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## Polish–Transylvanian Relations and English Diplomacy from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid–17<sup>th</sup> Century

A great number of diplomatic reports, instructions, and anonymous news-letters provide substantial evidence of the ever increasing involvement of late Elizabethan and early Stuart diplomacy in Transylvanian, Polish, and Turkish affairs. No doubt, the failure of Spanish efforts to depose Queen Elizabeth made it possible for contemporary English foreign policy to relinquish its defensive tactics in European affairs.<sup>1</sup> This new approach of active involvement was reluctantly adopted by King James I too whose daughter and son-in-law, the Elector Palatine, became entangled with a long lasting dynastic conflict with the Habsburgs. For this reason, wars generated along the eastern borders of the Habsburg provinces were considered as instrumental in diverting or occupying considerable forces of the rival powers of England.<sup>2</sup>

The emergence of Transylvania, a vassal principality of the Turkish Empire in the eastern part of the disintegrated Kingdom of Hungary, gave rise to different diplomatic and military combinations when its first prince of great political vision, István Báthori, became elected King of Poland. As a special legacy of Báthori's reign, English diplomats continued to pay significant attention to Polish-Transylvanian relations for over half a century. By all means, England's rivalry with the Catholic countries of contemporary Europe as well as the vested interest of English merchants in the Baltic

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<sup>1</sup> See the complex issues of Elizabethan foreign policy, including the role of its most formative figure. Conyers *Read*: *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*. I-III. Oxford 1925. Black underlines the importance of commercial interests: John B. *Black*: *The Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603*. Oxford <sup>2</sup>1976, 239-242. Of the recent analyses of the priorities of late Tudor foreign policy: Richard B. *Wernham*: *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1558-1603*. Berkeley/Ca. 1980.

<sup>2</sup> The motifs of contemporary Stuart policy were first described in full details in: Samuel R. *Gardiner*: *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1642*. I-X. London 1883-1884. See also some of the major works on these issues of the past few decades: G. *Davies*: *The Early Stuarts*. *The Oxford History of England*. Ed. G. Clark. Oxford <sup>2</sup>1959; Sidney R. *Brett*: *The Stuart Century, 1603-1714*. London 1961; Elmar *Weiss*: *Die Unterstützung Friedrich V. von der Pfalz durch Jakob I. und Karl I. von England im Dreißigjährigen Kriege, 1618-32*. Stuttgart 1966; James R. *Jones*: *Britain and Europe in the Seventeenth Century*. London 1966; Gerald M. *Howat*: *Stuart and Cromwellian Foreign Policy*. London 1974; Roger *Lockyer*: *The Early Stuarts. A Political History of England, 1603-1642*. London/New York 1989; Barry *Coward*: *The Stuart Age. England, 1603-1714*. London 1994. See also two monographs on the keyfigure of contemporary English diplomacy: Michael J. *Brown*: *Itinerant Ambassador. The Life of Sir Thomas Roe*. Lexington 1970; Michael *Strachan*: *Sir Thomas Roe*. Salisbury 1989.

trade largely influenced the handling of Polish-Transylvanian relations by contemporary English diplomacy.

The first analysis, Dávid Angyal's seminal study on Transylvanian-English diplomatic contacts, was published one hundred years ago in 1900.<sup>3</sup> The Polish historian, Josef Jasnowski, published his similarly important review of sixteenth and seventeenth century Anglo-Polish relations in 1948.<sup>4</sup> In the 1960s Charles Talbot compiled and edited a series of volumes under the auspices of the Institutum Historicum Polonicum of Rome containing letters and papers relating to English-Polish diplomatic contacts in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, several aspects of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Polish-Transylvanian political combinations were revealed by Talbot publishing the reports of English agents who were resident or travelling through Poland at the time. Almost simultaneously with the issuing of Talbot's volumes, a most significant work on Polish-Transylvanian relations at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was published by Ludwik Bazylow in 1967.<sup>6</sup> In Hungary the latest comprehensive analysis of the diplomacy of the Princes of Transylvania was given by Gábor Barta, Katalin Péter and Ágnes R. Várkonyi in the relevant chapters of a three volume synthesis of the history of Transylvania in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup>

Although some recent studies have touched upon the foreign policy of the Princes of Transylvania, including the involvement of English diplomats in sixteenth and seventeenth century Hungarian affairs,<sup>8</sup> the intriguing task of elucidating Polish-Transylvanian relations with the help of contemporary English diplomatic sources seems to have failed to attract the at-

<sup>3</sup> D. Angyal: Erdély politikai érintkezése Angliával. In: Századok 34 (1900) 309-325, 398-420, 495-508, 702-711, 873-904.

<sup>4</sup> J. Jasnowski: England and Poland in the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> Centuries. London [et al.] 1948.

<sup>5</sup> C. Talbot: Res Polonicae Elisabetha I Angliae regnante conscriptae ex Archivis Publicis Londoniarum. Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae (IHPR) Rome 1961; C. Talbot: Res Polonicae Iacobo I Angliae regnante conscriptae ex Archivis Publicis Londiniarum. IHPR Rome 1962; C. Talbot: Res Polonicae ex archivo Musei Britannici. I-II. IHPR Rome 1965-1967.

<sup>6</sup> L. Bazylow: Siedmiogrod a Polska 1576-1613. Warszawa 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Erdély története. I-III. Ed. Béla Köpeczi. Budapest 1986. The relevant volumes contain a comprehensive bibliography of the diplomatic correspondence of the Princes of Transylvania.

<sup>8</sup> Lajos Demény – Paul Cernavodeanu: Relațiile politice ale Angliei cu Moldova, Țara Românească și Transilvania în secolele XVI-XVIII. București 1974; Lajos Demény: Bethlen Gábor és kora. Bukarest 1982; C. Brennen: The Life and Times of Isaac Basire. Durham 1987 [Unpublished PhD Thesis]; Elek Csetri: Bethlen Gábor életútja. Bukarest 1992; Paul Cernavodeanu: The Issue of the Pashalyk of Oradea as Mirrored in the Relations between Transylvania and England during the Reign of Michael Apafi (1662-1665). In: Revue roumaine d'histoire 32 (1993) 332-348; György Kurucz: Die britische Diplomatie und Ungarn vom 14. bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. In: Ungarn-Jahrbuch 24 (1998/1999) 31-68; Meinolf Arens: Polnisch-ungarische politische Interferenzen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. In: Ungarn-Jahrbuch 25 (2000/2001) 35-46; Sándor Gebei: Az erdélyi fejedelmek és a lengyel trón. In: Erdélyi Múzeum 53 (2001) 1-29; György Kurucz: Sir Thomas Roe és az erdélyi-lengyel viszony Bethlen Gábor fejedelemsége idején. In: Magyarhontól az Újvilágig. Emlékkönyv Urbán Aladár ötvenéves tanári jubileumára. Eds. Gábor Erdődy, Róbert Hermann. Budapest 2002, 55-63.

tention of historians.<sup>9</sup> This paper is intended to throw some light on this special field of contemporary English diplomacy primarily based on researches carried out into the diplomatic correspondence of English envoys and ambassadors held in the Public Record Office. No attempt will this time be made to investigate the stance of English diplomacy on Polish-Transylvanian-Hungarian relations during the war of independence led by Ferenc Rákóczi II, Elected Prince of Transylvania, because it has thoroughly been analysed concerning the role of the English-Dutch mediation between Rákóczi and the Court of Vienna.<sup>10</sup>

## I

The ill-fated battle of Mohács in 1526 resulted not only in the ransacking and devastating of the central parts of Hungary, but in the emergence of two rival kings and the subsequent division of the country. The western and northern counties remained in the possession of the Habsburg monarch whereas the eastern part of the country, Transylvania, became a vassal principality of the Turks. Sultan Suleiman's concept of establishing a buffer zone in the region instead of trying to conquer Hungary's entire territory on account of the limited scope of action of the Turkish forces should be deemed as the logical explanation for the incomplete conquering of the Kingdom.<sup>11</sup>

Thirty years after the fall of Buda the continuous conflicts between the Habsburgs and János Zsigmond of Transylvania, who happened to be the grandson of the King of Poland, seemingly came to a standstill with the signing of the Treaty of Speyer. Renouncing his title as Elected King of Hungary as well as acknowledging Habsburg authority, János Zsigmond actually manifested the unity of the Kingdom of Hungary. However, the Estates of Transylvania soon needed to hold a new Diet in Weißenburg (*Gyulafehérvár, Alba Iulia*) to elect a new prince, because János Zsigmond suddenly died. The athename conveyed by the Chiaus to the Estates expressed the wish of the sublime Porte that István Báthori of Somlyó, the Constable of Großwardein (*Nagyvárad, Oradea*), be elected. The estates were aware of the importance of electing a prince not just accepting the recommendation of the Turks as it happened in Moldavia or Wallachia. How-

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<sup>9</sup> See the crucial issues of contemporary Polish foreign policy with a comprehensive bibliography in Zbigniew *Wójcik*: Lengyelország nemzetközi helyzete a 17. században. In: *Századok* 122 (1988) 829-851.

<sup>10</sup> *Angol diplomáciai iratok II. Rákóczi Ferenc korára, 1703-1712*. Ed. Ernő Simonyi. I-III. Budapest 1872-1877. See also the relevant parts of *Rákóczi tükrök*. I-III. Eds. Béla Köpeczi [et al.]. Budapest 1973; *Rákóczi tanulmányok*. Eds. Béla Köpeczi [et al.]. Budapest 1980.

<sup>11</sup> Géza *Perjés*: Szulejmán koncepciója és Erdély. In: *Tanulmányok Erdély történetéről*. Ed. István Rác. Debrecen 1988, 88.

ever, this time the decision of the estates was in harmony with the Turks's intention: a man of real authority was elected according to the two chroniclers of the election, Kristóf Berekszói Hagymás and Farkas Bethlen.<sup>12</sup> Báthori's subsequent gesture whereby he swore allegiance to the Emperor who held the Crown of Hungary reflected his commitment to the restoration of the unity of the country. He deliberately chose the title *vaiivode* instead of *prince*, but he did not hesitate to act against Gáspár Bekes who soon tried to undermine his position with the help of the Habsburg monarch. No doubt, Báthori's successful defiance to Emperor Maximilian made him an eligible candidate for the Crown of Poland when the Yagiellons became extinct and he clearly became one of the very few foreign monarchs that the Court of London considered to be worth doing business with.

The news of Báthori's election as Prince of Transylvania was communicated to State Secretary Sir Francis Walsingham from Italian sources in June 1571.<sup>13</sup> Hungary had long been a constant theatre of war and intelligence relating to that part of Europe was assessed in London on the basis of whether the Habsburgs might need to divert considerable military forces there. However, this inactivity of Elizabethan diplomacy concerning the affairs of such remote parts of Europe was beginning to change from an observer status into a formative one.<sup>14</sup> Queen Elizabeth's diplomacy was controlled by her shrewd councillor, Walsingham, who set up a network of agents thereby making it possible for the Queen to make her decisions in the light of every possible combination of her rivals' policies.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, when the mounting danger of the Habsburg grip on England was becoming more imminent in the 1570s, the different aspects of causing a diversion in the Habsburgs' back was carefully studied in London. This political necessity made Báthori's subsequent election as King of Poland defying his Imperial rival even more appealing, albeit the settlement of commercial conflicts with Poland over the English trade with Muscovy also influenced the Queen's attitude.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, Walsingham was very keen on nurturing Anglo-Polish relations despite the fact that no congratulations were at first conveyed to István Báthori on his accession to the Throne of Poland. However, Walsingham received ample intelligence of the circumstances of Báthori's election, reception, and coronation in Poland.<sup>17</sup>

In 1578 William Harborne, the first English Ambassador to the Porte, was travelling via Poland to take up office in Constantinople. By that time

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<sup>12</sup> *A Báthoriak kora*. Ed. Katalin Sebes. Budapest 1982, 5-16.

<sup>13</sup> Public Record Office [PRO] SP 70/118 items 1221, 1222/1.

<sup>14</sup> *Kurucz*: Die britische Diplomatie, 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of the motifs of contemporary English foreign policy, see Wernham.

<sup>16</sup> *Jasnowski* 18-20.

<sup>17</sup> PRO SP 70/136 item 422, SP 70/138 item 698, SP 70/140 item 786.

Anglo-Polish trade relations seemed to have been normalized by King Stephen who issued his patent whereby English merchants were granted the freedom of trade throughout the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>18</sup> Báthori's attitude to the English merchants was partly affected by his resentment towards the merchants of Danzig (*Gdańsk*) over their rebellion. On the other hand, he hoped that by granting special privileges to the English merchants he would be able to divert them from their trade with the Russians who used English weapons, powder, guns, and ammunitions in their wars against Poland.

However, King Stephen's subsequent campaigns against the Russians proved that he had not really managed to prevent the Muscovites from obtaining supplies from England. This inevitably led to the deterioration of Anglo-Polish relations. Nevertheless, when talks began between Emperor Rudolph and Báthori concerning the possession of Sathmar (*Szatmár*, *Satu Mare*) and other castles along the Transylvanian border in 1582, Walsingham ordered his agents not just to infiltrate the English Catholic communities in Poland, as John Rogers did, but to work on the mending of severed relations with Báthori's court.<sup>19</sup> No doubt, any kind of agreement between the King of Poland and the Emperor might have brought about the strengthening of the Catholic League against England. For this reason, John Herbert followed Báthori's court throughout half of the Kingdom of Poland just to obtain an audience. In his report Herbert then stated that »there is no lack in him [Báthori] of inclination« to have good relationship with Queen Elizabeth as well as making a quite interesting observation that certain Hungarians were granted special favours in the Polish court thereby raising the jealousy of the Polish nobility.<sup>20</sup> In any case, the success of his mission and Báthori's positive response was largely dependent on the opinion of one of the favoured Hungarians, a former student of the University of Padua, Márton Berzeviczy, the head of the Hungarian Chancery, who himself had visited England before.<sup>21</sup>

As regards the relationship between Poland and the Turkish Empire, as long as King Stephen reigned, a constant avoidance of conflicts characterized his policy vis-à-vis the Turks. Yet, this relative peace was quite precarious, because the Tartars who were the Sultan's subjects often made incursions into Polish territories. The Cossacks who lived by the Dnieper and at that time were the subjects of the King of Poland often ransacked Turkish territories, so Báthori was forced to send his ambassador to Constantinople with the promise of indemnity for the damage caused by the Cos-

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<sup>18</sup> PRO SP 88/1 f. 1.

<sup>19</sup> PRO SP 78/8 item 68, SP 80/1 f. 67; *Jasnowski* 18-20.

<sup>20</sup> PRO SP 88/1 f. 87. See also Janusz *Tazbir*: Magyarország mint szimbólum és figyelmeztetés a régi lengyel irodalomban. In: *Századok* 122 (1988) 815-828, here 827.

<sup>21</sup> László Cs. *Szabó*: Bevezetés. In: *Erdély öröksége. Erdélyi emlékirók Erdélyről*. II. Eds. László Makkai, László Cs. Szabó. Budapest 1940, V-XLVI, here XII-XIII.

sacks.<sup>22</sup> Báthori's conciliatory policy was definitely welcomed by Elizabeth's court in the 1580s, because it was thought in London that the imminent danger of a Spanish invasion against England might be averted by a Turkish onslaught against the Habsburg territories. Therefore, it seemed more expedient from an English point of view not to have the Turks engaged in a conflict with Poland, because it might have alleviated their threat to the countries of the King of Spain and of the Emperor.

William Harborne, who originally was an agent of the Levant Company and was formally given the status of a diplomat in 1582 reported to London with relief in his letter of October 1583 that the Turkish troops sent to Moldavia were contained at the Polish-Moldavian borders by the King of Poland's superior Polish forces.<sup>23</sup> In his letter of 15<sup>th</sup> September 1584 he again wrote to Walsingham that Báthori's Polish troops could be deemed as guarantors of the peace along the Transylvanian-Moldavian-Polish borders.<sup>24</sup>

As was anticipated, the death of King Stephen created a new situation in Transylvanian-Polish-English relations. Zsigmond Báthori, the late king's nephew, a young and volatile character succeeded him in Transylvania. His uncle's reign in Poland might have destined him to an even higher position, but the attitude of the Polish nobility to the Báthoris had become quite resentful by that time and some contemporary pamphleteers even branded the late King Stephen as »the Hungarian dog« just to go into the other extreme by calling him »Stephen the Great« one or two generations later.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the Estates of Poland did not want to have another Hungarian on the throne, although Zsigmond Báthori was quite logically considered to be a possible claimant to the throne even by English diplomatic intelligence as is revealed by Orazio Palavicino's report addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1587.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, the Habsburgs also failed to make themselves more popular with the Polish nobility and the overwhelming majority of the Estates were still adamant about not electing a Habsburg Archduke as King of Poland. However, Archduke Maximilian, Emperor Rudolph's brother, managed to rally the support of some members of the Silesian nobility. He was marching to Krakau (*Kraków*) with his troops and Stephen Powle, Walsingham's agent, noted that his army which soon began to besiege the Polish city contained Hungarian troops as well.<sup>27</sup> Obviously, the capturing of the Crown of Poland by the Habsburgs would also have been detrimen-

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<sup>22</sup> *Erdély története* I, 450-451; Janusz *Tazbir*: The Commonwealth of the Gentry. In: History of Poland. Eds. Aleksander Gieysztor [et al.]. Warsaw 1968, 196-197, 239.

<sup>23</sup> PRO SP 97/1 f. 40v.

<sup>24</sup> PRO SP 97/1 f. 75.

<sup>25</sup> *Tazbir*: Magyarország, 827.

<sup>26</sup> PRO SP 81/5 item 10. See also SP 101/27 item 22.

<sup>27</sup> PRO SP 101/81 item 1.

tal to England's economic and political interests. Therefore the news of the actions of Transylvanian troops to help the Polish Chancellor Jan Zamojski, Zsigmond Báthori's brother-in-law, raise the siege of Krakau was received with relief in London.<sup>28</sup> What was still unknown to Queen Elizabeth's court was whether the successful claimant to the Polish throne, Sigismund Wasa, would continue his predecessor's policy on refraining Poland from getting involved in a conflict with the Turks or not. A Turkish invasion seemed very likely, considering that the Turks' protégé, the Prince of Transylvania, might also have felt induced to take actions to gain the Crown of Poland. After all, Edward Barton, the English Ambassador to Constantinople, reported in his letter of November 1588 that an invasion of Transylvanian troops against Poland was anticipated.<sup>29</sup> However, the Transylvanians were quite concerned over the outbreak of a possible Polish-Turkish war, because the Grand Vizier's troops might have marched through Transylvania on their way to Poland. Jan Zamojski, the Chancellor of Poland, resorted to all possible diplomatic means to avert the danger of a Turkish invasion even by taking the services of the English Ambassador to Constantinople. However, Prince Zsigmond Báthori's diplomacy was also very active at the time as Barton's reports revealed it to Walsingham.<sup>30</sup> Although Transylvania was not included in the ensuing treaty between Poland and the Turks, contemporary records of some Hungarian noblemen of Transylvania gave credit to the English diplomacy for its successful mediation.<sup>31</sup>

Soon after that Zsigmond Báthori's envoy contacted Barton again. He conveyed the Prince's greetings as well as asking him to foster his master's claim to the Crown of Poland at the Porte if King Sigismund III renounced his crown and returned to Sweden. He said that England would certainly benefit from the unification of Transylvania with Poland, because these territories could counterbalance the overwhelming power of the Habsburgs in the continent. According, Barton supported the idea of Queen Elizabeth's intervention by using her authority at the Porte in favour of the Prince of Transylvania.<sup>32</sup>

However, Zsigmond Báthori's diplomatic designs to obtain the Porte's consent to the implementation of his high aspirations were foiled by the outbreak of the Fifteen Years War between Emperor Rudolph and the Turks. Most of Hungary's territory was devastated by the campaigns and the Turks demanded substantial contributions of their vassal principalities to the costs of the war. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1592 Barton reported that the Sultan demanded the payment of an extraordinary tribute by the Prince of Transylvania and his troops join the Turkish forces. However, more impor-

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<sup>28</sup> PRO SP 101/81 item 5a.

<sup>29</sup> PRO SP 97/1 f. 152.

<sup>30</sup> PRO SP 97/1 f. 88, SP 97/2 f. 17.

<sup>31</sup> *Angyal* 319.

<sup>32</sup> PRO SP 97/2 f. 115.

tantly, Barton was urging London for instructions concerning his possible diplomatic intervention for the King of Poland and the Prince of Transylvania.<sup>33</sup>

Undoubtedly, Zsigmond Báthori was in a very delicate situation and as soon as the Chiaus arrived from Sinan, the Grand Vizier, demanding that the Transylvanians deliver further military equipment and materials for the war and that the Prince join him with his army at Belgrade, the Prince's Council decided to review Transylvania's policy on the Turks. At the same time they decided to send István Kakas to England via Poland to solicit Queen Elizabeth's intervention at the Porte.<sup>34</sup> The Queen subsequently promised her diplomatic support to the Prince of Transylvania in her letter of 9<sup>th</sup> February 1594.<sup>35</sup> However, England could not jeopardise her relationship with the Turks. Although certain English diplomats, such as Christopher Parkins, tried to mediate between the two warring powers, but that must have been meant to deceive foreign courts, because a Turkish onslaught in Hungary could always engage considerable Imperial forces there despite the fact that the Porte was traditionally deemed as the archenemy of Christendom. Barton soon joined the Turkish forces in Hungary and followed them in their campaigns.<sup>36</sup>

Zsigmond Báthori's reluctance to support the Sultan in his campaign in Hungary precipitated his break-up with the Turks as well as his joining the Emperor especially after news was beginning to spread of an imminent Tartar incursion into Transylvania. Barton mentioned in his letter of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1594 that the Tartar forces would certainly devastate Podolia on their way to Hungary »being maisterless people without governours«.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the Transylvanian delegation left for Prague to negotiate the terms of an alliance with Emperor Rudolph the same month.<sup>38</sup> As was expected, Transylvania finally got involved in the war in the shadow of a quite unfortunate alliance with Mihai Viteazul of Wallachia.

As regards Poland, Chancellor Zamojski managed to keep the country away from a serious conflict with the Porte. This, however, did not mean that Polish troops were not fighting together with the Hungarians against the Turks. Barton reported to Sir Robert Cecil, Lord Burghley, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1594 that the Transylvanian, Moldavian, and Wallachian troops had been reinforced by Polish volunteers who wanted to take revenge for

<sup>33</sup> PRO SP 97/2 ff. 161, 163.

<sup>34</sup> János *Baranyai Decsi*: Báthori Zsigmond harcai a török ellen. In: *A Báthoriak kora* 81-83; *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești. III: Acte și scrisori (1585-1592)*. Ed. Andrei Veress. București 1934, 25-28.

<sup>35</sup> PRO SP 97/2 f. 241.

<sup>36</sup> Lajos *Kropf*: Egervára eleste és a mezőkeresztési csata 1596-ban (Angol jelentések nyomán). In: *Századok* 29 (1895) 397-421, 591-618; Vera *Fodor*: Angol tudósítás Eger ostromáról és a mezőkeresztési csataról. In: *Hadtörténelmi közlemények* 101 (1988) 552-562.

<sup>37</sup> PRO SP 97/2 f. 245.

<sup>38</sup> *Erdély története* I, 524.



the destruction of their homes. In addition, large numbers of Cossacks joined them from the Polish territories in the hope of taking some booty.<sup>39</sup> Further evidence of Barton's interest in joint Polish-Hungarian actions against the Turks was revealed in his report to Sir Thomas Heneage dated 12<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> August 1595 when he wrote that 10.000 Poles and 10.000 Hungarians from Transylvania were fighting the Turks, but it was »not publikly licensed by the King of Poland«. <sup>40</sup>

According to the assessment of English diplomats, the involvement of Polish troops in Prince Zsigmond Báthori's actions in Wallachia definitely carried a certain risk element for the Kingdom of Poland. Barton expressed his strong conviction after reviewing the situation in Moldavia that Poland should avoid any kind of conflict with the Turks, because it is a country which »is ill governed and open without defence of stronge castles, the Turks might goe [...] even unto Dansk«. <sup>41</sup> In the light of the successes of the Turks in Hungary his considerations should not be considered as far fetched. Chancellor Zamojski was completely aware of the danger which is corroborated by the fact that he felt it necessary to send an envoy to the Porte to congratulate the Turks on their successes in Hungary and manifest Poland's friendly terms with them by not forming a league with Emperor Rudolph. The same letter refers to instructions relating to Barton's overtures to be made in the course of preparing the Prince of Transylvania's reconciliation with the Sultan. <sup>42</sup>

One month later on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1595 he reported to Lord Burghley that Polish-Transylvanian relations had become extremely bad. The bone of contention was that the King of Poland could not condone Báthori's meddling with the affairs of Moldavia by having Vaivode Jeremia deposed since Moldavia had formerly been under Polish influence. <sup>43</sup> Christopher Parkins who was in Warsaw at the time compiled a summary report of Polish affairs in December 1595. He wrote that »Transylvania [...] became a common table talk in everie place of the Cittie in most odious manner«. <sup>44</sup>

Naturally, political and military considerations did not always coincide with the idea of Christian solidarity. Barton noted in his summary of the events of 1596 that a Polish nuncio arrived in the Turkish camp under Eger to negotiate the diversion of Tartar forces from the southern territories of Poland on their way to Transylvania and Hungary. <sup>45</sup> However, court diplomacy and real life inevitably showed serious discrepancies, for Barton reported in his letter of 1<sup>st</sup> May 1597 that Transylvanians, Poles, Cossacks,

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<sup>39</sup> British Library (BL) Cotton. Nero B. XII. f. 115v.

<sup>40</sup> PRO SP 97/3 f. 24.

<sup>41</sup> BL Cotton Nero B. XII. f. 120.

<sup>42</sup> PRO SP 97/3 f. 40.

<sup>43</sup> PRO SP 97/3 f. 61.

<sup>44</sup> PRO SP 88/1 f. 242.

<sup>45</sup> PRO SP 97/3 f. 147.

and Wallachian troops were trying to hinder the passage of the Tartars to Hungary.<sup>46</sup>

Unhappily, the volatility of Prince Zsigmond Báthori's policy resulted in military and diplomatic defeats. The English Ambassador to Constantinople no longer wanted to compromise himself with representing his case at the Porte.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Báthori failed to maintain proper relations with Poland. The general state of Polish-Transylvanian relations of the period were best reviewed by Sir George Carew in his impressive work entitled „Relation of the State of Polonia and the United Provinces of the Crown, 1598”.<sup>48</sup> Carew who was a lawyer before being sent to carry out different diplomatic missions, gave a comprehensive analysis of contemporary social, economic, and political affairs of Poland. He stated that the Poles had always been suspicious of the Habsburgs and their animosity towards them increased during the reign of King Stephen. Of Zsigmond Báthori, the Prince of Transylvania, he wrote that he »fell from the Turke to the Emperor [...] and withall fell into the mislike of the Poles«. Carew's assessment of the dangers Poland had for some time been exposed to seemed absolutely correct when he stated that the country any time needed to defend herself against both the Austrians and the Turks. One could really wonder if Poland might be able to resist all these pressures with anarchy prevailing in the country, because »the King can hardly content the nobility« and »Polonia is subiect to private quarrels«.<sup>49</sup>

Barton's successor in his post, Henry Lello, continued to report the twists and turns of Transylvanian policy, including Zsigmond Báthori's renunciations, to Lord Burghley.<sup>50</sup> His letter of 5<sup>th</sup> May 1599 gave a summary of the circumstances of the election of Cardinal András Báthori, as Prince of Transylvania, the former Prince's cousin, and also transmitted Chancellor Zamojski's propositions to the Queen to support the Cardinal at the Porte.<sup>51</sup> Cardinal András Báthori enjoyed the full support of the influential Chancellor of Poland which explains the terms of a peace treaty offered by him to the Turks. Henry Lello in his letter of 25<sup>th</sup> August 1599 noted that the Cardinal was asking for pardon for Mihai Viteazul of Wallachia who in return would join the Turks against the Emperor. In addition, Cardinal Báthori would secretly procure aid from the King of Poland »who shalbe his pledge for the keepinge of the sayed peace inviolable«.<sup>52</sup>

However, Mihai rather allied himself with the Habsburgs and broke into Transylvania in order to seize power in the principality which had

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<sup>46</sup> PRO SP 97/3 f. 184.

<sup>47</sup> PRO SP 97/3 ff. 201, 216.

<sup>48</sup> See relevant part of *Talbot: Res Polonicae* (1965-1967).

<sup>49</sup> *Talbot: Res Polonicae* (1965-1967), Pars I.

<sup>50</sup> PRO SP 97/3 ff. 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 257, 261, 263, 265.

<sup>51</sup> PRO SP 97/4 ff. 29, 34.

<sup>52</sup> PRO SP 97/4 f. 43.

fallen into anarchy on account of Zsigmond Báthori's policy.<sup>53</sup> Lello subsequently reported that the killing of Chancellor Zamojski's protégé, Cardinal Báthori, would bring about the intervention of the King of Poland. Lello's reports of the Polish preparations were confirmed in his letter of 26<sup>th</sup> April 1600 when he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil that 10.000 Poles under Zolkowsky »the most vallarous captaine in all Poland« were going to enter Transylvania to retaliate the death of Cardinal András Báthori.<sup>54</sup> However, by the time the Polish troops entered Moldavia, Mihai, the self-proclaimed Prince of Transylvania, had withdrawn from there. The excesses of his rule, which was after all just as bad for Transylvania as Zsigmond Báthori's, became widely known and the Polish envoy to the Porte tried to use all possible arguments which might have convinced the Turks to allow a Polish intervention in Transylvania. Henry Lello reported of Mihai that »the King of Poland his Nuntio here informeth to the greatest tirant that is in this age«.<sup>55</sup>

The invasion of Transylvania by Poland would inevitably have entailed a conflict with both Emperor Rudolph and the Turks. In any case, this action was mainly deemed as Chancellor Zamojski's private affair as was stated in Lello's report of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1601. By that time, Zsigmond Báthori had disgraced himself to such an extent that he did not even dare return to Poland for fear of the King of Poland's reaction to his ignoring the Polish requests not to enter into any league with the Habsburgs.<sup>56</sup>

## II

The political disarray in Transylvania as well as the destructions and starvation caused by the unpaid Imperial troops commanded by General Giorgio de Basta brought the principality to the verge of a complete devastation. However, intelligence of the successful movements of István Bocskai, the new Prince of Transylvania, were included in Lello's reports as of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1605.<sup>57</sup> As a result of Bocskai's advance in the Habsburg parts of Hungary, the Emperor was forced to negotiate the terms of a treaty which were meant to redress the political and religious grievances of the country. According to English diplomatic intelligence compiled in May 1605, the Estates of Transylvania disclosed their reasons for fighting the Emperor to the Poles.<sup>58</sup> The Jesuit councillors tried to persuade Sigismund III to adopt Rudolph's absolutistic policy and aggressive methods of Coun-

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<sup>53</sup> István Szamosközy: Erdély története. In: *A Báthoriak kora* 242-266.

<sup>54</sup> PRO SP 97/4 f. 83.

<sup>55</sup> PRO SP 97/4 f.101.

<sup>56</sup> PRO SP 97/4 f. 144.

<sup>57</sup> PRO SP 97/5 f. 1.

<sup>58</sup> PRO SP 88/2 f. 131.

terreformation. However, his efforts to support the Emperor against Bocskai definitely failed when the king was forced to send his envoy to the Estates of Transylvania. The proposition of Polish mediation between the Emperor and the Hungarians was the success of the Polish noble opposition.<sup>59</sup>

Thomas Glover, Henry Lello's successor in his office at the Porte, received no special instructions from London whether he should try to influence the Porte's attitude to Transylvania or not. This was the period when Poland was beginning to get involved in a long lasting conflict with the Swedes, but according to Glover's report, Polish interference in the affairs of Moldavia made Poland's relationship quite delicate with the Turks too.<sup>60</sup> As Glover pointed out in his letter of December 1607, an imminent conflict over Moldavia might as well induce the Turks to demand Transylvania's involvement.<sup>61</sup> In addition, the new Prince of Transylvania, Gábor Báthori, who just proved to be as irresponsible a ruler as his relative, Zsigmond Báthori was, seemed to promote the idea of interfering in Polish affairs according to some other English diplomatic sources from Poland in June 1608.<sup>62</sup>

As regards the diplomacy of the first Stuart King, James I., it remained quite neutral in Polish-Transylvanian affairs in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Glover, for example, was aware of Prince Gábor Báthori's efforts to gain the Sultan's approval of his plans to step up as a claimant to the Throne of Poland, but he never intervened.<sup>63</sup> One might say that Gábor Báthori's policy was by all means lacking the skills of gaining support for his aspirations. However, we should not forget that England did not feel threatened by the Habsburgs during his short reign whereby it would have seemed necessary for her to divert some Imperial forces in the course of a Turkish or Transylvanian onslaught against the Emperor. On the other hand, Polish efforts also failed to reinforce the position of the Movila family in Moldavia.<sup>64</sup> The Sultan's power and influence could not be challenged either by the vassal principalities or by Poland.

Parole Pindar, the new English Ambassador to Constantinople, reported the displacement of Prince Gábor Báthori by the Turks in his letter of 14<sup>th</sup> April 1613.<sup>65</sup> The first account of Gábor Bethlen's rise to the post of Prince of Transylvania was sent to London 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1613.<sup>66</sup> The fact that Bethlen resorted to Turkish support was interpreted by the English

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<sup>59</sup> Zsuzsanna Újváry: „Nagy két császár birodalmi között”. A hosszú háborútól Bethlen Gábor haláláig. Budapest 1984, 141.

<sup>60</sup> PRO SP 97/6 ff. 3, 13.

<sup>61</sup> PRO SP 97/6 f. 1.

<sup>62</sup> PRO SP 88/2 f. 177.

<sup>63</sup> PRO SP 97/6 ff. 138, 142.

<sup>64</sup> PRO SP 97/6 f. 265.

<sup>65</sup> PRO SP 97/7 f. 34.

<sup>66</sup> PRO SP 97/7 f. 51.

diplomats as an unquestionable proof of exposing Transylvania to the archenemy of Christendom, thereby making it possible for the Turks to invade the unoccupied territories of Hungary.<sup>67</sup> At that time King James relentlessly believed in the idea of Christian solidarity, so his distrust of the new prince is quite understandable. The whims and turns of the Báthoris' policy had always caused a lot of problems for the English diplomacy without actually benefiting from their support.

However, the priorities of Stuart diplomacy radically changed on account of the outbreak of the Thirty Years War thereby focusing the interest of English diplomats, among others, on internal Hungarian affairs. The new Emperor, Matthias, was quite determined to quell the opposition of the Estates of Hungary and did not seem to abandon the idea of implementing the Counterreformation by force. The only considerable hindrance to his policy was raised by Prince Gábor Bethlen who was not only an able military leader, but was capable of containing the absolutistic aspirations of the Habsburgs by exploiting his excellent diplomatic contacts at the Porte.<sup>68</sup> It was not an easy task, because the Habsburg monarchs constantly tried to undermine his position both with the Turks and the Christian princes of Europe. For this reason, the Habsburgs policy relied on possible claimants, such as György Homonnai, a nobleman of Northeastern Hungary, who even recruited Polish troops against Bethlen.<sup>69</sup>

The neutrality and disinterest of the English diplomacy in Transylvanian affairs as well as in the wider aspects of Bethlen's attitude to the neighbouring states ceased when King James's son-in-law, the Protestant Elector of the Palatinate, Friedrich, became elected King of Bohemia, but the Czech estates could not operate efficiently against the Emperor.<sup>70</sup> Bethlen seemed to be quite willing to take up arms against the Habsburg monarch to force him to redress the political and religious grievances of the Kingdom of Hungary, therefore the English Ambassador to Constantinople was instructed to pay special attention to the Prince of Transylvania's activity.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, Poland's conflict with the Turks, including King Sigismund III's stance on Bethlen's anti-Habsburg policy, was also taken into consideration by the Stuart diplomacy.<sup>72</sup> Homonnai's actions carried out with the help of Polish and Cossack troops in Northern Hungary in 1619, thereby making Bethlen relinquish the siege of Vienna, induced Transylvanian diplomacy to find a counterbalance to some future possible

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<sup>67</sup> PRO SP 80/3 f. 95.

<sup>68</sup> David J. Hill: *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*. II. New York 1906, 546-547, 650-651; *Strachan* 162.

<sup>69</sup> Máté Szepesi Laczkó: Emlékezetre való dolgok. In: Bethlen Gábor krónikásai. Krónikák, emlékiratok, naplók a nagy fejedelemtől. Ed. László Makkai. Budapest 1980, 96.

<sup>70</sup> *Howat* 32-33.

<sup>71</sup> *Brown* 148; *Kurucz*: Sir Thomas Roe, 59-60.

<sup>72</sup> PRO SP 97/7 ff. 3, 205, 207, 210.

diversions from Poland. Ironically, Polish arms were helping the Habsburgs against the Hungarians, whereas a prolonged Polish-Turkish conflict seemed to guarantee the safety of Bethlen's campaigns in Hungary.<sup>73</sup> The complete turn of Polish diplomacy as compared to the anti-Habsburg tradition of the Polish nobility was recorded by the English Ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Thomas Roe, when he noted that the Polish envoy was carrying out negotiations with the Turks on behalf of Emperor Ferdinand II.<sup>74</sup>

Roe shared his king's opinion of the deplorable state of Christendom whereby the lack of unity among the European princes enabled the Turkish empire, »this fearfull empire« which »is so weakened in power and corrupted in discipline« to survive.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, it hardly surprised him when the Divan expressed its displeasure with Bethlen over his reconciliation with the Emperor and the Poles.<sup>76</sup> However, Bethlen's coming to terms with the Poles might have had much more far reaching consequences according to Roe's interpretation. The lack of Turkish control over the Tartars, who kept invading Polish territories, always carried the possibility of a Turkish-Polish war. In the end Bethlen managed to eliminate the danger of Polish intervention in Hungary and the Turks' engagement in a conflict with Poland was meant to enable him to act more freely in Hungary than ever before. Consequently, »the Emperor courts Bethlen Gábor rather, I think, to hold him neutrall«.<sup>77</sup>

When Bethlen contacted Roe in the hope of creating some form of cooperation with England through his letter of 11<sup>th</sup> August 1622,<sup>78</sup> the Transylvanian envoy gave a comprehensive account of the King of Poland's direct influence on the concluding of the Treaty of Nikolsburg (*Mikulov*). Roe in his subsequent report to State Secretary Sir George Calvert expounded why Bethlen had been forced to abandon his plans on being informed by his brother that »the Kyng of Poland at the isntigation of the emperor, by intelligence with some of the principall lords of Transylvania, did practise a revolt, and promised ayd to make a new prince, that should wholly depend upon the empire and Poland [...] seeing the grand signor [the Sultan] had suddenly concluded peace with the Poles, he [Bethlen] feared he should bee left alone to the burthen of the warr; in which the kyng of poland bee- ing at ease, might assist the emperor«.<sup>79</sup>

Roe's account of the negotiations with Bethlen's envoy and Count Matěj Thurn, the leader of the Estates of Bohemia, revealed that the Prince

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<sup>73</sup> PRO SP 97/7 f. 218.

<sup>74</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*. Edited and printed by S. Richardson [et al.]. London 1740, 13.

<sup>75</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 22, 23.

<sup>76</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 45; PRO SP 97/8 f. 143.

<sup>77</sup> PRO SP 97/8 f. 194v.

<sup>78</sup> PRO SP 97/8 f.216.

<sup>79</sup> PRO SP 97/8 f. 231.

of Transylvania would need »to leave 6.000 men about Cassovia [*Kaschau, Kassa, Košice*] to make guard against the Poles«<sup>80</sup> in the course of his planned campaign against the Emperor. Bethlen's concern over Sigismund III's hostile attitude was justifiable as was revealed by Roe's report of 20<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> September 1622 when he wrote of his talks with the Grand Vizier who admitted »that the King of Poland did demand the desertion and destruction of [Bethlen] Gabor«.<sup>81</sup>

In the meantime, the attitude of the English diplomacy to Bethlen was beginning to change, especially after Bethlen's envoys visited all the western ambassadors and assured them that the Prince of Transylvania »will not give one foote of ground to the Turks«.<sup>82</sup> Roe in his report of 9<sup>th</sup> August 1623 acknowledged Bethlen's diplomatic skills concerning his relations with Poland as well as using the Turks to his own ends: »I should resolve [Bethlen] Gabor doth abuse the Turks; and though hee make all shewe to the contrary, because hee dares not yett offend them [...].«<sup>83</sup> However, Bethlen's new campaign planned with the participation of Tartar auxiliary forces against the Emperor could easily have upset his relationship with Sigismund III, because the Polish envoy declared that the Poles »will not suffer the Tartars to passe their dominion in ayd of Bethlem, to the prejudice of Christendom«.<sup>84</sup> In any case, it seemed quite useful to Bethlen to keep Sigismund III at bay by spreading the news of his asking the Turks to send Tartar aid to him.<sup>85</sup>

In the end, Roe was instructed from London to support Bethlen at the Porte, because it became clear that the advance of the Prince of Transylvania could foster the Elector Palatine's claims in Bohemia.<sup>86</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury also admitted the importance of Bethlen's campaigns against the Emperor although he noted that »some blemish it is unto his action that hee useth the Turks and Tartars which maketh Christian princes afrayd to ioyne any way with him«.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, the Court of London wanted to use Bethlen who was deemed as »necessary for diversion«.<sup>88</sup> Not surprisingly, the issue of a political marriage was also discussed implying that the Prince of Transylvania might have some even higher aspirations. The English Ambassador wrote to Queen Elizabeth, the King of Bohemia's wife, James I.'s daughter, that Bethlen's real aim was marriage and »he treats that also secretly in Poland, and hath his eye set-

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<sup>80</sup> PRO SP 97/8 f. 267.

<sup>81</sup> PRO SP 97/8 f. 259.

<sup>82</sup> PRO SP 97/9 f. 104.

<sup>83</sup> PRO SP 97/9 f. 162.

<sup>84</sup> PRO SP 97/9 f. 191.

<sup>85</sup> PRO SP 97/10 f. 40.

<sup>86</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 244.

<sup>87</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 253.

<sup>88</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 286-287.

tled upon greater hopes in that kingdome«. <sup>89</sup> Roe definitely expressed his regret over not having supported Bethlen more convincingly, because he seemed have to a »powerfull faction in Poland«, and should he be elected as king there, he might decide to avoid conflicts with the Emperor. <sup>90</sup>

Roe's letter of 26<sup>th</sup> November 1624 to State Secretary Dudley Carlton analyses the importance and circumstances of Bethlen's aspirations as a claimant to the Throne of Poland in full detail. Bethlen's proposition to Ferdinand II to marry his daughter for political reasons made him unpopular with some of his supporters, who were mainly the Radziwills, but he tried to make himself acceptable to the nobility by saying that he could guarantee peace and security for the Kingdom of Poland from the Turks and the Tartars. According to Roe, it was a »weighty« argument and knowing him he would not ever let the Turks extend their influence on Poland »for when hee shalbee strong, hee wilbee stout and obstinate beyond their expectation«. <sup>91</sup> For this reason, Poland united with Transylvania would certainly be very strong and the Emperor quite understandably tries to undermine Bethlen's position at the Porte by claiming that »they had made Bethlen Gabor too greate«. Consequently, Bethlen would like to rely on the authority of the King of England to boost his position in Poland.

Roe's observations clearly revealed the characteristics of Bethlen's attitude as well as the limitations of his policies. »He will not yeild up one foote of christian grownd, for his reputation, and hopes in Poland; and to possess Hungarye, is impossible for him in ten yeares warre.« <sup>92</sup> Bethlen's value in relation to his ability to divert the Emperor's forces thereby creating favourable military conditions for the Protestant League in Germany was again acknowledged by the English diplomacy when Roe asked the Chaimacam to admonish the King of Poland »not to suffer any of his subjects to enter in or spoile the countryes of the prince of Transylvania in his absence«. <sup>93</sup>

Roe did his best, but he could not change Charles I.'s attitude to Bethlen. Despite his military successes no financial aid was ever granted to him to pay his troops. The new ambassador, Peter Wyche, inherited the set of problems that had evolved in English-Transylvanian relations. He also noted that Bethlen never relinquished the idea of gaining the Crown of Poland even to the last months of his life. <sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 302.

<sup>90</sup> PRO SP 97/10 f. 154.

<sup>91</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 313-314.

<sup>92</sup> PRO SP 97/10 f. 182.

<sup>93</sup> *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe* 342.

<sup>94</sup> PRO SP 97/14 ff. 264, 268, 288.



### III

Just a few month after Bethlen had died in 1629, the far reaching consequences of uniting Transylvania with Poland were still contemplated by Roe who subsequently went on to serve in the court of the King of Sweden. He thought that a marriage between Prince Vladislaus of Poland and Katharina, Bethlen's widow, the Dowager of Transylvania, could be one of the possible options in achieving this goal.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, the priorities of English diplomacy concerning the involvement of the principality in an anti-Habsburg campaign remained unchanged during the reign of Gábor Bethlen's successors. György Rákóczi I also seemed to be committed to the general cause of Protestantism. However, Rákóczi was less willing to launch any kind of military campaign without proper English and Dutch financial contribution.<sup>96</sup> His cautious attitude was definitely justifiable, because his diplomacy did not seem to operate at the Porte as efficiently as Bethlen's had. For this reason, he tried to avoid military conflicts although he proved quite successful when either Count Esterházy, the Palatine of Hungary, a staunch supporter of the Habsburgs, or Count István Bethlen, Gábor Bethlen's brother, tried to depose him with the help of some of the Bashas of Hungary in 1631 and 1636, respectively.<sup>97</sup> In addition, as long as Sigismund III was reigning in Poland Rákóczi always had to reckon with a possible invasion as was confirmed by John Taylor's report from the Imperial Court of Vienna in March 1631.<sup>98</sup>

However, the internal troubles caused by Charles I's reign in England, his subsequent execution, and the Commonwealth period resulted in an extremely limited involvement of English diplomats in Transylvanian and Polish affairs. It was not until 1654 that Prince György Rákóczi II sent his envoy, Konstantin Schaum, via Poland to Sweden and England to find out the terms under which Transylvania could join the league of Protestant countries. Oliver Cromwell replied sympathetically to Rákóczi, however no real prospect of cooperation was raised in his letter of May 1655.<sup>99</sup> The scarcity of records in England relating to Rákóczi's policy at the time shows that the foreign policy of the English Commonwealth was focusing on some other aspects of contemporary European affairs. In any case, Rákóczi's ill-fated endeavour to gain the Crown of Poland with the help of the Swedes did not meet the approval of the Porte and Sir Thomas Bendish's report from Constantinople of the planned Turkish retaliation against Transylvania clearly stated that it had been a direct result Rákóczi's miscal-

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<sup>95</sup> PRO SP 88/7 ff. 50, 341.

<sup>96</sup> PRO SP 97/15 f. 158.

<sup>97</sup> PRO SP 80/7 f. 210, SP 97/16 f. 96.

<sup>98</sup> PRO SP 80/7 f. 210.

<sup>99</sup> Bodleian Library MS Rawl. A. 261 f. 46.

culuation of the Porte's attitude.<sup>100</sup> Bendish did not really exert serious influence on the events.<sup>101</sup> However, it was probably him who acquired Rákóczi's manifesto to the Estates of Poland and sent it to London in 1657.<sup>102</sup> The aftermath of Rákóczi's failure in Poland was learnt from Councillor László Mednyánszky's report in England as well as from occasional newsletters compiled from intelligence communicated from different European cities.<sup>103</sup>

The Polish Commonwealth successfully resisted the joint foreign invasion involving Prince György Rákóczi II whose brinkmanship could easily have caused the disintegration of the Kingdom Poland. On his return to Transylvania he failed to avert the Turkish and Tartar invasion which irrevocably shattered Transylvania's international prospects and position as was revealed by Finch Heneage,<sup>104</sup> Lord Winchilsea, the new Ambassador to Constantinople after the Stuart Restoration which brought about a significant change in England's policy vis-à-vis the Habsburgs. Firstly, the idea of promoting Protestant unity was abandoned. Secondly, the new Stuart diplomacy was rather keen on cooperating with Vienna. This new concept of condoning the policy of the Court of Vienna is reflected in a political memorandum drawn up in 1667 demanding that English interests be maintained in Ireland in such a way as those of Austria were maintained in Hungary.<sup>105</sup> Considering that Leopold I implemented the harshest absolutistic rule in Hungary at the time, the anonymous author must have had some real experience of the drastic methods imposed.

Mihály Apafi, the new Prince of Transylvania, was desperately soliciting the aid of the English diplomacy at the Porte due to the bitter legacy of György Rákóczi II's ill-fated policy. Turkish officials were levying excessive contributions on Transylvanian villages and towns and threatening the inhabitants with military force if they failed to meet their demands.<sup>106</sup> Winchilsea in his report of March 1663 did mention that he had been instructed by Charles II to undertake some services to help Apafi for »his Majestie commiserates much his condicion for being a Prince and a Christian«. <sup>107</sup> However, the English Ambassador also expressed his doubts that he could be of any help under the circumstances.<sup>108</sup>

Although the English diplomatic reports from this period contain several details of the Polish-Turkish war as well as of the anti-Habsburg movements in Hungary, no direct reference to Transylvanian-Polish relations

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<sup>100</sup> PRO SP 97/17 f. 144.

<sup>101</sup> Essex Record Office D/DHf 04-54.

<sup>102</sup> Bodleian Library MS Rawl. A. 47 f.82.

<sup>103</sup> Bodleian Library MS Rawl. A. 55 p. 170, PRO SP 77/31 f. 456, BL Add. 4365 f. 223.

<sup>104</sup> SP 97/17 f. 175.

<sup>105</sup> SP 63/323 item 195.

<sup>106</sup> Leicestershire Record Office, Finch Papers, Box 4962, 4963. Also *Cernavodeanu* 332-348.

<sup>107</sup> PRO SP 97/18 f. 10.

<sup>108</sup> PRO SP 97/18 f. 85.

was recorded. It was known to the Court of Vienna that negotiations were initiated to form a French, Polish, and Transylvanian alliance and the English Ambassador to Vienna must have been informed, but the existing documents do not reveal the English attitude to this issue. Bevil Skelton's reports of 7<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> October 1677 only contain neutral references to the activity of Polish troops in Upper Hungary.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, the diplomatic contacts between John III, King of Poland, and Prince Apafi were deemed as unimportant from an English point of view. At the same time, the successful campaigns of the Imperial troops against the Turks resulted in the liberation of Hungary and the elimination of independent Transylvanian foreign policy.

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<sup>109</sup> PRO SP 80/16 ff. 12, 13.