

# The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

*Edited by*

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‘SPLENDID ISOLATION’? THE MILITARY COOPERATION OF  
THE PRINCIPALITY OF TRANSYLVANIA WITH THE OTTOMAN  
EMPIRE (1571–1688) IN THE MIRROR OF THE HUNGARIAN  
HISTORIOGRAPHY’S DILEMMAS

János B. Szabó

*Historiographic Introduction*

One of the great paradoxes of modern Hungarian historiography is that it gives a prominent place in the discussions on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the Principality of Transylvania as an independent Hungarian state formation that seceded from the Kingdom of Hungary; at the same time for many decades it entirely neglected any other context for analyzing the frames of the Transylvanian state’s development.<sup>1</sup> One such context is the state’s contacts with the Ottoman Empire, a very seldom noted theme in historical overviews. The only Hungarian monograph concerning this issue was published in 1907, and in German the most recent short overview dates from 1923. In contrast, modern Romanian historiography dedicates considerable attention to the topic, including several monographs in the last two decades.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it can be assumed that the

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<sup>1</sup> Zsolt Trócsányi, *Erdélyi központi kormányzata 1540–1690* [Central Government in Transylvania 1540–1690] (Budapest, 1980); István Sinkovics, “Az erdélyi fejedelemség államszervezete” [State administration of the Principality of Transylvania], in *Magyarország története 1526–1686* [The history of Hungary 1526–1686], ed. Zsigmond Pál Pach and Ágnes R. Várkonyi (Budapest, 1985), 439–453; Katalin Péter, “Az erdélyi országgyűlés a kora újkori magyar fejlődésben” [The diet of Transylvania in the development of early modern Hungary], in Kálmán Benda and Katalin Péter, *Az országgyűlések a kora újkori magyar történelemben* [Diets in early modern Hungarian history] (Budapest, 1987), 13–23.

<sup>2</sup> Gyula Vajda, *Erdély viszonya a Portához és a római császárhoz mint magyar királyhoz a nemzeti fejedelemség korszakában* [The relationship of Transylvania to the Porte and the emperor as king of Hungary in the epoch of the national principality] (Kolozsvár, 1891); a shorter overview in Hungarian with comparative parts was published by Vencel Bíró, *Erdély követei a Portán* [Transylvanian envoys at the Porte] (Kolozsvár, 1921), 58–60, and “Erdély és a porta” [Transylvania and the Porte], *Századok* 57 (1923): 76–93. In German: Georg Müller, *Türkenherrschaft in Siebenbürgen: Verfassungsrechtliches Verhältnis Siebenbürgens zur Pforte 1541–1688* (Hermannstadt-Sibiu, 1923); for a summary of the more recent literature, see Gerald Volkmer, *Das Fürstentum Siebenbürgen: Aussenpolitik und*

reason for this oversight and silence is the topic's relevance and sensitive nature. In 1866 Sándor Szilágyi wrote the first modern synthesis on the principality's history, in his foreword defining the perspectives that served as a guide for Hungarian historiography for more than a century:

It is true that recently historiographers from Hungary give adequate respect to the relevance of Transylvania, study and analyze the sources of its history and write about it much more widely and fairly than their predecessors (...) they have neither space nor opportunity to destroy the bulk of old prejudices and to show the full picture of the institutions of the small state, which were so functional, its struggles, in which they had shown so much persistence, and its sufferings, which in some cases are unique in universal history (...) Today, no one would deny that it [the Principality] had the mission of maintaining the Hungarian nation and its constitution, even in cases when it brought its weapons to the other shore of the river Tisza [that is, when it waged war in Hungary] (...) It is a futile endeavor to make these movements look small by labeling them as revolts and a vain ambition to degrade the princes to simple leaders of specific parties. There was a time when Transylvania played a part in European politics and the foreign powers saw it as a factor in their calculations; and [the fact] that it was so is not simply the work of one or two ambitious men, regardless of whether or not some people want the world believe it is the case.<sup>3</sup>

This work, like many contemporaneous ones, was a typical product of the anti-Habsburg Hungarian war for independence of 1848–1849, a war that brought about fierce attacks on the dynastic perspective of earlier historiography. Although the specific political situation changed with the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the earlier situation was imprinted and over time affirmed by aspects of political debates from the period. It has had a large influence on historical thinking and the direction of research that has been sustained until the present time.<sup>4</sup>

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*Völkerrechtliche Stellung* (Heidelberg and Braşov, 2002), 40–61. In Romanian: Călin Felezeu, *Statutul Principatului Transilvaniei în raporturile cu Poarta Otomană 1541–1688* [The status of the Principality of Transylvania in relation to the Ottoman Empire] (Cluj-Napoca, 1996); Cristina Feneşan, *Constituirea Principatului autonom al Transilvaniei* [The formation of the autonomous Principality of Transylvania] (Bucharest, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Sándor Szilágyi, *Erdélyország története, tekintettel művelődésére* [The history of Transylvania, with special attention to its culture] (Pest, 1866), v–vii.

<sup>4</sup> Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century* (Boulder, CO, 2009), 1–6. See also the short summary of the viewpoints of Géza Pálffy and Sándor Őze in the most recent historians' debate on the topic: Péter Illik, *Történészek, viták a 16–17. századi magyar történelemről* [Historians and debates on sixteenth and seventeenth-century Hungarian history] (Budapest, 2011), 67–89.

The vigor with which these earlier perspectives survived can be measured in the recently published English language summaries about the history of Hungary.<sup>5</sup> In any case, the old question remains: how exactly should this mission of Transylvania as a “freedom fighter” or “unifier of the country” be understood, when “these princes, particularly István Bocskai, Gábor Bethlen, and Imre Thököly fought for an ‘independent Hungary,’ albeit with the help of several thousand Ottoman and Tatar troops.”<sup>6</sup>

For a long time the “solution” to this problem was to avoid the topic: the fact that the princes of Transylvania were vassals of the Ottoman Empire was not denied, but its relevance underwent a perceptible relativization.<sup>7</sup> Ambitious undertakings, such as the three-volume *History of Transylvania* were published during the 1980s in Hungary, by their sheer bulk and lack of a unified structure they lost themselves in the details of political, economic, and cultural history and failed to address structural questions

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<sup>5</sup> “Transylvania also maintained the hope that the unity of the kingdom would be re-established quite soon (...) The institutions and the court of royal Hungary being outside the country, those of Transylvania were cherished as the repositories of Hungarian statehood and culture.” László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe: A History of Hungary* (Budapest, 1999), 150; “There is no doubt, that the autonomy of Transylvania (...) became an important locus of Hungarian statehood in the midst of the German and Ottoman domination, and a haven for Hungarian culture and identity that was significant for the nation’s future.” Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (London, 2003), 106; “The century of virtual Transylvanian autonomy had thus been characterised by more than the Principality’s leadership of the struggle for Hungarian unity and independence (...) Transylvania had offered a beacon and pride to all Hungarians during one of the darkest periods of their history.” Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary* (London, 2006), 96.

<sup>6</sup> Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 4. For the “missionary” interpretation, see e.g., Béla Köpeczi, “The Hungarian Wars of Independence of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in Their European Context,” in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi: War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (New York, 1982), 445–455. When they had to reflect on the principality’s position toward Habsburg rule in Hungary, seventeenth-century contemporaries instead emphasized the state’s role as a counter balance. See Gábor Kármán, “Transylvania Between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires,” in *Statehood Before and Beyond Ethnicity: Minor States in Northern and Eastern Europe, 1600–2000*, ed. Linas Eriksonas and Leos Müller (Brussels, 2005), 151–158.

<sup>7</sup> If the question was raised at all, studies were conducted and written from the perspective of excusing the princes of Transylvania from accusations of cooperating with the Ottomans, placing emphasis upon the coercive force of circumstances. For example, László Nagy, “A XVII. századi Habsburg-ellenes függetlenségi harcok értékeléséhez (A török szövetség problematikája a Bocskai, Bethlen és I. Rákóczi György vezette küzdelmekben)” [To the interpretation of seventeenth-century anti-Habsburg wars for independence: The problem of Turkish alliance in the struggles led by Bocskai, Bethlen, and György Rákóczi I], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* n.s. 10, no. 2 (1963): 185–241.

concerning the long-term development of the principality.<sup>8</sup> In shorter summaries the dependent status is sometimes only described as “nominal” vassalage,<sup>9</sup> or even as a “protectorate,”<sup>10</sup> and the establishment of a “real” vassalage is traced to the 1660s, after the fall of the house Rákóczi and the Ottoman conquest of Várad.<sup>11</sup>

One explanation for this long and diplomatic silence is that an analysis of the contacts with the Ottoman Empire could be associated with the painful political problems related to the presence of Soviet occupation forces in post-World War II “socialist” Hungary.<sup>12</sup> Since the late 1980s, research has also been less hindered by the “international harmonizing” of the cultural politics of Eastern European regimes dependent on the Soviet Union. The rather oddly interpreted “solidarity” of the “socialist” countries led to a system in which the research of Hungarian scholars into the past of neighboring “friendly” countries was directly and indirectly restricted, apart from the topic of the anti-Habsburg, or generally anti-German (that is, anti-Western) “wars of independence.” The history of Transylvania fell into this restricted category, as clearly shown in the vehement reactions

<sup>8</sup> See the full English translation: *History of Transylvania*, vols. 1–3, ed. Béla Köpeczi (Boulder, CO, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Peter F. Sugar, “The Principality of Transylvania,” in *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (London and New York, 1990), 129.

<sup>10</sup> Péter Szabó, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség* [The Principality of Transylvania] (Budapest, 1997), 39–40; Sinkovics, “Az erdélyi fejedelemség államszervezete,” 442, 453.

<sup>11</sup> “The country that shrank into a small state lived from this time on really as an Ottoman vassal.” Gábor Barta, *Erdély* [Transylvania] (Budapest, 1989), 54. “(…) the subsequent installation by the Porte of a puppet prince, Akos Barcsay, to rule a devastated Transylvania marked the end of Principality’s existence as an independent force in European politics,” Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 112.

<sup>12</sup> In the contemporary atmosphere, where everything was seen in the light of its political relevance, it was clear how a historical essay published in 1983, on the 400th anniversary of the birth of Gábor Bethlen, later turned into a film (Ágnes Hankiss’ *Érzékeny búcsú a fejedelemtől* [Sentimental farewell to the prince]) suggested strong parallels between the activities of this prince, widely regarded as the most successful ruler of Transylvania, who gained his throne with Ottoman military support in 1613, and that of János Kádár, the chief secretary of the Party, who also won his power with Soviet weapons in 1956. See Lendvai, *The Hungarians*, 117–118, 124. This highlights the significance of remarks such as that of Katalin Péter in the three-volume *History of Transylvania* (1986): “Had Gabriel Bethlen died at this moment, he would have been remembered as one of the most sinister figures in the annals of Transylvania. Instead, he continued to reign for thirteen years and took his place in history among Transylvania’s outstanding leaders.” Katalin Péter, “The Golden Age of the Principality (1606–1660),” in *History of Transylvania*, vol. 2, *From 1606 to 1830*, ed. László Makkai and Zoltán Szász (New York, 2002), 40.



to the publication of the three-volume Hungarian *History of Transylvania* in 1986.<sup>13</sup>

It was only during the 1990s that circumstances arose in which work could begin to place the Principality of Transylvania into a wider international system of coordinates. The changes in Hungarian historiography after 1990 are well illustrated by the works of László Nagy, who before the transition wrote a dozen books about the anti-Habsburg military endeavors of the Transylvanian princes and the principality's military. These were based mostly on nineteenth-century source editions, because—apart from some local archives in Czechoslovakia—he did not have access to the relevant manuscript collections. In a study published in 1992 he was able to establish a new perspective that was exactly the opposite of his former anti-Habsburg viewpoint.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Béla Köpeczi, "Introduction to the English Edition," in *History of Transylvania*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to 1606*, ed. László Makkai and András Mócsy (Boulder, CO, 2002), 9–13; idem, "Erdély története harminc év távlatából" [The history of Transylvania in the perspective of thirty years], *Kisebbségkutatás* 15, no. 1. (2006): 47–59.

<sup>14</sup> See László Nagy, "A magyarországi Habsburg-uralom a török hódoltság idején" [Habsburg rule in Hungary in the period of the Ottoman occupation], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 105, no. 2 (1992): 3–29. The first Hungarian historian to be mentioned in the context of the new research is Gábor Barta, who studied the collapse of the Kingdom of Hungary and explained the formation of the Principality of Transylvania through the circumstances of the rule of John I Szapolyai and his son, John Sigismund. See his "An d'illusions (Notes sur la double éléction de rois après la défaite de Mohács)," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 2 (1978): 1–40; *Az erdélyi fejedelemség születése* [The birth of the Principality of Transylvania] (Budapest, 1979); *La route qui mène à Istanbul 1526–1528* (Budapest, 1994).

More recently, Teréz Oborni focused upon the contacts of the principality toward the Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg dynasty on the basis of the treaties concluded between them. Apart from her chapter in this volume, see also her previous studies: "From Province to Principality: Continuity and Change in Transylvania in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century," in *Fight Against the Turk in Central-Europe in the First Half of the 16th Century*, ed. István Zombori (Budapest, 2004), 165–180; "A gyalui szerződés" [The treaty of Gyalu], in *A magyar államiség első ezer éve* [The first thousand years of Hungarian statehood], ed. Márta Font and István Kajtár (Pécs, 2000), 133–146; "Die Plane des Wiener Hofes zur Rückeroberung Siebenbürgens 1557–1563," in *Kaiser Ferdinand I: Ein mitteleuropäischer Herrscher*, ed. Martina Fuchs, Teréz Oborni, and Gábor Ujváry (Münster, 2005), 277–298; "Erdély közjogi helyzete a speyeri szerződés után (1571–1575)" [The legal status of Transylvania after the treaty of Speyer], in *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére*, ed. Pál Fodor, Géza Pálffy, and István György Tóth (Budapest, 2002), 291–305; "Báthory Gábor megállapodásai a Magyar Királysággal" [The agreements between Gábor Báthory and the Kingdom of Hungary], in *Báthory Gábor és kora*, ed. Annamária Jeney-Tóth, Klára Papp, and Attila Ulrich (Debrecen, 2009), 111–122; and "Bethlen Gábor és a nagyszombati szerződés (1615)" [Gábor Bethlen and the treaty of Nagyszombat], *Századok* 145 (2011): 877–914.

The political and dynastic contacts of the principality with the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth again came under the spotlight, see Ildikó Horn, *Hit és hatalom: Az erdélyi unitárius nemesség 16. századi története* [Faith and power: The history of the Unitarian nobility

This new research trend scrutinized several aspects of the contacts with the Ottoman Empire. Pál Fodor drew an entirely new picture about the division of the sixteenth-century Kingdom of Hungary, shedding light on the involvement of the precursors of the Principality of Transylvania in the Ottoman system of *sancaks*; he introduced the term “virtual *sancak*” into Hungarian historiography. This was applied to those territories that were not occupied, but which the Ottomans granted charters formally integrating them into the empire. Included among these were those regions that later constituted the Principality of Transylvania.<sup>15</sup> Later on, Gábor Ágoston drew a parallel between this form of organization—traditionally seen as unique—and the system of the hereditary *sancaks* known from the eastern periphery of the empire. This comparison clarified the versatile character of the Ottoman structure of administration.<sup>16</sup> Simultaneously, new research aimed at analyzing the procedure of the Transylvanian princes’ appointment, inauguration, and their insignia.<sup>17</sup> Sándor Papp’s

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of Transylvania in the sixteenth century] (Budapest, 2009); eadem, *A könnyező krokodil: Jagelló Anna és Báthory István házassága* [The weeping crocodile: The marriage of Anna Jagiello with István Báthory] (Budapest, 2007); eadem, *Báthory András* (Budapest, 2002); Sándor Gebei, “Der Fürst von Siebenbürgen Gábor Bethlen und der polnische Thron,” in *The First Millenium of Hungary in Europe*, ed. Klára Papp and János Barta (Debrecen, 2002), 197–207; idem, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek és a lengyel királyválasztások* [The princes of Transylvania and royal elections in Poland] (Szeged, 2007). New light was shed on topics that had been popular earlier, such as the principality’s diplomacy toward Western Europe, see Gábor Kármán, *Erdélyi külpolitika a vesztfáliai béke után* [The foreign policy of Transylvania after the peace of Westphalia] (Budapest, 2011); idem, “The Hardship of Being an Ottoman Tributary: Transylvania at the Peace Congress of Westphalia,” in *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen*, ed. Norbert Spannenberger and Arno Strohmeier (Stuttgart, 2013), 163–183.

<sup>15</sup> Pál Fodor, “Ottoman Policy towards Hungary, 1520–1541,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45, nos. 2–3 (1991): 271–345; idem, “Das Wilajet von Temeschwar zur Zeit der osmanischen Eroberung,” *Südost-Forschungen* 55 (1996): 25–44.

<sup>16</sup> Gábor Ágoston, “A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (2003): 15–31.

<sup>17</sup> For the typology of the insignia sent to the princes by the Ottomans; their parallels elsewhere; the procedure of their delivery; and the inauguration ceremonies of the princes, see János B. Szabó, “Insignia of the Transylvanian Princes,” *Majestas* 4 (1996): 85–105; János B. Szabó and Péter Erdősi, “Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power in the Principality of Transylvania in East European Context,” *Majestas* 11 (2003): 111–160; János B. Szabó, “The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania,” in *Turkish Flowers: Studies on Ottoman Art in Hungary*, ed. Ibolya Gerehlyes (Budapest, 2005), 131–142. On the phases of the Ottoman inauguration of the princes, and the types of the documents of inauguration, see Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden der Osmanen für Ungarn und Siebenbürgen: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (Vienna, 2003); idem, “Critical Survey of Letter of Donation, Confirmation and that of Agreement Issued by the Ottoman Sultans for the Ruler of Hungary and Transylvania,” *Chronica* (Szeged) 4 (2004): 126–128. On the use of Ottoman military music as a symbol of power, see Balázs Sudár and Rumen István

systematic research in the diplomacy of the period was especially important, outlining for the first time the phases of the appointment procedure of the princes, the types of documents used for their inauguration, and the place of the phenomenon in the contexts of Ottoman legal theory.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from research on the economic contacts of the principality, the most recent studies also address the networks of personal contacts between the princes and the leading Ottoman politicians of the region. Their description of the former's role in the faction struggles of the empire's political life offers valuable insight into the hitherto rather modestly known history of the complex interactions between the two state entities.<sup>19</sup>

There is an absence of information regarding cooperation in the military field; we still substantially lack research that would uncover the Turkish source material. Consequently I am limited here to a summary of the data available at the moment.<sup>20</sup> On the basis of this, we can take note of the (mostly implicit) assumption of Hungarian historiography, that there was a "golden age" of the Principality of Transylvania—usually placed at the reign of István Báthory (1571–1586) or Gábor Bethlen (1613–1629). The chief notion here is that the principality's space for maneuvering was so broad that, except for the payment of the tribute, each of its obligations

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Csörsz, "Trombita, rézdob, tárogató..." (*A török hadizene és Magyarország*) ["Trumpet, copper drum, Turkish pipe...": Turkish military music and Hungary] (Enying, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> See his studies quoted in the previous note, as well as his chapter in this volume.

<sup>19</sup> Sándor Papp, "Homonnai Drugeth Bálint, Rákóczi Zsigmond és Báthory Gábor küzdelme az Erdély feletti hatalomért 1607-ben" [The struggle between Bálint Homonnai Drugeth, Zsigmond Rákóczi, and Gábor Báthory over Transylvania in 1607], *Századok* 148 (2008): 807–848; idem, "Bethlen Gábor, a Magyar Királyság és a Porta" [Gábor Bethlen, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Porte], *Századok* 145 (2011): 915–974; Balázs Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen: The Pasha and the Prince," in *Europe and the Ottoman World: Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul, 2013), forthcoming; János B. Szabó and Balázs Sudár, "Independens fejedelem az Portán kívül: II. Rákóczi György oszmán kapcsolatai. Esettanulmány az Erdélyi Fejedelemség és az Oszmán Birodalom viszonyának történetéhez. (1. rész)" ["An independent prince outside the Porte: The Ottoman relations of Prince György Rákóczi II: A case study for the history of the relationship between the Principality of Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire (Part one)], *Századok* 146 (2012): 1017–1048. For economic contacts, see Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, *Sibiu–Hermannstadt: Oriental Trade in Sixteenth Century Transylvania* (Cologne, 2007); eadem, "Oriental Trade and Merchants: Economic Relations Between the Ottoman Empire and Transylvania in the Sixteenth Century," in *Osmanische Orient und Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Robert Born and Andreas Puth (Stuttgart, 2013), forthcoming.

<sup>20</sup> Surprisingly, the military dimension has regularly been ignored in recent research on the interaction between the Ottoman Empire and the Principality of Transylvania.

(among them, the military) to the Ottoman Empire was nominal and could be avoided.<sup>21</sup>

The starting point of my analysis is 1571, and the election of István Báthory as a ruler. This date can be seen as marking the end of the principality's formation period after many earlier stages, as the state continued to function and implement the principles laid down during the rule of the Szapolyai dynasty (even after their extinction).<sup>22</sup> The end point of the study is 1688, when the Principality of Transylvania was definitively occupied by the forces of Leopold I, king of Hungary and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Prince Mihály Apafi I then signed the declaration of Fogaras, denouncing all his obligations toward the Ottoman Empire

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<sup>21</sup> In some cases Hungarian authors did emphasize the relevance of Transylvania's vassal status, in order to point out the sharp differences toward the two Romanian voievodates. See Kálmán Benda, "Erdély politikai kapcsolatai a román vajdaságokkal a XVI–XVII. században" [The political contacts of Transylvania with the Romanian voievodates in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries], in *Magyarok és románok*, vol. 2, ed. József Deér and László Gáldi (Budapest, 1944), 51–53; idem, "L'idée d'empire en Europe carpathique à la fin du Moyen Age," *Revue d'Histoire Comparée: Études Hongroises* 22 (1944): 54–80. At the same time, Romanian historiography almost always made a point of underlining the similar status of the "three Romanian states" (i.e., Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia) toward the Ottoman Empire. For example: "Transylvania and Partium consolidated their status of autonomous principality under Ottoman suzerainty, a status similar to that of Wallachia and Moldavia," or "Ottoman hegemony was uneven across the three countries, even though the differences in status were unessential. Transylvania enjoyed lighter suzerainty for a number of reasons (greater distance to the center and closeness to the west; its subjugation was accomplished later, fear of the Habsburgs, who pleaded the "liberation" of the province, etc.)." Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Romanians in the 14th–16th Centuries: From the 'Christian Republic' to the 'Restoration of Dacia,'" in *History of Romania (Compendium)*, ed. Ioan-Aurel Pop and Ioan Bolovan (Cluj-Napoca, 2006), 281, 288. At the same time, for many it was important to prove the contractual character of the Romanian voievodates' status toward the Ottoman Empire. For the debate, see Viorel Panaite's chapter in this volume, as well as Sándor Papp, "Keresztény vazallusok az Oszmán Birodalom észak-nyugati határainál [Diplomatikai vizsgálat a román vajdák szultáni 'ahdnâméi körül]" [Christian vassals at the northwestern borders of the Ottoman empire: Diplomatic analysis of the 'ahdnames for the Romanian voievods], *Aetas* 17, no. 1 (2002): 67–94; idem, "Christian Vassals on the Northwest Border of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Turks*, vol. 3, *Ottomans*, ed. Hasan Celal Güzel, C. Cem Oguz, and Osman Karatay (Ankara, 2002), 719–730. Cf. Mihai Maxim, "Le statut des Pays Roumains envers la Porte Ottomane aux XVI–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 24, nos. 1–2 (1985): 29–50; Tahsin Gemil, "'Capitulațiile' Transilvaniei de la jumătatea secolului XVII" [The "capitulations" of Transylvania from the mid-seventeenth century], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol," Iași* 23 (1986): 717–721; Mihai Maxim, "Din istoria relațiilor Româno-Otomane: 'Capitulațiile'" [From the history of the Romano–Ottoman relations: "Capitulations"], *Anale de Istorie* 6 (1982): 31–68.

<sup>22</sup> Oborni, "Erdély közjogi helyzete."

finally and completely.<sup>23</sup> I do not address those cases when “auxiliary troops” from the Ottoman Empire repeatedly forced specific princes (who lacked strong inner support) upon the principality, as happened in the cases of Mózes Székely (1603), István Bocskai (1606), Gábor Bethlen (1613), Ákos Barcsai (1658), and Mihály Apafi I (1661).

### *The Army of the Principality of Transylvania*

The existence of the Transylvanian principality was roughly simultaneous with the first phase of the military revolution took place in Western Europe, which had its versatile impacts on Central Europe, including Transylvania.<sup>24</sup> Although throughout its existence the principality retained its medieval military organization, inherited from the Kingdom of Hungary—based upon a system of privileges—the princely court maintained a 2–3000-man-strong army of mercenaries as well.<sup>25</sup> In the sixteenth century the Polish were the most important foreign troops, and in the seventeenth their place was taken by Germans.<sup>26</sup> At the Western borders of the country, which faced most of the dangers, Italian-style fortresses were built and the fortified places were supplied with artillery from the workshops in the territory of the principality. The use of firearms was widespread: At the end of the sixteenth century Hungarian and Transylvanian infantry consisted almost exclusively of riflemen. This was far from the norm in the region outside the medieval Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ágnes R. Várkonyi, “The Last Decades of the Independent Principality (1600–1711),” in *History of Transylvania*, vol. 2, *From 1606 to 1830*, ed. László Makkai and Zoltán Szász (Boulder, CO, 2002), 233–512.

<sup>24</sup> Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society, 1550–1800* (London, 1991); idem, *European Warfare, 1660–1815* (London and New York, 1994).

<sup>25</sup> János B. Szabó and Győző Somogyi, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség hadserege* [The army of the Principality of Transylvania] (Budapest, 1996), 40–52, 107–108.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 56–60, 109.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 63–74, 109–111. It is no coincidence that Sultan Murad III emphasized exactly this phenomenon in his letter to Voievod Kristóf Báthory in February 1578, in relation to the ongoing conflicts in Moldavia: “But those lords in Moldavia, they do not have rifles, but those who came in [Cossacks from Poland], they all have rifles. Due to these issues, you should quickly send in two thousand people, as many as needed, of good soldiers and lords, who could fight them. (...) And the army that you send should consist mostly of riflemen; there should be no neglect of this issue.” Áron Szilády and Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Török-magyarokori állam-okmánytár* [A collection of state papers from the Turkish–Hungarian age], vol. 1 (Pest, 1868) (henceforth TMÁO I), 19. See also the chapter of Ovidiu Cristea in this volume, which points out the growing competitive disadvantage of the soldiers from the Romanian voievodates with regard to military technology and the limited availability of firearms.

The Principality of Transylvania was thus able to transmit several elements of the changes in Western European military technology to the two Romanian voievodates and to Poland. In the so-called “fortress wars” in Northern Hungary from 1557 to 1566, the Habsburg armies were led by the best German officers of the time. The principality’s army faced severe challenges, and these wars brought a tremendous amount of experience for both the officers’ corps and the common soldiers. István Báthory, *voievod* of Transylvania, was elected king of Poland in 1576, thus his knowledge also enriched the Polish military. He introduced important reforms, based on Transylvanian and Hungarian examples, in equipment, weaponry, tactics, as well as on recruiting and finances. As a result, the previously troubled Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth became and remained until the 1620s a prominent military power in the region.<sup>28</sup>

According to an estimate of King Ferdinand I of Hungary, the voievodate of Transylvania and the Hungarian counties east of the river Tisza—that is, the territory later ruled by the princes—could raise 40,000 soldiers for their own defense, and 16–20,000 for deployment in Hungary.<sup>29</sup> These numbers appear realistic: fragmentary data suggest that until the mid-seventeenth century, in the event of an offensive war, 10–12,000 soldiers could be raised from the narrowly defined territory of the principality (which had a population of approximately one million people), and another 4,000 from the Partium (which, with its population of 300,000 people, formally belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary during the entire period). This constituted a force that can be considered, for this region, relatively powerful.<sup>30</sup>

However, the Transylvanian army was, in many respects, in a disadvantageous position when compared to a Western European type mercenary army of the same size. It lagged behind as a result of its structure of

<sup>28</sup> For the impact of Báthory’s reforms, see Dariusz Kupisz, “The Polish–Lithuanian Army in the Reign of King Stefan Bathory (1576–1586),” in *Warfare in Eastern Europe 1500–1800*, ed. Brian J. Davies (Leiden, 2012), 63–79. On the Polish infantry, see Jan Wimmer, “L’infanterie dans l’armée polonaise aux XV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in *Histoire militaire de la Pologne: problèmes choisis: dissertations, études, esquisses*, ed. Witold Bieganski, Piotr Stawiecki, and Janusz Wojtasik (Warsaw, 1970), 78–94; on his impact on the Polish cavalry, see Richard Brzezinski and Velimir Vukšić, *Polish Winged Hussar 1576–1775* (Oxford, 2006), 6, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Karl Lanz, ed., *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V. aus dem königlichen Archiv und der Bibliothek de Bourgogne zu Brüssel*, vol. 3, 1550–1556 (Leipzig, 1846), 11–15.

<sup>30</sup> In the last phase of the Thirty Years War, Swedish and French diplomats had doubts about accepting the Transylvanian offers to cooperate and enter an alliance. They were afraid that the expectations of the prince, with an army significantly larger than the other allies of the two crowns, could become an obstacle to the relatively quick closing of peace negotiations. See Kármán, *Erdélyi külpolitika*, 87.



branches, weaponry, and tactics, which adhered to earlier Hungarian traditions and were adjusted to the border regions of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it suffered from a relative lack of experience and the shortcomings of older equipment. Yet despite all this it nevertheless managed to serve the political goals of the princes relatively successfully until the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> That being said, it is also clear that by the second half of the century Transylvania could not keep pace with the new developments. In Western Europe large well-trained permanent armies were formed, a change that could not be followed by the principality, which had lost a third of its territory in the last years of the 1650s. A spy report written shortly after 1677 estimated the total strength of the army at 13,900 soldiers, of which the prince's permanent troops numbered only 1,500.<sup>32</sup> When the military potential was surveyed on the occasion of the election of Ferenc Rákóczi II as a prince in 1704, only 16,511 soldiers were registered.<sup>33</sup> The army that was available for use in interventions in foreign lands was reduced to just 7–8,000. This Transylvanian military force was inadequate for achieving local goals; in the wars from 1664 to 1686 its role was limited to a relatively successful defense of the principality's borders.

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<sup>31</sup> Neither the anti-Habsburg campaigns of Gábor Bethlen in 1618–1621, 1623, and 1626, nor that of György Rákóczi I in 1644–1645 ended in failure. Transylvanian armies won significant victories against the armies of the Romanian voievods and the Cossack troops supporting them in Wallachia (1611, 1655) and in Moldavia (1653). They defeated Ottoman armies at Giurgiu in 1595, and had the lion's part in the initial tactical successes of the Christian army at Mezőkeresztes in 1596. In 1636 and 1658 they were also victorious against the armies of the *beylerbeyi* of Buda. It must be acknowledged that they could not collect many trophies in the Ottoman wars between 1658 and 1661. This war, along with the failure of the Polish campaign in 1657, critically undermined the principality's military abilities and prestige. For discussion of the parallel Polish development, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Az oszmán 'katonai lemaradás' problémája és a kelet-európai hadszíntér" [The problem of the Ottoman "military backwardness" and the eastern European theater of battle], *Aetas* 17, no. 4 (1999): 142–148.

<sup>32</sup> István Czigány, *Reform vagy kudarc? Kísérletek a magyarországi katonaság beillesztésére a Habsburg Birodalom haderejébe 1600–1700* [Reform or failure? Attempts at the integration of the military in Hungary into the army of the Habsburg Empire] (Budapest, 2004), 158.

<sup>33</sup> András Magyari, ed., *II. Rákóczi Ferenc erdélyi hadserege* [The Transylvanian army of Ferenc Rákóczi II] (Bucharest, 2004), 79–80.

*The Framework of Military Cooperation with the Ottoman Empire*

The texts of the early agreements between the Szapolyai dynasty and the Porte did not survive. However, it is possible, utilizing Ottoman documents issued in the Báthory-period (the last three decades of the sixteenth century) to reconstruct in some detail the framework which the empire provided for the cooperation in the military sphere with its Transylvanian vassal. The sultan, in his letter of order (*hüküm-i hümayun*) issued on 21 May 1571, promised to send Ottoman border troops in case of an enemy attack; a provision that was completed in the '*ahdname-i hümayun*' issued the next year affirming that the Transylvanian prince was obligated to provide these Ottoman troops with victuals and equipment.<sup>34</sup>

The second '*ahdname-i hümayun*' given to István Báthory in 1575—when he was reinforced in his rule by the new sultan—repeated the conditional promise of aid and went into more detail concerning the military cooperation:

Similarly, if there should be any necessity for a service at the borders of our empire, when it is announced by the pashas and beys, the *voievod* and the dignitaries of the country should—according to their enduring subservience—show their readiness personally or through sending soldiers, equipment or victuals in the necessary extent.<sup>35</sup>

This document thus clearly prescribed mutual assistance, which was later further generalized in the charter (*hüküm-i hümayun*) sent to Kristóf Báthory—who replaced his brother as a supervisor of Transylvania (with the title of *voievod*)—using the formula “be the enemy of my enemy and a friend of my friend,” later a regular part of every seventeenth-century

<sup>34</sup> See their new editions in Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 190–194, respectively 214–219. They are also available in Hungarian translations, the first (in early modern translation) in Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek történeti bevezetésekkel* [Documents of the diets of Transylvania, with a historical introduction], vol. 2, 1556 sept.–1576 (Budapest, 1876) 459–461; the second (in early twentieth-century translation) in Imre Karácson, et al., ed., *Török-magyar oklevéltár 1533–1789* [Turkish–Hungarian collection of documents] (Budapest, 1914), 100.

<sup>35</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 221. The original Turkish text is unknown; the sixteenth-century Latin translation was also further translated to Hungarian by László Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567–1578* [Transylvania and the Porte] (Pest, 1862), 202. Another '*ahdname*' given to Báthory in late 1575 practically repeats the codification of mutual military help, see Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 223–227; Szalay, *Erdély*, 256.



'*ahdname*'.<sup>36</sup> During the Long Turkish War at the end of the sixteenth century the Ottoman promises to support the principality were repeated, but there were also changes in the field of the obligations. On one hand, the '*ahdname*' given to András Báthory in 1599 gave the prince—in a rather unconventional manner—a free hand to conclude a separate peace with the kings of Hungary; but it also included specific obligations for military cooperation: "Should Poles, Cossacks or other enemies attack Wallachia and Moldavia, the Transylvanians shall defend it if necessary."<sup>37</sup> The reverse regulation—that the two Romanian voievodates should give military support to Transylvania—appeared in the '*ahdname*' given to Zsigmond Báthory when he returned to the side of the sultan in 1601.<sup>38</sup> By the early seventeenth century the military obligations of the Principality of Transylvania to the Ottoman Empire were routine and taken for granted. When the Porte promoted Mózes Székely as a candidate for the princely title in 1603, he was not only promised some alleviation in tribute payment due to the devastations of the country in the war, but also that he would be excused from sending auxiliary troops to the Ottoman army.<sup>39</sup>

In the later period this question was discussed in general terms in the '*ahdname*' of Gábor Bethlen from 1614. It was, however, concrete in explicitly discussing the various fields of military cooperation, such as the respective conditions of support for Transylvania and for the Ottoman Empire. Considerable attention was also drawn to the specific orientation toward the voievodates:

[The prince of Transylvania] should have an understanding and live in a friendly manner with the *voievods* of Wallachia and Moldavia according to the obedience they owe to my Sublime Porte, they should hold good neighborhood in esteem, so that when any evil or an inimical intention should be heard from any direction, which could bring danger, if necessary, they

<sup>36</sup> The text is only known in a sixteenth-century Hungarian translation, see Szalay, *Erdély*, 275; Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 230–231. The exact relevance of the term is, however, not clear, see Papp, "Keresztény vazallusok," 78.

<sup>37</sup> Gábor Kármán, "Báthori András ahdnáméja" [The '*ahdname*' of András Báthori], *Fons (Forráskiadás és Segédtudományok)* 14 (2007): 348. The text is only known in sixteenth-century Hungarian translation.

<sup>38</sup> "The voievods of Wallachia and Moldavia should, when the need occurs, help him with their entire armies." The recent edition of the only surviving version (again, a sixteenth-century Hungarian translation) can be found in Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 253.

<sup>39</sup> Sándor Papp, "Székely Mózes erdélyi fejedelem hatalomra kerülésének diplomáciai tanulságai és egy nagyvezíri előterjesztés (*telhis*) keletkezése" [Conclusions for diplomacy from the process of the coming to power of Mózes Székely, prince of Transylvania, and the formation of a proposal (*telhis*) by the grand vizier], *Aetas* 14, no. 4. (1999), 79.

should support each other with their personal insurrection, and if there is no need for that, help each other by sending sufficient troops, and try to divert the ruin from each other.<sup>40</sup>

For the entire variety of obligations found in the documents concerning military cooperation between the principality and the empire, we note examples from the rule of the Szapolyai dynasty. Ever since King John of Hungary paid homage to the sultan in 1528, the Ottoman beys from the border were instructed to give him support.<sup>41</sup> Victuals were provided by Transylvania to Ottoman armies in 1545, when the Sublime Porte planned a large-scale campaign in Hungary and requested supplies of forage to be sent to Buda in the value of 10,000 guildens tribute from the principality.<sup>42</sup> In 1532 we even find examples of King John's soldiers participating at the siege of Esztergom, in cooperation with minor Ottoman troops, but far from the main Ottoman army. This of course opened a "second front" for the sultan's campaign directed against Vienna.<sup>43</sup> There is, however, only a late example from the sometimes rather chaotic period from 1528 to 1571 for the intervention—in the interest of the sultan—of a Transylvanian prince into the affairs of the two Romanian voievodates. John Sigismund sent 1,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry led by László Radák to Moldavia in order to help the struggle of Ștefan Tomșa against Ioan Iacob Heraclid (Despot-vodă). In order to maintain mutuality, two years later the Sublime

<sup>40</sup> The seventeenth-century Hungarian translation is published in *Erdélyi történelmi adatok* [Transylvanian historical data], vol. 2, ed. Imre Mikó (Kolozsvár, 1856), 340–341. Bethlen sought to eliminate at least a part of these burdensome obligations in 1617 through his diplomats at the Sublime Porte. He hoped that in relation to Christian opponents, only the regulations for common defense should remain in force and he should not be forced to participate in offensive campaigns: "If a Christian country or prince had not offended His Highness, us or our country, His Highness should have no power to force us against our own will to attack such a country or prince with weapons." Instructions of Bethlen for János Gáspár, his envoy in Istanbul (25 September 1617) Áron Szilády and Sándor Szilágyi, eds., *TMAO I*, 187.

<sup>41</sup> For the precedents in 1528, see Sándor Papp, "Hungary and the Ottoman Empire (From the Beginning to 1540)," in *Fight Against the Turk in Central-Europe in the First Half of the 16th Century*, ed. István Zombori (Budapest, 2004), 71. This way of giving Ottoman support must have been very frequent in the period between 1528 and 1571. The Ottoman armies stationed in Symria gave substantial assistance to John I in defending Buda in 1530, 1540, and 1541; he also received significant Ottoman aid in defeating the Habsburg counterattack after the failed Kőszeg campaign of Süleyman I in 1532.

<sup>42</sup> Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, eds., "Az ország ügye mindenek előtt való:" *A szultáni tanács Magyarországra vonatkozó rendeletei (1544–1545, 1552)* ["The affairs of the country stand before everything else": The ordinances of the sultan's council concerning Hungary] (Budapest, 2005), 18–21, 24–25.

<sup>43</sup> Zoltán Korpás, *V. Károly és Magyarország, 1526–1538* [Charles V and Hungary] (Budapest, 2008), 150, 232–233.

Porte ordered the Moldavian *voievod* to send 5–6000 soldiers and the Wallachians another 5,000 to support John Sigismund's wars in Hungary.<sup>44</sup>

This means that both the prospects and obligations included in the *'ahdname-i hümayuns* granted to Transylvanian princes after 1571 had their forerunners during the reign of the Szapolyai dynasty. Although their formulation over time became more precise, their content remained highly stable—as a matter of fact, their inclusion did not depend upon who was the actual prince of Transylvania.<sup>45</sup>

### *Designations of Transylvanian Troops to the Romanian voievodates*

In Hungarian historiography it is well-known that from 1529 on the Sublime Porte frequently delegated the troops of the Romanian *voievods* to support the Szapolyai dynasty.<sup>46</sup> Much less attention was devoted to the fact that Transylvania was not only relevant to the Sublime Porte's expansion toward the west, but that the sultans also gave it an important role in the security system of the northern borders of the empire (the Black Sea region). Here, following Genoese and Venetian patterns, the Ottomans developed a maritime empire surrounded by a ring of vassal territories.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, eds., *"Ez az ügy fölöttébb fontos:" A szultáni tanács Magyarországra vonatkozó rendeletei (1544–1545, 1552)* ["This is a very important issue": The ordinances of the sultan's council concerning Hungary] (Budapest, 2009), 249, 256–257, 312, 316–318. See also the corresponding parts of Ovidiu Cristea's chapter in this volume. Hungarian narrative sources suggest that the quick conclusion of the military activities and the capture of the voievod under siege were made possible by an agreement between the soldiers of Radák and the Hungarian mercenaries of the distressed Despot-vodá. See Ferenc Forgách, *"Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról Ferdinánd, János, Miksa királysága és II. János erdélyi fejedelemsége alatt"* [Memorial about the state of Hungary under the rule of kings Ferdinand, John, and Maximilian, and the prince John II in Transylvania], in *Humanista történetírók*, ed. Péter Kulcsár (Budapest, 1977), 804–805; Istvánffy Miklós, *Magyarok dolgairól írt históriája Tállyai Pál XVII. századi fordításában* [The chronicle about the Hungarian things in Pál Tállyai's seventeenth-century translation], vol. 1/1, ed. Péter Benits (Budapest, 2003), 345–346; Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története* [The history of Transylvania], vol. 2, *A váradi békekötéstől János Zsigmond haláláig (1538–1571)* [From the peace of Várad until the death of John Sigismund], ed. András Bodor and Tamás Kruppa (Budapest and Kolozsvár, 2002), 238–239.

<sup>45</sup> A final word on this question can, however, only be given after Sándor Papp publishes the second part of his endeavor, the collection of seventeenth-century inauguration documents given to princes of Transylvania.

<sup>46</sup> László Makkai, *Magyar–román közös múlt* [Common Hungarian–Romanian past] (Budapest, 1989), 89–93.

<sup>47</sup> Gáspár Katkó, "Campaigns of Zaporozhian Cossacks against the Ottoman Empire between 1492 and 1642," in *Rzeczpospolita wobec Orientu w epoce nowożytniej*, ed. Dariusz Milewski (Zarbrze, 2011), 37–43; Feridun M. Emecen, "Az Oszmán Birodalom sztyeppepei

Beyond the Transylvanian interventions into the unstable political relations of the Romanian voievodates, Hungarian historiography in the main failed to explore the principality's involvement in the management of the Ottoman Empire's problems with the Ukraine Cossacks, who exerted pressure on the Crimea and Moldavia.<sup>48</sup> Traditionally, these territories were in the Polish sphere of influence; the *voievods* were the kings' vassals until the Ottomans pushed back the Rzeczpospolita from the Black Sea region.<sup>49</sup> However, the unsettled conditions of Ukraine made it possible for various ambitious and violent local lords or Cossack leaders to aim beyond leading routine raids on the Ottoman borderlands, and rather try to achieve rule over Moldavia.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the traditional slow Polish armies, the Cossacks raiders' troops were relatively small and quick, and by the end of the sixteenth century frequently used firearms. As their activities covered a large region it was very difficult to organize defenses against them.<sup>51</sup> It was in this defensive system that Transylvania was given an important role, in part due to its geographical position and military capacity, and in part because of the advantageous political situation after the 1576 election of István Báthory as king of Poland.<sup>52</sup>

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határai és a moldvai kijáró" [The steppe borders of the Ottoman Empire and the exit through Moldavia], *Aetas* 18, no. 2 (2003): 21–29.

<sup>48</sup> Katkó, "Campaigns," 45–46; Sándor Gebei, "A lengyel végek katonaparasztsága a 16–17. században" [The armored peasantry at the Polish borderlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries], in *Emlékkönyv Rácz István 70. születésnapjára*, ed. Ágnes Kovács (Debrecen, 1999), 69–82. On the Transylvanian princes' involvement with the political issues of Romanian voievodes, see Benda, "Erdély politikai kapcsolatai"; Makkai, *Magyaromán közös múlt*, 94–95.

<sup>49</sup> Marek Plewczynski, "Söldnertruppen in Polen um die Wende des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Von Crécy bis Mohács: Kriegswesen im späten Mittelalter (1346–1526): Acta XXII. Kongress der Internationalen Kommission für Militärgeschichte, Wien, 9–13. September 1996* (Vienna, 1997), 345–349, 353–358; Ilona Czamańska, "Poland and Turkey in the 1st Half of the 16th Century—Turning Points," in *Fight against the Turk in Central-Europe in the first Half of the 16th Century*, ed. István Zombori (Budapest, 2004), 91–102; Andrei Pippidi, "Moldavie et Pologne: la fin de la vassalité," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 83 (2001): 59–78.

<sup>50</sup> The notorious Cossack leader from the mid-sixteenth century Ukraine, Dimitry Wiśniowiecki, also fell into Ottoman captivity when he interfered in the competition for the Moldavian throne in 1563. Forgách, "Emlékirat," 799–803.

<sup>51</sup> Mária Ivanics, "Kozák segédcapatok Habsburg szolgálatban (1593–1606)" [Cossack auxiliary troops in the service of Habsburgs], in *Az értelem bátorsága: Tanulmányok Perjés Géza emlékére*, ed. Gábor Hausner (Budapest, 2005), 291–295.

<sup>52</sup> Kazimierz Dopierała, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski z Turcją za Stefana Batorego* [Poland's diplomatic relations with Turkey under István Báthory] (Warsaw, 1986). See also a short English summary in Krzysztof Wawryzniak, "Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations in the Sixteenth Century" (MA diss., Bilkent University, Ankara, 2003), 62–63 (<http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0002291.pdf>, accessed 22 December 2011). The Sublime Porte could be

Each second year a letter came from the Sublime Porte to Transylvania reminding its rulers to keep their troops ready for action, given the threat of turmoil due either to the changing *voievods* in Moldavia or Wallachia or the Cossack raids. It was in 1574 during István Báthory's rule that for the first time a Transylvanian army was sent, according to the order to Moldavia, to defeat Voievod Ioan the Terrible (Ioan cel Cumplit), who had revolted against the sultan. Báthory sent Szekler troops to support the candidate of the Porte, and the united forces defeated Ioan in June of the same year.<sup>53</sup>

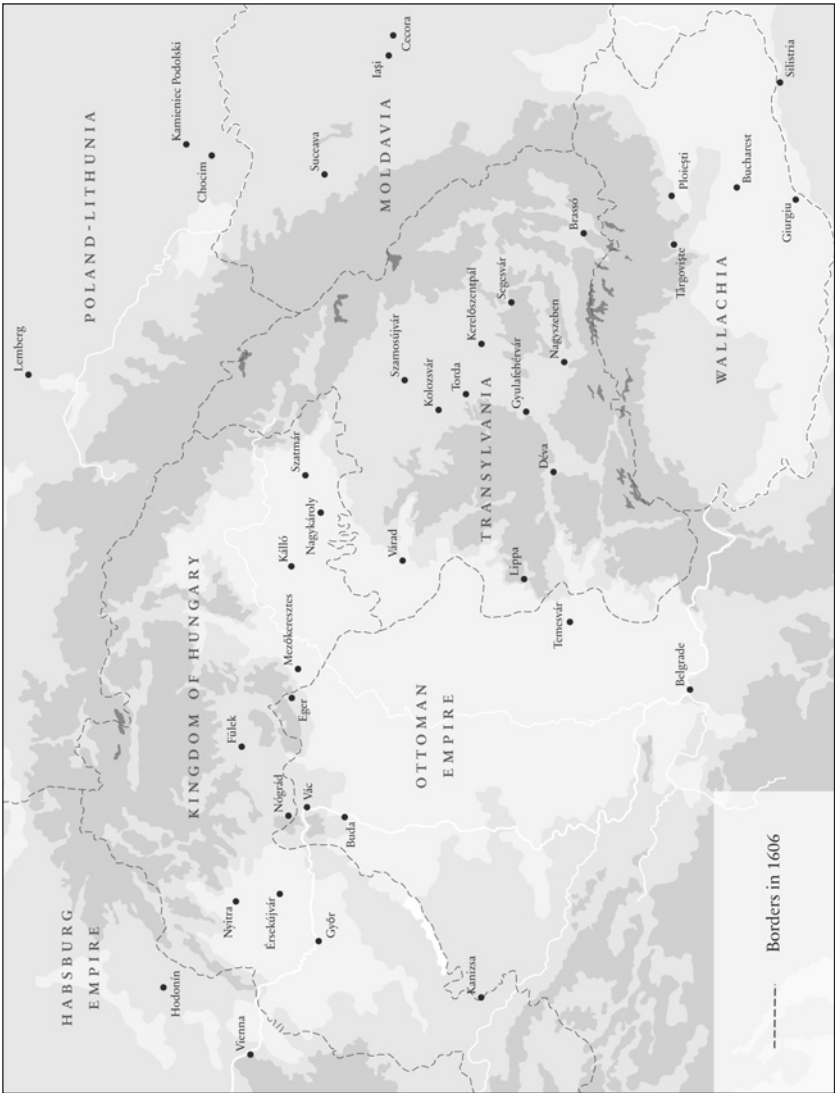
In 1577 a subject of King István Báthory, Ivan Pidkova (rumored to be a half-brother of Voievod Ioan) tried to establish rule over the voievodate. After the conquest of Iași, his Cossack army also defeated the Ottoman army coming to support the deposed *voievod*, Petru the lame (Petru Șchiopul). When the news reached the Transylvanian diet at Torda in October, they ordained general mobilization for November–December. During the summer of the next year an army consisting of Szeklers and the princely mercenary troops was united with the Ottoman and Moldavian troops, and besieged Pidkova at Iași. The Cossack leader was expelled from the country; he fled to Poland, where he was captured by István Báthory, who had him decapitated in Lemberg.<sup>54</sup> The relevance of sending

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certain that for Báthory as king of Poland (and thus ally of the Ottoman Empire) and the prince of Transylvania to maintain good relations, he would have to act in a determined manner against those who disturbed the peace.

<sup>53</sup> Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története* [The history of Transylvania], vol. 3, *Báthory István trónra lépésétől Báthory Zsigmond uralkodásáig, 1571–1594* [From István Báthory's succession to the throne till the reign of Zsigmond Báthory], ed. András Bodor and Tamás Kruppa (Budapest and Kolozsvár, 2004), 35. See also the orders of Sultan Selim II and the letter of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha to István Báthory (April–May 1574) Szalay, *Erdély*, 146–148, and Ovidiu Cristea's chapter in this volume. On the Szeklers of the Transylvanian army, see B. Szabó and Somogyi, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség hadserege*, 25–33, 105–106. The army was led by György Daczó and Mihály Rácz, the latter being a captain of the court infantry. See Attila Sunkó, "Az erdélyi fejedelmi testőrség archontológiája a XVI. században" [The archontology of the princely court guard in the sixteenth century], *Fons (Forráskiadás és Segéd tudományok)* 1, no. 2 (1994): 102, 104.

<sup>54</sup> Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 115–116. The decree of general mobilization: Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek történeti bevezetésekkel* [Documents of the diets of Transylvania, with a historical introduction], vol. 3, 1576–1596 (Budapest, 1877) [henceforth EOE III], 121. The order of Sultan Murad III to Kristóf Báthory (February 1878) and the report of Davut Bey on military activities: TMÁO I, 18–20. On the princes' mercenary troops, see B. Szabó and Somogyi, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség hadserege*, 40–43, 107–108; Attila Sunkó, "Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség udvari hadai a XVI. században" [The court troops of the Principality of Transylvania in the sixteenth century], *Levéltári Közlemények* 69, nos. 1–2 (1998): 99–131. The leader of the troops this time was the king's nephew, István Báthory Jr., but Mihály Rácz again played an important part in the supervision of the army.



Map 1. The Principality of Transylvania and the surrounding territories in the seventeenth century



mercenaries was highlighted by István Báthory on a later occasion, when an earlier brother-in-arms, Samuel Zborowski, who had in the meantime joined the Cossacks, invaded Moldavia in 1583. He cautioned the three governors of Transylvania from a distance: "Your Lordships should not send only Szeklers to such a place, because nothing else would follow than public damage and shame, but they should be mixed with mercenaries serving at the court, and an experienced and prudent person should be appointed as their leader."<sup>55</sup>

In 1592 Prince Zsigmond Báthory had already received an order from Sultan Murad III to assist in the repression of Petru Șchiopul's attempt, supported by the Cossacks, to regain lost power over Moldavia. The army consisted of 2,000 soldiers (1,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry) and brought some field cannons with them.<sup>56</sup> The prince ordered his captain to "try to enable our army to have its own ways, own quarters and not mix with foreign troops, so that there should be no conflict or concourse between them."<sup>57</sup> The battle between the armies of Petru and the principality took place near Iași, and according to Transylvanian sources the *voievod* was betrayed by his army. His cavalry fled at the beginning of the fight and his infantry (comprised mostly of Transylvanians) sounded a parley to Gáspár Sibrik, the leader of the prince's army. Petru himself was captured and handed over to the Ottomans.<sup>58</sup>

The Long Turkish War at the end of the sixteenth century was a turning point in this kind of cooperation. The Ottomans became much more cautious in using the Transylvanian army for such services in the seventeenth century as Zsigmond Báthory managed to greatly increase his influence in both voievodates and in coalition with him, Moldavia and Wallachia lost allegiance to the sultan. In any case, in this period princes of Transylvania

<sup>55</sup> István Báthory to the three governors (24 August 1583), Andrei Veress, ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești* [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia], vol. 2, *Acte și scrisori (1573–1584)* [Charters and letters] (Bucharest, 1930), 266. See also the order of Sultan Murad III to Voievod Zsigmond Báthory (22 June 1583), *ibid.*, 251.

<sup>56</sup> Of the cavalry, 200 were the mercenaries of the prince, while the rest came from the Szekler region of Háromszék; the infantry's origins were Háromszék (446), Szeklers from Csík-, Gyergyó- and Kászonszék (354) and 200 riflemen from the Saxon town of Kronstadt.

<sup>57</sup> Zsigmond Báthory's instructions to Gáspár Sibrik (25 September 1592) EOE III, 412–415. See also Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 229–230. For the Transylvanian Saxon troops, see B. Szabó and Somogyi, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség hadserege*, 36–39, 106–107.

<sup>58</sup> Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 231. See also Zsigmond Báthory's report on the victory to the sultan (2 October 1592), Karácson, ed., *Török-magyar oklevéltár*, 173. On Sibrik, see Sunkó, "A fejedelmi testőrség," 200.

regularly interfered in the struggles for the *voivodates'* thrones, even with armed forces.<sup>59</sup> Some of these endeavors, such as one in 1655, may have had the support of the Porte as well.

After the death of Matei Basarab, *voievod* of Wallachia, a military uprising started in the country. Matei had a large army of mercenaries, the so called *seimeni* troops from the Balkans, whom his successor Constantin Șerban wanted to release from service and deprive of their traditional privileges.<sup>60</sup> The military revolt turned into a popular uprising. When Constantin Șerban, after being held almost as hostage by the mercenaries, escaped to the pasha of Silistria, the rebels elected a popular boyar to be their new *voievod*, the Vornic Hrizea. These events seemed to become increasingly unpredictable, causing considerable anxiety in the neighboring countries. The deposed Constantin requested the help of Prince György Rákóczi II of Transylvania, whose intervention was not only supported by the pasha of Silistria, but for a while even by the Sublime Porte.<sup>61</sup> In May 1655 the prince collected his forces under his personal command and was joined by Gheorghe Ștefan, *voievod* of Moldavia, who personally brought his troops to Wallachia. The war was won in one decisive victory between Șoplea and Ploiești with the rebels suffering a crushing defeat. Rákóczi left 1,500 Transylvanian soldiers in support of Constantin Șerban and marched back home, taking thirty-two cannons as booty.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> During the rule of Gábor Bethlen, many such cases are known. See Lajos Demény, *Bethlen Gábor és kora* [Gábor Bethlen and his age] (Bucharest, 1982), 40–64.

<sup>60</sup> For the uprising, see Lidia A. Demény, Lajos Demény, and Nicolae Stoicescu, *Răscoala seimenilor sau răscoală populară? 1655. Țară Românească* [The revolt of the *seimens* or a popular revolt? 1655, Wallachia] (Bucharest, 1968), 297–300 (English summary); Lajos Demény, “Die Rolle des Soldatenelements in den Volksbewegungen des 17. Jahrhunderts: Der Charakter des Sejmen-Aufstandes in der Walachei im Jahre 1655,” in *Aus der Geschichte der ostmitteleuropäischen Bauernbewegungen im 16–17. Jahrhundert: Vorträge der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Konferenz aus Anlass der 500. Wiederkehr der Geburt von György Dózsa, Budapest, 12–15. September 1972*, ed. Gusztáv Heckenast (Budapest, 1977), 91–101; Lajos Thallóczy, “II. Rákóczy György és az oláh személyek” [György Rákóczi II and the Wallachian *seimens*], *Századok* 26 (1892): 449–456.

<sup>61</sup> For the changes in the Porte's verdict, see Kármán, *Erdélyi külpolitika*, 256–258; idem, “György Rákóczi II's Attempt to Establish a Local Power Base among the Tributaries of the Ottoman Empire 1653–1657,” in *Power and Influence in Southeastern Europe, 16th–19th Centuries*, ed. Maria Baramova, et al. (Berlin, 2013), 229–243.

<sup>62</sup> For the 1655 campaign to Wallachia, see Georg Kraus, *Erdélyi krónika 1608–1665* [Transylvanian chronicle], ed. and trans. Sándor Vogel (Budapest, 1994), 233–235; János Szalárdi, *Siralmas magyar krónikája* [Hungarian chronicle of laments], ed. Ferenc Szakály (Budapest, 1980), 337–341; Anonymous, *Rákóczi-eposz* [The Rákóczi epic], ed. Csaba Szigeti (Budapest, 1988), 76–108. For the battle, see György Rákóczi II to Zsuzsanna Lorántffy (9 July 1655), Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *A két Rákóczy György családi levelezése* [Family letters



*The Transylvanian Role in the Ottoman–Polish Conflicts*

In the Long Turkish War that began in the early 1590s Transylvania and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth took different stances. Under the rule of Zsigmond Báthory, the principality turned against the Porte and joined the Christian coalition together with the two Romanian voievodates. The Rzeczpospolita, on the other hand, followed the tradition of István Báthory's politics and remained neutral. In 1595, by taking advantage of the war and the way it preoccupied the two countries, the Rzeczpospolita was able to extend its sphere of influence over Moldavia at the expense of Transylvania. From this time on, the voievodate functioned as a triple condominium, causing many conflicts between the three powers—the Ottomans, the Crimean Tatars, and the Commonwealth.<sup>63</sup>

It was at a later phase of this series of conflicts that the principality was ordered to send support to the sultan's armies. In 1615, rebelling boyars, with support from Polish lords from the borderlands, sought to install Alexander Movilă upon the throne. Gábor Bethlen received an order from the Porte in October the same year to help the earlier *voievod*, Ștefan Tomșa. Bethlen, however, also favored Movilă and was not eager to obey the order. When the latter's armies defeated Ștefan Tomșa, the prince of Transylvania was accused of treason at the Sublime Porte.<sup>64</sup>

As the attempt of Sarhoş İbrahim Pasha to support the expelled *voievod* failed, the Porte appointed Iskender, the *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia, to be the chief general (*serdar*) of the armies sent to Moldavia. He mustered his armies at Temesvár and called the prince of Transylvania to send his troops as well.<sup>65</sup> Bethlen was in a tight corner, as he was at the same time threatened by an attack from the Kingdom of Hungary, and also pressured by the Porte to hand over the castle of Lippa. He decided to send a smaller auxiliary troop to the *serdar*'s army, he added to the *beylerbeyi* of Temesvár's 500 cavalry

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of the two princes György Rákóczi], *Monumenta Hungariae Historica: Diplomataria*, 24 (Budapest, 1875), 494.

<sup>63</sup> For the entry of Transylvania into the war, see Horn, *Báthory András*, 178–184, 189–191. For the politics connected to the Polish Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, see Mária Ivanics, *A Krími Kánság a tizenöt éves háborúban* [The Crimean khanate in the Fifteen Years War 1595–1606] (Budapest, 1994), 83–88; Gábor Várkonyi: “Angol békeközvetítés és lengyel–török tárgyalások a tizenöt éves háború időszakában” [English mediation and Polish–Ottoman negotiations during the Fifteen Years War], *Aetas* 18, no. 2 (2003): 44–62.

<sup>64</sup> Demény, *Bethlen*, 44–45; Sudár, “Iszkender és Bethlen Gábor,” 984; Katkó, “Campaigns,” 47–50.

<sup>65</sup> In July 1616 the Porte ordered that a 19,000 man strong Transylvanian army be sent to Moldavia, see TMÁO I: 169.

armed with pikes another 500 from his own military and then used his main army to lay siege to his own Lippa castle, in order to expedite the handover. Then, on learning of Iskender Pasha's victory on 3 August, he was able to use the excuse of the threat of György Homonnai Drugeth (a pretender of his throne from Hungary) to withdraw his troops from the Transylvanian–Moldavian border.<sup>66</sup>

Iskender—who in the meantime had been appointed pasha of Silistria—had to bring his armies into the voievodate again in the next year, as the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth did not easily cede its influence on Moldavia. Bethlen had already received an order to join the Moldavian campaign in April, and after long preparations and preliminary peace talks, on 29 August he crossed the border with approximately 12,000 soldiers.<sup>67</sup> They arrived in Suceava on 12 September, and with his mediation the peace of Busza was concluded on 23 September, after an eight-day negotiation.<sup>68</sup>

In a few years, the intervention of the prince of Transylvania in Moldavian and Polish affairs was requested again, but this time he managed to avoid sending his troops. In 1620, Gaspar Graziani, the *voievod* of Moldavia, lost the Porte's favor and was replaced—a decision he was not ready to accept. He invited Polish troops into the country but his armies suffered a crushing defeat at Cecora on 5–6 October from Iskender Pasha.<sup>69</sup> Although Graziani was his personal adversary, Bethlen contradicted the order of the Porte to send his troops to the Polish front with the excuse of his military involvement in Hungary (where he participated in the first phase of the Thirty Years War).<sup>70</sup> He used the same reasoning the next

<sup>66</sup> Sudár, "Iszkender és Bethlen Gábor," 984–986; Demény, *Bethlen*, 107. According to the chronicle of Máté Szepsi Lackó, the Transylvanian armored cavalry, armed with pikes, played a decisive role in Iskender's success. See *Erdélyi történelmi adatok* [Transylvanian historical data], vol. 3, ed. Imre Mikó (Kolozsvar, 1858), 161–162.

<sup>67</sup> The Ottoman army sent to Moldavia was at the time only 4,000 men strong, with 8–9,000 Tatars from the Bucak. See Bethlen's letter to János Gáspár (25 September 1617) TMÁO I: 185.

<sup>68</sup> Sudár, "Iszkender és Bethlen Gábor," 987; Demény, *Bethlen*, 107; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden, 1999), 345–353.

<sup>69</sup> Demény, *Bethlen*, 55–56; Gebei, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek*, 82; Manfred Stoy, "Gaspar Grațiani, Fürst der Moldau 1619–1620: Seine marginale Rolle in den Anfängen des Dreißigjährigen Krieges," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 112 (2004): 306–315.

<sup>70</sup> Demény, *Bethlen*, 55; Sudár, "Iszkender és Bethlen Gábor," 992. See also the order of Sultan Osman II to the governor of Transylvania, István Bethlen (1620), TMÁO I, 251, and Gábor Bethlen's letter to the judge of Beszterce (20 July 1620) Nicolae Iorga, ed., *Documente*

year to persuade the Porte to be content with his sending 600 carriages of victuals to the camp of Sultan Osman II, who faced acute logistical problems during his ultimately failed attempts to defeat the Polish army entrenched near Chocim. The victuals actually sent were even less than promised, and did not exceed 560 carriages.<sup>71</sup>

In 1633, animosity intensified again between the Ottomans and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, a result of the increasingly audacious raids of the Cossacks from Ukraine. Abaza Hasan, pasha of Silistria, tried to exploit the situation of the Rzeczpospolita's war against Muscovy, but his first attempt did not bring the expected results. With the Polish victory at Smolensk the following year, the probability of an easy victory disappeared; originally a great campaign with the sultan's participation was planned, but the Ottomans decided not to risk opening an additional second front given their ongoing war against Persia. A peace treaty was thus concluded with the Polish king.<sup>72</sup> In any case, preparations for the war had included the mobilization of the Transylvanian army as well. In March 1634 an order was sent to Prince György Rákóczi I, who did not dare to resist. Although he dedicated much energy to the mediation between the two powers, he kept his army ready between 15 May and mid-October, despite formidable logistical problems during the summer due to drought and plague.<sup>73</sup>

The conclusion of the Polish–Russian peace in 1667 opened a new period of conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Rzeczpospolita's attention could now again be turned

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*privitoare la istoria românilor* [Documents on the history of the Romanians], vol. 15, *Acta și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardeleni (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu)* [Documents and letters from the archives of Transylvanian towns (Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu)] part 2 (1601–1825) (Bucharest, 1913), 868.

<sup>71</sup> Demény, *Bethlen*, 53–56, 115–116; Gebei, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek*, 81–84; Sudár, “Iszkender és Bethlen Gábor,” 992. For the adventurous journey of the caravan of carriages, see the memorial of Ferenc Nagy Szabó from Marosvásárhely in *Erdélyi történelmi adatok* [Transylvanian historical data], vol. 1, ed. Imre Mikó (Kolozsvár, 1855) [henceforth ETA I], 128–139. The Szekler soldiers in the caravan's retinue were also used for engineering tasks, and on their way they quickly repaired one of the damaged Ottoman bridges in Moldavia, “as they had all the equipment [axes and drills] for it,” as the eyewitness put it.

<sup>72</sup> Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 432–436.

<sup>73</sup> The considerations of the prince's council were summarized in a contemporary chronicle as follows: “This issue seemed to be very grave to the prince as well as to his councilors, mostly because this warfare was supposed to be directed against a Christian country that had been good neighbors. However, after lengthy deliberations it was decided that offending the Porte should be avoided at any cost, and that it is necessary to show and eagerly maintain fidelity,” see Szalárdi, *Siralmas magyar krónikája*, 157. On the background, see also Kraus, *Erdélyi krónika*, 145–146; ETA I, 146.

toward the Cossacks of Ukraine. The Crimean Khanate, afraid of their cooperation with its Christian neighbors, managed to involve the sultan in the conflict. At one peak in the extended warfare Sultan Mehmed IV himself led a campaign to conquer Kamieniec Podolski, the most important Polish castle in the border zone. This time the Sublime Porte referred back to the example of Bethlen: "as when my divine predecessors waged war in these regions, the princes of our hereditary country, Transylvania, regularly sent 7–800 carriages filled with barley and flour as an assistance to the Turkish army," and so he ordered 600 carriages of victuals to be sent to the Ottoman camp—a number which was later mercifully reduced to 500.<sup>74</sup> After the successful siege, the Polish diplomats invited the prince of Transylvania to be a mediator at the peace talks. They later tried to turn Mihály Apafi I to their side in the conflict; he even appeared among the candidates in the royal election in 1674.<sup>75</sup> In the same year, Apafi was once more ordered to deliver 600 carriages of victuals to another campaign led by the sultan against the Polish territories.<sup>76</sup>

### *The Role of Transylvania in the Hungarian Theater of War*

After the peace of Adrianople in 1568, which put an end to the long wars in Hungary, it was only in the beginning of the 1590s that the idea reappeared that the weapons of the Ottoman Empire should be turned against Central Europe. Until the middle of 1593, however, it was not clear whether the war against Christian powers should start on land or sea. Due to the hesitation of the Ottoman dignitaries, the army under Grand Vizier Sinan

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<sup>74</sup> János Bethlen, *Erdély története 1629–1673* [The history of Transylvania], trans. Judit Vásárhelyi, ed. József Jankovics (Budapest, 1993), 465–473. See also the ordinance distributing the obligation among the Transylvanian administrative regions: Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek történeti bevezetésekkel* [Documents of the diets of Transylvania, with a historical introduction], vol. 15, 1669–1676 (Budapest, 1892) [henceforth EOE XV] 279–280. For the conflict generally, see Vojtech Kopčan, "A török Porta Thököly-politikája" [The politics of the Turkish Porte concerning Thököly], in *A Thököly-felkelés és kora*, ed. László Benczédi (Budapest, 1983), 121–122; Peter Bartl, "Der Kosakenstaat und das Osmanische Reich im 17. und in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Südost-Forschungen* 33 (1974): 183–188; Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Venedig, Wien und die Osmanen: Umbruch in Südost-europa, 1645–1700* (Munich, 1970), 260–279; as well as Victor Ostapchuk's chapter in this volume.

<sup>75</sup> János Bethlen, *Erdély története*, 528, 561; Gebei, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek*, 227.

<sup>76</sup> EOE XV, 385–387.

could not start its march toward Hungary until 29 July 1593.<sup>77</sup> The order of Sultan Murad III that the Transylvanian army should join the attack against the Habsburg-ruled country also came quite late, but included further demands: 100,000 *kiles* of wheat flour, the same amount of barley, a large quantity of honey, butter, and salt; eventually a large number of pikes, cannons with powder, equipment, and personnel for trail blazing. Also, the sultan demanded that Transylvanians should be obliged under penalty of death to join the army and be forbidden to take up service in the troops of the king of Hungary.<sup>78</sup>

At their diet in September the Transylvanian estates discussed what sort of position they should take in this unprecedented situation. The dignitaries accepted the advice of the Polish Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, and adopted the tactic of stalling for time and waiting for developments. They sent an envoy to the grand vizier's camp and petitioned for a reduction in demands. Support was also sought from the English ambassador at the Sublime Porte, for they claimed that Transylvania should be granted an exemption from warfare against Christian powers.<sup>79</sup>

According to the Ottomans' operational plans, the Transylvanian army, supported by the *beylerbeyi* of Temesvár, should open a second front in Northern Hungary. Serious attempts were being made to convince the Hungarian magnates in that territory to pay homage to the sultan, in effect to establish another vassal state similar to Transylvania.<sup>80</sup> The prince did not yet dare to openly oppose the sultan's order, and personally joined

<sup>77</sup> Pál Fodor, "Prelude to the Long War (1593–1606): Some Notes on the Ottoman Foreign Policy in 1591–1593," in *The Great Ottoman Turkish Civilization*, ed. Kemal Çiçek (Istanbul, 2000), 297–301.

<sup>78</sup> Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 221–222.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 237–248; 263–265. The instructions for the envoy to England have been published by Andrei Veress, ed. *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești* [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia], vol. 4, *Acte și scrisori (1593–1595)* [Charters and letters] (Bucharest, 1932), 25–28. See also Fodor, "Prelude"; Gábor Várkonyi, "A konstantinápolyi angol politika a tizenöt éves háború időszakában: Edward Barton angol portai követ jelentései Konstantinápolyból, 1593–1597" [English politics in Constantinople during the Fifteen Years War: The reports of Edward Barton, English Ambassador at the Porte from Constantinople, 1593–1597], *Aetas*, 15, no. 4. (2000): 119–120.

<sup>80</sup> Sándor László Tóth, *A mezőkeresztesi csata és a tizenöt éves háború* [The battle of Mezőkeresztes and the Fifteen Years War] (Szeged, 2000), 132–133, 136; Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 236. See also the 1593 order of Murad III concerning Transylvania's entry to the war, EOE III, 295. Similar joint warfare between the ruler of Transylvania and the *beylerbeyi* of Temesvár had already taken place in 1566. The aims were, just as in the earlier case, territories once under the rule of the Szapolyai dynasty: Ecsed, Nagykálló, Tokaj, and Kassa.

his troops in October. However, he managed to keep his armies in the Partium, under the pretext that he sought to defend against a likely attack on his lands from Hungary.<sup>81</sup> At the end of the Ottoman campaign, the grand vizier gave his permission to the Transylvanians to return home. When the military successes of the Christian armies during the winter caused a great anxiety in Ottoman Hungary, Zsigmond Báthory excused himself by stating that the troops were already in their winter quarters and unable to interfere.<sup>82</sup>

The following year the Sublime Porte again notified the prince to “prepare himself (...) with sixty thousand men and well-equipped ships (...) till the trees start to blossom (...) and be ready to march if the situation requires or the sultan orders it.”<sup>83</sup> There were even attempts to threaten the hesitating Transylvanians with the advance of the Crimean Tatars. Although Zsigmond Báthory failed to join the Ottoman campaign in 1594, it was not until early the next year that the Sublime Porte became certain that Transylvania and the two Romanian voievodates had not only backed out of the war, but even changed sides and joined the Christian coalition in the unfolding military conflict.<sup>84</sup>

The end of the Long Turkish War in 1606 brought with it a long period of peace—at least officially—to the Kingdom of Hungary. But when, in 1663, the prolongation of the peace between the Sublime Porte and Leopold I proved impossible, despite long negotiations, the armies of the Ottoman Empire again invaded the country. Grand Vizier Köprülü Ahmed marched with a sizeable army to conquer Érsekújvár and ordered the prince of Transylvania, Mihály Apafi I, to join him with his troops.<sup>85</sup> After the

<sup>81</sup> Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 267–268; EOE III: 300.

<sup>82</sup> Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 270, 274–276.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>84</sup> The Porte tried to mobilize the Transylvanians again during the summer of 1594. See the letters of Sultan Murad III to Zsigmond Báthory in Karácson, ed., *Török-magyar oklevéltár*, 175–179. Pál Fodor, “A váci ‘harmincad’ és egy hódoltsági főember a 16. században: Oszmán aga, cselebi és bég” [The custom duty of Vác and a dignitary from sixteenth-century Ottoman Hungary: Osman Ağa, Çelebi and Bey], *Történelmi Szemle* 43 (2001): 338; Tamás Kruppa, “Erdély és a Porta 1594–1597. évi békealkudozásainak történetéhez” [On the negotiations between Transylvania and the Sublime Porte in 1594–1597], *Századok* 137 (2003): 604–607; Ivanics, *A Krími Kánság*, 68–74; Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, “Magyar vonatkozású török államiratok a tizenöt éves háború korából” [Ottoman state papers related to Hungary from the period of the Fifteen Years War], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, n.s. 30, no. 2 (1983): 283.

<sup>85</sup> Ferenc Tóth, *Saint Gotthard 1664: une bataille Européenne* (Paris, 2007), 43–54; Ágnes R. Várkonyi, “The Principatus Transylvaniae and the Genesis of the Anti-Turkish Alliance,” in *Études historiques hongroises 1985: Publiées à l’occasion du XVI<sup>e</sup> Congrès international des*



previous five years of bloody wars, the principality had no significant military power, and its surviving capacity was bound by the imperial troops stationed in the country. The grand vizier took this weakness, along with the financially depleted state of Transylvania, into account and agreed that the prince should join him with only his personal retinue, a cavalry of 100 men and eighteen courtiers.<sup>86</sup>

Apafi waited until 10,000 Crimean Tatars and troops of the Moldavian and Wallachian *voievods* (1,000/600 infantry and 3,000/5,000 cavalry) crossed the country, and then marched with his retinue through Ottoman territory to the camp at Érsekújvár. When they reached the fortress on 18 October it had already fallen. His military presence was thus inconsequential, but the Ottomans tried to make use of him otherwise, publishing manifests in his name promising full freedom and security of property for the inhabitants of the country if they were ready to accept Ottoman sovereignty. The effect of this contribution, however, was counterbalanced by the prince's secret declaration to the dignitaries of the Kingdom that he did not aim to become a puppet king of Hungary in the sultan's service. In December at the close of the grand vizier's campaign, Apafi was allowed to return to his country.<sup>87</sup> In the course of the counteroffensive during the winter, the Transylvanian army managed to miss the relief of the castle Nyitra, and remained in the country in 1664 with the excuse of an attack upon Várad and a raid of *hajdú* troops on Transylvanian soil (which had been staged for this purpose).<sup>88</sup>

The anti-Ottoman wars of 1663–1664 ended in failure for the Habsburg Empire, and afterward, in Hungary, there was growing discontent with Leopold I that peaked in an armed uprising in the 1670s. Transylvania tried to support and control this movement with its modest means, but in the early 1680s the leading role of the anti-Habsburg activities was taken over from the principality's representatives by the so-called *kuruc* leaders

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*sciences historiques par le Comité national des historiens hongrois*, ed. Ferenc Glatz, et al. (Budapest, 1985), 593–612. The letters calling Apafi to the Ottoman camp are published in János Bethlen, *Erdély története*, 152–153, 162–163.

<sup>86</sup> Kraus, *Erdélyi krónika*, 565.

<sup>87</sup> Ágnes R. Várkonyi, "The Last Decades of the Independent Principality (1660–1711)," in *History of Transylvania*, vol. 2, *From 1606 to 1830*, ed. László Makkai and Zoltán Szász (New York, 2002), 252–254. See also János Bethlen, *Erdély története*, 156–157.

<sup>88</sup> János Bethlen, *Erdély története*, 215–222; Zsolt Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály (Erdély és a kurucmozgalom 1690-ig)* [Mihály Teleki: Transylvania and the *kuruc* movement until 1690] (Budapest, 1972), 44; Sándor László Tóth, "Kücsük Mehmed magyarországi tevékenységéhez" [To the activities of Küçük Mehmed Pasha in Hungary], *Aetas* 17, no. 4 (1999): 93–94.

from the group of Hungarian exiles. By this time, the Sublime Porte no longer saw in Mihály Apafi I, prince of Transylvania, his potential as an instrument to be used against the Habsburg Empire, but rather turned to the young rebel leader Imre Thököly.<sup>89</sup>

This change of preference was formalized by the sultan in 1682, with the withdrawal of the title of chief leader (*serasker* or *serdar*) granted to Apafi the year before; on 16 August 1682 in the camp at Fülek, Thököly was appointed “king” of a newly founded vassal state, the “Orta Macar” (Middle Hungary).<sup>90</sup> In the campaign led by İbrahim, *beylerbeyi* of Buda, an Ottoman army of 17–20,000 (according to others 25–30,000) men, 10–12,000 Hungarian *kurucs* of Thököly, and 5–8,000 soldiers from Transylvania took part.<sup>91</sup> The latter marched through Ottoman territory to the border castle of Fülek, and joined the ongoing siege. For the final charge, the *serasker* requested from the Transylvanians 2,000 infantry, 500 men to work in the trenches, and powder and balls for twelve cannons. They were also commissioned to destroy the walls of the fortress after its conquest by the Ottomans, after which the Transylvanian army returned home.<sup>92</sup>

In the following year, the Ottoman Empire resolved to deal a decisive blow to the Habsburgs: Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa mobilized the forces of the European vassal states and led his army against Vienna.<sup>93</sup> Prince

<sup>89</sup> János J. Varga, “Varianten der türkischen Orientierung in Ungarn: Wesselényi—Apafi—Thököly 1663–1683,” in *The First Millennium of Hungary in Europe*, ed. Klára Papp and János Barta (Debrecen, 2002), 208–215.

<sup>90</sup> On the term *Orta Macar*, see János J. Varga, “Az ‘Orta Madzsar’ szerepe Perényi Pétertől Thököly Imréig: A nyugati irányú török hódítás metodikájához” [The role of the ‘Orta Macar’ from Péter Perényi to Imre Thököly: Comments on the methods of the Turkish expansion toward the west], in *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére*, ed. Pál Fodor, Géza Pálffy, and István György Tóth (Budapest, 2002), 415–423; also Sándor Papp’s chapter in this volume. The document of appointment was recently edited by Sándor Papp, “Thököly Imrének és Közép-Magyarország népének kiállított szultáni szerződésével / Imre Thököly ve Orta Macaristan halkına verilen ahidname-i hümayun” [Treaty letter granted by the sultan to Imre Thököly and the people of Middle Hungary], in István Seres, *Thököly Imre és Törökország/Imre Thököly ve Türkiye* (Budapest, 2006), 278–289.

<sup>91</sup> At the beginning of August there were only 3,000 Szeklers, as well as 700 infantry and 700 cavalry from the Hungarian counties of Transylvania present at the prince’s camp; Apafi was, therefore, worried about how he would manage to collect 5,000 able soldiers. It was this army that left Szamosújvár on 5 August, but on the 10–11 it was joined by eleven battalions of Hungarian *kuruc* rebels, ten battalions of Hungarian *hajdús*, and two companies of German mercenaries. This was how their numbers reached 8,000. See Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 272.

<sup>92</sup> János J. Varga, *Válaszúton: Thököly Imre és Magyarország 1682–1684-ben* [At the crossroads: Imre Thököly and Hungary in 1682–1684] (Budapest, 2007), 27–36, 175–176.

<sup>93</sup> See Thomas M. Barker, *Double Eagle and Crescent: Vienna’s Second Turkish Siege and Its Historical Setting* (Albany, NY, 1967).



Mihály Apafi ordained that the insurrection of the army should begin as early as 23 February at Segesvár, and expected everyone to appear with good garments, weapons, and horses, “unlike last year and before, with wooden stirrups and in moccasins, because this time we shall have to meet our lord the grand vizier.”<sup>94</sup> The Sublime Porte also ordered the principality to send 800 carriages of victuals to Belgrade; the Transylvanian diplomats, however, managed to convince them to reduce this demand in exchange for the participation of the country’s troops in the campaign and a contribution of 10,000 thalers.<sup>95</sup>

The army of the Crimean Tatars, as well as the auxiliary troops of Moldavians and Wallachians (2,000, respectively 4,000 men strong) again used the route through Transylvania to the theater of war in Hungary, causing massive problems.<sup>96</sup> Once again it was only after their departure that the Transylvanian army of 6,000 men started their march on 8 July. They traversed Ottoman Hungary and then followed the Danube, arriving on 19 August at the encampment of the main Ottoman army at Bruck. The prince visited Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa on 22 August and was commissioned to blockade the fortress of Győr, which had a key position in the supply of reserves; together with Mustafa Pasha of Silistria guarded the bridges on the rivers Rába and Rábca. Thus Kara Mustafa managed to reposition the elite troops of İbrahim, *beylerbeyi* of Buda to Vienna, and keep his little-trusted Transylvanian vassal from making trouble. This was all the more reasonable, as the secret diplomacy of the prince throughout the entire campaign reveals that he was searching for ways to join the Christian powers.<sup>97</sup> Thus, after the relief of Vienna by Jan Sobieski, the Transylvanian troops withdrew, relatively undisturbed, to Buda as a rearguard for the retreating Ottoman army. From there, on 13 October, the grand vizier released Apafi’s troops to return home, but they suffered from epidemics during the encampment in Hungary. When they finally

<sup>94</sup> Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek történeti bevezetésekkel* [Documents of the diets of Transylvania, with a historical introduction], vol. 18, 1683–1686 (Budapest, 1895), 95.

<sup>95</sup> Varga, *Válaszúton*, 132.

<sup>96</sup> Maria Matilda Alexandrescu-Dersca-Bulgaru, “Die Rumänen bei der Belagerung Wiens,” in *Die Rumänen und die Belagerung Wiens, 1683: Aufsätze*, ed. Nicolae Stoicescu, et al. (Bucharest, 1983), 17–29.

<sup>97</sup> Varga, *Válaszúton*, 132–135. In secret, Apafi had already recommended himself as a mediator for peace negotiations to Emperor Leopold I through Pál Esterházy, the Palatine of Hungary. See Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 278–280.

arrived back on Transylvanian soil at Déva on 4 November almost half of the soldiers had expired.<sup>98</sup>

*Auxiliary Troops of the Ottoman Empire at the Princes' Side*

It is evident from the example of the Romanian voievodates that the rulers and pretenders of the vassal states who had enjoyed the trust of the Sublime Porte could count upon reciprocal military assistance from the empire. It sent the neighboring vassals as well as border troops for support when necessary. Beside the demands made on the princes, from 1572 to 1688 there was also a continuity of military help given to the Szapolyai dynasty under the rule of their successors.

The Sublime Porte did acknowledge the right of the Transylvanian diet to freely elect their prince, and confirmed the rule of István Báthory, who had been appointed by the estates' assembly. However, another candidate, Gáspár Bekes, also enjoyed some Ottoman support, in addition to the favors of the Habsburg court in Vienna. But when Bekes opted for an armed revolt in 1575, the Sublime Porte ordered its forces in Hungary and the *voievods* of Moldavia and Wallachia to assist Báthory.<sup>99</sup> The size of the forces reported in the sources varies, but even if they were limited, the narrative sources note the bravery of the Turks in the decisive battle of Kerelőszentpál (8 July 1575). In addition, the diversions they started blocked politicians from the Kingdom of Hungary from sending military support to Bekes.<sup>100</sup>

In 1611 there was a further case in which the rule of the prince confirmed by the Sublime Porte was seriously endangered. From the Kingdom of Hungary, Bálint Homonnai Drugeth, who enjoyed the support of certain Ottoman politicians, raised his flag as a pretender against Gábor Báthory.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 197–198.

<sup>99</sup> Horn, *Hit és hatalom*, 87–97.

<sup>100</sup> Narrative sources claim that the Ottoman auxiliary army consisted of 400 soldiers sent by the pasha of Temesvár, and 200 light cavalry from Wallachia. According to the reward registers, the numbers of the Ottoman soldiers should have been up to 1,000–1,500, and the order of the Porte prescribed the Moldavian and Wallachian voievods to send troops of 5,000 each. See Farkas Bethlen, *Erdély története*, vol. 3, 49, 56; Istvánffy, *Magyarok dolgairól*, vol. 3, 27–28; Szalay, *Erdély*, 227–229; Pál Fodor, “Making a Living on the Frontiers: Volunteers in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Army,” in *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe: The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*, ed. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Leiden, 2000), 229–263. During the diversions, Ottoman troops conquered the castles of Kékkő, Divény, and Somoskő, belonging to Bekes' supporter, János Balassa.

Báthory was also threatened by the former *voievod* of Wallachia, Radu Șerban, as well as by his own Saxon subjects. His enemies managed to confine him to the town of Nagyszeben, from which the prince asked for Ottoman support.<sup>101</sup> According to the chronicle of Tamás Borsos, “there came 30–40,000 Turks from the direction of Wallachia under Ömer Pasha for Báthory’s help, and 10,000 Turks from Temesvár under Zülfikar Pasha.”<sup>102</sup> No battle took place because the invaders fled upon learning of the Ottoman support, and after five days Ömer Pasha’s army was sent away from Transylvanian territory by the prince, because of the severe damage they had done during this time.<sup>103</sup>

In 1613 a new phase of Ottoman support for Transylvania began with the rule of Gábor Bethlen. The prince who had seized power with the help of Ottoman armies recognized that he was highly unpopular at the Viennese court, and to counter designs against him tried to convince the Porte to refresh its Western expansionist policies.<sup>104</sup> After 1618 he quickly joined the anti-Habsburg struggle of the Bohemian estates, and wished to involve the Ottoman Empire in the conflict as well, but initially without success. It was, however, a great loss of prestige for him in October 1620 when Karakaş Mehmed, the *beylerbeyi* of Buda, annexed Vác into Ottoman territory.<sup>105</sup>

In 1614 Bethlen still believed his armies were not prepared to march together with the Ottomans into an anti-Habsburg war, so he only asked

<sup>101</sup> Papp, “Homonnai”; Péter Vörös, “Forgách Zsigmond erdélyi expedíciója 1611-ben” [Zsigmond Forgách’s expedition to Transylvania in 1611], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 124 (2011): 864–887.

<sup>102</sup> Tamás Borsos, *Vásárhelytől a Fényes Portáig* [From Vásárhely to the Sublime Porte], ed. László Kocziány (Bucharest, 1972), 59.

<sup>103</sup> Sándor Mika, *Weiss Mihály* (Budapest, 1893), 141–143.

<sup>104</sup> See the detailed plans for an Ottoman attack against the Habsburg countries in Gábor Bethlen’s instructions to his envoy to the Sublime Porte: Sándor Szilágyi, ed. *Bethlen Gábor kiadatlan politikai levelei* [The unpublished political letters of Gábor Bethlen] (Budapest, 1879), 15–21. At the beginning of his rule the prince would have been more content if a cavalry of 2,000 Ottomans, 2,000 Romanians, and 1,000 Tatars, as well as 1,000 Ottoman infantry were left in his command, *ibid.*, 65. On the Habsburg attempts to depose Bethlen, see Oborni, “Bethlen Gábor”; Zsuzsanna Cziráki, “‘Senkinek pénzen vött rabjai nem voltunk sem nem vagyunk’: Brassó és a fejedelmi hatalom viszonya a város fejedelmi szolgáltatásai tükrében, Bethlen Gábor uralkodása idején” [“We are no slaves of anyone”: The relationship between Brassó and the princely power as reflected in the town’s services under the rule of Gábor Bethlen], (PhD diss., Szeged, 2010), 109–152.

<sup>105</sup> The Hungarian castle had secretly been promised by both sides, Bethlen and the Habsburgs, in exchange for Ottoman support. See Sándor Papp, “Bethlen Gábor, a Magyar Királyság és a Porta (1619–1621)” [Gábor Bethlen, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Porte], *Századok* 145 (2011): 953, 958; Sudár, “Iszkender és Bethlen Gábor,” 992–994.

for financial support from the Sublime Porte. By 1620–1621 the deterioration of his military situation motivated him to ask for more direct assistance, and he managed to gain some imperial troops in early 1621. In October of the same year he also obtained explicit authorization for the *beylerbeyis* of Eger and Temesvár to help him.<sup>106</sup> The few hundred cavalry coming from Ottoman Hungary played no significant role in the military activities, which were already winding down. Overall, Bethlen was able to use the visible Ottoman presence as an excellent means of putting pressure upon the court in Vienna.<sup>107</sup>

Bethlen came with a novel idea—to invite not only the Ottoman, but also the Romanian and Tatar troops to participate in the Transylvanian military activities in Hungary; this was unknown since the time of the Szapolyais. His letter, sent with the Tatar envoys to Khan Canibek Giray II, caused a considerable uproar, as the envoys were captured by Hungarian lords, who published Bethlen's offer to send 10,000 florins in exchange for 15,000 Tatar cavalry.<sup>108</sup> Although the prince's reputation was seriously damaged by his "fraternizing with the pagans," he refused to alter the plan and repeated the offer once again. As a result, 3,000 Tatars came to Northern Hungary from the Ottoman camp in Moldavia during the autumn of 1621. In the winter of the same year another 10,000 Nogay Tatars were positioned to follow under Kantemir Mirza. The prince, however, did not want to risk damage to his own country as a result of their march, and he needed the Tatars less, as peace negotiations had already begun with Ferdinand II. This unfolding context led him to allow the blockade of the mountain passes of the Carpathians, thus shutting the Nogays out of Transylvania.<sup>109</sup> During Bethlen's next campaign in Hungary in 1623,

<sup>106</sup> TMÁO I, 316–317, see Papp, "Bethlen," 963–968. His attempts to gain financial support in 1614 had all the more chance as the Ottoman Empire had already paid large sums for István Bocskai's soldiers in 1605–1606. See Nagy, "A XVII. századi Habsburg-ellenes függetlenségi harcok," 216.

<sup>107</sup> Papp, "Bethlen," 956–960. See also Gábor Bethlen's letters to his wife Károly Szabó, "Bethlen Gábornak és nejének Károlyi Zsuzsannának levelezése (Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egylet birtokában lévő eredeti és saját kezű példányokról)" [The correspondence between Gábor Bethlen and his wife, Zsuzsanna Károlyi (from the original and autographed copies owned by the Transylvanian Museum Society)], *Történelmi Tár* [2] (1879): 206; TMÁO I, 300; Samu Gergely, "Bethlen Gábor levelei feleségéhez Károlyi Zsuzsannához" [Gábor Bethlen's letters to his wife, Zsuzsanna Károlyi], *Történelmi Tár* [5] (1882): 129.

<sup>108</sup> See the report of György Széchy to Ferdinand II (26 April 1621) Szilágyi, ed., *Bethlen Gábor*, 163; Gyula Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor* (Budapest 1983), 136–137; Papp, "Bethlen," 963–964.

<sup>109</sup> See the diary of Mihály Tholdalagi: ETA I, 233–234; Andrei Veress, ed., *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești* [Documents concerning the

2–3,000 Tatar troops again joined his army and fewer also participated in his 1626 war.<sup>110</sup> The Tatars were not trained to fight against firearms; their equipment of sabers, bows, lassos, and short lances made them only suitable for raiding activities. Their strategic relevance lay mostly in their infamy, which was deliberately used by Bethlen to threaten his opponents:

if 4,000 Tatars should come—he wrote to his envoy at the Porte in 1624—the news will report about 14,000, and Your Lordship should believe that the presence of 4,000 Tatars is more effective for negotiating peace with the Germans than 20,000 Ottomans, because they are feared so much.<sup>111</sup>

It also became a normal practice for the Romanian *voievods* to send auxiliary troops at the request of the prince of Transylvania; both countries sent him 1,000 cavalry each in 1623, 1626, and again in 1644.<sup>112</sup> The *curteani*, a light cavalry equipped with bows, were usually used as advance guards of the Transylvanian troops, and as such did a great service.<sup>113</sup> But the Romanian cohorts, like the Ottomans and Tatars, also represented a burden for the prince. While they were supposed to be paid by the *voievods*, their wages were paid often late. This led to problems, as in 1644 when uncompensated Romanian soldiers tried to return home through Poland.<sup>114</sup>

Although Gábor Bethlen asked for the rank of *serdar* (Ottoman commander) and its attributes from the Sublime Porte in 1623, the rank for this campaign was given to İbrahim, *beylerbeyi* of Bosnia—known as Deli (“insane”) or Sarhoş (“drunkard”). He marched to Upper Hungary in October with an army of more than 10,000 Ottoman and Tatar soldiers from

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history of Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia], vol. 9, *Acte și scrisori (1614–1636)* [Charters and letters] (Bucharest, 1937), 240; TMÁO I, 336, 341. Ferenc Nagy Szabó notes, about the Tatar troops arriving in the autumn, that “these were taken there by the prince only for the sensation they cause,” see ETA I, 139.

<sup>110</sup> For both campaigns, see János Kemény, “Önéletírása” [Autobiography], in *Kemény János és Bethlen Miklós művei*, ed. Éva V. Windisch (Budapest, 1980), 49–50 and 68.

<sup>111</sup> TMÁO I, 410. On the Tatar military, see the study of Mária Ivanics in this volume.

<sup>112</sup> According to János Kemény, in 1623 their numbers were as high as 4,000. See Kemény, “Önéletírása,” 43.

<sup>113</sup> Bethlen had already asked (in 1620) for the “red cavalry” (“ross”) from Wallachia with the explanation: “we have enough heavy troops, but are in great need of light ones.” TMÁO I, 234. See also ETA I, 237.

<sup>114</sup> Kemény, “Önéletírása,” 262. The Transylvanian higher command in 1681 tried to avoid routing the Romanian auxiliary armies through the principality’s territory, but they failed to acquire the Sublime Porte’s support. See Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 258.

the *eyalets* of Bosnia, Kanizsa, Buda, Eger, Temesvár, and Silistria.<sup>115</sup> However, their military contribution was limited because neither the prince nor the pasha wanted to attack the army of Ferdinand II, then entrenched near Hodonín. Bethlen could not even use the Ottoman threat during his peace negotiations, as the pasha's troops—without informing him—returned home after the truce was concluded on 20 November. This was long after the standard end of the Ottoman campaigning season, the day of Kasim (23 October). The prince displayed another proof of the ambiguity of Transylvanian–Ottoman relations. He informed the captains of the Hungarian border fortresses of the route taken by İbrahim's runaway armies, and several smaller troops were thus defeated before reaching Ottoman territory.<sup>116</sup>

In the summer of 1626 Bethlen again managed to gain the Sublime Porte's support for his anti-Habsburg campaign. This time the commander of the Ottoman troops—assembled in a manner similar to 1623—was Murteza Pasha, who was also appointed *beylerbeyi* of Buda. He began his campaign by besieging the castle of Nógrád.<sup>117</sup> Bethlen sought to lure him away (in order to avoid the repetition of Vác's case of 1620) but succeeded only at the end of September, when the Ottoman pasha united his forces with those of Bethlen and his ally, Ernst Count of Mansfeld. No decisive battle took place—neither the Transylvanians and their allies, nor Albrecht von Wallenstein, the leader of the imperial troops, dared to risk it. But Bethlen at least managed to convince the pasha to station his armies in Hungary

<sup>115</sup> The order of Sultan Mustafa I about the marching of the troops (1623): TMÁO I, 381–382. See also the letters of Abdul Kerim, *beylerbeyi* of Silistria, and İbrahim Pasha to Gábor Bethlen (27 May 1623), *ibid.*, 381–382, and 400. For the Tatars, probably from the Bucak, see Kemény, “Önéletírása,” 49–50. On İbrahim Pasha, see Balázs Sudár, *A pécsi Jakovali Haszan-dzsámi* [The Jakovali Hasan cami in Pécs] (Budapest, 2010), 20–22. For Bethlen's request concerning the title of *serdar*, see his instruction to his envoy at the Sublime Porte: TMÁO I, 392.

<sup>116</sup> Gábor Bethlen's letter to Gáspár Illésházy (18 October 1623), Szádeczky, “Bethlen Gábor,” 54–55; Kemény, “Önéletírás,” 43–50; diary of László Révai, entries 27 and 30 November 1623, in László Szalay, *Galántai Gróf Eszterházy Miklós Magyarország nádora* [Count Miklós Eszterházy, palatine of Hungary] (Pest, 1866), vol. 2, 86–87. On the entire campaign, see László Nagy, *Bethlen Gábor a független Magyarorszáért* [Gábor Bethlen for the independent Hungary] (Budapest, 1969), 323–351.

<sup>117</sup> ETA I, 238; Gábor Bethlen's letter to Gáspár Illésházy (26 August 1626) Lajos K. Szádeczky, “Bethlen Gábor levelei Illésházy Gáspárhoz 1619–1629” [The letters of Gábor Bethlen to Gáspár Illésházy], *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 27 (1915), 90. The most important Ottoman source on the campaign is available in a recent modern edition: Nedim Zahirović, *Murteza Pascha von Ofen zwischen Panegyrik und Historie: Eine literarisch-historische Analyse eines osmanischen Wesirspiegels von Nergisi (El-vasfû l-kamil fi-ahvali l-veziri l'-adil)* (Berlin, 2010).



for winter quarters, thereby gaining considerable advantage for his peace negotiations.<sup>118</sup>

Like 1623 and 1626 when the campaigns of Bethlen in Hungary received fairly significant Ottoman support, in 1643 Prince György Rákóczi I also managed to acquire the consent and help of the Sublime Porte for his anti-Habsburg designs in Swedish and French alliance.<sup>119</sup> The rather small troops, only 1,000–1,500 men strong, did not play a large part in the military activity, and Rákóczi could not convince the leaders of Ottoman Hungary to start a diversion with the 7–8,000 soldiers they collected around Buda.<sup>120</sup> Rákóczi had problems keeping discipline among his Ottoman auxiliary troops, and his attempts to do so were interpreted instead as favoring the “common enemy,” the royal Hungarian armies. At the end of August 1644 one such disciplinary measure was used as a pretext for a temporary withdrawal of the Ottoman troops from the Hungarian theater of war. The preparations for the War of Candia motivated the Ottoman command to reduce their numbers and by 1645 entirely cease their activity on behalf of the Transylvanian prince.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> The prince had to use force to suppress a revolt in the Ottoman camp among those soldiers who preferred to leave the theater of war after the day of Kasim. See Kemény, “Önéletírása,” 76–78. On the campaign, see *ibid.*, 66–73; Gábor Bethlen’s letters to Gáspár Illésházy: Szádeczky, “Bethlen Gábor,” 95–97, 101–102, 104; and to Palatine Miklós Esterházy (29 September 1626) Szalay, Galántai Gróf Eszterházy Miklós, 398; Nagy, *Bethlen Gábor*, 383–437.

<sup>119</sup> Although these campaigns have the greatest number and most detailed descriptions in the Hungarian literature on Transylvanian military history, the political background of the Ottoman involvement remains an open question. See, for example, Nagy, *Bethlen Gábor*; László Cseh Szombathy, “I. Rákóczi György 1644-es hadjárata” [The 1644 campaign of György Rákóczi I], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* n.s. 3, no. 1 (1956), 43–76, and n.s. 4, nos. 1–2 (1957), 179–203; *idem*, “I. Rákóczi György 1645. évi hadjárata” [The 1645 campaign of György Rákóczi I], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* n.s. 4, nos. 3–4 (1957), 101–135.

<sup>120</sup> According to the chronicle of Katib Çelebi, Rákóczi asked for as many soldiers as had been sent from the *beylerbeylik* of Eger to support Bethlen, which numbered 1,500. See Imre Karácson, ed., *Török történetírók* [Turkish historiographers], vol. 3, 1566–1659 (Budapest, 1916), 340. On Rákóczi’s attempts to start the diversion, see István Szentpáli’s letter to the prince (21 June 1644) Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Levelek és okiratok I. Rákóczy György keleti összeköttetései történetéhez* [Letters and documents of the history of the eastern contacts of György Rákóczi I] (Budapest, 1883), 790.

<sup>121</sup> See Cseh-Szombathy, “I. Rákóczi György 1644-es hadjárata”; Cseh-Szombathy, “I. Rákóczi György 1645. évi hadjárata”. On the motivation of the Ottoman withdrawal in 1644, see György Rákóczi I’s letter to Mihály Maurer (1 September 1644), Antal Beke, and Samu Barabás, ed., *I. Rákóczy György és a Porta: Levelek és okiratok* [György Rákóczi I and the Porte: Letters and documents] (Budapest, 1888), 709–710. On further disciplinary problems concerning the Ottoman troops, see the prince’s letter to the same (11 and 20 December 1644), Ágoston Ötvös, ed., *Rejtelmes levelek első Rákóczy György korából* [Secret letters from the age of György Rákóczi I] (Kolozsvar, 1848), 122–126.

The next opportunity for a prince of Transylvania to intervene in the affairs of the Kingdom of Hungary in the vein of Bethlen and Rákóczi was presented by the anti-Habsburg Hungarian uprisings in the late 1670s. The Porte chose to decline to become involved in the conflicts in Hungary due to their Polish and Russian wars (1672–1676 and from 1677 on). Prince Mihály Apafi I only received the sultan's consent and the title of *serdar* in November 1680, and the *ferman* reached Transylvania in May 1681. Although the size of the army under Apafi's command was impressive, the campaign could not boast significant results.<sup>122</sup> Because of the slow mobilization of the Transylvanian army and the discord between Apafi and the young leader of the *kuruc* rebels, Imre Thököly, they failed to conquer the important border fortress of Szatmár. The negotiations to abandon the fortress were stalled by the pillage of the town by the Ottoman auxiliaries. Contrary to his promises, the cohorts of the *beylerbeyi* of Várad left the camp with their captives; and when the demoralized Transylvanian army also left the theater of war, even the two smaller castles of Kálló and Nagykároly (conquered earlier by Apafi) were recaptured by the imperial troops.<sup>123</sup>

### Conclusions

When assessing the relatively limited scope of the military cooperation between Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire, we should also take into account that during the time frame in question there were rather long periods of peace at the western and northern borders of the Ottoman Empire, where a Transylvanian involvement could have been called upon and put to use. The Ottoman Empire had been in open war with the Habsburg Empire between 1568 and 1683, for only sixteen years, and with

<sup>122</sup> In September 1681, Apafi had 7,000–8,000 Transylvanian, 7,000 Ottoman, 2,000 Moldavian and Wallachian troops, 6,800 *kurucs* under Imre Thököly's command, and 1,200 *kurucs* under Transylvanian command. In sum, approximately 24–25,000 soldiers and sixteen cannons. This was the largest army since the 1657 Polish campaign of György Rákóczi II. On the campaign, see Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 253–264; on the attempts to acquire the sultan's consent in the late 1670s, *ibid.*, 87–233.

<sup>123</sup> Trócsányi, *Teleki Mihály*, 253–264. On the role of Szatmár, see Géza Pálffy, "A felső-magyarországi főkapitányság és Erdély Báthory István uralkodása idején (1571–1586) (A Báthory kutatás egy feldolgozatlan kérdésköréről)" [The captain generalcy of upper Hungary and Transylvania during the rule of István Báthory (1571–1586): On a question not addressed earlier by the research concerning Báthory], *Mediaevalia Transilvanica* 1, nos. 1–2 (1997): 113–126.



the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth for only eight. In contrast, in the Mediterranean the wars against Venice and Spain lasted thirty-five years altogether, and against Persia no less than forty-six. The fact that wars taking place in faraway theaters did not compel the direct involvement of Transylvania does not indicate that the principality had a special status. When the Ottoman Empire waged war on a power that fell into the land's radius of action, it was asked to participate in one way or another.

The preceding overview suggests there was no period in the principality's history when the mechanisms of mutual support were not present. The *'ahdnames* prescribed such commitments for both sides, and it seems that practice even preceded the normative texts. For example, active defense against Cossack interventions in Moldavia was routine even before the codification of the obligation to help in official documents. The demands of the Sublime Porte clearly show the Ottoman political elite's method of using pressure with reference to precedents, which was also mirrored by the sultan's orders. In 1593 the Sublime Porte described its expectations concerning the participation of Transylvania in the Hungarian war with reference to John Sigismund's campaigns of 1566. In 1672 they used the fifty-year-old exemplar of Gábor Bethlen to demand victuals for the Polish campaign from Prince Mihály Apafi I. The size of the cohorts also followed precedents: it was normal for the Romanian voievodates to regularly send 2,000 auxiliary troops to Transylvania while the Ottomans sent 1,000–1,500 soldiers.

When looking at the problems from the side of Transylvania, one can see that they were relatively successful at avoiding the obligations, even in the post-1660 period. This is usually seen as a period of decline in the principality's power, as illustrated by the years 1663 and 1664. At the same time, it was not an exception to the rule that the main Transylvanian army had to participate in the Ottoman campaigns of 1682 and 1683. During the Long Turkish War of the late sixteenth century Zsigmond Báthory was able to avoid a similar situation only by joining the Christian side. György Rákóczi I had to endure an analogous conjuncture in the shadow of the Polish war in 1634, and Gábor Bethlen was unable to resist similar Ottoman demands in 1617.

In their wars between 1529 and 1568 the Ottomans could only achieve and maintain the rather ambiguous backing of the Szapolyai family because of the high stakes for the dynasty itself in their struggle against the Habsburgs. After 1571 the situation was consolidated, as noted by the chronicler János Baranyai Decsi:

Neither the goals, nor the motives of the war are the same as they were back then, when John and his son, with the help of Turkish arms, had their rivalry with the Austrian princes for the possession of the country. There is but one law in Hungary now and it sees the Turk as a violent conqueror, the enemy of law, freedom and faith, and it tries with all its power to repulse it.<sup>124</sup>

It is in light of this lack of motivation that the Porte's ability to advance its own interests should be judged: far more sultanic orders arrived in the principality than those that were actually followed in practical terms. It depended upon the political wisdom of the Ottoman elite to force their subjects, prone to "disobedience," to live up to their obligations. They had to decide what kind of task could be trusted to the Transylvanians, who were known to regularly collaborate with the Porte's adversaries.

Nevertheless there were two peculiar aspects to the cooperation. On one hand, the Hungarian influence over Wallachia and Moldavia—earlier vassals of the Kingdom of Hungary—was exercised between 1571 and 1594 by Transylvania, the state then seen as the Kingdom's successor, with the consent of the Ottoman sultans.<sup>125</sup> The peace and stability of this region, connected to Transylvania through a thousand channels, and the good relations between their rulers, was, traditionally, the primary interest of the principality. Nevertheless, in the Long Turkish War the prince of Transylvania built on these close contacts and managed to compel the *voievods* to break away from the Porte; thus, the Ottoman elite began to disapprove of the signs of Transylvanian influence in the *voievodates*, and after the wars between 1658 and 1662 they managed to almost entirely eliminate it.

On the other hand, after the attempts of the Szapolyai dynasty to unify the Kingdom of Hungary, under the rule of Gábor Bethlen and Mihály Apafi I the opportunity arose to merge the old Hungarian territories not

<sup>124</sup> Baranyai Decsi, *Magyar históriája*, 90.

<sup>125</sup> Benda, "Erdély politikai kapcsolatai"; Klára Jakó, "Hogyan láttak minket? Magyar-sággép a 17. századi és 18. század eleji moldvai és havasalföldi elbeszélő forrásokban" [How did they see us? The image of Hungary in the narrative sources from Moldavia and Wallachia from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries], *Történelmi Szemle* 53, no. 2 (2011): 163–182. Time and again, there was even a Transylvanian military presence in the *voievodates*. See the order of Sultan Murad III to Zsigmond Báthory to allow the *voievods* to recruit soldiers in Transylvania (30 September 1591) Karácson, ed., *Török-magyar oklevéltár*, 172–173; and the correspondence between them, in which the sultan calls upon the prince not to keep more than 800 soldiers at the *voievods'* court, "according to the old customs," Veress, ed., *Documente*, vol. 4, 15–17. For the presence of Transylvanian soldiers at the *voievods'* courts in the first half of the seventeenth century, see Demény, *Bethlen Gábor*, 49, 59–61, 111; Kármán, "György Rákóczi II's Attempt," 239–240.

under Ottoman control. This required the help of the sultan's weapons and meant acknowledging his suzerainty, but was in the interests of the Transylvanian princes. None of these rulers could fulfil this goal—and we are not even sure whether György Rákóczi I, who was also fighting an anti-Habsburg war, ever aimed at it—and in most cases they did not even gain the necessary Ottoman support for it. The contribution of several thousand soldiers from the borderlands was sufficient for pillaging the theater of war, but not for achieving serious strategic goals. At the same time, the campaigns of Gábor Bethlen in 1623 and 1626 might not have ended with compromise if he had not had at his side the entire army of the Hungarian Ottoman borderlands, which in size almost rivaled the prince's very own troops.