

WATERCOLOUR PORTRAITS OF THE TRANSYLVANIA'S PRINCES

CLAUDIA M. BONȚA¹

Abstract: This paper presents a series of portraits of the Transylvanian princes, along with a brief description of the political circumstances of the period 1541–1691, when Transylvania was a Principality. The watercolours presented here are extracted from the volume *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens*, which was published in 1729 and was based on a series of watercolours painted by an artist from Gratz in 1692.

Keywords: 16th - 18th centuries, portrait, watercolour, Transylvania's princes

Rezumat: Lucrarea prezintă o serie de portrete ale principilor Transilvaniei, alături de o succintă descriere a conjuncturii politice a epocii principatului Transilvaniei, 1541–1691. Acuarelele prezentate fac parte din volumul *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens* apărut în anul 1729, realizate după acuarele ale unui artist din Gratz, din anul 1692.

Cuvinte cheie: secolele XVI–XVIII, portret, acuarelă, principii Transilvaniei.

Various European political circumstances meant that, for 150 years, Transylvania, caught between two great powers, could enjoy a much-coveted status of relative independence. A dramatic course of events, the military collapse of Hungary at Mohács in 1526, and the transformation of part of its territory into an Ottoman province in 1541, as well as the power struggles between various political factions converged to create a small buffer state between the great powers: the Principality of Transylvania. The creation and evolution of the Transylvanian state unfolded under the sign of its special geopolitical position, as it represented an area of interest between the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires. Awareness of the potential benefits of this situation, in which the state was created under external pressure, and of the fact that its autonomy, established in 1541, was dependent on fluctuations of the authority of the two empires, led to adjustments in Transylvanian politics, which took advantage of the rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in the fight against the expansionist tendencies of both imperial powers. Officially dependent on the Ottomans, the Principality of Transylvania enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in important matters. The princes were chosen by the Diet and confirmed by the Ottomans, whose authority they recognized (also) by paying them a tribute. Ottoman support proved decisive in supporting some candidates for the throne, through military intervention sometimes. The Austrian imperial power relentlessly attempted to extend its rule over the Principality, repeatedly succeeding to take control of it, thanks to the recklessness of some princes, especially during the Turks' moments of weakness. Geopolitical advantages

¹ Claudia M. Bonța, PhD, Museum curator, Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei [The National History Museum of Transylvania] in Cluj-Napoca, hereafter abbreviated as MNIT (bonta.claudia@mnit.ro).

could often turn into inconveniences, the Transylvanians being invaded by troops of Turks, Tatars, Imperials, Cossacks, or mercenaries, under whose discretionary authority they were forced to live their lives. The era of the Principality was to end when the Imperial troops entered Transylvania at the end of the 17th century. The Leopoldine Charter of 4 December 1691 was the document that enshrined the Habsburg domination in Transylvania. This was confirmed by the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), under which Transylvania became a province of the Habsburg Empire and the title of Prince was taken over by the emperors from the House of Habsburg.²

The complicated historical context, the unstable political situation, the fickle military alliances, and the profound religious transformations, all these elements framed the period of the Principality as a precarious time, full of dramatic confrontations and bloody wars, accompanied by a whole series of misfortunes: shortages, famine, epidemics, looting, depopulation. The strategic location of the Principality meant that the state was almost permanently the target of military offensives, whether Ottoman or Imperial, with frequent changes in the balance of power and intense efforts to resolve the conflicts. The vulnerable position between the Turks and the Habsburgs determined a sinuous policy of changing alliances, in which Transylvania tried to maintain its autonomous status by using the rivalry between the two great powers to its own advantage. This status generated an avalanche of events, a dramatic evolution in which progress and stability intertwined with unrest and power struggles between rival factions, short and repeated reigns, and bloody disputes between ambitious families who wanted to create their own dynasty. In this short period of time, Transylvania was ruled by over thirty princes, governors or regents, some of them with several distinct governances from 1541 to 1691. Such an abundance of leaders makes it difficult to understand the age and its history, most of these figures being only vaguely familiar to the general public. Portraiture, as a more or less official art form, partially closes this gap by presenting a series of long-forgotten princes. Through painting, graphics and phaleristics we can find out what these princes looked like: disparate pieces, in collections and museums around the world, remind us of the image of these rulers.

One of the works that grouped together many of the portraits of these princes was designed at a time that was relatively close to the Principality era, at the beginning of the 18th century. Published under the title *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens*, in 1729, the work was inspired by a series of watercolours made in 1692 by an artist from Gratz, and presents more than 100 portraits of some of that epoch's characters, dressed in specific Transylvanian costumes.³ Among them can be distinguished a group of rulers of Transylvania. The interesting concept generated an original work, a true mosaic of portraits in which generic characters belonging to various human typologies display the characteristic attire of each social or ethnic category, at a time when social and political status was expressed through clothing. They pertain to social categories and national categories. They can be ordinary people, such as peasants, shepherds, servants, merchants and townspeople, or members of the elites, such as mayors, patricians, nobles and princes. In addition to the generic portraits,

² Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 544–646; Köpeczi et alii, I, II 2002; Pop, Bolovan 2013, 85–90; Lendvai 2013, 104–155; Felezeu 1996; *Istoria României*, II 1962, 630–640; Dörner 2006, 11–18.

³ <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/tel4/search?collection-id=a1033&query=Trachten-Kabinett%20von%20Siebenb%C3%BCrgens#/> (18 January 2019).

there are also individualized portraits of personalities of that era, including portraits of some of Transylvania's princes. As for the princes, the watercolours were probably made after the original portraits of the characters, with a relatively high degree of accuracy in terms of their physical appearance. The work amounts to a fresco of the Transylvanian Principality's era, with painstakingly depicted characters. In its entirety, the volume reflects the diversity and uniqueness of Transylvania. Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei in Cluj-Napoca has in its patrimony no less than sixteen watercolours from this series, representing the portraits of some of the Princes of Transylvania.

JOHANNES I 1538–1540, watercolour (Figure no. 1)⁴

The series of portraits begins with John Zápolya⁵ (1487–1540), the first leader of Transylvania after the Battle of Mohács, before the era of the Principality. On a simple plateau, with verdure in the background, the portrait of Zápolya is outlined, in a three-quarter view, with his left hand placed martially on his hip. The tone of the image alludes to his proclamation as King of Hungary.⁶ Wearing a crown on his head and a sceptre, Zápolya appears bearded, with untrimmed, dishevelled hair, exuding an air that borders on the wild. He is dressed in a long, golden caftan, embroidered with blue and green threads, a caftan that is fastened, at the top, with small, decorative buttons, while in the lower part it is simply wrapped and secured with a wide, turquoise blue girdle. On his shoulders he is wearing a long red cloak, lined with fur, and has knee-high red boots with raised toe tips. Bearded and unkempt, he is gazing martially forward, with staring eyes, ostentatiously holding the sceptre in his right hand. The almond-shaped eyes, the lips tightened in a sly smile, the targeted gaze, all these are details also found in an engraving signed by Erhard Schön (1491–1452),⁷ thus confirming the veracity of this portrait. Leader of the noble party, ambitious and merciless, Zápolya stood out as a man who was capable of anything and who cruelly crushed the great peasant uprising of 1514 led by George Dózsa.⁸ A Voivode of Transylvania, he took advantage of the period of anarchy after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, disputing the throne with Ferdinand I of Habsburg and benefiting from the support of an intact Transylvanian army, which had not arrived in time to fight at Mohács. Rich, crafty and unscrupulous, Zápolya used the troubled times the country was going through and the infighting between various factions to gain power. Duplicitously, he resorted to all possible means to achieve his goals, whether it was violence, intrigue or negotiations. In 1529 he recognized Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent as his sovereign and swore allegiance to him, thus becoming a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. He managed to reach a compromise with his Habsburg rival by signing a secret succession treaty in Oradea in 1538, a peace agreement that granted Zápolya a lifetime rule. In exchange, his designated heir was to

⁴ *JOHANNES I 1538–1540*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5801. Size: width = 35.5 cm; length = 22.9 cm.

⁵ Romanian: Ioan Zápolya, Hungarian: Zápolya János.

⁶ On 14 October 1526, the Tokaj Diet elected John Zápolya King, but on 17 December the Bratislava Diet proclaimed Ferdinand I of Habsburg King of Hungary. Hungary had two kings, and this led to a civil war between camps that were always changing, as well as to repeated external interventions, both from the Porte and from the Imperials or the rulers of Moldova and Wallachia. See Soporan 2003, 79–86.

⁷ http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%A9p:Szapolyai_J%C3%A1nos_fametszet.jpg/ (13 September 2019).

⁸ Romanian: Gheorghe Doja, Hungarian: Dózsa György.

be Ferdinand I of Habsburg. His proverbial cunning nature prevailed and he managed to spectacularly turn the situation in his favour by marrying the young Isabella of Jagiello, who gave him a son,⁹ in July 1540. A few days later, Zápolya died, leaving behind a direct heir who excluded Ferdinand I from the succession.¹⁰

STEPHANUS BÁTHORI 1571–1576, watercolour (Figure no. 2)¹¹

With his body twisted three quarters towards the viewer, his head in side view, Stephen Báthory¹² (1533–1586) is wearing on his head a crown that matches a long blue cloak, lined with fur. He is dressed in armour and holds the sceptre ostentatiously in his right hand, resting the left on his sword. Properly trimmed, with a neat moustache and a goatee, the prince exudes an imposing air, in keeping with his rank and parade outfit. A similar physiognomy is confirmed by a series of portraits of the prince, one of the best known being that attributed to Martin Kober, *STEPHANVS I/ REX POLONIE /ANNO/ 1586*.¹³ *The most enlightened and progressive Hungarian statesman from the end of the 16th century*,¹⁴ he had studied at the University of Padua, where he received a humanist education. After the death without issue of Prince John Sigismund Zápolya, Stephen Báthory was elected Prince of Transylvania. A member of the richest family of those times east of the Tisa, he was propelled to the princely throne and then became elected King of Poland, by his marriage to Anna Jagiello in 1576. Strongly influenced by the Jesuits, he founded, with their support, the University of Vilnius (1578) and the University of Cluj (1581). He waged a policy of equipoise, in which his desire to banish the Ottomans and restore the glory of the Hungarian Kingdom was subordinated to political lucidity. He did not venture into military action but sought to first create favourable circumstances. However, he died before he succeeded in doing so. The disappearance of the Transylvanian aristocratic magnates, the extinction of the Drágffy and Várday families, and the reconciliation of the two branches of the Báthory family were the elements that led to Stephen Báthory not having strong rivals. In the process of governance, he relied on his family. After leaving for Poland, he continued to govern Transylvania from a distance. He left his brother, Christopher Báthory, at the helm of the country and appointed the latter's son, Sigismund Báthory¹⁵ as his heir.¹⁶

CHRISTOPHORUS BÁTHORI 1576–1581, watercolour (Figure no. 3)¹⁷

On a plateau framed by verdure, Christopher Báthory¹⁸ (1530–1581) appears with a sword belted at his waist, his head uncovered, holding a fur cap under his arm. He is wearing

⁹ John Sigismund Zápolya (Romanian: Ioan Sigismund Zápolya, Hungarian: Zápolya János Zsigmond), 1540–1571, considered the first Prince of Transylvania.

¹⁰ Felezeu 1996, 72–75; Lendvai 2013, 104–123; Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002; Zöllner 1997, 231–234.

¹¹ *STEPHANUS BÁTHORI 1571–1576*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5802. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

¹² Romanian: Ștefan Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory István.

¹³ Martin (Marcin) Kober, cca. 1550–ante 1598, Polish portrait artist, court painter of Stephen Báthory, <http://51.254.200.38/zbiorywawel/node/4453/> (13 September 2019).

¹⁴ Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002.

¹⁵ Romanian: Sigismund Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory Zsigmond.

¹⁶ Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002; Pop 2004, 281–282; Felezeu 1996, 84–87.

¹⁷ *CHRISTOPHORUS BÁTHORI 1576–1581*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5803. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

¹⁸ Romanian: Cristofor Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory Kristóf.

a salmon-coloured suit, fastened with tiny buttons at the top, simply wrapped below and fastened with a wide green girdle. A whiff of wind allows the green lining of the suit to be seen. The character is covered in a long green cloak, lined with fur and embroidered with dark green plant motifs; at the top the cloak is adorned with five wide girdles with golden flares. Báthory has golden boots on his feet, with the tip twisted upwards. Completely grizzled, with trimmed white hair and beard, the prince exudes an air of distinction, but he seems exhausted, fatigued. The same distinguished air is noticeable in his medal portrait of 1580¹⁹ or in the engraving *Cristophorus Bathor de Somlyo*.²⁰ A voivode and deputy of Stephen Báthory since 1576, Christopher Báthory ruled with some degree of autonomy in domestic politics, but the three members of the Governing Council (the maternal uncle of Sigismund Báthory, Stephen Bocskai, and two of his more distant relatives, Dénes Csáky and László Sombori) had to carry out the orders of the Transylvanian chancellery in Cracow, foreign relations being the exclusive preserve of King Stephen Báthory.²¹

ANDREAS BÁTHORI 1599–1601, watercolour (Figure no. 4)²²

The portrait features a bizarre character, dressed in a short red cloak, long white priestly garb and black boots. From under the cardinal's red cloak, with an ermine collar, a large crucifix stands out, a cross with four equal sides. The character's physiognomy is a combined one, with characteristics of both a layman and a cleric, with trimmed bangs, with tresses and with a long, twisted nobleman's moustache. A strange character, neither a prelate, nor a prince, a peculiar product of the two worlds. On 21 March 1599, Sigismund Báthory renounced the throne of the Principality of Transylvania and, on 29 March 1599, the Transylvanian Diet of Mediaș elected his cousin, Cardinal Andrew Báthory²³ (1563–1599), as prince. The latter was close to Polish politics, having spent his youth at the court in Cracow, where his uncle, Stephen Báthory, had been King of Poland and Lithuania since December 1575. However, the pro-Polish political orientation of the new prince meant a radical change of Transylvania's foreign policy and the abandonment of an offensive anti-Ottoman policy. This prompted the reaction of Voivode Michael the Brave²⁴ who was forced to break through the circle of the pro-Ottoman camp in which he was trapped and to seek a direct path to his ally in the Holy League, the Habsburg Empire. With the help of the Szeklers, Michael the Brave defeated Andrew Báthory at the Battle of Șelimbăr, on 28 October 1599. After the battle, the cardinal ran off, trying to find refuge in Poland, but a few days later, he was captured by the Szeklers and killed on 3 November 1599. Therefore, the dates on the watercolour referring to the reign of the cardinal, 1599–1601, are inaccurate.

¹⁹ Medal dated in 1580, Collections of MNIT, N 72928, common metal, d=45.5 cm. Obv.: semi-circular CHRIST·BATH·DE·SOMLIO·. In the field: front portrait of Christopher Báthory with furry cloak over an embroidered coat fastened with small, round buttons. Rev.: semi-circular PRINCEPS TRANSYLV*1580*. In the field: the shield of the Báthory family (three wolf tusks) surmounted by the langued eagle, flanked by the sun and the moon. Below are seven fortresses on seven mountain peaks, arranged in a semi-circular manner. See Călian 2013, 66, pl. I/1.

²⁰ <http://mek.niif.hu/05600/05626/html/> (11 September 2019).

²¹ Sălăgean 2006, 19–29; Köpeczi et alii I 2002; Felezeu 1996, 84–87.

²² ANDREAS BÁTHORI 1599–1601, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5804. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

²³ Romanian: Andrei Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory András.

²⁴ Romanian: Mihai Viteazul, Hungarian: Vitéz Mihály.

Andrew Báthory's reign lasted several months, from spring to autumn 1599, when his death occurred. From the end of 1599 to 1601, Transylvania was a witness to a series of galloping events, with short and intensely disputed periods of governance, such as those of Michael the Brave (which began after the Battle of Șelimbăr, from 28 October 1599, and lasted until the Battle of Mirăslău, on 18 September 1600), George Basta (Imperial troops had control over Transylvania in the period of July 1600 and February 1601), Sigismund Báthory (who claimed the throne of the Principality in February 1601, and lost it in the Battle of Guruslău, on 3 August 1601), General Basta (who regained control of the Principality after July 1601). The troubled and volatile period continued with the reigns of Sigismund Báthory (who claimed back the throne of the Principality and abdicated for good in 1602, after the defeat suffered in front of Basta in Teiuș), Moses Székely²⁵ (proclaimed prince with the Ottomans' support in the spring of 1603 and killed in the Battle of Brașov against the ruler of Wallachia, Radu Șerban, on 17 July 1603) and, again, General Basta, Governor of Transylvania on behalf of the emperor. Transformed into a theatre of war, the country would experience one of the darkest periods in its history. The devastation caused by war, famine, chaos and, in particular, the looting and atrocities committed by the out-of-control mercenary troops brought the country to the brink of collapse.²⁶

GEORGIUS BASTA. 1603–1605, watercolour (Figure no. 5)²⁷

Portrait of General Georgio Basta²⁸ (1544–1607), Imperial Governor of Transylvania between 1603–1605, in epoch garments, posing with an arrogant, conquistador attitude, on a terrace framed by vegetation. The general is covered in armour down to his knees, wearing a discreet white collar, black shoes with red heels, white stockings and an embroidered cloak. Under his arm, he is holding a black cap with short plumage, after the Renaissance fashion. He is clutching a document firmly in his right hand and is resting his left hand on the long sword at his waist. The haughty figure with a sharp chin is found in his most famous portrait, *GEORGIVS BASTA DNS. IN SVLT. EQVES AVRAT. SAC. CÆS. MALT^{is} AC CATHOLICI REGIS HISPANLÆ CONSIL: BELLICVS NEC NON PARTIVM REGNI HVNG. SVPERIORIS GENERAL PROCAPITAN.*, *SCM Pictor, Ioan ab Ach pinx.*, an engraving by Dominicus Custos (cca. 1560–1615) after Hans von Aachen (1552–1615),²⁹ published in Augsburg under the title *Atrium Heroicum*...³⁰ General Basta fought at the head of the Imperial troops in the anti-Ottoman war called the *Long War* or the *Fifteen-Year War* (1591–1606) and ruled Transylvania as an imperial vassal. Ruthless and completely unscrupulous, he instigated an odious governance based on systematic looting.³¹ Remembered as one

²⁵ Romanian: Moise Secuiul, Hungarian: Székely Mózes.

²⁶ Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002, P. P. Panaitescu 2002, 44–51, 67–77, 82–87.

²⁷ *GEORGIUS BASTA. 1603–1605*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5805. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

²⁸ Romanian: Gheorghe Basta, Hungarian: Basta György.

²⁹ https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3712_869&partId=1&people=138246&peoA=138246-2-23&page=1/ (5 September 2019); <http://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/131356/> (5 September 2019).

³⁰ *Atrium Heroicum Caesarum, regum aliarumque summatum ac procerum qui intra proximum speculum vivere, aut hodie supersunt*, a work published by the Flemish Dominicus Custos, between 1602 and 1604, is a collection of 171 engraved portraits of the most influential figures of the time. See <https://publicdomainreview.org/collections/engravings-by-dominicus-custos/> (5 September 2019).

³¹ Felezeu 1996, 91–93.

of the most nefarious characters in the history of Transylvania, the imperial general had control over the country in several periods of time between 1600 and 1605. In the troubled climate from the beginning of the 17th century, after many twists and turns in his attempts to assert himself, Basta became Governor of Transylvania in 1603, in the service of Emperor Rudolph II, under the supervision of imperial commissioners. He maintained that position until 1605, when the imperial troops were forced out by Stephen Bocskai. His government was to remain entrenched in the collective memory as a harsh period for Transylvania. *An occupied, impoverished country, where mercenary troops laid down the law – looting, murdering, an apocalyptic atmosphere*,³² in which Basta ruled Transylvania with an iron hand and established an abusive regime, a real reign of terror.³³ Through violence, forced conversions and the dispossession of assets of those accused of high treason, Emperor Rudolf II tried to force the re-Catholicization of Transylvania, which had become largely Protestant. Mercenary troops recruited mostly among Walloons, Italians and Spaniards were a real calamity for the population. Moreover, the period of 1600–1605 is described as an age of political and military unrest, religious persecution, insecurity, frightening squalor and general despair.³⁴ The imperial military occupation and the punitive measures adopted led to the erosion of the pro-Habsburg attitude and determined the struggle for breaking away from the imperial sphere of influence, which had proved even more nefarious than the Ottoman one.³⁵

STEPHANUS BOSKAI. 1605–1607, watercolour (Figure no. 6)³⁶

Portrait of Stephen Bocskai³⁷ (1557–1606), Prince of Transylvania in 1605–1606, dressed in epoch garments. Located on a terrace framed by vegetation, with a faded hilly background, the prince is wearing red knee-high boots with spurs, a salmon-coloured cloak embroidered with golden flares, lined with fur, a coat of the same colour with a blue girdle and a black fur cap with decorative plumage fastened with a brooch with gems, after the fashion of the time. In his right hand, he is holding his sword, drawn out of its scabbard, and leaning it, relaxed, against his shoulder.³⁸ The two (almost identical) engravings rendering Bocskai's portrait, signed by Balthasar Caymox, 1591–1613 (*SPECTABILI AC MAGNIFICO. DOMINO DNO STEPHANO BOCHKAY DE KISMARIA. COMITI COMITATVS BIHARIENSIS, etc.*) and, respectively, Cryspin de Passe, 1605 (*STEPHANVS BOCHKAY DE KIS/MARIA, PRINCEPS TRANSSYLVA/NIAE, PARTIVM REGNI HVNGARIAE DOMI/NVS, ET SICVLORVM COMES. ANNO MDCV*),³⁹ show a relatively different physiognomy from the one depicted in this watercolour: an aging,

³² Dörner 2006, 11–18.

³³ Sălăgean 2006, 19–29.

³⁴ Lendvai 2013, 116–123; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002; Bérenger 2000, 199–201; Vehse, I 1856, 257–260.

³⁵ Szegedi 2006, 85–90.

³⁶ *STEPHANUS BOSKAI. 1605–1607*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5806. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

³⁷ Romanian: Ștefan Bocskai, Hungarian: Bocskai István.

³⁸ The same kind of pose, with the sword leaning against the shoulder, is found in an engraving signed by Cryspin of Passe, 1605.

³⁹ <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.202785/> (6 September 2019).

bulky individual, but with a more intense look and very expressive eyes. An important character for the history of Transylvania for a long period of time, Bocskai was the one who ended the fifteen-year war. Former adviser to the indecisive Sigismund Báthory, a partisan of anti-Ottoman policy, he acknowledged that the actions of the imperials, based on forced re-Catholicization, corruption, economic and military disorder, had resulted solely in poverty, famine and suffering in Transylvania. He retired, disappointed, from public life, but was forced to return to the political scene because of the pressures the imperials exerted over his wealth and life. The loss of the autonomy of Transylvania, the attacks on Protestantism, and the abuses of the Habsburgs unleashed an uprising under the leadership of Stephen Bocskai, a former supporter of Emperor Rudolf II, an exceptional military talent who organised, in the midst of the chaos, an army of bold warriors, the *hajduks*. Received with scepticism at first, Bocskai managed to arouse general enthusiasm through his actions, which led to the restoration of constitutional and religious rights and privileges. He promised to restore the old freedoms of the Szeklers and managed to master the troops of *hajduks*, whom he ennobled as a group and settled in the Partium region. *The merciless Counter-Reformation of the Habsburgs*⁴⁰ rallied the Lutheran Germans, not just the Calvinist Hungarians. Bocskai was at the forefront of the battle against the imperials, having managed to liberate Transylvania from their nefarious occupation, winning crushing victories together with Turkish and Tatar units. He was elected prince by the Congregation of Miercurea Nirajului on 21 February 1605, respectively by the Diet of Mediaș on 14 September 1605, being confirmed by the Ottomans on 19 October / 19 November 1604 under the official decree (*ahd-nâme*), respectively under the decree of 11 November 1605 (*berat*) which appointed him as Prince of Transylvania and King of Ottoman Hungary (a dignity he refused). He pacified the country, ended the disturbances and military interventions of the imperials, withdrew the *hajduks* and ensured the free practice of religion for the Protestants under the Treaty of Vienna of 23 June 1606, which enshrined the state autonomy of Transylvania and the freedom of Protestant denominations. Under the Treaty of Vienna, the imperialists recognized him for life as Prince of Transylvania and master of the Satu Mare and Tokaj fortresses and of the Bereg and Ugocsa counties, in a territorially enlarged Principality of Transylvania. A feared and respected warrior, a gifted diplomat, Stephen Bocskai mediated the signing of the Zsitvatorok Treaty between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans on 15 November 1606. The treaty put an end to the war begun in 1591 and re-established the *status quo* between the two empires (a situation that would persist, being successively renewed until 1663). Transylvania remained an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Porte. However, the prince died, having probably been poisoned, a few weeks later, in Cașovia, on 28/29 December 1606, at the age of 49. Stephen Bocskai was one of the greatest princes of Transylvania, his death marking the return of political instability in the Principality.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Lendvai 2013, 121–123.

⁴¹ Lendvai 2013, 116–123; Bérenger 2000, 202–205; Köpeczi et alii, I 2002; Andea 2004, 318–319; Dörner 2006, 11–18; Lupescu Makó 2006, 38–62; Encyclopædia Britannica, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Bocskay,_Stephen/ (18 January 2019); Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Szegedi 2006, 85–90; Călian 2006, 118–130.

SIGISMUNDUS RÁKOCZI. 1607–1608, watercolour (Figure no. 7)⁴²

On a terrace framed by vegetation, the portrait of Sigismund Rákóczi⁴³ (1544–1608), Prince of Transylvania in 1607–1608, in epoch garments. The prince is wearing yellow boots with an elongated, raised top, a long green caftan with a red girdle and a yellow cloak lined with ermine fur; on his head, placed in a slanted position, he has a cloth beret with a fur border and plumage. He is posing with his mace in his right hand and his left hand on his hip, above the sword that can be seen at the belt. The picture accurately reflects the portrait of the prince *SIGIS: RAKOTZI/ ab etn 1607. 9. Feb. Etn. 1608. 3.Mar. PRIN TRAN.*⁴⁴ However, the physiognomy depicted in this watercolour is more expressive and neatly executed. His election as prince was due to the ambition of the nobility in Transylvania to prove the fact that the Prince of Transylvania was to be elected by the Diet and not appointed by his predecessor or by the Porte. All this came at a time when Stephen Bocskai had designated Bálint Hommonnai as his successor and Gabriel Báthory had requested the Porte to appoint him as prince on the grounds of his illustrious descent. Having been Governor of Transylvania since the reign of Bocskai, Sigismund Rákóczi had administrated Transylvania in his absence and proved very skilful in exploiting favourable political circumstances. He had managed to rise from the ranks of the petty nobility to those of the aristocracy, becoming a candidate for the throne. The Transylvanian aristocracy was outraged by Bocskai's claim to appoint his own successor, which was a violation of the right of the Estates to freely choose their prince - *Let Bocskai not command us.*⁴⁵ The nobles preferred a candidate who had no external support, the only one residing in the country, unlike the others who had never lived in Transylvania. The situation was decided by the letter of Archduke Mathias, asking the nobles to wait for the emperor's decision, although under the Treaty of Vienna of 1606 there was no provision entitling the emperor to elect the Prince of Transylvania. To prevent any foreign intervention, the Diet of Transylvania did not wait for Bocskai's funeral and elected Sigismund Rákóczi as prince on 9 February 1607, facing Vienna and the Porte with a *fait accompli*.⁴⁶ Still, these events inspired fear of a new war and the cautious Sigismund Rákóczi offered the fortresses of Lipova and Ineu as compensation for the Turks' losses in the Fifteen-Year War. Peace was maintained thanks to the Turks, who accepted the election of Sigismund Rákóczi, refused the offer of the fortresses and offered to amend the terms of the Zsigvatorok Treaty. To avoid war, the Porte replaced Bálint Hommonnai's name in the documents with that of the *old and moderate* Sigismund Rákóczi,⁴⁷ the Ottomans declaring that all they expected of the new prince was to be loyal to the almighty sultan. Elected in February 1607, Sigismund Rákóczi had a short reign, since he retired in March 1608 following the uprising of the *hajduks*, thus avoiding the outbreak of a new conflict with the ambitious Gabriel Báthory. The abdication was interpreted as evidence of political skill and responsibility for the fate of the

⁴² *SIGISMUNDUS RÁKOCZI. 1607–1608, watercolour*, Collections of MNIT, F 5807. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁴³ Romanian: Sigismund Rákóczi, Hungarian: Rákóczi Zsigmond.

⁴⁴ The Collections of the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest
<http://www.npg.hu/index.php/component/jcollection/item/2434-rakoczi-zsigmond/> (6 September 2019).

⁴⁵ Lupescu, Makó 2006, p. 53.

⁴⁶ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Andreescu 1989, 3–4.

⁴⁷ Felezeu 1996, 95.

Principality that would otherwise have been dragged into a new conflict. He also gained material advantages following his negotiations with Gabriel Báthory, who offered Rákóczi the estates of Szádvár and Sárosvár. Suspensions persisted in the aftermath of Rákóczi's abdication, who was accused of seeking only material gain, after he retreated to his estates in royal Hungary, accompanied, according to rumours, by carts filled with treasures and money. In any case, Transylvania had avoided a new civil war.⁴⁸

GABRIEL BÁTHORI. 1608–1613, watercolour (Figure no. 8)⁴⁹

On a terrace framed by vegetation is shown the portrait of Gabriel Báthory⁵⁰ (1589–1613), Prince of Transylvania in 1608–1613, in epoch garments. The prince is wearing long yellow boots with spurs, a green coat embroidered with plant motifs, fastened with a brown girdle, red trousers and short red cloak lined with fur. On his head he has a cap made of green cloth with a fur border matching the cloak, crowned by a plumage of greenish black colour. He is posing in a proud and arrogant attitude, typical of the depicted character. An engraving by Johann Martin Bernigeroth (1713–1767), *Gabriel Bathorj*, housed in the collections of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest,⁵¹ features a similar version to this watercolour, a physiognomy with the same line of the nose, the eyes and the same type of moustache, the differences being the bushy beard (in the engraving) and the darker colour of the hair and the beard in the watercolour. Dazzling, well-mannered, endowed with a magnetic charm, Gabriel Báthory was a despotic, duplicitous and immoral prince, politically incompetent, blinded by unjustified ambitions. Gabriel Báthory seized the throne having ingeniously exploited the grievances of the *hajduks*, who were dismayed to find that all the promises of the late Prince Bocskai had been forgotten in a country impoverished by war; the only alternative was offered by Gabriel Báthory. On 5 February 1608, he signed an agreement with the captains of the *hajduks* who pledged to help him take control of Transylvania, provided that he supported Calvinism and took care of the *hajduks*' settlements. In March 1608, Gabriel Báthory was elected Prince of Transylvania, without firing a single shot, having been supported by the country's only significant armed force.⁵² Gabriel Báthory's reign was characterised by instability, abuses and chaotic actions that triggered hostility and discord. Totally unprepared for his task, the young prince knew nothing about economic policies, arbitrarily extorted existing resources for costly festivities and failed to implement a rational and modern economic policy that would provide him with a consistent basis for his reign. His dream was to rule Poland like Stephen Báthory, but he also had ambitions for Wallachia and Moldavia.⁵³ In early 1611, Gabriel Báthory

⁴⁸ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 95–96.

⁴⁹ GABRIEL BÁTHORI. 1608–1613, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5808. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁵⁰ Romanian: Gabriel Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory Gábor.

⁵¹ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernigeroth_G%C3%A1bor_B%C3%A1thori.jpg/ (11 September 2019).

⁵² Köpeczi et alii, II 2002.

⁵³ In 1608 Constantin Movilă, ruler of Moldavia, and Radu Șerban, ruler of Wallachia, became vassals of Gabriel Báthory.

intervened in Wallachia, occupied the fortress of Târgoviște,⁵⁴ but the Ottomans order him to return home.⁵⁵ His reckless action had severe consequences: during his adventure in Wallachia, the troops of the Pasha of Buda and those of the Pasha of Timișoara entered Transylvania for an attack from the rear, penetrating the territory of the *hajduks* who had set off for home. The Ottomans quickly received the order of withdrawal but the *hajduks* rose up again, ravaging the country. The incompetent prince had opened the gate for foreign interventions: Brașov, besieged by Báthory, asked Radu Șerban for help and the Captain General of Cașovia, Sigismund Forgách also raised arms against Gabriel Báthory. The country was devastated by the two military campaigns in the autumn of 1611, and the three nations demanded the expulsion of the despotic prince. The Porte agreed to appoint András Ghiczy (former captain of *hajduks*) as prince and he began negotiations with the Transylvanians for recognition. Báthory reacted typically for the Princes of the Transylvania and in the Diet of 26 June 1612, he proposed war against the Turks and associating with the Kingdom of Hungary, but the Estates refused, out of fear of catastrophic failure. The sudden change in the country's foreign politics threatened the position of Gabriel Bethlen, who had been instrumental in the relations with the Ottomans. Given the recent pro-Habsburg orientation, he had to take refuge in the Ottoman Empire, where he prepared for his return to the country as prince. An Ottoman army entered the country to support Bethlen and Gabriel Báthory withdrew to Oradea, determined to use every means to preserve his throne. He was murdered by his guards in Oradea on 27 October 1613, aged only 24.⁵⁶

GABRIEL BETHLEN, watercolour. 1613–1629 (Figure no. 9)⁵⁷

Portrait of Gabriel Bethlen⁵⁸ (1580–1629), Prince of Transylvania in 1613–1629, in epoch garments. The prince is posing from the profile, wearing a long cloak lined with ermine, a fur-trimmed cap and black plumage, knee-high boots and spurs. The left hand is resting, relaxed on the sword placed in its sheath. The red costume with green lining, the intense blue girdle, the green cloak and the yellow boots confirm his known passion for bright colours. Dark-skinned, bearded, with an unkempt heap of hair and a chunky body, Bethlen had a dark, unattractive appearance, but an extraordinary personality that demanded respect. In the 1620 portrait etched by Aegidius Sadeler (1570–1629), *GABRIEL BETHLEN D.G. TRANSYLVANIAE PRINCEPS, PARTIVM VNGARIAE REGNI DÑS, ET SICVLORVM COMES, Anno ætat XXXIX:à choNato MDCXX*,⁵⁹ what stand out are his sharp chin, the protruding lower jaw and the odd heap of hair on top of his head, but the watercolour presents an improved version of the prince, young, slender, with the head covered by a cap and his jutting chin masked by the beard. Gabriel Bethlen came from one of the richest and most prominent families in Transylvania, but was orphaned at 13, when he joined Sigismund Báthory's Court in Alba Iulia. Little if anything is known

⁵⁴ On which occasion Gabriel Báthory uses the title *Dei gratia Transylvaniae, Valachiae Transalpinæque Princeps, partium regni Hungariae Dominus et Siculorum Comes etc.*, see Andreescu 1989, 6.

⁵⁵ Andreescu 1989, 4–11.

⁵⁶ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116.

⁵⁷ *GABRIEL BETHLEN. 1613–1629*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7174. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁵⁸ Romanian: Gabriel Bethlen, Hungarian: Bethlen Gábor.

⁵⁹ <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-1999-1360/> (10 September 2019); <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.461212/> (10 September 2019).

about his education, but at only 32 years of age, he was already an experienced general who had served his country under three princes, Moses Székely, Stephen Bocskay and Gabriel Báthory, and had been arrested by Sigismund Rákóczi. Endangered by Gabriel Báthory's new pro-Habsburg orientation, Bethlen prepared his ascent to the throne in a calculated manner. A skilful diplomat, a good connoisseur of the Ottoman Empire, he acted cautiously, gradually ensuring the support of the high Turkish officials. On 5 October 1613, Bethlen arrived in Transylvania with the highest concentration of Turkish-Tatar forces, about 80,000 people. The Diet convened in Cluj by Pasha Skander gave its ruling and, on 23 October 1613, Gabriel Bethlen became Prince of Transylvania. It was noted, with irony, that *they had chosen him freely, being so affrighted*. The Turkish troops withdrew after Báthory's death, leaving behind a devastated country, under firm control of the Porte.⁶⁰ His forced ascent to the throne, the handover of Lipova fortress and the memory of Gabriel Báthory's arbitrary rule sparked hostility against the new prince, but Bethlen proved to be a good expert on political realities and acted tactfully, managing to change the balance of power between the prince and the ruling classes. He avoided a direct confrontation and used the peculiarities of the Transylvanian society, where the rights of the Estates and of the prince were not firmly regulated. He began by reviewing all the donations and ennoblings between 1585 and 1615, which was an opportunity to increase his princely domain. He brought two changes to the system of governance: he marginalized the Diet qualitatively and quantitatively, thereby reducing the number of the convened sessions and of the members, who were, anyhow, nominated by the prince, while the second change consisted in the promotion of efficient economic policies. Through the two changes, he limited the Estates' prerogative of monitoring the power of the prince, who had an authoritarian rule. One of the most important statesmen, the brightest Prince of Transylvania, Bethlen secured a strong position for the Principality. His armies were never defeated and in the sixteen years of his reign, the country was not trampled by enemies. He maintained good diplomatic relations with the Turks, and his foreign policy was oriented against the Habsburgs. He participated in the Thirty-Year War, in three campaigns (1619, 1623, and 1626), in which he occupied territories in Slovakia and Hungary, becoming an important figure on the stage of international politics. He was a champion of confessional tolerance, culture, education and science. He set up a school of higher education and a library and invited to Alba-Iulia poets, musicians, artists and jewellers from Germany, Vienna and Venice. Bethlen encouraged trade, crafts, mining and exports, elements that generated the resources needed for a modern state to function. His policies underpinned a rise in living standards and the doubling of state revenues created the basis for his ambitious foreign policy and the princely luxury he later embraced. His wise policies provided a rare freedom of action for a small European state. Gabriel Bethlen's Transylvania asserted itself as a powerful and prestigious autonomous state. His reign is considered the *Golden Age of the Principality of Transylvania*.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002.

⁶¹ Lendvai 2013, 124–136; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 583–593; Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Andea 2004, 320–325; Ingrao 2000, 39–40.

GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI I. 1630–1642, watercolour (Figure no. 10)⁶²

On a terrace framed by vegetation, the portrait of George Rákóczi I⁶³ (1593–1648), Prince of Transylvania in 1630–1648, in epoch garments. The prince is wearing a red costume, knee-high yellow boots and pointed toes and spurs, a fur-trimmed cloth cap and rich plumage, fastened with a brooch with precious stones, and a red short coat lined with fur. He has a sceptre in his right hand, while his left hand rests on his hip, in a studied pose. The richness of colours, the imposing and demanding attitude excellently encapsulates the prince's character. While the engraving signed by Jan Gillisz van Vliet (1605–1668), after a drawing by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), *George I Rákóczi of Felsővadász*,⁶⁴ offers a youthful portrait of the prince, with very few features similar to the sketch in the series discussed here, the old-age portrait of the prince, *Felsővadászi I Öreg Rákóczi György erdélyi fejedelem*⁶⁵ conveys a physiognomy which is relatively close to that illustrated in the watercolour. Gabriel Bethlen's death temporarily brought his second wife, Catherine of Brandenburg, to the throne of the Principality, but she proved totally devoid of political skill and was forced to abdicate in favour of Stephen Bethlen, the brother of the former prince. George Rákóczi laid claims to the throne of the Principality and enjoyed the support of the *hajduks*. Negotiations took place, and the Porte sent two firmans, each in the name of one of the suitors, so it was up to the former princess to decide which name she would propose to the Diet. Her hatred of her former brother-in-law proved decisive and Catherine supported Rákóczi. The election took place on December 1, 1630. The imperials were engaged in the battles of the Thirty-Year War and the Ottomans were facing the Persians' uprisings, and thus, the three successive changes on the throne of the Principality from the period 1629 and 1630 did not provoke the intervention of the great powers.⁶⁶ The son of Sigismund Rákóczi, George Rákóczi I had a completely different temperament from his. Sigismund had been adaptable and sociable, two qualities that had helped him to progress through to the highest office in the state, and, when he realized that maintaining his position would have brought a risk to the country, he was wise enough to step down. By contrast, George Rákóczi was determined to seize the throne at all costs. His authoritarian measures, especially the confiscations of the noble estates with which he enriched his own family, caused discontent and led in 1636 to Stephen Bethlen's attempt to have him replaced, with the support of the Pasha of Buda. Determined to stay at the country's helm, Rákóczi defeated the Turks in the Battle of Salonta. As the conflict was, in fact, with local Ottoman politicians, the Porte did not turn against Rákóczi, allowing him to stay on the throne, unwilling to alter relations with him. Once this uprising was quelled, George Rákóczi started to intimidate the opposition and created an authoritarian reign. His reign was marked by executions and confiscations of estates, which made Rákóczi the richest landowner. In terms of foreign policy, the prince's anti-Habsburg orientation led him, in the autumn of 1643, to sign an alliance with the Protestant camp and to invade

⁶² GEORGIUS RÁKOCZII. 1630–1642, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7175. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁶³ Romanian: Gheorghe Rákóczi I, Hungarian: I. Rákóczi György.

⁶⁴ The Collections of Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_I_\(G%C3%B6rgy\)_R%C3%A1k%C3%B3czi_\(1593–1648\)_Rembrandt_van_Rijn_%26_Jan_Gillisz_van_Vliet.jpg/\(11 September 2019\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_I_(G%C3%B6rgy)_R%C3%A1k%C3%B3czi_(1593–1648)_Rembrandt_van_Rijn_%26_Jan_Gillisz_van_Vliet.jpg/(11%20September%202019)).

⁶⁵ <http://church.lutheran.hu/reformatio/pp.htm/> (11 September 2019).

⁶⁶ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002.

Hungary. Following negotiations with Ferdinand III, approval was granted to his religious claims and, especially, to his personal requests related to his estates. As a result, he signed a separate peace treaty with the Habsburgs at Linz and withdrew his troops under the unrealistic pretext of Ottoman orders. The war brought him new domains, over which he expanded religious freedoms in favour of the Protestants, but also of the Orthodox. His era was one of economic and cultural flourishing. He consolidated his central power and Calvinism. The prince promoted the use of the mother tongue in education and in the church, not only for the Hungarian community, but also for the Germans and the Romanians. He supported the development of the education system in Transylvania. He established the elementary education system with Romanian as a language of instruction in 1669, when a series of Romanian elementary schools were opened. The first Romanian school, set up in Făgăraș in 1657, was owed to his wife, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy. Rákóczi also supported the first Romanian translation of the New Testament, *Biblia Rákóczi*, in 1648, in Alba-Iulia. George Rákóczi I is considered among the most prominent princes of Transylvania. This is due largely to the favourable international circumstances that rendered his reign as one of the most successful in the history of the Principality of Transylvania. He died on 11 October 1648 without having fulfilled his plan to place his son Sigismund on the Polish throne.⁶⁷

GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI II. 1642–1658, watercolour (Figure no. 11)⁶⁸

Portrait of George Rákóczi II⁶⁹ (1621–1660), Prince of Transylvania in the period 1648–1660, in epoch garments. The year 1642 recalls the moment of his election as an associate to the reign and successor to his father, George Rákóczi I, which laid the ground for a quiet succession.⁷⁰ On a terrace framed by vegetation, the prince is posing haughty, holding, in his left hand, the sceptre and, in his right hand, the cap with a fur border and bushy plumage, fastened by a brooch with precious stones. He is dressed in an elegant, pale pink costume, featuring a rich, black embroidery on both the jacket and the trousers, while the green sleeves match the broad green belt around his waist. He is wearing knee-high yellow boots with spurs and a fur-lined cloak, clamped on his shoulder with a thin string. The original cropped haircut, with a curly lock of hair on top of his head, individualizes him in a special way, as noticeable in the engraving *SERENISS. GEORGIVS RAGOTZINVS/TRANSSILVANLÆ PRINCEPS* signed *P. de Iode excudit*.⁷¹ Ambitious but lacking in vision, George Rákóczi II had completely unrealistic self-aggrandizing ideas. He was involved

⁶⁷ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Andea 2004, 330–334; Andea 2012, 47–56; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 595–600; Ingrao 2000, 47–48; Felezeu 1996, 91–116.

⁶⁸ *GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI II. 1642–1658*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5809. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁶⁹ Romanian: Gheorghe Rákóczi al II-lea, Hungarian: II. Rákóczi György.

⁷⁰ On 3 February 1642, the Diet of Transylvania elected George Rákóczi II as an associate to the reign and successor to his father, George Rákóczi I, which was supposed to ensure his smooth succession on the throne of Transylvania, but his actual reign began only when Prince George Rákóczi I passed away, on 11 October 1648.

⁷¹ Pieter de Jode, 1606–1674, an engraver and editor in Antwerp. The etching appears in the series *THEATRVM/ Pontificvm/ Imperatorvm/ Regvm,/ Dvcvm,/ Principvm,/ etc./ Pace et Bello Illvstrivm*. It mentions, in the lower register, *Antverpiæ/ Apud Petrvn de Iode/ Chalcographvm. E. Quellinusinu., P. de Iode fecit*. See https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3646811&partId=1&searchText=Van+Mol&page=1/ (5 September 2019).

in the power struggles of the Romanian voivodates, and in his desire to ascend to the Polish throne, he ventured to Poland in 1657 as the ally of the Swedes, but the Polish-Tatar riposte in the Battle of Czarny Ostrów forced him to abandon his troops and flee back to his country, with an escort of 300 people. His army, led by General John Kemény, faced a real disaster and was completely captured by the Tatars. The new Grand Vizier Mehmed Köprülü decided to replace Rákóczi, accusing him of organizing the campaign in Poland despite the Sultan's will, of making an alliance with the Cossacks, who were the enemies of the Sultan, of invading Wallachia two years before, of bringing Transylvania into a dangerous situation and of fleeing from the Tatar Khan. The Diet was to choose a new prince. Francis Rhédey was elected as his successor. Rhédey was the cousin of Gabriel Bethlen, but George Rákóczi II reclaimed the throne and the Diet appointed him prince again on 14 January 1658. Political indecision determined the reaction of the Porte: the punishment expedition of May 1658 involved troops of Turks and Tatars, who advanced unopposed in the defenceless country, as Rákóczi had retreated to a safe distance, in Debrecen. Trying to save the day, Achatius Barcsay⁷², the former Governor of Transylvania during Rákóczi's Polish adventure, presented himself before the Grand Vizier and agreed to pay a huge annual tribute and war compensation. The Diet approved his appointment as prince on 7 October 1658. Thanks to the agreement gained by Barcsay, the Turks left the country, but the battle between supporters of the two princes, led to the outbreak of a civil war, complicated by the intervention of John Kemény, who had returned to the country in September 1659. The failure to pay the huge tribute led to a new Ottoman intervention in the devastated country, in 1660. With most of the army in Tatar captivity, Rákóczi was defeated in Gilău and, wounded in battle, he fled to Oradea, where he died from his wounds on 7 June 1660. Blinded by his lust for power, George Rákóczi II had caused the invasion of foreign armies in Transylvania and brought about a civil war, without considering the consequences of his actions, with the same nonchalance with which he had abandoned his troops in Tatar captivity and refused to pay the ransom demanded. Revoked and reinstated by the Diet, Rákóczi desperately clung to the throne, acting irresponsibly, proving his selfishness and utter contempt for the fate of others.⁷³

FRANCISCUS RHEDAI. 1658, watercolour (Figure no. 12) ⁷⁴

In an orange costume, with the body at a three-quarter view and the head in profile, the prince is waving his sceptre in his right hand while keeping his left hand cautiously on his sword. He is wearing a wide green girdle, matching his green cuffs and the lining that is discreetly visible. He is not wearing a cloak, but has a fur-trimmed cap and black plumage. The costume fastened with buttons and golden flares is wrapped in the lower part and fastened with the help of the wide girdle. He is wearing long yellow boots and is holding his feet in unnatural, ballet-like posture, with his heels stuck together and his toes completely apart. His long, twisted moustache, his curly hair at his back and his gazing off into the

⁷² Romanian: Acațiu Barcsay, Hungarian: Barcsay Ákos.

⁷³ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Andea 2004, 333–335; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 600–606; Ingrao 2000, 65–67.

⁷⁴ *FRANCISCUS RHEDAI. 1658, watercolour*, Collections of MNIT, F 5810. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

distance complete the portrait of Francis Rhédey⁷⁵ (1610–1667), the prince who occupied the throne of the Principality of Transylvania for a very short period of time, in the midst of the struggles for the replacement of George Rákóczi II.

JOHANNES KEMENY. 1660–1661, watercolour (Figure no. 13)⁷⁶

With a direct gaze and his lips tightened in a subtle grin, two elements that are also found in his portrait by an unknown author, *Ioan Kemeny*, D: G: PRI: TRA:, cca. 1661,⁷⁷ John Kemény⁷⁸ (1607–1662) is walking gracefully in the watercolour, on tiptoes, as if dancing. He is dressed in a blue costume with golden flares that stretch to the wide red girdle around his waist. The red cuffs also match the long sword sheath that touches the ground. With his beard and moustache trimmed neatly, he is leaning with his left hand against the sword, while holding the sceptre in his right hand. We notice the spurs on his golden boots and his elegant cap with a fur border. Commander of the Transylvanian Army, Kemény was highly prized for his military skill. He had travelled on diplomatic missions to Berlin and Constantinople, campaigned in Poland and had been a prisoner with the Tatars. Appointed in 1652, by George Rákóczi II, as Governor of Transylvania, until the prince's son would come of age, he was elected to rule the country at the end of 1660 and was confirmed by the Diet, which had been convened on the first day of the year, 1661, in Reghin. Driven by a sense of mission and responsibility, Kemény accepted this dignity which, in his view, was a burden even in happy times. The new prince enjoyed the support of politicians and members of the high aristocracy, including Francis Rhédey. On 23 April 1661, the Diet in Bistrița declared the severance of Transylvania's relations with the Ottomans and announced that the Principality was now under the protection of the Habsburg emperor, in the belief that they were participating in a vast international military effort, but the anti-Ottoman campaign was no longer of topical interest: at the end of May, a secret agreement concluded between Leopold and the Turks recognized the new Ottoman conquests in exchange for the Ottomans' promise that they would not attack royal Hungary and acknowledged the cessation of the actions undertaken in Transylvania, where a new prince had to be elected. On 17 September 1661, the Diet convened under Ottoman threat and elected Michael Apafi as Prince of Transylvania. On 23 January 1662, the Ottoman army defeated Kemény's troops at Seleușul Mare. The prince lost his life in battle.⁷⁹

MICHAEL APAFFI I. 1661–1684, watercolour (Figure no. 14)⁸⁰

On a terrace framed by vegetation, with a fading mountain background, the portrait of Michael Apafi I⁸¹ (1632–1690), Prince of Transylvania in 1661–1690⁸², in epoch garments.

⁷⁵ Romanian: Francisc Rhédey, Hungarian: Rhédey Ferenc.

⁷⁶ *JOHANNES KEMENY. 1660–1661*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5811. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁷⁷ <http://mek.niif.hu/01800/01885/html/cd5m/kepek/tortenelem/to213fo88006.jpg/> (12 September 2019).

⁷⁸ Romanian: Ioan Kemény, Hungarian: Kemény János.

⁷⁹ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 107–111; Andea 2004, 335; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 603–607.

⁸⁰ *MICHAEL APAFFI I. 1661–1684*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5812. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁸¹ Romanian: Mihai Apafi I, Hungarian: I. Apafi Mihály.

⁸² The year 1684 in the watercolour refer probably to the time of the election of his son, Michael Apafi II, as an associate to the reign, by the Diet, as Michael Apafi I was prince of Transylvania until his death, in 1690.

The prince is wearing yellow knee-high boots with spurs, a red costume, consisting of trousers and a jacket with golden buttons, over which, on his shoulder, he is wearing a red cloak lined with fur. With his tresses in the wind and his gaze fixed, he is holding the sceptre in his left hand and a furry cap in his right hand. His uptight countenance, also encountered in the engravings that depict him,⁸³ proves to be defining for this prince, who was propelled to the throne in complicated circumstances for Transylvania. Michael Apafi was a young, well-educated man, with a pensive disposition, who had to deal with a dwindling Transylvania, seriously weakened by a protracted political crisis, in which the central power was adversely affected. Secret agreements between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, as well as the endless battles between the two great powers over the course of a short period of time, between 1657 and 1664, led to Transylvania's losing a quarter of its territory. Apafi was faced with the turmoil caused by Emeric Thököly,⁸⁴ a talented military commander and organizer, an ambitious leader who, at the beginning of 1682, was asking to be made King of Hungary by the Turks, wishing to extend his power over Transylvania. Apafi chose the diplomatic path, consolidated his internal power and secured the election of his minor son as his heir. He also promoted a coherent economic policy. Caught between conflicting external pressures, Apafi struggled to preserve the Transylvanian state and managed to sign in Vienna, on 28 June 1686, a secret agreement with Leopold I, whereby the Principality's terms for the preservation of the state were accepted (the right of the Estates to choose their prince, religious freedom, the return of the territories belonging to Transylvania after their liberation from the Turks). The emperor pledged not to lay claim on the princely title or on Transylvania's coat-of-arms. The treaties proved worthless: the imperial troops invaded the country, ravaging everything in their path. Negotiations and the payment of huge sums provided guarantees that the emperor would respect the independence of the Principality.⁸⁵ Apafi's authority diminished, the Principality being virtually ruled by one of his advisers, Michael Teleki. On 9 May 1688, the *Făgăraș Declaration* was issued, whereby Transylvania changed the suzerainty of the Porte with that of Leopold I, Emperor and King of Hungary. Old age, illness and family problems had marked Apafi, who had struggled with deep depression in the last eighteen months of his reign. On 15 April 1690, he passed away. Dominated by his entourage, labelled as mediocre or a puppet of the Turks, Apafi had nonetheless succeeded, with his cautious attitude and realistic policy, to re-establish the central authority and to enforce diplomacy as the primary weapon for the maintenance of the Transylvanian state, by exploiting the discord between the great powers.⁸⁶

⁸³ *Michael I Apafi, 1666*, by Cornelis Meyssens (1640–1673) <http://images.konyvtar.elte.hu/szepseg/61.jpg/> (11 September 2019); *MICHAEL APAFI / Princeps Transylvaniae. Partium Regni / Hungariae Dominus et Siculorum / Comes*. <https://www.rct.uk/collection/611525/michael-apafi-princeps-transylvaniae/> (11 September 2019).

⁸⁴ Romanian: Emeric Thököly, Hungarian: Thököly Imre.

⁸⁵ In fact, in the mint of occupied Sibiu, the imperials issued pieces with the inscription *Capta Transylvania*, which commemorated the military occupation of the country.

⁸⁶ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 111–119; Lendvai 2013, 148–154; Bérenger 2000, 253; 261–265; Andea 2004, 348–352; Andea 2012, 47–56; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 608–630; Ingrao 2000, 67–75, 85.

MICHAEL APAFFI II. 1684–1686, watercolour (Figure no. 15)⁸⁷

On a terrace framed by verdure, against a fading hilly backdrop, the portrait of Michael Apafi II⁸⁸ (1676–1713), posing dramatically, with his sceptre in his right hand, his sword in his scabbard, and his left hand on his hip. The frail youngster is pictured in epoch garment, with pink trousers and a green coat, with a gold girdle around his waist, pink knee-high boots with spurs and a white fur-lined coat. There is little information on Michael Apafi II, but it is known that he received a fine education. After the death of his father, the Porte appointed to the throne not his successor, Michael Apafi II, who had been confirmed by the Diet, but Emeric Thököly, who had control over the country between 1690–1692. Imperial military victories changed the balance of power. Thököly was removed and Michael Apafi II was enthroned as prince.⁸⁹ Until Prince Michael Apafi II came of age, Transylvania was to be administered by a governor, appointed by the Estates and confirmed by the emperor: George Bánffy. The court intrigues led the future prince to marry the governor's sister-in-law, General Bethlen's daughter, and the Habsburgs used this clandestine marriage as a pretext to detain him in Vienna during the anti-Ottoman war. When he came of age, in 1696, Michael Apafi II ceded the title of prince to Emperor Leopold I, who granted him a life annuity and the title of imperial prince. The prince was to remain in Vienna, where he died at the young age of 36.⁹⁰

In addition to the series of princes, there is also a portrait of the emperor, who bore the title of Prince of Transylvania at the time of the publication of *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens*:

CAROLUS.VI. 1711–1740, watercolour (Figure no. 16)⁹¹

Unlike the other protagonists of the portraits, Charles VI of Habsburg⁹² (1685–1740) is rendered inside, next to a table covered by a green curtain with golden tassels on which the insignia of power are placed: the sword and the orb with the cross are placed randomly, while the crown is carefully positioned on a red pillow embroidered in gold. The last portrait of the series depicts a wealthy character, draped in a rich cloak embroidered in gold, adorned with precious stones, lined with fine red silk. The expensive armour, the rich ruffles of the shirt, the hat with flamboyant feathers, the long, curly wig, the collar of the order of the Golden Fleece, worn around the neck, all these are the elements that make up an official portrait in festive Baroque style, *kaiserstil*, which reflected the glory of their victories against the Ottomans and made it possible for the monarchy to legitimise itself as a great power. With one hand on his hip and the other resting on the sceptre, a direct gaze and a barely visible smile in the corner of the lips, the emperor is posing with a martial

⁸⁷ MICHAEL APAFFI II. 1684–1686, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5813. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁸⁸ Romanian: Mihai Apafi al II-lea, Hungarian: II. Apafi Mihály.

⁸⁹ The years in the watercolour, 1684–1686, refer probably to the time of his election by the Diet, as an associate to the reign and successor to his father, respectively to the time of the imperial military occupation of Transylvania.

⁹⁰ Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Bérenger 2000, 263–265; Ingrao 2000, 85; Andea 2004, 350–352.

⁹¹ CAROLUS.VI. 1711–1740, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7176. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

⁹² Romanian: Carol al VI-lea, Hungarian: VI. Károly.

attitude, frequently encountered in the portraits depicting him, especially in those painted by Johann Gottfried Auerbach (1697–1753).⁹³

Bibliography

- Andea 2004 Susana Andea, *Țările Române în secolul al XVII-lea*. In: I.A. Pop, I. Bolovan, *Istoria României*, 2004.
- Andea 2012 Susana Andea, *Autoritatea princiară între reglementări juridice și putere astărilor. Domnia lui Mihai Apafi*, Anuarul Institutului de Istorie «George Barițiu», Series Historica, 51, 2012.
- Andreescu 1989 Ștefan Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae. Relațiile politice Dintre Țara Românească, Moldova și Transilvania în răstimpul 1601–1659*, București 1989. <http://www.bjmures.ro/bdPublicatii/CarteStudenti/A/Andreescu-RestitutioDaciaeII.pdf/> (4 July 2018)
- Bérenger 2000 Jean Bérenger, *Istoria Imperiului Habsburgilor. 1273–1918*, București 2000.
- Călian 2006 Livia Călian, *Personalități transilvane din epoca lui Ștefan Bocskai în medalistică*. In: Tudor Sălăgean, Melinda Mitu (eds.), *Principele Ștefan Bocskai și Epoca sa*, Cluj-Napoca 2006.
- Călian 2013 Livia Călian, *Medalii Transilvane din Colecțiile Esterházy și Delhaes*, Cluj-Napoca 2013.
- Dörner 2006 Anton Dörner, *Statutul juridic al Transilvaniei în timpul Principelui Bocskai*. In: Tudor Sălăgean, Melinda Mitu (eds.), *Principele Ștefan Bocskai și epoca sa*, Cluj-Napoca 2006.
- Drăgoescu et alii 1997 Anton Drăgoescu, Grigore Pop, Ioan Glodariu, Mircea Rusu, Ioan-Aurel Pop, Avram Andea, Susana Andea, Aurel Răduțiu, Nicolae Edroiu, Ladislau Gyémánt, Gelu Neamțu, Ioan Bolovan, Simion Retegan, Dumitru Suciu, *Istoria României. Transilvania*, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca 1997.
- Felezeu 1996 Călin Felezeu, *Statutul principatului Transilvaniei în raporturile cu Poarta Otomană (1541–1688)*, Cluj-Napoca 1996.
- Ingrao 2000 Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1618–1815*, Cambridge 2000.
- Istoria României*, II 1962 *Istoria României*, vol. II, București 1962.
- Köpeczi et alii 2002 Béla Köpeczi, László Makkai, András Mócsy (eds.), *History of Transylvania*, 2002; vol. I, *From the beginning to 1606*, <http://mek.oszk.hu/03400/03407/html/1.html/> (25 June 2018); vol. II, *From 1606 to 1830*, <http://mek.oszk.hu/03400/03407/html/164.html/> (2 June 2018).
- Lendvai2013 Paul Lendvai, *Ungurii*, București 2013.
- Lupescu Makó 2006 Mária Lupescu Makó, *Testamentul politic al lui Ștefan Bocskai*. In: Tudor Sălăgean, Melinda Mitu (eds.), *Principele Ștefan Bocskai și epoca sa*, Cluj-Napoca 2006.
- Pop 2004 Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Românii în secolele XIV–XVI: de la „republica creștină” la „restaurarea Daciei.”* In: Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan (eds.), *Istoria României*, Cluj-Napoca 2004.

⁹³ Ingrao 2000, 120–126; Wheatcroft 2003, 352.

- Pop, Bolovan 2013 Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan, *Istoria Transilvaniei*, Cluj-Napoca 2013.
- Panaitescu 2002 P. P. Panaitescu, *Mihai Viteazul*, București 2002.
- Sălăgean 2006 Tudor Sălăgean, *Ascensiunea politică a lui Ștefan Bocskai. Relații familial și intrigi politice în Transilvania unei epoci de criză*. In: Tudor Sălăgean, Melinda Mitu (eds.), *Principele Ștefan Bocskai și epoca sa*, Cluj-Napoca 2006.
- Soporan 2003 Florin Soporan, *La Transylvanie au milieu du XVIe siècle – Entre Habsbourg et Ottomans*, Transylvanian Review, 12, 2003.
- Szegedi 2006 Edit Szegedi, *Bocskai în memorialistica și cronistica săsească din secolul al XVII-lea*. In: Tudor Sălăgean, Melinda Mitu (eds.), *Principele Ștefan Bocskai și epoca sa*, Cluj-Napoca 2006.
- Vehse I 1856 Carl Eduard Vehse, *Memoirs of the Court Aristocracy and Diplomacy of Austria*, vol. I, London 1856.
- Wheatcroft 2003 Andrew Wheatcroft, *Habsburgii. Personificare a unui imperiu*, București 2003.
- Zöllner1997 Eric Zöllner, *Istoria Austriei de la începuturi până în prezent*, vol. I, Bucharest 1997.



Figure no. 1: JOHANNES I 1538–1540, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5801.



Figure no. 2: STEPHANUS BÁTHORI 1571–1576, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5802.



Figure no. 3: CHRISTOPHORUS BÁTHORI 1576–1581, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5803.



Figure no. 4: ANDREAS BÁTHORI 1599–1601, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5804.



Figure no. 5: GEORGIUS BASTA. 1603–1605, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5805.



Figure no. 6: STEPHANUS BOSKAI. 1605–1607, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5806.



Figure no. 7: SIGISMUNDUS RÁKOCZI. 1607–1608, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5807.



Figure no. 8: GABRIEL BÁTHORI. 1608–1613, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5808.



Figure no. 9: GABRIEL BETHLEN. 1613–1629, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7174.



Figure no. 10: GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI I. 1630–1642, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7175.



Figure no. 11: GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI II. 1642–1658, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5809.



Figure no. 12: FRANCISCUS RHEDAI. 1658, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5810.



Figure no. 13: JOHANNES KEMENY. 1660–1661, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5811.



Figure no. 14: MICHAEL APAFFI I. 1661–1684, watercolour, Collections of MNIT F 5812.



Figure no. 15: MICHAEL APAFFI II. 1684–1686, watercolour, Collections of MNIT F 5813.



Figure no. 16: CAROLUS. VI. 1711–1740, watercolour, Collections of MNIT F 7176.