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WHY THÖKÖLY? PRESENTATION OF THE THÖKÖLY DRAMA ISSUE IN SPAIN

The Kingdom of Hungary and the Spanish Empire have been linked by important ties for several centuries throughout history. Certain relations between the countries are not well known by most historians, even though they are vital in terms of politics, starting with the marriages between the two Habsburg Houses, through economic interests, such as requesting financial help to fight the Turks, and finally, literary connections that I will mention later. Throughout the centuries, these family associations became tighter and other times they became a little more distant. This was the case during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well, , , while the struggle against the Ottoman Turks has already ceased. The House of Austria in Spain ended with the death of Charles II¹ since he had no heir to the throne. The Spanish Empire with the last Habsburg was already in full decline that had begun many decades before, and with the death of Philip IV² the situation grew even more grave. His son, Charles II was not able to rule his kingdom yet because he was only four years old; therefore, his mother, Mariana of Austria³ was the appointed regent to advise her son until he became a legal adult at the age of 14. Although the weakness of the Spanish Empire began during the time of the Spanish Habsburgs, the last king had questionable abilities to govern the Spanish Kingdom. However, modern historiography tends to view Charles II and his limitations less judgementally. Researchers say that despite having limited mental capacities, he was aware of the responsibility he had. Having viewed the situation in Spain in the late seventeenth century, let us review the family ties between the two branches of the Habsburgs. The mother of the last Spanish king of the House of the Habsburgs was the sister of Leopold I Emperor of The Holy Roman Empire and king of Hungary. Leopold I married Margarita Teresa of Spain in 1666. His ruling was characterized by counterbalancing the political dominance of France in Europe and by rejecting the threat of the Ottoman Empire. Before the final decline of the House of Austria in Spain, the struggles for the throne between the two monarchs had already begun. This started the War of Succession.

¹ Charles II of Spain (1665–1700), also known as El Hechizado, was the last Habsburg ruler of the Spanish Empire.

² Philip IV of Spain (1621–1665)

³ Mariana of Austria or Maria Anna (1665–1696) was the second child of Ferdinand of Hungary and Queen of Spain from 1649 until her husband Philip IV died in 1665. Her daughter was Margaret Theresa (1651–1673), first wife of Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor and also the brother of Maria Anna.

Investigation of archival sources and other libraries

The basic claim is that the rebellion of Count Imre Thököly might have ideologically or perhaps politically impacted the Spanish nobility and Hungary. The fact that a lord of noble origin with the continued support of other members of the nobility of Hungary rebelled against the king and emperor of The Holy Roman Empire was unique and shocking at the same time. We know, that Spanish nobility – or at least some of the Spanish nobles – became supportive in the rebellion led by a Hungarian noble against their king and against the defender of Christianity, Leopold I. To understand the reaction of the Spanish nobility to the events that occurred in Hungary, I have researched abundant sources in Spain, Hungary, and Austria.⁴ These sources show that some Spanish nobles had a keen interest in the events that were transpiring in Eastern Europe. During the investigation carried out in the General Archive of Simancas, in the Archive of the Nobility Section of Toledo, and in the National Library of Spain, I found some plays about the rebellious count.⁵ Here are some examples of these unique works about Count Thököly. In the Spanish sources, his name is spelled as Tekeli, as the Hungarian letter “ö” does not exist in the Spanish alphabet.

*El molino de Kebe y aventuras de Tequeli: pieza nueva en tres actos.*⁶

*Más puede amor que el destino y aventuras del conde Emerico Techeli: comedia nueva.*⁷

*La traición necesitada y fortuna de Techeli: comedia en tres jornadas.*⁸

*Narciso Agustín Solano y Lobo: Comedia nueva, La amazona de Montgaz; Aventuras de Tequeli.*⁹

⁴ WINDISCHNÉ TÖRTEI Renáta, Buda ostroma spanyol szemmel, visszavívásának 330. évfordulója (1686–2016). http://www.balassiintezet.hu/images/institutes/budapest/Documents/Lektor-Halozat/KlebelsbergKuno.osztondij_2016evi_palyazat_nyertesei_kutatasi_beszamoloik/Windischn%20Trtei%20Renta%20Buda%20ostroma%20spanyol%20szemmel%20visszavvsnak%20330.%20vfordulja%201686-2016.pdf

⁵ Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección Nobleza: Archivo de los Duques de Osuna (AHN SN Osuna), Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE) and Universidad de Sevilla (US): Fondo Antiguo

⁶ BNE Fondo Antiguo MSS/16262. siglo XIX.

⁷ BNE Fondo Antiguo MSS/16439 encontrada en Inventario de la Librería que fue del Excmo. Sr. D. Agustín Durán. siglo XVIII.

⁸ BNE Fondo Antiguo MSS.MICRO/11632. siglo XVIII.

⁹ BNE Fondo Antiguo T/6965. Publicado en Barcelona, Impr. de Carlos Gibért y Tutó.

Analysis of the works that include Thököly

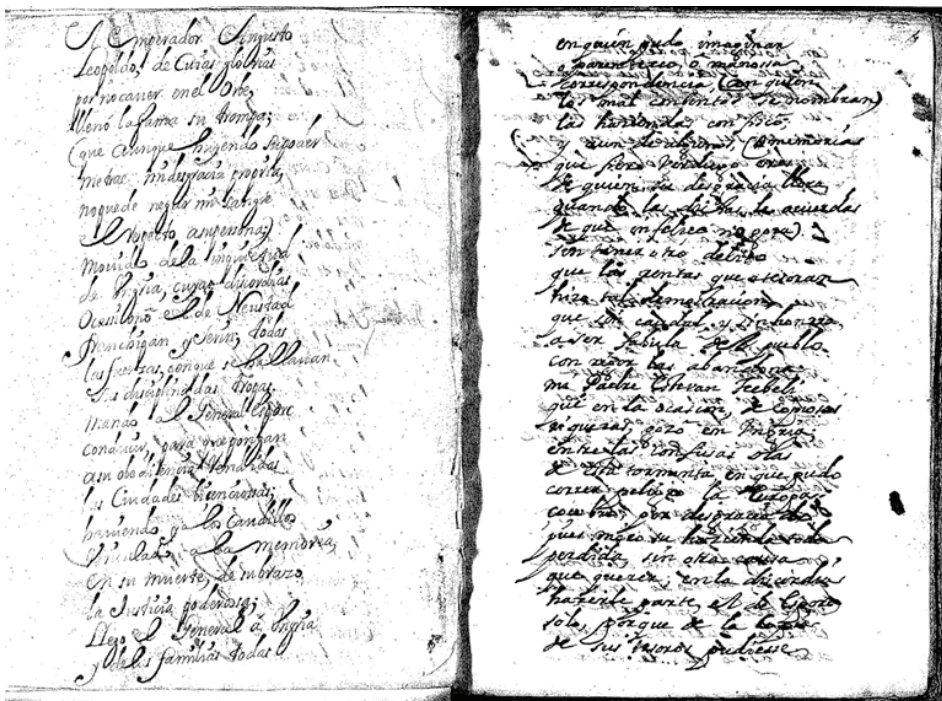
Analyzing these literary works, we observe a significant difference between the historical figure and the character of the count. According to the sources, the head of the *kuruc* bands was a smart, strict, authoritarian, severe man, a good leader, without the smallest spark of fear. About the young Thököly they wrote the following:

*en las tempranas muestras de un ardiente, y generoso espíritu, no solo por los ejercicios de cavallería sino también por la desvelada aplicación de las letras, pues a los catorce años de su edad había ya clausulado felizmente su curso en el Colegio de Eperies con singular pericia de la lengua Latina, y de las materias Escolasticas, que suelen laurear la juventud.*¹⁰

[in the early samples of a fiery, generous spirit, not only for the exercises of cavalry but also for the unveiled application of the letters, because at fourteen years of age he had already happily claimed his course at the College of Eperies with singular expertise of the Latin language, and scholastic subjects, which tend to laureate youth.]

Count Thököly was a not a well-known figure in Western Europe, and even less so in the Iberian Peninsula; thus, it is surprising that there is more than one work written in Spanish about his life, his love, and the fight against the Habsburgs. It seems that the character became of literary interest partly due to his aspiration to achieve the independence of Hungary from the Turks and the Habsburgs, with the autonomous Transylvania. His eternal love towards his wife, Ilona also added to literary interest. Perhaps the authors of these dramas wanted to show the courage, the character, the glorious life of a national hero. Below, we will see some examples of the works mentioned above to show the elements they have in common. It seems probable that the audience – we still do not know with certainty if they were readers or spectators – did not know either the characters or the contemporary events in Eastern Europe. Here are some lines from the drama about Count Thököly:

¹⁰ Francisco de Montalbo: Historia de las guerras de Ungría desde el año 82 hasta el de 88. Palermo, 1693. 21–23.



Drama entitled *Más puede el amor...*

In the drama entitled *Más puede el amor...* they describe family ties: *el conde Tekeli* es „hijo de Estevan Techeli, conde de Kesmark”¹¹ Count Thököly is “son of Esteban Tekeli, Earl of Kesmark”

It was important to emphasize who the work is about, simply because they are not known to everyone.

The play of *Molino de Keben...* begins at once with a description of the rebellious count:

Volf: *Sois vos el conde Tequeli?*

Tequeli: *por que mi nombre pronuncias?*

Volf: *En mi corazon se encuentra tan fuertemente gravado ese nombre que aun que quieraen vano porque es la primera idea que al instante que despierto acude siempre a mi lengua.*¹²

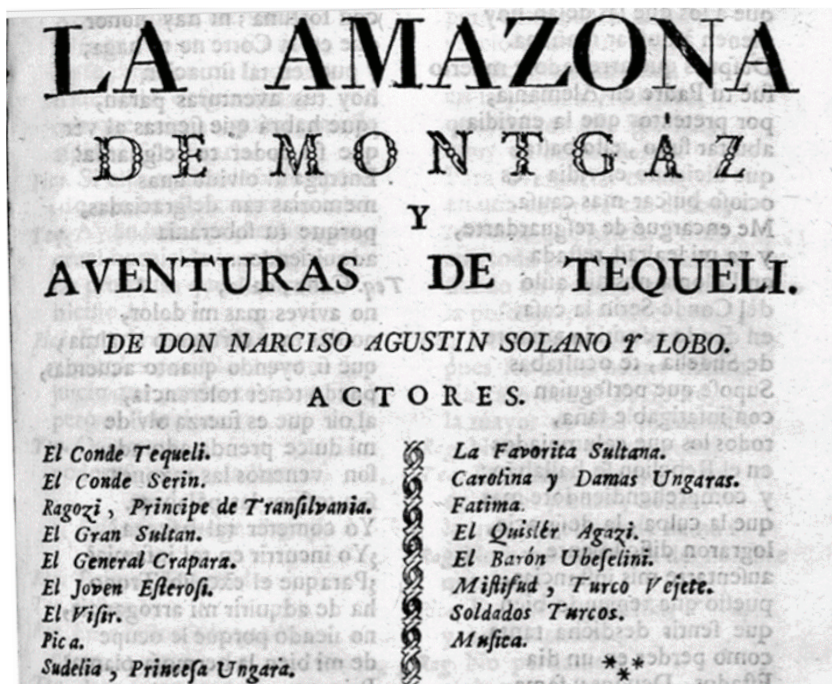
¹¹ *Más puede amor que el destino y aventuras del conde Emerico Techeli: comedia nueva* 6.

¹² *El molino de Keben y las aventuras de Tequeli*. S. XIX. 4-5.

[Volf: Are you the Count Tequeli?

Tequeli: why did you say my name?

Volf: In my heart, this name is so strongly engraved that even if I want in vain because it is the first idea that I instantly wake up always to my tongue.]



Front page of the drama entitled *La amazona de Montgaz*

In the text play titled *La amazona de Montgaz...*, a memory appears about the heroic deeds of Thököly:

*Servir al conde Tequeli el valor con que siempre me ha seguido mi confianza ha merecido y aunque tiene buen humor, es de honrado nacimiento...*¹³

[Serve the Count Tequeli the courage with which he has always followed me my trust has deserved and although he has good humor, is of honest birth ...]

In some of the dramas, the Hungarian count has a heroic lover, Sudelia who is strongly attracted to him. She represents the figure of Ilona Zrínyi, although, in reality, we do not have much information about that period before their marriage. Here we can see how Count Tekeli feels, when he talks about his love for Sudelia:

¹³ *La traición necesitada y fortuna de Techeli: comedia en tres jornadas. Publicación s. XVIII. 4.*

*Amor, pues negaste de mi bien la mano blanca, o dame paciencia, amor, o mi triste vida acaba...*¹⁴

[Love, because you denied my good white hand, or give me patience, love, or my sad life ends ..]

*Y con tantas señas de su hermosura, que el alma cuyo lienzo, perfecta pinta la imaginación, lo sumo de su belleza...*¹⁵

[And with so many signs of its beauty, that the soul whose canvas, perfect paints the imagination, the most of its beauty ...]

The text and the actualhistorical events are, of course, not in line, as we do not expect literary works, drama, entertainment plays to be authentic and accurate. At the same time, many historical figures appear in them, so the question arises: who was the author or how did the author obtain information about the Court or about Thököly and his relationship with the Turks. In many cases, these works might have been based on Hungarian, German or Italian dramas. The works reveal the count's life, personality, kinship, and friendship with Ilona Zrínyi, and later his flaming love for her. It is interesting to highlight that most of these dramas have a happy ending.

The ultimate purpose of my essay is to present the enormous contrast between the positive tone of the drama where Thököly's personality is already raised to the height of Don Quixote and Cid, while his emergence in other literary works is far from being glorified. The following is an example of Thököly entering into alliance with the archenemy, the Turks.

Count Thököly, according to the previous quotes, is an enthusiastic lover; however, in the following lines he appears in a negative role. The first sentences are quoted from a sermon given in Valencia, in the year of 1684:

*Y assi se experimentó en nuestra lamentable amenazada fatalidad; pues a mas que el Rebelde Conde Tekeli, Enemigo Domestico del Imperio, siempre Herege y ya revestido de Turco, para que al abismo de condenacion.*¹⁶

[And so it was experienced in our lamentable threatened fatality; for more than the Rebel Count Tekeli, Domestic Enemy of the Empire, always heretic and already clothed with Turco, so that the abyss of condemnation.]

¹⁴ *La amazona de Montgaz, 4.*

¹⁵ *Más puede el amor*

¹⁶ *Sermón del dulcissimo nombre de Maria [...] 10 de septiembre 1684. Predicado por R. P. Iosef Rodriguez. Valencia, en la Imprenta de Jaime de Bordazar, 1684, 26.*

Series of problems emerged

The main concern with the aforementioned plays is to identify the author, the time, the date of composition or the place of origin. Generally, we know who the author of the scripts, but in the case of these dramas, the names of the authors are still unknown. No signature appears at the end, not a name, not even a pseudonym. There is no clue, no trace or no hint that can guide us. The same goes for place and time. In addition, in the work entitled *La traición necesitada...* the question arises whether they were written by different authors, as the handwritings are so different. We can even suspect that there are more than two authors. In these cases, apart from the recurring characters, we can rely on the historical context and the style of the drama.

Finally, I would like to introduce some ideas that have not yet been developed in detail, but may be important in the future, for example, the question of origin. Several questions and doubts emerge about these dramas: where, when, and who commissioned them. Where did the basic information about events in Hungary come from? We might also ask what the purpose of these literary works had been. During these times, such plays were used as calls for military actions against the Turks. One idea is that they were commissioned to attract the attention of Spanish nobles – an understanding and receptive public. Presenting the situation in Eastern Europe could unite an army for the fight against the Turkish in the 1680s. Naturally, this concept is not fully proven yet, and we must investigate the sources more deeply to reach a final conclusion.

Eventually, wish to emphasize that there is still significant research necessary to professionally analyze these works. A philological, historical and literary analysis is indispensable since we must answer numerous questions I mentioned earlier. In addition, it is necessary to note that this study is part of a greater historical investigation. Surely, these sources will bring a new perspective to the current investigation regarding the role of Hungarians in the history of Spain and vice versa.