

ABSTRACT

Szeklerland and its history raised the interest of numerous researchers over the last decades. This land and its inhabitants have always lived otherwise than other nationalities in Transylvania; different, sometimes favorable laws were applied to Székelys, and in exchange they had different commitments. Observing the various periods of time, we recognize an entirely distinct history of the Székelys in the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern Times. While for Hungary's history the watershed moment was the Battle at Mohács, and for Transylvania it was the time when the country split in three, research has found that for Székelyföld this moment is represented by the events that took place in 1562. Almost every book and article regarding the history of Székelys in the Period of the Principality starts with the phrase that 'after 1562 a new era has begun'. If we analyze the events of this period and the processes started in the Middle Ages we must agree with this statement, because after the orders of Sighișoara the status and rights, but mostly the social relations of the residents of Székelyföld have turned over completely. The introduction of the *ius regium* (unapplied for this region before) and the sinking of the free Székelys into villeinage set on a process of feudalism never known before in county territories. However, the Székelys appear in the newly formed Transylvanian Principality as one of the Orders of the Principality and their elite members started playing roles in different political, diplomatic or military tasks in the interest of the country. In this way, the Székely Seats did not only hold an opinion in the parliament as a community, but the wealthy elites could also form the role playing of different Seats in key matters. Analyzing the history of Csík Seat and its approach to politics in the Period of the Principality, the above mentioned statement is entirely recognizable. Before explaining this thought, I'd like to outline the main themes and perspectives of my thesis and first of all clarify what I mean by Csík Seat. As well known, in the Period of the Principality, Csík Seat appears alongside Gyergyó and Kászón Seats, these two being sub-seats. With my research I will not concern these sub-seats (though in some cases I will mention them) mainly because they have been separately investigated already by others. Dezső Garda has written several books and articles of Gyergyó region and its history in the Early Modern Times, while Imreh István and Pataki József have published many articles and a monograph of Kászón Seat.

Although Sándor Pál-Antal, Judit Balogh, Dezső Garda and numerous other scholars have touched the history of Csík Seat along their own researches, a specific work focusing only on this territory and its residents has not been written yet. I believe my research regarding Csík Seat in the Period of the Principality is a supplementary work that will raise the interest of both the historians and a wider public. I start my research with a political history frame that will support the reader throughout the rest

of the thesis making the small details in the history of the settlement and of the society more understandable. I determined the interval of my research between 1562–1690, analyzing in this time the Csík Seat that lies in the Ciuc Basin with all its 36 settlements, its general society but also its local elite and everyday stories. As I have mentioned before, in the Period of the Principality the Székelys were involved in national politics as one of the Orders of the Principality. Thus, in analyzing the region I considered important to first review and present the political role playing of Csík Seat in this period. This is a rather crucial matter in understanding the contemporary conditions of Csík. Those that lived here have not only took on roles in politics as a community (in electing the Prince or other jurisdictions) but the members of their noble families have represented and affected the opinion of the Seat by their personal decisions. During my research it became clearly visible what the consequences of these decisions were like.