

ABSTRACTS

Zsuzsanna Cziráki

■ **A Rebel Province? The Political Quest of the Transylvanian Saxons in the Early 17th Century**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Saxons, Saxon University, quest*

The Transylvanian Saxons are generally believed to have pursued a pro-German, pro-Habsburg policy over the past centuries, but this simplistic approach is not appropriate in this case either. During the first decades of the 17th century, one of the most active periods of Saxon politics, this particular Transylvanian community carried out remarkable diplomatic manoeuvres in two world empires – the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire – in order to preserve the special religious privileges they had inherited from their ancestors in Transylvania. Using the example of the 1610s, the study draws attention to the fact that the strategy of the Saxon University in the era of the Transylvanian Principality was not always uniform, and that it was never tied to a single power, but was flexible and adapted to the possibilities, considering the realities of the situation. The extraordinary circumstances of Gabriel Bethlen's accession to the throne have been known for a long time, but it has been less widely known that the Saxons' opposition to Gabriel Báthory played a major role in his success. They wanted to remove the prince because of the curtailment of the autonomy of the Saxons, and to achieve this goal, intensive diplomatic activity was carried out both in Constantinople and in Vienna. At the centre of events in the land of Saxons was Johannes Benkner, Bethlen's confidant in Brassó, long considered to be of unshakeable loyalty, who used his network of contacts in Transylvania and across the borders of the principality with remarkable virtuosity, first for Bethlen and then against Bethlen.

Klára Jakó

■ **“Like Owls...”: Serving Transylvania's Stability by Pen, alongside the Romanian Voivodes**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Hungarian secretaries, chancelleries, Moldavia, Wallachia, stability*

Hungarian secretaries, who worked in the chancelleries of Moldavian and Wallachian voivodes, belonged to a special group of the official intelligentsia employed in the Eastern foreign policy of the Principality of Transylvania. They were active between the middle of the 16th century and the beginning of the 18th century. These scribes, who in many cases came from the Transylvanian Princely Chancellery and were closely connected with the person of the Moldavian or Wallachian voivodes, also performed similar tasks as the permanent Transylvanian envoys to the Porte. They acted as interpreters if needed or went on mission as legates if called for. With their help, the voivodes provided the Transylvanian prince or towns in the border region with international news, but many times they themselves informed Transylvania at their own initiative. Their confidential, reliable work greatly contributed to the survival of the Principality.

Gábor Kármán

■ **Fleeing Forward: The Thirty Years' War as a Solution to Transylvania's Crisis**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Thirty Years' War, solution, crisis*

With the resignation of Sigismund Báthory from the princely title in 1597, a long-lasting crisis started in Transylvania. During the Long Ottoman War of the turn of the 17th century, practically each year new candidates surfaced to win the throne for themselves with Habsburg, Ottoman, or Polish support. This trend did not stop with the Peace of Zsitvatorok in 1606: the position of the Transylvanian princes was threate-

ned by armed competitors on an almost biannual basis. Gabriel Bethlen (1613-1629) was the prince who managed to stop the trend, although in the first years of his rule he also had to endure an attempt for deposition from the direction of the Kingdom of Hungary and was in a weak position to resist Ottoman pressure because he had earned the throne with military support of the sultan's army. This paper argues that Bethlen managed to escape from these dire straits by fleeing forward and entering the war which started with the Bohemian uprising in 1618. His successes (despite the uprising's collapse in 1620) and the ensuing Thirty Years' War made sure that Bethlen did not have to worry about threats coming from the Habsburg Empire. More surprisingly, this also brought him relief in the sultan's realm: the fact that he brought to the Sublime Porte representatives of the confederated lands gave him so much credit that in the 1620s he could enjoy a position in the Ottoman world of politics which lacks any parallel among the princes of Transylvania.

Tamás Kruppa

■ Papal Nuncio Germanico Malaspina's Mission to Transylvania in 1599

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Germanico Malaspina, papal nuncio, 1599*

The new Pope, Clement VIII., who ascended the throne in 1592, gave the Principality of Transylvania a very important role as an ally of the Habsburg Empire and the Papacy in the war that erupted in 1593 against the Ottoman Empire. When the Transylvanian prince Sigismund Báthory abdicated his throne for the second time in 1598, the papal diplomacy sent a new nuncio, Germanico Malaspina, to support the new ruler of the country, Andrew Báthory. Malaspina's task was to prevent the principality from leaving the war, to curb the increasing influence of Polish diplomacy on the

principality – which [i.e. the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth] wanted to extend its power beyond Moldavia to Transylvania and Wallachia, and to prevent the armed intervention of the emperor's army to dethrone Andrew Báthory. The cardinal was expected by Rome to keep his country in the anti-Turkish alliance and to strengthen the position of Transylvanian Catholicism; moreover, to even spread the faith further into the Orthodox lands with the help of the prince. Even though Malaspina's diplomatic mission ended in failure, his actions are a clear testimony to the flexibility of papal diplomacy and his independent vision for the region.

Teréz Oborni

■ “We Carry Ourselves like a Bird on a Branch”: On the Initial Chances of Sigismund Rákóczi's rule

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Sigismund Rákóczi, Habsburg Monarchy, Ottoman Empire*

From the very beginning, the Transylvanian princes were only able to keep their country intact if they established good relations with both the neighbouring great powers, the Habsburg Monarchy, and the Ottoman Empire. Although the orders of Transylvanian had the right of free election of princes (*libera electio*), which they received from Sultan Selim II in 1567 and enacted into law, the new princes had to be approved by the rulers of both great powers. When Sigismund Rákóczi was elected by the orders of Transylvania in February 1607, the new prince had to immediately get his rule accepted both in Constantinople and at the imperial-royal court in Prague. Rákóczi was also in a difficult position because in the beginning both courts supported a lord from Upper Hungary, Bálint Homonnai Drugeth, and by the summer of 1607. Gabriel Báthory, the last male member of the Báthory dynasty of Somlyó, had already established a larger circle of supporters both in Transylvania and in

the Kingdom of Hungary. Rákóczi, despite his skilful political manoeuvres, must have known even then that he would soon have to renounce the principality, which he did not do until March 1608.

Klára Papp

■ **In the Service of the Respublica and the Ecclesia: The Role of the Rhédeys in the Struggle for the Survival of the Principality**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Rhédey family, respublica, ecclesia, survival*

Francisc Rhédey was a nobleman from the Kingdom of Hungary who sought and found refuge in the Principality of Transylvania at the end of the 16th century. From the autumn of 1604, he was given military duties by Stephen Bocskai, Prince of Transylvania. He and his army of hajdús were the conquerors of Szécsény, Fülek, and Korpona. He became a member of the princely council and was awarded the title of *magnificus* Prince Sigismund Rákóczi made him the chief captain of Várad, then the sheriff of Bihar county, as well as the owner of the castle and the estate of Szentjobb. After the fall of Prince Gabriel Báthory, Francisc Rhédey entered the service of his brother-in-law, Prince Gabriel Bethlen, from whom he received the estate of Zsáka, consisting of 18 villages. In the counties of Bihar, Kraszna, and Közép-Szolnok he was engaged in military organisation, the recruitment of mercenaries, the fortification of the fortress of Várad, and the control and management of the hajdús. He helped Bethlen's diplomatic relations by delivering his letters. During Bethlen's first campaign against the Habsburgs (1619-1621), he once again added to the successes of the princely armies as a military leader.

His son, Francisc Rhédey Jr., who was married to Stephen Bethlen's daughter, Fruzsina, also used the Bethlen family connections. He became a member of the princely council and first the she-

riff of Küküllő, then of Máramaros county, and the owner of Huszt castle. From November 1657 he was the prince elected by the orders of Transylvania and accepted by the Porte, but in January 1658 he abdicated in favour of the former prince, George II Rákóczi. His decision gave Rákóczi the opportunity to gather strength and return. Of the two Rhédeys, it was the activities and military successes of the captain of the fortress of Várad that contributed to the survival of the Principality of Transylvania.

Balázs Viktor Rác

■ **The Correlation of the Székelys' Prerogatives and the Land Ownership in the Privileges Issued during the Fifteen Years' War**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Székely liberties, land ownership, privileges, Fifteen-Years' war*

In 1562 the organisation of the state, which required legal and social homogenisation, the decades-long internal social transformation, as well as the current foreign and domestic political situation led to the loss of the Székelys' former privileges. Although the system established at that time was consolidated in many aspects in the long term (e.g., the system of royal donations, the role of the royal judges and the princely table in the judicial process), by the end of the Fifteen Years' War the Székelys could claim some of their old privileges again. Apart from the reintroduction of the free use of salt, and the possibility to have a limited say in the election of officials, the *libertinus* status of the liberated Székelys was the most significant prerogative, which guaranteed them personal freedom and exemption from taxes, while they were also obliged to perform military service.

Balázs Sudár

■ **“Turkish-Made Prince”: The Early Years of Michael I Apafi and the Turkish Relief Forces in Transylvania**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Michael I Apafi, Prince of Transylvania, Turkish connections*

The election of Michael Apafi I Prince of Transylvania, and the establishment of his power in the first years of his reign were the result of the active involvement of the Ottoman-Turkish forces. The presence of the Turkish troops was necessary, among other reasons, because the Ottoman vassalage of Transylvania had a significant Habsburg royal force stationed in several castles. Ali Köse Pasha, the commander of the Turkish army responsible for the settlement of the Transylvanian problem, first ordered Ibrahim Tiryaki and then Mehmed Küçük to Transylvania to keep Michael Apafi on the throne and to achieve the departure of the Habsburg garrisons.

In January 1662, they defeated John Kemény's army at Nagyszőlős, and in the spring and summer of that year a basically Ottoman-Habsburg war broke out in Transylvania, even if with relatively little intensity. Mehmed Küçük held first Samosújvár and then Kolozsvár under siege, the latter for two and a half months, while Habsburg troops led by Colonel Franz von Schneidau pushed into the province. As both sides wanted to avoid escalation of the war, they tried to settle the situation through negotiations, which led to the conclusion of the armistice in Istanbul in June 1662 and the end of the fighting in Transylvania. A settlement was not reached, and the conflict escalated to a clash between the two empires in 1663.

János B. Szabó

■ **"The 'Fall' of Transylvania. The Campaign in Poland and Its Consequences: A Crisis of Power in the Principality (1657-1658)**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, campaign in Poland, power crisis*

George II Rákóczi entered the Polish-Swedish conflict, which began in 1655, in January 1657 at the request of the Swedes. In return for military

assistance in Transylvania, he wanted the Polish royal title, the seats of the Polish kings, Krakow and Warsaw, and the rich salt mines. In return, he offered the King of Sweden not only the armed forces of his own principality, but the alliance of the Cossack hetman Khmelnytsky and the arms of the Cossacks, as well as his diplomatic network, the favours of Turkish Porte and the Crimean Tatar Khan. Rákóczi set out with an army of 18,000 men, and was initially successful, but was eventually defeated. On 22 July 1657, George II Rákóczi asked for peace at Czarny Ostrów from the commanders of the Polish army pursuing him. The Poles imposed more than humiliating conditions: in addition to the justifiable political and military conditions, Rákóczi was obliged to pay 1,200,000 Polish gold pieces as military compensation. A large part of the Transylvanian army was captured by the Crimean Tatars, and the return of the prince to Transylvania was greeted by a nationwide uproar. The Porte ordered his dismissal, and first Francisc Rhédey and then Ákos Barcsay were appointed in his place. Rákóczi did not want to resign but chose armed resistance against the Turkish-Tatar armies invading Transylvania. The years 1657-1658 marked the beginning of a period of power crisis, which would not end until 1660, resulting in severe devastation and territorial loss.

Ágnes Szalai

■ **"There Can Be but Faint Hope about the Körös Villages...": The Struggle of Michael I Apafi and His Government to Keep the Halmágy Region (1670-1671)**

Keywords: *Principality of Transylvania, Michael I Apafi, struggle, Halmágy Region*

The era of the Principality of Transylvania (1661-1690) marked by the name of Michael I Apafi is considered by historians as a turbulent period of the state. This was mainly due to the events of the second sovereignty crisis,

the fall of Varad (1660) and the fall of most of Partium to the Ottomans. As a consequence, a considerable part of the western Transylvanian counties were forced to pay taxes to both the Ottoman provinces and the principality, i.e. this region was also characterised by the so-called double possession (*condominium*). In order to run their provinces, the Ottoman vilayets' heads sought to increase their taxed territories at the expense of the Prin-

cipality of Transylvania. This period became a constant source of conflict between Transylvania and the Ottoman provinces. The aim of the study is to describe one episode of the conflict: the negotiations between the Temesvár Vilayet and the government of the Principality of Transylvania for the taxation of the villages in the Halmágy region in 1670-1671 and to present the results.



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TÁMOGATÓK



CONSILIUL JUDEȚEAN
CLUJ

„Erdély fejedelmei nemegyszer találták szemben magukat azzal a helyzettel, hogy országuk megtartását a szomszédos nagyhatalmak egyikének vagy másikának, de leginkább mindkettőnek a jóakarata biztosította. A fejedelmek a »két nagy császár« között több-kevesebb sikerrel egyensúlyozva teremtették meg a biztonságot, és tartották meg országukat. Már Fráter György, akinek a keleti királyság politikai berendezkedésének megszervezését köszönhetjük a 16. század negyvenes éveiben, világosan látta, hogy az egész hajdan volt Magyar Királyság, de még inkább annak leszakadóban lévő keleti része a két nagyhatalom szorításába került.”

(Oborni Teréz)

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