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Gábor Bethlen and His European Presence

This paper studies the European presence of the most important ruler of the Principality of Transylvania, Gábor Bethlen (1580–1629) in the light of predominant developments of the Early Modern Age such as the general crisis of the seventeenth century, the Thirty Years' War, the international networks of alliances, the absolutist governments, the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, the nation states, the modern expectations towards governments, the new science of political cultures, the explosion of information networks and the law of concluding peace.

The study gives an overview on the extreme views on Gábor Bethlen in the early modern era as well as in posterity. This ruler of the Transylvanian state—a tributary of the Ottoman Empire, but also belonging to the power sphere of the Habsburgs—was on the one hand regarded as a creature of the Turks, on the other as a monarch who had profound influence upon the fate of Europe. The paper shows how Bethlen created tranquility, security and economic stability in the country which had been ruined, destroyed by Ottoman and imperial military interventions and on the verge of civil war. Having a wide range of political experience and a good knowledge of contemporary political theories, the prince managed to accommodate absolutist government and mercantilist economic policies to Transylvanian circumstances. He was nevertheless unable to compete with the propaganda campaign against him.

Keywords: general crisis of the seventeenth century, the 'Thirty Years' War, the international networks of alliances, the absolutist governments, the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires

Prelude

He is like a star, and “no astrologer can iudge of him till he bee worne out.”¹ The report on Prince Gábor Bethlen of Transylvania by Sir Thomas Roe, English ambassador to Constantinople, has lost none of its validity four hundred years after his election.

The 1630 London edition of Giovanni Botero's world chronicle devotes a whole chapter, “The State of Bethlen Gábor in Transilvania,” to this brave and

1 Samuel Richardson, *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe in his Embassy in the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621 to 1628 inclusive* (London: Society for the Encouragement of Learning, 1740), 178. App. H. 4 2454. See also György Kurucz, “Sir Thomas Roe és az erdélyi–lengyel viszony Bethlen Gábor fejedelemsége idején,” in *Magyarbontól az Újvilágig. Emlékkönyv Urbán Aladár ötvenéves tanári jubileumára*, ed. Róbert Hermann and Gábor Erdődy (Budapest: Argumentum, 2002), 55–63.

exceptionally talented prince and his deeds in defending his country against the Ottomans and the House of Habsburg.² The opinions of his detractors were put succinctly by the “Tacitus of Europe,” Virgilio Malvezzi, who wrote that Bethlen was inscrutable and untrustworthy.³ Samuel Richardson’s opinion was glowing: “in warfare and diplomacy, he was one of the most greatest rulers of his age.”⁴ Leopold Ranke wrote, “one of the most powerful figures of the world upheaval that was the Thirty Years’ War.”⁵ Others took up the words of the propaganda his enemies put forth against him: a creature of the Turks, circumcised, Mohammedan.⁶ In the enormous literature on the Thirty Years’ War, the prince of Transylvania has appeared in various lights up to the present day.⁷ Through all of it, he has remained, in the words of Botero’s world chronicle, “a man much talked of, but little known.” After the storms of four hundred years, Hungarian historians say much the same. He has been called a “man of the Turks,” but also praised for his statesmanship, “after St Stephen and King Matthias (r. 1458–90), perhaps our finest ruler.”⁸ To date, however, Hungarian historians have not paid enough attention to his European presence.

I will discuss here the concept of “presence” in the period of European change, the qualifications required for statesmanship, and Bethlen’s part in the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation and the Hague Alliance.

Options for Presence

Upon his election as prince by the Diet of Kolozsvár on October 23, 1613, Gábor Bethlen announced the essence of his program: only peace could save a nation so reduced and ruined by wars from utter destruction.⁹ Circumstances,

however, were not favorable to the intentions of this Calvinist prince. Ottoman forces had escorted him into Transylvania, the Diet had been called by Iskender Pasha, Beylerbey of Kanizsa, who made camp beside Torda near Kolozsvár (now Turda and Cluj-Napoca, Romania). Tartar armies plundered the villages along the River Szamos, and on the western border of the country, castles were being captured by Matthias II, Holy Roman emperor and king of Hungary. In Vienna, the election was seen as both a Protestant and an Ottoman onslaught. Bethlen was proclaiming a vision of peace while his country faced the threat of civil war and an eruption of the Habsburg–Ottoman conflict.

Bethlen managed to persuade the Ottomans to leave the country after his accession to the throne, but immediately found himself in an impossible position. Kadizade Ali, Pasha of Buda, seizing control of the region in 1614, suddenly imprisoned Bethlen’s protector, Iskender Pasha and started to promote a claimant to the princely throne, György Homonnai Drugeth.¹⁰ A Catholic, Homonnai also secured the support of the dominant statesman of the Habsburg Empire, Bishop of Vienna and President of the Geheimrat Melchior Khlesl.¹¹ At the very moment of Bethlen’s election, Khlesl launched a well-organized propaganda campaign against the new prince. Accusations made in terms like “Türkischer Bethlehem” and “Mohamedanischer Gábor” fed the flames of public opinion which had been ignited by tales of Tartar soldiers’ brutality and Ottoman plans to conquer the world.¹² The accusations were not yet widely disseminated in German-speaking areas, but the tone was set for future developments.¹³

10 Balázs Sudár, “Iskender and Gábor Bethlen: The Pasha and the Prince,” in *Europe and the Ottoman World: Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul: Isis, 2013), 143–52.

11 See Oborni’s paper in this issue; Zsuzsanna Cziráki, “Erdély szerepe Melchior Khlesl fennmaradt írásos véleményeiben 1611–1616 között,” in *Bethlen Gábor és Európa*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Kees Teszelszky (Budapest: ELTE BTK Középkori és Kora Újkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék–Transylvania Emlékeiért Tudományos Egyesület, 2013), 77–102; Péter Tusor, *Egy „epizód” Magyarország és a Szentszék történeti kapcsolataiból. Pázmány Péter esztergomi érseki kinevezése (Mikropolitikai tanulmány)*. (Diss. for doctorate of the Academy, manuscript, 2012), 148–49.

12 National Széchényi Library (OSZK) Apponyi Collection, M 347; Nóra G. Etényi, “Der Frieden von Zsitvatorok in der zeitgenössischen Propaganda,” in *Einigkeit und Frieden sollen auf Seiten jeder Partei sein: Die Friedensschlüsse von Wien (23. 06. 1606) und Zsitvatorok (15. 11. 1606)* (Zum 400. Jahrestag des Bocskai-Freiheitskampfes IX), ed. János Barta, Manfred Jatzlauk, and Klára Papp (Debrecen: Institut für Geschichte der Univ. Debrecen–Selbstverwaltung des Komitats Hajdú-Bihar, 2007), 267–79.

13 Krisztina Varsányi, *Bethlen Gábor fejedelem a Német-római Birodalom korabeli nyilvánossága előtt német nyelvű nyomtatványok tükrében* (PhD diss., ELTE, Budapest 2012); Gábor Almási, “Bethlen és a törököség kérdése a korabeli propagandában és a politikában,” in *Bethlen Gábor és Európa*, ed. Kármán and Teszelszky, 311–66; David Jayne Hill, *A History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe*, vol. 2 (New York: Longmans

2 Giovanni Botero, *Relations of the most famous kingdoms and commonwealths through the world enlarged with an addition of the estates of Saxony, Germany, Geneva, Hungary and the East Indies*, trans. Robert Johnson (London: n.p., 1630); see also István Gál, “Maksai Péter angol nyelvű Bethlen életrajza 1629-ből,” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 80, no. 2 (1976): 223–37.

3 Virgilio Malvezzi, *Introduzione al racconto De’ principali successi accaduti sotto il comando del potentissimo Ré Filippo quarto* (Rome: per gl’Heredi del Corbelletti, 1651), 59, 63.

4 Richardson, *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*.

5 Leopold Ranke, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 23 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1982), 40.

6 Golo Mann, *Wallenstein. Sein Leben erzählt von ~* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1971), 225.

7 Kurucz, *Sir Thomas Roe és az erdélyi–lengyel viszony*, 55–57.

8 Gyula Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor. Történelmi tanulmány* (Budapest: Magyar Szemle, [1929], 2nd edn 1983), 17; Csaba Csörge and László Tölg, *Bethlen Gábor. Erdély aranya. Észak-oroszánja* (Budapest: MTA, 2004).

9 Bethlen to Ferenc Batthyány, Captain of Transdanubia. Kolozsvár, 19 November 1613. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, P 1314 Batthyány family archives, Missiles No. 6610.

It was following the cataclysms which befell the kingdom in the sixteenth century—the Battle of Mohács in 1526 and Sultan Süleyman's occupation of its capital, Buda, in 1541—that the eastern part of medieval Hungary was involuntarily and violently shaped into the Principality of Transylvania (Principatus Transylvaniae).¹⁴ Transylvania's geopolitical position constrained the ambitions of its princes, although neither the Ottoman nor the Habsburg Empires succeeded in annexing its territory. In all of their many attempts, the military forces of both countries found their strength exhausted after breaching Transylvania's borders.¹⁵ The new Hungarian state established itself by virtue of medieval traditions, European power relations and the adaptability of its society; its international recognition was presaged by the Peace of Adrianople (1568) and legalized by the Treaty of Speyer between Maximilian I of Hungary and Holy Roman emperor and John Sigismund (king-elect of Hungary 1541–1571, prince of Transylvania 1571) in 1570.¹⁶ From that time on, Transylvania appeared on a separate page in Ortelius' atlas. In pursuing its “national interest”, however, it was constantly subject to the varying pressures of a dual dependence.¹⁷

The history of Gábor Bethlen's family was intertwined with the formation of the Principality. He fully experienced the fragility of the Transylvanian state in his youth. His grandfather fought in the Battle of Mohács (1526), where the forces of Sultan Süleyman shattered the unity of the Kingdom of Hungary. The

estates the family had held since the fourteenth century, together with the family seat of Iktár, lay in the two-thirds of the kingdom occupied by the Ottomans. His father Farkas Bethlen, after defending the castle of Gyula on behalf of the king against an Ottoman siege, resettled in Transylvania.

Gábor Bethlen was born in the family's castle of Marosillye in Hunyad county on November 15, 1580, in one of Transylvania's last years of tranquility following its establishment as a state, and spent his childhood there. His father was captain-general of the Principality and the military honors he earned in the service of Stephen Báthory, prince of Transylvania and king of Poland, earned him estates with many villages (1576), but after his early death, Prince Sigismund Báthory took his castle—which was in the border country—under control of the treasury. His mother, Fruzsina Lázár, came from a senior family of Székely land, an area of Transylvania with considerable autonomy and border defense duties. She followed her husband shortly after his death.

After being orphaned, Gábor and his younger brother spent some time, perhaps a few years, in the fortified house of András Lázár, a Székely king's judge (*iudex regius*), in Gyergyószárhegy. He was employed as page in the political center of Transylvania, the court of Prince Zsigmond Báthory. It was to be a formative experience for him, where as an adolescent he had his first glimpse of the new political culture, a subject we will return to. It was while he was there that the Principality's relative balance within the grip of two great powers was violently upset by war. When the conflict broke out between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires in 1592, Prince Zsigmond Báthory entered the fray in alliance with Emperor Rudolf.¹⁸ Bethlen was among the victors at the Battle of Giurgiu in 1595, but soon experienced the agonies of the Habsburg–Ottoman war: for a decade, Transylvania was the theater of a protracted, static war, prey to a pointless struggle between a succession of princes and generals.¹⁹ Bethlen lived through the anarchic consequences of Zsigmond Báthory's abdication and return, experiencing the despotism of Habsburg-party Voivode Michael and the imperial mercenary leader Giorgio Basta and the violent persecution of the nobility and the Protestants. He fought beside András Báthory and,

Green and Co., 1906), 560–61; “Als europafremder Barbar wurde er geschildert, als Beschnittener und heillicher Mohammedaner, als Tatar oder was noch,” Mann, *Wallenstein*, 225. For a detailed criticism of Golo Mann's account of Bethlen, see Andreas Oplatka, “Magyarország mozgástere Kelet és Nyugat között – Bethlen Gábor és Kádár János,” *Valóság* 32, no. 8 (1989): 115; Hans Sturmerberger: *Aufstand in Böhmen. Der Beginn des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (München: Oldenbourg, 1951), 61–62; Hugo Hantsch, *Die Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. 1. (Graz–Vienna–Cologne: Styria, 1959), 339; Harald Roth, *Kis Erdély-történet*, trans. Zoltán Hajdú Farkas (Csíkszereda: Pallas-Akadémia, 1999), 41. Criticism of Turkish affinity: László Makkai, “Bethlen Gábor és az európai művelődés,” *Századok* 115 (1981): 673–97.

14 Gábor Barta et al., eds., *History of Transylvania*, vol. 2 (1606–1830) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1999).

15 Tamás Kruppa, “Miksa főherceg erdélyi kormányzóságának terve (Az erdélyi Habsburg-kormányzat felállításának kérdéséhez (1597–1602),” *Századok* 145 (2011): 817–45.

16 Teréz Oborni, “Erdély közjogi helyzete a speyeri szerződés után (1571–1575),” in *Tanulmányok Székely Ferenc emlékére*, ed. Pál Fodor, István György Tóth, and Géza Pálffy (Budapest: MTA TKI Gazdaság- és Társadalomtörténeti Kutatócsoport, 2002), 291–304.

17 Gábor Barta, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség születése* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984); Teréz Oborni, “Die Pläne des Wiener Hofes zur Rückeroberung Siebenbürgens 1557–1563,” in *Kaiser Ferdinand I. Ein mitteleuropäischer Herrscher*, ed. Martina Fuchs et al. (Münster: Aschendorff, 2005), 277–96; Teréz Oborni, *Udvar, állam, kormányzat a koraiújkorai Erdélyben* (Budapest: ELTE, 2011); Barna Mezey, “Az erdélyi fejedelemség kormányzata Bethlen Gábor korában,” in *Bethlen Gábor állama és kora*, ed. Kálmán Kovács (Budapest: ELTE, 1980), 19–28; Klára Papp, “Nemesi társadalom az Erdélyi Fejedelemségben,” *Korunk* 34, no. 3 (2013): 34–42; Gusztáv Mihály Hermann, “Pillantás Erdély fejedelemségekori társadalmára,” *ibid.*, 43–49.

18 Mária Ivanics, *A Krimi Kánság a tizenöt éves háborúban* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1994); Gábor Várkonyi, “Erdély bekapcsolódása a tizenöt éves háborúba. Báthory Zsigmond és a konstantinápolyi politika,” in *Léptékváltó társadalomtörténet Benda Gyula tiszteletére*, ed. Zsolt K. Horváth, András Lugosi, and Ferenc Sohajda (Budapest: Hermész Kör–Osiris, 2003), 310–26.

19 Teréz Oborni, *Erdély fejedelmei* (Budapest: Pannonica, 2002); Ildikó Horn, *Báthory András* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2002).

bleeding from many wounds, fled to Ottoman lands. With Ottoman assistance, he took part in the military ventures of Prince Mózes Székely, who attacked Basta twice (1602–1603), and he was an eyewitness when the princely palace in Gyulafehérvár burned and the cathedral tower with its clock fell to the ground. That was when Bethlen started to seek out for himself political options that could free the Principality from the stifling grip of the Habsburg and Ottoman powers. His soldiers elected him prince, and the Porte supported him even then. But Bethlen considered István Bocskai, former counselor to the prince and Captain of Várada (now Oradea, Romania), as better suited to defend the constitution of Transylvania and Hungary and to lead the way out of a horrific war which had pitched the land into anarchy.

When the throne again became vacant after Bocskai's death (1606) and old Prince Zsigmond Rákóczi's abdication (1608), Bethlen assisted in the election of the eighteen-year-old Gábor Báthory (r. 1608–1613). This talented and ambitious scion of the Báthory family might have upheld the broad political vision of his ancestors, but his attempts to balance the conflicts of Transylvania's complex society caused him to assume unlimited powers. He abolished the privileges of the Saxons, led a campaign against the Romanian voivodates of Moldavia and Wallachia, and lived the life of a gilded youth. He was not mature for princely power.²⁰

By this time, Bethlen had become one of the foremost landowners in Transylvania, regaining his family legacy and extending it by several thousand acres, and his wife Zsuzsa Károlyi, who bore him two children, brought a substantial dowry. He was a pivotal figure in Transylvanian politics, the captain-in-chief of the household cavalry, *főispán* of Hunyad county, and captain-in-chief of Csíkszék, Gyergyószék and Kászon-szék. In 1612, fallen from grace, he had to seek refuge in Ottoman lands. We can only speculate as to what soured his relations with the young prince. He clearly did not approve of Báthory's foreign policy, his aspirations to the Polish throne, or his campaigns against Moldavia and Wallachia.²¹

Bethlen made thorough preparations for his own election as prince. He visited all of the pashas of the Ottoman castles, travelled to Belgrade and Buda, won over the Catholic aristocrats of Transylvania, had an audience with the sultan in Adrianople, and got the Saxons behind him.²² His election got a mixed reception among contemporaries. An account of the circumstances "resting on the documents" was written by his court historian, Gáspár Bojti Veres. The Diet held in St Michael's Church was initially divided. Some wanted an interregnum. Others proposed that Transylvania be governed by a triumvirate rather than a prince. In the end, the desire to be free of the Ottoman troops drove the estates to unanimously lay down their votes for one of the two candidates, Gábor Bethlen. In his welcoming address, János Mikola, president of the Transylvanian high court (*tabula principalis*) said emphatically that the election had "followed the customs of Christian countries."²³ In the eyes of some Transylvanians, however, it was the Ottomans who had made Gábor Bethlen prince.

The traditions of the little country's presence in Europe eased Bethlen's position as he took the throne, but there were also new demands to be faced. Government and politics were in transformation throughout the continent, with new shared values emerging in the economy, in culture, and in forms of governance. Discoveries were making the world bigger. The inclusion of both Transylvania and China in Botero's world chronicle, for example, was no longer a novelty.

The potency of a country's presence in Europe depended on how much it could adopt new order and value systems, and what it contributed to these. The methods by which it could assert its presence, however, lay in a new and invisible "great power" which was redefining what European presence meant: the information explosion. The centers of this new power were the cities with the largest printing presses: Venice, Vienna, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Frankfurt, London and Amsterdam. The printed media rapidly and efficiently disseminated the news to serve political interests, but on a commercial basis. News-hungry Europe enjoyed an information honeymoon during the Thirty Years' War, finding out about everything and its opposite quickly, served up to different

20 István Bársony, "Báthory Gábor alakja a történetírásban," István Bitskey, "'Erdély Hectors' avagy 'tirannusa'?" Tamás Kruppa, "Báthory Gábor a forrásokban: propaganda és ellenpropaganda," all in *Báthory Gábor és kora*, ed. Klára Papp et al. (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Történeti Intézete, 2009).

21 Katalin Péter, "Bethlen Gábor emlékezete. A fejedelem pályakezdése," *Századok* 114 (1980): 744–49; Klára Jakó, "Báthory Gábor és a román vajdaságok," in *Báthory Gábor és kora*, 123–33; Teréz Oborni, "Báthory Gábor megállapodása a Magyar Királysággal," *ibid.*, 111–22.

22 Ildikó Horn, "A fejedelmi tanács Bethlen Gábor korában," *Századok* 145 (2011): 997–1027; Zsuzsanna Cziráki, "Brassó és az erdélyi szászok szerepe Bethlen Gábor fejedelem trónfoglalásában (1611–1613)," *Századok* 145 (2011): 847–76.

23 Gáspár Bojti Veres, "A nagy Bethlen Gábor viselt dolgairól," in *Bethlen Gábor emlékezete*, comp., ed. László Makkai (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1980), 36, 95–103. His biography by Emma Bartoniek in *Fejezetek a XVI-XVII. századi magyarországi történetírás történetéből*, ed. Ritoók Zsigmondné (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Irodalomtudományi Intézete és a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára 1975), 327–38.

sections of society in the way they demanded.²⁴ How often did Gábor Bethlen's name appear in print? It is impossible to tell with any precision, but he was certainly the first Hungarian statesman to become what we would now call a media star.

Bethlen appreciated how the Turks, and the frightening image of them, could be put to use as a propaganda weapon. He also knew, however, that there were new interests exerting influence on Europe's rulers. He wrote in a letter to Melchior Khlesl that Transylvania, "lying in the throat of the Turks," could do no more than maintain "peace and covenant." Even larger Christian countries, further from the Ottomans, were doing the same thing. "Emperor Rudolf has accepted the present Turkish emperor as a son ... and this has been confirmed by oaths and charters. Why, if this is no dishonor for such fine kings, emperors and realms and does not lead to their ejection from the company of Christian countries, is Transylvania alone so accused, and scourged and condemned without mercy?"²⁵ Set down in private correspondence, hidden from public view, these arguments were ineffective. As far as we know, the prince did not make the circumstances of his election public. It was a serious failure, but unavoidable. Transylvania had neither the means nor the capability to connect into the information network.

The Statesman

Following Bethlen's election, the estates, by custom, presented the new prince with the conditions which delineated his duties and powers. More modern procedures for the exercise of power, however, were being demanded by the changes in Europe. Bethlen took up the princely scepter fully prepared, with a definite program, and built up his power as a true sovereign.

His appointments to the governing body, the Princely Council, were designed to serve his interests, but he made realistic deference to the political, religious, ethnic and economic composition of feudal society and included men with special expertise.²⁶ He started rebuilding castles and towns and attempted

to pass on some of the costs to the tax-exempt nobility. He repossessed previously alienated treasury estates and sources of income. He restored the Saxons' privileges and moved to settle the internal affairs of the Székelys.²⁷ Regarding Transylvania's constitution, he proclaimed the unity and equality of the three feudal nations. Despite many compromises, he introduced strict central governmental control and, over the years, suppressed the political influence of the Diet.²⁸

To implement the reason and interests of state, the new system of government which was emerging in response to far-reaching economic, executive, military and scientific changes demanded qualified counselors and a properly-organized administrative staff. Above all, it demanded a sovereign—or a statesman advising the sovereign—who was capable of employing the new techniques of politics and diplomacy. Politics had become a science, with a language differentiated for specific aims and requirements.

Bethlen was lacking in traditional schooling, and had not attended a foreign university. As a result, it was thought for a long time that his grasp of political science was instinctive in origin.²⁹ Recent research, however, has discovered that he gained much from the Báthory court traditions and that his familiarity with the new ideas which he adopted so adroitly was the result of systematic study. In the court of Zsigmond Báthory, he was exposed to the open culture of the Báthorys' court and a milieu rich in Italian influences.³⁰ He learned taste, customs, communication and the rules of contact. He became familiarized with the requirements of a Catholic court and princely image-building. He gained insight into foreign relations, the forms of expression of power and culture, simulation, and the new methods of politics.³¹ It was here he acquired his love

27 Rezső Lovas, "A százsz kérdés Bethlen Gábor korában," *Századok* 78 (1944): 419–62; Judit Balogh, "A székely nemesség helyzete Bethlen Gábor fejedelemsége alatt a Liber Regius oklevelei alapján," *Publicationes Universitatis Miskolcensis. Sectio Philosophica* 13, no. 3 (2008): 335–61.

28 Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor*; Zsolt Trócsányi, "Bethlen Gábor erdélyi állama," *Jogtudományi Közöny* 35 (1980): 617–22; Zsolt Trócsányi, *Erdély központi kormányzata 1540–1690* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1980); Teréz Oborni, "Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség állama és politikai berendezkedése," *Korunk* 34, no. 3 (2013): 8–16.

29 Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor*, 56; Kálmán Benda, "Diplomáciai szervezet és diplomata Erdélyben Bethlen Gábor korában," *Századok* 145 (1981): 725–30.

30 Péter Erdősi, *Hatalom és reprezentáció Báthory Zsigmond erdélyi fejedelem udvarában (1581–1598)* (PhD diss., manuscript, 1999); Péter Erdősi: "Báthory Zsigmond ünnepi armása. A fejedelem és a ceremóniák," *Aetas* 10 (1995): 24–67; Horn, *Báthory András*.

31 Péter Erdősi, "A politikai színlelés funkciói és megítélése Báthory Zsigmond erdélyi fejedelem udvarában," in *Színlelés és rejtezködés. A kora újkor magyar politika szerepjátékai*, ed. Nóra G. Etényi and Ildikó Horn (Budapest: L'Harmattan–Transylvania Emlékeiért Tudományos Egyesület, 2010), 77–108.

24 Nóra G. Etényi, *Hadszín és nyilvánosság. A magyarországi török háború hírei a 17. századi német újságokban* (Budapest: Balassi, 2003).

25 Bethlen's letter to Melchior Khlesl, Fogaras, 19 February 1614. Sándor Szilágyi, ed., "Bethlen Gábor politikai levelei," *Történelmi Tár* 3 (1880): 461. Published more recently by Teréz Oborni, "Bethlen Gábor és a nagyszombati szerződés (1615)," *Századok* 145 (2011): 877–914, quotation: 901–2.

26 Zsolt Trócsányi, "Bethlen Gábor hivatalsszervezete," *Századok* 115 (1981): 698–702; Ildikó Horn, "A fejedelmi tanács Bethlen Gábor korában," *Századok* 145 (2011): 997–1028.

of the arts, and was so deeply affected by music that the aspiration to improve musical life at court remained with him throughout his reign.³²

In his youth, he became familiar with the centralized methods of Habsburg rule. He went to Prague, Emperor Rudolf's Central European cultural and scientific capital.³³ In 1608, he led a fifty-strong embassy to Constantinople. He was present at the 1609 Diet of Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia), the city beside the Danube which had become capital of the Kingdom of Hungary after the fall of Buda. A military campaign took him to the Romanian voivodates, and he acted as a peace intermediary between the Poles and the Ottomans. He learned Turkish, and the mode of political communication in the Sublime Porte. As part of Bocskai's staff, he learned about the Habsburg war machine and peace negotiations, and became familiar with the Netherlands' Europe-oriented policies and propaganda network.³⁴

He lived with books from an early age. On his campaigns, he always had a wagonful of books with him, and he read on the road. Brief references in his will tell us that he knew the wisdom of the Greek and Latin classical authors.³⁵ The breadth of his reading is apparent from his several hundred letters and the marginal notes he made in the manuscript of the Latin *History of Transylvania* by the greatest historian of the age, István Szamosközy.³⁶ His court library and private library in Gyulafehérvár were destroyed in a fire, but two of the books

which survived class among the essential manuals of modern government. One is an atlas, Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, on whose title page the twenty-eight-year-old Bethlen, setting out on a diplomatic mission to the Porte, wrote "Lord of the armies, bless my journey, that it may be fortunate ..." ³⁷

The other book to escape the flames was Antonio de Guevara's *Horologium principum*. In the early seventeenth century, books on political science were manuals for practical rule. The original source was Machiavelli, read even by those who banned him. *Il Principe* was at hand in Richelieu's study, the central offices of the Burg in Vienna, and the libraries of the aristocrats behind the Bohemian Revolt. De Guevara's book quotes both the over-criticized *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi*. The president of the Prague Chamber remarked of Khlesl: "He is closer to Machiavelli than to the breviary."³⁸ The theories of state that proliferated at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries refined the requirements of the modern state. The directives of Justus Lipsius, highly popular in Hungary, also found their way to Transylvania. *Basilikon Doron*, the instructions which James I of England (whose grandson became Bethlen's godson) wrote to his son, was published in Hungarian in 1612 under the title *Királyi ajándék* [Royal Gift], translated by Bocskai's preacher György Szepsi Korotz.³⁹

Bethlen's intensive interest in the subject is also evident from two Hungarian books on political science. A Reformed Church minister who had attended university in Heidelberg, János Pataki Fésüs, dedicated his book *Királyok tüköre* [Mirror of Kings] to the prince. It highlights the relationships between counselors and prince and establishing internal peace in the country. István Milotai Nyilas also dedicated his directives for successful governance of countries, formulated in a commentary to the *Twentieth Psalm of King David*, to "the God-Fearing Christian Prince of Hungary and Transylvania," Gábor Bethlen. These works effectively extended the thoughts of Justus Lipsius. A cultured sovereign was the

32 Emil Haraszti, "Étienne Bathory et la musique en Transylvanie," in *Étienne Báthory, roi de Pologne, prince de Transylvanie* (Kraków: Imprimerie de l'Université des Jagellons, 1935.), 71–80; Péter Király, "Somlyai (ifj.) Báthory István és a zene," in Péter Király, *Magyarország és Európa. Zenetörténeti írások* (Budapest: Balassi, 2003), 45–52.

33 Robert J.W. Evans, *Rudolf II and his World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973); Eliška Fučíková, "Prague Castle under Rudolf II, His Predecessors and Successors 1530–1648," in *Rudolf and Prague. The Imperial Court and residential city as the Cultural and spiritual heart of Central Europe*, ed. Eliška Fučíková et al. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 2–71.

34 Endre Veress, "Bethlen Gábor fejedelem ifjúsága. (Bethlen ifjúkori leveleivel)," *Erdélyi Múzeum* 9, no. 6 (1914): 285–338; Kees Teszelszky, "Bocskai István követének iratai az európai politika tükrében," in *Színlelés és rejtőzködés*, 143–64.

35 "Bethlen Gábor végrendelete," in *Magyar gondolkodók. 17. század*, sel., ed. and ann. Márton Tarnóc (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1979), 107, 112–13.

36 Zsigmond Jakó, "A nagyenyedi kollégium Bethlen-könyvtárának kezdetei és első korszaka (1622–1658)," in Zsigmond Jakó, *Írás, könyv, értelmiség* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1976), 199–200; Sándor Iván Kovács et al., "Bethlen Gábor könyvtárának újabban előkerült darabja" *Magyar Könyvszemle* 85 (1969): 376–77; István Sinkovics, "Szamosközy István," in István Szamosközy, *Erdély története* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1977), 31; Teréz Oborni, "...quem historiae Transylvaniae patrem merito dixeris..." Az erdélyi történetírás atyja: Szamosközy István," *Korunk* 22, no. 5 (2011): 16–22; Antal Pirnát, "Die Heliodor-Übersetzung von Enyedi," in *György Enyedi and Central European Unitarism in the 16–17th Centuries*, ed. Mihály Balázs and Gizella

Keserű, vol. 11 of *Studia Humanitatis* (Budapest: Balassi, 2000), 285; István Milotai Nyilas, *Speculum tributarius* (Debrecen: n.p., 1622), Régi Magyarországi Nyomtatványok (hereafter RMNy) 1262; István Monok, *A művelt arisztokrata* (Budapest: Kossuth, 2012), 50–55.

37 Károly Szabó, "Bethlen Gábor sajátkezű feljegyzése," *Történelmi Tár* 5 (1882): 267.

38 Péter Ötvös, "Együttműködő ellenfelek. A bécsi béke és a bécsi püspök," in *Idővel paloták...* Magyar udvari kultúra a 16–17. században, ed. Nóra G. Etényi and Ildikó Horn (Budapest: Balassi, 2005), 118.

39 István Milotai Nyilas, *Sz. Dávidnak huszadik Soltarának rövid praedicationok szerint való magyarázattya, Irattott és kibocsáttott az Felséges Bethlen Gábornak Istenfélő keresztény Fejedelemlnek fő prädicatora ~ által* (Cassa: Festus János, 1620); Letter of dedication to Gábor Bethlen, in János Füsüs Pataki, "Királyoknak tüköre Bártfa 1626," in *Magyar gondolkodók. 17. század*, ed. Márton Tarnóc (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1979), 69–86; *Basilikon Doron. Az angliai, scotiai franciai és hibernai Első Jakob Királynak, az igaz hitnek oltalmazójának és fia tanitasaért írt Királyi ajándéka*, trans. György Szepsi Korotz (Oppenheimium: Galler Hieronimus, 1612).

key to the internal peace of the realm, and also essential were law, understanding and “intelligence.” Even war is not decided by individual valor, but by diplomacy, negotiations, conference tables and money. The key words were *necessitas*, *fortuna* and *fama*. For effective government, the ruler must be in sovereign control, but with the help of his counselors.

Bethlen has left us thorough analyses of the rapidly-changing political situations in several-page letters and ambassadorial instructions, written in angular script. His intentions and decisions, however, are difficult to discern.⁴⁰ His rapid changes, multifarious contradictory plans, which nearly drove his enemies mad, are clear and understandable in terms of the prevailing principles of statecraft. Simulation was occasionally a justified recourse for a ruler, an essential means of obtaining and holding on to power.

Justus Lipsius dwelt at length on the requirements of good, successful rule. His *Politics* was translated into Hungarian by the loyal disciple of the Bethlen family, János Laskai. Lipsius copies Machiavelli almost word for word in this book, and advises the prince to be a lion in action and a fox in his plans. “Where the lion skin does not serve, he must put on the fox skin.” Lipsius invests misleading politics with moral content. The whole world is treacherous, he declared, and only he who overcomes the treachery will prevail. Consequently, the good ruler must blend some deception into his intelligent ideas. The fox must be treated foxily. “The prince must be Lion and Fox.” There were critical predicaments and circumstances when cunning was essential: every statesman of the time kept his plans secret, played with several cards, and it was everyday practice to capture the enemy’s correspondence and deceive the public with forged letters. The statesmen of the Habsburg government made extensive use of deception politics, as did Sultan Osman II, who disguised his plans for the war against Persia as a pilgrimage to Mecca.⁴¹ Lipsius backed up his view with

classical authors: “Like Pindarus, I always praise a statesman who executes his affairs like a roaring lion and negotiates like a fox.”⁴²

The techniques of deception were essential to Transylvanian politics, and were deployed with masterful skill to keep the two threatening powers at bay.⁴³ The governmental procedures implemented by Bethlen correspond closely to the model of the prince set out in the books on political theory. His priorities in building up his power bear this out. Soldiers enlisted into the army were to receive regular pay, as provided by a patent he issued in the days before his election.⁴⁴ He appreciated the crucial importance to a modern state of a regularly paid standing army. Some countries took nearly a century to establish one; Bethlen only had a few years, and limited means. He built up his army from Székelys and Hajdús, soldiers who had pledged their military service to Bocskai in return for being settled in the Partium with their families.⁴⁵ Regular pay, which Bethlen saw as crucial, was a serious challenge for every country. He was often obliged to make grants of land in compensation for failure to pay his officers and men. He demanded hard discipline, and his army regulations punished the most serious and intractable delinquency of contemporary warfare—pillaging, arbitrariness and robbery—with execution.⁴⁶

He employed a centralized and mercantilist economic policy.⁴⁷ He promoted schooling and provided scholarships with a view to developing a highly qualified

40 “Mihi, cum Pindaro, semper laudatus ille vir; qui ‘...Animum graviter frementium leonum / In discrimine: consilio vero vulpes.’” Ibid.

43 Péter Erdősi, “A politikai színlelés funkciói és megítélése Báthory Zsigmond erdélyi fejedelem udvarában,” in Etényi et al., eds., *Színlelés és rejtőzködés*, 33–66; Gábor Almási, “Politikai színlelés, vallási színlelés és a császári udvar Nicodémusai a konfesszionizáció korában,” *ibid.*, 77–105; Nóra G. Etényi: “A politika arcai és álarcai a 17. századi pamfletekben és rölapokon,” *ibid.*, 203–34.

44 Ifj. Kemény Lajos, publ., “Kassa város levéltárából,” *Történelmi Tár*, New series, 1 (1900): 478.

45 László Nagy, *Bethlen Gábor a független Magyarországért* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1969); István Rác, *A hajdúk a XVII. században* (Debrecen: KLTE, 1969).

46 Domokos Makkai, közli, “Bethlen Gábor biztosító és adománylevele a lippai vitézeknek,” *Történelmi Tár* 11 (1888): 598–603; Károly Ráth, “Bethlen Gábor 1619–21 évi tábornokságai,” *Győri Történelmi és Régészeti Füzetek* 2 (1863): 255.

47 Szekfű, *Bethlen*; Vera Mráz, “Bethlen Gábor gazdaságpolitikája,” *Századok* 87 (1953): 512–64; Ágnes R. Várkonyi, “Handelswesen und Politik in Ungarn des XVII–XVIII. Jahrhunderts (Theorien, Monopole, Schmugglerbewegungen 1600–1711),” *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 17 (1971): 207–24; Kálmán Benda, “Habsburg Absolutism and the Resistance of the Hungarian Estates in the 16–17th centuries,” in *Crown, Church and Estates. Central European politics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, ed. R.J.W. Evans and T.V. Thomas (London: Macmillan, 1991), 123–28.

40 Bethlen “is one of the most interesting representatives of the art of the political letter.” Kuno Klebelsberg, “Bethlen Gábor emlékezete. 1929,” in *idem, Jöjjetek harmincas évek* (Budapest: Athenaeum, n.d.), 204. (Thanks to Gábor Újváry for this reference.)

41 “Cum vulpe junctum, pariter vulpinariter...” “Ubi Leonina pellis non pertingit, oportet Vulpianam assuere.” “Princeps ex leone et vulpe.” Justus Lipsius, “*Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (1598),” in Justus Lipsius, *Politica. Six books of politics or political instruction*, ed., trans. and intro. Jan Waszink, liber IV, caput XIII (Assen: Bibliotheca Latinitatis Novae, Royal van Gorcum, 2004), 506–10. Contemporary Hungarian translation: *Justus Lipsiusnak a polgári társaságnak tudományáról írt hat könyvei. Mellyek kivált képpen a Fejedelemségre tartoznak Melyeket újonnan Deákbold magyarra fordított Laskai János. Bátfán nyomtatta Klösz Jakab 1641 esztendőben*, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, Kézirattár Rm I 8r. 203. See also: *Laskai János válogatott művei. Magyar Justus Lipsius*, ed., intro. and notes, Márton Tarnóc (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1970), 299–311.

administrative staff for his modern princely court.⁴⁸ Right from the start of his reign, he built up his princely seat in Gyulafehérvár (now Alba Iulia, Romania). His broad vision shows up in the development of the city and the two-phase construction of his princely palace.⁴⁹

He organized the Transylvanian state, and his court, to follow the norms of European royal display, carrying on the customs of the Báthorys. Bethlen knew that the prince's court was the country itself. It was a diplomatic, political, academic and artistic center, and the seat of government. It had a library, archives, and collections of coins and portraits.⁵⁰ He took a personal interest in stocking his library, the “fine Bibliotheca,” although we do not know who his buyers were. He had his books “splendidly bound and adorned with crested supra-libros.” He was aware of the library's practical and academic significance and its status as a collection, expressing the image of the realm. He intended to recover the highly valuable books of the library of King Matthias, the great renaissance king of Hungary. These were manuscripts, known throughout the world as *Corvinas*, richly illustrated codices which had fallen into the hands of the Ottomans upon the fall of Buda. He set up the country's archives and gathered foreign documents on government. He required of his diplomats that they keep two diaries, one general and one with confidential information. The confidential diaries were to be deposited in the archives upon their return. He had the printing press moved from Nagyszombat (now Trnava, Slovakia) to Gyulafehérvár, and he founded the Collegium Academicum, for which he recruited Martin Opitz, the “German Virgil,” Johann Heinrich Alstedt of Herborn, and Johann Heinrich Bisterfeld and Ludovicus Philippus Piscator, with an eye on more than education: he intended his court to become a center of scholarship.⁵¹

He recognized the power of obtaining and disseminating information. His instruction to his ambassador to Constantinople, Tamás Borsos, presages the

instruction of a modern press chief: “From whatever corner of the world, news good or evil, what changes on land or sea, you may hear or reach something, write it down, make a note, and write what you hear to us, with full explanation.”⁵² Delay was always a danger, exacerbated in Transylvania's case by a particular circumstance. Bethlen could only maintain a permanent diplomatic agent in one place. Constantinople, the world capital of European embassies, was the obvious choice, but like the rest of the Ottoman Empire it had the great disadvantage of lacking a printing press. Information could be obtained only by the slow traditional routes, and could not be disseminated in the efficient form of printed text.

He summed up his politics, with due heed to the realities of power, in terms of balance between the two empires: “we can serve Christendom with good intentions and sincerity, and the Turks too, I can look for their favors as such a great enemy, so that they are not irritated because of us.”⁵³ Between 1613 and 1619, he won recognition for his principality from both Vienna and Constantinople, and secured a time of tranquility and abundance for Transylvania.⁵⁴

Recent research, informed by the findings of modern Turkish studies and source criticism, has shown that Bethlen's Ottoman policy was much more complex than “Turkish vassalage,” the oversimplified term common in the old literature, applied in accusatory or embarrassed tones. His relationship with the Porte was extremely varied,⁵⁵ responding to the rapid turnover in high positions in the Porte and elsewhere, European political affairs, and the highly intensive Habsburg–Ottoman relations which went on over the heads of the Hungarians. It was influenced by the Bohemian Revolt, Polish–Ottoman relations and not least the Constantinople policies of the Netherlands, England and France. Then there was another “great power,” propaganda. Captured and forged letters and false information were put into print and disseminated, setting traps for the objective but unwary modern researcher. For Bethlen, however, everyday realism

48 Gábor Sipos, “‘Tanulásoknak okáért...’ Bethlen Gábor világi elitképző programjáról,” *Korunk* 34, no. 3 (2013): 21–33.

49 András Kovács, “Gyulafehérvár. Site of Transylvanian Princely Court in the 16th Century,” in *Studies in the History of Early Modern Transylvania*, ed. Gyöngy Kovács Kiss, vol. 140 of *Atlantic Studies on Society in Change* (Boulder, Colo.: Social Science Monographs, 2011.), 319–58; András Kovács, “Az építkező Bethlen Gábor és székvárosa,” in *Emlékkönyv Jakó Zsigmond nyolcvanadik születésnapjára*, ed. András Kovács, Gábor Sipos, and Sándor Tonk (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1996), 276–94.

50 See: “*Idővel paloták...*” ed. Nóra G. Etényi and Ildikó Horn; Annamária Jeney-Tóth, “A fejedelmi udvar az Erdélyi Fejedelemségben,” *Korunk* 34, no. 3 (2013): 27–33.

51 Márton Tarnóc, *Erdély művelődése Bethlen Gábor és a két Rákóczi György korában* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1978); Makkai, *Bethlen Gábor és az európai művelődés*; András Lajos Róth, “Európaiságunk megsejtése,” *Korunk* 34, no. 3 (2013): 67.

52 “Akármely szegletiről ez világnak, jó vagy gonosz hírek, mi változások mind földön, tengeren, valamelyeket hallhat, érhet fel írván, jegyezvén minekünk is bő beszéddel az mint ott hallja, írja meg.” 18 April 1618, TMÁO, vol. 1, 200.

53 “...a kereszténységnek igaz jó akarattal Sinceritással szolgálhassunk, a töröknek is, mint olyan hatalmas ellenségnek kedvét kereshessem, ne irítaltassék miattunk.” Sándor Szilágyi, pub., *Bethlen Gábor fejedelem kiadatlan politikai levelei* (Budapest: MTA, 1879), 89.

54 Teréz Oborni, “Bethlen Gábor és a nagyszombati szerződés,” *Századok* 145 (2011): 677–914; text of the secret agreement: 905–6.

55 Sándor Papp, “Bethlen Gábor, a Magyar Királyság és a Porta (1619–1629),” *Századok* 145 (2011): 915–74; Sudár, “Iskender and Gábor Bethlen;” Almási, “Bethlen és a törökösség.”

demanded the maintenance of good relations. The Porte's demand that he fulfill the promise of the Habsburg emperors and Transylvanian princes to hand over the castles of Lippa (now Lipova, Romania) and Jenő (now Ineu, Romania) weighed down heavily on him. He delayed the handover as long as he could, but on June 14, 1616, the gates of Lippa, captured by a siege of his own soldiers, were opened to Deak Mehmed, Pasha of Temesvár (now Timișoara, Romania).⁵⁶

The new sultan ordered Bethlen to hand over Jenő castle, pay the annual tribute without delay and join the Moldavian campaign, and prepared to attack Poland. Bethlen managed to forge an alliance with the new Voivode of Moldavia, Radu Mihnea. He was unable, however, to establish a workable cooperation with Sigismund III of Poland after warning him of the impending Ottoman campaign and mentioning the possibility of joint action.⁵⁷

The half-century following his election, however, indisputably proved that the princely scepter was in the hand of a statesman who was educated and successful in practical politics.

The Central European Confederation

The Bohemian nobles' declaration of their secession from the Habsburg Empire by the symbolic rite of defenestration in Prague Castle on May 23, 1618 opened a new chapter in Bethlen's politics. By entering the struggle on the Bohemian side, Bethlen was pursuing his vision that he could best safeguard the statehood of the Principality and defend the constitution of the Kingdom of Hungary by joining forces with his Protestant neighbors and more distant Protestant countries and thus link into the system of European states.⁵⁸

In requesting assistance, the Bohemian nobles raised the prospect that if Bethlen was elected king of Hungary, they would make him a candidate for the Bohemian throne. After long preparation, Bethlen's army, under the command of Count Jindřich Matyáš Thurn and together with rebel forces, marched in August 1619.⁵⁹ Recently discovered Ottoman sources refute the old hypotheses

that the Porte gave him its backing. It did not even give clear permission, because the sultan was sticking by his peace treaty with the Habsburg emperor.⁶⁰

He justified his campaign on several grounds: defense of religious freedom, freedom of the Kingdom of Hungary, and fulfilment of the Bohemian rebels' request.⁶¹ The pamphlet *Querela Hungariae*, published in Latin and Hungarian in Kassa (now Košice, Slovakia), informed Hungary and foreign countries that the nobles and cities of the Kingdom had summoned the prince of Transylvania because of the emperor's failure to keep the terms of the Treaty of Vienna, signed with the Hungarian estates in 1606. He was oppressing Protestants, was incapable of defending the kingdom, and the Turks had annexed dozens of villages to the Ottoman Empire under cover of peace.⁶² The author of the pamphlet, the Reformed Church minister Péter Alvinczi, who had studied at the universities of Wittenberg and Heidelberg, was arguing from fact, arranging the details in the political language of the age to appeal to readers. A particularly powerful argument was Bethlen's reference to the Peace of Vienna, whose terms the Habsburg government had not kept. Bethlen's course of action, however, principally followed his general, broad-based, long term political ambition.

Historians who aim at objectivity have long acknowledged his exceptional political sharp-sightedness, as many of his enemies did. The decision was consistent with his appreciation of the European situation. He recognized that Europe was preparing for a war which would put all of its countries under arms. Although not even he could foresee the course of the war, the conflicts of interests among European powers were clear to him. He had a notion of the political superiority of the Habsburgs of Spain and Austria and the rising tensions between France, the Netherlands, England and other countries. He

(Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 1983), 1269; on preparations for his campaign: Szilágyi, *Bethlen Gábor kiadatlan politikai levelei*, 133; Sándor Szilágyi, pub., "Oklevelek Bethlen Gábor 1619–1621. hadjáratai történetéhez," *Magyar Történelmi Társulat* 4 (1857), 213–15.

60 Papp, *Bethlen Gábor*, 932.

61 Péter, *Bethlen Gábor emlékezete*, 175, 191–92; László Nagy, "Bethlen Gábor a magyar históriában," in *Bethlen Gábor állama és kora*, ed. Kálmán Kovács (Budapest: ELTE, 1980), 3–18; Géza Herczegh, "Bethlen Gábor külpolitikai törekvései," *ibid.*, 37–48; Carl Göllner, ed., *Geschichte der Deutschen auf dem Gebiete Rumäniens*, vol. 1. (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1979), 203.

62 Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* (hereinafter EOE), vol. 7 (Budapest: MTA, 1875–1898), 116; József Pokoly, *Az erdélyi református egyház története*, vol. 2/5 (Budapest: Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Állandó Igazgatótanácsa, 1904–1905), 76; Mihály Imre, "Magyarország panasza" – *A Querela Hungariae toposz a XVI–XVII. század irodalmában*, vol. 2 of *Bibliotheca Studiorum Litterarium* (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 1995); Éva Vámos, *Lászlók, ismerjék a világnak minden népei... Magyarországi és magyar vonatkozású röpiratok, újságok (1458–1849)* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1981), 33–34.

56 Papp, *Bethlen*, 931; Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen," Almási, "Bethlen és a törököség."

57 Antal Gindely and Acsády Ignác, *Bethlen Gábor és udvara* (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 1890), 17; Lajos Demény, *Bethlen Gábor és kora* (Bucharest: Politikai, 1982); Sándor Gebei, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek és a lengyel királyválasztások* (Budapest: Belvedere, 2007).

58 Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor*, 84; Elek Csetri, *Bethlen Gábor életútja* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1992), 91.

59 Letter from Bethlen to Ferenc Rhédey, July 1618, in Szilágyi, *Bethlen Gábor kiadatlan politikai levelei*, 100–1; Gabriel Schreiber, ...an die Herren Directoren des Böhmen, 1619. aug. 18. Régi Magyar Könyvtár III

counted on England, Holland, Denmark, Brandenburg, Switzerland and the Protestant countries in general to stand beside the Bohemians, and expected James I of England to send assistance to his son-in-law.⁶³ His mistake was in believing that the Protestant powers would immediately hasten to defend the Bohemians. Although pained by the disappointment, he did not abandon his vision, and declared that the highest aim of his reign was to secure peace for his country.⁶⁴ He saw the only guarantee for the future of the Principality of Transylvania as a state, squeezed between two great empires and sitting in the jaws of the Ottomans, as being accepted into the great family of European countries. Until then, Bethlen would take every chance to break out on to the international arena.⁶⁵ If he failed to take this opportunity, Transylvania would be isolated from Christendom. The fundamental *necessitas* deriving from the division of the Kingdom of Hungary itself forced him to accept the substantial costs and risks of war, and grasp the *bona occasio*.⁶⁶

Sources variously estimate the strength of his army at between 15,000 and 40,000.⁶⁷ He quickly occupied the northeastern area of the Kingdom, known at the time as Upper Hungary. In mid-October, in fierce fighting, he took Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia) whose four-towered castle was the repository of the Hungarian royal crown, which thus fell into Bethlen's hands. Two Diets subsequently elected him king of Hungary, the first called by Palatine Zsigmond Forgách at Pozsony (November 1709–February 1620) and the second at Besztercebánya (now Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; August 25, 1620). From that time on, he issued his charters as elected king of Hungary and prince of Transylvania, had coins struck with his royal title, and exercised his sovereign rights with grants of land, but he never had himself crowned.⁶⁸

63 Áron Zarnóczy, "Angol követjelentések Bethlen Gábor első hadjáratáról és a nikolsburgi békekötésről (1619–1622)," in Kármán and Teszelszky, eds. *Bethlen és Európa*, 130–43.

64 R. Várkonyi Ágnes, "Bethlen és az európai béketárgyalások," *Valóság* 24, no. 2 (1981): 1–10.

65 EOE, vol. 7, 74–82. See also Csetri, *Bethlen életútja*, 77–78.

66 Jozef Polišenský, *War and Society in Europe 1618–1648* (Cambridge: CUP, 1978); Gottfried Schramm, "Armed conflicts in east Central Europe," in Evans, *Crown, Church and Estates*, 176–95; W. Schmidt-Biggemann, "The Apocalypse and millenarianism in the Thirty Years War," in 1648. *War and Peace in Europe I*, ed. Klaus Büßmann (n.p.: Verant.-Ges. 350 Jahre Westfäl. Friede, 1998), 259–63; Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Years War* (London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

67 László Nagy, *Magyar hadsereg és hadművészet a harmincéves háborúban* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1972), 77–80.

68 Joannes Bocatius, *Historica parascene seu praeparatio ad rerum in Hvmgaria Transylvaniaque trivm imperatorum ac regum, Rudolph. II Matthiae II et Ferdinandi II nec non elect. novi reg. Gabrielis tempore gestarum opus historiale ...* (Cassoviae: Mollerus, 1621). RMNY, 1245.

Why not? Various answers have been put forward by Hungarian historians. To the friends who urged him to accept coronation, he answered that the ancient right of crowning the king lay with the archbishop of Esztergom, and his chances were nil as long as Péter Pázmány held this title.⁶⁹ Bethlen was aware that being Catholic was a definite requirement, but in addition to the deep faith and conviction which tied him to the Reformed Church, he made the realistic calculation that a Protestant prince converting in order to become a Catholic king could no longer count on the support of Calvinist and Lutheran countries.

Research is made difficult by Bethlen's statement in a letter to Iskender Pasha dated November 4, 1619: "The crown is in my hands, thanks be to God ... after the tenth day I will be elected king of the Hungarians." The lines of this letter, which was printed in many copies, are interpreted to mean that Bethlen was, with Ottoman help, preparing to be elected and crowned king. The only trouble is that the original of this letter has never been found; the closest is a copy held in Vienna.⁷⁰

The fortunes of the Bohemian–Moravian–Hungarian–Transylvanian confederation seems to have had a profound effect on Bethlen's delaying position with regard to ascent to the Hungarian throne and to the act of coronation.⁷¹ On January 2, 1620, the Pozsony Diet notified the royal commissioners that they were entering an alliance with the Bohemians and other provinces of the Habsburg Empire.

In its eighteen points, the treaty establishing the Confederation declared that the alliance was eternal and indissoluble. Joint defense was to be organized at a joint diet, and the Bohemian and Moravian nobles would contribute a prescribed sum for maintenance of the border defense castles. Offensive and defensive wars and peace talks could only be entered into by common consent. The countries of the confederation would permit mutual free trade and would mint a common currency. Disputes would be settled at a joint diet. Kings and princes of every

69 Ferenc Károly Palma, *Notitia rerum Hungaricarum*, 3rd edn (Pestini, Budae et Cassoviae, 1785), 215. See also Előd Borian, *Bethlen Gábor fejedelem tetteinek bemutatása*. Manuscript.

70 Österreichische Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Ungarische Akten AA, Kart. 169, Konc. C, fol. 193. Kindly sent to me by István Fazekas; Katalin Péter, "Bethlen Gábor magyar királysága, az országgyűlés és a Porta," *Századok* 117, no. 5 (1983): 1028–60; Papp, *Bethlen Gábor*, 936–37; Sudár, "Iskender and Gábor Bethlen," n. 83.

71 Kálmán Demkó, "A magyar–cseh confederatio és a besztercebányai országgyűlés 1620-ban," *Századok* 20 (1886): 105–21, 209–28, 291–308; Gindely, *Bethlen Gábor udvara*, 29–30; Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor*, 69–109.

country would take an oath to the Confederation upon their election. Peace would be made by common consent.⁷²

This—probably still preliminary—confederation agreement was signed by Bethlen “in view of the interests of Christendom,” on January 15, 1620 and by King Frederick of Bohemia on January 25. It was also initialed by representatives of the Bohemian and Hungarian estates.⁷³ Bethlen was aware of the realities: the circumstances were grave, and the Bohemians would also have to make peace with the Habsburg emperor. A Bohemian and Hungarian embassy set out for Istanbul to solicit the indispensable approval of the Sublime Porte.⁷⁴ Ferdinand II’s counselors considered the Bohemian–Hungarian confederation a threat to both the empire and the interests of the Catholic Union, and the Hofburg mobilized various diplomatic channels to counter it.

The Ottoman Empire also maintained its claim to be the undisputedly dominant factor in the region. It did not interfere in the Bohemian Revolt, and offered the prospect of help for Bethlen only if he was crowned king and his campaign was a definite success.⁷⁵ Bethlen informed the Porte of the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation in a *Memoriale* largely written in his own hand.⁷⁶ This extensive proposal remarkably finds a precedent for the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation in the time of “Old King Matthias” (Corvinus). With many exaggerations and arguments designed to win over the Porte, he explains how much the Ottoman Empire would profit from the Confederation. The Confederation would provide defense in case the Habsburg regime prepared to attack and would secure peace in the region; the Porte would also gain tribute and gifts from Bohemia. We do not know what the Porte’s views were, but Sultan Osman II’s dispatch of a mere letter of support to the Besztercebánya Diet instead of the requested *ahdname* must have been significant.⁷⁷

The Diet aroused great international interest, and the Transylvanian estates sent representatives to “negotiate the Confederation.”⁷⁸ In his princely proposition, Bethlen stated that members of the Confederation had the chief collective duty of making peace; only thus could tranquility be achieved in the region. The imperial delegates, however, objected that Bethlen was usurping royal rights, and as prince could not make a proposition to the Diet which was the reserve of the king.

The sultan’s letter was read out at the Diet. It implied a very cautious, general guarantee in two major questions. “We will not be negligent towards ... the honorable Hungarian nation” for the sake of Emperor Ferdinand, and “our sublime gate ... is open” to the Bohemians. In the matter of Bethlen’s kingship, the letter was reserved but not hostile: if the Diet wished to elect a king, it should elect one who would be well-intentioned towards the Porte and keep the kingdom in peace. A Bohemian–Hungarian–Transylvanian delegation from the Diet set out for Constantinople to seek a charter declaring defense of the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation. Despite all this, Bethlen again failed to win the sultan’s patronage of the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation.⁷⁹

It was of fundamental importance for Bethlen to gain the recognition and support of the Protestant countries. Writing in April 1620 to Imre Thurzó, who was negotiating in Prague, he explained in detail how much he counted on the assistance of England, Denmark, the Netherlands and the German princes, and how much it saddened him that they had not even sent envoys to the Diet and had not provided the support he hoped for.⁸⁰

There are therefore several arguments why Bethlen tied his decision on coronation to the fortunes of the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation. Only the Confederation had the chance of representing an effective force in the region, but in order to consolidate its position and win the support it needed for recognition, it would have to manifest its strength.

The Confederation did not have a battle-ready army or a joint system of operation. There is no evidence that military plans were coordinated, and there was no central command. At the Battle of White Mountain on November 8,

72 EOE, vol. 7, 540.

73 TMÁO, vol. 1, 224–25; Sudár, “Iskender and Gábor Bethlen,” Andrea Schmidt–Rösler, “Princeps Transilvaniae – Rex Hungariae? Gabriel Bethlens Außenpolitik zwischen Krieg und Frieden,” in *Kalkül – Transfer – Symbol. Europäische Friedensverträge der Vormoderne*, ed. Heinz Duchhardt and Martin Peters (Mainz: Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Beiheft online 1, 2006), Abschnitt 80–98, <http://www.ieg-mainz.de/vieg-online-beihefte/01-2006.html>.

80 Szilágyi, *Bethlen Gábor kiadatlan politikai levelei*, 196–97.

72 Demkó, “A magyar–cseh konföderáció,” 106–7.

73 Copy issued by the King of Bohemia: Friedrich Firnhaber, *Geschichte Ungarns*, 98–104; A copy amended by Bethlen: Béla Pettkó, “Az 1620. jan.15-iki szövetséglevél variánsai,” *Történelmi Tár* 12 (1889): 105–14; See also Demkó, *A magyar–cseh konföderáció*, 214–16.

74 Demkó, *A magyar–cseh konföderáció*, 108.

75 Letter from Mehmed, Pasha of Buda, to Gábor Bethlen: Buda, Nov. 11, 1619 in *Erdélyi Történelmi Adatok*, vol. 8/4, ed. and pub. Imre Mikó (Kolozsvár: Stein János, 1855–1862), 334.

76 Bethlen Gábor: “Memoriale ad Portam O/tt/homanicam, s. d. [1620 közepe]” in *Török–magyarokori állam-okmánytár*, vols. 1–7 (hereinafter: TMÁO), ed. Áron Szilágyi and Sándor Szilágyi (Pest: Eggenberger, 1868–1872), 226–38.

77 The letter issued from the archives of the Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület: TMÁO I, 224–25; Other manuscript and printed copies, and copies of prints, are mentioned in Papp, *Bethlen Gábor*.

1620, the forces of the allied estates suffered a devastating defeat. This put the seal on the Bohemian–Hungarian Confederation. It came to an end without becoming a substantial factor in Central Europe, because it proved unequal to the task of bringing the war to an end and stabilizing the region's affairs.

Despite the defeat, Bethlen signed a satisfactory treaty with Ferdinand II in January 1622. Under the Peace of Nikolsburg, he returned the crown and renounced his royal title and gained substantial territory in the form of seven counties of Upper Hungary, giving him control of the trade routes to Poland. He also acquired the Duchies of Oppeln and Ratibor in Silesia.

In the Hague Alliance

The prince's emissaries arrived in Constantinople on September 1, 1622. András Kapy, together with Count Thurn, the general of the defeated Bohemian Revolt who was in service in Transylvania, had been sent to find out about affairs in the Porte and the matter of support from the European powers. The reputation of Transylvanian diplomacy was at its lowest point. The Porte was dissatisfied by the Peace of Nikolsburg and the king of Poland was demanding that Bethlen be deposed or crushed. The English Ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, who had taken up his station in Constantinople in late 1621, had instructions to keep his distance from the prince of Transylvania and not to establish contact with his emissaries.⁸¹

A series of European propaganda documents designed to undermine Bethlen's standing appeared between 1619 and 1622. They alleged that the prince of Transylvania was a creature of the Turks, was circumcised, and was by nature a Mohammedan, untrustworthy and barbarian. A letter allegedly by Bethlen to the Tatar khan dated April 1, 1621, printed in Latin, German and French and finding its way even to England, aroused particular outrage. In the letter, Bethlen congratulates the Tatar khan on his victory over the Poles, is insulting about the Poles and makes the offer that if the khan comes with 20,000 Tatars, he will lead them into the wealthy neighboring countries where they may pillage and take prisoners at will.⁸²

A historical-political pamphlet published anonymously in Hungarian and Latin, entitled *On the Current State of Hungary, Advice of a True Hungarian Who Loves His Homeland* published this and another eight letters. Among its untruths were that the sultan wanted to make Gábor Bethlen—a tyrant “who bathes in Christian blood”—king of Hungary and that the Confederation served the Ottoman Empire's plans for conquest and for destruction of Christendom. Research has not yet discovered the originals of the published letters, especially the highly influential letter to the Tatar khan, casting serious doubt on the truth of this pamphlet's contents.⁸³

Bethlen's followers, and the Protestants in general, put up a defense against the charges. János Keserői Dajka, Reformed Church bishop of Transylvania, wrote his views in a letter which was printed and disseminated by David Pareus, a professor in Heidelberg. “We are far from the German emperor, truly in the lion's throat, and the lion could easily tear us to pieces and maul us while his Holy Highness the emperor takes counsel on our cause. If countries, lands, kings and princes so far from the Turk strive to obtain peace from the Turks at great expense, what is so astonishing if we, broken by the wars of so many years and utterly drained of strength, are forced to do the same? But we are still not Turks, for whom we desire that they might perish and disappear, whatever lies people tell about us; the gracious and dignified manner of his rule is witness that our glorious prince is a true Christian.”⁸⁴ And despite the unprecedented condemnatory propaganda, Bethlen's significance in Europe grew.

The Protestant countries initially showed some degree of sympathy with Bethlen's policy. Written expressions of public opinion in the Netherlands unreservedly applauded the Principality of Transylvania. As the Netherlands were split in two, a fight for survival started with the Spanish branch of the House of Habsburg. A broad section of Dutch society expressed interest and sympathy towards the Principality of Transylvania and its joint struggle alongside the Bohemians. They looked on the Hungarians as a brave sister nation. Amsterdam was the media center of the information world, gathering, classifying, expanding and forwarding the news. Pictures, writing and newsletters concerning Gábor Bethlen told of how he and his followers were struggling against the tyranny of

81 April 11, 1622: *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 28–30; See also Kurucz, *Sir Thomas Roe és az erdélyi-lengyel viszony*, 60; Áron Zarnóczy, *Anglia és Bethlen Gábor kapcsolata angliai jelentések tükrében (1624–1625)*, manuscript.

82 Krisztina Varsányi, *Bethlen a német nyelvű nyomtatványok tükrében*, 49; Almási, *Bethlen törökösége*.

83 Magyarország mostani állapotjáról. 1621. MTA Kézirattár Mr. ir. 4, Q 216.; Almási, *Bethlen és a törököség*; Hungarian and international historiography still accepts these published letters as credible sources, and has built hypotheses on them, without researching their origins or subjecting them to satisfactory text criticism.

84 David Czwittinger, *Specimen Hungariae Literatae* (Francofurti et Lipsiae: Kohlesius, 1711), 67–77.

the Habsburg emperor, and had entered the fight for freedom of conscience and the wider freedom of their countries.⁸⁵

Cornelius Haga, ambassador to the Porte of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, immediately welcomed the Bohemian Revolt. In spring 1620, his government, the Staten Generaal, authorized him to support the Confederation. From that time onward Cornelius Haga consistently interceded at the Porte in Bethlen's interests and persuaded the sultan to write a letter to the Staten Generaal recommending it to assist Bethlen in his efforts.⁸⁶ Cornelius Haga was the only Western diplomat who immediately expressed his intent to cooperate with Gábor Bethlen's emissaries, András Kapy and Count Thurn, when they arrived in Constantinople in 1622.

The plan for Bethlen to marry Catherine, younger sister of the elector of Brandenburg, probably first arose in the thoughts of Sir Thomas Roe and of Elizabeth, daughter of James I and Queen of Bohemia, whose tutor he had once been and with whom he had remained in intensive correspondence. It was perhaps also related to the diplomatic intrigues of Frederick, Elector Palatine, who was in contact with Bethlen. The marriage, conducted in full splendor in Kassa in March, 1626, was not a fortunate one with regards to Catherine's personality, but it raised the international authority of the prince of Transylvania, making Bethlen brother-in-law to King Gustav Adolf of Sweden. Nonetheless, several years of diplomacy were needed to gain entrance among the countries collaborating against the Austrian and Spanish Habsburg empires in the Hague Alliance. Only through a complex combination of circumstances did Bethlen overcome the enormous distance between Transylvania and the Hague.

England had long-standing trade relations with the Ottoman world. The English ambassador had accompanied the sultan in his Hungarian campaign during the Long War in 1596, and English ambassadorial reports show that City men with interests in Baltic marine trade paid increasing attention to Ottoman–Transylvanian–Polish political relations. For them, the Ottomans were trading partners rather than ruthless conquerors.⁸⁷ The English ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Thomas Roe, had broad diplomatic experience and an overview of politics throughout Europe. His detailed reports to the Secretary

of State, Sir George Calvert, show how keenly he appreciated the significance of the Ottoman Empire and its influence in conflicts between Christian countries. In September 1622, he reported on his negotiations with the grand vizier, where he learned that King Sigismund III of Poland had approached the Porte to demand that Bethlen be deposed, or indeed crushed.⁸⁸ He stated the view that Bethlen was in contact with the king's opponents and could himself gain the Polish crown.

Roe became increasingly admiring of Bethlen's policies, particularly as regards his Ottoman contacts. Bethlen knew how the pashas thought; he could handle complicated Ottoman politics; and he commanded authority at the Porte. He could have been very useful to the Protestant League and to England in tying down the Habsburgs' strength in the east and in mobilizing the Ottomans.

Bethlen explained to Adam von Schwarzenberg, the elector of Brandenburg's representative in Catherine's retinue, that if the candidate powers for the alliance currently in formation, England, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Sweden and Venice, did not put their relations in order, all of their efforts would be built on sand.⁸⁹ If they could not bring the Porte to their side, then the enemy would do so, and they would be unable to open the "eastern front." Bethlen realistically calculated the danger of having an enemy at his back.

Bethlen's ambassador, Matthias Quadt,⁹⁰ was present at the talks between England, the Netherlands and Denmark which led to the Hague Alliance. Since he did not have the prince's authorization, however, Transylvania was not included in the treaty, which was signed on December 9, 1625. Bethlen signed his authorization on April 18, 1626, but it was slow to arrive.⁹¹ The objectives of the Hague Coalition included a coordinated international attack against the armies of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburg powers. Bethlen's task was to tie down the Habsburgs in the east, secure the support of the Ottomans, and thus prevent Vienna from obtaining open or indirect Ottoman assistance.

The Staten Generaal accepted Quadt's proposal in a decision of August 25, 1626. The prince of Transylvania reasoned that the enormous strength of the enemy required the Protestant forces to join together. The Ottoman Porte also

88 Public Record Office London, SP 97/8 fol 259. Quoted in Kurucz, "Sir Thomas Roe," 60.

89 Gyula Szabó, "Brandenburgi Katalin esküvője," *Történelmi Tár* 11 (1888): 445–46.

90 His biography: Gábor Kármán, "Külföldi diplomata Bethlen Gábor szolgálatában," in *Bethlen Gábor és Európa*, ed. Kármán and Teszelszky, 154–58.

91 Ágnes Hankó, *Nemzetközi hitelnyújtás a harmincéves háború idején. A hágai koalíció pénzügye Bethlen Gábornak 1626-ban.* (PhD diss., manuscript, ELTE, 1993), 21.

85 Kees Teszelszky, "Magyarország és Erdély képe Németalföldön a Bocskai-felkelés és Bethlen Gábor hadjárata idején," in *Bethlen Gábor és Európa*, ed. Kármán and Teszelszky, 203–44; Zoltán Piri, "Bethlen Gábor fejedelem útja a hágai szövetségbe," *Történelmi Szemle* 41 (1999): 157–76.

86 Piri, "Bethlen Gábor fejedelem útja."

87 Kurucz, "Sir Thomas Roe;" Zarnóczy, *Anglia és Bethlen Gábor kapcsolata*.

had to be considered; it was prepared to weigh in with a strong army, but laid conditions: a monthly subvention of 40,000 imperial thalers and the inclusion of the Principality of Transylvania into the peace talks.⁹² Roe considered this a relatively trifling sum,⁹³ but the Hague Coalition had severe financial problems. Ultimately, it was decided that the king of England would provide half of the 40,000 thalers a month payable to Bethlen, the king of Denmark a further 10,000 thalers, and the remaining 10,000 thalers would be put up jointly by France, Venice and Savoy.⁹⁴ Bethlen launched his campaign on August 25, 1626 with 15-20,000-strong army. Scriptural quotations and a sword crossed with an olive branch on his red standard expressed that peace could only be achieved through battle, with God's help. After being joined by Murteza, pasha of Buda and Mansfeld's army, the Transylvanian military strength was estimated at 40,000.⁹⁵

Epilogue

His death was mourned in verse written in Hungarian, German, Greek, Latin and Hebrew.⁹⁶ He modestly summed up the greatest achievements of his reign in his *Testamentum*: “the feet of our enemy's horses did not tramp the soil of our homeland.” A later, otherwise critical historian recognized his European significance: “To Hungary and the seventeenth-century system of European states was given a gifted and very successful prince, who alone in the centuries of the Habsburg era proved that a son of the Hungarians, connected to the great European currents, in favorable circumstances, as sovereign and statesman, could perform as well as or better than the best of his European contemporaries.”⁹⁷

In 1631, all of Europe learned of the great personages of the age in a splendid portrait album with Latin verses, the work of the diplomat and humanist Johann Joachim Rusdorf. In the contemporary Hungarian translation,

the anthology *Sebes agynak késő sisak* [Helmet Late for Wounded Head], Bethlen, in the company of Gustav Adolf, Wallenstein and Richelieu, speaks the words *For all the Hungarians / And so for the Christians / I am the great Gedeon / There are princes great / And men of noble estate / Who owe the light of their eyes to me / They raise up their hats / And turn a respectful ear / On hearing my godly name.*⁹⁸

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98 “Az magyar nemzetnek / S az körösztenységnek / Én vagyok Gedeonja / Sok fejedelmeknek / És minden rendeknek / Függek rám szeme világa, / Süvegemeléssel, / Tisztességes füllel / Jámbor nevemet hallja.” Johann Joachim Rusdorf, “Elegidia et poematia epidictica,” in *A harmincéves háború verses arcképcsarnoka. A ‘Sebes agynak késő sisak’ és latin forrása*, publ. Gizella Keserű, Sándor Fazekas, and Levente Juhász (Szeged: SZTE, 2010).

92 Richardson, *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 516; Lipót Óváry, *Oklevéltár Bethlen Gábor diplomaczejai összeköttetései történetéhez* (Budapest: M. Tud. Akadémia, 1886), 558; Hankó, *Nemzetközi hitelnyújtás*, 23.

93 István Czigány, “Hadsereg és ellátás Bethlen Gábor korában,” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 28 (1981): 526–41.

94 Hankó, *Nemzetközi hitelnyújtás*, 21, n. 10.

95 Lajos Szádeczky Kardoss, *Bethlen Gábor levelei Illésbázy Gáspárhoz, 1619–1629*, vol. 27 of *Magyar Történelmi Tárr* (Budapest: MTA, 1915), 9; Nagy, *Magyar hadsereg és hadművészet*, 79.

96 György Kristóf, “Zsidó, görög és latin gyászversek Bethlen Gábor temetésére,” *Erdélyi Múzeum* 36, new ser. no. 2 (1931): 90–97.

97 Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor*, 249.

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