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The Voivode Józef Potocki and the Prince Francis Rákóczi II

Abstract: The recent revival of studies on the Hungarian War of Independence led by Francis Rákóczi II (1703-1711) since the last international conferences on this topic encouraged research on the most important events of European diplomacy in the period of the Spanish Succession War. The importance of the Hungarian War of Independence consists in its capacity of forcing the Habsburg Empire to open a secondary war in Hungary and thus improving France's military dispositions. Prince Francis Rákóczi II, who is internationally by far the best-known member of his family, is one of the most popular national heroes.

Keywords: Francis Rákóczi II, Hungarian War of Independence, Spanish Succession War

The recent revival of studies on the Hungarian War of Independence led by Francis Rákóczi II (1703–1711) since the last international conferences¹ on this topic encouraged research on the most important events of European diplomacy in the period of the Spanish Succession War. The importance of the Hungarian War of Independence consists in its capacity of forcing the Habsburg Empire to open a secondary war in

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¹ The most important event was the international conference “Europe and Hungary in the Age of Ferenc II Rákóczi” organized by the University of Reformed Church Gáspár Károli of Budapest on 24–26th September 2003 (published in *Studia Caroliensia* 2004/3–4).

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For the better understanding of the historical events it is important to recall the special relation between Hungary and the Habsburg dynasty. After the battle of Mohács in 1526 when King Louis II lost his life, his brother in law Ferdinand I of Habsburg succeeded to his inheritance and was elected King of Hungary and Croatia. This personal union between Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy characterised the Hungarian history from 1526 until 1918. Under the Turkish onslaught Hungary disintegrated into three separate parts Turkish Hungary in the middle of the country, the rest of the Hungarian Kingdom (Habsburg or Royal Hungary) in the western part and Northern Hungary and Transylvania, which became a quasi independent principality. After the repulse of the Turks, in 1687 during the Diet of Pressburg (now Bratislava in Slovakia), the Hungarian Estates relinquished their right of election and their right of resistance. The hereditary title of the Habsburgs to the Hungarian Kingdom was officially recognized and the Emperor's son, Joseph was crowned King of Hungary at the age of nine.²

In spite of the agreement between the House of Habsburg and the Hungarian Estates, the integration of Hungary into the Habsburg Monarchy was not an easy affair. The tax reform of 1697 and the activity of the special administration of the newly conquered and formerly Hungarian territories, the so-called *Neoacquistica Commissio*, provoked a large resistance of Hungarian society. The conjuration of Wesselényi in 1670's, the uprising of Thököly during the next years created troubles and tensions between the population and the imperial authorities. In the last decades of the 17th century, families of magnates, like the Zrínyi's, Bercsényi's and Rákóczi's were the leaders of the anti-Habsburg activity.³

Francis Rákóczi II the leader of the Hungarian uprising at the beginning of the 18th century called the Hungarian War of Independence by the Hungarian national historiography was a Prince of the Holy Roman

² J. Bérenger, *Charles Kecskeméti, Parlement et vie parlementaire en Hongrie 1608–1918*, Paris 2005, pp. 128–141.

³ See on the conjuration of Wesselényi: G. Wagner, *Der Wiener Hof, Ludwig XIV. und die Anfänge der Magnatenverschwörung 1664–65*, in: *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, Wien 1963.

Empire. His life falls naturally into three periods, each of which constitutes a distinct and important area in the history of Hungary. The youth was concurred with the glorious delivery of Hungary from the Turks and the greatness of the Austrian power in Hungary (1686–1699). His political career occurred during the war of the Spanish Succession, which lasted only eight years (1703–1711). The last period of his life was a long saga of exile and this was also the period of his literally main activity (1712–1735).⁴

Francis Rákóczi II was born in Borsi in the north of Hungary in 1676. The Rákóczi family was of princely Transylvanian stock whose members were leaders of the struggles of the Hungarian independence first against the Ottoman attacks and later against the absolutist ambitions of the Emperor Leopold I. His father, Francis Rákóczi I, was an aristocrat of some repute and possessed a huge amount of estates in the North-east of Hungary. As he feared of the increasing influence of the imperial authorities in Hungary, he was soon involved in an anti-Habsburg conspiracy (the so-called Wesselényi conspiracy in 1670). The conspiracy was discovered and some of the leaders were beheaded. He only escaped from the imperial revenge by his sudden death. His wife, Helen Zrínyi, was also a member of the old Hungarian nobility, descendent of the famous Nicholas Zrínyi who defended the castle of Szigetvár in Hungary in 1566 when Suleyman the Great died. After the death of his husband, the widow married the other leader of the Hungarian national movement, Emeric Thököly. The latter led a long internal war against Austrian forces and contributed to the Ottoman attacks against them, for instance during the second siege of Vienna in 1683. Supported by the Ottoman Empire and by the French diplomacy he managed to create a vassal Hungarian Kingdom in the middle of the country (*Orta Maçar* in Turkish) and he reigned briefly as Prince of Transylvania. This small and weak Hungarian state could not survive the collapse of the Ottoman forces in the Hungarian battlefields and Emeric Thököly was obliged to emigrate into Turkey. His wife resisted heroically in the castle of Munkács (now Mukatchevo in the Ukraine) with her children, Francis and Julianne, un-

⁴ See on this period of his life: F. Tóth, *Emigré or Exile? Francis Rákóczi II and His Exile in France and Turkey*, in: *Monarchy and Exile, The Politics of Legitimacy from Marie de Médicis to Wilhelm II*, ed. P. Mansel-Torsten Riotte, London 2011, pp. 91–102.

til the desperate surrender in 1688. Helen Zrínyi left Hungary and joined her husband in Turkey. During their emigration, they lived in Izmit (the ancient Nicomedia) with the support of the Sultan. Since then, the Ottoman Empire became a favourite place of Hungarian refugees.⁵

Francis Rákóczi II was brought up under imperial supervision in a Jesuit school in Bohemia and at the University of Prague. He became a cultivated “honnête homme” in the court of Vienna and did not care about the troubles in Hungary, he was even dissuaded from speaking Hungarian. After his studies, he married the Princess Charlotte-Amelia of Hesse-Rheinfels without the permission of the Emperor. His return in 1694 to his country visiting his family estates in the North Hungarian area opened his eyes and made him get into contact with other patriots. Then he changed his mind and almost by right of inheritance he found himself a leading figure in the new national struggle for Hungarian independence. Rákóczi turned himself to the French King for a foreign support but an Austrian spy intercepted his letter. He was sent to the prison of Wiener Neustadt where he waited for the sentence of the imperial court, this meant his obvious death. With the aid of his wife, he organized an adventurous escape from the prison, which impressed the contemporary European public opinion, as the duke of Saint-Simon mentioned it in his memories. Rákóczi's estates were ordered to be impounded by Leopold I on 6 July 1701. On 19 November, not long after Rákóczi's escape, all his movable and immovable property was confiscated. He retired in Poland for two years and lived in exile with some other Hungarian aristocrats, like the count of Bercsényi, his most devoted general during the next war. Bercsényi got in touch with the French ambassador, the marquis de Bonnac. After a vain conversation with the cardinal primate Radzi, Bonnac gave some money to Bercsényi and oriented the Hungarians by his letters of recommendation towards the Polish magnates, like Potockis and Sieniawskis, as he wrote it clearly in his letter to Louis XIV:

“J'allay aussitost chez Monsieur le Cardinal Primat; je le fis res-souvenir des discours qu'il m'avoit tenus au sujet de son argent, mais il me dit d'abord que les choses estoient changées, qu'il avoit de l'argent de reste lorsqu'il m'avoit parlé, qu'il n'en auroit peut-estre pas assez présentement, qu'il falloir qu'il allast à la diète, qu'il y fit une dépense considérable, et qu'il y acheta peut-estre

⁵ S. István, *Thököly Imre és Törökország*, Budapest 2006, pp. 182–191.

des amis, que tout cela l'empeschoit de se défaire de son argent. J'eus beau le presser, je ne pus jamais en tirer autre chose, et les sollicitations que je luy ai fait faire par le Potoschi et par Madame la Palatine de Linciei, n'ont pas esté plus heureuses, quoi que pour faire agir celle-ci avec plus de vivacité, je luy ait donné ma calèche, dont elle avoit envie. Il falloit cependant donner absolument quelque chose au Comte Berchini qui estoit venu icy sans argent. sy j'en eusse pu trouver dans la ville parmi les marchands, je n'aurois fait aucune difficulté d'en prendre et de tirer sur Paris pour mon remboursement; mais dans les jours que j'ay retenu Monsieur le Comte Berchini, je n'ay pu trouver que 200 ducats et 100 escus à luy donner. J'ay suppléé à cela en quelque manière, en luy donnant – comme il l'a souhaité – des lettres de recommandation pour les Palatins de Kiovie et de Cracovie et pour Madame la Palatine de Beltz, que j'ay prié instamment de vouloir leur avancer quelque argent que je leur feray rembourser à Dantzick, dans l'espérance que Votre Majesté voudra bien m'en faire tenir compte.”⁶

Rákóczi's arrival in Poland coincided with the troubles due to first period of the Great Northern War (1700–1721). After the failure to take Riga and the startling Swedish victories in Denmark, Augustus II was in a delicate position, because had a large opposition composed of magnates like the Leszczyńskis, the Sobieskis, the Lubomirskis and the Potockis supporting an alliance with Sweden. When Charles XII turned south and invaded Poland, his troops met little resistance in the country. Disregarding Polish negotiation proposals, Charles XII crossed into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and decisively defeated the Saxe-Polish forces in the battle of Klissow in 1702 and in the battle of Pultusk in 1703. This successful invasion enabled Charles XII to dethrone Auguste II and obliged the Rzeczpospolita to replace him with Stanislas Leszczyński who was crowned in 1705. Between 1704 and 1709 the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had one of the most serious crises of its existence. On the one hand, the military operations of the Swedish-Russian war took place on the territory of the Rzeczpospolita, on the other hand, the civil

⁶ Letter of Bonnac to Louis XIV (Varsovie, 16th June 1703) published in: F. Tóth (dir.), *Correspondance diplomatique relative à la guerre d'indépendance du prince François II Rákóczi (1703–1711)*. (Bibliothèque de l'étude de l'Europe centrale N° 9), Paris–Genève 2012, p. 129.

war between the Polish factions augmented the devastations of the Great Northern War. In these circumstances, the Polish society was extremely divided, some of them supported Charles XII, others Augustus II. The great hetman Józef Potocki was one of the pillars of Leszczyński's party, because he was the brother-in-law of Stanisław Leszczyński. Rákóczi's relations with Polish aristocrats and the Potockis were very useful for the preparation of his war. In order to have a strong army, the prince Rákóczi was obliged to contract some debts with Polish aristocrats. Before his return to Hungary in 1703, he waited at the border the troops promised by Polish aristocrats, especially Józef Potocki meanwhile the Hungarian when a popular unrest broke up and choose him for a leader. His first army was composed of peasants and former imperial soldiers released after the end of war of Liberation from the Turks.

That year, in spring 1703 the legation of those preparing the independence war in the Tiszahát region was already urging the prince's homecoming, who, on the other hand, saw it more and more hopeless to start his independence war with the support of Polish soldiers hired with money from the French. The tight squeeze forced Rákóczi to look for financial sources in his close environment, and to offer his estates as backing. On 2 April he pawned half of his estate at Makovica, giving it to the Sieniawskis, a couple providing him refuge, for 125,000 German Florins. It is important to note that it was around this time, too, that the second legation from Hungary arrived in Brzeżany. The condition in both debentures deserves attention: Rákóczi will be able to hand over his estates if his intentions, with God's help, come to realization; that is, if he manages to take them back with his army. Both debentures are drafts, it is not known whether a fair copy was made. Thus we don't know if the deal was concluded or remained a plan. Anyhow, it is a fact that Rákóczi left Brzeżany for Hungary in early June 1703 without having been able to recruit soldiers in Poland. His company in exile, Count Miklós Bercsényi got the task to continue negotiating with the French envoy and the Polish lords. A French memoir addressed to count des Alleurs, Louis XIV's envoy to Rákóczi, summarize the events as it follows: "Le commencement de mois de juin de l'année 1703 il rendoit compte de ses projets et de la manière dont il prétendoit surprendre les places qu'il vouloit occuper pour l'exécution de ses desseins. Son intention estoit de se rendre incessamment en Hongrie avec les troupes que le Palatin de Beltz, celui de Kiovie, Potosky tous deux zélés pour le service du Roy, et quelques

Polonois, amis du Prince Ragotzy, avoient assemblées pour son service.”⁷ Rákóczi managed to recruit a few hundred soldiers. Rákóczi’s contracted an other debenture after the occupation of Huszt (17 August 1703). This letter would have given the fortress of Huszt and its estates to the Voivode of Kiev Józef Potocki, under certain conditions.⁸ Rákóczi wanted to get further military aid for the independence fight from Poland. Since this wish did not come to realization, he did not hand over Huszt, either. He recalled that situation as well in his memoirs: “Aiant ainsi expédié nos Emissaires, nous allâmes joindre nos amis le Prince Wisnioweczky et Potosky, Palatin de Kiovie, pour qu’en leur engageant mes biens nous pussions obtenir d’eux quelques secours de troupes.”⁹

The outbreak of the war of Spanish Succession caused a special situation in Hungary: Imperial regiments that were stationed in Hungary were mostly relocated to the western front. The Hungarian uprising, the famous War of Independence took eight years and it succeeded to maintain considerable Austrian troops in Hungary. The great project of Rákóczi to join the French and Bavarian armies in Austria became completely impossible after their disastrous defeat at Blenheim in 1704, thus the Hungarian rebels had to face Austrian troops in their country. After the crushing victory gained by Imperial forces at Trenčsén in August 1708 Hungarian rebels lost the control of the northwestern and upper part of Hungary. Although the Hungarians lost every regular battle during this war, they managed to resist to the best army of Europe by the tactic of small war, a kind of guerrilla warfare well introduced in Hungary during the Turkish wars. Hungarian light cavalry, the famous hussars, succeeded to immobilize the disciplined imperial armies and became very successful in this art of the war. Louis XIV sent money, weapons and military counsellors to Hungary, but he did not accepted to

⁷ Mémoire de Louis XIV à des Alleurs (Versailles, 1st April 1704), idem, pp. 212–213.

⁸ There are three hitherto unpublished Latin debentures in Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II’s archives, namely in the part transported to exile; and now these debentures are presented to the readers with their full text in Hungarian translation. Two of them with the earlier dates were written during Rákóczi’s stay in Brzeżany, Poland (today: Бережани, Ukraine). F. Sípos, *Rákóczi Ferenc záloglevelei lengyel főurak számára, 1703*, “Hadtörténelmi Közlemények”, 126 (2013), 1, pp. 103–115.

⁹ *Mémoires du prince François II Rákóczi sur la guerre de Hongrie depuis 1703 jusqu’à sa fin*, ed. by B. Köpeczi, Budapest 1978, p. 22.

sign a treaty of alliance with the Hungarian rebels. The French subvention, about 30000 *livres* yearly, arrived via Poland to Hungary very slowly and at the end of the war this money was placed in the Hôtel de Ville of Paris. Later, during Rákóczi's exile in France, more subventions accorded by the French King were paid to the Hôtel de Ville, which managed the finances of Hungarian émigrés.

Francis Rákóczi II, a descendent of Transylvania princes, attached a great importance to having the title not only in virtue of being a Rákóczi, but also by election. In August 1704, almost at the same time of the Duke of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim he was elected Prince of Transylvania at the Diet of Gyulafehérvár¹⁰. After his election, Rákóczi sent his envoys to the various European powers. The Diet of Ónod confirmed him in his power in 1707. He hoped thereby that the European powers would renew with him the Principality's old international agreements dated from the treaties of Westphalie. In fact, the prince of Transylvania had to act in diplomatic isolation without considerable economic resources during the last period of his war. In 1707, during the Great Northern War, he was also one of the candidates to throne of Poland, supported mostly by Elzbieta Sieniawska, the palatine of Beltz. However, his diplomacy adapted itself to the adverse circumstances with remarkable agility and he was able to keep the issue of Hungary and Transylvania on the agenda of the peace conferences (The Hague in 1709 and Getruydenberg in 1710).¹¹

Rákóczi's War of Independence was fought in the Hungarian Kingdom and Transylvania in the wake of the region's liberation from the Ottoman, in one of the subordinate theater of operations of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), the first world war of modern times, fought in Spain, Italy, south Germany, the Netherlands, on the oceans and in the North Sea. This anti-Habsburg Hungarian national uprising (1703–1711), led by Prince of Transylvania Ferenc II Rákóczi, was at the same time the estate's fight for freedom; a civil war in terms of the political division of the country; and an armed conflict of international significance in the frame of the above-mentioned War of Succession. The

¹⁰ Now Alba Julia in Rumania.

¹¹ A.R. Várkonyi, *Gábor Bethlen and Transylvania under the Rákóczis at the European Peace Negotiations 1648–1714*, in: *Forschungen über Siebenbürgen und seine Nachbarn, Festschrift für Attila T. Szabó und Zsigmond Jakó*, Hrsg. K. Benda, T. von Bogyay, H. Glassl, Z.K. Lengyel, München 1987, pp. 151–162.

kuruc rebels or the Hungarian “malcontents”, as referred to by the contemporary press of Europe and the New World, could count on the military and financial assistance of France, the opponents of the Habsburgs, as well as the mediation of Britain and the Netherlands, the two sea powers allied with Vienna but supporting the Protestant cause.

As we have shown previously Józef Potocki voivode of Kiev was a supporter of the prince Rákóczi at the beginning of the war in 1702–1703. The king Stanislas Leszczyński named him great hetman of the Polish army. During the civil war in Poland, he participated to battle of Koniecpol in November 1708 where he lost an important part of his army. This military setback prevented him from joining Charles XII’s army in Ukraine and Potocki’s forces were blocked in Poland under the menace of the Russian army of Peter the Great. Potocki repelled twice the Russian forces, but he had to flee in Hungary with his army. In order to avoid to be captured Potocki asked protection from the Prince Rákóczi in 1709 with his three regiments of cavalry.¹² Meanwhile, the Russian army defeated the Swedish forces at Poltava (the 8th July 1709). At Poltava, it was not only Russian numbers but the increased skill of the Russian Army that at least overcame Charles XII. The battle heralded the emergence of Russia as a European great power and signalled the end of Sweden’s great-power status. The brilliant army of Charles XII disappeared and Józef Potocki could not count on his aid and accepted the service of the prince Rákóczi, as he remarks it in his memoirs:

“Peu après son départ¹³, il y eut des Seigneurs polonois, partisans du Roi de Suède, qui vinrent me trouver pour m’offrir des Valaques, des Tartares et quelques Compagnies de Dragons; parce qu’après la Bataille de Pultava, les Troupes du Roi de Suède aiant aussi été malmenées en Pologne, les susdits se trouvoient à peu près dans le même état où j’étois. Mais avant que de déboursier de l’argent, aiant voulu être assure de l’existence de ces Troupes, les Commissaires que j’avois envoyé en Pologne en les trouvèrent pas. Vers la fin de l’Automne, le hazard m’amena un secours de 2000 hommes effectifs, avec le Palatin de Kiovie Potosky. Ce Seigneur avoit été déclaré Grand-Général par le Roi Stanislas, et aiant été battu par les Moscovites, il

¹² See on the service of Potocki’s forces in Hungary: MTA Kézirattár, MS 4961/II. Box 11. Documents without page numbers (Szerencs, 31th May 1709, Eperjes, 15th July 1709).

¹³ The Russian envoy (note of F.T.).

fut contraint de venir sur les frontières de Hongrie et, étant poursuivi, il me demanda la permission d'y entrer, fondé sur l'amitié qui étoit entre nous, dont il m'avoit donné des marques essentielles par le secours de quelques Troupes au commencement de la Guerre. Je lui répondis que quant à sa personne, j'étois et serois toujours ravi de lui donner toutes les marques d'amitié qui dépendroient de moi; mais que quant aux Troupes qu'il commandoit, qu'étant en alliance avec le Czar, je ne pouvois les recevoir tandis qu'elles seroient au Roi de Suède ou au Roi Stanislas, ses ennemis; qu'ainsi pour les sauver, il n'y avoit pas d'autre remède sinon d'entrer à mon service et me prêter serment de fidélité, par où leur condition deviendrait meilleure que s'ils se rendoient prisonniers de guerre aux Moscovites qui les pressaient fort, ensorte qu'elles n'avoient guères de tems pour délibérer. Elles acceptèrent mes offers. Elles entrèrent par Munkacz, où j'étois allé les recevoir; elles me prêtèrent serment; après quoi je fis savoir au Brigadier muscovite qui les poursuivait de près, que ces Troupes n'étant plus aux ennemis du Czar, mais à son Allié, il donneroit atteinte au Traité que j'avois avec ce Prince, s'il passait les frontières dans le dessein de les poursuivre. Parmi ces Troupes, je trouvai le debris d'un Régiment de Dragons que le Marquis de Bonac m'avoit fait lever en Pologne avec le consentement du Roi de Suède par le Colonel Bielk, Suédois, dont Charrière, François, étoit Lieutenant-Colonel, et que le Roi Stanislas m'avoit fait enlever, il y avoit environ deux ans. Il n'y avoit guères plus de 200 hommes. Le Régiment de Zilik, appartenant au Roi de Suède, compose de Soldats François faits prisonniers à Hochstet, étoit environ de 150 hommes, ainsi que les Gardes du Roi Stanislas et quatre Compagnies de Dragons du Palatin, environ 40 hommes chacune. Le reste étoit Polonois et Tartares de Lithuanie appelés Lipka."¹⁴

In cooperation with the Hungarian authorities Józef Potocki tried to stop the desertion of his troops. At the Hungarian-Polish border the Polish soldiers and officers had to possess a passport of Rákóczi or Potocki. Everyone passing the border without passport was at the moment arrested and sent to Potocki's army. The Polish contingent, called in sources "Militia Auxiliaria" constituted an important part of Rákóczi's forces composed of about 12.000 men. This army executed the last important operation during the government of prince Rákóczi.

¹⁴ *Mémoires du prince François II Rákóczi sur la guerre de Hongrie depuis 1703 jusqu'à sa fin*, ed. by B. Köpeczi, Budapest 197, pp. 181–182.

The “Militia Auxilaria” commanded by Potocki stationed at the beginning of the year 1710 in the region Zemplén in Upper Hungary. Most of their forces took part in the battle of Romhány, but another part with the court of Potocki remained in their winter quarters. In Hungarian sources concerning his title of great hetman of the crown (*wielki hetman koronny*) was mentioned as “Excellentissimus Dominus Palatinus Kioviensis et Supremus Exercitus Regni Poloniae Dux” or “Supremus Dux” which was interpreted by Rákóczi in French as “Grand-Général”. We can observe that this denomination corresponded to the same rank that count Bercsényi held in the Hungarian army: “Grand-Général des Etats Confédérés”.¹⁵

Potocki’s army stayed between January and April 1710 in Upper Hungary, in the region of Kassa (now Kosice in Slovakia). In the beginning of January about 4000 Polish cavalrymen stationed near Sztropkó (now Stropkov in Slovakia) under the direction of the counts Józef Potocki and Stanislaw Tarlo. This contingent took part of the battle of Romhány the 22th January 1710. This was the last battle of Rákóczi’s troops against the Imperial forces commanded by the general Johann Damien Sickingen. Count Potocki directed the left wing composed of about three thousand Polish cavalrymen. The battle started with the furious attack of Polish cavalry who defeated the Imperial dragons. In spite of the lucky commencement, the Hungarian troops did not exploited this advantage because of the disordered plundering of enemies baggage. Finally, the Imperial dragons reorganized their troops and counter-attacked successfully the Hungarian forces. Although their considerable losses, Sickingen’s army obliged Rákóczi’s forces to retire. In his memoirs, Rákóczi noted that his troops remained in order during this retirement towards Érsekújvár (Neuhausel, now Nové Zámky in Slovakia): “Mes troupes ne se débandèrent pas et après quelques jours de rafraîchissement, je détachai les Polonois avec quelques Régimens hongrois pour renforcer la Cavalerie de Neiheisel, et pour y faire entrer des Comtés voisins de la Forteresse, tuos les grains qu’ils trouveroient dans les Villages.”¹⁶

¹⁵ O. Tamás, *Zemplén vármegye és térsége hadi krónikája 1710 elején*, in: *Az újrakezdés esélye. Tanulmányok a Rákóczi-szabadságharc befejezésének 300. évfordulója alkalmából*, szerk. Czigány István, Kincses Katalin Mária, Budapest 2012, pp. 56–57.

¹⁶ *Mémoires du prince François II Rákóczi sur la guerre de Hongrie depuis 1703 jusqu’à sa fin*, éd. par Béla Köpeczi, Budapest 1978, p. 184.

After battle of Romhány the Hungarian uprising lost all and any hope for the continuation of the war. Because of the disastrous economical situation, the spread of the plague in the country the state of Rákóczi started his disintegration and inevitable downfall. Polish troops were reunited mostly in the county of Zemplén, the safe regions free of the plague. The lack of horses and the problems of alimentation were very often discussed by the Polish command and the Hungarian authorities. Due to the research of Tamás Oláh, the Polish troops, fragments of Stanisław Leszczyński's army, staying between January and April 1710 in this county were composed of the following parties:

- the court of of great hetman of the crown Józef Potocki,
- the royal bodyguard infantry of Stanisław Leszczyński,
- the royal bodyguard cavalry regiment of Stanisław Leszczyński – so called Skórzewski regiment,
- the cavalry regiment of Józef Potocki,
- the dragon regiment of Józef Potocki.¹⁷

Beside his position of great hetman of the Polish army, Józef Potocki also acted as a military advisor for prince Rákóczi and count Bercsényi. Maybe, the Polish great hetman had an influence on the Hungarian tactical or strategic decisions. The period of Hungarian war of independence war characterized by the “guerre de parties” or “little war” (*petite guerre*)¹⁸ which spread later in Western Europe thanks to Hungarian hussars. The term “little war” itself appeared at the beginning of the 18th century. The quality of great hetman of Potocki was interesting in Hungary because he stayed not only as a friendly Polish aristocrat, or diplomat and military advisor, but as the commander in chief of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Consequently, he was at the same level as count Bercsényi which could make some difficulties in the subordination and the

¹⁷ O. Tamás, *Zemplén vármegye és térsége hadi krónikája 1710 elején*, in: *Az újrakezdés esélye. Tanulmányok a Rákóczi-szabadságharc befejezésének 300. évfordulója alkalmából*, szerk. Czigány István, Kincses Katalin Mária, Budapest 2012, pp. 58–61.

¹⁸ The Polish term “mala woyna” appeared also thanks to translations of treatises on little war. For example, the translation of Grandmaison treatise of 1812: *Mala woyna czyli slusby letkich pulkow w czasie woyny*, przez P. Kapitana de Grand-Maison. Cited by S. Picaud, *The Little War of the 18th Century in Europe: An Updating of the Bibliography*, *Bibliographie internationale d'histoire militaire Sélection* 2000–2004, Pully 2005, p. 189.

command of the international army of prince Rákóczi. Nevertheless, the members of his retinue, as well as other Polish officers who arrived in Hungary earlier through the intervention of the French ambassador in Poland, saw service in the kuruc army, in parallel with representing the Polish king. Engaged in this fields of activity, Janusz Grudzinski (1710) was promoted to the rank of field marshal by Rákóczi, like were other French officers in the Hungarian military high command: Louis Fierville, Louis Lemaire, Georges Chassant in the infantry and François Damoiseau in the engineer corps.¹⁹

We can also notice the influence of Polish cavalry on Hungarian tactics. The Polish hussar was considered as a hybrid, the offspring of a complicated mix of eastern and western ancestry. As a Polish semi-heavy hussar cavalry, the Potocki troops were very efficient against regular Imperial troops like dragons during the battle of Romhány (22th January 1710), at least until the beginning of the chaotic plundering. The prince Rákóczi distinguished particularly his foreign troops, like French, Polish and Swedish regiments. In spite of the hostility of Hungarian generals, he managed to provide them a special allowances and more freedom in military decision in his army. In Hungarian sources we can also find some words of Polish origin what can prove the reality of this influence. For example, some officer-names were mentioned in Polish because they were completely different of the Hungarian usage. The case of Polish words in Hungarian sources, like *rotmistrz*, *kapitán*, *kwatermistrz*, *towarzysze* or *pan* are the witnesses of this phenomenon. The *rotmistrz*²⁰ lists conserved in the Archive of the County Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén make evident that the system of the recruitment and organization of Polish art existed also in Hungary.²¹

The downfall of the Hungarian uprising occurred in 1711 when the prince left Hungary for Poland where he was the honoured guest of the

¹⁹ M. Kálmán, *II. Rákóczi Ferenc tábornokai és brigádérosai*, Budapest 2006, p. 75.

²⁰ The commander or captain *rotmistrz* (Rittmeister in German) was responsible for the recruitment of Polish hussar regiments. See: R. Brzezinski, V. Vuksic, *Polish winged hussar, 1500–1775*, Oxford 2005, pp. 7–9.

²¹ O. Tamás, *Zemplén vármegye és térsége hadi krónikája 1710 elején*, in: *Az újrakezdés esélye. Tanulmányok a Rákóczi-szabadságharc befejezésének 300. évfordulója alkalmából*, szerk. Czigány István, Kincses Katalin Mária, Budapest 2012, pp. 58–61.

Polish aristocracy. After a short stay in Danzig where he lived under the pseudonym of Count of Sáros he went to England, where Queen Anne refused to receive him because of the Austrian diplomatic pressure. Rákóczi followed his trip to France and landed at Dieppe on January 13, 1713. As soon as possible, he joined the Court of Louis XIV at Versailles. After Louis XIV's death, the Prince of Rákóczi retired at Grosbois in the monastery of the Order of Camaldules and dedicated his life to religious devotion. The new Turkish war presented a good chance for Rákóczi to restart his struggle for Hungarian independence. As the Sultan Ahmed III invited him to Turkey, he decided to move to Constantinople in 1717. He left France in September 1717 with his small entourage and landed at Gallipoli the next month. The Sultan received him with honours but not recognized him as legitimate monarch. The Ottoman Empire signed the Peace Treaty of Passarowitz with Austria on July 21, 1718. Among its provisions was the refusal of the Turks to extradite the exiled Hungarians. Two years later, the Austrian envoy requested that the exiles be turned over, but the Sultan refused as a matter of honor. Rákóczi and his entourage were settled in the town of Rodosto (now Terkirdag in Turkey), a city in the Eastern Thrace, in the European part of Turkey. This city was relatively distant from the Ottoman capital, and a large Hungarian colony lived there on the Sea of Marmara even after the death of the prince Rákóczi. The multicultural town of Rodosto was a favourite residence for the exiled allies of the Sultan: Polish²², Swedish and Hungarian emigration were settled there during the 18th century, but the most remarkable among them was the Hungarian colony of the prince Rákóczi.

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²² Later the count Ignace Potocki (1738–1794) starosta of Kanowa et marshall of the Confederation of Bar, lived there after the 1770 during his emigration in Turkey.

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