

Derya Ocak

**GIFT AND PURPOSE: DIPLOMATIC GIFT EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE  
OTTOMANS AND TRANSYLVANIA DURING THE REIGN OF ISTVÁN  
BÁTHORY (1571-1576)**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

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by

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(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Budapest, 13 November 2016

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Signature

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>Methodology and sources</b> .....	6
<b>Terminology of the gift</b> .....	9
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	
<b>BETWEEN THE EMPERORS: TRANSYLVANIA DURING THE REIGN OF ISTVÁN BÁTHORY (1571-1576)</b> .....	13
<b>The vassal status and obligations of the principalities in the Danubian region</b> .....	14
<b>Transylvania’s Privileges</b> .....	19
<b>New ruler, new diplomacy: The reign of István Báthory</b> .....	21
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	
<b>GIFTS FROM THE OTTOMANS: SYMBOLIC GIFTS OF THE SULTAN</b> .....	29
<b>Gift of the sultan: ‘<i>Ahdname</i>’</b> .....	30
<b>Gift of the sultan: Insignia</b> .....	34
<b>Ceremony of gift-giving</b> .....	48
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	
<b>GIFTS FROM TRANSYLVANIA: THE GIFT OF TRIBUTE</b> .....	55
<b>Beyond the Gift: Network, mediators and cultural exchange</b> .....	69
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	78
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	81
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	94

## INTRODUCTION

“As soon as [one] enters into their territories [one] must constantly be sowing money as a kind of seed, since for money he can procure himself favour, love, and anything that he wants... Should they [the Turks] fly into a rage, a common occurrence...they allow themselves to be calmed by money...otherwise it would be impossible to have any dealings or transact any business with them.”<sup>1</sup>

The act of giving to indicate the relations on both the individual and social level or on the inter-communal level continued to exist with its social, cultural, political and economic dimensions throughout the whole Ottoman period. I argue that gift exchange and the gifts as objects were tools to transmit messages, such as authority, prestige, power, hierarchy, superiority and inferiority in relations, to other people and political entities. Since it was impossible to be present in the Ottoman court without acknowledging sultan’s authority, it was not possible to attempt any negotiations, or establish a diplomatic relationship without gifts. As Michael Talbot says, “without friendship there could be no peace; but without gifts and royal letters, there could be no friendship.”<sup>2</sup>

As a symbolic act, gift exchange established a bond of dependency between the superior and the inferior in the Turco-Mongol world and it formed a persistent custom practiced by the Ottomans. Upon their appointment, Ottoman officials paid a fixed amount of money (*resm-i berat*) and received costly presents from the sultan such as *kaftans*, horses with gilded saddles or swords.<sup>3</sup> These presents symbolized the authority of the sultan and transmitted messages that differed depending on the relationship between the receiver and the giver. Diplomatic relations, religion, culture, geographical position and distance, the level of

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526-1850* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 37.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Talbot, “A Treaty of Narratives: Friendship, Gifts, and Diplomatic History in the British Capitulations of 1641,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 48 (2016): 360, 362.

<sup>3</sup> Halil İnalçık, “Ottoman Archival Materials on Millets,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982), 447-48.



subjection between the receiver and the giver as well as the number and the selection of objects played important roles in the gift-exchange process. The Ottomans received manuscripts or the Qur'an from Muslim rulers while they received Mediterranean fruit or objects from Dubrovnik or Italy, for instance.<sup>4</sup> The sultans were honored with valuable gifts most of the time, however, they also received insulting gifts from their enemies.<sup>5</sup>

Not only with foreign states, gifts also played a significant role in regulating the relationship and strengthening the bond between the sultan and his own subjects. Sultans were at the center of the gift-giving, and his officials—from highest rank to the lowest—were involved in this process. One of the most significant occasions for this process was the accession to the throne. When a sultan acceded to the throne one of the first things he had to do was to give *cülus bahşişi* (an accession bonus) to the military officials.<sup>6</sup> This “promised gift” played a central role in preventing any commotion among the *janissaries*, the soldiers of the sultan who came to hold powerful position in the late sixteenth century. After the death of Süleyman in 1566, his son Selim was immediately called to Belgrade by Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha for the accession.<sup>7</sup> When the new sultan finally arrived in Belgrade, the Janissaries were not satisfied by the *bahşiş* that was offered. Even after arriving in

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<sup>4</sup> In his letters, Busbecq mentions gifts from Safavids to Sultan Süleyman's court: harnesses, carpets, colored tent curtains, bejeweled swords, and among them a spectacular Qur'an which overshadows all the others: Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *Türk Mektupları: Kanuni Döneminde Avrupalı Bir Elçinin Gözlemleri (1555-1560)* [Turkish letters: Observations of a European ambassador in the reign of Kanuni], trans. Derin Türkömer (Istanbul: İS Bankası Yayınları, 2013), 67-68. For the English publication see: *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq: Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554-1562*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 62.

<sup>5</sup> One of these insulting gifts, a golden casket stamped with the royal seal, was sent to Selim I by Safavid Shah Ismail with an insulting letter. Selim's anger over this gift resulted in the execution of the messenger: Sinem Arcaç, “Gift in Motion: Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Exchange, 1501-1618” (Ph.D. diss, University of Minnesota, 2012), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, *Cülus ve Cenaze Törenleri [Cülus and funeral ceremonies]* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1999), 139; and İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilatı* [Palace organization in the Ottoman state], (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1945), 184. See also Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, “Enthronement Ceremonies,” in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 208-9.

<sup>7</sup> Selim's accession first took place in the Topkapı Palace but Sokollu Mehmed Pasha urged him to ascend to the throne in Belgrade, where his father's household and army were waiting: Metin Kunt, “Sultan, Dynasty, and State in the Ottoman Empire,” *Medieval History Journal* 6, no. 2 (2003): 223; Halil Evren Sünnetçioğlu, “Audi Alteram Partem (Hear the Other Side Too): The Meaning of the Battle of Lepanto (1571) among Late Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Historians” (MA Thesis., Central European University, 2013), 10-17.

Istanbul, they did not allow the sultan to enter the palace until he paid the amount that they required.<sup>8</sup> Selim II's accession to the throne demonstrates the disturbances that could occur if this obligatory gift did not meet the janissaries' requirements. Understanding the phenomenon of giving and the feature of reciprocity can be complicated in this event. A sultan's gift to his soldiers was neither voluntary nor just a favor. It was compulsory for the sultans and unless they complied, they could not legitimate their sovereignty.

As a significant aspect of gift-giving in the Ottoman context, I would also like to mention a "giving-refusing-accepting" concept that occurred in the relationship between the Ottoman sultan and his soldiers, the janissaries. Various form of the gifts were seen in the Ottoman context of gift-giving: objects, money, drinks and food, and even persons.<sup>9</sup> One can clearly see the role of the food, in particular soup (*çorba*) as a gift and its function in regulation of the relationship between the authority and the subject. Imperial soup and cauldron (*kazan*) played a central role in the daily life of janissaries and their relationship with the sultan. The cauldron was sacred for the janissary hearth and the symbol of the loyalty of janissaries to the sultan.<sup>10</sup> If janissaries were dissatisfied with something, they showed their discontent by refusing the soup. For instance, in 1591 when their colleagues had problem with the local people in Erzurum, janissaries had conflict with the Grand Vizier Ferhad Pasha and rejected to eat from the soup that was offered in the hearth. This action of the soldiers resulted in grand vizier's dismissal.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it was a habit for janissaries to overturn the cauldrons, filled with soup, to announce their rebellion against the sultan's authority.

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<sup>8</sup> Sefik Peksevgen, "Selim II," *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 513; Mecteba Ilgürel, "Yeniceri," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam], 389-91.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, in her PhD thesis, Sinem Arcak treats a Safavid Prince hostage as an exchangeable object: Arcak, "Gift in Motion," 137.

<sup>10</sup> *Kazan- Şerif* (Holy Cauldron): according to janissaries' belief the cauldron was sacred and it was presented by Hacı Bektaş, the leader of Bektaşî dervish order, to the *ocak* (hearth). In Amy Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem* (New York: University of New York, 2002), 140.

<sup>11</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilatında Kapıkulu Ocakları*, vol. 1 [*Kapıkulu* hearths in the Ottoman organization] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 322.

Considering the soup as sultan's gift to the janissaries and connecting it to janissaries' refusal or accepting in the context of gift-giving helps us understand the relationship behind this behavior. In this behavior, the soup-gift of the sultan was the key for the soldiers to communicate with the sultan indirectly. Accepting this soup and eating from it meant to accept the obligations towards the sultan and accept his authority. On the contrary, to refuse the soup meant to reject his authority and break the bonds with the sultan. This was a symbolic and ceremonial way of communication between the sultan and the janissaries. The gift of soup played a role as a communication tool. To refuse it was the way to express dissatisfaction and revolt, on the other hand to accept it expressed satisfaction and abidance.

During his reign, a sultan had to establish new relationships and networks with his dignitaries and subjects. Festivals, weddings and ceremonies were ideal occasions to build up new ties and reinforce the old ones. Gifts were among the best accessories to help establish and solidify these ties through festivals. It is important to point out that the reason for organizing these festivals was usually a circumcision or an imperial wedding. However, the real reasons behind them were mostly political or social struggles that affected the authority of the sultan. Through these festivals, a sultan had a chance to reconfirm his legitimacy and authority. Gifts exchanged between the sultan and his subjects during festivals were the accessories that made power relations and hierarchies visible. Moreover, while the sultan built up his authority and demonstrated generosity by distributing gifts to his subjects, he normally received more than he gave, which could also meet the costs of the extravagant festivals.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For instance, in 1582, a significant festival was held in Istanbul for the circumcision of Sultan Murad III's son Şehzade Mehmed (Mehmed III). In his account, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî gives the list of gifts sent to the Porte upon the invitation of the sultan. Among them, Wallachia sent silver pitchers, cups, salvers and fabrics, while Moldavia sent more or less the same, as well as six falcons. In addition to the gifts from other countries, valuable gifts presented by the guilds during the festival might also have had significant role in covering the costs. These gifts mostly consisted of the products of guilds' handicraft: Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Câmi'ü'l-Buhûr Der Mecâlis-i Sûr* [The gathering of the seas on the scenes of the celebration], ed. Ali Öztekin (Ankara: TTK, 1996), 23-49. Ann Lambton also mentions that during the circumcision of the son of Shah Ja'far Khan Zand, the entire trading community in Shiraz was forced to contribute with *peşkeş* to meet the costs of the

Another layer of gift-giving can be found in an exceptional way of obtaining territories as gifts in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman sultans were able to annex new territories without the use of force. This way of territory acquisition became common practice at the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Although there were some exceptions, Ottoman sultans abandoned the tradition of getting married after the beginning of fifteenth century. This prevented such gifts as a way of obtaining new territories into the empire.

It was not only the sultan who established his networks and relations through gifts. Ottoman dignitaries were active participants in this gift-giving chain. Sokollu Mustafa Pasha, the grand vizier of three Ottoman sultans from Süleyman to Murad III (1565-1579), is known for his wealth, which he gained through gifts.<sup>14</sup> Apart from their private effort to gain fortune through gifts, it was a custom in the Ottoman court that if an ambassador or an envoy needed to reach the sultan in order to present his gifts and messages, first he had to present gifts to the dignitaries according to their hierarchical status. Without presenting these gifts to the statesmen from the highest rank to the lowest, it was impossible to appear before the sultan.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary sources provide detailed lists of the gifts which should be presented to the statesmen in the court.

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festivities: Ann Lambton, "Pishkash: Present or Tribute?," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, no. 1 (1994): 146.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, in 1381, Sultan Murad's son Bayezid and Germiyanid Bey's daughter got married and the father of the bride donated Kütahya, Simav, Eğriğöz and Tavşanlı to the sultan as bride's *cihaz* (dowry, also called *çeyiz*, clothes or valuable objects which brides bring to their husband's house for themselves or common use). The real reason why Germiyanids agreed to hand over these cities is unclear. Mustafa Akdağ states that this kind of marriage, in which women brought lands as *çeyiz* was not a tradition among the Ottomans or Turks: Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiye'nin İktisadi ve İçtimai Tarihi* [The economic and social history of Turkey], vol. 1 (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1977), 298-99; Hoca Saadeddin Efendi, *Tacü't-Tevarih* [Crown of stories], vol. 1, ed. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1979), 149.

<sup>14</sup> İbrahim Peçevî, *Târîh-i Peçevî* [Pecevi's history], vol. 1, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992), 9.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, when Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga visited Sultan Ahmed I to negotiate for capitulations, he was not aware of the fact that the viziers and *paşas* should be presented gifts as well. Grand Vizier Halil Paşa urged him to present gifts to the Ottoman dignitaries first since that was necessary to be able to present gifts to the sultan. However, Haga refused the paşa's advice stating that he was not allowed to present gifts other than those he brought from the Netherlands. At the end, Halil Paşa lent 3,000 gold pieces to Haga to enable him to follow the Ottoman court practices: Bülent Arı, "The First Dutch Ambassador in Istanbul: Cornelis Haga and the Dutch Capitulations of 1612" (Ph.D. diss., Bilkent University, 2003), 98-99.

This thesis aims to demonstrate one of the many dimensions and representations of gift-giving in Ottoman diplomacy in the context of Ottoman-Transylvanian relationship. By focusing on the relationship between the Ottomans and one of their Christian vassals, I intend to illustrate one of the distinctive features of gift-giving in the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire. I will examine the role and function of gifts in shaping the empire's diplomacy with its vassals. By doing so, I intend to find answers for the following questions: How was diplomacy shaped beyond gift-giving? What was the primary intention beyond the diplomatic exchange? What kind of objects were exchanged between Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire? What were the function and meaning of these gifts and what kind of messages were transmitted through them?

### **Methodology and sources**

Marcel Mauss approaches the phenomenon of gift-giving, beyond material values, as a tool for socialization or as a way to establish social bonds.<sup>16</sup> According to him, the meaning of gift-giving is not only in an exchange of goods, property or wealth; people establish and maintain relationships or emphasize social orders and hierarchies with these transactions. In addition, Mauss articulates the feature of reciprocity of gifts. In theory, gift exchange is voluntary, but in fact the receiver is obliged to return another gift. Modern sociologists contribute a better understanding of the social structure and relations between individuals and groups. According to Peter Blau, for instance, a person who has done a service for another expects gratitude and a service in return. Failure of reciprocity would result in the perception of ingratitude. However, to reciprocate for the given services creates a social bond between

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<sup>16</sup> Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Cohen&West, 1954), 2-3. See also E. E. Evans-Pritchard's introduction in the same book: E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Introduction," in Mauss, *The Gift*, v-x.

the two.<sup>17</sup> To reciprocate is expected and failure to meet this expectation breaks the bonds that had been already established and risk further opportunities.

To focus on establishing relationship and the hierarchy, as well as the level of reciprocity between the two parties will enable me to understand better the function of the gifts in Ottoman diplomacy. In order to gain a deeper insight into the relationships and networks established beyond gift-giving, my thesis will benefit from a new approach that has risen within the history of diplomacy: *new diplomatic history*.<sup>18</sup> This new methodological approach attempts to rediscover diplomacy by focusing on various individuals or groups involved in diplomacy in addition to the ambassador, and identifying the particular actors, their networks, and their agendas in the gift-giving process. Luckily, my sources provide precious information, albeit not too abundant, about the role of various intermediaries in the diplomacy and gift-giving process between the Ottomans and Transylvanian rulers.

In order to understand the nature of this relationship between the Ottomans and Transylvania, both in the context of bilateral relations and of the broader international situation, I first focus on the primary sources. My main sources are the corpus of letters and dispatches, in both Ottoman Turkish and Hungarian, which were exchanged during a period of five years (1571-1576). The basis of my study is the manuscript named *Protocollum Báthoryanum*.<sup>19</sup> This manuscript contains copies of the correspondence between voivodes of Transylvania (István Báthory, Kristóf Báthory) and the Ottoman Sultans (Selim II and Murad III), pashas, *chavushes* and dragomans. These letters are mostly in Hungarian, but some of them are in Latin.<sup>20</sup> The letters not only provide information about diplomatic relationships,

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<sup>17</sup> Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 4.

<sup>18</sup> John Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no 1 (2008); Daniel Goffman, "Negotiating with the Renaissance State: The Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> OSzKK (Hungarian National Library, Manuscript Department), Fol. Hung. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Among these Hungarian and Latin letters, there is only one letter includes the Ottoman language. This letter was written to István Báthory by Murad Bey, an Ottoman imperial interpreter who was a Hungarian convert to

but also serve as a record of the objects, which were exchanged between these two territories. Many of these letters were also published by László Szalay in 1862.<sup>21</sup>

Focusing on both Hungarian and Ottoman sources, raises the problem of terminology. Seeking the appropriate terminology by comparing both sources can help in this question. For instance, the title of *voivode* (Hungarian *vajda* and Turkish *voyvoda*) can be controversial since the Transylvanian rulers are called *prince* (*fejedelem* in Hungarian). However, the sources that I used, both Hungarian and Ottoman, refer to István Báthory as *voivode*. The reason behind the use of this term in the sources is István Báthory's policy to maintain good relationships both with the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottomans.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to these Hungarian and Latin sources, the other main source is the body of Ottoman registers of important affairs (*mühimme defterleri*) located in the Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, which contain a great number of documents for diplomatic history studies. These documents include copies of letters, and injunctions or agreements. The documents related to the Ottoman and Transylvanian relationship between 1571 and 1576 are registered in the *mühimme* registers number 11 through 29.<sup>23</sup>

Through these letters and documents, I am able to examine the main structure of the diplomatic relationship between Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, these sources include correspondence of the pashas, dragomans, and other imperial officials from both sides that show an additional layer in their relationship, which is established beyond the visible actors of diplomacy.

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Islam. Although this letter is not directly about gift-giving, it has significant value to explore the role of the converts or dragomans in the established diplomatic relations between Transylvania and the Ottomans. *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, Fol. Hung. 37, OSzKK [Hungarian National Library, Manuscript Department], fol. 171r.

<sup>21</sup> László Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578 1578* [Transylvania and the Porte 1567-1578], (Pest: Laupper és Stolp, 1862).

<sup>22</sup> See Teréz Oborni's article for the discussion of title *voivode*: "Between Vienna and Constantinople: Notes on the Legal Status of the Principality of Transylvania," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 76-77.

<sup>23</sup> Only one of these *defters* was published: *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1999).

In addition to the documents mentioned above, I will also examine narrative sources. Among these, Stephan Gerlach's account has a significant place. Gerlach was a Lutheran chaplain who went to Istanbul with the Habsburg envoy and lived there between 1573 and 1578.<sup>24</sup> His account provides exceptional information about the diplomatic relations, and the people who were involved in this process, as well as the social and cultural life of the Ottomans.

Using both Hungarian and Ottoman sources and comparing them in order to identify the individuals and the objects are an essential part of my methodology to strengthen my sources' reliability. This comparative approach will allow me to analyze the roles and duties of the individuals mentioned in the letters.

### **Terminology of the gift**

To look into the Ottoman context first of all brings up the issue of terminology. The Ottoman language used a variety of terms to refer to gifts. Most common among them are *hediye*, *peşkeş* (or *pişkeş*) and *in'am*.<sup>25</sup> The Ottomans used *hediye* or *peşkeş* to refer to gift and *haraç* for tribute. The gifts which were sent from an inferior to a superior were called *peşkeş* while *in'am* was used mostly to indicate gifts which were given by Ottoman sultans to an inferior subject. The terms would refer not only to an object or material, but they also indicated a bond and a kind of hierarchical structure between the receiver and the giver.

In my research, in the context of Ottoman-Transylvanian diplomatic relation, insignia and *peşkeş* will be in the center of the inquiry. In the Ottoman historiography *Hükümet alametleri* (insignia) is a term to refer to symbolic gifts sent by the sultan to his vassal rulers or governors in the provinces. In the examination of the diplomatic relationships between

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<sup>24</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü 1573-1576* [Turkish diary 1573-1576], vols 1-2, ed. Kemal Beydilli (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> About the terminology of gift-giving in the Islamic context see: Lambton, "Pishkash: Present or Tribute?," 145-58 and Fahmida Suleman, "Gifts and Gift-Giving," in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Joseph W. Meri (New York: Routledge, 2006), 295-96.



Transylvania and the Ottomans, as well as the role of the gifts in these relationships, insignia will be of great significance in emphasizing the hierarchical status between the receiver and the giver.

*Peşkeş* is a more complex term. Michael Talbot calls *peşkeş* a tributary gift, which indicates the sense of obligation behind it.<sup>26</sup> While as a general term it mostly indicates an inferior's present to their superior, as a technical term it also refers to a regular tax and an ad hoc tax levied by rulers.<sup>27</sup> Offering a gift or *peşkeş* to a superior was a Middle Eastern tradition dating back to ancient Iran. It signified the loyalty of the subjects or the vassals to the rulers. In order to be admitted into the sultan's presence or that of a state dignitary, it was obligatory to present a *peşkeş*.<sup>28</sup> In her work on gift giving in Persian society, Ann Lambton states that over time *peşkeş* transformed into a source of revenue for the state.<sup>29</sup> As an Ottoman court practice, *peşkeş* was given by the Ottoman officials at the time of their appointment to office, as well as at the time of special events such as festivals or *newruz*<sup>30</sup> celebrations. Halil İnalçık states that as a symbolic act, exchange of presents existed from the beginning of Ottoman history and it cannot be interpreted as bribery from the Ottoman viewpoint: "bribery was considered a crime when the monarch's direct interests were in jeopardy."<sup>31</sup> It is common to see the use of *bribe* to refer to gifts in the accounts of Western diplomats, envoys, and travelers to the Ottoman court. These people found this "Eastern practice" unusual and interesting and they saw no harm in using *bribe*. A bribe for them was

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Talbot, "A Treaty of Narratives," 367.

<sup>27</sup> Ann Lambton, "Pishkash," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 312.

<sup>28</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Tax Collection, Embezzlement and Bribery in Ottoman Finances," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 15, no. 2 (1991): 332-33.

<sup>29</sup> Lambton, "Pishkash: Present or Tribute?," 158.

<sup>30</sup> A Persian word that indicates the New Year and the beginning of spring. As it was in the Safavids, *newruz* was celebrated across the Ottoman territories and exchange of gifts accompanied the celebrations: Mehrdad Kia, *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2011), 148; Avner Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks, Alla Turca: Time and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 19-21; Lambton, "Pishkash: Present or Tribute?," 145.

<sup>31</sup> Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, eds, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1600*, vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 74-75; İnalçık, "Ottoman Archival Materials on Millets," 447-48.

not only an accessory to the diplomatic relationships, but also an important practice of the Ottoman court. To receive a small amount of money for their service was a recognized right of the Ottoman officials. On the other hand, the amount of the *peşkeş*, which was obligatory to be presented to the sultan by every dignitary, including viziers, *paşas* and Christian patriarchs, was fixed by regulations.<sup>32</sup> However, this custom was often abused by the officials in order to acquire substantial gifts,<sup>33</sup> which, not surprisingly, opened the path for bribery.

In the sources, the Hungarians registered the annual payment and objects to the Ottomans as tax, while they named as “gift” the materials and the money sent to the Porte upon special occasions, such as appointment of the new voivode or upon the succession of the new sultan. While Transylvanians called their gifts “tax,” the Habsburgs tried to avoid the use of the terms “tax” or “tribute” (*haraç*), since they indicate the inferiority of the giver. After the 1547 treaty, the Habsburgs had to send 30,000 ducats yearly to the Ottomans in order to keep the control of Hungarian lands in their realm. In the treaty, the 30,000 ducats were called a ‘payment of money’ in both parts. The Habsburgs preferred to name it as “*munus honestum et honorarium*” (honor-gift and honorarium).<sup>34</sup> The letters of the Ottoman governors in Buda demonstrate that the use of “gift” was also adopted by the Ottomans for

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<sup>32</sup> For instance, the governor of Rumeli gave to the *mir-`alem*, the master of the standards, at the Porte ten thousand *akça*. Moreover, in 1525, Jeremiah I was appointed as patriarch and it was stated in the *berat*, deed of grant, that he would pay 3,500 florins for this office yearly. In the mid-seventeenth century, in order to get the imperial diploma from the sultan, the governor of Rumeli gave 1 thousand *akça*, and the Greek Orthodox Patriarch gave 20,000 *guruş*: Tom Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 123; İnalcık and Quataert, eds, *An Economic and Social History*, vol.1, 74-75. İnalcık also states that metropolitans and bishops were assigned regular income from the Ottoman treasury in the form of *timar*. Therefore, they had to present customary gifts, *peşkeş*, to the sultan. In time, the competition for the patriarchate in the Greek church increased the amount of the *peşkeş* and it was considered as a source of revenue for the state: İnalcık, “Ottoman Archival Materials on Millets,” 448; Gustav Bayerle, *Pashas, Begg and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1997), 110.

<sup>33</sup> İnalcık, “Tax Collection, Embezzlement and Bribery,” 332-33.

<sup>34</sup> Carina L. Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and Mexicans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 221-22; Kenneth Meyer Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571): The Sixteenth Century from Julius III to Pius V*, vol. 4 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1984), 844.

the annual payment of Habsburgs.<sup>35</sup> By comparing the gifts of the Habsburgs to the Porte with the gifts of Transylvania, one can see the similarities. At the same time, one called it “tax” while the other called it a “gift.” This is a clear sign of the significant role of the status of the giver as well as the diplomatic relationship between the receiver and the giver.

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<sup>35</sup> Gustav Bayerle, *Ottoman Diplomacy in Hungary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 21-23. In his account, Salomon Schweigger, who was the preacher of the Habsburg delegation to the Porte, states that the use of tax or *haraç* (tribute) would be insulting for his country, therefore he would rather call them “present” in Italian. He also adds that the Ottomans allowed them to call the annual payment in this “kind” way, however, they kept insisting on the use of *haraç*: Salomon Schweigger, *Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk, 1578-1581* [Travel to the City of Sultans, 1578-1581] (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), 69-70.

## CHAPTER I:

### BETWEEN THE EMPERORS: TRANSYLVANIA DURING THE REIGN OF ISTVÁN BÁTHORY (1571-1576)

Transylvania had significant value due to its strategic location between the two most powerful states of the sixteenth century: the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Its existence depended on political strategies that could maintain the balance between these two powers. In the sixteenth century, after the Ottoman occupation of the Hungarian region, the main task for the rulers of Transylvania was to defend their territory against these two powers and to try to avoid their claim of decisive domination over the principality. In order to understand the relationship between Transylvania and the Ottomans, it is necessary to give a historical background for the situation in the region starting with Sultan Süleyman's campaigns.

The conflict that started in 1519 between Charles V and Francis I for the throne of the Holy Roman Empire served the Ottomans as an excuse to invade Central Europe. Sultan Süleyman's campaigns resulted in the fall of Belgrade in 1521. This gain provided the Ottomans with a secure base on the Danube for further expansion. Five years later, in 1526, Süleyman's army fought the Hungarian army at Mohács and won a decisive victory that led to the division of medieval Hungary.

After the battle of Mohács in 1526, János Szapolyai was elected as king, but Charles V's brother, Ferdinand I, staked his claim to the crown of Hungary based on a previous agreement and gathered his army to attack. Ferdinand's attempt resulted in Süleyman leading another campaign against Buda in 1529. János Szapolyai was enthroned again and agreed to pay yearly tribute to the sultan.<sup>36</sup> The death of János Szapolyai in 1540 rekindled the struggle between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans for the domination of Hungary. In 1541, Ferdinand

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<sup>36</sup> Halil İnalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix, 1988), 35-36.

invaded Hungary again and Süleyman decided to establish direct control over Hungary by taking the capital, Buda. This time Süleyman's intention was not only to occupy the region and confront Ferdinand's claim over it, but also to bring it under direct Ottoman rule as a province. As a result, Hungary was divided into three parts: northern and western Hungary came under the Habsburg rule, the central part of the country became Ottoman territory, and the eastern parts of Hungary became the Principality of Transylvania as a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>37</sup>

### **The vassal status and obligations of the principalities in the Danubian region**

Transylvania became dependent on the Ottomans to maintain its foreign policy like the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. These vassal states provided a barrier for the Ottomans against Poland, Moscow, and the Habsburgs, which were potential enemies of the empire.<sup>38</sup> Among these potential enemies, the Habsburgs were a major rival to the Ottomans' imperial vision. Therefore, Transylvania had a significant role in countering the Habsburgs' claims for the domination of the region. In order to better understand the relationship between the vassal states and the Ottomans, and how this vassalage functioned in the sixteenth century, it is necessary to look more deeply into the Ottoman regulations for non-Muslim territories under its domain.

The Ottomans were aware of the difficulties of applying direct Ottoman rule in distant territories. As an alternative to direct Ottoman domination, they found another form of subordination: vassalage. The Ottoman Empire considered vassal states as part of its own "well-protected domains" (*memâlik-i mahruse*) and regulated their subordination through

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<sup>37</sup> Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor, *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe: The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), xv-xvi.

<sup>38</sup> However, as Dariusz Kolodziejczyk states, Poland was never a serious threat for the Ottomans unlike Austria, Russia, Venice, and medieval Hungary: Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), xvi.

compulsory services.<sup>39</sup> In this way, the Ottomans could avoid the financial, and physical burdens of establishing an Ottoman administrative system in these territories, while vassal states could avoid invasion by the Ottomans and still have the protection of the sultan, whom they were too weak to fight alone.<sup>40</sup> The establishment of a relationship between the Ottomans and vassal states relied on this basic reciprocity: exchange of duties, tributes, customary gifts, information sharing, and obedience in return for the sultan's protection.<sup>41</sup> Both sides benefited politically through this exchange and stabilized their positions in the European diplomatic community. How did this reciprocity function? What were the duties of vassal states towards the sultan?

Viorel Panaite emphasizes the *zimmi* status of the principalities.<sup>42</sup> The Wallachians, Moldavians and Transylvanians were considered *zimmis* (non-Muslims under the protection of the Muslim ruler) according to the Islamic tradition. Islamic law provided for security of *zimmis'* lives, property, and religious practices. In return for this guarantee, first of all they were obliged to pay a tax.<sup>43</sup> The tax that the non-Muslim subjects had to pay was called *harac* (in this context tribute).<sup>44</sup> To pay a yearly tribute was one of the main obligations which signaled their submission to the sultan. The other main character of the dependency of the

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<sup>39</sup> Sándor Papp, "The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities, Churches, and States in the Ottoman Empire," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 365.

<sup>40</sup> Rhoads Murphey, "Süleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary: Ottoman Manifest Destiny or a Delayed Reaction to Charles V's Universalist Vision," *Journal of Early Modern History* 5 (2001): 211. Although they accepted the protection of the sultan over their countries, revolts of the voivodes against Ottoman sultans were common. See: Radu G. Păun, "Enemies Within: Networks of Influence and the Military Revolts against the Ottoman Power (Moldavia and Wallachia, Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 209-49.

<sup>41</sup> Murphey, "Süleyman I and the Conquest of Hungary," 209-10.

<sup>42</sup> Viorel Panaite, "The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities—As *Harâcgüzarlar* of the Ottoman Sultans," in *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 84.

<sup>43</sup> Khadduri states six necessary duties for *zimmis*: 1) Every male, adult is under obligation to pay *cizye*. 2) *Zimmis* should not attack Islam nor show any disrespect to it. 3) They should not show any disrespect to the Prophet Muhammad or to the Qur'an. 4) They should not injure the life or property of a Muslim. 5) They are not permitted to marry a Muslim woman. 6) They are not permitted to assist the enemy neither by giving refuge to a foreigner nor by harboring spies: Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 195-97.

<sup>44</sup> For this tax the term *haraç* was used until the sixteenth century, and *cizye* afterwards: Halil Inalcik, "Cizye," in *Islam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam], vol. 8 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 45.

vassal states was supporting the Ottoman military campaigns when it was necessary. These military obligations did not mean only supporting Ottoman campaigns, but also supporting the other vassal states when it was necessary. The Ottoman phrase “be a friend of my friends, and an enemy to my enemies” was used to explain this task for the vassals.<sup>45</sup> For instance, in 1559, the Moldavian voivode was ordered to support the Wallachian voivode, Mircea Ciobanul, against Habsburg and Polish attack and send soldiers to his army if Mircea requests it.<sup>46</sup> The same year, on 2 August 1559, two letters were sent from the Porte to the voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia about Ferdinand’s plan to attack the Transylvanian territories. The documents mentioned that János Zsigmond had informed the Porte about Ferdinand’s campaign plans. In the letters, the voivodes were ordered to send information about the situation and to be ready to support Transylvania against Ferdinand’s attacks.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the governors of Ottoman provinces, such as Buda and Temesvár, were also charged with protecting and supporting the vassal states.<sup>48</sup>

These last examples raise another issue noted by Panaite: the duty of collecting information.<sup>49</sup> The voivodes of vassal states were expected to collect information about the political circumstances in the region and report it to the Porte. Transylvania informed the Porte about the policy of the Hungarian kingdom and the Habsburg Monarchy as well as their military actions in the region. In 1568, King János Zsigmond informed the Ottoman court about the Habsburgs’ initiative for an alliance with Poland and the Russian Empire against

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<sup>45</sup> Viorel Panaite, “The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities,” 70.

<sup>46</sup> *3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* [Registers of Important Affairs Number3] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1993), 170.

<sup>47</sup> *3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 86.

<sup>48</sup> In the *hükm* sent to Kristóf Báthory and the other lords of Transylvania in 1571, the sultan mentions the appointment of István Báthory as voivode of Transylvania and states that the governors of Buda and Temesvár were charged with protecting Transylvania against the attacks of enemies: *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 241.

<sup>49</sup> Viorel Panaite, “The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities”, 77. Also see Bülent Arı, “Early Ottoman Diplomacy: Ad Hoc Period,” in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 45-46. For detailed information about the military cooperation and avoiding participation, see János B. Szabó, “‘Splendid Isolation?’ The Military Cooperation of the Principality of Transylvania with the Ottoman Empire (1571-1688) in the Mirror of Hungarian Historiography’s Dilemmas,” in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 301-40.

the Ottomans.<sup>50</sup> Wallachian and Moldavian voivodes, in addition to sharing information between themselves, were channels for information from Polish and Russian sources. A letter written to the Moldavian voivode about the arrival of the gifts which he had sent, mentions that the voivode should not lose time in informing the Porte about the news from Poland, Moscow and Ferdinand.<sup>51</sup> In another letter the Porte sent to the Wallachian voivode in 1571, the sultan says: “You sent a letter and informed the news about Transylvania. What you said was presented to my eminent throne in detail [...]”<sup>52</sup>

The establishment of information-gathering networks through the vassal states and the province of Buda bordering the rival empire helped the Ottomans to integrate into European politics and manage their propaganda machine. According to Gábor Ágoston, imperial ideology and a universalist vision of empire formulated in the reign of Süleyman constituted “the Ottoman grand strategy.” In this regard, collecting information and intelligence had a significant role for the legitimization of the Ottoman power.<sup>53</sup> Transylvania and the other vassal states in the region fulfilled their role as a channel for the Ottomans to achieve their goals. That is why, even if the reason for a letter or an order was different, most of the time this expectation was stated at the end of the documents by saying: “Do not delay to inform

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<sup>50</sup> 7 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* [Registers of Important Affairs, No. 7], vol. 2 (Ankara: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1999), 291.

<sup>51</sup> 3 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 161. While Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia provided information about Poland, Moscow, and the Habsburgs, Ragusa did so about the Spanish Habsburgs and Italy: Gábor Ágoston, “Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry,” in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89. For Ragusa’s role as an intelligence center between the Ottomans and Habsburgs, see: Özlem Kumrular, *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Osmanlı Habsburg Düellosu* [The Ottoman-Habsburg rivalry in the light of new documents] (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 98-109.

<sup>52</sup> 12 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol.1, 443.

<sup>53</sup> Gábor Ágoston, “Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy,” 77. Sultan Selim II’s *ahdname* to the Habsburgs, dated in 1568, gives an idea of universalist vision of the empire: “I who, am the sultans of the Roman, Arab and Persian lands, king of the kings of China, Cathay, Khitan and Turk [...] Paducah of the cities around the Mediterranean Sea, of the forts and fortresses around the Black Sea, of Egypt, Port Said, Aleppo, Damascus, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina, Jarusalem, Yemen, Aden, Sana, Ethiopia, Basra, al-Ahsa, Kurdistan, Georgia, Luristan, Van, Kipchak Steppes, lands of Tatar as well as the totality of Anatolia, Zulkadria, Karaman and generally of Rum Eli, Vallachia, Moldavia and of many other provinces conquered with my victorious sabre [...]” Quoted in Güneş Işıksel, “Ottoman-Habsburg Relations in the Second Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: The Ottoman Standpoint,” in *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen: Das Osmanische Reich und dei Habsburgermonarchie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Arno Strohmeier and Norbert Spannenberger (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 55.



my Threshold of happiness about the true news that you have.”<sup>54</sup> In addition, roads and the communication network played significant roles in transmitting and gathering information. A significant number of documents registered in *Mühimmes* show that Ottomans used vassal states in order to provide fast and safe communication. These documents mostly ordered the voivodes to provide safe passage for the Ottoman messengers.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, vassal states not only provide information itself, but also a secure route for the Ottoman communication and network system.

The two obligations, supporting the Ottoman campaigns and collecting information for the Ottomans against Christians, raised the issue of the voivodes’ allegiance to Christendom. The voivodes were often unwilling to fight or spy on their religious brothers. That is why in some cases they avoided participation in the campaigns or proper espionage for the Porte.<sup>56</sup> In addition, principalities were an important source of information not only for the Ottomans, but also for the Christian states who were eager to learn about the situation in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>57</sup> It is difficult to infer to what extent the Ottomans were aware of the disloyalty of the vassals unless it ended up in a direct revolt, but it is certain that the latter did not always practice the “be a friend of my friends, and an enemy to my enemies” rule.

It is clear that except for sending yearly tribute and *piskesh* (gift) the voivodes could avoid the other obligations by political maneuvers.<sup>58</sup> However, paying tribute did not necessarily mean being a vassal to the empire. With the treaty signed in 1547 between Ferdinand and Süleyman, Ferdinand was also obliged to send yearly tribute and gifts to the Porte in return for keeping part of Hungary under his rule.<sup>59</sup> In this sense, one could argue

<sup>54</sup> “*vâkıf olduğun ahbâr-ı sahihayı Südde-i sa’âdet’üme i’lâmdan hâlî olmayasın.*”

<sup>55</sup> For instance, in the order dated 1564, Wallachian voivode was asked to secure the transit of Sinan Cavush, who was responsible for delivering an important message to Transylvania: *6 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* [Registers of Important Affairs Number 6], vol. 1 (Ankara: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995), 107.

<sup>56</sup> Panaite, “The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities,” 73.

<sup>57</sup> Panaite, “The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities,” 77.

<sup>58</sup> B. Szabó, “‘Splendid Isolation?’,” 307-8.

<sup>59</sup> Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, 37.

that military support, collecting information for the Porte and obeying the sultan's orders symbolized the vassal status of the principalities in theory; in practice, however, these were conditions which the voivodes tried to avoid. Although the yearly tribute was considered the main and inevitable obligation for the vassals, there were some cases when even the yearly tribute could be avoided. Examples from the early seventeenth century show that if military support was provided the Porte was willing to cancel the obligation of the annual tribute payment. In 1603, when Moldavia was asked to join the campaign against Wallachia and Transylvania, Voivode Ieremia Movile was given two options: paying the yearly tribute or recruiting soldiers to support Ottoman army.<sup>60</sup>

### **Transylvania's Privileges**

Although the main obligations were the same for all three vassal states in the Danube region, it is important to state that the status of Transylvania as a vassal state was different from Wallachia and Moldavia. For instance, in comparison with the Romanian vassals of the Ottoman Empire, Moldavia and Wallachia, Transylvania's more independent status can be clearly seen at least in three respects. Free election of the ruler was one of the distinctive privileges that the Ottomans granted the Transylvanians,<sup>61</sup> although the exact degree of freedom is a controversial issue in historiography. It was known that only a candidate supported by the Porte could succeed in the position.<sup>62</sup> In addition, Transylvania was obliged to pay less yearly tribute and less *piskesh* compared to Wallachia and Moldavia. Furthermore,

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<sup>60</sup> "Tribute should not be required this year; in exchange, on account of this year's tribute, recruiting many soldiers [...], he should banish German and Hungarian armies from the country of Transylvania serving thus the imperial court. And if he should not commit himself to this duty [...], he shall be asked to send the *harâc* in time." Quoted in Panaite, "The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities," 74.

<sup>61</sup> In a letter dated 1571 and sent to the Transylvanian lords about electing a new ruler, the sultan ordered to the lords that they should gather as soon as possible to make a decision about the new voivode and inform the Porte immediately so that the sultan could send the *berât* (diploma of confirmation) for the new ruler: *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, [Registers of Important Affairs Number 12], vol.1, 237-38. For a discussion of freely elected rulers see Graeme Murdock, "'Freely Elected in Fear': Princely Elections and Political Power in Early Modern Transylvania," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no. 3-4 (2003): 213-44.

<sup>62</sup> János B. Szabó and Péter Erdősi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power in the Principality of Transylvania in East European Context," *Majestas* 11 (2003): 112.

no Ottoman troops were stationed in Transylvanian territory, unlike the case of the Romanian vassals. Transylvania was also not required to send hostages to Istanbul, while Wallachian and Moldavian rulers had to send their sons as hostages to the Ottomans.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, a *kapucubaşı*, who was selected by the voivode, was sent from the Porte to the capital of Wallachia and Moldavia with the newly elected voivode.<sup>64</sup>

By looking at *Mühimme* registers, one can see another distinct difference between the Romanian vassal states and Transylvania. These registers show that Wallachian and Moldavian voivodes received more *hükm-i hümayun* (letter of order) from the sultan about various topics compared to Transylvania. Among them, the Porte's requests for providing grain, saltpetre, and packhorses for neighbouring provinces indicate the extent of the economic liability of Wallachia and Moldavia to the Porte. In the letters, there is usually no statement on whether this supply would be deducted from the tribute or not, although, some of the *hükms* (orders) provide this information. For instance, in 1568 Moldavia and Wallachia were asked to send packhorses for the campaign of Caffa and, in turn, this would be deducted from their *haraç*.<sup>65</sup>

Why did the Ottomans not apply the same status to Transylvania? Why did this principality receive this privilege? Its distance from the Porte and neighbourhood of the Habsburgs have an essential role in answering these questions. The political and cultural impact of the surviving Hungarian elite and the influence of the major Ottoman rival in the region, the Habsburgs, led the Porte to make this decision.<sup>66</sup> The financial, intelligence, and military obligations imposed on Transylvania were basic and knowing the challenges that

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<sup>63</sup> Géza Dávid, "Administration in Ottoman Europe," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London: Longman, 1995), 88.

<sup>64</sup> Selânikî Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selânikî* [Selânikî's History], ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1999), 411.

<sup>65</sup> *7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* [Registers of Important Affairs, No. 7], vol. 2, 134.

<sup>66</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers," in *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 29.

they might have faced in the territory by pushing Transylvania with further obligations, the Ottomans were content with this reciprocal diplomatic connection. Moreover, considering the Ottomans' actual claim to be a "world empire," Transylvania had a significant role in the region. With its strategic position and connections with the Habsburgs, vassal states, and the province of Buda, Transylvania was an important resource for mediating the Ottomans' "imperial ideology" in Europe.

### **New ruler, new diplomacy: The reign of István Báthory**

Some scholars suggest that the special status of Transylvania and the relationship between Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire were forged much earlier, in 1528, in the alliance of King János Szapolyai with the Porte.<sup>67</sup> The king agreed to pay homage to the sultan without paying tribute and Ottoman troops supported the Hungarian army against Ferdinand to defend Buda several times between 1530 and 1541.<sup>68</sup> In 1543, after the sultan appointed the son of King János, János Zsigmond, as the ruler, Transylvania decided to send a tribute to the Porte and became dependent on the empire. In 1567, the law of the Gyulafehérvár diet shows that Transylvanians were allowed to appoint a ruler after the death of János Zsigmond. Starting from 1571, the Transylvanian voivodes were elected by the Transylvanian estates based on this law.<sup>69</sup> However, the sultan had to confirm the legitimacy of the new ruler by an *ahdname*.<sup>70</sup> The sultan's relationship with the Transylvanian voivode

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<sup>67</sup> Oborni, "Between Vienna and Constantinople," 71; B. Szabó, "Splendid Isolation?," 314. Also see Gábor Barta's article investigating the process of this alliance: Gábor Barta, "A Forgotten Theatre of War 1526-1528," in *Hungarian-Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent*, ed. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Budapest: Loránd Eötvös University, Department of Turkish Studies, 1994), 93-130.

<sup>68</sup> Sándor Papp, "Hungary and the Ottoman Empire (From the Beginning to 1540)," in *Fight against the Turks in Central-Europe in the First Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. István Zombori (Budapest: METEM, 2004), 70-71. The first tribute of 10,000 florins was paid in 1543. Papp, "The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities, Churches, and States in the Ottoman Empire," 412.

<sup>69</sup> Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* [Documents of the Transylvanian Diets], vol. 2 (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvkiadó, 1876), 331-38; Oborni, "Between Vienna and Constantinople," 72.

<sup>70</sup> *Ahdnâme* was a pact which regulated the privileges and relationship between the sultan and other parties. The term is composed of the Arabic word 'ahd (oath) and Persian *nâme* (letter): Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu,

was regulated through these *ahdnames*.<sup>71</sup> As will be noted in the next chapter, together with the *ahdname*, insignia also played a significant role in displaying the vassal status of principalities.<sup>72</sup>

When János Zsigmond died, a new candidate rose from the noble Hungarian Báthory family. István Báthory was an ideal candidate to rule due to his previous experience in foreign diplomacy and military experience.<sup>73</sup> He was elected voivode of Transylvania in 1571 and crowned as king of Poland in 1576. While he only ruled for five years, diplomatic relations among the Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Transylvania during his reign are worth investigating because István Báthory managed to establish a good relationship with the Porte, and also maintained a balance between the Habsburgs and Ottomans. According to Hungarian historiography, his reign was considered a ‘golden age’ because he avoided Ottoman influence and ruled the Principality of Transylvania almost as an independent state. What was the secret of his policy? How did he manage to handle both sides without causing great trouble for his country?

Teréz Oborni describes the attitude of István Báthory towards the Porte as “neither too hostile, nor too friendly.”<sup>74</sup> Paying a yearly tribute to the Porte and receiving insignia with *ahdname* were a clear sign of obedience. Although one of the consequences of this obedience was to be dependent on the Porte in foreign policy, István Báthory managed to

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“Ahidnâme,” in *Islam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam], vol. 1 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 536-40.

<sup>71</sup> Panaite, “The Voivodes of the Danubian Principalities,” 67.

<sup>72</sup> In 1576, the letter sent from Sultan Murad III to Kristóf Báthory gives the information about insignias. In this letter Sultan Murad III states what he sent as gift and objects of his sovereignty (insignia) to Kristóf Báthory. In his letter, the sultan also requested previous insignias which had been sent by his father Sultan Selim II to István Báthory, to be sent back to the Porte: The studies of Sándor Papp, János B. Szabó and Péter Erdősi are informative about the ceremonial part of this diplomatic process of gifts and insignias: Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden der Osmanen für Ungarn und Siebenbürgen: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003); János B. Szabó, “The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania,” in *Turkish Flowers: Studies in Ottoman Art in Hungary*, ed. Ibolya Gerelyes (Budapest: Hungarian National Museum, 2005), 131-42; János B. Szabó and Péter Erdősi, “Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power in the Principality of Transylvania in East European Context,” *Majestas 11* (2003): 111-60.

<sup>73</sup> Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 156; B. Szabó, “‘Splendid Isolation?’,” 310.

<sup>74</sup> Oborni, “Between Vienna and Constantinople,” 77.

regulate relations with the Kingdom of Hungary as well. In a different way, a similar kind of obedience was regulated by treaties and agreements between Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary. He showed his loyalty to the Kingdom of Hungary through his loyalty oath to Maximilian II (r. 1564-1576). At the beginning of his letter, István Báthory calls himself voivode: “I am István Báthory, the *voivode* of Transylvania, the count of Szeklers, I swear to the living God...”<sup>75</sup>

By renouncing his title of “prince”, István Báthory showed his subjection not only to Maximilian II, but also to the Ottoman sultans. In his letters to the Ottoman court, István Báthory called himself voivode (Hungarian *vajda* and Turkish *voyvoda*) of Transylvania.<sup>76</sup> In return, Ottoman sultans addressed István Báthory as voivode and always reminded him of the subordinate status of Transylvania in letters. The reason behind the use of this title in the sources can be explained by István Báthory’s policy of maintaining the principality’s security by establishing good relationships with both the Habsburgs and the Ottomans.

After 1541, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans each considered Transylvania as their vassal and did not recognize the other’s sovereignty over the principality. From the beginning, the Habsburgs did not accept Transylvania’s separation from the Kingdom of Hungary and continued to treat the rulers of Transylvania as their officials. They threatened the principality not only by repeated sieges of castles in the territory, but also by diplomatic manoeuvres through Transylvanian aristocrats who supported the Habsburg rather than the

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<sup>75</sup> For the Hungarian version of the oath see László Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 19; for the Latin text see Endre Veress, *Báthory István erdélyi fejedelem és lengyel király levelezése* [The correspondence of Báthory István, prince of Transylvania and king of Poland], vol.1, 1556-1575 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Tudományos Intézet, 1944), 115-16; Oborni, “Between Vienna and Constantinople,” 75-76. Also see Pál Fodor, “Making a Living on the Frontiers: Volunteers in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Army,” in *Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe: The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*, ed. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 256-57.

<sup>76</sup> *Voyvoda* is a Slavic origin term which means “governor”. This title was used for mostly Wallachian and Moldavian princes in Ottoman documents. Later, after the death of János Zsigmond, it was used for the Transylvanian rulers as well, but in the beginning “king” was the title for Transylvanian rulers. For instance, one of the orders from the Porte to the voivode of Wallachia, dated 1564, says “*Eflâk voyvodasına*” (to the voivode of Wallachia); and “*Erdel Kralı olan İstefan Kral*” (János Zsigmond, King of Transylvania) for the Transylvanian ruler: *6 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, [Registers of Important Affairs No. 6.], vol. 1 (Ankara: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995), 107; *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 218.

Ottoman sovereignty. However, during the 1570s István Báthory was able to establish the independence of the state from the Habsburgs, while the position of vassalage to the Ottomans remained throughout the whole existence of the independent principality.<sup>77</sup>

During his reign, István Báthory had to protect his country against two empires. Although he renounced his title of prince and accepted the sovereignty of the Hungarian king, he could not satisfy the Habsburgs because of his vassalage towards the Ottomans. In his letters to Maximilian, he explained the situation by stating that his subjection to the Porte was necessary to avoid any possible Ottoman intervention.<sup>78</sup> It seems that Báthory tempered the Habsburgs' disapproval of his subjection to the sultan by pronouncing the Ottomans as a common enemy and threat to both the Habsburgs and Transylvania. The success of his strategy may also show that a potential Ottoman occupation, which could have resulted in turning the principality into an Ottoman province, was feared by the Habsburgs as well as by Transylvania.<sup>79</sup> István Báthory took advantage of this common threat to assuage the Habsburg influence in his realm. Báthory's rival, however, Gáspár Békés, who claimed to be the ruler of Transylvania and was supported by Maximilian, might also have had an effect on his political strategy towards the Ottomans. Maximilian supported Gáspár Békés, considering him the more suitable ruler for Transylvania, while the Ottomans supported

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<sup>77</sup> Gábor Kármán, "Transylvania between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires," in *Statehood before and beyond Ethnicity: Minor States in Northern and Eastern Europe 1600-2000*, ed. Linas Eriksonas and Leas Müller (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2005), 152; and Oborni, "Between Vienna and Constantinople," 78. According to Sándor Papp, the legal position of the vassal Transylvania was stabilized from 1571 onwards with the inauguration of István Báthory which was the first voivode election and the first inauguration by the Turks, and later served as an example: Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden der Osmanen für Ungarn und Siebenbürgen*, 74.

<sup>78</sup> Teréz Oborni, "The Artful Diplomacy of István Báthory and the Survival of the Principality of Transylvania (1571)," in *Frieden und Konfliktmanagement in interkulturellen Räumen: Das Osmanische Reich und die Habsburgermonarchie in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Arno Strohmeyer and Norbert Spannenberger (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 90.

<sup>79</sup> Oborni, "The Artful Diplomacy," 87. However, in his diary, Stephan Gerlach states that the pasha of Buda and the other pashas in the Porte gave hope to Békés in his struggle against Báthory, but when the fight started, they supported Báthory. One would suggest that Ottoman dignitaries used this conflict between Békés and Báthory in order to gain more benefits, such as more tribute or land. For Gerlach's detailed account, see: Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü: 1573-1576*, vol.1, 216-59.

Báthory.<sup>80</sup> Thus, it is justifiable to suggest that Báthory needed the support of the Ottomans against Békés, or in a broad sense against the Habsburgs, in order to keep his position as ruler of the principality.

After he became one of the candidates for the Polish throne, in 1576, István Báthory was elected king. The support of the Ottomans for Báthory during the election process was used by the rival Habsburgs to construct a negative image of him as a puppet of Ottomans. However, he knew the importance of good relations with the Porte and continued to maintain this and played a mediatory role in European diplomacy.<sup>81</sup>

István Báthory's success not only decreased the turbulence in the borderlands between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire: in the second half of the sixteenth century, the political circumstances in Istanbul as well as the character and the policy of the sultans and the grand viziers might have allowed him to enhance diplomatic relationships. During the reign of István Báthory in Transylvania, Sultan Selim II (1566-1574) and Sultan Murad III (1574-1595) were the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. After the death of Süleyman the Magnificent in 1566, his son, Selim II, ascended the throne. In contrast to his father, Sultan Selim preferred to live a life separate from the burden of ruling an empire and left the power mostly to his grand vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (1565-1579).<sup>82</sup> Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's diplomacy was based on mollifying the conflicts with the empire's potential enemies in both the West and the East.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, he not only successfully established good relationships and networks in the imperial court in Istanbul, but also in the provinces by appointing his

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<sup>80</sup> Oborni, "The Artful Diplomacy", 91.

<sup>81</sup> Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 124.

<sup>82</sup> Unlike Sultan Suleyman, who successfully fulfilled the role of "holy warrior", his immediate successors Sultan Selim II and Murad III stayed away from the battlefield, see Colin Imber, "Frozen Legitimacy," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 101.

<sup>83</sup> Gilles Veinstein, "Sokollu Mehmed Pasha," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 9, new edition (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 709.



relatives or people whom he favoured to key positions.<sup>84</sup> One of them was his nephew, Sokollu Mustafa Pasha (1566-1578). Sokollu Mustafa Pasha was appointed provincial governor of Buda in 1566, after the execution of Arslan Pasha, who had clashed with grand vizier Mehmed Pasha.

Buda Pashas had significant role in the process of gift transfer from Habsburgs to the Porte. They were responsible for the dates and process of gift delivering, and also met all the expenses of the envoy of a foreign country and his delegation, starting from their arrival to Ottoman lands until they reached Constantinople.<sup>85</sup> The duty of gift delivery was important to fulfil not only to maintain the peace between two parties, but also to please the pashas at the Porte, who received a significant share of the gifts.<sup>86</sup> Mustafa Pasha's letters to Maximilian and to the Hungarian lords demonstrate his efforts to ensure the transportation of the gifts.<sup>87</sup> Apart from this, the Buda pasha was responsible for information gathering and reporting the circumstances in the region to the Porte.<sup>88</sup>

Buda was viewed as a strategically important territory in diplomatic relations with the Habsburgs and Transylvania. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's grand vizierate in the imperial court and his nephew's government in Buda, shaped the diplomatic relations among the three

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<sup>84</sup> For Sokollu's policy and mechanism of networking, see: Uroš Dakić, "The Sokollu Clan and the Politics of Vizirial Households in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century," (MA thesis, Central European University, 2012), 36-52.

<sup>85</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü: 1573-1576*, vol. 1, 88. Also see Wenceslas Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz*, trans. A. H. Wratislaw (London: Bell & Daldy, 1862), 9.

<sup>86</sup> For instance Arslan Pasha, Pasha of Buda (1565-1566), had troubles to convince Maximilian to deliver the gifts to the Porte. This failure, together with other discontent, resulted in his execution: Yasemin Altayli, "Budun Beykerbeyi Arslan Paşa (1565-1566)" [Beylerbeyi Arslan Pasha], *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 19 (2006): 45-50; Gyula Káldy-Nagy, "Budun Beylerbeyi Mustafa Pasa (1566-1578)," *Bellekten*, 210, no. 54 (1990): 654.

<sup>87</sup> One of his letters he stated that because of the problems in gifts delivering, he was afraid of to be beheaded like Arslan Pasha, see; Yasemin Altayli, "Macarca Mektuplarıyla Budun Beykerbeyi Sokollu Mustafa Pasa (1566-1578)" [Beylerbeyi Sokollu Mustafa Pasha with his Hungarian Letters], *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Fakültesi Dergisi* 49, no.2 (2009), 167-68.

<sup>88</sup> In one of his orders dated 1567, Sultan Selim II informed Sokollu Mustafa Pasha about the Habsburgs' attacks and further plans in the region. He stated that the Porte was informed by the king of Transylvania and the Pasha of Timisoara about these plans while nothing arrived from Buda. And he asked: "This news did not arrive from you...Don't you have spies? If this news is true, why did not you know about it and report it?" *7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 2, 313.

territories. This diplomatic triangle can be clearly seen in the correspondence among them. In these letters, the senders and receivers were not only Sultan Selim II, Sultan Murad III, Kristóf Báthory, and István Báthory; but also Sokollu Mustafa Pasha, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and King Maximilian.<sup>89</sup> Both pashas were in the centre of diplomacy in the region and their tenure was a peaceful period between the Porte and Vienna. However, in the course of his tenure, Sokollu Mustafa Pasha struggled with difficulties due to delays of gifts and taxes from Vienna to the Porte,<sup>90</sup> while Sultan Selim II and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha were struggling with conflicts between the Crimea, Wallachia, and Russia in the north as well as battles against the Venetians and the Holy League in order to keep superiority over the Mediterranean Sea (Ottoman-Venetian Wars, 1570-1573; Battle of Lepanto, 1571) in the south. At the time of János Zsigmond's death and the election of a new ruler in Transylvania, the Ottomans entered into war with Venice in Cyprus. This struggle may have distracted the Ottomans from an initiative for stricter control over Transylvania and allowed István Báthory to establish his considerably independent reign.

After Sultan Selim's death, his son, Sultan Murad III, ascended the throne in 1574. With his accession the dynamics established in the imperial court started to change. He preferred to be more active in political affairs and have complete power at court.<sup>91</sup> His centralization policy provided a new structure in the imperial court and also in the provinces. However, to realize this new policy required some time. Thus, at the beginning of his rule, no drastic changes occurred in the relationship among Habsburgs, Ottomans, and Transylvania.

Soon after his accession, Sultan Murad III continued to fight in the Mediterranean Sea. However, the main diplomatic struggle of the first half of his reign was the conflict with

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<sup>89</sup> László Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, (Pest: Laupper és Stolp, 1862); Endre Veress, *Báthory István erdélyi fejedelem és lengyel király levelezése*, vol. 1; Sándor Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek* [Documents of Transylvanian Diets], vol. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Yasemin Altayli, "Macarca Mektuplarıyla Budin Beykerbeyi Sokollu Mustafa Pasa (1566-1578) [Hungarian letters by Beylerbeyi Sokollu Mustafa Pasha], *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Cografya Fakültesi Dergisi* 49, no. 2 (2009): 158.

<sup>91</sup> Uroš Dakić, "The Sokollu Clan and the Politics of Vizirial Households," 35-36.

the Safavids in the east. Later, fights with the Habsburgs took centre stage in the second half of his reign.<sup>92</sup>

Between 1571 and 1576, István Báthory successfully delivered tributes and gifts to Sultan Selim II and Sultan Murad III. However, these yearly tributes and gifts were not enough to maintain a good relationship with the Porte. Many viziers, pashas, *chavushes*, and other high ranking statesmen among the Ottomans were involved in this gift-exchange process.<sup>93</sup> The role of the gifts in this network behind diplomatic relations is more visible through the investigation of the letters exchanged between two sides. While István Báthory tried to maintain a good relationship with the Porte by paying taxes and sending gifts, he also established a policy based on a declaration of obedience to the Habsburgs by secret oaths.<sup>94</sup> The question of whether the Porte was unaware of these secret oaths or the obedience of Transylvania to the Habsburgs remains unclear. However, since the Ottomans knew the difficulties of gaining full authority over Transylvania, which meant a decisive supremacy over the Habsburgs as well, they feasibly ignored reality and tried to keep the balance in the region through the Province of Buda and their vassal, the Principality of Transylvania.

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<sup>92</sup> Imber, "Frozen Legitimacy," 101-2.

<sup>93</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*.

<sup>94</sup> Teréz Oborni also mentions that only a few Transylvanian aristocrats knew about István Báthory's oath of loyalty to Maximilian: "Between Vienna and Constantinople," 76.

## CHAPTER II:

### GIFTS FROM THE OTTOMANS: SYMBOLIC GIFTS OF THE SULTAN

Besides the mutual obligations that determined the structure of the relationship, the reciprocal exchange of objects played a significant role in confirming both parties' status in the relationship between the Ottomans and Transylvania. The Ottomans sent *ahdname* and insignia—banner, maces, *kaftans*, and other objects—which communicated the gift-giver's superior status to the recipient in a symbolic manner. In return, they received a yearly tribute of money with particular gifts such as falcons, horses, and cups, among other things. In this chapter, I will focus on the objects, their symbolic meanings, ceremonials, and moreover, the personal or impersonal relationship established behind this exchange process in the historical context.

First of all, it is important to mention the Ottoman diplomacy toward the West, which is known for its non-reciprocal nature. The Ottoman Empire shaped its diplomacy according to Islamic principles. Based on these principles, in order to regulate international relations, it divided the world into two parts: the Abode of Islam (*Dâr al-Islam*), and the Abode of War (*Dâr al-Harb*) where the infidels live.<sup>95</sup> Besides these two, there was the Abode of Treaty (*Dâr al-Sulh*) in which the Ottomans regulated their relations with non-Muslims with an agreement to pay tribute. Ottoman vassal principalities were included in this territorial division.<sup>96</sup> In order to legitimize the relationship established with the infidel, Ottomans applied a legal framework by granting them imperial pledge (*ahdname-i hümayun*).

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<sup>95</sup> A. Nuri Yurdusev, "The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy," in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 5-6.

<sup>96</sup> Bülent Arı, "Early Ottoman Diplomacy: Ad Hoc Period," in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 40-41.

## Gifts of the sultan: *Ahdname*

The *ahdname* was an essential object in the reciprocity process between both parties. Considering the *ahdname* as a written part of the regulation of the “non-equal” reciprocity and obligations that the sultan provided to Transylvania, I suggest calling it a “gift” from the sultan to his subject, in this case to the Transylvanian ruler.<sup>97</sup> In the first *ahdname* sent to István Báthory, Sultan Selim II stated: “They announced that King Stephen was acknowledged as voivode and they requested my imperial *ahdname* to be *sadaka* (charity, alms) and granted *ihsan* (gift, grant) to him.”<sup>98</sup> Here the words *sadaka* and *ihsan* show that the Ottomans considered this document a gift or donation from the sultan.

The Ottoman sultans regulated their peace, alliances, trade conditions, and vassalage relations through *ahdnames* or capitulations, as well as the status of the foreigners living or travelling in the empire.<sup>99</sup> According to Edhem Eldem, capitulations were an attempt to create a *jus gentium* for the foreigners who otherwise would have remained lawless.<sup>100</sup> The content of these documents was the rights or privileges granted by the sultan and the obligations of the other party in return for these privileges.<sup>101</sup> *Ahdnames*, like other documents conferring a privilege, were often drawn up in the form of a *berat* (deed of grant),

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<sup>97</sup> As an elected ruler of Transylvania, István Báthory was given an *ahdname* while Wallachian and Moldavian voivodes were given *berat* (deed of grant) upon their appointment by the Ottoman sultans. Sándor Papp, “Ștefan cel Mare, le roi Matthias et l’Empire Ottoman,” in *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en mer Noire (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XXI<sup>e</sup> siècles): Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*, ed. Faruk Bilici, Ionel Căndea, and Anca Popescu (Braila: Musée de Braila-Editions Istros, 2007), 363-90.

<sup>98</sup> “*voivodalik ana mukarrer ola deyü i’lam edüb İstefan Krala ‘inayet olunduğu üzere ‘ahdname-i hümayunum sadaka u ihsan olunmasın rica eylediler.*” Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 215; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* [Ottoman history] vol. 3, pt. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 46; Feridun Ahmed, *Mecmua’i Münşeatü’s-selatin II* [The epistolary collection of the Imperial Chancellery] (Istanbul, 1268 (1848), 461-462.

<sup>99</sup> Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (Boulder, CO, 2000), 239; Edhem Eldem, “Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity: The Reception of Foreigners in Ottoman Istanbul,” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 2: *Cities and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, ed. Donatella Calabi and Stephen Turk Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 117.

<sup>100</sup> Edhem Eldem, “Foreigners at the Threshold of Felicity,” 117.

<sup>101</sup> Nicolaas H. Biegan, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship: According to the Firmans of Murad III (1575-1595) Extant in the State Archive of Dubrovnik* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967), 46.

which is also called *nişan*.<sup>102</sup> It is also important to note that trade or peace agreements with sovereign rulers, such as Venice, France, Poland, and the Habsburg Empire, called *capitulations* in Western Europe, were also called *ahdname* in Ottoman diplomacy.<sup>103</sup>

The document granted by the sultan to western countries reflected the non-reciprocal nature of the Ottoman diplomacy. The Ottomans' claim of superiority shaped its diplomacy in a non-reciprocal frame.<sup>104</sup> They did refuse to consider the equality of the European powers.<sup>105</sup> One would suggest that for the Ottomans, accepting the reciprocity in the diplomacy meant accepting the equality. Thus, the character of the documents granted by the sultan was also unilateral.

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<sup>102</sup> Halil Inalcık, "İmtiyazat," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, vol. 3 (Leiden, Brill: 1986), 1179.

<sup>103</sup> Sándor Papp, "The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities, Churches, and States in the Ottoman Empire," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 378, 406. The related documents were published by Sándor Papp with German translations in *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 147-288. Dariusz Kolodziejczyk rightfully emphasizes the confusion in the use of different terms for this type of document: *imtiyazat* (privileges), *ahdname* (letter of oath), *capitolazioni* (capitulations) and *pacta* (treaty). While both Ottoman terms (*imtiyazat* and *ahdname*) stress the unilateral character of the document, the Western terms (capitulation and treaty) stress the bilateral character: Kolodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations*, 3-7; Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace*, 241; Maria Pia Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas in the 16th c.: Gifts and Insignia," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2008), 193. On the other hand, *imtiyazat* and capitulation were related to the commercial privileges: Halil Inalcık, "İmtiyazat," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 3, 1179-89. This inconsistency in the terminology of Ottoman diplomacy has often caused confusion among scholars. For instance, Nicolaas H. Biegman states that four *ahdnames* from Murad III to Ragusa were in the form of *ferman* (imperial order), while Reyhman and Zajaczkowski stress that *ferman* should not be used to refer to the correspondence of the sultan with a foreign sovereign: Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, 54; Jan Reyhman and others, *Handbook of Ottoman-Turkish Diplomats* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 137. For an analysis of the inconsistency in the terminology used in Ottoman diplomacy, see Hans Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats: The 'Ahdnames; The Historical Background and the Development of a Category of Political-Commercial Instruments together with an Annotated Edition of a Corpus of Relevant Documents," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 1, no. 2 (1998): 185-90. For the several aspects of the capitulations' contents, see Maurits H. Van Den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beraths in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 19-26.

<sup>104</sup> Michael Talbot compares both the Ottoman and Habsburg text of Treaty of Zitvatorok (1606) and states that the Habsburg text focuses on the reciprocity and reciprocal gift exchange, while the Ottoman text simply ignores any notion of reciprocity: Michael Talbot, "A Treaty of Narratives: Friendship, Gifts, and Diplomatic History in the British Capitulations of 1641," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 48 (2016): 362. Also see: J. C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European States System," *The Middle East Journal* 15 (1961): 146.

<sup>105</sup> For instance, they had no interest to establish embassies in Europe until the eighteenth century. In addition, learning a European language was forbidden in the Ottoman court. Diplomatic exchanges and ceremonies were always held in the Ottoman court and in the Turkish language: Virginia Aksan, "Who was an Ottoman? Reflection on 'Wearing Hats' and 'Turning Turk'," in *Europe und die Türkei im 18. Jahrhundert/Europe and Turkey in the 18th Century*, ed. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2011), 307; Thomas Naff, "Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1809," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83 (1963), 314; J. C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European States System," 147.

Different types of *ahdnames* were used according to their purpose and the relationship between the Porte and the other parties. From the time of Süleyman, the ruler of Transylvania received an *ahdname-i hümayun* (imperial pledge) from the sultan, which determined the character of Transylvania as a vassal. Sándor Papp notes the similarity in the content of these *ahdnames* to *berats* (deeds of grant), which were clearly unilateral, given to Moldavian and Wallachian rulers as well.<sup>106</sup>

The bilateral vs. unilateral character of the *ahdname* has been a subject of much discussion by scholars. This confusion reflects the Ottoman and the Western perceptions of *ahdname*. Through focusing on the early Ottoman-Venetian diplomacy, Hans Theunissen states that in the fifteenth century, Ottoman *ahdnames* developed a bilateral character under the influence of the Byzantine-Venetian treaties. According to this tradition, both sides exchanged the text and swore in the presence of the other party's representative to maintain the agreement.<sup>107</sup> Hans Theunissen also states that during the sixteenth century, when the Ottomans reached the peak of their power, Ottoman-Venetian treaties were gradually transformed into unilateral privileges granted by the sultan. Although the treaties had reciprocal clauses at the beginning of the sixteenth century, from 1540 onwards they began to take on a unilateral character.<sup>108</sup> This change was not only visible in the form of the documents. In the sixteenth century, the Ottomans gradually abandoned the use of language of the addressee, such as Greek or Italian, and began to use only Ottoman Turkish.<sup>109</sup> The bilateral diplomatic procedures remained, such as the exchange of documents and swearing

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<sup>106</sup> A *berat* was a deed of grant given by the sultan that provided privileges to the holder. Susan Skilliter states that the *ahdnames* given to the English in 1580 and to the French in 1569 were drawn up not in the form of *ahdname* but in the form of *berat*: Susan Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey 1578-1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 2-3, 92.

<sup>107</sup> Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats," 225. For the inconsistency of the terminology used in Ottoman diplomatics, see: 185-90

<sup>108</sup> Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats," 240, 253-255.

<sup>109</sup> Tijana Krstic, "Of Translation and Empire: Sixteenth-century Ottoman Imperial Interpreters as Renaissance Go-betweens," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012), 132. For instance, Mehmed II's peace treaty with Venice in 1478 was written in Greek: Diana Gilliland Wright and Pierre A. MacKay, "When the *Serenissima* and the *Gran Turco* Made Love: The Peace Treaty of 1478," *Studi Veneziani* 53 (2007), 269-71.

an oath by both parties.<sup>110</sup> The change to unilateral *ahdnames* and the shift in the language and the diplomatic process are not surprising as they coincide with the rise of an Ottoman universalist vision in the mid-sixteenth century.

Maria Pia Pedani points out the same issue noting that the *ahdnames* changing into the form of *berat* (deed of grant) meant that the Ottomans considered themselves superior to the other party.<sup>111</sup> Viorel Panaite is another scholar who has contributed to the discussion by investigating the diplomatic form of the Ottoman texts. According to Panaite, fifteenth-century *ahdnames* granted to Venice, Hungary, Poland, and the Habsburg Empire were clearly unilateral, although the Western view was contrary.<sup>112</sup> This unilateral character can be clearly seen in the relationship between the Ottomans and Transylvania in the contents of the texts in *ahdnames*. However, it is important to state that there was almost always a negotiation process behind the actual procedure of the creation of the document.<sup>113</sup>

According to Ottoman chancery practice, the validity of *ahdnames* ended with the passage of the stated number of years or the end of the contractor's reign. Therefore, it had to be renewed and confirmed by the new successor.<sup>114</sup> One would suggest that this temporary nature of the pledge allowed the Ottomans to control the relationship. During his reign, István Báthory received three *ahdnames* from the Porte, one from Sultan Selim II and two from Sultan Murad III. The reason for two *ahdnames* from Sultan Murad was a change of the amount of tribute. According to first agreement, the voivode of Transylvania was supposed to increase the tribute by 5,000 golden florins after the accession of each new sultan.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Hans Theunissen, "Ottoman-Venetian Diplomats," 255.

<sup>111</sup> Maria Pia Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas in the 16th c.: Gifts and Insignia," 193.

<sup>112</sup> Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace*, 242.

<sup>113</sup> For instance, Transylvania tried to influence the Porte for the financial obligations to be written in the *ahdname*. See the list of orders for Ferenc Balogh, envoy of István Báthory, to negotiate at the Porte: László Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 299. Moreover, in the latter period, there were some occasions when Transylvanian rulers themselves drafted the *ahdnames* that they wanted to receive from the sultan. Papp, "The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities, Churches, and States in the Ottoman Empire," 411.

<sup>114</sup> Panaite, *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace*, 246; Inalcık, "İmtiyazat," 1179.

<sup>115</sup> János Lipták, *A Portai adó története: Az Erdélyi fejedelemségben* [The history of the Porte Tax: In the Principality of Transylvania] (Késmárk: Sauter, 1911), 25.



However, István Báthory later succeeded in convincing the Porte to cap the tribute at 15,000 golden florins. His victory against Békés and the news about his election as king of Poland might have affected the change in the sultan's decision.<sup>116</sup> This shows that once an *ahdname* was drawn up it was possible to change or renew it based on negotiations without the accession of a new sultan.

### **Gift of the sultan: Insignia**

The process of inaugurating Transylvanian rulers started when the Transylvanian estates informed the Porte about the election of the new ruler. Thereupon, the sultan would send at least two *fermans* (sultan's orders)—one for the estates, one for the new ruler—to confirm his rulership.<sup>117</sup> Alongside the *fermans* and *ahdname*, sultans also sent the insignia of inauguration: a banner (*sancak*), cap (*üsküf, börk*), mace (*topuz*), panache or aigrette (*sorguç*), saber (*seyf, kılıç*), horse, and a robe of honor (*kaftan, hilat*).<sup>118</sup> These insignia were the visual expression of the sultan's supremacy over the Transylvanian ruler. Each object contained a symbolic message, such as friendship, trust, power, authority, or sovereignty and communicated to the receiver on behalf of the sultan. Beyond their symbolic meanings, most

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<sup>116</sup> Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 73-84. That was not the only case when the sultan withdrew a granted *ahdname*. When István Báthory's successor, Kristóf Báthory, died in 1581, his son, nine-year-old Sigismund Báthory, was given an *ahdname* by the sultan. However, vizier Sinan Pasha was against his voivodate and wanted Pál Márkházi, who promised to send more tax, to be voivode. Although an *ahdname* was given to Sigismund Báthory, another one was issued for Pál Márkházi in 1581. In the document given to Pál Márkházi, the sultan stated that an *ahdname-i hümayun* was given to Sigismund Báthory, but, since he was too young to rule and hesitated to pay more taxes, the voivodate was given to Pál Márkházi, on account of his ability and promise to pay more. However, upon the dismissal of Sinan Pasha, the sultan again confirmed Sigismund Báthory's voivodate. *Mühimme* No. 42 in: Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 47. Also see Mihail Gübøglu, "Osmanlı Padişahları Tarafından Transilvanya'ya Verilen Ahidnameler Kapitülasyonlar (1541-1690)" [Ahdnames and capitulations given to Transylvania by the Ottoman sultans], in *X. Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara, 22-26 Eylül 1986): Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler, IV* [Tenth Congress of Turkish History (Ankara, 22-26 September 1986): Bulletins presented at the congress] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), 1728; Sándor Papp, "From a Transylvanian Principality to an Ottoman Sanjak: The Life of Pál Márkházi, a Hungarian Renegade," *Chronica* 4 (2004): 57-67.

<sup>117</sup> After the Porte was informed of the election, a letter of order was sent to Kristóf Báthory and the other lords, and a separate letter to István Báthory: *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol.1, 241-43.

<sup>118</sup> Papp, "The System of Autonomous Muslim and Christian Communities," 408. More or less the same objects, were sent not only to the Transylvanian voivodes, but also to other Christian vassals. These symbolic objects were used in appointing Muslim vassals or high-ranking Ottoman officials, too.

of them had significant cultural value which related to the Ottoman and Turkish traditions. Through mobilizing these objects beyond their borders, the Ottomans not only made the sultan's authority and universalist vision visible, but also made their cultural propaganda, while preserving the political goals behind this transmission. Some of the objects, such as *kaftan* and horse, served more to this cultural propaganda than the others, due to their material value.

On August 15, 1571, the insignia of Selim II to István Báthory arrived in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia). In his letter to István Báthory, the sultan stated that with his *şahincibaşı*,<sup>119</sup> Muhammed, he sent a *sancak*,<sup>120</sup> *üsküf*, a wonderful horse (*mükemmel at*) with a saddle (*raht*), and *hil'at*<sup>121</sup> to the newly elected voivode.<sup>122</sup> Among them, the main symbolic object that transmitted the power of the sultan was the *sancak*.<sup>123</sup> *Sancak* was also the name of the main administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire, ruled by a *sancakbeyi* (governor of a *sancak*). The *sancakbeyi* received a *sancak* from the sultan as a symbol of his authority. The same practice was applied to the *beylerbeyi* and voivodas' appointments as well.<sup>124</sup> By giving the voivodes a *sancak* and *tuğ* (horse tail)<sup>125</sup> as symbols of power of the sultan, the Ottomans

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<sup>119</sup> The official who was responsible for the falcons or other birds of prey. In Hungarian *madarászmaster*.

<sup>120</sup> In the text: *râyet-i feth-âyet*.

<sup>121</sup> In the text: *hil'at-ı fâhire-i hüsvânem* (splendid *hil'at* of my suzerainty).

<sup>122</sup> *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 1, 448, no.698; Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 20.

<sup>123</sup> In the reign of Süleyman, the number of the standards (*sancak*) in the empire increased from four to seven, which symbolized the sovereignty over the seven climes: Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 412.

<sup>124</sup> In the case of Transylvania, Sultan Süleyman sent a flag (*sancak*) to Queen Izabella's son. In 1541, Izabella stated in her letter: "What we do know is that he [János Zsigmond] was honoured with the name and title of the *sancak* of Transylvania": Pál Fodor, "Ottoman Policy towards Hungary, 1520-1541," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 45, no. 2-3 (1991): 327. Also see Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 2., 3.

<sup>125</sup> According to Ottoman tradition, high-ranking officials, as well as voivodes, received *tuğ* according to their rank. For instance, a vizier received three *tuğ* from the sultan as a symbol of his authority. See Tülin Coruhlu, "Tuğ," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam,], vol. 41 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2012), 331. Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlılarda Devlet Teşkilatı ve Sosyal Yapı* [State organisation and social structure of the Ottomans between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), 11.

considered them no different from other governors.<sup>126</sup> This is what Pál Fodor calls a “virtual *sancak*.” He states that by donating the sultan’s diploma and granting the *sancak* to János Zsigmond, the sultan installed the Ottoman administrative system in this region. However, this “virtual *sancak*,” which was not incorporated directly into the empire, must be distinguished from the ones which were directly under the Ottoman administrative system.<sup>127</sup> Pál Fodor also emphasizes the Ottomans’ use of terminology. In many of Süleyman’s decrees this formula appears: “Transylvania is the *sancak* of my servant in the old way, the king’s son;” “I gave [him] Transylvania as a *sancak*.”<sup>128</sup>

Without integrating Transylvania into their administrative system, the Ottomans claimed Transylvania as their *sancak*, and applied their ceremonial customs to visualize their claim to sovereignty. According to the Hungarian sources, the main object symbolizing the sultan’s supremacy, the banner, was red with a golden heart on top of it, “which expressed that the emperor’s heart was compliant and gracious towards his vassal.”<sup>129</sup>

At the end of an Ottoman governor’s tenure the *sancak* should have been returned to the Porte and reassigned to the new one to shift the sultan’s power from one to the other. In the change or dismissal of a *sancakbeyi* or *beylerbeyi*, when a new voivode was elected, the previous *sancak* was supposed to be sent back to the Porte. However, sources show that it was not the *sancak* itself that was supposed to be sent after the end of the tenure, but only the top of the *sancak*, a spherical knob.<sup>130</sup> For instance, when István Báthory was elected king of Poland, Sultan Murad III sent a *hükm-i hümayun* (imperial order) to Kristóf Báthory in which he informed the voivode about insignia he had sent to Transylvania and requested that the

<sup>126</sup> Transylvania was also recorded in *Sancak Tevcih Defteri* (*sancak* records) alongside Moldavia and Wallachia: Orhan Kılıç, “Ottoman Provincial Organization in the Classical Period (1362-1799),” in *The Turks*, vol. 3, ed. H. Celal Güzel (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publications, 2002), 483.

<sup>127</sup> Fodor, “Ottoman Policy towards Hungary, 1520-1541,” 330.

<sup>128</sup> Quotations from various sources: Fodor, “Ottoman Policy towards Hungary, 1520-1541,” 329.

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in B. Szabó, “The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania,” 131. See also Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 2, 1.

<sup>130</sup> Rhoads Murphey states that the top of the *sancak* was another symbol of sultan’s sovereign authority conferred on the office holder during his tenure: Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800* (London: Continuum, 2008), 230.

previous *sancak*'s top, originally sent by his father, Sultan Selim II, to István Báthory, be returned to the Porte.<sup>131</sup> That was a sign of the end of a tenure, and beginning of a new one.

Alongside the *sancak*, the *tuğ* (horse tail), was another symbol of the sultan's authority which was given to *sancakbeyi* or voivodes at their appointments. I would like to point out the absence of *tuğ* among the insignia sent to Transylvania, although the Wallachian, Moldavian, and Crimean rulers received *tuğ* from the sultan.<sup>132</sup> As the Ottomans ranked the Wallachian and Moldavian voivodes equal to the *beylerbeyi*, they each received two *tuğs* from the sultan.<sup>133</sup>

Among all insignia, the *kaftan* had a significant role as diplomatic gift, not only in internal, but also in foreign diplomacy. The giving *kaftan*, or *hilat*,<sup>134</sup> as a gift was a very old Islamic tradition. It was a gift which was only given by a superior, most often the sultan, to an inferior.<sup>135</sup> The reason for gifting *kaftans* at the Ottoman court was mostly to confirm the appointment of a new official or a new task given to a person, such as commanding the army.<sup>136</sup> The envoys or ambassadors of foreign countries who visited the sultan were also

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<sup>131</sup> Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 3, 9. Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 273; Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 82. The Transylvanian ruler also used the banner in order to renounce their disengagement from the Porte. For instance, in 1594, Zsigmond Báthory sent the sultan's *sancak* to Emperor Rudolf to renounce his connection with the Porte: B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 135.

<sup>132</sup> Uzunçarşılı also mentions that István Bocskai received a *sancak* and *tuğ* from Sultan Ahmed I. However, in his *berat-i hümayun* in 1604, Ahmed I states that he sent the banner with the cap, robe of honor, and sword. This document does not mention the *tuğ*: Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanli Tarihi*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 52. For the original of the letter: Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archive], Török iratok [Turkish documents], Microfilm: R.315, nr.33-33b. For German translation: Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 261. Maria Pia Pedani mentions that Sultan Süleyman was accompanied by seven *tuğ* and eight banners on parade: Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 201.

<sup>133</sup> *Beylerbeyi* received two *tuğs* while *sancakbeyi* received only one. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanli Tarihi*, vol. 1, 403; Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 202.

<sup>134</sup> The *kaftan* given as a favor or reward from a superior to a person was called a *hilat* (robe of honor): Mehmet Şeker, "Hil'ât," in *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, vol.18, 22.

<sup>135</sup> That means that gifting *kaftans* was centralized in the Ottoman court. However, on some occasions high ranking Ottoman officials were provided *kaftans* to hand out as gifts. These officials were mostly representatives of the sultan's sovereignty in the provinces or commanders on the battle field. See Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "East is East and West is West, and Sometimes the Twain Did Meet: Diplomatic Gift Exchange in the Ottoman Empire," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies*, vol. 2, ed. Colin Imber, Keiko Kiyotaki, and Rhoads Murphey (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 118.

<sup>136</sup> For instance, when a vizier was given the task of commanding the army, he was given *kaftan* by the sultan before the campaign to confirm his service and another one at the end to reward his success. See Rhoads

given *kaftans* according to their rank and the relationship between the Porte and the country they represented.<sup>137</sup> In fact, they were obliged to present themselves with those *kaftans* before the sultan during the reception.

According to the most wide-spread interpretation, the *kaftan* symbolized the sovereign's trust and protection and therefore the receiver's loyalty to the sultan.<sup>138</sup> The offering of a *kaftan* as a gift was a symbolic expression of patronage and supremacy in Ottoman diplomacy. Through granting this gift, the sultan confirmed the position of the receiver and established a bond with him. To emphasize this bond, a *kaftan* was worn by the sultan before it was gifted to someone in the early periods.<sup>139</sup> At the same time, the recipient acknowledged his subordination to the sultan by accepting the garment.<sup>140</sup> Finbarr B. Flood argues that gifting a robe of honor could be considered as a way to insert those outside the

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Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 237. For other reasons to distribute *kaftans* or *hilats* see Filiz Karaca, "Osmanlılar'da Hil'ât" [Hil'at in the Ottomans], in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 18, 25-26.

<sup>137</sup> The type of the textile used, color, embroidery and the buttons determined the value of a *kaftan*. For instance the Ottoman viziers had velvet *kaftans* with golden buttons and gold ribbons: Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* [Dictionary of Ottoman historical idioms and terms], vol. 2 (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 134. Transylvanian ambassador Tamás Borsos recognized the high quality of the *kaftans* which were given to the Persian embassy: "a very beautiful *kaftan*, the kind worn by the sultan himself," quoted by Veronika Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costumes in Eastern Europe* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1982), 39. The Ottomans gave different types of *kaftans* made of different types of fabrics according to the rank of the receiver. The most appreciated color for a *kaftan* was red, since this color was associated with power in the empire. In contrast, the expensive blue was the favorite color in Europe. It was used in Virgin May's pictures and frescos, which is why blue became the color of Christians while yellow was associated with Jews: Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 198-99. It is also notable that furs in the Russian court functioned like *kaftans* in the Ottoman Empire. The rank of the recipient, as well as the political relationship, determined the number of the furs given as a gift to a person: Maija Jansson, "Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9, no. 3-4 (2005): 362.

<sup>138</sup> Hedda Reindl-Kiel states that receiving *kaftan* symbolized a kind of vassalage, while in his article "Kézcsók a pasának? Erdélyi követek Budán" Gábor Kármán suggests that the act of granting *kaftan* did not refer to a vassal status, rather functioned as a unilateral act of donator's protection and goodwill: Hedda Reindl Kiel, "East is East and West is West," 119; Gábor Kármán, "Kézcsók a pasának? Erdélyi követek Budán," *Történelmi Szemle*, LVI, 4 (2014): 655-656.

<sup>139</sup> Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 198.

<sup>140</sup> Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 187-188. Deborah Howard considers robing a visitor as a powerful metaphor for negotiation. According to her, textile is an indicator of the wealth and splendour of the host state. While robing honoured the recipient, it made them appear in the host state's fashion: Deborah Howard, "Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe: Forging European Identities: 1400-1700*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 144.

system into the system.<sup>141</sup> One would suggest that this phenomenon was applied in the Ottoman system, too. By clothing outsiders in a sultanic garment, the Ottomans intended to integrate them into their system. The Islamic law that rules foreigners lawless makes it impossible to negotiate with them without legitimizing their status first. The Ottomans' custom of clothing foreigners can be interpreted as a visual expression of legitimizing the existence of foreigners in the Ottoman court. Once they wore Ottoman garments, they had the right to be present before the sultan.<sup>142</sup> To receive a *hilat* from the sultan provided recognition, prestige, and honour, which were the core elements in the Ottoman system since the ethnicity of the person was not valued.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, dressing the visitors in an Ottoman fashion subjugated the recipients.<sup>144</sup> In addition, the removal of this robe from the person meant the owner's dismissal and loss of favor.<sup>145</sup>

The Transylvanian rulers and dignitaries of the Transylvanian court received *kaftans* from the sultan after their election. In 1571, there were 25 *hilats* among the insignia Sultan Selim II sent to István Báthory, one for the voivode, others for the dignitaries.<sup>146</sup> In his letter

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<sup>141</sup> Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2009), 75.

<sup>142</sup> Envoys of foreign countries were obliged to present themselves with *kaftans* before the sultan during the receptions. In the Peace of Karlowitz (1699), which marks the decline of Ottoman power in Central Europe and was brokered between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire, it was stated that ambassadors of the Habsburgs and their delegation were given no dress code: "Let it be permitted for the Imperial [i.e. Austrian] ambassadors and residents and their servants to dress however they wish, nor should there be any hindrance given them." In the same treaty it was also stated that the Habsburgs were allowed to bring free gifts: "Let them bring free will gifts which are, however, suitable for the dignity of each of the emperors, as a signs of friendship." In Fred L. Israel, ed., *Major Peace Treaties of Modern History, 1648-1967*, vol. 2 (New York: Chelsea House, 1967), 879. Also see; Tetyana Grygorieva, "Symbols and Perceptions of Diplomatic Ceremony: Ambassadors of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in Istanbul," in *Kommunikation durch symbolische Akte: Religiöse Heterogenität und politische Herrschaft in Polen-Litauen*, ed. Yvonne Kleinmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 115.

<sup>143</sup> Contrary to Europe, in the Ottoman Empire ethnic origin was not important for an official to have a high position. They were all considered slaves and could gain power and reach the highest position below the sultan by their talent, success, gaining favor and prestige.

<sup>144</sup> Howard, "Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans," 144.

<sup>145</sup> Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 228. For instance: "Giovanni Dario [Venetian diplomat] was then dismissed with all honors and gift of three ceremonial garments (*kaftan*) of gold cloth." In Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 370. Moreover, there are instances in Ottoman history when dismissal was announced by gifting a black *kaftan*. For instance, Vizir Gedik Ahmed Pasha was killed by the sultan's order after receiving a black *hilat* from the sultan at a banquet: Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol.1, 177.

<sup>146</sup> *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 1, 448, no. 698; Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 20; B. Szabó and Erdósi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 122-23.

to the voivode, the sultan said: “Take and put them [*hilats*] on and be the voivode according to my *ferman-ı şerif* (imperial order) [...] and clothe your lords according to their rank.”<sup>147</sup> By giving *kaftans* to the Transylvanian ruler and the dignitaries, first of all, the sultan confirmed the positions of the voivode and his court officials. By accepting the *kaftans*, at least visually, they agreed to be protected by the Ottoman sultan and be a part of the Ottoman system.<sup>148</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the basic elements of the relationship established between two parties was the protection of the sultan. *Kaftans* were also the symbol of this protection and the bond between the sultan and his subordinate.<sup>149</sup>

To look from another perspective at the function of this garment, I return to Marcel Mauss. According to Mauss, some of the objects given as gifts should be considered as a part of the donor. This phenomenon can be seen in gifting *kaftans* in the Ottoman system as well. The *kaftan* can be interpreted as a part of the sultan, which served to make the sultan and his supremacy visible on other bodies with or without sultan’s presence. Through the circulation of *kaftan*, the sultan and his sovereignty became visible throughout or outside the Ottoman lands and this garment contributed to spreading the Ottoman universalist propaganda in Europe.

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<sup>147</sup> “*alup giyüp fermân-ı şerifimmuktezâsınca vilâyet-I mezbûrede voyvoda olup... ümerâ-i vilâyete gönderilen hil’atlerin istihkâklarına göre giydürüp.*” In *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 1, 448, no. 698.

<sup>148</sup> Here it is important to underline the Ottoman expectations for the addressees to put the garments on when they received them. As it was stated in the letter of Sultan Selim II to István Báthory (“Take and put them on”), the voivode was not only expected to receive the *kaftan* but also to wear it. Another example from the fifteenth century shows the Ottomans’ wish to see the recipients in the garments sent by the sultan. In 1479, when Mehmed II’s envoy Lütfi Bey presented a woven belt that had been worn by the sultan to the Venetian Doge Giovanni Mocenigo, Lütfi Bey remarked that the doge should wear the belt “for love of his master.” In Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 371.

<sup>149</sup> A Hungarian folk tale emphasizes not only the effect of the *kaftan* in Hungarian tradition and culture, but also makes a reference to its protective function. According to this famous story, a Turkish *kaftan* in Kecskemét was used to protect the villages from the attack of the Turks. Whenever a Turkish army was in the area, the commander appeared in the *kaftan* before them, which made them dismount and kiss the garment. Veronika Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costumes in Eastern Europe* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1982), 14.

In his article on cultural diplomacy, Lucian Jora states that cultural diplomacy can be identified as cultural propaganda, as far as culture is exposed for certain political goals.<sup>150</sup> Beyond being one of the most significant cultural objects in the empire, *kaftan* always bore political purposes. As a luxury product whose material was valued in trade, *kaftan* also had significant role in the Ottomans' cultural propaganda, and served to "brand" the empire beyond its borders. The impact of the *kaftan* exceeded the framework of state-to-state diplomacy. It had influence not only on diplomatic relations and trading, but also on contemporary socio-cultural life in Transylvania. This Turkish garment inspired its own regional male fashion style, which had an oriental character. Not only did the people who had enough money to afford such garments start to wear kaftan-type coats, but the ruling elite also favoured this fashion. For instance, according to the sources, István Báthory wore the *kaftan* and Gábor Bethlen dressed like a Turkish dignitary.<sup>151</sup> The traces of this trend go back to the second half of the fifteenth century in Hungary. King Mátyás Hunyadi was wearing a Turkish *kaftan* when he received the Italian ambassador, Caesar Valentini. He also gave *kaftans* as gifts for the occasion.<sup>152</sup>

Sources describe a later example of a ceremony of receiving a *kaftan*. The Transylvanian envoy, István Szalánczi, who brought the taxes to the Porte, wrote to Rákóczi György I in 1638:

After having been asked by the *kaymakam* whether the tax was brought in gold from Transylvania, he told me, 'the following Tuesday I shall have you appear in front of His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan.' As the weather was ugly and windy, there was no divan, and our reception was postponed until 24

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<sup>150</sup> Lucian Jora, "New Practices and Trends in Cultural Diplomacy," *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations*, 10, no. 1 (2013): 44

<sup>151</sup> After the election of István Báthory as king of Poland, the Ottoman style of apparel became more fashionable in Poland as well: Nurhan Atasoy and Lâle Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture in Europe: 1453-1699* (Istanbul: Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2012), 67, 266. For the Turkish influence on the national costumes of Central and Eastern Europe, see Irena Turnau, *History of Dress in Central and Eastern Europe from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (Warsaw: Institute of the History of Material Culture Polish Academy of Sciences, 1991); Atasoy and Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture*, 29-125.

<sup>152</sup> This inclination cannot be the result of only gift exchange activity, but also the enterprises of merchants from both sides: Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costumes*, 4, 12, 14-15. See also B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 138.



January... we were offered seats in the divan...then we were taken to the place where *kaftans* are given. There eight of us were ‘*kaftaned*’, not counting the interpreter, and I was taken to the sultan... There I saluted His Honour the Sultan, presented him the letter of your Excellency and the presents, that is to say, the tax of 10,000 gold florins, one wash basin with pitcher, ten large covered chalices of silver gilt, made in a courtly fashion, and twenty-eight falcons. Prior to being ‘*kaftaned*’ in the ‘*kaftan-giving*’ hall, I gave out the presents to the member of the sultan’s court to the sum of 11,000 aspers.<sup>153</sup>

After being given as a gift, most of the time *kaftans* were cut up and repurposed, for example made into *dolmány*s,<sup>154</sup> or a coverlet and mass cloth.<sup>155</sup> Szabó describes this transformation of the object as losing significance. If one turns to the Ottoman side, one sees similar actions. *Kaftans* were turned into simple material objects after the act of receiving them. Reindl-Kiel states that at the moment *kaftans* were received, they were put into the person’s treasury: “Impressive gifts were evidently conceived as a part of a secondary currency in kind.”<sup>156</sup> Once the prestige, honor or confirmation were acquired with the *kaftan*, it was just an object which could become an asset for the owner. Here one can suggest that act of “giving a *kaftan*” and the context had more significant role in honoring the receiver than the object itself. The *kaftan* was a tool for the superior to communicate with an inferior. Once the message was transmitted, the object lost its symbolic significance but sustained its material value.

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<sup>153</sup> Quoted by Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costumes*, 13. For the full text of the Hungarian letter see Antal Beke and Samu Barabás, *I. Rákóczi György és a porta: Levelek és okiratok* [György Rákóczi I and the Sublime Porte: Letters and Documents] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1888), 459-67. About the same occasion, Tamás Borsos’s account says: “The Turks did not give a *kaftan* to Stephen Szalánczi, as he had already received two on the way [...] he started to shout rudely at Lord Balassi [...], asking why he had not been given one. Then the Turks took a *kaftan* from the back of the *çavuş* Jusuf and that was put on over Szalánczi.” Quoted by Veronika Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costumes*, 14.

<sup>154</sup> *Dolmány* was a type of jacket. See: Turnau, *History of Dress in Central and Eastern Europe*, 13, 17-19. Also see B. Szabó, “The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania,” 135.

<sup>155</sup> Gifts of clothes brought by Ottoman envoys to Venice were usually sent to St. Mark’s and made into liturgical cloths: Howard, “Cultural Transfer between Venice and the Ottomans, 145. Margareta Nockert also states that in Sweden Ottoman *kaftans* and textiles were given to the church and they were transformed into mass cloths: Margareta Nockert, “Rålamb Koleksiyonundan Rålamb Kaftanı ve Osmanlı Dokumaları” [Rålamb’s *Kaftan* and Ottoman Textiles from the Collection of Rålamb], in *Alay-ı Hümayun: İsveç Elçisi Rålamb’ın İstanbul Ziyareti ve Resimleri 1657-1658* [Imperial Procession: Swedish Ambassador Rålamb’s Visit to Istanbul and Paintings, 1657-1658], ed. Karin Adahl (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), 269.

<sup>156</sup> Reindl-Kiel, “East is East and West is West,” 117.

Besides the *kaftan*, another textile item had a role in symbolizing the bond between the sultan and his subject: the hat (*börk*). Among the accessories, headgear played the most significant role for the visual expression of a person's status in the empire. They were used to display hierarchical codes by their color, shape, type and material.<sup>157</sup> Not only the ranks were defined by the headgear, but ethnic and religious groups were also distinguished by their clothes and headdresses.<sup>158</sup> During the period of the Seljuks and Ottomans, *börks* appeared in different materials and shapes. During the Ottoman period, the changes in the shape and decoration of the *börks* was conspicuous after the accession of a new sultan.<sup>159</sup> The reason for this change can be explained by the symbolic function of the headgear. Since hats symbolized loyalty to the sultan, a new sultan meant a new bond between the sultan and his subjects and the visual expression of this bond was displayed in headgear. Hence, in the empire, to remove the headgear meant to remove this bond with the sultan.<sup>160</sup> When a sultan died, his subjects and soldiers threw their hats to the ground to show their sadness and symbolize the broken bond between them and their sovereign.<sup>161</sup>

Sending a headgear as an insignia to vassal rulers was definitely intended to establish a bond between the sultan and his vassals. Since these hats resembled the janissaries' *börk*,

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<sup>157</sup> Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 227. Also see Virginia Aksan, "Who was an Ottoman? Reflection on 'Wearing Hats' and 'Turning Turk'," in *Europe und die Türkei im 18. Jahrhundert / Europe and Turkey in the 18th Century*, ed. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2011), 307.

<sup>158</sup> Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Root of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6. For instance, during the reign of Mehmed II, Jews were assigned to wear red headgear while Christians were assigned to wear black headgear: Betül İpşirli Argit, "Clothing Habits, Regulations and Non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire," *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 24 (2005): 81.

<sup>159</sup> Emel Esin, "Börk," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, 328. *Kuka* and *serpuş* were other names used for hat.

<sup>160</sup> That is why when ambassadors visited the Porte they were not allowed to remove their hats in front of the sultan, since it indicated the break of the loyalty to the sultan. After spending some years of his childhood in the Ottoman Empire as a hostage, Prince Vlad III of Wallachia, also known as Vlad the Impaler, was familiar with these customs at the Ottoman court. Perhaps that was why in one instance he asked the envoy of Mehmed the Conqueror to raise his *turban* in front of him. The Ottoman envoy refused this request, since raising the hat meant breaking his loyalty to the sultan, and he was killed by nailing his turban to his head. Vlad III killing the envoy can be interpreted not only as an act against diplomatic rules, but rather as an act of contempt towards Ottoman customs: Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 204.

<sup>161</sup> Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas" 200. Also see, Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, "II.Mehmed'den I.Ahmed'e Osmanlı Padişahlarının Cenaze Törenleri (1481-1616)" [Funeral ceremonies of the Ottoman sultans, from Mehmed II to Ahmed I (1481-1616)], in *Osmanlılar ve Ölüm* [The Ottomans and death], ed. Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 258-60.

called *üskiüf*,<sup>162</sup> the same connection can be observed between this object and the janissaries.<sup>163</sup> The *muhzır ağa*'s<sup>164</sup> role in putting the hat on the voivode's head supports this.<sup>165</sup> Through giving this object to the voivode, the sultan not only established a link between himself and his subject, he also linked the janissaries with the voivode.

Another object related to apparel was the aigrette (feather: *sorguç*). The aigrette was used by Ottoman sultans and other dignitaries on special occasions such as enthronement, festivals, weddings, and campaigns. While giving a *kaftan* as a gift was a common tradition in the Ottoman court, giving a *sorguç* was not very common and therefore symbolized a higher favour.<sup>166</sup> They were given by the sultan mostly to the viziers who commanded the army during a campaign.<sup>167</sup> For instance, when Sultan Süleyman arrived at Mohacs, he had three feathers on his hat. He gave another one to his grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha.<sup>168</sup> Probably this object functioned as a talisman to protect the person from evil during the battle.<sup>169</sup> This information supports the interpretation of the symbolic meaning of giving a *sorguç* to a voivode. I suggest again that this object underscored the military cooperation between the two parties. A sultan gave the *sorguç* to the voivode to protect him and his army from the harm since he had to support the Ottoman army when it was necessary.

In the sources, the *sorguç* is not mentioned as an insignia sent from the Ottoman sultans to István Báthory. The probable reason for this is that the aigrette was attached to the cap and considered as a part of the cap. However, Nurhan Atasoy and Lâle Uluç mention an

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<sup>162</sup> The type of *börk* which was used by janissaries and embroidered with silver or gold thread was called *üskiüf*: Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. 3, 560; Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 199.

<sup>163</sup> Janissaries' *börk* was a symbol of their devotion or loyalty to the sultans. János B. Szabó states that the hat was sent by the janissaries to new prince: "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 132.

<sup>164</sup> *Muhzır ağa* was a member of janissaries and responsible for the protection of the grand vizier and representative of the issues related janissaries in the imperial court: Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. 2, 572.

<sup>165</sup> Radu G. Paun stated that *muhzır ağa* replaced the *kuka* on the head of new Romanian voivodes during the ceremonies of inauguration: "Sur l'investiture des derniers princes phanariotes," *Revue des études Sud-Est européennes*, 35 (1997): 71.

<sup>166</sup> Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, "Sorguç," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam], vol.37 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), 379.

<sup>167</sup> Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 234-35; Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 199-200.

<sup>168</sup> Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 200.

<sup>169</sup> Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 199-200.

aigrette recorded in Czartoryski Museum in Cracow as belonging to István Báthory.<sup>170</sup>

Therefore, one would assume that, even if it was not among the insignia of inauguration, the voivode received an aigrette as well.

Horses were also among the insignia from the sultan to the voivodes. Animals, in general, were among the formal gifts in the Ottoman Empire and horses, camels, falcons, and dogs were considered precious.<sup>171</sup> In her article on gifts of animals in the relationship between the Dutch and Japanese, Martha Chaiklin emphasizes the symbolic value of these animals through the connection between hunting and the military success.<sup>172</sup> Hunting was important since it provided skills for war; therefore, certain live animals had significant value as gifts used for hunting. Among those animals, due to their military value and role in the communication system, the horse was the most precious in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>173</sup> This animal symbolized power and the military competence.<sup>174</sup> Thus, for a foreign addressee to receive a horse as a gift was a great honor and a sign of friendship and trust.

The significant role of horses in Ottoman culture was based on the pre-Islamic period. In Turkish culture, the horse was considered sacred and was buried with the owner or in a

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<sup>170</sup> Adam Zamoyski, *The Czartoryski Museum* (London: Azimuth Editions on Behalf of the Princes Czartoryski Foundation, 2001) cited in Atasoy and Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture*, 266.

<sup>171</sup> Exotic animals such as lions, elephants, tigers, and giraffes were sent as gifts to the Ottoman court as well: Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Power and Submission: Gifting at Royal Circumcision Festival in the Ottoman Empire (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)," *Turcica* 41 (2009): 52. Elias I. Muhanna provides the translation of a corpus of Ottoman-Mamluk diplomatic visits and gift exchange in the fifteenth century. In this corpus there is evidence that a number of exotic animals were exchanged: Elias I. Muhanna, "The Sultan's New Clothes: Ottoman-Mamluk Gift Exchange in the Fifteenth Century," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 190-97. Furthermore, in 1289, Ilkhan Arghun offered Philip the Fair an alliance in exchange for rare and precious gifts which included falcons too: Anthony Cutler, "Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 257.

<sup>172</sup> Martha Chaiklin, "The Merchant's Ark: Live Animal Gifts in Early Modern Dutch-Japanese Relations," *World History Connected* 9, no. 1 (2012): 6-7. Accessed August, 2014. <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/9.1/index.html>.

<sup>173</sup> It was not even allowed to export horses from the country. An imperial order registered in the *Mühimme* demonstrates the Ottoman's fear of giving good horses to the enemy. In 1560 the pasha of Buda was ordered to make sure not to give any horses from the Ottoman lands to the infidels with the excuse of evacuating captives. When the envoy of János Zsigmond Szapolyai was in Istanbul in 1559, he and his men were provided horses by the Ottomans. An imperial order states that they had to give the horses back since it was forbidden to take horses out of the Ottoman lands. It is also stated that the authorities should avoid giving them nice horses to ride. Instead, they should ride only packhorses. See: *3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 71, 141-42, 301.

<sup>174</sup> Ottoman sultans were often depicted on horseback to emphasize their military power: Tülay Artan, "Ahmed I and 'Tuhfet'ül-mülûk ve's-selâtîn': A Period Manuscript on Horses, Horsemanship and Hunting," in *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Istanbul: Eren, 2010), 236.

private cemetery.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, Turkish horses, together with other military equipment which symbolized the military success of the Ottomans, played a significant role in the medieval West in creating the image of the Turks.<sup>176</sup> They were strong and fast and played a key role in the Ottomans' success on the battlefield.

It is known that the pashas of provinces in the empire received horses as gifts from the sultan at the time of their appointment to the office, and so did voivodes on the occasion of their inauguration.<sup>177</sup> In the sources, these horses were mentioned as *esb-i mükemmel* or *mükemmel at* (wonderful or caparisoned horse), which means they were decorated with valuable full horse equipment. According to the information in the sources at least two horses were sent to István Báthory with other insignia.<sup>178</sup>

Another object among the insignia of the sultan was the mace (*topuz* or *gürz*). The Crimean, Wallachian, Moldavian, and Transylvanian voivodes each received a mace from the sultan for their inauguration.<sup>179</sup> The *topuz* (mace) was prevalently used by the Ottomans, and previously by the Seljuks as well. It was not only a weapon used for military purposes, but also an accessory for Ottoman ceremonies. It was a symbol of the sultan's military authority. The quality and the decoration of the mace reflected the rank of the holder: the heavier and

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<sup>175</sup> Ibrahim Kafesoğlu, "İslam Öncesi At" [Horse in the pre-Islamic Period], In *İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam] vol. 4 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1991), 27. This old Turkish tradition continued in the Ottoman period. The horses of Mehmed II and Osman II had a private cemetery in Istanbul. Especially Osman's love of horses inspired works of literature in his reign. His horse was buried in Üsküdar on the grounds of a royal palace and had a headstone: Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 118-19; Alan Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 235, fn. 3. In his diary Ogier Ghislain Busbecq expressed his amazement at the way horses were treated and the close relationship established between horses and their owners in the empire: Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, *Türk Mektupları: Kanuni Döneminde Avrupalı Bir Elçinin Gözlemleri (1555-1560)* [Turkish Letters: Observation of a European Envoy in the Period of Kanuni (1555-1560)] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2013), 117-18.

<sup>176</sup> Gerhard Jaritz, "Fear and Fascination: Late Medieval German Perceptions of the Turks Revisited," *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 46 (2002): 42.

<sup>177</sup> For instance, the governors of Egypt received horses as part of their gift package when they arrived in the province: Mikhail, *The Animal in Ottoman Egypt*, 23.

<sup>178</sup> For instance, in 1571 Sultan Selim II sent "a few" caparisoned horses to István Báthory: Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 20.

<sup>179</sup> Tülin Coruhlu, "Gürz," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam], vol. 14 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1996), 327; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 46, 53-54.

more decorated the mace, the more honorable the person who had it.<sup>180</sup> For instance, János B. Szabó emphasizes the similarity of the mace of Transylvanian Voivode Mihály Apafi II and that of Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa to show the rank-denoting function of the maces sent to voivodes of Transylvania.<sup>181</sup>

Maria Pia Pedani states that sword was not among the insignia sent by the sultan to voivodes in the sixteenth century. She also adds that a sword was mostly given to Muslim rulers as a gift since it was a symbol of trust and peace as well as the sultan's authority.<sup>182</sup> In the sources that I investigated, it was not mentioned whether or not István Báthory received a sword or sabre from the sultan. However, Sultan Ahmet I's *berat* to Bocskai in 1604 reveals that this voivode received swords from the sultan.<sup>183</sup> Another example shows that János Zsigmond also received a sabre and dagger with a belt in 1566.<sup>184</sup> Gerhard Jaritz states that Turkish sabres became part of the exotic collections of the aristocratic or upper class in Europe in the sixteenth century.<sup>185</sup> And again it was István Báthory who brought the fashion of sabre, as well as other war equipment in Ottoman style, from Transylvania to Poland. As a result, the sabre became the Polish national weapon.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Coruhlu, "Gürz," 327.

<sup>181</sup> B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 133.

<sup>182</sup> Pedani, "*Sultans and Voivodas*," 202.

<sup>183</sup> Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archive], Török iratok [Turkish documents], Microfilm: R.315, nr.33b. For German translation and the Ottoman text, see Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 262.

<sup>184</sup> This sabre and dagger were of the type that was used by janissary commanders: B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 138, fn. 10.

<sup>185</sup> Gerhard Jaritz, "Fear and Fascination," 43.

<sup>186</sup> For István Báthory's introduction of the Turkish-style armour into the Polish army, see: Michal Dziewulski, "Eastern Influences on Polish Arms," Presented at the Ethnographic Arms and Armor Seminar in Timonium, 17th March 2007, accessed August, 2014, <http://www.vikingsword.com/ethsword/Dziewulski01.pdf> (), 7-21. According to Dziewulski, one of the reasons for adopting Ottoman style armours and accessories in the Polish army was to imitate the enemy; Dziewulski, "Eastern Influences," 4. On the other hand, Gerhard Jaritz suggests that adopting "Turkish" war equipment and strategies was meant to achieve the military success of the Turks. At the same time, the military threat of the Ottomans brought about fascination, which led the Ottoman fashion to become popular in the West: Gerhard Jaritz, "Fear and Fascination," 42-46.

The sword or sabre symbolized the authority of the sultan as well as the military cooperation between the two parties.<sup>187</sup> Based on the descriptions in the sources, János B. Szabó suggests that the similarity between the daggers or sabres, as well as caps that the sultan gave as gifts to the Hungarian rulers, and those that of the janissaries shows the connection between the rulers and the janissary corps.<sup>188</sup> This information also supports the fact that the sabre and dagger symbolized military cooperation, as Transylvanian rulers were obliged to support the Ottoman army by sending their troops, while the Ottomans had to protect Transylvania against its enemies. An Ottoman helmet, which was sent to István Báthory by Sultan Selim II as a gift, was another object underpinning the military cooperation between the two sides.<sup>189</sup>

In conclusion, the type, quantity, and quality of the objects given as insignia by the sultan demonstrated visibly the hierarchical structure of the relationship between the sultan and his subjects. They served to visualize the sultan's supremacy and the empire's universalist vision, and also confirmed the vassal status of the principalities. By accepting the insignia the addressee acknowledged his vassal status and dependence on the sultan.

### **Ceremony of gift-giving**

In his book, Rhoads Murphey mentions the insignia of the sultan to the viziers who commanded the army in a campaign. According to Murphey, delivering the insignia signified an induction to the task; secondly it transferred the authority and responsibility to the recipient.<sup>190</sup> As the sultan's tributary and supporter of the Ottoman army during the conflicts, the purpose of the insignia was the same at the inauguration of the new voivode: to confirm

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<sup>187</sup> When a commander of the Ottoman army went on a campaign and entered the territory of the enemy, he received a sword and dagger from the sultan, which underlined the military mission he undertook in the name of the sultan. Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 234.

<sup>188</sup> B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 133.

<sup>189</sup> Atasoy and Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture*, 238-239, 245.

<sup>190</sup> Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 234.

the task and transmit the sultanic power. Therefore, the ceremonial act of presenting the Ottoman insignia played a significant role in emphasizing Ottoman sovereignty over principalities.

János B. Szabó and Péter Erdősi investigate the ceremonial part of Transylvanian voivodes' inauguration. They identify two main stages: first is the election and oath at the diets; second is the confirmation by Ottoman insignia.<sup>191</sup> As a first step, the inauguration of the Transylvanian ruler was held by a mutual oath between the prince and the estates in Transylvania. This oath was normally held in churches without any ecclesiastical ceremony. In 1571, at the time of Báthory's election, the news spread that the Ottoman envoy brought a document appointing István Báthory; however, the diet read the sultan's letter only after the election and the oath.<sup>192</sup>

Upon the appointment of István Báthory in 1571, two imperial orders were dispatched from Sultan Selim II to Transylvania. One of them was addressed to Kristóf Báthory and other lords of Transylvania, stating that István Báthory was appointed as new voivode since the lords notified their loyalty and requested for continuation of the protection.<sup>193</sup> The second document was addressed to István Báthory. In this document, the sultan stated that István Báthory was appointed as voivode upon the request of Transylvanian lords and that he is supposed to act in concert with Hungarian lords for the good of his country, and be in contact with the Buda and Temesvár *beylerbeyis* in case they need help to prevent the attacks of enemies.<sup>194</sup>

As a second step, the visual part of the transfer of power – the ceremony of giving insignia – was held both outside and in town in Transylvania. The envoy of the sultan and his

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<sup>191</sup> B. Szabó and Erdősi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 111.

<sup>192</sup> Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 78; János B. Szabó and Péter Erdősi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 117-18.

<sup>193</sup> *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 1, 215, nr. 325; Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 76.

<sup>194</sup> *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 1, 216, nr. 326.



escort arrived in Gyulafehérvár in 15<sup>th</sup> August and were welcomed outside the town.<sup>195</sup>

Sources describe the first ceremony of delivering the insignia of Sultan Selim II to István Báthory in 1571:

Mehmed Aga, the *madarászmester* [*şahincibaşı*, falconer] of Selim was sent to Transylvania with 200 horsemen and many camels and they arrived in Gyulafehérvár in 15th August. The voivode went a mile before Gyulafehérvár to welcome him. When they met, the Aga first kissed the red flag with a golden button, and gave it to the prince. He [Báthory] took the flag and kissed it in same way. During that time they were on the horse back and when they arrived in the city, the Aga accompanied Báthory with the flag until the gate of the palace. The third day, with a big ceremony, he [Mehmed Aga] gave golden clothes, a few caparisoned horses, the mace and the cap, and then *kaftans* for 25 persons as gifts among that Selim sent; and on behalf of him [the sultan] he told the prince to be faithful. Mehmed's envoy's entourage was there as well. Fourteen days later they were allowed to leave. To the first envoy [Mehmed], 8.000 golden coins were given as a gift. This man cried a lot stating that he was expecting more as recompense for such a big and significant task; this disappointment hurt him a lot.<sup>196</sup>

According to this information, the inauguration ceremony of the Transylvanian voivode was in the capital of Transylvania. After the arrival of the delegation, the envoy of the sultan handed the insignia over on the third day, while the *sancak* was transferred during the first meeting outside of the town with the gesture of kissing. However, in the case of Gábor Báthory in 1608, the flag, horse, sabre and the mace were given at the first meeting outside the town, while the *kaftans* and a hat with panache were handed over in the town.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> According to the sources, István Báthory expected the insignia to arrive earlier: Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 81; B. Szabó and Erdősi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 122-23.

<sup>196</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 20. See also Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 81-82; Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 2, 408. For the sultan's letter of order sent with the *şahincibaşı* to István Báthory, which mentions the insignia, see: *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* vol. 1, 448, no. 698.

<sup>197</sup> B. Szabó and Erdősi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 124-25.

In both cases the flag was the first object that was changed between two parties with or without the company of other insignia.

As opposed to the Transylvanian examples, the appointment of Moldavian or Wallachian voivodes were held in two separate inauguration ceremonies: first in Constantinople, and second in their capital.<sup>198</sup> The ceremonies in Constantinople lasted for at least three days and started with the religious rituals in the church, where the patriarch conducted the ceremony and all the representatives of the Christian subjects of the empire attended.<sup>199</sup> After the religious ceremony, a few days later, the new voivode would visit the sultan in the palace to kiss his hand and receive the insignia. There he was given the *sancak* as an attribute of sultan's power and two white horse tails.<sup>200</sup> During the ceremonies, the voivodes would present to the sultan precious furs of ermine, sable and squirrel, twenty horses, and seventy falcons as gifts, while they received gifts such as a horse and valuable fabrics. Apart from this, Wallachian and Moldavian voivodes also received a sum of money as a gift from the sultan at the ceremony in Istanbul: Wallachia 3.000 *akçe*, Moldavia 2.200 *akçe*.<sup>201</sup> After the confirmation of voivode's appointment by the sultan in Constantinople, a similar ceremony would be held in Iași and Bucharest, in the presence of an Ottoman

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<sup>198</sup> There were also some occasions when the voivode personally handed over his gifts and tribute to the sultan. For instance, N. Beldiceanu states that in 1529, Süleyman gave a *kaftan* lined with sable fur to Moldavian voivode, Petru Rareș, to reward him for bringing the tribute personally. Tasin Gemil, *Romanians and Ottomans in the XIVth – XVIth Centuries* (Bucharest: Romanian Academy, 2009), 250.

<sup>199</sup> Corina Nicolescu stated that the ceremonies of Romanian princes' inauguration had strong Byzantine influence especially in the early periods, between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. However, during the later periods, Ottoman elements were introduced into these ceremonies: Corina Nicolescu, "Le couronnement 'incoronatia': Contribution à l'histoire du cérémonial roumain," *Revue des études Sud-Est européennes*, 4 (1976), 647-63. Also see Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 206-8. For a detailed description of later ceremonies, see Radu G. Paun, "Sur l'investiture des derniers princes phanariotes," *Revue des études Sud-Est européennes* 35 (1997), 65-73. Here I would also like to note that the patriarch was also tied to the Ottoman system through yearly monetary gifts (*pişkeş*) since 1474: Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 136.

<sup>200</sup> Nicolescu, "Le couronnement 'incoronatia'," 662; Mihai Maxim, "Voyvoda," in *Islam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam] vol. 8 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013), 128.

<sup>201</sup> However, the Transylvanian voivode did not receive such gifts: B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 134; Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 187-88, 224.

envoy.<sup>202</sup> On the way back home, voivodes were accompanied by janissaries and the *mehter* (imperial band) from Constantinople to the northern part of Danube. When they arrived at the capital, another religious ritual was held in the church and then in the palace. During the ceremony, the letter of the sultan was read out and the voivode gave gifts of cloth and fur to the Ottoman envoy, so called *iskemle ağası*.<sup>203</sup> Then, at the end the new voivode and the envoy had to hug each other.<sup>204</sup> At the end of the ceremony, all members of the council saluted the new voivode by kissing his *kaftan* given by the sultan and sometimes they drank coffee at the reception in the palace.<sup>205</sup> Following this ceremony, *berât-ı hümayun* (imperial deed of grant) was sent to the voivodes after a few months.<sup>206</sup>

This ceremony of inauguration of the Christian vassals, which had recourse to the traditions of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, had significant value for Moldavia and Walachia since they considered themselves the heir of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>207</sup> On the other hand, inauguration ceremonies of the Muslim vassals had an Islamic context. For instance, Crimean rulers received the Qur'an from the sultan and read out a prayer, the *Fatiha*, from it. They

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<sup>202</sup> The envoys who were responsible for the appointment of voivodes on behalf of the sultan, were called *iskemle ağası* in Turkish. Uzunçarşılı states that, they were called *iskemle ağası* (aga of chair) instead of *taht ağası* (aga of throne) because Transylvanian, Wallachian and Moldavian principalities were not considered kingdoms. Furthermore, to attribute this the Ottomans sent a chair to Zsigmond Rákóczi with the insignia: B. Szabó and Erdősi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 124; Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 333.

<sup>203</sup> One small detail about the sultan's letter also indicates the ranking of the principalities. According to the sources, Transylvanian rulers received their letters from the sultan in a silk atlas bag with a silver seal, while Moldavian and Wallachian rulers received theirs in a woollen or linen bag without an authenticating seal: B. Szabó, "The Insignia of the Princes of Transylvania," 134

<sup>204</sup> Corina Nicolescu, "Le couronnement 'incoronatia'," 662. This kind of gesture, which symbolized the tie between the two sides, was also seen in the religious ceremony in the church. During the religious ceremony, the voivode had to kiss the patriarch's hand. After the ceremony, they left the church together and the patriarch held the voivode's hand and rose it toward the church: Paun, "Sur l'investiture des derniers princes phanariotes," 68.

<sup>205</sup> Nicolescu, "Le couronnement 'incoronatia'," 662-63. Also see; Maxim, "Voyvoda," 128. Coffee was one of the central elements of the Ottoman diplomacy and took a significant place in the ceremonials. Radu G. Paun notes that when the voivode was in Constantinople, sometimes the patriarch and the voivode drank coffee, ate sweets and offered perfumes to each other: Paun, "Sur l'investiture des derniers princes phanariotes," 68-69. Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer also highlight the impact of the Ottoman diplomacy on making coffee a central part of the ceremonies: Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer, "Turquerie: Culture in Motion, 1650-1750," *Past and Present*, 221 (2013), 94-95.

<sup>206</sup> Maxim, "Voyvoda," 128.

<sup>207</sup> Sándor Papp, "Christian Vassals on the Northwest Border of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Turks*, vol. 3, ed. Hasan Celal Güzel, C. Cem Oğuz, Osman Karatay (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publications, 2002), 719.

were given a *berat* with two banners, two horsetails, panache, horse, fur, robe of honor, sword, quiver, and dagger as gifts.<sup>208</sup>

Murphey points out that without a personal appearance at the court of the sultan, the Wallachian and Moldavian rulers' sovereignty was not confirmed.<sup>209</sup> However, for the appointment of Transylvanian voivode this was not practiced. This ceremonial difference in inauguration between Transylvania and Wallachia and Moldavia can be considered as one of the signs showing the different hierarchical positions of these principalities. Another difference can be seen in the number of people in the delegation sent to the capitals of the principalities. The delegation of the *iskemle ağası* who went to Moldavia or Wallachia consisted of around 40 people,<sup>210</sup> while the entourage going to Transylvania was much more numerous.<sup>211</sup>

In 1576, the same delivery process transpired for Kristóf Báthory when his brother István Báthory was elected king of Poland and he replaced him. According to Stephan Gerlach's account, the Ottoman delegation left Istanbul in 14 June, 1576 to deliver the insignia of Sultan Murad III.<sup>212</sup> The head of the delegation was the head of Sultan's stable, *mirahor* Mehmed Aga. He was accompanied by Ahmet *Çavuş* and Dragoman Mustafa.<sup>213</sup> He was given a red flag (*sancak*), a hat (*börk*) which was red and gilt in the middle section, two horses, and 26 silk robes (*kaftan*).<sup>214</sup> The Ottoman delegation consisted of 295 people and members of this delegation were listed in detail in the sources. Among them there were

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<sup>208</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol 3, pt. 2, 28, 33.

<sup>209</sup> Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty*, 223-24.

<sup>210</sup> Among them there were standard bearer, *iskemle ağası*, the head of mehter and the other musicians, gate keepers, pages, servants: Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, [Ottoman history.] 6 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 101. Just for comparison, when the Habsburgs' envoy Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein visited the Porte, his delegation consisted of around 100 people, including clergymen, interpreters, painters, musicians, blacksmiths and coachmen: Peter Burschel, "A Clock for the Sultan: Diplomatic Gift-Giving from an Intercultural Perspective," *The Medieval History Journal* 16 (2003): 550-51.

<sup>211</sup> In 1571 the Ottoman delegation consisted of 105 members, while in 1576 it consisted of 295 people: Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 271-72; B. Szabó and Erdösi, "Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power," 122-23.

<sup>212</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü: 1573-1576*, vol. 1, 366.

<sup>213</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, vol. 1, 271-72. Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 3, 9.

<sup>214</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. 1, 366.

religious functionaries; officers in charge of the care of animals such as horses, camels, and mules; slaves, servants, and gatekeepers of high-ranking officials, musicians, etc.<sup>215</sup>

In the end of June 1576, Kristóf Báthory invited the lords to Fehérvár to welcome the Ottoman delegation. As it was the tradition, he welcomed the Ottoman delegation outside of the city. He received the *sancak* there and escorted the delegation to his palace accompanied with loud music.<sup>216</sup> After arriving at the palace, insignia and *ahdname* were given to the voivode and the *kaftans* to his lords.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 271-72. Hosting such a great number of delegation must have caused problems for Transylvania. Szabó and Erdősi mentions that there was a house for the Ottoman envoys which was furnished according to Ottoman customs: B. Szabó and Erdősi, “Ceremonies Marking the Transfer of Power,” 124.

<sup>216</sup> *Mehter* (imperial band) was the auditory symbol of the sultan’s sovereignty and the members of this band were the essential part of such delegations. Due to this connection between the imperial band and sovereignty, foreign delegations were not allowed to enter the capital with banners and music. Moreover, the Ottomans sent delegations as large as possible, while they did not permit large ambassadorial delegations to enter their lands. See Peter Burschel, “A Clock for the Sultan,” 552.

<sup>217</sup> Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 3, 9.

## CHAPTER III:

### GIFTS FROM TRANSYLVANIA: THE GIFT OF TRIBUTE

After the death of King Szapolyai, Sultan Selim II wrote to István Báthory: “as the land of Transylvania had been given previously to the dead king [of Hungary, János Zsigmond], and the way he possessed it, I let you possess it the same way.”<sup>218</sup> However, the Transylvanian estate feared an increase in the tribute. Tamásfalvi László wrote to his brother Dénes, that he understood that the sultan allowed the election, but “he will increase the tax two or three times more than it was until now.”<sup>219</sup> In 1571, the Transylvanian estates selected three persons as envoys from the three nations to inform the sultan about the result of the election and take the tribute to the Porte. A list of taxes and gifts sent from Transylvania to the Porte was also attached to István Báthory’s letter to Maximilian, dated 1571. This list contained the amount of the gold pieces, silver and cups that were distributed in the Ottoman court:<sup>220</sup>

#### List I:

Register of expenses for the Porte of the mighty emperor of the Turks:

To the three legates of the three nations,	1,500 pieces of gold
To the emperor of the Turks,	10,000 pieces of gold
To Mehmed Pasha, <sup>221</sup>	3,000 pieces of gold
To Pertev Pasha,	1,000 pieces of gold
To Piyale Pasha,	200 pieces of gold
To Ahmet Pasha,	200 pieces of gold

<sup>218</sup> László Szalay, *Adalékok a magyar nemzet történetéhez a xvi-dik században* [Data for Hungarian nation’s history in the sixteenth century] (Pest: Ráth Mór, 1861), 245; Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 33.

<sup>219</sup> Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 24.

<sup>220</sup> Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 2, 470-471.

<sup>221</sup> This list also reflects the ranks among the pashas in the Ottoman court. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was followed by Pertev Pasha, who was his companion from the time they served under *defterdar* Iskender Çelebi. Ibrahim Peçevi gives the rank of the pashas, which follows the same order in the list, in his account: Grand vizier Mehmed Pasha, second vizier Pertev Pasha, third vizier Piyale Pasha, fourth vizier Ahmed Pasha, fifth vizier Zal Mahmud Pasha (not mentioned in this list but in the following one) and the sixth vizier Mustafa Pasha. This information indicates the rank order and the amount of the money which should be given. See Ibrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevi*, C.1 [Peçevi’s History, vol.1], ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992), 342. In his account, Stephan Gerlach also gives the rank of the viziers in 1573: Grand vizier Mehmed Pasha, second vizier Piyale Pasha, third vizier Mahmud Pasha, fourth vizier Ahmed Pasha, fifth vizier Lala Mustafa Pasha, sixth vizier Sinan Pasha: Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü: 1573-1576*, vol. 1, 106.

To Mustafa Pasha,	200 pieces of gold	
To Murad Dragoman, <sup>222</sup> interpreter	100 taller	
Also, to the emperor	100 silver marks	
To Mehmet Pasha	20 silver marks	
To each of the others who remained	10 silver marks	
Also to Pasha's <i>kapucu</i> one of the emperor's	1 silver cups	
Also to the Pasha of the <i>çavuşes</i>	1 cup	
Also to <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	1 cup	
To the chancellor	1 cup	
Also to the <i>aga</i> of the Janissaries	1 cup	
Also to Mehmed Pasha's <i>kethüda</i>	1 cup	
Also in the Porte to the emperor and the pashas		
for the distribution of pieces of gold		100 pieces of gold
To the present <i>çavuş</i> for his travelling expenses and service,		1670 taller
To the same [person]	1 silver cup	
Also on the day of the arrival of the new Turkish legates with banners and sceptre that it is expected by them		12.000 taller

This document shows that after the election, István Báthory not only informed the Porte and fulfilled his duty as a vassal of the sultan, but also he informed Maximilian about his obligations towards the Ottomans. This is a clear sign of István Báthory's diplomacy to maintain the balance and peace on both sides. The envoy István Kemény delivered the tribute to the treasury. He received a certificate from the treasurer which says: "The tax of the year 979, ten thousand gold florins were sent by István Báthory from Transylvania and it was given to my treasury by István Kemény, and I issued this certificate of tax<sup>223</sup> for the cases when it is necessary."<sup>224</sup>

The certificate of tax could be issued upon the submission of the tax to the treasury. However, in order to receive the certificate, the envoys had to pay another amount to the

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<sup>222</sup> Murad was an important figure in the Ottoman court. He was originally a Hungarian from Transylvania and served as an imperial interpreter in the Ottoman court. *Protocollum Báthoryanum* and László Szalay's publication *Erdély és a Porta* consist of letters from Murad to István Báthory, which shows the close link between the two. About Dragoman Murad and his works also see; Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): 35-63 and Pál Ács, "Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad: Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan's Interpreters," in *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000), 307-16.

<sup>223</sup> *Menedéklevél* in Hungarian and *berat* in Ottoman Turkish.

<sup>224</sup> Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 24.

Ottoman official called *kağıt emini*.<sup>225</sup> In a letter to István Báthory in 1573,<sup>226</sup> Murad Dragoman states that the *kağıt emini* did not want to give the certificate of tax since the voivode did not pay the fee for it. Murad succeeded in convincing him to give the *menedéklevél*, however, the *kağıt emini* added: “But if the money for the *berat* [privilegium in the text] does not arrive, I will not give the *menedéklevél* for the tax next year.”

In the list of István Báthory’s reign of the first tax and gifts delivered to the Porte, 10.000 gold florins tribute<sup>227</sup> was assigned to the sultan himself. However, the amount that was given to the pashas and the other Ottoman officials was almost equal to the amount of the yearly tribute itself. As a result, all together the tribute to the Porte could have been double. One should be always aware of the fact that the amount of the “yearly tribute” referred only to the amount designated for the sultan. Although the first list of tribute to the Porte includes what was given to the sultan and other high ranking officials, other lists would include more details of distribution at the Porte.

In 1573, István Báthory sent the same amount of tribute to the Porte with his envoy Balogh Ferenc. In the same year, István Báthory’s enemy, Bekes took action in order to convince the Porte to let him become the ruler of Transylvania. Bekes sent his envoy, Imre Antalfi, to the Porte and offered the double amount of tribute to Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. Bekes was not successful in convincing the sultan, but his attempt showed the Porte that it was possible to get more tribute from Transylvania.<sup>228</sup> Although Bekes offered the sultan more taxes from Transylvania, the Ottomans did not accept this offer since

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<sup>225</sup> The *kağıt emini* was an Ottoman official responsible for giving the document of *berat* to the owners. To get this document from him the owner of the *berat* had to give him a fee called *berat harci*, Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. 2 , 136.

<sup>226</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta 1567-1578*, 112-14.

<sup>227</sup> According to these sources, during this period Moldavia’s tax was 16,000 gold florins; Wallachia’s was 12.000 gold florins: Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 27.

<sup>228</sup> Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 24-25. Beside the double the tribute, Békés also offered 40,000 gold pieces and a valuable ring for the grand vizier: Pál Fodor, “Making a Living on the Frontiers,” 256.



Bekes was supported by the Habsburgs. Later, however, they used this fact against Transylvania to increase the tax. In 1573 Transylvania sent to the Porte:<sup>229</sup>

**List II:**

Tax for the Porte	
To the Great Sultan we gave	10,000 gold forint, 100 gira silver.
To the Grand Vizier we gave	5,000 taller and 20 gira silver
To Mahmut Pasha	300 taller and 10 gira silver
To Ahmet Pasha	300 taller and 10 gira silver
To Mustafa Pasha	300 taller and 10 gira silver
To Sinan Pasha	300 taller and 1 golden cup
To Feridun Aga	200 taller, 1 cup, 1 gilt armour
To Ahmet Çavuş	300 taller, 1 carriage together with 4 horses
To Murat Beg	100 taller
To Çavuş Pasha	1 cup
To the aga of the gate	1 cup
To the <i>kapucular kethüdası</i> <sup>230</sup>	1 cup
To the <i>kethüda</i> <sup>231</sup> of the pasha	1 cup
1 cup and 10 gira silver remained with me.	

Your Majesty gave 200 taller into my hand, from this we gave what was necessary (1573):<sup>232</sup>

To the sultan's <i>kapucu</i> <sup>233</sup> we gave sixty taller	60
To the sultan's scribe <sup>234</sup> we gave	22
To the great <i>kapucu</i> we gave	5.5
To the sultan's <i>mehters</i> <sup>235</sup> we gave	5.5
To the one who measures gold we gave	1
To the one who melts gold	1
To an old <i>kapucu</i> we gave	1
To the scribes' <i>kapucu</i> we gave	1
To the water carrier we gave half a taller	0,5
For the certificate of tax <sup>236</sup> we gave	3.5
At the grand vizier's gate we gave	14
Ali Pasha was not at home	
At the Ahmet Pasha's gate we gave	8.5
At Mahmut Pasha's gate	7
At Mustafa Pasha's gate	9
At Sinan Pasha's gate we gave	8

<sup>229</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 115: *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, Fol. Hung. 37, fol. 43-45.

<sup>230</sup> The commander of the imperial gatekeepers (*kapucu*).

<sup>231</sup> Steward, master of house. Also refers to an authorized deputy in the Ottoman administration.

<sup>232</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 114-15.

<sup>233</sup> Gatekeeper.

<sup>234</sup> In the Hungarian text: *deák*. In the Ottoman context this was a specific kind of scribe, a *tezkireci*, who was responsible for drafting certificates or deeds.

<sup>235</sup> Military band.

<sup>236</sup> In the Hungarian text: *adó-menedék-levél*.

At <i>çavuş</i> <sup>237</sup> pasha's gate	4
At Feridun Aga's gate we gave	1
From this amount what is left with me	58

### List III

What should be distributed at the gate of the Pasha (1573) <sup>238</sup>	
To the grand vizier's <i>kapucu</i>	20 taller
To the five <i>kapucu</i> of the Pasha 10 taller [for each]	50 taller
To the head of the money measurers and four scribes	
3 gold [for each], it is all together	15 gold.
To the accountant of called <i>mehter</i>	3 gold
To the one who melts gold	1 taller
To the <i>çavuş</i> of <i>defterdar</i> <sup>239</sup>	3 taller
To the <i>kapucu</i> who stands at the gate of the scribes	1 taller
To the one who writes safe conduct	4 taller
To the Kasım <i>kapucu</i> who ordered all the things and the gifts	5 taller
To the <i>kapucu</i> and <i>çavuşes</i>	60 taller
From this your majesty can understand, how much it is necessary to spend for the lower ranks.	

These and additional lists also demonstrate that another layer of distribution of gifts existed in the Ottoman case. Starting from the viziers, a large group of officials such as *kapucu*, *çavuş*, *kethüda*, dragomans, and scribes were given gifts, so-called *pişkeş*, during the process of submitting the tribute to the Ottoman treasury. It is also clear that the Transylvanian officials were highly aware of the process and the rules of giving at the Ottoman court. The pashas were visited at their own residences and money was even distributed at the entrances of their residences. All the distribution was done according to the ranks of the officials. Moreover, the particular sums of money for the officials and the objects, such as cups, were also considered part of the tribute. Transylvanian officials listed them together under the title of "tax." The Ottomans knew about and expected each gift. An imperial order from the sultan to the Moldavian voivode in 1568 demonstrates the Ottoman perception that these items were not separate from the tax. In this document, the Moldavian

<sup>237</sup> Marshal or courier.

<sup>238</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 131: *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, Fol. Hung. 37, fol. 21.

<sup>239</sup> Director of the imperial treasury.

voivode was asked to send tribute of 300 florins for *nişancı*,<sup>240</sup> 250 florins for *reisülküttab*,<sup>241</sup> and 50 florins for each scribe of the *Divan-ı Hümayun* (Imperial Council) “as giving this tax was *kânûn-ı mukarrer* (determined by law) from olden times.”<sup>242</sup>

In 1574, when Sultan Selim II died, István Báthory’s rival Bekes wanted to use this occasion and tried to convince the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha through his envoy Antalfi. Negotiations and initiations to convince Mehmed Pasha were not successful, however. The grand vizier’s answer to the envoy was a clear indication of the Porte’s awareness of Bekes’s support: “As your lord [Bekes] is in the court of such a lord, who is our enemy, indeed it would be our shame to give the letter [*ahdname*] which lets him enter into our country. By the way, your lord should learn that the one who sends higher tax even one *oszipora* more than the current tax, that person shall own Transylvania.”<sup>243</sup> With these words, on one hand, Mehmed Pasha informed Békés about the Porte’s unwillingness to support him for the voivodate, on the other hand, he left an open door which would provoke competition between the rivals and eventually could force an increase of the tax.

Meanwhile, Mehmed Pasha also warned István Báthory about the circumstances at the Porte: A new sultan, Murad III, had ascended the throne, thus the voivode should increase the amount of tribute.<sup>244</sup> As I mentioned above, according to the Ottoman custom, with the accession of a new sultan all the *berats* and *ahdnames* had to be renewed and confirmed. This could have been one reason for changes in the taxes of Christian vassals, a rival to the

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<sup>240</sup> The head of the imperial chancery. In lists VI and VIII *nişancı* received 300 taller from the Transylvanian envoy.

<sup>241</sup> Chief of the clerks.

<sup>242</sup> 7 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 2, 541-42. For instance, in 1540, István Majlád, who revolted against János Szapolyai, negotiated with Sultan Suleyman in order to be the voivode of Transylvania after the death of King János. His offer to the sultan was 25,000 gold florins, more than double the actual tribute. And he did not forget to include the viziers as well; together with 25,000 gold florins, a gift of 1,000 gold florins for the each vizier of the sultan: Papp, “Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire,” 570. For Lütfi Pasha’s answer, which calls on Majlád for peaceful relations with both King János and the sultan after his offer, see Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 162-63.

<sup>243</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 199; Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 25.

<sup>244</sup> Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 25.

voivodate who was ready to pay more, like Majlád or Békés, might have affected the increase of the tribute.

Báthory was not late in sending his envoy, Kendi, with gifts to the Porte with the task of getting the confirmation of his voivodate against Békés from the new sultan and convincing the sultan not to make any changes in the amount of yearly tribute.<sup>245</sup> The envoy Antalfi informed Békés from Constantinople in a letter: "...now Kendi brought big gifts here from Báthory. He strongly complains about you in the name of Transylvania and praises the voivode, who is to be confirmed by the successor of Selim at the same time."<sup>246</sup> The *Protocollum Báthoryanum* consists of the list of the gifts sent by Báthory:<sup>247</sup>

**List IV:**

Kendi Sándor's list:<sup>248</sup>

The gifts to be sent to the Porte when the new voivode was elected, now we gave the following:

Our lord gave me a cup	II
To the sultan, cup	VIII
2 bowls, wash basin	
Jug	II
Candlestick	II
To Mehmet Pasha, taller	10,000
and cups	III
To Piali Pasha, cup	II
To Ahmet Pasha, cup	II
To Zal [Mahmud] Pasha, cup	II
To Mustafa Pasha, cup	II
To Sinan Pasha, cup	II
To the <i>mirahor</i> , <sup>249</sup> cup	I
To the aga of Janissaries	I
To the <i>çavuşbaşı</i>	I
To the <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	I
Cancellarius <sup>250</sup>	I
To the Pasha's <i>kethüda</i>	I
To the pasha <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	I
To the sultan's <i>kapu aga</i>	I

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>246</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 200.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 197-98.; *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, Fol. Hung. 37, fol. 43.

<sup>248</sup> Here I use Roman numerals since as in the document.

<sup>249</sup> The master of the imperial stable.

<sup>250</sup> I would like to thank again to Sandor Papp for informing me that this term refers to the Ottoman *reis'ül küttab*, who was the head of chancery.

To the *beylerbeyi*<sup>251</sup> II  
 Those *kapucus* at the gate taller IIII  
 At the gate of the aga of Janissaries IIII  
 One small cup remained of our lord that I brought it back.  
 When all the gifts to the sultan have been taken away by the officers, 5,500 ozpora  
 should be given to the *kapucus*, which is 138.5 taller.  
 Besides these *solaks*,<sup>252</sup> to those who set up the tent, those who carry linen and others  
 I gave 15 and more.  
 Once more to Kasim, the great *kapucu*, I gave taller VIII.  
 For this *ahdname*<sup>253</sup> letter that was written by scribe I gave 15 gold.  
 To the one who wrote the *tuğra*<sup>254</sup> with gold, to him, taller I

This list or any other source I have surveyed do not provide any information on whether the sultan or the pashas were given additional sums of money besides the cups during Kendi's visit. However, according to this list, only the grand vizier, Mehmed Pasha, received 10,000 taller besides the cup. This amount is double of what he received with the tax submission of 1573. This reveals the role of the grand vizier during the process of negotiation and persuasion.

Sokollu Mehmed Pasha sent Kendi with good promises. Nevertheless he emphasized that the tribute should have been increased since the new sultan had acceded to the throne. Kendi failed to fulfil part of his mission. István Báthory's voivodate was confirmed by the sultan but he had to send 5,000 gold florins more in order to keep his position as the voivode of Transylvania.<sup>255</sup> On April 25, 1575, Báthory received the first *ahdname* from Sultan Murad III. In the *ahdname*, the sultan stated that according to the old custom, the tribute of the voivode should increase with the succession of every new sultan.<sup>256</sup> Báthory did not want to accept this increase, but Sokollu Mehmed Pasha wrote him that sultan increased the taxes for everyone who was obliged to pay tribute. He even suggested to Báthory that if he wanted

<sup>251</sup> A governor general.

<sup>252</sup> Left-handed guards. Companies of the Janissary corps, who walked near the sultan to protect him.

<sup>253</sup> In the Hungarian text: *chename*.

<sup>254</sup> Sultan's signature.

<sup>255</sup> Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 25.

<sup>256</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 201; for the Latin text see, Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 220; *Protocollum Báthorianum*, fol. 217-218r.

to keep this increase secret from the country, he should arrange the extra amount with his lords. This information suggests that István Báthory's concern was not only being under more financial liability towards the Ottomans, but also convincing the lords of the country to accept this increase. The grand vizier added in his letter: "If we would like to take the country away or want more gold, we would give the country to Békés, who promised 30,000 [pieces of] gold."<sup>257</sup>

Finally Báthory accepted the increase of 5,000 golden florins, but he charged his envoy, Ferenc Balogh, to: "beg for it to be written to the *ahdname* that after this the tax will not be increased."<sup>258</sup> This information indicates that through negotiations, Transylvania could have influenced what was written in the *ahdname*. In his letter, Báthory also asked Sokollu Mehmed Pasha to write an encouraging letter for the country stating that there would be no more increases in the amount of tax later.<sup>259</sup>

In 1575, István Báthory sent his ambassador, Ferenc Balogh, to the Porte with the promised tribute and the gifts. As an envoy, Ferenc Balogh's duties at the Ottoman court were diverse. Besides getting the *ahdname* from the sultan, one of the most important tasks was to convince the Porte not to increase the amount of the tribute after each accession of a new sultan. He was given many other duties to carry on at the Porte, apart from delivering the tribute. Some of his main tasks were:<sup>260</sup>

#### **List V:**

Orders for Ferencz Balogh who is sent to the Porte as envoy

- 1- The *ahdname* has to be confirmed by the sultan.
- 2- Request about the villages which are not written into Halil Beg's *defter* and occupied: Free them and let them not be occupied any longer.

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<sup>257</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 245; Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 25.

<sup>258</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 299.

<sup>259</sup> An increase in the tax was always a great fear in the Transylvanian area. They were concerned about having to pay more taxes and to be "governed like Wallachia and Moldavia," Lipták, *A Portai adó története*, 25, 28. Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 248.

<sup>260</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 298-299.

- 3- Request a letter from the sultan to the lords of the highlands who came under the rule of the Great Sultan, to involve them in this engagement and encourage them with this letter.
- 4- Inform the pasha in detail about the state of our issues with Germans.
- 5- Discuss the issue of Huszt castle.
- 6- János Várkonyi, who was sent to the Porte by the *Beg* of Csanad, who is our servant from Várad, may his majesty set him free.
- 7- There is a poor lad called Lőrincz Tandori, he has to be ransomed if it is possible for 100 golden forint or even more.
- 8- If the pasha wants, as it was before, to let the envoys live, (it would be good) if his majesty grants this favor. In this case we would not be seen lower than other subjects of the Great Sultan.
- 9- Ask the pasha for good kind of *terjek*<sup>261</sup> and *terra sigillata*.<sup>262</sup>
- 10- Send Menyhárt<sup>263</sup> 50 taller and speak with him secretly.
- 11- From Brasso bring that carriage to the *emin*<sup>264</sup> of Ruscuk.
- 12- Send out Vokcsovit and send him the costs.
- 13- Beg for it to be written in the *ahdname* that after this the tax will not be increased.

This list of Transylvanian envoy's tasks shows the main issues that had to be negotiated between the two sides during the visit at the Porte: freeing the captives, issues of the villages and castles, circumstances about the Habsburgs, certain goods that had to be purchased, contacting various key persons, and the *ahdname*. That means that each delivery of the tribute paved the way for negotiating political issues, gathering information, establishing networks, and exchanging goods. And finally the list of the tribute delivered by Ferenc Balogh:<sup>265</sup>

#### List VI:

The register of the tax for the sultan, which was brought to the Porte by Ferenc Balogh September 10, 1575.

To the sultan	15,000 golden florins
To Mehmed Pasha	5,000 taller
To Piali Pasha	1,000 taller
To Ahmed Pasha	300 taller
To Zal Pasha	300 taller
To Mustafa Pasha	300 taller

<sup>261</sup> *Terjek* in the Hungarian sources and *tiryak* or *mitridat* in Ottoman sources. A kind of antidote or mithridate: poison against animal-generated poison, medicine containing opiates.

<sup>262</sup> Bright-red, slipped pottery used throughout the Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire for healing purpose.

<sup>263</sup> This name appears in the following list of tribute as one of the dragomans at the Porte.

<sup>264</sup> Custodian.

<sup>265</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 300-2; *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, Fol. Hung. 37, fol. 219-25.

To Sinan Pasha	300 taller
To <i>Nişancı</i> <sup>266</sup> Pasha	300 taller
To cancellarius	300 taller
To <i>Çavuş</i> Pasha	150 taller
To Ahmed <i>Çavuş</i> <sup>267</sup>	300 taller
To Mustafa dragoman <sup>268</sup>	50 taller
To Murat Beg	50 taller
To Menyhárt dragoman	50 taller

The amounts of silver at the Porte

To the sultan it is necessary to give as tax	100 marc.
To Mehmed Pasha	20 marc.
To Piali Pasha	10 marc.
To Ahmed Pasha	10 marc.
To Zal Pasha	10 marc.
To Mustafa Pasha	10 marc.
To Sinan Pasha	10 marc.

Distribution of cups in addition to the tax

To the beglerbeyi it is necessary to give	2 cups
To the Janissary Aga	1 cup
To <i>Çavuş</i> Pasha	1 cup
To the <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	1 cup
To the cancellarius	1 cup
To Pasha's <i>kethüda</i>	1 cup
To Pasha's <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	1 cup
To the <i>aga</i> of the gate	1 cup

Besides these, above the ordinary

To Mehmed Pasha <sup>269</sup>	10,000 taller
For the cost of Ferenc Balogh	400 taller

For the distribution at the Porte it is true that 150 taller should be given but because the tax and the gifts are brought in together and it has to be shown separately, because of this I gave two times that amount

	300 taller
To Farkas Ugcsovit, <sup>270</sup> who is at the Porte now, I sent	200 taller
To the fowlers [ <i>doğancı</i> ] in order to bring sixteen falcons	114 taller

Continuance

<sup>266</sup> The authority responsible for drawing the *tuğra* (sultan's signature) on an imperial decree.

<sup>267</sup> *Mühimmes* show that Ahmed *Çavuş* was dispatched to Transylvania to deliver sultan's letters and *fermans* upon István Báthory's election: *14 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* [Registers of Important Affairs Number 14], document nos: 32/21, 45/35; *12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol.1, 241-44, 448; Sándor Papp, *Die Verleihungs-, Bekräftigungs- und Vertragsurkunden*, 75. Later, in 1573, Ahmed *Çavuş* was the one who brought the insignia to István Báthory: Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 204.

<sup>268</sup> A Hungarian renegade in the Ottoman court, who was sent to Transylvania and Venice to bring the news of Murad III's accession: Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 204.

<sup>269</sup> This "above ordinary" payment, double the amount that Mehmed Pasha received during the official submission of the tribute, can be interpreted as a sign of a negotiation with the grand vizier.

<sup>270</sup> Farkas Ugcsovit was another envoy of István Báthory at the Porte. Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 3, 12.



Old cups brought to the sultan	8
Golden wash basins	2
Golden candlesticks	2
To Mehmed Pasha, old cups	3
To Piali Pasha, cup	2
To Ahmed Pasha	2
To Zal Pasha	2
To Mustafa Pasha	2
To Sinan Pasha	2
To the <i>mirahor</i>	1
Besides these when they bring gifts to the sultan, and not tax, it has to be brought for these [people] as well:	
To the Janissary Aga, cup	1
To <i>Çavuş</i> Pasha	1
To the <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	1
To the cancellarius	1
To the pasha's <i>kethüda</i>	1
To the pasha's <i>kapucular kethüdası</i>	1
To the <i>aga</i> of the gate	1
To the <i>Beylerbeyi</i>	2

The list of gifts delivered from Habsburgs to the Ottoman court in the same year can help us stress the distinction features of the Ottoman-Transylvanian diplomatic exchange. The variety of the objects and the value of the gifts can clearly show the basic distinctions between the gift and the tribute given by the Habsburgs and Transylvania. According to Gerlach's account, in August 1575, watch was one of the most essential objects besides cups, carafe, chalice and compass (see appendix:I-II).<sup>271</sup> In the lists, however, besides the money, cup is the only essential object that was delivered to the Ottomans by Transylvania. Same differences appear also in the amount of the money distributed to the Ottoman dignitaries. For instance, in 1575, grand vizier Mehmed Pasha received 5,000 taller, while he received 9,000 from the Habsburgs. Similarly, Murad Dragoman received 50 or 100 taller from Transylvania while he was receiving 300 taller from the Habsburgs. These differences were visible also for the lower ranking officials at the Ottoman court. This simple comparison shows that the amount of the tribute, as well as the diversity and the value of the objects and

<sup>271</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü: 1573-1576*, [Turkish diary: 1573-1576], vol. 1, trans. Turkis Noyan, ed. Kemal Beydilli (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), 216-19.

amounts of the money distributed were determined by the level of the diplomatic relationship established between the Ottomans and the other parties. Although all the expected gifts—or money, in the case of Transylvania—to be distributed were already determined by the Ottomans, these expectations were different for each country, based on the structure of the diplomatic connection.

The last delivery of the tribute to the Porte was in 1576 and it coincided with the election of the King of Poland. The tribute delivered to the Porte was the following:<sup>272</sup>

**List VII:**

The continuance of giving at the Porte by Ferenc Balogh (1576):

To the Pashas	
1-	To the grand vizier 5.000 taller
	20 gira silver
	There at the gate to the <i>kapucus</i> XII taller
	To the <i>bölükbaşı</i> <sup>273</sup> III taller
	To the small <i>bölükbaşı</i> to the other II taller
	To the Pasha's courier <sup>274</sup> I taller
2-	To Piali Pasha 1000 taller
	10 gira silver
	There to the <i>kapucus</i> VIII taller
	To the courier I taller
3-	To Ahmed Pasha 300 taller
	10 gira silver
	There to the <i>kapucus</i> VI taller
4-	To Zal Pasha 300 taller
	10 gira silver
	To the <i>kapucus</i>
5-	To Mustafa Pasha 300 taller
	10 gira silver
	To the <i>kapucus</i> VI taller
6-	To Sinan Pasha 300 taller
	10 gira silver
	To the <i>kapucus</i> VI taller
	His courier came to the residence, for him I taller
	The servant of this Sinan Pasha brought two brooms;
	he said that this is their law and we have
	to pay it, I gave him X ozpora
	To the <i>nişancı</i> we gave 300 taller
	To the cancellarius 300 taller

<sup>272</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 304-5; *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, Fol. Hung. 37, fol. 42.

<sup>273</sup> The commander of a military unit (*bölük*) in size from 20 to 200 men.

<sup>274</sup>In Ottoman Turkish: *ulak*.

To <i>Çavuş</i> Pasha	150 taller
To him I gave 100 from the Vokcsovit's money.	
To Ahmet <i>Çavuş</i>	300 taller
To Mustafa Dragoman	50 taller
To Murat Beg	50 taller
To Menyhárt Dragoman	50 taller

### List VII:

Balogh Ferencz's account (1576):<sup>275</sup>

To the sultan 15,000 gold, and 100 gira silver.	
The distribution at the court of the sultan:	
To the gate keepers	LI taller
To the head of gatekeeper Kasım	VIII taller
To the <i>solaks</i>	I taller
To the golden headings	I taller
To the inner gate's <i>kapucu</i>	II taller
At the external gate	I taller
To the <i>kapucu</i> who let the people into the presence of the pashas	I taller
To the <i>ruznamçeci</i> <sup>276</sup> , who takes the tax	X taller
To those who measure	III taller
To the servants who measure	III taller
To the <i>çavuş</i> of the <i>defterdar</i> <sup>277</sup>	I taller
To the gift registrar	V taller
To the <i>veznedar</i> <sup>278</sup>	V taller
To the ones who look after gold	III taller
To those who pitch the tents	II taller
To the ones who melt gold	III taller
To the <i>çavuş</i> who takes in	II taller
To the ones who hold the silver	I taller
The scribe of the pasha sits there too, for him as well	II taller
For the one they asked from me	III taller
For the <i>çavuş</i> who writes to the registry	I taller
This one reprimanded me greatly because we did not give him [anything] the other time since we did not write him in the registry.	
Above these 100 or 200 ozpora have gone	
For drummers and trumpet players	VIII taller
These [drummers and trumpet players] are poor, if they are satisfied with this amount, it is good, but they demand more.	
For the certificate of tax, when they take it out for the accountant who registers the tax of the sultan, for that register, for him	II taller
To the accountant's <i>tezkireci</i> <sup>279</sup>	I taller

<sup>275</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 302-4.

<sup>276</sup> The accountant who registers the daily financial transactions at the imperial treasury.

<sup>277</sup> Director of the finances in the empire, ranking after the grand vizier.

<sup>278</sup> The treasurer who counts the money entering the treasury.

<sup>279</sup> Certificate-maker

After this for the *kağıt emini*<sup>280</sup>, who puts the seal on it V ozpora  
 After this they give it to a scribe who registers it, for this one [a gift] also has  
 to be given, but I did not give now.  
 After this they bring it to the *nişancı* to write the *tuğra* on it.  
 To Vokcsovít our lord sent 200 taller  
 100 from this I gave to *çavuş* Pasha.  
 I paid 57 taller for the debt of Vokcsovít.  
 43 taller remained with me.  
 When we had the *ahdname* written, I gave 25 gold, which is 22 ½ taller.  
 For the one who wrote the *tuğra* with gold on it, for him 1 taller.  
 I bought a silk belt for the sword 6 taller  
 I bought the *sepet*<sup>281</sup> for velvet 2 taller  
 I increased the numbers of tallers of pashas 10 taller  
 To Hüseyin, whom now I sent back, I gave 14 taller

Soon after this tribute and gift delivery, István Báthory was elected the King of Poland and he was replaced by his brother, Kristóf Báthory, to rule the country. Grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha wrote to Kristóf Báthory to inform him that they had received the tribute, falcons,<sup>282</sup> and other gifts which were sent from Transylvania. His statement “I sent the *terje* and the medicine which you wanted” shows another layer of exchange process between the two sides.<sup>283</sup>

### **Beyond the gift: Network, mediators and cultural exchange**

Gift exchange, delivering the insignia and tribute made way for an encounter of cultures between Transylvania and the Ottoman Empire. While the Ottomans engaged in cultural and political propaganda by sending insignia to Transylvania, they received money

<sup>280</sup> Intendant of document. He was responsible from the renewal of *berats* (deeds of grant).

<sup>281</sup> A basket.

<sup>282</sup> Although it was not mentioned in the lists, falcons were also the part of the gift-giving process to the Ottomans. The reason for the absence of the falcons in the lists may be the way they were delivered. The falcons were not delivered by the Transylvanian officials together with the other gifts. Instead, the Ottomans sent their own men to receive falcons. List V of tax dated to 1575, mentions that: “To the fowlers [*doğancı*] in order to bring sixteen falcon-144 taller”. This information clearly indicates that the Ottomans sent their own men to bring the falcons: Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 302.

<sup>283</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 318-19. In another letter from Mehmed Pasha to István Báthory, dated 10 October 1573, grand vizier states that he sent a really good type of medicine (thymiana) that voivode had requested: Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 86.

and objects which had more material value than cultural. However, beyond this, another layer of exchange existed by which the individuals established and used their network.

It is known that the Ottomans used renegades as mediators many times and they saw no harm in using renegades' background, knowledge of the culture and language to negotiate with the other party. The corpus of dispatches in the *Protocollum Báthoryanum* contains many letters exchanged between the Transylvanian voivode and Ottoman renegades, who were mostly originally Hungarian.<sup>284</sup> Murat Dragoman, Mahmud Dragoman, Mustafa Dragoman, Ahmet *Çavuş*, Feridun Aga, and Menyhárt Dragoman are some of the names mentioned in the documents. Those names also appear in the lists of gift distribution at the Porte. For instance, Ahmet *Çavuş* received one of the highest amounts from Transylvania, 300 taller,<sup>285</sup> which was also given to the viziers. Most likely he was the same Ahmet *Çavuş* who was sent to Transylvania in 1573 to deliver the insignia of the sultan to István Báthory and also a member of the delegation to deliver the insignia to Kristóf Báthory in 1576.<sup>286</sup> According to the sources, just before István Báthory had departed to Cracow to ascend the throne, Ahmet *Çavuş* was with him in Transylvania.<sup>287</sup> Gyula Káldy-Nagy states that Ahmet *Çavuş* was one of István Báthory's most reliable men at the Porte. He provided information to him regularly. In 16 October 1573, Ahmet *Çavuş* wrote to István Báthory that Feridun Bey required a carriage from István Báthory. In List II, it is noted that Ahmet *Çavuş* received a carriage with horses. It is highly possible that this carriage was given to him after his request. In his letter, Feridun Bey himself also wrote to István Báthory to send him a carriage of the type that István Báthory himself used, with beautiful horses. He added at the end of his letter:

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<sup>284</sup> For the letters see: Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 88, 92, 93, 101, 107, 109, 111, 112, 139.

<sup>285</sup> See the List VI and VII.

<sup>286</sup> Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 3, 9; Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 271; Pedani, "Sultans and Voivodas," 203.

<sup>287</sup> Szilágyi, ed. *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. 3, 6.

“If you have an order for me, I am ready to send two packhorses or anything else. I don’t have any other requirements for now, just send the carriage with horses.”<sup>288</sup>

Sources also mention another interpreter, called Ferhad, of Hungarian origin. In *mühimmes*, one can see that Ferhad Dragoman was dispatched to Transylvania many times.<sup>289</sup> Maria Pia Pedani states: “in 1554 Mahmud himself, together with the interpreter Ferhad and a *çavuş*, enthroned Queen Isabel’s son, Sigismund [János Zsigmond]. In his turn, another interpreter Ferhad, also of Hungarian origin, was sent again to Transylvania for state affairs many years later, in 1569.”<sup>290</sup> However, in the sources I could not find two different interpreters called Ferhad and both Hungarian in origin. Considering the long tenure of Hungarian renegade Ferhad Dragoman (1554-1576), it is strongly possible that these two Ferhads are probably the same person.<sup>291</sup> In *Mühimme no.7*, a document dated 1567 states that Ferhad *Çavuş*, who was sent to Transylvania to determine the borders, was captured by the Habsburgs.<sup>292</sup> Another document in the same *Mühimme* shows that in order to set Ferhad *Çavuş* free, Ferhad Dragoman was dispatched to Transylvania with an imperial order.<sup>293</sup> It is clear that two Ferhads were sent to Transylvania for state affairs from the Ottoman court, but only one of them had the title of dragoman. Probably Ferhad *Çavuş* was also of Hungarian origin.<sup>294</sup> Murad Dragoman’s letter to István Báthory in 1573 states that Ferhad Dragoman

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<sup>288</sup> Gyula Káldy-Nagy, “Budín Beylerbeyi Mustafa Paşa (1566-1578)” [The Governor of Buda Mustafa Pasha], *Bulleten* 210, no. 54 (1990): 659-60; Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 111-12.

<sup>289</sup> *5 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri* [Registers of Important Affairs Number 5] (Ankara: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1994), 189; *3 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 84, 302, 303, 305, 643, 658, 659, 675; *7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 491.

<sup>290</sup> Pedani, “Sultans and Voivodas,” 203.

<sup>291</sup> Gilles Veinstein’s and Gábor Ágoston’s statements make this possibility stronger. Gilles Veinstein states that “...on his death in 1576, the interpreter Ferhad, of Hungarian origin, in his post since 1554, was replaced by his son, Mehmed, holder of a timar in the sancak of Canik.” Gábor Ágoston says: “Istanbul dispatched Ferhad Dragoman, another Hungarian renegade, to the elected Hungarian king, Janos Zsigmond,” Gábor Ágoston, “Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy,” 90; Gilles Veinstein, “The Ottoman Administration and the Problem of Interpreters,” in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation*, vol. 3, Philosophy, Science and Institutions, ed. Kemal Çiçek (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2000), 608.

<sup>292</sup> *7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 2, 137-38.

<sup>293</sup> *7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, vol. 2, 150-51.

<sup>294</sup> In 1565/1566 Ferhad *Çavuş* was also sent to Wallachia to proclaim the new voivode. However, he was not given the customary gift of money for this task. An imperial order dispatched to Wallachia ordered the voivode to send this money: *5 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri*, 156, no. 950.

was the chief interpreter and regularly received money from the voivode.<sup>295</sup> However, Ferhad Dragoman's name was not mentioned in the distribution lists. The name Menyhárt, however, is mentioned in the lists of gifts, which I assume might refer to Ferhad. One can guess the close connection between Transylvanian officials and interpreter Menyhárt from the statement in the List V: "Send Menyhárt 50 taller and speak with him secretly."<sup>296</sup>

In his letter to István Báthory, Murad starts by mentioning that he is "sort of" from Somlyó like the voivode himself ("...*én is Somlyaiak féle voltam, nagyságod is Somlyainak nevezetik...*"). He continues his letter with complaints about the money he receives from the voivode. He states that although he is the chief interpreter now, he does not receive as much money as the previous chief interpreter, Ferhad, had received from the voivode. His letter provides more information about the expected gifts for interpreters at the Ottoman courts. According to the sultan's injunction [decretum] interpreters of the Porte were to receive 17,000 ospora. Moreover, Murad states that although he did not do anything for the Wallachian and Moldavian voivodes he received 6,000 ospora and a horse from them every year.<sup>297</sup> According to Stephan Gerlach, Murad Dragoman and Mahmud Dragoman received gifts annually and money from the Habsburg emperor as well.<sup>298</sup>

The tribute and the gifts brought by the envoy Ferenc Balogh are the last ones that were registered in the sources I rely on for my research. Apart from these lists, a deeper investigation of the letters, which were exchanged between two parties can reveal another dimension of gift giving and the information network.

One of the most significant examples of the network established between the Transylvanian authorities and the Ottoman officials is the deed of donation of Kristóf

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<sup>295</sup> For Murad's letter to the voivode, see: Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 112-14

<sup>296</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 299.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid*, 112-14.

<sup>298</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. 1, 98.

Báthory to the governor of Buda, Mustafa Pasha.<sup>299</sup> In his deed, Kristóf Báthory states his gratefulness for Mustafa Pasha's friendship, service, and help against his enemies. For all this, Kristóf Báthory gave two villages (Bikácsi and Nagyradván) as a gift to Mustafa Pasha. But, he had some expectations in return. He requested that the pasha try every possible way at the Sublime Porte of the sultan in order to free villages that had not been recorded in the imperial register previously. This deed of donation shows that Mustafa Pasha was required and expected to represent the interests of Transylvania in the name of voivode at the Ottoman court. Mustafa Pasha accepted the gifts, which means he accepted supporting Transylvania's interest and established a pious foundation [*wakf*] from the income of these villages.<sup>300</sup>

Looking into the lists and the correspondence in *Protocollum Báthoryanum*, one can see that one of the greatest concerns of Transylvania was to prevent Ottoman dominion over villages which were not officially registered in the Ottoman records (the famous *defter* of Halil Beg). On one hand, Transylvania forced the Ottoman court to give these villages back, but on the other hand, they donated two villages for the benefit of Mustafa Pasha in order to ensure his support. The pasha's acceptance of these villages and creating endowments with the tax revenues from them raise the question of motivation behind founding endowments among the Ottomans. By doing this, the pasha not only fulfilled his spiritual mission as a Muslim, but also invested in his self-interest. As has been discussed in the recent scholarship, spiritual and religious aims were not the only reason for pious foundations. Political legitimacy, prestige, avoidance of confiscation, and strengthening authority also seem to have been strong motivations behind founding *wakfs*.<sup>301</sup> It would not be wrong to state that the pasha's attitude was not only an indicator of his benevolences.

<sup>299</sup> László Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 313-14.

<sup>300</sup> Gábor Ágoston, "Muslim Cultural Enclaves in Hungary under Ottoman Rule," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45 (1991): 190.

<sup>301</sup> Amy Singer, "Charity's Legacies: A Reconsideration of Ottoman Imperial Endowment-Making," in *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, eds. Michael Bonner, Mine Ener, and Amy Singer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 298-99; Kayhan Orbay, "The Economic Efficiency of Imperial Waqfs in



A letter written by *mirahor*<sup>302</sup> Mehmed Aga, who was the head of the delegation delivering the insignia and *sancak* to Kristóf Báthory in 1576, is another example of the networks established among the individuals of the both parties. In his letter, Mehmed Aga informs Kristóf Báthory about the sultan's willingness to support Báthory against his enemies and asks him to take care of the messenger, Ahmed *Çavuş*, whom the sultan sent to Transylvania. At the end of the letter he added: "and may your majesty write letters to me often, let me know about your things as well. Moreover, I ask your majesty to send me two pine martens and a clock, and what issues your majesty has here, you may order me..."<sup>303</sup>

As one can see, from *çavuşes* to scribes, from interpreters to pashas, István Báthory and his successor Kristóf Báthory managed to establish a strong network in the Ottoman court, which they could use to support their own interests. Gifts played a significant role in this process. Each gift delivery not only opened the way for new network channels, but also formed a basis for the exchange of goods. Transylvanian envoys did not leave the Ottoman territories with empty hands after delivering gifts. There was always a demand from Transylvania for Ottoman goods. This list demonstrates some of the goods that Transylvanian envoy bought in Constantinople:<sup>304</sup>

Besides these, we bought from 200 golden forints:

4 saddlecloth	85 taller
10 pieces of <i>bagazia</i> <sup>305</sup>	21 taller
30 <i>oka</i> <sup>306</sup> <i>kanát</i>	3 taller
Octopuses	4 taller

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the Ottoman Empire," conference paper, *XIV International Economic History Congress*, Helsinki, 2006, accessed May, 2015, [https://www.academia.edu/5979515/The\\_Economic\\_Efficiency\\_of\\_Imperial\\_Waqfs\\_in\\_the\\_Ottoman\\_Empire](https://www.academia.edu/5979515/The_Economic_Efficiency_of_Imperial_Waqfs_in_the_Ottoman_Empire), 3.

<sup>302</sup> The master of the imperial stable.

<sup>303</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 308-9.

<sup>304</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 116.

<sup>305</sup> Hungarian *bagázia*, Polish *bagazja*, originally from Turkish *boğaca*. A kind of linen used in Transylvania to make skirts. It was one of the most popular goods for garments: Gervers, *The Influence of Ottoman Turkish Textiles and Costumes*, 6.

<sup>306</sup> *Oka* or *okka* was an Ottoman measure of quantity.

1 panther skin	14 taller
Another panther skin	8 taller
4 panther skin	39 taller
1 chair	18 taller
4 bunches of heron feathers	83 taller
<i>Terra sigillata</i>	8.5 taller
Pomegranates	1 taller
What I have left	13 taller

This lists reflects information that Mária Pakucs-Willcocks provides in her article about trade with the East in Transylvania and the goods imported from the Ottoman Empire. According to her results, the major Turkish goods that were demanded were textiles-such as *bogasia* and *aba*,<sup>307</sup> leather, cotton, wool, spices and carpets.<sup>308</sup>

Although it is not mentioned in the gift lists, one of the most significant objects demanded from the Ottoman lands were carpets and rugs. Today Transylvanian churches display great number of Ottoman carpets from fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. These carpets were acquired through the gift exchange process, from ransom to free captives or from wars, but mostly through the trade process.<sup>309</sup> They were considered valuable assets and highly demanded by the wealthy people and the ruling elite. Later, the ownership of these carpets passed to churches through pious donations. They decorated the walls of mostly Lutheran churches in order to cover erased frescoes on the walls and also to create a warmer atmosphere in empty places during the Reformation period.<sup>310</sup> This tradition of displaying the carpets in churches was even adopted by the pashas of Buda, who decorated their

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<sup>307</sup> Mixed cotton and wool textile.

<sup>308</sup> Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, "Transylvania and Its International Trade: 1525-1575," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica* 16, no. 2 (2012): 179-81.

<sup>309</sup> Atasoy and Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture in Europe*, 173-74.

<sup>310</sup> Inalcık, "The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300-1600," 298; Levent Boz, "Romanya'nın Transilvania Bölgesi Protestan Kiliselerine Halı Bağışlama Geleneği" [The tradition of donating carpets to Protestant churches of the Transylvanian region of Romania], *Vakıflar Dergisi* 42 (2014): 81-87; Ferenc Batári, "The First Ottoman Turkish Carpet Exhibition in the Western World," *Halı*, 136 (2004): 87-89; Stefano Ionesco, "Transylvanian Rugs: The collection of St. Margaret's Church in Mediash," *Ghereh: International Carpet and Textile Review* 50 (2012): 8.

mosques with carpets.<sup>311</sup> It was also a common style for house decoration in Ottoman lands. They covered their walls and floors with carpets as the pasha of Buda did: “The Pasha of Buda was sitting in the middle of the carpets on a divan and the ground was covered with handsome carpets...”<sup>312</sup>

As was mentioned in the list, *terra sigillata* was among the goods carried from the Ottoman lands to Transylvania. Probably *terra sigillata* vessels were ordered for the red-colored clay’s healing values. They became popular in Europe through diplomatic and commercial channels in the shape of sealed tablets and vessels.<sup>313</sup> Lemnian earth, clay from the island of Lemnos, was rediscovered by the Ottoman Turks in 1480, in the reign of Mehmed II. The healing quality of this clay was highly esteemed by the Ottomans against poison and plague. This earth was called *tin-i makhtum* (sealed earth) by the Ottomans and was taken in the form of pastilles stamped with official seals.<sup>314</sup> In 1530, Agricola, in *Bermannus*, states that he had seen tablets of Lemnian earth brought from Constantinople which were yellowish color and stamped with Turkish letters. He also mentions that the Turks held it to be the only remedy for plague.<sup>315</sup>

In an anonymous Venetian manuscript which praises the reign of Sultan Süleyman, the author mentions the Ottomans as the descendants of Apollo and the possession of the gift of medicine by the Ottomans. According to the author, the Ottomans had the responsibility to share this gift with the rest of the world, which, in return, gave the Ottomans the right to dominate other cultures.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Atasoy and Uluç, *Impressions of Ottoman Culture in Europe*, 177.

<sup>312</sup> Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz*, 9-10.

<sup>313</sup> Gisela Helmecke and Karin Ruehrdanz, “Turkish ‘Terra Sigillata’ Vessels from the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century and Their Counterparts in Europe and the New World,” in *Thirteenth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. Dávid Géza and Ibolya Gerelyes (Budapest: Hungarian National Museum, 2009), 310.

<sup>314</sup> Henryk Jaronowski, “‘An Earth by any Other Name’: Pre-Ottoman Sources and Names for Lemnian Earth,” *Hellenika* 58, no. 1 (2008): 47-48.

<sup>315</sup> F. W. Hasluck, “Terra Lemnia,” *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 16 (1909/1910): 222.

<sup>316</sup> Ana Pulido-Rull, “A Pronouncement of Alliance: An Anonymous Illuminated Venetian Manuscript for Sultan Süleyman,” *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 39, fn: 36.

Another entry in my sample documents supports this anonymous author's remark about the Ottoman's possession of medicine. *Terjek*, which was mentioned in List V, was a different version of mithridate, a type of antidote against animal-generated poison.<sup>317</sup> Transylvanian voivode requested *terjek* with *terra sigillata* from grand vizier Mehmed Pasha. In his diary, Stephan Gerlach also mentions Mehmed Pasha's task of providing *terjek* and *terra sigillata* to the voivode. According to his account, Mehmed Pasha sent *terjek* in two silver boxes and sealed earth (*terra sigillata*) each year to the voivode in return for 1,000 taller.<sup>318</sup> In his letter to Kristóf Báthory in 1576, after receiving the tax and the gifts, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha confirms the exchange: "... You sent to the Porte your dignitaries with tax, falcons and other gifts. They gave everything that you sent. Thus, protect your country and community [*községet*] and keep it well [*jól tartasad*], get along with your neighbours and be in peace... I sent the *terjek* and the medicine which you wanted..."<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Fatma Şimşek, "Mithridaticum and *Mesir*: The Story of an Antidote from Antiquity into Ottoman Times," *Mediterranean Journal of Humanities* 2, no. 2 (2012): 245.

<sup>318</sup> Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol. 2, 667.

<sup>319</sup> Szalay, *Erdély és a Porta*, 318-19.

## CONCLUSION

In my research, I focused on only one gift-giving relationship, between the Ottoman Empire and one of its Christian vassals, Transylvania. One can see that the gifts were the instrument for shaping the diplomacy between the two polities. Gifts and tributes confirmed the status of both sides in this relationship and the reciprocity was formed based upon the obligations that were determined mostly by the Ottomans. However, this reciprocity was explicitly unequal as the Ottomans tried to emphasize their sovereignty and superiority through diplomatic exchanges. All the gifts, the amount of the money and the number of the objects were already determined by the Ottomans and Transylvanian officials were highly aware of these rules and custom of giving at the Porte. However, there was always an open door to negotiate through the mediators.

The structure of diplomatic gift exchange process between the two parties differed in many aspects from the other Christian or Muslim states. Although, Transylvania was a Christian state, due to its vassal status it had no free choice in determining the gifts, while other Christian states, such as France, Italy and England, had considerably more flexibility in their choices, yet still had to obey the rules of diplomatic exchange regulated by the custom. On the other hand, Transylvania had less obligations towards the Porte compared to other Christian vassal states.

In my thesis, I argue that the Ottomans also used the gifts and the gift giving ceremony for their universalist imperial claims. Due to Transylvania's strategic position between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, delivery of the insignia and the associated ceremony played significant role in the sultan's imperial ambitions at the time. The objects, insignia, sent to Transylvania did not only serve symbolic communication between the sultan and his vassal, but also contained the message to the wider audience. Through insignia and

ceremonies, the Ottomans did not transmit the message of prestige, authority, superiority, etc. only to Transylvania, but also to the whole Western world.

While competing is in the nature of the diplomatic exchange in general, in Transylvanian and Ottoman context there is no sign of competing. It was simply recognition of the status and the confirmation of the continuity of the diplomatic relationship. However, I would suggest that through this exchange process, the Ottomans competed mostly with Habsburgs, since to keep Transylvania's vassal status meant to have the power in the region.

Another significant point is the absence of religious propaganda through the gifts. The Ottomans did not intend to demonstrate any religious recognition in the choice of sultanic gifts, while religious emphasis was pretty visible in in the context of Safavid-Ottoman or Crimean Khanate-Ottoman exchange of gifts. On the other hand, as it was in the Wallachian and Moldavian case, one would suggest that Christian religious ceremonies held in Constantinople as a part of accession contributed to the Ottomans' sovereignty claim over the Christian world.

For Transylvania's part, one would see the way how it managed to maintain a peaceful relationship by accepting the insignia and sending the gift of tribute to the Porte. Moreover, through the gifts voivode managed to establish his network at the Porte. He did not only gain the support of the sultan, but also the favourites of the sultan in the Ottoman court, which was a key to ensure his status as voivode against the candidates supported by the Habsburgs. The gift exchange process was a chance to create new network channels and strengthen the previous ones. Dragomans, renegades, and the sultan's officials who participated the process of exchange had significant role in shaping the diplomacy.

More complex and comparative research on diplomatic gift exchange between the Ottomans and its vassals during a larger period of time would help to demonstrate more aspects and cultural, politic and economic dimensions of the process. By this means, one

would have a better understanding in the process of gift exchange and the way how it was used to shape the diplomacy with the shift of powers.

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## APPENDIX:

### I.

#### List of the gifts to the Porte from the Habsburgs in August 1575 from the account of Gerlach:<sup>320</sup>

Sokollu Mehmed Pasha: 9.000 taller, 5 big silver cup, carafe, meyve fruit nappy, gold-plated watch.

Piyale Pasha: 2.000 taller, 3 big silver cup, a watch, a compass.

Ahmed Pasha: 1.000 taller, 12 gol-plated plates, a watch, a compass.

Mahmud Pasha: 1.000 taller, 2 big silver cup, a watch.

Mustafa Pasha: 1.000 taller, 2 cups, a watch, a compass.

Sinan Pasha: 1.000 taller, 2 big silver cup or chalice.

[On the way to Pasha of Buda] Mustafa Pasha: 3.000 taller, 4 big silver cup, a watch.

[On the way to Bey of Estergon] 300 taller, 2 pitcher, a high watch with round glass.

Aga of Janissary: 300 taller, 2 cup, a watch.

Rumeli Beylerbeyi: [?] taller, 4 big silver cup, a watch.

To the gatekeeper of Mehmed Pasha and to the other servants: 100 taller.

To the servants of the Pasha of Buda's place: 600 taller.

To the other pashas' [in Istanbul] servants: 50 taller.

To Dr. Salomon [doctor of Mehmed Pasha] and to the one whos name was secret: 300 taller.

To Adam Neuser: 100 taller.

To the foremost servants (or dignitaries ??): 1.500 taller.

To the interpreters of the Porte: 1.800 taller.

23 August 1575: gifts to the Sultan

45.000 taller.

Gold-plated silver writing set.

A crystal watch which is 3 span high, large , incredibly beautiful and 1.500 taller worth.

A washbowl and ewer set, decorated with fish, cancer and leaf motives.

4 big and high gilt chalice.

An alarm clock which has 4 minaret.

A compass which has the picture of whole Turkey on it.

(all these worth 3181 Reichtaler 58 Krenzer)

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<sup>320</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol.1, 216-219.

## II.

### List of the gifts to the Ottoman dignitaries and interpreters given by the Habsburgs (from Gerlach's account):<sup>321</sup>

To the *chavush* who welcomed the Ambassador at the entrance of the city: 50 taler.

For the same reason to the *chavushbashi*: 25 taler

To the *ulufecibaşı*: 25 taler

To the ones who brought the food sent by the Sultan and Mehmed Pasha: 25 taler

When the Ambassador went to see the Pahsa the first time, to the door guard and other servants: 100 taler.

To the servants and gatekeeper of Piyale Pasha: 50 taler.

To Ahmed Pasha's gatekeepers: 50 taler

To Mehmed Pasha's gatekeepers: 50 taler

To Mustafa Pasha's gatekeepers: 50 taler

To Sinan Pasha's gatekeeper: 50 taler

To the Sultan's head of gatekeepers: 25 taler

To the guards of the inner doors: 25 taler

To the leader of the ships: 12.5 taler

To the *zağarcı* (who deals with sultan's hunting dogs): 1.5

To the *kurtçu* (who deals with wolves): 1.5 taler

To the *aslançı* (who deals with lions): 1.5

To the musicians: 3 taler

...

The amount that was paid to the interpreters in the Porte by envoys of the Emperor:

To the *bas tercuman* Mahmud Bey: 1000 taler

To Murad Bey: 300 taler

To Hürrem Bey: [not stated]

To Mehmed Bey: 50 taler

To Aurelius: 50 taler

To the scribe Mahmud Bey: 20 taler

To the Turkish scribe of the prison: 30 taler

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<sup>321</sup> Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, vol.1, 85-87.