

Critical survey

of letters of donation, confirmation and that of agreement issued by the Ottoman sultans for the rulers of Hungary and Transylvania

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While writing the dissertation one of my aims was to clarify the relationship between the Hungarian Kingdom as it came under Ottoman control after the battle of Mohács and the Transylvanian Principality when it separated from Hungary. The letters of agreement (*'ahd-nâme*) written at the Sultan's chancellery constitute important sources for the study of this problem. The value of these sources has long been known in Hungarian historiography; some of them appeared in contemporary Hungarian translations in Hungarian source publications of the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the gathering of these documents and the critical edition of text-variants had not been made yet, I undertook this task. First I intended to publish all the letters of agreement from the early Ottoman-Hungarian diplomatic contacts till the middle of the eighteenth century. While working on them I had partly to restrict and partly enlarge the subject. The latter became necessary, because I realized that it is not enough to deal with the letters of agreement, because the confirmation of a new Transylvanian ruler was a process of several phases. To understand this procedure I had to treat all the relating documents. Therefore the number of documents increased, so I limited the period examined between 1526 and 1606. In the future I would like to go on with this work and to publish the letters of agreement of the later centuries.

1) The dissertation consists of seven chapters and the text of the documents. The first chapter deals with the problem of why there is not a unified Transylvanian princely archive, which should contain the letters sent from the Porte. Lacking this I surveyed the extant documents in European or Turkish archives or libraries relating to Transylvania (1.1.) Since there is no such specific file in Istanbul, which would solely relate to Transylvanian diplomatic affairs, I examined the central authorities' customs and procedures of issuing documents (1.2.).

2) The second chapter treats the relation of the first Hungarian vassal ruler to the Porte. According to an accepted theory Sultan Süleyman confirmed John Szapolyai with a letter of agreement, when the latter entered into relations with

the Porte at the beginning of 1528 by his envoy, Hieronym Łaski. The Latin text of this document can be read in almost every related historical work, only the outstanding orientalist, Joseph Hammer-Purgstall doubted the authenticity of this document. Following his lead, I examined this source from the aspect of diplomatics (2.1.). I took into consideration the data of narrative sources and special literature referring to this letter of agreement (2.2.). In my opinion the document is false, probably originating from 1530. It is interesting that later other falsified variants came into being in the seventeenth century; one document was made for John Sigismund and one for Gabriel Bethlen (2.3.).

3) The Ottoman connections of John Szapolyai's son, Sigismund John is examined in the third chapter. After the death of his father the Porte made a contract with him (1540), in which the payment of tribute was included as well. Later as a Hungarian king he shared the territory of the country not only with his Habsburg opponent, but also with his Ottoman ally. He obtained an Ottoman confirmation document (*berât-i hümayun*) for Transylvania (1541), which shows not only the development of vassalage, but reveals the Ottoman concept according to which Transylvania became part of the Ottoman Empire. The sources testify that after the "interregnum of Transylvania" (1551–1556), when Ferdinand I was forced to give Transylvania back to John Sigismund, the relation of the Ottoman Empire and the vassal Transylvania was fixed by letters of agreement (1556, 1567 (?)) as well, documents which did not survive (3.3.).

4) The next Transylvanian ruler, Stephen Báthory's rise to power is examined in the fourth chapter with the help of Ottoman sources and the reports of the embassy of the Austrian Habsburgs in Constantinople. These documents made it possible for the first time to reconstruct the process of appointment and confirmation of a Christian vassal prince by the Porte (4.1.). As a result of this research it appears that a system of four phases existed: appointment, inauguration, confirmation, and conclusion of an agreement. Every phase required a separate form of document.

a) First an embassy reported to the Porte the death of the former voivode (king) and the name of the elected new ruler. The imperial council (*divân-i hümayun*) made a decision in this matter and *chiaus* was sent with an appointing letter made in form of *hük-m-i hümayun*.

b) Then the inauguration symbols were sent with a high official, among which the most important was the *sancak-i hümayun*. The accompanying letter was a *hük-m-i hümayun* as well.

c) After the inauguration and the payment of a fee a *berât* should be secured by the Transylvanian envoys for the confirmation of the voivode (prince).

d) The letter of agreement was written after negotiations with the Porte. It was not closely related with the inauguration, but can be considered the basic document, which secured the free election of the prince and fixed the borders referring to the *defter* of Halil beg. Its form was the '*ahd-nâme-i hümayun*'.

Following the death of Sultan Selem II in December 1574, Sultan Murad III had to confirm all the letters of appointment and agreement. As a result two '*ahd-nâme*' documents came into being the following year. The first '*ahd-nâme*' states

that with every Ottoman Sultanic accession the Transylvanian tribute increased by 5,000 ducats. It was not accepted by the Transylvanian prince. The second *'ahd-nâme* differs from the first, because it mentions just a single increase of 5,000 ducats (4.2.). After Stephen Báthory had accepted the Polish throne, he left Transylvania, appointing as heir his elder brother, Christopher, who was inaugurated by the Porte as well (4.3.).

5) This system remained unmodified till the Long War (Fifteen Years' War). Chapter 5 treats the attempts of Pál Márkházi, a Transylvanian pretender, at securing the Transylvanian throne. The relating Ottoman sources and reports of the Habsburgs at Istanbul perfectly complement each other (5.1–5.4.).

6) From 1595 on, the regular Transylvanian Ottoman diplomatic connections broke down and the *mühimme defterleri* do not give account of the attempts of the inauguration of princes. It is difficult to decide, whether the *'ahd-nâme* mentioned alone in Hungarian sources took over the functions of the other documents of appointment or if it shows just the lack of sources. In consequence of this uncertainty it is not easy to form an opinion the in case of the confirmation of Andrew Báthory (1599), Sigismund Báthory (for the second time 1601) and Mózes Székely (1603) (6.1–6.2.). At the election of Stephen Bocskai an *'ahd-nâme* was sent to the estates, in which the right of free election was emphasized. Later Bocskai got the Hungarian Kingdom and the Principality of Transylvania by a *berât-i hümayun* (6.3.). The conclusion of the agreement preceded by a Sultanic hearing and long negotiations was confirmed by an *'ahd-nâme-i hümayun* for Bocskai (1605) (6.4.). Since it was not possible to locate the original document, I reconstructed its text by comparing the extant copies (6.5.).

7) In the summary I made a survey about the system of the appointment of the Transylvanian princes (7.1.) and compared it briefly with the appointments of the voivodes of the other two Christian vassal states (Moldavia and Wallachia). It seems that the system of the inauguration was similar in the Romanian states to that of Transylvania till the beginning of the seventeenth century. Later the Romanian voivodes were inaugurated with letters of order and were confirmed with *berâts* like Muslim officials. (7.2.).

The second part of the dissertation contains the critical edition of 55 documents. Where it seemed necessary, the variants of the documents were given. On the basis of these, 45 Turkish, 10 Hungarian and 4 Latin letters were treated. Besides Turkish and Latin transcriptions German translations have been added, while the Latin texts (with one exception) were transcribed. The dissertation closes with the facsimile of the documents analyzed.