2013, TİKA also began funding the identification of the site where Sultan Suleiman I actually died and the exploration of the tomb complex built there. This organisation coordinated and carried out a major renovation and extension of the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park at the site of the "Turkish Cemetery" in Szigetvár in 2016.

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and collective memory, its causes have always been controversial. There is a similar debate about the role of the Principality of Transylvania and the "Ottoman-Turkish orientation" that had become the dominant policy there.

<sup>14</sup>According to the 2006 Gallup survey, the ratio of those who prefer to see Turkey as a friend was 67.1% in partially Muslim Kosovo (excluding Kosovska Mitrovica), 71.3% in Macedonia, 56.3% in Albania and 50.9% in the Bosnian entity. In 2011, the answer to the same question was 94.7% in Kosovo (excluding Kosovska Mitrovica), 66.7% among residents in the Bosnian-Croatian Federation, 69.2% in Albania and 70.3% in Macedonia. The image of the Turks also improved in non-Muslim areas. While in 2006, only 8.2% of the population in the Bosnian Serb entity, 21.1% in Serbia, 25.7% in Montenegro and 24% in Croatia saw the Turks as friends, in 2011 this ratio was 33.8% in the Republic of Serbia (Republika Sprska), 17.4% in Serbia, 30.4% in Montenegro and 33.5% in Croatia. See: Egeresi, *ibid*, pp. 10-18.

### Why the Turkish cemetery of all places?

In 1688, Christian relief troops blockaded the fortress system of the Island under Ottoman rule and then seized it in 1689. Leandro Anguissola, a military engineer of Italian origin but in Austrian service, drew a sketch of the blockade and siege of Szigetvár and its surroundings. The map, reflecting the state of the Ottoman capitulation on 13 February 1689, also marked a pentagonal object “F” to the north, along the road leading from the castle to Kaposvár, next to the Almás Stream.<sup>15</sup> On the inside, the cartographer depicted a circular mound, an elevation marked in grey. According to the map legends, Anguissola marked this as the place where Sultan Suleiman died in the siege in 1566.<sup>16</sup>

Probably this open woodland was mentioned earlier by Pál Esterházy in his ‘Mars Hungaricus’ published in 1664<sup>17</sup>, as the lakeside location<sup>18</sup> where Sultan Suleiman was believed to have fallen under a linden tree hit by a cannon ball. According to Evlia Çelebi, who was also in Szigetvár at the time, the Sultan’s tent was on the shore of a lake at a cannon ball’s distance from Szigetvár.<sup>19</sup>

We believe that this location as a memorial site may have been relocated by the people continuously living in the neighbourhood, especially by Bosnians, from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to the period following the Ottoman occupation. The place was mentioned in a document dating back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as “Suleiman’s fortifications”<sup>20</sup>, and then in 1838, it appeared in “Baranya Vármegye Föld Abrosza” [Book of Maps of Baranya County] published by cartographer József Kóczián as “Suleiman’s campsite” along the

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<sup>15</sup> Norbert Páp, Máté Kitanics, Péter Gyenizse, Erika Hancz, Zita Bognár, Tamás Tóth, Zoltán Hámori, Finding the tomb of Suleiman the Magnificent in Szigetvár, Hungary: historical, geophysical and archaeological investigations, *Die Erde*, vol. 146. no. 4, (2014), pp. 289-303.

<sup>16</sup> The map legends have the following description: „Orth wo der türkische Kaiser Solimanus ist gestorben” [The place where Turkish Emperor Suleiman died].

<sup>17</sup> Pál Esterházy, *Mars Hungaricus*, Zrínyi Kiadó, Budapest, 1989, 562 p.

<sup>18</sup>In this context, the lakeside location can be interpreted as the swampy shore of the swollen Almás Stream.

<sup>19</sup> Imre Karácson (transl.), *Evliya Cselebi török világotutató magyarországi utazásai 1660–1664* [Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi’s travels in Hungary.], in: *Török-Magyarkori Történelmi Emlékek* [Historical Relics from the Turkish-Hungarian Age]. *Török Történetírók* [Turkish Historiographers] III. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest, 1904, 547 p.

<sup>20</sup> Máté Kitanics, *Szigetvár-Turbék: a szultán temetkezési helye a 17–18. századi magyar, német és latin források tükrében* [Szigetvár-Turbék: The Sultan’s burial place in the mirror of 17th-18th-century Hungarian, German and Latin sources / 17–18. Yüzyıllarına Ait Macarca, Almanca ve Latince Kaynaklar Temelinde Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’ın Mezarının Olusturulduğu Bölge]. In: Norbert Páp (ed.): *Szülejmán szultán emlékezete Szigetváron* [The Memory of Sultan Suleiman in Szigetvár/Kanuni Sultan Süleyman’ın Szigetvár’daki hatırası], Mediterrán és Balkán Fórum [Mediterranean and Balkan Forum] (Special edition), PTE TTK FI, Pécs, 2014, pp. 91-109.

road to Kaposvár, marked by a small hill.<sup>21</sup> In 1845, playwright Imre Vahot mentioned it during his visit to Szigetvár as “*Suleiman’s camp and burial place*”.<sup>22</sup>

About two decades later, it appeared on the map of the Second Military Survey (1859) as the Turkish cemetery with its well-defined shape and the small hill, and as *Türkengrab* on the geological profile of the Third Military Survey (1880). The site, which was considered part of the Turkish cemetery, was owned by the community in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In fact, according to popular tradition, it was and had previously been owned by the Turks. According to personal communication by Bosnian families, it was not allowed to eat the walnuts produced here because of the Turkish dead. Additionally, although hay was collected, due to tribute to the dead, it was not allowed to plough the fields.<sup>23</sup>

To verify the legend, Béla Salamon, secretary of the Zrínyi Miklós Museum Association, conducted excavations in 1934 with Ödön Batizfalvy at the Turkish cemetery. According to the records, it appears that in addition to Celtic relics, four skeletons facing Mecca had been found. In 1959, Salamon recalled the excavation as follows:

“In order to shed light on different folk traditions and folk tales, I explored the whole area around 1930 using research ditches. Cutting through the small hill in the middle to a depth of four and a half meters, we found no graveyard, nor any bones ... In the north-eastern corner, we found four skeletons in a perfect lying position, with their heads towards Mecca, 50-60 cm deep, with no grave furniture. The tombs were poured with thick lime milk ... after retaking the castle, several old, ill Turkish people remained in Szigetvár and when they died, probably due to a contagious disease, they were buried here ... Thus, we should not be looking for the bodies of people who died during the 1566 seize, nor for those who died during the 122 years of Turkish occupation in this area of about four hectares.”<sup>24</sup>

The Foreign Minister of NATO-member Turkey, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil<sup>25</sup> paid a three-day visit<sup>26</sup> to Hungary in November 1970 with a delegation to

<sup>21</sup> József Kóczián, *Baranya Vármegye föld abraza*. [Book of Maps of Baranya County]. Hadtörténelmi Intézet és Múzeum, B IX a 1401–2599, 1838.

<sup>22</sup> Imre Vahot, *Úti Emlények* [Travel Experiences] (Szigetvár.–Somogy.–Hárságy.–Kaposvár.), *Regélő Pesti Dinattlap*, vol. 3, no. 32, 1845, pp. 1039-1045.

<sup>23</sup> In 2018–2019, Máté Kitanics and Gábor Szalai interviewed more than 10 elderly people of Bosnian descent about the past and ethnography of Szigetvár and Turbék.

<sup>24</sup> Béla Salamon, Hozzászólás a „Hol van Zrínyi Miklós sírja?” című cikkhez (Comment on the article “Where is the tomb of Miklós Zrínyi?”), *Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 16, no. 207, 1959, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> He was Minister of Foreign Affairs between 27 October 1965 and 26 March 1971.

<sup>26</sup> All this was in return for Foreign Minister János Péter’s visit to Turkey in July 1968. It was at this time that the Rákóczi Memorial Museum was opened in Rodostó.

boost cultural, economic and trade relations. The visit coincided with the easing of tension in the Cold War. The delegation visited the main locations of Hungarian-Turkish common history, including Szigetvár and Baranya County. After seeing the castle, they also visited the church in Turbék, the place where a memorial plate had shown since 1913: this is where the mausoleum of Sultan Suleiman once stood. The Turkish party planned to build a türbe (a tomb) and a “janitor’s apartment” for its leader (the türbedar). County leaders supported the plan and making the area in question available for construction work, but suggested that details should be agreed by the two foreign ministries. At the same time, the head of the Turkish diplomatic service requested that by the time of their prime minister’s arrival, “*the shrine to commemorate the great leader of Turkish history, Sultan Suleiman*” should take a form worthy of their great historical figure.<sup>27</sup>

In connection with the above, archaeologist Valéria Kováts began excavations in 1971 at the Turkish cemetery and the Turbék shrine church in order to identify Sultan Suleiman’s türbe. She said she had dug a research trench of more than 350 meters in total but found no remains of the building or any skeletons. During the excavation, however, she came to the assumption that soil had been piled up to a height of 70-100 cm at the swampy site to make it rise out of its surroundings. According to her, the imperial military engineer must have seen the pentagonal object intact, in its original form, which the Turks regarded as a “cultic site”. She believed that the original cultic function had been forgotten by the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was replaced by the legend of the Turkish cemetery.<sup>28</sup> After her excavations at the church in Turbék, she developed her position further, claiming that the Turkish cemetery may have included the Sultan’s tent, and that was the place where the Sultan died, but his türbe and the palisaded fortress protecting it were built on the site of the church.<sup>29</sup> Although she was unable to substantiate her hypothesis with written sources and archaeological evidence, her theory was generally accepted in scientific circles until the beginning of recent research to identify the türbe (2013). The fact that no memorial site was built at the time, in the 1970s, at the church in Turbék or the Turkish cemetery was probably due to the replacement

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<sup>27</sup> Anonymous author, A török külügyminiszter látogatása Baranyában [The Turkish foreign minister’s visit to Baranya County], *Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 27, no. 272, 1970, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous author, Az egykori török tábor helyén nem találtak temetőt (No tomb has been found at the former Turkish campsite), *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 5, no. 62, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Norbert Páp, Máté Kitanics, *Nagy Szulejmán szultán szigetvári türbéjének kutatása (1903–2016)* [Research on the türbe of Suleiman the Magnificent in Szigetvár]. In: Norbert Páp, Pál Fodor (ed.), *Szulejmán szultán Szigetváron [Sultan Suleiman in Szigetvár]. A szigetvári kutatások 2013–2016 között* [Research in Szigetvár between 2013–2016.] Pécs 2017, pp. 25-47.

of the foreign minister in 1971, who supported this plan. As a result, due to lack of an influential patron and the fact that it was no longer a priority in the complicated and tense domestic political situation in Turkey, the plan had been abandoned.

In the 1980s, it was primarily academic institutions dealing with 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian and world literature, history and fine arts and the teachers of the Teacher Training College of Pécs, especially Imre Polányi, made efforts to draw attention to the Turkish relics of Szigetvár. In cooperation with the Local Castle Circle, prestigious conferences were organised every year in Szigetvár; for example, the annual conference of the Renaissance and Baroque Research Group was held here in 1986. In the same year, on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Buda and several other Hungarian cities from Turkish rule, Hungary (the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Janus Pannonius University of Pécs) hosted one of the most important conferences in the Ottoman world, CIÉPO (Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes). Its participants also visited Szigetvár.<sup>30</sup> Some of the prominent scientists attending the conference included Bernard Lewis, Kemal Karpat, Robert Mantran, Gilles Veinstein and Nicolas Vatin. One of the important events of the conference programme was a visit to the Helping Blessed Virgin Mary shrine church, which was considered, at the time, the tomb of Sultan Suleiman. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (1902-1994), one of the greatest experts of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman literature, brought up the Sultan's memory by reciting contemporary literary works and mentioned him in his speech.<sup>31</sup> From these years onwards, diplomats from the Turkish Embassy in Budapest were frequently visiting Szigetvár, as well as Pécs, Mohács and Siklós.

In 1988-1989, leaders in Ankara learned that major changes would soon take place in Hungary primarily through reports by the Turkish ambassador to Budapest at the time, Halit Güvener (1935-2010).<sup>32</sup> As soon as it became possible to establish civil organisations, the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Society was founded in 1989. This and the protest of Hungarian intellectuals

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<sup>30</sup> The conference was chaired by renowned turkologist György Hazai, who also paid tribute to Suleiman in his speech.

<sup>31</sup> Personal communication by János Hóvári, assistant professor at the University of Pécs and secretary of the Hungarian event.

<sup>32</sup> Personal communication by János Hóvári, who had a good relationship with the Turkish ambassador.

against the expulsion of Bulgarian Turks turned the attention of Turkish intellectuals back to Hungary.<sup>33</sup>

The first important Turkish visit in the changed, new situation, which included a review of Hungarian-Turkish relations, was paid by a delegation headed by Minister of Culture Namık Kemal Zeybek<sup>34</sup> in November 1989. The minister spent one night in Szigetvár, accompanied by János Hóvári, secretary of the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Society. After the 1970s, the Turkish government raised the idea again, for the second time, of setting up a monument worthy of Sultan Suleiman. Thereafter, the Turkish Embassy in Budapest was given the task of taking steps to this end in Budapest and Szigetvár.<sup>35</sup>

In the early 1990s, as the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sultan Suleiman's birth was approaching, the Turkish side was increasingly determined to create a place of remembrance in Hungary. In the meantime, the Cold War came to an end, the Western Alliance was victorious, and Hungary, being liberated from Soviet ties, became part of Western structures. Hungary was making strong efforts to get closer to NATO member states, including Turkey. In December 1993, Turkish Minister of Culture Durmuş Fikri Sağlar<sup>36</sup> visited Szigetvár and gave Mayor Mátyás Darázsi the model of the statue designed for Suleiman I.<sup>37</sup> According to personal communication by the former mayor, the neighbourhood of the Tomb of Gül Baba was also suggested at the negotiations as a possible place for the statue, but eventually Szigetvár was chosen. In subsequent negotiations, the two competing locations were the area around the church in Turbék and the Turkish cemetery. Due to the resistance of the Catholic bishopric of Pécs, however, which did not support the idea of setting up a Turkish memorial park at the church, eventually, the Turkish cemetery, i.e. the Sultan's presumed place of death, won the competition.<sup>38</sup> Taking advantage of municipal freedoms that had suddenly set in, the Turkish party bypassed the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Education during negotiations

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<sup>33</sup> György Hazai writes more on this in his memoirs: György Hazai, *Ellenszélben és szélárnyékban [Under a headwind and lee-waves]. Memoár*, Vámbéry Polgári Társulás, Dunaszerdahely, 2017, pp. 141-144.

<sup>34</sup> He was the Turkish minister of culture from 17 March 1989 and 23 June 1991.

<sup>35</sup> Personal communication: János Hóvári.

<sup>36</sup> He served his first term as minister of culture from 20 November 1991 to 27 July 1994.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous author, Emlékműfelállítást terveznek Szigetváron [New monument to be set up in Szigetvár]. Baranyába látogatott a török kulturális miniszter [Turkish minister of culture visits Baranya County], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 4, no. 331, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup>In 2018 autumn, Máté Kitanics and Gábor Szalai interviewed former mayor Mátyás Darázsi on issues related to Szigetvár's past.

on the establishment of the monument, and directly negotiated with the Municipality of Szigetvár.<sup>39</sup> As a result, the two ministries learned about what was happening in Szigetvár only through hearsay.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, on 3 June 1994, the Municipality of Szigetvár and the Republic of Turkey signed an agreement for the lease of the “land designated as the Turkish cemetery”.<sup>41</sup> The Turkish party leased the area for a nominal amount of HUF 1 for 99 years “to set up a Turkish memorial site not later than by 31 December 1994”.

### **A Turkish memorial site turned into a Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park**

Following the negotiations, the memorial site was completed in the summer of 1994, on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Sultan Suleiman, in an area leased by the Turkish state for a symbolic sum for 99 years. However, it was not inaugurated on the day of the ruler’s birth, but on September 6<sup>42</sup>, on the day he allegedly died. The entrance to the park, surrounded by an arabesque fence, is located directly from on east on Main Road 67. The statue of Sultan Suleiman was erected on the small elevation shown on the above-mentioned map, which had been levelled. To the north of it, at the end of the memorial site, a symbolic türbe was built with a stone coffin in it.<sup>43</sup>

At the invitation of President Árpád Göncz, President of the Republic of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel<sup>44</sup> and Fikri Sağlar’s immediate successor, Minister of Culture Timurçin Savaş<sup>45</sup> arrived in Hungary to officially open the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park and unveil the monumental bronze sculpture of Suleiman. The Turkish delegation thanked the Hungarian government for its

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<sup>39</sup> The Mayor of Szigetvár had a wide scope for action, as he was member of the Alliance of Free Democrats, the party in opposition until the summer of 1994 and then part of the government that came to power that year.

<sup>40</sup> Personal communication by János Hóvári, who headed the secretariat of political Under-Secretary András Kelemen at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1993-1994.

<sup>41</sup> The agreement was signed by Mayor Mátyás Darázsi on behalf of the Municipality of Szigetvár and Ambassador Bedrettin Tunabaş on behalf of the Republic of Turkey.

<sup>42</sup> In fact, Sultan Suleiman and Miklós Zrínyi died one day later, on September 7.

<sup>43</sup> László Horváth, a building contractor in Szigetvár, who was Honorary Consul of the Republic of Turkey in Szigetvár until 2014, played a key role in the implementation of the project and did a lot to improve relations. See: Zoltán Varga, 5 éve nyílt meg a tiszteletbeli konzulátus Szigetváron [The Honorary Consulate was opened 5 years ago in Szigetvár]. Beszélgetés Horváth László úrral, a Török Köztársaság tiszteletbeli konzuljával [Interview with Mr László Horváth, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Turkey], *Szigetvári Polgár*, vol. 5, no. 12, 2001, pp. 10-11.

<sup>44</sup> Prior to this, the last time that Hungarian and Turkish heads of state met was in 1989. The exhibition entitled “Suleiman the Magnificent and His Age” was also opened during this visit between 5–7 September in the Buda Castle.

<sup>45</sup> He was the Turkish minister of culture from 27 July 1994 to 27 March 1995.

support in establishing the park. Although the statue of Zrínyi was not yet erected at the time<sup>46</sup>, the site, which was intended to be a bridge between the two nations, was seen as a tribute to the ruler and the defender of the castle. They emphasised that former relations saddled with wars had been transformed into cooperation, helping each other, noting the fact that Ferenc Rákóczi had found shelter in Rodostó and that his statue<sup>47</sup> had been unveiled there just recently. They suggested that the Turkish state would contribute to the restoration of Ottoman monuments in Hungary. In his speech, Minister of Culture Gábor Fodor<sup>48</sup>, representing the Hungarian government, stressed Hungary's role in curbing the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, he did not see the Suleiman's statue as a monument representing the conqueror of Hungary, but as a historic person whose country had repeatedly provided refuge to our compatriots. In addition to Hungarian culture, he emphasised the role of Croatian culture in maintaining Zrínyi's memory. After unveiling the five-ton work of art made by Metin Yurdanur, the Turkish party sprayed soil from Trabzon on the coffin in the memorial park's türbe, which was followed by a common prayer.<sup>49</sup>

Following and partly related to the construction of the memorial site, several plans were raised by the Turkish and Hungarian parties to increase the importance of cultural and economic relations. These included the establishment of a Turkish bazaar, as well as the construction of hotels, restaurants, a Turkish bath, or restoration of the incomplete minaret of the Suleiman mosque in the castle. Specific negotiations were conducted with the help of the Turkish Embassy in Hungary for building a hotel with a Turkish stake in it next to the park, and by the end of September 1995, significant progress had been made<sup>50</sup> since the city administration saw a great opportunity in this. They believed that not only tourists who had been occupying Pécs and were also showing interest in Szigetvár would choose this place, but the hotel, combined with the opportunities offered by the Friendship Park and other

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<sup>46</sup> János Hóvári seems to remember that the leadership of the Ministry of Culture at the time undertook an oral commitment to have Zrínyi's bust made, but this had not yet been realised.

<sup>47</sup> The six-and-a-half-meter bronze statue of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II was funded by the Turks and was unveiled in Rodostó (Tekirdağ) on 23 August 1994, with Turkish and Hungarian government attendance.

<sup>48</sup> János Hóvári believes that the Hungarian minister of culture was reluctant until the last days to attend the inauguration of the Memorial Park.

<sup>49</sup> Sándor Lőrincz, *Harcokban gyökerező török-magyar barátság* [Turkish-Hungarian friendship rooted in fights], *Somogyi Hírlap*, vol. 5, no. 210, 1994, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Csaba Stefanits, *Török érdeklőségű hotel épülhetne Szigetváron* [A hotel with a Turkish stake could be built in Szigetvár]. *Ha Allah is úgy akarja* [If Allah wills], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 6, no. 265, 1995, p. 9.

tourist attractions would also be able to attract the millions of Turkish guest workers travelling through the area twice a year. In this context, they were not happy to see the demonstration against the Suleiman statue in Szigetvár, supported by the newly founded Zrínyi Historical Association in Budapest, as they believed this hostile attitude could hinder the negotiations. The association held its protest on September 24 at the Friendship Park. Around 100-120 people came from Budapest on three buses. One of the founders of the Association, retired actress Edit Kéri, along with the national radical Isabella Király B., the founder of the Party of Hungarian Interest, spoke on behalf of the protesters, demanding that the statue be removed as soon as possible.<sup>51</sup> They found it unacceptable that a conqueror, an oppressor responsible for the death of thousands of Hungarian had been given a statue in Zrínyi's town.

Of course, the statue had not been removed; in fact, with the financial support of the Turkish government, but designed by a Hungarian artist, a richly decorated drinking fountain with four outflows, the "Friendship Well"<sup>52</sup> was built on the section of the park opening to the road in early 1996, which was inaugurated by Turkish Minister of Culture Fikri Sağlar<sup>53</sup> and the outgoing mayor, Gyula Rodek on January 13.<sup>54</sup> However, the major architectural and symbolic elements of the park came to fruition only in 1997, when the statue of Miklós Zrínyi, the defender of the castle, was finally erected next to the statue of Suleiman, the symbolic türbe and the drinking fountain. This statue was also made by Metin Yurdanur with donation and funding from the Turkish state.<sup>55</sup> Following initial debates on whether the former enemies were to be placed facing each other or side by side, on 8 September, the representatives of the Municipality of Szigetvár voted on the latter by a large majority.<sup>56</sup> The sculptor

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<sup>51</sup> Csaba Stefanits, Tüntetés Szulejmán ellen [Protest against Suleiman], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 6, no. 262, 1995, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> The marble and faience needed for this came from Turkey. See: Anonymous author, Barátság kútja [Friendship Well], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 7, no. 17, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> He served his second term as Minister of Culture for Turkey from 30 October 1995 to 6 March 1996.

<sup>54</sup> Anonymous author, Török kutat avattak Szigetváron [Turkish well inaugurated in Szigetvár], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 52, no. 12, 1996, p. 1. László Horváth, the contractor of the park and the well mentioned before, was appointed Honorary Turkish Consul earlier this year. The consulate opened at 3 Zrínyi Square in December and was the first foreign representation of the Turkish state with no Turkish citizens living nearby. The tasks of the Consul and the Consulate were primarily to develop Hungarian-Turkish trade and cultural relations, to help Turkish citizens in need near the city, and to promote tourism between the two countries. Honorary Consul László Horváth was in office for nearly two decades until the Consulate was finally closed down.

<sup>55</sup> However, this statue was not made of bronze, but of plastic reinforced by fiberglass.

<sup>56</sup> B. M. L., Szulejmán és Zrínyi együtt [Suleiman and Zrínyi together], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 8, no. 247, 1997, p. 1.

arrived in Szigetvár in October, and under his instructions – by moving Suleiman's statue slightly to the east – the statue of Miklós Zrínyi was in put in place.<sup>57</sup> Shortly afterwards, the external walkway with benches was also completed.

However, the inauguration of the statue was postponed several times and eventually, it did not take place the following year, nor later. In any case, thanks to the Zrínyi statue, the Turkish memorial site was turned into a real Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park and was now more strongly incorporated into the modern Zrínyi cult in Szigetvár, dating back to 1833, as well as into the programme of the Zrínyi Days. In addition to local politicians and municipal leaders, the Ambassador of Turkey, as well as members of the Szigetvár Traditionalists' Society and the Zrínyi Guard of Csáktornya (Zrinska garda Čakovec) regularly take part in wreathing ceremonies and commemorations held at the beginning of September each year. From time to time, senior state leaders of the Republic of Turkey also visit the site. Thus, in April 2001, Minister of Defence Sabahattin Çakmakoglu (28 May 1999 – 18 November 2002), and in May 2005, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (14 March 2003 – 28 August 2014) paid their tribute of respect in the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park. On the whole, the park built on the site of the former Turkish cemetery was fully accepted by both Hungarians and Croats.

### **Renewal of the Memorial Park**

By the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the siege of Szigetvár, significant developments had taken place. Among other things, the castle had been renewed, a new exhibition had been designed by 2015, and the statue of Zrínyi breaking out of the castle was erected in 2016 in the courtyard. All this was made possible by the support of the Hungarian state and the European Union, but the Turkish party also contributed to the preparations for the round anniversary.

TİKA had been funding the project since January 2013, which aimed to identify the place of Sultan Suleiman's mausoleum by September 2016 at the latest. At the beginning of research work, the Turkish party strongly called for a closer examination of the area of the Turbék shrine church and its immediate surroundings. This was not only due to the fact that, according to folk tradition, the Helping Blessed Virgin Mary Church was built on the site that used to be Suleiman's türbe, but also to the fact that the Ottoman Empire had already taken a position on this issue in 1913. This year, a memorial plate was placed next to the main entrance of the church with an inscription in Hungarian and Ottoman-Turkish, saying "*The heart and internal organs of our Legislator and Sultan*

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<sup>57</sup> B. M. L.: Zrínyi, a leplezetlen [Zrínyi, undisguised], *Új Dunántúli Napló*, vol. 8, no. 289, 1997, p. 17.

*Suleiman Ghazi Khan were buried at this place, where his tomb used to stand*<sup>57</sup>. The high emotions attached to Turanism mentioned before and the rapprochement between the two states that were allies in World War I also played a role in installing the memorial plate. It was, however, directly related to an event that took place during the Balkan wars, when a Turkish unit fleeing to the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was deployed in Kaposvár near Szigetvár. Turcophile emotions were aroused in the local community. After the visit of Turkish officers, the parish priest of Szigetvár suggested that a memorial plate should be installed. This was done on 17 November 1913 in cooperation with the Turkish government, represented by Bey Ahmed Hikmet, the Turkish Consul in Budapest, and the event was attended by senior Hungarian government officials. All this simultaneously served pilgrimage-related local Catholic ecclesiastical interests by proclaiming victory over Islam, as well as Muslim/Ottoman goals.

In this context, the research team carried out geophysical measurements in the autumn of 2014 in and around the church's courtyard in order to settle the türbe-church continuity issue, as requested by TİKA. The measurement results did not support folk tradition and the assumption that the church was built on the site of the Sultan's tomb complex.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, in 2013, a new site was suggested as a possible site in the vineyard in Turbék, where by 2015, the research team had been able to identify without any doubt the türbe of the greatest Ottoman ruler.<sup>59</sup>

All this will certainly have an impact on the fate of the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park in the long run, as latest research and the identification of the türbe have deprived the memorial site of its cause of foundation.<sup>60</sup> The previously mentioned hypothesis, which was represented by Valéria Kováts, and on the basis of which the place of the memorial park was selected, had clearly proved false. However, this did not materially affect the events from the point of view of the anniversary. The park was finally renovated in 2016 with the financial support of the Turkish state, in accordance with TİKA's plans.

The changes have affected the entire area. Major elements have been renewed and the fence, the exterior walkway and rest benches have been fully redesigned on a much larger area than before. As a gesture towards the former

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<sup>58</sup> Additional complex research by the research team finally settled the issue and proved that the shrine church had no Turkish background.

<sup>59</sup> Pál Fodor, Norbert Pap, Szulejmán szultán szigetvári sírkápolnája nyomában [In search of Sultan Suleiman's sepulchral chapel], *Magyar Tudomány*, vol. 177, no. 9, 2016, pp. 1057-1066.

<sup>60</sup> According to recent research, there is no reason to doubt that, after the arrival of Sultan Suleiman, his campsite complex remained on the Turbék vineyard all along and the Sultan died there.

Christian side, the Turkish party cast the monumental statue of Miklós Zrínyi in bronze, similarly to Suleiman's statue.

Bilateral Hungarian-Turkish relations have been given a more prominent role in the development of the park than previously. This was represented not only by the dark and light stripes running side by side in the park, symbolising the common history of the two sides, but also by featuring the highlights of their common past on large tableaux. In addition, Muslim historical symbolism has been strengthened. The inclusion of cypresses in the park's layout (nine cypresses representing the nine Ottoman sultans preceding Suleiman and four cypresses representing the four minarets in the four corners of the symbolic türbe) partly referred to Ottoman traditions. On the other hand, the prominent presence of cypresses in the garden also stemmed from Islamic tradition, as this type of tree is often found in Muslim gardens that evoke the perfection of paradise. During renovation, the tomb was reoriented in the symbolic tomb of the park from the north-south axis to east-west. This was also due to the need to conform to Muslim customs, whereby the dead are buried facing Mecca, and the body is accordingly placed perpendicular to the Kiblah.

Shortly before the commencement of the jubilee celebrations, with the changes mentioned above, the park had taken its final shape. At the invitation of President János Áder, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović were to have attended the anniversary celebrations, as originally planned, including the renovated memorial site. Finally, because of a coup attempted in Turkey, the Turkish party was represented by Deputy Prime Minister Veysi Kaynak.

While the Hungarian and Croatian presidents delivered their keynote speeches on 7 September 2016 at the inauguration of the work of art made by sculptor Tamás Szabó showing Miklós Zrínyi and his soldiers breaking out of the castle, the deputy prime minister representing the Turkish state played a leading role at the next event, in the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park decorated with Hungarian, Turkish and Croatian flags. In his speech, Veysi Kaynak noted that the Hungarian and Turkish peoples were related, and their historical conflicts had been turned into friendly relations and had been raised to a level higher than ever before. The fact that the Hungarian government was the first to provide support to the Turkish government after the attempted coup on 15 July also contributed to this.<sup>61</sup> He also noted that the Ottoman Empire had not prohibited the native language or religion of its inhabitants in

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<sup>61</sup> Tamás Velkei, 'Tisztelet Szigetvár hőseinek. [Tribute to the Heroes of Szigetvár.] Egyre több részletét tárják fel a régészek I. Szulejmán türbéjének [More and more details of Suleiman I's türbe is being explored by archaeologists], *Magyar Nemzet*, vol. 79, no. 211, 1996, p. 5.

the areas under its rule, nor had it committed genocide (note here that the content of the speech largely overlaps with that of Ambassador Hüsrev Gerede in 1926 in Mohács). It is in this spirit that Turkey, Hungary and Croatia will continue to be able to work together and the park will become a symbol of eternal friendship of the three nations. Deputy Prime Minister Veysi Kaynak unveiled a memorial stone at the entrance to the memorial park to commemorate the visit of the Hungarian and Croatian Presidents and the joint wreathing ceremony. As part of the commemoration, Ottoman princesses led by author Kenizé Mourad, who took part in the Zrínyi Days programmes, also laid a wreath.

Following traditions, although at a lower level of representation, the Hungarian, Croatian and Turkish parties also laid wreaths at the renovated site on the occasion of the 2017 and the 2018 Zrínyi Days. Although the memorial site has been able to create a breakthrough in tourism either before or since 2016, many of the travellers stop here for a short time, and Turkish and Croatian visitors to Baranya County often go to see the site. The locals have come to accept the quarter-century-old park, especially after the statue of Zrínyi was erected. However, the big question is how the cult of the memorial place will develop after the excavations in Turbék. What effects will the creation of a vineyard memorial place have in the future? We may be right in assuming that the identification of Sultan Suleiman's place of death and mausoleum in Turbék could lead to giving a more pronounced role to the common past of the two nations and to bilateral Hungarian-Turkish relations in the Friendship Park, reducing, at the same time, the relative importance of Suleiman. Perhaps the best way to achieve this would be to transform the memorial site into a sculpture park if, besides central sculptures, statues of other great figures from common history could also be displayed there.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has been prepared by the analysis of primary and secondary sources as well as the interviews. The primary source analysis and interviews with local contributors and members of old Bosniak families in Szigetvár have clarified the antecedents and the establishment of the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park. Examination of the secondary sources, particularly, the press scan has revealed the formation process of the Hungarian and Turkish remembrance policies in the 20th century, cultural diplomatic endeavors and their relevance with the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park.

In 1994, at the initiative of the Turkish government and with the funding and support of the Hungarian government, a Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park was established in the Turkish cemetery at the Sultan's presumed place of death. The park, which was leased to the Turkish state for a symbolic sum for

99 years, first provided home to a bronze statue of Sultan Suleiman and a memorial türbe, followed by an ornamental drinking fountain built in 1996.

The major architectural elements were completed in 1997, when the statue of the hero defending the castle, Miklós Zrínyi was erected alongside the sultan's statue. The park has since become a genuine Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park from a Turkish memorial site and is increasingly accepted by local residents. The site has become an integral part of the modern Zrínyi cult in Szigetvár, dating back to 1833, and in the following years, it has been integrated into the programme of the Zrínyi Days festivities.

Several development projects had been implemented by the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the siege of Szigetvár. In addition to the castle, the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park was renewed, funded by the Turkish state and under the supervision of TİKA. The memorial site has undergone a major transformation, with Zrínyi's statue cast in bronze, a new design of the walkway and more prominent representation of Turkish-Hungarian bilateral relations, the common past and especially common historical figures. In addition, Muslim historical symbolism has been strengthened.

At the 2016 festivities, the Hungarian, Turkish and Croatian states were represented at a high level, with the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister playing a key role due to the cultic role of the site dating back to the Ottoman period. The parties concerned held a joint commemoration at the memorial site on the occasion of the 2017 and 2018 Zrínyi Days.

One of the major developments affecting the fate of the park was the discovery of Sultan Suleiman's türbe in 2015 in the nearby vineyard in Turbék. Upon completion of the excavations, it is likely that some kind of memorial site will be created there, which may have a strong impact on the memorial site established at the former Turkish cemetery. The authors of this paper believe that, since Sultan Suleiman did not die at the site where the Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Park was established, it would be advisable to transform the park into a statue park while retaining its central objects and displaying statues of great historical figures of the common past there.

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