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The rule of Gábor Bethlen in Upper Silesia (1620-1624)

The issue of conferring the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz as a pledge to Gábor Bethlen, the Prince of Transylvania, is still waiting to be thoroughly studied. So far, not a single separate dissertation, article or monograph has been devoted to it, except one valuable yet now completely antiquated work by Veress, which relates to it only partially¹. Apart from that, more or less accurate references on the subject are found in numerous studies concerning the Thirty Years' War. The purpose of this article is to present this issue on the basis of yet unexplored archival materials and literature of the subject.

The incident of throwing the governors of Emperor Matthias I, William Slavata and Jaroslav Martinic, as well as his secretary Fabricius, out of one of the windows of the royal castle in Hradčany in Prague on the 23rd of May, 1618, marked the beginning of one of the largest, most violent and most destructive wars in Central Europe in the era of feudalism, during which the major powers of contemporary Europe—where political, religious, economic and dynastic interests of most European countries crossed—struggled with each other for as long as thirty years. The Defenestration of Prague had become a signal for a common revolt in Bohemia, at the head of which stood the provisional government composed of as many as thirty so-called 'directors'. The Czechs fervently began to seek allies against the Habsburgs. They tried to attract primarily the Protestant nobility and the cities of the Lands of the Crown of St Wenceslaus, the Moravians, the Lusatians, and finally the Silesians. Silesian states did not immediately side with the Bohemian rebellion. Initially, they were just waiting, while maintaining a friendly neutral attitude for the Czechs. This was not so much due to the fear of the Polish intervention, although this also played a prominent role, because the ruling circles in Rzeczpospolita continuously sent warnings, admonishments and threats urging the Silesians not to unite with the Bohemian 'rebels', but rather due to the pursuit of the Bohemian states to fully subjugate Silesia and other 'Czech' countries and to gain absolute supremacy within the Bohemian Crown. Silesian passivity lapsed in 1619 as a result of negotiations conducted in July and August in Prague, when on the basis of the common religious, state and partially national interests, a coalition was formed between Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia against the Habsburgs, with the guarantee of full autonomy to all the Lands of the Crown of St Wenceslaus. Its members were to be linked by a personal union, and the power of the king was to be

¹ E. Veress, Bathory Zsigmond es Bethlen Gábor viszonya az oppein-ratibori herczsegekhez, Kolozsvar 1897, a copy from the journal Erdelyi Muzeum, 1897.



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very limited. After the conclusion of the union treaty, Ferdinand II, the successor of Matthias I (deceased in March 1619) much feared by the Protestants, was dethroned and Elector Palatine Frederick V was elected the new King of Bohemia and crowned in Prague on the 4th of November as Frederick I. He was recognized by all the states of the newly created union².

Czech insurgents sought also help from almost all Protestant rulers in Europe, and especially in the Holy Roman Empire. A potential candidate for their ally was, among others, the Prince of Transylvania, Gábor Bethlen (1613–1629), a great leader, a skilful politician and an ingenious diplomat, not without reason called 'the Mithridates of Transylvania', who was drawn into the anti-Habsburg camp by a traditionally reluctant attitude of the Viennese court, and especially Emperor Matthias I. Put on the throne of Transylvania by its states with the support of the High Porte, from the beginning of his reign Bethlen faced major difficulties posed by the Viennese diplomacy and Habsburg supporters in Transylvania. On the one hand, the court of Vienna lingered to recognize Bethlen's rule, while on the other hand it attempted to conflict him with Turkey; there was no pretender to the throne of Transylvania that would not be supported by the Habsburgs against him, and above all they favoured Hommonay. Finally, they fuelled separatist aspirations of the Transylvanian Saxons who aimed to break away from Transylvania by an armed uprising and create autonomous state under the Austrian and Turkish authority.

From the beginning of his rule in Transylvania, Bethlen sought to achieve full independence and sovereignty of the state, and the unity of Hungary under his scepter. He was well aware that this could be achieved by veering between two powerful Habsburg and Turkish camps. Therefore, he did not want to pay tribute on the grounds of the feud dependency from Turkey and give away the borderline fortress of Lipa. At the same time, he tried to get closer to Austria and its faithful ally Rzeczpospolita, but all his efforts were crashed by the hostility of the Austrians and resentment of the Polish court³. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Prince of Transylvania welcomed the Bohemian uprising with the greatest joy, perceiving it as a great opportunity to get into a wider political arena. It must be admitted that he immediately recognized the significance of this fact. In one of his letters from this period he wrote enthusiastically that 'the good God always favours his people'; he rated the war in Bohemia higher than the uprising of Žižka⁴. He also immediately initiated intense, though shrouded in mystery, preparations for active involvement in the events which shook the possessions of the Habsburgs and the entire Holy Roman Empire. If he had not joined the events immediately, then it was mainly due to the

²H. Palm, 'Das Verhalten der schlesischen Fürsten und Stände bei der Wahl Friedrich V. von der Pfalz zum Könige von Böhmen im Jahre 1619' (Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens, issue VII, 1866, pp. 246–248); A. S z e l ą g o w s k i, Śląsk i Polska wobec powstania czeskiego, Lwów 1904, p. 54.

³ F. Suwara, Przyczyny i skutki kłeski cecorskiej 1620 r., Kraków 1930, pp. 28–29, 40; M. R i t t e r, Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Gegenreformation und des dreissigjährigen Krieges (1555–1648), vol. III, part 1 Bibliothek deutscher Geschichte, Stuttgart–Berlin 1901, pp. 52–54; E. L u k i n i c h, Dzieje Węgier w szkicach biograficznych, Budapest 1939, pp. 139–142.

⁴ D. Angyal, 'Gabriel Bethlen' (Revue historique, 1928, p. 26).



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lack of material means to wage war⁵. Of some importance was also the fear of the position to be taken by the Polish court in the case of his intervention against the Habsburgs. Moreover, this fear was not groundless, as Sigismund III Vasa spared no effort to dissuade Bethlen and Hungarian states from the fight against the Habsburgs. Transylvania and Hungary were continuously flocked with warnings and threats from the Warsaw court and Hetman Żółkiewski⁶.

Having agreed with Turkey to secure his backs and provide possible support, in the summer of 1619 Bethlen initiated the war against the Habsburgs. The main attack was directed at Hungary, which was greatly dissatisfied due to the Catholics violating the provisions of the Vienna Treaty of 1606, which ensured religious freedom to the states and royal cities in Hungary. The Prince of Transylvania decided to use this dissatisfaction to strengthen his influence in this area and to possibly unify under his scepter Hungary and Transylvania into one land independent of the Habsburgs. Hungarian nobility stood massively on his side. In short time, the Hungarian lands situated on the left bank of the Danube, especially Slovakia from Koszyce to Bratislava, were in his hand.

Simultaneously with hostilities, negotiations between Bohemia and Transylvania began on entering into alliance and uniting in the common fight against the Habsburgs. Although initially in Prague there were certain doubts about that, carefully fuelled by Austrian propaganda imputing Bethlen to attempt to take over the Bohemian Crown, regardless of that, the directors wrote in August 1619 a letter to the Prince of Transylvania proposing an offensive-resistant alliance and then they were visited by Marek Weiwoda in relation with this case⁷. At about the same time Bethlen also established contacts with the Silesian states; he sent envoys to the governor of Silesia, Duke Jan Chrystian of Brzeg, represented by Marek Weiwoda and Stanisław Hutzar, who encouraged Silesian states to persevere in the alliance with Bohemia and to fight against the Emperor, promising them the help of Transylvania in case of a threat from the Polish side and tempting them with the ability to get help from the High Porte and Tatars⁸. On his behalf also Stanisław Thurzó tried to win the support of the Silesians⁹.

⁵ A. Gindely, *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges*, vol II, Prag 1880, p. 289.

⁶ A. Prochaska, *Hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski*, Warszawa 1927, p. 208, przypis 12 i pp. 214–215; Suwara, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–53; A. Sokołowski, 'Austriacka polityka Zygmunta III' (*Przegląd Polski*, issue III, 1879, p. 39). These warnings were addressed also to Silesia, and their authors were not only the members of the Polish court, but also the nobility, like for instance the nobility of Mazovia, reluctant towards the establishment of links between the Silesians and Gábor Bethlen and the Turks. Cf. the resolution of the sejmik of Środa from the 22nd of September 1620 and the letter of the local states to the states of Silesia from the 25th of September 1620 (J. Macurek, *Ceske povstani r. 1618–1620 a Polsko*, Brno 1937, p. 112, footnote 1).

⁷ H. Palm, 'Die Confederation der Schlesier mit den Bohmen im Jahre 1619 in ihren nachsten Folgen' (*Zeitschrift...*, issue VIII, 1867, pp. 293–294); J. Polisenky, *Nizozemsku politika a Bild Hora*, Praha 1958, pp. 193 and 201.

⁸ Kurzer Extract der Verrichtung und Anbringen des Bethlehem Gabors, Furstens in Siebenburgen, Gesandten bei dem Oberamt in Schlesien, Furstens zu Brieg, Brieg 5 IX 1619 (*Acta et documenta historiam Gabriellis Bethlen Transsilimniae principis illustrantia*, edidit A. Gindely, Budapest 1890, pp. 12–13); cf. Szelaḡowski, *op. cit.*, p. 90. Lebzelter wrote from Prague to Schonberg: 'Der



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The sejm convened in November by the Palatine of Hungary under pressure of Bethlen agreed to continue the fight against the Habsburgs and the alliance with the newly chosen king of Bohemia, Frederick I. The Transylvanian and Hungarian armies charged at Vienna and almost without serious resistance reached its gates. It is hard to suspect what the fate of this city would have been, had it not been for the, unexpected for Gábor Bethlen, invasion of the Upper Hungary by *lisowczycy* and Hommonay, who defeated Bethlen's army commanded by György Rákóczi in the Battle of Humenné. In this way, Rzeczpospolita sought to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the Polish-Austrian treaty of 1613. Moscow war and the danger from the Tatars prevented Sigismund III from joining the war between the Habsburgs and the Protestant Union. The events in Hungary, however, went so far that the Polish king found it necessary to help Ferdinand II at least in this way. Also Hetman Żółkiewski, though at first quite favourably disposed towards Bethlen, agreed to this. Writing, e.g. about the threat to Vienna posed by the Protestant troops, the aged Hetman stated: 'to look at that with folded arms is [a thing] wretched and unfair'¹⁰. Intervention against the Protestants was indeed long and carefully prepared by the Polish court circles¹¹. At the same time, at the end of November, Sigismund III sent Otwinowski to Constantinople, with the aim, among others, of discrediting Bethlen in the eyes of the High Porte by showing a number of his letters as and evidence that the Prince of Transylvania had not so long before tried to rebel against Turkey and conspired with its enemies.

At the news of the invasion of *lisowczycy*, Bethlen hastily retreated from Vienna to save the endangered rears. He also had to counter the diplomatic activity of the Polish court in the Turkish area. At the same time, he was visited by Bohemian envoys who came with a proposition of an alliance. The negotiations in this matter were being conducted for a long time because the financial demands of Bethlen presented to Frederick I and the Bohemian states were quite extortionate. The talks were then continued in Prague, where Earl Ergogy arrived on behalf of the Prince. Not wanting to lose such a valuable ally, Frederick I tried to influence the states of the Lands of the Crown of St Weneclaus to adopt these conditions, e.g. on the 19th of December, 1619, he demanded from the Silesian states to expedite the

siebenburgische Abgesandte hat under andern sich vernehraen lassen, es waren allbereit 40 000 Tartarn und 30 000 Turcken in Bereitschaft, welche dem Konig in Polen, da er im geringsten wider Schlesien etwas tentieren wollte, ins Land fallen und dasselb ufs ausserste ruinieren wurden...', Prague 3-13 October 1619; (Gindely, *Acta et documenta...*, p. 36).

⁹ Schreiben des Grafen Emerich Thurso in Hungarn in Volmacht des Fursten in Siebenburgen, Bytten 20 IX 1619 (*Acta publica*, edidit H. Palm, vol. II, Breslau 1869, pp. 310-311); Palm, *Das Yerhalten...*, p. 227.

¹⁰ An undated letter of Hetman Żółkiewski to the Chancellor (Bielowski, *Pisma Żółkiewskiego*, pp. 352-353).

¹¹ I obtained this information from Professor W. Czapliński, who is currently preparing a paper devoted to this very subject. Here, I would like to thank Professor Czapliński not only for sharing this information but also for all his precious advice and guidelines that were an invaluable aid in the process of writing this paper.



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plenipotentiaries to the sejm in Bratislava as soon as possible to sign the alliance ¹². He returned to this issue several times in early 1620 ¹³.

Bethlen's situation in Hungary at the turn of 1619 and 1620 was so stable, despite the defeat at the Battle of Humenné, that the Hungarian states gathered in Bratislava offered him on the 15th of January, 1620, the Crown of St Stephen. However, the Prince of Transylvania still did not feel strong enough to accept it and was satisfied with the choice *in principem et caput regni Hungariae* ¹⁴. On the same day, the treaty of alliance between Bethlen and Bohemia was also concluded ¹⁵.

The Habsburg diplomacy proceeded immediately to parry this blow, undoubtedly severe to the Viennese court. Trying to isolate the Prince of Transylvania from his allies, they offered him a truce on terms that would be very favourable for him. Not being sure of the support of Turkey and being afraid of a new incursion by the Poles, and above all, probably bribed by the imperial envoys who were said to appear in Bratislava with a few barrels of gold, Bethlen agreed to this offer, and on the 16th of January, 1620, at the sejm of Bratislava a truce was concluded, which bound both sides from the 29th of September of that year. On the 23rd of January it was ratified by the Emperor ¹⁶. Under this agreement, the Emperor confirmed that the Prince of Transylvania owned thirteen Hungarian counties, he was conferred some properties in Bohemia and two Silesian Duchies of Opole and Racibórz for the possession of his, his legitimate descendants and his successors to the throne of Transylvania. The Emperor on his side reserved only that the new ruler would respect the rights and privileges of the Catholic Church in Upper Silesia. Bethlen could finally use the title of the Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Duke of Opole–Racibórz ¹⁷. In this way, he was to possess, among others, the lands which Sigismund III Vasa, a longstanding friend of the Habsburgs, wanted as a feud for his sons. Meanwhile, the Polish king

¹² Fryderyk I do książąt i stanów śląskich, Praga 19 XII 1619 r. (Acta publica, vol. III, Breslau 1872, pp. 10–11); Suwara, op. cit., pp. 42 and the following; Prochaska, op. cit., p. 387.

¹³ Ihrer Koniglichen Majestat Proposition an die Herrn Fursten und Stunde in Schlesien, 27 II 1620 r. (Acta publica, vol. III, p. 35); Designation der auf dem General-Landtage zur Berathung kommenden Artikel, undated (ibid., p. 46).

¹⁴ F. Hurter, Geschichte Kaiser Ferdinand II. und seiner Eltern, vol. VIII, Schaffhausen 1857, p. 375.

¹⁵ Osterreichische Staatsvertrage. Furstentum Siebenburgen (1526–1690) (Veroffentlichungen der Kommission fur Neuere Geschichte Osterreichs, vol. IX, edidit R. Gooss, Wien 1911, p. 487).

¹⁶ I. A. Fessler, Die Geschichte der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen, vol. VIII, Leipzig 1824, p. 526; J. O. Opel, Der niedersachsisch-danische Krieg, vol. I, Halle 1872, p. 114; Huber, Geschichte Osterreichs, cz. IV, Gotha 1896, pp. 151–152; A. Gindely, Geschichte des dreissigjahrigen Krieges, vol. II, p. 346.

¹⁷ F. Firnhaber, Actenstucke zur Aufhellung der ungrischen Geschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts (Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der Kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. XXVIII, 1858, pp. 392 and the following). A passage from a ratified version of this treaty that was especially meaningful to us is as follows: 'Primum. Praefatum Hungariae et Transilvaniae Principem etc. autoritate nostra et potestate Caesarea et Imperiali in principem Sacri Romani imperii creamus et declaramus. Praeterea ducatus in Silesia Oppoliae et Ratibor una cum titulo ducis praefatorum ducatum cum omni iure et iurisdictione quo antecessores eorundem ducatum possessores usi sunt, quamprimum in potestatem nostram redierit, ecclesiasticis bonis et religionis Catholicae exercitiis salvis, illaesis et nullatenus variandis aut turbandis permanentibus sibi haeredibusque et posteritatibus suis ex lumbis eiusdem deseendentibus et legitimo thoro natis conferemus...' (Gooss, op. cit., pp. 493–495).



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had to settle for a ceremonial appointment of a four-year Prince Charles Ferdinand for the coadjutor of the bishop of Wrocław, which was done in December of the previous year by Archduke Charles¹⁸.

The conclusion of the armistice treaty in Bratislava and further negotiations between the representatives of Gábor Bethlen and the imperial envoys aroused great concern of the Protestants fighting against the Habsburgs and undermined the trust in his policy, which was regarded to be hypocritical. The astonishment at this was even bigger concerning a very favourable military situation of the Protestants. Since the siege of Vienna, the Bohemian lands were free of the imperial army, the greater part of Hungary was in the hands of the Prince of Transylvania, and victory was secured on all fronts. The armies of Dampierre and Bucquoi in Austria were threatened with total annihilation. It is not surprising then that Ferdinand II regarded the conclusion of this treaty as a major diplomatic and political success¹⁹. It is characteristic that both Ferdinand II and Bethlen wanted the Polish side to enter the treaty, which is stated in a letter from the Emperor to Bethlen dated the 4th of February, 1620, and in Transylvanian message to Hetman Koniecpolski and bishop Myszkowski²⁰. What is more, the Prince of Transylvania also tried to mediate in reaching the truce between the Habsburgs and Bohemia, but he encountered strong opposition of both interested parties; Ferdinand II did not want to negotiate at all with the 'rebellious subjects'²¹. In this way, Bethlen attempted to exploit some delay in warfare to protect from the Polish side, which was dominated by the atmosphere of dissatisfaction, skilfully excited by the Protestant camp, which aroused after *lisowczy* raided Hungary as a result of dissatisfaction with the pro-Habsburg policy of Sigismund III and the robberies committed by Lisowski's soldiers on the Pogórze²². He also wanted to manage the internal affairs of Hungary and Transylvania.

However, the fears of the Protestant Union were unfounded. The warnings of its representatives that *ab Imperatoris Ferdinandi partibus nulla plane fi delitatis spes supersit*²³ were not in vain. The terms of the armistice treaty were not performed at

¹⁸ Czapliński, Szlachta, możnowładztwo i oficjalna polityka polska wobec Śląska pod koniec XVI i w pierwszej połowie XVII w. (Szkice z dziejów Śląska, vol. I, Warszawa 1953, p. 280).

¹⁹ Ferdynand II do arcyksięcia Karola, 12 II 1620 r. (H. Palm, Die Confederation..., pp. 314–315); cf. P a l m, op. cit., pp. 302–303.

²⁰ Prochaska, op. cit., p. 214.

²¹ During the spring sejm of Prague the following was said to the envoys from Transylvania: 'dass der Furste in Siebenburgen diese Lande ohne ihren vorbewust in die Inducias einmischen wollen...' Relation der Schlesischen Gesandten auf den Pragerischen Landtag, so vom 25. Martij bis 11. Maij gehalten, Prag 11 V 1620 r. (Acta publica, vol. III, p. 121).

²² On the 17th of March 1620, Simon Pecszy wrote to the Emperor about the situation in Poland: 'ad instar Boemorum armia in regem parantur...' (Gindely, Acta et documenta..., p. 99), and on the basis of a report from a secret audience of baron Achatius von Dohn with Gábor Bethlen we find that 'etliche in Polen es gerne so machen wollen, wie in Bohmen, bitten allein um Geldhulfe...' (ibid., p. 156). Radziwiłł was said to reside at that time in Silesia and make contact with the local Protestants. On the situation in Rzeczypospolita at the outset of 1620 cf. Suwara, op. cit., pp. 60–62.

²³ Schreiben der Schlesischen Stande an den Fursten von Siebenburgen wegen des Waffenstillstands mit Kaiser Ferdinand, Vratislaviae 10 III 1620 r. (Acta publica, vol. III, pp. 72–74); Antwort Bethlehen Gabor's in Siebenburgen auf der Herren Fursten und Stande von vorhergesetzter Zusammenkunft an Ihn abgegangenes Schreiben, Caskoviae 3 IV 1620 r. (ibid., pp. 101–103).



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all, and it was not a long time before warfare actions renewed. On the 25th of April, 1620, after a long bidding, mainly of financial nature because Bethlen was in real need of money, an alliance between Bohemia and Transylvania was reached. At the same time, the envoys of Bohemian and Hungarian states went to Constantinople, including, among others, a Silesian nobleman, Hans von Cöln. The envoys were to seek the military assistance of the High Porte, but without obliging the Bohemians to pay tribute to the Sultan. In the court of Sultan Bethlen was addressed with distrust, although his gifts were accepted. What was noticeable there, among others, was the impact of the activity of Otwinowski²⁴. As a result of the April mission, however, a *czausz* who appeared in July in Prague announced severe punishment of Rzeczpospolita for the invasion of Hungary and Silesia by *lisowczycy* and Cossack invasion of Crimea and Turkey. An 80-thousand Turkish army against the Emperor was also to come to Bohemia through Transylvania²⁵.

Due to the new threat of his property by the Protestant army, Ferdinand II asked Sigismund III to send envoys to the Hungarian states to persuade them to remain faithful to the Emperor and to prevent war. Also this time the Polish king did not refuse and sent to the sejm in Bystrzyca Castellan of Bełsk, Mikołaj Firlej, but the mission was dashed to the ground because Bethlen did not allow the Polish envoys to the sejm, and the states in turn set out such conditions which were impossible to accept by Firlej, as he did not have appropriate plenipotentiary power²⁶. While the Austrian diplomacy managed once more, on the 18th of August, 1620, to arrange in Bańska Bystrzyca a new armistice with the Transylvanian Prince on the terms agreed yet in Bratislava, that stopped neither the Hungarian states from the dethronement of Ferdinand II as a King of Hungary, nor Gábor Bethlen from accepting from them the Hungarian crown and opening the offensive in the direction of Lower Austria, anyway crowned with complete success.

It was undoubtedly a big political success of the Prince of Transylvania. However, it was almost entirely not exploited due to the events adverse for the Protestants which took place in the Holy Roman Empire and Bohemia. Ferdinand II exploited much better the period of rest to prepare for the decisive battle against the Protestant Union. Poland kept Silesia, and partly Bethlen, in check. Fortunately for the Habsburgs, the major hit from Turkey went in the direction of Rzeczpospolita, which on the 1st of October suffered a heavy defeat at Cecora. In the Spanish Netherlands, Archduke Albert, and in fact Marquis Spinola, gathered a large army and threatened the hereditary lands of the Winter King, Palatinate. The Catholic League led by Maximilian Duke of Bavaria, with 26-30-thousand army, kept in check the Protestant Union army in the Holy Roman Empire under the leadership of Joachim Ernest Margrave of Brandenburg. The Emperor finally managed to obtain for himself the Protestant Duke of Saxony, Jan Jerzy. Meanwhile, the Protestant camp was completely at odds. Bohemia lacked money, and Bethlen still demanded it, just as he demanded reviving reinforcement corps to Hungary. Jan Jerzy, Margrave of Karniów, argued

²⁴ J. Hammer, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, vol. II, Pesth 1834, p. 783; S u w a r a, op. cit., p. 70.

²⁵ A. Gindely, *Geschichte des dreissigjahrigen Krieges*, vol. III, p. 179.

²⁶ Szelaḡowski, op. cit., pp. 136–138.



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with the commander of the Protestant army in Bohemia, Prince Christian of Anhalt. Czech diplomacy failed in their attempt to actively include the Netherlands in the fight against the Habsburgs²⁷. The mission of the Swedish agent in Prague, Rutgerius, who was working on tightening the Protestant relationship with Sweden, ended in complete failure. Russia was also failed to acquire²⁸. In this situation, Tilly entered Bohemia. At the last moment the imperial diplomats managed to isolate Mansfeld's corps from the army of the Protestant union. On the 8th of November, the Bohemian army suffered a total defeat in the Battle of White Mountain. At the news of that, Bethlen held the Transylvanian–Hungarian offensive in the direction of Lower Austria.

Ferdinand II, encouraged by the success of the Catholic troops in Bohemia, also decided to somewhat strengthen his position in Hungary. Vienna questioned above all the legitimacy of the resolutions of the sejm in Bratislava and Bystrzyca as contrary to the laws of the Kingdom of Hungary²⁹. At the same time, the defeat of Bohemian insurgents made Gábor Bethlen more willing to make concessions, especially since his financial and military situation was fairly difficult³⁰. Therefore, in January 1621, he signed armistice with Ferdinand II and both sides agreed to continue negotiations. They took place in the fortress of Hamburg, where the autumn Transylvanian–Hungarian offensive stopped. The mediators on behalf of Louis XIII were French envoys: the Duke d'Angoulesme, and Counts de Bethune and de Preaux Chateauneuf. The main issue of negotiations were, of course, Hungarian matters; the imperial side wanted to persuade Gábor Bethlen to renounce the Hungarian crown and to deplete the land he owned in Hungary, offering him in exchange some concessions in Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Thus, during these negotiations, the case of both Upper Silesian duchies was from time to time coming to light. On the other hand, the Transylvanian envoys wanted to maintain the existing gains in Hungary and gain for their ruler the Duchy of Opole– Racibórz, providing in exchange vague promises of the Prince renouncing the Crown of St Stephen³¹.

During the negotiations it was obvious that virtually none of the parties wanted to go to the concessions required by the opposite party. Although Bethlen publicly announced his good will and the desire of peace and to achieve this goal—as he maintained—he was ready to give up not only both duchies in Upper Silesia, but was

²⁷ H. Palm, 'Schlesiens Antheil am dreissigjahrigen Kriege vom Juli bis December 1620' (Zeitschrift..., issue XII, 1874, pp. 285–295).

²⁸ Macurek, op. cit., pp. 102 and the following.

²⁹ 'Ferdinandi II quo Bethlenii electionem in regem Hungariae, irritam, nullam, et constitutionibus regni adversam, declarat, frivolas factiosorum obiectiones refellit, et acta convantus Posoniensis et Neosoliensis irritat. Die 10. Decemb. 1620' (G. Pray, Gabriellis Bethlenii principatus Transsylvaniae coaevis documentis illustratus, edidit J. F. Miller, vol. I, Pestini 1816, p. 212).

³⁰ F. Kavka, J. Polišenský, F. Kutnar, *Prehled dejin Ceskoslovenska v epose feudalismu*, vol. III (1526–1781), Praha 1956, pp. 152 and the following. Bethlen's enfeeblement following the defeat in the battle of White Mountain is illustrated by his letter to Silesian dukes and states written in Bratislava on the 16th of Novembr 1620 (Acta publica, vol. III, pp. 270–272).

³¹ Gindely, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 237 and the following; *Ambassade extraordinaire de Messieurs le duc d'Angoulesme, comte de Bethune et de Preaux-Chateau-Neuf...*, Paris 1667, pp. 12 and the following.



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also ready for the depletion of his ownership in Hungary³², these were only verbal declarations, aimed at winning the time³³. At the same time, he was intensely preparing for the war³⁴; he sent letters to his supporters and allies to encourage them to persevere in their resistance against the Habsburgs, and those who would commit treason against him and Frederick I, he threatened with Tatar invasion. In this tone, among others, he maintained a letter to the Silesian states, but soon after the defeat in the Battle of White Mountain they informed him of their intention to humble themselves in front of the Emperor³⁵ and they concluded this attempt through the Saxon mediation, signing the so-called Dresden Accord on the 25th of February, 1621³⁶. The Silesian states probably did not reply to those letters; however, they seriously considered the possibility of invasion of the Upper and Lower Silesia by the Transylvanian troops and Margrave Jan Jerzy of Karniów. The same was also feared in the Viennese circles³⁷. In February, Jan Jerzy of Karniów went with a six-thousand army from Upper Lusatia, to join Gábor Bethlen, and together with him attack the Emperor. He stopped for a while in the Episcopal Duchy of Nysa, and then in the summer in the Duchy of Opava, where his forces increased to 12,000 people³⁸.

Equally disingenuous were declarations of peace issued from the imperial court, which did not intend to give up claim to the whole of Hungary, and in the current situation it was impossible without warfare. Therefore, despite honest attempts of French diplomacy to reconcile the dispute, in April the negotiations were terminated and, having learnt that so far the Polish side did not present any danger to him as it was still dealing with the effects of their defeat at Cecora and facing another Turkish invasion, Bethlen started another war with the aim of freeing Bohemia from the hands of Ferdinand II³⁹.

³² Bethlen's declarations of peace are contained in his letters. Tyrnaviae, March 8 and 9, 1621 (Bethlen Gabor fejedelem kiadatlam Politikai levelei. S. Szilagyi, Budapest 1879, no. CCXLIX–CCL, pp. 263–264).

³³ Count Matthias of Thurn to Frederick I of Palatine, Nitra April 22, 1621 (Z korespondence pobelohorske emigrace z let 1621–1624, edicit O. Odložilik, Praha 1933, pp. 45–46).

³⁴ Bethlen to Thurn, Koszyce, May 14, 1621 (ibid., pp. 51–52). In his letter from April 10, 1620, he assured also Devlet I Giray that the Emperor could not provide help for the Poles, because of him being engaged in a war with Transilvania and because it was impossible for him to sign peace with his opponent (Documente private la Ist. Romanilor, vol. VIII, pp. 395–400).

³⁵ Die Fursten und Stande Schlesiens an Bethlen Gabor..., Legnica, February 13, 1621, (Acta publica. vol. IV. pp. 54–55); Gábor Bethlen to Silesian dukes and states, Tyrnaviae, March 10, 1621, (Provincial State Archive in Wrocław—hereafter abbreviated as WAP Wr.—Furstentum Oels, Rep. 33 I 1471, vol. I); Bethlen to Silesian dukes and states, Tyrnaviae, April 1, 1621 (ibid.). Bethlen's threats addressed to Silesians were described in the letter to the Emperor of March 2, 1621 by the kurfirst of the Sas dynasty, Jan Jerzy (Acta publica, vol. IV, p. 120; cf. p. 152, footnote no. 2); the Transilvanian circles strongly complained about the 'defectionem et perfidiam' of Silesians (G i n d e l y, Acta. et documenta..., p. 283).

³⁶ H. Palm, 'Der Dresdner Accord' (Zeitschrift..., issue XIII, 1878, pp. 153 and the following).

³⁷ The regent of Cieszyn to Oberamt, June 16, 1621 (Acta publica, vol. IV, p. 172), and Duke of Lichtenstein to the kurfirst of the Sas dynasty, Jan Jerzy, Prague, July 19, 1621 (ibid., p. 183).

³⁸ J. Krebs, 'Die letzten Monate der kursachsische Occupation Schlesiens (Januar bis Mai 1622)' (Zeitschrift..., issue XV, 1380, pp. 101–103).

³⁹ Pray-Miller, op. cit., vol. I, p. 235; Gooss, op. cit., pp. 505–511, cf. the correspondence between the Duke Jerzy of Zbaraż from the period between April and June 1621 (Listy księcia Jerzego Zbaraskiego kasztelana krakowskiego z lat 1621–1631, published by A. Sokołowski, Kraków 1878, pp. 35–40).



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The new campaign, waged with varying success, did not bring conclusive results. Although the imperial leader Bucquoy seized Bratislava in May, he was killed two months later during the siege of Nové Zámky. Joint action with Margrave of Karniów allowed Bethlen to attack Moravia, but he failed to connect with him. Only as a result of, among others, the truce between Rzeczpospolita and Turkey at Chocim (the 9th of October) and concerns about the further actions of Polish side and dislodging Mansfeld troops from the Upper Palatinate by the armies of Tilly, the forlorn Prince of Transylvania decided to once again establish negotiations with the Emperor. The Hungarian states asked the Polish king to mediate in this matter ⁴⁰.

Negotiations took place in Mikulov in Moravia (Nikolsburg). Initially they did not seem to be a success, and Gábor Bethlen, as usual, was trying to cause unrest on the rear of the enemy; he attempted, among others, to persuade the Silesian states to resist the Emperor, threatening them with another Tatar-Transylvanian invasion, if they did not side with him ⁴¹. The response to his first letter was, however, negative, and the rest of his letters were left without any reply ⁴². Still, those threats were taken seriously; and at the beginning of November, 1621, the Silesians asked the Emperor for help in the event of invasion from Transylvania and the Margrave of Karniów ⁴³.

Like all previous negotiations, the ones in Mikulov concerned mainly Hungarian affairs. Every effort of Ferdinand II was directed at Bethlen giving up the title of the Hungarian King and at reducing his conquests in Hungary by a few southern counties, whereas the Prince of Transylvania attempted to maintain the status quo in this area. This time the Upper Silesian Duchies were quite often mentioned by both the imperial and Transylvanian delegates. The Habsburg delegation agreed to give the Duchy of Opole-Racibórz as a pledge to the Prince of Transylvania, in a known aim, but at the same time it was doing everything to keep their dependence from the Emperor. The Transylvanians were ready to give it away at the cost of maintaining the thirteen Hungarian counties; the exchange of the Duchy in return for Borsod and Zemplin counties was also an option many times discussed. This project, however, fell through, and on the 2nd of December Gábor Bethlen demanded both Upper Silesian Duchies to be given in hereditary possession to him and his descendants, and unless he got them, they should be given to his adopted son, Stephen Bethlen the Younger. In return, he promised, among others, by his plenipotentiary Kassai, to respect the rights and privileges of the Catholic Church in this area. However, after consultation with a member of the Austrian delegation, Earl Esterhazy, in the middle of that month the Emperor put forward objections to giving the Upper Silesian land to the descendants of the Prince of Transylvania. In this way, he wanted to ensure the restitution of Upper Silesia after the death of Gábor and Stephen Bethlen. The Prince

⁴⁰ Zbaraski do stanów węgierskich, Kraków 2 VIII 1621 r. (ibid., p. 38).

⁴¹ Gábor Bethlen to Silesian dukes and states, November 5, 1621 (Acta publica. vol IV, p. 192), and Bethlen to Silesian dukes and states, November 14, 1621 (G. B u c k i s c h, Schlesische Religions-Acten, part V, Archdiocesan Archive in Wrocław—hereafter abbreviated as AA Wr.—cat no. I 13e, pp. 331–332).

⁴² Recognition der Fursten und Stande Schlesiens, 11 XI 1621 r. (Acta publica, vol IV, p. 192).

⁴³ Fursientags-Schluss Breslau, 8 XI 1621, (ibid., p. 215–216); Ferdynand II do Lipota, Becs 1 XII 1621 r. (Gindely, Acta et documenta..., p. 330–331).



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of Transylvania gave a negative reply to the counter-proposal of the imperial delegation. Negotiations concerning various points continued for some time, but eventually for fear of the threat of Turkish invasion and to provide freedom of action in the Holy Roman Empire, the Austrian delegation, and especially Breuner, pressed by the Court of Vienna, was forced to give way in some matters, and on the New Year's Eve of 1621, a peace treaty between the Holy Roman Empire and the Principality of Transylvania and the allied Hungarian states was signed ⁴⁴. A week later it was ratified by Gábor Bethlen and on the 7th of January, 1622, by Ferdinand II.

According to the Peace of Mikulov, the Emperor recognized the rule of the Prince of Transylvania over seven Hungarian counties, conferred him some goods in Bohemia (Pardubice), agreed to pay Bethlen 50,000 ducats per year to maintain strongholds on the Hungarian–Moravian border, guaranteed amnesty for his followers on the areas that fell for the Habsburgs, and the freedom for scientists, men of letters and artists, if they wanted to go to Transylvania, and finally—what is most important to us—he gave the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz as a pledge to the Prince of Transylvania and his legitimate sons, and in case there were no such descendants, to Stephen Bethlen the Younger. Gábor Bethlen committed at the same time to preserving and respecting the rights and privileges of the Catholic Church on the Silesian land which were pledged to him. In addition, he was conferred the title of the Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Duke of Opole–Racibórz ⁴⁵.

The Peace of Mikulov meant that Ferdinand II had to temporarily resign from his political and religious restoration plans in Hungary. He achieved his main objective: Gábor Bethlen was isolated from his friends and allies in the Holy Roman Empire and the threat of Turkish invasion was moved a little further away; he could then peacefully settle accounts with the Margrave of Karniów and suppress the source of rebellion in the County of Kłodzko, as well as take care of German issues. The effects of this were soon visible. Already in May 1622, Tilly defeated at Wimpfen the new

⁴⁴ G. Winter, *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges*, Leipzig 1934, p. 203–204; Huber, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, pp. 195–196; Gindely, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, pp. 269–271; Hurter, *op. cit.*, vol. IX, pp. 72–75; Gooss, *op. cit.*, pp. 516–535. The text of the treaty was published by Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, vol. V, cz. 2, p. 407.

⁴⁵ The ratified treaty was published, among others, by Pray-Miller, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 241 and the following; F. Firnhaber, *Actenstücke zur Aufhellung der ungrischen Geschichte des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen, vol. VIII, Wien 1852, pp. 32 and the following); Gooss, *op. cit.*, pp. 549 and the following. A passage of this treaty that was especially meaningful to us is as follows: 'Vicissim praefata Sacra Imperatoria Regiaque Maiestas eundem dominum principem auctoritate sua et potestate Imperiali in principem Sacri Romani Imperii creat et declarat. Praeterea duos in Silesia ducatus Opoliae et Ratiboriae cum usu titulorum et insygnium libero omnique et iure et iurisdictione obventionisque, quibus quondam princeps Sigimundus Bathory de Somlyo tenuit, possedit et gavisus est, ipsi domino principi et uno et filiis et propriis lumbis et thoro legitimo procreando, lis vero non existentibus filio adoptivo et nepoti Stephano Bethlen iuniori, ad dies vitae eiusdem benigne confert, bonis ecclesiasticis et proventibus cleri, immunitatibus et iurisdictionibus religionisque Catholicae exercitiis in his etiam ducatus salvis et illaesis permanentibus, nec ullo pacto alterius religionis introductione vel aliter qualitercunque per ipsum dominum principem vel quosvis alios variandis et turbandis. Quoad titulum benigne Sua Maiestas consentit, ut praeter titulum usitatum principis Transsilvaniae titulo etiam illustrissimi Sacri Romani Imperii, principis ducisque Opoliae et Ratiboriae utatur.' Quoted after Gooss, *op. cit.*, pp. 549–550.



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proponent of the Winter King, Prince George Frederick Baden Durlach, and in June at Höchst he beat Prince Christian of Brunswick. The exiled Frederick I made at that time yet another mistake. Assuming that by offering concessions he could secure the support of the Emperor, he dismissed Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick from service. Both of them joined the Dutch military service and in this situation the Palatinate easily got into the hands of Tilly ⁴⁶.

It is no wonder that Ferdinand II thought the established peace treaty to be very beneficial for himself and initially seriously thought about the execution of its provisions. He simply wanted peace from the south and the east. Unlike previous agreements, which in the point that is interesting for us had never been executed, the Emperor indeed wanted to give Gábor Bethlen the Upper Silesian Duchies. Even before the ratification of the treaty he had notified of this his brother, Archduke Charles ⁴⁷, and then already on the 7th of January, he sent a letter to the governor of Silesia, Duke of Legnica-Brześć, Jerzy Rudolf, informing him of the peace treaty concluded with the Principality of Transylvania and its conditions relating to Silesia, giving precise instructions on the transfer of the Opole region and the Racibórz region to Bethlen. Namely, the governor was ordered to go at the head of the committee, which beside him was to include the former starost of the Duchy of Opole-Racibórz Jan Krzysztof Pruskowski of Prószków and imperial counsellors Mikołaj Kochticki and Fryderyk Gelhorn, to Opole to convene a sejmik, communicate the imperial will to the states, and then take their oath to the Prince of Transylvania and pass both duchies either to Gábor Bethlen in person, if he arrived there, or to his plenipotentiaries. At the same time, he promised the states of Upper Silesia that by going under the rule of Transylvania they would not suffer any damage to their rights, privileges and freedoms. Finally, he explained that he was urged to enter into peace treaty on such terms by the threat of Turkish and Tatar invasions hanging over his country, which would also not spare Silesia ⁴⁸.

Already since the moment the first detailed information about the conclusion of peace between the Emperor and the Prince of Transylvania arrived ⁴⁹ there was great commotion among the nobility of Upper Silesia. On the 11th of March, the representatives of the states hastily assembled in Opole (the so-called *ausschussowie*) requested intervention from the Emperor's brother, Archduke Charles. On behalf of the states, they claimed that the change of the ruler was not their wish and that putting them under foreign rule was contrary to *de non alienando*, which was their privilege confirmed many times by Bohemian rulers. They expressed hope that the Emperor would not only respect this privilege, but would confirm it again, which in

⁴⁶ K. Piwarski, *Czasy wojen religijnych* (WHP, V/2, p. 109).

⁴⁷ Ferdinand II to Archduke Charles, January 2, 1622 (*Acta publica*, vol. IV, p. 195).

⁴⁸ Böhme, *Diplomatische Beytrage zur Untersuchung der schlesischen Rechte und Geschichte*, vol. IV, Berlin 1772, pp. 175-176; A. Weltzel, *Geschichte der Stadt Ratibor*, Ratibor 1861, p. 157; Veress, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Zusammenkunft der nachst angesessenen Fursten und Stande zu Liegnitz vom 12. bis 20. Januar* (*Acta publica*, vol. V, Breslau 1830, p. 68).



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practice would mean cancellation of the point of the Treaty of Mikulov which said about the pledge of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz ⁵⁰.

The supplication of the states of Upper Silesia is maintained in a similar form, addressed directly to the Emperor; the only difference is that they additionally refer to the Dresden Accord concluded in February of the previous year, which guaranteed the Silesian states to retain all their rights and privileges, and thus the privilege *de non alienando* ⁵¹.

The Upper Silesian states were not alone in their action against the transfer of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz to Gábor Bethlen. Initially, they were strongly supported by Archduke Charles, who already in January had considered the aforementioned point of the Treaty of Mikulov as unlawful and expressed the opinion that it should not be confirmed by the Emperor ⁵². The action was also kindly welcomed by the supreme authority of the Silesian region, the new governor and the so-called Royal Supreme Office (Oberamt) in Wrocław, as well as the so-called '*kamera* of Silesia'. However, for obvious reasons, the Emperor managed to convince the bishop of Wrocław to the necessity of transferring Upper Silesia to the Prince of Transylvania, and he in turn influenced the attitude of the Upper Silesian states. It was reflected in the resolution of the representatives of the states of the 11th of April. It no longer called so strongly for cancelling the point of the Treaty of Mikulov concerning Upper Silesia; it only obliged Count Jerzy of Oppersdorf to go with plenipotentiaries of the states to Vienna and to ask the Emperor so that '*Accord strany Alienatij tiech Knížetstwy pokud možne zmienitj, Stawum Privilegia gegich potwrditj a gych przy nich milostive chraniti a zustawitj raczyła*' ⁵³.

With the instruction of similar content ⁵⁴ Jerzy of Oppersdorf was sent to Vienna. He was also handed letters to the Emperor ⁵⁵ and to the Chancellor ⁵⁶. In the letters they were asked to, intercede and support the states with Joachim Mettich who was negotiating with the Transylvanian delegates on a few obscure points of the Treaty of Mikulov, and to arrange the affairs in such a way that the Prince of Transylvania would give up his claim to the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz.

It is baffling where such large reserve of Silesian authorities and reluctance of Upper Silesian states to Gábor Bethlen came from.

After all, not so long before, the Silesians put up with him openly and secretly, and the local Protestants could count on his support. Taking over the rule on Upper Silesia by Bethlen could strengthen the position of Protestants throughout Silesia. It

⁵⁰ The representatives of the states of Upper Silesia to Archduke Charles, Opole, March 11, 1622, (WAP Wr., Furstentum Oppeln-Ratibor, Rep. 35 II 7c, fol. 196).

⁵¹ The states of Upper Silesia to Emperor Ferdinand II, Opole, March 11, 1622 (ibid., fol. 194–195); cf. the account of the agent of Venice in Vienna, Marco Antonio Padavina, of April 2 (Diplomatarium relationum Gabrielis Bethlen cum Venetorum Republica, edidit L. Ovary, Budapest 1886, p. 250).

⁵² Archduke Charles to the Silesian governor Duke Jerzy Rudolf, Neisse, January 16, 1622 (Acta publica, vol. IV, p. 197).

⁵³ Zawrzeni sniemowne, Opole, April 11, 1622 (WAP Wr., Rep. 35 II 7c, fol. 197–193); the original spelling is retained in all the quotes from the manuscripts contained in this paper.

⁵⁴ Psani panu Girzimu z Oppersstorffu, Opole, April 11, 1622 (ibid., fol. 202–204).

⁵⁵ GCM psani z strany Knížeti Sedmihratskeho, Opole, April 11, 1622 (ibid., fol. 201–202).

⁵⁶ Psani neywyssemu panu Canczlerzj, Opole, April 11, 1622 (ibid., fol. 200–202).



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would seem, therefore, that the nobility of Silesia should rather gladly welcome the provisions of the Treaty of Mikulov. Whereas, the response of Silesian states, especially that of the Opole region and the Racibórz region, was quite different. However, it is completely understandable if one carefully considers the situation prevailing in Silesia. The Silesians, who after the Battle of White Mountain through the intercession and mediation of the Elector of Saxony, paid dearly indeed, managed by Dresden Accord to get out of involvement on the side of the Bohemian uprising and beyond the payment of large sums of money, exile of the most prominent Protestant leaders and confiscations, which mainly affected the areas of today's Cieszyn Silesia ⁵⁷, did not experience more serious repression - they saw on the example of Bohemia how dearly they could pay for a new 'revolt and rebellion' against the Habsburgs. So they preferred to stay reserved towards Gábor Bethlen, especially because they were afraid that if the peace treaty was broken, they could be reminded of their former contacts with him. They were well aware of the flexibility of the policy of 'the Transylvanian Mithridates', his 'duplicity' and the ease with which he flipped as necessary from one camp to another.

The position of Upper Silesia states was also affected by another, more tangible threat, namely the fear that when giving the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz to Gábor Bethlen, the invasions of *lisowczycy* on these lands would increase, and this was a source of panic fear. There was nothing strange in that, because they learned the consequences of their invasions all too well already in 1620 ⁵⁸ We shall see below that this fear played a significant role, indeed.

Resistance of Upper Silesian states and inertia of the governor postponed the transfer of Upper Silesia to Gábor Bethlen, causing frequent interventions of Transylvanian diplomats and the Prince himself at the court of Vienna. Already in March 1622, during negotiations in Nowe Dwory (*Neuhaussel*) Transylvanian envoys, Kassai and Karoly, at the command of their ruler asked the imperial delegates when Ferdinand II would fulfil the commitments undertaken in Mikulov and pass the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz. After this intervention, at the formal meeting between the two delegations, the Emperor gave to the envoys a document in which he guaranteed to pass to Gábor Bethlen these duchies under the conditions imposed by the Treaty of Mikulov ⁵⁹.

At the end of that month, the Prince of Transylvania once again indicated the difficulties in the implementation of the conditions of the peace treaty and again asked for the observance of the provisions agreed in Mikulov ⁶⁰. A few days later, he also ordered the Transylvanian Chancellor, who was to travel to the sejm of the Holy Roman Empire, to intervene at the imperial court regarding the actual transfer of the

⁵⁷ Cf. J. Zukał, *Slezske konfiskace 1620–30. Polentovani provimile slechty v Krnovsku, Opavsku a Osoblazsku po bitvi Belohorske a po vpadu Monsfeldove* (Historicky archiv ceske akademie, no. 42, Praha 1916, pp. 3 and the following).

⁵⁸ W. Czapliński, 'Śląsk a Polska w pierwszych latach wojny trzydziestoletniej (1618–1620)' (Sobótka, issue II, 1947, pp. 175–176).

⁵⁹ Gindely, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 463.

⁶⁰ Gábor Bethlen to Ferdinand II, Cassoviae, March 24, 1622 (Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transsylvaniae, edidit S. Szilagy, vol. VIII, Buda-Pest 1882, pp. 90–91).



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duchies of Upper Silesia ⁶¹. Finally, on the subject of obscure and disputed points of the Treaty of Mikulov, negotiations in Vienna had been conducted since the beginning of May. Among the raised issues, there was also the case of the Upper Silesian duchies. It is characteristic that they raised the project of Upper Hungary states, subordinate to the Transylvanian Prince, whereby the Racibórz and Opole regions were to be replaced with two Hungarian counties. Suspecting—it seems rightly so—that behind this proposal is none other but Gábor Bethlen, the Emperor categorically rejected it, fearing excessive empowerment of the position of the Prince of Transylvania in Hungary ⁶². And the Emperor's influence in this area started at this time to decline considerably, the number of his supporters was dwindling, and Stanisław Thurzó, a former follower of Bethlen, now ill-disposed towards the Emperor, was chosen the Count Palatine. The change of the situation in Hungary was visibly marked by the visit of the Emperor and his young consort Elenonore of Mantua on the Hungarian sejm in Odenburg on the 24th of May ⁶³.

It seems completely unjustified to impute that Ferdinand II did not want to give the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz to the Prince of Transylvania ⁶⁴. Indeed, if that were so, he would not try to convince his brother Charles in this matter, or to change the stand of the Upper Silesian states. Moreover, the course of events which took place in the Holy Roman Empire and Hungary showed clearly that the Emperor wanted to maintain peace with Bethlen, because time was working for him. He was justified by the difficulties which he initially encountered in Silesia. He wrote frankly about it in a letter to Gábor Bethlen of the 13th of May, confirming once again his good will to fulfil the provisions of the Treaty of Mikulov and to pass to him the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz and informing him about the convening of sejmik in Opole on the 30th of May, where it would officially be transferred ⁶⁵. What is more, according to the promise expressed in this letter, the following day he sent a relevant instruction to Prince Jerzy Rudolf, in which he assured of his willingness to comply with all the provisions of the Treaty of Mikulov. Therefore, once again he commanded to convene

⁶¹ *Instructio generoso domino Stephano Kovachoczy regni Transylvaniae protocancellario et ad sacratissimam imperatoriam regiamque Majestatem in comitiis Soproniensibus constitutam ablegato commissario...*, Cassoviae, April 1, 1622 (Bethlen Gabor fejedelem levelezese, edidit S. Szilagyi, Budapest 1887, no. CLXXIII, pp. 214–217). In the opening of this instruction we read: 'Juxta contenta Niclaspurgensis diplomatis superinde emanati utrumque Opuliae scilicet et Ratboriae ducatum mos et defacto sua Majestas manibus nostris, cum ex parte in resignationibus ad manus suae Majestatis regni Hungariae et praesidiorum in eo habitorum fienda, nihil desideratur, assignare deibebit et applicare'. Cf. *V e r e s s*, op. cit., pp. 28–29.

⁶² Padavin of Vienna writes about this, May 14, 1622 (*O v a r y*, op. cit., pp. 254–255).

⁶³ *Gooss*, op. cit., p. 564.

⁶⁴ This is done by, for instance, S. Szilagyi in the introduction to *Monumenta Comititalia...*, vol. VIII, p. 19.

⁶⁵ Ferdinand II to Gábor Bethlen, Vienna, May 13, 1622 (Statni ustredni archiv, Praha, Archiv Ministerstva vnitra, zespól Ceska dvorska kancelar—abbreviation: SUA, CDK—cat. no. 2 V E 2, box no. 739, file entiteld Schriften von den Jahren 1622 und 1623 betrefenden die in dem Nikolsburger Friedensvertrage stipulirte Abtretung der Furstenthumer Oppeln und Ratibor an den Fursten von Siebenburgen, Bethlen Gabor, und die Einziehung derselbten nach Bethlen's Wiedervereinigung mit den Feiden des Kaisers).



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the Upper Silesian states in Opole and to give Upper Silesian duchies to the Prince of Transylvania at the session of the sejmik ⁶⁶.

Gábor Bethlen had previously sent a separate letter to Jerzy Rudolf, informing him about sending commissioners, Jerzy Tatay and Andrzej Marussy, to take over the land of Upper Silesia and asking him to help them in their work ⁶⁷. The Prince of Legnica replied to this letter in a quite favourable tone and promised to do everything to satisfy the will of the Emperor and the desire of the Prince of Transylvania at the sejmik in Opole on the 30th of May ⁶⁸, but he did not hurry to fulfil this promise. He did not want to accept Bethlen's commissioners who arrived in Silesia at the beginning of May, explaining that he was *in publicis deliberationibus occupatissimus* ⁶⁹, and the care of them he commissioned to the vice-chancellor Kahl. It was obvious that he did not want to be personally involved in this matter; however, he had to obey the orders received from Vienna, which he expressed in a letter to the Emperor saying that he personally and the committee would guide the proceedings of the Upper Silesian states in such a way that both duchies would be transferred either personally to the Prince of Transylvania or to his authorized commissioners ⁷⁰.

It was one of the demands made by the Transylvanian envoys, Tatay and Marussy, who also demanded that the Silesian Chamber give them all *urbaria* and administrative records of *kamera* owned estates in Upper Silesia and to transfer to them the income from these assets for the period from the ratification of the Treaty of Mikulov to their actual transfer under Transylvanian administration ⁷¹. On behalf of the governor, they were welcomed by Vice-Chancellor Kahl, who said that the rule of

⁶⁶ Bohme, op. cit., vol. IV, pp. 177—178.

⁶⁷ Gábor Bethlen to Duke Jerzy Rudolf, Cassovia, April 2, 1622 (SUA-ĆDK, Schriften...).

⁶⁸ Jerzy Rudolf to Bethlen Gabor, Legnica 29 IV 1622 r. (ibid.).

⁶⁹ Mundliche Abfertigung der Siebenburgischen Gesandten per dominum Kahl vicecanzlern, undated (ibid.).

⁷⁰ Jerzy Rudolf to Ferdinand II, Legnica, May 1, 1622 (ibid.).

⁷¹ 'Ut felicius tam mandata Sacratissimae Caesareae Majestatis, quam literae electae Majestatis effectu suo gaudere possint, operae precium duximus pro dexteriori excutione rerum praesentium, receptionis duorum Ducatum aliquod natatu digna rerum momenta in memoriam Illustrissimae Celsitudini vestrae revocare, ac super eo maturam resolutionem prestolari. Primum, itaque factu dignum est, ut illustrissimus princeps noster gratiosissimus Dominos Commissarios a parte Caesareae Majestatis benigne una nobiscum ratione resignationis Duca tuum fiendae expedire dignetur. Secundum, ut inclytae Camerae Vratislaviensi gratiose iniungere velit, quatenus Urbaria duorum Ducatum Opoliae et Ratiboriae, bonorumque omnium cum universis proventibus Civitatum, oppidorum, ad eos Ducatus ob antiquo pertinere debentium, sive ea sint bona feudalia, aut libera, sive impignerata, sive vendita, aut vero alicui data, aut inscripta, cum declaratione singulari nobis iuxta cathalogum vel seriem extra dari ne moleste ferat. Tertium, ut a tempore permutationis diplomatum, a nona die scilicet Januarij... a quo die prenominati duo Ducatum Electae Regiae Majestatis cesserunt omnes prventus Ducatum, Tricesimarum teleniorum taxas Civitatum vel per Dominum Praefectum, vel per inelytam Cameram Vratislaviensem ad hodiernum usque diem perceptorum vel ex restantijs percipiendorum manibus benigne curare dignetur, ne hinc aliqua jactura proventuum vel potius sacro diplomati injuria Clementissimoque Domino nostro disciplina emergere videatur, neque aliquid vel in instrumentis armamentarijs vel rebus allodialibus desiderari censeatur, hoc insuper adiecto, ut Illustrissima Celsitudo vestra vel super hoc Cameram Vratislaviensem requirere dignetur, quatenus usitatas instructiones, salaria congrua omnium officialium in paribus nobis expediri insinuet ac annuat...', Jerzy Tatay and Andrzej Marussy to Jerzy Rudolf, undated (ibid.).



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the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz cannot be transferred *uno tempom momento* but it would be done in accordance with the national laws on a sejmik in Opole convened by Jerzy Rudolf ⁷².

The composition of the committee designated already on the 7th of January by the Emperor was partly changed. The governor, claiming to be extremely busy, was not able to come or did not want to come, despite a clear command from Ferdinand II. He appointed Joachim Malzan, a Silesian nobleman, to replace him as a chairman of the committee. From the other members of the committee only Pruskowski came to Opole, as he had expected the states to confirm his nomination for the starost of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz.

Having arrived in Opole, the imperial commissioners found troubled minds and conflicting opinions. The proceedings of the states were turbulent, and various incidents occurred from time to time. In the end, however, Malzan and Pruskowski successfully managed to finalize the works ⁷³, which was highly stimulated by the threat of another invasion of *lisowczycy*. During the proceedings of the sejmik, Polish troops approaching from Dobrodzień reached Opole, demanding to pass across the bridges on the way to Nysa. The states wrote on this subject to the Archduke Charles, asking him to intervene with the Emperor, but this time it was no more dangerous than frightening because the troops headed unstopped for the County of Kłodzko ⁷⁴.

In such circumstances, on the 30th of May the Upper Silesian states, pressured on one side by the imperial commissioners, and on the other by the delegates and representatives of Bethlen, adopted a resolution to accept the Prince of Transylvania as their lord and pay him homage, however, they reserved to come back under the rule of the kings of Bohemia after the expiry of the pledge ⁷⁵. A letter of the content almost identical to the content of the resolution, was sent by the states directly to Gábor Bethlen, informing him of the decision reached at the sejmik, and asking for compliance with the conditions specified in the resolution, in particular for confirmation in a special document, drawn up in the Czech language on a parchment, of all rights and privileges, as well as for ensuring them the freedom of religion ⁷⁶. In

⁷² Mundliche Abfertigung...

⁷³ The account of Malzan sent to Jerzy Rudolf, Opole, June 1, 1622 (ibid.).

⁷⁴ W. Dembołęcki, *Przewagi elearów polskich*, 1623; A. Weltzel, *Geschichte der Stadt, Herrschaft und ehemaligen Festung Kosel*, Kosel 1888, p. 166.

⁷⁵ In this resolution we read as follows: 'Z tiech przyczyn Pany Stawowe mohly dagicz se na obdarowani swe, že od kolena G. M. Kraluow Czeskych odlauczeni a žadnemu ginemu w poddanost addawanj byti nemagj, nez prohydagicze se na tom Accordu [that is the Peace of Mikulov—author's note, J. L.], yak dotczeno, wssemu krzestianstwj nemale nez welicze zalezj. Aby proto wietszy krwe prolitj a znissczeni tiechto okolicznych zemi se nestalo, nybrz temu accordu a milustiwie wuoli G. M. Cz. zadosti uczynieno bylo, sou Pany Stawowe G. M. P. K. M. podle wydane a zapsane Notule hold vczynilj, a Geho za Pana yak dotczeno do dwu žywotuw, wssakz z tut wyminku, kdyby ten czas dossel, žeby od G. M. Cz. a neb bedauczych Kralow Czeskych dale gim milostive vssetczeni a przy obdarowanim swym podstatnie pozustawenj bylj przygatj...' *Zawrzeni sniemowne*, Opole, May 30, 1622 (WAP Wr., Rep. 35 II 7c, fol. 209–210). What's interesting, no attention whatsoever was devoted to the fact that this resolution was actually a violation of the (crucial to us) point of the Mikulov treaty, because it excluded Gábor Bethlen's potential descendants from ruling Upper Silesia.

⁷⁶ Psany G. M. K. Gabryelowi etc., Opole, June 1, 1622 (ibid., fol. 222–223).



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this way, after more than two years of diplomatic negotiations, Gábor Bethlen came into the actual possession of both Upper Silesian duchies.

Adopting a resolution approving the provisions of the Treaty of Mikulov concerning the pledge of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz to the Prince of Transylvania, the Upper Silesian states at the same time tried to satisfy their own demands as well. It concerned namely the assignment of the office of the national starost. During the Bohemian uprising this function was performed by Andrzej Kochticki, a leader of Upper Silesian Protestants. At the end of 1621, Ferdinand II tried to impose on the Upper Silesian land the former starost from the times of Emperor Matthias, Jan Krzysztof Pruskowski. However, the states refused to recognize him on the pretext that, contrary to national laws, before taking his office he had not wanted to swear an oath to them. In fact, he was a tardy tool in the hands of the Catholics⁷⁷. The dispute lasted for quite a long time and after many interventions⁷⁸ it was resolved in May during the aforementioned sejmik, when the states agreed to transfer both duchies to Gábor Bethlen and demanded to leave the existing national officials on their positions, and thus leaving Andrzej Kochticki at the office of starost, and they took an appropriate resolution in this matter⁷⁹. Although it was obviously contrary to the command of the Emperor of the 23rd of April, which in fact nominated Pruskowski for the office⁸⁰, in the end during the reign of Gábor Bethlen in Upper Silesia Kochticki remained in office.

Now a question arises about the course and the importance of Gábor Bethlen's rule for the Upper Silesian duchies. It is known that in his home country he initiated the gold age in every respect. Due to favourable political conditions he managed to transform a small principality into a country that was a match for even such great powers as the Habsburgs and Turkey. The economic policy which he followed was very favourable for the country, he supported the development of mining, industry and trade, which influenced quick growth of national revenues. Basing on the burghers, he succeeded in his attempts to strengthen his power. Calvinist himself, he was able to show religious tolerance, among his close advisers there were even the Jesuits. He became famous for being a friend and protector of arts and science⁸¹.

What economic and religious policy did he follow in the area of our interest? Was it similar to the Transylvanian policy, or did he treat Upper Silesia as typical spoils of war, which in the short term was to bring big profits? It is not easy to reply to these questions. Archival materials concerning Gábor Bethlen's internal rule in the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz are very scarce. References in the literature on the subject are only marginal. These rules lasted a very short time indeed, just a little over one year.

⁷⁷ Zawrzeni sniemowne, Opole, December 8, 1621 (ibid., fol. 189–190); the Upper Silesian states to Oberamt, Opole, December 9, 1622 (ibid., fol. 191–192).

⁷⁸ Cf. the letter of the states of Upper Silesia to the Emperor, Opole, March 11, 1622 (ibid., fol. 195).

⁷⁹ Zawrzeni sniemowne, Opole, May 30, 1622 (ibid., fol. 209–210); cf. the footnote no. 73.

⁸⁰ Jerzy Rudolf to Ferdinand II, Legnica, July 13 1622 (SUA-CDK, Schriften... We learn about this nomination only from a brief mention in this letter).

⁸¹ T. Wittman, Bethlen Gábor, Budapest 1952, passim; Kapitoly z uhorských dejin, Bratislava 1952, pp. 118–120; J. Rechman, Dzieje Węgier, Warszawa 1954, pp. 42–43; Ungarn. Land und Volk, Geschichte, Staatsrechte, Verwaltung und Rechtspflege..., Leipzig 1918, pp. 172–173.



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Besides, the times of his rule were turbulent, and many archival materials are missing. In total, there are extremely few references to the problem that have been preserved up to now. We shall try to apply them to provide a brief outline of the internal governments of the Prince of Transylvania in Upper Silesia.

The country was ruled, as it was previously, by the office of starost, who was to be only an executor of the Prince's will. Just a few days after paying homage to the Prince by the Upper Silesian states through the hands of the princely commissioners, starost Andrzej Kochticki turned to Gábor Bethlen with a request to send the princely seal to stamp the documents issued by the chancellery of starost. This mention proves that his power in Upper Silesia was much greater than that of the later lords of that land, the Vasas. The latter ones, apart from Charles Ferdinand, had no right to use the title of the Duke of Opole–Racibórz. The office of starost was also completely independent from them⁸². On the other hand, Gábor Bethlen was the actual ruler of the land. If anything limited his power, it was primarily communication difficulties and the associated difficulties in maintaining contact with the office of starost. What contributed to it was, moreover, purposeful and conscious activities of the Austrian authorities, who soon after the Upper Silesian states paid homage to Gábor Bethlen wanted his contacts with these lands to become as weak as possible. This, of course, was associated with gradual deterioration of the relations between the Habsburgs and Transylvania. The Upper Silesian states strongly complained about those difficulties. There were such moments, as for example in the spring of 1623, when in general it was impossible to contact the Prince, as a result of which a lot of current affairs were waiting to be managed⁸³. Gábor Bethlen even suspected Archduke Charles of preventing Upper Silesian envoys to approach him⁸⁴.

The management of goods in pledge of Transylvania was carried out by the commissioners sent by Bethlen. It seems that the Prince drew most attention to this area of activity. Already at the first audience at the Oberamt, Tatay and Marussy spoke primarily about the income from the *kamera* owned estates and economic books. Later, especially after the transfer of the duchies, they dealt with the matter even more earnestly. First of all, they had to stop the action of some imperial officers, for example, Baron of Strinzenstein and Duke of Lichtenstein, who suggested collecting the whole livestock, crops and fish from the imperial farms in the *kamera*

⁸² W. Dzięgiel, *Utrata księstw opolskiego i raciborskiego przez Ludwikę Marię w r. 1666*, Kraków 1936, pp. 49–53; Andrzej Kochticki to Gábor Bethlen, Opole, July 2, 1622 (WAP Wr., Rep. 35 II 7c, fol. 211–212).

⁸³ *Zawrzeni sniemowne*, Opole, June 12, 1623 (ibid., fol. 214); *Psanj G. K. M. Gabryelowi*, Opole, June 12, 1623 (ibid., fol. 217–218); *Instruczij Panuom Wysianym k G. K. M. Knizeti Gabryelowy*, Opole, June 12 1623 (ibid., fol. 218–220).

⁸⁴ In Bethlen's letter to Archbishop Peter Pazmany, Tokaj, March 22, 1623, among others, we read as follows: 'Sleziabol praefectusunkat vala ki, mivel semmi instructiója nem volt, Carolus herczeg utjaban, megfogatta es elvitette mennyit, busulunk, meg nem irhatjuk, az rettenetes gyalazatot minden martanknak elveszesenel is magyobonak tartjuk, hogy mi ily suspectusok vagyunk es csak szolgankkal sem szabad beszellennunke; miert is adta o felsege az ros z ducatus nekunk...' Pazmany Peter *levelezese*, vol. I, edidit V. Franki (*Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, vol. XIX, Budapest 1873, pp. 319–321).



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owned estates of Opole and Koźle and give them away for the needs of the army⁸⁵. It also required a lot of their effort to get urbaria and administrative records of those estates⁸⁶, because the Silesian *kamera* did not want to give them away, and only by the personal intervention of the governor, Jerzy Rudolf, they promised to appoint a special officer to settle this issue⁸⁷.

About the economic policy of Transylvanian administrators in the *kamera* owned estates in the Duchy of Świdnica–Jawor we have not even the slightest mention. We only know that it was directed at a large and quick profit, which is quite understandable in light of Bethlen's on-going financial trouble. This relatively small country could provide Bethlen with 300,000 guildens of annual income. It was also to a big extent due to his monetary policy. Certainly it was not favourable to Upper Silesia. The country where everything was extremely expensive, with prices rising literally from day to day, reaching catastrophic levels already in 1622⁸⁸, the Prince of Transylvania began to flood with the poor coin, minted by his people in Opole–Racibórz⁸⁹.

As far as religious matters are concerned, basically Gábor Bethlen gave Catholic clergy no special occasions to complain about him. Yet undoubtedly, under his rule Protestants raised their head in Upper Silesia⁹⁰. Hence quite frequent complaints from Catholic circles about harassment from the Protestants. Especially great turmoil was caused by the disputes between the Protestant burghers and the city council in Opole, and the local Catholic clergy, which reached the Bishop of Wrocław, Gábor Bethlen, and even the Emperor. It must be admitted that the Prince of Transylvania and his officials tried to stay impartial in these disputes and pronounce as objective judgements as possible, e.g., in August 1622, Gábor Bethlen assured the Prior of Dominicans that he would defend his legitimate rights and in accordance with this promise he issued a relevant command to starost Kochticki. However, it did not bother the clergy of Opole to complain to the bishop about infringement of the rights and privileges of the Catholic Church, as was the case for example, of Dean Jan Stephecius⁹¹. Those constant complaints of the clergy of Opole were passed by Archduke Charles to the court of Vienna. Finally, Ferdinand II promised his brother

⁸⁵ Baron Hans Ernest von Strintzenstein to the Silesian *kamera*, Leuttomericz, May 28, 1622 (SUA-CDK, Schriften...); Duke of Liechtenstein to the Emperor, June 14, 1622 (ibid.).

⁸⁶ Cf. The protest issued by Tatay and Marussy to Duke Jerzy Rudolf, undated (ibid.); *Recognitio Legatis Hungaricis super Prolestatione tradita data Lignicii*, September 9, 1622 (ibid.).

⁸⁷ Jerzy Rudolf to Silesian *kamera*, Legnica, June 7, 1622 (ibid.); the head of the Silesian *kamera* to Jerzy Rudolf, Wrocław, June 15, 1622 (ibid.).

⁸⁸ F. Idzikowski, *Geschichte der Stadt Oppeln*, Oppeln 1863, p. 164; F. Friedensburg, 'Die schlesischen Getreidepreise vor 1740' (*Zeitschrift...*, issue XL, 1908, p. 30).

⁸⁹ F. Friedensburg, *Schlesiens neuere Munzgeschichte* (*Codex diplomaticus Silesiae*, vol. XIX, Breslau 1899, pp. 190–191); M. G. Dewerdeck, *Silesia numismatica...*, Jauer 1711, pp. 502–504. Gábor Bethlen himself also admits it in the letter to the judge of Koszyce, December 5, 1622 (Bethlen Gabor *fejedelem levelezese*, Budapest 1887, no. CXC VII, p. 239). His behaviour is justified by Veress, *op. cit.*, p. 31 and the following, but the arguments he uses are not convincing.

⁹⁰ Veress, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁹¹ Idzikowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 163–164.



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to intervene and that Gábor Bethlen '*wegen der bedrengten Catholischen im Opplischen Furstenthumb*'⁹².

Characteristic is the description of the arrival of the Transylvanian officials to Prudnik because of the changes in the city council⁹³. According to the old custom, though no longer practised there, they asked the congregation of citizens to speak their complaints against the council. Initially, the board members did not object against it, but when some of the burghers took advantage of a convenient opportunity and began to pull out various complaints against the councillors and the Transylvanian officials took them seriously, the town writer Hartwig Strumpf began to protest against the entitlement of royal officials and the *gmina* to issue complaints during the change of the council. This provoked a lively discussion, the result of which, unfortunately, remains unknown to us. This example, however, is significant because it illustrates the tendency of the Transylvanian government to settle the disputes between the inhabitants of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz as objectively as possible.

It seems, however, that Bethlen himself was aware of the temporariness of his rule in Upper Silesia. First, he did not come to Opole to take the oath from his new subjects, although initially he declared such intention, then he did not appear at all at the meetings of the dukes and states of Silesia in Wrocław, at which they strongly complained, accusing him that he tried to release the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz from its part of all-Silesian responsibilities⁹⁴. While the Prince of Transylvania tried later to fix this offence and authorized the starost of the subordinate Upper Silesian duchies to represent him at congresses of Silesian dukes and states, but it happened only at the end of April 1623 which at the same time was the end of his reign in the area⁹⁵.

There is little material based on which we could characterize the attitude of the people of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz towards Gábor Bethlen. Not even one source mentions the attitude of the peasants towards the new ruler. It seems, however, that he was quite popular among the Protestant burghers of Upper Silesia. This would be indicated by the incidents from Opole and Prudnik which are described below. If this

⁹² Ferdinand II to Archduke Charles, Vienna, October 17, 1622 (AA Wr., cat. no. I A 4/b¹, no. 189).

⁹³ A. Weltzel, *Geschichte der Stadt Neustadt...*, p. 164; J. Chrzęszcz, *Geschichte der Stadt Neustadt, Neustadt 1912*, p. 164.

⁹⁴ *Memoriale zu itzigen Furstenttage gehong in Landes- und Privatsachen*, Breslau, March 23, 1623 (Acta publica, vol. V, p. 166).

⁹⁵ 'Cum nihil magis unquam in votis quam Christiani populi commoda habuerimus, in idque omni conatu semper incubuerimus, ul et curae nostrae demonstraremus, quo officio nostro non in ultimis responsuri, ea qua par est intentione videremus. Eapropter cum publica dilectionum et dominationum vestrarum comitia Vratislaviae tempore ab eo, quo cum Sacra Caesarea Majestate conclusis foederum pactis Ducatus nostri Silesiaci ratione pactorum acceperimus; ne officio nostro et publicae earum causae deosse videremur, nomine nostro Praefectum Ducatum illorum ibi interesse voluimus; idque serio nostris injunximus, ut omni ope in publica earum commoda sibi annitendum existimarent. Sed cum reversales quasdam a nobis Delictiones et Dominationes Vestras antiquo usui illarum Provinciarum insistentes exposcere intellegimus, uti id et antiquitati consentaneum, et antiquo earum juri condignum arbitrati, nihil in nobis de iis tradendis difficultatis et morae interponeremus, nisi paria earum Praefectus noster apud se oblita nuper a nobis dimissus in Silesiam secum obduxisset...' Gábor Bethlen to the Silesian dukes and states, Varadia, April 26, 1623 (WAP Wr, Rep. 33 I 147¹, vol. I).



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indeed was the case, it should not be surprising. Bethlen, after all, based his internal politics in Transylvania on the burghers, and used it to pursue his ambitious absolutist plans.

A little more may be said about the relation of the Silesian nobility towards him. Overall, compared with the period prior to vowing to him, there were no major changes in their attitude; and it was still negative for the same reasons that have already been discussed above. The nobility knew that his governments were only temporary, and so they were treated. They were also afraid that the rule might be changed to permanent. For this purpose, they called for continuous confirmation of their privileges, which guaranteed them to return under the rule of the kings of Bohemia: they had requested this already in June 1623, when the rupture between the Prince of Transylvania and the Emperor was almost certain ⁹⁶.

The states and authorities of the lands of Upper Silesia turned to him only in official matters, and these were only the most urgent ones, those which they could not handle on their own. One of such cases was an issue of invasions and forays of the Polish nobility on the area of the Duchy of Opole. For example, they complained that Albrecht Olewiński with his servants and peasants stormed the estate of Jan Frankenberg, Nowa Wieś, wounding eighteen people, including three who died, kidnapped several others and placed them in his estate as subjects. The complaint about similar excesses was also issued by the parson of Olesno, Hieronim Perc. Therefore, the Upper Silesian states asked Gábor Bethlen to intervene at the Polish court ⁹⁷.

It is clear, on the other hand, that the Prince of Transylvania also had his supporters in the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, but their number was not large. These were mainly the Reswitzs and Hans Schellendorf who on behalf of Bethlen held the high office of regent of both Upper Silesian duchies ⁹⁸. The Silesian nobility in general was ill-disposed towards him. The situation was similar on the whole Silesia. Bethlen had there a number of implicit or explicit supporters, but all in all they were very few. Some Silesian Protestants tried to get close to him, among others, through the patronage of Duke Jan Chrystian of Legnica-Brześć, Silesian poet Martin Opitz went to Transylvania to take the position in an academic high school in Weissenburg ⁹⁹.

Bethlen himself had no illusions about his new subjects. Reportedly, he admitted that he was not well liked in Upper Silesia, he was even to talk about the contempt that the local gentry felt towards him ¹⁰⁰. It seems, however, that this judgement is a little exaggerated, because saying it, the Prince of Transylvania wanted to convince the Hungarian states about the need for armed struggle against the Habsburgs.

In the early spring of 1623, the relations between Transylvania and the Habsburgs which since entering into peace had been correct, though reserved and marked by suspicion and distrust, began to rapidly deteriorate. Gábor Bethlen

⁹⁶ Zawrzenj sniemowne, Opole, June 12, 1623 (WAP Wr., Rep. 35 II 7c, fol. 214); Instructij Panuom wyslanym k C, K. M. Knížeti Gabryelowy, Opole, June 12, 1623 (ibid., fol. 218–220).

⁹⁷ Psanj G. K. M. Gabryelowi, Opole, June 12, 1623 (ibid., fol. 217–218).

⁹⁸ Their frequent contacts with the Transilvanian court prove this fact.

⁹⁹ M. Szyrocki, Martin Opitz, Berlin 1956, p. 51.

¹⁰⁰ Padavin's account from Vienna, July 22, 1623 (O v á r y, op. cit., p. 281).



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regarded the terms of the Peace of Mikulov as the last resort, to which he was forced by political and military conditions, and he was waiting for an opportunity to get rid of them, especially as his influence in Hungary was gradually diminishing, and the Catholics were getting stronger. Therefore, he began to prepare for a new war with the Habsburgs: he used the period of peace for rapid economic restoration of the war-devastated country and he carried out the necessary military reforms aimed at improving discipline and valour of his army. He also began to look for suitable allies to fight against the Catholics. Initially, he did it in secret from his states, which already in May 1622 were inclined to put pressure on him towards concluding an alliance treaty with the Emperor, as long as it was not directed against Turkey¹⁰¹. Already in February 1622, he tried to establish contact with Gustavus Adolphus¹⁰², and negotiate with the Bohemian emigrants and Turkey. In August, on behalf of the 'winter king', a former leader of Bohemian opposition, Count Maciej Turni and Bethlen's envoy, Michał Tholdalagi, appeared in Constantinople¹⁰³. They had an easier task, since after the murder of Osman, the new sultan, Mustafa, willingly approved of all activities against the house of Habsburg. The new vizier was also supposed to be very appreciative of Bethlen¹⁰⁴. It is no wonder that the High Porte promised to the Bohemian and Transylvanian messengers help in the form of 20,000 Turkish troops and 10,000 Tatars¹⁰⁵. Also the situation in the West appeared to be positive for Bethlen. Although the Emperor—as mentioned above—managed to crush the seats of Protestant 'rebellion' in the Northwest Germany and in the County of Kłodzko, the occupation of Palatine by Tilly and appointing the Maximilian of Bavaria as an Elector caused concern among the remaining electors, especially the Protestant ones, who had so long acted rather passively about the fight between the Habsburgs and Bohemia, because it shook the balance in the electoral college between Protestants and Catholics. Finally, very beneficial for the Protestant Union of the Holy Roman Empire was the fact that in 1621 the Netherlands did not renew the armistice treaty with Spain and entered into war not only with their own force but using Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick who were in their service. In this situation, the court of Vienna and the befriended circles followed with understandable anxiety the diplomatic activity of Gábor Bethlen and his adherents in Constantinople, Hungary and the Netherlands¹⁰⁶. Ferdinand II was not yet ready for a general crackdown with the Protestant opposition and he preferred to suppress the individual seats of

¹⁰¹ Monumenta Comitialia..., vol. VIII, p. 95 and the following. Cf. also T. Wittman, Gábor Bethlenmint handszervezo, Budapest 1952, pp. 5 and the following.

¹⁰² N. Ahnlund, Gustaf Adolf och tyska kriget (Historisk tidsskrift, 1917. p. 250, footnote no. 1).

¹⁰³ Thurn to Queen Elisabeth, Carogród, September 30, 1622 (Odlozilik, op. cit., pp. 86–88); Thurn to Frederick I, Galata, January 18, 1623 (ibid., pp. 101–110); Frederick to Thun, June 16, 1623 (ibid., pp. 139–140); Peter Pazmany to Ferdinand II, Sellyae, November 15, 1622 (Pazmany Peter levelezese..., p. 311); Johann Schweikard Kurf. von Mainz, Aufzeichnungen uber den Regensburger Furstentag 7.I.–20.III. 1623 (Briefe und Akten zur Geschichte des dreissigjahrigen Kriegs. Neue Folge. Die Politik Maximilians I. von Bayern und seiner Verbundeten, 1618–1651, vol. II, part 1. 1623–1624, edited by W. Goetz, Leipzig 1907, no. 5, p. 16).

¹⁰⁴ Thurn to Frederick I, Galata, February 4, 1623 (Odlozilik, op. cit., pp. 113–115).

¹⁰⁵ M. Depner, Das Furstentum Siebenburgen im Kampf gegen Habsburg, Stuttgart 1938, p. 99.

¹⁰⁶ Gooss, op. cit., pp. 565 and the following.



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resistance separately. Meanwhile, the threat of military invasion from the troops of Transylvania, as well as Turkish-Tatar troops, became more and more real.

The official pretext for deteriorating Habsburg–Transylvanian relations was to be the fact that the Emperor failed to follow the conditions of the Peace of Mikulov¹⁰⁷. Gábor Bethlen complained, among others, that Ferdinand II took his Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, did not allow his plenipotentiary, Schellendorf, to participate in the meetings of the Silesian princes and states, did not pay subsidies due to him, oppressed his followers, plotted against him in Hungary, etc.¹⁰⁸.

The charges made by the Prince of Transylvania were true to a large extent. For example, already in the early spring of 1623 Ferdinand II in a solemn letter conferred the *kamera* owned estates in the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz to the known pacifier of Silesia, burgrave Karl Hannibal von Dohn and his male descendants. Such selling the bear's skin before it was caught might, of course, be not to Gábor Bethlen's liking, and definitely he did not like it, despite the Emperor's reservation that the transfer of these assets to the burgrave will take place only '*nach todlichen abgang abgemeltens Bethleen Gabors vnd seines vettern Stephan Bethleen oder durch was immer gestalt vnd wege obberuhrte beide Furstenthumber Oppeln vnd Ratibor widerumb auf vnss vnd vnserer Nachkommende Konigs zu Behaimb vnd obrisle hertzogen in Schlesien khommen vnd fallen solten*'¹⁰⁹.

However, it must be said that the case of the two Upper Silesian duchies was just a slight pretext for a war with the emperor. The main reasons lay in the conflicts between Transylvania and Austria in Hungary and in the conflicts between the Protestants and Catholics in Germany and throughout almost the whole Europe. It was during this period that a new anti-Habsburg coalition was organized, an important link of which was supposed to be also Gábor Bethlen¹¹⁰. Already in January 1623, Czech immigrant Ehrenfried Berbisdorf reported to King Frederick I about the existence of the invasion plan of Christian and Mansfeld on the Lands of the Crown of St Weneclaus, and joining their forces with Bethlen which was to take place in Silesia¹¹¹. Hence probably stemmed enthusiastic reports of the agents of the 'winter king' and his consort Elizabeth, dating to this period and telling about Gábor Bethlen's fidelity to the Protestant cause¹¹². In May of that year, a specific plan of joint action of Bethlen and Christian of Brunswick in the Holy Roman Empire was developed¹¹³.

Finally, during this period an interesting plan was designed for Sweden to join the fight against the Catholics. Gustavus Adolphus planned primarily to create a north

¹⁰⁷ F. Tadra, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Feldzuges Bethlen Gabors gegen Kaiser Ferdinand II im Jahre 1623 (Archiv für österreichische Geschichte, issue LV, 1877. p. 409); Gindely, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 475.

¹⁰⁸ Buckisch, op. cit., pp. 412–413; cf. Acta publica, vol. V, p. 183, footnote no. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Copeilische Abschrift des Expectants-Briefe wegen Cammergutter im Opplischen und Ratiborischen, Wien, April 28, 1623 (AA Wr., cat. no. I A 4/d¹, no. 31a).

¹¹⁰ Gindely, op. cit., vol. IV, pp. 476 and the following.

¹¹¹ Ehrenfried Berbisdorf to the so-called 'winter king', Hague, January 1623 (Odložik, op. cit., pp. 32–34).

¹¹² Cf. the letters of Thurn and Berbisdorf quoted above.

¹¹³ Depner, op. cit., pp. 96–97.



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coalition of Protestants, which would be composed of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Rostock, Lübeck, Hamburg and Holstein. Swedish troops were to hit Prussia, take over the coast, and from there move to Greater Poland, and, having provided the basis of food supplies from the north-west, as well as possible reinforcement, to march into Silesia. At the same time Bethlen would attack Silesia and Poland from the south, and Margrave Karniowski and Thurn would hit Bohemia. He was also hoping for an uprising of the members of the Orthodox Church in Rzeczpospolita ¹¹⁴. In this way, he chose the line of the Odra river as the basis for operations. The implementation of this plan, however, encountered serious difficulties. Despite significant pressure from Thurn ¹¹⁵ Bethlen was not too eager to invade Poland, he preferred to conquer Silesia. The attempts to organize a coalition in northern Germany also did not produce a good result. They failed mainly because of the attitude of George William, Elector of Brandenburg, whose only care after having received Prussian fiefs in 1621 from Sigismund III was about maintaining the Duchy of Prussia during the on-going war between his brother in law, Gustavus Adolphus, and his superior, Sigismund III. Therefore, he rather hid his support for the 'winter king'.

According to the agreement signed with Christian of Brunswick and the Netherlands in August 1623, Bethlen initiated the war against the Habsburgs. The offensive of Transylvanian and Hungarian troops brought him great military success: they entered far into the Habsburg territories, especially in Moravia, and reached the borders of Silesia, taking Bogumin. The imperial generals, Caraffa and Wallenstein, suffered defeat after defeat ¹¹⁶.

The Court of Vienna answered to the breaking off the peace most of all by taking away the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz from the Prince of Transylvania because they realized the strategic importance of this region which it may have as a bridge between the North and the South and the West. On the 30th of September, 1623, Ferdinand II gave the order to his governor in Silesia, Duke Jerzy Rudolf, to appoint a commission to take away the Upper Silesian duchies and stand at the head of it. However, Jerzy Rudolf, excusing himself with the activities in the *Oberamt* and the proceedings of states and dukes, just like when this land was given as a pledge to Transylvania, he evaded to participate in the commission, suggesting that Henry Wenceslaus, Duke of Ziębice–Oleśnica should take his place. He sent in this case a messenger to Vienna, and he commanded to convene sejmik in Opole on the 24th of October ¹¹⁷. Then he set up a commission, which comprised Joachim Malzan and Hans Ulrich Schaffgotsch. The work of commission was to begin in Opole on the 16th

¹¹⁴ Ahnlund, op. cit., pp. 261–265.

¹¹⁵ C. Wibling, *Sveriges förhållande till Siebenburgen 1623–1648*, Lund 1890, p. 11; F. H. Schubert, *Ludwig Camerarius (1573–1651)*, Kellmunz Oborpfalz 1955, p. 246; Cf. Thurn's correspondence quoted above.

¹¹⁶ Tadra, op. cit., p. 409 and the following. Bethlen preparations to war were kept in the utmost secrecy. That's why he entered negotiations with imperial agents, Andrew Izdenczy and Jacob Szentkereszty (Klausenburg in June and July of 1623), which naturally brought no positive results. *Monumenta Comitialia...*, vol. VIII, pp. 145–159.

¹¹⁷ Jerzy Rudolf to Ferdinand II, undated (SUA-ČDK, Schriften...).



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of October, but it was supposed to arrive there earlier to investigate the situation and make preliminary preparations ¹¹⁸.

At the head of the commission stood indeed Henry Wenceslaus, Duke of Ziębice–Oleśnica, who received from Jerzy Rudolf an extensive guidance concerning the work awaiting him. Jerzy Rudolf recommended there, among others, to garrison the emperor's armies in the major Upper Silesian cities, especially in Opole, and to track, capture and throw into prison the '*verdechtige Precktifikanten*'. A resolution was also adopted stating that the only currency in circulation in Upper Silesia can be that of the Emperor's ¹¹⁹. At the same time, at the command of the Emperor, intense preparation to repel a possible invasion of Gábor Bethlen of Silesia commenced by decreeing new money to pay the soldiers and locating troops at all mountain passages to Hungary, especially at Jablunkov Pass ¹²⁰.

In accordance with the wishes of the Emperor, people suspected of having connections with Gábor Bethlen were caught, e.g. among the detainees was Regent Hans Schellendorf. However, soon an order came to let him free and send him to Vienna, accompanied by the director of Silesian county. For it turned out that he was not only a regent on behalf of the Prince of Transylvania, but also—as administrators of ecclesiastical Duchy of Nysa wrote—'*Ihrer Mayestet genisslicher, gehor samer vnd gar getreuer Vnterthaner ist*' ¹²¹. There is nothing we are able to say about other arrested people and their fate.

It was immediately organised to take away both Upper Silesian duchies from Gábor Bethlen. On the 15th of October both commissioners, Malzan and Schaffgotsch, came to Opole, and only Duke Henry Wenceslaus did not appear. They wanted to begin their work immediately, but on a set day, that is the 16th of that month, no

¹¹⁸ Patent an die Stände der Fürstenthümer Oppeln und Ratibor zur Ablegung der Huldigung für ihre Kays. Mayt., Breslau, October 9, 1623 (WAP Wr., Archive of the city of Wrocław, cat. no. A 40–2, print). Cf. the account of Piotr Gebauer Anludi, Erhard Gelhorn, Jodok Marcin Weber and Walentyn Winter for the Archduke Charles, Wrocław, October 6, 1623 (AA Wr., cat. no. I A 4/e¹, no. 156).

¹¹⁹ G. Fuchs, *Materialien zur evangelischen Religionsgeschichte von Oberschlesien*, vol. X, Breslau 1773, p. 23; Jerzy Rudolf to Henry Wenceslaus, Wrocław, October 12, 1623 (SUA-CDK, Schriften...).

¹²⁰ *Orditiatio für den herrn Obersten von Dohna mit seinem Regiment zu Fuss die Passe gegen Hungarn zu besetzen*, Breslau, October 13, 1623 (ibid.); *Ordinatio dem herrn Obersten von Dohna auf seine 1000 Pferde ertheilet*, Breslau, October 12, 1623 (ibid.); Patent an die 1000 Dohnaische Pferde wegen ihres Fortzugs, Breslau, October 18, 1623 (ibid.); Jerzy Rudolf to Dohnau, Legnica, October 20, 1623 (ibid.); Dohnau to the Duke Frederick William of Cieszyn, Wrocław, October 12, 1623 and Legnica, October 23, 1623 (ibid.). This abundant correspondence between Oberamt, the dukes and states and Dohnau's regiment owes its existence to the reluctance of the soldiers to fulfill the marching order and their agreement to occupy the designated positions only after being assured by the states that their financial demands would be met. Cf. J. Krebs, '*Zur Geschichte der inneren Verhältnisse Schlesiens von der Schlacht am Welschen Berge bis zum Einmarsche Waldstetns*' (*Zeitschrift...*, issue XVI, 1882, pp. 51–52).

¹²¹ Der Erczherzoglichen Stadthalter Schreiben an die Kais. Commissarien wegen Hanss Schellendorffs, Neiss, October 15, 1623 (SUA-CDK, Schriften...); Erczherzoglichen Stadthalter Schreiben an Herzog Heinrich Wenzeln wegen Hanssess von Schellendorfs, Neiss, October 13, 1623 (ibid.); cf. the letter of this 'government' to Jerzy Rudolf, Neisse, October 17, 1623, and the duke's answer to this letter, Legnica, October 20, 1623, as well as the letter of Jerzy Rudolf to Ferdinand II, Legnica, October 24, 1623 (ibid.).



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representative of the states or the authorities came to them. Also no one came to justify this groundless absence. Commissioners were greatly embarrassed because of that, they could not find a reason for such conduct of so competent local factors, and were confused about what to do next. They decided to wait one more day, thinking that some more significant personalities of the duchy would come in person or send appropriate explanation in writing. However, no such thing happened. Finally, they decided to speak with the representatives of the office of starost, and above all, with the starost and the chancellor themselves, the more so that the imperial instructions recommended them clearly '*die Beambteten fur VNS* [that is Commissioners—author's note, J.L.] *zue erfordern vnd gedachtem ieczigen Hauptman Kochticzki, wie auch dem Canczler vnd andern Beambten interimswise bis auf I. K. M. allernedigste fernere Resolution Ihrer Ambter Verwaltung anzubefehlen vnd sie hierauff die Ambts-Pflicht ablegen zue lassen*'. Seeing, however, that they would not perform their major task, they decided to postpone the work until another time which will be appointed by the governor. Although originally they thought about taking over the *kamera* estates under the imperial administration and taking the oath from the burghers of Opole, in the absence of explicit instructions, they abandoned those plans. They decided to leave Opole, reporting everything to the head of the commission, Duke Henry Wenceslaus, and governor Jerzy Rudolf ¹²².

What requires some explanation here is the position of the Upper Silesian states. It seems that their resistance resulted from the fact that they wanted to play for time against the expected attack of Gábor Bethlen on Silesia. In Vienna and in Silesia there was widespread belief that the attack of Transylvanian troops would go in that direction ¹²³. Besides, they had already been stationed at Bogumin. So the states probably feared that having entered into Silesia, the Prince of Transylvania would want to take revenge on the local gentry, had they broken the oath sworn to him.

In Wrocław, on the other hand, nobody took this into consideration. At the general sejmik held there in October, Bethlen's plenipotentiary had already not been admitted ¹²⁴. Jerzy Rudolf decided also to put pressure on the Upper Silesian states so that they would meet the imperial demands. Therefore, he instructed commissioners to go back to Opole, where on the 24th of October the proceedings of sejmik were to begin; he asked the Duke of Ziębice–Oleśnica to go there in person and to make, even before the opening of the meeting, the appropriate 'preparatoria', and gave him detailed instructions as to the smoothest manner to lead to taking away the Upper

¹²² Relation der Kays. Commissarien uerrichtung zu Oppeln, Opole, October 17, 1623 (ibid.).

¹²³ Duke Frederick William of Cieszyn to Jerzy Rudolf, Schwarzwasser, October 14, 1623 (ibid.). He wrote that he was expecting Bethlen's arrival in Silesia with the army of 90,000 soldiers. Cf. Acta publica, vol. V, p. 206, footnote no. 1, and the letter of Piotr Pazmany to Ferdinand II, Bratislava, October 22 1623, where we read as follows: 'Atque utinam Moraviam et Silesiam non pervadat... [that is Gábor Bethlen—author's note, J. L.]'. Peter Pazmany levelezese..., pp. 355–356.

¹²⁴ Aus dem Berichte der Munsterberg-Frankensteinschen Gesandten an den Landeshauptmann Sigismund von Bock, Breslau, October 18, 1623 (Acta publica, vol. V. p. 205).



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Silesian duchies from Gábor Bethlen ¹²⁵. Finally, he informed the Emperor about the current course of affairs ¹²⁶.

Regretfully, no archival materials have survived in Silesia that would describe the proceedings of the sejmik in Opole which was held from the 24th to the 26th of October, 1623. Due to this fact, we cannot say anything more specific about the methods and means by which Henry Wenceslaus managed to persuade the Upper Silesian states to adopt a resolution about the return of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz into direct possession of the Habsburgs and swearing the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand II ¹²⁷. In any case, the Duke of Ziębice–Oleśnica must have performed very well in this cause, since the Emperor invited him to further service to the House of Habsburg, which '*Ihr [that is Prince—author's note, J.L.] bei der Opplischen Commission ein gutt prob zue mainem sonderbaren gnedigsten Contento gethan*' ¹²⁸.

When Silesia intensively prepared to repel a possible invasion of Transylvanian troops and in command of Ferdinand II conducted restitution of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, new negotiations between the Habsburgs and Gábor Bethlen commenced. Indeed, seizing weapons, 'the Transylvanian Mithridates' counted on the support of his allies, meanwhile, still in August, Christian of Brunswick was defeated by Tilly at Stadtlohn, and Mansfeld at Friesvyth, and they both took refuge in the Netherlands. Other Protestant countries did not provide any help to the forlorn Bethlen. While the Swedes were still assembling a Protestant coalition, so far it did not secure the chance of success. Therefore, the Prince of Transylvania had no other choice as to enter into agreements; the relation of forces was definitely negative for him. On the 10th of October, Palatine Stanislaw Thurzó came to stop him from taking further steps against the Emperor and start negotiations. They were to be continued by Stefan Pograny and Stefan Szikszay. Bethlen did not oppose the agreements, especially that in Turkey there had been a new revolution, and it was difficult to tell whether the new Sultan, a 14-year-old Murad IV, would support Transylvania against Austria. Although already in October Mansfeld expressed willingness to march, if necessary, in Moravia and Silesia ¹²⁹, Bethlen did not believe it and in October he

¹²⁵ In this instruction we read as follows: 'Sonderlichen wollen E. G. mit fleisse darob sein, damit sie zum ersten zum proponiren gelangen vnd die Commission ablegen mogen, ehe etwa die Stende von andern praeocupiret vnd dass werckh desto verwirreter gemacht werden mochte. Solten auch die andern Kays. deputirten, welche gleichwol etwas weit abgesehen nicht so eilendts, als es wol vonnoten zuer stelle kommen konnen, wollen E. G. die versamleten Stende mit hierzue dienlichen motiven persvadiren, das sie nicht von ein ander verriicken, sondern sich so lange beysamen halten wolten biess sie die anderen deputirten zu rechte anlangen kondten, damit also I. K, M. allergnediegstem wiellen vnd anschaffen vmb so viel desto vnfeilbarlicher vnd schuldigster massen ein genugen beschehen móge...' Jerzy Rudolf to Henry Weneclaus, Legnica, October 19, 1623 (SUA-CDK, Schriften...).

¹²⁶ Relation, wegen einziehung Oppeln vnd Ratibor, Legnica, October 24, 1623 (ibid.).

¹²⁷ Idzikowski, op. cit., p. 158; Weltzel, Geschichte der Stadt Ratibor, p. 158; Hurter, op. cit., vol. IX, p. 235.

¹²⁸ Ferdinand II to Henry Weneclaus, Vienna, November 3, 1623 (WAP Wr., Rep. 33 I 55a).

¹²⁹ Mansfeld to Thurn, Griekziell, October 16, 1623 (Odložilik, op. cit., 149–150). The relationship between Bethlen and the Habsburgs was so tense that despite the unfavourable conditions Frederick I expressed in Hague his hope for keeping up the conflict between the Prince of Transylvania and the Austrians until spring, when, as he expected, he would gather stronger forces in the West in order to



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began negotiations in Hodonim (Góding), besieged by Transylvanian troops, either personally or by his plenipotentiaries, Chancellor Kováchóczy and Kassai ¹³⁰.

During the negotiations the Emperor firmly rejected Bethlen's request to take as a basis for negotiations the terms of the Treaty of Mikulov, among others the terms stating Bethlen's territorial conquests in Hungary and Upper Silesia. It was often demanded that both Upper Silesian duchies should be given back to the Prince of Transylvania; Transylvanian delegation firmly insisted on that. There was, however, such a point when as a result of persuasion on the part of the Hungarian states, whose assumption was that the Transylvanian Prince had no authority at all in Upper Silesia, they were ready to give up this claim '*tali conditione, ut liber passus in eo* [that is Gábor Bethlen's—author's note, J.L.] *sit omnibus etiam ex Silesia, Opulia et Ratiboria, neque ulli benevoli suae serenitatis vel in personis, vel in bonis molestuntur, ita in converso neque suae Mattis fidelis ubique*'. Surrendering the factual possession of the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, Bethlen was to keep the title of duke of the land. However, in the last moment the Prince protested against such a solution to the discussed problem and demanded not only the title, but also the rule over the duchies of Upper Silesia. And while his own advisers tried to persuade him to make concessions, he remained unyielding ¹³¹.

Not wanting to prolong the negotiations, the imperial delegation agreed to compromise because they feared that a new uprising in support of Bethlen would spark in Hungary. His supporters there rebelled firmly ¹³². Therefore, on the 20th of November, 1623, a truce valid until the 29th of September, 1624, was concluded, under which both Upper Silesian duchies were to remain in the hands of Bethlen as long as the treaty was valid. The Prince of Transylvania and his men were to have free access to Silesia, especially Upper Silesia. They guaranteed to one another that the supporters and allies of the one side would not be punished by the other side and would not suffer any damage to themselves and their estates ¹³³.

This agreement was immediately ratified by the Prince of Transylvania, but Ferdinand II refused to confirm it. Once having taken away the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz from Gábor Bethlen, he did not want to give it back, and he had already felt strong enough to be able to afford it. This resulted in the establishment of new

strike at the Catholics together with the army of Transylvania. Actually, he directed his request to Bethlen himself (Frederic I to Gábor Bethlen, Hague, September 12, 1623, *ibid.*, pp. 142–145; Bethlen to Thurn, Hague, September 13, 1623, *ibid.*, pp. 145–147). Bethlen's fears regarding the stand of Porta were not unjustified, for 'ein vornehmer turkischer Wessir und Pascha hat kais. Mt. schriftlich versichert, dass der turkische Kaiser des Bethlens sich anderergestalt nicht annehmen oder in seine Handel mischen werde, es wurde denn der Bethlen vom deuthen Kaiser angegriffen...' Zeidler's account, Becs, September 24, 1623 (Gindely, *Acta et documenta...*, p. 356).

¹³⁰ Gooss, *op. cit.*, p. 568.

¹³¹ *Monumenta Comititalia...*, vol. VIII, pp. 175–177.

¹³² Gindely, *Acta et documenta...*, p. 361.

¹³³ Gooss, *op. cit.*, pp. 570–571; *Monumenta Comititalia...*, vol. VIII, p. 200. Of our interest was the following passage: 'Ducatus in Silesia Oppuliae et Ratiboriae, sicut antea per dominum principem fuerunt possessi, maneant in eodem statu usque and terminum induciarum...' Quoted after: G i n d e l y, *Acta et documenta...*, p. 364. The making of this truce met with enthusiasm of the Poles. Duke of Zbaraż to Gábor Bethlen, Cracow, December 8, 1623, Sokołowski, *op. cit.*, p. 83.



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negotiations in Tyrnau, in which Emerich Czobora acted on behalf of the Palatine. They ended on the 8th of December, with drafting a new version of the truce, which stated the transfer of Upper Silesian duchies to the Emperor in return for leaving one of the debatable Hungarian counties in the hands of the Prince of Transylvania¹³⁴.

This time, for a change, Gábor Bethlen refused to ratify the agreement, and this is mainly due to the section concerning the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz. He also rejected a suggestion put forward by the Hungarian states, of the exchange of Upper Silesia for two Hungarian districts: Trichin and Thurócz¹³⁵, mainly for financial reasons, because they could give him only 25,000 ducats of annual income, while the Upper Silesian duchies provided 300,000 of income per year¹³⁶. Therefore, despite the pleas and insistence on the part of the Hungarian Palatine, he persisted until an amendment was added to the already finished edition of the treaty, proclaiming that the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz remain under his rule until the expiry of the truce. Otherwise, he threatened with Turkish and Tatar invasion. He did not even allow the imperial delegation to communicate with Ferdinand II in this matter¹³⁷. A new text of the armistice treaty submitted to the Emperor for ratification was rejected again, because Ferdinand II refused to accept the return of Upper Silesian duchies to Bethlen. In this situation, the negotiations had to be continued and finally, after nearly two months of additional meetings, on the 20th of January, 1624, a truce was concluded at Bańska Bystrzyca, under which the mentioned duchies eventually were given to the Emperor, yet amnesty was ensured for all Transylvanian supporters in the area; Bethlen also lost five Hungarian counties, and he had to send back the Turkish-Tatar reinforcement troops, etc.¹³⁸ The signing of the armistice finally dispelled the hopes of the 'winter king' and his followers to keep Transylvania in the fight against the Habsburgs¹³⁹.

During these negotiations, Gábor Bethlen formulated an original plan of managing Transylvanian–Habsburg relationships. He wanted to retain all Transylvanian spoils of war gained so far, and at the same time he provided the Emperor with complete peace in this regard and an alliance with Transylvania. Bethlen wanted to bind with Ferdinand II with a treaty of friendship. It was to be

¹³⁴ Having formulated his conditions on the 28th of November, Ferdinand II concluded: 'ducatus Oppulidae et Ratiboriae in Silesia maneant pro nobis...' (ibid., p. 367). In an almost unchanged form, this condition was stated in the treaty of the 8th of December: 'ducatus Oppulidae et Ratibor maneant pro Sua Majestate...' (Monumenta Comititalia..., vol. VIII, p. 210; Gooss, op. cit., p. 577). There was yet another point, stating that 'quod nullos ex benevolis domini principis in his comitatibus Sua Majestas Caesarea Regiaeque in personis vel bonis molestabit et impedit, passusque per comitatus eos, sicuti et alios hominibus domini principis in Silesiam, ducatusque Oppoliensem et Ratiboriensem liber eonceditur...' Gooss, op. cit., p. 570.

¹³⁵ Monumenta Comititalia..., vol. VIII, p. 183.

¹³⁶ Veress, op. cit., p. 31.

¹³⁷ The report of the imperial delegates from the negotiations of December 1623 (Gindely, Acta et documenta..., p. 383).

¹³⁸ Gooss, op. cit., pp. 579–580. The point we are especially interested in, except some minor stylistic changes, is almost identical with the passage from the treaty of the 8th of December of previous year.

¹³⁹ An unknown Moravian nobleman to Zierotin, December 21, 1623 (Odložilik, op. cit., pp. 161–163); Zierotin to Frederick I, Berlin, January 31, 1624 (ibid., pp. 167–168).



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bound by the marriage with Archduchess Cecilia Renata, the latter Polish Queen, whose dowry were to be both Upper Silesian duchies, and after her husband's death she was to get the throne of Transylvania. The Prince of Transylvania was also to become the imperial governor in Hungary. In this way, Bethlen, seeing that the war with the Emperor took on a negative turn for him, tried to save his holdings in Hungary and Silesia. If the plan had been carried out, it would have been very beneficial for both parties. However, it did not happen. While it is true that in January 1624, Bethlen's Catholic envoy, Wolfgang Kamuthy, went to Vienna with this mission, he did not achieve much. The negotiations on this issue dragged on until mid-1625, and did not yield any result. Their failure resulted first of all from the reluctance of the Viennese court, mainly for religious reasons, though also in this matter Bethlen went to a far-reaching compromise ¹⁴⁰.

A new truce did not end the negotiations, because Bethlen was still asking for the confirmation of all the provisions of the Treaty of Mikulov. On the 6th of February, 1624, new Transylvanian delegation came to Vienna, represented by Wolfgang Kamuthy, Stefan Kassai and Jan Bornemissza. Meanwhile, in the court of Vienna, two concepts regarding the settlement of the dispute with Gábor Bethlen and solving the German problem clashed. The first of these concepts was represented by the Catholic leaders in Hungary, Primate Piotr Pazmany and Count Nicholas Esterhazy, who refused to even negotiate with the Prince of Transylvania, believing that it was an opportune time either to crush him completely, or at least to eliminate Bethlen's influence in Hungary. However, the Emperor followed the suggestion of German advisers, especially Eggenberg, who, because of the general German situation found it necessary to make peace with Bethlen. Therefore, when Transylvanian envoys arrived in Vienna, Ferdinand II, although he refused to grant them an audience, appointed a commission to negotiate with them, which comprised Bishop von Raab, Dallos, Chancellor of Hungary, Stefan Sennyey, Emerich Czobor, Earl Raimbald and Jerzy Teufel, and among the members of this group there were no Hungarian extremists. The competences of the commission entirely excluded all the matters related to the proposed marriage of Bethlen with Cecilia Renata ¹⁴¹.

The meeting of the Habsburg and Transylvanian delegations held on the 19th, 21st and 24th of February showed complete discord between them; the Transylvanian side regarded the Treaty of Mikulov as the basis for peace negotiations, while the Emperor's side referred to the state from before the outbreak of war, i.e. from 1619. A significant role played here the negotiations concerning the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz. During these meetings the only achievement was the conclusion of armistice for the period from the 27th of February to the 31st of March, ratified by Gábor Bethlen on the 14th of March. The text of the ceasefire in the section of interest to us was identical to the text of the armistice treaty from January ¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ Fessler, op. cit., vol. VIII, p. 581; Depner, op. cit., pp. 103–106.

¹⁴¹ Gooss, op. cit., pp. 583–584.

¹⁴² Gindely, Acta et documenta..., p. 390; Gooss, op. cit., p. 588; Firnhaber, Actenstucke... (Archiv..., p. 40); H. Schwicker, Peter Pdzmany, Erzbischof und Primas von Hungarn..., Koln 1888, p. 66, provides erroneously the date of the 26th of March and wrongly designates the treaty as a peace treaty.



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Gábor Bethlen's obstinate claims for the restitution of the Upper Silesian duchies made it very difficult to reach an agreement. Imperial delegation started even to hesitate whether to make concessions in this point, but against the intransigent position of the Hungarian leaders they had to abandon this idea. It was still called for the Prince of Transylvania to regain the title of the King of Hungary and the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, and in return he would receive the Hungarian lands up to the river Taya, with reservation that the strongholds to Koszyce were taken by imperial garrisons. The guarantee of peace was to be '*dass, wofern Bethlen wider Ihre Mt. bruchig wurde, seine Stande und Unterthanen sowohl in Siebenburgen als Ober-Ungarn alsdann uf solchen Fall ihrer Eidespflicht straks ipso facto erlassen sein sollen*'. Nevertheless, the Transylvanian envoys did not agree to this, pointing to the lack of adequate instruction, the need to adhere to the conditions of the Treaty of Mikulov and the need to consult with their Prince.

In mid-March, on the meeting of a secret council and the Hungarian council in Vienna, the Emperor decided to once again reject the proposal to conclude a peace treaty with Transylvania on the principles established in Mikulov and instructed Thurzó to notify about it the Transylvanian envoys in the following days. He was urged by the news that in case of war Bethlen could not count for the help from Turkey at the time ¹⁴³. However, on the 25th of that month, he changed his mind in view of adverse news flowing from Germany and Sweden and he ordered to carry out negotiations, taking the Treaty of Mikulov as a starting point because Transylvanian envoys wanted to leave Vienna on account of the instructions and Ferdinand II preferred to avoid this. Changing the position of the Viennese court removed a major obstacle to the successful completion of negotiations and moved them seriously forward. Moreover, it had already been expressed in the earlier Palatine's speech at the meeting of the delegation on the 20th of March. Thurzó suggested then at his own—as he pointed out—initiative that Bethlen should renounce the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz and counties Abaujvar with Koszyce and Borsod with the city of Szondro and, in return, he would obtain from the Emperor confirmation of the remaining points of the Treaty of Mikulov. As to the resignation from the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, Palatine's suggestion in principle was not opposed to, because at the end of the meeting one of the Transylvanian delegates, Kassai, declared that Bethlen would never give up possessions in Hungary, but he did not mention anything about the Upper Silesian duchies ¹⁴⁴. Since then, negotiations had unfolded quickly. Bethlen sent new instructions, which authorized the Transylvanian delegates to give up the land of Upper Silesia, if the imperial party still insisted on this, but in return for an appropriate equivalent. Transylvanian envoys presented this proposition to the imperial delegation and demanded in return for their ruler the Ecsed Castle, so far kept by them as a pledge, and Felso- and Nagybánya, as well as amnesty for all Transylvanian supporters in the Upper Silesia and the renounced Hungarian territories¹⁴⁵. This condition was accepted on the 25th of March and the ceasefire

¹⁴³ Zeidler's account, Bacs, March 10–20, 1624 (Gindely, Acta et documenta..., p. 404).

¹⁴⁴ V. Frankl, Pazmany Peter es kora, vol. II, Pest 1870, pp. 90–98.

¹⁴⁵ Gooss, op. cit., p. 593.



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was extended to the 1st of May. In Vienna, the Habsburg delegation prepared a draft of a peace treaty on the basis of the conditions agreed during negotiations, the only reservation was that Ferdinand II did not want to agree to give any compensation for Bethlen's abandonment of the claim to Upper Silesian duchies.

On the 6th of April, Transylvanian envoys went with the text of the draft treaty¹⁴⁶ and the patent form concerning amnesty to meet Gábor Bethlen staying in Koszyce. He accepted the results of the many months of negotiations very reluctantly, but being pressed by the states and not seeing the expected aid from the West¹⁴⁷, he had to give way. He also signed on the 22nd of April the draft text of the ratification, thus introducing into the text some minor changes, among others, he demanded to retain the title of the Duke of Opole–Racibórz and, for the request of the states, to supplement the text of the amnesty¹⁴⁸. Then he sent his representatives, Chancellor Kovachóczy and Stefan Bornessa, to Vienna to complete the negotiations. On the 8th of May in this city a peace treaty was signed, under which Gábor Bethlen resigned, among others, from his claim to the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz with no equivalent, retaining lifelong title of the Duke of these lands; in return he was given seven counties and confirmation of religious and political freedoms at the renounced areas¹⁴⁹. The Peace of Vienna of the 8th of May, 1624, essentially ended more than a four-year struggle of Transylvanian diplomacy to obtain Upper Silesia and then keep it as a pledge. While in the years 1624–1626 this issue came out again on diplomatic arena when Gustavus Adolphus returned to his plans of assuming the line of Odra to be the basis for the military campaign against the Habsburgs. At that time, there was a project to attack Silesia from the north by the Swedish army and the allied armies of the North German dukes, from the south by the Transylvanian army, and from the west, among others, by Mansfeld, the greatest adventurer of the first phase of the Thirty Years' War. Gábor Bethlen was supposed to be an important link in a new coalition. Especially involved in his access to it were the following diplomats: Roe from England, Sebastian Breyant from France and Gustavus Adolphus' envoy sent to Transylvania with a secret mission—Sandler. Initially the alliance was planned to be bound by the marriage between the Prince of Transylvania and the sister of the Elector of Brandenburg, Catherine, who was also the sister of Gustavus Adolphus' consort¹⁵⁰. In view of the resistance of Danzig, which did not want to agree to neutrality in the event of the Swedish-Polish War and due to the pressure from the Brandenburg envoy, Bellini, and Dutch diplomacy insisting on transferring the war to the north of Germany, and not to the countries of the Holy Crown of St Weneclaus, the plans of Gustavus Adolphus fell temporarily, but later they were taken by Denmark. In the light of these plans, Gábor Bethlen was not only to take the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz, but also other Silesian territories, especially the Duchy of Brześć–Karniów

¹⁴⁶ Pray-Miller, op. cit., vol. II, Pestini 1816, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ Bethlen to Thurn, Koszyce, April 11, 1624 (Odložilik, op. cit., pp. 177–178).

¹⁴⁸ Gooss, op. cit., pp. 599–600.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 594–595; Huber, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 270.

¹⁵⁰ Angyal, op. cit., p. 57; Szelaḡowski, op. cit., pp. 304–305; J. Paul, Gustaf Adolf, vol. I, Leipzig 1927, pp. 150–151; G. Droysen, Gustaf Adolf, vol. I, Leipzig 1869, pp. 188 and the following.



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¹⁵¹. However, the Prince of Transylvania did not immediately decide to enter the new coalition. His experiences with too snap, active involvement against the Habsburgs was too harsh. He was afraid of the new political and military isolation. Therefore, regardless of the plans, he established contacts with the imperial diplomacy and tried to negotiate some concessions, especially the Upper Silesian duchies. Viennese court, however, did not trust him and did not agree to it, sniffing a trick in his declarations of peace, especially that his abolition of the Protestant potencies was well-known ¹⁵². This was clearly indicated by his marriage to Catherine Hohenzollern concluded in March, 1626 ¹⁵³. These fears were not unfounded, because not long after that, the Transylvanian army attacked the Habsburg territories. The new campaign was not successful for Bethlen. Soon, by the failure of the Danish army and his own troops, and as a result of Wallenstein marching into Hungary, he was forced to conclude a truce and then peace ¹⁵⁴. The new peace treaty, similar to the one concluded two years before in Vienna, did not offer Bethlen any benefits; he gained for himself neither the Upper Silesian duchies, nor the possessions in Hungary, previously lost to the Emperor. It should be noted that, although he never regained the land of Upper Silesia, until his death Gábor Bethlen used the title of the Duke of Opole–Racibórz and had it engraved on the coins struck at his mints ¹⁵⁵.

In the light of our previous discussion, an opinion expressed by Dziegiel ¹⁵⁶ and confirmed by other researchers ¹⁵⁷ is fully justified and confirmed, namely that '*this colony* [that is Silesia—author's note, J.L.] *was used primarily for patching holes in the*

¹⁵¹ Ahnlung, op. cit., p. 272 and the following; idem, Gustav Adolf infor tyska kriget, Stockholm 1918, pp. 2–3; Danmark Norges Traktater, vol. III, Kobenhavn 1916, p. 624; Schubert, op. cit., pp. 286 and the following; Thurn to Gábor Bethlen, Hague, July 14, 1624 (Odložilik, op. cit., pp. 180–183); Capitaneus a Strassburg to Thurn, Alba, July 28, 1626 (Ovary, op. cit., p. 211); Thurn to Capitaneus a Strassburg, undeated (ibid, p. 213).

¹⁵² Padavin in the letter of the 5th of August 1626 from Vienna informed that Gábor Bethlen presented Cardinal Dietrichstein with a marvelous Turkish horse: 'eon lettere d'assicuratione d'esser fidellissimo et sincerissimo amico di Cesare, voler dipender da lui, et tutto cio che havera a passare eon ia Maesta Sua, intende sij portato da esso Cardinale; per segno di che lo progava far istanza alla Maesta Sua, perche le ritomi i dua ducati d'Opolia et Ratibor che sono dalia moglie, oltre di che vogli l'Imperatore prometterie et farle assistenza per ... di veder doppo lui il Principato di Transilvania in figlio, se ne fossero, owere in nepote, facendo percio larghissime esibitioni, senza dichiarirsi ad alcuna resoluzione in contrario, con quali; et con tutte le dimande predette e capitato qui il Cardinale, doppo espedito corriere; quello di Gábor con promissione di manderle la risposta, che tutti questi giorni si e consultata et hoggi deve essere resoluta, con la quale il Cardinale espedira uno in Transilvania. Corrispondente alla dimanda non sara certo la risposta; perche li due Ducati gliha gia il Re, et levarglieti non si approba, il Marchesato si reputa ben confiscato et l'assistenza che ricerca, ben si conosce che e per prender occasione dalia negativa di diro, di non potersi promettere alcuna cosa di qua, et che eon pretesto di ricuperare il suo, sij per uscire...' (Ovary, op. cit., pp. 403–109).

¹⁵³ S. Szilagy. Bethlen Gabor es a sved diplomaczia (Ertekezések a tortenelmi Tudományok Korebol, issue X, 1882, pp. 8–U); idem, Gabriel Bethlen und die schwedische Diplomatie, Budapest 1882, pp. 11–12.

¹⁵⁴ Gooss, op. cit., pp. 609–623.

¹⁵⁵ Dewerdeck, op. cit., pp. 503–504; F. Lucae, Schlesiens curieuse Denckwurdigkeiten oder vollkommene Chronica..., Franckfurt am Mayn 1689. p. 718.

¹⁵⁶ Dziegiel, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ K. Piwarski, Historia Śląska, Wrocław–Katowice 1947. p. 217.



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imperial diplomacy, in fact, when we look back and remember the individual moments of the intricacies of this diplomacy, we will see that whenever the men at a green table somewhere could not be reconciled, then Silesia, especially Upper Silesia, fell victim, became a patch that was applied where it was necessary to heal the wound, quell the anger or temper irritated ambition'. We shall add to that: it was a colony of great strategic importance, and therefore, despite the different tides, it always came back under the Habsburg rule.

According to the almost an age-old tradition, at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, Upper Silesia was used as a bargain in the political and financial schemes in Hungary. Giving the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz as a pledge to Bethlen Gábor was aimed at weakening his position and depletion of his possession in Hungary. Initially, before the battle of White Mountain, Upper Silesian duchies were given to him only in writing, probably because it was feared that taking them under his rule would strengthened the position of Protestants in Silesia. After the suppression of the Bohemian uprising and restoring a relative peace in Silesia, he was admitted there, but only for so long as the danger of Protestant coalition and the Turkish invasion were real during that war, and until the strategic importance of the Silesian land in the Swedish–Transylvanian or Danish–Transylvanian alliance became clear. Then Upper Silesia was taken away from him and never again was he admitted there. It can also be assumed that giving the Prince of Transylvania the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz could have another meaning for the Habsburgs. Apart from verbal promises and the hopes coming mainly not so much from the court of Vienna, but from the Bishop of Wrocław, Archduke Charles, who in this case should be considered *persona privata*, which were aimed to ensure the necessary support against the enemies of the Empire, every effort was made in Vienna in order to prevent the House of Vasa to enter Silesia¹⁵⁸. It is significant that this line was kept practically only until the Battle of White Mountain, and later pronouncements on the subject disappear almost completely. Moreover, almost until the half of 1624, until the Peace of Vienna, an argument can be posed that the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz was a pledge for the Prince of Transylvania. Although we do not know the case of exploiting this argument by the Austrian diplomacy, the fact is that it paralysed, especially after 1620, each Polish action giving the Vasas a real chance to settle in Silesia.

It seems, however, that also the Polish court, after the White Mountain preoccupied with internal troubles and Turkish dangers, did not intend to initiate any action to acquire Upper Silesia for Rzeczpospolita, even as a fief to the king's sons. Sigismund III, still living in terror before a new rebellion, clung to pro-

¹⁵⁸ Szelągowski, op. cit., pp. 240–241; Czaplński, *Szlachta, możnowładztwo...*, pp. 280–281. The latter one has recently presented a justified hypothesis that there were no chances to regain Silesia during the Thirty Years' War 'neither by means of an alliance with the Habsburgs nor with the Protestants' (*Polityka Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w latach 1576–1648, 'Pamiętnik VIII Zjazdu Historyków Polskich w Krakowie 14–17 września 1958 r.', vol. I, Warszawa 1958, pp. 97–98*). More explicit mentions on the planned concessions of the court of Vienna to Sigismund III in Silesia can be found only in the guidelines for the envoys of Ferdinand II, who travelled to Poland: Althan and Tennagl, from the end of 1619 (*Prochaska, op. cit., pp. 400–401; Macurek, op. cit., pp. 84–85*). Also this time the Emperor failed to mention the parts of Silesia he was planning to cede to the Polish King.



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Habsburg policy, which was supposed to help him regain the Swedish crown. Therefore, he could not and would not worsen Habsburg–Transylvanian relations by claiming for himself or for his sons the Upper Silesian land, which served as an important asset in the actions in Hungary. Extremely characteristic in this respect is the correspondence between Sigismund III and Ferdinand II during negotiations in Mikulov and the conclusion of a peace treaty in Mikulov. The case of Upper Silesia does not appear there even once. The Emperor did not inform the Polish court of his intention to give the land to Bethlen. When it became an accomplished fact, writing about the conditions of Peace of Mikulov and justifying the necessity of its conclusion, he did not mention at all that the price he had paid for it was, among others, giving the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz as a pledge to the Prince of Transylvania. He insisted only on the fact that the Polish king should prevent Polish attack on Hungary and Transylvania, because he cares for good relations with Gábor Bethlen. Sigismund III also did not mention the Upper Silesia in response to the letters; nothing is written there about the Polish efforts to get the land, not a word of protest against giving it away to the Prince of Transylvania¹⁵⁹. All indications show that the court of Warsaw completely resigned from the attempts to settle in Upper Silesia, for 'higher' cause. There are also other facts that support this thesis. Sigismund III, and in fact his wife, began to look elsewhere for their sons benefices. When in 1623 the relations between Gábor Bethlen and the Habsburgs were tense and there was a threat of the outbreak of a new war at any moment, and Ferdinand II was giving the Upper Silesian *kamera* owned estates as a pledge to the burgrave von Dohna, Queen Constance and the all-powerful governess of the king's sons, Ursula Meyer, started their efforts to obtain on the imperial court for one of the Polish princes, the Bishopric of Kamień Pomorski and the Canonry of Cologne¹⁶⁰.

Initially, Gábor Bethlen did not treat the Upper Silesian duchies pledge seriously. He just alluded to the traditions of the Hungarian Queen Isabella and King Sigismund Báthory. If he insisted on having them in possession, it was primarily for financial considerations. He realized quite quickly that the rich soil of Upper Silesia can be his goldmine, and the money was still needed. His economic and monetary policy in Upper Silesia brought also surprisingly favourable results. It is no wonder that he wanted to keep it under his rule. His rule in Upper Silesia, not enjoying in fact the sympathy and support of the vast majority of the local population, was focused—as it seems—especially to draw the maximum financial benefit from the country's resources. After all, he did not even place there his military crews. Nevertheless, when he began to establish diplomatic relations and spin, completely unreal, though,

¹⁵⁹ Cf. the letters of Ferdinand II to Sigismund III, Vienna, December 29, 1621 and January 8, 1622, and Sigismund III's answer, Warsaw, February 6, 1622 (Czartoryski Library in Cracow, rkps no. 1623, pp. 1684–1688).

¹⁶⁰ 'Wie sy dann ietzt zu Ir Khaysserl. Majt. geschriben vnd dieselben gebethen haben, dess Sy darzue verheifen wollen, dass ainer auss Ir Majt. [that is of Queen Constance—author's note, J. L.] geliebsten Sohnen mecht dass Bistumb Camin in Bommern, so ietzt vaciert vnd ain canonicat zu Cóln darzu bekhommen khond, darzu dann E.F.G. auch genedigst woli weren khonden, dass ain Canonicat ainem auss vnssern Prinzen mecht conferiert werden...' Extract auss der Jungkhfraw Mayrin Schreiben, March 19, 1623 (WAP Wr., Bistum Breslau, Rep. 15 II 22s).



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plans for an alliance with the northern Protestant countries, especially with Sweden, he realized the great strategic importance of Upper Silesia, but it was too late, because the leaders of the Habsburg policy had also realised that, they took the land away from him and did not want to give it back.

Gábor Bethlen's rule in Upper Silesia closed the era of recurrent practices of pledging the land to the Transylvanian and Hungarian rulers. Indeed, in 1621 there emerged a project of marriage of Hommonay with one of the Austrian archduchesses whose dowry was to become the Duchy of Opole–Racibórz ¹⁶¹, but it never saw the daylight.

Translated by Katarzyna Hussar

¹⁶¹ 'Voluerint enim ut matrimonio cum Homonaio iuncta, Ducatus Opoliensem et Ratiboriensem in dasolata Silesia acciperet...' Copia extracta ex litteris Transylvanicis, November 15, 1629 (Gindely, Acta et documenta..., p. 505).