

GÁBOR BÁTHORI

**The Political and Military Alliance of the Transylvanian Joint Rule and the Porte
during István Bocskai's and Gábor Bethlen's Reign**

Authorial Representation and Official Censures of the PhD Thesis Titled Above

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Stating academic problem

Researches connected to The Osmanli Empire and to Hungary's history in the 16th and 17th centuries, professional debates enriched the foreign archives and essays, including Turkish ones, with new fragments and figures, which at the same time perfected the knowledge about the era and happenings as well as helped to get to know the forces in the Carpathian Basin and also the regional decisions fitting to high politics, the individually appearing Transylvanian role.

Concerning the above mentioned facts, analyzing the political, military and security history of paradigm-change in the 16th century Carpathian Basin I brought it into a wider connection and parallel, synthesized István Bocskai's and Gábor Bethlen's Turkish relationship who under changing authorities politicized for Transylvania's security.

Summarizing: in my thesis I intend to deal with the following crucial issues:

- Middle-European relationships of the eastern part of historic Hungary, highlighting the interests of the Osmanli Empire and Transylvania, and the interests of the Hapsburg Empire and Transylvania.
- outer and inner factors shaping Prince István Bocskai's and Prince Gábor Bethlen's Turkish relations
- the role of the politician under the circumstances of changing political and military authorities, and the way the feodary princes could move within the relationship with the Porte
- the most crucial characteristics and values of the Transylvanian Joint Rule's army
- the establishment of the military cooperation of the Porte and Transylvania during the campaigns against the Hapsburgs, as well as the way the princes kept political and military realities in their minds during their wars.

1. Aims of Research:

I believe the aim of my research, with the help of published sources and bibliographies, is to think over and analyze the process which led, from the 15-year war in Transylvania in the reign of the Porte in 1594, through the movements against the Hapsburgs which broke out in the 17th century following the Turcophobe twist, to the political and military relationship and cooperation of the Turkish and the Joint Rule.

Within this topic I intend to aim the followings:

- **define** the region's relationship to high politics, within this I highlight the following concepts:
 - Main line of forces of the region
 - Transylvania's margins and security policy
 - The content of political and military alliance generated from the struggles against the Hapsburgs

- **represent** the reasons of the feodary Transylvania's rebellions during the 15-year war,
 - The decreasing security of the Joint Rule, its role in the struggles of Hungarian classes during Bocskai's and Bethlen's reigns, the individual relationship and interests of the Porte and Transylvania, and the background of their political and military alliance-establishment
 - the opening European margins due to the 30-year war, Bethlen's politics, campaigns his relationship with his Turkish ally
- **analyze** those motivations, interests, political and military aims that shaped the security of the Transylvanian Joint Rule, the Hapsburg Empire and the Porte in the given period

2. Adopted Researching Methods:

During my research I mainly applied Hungarian sources and documents, as well as sources of the given research area. I made my synthesis by organizing and analyzing the above mentioned sources.

- Above all I used my own experience and professional knowledge
- I took part in conferences and memoir meetings concerning the given topic
- I regularly consulted with experts of the given period, with:
 - recognized university tutors,
 - academic authorities from the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy (MTA)
 - academic authorities from the Institute of Military History of Miklós Zrínyi University of National Defence (ZMNE)

While writing my thesis and research I considered fitting to the bases of the research, objectivity, accuracy and proof of my statements as the target guideline.

3. Description of the researches chapter by chapter

Chapter 1: Hungarian-Turkish Relations in the 16th Century

The establishment of the Transylvanian Joint Rule and its feodary relationship with the Osmanli Empire was due to the mid-European authority and military policy which was generated by the Turkish expansion in the first half of the 16th century. This huge paradigm change, the great transition in the line of forces made the research of this period extremely urgent. Therefore, I also paid some attention to analyze the establishment of the collision line between the Hapsburg and Osmanli Empires, to the emergence of the feodary Transylvanian Joint Rule surrounded by army, and also to the details of the conclusion in four small parts.

Part 1: The westward expansion of the Osmanli Empire seemed to be fatal for Hungary. The latest researches indicate that the main objective of the Turkish campaigns in 1521 and in 1526 was to conquer the country in a fractional way. Being in opposition with the Porte, which at that time was at the zenith of her military performance, and being loaded by the burden of competition with the Hapsburg-French, Hungary had no chance in the Carpathian Basin to shape the balance of powers. The country's security was weakened by the defeat at

Mohács, by Lajos II's death which led to a political vacuum and a dual election, and by the civil war between János I and Hapsburg Ferdinand I.

The Carpathian Basin became more valuable for the Hapsburg Empire due to the Turkish expansion, therefore the Hapsburgs were not willing to stand the reign of János I, so the only solution he was left – and this is a historic paradox – was an agreement with the Turkish, as he could not get the support of the European Christian States. Ferdinand I. being in Hungary was in sharp opposition with Sultan Sulejman's ambitions of becoming an absolute great power, so due to the fact that the Turkish westward extension slowed down Sulejman's Hungarian policy interests led to an agreement with Janos I in 1527, which actually meant a feodary state. The issue was now where to draw the line of the power balance between the two empires, which part of the country could they draw under their authority and make the gained part secure.

Part 2: One of the most crucial points of this process is Transylvania's becoming feodary dependent. With János I's death in 1540 the Turkish occupation of the country got faster and faster. Vienna being the main strategic target required the occupation and massive military control of the middle territory as well as keep the eastern part, Transylvania from joining the Royal Hungary based on the occupational right and on the Hungarian-Turkish alliance of 1527/28.

The Hapsburgs seemed to be unable to reinforce their authority in the geographically distant Transylvania which strengthened the Transylvanian classes' knowledge of being left alone. The real politician triad of István Báthory, István Bocskai and Gábor Bethlen fully appropriated the margins and they saw Transylvania's security in the alliance with the Porte which was made under the pressure of necessity. This undoubtedly led to the reinforcement of Transylvanizm.

Part 3: Following Sulejman's conquest the main target became the security of the so established borders, the maintenance of the military status quo between the two empires, which was guaranteed by the Treaty of Adrianople in 1568 for 25 years. Meanwhile, there are crucial changes in the background; the pace of European economy speeded up, the Osmanli extension policy broke down due to the defeat at Lepanto which started the series of depression concerning monetary policy and statecraft parallel with the defeats from the Persian at the eastern front line.

The Turkish politics, however, kept an eye on the balance of power in Middle Europe; they could not tolerate neither the Hapsburg's attempt to the Polish throne nor István Báthory's image of a Transylvanian-Polish personal union. Transylvania's status is a crucial issue for both authorities because the changes happening here can affect the two feodary Romanian Joint Rules.

According to my judgment the active defensive strategy and the military managing program of Vienna, which was started at the western fortress line in 1580, took into consideration that in case of gaining power and passing the exam successfully they could attract the Transylvanian political elite to contract out of their Turkish obligation, and to take up a military cooperation with the Hapsburg.

Examining the events of the period in this chapter I:

- exhibited the state of the Middle European force and military policy in the first half of the 16th century in chronological order
- highlighted the new force lines established in Hungary
- represented the emergence of the historic paradox which in 1527 led to a Hungarian-Turkish alliance

- analyzed the circumstances of the birth of the Transylvanian Joint Rule, the alliance with the Porte as one of the possibilities of establishing Transylvania's security and which led to the strengthening of Transylvanizm.

Chapter 2: The consequences of the 15-year war in Transylvania

In the last decades of the 16th century the Osmanli Empire was trying to get out of her inner depression by a westward campaign and started a long war against the Hapsburg Empire between 1591 and 1606. The war politics, the first years of the campaigns ending in equal balance of powers forced the central Middle European Turkish-feodary states, Transylvania and the two Romanian Empire to make decisions concerning the followings: taking upon orientation changes, joining to the Christian coalition, the possibility of separation: the union of Hungary.

The security interests of the two great powers in war were different; the Porte's interest was to keep Transylvania's loyalty as the Turcophil policy of Romanian Empires depended on it. The Hapsburg's interest, on the other side, was to draw Transylvania and with it Moldva and the Snowy Plain into Christian coalition sharing the Turkish forces which partly were to attack Vienna; and the reconstruction of the territorial union in Royal Hungary.

Zsigmond Báthory gave an answer to Transylvania's historic dilemma when in 1595 made a military-political alliance with King Rudolf I. This decision meant the total change of the already existing security policy. The three feodary joint rules holding that far the Turkish orientation now depended on the victory of the Christian coalition. After the liberation of Snowy Plain, the victory at Gyurgyevó and the recapture of the fortresses along the river Maros, in 1596 the Turkish counter-attack, Eger's and Mezőkeresztes' defeat proved that the balance of power between the two great powers is equal, so Transylvania's security was in a great trouble. This situation started a series of tactics giving the Transylvanian Turcophils the possibility to activate themselves. The foreign policy movement for gaining Transylvania led to a domestic state of war. The three feodary joint rules wearing arms against each other made Transylvania a battlefield, and the rifler mercenaries surrendered Transylvania. The Turkish diplomacy's help and military interference seemed to be little to reconstruct the Transylvanian feodary system; it could not prevent Transylvania from returning to the rule of the Hungarian Crown. For a short time it seemed with the union of the two countries Transylvania's fate and the competition among the empires striving for it were decided.

In this chapter:

- I represented and discovered the reasons and motivations that from 1591 to 1606 led to the 15-year war between the two empires which needed huge forces
- I examined the risks of Transylvania's decision giving up the Turkish orientation
- I represent the military results of the 15-year war, and also the reasons of the stalemate emerged between the two empires
- I went into detail concerning Transylvania's security and also dealt with her reasons of attempting to return to the Porte

Chapter 3: The Bocskai Rebellion and the Porte's Alliance

In this chapter I analyzed the complex process in which the inner balance of forces brought great social conflicts into the surface at the beginning of the 17th century in the Hapsburg and Osmanli Empires which got exhausted during the long war, and these social conflicts led to uncertainty of authorities in the Carpathian Basin.

The Hapsburg absolutism started an attack against the constitutional rights of the classes, which resulted in rebellions of Royal Hungarian classes and towns in 1604. One of the characteristics of these rebellions was that they were started when the Hapsburg attention was targeted to the European international politics, or due to her military conflicts her forces were occupied. It is also true to these movements that they tried to use the Turkish presence to their political success.

István Bocskai was erected to the top of the rebellions by the individual situation around his personality and later it also led to the military cooperation with the Porte. For the Porte the Hungarian rebellion against the Hapsburg created the possibility of reconstruct her influence in Transylvania, and also the possibility of ending the newly moving war.

The political –military cooperation signed in Istanbul in 1605 was constructed with the regard of the two parties. For the Porte Bocskai became such a valuable ally due to his military-political achievements and his growing army that she did not take the risk to reconstruct the security of her own and that of Transylvania.

The Christian Transylvania's military alliance with the Osmanli Empire commanded serious European followings. However, I strongly believe that Bocskai's Turkish relations and military cooperation did not break European military forces. Bocskai as a real politician never questioned his belonging to Christian Europe; he never gave up his plan of Hungarian integrity. He considered his own alliance provisional, with it he intended to use shifts among Mid-European forces and interest, and decreasing the Hapsburg-Turkish pressure he wanted to increase Transylvania's margins and security. The Porte did not risk her alliance with Bocskai as in a certain extent she depended on it, but she also abused it for confirming her situation in Hungary by conquering Esztergom and widening her protective line at Buda.

Bocskai believed that the political-military dilemma caused by this situation could only be solved by a peace treaty between the Hapsburg and the Turkish parallel by the reconstruction of class interests, the support of free religious worship, the acknowledgement of the Transylvanian Joint Rule, as well as by giving Hungarian territories to Transylvania to strengthen her economic-defensive abilities this way. After the Treaty of Vienna deciding the fate of the Hungarian rebellion the war between the great powers was ended by the compromise Treaty of Zsitvatorok based on status quo.

In my opinion since Mohács' and Buda's defeat concerning treaties this was the first time a Hungarian politician had been able to get across Hungarian interests and strengthen Transylvania's independence while surrounded by Hapsburg-Turkish balance of powers. So could Bocskai set up his concept that between the two great powers even being in Turkish feodarity it is Transylvania's existence and security that effects the security of whole Hungary during this period.

In this chapter:

- I represented and classified the circumstances that led to the alliance and military cooperation between Sultan Ahmed I and István Bocskai
- I examined the consequences of this alliance, its effects on Transylvania's security, the Transylvanian role reconsidered in Bocskai's concept

Chapter 4: Gábor Bethlen's and the Porte's Relationship

After István Bocskai's death the question of succession within and out of the Transylvanian borders led to confusing situations which the two great powers tried to abuse for strengthening their influences. Abusing this uncertainty and using the power of armed heyducks first Gábor Báthory then, after getting into a vacuum of authority, the Porte with a demonstrative procession, the Turkish politics in Gábor Bethlen's personality, secured feodary Transylvania's interests. Under changeable political authority circumstances in Transylvania the politician is given an extremely important role – how to use his power, whether he can create political, economic and military dimensions, which three together make out the joint rule's security.

Gábor Bethlen, to achieve this position, created the period's ideal state, the centralized, and international authority practice, monetary and economic policy on new bases, wide-ranging diplomacy and huge military force, which enabled Bocskai's dream about Transylvania's role to come true.

The Transylvanian security policy was absolutely based on Hapsburg-Osmanli relationship. Gábor Bethlen had the burdensome responsibility to widen Transylvania's relations with the help of his outstandingly tactical abilities, and to increase his obedience, to protect his country's interest from the Turkish, all in all to strengthen Transylvania's security. From 1618/19, with the outburst of the 30-year war new European perspectives opened for Bethlen. His taking part in battles against the Hapsburg – due to his army and western ally - his power in the Turkish alliance grew and he brought up the most crucial issue of the Hungarian affairs: would there be a turning point with the emergence of the International Kingdom which finally leads to Turkish expulsion?

Gábor Bethlen, after his defeat at White Mountain (Fehérhegy), realized that the powers in the area would stay the same as neither the Hapsburg nor the Turkish interests wanted to abolish status quo.

While analyzing Bethlen's and the Porte's relationship:

- I introduced that the Porte's primary security interest is a faithful Transylvania without authority confusion
- I proved that an outstandingly talented politician is able to establish the abilities that strengthen Transylvania's security policy in a territory with changing powers
- I referred to the fact that the Porte's interest is to support movements against the Hapsburg, but at the same time both power's aim is to maintain status quo.

Chapter 5: The 30-year War and Gábor Bethlen

In the longest section of my thesis I deal with three issues that basically determine the individual Transylvanian margins and that gave a role to the eastern part of the 3-part thorn Hungary, to Transylvania on the stage of Europe's high politics.

One of the conditions is the period of the European change of era in which the first continental war, the 30-year war (between 1618 and 1648) played a crucial role. The war's real question was if the Spanish and Hapsburg hegemony could be abolished. New authority groups, political and military coalitions emerged where religion also got some role. All these led to a struggle between the Christian Europe and the Islamic Turkish Empire which became a regional issue till the middle of the 17th century. The battlefield of the struggle became the German Empire where Europe's interests of international authority-political strategy accumulated.

Gábor Bethlen with his sensitivity of political processes noticed the movement in the European interests and authority relations early, in the Czech-period of the war and hoped if he managed to connect the conceptionally strengthened Transylvania into this margin; the Hapsburg weakening helps him to establish the international kingdom.

To achieve this, from Transylvania's point of view the most important security policy conditions were the followings: economic policy of the joint rule's authority building which was the basis of the potential army, the Porte's policy that provided the military support needed to the anti-Hapsburg struggle.

Bethlen's army and abilities were shaped together by Transylvania's historic traditions, the consequences of Bethlen's home policy, the European military development and its effects in the distant state. His army consisted of the period's classical arms, mainly the infantry, the cavalry and the artillery. The advantages and disadvantages of this army could be seen in the campaigns against the Hapsburgs in 1619/21, 1623 and 1626.

The happenings of certain war periods made Bethlen realize the fact that the union of Transylvania and Royal Hungary opposed the intentions of the two great powers but the price of the Turkish political and military protection made him be careful; the occupation of Vác in 1626, King and Emperor Ferdinand II's attacking power, the indifference of the Hungarian classes and the inadequate support of protestant western allies.

Though not being able to unite the two countries at the outburst of the war, Bethlen managed to strengthen Transylvania's security, to broaden the Mid-European area's facilities with European possibilities.

In this chapter:

- I represented and analyzed the European authority policy in the first third of the 17th century, the reasons of the 30-year war outburst, the aims of the established military and political coalitions, periods and balance of powers in the battles
- I introduced the consequences of the war in Mid-Europe and the outburst struggles of the classes, which brought front lines against the Danube-Hapsburg Empire
- I went into details introducing Bethlen's army, policy which led to anti-Hapsburg alliance and military role taking
- I dealt with the ally Turkish military support during the campaigns in 1623 and 1626 in a separate section
- I touched Bethlen's and Ferdinand II's treaties in the certain periods of the campaigns, Transylvania's security and shaping her margins

6. Conclusions

The Osmanli Empire's westward expansion meant a great security to the Hungarian Kingdom located to the Carpathian Basin. The country continually splitting into three parts was forced to adopt the circumstances lasting for one and a half centuries. Analyzing the force lines' effects it can be seen that Transylvania – due to her secondary military role and her right to conquer, parallel with the Hungarian-Turkish alliance signed in 1527/28 – was connected to the Porte as an individually feodary state keeping her strong relationship with Royal Hungary and Christian Europe.

However, the Hapsburg Empire being far from the eastern part of the country could not spread her protection to it. The military stalemate of the 15-year war did not make any changes in the balance of powers between the two great powers; both countries' primary aim was to keep up their own security policy parallel with the status quo.

Transylvania's staying alone resulted in an individual policy. István Báthory, István Bocskai and Gábor Bethlen represented a sort of policy to keep up the security which regarded the eastern – middle – European geopolitical environment. Keeping an eye on the union of the country they established the Transylvanian policy while being in a coerced alliance with the Turkish, which provided the Joint Rule's state existence. The Turkish orientation, generated from geopolitical necessity and the Turkish interests hiding behind the anti-Hapsburg movements starting from Transylvania, resulted in distrust and political imposition among European politicians and among the classes of Royal Hungary, but it was also proved under changing political powers that the abilities, real political sense, tactical and conception establishing ability, use of power of the politician, even if anything could have happened in Transylvania at the turn of the 16th-17th centuries, greatly supported the economic and cultural strengthening of the Joint Rule.

7. Academic Results

I consider academic results of my thesis the followings based on the organization and analysis of my research work:

1. Using primarily the earlier theses but also with the help of new sources, data I represented the special political and military situation emerged between the Porte and Transylvania in 1603/04, which supported the rebirth of the Turkish alliance.
2. Within the barrier of the length of my thesis I represented detailed the political and military happenings operating together in the alliance of Transylvania and the Porte by using, analyzing, setting up a synthesis and confirming the given professional literature highlighting the extent of security coercion and what both parties had to take upon due to the alliance.

8. The Usability of the Thesis

I consider my thesis adaptable in the following possibilities:

- Helps in a more modulated way to represent and get to know the political and military cooperation of the Turkish alliance emerged during István Bocskai's and Gábor Bethlen's anti-Hapsburg movements
- Further on, analyzing the security of the Hapsburg, Osmanli Empires and Transylvania in the period's Middle-Europe in new points and

construction helps the researchers of the period and those who are interested in this topic concerning anniversaries

- Besides, it can get a chance of being applied in the field of education at the appropriate faculties of ZMNE such as in
 - Military History
 - Faculty of Political Theory and History

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Gábor Báthori