

SÁNDOR PAPP

## Temporary Appointments by the Sultan

*A New Method for Ensuring Succession in Transylvania  
before the Death of the Ruling Prince\**

### INTRODUCTION

The power structure of the Ottoman Empire was quite diverse, and the flexibility of their rule is shown by the fact that their system of autonomy in religion, communities and states survived up to the modernisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In order to examine the individual areas not in isolation, but instead from the perspective of the empire, it is necessary to make a comparative analysis of similar structures.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers studying the state structure of the Ottoman Empire sharply differentiate between those vilayets and sanjaks where it was possible to observe an arrangement that is considered classical, and those that retained in some form the internal structures from prior to their conquest, in some cases even their ruling dynasties. The phrase “vassal state” has been used in relation to the history of the Ottoman Empire by European literature, but this currently seems to be in the process of being replaced by the term “tributary state”, which can be traced back to the Ottoman terminology of *haracgüzâr* (‘tributary’). This term was generally in widespread use for vassal states, even when certain Muslim and Christian states never paid tribute. In Ottoman terminology, it is primarily the terms *teba’a* and *tebâ’iyet* that appear for vassal states. In every case, the Ottoman Empire considered the vassal states to be a part of their own imperial territories, the *memâlik-i mahrûse* (‘well-protected empire’).<sup>2</sup> In addition to the possible payment of tribute,

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<sup>1</sup> Papp, “Die Inaugurationen der Krimkhane”; Papp, “The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities”; Papp, “Gesetzliche Garantien”.

<sup>2</sup> Panaite, *Pace, război și comerț în Islam*; Idem, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers*; Idem, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Its Tribute-Payers from North of Danube*.

the subservience was underlined by the naming of services and stressing the sultan's *right of investiture* over the vassal rulers. This is the point in which the circumstances of Transylvania are of prominent significance to international Ottoman research, namely that only this Ottoman vassal state has essentially complete surviving source materials related to a century and a half of the sultan's practice of installing rulers. The sources on the sultan's appointment of princes related to the 16<sup>th</sup> century are even available to researchers in published form.<sup>3</sup>

In the following, I will discuss the sultan's confirmation of two consecutive princes of Transylvania. The first instance was a temporary confirmation that only bestowed upon the recipient an assurance of his right to inherit the throne prior to the death of his father, who was his predecessor. This type of legal act seems to be unknown in the case of other vassal states. The second procedure presents the structural system for the handover of power that had developed by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

#### THE PRINCE'S RIGHT OF INHERITANCE ACCORDING TO THE SO-CALLED “‘*AHDNĀME OF SÜLEYMĀN*”

My research up to this point has led to the idea that the first Hungarian king to accept Ottoman authority, János (or John) Szapolyai, received a letter of confirmation from the sultan in 1529, that represented the legal background and model for the power of the later voivodes and princes of Transylvania. However, this document was not addressed to a prince of Transylvania, but instead a Hungarian king, and it provided for rule over the entire Kingdom of Hungary in exchange for recognising the payment of tribute. Although this document has been lost, we know from Ferenc Forgács that it included the amount of tribute, which at this time was 50,000 gold ducats.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of János Zsigmond (or John Sigismund), the contemporary Hungarian translation of the *ahdname* issued in October 1540, is known, which confirms the right to inherit the throne alongside the fact of the tribute. In this, we find the first indication that Kanuni Sultan Süleyman endorsed succession by male heirs following János Zsigmond.<sup>5</sup>

The next text of an actual imperial pledge (in Ottoman-Turkish '*ahdnāme-i hümāyūn*, 'imperial treaty') of the sultan that remains is only from 1571/72,<sup>6</sup> which granted the powers of the voivode of Transylvania, namely to István Báthory. This document is the link between the "*Süleymān era*" and the *ahdnames* from later periods. It prefigured the later imperial pledges of the sultan to later princes in its structure, content and phrasing. At the same time, the document cites

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<sup>3</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*.

<sup>4</sup> Forgács, *Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról*, p. 571; Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43 and pp. 159–162.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214–219.

the ahdname issued to János Zsigmond during the time of Selim II, which presumably dates from around 1566 or a little bit later. István Báthory was issued another two ahdnames in 1575, and the pretender to the throne, Pál Márkházy was issued one in 1581,<sup>7</sup> which besides the updates were so similar to one another that it can be hypothesised that the same was also the case with earlier examples. Thus, the ahdnames with unknown texts, such as that issued to John Sigismund in 1541, or the one issued upon his return from Poland in 1556, that was rewritten in the name of Selim II (circa 1566),<sup>8</sup> may have also been very similar to one another and in the end may have shown a strong relationship with the formal elements and text of the known ahdname of István Báthory (1571/72).

If we accept the above train of thought, it is possible to make progress towards answering the question of whether ahdnames between 1571/72 and 1581, immediately after the “*Süleymān era*”, contained the passage stating that the title of king or voivode can be primarily inherited by the blood relatives of the reigning monarch. The answer seems to be yes, since it can be clearly read from the ahdname of István Báthory that if the office of the ruler of Transylvania falls vacant, then power is given at the Sublime Porte first to the person who the estates consider worthy from amongst the sons, brothers and relatives of the previous voivode. The above passage can also be found in István Báthory’s two other confirmations from 1575. At the same time, it was left out of the imperial treaty of the sultan to Pál Márkházy, who was in opposition to Zsigmond Báthory (1581–1599 and 1601–1602). This is understandable, since it was uncertain whether he would be able to unseat the child voivode, let alone have the right of succession to the throne. However, the right of succession from father to son returns during the Long Turkish War (1591/93–1606), albeit in a narrower form because other relatives were left out. In the case of András Báthory (1599), the imperial pledge states that the Transylvanian estates could only elect a “son of the house” if the line of the prince was broken. This is repeated in the imperial pledge of the sultan issued to Zsigmond Báthory in 1601 as well. It is also possible to read about succession from father to son in the original Turkish text of the draft ahdname for Bocskai, as well as in the final version amended in Hungary.<sup>9</sup>

The next imperial pledge of the sultan, which also spoke of succession, is from 1608, and confirmed the position of Gábor Báthory (1608–1613). This document was now from many aspects the precursor of the classical ahdnames of the sultan for great Transylvanian princes. The wording on the issue of succession precisely follows the historical background for Gábor Báthory’s rise to power, namely that he did not inherit the throne peacefully, but took it by force and the Sublime Porte

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<sup>7</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, pp. 220–228 and 243–247.

<sup>8</sup> Sándor Szilágyi describes an ahdname that was dated 1566, but that was a 17<sup>th</sup>-century forgery. Szilágyi, *Erdélyország története*, pp. 385–388; Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, pp. 47–52.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 265–287; The full text of the imperial pledge of the sultan to András Báthory was published in Kármán, “Báthori András ahdnáméja”; Kármán, “The ’Ahdname of Sultan Mehmed III”.

gave its blessing to this. Thus, the ahdname declares that if someone must be installed as prince, then he should be one who is worthy of the position chosen from the sons and brothers of the Transylvanian beys (that is, nobles). It does not talk about succession according to blood within the prince's family. If we examine the structure of the text thoroughly, it comes to light that the above ideas do not reflect Ottoman opinions, but instead the points of the Transylvanian petition were employed as a model for the Ottoman imperial treaty of the sultan and in the explanation for the document they included.

“[Gábor Báthory] sent a letter through his envoy, the pride of the dignitaries of the Christian community, Gábor Bethlen, who is amongst the noteworthy and outstanding lords, the content of which is as follows: When, beginning from old times, a voivode or prince was installed in the aforementioned country, they graciously bestowed the honorable position of prince in the manner set down and recorded in the imperial pledge to a person who was amongst the sons or brothers of the Transylvanian nobles and was worthy of the position of prince, who the lords and noblemen of the country accepted and who had declared their fidelity, loyalty and submission to my great empire.”<sup>10</sup>

The issue of succession comes up one more time in the document, but citing previously issued imperial treaty of the sultan it indicates that the Sublime Porte can only appoint a Transylvanian lord to be prince whose confirmation the estates of the country have requested, and those who do not have this mandate should be rejected.

“If the position of Transylvanian leader is vacant, they should only accept and appoint one who is effective, upstanding and honest to the lords and nobles of the country, to the country and state and to my lofty empire. After this individual is announced to my blessed Sublime Porte, the [power] is granted and bestowed on the part of my majesty, but in no case will it be given to one who seeks power at my blessed Sublime Porte without the petition and desire of the country.”<sup>11</sup>

It is only in the imperial treaty of the sultan for Catherine of Brandenburg and then transplanted into those of György I and II Rákóczi that the train of thought can be found that defined the continuity of 17<sup>th</sup> century succession. This aspect is that the new ruler can be selected from the sons, brothers and relatives of the prince.

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<sup>10</sup> “mektübla mü ‘teber u güzîde ümerâsından qıdvetü â ‘yâni l-milleti mesîhîye Betlen Gâbör nâm elçisini irsâl edüb mazmûnunda vilâyet-i mezbûreye mâ-teqaddûmden berü voyvoda ve hâkim naşb olunmaq lâzım geldükde yine vilâyet-i Erdel begleri evlâdından ve qarındaşlarından hükûmete layıq olanı vilâyet begleri ve â ‘yâni qabûl edüb devlet-i ‘alîyemüze şadâqat u ihlâş ve ‘ubûdîyet u ihtîşâş üzre olduĝu i ‘lâm êtdüklerinde vilâyet-i mezbûre hükûmeti aña ‘inâyet olunmaq ‘ahd-nâmelerde mesîr u muqayyed olmaĝın [...]”, ÖNB, Handschriftensammlung, Mixt 1598. lines 10–12.

<sup>11</sup> „muqaddemâ verilen ‘ahdnâme-i hümâyûn-i mazmûni mer ‘ı qılınub Erdel hükûmeti maħlûle olduqda vilâyetüñ ümerâ vu â ‘yâni memleket u vilâyete ve devlet-i ‘alîyemüze nâfi ‘ ve foĝru ve müstaqîm kimesneyi hükûmete qabûl u ta ‘yîn edüb âsitâne-i se ‘âdetimüze ‘arz êtdüklerinde maqbûl-i hümâyûnimuz olub ke-mâ kân ‘inâyet u ihsân olunub anuñ gibi â ‘yân-i vilâyetüñ taleb u ittîfâqı yoĝ-iken âsitâne-i se ‘âdetimizde hükûmet-i mezbûreye tâlib olduqlarında verilmeye...” ÖNB Handschriftensammlung Mixt 1598. lines 16–17.

“Since the strict law is if it again becomes necessary by leave of my highest majesty to appoint someone to the position of prince of Transylvania in the case of death or for some other reason, then my sovereign’s letter of appointment and my favourable imperial pledge shall be placed in the hands of one who the other lords and nobles of the three estates and the subjects have nominated, and who is from the sons, brothers or relatives of the Transylvanian ruling dynasty and who is at the same time worthy of the position.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, as can be seen, a kind of continuity was ensured from Süleyman I both on the issue of ahdnames and on the question of succession contained within these. Despite this, it cannot be stated that this tradition can be traced unbroken either from the time of King John Szapolyai or that of his son, John Sigismund. Independent of this, there was an effort by the Sublime Porte to issue ahdnames with identical structure and content not just for Transylvania, but for other allied countries as well. It can be hypothesised, although it cannot be proven through documents, that the Ottomans themselves were not able to produce an original version or copy of the “*ahdnâme of Süleymân*” in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or more precisely at least from the time of the Long Turkish War. The continuity was still ensured through the spirit and phrasing of the later documents, including long sections that are repeated, even if the Hungarian–Ottoman relationship had to be re-interpreted from a diplomatic perspective amongst new political circumstances, particularly during the time of István Bocskai’s uprising (1604–1606). It is only from the 17<sup>th</sup> century that a kind of stability again develops in the structure of the ahdnames, similar to the period of the Long Turkish War. The ordered and lasting circumstances of rule provided another opportunity to develop or attempt to establish a princely dynasty, as it is found in the formula cited above in the case of Catherine of Brandenburg and the two György Rákóczi to reinstitute succession according to blood.

There were times when a certain voivode or prince was not only confirmed once, but several times. The reason for this was that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, following

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<sup>12</sup> „*anuñ gibi hulül-i ecliyle fevt olduqda veyâhüd âhar tarîqle Erdel hâkimi tecdîd olunmaq lâzım geldükde Erdel hâkimleriniñ silsilesine münteşib olan oğullarından ve qarındaşlarından vesâ’ir aqrabalarından hükümete esâs ‘ubûdiyeti üstivâr olan kimesneyi rızâ-yi hümâyûnumla vilâyet-i Erdeliñ sâyir begleri ve üç millet â’yâm ve re’âyâsı hükümetlerine ihtiyâr edüb dañi sütte-i se’âdetümden üzerlerine hâkim naşb u ta’yîn olunub ellerine berât-i hümâyûn ve ‘ahd-nâme-i se’âdet-maqrûnum vèrilmek muqarrer olmağla ...*”; Catherine of Brandenburg’s ahd-name: GSPK I. (Berlin) Hauptabteilung, Geheimer Rat, Repositorium 11, Auswärtige Beziehungen, 255a Siebenbürgen nr. 3. vol. 3. Bl. 339–344, and fol. 345–347; (Ottoman-Turkish and German language versions of Catherine of Brandenburg’s ahdname), Incomplete publication of Gábor Bethlen’s ahdname: Ferîdün, *Mecmû’a-i münşe’âtü s-selâfîn*, pp. 450–453. (I would like to express my gratitude towards Gábor Kármán and Éva Deák for providing me with a photocopy of the Turkish text and German translation of the imperial pledge given to Catherine of Brandenburg that is held in Berlin.); György I Rákóczi’s ahdname: MNL OL, Mikrofilmtár, box 21050 (miscellaneous document copies from Ljubljana); Handžić, “Diploma sultana Murada IV”, pp. 175–191 and table 5; György II Rákóczi’s ahdname: Babinger, “Zwei türkische Schutzbriefe”, pp. 124–149; the contemporary Hungarian translations of the ahdnames of Báthory, Bethlen and György I Rákóczi can be found in: Mikó, “Athnámék”, pp. 328–349.

the death of the sultan, the previous imperial appointments had to be reconfirmed in the name of the new sultan. This took place in the case of István Báthory in 1575, when Selim II (1566–1574) died and Murad III (1574–1595) came to the throne. As a result of the change in sultans, he received three ahdnames. The first version received from Selim II was reissued in the spring of 1575, following the accession to the throne of Murad III, and then again at the very end of 1575. The reason for it being issued twice is that the voivode did not want to accept the increase in annual tribute of 5,000 ducats in such a way that the annual amount would be raised another 5,000 ducats after every new transition of ruler. The second ahdname sent out by Sultan Murad III, codified that the increase in tribute was a single event and would not be raised again.<sup>13</sup> When the document arrived in Transylvania in February of 1576, the older brother of István Báthory (1571–1576), Kristóf Báthory (1576–1581), had already temporarily taken over the position of voivode. The reason behind this was that the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth had invited István Báthory to be king, and he then left Transylvania.<sup>14</sup>

The confirmation of Kristóf Báthory in 1576, did not even come in the form of an ahdname, but instead an order of the sultan (*hüküm, fermān*).<sup>15</sup> This type of procedure had originally been a part of the confirmation process in the case of Transylvanian voivodes. Following the election, the sultan sent two sets of orders about the transfer of power, one to the voivode and one to the estates. This was followed by another set of orders that was accompanied by the symbol of rule, the sultan's banner (*sancaq*). When it was certain that István Báthory was not going to return to the voivodeship from Poland, they then sent the imperial pledge for the prince to Kristóf Báthory but this document has not yet been discovered at this point. It is known for certain that it did exist at some time due to later documents that cited this ahdname as a precedent. These include the Ottoman documents sent after the death of Kristóf Báthory (in 1581) to both his son, Zsigmond Báthory (1581–1599, 1601–1602), and the pretender to the throne opposed to him, Pál Márkházy (1581).<sup>16</sup> It is interesting that in the middle of July of 1576, when he obtained the title of voivode, he not only did not receive an ahdname, but even had to return the silver flagpole finial (*ser-‘alem*) that had been amongst the insignia of his younger brother István Báthory as voivode. Later he did also receive this kind of insignia of power by his own right.<sup>17</sup>

The second method for transferring power in the principality, which can be considered unusual, can be linked to the confirmation of the princess Catherine of Brandenburg. Her husband, Gábor Bethlen, the Prince of Transylvania (1613–1629), did everything in his power to ensure that after his death – with no living male heirs – he should be succeeded by his wife, Catherine of Brandenburg, the sister of the Elector of Brandenburg, George William (1619–1640). In accordance

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<sup>13</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, pp. 84–91.

<sup>14</sup> Beydilli, *Die polnischen Königswahlen*, passim.

<sup>15</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, pp. 89–91 and 229–232.

<sup>16</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, pp. 233, 235–237 and 241–252.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

with this, an *ahdname* was issued at the Sublime Porte dated to the period of ten days between 7 and 16 February 1627. The document was identical word-for-word with the *ahdname* issued for her husband that was created in July of 1614. Despite this, there was a fundamental difference between the two legal acts, namely that while Bethlen came to the throne on a permanent basis, his wife received the title during her husband's life, and the legal basis for the actual wielding of power was only after the death of Bethlen. However, the content of the *ahdname* confirming the appointment by the sultan did not restrict the powers of the princess as heir to the throne. After Bethlen's death, even though the final decision of the sultan was in the hands of the princess, it still seemed necessary for an order of the sultan to be sent to Transylvania, which called upon Catherine of Brandenburg to take power on the basis of an election by the Transylvanians. The sultan ordered the estates to serve loyally. Unfortunately, it cannot be clearly determined whether the insignia of the prince were sent again, as no additional data related to this have been found.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the *ahdnames* that have been mentioned repeatedly so far, there was another kind of confirmation document from the sultan that existed, which was called a *berāt* or *menşūr* in the Turkish language. This type of document had already appeared several times during the appointment of a prince of Transylvania, and on the basis of an Ottoman source in the Persian language it is my impression that the imperial treaty issued to Szapolyai in 1529, was also an *ahdname* drafted in the form of a *berat*.<sup>19</sup> However, I do not intend on discussing the structural elements of this kind of document now. It must be noted, though, that the vassal voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia, the Cossack hetmans, the Tatar khans, *kalgas* and *nureddins* and the Tunisian beys and *beylerbeys* were also appointed using documents of the *berat* or *menşur* type, and several examples are known from Transylvanian history.<sup>20</sup> In relation to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, I have come to the conclusion that a *berat* is a part of an appointment procedure with four levels. I have surmised this despite the fact that the *berats* sent to the Transylvanian voivodes have not survived from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, I have found data that prior to obtaining the final element for appointment, the *ahdname*, a *berat* was issued following the payment of a fee.<sup>21</sup> Although the data led to this conclusion, later I began to feel doubt, since up to 1604 – as I mentioned above – not a single example had survived until the *berat* of István Bocskai (1604–1606). Thus, the possibility cannot be completely discounted that already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century *ahdnames* were referred to as *berats*, since their introductory formulas were similar. The first surviving *berat* was made in Buda in 1604, through which the Grand Vizier Lala Mehmed named István Bocskai Prince of Transylvania and King of

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<sup>18</sup> Ötvös, “Brandenburgi Katalin fejedelemsége”, pp. 153–244; Szilágyi, “Brandenburgi Katalin trónraléptére”, pp. 470–476.

<sup>19</sup> Papp, “Hungary and the Ottoman Empire”, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> Papp, “Muszlim és keresztény közösségek”, pp. 25–72; Papp, “The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities”, pp. 375–419.

<sup>21</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, p. 136.

the Hungarian nation.<sup>22</sup> Bálint Drugeth of Homonna received the next one, in which the Grand Vizier Kuyucu Murad confirmed him as Bocskai's successor as prince in the name of the sultan in 1607. This document was altered through forgery to the name of Zsigmond Rákóczi (1607–1608).<sup>23</sup> The granting of a *berat* did not represent the final transfer of power in the aforementioned cases, which is shown by the fact that Bocskai received his imperial pledge from the sultan following negotiations at the Sublime Porte as well as by data that an *ahdname* was expected from the sultan for Drugeth's appointment, which allegedly arrived in Hungary in the autumn of 1607.<sup>24</sup> Although it does not come to light from the 17<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian translations, it is clear from the Turkish texts that the imperial pledges of the sultan sent to Gábor Bethlen (1613–1629), Catherine of Brandenburg (1629–1630) and György I (1630–1648) and György II Rákóczi (1648–1660) could be categorised as two types of documents at the same time, despite the fact that in their structure and language they were similar to the Ottoman imperial treaties sent to European Christian states such as the Habsburg Empire, Venice, Poland and France. In the texts of the aforementioned documents, there are references that appear alongside one another to them being called both *berats* and *ahdnames*. The first type of document shows the transfer of the title of prince, while the second presents the contractual relationship set in historical traditions that existed with the Sublime Porte. As I have indicated, this hybrid type of document first appeared in 1614, with the appointment of Gábor Bethlen. As more time passed after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Hungary had in a legal sense changed from an equal power to a subject state, it became harder and harder for the Ottoman government to understand why Transylvania, which fundamentally was a vassal just like the Romanian voivodeships, Moldavia and Wallachia alongside it, should receive an *ahdname* in contrast to the general custom. Perhaps the solution to this contradiction, which is difficult to understand legally, was created by the form of a letter of appointment similar in structure and linguistic elements to the *ahdnames* of the western countries, but that also took on the name of a *berat* to confirm the prince, closer to the standard procedure of the Ottoman Empire. Comparing the Transylvanian imperial pledges with the Moldavian and Wallachian *beräts* (which contain no reference to the title *ahdname*), the latter are reminiscent of the western *ahdnames* in structure, and the articles included in the text were based traditionally on a petition of the estates. In the case of the Moldavian and Wallachian *berats*, the most important factor was the one-sided tribute, and the structure of the documents is clearly related to documents appointing Ottoman officials.<sup>25</sup>

However, a very important factor should not be forgotten. Although the documents also refer to themselves as *berats* as well as *ahdnames*, even the Ottomans saw the Transylvanian imperial treaties issued between 1614 and 1649 as

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261–263.

<sup>23</sup> Papp, “Eine „verfälschte“ sultanische Bestallungsurkunde”, pp. 125–130.

<sup>24</sup> Papp, “Homonai Drugeth Bálint fellépése”, pp. 133–152.

<sup>25</sup> Papp, “Christian Vassals on the Northwest Border”, pp. 719–730.



ahdnames, just as had been the case previously. At the same time, it should be pointed out that in 1642, when György II Rákóczi received his confirmation while his father was still alive, the Sublime Porte wanted to issue a document very similar to the *berats* that were the final confirmation letters for Moldavian and Wallachian voivodes. A *berat* like this provided *temporary* confirmation, which the other vassal principalities always received as a final document. All of this was intended to represent the political weight and power of Transylvania at the time.

THE PROTOTYPE: THE FIRST TEMPORARY CONFIRMATION AND APPOINTMENT OF GYÖRGY II RÁKÓCZI BY THE SULTAN DURING HIS FATHER'S LIFETIME (1642)

The Transylvanian envoys arrived in Constantinople on 3 May 1642, to begin the negotiations for the sultan to confirm the son of the prince, György II Rákóczi. In accordance with tradition, they were ceremonially received before the city gates, and the Sublime Porte's Hungarian *interpreter* Zülfikar Agha<sup>26</sup> was present with his son and 28 *chiauses*. The number of *chiauses* always indicated the opinion about the prince. The next day the vizier, Kemankeş Kara Mustafa Pasha (1638–1644) sent the Hungarian *interpreter* to inquire if they had the gifts sent for the sultan and for him. They opened the chests and the agha appraised the value of the silver items, which the envoys said were greater in weight than they actually were. The agha recalculated their value and found the total value of 6,000 thalers to be much too small. The envoys claimed that the country does not customarily pay for the issuance of the insignia of appointment and the *ahdname* – at least according to the reasoning of the prince – and wanted to avoid the financial demands. They even denied that they had cash.

The haggling went on in the manner customary in the bazaars of the oriental world for the issuance of the imperial treaty of the sultan. They promised Zülfikar, as the intermediary, an additional payment of 500 thalers, while obtaining the concession that it would not be necessary to pay the sultan cash. However, in the case of the grand vizier the agha only agreed to the reduction of the amount to 8,000 thalers.<sup>27</sup>

Zülfikar continued to uphold the promise that if the prince were to devote a small expense to him, then he would be able to achieve other goals, such as regaining Ottoman support for the seven counties in Upper Hungary (mostly within present-day Slovakia) that were under the rule of the Habsburg Hungarian king, but which Gábor Bethlen had held. Through skillful political negotiation, they could have had the pretender to the throne Mózes II Székely, the posthumous son of the Prince of Transylvania Mózes I Székely (1602–1603) who had been living in Yedikule Fortress in Constantinople since 1636, sent to Rhodes or Cyprus where he would not have been able to plot against the prince as much. Mózes Székely's situation was genuinely uncertain, which is shown by the fact that he

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<sup>26</sup> Kármán, "Grand Dragoman Zülfikar Ağa".

<sup>27</sup> Mihály Maurer's report to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 8 May 1642, Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török-magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 102–103.

had not been given an allowance by the Sublime Porte for months.<sup>28</sup> Later, the prince was quite annoyed at the envoys that they had passed up this excellent opportunity.

However, they could not have done anything about this, since they had to concentrate on a much more serious issue than the possibility of being rid of Mózes Székely, something that put their efforts up to that point in doubt. The grand vizier ordered the members of the delegation to his office on 11 May 1642. Several of those in attendance wrote reports on what was said during this meeting. The tension was caused by the grand vizier proposing that instead of the insignia of the prince expected by the Transylvanians, that is, the banner, sabre, sceptre and horse as well as the imperial pledge of the sultan, he would only provide a lower-level confirmation. He did not want to grant the horse and the *ahdname* of the sultan. The grand vizier cited that in reference to the imperial pledge of Sultan Süleyman, the *ahdnames* of István Bocskai, Gábor Báthori, Gábor Bethlen and Catherine of Brandenburg stated the successor would only be confirmed following the death of the prince and only after this would the insignia of the prince be issued from the Sublime Porte. The grand vizier interpreted the law in such a way that since the prince had not died, an *ahdname* could not be granted to his successor, only a letter under the seal (in case of course *tuğra*) of the sultan. The ambassador István Serédy touched upon the following in his response:

*“When István Báthory was to assume the kingdom of Poland, the election of Kristóf Báthory took place and was confirmed by the Sublime Porte, and this was the case for Zsigmond Báthori and Princess Catharina. The final conclusion of this matter would be that the letter that your Highness and the noble country wrote to our magnificent emperor was brought to him and he immediately understood the purpose of the mission.”*

At the same time, for the first time it came up that the reduction of the tribute granted to Gábor Bethlen, as a result of which the tribute that had been 15,000 ducats was lowered to 10,000 ducats with the ceding of Lippa (present day Lipova, in Romania), was canceled by the Sublime Porte, and they began to demand the increase in tribute as a condition for inauguration by the Sublime Porte.<sup>29</sup>

Following a meal, they brought the special gifts to the grand vizier, with the gold coins placed in a pile in addition to guns as well. The grand vizier bestowed 20 ducats to István Rácz, 18 to Mihály Maurer and around 40 to Zülfikar. The grand vizier received the envoys without ceremony in a simple tunic, and then following the talks visited the sultan at the Field of Davud Pasha. Returning later, he sent for Serdély for a personal discussion. Again, he asked him why the prince

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<sup>28</sup> Mihály Maurer's report to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 08 May 1642, Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 102–103.

<sup>29</sup> István Rácz's report to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 15 May 1642, Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 105–107. We also found data on the alteration of the Transylvanian tribute in the manuscript no. Mixt 174 held in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. This also shows that the compiler of the manuscript delved deeply into the relationships in the Sublime Porte at the time of György I Rákóczi, fol. 54v–55v. “*Ber-müceb-i defter-i hazîne-i ‘amire ‘an tahvîl voyvoda-i Erdel’*”

wanted to have his son confirmed, and whether he perhaps wanted a kingdom for himself somewhere.

The ambassador stood pat in his denials, but Mihály Maurer promised another 5,000 thalers to Zülfikar if he could resolve the matters of avoiding the increase in tribute and obtaining the ahdname. The ambassador met another time that day with the grand vizier, who appeared more compliant prior to his visit with the sultan. Following his departure, Zülfikar considered the matter to be closed and demanded the so-called “celebratory cake”<sup>30</sup> fee ahead of time. At this time, the issue of the gift and money to be given to the grand vizier was brought up again. The negotiations came to 13,000 thalers and a washbasin with a pitcher, but the other dignitaries that had participated in the matter also demanded sums of varying sizes. However, it is conspicuous that everyone was merely concerned with their own benefit, and they appeared to be far more liberal on the matter of the money and gifts for the sultan.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the special gift, the regular annual gift had to be given to both the sultan and the grand vizier. This took place on 17 May, and it seemed that they were satisfied with the carriage for the sultan and the gifts handed over to his mother and the grand vizier.<sup>32</sup>

However, hopes were finally dashed on 2 of June. The permanent envoy István Rácz informed the prince that they had cited both the ahdname of sultan Süleyman and the letters of the prince and the estates in vain, as they did not receive what they wanted. The grand vizier held back the ahdname and the horse, but would send the banner, sceptre, sabre, cap and two kaftans for the prince, two for his son and ten for the counsellors. However, a promise was made that the successor would receive the ahdname and the horse following the death of the older prince. It was declared for the first time on this day what type of document the Ottomans wanted to employ for a temporary confirmation. “Nevertheless, they will hand over a letter that they call a berat, so that after the death of your highness, they will recognise his majesty, his highness as the prince.” At the same time, they again began to demand the increase of the tribute of 5,000 ducats.<sup>33</sup>

Based on the above data, Sándor Szilágyi established in the Records of the Transylvanian National Assembly that an ahdname did not arrive, but György II Rákóczi was confirmed with a berat.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, in the pages of *Levelek és okiratok I. Rákóczi György keleti összeköttetései történetéhez*<sup>35</sup> they cited the documents published in volume 3 of the *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*<sup>36</sup> as an explanation, which were translated by Áron Szilády from the work entitled *Correspondence of the Sultans* by Ferīdūn bey. The document in question was

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<sup>30</sup> The phrase “öröm-kalács”, meaning ‘celebratory cake’ was a euphemism for a kind of bribe given to Ottoman officials. (SP)

<sup>31</sup> Mihály Maurer’s report to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 15 May 1642, Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 109–110.

<sup>32</sup> Constantinople, 19 May 1642, Szilágyi, *Levelek és okiratok*, p. 671.

<sup>33</sup> István Rácz to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 2 June 1642, Szilágyi, *Levelek és okiratok*, p. 674.

<sup>34</sup> Szilágyi, *EOE*, vol. 10, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> Szilágyi, *Levelek és okiratok*, p.

<sup>36</sup> Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 116–117.

described in both the original Turkish publication of sources and in the translation that it was the text of the ahdname issued to György II Rákóczi *while his father was still alive*.<sup>37</sup> János Kósa in his book on György II Rákóczi resolved the seeming contradiction by hypothesizing that with further gifts it was possible to obtain the issuance of an imperial pledge of the sultan.<sup>38</sup> This may be indicated by the invitation to the ceremony for the granting of the prince's insignia, "*the Turkish emperor and the sublime porte have accepted and affirmed the election of our beloved son, György Rákóczi to the position of prince; and as a true indication and proof according to the old custom of the sublime porte and the country the kapuji-bashi has been sent to us with the imperial banner, sceptre, 'athname' and other appropriate imperial gifts, and solemnly sent to the new prince,*" who since he was proceeding in national matters, wanted to receive him with great ceremony. The invitees had to go to Gyulafehérvár (present day Alba Iulia, in Romania) on 2 July.<sup>39</sup>

If we continue to read the correspondence between the prince and his men working at the Sublime Porte, it is clear that Rákóczi was very dissatisfied. There is no evidence that they might have succeeded in having an imperial pledge of the sultan, or ahdname, issued, but instead just the opposite. All of their efforts were frustrated by the grand vizier's stubbornness. Before continuing to follow the events, I will summarise the four factors that made up the turning points in the negotiations at the Sublime Porte, and which I will examine in detail below. The factors are the following: 1) already on 11 May, so at the beginning of the talks, the Sublime Porte made it clear that it did not want to issue an imperial pledge of the sultan; 2) the grand vizier cited the "*imperial pledge of Süleymān*", in which the automatic confirmation would only come following the death of the father, and with no strings attached; 3) the envoys knew of two events from Transylvanian history, the appointments of Kristóf Báthory in 1576 and of Catherine of Brandenburg in 1627, that could serve as models in the matter being negotiated; and 4) of the princely insignia, György II Rákóczi only received the ahdname and the horse following his father's death, and until then had to be satisfied with a *berāt*.

During the negotiations taking place to confirm the young prince, Transylvanian diplomacy was not prepared for the issuance of the imperial pledge of the sultan to be denied at the Sublime Porte. The reign of Sultan Suleyman, which both parties cited as a model, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century had become a symbol of a lost golden age in all aspects. In the eyes of the Transylvanians, the ahdname he had issued meant even more than this. In the feudal public consciousness, the internal constitutional relationships of the country and the clearly definable leeway to act in external political matters were linked to this document, so it provided a kind of legitimacy for the rights of the ruler. However, this document did not in fact exist,

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<sup>37</sup> Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török-magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 116–120; Ferīdūn "Mecmū' a-i münşe'ātü s-selātin 2", pp. 470–471.

<sup>38</sup> Kósa, *II. Rákóczi György*, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> György I Rákóczi to Péter Sófálvai Gávai, Gyulafehérvár, 16 June 1642, Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török-magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 124–125.

despite the fact that it had become a part of a historical tradition that was not just based on fairy tales, as we have seen above.

The envoy of György I Rákóczi, István Rác, reported in detail about the negotiations that preceded his son, György II Rákóczi, receiving the confirmation as prince from the sultan while his father was still alive. He also informed the prince that the envoys would be departing for home on 3 June and would be bringing with them the kapuji-bashi (kapıcı başı), who would arrive in the seat of the principality, Gyulaféhevár, for the investiture. György I Rákóczi was able to receive information about all of this in person from Mihály Maurer, who had been sent ahead.<sup>40</sup> The response from Gyulaféhevár was already on its way to Constantinople on 13 June. György I Rákóczi was very angry that the envoys had left the Ottoman capital without his permission. He deemed that they had not proceeded in the spirit of their orders. If they had waited for his letters, then the matter would not have taken an unfavourable turn from him. He stated his position as follows:

*"[...] and in the future, if our son follows our advice, after our death he and the country will not incur any expense or even solicit either an ahdname or a horse, I could write several reasons for this to your grace, but we see that the vizier acted (from someone's advice) to gain benefit for himself both during our life and after our death, but they will be in error and they will realise this before long. If we had not relied upon the vizier's promise and reassurance, then we would have been able to take care of the matter better, we could send the vizier's and the mufti's letters both in Hungarian. If your grace Zülfikar had not made your persistent comments, then it would have been easy for the country and us to tell the porte about the election of our son, and to petition for his confirmation after our death, and keep the fine gift. Thus, we believe that the princes after us will learn from this and avoid this situation."*<sup>41</sup>

It can be seen that the prince considered the behaviour of the Sublime Porte to be deceitful, because in spite of the promises of the grand vizier and the *seyhülislam* and the great expenditures of the Transylvanians, it had not issued an ahdname, but instead a berat. He gave orders that the troublemaker Mózes Székely, who was waiting to gain the throne of prince of Transylvania in Yedikule Fortress as the posthumous son of his father, the prince Mózes I Székely (1602–1603),<sup>42</sup> should be removed from the Ottoman capital to Rhodes or Cyprus, so that he would no longer be able to meddle in Transylvanian affairs. The matter of the unsuccessful diplomatic maneuvering crops up from time to time for a few weeks in the correspondence of the prince and the envoy to the Sublime Porte, but then attention was drawn away from this by a much more pressing matter. This was the possibility of intervening in the Thirty Years' War, possible Ottoman support in joining the European anti-Habsburg alliance and most specifically, the taking back

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<sup>40</sup> István Rác to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 2 June 1642, Szilágyi, *Levelek és okiratok*, p. 674.

<sup>41</sup> György I Rákóczi to István Rác, Gyulaféhevár, 13 June 1642, Szilágyi, *Levelek és okiratok*, pp. 676–677.

<sup>42</sup> Papp, "Egy Habsburg követ", pp. 40–52; Idem, "Osmanische Funktionäre", pp. 24–41.

of the seven counties of Upper Hungary that were in Habsburg hands.<sup>43</sup> Since the commissioners of the two great empires had renegotiated the continuance of the Treaty of Zsitvatorok in Szőny in the spring of 1642,<sup>44</sup> it was uncertain whether the Sublime Porte would give permission for military action.

Instead of 2 July, date that was indicated on the invitation, the ceremonial handover of the insignia of the prince took place on Tuesday, 8 July, and this is reported on in an anonymous journal. Since there are not a great deal of these types of descriptions available, I consider it worthwhile to present the reception in detail. One of the confidants of the prince, Ákos Barcsai, joined the envoys arriving from the Sublime Porte in Transylvania, and they escorted the kapuji-bashi, Mustafa Agha, to Mühlbach (in Hungarian Szászsebes, present day Sebeș, in Romania) on 7 July. The next day the procession set off from there to the seat of the prince in Gyulafehérvár. Preparations were also underway in the capital. Following the early morning church service, which the young prince attended with the counsellors and the people of the court, György II Rákóczi returned to the prince's audience chamber. From there, his father gave him his blessing and sent him back to his accommodations. During this time, the estates of the country prepared to march out on horseback. When the drum of the country was struck, the young prince joined them as well. The peers also joined the procession, led by the field armies and then the nobility that lived in the vicinity of Gyulafehérvár. This was followed by the thirty-two person escort of the young prince, and then ten lead horses that were richly decorated and equipped, expressing the majesty of the prince. Following the horses, György II Rákóczi marched with his closest escort, Zsigmond Rákóczi, Boldizsár Wesselényi, Ferenc Kornis, Zsigmond Barcsai, István Szalánczi, Simon Péchi, Ferenc Rédey, István Haller and Zsigmond Kornis, who all rode alongside one another in threes. The young prince himself followed them, and behind him, a group of leading men marched, including Pál Bornemissza, the captain-general of the court cavalry, János Kemény and Ferenc Bethlen, the head steward. The ceremonial procession was closed by the people of the princely court and the court guard organised into four battalions. The military escort consisted of 700 Hungarian and 550 German infantrymen.

The escort of the kapuji-bashi was made up of 39 people, and his son was also in attendance with him. They approached one another ceremonially. The Hungarian and German infantry of the court encircled an area where the first ceremony took place. The nearby mounted lancer units also appeared. First, the kapuji-bashi dismounted from his horse and approached the prince on foot. The young prince reciprocated this honor and dismounted from his horse along with his younger brother, counsellors and ten leaders, as well as Pál Bornemissza, János Kemény and István Haller. Following the mutual words of greeting, the kapuji-bashi personally buckled the sabre that was one of the insignia around the waist of the

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<sup>43</sup> Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 125–126 and 131–132.

<sup>44</sup> For the so-called second Peace Treaty of Szőny in 1642, see the article by Krisztina Juhász in the present volume. Cf.: Juhász, “A második szőnyi béke margójára”; Idem, “Esterházy Dániel és Esterházy Miklós”; Idem, “...gyümölcsé pedig semmi nem volt”.

young prince. At the same time, he unbuckled his own sabre from his belt and held it out to Mihály Monaki. The most important of the prince's insignia, the banner was handed over second, which the prince passed along to Mátyás Huszár. Third to be handed over was the ornamental mace that was referred to as a sceptre, which Péter Haller received. Words of greeting again followed the bestowal of the sultan's insignia.

After the ceremony, everyone mounted their horses while the cannons sounded from the bastion. Mustafa Agha was to the left, the young prince to the right, and they returned to Gyulafehérvár in the same order in which they marched out. The sultan's insignia of rule were brought ahead of the prince by the aristocrats that had received them from the young György Rákóczi when they were handed over. The procession accompanied the Ottoman delegation to their accommodations in the Gálfi House, where they bid them farewell but left a large escort alongside the Ottoman dignitary. Meanwhile, the Hungarian and German infantrymen marched into the market square and took their positions. The Ottoman pipers and drummers escorted the prince up to the castle palace, on his way to his father.<sup>45</sup> The "old" prince greeted the counsellors and his son and gave them advice. While the young prince was in the palace with his father, the Hungarian and German infantry fired two salutes. The German soldiers then marched to their quarters but stopped on the way before the accommodations of the kapuji-bashi, where they also fired off a salvo. At 10 o'clock, the prince sent his carriage accompanied by numerous aristocrats and courtiers for Mustafa Agha, who they escorted to the audience chamber. At the gate to the palace, the prince's steward, Ferenc Bethlen, greeted the Ottoman dignitary and escorted him in to see his lord. György I Rákóczi rose from the table in deference to him. To his right stood the young prince, behind him Zsigmond Rákóczi and to his left the counsellors. Mustafa kissed the hand and robe of the "old" prince, and then handed over the letters of the sultan and the grand vizier to him, György II Rákóczi and the estates, comprising six letters in all. At the same time, he presented two ceremonial robes, or kaftans, each to the young and the old prince. At this time, the kapuji-bashi placed upon the head of György II Rákóczi the "scofium embroidered cap", which was the headwear of a janissary officer and was adorned with a decorative plume (*üsküf, börk*). Ten counsellors also each received a kaftan. During the period before lunch, the old prince and his sons accompanied by the Turkish scribe had a talk with Mustafa Agha and his entourage. Meanwhile, everyone else left the reception hall. After the meal together, during which the younger György Rákóczi sat at the prince's right hand and Mustafa Agha at his left, the participants in the ceremony went back to the audience chamber for a brief time, where the Ottoman envoy bid farewell and returned to his accommodations.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Although the source talks about the castle outside the city, it is clear on the basis of András Kovács's book that there was no freestanding castle, just the fortified city, and within this, the prince's palace. Kovács, *Késő reneszánsz építészet Erdélyben*, pp. 75–83.

<sup>46</sup> Szilágyi, *II. Rákóczi György fejedelemmé választása*, pp. 237–244.

It may be apparent that the handover of the insignia did not occur at once but took place in well-structured stages. There was some kind of customary order that stretched back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century for these events at the prince's court. István Báthory's insignia of confirmation were brought to Transylvania by the master falconer Mehmed Agha. The delegation was much larger and more impressive, being comprised of two hundred people according to the chronicler. The voivode rode a mile out of Gyulafehérvár to greet the Ottoman dignitary and received the sultan's banner there in the open, mounted on his horse, slightly different from described above. The Ottoman envoy and István Báthory also rode into the city alongside one another. The audience was held on the third day after this, and this was when there was the handover of the kaftans, the horse, the sceptre (*sceptrum=topuz*) and diadem, which here should not be understood as a crown, but instead a cap with a plume. During the investiture ceremony, twenty-five counsellors received kaftans.<sup>47</sup>

György I Rákóczi could not help himself, and at the final reception on 12 July 1642, he threw it in the face of the kapuji-bashi that the Sublime Porte had made such a mess of it. The Ottoman dignitary promised that the horse would also be bestowed, and perhaps they would send it after him. However, the prince did not lighten up, and stated that it should have been there already. Although the above matter affected György I Rákóczi very deeply, he also paid attention to other affairs in Constantinople. For weeks, he had corresponded on the matter of the purchase of several items with his agent (*kapitiha*) at the Sublime Porte, who wrote that he could offer 850 thalers for the four rugs in question, and if they sold them, then fine, if not, then they would keep the money.<sup>48</sup> He showed similar "implacability" in the matter of the rugs as he did in connection with his son's appointment.

#### THE FINAL CONFIRMATION BY THE SULTAN OF GYÖRGY II RÁKÓCZI AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH (1649)

They wanted to hold the funeral of the "old" György Rákóczi on 10 January 1649. First, a national assembly was called, where it was decided to give back five of the seven counties that they had been able to reconquer temporarily (1644–1649) during the Thirty Years' War. After this, there were still areas under the control of the Transylvanian government such as Szabolcs and Szatmár counties as well as Nagyálló, Nagybánya (present day Baia Mare, in Romania), Tokaj, Regéc and Lednice (in present day Lednica, in Slovakia). The delegation reporting on the death of the prince had to beg to have the increase in tribute dismissed. Before they had officially reported the death, the Sublime Porte had been informed through Ferenc Gyárfás. At the news of the death, the men of Mózes Székely, who

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<sup>47</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, pp. 81–82; Forgách, *Emlékirat Magyarország állapotáról*, pp. 995–996; Majer, "Ghymeszi Forgách Ferencz", p. 475.

<sup>48</sup> György I Rákóczi to István Rácz, Gyulafehérvár, 12 July 1642, Szilágyi, *Levelek és okiratok*, pp. 678–679; István Rácz to György I Rákóczi, Constantinople, 11 June 1642, Szilágyi–Szilágyi, *Török-magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, p. 120.



was in captivity (or rather held hostage) at Yedikule Fortress, took measures to obtain the title of prince.

György II Rákóczi sent some gifts to the Sublime Porte through the envoy Miklós Sebessi, the amount of which the permanent envoy, Ferenc Gyárfás, thought was rather too small, pointing out that “*both our magnificent emperor is a new emperor [Mehmed IV (1648–1687)], the grand vizier is a new vizier [Sofu Mehmed (1648–1649)], and by the grace of God, your gracious highness also just gained the title of prince in reality, [...]*” so it would not have hurt to be more generous.<sup>49</sup> The estates tried to achieve their aim through a collective letter of petition (*mahzar* or *mazar letter* in contemporary Hungarian parlance). The document only touches upon a single issue, the elimination of the increase in tribute, and names István Serédy and his fellow envoys, who were begging for the good graces of the sultan on behalf of the prince and the estates. The type of document is also interesting. In national matters, the Hungarian estates, the same as the boyars of Moldavia and Wallachia, submitted a collective petition to the Sublime Porte signed and sealed by the counsellors.<sup>50</sup>

The ambassador, István Serédy arrived in the Ottoman capital on 29 March 1649, where he was honorably received, but did not come before the grand vizier. He was also only briefly able to speak with Zülfikar Agha,<sup>51</sup> since the ambassador of the Habsburg emperor, Johann Rudolf Schmid von Schwarzenhorn, took part in an audience with the sultan on this same day. Habsburg diplomacy was faced with a great task at this time, since at stake was the signing of the new Habsburg–Ottoman peace treaty. Johann Rudolf Schmid had been trying to make an agreement on this for a while with the Grand Vizeir Sofu Mehmed, whose dismissal further complicated the negotiations. At the same time, the talks had also proceeded slowly due to the demands of the Sublime Porte. The situation did not become any easier with the arrival of the new grand vizier, Kara Murat (1649–1650),<sup>52</sup> who citing the Treaty of Zsitvatorok demanded a renewed payment of 200,000 thalers, just as his predecessor had.<sup>53</sup>

Serédy also soon reported that the gift sent by Miklós Sebessi truly was too small and begged the prince to bring another 10,000 ducats to the Sublime Porte. At the same time, he asked that a draft ahdname also be submitted.<sup>54</sup> In Serédy’s letter dated 2 May, he reported that the Sublime Porte was not willing to back down on the reduction of the tribute, and were demanding another 15,000 ducats

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<sup>49</sup> Ferenc Gyárfás to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 20 December 1648, Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, pp. 414–417.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417–420.

<sup>51</sup> Reports from István Serédy to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 30 March and 12 April 1649, Szilágyi, *Erdély és az északkeleti háború*, pp. 73–75.

<sup>52</sup> Danişmend, “Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı”, p. 38.

<sup>53</sup> Johann Rudolf Schmid to Ferdinand III, Constantinople, 15 April 1649, ÖStA HHStA, Türkei I, Kt. 121., Konv. 1, fol. 54–57; Meienberger, *Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzenhorn*; Durregger, *Diplomatische Kommunikation*; Cziráki, “Making Decisions at the Imperial Court”.

<sup>54</sup> Reports from István Serédy to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 30 March and 12 April 1649, Szilágyi *Erdély és az északkeleti háború*, pp. 73–75.

in addition. If the young prince did not want to concede, then they also threatened the envoy that they would overwhelm the country with Tatar soldiers. If the tribute were to arrive, then the obstacles to issuing the ahdname and the other insignia would be removed, and they would be brought to Transylvania by a kapuji-bashi. At the same time, they also demanded the “sum” from the Hungarian counties.<sup>55</sup> It was probably fortunate for the Transylvanians that the previous grand vizier, Sofu Mehmed, who was old and greedy for gifts, was dismissed on 21 May, and the janissary agha, Kara Murat was appointed to replace him. He received István Serédy on the third day after taking office, and everything that seemed so beyond hope before was settled at once. The grand vizier even noted that he was very happy that Mózes Székely – who had pleaded for the principality with the promise of a great amount of money – would not take the throne as prince, but instead the young Rákóczi. This is when the ambassador handed over the draft for the ahdname as well. Soon, on 1 June, he had an audience before the sultan. The grand vizier found out why they had allowed Kassa (present day Košice, in Slovakia) and the seven counties to return to Habsburg control. Although the ambassador alluded that the gates of Kassa had been opened to the armies in secret, at night, the grand vizier asked whether it was true that according to the agreement they were only in the hands of the prince until his death. Serédy admitted that was so, since the Sublime Porte had not provided real support and had ordered the prince at that time to return from the campaign. The grand vizier took the matter off the agenda, but noted that in the treaty signed with the Habsburg emperor the seven counties had been placed permanently under Transylvanian rule.<sup>56</sup> As I mentioned above, the representatives of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires had set down the basis of the new peace treaty at this time.<sup>57</sup> The manuscript volume containing the agreements signed with the Habsburg Empire and the submissions of the permanent ambassador that was kept at the Sublime Porte contains the notation that the temporary peace treaty (*temessük*) was issued under the name of the Grand Vizier Kara Murat. The seven counties were discussed at the very end of this, which however reflects the situation following their handover, according to which, “five

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<sup>55</sup> Ambassador István Serédy to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 2 May 1649, Szilágyi, *Okmánytár II. Rákóczy György diplomáciai összeköttetéseihez*, pp.17–19.

<sup>56</sup> Report from István Serédy to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 15 June 1649, Szilágyi, *Erdély és az északkeleti háború*, p. 77.

<sup>57</sup> Papp, “Az Oszmán Birodalom”; Treaty text with the stamp of the Grand Vizier Kara Murat Pasha; The treaty text in Latin with the signature of the internuncius Johann Rudolf Schmid. (Jo. Schmidt); Three other copies of the Italian translation: ÖStA HHStA, TU, Kt. 8, 12 July 1649 (2 Recep 1059); GNN, 4 o Cod. MS. Turcica 29; The Latin translation of the Turkish text, along with the imperial ratification, Constantinople, 01 July 1649, ÖStA HHStA, HS, W 518; BOA, Düvel-i Ecnebiyye defterleri, Nr. 57/1. Nemeçe Ahd defteri, pp. 15–17; *Mu’ahedât mecmû’ası*. 3, pp. 84–88; *Treaties between Turkey and the Foreign Powers*, pp. 35–38. (01 July 1649) and alongside this, the imperial ratification with no date.

of the seven counties in Middle Hungary along with the castle of Kassa will remain in their current condition, and the voivode of Transylvania should not interfere in their affairs in any way.”<sup>58</sup>

Franz Babinger in 1920, in Uppsala in the Oriental studies journal, *Le Monde Oriental* published the ceremonial acknowledgement of the sultan issued for György II Rákóczi's first tribute payment as well as the imperial pledge of the sultan itself transcribed in Arabic script, in German translation and with an attached photograph.<sup>59</sup> Following the appearance of the essay and the publication of sources, Imre Lukinich published a review of it in *Századok*, in which he stated along with a few other minor errors that the text of the document was already known to Hungarian historians in Hungarian translation.<sup>60</sup> This remark was fundamentally erroneous. Lukinich had not read the German translation of the documents carefully, but had only skimmed them, otherwise he could not have written that on pages 118–120 of volume 3 of the *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár* the text had already been published in Hungarian translation. It was not even the Hungarian translation of the berat for appointment mentioned above that was published there (it was on pages 116–117), but the firman of the sultan sent to György I Rákóczi as an accompanying letter to it. The field of history could have had a passing familiarity with the content of the imperial pledge through the work of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, who had quoted the text of the ahdname from a collection of letters (*Inscha des Reis Efendi Mohamed* Nr. 34.), the date of which he provided as follows: “*Haziran 1059* [July 1649]”.<sup>61</sup>

The original copy of the ahdname along with the letter from the sultan confirming the payment of tribute was held in the State and Court Library in Karlsruhe until the end of the Second World War, when a significant portion of the abundant materials related to Ottoman studies were destroyed.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> BOA, Düvel-i Ecnebiyye defterleri, Nemçe Ahd defteri, 17; *Mu‘āhedāt mecmū‘ası*. İstanbul, 3. no date. (1297.) 88.

<sup>59</sup> Babinger, “Zwei türkische Schutzbriefe”, pp. 115–151.

<sup>60</sup> Lukinich, “Franz Babinger: Zwei türkische Schutzbriefe” pp. 252–253.

<sup>61</sup> Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, vol. 5, pp. 491–492 and p. 491, footnote c; Lukinich, as well as Sándor Silágyi previously had used the abridged second German publication. Szilády–Szilágyi, *Török–magyarkori államokmánytár*, vol. 3, p. 348; Lukinich, „Franz Babinger: Zwei türkische Schutzbriefe”, pp. 252–253.

<sup>62</sup> I first heard from the renowned expert on Turkish studies from Munich, Hans Georg Majer, that the rich material on Ottoman studies there had burned due to the bombing during the Second World War. This personal information is confirmed by the most recent publication of the Holder catalogue, in which they indicated the surviving documents and sections with a cross. The collection that was located in the reference code Rastatt 216-326a was completely destroyed, with only the document, number 325, a brief record of a military muster of 1683, escaping (Holder, *Die Durlaucher und Rastatter Handschriften*, p. 217.). It is fortunate that in 1931 Franz Babinger published the photographs of the other lost documents with an introduction and notes, so that now on the basis of his publication the collection can at least be examined in photographs, which is unique from the standpoint that it contained the personal archives of a certain Bosnian Osman Pasha. It included the various documents from the offices of the bostanji-bashi and of the grand vizier's kaymakams that were created during official work, all the way to the offices of the Syrian, Anatolian and Egyptian beylerbeys. According to my knowledge, no similar collection

The outstanding Hungarian expert on Turkish studies, Lajos Fekete, spoke appreciatively about Babinger's publication of sources on the sultan's letters sent to György II Rákóczi, highlighting the careful transcription and translation, and the fine facsimile. Both Lukinich and also Fekete pointed out that the ahdname of György II Rákóczi showed extraordinary similarities to the ahdnames surviving in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian translations published by Imre Mikó in the *Erdélyi Történeti Adatokban*, particularly the imperial pledge of the sultan given to György I Rákóczi in 1630.<sup>63</sup>

The above statement is completely correct.<sup>64</sup> If we consider that ambassador Serédy submitted a draft ahdname at the Sublime Porte, which was the basis for the imperial pledge for György II Rákóczi, then an explanation for the great similarity is found instantly. At the same time, I mentioned above that the Ottoman chancellery – just like similar European bureaus of the time – was based on stock phrases, it used the formal and structural elements from documents of the same type that had been created earlier, in the current case the texts of the imperial pledges for Bethlen, Catherine of Brandenburg and in particular, György I Rákóczi.

Following the Babinger publication of texts from 1920, the outstanding Czech expert in Oriental studies, Jan Rypka, also presented an essay. He published the document from the aforementioned defter under number Turcica 29 held in Göttingen, which the grand vizier sent as an accompaniment to the imperial pledge of the sultan. At the same time, he pointed out that the sultan's confirmation of the payment of tribute that Babinger also thought (incorrectly) was a *berat*, as well as the *ahdname* itself can also be found in the manuscript from Göttingen.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, it can be shown that the kapuji-bashi brought three documents when confirming the prince: a letter from the sultan countersigning on the payment of tribute, an imperial pledge of the sultan that at the same time included the confirmation of the appointment of the prince, so was called both a *berat* and an ahdname, and a diploma from the grand vizier that was the letter accompanying the ahdname.

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that has survived in the originals has not yet been discovered (Babinger, *Das Archiv des Bosniaken Osman Pascha*). The first Italian description of the collection was prepared by the famous Oriental studies expert of Emperor Leopold I not long after they were found in the camp of the Ottoman army following the second siege of Vienna. Brambach, *Meninski über türkische Handschriften*, pp. 303–308; Babinger, *Das Archiv des Bosniaken Osman Pascha*, pp. 2–6. For the two Turkish documents sent to György II Rákóczi, see: Brambach, *Die Handschriften*, p. 52, Nr. 96, “Rastatt 232. Kalligraphisches Prachtstück; die Toghrâ und Doxologie (2 Zeilen) zu Anfang mit Goldschrift, 4,20 X 0,70 m; 36 Zeilen, je 7 cm von einander entfernt, vokalisiert Dîwânî. Berât und Ahdname aus Konstantinopel von Anfang Ğumâdi-l-âkhir 1059 (begann am 12. Juni 1649), im Text dem 2. Hazîrân 1649 gleichgesetzt, an den Fürsten von Siebenbürgen (Erdel) Georg Rákóczy, dessen Inhalt ausführlich angegeben ist bei v. Hammer V. 491.)”, “Rastatt 233”: the letter of the sultan confirming the payment of tribute is also mentioned here under the shelf guide.

<sup>63</sup> Fekete, “Osmanisch parkan”.

<sup>64</sup> MNL OL, Microfilm Archive. box 21050 (miscellaneous document copies from Ljubljana); the publication of the document in Arabic script and in the Serbo-Croatian language: Handžić, “Diploma sultana Murada IV”. Date: 3–13 April 1631; Mikó, “Athnámék”, pp. 343–348.

<sup>65</sup> Rypka, “Die türkischen Schutzbriefe”; GNN, 4 o Cod. MS. Turcica 29, 69b. and 62b–64a.

The envoys departed for home along with the kapuji-bashi at the end of June. On 7 July, the prince called the counsellors to Gyulafehérvár on 21 July, for the ceremonial inauguration.<sup>66</sup> The delegation from the Sublime Porte arrived from Kronstadt (in Hungarian Brassó, present day Braşov, in Romania), where it was received by a thousand *Székely* soldiers, and later another 2,000 joined them. For a while, the magistrates of Kronstadt also accompanied them to Weidenbach (in Hungarian Vidombák, present day Ghimbav, in Romania).<sup>67</sup>

ANOTHER BERAT: THE CONFIRMATION OF THE PRINCE FERENC I RÁKÓCZI DURING HIS FATHER'S LIFETIME (1652)

György II Rákóczi called a Diet on 18 February, in Gyulafehérvár. The pressing reason for this was that he was suffering from such a serious case of smallpox that it could have been fatal. He asked the estates to elect his son, Ferenc Rákóczi, to be his successor while he was still alive. As with every similar case when preparations were made to place a child alongside his father, the example of Zsigmond Báthory and its sorrowful results came to mind. During the period of the Fifteen Years' War or Long Turkish War the rule of the restless prince devastated Transylvania nearly completely.

The election took place along with the enactment of strict regulations on 9 March. János Kemény was appointed as the regent. However, by the time the national assembly had concluded, György II Rákóczi had recovered nicely. János Boros was sent to the Sublime Porte for the confirmation by the sultan.<sup>68</sup>

Sándor Szilágyi wrote very briefly about the sultan's confirmation of Ferenc Rákóczi in the 11<sup>th</sup> volume of *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*. His information was for the most part taken from the chronicle of Georg Kraus, the scribe from Mühlbach. According to this, the insignia for confirmation were brought in March by an agent by the name of Hasan. However, the prince was not satisfied with this, and so in September he announced another national assembly, which sent István Serédy, a diplomat who was already experienced in these matters, along with János Daniel, György Bánffy and the royal magistrate of Mühlbach, Stephanus Mann, to rectify the "imperial pledge".<sup>69</sup>

The confirmation by the sultan of the young prince ran into similar difficulties as that of György II Rákóczi ten years earlier. At first it seemed like everything would proceed in order, and the special and permanent envoys easily received the consent of the grand vizier with the help of the kizlar aghasi (*kizlar agasi*).<sup>70</sup> Szil-

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<sup>66</sup> Szilágyi, *EOE*, vol. 11, p. 10, pp. 63–64.

<sup>67</sup> Szilágyi, *EOE*, vol. 11, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Szilágyi, *EOE*, vol. 10, pp. 21–24.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24; Kraus, *Erdélyi krónika*, p. 201.

<sup>70</sup> Kapittha Márton Boldai to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 28 May 1652, Szilágyi, *Okmánytár II. Rákóczy György diplomáciai összeköttetéseihez*, p. 97.

ágyi noted that the papers from this delegation were still lurking somewhere. Recently it has been possible to discover some of the Ottoman documents related to the appointment of Ferenc I Rákóczi in Istanbul and in Göttingen.

It must be stated that Georg Kraus and Sándor Szilágyi who followed him were going down the wrong path. Naturally, the most obvious error was committed by Kraus, according to which “*Hasan Pasha*” had already brought the insignia of appointment in March. The envoy of the Sublime Porte, who was identified as *Elczi Haszon* (Elçi Hasan) in the Transylvanian sources, did in fact go to Transylvania during the prince’s illness.<sup>71</sup> The purpose of his journey was twofold, on the one hand, he had to provide information on whether the prince of Transylvania was alive and on the other hand, he was participating in a joint Ottoman–Habsburg border demarcation commission in Hungary.<sup>72</sup> However, one thing is certain, at this time there was not yet any talk of electing Ferenc Rákóczi. Kraus thoroughly confused the events of this period, and it can be seen that for him the actual purpose of the envoy’s trip was not what was important, but for him to work his anti-Hungarian speech given in Mühlbach into his message. The group of insignia that were wanted could not have arrived before the Transylvanian delegation petitioned for Ferenc Rákóczi’s confirmation. The envoy Márton Boldai still mentions getting the grand vizier’s permission in May.<sup>73</sup> However, the documents to be presented now all place the petition and the confirmation itself in the autumn and winter of 1652. I propose that the first steps thought to be for appointment could not have been anything other than preliminary requests for permission. If in connection with this, an order was prepared in the name of the sultan, that would not have been considered a final confirmation. An example such as this is known from later, when Mihály II Apafi was recognised as the future prince while his father was still alive.<sup>74</sup> All of this is just supposition in terms of Ferenc Rákóczi, and there is no proof of it. The prince and the estates pleaded for the mercy of the sultan through a collective letter of petition, just as they had ten years earlier. This document is known in Turkish translation. Several Transylvanian aristocrats

<sup>71</sup> János Kemény to György II Rákóczi, Gyulafehérvár, 8 January 1652, MNL OL MKA, Archivum Familiae Rákóczi, E 190. 27. cs. 6566; Publication: Szilágyi, *Okmánytár II. Rákóczy György diplomáciai összeköttetéseihez*, pp. 92–94; the pasha of Buda also reports on this: TSMA, E.6977.

<sup>72</sup> Papp, “Egy Habsburg követ”, pp. 40–52; Papp, “Osmanische Funktionäre”; Szabados, *Die Berichte Hans Caspars*, Nr. 34, pp. 98–102 and Nr. 36, pp. 105–109. Nr. 36.

<sup>73</sup> Kapitihá Márton Boldai to György II Rákóczi, Constantinople, 28 May 1652, Szilágyi, *Okmánytár II. Rákóczy György diplomáciai összeköttetéseihez*, p. 97.

<sup>74</sup> Letter of the Sultan that Mihály II Apafi received to ensure him of the title of prince, while his father was still alive, ANR DG-București, Doc. turc. XXIX/2326, 03–12 August 1684 (“*evâhir Şabân 1095*”); Gemil, *Relațiile Țărilor Române cu Poarta Otomană*, p. 368. In this case, we also see that months passed between the first and final steps for the confirmation by the sultan. The final document of appointment of Mihály II Apafi, ÖStA HHStA, TU 1684. 11. 19–28. (Fragment of the original *berat*) (“Fragment, Nachfolge Apáfy’s in Siebenbürgen betrifft. Mitte Zilhidsche 1059 / Nov. 1684); SUB Göttingen, 4<sup>o</sup> Cod. MS. Manuscript, Turcica 30, fol. 77r–77v; Its publication with a French translation: Veselá-Přenosilová, “Contribution aux rapports de la Porte Sublime”, pp. 571–572.

signed the petition on behalf of the estates, and in the translation, it was also noted that the petition was authenticated by their seals above their names in the original. The document was issued in September (“*bu ‘ubūdīyet-nāmemüz Erdel Belğrādında evvel-i güz ayıñ yigirmi sekizinci gününde sene 1641 velādet-i ħazreti ‘İsā ‘m (= ‘aleyhi s-selām) yazılmışdur*”). The argument of the estates was so similar to the petition following the election ten years previously that it can be hypothesised that they were prepared using the model of earlier documents. In essence, they cited that if the prince were to die, it will be the duty of the estates to elect a new ruler, but all of this would take time. Since they were surrounded by large and strong countries, it would be better if they were to avoid the danger inherent in the interregnum and elect the son of the prince to be the future prince while his father was still alive. They had decided on all of this in the Diet that had been concluded, and requested that the sultan confirm their decision according to custom.<sup>75</sup> Two documents were created due to this petition, or at least this many are known up to now. One was addressed to György II Rákóczi and in this, he was informed of the sultan’s decision, according to which his son would be accepted as prince after his death, but until then he could not intervene in the matters of governance. In the manuscript at Göttingen it was considered necessary to mention that this document was not an *ahdname* of the sultan, just a *name*, or a letter (“*‘bi-l-fi ‘l Erdel ħākimī olan Rāqōçī Gōrgī ve Erdel memleketine tābi ‘ üç millet ā ‘yāni ‘arż u maĥzarları ile ricā eyledükleri ‘ahdnāme vērilmeyüb işbu vērilen nāme-i hümmāyūnuñ şūretidür fi sene 1063* [In the request of the current prince of Transylvania, György Rákóczi and the nobles of the three estates and their collective letter of petition, they have requested an imperial treaty, which has not been issued. [This] is a copy of the sovereign’s letter in the year 1063]”) The document is in fact a response to the petition of the prince and the estates, which also repeats elements from the request. At the same time, it also differs in a few points from the previous *ahdnames*, and for example prohibits the voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia being received if they rebel against Constantinople. It also blocks the immigration of rayahs, both from the voivodeships and from Ottoman territories. The insignia of the prince to come from the sultan were the following: two decorative kaftans, a banner of the sultan and a sceptre, which they bestowed upon both the adult and child princes. The insignia of rule were brought by an internal official of the court, the *haseki-bashi*, Ahmed.<sup>76</sup> Mention must also be made of the appointment letter itself. The confirmation document sent at this time has been unknown to the study of history to this point. Its copy can be found in the aforementioned manuscript from Göttingen under reference code Turcica 29, and it is a *berat*, not an *ahdname*.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> TSMA E. 6462.

<sup>76</sup> SUB, Göttingen, 4<sup>o</sup> Cod. MS. Turcica 29. fol. 96v–97r. The date is 20–30 Muharrem 1063 / 2–11 December 1652.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

THE CONSTRUCTION, STRUCTURE AND DIPLOMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE  
TEMPORARY LETTER OF APPOINTMENT (*BERÁT*)

This document bears special value when examining the diplomatic links between Transylvania and the Sublime Porte in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Namely, on the basis of this berat it has also been possible to form a clear opinion on the documentary materials related to the confirmation of the prince ten years earlier mentioned above. Without the document from the sultan appointing Ferenc I Rákóczi, it would not have been possible to perform the textual critical analysis that provides the basis for me to state that the 1642 letter of confirmation for György II Rákóczi known from the collection of Ferīdūn bey and listed as an ahdname there, is instead a berat. From the comparison of the text of the two documents it becomes clear that the original berat of 1642 is essentially the same word-for-word as the document granted ten years later to Ferenc I Rákóczi. The question may arise about what was left out of the publication that could be supplemented by the manuscript in Göttingen. The elements that are missing are those that are indispensable for identifying the “type”, such as the long introductory section that states that the sultan, as the trustee of divine justice, fulfills the requests of those who turn to him as well as references to sections of the text of the Koran that are aimed at observing contracts and supporting beneficiaries. The Ferīdūn publication for the most part included the details that were interesting from a political perspective, which state that the prince and the representatives of the three nations had petitioned for the confirmation of the young György Rákóczi while his father was still alive with the condition that he not be able to interfere in the exercise of power. The tribute had to be sent in time and if the voivodes of Moldavia or Wallachia were to rise up against the Sublime Porte and seek refuge there or immigrating rayahs came looking for a better life, they must be handed over. Based on these conditions, the prince and the estates requested the issuance of a berat of the sultan, which – with the renewed mention of the terms – the sultan had fulfilled and appointed György II Rákóczi prince of Transylvania, but he would only be able to govern the country in actuality after the death of his father. The document repeatedly mentioned the surrender of the tribute on time, lawful rule and includes a recurrent formula, according to which the young György Rákóczi will be a friend to the sultan’s friends and an enemy to his enemies. The text in the Ferīdūn collection related to Ferenc I Rákóczi ends here, essentially in the middle of a sentence that states that a kapujibashi would bring the insignia of the prince. The missing section is also worthy of attention. This is where the berat talked about how György II Rákóczi must do everything to protect the state and his subjects, who in return must consider him the prince after his father’s death and must recognize his rule. The original text concluded with the customary formula, “*They have to know this, let them put their trust in the sublime monogram.*” A precise date was not included on the document, the currently unknown draftsman of the Ferīdūn collection only provided the year.

The above structural elements are thus repeated in the case of Ferenc I Rákóczi as well, and the text is identical aside from having the names changed and minor stylistic differences. This is a quite natural occurrence. An element of diplomacy



of this great importance, the installation of a vassal ruler into power, demands clear forms, grand, ceremonial phrasing, established ceremony and the reduction of improvisation to the extent possible by the sovereign power. Differences from the usual always suggest the development of a new structure of political power, which requires the alteration of the ceremonies as well as the symbols, insignia and documents used.

Therefore, there is no wonder that berats based on the same logic and using very similar expressive terminology and content were prepared for the vassal rulers of the period. However, very few examples of this are found in publications. As an example, there is a single known Moldavian berat from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which was sent to the voivode Alexandru Iliaş around 1620/21, when Gaşpar Graţiani was removed.<sup>78</sup> Of those that have not been published, the berat of the Cossack hetman Petro Doroshenko stands out (1669).<sup>79</sup>

Since the entire process is built upon a very rigid system, it is possible to identify those documents and insignia about which information was not found, or which due to the preliminary nature of the confirmation – since the father was still alive – were not sent. The prince's letter of petition sent to the Sublime Porte for his son's appointment has not survived, or has not yet been found. At the same time, the letter of the sultan issued to the estates is not known either, although I consider its existence to be certain, since there are continuous examples of them from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was also necessary for the grand vizier to write a document called a *mektûb* (letter). Despite the lack of these, we have made a large step forward, since there had been no materials available so far from Hungarian archives related to this appointment. From the berat, it is clear that only the decorative clothing, the sultan's banner and the sceptre were sent of the prince's insignia, so the sabre, the ornamental plume, the janissary officer's cap and the horse with its equipment were left out of the set. These should have been brought at the final confirmation, with the transfer of power, which – with the knowledge of Ferenc I Rákóczi's life story – never could have happened.

According to the Transylvanian Saxon historian Georg Kraus, a pasha by the name of Osman, the sultan's cup-bearer, was sent from the Sublime Porte to confirm the young prince.<sup>80</sup> Precise information was found in the correspondence of the Rákóczi family in terms of when and where the handover of the documents and insignia of appointment took place. The young Ferenc Rákóczi himself wrote to his grandmother, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy on 14 February 1653, that “*I went before the Turkish envoy and there were quite a lot shots, but I did not fear anything, and I entered with him on his horse from the Váradsja [present day Oarda, in Romania] Bridge.*”<sup>81</sup> Although we do not have any more information about the ceremony besides the handover of the insignia of power, the cited correspondence indicates

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<sup>78</sup> Ferīdūn, *Mecmū‘a-i münşe‘ātü s-selāfīn*, vol. 2, pp. 488–489, Papp, “Keresztény vazallusok”, pp. 67–96 and 92–93.

<sup>79</sup> BOA, İbnülemin, Hariciyye No. 52; Ostapchuk, “Cossack Ukraine”.

<sup>80</sup> Kraus, *Erdélyi krónika*, p. 201.

<sup>81</sup> Szilágyi, *A két Rákóczi György*, p. 448.

that it proceeded in a similar manner to what took place ten years earlier, in the case of György II Rákóczi.

APPENDIX

1.

*Document of temporary appointment issued to György II Rákóczi. The text of the document had been modified from its original form as a document of appointment (berāt) to an abridged version of an imperial pledge (‘ahdnāme).*

*Ferīdūn, Mecmū’-a-i münşe’atü s-selāfīn, vol. 2, pp. 470–471.*

*Published copy*

*Type of document: berāt-i hümāyūn*

Müşārūn ileyh Rāqōcī Gōrgī qrāluñ oğlına hükümetiñ tevfiži irādesiyle işdār buyurulan ‘ahd-nāme-i hümāyūn şüretidür

bi-l-fi’l Erdel hākimi olan Rāqōcī Gōrgī hutimet ‘avāqibuhu bi-l hayruñ oğlı gendüden-şoñra Erdel hükümetine muşaarrıf olmaq fermānum olmağın tevqi’-i refi’-i hümāyūnum vāşıl olıcaq ma’lūm ola ki

müşārūn ileyh babañ Rāqōcī Gōrgīñ der-i devlet-medārımuza elçisi ile mektüb ve pişkeşi ve Erdel memleketine tābi’ üç millet ā’yānınuñ ādemleri ve mağzarları gelüb babañdan-şoñra hükümet saña ‘ināyet u ihsānum olunmaq bābında ‘avātıf-i ‘aliyemüzden ricā vu iltimās eylemeleriyle mādām-ki babañ hayātda ola Erdel hākimi olub vefātından-şoñra hükümet-i mezbūre<sup>82</sup> sen muşaarrıf ve şadāqat u istiğāmetle ‘ubūdīyet maqāmında şābit qadem olub ve dōstimuza dōst ve düşmenimūze düşmen olasın ve devlet-i ‘aliyeme hayr-i h’āhlıq ve toğrılıq üzere Erdel hārācını vaqtıyle irsāl u işālda ihtimām edesin Eflāq ve Boğdān voyvodalarından ve bōyār ve bellü başlıklarından biri ‘işyān edüb Erdel vilāyetine qaçub varduqlarında tütub āsitāne-i devlet-medāruma gönderesin ve sāyir memālik-i mağrüsemez re’āyāsından dañı firār edenleri girtıye döndüresin şurūt-i mezkūreye ri’āyet eylemek üzere ve babañ hayātda olduqça sen hükūmete qarışmayub gendüden-şoñra Erdel vilāyetinüñ hākimi sen olmaq bābında haqqıñda mezīd-i ‘ināyet-i mülūkāne ve mezīyet-i ‘avārıf-i husrevānem vücūde getürüb saña iki şevb hil’at-i mürişü l-behçet ile sancaq ve topuz ihsānımız olub dergāh-i mu’allāmuz qapucı başlıklarından iftiħārü l-emācidi ve-l-ekārim filān zīde mecduhu ile irsāl olunmuşdur vuşūlunda gerekdür ki eşnāf-i i’zāz ve ikrām ile hil’atları giyüb sancaq ve topuzı hıfz edüb işbu nāme-i encāmuñ mefhūmıyle ‘amel eylesesin sene 1052.

*Translation:*

Since my imperial command has been issued that the son of the current prince of Transylvania, György Rákóczi, may his life end in good, shall hold the government of Transylvania after him, as soon as the sublime imperial letter arrives, let it be known: A letter, an envoy, and a gift from your aforementioned father have arrived at the court of felicity as have the envoys and joint publications with the seals (*mağzarları*) of the nobles of the

<sup>82</sup> In Original: “mezbūre hükūmete”.

Three Nations of Transylvania. They have indicated their request and hope that the government will be handed over to you after your father.

As long as your father is alive, he shall be the prince of Transylvania, but after his death, you shall hold the title of prince of Transylvania. You shall be constant in the sincerity and devotion of your loyalty, friend to our friends and enemy to our enemies, and remain benevolent in righteousness towards my exalted empire.

You shall pay the Transylvanian tribute on time. If any of the voivodes or nobles (bellü başlular) of Moldavia or Wallachia flees to Transylvania, you shall capture them and send them back to my court of felicity.

If anyone flees from the *re āyā* of my well-protected realm, you shall return them. In consideration of these conditions, as long as your father is alive, you shall not interfere in his reign. But in accordance with the fact that you shall become the prince of Transylvania after him, you have been granted an abundance of high, royal benevolence and magnanimous, distinguished grace, and from me are sent two robes of honour, which are the cause of joy, a banner, and a mace (*topuz*), which have been sent by my *kapudji bashi*, who is the pride of the illustrious and the grand dignitaries, [name missing], may his dignity increase, as soon as he arrives, you shall (consider) them the pinnacle of honour and favour, put on the robe of honour, keep the banner and the mace, and from now on act in accordance with the contents of my very kind letter. In 1052 (1642).

## 2.

*Document of temporary appointment issued to Ferenc Rákóczi in relation to the fact that as long as the prince of Transylvania, György Rákóczi is still alive, he shall hold the said rulership, but after his death, (Ferenc Rákóczi) shall dispose of the principality.*

Göttingen, Niedersächsische Nationalbibliothek, 4<sup>o</sup> Cod. MS. Turcica 29. fol. 96r–96v.  
Copy

Type of document: *berāt-i hümāyūn*

Erdel hākimi olan Rāqōçī Gōrgī mādām-ki hay<sup>v</sup>ātada ola hūkūmet-i mezbūreye muṭaṣṣaruf ola fevt olunduqdan soñra oğlu Rāqōçī Ferenc Erdel hākimi olmaq üzre verilən berātuñ şüretidür fi sene [10]63.

- 1 Nişān-i şerif oldur-ki çün cenāb-i mālīkū l-mülki celle celālehu ve te‘ālā ve ḥazret-i müfīzū n-nevāli ve-l-merātibi
- 2 ‘amma iḥsānuhu ve te‘ālā kemāl-i kerem ü cevdetden zāt-i se‘ādet-āyātumu innā ca ‘al-nāka ḥalīfeten fi-l-ārd<sup>83</sup>
- 3 teşrīfine maḥşūş qılub ‘atebe-i ‘alīye-i ‘izzet-nişānumı melāz-i mülük-i eşrāf-i āfāq ve dūdmān-i devlet-bünyānımu
- 4 maqsim-i erzāq-i kāffe-i ennām eyledi fa-lā-cereme şükran ‘ale tilke n-ni‘ami zimmet-i himmet-i şāhāne ve şān-i se‘ādet-
- 5 nişān-i pādīşāhāneme vācib ü ehemmi ve müteḥattim ü elzem olmışdur-ki hemvāre elṭāf-i ‘ināyet ve iḥsānum küşāde
- 6 ve esbāb-i ‘atīfet-i fi imtinānum āmāde ola binā’en ‘alā zālīke bi-l-fi’l Erdel hākimi olan iftiḥārū

<sup>83</sup> In the original, instead of *ārz*, *ārş*. *Yā Dāvūdu innā ca ‘alnāka ḥalīfeten fi-l-ārd Qur’an*, Şād 38: 26, “O David, We appointed you a deputy on earth”. *Kur’ân-i Kerîm*, p. 453; *The Qur’an*, p. 370.

- 7 l-ümerā' i 'izāmi l-ṭsevīye Rāqoçī Görgy hutimet 'avāqibuhu bi-l hayruñ oğlu olub  
gendüden-şonra
- 8 Erdel hükümetine mutaşşarıf olmaq fermānum olan rāfi' -i tevqī' -i refi' ü ş-şān-i hāqānī  
ve nāfiz-i yarlıg-i belīg-i meserret-
- 9 'unvān-i tācdārī qıdvetü ümerā' i l-milleti mesīhīye Rāqoçī Ferenc hutimet 'avāqibuhu  
bi-l-hayr için müşārün ileyh
- 10 babası Rāqoçī Görginüñ der-i devlet-medārımuza mektüb ve elçisi ve pīşkeşi ve Erdel  
memleketine tābi'
- 11 üç millet ā' yānımuñ ādemleri ve maḥzarları gelüb babası-i müşārün ileyhden şonra Er-  
del hükümeti
- 12 oğlu-i mūmā ileyh Rāqoçī Ferenc hutimet 'avāqibuhuya 'ināyet u ihsānum olmaq  
bābında 'avātıf-i 'alīyemüze
- 13 ricā vu iltimās eylemeleri ile mādām-ki babası hayv[ā]tda ola Erdel hākimi olub fevt  
olunduğdan-şonra
- 14 hükümet-i Erdele oğlu-i mūmā ileyh mutaşşarıf olmaq üzre berāt-i hümāyūnum  
vērilmek bābında istid' ā-yi
- 15 'ināyet ve istircā-i merḥamet eyledüğü ecilden imdi babası-i müşārün ileyh hayv[ā]tda  
Erdel hākimi olub
- 16 fevt olduqdan şonra hükümet-i Erdele oğlu-i mūmā ileyh mutaşşarıf olub şadāqat u  
istiḳāmet ile
- 17 'ubūdīyet maqāmında sābit qadem ve doğruluq ile devlet-i 'alīyemizüñ hayr-i h'āhi  
olub Erdel ḥarācını
- 18 vaqit u zemānı ile irsāl ve Boğdān ve Eflāq voyvodalarından ve böyārlarından ve bellü  
başlularından
- 19 'işyān edüb Erdel vilāyetine qaçub varduqlarında aḥz edüb āsitāne-i devlet-  
medārımuza
- 20 gönderüb ve Boğdān ve Eflāq ve sāyir memālik-i maḥrüsemez re'āyālarından birisi  
firār eyledükde cümlesi
- 21 girü memālik-i maḥsüsemeze redd edüb göndermek üzre ḥatt-i hümāyūn-i se'ādet-  
maqrūnum şadır olmağın mücebince (96v.)
- 22 işbu berāt-i se'ādet-āyāt ve behcet-gāyātı vërdüm ve buyurdum-ki ba'dü l-yevm  
müşārün ileyh Erdel
- 23 hākimi olan babası Rāqoçī Görgi hutimet 'avāqibuhu mādām-ki hayv'ātda ola Erdel  
hākimi olub
- 24 fevt olduqdan şonra hükümet-i Erdele oğlu-i mūmā ileyh şurūt-i mezküre ile mutaşşarıf  
ve āsitāne-i
- 25 se'ādet-āşyānımuza şadāqat u istiḳāmet ile 'ubūdīyet maqāmında sābit qadem ve  
toğruluq ile devlet-i
- 26 'alīyemizüñ hayr-i h'āhi olub Erdel ḥarācı vaqit u zemānı ile āsitāne-i se'ādet-āşyānı-  
muza
- 27 irsāl ve dōstuma dōst ve düşmenüme düşmen olub ve bu<sup>84</sup> minvāl-i meşrū' ve şurūt-i  
mezküre ile
- 28 babası-i müşārün ileyh mutaşşarıf olduğı üzre oğlu-i mūmā ileyh daḥı mutaşşarıf olub  
ve hıfz
- 29 u ḥirāset-i memleket ve zabt u şiyānet-i ḥazīne ve ra'īyet bābında bezl-i maqdūr ve  
sa'y-i nā-maḥşūr eyleye ol bābda

<sup>84</sup> The ve (and) had been two times written or it should be bu (this), but it is from the manuscript not sure. I accepted according to context the second option.

30 imdād üze[r]inden [?] hīc āhad māni‘ ü dāfi‘ olunmaya şöyle bileler ‘alāmet-i şerīfe  
i‘timād qılalar tahrīren fī evāhīri şehri muhārremü l-ḥaram sene selese ve-sittin ve-elf

*Translation:*

The noble monogram (*Niṣān*) is as follows: Since the majestic Lord of the Universe – great and sublime is his glory – and his Holy Majesty, the generous giver of grace – he shall give his manifold grace continually – from his perfect grace-giving excellence to honour my blissful personage [according to the Qur’anic verse], “we make you deputy (caliph) on earth”. He has made my grand, excellent court a refuge for the noble kings of our time and our eternal, blissful dynasty has made it the place where the daily bread of humanity is distributed.

No doubt, the expression of gratitude for these benefits has become a royal custom, necessary, obligatory, and inevitable for my sovereign, blessed Majesty. In the same way, my gracious and giving kindness should be open, and this gives me a reason to always give thanks.

Therefore, the current prince of Transylvania, the chosen one of the great Christian princes, György Rákóczi, may his life end in good, has my command as it is written for his son, namely, after him he shall hold the government of Transylvania, thus, the father of the one mentioned, György Rákóczi, has sent his letter, his envoy, and his gift to the blessed porte for the possessor of the exalted, grand monogram (*rāfi‘-i tevqī‘-i refī‘ü ṣ-ṣān-i ḥāqānī*), for the holder of the grand and mighty imperial document of appointment (*nāfiṣ-i yarlıg-i belīg-i meserret-‘unvān-i tācdārī*), for the model of the princes of the Christian community of faith, for Ferenc Rákóczi, may his life end in good. Both the messengers and the joint supplications with the seals (*maḥzarları*) of the nobles of the Three Nations of Transylvania have arrived.

They have directed their request and hope that after his aforementioned father, the government of Transylvania will pass to his aforementioned son, Ferenc Rákóczi, may his life end (in good).

As long as his father is alive, the latter shall be the prince of Transylvania, but after his death the son shall hold the government of Transylvania. In this matter, they have graciously and humbly requested that I issue my imperial document of appointment (*berāt-i hümayūnum*).

Now we have issued our letter related to blessedness handwritten by ourselves (*ḥaṭṭ-i hümayūn-i se ‘ādet-maqrūnum*), which provides that the father, as long as he survives, be prince of Transylvania. After his death, the government of Transylvania shall pass to the aforementioned son if he remains steadfast in sincerity and devotion in his loyalty and benevolent in righteousness towards my exalted realm and pays the Transylvanian tribute in a timely and punctual manner.

If any of the voivodes of Moldavia or Wallachia or their boyars or nobles (*bellü başlular*) flees to Transylvania, they shall be captured and sent back to my court of felicity.

If anyone flees from the *re ‘āyā* of Moldavia or Wallachia or from the other inhabitants of my lands, they shall be returned to my well-protected empire.

Therefore, my extraordinarily benevolent document of appointment (*berāt-i se ‘ādet-āyāt ve behcet-ğāyātı*), adorned with [Koranic] verses, is now issued, and I have ordered that as long as his father György Rákóczi, may his life end in good, the aforementioned prince of Transylvania is still alive, he shall also be prince of Transylvania. After his death, however, the government of Transylvania shall be held by his son, Ferenc Rákóczi, may his life end in good, under the aforementioned conditions.

He shall remain steadfast in sincerity and devotion in his loyalty towards my court, which is the refuge of felicity, benevolent in righteousness towards my exalted empire, and pay the Transylvanian tribute on time and punctually to my court, which is the refuge of felicity.

He shall be the friend of our friends and the enemy of our enemies.

The aforementioned son shall hold [the government of Transylvania] lawfully and under these aforementioned conditions, as his aforementioned father has held it.

He shall exert (all) possible effort for the preservation and support of the country and the protection and defence of the treasury and the subjects, and in this case there cannot be the slightest obstacle or any refusal to help. They have to know this, let them put their trust in the sublime monogram.

Written down in the first decade of the forbidden Muḥarrem in 1063 (22 December 1651 – 1 January 1652).

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