

Constantin Brâncoveanu's Relations with the Transylvanian Territories

Revd. Ciprian CATANĂ*

Abstract:

Even if divided by external reasons, the three Romanian provinces were always connected to each other by politics, military, religion, economy and culture. Those connections between Wallachia and Transylvania were particularly preserved during Constantin Brâncoveanu's reign. The economical relations between the two countries were facilitated by the properties the prince owned in Braşov or in Făgăraş region and by the connections Brâncoveanu established with the Transylvanian merchants who traded commodities between the two countries.

Since over that period, at the beginning of the XVIIth century, the process of converting Romanian people from Transylvania to catholicism, the Wallachian prince considered to be his duty to support his hard-pressed Transylvanian brothers. After the union in 1698 and after the Orthodox Metropolitan Church in Alba-Iulia was disbanded in 1701, Brâncoveanu did not give up, but he kept trying to restore the religious unity between the separated Romanians by building worship places (Făgăraş), by reconstructing others (Poiana Mărului or Ocna Sibiului), by ordaining metropolitan priests, donations or printing religious books (*Bucoavna* and *Teaching of Scriptures*). The donations, the foundations, the printed books donated to the churches in Transylvania, were manifestations of the permanent concern of Constantin Brâncoveanu for supporting the Orthodox faith between the Carpathian Mountains, which was in a difficult period, oppressed by the Habsburg Empire on one hand and on the other by the assault from Calvins and Catholics.

The intricate connections with the Romanians from Transylvania, on territorial, demographic, economic, cultural and confessional issues, brought the Wal-

* Revd. PhD Ciprian Catană, associated member of the Research Center for Theology, *Lucian Blaga* University of Sibiu, Romania.

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lachian prince a definite place in the Romanian people memory all over Romanian territories.

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Like all his predecessors on the throne, Constantin Brâncoveanu wanted a strong relationship with all the Romanian people from across the mountains, always trying to support them and, through faith and language, keep their brothers from Wallachia and Moldavia close. Divided by external reasons, the three Romanian provinces were always connected to each other by politics, military, religion, economy and culture. Whether it was about people, books, ideas, commodities, they all circulated in this Romanian space separated by the Carpathians. The princes of Wallachia, ever since Mihai Viteazu, had not only a very powerful consciousness of the Romanian people living on all three sides of the Carpathians, organized in different political entities, but also the Union from 1600, which had proved the force that Romanian people were capable of, when they were all united under the same ruler. Constantin Brâncoveanu targeted the reconstruction of the Romanian unity, but, at that time, it seemed almost impossible to achieve, politically and military, so the dream for the Union was shapeshifting as it had done before under the rule of Mircea cel batran until Mihai Viteazu and under Radu cel Mare until Matei Basarab. The initiative for Romanian solidarity, often taken from the Eastern side of the Carpathians, was mainly targeting the Romanian brothers from Transylvania, which many times in their history were in danger of losing their inheritance due to a lack of proper state structure.

Under the rule of Constantin Brâncoveanu, for 26 years, some methods of protection for the Romanian people from Transylvania are reactivated, specifically the property over some territories and other goods North of the Carpathians (territorial issue), acknowledgment of the right of Romanian people from Transylvania to use the Wallachian pastures for their herds, receiving those threatened by foreign domination (demographic issue), stimulating the trade (economic issue), bringing the Transylvanian scholars in the service of the prince, spreading the printed materials and donating for these services, sending masters typographers to help (cultural issue), founding places of worship, ordinating in București, Târgoviște, Râmnic or Buzău of priests and hierarchs from Ardeal, protecting the orthodoxy from the catholic threat (confessional issue).¹ A particular aspect of the

¹ Ioan Aurel Pop, "The reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu and the Romanians from Transylvania – historical reality and its implications in the Transylvanian historiography of the XVIIIth

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interest the Wallachian prince had in Transylvania was his involvement in supporting the Kuruc uprising against the Habsburgic domination, led by Francisc Rakoczi II, uprising in which many Romanian people participated, organized and led by their captains in Bihor, Baia Mare, Odorhei or Țara Bârsei.

Transylvania had always been facing the expansionist tendencies of the Habsburg Empire, tendencies that led to an alliance between Șerban Voda Cantacuzino and prince Mihail Apafi. Their treaty was an agreement to unify Wallachia and Transylvania. It was a defensive treaty, ment to secure their interests agains the Ottoman Empire (in Wallachia) and the Habsburg Empire (Transylvania).²

The Habsburg Monarchy wanted to break this alliance by sending an army inside the Carpathians and by forcing the prince, on many occasions, to sign all kind of autonomy restrictive treaties. Constantin Brâncoveanu will react, when taking over the throne, against all these tendecies, for the benefit of all Romanian people, even if there were certain signs coming from the Court of Wien that they intended to conquer Wallachia.

Even if the Wallachian prince advised the Habsburg monarch not to send troups to his country, it finally happened at the end of 1689, when the Austrian army entered the territories South of the Carpathian Mountains, through Cerneți and Bran, triggering concerns and with them, a defensive reaction. As a result of some clever approaches of the Wallachian prince, the Austrian army withdrew. In the spring of 1690, at the Transylvanian prince Mihail Apafi's death, Constantin Brâncoveanu supported Imre Thokoly in his attempt to occupy the throne and somehow reduce the Austrian pressure on the two Romanian countries.³ In order to achieve that, the prince made an intervention in Transylvania and, together with the allied Ottoman army, defeated, on 21st August 1690, in Zărnești, the imperial troups and even the commanding general, Heissler, is captured. He went down the hill from where he was supervising the battle together with Kuciuk Gazi Ghirai, to meet the Austrian general, shook his hand and had an amicable conversation. He was received with arrogance as the general "was not responding as a prisoner and slave, but as if he wanted to show his noble origins".⁴ Together with Heissler, the

century" in *Constantin Brâncoveanu*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, 1989, p. 60.

² V. Zaborovschi, *The external politics of the three Principalities, Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia since the siege on Wien (1683) until the death of Șerban Cantacuzino and the ascent to the throne of Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688)*, Bucharest, 1925, p. 29.

³ Ion Pătroi, *Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu*, Universitaria Publishing House, Craiova, 2004, p. 216.

⁴ Radu Logofătul Greceanu, *The history of Constantin Basarab Brâncoveanu Voivode's reign (1688-1714)*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, 1970, p. 79.

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Romanian army also captured 19 imperial commanders and 22 imperial banners, from which seven were sent to the Pope and 15 banners decorated with crosses were sent to the Great Vizier.⁵ The victory at Zărnești was but a step towards the Wallachian prince's goal, that of restoring the autonomy of Transylvania, but at the same time it represented a turning point in the relations with the Empire.

The new prince that Brâncoveanu installed in Transylvania did not last, and so, Brâncoveanu resumed the diplomatic talks with the emperor in order to have an alternative to the Ottoman pressure. The actions of the Wallachian prince during 1690-1692 brought a balance between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman counterpart which, through their military campaigns in Transylvania and Wallachia, were trying to annihilate his autonomy. In order to be able to maintain this political and diplomatic balance between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire, Brâncoveanu will undertake many actions and dialogues in the following years. The Treaty of Karlowitz, signed in January 1699, recorded the situation on the battlefield, with Transylvania removed from the Ottoman political influence and with Wallachia and Moldavia out of the European powers interest range.⁶

Economic relations with Transylvania

In such a context, Constantin Brâncoveanu makes use of many economic and commercial means to connect to the Transylvanian principality. These relations were part of his national policy. The two countries had multiple and various commercial connections, especially considering the personal interests of the prince, who owned properties in Brasov and even more in Fagaras region, some of them being inherited from his parents. If during the rule of Șerban Cantacuzino these relations between Wallachia and Transylvania were limited by the regulations imposed from the Court of Wien or at least we have too little information because of a low level of communication between Șerban Vodă and prince Apafi, during Brâncoveanu's rule, these relations were strengthened considerably, especially with Brasov, which was geographically located at a confluence point between the three Romanian countries.

In order to reach Wallachia, the merchants from Transylvania had to travel a long way through the wild and inhabited valleys of the Carpathians. From the oldest times, the most travelled road was the one passing through Bran, Rucăr and Dragoslavele. Other narrow roads only allowed horse caravans and their loads to pass, just like the road through Prahova Valley, where the Sinaia Monastery was

⁵ Constantin Rezachevici, *Constantin Brâncoveanu - Zărnești 1690*, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1989, p. 207.

⁶ Ion Pătroi, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

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founded by Mihai Cantacuzino, one of the high officials, or the road through Jiu Valley, which had been used centuries before by the armies of princes Litovoi and Bărbat when fighting the Hungarian troops for liberty. As for a third road, the one through Teleajan Valley, which Mihai Viteazu and his men had used to cross the mountains to bring unity to all Romanian people, it was a road that crossed deserted areas, dangerous for merchants and their goods.⁷

Constantin Brancoveanu had known the merchants across the mountains even before he became the ruler of his country, since he had been assigned with various official positions under his uncle's rule. It was from them that he had found out that over the mountains, in very well kept towns, many Romanian people, as many as in Wallachia, were living and working and that their only trouble was that they didn't have the same civil rights as all the other nations living with them: Hungarians, Saxons, Szeklers, which had been favoured by monarchs from ancient times.

With help from the same merchants from Brasov, the prince kept selling in Transylvania, for years in a row the wine produced in the vineyards of Obilești, Potlogi or Mogoșoaia, the officers at the borders being instructed not to make them pay heavy taxes.⁸ He also sold herds of cattle and pigs inside Fagaras country.

One of the very well demanded export commodity that was available in Wallachia even from the XIVth, was wheat. During Constantin Brâncoveanu's reign wheat could be found on the Transylvanian markets. The high demand for wheat on the market in Brasov determined the prince to temporarily suspend its export. On 10th of June 1698, he wrote to the city leaders in Brașov of a delay on export for "2000 pails of wheat due to your city, for a month; from now, until the time to harvest and if God has mercy on us to give us a lot of bread and we have no shortage to deprive the people of their bread, then the trade will be free and who wishes to pass shall pass".⁹ Other grains that went to export were the barley and the millet. The cattle trade was also really developed and the prince was planning to found a trading company for this in May 1695.¹⁰

Among the goods Transylvania was interested in, a very important place was taken by the felt made in Brasov, used to make the uniforms for the soldiers. In February 1705, the prince bought from Brașov 130 rolls of green felt, 20 rolls of red felt and 120 rolls of blue felt. In 1708, he sent the businessman Manu Apostol

⁷ Constantin Șerban, *Constantin Brâncoveanu*, Tinerețului Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 102.

⁸ Ion D. Pârvănescu, *Martyrs of the nation. Constantin Brâncoveanu and his sons*, Pârvănescu P.H., Drobeta Turnu Severin, 2008, 154.

⁹ N. Iorga, *Studies and documents*, X, p. 43 apud Ștefan Ionescu, *The Brancoveanu age*, Dacia P.H., Cluj-Napoca, 1981, 58.

¹⁰ Ștefan Meteș, *Commercial relations between Wallachia and Transylvania until the XVIIIth century*, Sighișoara, 1921, p. 184.

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to Brasov, in order to buy felt for the people in Court.¹¹ Many of the bells for the numerous monasteries were ordered in Sibiu or Braşov, when they didn't send the order to Wien. In Braşov, the favourite craftsman for bells was a certain Henric Lambru. In 1712 the voivode gave to the Gura Motrului Monastery a bell cast in Sibiu by Moritz Lang.

The royal courts and the boyar families got from Transylvania luxury goods, made of gold and silver, inlaid with rubies, sapphires or pearls, made by jewelers from the same big Transylvanian cities. In his first year as ruler, Constantin Brâncoveanu ordered master Irimia, the sigil master in Braşov, a seal carved in stone, identical to the one on his golden ring. Later on, his golden and silver dishes (goblets, platters, glasses, plates) as well as various religious objects (censers, paravanes, chalices) were crafted by famous artisans such as Gheorghe II May, George Heltner or Johanes Henning.¹²

The extensive commercial connections to Braşov were mediated by Romanians from the cities, especially by those from Şchei. They also owned vineyards on the hills of Piteşti. It was easy for them to cross the border to Wallachia and they had many facilities granted by the Wallahian prince. Among the boyar families, the most connected, even from ancient times, with Brasov were the Cantacuzino family. Constantin Brâncoveanu would strengthen those connections even more. Besides all these trading activities we could also mention the transit trade, through Bran or Turnu Roşu, between Central Europe and Eastern Europe through Transylvania. Thus, through commerce, Wallachia had always been opened for Europe and at the same time, the Romanians living on the two sides of the Carpathian Mountains were in permanent contact.

The connections of Wallachia were not only with Braşov and Sibiu, but also with other cities like Mediaş, Sighişoara, Haţeg, Miercurea-Ciuc, Făgăraş, Cluj or Orăştie. The complementary nature of the economy in those two countries concurred to keeping very tied relations between Wallachians and Transylvanians.

There were not only the business with merchants and skilled craftsmen in Braşov that linked Constantin Brâncoveanu to those places over the mountains. From his ancestors, he had a vast estate, with orchards and ponds, that brought him a huge income. We talk about the estate in Sâmbăta de Sus from Făgăraş Country, which his grandfather Preda Brâncoveanu got from prince Gheorghe Rakoczi II, by a pledge of 1800 gold coins. To that estate, the prince added the settlements Berivoii Mari, Viştea, Drăguşul, bought from the Transylvanian gov-

¹¹ Stefan Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹² T. Voinescu, "The artistic connections between Wallachia and Transylvania", in *Studies and researches of history of art*, nr. 1-2/1956, p. 90 apud Constantin Şerban, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

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ernor Gheorghe Banffy and the estate Poiana Mărului bought in 1707 from two Hungarian noblemen.¹³

Some of the Hungarian noblemen, that fled to Wallachia because of the Kuruc rebellion and who were financially supported by the Wallachian prince, offered him in return four villages in Hunedoara County. We only have information about Trestia, with the gold mines near Băița.¹⁴ In Hunedoara county, the prince also owned the village of Tămășasa, and close to the end of his reign, he bought Rucăr, in Fagaras Country.¹⁵

The prince also owned three houses in Brașov, and other households in Fagaras Country. Through some of his men – Court Marshal Pană, commander David Corbea or Teodor Corbea – he bought houses with large gardens and apiaries in Șcheii Brașovului. Having all these properties in the regions between the mountains was somehow justified in those hard times, when the Austran armies were fighting the Ottomans near Belgrade, on the Danube's shores and when the Ottoman sovereignty North of the Carpathians was no longer an option. Just as the prince did, other of his closest relatives, the Cantacuzino family, bought properties in those regions. His uncles, the High Steward Constantin and the the Chancellor Mihai, bought the village of Recea, his late uncle Șerban owned the village of Copăcel in Fagaras Country, his cousin Ștefan Cantacuzino the estates of Porumbacu de Sus and Porumbacu de Jos and the other cousins – Gheorghe Cantacuzino, Șerban Cantacuzino – households in Brașov.¹⁶

From the year of the prince's death, 1714, we still have a very well kept inventory of the brancoveanu's family properties in the Southern region of Transylvania, in Fagaras Country: "plough land for 620 pails of grain, the villages of Sâmbăta de Sus and de Jos, Berivoii Mari and Mici, Bleșor, Sinoara; meadows for 169 carts in Sâmbăta de Sus and de Jos, Șomartin; a beech forest in Berivoi and an oak forest in Șomartin; 127 serfs – family heads, plus 6 widows with houses and 26 refugee serfs from Sâmbăta de Sus and de Jos, Rodbav, Berivoii Mari și Mici, Bleșor, Sinoara; nearly 1500 cattle; 170 Hungarian florins plus 1409 florins to be cashed out from the vassals".¹⁷ The houses were listed by the number of chambers, kitchens, cellars, barns, gardens, orchards or stables.

¹³ Ioan Lupaș, *Historical documents on Brancoveanu's estates in Transylvania and Oltenia (1654-1832)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1933, p. 32 Same information in Șt. Meteș, *The estates of princes and noblemen from the Romanian countries in Transylvania and Hungary*, Arad, 1925, p. 76.

¹⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu, N. Dobrescu, *Documents and records about Constantin Brâncoveanu*, Bucharest, 1907, p. 354, doc. 501.

¹⁵ Șt. Meteș, *The estates...*, p. 87.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 88.

¹⁷ M. Sofronie, "Aspecte privind relațiile dintre Țara Românească și Transilvania în timpul domniei lui Constantin Brâncoveanu", in *Studii și comunicări*, 1969, p. 372 apud Ion Aurel Pop, art. cit., p. 61.

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All these denote the prosperity of a prince interested in the territories between the Carpathian Mountains. This wealth was relative in 1714, as, to the end of his reign, the concerns, his rivals' intrigues and the uncertainty, made the prince to redirect his interest toward other goals. Even when the end was near, he was interested in buying certain estates in Fagaras area. But from around 1713, Constantin Brâncoveanu was conditioned at purchasing properties in Transylvania, which denoted a certain concern of the authorities about those Romanian properties North of the Carpathian Mountains. The permission to buy only properties that belonged to the fisc, with approval from the government and the Emperor were the first steps of the obvious restrictions for the one who, just like his ancestors (in XIIIth-XIVth centuries) wanted to actually own vast areas of Transylvania.

Constantin Brâncoveanu and his support for Romanians against the "uniatic"

The situation of the Romanian people in Transylvania, always under strict supervision from the Habsburg dynasty, was always a priority in Brancoveanu's policy, the prince trying by any means possible to support the brothers in Transylvania in their struggle to safeguard the state and religious unity. This situation became dramatic even from the second half of the XVth century. In the 1291 Diet, Romanians were represented by their noblemen and the same on 6th May 1355, after that, their fate got worse because of the harsh policy of the Angevin kings who attempted to increase their authority through a process of catholicization. Until 1526, that is until the moment Transylvania separated from Hungary, after the battle of Mohacs, Romanians had endured restrictions and humiliations from the Hungarian kings under the protection of the Pope and of the Roman - Catholic Church. Granting titles of nobility and feudal privileges were conditioned by being a part of the Catholic Church. Because Romanians didn't hesitate to stay loyal to the faith of their ancestors, their social situation stayed the same, they were serfs. Because of religious persecution, the Romanians from across the mountains closed ranks and thus the Orthodox Church became a determining factor in the safeguarding of their nationality, which Constantin Brâncoveanu very well noticed.

Through their propaganda, the Jesuits tried to draw the Romanian people toward the Catholic Church and in order to achieve their goal they threatened them and they humiliated them. Even the Hungarian Calvinists sensed in the Habsburg Monarchy the power able to destroy them. This is why, at a moment in time, in 1694, they even thought to elect Constantin Brancoveanu as prince of Transylvania, considering the good relations between him and the Emperor from Wien. One of his contemporaries, Nicola de Porta, secretary of the Wallachian prince, wrote

in a letter that the Hungarians believed that the election of Brancoveanu as their prince was benefic to their rights and liberties. They thought of him as being “an important man, coronated prince, renowned for being a great politician; through him they could secure their independence and order at the same time”¹⁸.

Even before Transylvania was attached to the Habsburg Empire, as a result of the Treaty of Karlovitz (1699), the cabinet in Wien was very active in trying to catholicize the Romanians across the mountains, supported by the Emperor Leopold who was raised by Jesuits and he himself being a devout protector of the papacy. Considering that the Orthodox Romanians were the majoritary population in Transylvania, the emperor received with great joy the Jesuits' proposal to intensify the propaganda for catholicizing the Romanians, luring them with political rights. The Wallachian prince, worried that these actions would lead to a loss of his Transylvanian brothers, immediately helped the Romanians in Fagaras to build a church there, right before the Jesuit efforts to bring the Romanians into the Catholic Church became open. In 1697, Constantin Brâncoveanu started building this church, on his own expense and for the true joy of his Transylvanian brothers. He also intervened near the Court of Wien to get the building permit. He got it on 10th October, but on two conditions: the church about to be built should not offend the Reformed Church from Fagaras or the jurisdiction the Calvinists had over Orthodox priests and the walls should not be very thick or very tall “out of respect for the citadel tower that should be the tallest around”.¹⁹ The church built for the merchants and craftsmen in Făgăraș was finished in September 1698, and the prince gave it many gifts which got lost when the church became Catholic, after the union.

The cardinal Kolonicz, the primate of Austria, supported the process of gaining Romanians to catholicism, claiming that the only difference between Catholics and Orthodoxes is this: acknowledgment of the papacy. He was helped in his endeavour by the Orthodox metropolitan Teofil. Lured by privileges for the priests, he was convinced by the Austrian authorities to ask for the transfer of the ancestral Orthodox church, even if Constantin Brancoveanu threatened to depose him unless he stopped the Catholic propaganda.

After Teofil's death, among the candidates for his position was the young hieromonk Atanasie Anghel, the son of a priest from Bobâlna (Hunedoara) or Ciugud (Alba). He succeeded in gain, paying some amounts of money, the good will of the Transylvanian governor and of some other high officials and in September he went to Wallachia to receive, as the old rituals intended, the gift of

¹⁸ C.Giurescu și N. Dobrescu, *op. cit.*, p. 73-75, doc. 111.

¹⁹ Silviu Dragomir, *The history of the religious deliverance of the Romanian people in Transylvania in the XVIIIth centur*” Sibiu, 1920, p. 97.

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priesthood²⁰. Apparently, in Bucharest, they knew about the intentions of the catholics to attract Romanians and that the new candidate was not trustworthy. That is why he was held in Bucharest for seven months to study the Orthodox gospel. He was ordained bishop at 22nd of January 1698 and he had to sign a liturgic, dogmatic and canonic document, with 22 points, drafted by Patriarch Dositei of Jerusalem who was in Wallachia at that time. Like his predecessors, the new metropolitan received many gifts, vestments and books and, on 25th of May 1698, his annual funds of 6000 gold coins for the metropolitan church was renewed, so that “everything should follow and obey the good teachings of the holy Kir Teodosie and that he should keep unchanged the ways of the Wallachian laws in his diocese.”²¹ Upon his return to Alba-Iulia, Atanasie was assaulted by the Jesuits.

The emperor Leopold I signed, on 14th of April, a resolution according to which the Romanians had the possibility to adhere to any of the four official religions or to keep their old faith. The priests that agreed to adhere to one of those official religions would have been granted all the privileges of the cult of their choice and those choosing the Church of Rome would have been granted all the privileges reserved for the Catholic priests. This resolution was followed by a manifest from cardinal Leopold Kolonics, on 2nd of June 1698, addressed to the Transylvanian priests, mentioning that only those embracing the teachings of the Catholic Church and the four Florentine points would be granted the privileges of the Catholic clergy.

Heavily pressured, the metropolitan, on 7th of July 1698, called on a synod in Alba Iulia, in which only part of the Romanian priests participated. They drafted a document in Romanian, stating that “on our own free will we unite with the Catholic Church of Rome and through this document we confess to be part of it”.²² But the Romanian version of the document didn't match the latin version written by Jesuit Ladislau Barany. Through this document they intended to claim that the union was a spontaneous and free act of the Orthodox clergy. As it was, the union was done in terror and with material promises. Further research demonstrated the false in the Jesuits' history, proving that the Romanian people did not follow those clergymen who, attracted by earthly goods, united with the Church of Rome.

The Court of Wien was using this “union” in its attempt to strengthen the positions in Transylvania and the Catholic Church was just a means to an end.

²⁰ Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *The history of the Romanian Orthodox Church, vol. II*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1994, p. 292.

²¹ George Popoviciu, *The Union of the Romanians in Transylvania with the Roman-Catholic Church, under the Emperor Leopold I*, Lugoj, 1901, p. 32.

²² George Popoviciu, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

The Habsburg Monarchy aimed much more deeper. Adhering to the Church of Rome signified a separation of the Romanians in Transylvania from the Orthodox Church, and the officials in Wien intended a separation between the Romanians in Transylvania and the rest of the Romanian orthodoxy. The implications of this deed were way beyond the confessional or political sphere, they were also cultural, endangering the Romanian unity.

That was the reason why Constantin Brâncoveanu, advised by the country's metropolitan Teodosie and by the Patriarch Dositei, kept supporting the Metropolitan Church in Alba Iulia even after that synod from July 1698, taking into account the fact that that document was signed only by 33 archpriests and not by Atanasie. But the privileges promised by the Court of Wien were far more attractive for the clergymen. Thus, in September 1700, the metropolitan Atanasie called on a new synod in Alba Iulia, in which all the archpriests (54) and 163 orthodox priests participated. After a two days debate – 5th and 6th of September – they acknowledge the allegiance of the Orthodox Church to the Roman - Catholic Church.²³ In a letter addressed to Patriarch Adrian of Moscow, on 8th November 1700, the metropolitan Teodosie, describing the situation of the churches in Transylvania wrote: "It is not only from the unholy pagans (the Turks) that the holy church goes through hard times, but also from the Catholics who, everywhere in their land, force people, tempt them and oppress them in order to make them change confession and follow the enemies of the holy Eastern Church; with deep pain in our hearts and bitterness of our souls and of all the Orthodox people, we hear and understand that the holy churches in Ardeal and other Orthodox churches in upper Hungary are submitted to cruelties and by deceit and guile, the Jesuits and others, as wolves disguised as sheep are doing everything they can to delude and seduce the people and the true Orthodox flock of Christ."²⁴ But the propaganda to absorb the Orthodox Church continued even stronger. On 17th of March 1701, they issued the first leopoldine document to solemnly confer facilities to all Romanians that chose to become Catholics. The exemption from all feudal obligations for priests, ensuring equal rights between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic one, as well as the inclusion of all secularists in the "catholic state" besides the clergy, were the material advantages that led to the union imposed by the Habsburg Monarchy between the two churches. On 20th of March 1701, Atanasie also signed the union paper, and on 25th of March it was consecrated for a second time in Wien by the cardinal Kolonicz as the bishop of the united Romanians..²⁵At the same time,

²³ Stefan Ionescu, *The age...*, p. 35.

²⁴ Silviu Dragomir, *Contributions to the relations between the Romanian Church and Russia in the XVIIth*, Bucharest, 1912.

²⁵ Stefan Ionescu, *The age...*, p. 36.

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he committed himself to cut any relations with Wallachia, the prince of Wallachia and the metropolitan Teodosie. Thus, a part of the Transylvanian church was no longer under Calvinistic influence, being included in the Roman-Catholic church.

The very existence of this union was for Constantin Brâncoveanu a real danger for the survival of the Romanian people. The Orthodox metropolitan church in Alba-Iulia, founded by Mihai Viteazu, hierarchically depending on the metropolitan church of Ungrovlahia, was disbanded in 1701, after a century of existence, as a result of this union act. All the accomplishments of Șerban Vodă in his endeavour of protecting the Romanian people in these parts were lost. They needed material support, books, to fight this unbalanced fight. But the Wallachian prince didn't give up on this fight, being certain of the links of blood and faith between all the Romanians around the Carpathian Mountains.

In order to support the resistance of the Romanians from Transylvania, Constantin Brâncoveanu hired an agent, Pater Ianoș, who, together with Dindar, one of his relatives and his secretary, and with David Corbea, later Constantin Vodă's ambassador on Petru I of Russia's Court, fought a fierce battle against the union.²⁶ This Pater Ianoș was a rich Transylvanian merchant, with multiple connections in Wallachia, where he owned an estate, in Perișani, Argeș. A letter addressed to the unitarian bishop Atanasie, on 13th of March 1701, helps us understand his fight against the union. In that letter, he said that the union was made by priests who got personal benefits in return, and the secularists, which were more numerous, did not answer to the Catholic call.²⁷

Thus, the union induces a profound state of discontent in the spirits of the Romanians from Transylvania and many of them became refugees on the South part of the Carpathians. Moreover, the Romanians from Șcheii Brașovului filed a petition to the Court of Wien, through which they demanded permission to remain, as before, "with their old Orthodox faith".²⁸ These Romanians had made it clear for the synod, even since June 1700 that they would remain loyal to the Orthodox faith. A letter signed by them said: "and us, the ones that wanted it, would not part from the Eastern Church for we would not take other faith no matter what we would receive in return. And if we found out that one of our priests would be involved with another law, we would not take him in".²⁹ After the union, the people from Brasov addressed the bishop Atanasie telling him that "when we

²⁶ Ștefan Ionescu, Panait I. Panait, *Constantin Brâncoveanu*, Științifică P.H., București, 1969, p. 191.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 192.

²⁸ Sterie Stinghe, *Documents about the past of the Romanians in Șcheii Brașovului (1700-1783)*, I, Brașov, 1901, p. 29.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

say we don't embrace the union we say we don't acknowledge the four points that separate the churches, and he who does that is a real Catholic. Therefore we do not allow it nor accept it"³⁰

Constantin Brâncoveanu was addressing the same people from Brasov in a letter he sent on 5th of July 1701, that expressed his joy when hearing about their attitude toward the union: "I much rejoiced that you were not tempted, nor followed, those others (who embraced the faith of Rome), but you stood by the pure Orthodox faith which you inherited from your fathers and forefathers ...; we know you did an honest and pious deed in front of God and wise people and we pray to God to give you strength and protection in the same old Orthodox law so you can keep it pure and unaltered."³¹ The prince of Wallachia ensured them that God would not stand by those who gave up on the true faith: "We are convinced that those who curse and dishonor the law they grew up with before God will soon be punished because many times, those who forsake their faith and seek another will be punished by the all mighty God."³² In only few years, the brave prince would pay with his life and the life of his four sons for being devoted to the faith he grew up with.

He reassured the people from Brasov that the Court of Wien cannot enforce the union: "We have word from the imperial Court of Beci (Wien) that the bishop does not have permission from the emperor to force the people, unless they are willing. We are founders of this church too, as it was build by the late princes of this country that has to guard and follow the ancient law, and we will protect and support those who are on our side."³³

Moreover, Brâncoveanu wrote to the people in Brasov about the good behaviour of the people in Fagaras, who brought him a lot of joy: "The fathers from Fagaras and other Orthodox christians were not tempted and they respected the honor of their faith...which was the right thing to do as we built that holy church hoping to devote it to the holy Eastern Church and that the priests and christians there would not be deprived of the Orthodox laws; and we say that for those we can find and protect we will be there."³⁴

Pained by that union document, Brâncoveanu addresses the emperor Leopold I himself, lamenting the fate of the brothers from Transylvania. Do do this, he took advantage of the British ambassador in Constantinople, Lord William Paget, who passed through Wallachia in the spring of 1702, asking him to deliver a letter

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 25-26.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 15-16.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

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to the Austrian emperor. In this letter Brancoveanu asked the emperor not to force the Romanians in Transylvania to unite with the Church of Rome. The answer from Wien came through the same emissary, and somehow disconcerted the Wallachian prince: “Why is the good prince concerned about the emperor’s decisions with respect to religion in his own country, as long as the emperor never asked the Wallachian prince what he does about that in his country?”³⁵

The defense policy of the Romanians from Transylvania was not only about building churches, like the one in Făgăraș, or about endowing them with precious objects, estates or vestments, but also about engaging in the cultural needs of the Romanians across the mountains. Even from 1698, the Wallachian prince had sent the skilled typographer Mihail Iștvanovici, apprentice of the Wallachian metropolitan Antim Ivireanul, to Belgrade in order to help the Transylvanian brothers print curricular and religious books. Here, the artisan first printed a *Bucoavnă*, which contained the symbol of faith, the Ten Commandments but also an interpretation of the seven Holy Mysteries. Its mission was to teach the new Transylvanian generations the spirit of a unitary Romanian culture.

In the same year they also printed a book of Sunday sermons, *Evangelia ca învățătură* (*Gospel teachings*), or *Chiriacodromion*, in order to help Romanians from falling apart from their rightful faith. In this book, addressed to metropolitan Atanasie Anghel, Mihail Iștvanovici shared with all the Romanians in Transylvania the fact that the Prince of Wallachia was “the true patron of the holy metropolitan church here in Transylvania and of those who need His Highness’ mercy; who many times showed (and forever will) he was a guiding light for the Orthodox faith, supporting it with divine books by printing them ...and upon Your holiness request, for you and your honourable synod, because there were no typographers here in Transylvania for our people, His Highness, in his generosity and out of endearment for the holy church, sent me to be at your service in order to provide what the holy churches might need.”³⁶ In the same book he explained the Orthodox readers that he did the right things on many occasions, but not intending to “change the Holy Scripture or the traditional canons of the Orthodox Eastern Church or to show oneself as being more skillful than the ones before.”³⁷ As for the number of copies printed in that period, the experts concluded that, in general, in the XVIIIth century, every book was printed in between 100 and 1000

³⁵ Nicolaus Nilles, *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam Ecclesiae Orientalis in terris coronae S. Stephani*, Innsbruck, 1885, p. 354-355 apud Pr. Prof. Ioan Rămureanu, “Constantin Brâncoveanu, protector of Orthodox faith”, in *BOR*, nr. 9-10/1964, p. 921.

³⁶ Ion Bianu și Nerva Hodoș, *Old Romanian Bibliography*, I, Bucharest, 1944, p. 369-370, apud Pr. prof. Ioan Rămureanu, art. cit. in *BOR*, nr. 9-10/1964, p. 921.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 372.

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copies. However, a more recent study estimated for the *Chiriadromion*, printed in Alba-Iulia, a number of about 2000 copies, demonstrating its importance.³⁸ This book represented a true monument of spiritual union, as the historian Ioan Lupaş observed: “We can say, without exaggerating, that considering the conditions at the end of the XVIIth century, it would have been very hard, beyond any political boundaries, to manifest the idea of Romanian unity and solidarity in a better and more eloquent way than the one materialized in the content of the important printing from the metropolitan Alba Iulia, under the patronage of Constantin Brâncoveanu.”³⁹

After those two printed materials from Belgrade, the printing activities stopped for half a century, which only proved the fact that Romanians did not embrace the Catholic faith.

Also, the books printed in Wallachia during Brancoveanu's reign, circulated everywhere in Transylvania. At Berivoiu Mic, Recea, Făgăraş, Braşov, Sâmbăta de Sus, but also in Maramureş at Strîmtura or Săpânţa, the translations or the printings from the time of the great Wallachian ruler were received for the use of the all local communities as well as for the consolidation of the Romanian language.⁴⁰ Only the inventory catalogue of the books from the Romanian church and school library in Şcheii Braşovului (for the period between 1688-1713) counted about 20 books from Brancoveanu's age, the majority being donated by the prince himself: *Biblia rumânească dată de Constantin Băsarabă voevod* (*The Romanian Bible from Constantin Basaraba Voivode*), two *Mărgărituri* from Saint John Chrysostom, *The Golden Mouth* (translated by the brothers Radu and Şerban Greceanu), *12 Minee tiparnice, foarte cu treabă, date de Măria Sa Constantin voevod*, a *Triod*, a *Penticostar*, an *Apostol rumânesc*.⁴¹ Between the years 1712-1713, 80 books printed by Gheorghe Radovici in Târgovişte circulated throughout Transylvania.⁴² In almost every village and city from Transylvania, in churches or in the faithful people's households, the Romanian language was consolidated, and on some of these books one could find precious notes. One of the Romanians from Transylvania, who came to Wallachia in order to become a monk or priest, Ioasaf, who lived at Daia Mon-

³⁸ Florin Ducaş, *Old Romanian travelling books*, Bucharest, 1987, p. 185.

³⁹ Ioan Lupaş, “Romanian studying book from 1643, reprinted in a Transylvanian edition in Alba Iulia in 1699” in *MSM*, no. 10-12/1957, p. 806 apud Ioan Pătroi, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

⁴⁰ Ştefan Ionescu, *The age...*, p. 39.

⁴¹ *Papers, documents and letters from Şcheii Braşovului*, ed. by V. Oltean, Minerva P.H., Bucharest, 1980, p. 4.

⁴² Identified in Transylvanian churches: 25 liturgy books (1713), 25 “octoihuri” (1713), 3 “catavasiere” (1714), 15 “ceasloave” (1714) cf. Şt. Ionescu, *The age...*, p. 41.

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astery, left on a *Antologhion*, printed in Râmnic, in 1703, a very beautiful note. In January 1711 he wrote that, after his death, the book should “stay with my brothers from Moldavia, father Petre from Târgu Bacău and another younger brother from Wallachia, near Bucharest, father Ursache.”⁴³

Constantin Brâncoveanu’s foundations and donations in Transylvania

In Transylvania, Brancoveanu’s policy for safeguarding the Romanian people’s interests manifested also through founding worship places, which remained for posterity. Besides the church in Făgăraș, of which we have already talked about, he also built the monastery in Sâmbăta de Sus. 50 years after the prince’s death, in the time of bishop Petru Pavel Aron, when the general Bucov destroyed all the Orthodox monasteries in Transylvania, the one built by Brancoveanu remained unharmed.⁴⁴

He helped repair churches and secluded convents in Recea and Poiana Mărului (under the patronage of The birth of John the Baptist)⁴⁵ and they were gifted with various printed materials (some of them signed by the prince himself) and with many other precious objects.⁴⁶ Some church painters and some painters of icons from the Brancoveanu school, painted, at the beginning of the XVIIIth century artworks that can be seen in the churches in Olteț (Brașov County), Sîntandrei (Mureș County), Maieri (Alba County), Blaj, Șcheii Brașovului, Zagon (Covasna County), Poiana Mărului and Ocna Sibiului- an old founding of Mihai Viteazu. This church was entirely renovated on Brâncoveanu’s expense.⁴⁷ Shortly after the union of some Romanians with the Catholic Church, the bishop Inochentie Micu was requesting, for painting the iconostasis of the episcopal church in Blaj, the presence of Ștefan Zugravul from Ocnele Mari so they can realize “beautiful and decent works, like one can find in Wallachia, at Cozia or Hurezi.”⁴⁸ Thus, we can say that the Brancoveanu style was becoming a panromanian one, a model for the

⁴³ Nicolae Iorga, *Studies and documents*, III, p. 169 apud Ștefan Ionescu, *The ag...*, p. 42.

⁴⁴ This monastery was founded by the prince’s grandfather, Preda Brâncoveanu, under the patronage Adormirea Maicii Domnului. Cf. Ștefan Meteș, *Romanian monasteries in Transylvania and Hungary*, Sibiu, 1936, p. 88.

⁴⁵ Was finished in 1707, when Brâncoveanu became the owner of this village Cf. Ioana Cristache-Panait and Eugenia Greceanu, “Romanian churches in Fagaras country” in *MA*, nr. 7-8/1971, p. 577.

⁴⁶ Florin Popescu, *Brancoveanu’s foundations*, Bucharest, Sport-Turism P.H., 1976, p. 82.

⁴⁷ Pr. N. Șerbănescu “Constantin Vodă Brâncoveanu the ruler of Wallachia” in *BOR*, no. 8-10/1984, p. 671. Same information in Pr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, “The Wallachian support for the Orthodox Church in Transylvania” in *MO*, nr. 9-12/1960, p. 606.

⁴⁸ M. Porumb, *Painters from the Brancoveanu school in Transylvania in the first half of the XVIIIth century*, Cluj Napoca, 1977, p. 415.

Transylvanian art, which was developing both in an Orthodox and Greco Catholic environment.

There is no doubt that the prince made donations for all the churches he had built. Those donations were not ment only for those churches he had founded, but his generosity was felt by other holly places between the Carpathian Mountains. We have already mentioned that he helped the metropolitan church from Alba Iulia, church that also received the village of Merișani in Argeș County. The old church in Șcheii Brașovului, Sfântul Nicolae, received money donations, religious books – among which the 12 *Mineie* printed in 1698 in Buzău, vestments, precious objects and estates. Because of that, of course, he “I Costandin voievod and gosp(odja) ego Mariica i cead ih” are mentioned in the great diptych of this holly place.⁴⁹ One of Constantin Brâncoveanu’s daughters, princess Ancuța, the wife of colonel Nicolae Russet from Moldavia, before her death on 12th of April 1730, in Brasov, in the memory of her father, donated to this church a a golden crown inlaid with diamonds. This is why she was also mentioned, together with her husband and her parents, in the diptych of this church.⁵⁰

From a document dated on 15th of March 1699 we find out about how much Constantin Brâncoveanu cared about the people in Făgăraș and about the church he had built in that city: “Behold, from my fortune, that God bestowed upon me, we founded and built this holy church over the mountains, in Transylvania, in the city we call Făgăraș, and we adorned it inside and outside as we can see, with what we could from our own efforts. And besides all these I add my donation to benefit the holy church and for the food of the holy priests that live in it, I also say that from the royal toll in Rucăr and Dragoslavele they could take 50 talers. And the priests of this holly church should come every year in the month of October, on the 26th, on St. Dimitrie’s day, to get this money from the toll officers, but only as long as they keep the Orthodox faith. And if they change their faith and leave the Eastern Church, they shall be deprived of this gift I gave them.”⁵¹ Even if the prince was very wise in this decision, after a while, the church became unitarian.

The donations, foundations, the printed books given to the churches in Transylvania, were all manifestations of the permanent concern Constantin Brâncoveanu had to support the Orthodox faith inside the Carpathians, on a time people were having difficulties from the Habsburg Empire and from the aggressive assault of Calvinists and especially of Catholics.

⁴⁹ Candid C. Mușlea, *Saint Nicholas Church in Șcheii Brașovului*, p. 406 apud Pr. N. Șerbănescu, art. cit. in *BOR*, no. 8-10/1984, p. 674.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p.406 apud Pr. N. Șerbănescu, art. cit., in *BOR* no. 8-10/1984, p. 674.

⁵¹ Ștefan Meteș, *The history of the Romanian church in Transylvania*, Sibiu, 1935, p. 336.

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Constantin Brâncoveanu and the Kuruc uprising

Not long after the union of the Transylvanians with the Church of Rome, the prince was facing a new challenge, the Kuruc uprising from 1703, which started in Hungary and then, on a very fast pace, spread in the Northern Transylvania. It started in June 1703 in Muncacs and was led by Francisc Rakoczi II, a very wealthy landlord. Its objectives were the abolishment of the Habsburg domination and freedom for the ethnic groups in Transylvania. Many Romanians would be part of this uprising, being fascinated by the idea of recovering privileges that they had lost centuries ago. Their participation had both a social reason - being a nation of serfs – and a religious one, because their Orthodox Church was forced into a union with the Roman – Catholic Church. For the Romanian people, this rebellion seemed the only way possible to escape the social and religious enslavement. As the movement was spreading around the country, Romanians, Hungarians, Szeklers and the other nationalities were all gathering under the red banners of the rebels. The leaders of the uprising wrote: “ One can hardly imagine the ardor and the joy that brought the people from all over the country. They came in groups, bringing bread, meat and other thing to eat...they enrolled in the army. And because we lacked guns, they brought swords, forks and sickles, saying that they were willing to live and dye beside me.”⁵² The rebellion would rapidly spread on the entire territory between the Carpathians and the participants were not only serfs, but also poor city people, priests and even representants of the small nobility from Hațeg or Maramureș. The Romanians were organized in groups led by their captains, among them being Murgu Hațeganu, in Bihor; Gligor Pinteia, also known as Pinteia Viteazu, in Baia Mare; captain Ciurilă on Someș; captain Nichita Balica from Turda; Vasile Negru in Odorhei; Bucur Câmpeanu, in Țara Bârsei; Ștefan Sudrucean, in Alba; colonel Farcaș Dragu, in Arad.⁵³ Therefore, a great number of Romanians were fighting alongside Hungarians, and this explained why the rebellion no longer had a hungarian local aspect, but a political, social and religious one. Because of the magnitude of this movement, the imperial army intervened and took action against the Kuruc (in Hungarian kuruc = outlaw), as they were calling the rebels. The empire sent Austrian troupes to defeat them, the “lobonți” or “labanții”. who were mixed troupes very loyal to the Habsburg Monarchy.⁵⁴

⁵² “Memoires du prince Francois Rakoczi sur la guerre de Hongrie”, II, la Haye, 1739, p. 33-34 apud Ștefan Ionescu, *The age...*, p. 42.

⁵³ C. Daicoviciu and others, *From the Transylvanian history*, Academiei R.P.R. P.H., 1961, p. 231.

⁵⁴ A. Andea, A. Răduțiu, N. Endroiu, *The history of Transylvania*, Științifică P.H., Bucharest, 1970, p. 287.

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On this occasion too, Constantin Brâncoveanu tried to support the Romanians across the mountains, but his attitude had to take into account two very important aspects: the peace Treaty of Karlovitz, which placed Wallachia at the Habsburg Empire borders and the union between the Orthodox Church with Rome. He was well aware of the danger represented by the Austrians to his country. On the other hand, even at the beginning of the rebellion, in 1703, his relations with the Ottomans were pretty bad, because of Alexandru Mavrocordat's intrigues on pursuing his interest to occupy the throne. In the Court of Bucharest it was well known that those who instigated Francisc Rakoczi II were the French. Louis the XIVth, the most powerful king in Europe at the beginning of the XVIIIth century, was interested in expanding the French influence in Eastern Europe and it was in his best interest to start a rebellion against the imperials, strong enough to make the Ottomans have a military intervention. Thus, Hungary and Transylvania could fall under Ottoman sovereignty and the French could easily follow up on their eastern policy.⁵⁵ At the beginning, the Wallachian prince did not involve in any way. But after the movement spread rapidly throughout Transylvania, and more and more Romanians were participating in it, Brâncoveanu had to change this attitude. He realized that he had to support the Romanians from Transylvania and, at the same time, to keep good relations both with the Ottomans and Wien. But as the interests of the two powerful empires were completely different regarding the uprising, the prince was forced to alternate a neutral position with a duplicatory one. He helped the Transylvanians in their fight for freedom, but he showed loyalty to the Empire, as he had no idea how the movement would end and at the same time he fulfilled all the demands from the Grand Vizier. A certain fact is that Wallachians and Moldavians supported this movement against the Habsburg Monarchy by helping the Kuruc refugees. Their families found shelter South of the Carpathians, as Marcus Fronius tells us: "their wives and children are in Wallachia"⁵⁶ The same chronicler noted the concern that, if the Romanian rebels got help from Wallachians and Moldavians in the Kuruc movement against the Habsburg Monarchy, they would become the rulers of the principality: "if they pay attention to the real war and they learn how to use their weapons, then they will be a real threat because when they remember they are Romanians they may fight for ruling Transylvania, with the help of Moldavians and Wallachians"⁵⁷.

Between Constantin Brâncoveanu, his high officials and Francisc Rakoczi II there were a lot of letters sent in the years 1704-1710. In all that time, 40 letters

⁵⁵ Ștefan Ionescu, *The age...*, p. 44.

⁵⁶ C. Gollner, P. Abrudan, *Francisc Rakoczi II (1704-1711)*, 1983, p. 138.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 138-139.

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came from Wallachia to Rakoczi's camp, and about 30 the other way around, asking for political, diplomatic and military support against the Habsburg Empire.⁵⁸ At the same time, Brâncoveanu kept informing the Ottomans about the situation in Transylvania, trying to obtain help for the Kuruc in their fight against the Austrians. The High Steward Constantin Cantacuzino wrote: "If the Transylvanians, in order to get rid of the Austrian would come as refugees on our land, we would receive them and after that help them if they wanted to go back."⁵⁹

Even if he was really careful, the prince was suspected by all the parties involved, Imperials, Turks or French, as his feelings for the Romanians in Transylvania, who were participating in this movement, were well known. From all the contradictory information we have from different diplomatic sources back then, we understand that Brâncoveanu's policy was very well nuanced and he wanted both to support the rebels and to remain on good terms with the Imperials and the Ottomans.

The year 1708 brought a lot of local victories for the Kuruc, but the rebellion was degrading. They killed a lot of Catholic priests, they kidnaped the judge from Feldioara and they were plundering all over the country. Brâncoveanu, even if he kept his neutral position, allowed Francisc Rakoczi II's emissary, Ianoș Papay, to pass through Wallachia on his way to Constantinople. But this was not an impediment in keeping a good relation with the imperial general Kriechbaum, to whom he sent, on a regular basis, wine from his vineyards in Pitești. And the Emperor Iosif I was reassured that the Wallachian prince would continue to keep his position.⁶⁰

As for the relations between the prince and Francisc Rakoczi II, they were always fair and close, as they had a common interest. When Francisc appoints Ion Țircă as bishop in Alba Iulia, after he had been elected as prince of Transylvania by the Dieta assembled in Târgu Mureș, he previously had asked for guidance from the Wallachian prince. Likewise, the representant of the prince in Constantinople was a nobleman from Faragas, Ion Talabă, and Rakoczi's messenger for the tzar was also Romanian, from Brâncoveanu's Court, Teodor Corbea, brother of commander David Corbea.⁶¹ This approach, of being a good neighbour with the rebel leader, had a good explanation: Constantin Brâncoveanu was interested in the defeat of the Habsburg Empire, because it was the only way for the Transylvanians to become a free nation in a confederate state, as Francisc Rakoczi II

⁵⁸ Paul Cernovodeanu, "First news about Rakoczi's uprising in High Steward Cantacuzino's letter between 1703-1704" in *History studies of coinhabiting nationalities in romania and their union with the Romanian people*, I, Bucharest, 1976, p. 79-101.

⁵⁹ C.Gollner, P. Abrudan, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁶⁰ C. Giurescu și N. Dobrescu, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

⁶¹ *The Hurmuzaki papers*, I/1, p.391-392 apud Ștefan Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

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committed to achieve through this movement. Achieving this goal was really difficult, but the prince had a moral obligation to help the Romanian rebels who were his brothers. At the same time he had to pay close attention to how the things were evolving, in order to adopt the best attitude and not to endanger the good relations he had with the Turks, the Austrians and Francisc.

Starting with 1709, the fall of the Kuruc began to be obvious. In 1711 they were completely defeated because Rakoczi's substitute, Alexandru Karoly, was far more preoccupied with saving his possessions than achieving the rebellion's goals. He signed a peace agreement and a reconciliation with the Empire in Satu Mare, in 1711, and the former leader was forced to leave Transylvania, went to Poland and from there to France, where he remained until 1717 when he boarded a ship from Marseille and sailed to Galipoli.⁶²

The defeat of the rebellion brought back the old social situation. The Romanians on the right side of Mureș River participated in another uprising led by the Serbian captain Petre Seghedinaț, from the Serbian colony in Transylvania, in Aiud and Zarand regions. But this happened later, in 1735, and it was also a failure.⁶³

As in many other circumstances during his reign, the prince's intuition regarding the Kuruc rebellion proved to be right. Even if he wanted very much a victory of the rebels, for a change in the Transylvanian situation, he didn't get high hopes, knowing how strong the Austrian army was and how complicated the external situation would be. Because his country had a common border with the Habsburg Empire and had the Turks positioned South of the Danube, there were not many things he could have done for the rebels. He supported them as much as he could, but paying attention not to upset the two powerful empires that were watching his every move. His neutral attitude, imposed by the political circumstances does not diminish his strong national awareness, which he made evident with any occasion he had to help the Romanian people on all the sides of the Carpathian Mountains.

During his 26 years reign, Constantin Brâncoveanu permanently protected the interests of the Orthodoxy in Transylvania, and the ethnic unity of the Romanian people. This was made very clear by the ideas of unity, Latinity and continuity which are observed in the scholars' accomplishments in the XVIIth century and the beginning of the next. Wallachia was on a mission to recover the political unity of the people and that reflected on the jurisdiction of metropolitan church

⁶² Ștefan Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁶³ Prof. Dr. Liviu Patachi, "Romanian Orthodoxes and their fight with catholicism after 1700", in *ST* nr. 3-6/1950, p. 224.

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South of the Carpathians over the Romanians from Transylvania, on the worship places, the printed books, the donations (the village of Merișani) to the metropolitan church of Transylvania and to other churches between the Carpathians. All these are evidence of a sincere Romanian policy.

During the religious union, the prince, through his letters, by sending and receiving emissaries, through his intervention at the Court of Wien so the Romanians would not be forced to accept this union, through his collaboration with the metropolitans Antim Ivireanul, Teodosie from Wallachia or Dositei of Jerusalem, through his collaboration with the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Moscow in order to stop that from happening, through works against the Catholic propaganda, he became the main factor in protecting the Romanian unity in a time of separation. His position regarding the union of some Romanians with the Church of Rome, his policy of expanding his influence over Transylvania and Moldavia, made Constantin Brâncoveanu one of the greatest Romanian rulers. Even if he didn't pursue the unification of the Romanians from all the territories of ancient Dacia, he was aware of the existence of a Romanian nation, unique and inseparable, living in three Romanian provinces and everytime he had a chance he stood up for them.

The intricate connections with the Romanians from Transylvania, on territorial, demographic, economic, cultural and confessional issues, brought the Wallachian prince a definite place in the Romanian people memory all over Romanian territories.

Ingenious ruler, faithful, good master, lover of arts and culture, protector of the ancestral law of his country, neglecting and sacrificing his own family for his faith and people, Constantin Brâncoveanu was and forever will be one of the greatest personalities in the political and especially cultural history of the Romanian people. He symbolizes "the golden age of the Romanian spirit, and his tragic end, endured with Christian strength, gives him the halo of a martyr"⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ Constantin C. Giurescu, *From the past*, p. 118.