

MICHAEL THE BRAVE AND PARTIUM^{*}

DORU ȚUINEA^{**}

Immediately after he conquered Transylvania through military force and entered in Alba Iulia, Michael the Brave made all the necessary steps in order to be recognised by the inhabitants and by Rudolph II, the Holy Roman emperor, as the new prince of the country. Given that, from the beginning of his Transylvanian rule he declared that he had started the war against cardinal Andrew Bathory in order to keep Transylvania along the Christian powers in the Long War against the Ottomans. During the negotiations between Michael the Brave and the representatives of the Habsburg empire, he expressed his desire to be acknowledged also as the ruler of the Hungarian parts outside Transylvania, known as Partium.

The present study aims to discuss the status of Partium region during the Transylvanian reign of Michael the Brave, which lasted approximately 11 months, emphasizing aspects which have been unknown or even ignored by the historiography. The main goal of the study is to bring up and analyse examples of political decisions taken by Michael the Brave touching the counties outside of Transylvania, ruled by the Habsburgs, and, further on, to inventory the consequences they produced, if any.

The territory of Partium was a bone of contention between the Holy Roman emperor, as king of Hungary, and the Ottoman sultan, especially after the destruction of the medieval Hungarian kingdom and the establishment of the Buda *Eyalet*. The creation of the Transylvanian principality in 1541 gave a new dimension to this political and military dispute: Partium was included within the borders of Transylvania, and therefore the Habsburgs were deprived of these territories. The inclusion of Partium to the Transylvanian principality formally happened with the naming of John Sigismund, through the decision of the Sublime Porte, as prince of a vast territory, which included the medieval voivodship and the marginal counties stretching up to Tisa¹.

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^{**} Assistant researcher at the “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History; doru.tuinea@yahoo.ro

¹ Cristina Feneșan, *Constituirea principatului autonom al Transilvaniei*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1997, p. 48–49.

The dispute between the two empires, regarding not only the rule over Partium, but also over Transylvania, continued for decades, while the local officials oscillated between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans². In 1570 the envoys of John Sigismund, on one side, and emperor Maximilian II and his advisers, on the other, spent almost the entire year debating about the status of the Hungarian counties and fortresses, only to conclude with mutual concessions (Treaty of Speyer). The counties of Bihor (with the fortress of Oradea), Crasna, Solnocul de Mijloc and Maramureș (with the fortress of Hust, but without Baia Mare) remained parts of Transylvania, even if the Transylvanian prince gave up his ambition to rebuild the Hungarian Kingdom around Transylvania³.

The uncertain status of the province was maintained during the rule of the following princes and the disputes were reopened with the renewal of military conflicts between Christians and Ottomans. The war was ignited by various minor incidents at the border between the Holy Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire, formally located on the territory of old Hungary⁴ and it gave to the Ottomans the occasion to occupy some territories from Partium. Even if the princes of Transylvania included Partium in their laws, the marginal counties and fortresses were separated from the principality and constituted *partes Hungariae*, a territory claimed both by the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Sigismund Bathory, who participated in the war together with the imperial forces, insisted even after 1598 that Oradea and the whole old border should be restored to the Transylvanian prince, which was to be preferred to the risk of the Ottoman conquest⁵.

The Long War between the Christian states, united in the Holy League, and the Ottoman Empire created the international context to which the anti-Ottoman campaigns of Michael the Brave can be ascribed, including the conquest of Transylvania. Even if Michael the Brave occupied Transylvania as member of the Holy League fighting against the Ottomans, he continued to keep a political correspondence with the Porte. As soon as the news of the advance of Michael the Brave reached Constantinople, the sultan ordered the detention of the Wallachian emissary and his servants present in city⁶. Another embassy of the Romanian prince led by Anghelache, a Greek, arrived at Constantinople at the end of January 1600⁷. The envoys were entitled to conclude the peace. Therefore, the sultan sent to

² For the evolution of these negotiations and disputes see *Ibidem*, p. 132–176.

³ Lukinich Imre, *Erdély területei változásai a török hódítás korában (1541–1711)*, Budapest, 1918, p. 132.

⁴ For the context, see Ion Sârbu, *Istoria lui Mihai vodă Viteazul, domnul Țării Românești*, Editura Facla, 1976, p. 33–42.

⁵ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, Editura Militară, București, 1968, p. 247.

⁶ *Mihai Viteazul în conștiință europeană*, vol. IV, București, 1986 (further *MVCE*), nr. 128, p. 177.

⁷ Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. XII (further Hurmuzaki, *Documente*), București, 1903, nr. MXLIII, p. 676. This Angelache had been *mare portar* of Michael the Brave in Wallachia (see Dorel Țuinea, *Evoluția componenței sfatului domnesc al Țării Românești în timpul domniei lui Mihai Viteazul*, in “*Revista istorică*”, tom XXVIII, 2017, nr. 5–6, p. 411–461).

Transylvania three *kapucus* together with the ambassador of the prince, with the purpose of negotiating the terms of peace and to bring the tribute⁸.

Following these negotiations, the Sublime Porte sent a large embassy to Transylvania, led by Hurami aga⁹ and formed up by 100 members¹⁰. The Ottoman envoys arrived in Braşov on 9th of March 1600 and the Romanian prince welcomed them with fast and the two sides exchanged gifts. Hurami aga brought the usual symbols of authority for the prince and his son, Nicolae Pătraşcu, which meant that the Ottomans recognised Michael the Brave as ruler of Transylvania and his son as ruler of Wallachia.

Ieremia Movilă learned about this embassy and the attitude of the Ottomans towards the Romanian prince, including the giving of the symbols of authority, from Giafer (Dziafer) a *Çavuş*, member of Hurami's entourage¹¹. However, the real desire of Michael the Brave was to have this authority acknowledged by the Holy Roman emperor but until its arrival he decided to show his courtesy to the Ottomans in order to delay an immediate confrontation. At that time Michael the Brave was expecting money from the Habsburgs, mostly because he was already planning his expedition to Moldavia¹².

PARTIUM AND THE NEGOTIATIONS OF MICHAEL THE BRAVE WITH THE HABSBURGS

The claims of Michael the Brave over Partium are known and have been presented for a long time by the Romanian historiography¹³. The embassy led by Petru Armeanul in November 1599 informed the Habsburgs and the emperor himself about the victory at Şelimbăr but did not discuss the status of Michael the Brave neither in Transylvania, nor in Partium¹⁴. News on the victory of Şelimbăr were delivered also by the priest Stan, the confessor of Michael the Brave, who at 5th of November 1599 was in Košice¹⁵. On 16th of November 1599, the prefect and his councillors of Szepes wrote from Košice, saying that the Hungarian territories should be governed by the imperial administration, given that Partium had been

⁸ See also Ilie Minea, *Mihai vodă Viteazul şi turcii în anii 1600–1601*, in "Cercetări istorice", anul X–XII (1934–1936), nr. 1, p. 156–195.

⁹ Nicolas Iorga named him Hussein aga, see Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, p. 327.

¹⁰ *MVCE*, IV, nr. 171, p. 228.

¹¹ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/2, nr. CCCXIII, p. 589.

¹² Ilie Minea, *op. cit.*, p. 166–167.

¹³ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, p. 311–355; Petre P. Panaitescu, *Mihai Viteazul*, Corint, Bucureşti, 2002, p. 205–210.

¹⁴ For the evolution of the talks, see Ştefan Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae*, vol. III. *Studii cu privire la Mihai Viteazul*, Editura Albatros, Bucureşti, 1997, p. 283–285.

¹⁵ *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, vol. II, Hermanstadt, 1845, p. 459–461. See also Andrei Pippidi, *Noi informaţii cu privire la lupta de la Şelimbăr*, in "Revista de Istorie", tom 28, 1975, nr. 4, p. 553–574.

ruled by the Hungarian monarchy (*totum id quidquid est, quod in Hungaria possederunt, a Transilvanica procuratione rescindatur, et Hungarico Regno iterum incorporetur*)¹⁶.

In January 1600, the embassy of the ban Mihalcea Caragea and the treasurer Stoichiță arrived at the imperial court, with clear instructions from Michael the Brave regarding the negotiations with the Habsburgs. Among the claims of the Wallachian voivode, one concerned the return of Transylvania to its old boundaries (*Oradea cu ținutul Bihorului și Hustul cu Maramurășului și ținutul Crasnei și ale Solnocului și ale Sărandului și Nagbaia, cu Baia de Sus și toate ținuturile lor carele au fost date de Macsimilian împărat suptă Ardeal*)¹⁷.

By the end of January 1600 Carlo Magno, one of the Habsburg ambassadors in Transylvania, sent a few reports to the imperial commissioners saying that Michael Brave did not want to hear anymore promises and decided to ask for money¹⁸. The same ambassador also acknowledged the emperor, Rudolph II, that Michael might abandon his claims regarding Transylvania, and quoted some of his sayings “if the emperor wanted to honour me (Michael the Brave n.n.) and my son with the title of prince of the Holy Empire and to reward me and give me the means to carry on this war”¹⁹. In another report, signed together with Giovanni de Marini Poli, Carlo Magno said that in a private audience the Wallachian voivode confessed to them that only his allegiance to the emperor prevented him from waging war against Giorgio Basta, who “together with the above-mentioned partisans (*Ștefan Bocskay, Ștefan Bathory de Ecsed and Ștefan Bathory de Somlío* n.n.) destroyed three counties”²⁰. He most likely referred to Maramureș, Solnocul de Mijloc and Crasna, because we find these three territories mentioned in the income register in November 1599, where were included the counties of Transylvania together with those three, mentioned as the counties of the Hungarian realm which belong to *Ardeal*²¹.

Back in Transylvania, Stoichiță of Strâmba brought with him an unsatisfactory answer regarding Michael's claims, – that made the voivode so angry that he expressed his thoughts in a private audience with the imperial commissioners (David Ungnad and Mihail Székely) regarding the intention of the emperor to chase him out of Transylvania²². Although Rudolph II praised the courage of Michael the Brave and the conquest of Transylvania, he did not send clear responses to the claims made by the ban Mihalcea and the treasurer Stoichiță, but only promised that would send imperial envoys to speak with the Wallachian voivode about the

¹⁶ *MVCE*, IV, nr. 129, p. 179.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, I, nr. 137, p. 373.

¹⁸ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. IV (further *Călători străini*), Editura Științifică, București, 1972, p. 19.

¹⁹ *MVCE*, I, nr. 140, p. 382.

²⁰ *Călători străini*, IV, p. 17–18.

²¹ *DRH*, B, XI, nr. 348, p. 492.

²² Ștefan Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae*, III, p. 289–290; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, p. 322.

government of Transylvania²³. A few days later Wallachia was placed under imperial protection, as the emperor recognized Michael's succession to Wallachia, on male line, as long as his heirs would pledge homage to the Habsburgs²⁴.

The negotiations between Michael the Brave and the Habsburgs were postponed until the summer of 1600, when the doctor Bartholomew Pezzen arrived in Transylvania with the mission to counsel Michael regarding the government of Transylvania²⁵. The Wallachian voivode insisted for this embassy, hoping that the high-ranking imperial envoy would bring him the imperial confirmation of his authority over Transylvania²⁶.

The meeting between Michael the Brave and Bartholomew Pezzen took place only in July 1600, when the Transylvania Diet met in Alba Iulia. The reason for the delay was the presence of Michael in Moldavia. When they finally met, Michael the Brave asked for his acknowledgement as prince of Transylvania and for the five counties (Bihor, Solnocul de Mijloc, Maramureș, Sarand and Crasna) as part of his principality²⁷. Moreover, the castles of Hust, Chioar, Gheorghieni, Gilău, Veci and Făgăraș had to be inherited by his female heirs, if his male line would disappear²⁸.

These claims were rejected by the imperial envoy, but the negotiations continued until Michael renounced to some of them. In the end, Bartholomew Pezzen left for Vienna with only six claims and Michael the Brave accepted to be acknowledged only as governor of Transylvania, but having the right to make donations and to collect the incomes. Regarding Partium, Michael only asked for the castles of Hust and Chioar to be offered to him and his heirs²⁹. The response from the emperor arrived late, on 12th of September 1600, and recognized Michael as governor of Transylvania, but the castles of Hust and Chioar remained under the control of the Habsburgs, who argued that they had the right to rule over them as the Holy Roman emperor was also king of Hungary³⁰.

THE DECISIONS OF MICHAEL THE BRAVE REGARDING PARTIUM

During the negotiations with the Habsburgs, Michael the Brave claimed also the county of Zarand, which was considered part of Transylvania and he wanted to

²³ *MVCE*, I, nr. 142, p. 389–391.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, nr. 146, p. 403–404. A copy of the original document can be found at SJAN Covasna, Colecția personală Barabás Samuil, nr. 9, f. 13.

²⁵ Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești*, vol. VI, București, 1933 (further Andrei Veress, *Documente*), nr. 116, p. 123–124.

²⁶ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, p. 330–331. For repeated requests made by Michael the Brave for Bartolomeus Pezzen's coming to Transylvania see *MVCE*, V, nr. 168, 175, 176 and 184.

²⁷ *MVCE*, I, nr. 196, p. 525. See also Ștefan Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae*, III, p. 308–310.

²⁸ *MVCE*, I, nr. 196, p. 525.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, nr. 200, p. 553.

³⁰ *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae*, vol. IV, Budapesta, 1878., nr. LXI, p. 539–544.

control it. Although the claims over the county of Zarand and the other counties and castles were already mentioned by Michael's embassy to the imperial court in January 1600, the Wallachian prince considered from the beginning that he had the same authority over Zarand as his predecessors did. He had in mind the fact that Sigismund and Andrew Bathory issued acts concerning the nobles and properties from this county³¹.

At the 18th of November 1599, Michael the Brave offered Nicolae Segnyei of Lapispatok the castle of Chiroch together with its lands (Ghioroc, Brad, Aciua, Lazuri, Crișcior, Poiana etc.), all located in the county of Zarand, as a reward for his faithful services³². According to the documents, these properties were granted to Nicolae Segnyei by Sigismund Bathory, and Michael the Brave confirmed this donation, awarding also to Nicolae the royal right over the castles and the lands. It can therefore be observed that Michael the Brave exercised his right to give donations before having a final agreement with the Habsburgs about the county of Zarand, suggesting the prince's position regarding these territories from Partium.

The attitude of Michael the Brave regarding the county of Zarand was constant during his Transylvanian rule. Thus, in July 1600, while he was negotiating with Bartholomew Pezzen, he accepted the complaint of the nobles from Zarand, who wanted to be able to have a judge in their country in order to not go to Ineu. The prince confirmed their right to have a judge and prevented the captain of Ineu of his juridical power over the county of Zarand³³.

In addition to this problem, another important aspect for the situation is represented by the presence of representatives from Zarand in the Transylvanian Diet. This means that Michael the Brave sent an envoy to the county of Zarand asking the magistrates to name a representative to the Diet. Accordingly, it seems that for the nobles from Zarand Michael the Brave was their ruler and the *de facto* prince of Transylvania, trusting to have with him the same relations and they had had with his predecessors.

The participation of the envoys from Zarand to the meetings of the Transylvanian Diet indicates that for Michael the Brave and the Transylvanian estates the county of Zarand was integrated into the principality. This is also emphasized by the introductory parts of the three diets held by the Wallachian prince, mentioning that besides the Transylvanian nations, there were also present the deputies of the peoples from the Hungarian territories (or the parts which were subjected to Transylvania)³⁴. Thus, from this point of view, Michael the Brave followed the footsteps of his predecessors.

³¹ See for example the donations made by the two princes at SJAN Cluj, Fond Familial Wass, Seria 2. Documente fasciculate, fasc. XLIII, nr. 4; SJAN Cluj, Fond Familial Ana Kemeny, nr. 47; SJAN Cluj, Fond familial Gyulai-Kuun, Seria 1. Documente medievale, nr. 373 and 379.

³² Andrei Veress, *Documente*, V, nr. 198, p. 283–285.

³³ *MVCE*, I, nr. 198, p. 539.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, nr. 109, p. 298, nr. 159, p. 445 and nr. 198, p. 536.

Michael the Brave had shown also a particular interest for other two counties from Partium, Crasna and Solnocul de Mijloc, and the sources argue in this respect especially when it comes to the decisions taken for them. One of the first dispositions was to convene the Transylvanian Diet, an action which was considered by the papal nuncio as “the highest juridical act that could be exerted by a prince”³⁵. The first convening acts date from 2nd of November 1599³⁶, only a day after the Wallachian prince entered in Alba-Iulia, but the edition published by Nicolas Iorga does not include the names of the addressees, thus we do not know who was summoned by the prince. However, from a document published at Sibiu in 1845 we know that on 2nd of November 1599 the Wallachian prince commanded to the magistrate from the county of Crasna (*comitibus, vicecomitibus, iudicibus ac universitatis comitatus Krasznsensis*) to present himself to the diet, which was to be held on the 20th of November at Cluj³⁷.

Two days later, Michael the Brave wrote to Ladislau Gyulaffy of Rathoth, the count of Solnocul de Mijloc, dispatching to him the same command³⁸. After a few days, the Wallachian prince considered to change the place, thus he wrote again to Ladislau Gyulaffy inviting him to come to Alba Iulia³⁹. John Darahi, the Hungarian secretary of Michael the Brave, and eyewitness of the battle of Șelimbăr and to other events, noted in a report to Mihail Szekely that “in the second day after the Transylvania armies fled, the voivode (...) came to the battlefield and their camp”, where he commanded to be brought Gaspar Kornis, with whom he counselled right in the tent of the cardinal Andrew Bathory and he ordered letters to be sent to the bordering territories (*in confiniis Transsylvanica*) in the name of the voivode and of Kornis⁴⁰. The secretary reproduces the content of these letters and so we get to know the content of the transmitted to the bordering counties. Firstly, the addressees were asked not to alienate the territories neither from the emperor, nor from the Transylvanian prince, being assured that they would receive their remaining payments (*stipendiis*)⁴¹.

So far we can see that for Michael the Brave there was no distinction between Transylvania and Partium when it come for him to exert his right to convene the diet, considering that he possessed the same rights as the former princes of Transylvania, which indicates that he did not thought that the Habsburgs would not recognise him as ruler of Transylvania and Partium.

Ladislau Gyulaffi was count of Solnocul de Mijloc under of Sigismund and Andrew Báthory⁴², former princes of Transylvania, and when the Wallachian prince

³⁵ *Ibidem*, nr. 104, p. 281. See also Ștefan Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae*, III, p. 300.

³⁶ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, nr. DCCLXIX și DCCLXX, p. 483–484.

³⁷ *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, vol. II, Hermanstadt, 1845, p. 458.

³⁸ Ioan Lupaș, *Documente istorice transilvane*, vol. I, Cluj, 1940, nr. 1, p. 1–2.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, nr. 2, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Călători străini*, IV, p. 127.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*. The Latin text in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III/1, nr. CCCXL, p. 427–433.

⁴² For exemplification, see SJAN Cluj, Fond familial Gyulai-Kuun, Seria I. Documente medievale, nr. 367 (22 october 1594) and *Ibidem*, Seria III. Documente cotate, B. Rudenii, nr. 17, f. 172 (2 september 1599).

sat on the throne in Alba Iulia, “the young Gyulaffi rendered himself with his castle (to Michael the Brave n.n.) <declaring himself> as subject to his imperial majesty”⁴³. However, during the Transylvanian rule of Michael the Brave, the Habsburgs named Paul Niary count of Bihor, Crasna and Solnocul de Mijloc, and he entitled himself as that⁴⁴, emphasizing the disputes between the Wallachian prince and the empire regarding Transylvania and the counties from Partium.

In the first days of his Transylvanian rule, Michael the Brave extended his control over the fortresses of the principality and of Partium. Thus, the fortresses of Hust and Chioar surrendered to the Wallachian prince⁴⁵, although their commanders complained that they were exhorted by the general captain to surrender the fortresses and they did not know what to do, because they did not want to alienate them from Transylvania⁴⁶. Conquering these fortresses provided the voivode with a different attitude from the Habsburgs⁴⁷. If Hust was quickly conquered by the troops of Giorgio Basta⁴⁸, Chioar remained under Michael’s control, who placed there as captain a Wallachian boyar, aga Leca, who occupied the same military position in Gherla⁴⁹. Leca surrendered Chioar to the Transylvanian estates at the beginning of September 1600⁵⁰ and later Giorgio Basta himself wrote to the emperor Rudolph II that Leca deserved to be rewarded⁵¹.

In the matter of the other fortresses, on the 8th of December 1599 Gheorghe Rabuss wrote to the archduke Maximilian that: “all garrisons: Lipova, Ineu, Șiria, Lugoj, Caransebeș and others have been occupied by Wallachian captains and soldiers, and the former captains have been dismissed”⁵². Obviously, the statement regarding the dismissal of captains does not reflect fully the reality⁵³, but what matters here is the part of the phrase were the fortresses from Partium, excepting

⁴³ *MVCE*, IV, nr. 132, p. 185.

⁴⁴ For example, on 1st of November 1599 (SJAN Cluj, Fond familial Bánffy, Seria I. ANR, Seria II. Instrumente contemporane de evidență și documente după instrumente contemporane de evidență, Subseria 1b. Documente ordonate după registrul 1b, fasc. 102, nr. 8) and at 4th of August 1600 (*Ibidem*, Subseria 2 – Documente ordonate după registrul 2, Fascicula Z, nr. 14).

⁴⁵ *MVCE*, II, p. 130.

⁴⁶ The report of Ioan Darahi at *Călători străini*, IV, p. 132.

⁴⁷ Lukinich Imre, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁴⁸ On 12th of February 1600, Giorgio Basta brought Hust and other two small fortresses in obedience to the emperor. See *MVCE*, V, nr. 153, p. 241–243.

⁴⁹ Andrei Veress, *Documente*, VI, nr. 125, p. 130–131; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, nr. MCLXII, p. 799.

⁵⁰ Petre P. Panaitescu, *op. cit.*, p. 219. The Transylvanian States wrote to aga Leca, at 4 september 1600, asking him to side with them (See *Monumenta Comitalia Regni Transylvaniae*, IV, Budapest, 1878, nr. LVIII, p. 531–533).

⁵¹ Veress Endre, *Basta György hadvezér levelezése és iratai, 1597–1607*, Budapest, 1909, nr. 608, p. 451.

⁵² *MVCE*, I, nr. 116, p. 314.

⁵³ For example, Ioan Szelestey had been named captain at Șiria (*MVCE*, I, nr. 140, p. 384). See also Doru Țuinea, *Pătrunderea slujbașilor netrănsilvăneni ai lui Mihai Viteazul în societatea ardeleană*, in “Studii și materiale de istorie medie”, vol. XXXVII, 2019, p. 73–85.

Lugoj and Caransebeș, are mentioned as being occupied by the troops of the Wallachian voivode.

During the sessions of the Diet from November 1599 it was decided that Michael the Brave should take into account all the privileges and decisions, besides the donations made by the prince Sigismund⁵⁴. Following this decision, Michael the Brave ordered the magistrate from the county of Solnocul de Mijloc to inventory all lands or parts of lands which were gifted by Sigismund Báthory in that territory, together with the number of serfs who lived there, inventory that should have been handed to the prince⁵⁵. This command suggests once more the fact that the prince considered himself ruler of both Transylvania and Partium.

On 4th of December 1599, Michael the Brave commanded a census of all high-ranking men from the counties of Crasna and Solnocul de Mijloc (*omnes preacipuos homines seculares et ecclesiasticos, nobiles et viduas*) and the list had also to be sent to him in the shortest time possible⁵⁶. Paul Niary, the count of Crasna and Solnocul de Mijloc, wrote to archduke Mathias, brother of Rudolph II, on 8th of January 1600, informing him that Michael the Brave ordered a list with all the men from Solnocul de Mijloc and Crasna (*denuo litteris mandavit utrique comitatui ut connumerentur, tam nobiles quam ignobiles utriusque comitatus*), in spite of the fact that those counties had been occupied by the army of Paul Niary. It was therefore a trespass of imperial jurisdiction which was entitled to exert authority according to the old order (*iuxta antiquam consuetudinem*)⁵⁷. At about the same time Giorgio Basta informed the archduke Maximilian, another brother of Rudolph II, that Michael the Brave was preparing to attack the peripheral counties, including the fortresses of Hust and Chioar⁵⁸.

On 22nd of December 1599, Michael the Brave made a new donation to the nobleman Gheorghe Borbély of Sima, namely the estate of Chiazar from the county of Dăbâca and parts from the estates of Aython (nowadays Aiton, Cluj) and Zengiel (nowadays Sânger, Mureș), including the houses and the noble courts from there, together with another part from the estate of Mezőpanasz, located in the county of Bihar⁵⁹. According to this act of donation, these lands were already in the possession of Gheorghe Borbély of Sima, but he did not have any official document to support for his rights. Also, the prince recognized him the royal rights over these regions.

In the same day was issued another command which gave to the same Gheorghe Borbély of Sima the estates of Menessi, Giarak and Jassel, together with a house and a noble court in the town of Lipova, all being located in the county of

⁵⁴ *MVCE*, I, nr. 109, p. 301.

⁵⁵ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III/1, nr. CCCI, p. 378.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, XII, nr. DCCCXLVI, p. 528.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, nr. CMXLVIII, p. 591. See also Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, p. 286.

⁵⁸ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, nr. CMLVII, p. 599.

⁵⁹ SJAN Cluj, Fond familial Wass, II. Documente fasciculate, fasc. LXV, nr. 13.

Arad⁶⁰. This document, addressed to the archivists from the chapter of Alba, provides us with more details: these properties were given to Gheorghe Borbély of Sima by the former prince, Sigismund Báthory, and Michael the Brave confirmed these rights of possession as a reward for his faithful services for his military merits during the liberation of the fortresses Lipova, Șiria and Ineu. These fortresses were conquered by the Ottomans and since August 1599 Andrew Báthory was asking through the mediation of Grand Vizier Ibrahim and *çavuş* Mustafa for Ineu and Lipova to be returned to Transylvania⁶¹.

For the bigger picture is worth to observe that Michael the Brave started to change his attitude toward the Habsburgs, especially because the negotiations with the imperials concerning Partium did not followed the expected path; therefore he avoided to grant anymore donations in the territories controlled by the Habsburgs. Such an example might be seen in Michael's interventions for the recovery of the Adoryan castle from Bihor to the nobleman Ștefan Csaky. On the 2nd of February 1600, the Wallachian prince addressed Volfgang Rumpff, free baron and intimate adviser of Rudolph II, asking his earnestly to offer to Ștefan Csaky the Adoryan castle, which had been in his family possession for over 100 years until it was conquered by the Turks and Tatars. After the reconquest of the territory, the archduke Maximilian gave this castle to Ioan Szelestey to the prejudice of Ștefan Csaky⁶². In the following day, Michael the Brave addressed directly to the emperor, asking him to command to the captain of Oradea to return the castle to Ștefan Csaky⁶³.

We learn from last case, that Michael the Brave did not order for the castle to be returned, but asked the imperial authorities to do it, which illustrates yet the refusal of the imperial authorities to acknowledge the authority of the Wallachian voivode outside the principality. Also, Michael's new attitude shows that the prince understood his complex situation, especially since he was still depended on the funds which he received from the Habsburgs in order to pay his mercenaries. Thus, before he received the response from the emperor, which was to be brought by the treasurer Stoica⁶⁴, Michael preferred not to affect even more the relations with the empire and decided to ask the imperial authorities to return the castle to Ștefan Csaky. After this moment he stopped granting donations in Partium

However, this does not mean that the Wallachian prince renounced to all his claims over Partium. We have seen that in his negotiations with Bartholomew Pezzen, initially Michael the Brave reclaimed a consistent part of Partium, later limited only to the fortresses of Hust and Chioar, while at the Diet of 1600 participated also representatives from Zarand.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, nr. 15.

⁶¹ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Mihai Viteazul*, p. 264–265.

⁶² MOL Családok, Testületek és intézmények levéltárai, Csáky család levéltára, Központi levéltár (P 71), at SANIC, Colecția Microfilme Ungaria, Rola 626, cadre 1267–1269.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, cadre 1270–1272.

⁶⁴ Ștefan Andreescu, *Restitutio Daciae*, III, p. 289.

To all these is also worth to be added that on 18th of July 1600 Michael the Brave commanded to all inhabitants from the Hungarian territories, both noblemen and common people (*in partibus regni Hungariae constitutis et commorantibus*) to testify in a trial of Paul Buza from Lipova⁶⁵. According to the disposition, the ones who were asked to participate at this trial had to present themselves at the appointed time, otherwise they would be fined with 16 marks. The hearing was to be taken place before the local officials: the vicecounts and judges of the nobles from the county of Bihor; archivists from Oradea or a witness; the judge and jurors from Oradea; Andrei Ip, vice-captain of Lipova; Ioan More, Paul Nagy, Gabriel Falty, Andrei Piskolty and Ladislau Balko from Lipova; Mihail Chokassy, Ladislau Gorbay, Gheorghe Vancha and Albert Ribiczey, castellans of Ineu. All carried out the investigation as men of the prince (*hominum nostrorum*). The preparations for this trial suggests, once more the fact that Michael the Brave did not gave up in issuing orders to the authorities from Partium and he did until the end of his Transylvanian rule, even if the Habsburgs did not fully recognized him as ruler of the province.

CONCLUSIONS

During his Transylvanian rule, Michael the Brave considered that Partium was under his authority, as it used to be during the government of his predecessors as rulers of Transylvania. For that he asked even during the first meeting between his representatives and those of Rudolph II to have Partium under his authority.

Even though the attitude of the imperial authorities was not in accordance with Michael's desire, he look after the counties from Partium, especially the fortresses recovered from the Ottomans, where he named in command trustful men. The captains and castellans from these territories represented centres of power for the Wallachian prince. Moreover, the attitude and interest shown by Michael the Brave towards the counties and fortresses from Partium, proved that he knew and understood the realities of the Transylvanian principality, continuing the politics of his predecessors towards these territories, which he wanted to have joined to Transylvania. From this point of view, the Wallachian voivode protected the strategical and military interests of the Transylvanian people in front of the Habsburgs, like previously done by his Transylvanian predecessors.

However, facing the resistance of the Habsburg authorities to his rule, Michael the Brave made concessions regarding Partium from the beginning of 1600 and lacking the imperial recognition of his authority he did not make any donations, but only helped some of his faithful men when they had to deal with the imperial officials. These concessions culminated with abandoning all Partium

⁶⁵ SJAN Cluj, Fond Primăria municipiului Cluj, Seria A. Privilegii și acte, Subseria 6. Acte constituite în fascicule pe probleme și după proveniență, fasc. 16, nr. 1.

during the negotiations with Bartholomew Pezzen. Michael the Brave hoped to be acknowledged at least as rightful commander of the fortresses of Hust and Chioar, but the emperor considered that he was the rightful ruler over them, from his position as king of Hungary.

The abandon of the claims over Partium might be interpreted as a concession of Michael the Brave towards the imperial authorities hoping that in exchange he could have been acknowledged as prince of Transylvania. Given the protracted negotiations, the financial urgencies and the local context (the invasion in Moldavia of the Polish troops, the resumption of fighting with the Ottomans), the Wallachian voivode abandoned the Hungarian territories, but continued to claim authority over Transylvania, which he wanted to rule as governor.

Even if his authority over Partium was not recognized, Michael the Brave took some extended liberties in the matter of authority: issued various orders regarding this territory, convened the Diet, commanded a census of the noblemen and a list of donations made by Sigismund Bathory. All these commands prove that Michael the Brave exerted princely rights over Partium and his authority was acknowledged by local officials, who even participated at the Diet.

MICHAEL THE BRAVE AND PARTIUM

Abstract

This paper studies the governance of Michael the Brave over Partium during his Transylvanian rule (November 1599 – September 1600). Michael the Brave became ruler of Transylvania by defeating Andrew Bathory, his authority being acknowledged by the three estates of the country. Following in the footsteps of the former princes of Transylvania, the Wallachian voivode considered that the Hungarian territories (Partium) were under his authority.

During the negotiations with the Habsburgs, the Wallachian prince wanted to be acknowledged as prince of Transylvanian, and the territories from Partium to be annexed to the Transylvanian principality. However, given that he met with opposition from the imperial authorities, Michael abandoned his claims over Partium in the summer of 1600. However, during his Transylvanian rule he issued orders regarding this territory.

Keywords: Transylvania; Partium; partes Hungariae; Michael the Brave; negotiations; governance; fortresses.