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BETWEEN THE BALTIC AND THE ADRIATIC

OSTMITTELEUROPA: ZWISCHEN OSTSEE UND ADRIA

VOLUME / BAND 2

ISSUE / HEFT 1



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Faculty of Humanities
Institute of History



2026

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Published by / Herausgegeben von:

University of Debrecen

Issued by / Veröffentlicht von:

The University of Debrecen Faculty of Humanities, Institute of History

Address / Adresse:

H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1.

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All articles were reviewed through a double-blind peer review process / Alle Beiträge wurden in einem Double-Blind-Peer-Review-Verfahren begutachtet.

ISSN:

Print: 3058-0501

Available online at / Online verfügbar unter:

<https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/eastcentraleurope/index>

(Editorial support by University of Debrecen University and National Library / unterstützt durch Universitäts- und Nationalbibliothek der Universität Debrecen)

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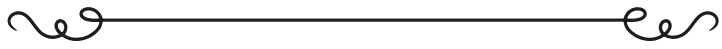
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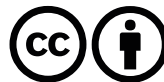
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The Ethnic and Social Background of the Military in Szeben (Sibiu) and Brassó (Braşov) during the Second Half of the Fifteenth and First Half of the Sixteenth Centuries

ABSTRACT

Transylvania was one of the most highly militarized regions of the late medieval Kingdom of Hungary. This study examines the military organization of two Transylvanian Saxon towns, Szeben and Brassó, as well as the ethnic and social composition of their urban military forces in the second half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. The findings indicate that the two towns employed different mobilization systems. Most soldiers were recruited from the local Saxon population, though Szekler and Wallachian individuals were also present. In both towns, a significant proportion of the soldiers were originally craftsmen.

Keywords: social history, military history, Saxon towns, ethnic, soldiers

Introduction

During the late Middle Ages, Transylvania was considered one of the most militarized regions within the Kingdom of Hungary. Some estimates suggest that the population of 500,000 living here could mobilize up to 50,000 soldiers. In practice, however, such a large force was never assembled in one place, mainly because of the limited logistical capacity and the mobilization system of the era. Moreover, the deployment of this army beyond Transylvania was highly restricted.¹

In terms of social background, the military forces that could be mobilized in Transylvania came primarily from three “ethnic groups” (“nation”), each

¹ Kubinyi András, “Hadszervezet a késő középkori Magyarországon”, In. Kubinyi András, *Nándorfehérvártól Mohácsig. A Mátyás- és a Jagelló-kor hadtörténete*. Budapest, 2007. 199–215. 201.; B. Szabó, János, “The Military Organization and Army of the Kingdom of Hungary (1490–1526)”, In. B. Szabó, János – Fodor, Pál (eds.), *On the Verge of a New Era. The Armies of Europe at the Time of the Battle of Mohács*. Budapest, 2021. 147–171. 152.

with distinct legal statuses during the Middle Ages: the Hungarians (nobility), the Szeklers, and the Saxons.² This study will focus on one of these groups, namely the ethnic and social background of the soldiers recruited from the Saxon towns of Transylvania. Due to space limitations and the availability of sources, the analysis will concentrate on the towns of Brassó (Rom. Braşov, Ger. Kronstadt) and Szeben (Rom. Sibiu, Ger. Hermannstadt).

Until recently, the study of military forces in late medieval Transylvanian Saxon towns was regarded as a peripheral topic. This has changed considerably in recent years. For the late Middle Ages, the studies of Liviu Cîmpeanu are particularly noteworthy,³ especially his English-language publication of 2022, which offers an excellent overview of the organization of the Transylvanian Saxon military.⁴ For the early modern period, the works of Florin Nicolae Ardelean, Zsuzsanna Cziráki and Csaba Izsán deserve particular attention.⁵

The present examination focuses on the latter half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century.⁶ Sources for the Saxon towns become

² B. Szabó, *The Military Organization*, 2021. 159.

³ Cîmpeanu, Liviu, “Written Rules and Privileges. Fiscal and Military Obligations of the Transylvanian Saxons in the Middle Ages”, In. Rady, Martyn – Simon, Alexandru (eds.), *Government and Law in Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia*. London, 2013. 37–42.; Cîmpeanu, Liviu, “Organizarea militară a Braşovului până la sfârşitul secolului al XV-lea”, In. Ciobanu, Vasile – Iacob, Dan Dumitru (eds.), *Studii de istorie a oraşelor. In honorem Paul Niedermaier*. Bucureşti–Brăila, 2017. 336–359.; Cîmpeanu, Liviu, “Organizarea militară a oraşelor săseşti în Evul Mediu. Studiu de caz: Sighişoara”, = *Alt-Schaessburg. Istorie. Patrimoniul* 12, 2019, 61–69.; Cîmpeanu, Liviu, “Obligaţii militare şi ordine de mobilizare a oraşelor săseşti din Transilvania la sfârşitul Evului Mediu”, = *Historia Urbana* 27, 2019, 123–144.

⁴ Cîmpeanu, Liviu, “‘Ad Retinendam Coronam’. Military Organization at the Transylvanian Border in the Late Middle Ages”, In. Ardelean, Florin Nicolae et al. (eds.), *From Medieval Frontiers to Early Modern Borders in Central and South-Eastern Europe*. Berlin, 2022. 141–174.

⁵ Without claiming to be exhaustive: Ardelean, Florin Nicolae, “‘Pecunia nervus belli’. The Saxon University in Transylvania and its Contribution to the Military Campaign of 1566–1567”, In. Iusztin, Zoltan (ed.), *Politics and Society in the Central and South-Eastern Europe (13th–16th centuries)*. Cluj-Napoca, 2019. 215–222.; Cziráki Zsuzsanna, “Brassói és barcasági katonák Bethlen Gábor hadseregében”, = *Belvedere Meridionale* 22:3–4, 2010, 88–99.; Izsán, Csaba, “Between Soldier and Guard: The Roles of the Town Mercenaries in the Late Sixteenth- Early Seventeenth Century Cluj (Klausenburg/Kolozsvár), Sighişoara (Schässburg/Segesvár) and Braşov (Kronstadt/Brassó)”, In. Ardelean, Florin Nicolae et al. (eds.), *From Medieval Frontiers to Early Modern Borders in Central and South-Eastern Europe*. Berlin, 2022. 191–206.

⁶ For the general framework of the research, see: Szokola, László, “The Role of the Urban Military in the Military Organization of the Late Medieval Kingdom of Hungary”, In.

sufficiently abundant only in the later fifteenth century, making it possible to investigate questions of social and ethnic background. Extending the analysis to the mid- sixteenth century is justified for two reasons. First, by that time the ethnic composition of the town's military forces had shifted significantly, with Hungarian soldiers playing a much greater role and thereby breaking with earlier patterns.⁷ Second, in this same period the separate Principality of Transylvania emerged, whose military organization differed markedly from that of the Kingdom of Hungary.⁸

The study draws primarily on correspondence, account books, and mercenary registers preserved in the archives of Brassó and Szeben, complemented by scattered sources elsewhere. The focus is on the ethnic and social background of the military units deployed outside the towns, while issues of urban self-defense will not be examined in detail. I drew conclusions about the soldiers' ethnic backgrounds and original professions from their surnames. This method is often used in research related to medieval society, but its reliability is questionable. The main reason for these doubts is that it is difficult to determine if a surname describes a particular characteristic of the person or was inherited from their father. In my opinion, this method can be misleading when examining the ethnic and social background of individuals, but it is suitable for describing general social phenomena and changes.⁹

In the first part of the study, I will outline the framework of military service in Transylvanian towns as it can be reconstructed from their privileges.

Bárány, Attila (ed.), *Mercenaries and Crusaders*. Debrecen, 2024. 397–410. 397–399.

⁷ Izsán, *Between Soldier and Guard*, 2022. 197–198. The author gives examples of the problem of determining ethnicity based on names.

⁸ However, its basic characteristics originated in the Middle Ages. For more details, see: Ardelean, Florin Nicolae, “War, Innovations and Cultural Transfers in East-Central Europe: The Army of Transylvania in the Age of Transition from Voivodeship to Principality (Second Half of the 16th Century)”, = *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 7, 2024, 17–38.; Cîmpeanu, Liviu, “The Transylvanian-Saxon University at War. Trabanten in John Sigismund Szapolyai's Campaigns at the North-Western Borders of Transylvania (1561–1567)”, = *Acta Musei Napocensis. Historica* 58:2, 2021, 11–28.

⁹ For more details, see: Szokola, László, “Foot Mercenaries from Hungarian Towns in Foreign Armies – Contributions to the Issue of Mercenary Potential in Late Medieval Hungary”, = *Acta Mediaevalia. Series Nova* 2025, 162–165.

The military service of the Transylvanian towns in light of their privileges

The first significant document relating to this subject is the privilege granted in 1224, known as the *Andreanum*. In addition to other provisions, this charter established the military obligations of the Saxons in the Szeben (Sibiu) region. Among the privileges regulating military service in thirteenth century Hungary, the *Andreanum* can be classified as one of those that required a precisely defined number of soldiers not from a single town, but from a wider territorial unit.¹⁰ According to the charter, the Saxons were required to provide five hundred soldiers for internal campaigns, and one hundred for external campaigns if the ruler himself was leading the army. In the event that one of the king's commanders led the army outside the country, they had to send fifty soldiers.¹¹ In the fifteenth century, the provisions of this charter were extended to other Saxon districts, although this was not the only model that can be observed in Transylvania.

We see a completely different approach to sending troops in Kolozsvár (Rom. Cluj, Ger. Klausenburg), which, although not a Saxon town, originally had a significant Saxon population.¹² According to the privileges granted to the town ca. 1272, the local populace was required to provide one soldier for every sixty households (*mansio*).¹³ Then, according to a privilege granted by King Sigismund in 1405, the town was required to pay two hundred florins instead of participating in the eastern campaigns (*versus partes orientales*).¹⁴ Subsequently, as Elek Jakab has previously observed, there were no orders regarding the dispatch of soldiers from Kolozsvár.¹⁵ This would, in principle, confirm that the aforementioned privileges had indeed been enforced. However, we have a letter from King Matthias, dated 1484, which states that the seven and two Transylvanian Saxon seats (administrative units),

¹⁰ For an analysis of the military aspects of early Hungarian town privileges, see: Szende Katalin, "Sub nostro vexillo regali. Katonaállítási kötelezettség a középkori magyar városi és hospes-kiváltságlevelekben", In: Kincses Katalin Mária (ed.), *Hadi és más nevezetes történetek. Tanulmányok Veszprémy László tiszteletére*. Budapest, 2018. 542–551.

¹¹ *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, vol. I–VII. Zimmermann, Franz et al. (eds.) Hermannstadt–Bukarest, 1892–1991. [hereinafter *Urk. Sieb.*] I. Nr. 53.

¹² Makkai László, *Társadalom és nemzetiség a középkori Kolozsváron*. Kolozsvár, 1943.

¹³ Szende, *Katonaállítási kötelezettség*, 2018. 544, 550.

¹⁴ *Oklevéltár Kolozsvár története első kötetéhez*, vol. I. Ed. Jakab Elek. Buda, 1870. [hereinafter *Kolozsvár*] Nr. 74.

¹⁵ Jakab Elek, *Kolozsvár története*, vol. I. Buda, 1870. 479–480.

along with Kolozsvár, were ordered to provide two hundred horsemen to fight against the Ottoman sultan's attacking army.¹⁶ This contradiction is partially resolved by king Wladislaus II in a letter dated December 7, 1493. In this order, the voivode and vice-voivode were instructed to reinstate the former privilege of the people of Kolozsvár regarding military service. According to this privilege, the inhabitants of Kolozsvár were obliged to provide a maximum of 52 horsemen for the army. The voivode and vice-voivode were prohibited from violating this privilege or calling the people to arms individually, except in the event of an attack by the sultan himself on Transylvania. In this particular instance, the inhabitants of Kolozsvár would be under the obligation to serve on an individual basis, with the exception of those who were to remain behind for the purpose of guarding the town.¹⁷ By the reign of John I, a modification was made to the privilege regarding the dispatch of horsemen, with the number being increased to two hundred.¹⁸

Another change that can be traced through various privileges is apparent relating to the Transylvanian Saxon town of Brassó. The earliest document mentioning the military obligations of Brassó (and the Barcaság [Rom. Țara Bârsei, Ger. Burzenland] district) dates from March 28, 1353. According to the document, King Louis I confirmed the town's ancient privilege, which stipulated that if the king led a personal military campaign to the west, the town had to send fifty well-armed soldiers. If the campaign was to the east, the population was required to serve as cavalry or infantry.¹⁹ This privilege was confirmed by King Matthias in November 1467.²⁰ He also confirmed the privileges granted by the Andreanum in 1486, extending the military obligations contained therein to the Saxons of the Szeben region and other Saxon districts, including Brassó and Barcaság.²¹ Contrary to what is stated in the Andreanum regarding the deployment of soldiers, a letter addressed to István Bátori, voivode of Transylvania, in 1488 reveals that the ruler had previously exempted Brassó and Barcaság from participating in western wars, and therefore only allowed their mobilization to the territories of Transylvania,

¹⁶ Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4559.

¹⁷ Kolozsvár. Nr. 187.

¹⁸ Flóra Ágnes, "Kolozsvár és a központi hatalom kapcsolata a Mohács utáni évtizedekben", = *Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv* 8, 2013, 38. The king sent the prohibitive order related to this in 1531.

¹⁹ Urk. Sieb. II. Nr. 677.

²⁰ Urk. Sieb. VI. Nr. 3654.

²¹ *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon. Oklevéltár*, vol. XII. Ed. Teleki József. Pest, 1857. Nr. 729.

Wallachia, Moldavia, and the Ottoman Empire.²² Another significant privilege is revealed through a prohibition issued by King Louis II in 1508, which stipulated that the Transylvanian voivode could mobilize the Saxon troops only subsequent to the mobilization of the nobles and the Szeklers, based on the ancient rights of the Saxons.²³ Among our sources, there are orders stating that in several cases the Saxons were mobilized together with the nobles and/or the Szeklers.²⁴ Furthermore, among the accounts of Szeben, we find an entry stating that the town sent an envoy to the voivode of Transylvania to prevent the mobilization of Saxon troops before the nobles.²⁵ Nevertheless, it is challenging to substantiate the claim that this privilege was consistently adhered to (specifically due to the prohibition and the aforementioned envoy).²⁶

It can be clearly seen from all this that in Transylvania, as in other areas of the Kingdom of Hungary, the regulation of military service of towns began in the thirteenth century. Based on the privileges granted to them,

²² Urk. Sieb. Nr. 4772.

²³ Brassó's copy: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltár, Budapest [hereinafter MNL OL], Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény [hereinafter DF], 247108. Szeben's copy: *Székelly oklevéltár*. I–VII. Eds. Szabó Károly – Szádeczky Lajos. Kolozsvár, 1872–1898. [hereinafter Székely oklt.] I. Nr. 128. Beszterce's (Rom. Bistrița, Ger. Bistritz) copy: MNL OL DF 247513.

²⁴ One example is a letter dated May 20, 1523, from Lénárd Barlabási, vice-voivode of Transylvania: MNL OL DF 246153. Another good example is the letter dated January 29, 1503, from Péter Szentgyörgyi and Bazini, voivode of Transylvania: MNL OL DF 245936. In 1514, the Transylvanian voivode mobilized the nobility of Belső-Szolnok and Brassó at the same time: Neumann Tibor, "Bulgária–Erdély–Temesvár: Szapolyai János és a parasztháború", In. Tóth Norbert C. – Neumann Tibor (eds.), *Keresztesekből lázadók: Tanulmányok 1514 Magyarországról*. Budapest, 2015. 103–154. 121.

²⁵ *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Hermannstadt und der sächsischen Nation*. I. Hermannstadt, 1880. [hereinafter Hermannstadt] 520.

²⁶ It may be surmised that this abstention from military service engendered a negative perception of the Saxon military among contemporaries. For instance, in a letter written in 1526 to King Louis II requesting assistance, János Szapolyai, voivode of Transylvania, stated that only Saxons were riflemen in Transylvania, but that they were not naturally inclined to remain on the battlefield, nor did they really hold out in their towns: "Pixidarii etiam non inveniuntur, nisi inter Saxones. Saxones vero talis sunt naturae, quod non in campo, imo etiam vix in civitatibus perseverabunt." *A Szapolyai család oklevéltára I. Levelek és oklevelek (1458–1526)*. Ed. Neumann Tibor. Budapest, 2012. [hereinafter Szapolyai oklt.] Nr. 613. Antal Verancsics shared a similar opinion, emphasizing in his description of Transylvania that the Saxons fought on foot and easily retreated in open fields, which is why they preferred to pay money to avoid military service. However, he acknowledged their perseverance in defending towns. *Verancsics Antal M. Kir. helytartó, esztergomi érsek összes munkái*, I. Ed. Szalay László. Pest, 1857. 147–148.

they had to fulfill this duty by providing a predetermined number of soldiers or according to the number of households. Furthermore, in the case of Transylvanian towns, over time the obligation to go to war per capita is also encountered. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that it is not possible to draw far-reaching conclusions based solely on an examination of privileges. This will become even more obvious when compared with the following. The underlying reasons for this phenomenon are not apparent and may be varied. One such issue is the lack of written documentation about the most recent changes. The other possibility is that the surviving letters of privilege either formalized an existing practice or conveyed an expectation that was not aligned with the economic performance of the given settlement (or its inhabitants). Moreover, it is imperative to consider instances where an individual's decision supersedes an established right. For instance, consider the letter written in 1514 by János Szapolyai, voivode of Transylvania, to Brassó. In this letter, he requested soldiers beyond the privileges granted to the town in order to suppress the so-called Dózsa uprising.²⁷ Consequently, let us examine the practice of military recruitment in individual towns, as well as the ethnic and social background of the military.

The social and ethnic background of the soldiers of Brassó

The archives of Brassó (or, more precisely, the town's account books) contain a mercenary register from 1539 and two lists of the town's so-called "darabonts" from the relevant period. I will explain the difference between the two terms in more detail below. First, however, let us examine the social and ethnic backgrounds of mercenaries.

The list of mercenaries written in 1539 contains 63 names, but there are 67 soldiers on it, as a note next to the captain's name states that he had four servants ("mit 4 knechten"). Of the 63 names, 50 are of Saxon-German origin and 13 are of Szekler-Hungarian origin, with a further 9 bearing the name

²⁷ "Et cum huiusmodi pericula statum publicum harum partium concernere dinoscuntur, requirimus vos et nichilominus regia in persona sub nota infidelitatis firmissime committimus, quatenus habita presentium notitia et non pensatis in presentiarum vestris libertatum prerogativis sine omni dilatione equites IIIIc, pedites vero similiter IIIIc ordinare illosque bene ordinatos festinantissime movere et presertim infra diem dominicum prescriptum post festum Sancte Trinitatis [June 18] erga nos ad opidum Enyed debeatis et teneamini, secus, in quantum saluti patrie et proprie providere cupitis, nullatenus facturi." Szapolyai oklt. Nr. 391.

of some kind of craft. This indicates that 14% of the military can be considered to be of a craftsman background. It therefore appears that, although Saxons constituted the majority of the town's mercenaries, a significant number of other ethnic groups were also present within the military of the town.²⁸

As we will see from the lists analyzed below, the Hungarian and Szekler soldiers in the ranks of the Brassó military came partly from the local Szeklers and the inhabitants of Töröcsvár (Rom. Bran, Ger. Türzdorf) estate, partly from the Hungarian population,²⁹ and partly from units recruited in Szeklerland. The latter is confirmed by entries in the account book of Brassó from 1521³⁰ and 1533,³¹ according to which the town council sent its men on a recruitment expedition to the Szeklerland. Furthermore, according to the entry from 1533, they already had a pre-compiled *registrum* of soldiers to be recruited. The hiring of the Szeklers (and, incidentally, the inhabitants of Barcaság) as mercenaries is also confirmed by a letter dated October 18, 1501, from Péter Szentgyörgyi and Bazini, voivode of Transylvania. According to this document, he orders the recruitment of six hundred or at least five hundred light cavalymen from among the soldiers of Brassó or Szeklerland.³²

Another significant ethnic group in the military is the Romanians. A letter dated December 22, 1480, from István Bátori, voivode of Transylvania, refers to the existence of soldiers from Wallachia, in which he ordered Brassó to hire 110 horsemen from among the men of the deceased voivode of Wallachia for two florins each.³³ However, in a letter dated March 9, 1481, he only mentions the recruitment of Vlachs and does not specifically mention the Wallachians,³⁴ but it is likely that he is referring to them here as well, since on 31 March

²⁸ This is also mentioned in a letter dated August 14, 1479, from István Bátori, voivode of Transylvania, in which he orders the councilors of the town of Brassó to keep mercenaries from other nations in their service and to pay them two florins in wages: "Item stipendiariis vestris qui sunt ex alienis natio(nibus) et partibus singulos duos florenos dare velitis et eo(sdem) dimittere non debeatis" Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4315.

²⁹ The names Szegedi (of Szeged), Kolozsvári (of Kolozsvár), and Hunyadi (of Hunyad), for example, refer to the presence of Hungarians.

³⁰ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen. Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Kronstadt*, vol. I. Rechnungen aus 1503–1526., Vol II. Rechnungen aus 1526–1540., Vol. III. Rechnungen aus 1541–1550. Kronstadt, 1886–1896. [hereinafter Kronstadt] I. 352.

³¹ Kronstadt II. 326.

³² Székely oklt. I. Nr. 220.

³³ Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4378.

³⁴ Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4392.

he again ordered the recruitment of three hundred horsemen from among the Wallachians for the town.³⁵

In addition to the mercenaries provided by the Saxon towns, their associated settlements also sent soldiers. Regarding the relationship between settlements and a given town, we can distinguish two categories. In the case of Saxon towns, Szeben, Brassó and Beszterce were not “only” towns, but also leaders of the associated Saxon districts. As we will see with Brassó and Szeben, this meant they could use the military forces of their territories in addition to their own. Another group of settlements were those owned by the town as landlord, so it had to provide troops from these estates accordingly.

In 1454, King Ladislaus V ordered Vidombák (Rom. Ghimbav, Ger. Weidenbach), Barcaszentpéter (Ro. Sânpetru, Ger. Petersburg), Botfalu (Rom. Bod, Ger. Brenndorf) and Szászhermány (Rom. Härman, Ger. Honigberg) to participate in the fortification works of Brassó and in the defense of the town.³⁶ In 1500, King Wladislaus II confirmed that Törösvár and its estates, as well as the villages of Barcaújfalu (Rom. Satu Nou, Ger. Neudorf), Vledény (Rom. Vlădeni, Ger. Wladen), Szúnyogszék (Rom. Dumbrăvița, Ger. Schnakendorf), Zernest (Rom. Zărnești, Ger. Zernescht) and Ótohán (Rom. Tohanu Vechi, Ger. Alttachen) belonging to Brassó and were subject to the same taxation and military service as the town.³⁷

Two lists of soldiers provide substantiation for the joint military service of the settlements with the town. One of them has no date. However, based on the information it contains, the editors of the source publication placed its date of origin between 1500 and 1510.³⁸ The other list is from 1540.³⁹ A common feature of both sources is that they provide the names of the soldiers belonging to each unit. The scribes who wrote the lists also noted the soldiers’ places of origin, which were located either in the Barcaság region or on the private estates of Brassó.⁴⁰ The first record is particularly noteworthy, as it organizes the soldiers from the town of Brassó according to their urban quarter. In total, it contains 208 individual names. Of the 64 people, eight came from Catharina, eleven from Corpus Christi, eight from Petri,

³⁵ Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4405.

³⁶ Urk. Sieb. V. Nr. 2907.

³⁷ Urk. Sieb. VIII. Nr. 6045. Törösvár was taken in pledge by Brassó in 1498: Nussbächer, Gernot, “Brassó és a Barcaság közigazgatása a korájkor küszöbén”, = *Aetas* 26:2, 2011, 174.

³⁸ Kronstadt III. 3–5.

³⁹ Kronstadt III. 79–80.

⁴⁰ Nussbächer, Brassó és a Barcaság, 2011. 176–177.

and thirty-seven from Portica.⁴¹ The latter deserves special attention because it included the suburb of Bolonya (Rom. Blumăna, Ger. Blumenau), which had a Hungarian majority, and therefore had a significant Szekler-Hungarian population.⁴² Of the 64 soldiers, 55 can be considered of Szekler-Hungarian ethnicity (for instance: *Rab Ianos, Fabian Ianos, Szekell Tomas*), while the rest are Saxons (for instance: *Jacob Mitwescherr, Dik Merten*). Soldiers' surnames also include names of other ethnic groups, such as Croatian (*Horwat*). However, based on the form of their first names and the Hungarian order of surnames and first names,⁴³ it is highly likely that these soldiers had already been Magyarized. There are 144 people from settlements belonging to Brassó on the list, 117 of whom have Szekler-Hungarian names (e.g., *Balint Ianos, Tomas Ianos, Weres Istwann*), while the remaining 27 have Saxon names (e.g., *Clemens Tong, Celle Merten*). This ethnic distribution therefore suggests that the Saxon population, which was obliged to serve in the military, often sent Szekler-Hungarian soldiers in their place. However, as we will see below, this was not a widespread phenomenon.

Of the settlements belonging to Brassó, the market towns (*oppida*) sent the following number of soldiers:

Name of settlement	Number of soldiers
Barcarozsnyó (Rom. Râșnov, Ger. Rosenau)	7
Feketehalom (Rom. Codlea, Ger. Zeiden)	6
Földvár (Rom. Feldioara, Ger. Marienburg)	4
Prázsmár (Rom. Prejmer, Ger. Tartlau)	9

Table 1: Number of soldiers provided by market towns in Barcaság
(list dated between 1500 and 1510)

⁴¹ For the society of the Portica quarter, see: Granasztói György, "Társadalmi tagozódás Brassóban a 15. század végén", = *Századok* 106, 1972, 350–399.

⁴² Nussbächer, Brassó és a Barcaság, 2011. 176. The different quarters had parts in both the town center and the suburbs.

⁴³ In most European languages, personal names are ordered as first name followed by surname, whereas in Hungarian the order is reversed, with the surname preceding the first name.

Compared to them, the number of soldiers sent by the villages of Barcaság was as follows:

Name of settlement	Number of soldiers
Keresztényfalva (Rom. Cristian, Ger. Neustadt)	4
Höltövény (Rom. Hălchiu, Ger. Heldsdorf)	5
Szász)veresmart (Rom. Rotbav, Ger. Rothbach)	1
Szászmagyarós (Rom. Măieruş, Ger. Nußbach)	3
Vidombák (Rom. Ghimbav, Ger. Weidenbach)	4
Barcaszentpéter (Rom. Sânpetru, Ger. Petersberg)	4
Botfalu (Rom. Brod, Ger. Brenndorf)	5
Szászhermány (Rom. Hărman, Ger. Honigberg)	3

Table 2: Number of soldiers provided by villages in Barcaság
(list dated between 1500 and 1510)

The table below shows soldiers coming from estates owned directly by Brassó or through Töröcsvár:

Name of settlement	Number of soldiers
Csernátfalu (Rom. Cernatu, Ger. Zernendorf)	6
Hosszúfalu (Rom. Satu-Lung, Ger. Langendorf)	21
Apáca (Rom. Apaşa, Ger. Geist)	11
Krizba (Rom. Crizbav, Ger. Krebsbach)	12
Bácsfalu (Rom. Baciú, Ger. Basendorf)	5
Türkös (Rom. Turcheş, Ger. Türckesdorf)	11
Tatrang (Rom. Tărlungeni, Ger. Tatrangen)	12
Pürkerec (Rom. Purcăreni, Ger. Pürkeressen)	9
Zajzon (Rom. Zizin, Ger. Zaisendorf)	8

Table 3: Number of soldiers provided by the estates of Brassó
(list dated between 1500 and 1510)

Clearly, the market towns of Barcaság sent more soldiers than the villages. However, even more people came from Brassó's own villages, even though they were "only" villages. The list also includes several names referring to crafts, such as: mason (*Maurerr*), shield maker (*Pays Iarto*), bow maker (*Jy Iarto*), weaver (*Takach*), blacksmith (*Koach, Kowach*). The number of people with names referring to or associated with such crafts is counted at 14, which rep-

resents approximately 10% of the entire unit. A similar, yet in many ways different, picture emerges when analyzing the list from 1540. The similarity is primarily evident in the fact that the second half of the register also lists the soldiers dispatched by the various villages and market towns belonging to Brassó by settlement. Although the first half of the list seems to be an unrelated record, reviewing the names suggests that town soldiers are included in addition to soldiers sent by the other settlements. Among those listed are individuals who appear as deceased in the second half of the list. Therefore, the first half of the register was probably created before one hundred infantrymen were dispatched to Fogaraschland (Țara Făgărașului) on the order of King John in 1540, and the second half was created after their return to Brassó.⁴⁴ A total of forty-three (or, more precisely, forty-six, including the deceased) individuals can be connected to the settlements belonging to Brassó, all of whom had Saxon-German names. The unit has a total of 97 members, including soldiers from Brassó. Of the soldiers from Brassó, 26 have Szekler-Hungarian names and 25 have Saxon-German ones. Furthermore, there are 18 names referring to crafts among them, accounting for 19% of the total. In terms of the soldiers' places of origin, the composition of the military in market towns was as follows:

Name of settlement	Number of soldiers
Barcarozsnyó	4
Feketehalom	4
Földvár	4
Prázsmár	4 (seven names are listed due to three dead soldiers)

Table 4: Number of soldiers provided by market towns in Barcaság (1540)

The villages sent the following numbers of soldiers:

Name of settlement	Number of soldiers
Keresztényfalva	3
Vidombák	3
Höltövény	3
Botfalu	3

⁴⁴ Arhivele Naționale ale României, Serviciul Județean Brașov, Colecția de documente Fronius Volumul I.: Nr. 262.

Barcaszentpéter	3
Szászhermány	4
Szászveresmart	3
Szászmagyarós	3

Table 5: Number of soldiers provided by the villages of Barcaság (1540)

In addition to them, two soldiers arrived from Töröcsvár

Another very vivid example of the military role of these settlements is a record from 1528, according to which Brassó paid for various firearms, bullets, saltpeter, sulfur, and other materials, as well as money to cover the army commanders' expenses and other costs.⁴⁵ However, what is important for us at present from this record is that, in addition to the wages of the town's 74 mercenaries, it also lists the number of armed men provided by the settlements of the Barcaság district:

Name of settlement	Number of soldiers
Feketehalom	14
Földvár	12
Szászhermány	11
Vidombák	11
Keresztényfalva	9
Barcaszentpéter	9
Botfalu	9
(Szász)volkány (Rom. Vulcan, Ger. Wolkendorf)	4
Szászveresmart	4
Höltövény	9
Szászmagyarós	4

Table 6: Number of soldiers from settlements in Barcaság listed in the 1528

In addition to this, individual settlements sent out soldiers, horses, carts and tools (such as shovels, hoes and pickaxes), as well as other personnel, in varying quantities.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Kronstadt II. 124–125.

⁴⁶ Kronstadt II. 124–125.

In my opinion, as indicated by the titles of the lists from 1540 and those dating from between 1500 and 1510, soldiers originally from the Barcaság district and the estates of Brassó could have been called *darabonts*. Although *darabont* is a more general term attested in other sources, in Brassó it was presumably used to distinguish soldiers provided by various settlements from mercenaries hired by Brassó using tax revenues. This distinction may be explained by the fact that these settlements were obliged to provide troops on the basis of the privileges mentioned above. However, based on recent research, if my theory is correct, this distinction had disappeared by the seventeenth century.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, the phenomenon described above has not disappeared completely, as can be seen from the article written by Pál Mátyás and Sándor Vogel.⁴⁸ In it, the authors list several data from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which show that the residents of Apáca (Rom. Apața, Ger. Geist), which was owned by Brassó (via Töröcsvár), can be found among the ranks of Brassó's *darabonts*. Some of them temporarily gained privileged status and became freemen, exempting them from tenant peasant (there is no trace of this privilege at the beginning of the sixteenth century).⁴⁹

The social and ethnic background of the military forces of Szeben

Compared to the town described above, the ties between Szeben and the military of the Seven Seats belonging to it were different. A significant number of soldiers recruited by Szeben were constantly employed by the town and performed various tasks. For instance, the town council dispatched horsemen and foot soldiers on multiple occasions to confront the Vlach bandits in the region. We know of such troops being sent out in 1495 (14 mercenaries), 1496 (6 mercenaries), and 1506 (40 riflemen).⁵⁰ According to the accounts, in addition to taking action against criminals, these soldiers performed

⁴⁷ Izsán, *Between Soldier and Guard*, 2022. 193. For more information on the Transylvanian *darabonts* in various services, see: Ardelean, Florin Nicolae, "The Guardsman (Drabant/Darabont) during the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century", In: Ardelean, Florin Nicolae et al. (eds.), *From Medieval Frontiers to Early Modern Borders in Central and South-Eastern Europe*. Berlin, 2022. 175–190.

⁴⁸ Mátyás Pál – Vogel Sándor, "Társadalom és művelődés a XVII. századi Apácán", = *Acta Historiae Litterarum Hungaricarum* 21, 1985, 84–86.

⁴⁹ Kronstadt II. 3–9.

⁵⁰ Hermannstadt 462.

the duties of policemen, couriers, and armed guards.⁵¹ However, the number of military units deployed in the event of war was also low. For instance, the town sent only 34 soldiers to King Matthias's Moldavian campaign in 1467.⁵²

According to numerous sources, Szeben also mobilized the Seven Seats. Therefore, the deployed army may have consisted of Szeben's small forces and troops from the Saxon seats. Such a mobilization is documented in the account book of the town on September 6⁵³ and December 31,⁵⁴ 1507. In a letter sent by Szeben to the seat of Nagysink on January 7, 1471, the town requested cavalry and infantry soldiers per capita to fight against the Ottomans.⁵⁵

Among the orders concerning the mobilization of the Saxons, there are several that include commands for the mobilization of various Saxon seats.⁵⁶ Of course, these letters must be interpreted as meaning that the town of Szeben forwarded the orders of the king or some official performing military duties to the Seven Seats, less frequently to the Two Seats, and even to Brassó and Beszterce (Rom. Bistrița, Ger. Bistritz). However, what I would like to draw attention to here is that, unlike the development in Brassó, in Szeben it seems that during the period in question, it was not the size of the town army that swelled with the call to arms of the military of the seats, but rather that smaller and heterogeneous units (cavalry, infantry, artillery) were added to the independent units of the other seats.⁵⁷ This statement is reinforced by the list of military exemptions that the ruler granted to various Saxon settlements:

⁵¹ Coulter, Matthew John, "Political Communication Practices of the Transylvanian Saxon Towns, c. 1467–1526", (PhD diss. University of Cambridge, 2023). 192–201.; Hermannstadt 468, 474–475, 530–532, 545. I would like to thank Matthew John Coulter for making his manuscript available to me.

⁵² Hermannstadt 9.

⁵³ Hermannstadt 471.

⁵⁴ Hermannstadt 471.

⁵⁵ Urk. Sieb. VI. Nr. 3843.

⁵⁶ For examples, see: Szokola, Urban Military, 2024. 402–409.

⁵⁷ Unlike those of Brassó and Barcaság, we know nothing about the military obligations of the non-privileged estates belonging to the Seven Seats. For more information on these estates, see: Draskóczy István, "Az erdélyi Szászföld demográfiai helyzete a 16. század elején", = *Erdélyi Múzeum* 61:1–2, 1999, 1–30. 5, 30.

Settlement	Date	Exemption
Szentágota (<i>oppidum</i>) (Rom. Agnita, Ger. Agnetheln)	November 19, 1466. (Urk. Sieb. VI. Nr. 3507.)	The market town was permitted to retain half of its army to defend its own fortifications.
Berehalom (<i>oppidum</i>) (Rom. Biertan, Ger. BIRTHÄLM)	September 29, 1468. (Urk. Sieb. VI. Nr. 3649.)	The market town was permitted to retain one-third of its army to defend the fortified church.
Ecel (<i>villa</i>) (Rom. Ațel, Ger. Hetzeldorf)	March 10, 1471. (Urk. Sieb. VI. Nr. 3846.)	The village can permanently retain one-third of its own army to defend the fortified church.
Nagysink (<i>oppidum</i>) (Rom. Cincu, Ger. Großschenk)	August 11, 1474. (Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4014.) March 8, 1492. (Urk. Sieb. VIII. Nr. 5234.) November 28, 1516. (MNL OL DF 292137.)	The market town was permitted to retain half of its army to defend the town's castle (<i>castrum</i>).
Medgyes (<i>civitas</i>) (Rom. Mediaș, Ger. Mediasch)	January 9, 1477. (Urk. Sieb. VII. Nr. 4164.)	The town only has to send 32 people to war; it can retain the rest.
Szászkézd (<i>oppidum</i>) (Rom. Saschiz, Ger. Keisd)	October 26, 1470. (Urk. Sieb. VI. Nr. 3825.) June 23, 1493. (Urk. Sieb. VIII. Nr. 5378.) April 12, 1496. (Urk. Sieb. VIII. Nr. 5655.)	The town was not called to arms against the Ottomans due to the construction of the church dedicated to St. Stephen, and in 1470 it received this concession for its own defense.
Újváros (<i>villa</i>) (Rom. Noiștat, Ger. Neustadt)	January 17, 1494. (Urk. Sieb. VIII. Nr. 5451A.)	The village was permitted to retain half of its army to defend its own fortifications and the surrounding settlements during the Ottoman attack.

Table 7: Military exemptions granted by the ruler to Saxon settlements

Based on Liviu Cîmpeanu's research, it appears that even in later centuries, the Saxon seats continued to rely on the local population to form the basis of their army, although it was possible to buy one's way out of personal military service. As a result, we are informed that, even in 1600, certain marauding mercenaries killed eight hundred conscripted peasants in the seat of Nagysink.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Cîmpeanu, *Military Organization*, 2022. 149. For the mobilization of Saxon seats, see also: *ibid.* 146–156.

We encounter difficulties in conducting an ethnic and social analysis of the soldiers of Szekes, as there are few records of mercenaries hired by the town, and entire troops were rarely recorded. A list that is useful from our point of view, for example, must be compiled from several entries within the town accounts. In 1496, the town sent out soldiers to search for certain criminals, but the scribe only recorded the names of a few of them, namely: Mihály Nagy, Márton Tatár (= Martin Tatar, but his Tatar origin is unlikely based on the recorded name form), Bálint Székely (Székely = Szekler), Márton Székely, Tamás Cseh (Thomas Czech, but his Czech origin is unlikely based on the recorded name form), *Hussor Vlicsch*, *Paulus Wyroch*, Márton Székely, Péter Székely.⁵⁹ The following year, *Paulus Wyroch*, *Jeirg Ystwan*, János Márton, and a certain Horvát appear in the accounts as mercenaries, in addition to those already mentioned.⁶⁰

The situation is similar in the case of the records concerning the payment of horsemen serving the town at various times in 1506. At that time, according to the customs of the era, the leaders of the units were listed with their horses. In other words, the horsemen belonging to the leader were listed with him. However, it is difficult to determine the number of horses (and therefore riders) because the number assigned to each person changed several times based on different records. In terms of the names of the horsemen, a significant proportion of them appear in Latinized form. Among the other horsemen, we find some with Hungarian surnames, such as Bagdi *Johannes*, Török (= Turkish) *Ladislaus*, Enyedi (= of Enyed) *Michael*, Kopasz (= Bald) *Michael*, and Matheus. In this case, first names are not given in Hungarian form, but first names and surnames follow each other in Hungarian order. In addition to Latinized and Hungarian names, we also find a German name (*Johannes Vatter*) among the entries.⁶¹

A list from 1508, among the entries in the town accounts, is particularly noteworthy. It includes riflemen, the personnel who transported them, and two cannon masters.⁶² What makes this list unusual is that, similarly to the horsemen mentioned above, not all of the riflemen are named, only those who presumably received the pay on behalf of their comrades. They were probably also the corporals of the troop, as we can surmise from the fact that

⁵⁹ Hermannstadt 221. 236–237.

⁶⁰ Hermannstadt 239.

⁶¹ Hermannstadt 443–444, 480–482.

⁶² Hermannstadt 500–501.

the writer of the list separated the 59 riflemen into smaller groups of no more than seven people. Of the 35 people listed by name, ten were likely Saxon by ethnicity. However, there are a significant number of Latinized names (13 people), as well as one Szekler and one Serb. In terms of place of origin, the list includes people from Brassó, Temesvár (Timișoara), Maros, Torda, and even Nyitra (Nitra), as well as one person with the surname Burger. The number of soldiers with surnames referring to their profession is also significant (10 people):

Profession	Surname	Number of persons
Goldsmith	Aurifex, Aurifaber	3
Tailor	Sartor	1
Barber	Barbitonsor	1
Carpenter	Carpentarius	1
Miller	Molitor	2
Saddle maker	Sellator	1
Sieve maker	Rittermacher (=Reytermacher see also: Hermannstadt 644.)	1

Table 8: The original profession of the foot soldiers of Szeben based on their surnames (1508)

Among the names, there are two designations referring to education (*Scolaris*, *Literatus*), and it is worth mentioning that Paulus Wyroch, mentioned above, appears on the list as the only horseman with two horses (i.e., not as a rifleman on this occasion). The only thing we know about the role of the troops is that they were sent to Wallachia after the death of Radu IV the Great, voivode of Wallachia.⁶³

In 1524, sources from Szeben mention soldiers named Ambrus Szász, Kelemen Szászvárosi, and Kelemen Kis.⁶⁴ The following year, Ambrus Nagy appears in the town accounts.⁶⁵ Among the horsemen, a certain *Ioannes Olah*, possibly of Romanian origin, also appears.⁶⁶ In the records, we also encounter a horseman named *Joannes Nemeth*, whose name, written in Hungarian form

⁶³ Gündisch, Gustav, "Siebenbürgen in Türkenabwehr 1395–1526", In: Gündisch, Gustav, *Aus Geschichte und Kultur der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Ausgewählte Aufsätze und Berichte*. Köln–Wien, 1987. 37–64. 61.

⁶⁴ MNL OL DF 286803. 64v.

⁶⁵ MNL OL DF 286803. 89.

⁶⁶ MNL OL DF 286803. 41r.

in a predominantly German environment, leaves some uncertainty as to his origin.⁶⁷ In the case of Szeben, we can say that the proportion of those with Hungarian names was high primarily among the cavalry, while the number of Germans (Saxons) among the infantry was significant.

Conclusion

As we have seen above, the method of raising troops in Transylvanian towns cannot be reconstructed solely on the basis of the charters granted to them, as actual practice may have been influenced by the town's capabilities and the requests of the king or one of his officials (primarily the voivode of Transylvania). Based on the practice that was implemented, the town of Brassó could mobilize troops in two ways: 1) it recruited soldiers 2) in addition to the soldiers provided by the town quarters, it requested soldiers from the Barcaság district and from the town's own estates, which it organized into a single unit. The soldiers mobilized in the latter manner were originally responsible for defense, and it is likely that the name *darabont*, which appears in the sources, originally referred to them. In contrast, the town of Szeben followed a different method of mobilizing soldiers. The town itself fielded only a small but mixed force, to which it assigned the troops of the Seven Seats. However, the soldiers of the seats functioned as independent units, as we learn from the exemptions granted to individual settlements. The military forces provided by the two towns were primarily of Saxon-German origin, so they were mostly recruited from the local population. However, the Szeklers and the Hungarians also played an outstanding role in the military as mercenaries. In addition to these mercenaries, towns, primarily Brassó, occasionally hired soldiers from the Wallachian region. A significant proportion of the soldiers in both towns were originally craftsmen or engaged in other professions. It may also be noted that certain craftsmen possessed skills that were particularly valuable for the production of military equipment and the construction of fortifications (e.g. shield makers, carpenters).

⁶⁷ MNL OL DF 286803. 41r.

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE: BETWEEN THE BALTIC AND THE ADRIATIC OSTMITTELEUROPA: ZWISCHEN OSTSEE UND ADRIA

Aims and Scope

The East Central Europe: Between the Baltic and the Adriatic (ECE) is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the Institute of History at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Debrecen. As its title suggests, the journal focuses on the history of Central Europe, covering the region between the Baltic and Adriatic Seas. This region was for centuries a crossroads and meeting point where diverse ethnic groups, religions, traditions, and political entities interacted in unique ways. In addition to studies directly examining the history of the region, the editors welcome methodologically and/or theoretically relevant contributions for the analysis of historical processes.

The journal seeks to create an interdisciplinary platform to facilitate dialogue and disseminate new research on the region, whose findings are often limited in international scholarship due to language barriers and the influence of national narratives. To support this goal, ECE is an open-access journal, published at least once annually, available in both print and online formats.

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Ostmitteleuropa: Zwischen Ostsee und Adria (ECE) ist eine begutachtete wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift, die vom Historischen Institut der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Debrecen herausgegeben wird. Wie der Titel schon andeutet, konzentriert sich die Zeitschrift auf die Geschichte Mitteleuropas, insbesondere auf das Gebiet zwischen Ostsee und Adria. Diese Region war über Jahrhunderte ein Schnittpunkt und Begegnungsraum, in dem unterschiedliche ethnische Gruppen, Religionen, Traditionen und politische Einheiten auf einzigartige Weise interagierten. Neben Studien, die Geschichte der Region direkt untersuchen, erwarten die Herausgeber methodisch und/oder theoretisch relevante Beiträge zur Analyse historischer Prozesse.

Die Zeitschrift möchte eine interdisziplinäre Plattform schaffen, um den Dialog zu fördern und neue Forschungsergebnisse über die Region zu verbreiten, deren Ergebnisse aufgrund von Sprachbarrieren und der Prägung durch nationale Narrative international nur begrenzt bekannt sind. Zur Unterstützung dieses Ziels ist ECE eine Open-Access-Zeitschrift, die mindestens einmal jährlich erscheint und sowohl in gedruckter als auch in digitaler Form verfügbar ist.

Impressum

Publisher / Verlag: The University of Debrecen Faculty of Humanities Institute of History

Responsible Publisher / Verantwortlicher Herausgeber: The dean of the faculty / Der Dekan der Fakultät

Responsible Editors / Verantwortliche Redakteurs: Attila Bárány, László Pószán

ISSN 3058-0501

Printed in Hungary by / Gedruckt in Ungarn von Printart Kft.

Editorial Office / Redaktionsbüro

H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, Magyarország

e-mail: lendulet.unideb@gmail.com

Homepage: <https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/eastcentraleurope/index>

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Front cover / Titelfbild:

Hartmann Schedel, *Registrum huius operis libri cronicarum cum figuris et ymaginibus ab inicio mundi*, Nürnberg, 1493. (Schedelsche Weltchronik/Nürnberger Chronik/Chronicon mundi)

München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rar. 287. (<https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/view/bsb00034024>)

Prussia, fol. 288v. / Dalmatia, fol. 268r.

Supported by / Gefördert durch:

University of Debrecen Thematic Excellence Programme “The Role and Image of Hungary in Medieval Europe Research Group”

HUN-REN-DE “Research Group Military History of Medieval Hungary and Central Europe”

Humaniora programme of the University of Debrecen

ISSN 3058-0501



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