



BOOK REVIEWS

Erdélyi külpolitika a vesztfáliai béke után [Transylvania's Foreign Policy following the Peace of Westphalia]. By Gábor Kármán. Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2011. 484 pp.

The period following the Peace of Westphalia was an era of exciting and far-reaching structural change in the history of Europe. In this book Gábor Kármán, a prominent scholar of the history of the Transylvanian Principality and the diplomatic history of the early modern period, guides his reader through the first ten years following the conclusion of the treaties in 1648, a decade rich with decisive events. He examines the shift that took place in foreign policy over time as denominational elements gradually came to play a smaller and smaller role in the decisions of policy makers, not to mention the justifications given for these decisions, yielding gradually to simple reason of state, which used old sectarian arguments at most as a tool in order to mask other goals. For readers unfamiliar with the subject it may seem a bit odd that Kármán seeks to illustrate this process with the example of the Transylvanian Principality, which was one of the vassal states of the Ottoman Empire, but in the seventeenth century, its limited sovereignty notwithstanding, this successor state of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom, under the leadership of Calvinist rulers, sometimes pursued a remarkably independent foreign policy and appeared as an important actor on the stage of European politics.

The book essentially offers an overview of the foreign policy of Transylvanian Prince György Rákóczi II (1648–1660) up until his entry in the Second Northern War (the military campaign launched in 1657 in alliance with Sweden against King John II Casimir of Poland), which had disastrous consequences for Transylvania. However, since Kármán is most interested in the structural changes that took place, he also includes at the beginning of the book a brief overview of the campaign (1644–1645) led by the Prince's father, György Rákóczi I, against Ferdinand III, as well as the justification that was given for this campaign. He considers the role that the Transylvanian Principality played in the last stages of the Thirty Years' War among the Protestant countries and the place it was given in the Westphalia system. In the course of his analysis Gábor Kármán makes use of excellent source materials, including a number of historical syntheses published in Western Europe, publications of annotated sources by

nineteenth-century historian Sándor Szilágyi, and works by Ágnes R. Várkonyi, Katalin Péter and Sándor Gebei, twentieth-century historians from the postwar period. In 2010 a collection of essays on the period of György Rákóczi II's rule was published<sup>1</sup> (as it so happens a collection that Kármán and I edited together) that provided a firm foundation for further study of many important questions regarding the period. Kármán's book, however, differs from other studies of the era in Hungary in that he contextualizes his assessment of the events in a broader theoretical framework and scrutinizes the motivations and justifications behind the various foreign policy maneuvers with considerable skepticism.

The theoretical framework of Kármán's inquiry is comprised of three paradigms: Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard's theory of confessionalization, which links the formation of denominations to the emergence of the modern territorial state, structural political history, which offers a new approach to the narration of political conflicts, and finally discourse theory, which provides new methods in the analysis of communication. Of these three pillars, the book rests perhaps most firmly on the second, structural political history, which is hardly surprising since the focus of Kármán's study is foreign policy. One of the virtues of the book is that Kármán only refers to the theoretical underpinnings when actually necessary. Moreover, he does not treat the theories as axioms, but rather as heuristic tools. He therefore offers not simply an array of examples, but an engaging and highly readable analysis which always strives to shed light on the actual motives that lay behind the official explanations of foreign policy decisions.

The main chapters of the book are arranged in chronological order. They address individual nodes of Transylvanian foreign policy. These attentive case studies are followed by a conclusion in which Kármán summarizes the transformation that took place in the strategies that were used to win legitimacy. The point of departure is the campaign launched in early 1644 by György Rákóczi I, in alliance with France and Sweden, against Ferdinand III, one of the conflicts of the Thirty Years' War that has been characterized with stubborn persistence in the secondary literature as a continuation of the earlier, similar military campaigns of Gábor Bethlen (1613–1629). (It is worth noting that this interpretation is not merely the work of later historians, rather it is implied by the rhetoric of the proclamation issued by Rákóczi, in which he alludes to

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1 *Szerencsének elegyes forgása. II. Rákóczi György és kora* [Mixed Turns of Fate. Rákóczi György II and His Era], ed. Gábor Kármán and András Péter Szabó (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2009).

Bethlen.) The two enemies in the conflict, György Rákóczi I and Palatine Miklós Esterházy (the representative of the royal Estates), had their proclamations published in printed form. Since there were no regularly appearing organs of the press in Hungary in the seventeenth century, Kármán consulted personal correspondence. He makes no mention of the circular letters (which had the tone of manifestos) written by the Prince, the Palatine, and other officials as a separate kind of source, but he makes use of them in his inquiry as well. The Transylvanian Prince presented himself as the defender of the royal Estates in a manner that had been customary since the uprising led by István Bocskai in 1606, but Kármán persuasively demonstrates that Rákóczi quite deliberately placed less emphasis on denominational considerations in his justification of the campaign than his predecessors had, and he presents these considerations more as affronts to the Estates. In contrast, the Palatine's characterization of the conflict implied that the Prince represented not the Estates, but only Protestant interests, and he consistently added that Rákóczi was motivated by little more than personal avarice.<sup>2</sup> Esterházy was not entirely wrong, for alongside the concerns of the Protestant denominations and the Estates, often condemned self-interest also played a role in the launch of the campaign. In the end it was seen as a sectarian enterprise, the Prince's intentions notwithstanding. As he clarifies this point, Kármán also persuasively refutes two widespread but (at least in my assessment) mistaken views. First, he notes that Transylvania cannot be considered to have been a denominationally neutral state in the seventeenth century. The frequently alleged notion of the multi-confessional nature of the Principality is undermined by the power position of the Calvinist Church over the other denominations (first and foremost the Unitarians and the Catholics). Thus Transylvania should be regarded more as a distinctive example of unfinished confessionalization. Second, Kármán alludes briefly to the fact that the campaign led by Rákóczi

2 It is worth noting one detail not mentioned in the book. On November 6, 1644 at one of the sittings of the peace negotiations in Nagyszombat (today Trnava in Slovakia) the emissary of Bártfa (today Bardejov in Slovakia), who was a supporter of Rákóczi, thus recounted Miklós Esterházy's words: "Nu, vos domini conjicitis culpam huius mali in nos, cum tamen vos estis autores, vos praetenditis speciosum titulum religionis et libertatis, sed falsa sunt, ut etiam Betlehemus fecit, ad quae haec tria potissimum ipsum appulerant: 1. Cupido habendi. 2. Libido dominandi. 3. Ambitio ulciscendi. Ita et vester princeps non aliis rationibus motus, quam his, et pretiosum vel speciosum titulum, et hac ratione vult vos subjugare, immo jam colla vestra subjugavit, privabit vos libertatibus, devastabit regnum. – et alia plurima incompetencia dixit." Štátny archív v Prešove, pobočka Bardejov, Archív mesta Bardejova, Mestské knihy, Nr. 690, Acta diaetalia 1644–1655. f. 47r.

should not be linked to the idea of the “national kingdom,” a somewhat vague notion that was given too much weight in postwar Hungarian historiography.

In the subsequent chapter Kármán examines the place occupied by the Transylvanian Principality in the hierarchical international system before the Peace of Westphalia, and his examination rests not on representations of power, but on concrete political acts and the reactions of the great powers. Basing his depiction on the negotiations that took place in 1644–1645 between Transylvania and Sweden and Transylvania and France, the reception of the separate peace concluded by the Prince in Linz in 1645, and the trifling role of Transylvania at the Westphalia peace negotiations, Kármán offers a very disillusioning portrayal of the prestige of the Principality, if nonetheless more precise than any portrait so far. The Protestant powers reckoned with Transylvania, but they hardly considered it an ally or partner of equal rank. As a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, Transylvania was regularly regarded with palpable suspicion, and this became something of a self-fulfilling prophecy when it came to decisions such as Rákóczi’s arbitrary withdrawal from the war. In the end neither Transylvania nor the Protestant powers of Europe showed much mutual trust. Transylvania did not even send an emissary to the Westphalia negotiations, though the Principality did manage to obtain the modest achievement of being included in the Treaty of Osnabrück as one of the allies of Sweden (and at the same time of the emperor!).

The question of relations with Poland was an issue in 1648, when György Rákóczi II succeeded his father, and it remained an issue throughout his rule. Influenced by the (admittedly somewhat distant) example set by Transylvanian Prince István Báthory (1571–1586), the Rákóczi house also sought to obtain the Polish royal title. They had perhaps the best chance of doing so in the fall of 1648, immediately before the death of the elder György Rákóczi, when the Polish elite suddenly found itself in need of military assistance because of a Cossack attack. However, the fact that no one was even named indicates the haphazard nature of the plans. The Transylvanian emissaries sometimes strove to win support for the older Prince and sometimes endeavored to curry favor for his younger son, Zsigmond Rákóczi (1622–1652). (The book has perhaps only one structural flaw, namely that this fact is only mentioned in the middle of the chapter.) The supporters of the Rákóczi house in Poland, however, were almost exclusively either Protestants or Orthodox, and the possible support of the Cossacks, who were also Orthodox, meant more of a disadvantage than an advantage in Polish politics. Furthermore, the efforts of the Transylvanian

Principality did not have the support of the European Protestant Powers. György Rákóczi II used the Polish–Cossack war to continue his father's efforts up until the summer of 1651, though with decreasing chances of success. In 1653 Transylvanian–Polish relations warmed as a consequence of the Cossacks' armed intervention in Moldova, but this proved only transitional.

György Rákóczi II was able to pursue a relatively independent foreign policy in part because at the beginning of his rule he managed to secure his position with regards to the Ottoman Empire (which was gradually weakening) and Ferdinand III. He came into conflict with the Turks over a threatened (and in the end accepted) rise in taxes and with the Habsburgs over the official expulsion of the Jesuits from Transylvania in 1652. The Viennese court also regarded the marriage of the Prince's younger brother Zsigmond Rákóczi to Henrietta Maria von der Pfalz (the daughter of Frederick V of Pfalz, who for a short time had been King of Bohemia) in 1651 as a hostile move, though Kármán persuasively argues that the alliance was not based on any concrete political plan, but rather simply on considerations of prestige.

The two chapters on the complex relationship between the Transylvanian Principality and the aristocracy of the Hungarian Kingdom (which at this time for the most part was Catholic) are particularly interesting. Building on the work of Katalin Péter and making small changes to her model, Kármán examines the process whereby, following the ratification of the Peace Treaty of Linz at the 1646–1647 National Assembly (in other words the relatively enduring resolution of debates between the denominations), the traditional coalitions in domestic politics, which were essentially divided on the basis of denominational differences, fell apart and a relationship based on mutually beneficial cooperation developed between the Catholic Palatine Pál Pálffy and the Calvinist Prince György Rákóczi II. Kármán considers the role of the Prince's brother Zsigmond (who resided in the Hungarian Kingdom) to have been significant only in the maintenance of relationships in the early 1650s, and he contradicts the widely familiar view of Ágnes R. Várkonyi with his assertion that there is no trace in the politics of the younger György Rákóczi of any thought of going to war with the Ottoman Empire until the crisis of power in Transylvania after 1657. At the same time this would have meant that the two sides, having set aside denominational differences, must have profoundly misunderstood each other, since the elite of the Hungarian Kingdom had always sought to expel the Turks from the region. (The presence of anti-Turk nobiliary nationalism in the letters of György Rákóczi II does seem to suggest that he entertained the idea of a

struggle against the Turks before 1657.) With the death of Pál Pálffy in 1653 the relationship between the Principality and the Hungarian Kingdom weakened, and in the subsequent political life of the Kingdom, which was dominated by Archbishop of Esztergom György Lippay and was rife with personal and rekindled denominational strife, the Transylvanian Prince could only count on individual members of the aristocracy, such as Miklós Zrínyi (also a famous poet) or Ferenc Nádasdy. (His close relationship with Ádám Batthyány did not begin then, as Kármán suggests, but rather in the early 1650s.)

The need arose in connection with the plans regarding Poland in the early 1650s for the Principality to develop a more detailed and denominationally neutral strategy of legitimation in order to justify any aggressive steps, and Kármán discerns a similar effort in connection with the 1653 Moldovan crisis. When György Rákóczi II removed Vasile Lupu, the inimical Voivode of Moldova, after launching a military campaign in 1653 he characterized his actions as a preventive measure.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence of the 1653 military campaign in Moldova and the 1655 campaign in Wallachia, the Romanian Voivodships, which were also among the vassals of the Ottoman Empire but which were in a considerably weaker position, became subordinate to the Transylvanian Principality.

In 1655, following Sweden's attack on the Polish Kingdom, György Rákóczi II, having gained greater scope for action and increased self-assurance, revived his plans for the Polish lands, and in 1657, in an alliance with Sweden and the Cossacks, he attacked the Rzeczpospolita Polska. Kármán disputes the view of Sándor Gebei and makes a persuasive case in support of the following points: 1) the Prince initiated the relationship with Sweden, 2) in the period of rapid advance, the Swedes did not intent to divide the Rzeczpospolita, and 3) in the course of negotiations with the Transylvanian Prince Swedish King Charles Gustave X conducted himself in good faith. Indeed it was György Rákóczi II who did not ratify the Radnót treaty and throughout the military campaign against Poland he continuously maintained ties with the Poles.<sup>4</sup>

3 Kármán presents the justification given for the war on the basis of a letter that the Prince wrote to the Polish King John II Casimir, though one finds other signs of the legitimation strategy in Transylvanian sources as well, such as in the unpublished chronicle of the notary of Beszterce (today Bistrița in Romania): "Ob supra memoratas procul dubio nefandas practicas per Basiliū Moldaviae despotam ac vaivodam in Porta Othomanica motas, quamobrem jure merito insurrectio publica contra eundem facta est." *Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Cluj-Napoca. Primăria orașului Bistrița*, a. III, p. 3, 329.

4 Kármán recently published an engaging article on the diplomat steps taken during the Polish campaign of György Rákóczi II. Kármán Gábor, "II. Rákóczi György 1657. évi lengyelországi hadjáratának

In the last chapters of the book Kármán offers a kind of summary characterization of the foreign policy of György Rákóczi II and the role of denominational considerations in foreign policy decisions. First he refutes the misconception, prevalent in Swedish historiography, according to which György Rákóczi II was a religious fanatic. Although Comenius and his circle did everything they could to pull the Transylvanian Prince into their political plans, György Rákóczi II himself showed little interest. While he may have taken advantage, from time to time, of the Moravian fugitive scholar's vast network of connections, he did not share his views, and the Polish military campaign was not prompted by Comenius' ideas. Kármán provides a detailed explanation as to why he doesn't accept earlier hypotheses of Hungarian historians regarding the reasons for the campaign and then presents the Prince's official justification. In his manifesto, Rákóczi emphasizes the earlier offer of the Polish throne, Christian mercy, and the restoration of the rights (first and foremost freedom of conscience) that had been violated in the course of the fighting. He also makes strong appeals, stronger than in his earlier proclamations, to the concept of the just war (*bellum iustum*). Finally, Kármán endeavors to answer the question regarding the true reason for the military campaign. In his view, it lies primarily in dynastic considerations. Through his conquests (which were presented as peaceful occupations), György Rákóczi II sought to strengthen his family's reputation and power. If one finds credible the detailed account of György Horváth-Kissevith, an emissary of the Hungarian Kingdom who sought an audience with the Prince before the military campaign was launched, Rákóczi himself alluded to this motive in confidential conversations.<sup>5</sup>

In his conclusion, Kármán again traces the shift from a foreign policy that was based on denominational interests (or at least derived its legitimacy from denominational considerations) to the autocracy of the reason of state, which

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diplomáciai háttere" [The Diplomatic Background of the 1657 Military Campaign in Poland of György Rákóczi II], *Századok* 146, no. 5 (2012): 1049–84.

5 György Horváth-Kissevith's report to the King on his visit to the Transylvanian Prince in early December. At the end of the last meeting the emissary, at the suggestion of chancellor György Szelepcsényi, praised Transylvania and Rákóczi, who had conquered Wallachia and Moldova and even had control over part of Hungary and therefore could be quite satisfied with his attainments: "Respondit princeps: eam esse naturam principum et quorumvis aliorum, ut modum, quo familiam suam ad altiora evehere, et dignitatibus maximis ampliare et condecorare possint, studeant adinvenire, sic et se dictus princeps, si – ita inquit – Deo visum foret, eiusmodi occasionibus merito parere posse." Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, A 98, Magyar Kancellária, gyűjteményes fondok – Transylvania, b. 12, f. 16 (1650–1658), no. 47 (cs. 13, f. 1117.) Kármán makes use of the source in his discussion of the standpoint of Zsuzsanna Lorántffy, but does not refer to it with regards to this.

served both the interests of the ruler and the welfare of the public and was always able to incorporate other kinds of reasoning. In his view Rákóczi's Polish military campaign might well have served both his own personal interests and the interests of the Transylvanian state, but given the Prince's failure to prevail it is assessed as a blunder from the perspective of reason of state.

One should make some mention of the book's flaws, as well as the underlying concept. It contains an almost trivial number of factual errors. Ever since the publication of János Heltai's monograph on the subject few historians would claim that the *Querela Hungaria* was compiled by Alvinczi Péter (p.46),<sup>6</sup> the 1645 Colloquium Charitativum (referred to in the book as the Collegium charitativum) was not the initiative of Comenius, but rather King Ladislaus IV of Poland (p.121),<sup>7</sup> and the wife of Palatine Ferenc Wesselényi, who visited Zsuzsanna Lorántffy in 1655, was not Zsófia Bosnyák but Mária Széchy (p.289). But these are essentially the only mistakes. Kármán's analysis of the foreign policy of the Transylvania Principality is a work of unparalleled cogency and precision. However, one may nonetheless entertain doubts concerning the thesis of the work, according to which denominational concerns were gradually relegated to the background. The comparison drawn between the legitimation of György Rákóczi I's military campaign against the Hungarian Kingdom in 1644–1645 and the theoretical justifications given for the Transylvanian foreign policy of the 1650s is misleadingly simple. Given the strong mental and material connections between the two countries and György Rákóczi I's expansive estates in Hungary, the first cannot really be considered simply as a foreign policy decision. Its legitimation reminds us far more of the propaganda of a civil war, and the Prince's attempt to disguise his denominationally motivated statements as non-denominational is suspicious at best. György Rákóczi II's military campaigns of the 1650s had no real "antecedent," since no Transylvanian prince had ever interfered so directly in the affairs of a neighboring state, with the exception of the Hungarian Kingdom, which was regarded as part of the Hungarian "homeland." (Had György Rákóczi I actually helped Wallachia in the conflict with Moldova in the 1630s, there might be some comparison.) In 1653 György Rákóczi II could hardly cite the defense of Protestantism as an explanation for

6 János Heltai, *Alvinczi Péter és a heidelbergi peregrinusok* [Péter Alvinczi and the Heidelberg Pilgrims] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1994), 129–54.

7 Milada Blekestad, *Comenius. Versuch eines Umrisses von Leben, Werk und Schicksal des Jan Amos Komenský* (Oslo–Prague: Universitetsforlaget–Academia, 1969), 398–407.

the campaign against Moldova. Drawing distinctions between various strategies of legitimation is also problematic. In the case of conflicts for which we have plentiful sources it is clear that the Prince used a variety of different kinds of justifications, depending on the audience. (Kármán emphasizes this in connection with the campaign of 1644–1645.) However, there is a dearth of sources on the legitimation strategies used in the 1650s, and we have only a small slice of the communications on which to base tentative conclusions.

Whatever we may think of the shift towards reason of state (depicted on the cover of the book with a two-headed figure), Gábor Kármán's eloquently written, clearly structured book is a milestone in the study of Transylvanian foreign policy and more broadly Hungarian politics of the early Modern Era. It offers new methodological approaches and corrects many misunderstandings found in earlier secondary literature. In its theoretical sophistication, its use of sources, and the equipoise of its analyses it sets an admirably high standard.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

András Péter Szabó

A rohonci kód [The Rohonc Code]. By Benedek Láng. Budapest: Jaffa, 2011. 227 pp.

If there is anything that makes a scholar get out of his armchair and pace his room like a man possessed, chewing on the stem of his glasses or pulling at his beard, murmuring to himself and going through the whole gamut of emotions from optimistic outbursts to utter despair, then it is one of the well-kept secrets of history, an undecipherable text or unbreakable linguistic code. No historian who believed these writing systems to be absolutely unbreakable would take his chance and dedicate a huge amount of his time, money and energies into trying to decipher them. He must have the itchy feeling that he might be the one who finds the missing clue, puts the pieces of the jigsaw into a coherent whole and either breaks the code or proves that it is, indeed, unbreakable.

There are a number of such long known but hitherto undeciphered puzzles in historical research, from the Linear A writing system of ancient Crete and the Rongorongo writing of Easter Island, through the pictorial codes of the Voynich manuscript to the nineteenth-century Beale ciphers. People with very different backgrounds, scholars with an interest in the codes' historical context, amateur code breakers, experts employed by intelligence agencies, mathematicians, linguists, treasure-hunters and many more have attempted to unveil their mysteries. While the efforts may be heroic, the rewards are often meager. Many famous or ill-famed codes have turned out to be forgeries, (dirty) tricks played on contemporaries and later generations for riches and fame, an intellectual challenge taken a tiny bit too far.

While all of these cryptic writing systems have received intense scholarly interest and been the subjects of large numbers of studies and monographs, a similarly intriguing and undeciphered code had to wait a long time before getting the attention it deserved. The Rohonc code is contained in a 450-page codex, a richly illustrated book with long sequences of ciphers handwritten on 10 × 12 cm paper sheets. It derives its name from the Castle of Rohonc (now Rechnitz, Austria) one of the aristocratic residencies of the Batthyány family, who accumulated an unmatched collection of over 30,000 books there, many of which—the codex in question included—ended up in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1838. The Batthyánys had always been known for their bibliophilia, and their passion for collecting caused them to acquire books from the most diverse sources. It is therefore almost impossible to know where this particular codex came from.

After the codex passed to the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a few enthusiasts saw in the code some form of ancient Hungarian writing and attempted to decipher it accordingly. When they realized it was not, the codex was discarded as a mere forgery unworthy of a gentleman's attention. And so it largely remained until a fatal encounter with historian Benedek Láng some time in 2006. How much Láng paced his room rubbing his beard cannot be known for sure, but it seems safe to conclude that the appeal of the Rohonc codex was impossible for him to resist and prompted him to engage in years of research. The result is a monograph that both educates and entertains.

Láng starts with an overview of the nineteenth century, which was undeniably a golden age for forgers, particularly those specializing in documents of historical interest. There were many ambitious attempts to fill awkward gaps in the big narrative of small nations and produce examples of greatness of mind and culture, testimonies promoting the cause of people who felt deprived of historical justice. Hungary had a particularly rich pool of well-qualified and even well-known historical and literary scholars who indulged in forays to the dark side and became expert forgers. Such was their skill that some of their alleged products are still sometimes thought to be authentic. Two notable examples are Kálmán Thaly (1839–1909) and Sámuel Literáti Nemes (1794–1842): one because of his peculiar duplicity, being a historian who took great pains to save original documents from decay but at the same time a forger who created historical letters and “old military songs” in the style of eighteenth-century anti-Habsburg movements; the other because of his (possible) connection to the codex of Rohonc.<sup>1</sup>

Literáti Nemes was an antiquarian who worked for many of Hungary's best-known contemporary booklovers. He brought to light a great number of fantastic items, but was not averse to supplying his clients with exquisite forgeries. Some of these he made himself, others he probably only passed on to unsuspecting enthusiasts. These forgeries, twenty-three altogether, are now kept in the National Széchényi Library in Budapest.<sup>2</sup> They include old maps, diplomas, Hungarian language prayers from the eleventh century and many richly illustrated genealogies and chronicles. Some are better than others, and interestingly, despite firm evidence to the contrary, there still are a few amateur historians who believe in

1 Ágnes R. Várkonyi, *Thaly Kálmán és történetírása* [Kálmán Thaly and his History Writing] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1961); Ákos Kelecsényi, “Egy magyar régiségkereskedő a 19. században. Literáti Nemes Sámuel (1794–1842)” [A Hungarian Nineteenth-Century Book Collector, Samuel Literati Nemes], *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Évkönyve 1972* (Budapest: OSZK, 1975), 307–27.

2 National Széchényi Library, Fol. Hung. 1365/1 and 2.

their authenticity, largely because they would support one or another airy theory, such as the linguistic kinship between Hungarian and Sumeric.

It is important to note, however, that all these forgeries were short, a couple of pages at best. Even though Literáti Nemes' alleged involvement in the appearance of the Rohonc codex certainly casts the shadow of suspicion over its originality, Láng warns that the sheer size of this work sets it apart from the other well-known forgeries associated with Literáti Nemes. Nonetheless, such was the magnitude of the scandals and the wave of disappointment surrounding the documents which Literáti Nemes sold to various clients that the Rohonc codex was too easily assumed to be another of his mischiefs.

The Rohonc codex stands out from other hitherto undeciphered codices by its plainness: it contains no rich, colorful illustrations, indeed its pictures are almost primitive, as if radiating certain piety, and the codes are not especially decorative (unlike those in the Voynich manuscript, for instance). If it is a forgery, it must have been difficult to sell as something precious, and the immense efforts of the forger (he wrote 446 pages, after all) may not have been financially rewarding. All these aspects lend weight to the idea that the codex of Rohonc is not a forgery.

But before revealing any potentially conclusive evidence, Láng goes through the fascinating and occasionally almost ludicrous theories which have been associated with the code. From the Hungarian engineer who simply “read” the characters of the two pages of the codex at his disposal as an Ancient Hungarian prayer (he was not discouraged when it turned out that he held the pages upside down), through the even more far-fetched “reading” of the Romanian archaeologist who dedicated twenty years and a massive volume to deciphering the codex (without realizing she had read the characters in the wrong direction), to the Sanskrit kinship theory, one thing is common: they all serve different ideologies, each heavily loaded with historical-political implications, desires, grudges and ambitions. Other, less biased attempts at deciphering the code did not reach a solution but developed a promising methodology and offered more help for future attempts.

After this overview of his predecessors' work, Láng tells his own story: how he approached the problem, and what he discovered. From down-to-earth physical examination methods, especially those directed at the watermarks, he found that the paper of the Rohonc codex was made in Northern Italy—Vicenza or Udine—in the mid-sixteenth century, although Láng is cautious about narrowing down the time and place it was made. He further analyses the paper, the ink, the type of pen used to write the codes, and the hand(s) which wrote the lines. With the help of an

international expert, Joe Nickell, he draws the cautious conclusion that the writing is probably not (much) later than the paper itself, and goes right to left. There is no obvious indicator of the text being a forgery. Still, the possibility remains that the sixteenth-century paper remained unused, unwritten for centuries, possibly lying low in the Batthyánys' enormous library, and so Láng determines the *terminus ante quem* as 1838 and the *terminus post quem* as 1530.

A close examination puts the possible number of characters at between 120 and 150, but the final figure is still to be determined. The difficulty lies in the fact that there is no punctuation, one does not know where one word or sentence ends and where the next begins. Neither can the presence of a natural or artificial language behind the codes be determined, and if it is a natural language, which one it could be. One is left with more questions than answers, but Láng reminds the reader that whatever the motivation for the making of the codex, and whether or not it contains a natural, shorthand or perfect language, the goal is clear: cryptanalysis and code-breaking.

Finding little to go on in the codes, the author turns to the 84 peculiar images in the codex. Some of these are relatively easy to recognize: they tell stories from the life of Christ, among them the Annunciation, the Three Magi with the Star of Bethlehem, Christ before Pilate, and so on. Others, however, are less obvious. An art-history analysis of the images—based on the types of churches and buildings, the distorted gothic shapes—suggests that they were drawn in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries; they also have a marked East European tinge. It may thus be possible to narrow down the potential languages associated with the codes (assuming that we are dealing with a natural language) to Latin, German, Hungarian, South Slavic and Romanian.

Láng then goes on to try and identify “cribs” in the text, starting from the short inscriptions in the images. The frequent repetition of certain figures, Christ included, under the same set of codes suggests some promise for this line of attack, but the breakthrough is yet to come. Similar conclusions regarding these inscriptions have recently been reached by other workers. Gábor Tokai and Levente Zoltán Király seem to have produced the most convincing results thus far, and their ongoing work is more than promising. It seems then that the codes of Rohonc conceal notions rather than letters, character strings refer to words, but single characters do not correspond to single sounds.<sup>3</sup>

3 Gábor Tokai, “Az első lépések a Rohonci-kódex megfejtéséhez” [The First Steps Toward an Undeciphering of the Rohonc Codex], *Élet és Tudomány* 55–56, no. 52–53 (2010), no. 2 (2011): 1675–78, 50–53; Levente Zoltán Király, “Struktúrák a Rohonci-kódex szövegében. Helyzetjelentés egy amatőr

If the author's partial conclusions are true, then we are dealing with a Biblical text of some sorts. This throws up some very exciting possibilities, such as an apocryphal text written for and by a sect like the Bogumils, but something like a Book of Hours, a much more widespread form at the time, is more likely. The fact that the text runs from right to left could indicate the influence of Hebrew or Arabic/Turkish languages. But what is that text? Who encrypted it? Why and for whom? So many are the possibilities in the colorful East European scenario that the question remains open for the time being.

Finding no satisfying solution based on the content, Láng goes on to approach his text from a more technical/practical angle. The following chapter offers an exciting overview of the secret writing systems known in Western Europe and Hungary: monoalphabetic and polyalphabetic methods and homophonic writing, which was the predominant method until the end of the seventeenth century. These code systems were first applied in diplomatic correspondence and were also widespread in seventeenth-century Hungary: the codes used by György Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania, Imre Thököly, Miklós Zrínyi and even Archbishop Péter Pázmány are all examples of homophonic writing. These were by no means easy to break—the code used by Pázmány, for instance, was deciphered only through close collaboration between a historian and a code breaker.<sup>4</sup> The historian's knowledge of historic facts and faces was crucial in suggesting what names of persons and geographical places the nomenclators could stand for, while the code breaker lent his expertise in cryptography and the mathematical regularities in secret writing.

Cryptography was not the only technique. Stenography was also widely used, and when the table matching characters to words or syllables is missing, the text becomes hard or even impossible to read. The Rohonc code may even be an example of shorthand writing, although its pool of characters seems too complicated and unusual for that.

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kutatásról” [Structures in the Text of the Rohonc Codex: A Status Report on an Amateur Research], *Theológiai Szemle* 54, no. 2 (2011): 82–93.

4 Péter Tusor, “Pázmány bíboros olasz rejtjelkulcsa: C.H. Motmann ‘Residente d’Ungheria’: A római magyar agenzia történetéhez” [Cardinal Pázmány's Italian Codebook: C. H. Motmann ‘Residente d’Ungheria’. On the History of the Hungarian Agenzia in Rome], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 116 (2003): 535–81; Zoltán Révay, *Titkosírások. Fejezetek a rejtjelezés történetéből* [Ciphers. Chapters from the History of Cryptology], (Budapest: Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó, 1978); idem, *II. Rákóczi Ferenc és korának rejtjelezése, XVIII. század* [Cryptography of Ferenc Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania and His Age] (Budapest: Magyar Néphadsereg Híradó Főnökség Kiadása, 1974).

Returning to the problem of what actual language lies behind the codex of Rohonc, Láng discusses the many efforts at creating (or finding a long-lost) perfect single language, a key to all mysteries, a common ground between cultures and religions, and ponders the possibility that the Rohonc code is one of these. Artificial languages were especially popular at the time it was most probably made, the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Still, the earliest known example of an artificial language project from Hungary is the work of the eighteenth-century Hungarian intellectual vagabond, György Kalmár.<sup>5</sup>

Benedek's highly complex and intellectually challenging tour-de-force concludes with a chapter which, rather than promising a grand breakthrough, a final solution, a fantastic discovery, modestly offers the reader a summary of "what we know for sure, what we are quite sure we know, and what we have no idea about." I will not spoil the pleasure of future readers by giving away the author's conclusions, but I would like to highlight some of the merits of this monograph.

It is unusual for a book on the Hungarian market, combining high erudition (and a digestible amount of endnotes after each chapter) as demanded by academics with a down-to-earth, even entertaining narrative style accessible to general readers. Láng revives a tradition of popularizing science, something snug academics tend to frown on. Having proved enough times his knowledge of sources and methods, he has now made use of them to cater for a much wider audience. In the 1980s, the tradition of renowned academics reaching out to a more general public through popular versions of their scholarly work still flourished in Hungary.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, the book is not for the faint hearted, delving deep into the world of combinatorics, paleography and historical research, although the reader may choose how far to follow the details. The appendices, one with a list of the illustrations in the Rohonc codex and one with a summary of code breaking methods, actually invites the reader to have a go and try for him/herself. And this is one of the great strengths of the book: it does not state unquestionable truths but invites us to think along. Who knows, maybe the final key to the code of Rohonc lies with one of the future readers of Benedek Láng's book.

Dóra Bobory

<sup>5</sup> *Præcepta grammatica atque specimina linguae philosophicae, sive universalis* (Berlin: D. Iacobaeer, 1772).

<sup>6</sup> Many such books were published in the Magyar História (Hungarian History) and the Labirintus (Labyrinth) series.

Határok, vándorok, kémek. A magyarokról és a románokról alkotott kép Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli írásaiban [Frontiers, Wayfarers, Spies. The Image of Hungarians and Romanians in the Writings of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli]. By Levente Nagy. Budapest: Lucidus Kiadó, 2011. 286 pp.

Born in Bologna, Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (1658–1730) entered Habsburg service in 1683 and spent nearly twenty years in the Southeast European region as a soldier, diplomat, traveler, scientist and collector. Between 1682 and 1701, he devoted his activities to the liberation of Hungary from the Ottomans: he fought as a soldier in the army of Emperor Leopold I, was active as a diplomat in the peace talks with the Ottomans in 1690–1691 and 1698–1699, and in marking out the frontier between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire after the Peace of Karlowitz. He had started preparations for the latter work many years earlier, using scientifically based methods. As scientist and collector, he gathered together all kinds of objects, manuscripts, codices, maps, original documents, Roman remains and more, and all kinds of information: geographical, current political, historical, demographic, religious, etc. The lasting outcome of his work is a body of several thousand manuscript pages<sup>1</sup> on Hungary and the whole Carpathian Basin, partly based on his own observations and partly drawing on local sources. Through modern analysis, it has yielded much information about the region and gives an accurate account of contemporary political thinking of the time, including attitudes towards the Hungarian people.

Much has been published about Marsigli himself, including his own autobiography<sup>2</sup> and biographies large and small by authors of various nationalities, chiefly Italians and Hungarians.<sup>3</sup> Levente Nagy has been researching and publishing on Marsigli extensively for several decades. In the first part of the book, he sensibly restricted the biography details to those required for an understanding of events in the Carpathian Basin and the time he spent there.

1 Endre Veress, *A bolognai Marsigli-iratok magyar vonatkozásai* [Hungarian Aspects of the Marsigli Documents in Bologna] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1906).

2 Emilio Lovarini ed., *Autobiografia di Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli messa in luce nel secondo centenario della morte di lui dal Comitato Marsigliano* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1930).

3 See inter alia John Stoye, *Marsigli's Europe, 1680–1730: The Life and Times of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, Soldier and Virtuoso* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Magda Jászay, “Marsigli, a katonai, diplomata és tudós Magyarországon a török kor alkonyán” [Marsigli: a Soldier, Diplomat and Scientist at the Twilight of the Ottoman Era in Hungary], *Történelmi Szemle* 41, no. 1–2 (1999): 42–49.

Under the heading *Kalandok* [Adventures], he gives a detailed account of Marsigli's attempts to research the Matthias Library of Buda and his diplomatic efforts of 1689–1691. A recently-formed hypothesis regarding the latter, first put forward by Hungarian researchers,<sup>4</sup> is that there were political purposes as well as scientific zeal behind the Italian count's thirst for knowledge, i.e. he was working as a spy.

After the introduction, Nagy goes into the details of Marsigli's principal works. These concern the whole Southeastern European region, and not just the Hungarians and Romanians. One of these documents, *Descrittione naturale, civile e militare delle Misie, Dacie e Illirico libri quattordici*, was written to serve the legitimization of Habsburg rule over the lands recovered from the Ottomans. The part covering Illyria was not included, presumably because he had already written about the relations with the Dalmatian and Croatian lands and the sensitive question of their connection with the Kingdom of Hungary. He dealt with the former Roman province of Dacia in considerable depth, markedly manipulating the description for political purposes. He greatly exaggerated the size of the province and gave an account that went back to Roman times, one of the first elaborations of modern Daco-Roman continuity. On the basis of the Dacia discourse, the author plausibly demonstrates that Marsigli described the regional units that made up the Kingdom of Hungary using the names of the Roman provinces, by means of arbitrarily changing their boundaries. This was part of an attempt to find precedents, in the form of previously established states, for the restoration a putative past entity (the Roman Empire) within the Habsburg Monarchy.

Marsigli characterized the nation (*nazione*) in terms of origin, domicile, language, occupation and costume. Nonetheless, he nearly always referred to ethnic groups in terms of a political unit, a state: *Monarchia Hungarica* (Hungary),

4 For the history of research in Hungary, see Levente Nagy, “Le generazioni di studiosi ungheresi e il Fondo Marsigli,” *Quaderni di storia* 59 (2004) gennaio/giugno: 205–22; idem, “Magyar kutatógenerációk és a Marsigli-hagyaték” [Generations of Hungarian Researchers and the Marsigli Legacy], in *Humanizmus, religio, identitástudat. Tanulmányok a kora újkori Magyarország művelődéstörténetéről* [Humanism, Religion, Identity. Studies in the Early Modern Cultural History of Hungary], ed. István Bitskey and Gergely Tamás Fazakas (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetem, 2007), 252–73; Mónika F. Molnár, “Le ricerche ungheresi del Fondo Marsigli di Bologna,” *Annuario. Studi e documenti italo-ungheresi* (Rome–Szeged: Accademia d’Ungheria in Roma Istituto Storico ‘Fraknói’–Università degli Studi di Szeged, Dipartimento di Italianistica, 2005): 38–49. Significant Marsigli researchers in Hungary today, apart from Levente Nagy, include Sándor Bene (Croatian aspects), Deák András Antal (maps), Mónika F. Molnár (Ottoman contacts) and Zsuzsa Kovács (bibliographic history, catalogues).

*Wallachia, Moldavia, Transilvania, Croazia, Impero Romano Germanico* (Holy Roman Empire) and *Impero Ottomano*, and not as Hungarians, Vlachs, Croatians, Germans, Turks, etc.

Marsigli's activity can be divided into two distinct periods: up to and after his inglorious dismissal from Habsburg service in 1703. The author pays great attention to the gradual progression and refinement of Marsigli's ideas in his writing. He shows how different texts deal with the establishment of the Principality of Transylvania as an independent state and how Marsigli's notion of Dacia formed and evolved. Nagy demonstrates how Marsigli used the information he gathered from local intellectuals and politicians in these texts, and particularly what he incorporated and what he left out. He finds that most of the *Descrittione* is a compilation. Marsigli added little to the text because his aim was simply to gather together information and not to evaluate it. Only in a few places did he interfere radically with what his informers wrote. The purpose of the *Descrittione* was fundamentally military: the retention of Transylvania and the annexation of the Romanian voivodeships to the Habsburg Monarchy. As regards the latter, Marsigli thought that Moldavia should be dropped, but he outlined an actual invasion plan for Wallachia. The military plan, however, had to be linked to a legal basis for bringing these lands under imperial control, and Marsigli achieved this by interpreting parts of the Kingdom of Hungary as "predecessor states." Emperor Leopold I (1657–1705), as lawful king of Hungary, could thus take possession of the lands reconquered from the Ottomans. He reinforced this explanation in a later work showing which voivodeships and principalities belonged to "true Hungary." This is inherent in the title itself: *Monarchia Hungarica in sua regna, principatus et ducatus divisa, nimirum: Hungariam veram, Bosnam, Serviam, Croatiam, Sclavoniam, Erzegovinam, Moldaviam, Valachiam, Transylvaniam, Banatum Temesvariensem, Bulgariam*.

Nagy devotes a whole chapter to the information Marsigli gathered on the Hungarian and Romanian languages and linguistic relics: Székely runes, an early Latin–Hungarian–Romanian dictionary (the "*Lexicon Marsilianum*") and a word list containing 2500 Transylvanian, Moldavian and Wallachian toponyms. In the story of the research behind the latter, Nagy points out something which previous Marsigli scholars have tended to ignore: Marsigli always arranged the texts himself, whether he wrote or collected them. From his categorizations by subject matter, it is possible to establish the time and purpose of their creation. For example, he started work on the vocabulary—compiling it or having it compiled—because it filled a pressing practical need in his border surveying

work of 1699–1701. After summarizing the disputes and opinions surrounding the much-researched *Lexicon Marsilianum* and makes a new attempt to establish its authorship. He concludes that it must have been the work of several authors, and they must have used several existing word lists.

The long chapter *Iratok* [Documents] explores three documents on the history of the Hungarians which Marsigli wrote entirely himself. *Epitome della ribellione dell' Ungheria con annesso il Prodromo del Protocollo de' moderni confini Cesarei Ottomanici*, probably dating from 1699, takes the most hostile tone. It consists largely of clichés borrowed from Italian pro-Habsburg propaganda writers. The second, which survives only in fragments, is *Memorie ed introduzione all'istoria della ribellione d'Ungheria*. Nagy considers this and the foregoing work to have been preliminary studies for the third, *Primo Abozzzo del compendio storico dell'Ungheria per servire d'introduzione al trattato: Acta Executionis Pacis fatto dal generale co(lonello) Marsili*.<sup>5</sup> The latter, written sometime between 1705 and 1718, was translated into Latin and intended as the foreword, a kind of advertisement, for a planned compilation of his writing, *Acta executionis pacis*.<sup>6</sup> Its wording, and the way it judges and condemns the Hungarians differ at many points from the other two documents, which were written before his fall from grace at Breisach in 1703. His main thrust was the possibility of reviving the old Roman Empire on lands which were occupied by the Scythians and their successors. This would form part of a Christianized world empire where order, security and economic prosperity prevailed and whose trustees would be the Holy Roman Emperors and the Pope. The highly original way Marsigli arranged the information he obtained on Hungarian history to fit his defined conception reveals his conception of the peoples and history of the Carpathian Basin region. He highlights only five basic episodes between the Scythians and the Peace of Karlowitz (1699). In the last part of *Abozzzo* he enlarges his own role, considerably distorting the relative significance of events. Like all of his works, his historical writing can be understood as a kind of biography and speech for the defense. The author wryly remarks at several points how Marsigli, the upholder of the *nihil mihi* principle,

5 In Hungarian, see Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, *A Magyar Királyság történetének kivonata* [Extract from the History of the Kingdom of Hungary], trans. Levente Nagy (Máriabesnyő: Merhavia, 2009).

6 On the Peace of Karlowitz and its implementation, i.e. his collection concerning the marking out of the frontier. For more detail on this, see Sándor Bene, “Acta Pacis – Béke a muzulmánokkal. Luigi Ferdinando Marsili terve a karlócai béke iratainak kiadására” [Acta Pacis – Peace with the Moslems. Luigi Ferdinando Marsili’s Plan to Publish the Documents of the Peace of Karlowitz], *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 119 (2006): 329–72.

often put forward his own personality, ideas and proposals in his writing, plans and descriptions.

In the final part of the book, the author summarizes and places in a wider European context how nations, particularly the Hungarians and the Romanians, appear in Marsigli's writing. He finds an imagological discourse conforming to strict rules, with peoples being judged on the basis of their position in the structure of states. In the late seventeenth century, premises based on classical traditions, namely Herodotos, Hyppocrates and Aristotle, formed the basis of thinking about other peoples. Facets of these abound in Marsigli's writing, even where the basic notions go against his own personal experience. Marsigli claimed that the Hungarians inherited their pride, restlessness and querulous tendencies from their ancestors the Scythians and the Mongols, although the Huns and the Turks also entered the picture as relatives. A view of Hungary espoused by a group of largely Italian-born and Militärpartei-linked generals in the Vienna court, following the insights of Raimondo Montecuccoli (e.g. Antonio Caraffa), found its way into Marsigli's ideology.<sup>7</sup> This had at its center integration of Hungary into the Habsburg Monarchy, the key to the rise of the authority and power of Emperor Leopold. Settling the position of Hungary was considered fundamental in the fight against the Ottomans. Besides the militarist conceptions, intended to represent the security of the Emperor's subjects, Marsigli greatly valued the development of trade, on which he made specific proposals to the highest government circles in Vienna. These all followed the contemporary ideas of establishing Austrian absolutism and making it competitive. For this, in addition to proper government and maintenance of order, Marsigli, as Leopold I's commissioner directing the work on delineating the frontiers between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires after the Peace of Karlowitz,<sup>8</sup> considered the security of the frontiers to be crucial. The frontiers were what signaled alienness, that which was not to be integrated but segregated. The near obsession for seeking out, delineating and defining borders pervaded seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalist thinking. It was an attempt to create a new and meaningful order at a time when the sacred order of things was

7 See Fabio Martelli, "Generali italiani a Vienna tra scienza nuova, empirismo e ideali assolutistici," in *La politica, la scienza, le armi. Luigi Ferdinando Marsili e la costruzione della frontiera dell'Impero e dell'Europa*, ed. Raffaella Gherardi (Bologna: Mulino, 2010), 45–100; Raffaella Gherardi and Fabio Martelli, *La pace degli eserciti e dell'economia. Montecuccoli e Marsili alla Corte di Vienna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009).

8 A small part of the surviving documents on this have appeared in print: Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, *Relazioni dei confini della Croazia e della Transilvania a sua Maestà Cesarea (1699–1701)*, ed. Raffaella Gherardi, vols 1–2 (Modena, 1986).

collapsing. Marsigli's aims regarding the Hungarians, as Nagy concludes from his discussion of frontier history, were integration, elimination of rebellious elements, and acceptance by Vienna, to which end he presented the Hungarians as peaceful Austrian subjects.

Since the book brings together research which Levente Nagy has pursued in several directions for more than a decade, its structure is not completely consistent. Its five large chapters are only loosely interconnected, while a few major subjects recur, highlighting their importance. The book has a thorough index, and its extensive bibliography will be of great assistance for further reading.

Overall, although Marsigli research in many areas is still unable to get beyond the level of putting forward new questions and hypotheses, Nagy's book fits excellently into the concept by which the publisher, Lucidus, intends to promote and disseminate scholarly work on the questions of national self-awareness and Hungarian–non-Hungarian relations. Nagy has dispelled many decades-old myths by putting certain Marsigli texts under detailed philological scrutiny. Since the author is competent in current European research and in early modern Hungarian and Romanian literature and history, he interprets the texts in a suitably broad context and sets them against well-selected control sources.

*Translated by Alan Campbell*

Mónika F. Molnár

Studies in the History of Early Modern Transylvania. Edited by Gyöngy Kovács Kiss. Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 2011. viii + 616 pp.

The cultures of the peoples of Central Europe differ significantly from the cultures of Western Europe. The region is characterized in particular by a diversity of languages, religions, and power structures.<sup>1</sup> It is vital for the historians of Central Europe to ensure that their findings and research are accessible to the wider international community. The series entitled *Atlantic Studies on Society in Change*, which publishes current research on the history of Central Europe, has been an essential contribution to this effort since its founding in 1977. Published by Columbia University Press and consisting now of some 140 volumes, this English-language series addresses not only readerships in Great Britain and the United States, but now, given the spread of English, an increasingly large global audience. As part of the series, a three-volume work on the history of Transylvania was published one decade ago under the editorship of Béla Köpeczi and Zoltán Szász.<sup>2</sup> It continues to represent a fundamental work of scholarship on Transylvania. The theme of this collection of essays, *Studies in the History of Early Modern Transylvania*, is more narrow in its focus. The essays concern the history of Transylvania in the early modern era, i.e. the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Most of the authors are Hungarian historians living in Romania who have studied the history of the region they regard as home.

In the introduction, Gyöngy Kovács Kiss, who is also the editor of the collection, offers a brief historical overview of the Transylvanian Principality. It is not easy task to provide a pithy characterization of the political circumstances and constitutional state of the principedom, since questions pertaining to its status continue to be subjects of debate today. The fact that Kovács Kiss herself refers to Transylvania as a “semi-independent” vassal state of the Ottoman Empire in the opening lines and then, not much later in the text, as an independent state that existed from the middle of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth (i.e. until the expulsion of the Turks) is a clear illustration of this. In her brief overview she nonetheless captures with keen insight the essence of the double-dependencies of the principedom (Habsburg on the one hand, Ottoman on the other), and she provides a balanced depiction of the principal

1 See the preface to the series by Ignác Romsics (viii).

2 Zoltán Szász and Béla Köpeczi, eds., *A History of Transylvania from the Beginning to 1919*, vols. 1–3, *Atlantic Studies on Society in Change*, no. 106–108, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000–2002).

characteristics of the reigns of the individual princes. She guides her reader through the political history of Transylvania up until the end of the eighteenth century. The introduction concludes with a description of the nascent Romanian national movements and offers a concluding paragraph on the early nineteenth century, the Napoleonic wars, the Congress of Vienna, and the Metternich Era.

According to the introduction, the essential goal of the essays is to present new perspectives on the complex history of Transylvania in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The contributors to the volume have set aside questions of domestic and foreign policy and focus instead on issues pertaining to social, administrative, cultural, and everyday life. The book is divided into three sections. The first is entitled, “Structure and Organization – Society – Interpersonal Relations.” It includes topics such as the history of the princely court, the organization of the counties, and various social strata.

A study by Annamária Jeney-Tóth entitled “The Transylvanian Princely Court in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century” is the opening essay of this section. True to its subtitle (“On the Basis of the Account Books of Kolozsvár”), the essay presents the structure of the prince’s court during its stays at various times in the city of Kolozsvár (Cluj in Romanian, Klausenburg in German) and the different groups of court society on the basis, first and foremost, of account records, with a separate chapter on the court nobility, court stewards, and court “school,” where the children of the nobility prepared during their years in the court for the later roles they were to assume as adults. In addition to offering portraits of the prince’s postal service, retainers, soldiery, and Master of the Horse, Jeney-Tóth also touches on people (musicians, kitchen staff, people affiliated with the chancellery) who were not strictly part of the court, but who often were with the court during its time in the city. In the conclusion to the essay Jeney-Tóth summarizes the most important elements of the court, determines the approximate number of people belonging to it, and establishes that the composition of the court, which was diverse and complex, depended to a great extent on the personality and family of the individual princes. A separate table offers an overview of the data concerning the courts of each prince. This essay, a valuable contribution based on thorough source work, is missing only a brief introduction to the secondary literature on the subject and an examination of the development of the princely court.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> One finds these, however, in another writing by Jeney-Tóth: Annamária Jeney-Tóth, “A fejedelmi udvar az Erdélyi Fejedelemségben” [The Princely Court of the Transylvanian Principedom], *Korunk* 24, no. 3 (March 2013): 27–33.

Veronka Dáné, an expert on the official organization of the counties of the Transylvanian Principedom,<sup>4</sup> uses the records books of Torda county as the foundation of her examination of the judicial practices in the county and the institution of the Lord and Deputy Lieutenant (the *főispán* and *alispán*). The essay clearly traces the formation of the county *sedria* in the seventeenth century and Dáné demonstrates that the “golden age” of Transylvanian history (the age of Prince Gábor Bethlen) bore witness to important attainments in the administration of justice (one might think of the achievements in the standardization of legal practice of the 1619 Diet). We must state however that while there were some similarities between the organizations of the individual counties, they nonetheless varied substantially and one should not venture any general conclusions on the basis of only one or two counties.

In the next essay in this chapter Mihály Sebestyén (Spielmann) presents “The Tragedy of Dénes Bánffy.” As the brother-in-law of the prince, Dénes Bánffy established relations on his own authority with the Ottomans and the Hungarian Kingdom, presumably with the goal of averting threats to the security of the Principality. His actions, however, gave rise to the suspicion that he was aspiring to assume the throne. His enemies, a group of influential Transylvanian aristocrats with chancellor Mihály Teleki at their head, looked with mistrust not only on his machinations in foreign policy, but also on the fact that he had acquired enormous estates. In the end the prince had him executed. This is the only essay in the collection that addresses a question pertaining to the higher nobility, although the internal conflicts of the Apafi era are given an even larger role in the story. The author offers a narrative of Bánffy’s fall (1674) on the basis of the available sources and the secondary literature. Sebestyén offers new insights into the story by revealing and explaining the interrelationships between the aristocrats of Transylvania.

Mihály Hermann Gusztáv continues this presentation of the varied social layers in a fascinating essay entitled “The Virtual Székely Past.” He guides the reader through a later centuries on the basis of the *Csíki Székely Krónika* [Székely Chronicle of Csík] and legends from other forged chronicles. It would have been

4 Veronka Dáné, “Az Ónagysága széki így deliberála.” *Torda vármegye fejedelemségkori bírósági gyakorlata* [“His Honor’s Bench thus Rules.” Jurisdictional Practice in Torda County in the Time of the Principedom] (Debrecen–Kolozsvár: Debreceni Egyetem–Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2006).

interesting to have included, alongside this excursion into *Geistesgeschichte*, an essay on the role of Székely society in the early modern era.<sup>5</sup>

In his essay on the Romanian nobility of Transylvania in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries Ioan Drăgan offers an overview of the nobility of Romanian descent in the early modern era. He demonstrates that the upper echelon of the Romanian nobility essentially abandoned its Romanian identity and became Hungarian. This process of assimilation among the elite took place in parallel with the immigration of broader Romanian masses from the areas around Kővár (Chioar in Romanian), Fogaras (Făgăraș in Romanian, Fugreschmarkt in German), Zaránd (Zarand in Romanian) and Bihar. The members of this broader social group belonged to the poorer nobility, and in time they came to replace the older nobility of Bánát (Banat in Romanian), Hátszeg (Hațeg in Romanian), and Máramaros (Maramureș in Romanian). In the nineteenth century they were closer to the Romanian speaking population and became part of the Romanian national movements. It might have been nice to have had, alongside this essay on the Romanian nobility, a contribution on the role of the higher and middle Hungarian nobility in the history of Transylvania as well, building for instance on the research that is underway even at the moment on social elites. There are also no essays on the Saxons either, the so-called “third nation,” a regrettable omission given the prominence of their role in the economic, social, and political life of Transylvania.

Judit Pál has contributed an essay on the Armenians of Transylvania in the eighteenth century. As she persuasively shows, the arrival of Armenians in Transylvania cannot be tied to any concrete date. Her thoroughly-footnoted essay acquaints the reader with the story of the spread of the Armenian community, the foundation of Armenopolis, their conversion from the Armenian Church to Catholicism, and the role they played in economic life.

Sándor Pál-Antal looks at the social composition of Marosvásárhely (Târgu-Mureș in Romanian, Neumarkt in German), a Transylvanian city that could hardly be characterized as typical, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Marosvásárhely was the only *civitas* of the Székely Land, in other words the only settlement to be given the status of royal free city, which it was granted in 1616. One of the distinctive features of the city was the mix of burghers and members of the nobility. The nobility enjoyed a number of privileges, but

<sup>5</sup> The author does this in an essay that was published later: Gusztáv Mihály Hermann, “Pillantás Erdély fejedelemség kori társadalmára” [A Glimpse of Transylvanian Society in the Era of the Principedom], *Korunk* 24, no. 3 (March 2013): 43–49.

the burghers dominated the bodies of municipal government, so the differing rights and privileges led to conflicts. It might have been nice to have included something on the long, gradual process of change as the settlement grew into a city. This process slowly freed Marosvásárhely from the influence of Marosszék and created conflicts between the city and the Székelys.

The last essay in this chapter was written by István Imreh (1919–2003), a scholar on the laws in the Székely villages. Regrettably, it is not made clear whether this essay was simply part of his bequest of manuscripts or possibly an extract from one of his writings published in the 1960s and 1970s (these writings are listed in the first footnote). The dominant concept of economic history in the article implies an approach that dates back some forty or fifty years and therefore should be regarded as out-of-date if not obsolete. It seems a bit out of place in a volume that promises to offer “new perspectives” in the study of history. The article provides a brief presentation of the statutes in the Székely villages and the villages belonging to demesnes. There is also some discussion of the regulations in cities and a short presentation of some economic instructions of the demesnes and of the estates belonging to the princes.

The theme of the second section of the book is the intellectual, cultural, and religious life of the era. According to the title there are three topics: “Scholarship – Culture – Architecture.” In the opening essay of this section Dezső Buzogány examines the Reformation in Transylvania from the perspective of theological history. This superb essay acquaints the reader with the eras in which the ideas of the Reformation spread to and took hold in Transylvania. One of Buzogány’s fundamental theses is that the Reformation was not a renewal of faith, or more precisely that the adherents of the Reformation did not demand the establishment of a new Church, but rather sought to restore the medieval Church and return to the model of the Church of the first centuries of Christendom and of the Bible. The formation of a new Church structure was a response to the hostile reaction of the Catholic Church.

In his essay, Gernot Nussbächer’s examines the life of Johannes Honterus (1498–1549), a saxon humanist, polyhistor, church organizer, and reformer. Born in the city of Brassó (Braşov in Romanian, Kronstadt in German), Johannes Honterus was a scholar, pedagogue, publisher, and lawyer all in one, a great figure of the Reformation with a variety of talents. The essay is complemented by a bibliography on Honterus’ writings and the secondary literature on his life and work. Nussbächer is a devoted scholar of Honterus’ work, and he has published numerous articles and monographs on his findings. However, this essay, which

essentially offers a summary, seems to have been written as something of an overview for non-experts (as is indicated by the complete lack of footnotes), and it was published in German and Romanian in 2009.

The inclusion of an essay written some twenty years ago by Zsigmond Jakó (1916–2008) is another indication of the heterogeneous nature of the volume. The essay, which examines the life and work of bishop Ignác Batthyány, was originally published in 1991 in *Erdélyi Múzeum*.<sup>6</sup> Its republication in this collection represents a gesture of respect for and commemoration of its author. Jakó establishes that the bishop's ambitions to become a historian did not begin to take root in the Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum in Rome, but rather during his years at the University of Nagyszombat. He acquaints the reader with Batthyány's work collecting sources on Church history, which was an integral part of the Jesuit school of history at the time. One of the indisputable indications of the high standards Batthyány set in his work as a collector is the fact that, of the medieval Latin codices in Romania today, 80 percent are from his library. His death at an early age was a tragedy in part because it prevented him from realizing further plans to create a society of scholars and maintain an astronomical observatory. With his "far-sighted, wide-ranging cultural conception" (p.301), Batthyány was a worthy heir to the cultural and educational efforts of István Báthory, Gábor Bethlen, and György I. Rákóczi. It is regrettable that there is not a single essay on any of the latter three Transylvanian princes in the collection.

An essay by acclaimed art historian András Kovács summarizes the findings of research on the city of Gyulafehérvár, offering a detailed presentation of the history of the most important buildings of the city in the course of the sixteenth century. Kovács begins with a brief discussion of the complexities of research on architectural history and then examines the topography and fortifications of the castle on the basis of available sources, touching on the complexities of establishing a water-supply system and the formation of an armory and a canon foundry. The reconstruction of the seat of the principality, which was created out of the buildings of the medieval bishop's palace, raises many questions to which only archeological excavations could give precise answers, such as the date of the construction of the "inner courtyard" or the ground-floor corridor. The illustrations nicely complement the text.

Klára P. Kovács' essay on the sixteenth-century bastion fortifications is a thorough summary of modern architectural history Kovács takes both pictures

<sup>6</sup> Jakó, Zsigmond, "Batthyány Ignác, a tudós és a tudományos szervező," *Erdélyi Múzeum* 53 (1991): 76–99.

and written sources into consideration in her study, but she does not use archeological data, which might have enabled her to provide a more thorough and detailed examination of the subject. The early dating on the basis of written sources of the construction of the castle of Szamosújvár (Gherla in Romanian) seems dubious. The supplemental illustrations are a useful inclusion and complement the text.

The chapter on culture comes to a close with an essay by Albert Fekete in which he examines the garden culture of the early modern era from the perspective of landscape architecture. His goal is not simply to present the sources on Renaissance garden culture, but to present the tools that were used at the time to shape the landscape and to examine how this continued into the second half of the eighteenth century. His principal thesis is that the Transylvanian garden culture (of the Székelys and the Saxons, of the prince's court and the aristocracy) had a decisive influence on the natural environment. The essay offers numerous illustrations of how prominent gardens (the gardens of castles and curiae) transformed the surrounding areas and how important they were from aesthetic, ecological, and economic perspectives. While this second part of the volume is interesting and at times contains new findings, as an overview it is nonetheless flawed, as it presents only a small slice of the rich cultural life of Transylvania and the research that has been devoted to it.

The third and final chapter, entitled “Claudiopolis – Transylvaniae Civitas Primaria,” presents the social and cultural world of the city of Kolozsvár, quite rightly referred to as the most important city in Transylvania. The essays offer insights into the various social layers of Kolozsvár and the everyday lives of the denizens of the city. These essays were already published in the first decade of the twenty-first century in Hungarian, with the exception of the essay by András Kiss, only the first part of which had already been published.

The essay by László Pakó examines the conflicts between the burghers of Kolozsvár and the members of the nobility who settled in the city. The denizens of the city tried many times and adopted various strategies to prevent the nobility from purchasing real estate in the city, and when a member of the nobility succeeded in buying a house, they attempted to purchase it back from him.

In her essay Ágnes Flóra presents the elite of Kolozsvár in the early modern era. She touches on historical precedents, the so-called “geréb patricians,” and the rotation of the Saxon and Hungarian nations in the governance of the city. Endogamy was common among the elites of the city, as Flóra demonstrates

with the example of the daughters of Tamás Budai, a Kolozsvár goldsmith. The lifestyle of the elite of Kolozsvár resembled the lifestyle of the nobility in the rest of the country. Renaissance tastes prevailed and book collecting was a common passion. Flóra also notes that while the meaning of the word patrician varies from case to case, there are general criteria, and the burgers of Kolozsvár in the sixteenth century did not meet these criteria, since they did not constitute a closed community possessing privileges, unlike for instance the burghers of Nuremberg. In time, the more influential families would leave the city and integrate into the nobility.

The essays by Gyöngy Kovács Kiss and András Kiss take the reader into the world of everyday people of Transylvania. Kovács Kiss provides insights into the everyday lives of the citizens of Kolozsvár. The first part of her essay deals with games and leisure spaces. It presents the practices surrounding wine retail and the regulations pertaining to the importation of wine. The customers in the taverns in Kolozsvár came from various backgrounds and social layers. Alongside the local burghers one also found soldiers and “idlers.” The shooting range was another site of leisure activity. Young men came to indulge in target practice with bows and arrows. The essay also informs the reader which games were popular among the people of Kolozsvár in their free time (dice, cards, ninepins, etc.). The second half of the essay examines the modes of gossip and slander (accusations of witchcraft, lechery, debauchery, and illegitimate pregnancy) and the most important sites. The reader is acquainted with the market, where various implements and remedies were sold, the public bathhouse, the mill, and the bakery.

An essay by András Kiss constitutes a fine conclusion to the collection. He recounts the story of the first and last witch trials of Kolozsvár and examines the social and psychological motives behind witch trials in general. In the first trial the accused, Prisca Kewmies (Piroska Kőmíves), was a midwife who was condemned to death in 1565, before Klára Bócy, who earlier had been seen in the secondary literature as the first woman to have been burnt at the stake in Kolozsvár. Kiss suspects that one of the people who may have played a significant role in instigating the trials was a tailor named Péter Grúz, and he identifies some of Grúz's possible motives. The last “witch,” a hapless beggar named Kata Kádár, was executed in February, 1734. Kiss provides a vivid and well-documented account of her life, the gruesome tortures to which she was submitted, her beheading, and the incineration of her body. This chapter, gripping as the stories are, would have been more interesting had it not been

limited to the city of Kolozsvár, but rather had also included the cities around the salt mines, the Saxon cities, Marosvásárhely on the western fringes of the Székely Land, and the princely capital of Gyulafehérvár. This would have given the reader some perspectives on the scholarship of the last few decades concerning urban history and urban society.

One of the strengths of the collection is that it contains biographical details at the end of the essays concerning the more important historical figures mentioned. This represents a useful complement to the essays themselves, and it is followed by brief introductions of the authors, a selected bibliography, and an index of places and proper names. Regrettably, there are inconsistencies in the use of English. For instance the term *főispán* is translated as “lord lieutenant” in some articles and “main county head” in others.

There are some printing mistakes in the volume, as well as typos, for instance, the contention according to which Dénes Bánffy was born around 1630 but nonetheless was 54 or 55 years old at the time of his death in 1674. According to another contention in the essay Mihály Apafi was freed from Tatar captivity sometime around 1600 (in fact this happened 60 years later).

Nonetheless, considering the thoroughness of the essays, this volume constitutes a valuable collection that will be highly useful to scholars both in and outside of Hungary.

*Translated by Thomas Cooper*

Angelika T. Orgona

A városi élet keretei a feudális kori Magyarországon. Kassa társadalma a 16. század derekán [The Settings of Urban Life in Feudal Hungary. Kassa (Košice) Society in the Mid-Sixteenth Century]. By György Granasztói. Budapest: Korall, 2012. 415 pp.

Urban history did not come into the focus of Hungarian historical research until the second half of the twentieth century, before which research on urbanization and urban society was regarded as the reserve of local historians. It was only when the history of events started to lose some of its dominance and disciplines such as economic and social history made more headway that Hungarian scholars turned their attention towards towns as the mediator spaces of craftsmanship and commerce.

Historians researching the towns of medieval and early modern Hungary cannot rely on the same sources as are used for the study of, for instance, political history. In addition to charters and other legal documents, they have to use accounts, tax lists, wills, tithe lists, etc. These sources were discovered by archivists as early as the late nineteenth century and many of them were even published then or in the early twentieth century, but they attracted little attention from researchers.

The first written urban privileges date from the early thirteenth century, and literacy became widespread in Buda, Sopron, and towns in the north of the Hungarian Kingdom (in present day Slovakia) in the fourteenth. Literacy became slightly more diverse as some of the towns employed professional notaries. In the late medieval period, the free royal towns (towns subject to the direct jurisdiction of the kings of Hungary, and having the most privileges) had quite sophisticated systems of administration<sup>1</sup> This increasing complexity is well reflected in the appearance and rapid diversification of town books (*Libri civitatum*).<sup>2</sup> Apart from

1 Katalin Szende, “Towns and the Written Word in Medieval Hungary,” in *Writing and the Administration of Medieval Towns: Medieval Urban Literacy I*, ed. Marco Mostert and Anna Adamska, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013) (in preparation).

2 On the role of town books in urban administration, see Judit Majorossy and Katalin Szende, “Libri civitatum. Városkönyvek a középkori Magyar Királyság közigazgatásában” [Libri Civitatum. Town Books in the Medieval Hungarian Administration], in *Tiszteletkőr. Történeti Tanulmányok Draskóczy István egyetemi tanár 60. születésnapjára* [Lap of Honor. Historical Essays in Honor of Professor István Draskóczy on his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday], ed. Gábor Mikó, Bence Péterfi, and András Vadas (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2012), 319–30. On urban administration in late medieval towns, see also Judit Majorossy and Károly Goda, “Städtische Selbstverwaltung und Schriftproduktion im spätmittelalterlichen Königreich Ungarn—Eine

their judicial affairs, towns had their own tax administration, and numerous tax and tithe lists are preserved from fifteenth and sixteenth-century Hungary. Apart from these serial sources, one finds household conscriptions and—in the case of Kassa—ambulations (*ambulationes*), documents that served both economic and military purposes.

Despite the early publication of these sources, they were not subjected to systematic research until the 1960s. That was when more and more scholars began to follow historians of the *Annales*-school who were increasingly shifting their focus to serial sources.<sup>3</sup> Systematic analysis of these sources went on in parallel with the development of computer technology, which gained the attention of several French historians of the period.<sup>4</sup> Hungarian historians also showed growing interest in the use of computers in fields such as historical demography and economic history, where the use of mathematics and quantitative methods was fundamental.<sup>5</sup> These included some historians who were already well established, such as Erik Fügedi, Vera Bácskai and József Kovacsics, and others, such as György Granasztói, who were at early stages of their careers.

Granasztói's extensive volume on the sixteenth-century society of Kassa (Košice) is a fruit of the early phase of computer-based quantitative historical research in Hungary. He started to work on towns in Hungary in the early 1960s, and from early on his output had two facets: one was social structure and demography, and the other urban layout. In the 1960s and 1970s he analyzed serial sources to gain insight into the urban structure of major towns from the Hungarian Kingdom such as Győr, Sopron, Kassa and Nagyszombat (Trnava).

The book reviewed here is not new; Granasztói wrote it in the early 1970s, and completed it in 1975, when it earned him a degree from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. It remained a manuscript, however, until the editors of *Korall*, a leading journal of social sciences and social history, recently decided to publish it as part of a new series: *Társadalomtörténeti Monográfiák* (Studies in social history).

Kassa, the scene of Granasztói's book, first rose to significance in the Kingdom in the Middle Ages. In the classification of medieval Hungarian towns

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Quellenkunde für Ödenburg und Pressburg," *Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung* [NF] 13 (2008): 61–100.

3 For instance, see the collection of the studies on the topic written by Pierre Chaunu between 1960 and 1975: Pierre Chaunu, *Histoire quantitative, histoire sérielle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1978).

4 For instance, see the works of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.

5 Judit Pál, "Wouldn't it be Better for Me to Enroll in the Mathematics Department?"—Interview with the Historian Vera Bácskai," *Colloquia. Journal of Central European History* 18 (2011): 186–95, esp. 189–90.

according to a detailed set of criteria devised by the influential Hungarian urban historian András Kubinyi, Kassa accompanied eight other towns in the highest category. Kassa stood out even in this group, and only Buda, Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia) and Kolozsvár (now Cluj-Napoca, Romania) are thought to have been more significant centers.<sup>6</sup> Kassa's importance in many respects decreased during the sixteenth century, but that certainly did not affect literacy there: only Sopron and Pozsony have equally rich archives from this period. Despite its shrinking role as a center of the urban network, Kassa remained an important town.

An analysis of this transformation is part of Granasztói's agenda for the book. He attempts to reconstruct as many parameters of the sixteenth-century Kassa society as possible using serial sources and with the aid of a computer analysis. Before turning to that, he lists some factors that might influence the accuracy of the datasets he used: 1) the total population of the inner town; 2) the occupations of the population as derived from the tax lists; 3) the ownership of the estates; 4) the distinction of family and household; 5) missing streets. These are all valid problems, especially considering the sensitivity of the analyses he based on the datasets. They could have been partly treated by the study of other sources preserved in the archives of the town, such as the large number of charters or letters which are known from this period. These sources could have greatly helped him to determine, for example, what proportion of the inner town population was represented in the documents. It is also true, however, that at several points in the book, Granasztói carefully refers back to these problems, and makes an indication that they are all general methodological problems when using tax lists and conscriptions to reconstruct the characteristics of a certain society.<sup>7</sup>

6 András Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat a középkori Alföldön és az Alföld szélén* [Urban Development and Urban Network on the Great Hungarian Plain and its Fringes in the Middle Ages], *Dél-alföldi Évszázadok* 14. (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 2000); András Kubinyi, "Városhálózat a késő középkori Kárpát-medencében" [Urban Network in Late Medieval Hungary], in *Bártfától Pozsonyig: Városok a 13–17. században* [From Bártfa (Bardejov) to Pozsony: Towns between the Thirteenth and Seventeenth Centuries] (*Társadalom- és Művelődéstörténeti Tanulmányok* 35), ed. Enikő Csukovits and Tünde Lengyel (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 2005), 9–36.

7 For the example of Sopron, see Károly Goda, "The fluctuation of the number of taxpayers and the sum of the annual regular tax in Sopron, 1424–1686," in *Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns No. 1 – Sopron*, ed. Ferenc Jankó, József Kücsán and Katalin Szende with the contribution of Ferenc Dávid, Károly Goda and Melinda Kiss (Sopron: Győr-Moson-Sopron Megye Soproni Levéltára, 2010), 55–57 and the associated maps.

Granasztói starts the analysis of social structure of the town by reconstructing the population of the (inner) town. His precise figures, based on conscriptions, show that it fluctuated between 2000 and 2700 during the sixteenth century. The population was relatively high in the late medieval period, but decreased significantly during the 1530s as the town was deeply affected by the wars of succession to the Hungarian throne. The analysis goes into the details of the family structure of the town center population, but omits a significant part of the population—those living in the suburbs and those connected with the military. The latter are particularly important as most of them lived in the direct surroundings of the “Ring”, the main market street of the town, and as such were important factors in its everyday life.<sup>8</sup> In recent years—thanks to the works of István Németh H.—scholarship has a better insight to the problem of military population living in the town of Kassa.<sup>9</sup> Despite this problem, Granasztói’s analysis of the inner-town population makes a fundamental contribution to two long historiographical debates concerning: 1) the distinction between the family and the household in the urban context in pre-modern societies 2) the size of families in towns. Here Granasztói places his results in the international context by comparing his results with those of similar investigations of towns elsewhere, mostly in the German speaking areas and England.

The value of computer-based analysis shows up best in the chapter on professions and social stratification in Kassa. Granasztói applies a method by which he clearly demonstrates, for example, the strong correlation between the amount of grain and wine kept in households and the wealth of families. Later scholarship has shown that many burghers had a share in the export of Hegyalja wine to Poland,<sup>10</sup> and those who were involved in long distance trade seem to have had more reserves than others in the town.

After the analyses of social stratification, the presence of professions in the town and the financial status of the burghers, Granasztói turns to Kassa’s role as a trade center in the region. He is most interested in determining why Kassa

8 On the conflicts between the army and the burghers, see István H. Németh, “Kassai polgárok és katonák a 16. században: a hadsereg beköltözésével járó társadalmi és közigazgatási jelenségek a felsőmagyarországi városok életében a Mohácsot követő évtizedek során” [The Košice Burghers and Soldiers in the Sixteenth Century. Social and Administrative Concomitants of Military Settlement in Upper Hungarian Towns after the Battle of Mohács], *Levéltári Közlemények* 68, no. 1–2 (1997): 143–97.

9 Cf. footnote 8.

10 István Draskóczy, “Borkereskedelem a 15–16. század fordulóján” [Wine Trade at the Turn of the Fifteenth Century], in *Borok és korok* [Wines and Eras], ed. Ferenc Benyák and Zoltán Benyák (Budapest: Hermész Kör, 1999), 99–114, 325–30. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Budapest: Hermész Kör, 2002, 115–30, 379–82).

never became as important as Buda, Kraków or Vienna in the urban network of Central Europe. Granasztói shows how the town lost its importance in long distance trade by the mid-sixteenth century. The two key factors were the loss of medieval privileges and a lack of assets. Without investments, Kassa could not play a role in the long distance cattle trade, provenly one of the most profitable businesses of the century. Granasztói also shows the structure of industries to have changed, putting Kassa at a disadvantage against other towns in the region. As the price of agrarian products rose after the end of the Middle Ages, Kassa's industrial role decreased and its market shifted towards the exchange of agricultural products. The change in the town's industry was accompanied by a transformation in the composition of its population by nationality. Throughout the late medieval period, like the other major towns of the Hungarian Kingdom, Kassa was dominated by a German elite, but the influx of a substantial Hungarian population in the period following the battle of Mohács changed power structures of the town.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1970s, Granasztói's work was a ground-breaking study in many senses. He pioneered the use of computer-based quantitative methods to reconstruct characteristics of the population of an area, and was one of the first to study the social dynamics of a community based on previously underestimated serial sources.

Granasztói's monograph remains an undoubted achievement even if significant improvements in two areas over the last 40 years have challenged the validity of his results. Firstly, historians and archivists have studied a huge amount of archival material kept in the archives of the Habsburg central administration and apart from that hundreds of charters, private letters and accounts relating to the history of Kassa are now available online or in source publications. These sources have led to significant progress in issues such as the military population and the changes in Kassa's economic role in the late medieval period and the first decades of early modern times.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the computer methods used by Granasztói have gone through significant transformation, and historians have expressed their doubts about the validity of studies based exclusively on

11 Zsuzsanna J. Újváry, "Kassa polgárságának etnikai-politikai változásai a 16. század közepétől a 17. század első harmadáig" [The Ethno-Political Changes of the Kassa Bourgeoisie from the Mid-Sixteenth to the First Third of the Seventeenth Centuries], in *A magyar polgári átalakulás kérdései. Tanulmányok Szabad György 60. születésnapjára* [Questions of the Hungarian Civic Transformation. Studies in Honor of György Szabad on his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday], ed. Iván Zoltán Dénes, András Gergely, and Gábor Pajkossy (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 1984), 9–36.

12 See the works of István H. Németh and Zsuzsanna Újváry in the topic.

the analysis of variables. Despite these changes, the results of Granasztói's painstaking analysis of the unique sources preserved in the archives of Kassa are still used by Hungarian historians. It has therefore been well worth publishing the study, and we can only regret that it did not happen in 1970s.

*Translated by Alan Campbell*

András Vadas