

Report on the Government of Transylvania, 1604

Notes on the Operation of the Provisional Habsburg Government Bodies*

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Abstract. In the summer of 1604, the Transylvanian Council of Government, which had been formed shortly before, submitted a longer report to King Rudolf I of Hungary. They reported on the administration and financial situation of the newly pacified province of Transylvania. The most pressing issue, however, was the pay and maintenance of the mercenary corps stationed in Transylvania. Accordingly, the bulk of the report is devoted to discussing problems relating to the army. The report gives us an idea of how a Council of Government (*Regiment*) that had already been ‘tried and tested’ in the Austrian hereditary provinces functioned in Transylvania, and introduces the challenges members of the Council had to face.

Keywords: government, composite monarchy, Council of Government, governor, Transylvania

On 18 July 1604, Paul von Krauseneck and Carl Imhoff, commissioners of Rudolf I (as king of the Hungarian Kingdom) to Transylvania, sent a letter to the city of Beszterce (Bistrița) informing it of several important changes in government. According to these, the monarch issued a new instruction on the administration of finance and justice in Transylvania. The ruler entrusted the administration of justice to the governor appointed at the head of Transylvania and to members of the Council of Government (Ger. *Gubernatorn und Excelsius Regiment*). The Transylvanian Chamber was responsible for the management of finances.¹

The institutions contained in the short, concise but sternly worded letter date from the second temporary Habsburg rule of Transylvania, when during the Long

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1 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 100.

Turkish War the territory of the Principality of Transylvania came under the direct rule of the Hungarian king for a few years. The public, political and military history aspects of the subject are well researched, but in Hungarian administrative history, in contrast to contemporary German and Austrian research, little has been said about these governmental bodies.² Apart from Győző Ember's monograph on the history of early modern administration,³ only Zsolt Trócsányi dealt with this topic in his book published in 1980. In his view, the history of these governmental bodies is not part of the administrative history of the independent Transylvanian state, as they only existed for a few years in Transylvania. As such, they did not have a major impact on the development of the Transylvanian government.⁴ The undoubtedly justified argument made by Trócsányi, an eminent expert on the subject, these institutions were only temporary in the Principality. Nevertheless, their history is worth looking into, as the considerable amount of surviving documentary evidence shows that, even if temporarily, the Habsburg government managed to introduce the governmental reforms that had been implemented in other parts of the Empire.

These administrative reforms, introduced in Hungary by Ferdinand I,⁵ were in principle aimed at creating a government that would unite the entire Habsburg Empire according to uniform administrative principles.⁶ The emphasis was on the government councils (Ger. *Regiment*) governing individual territories, known in the literature of administrative history as *dicasterium*, or government departments.⁷ Based on a bureaucratic organization of work (permanent employment, trained officials, permanent headquarters), the *dicasterium* was one of the most important factors in the centralization of the modern age and a milestone in the development of the modern state. It is no coincidence that the literature considers it a major component of the modern state apparatus, since it was the *dicasterium* that first embodied (in principle) an administration independent of the influence of the estates.⁸

2 For example: Kruppa, "Tervek az erdélyi kormányzóság," 281–310; Kruppa, "Miksa főherceg," 817–45.

3 Ember, *Az újkori magyar közigazgatás története*, 423–33.

4 Trócsányi, *Erdély központi kormányzata*, 16.

5 Fazekas, "A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai," 11–18.

6 Mezey and Gosztanyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet*, 185–86.

7 The specificity of the *dicasterium* as a governmental body is not correctly conveyed in the English translations (e.g., seat of government, chairs of government, governmental court); therefore, I use the Latin terminology throughout the text.

8 Mezey and Gosztanyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet*, 185–86. Jaroslav Pánek wrote about King Ferdinand I of Hungary's reforms in the countries of the Czech Crown that the monarch's first step was to create new state institutions not connected to the Czech estates, and thus could not be influenced by them. Pánek, "Das politische System des böhmischen Staates," 75.

However, we should emphasize, especially in relation to the Habsburg Empire of the period, that although certain areas of state administration—most notably war and finance—were significantly centralized, for a long time to come the Habsburg Empire remained a diverse, loosely interconnected conglomerate of states.⁹ As a result, it could not be governed solely by the bureaucratic institutions listed; the court could not bypass the local political elite, and was constantly forced to compromise and coordinate.¹⁰ The latter is also true of the short reign of the Hungarian king in Transylvania, although here, due to internal political events (which we will discuss later), Rudolf I took a much tougher stance against the Transylvanian estates than his grandfather Ferdinand I did in the case of the Hungarian estates.

The establishment of the governmental body/bodies¹¹ that operated between 1604 and 1605 was preceded by a lengthy decision-making process. There were several reasons for this. On the one hand, due to the constantly changing foreign and domestic political events and the unpredictability of the battlefield, it was not until the autumn of 1603 that Habsburg rule was actually sufficiently consolidated to allow any meaningful discussion of administrative reforms in the province (most contemporary documents used the term *provincia* for Transylvania),¹² and its integration into the complex monarchy of the Habsburgs in Central Europe. The events of the Long Turkish War (the repeated resignation and return of the Transylvanian Prince Sigismund Báthory, the rule of Michael the Brave voivode of Wallachia in Transylvania, and the punitive campaigns of Giorgio Basta) had left Transylvanian society with an almost insoluble contradiction. In February 1602, Sigismund Báthory stated in a memorandum to general Giorgio Basta that Transylvania would be doomed to destruction either by the large number of soldiers stationed there or by the campaigns of the Ottoman Empire, which was seeking to regain control of the territory.¹³ It was at this time that Mózes Székely (later Prince of Transylvania), freed from captivity, came to the conclusion that the Principality could only be revived under Ottoman rule, a view supported by several prominent Transylvanian

9 Kenyeres et al., “A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság,” 1074–75. For further literature in English on the structure and administrative system of the Habsburg Monarchy of the period (in addition to the monograph by Thomas Winkelbauer, and Elliott’s study), see footnote 118 on page 1075 of the cited article.

10 Kenyeres et al., “A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság,” 1074–75.

11 The relationship of the Chamber of Transylvania with the Transylvanian Council of Government is not yet fully clarified. It is probable that there was a certain dependency relationship, since the three government councillors were also chamber councillors and chamber presidents. Mátyás-Rausch, “Az erdélyi pénzügyigazgatás,” 1106–19; cp. Arens, *Habsburg und Siebenbürgen*, 195–97.

12 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 77–83.

13 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. I, 654–58.

noblemen.¹⁴ The name of Mózes Székely and his short reign in Transylvania should be highlighted because his action marked a radical change in the Habsburg court's relationship with Transylvania. Although the Hungarian king and several prominent members of his court had already 'doubted' the loyalty of the Transylvanian people in earlier years,¹⁵ the Habsburg court was scrupulous in obtaining the consent of the Transylvanian estates for major changes in government (such as the appointment of Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg as governor of Transylvania).¹⁶ This tendency was interrupted after Mózes Székely's action and his subsequent rise to power. From that point, the royal court regarded Transylvanian nobles as notorious rebels and treated them as such.¹⁷ Gerald Volkmer, in his magnum opus on the Transylvanian state, argued that the Transylvanian people, by increasingly taking up the banner of Mózes Székely, were in breach of the 'contract' (*Vertrag*) with the Hungarian monarch, and that this entailed the suspension of the historical Transylvanian constitution (i.e., the established Transylvanian political and power structure and the rights of the estates).¹⁸

This resulted in the introduction of a state administration through *dicasterium*, which was alien to the development of the Transylvanian state.¹⁹ Why was state administration through the *dicasterium* alien to the development of the Transylvanian state? According to Trócsányi, the administrative development of the independent Transylvanian state was determined primarily by the presence of an external threat.²⁰ Under these conditions, it is understandable that considerable power was concentrated in the hands of the princes. The only central governmental organ of Transylvanian state administration was the princely chancellery. During the princely period, there was no administrative body in Transylvania similar to the *dicasterium* in the provinces of the Habsburg Empire, and the central administration of finance was ultimately under the control of the prince, although there was an 'office' at the princely court dealing with day-to-day finance. It was only in the eighteenth century

14 Oborni, *Erdély fejedelmei*, 108.

15 In his memorandum of 1599, György Zrínyi discussed how Transylvanian towns involved in rebellion should be fined. *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor III*. 380–81.

16 Kruppa, "Miksa főherceg," 822–23.

17 Volkmer, *Siebenbürgen*, 249.

18 Mezey and Gosztonyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet*, 50, 53. The legal dilemmas involved in territorial unification were already a preoccupation of contemporary thinkers. The Spanish jurist Pereira in the mid-seventeenth century believed that territorial unification was generally associated with the preservation of rights and privileges, and that the only deviation from this norm was when rebellion or rebellion was to be punished. Sashalmi, *A nyugat-európai államfejlődés vázolata*, 115.

19 Mezey and Gosztonyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet*, 184–85.

20 Trócsányi, *Erdély központi kormányzata*, 415.

that modern offices were ‘established’ in Transylvania, independent of the influence of the orders, with a permanent division of labour and division of tasks.

This is certainly not to suggest that the Hungarian royal court wanted to govern Transylvania solely through *dicasterium* because of the unreliability of the Transylvanian people, but merely to point out that, after the overthrow of Mózes Székely, the Habsburg administration no longer sought to introduce governmental changes in the newly conquered province by broad consensus.

The establishment of the bureaucratic state apparatus, which played a key role in the retention of the newly conquered province,²¹ was not only delayed for years by historical events, but also by the ‘complex statehood’ of the Habsburg Monarchy. The development, characteristics and evolution of the *zusammengesetzter Staat* or *composite monarchy/state* have long been a subject of interest to scholars, with Königsberger and J. H. Elliott’s works about the topic being the leading literature on the subject,²² while the most recent and most detailed characterization of the Habsburg monarchy in Central Europe has been provided by Thomas Winkelbauer.²³ Winkelbauer’s argument could be summarized as follows: the Habsburg monarchy in Central Europe in the early modern period was a dynastic complex of estates.²⁴ The most important link between the countries that made up the confederation was the monarch himself, who had different powers in each country/province and was forced to govern in different ways.²⁵ In Elliott’s view, the main structural problem of the composite states in the early modern period was that the ruler maintained his centre far from certain provinces he held, and the distance from the centre required special governance arrangements, as we can see in the case of Transylvania.²⁶ The situation of Transylvania, while it was briefly a Habsburg province in the early seventeenth century, was special not only because it was very far from the royal seat, but also because it was annexed by the Hungarian ruler at extraordinary times.

21 In the literature on the history of public administration, it has long been accepted that without a bureaucratic state apparatus, it was impossible to finance a powerful army capable of conquering new territories for the ruler. Moreover, state building (Ger. *Herrschaftsverdichtung*) in newly conquered territories was not successful without a bureaucracy. Fazekas, “A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai,” 16–7.

22 Königsberger, “Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum,” 127; Elliott, “Europe of Composite Monarchies,” 48–71.

23 Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht*, vol. I, 25. In German, the definition is: “eine monarchise Union monarchischer Unionen von Ständessaaten und ein aus zusammengesetzten Staaten zusammengesetzter Staat.”

24 Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht*, vol. I, 25; Kenyeres et al., “A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság,” 1068.

25 Fazekas, “A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai,” 14–5.

26 Elliott, “Europe of Composite Monarchies,” 56–7.

The thesis that stability in a newly conquered province by military force alone was not the most cost-effective solution was well known at the time;²⁷ long-term integration was achieved through central government offices.²⁸ In the case of Transylvania, however, the conditions of war, the widespread discontent in the province, and the subsequent reprisals following the rebellion led to the predominance of brute military force, and compromise solutions and administrative reforms in stages (which were, in fact, the main features of the administrative reforms of Habsburg rulers) were pushed into the background.²⁹

The establishment and composition of the *Regiment*, which was set up in January 1604, was a topic of discussion for at least a year in the most important government bodies of the Habsburg Empire (including the Privy Council/*Geheimrat* and the Aulic Chamber/*Hofkammer*), but the Transylvanian estates were certainly not involved in this preparatory process. According to the central concept, the ruler would subsequently maintain contact with Transylvania through the newly established government body. In this way, the three Transylvanian estates (Lat. *natio*, Hung. *nemzet*) and the diet (Lat. *diaeta*, Hung. *országgyűlés*) would not have been the primary link between the country and its ruler.³⁰

The idea that the independent legislative activity of the Transylvanian Diet should be radically reduced to the adoption of decisions by the Council of Government was conceived in the minds of the Hungarian king's advisers in early 1603. At the diet held in January 1603, the Transylvanian estates submitted a package of twenty-five points to the King's commissioners (Hans von Molart and Nicolas von Burghauß) and asked the commissioners to respond to them.³¹ These were then to be enacted into law, i.e., into articles of law. In their report to the Emperor, the two Commissioners wrote that they had not given a substantive answer to these claims (Lat. *postulatum*). They

27 Elliott, "Europe of Composite Monarchies," 55. According to the latest research, the Long Turkish War cost at least 6 million Rhenish forints to finance at the imperial level, and the cost of the field troops hired for half a year was about 2.3 million Rhenish forints. Kenyeres et al., "A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság," 1053–54.

28 Elliott, "Europe of Composite Monarchies," 55.

29 Ferdinand I consolidated his rule in Bohemia in a three-stage process. The first step was the establishment of a new state apparatus independent of the estates, the second was the introduction of bureaucratic methods into traditional Czech institutions, and the third was the development of loyalty to the monarch and the increasing influence of the *Privy Council/Geheimrat*. The Emperor placed great emphasis on winning over the leaders of the estates, who themselves further consolidated Habsburg rule on Bohemian field. Pánek, "Das politische System des böhmischen Staates," 75–6.

30 Cp. Pánek, "Das politische System des böhmischen Staates," 71–5.

31 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 297–98.

justified their decision on the grounds that they could not participate in the legislature, and the laws had to be sanctioned by the Emperor. This was a perfectly valid argument, but there was other reasoning behind the Commissioners' argument. They wrote about this in detail in their report. In their view, the estates wanted to use the Diet to weaken the power of the monarch in Transylvania and to impose conditions on his rule, which would inevitably lead to the Hungarian king being unable to consolidate his rule in the province he had acquired with much difficulty and sacrifice. In their report, they therefore proposed that the monarch should govern Transylvania 'per decreta et placeta', i.e., by decree, until a governor or lieutenant (lat. *locumtenens*, Ger. *Gubernator oder Locumtenentem verordnet*) was appointed to head the province.³² The future leader should then govern the province with the 'große Rat', i.e., the governing council, still by decree.³³ The Diet would not have the right to legislate independently, but would only be presented with the decisions of the Council of Government for adoption, not discussion.³⁴

The instructions for the Transylvanian Council of Government (*Regiment*, Lat. *Excelsi Regiminis provinciae Transilvaniae Consilarii*), set up without the participation of the Transylvanian estates, were issued on 12 January 1604.³⁵ It is clear that the Habsburg government intended to administer Transylvania as an autonomous province.³⁶ The administrative reforms were modelled on the administrative system of the Austrian hereditary provinces (most notably the *niederösterreichische Regiment*).³⁷ The *Geheimrat* (Privy Council), which met at the seat of the monarch, was the main decision-making body. Below the Privy Council in the organizational hierarchy was the Transylvanian Council of Government (Ger. *Mittelbehörde*) as a mid-level administrative body, headed by the governor, similar to the Government Council of Lower Austria (*niederösterreichische Regiment*). The difference between the two institutions was that the latter was not headed by a governor but by a lieutenant (Ger. *Statthalter*).³⁸ The *Regiment* consisted of twelve councillors, some of noble, and some of common origin. The most important functions of the Council, apart from political administration, were the administration of justice and military affairs.³⁹

32 Relation, 88–90.

33 Relation, 88–90.

34 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 297–98.

35 Several copies of the instructions have survived. Endre Veress published a copy of the text of the instruction for the Government Council, which is preserved in the archives of the Saxon University (*Universitas Saxonum/Szász Universitas*). Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 359–67.

36 EOE V. 221.

37 Fazekas, "A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai," 13–4.

38 Rosenthal, *Die Behördeorganisation Kaiser Ferdinands*, vol. I, 162.

39 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 359–67.

According to Eduard Rosenthal, a scholar of the administration of the Austrian hereditary provinces, the greatest administrative development in the functioning of the *Regiment* was its permanence, i.e., the *Regiment* became a permanent office (Ger. *permanens Behörde, ununterbrochene Verwaltung*).⁴⁰ Naturally, continuity was also required of the Transylvanian Council, which had to meet even when Giorgio Basta, who was governor,⁴¹ was not in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), the town designated as the seat of the Governing Council. In such cases, the senior councillor presided over the meeting.⁴²

Turning to the report of the summer of 1604 and the circumstances in which it was written, it was the product of a government body which, despite many difficulties, proved to be able to function. The report on Transylvanian affairs was signed by five members of the Council: Paul von Krauseneck, Carl Imhoff, Count Tommaso Capreolo (as deputy to Giorgio Basta), Benedek Mindszenti, and Gábor Haller. Two annexes are attached to the report. One was a decree of the King of Hungary to the Transylvanian Government Council, and the other was an order to the General of Upper Hungary (Hung. *felső-magyarországi főkapitány*), Giovanni Giacomo Barbiano di Belgioioso.⁴³

If we compare the report written by the members of the Transylvanian *Regiment* with the attached imperial decree, we can find several ‘nodes’ that were particularly characteristic of the situation of the Transylvanian administration at the time. The most expressive statement is perhaps the following quote, which appears in the introduction to the report: “alle tag so ungläubige beschwerden einkomben.”⁴⁴ In other words, councillors were under enormous pressure every single day. In the imperial decree, the response to this statement was that the king of Hungary acknowledged the efforts of his councillors to regularize the legal and financial situation of Transylvania, thus advancing the cause of the pacification and successful integration of the province.⁴⁵ The councillors placed particular emphasis on the efficient management of finances, since the key to the preservation of the province was the availability of sufficient funds to pay for military expenses.⁴⁶

40 Rosenthal, *Die Behördeorganisation Kaiser Ferdinands*, vol. I, 162.

41 Mátyás-Rausch, “Giorgio Basta kormányzói tevékenysége,” 183–98, (forthcoming).

42 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 359–67.

43 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

44 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

45 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

46 As early as December 1602, Giorgio Basta advised Rudolf I that if he did not want to lose control of Transylvania, he would have to spend a lot of money on maintaining and improving the army, without which the renegade Transylvanian estates could not be kept in check. Volkmer, *Siebenbürgen*, 249.

Although Giorgio Basta, after his victory over Mózes Székely, ruled Transylvania with a firm hand, in several places in his instruction the Hungarian king emphasized the importance of agreement and cooperation.⁴⁷ He instructed his councillors to convene the Transylvanian Diet, albeit for the sole purpose of voting the tax necessary to supply the army, and for generally contributing to its maintenance. As far as provincial liberties and privileges were concerned, the text continues, the decisions taken at the Diet at Déva (Deva) in the autumn of 1603 continued to prevail.⁴⁸ The Diet mentioned in the imperial decree was the most important meeting of the Basta period, as it was the first time that members of the Transylvanian Diet had met after the overthrow of Mózes Székely.⁴⁹ At this assembly, resolutions were passed, severely restricting former liberties, especially the privileges of the larger Transylvanian cities, and the estates were forced to adopt decisions that regulated the whole of the Transylvanian nobility.⁵⁰ The fact that the ruler insisted on the decrees of Déva sheds a different light on the desire for cooperation. Most of all because it was the decisions taken at Déva that deprived the Transylvanian estates of the possibility of cooperation. Thus, the convened Diet was merely a means of ‘raising’ the considerable amount of money needed to maintain the army stationed in Transylvania.

The central problem, as the report of the Council of Government shows, was therefore to overcome the financial difficulties. About two-thirds of the financial section of the report was devoted to the almost impossible challenges facing the Council in supplying the mercenary troops stationed in Transylvania. They advised the Emperor that Transylvania should have its own paymaster (Ger. *Zahlmeister*) and that the Upper Hungarian paymaster (Hung. *felső-magyarországi fizetőmester*) should not be responsible for financing Transylvanian forces.⁵¹ In fact, the Council of Government had already ‘knocked on an open door’ with this request, since Georg Reichel/Reichl, who was already the court paymaster (Ger. *Hofzahlmeister*), had been entrusted with the task of settling Transylvanian military expenses in the autumn of 1603. Rudolf I had also stipulated to his commissioners in Transylvania that Reichel was to be in constant and close correspondence with the Paymaster

47 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

48 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

49 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 297–98.

50 Several copies of these decisions have survived. For example: MNL OL P 677 Box 1, fol. 29. I would like to thank my colleague Balázs Viktor Rácz for the data.

51 In Upper Hungary, a military paymaster’s office operated independently from the second half of the sixteenth century, which directly financed the military expenditures of the region. The majority of its revenues came from the Hungarian paymaster, while part of it was financed from the revenues of Upper Hungary. Kenyeres et al., “A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság,” 1050–52.

of Upper Hungary, Joseph Ganz.⁵² The independent position of military paymaster of Transylvania was probably established in the spring of 1604 and was directly dependent on the office of court paymaster. The post continued to be held by Georg Reichel, who was also cashier of the Transylvanian Chamber (Lat. *perceptor rationum*).⁵³ The supply of mercenary troops was further complicated, the text continues, by the death of Stanislaw Krakker, the master of catering (Ger. *Obrister Proviantmeister*).⁵⁴ Paul von Krauseneck, who, incidentally, had written parts of the report in the first person singular, was forced to take over his duties because, unfortunately, no suitable replacement could be found.⁵⁵

The members of the Council calculated that it would cost about 30,000 *talers* to maintain the army here, and that the taxes and revenues from the province would not be sufficient.⁵⁶ Their statement was not supported by precise figures, and there are no records from those years to which the Council members' statements can be compared. Only for the last years that could be called quiet (1598–1599) do we have a record of the princely treasury's income amounting to 219,000 forints and its expenditure to about 247,000 forints.⁵⁷ Reading through the list, it is evident that even at the end of the sixteenth century, the largest item of expenditure was the maintenance of the castles and the provisioning of the soldiers serving there. And by the beginning of the seventeenth century, in addition to the troops stationed in the castles, other royal troops had to be supplied for a country in serious difficulties. Reading the report of the Council of Government further, it transpires that the problem was not only that the province had little revenue of its own, but also that there was a shortage of high-quality minted coins, especially *taler*. This was not a new phenomenon, as the Transylvanian princes had already been struggling with this problem at the end of the sixteenth century, despite the fact that, among other things, a large quantity of *taler* coins had been issued in Nagybánya (Baia Mare) during this period.⁵⁸ To remedy the shortage of quality *taler* coins, Rudolf I advised members of the Council to mint as many coins with a high ore content as possible, but this was not easy, as the report shows. The main reason, as Gábor Haller

52 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 311.

53 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 401–2. Mátyás-Rausch, "Az erdélyi pénzügyigazgatás," 1104, 1126.

54 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18. At the end of March 1604, Nicolas von Burghauß informed the town council of Beszterce that Stanislaw Krakker had died. He asked the members of council to check what the master of catering had left behind in Beszterce. MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 40.

55 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

56 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

57 Oborni, "Erdélyi kincstári bevételei," 345.

58 Buza, *Magyarországi és erdélyi pénzürtékek*, 68–9.

and his ‘colleagues’ argued, was that the mining sector, which was responsible for the extraction of precious ore, was also struggling, and in wartime there was little chance of putting this sector of the economy in order.⁵⁹

In the report, the councillors repeatedly refer to the violence committed by the military and express the view that the key to peace and tranquillity in the province is the punctual payment of army.⁶⁰ The report sent to the Emperor, as well as the correspondence of the Transylvanian Saxon towns of the time, reveals the enormous financial and economic pressure that the Habsburg rule caused to Transylvanian society. I emphasize the Transylvanian Saxon towns for a reason: it was largely these ‘well-developed’ settlements that financed the Hungarian king’s rule in Transylvania. The letters and decrees of the Governing Council, which it addressed in the spring of 1604 to the towns of Szeben (Sibiu) and Beszterce, among others, almost invariably contain instructions on the sums of money that the towns were to provide ‘in support’ of the Transylvanian army. They usually argued in their letters addressed to the towns that only the sums paid by the *Universitas Saxonum* would allow the mercenary troops to be moved into the Transylvanian castles as soon as possible, and thus the surrounding areas and estates of the towns could be freed from the soldiers who were consuming everything. In these letters, the accommodation of the Flemish and Walloon cavalry in the castles was directly named as the most important public good, which the city governments should promote with all their might.⁶¹ In addition, they were also to provide for the Council of Government. It was not by chance that the government of Kolozsvár requested that the Saxon towns should not be the only ones to provide for the Council of Government and the Transylvanian Chamber, but that the other cities should also do their share.⁶²

Despite the most advanced Transylvanian towns’ considerable sacrifices made to consolidate Habsburg rule in Transylvania, the ‘behavior’ of the central government towards them was somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, in the decrees of the Governing Council, the leaders of the towns were repeatedly threatened, implicitly or explicitly, if they did not cooperate with the Council and fail to pay the requested amount within a short period of time. The threat was that the unpaid mercenaries, including the Flemish and Walloon cavalry, would be ‘forced’ by the government to be billeted in the towns or on their estates and villages.⁶³ The letters also show that

59 Despite the difficulties encountered, the financial government sent out several commissions to survey the Transylvanian mining industry, and several attempts were made to introduce innovations in the Transylvanian precious metal mining. Mátyás-Rausch, *Ércbányászat a Báthoryak korában*, 242–47.

60 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

61 SJAN Sibiu ColMed (Urkunden) Urkunden Materia V. Nr. 15, 47.

62 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

63 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 124.

Saxon towns were generally 'asked' to pay between 2,000 and 8,000 forints, but there is also a letter addressed to the town of Beszterce asking Saxon towns to produce the next six months' pay.⁶⁴ However, the central government also sought to protect the towns' inhabitants, especially the merchants, from looting by soldiers. Carl Imhoff and Paul von Krauseneck wrote in a letter to the city of Beszterce on 1 August 1604 that they had appointed Mathias Alexander to protect merchants passing through Transylvania and their goods from the plundering of soldiers.⁶⁵ They justified their decision on the grounds that the merchants and their economic activities were of great benefit to Transylvania, and the town council of Beszterce was obliged to help the commissioner and comply with his requests.

It is seen from the above that the Transylvanian *Regiment* relied primarily on the economic strength and other resources of the Saxon towns, considered one of their primary partners in maintaining the stability of the province. However, this trust proved to be a double-edged weapon. In the spring of 1604, the members of the Council of Government had to deal with new problems. It became increasingly difficult to feed and supply the army. Public safety also deteriorated, and a wave of violence swept across Transylvania. In search of a solution, the Council convened the cities of the *Universitas Saxonum* for a special meeting. The meeting was to take place before the convocation of the Diet, and its main purpose was to discuss the administrative, legal, and financial issues that most affected the municipal jurisdictions. Invitations were sent by Georg Hoffman and Paul von Krauseneck to Szeben, Segesvár (Sighişoara), Medgyes (Mediaş), Szászsebes (Sebes), Beszterce, and Brassó (Braşov).⁶⁶ On the basis of Mihály Weiss's diary, Sándor Szilágyi believes that Georg Hofmann invited the three Transylvanian estates to the meeting in Nagybánya on behalf of the Government Council (*Regnicolas in Nagy-Bánya ad 5 diem jun. convocarunt*).⁶⁷ However, from the invitations sent out, as well as from other sources dealing with the meeting in Nagybánya, it seems that only the ambassadors of the Saxon towns (the town judges and one council member each) were invited to the meeting. According to the text of the German-language invitation, this meeting was necessary in order to curb the military's depredations and violence and thus to bring peace and tranquillity to Transylvania.⁶⁸ The resolutions of the meeting in Nagybánya have not survived, and it is likely that it could not be held on the date announced. This assumption is confirmed by the report of the Council of Government, according to which the delegates travelling to the meeting in Nagybánya would have had to cross

64 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 101, 104.

65 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 108.

66 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 275.

67 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 73.

68 SJAN Sibiu ColMed (Urkunden) Materia V. Nr. 41.

very dangerous territory.⁶⁹ Following the failure of the meeting, no further talks were announced, at least not in the correspondence received by the municipalities. Subsequently, the Transylvanian *Regiment* sent to the Saxon towns a succession of instructions, which could be interpreted as a demand for payment. Their wording reflects that there was no room for objection and that the *Universitas Saxonum* had to continue to make further financial sacrifices ‘in the interests of the homeland’ (*solche Handlung dem Vatterlandt*).⁷⁰

In their report written in the summer of 1604, members of the Transylvanian *Regiment* not only reported to the Emperor on the financial implications of supplying the Walloon and Flemish cavalry stationed in Transylvania, but also on how they were trying to alleviate the acute shortage of grain and other foodstuffs. They had to rely mainly on the municipal authorities to remedy the latter. According to the report of the Council of Government and the letters to the Saxon towns, the castles in royal ownership formed a well-organized network, with the towns nearest to them being responsible for their supply.⁷¹ Beszterce had to take care of two castles, Kővár and Szamosújvár (Gherla).⁷² However, members of the Council of Government encountered new ‘obstacles’ in supplying the castles and the mercenary corps. In their report, they complain that the privileges previously granted to the Saxon towns, which had previously been confirmed by Giorgio Basta, made it very difficult to feed the troops. Carl Imhoff, in a letter dated 13 May 1604, describes in detail to the governance of Beszterce the difficulties of feeding the soldiers of Szamosújvár. According to the letter, the main problem was the inability to transport grain from the castle of Kővár to Szamosújvár. Imhoff therefore asks the town council of Beszterce to help the court judge of Szamosújvár (Johann Rattinger)⁷³ with the transport of grain by providing at least ten or twenty wagons. The letter also points out that the councillors were aware of the privileges enjoyed by the town, but that in view of the war situation they should be disregarded for the time being.⁷⁴ Particular attention is given to the privilege whereby the town of Beszterce was not obliged to give and deliver food to the army, nor to take their horses by force, unless ordered to do so by Giorgio Basta himself.⁷⁵ The increasing difficulties in supplying the army are also evidenced by the

69 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

70 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 275.

71 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

72 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 68.

73 Jakob Rattinger, a relative of the court judge of Szamosújvár, succeeded Stanislaw Krakker as *Proviantmeister in Siebenbürgen*. ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 94. Konv. 1607. Dec., fol. 487–9.

74 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 68. In March 1604, the town of Brassó petitioned Giorgio Basta to respect their privileges and to forbid the *magister annonae* (Stanislaw Krakker) to unlawfully demand food from Brassó. Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 414.

75 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 291.

fact that Basta, in his previous letters of command, had always promised Beszterce something in return for feeding the army serving in Transylvania. In such cases, the governance of the town was usually given the opportunity to deduct from its annual compulsory tax an amount to the value of the food distributed.⁷⁶

In summary of the main message of the report compiled by the Council of Government, we should go back to the passage quoted at the beginning of the paper showing that the Council of Government was faced with unimaginable difficulties every day. The most pressing problem was to pacify and retain the province. Once Mózes Székely, who enjoyed the majority of Transylvanian society's support, had been deposed, the Habsburg government's primary objective was to prevent the re-emergence of anti-Habsburg voices. This task in itself posed a serious challenge to the Transylvanian *Regiment*, which had to accept the rule of the Hungarian king in an increasingly impoverished country and, at the same time, to establish a new administrative system. Members of the Council could not whole-heartedly concentrate on the latter task, as their most important job was to supply the troops stationed in Transylvania and to ease the social tensions associated with the military presence. Thus, they could not deal with such important tasks as the revision of the privileges of Székelys, the privileges and donations after the first abdication of Sigismund Báthory (1598).⁷⁷

Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, after the Habsburg takeover in 1602, Transylvania was to be integrated into a composite monarchy of Habsburgs. According to T. H. Elliott's definition, an early modern composite state/monarchy is in fact a *mutual agreement* between the ruler and the ruling elite of the provinces/countries under his rule.⁷⁸ In the case of Transylvania, the Hungarian ruler also tried to reach at least some kind of agreement with the political elite of the province, although Mózes Székely's rise to power and his rule in Transylvania (15 April – 17 July 1603) made the royal court extremely distrustful. One element of this was the inclusion of several prominent politicians from Transylvanian noble families (Gábor Haller, Pongrác Sennyei) and influential Saxon citizens (Albert Huet, Johann Renner) in the Council of Government that governed the civil administration of Transylvania. However, the above report also shows that this 'reconciliation' had its limits. The most important decisions were taken by those whose loyalty to the king

76 The *magister annonae* issued a certificate of the quantity and value of the food delivered. Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 56, 358, 393, 424.

77 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–318; EOE V. 77–83.

78 Elliott, "Europe of composite monarchies," 55.

was beyond doubt (such as Vice-Chancellor Ferenc Daróczy).⁷⁹ The financial affairs, which played a key role in the retention of the province, were entrusted to Paul von Krauseneck, Carl Imhoff, and Nicolas von Burghauß, who were delegated by the Emperor to Transylvania to head the Transylvanian Chamber, which was set up at the same time as the Council of Government.

Going back to the quotation from Zsolt Trócsányi cited at the beginning of the paper that the Habsburg governmental bodies in Transylvania were short-lived, we should briefly summarize the fate of the Transylvanian Council of Government. The Bocskai uprising, which had broken out in Upper Hungary in the wake of general discontent (religious, etc.), naturally reached Transylvania. Transylvanian society rapidly joined Zsigmond Báthory's uncle, so that by the summer of 1605, it was no longer the Transylvanian *Regiment* but Bocskai who ruled Transylvania. The councillors retreated to the city of Szeben and after Bocskai was elected Prince of Transylvania, they returned to the Habsburg Empire.⁸⁰

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