

## ABSTRACTS

### Gábor Kármán: Sovereignty and Representation: Transylvania in the Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic System of the Sublime Porte

This paper discusses Transylvania's sovereignty towards the Ottoman Empire through a comparative analysis of the principality's diplomatic representation at the Sublime Porte. Four major questions are examined in detail. First, how were the embassies structured? What different forms and ranks of deputies did various political entities deploy to represent their interests in the Ottoman capital? Second, can the embassy's location be taken as an indicator of the prestige of the representatives residing there? Third, what was the ceremonial aspect of their presence, that is, the formal acts of the entry of the diplomats to Constantinople and their audiences with the grand vizier and the sultan? Last, what conclusions can be drawn from the occasional mistreatment of diplomats?

The typology of the diplomatic representatives at the Sublime Porte and the terminology associated with them proved to be unfit for showing clear distinctions between the treatment of tributaries and independent states. The topography of the residents' lodging also showed divisions running along different lines. The analysis of diplomatic ceremonies, however, did point to distinct boundaries between the peripheries of the empire, its tributaries, and the states independent from the sultan's rule. Both the quantitative and qualitative differences in the diplomatic ceremonies in Constantinople proved to be weaker between Transylvania and the independent states than among the principality and the *voievodates* of Moldavia and Wallachia. The cases of mistreatment, on their part, pointed to an important chronological divide in the prestige Transylvania enjoyed at the Sublime Porte and the analysis shows that this change took place in the late 1650s and early 1660s.

### Lovro Kunčević: Janus-Faced Sovereignty: The International Status of the Ragusan Republic in the Early Modern Period

The article investigates the consequences of being an Ottoman tributary state for the legal status and claims to independence of the early modern Ragusan Republic. The first part of the study addresses the obligations and privileges of Ragusa according to Ottoman documents and the amount of self-governance that the

city enjoyed as a consequence. The second part reconstructs the peculiar interpretation of tributary status promoted by the Ragusan government and contrasts it with the very different Ottoman understanding. The third part considers the claims to “objectivity” of these two irreconcilable interpretations within their proper historical context – the interaction of two mutually alien legal cultures, Ottoman and Ragusan – which results in a somewhat heterodox interpretation of Ragusan legal status. More precisely, this discussion suggests that the usual dichotomy between the two interpretations of Ragusan status – the claim that it was an independent state and that it was a part of the Ottoman Empire – is profoundly anachronistic. The study is concluded with general reflections on the use of international law and inter-state treaties across the cultural border between Islam and Christianity in the early modern period.

### Domagoj Madunić: Ali Pasha Čengić and the Frontier Elites of the Ottoman Empire During the War for Crete (1645–1669)

The subject of this study is the intriguing person of Ali Pasha Čengić, a member of one of the most prominent families among the Bosnian Ottoman lords and his conduct during the Venetian–Ottoman War for Crete. For almost two decades, Ali Pasha was a dominant figure in the Bosnian *eyalet*, but he also maintained close and friendly ties with the Republic of Venice, and even went so far as to openly sabotage the Ottoman attack on Kotor in 1657. Thus far historiography has treated his person in a negative light: a traitor of the Empire serving his Venetian masters for money and personal gains, and who was – even by Turkish standards – extremely greedy, corrupt and cruel.

I argue that the case of this controversial Bosnian grandee well illustrates the complexities of the Empire’s frontier. As demonstrated through a detailed reconstruction of his historical background, Ali Pasha was driven by motives other than simple material gain and his image should not be reduced to black and white, simply condemning him as a traitor. Above all, Ali Pasha Čengić was a wealthy lord for whom the family/dynastic interests came before everything else.

The war between the Venetian Republic and the Ottoman Empire was initially successful for the Ottomans, but as it continued year after year the casualties among the Ottoman frontier elite grew considerably. In the conditions resulting from protracted warfare, their estates were frequently raided and plundered, and many from the Bosnian Ottoman elite were facing complete material ruin. Without the prospect of victory and peace in the near future, it should come as no surprise that some concluded that their dynastic/family interests diverge from those of the Empire they served and decided to find their own means to ensure survival.

## Radu G. Păun: Enemies Within: Networks of Influence and Military Revolts against the Ottoman Power in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Moldavia and Wallachia

The present paper discusses sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Wallachian and Moldavian military revolts against the Porte as a telling indicator of governance relations between centre and periphery of the Ottoman imperial system. Examined in the context of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the twin vassal principalities, the origins and political career of rebelling local princes demonstrate that prosopographic analysis can provide essential insights into the phenomenon of military revolt. On one hand, it is proven that almost all the Wallachian and Moldavian military uprisings against the Porte were initiated by individuals who had spent long periods in the Ottoman *milieu* and were familiar with the Ottoman system of power. In this capacity, they acted as true “men of the system” involved in broad networks that often encompassed groups of various religion and ethnic background. It was precisely this position that provided them both access to the thrones of Moldavia and/or Wallachia and the means to contest Ottoman suzerainty. On the other hand, the analysis also shows that rebelling Wallachian and Moldavian princes were familiar with and subscribed to the various ideas about the imminent fall of the Ottoman Empire, which circulated all over Europe at the time. These ideas are shown to have played a role in their decision to raise their weapons against their “infidel” overlord.

## Péter Tóth G.: Event, Biography, Public Sphere. Correlations between the Contemporary Reception of a Seventeenth-Century Supernatural Phenomenon and the Biographies of the Báthory Clan

As in the popular television show *X-Files*, ‘the truth is out there’ could be the motto for the narrative of the event analysed in this study: on a still and sunny day in the spring of 1605, several people alleged to have seen a miraculous celestial beam of light accompanied with a horrible explosion in the vicinity of the villages Apagy and Nagykálló in Szabolcs county.

The event itself was recorded by three contemporary authors. Péter Alvinczi, a Calvinist minister “commuting” between Kassa and Nagyvárád; Máté Szepsi Laczkó, another Calvinist living in Erdőbénye, and later Sárospatak; and the Jesuit missionary Gergely Vásárhelyi, who was active in Upper Hungary and the Transdanubian region.

The study primarily focuses on the types of text organised into a unit by an event (in this case the observation of a supernatural phenomenon) and the

ways this text formulates its own context. Another question is how this event infiltrates the biography of an aristocratic family, specifically that of István Báthory, and the collective memory concerning the news of his death. The study also discusses the principles at work in the selection of news based on eyewitness accounts, and the ways these correspond with the authors' narratives. How does the public sphere operate and how are the texts used as a representation of the authors' own individual and group interests?

The examination of these texts suggests that writing is a determinative medium of social life, where the intricate network of private and political correspondence, opinions, news and gossip creates groups and bonds among its members. The study concludes that the stories about István Báthory were just as suitable for the manipulative formation of the public sphere as the other way round, that is, the public sphere also played an important role in the construction of these stories. It comes as no surprise that the ghost stories spreading after István Báthory's death, initially recorded as the last episode of his biography, later became central in the life stories of Gábor and Erzsébet Báthory.

### Nedim Zahirović: The Memibegović Family in Hungary, Slavonia and Croatia in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century

This paper is a reconstruction of the genealogy of the Memibegović family, which was politically active in the European Ottoman borderlands (Dalmatia, Bosnia, Slavonia and Hungary) for three generations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The study focuses on the reconstruction of the family ties and the careers of individual family members. Also discussed are the main methodological problems of reconstruction, which mostly derive from the Ottoman custom of personal identification by first name and official title only, as well as the frequent changes in office-holding in the borderlands. On one hand, these are overcome by synoptic research that extends beyond selected parts of the borderlands and examines this territory in its entirety. On the other hand, this is complemented with the parallel study of the biographies of office-holders, who appear under identical names in the same time period.