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# Les travaux sur les ordres mendiants en Transylvanie médiévale au regard des tendances actuelles de la recherche européenne

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**Abstract:** *This paper offers a critical overview of results of late or current researches about the male friaries of the Mendicant Orders in Transylvania during the Middle Ages (13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> c.) from five angles that have been recently explored mainly by French, Italian, German and English medievalists: 1) the geography and topography of the Mendicant friaries of Transylvania, 2) the material running and economy of these friaries, 3) their influence on society and lay piety, 4) the impact of the Observance-trend, 5) the use and signification of images. Finally, it raises the issue of the hypothetical "Transylvanian exception".*

**Keywords:** mendicant orders, ecclesiastical topography, spiritual influence, Observance, religious iconography

**Studiile privind Ordinele mendicante din Transilvania medievală în lumina cercetărilor europene recente** Această lucrare oferă un rezumat critic al cercetărilor recente referitoare la așezămintele fraților din ordinele mendicante din Transilvania în evul mediu (secolele XIII-XVI). Aceste probleme sunt abordate din cinci perspective care au fost explorate recent mai ales de medievisti francezi, italieni, germani și englezi: 1) geografia și topografia conventelor mendicante din Transilvania, 2) organizarea materială și economia acestor stabilimente, 3) influența lor asupra societății și a pietății laice, 4) impactul reformei observante, 5) folosirea și semnificația imaginilor. În final studiul pune problema ipoteticei 'excepții transilvoănene'.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Ordine mendicante, topografie ecleziastică, influență spirituală, observanță, iconografie religioasă

Le jugement que portent certains historiens roumains sur la médiévisitique pratiquée dans leur pays est pour le moins sévère. Déplorant le lourd passif laissé par la période communiste, ils pointent le conservatisme des approches – derrière un discours convenu d'« ouverture à l'Ouest » – et la dispersion des initiatives, faute de coordination entre les nombreux centres de recherche (universités et instituts) de Roumanie, dispersion qu'accentue la récente recrudescence des particularismes ethniques et régionaux<sup>1</sup>. Les travaux portant sur les couvents mendiants de

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<sup>1</sup> FLOREA, Carmen, « Is there a Future for Medieval Studies in Romania ? », dans M. SÁGHY (dir.), *Fifteen Years of Medieval Studies in Central Europe*, (Budapest, CEU, 2009),

Transylvanie entre le début du XIII<sup>e</sup> et le milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle échappent-ils à ces travers ? La présente contribution tentera de répondre à cette interrogation, sans se limiter toutefois aux recherches effectuées par les historiens rattachés aux institutions ayant leur siège en Roumanie ou en Hongrie : son objectif est d'évaluer le degré d'intégration aux grands questionnements de l'historiographie européenne des enquêtes prenant pour cadre la Transylvanie médiévale, quelle que soit la provenance géographique de leurs auteurs.

La connaissance du fait mendiant au Moyen Âge a bénéficié depuis un demi-siècle de l'exploration de thématiques jusqu'alors négligées – à l'exception de la personnalité et du projet du fondateur de l'ordre des Mineurs, qui occupent toujours le devant de la scène éditoriale<sup>2</sup>. Quatre d'entre elles recourent celles qu'abordent les toutes dernières recherches portant sur les frères mendiants en Transylvanie : I. *Géographie et topographie des couvents mendiants*, II. *Vie matérielle et économie*, III. *Rayonnement dans la société et façonnement de la piété des fidèles*, IV. *Le mouvement de l'Observance*. V. *Les frères mendiants et les images*. Nous les présenterons successivement, en soulevant *in fine* la question d'une possible « exception transylvaine »<sup>3</sup>.

### *Géographie et topographie des couvents mendiants de Transylvanie*

L'inscription des ordres religieux dans l'espace demeure une préoccupation dominante de l'historiographie sur les ordres réguliers. Depuis les années 1980, les travaux français, anglo-saxons, allemands et italiens sur le double processus de spatialisation du sacré et de sacralisation de l'espace ont mis à la disposition des chercheurs des outils conceptuels et des moyens techniques nouveaux, applicables (au prix de quelques réajustements) aussi bien à la répartition des foyers de pèlerinages qu'à la

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p. 279-286, ici p. 284-286 ; JAKÓ, Zsigmond, « Erdély a magyar középorkutatásban » [La Transylvanie dans la recherche hongroise en histoire médiévale], *Erdélyi Múzeum* 67 (2005): 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Voir la biographie qu'André Vauchez a récemment consacrée au *poverello*, qui couronne près de cinq décennies de recherches sur le sujet : *François d'Assise* (Paris, Fayard, 2009), ainsi que le monumental travail d'édition et de traduction effectué dans : Jacques DALARUN (dir.), *François d'Assise. Écrits, vies, témoignages* (Paris-Fribourg, Cerf-Academic Press, 2010, 2 vol.).

<sup>3</sup> Il sera principalement question ici des Frères mineurs et prêcheurs, puisque les Ermites de saint Augustin et les Carmes étaient peu (ou pas) présents en Transylvanie au Moyen Âge. Sur les variantes féminines de ces ordres (Clarisses, Dominicaines, les tertiaires ou « béguines » affiliées aux ordres mendiants), singulièrement nombreuses en Transylvanie, voir l'article de Carmen Florea dans ce volume. *Last but not least*, cet aperçu historiographique est d'autant plus lacunaire que l'auteur de ces lignes ne maîtrise pas la langue roumaine.

construction de « territoires sacrés » (diocèses et paroisses) et à la constitution en réseau des monastères issus de la famille bénédictine ainsi que des maisons des ordres mendiants<sup>4</sup>. On évoquera ici (1) la densité globale des couvents, (2) leur articulation avec le maillage urbain, (3) leur insertion dans l'espace urbain, (4) la géographie administrative régulière.

1. On le savait depuis près d'un siècle<sup>5</sup> mais les études récentes menées en Hongrie et en Transylvanie – présentées sous forme de répertoires cartographiés – le confirment, à l'aide d'instruments statistiques et cartographiques perfectionnés et en s'appuyant sur un socle élargi de sources textuelles et de matériaux archéologiques : la Transylvanie était l'une des régions du royaume de Hongrie la mieux pourvue en couvents mendiants aux XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles, surtout à partir du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elle arrivait juste après la Transdanubie au plan du nombre de religieux et rivalisait avec elle selon les critères du nombre d'établissements par habitant ou de la densité de leur occupation spatiale. Les comptages méthodiques effectués par Beatrix Romhányi à l'échelle du royaume magyar<sup>6</sup>, par Mihalea Salontai pour les Dominicains de Transylvanie<sup>7</sup> et par Adrian Rusu et ses collaborateurs roumains pour les communautés régulières de la moitié orientale du bassin carpatique<sup>8</sup> ont permis d'affiner les données antérieures, en corrigeant au passage certaines erreurs chronologiques ou topographiques. Un bilan succinct sur la présence des mendiants en Transylvanie à la fin du Moyen Âge a déjà pu être dressé sur cette base<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> État actuel de la réflexion à partir d'exemples situés en France méridionale dans : LAUWERS, Michel (dir.), *Lieux sacrés et espace ecclésial*, Toulouse, Privat (Cahiers de Fanjeaux n° 46), à paraître en juillet 2011.

<sup>5</sup> KARÁCSONYI, János, *Szent Ferencz rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig* [Histoire de l'ordre de saint François en Hongrie jusqu'en 1711], (Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1922-1924) ; HARSÁNYI, András, *A domonkosrend Magyarországon a reformáció előtt* [L'ordre des dominicains en Hongrie avant la Réforme], (Debrecen, 1938) ; IVÁNYI, Béla, « Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Siebenbürgen und der Moldau », *Siebenbürgische Vierteljahrschrift* 1-2(1939-1940): 22-59 et 241-256.

<sup>6</sup> ROMHÁNYI, Beatrix, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon* [Couvents et chapitres de chanoines en Hongrie médiévale], (Budapest, Pytheas, 2000) (version CD-rom révisée : 2008).

<sup>7</sup> SALONTAI, Mihaela Sanda, *Mănăstiri dominicane din Transilvania* [Les couvents dominicains de Transylvanie], (Cluj-Napoca, Editura Nereamia Napocae, 2002) (résumé anglais p. 319-339). Bilan succinct dans : SOÓS, Zoltán, « The Franciscan Friary of Târgu Mureș (Marosvásárhely) and the Franciscain Presence in Medieval Transylvania », dans K. SZENDE, J. A. RASSON, M. SEBŐK (dir.), *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 9(2003): 249-274.

<sup>8</sup> RUSU, Adrian Andrei (dir.), *Dicționarul mănăstirilor din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș* [Dictionnaire des monastères et couvents de Transylvanie et des Banats], (Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitara, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> FLOREA, Carmen, « The Third Path: Charity and Devotion in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns », dans M. CRĂCIUN et E. FULTON (dir.), *Communities of Devotion*.

Ces travaux éclairent le processus d'installation des frères, en tenant compte du contexte ecclésiastique local. Ils relèvent la corrélation entre les « blancs » du maillage monastique et l'abondance (relative) de couvents mendiants : ceux-ci viennent compenser en quelque sorte l'effacement des Bénédictins (un seul monastère transylvain, celui de Cluj-Mănăştur /Kolozsmonostor, certes de rayonnement exceptionnel) et des Ermites de saint Paul. Ils soulignent par ailleurs l'importance de l'Observance, qui permet de maintenir les fondations mendiante à un niveau particulièrement élevé, à une période où elles stagnaient dans le centre, le nord et l'ouest du bassin carpatique, ceci au profit des franciscains, les seuls à cumuler transferts et créations *ex nihilo* (voir *infra*).

Des études locales complètent cette vision d'ensemble. Elles illustrent par exemple les obstacles entravant l'installation des frères. En Transylvanie comme dans nombre de villes occidentales, les conflits entre curés de paroisse et mendiants ne manquent pas du XIII<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, pour les mêmes motifs et avec les mêmes enjeux spirituels et matériels qu'ailleurs, les plus virulents nécessitant un arbitrage pontifical<sup>10</sup>.

2. L'articulation étroite entre couvents mendiants et milieu urbain – par un processus synchrone dans lequel les frères étaient attirés par les villes tandis que leur présence stimulait le dynamisme urbain – était l'hypothèse de travail de l'enquête pionnière dirigée par Jacques Le Goff à partir d'exemples français<sup>11</sup>. Depuis, des monographies régionales concernant la France de l'Ouest<sup>12</sup> aussi bien que l'Italie centrale ont montré que cette combinaison s'applique aux Prêcheurs plus qu'aux Mineurs. Présents dans les grandes villes, ces derniers ne craignaient pas d'ériger leurs couvents dans de minuscules bourgades ; les tendances érémitiques de la réforme

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*Religious Orders and Society in East Central Europe, 1450-1800*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, sous presse), chapitre 2, paragraphe "The Mendicant Orders in Transylvania".

<sup>10</sup> LUPESCU MAKÓ, Mária, « Egy konfliktus margójára : a világi papság és a domonkosok kapcsolatai a középkori kolozsváron » [En marge d'un conflit : les relations entre clergé séculier et Dominicains à Cluj/Kolozsvár au Moyen Âge], dans I. COSTEA, C. FLOREA, J. PÁL et E. RÜSZ FOGARASI (dir.), *Oraşe şi oraşeni. Városok és városalakók* [Villes et citadins], (Cluj-Napoca, 2006), p. 404-41 ; FLOREA, Carmen, « The Third Path: Charity and Devotion in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns », dans M. CRĂCIUN et E. FULTON (dir.), *Communities of Devotion...*, chapitre 2 ; J. KARÁCSONYI, *Szent Ferencz...*, I, p. 367 et II, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> LE GOFF, Jacques, « Apostolat mendiant et fait urbain dans la France Médiévale : l'implantation des Ordres Mendiants. Programme de questionnaire pour une enquête », *Annales ESC* 23(1968) : 335-352 ; LE GOFF, J., LAGARDE, G., de FONTETTE, D., GUERREAU, A., « Enquête du Centre de Recherches Historiques : Ordres Mendiants et Urbanisation dans la France Médiévale. État de l'enquête », *Annales ESC* 25(1970) : 924-965.

<sup>12</sup> Voir entre autres : MARTIN, Hervé, *Les ordres mendiants en Bretagne (v. 1230-v. 1530). Pauvreté volontaire et prédication à la fin du Moyen Âge*, (Paris, Klincksieck, 1975).



observante accentuèrent ce trait au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>13</sup>. Erik Fügedi a souligné voici quarante ans l'interaction étroite entre urbanisation et réseau mendiant en Hongrie médiévale ; la présence des frères est selon lui l'un des meilleurs indicateurs de la vitalité démographique et économique des localités hongroises à la date de leur arrivée<sup>14</sup>. En Transylvanie aussi, les mendiants entretenaient un rapport privilégié avec la ville. Cinq localités urbaines abritaient rien moins que deux couvents au tournant des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles. Toutefois, les répertoires cartographiés mentionnés ci-dessus ont apporté des nuances importantes, par ordre et selon les époques, au schéma général hérité de l'enquête de Jacques Le Goff. Les Dominicains s'installèrent dans les villes transylvaines qui leur semblaient appelées à se développer (sauf à Vințu de Jos / Alvinc / Winc), constate Mihaela Salontai<sup>15</sup>. Mais pour Zoltán Soós, qui s'intéresse aux Franciscains, le rôle des couvents mendiants dans l'urbanisation de la Transylvanie reste à prouver<sup>16</sup>. Il n'est pas certain que, contrairement à ceux de France par exemple, les couvents implantés dans les faubourgs soient devenus le noyau d'un nouveau quartier<sup>17</sup>. Les Franciscains observants ne privilégiaient pas les sites urbains<sup>18</sup>. Dans l'ensemble, si les fondations mendiante des XIII-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles prirent presque toujours la ville pour cadre (Alba Iulia / Gyulafehérvár, Bistrița / Beszterce, Cluj / Kolozsvár, Sibiu / Nagyszeben et Sighișoara / Segesvár), celles du siècle suivant sont plutôt rurales ou semi-rurales.

Les circonstances à la fois culturelles, ecclésiastiques et sociales de l'installation des frères en Transylvanie commencent à être mieux connues. Le rôle de la colonisation « saxonne », observé de longue date, a été rappelé par Mihalea Salontai et Zoltán Soós. La première observe que trois des cinq villes de Transylvanie abritant deux couvents sont exclusivement

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<sup>13</sup> Parmi les nombreux travaux portant sur cette question, voir FOIS, Mario, « Il fenomeno dell'Osservanza negli Ordini religiosi tra il '300 e il '400. Alcune particolarità dell'Osservanza francescana », dans G. CARDAROPOLI, M. CONTI (dir.), *Lettura delle Fonti Francescane attraverso i secoli: il '400*, (Rome, 1981), p. 53-105, ainsi que les références fournies infra (paragraphe sur l'Observance).

<sup>14</sup> FÜGEDI, Erik, « La formation des villes et les ordres mendiants en Hongrie », *Annales E.S.C.* 25(mai-juin 1970): 966-987 ; version hongroise remaniée : « Koldulórendek és városfejlődés Magyarországon » [Les ordres mendiants et le développement urbain en Hongrie], *Századok* 106(1972): 69-95.

<sup>15</sup> M. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, que suit C. Florea dans « The Third Path... », paragraphe "The Mendicant Orders in Transylvania".

<sup>16</sup> SOÓS, Zoltán, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 255, 267, 273.

<sup>17</sup> de FONTEITE, Micheline, « Villes médiévales et ordres mendiants », *Revue d'Histoire du Droit* 48(1970) : 390-407.

<sup>18</sup> de CEVINS, Marie-Madeleine, *Les Franciscains observants hongrois de l'expansion à la débâcle (vers 1450 – vers 1540)*, (Rome, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Bibliotheca seraphico-capuccina 83, 2008), p. 51-52.

germanophones et que six des huit (à neuf) couvents dominicains de Transylvanie se situent dans des villes « saxonnnes » – les deux derniers se trouvant en terre sicule (Odorheiu Secuiesc /Székelyudvarhely) et, autre cas particulier, dans la cité épiscopale d’Alba Iulia /Gyulafehérvár<sup>19</sup>. L’homogénéité ethnique ayant entravé le découpage de paroisses supplémentaires dans ces villes peuplées (plus de 3000 habitants à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle), les couvents mendiants auraient pallié l’insuffisance de l’encadrement paroissial. Zoltán Soós dresse un constat similaire à propos des Franciscains : les créations de la « première vague » (peu après le milieu du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle) et de la « troisième » (fin XV<sup>e</sup>-début XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle) apparurent très souvent dans des villes saxonnnes<sup>20</sup>. Néanmoins, des couvents naquirent dans des villes « mixtes » ou majoritairement hungarophones au cours de la « deuxième vague » (des années 1420 à 1450). Celui de Târgu Mureş /Márosvásárhely, en terre sicule, était l’un des plus attractifs de la région : son église, foyer de pèlerinage actif, pouvait accueillir un millier de fidèles, soit le double de la population locale<sup>21</sup>. Inversement, le couvent dominicain de Odorheiu Secuiesc, unique fondation de Prêcheurs en territoire sicule, avait une importance moindre en comparaison des couvents dominicains fondés en milieu « saxon ». Il semble avoir souffert de la « concurrence » de l’église franciscaine de Târgu Mureş<sup>22</sup>.

3. L’équipe de chercheurs animée par Jacques le Goff avait observé qu’à l’intérieur de l’espace urbain, les couvents mendiants s’installaient de préférence à proximité des lieux de passage ou de rassemblement, à bonne distance des institutions ecclésiastiques séculières ou régulières préexistantes et dans les quartiers socialement intermédiaires. Confirmée par les monographies urbaines publiées entre-temps en France, en Italie et en Allemagne, cette socio-topographie caractérise assez bien les couvents mendiants de Hongrie, à en juger par les plans établis depuis les années 1970 à l’aide d’indices archéologiques et textuels<sup>23</sup>. Ces études locales sont aussi l’occasion de

<sup>19</sup> M. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, p. 27-32.

<sup>20</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 249.

<sup>21</sup> BOROS, Fortunát, « Ferencrendiek a Székelyföldön » [Les Franciscains en terre sicule], dans V. CSUTAK (dir.), *Emlékkönyv a Székely Nemzeti Múzeum ötvenes Jubileumára*, (Sepsiszentgyörgy, 1929), p. 72-94.

<sup>22</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 272 ; *Id.*, « A marosvásárhelyi ferences templom és kolostor. A ferences rend szerepe Marosvásárhely fejlődésében » [L’église et le couvent franciscain de Târgu Mureş. Le rôle de l’ordre franciscain dans le développement de Târgu Mureş], dans A. RUSU, P. SZÓCS (dir.), *Arhitectura religioasă medievală din Transilvania. Medieval Ecclesiastical Architecture in Transylvania*, t. II, (Satu Mare, 2002), p. 146-180.

<sup>23</sup> E. FÜGEDI, « La formation des villes... » ; de CEVINS, Marie-Madeleine, *L’Église dans les villes hongroises à la fin du Moyen Âge (vers 1320 - vers 1490)*, (Budapest-Paris-Szeged,

rappeler la part de contingence qui détermine l'emplacement d'un futur couvent (espace resté vide dans le tissu urbain, bâtiment ou terrain appartenant au fondateur, récupération d'un monastère abandonné, etc.), lequel ne s'accorde pas toujours avec les recommandations des instances supérieures de chaque ordre (chapitre et ministre ou prieur général), même si leur accord reste indispensable, ni avec celles du souverain pontife. Dans les notices de son répertoire des couvents dominicains de Transylvanie, Mihaela Salontai prend soin de réunir dans un paragraphe spécifique les indications disponibles sur la localisation exacte des couvents. Une comparaison avec les couvents de Prêcheurs des villes plus occidentales du bassin carpatique permettrait certainement de dégager des tendances propres aux couvents de Transylvanie.

4. La réflexion en cours sur la notion de territoire (du) sacré, qui a conduit, en France comme en Italie, en Allemagne ou en Angleterre, à réviser les approches antérieures sur la genèse des diocèses et des paroisses<sup>24</sup> aussi bien que sur l'emprise spatiale de Cluny<sup>25</sup> tarde à faire des émules chez les spécialistes européens de l'histoire des ordres mendiants au Moyen Âge. Rares sont les études consacrées à la formation des circonscriptions régulières mendiante - provinces, vicairies, custodies..., mais aussi territoires de prédication et de quête, ou encore circonscriptions de visite<sup>26</sup>. On sait seulement que, dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, lors de la création de la plupart des chapitres provinciaux (avec supérieur et chapitre), les provinces puis leurs subdivisions s'étaient coulées, pour d'évidentes raisons pratiques, dans les limites administratives séculières, tout en tenant compte de la densité des couvents. Fondées (comme les circonscriptions de visite clunisiennes) de façon empirique, elles furent lentement organisées et utilisées comme des territoires aux limites tangibles et révisables<sup>27</sup>.

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METEM - Publications de l'Institut Hongrois de Paris - Université de Szeged / Dissertations I, 2003), p. 50-53 et 359-380 (plans urbains).

<sup>24</sup> Parmi les ouvrages récemment parus en France sur le sujet : MAZEL, Florian (dir.), *L'espace du diocèse. Genèse d'un territoire dans l'Occident médiéval (V<sup>e</sup>-VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Voir notamment : IOGNA-PRAT, Dominique, *Études clunisiennes*, (Paris, Picard, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> BERTRAND, Paul, VIALLET, Ludovic (dir.), « La quête mendicante. Espace, pastorale, réseaux », dans J.-L. FRAY (dir.), *L'historien en quête d'espaces*, (Clermont-Ferrand, Presses de l'Université Blaise-Pascal, 2004), p. 347-369 ; LENOBLE, Clément, *Les Mendiants au village. Quêtes et prédication autour d'Avignon à la fin du Moyen Âge (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Toulouse, Privat, 2006) ; BERTRAND, Paul, LENOBLE, Clément, « Aires de prédication et aires de quête des couvents mendiants. À propos des franciscains d'Avignon et des dominicains de Rodez », dans M. LAUWERS (dir.), *Lieux sacrés...*

<sup>27</sup> État ancien des connaissances dans : HOURLIER, Dom Jacques, *L'âge classique (1140-1378). Les religieux.*, t. X de *l'Histoire du droit et des institutions de l'Eglise en Occident*, dir. G. Le BRAS, (Paris, Cujas, 1974), p. 405-408.

Le royaume de Hongrie disposait dès les années 1220-1230, fait bien connu là encore, de deux provinces, l'une franciscaine, l'autre dominicaine. Deux siècles plus tard, lorsque la province franciscaine observante de Hongrie se dissocia du noyau bosniaque, elle se calqua à nouveau sur les frontières du royaume de saint Étienne, en lui ajoutant seulement les couvents missionnaires de Moldavie et de Valachie. Or, à l'intérieur de ce cadre « national » de la *provincia Hungari[a]*, on relève l'apparition précoce de subdivisions correspondant exactement aux limites civiles (voïvodie) et ecclésiastiques (diocèse) de la Transylvanie, chez les Dominicains (la *natio Transilvanica* est l'une des 5 vicairies ou « nations » mentionnées au début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle) comme chez les Franciscains (la *custodia transylvana* figure dans la liste de 1332 et eut ensuite son équivalent chez les observants)<sup>28</sup>. Enfin, deux ans seulement après avoir partagé la custodie transylvaine en 1535, les dirigeants de la province salvatorienne (franciscaine observante) décidèrent de revenir au découpage initial. Cette coïncidence quasi continue entre circonscriptions mendiantes et circonscriptions ecclésiastiques et civiles pose déjà la question de la spécificité du fait mendiant en Transylvanie. Selon Zoltán Soós, c'est la vigueur de l'activité missionnaire – prouvée par les sources à propos de cinq couvents franciscains sur quatorze – qui justifie l'existence d'une circonscription transylvaine unique, vocation que confirme l'intégration dans la custodie franciscaine des couvents situés de l'autre côté des Carpates<sup>29</sup>.

Les territoires de prédication et de quête demeurent mal connus, faute de sources. Ils ne sont précisément documentés que chez les Dominicains, qui ont rédigé à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle une liste de *praedici* et de *termini* que Mihaela Salontai a publiée et analysée dans sa thèse<sup>30</sup>. Sa confrontation avec les données (certes éparses) dont on dispose dans d'autres régions de la chrétienté médiévale reste à faire<sup>31</sup>. Les conflits entre couvents qu'occasionnait la révision du tracé de ces circonscriptions en disent long en tout cas sur leurs enjeux matériels.

### *Vie matérielle et économie des couvents mendiants de Transylvanie*

Si la question de la pauvreté (surtout franciscaine) a été longuement débattue depuis un siècle, l'étude parallèle du discours des frères et de leurs pratiques économiques « réelles » n'a été menée, en dehors de quelques monographies isolées (allemandes surtout<sup>32</sup>), que très récemment, dans le

<sup>28</sup> Comme le rappelle Mihaela Salontai dans *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, p. 49-79.

<sup>29</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 273-274.

<sup>30</sup> M. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, p. 69-71.

<sup>31</sup> Voir les références indiquées dans la note 24.

<sup>32</sup> Voir les titres indiqués dans la « bibliographie raisonnée commentée » réunie par Florent Cygler dans : BÉRIOU, Nicole et CHIFFOLEAU, Jacques (dir.), *Économie et religion*.

cadre d'une enquête effectuée entre 2001 et 2009 sous la direction de Nicole Bériou et de Jacques Chiffolleau<sup>33</sup>. À partir d'exemples principalement français et italiens, ses participants ont montré que les frères mendiants avaient imaginé dès le milieu du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle des solutions inédites, sur le plan des idées comme sur celui des pratiques gestionnaires, pour résoudre la contradiction inhérente à leur état de *mendicantes* – vivre pauvrement sans renoncer à leurs activités religieuses ni sombrer dans la dépendance ou mettre en péril la survie des frères –, et non par « oubli » de la Règle. Ils ouvraient ainsi une « troisième voie » entre évangélisme radical et stabilité monastique<sup>34</sup>.

Indépendamment de ces découvertes, mais stimulés après coup par les exemples comparatifs et les modèles méthodologiques mis à la disposition des chercheurs par l'enquête « Économie et religion », des médiévistes et des archéologues ont commencé à examiner le fonctionnement économique des couvents mendiants d'Europe centrale. Beatrix Romhányi a largement défriché le terrain hongrois. Après s'être intéressée aux Bénédictins et aux Ermites de saint Paul sous cet angle, elle a réuni des éléments inédits sur les Dominicains, mieux documentés que les Franciscains<sup>35</sup>. En s'appuyant sur

*L'expérience des ordres mendiants (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2009), p. 23-36.

<sup>33</sup> Ses résultats ont été publiés dans : N. BÉRIOU et J. CHIFFOLEAU (dir.), *Économie et religion...* ; *L'economia dei conventi dei fratri minori e predicatori fino alla metà del Trecento. Atti del XXXI Convegno internazionale (Assisi, 9-11 ottobre 2003)*, Spolète, Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo, 2004. On les complètera par BERTRAND, Paul, *Commerce avec Dame Pauvreté : structures et fonctions des couvents mendiants à Liège, XIII<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Genève, Droz, 2004) ; MELVILLE, Gert et KEHNEL, Annette (dir.), *In proposito paupertatis : Studien zum Armutsverständnis bei den mittelalterlichen Bettelorden*, (Munster, Lit., 2001) ; TODSCHINI, Giacomo, *Richesse franciscaine : de la pauvreté volontaire à la société de marché*, (Lagrasse, Verdier, 2008) (éd. orig. italienne : Bologne, Il Mulino, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> Les sources normatives, homilétiques et iconographiques réunies par les collaborateurs de l'enquête « Économie et religion » montrent d'une part que le discours des frères – longtemps occulté par les exposés manichéens issus des querelles internes autour de la pauvreté – valorisait la circulation des biens (matériels et spirituels) entre les hommes. D'autre part, comptes, actes de donations et testaments révèlent que l'« économie réelle » des couvents mendiants combinait dès la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle l'acceptation de biens (fonciers notamment) et de revenus (rentes, péages, etc.) stables – habituels chez les moines bénédictins et les couvents féminins mais prohibés par les fondateurs des deux principaux ordres mendiants – et l'expérience vécue de la précarité matérielle, par la pratique des quêtes, la proportion non négligeable des aumônes dans les revenus des communautés et la mise en vente systématique de leurs stocks alimentaires ou vestimentaires. Voir N. BÉRIOU et J. CHIFFOLEAU (dir.), *Économie et religion...*, *passim*.

<sup>35</sup> ROMHÁNYI, Beatrix, « Domonkos kolostorok birtokai a későközépkorban [Les possessions des couvents dominicains à la fin du Moyen Âge] », *Századok* 144(2010), 2: 395-410 ; ROMHÁNYI, Beatrix, « Kolostori gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon [Économie

les données aujourd'hui accessibles et à titre d'étape préparatoire pour un programme collectif de recherche appelé à s'étendre à toute l'Europe du Centre-Est, l'auteur de ces lignes a relevé de nombreux traits communs entre les couvents mendiants hongrois et ceux décrits par l'enquête « Économie et religion » – en deux mots : une gestion pragmatique tolérant sans états d'âme la perception de revenus réguliers – mais également des différences, parmi lesquelles la rupture radicale causée par le mouvement observant chez les Frères mineurs (même conventuels) à partir du milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>36</sup>.

L'impact de l'Observance mis à part, ces sondages n'ont pas encore permis de relever des tendances qui seraient limitées aux mendiants de Transylvanie, que ce soit en matière de culture matérielle, de pratiques gestionnaires ou de conception de l'économie. Le couvent de Sighișoara /Segesvár est apparemment le seul de la province dominicaine hongroise à avoir conservé un inventaire détaillé recensant les (25) dons meubles et donations immeubles faits à l'établissement (*Libellum seu inventarium benefactorum*), consignés par le prieur de l'établissement, Antoine Fabri entre le milieu des années 1460 et 1529 ; il est assorti d'un obituaire énumérant les donateurs (*Liber Ambonis*) – du moins ceux jugés dignes d'être mentionnés dans la liturgie<sup>37</sup>. Compte tenu du prestige exceptionnel de l'établissement, on ne saurait en conclure que les autres couvents de Prêcheurs de la région tenaient des registres comparables. Les monographies fondées sur le dépouillement de sources testamentaires (où apparaissent les legs en faveur des frères)<sup>38</sup> ou sur les comptes-rendus de fouilles archéologiques<sup>39</sup>, de

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régulière en Hongrie médiévale] », dans A. KUBINYI, J. LASZLOVSZKY, P. SZABÓ (dir.), *Gazdaság és gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon : gazdaságtörténet, anyagi kultúra, régészet*, (Budapest, Martin Opitz, 2008), p. 412 (avec bibliographie).

<sup>36</sup> de CEVINS, Marie-Madeleine, « Les frères mendiants et l'économie en Hongrie médiévale. L'état de la recherche », *Études franciscaines*, n. s., 2010, fasc. 2 : 4-45.

<sup>37</sup> Ces registres ont été présentés et édités dès les années 1860 (avec une transcription aléatoire des noms propres) dans : FABRITIUS, Karl, « Zwei Funde in der ehemaligen Dominikanerkirche zu Schässburg », *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde* V/1(1861) : 1-40 (Obituaire : p. 16-17) ; IPOLYI, Arnold, « Adalékok a magyar domonkosok történetéhez », *Magyar Sion* 5(1867) : 481-497, 590-609, 662-673, 769-776. Maria Lupescu en prépare l'édition moderne.

<sup>38</sup> Voir les thèses (MA ou PhD) de Carmen Florea et Mária Lupescu Makó, préparées et soutenues à la *Central European University* (sous la direction de Katalin Szende, Gerhardt Jaritz et Gábor Klaniczay) et à l'Université Babeş-Bolyai de Cluj, dont les résultats ont été publiés (au moins en partie) : FLOREA, Carmen, *Devotion and Patronage of Saints in Late Medieval Transylvania* (MA, 1999) ; LUPESCU MAKÓ, Mária, *Catholic Piety in Transylvania during the Middle Ages: an Analysis of the Donations and Testaments Given to the Monasteries and their Churches* (MA, 1999) ; *Ead.*, *Catholic Piety in Transylvanian Royal Towns on the Basis of*

même que les ouvrages décrivant l'architecture médiévale en Transylvanie – élément constitutif de la culture matérielle des frères<sup>40</sup>, pourraient néanmoins être exploités en ce sens. Mihaela Salontai a souligné l'existence de véritables complexes architecturaux, chez les Dominicains de Braşov par exemple. Ils ne sont pas sans rappeler ceux des couvents de France du Nord<sup>41</sup>, à cette nuance près que (de façon prévisible) la préoccupation défensive est nettement plus marquée en Transylvanie, sans parler d'un certain régionalisme architectural<sup>42</sup>.

Quels étaient les revenus des couvents de Transylvanie, leur montant, leur nature et leur provenance ? La question reste ouverte. Les donations foncières *in perpetuum* consenties aux Prêcheurs y sont à peu près aussi récurrentes, semble-t-il, que dans le reste du royaume magyar entre les années 1470 et le début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>43</sup>. Mihaela Salontai a relevé des indices de ce que les frères dominicains, comme en Italie ou en France, cherchaient à s'insérer dans les circuits d'échange et les réseaux de fabrication artisanale. Les Dominicains de Braşov avaient, dans les années 1520-1530, une fabrique de cierges, un atelier de reliure ainsi qu'un atelier de taille de pierres et une briqueterie, qui fournissaient aussi la municipalité<sup>44</sup>. L'exploration des testaments urbains par Mária Lupescu a apporté des résultats complémentaires fort intéressants. On apprend que les frères mineurs recevaient des étangs piscicoles<sup>45</sup> – ou au moins leur production, comme Zoltán Soós l'a constaté à Târgu Mureş (1471)<sup>46</sup> –, comme dans d'autres couvents du royaume magyar. Mais un changement décisif s'opère au

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*Donations and Testaments* (PhD en voie d'achèvement) ; *Ead.*, « „Item lego...” Gifts for the Soul in Late Medieval Transylvania », *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 7(2001) : 161-185.

<sup>39</sup> Il est évidemment impossible de les citer toutes ici. Outre celle de Zoltán Soós (« The Franciscan Friary... »), on se reportera à la bibliographie fournie par les répertoires détaillés d'Adrian Rusu et Mihaela Salontai cités plus haut.

<sup>40</sup> ENTZ, Géza, *Erdély építészete a 11-13. században* [L'architecture de Transylvanie aux XI<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles], (Cluj, Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1994) ; *Id.*, *Erdély építészete a 14-16. században* [L'architecture de Transylvanie aux XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles], (Cluj, Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1996).

<sup>41</sup> VOLTI, Panayota, *Les couvents des ordres mendiants et leur environnement à la fin du Moyen Âge. Le nord de la France et les anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux*, (Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Quelques exemples franciscains : le clocher flanqué de quatre tourelles d'angle de l'église franciscaine de Târgu Mureş, que l'on retrouve sur d'autres édifices de la région, ou encore les tympans à voussures très linéaires. Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 259, 261.

<sup>43</sup> B. ROMHÁNYI, « Domonkos... », *op. cit.*, p. 401.

<sup>44</sup> M. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, p. 130.

<sup>45</sup> M. LUPESCU, « „Item lego...” », p. 170-178.

<sup>46</sup> « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 253.

milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle dans la nature des dons : composés antérieurement de biens fonds et de rentes, ils deviennent plus « ciblés » ensuite, soit en répondant aux besoins (alimentaires, vestimentaires, liturgiques) des religieux, soit pour rétribuer une chapellenie (service perpétuel), soit pour financer la décoration de telle partie de l'église ou l'aménagement d'une chapelle intérieure<sup>47</sup>. La dépendance des religieux à l'égard de leurs bienfaiteurs occasionnels semble néanmoins compensée par l'augmentation des messes obituelles. Reste à savoir si ces tendances, perceptibles dans toute la Hongrie<sup>48</sup>, sont plus marquées en Transylvanie et si elles valent également pour les couvents ruraux, dont la documentation est fantomatique.

L'utilisation conjointe des éléments dispersés (textuels, architecturaux, voire iconographiques) dont on dispose pourrait également affiner l'étude diachronique de la situation économique des couvents mendiants de Transylvanie. Elle mettrait certainement en évidence, à l'échelle de chaque couvent (comme cela a été fait à Târgu Mureş par Zoltán Sóos<sup>49</sup>) et de la custodie ou vicairie transylvaine, des périodes « fastes » - entendons par là celles où s'ouvrent des chantiers de grande envergure (agrandissement, ajout de chapelles latérales, ...), où la décoration s'enrichit (commandes de peintures murales, de retables) et où l'équipement progresse (acquisition de vaisselle liturgique précieuse, de livres liturgiques, d'un orgue, etc.). Les séries testamentaires peuvent partiellement compenser la disparition des vestiges archéologiques puisque, Maria Lupescu l'a constaté, les bienfaiteurs étaient parfaitement informés des travaux à effectuer dans les églises mendiants au moment de dicter leurs dernières volontés<sup>50</sup>.

Lorsqu'elles s'étirent jusqu'aux années 1540, les enquêtes sur l'économie mendicante en Transylvanie permettent aussi d'appréhender les changements résultant de la propagation de la Réforme protestante. Elle fit perdre aux frères de précieux appuis dans la société civile selon une chronologie et des modalités encore mal connues. Vers 1530, certaines municipalités contestèrent aux religieux la possession de leurs biens et refusèrent de les aider à réparer les dommages causés par les guerres<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> M. LUPESCU, « „Item lego...” », p. 185.

<sup>48</sup> Voir les conclusions établies à titre provisoire dans : M.-M. de CEVINS, « Les frères mendiants... », p. 43-44.

<sup>49</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 265-266.

<sup>50</sup> M. LUPESCU, « „Item lego...” », p. 185.

<sup>51</sup> La municipalité de Bistrița refusa ainsi en 1531 d'aider les Franciscains de la ville à reconstruire leur moulin, réduit en cendres par les troupes du voïvode de Moldavie, au motif qu'ils n'auraient jamais dû en posséder un ; les conseillers ajoutèrent que le ruisseau qui l'alimentait « appartenait » à la ville. J. KARÁCSONYI, *Szent Ferencz...*, I, p. 149.



Comme dans les villes occidentales, les propriétés et exonérations fiscales des couvents éveillaient les appétits. Pourtant, observe Maria Lupescu, les dons continuaient d'affluer en direction des couvents transylvains, souvent assortis de célébrations perpétuelles<sup>52</sup>, alors qu'ils décroissaient dans le reste du royaume de Hongrie<sup>53</sup>. Il est possible que les strates inférieures et intermédiaires de la société transylvaine aient attendu le milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle pour ne plus voir dans les frères des auxiliaires du salut.

### *Rayonnement social et façonnement de la piété des laïcs*

Une étude sociographique des mendiants de Transylvanie semble mission impossible dans la mesure où les sources ne livrent généralement que des prénoms de religieux, suivis dans les meilleurs des cas de leur lieu de naissance ou de résidence. Tout juste perçoit-on une différence entre Prêcheurs et Mineurs en matière de recrutement géographique : les premiers, d'après les listes du premier quart du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle dépouillées par Mihaela Salontai, n'étaient pas tous natifs de Transylvanie, ni même de Hongrie, qu'ils fussent prieurs ou seulement frères lais (à Cluj, à Brassó<sup>54</sup>) ; alors que les Franciscains recrutaient principalement sur place, à tous les niveaux (voir *infra*).

Une autre méthode pour apprécier le rayonnement des frères dans la société laïque et ecclésiastique locale consiste à identifier leurs bienfaiteurs. La création d'une base de données rassemblant tous les dons en faveur des couvents de Transylvanie ainsi que leur provenance, appelée de ses vœux par Zoltán Soós<sup>55</sup>, serait un jalon précieux dans cette perspective. Pour le moment, un rapide survol des fonds testamentaires de plusieurs villes hongroises paraît confirmer l'idée communément admise selon laquelle les frères mendiants auraient été particulièrement populaires en Transylvanie. Loin de là, à Sopron, à Presbourg (Bratislava / Pozsony) ou encore à Bardejov / Bártfa, moins d'un testateur sur dix léguait un bien à (au moins) un couvent mendiant ; les établissements mendiants abritaient seulement une minorité des chapellenies et ils ne recevaient que des sommes modiques par rapport aux dons faits aux paroisses et aux établissements charitables<sup>56</sup>. Les testaments de Cluj analysés par Mária Lupescu décrivent une situation nettement plus favorable aux frères : 42 % des (50) testateurs de la ville ou des environs demandent à être ensevelis dans un couvent ou un monastère, surtout dans un couvent mendiant et

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<sup>52</sup> M. LUPESCU, « „Item lego" ... », p. 165, 167.

<sup>53</sup> M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 401-406.

<sup>54</sup> M. SALONTAI, *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, p. 153-154, p. 125-133.

<sup>55</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 273.

<sup>56</sup> M.-M. de CEVINS, *L'Église dans les villes hongroises...*, p. 223-227.

parfois dans l'habit de l'ordre, entre 1450 et 1550. Il s'agit presque toujours de gens aisés, bourgeois ou nobles, qui souhaitent être enterrés à l'intérieur de l'église, pendant que les fidèles moins fortunés se contentent du cimetière paroissial pour leur repos éternel<sup>57</sup>.

Enrichissant l'étude du mouvement confraternel, dont les recherches menées depuis trente ans dans toute l'Europe constatent l'extrême polymorphie à la fin du Moyen Âge<sup>58</sup>, les récents travaux de Lidia Gross et de Carmen Florea ont souligné l'importance des confréries comme vecteurs de la spiritualité mendicante dans la société civile en Transylvanie après le milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les confréries y sont bien plus souvent rattachées à un couvent mendiant dans cette région (ce qui les rapproche des associations italiennes<sup>59</sup>) que dans le reste du royaume ; et elles tiennent, par delà la mort, à préserver ce lien par le biais des sépultures, passant outre les protestations des curés. Leur organisation, leur composition et leur fonctionnement global ne diffèrent pas nécessairement pour autant de ceux des associations affiliées à une église paroissiale<sup>60</sup>. Mais leur fonction sociale s'en démarque nettement. En comparant trois confréries affiliées à des couvents mendiants dominicains à Cluj, Braşov et Bistriţa entre les années 1460 et 1540, Carmen Florea retrouve les clivages sociaux dans les préférences des habitants<sup>61</sup>. L'exemple de la confrérie des valets fourreurs de Braşov tend ainsi à prouver qu'en Transylvanie, la paroisse étant contrôlée par le patriciat local (ou par les maîtres des métiers), les couches de la population urbaine exclues ou marginalisées (les valets dans les métiers, ainsi que l'ensemble des indigents) se tournaient spontanément vers les établissements mendiants au moment de fonder une confrérie de dévotion ou de métier, ou d'entrer dans l'une d'elles. La socio-topographie des couvents mendiants, implantés souvent dans les quartiers « populaires », les y prédisposait déjà. L'opposition du curé ne faisait qu'accentuer, par réaction, leur prise de distance par rapport au centre paroissial. Ces associations aux activités caritatives particulièrement développées diffusaient à leur échelle la solidarité entre chrétiens que prescrivaient à leur auditoire

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<sup>57</sup> M. LUPESCU, « „Item lego” ... », p. 165, 167.

<sup>58</sup> Mise au point synthétique et bibliographie à jour dans : MATZ, Jean-Michel, de la RONCIÈRE, Charles-Marie, « Le mouvement confraternel », dans M.-M. de CEVINS et J.-M. MATZ (dir.), *Structures et dynamiques religieuses dans les sociétés de l'Occident latin (1179-1449)*, (Rennes, P.U.R., 2010), p. 243-253.

<sup>59</sup> GAZZINI, Marina, *Confraternite e società cittadina nel medioevo italiano*, Bologne, CLUEB, 2006 ; de LA RONCIÈRE, Charles-Marie, « La place des confréries dans l'encadrement religieux du contado florentin au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle », *MEFRM*, t. 85 (1973) : 31-77 et 633-671.

<sup>60</sup> GROSS, Lidia *Confreriile medievale în Transilvania (secolele XIV- XVI)* [Les confréries médiévales en Transylvanie (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> s.)], (Cluj-Napoca, 2004), p. 199-244.

<sup>61</sup> C. FLOREA « The Third Path... »

les prédicateurs mendiants. Leur vocation était aussi de faciliter l'intégration des nouveaux venus et des indigents dans la société urbaine<sup>62</sup>.

Elles facilitèrent par ailleurs l'adoption par les habitants des pratiques dévotionnelles que les frères affectionnaient, comme le Rosaire – qui donna naissance aux confréries du même nom – ou le psautier de la Vierge<sup>63</sup>. De façon générale, la pastorale déployée par les frères mendiants a-t-elle contribué, conformément au projet initial de la papauté, à uniformiser croyances et pratiques religieuses dans ce saillant de la « frontière » de la chrétienté latine qu'était la Transylvanie ? Les recherches effectuées à propos des pays de « nouvelle chrétienté » ne cessent de souligner le décalage entre « religion prescrite » (par le magistère ecclésial, mendiants inclus) et « religion vécue » (par la masse des fidèles). Ils soulignent en particulier les résistances à l'acculturation chrétienne dans les « marges » scandinaves et ibérique de la *christianitas*. Mais il est vrai que là, l'essentiel de la tâche revenait au clergé paroissial et aux évêques, et non aux frères mendiants<sup>64</sup>. Les disciples de Jerzy Kłoczowski considèrent qu'en Europe du Centre-Est, la christianisation « en profondeur » était pratiquement achevée aux XIV<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles et qu'elle était redevable avant tout aux frères<sup>65</sup>. Tel n'est pas l'avis d'Aleksander Gieysztor et de Stanisław Bylina, pour qui on a encore affaire à un « christianisme folklorisé » (en Pologne comme en Hongrie) à la fin du Moyen Âge, surtout dans les campagnes : les populations rurales étant restées à l'écart du champ d'action des ordres mendiants, elles savaient à peine le *Credo* et négligeaient leurs obligations dominicales<sup>66</sup>.

Les derniers travaux décrivant la piété des habitants de Transylvanie à partir de la documentation textuelle (testamentaire notamment) et iconographique ne font pas ressortir, à l'heure actuelle, de traits singuliers. Dévotion eucharistique, culte des saints (notamment de la Vierge Marie),

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> En Scandinavie, « le monachisme ne joue aucun rôle » sur le plan de la christianisation, selon les conclusions de : MAILLEFER, Jean-Marie, « L'organisation ecclésiastique des limites septentrionales de l'Occident chrétien en Suède et en Norvège au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle », dans *L'Église et le peuple chrétien dans les pays de l'Europe du Centre-Est et du Nord (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> s.)*, Actes du colloque de Rome (27-29 janvier 1986), (Rome, Collection de l'École Française de Rome n°128, 1990), p. 67-79 (ici p. 70).

<sup>65</sup> KŁOCZOWSKI, Jerzy (dir.), *Christianity in East Central Europe. Late Middle Ages*, Actes du Congrès de la Commission Internationale d'Histoire Ecclésiastique Comparée (Lublin, 2-6 septembre 1996), vol. 2 (Le bas Moyen Âge), (Lublin, Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1999) ; *Id.*, *L'Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours* (dir. J.-M. MAYEUR et alii), t. 6, (Paris, 1990), p. 815-843.

<sup>66</sup> En français : BYLINA, Stanisław, « La catéchèse du peuple en Europe du Centre-Est aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles », dans J. KŁOCZOWSKI (dir.), *Christianity...*, vol. 2, p. 40-52.

préparation à la mort par l'accumulation des suffrages<sup>67</sup> rappellent fortement ce que l'on trouve dans l'ensemble du royaume de saint Étienne<sup>68</sup>. De leur côté, les enquêtes s'intéressant aux débuts du luthéranisme en Transylvanie relativisent la part du déterminant ethnique dans les choix confessionnels du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, notamment à l'aide de sources iconographiques<sup>69</sup>. Les frères mendiants sont-ils les principaux responsables de l'uniformisation des croyances et des pratiques religieuses en Transylvanie ? On peut le supposer pour les habitants des villes : les études sur la religiosité laïque citées précédemment portent sur des localités urbaines abritant au moins un couvent mendiant (pour une seule paroisse) à la fin du Moyen Âge. Zoltán Soós note la présence de motifs mariaux jusque sur les clefs de voûte de l'église franciscaine de Târgu Mureş (la rose à huit pétales)<sup>70</sup>, procédé visuel qui confirmerait la responsabilité des Franciscains dans la vigueur de la dévotion mariale. Des investigations supplémentaires seraient néanmoins nécessaires pour savoir si des écarts subsistaient entre ruraux et citadins au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Entre le discours des frères et ce qu'en retenaient les fidèles, il y avait aussi une différence. Les Hongrois de la fin du Moyen Âge semblent plus attachés aux indulgences qu'à la conversion intérieure et leurs pratiques ne sont pas exemptes de « magisme chrétien »<sup>71</sup> – celui dont parle Hervé Martin à propos de la Silésie où prêchait le Dominicain Pérégrin d'Opole vers 1300<sup>72</sup>. Maria Crăciun a réuni tout récemment des matériaux textuels et surtout

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<sup>67</sup> Outre les études de Carmen Florea et de Mária Lupescu effectuées à partir des testaments transylvains et citées plus haut, voir : CRĂCIUN, Maria, « Eucharistic Devotion in the iconography of Transylvanian Polyptych Altarpieces », dans J. PAIVA (dir.), *Religious Ceremonials and Images. Power and Social Meaning (1400-1750)* (Lisbon, 2002), p. 191-230 ; Ead., « 'Moartea cea bună': intercesori și protectori în pragul marii treceri. Între discursul clerical și pietatea populară » [“La Bonne Mort” : intercesseurs et protecteurs au seuil de l’Au-delà. Entre discours clérical et piété populaire], dans M. GRANCEA et A. DUMITRAN (dir.), *Discursuri despre moarte în Transilvania secolelor XVI-XX*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2006), p. 226-270 ; LUPESCU MAKO, Mária, « Death and Remembrance in late medieval Sighișoara (Schässburg, Segesvár) », *Caiete de antropologie istorică*, 1-2(2004) : 93-106.

<sup>68</sup> Telle est la conclusion de Mária Lupescu, dans « „Item lego”... »..., p. 185.

<sup>69</sup> PETERS, Christine, « Mural paintings, ethnicity and religious identity in Transylvania : the context for Reformation », dans K. MAAG (dir.), *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, Actes du congrès de St Andrews (avril 1995), (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1997) (St Andrews studies in Reformation history), p. 92-117.

<sup>70</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 257, 268.

<sup>71</sup> de CEVINS, Marie-Madeleine, « The influence of Franciscan friars on popular piety in the kingdom of Hungary at the end of the fifteenth century », dans M. CRĂCIUN et E. FULTON (dir.), *Communities of Devotion...*

<sup>72</sup> MARTIN, Hervé, *Pérégrin d'Opole. Un prédicateur dominicain à l'apogée de la chrétienté médiévale*, (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2008), p. 24.

iconographiques (peintures murales et retables des églises paroissiales) provenant des villes saxonnes de Transylvanie qui devraient permettre d'en savoir plus<sup>73</sup>. Soulevant précisément la question de l'influence des ordres mendiants sur la piété des habitants de ces villes au tournant des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles, elle remarque que les frères n'étaient pas seulement les propagateurs d'une piété transmise « par le haut » (par la papauté ou par les dirigeants des ordres mendiants) mais qu'ils s'adaptaient aux attentes de leurs ouailles<sup>74</sup>. À ce stade des recherches, il reste cependant difficile de savoir qui, des frères mendiants – parmi lesquels il faudrait distinguer les Mineurs des Prêcheurs –, des prêtres de paroisse ou des fidèles, était le plus attaché à la figure mariale, au *Corpus Christi* ou au *Vir Dolorum*. L'examen minutieux des (inventaires de) bibliothèques mendiante transylvaines – qui s'intégrerait en outre dans une dynamique européenne de recherche sur le rapport des frères mendiants aux livres<sup>75</sup> – permettrait d'en savoir un peu plus.

### *L'Observance en Transylvanie*

Peu étudiée jusqu'au début des années 1980, la réforme observante a fait l'objet de nombreux travaux, principalement en Italie, en Allemagne, en France et en Espagne, qui ont renouvelé la vision que l'on avait du mouvement, surtout parmi les fils de saint François<sup>76</sup>. Ils ont montré l'incroyable diversité des expériences menées sous le vocable fédérateur d'Observance, dans le temps (jusqu'à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle) et dans l'espace ; ceci en soulignant d'une part le rôle décisif de quelques figures charismatiques et mobiles dans la diffusion des nouveaux modèles de *vita*

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<sup>73</sup> CRĂCIUN, Maria, « Mendicant Impact on the Saxon Community of Transylvania, c. 1450-1550 », dans M. CRĂCIUN et E. FULTON (dir.), *Communities of Devotion...*, chapitre 1.

<sup>74</sup> Un exemple : les saints fondateurs, Dominique et François, sont assez peu représentés dans ces églises, alors que la Vierge nimbée de Soleil ou le *Vir dolorum* s'y rencontrent fréquemment. *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Voir les séminaires et colloques organisés sur ce thème par Nicole Bériou et Donatella Nebbiai à l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (Paris), dont le programme est disponible sur [www.mendicantes.net](http://www.mendicantes.net) ; *Studio et studia : le scuole degli ordini mendicanti tra XIII e XIV secolo, Atti del XXIX Convegno internazionale* (Assisi, 11-13 ottobre 2001), (Spolète, Centro italiano di studisull'alto Medioevo, 2003).

<sup>76</sup> *Il rinnovamento del francescanesimo : l'Osservanza. Atti del XI Convegno Internazionale di Studi Francescani* (Assisi, 20-22 ottobre 1983), (Assise-Pérouse, Centro di Studi Francescani - Università di Perugia, 1985) ; NIMMO, Duncan B., *Reform and Division in the Franciscan Order (1226-1538) : from St. Francis to the Foundation of the Capuchins*, (Rome, BSC n°33, 1987) ; ELM, Kaspar (dir.), *Reformbemühungen und Observanzbestrebungen im spätmittelalterlichen Ordenswesen*, (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1989) ; MEYER, Frédéric et VIALLET, Ludovic (dir.), *Identités franciscaines à l'âge des réformes*, (Clermont-Ferrand, Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2005).

*religiosa*, et d'autre part l'implication des pouvoirs civils (roi, princes, nobles) dans la mise en œuvre concrète de la réforme. En Transylvanie, comme en Sirmie et en Slavonie, la proportion de couvents observants par rapport aux « conventuels » est particulièrement élevée par rapport à la situation « nationale »<sup>77</sup>. Ce trait explique à la fois, on l'a dit, l'épanouissement très tardif des ordres mendiants, le déséquilibre entre franciscains et dominicains (où il n'y eut ni créations observantes, ni province réformée), l'implantation souvent semi-rurale des couvents ainsi enfin que l'application plus stricte de l'exigence de pauvreté.

De la fondation des premiers couvents observants sous les rois Angevins jusqu'au milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, la Transylvanie a occupé une place privilégiée dans la réforme des couvents mendiants de Hongrie. Des synthèses et des monographies ont éclairé il y a peu les circonstances de l'implantation de l'Observance franciscaine en Hongrie, alimentant la réflexion plus vaste sur le processus de réforme chez les mendiants à la fin du Moyen Âge<sup>78</sup>. Ils ont établi que, si la Bosnie est bien le berceau initial de la réforme des Mineurs de la province hongroise, les projets d'expansion balkanique de Louis le Grand ont posé des jalons durables dans la province transylvaine : rappelons qu'en 1369-1370, les défaites subies par les troupes royales en Bulgarie entraînent le repli des frères mineurs venus de la vicairie de Bosnie en direction de la Transylvanie et dans la vallée de la Timiș /Temes<sup>79</sup>. Certes, les racines mémorielles de l'Observance franciscaine hongroise ne se trouvent pas en Transylvanie mais en Bosnie - d'où provenaient ses premiers martyrs, les frères massacrés à Vidin en 1369, et où fut commencée la chronique observante au début du siècle suivant - ainsi qu'au sud de la Grande Plaine - le nom populaire des franciscains observants hongrois dès le milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, *cseri barátok*, ferait référence au couvent de Cseri<sup>80</sup>.

Par la suite, la situation religieuse propre à la Transylvanie favorisa l'essor du mouvement, avant comme après la création de la province observante autonome de Hongrie en 1448. En effet, la présence de chrétiens

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<sup>77</sup> ROMHÁNYI, Beatrix, *Monasteriologia Hungarica...*, p. 77.

<sup>78</sup> Vue d'ensemble dans : M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 31-62.

<sup>79</sup> de CEVINS, Marie-Madeleine, « L'alliance du sabre et du goupillon en Hongrie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle : les frères mendiants comme agents de l'expansionnisme angevin dans les Balkans », dans *La diplomatie dans les territoires angevins*, Actes du colloque de Szeged - Budapest (13-16 septembre 2007), (Rome-Szeged, Institut Hongrois de Rome-Université de Szeged, sous presse).

<sup>80</sup> L'étymologie de cette expression mentionnée pour la première fois par écrit dans les années 1470 sous la plume de Jean de Thuróc demeure discutée. Résumé dans : M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 69-70.

orthodoxes d'une part, en nombre croissant depuis l'expansion mongole puis ottomane, et la persistance de foyers hérétiques d'autre part (moins cryptobogomiles que hussites, taborites et calixtins, à partir des années 1420<sup>81</sup>) faisaient de la région une terre de mission à la fois intérieure et extérieure (en direction de la Moldavie, où avaient fui les hussites traqués par Jacques de la Marche). Certains couvents furent expressément fondés dans ce but dès les années 1440, comme ceux de Şumuleu Ciuc /Csíksomlyó et Teiuş /Tövis<sup>82</sup>. De plus, la proximité des Infidèles turcs valut aux Franciscains observants (de la vicairie de Bosnie) la reconnaissance par le pape dès 1424 de leur rôle de *defensor christianitatis* et l'envoi en Hongrie (sans oublier la Transylvanie) de deux illustres prédicateurs et réformateurs : Jacques de la Marche et Jean de Capistran. C'est en Transylvanie que le premier aurait écrit en 1436 les *Articuli husitarum*, alors qu'il était à la fois inquisiteur pontifical et chef de la vicairie franciscaine observante de Bosnie, animé par la volonté de traquer les hérétiques<sup>83</sup>. Jean de Capistran arriva sur place pour prêcher la croisade contre les Infidèles mais aussi convertir les orthodoxes - ce qu'il fit avec le concours des franciscains de Transylvanie (« 10000 » « schismatiques » auraient ainsi été ramenés dans le giron de Rome à l'automne 1455), avant d'approcher de Belgrade<sup>84</sup>. Côté dominicain, le passage des réformateurs Jacques Riecher puis Léonard de Brixenthal eut des effets presque comparables<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> Sur les missions observantes en Moldavie et les hérésies en Transylvanie, voir GALAMB, György, « A ferences obszervancia magyarországi térnyeréséhez », dans F. PITI (dir.), « Magyaroknak eleiről ». *Ünnepi tanulmányok a hatvan esztendő Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, (Szeged, Szeged Középkorász Műhely, 2000), p.165-181 ; *Id.*, « Francescani, eretici e repressione antiereticale nell'Ungheria del 15. secolo », *Chronica. Annual of the Institute of History of the University of Szeged (Hungary)*, 2(2002): 39-56 ; *Id.*, *Marchiai Jakab prédikációs és inkvizítori tevékenysége (A ferences obszervancia itáliai, boszniai és magyarországi szerepéhez)*, (Szeged, Thèse de Doctorat (inédate), 2001), en particulier p.188-225.

<sup>82</sup> Comme le rappelle Zoltán Soós dans « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 270-272.

<sup>83</sup> GALAMB, György, « A ferences obszervancia magyarországi térnyeréséhez » [Contribution à l'étude de l'expansion de l'observance franciscaine en Hongrie], dans F. PITI (dir.), « Magyaroknak eleiről ». *Ünnepi tanulmányok a hatvan esztendő Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, (Szeged, Szeged Középkorász Műhely, 2000), p.165-181 ; *Id.*, « Francescani, eretici e repressione antiereticale nell'Ungheria del 15. secolo », *Chronica. Annual of the Institute of History of the University of Szeged (Hungary)*, 2(2002): 39-56 ; *Id.*, *Marchiai Jakab prédikációs és inkvizítori tevékenysége (A ferences obszervancia itáliai, boszniai és magyarországi szerepéhez)* [L'activité prédicante et inquisitoriale de Jacques de la Marche (À propos du rôle de l'observance franciscaine italienne, bosniaque et hongroise)], (Budapest, Thèse de Doctorat (inédate), 2001), en particulier p.170-171, 221-224 ; *Id.*, « S. Giacomo della Marca e gli inizi dell'Osservanza francescana in Ungheria », *Picenum Seraphicum XXI* (2002) : 11-31.

<sup>84</sup> ANDRIĆ, Stanko, *The Miracles of St. John Capistran*, (Budapest, CEUP, 2000), p. 25-26.

<sup>85</sup> A. HÁRSÁNYI, *A domonkosrend...*, p. 34-37.

Et l'Observance bénéficia en Transylvanie du soutien continu des Hunyades, de Jean à Mathias Corvin<sup>86</sup>.

On ne saurait en déduire que les frères transylvains donnaient le ton dans la province : les décisions de portée générale étaient arrêtées, en Hongrie comme ailleurs, à l'échelon provincial<sup>87</sup>. À l'apogée de la réforme des réguliers, au tournant des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles, outre la mobilité propre aux mendiants, les rouages administratifs assuraient à la province franciscaine observante une direction à la fois collégiale et centralisée qui tuait dans l'œuf toute forme de particularisme régional<sup>88</sup>. Les *studia* les plus réputés étaient ceux des couvents de Buda et d'Esztergom, où avaient étudié et enseigné les célébrités prêcheurs Oswald de Laskó et Pelbart de Temesvár. Aucun chapitre de la province salvatorienne ne se tint en Transylvanie, trop excentrée visiblement<sup>89</sup>. Sans doute cela compensait-il le recrutement régional des frères – issus le plus souvent de la communauté ethnique dominante de la ville (les Hongrois à Târgu Mures, les Allemands à Medias) – qu'indiquent les recensements du début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>90</sup>.

Des monographies récentes ont conforté le point de vue antérieur selon lequel la réforme mendicante a connu en Transylvanie un succès particulièrement prolongé, tandis que le repli s'amorçait dans le reste du bassin carpatique depuis les années 1500-1510. En 1523, la *custodia transylvana* arrivait en seconde position dans la province franciscaine observante de Hongrie sur le plan du nombre de frères, après celle d'Esztergom ; en 1535, c'est celle qui abritait le plus de couvents en 1535 (11), la seule que l'on envisagea de partager en deux pour en faciliter la gestion<sup>91</sup>. Enfin, les fondations de couvents, l'admission de novices et les donations importantes se poursuivirent en Transylvanie jusque dans années 1540<sup>92</sup>. La « seconde

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<sup>86</sup> KUBINYI, András, « Mátyás király és a monasztikus rendek » [Le roi Mathias et les ordres monastiques], dans I. TAKÁCS (dir.), *Mons Sacer 996-1996. Pannonhalma 1000 éve*, t. I, (Pannonhalma, A pannonhalmi főapátság, 1996), p. 538-544.

<sup>87</sup> D. Jacques Hourlier la décrivait déjà comme « un rouage essentiel dans l'organisation des ordres mendiants » et « le cadre habituel de leur activité, tant sur le plan juridique que sur le plan sociologique », dans *L'âge classique...*, p. 408. Les sources de la pratique confirment ce schéma théorique (voir les références données *supra* et *infra*).

<sup>88</sup> M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 165-183 ; *Ead.*, « L'Observance franciscaine en Hongrie dans les années 1500 à 1530 : une centralisation clérée ? », dans F. MEYER et L. VIALLET (dir.), *Identités franciscaines à l'âge des réformes*, (Clermont-Ferrand, Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2005), p. 431-462.

<sup>89</sup> M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 622-623.

<sup>90</sup> Z. SOÓS, « The Franciscan Friary... », p. 269.

<sup>91</sup> J. KARÁCSONYI, *Szent Ferencz...*, I, p. 107 ; M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 379-380.

<sup>92</sup> Voir les travaux de Mária Lupescu mentionnés plus haut.



jeunesse » du franciscanisme réformé dans cette région tient en grande partie à des facteurs circonstanciels extérieurs aux ordres mendiants : l'afflux d'immigrants venus du sud du pays, la protection momentanée de l'évêque Émeric Czibak et le maintien de conditions de sécurité et d'approvisionnement moins médiocres qu'ailleurs<sup>93</sup>. Mais elle s'explique peut-être aussi par l'insertion et le rayonnement remarquables des frères dans la société civile – masculine *et* féminine, d'après les recherches de Carmen Florea sur les couvents de moniales dominicaines et les béguinages franciscains<sup>94</sup>.

### *Les frères mendiants et les images*

Quel usage les frères mendiants de Transylvanie faisaient-ils des images ? Comment ont-ils résolu la tension inévitable entre les restrictions imposées, au nom de la pauvreté, par les dirigeants de l'ordre au sujet du décor des églises mendiante (chez les Franciscains depuis le chapitre général de Narbonne de 1260) et la remise à l'honneur des images comme adjuvants à la prédication et plus généralement comme outils de la pastorale laïque<sup>95</sup> ? De nombreux travaux d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie médiévale se sont intéressés aux représentations iconographiques du royaume de Hongrie affiliées aux ordres mendiants – qu'elles aient été réalisées dans des églises rattachées à un couvent ou dans des sanctuaires érigés à proximité, ou encore qu'elles résultent des largesses de personnages influents (bourgeois ou seigneurs) entretenant des relations suivies avec les frères. Il en ressort qu'en Hongrie comme en Italie, les frères se sont emparés très rapidement de ce formidable instrument de pédagogie religieuse, en couvrant d'images aussi bien les murs de la nef que ceux du chœur de l'édifice ecclésial et sans se contenter de représenter les saints fondateurs, le Christ ou la Vierge Marie sous leur forme habituelle<sup>96</sup>. À l'extrême fin du

<sup>93</sup> M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 375-377.

<sup>94</sup> FLOREA, Carmen, « The Third Path: Charity and Devotion in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns », dans M. CRĂCIUN et E. FULTON (dir.), *Communities of Devotion...*, chapitre 2, paragraphe "The Mendicant Orders in Transylvania".

<sup>95</sup> Mise au point historiographique récente sur le rapport des ordres mendiants à l'image dans : LIONNET, Marie, *Les peintures murales en Hongrie à la fin du Moyen Âge (v. 1300-v. 1475). La transmission des traditions iconographiques et les formes originales de leur appropriation locale sur l'exemple de deux thèmes majeurs : la Mère de Dieu et le Jugement dernier*, thèse inédite d'histoire de l'art, (Université Paris X - Nanterre, 2004), vol. 1, p. 379-381. Rappelons que les liens entre prédication et images ont fait l'objet de nombreux travaux ces vingt dernières années, principalement italiens et français, tels ceux de Roberto Rusconi, Emma Simi Varanelli, Nicole Bériou ou encore Hervé Martin.

<sup>96</sup> Faute de pouvoir les citer tous, on se contentera de renvoyer à : MAROSI, Ernő (dir.), *Magyarországi művészet 1300-1470 körül* [L'art en Hongrie de 1300 à 1470 environ],

XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, les deux prédicateurs Pelbart de Temesvár et Oswald de Laskó vantaient les mérites de l'image, citant Bonaventure ; et ils recommandaient aux utilisateurs de leurs sermonnaires de montrer au public les représentations figurées qui les entouraient dans l'église ou de brandir des images mobiles<sup>97</sup>.

Malheureusement, l'état de conservation des édifices mendiants de Hongrie, celui de leurs peintures murales comme de leurs polyptyques – surtout en Transylvanie – ne permet pas une exploitation fine de leur contenu. De même, l'impact de l'iconographie mendicante sur celle des églises environnantes reste difficile à apprécier<sup>98</sup>. Pire encore, certaines identifications demeurent problématiques. Ciprian Firea a mis en cause il y a peu la provenance dominicaine du retable de Sighișoara dédié à saint Martin (vers 1520), pourtant établie depuis longtemps<sup>99</sup>. Son absence dans les sources écrites issues du couvent dominicain de la ville (que ce soit dans l'inventaire des donations évoqué plus haut ou dans les manuscrits liturgiques) le conduit à penser qu'il s'agit d'une production extérieure à l'ordre des Prêcheurs<sup>100</sup>. La présence d'un fondateur d'ordre (ici, Dominique, à moins qu'il ne s'agisse en réalité de saint Gilles) et de plusieurs personnages portant l'habit de régulier n'est donc pas toujours une « marque de fabrication » mendicante. On touche ici à la question plus générale de l'autoreprésentation des frères et de leur ordre par l'image – ce qui rejoint les recherches de Dominique Donadieu-Rigaut sur la vision de l'*ordo* monastique au Moyen Âge<sup>101</sup>. Enfin, dans l'hypothèse où le retable de Sighișoara serait tout de même issu de l'ordre des Prêcheurs, l'identité dominicaine aurait été occultée par la représentation de personnages saints familiers des habitants (saints évêques, saints rois de Hongrie et autres saints « nationaux ») ; ce qui tendrait à prouver que les frères se pliaient aux

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(Budapest, Akadémiai kiadó, 1987), 2 vol (936 + 720 p. de clichés) ; HARIS, Andrea, (dir.), *Koldulórendi építészet a középkori Magyarországon. Tanulmányok*, Budapest, Országos Műemlékvédelmi hivatal (Művészettörténet-Műemlékvédelem VII), (Budapest, 1994).

<sup>97</sup> de CEVINS, Marie-Madeleine, « L'exercice de la prédication pastorale en Hongrie à la fin du Moyen Âge », dans S. CASSAGNES-BROUQUET, A. CHAUOU, D. PICHOT, L. ROUSSELOT (dir.), *Religions et mentalités au Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Hervé Martin*, (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003), p. 335 ; PÁSZTOR, Lajos, « Temesvári Pelbárt és Laskai Ozsvát az egyházi és világi pályáról », *Regnum* (1937): 142-145.

<sup>98</sup> LIONNET, Marie, *Les peintures murales...*, vol. 1, p. 379, note 1488.

<sup>99</sup> FIREA, Ciprian, « Polipticul din Sighișoara – un retblu dominican ? » [Le polyptyque de Sighișoara : un retable dominicain ?], *Ars Transilvaniae* XIX (2009): 69-80 + 13 pl. hors texte.

<sup>100</sup> FIREA, Ciprian, « Polipticul din Sighișoara... », p. 76-79.

<sup>101</sup> DONADIEU-RIGAUT, Dominique, *Penser en images les ordres religieux (XII<sup>e</sup> – XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Paris, Éditions Arguments, 2005).

souhaits de leur auditoire en matière d'iconographie, au lieu de leur imposer « leur » spiritualité propre.

Malgré tout, il semble que l'iconographie des églises médiévales de Transylvanie, mendiante ou non, porte bien l'empreinte d'une spiritualité mendiante, et notamment franciscaine. Faute de représentations suffisantes, on ne pourra sans doute jamais faire en Transylvanie ce qu'a réussi Dušan Buran pour le nord du royaume de saint Étienne : relier la diffusion du thème du *Consensus Mariae* – élément de la représentation de l'Annonciation cher aux Frères mineurs – au maillage des couvents mendiants. Néanmoins, Anca Gogâltan a repéré dans les peintures du chœur de l'église de Mălâncrav / Almakerék des motifs proprement franciscains, très révélateurs selon elle des contacts entre l'aristocratie locale et les Franciscains au début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>102</sup>. Dans sa thèse consacrée aux peintures murales représentant la Vierge Marie et le Jugement dernier en Hongrie à la fin du Moyen Âge, Marie Lionnet a affiné ces propositions. Elle a analysé en détail deux ensembles iconographiques originaires de Transylvanie et manifestement d'inspiration franciscaine bien que n'appartenant pas à des édifices affiliés à l'ordres des Mineurs : *primo*, celui qui orne la nef de l'église de Sântămărie Orlea / Óraljaboldogfalva (v. 1310-1320), située dans une bourgade latine enclavée dans un territoire majoritairement orthodoxe, proche de la frontière valaque mais aussi du couvent franciscain de Orăștie / Szászváros ; *secundo*, celui du mur nord de la nef de l'église de Mălâncrav, en terre saxonne, propriété du lignage des Apafi (après 1350) et certainement décoré à leur initiative. Le premier ensemble, bien que conforme à la disposition byzantine, réserve à la Croix une place centrale (au sens propre !) et situe Marie au cœur du processus de Rédemption. Le second, qui décrit la glorification de la Vierge, affirme la croyance en la résurrection immédiate de Marie corps et âme (croyance promue comme chacun sait par les théologiens franciscains), en employant une structure narrative (procédé courant là aussi chez les Mineurs). Par ailleurs, l'apparition particulièrement précoce dans les peintures murales de Transylvanie du thème de la Mère de Miséricorde (jusque dans les représentations du Jugement dernier) atteste l'importance de la spiritualité franciscaine dans l'iconographie religieuse de la région<sup>103</sup>.

Les éléments réunis dans les lignes qui précèdent demeurent trop fragmentaires pour conclure à une « exception transylvaine » en matière de fait mendiant à la fin du Moyen Âge. La question mérite néanmoins d'être

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<sup>102</sup> GOGÂLTAN, Anca, *Patronage and Artistic Production in Transylvania. The Apafis and the Church in Mălâncrav (14th-15th Centuries)*, PhD, Central European University, (Budapest, 2002), p. 125-126.

<sup>103</sup> LIONNET, Marie, *Les peintures murales...*, vol. 1, p. 383-408.

posée, puisque les chercheurs européens insistent depuis les années 1960-1980 sur la diversité du paysage mendiant, dans un cadre national mais aussi régional, à rebours d'une approche qui avait trop longtemps privilégié le foyer italien du fait de son exceptionnelle richesse documentaire et de son rôle de matrice des *ordines mendicantes*<sup>104</sup>. Dans leur histoire abrégée de l'ordre des Mineurs en Transylvanie écrite dans les années 1920, Fortunát Boros et József György soulignaient, sur la foi de leurs prédécesseurs cléricaux des XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles, l'apparition précoce de custodies calquées sur les limites de la Transylvanie et ils décrivaient celle-ci comme un terreau exceptionnellement fertile pour le franciscanisme<sup>105</sup>. L'historiographie de l'époque communiste exalta ensuite l'engagement des Franciscains de Transylvanie dans les révoltes populaires de 1437 puis de 1514<sup>106</sup> – interprétation largement démentie depuis, puisque les principaux foyers de révolte se situaient (aussi) plus à l'ouest et que les clercs séculiers participèrent à ces mouvements contestataires<sup>107</sup>. Les travaux récents semblent confirmer que c'est dans l'activité missionnaire qu'il faut chercher la clef d'interprétation de l'ample succès des mendiants en Transylvanie,

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<sup>104</sup> À défaut de pouvoir recenser ici toutes les monographies, ouvrages collectifs ou synthèses d'histoire locale, régionale ou nationale qui ont mis en évidence la diversité du paysage mendiant au Moyen Âge, en voici quelques-uns qui ont fait date, par secteur géographique : *Les ordres mendiants et la ville en Italie centrale (v. 1220-v. 1350)*, Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, 89 (1977) ; MARTIN, Hervé, *Les ordres mendiants en Bretagne...* ; Ó CLABAIGH, Colmán N., *The Franciscans in Ireland 1400-1534. From Reform to Reformation*, (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2002) ; NYHUS, Paul L., *The Franciscans in South Germany, 1400-1530: Reform and Revolution*, (Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1975) (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. New Series, t. 65, n° 8) ; NEIDIGER, Bernard, *Mendikanten zwischen Ordensideal und städtischer Realität. Untersuchungen zum wirtschaftlichen Verhalten der Bettelorden im Basel*, (Berlin, Berliner Historische Studien 5, Ordensstudien 3, 1981) ; RASMUSSEN, Jorgen Nybo, *Die Franziskaner in der nordischen Ländern im Mittelalter*, (Kevelaer, Edition Coelde, 2002) (Franziskanische Forschungen, 43) ; DŽAMBO, Jozo, *Die Franziskaner im mittelalterlichen Bosnien*, (Werl, Dietrich Coelde Verlag, 1991).

<sup>105</sup> BOROS, Fortunát, *Az erdélyi ferencrendiek* [Les franciscains de Transylvanie], (Cluj-Kolozsvár, 1927) ; GYÖRGY, József, *A ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben* [La vie et l'activité des Franciscains en Transylvanie], (Cluj-Kolozsvár, 1930).

<sup>106</sup> SZÜCS, Jenő, « Ferences ellenzéki áramlat a magyar parasztháború és reformáció hátterében », *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* (1974) : 409-439 (traduction allemande : « Die oppositionelle Strömung der Franziskaner im Hintergrund des Bauernkrieges und der Reformation in Ungarn », *Études Historiques Hongroises* (1985), F. GLATZ et E. PAMLÉNYI (dir.), vol. I, (Budapest, 1985), p. 483-514 ; *Id.*, « A ferences obszervancia és a 1514. évi parasztháború. Egy kódex tanúsága » [L'Observance franciscaine et la guerre paysanne de l'année 1514], *Levélártári Közlemények* 43 (1972) : 213-263.

<sup>107</sup> Présentation détaillée de la controverse dans M.-M. de CEVINS, *Les franciscains observants...*, p. 337-351.

avant comme après le tournant observant. Ils n'occulent pas pour autant les inflexions propres à chaque ordre (Franciscains et Dominicains n'y ayant pas eu le même rayonnement), à chaque sphère culturelle (les trois « nations » saxonne, sicule et hongroise) et à chaque catégorie sociale (des grands seigneurs aux bourgeois et aux paysans), qui dessinent en fin de compte un paysage mendiant particulièrement nuancé.

Au terme de ce bref aperçu, il apparaît que les recherches menées sur les ordres mendiants en Transylvanie s'inscrivent pleinement dans les problématiques explorées à propos d'autres espaces de la Chrétienté médiévale. Elles reposent sur une documentation variée et mettent en œuvre des méthodes éprouvées – pour les testaments comme pour les relevés de fouilles ou la documentation iconographique. La présentation des résultats à l'aide du genre dictionnaire (ou répertoire alphabétique), ancrée à la tradition ancienne du *monasterologia*<sup>108</sup>, illustre une tendance montante dans l'historiographie depuis deux décennies, qui réconcilie exigences d'érudition et facilité d'accès à l'information scientifique. La fusion des notices existantes par couvent sous forme numérisée, leur traduction systématique en une ou plusieurs langues occidentales, de même que l'ajout de données iconographiques et une cartographie de qualité assureraient certes une meilleure diffusion internationale de ces éléments. D'autres thèmes mériteraient par ailleurs d'être investigués pour mieux cerner la spiritualité des frères de Transylvanie, notamment (à travers leurs écrits, leurs bibliothèques ou leurs livres) leur culture théologique et intellectuelle.

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<sup>108</sup> Pour la Hongrie, FUXHOFFER, Damianus, *Monasteriologia Regni Hungariae*, t. I: *Monasteria ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, t. II: *Sacrae domus canonicorum, cisterciensium, ordinum equestrium et eremitarum augustininorum*, (Pest, Szent István Társulat, 1858-1860) (3<sup>e</sup> éd. Vienne-Esztergom, 1869).



# Le pays du Maramureș au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle – interférences ethniques et confessionnelles

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**Resumé :** Le Maramureș du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle peut être conçu comme le produit corrélé de deux mondes différents qui ont interféré : un monde de tradition romano-byzantine et d'influence byzantino-slave, représenté principalement par les orthodoxes roumains, et un monde de type occidental (avec des éléments de tradition gentilice), représenté par les autorités catholiques hongroises, l'Église catholique, les « hôtes ». À mesure que l'élite dominante des Roumains s'est rapprochée de la royauté et des autorités hongroises, afin de préserver son statut (une autre préférant se retirer en Moldavie), aux sujets roumains déjà existants s'ajoutèrent d'autres Roumains, du voisinage, et notamment des Ruthènes, descendus du sein de leur peuple, du Nord. Pour plusieurs raisons, mais notamment en considération de la confession commune et du statut social similaire, les sujets ruthènes se sont surtout rapprochés des sujets roumains, partageant avec eux le même sort. Des propriétaires terriens ont commencé, à partir du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, à s'élever du sein des Ruthènes, se rapprochant, tout comme les knèzes roumains, du statut de la noblesse hongroise. Les deux communautés orthodoxes – roumaine et ruthène – ont subi la pression de l'Église catholique, suite à laquelle une partie de leur élite embrassa la confession occidentale. Grâce à ces aspects, le Maramureș historique, « pays » d'environ 10 500 km<sup>2</sup>, situé à l'intérieur d'une large bande d'interférence entre Occident et Orient, qui commençait à la mer Baltique et se terminait à l'Adriatique, demeure un fascinant creuset de cultures et civilisations, véritable symbole de l'Europe multiculturelle et pluriconfessionnelle.

**Keywords:** Le Maramureș, Moyen Age, Roumains, Ruthènes, interférences ethniques

**Țara Maramureșului în secolul al XIV-lea – interferențe etnice și confesionale**  
Maramureșul secolului al XIV-lea era produsul corelat a două lumi diferite, ajunse în interferență: o lume de tradiție romano-bizantină și de influență bizantino-slavă, reprezentată, în principal, de ortodocșii români și alta de tip occidental (cu elemente de tradiție gentilică), reprezentată de autoritățile catolice ungare, de biserica catolică, de "oaspeți". Pe măsură ce o parte din elita stăpânitoare a românilor, cu scopul menținerii statutului său, s-a alăturat regalității și autorităților ungare (o alta preferând retragerea în Moldova), supușilor români existenți li s-au adăugat alții, tot români, din vecinătate, dar mai ales ruteni, coborâți din mijlocul poporului lor, dinspre nord. Din mai multe motive, dar mai ales datorită confesiunii comune și statutului social similar, supușii ruteni s-au apropiat mai ales de supușii români, alături de care au împărtășit aceeași soartă. Din secolul al XV-lea începând, se ridică și dintre ruteni unii stăpâni de pământ care, ca și cnezii români, se apropie de

statutul nobilimii ungare. Ambele comunități ortodoxe – română și ruteană – au suferit o serie de presiuni ale bisericii catolice, în urma cărora o parte din elite au trecut la confesiune apuseană. Prin toate acestea, Maramureșul istoric, "țară" de circa 10 500 kilometri pătrați, situată pe largă fâșie de interferență dintre Apus și Răsărit, care pornea de la Marea Baltică și ajungea la Marea Adriatică, rămâne un fascinant creuzet de culturi și civilizații, adevărat simbol al Europei multiculturale și pluriconfesionale.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Maramureș, Ev Mediu, români, ruteni, interferențe etnice

### Introduction

L'histoire médiévale du Maramureș<sup>1</sup> a fait, à partir du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'objet d'études approfondies dans les historiographies roumaine, hongroise et ukrainienne, qui ont fouillé à fond dans les sources documentaires, rédigées le plus souvent en latin. Les résultats ont été des plus différents, et cela pour plusieurs raisons : l'esprit romantique national, qui avait tendance à glorifier outre mesure les exploits du peuple dont était issu l'historien en cause ; le processus de formation des États nationaux, qui avaient besoin d'une légitimation historique solide ; le stade fragmentaire et unilatéral des sources ; la méconnaissance des résultats obtenus par les autres historiographies, tenues pour adverses etc. On est ainsi arrivé à des histoires du Maramureș parallèles et souvent différentes. Pendant les dernières décennies, lorsque les contraintes idéologiques et « la commande sociale » ont substantiellement perdu du terrain, les conclusions, devenues elles aussi plus réalistes, commencèrent à être acceptées par un nombre croissant de spécialistes. Cela ne signifie pas pour autant que l'esprit national et le nationalisme même auraient complètement disparu, ils continueront probablement à influencer pour longtemps les approches en la matière dans les pays d'Europe centrale et de l'Est. Les historiens sont aujourd'hui plus que jamais appelés à refléter correctement et sans des partis pris le contenu des sources.

### Les termes de *Valahus* et *Ruthenus*

Le Maramureș reste un lieu idéal pour l'étude des interférences et, parfois, de la cohabitation entre Roumains, Ruthènes, Hongrois et Germaniques, de même qu'entre orthodoxes et catholiques au Moyen Âge.

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<sup>1</sup> La plus récente synthèse d'histoire de la Transylvanie – qui comprend aussi l'histoire du Maramureș, avec la bibliographie afférente –, d'environ 1700 pages, est coordonnée par Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Năgler et András Magyari: *Istoria Transilvaniei*, vol. I (jusqu'à 1541), vol. II (de 1541 à 1711), vol. III (de 1711 à 1918), (Cluj-Napoca, 2003-2009). Le I<sup>er</sup> et le II<sup>e</sup> volumes ont aussi des versions en anglais.



Nous essayons dans ce qui suit à présenter les conclusions les plus significatives des historiens roumains en la matière, principalement en ce qui concerne les rapports entre Roumains et Ruthènes dans le Maramureș historique du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle.<sup>2</sup> Ce sont, évidemment, des choses délicates, étant donné, d'une part, que les termes des documents moyenâgeux n'ont pas la précision actuelle, et, de l'autre, que les ethnonymes du temps, en latin, ont acquis également, dans certains cas, des significations différentes (sociales, religieuses, socioprofessionnelles). Nous partons toutefois de la prémisse, fondée sur l'étude d'à peu près 3 500 documents latins relatifs au Maramureș, aux comitats voisins du Royaume de Hongrie (Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa, Satu-Mare, Bihor), à la Transylvanie, au Banat etc., que les termes de *Volachus* (avec ses variantes) et *Ruthenus* (avec ses variantes) se rapportent généralement, dans ces lieux et ces temps (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles) aux Roumains et respectivement aux Ruthènes (Russini), sans vêtir d'autres connotations.<sup>3</sup> Autrement dit, tous les documents latins du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle (environ 60 documents) sur le Maramureș, Bereg etc. contenant la notion de *Volachus* désignent par ce terme invariablement les Roumains et ont rapport à l'ethnie roumaine. De même, le mot *Ruthenus*, qui n'apparaît dans les documents du Maramureș qu'au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, a lui aussi un caractère ethnique. Il arrive très rarement que le contenu ethnique des termes « Valaque » et « Ruthène » puisse être doublé d'un sens confessionnel, du fait que tant les Ruthènes que les Roumains étaient orthodoxes et qu'on tenait à mettre en avant leur appartenance à cette confession. Les éventuelles confusions avec d'autres réalités et significations du territoire du Maramureș au Moyen Âge sont tout à fait exclues.<sup>4</sup>

D'ailleurs, tous ceux qu'on appelle *Volachus* au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle (comme dans le siècle suivant) sont présentés comme knèzes, knèzes devenus nobles

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<sup>2</sup> Le meilleur ouvrage de l'historiographie roumaine sur le Maramureș médiéval reste la monographie de Radu Popa, *Țara Maramureșului în veacul al XIV-lea*, avec une préface par Mihai Berza, II<sup>e</sup> éd. soignée par Adrian Ioniță, (Bucarest, 1997). La I<sup>ère</sup> édition, parue en 1970, est le fruit de recherches sérieuses des sources écrites et de fouilles archéologiques minutieuses, constituant un modèle du genre.

<sup>3</sup> L'identification entre « Valaque » et « berger » n'a pas de relevance pour notre étude (provenant d'une période ultérieure et se rencontrant dans des régions où la population roumaine n'était pas majoritaire), ni l'extension du « droit roumain » sur des agglomérations qui n'étaient (plus) habitées par des Roumains (survenue après le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans d'autres zones, et non pas au Maramureș).

<sup>4</sup> Pour le terme latin *Valachus* ou *Olachus*, avec ses variantes, nous avons utilisé le mot « Roumain », puisqu'il y a des témoignages certains et clairs que les Roumains se sont toujours, y compris au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, appelés eux-mêmes « Roumains », ignorant l'ethnonyme « Valaque » que leur donnaient les étrangers. Pour le terme *Ruthenus* des textes latins, nous avons utilisé le mot « Ruthène », existant en roumain et suivant l'esprit de la langue roumaine, qui ne contient pas le mot « russin ».

ou propriétaires de domaines (*possessiones, kenesiatus*), ce qui démontre clairement que ce mot ne pouvait pas faire référence à des bergers. Un exemple éloquent en ce sens est un diplôme royal du 14 mai 1353, qui parle d'un « domaine capital et principal » de Ștefan et Ioan, les Roumains, fils de Iuga, roumain lui aussi, serviteurs fidèles du même roi » (*capitalis et principalis possessionis Stephani et Iohannis, Olachorum, filiorum Ige, similiter Olachi, fidelium seroencium dicti domini regis*).<sup>5</sup> De même, le 10 février 1419, le roi Sigismond de Luxembourg appelle un de ses fidèles *Georgius, filius Iohannis Volachus de Dolha, aule nostre familiaris*, ce qui veut dire « Gheorghe, fils de Ioan le Roumain de Dolha, serviteur à notre cour ». <sup>6</sup> Il est impossible de trouver un autre sens du mot *Volachus* ou *Olachus*<sup>7</sup>, étant donné que « les dignitaires de la cour royale » ou « les serviteurs fidèles du roi » ne pouvaient pas être bergers errants dans les montagnes. Admettre que, pour un même territoire, une même époque et les mêmes chancelleries, le mot *Volachus* (avec ses variantes) aurait des sens différents est contraire à toute logique et à tout esprit historique. Aussi préférons-nous éviter les polémiques stériles (qu'elles soient anciennes ou nouvelles) de type nationaliste dans cette question.<sup>8</sup>

### Témoignages sur les Ruthènes du Maramureș au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle

Voyons les mentions relatives aux premiers Ruthènes du Maramureș.<sup>9</sup> Nous constatons que pour la période antérieure à l'an 1400, les témoignages de type documentaire sont inexistantes ou ne sont pas encore connus.<sup>10</sup> La

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<sup>5</sup> Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, *Diplome maramureșene din secolele XIV și XV*, IV<sup>e</sup> éd., (Cluj-Napoca, 2009), no. 16, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 132 (129), p. 318.

<sup>7</sup> La forme *Olachus* est la variante latinisée de l'ethnonyme hongrois *Olah* (pl. *Olahok*) – provenant toujours du nom Vlaque –, par lequel les Hongrois dénommaient les Roumains. Les Italiens étaient dénommés par les Hongrois *Olasz* (pl. *Olaszok*).

<sup>8</sup> Il y a des cas, dans des régions plus éloignées, où les Roumains sont parvenus avec leurs troupes, et où le mot « Valaque » vêt aussi le sens de berger, tout comme il y a des exemples, notamment du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, où le même terme « Valaque », relatif à la Transylvanie, signifie aussi « serf » ou « orthodoxe ». Ce sont tout de même des situations claires et bien connues, qui ne sont pas susceptibles de créer des confusions, ni de conduire à des généralisations dépourvues de toute valeur historique.

<sup>9</sup> Pour des ouvrages plus récents sur les Ruthènes, voir Alexander Bonkalo, *The Rusyns*, (New York, 1990); Paul Robert Magocsi, Ivan Pop (éditeurs), *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, édition revue et rajoutée, (Toronto, 2005), ou Pavlo Robert Magocs, *Poporul de niciunde. Istorie în imagini a rutenilor carpatici*, (Ujgorod, 2007), le dernier ayant un rôle de vulgarisation. La question de la priorité de l'habitation au Maramureș n'est plus d'actualité, puisqu'elle n'a aucune relevance pour la carte politique actuelle de l'Europe.

<sup>10</sup> Le présent ouvrage n'a pas en vue de traiter la cohabitation entre les Daco-Romains et les premiers Roumains, d'une part, et les Slaves, de l'autre, au début du Moyen Âge,

présence des Ruthènes avant 1400 pourrait toutefois être affirmée à l'aide de la toponymie et de l'oronymie, en faisant tout de même preuve de beaucoup de précaution. Le nom *Orozviz* (Apa Rusului, en hongrois), par exemple, apparaît dès 1353 et ensuite en 1373. En 1353, lorsqu'on confirme et on borne à nouveau la partie qui revient aux fils du voïvode Iuga (le frère du voïvode Bogdan, futur prince de la Moldavie), de l'ancien knézat de vallée de la famille Bogdan, on dit que leur domaine passe auprès « d'une rivière qui s'appelle *Orozviz* ». <sup>11</sup> En 1373, une *possessio Orozviz*, à l'extérieur de l'ancien domaine de « l'insoumis » (à ce moment-là, décédé) Bogdan, était bornée cette fois au bénéfice de la famille Dragoș (qui avaient fui la Moldavie et cherché refuge dans le Maramureș natal). <sup>12</sup> On pourrait supposer que ce domaine qui s'appelait « Apa Rusului » aurait existé avant la première mention (de 1373), faisant partie du knézat déjà mentionné de la famille Bogdan. On sait également que ce domaine avait été accaparé par les Dragoș, avant 1390, quand il figure parmi leurs propriétés sous le nom de *Orozfalu* (Le village russe). <sup>13</sup> Ce nom témoigne clairement d'une enclave inhabituelle d'une autre ethnie dans une masse compacte de population. Enfin, après avoir été repris des mains des Dragoș, ce village est confirmé, en 1411, aux successeurs dudit Iuga et à une famille de Dolha (apparentée), étant cette fois mentionné soit sous le nom de *Rwzkopolyana* (Poiana Rusca), soit sous celui de *Rwzkowa* (Ruscova). <sup>14</sup> Or, les possessions Ruscova et Poienile de sub Munte sont connues jusqu'à nos jours comme étant habitées par une population ruthène du Maramureș. Cependant d'autres noms à caractère généralement slave de la même région, rencontrés aussi dans des contrées qui n'avaient jamais été habitées par des Ruthènes, n'ont aucune relevance pour l'attestation des Ruthènes du Maramureș, provenant de la première période de cohabitation roumano-slave, lorsque les ancêtres des Roumains et les Roumains, du fait de vivre aux côtés des Slaves, ont emprunté à leur langue une dot lexicale slave appréciable. <sup>15</sup>

Voyons d'autres exemples de villages portant des noms ruthènes, mentionnés assez tôt. Une *possessio Berezna* (actuellement Berezovo, en

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après le VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, attestée quelques siècles durant sur le territoire de la Transylvanie, au Banat et au Maramureș, ce qui ne signifie pas pour autant que nous n'ayons pas tenu compte dans nos analyses de ce processus historique d'exceptionnelle importance.

<sup>11</sup> I. Mihalyi de Așșa, *op. cit.*, no. 16, p. 137.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 36, p. 85-86.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 57, p. 130.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 96, p. 225 et no. 99, p. 235. Nous croyons avec Radu Popa que le nom *Rwzkopolyana* (du document du 25 mai 1411, no. 96, p. 225, chez Mihalyi, dans l'édition citée) cache, dans ce cas, deux possessions, à savoir Poiana Ruscă (à présent Poienile de sub Munte) et Ruscova (aujourd'hui du même nom). Voir R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 93-94.

<sup>15</sup> R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Ukraine) apparaît dans la Vallée de Neagova, en 1415, comme le domaine héréditaire des seigneurs féodaux roumains de Domnești (appelé aussi Urmezeu, de nos jours Ruskje Pole, en Ukraine), avec Lipceni, Herinceni et Boureni, situés dans la même Vallée de Neagova. Cependant les domaines de Lipceni et Herinceni (de nos jours Lipča et Gorinkove, en Ukraine) étaient mentionnés dès 1350, par le roi Louis I<sup>er</sup> (1342-1382) comme « nos villages roumains » (*villas nostras Olachales*), antérieurement en possession de quelques knèzes roumains et concédés maintenant « à nos fidèles Roumains » (*fidelium Olachorum nostrorum*) Sărăcin, Nicolae, Valentin et Lucaciu, fils de Crăciun de Bilca (actuellement en Ukraine).<sup>16</sup> De 1350 à 1412, les seules agglomérations mentionnées sur ce vaste domaine, qui était disputé par quelques familles féodales roumaines, étaient les villages roumains Lipceni et Herinceni, pour qu'en 1415 deux villages ruthènes, Berezna et Boureni apparaissent sur le même domaine, le dernier appelé aussi *Ekermezew* (de nos jours en Ukraine). Comme une mention expresse du document de 1350 visait l'obligation des nouveaux seigneurs de peupler la propriété en cause « d'une multitude de nouveaux habitants », on peut supposer que les villages Berezna et Boureni auraient été fondés plus tard, probablement autour de l'an 1400, étant donné qu'ils sont consignés pour la première fois en 1415.<sup>17</sup>

Selon un document émis en 1404, la famille Dragoș avait fait bâtir un monastère sur le domaine Taras et lui avait fait don d'un village qui s'appelait Peri (Hrusovo, en Ukraine). Étant donné qu'en 1389 on ne faisait mention que de « la rivière Peri » et, tout près, d'un « lieu qui s'appelait monastère », le village Peri se serait probablement formé à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, sur les terres détachées des villages voisins, Taras et Apșa de Sus.<sup>18</sup> Cette agglomération fut peuplée par des serfs ruthènes, ce qui explique, probablement, la dénomination de *claustrum Ruthenorum* qu'on avait donnée à l'établissement monacal en 1456.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> I. Mihalyi de Apșa, *op. cit.*, no. 15, p. 35.

<sup>17</sup> R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 65-66.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*. En 1391, le noble Drag, parti, avec l'accord du roi Sigismond du Luxembourg, pour Constantinople, qui était à ce moment assiégé par les Ottomans, demandait et recevait de la part du patriarcat oecuménique le rang de stavropégie pour le monastère de sa famille de Peri, placé sous la juridiction de la métropole de Halici. Le texte (la variante latine de 1494) montre que « le voïvode Balc et le magistère Drag » (frères et descendants de Dragoș, le fondateur de la Moldavie), avec les religieux et « tous les grands et les menus hommes » des contrées placées sous la juridiction de la stavropégie avaient le droit d'élire le supérieur du monastère, qui remplissait le rôle d'évêque. L'élection du supérieur du monastère par « tous les grands et les menus hommes » semble renvoyer à une époque antérieure à l'an 1391, lorsque l'assemblée des knèzes du

### Les Ruthènes de Maramureș et l'Église catholique

Un document du 27 septembre 1418, émis par le Convent de Lelez (actuellement en Slovaquie), qui établissait la valeur et la composition des domaines de Bogdan, le fils de Ioan de Dolha (condamné pour violence), et des membres de sa famille, attestait que dans quelques possessions du comitat de Bereg il y avait aussi « deux chapelles en bois, une appartenant aux chrétiens, ayant le clocher en bois, et l'autre aux Ruthènes, les deux pourvues d'un cimetière et d'un lieu d'enterrement » (à Sarkad, où il y avait 11 parcelles serviles (*sessio*) habitées et 5 inhabitées), « deux chapelles en bois, une appartenant aux chrétiens et l'autre aux Ruthènes, les deux pourvues d'un cimetière, la dite chapelle des Ruthènes ayant aussi un lieu d'enterrement » (à Makaria, où il y avait 25 parcelles serviles habitées), « une chapelle en bois des Ruthènes pourvue d'un cimetière et d'un lieu d'enterrement » (à Dolha, aujourd'hui Dovce, en Ukraine, où il y avait 23 parcelles serviles habitées).<sup>20</sup> Ces documents témoignent d'une cohabitation (ou seulement habitation) des sujets ruthènes et catholiques dans les mêmes villages, situés à ce moment-là dans le comitat de Bereg, voisin du Maramureș. La paire de termes « chrétiens » - « ruthènes » montre, en accord avec la mentalité catholique du temps, que les Ruthènes (comme les Roumains et les autres orthodoxes, qu'on appelait souvent « schismatiques ») n'étaient pas considérés comme de vrais chrétiens.<sup>21</sup> D'ailleurs les Ruthènes, tout comme les Roumains, ont été soumis au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle à plusieurs campagnes de conversion au catholicisme, promues surtout par le roi Louis I<sup>er</sup> de Hongrie, avec le soutien de la papauté. Le 11

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Maramureș, présidée par le voïvode, avait aussi des attributions d'organisation de la vie ecclésiastique (R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 208). L'autorité de l'exarchat patriarcal de Peri s'étendait sur Maramureș, Sălaj, Arad et Ugocsa (où les Dragoș possédaient de vastes domaines et exerçaient la fonction de *comes*), ainsi que sur Bereg et, probablement, dans le nord du voïvodat de Transylvanie (R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 234-236). Ce geste de 1391 du Patriarcat de Constantinople, de traiter avec les deux frères de Maramureș, de créer la stavropégie de Peri et de reconnaître aux deux frères le droit de surveiller la métropole de Halici, était un acte d'hostilité à la fois envers la Pologne et la Moldavie; la nomination par le patriarcat d'une sorte de suppléant du métropolitain de Halici, sous le patronage de Balc (Balița) et Drag (Dragoș) signifiait l'introduction dans la compétition pour Halici d'un facteur dépendant du Royaume de Hongrie (les deux frères de Maramureș étaient magnats de Hongrie), qui était hostile tant à la Pologne qu'à la Moldavie. Voir Șerban Papacostea, *Întemeierea Mitropoliei Moldovei: implicații central- și est-europene*, dans le vol. "România în istoria universală", III/1, coordinateurs I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Buzatu, V. Cristian, (Iași, 1988), p. 530-532.

<sup>20</sup> I. Mihalyi de Apșa, *op. cit.*, no. 128, p. 308-309.

<sup>21</sup> Employé ainsi, en tant que partie de la paire « chrétiens » - « ruthènes », le mot « ruthène » n'a pas prioritairement de connotation ethnique, mais confessionnelle. Il en est de même pour le terme « valaque », dans certaines situations, ce qui ne signifie pas que les deux notions perdent leur essence ethnique.

août 1357, par exemple, le pape Innocent VI céda au susdit roi les dîmes ecclésiastiques de Hongrie pour une période de trois ans, en récompense de ses efforts liés à la diffusion de la foi romaine, y compris « de ses combats contre les Ruthènes et les Lituaniens ». <sup>22</sup> Alors que le 12 mars 1370, le pape Urbain V plaçait les Ruthènes (à côté des Grecs, des Coumans, des Scythes, des Arméniens etc.) parmi « les nations infidèles de l'Est et du Nord », à qui les moines franciscains « annonçaient la parole de Dieu », les mêmes qui dans le passé « étaient revenus à la foi catholique », mais qui, au moment de l'élaboration du document, « l'abjuraient ». <sup>23</sup> Au cours de ces campagnes, où l'activité « missionnaire » pacifique des moines franciscains s'alliait à la violence du « bras séculier » (autrement dit à l'action militaire laïque menée par le roi), certains Ruthènes, qu'on espérait convertir, auraient pu se laisser attirer à l'intérieur du Royaume hongrois, dans ses parties du nord-est, y compris au Maramureș. En effet, par la colonisation des serfs ruthènes à l'intérieur d'un royaume catholique, comme l'était officiellement la Hongrie, les autorités accomplissaient aussi un autre desideratum, celui d'obtenir de la main d'œuvre bon marché pour certaines zones montagneuses et collinaires, où il y avait tout de même des surfaces propices à la culture, à l'élevage et à l'extraction du sel. Une autre circonstance historique est à mentionner dans ce contexte : la masse des Ruthènes faisait partie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle du Royaume de Pologne et du Grand Knézat de Lituanie, entrés en union personnelle en 1385-1386 ; cependant avant cet événement, entre 1370 et 1382, la Pologne était en union personnelle avec la Hongrie, sous le règne dudit roi Louis I<sup>er</sup>, le plus fervent partisan du catholicisme du temps ; dans un tel contexte, on doit souligner que le Maramureș et certaines régions du nord habitées par des Ruthènes ont été, pendant 12 ans, assujettis au même souverain, qui aurait pu les déterminer à venir s'établir plus vers le Sud, dans des lieux qui n'attendaient qu'à être cultivés et où la campagne de conversion au catholicisme était très intense.

### **Le Maramureș entre son statut ancien de voïvodat roumain et celui récent de comitat de Hongrie**

Dans plusieurs régions orientales du Royaume de Hongrie, la féodalité roumaine était, au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, prédominante ou très nombreuse. <sup>24</sup> Le Maramureș est en ce sens un cas particulier, puisque – chose presque

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<sup>22</sup> A. Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, vol. II, (Roma, 1860), p. 33-34.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 96-97.

<sup>24</sup> Voir I.-A. Pop, *Instituții medievale românești. Adunările cneziale și nobiliare (boierești) din Transilvania în secolele XIV-XVI*, (Cluj-Napoca, 1991) et Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania între anii 1440-1514*, (Bucarest, 2000).

inconnue dans les zones voisines ou plus éloignées – tous les propriétaires de terres étaient roumains et régnaient sur les villages en qualité de knèzes. Le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle s'avéra décisif pour imposer certaines formules institutionnelles du Royaume de Hongrie, pour transformer et adapter les structures roumaines en fonction des exigences du régime de type féodal occidental, venu de l'Ouest. Une institution administrative fondamentale de ce genre était le comitat. Or, pendant les décennies qui ont précédé l'organisation rigoureuse du comitat de Maramureș, les documents latins attestent l'existence du Pays ou du Voïvodat du Maramureș, dirigé par un voïvode, qui était élu périodiquement par l'assemblée des knèzes. Le fondement du pouvoir des knèzes était la terre et les habitants les villages. À la tête de chaque agglomération rurale (et du territoire environnant) il y avait d'ordinaire un knèze, propriétaire de la terre travaillée par les paysans, qui percevait de leur part certaines charges patrimoniales et les astreignait à différentes prestations. Plusieurs knézats situés dans la vallée d'une rivière ou dans une dépression formaient un knézat plus grand, que Radu Popa appelle d'une manière conventionnelle knézat de vallée. Tels étaient les knézats de vallée de la famille Bogdan, de Cosău, de Mara, de Varalia (Subcetate), de Câmpulung, de Talabor ou de la Vallée de Bârjava.<sup>25</sup> Les knèzes de vallée appartenaient aux familles féodales les plus prestigieuses et les plus riches du Maramureș et avaient dans leur subordination, sous des formes et des formules actuellement difficiles à identifier, les menus knèzes de village. Selon les documents, les knèzes du Maramureș se réunissaient dans des assemblées périodiques (qu'on appelait « assemblées de tous les knèzes du pays »), afin de résoudre des questions essentielles visant tout le Pays du Maramureș, y compris l'élection du voïvode, le chef suprême.

Une partie de ces knèzes réussissent, petit à petit, notamment à partir de la seconde moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, à se faire déclarer nobles, c'est-à-dire à s'adapter aux règles du Royaume de Hongrie, selon lesquelles seuls les nobles pouvaient être reconnus comme de vrais propriétaires de terres. Or, la qualité de noble supposait, entre autres, avoir une origine illustre, reconnue par les gens du lieu, posséder des terres, exercer le métier des armes etc. Les knèzes roumains remplissaient la plupart de ces conditions, puisqu'ils étaient des propriétaires *ab antiquo* et militaires (combattants). Cependant le roi Louis I<sup>er</sup> avait introduit deux autres conditions de la qualité de noble, liées à la possession d'un document écrit délivré par le souverain et à l'appartenance au catholicisme. Autrement dit, à partir de la 7<sup>e</sup> décennie du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle il ne suffisait plus d'être propriétaire de terre et combattant pour être considéré comme noble, mais il fallait de plus obtenir un document écrit de la part du roi, qui atteste la propriété, et se convertir

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<sup>25</sup> Voir R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 143-160.

au catholicisme. Si cette dernière condition a pu, quelquefois, être éludée, notamment par les petits propriétaires qui ne détenaient pas de fonctions importantes, le diplôme royal de donation (confirmation) est devenu un argument et un instrument *sine qua non* de la qualité de noble et implicitement de la propriété. Les knèzes du Maramureș, maîtres anciens de leurs villages, se sont ainsi mis au service de la royauté et de « la sainte couronne du Royaume de Hongrie » (comme les textes latins le précisait) et ont pour la plupart obtenu des diplômes pour les domaines dont ils étaient les propriétaires depuis la nuit des temps. À moins qu'à ce moment-là leur propriété de fait devait être confirmée par une attestation de droit, en écrit. Si les knèzes devenaient peu à peu nobles, les voïvodes du Pays du Maramureș commençaient à être assimilés aux *comes*. Ces deniers – les *comes* – étaient envoyés en qualité de dignitaires du roi et chargés de diriger en son nom un certain territoire. Pendant une brève période, de transition, à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le même personnage du Maramureș apparaît dans les sources à la fois comme voïvode et *comes*. À partir du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'ancienne assemblée des knèzes dirigée par le voïvode devient au fur et à mesure l'assemblée des nobles dirigée par le *comes*, ce dernier n'étant plus élu, mais nommé par le roi. Outre ces transformations substantielles, on doit encore remarquer l'implantation, au début sous des formes modestes, de l'Église catholique avec toutes ses composantes, ainsi que la colonisation de quelques personnes et groupes étrangers, arrivés des zones voisines ou plus éloignées. Comme nous l'avons déjà précisé, les maîtres nobles arrivés de l'extérieur ont constitué, dans le Maramureș du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle (et même plus tard), des cas tout à fait exceptionnels. Il s'agit de la possession de Visc, qui de 1272 à 1300 a été la propriété de la famille hongroise Hontpazmány-Ujhely<sup>26</sup>, de l'apparition, en 1391, près de Hust, de la famille Rozsály, et de deux autres cas de « hôtes royaux » entrés en possession d'un village ou d'une partie de village.<sup>27</sup> Pour le reste, des dizaines de propriétés étaient en possession exclusive des petits féodaux roumains et, quelques-unes, de deux ou trois familles de grands nobles roumains.

Qui étaient « les hôtes royaux » ? À la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle les premiers groupes de colons germaniques arrivent au Maramureș, où ils fondent les localités Hust, Visc, Teceu et Câmpulung, situées sur les deux rives de la Tisza. La cinquième agglomération de hôtes royaux apparaîtra un peu plus

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<sup>26</sup> La famille Hontpazmány appartenait aux clans aristocratiques d'origine germanique en Hongrie médiévale. D'ailleurs, sur les 26 clans aristocratiques hongrois du temps du roi André II (1205-1235), deux tiers seulement étaient d'origine hongroise, six descendaient des Germaniques, un des émigrés français, un des émigrés italiens et un autre des émigrés espagnols. Voir Erik Fügedi, *Kings, Bishops, Nobles and Burgers*, (London, 1986), chapitre IV, p. 6-7.

<sup>27</sup> R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 136.



tard, probablement au début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Étant donné que le privilège octroyé aux hôtes de Maramureș en 1329 suit le modèle de celui accordé en 1262 aux hôtes germaniques de Vinogradovo, et puisque le roi, en 1280, avait fait don de cette agglomération à un féodal, malgré le privilège dont elle jouissait, on pourrait supposer que les Germaniques arrivés au Maramureș proviendraient en fait de Vinogradovo.<sup>28</sup> Comme l'arrivée des Germaniques sera petit à petit accompagnée de celle des Hongrois, en 1329 le roi octroie lesdits privilèges « à nos hôtes fidèles de Maramureș, saxons et hongrois ».<sup>29</sup>

### **La confrontation et l'interférence entre deux modèles de civilisation**

Toutes ces immixtions avaient au fur et à mesure tendance à changer substantiellement l'ancien état des choses qui s'était perpétué au Maramureș depuis des siècles. Les réalités locales anciennes, telles qu'elles apparaissent à travers les documents latins conservés, montrent une société politiquement structurée sous la forme d'un « pays » (le mot roumain « țară » provient du latin *terra*), dirigé par des juges et des ducs, qui étaient propriétaires de terres et dont les sujets étaient astreints à des charges patrimoniales et différentes prestations. C'est l'image d'une organisation de souche romaine, modifiée par le temps et par le contact avec les peuples barbares, et principalement par la cohabitation des Daco-Romains et des Roumains avec les Slaves, à partir du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les adaptations et les changements furent accélérés par les influences religieuses, dans les conditions où l'organisation ecclésiastique de type byzantino-slave, empruntée au début aux Slaves du Sud (les Bulgares) se superposa sur le christianisme que les Daco-Romains et les Roumains premiers avaient repris sous la forme et dans la langue latine. Les Roumains parviennent ainsi à être le seul peuple d'origine romaine (qui parle une langue néo-latine), adepte de la foi orthodoxe et qui emploie le slavon en tant que langue de l'Église, de la chancellerie et de la culture écrite au Moyen Âge. Ce processus complexe d'influences et d'interférences est bien reflété par la langue roumaine, où les mêmes réalités médiévales ont des noms doubles, à la fois d'origine latine et slave : țară-voievodat (pays, voïvodat), jude-cnez (juge, knèze), duce-voievod (duc, voïvode), domn-stăpân (prince régnant, maître), domnie-stăpânire (règne, domination), rege-crai (roi, prince), împărat-țar (empereur, tsar), lege-pravilă (loi, code) etc. La terminologie religieuse est en ce sens plus significative, puisque les notions roumaines relatives à la croyance sont généralement héritées du latin (Dumnezeu/Dieu, credință/croyance, crez/crédo, lege/loi, cuminecătură/communion, rugăciune/prière, închinăciune/

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> I. Mihalyi de Apșa, *op. cit.*, no. 4, p. 10-13.

dévotion, mărturisire/aveu, sărbătoare/fête, biserică/église, mănăstire/monastère, înger/ange, Paști/Paques, Crăciun/Noël, Florii/Dimanche des Rameaux, Sânpetru/Saint-Pierre, Sânmihai/Saint-Michel, Sântămărie/ Sainte-Marie, câșlegi/jours gras etc.), alors que celles concernant l'organisation de l'Église sont slaves (vlădică/évêque, vecernie/vêpres, utrenie/matines, slujbă/messe, blagoveștenie/l'Annonciation, miluire/aumône, duh/esprit, stareț/supérieur d'un monastère, odăjdii/vêtements sacerdotaux, ispită/tentation, izbăvire/salut etc.).<sup>30</sup> Quoiqu'il en soit, au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, par l'existence même d'une masse massive de Roumains, bien attestée par les sources au Maramureș, ce pays-voïvodat avait pour trait essentiel de son organisation des réalités de type romain et romain-byzantin, sur lesquelles s'était assise de manière organique une forte influence slavo-byzantine. Autrement dit, la société de Maramureș avait une élite dominante assez nombreuse, organisée selon des modèles anciens d'origine romano-byzantino-slave.

À partir de la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ce tableau commence à se modifier, suite à l'effort, assez timide au début, des autorités hongroises d'organiser la région (Maramureș, Bereg, Ugocsa) en accord avec le modèle institutionnel hongrois. On pourrait dire qu'après la conquête militaire (survenue assez tôt, aux XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles), relativement superficielle, le Royaume hongrois déploya (à partir de l'an 1300) une conquête institutionnelle et administrative, destinée à contrôler effectivement ses territoires de l'Est et du Nord-Est, éloignés du centre. Le souci de la royauté d'exploiter plus efficacement le territoire, afin d'obtenir des revenus sûrs et substantiels, se voit dans l'envoi d'émissaires ou dignitaires (*comites*), la colonisation de « hôtes » germaniques et hongrois, l'effort d'« agrémenter » ses vastes territoires de gens disponibles pour travailler ces terres (le sol et même le sous-sol). Ces efforts ont pour résultat l'apparition au Maramureș ou dans ses environs d'églises (paroisses) catholiques (destinées au dignitaires ou aux fonctionnaires et aux « hôtes ») et de nouvelles institutions laïques, politiques, administratives, économiques, juridiques, culturelles etc., telles le comitat, l'assemblée (la congrégation) des nobles du comitat, les juges nobiliaires, les actes de donation, les *loca credibilia* (lieux de témoignage) et autres. Le comitat de Maramureș, par exemple, ne parvient à s'organiser

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<sup>30</sup> J'y ai inséré des mots d'une autre origine (grecque, germanique etc.), qui auraient pénétré en roumain par filière latine et slave, ainsi que d'autres, qui auraient probablement été adoptés par les Roumains ou par leurs ancêtres non pendant la période de leur cohabitation avec les Slaves, mais au Moyen Âge, sous l'influence du slavon, devenu langue du culte, des chancelleries et de la culture écrite. Cette dualité, présente dans la langue roumaine (termes latins relatifs à l'essence de la foi et termes slaves relatifs à sa forme) est évidemment relative.

qu'au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, au bout de huit à neuf décennies de tâtonnements, expériences, progrès et reculs. Si le titre de *comes* de Maramureș apparaît pour la première fois en 1303, les premiers *comes* qui résident effectivement dans ce territoire ne datent que du dernier tiers du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Un aspect intéressant et moins présent (sous des formes aussi évidentes) dans d'autres territoires conquis par le Royaume hongrois vers l'Est et le Nord-Est est la formation de nouvelles institutions (amenées de l'Ouest au Maramureș) sur le squelette des structures des anciennes institutions déjà mentionnées. Par conséquent, les anciens voïvodes des Roumains (*vaivodae Valachorum maramorosiensium*) deviennent *comes* au service du roi hongrois, l'ancienne assemblée des knèzes du Pays du Maramureș (*omnes kenezii Terrae Maramorosiensis*) se transforme petit à petit en congrégation du comitat (*congregatio* ou *universitas*), formée toujours de knèzes et, à partir d'un certain moment, également de knèzes pourvus de diplômes royaux et anoblis ; les knézats prennent progressivement le nom de possessions (*possessiones*), sont partagés, modifiés, bornés, selon des limites anciennes ou nouvelles. Ces nouvelles réalités n'entraînent pas que le changement du nom des anciennes réalités, mais elles commencent même à avoir une essence différente. Il s'agit de certaines formes d'organisation occidentales, spécifiques surtout du monde féodal germanique (que les Hongrois, après l'an 1000, ont cherché à imiter), à moins que ces formes se sont greffées sur d'anciennes racines gentiles, propres à l'ancienne organisation de clan des premiers Hongrois, descendus en Pannonie en 895-896. Il s'agit donc d'une société d'influence occidentale *sui generis* (que certains auteurs récents refusent, de manière beaucoup plus sévère, à notre avis, d'appeler féodale<sup>31</sup>), mais qui a un fond traditionnel solide datant de l'époque tribale. Les Angevins ont cependant drastiquement atténué, au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'ancienne tradition hongroise primitive, imposant, dans les moindres détails et presque dans toute la structure institutionnelle du royaume, le modèle féodal occidental, cette fois-ci d'influence française (franco-napolitaine).

Il n'empêche que le Maramureș est resté, également au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, organisé essentiellement d'après l'ancienne tradition roumaine romano-byzantine, d'influence byzantino-slave, avec une classe de knèzes pour maîtres, des knézats de village et de vallée, des domaines *ab antiquo*, des églises et des monastères byzantins (orthodoxes). Il s'agit cependant d'un monde en cours de changement, sous l'impulsion des nouvelles

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<sup>31</sup> Pal Engel, *Regatul Sfântului Ștefan. Istoria Ungariei medievale, 895-1526*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2006), p. 110-151. Voir aussi la version anglaise de cet ouvrage (*The Realm of St. Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary 895-1526*), parue à Londres et New York en 2001.

institutions implantées par l'État hongrois, des colons saxons et hongrois, de l'Église catholique, des documents écrits, des services militaires et des taxes prétendues par la royauté etc. Autrement dit, le Pays du Maramureș continuait à être une structure essentiellement romano-byzantine et byzantino-slave, avec certaines formes superficielles empruntées depuis relativement peu de temps à l'Occident, de type germanique et franco-napolitain. Un exemple en ce sens est l'Église, institution qui continue à être orientale (orthodoxe) pour la plupart des habitants. Les nouveau-venus, qu'on appelle « hôtes », ont quelques églises (chapelles) à eux, occidentales (catholiques) dans les lieux où ils se sont établis, assez peu organisées, du moment où les placer sous l'autorité de l'un des évêchés voisins (de Transylvanie ou de Agria), sous la forme d'archidiaconats (analogues aux archiprêtres orthodoxes), constituait sujet de dispute dès 1300-1350. Le Maramureș ne comptait aucun monastère catholique au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle.

L'exemple du Maramureș est éloquent pour la nécessité d'éliminer certains préjugés historiographiques qui persistent encore et qui présentent le Royaume hongrois médiéval comme une sorte de monolithe confessionnel ethnique. Or, selon des recherches anciennes et récentes, les sources documentaires narratives et archéologiques révèlent qu'avant la grande invasion des Tatars (1241-1242), dans tout le royaume du Saint Etienne il y avait environ 600 monastères byzantins (dont 400 localisés)<sup>32</sup>, par rapport à seulement 170-180 monastères latins (catholiques). Le chroniqueur humaniste Antonio Bonfini affirme dans le même esprit, lorsqu'il fait l'éloge du roi Louis I<sup>er</sup>, surnommé le Grand, qu'à la fin du règne de celui-ci (soit autour de l'an 1380), après un effort sans précédent d'imposer le catholicisme comme unique religion en Hongrie, « la vraie foi » était tellement répandue qu'« à l'avis de tous, plus d'un tiers du pays (*propter omnium opinionem, plus quam tertia pars regni*) était pénétré par la sainte coutume ».<sup>33</sup> Ces exemples révèlent qu'en Hongrie médiévale (au moins jusque vers 1400), la foi byzantine, loin d'être l'apanage d'une minorité, était embrassée par la moitié de sa population, autrement dit par tellement de gens qu'on avait l'impression d'une majorité.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars*, (Budapest, 1970), p. 115; I.-A. Pop, *Regatul Ungariei între Apus și Răsărit: catolici și noncatolici în secolele XIII-XIV*, in "Anuarul Institutului de istorie Cluj-Napoca", XXVI(1997): 314.

<sup>33</sup> A. Bonfinius, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades quatuor cum dimidia*, édition par I. Sambucus, (Bâle, 1568), p. 377.

<sup>34</sup> Cet aspect, c'est-à-dire le besoin de repenser les proportions confessionnelles et même ethniques médiévales est valable aussi dans le cas de la Pologne (plus précisément de l'Union polono-lituanienne), où le nombre des orthodoxes et même des élites orthodoxes était probablement, après 1385-1386, supérieur à celui de Hongrie.

### **Troubles et révoltes dans la société de Maramureș**

Même si les anciennes réalités et traditions continuaient à persister, l'assaut des nouvelles lois que les autorités hongroises avaient apportées de l'Ouest devenait pénible et embarrassant pour les Orientaux, conduisant à des troubles, résistances et même révoltes. Le Maramureș est un exemple significatif en ce sens. Vers le milieu du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, deux camps ou groupements s'étaient formés dans la société knéziale de Maramureș : si l'un, décidé à conserver et même augmenter ses domaines, ses prérogatives et essentiellement son pouvoir, militait pour la collaboration avec la royauté et ses représentants, l'autre, visant les mêmes buts (maintenir son statut de leader) préconisait la résistance contre les immixtions extérieures. Les représentants symboliques de ces deux orientations ont été les chefs roumains Dragoș (membre d'une famille knéziale anoblie) et Bodan (membre d'une famille knéziale qui détenait aussi la dignité de voïvode du Maramureș). Dragoș, comme beaucoup d'autres féodaux roumains, a participé aux campagnes du roi Louis contre les Tatars, où ses mérites ont été reconnus par la royauté. En conséquence, on le retrouve en 1359 à la tête du voïvodat de Moldavie, en qualité de vassal fidèle du souverain hongrois. Il y fonda une dynastie, formée de son fils, Sas, et de son petit-fils, Balc. Quant à l'autre chef roumain du Maramureș, Bogdan, il apparaît dans les documents (vers 1342) comme un insoumis et un révolté, aux côtés de ses adeptes. Cette résistance, transformée en révolte, se prolongea durant à peu près deux décennies (avec des périodes d'accalmie et, peut-être, même de soumission temporaire au roi). En 1363-1364, Bogdan, que le roi avait appelé « notre infidèle notoire », franchit définitivement les montagnes vers l'Est, chassa les successeurs de Dragoș de ces territoires et y fonda, sur les anciennes réalités politiques roumaines, le deuxième État médiéval roumain, la Moldavie. Dans de nombreuses sources étrangères et nationales (destinées aux étrangers), la Moldavie sera d'ailleurs appelée « la Valachie », « la petite Valachie », « la Russo-Valachie » etc.

### **L'augmentation du nombre de Ruthènes au Maramureș et leur cohabitation avec les Roumains**

Se déroulant sur le fond de ces troubles politiques et militaires, que les sources reflétaient en priorité, la vie des communautés paysannes des villages (knézats) est extrêmement peu connue. Il est à supposer que les hommes ordinaires qui peuplaient les plus de 100 agglomérations attestées avant 1400 auraient vécu relativement isolés des nouvelles institutions royales, de l'Église catholique et des « hôtes » établis dans les cinq bourgs. Le souci des autorités de bénéficier de nouveaux travailleurs se voit partout,

dans les documents, depuis le privilège octroyé aux « hôtes », en 1329, dans lequel tous les hommes de condition libre sont invités à venir « s'installer » dans ces lieux<sup>35</sup>, à l'attribution, en 1350, du knézat des villages roumains Lipceni et Herniceni aux fils de Crăciun, soit « à nos Roumains fidèles », dans l'espoir qu'ils seront « dotés d'une multitude de nouveaux habitants », outre « tous les hommes et les Roumains » établis déjà dans lesdits villages, qui sont conseillés de se soumettre aux nouveaux maîtres tel qu'ils l'ont fait à leurs anciens knèzes.<sup>36</sup> La Couronne encourageait donc l'arrivée de nouvelles forces qui, aux côtés de celles déjà existantes, oeuvrent pour la prospérité du Pays du Maramureş. Parmi les nouveau-venus, provenant le plus souvent des régions voisines, il y avait parfois des Roumains et, probablement, bien des Ruthènes. Si le Maramureş proprement dit comptait à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle quelques villages ruthènes – comme nous l'avons montré à l'aide de la toponymie –, la présence des Ruthènes est certainement plus ancienne dans la vallée de la Bârjava et, probablement, dans d'autres lieux du comitat voisin, Bereg. Les villages ruthénisés, asservis aux knézats de vallée roumains, ceux ruthénisés du XV<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles, ont toujours appartenu, fût-il temporairement, à la trésorerie royale ou à un grand féodal, ce qui explique l'installation de serfs ruthènes.<sup>37</sup> Selon les documents étudiés, le nombre des Ruthènes (Ukrainiens) établis dans le Maramureş historique n'a dépassé celui des Roumains qu'à peine au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle ; en 1839, le Maramureş (qui comprenait à ce moment aussi les villages de la vallée de Bârjava, au Bereg) comptait 84 000 Ruthènes et presque 50 000 Roumains, pour que peu avant l'an 1900 ce rapport fût de deux contre un (soit 122 500 Ukrainiens par rapport à 65 000 Roumains).<sup>38</sup> Cette avance des Ruthènes vers le Sud est un phénomène parfaitement normal et comparable à d'autres déplacements de populations de la même période médiévale, tel le déplacement de certains Roumains de Moldavie sous-alpine et, peut-être, même du Maramureş, qui ont petit à petit « essaimé » vers le sud de la Pologne (où, après la disparition du caractère ethnique roumain de ces régions, on peut rencontrer des villages organisés selon le droit des Roumains, soit *ius Valachicum*) et au-delà du Prout, jusque très loin vers l'Est, changeant la composition ethnique de ces régions d'interférence sous-peuplées, où la présence slave est attestée très tôt. Autrement dit, si certains Roumains des régions du nord-est et de l'est de la Roumanie actuelle ont, à

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<sup>35</sup> I. Mihalyi de Apşa, *op. cit.*, no. 4, p. 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 15, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> R. Popa, p. 53, note 64.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51, note 58. Voir aussi Vilmos Bélay, *Máramoros megye társadalma és nemzetiségei. A megye betelepülésétől a XVIII század elejéig*, (Budapesta, 1943), p. 111-112.

la fin du I<sup>er</sup> millénaire et au début du millénaire suivant, progressivement avancé, avec ou sans leurs troupeaux, vers le sud de la Pologne et le territoire situé entre le Prout et le Dniestr, et même plus loin, vers des régions assez dépeuplées, habitées aussi par des tribus slaves, certains Ruthènes, probablement attirés par les offres des autorités hongroises, ont avancé vers l'Ouest et le Sud-Ouest, arrivant d'abord au Bereg, dans le voisinage du Maramureș, et, à partir du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, même au Maramureș, parmi les Roumains. À la différence des déplacements organisés, contrôlés et consignés dans les privilèges octroyés aux « hôtes » germaniques et hongrois arrivés au Maramureș au XIII<sup>e</sup> et au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le déplacement des Ruthènes paraît « caché », sans être directement dirigé par les autorités. Il s'agit de deux phénomènes distincts, l'un officiel et destiné à des hommes libres et des communautés privilégiées (le cas des « hôtes »), et l'autre, non-officiel, destiné à des sujets (serfs) dépourvus de privilèges (le cas des Ruthènes). Par conséquent, la féodalité du Maramureș – presque totalement roumaine au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, comme nous l'avons déjà précisé –, à laquelle s'ajoutaient les « hôtes » établis dans les cinq agglomérations et l'Église catholique avec ses quelques possessions, ne comptait à ce moment aucun maître ruthène.<sup>39</sup> Quels ont été les mécanismes de cette cohabitation, nous l'ignorons, puisque les diplômes conservés offrent des détails sur la vie des maîtres, le régime de la propriété, des processus, accaparements, nantissements, confiscations etc., sans faire référence à la vie des sujets. On doit toutefois supposer que les sujets roumains et ruthènes, orthodoxes tous les deux et utilisant le slavon comme langue du culte, auraient eu suffisamment de raisons pour se rapprocher et cohabiter : le fait qu'ils ne bénéficiaient pas de privilèges globaux, que leur foi et leur Église n'étaient pas officiellement reconnues, qu'ils étaient soumis à des campagnes de conversion au catholicisme et devaient supporter le mépris de la notion de « schismatique ». Étant donné la langue liturgique commune, le slavon, la possibilité que les Roumains et les Ruthènes aient fréquenté les mêmes locaux de culte devient évidente. Si la noblesse roumaine de Maramureș allait, au fil du temps, se rapprocher de plus en plus de la mentalité nobiliaire hongroise, spécifique de tout le royaume, le petit peuple, à la fois roumain et ruthène, restera attaché à l'orthodoxie et à l'atmosphère spirituelle byzantino-slave. Il est fort probable qu'il développe, dans certaines périodes du Moyen Âge, une sorte de solidarité entre sujets et

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<sup>39</sup> C'est en 1439 qu'apparaissent pour la première fois deux maîtres ruthènes dans les villages Bocicoi (*possessio Volachica*) et Lunca, au nord de la Tisza, qui avaient antérieurement, du temps jadis, été en possession de la famille des knèzes roumains de Crăciunești (*Volachi de Karachonfalva*). Voir R. Popa, *op. cit.*, p. 68-69.

discriminés, qui disparaîtra plus tard, suite à l'exaltation du sentiment national, aux mouvements nationaux et à la fondation des États nationaux. Un autre élément commun, de rapprochement, entre les sujets roumains et ruthènes du Maramureș au Moyen Âge, qui n'était pas sans rapport avec leur discrimination commune dans un État étranger et catholique, aurait pu être la présence dans le voisinage (ou le souvenir d'une telle présence glorieuse) des États roumains et respectivement slaves orthodoxes libres, fondés avec la contribution des ancêtres de ces Roumains et Ruthènes du XIV<sup>e</sup> et du XV<sup>e</sup> siècles. Autrement dit, si la noblesse, les « hôtes », le clergé catholique avaient suffisamment de raisons pour regarder vers l'Ouest, qui leur offrait soutien, privilèges et un modèle de vie, le petit peuple, roumain et ruthène, à son tour, avait autant de motifs pour s'orienter, plein d'espoir, vers l'Est et le Nord-Est, où habitaient des masses libres de population pratiquant la même foi et parlant la même langue.

### **En guise de conclusion**

Le Maramureș du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle peut être conçu comme le produit corrélé de deux mondes différents qui ont interféré : un monde de tradition romano-byzantine et d'influence byzantino-slave, représenté principalement par les orthodoxes roumains, et un monde de type occidental (avec des éléments de tradition gentilice), représenté par les autorités catholiques hongroises, l'Église catholique, les « hôtes ». À mesure que l'élite dominante des Roumains s'est rapprochée de la royauté et des autorités hongroises, afin de préserver son statut (une autre préférant se retirer en Moldavie), aux sujets roumains déjà existants s'ajoutèrent d'autres Roumains, du voisinage, et notamment des Ruthènes, descendus du sein de leur peuple, du Nord. Pour plusieurs raisons, mais notamment en considération de la confession commune et du statut social similaire, les sujets ruthènes se sont surtout rapprochés des sujets roumains, partageant avec eux le même sort. Des propriétaires terriens ont commencé, à partir du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, à s'élever du sein des Ruthènes, se rapprochant, tout comme les knèzes roumains, du statut de la noblesse hongroise. Les deux communautés orthodoxes – roumaine et ruthène – ont subi la pression de l'Église catholique, suite à laquelle une partie de leur élite embrassa la confession occidentale. Grâce à ces aspects, le Maramureș historique, « pays » d'environ 10 500 km<sup>2</sup>, situé à l'intérieur d'une large bande d'interférence entre Occident et Orient, qui commençait à la mer Baltique et se terminait à l'Adriatique, demeure un fascinant creuset de cultures et civilisations, véritable symbole de l'Europe multiculturelle et pluriconfessionnelle.



# The Career of Two Archdeacons of the Late Middle Ages

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**Abstract:** In the Middle Ages archdeacons represented a group of the ecclesiastic élite, who had a bright perspective for the future and who played an important role in church administration. They had a large area of competence, high authority and serious power to exercise in everyday life all these enabled them to hold leadership and control in their hands and to give orders. Due to their competence in administrative, financial and canon law matters related to the priests and church members within their own church district, they played a key-role in the life of the Church in the Middle Ages. This being the case it is understandable why the Church, on the one hand, aimed at raising the level of their erudition and providing their education and why the court, on the other hand, made it its practice to honour their activity at court by donating them benefices. By patronizing the archdeacons both the church and the court ensured very prudently their own interests as well. In the present study, I will try to illustrate the career perspectives of the archdeacons holding benefices by presenting the career of two representatives, i.e. two archdeacons of two neighbouring archdeaconries: Szatmár (Sătmar) and Ugocea (Ugocea) in the late Middle Ages. The walk of life of Ferenc Acél, archdeacon of Sătmar and Miklós Gerendi, the archdeacon of Ugocea have many similarities as both belonged to the middle class of the clergy, but at the same time also many differences springing from their origin, their family relations, their studies and their patronage can be found.

**Keywords:** archdeacon – benefice – royal secretary – Transylvania – Middle Ages

**Două cariere de arhidiaconi de la sfârşitul evului mediu.** În evul mediu arhidiaconii reprezentau acea categorie promiţătoare a elitei ecleziastice, care a jucat un rol important în administraţia bisericească. Drepturile largi de care se bucurau, prestaţia lor, puterea exercitată de ei în viaţa de zi cu zi le-au oferit arhidiaconilor posibilitatea să conducă, şi să ducă la bun sfârşit planurile capitlului şi ale bisericii. Datorită problemelor administrative, financiare şi de drept canonic pe care le-au prezentat membrii clerului şi enoriaşii din dieceză şi a căror rezolvare ţinea de arhidiaconi, aceştia au avut un rol hotărâtor în viaţa bisericii medievale. Prin aceasta se poate explica pe de o parte tendinţa bisericii de a creşte nivelul lor cultural şi de a se îngriji de studiile lor, pe de altă parte, tendinţa curţii regale de a onora prin beneficii serviciile lor în interesul curţii. Procedând în acest fel atât biserica cât şi curtea regală s-au îngrijit de fapt în cel mai subtil mod de propriile interese.

În studiul de faţă încerc să prezint prin analiza a două cariere de arhidiaconi din Sătmar şi Ugocea de la sfârşitul evului mediu posibilităţile de carieră ale celor care deţineau diferite beneficii şi prebende ecleziastice. Carierele celor doi aparţinând clerului de mijloc, Ferenc Acél, arhidiacon de Sătmar şi Miklós Gerendi, arhidiacon

de Ugocea prezintă numeroase asemănări, dar în același timp și numeroase trăsături unice, rezultând din origine, relațiile de familie și rudenie, studiile și patronii de al căror sprijin s-au bucurat. Ambii au reușit să facă și o carieră laică, devenind secretari regali. Ceea ce părea a fi însă vârful carierei lor le-a adus, într-un fel sau altul, și sfârșitul. Politica, ca și în zilele noastre, făcea victime chiar și atunci.

**Cuvinte cheie:** arhidiacon, beneficiu, secretar regal, Transilvania, evul mediu

In the Middle Ages archdeacons represented a group of the ecclesiastic élite, which had a bright perspective for the future and played an important role in church administration. They had a large area of competence, high authority and serious power to exercise in everyday life, enabling them to hold leadership and control in their hands and to give orders. Due to their competence in administrative, financial and canon law matters related to the priests and church members within their own church district they played a key-role in the life of the Church in the Middle Ages. This being the case it is understandable why the Church, on the one hand, aimed at raising the level of their erudition and providing their education and why the court, on the other hand, made it its practice to honour their activity at court by donating them benefices. By patronizing the archdeacons both the Church and the court ensured very prudently their own interests as well.

In the following I will try to illustrate the career perspectives of the archdeacons holding benefices by presenting the career of two representatives, i.e. two archdeacons of two neighbouring archdeaconries: Szatmár (Sătmar) and Ugocea (Ugocea) in the late Middle Ages. The walk of life of Ferenc Acél, archdeacon of Sătmar and Miklós Gerendi, the archdeacon of Ugocea have many similarities as both belonged to the middle class of the clergy, but at the same time many differences springing from their origin, their family relations, their studies and their patronage can be found.

### **Ferenc Acél, archdeacon of Sătmar**

Ferenc Acél of Kisszellő (sometimes written as 'of Zele') was a descendant of a family of petty noblemen originating from Szelő in Nógrád county.<sup>1</sup> The family had strong ties to the court and Church already at the

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<sup>1</sup> Diplomatkai Levéltár, Magyar Országos Levéltár 18600 (Diplomatic Archive, The National Archives of Hungary), Budapest, Hungary (henceforth DL); Dezső Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában* (Historical Geography of Hungary in the Era of the Hunyadis) (5 vols, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1890-1913), vol. I, p. 111; József Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg Mátyás és a Jagellók korában* (A budai, fehérvári, győri és pozsonyi káptalan adattárával) (The Ecclesiastical Middle Stratum in the Age of Matthias and of Jagiellons. With the Database of the Buda, Fehérvár, Győr and

beginning of the fifteenth century. The first outstanding personality of the family was János of Szelő. He became a magister and is mentioned first as a Supreme Court notary between 1409 and 1415 and as the protonotary of the judge of the royal court between 1416 and 1439. He was the one obtaining a letter of donation providing the right to have an emblem for his family in 1418.<sup>2</sup> Even though in his case it cannot be proven in a reliable manner that he studied abroad, this is not the case of another member of the family. Imre of Szelő is first mentioned in 1427 as a student enrolled at the University of Vienna. He belonged to the category of clergymen who were not content to have acquired their erudition in the Hungarian educational institutions and who wanted to enhance their knowledge of canon law besides the practice achieved in ecclesiastic courts also by listening to the theoretical lectures of famous university professors. It is highly probable that his university degree and erudition were some of the reasons why he is recorded to be canon of Vác in 1446.<sup>3</sup> Another member of the family, Márton of Szelő had a similar ecclesiastic career, more precisely he was a member in the chapter of Veszprém. He is mentioned to be the canon of Veszprém in 1512.<sup>4</sup> So it can be stated that Ferenc merely continued a family tradition in the second part of his career.

The career of Ferenc Acél started at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He is mentioned first by his name of origin: 'of Kisszellő' in 1509 when he was representing provost Miklós Zele of Sánkfalva along with other two canons of Pozsony (Bratislava) in the proceedings of a legal action. Although he is mentioned to be a *litteratus* this does not mean yet that he had entered the bond of the church. However, it does mean that he did not study at a foreign university since the term *litteratus* refers to having a degree from a Hungarian school.<sup>5</sup> Köblös assumes that his representing the provost can be explained by some sort of family ties between the Acél family of petty noblemen of Nógrád county and Zele, provost of Sánkfalva originating from a family of noblemen of Gömör county.<sup>6</sup> Such an

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Bratislava Chapters) /Társadalom- és Művelődéstörténeti Tanulmányok 12./ (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1994), p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> György Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség a Mohács előtti Magyarországon* (The Law Learned Intelligentsia in Hungary before Mohács) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), p. 181; Ferenc Kubinyi: „A Mohorai Vidffyek czímeres-levele és nemzedékrendjük” (The Vidffys of Mohora’s Coat of Arms and Genealogy), *Turul*, 1885/1–5: 63–66.

<sup>3</sup> Károly Schrauf, *Magyarországi tanulók a bécsi egyetemen* (Hungarian Students at the Wien University) (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1892), p. 66; DL 14004.

<sup>4</sup> Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény, Magyar Országos Levéltár 201634 (Diplomatic Photo Collection, The National Archives of Hungary), Budapest, Hungary (henceforth DF).

<sup>5</sup> DF 228157.

<sup>6</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi közélet*, p. 454.

assumption would illuminate somewhat also his stand while representing the provost in the legal action. Ferenc Acél is mentioned as the incumbent of a benefice for the first time at the end of 1513. At this time Acél was a canon of Bratislava and Vác and he is mentioned to be making an agreement with the chapter of Bratislava regarding the receipt of the revenue of his benefice.<sup>7</sup> This is the first record available on Ferenc Acél's accumulation of benefices (which will increase manifold in time). The accumulation of benefices, i.e. receiving the revenues of several benefices at the same time was prohibited in theory by medieval councils, as those who had to manage several benefices would no longer be able to fulfill their residential duties. Dispensation from this prohibition could be obtained only from the Pope himself. This issue was intensely discussed during the fifteenth century not only by the councils, but also by the Hungarian diets.<sup>8</sup> Although there were propositions to prohibit obtaining revenues from two benefices at the same time even for the smallest of the incumbents, these provisions were mere dead letters since, in practice the accumulation of benefices remained a general phenomenon of the late Middle Ages. This is best proven by the high number of papal dispensations. The existence of several laws on the subject is a sign that this law had to be brought into effect over and over again, since it could not be enforced.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand it would seem that members of the chapter regarded accumulation of benefices as acceptable as long as the incumbent who was away could ensure that his liturgical duties tied to his benefices were fulfilled. Communication between the incumbents being constantly away from their place of duty and the chapter was reduced to merely receiving their revenues and conflicts arose only when and if they considered their revenue to be too low. In 1513, Ferenc Acél, canon of Bratislava and Vác found himself in exactly such a situation. Since he was negotiating with the chapter of Bratislava concerning his revenue, it is probable that he had arranged for replacement in regard to the fulfillment of his liturgical duties in Bratislava, but despite this fact he claimed a revenue.

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<sup>7</sup> In November 1513 Ferenc Kisszelői reckons himself among the members of the chapters of Vác and Bratislava. DF 228418.

<sup>8</sup> The problem of the aggregation of the benefices was one of the items on the agenda at the Council of Konstanz. Elemér Mályusz: *A konstanzi zsinat és a magyar főkegyúri jog* (The Council of Konstanz and the Hungarian ius supremi patronatus) (Máriabesenyő – Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2005, reprint), pp. 127–130. On the parliamentary decisions see Köblös, *Az egyházi közélet*, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> Mályusz adopted a different approach to the problem. In his opinion these regulations pass over in practice, too. The scarcity of the sources concerning the members of the (Szepes) Spiš and Oradea chapters lead him to this conclusion. Mályusz, *A konstanzi zsinat*, pp. 129–130.

In the spring of 1514 Ferenc Acél appears in the sources again as canon of Vác and Bratislava, although this time he is mentioned not for his ecclesiastic, but his literary activity. 1514 is the year when four of his speeches designed to be presented during Lent were published under the title *Quatuor ieiuniores* along with the epigrams of Benedek Berkényi.<sup>10</sup> Köblös assumes that he was living at court as a secretary already in this period this having been the reason why he had to arrange his revenues in 1513 and this being the means to make his literary endeavours possible.<sup>11</sup> It is known for certain that in 1515 he was living in Buda, far away from his benefice in Bratislava for he is mentioned at this time as a canon of Bratislava and secretary of the queen.<sup>12</sup> Both titles are worth our closer attention. First he is no longer mentioned as a canon of Vác, he probably gave up this position for a more promising one (at the court). Since this time therefore sources do not mention him as a canon of Vác. On the other hand, his title of secretary of the queen is quite questionable for the country did not have a queen at that time. Therefore it is to be assumed that this is an erroneous recording, he probably became secretary of the king, a position that – as all signs point to it – he held along with the, later really obtained position of secretary of the queen, an office he kept until his death.<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to the commonly held assumption in the specialized literature, secretaries did not belong to the chancery, but were directly under the orders of the king or the queen. All secretaries were without exception literate and erudite persons who occasionally could assist with chancery duties given their afore mentioned abilities. At the same time, besides administrating the petitions, secretaries of the king could participate in the royal council as royal counsellors, i.e. consiliariuses. They were often sent out to one of the magistrates to perform various duties from handing over a simple letter sent by the king to participating in important negotiations. Besides, the secretaries performed also important diplomatic duties. Together with the chancellors they participated in the negotiations and discussions with foreign emissaries received at the royal court, in writing diplomatic letters and were included in foreign missions. Although they were considered to be specialist diplomats they were not the only ones to

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<sup>10</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg*, p. 454. At this time he is using the Szelői or Kisszelői name, but later increasingly that of Acél will be generalized.

<sup>11</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg*, p. 454.

<sup>12</sup> DF 228104.

<sup>13</sup> While in Köblös' opinion he held the secretary of the queen title, in Kubinyi's view he held that of the king' secretary. Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg*, p. 454; András Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok II. Lajos király uralkodása idejében” (The Royal Secretaries in the Reign of Louis II), *Gesta – International Journal of Medieval Art*, 6 (2006): 10.

participate in negotiations and discussions regarding foreign affairs and to go on a foreign mission. But just as foreign affairs were not the privilege of the secretaries, neither were internal affairs their monopoly. Therefore it can be stated that secretaries were employed in various domains of state administration, but they had no branch of this administration as their sole competence. Their closest relationship was with the royal chamberlains.<sup>14</sup> At the same time it would seem that these two categories were the closest to the ruler within the royal court. In order to be able to perform their tasks, secretaries had to be highly educated and had to be able to speak foreign languages. This is precisely why Kubinyi has suggested that this domain of the culture of the era of the Jagiellons should be discussed under the name of court Humanism.<sup>15</sup> These traits of the court secretaries fit perfectly both Ferenc Acél and Miklós Gerendi who will be discussed subsequently.

Coming back to Ferenc Acél's career at the beginning of the sixteenth century it turns out that his benefices and his absence from Bratislava raised problems again. It is proven that Acél was holding the position of royal secretary and living in Buda by 1515. His problems occurred due to the fact that in the meantime the chapter of Bratislava elected him as a dean. Deanship was an office in the chapter that was not considered a dignity and the mandate was only for one year. The most important duties of a dean were administration of the estates, collection of the revenues of the chapter, judgement in the case of the serfs of the chapter and pacification of canons in conflict. Becoming a dean was highly appealing to every canon for this meant an opportunity to acquire other revenues besides the revenue of their own benefices. These other revenues could be: a third of the fines imposed, a certain amount of gifts of food, eventually the revenue of some of the fields and meadows. This explains why the chapter of Bratislava resented Acél for his absence, on the one hand and why Acél could not resist the temptation of further revenues, on the other. Since his duties as a secretary required his presence in Buda, his duties as a dean of Bratislava were performed by Márk Velikei.<sup>16</sup> Naturally, Ferenc Acél regarded himself as the rightful beneficiary of the revenues incurred by the deanship, but not so the chapter. In response Acél asked provost Ferenc Balbus who was a royal secretary himself since 1513 to intervene in his favour before the king so he could collect his revenues despite his absence.<sup>17</sup> The court probably intervened in his favour, but the

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<sup>14</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg*, p. 455.

<sup>17</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg*, p. 454.

strong influence of the chapter of Bratislava is demonstrated also by the fact that Acél did not reach his goal completely, a compromise was reached. According to this compromise in December 1515 Acél admitted in his capacity of canon of Bratislava and secretary of the queen (in fact of the king, as mentioned before) that he received 8 Florins from the chapter, however he no longer would require any revenues if he was absent from his office.<sup>18</sup> After this incident there is no record of him in Bratislava for eight years: his deanship expired earlier, he remained a canon, but since he was away he did not claim a revenue. During this time he was active at the court: there is proof that from 1516 to 1520 he was indeed a referent as a royal secretary.<sup>19</sup> In the table analyzing the activity as a referent of the royal secretaries of Louis II of Hungary drawn up by Kubinyi, Ferenc Acél is presented with 1 record in 1517, 5 records in 1519, 3 records in 1520 and 1 record in 1521. In view of this statistic he was the second most frequently employed referent.<sup>20</sup> This piece of information is complete only if it is mentioned that most of the royal secretaries were employed as referents quite seldom, on the one hand and that no specialization according to sphere of duty or territory of competence can be proved among the documents published with their help. Petitions handed in could be resolved by any of the secretaries regardless of where the plaintiff came from.<sup>21</sup> In the time of Ladislaus II Jagiellon, the number of royal secretaries increased considerably, probably due to their manifold sphere of duty. Until the battle of Mohács there were dozens of them employed every year. During the reign of Louis II of Hungary there are records of 25 secretaries.<sup>22</sup> There are records of 11 secretaries of the queen and – just as Acél's case shows – several of them were secretaries of the king and queen at the same time. It is highly probable that Ferenc Acél obtained the position of the secretary of the queen in 1522, after Louis II of Hungary and Maria Habsburg were married. In fact, Ferenc Acél is mentioned as royal secretary several times until 1522 and after 1522 as *secretarius utriusque regie maiestatis*.<sup>23</sup> Besides being a

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<sup>18</sup> DF 228104.

<sup>19</sup> Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség*, p. 322. In 1519 he appears in a charter as *Francisci Aczeel regie Maiestatis secretarii*. DL 73446; Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> András Kubinyi, „Habsburg Mária királyné udvartartása és a politika 1521–1526” (Mary Habsburg's Household and the Politics, 1521–1526). In Orsolya Réthelyi – Beatrix F. Romhányi – Enikő Spekner – András Végh (eds.), *Habsburg Mária, Mohács özvegye. A királyné és udvara 1521 – 1531* (Mary Habsburg, the Widow of Mohács. The Queen and its Court 1521–1531) (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 2005), p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> For example DF 243515, 281414.

referent, Acél also had diplomatic duties, e.g. at the beginning of 1520 he was the emissary of the king to the regents of Austria.<sup>24</sup> The monarch also assigned royal secretaries for tasks regarding taxation thus usually helping the chamberlains. In 1521 Acél had a similar assignment when he received the task to appease the Saxons in regard to the tax they needed to pay<sup>25</sup> or in 1522 when he was assigned the task to collect the tax due from Bratislava.<sup>26</sup> In the same year he was included in the retinue of the king when he went to Bohemia, while in June 1522 he signed his letter written in the Castle of Prague as secretary of the king and the queen and archdeacon of Sătmar.<sup>27</sup> Due to his capacity of royal secretary, on 24 August of the same year Burgo imperial emissary assigned him in Prague to inform the palatine of the news in Bohemia.<sup>28</sup>

Ferenc Acél's appointment as archdeacon of Sătmar was closely related to another benefice conferred him earlier. In 1518 – evidently as a reward for his court activity – the king reserved him the revenues of the Benedictine abbey of Garamszentbenedek (Hronský Beňadik).<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, in April of that year the king, Louis II of Hungary let the abbot of Pannonhalma know that he meant to donate the abbey of Hronský Beňadik to Ferenc Acél who intended to join the Benedictine order. Although the substantial, wealthy benefice was probably tempting for Ferenc Acél, its enticement was not strong enough to convince him to take the Benedictine vow. Thus, in the following years it seems that he avoided entering the order. He probably considered accepting the benefice of the abbey without renouncing his status as a secular priest. It is known that, although he was given countless deferments in entering the order, he did not meet any of them. Therefore Máté Tolnai, the abbot of Pannonhalma requested the king

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<sup>24</sup> DF 241184; Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> DF 247690. According to the charter, in August, 1521 the representants of Braşov travelled to Sibiu at the request of protonotarius István and Ferenc [Acél], provost of Alba Iulia. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen* (Kronstadt: 1886), vol. I, p. 353 (henceforth *Quellen*). However, we do not have any data concerning Acél's provosty of Alba Iulia. Very probably it is an errata, because at the mentioned time Ferenc Szeremlyéni was the provost of Alba Iulia. József Fögel: *II. Ulászló udvartartása 1490–1516* (The Household of Ulászló II 1490–1516) (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1913), p. 49; Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség*, p. 319. Vekov takes sides on the Alba Iulia provosty of Ferenc Acél in 1523. Károly Vekov, *Locul de adeverire din Alba Iulia (secolele XIII–XVI)* (The Loca Credibilia of Alba Iulia, XIII–XVIth Centuries) (Cluj-Napoca: Fundația Culturală Română – Casa de Editură și Tipografie Gloria, 2003), Appendix no. 7.

<sup>26</sup> DF 241230, 241236, 247690; Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, pp. 11, 16.

<sup>27</sup> DF 243518.

<sup>28</sup> DL 25661.

<sup>29</sup> *Hazai okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus patrius Hungaricus*. Studia et opera Emerici Nagy (Budapest: MTA Történelmi Bizottsága, 1891), II, p. 107 (henceforth *HO*).



not to force the order to receive Ferenc and to give them permission to release him from among their candidates.<sup>30</sup> The king evidently granted the request of the abbot, but he compensated Ferenc in another manner: in 1522 there is a record concerning his position as archdeacon of Sătmar.<sup>31</sup> Let us briefly comment on this. The appointment of Ferenc Acél as the archdeacon of Sătmar is an excellent example to illustrate that not much had changed in Hungary since the thirteenth century. The monarch continued to reward his subjects' administrative activity by benefices, just as he had two hundred years before, for the feudal administration was not familiar with the concept of paying a wage for persons serving in the state administration. The reluctance of the incumbents to enter the greater orders could also be interpreted as a glaring sign of the „secularization”, which led to the Reformation, but this is probably not the case. Instead such reluctance is probably a sign that, although these individuals accepted the benefice as payment for their services to the state they had no calling as priests and therefore – precisely in concordance with their religious beliefs – they tried to resist the forces encouraging them to be ordained as long as possible.<sup>32</sup> This is how the case of Ferenc Acél should be regarded as well. He had a less significant position within the church and could not convince himself to take monastic vows which meant a stricter bond on his life.

Ferenc Acél seems to have been a clergyman with a fine talent for finances. Besides being the archdeacon of Sătmar, at the end of 1521 he leased from his earlier protector, from Balbus who had moved from Bratislava to Austria for fear of the Ottomans also the provostry of Bratislava under the condition that if Balbus would be elected bishop he, Acél would fully inherit the provostry.<sup>33</sup> He probably did not expect this agreement to become effective as soon as it did. Perhaps he had or he may have suspected such an outcome. Anyway, after Ferdinand rewarded Balbus for services by granting him the bishopric of Gurk in 1523 the agreement between Balbus and Acél came to fulfillment.<sup>34</sup> But he did not get to enjoy his provostry. In the spring of

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<sup>30</sup> László Erdélyi – Pongrác Sörös (eds.), *A pannonhalmi Szent Benedek-rend története* (The History of the Benedictine Order from Pannonhalma) (12 vols, Budapest: A pannonhalmi Szent Benedek-rend, 1912–1916), III, p. 731; V[ince] Bunyitay – R[ajmond] Rapaics – J[ános] Karácsonyi, eds., *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek a magyarországi hitújítás korából* (Ecclesiastical-historical Records from the Hungarian Reformation) (3 vols, Budapest: A Szent-István-Társulat Tud. és Irod. Osztálya, 1902–1906), I, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> DF 243518. This charter issued on 29 June, 1522 is the first one which mentioned Acél as archdeacon of Sătmar and the secretary both of the king and queen.

<sup>32</sup> Elemér Mályusz, *Egyházi társadalom a középkori Magyarországon* (Ecclesiastical Society in Medieval Hungary) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), pp. 185–207.

<sup>33</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi középréteg*, p. 445.

<sup>34</sup> Nándor Knauz, „Balbi Jeromos, II. Lajos király tanára” (Jeromos Balbi, the Teacher of King Louis II), *Magyar Sion*, 1866: 349.

this year Ferenc Acél, who was still called an administrator<sup>35</sup> in every document, was assassinated at night on 17 May 1523.<sup>36</sup> According to György Szerémi, it was István Báthori who strangled him out of revenge, because he considered Acél responsible for his removal from the position of palatine.<sup>37</sup> It is not known exactly whether this was true, but there is something to the story, for the Austrian emissary, Siegmund von Herberstein reported on 23 May 1523 to Salamanca, the treasurer of archduke Ferdinand and also his most trusted man that, during the Diet they found the body of Ferenc Acél, a royal secretary and archdeacon of Sätmar next to the palatine's house and 11 wounds had been inflicted on him.<sup>38</sup>

Ferenc Acél was a more than competent secretary and he probably also fulfilled his duties as the archdeacon of Sätmar, either by himself or rather through his deputy who was appointed and called to account by him. It seems he had the ability and aptitudes necessary to deal with all these challenges despite the fact that, as archdeacon of Sätmar he was one of those clergymen who did not observe the resolutions of the council of Buda of 1279, which specified that holders of such positions had to have studied canon law at university. However, the council itself made a concession, i.e. that whoever did not yet have a degree in canon law could obtain it later.<sup>39</sup> Such a provision was not without ground if one considers that one of the duties of the holders of such positions was to pass sentence in ecclesiastic

<sup>35</sup> DF 227996, 281414.

<sup>36</sup> Knauz, „Balbi Jeromos”, p. 349.

<sup>37</sup> „... this István Báthori in secret ... killed Ferenc Acél in his own home. As after lunch Ferenc Acél sleepiness seized and he sent out of house his attendants and he already slept, István Báthori had spying out him. He had a very cunning and clever servant, Bálint Balica; he was always ready for robbery or roguery. He [Bálint Balica] was induced by his lord to commit the murder, because Ferenc Acél wrote a lot of bad things about him, which partly were true, partly were false, because Hungarians had three natures: rancor, abuse and killing. King Louis, after his father death went to the Czechs to arrange his rule between them, because they wanted this visitation. And this was in the 1518 year. Because the king was still a child, without to consult the Hungarians, in Prague they took away from Báthori the function of comes Timisoara, and gave it to an honorable man, Jakab Bánffy of Verőce, who was a very brave valiant. When István Báthori find out, that beside the title of palatine that of the comes also was taken away from him, and Ferenc Acél wrote a letter against him, this one [Ferenc Acél] was found killed secretly in his own house, in his bad, and never was find out whose sin is.” György Szerémi, *Magyarország romlásáról* (About Hungary's Ruination) (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1979), pp. 85–86. Szerémi made a mistake placing the event in 1518 and very probably the mode of death was another as well.

<sup>38</sup> Kubinyi, „Habsburg Mária királyné udvartartása”, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Mályusz, *Egyházi társadalom*, pp. 99–100; Sándor Tonk: *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a középkorban* (The Peregrination of the Transylvanians in the Middle Ages) (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1979), p. 132.

legal actions, although there were many clergymen who did not observe this provision. In the Hungary of the fourteenth – fifteenth century the chapters left it with their members, the archdeacon-canonists whether they wanted and felt the need to pursue academic studies or not. It seems that, as far as academic studies were concerned the habit was that of Esztergom in the fourteenth century, i.e. that canonists could have a leave of absence for three years for the purpose of studying. Still the chapter required its members not to take their academic studies lightly but work hard while at them. At the end of the third year everybody was bound to come home and report on their progress and studies during an examination. The same position is reflected also in the provision of 1521 of the chapter of Bratislava regarding the fact that archdeacon-canonists must be living within the area of their canonry, except those who left for studies abroad. The latter were entitled to the revenue of their benefices even if they were not living within the area. It is thus obvious that the chapters did not condition the position of archdeacon-canonist on academic studies despite the provisions of the council; but as it turns out there were very many clergymen who did use the opportunity, especially those who were younger. This means the erudition of the clergymen in the chapters was increasing, the standard was ever higher and yet the progress was still very slow. In Hungary and its immediate surroundings, like Transylvania there was no chapter in which most of the members had academic studies.<sup>40</sup> Since the end of the thirteenth century the number of clergymen with academic studies had continuously increased yet there were no situations like in Germany where, at the end of the Middle Ages it was a general custom for every member of the chapter to have academic studies. However, there was another way to acquire knowledge, pointed out also by the specialized literature: continuous individual involvement in private study, building on the foundations laid by the education received in the chapter schools. In my opinion, Ferenc Acél belongs to this category. It is known for certain that he did not go to university for, in 1509 Ferenc of Kisszellő is called a *litteratus*. Litterati as a concept referred to persons who attended only Hungarian schools. Still there were many cases when people who did not attend foreign universities demonstrated impressive erudition. Ferenc Acél's literary activity reflects precisely that. And that is probably no coincidence. Secretaries had continuous personal relations with the king and the queen, they represented erudition at the court and as such contributed to the court being considered a more prestigious one by the international Humanist academic society. Not every one of these individuals was particularly a Humanist, but they knew

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<sup>40</sup> Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása*, pp. 128–132; Vekov, *Locul de adevire din Alba Iulia*, pp. 301–303.

how to write well in Latin and had the common cultural knowledge of the age. And if one comes to think of it they did need such cultural knowledge in order to perform the tasks assigned to them.

### **Miklós Gerendi, the archdeacon of Ugocea**

Miklós Gerendi originates from a long line of Transylvanian noblemen and had a wonderful career in the Church: provost of Fehérvár, archdeacon of Ugocea, custos of Fehérvár and, finally bishop of Transylvania. In this paper, his position as an archdeacon of Ugocea is of the most interest.

The Gerendis coming from the Tyukod clan, belonging to the middle class of the nobility according to the size of their landholdings had their estates mainly in the counties of Torda (Turda) and Kolozs (Cluj).<sup>41</sup> One of the most prominent members of the family is Miklós Gerendi whose walk of life is studied in this paper. In his case it is lucky that there are sources telling not only about his immediate family, but also the various stages of his studies. His first place of study was Várad (Oradea), he was a student in the chapter school of Oradea along with Miklós Oláh in the time when Zsigmond Thurzó was the bishop, i.e. between 1505/1506–1512.<sup>42</sup> It is possible that the years spent in Oradea marked his life and the relations formed here had an important role in building his career, the recommendations received from the former bishop may have even helped him to some benefices. In any case, later records prove that Zsigmond Thurzó, first bishop of Transylvania for a short period, then the bishop of Oradea until his death, royal secretary between 1500 and 1507 and also provost of Fehérvár between 1501 and 1503, did not forget this talented student and offered him his patronage later in his career.<sup>43</sup> After the basic schooling in Hungary, Gerendi attended a foreign university. Universities were the means to continue one's studies and to acquire academic knowledge. As it is well known, besides the short-lived attempt to create a Hungarian university, there were no universities in Hungary, therefore if somebody wished to study more than what the chapter schools offered, as Miklós

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<sup>41</sup> Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, vol. V, pp. 774–777; Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai címerekkel és nemzedékrendi táblákkal* (Blazons and Genealogical Illustrations of Hungarian Families) (12 vols, Pest: Ráth Mór, 1857–1868), vol. IV, pp. 371–372; Rikárd Gyulai, „Adatok a Gerendi család történetéhez” (Data Concerning the History of the Gerendi Family), *Genealógiai Füzetek*, 1906: 49–51, 60–61, 79–80, 89–91, 98–100.

<sup>42</sup> Vincze Bunyitay, *A váradai püspökség története alapításától a jelenkorig* (The History of the Bishopric of Oradea from its Foundation till the Present Days) (4 vols, Nagyvárad–Debrecen, 1883–1935), vol. II, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség*, pp. 324, 327.

Gerendi did, he needed to attend, for a longer or shorter period of time a foreign university. As the registers of students show, Hungarian students of the late Middle Ages did take this opportunity. Some of the students studying at foreign universities appear later as members of the clergy. Although there was no papal decree that required a university degree in order to obtain the benefice of the position of canon, the middling group of the clergy as the spiritual élite of this social segment attempted to reserve the benefices of the position of canon to itself. Since it was possible to enroll and attend a university even while serving as a canon, incumbents used this opportunity to a great extent.<sup>44</sup> The most popular universities were that of Vienna and of Cracow, probably because these were closest to home and therefore expenses could be kept at a lower level than if someone went to an Italian university.<sup>45</sup> Gerendi also went to the University of Vienna as a member of the *natio Hungarica* between 1475 and 1476 (a matter that will be dealt with in detail later).<sup>46</sup>

After he finished his university studies there is no word about Gerendi. According to the sources available he started his carrier at court, he is first mentioned here as a royal secretary issuing a diploma in September 1523.<sup>47</sup> This however does not mean that this is the time of his appointment as a royal secretary, he could have been appointed earlier. Ferenc Acél's case is a very good example that the period of service of the royal secretaries is very difficult to establish, except in a few cases. As it shall be seen in detail, King Louis II of Hungary had been trying to obtain a benefice for him for several months since the beginning of September 1523. On this basis it could be concluded that he was appointed as a royal secretary at the end of the summer of this year. But, in a letter of the king written in March Gerendi is mentioned as a royal secretary who would come to him to Prague and would report on the news in Hungary. In fact this means that Gerendi must have been appointed as royal secretary at the beginning of 1522 at the latest, before King Louis II of Hungary's visit to Bohemia.<sup>48</sup> In his capacity of royal

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<sup>44</sup> The canons who were absent because of their university studies continued to benefit from their incomes.

<sup>45</sup> Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása*, p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Franz Gall - Willy Szaivert (hrsg.), *Die Matrikel der Universität Wien* (2 vols, Graz-Wien-Köln: 1956-1967), vol. II/1, p. 152 (henceforth *MUW*); Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása*, p. 306.

<sup>47</sup> *HO*, vol. V, pp. 424-426; Loránd Szilágyi, *A magyar királyi kancellária szerepe az államkormányzatban 1458 - 1526* (The Role of the Hungarian Royal Chancery in State Administration 1458-1526) (Budapest: Franklin Társulat nyomdája, 1930), p. 24; József Főgel, *II. Lajos udvartartása* (The Household of Louis II) (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1917), p. 43.

<sup>48</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 13.

secretary engaged in diplomatic services, which was not a unique case. In the decade before the battle of Mohács there were many royal secretaries undertaking diplomatic services, among others the above discussed Ferenc Acél. Miklós Gerendi simply continued this well-trying practice when, in 1523 he was the emissary of King Louis II of Hungary, who was spending a longer period of time in Prague, to the Polish king Sigismund I the Old.<sup>49</sup>

The appointment of Miklós Gerendi as archdeacon of Ugocea is worth a closer look, it is a procedure that could offer valuable pieces of information regarding the intermingling of secular and ecclesiastical careers. In September 1523, treasurer Ferenc Forgách, the king, chancellor Szalkai and chief chancellor Szatmári each wrote a letter to the bishop of Transylvania asking him to provide a benefice of a canon to royal secretary Miklós Gerendi.<sup>50</sup> But bishop Ferenc Várdai was reluctant to please them. In December, the king wrote another letter to the bishop making the same request and referred to the fact that Gerendi was the only royal secretary at court without a benefice.<sup>51</sup> This time Gerendi was appointed as archdeacon of Ugocea. Gerendi thanked the bishop in February 1524, since at the time of his appointment he was in Bratislava with the court. In his letter of thanks Gerendi mentioned that his appointment „pleased also my lord, the chancellor”.<sup>52</sup> Should the legal institution of familiarity have been in effect in the chancery, Gerendi could be considered the familiaris of chancellor László Szalkai (also bishop of Eger). However, Gerendi’s letter could be interpreted in another way as well. He may have called the chancellor ‘my lord’ merely as a polite form of expression, but it may not be excluded that

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<sup>49</sup> In August he is already at home. In September Gerendi as secretary wrote from Esztergom to the Polish Chancellor. He made references concerning the legation in the instruction made for the lord chancellor of the Polish king on the occasion of the summit from Wiener Neustadt. In October, at the summit held with the participation of Louis II, Ferdinand of Habsburg, Austrian archduke and Krzysztof Szydłowiecki representing Sigismund I, the Polish king, the major problems raised were the reformation process of the Hungarian royal court and that of administration, as well as the common defense against the Turks. After summit, Gerendi was sent to negotiate with Szatmári primate. István Zombori (ed.), *Krzysztof Szydłowiecki kancellár naplója 1523-ból* (Krzysztof Szydłowiecki Chancellor’s Diary from 1523) (Budapest: METEM, 2004), pp. 231, 233, 237; Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség*, p. 324; Főgel, *II. Lajos*, pp. 43, 104.

<sup>50</sup> DL 82613–82616. It is worth to mention that all four of them asked from bishop Várdai for Gerendi as prebend the archdeaconry of Telegd (Tileagd), remained unfilled through János Lázói’s death. Besides this, was another option raised by the king at the beginning and at the end of the same year, 1523, that of the custos in the Alba Iulia chapter. DL 82626–82627; Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> DL 82626–627; Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> DL 82634; Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 5.

there was a patron-client relationship between the two of them, which is a more relaxed form of familiarity, but absolutely one of the most frequent forms of aid employed in order to access the royal court both in Hungary and in the West. In Gerendi's case, another method of becoming a royal secretary, i.e. the importance of family connections is plausible as well. Thus, it is possible that Gerendi was assisted in this endeavour also by János Bornemissza, the castellan of Buda.<sup>53</sup>

On the other hand, this case casts light upon the fact that even at the end of the Middle Ages it was habitual to reward services of a secular position by benefices in the Church. Although secretaries were given a share of the emission tax of the documents, they were paid wages also with the benefices of the Church received from the king or by the influence of the king. As one could see, the king argued for the appointment of Gerendi as a canon by saying that he was the only secretary at court without a benefice. It is striking indeed that from among the 25 secretaries of Louis II of Hungary there were only three for whom there is no record of a benefice.<sup>54</sup> Having had to wait for a benefice to vacate, just as Gerendi had, is another matter. On the other hand, frequent connection of services at the chancery with the scope of duties of an archdeacon is not unusual at all if one considers that both positions mainly required legal qualification.

As a royal secretary, Gerendi rendered outstanding services not only in the domain of foreign affairs, but also in that of internal affairs, e.g. he assisted the staff of the treasury during tax collection. His services in this respect are best documented in the case of the Saxons of Transylvania when he was requesting payment of the taxes along with another emissary as the king's deputy at the national assembly of the Saxons.<sup>55</sup> In 1522 the king sent Miklós Gerendi again to the assembly of the Saxons of Transylvania in order to solve taxation along with the comes of the chamber of salt.<sup>56</sup> In 1525, he met the Saxons again having the same assignment; for it is recorded that on 23 March he received money for travel expenses in order to fulfill such a duty and several documents dated at the end of May and beginning of July mention his assignment in this respect.<sup>57</sup> Royal secretary Gerendi is mentioned in these documents with the title provost of Buda, but in August his title was already custos of Fehérvár. There are signs that the court could deprive him finally of the position of provost and give it to János Statileo

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<sup>53</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, p. 436.

<sup>56</sup> *Quellen*, vol. I, p. 436.

<sup>57</sup> DF 247761-247766; Fögel, *II. Lajos*, p. 116.

only during the time of his mission in Transylvania. It seems Gerendi was the right man to deal with the taxation problems regarding the Saxons. His being familiar with the places and close to the families probably helped. In any case, despite the fact that the treasurer was changed (János Dóci replaced Elek Thurzó), Gerendi was allowed to continue dealing with the Saxon taxes,<sup>58</sup> which most definitely means they were pleased with his work.

As it could be seen, at the beginning of the 1520s Gerendi was an active member in the court administration. This fact is supported also by his activity as a referent. In the table analyzing the activity as a referent of the royal secretaries of Louis II of Hungary drawn up by Kubinyi, Miklós Gerendi is presented with 1 record in 1523, 3 records in 1524 and 4 records in 1525.<sup>59</sup> Besides taxation problems and relational problems the king sent him out to the magistrates to perform various duties from handing over a simple letter sent by the king to participating in important negotiations. The king seems to have used Gerendi's talents as a negotiator also in other important matters. For example, in 1524 the king sent him out to Transylvania to deal with the spreading of Luther's views among the Saxons along with chamberlain Gáspár Ráskai.<sup>60</sup> Between August and November 1524 he was several times in Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Hermannstadt) in order to fight the Lutherans at the king's order. He even reported on a priest to the dean of Sibiu accusing him of being a Lutheran. In this case he is mentioned besides being a royal secretary also as archdeacon of Ugocea.<sup>61</sup>

Miklós Gerendi's case shows clearly that church benefices granted to various incumbents were used in fact to reward services rendered in various domains of state administration. It seems that he was another incumbent for whom being a royal secretary was most important, this met his ambitions best. Achieving his ambition took a long journey which could not lack proper qualification. In order to be able to fulfill his duties he had to be highly educated and had to be able to speak foreign languages. Specialized literature usually emphasizes the importance of academic knowledge in the case of the royal secretaries and the fact that among the royal secretaries the number of those who went to an Italian university surpasses by far that of those going to a Central-European one.<sup>62</sup> Miklós Gerendi can be included in the category of the latter. However, there are some problems in identifying him. For as it could be seen before, there are

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<sup>58</sup> DF 247772-247774.

<sup>59</sup> Kubinyi, „A királyi titkárok”, p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> In the same time they collected taxes from Saxons. Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, pp. 138–140, 153, 179.

<sup>61</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, pp. 153–154, 179–180.

<sup>62</sup> Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása*, p. 43.



records showing that a certain Miklós Gerendi enrolled in the University of Vienna in 1475, but should our Miklós Gerendi have been that Miklós Gerendi, than he had to have been over sixty years old when he was appointed royal secretary.<sup>63</sup> It should be also mentioned that it is assumed that he studied Greek together with Miklós Oláh in the chapter school of Oradea.<sup>64</sup> Since Oláh was born in January 1493, should the record be authentic, it is improbable that Gerendi, the royal secretary was the one studying in Vienna. And yet this cannot be excluded, since his father bearing the same name was a married man with several children by 1475 and since he was born in 1460 (and not in 1455) according to the genealogy of the family he could be the only one matching the enrollment of 1475 with that name (at 15 he would already be accepted at the university).<sup>65</sup> Scarce records of later times show bishop Miklós Gerendi to have had Humanist traits. Schwob, when discussing the formation of the separate Humanist circle of Transylvania in the milieu of Queen Maria a few years before the battle of Mohács mentions as members of this colony Jacobus Piso, Ludovicus and Martinus Pileus (Hueter), Miklós Oláh, Gáspár Horváth of

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<sup>63</sup> MUW, vol. II, p. 152; Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása*, p. 306.

<sup>64</sup> Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség története*, vol. II, p. 20; Árpád Varga, „A váradi káptalan hiteleshelyi működése” (The Activity of the Loca Credibilia from Oradea). In Elek Csetri – Zsigmond Jakó – Gábor Sipos – Sándor Tonk (eds.), *Művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok* (Studies in Cultural History) (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1980), p. 23; Sándor V. Kovács, *Esztorténet és régi magyar irodalom. Tanulmányok* (The History of Ideas and the Old Hungarian Literature. Studies) (Budapest: Magvető, 1987), p. 471.

<sup>65</sup> Pál Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia* (Medieval Hungarian Genealogy) / Arcanum DVD Könyvtár IV. Családtörténet. Heraldika. Honismeret. / (Budapest: Arcanum, 2003), DVD. According to the family tree of the Gerendi family from the Tyukod genus the latter bishop's father appeared in the documents between 1440 and 1482, while his wife, Anna Dobokai appeared in the written sources between 1457 and 1482. Three elder brothers (Péter, Jób, Orsolya) were mentioned in 1460, while Miklós Gerendi was mentioned for the first time in 1483. At the same time were mentioned two other brothers of the latter bishop, Jakab (1483–1505) and Magdolna (1483–1485). He had also four more other brothers László (1499–1524), Péter junior (1499–1500), Mátyás (1499–523) and Miklós junior, the latter mentioned only in 1499. Another genealogy of the Gerendi family is suggested by Ildikó Horn, *Tündérország útvesztői. Tanulmányok Erdély történelméhez* [The Mazes of the Land of the Fairies. Studies about the History of Transylvania] (Budapest: ELTE Történelemtudományok Doktori Iskola, 2005), pp. 102–103. For the family see also: Mária Lupescuné Makó, „(Gyéres)Szentkirály – kultusz és birtoktörténet” ((Gyéres) Szentkirály – Cult and Estate History). In Vilmos Keszeg – Zsolt Szabó (eds.), *Aranyos-vidék magyarsága. Aranyosszék, Torda és vidéke a változó időben* (The Magyars from Arieș-region. Sedes Arieș, Turda and its Region in Changing Times) (Kolozsvar: Kriterion, 2006), pp. 127–129.

Vingárt, Georg Reichstorffer and Miklós Gerendi.<sup>66</sup> Reichstorffer proves Gerendi's being of a Humanist spirituality also by dedicating his description of Moldavia to Gerendi describing him as a personality who is known to like ancient Greek and Latin historians, especially Thucydides and Polybius.<sup>67</sup>

Coming back to Miklós Gerendi's career, he became the provost of Buda in 1525,<sup>68</sup> and at this time king Louis II of Hungary transferred him the rights of the royal patronage regarding all the benefices of the church of Buda.<sup>69</sup> In the relational notes of a royal diploma he is mentioned in April the same year also as custos of Fehérvár.<sup>70</sup> Later, between 1525 and 1527 he is mentioned several times as custos of Fehérvár.<sup>71</sup> It is known for certain that even in November 1527 when Ferdinand was crowned to be king he was custos of Fehérvár.<sup>72</sup> In the meantime, in 1526 he participated along with other royal secretaries to the collection of the church treasures allowed by the Pope to be used in order to prepare for the battle with the Ottomans. It is probably not unimportant that from among all royal secretaries the king assigned him the task to mint money out of these treasures and use them for military purposes.<sup>73</sup> Finally, he also participated in sending out the orders of mobilization before the battle of Mohács and his name is mentioned in the list of royal secretaries who survived the battle.<sup>74</sup> Not long after that, in 1527 Ferdinand appointed him bishop of Transylvania.<sup>75</sup> In 1528, King John Szapolyai appointed also bishop of Transylvania the same János Statileo who was given the provosty of Buda when it was taken away from Gerendi. Thus, until the beginning of the 1540s Transylvania had two bishops, although Gerendi who was supporting Ferdinand understandably did not spend much time at the bishop's seat. In 1528, Miklós Gerendi obtained also the title of royal treasurer besides that of elected bishop of

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<sup>66</sup> Ute Monika Schwob, „Siebenbürgische Humanisten am Ofener Jagiellonenhof“, *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 3.12 (1975): 81-90.

<sup>67</sup> Georg Reichstorffer, *Erdély és Moldova leírása. Chorographia Transilvaniae. Chorographia Moldaviae*. Ed., trans. by István Szabadi (Debrecen: Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem Klasszika-filológiai Tanszéke, 1994), pp. 58-63.

<sup>68</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi közélet*, p. 293.

<sup>69</sup> DL 39349.

<sup>70</sup> DL 62100; Köblös, *Az egyházi közélet*, p. 293.

<sup>71</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, pp. 289, 291, 329, 331.

<sup>72</sup> Köblös, *Az egyházi közélet*, p. 293.

<sup>73</sup> István Brodarics, *Igaz leírás a magyaroknak a törökökkel Mohácsnál vívott csatájáról* (True Description about the Mohács Battle between Hungarians and Turks). Ed. Gábor Szigethy. /Gondolkodó magyarok./ (Budapest: Neumann kht., 2003) <http://mek.niif.hu/05800/05872/html/gmbrodarics0002.html> (accessed on 01.07. 2011)

<sup>74</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, p. 296.

<sup>75</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, p. 342.

Transylvania.<sup>76</sup> In the following years, his name is found on many documents regarding the tax collection from the Saxons and regarding the emission of letters communicating noblemen their obligation to present an army,<sup>77</sup> but also in his personal letters telling about the personal financial sacrifices he made supporting Ferdinand's party and asking for help.<sup>78</sup> Although he was made to flee by supporters of John Szapolyai,<sup>79</sup> he did not leave Transylvania, he stayed in Sibiu.<sup>80</sup> It seems he left the country permanently in 1534 or 1536 until then supervising the defence of Sibiu. In the following years, he appeared again as the emissary of Ferdinand,<sup>81</sup> administrating cases of obtaining benefices,<sup>82</sup> and he is mentioned to be a member of the royal council since 1537.<sup>83</sup> The next year king Ferdinand wrote the emperor asking him to obtain from King John Szapolyai that Miklós Gerendi, the bishop of Transylvania who proved his loyalty to him by sacrificing everything he had would be reinstated in his position as a bishop.<sup>84</sup> In June 1540, he is still mentioned as bishop of Transylvania.<sup>85</sup> The two bishops of Transylvania appointed almost at the same time, but by different rulers passed away also almost at the same time: Gerendi in 1540/1542, Statileo in 1542.<sup>86</sup> As it could be seen, the culmination of Gerendi's career was obtaining the position of bishop of Transylvania, but he could hardly enjoy the fruit of his career in state administration. The time he bore the title of bishop of Transylvania coincided with the most agitated

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<sup>76</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, pp. 375–376. He is mentioned in the same way in 1529 and 1531. Zsigmond Jakó (ed.), *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei, 1289–1556* (The Convent Records from Cluj-Mănăstur, 1289–1556) / *A Magyar Országos Levéltár Kiadványai II.* (2 vols, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), vol. II, no. 4251, 4357 (henceforth *KmJkv*).

<sup>77</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, pp. 410–411, 435–436.

<sup>78</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, pp. 426–428, 451–452.

<sup>79</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. I, p. 515.

<sup>80</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. II, p. 40.

<sup>81</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. II, pp. 291–292, vol. III, p. 267.

<sup>82</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. III, p. 181.

<sup>83</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. III, p. 181.

<sup>84</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. III, pp. 274–275. His banishment is also mentioned later. Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. III, pp. 299–300.

<sup>85</sup> Bunyitay – Rapaics – Karácsonyi, *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek*, vol. III, pp. 464–465.

<sup>86</sup> Bónis, *A jogtudó értelmiség*, p. 322, 324. There is no accordance concerning the Gerendi's date and place of death. While Bónis suggests that Gerendi's end of life was in Cracow, recently Horn shows that Gerendi, the Black Bishop fell ill and died in Bratislava sometime before August 1542, when he was returning from Ferdinand. See Horn, *Tündérország útvesztői*, pp. 105, 122.

period of the history of Transylvania beginning with the sad outcome of the battle of Mohács. The presence of the Ottomans in the region was all the more serious as John Szapolyai and Ferdinand maintained parallel administrations reflected well by the appointment as bishop of Transylvania of Gerendi and Statileo almost at the same time. So Miklós Gerendi was an important participant acting on behalf of Ferdinand in this political crisis lasting for decades initiated with the election of two kings at the same time.

### Conclusions

Even at first sight it is obvious that there are many similarities between the careers of these two persons. Both Ferenc Acél and Miklós Gerendi were people living in the late Middle Ages. Looking at their qualifications it can be added as János Horváth said that both of them were representatives of the chancery Humanism of the Jagiellon-period.<sup>87</sup> They fall into the same category also as far as their origin is concerned, both of them declared themselves of noble origin and there is proof of that. They both started their career having obtained ecclesiastic titles and benefices, but reached the culminating point in their career in a secular domain, as royal secretaries. They were royal secretaries at the court in the same period so it is possible even that they knew each other and had met at court, although it is known that secretaries, just as noblemen, did not stay at court permanently, but only on the occasions their services were needed. Another similarity is that they were both rewarded by the ruler for their services in state administration being awarded benefices, the position of archdeacon of Sätmar in Acél's case and that of Ugocea and the position of bishop of Transylvania for Gerendi. Unfortunately, very few records of their activity as archdeacon and bishop have survived. The practical reason for this is that they were given these benefices almost at the end of their lives. Another, quite important matter was that the archdeacons were also canons thus their revenues were increased even if the position of a canon ranked lower than that of an archdeacon.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, many times in the case of bigger

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<sup>87</sup> János Horváth, *Az irodalmi műveltség megoszlása. Magyar humanizmus (The Partition of the Literary Erudition. Hungarian Humanism)* (Budapest: Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1935), pp. 180–232.

<sup>88</sup> For example, in the Transylvanian chapter the archdeacon of Sätmar paid in 1333 papal taxes as canon 64 coppers, while as archdeacon paid 110 coppers. This shows that his income as archdeacon was higher than that as canon. Zsigmond Jakó (ed.), *Erdélyi okmánytár. Oklevelek, levelek és más írásos emlékek Erdély történetéhez. Codex diplomaticus Transsylvaniae. Diplomata, epistolae et alia instrumenta litteraria res Transsylvanas illustrantia* (3 vols, Budapest: Akadémiai – Magyar Országos Levéltár, 1997–2008), vol. II, no. 1062 (henceforth *EOkm*).

archdeaconries their value was smaller as canonicate. For example, in 1317 – 1320 in the chapter of Transylvania the value of several vacant canonicates were evaluated to 16 marks each, but the archdeaconry of Küküllő (Târnava) was evaluated at 70 marks at the same time.<sup>89</sup> In any case, according to the calculations made by Mályusz the revenue of the more important members of the chapter in the late Middle Ages, e.g. the archdeacon of Sătmar and of Ugocea could easily have a revenue double than a canon.<sup>90</sup>

However, the careers of Acél and Gerendi have their own specific traits as well. Although Acél did not study at foreign universities there are signs that he thought it important to continue to acquire information by self-teaching. He had a literary activity just as others of his contemporaries considered to be Humanists. What strongly differentiates him from Gerendi in my opinion is his strong desire for success, his ambition. It is obvious from the very beginning that he sought the company of the right persons, able to help him in his career. He made an effort to obtain valuable benefices and as it was the custom he enjoyed several of such benefices. However, he soon realized that he did not have a chance to become part of the élite in the midst of the clergy, but he could have access to it in an indirect manner, by becoming a royal secretary. In this way, he approached the scene of high politics. His tragic death suggests, on the one hand that, as royal secretary he participated in political games, and on the other that he achieved what he had wished for, he was serving at the scene where high politics were formed.

Unlike Acél, Gerendi studied abroad. There is no doubt that this fact and the assistance of his patronage played a great part in his acceding to the court quite soon and his having there a sphere of duties adequate for his qualification. He made the most of his Transylvanian origin in the court, for I do not think it is a mere coincidence that he was sent so often to solve taxation problems with the Saxons. His journeys to Transylvania were convenient occasions also to solve his own family and estate problems. Receiving the position of bishop of Transylvania is the culminating point of his ecclesiastical career, a position he would have found difficult to fulfill had he not served as a royal secretary for years on end.

So it was their origin, their qualification, their family and patronage relations, as well as their services at court that helped them to the benefices of the Church. However, the political situation had an influence on both of their lives: Acél paid with his life for it, while Gerendi never got to enjoy the privileges he obtained by being appointed bishop of Transylvania.

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<sup>89</sup> *EOkm*, vol. II, no. 280.

<sup>90</sup> Mályusz, *Egyházi társadalom*, pp. 81–84.



# Women and Mendicant Orders in Late Medieval Transylvania

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**Abstract:** The religious experience of the Transylvanian laity has received increased attention in the research of the last two decades. As a result of these studies, it has been observed, that the religious aspirations and practices of the lay people were framed not only within the parochial boundaries, but also within those provided by the Mendicant Orders. However, the religious experience of the women and the ways in which this experience was organized and supervised by the friars has been only marginally discussed. Thus, this study wishes to explore the institutionalization of women's religious life inside the houses belonging to the Franciscan and Dominican Order respectively. The rhythm of Mendicant female establishments will be observed in close relation to the general and local histories of the friars. This would allow for a deeper understanding of both the peculiar features of the religious integration of women with the Mendicants and the specific devotional practices they were encouraged to follow.

**Keywords:** religious experience, women, Mendicant Orders, Transylvania, competition

**Femeia și ordinele mendicante în Transilvania evului mediu târziu** Experiența religioasă a laicilor transilvăneni a beneficiat de un interes crescând în cercetarea ultimelor două decenii, cercetare care a punctat modalitățile în care experiența religioasă a fost articulată nu doar în limitele bisericilor parohiale, dar și a acelora oferite de Ordinele Mendicante. Cu toate acestea, experiența religioasă a femeilor, precum și modul în care aceasta a fost organizată și supravegheată de către frații mendicanți a fost investigată doar parțial. Astfel, acest studiu dorește să exploreze instituționalizarea vieții religioase a femeilor în interiorul așezărilor franciscane și dominicane. Ritmul vieții în mănăstirile feminine mendicante va fi analizat în strânsă legătură cu istoria generală și locală a fraților. Cu ajutorul acestei strategii analitice vor putea fi înțelese în detaliu atât caracteristicile particulare ale integrării religioase a femeilor de către franciscani și dominicani, cât și modelele devoționale care le-au fost oferite.

**Cuvinte cheie :** experiențe religioase, femei, ordine mendicante, Transilvania, competiție

The main aim of this study is to decipher the ways within which women's religious experience was framed by the Mendicant Orders. Older and more recent research on the history of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders in the kingdom of Hungary has pointed out the great success

enjoyed by the Friars Minor and Friars Preachers in late medieval Transylvania. Among the explanations proposed by historians were the feeble parochial network of the region, the existence of a numerous Orthodox population and the frequent Ottoman attacks, all and each of these instances prompting the missionary zeal of the friars.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it has been observed that the evangelization goals of the two most important Mendicant Orders met the enthusiasm not only of the townspeople, but also of the nobility, who particularly in the late Middle Ages constituted the great benefactors of the Mendicant establishments.<sup>2</sup>

In the Transylvanian towns, the parish church was the dominant ecclesiastical institution, primarily because, as elsewhere in the Latin Christendom, the rhythm of life was defined within parochial limits.<sup>3</sup> Even in the most important urban centers of the region, the religious life of the townspeople was integrated within a single parish church. This was the case with Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa and, to some extent until mid fifteenth-century, with Cluj. Economically prosperous, witnessing an accelerated rate of demographic growth in the course of the fifteenth century, ethnically homogenous - as they were largely inhabited by a German population - these towns had a monoparochial profile from a religious point of view. However, the religious needs of thousands of people could have hardly been accommodated by the parish church. The Mendicant churches and the friars' pastoral zeal thus complemented the parochial framework. Particularly as a result of recent investigations, one can accurately consider that the Mendicant integration of religious life was a suitable option for the Transylvanian laity.<sup>4</sup> These valuable analytical suggestions highlighted that

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<sup>1</sup> András Harsányi, *A Domonkosrend Magyarországon a reformáció előtt*, (Debrecen, 1938); János Karácsonyi, *Szent Ferencz rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig*, (Budapest, 1922-1923); Viorel Achim, *Les unités territoriales de l'ordre franciscain dans l'espace roumain*, in *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Maria Crăciun and Ovidiu Ghitta, pp. 24-31, (Cluj University Press, 1995); Marie Madeleine de Cevins, *L'Église dans les villes hongroises a la fin du Moyen Ages (vers 1320-vers 1490)* (Budapest-Paris-Szeged, 2003); Mihaela Sanda Salontai, *Mănăstiri dominicane din Transilvania*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Mária Lupescu Makó, "Item lego..." Gifts for the Soul in Late Medieval Transylvania, *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 7(2001): 161-97; Eadem, "Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval Sighişoara (Schässburg, Segesvár)," *Caiete de antropologie istorică. Oamenii și moartea în societatea românească*, 1-2(2004): 93-106; Zoltán Soós, "The Franciscan Friary of Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely) and the Franciscan Presence in Medieval Transylvania", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 9 (2003): 249-274.

<sup>3</sup> de Cevins, *L'Église...*, 24-48 and pp. 99-100.

<sup>4</sup> de Cevins, *L'Église...*, pp. 38-63; Lupescu Makó, "Item lego...", pp. 165-84; Maria Crăciun, *Mendicant Impact on the Saxon Community of Transylvania, c. 1450-1550*, in Maria



at the end of the Middle Ages the Mendicants had a strong impact on the religious life of the laity.

This impact was reflected on the one hand at institutional level. The Mendicant churches and the confraternities functioning under the friars' supervision competed with the parish churches in towns, attracting the interest of townspeople and organizing their religious life. As the conflicts with the parish clergy demonstrate, the townspeople of Bistrița, Cluj, Sibiu and Brașov seemed to have been particularly interested in the cure of souls the Mendicants provided. Attendance of the Masses celebrated in their churches, choice of burials with the Mendicants, participation in the life of Franciscan and Dominican fellowships on a regular basis were examples of the way in which these people, women and men alike, departed from their parish churches.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, it has been observed that the Mendicants offered not just an institutional alternative. Their religious message, the specific Christocentric and Marian devotions they promoted, such as veneration of Jesus's Name and the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin influenced lay piety.<sup>6</sup> The extent of this influence on lay devotional life is also proven by the transformation of the friars into vehicles of salvation through the intercessorial prayers they were requested to perform.<sup>7</sup>

The research trend focusing on the way institutional integration of the laity's religious life influenced its devotional practices and beliefs became one of the favorite lines of investigation in the past decades.<sup>8</sup> Among the interesting observations this analytical trend provides, one can notice the great emphasis placed not only on the religious life of men, but also on that of women. Long neglected, the female religious experience has been brought to the fore by a detailed and nuanced investigation of institutionalization of women's religious life in particular forms such as the houses of the beguines, the female sanctity, the role they played and the

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Crăciun, Elaine Fulton, *Communities of Devotion: Religious Orders and Society in East Central Europe, 1450-1800* (forthcoming)

<sup>5</sup> The organization of Mendicant fellowships was discussed by Lidia Gross, *Confreriile medievale în Transilvania (secolele XIV-XVI)* (Cluj-Napoca, 2004), pp. 170-80. Carmen Florea, *The Third Path: Charity and Devotion in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns, Communities of Devotion...* (forthcoming), is an attempt to demonstrate that growing interest on the part of the laity for the pastoral cure the friars' could provide is well attested particularly in the case of the Dominican confraternity from Cluj.

<sup>6</sup> Crăciun, *Mendicant Impact...*

<sup>7</sup> Lupescu Makó, "Item lego...", pp. 178-85.

<sup>8</sup> Vauchez, *Les laïcs au Moyen Ages*, (Paris, 1987); Idem, *Esperienze religiose nel medioevo* (Roma, 2003); Catherine Vincent, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France* (Paris, 1994); John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, 1995); Robert Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe c. 1215-c. 1515* (Cambridge, 1995).

place ascribed to them in the history of religious orders.<sup>9</sup> The peculiar features characterizing the religious experience of “the other half” of medieval Christendom have been highlighted by these studies. As the research of the religious experience of Transylvanian laity has yielded important results so far, it would be highly interesting to try to nuance this understanding by attempting to explore the substance and intricacies of the female religious experience in this region. This attempt thus benefits from the observations made by previous studies with regard to the Mendicant Orders’ attempts to institutionalize the religious life of the laity. Since little attention has been given to the ways that Mendicant strategy considered the religious aspirations of women, this study aims at shedding some more light on this issue. What was, from an institutional point of view, the Mendicant policy towards women in late medieval Transylvania? What was the women’s response to the Mendicant integration of their religious life? Was there any impact the female mendicant establishments made on religious life?

The Mendicants were present in Transylvania very soon after their first houses were attested in the kingdom.<sup>10</sup> An overview of the Dominican presence in this region reveals that, as early as the mid thirteenth-century, the Friars Preachers were building their convents in Sibiu and Bistrița, this preference for urban localities being maintained in the case of other foundations, such as those from Sighișoara, Cluj, and Brașov. Therefore, the Transylvanian case confirms the suggestion made four decades ago concerning the preference of the Dominican Orders for important urban centers.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted, however, that the early urban spread of the friars is not the only feature of their presence. More important for the purpose of my investigation is the extremely well-balanced distribution of their male and female convents. Thus, there were Dominican nunneries in five out of the nine localities where a Dominican convent functioned. The fact that these female houses were located in the most important Transylvanian towns (Sibiu, Bistrița, Cluj, Brașov, and Sighișoara) strengthens the urban profile of

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<sup>9</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, (Berkeley, 1984); Anna Benvenuti “*In Castro Poenitentiae*” *Santità e società femminile nell’Italia medievale*, (Roma, 1990); Gabriela Zarri, *Le sante vive. Cultura e religiosità femminile nella prima età moderna*, (Rosenberg&Sellier, 1990); Christiane Klapisch-Zuber ed., *A History of Women in Silences of the Middle Ages*, (Harvard University Press, 1992); Ulrike Wiethaus, *Maps of Flesh and Light. The Religious Experience of Medieval Women*, (Syracuse, 1993); Catherine M. Mooney, (ed.) *Gendered Voices. Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, (Philadelphia, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> de Cevins, *L’Église...*, p. 49, in 1221 the Dominicans had already founded a convent in Győr, whilst several years later, in 1229, the Franciscans established a convent in Esztergom.

<sup>11</sup> Erik Fügedi, *Koldulórendek és városfejlődés Magyarországon, Századok* 106 (1972): 66-94.

the Dominican spread in Transylvania, the male convents of these towns being complemented by Dominican nunneries. Perhaps the Dominican appeal to an urban population explains, at least partly, the absence of Dominican nunneries in the Episcopal town of Alba Iulia and in pre-urban localities such as Vințu de Jos and Odorheiul Secuiesc.<sup>12</sup>

If we are to understand the Dominican policy with regard to the female foundations from Transylvania the geographical distribution should be connected with the time when these houses were founded and the developments taking place within the Order of the Friars Preachers. In the light of the surviving sources, it can be considered that all the Dominican nunneries were established in the course of the fifteenth century. Most likely, the first female house was that from Cluj, as in 1450 the prioress of St. Egidius monastery already decided to sell some liturgical books that were of no more use to her congregation.<sup>13</sup> The foundation of this nunnery may have thus occurred prior to 1450 when, as we have seen, its functioning was well documented. Although it cannot be established with certainty, it seems that the foundation was part of the ambitious programme of reforming the Transylvanian convents, as the papal bull of 1444 *Prospicientes ex apice* nominated Jacob Richer as vicar of the Transylvanian Dominicans and entrusted him with the restoration of religious life.<sup>14</sup> Richer's work was followed by that of another noteworthy Observant friar, Leonardus de Brixenthal. As a result, in the sixth decade of the fifteenth century, the convents of Cluj, Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa and Sighişoara became observant.<sup>15</sup>

The case of the Dominican nunnery of Cluj was by no means the only example of a nunnery founded in the aftermath of the adoption of observant ideals by the male convents. As the chronology of the Dominican spread in Transylvania reveals, the nunneries of Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa and Sighişoara were also founded after the Observant movement took firm roots in this region.<sup>16</sup> The long delay between the establishment of the male convents and

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<sup>12</sup> As very little information has survived about the Dominican convent of Sebeş, it is hard to assess whether the Dominicans made a lasting impact on the religious life of the laity of this town. However, an indulgence granted in 1493 by the master general of the Dominicans to the fraternity of St. Nicholas functioning under the spiritual supervision of this convent still reveals, albeit partially, the interaction between the Friars Preachers and the lay people, see Gross, *Confreriile...*, p.176 and Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Siebenbürgen*, vol. I, (Hermannstadt, 1921), p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> Zsigmond Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei*, (Budapest, 1990), doc. no. 828, p. 402.

<sup>14</sup> Harsányi, *A Domonkosrend ...*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36, Salontai, *Mănăstiri dominicane...*, p. 231.

<sup>16</sup> The nunnery of Bistriţa is attested in 1476, that from Sighişoara was founded sometime in the second half of the fifteenth century, whereas those from Sibiu and Braşov

that of the nunneries, a delay reflected by each of the above mentioned Dominican houses, might suggest that the renewal of life in the male convents prompted pious women to become integrated into the Second Order.

The case of Sibiu is particularly interesting in this regard, as the Dominican convent is attested since the middle of the thirteenth-century, whilst the nunnery of St. Mary Magdalene is mentioned with certainty only at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This tardiness in the foundation of the Dominican nunnery of Sibiu cannot be explained only by the notorious reluctance the friars displayed with regard to the supervision of the Second Order.<sup>17</sup> The close scrutiny of the religious life and ecclesiastical structure of the town of Sibiu might offer additional clarifications. As the Holy Cross Dominican convent was an early foundation, most likely established in the fourth decade of the thirteenth century, at the time when Sibiu was an emerging town, its location on the outskirts of the urban territory accurately reflects the relationship between urbanization and the settlement of the Mendicant Orders. But, at the same time, this marginal position, in one of Sibiu's suburbs, exposed it to the Turkish attacks, the most severe ones, those from 1432 and 1438, greatly devastating it. Despite the ecclesiastical support and, to some extent, even that of the urban magistracy, the relocation of the Dominican convent happened only three decades later, in 1474, when it was finally moved inside the town's walls.<sup>18</sup>

At the time this transfer occurred, the Holy Cross convent was already a reformed one. The foundation of the Dominican nunnery in the town of Sibiu can be placed thus in the decades following the reformation of the male convent and its relocation inside the fortified urban territory.<sup>19</sup> If

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are attested in 1502, see Adrian Andrei Rusu, Nicolae Sabău, Ileana Burnichioiu, Ioan Vasile Leb, Mária Makó Lupescu, *Dicționarul mănăstirilor din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș*, (Cluj-Napoca, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order*, (New York, 1966-1973), although St. Dominic supported an active apostolate among the women affiliated with the Friars Preachers, after his death, it became increasingly difficult for the Second Order to secure the supervision of the friars *in spiritualibus et temporalibus*. In the course of the fourteenth century, numerous decisions of the general chapters established the precise obligations the friars would have in regard with the Dominican nuns, by severely limiting the number and the duration of the visits in the nunneries, pp. 387-97.

<sup>18</sup> Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Konrad G. Gündisch und Gernot Nussbächer eds., *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, (Bukarest, 1991), doc. no. 4022, pp 28-30.

<sup>19</sup> According to the town's registers, in 1497 the urban magistracy gave financial support to the Dominican nuns, see *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Hermannstadt und der Sächsischen Nation*, vol. I, (1380-1516), (Hermannstadt 1880), p. 242. However, information about a functioning Dominican nunnery in Sibiu comes only from the beginning of the sixteenth-century, see Rusu et al, *Dicționarul...*

the case of the Dominican nunnery from Cluj signaled that the reformation of the male convent might have prompted integration into the Second Order, the case of Sibiu adds further weight to this assumption. The presence of an observant Dominican convent in Sibiu - derived as it was from the insistence of the local Dominicans and the prior provincial to have it moved inside the town's walls<sup>20</sup> may have influenced the decision of founding a Dominican nunnery there.

As the Dominican Order devised a cautious policy with regard to the female foundations, for which the approval of three successive general chapters was needed,<sup>21</sup> it cannot be excluded that the Transylvanian nunneries followed a similar route. Despite the lack of evidence in this regard, the establishment of Dominican nunneries in the most important Transylvanian towns only after the observant way of life was adopted by the male convents by mediation of the highest ecclesiastical authorities, suggests the awareness of the Dominican Order's governing bodies, or at least their formal approvals of such initiatives. That the observant movement within the Dominican convents of Transylvania might have triggered the establishment of the houses of the Second Order is an assumption also sustained by the devotions the Friars Preachers intended to promote.

An overview of the patron saints of the Dominican nunneries could offer valuable insights in this regard. The celestial protectors the Dominicans chose for their Transylvanian establishments, both male and female, seem to conform to the general policy of the Order in the late Middle Ages.<sup>22</sup> No Dominican saint, not even the founder of the Order of the Friars Preachers, has been selected as the patron saint of the convents in this region. On the contrary, preference for the saints of the Early Church and for the Virgin Mary is detectable in the Dominican *patrocinia*.<sup>23</sup> This is, to some extent, the case with the Dominican nunneries, too. Despite being founded as a result of the observant movement, the most recently canonized female saint, considered to be a worthy example of this movement within the Dominican Order, Catherine of Siena, did not become patron of any of the Transylvanian female houses.<sup>24</sup> The long-established figures of the liturgical calendar were

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<sup>20</sup> Salontai, *Mănăstiri...*, pp. 213-4.

<sup>21</sup> Hinnebusch, *The History...*, p. 391.

<sup>22</sup> Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 336-48.

<sup>23</sup> The Virgin Mary was the patron saint of the convents from Alba Iulia, Cluj, Sighișoara and Odorheiul Secuiesc, Sts. Peter and Paul patronized the convent from Brașov, the convents of Sibiu and Bistrița were dedicated to the Holy Cross, whilst that from Sebeș perhaps to St. Nicholas, see Rusu et al, *Dicționarul*.

<sup>24</sup> Gabriella Zarri, *L'età rinascimentale, Storia della santità nel cristianesimo occidentale*, di Anna Benvenuti, Sofia Boesch Gajano, Simon Ditchfield, Roberto Rusconi, Francesco Scorza Barcellona, Gabriella Zarri (Roma, 2005), pp. 230-65.

again called to protect the Dominican nuns, such as St. Egidius in Cluj, the Virgin Mary in Bistrița, St. John the Baptist in Brașov, St. Sebastian in Sighișoara, and St. Mary Magdalene in Sibiu.

However old these cults were, they corresponded to the Observant ideal of reforming religious life, of bringing the apostolic model of life closer, of insisting on the need to imitate Christian perfection. As it has been argued, reform and observant movement were synonymous in the late Middle Ages, the aim being that of restoring, redressing the life in convents according to the ideal of the founders of the Mendicant Orders.<sup>25</sup> In order to attain this purpose, the key figures of early Christianity could be the ideal candidates, as the case of the Dominican patron saints from Transylvania demonstrates. Besides this general trend, there are also some more interesting nuances that could deepen our understanding of the Dominican policy with regard to the houses of the Second Order.

For the nunneries of the Dominican Order, reformation inspired by the Observant movement meant enclosure, reformers of the second half of the fifteenth-century insisting on the exigencies of living a cloistered life, keeping not only the body, but also the soul separated from the world, if these nuns were to become true brides of Christ.<sup>26</sup> This affinity with an austere way of life may have inspired the choice of St. Egidius as the patron saint of the Dominican nuns from Cluj. As the cult of St Egidius was most likely founded during the times of growing involvement of the Observant propagators in the functioning of the Dominican province of Transylvania, as the activity of Jacob Richer proves, it is tempting to conclude that St. Egidius could have been a suitable protector for the nuns of Cluj.

The relationship between the observant movement and the ascetic way of life represented by the hermit saints is given further weight by the example of the Dominican male house in the same town. It is precisely after its reformation that St. Anthony is mentioned next to the Virgin Mary as patron saint of the convent. The occurrence of this second *patrocinium* for the first time in our sources in 1455 is surely no accident and can be connected with the transformation of the Dominican convent from Cluj into an observant one.<sup>27</sup> By choosing the first hermit, a saint becoming increasingly

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<sup>25</sup> Kaspar Elm, *Riforme e osservanze nel XIV e XV secolo. Una sinossi* in Giorgio Chittolini and Kaspar Elm (eds), *Ordini religiosi e società politica in Italia e Germania nei secoli XIV e XV* (Bologna, 2001), pp. 489-501.

<sup>26</sup> Heike Huffmann, *Inside and Outside the Convent Walls. The Norm and Practice of Enclosure in Reformed Nunneries of Late Medieval Germany*, *The Medieval History Journal*, 4 (2001): 103-4.

<sup>27</sup> Elek Jakab, (ed.), *Oklevéltár Kolozsvár története első kötetéhez* (Buda, 1870), doc. no. CXIV, p. 191.

popular in the Observant Dominican milieu of the late Middle Ages,<sup>28</sup> as their additional patron, the friars of Cluj displayed their allegiance to the observant ideals. Similarly, the other hermit, St. Egidius as protector of nuns, served the same purpose. The two noteworthy saintly figures of the ascetic way of life were thus called through the observant movement to protect the friars and the nuns of Cluj.

The patron saint of the Dominican nuns of Sibiu, St. Mary Magdalene, could also be integrated within this line of reasoning. A saint embodying true penance and a propagator of the Christian message, Mary Magdalene could not have escaped the assiduous preaching of the friars. She can also be included into the efforts made by the Friars Preachers to adapt old cults to the needs of the day, as the support they gave to the saints of the Early Church accurately proves.<sup>29</sup> For the town of Sibiu, undergoing population growth in the late Middle Ages and social diversification, St. Mary Magdalene could have responded to the religious expectations of the women deciding to enroll into the Second Order. This saint was a suitable example for the apostolate the friars undertook in towns as well. For those nuns from whom the observant exigencies required a cloistered life and denial of body and soul, the example of repentance St. Mary Magdalene represented was a viable choice. The patronage she could exercise over those women was a symbol of both: the observant movement and the way of life it prescribed to those living in convents.

However, the Dominicans were not the only ones gaining adherents among the Transylvanian lay people. The Order of St. Francis could account for at least an equal enthusiasm on the part of the laity of this region. There are several features of the Franciscan settlement in Transylvania that resemble the Dominican case. Although in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Friars Minor seemed to prefer urban centers, confirming thus the connection between the Mendicant Orders and the urbanization of this region, a change occurred in the fifteenth-century. It was during this time that the newly-founded Franciscan houses outnumbered those of the Dominicans.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Meiffret, *Saint Antoine ermite en Italie (1340-1540)* (Roma, 2004), pp. 61-4.

<sup>29</sup> It was the preaching activity of the Dominican Friars which gave new impulses to the long-established cults of the apostles, confessors, and hermits, and propagated the models these saints represented among the townspeople, see *Legend Area: slept sickles de diffusion*, edited by Brenda Dunn-Landau (Montreal-Paris, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> In the early phase of Franciscan settlement in Transylvania, the convents of Bistrița, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Orăștie, Sibiu, and Tg. Mureș were founded. However, the greatest part of the Franciscan male convents were established as a result of the emergence of the Observant branch of this order, as this is proven by the convents of Albești, Brașov, Cluj,

The history of the Franciscan Order in Transylvania in the late Middle Ages, as it has been observed, is profoundly marked by the foundation of their houses in rural areas or in pre-urban localities and by the great success enjoyed by the Observant branch of the order.<sup>31</sup> This success is detectable not only by considering the male convents that were established, but also by taking into account the houses of the Poor Claire. Furthermore, the numerous houses of the Third Order placed under the Observant's supervision, strengthened, at least from a quantitative point of view, the Observant Franciscan network in Transylvania.<sup>32</sup>

However, if we are to understand the Franciscan appeal to the laypeople, particularly to women, then a more nuanced explanation of this success is needed. When compared to the Dominican nunneries, the geographical distribution of the houses of the Poor Claire appears to follow the same path. Thus, the majority of the most important urban centers, such as Sibiu, Braşov and Cluj benefited from the presence of the Franciscan nunneries. This situation is comparable to that of the Dominican establishments, as it has been discussed above: in the large commercial towns of Transylvania the male convents were always complemented by the female ones. If the house of the Third Order from Bistriţa is also taken into account, a very interesting picture emerges.

First of all, the Mendicant insistence on embarking on the evangelization of the urban population is confirmed not only by the example of the male convents, both Franciscan and Dominican, but also by that of the female establishments.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, one cannot fail to point out the competition which might have existed between the two most important Mendicant Orders. The foundation of both female and male establishments in the towns of Sibiu, Braşov, Bistriţa and Cluj reveals the great popularity the Friars Preachers and the Friars Minor enjoyed in late medieval Transylvania, but

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Coşeu, Deva, Harale, Haţeg, Hunedoara, Mediaş, Şumuleu (Miercurea) Ciuc, Păuca and Suseni, see Rusu et al., *Dicţionarul*..

<sup>31</sup> In recent years, increased attention has been devoted to the understanding of the peculiarities of the Observant Franciscan movement in this region; see particularly Soós, *The Franciscan Friary of Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely) and the Franciscain Presence in Medieval Transylvania*, *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, 9(2003): 249-274 and de Cevins *Les Franciscains observants hongrois de l'expansion à la débâcle (vers 1450 – vers 1540)*, (Roma, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Houses of the Third Order were attested in Albeşti (1535), Bistriţa (1531), Braşov (1534), Cluj (1522), Coşeu (1507), Mediaş (1525), Orăştie (1334), Suseni (1535), Tîrgu Mureş (1503) and Teiuş (1520), see Rusu et al *Dicţionarul*.

<sup>33</sup> de Cevins, *L'Eglise...*, pp. 50-2 for the discussion of the Dominican and Franciscan male convents in the kingdom and pp. 97-9 for the situation of the Mendicant nunneries.



could also suggest the competition between them, a competition which might have been stimulated by the largely monoparochial profile of these towns.

This seems to have been particularly relevant in what concerns the religious integration of women. In the second half of the fifteenth century, one could notice an increased interest on the part of the laity to organize and control its religious life. Involvement in the religious routine of devotional fraternities, foundation of pious fellowships, and cautious design of the religious responsibilities to be followed by the members of craft guilds reflect this trend.<sup>34</sup> To be sure, these were largely male initiatives aiming at offering a framework within which men could live their religious life. The instances when women are explicitly mentioned as members of these associations are rare. To the best of my knowledge, there was only one devotional fellowship based in a parish church that seems to contradict this hypothesis. According to the surviving sources, the lay members of the Marian confraternity of the Sibiu chapter were mentioned together with their wives.<sup>35</sup>

By contrast, women's involvement in the life of the confraternities organized with the Mendicants is much better documented. Whilst the Dominican fellowships from Cluj, Sighișoara and perhaps even Sebeș counted among their members men and women alike,<sup>36</sup> the situation was different with the confraternity of the Rosary from Bistrița. Functioning under the auspices of the Dominican convent, on the eve of the Reformation, this devotional fellowship seems to have been extremely popular among the women belonging to the elite of the town. Although one must be extremely prudent in emphasizing the female membership of this confraternity, the long list of women mentioned as Rosary members is a valuable indicator of their devotional preferences.<sup>37</sup> It is important to stress at this point that it was within the Observant framework that the female members of these fellowships fulfilled their pious goals, as these devotional associations functioned in the reformed convents of the Transylvanian Dominican network.

Observance, competition and women's involvement in religious life greatly influenced the history of the Franciscans as well. One of the most

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<sup>34</sup> Gross, *Confreriile...*, pp. 169-80, 202-32, 245-65 has analyzed the emergence and the functioning of devotional associations in the most important Transylvanian towns.

<sup>35</sup> Gustav Seiwert, Die Bruderschaft des heiligen Leichnams in Hermannstadt, *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*. Neue Folge, 10(1872): 316-8.

<sup>36</sup> Gross, *Confreriile...*, pp. 172-80.

<sup>37</sup> Otto Dahinten, Beiträge zur Baugeschichte von Bistritz, *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 50(1941-1944): 311-461, 395; Béla Iványi, Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Siebenbürgen und der Moldau, *Siebenbürgische Vierteljahrschrift*, 62(1939): 22-59, and Gross, *Confreriile...*, pp. 178-80.

striking examples in this regard is the case of the Observant fraternity from Cluj. Despite the paucity of our sources, we do know that in the year 1463 the minister general of the province of Hungary approved the entrance of their wives and children into the tailors' fraternity.<sup>38</sup> In the light of this charter, it seems that this Observant Franciscan fraternity functioned in the St. Michael parish church of Cluj. By developing a religious routine around the altar of St. Francis, this fraternity offers a peculiar example, peculiar, because at the time of its initiation, there was no Franciscan establishment in the town of Cluj. The parochial boundaries were broken in this case to the profit of women and children who were integrated into the fellowship of St. Francis.

As I have tried to argue elsewhere, the seventh decade of the fifteenth century was dominated by profound tensions between the parochial curia and the Mendicant Orders, tensions which reveal the preference of some of the townspeople of Cluj for the Mendicants, particularly for the Dominican Order.<sup>39</sup> The vigorous opposition of the parish priest and the lack of institutional support the Observant Franciscans could have provided to the fraternity of St. Francis might explain the silence surrounding it in our sources after 1463. Only three years later, in 1466, the tailors are mentioned as being grouped in a parish-based devotional association dedicated to All Saints.<sup>40</sup>

It seems that the Observant Franciscans attempted to integrate into their branch a group whose solidarity was forged at professional and family level. They failed in Cluj, particularly because of the ecclesiastical profile of the town in the late fifteenth century. However, this failure has the merit of revealing the effort they made very soon after the Dominicans were documented as being very active in this town. The reformation of their male convent, the foundation of the Dominican nunnery and the functioning of a confraternity within the Dominican church offered a pre-eminent position of this Order to the point that the conflicts with the parish curia needed papal arbitration.<sup>41</sup> As Cluj tended to become one of the most important urban centers in the late fifteenth century, both in terms of economic and demographic growth, being culturally diverse as well, considering it was inhabited by groups of Germans and Hungarians, the Observant Franciscans may have found there a fertile soil for their missionary purposes.

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<sup>38</sup> Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Gernot Nussbächer, Konrad G. Gündisch, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, vol. VI, (Bukarest, 1981), doc. no. 3331, p. 154.

<sup>39</sup> Florea, *The Third Path*.

<sup>40</sup> *Urkundenbuch...*, vol. VI, doc. no. 3493, p. 261

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. no. 3461, pp. 237-8

Despite this failure, the Observant Franciscans managed to redress the balance. After the foundation of their male convent in Cluj in 1486, they were able to supervise the functioning of the Poor Claire nunnery, firstly attested in 1506, and only two decades later, the house of the Third Order. In fact, due to these two female establishments, the town of Cluj became the only one in Transylvania having five Mendicant houses throughout the late Middle Ages. Of these, three were institutions in which women could express their religious aspirations. This was largely the result of the missionary activity undertaken by the Observant Franciscans in the second half of the fifteenth century. The efficiency of their work is suggested not only by the new male convents they founded, but also by the numerous houses of the Third Order placed under their jurisdiction. As a result, it has been considered that the Observant movement produced its effects not only after 1450, but also in the first decades of the sixteenth century, as this is proven by the attempt to organize a separate custody for the Transylvanian Observant Franciscans in 1535.<sup>42</sup>

The majority of the nine houses of the Third Order are attested in the timeframe between 1520 and 1535 in towns, but also in smaller localities where an Observant Franciscan convent already existed.<sup>43</sup> The Transylvanian tertiaries were part of the Third Order Regular, defined in the late Middle Ages predominantly by female membership, structures of government and specific regulations.<sup>44</sup> One can accurately suppose that the monastic profile of the houses of the tertiaries from Transylvania is derived from the role played by the Observant Franciscans in their organization. Furthermore, the exclusive female membership of these communities reveals the friars' attempt, and even success in integrating women.<sup>45</sup> Because the great majority of these houses are located in places boasting urban features, it would be interesting to explore why the urban population was attracted to this form of religious life.

Despite the extreme scarcity of our sources, there are several decisions taken by the provincial chapters of the Observant Franciscans that could further clarify women's preference for the Third Order. It seems that implementation of a severe, cloistered way of life was not without

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<sup>42</sup> See in this issue the study of Marie Madeleine de Cevins, *Les travaux sur les ordres mendiants en Transylvanie médiévale au regard des tendances actuelles de la recherche européenne*, the section *L'Observance en Transylvanie*.

<sup>43</sup> See above footnote 31.

<sup>44</sup> John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from the Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford, 1998), pp.417-27 and pp. 560-5; Alfonso Pompei, *Terminologia varia dei penitenti, in Il movimento francescano della penitenza nella società medioevale*, (Roma, 1980), pp. 12-22.

<sup>45</sup> de Cevins, *L'Église...*, pp. 212-4.

difficulties. For example, in 1533, the sisters of the Third Order were forbidden to go begging from house to house.<sup>46</sup> This decision might be explained not only by the friars' wish to keep the tertiaries cloistered, which made them more easily controlled and supervised. The difficult circumstances after the defeat of Mohács and the spread of the evangelical ideas required limitation of contacts with the outside world, even at the expense of diminishing the charitable activities these women were engaged in. Apart from this pragmatic reasoning, this decision illuminates one of the important traits of the life these women lived. Although restricted to live a contemplative life in closed communities, the practice of begging still recalls the original impulses of those wishing to dedicate their lives to the others.

However, begging was effective in prosperous communities, such as towns where one could find both those able to renounce some of their goods and those in need. From this point of view, the Transylvanian tertiaries activating in urban or pre-urban localities could be efficient in providing relief. At the same time, they were suitable candidates to embark on such enterprises because towns were socially diverse. In the absence of detailed records of the Transylvanian female mendicant establishments, it is very difficult to establish with accuracy who these women were and what the social status of those choosing to enroll into the Second Order and in the Third one was. It has been suggested that, in general, enrolment into the Dominican and the Poor Claire nunneries was favored by members of the high aristocracy and urban elite, more precisely by the young girls belonging to these social strata. The very few Transylvanian references in this regard seem to confirm this assumption.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the houses of the Third Order could have been a valuable choice for widows or unmarried women, who lacked social integration, which placed them in a difficult, marginal position. As the few instances found in our sources reveal, this could have been indeed the case.<sup>48</sup>

As such, women living in towns, but whose social status was uncertain, could find an honorable place to live in, whilst being also able to devote themselves to the care of the others. This supposition is reinforced by

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<sup>46</sup> Ferenc Kollányi, Magyar ferencrendiek a XVI. század első felében, *Századok*, 32(1898): 913.

<sup>47</sup> As it was, for example, the case of Claire, a young girl renouncing her inheritance because *ad religionem seu ordinem sanctimonialium cum tota intentione cordis sui intrare volendo*, see Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori...*, doc. no. 2831, pp. 102-3;

<sup>48</sup> Magdalene *confratrissa fratrum minorum claustris Beatissime Virginis Marie in...Coloswar*, or Dorothy tertiary in Tg. Mureş, see V. Bunyitay, R. Rapaics, J. Karácsonyi (eds.), *Monumenta Ecclesiastica tempora innovatae in Hungaria religionis/Egyháztörténelmi emlékek a Magyarországi hitújítás korából*, Vol. I 1520-1529, (Budapest, 1902), doc. no. 159, p. 178 and Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori...*, doc. no.3272, pp. 225-6.

analyzing the fate of the female establishments from Braşov. The nunnery of the Poor Claire had been attested there since 1486, whilst the house of the Third Order was mentioned in 1534. As we have seen, this was also the situation for Cluj. However, in Braşov, the Observant Franciscan convent was founded only at the beginning of the sixteenth century and had a very short-lived existence.<sup>49</sup> This means that the nunnery was founded before the male convent was established, a unique situation as compared to all the other Transylvanian houses of the Second Order. Similarly, the house of the tertiaries was most likely founded after the Observant friars had to leave the town. One cannot exclude that the spiritual supervision was entrusted to the convent of Şumuleu Ciuc, both in case of the nuns and of the tertiaries.<sup>50</sup>

Apart from these peculiar institutional traits, the case of Braşov illustrates the popularity the Observant Franciscans had among the women of the town. Perhaps it is not accidental that Braşov, like Cluj, benefited from a nunnery and a house of the Third Order. In the late Middle Ages, Braşov was the largest Transylvanian town, a commercial town characterized by mobility, socially very diverse and, from a religious point of view, dominated by the functioning of a single parish church. Very little is known about the religious integration of women in this town. The guilds' statutes drafted predominantly in the second half of the fifteenth century and in the first decades of the sixteenth century consider exclusively the religious responsibilities of the men, be they masters, apprentices or journeymen. Furthermore, in case of a master's death, the widow is given very limited help, being allowed to benefit from her husband's work usually for just one year.<sup>51</sup>

Men articulated their religious life primarily in the parish church. The sources allow us to observe that the parish church was the centre of religious life particularly for those of a certain social status, men first and foremost, involved in running the business of the town. There were not only guild regulations that neglected any religious role women could fulfill; in fact, Braşov was extremely poor in terms of religious associations, as only a Corpus Christi fraternity was attested, to whose devotional practices most likely women participated, besides devotional fellowships founded by the

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<sup>49</sup> Karácsonyi, *Szent Ferencz...*, vol. II, p. 19, the Observant Franciscans could have found a convent in Braşov only in 1507, but as a result of the parish priest opposition who even opened a trial against the entire Observant Franciscan province, the friars had to leave the town very soon after 1520.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, for example in 1535, Andrew Ujvárosi is mentioned as confessor of the tertiaries.

<sup>51</sup> See for example the guild regulations of the furriers from Braşov, Gernot Nussbächer and Elisabeta Marin (eds.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt* (Kronstadt, Heidelberg, 1999), vol. 9, doc. no. 2, pp. 24-8.

journeymen of furriers, shoemakers, tailors and blacksmiths.<sup>52</sup> Under these circumstances, the Mendicant offer might have seemed attractive for those women willing to pursue a religious mode of life. This seems to have been the case with the Dominican nunnery. Firstly attested in 1502, only eight years later there were eighteen nuns, whereas in 1524 the number of those residing in the house of St. John increased to thirty-two.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the female houses of the Observant Franciscans benefited from similar enthusiasm which, as we have seen previously, functioned under a rather precarious spiritual guidance. On the other hand, they could continue to function in a town where there were not only women in need of the sort of social legitimacy these houses could provide, but also people who might benefit from their assistance. Braşov and Cluj, the only Transylvanian towns where our sources show the existence of both a nunnery of Poor Claire and a house of the Third Order, eloquently speak of the success of the Observant branch of the Franciscans. Perhaps in order for this success to be possible, the activity of the friars would not have sufficed. Numerous inhabitants, cultural and social diversity, a weak parochial network and a high profile of the competing Dominican Order, all these peculiar features of the religious life in the Transylvanian urban milieu seem to have worked towards the same end.

The understanding of the relationship between women and the Mendicant Orders has revealed thus far that the institutional framework provided by the Franciscans and Dominicans, particularly in towns, attracted women's interest to the point that they decided to embark on a contemplative, cloistered life. However, institutional affiliation with the Mendicants was not the only way the laity followed in order to express support for the friars' mission. Detailed research on the place occupied by Franciscans and Dominicans in the laity's devotional choices has revealed the important place ascribed to them, particularly in what concerns the economy of salvation. It has been observed that testaments and donations drafted in the second half of the fifteenth century and in the first half of the following one privileged the friars as recipients of pious bequests.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, it would be interesting to explore the extent to which the policy of endowments focused on female Mendicant establishments and if the nuns and/or tertiaries were called to fulfill the same intercessorial role.

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<sup>52</sup> Gross, *Confraeriile...*, pp. 223-32 and Nussbächer, Marin (eds.), *Quellen...*, doc. no. 14, pp. 49-54, doc. no. 12, pp. 47-8, doc. no. 17, pp. 61-2, and doc. no. 19, pp. 64.

<sup>53</sup> Rusu et al., *Dicţionarul*

<sup>54</sup> Lupescu Makó, "*Item lego...*", pp. 169-97, for example in twenty one out of the fifty analyzed last wills, the testators chose the church of a particular friary as burial place.

Although the Transylvanian source material is far from being generous, it could still offer some insights into the complex relationship between women and the Mendicant Orders. Men seem to have been particularly interested in supporting Mendicant establishments and devising strategies for easing their way to salvation with the help of the friars.<sup>55</sup> There are, however, several instances in which women decided to endow Franciscan and Dominican friaries and nunneries in pursuing the same goal.<sup>56</sup> In the light of the surviving sources, it can be suggested that women from towns such as Cluj, Braşov and Bistriţa were those choosing to give support to the Mendicant female establishments. As we have seen, these were precisely the towns where the Mendicant presence was at its strongest due to the observant movement. Therefore, it is not surprising that women were accompanying men in their attempt to secure assistance from Mendicants.

Transylvanian donations and testaments detail, often at length, the type, the number, and the time when intercessory prayers were to be performed by the friars, transforming them into valuable vehicles of salvation.<sup>57</sup> However, this role seems to have been only to a very limited extent ascribed to nuns. The last will of Thomas Farkas drafted in 1485 specified a very generous donation made for the Dominican nunnery of Bistriţa, the sisters being requested to pray for his and his family's salvation.<sup>58</sup> His donation is important not only because it entrusted the fate of his

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<sup>55</sup> Highly relevant in this respect are the lists compiled by the priors of the Dominican convents from Cluj and Sighişoara, lists containing the donations received and the religious obligations the friars would have to fulfill, see János Eszterházy, *A kolozsvári Boldog-Azonyról címzett domonkosok, jelenleg ferencziek egyházának történeti és építészeti leírása*, *Magyar Sion*, 4(1866): 582-624 and Karl Fabritius, *Zwei Funde in der ehemaligen Dominikanerkirche zu Schässburg* *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, Neue Folge, 5(1861): 1-40.

<sup>56</sup> Among the donations made by women, one can mention those of the widow of Peter Moldner from Bistriţa, of Claire Thabiassy from Sibiu, of Margaret Sleser and Ursula, widow of Paul Zylahy from Cluj, see Bunyitay, Karácsonyi (eds.), *Monumenta...*, doc. no. 98, doc. no. 141 and Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori...*, doc. no. 1153, p. 488; doc. no. 4362, p. 533.

<sup>57</sup> In his testament drafted in 1499, Nicholas Bethlen requested the friars of the Dominican convent from Sighişoara to pray in perpetuity for the salvation of his and King Mathias's souls. The requirements were as follows: each Tuesday, the divine service for the dead should be performed for the King's soul, each Friday the Passion of Christ should be commemorated for the benefit of Nicholas Bethlen, each Saturday the Mass for the Virgin Mary would have to be accomplished. The vigils for the departed souls should be performed on the feast day of St. Martin for the testator and on the feast day of the Apostle Mathew for the King, Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori...*, doc. no. 3094, pp. 175-6.

<sup>58</sup> Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Konrad G. Gündisch, Gernot Nussbächer, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, (Bukarest, 1991), vol. VII, doc. no. 4592, p. 388.

salvation to religious women; it is most likely that this donation was made with the purpose of giving material support to a recently founded Dominican nunnery. As we learn from a charter issued several decades later, the daughter of Thomas Farkas is mentioned as being a Dominican nun in Bistrița.<sup>59</sup> This is a nice example of the way family bonds went beyond the walls of the nunnery. Perhaps precisely because the Dominican nuns lived a life of solitude and contemplation, their prayers could help those left behind.

Family motivations are not the only ones that seem to have prompted such requests. When Magdalene drafted her last will in December 1531, she endowed the Dominican nunnery of Cluj and asked the nuns to repeat for her the well known Marian antiphon *Salve Regina*.<sup>60</sup> As this requirement was formulated by an Observant Franciscan tertiary, it might suggest that the Dominican nuns were distinguishing themselves as capable, valuable performers of prayers that could help others. This was most likely the case, as Magdalene lavishly endowed her fellow tertiaries, as well as the sisters of the Poor Claire from Cluj. But only the nuns of St. Egidius, the Franciscan friars and the parish clergy from St. Michael were explicitly associated with her attempt to secure salvation. It would be unsafe to assume that the Dominican nuns of Cluj and Bistrița specialized themselves in the performance of intercessory prayers, as the two examples discussed above are the only ones of such kind. However, it is worth pointing out that in late medieval Transylvania, not only the friars, but also the nuns were considered worthy of contributing to the economy of salvation.

The analysis of the relationship between women and Mendicant Orders has the merit of revealing interesting nuances concerning religious life. First of all, the numerous female foundations, Franciscan and Dominican alike, greatly contributed to the popularity the friars enjoyed in Transylvania. Thus, the mendicant network in this region distinguishes itself within the echelon of the entire Hungarian kingdom, as the nunneries and the houses of the Third Order make the localities of this area surpass other localities in the kingdom in what concerns the number of mendicant establishments.<sup>61</sup> As the vast majority of female foundations are attested only after the observant movement took firm roots with the Dominicans and Franciscans

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<sup>59</sup> Jakó, *A kolozsmonostori...*, doc. no. 3272, p. 225.

<sup>60</sup> *Item sanctimonialibus sub habitu nigro in claustris sub invocatione divi Egidii constructo commorantibus omnia mea vestimenta, absque tamen argenteis clenodiis in ipsis vestibis consutis, lego, ita, ut usque ad viginti quinque annos singulis sabbatis diebus et sanctorum vigilis, quolibet vespere, in ecclesia ipsarum Salve decantent*, see Bunyitay, Karácsonyi (eds.), *Monumenta...*, doc. no. 159, pp. 178-81.

<sup>61</sup> de Cevins, *L'Eglise...*, pp. 50-2 for the discussion of the Dominican and Franciscan male convents in the kingdom and pp. 97-9 for the situation of the Mendicant nunneries.



of Transylvania, it can be concluded that the nunneries and the houses of the Third Order were the result of this programme of religious reform.

The importance of the observant ideals can be assessed not only in the number of convents, but also in the specificity of the life encountered in the female mendicant communities and in the particular forms of devotion promoted there. It seems that the requirements of strict enclosure and austere way of life were constantly promoted by the friars for the better functioning of the female establishments they supervised. This trend is visible not only with regard to the internal organizations of these communities, it is also visible in the devotional models offered to these women, as was the case with the patron saints of the nunneries of Cluj and Sibiu. Furthermore, the perfection of Christian life these women pursued inside the walls of their houses might have transformed them into valuable mediators of one's salvation.

At the same time, one cannot ignore the competition which existed between Franciscans and Dominicans in what concerns the integration of women within their orders. Undoubtedly, the towns were the place *par excellence* for this competition. Moreover, as the examples of the most important Transylvanian urban centers prove, the friars missed no opportunity to organize the religious life of women. This integration, however, cannot be separated from the history of the male convents of the two most important Mendicant Orders. Particularly the developments taking place within each of these orders were the ones bringing clarification about the emergence of the female mendicant communities. The particular religious contexts of the towns where these communities were founded demonstrate the friars' ability to adapt themselves to specific local circumstances, whilst remaining faithful to the general policy of their orders.

In this regard, perhaps the best example is that of the Third Order Regular. Its numerous houses in Transylvania further confirm the strong urban profile of this particular movement. Despite becoming a monastic order, the original enthusiasm which animated the laity, wishing to fulfill its religious aspirations by pursuing charitable goals, was still detectable in Transylvania. The tertiaries were living a life separated from the world, a life that offered extremely rare occasions for helping the others. Nevertheless, the exercise of the highest Christian virtue, that of charity, could also be performed whilst living a cloistered life. Self-denial, help given to the other members of the communities, common prayers were other ways in which love for one's neighbor could be expressed. The tertiaries were not allowed to provide charity to the outside world. However, the analyzed examples reveal that the houses of the Third Order were places where women, particularly widows, could find an honorable place to live. It

would not be an exaggeration to see this opportunity as a charitable solution, offered by means of the religious integration of women in need.

Comparison with the religious experience of the laity and the institutional channels it used in order to live this experience is a useful path to follow when attempting to understand the relationship between women and the Mendicant Orders in late medieval Transylvania. It is a complex relationship, largely defined by the variety of ecclesiastical solutions women could, or - for various reasons -, could not opt for when trying to express their devotion. The understanding of the institutional framework the Franciscans and Dominicans provided highlights the interest and perhaps even the preference of the Transylvanian women for the Mendicants. It was precisely because women's interaction with and reaction to the friars' religious message is such a multifaceted process that the voice of the "other half of the Christendom" could be heard.

# Cultural Capital and Social Networks: the Saxon community in early modern Transylvania

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**Abstract:** *Through a thorough examination of guild statutes, this study focuses on the identity of the Saxon artisan community in social and cultural terms. By analyzing strategies of social inclusion/integration and patterns of social exclusion while discussing the construction of social networks and the strengthening of group solidarity, the study highlights the accumulation of social capital within the Saxon artisan community. By exploring the motivation behind these strategies, the essay assesses the impact of protestant discourse on the identity of this community and the accumulation of cultural capital which helped it preserve its distinct ethos in early modern Transylvanian society.*

**Keywords:** guilds, Saxon artisans, social capital, cultural capital, Transylvania

**Capital cultural și rețele sociale: comunitatea saxonă din Transilvania premodernă** *Prin examinarea atentă a statutelor breslelor, acest studiu se concentrează asupra identității comunității artizanilor sași în termeni sociali și culturali. Analizând strategiile de includere/integrare socială și modelele de excludere socială în timp ce discută construcția unor rețele sociale și consolidarea unei solidarități de grup studiul subliniază acumularea capitalului social în cadrul comunității meșteșugarilor sași. Prin explorarea motivelor din spatele acestor strategii, articolul estimează impactul discursului protestant asupra identității acestei comunități și acumularea unui capital cultural care a ajutat-o să-și mențină ethosul distinct în societatea transilvăneană în epoca modernă timpurie.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** bresle, artizani sași, capital social, capital cultural, Transilvania

On 24 February 1472 the cobblers' guild of Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó) wrote a letter concerning Johannes of Silesia requesting his punishment. Johannes had worked for a local artisan, Stephanus Sutor and, at the end of his service had mistreated him as he had physically attacked his wife while attempting to steal a small vessel from their house. He had flung her against a statue and, consequently, at the time the letter was written she had not fully recovered from her injuries. The members of the guild, considering that Johannes had - at least temporarily - lost his mind requested all members of their profession throughout the country to punish him justly so that his example would discourage others from similar deeds.<sup>1</sup> The guild

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itself would not remain passive in the face of these events but would punish the culprit according to their own customs and set of rules. The nature of the punishment meted out by the guild is more interesting for the purposes of this investigation. Johannes would not be allowed to work, which presumably was meant to affect his livelihood and general wellbeing. But he would also be shunned from social gatherings and would not be able to benefit from 'the friendship of the guild' ('nec in fraternitatis amicitia stando').<sup>2</sup> This suggests that, in the eyes of the guild the most severe punishment was exclusion from society. The wording of the document however suggests that it does not refer to the broader society of the town but to the narrower world of the guild.

This example raises questions concerning the social networks created by the artisans and the social capital accumulated by this community. Positioned between the elite - comprising landowning patricians and rich merchants - and a broad stratum of wage earning craftsmen, master artisans were an urban middle class with limited access to political authority.<sup>3</sup> It is probably safe to assume that, in order to become upwardly mobile, individual artisans had to devise and implement policies intended to secure their position within the upper social strata and give them decision-making powers in the governing of the towns. It is thus legitimate to ask ourselves whether artisans also developed group strategies to protect their interests and promote social and political agendas.

The example of Johannes of Silesia and his exclusion from the cobblers' guild and from artisan society further suggests that master craftsmen had developed a degree of self-awareness and leads one to explore the strategies devised by this segment of society in order to develop group identity and a specific ethos of the community. The broader political, social and cultural context for these developments (the Ottoman onslaught, the restructuring of the Hungarian kingdom and the dawn of the Reformation) compels one to consider the impact of the adoption of evangelical ideas by the Saxon community (1544-1545) on the construction

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<sup>1</sup> Gernot Nussbächer, Elisabeta Marin (eds.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt*, IX, *Zunfturkunden 1420-1580* (Kronstadt, 1999), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 57-8.

<sup>3</sup> For the social structure of Transylvanian towns, see Gustav Gündisch, 'Patriciatul din Sibiu în evul mediu' in *Transilvania și sașii ardeleni în istoriografie. Din publicațiile Asociației de Studii Transilvane*. Heidelberg (Sibiu, Heidelberg, 2001), pp. 127-45. Konrad Gündisch, 'Patriciatul orășenesc medieval al Bistriței până la începutul secolului al XVI-lea', *File de Istorie* IV (1976), 147-89. Maja Philippi, 'Structura socială a Brașovului în evul mediu' in *Transilvania și sașii ardeleni în istoriografie*, pp. 146-61.

of their collective identity.<sup>4</sup> Considering that, throughout the Middle Ages the Saxons had defined themselves primarily as a privileged group in juridical terms,<sup>5</sup> one is persuaded to ask whether, during the early modern period, religion had become a factor in the accumulation of cultural capital by the Saxon community and especially by this urban middle class?

In attempting to answer such questions, the present study aims to assess the identity of the Saxon artisan community in social and cultural terms. By focusing on strategies of social inclusion/integration and patterns of social exclusion and on the construction of social networks and the strengthening of group solidarity the study hopes to highlight the accumulation of social capital among the Saxon craftsmen. By exploring the motivation behind these strategies, the essay aims to assess the impact of Protestant discourse on the identity of this community and the accumulation of cultural capital which helped it preserve its distinct ethos in early modern Transylvanian society.

The study will rely on the concepts of social and cultural capital and the notion of *habitus* as defined by Bourdieu. Social capital can best be described as the resources within a community that create family and social organization. These resources are developed in relationship to and with others. Key constructs within the concept include social relationships, group membership, shared norms, trust, formal and informal social networks, reciprocity and civic engagement. Consequently, social capital involves the creation of support networks, fostering solidarity while cultural and informational capital comprises the accumulation of knowledge and skills.<sup>6</sup> *Habitus* is formed in the course of socialization by the family and other educational institutions. It is the product of internalized practices, structures, norms and ideas of a particular social environment. Within this logic, reproducing culture was essential to propagating social relations which allowed the self-reproduction of the group.

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<sup>4</sup> For the role of guilds in the adoption of the Reformation in imperial cities, see P.J. Broadhead, 'Guildsmen, Religious Reform and the Search for the Common Good. The Role of the Guilds in the Early Reformation in Augsburg', *Historical Journal* 39/3 (1996), 577-97. For a history of the Reformation in Transylvania, see Edit Szegedi, 'Reforma în Transilvania. Construirea identităților profesionale' in Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Năgler, András Magyari (eds.), *Istoria Transilvaniei* vol II (de la 1541 până la 1711) (Cluj-Napoca, 2005), pp. 237-48.

<sup>5</sup> Konrad Gündisch, 'Autonomie de stări și regionalitate în Ardealul medieval' in *Transilvania și sașii ardeleni în istoriografie*, pp. 33- 53, especially p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1986), pp. 241-258. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups', *Theory and Society* 14/6 (1985), 723-44.

As these concepts have successfully been applied to the study of early modern nobility in order to unravel their strategies of self reproduction,<sup>7</sup> this essay is an attempt to deploy these constructs in the analysis of the urban middle class - the community of artisans - and to consider the guild an educational institution, essential in shaping the *habitus* of the group. By focusing on the statutes of the guilds, written by master artisans and sanctioned by town governments, the essay aims to highlight the active involvement of craftsmen in the construction of their group identity.

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The example of Johannes of Silesia suggests that in the world of the towns the guild encouraged its members to accumulate social capital by creating strong social networks and indestructible bonds between artisans of the same profession, although arguably this process allowed the organization to enhance its economic and social control over the craftsmen.<sup>8</sup> As a symptom of these strategies, the guild masters consciously attempted to integrate all artisans in these institutions while those who refused to join a guild were considered disruptive.<sup>9</sup> This rule seems to have applied not only to indigenous craftsmen but also to foreigners who were, in principle encouraged to join the guilds. For example, the statute for surgeons and barbers written by the Saxon University in 1562 stipulated that those barbers who wished to settle in Saxon towns benefited from full guild rights according to the local customs.<sup>10</sup> Those artisans who were offered the opportunity to join the guild but refused were deprived of the right to work and could not earn their living.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, all artisans had to follow the rules of the guild in both work and life.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Karin J. MacHardy, 'Cultural Capital, Family Strategies and Noble Identity in Early Modern Habsburg Austria 1573-1620', *Past and Present* 163 (1999), 36-75.

<sup>8</sup> For the interest of the guild in social disciplining see, Maria Crăciun, 'Comunități devoționale/ comunități disciplinate: sașii în Transilvania modernă timpurie' conference paper presented at 'Disciplinare socială în societatea modernă și contemporană (sec. XVI-XXI)', 19-20 November 2010. For broader processes of social disciplining in Saxon towns, see Mária Pakucs, 'Behavior Control in Sibiu in the 16th century between Norm and Practice', in Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, Ionela Băluță (eds.), *Bonnes et mauvaises moeurs dans la société roumaine d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (București, 2004), pp. 43-60. Mária Pakucs, '„Gute Ordnung und Disciplin“: Patterns of Social Discipline in Sibiu (Hermannstadt) in the Sixteenth Century', *New Europe College Yearbook 2003-2004* (București, 2005), pp. 175-206.

<sup>9</sup> The statute for the goldsmiths (1561), *Quellen*, IX, p. 260.

<sup>10</sup> Monica Vlaicu (ed.), *Documente privind istoria orașului Sibiu II Comerț și meșteșuguri în Sibiu și în cele Șapte Scaune, 1229-1579* (Sibiu, Heidelberg, 2003), p. 400.

<sup>11</sup> Similar rules appear in the statute for the glove makers (1540), for the tailors (1558), the potters (1564), the pewter smiths (1568), and for the butchers (1570). *Quellen*, IX, pp. 184, 242, 279, 290, 311-2.

<sup>12</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 212.

The efforts of the guild to regulate the lives of artisans were supported by the urban magistracy. Thus, in 1553 the city council of Braşov confirmed the statutes issued by the Saxon University for the wheel-makers' guild. The magistracy was in favor of 'praiseworthy' order forbidding the 'insubordinate' to practice the trade outside the guild. Consequently, the town magistrates offered the guilds their support in their struggle against 'stirrers' and 'makeshift artisans'.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the guilds – for instance that of joiners, painters and sculptors in wood from Braşov – requested the help of the magistracy against those who 'defy the guild'. The town council was bound to assist master artisans in their attempts to discipline the members of the guild. If they failed to do so, master craftsmen were allowed to resort to the Saxon University and obtain its assistance to punish insubordinate members of the institution.<sup>14</sup>

This highlights similar goals shared by guild leadership and city magistracy. Thus, the ideal situation projected by both the guild masters and the town governance was that all artisans of the same profession would pledge allegiance to the guild and abide by its rules.

The 'insubordinate', that is, those who rejected the authority of the guild were frequently dubbed 'stirrers'.<sup>15</sup> If one were to draw a history of the term it is interesting to note that, in its first sense this was used to designate those who worked for individuals outside the guild or who sold the result of their work at annual fairs. The statute for the joiners, painters and sculptors from 1532 stated that a master artisan who engaged in such activities would be considered a 'stirrer' and lose all guild support.<sup>16</sup> The term was later extended to those who refused to join a guild. For example, the statute issued on 17 May 1549 by the union of the guilds of painters and joiners for their apprentices and journeymen also referred to behavior towards those who had not joined a guild, confirming the competitive nature of the relations between members and non-members but also a hierarchy within the various crafts, naming carpenters, millers, schoolteachers and bell ringers as the enemy.<sup>17</sup> The richer and more powerful guilds could afford to state this rule most forcefully.<sup>18</sup> Later, the term was extended to

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<sup>13</sup> The document names them 'Stirrerren und Himpleren'. *Quellen*, IX, p. 200.

<sup>14</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 155-6.

<sup>15</sup> The word is spelled in different ways in the German version of the documents: Störer, Stirer, Stürer, Sthwrer. Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household. Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1991), p. 37 equates the term to 'reprobates' and considers that this word captures the perception of their behaviour as a disruption of guild respectability in both its sexual and economic aspects.

<sup>16</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 200.

<sup>18</sup> This is obvious in the statutes of the goldsmiths' guild (1559). This point of view was reiterated on 5 May 1561 *Quellen*, IX, pp. 248, 260.

those who competed with guild members, often Romanians who inhabited various regions of the Burzenland.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, a 'stirrer' was somebody who impersonated a master artisan, especially if he was an unmarried journeyman.<sup>20</sup> Some statutes suggest that the biggest enemy were those journeymen who worked as masters 'in cities, in market towns and in villages' eluding the correct procedure of being admitted into the guild. As suggested by the statutes for the furriers of 1512 such offences were severely punished.<sup>21</sup> In the name of the 'common good', the artisans from the Burzenland were requested to help find and uproot these 'stirrers'.<sup>22</sup> Finally, an artisan who had not learned the craft properly or who traveled from place to place because of past transgressions was considered a 'stirrer.' In order to discourage guild members from overlooking these transgressions, the master artisan who hired such individuals would lose his guild right. Moreover, somebody who would train under such a master would be considered unsuitable for the guild.<sup>23</sup>

The changing meaning attached to the term 'stirrer' suggests that the concerns of the guild evolved from a tendency to stigmatize those who were detrimental to the prosperity of the institution – thus highlighting economic priorities – to a desire to strengthen the bond between artisans within the profession.

The process reveals the tensions between guild members and those outside the organizations and the effort of the guild to forbid craftsmen to work outside the framework provided by this institution. Thus the guild controlled access to the craft and decided who had and who did not have the right to work. As long as there were 'good master artisans' available, 'stirrers' were not allowed to work but, if there was a lack of guild masters, than 'want knew no law'.<sup>24</sup> The statement highlights both the pragmatic nature of this society and the primarily economic motivations behind these rules. As merchandise and tools were often confiscated it becomes obvious that the culprits lost the right to work and thus the ability to support themselves.

The development of this concept highlights the attempt of the guilds to retain control not just over the towns but also over the surrounding territories. The emphasis on the cooperation of the artisans from the Burzenland in this effort to uproot 'stirrers', again suggests the strengthening of the bonds between members of the same profession,

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<sup>19</sup> The statute of the potters (1564), *Quellen*, IX, p. 279.

<sup>20</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 322.

<sup>21</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> Statute for the millers of Braşov and the Burzenland (1571) *Quellen*, IX, p. 323.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.



transgressing the boundaries between the town and the surrounding countryside. The documents also highlight the existence of hierarchies within the guild system, some crafts being considered more prestigious than others. Sculptors and joiners obviously thought they were superior to carpenters and millers but also to people who provided a service rather than a product such as school teachers and bell ringers.

Moreover, master artisans were clearly attempting to block upward social mobility. This is highlighted by those examples where journeymen were not permitted to work as master artisans unless they had learned the craft properly, were married and willing to settle within the community, abiding by its rules. For example, such decisions were taken by the guild of joiners, painters and sculptors of Braşov who would not allow unmarried journeymen to work as masters 'in the towns or in other places where guilds existed' without having accomplished their masterpiece and entered into an engagement to be married.<sup>25</sup> As Lyndal Roper has demonstrated for Augsburg the link between marriage and masterhood was a deep-rooted moral principle, which also marked the boundary between the guild masters and journeymen, highlighting distinctions of status and function.<sup>26</sup>

Equal control was exercised over the brotherhoods of journeymen. The latter were encouraged to join the brotherhoods and those who refused were suspected of disdain and condescension.<sup>27</sup> Punishment for such individuals was social exclusion.<sup>28</sup> Journeymen who disregarded this rule and fraternized with these undesirables were fined with two weeks' worth of pay. The fact that those who were aware of such transgressions but did not report them were punished to pay the same amount of money suggests an attempt to discipline from below with the involvement of the community. Thus, the brotherhood although closely monitored was not devoid of authority. It was able for instance to exile journeymen who were not serious.<sup>29</sup> Finally, journeymen were forbidden to work in places where guilds did not exist, especially in Moldavia and Wallachia.<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, guild statutes suggest that the main issue was control. Integration was desirable because master artisans wished to closely monitor economic activity in the towns and surrounding territories, to eliminate competition and to promote the interests of the guilds. Their desire to block upward social mobility was prompted by the pressures from

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<sup>25</sup> Statute for the painters, carpenters, sculptors in wood (1532), *Quellen*, IX, p. 156.

<sup>26</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 31-2, 136.

<sup>27</sup> ,als Verächter der Brüder', *Quellen*, IX, pp. 47-8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> Statute of the union of the furriers' guild (2 December 1555), *Quellen*, IX, p. 227.

both outside and within the group. On the one hand, they competed with artisans who did not belong to the guilds and on the other hand with the journeymen who aspired to become master artisans.

No matter how intent master artisans were to protect the prosperity of the guilds, they were at least equally keen to foster strong social bonds within the group, to establish trust and shared norms between guild members. The rules established by the guild were intended to consolidate the good reputation of its members. For example, in 1550, the statutes for the barbers suggest that the guild was perceived as an association of honest men (*honestorum virorum*).<sup>31</sup> Moreover, in 1570 the magistracy of Braşov granted a statute for the builders' guild stating that master artisans had to obey the elders of the guild in order to preserve order and honesty.<sup>32</sup> The statutes of the butchers - written in 1570 - stated that all members of the guild (masters, journeymen and apprentices) had to have a good reputation within the community.<sup>33</sup> This dovetails with conclusions regarding the German cities of the Empire where the guilds operated as 'perfect' communities, their members' collective honor established through reputation.<sup>34</sup> As Roper has suggested for Augsburg, the concept of honour was central to their sense of corporate identity. Through its rules, the craft sought to preserve its status and the collective honour of its members.<sup>35</sup>

Besides regulating their own behavior, the masters were responsible for the apprentices in their care and for the journeymen employed in their workshops. They were severely punished if they ignored transgressions of social norms or inadequacies in their training.<sup>36</sup> The fact that punishment often consisted of the severing of social bonds within the profession, loss of membership in the guild and outright banishment from this institution draws attention to the issue of social exclusion.

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The consensus between urban authorities and guild masters regarding membership/integration in the guild does not mean that access to these organizations was completely unrestricted. The leadership of the guilds formulated the necessary rules to be observed by those who wished to join. As it has already been suggested access was conditioned by the need to maintain certain standards of training and accomplishment. The guild verified the veracity of the statements made by those who wished to join the

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<sup>31</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 203.

<sup>32</sup> ‚zucht und Erbarkeit erhalten werd', *Quellen*, IX, p. 300.

<sup>33</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 311.

<sup>34</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> *Quellen*, vol. IX, p. 323.

organization and/or settle in Transylvanian towns, especially when they were foreigners and had learned the craft elsewhere. The tendency of the guild to limit access to the closed world they had constructed is already substantiated by the intervention of Sigismund, the king of Hungary on 3 July 1428. In a letter to the guilds of Braşov he requested that they receive the artisans who wished to settle in the town.<sup>37</sup> The fact that candidates had to benefit from the support of master artisans in order to be received by the guild points to the role of the leadership of these organizations.<sup>38</sup> In the case of aspiring apprentices the master and the entire guild tested the probity of the individual in question before hiring him, according to existing customs.<sup>39</sup> The master had to introduce the candidate to the guild and the elders had to verify the information received. For example, the tailors' guild from Braşov decided in 1558 that if a master artisan failed to introduce the apprentice to the guild he would be fined one florin.<sup>40</sup>

The severity of these restrictions increased when it came to journeymen. Quite often, hiring a journeyman depended on the information about his past, his actions, the length and seriousness of his training (a minimum of 4 years), his previous workplaces and the duration of his employment.<sup>41</sup> Especially if they were foreigners, journeymen had to work for a number of years before being considered for the guild, so that their lives and behavior could be known.<sup>42</sup> Presenting documents attesting the completion of their training suggests a bureaucratization of the process.<sup>43</sup> These rules were appropriated by the brotherhoods of journeymen who decided that a foreigner could only become a master artisan after his morality, his craftsmanship, his deeds and his temper were known.<sup>44</sup> Master artisans were thus concerned to maintain professional standards within the guilds but also to create a community of upstanding citizens, morally flawless and well disposed towards their fellow craftsmen.<sup>45</sup> Obviously, the maintenance of such purity required further restrictions.

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<sup>37</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 35-6.

<sup>38</sup> Statutes of the goldsmiths' guild (25 August 1505), *Quellen*, IX, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 238.

<sup>40</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 241.

<sup>41</sup> Statutes for the journeymen of the pewter workers' guild (1561), *Quellen*, IX, p. 267.

<sup>42</sup> This was true for the statutes of the goldsmiths (1559) and for those of the cloth makers (1560). *Quellen*, IX, pp. 248, 251.

<sup>43</sup> *Quellen*, vol. IX, pp. 252, 322. Vlaicu, p. 399.

<sup>44</sup> The brotherhood of the cloth makers' journeymen (1575), *Quellen*, IX, p. 347.

<sup>45</sup> Similar conclusions have been reached for Augsburg. Roper, *The Holy Household*, p. 71 argues that the guild operated as 'a more perfect community within the city, its members' collective honour established competitively through reputation'.

Generally speaking, access to the guild was forbidden to serves, Szeklers, Romanians, illegitimate children and dishonest individuals.<sup>46</sup> This statement suggests that criteria for exclusion were first of all social status, ethnicity, membership in the church and moral standing in the community. The issue of legitimate birth as a condition *sine qua non* is most frequently reiterated in the statutes. All those received into a guild had to be born within wedlock and pious.<sup>47</sup> Medieval regulations can not be held to be completely reliant on ecclesiastical guidelines as it has been suggested that the medieval Catholic Church had an incoherent discussion of sexuality. On the one hand is generated the feeling that the sexual act was intrinsically shameful and contributed to diffusing pollution within the community, on the other it encouraged marriage because it legitimated the sexual relation by the social relation it created. However, couples were exhorted but not required to postpone conjugal relations until after the marriage had been blessed at a nuptial mass.<sup>48</sup> The guild seems to have appropriated the interest in the social relation, the bond made in front of the community. As it has been demonstrated for the German cities of the Empire this involved the merging of goods and mutual commitments declared publicly.<sup>49</sup> As in Transylvania, urban law such as the *Codex Altemberger* was modeled on the legislation of Magdeburg,<sup>50</sup> it is tempting to assume that regulations concerning admittance into the guilds were often copied from cities in the Empire. It is thus likely that views on legitimacy were anchored in the concern to defend the collective honour of the guild which could be severely tainted by public sins such as adultery, bigamy, illicit unions and bastardry, as Roper has suggested in her study of Augsburg.<sup>51</sup>

The fact that the condition of legitimate birth appears in fourteen documents during late medieval times and in thirty-six documents after the Reformation suggests increasing concern for the issue following the adoption of evangelical ideas. Although this increase in the figures could be accounted for by the larger number of guild statutes written in the second half of the sixteenth century, stronger concern for legitimate birth could also be explained by the importance afforded marriage and the ideal of married

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<sup>46</sup> The statute of the smiths from Braşov (1573-1575), *Quellen*, vol. IX, p. 335. Statute of the weavers from Cisnădie (1557), Vlaicu, p. 377.

<sup>47</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 26, 393, 375, 388, 311. Vlaicu, pp. 311, 315, 319, 323, 328, 332, 338, 342, 346, 356, 358, 362.

<sup>48</sup> John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 20, 25, 37.

<sup>49</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 132-164. Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The reformation of ritual. An interpretation of early modern Germany* (London, 1997), pp. 6-42.

<sup>50</sup> Konrad Gündisch, 'Autonomie de stări', pp. 49-50.

<sup>51</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 37-8.

life in Protestant discourse.<sup>52</sup> Within this framework illegitimacy was considered a major offence.<sup>53</sup>

Sometimes the right to join the guild was only granted to Germans. For example, on 25 August 1505 the statute of the archers of Braşov mentioned that Hungarians who were already members could remain within the guild, together with their sons, but in the future individuals whose mother tongue was not German would not be admitted.<sup>54</sup> A similar restriction occurs in the statute of the goldsmiths from 24 January 1511.<sup>55</sup> The emphasis seems to be on language as a marker of identity as the document states that those admitted were to be 'of the German language'.<sup>56</sup> Again the rule was more severely implemented in the case of foreigners as suggested by the statute of the furriers of Braşov in 1528.<sup>57</sup> In time, these regulations were extended to comprise aspiring apprentices. For example, in 1532 the guild of the joiners, painters and sculptors decided to reject any Hungarian candidates.<sup>58</sup> In 1555, the cloth makers decided that if a master became aware that an apprentice was a Szekler on his mother's or his father's side and failed to communicate this fact to the guild he would be fined. Obviously the youngster in question would lose the right to join the guild.<sup>59</sup>

This tendency to restrict access to the guilds on ethnic (or linguistic) grounds is best illustrated by an inquiry into the past of an aspiring apprentice, resident of an *oppidum* who, in 1575 wished to join a guild from

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<sup>52</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 57, 60, 66 argues that the Reformation made marriage the cornerstone of its moral and religious universe offering 'a full-blooded affirmation of the positive ideal of married life'. Susan C. Karant-Nunn, 'The Emergence of the Pastoral Family in the German Reformation: The Parsonage as a Site of Socio-religious Change' in C. Scott Dixon, Luise Schorn-Schütte (eds.), *The Protestant Clergy in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 79-99, especially p. 80 suggests that in the Empire no man could become a guild master without first providing written proof of having been born within wedlock and without having married as soon as he gave formal evidence of his artisanal skills.

<sup>53</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 37, 71. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation. Central Europe 1550-1750* (London, 1989), p. 149 suggests that the suppression of premarital sex and illegitimacy represented a logical extension of the establishment of patriarchy in early modern Germany. He also remarks on Calvinist condemnation of premarital sex and harsher stigmatization of bastardry.

<sup>54</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 85.

<sup>55</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 95.

<sup>56</sup> Statute of the goldsmiths from Brasov (1511) 'dy do awss dewtscher Czwingnn sein'. *Quellen*, IX, p. 93.

<sup>57</sup> 'Deytschem Art', *Quellen*, IX, p. 148.

<sup>58</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 155. One finds similar provisions in the statute for the potters from Sibiu (1539), Vlaicu, p. 328.

<sup>59</sup> *Quellen*, vol. IX, p. 235.

a royal free town.<sup>60</sup> The magistrates of Abrud (Grossschlatten, Abrudbánya) wrote to the goldsmiths of Braşov concerning the origin of Jacobus, the son of Joannes Neez who wished to become an apprentice in the goldsmiths' guild. The letter testified that Joannes and his wife led a decent and honest life and that the community was not aware of any misdeeds or transgressions. It also stated that the two were Germans and spoke German in both private and public contexts.<sup>61</sup>

We do not know what happened to Jacobus and whether he was allowed to become a goldsmith's apprentice at Braşov, but some other examples suggest that sometimes the existence of one German parent was sufficient to obtain admission to the guild. A decision of this type was reached in 1558 by the magistracy of Braşov in the case of the son of Vincentius, the vice castellan of Bran (Törzburg, Törcsvár) who was admitted to the weavers' guild.<sup>62</sup> Before coming to the attention of the magistracy, the case was examined by the guild, which discovered that the boy was German on his mother's side, while his father was 'ein rechter Bulgarus.'<sup>63</sup> As this group, who lived outside the city walls were of the Christian faith (welche auch Christens Glaubens sein), God had advised the senators to receive the youngster in the guild.

These two more detailed examples are able to enrich our understanding of the mechanics of exclusion based on linguistic and /or ethnic criteria. The example of Jacobus is interesting despite its lack of conclusion. The document suggests that the move from a market town to a royal free one was not the great impediment to admitting Jacobus to apprenticeship. His ethnic origin and linguistic ability seemed to be the crux of the matter along with the standing of his parents in the community.

The example of young Vincentius is relevant in two ways. First by highlighting the history of the case, investigated primarily by the guild and then by the city magistracy it suggests that the guild protected its cultural identity of its own accord. However, the guild may have responded to impulses from the city magistrates. Katalin Szende has suggested that Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben) was one of the few places in medieval Hungary where the acceptance of new inhabitants was limited on an ethnic basis.<sup>64</sup> There is no reason to believe that Braşov pursued different strategies

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<sup>60</sup> *Quellen*, vol. IX, pp. 335-6.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>62</sup> *Quellen*, vol. IX, p. 236.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>64</sup> Katalin Szende, 'Integration through Language: the Multilingual Character of Late Medieval Hungarian Towns' in Derek Keene, Balazs Nagy, Katalin Szende (eds.), *Segregation-Integration-Assimilation. Religious and Ethnic Groups in the Medieval Towns of Central and Eastern Europe* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 205-234, especially p. 207.

in this respect especially if one thinks of Sigismund's request addressed to the guilds of Braşov to allow foreign artisans to settle in the town.<sup>65</sup> Such strategies were probably encouraged by the fact that, as Szende has argued, in Saxon towns of Transylvania (Braşov, Sibiu, Sighişoara [Schässburg, Szegesvár] and Bistriţa [Bistriz, Beszterce]) access to the administrative elite was afforded to one ethnic group.<sup>66</sup> This argues for a consensus between the elite and the middling groups in the Saxon community.

The two cases highlight the importance of language in defining the identity of the aspiring apprentices, almost to a point where language was a warrantee for other qualities the individual may possess. As Szende has suggested, German may have enjoyed increasing prestige between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries although the highest ranking legal documents issued in German were local or guild statutes.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, master artisans may have been proud of their ability to use German and integrated language into the cultural capital of the group, turning in into a marker of identity.

Within this logic it is surprising that although language is invoked in the guild statutes as a criterion for admission into the guild, Hungarians were not rejected because they did not speak or understand German, but rather because they were not German. For instance Jacobus Feher, the author of the letter from Abrud is careful to mention that he was also able to use German.<sup>68</sup> This dovetails with Szende's conclusion that German was broadly understood and used by most of the other ethnic groups that lived in towns with significant German communities.<sup>69</sup> Contrary to Szende's conclusion that, by understanding and in some contexts using the language of the 'others' the various ethnic groups could avoid segregation, in this particular case familiarity with German did not seem to secure a place in the guild or to ensure social integration. Belonging to the 'people' - a much more elusive category - seemed to come into play.

A closer reading of the documents shows that the first mention of the ethnic/linguistic criterion occurs in 1505 at Braşov and refers specifically to language.<sup>70</sup> The terms German and Hungarian (Vnger, Deutsch), although used do not seem to refer specifically to ethnicity. In fact, one document written in Braşov in 1555, by using the word 'nation' (czeklischer Nation)

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<sup>65</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 34-6.

<sup>66</sup> Szende, p. 214.

<sup>67</sup> Szende, p. 228.

<sup>68</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 336.

<sup>69</sup> Szende, p. 230.

<sup>70</sup> '...aber czukunfftig sol man keinen aus andern Czungen auff's Handwerk nemen als nur Deutschen' *Quellen*, IX, p. 84.

seems to suggest that those terms were used in reference to status.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the statute drawn for the barbers in 1572 by the magistracy of Braşov seems to confirm this conclusion, albeit indirectly. The magistracy requested that the barbers should not cut the hair of 'our people' – that is those living in Braşov and the Burzenland, whether Germans or Hungarians – above the neck. All other inhabitants could cut their hair anyway they pleased as long as they did not shave it off.<sup>72</sup> By contrast the use of the term 'Art' (best translated as 'sort', 'kind' – the equivalent of 'species' in biology) suggests awareness of cultural bonds and group solidarity. A development in the use of these terms can not be accurately established from the scarcity of evidence although specific reference to language – as in 'czunge' (tongue) – occurs in 1505 and 1511 while the concept of 'Art' appears in 1528 and 1570.

A case of slander – involving millers from Braşov and Hălchiu – brought before the magistrate of Braşov in 1576 highlights additional patterns of social exclusion. In the exchange of accusations between the two parties, Stephens Peter had accused the millers of Braşov of 'acting like gypsies' suggesting that being compared to a gypsy was considered an insult.<sup>73</sup> The gypsy seemed to be the negative 'other' through his very nature. The document suggests the exclusion of gypsies from Saxon society adding a racial element to existing reasons for social segregation. Gypsies were considered a marginal group fulfilling the most humiliating duties and undertaking the hardest work. They were paid to clear the city of stray dogs, to clean the city markets and the courtyard of the council house of rubbish and manure and to work in the various urban construction projects.<sup>74</sup> They were also used as henchmen and to administer physical punishment.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, by invoking the faith of the Bulgarians, the documents relating to the case of Vincentius bring to the fore the issue of religion. Starting from the Middle Ages, the statutes mention that the aspiring apprentice had to be the son of God fearing, pious people. This highlights

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<sup>71</sup> 'der vom Vatter oder Mutter czeklischer Nation ist' *Quellen*, IX, p. 232.

<sup>72</sup> 'niemand der Unierigen als Kroner und Burzenlender un aller ihrer Zugehär, sie wehren Tewtschen oder Hunger...' *Quellen*, IX, p. 324.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Stephens had allegedly stated that the millers 'hettten ein cziganisch Czeche'. He defended himself by declaring that he had only said: 'sie die Mölner handlen zwiganisch'. *Quellen*, IX, pp. 340-1.

<sup>74</sup> Mária Pakucs Willcocks, 'Sărbătoare în oraş': festivaluri și ceremonialuri publice în Sibiul veacului al XVI-lea' in Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu, Mária Pakucs Willcocks (eds.), *Spectacolul public între tradiție și modernitate. Sărbători, ceremonialuri, pelerinaje și suplicii* (București, 2007), pp. 15-42, especially p. 40.

<sup>75</sup> Giovanni Andrea Gromo and István Szántó in Maria Holban (ed.), *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, II (București, 1970), pp. 338, 498.



the importance of affiliation to the church. After the Reformation, belonging to the faith adopted by the Saxons as a group seemed to be paramount. In this context we can read more into the statement concerning the ‚Christian beliefs‘ of the Bulgarians. The city magistracy had made great efforts (including the production of a catechism) to bring the ‚true faith‘ to the Bulgarians and Romanians living in the city’s boroughs.<sup>76</sup> By contrast to the late Middle Ages when the expression ‚pious‘ or ‚devout‘ used in documents referred to specific duties – often centered on the guild’s altar, generally located in the parish church – or on particular devotional actions, after the Reformation only four documents out of thirty-four mention specific duties of the guild members. After the Reformation ‚pious‘ seems to refer to the religion of the group. This seems to mark a shift from a spiritual identity to a confessional one.<sup>77</sup> Thus, religion may have been an additional criterion for admitting new members to the guilds as suggested by the reference to the Christian faith of the Bulgarians. This awareness of one’s confessional identity, including specific devotional behavior suggests that religion may have enhanced the development of the cultural capital of the group.

However, language and/or ethnicity and even religion are not the only criteria for limiting access to the guilds. A good name, a reputation for honesty and moral standing within the community were equally important for being accepted by the guilds, as suggested by the statutes of the barbers of Braşov written in 1570.<sup>78</sup> In 1560 the statutes for the cloth weavers refused to accept any dishonest master artisans or journeymen into the guild and denied any support to their apprentices.<sup>79</sup> In the already mentioned case of Jacobus the goldsmiths’ guild had made inquires concerning the integrity and honesty of Joannes and his wife.<sup>80</sup> The goldsmiths may have been reassured when they found that Jacobus’ parents had led honest and decent

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<sup>76</sup> Andreas Müller, *Humanistisch geprägte Reformation an der Grenze von ostlichen und westlichen Christentum. Valentin Wagners griechische Katechismus von 1550* (Cambridge, Hamburg, 2000). Pavel Binder, ‚Precizări cu privire la perioada coresiană a culturii braşovene‘, *Limba Română* XXII/13 (1973), 271-7. Edit Szegedi, ‚Johannes Honterus în mediul maghiar și românesc‘ in Edit Szegedi, *Identități premoderne în Transilvania* (Cluj Napoca, 2002), pp. 25-30.

<sup>77</sup> For the development of a devotional identity under the patronage of a saint, see Carmen Florea, ‚Despre tensiunea unei solidarități în evul mediu târziu: exemplul unor orașe transilvănene‘ in Mihaela Grancea (ed.), *Reprezentări ale morții în Transilvania secolelor XVI-XX* (Cluj-Napoca, 2005), pp. 51- 69, especially pp. 61-2.

<sup>78</sup> ‚ex bonae famae ac probus esse debeat‘, *Quellen*, IX, p. 309.

<sup>79</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 251.

<sup>80</sup> ‚de integritate sua probitate predicti Joannis et coniugis ipsius sciscituri...‘, *Quellen*, IX, p. 336.

lives and there had been no bad rumours about them.<sup>81</sup> Finally, in 1580 the statutes of the barbers' guild approved by the Saxon University stipulated that if someone had been sentenced by the judges for lack of virtue he would not be considered worthy of being received into the guild.<sup>82</sup>

In the case of Sibiu, attention is drawn to attitudes highlighted in the exchange of letters between the city council of Augsburg and the citizens of the Transylvanian town in 1560. Johann Ehinger from Augsburg had requested the council of his home town to intervene on his behalf with the council of Sibiu so that his nephew, David Hess, the son of a barber and surgeon would be admitted as an apprentice in the goldsmiths' guild. The case attracts attention not so much because of its resolution but rather because it highlights the reticence towards barbers and surgeons within the artisan community of Sibiu. Ehinger's letter to the Augsburg council suggests that the attitude of the citizens of Sibiu cast a shadow on the reputation of the barbers and caused unpleasantness for their wives and children. The city council of Augsburg wrote to the magistracy of Sibiu on David's behalf arguing that the sons of barbers and surgeons were admitted to train in any other craft as their parents were deemed to exercise honest and useful professions.<sup>83</sup> As the citizens of Sibiu remained suspicious, Gall Fischer (or Vischer) wrote to Nürnberg and Vienna to find out whether the sons of barbers were allowed to learn other crafts. The answer from both cities was meant to reassure the magistracy of Sibiu that barbers and surgeons were honorable individuals.<sup>84</sup>

The letters under scrutiny here highlight several issues: general reticence towards the settling of foreigners in Transylvanian towns, reticence towards barbers and surgeons, relations with the German world and awareness of existing cultural links between Saxons and the Germans in the Empire. However, the most important issue under discussion seems to have been the morality of barbers and surgeons which appears to have been questioned by the community of Sibiu.

The nature of their trade could perhaps be held to account for this attitude towards the barbers/surgeons as the quality of their services could be measured only with difficulty. For example, the statute for the barbers established by the Saxon community in 1580 stipulated that a surgeon should consult his colleagues when called upon to assist a wounded individual. If the injuries sustained made it unlikely for the person to

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<sup>81</sup> ,vitam pudice et honeste...', Ibidem.

<sup>82</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 386.

<sup>83</sup> Vlaicu, pp. 381-2.

<sup>84</sup> Vlaicu, pp. 384-5.

survive, the master should consult three or four other masters before initiating treatment. The barber/surgeon who disregarded this requirement was fined. Moreover, for pills and potions the barber should consult a doctor (Herr Doctoren).<sup>85</sup>

The attitude towards barbers and surgeons also suggests the survival of medieval attitudes towards illicit professions tainted by contact with dirt and blood.<sup>86</sup> Finally, their trade also brought barbers and surgeons in close contact with their clients/ patients allowing for more intimacy than was usual in early modern society. As if to confirm these suspicions, the statutes of the barbers are the only ones that consistently mention adultery as an offence punished with exclusion from the guild.<sup>87</sup> As Roper has persuasively argued, after the Reformation, in a world that tended to use marriage as an instrument of social and demographic policy, adultery and fornication were thought to destroy the fabric of the household.<sup>88</sup> It is therefore not surprising that those who had indulged in these particular sins were excluded from the guilds.

Perhaps in order to protect themselves from such suspicions the barbers decided that they would not be in the same guild with bath attendants, while the journeymen of the latter profession were not allowed to work as barbers.<sup>89</sup> Their fears seem to be confirmed by the letters from Vienna and Nürnberg where bath attendants are mentioned together with barbers as individuals whose honourable profession had to be justified, as public baths were often associated with prostitution, which had been considered a sin of concupiscence along with adultery and rape since the Middle Ages.<sup>90</sup>

In similar manner, the practice of lowly crafts, tainted by association with dirt excluded the labourers in question from these institutions. For example, the artisans who processed the plain cloth produced in the towns

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<sup>85</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 386.

<sup>86</sup> Jacques le Goff, 'Meserii licite și meserii ilicite în occidental medieval' in Jacques le Goff, *Pentru un alt ev mediu* (București, 1987), pp. 150-72, especially pp. 151-2 and 157 suggests that surgeons and barbers were on the black list of despised professions, tainted as they were by their contact with blood.

<sup>87</sup> Isabella confirms the statutes of the barbers' guilds of Sibiu, Brașov, Bistrița, Sighișoara and Mediaș (1550). The decision of the Saxon University concerning the guild of the barbers (1580), *Quellen*, IX, pp. 205, 386.

<sup>88</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 66, 68, 142 remarks that guild discipline procedures concentrated on the public sins which led to the disruption of the household workshop. Hsia, *Social Discipline*, p. 146 argues that although marriage was no longer a sacrament in Protestant areas it assumed a far greater function as the cornerstone of state and society.

<sup>89</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 205.

<sup>90</sup> Bossy, p. 40.

were not allowed to form a guild.<sup>91</sup> Cart drivers who provided a menial service were also not tolerated by the craft.<sup>92</sup> As if to confirm this conclusion, barbers and surgeons only formed their own brotherhood in 1550.<sup>93</sup>

Moreover, as it has already been suggested some professions were perceived as inferior to others and were thus more closely monitored. The millers are always part of the group of suspects as shown by their statutes approved on 15 November 1571 by the magistracy of Braşov, which mention 'stirrers' who travel from place to place because of past misbehavior or had not learned their trade properly.<sup>94</sup> In the millers' case, suspicions occurred because they were a mobile group, traveling throughout the country, often renting mills to operate. Misdeeds committed elsewhere could easily escape notice in the new work place. Moreover, controlling spaces of socialization, millers were exposed to the exchange of information and ideas which could foster sedition and perhaps heresy.<sup>95</sup>

These attitudes have not escaped the attention of historians and reasons behind them have been suggested. The desire to exclude from the guilds ethnically distinct individuals may have coincided with the emergence of the Saxon University (1486) and the development of protectionist attitudes in Transylvanian royal free towns when the latter were facing competition from the *oppida*/market towns on county land.<sup>96</sup> However persuasive this argument may be, the explanation offered by one of the documents suggests awareness of cultural differences (*das Vngers vnd Tewthsch selten frydlich mitheynader leben*) rather than mere professional competition.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, although this tendency to exclude the ethnic 'other' was apparent before the Reformation, it seemed to become stronger in its wake as, in most documents, belonging to the German group

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<sup>91</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 112.

<sup>92</sup> Statutes for the millers of Braşov (1571), *Quellen*, IX, p. 322.

<sup>93</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 202-6.

<sup>94</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 318-24, especially p.323.

<sup>95</sup> For the propensity of millers for heresy see the case of Menocchio, the miller from Friuli analysed by Carlo Ginzburg, *Brânza și viermii. Universul unui morar din secolul al XVI-lea* (Bucureşti, 1997). Jean Claude Schmitt, 'L'Histoire des margineaux', in Jacques le Goff (ed.), *La nouvelle histoire* 2 ed.(Bruxelles, 1988), pp. 277-306, especially p. 283 suggests that the miller, despite his expertise and control over the most advanced technology of the age is also a marginal. C. Rivals, *Le Moulin à vent et le Méunier dans la société française traditionnelle* (Ivry, 1976).

<sup>96</sup> *History of Transylvania*, edited by Béla Köpeczi et alri (Budapest, 1994), p. 235 suggests that exclusion of foreign individuals first occurred at Sibiu in 1476 in the context of the Dominicans' request to move their convent within the city walls. They were allowed to do so on condition that they would accept German brothers.

<sup>97</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 155.

was attached to the prerequisite of legitimate birth.<sup>98</sup> Although the paucity of the sources makes quantitative analysis impossible, the concepts used seem to highlight interest in cultural identity and concern for group solidarity within the 'Deutschen Art'. This suggests that the Reformation itself could be held to account for this development. Perhaps the use of German in church services attested by the decrees of Lutheran church synods increased awareness of linguistic differences and enhanced feelings of belonging to an ethnic group.<sup>99</sup> The expression "lingua nostra" used in the text strengthens the impression that language had become part of the cultural capital of the group. This seems to confirm Szende's conclusion that by maintaining contexts where the use of their native language was required the various ethnic groups consciously contested assimilation.<sup>100</sup>

The highlighting of carnal sin, honesty and respectability can also be associated with the Reformation and would suggest that Protestant ideas concerning moral conduct had been appropriated by the Saxon artisan community.<sup>101</sup>

The evidence examined so far suggests that artisans were concerned to construct a world distinct from other groups in early modern society, a community suspicious of strangers (foreigners), a group who valued its germanity (as suggested by the appeal to German models and practices from the Empire). The examination of the patterns of exclusion highlights

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<sup>98</sup> Statutes of the tailors from Braşov (1558). Decision of the magistracy of Braşov regarding the statutes of the cloth weavers (1560), *Quellen*, IX, pp. 241, 251.

<sup>99</sup> ,Comitendum in super ut in qualibet ecclesia parochiali Biblia latina et germanica, Postilla quoque, quam author domesticam inscripsit, cum Catechismo et similibus necessarijs libris in lingua vernacula habeantur, et quotidie ex illis aliqua lectio ad utilitatem populi, aut si auditores desint, ad laudem et honorem Dei pro populo legatur.' ,Post quem minister nostro idiomate legit ad populum caput novi testamenti quod occurrit in ordine, ab evangelio Mathei incipiendo usque ad finem Apocalypseos... similiter lingua nostra leguntur.' ,... initium sit ab aliquo cantu germanico, quem sequiter lectio novi testamenti ad populum', *Reformatio ecclesiarum Saxoniarum in Transylvania* published at Braşov in 1547 in Georg Daniel Teutsch, *Urkundenbuch der evangelischen Landeskirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen* vol. I, (Hermannstadt, 1862), pp. 31, 33, 35.

<sup>100</sup> Szende, p. 232.

<sup>101</sup> Hsia, *Social Discipline*, pp. 122-3 argues that the Reformation led to the imposition of moral discipline in the early modern state in a process which assumed parallel developments in Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist territories. Confessionalization brought together state coercion and church discipline and created an intersection between the history of sin and the history of criminalization. Recent studies have shown that interest in discipline was not peculiar to Reformed Protestantism. For interest in discipline in Lutheran communities, see Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London, 1994), pp. 37-52, especially pp. 40-1 and pp. 145-67. Roper, *The Holy Husehold*, pp. 56-88.

moral, linguistic (perhaps ethnic), religious and racial criteria for admission to the group of artisans. While master artisans wished that everyone who had been admitted to work in the town to belong to the guilds so that their lives and activities could be better controlled, they made access to the crafts difficult and limited the right of foreigners to work in Transylvanian towns.

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On the other hand, the right to belong to a guild was hereditary and the sons of artisans were preferred as candidates as it was expected that a master craftsman would train at least one son to take over the workshop.<sup>102</sup> This points to existing solidarity within the group of artisans. Other examples suggest that this solidarity was extended to sons of artisans who were not citizens of Transylvanian towns. For example, the guild of the loaf makers of Braşov reached an agreement with its counterpart of Sibiu regarding behaviour towards apprentices and journeymen. The guild was not supposed to hire more than one foreign apprentice at any time, with the exception of the sons of master artisans who were not to be rejected but rather given full support.<sup>103</sup> The document suggests that not only were foreigners favoured out of professional solidarity, but also that the sons of indigenous master artisans were given preferential treatment. The aspiring apprentices who were not the sons of craftsmen had to undergo a longer apprenticeship, generally of four years and had to pay the guild a tax as well as complete their masterpiece and organise a banquet.<sup>104</sup>

The guild was not fully closed to journeymen either, as there was room for upward social mobility. Those journeymen who married a master artisan's daughter or a master's widow could benefit from the guild right.<sup>105</sup> This raises the issue of marriage and its role in creating strong social networks within the towns.<sup>106</sup> Studies focused on the social history of Transylvanian Saxon towns have highlighted that artisans formed alliances through marriages and attempted to penetrate the upper echelons of the elite. For example, rich artisans became upwardly mobile by marrying into the nobility.<sup>107</sup> Such marriages brought both economic and social benefits and

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<sup>102</sup> 30 November 1579, in the statute for the barrel makers of Cincu it is decided that the oldest son should take over the craft. *Quellen*, IX, p. 376.

<sup>103</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 358.

<sup>104</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 148.

<sup>105</sup> Vlaicu, p. 356.

<sup>106</sup> Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 32,39 suggests that marriage functioned as an integrative social fantasy as it was the most important route for social advancement in cases when journeymen married widows.

<sup>107</sup> Konrad Gündisch, 'Bistriţa', pp. 156-7 mentions the example of Margaret, a nobleman's daughter who took John Kestyus as her second husband and Valentine Sopotha as her third.

made these noble women extremely eligible even as widows.<sup>108</sup> As master artisans had an increasingly important role in the town government, they established their own social networks through marriages that brought both economic and social benefits.<sup>109</sup> As Carmen Florea has suggested, women although bereft of public roles were used by their prosperous families in their strategies of self-reproduction.<sup>110</sup> For example, Barbara Schneider was a coveted prize for both the Beuchel and the Werner families of Bistrița.<sup>111</sup>

This tightly knit and relatively closed group offered a support network for each member of the artisan community. This became obvious in cases of illness and death. When illness struck, the main concern of the guild was that the individual in question could support himself. Decisions taken at Buda in 1520-24 in a court case involving cobblers and tanners show sensitivity to the situation of elderly artisans who could no longer work as cobblers and allowed them to support themselves by tanning animal skins.<sup>112</sup> Help from the guild could take more concrete shape. In 1539, the statutes written by the Saxon University for the potters decided that the guild would offer workers when one of its members was ill.<sup>113</sup> Similar provisions appear in the statutes for the cloth weavers of Brașov (24 April 1560) and the statutes of the barbers (28 April 1572).<sup>114</sup> Help in the form of a journeyman to undertake some of the duties in the workshop was also provided when a master had to travel.<sup>115</sup>

This type of solidarity was extended to journeymen who would be looked after in case of illness by other journeymen from the same guild as indicated by the statutes of the weavers from Cîsnădie.<sup>116</sup> Sometimes, this

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<sup>108</sup> Margaret who, through her first marriage had entered the noble family of Șintereag also had substantial property of her own. Johannes Lulay, a member of the elite from Sibiu came to benefit from the mining revenues at Rodna by marrying the widow of Fabian Eiben, thus establishing connections with one of the most important families of Bistrița. Konrad Gündisch, *Bistrița*, p. 165.

<sup>109</sup> For example, Andreas Beuchel and Wolfgang Forster were both connected by marriage to the Eiben family. The Eiben family married one of their members, Ursula to Paul Sutor the elder of the cobblers' guild. Konrad Gündisch, *Bistrița*, pp. 167, 171.

<sup>110</sup> Carmen Florea, 'The Third Path: Charity and Devotion in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns' in Maria Crăciun, Elaine Fulton (eds.), *Communities of Devotion. Religious Orders and Secular Society in Early Modern East Central Europe* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 91-120, especially p. 117.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>112</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 135.

<sup>113</sup> Vlaicu, p. 329.

<sup>114</sup> *Quellen*, IX, pp. 251, 327.

<sup>115</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 327.

<sup>116</sup> Vlaicu, pp. 373, 394.

meant to simply make sure that the ill person had a roof over his head. Understanding that a master artisan may not wish to indefinitely host ill journeymen, the tailors' guild from Braşov decided in 1558 that the 'father of the journeymen' would open his house to accommodate them, but the journeymen in question would have to use their savings to support themselves.<sup>117</sup> The example highlights concern not to transform responsibility into unnecessary burden for a journeyman's household. Some of these regulations suggest the development of a system of mutual aid with financial implications. For example, in 1577 the statute for the cloth weavers' guild stipulated that, if an individual fell ill the journeymen would lend him the money necessary for his sustenance, which he would repay when he had recovered his health.<sup>118</sup> In the same vein, other statutes decided that journeymen would give the masters half a florin to create a fund which would be used to help journeymen in case of illness.<sup>119</sup> Besides suggesting that journeymen were a particularly vulnerable group, especially if they were not locals, the example highlights the institutionalization of charity and attempts to stimulate solidarity within the group.<sup>120</sup>

The motives behind these actions which transpire from the texts are also suggestive. For example the statutes of the barbers from 1580 stipulate that, in case of illness and when the individual in question was too poor to pay for the services of the barber/surgeon, the latter was urged to not abandon him but rather to care for the patient and to cure him 'out of Christian love' (aus christlicher Liebe) at the expense of the guild.<sup>121</sup> Christian love was also invoked in the statutes for the cloth weavers of Sibiu (1577) as the incentive for the father of the journeymen who had to offer his house, a bed to sleep in and sustenance according to his possibilities to ill journeymen.<sup>122</sup> The text suggests, on the one hand the survival of rules and customs regarding charity, the obligation to offer food and shelter and, on the other the collective responsibility of the guild to its members. This responsibility undertaken by the community of artisans also served to

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<sup>117</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 243. Similar provisions exist for Sibiu. The statutes of the brotherhood of the journeymen of the weavers' guild, (1577), Vlaicu, p. 462.

<sup>118</sup> Vlaicu, p. 461.

<sup>119</sup> Statute for belt makers (1555), *Quellen*, IX, p. 224.

<sup>120</sup> For the definition of journeymen as a vulnerable, nearly marginal group in the medieval period, see Florea, 'Third Path', pp. 107-8, 111-2. For patterns of solidarity within brotherhoods of journeymen, see Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Strikes and Salvation in Lyon' in Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), pp. 1-16, especially p. 15.

<sup>121</sup> *Quellen*, vol. IX, p. 386.

<sup>122</sup> Vlaicu, p. 461.



strengthen the solidarity of the group. Finally, the motives reiterated in these texts, the appeal to Christian love suggest the integration of Protestant rhetoric. The priority of professional solidarity is underlined by the agreement reached in 1570 between the barrel makers' guild of Sibiu and Braşov concerning the admission of apprentices and journeymen. The motive for signing this agreement was the 'extraordinary friendship', the maintenance of 'Christian unity and love' and of 'mutual understanding'.<sup>123</sup>

Finally, solidarity related to death is frequently mentioned in guild statutes. Members of the guilds had to attend the funerals of master artisans and their wives.<sup>124</sup> Such provisions obviously continued patterns of behavior devised in the medieval period meant to strengthen solidarity within the professional group.<sup>125</sup> Master artisans attempted to impose these norms to the brotherhoods of the journeymen. Thus, journeymen who failed to attend the funerals of brotherhood members had to pay a rather substantial fine.<sup>126</sup> The documents suggest that the middle group of urban society was concerned by the public manifestation of communal solidarity. The statutes of the guilds insist that the entire group would honor the deceased by attending the funeral and would show their solidarity with the bereaved family by accompanying the master artisan to his grave. In contrast to the Middle Ages, when the effort of the group aimed to ensure the salvation of the dead and the intervention of the community – both professional and devotional – had an intercessory focus, after the Reformation the emphasis seems to have shifted towards social solidarity. The members of the guilds paid for the funerals of the brothers if they were unable to do so themselves.

Finally, the guild and the brotherhoods of journeymen also served as a context for socialization. The statutes for the brotherhood of the journeymen from the weavers' guild confirmed by the magistracy of Braşov in 1576 encouraged members to attend the Krantz of their own organization and show up at the social gatherings of other brotherhoods only when invited by a close friend.<sup>127</sup>

This exploration of the world of the Saxon artisans from Transylvanian towns suggests their concern for the accumulation of social capital. Master artisans developed strategies of integration encouraging membership of the guilds, fostered the appropriation of shared norms by writing statutes and

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<sup>123</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 308.

<sup>124</sup> Statute for the tailors' guild of Braşov (1558). Statutes for the nail makers of Braşov (1573-75), *Quellen*, IX, pp. 242, 335. Vlaicu, p. 462.

<sup>125</sup> Florea, 'Despre tensiunea unei solidarităţi' p. 59.

<sup>126</sup> Vlaicu, p. 462. *Quellen*, IX, p. 346.

<sup>127</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 547.

regulations, established trust between members by insisting on honesty and moral standing. Privileging the members of their own profession, while favoring sons of artisans in general and tending to limit the access of foreigners into the guild, master artisans created the social networks necessary for the reproduction of the group. These were further strengthened through marriage alliances which superimposed guild and family structures. The strong link between the workshop and the household transformed both the family and the guild into educational institutions and loci of socialization which fostered the building of cultural capital through shared practices, views and attitudes. The use of German, the value placed on marriage, the redefinition of sin, the reorganization of charity and solidarity inspired by Christian love highlight the appropriation of Protestant rhetoric and argue for the cultural construction of identity within this group. The strength of the system is best suggested by the voice of the excluded. In the words of Gregorius Placz, exclusion from the guild and the public accusation of dishonesty were equal to a living death.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> *Quellen*, IX, p. 283.

# An Official Patron Saint of Moldavia? St. John the New and the Dynastic Significance of His Cult in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The paper investigates the evolution of St. John the New's cult in Moldavia during the first two centuries of its existence, from the perspective of its dynastic implications. Orchestrated on princely initiative, the ceremonial transfer of his relics to Suceava (1415) played the role of a local canonization and marked the starting point of St. John's veneration as protector saint of the country. However, the evidence suggests that his career as such was neither linear, nor long lasting. By scrutinizing all the available data indicating the direct participation of the political authority in supporting and consolidating St. John's cult, the analysis points out that he was unequivocally promoted as protector saint of the principality only towards the middle of the sixteenth century. Almost completely ignored until then, the cult had been encouraged only by princes with strong dynastic preoccupations (Alexander the Kind, Stephan the Great, Petru Rareş), which suggest a gradual association of St. John the New with the ruling dynasty. Even if invested with political significance from the beginning, the cult was explicitly exploited for dynastical purposes in Moldavia only towards the end of the sixteenth century. In a time when succession to the throne was no longer confined exclusively to the traditional ruling house, the increasing devotion of princes with dynastical flaws (Peter the Lamé or Ieremia Movilă) for the saint's relics was more and more charged with political significance, publicly affirming their affiliation to the dynasty. For the last Moldavian princes preoccupied with the continuity of the old lineage, the appropriation of St. John's cult and its ostentatious promotion seem to have been effective in terms of dynastic legitimacy.

**Key Words:** St. John the New, protector saint of Moldavia, cult of saints, veneration of relics, princely patronage, dynastic motivations.

**Un sfânt patron oficial al Moldovei? Sf. Ioan cel Nou și semnificația dinastică a cultului său în sec. XV-XVI** Articolul investighează evoluția cultului dedicat Sf. Ioan cel Nou în Moldova în primele două secole ale existenței sale, din perspectiva semnificațiilor dinastice ce i-au fost atribuite. Instrumentalizată din inițiativă voievodală, aducerea ceremonială a moaștelor sale la Suceava, în anul 1415, a echivalat practic cu

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canonizarea locală a sfântului, marcând punctul de pornire al venerării sale ca protector oficial al țării, și implicit al instituției domniei. Supunând unei analize comparative sursele textuale și vizuale referitoare la implicarea directă a autorității politice în promovarea și consolidarea acestui cult, cercetarea scoate în evidență că abia începând cu mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea Ioan cel Nou a început să fie asumat în calitate de sfând protector al țării. Aproape ignorat până atunci, cultul său nu fusese încurajat decât de către domni cu o puternică conștiință dinastică ca Alexandru cel Bun, Ștefan cel Mare sau Petru Rareș, ceea ce pare să indice o graduală asociere a Sf. Ioan cu dinastia conducătoare. Deși investit cu semnificații politice încă de la adoptarea sa în Moldova, cultul Sf. Ioan cel Nou a fost exploatat din perspectivă dinastică abia către sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea. Într-o perioadă când deținerea tronului nu mai era rezervată exclusiv descendenților Bogdăneștilor, devoțiunea accentuată a unor voievozi cu defecțiuni dinastice pentru moaștele Sf. Ioan avea și motivații politice, fiind menită să afirme legitimitatea succesiunii lor. Pentru acești ultimi domni preocupați de ideea continuității dinastice, asumarea și promovarea ostentativă a cultului Sf. Ioan cel Nou par să fi fost eficiente în sensul legitimării dinastice.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Sf. Ioan cel Nou, sfântul protector al Moldovei, istoria sfinților, venerarea moaștelor, patronajul princiar, motivații dinastice

*...and he [Alexander the Kind, n.n.], together with all his revered and a large multitude of believers, but also with the hierarchs and all the clergy, carrying candles and incense and fine smelling myrrh, greet the martyr's worth of praise body. He lies prostrate before the chest, embraces that much suffering body, touches the saint's hands with his eyes and his lips, pours plenty tears of joy and proclaims him as protector of his country, and then deposits in honor the relics in the holy metropolitan church, in the enlightened city of Suceava, where his seat was.<sup>2</sup>*

According to the hagiographical text which relates the event, in the year 1415,<sup>3</sup> when the relics of St. John the New were translated from Crimea to Suceava, the prince Alexander the Kind personally greeted them during a ceremonial *adventus*, lying prostrate before the chest, publicly venerating the holy body and then investing the saint with the attribute of holy protector of

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<sup>2</sup> *Pătimirea sfântului și slăvitului mucenic Ioan cel Nou, care a fost chinuit la Cetatea Albă, scrisă de Grigore călugărul și prezbiterul din marea biserică a Moldovlahiei* (The Passion of the Holy and Venerated Martyr John the New, who was Tortured at Cetatea Albă, Written by Gregory, Monk and Presbyter of the Great Church of Moldovlahia), translated and edited by Bishop Melchisedec, *Revista pentru Istorie, Arheologie și Filologie*, II, Bucharest, 1884, vol. III, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> There has been a long historiographical debate concerning the exact year of St. John's *translatio reliquorum* to Suceava, the most recent opinions converging on the year 1415; for the complete bibliography and a critical analysis of the subject, see Ștefan Gorovei, „Mucenicia Sfântului Ioan cel Nou. Noi puncte de vedere” (The Martyrdom of St. John the New. New Considerations), in Ionel Căndea, P. Cernovodeanu, Gh. Lazăr (eds.), *Închinare lui Petre Ș. Năsturel la 80 ani*, Brăila, 2003, p. 555-572.

his country.<sup>4</sup> Although it consists mostly of conventional *topoi*, the fragment cited above alludes nevertheless to an actual historical occurrence<sup>5</sup> of welcoming the first relics acquired by an Orthodox Moldavian ruler and subsequently depositing them in his centre of power. Moreover, the princely public invocation of the saint's protection over the country marked the starting point of St. John's career as official protector of Moldavia. He enjoyed this role until the middle of the seventeenth century, when he eventually lost it in favor of St. Parasceve of Turnovo, once her prestigious relics were purchased from Constantinople and translated, in 1641, to the new capital of Iași.<sup>6</sup> After this interesting transfer between the two cults, St. John still enjoyed significant popular devotion and remained the object of an important annual pilgrimage,<sup>7</sup> although the core of his veneration was restricted mainly to the city of Suceava and the church which hosted his relics.

Invested with political significance, the *translatio* from 1415 and the ritual gestures which accompanied it emphasized the monarch's role in the institutionalization of the new cult,<sup>8</sup> but also ostentatiously displayed the special relationship established from the very beginning between St. John and the Moldavian ruling house. Focusing precisely on this relationship, the present study aims at investigating the evolution of the cult from the

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<sup>4</sup> The syntagm "svoeia drǎjavī" in the hagiographical text, translated with 'protector saint of the country'; see Ștefan S. Gorovei, *op. cit.*, p. 557.

<sup>5</sup> As suggested also by a lost internal document, preserved in a late German abstract, which mentions a donation of Alexander the Kind to St. John the New (i.e. to the metropolitan church), in remembrance of the *adventus* of his relics to Moldavia, see Alexandru V. Diță, „În legătură cu paternitatea primei scrieri în proză a literaturii române” (Concerning the Paternity of the First Writing in Prose from Romanian Literature), *Luceașărul*, 26 / 44 (November 5th 1983): p. 6. Ștefan S. Gorovei argues that the original document must have been issued in 1415, the year of the *translatio reliquarum*; see *Idem, op. cit.*, p. 562-564.

<sup>6</sup> For the veneration of St. Parasceve in medieval Moldavia, see Dan Ioan Mureșan, *Autour de l'élément politique du culte de sainte Parascève la Jeune en Moldavie*, in Petre Guran, Bernard Flusin (eds.), „L'Empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine”, București, New Europe College, 2001, p. 249-280 and more recently Ivan Biliarsky, „The Cult of Saint Petka and the Constantinopolitan Marial Cult”, in Ivan Biliarsky, Radu G. Păun (eds.), *Le cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l'idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale*, București, New Europe College, 2007, p. 81-104.

<sup>7</sup> See Simeon Florea Marian, *Sântul Ioan cel Nou de la Suceava. Schiță istorică* (Saint John the New of Suceava. Hystorical Overview), București, 1895.

<sup>8</sup> The hagiographical texts referring to *inventio* and *translatio reliquarum* for saints who enjoyed a central cult in the Slavic-Byzantine countries generally confer to the monarchic power the merit of initializing their official cult; see Petre Guran, „Invention et translation des reliques – un cérémonial monarchique?”, *Révue des études sud-est européennes*, 36 / 1-4 (1998): 196-197.

perspective of the dynastic implications assigned to it while St. John the New was still considered as patron saint of the country. The analysis will try to assess whether the political authority unequivocally supported the new saint as official protector of the principality, and implicitly of the ruling house. If the latter is true, did the princely efforts in promoting the new saint reflect a dynastical appropriation of his cult? And finally, was the patronage over St. John's cult exploited by the ruling house in terms of legitimizing dynastical claims?

In the attempt to answer these questions, the research will scrutinize all the available data indicating the direct participation of the political authority in supporting and consolidating the veneration dedicated to St. John, from his arrival to Suceava, until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Besides the common indicators of a cult (hagiographical and liturgical sources, veneration of relics, feast celebration, church dedications, donations, etc.), special attention will be paid to visual representations illustrating St. John the New in churches patronized by the ruling house. The latter were examined in previous historiography almost exclusively from a perspective confined to art history and concerned to establish chronologies and identify iconographical prototypes.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, a comparative approach to the existent visual evidence as part of the same process of inventing (in medieval terms) and promoting a new saint for Moldavia seems appropriate. Moreover, since most of the internal written documents referring to St. John's veneration were lost with the dislocation, in the seventeenth century, of the Moldavian metropolitan archives,<sup>10</sup> the analysis of the non-textual sources becomes indispensable in the attempt to reconstruct the first two centuries in the evolution of the cult.

Starting from the premise that royal patronage contributed decisively in strengthening the veneration of saints in the Middle Ages, the study will investigate the major efforts undertaken by the princely institution to support St. John the New's cult in the chosen period, paying special attention to the political implications of such actions. In a chronological sequence, the first endeavor in this direction takes us back to the event from 1415. For better deciphering the significance of St. John's *translatio* to Suceava, a brief overview of the political and confessional context becomes necessary. At the beginning

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<sup>9</sup> Teodora Voinescu, "Cea mai veche operă de argintărie medievală din Moldova" (The Earliest Medieval Silver Work from Moldavia), *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria Artă Plastică* 11 / 2 (1964): 265-289; Constanța Costea, "Despre reprezentările Sf. Ioan cel Nou în arta medievală" (On the Representations of St. John the New in Medieval Art), *Revista Monumentelor Istorice*, 67 / 1-2 (1998): 18-35.

<sup>10</sup> The archives were lost after their transfer to Poland, in 1686, at the initiative of Metropolitan Dosoftei; see Simeon Florea Marian, *op. cit.*, p. 89-90.

of the fifteenth century, the relatively young principality of Moldavia reached the peak of its consolidation so far. By this time it had already achieved a certain political autonomy in relation to the powerful neighboring kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, as well as a territorial and institutional consolidation that allowed Prince Alexander the Kind (1400-1432) to entitle himself *autokrator*/"sovereign by himself".<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the creation in the last decades of the fourteenth century of the Moldavian Orthodox metropolitan seat,<sup>12</sup> subordinated to the ecumenical Patriarchy of Constantinople, concluded the complex process of state foundation, conferring higher political prestige to the principality and, finally, assimilating it to the Byzantine Commonwealth. Non-coincidentally, St. John's *translatio*, hence the local re-invention of the saint, occurred shortly after the canonical reconciliation with the Ecumenical Patriarchy, which ended a long conflict concerning the right to nominate the metropolitan,<sup>13</sup> temporarily strengthening the position of the Moldavian Church. The ruling house had played an active role in mediating between the two parts and managed to obtain from the Patriarchy the final acceptance of a local hierarch - Joseph - on the metropolitan seat. Under such circumstances, the transfer and the installation at Suceava of the first holy relics purchased by the Moldavian principality, in collaboration with the ecclesiastical authority, was rich in political implications. Not only it legitimized the autonomous claims of the local Church or even ensured wider space of maneuver for

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<sup>11</sup> Constantin Cihodaru, *Alexandru cel Bun* (Alexander the Kind), Iași, Ed. Junimea, 1984, p. 150-151.

<sup>12</sup> The creation of the Moldavian metropolitan seat has been dealt with at length in Romanian historiography, but it still remains a subject open to interpretations. For the most influential opinions on the issue, see Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* (The History of the Moldavian Orthodox Church), 2nd edition, București, 1991, p. 273-282; Ștefan S. Gorovei, „La începutul relațiilor moldo-bizantine: contextul întemeierii Mitropoliei Moldovei” (At the Beginning of the Moldo-Byzantine Relationships: the Context of the Formation of the Moldavian Metropolitan Seat), in I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Buzatu, V. Cristian (eds.), *România în istoria universală*, III, Iași, Universitatea „Al.I. Cuza”, 1988, p. 853-880; Șerban Papacostea, „Întemeierea Mitropoliei Moldovei: implicații central și sud-est europene” (The Creation of the Moldavian Metropolitan Seat: Central and South-East European Implications), in *loc. cit.*, p. 525-542; Răzvan Theodorescu, „Implicații balcanice ale începuturilor Mitropoliei Moldovei: o ipoteză” (Balkan Implications of the Beginnings of the Moldavian Metropolitan Seat), in *loc. cit.*, p. 543-566.

<sup>13</sup> For the conflict with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, besides the references in note 12, see also Laurent, Vitalien, “Aux origines de l’Eglise de Moldavie. Le métropolite Jérémie et l’évêque Joseph”, *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 5 (1947): 158-170; Scarlat Porcescu, “Iosif, cel dintâi mitropolit cunoscut al Moldovei” (Joseph - the first known Moldavian metropolitan), *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, 40 / 3-4 (1964): 128-138 and, recently, a more nuanced interpretation by Liviu Pilat, *Între Roma și Bizanț. Societate și Putere în Moldova (secolele XIV-XVI)* (Between Rome and Byzantium. Society and Power in Moldavia (14th to 16th centuries), Iași, Ed. Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, 2008, p. 275-293.

consecrating its metropolitans,<sup>14</sup> but it also consolidated the spiritual and political prestige of the princely institution.<sup>15</sup>

Commissioned by *voievode* Alexander the Kind and organized at his expense, the translation concluded with a ceremonial *adventus*, during which the prince was conferred the leading role. Emphasizing the implication of the political authority in the institutionalization of the new cult<sup>16</sup>, the whole *mise-en-scene* and the ritual gestures that accompanied it were intended to authenticate and publicly proclaim the sanctity of the relics<sup>17</sup> and to re-launch the devotion towards them at the new location. This prerequisite in the development of a cult was all the more necessary in St. John's case, since no reliable evidence regarding his veneration prior to the relics' arrival at Suceava was preserved.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, this quasi-anonymous neo-martyr brought from the fringes of the Empire was no famous figure of Byzantine-Slavic hagiography, nor had he relics of prestigious provenance. Therefore, one can fairly argue that the *translatio* from 1415, sanctioned by the political authority, played the role of an official canonization of St. John the New,<sup>19</sup> marking the starting point for the local devotion responsible eventually for his inclusion into the Orthodox pantheon of saints.

At the same time, the direct involvement of the prince in the ceremonial, the intimate contact with the relics, the public dimension of his devotion were very efficient instruments for public representation of political power.<sup>20</sup> However, since the hagiographical narration is the only source describing the *adventus reliquiarum*, one should be methodologically

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<sup>14</sup> Matei Cazacu, "Saint Jean le Nouveau, son martyre, ses reliques et leur translation à Suceava", in Petre Guran, Bernard Flusin (eds.), *L'Empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine*, București, New Europe College, 2001, p. 150-151.

<sup>15</sup> Petre Guran, *op. cit.*, p. 212, 216; Idem, "Aspects et rôle du saint dans les nouveaux états du «Commonweath Byzantin» (XIe-XVe siècles)", in Laurențiu Vlad (ed.), *Pouvoirs et mentalités. À la mémoire du Professeur Alexandru Duțu*, București, Ed. Babel [Studia Politica], 1999, p. 66-67.

<sup>16</sup> Petre Guran, *Invention et translation des reliques...*, p. 196-197, 222.

<sup>17</sup> Sofia Boesh Gajano, "Reliques et pouvoirs", in Edina Bozoky, Anne-Marie Helvetius (eds.), *Les reliques. Objects, cultes, symbols*, Turnhout, ed. Brepols, 1999, p. 265.

<sup>18</sup> Matei Cazacu has drawn attention to two scattered pieces of information that refer to a toponym and, respectively, to a chapel dedicated to St. John in the Crimean town of Vospro-Kertch, where the martyrdom presumably took place; see Matei Cazacu, *Saint Jean le Nouveau...*, p. 138-139 and note 6 on page 139. As interesting as they might be, they are far from enough to prove the existence of a cult dedicated to St. John the New prior to his translation to Moldavia.

<sup>19</sup> The idea was only obliquely suggested by Constanța Costea; see Eadem, *op. cit.*, footnote 83 on page 33.

<sup>20</sup> For the political use of relics in the Middle Ages, see Edina Bozóky, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis. Protection collective et légitimation du pouvoir*, Paris, Ed. Beauchesne, 2006, p. 232-254.



cautious in interpreting the latter's political implications. The text does not faithfully reflect the ceremony which actually took place, but rather an ecclesiastical projection on exemplary actions that should have been taken by the political authority under the circumstances. Such ostentatious gestures would not only indicate the monarch as the main beneficiary of the saint's intercession, but they would also display the special alliance between St. John and the ruling house. On the other hand, the prince's veneration of the relics was intentionally meant to transcend the sphere of private devotion, in order to engage the whole community of believers under the collective protection of the new saint.<sup>21</sup> The idea was additionally supported by the prince's public invocation of John the New as protector saint of the country, namely of the ruling house and its subjects - in a broad reading of the *syntagm*.

Nevertheless, further evidence suggests that his career as such was not linear in the epoch. If the *translatio* from 1415, ceremonially orchestrated in collaboration with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, was the key point in the top-down implementation of the new cult in Moldavia, the choice of placing the ruling dynasty under St. John's patronage assigned to the princely institution the moral and political responsibility of promoting his veneration henceforth. What happened to this spiritual legacy during the time of Alexander the Kind's successors to the throne? Apparently paradoxical, it seems that the political authority rather ignored St. John's veneration for more than half a century. Even if this lack of interest might be partly explained, given the tormented political context in the epoch,<sup>22</sup> the complete absence of any sources referring to princes' devotion for the new saint is nevertheless suggestive. Until the last decades of the fifteenth century, the only evidence preserved regarding the evolution of his cult comes exclusively from the ecclesiastical milieu and refers to the writing of the hagiographical text and its circulation in monastic manuscripts.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Bernard Flusin, „L'empereur hagiographe. Remarques sur le rôle des premiers empereurs macédoniens dans le culte des saints”, in vol. *L'empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine*, ed. Petre Guran, București, New Europe College, 2001, p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Mușatinii* (The Mușatins), București, 1976, p. 50-51.

<sup>23</sup> The earliest version of the hagiographical narration was preserved in a *Sbornik* copied in 1439 by the famous calligrapher Gavril Uric, at Neamț monastery; see Petre P. Panaitescu, *Manuscrisele slave din Biblioteca Academiei R.P.R.* (The Slavic Manuscripts from the Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences), București, Ed. Academiei, 1959, ms. 146, p. 245-247; while a later copy in *Sbornik* from 1476 written at Putna monastery attests the circulation of the text; see Paulin Popescu, „Manuscrite slavone din Mănăstirea Putna (II)” (Slavonic Manuscripts from Putna Monastery II), *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, 80 / 7-8 (1962): 696-697.

There is however another significant issue to be taken into consideration at this point of the discussion, namely the controversial silver reliquary box which actually contains the relics of St. John the New. (Fig. 1) Decorated with twelve scenes from an incompletely preserved iconographical cycle illustrating the saint's martyrdom,<sup>24</sup> the expensive reliquary must have been, in all probability, a princely donation. Very efficient in terms of relics' authentication and dissemination of the cult, by ensuring a ritual exposure of the holy body – the core of St. John's veneration,<sup>25</sup> the donation of an illustrated reliquary would only logically fit into a scenario of promoting a new, less conspicuous saint. The only problem is that, in the absence of any reliable documentary information, the silver artifact was very differently dated by art historians, ranging from the first half of the fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, or even later.<sup>26</sup> Exclusively based on stylistic considerations or the analysis of medieval costumes, their conclusions are basically impossible to verify, which renders very difficult any attempt to chronologically integrate the reliquary into the present investigation. Nevertheless, if the most influential hypothesis, which attributes it to the first half of the fifteenth century,<sup>27</sup> proves to be true, then it is highly likely that it belonged to the reign of Alexander the Kind and not to the epoch of his immediate successors, who seem to have shown poor interest in St. John's relics

The situation slightly changed only with the reign of Stephan the Great, Moldavia's most prestigious medieval ruler and its greatest *ktetor*/founder of churches. Even in his case, the sources are deficient and of indirect nature concerning the princely veneration for the presumable protector saint of the country. A first clue in this direction is the unusual funerary choice of burying his first wife, Evdochia of Kiev, in the metropolitan church,<sup>28</sup> probably seeking the special protection offered by

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<sup>24</sup> For the most accurate description of the reliquary, as well as of its iconography, see Teodora Voinescu, "Cea mai veche operă de argintărie medievală din Moldova" (The Earliest Medieval Silver Work from Moldavia), *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria Artă Plastică*, 11 / 2 (1964): 265-289.

<sup>25</sup> For the functions of illustrated reliquaries in the Middle Ages, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Les reliques et les images", in Edina Bozoky, Anne-Marie Helvetius (eds.), *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symbols*, Turnhout, Ed. Brepols, 1999, p. 151.

<sup>26</sup> For an overview of the most important opinions on the subject, with bibliographical references, see Constanța Costea, „Despre reprezentările Sf. Ioan cel Nou în arta medievală” (On the Representations of St. John the New in Medieval Art), *Revista Monumentelor Istorice*, 67 / 1-2 (1998): p. 19-24.

<sup>27</sup> Teodora Voinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>28</sup> Mircea D. Matei, "În Mirăuții Evdochiei de Kiev" (The Church of Mirăuți in the Time of Evdochia of Kiev), *Magazin Istoric*, 37 / 3 (2003): 20-25.

the vicinity of St. John's relics. However, two years later, in a donation document issued by the prince for the metropolitan church, indicating the offices to be performed for the eternal salvation of his wife,<sup>29</sup> there is no reference whatsoever to the presence of the holy relics or to the saint's intercession.

Another indirect testimony of Stephan the Great's veneration for St. John the New was the commissioning, in 1473, of a famous manuscript, in which the hagiographical text dedicated to St. John was deliberately included, together with a *Life* and *Panegyric* of St. George and also with *The Panegyric of the Holy Emperors Constantine and Helen*, written by patriarch Euthimie of Turnovo.<sup>30</sup> Keeping in mind that the year 1473 had a special significance for the *voivode*, when he actively engaged in an anti-Ottoman policy,<sup>31</sup> the association of the three texts could correspond to a symbolical invocation of St. George and St. Constantine, as protectors in battle and *nikephoros* / "carriers of victory". Suggestively, this prayer of intercession was reinforced by the additional invocation of St. John the New, the patron saint of the principality, whose protection was apparently sought in military terms

Finally, Stephan the Great's most important contribution to the consolidation of his cult was the building, in 1498, of a small *pareklesion* at Bistrița monastery (Fig. 2), bearing the saint's dedication.<sup>32</sup> The votive inscription mentions in consecrated formulas that the chapel, dedicated to "the saint martyr John the New from Cetatea Albă", was founded for commemorating the ruler, his wife and their children.<sup>33</sup> Even if of minor significance compared to Stephan the Great's prodigious founding activity, the Bistrița *pareklesion* was the only one among his churches to bear a *vocabula* not referring to a traditional saint. It was also the first religious edifice dedicated to St. John the New – a very powerful indicator of the latter's strengthening cult in Moldavia, but also a decisive step made by the ruling house for its further promotion. Not coincidentally, the *pareklesion* was built inside the monastery which functioned as personal *necropolis* for Alexander the Kind, the founder of the cult. Moreover, Bistrița was also the

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<sup>29</sup> *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, A, II, București, 1976, no. 157, p. 232-233.

<sup>30</sup> The *Sbornik* written by monk Jacob at Putna monastery was finished in 1474; Paulin Popescu, *op. cit.*, p. 696-698.

<sup>31</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ștefan cel Mare* (Princeps omni laude maior. A History of Stephan the Great), Putna Monastery, 2005, p. 93-98.

<sup>32</sup> *Repertoriul monumentelor și obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ștefan cel Mare* (The Repertory of Monuments and Art Objects from the Time of Stephan the Great), București, Ed. Academiei, 1958-159.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 155.

burial place for another Alexander - Stephan's oldest son and designated successor to the throne,<sup>34</sup> who had died two years earlier. Preoccupied in establishing his legitimizing heritage, as well as the succession within his own dynastic lineage,<sup>35</sup> the *voievode's* choice to dedicate the *pareklesion* to St. John the New was thus invested with dynastic motivations. This was all the more so, since Stephan the Great had established a new branch within the ruling dynasty, just like Prince Alexander had once done.<sup>36</sup> By setting up a direct connection to his predecessor, who proclaimed St. John as patron saint of the ruling house, this foundation was more than a pious gesture, being charged with dynastic symbolism. It corresponded to a divine validation of the legitimate continuity of the lineage, as well as an invocation of the latter's protection over the princely family. At the same time it suggests that, at the end of the fifteenth century, John the New began to be perceived as a relevant saint for the ruling dynasty.

The idea was expressed in visual terms in 1529, when Petru Rareș - Stephan's illegitimate son, who deliberately continued his father's example as protector and great founder of the Church - commissioned the painting of a votive image on the façade of the same *pareklesion* (Fig. 3). The original fresco was repainted in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but it preserved the initial iconographical scheme,<sup>37</sup> illustrating St. John the New - to whom the *pareklesion* was dedicated - interceding between Christ and four male donors, all of them former Moldavian princes. The depiction of the latter displays the accurate succession to the throne, beginning with Stephan the Great and finishing with Rareș himself, even if only the two of them were actually founders of the *pareklesion*.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the four lay

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<sup>34</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude...*, p. 316.

<sup>35</sup> Benoît Joudiou, „Le règne d'Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique”, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine*, Putna Monastery, 2004, p. 415-428.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander the Kind and Stephan the Great were the first Moldavian rulers who founded personal necropolis for their families, at Bistrița and, respectively, at Putna monastery; for the dynastic implications of such foundations, see Maria Magdalena Székely, „Un proiect nerealizat: mitropolia de la Trei Ierarhi” (An Unaccomplished Project: The Metropolitan Seat from the Three Hierarchs Church), *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”*, Iași, 21 (1994), p. 75.

<sup>37</sup> For a full description of both the image and the votive inscription, see Marina Ileana Sabados, „Considerații în legătură cu tabloul votiv de pe fațada turnului-clopotniță de la Mănăstirea Bistrița (Neamț). Inscricția originală” (Considerations Concerning the Votive Image from the Façade of the Belfry from Bistrița Monastery. The Original Inscription), *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria Artă Plastică*, 39 (1992): 110-114.

<sup>38</sup> I have investigated elsewhere the dynastic significance of this votive image for the reign of Petru Rareș; Elena Firea, *Idee dinastică în tablourile votive ale lui Petru Rareș*

figures are grouped on the basis of the direct lineage between them: Stephan the Great with his illegitimate son, Petru Rareș, at the right side of Christ, while Bogdan III together with his own illegitimate son, Stephan the Young, stand at his left. Bearing in mind that Byzantine tradition allowed only *ktetors* to be represented in votive images, it becomes evident that Rareș' motivation for including his two other predecessors under the symbolic protection of the patron saint of the ruling house was of dynastic nature. At a time when his internal position was not consolidated yet, the prince chose to illustrate the complete dynastical sequence connecting him to his legitimizing father. More than a visual prayer for the intercession of St. John the New, the image would therefore emphasize Rareș's legitimate succession to the throne and his affiliation to the Moldavian dynasty.

No other direct information concerning the devotion of this ambitious prince for St. John the New was preserved, but it was during his reign that the latter's iconographical representations entered Moldavian church decoration. Iconic depictions of St. John, always associated with military saints, sometimes even dressed in armour<sup>39</sup> or holding a prominent sword,<sup>40</sup> were now included in several churches patronized by the ruling house.<sup>41</sup> Visual expressions of St. John the New's assimilation among the traditional saints venerated in the epoch, these images allude to his role as protector of the principality, intended in military terms. In a context where the Ottoman threat was increasing, St. John's protection over the country was expected mostly as defense and support in battle.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, one cannot ignore that the most elaborate such iconic representations (full-length figures, lavish costume, minute detail depiction, etc.), from Humor (Fig. 4) and Moldovița, were located in the lower register of the nave

(Dyanstic Construct in Petru Rareș' Votive Images), *Ars Transsilvaniae*, 13-14 (2004-2005): 143-162.

<sup>39</sup> At Moldovița, in the northern apse of the nave.

<sup>40</sup> At Humor, at the same place; see *Monumente medievale din Bucovina* (Medieval Monuments from Bucovina), f.l., Art Conservation Support, 2010, p.190. Here St. John wears a martyr's tunic, but holds a big sword.

<sup>41</sup> At Dobrovăț -1529 (see Vasile Drăguț, „De nouveau sur les peintures murales extérieures de Moldavie. Considérations historiques et iconographiques”, *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 26 / 1-2 (1987), p. 71-73), at Humor (1535) – both in the nave (I express my gratitude to Tereza Sinigalia, for first pointing out this representation) and on the façade, or Moldovița (1537), again in the nave and on the façade.

<sup>42</sup> The idea was tangently formulated by Sorin Ulea, as an argument for the so-called „national-military” significance of the external decoration of the apses; see Idem, „Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I)” (The Origins and Ideological Meaning of the External Moldavian Painting), *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria Artă Plastică*, 1 (1963): p. 84-85.

decoration, relatively close to the votive images illustrating Petru Rareș's family in full dignity. Not sufficient for attesting a dynastic appropriation of the saint, this vicinity suggests nevertheless a stronger connection between the ruling house and St. John's cult in the first half of the sixteenth century.

From the same epoch dates the earliest iconographical fresco cycle narrating his martyrdom, painted on the southern façade of St. George church in Suceava.<sup>43</sup> Begun by Bogdan III and finished by Stephan the Young in 1522,<sup>44</sup> the edifice was meant to be the new metropolitan church and, therefore, to host the relics of St. John the New.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, in 1532-1534, when Petru Rareș commissioned the painting of the frescoes, they also included a hagiographical cycle illustrating the saint's martyrdom. Its unexpected location on the southern façade suggests that the iconographers were still experimenting. This first mural cycle is nowadays barely visible, but it probably developed a pattern closely indebted to the hagiographical text and similar to the latter cycles from Bistrița or Voroneț. It is however intriguing that the scene of *St. John's Translatio to Suceava*, which usually closes such cycles, is strangely missing. Nor does the decoration of the silver reliquary from the nave of the same church preserve this emblematic composition. Was the scene painted at the interior, in the vicinity of the relics and the votive image, and thus charged with dynastical symbolism? As appealing as it might be for the present research, the hypothesis remains impossible to verify.

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<sup>43</sup> The external frescoes from St. George church are very poorly preserved, which rendered difficult the identification of the cycle in previous historiography. The restoration from 1983-1984 had already revealed the existence of a cycle dedicated to St. John's martyrdom there; see Vasile Drăguț, *op. cit.*, p. 72. However, some researchers denied this identification, considering that, at the same location, was depicted the theme of the *Prodigal Son*; see Irinel Crăciunaș, „Bisericile cu pictură exterioară din Moldova” II (The Churches with Exterior Paintings from Moldavia), *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, 46 / 3-6 (1970), p. 136; Constanța Costea, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Ion I. Solcanu, *Artă și societate românească* (Romanian Art and Society), București, Ed. Enciclopedică, 2002, p. 168, with a full description of one of the supposed dance scenes. The most recent renovation undoubtedly confirms the existence, in the lower three registers of the wall between the southern apse and the eastern one, of a hagiographical cycle dedicated to St. John the New. Among the 15 scenes composing it, at least 3 (*The Appearance Before the Pagan Ruler*, *The Entombment of the Saint* and *The Attempt to Steal the Relics*) are clearly distinguishable, unequivocally confirming the first identification.

<sup>44</sup> Ioan Caproșu, *Vechea catedrală mitropolitană din Suceava* (The Old Metropolitan Church from Suceava), Iași, 1980, p. 38.

<sup>45</sup> For that purpose, instead of a funerary room, a special space was created in the western part of the nave, for installing and exposing the holy relics; see *Monumente medievale din Bucovina...*, p. 48.

The situation was completely different in the case of the other hagiographical cycle dedicated to St. John during the reign of Petru Rareș, namely the one from the Bistrița *pareklesion*. Only partly preserved,<sup>46</sup> it contains the earliest known representation of the *Translatio...* scene in Moldavian mural painting. Illustrating almost literally the hagiographical narration, it depicts three different episodes in one scene: the greeting of the relics in front of the town gates, their veneration by Prince Alexander the Kind and, finally, their ceremonial procession through the city.<sup>47</sup> A real *unicum* among the Moldavian versions of the theme, the composition from Bistrița is the only one illustrating the princely public veneration of the holy body as a key-moment in the implementation of the new cult. The choice was probably motivated by the special location of this narrative cycle, in the only church dedicated to St. John, inside the monastery where both Alexander the Kind and Metropolitan Joseph – the main instigators of his cult – were buried. Moreover, together with the two votive images from the Bistrița *pareklession*,<sup>48</sup> they depicted the most active rulers in supporting St. John's cult so far: Alexander the Kind, Stephan the Great and Petru Rareș himself. Placed under the protection of the patron saint of the ruling house, this suggestive association served legitimizing purposes for Rareș – another prince who established his own branch within the dynasty. Symbolically connecting him to his most prestigious predecessors to the throne, Rareș' alignment to the ruling dynasty was stressed once more, as well as the legitimacy of his own lineage.

The final, but not compulsory stage in the affirmation of a new cult,<sup>49</sup> the elaboration of ample iconographical cycles ensured a broader dissemination of the hagiographical story and contributed decisively to the further promotion of the saint. In the second half of the sixteenth century, elaborate narrative cycles illustrating St. John the New's martyrdom were introduced in the decoration of several churches patronized by the princely institution: at Voroneț (1547), the Episcopal church from Roman (1552-1561) and Sucevița (1596).<sup>50</sup> Perpetuating the same iconographical nucleus, they present only minor variations in the number or selection of the scenes,<sup>51</sup> always concluding with the one illustrating the transfer of the relics to

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<sup>46</sup> Constanța Costea, *op. cit.*, footnote 15, p. 18; p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31 and a reconstruction of the image at page 35.

<sup>48</sup> Besides the already discussed votive image from the façade, there is another one inside the church, very fragmentarily preserved.

<sup>49</sup> Elka Bakalova, "La Vie de Sainte Parasceve de Tirnovo dans l'art balkanique du bas moyen age", *Byzantinobulgarica*, 5 (1978): p. 209.

<sup>50</sup> Constanța Costea, *op. cit.*, p. 18, 24-30.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 30.

Suceava (Fig. 5). Typical for the Byzantine tradition, the image depicts the first and most important phase of a ceremonial *adventus*, namely the moment of the public meeting, *fuori mura*, between the relics and the receiving community.<sup>52</sup> Leading it, Alexander the Kind's family is represented in the gesture of greeting the holy relics, without actually taking part in the procession. This formula reflects the voivode's role as commissioner of the *translatio*, but ignores his participation in the public veneration of the relics. Wearing crowns and the ceremonial *granatza*,<sup>53</sup> the ruling pair is followed by dignitaries of the court and a large crowd, having the schematically rendered city of Suceava<sup>54</sup> - their centre of power - as a background. Thus, a concentrated image of the political sovereign authority was outlined, with the prince as the main beneficiary of St. John's protection, bestowing it, at his turn, to the whole country. Keeping in mind that these scenes were painted in churches founded by the ruling house, but under the direct patronage of some of the most influential ecclesiastical hierarchs of the time (Metropolitan Grigore Roșca at Voroneț,<sup>55</sup> Bishop Macarie of Roman<sup>56</sup> and, respectively, Metropolitan Gheorghe Movilă at Sucevița<sup>57</sup>), one could argue that they reflect not so much the princely ideology, but a clerical projection on the relationship between the political authority and St. John's cult. Hence, the conventional image of the princely institution, as well as the indirect recommendation to follow Alexander the Kind's example in promoting the saint, as a dynastic responsibility.

The theme was also interpreted as a reflection of the local assimilation of St. John the New as protector saint of the principality, only

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<sup>52</sup> For a typology of *adventus* ceremonies in Byzantium, see Gary Vikan, Kenneth G. Holum „The Trier Ivory, *Adventus* Ceremonial, and the Relics of St. Stephen”, in Idem, *Sacred Images and Sacred Power in Byzantium*, Cornwall, Ashgate, Variorum Collected Studies Series, 2003, p. 116-120.

<sup>53</sup> Combined, the two of them constituted the main elements of the apparatus costume in medieval Moldavia, before the middle of the sixteenth century; see Corina Nicolescu, “Les insignes du pouvoir. Contribution à l'histoire du cérémonial de cour roumain”, *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 15 / 2 (1977), p. 245.

<sup>54</sup> Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc, “Imagini ale cetății Sucevei în pictura murală din Moldova” (Images of Suceava Fortress in Moldavian Mural Paintings), in Marius Porumb, Aurel Chiriac (eds.), *Sub zodia Vătășianu. Studii de istoria artei*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Nereamia Napocae, 2002, p. 59-65.

<sup>55</sup> Sorin Ulea, *op. cit.*, p. 86-87.

<sup>56</sup> Marina Ileana Sabados, *Catedrala Episcopiei Romanului* (The Cathedral of Roman Bishopric), Episcopia Romanului și Hușilor, 1990, p. 17-19.

<sup>57</sup> Victor Brătulescu, “Pictura Suceviței și datarea ei” (The Paintings from Sucevița and Their Dating), in vol. *Movileștii. Istorie și spiritualitate românească I*, Sucevița Monastery, 2006, p. 219-242.



towards the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>58</sup> Since the iconic representations of the saint indicate an earlier manifestation of the idea, the significance of the theme seems more connected to a stronger princely interest in the saint's relics in the epoch. Apparently, albeit paradoxically, the first ruler who showed a special veneration to the latter was Peter the Lamé, a prince not related at all to the Moldavian ruling dynasty. In 1589, after having undertaken major reconstruction work at the metropolitan church, he transferred the saint's relics from the old church to the new one.<sup>59</sup> They were installed in the nave, just in front of the votive image painted there in the interval 1532-1534, upon Rareș's initiative.<sup>60</sup> Wanting to be included in this composition, among his predecessors to the throne and, most importantly, in such a fortunate proximity to St. John's relics, Peter the Lamé ordered his own portrait to be painted over the one of Rareș's wife.<sup>61</sup> His impious gesture was very effective in terms of publicly displaying a dynastic message: the new composition now showed exclusively men among the princely donors – the only ones responsible for dynastic continuity. Including his portrait among them, Peter the Lamé added a votive inscription to the image bearing his own name and the key information that his son, Stephan, had already been anointed as legitimate ruler.<sup>62</sup> In close connection to the physical presence of St. John's relics, the image and the text were meant to invoke the saint's legitimizing sanction for the succession to the throne of a new branch, not connected to the old dynastic line.

Finally, a last example to be considered in the present analysis dates from the end of the sixteenth century and concerns prince Ieremia Movilă (1595-1606), a boyar related to the Moldavian dynasty through his mother<sup>63</sup> – that is, through less legitimate female blood. As tempting as it may be to assume that precisely this dynastic flaw has determined him to encourage and promote the cult of the patron saint of the ruling house, one should not ignore the decisive influence that his brother, Metropolitan Gheorghe

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<sup>58</sup> Teodora Voinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 284 and note 33 on pages 284-285.

<sup>59</sup> P. P. Panaitescu (ed.) *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan* (The Slavico-Romanian Chronicles of Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, published by I. Bogdan), București, 1959, p. 162-163.

<sup>60</sup> Sorin Ulea, „Datarea frescelor bisericii mitropolitane Sf. Gheorghe din Suceava” (The Dating of the Frescoes from the St. George Metropolitan Church from Suceava), *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei. Seria Artă Plastică*, 13 / 2 (1966): p. 230.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 223-224.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 210.

<sup>63</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, „Pe marginea unei filiații incerte: Maria Movilă – fiica lui Petru Rareș” (On the Margins of an Uncertain Lineage: Maria Movilă – the Daughter of Petru Rareș), in vol. *Movileștii. Istorie și spiritualitate românească I*, Sucevița Monastery, 2006, p. 61-68.

Movilă, must have had in this respect. The Movilas had a very personal devotion to St. John the New,<sup>64</sup> strongly contributing to the consolidation of his cult. The commissioning of an extensive iconographical cycle illustrating the saint's martyrdom in the mural decoration of their family *necropolis* at Sucevița<sup>65</sup> is a first indicator in this sense. In addition, a full-length iconic representation of the saint, holding a sword and a martyr's cross, was painted on the eastern wall of the nave, next to the one of St. George and in close vicinity to the votive image illustrating Ieremia Movilă's family and continuing on the western wall with the symmetrical composition depicting Metropolitan Gheorghe Movilă officiating at the altar.<sup>66</sup> The complete representation of the ruling family was thus symbolically placed under the protection of the patron saint of the dynasty. His invocation was invested with dynastic significance and was meant to bestow spiritual and political legitimacy for the new dynastic branch and to justify the succession to the throne within the same family.

Actually, only two years later, in 1598, Ieremia Movilă received from the Ottoman Porte the confirmation of his life-time reign in Moldavia and the hereditary succession of his lineage.<sup>67</sup> Shortly afterwards, he made a donation to Bistrița and Râșca monasteries, for the salvation of all his ancestors to the throne, especially his (legitimizing) grandparents and parents, for his own health and salvation, as well as that of his wife and their successor, Constantine. In exchange, the princely donor asked to be commemorated each year, on the feast of St. John the New.<sup>68</sup> A very suggestive indicator of Ieremia Movilă's personal devotion for St. John, the last detail confirms that he was perceived as protector saint of the Moldavian dynasty at the end of the sixteenth century.

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<sup>64</sup> Maria Magdalena Székely, „Manifeste de putere la Ieremia Movilă” (Manifestations of Power in the case of Ieremia Movilă), in vol. *Movileștii. Istorie și spiritualitate românească* II, Sucevița Monastery, 2006, p. 123-136.

<sup>65</sup> Located in the exonarthex of the church, it consists of 15 narrative scenes, culminating with the one of the relics' *translatio* to Moldavia; see Constanța Costea, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>66</sup> Constanța Costea, “Naosul Suceviței” (The Nave of Sucevița Monastery), in Marius Porumb, Aurel Chiriac (eds.), *Sub zodia Vătășianu. Studii de istoria artei*, Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Nereamia Napocae, 2002, p. 109-110.

<sup>67</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, „O lămurire: domnia ereditară a familiei Movilă” (A Clarification: The Hereditary Dominion of the Movilas), *Revista de Istorie*, 28 / 7 (1975): 1091-1094; Idem, „Addenda et corrigenda”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A.D. Xenopol”*, Iași, 15 (1978): 529-530.

<sup>68</sup> Maria Magdalena Székely, *Manifeste de putere...*, p. 130, with an excellent interpretation of the significance of the donation.

The idea is reflected by a very special composition from the church hosting the martyr's holy body in Suceava. The Movilas had commissioned a monumental ciborium for the relics, which gave them the right to represent themselves in a votive image.<sup>69</sup> Since it was impossible to enlarge the original composition, the donors chose a different formula for their purpose, explicitly referring to the veneration for St. John's relics. Known in the literature as *The Offering of the Ciborium*, the image depicts St. John the New, lying in his chest, to whom Metropolitan Gheorghe Movilă - the vicar of the metropolitan church - ceremonially offers the ciborium. Symbolically standing at the right side of the saint, Ieremia Movila's family actively participates in the donation, while on his left are represented Simion Movila - the prince's third brother, prince of Wallachia - and his kindred.<sup>70</sup> The complete image of this successful new dynastic lineage was thus symbolically placed under the legitimizing protection of the patron saint of the ruling house. In order to stress the dynastic message, the donors also commissioned the painting of two additional compositions in close proximity to their votive image. Significantly, the first one is precisely the scene of the relics' *translatio* to Suceava which was previously missing from the narrative cycle at St. George church. The other consists of a standing portrait of Stephan the Great,<sup>71</sup> the prince who first dedicated a religious edifice to John the New. Considering also the original votive painting from nearby, which contained, among others, Petru Rareș' portrait, the Movilas ensured that they were associated to all the ruling princes who previously encouraged St. John's cult. A direct connection to their most prestigious predecessors to the throne was thus established, publicly affirming their affiliation to the dynasty.

This overview of the most relevant actions undertaken by the princely institution to stimulate and consolidate St. John the New's cult points out that it was barely the most privileged cult embraced by Moldavian rulers before the second half of the sixteenth century. After its deliberate top-down implementation, originating in the emblematic moment of the relics' *translatios* to Suceava, the veneration of the newly proclaimed patron saint of the principality was not decisively or constantly promoted by the princely institution during the first century of its existence. Even if not completely ignored, St. John's cult was rather poorly encouraged

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<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, p. 128-129.

<sup>70</sup> The identification of the latter as Simion Movilă's family is almost unanimous in the recent historiography; for the exception, see Constanța Costea, *Despre reprezentarea...*, p. 32-34.

<sup>71</sup> Maria Magdalena Székely, *Manifeste de putere...*, p. 127.

and only by princes like Alexander the Kind, Stephan the Great or Petru Rareș, who had otherwise proved to be quite active in religious foundations or donations to the church. Descendants of the Moldavian ruling house, all of them claimed to establish new branches within the dynasty, and tried to ensure the succession to the throne for their own lineages.

The fact that it had been supported exclusively by princes with strong dynastic preoccupations (the ones who had founded private familial necropolises) suggests nevertheless a gradual association of St. John's cult with the ruling dynasty. Reserved exclusively to princely foundations, the first visual representations of the saint seem to support the same idea. Related to those of traditional military saints and to the princely portraits from the votive images, they correspond to an invocation of St. John's protection over the ruling house – an indicator of the assimilation of his role as official protector saint of the country.

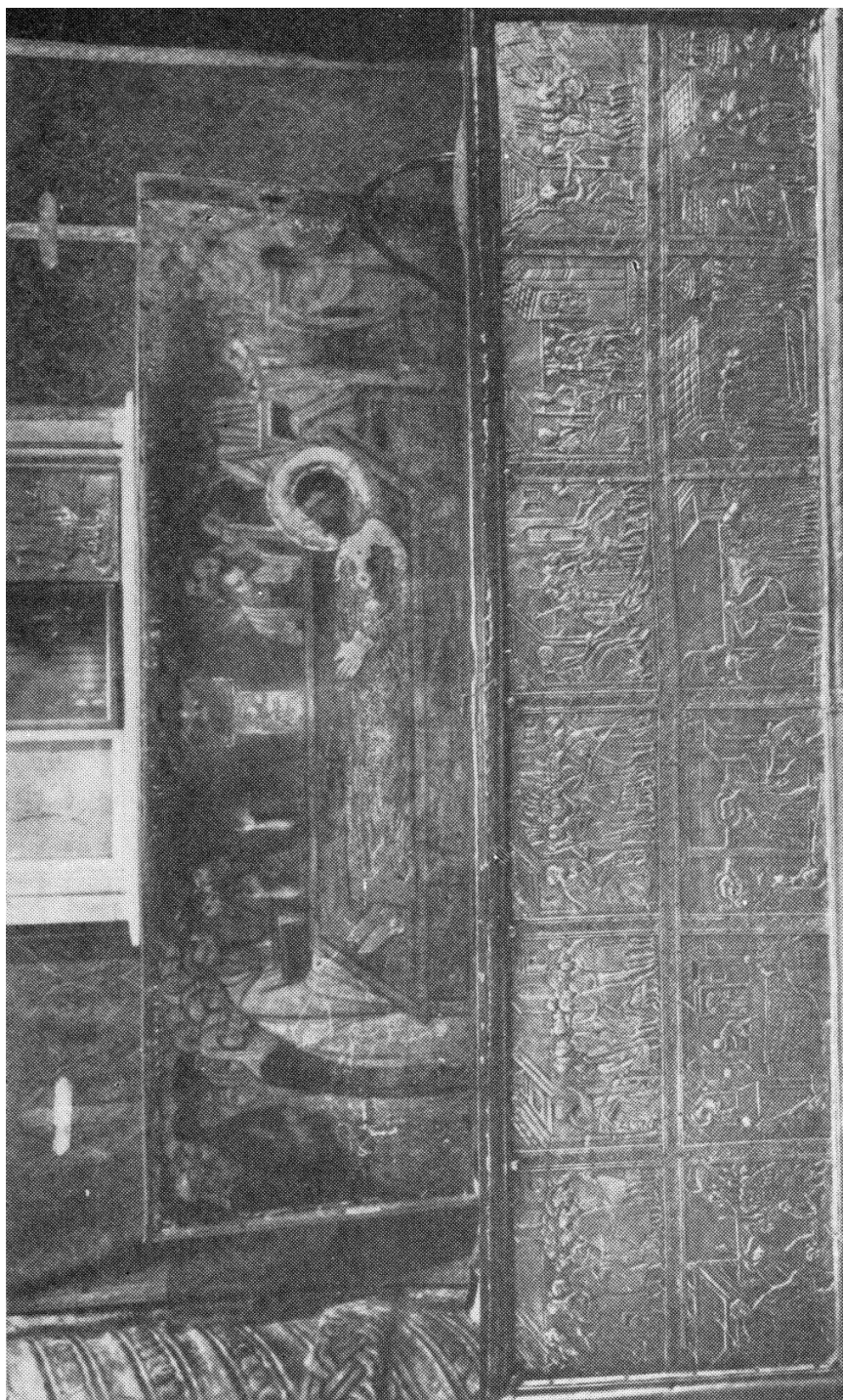
Invested with political significance from the beginning, St. John the New's cult was explicitly exploited for dynastic purposes in Moldavia only towards the end of the sixteenth century. The gradual strengthening of this cult coincided with a stronger interest of the princes for his relics. Now, when the succession to the throne was no longer confined exclusively to descendants of the traditional ruling family, the increasing devotion to the saint was gradually invested with dynastic significance, publicly affirming the affiliation to the dynasty. Moreover, a decisive input to the veneration of St. John's relics came precisely from rulers with dynastic flaws, like Peter the Lamé or Ieremia Movilă, who made efforts to claim their legitimacy to the throne and to consolidate their succession. The fact is not surprising, since in Byzantium as in Western Europe, ceremonial rituals focusing on holy relics have been employed for legitimizing purposes especially by founders of new dynasties or new lineages within old dynasties.<sup>72</sup> For the last Moldavian princes preoccupied with the continuity of the traditional dynasty, the appropriation of St. John's cult, its promotion and the ostentatious display of their devotion for his relics, seems to have proven quite effective in this sense.

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<sup>72</sup> Edina Bozoky, *op. cit.*, p. 254.



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**

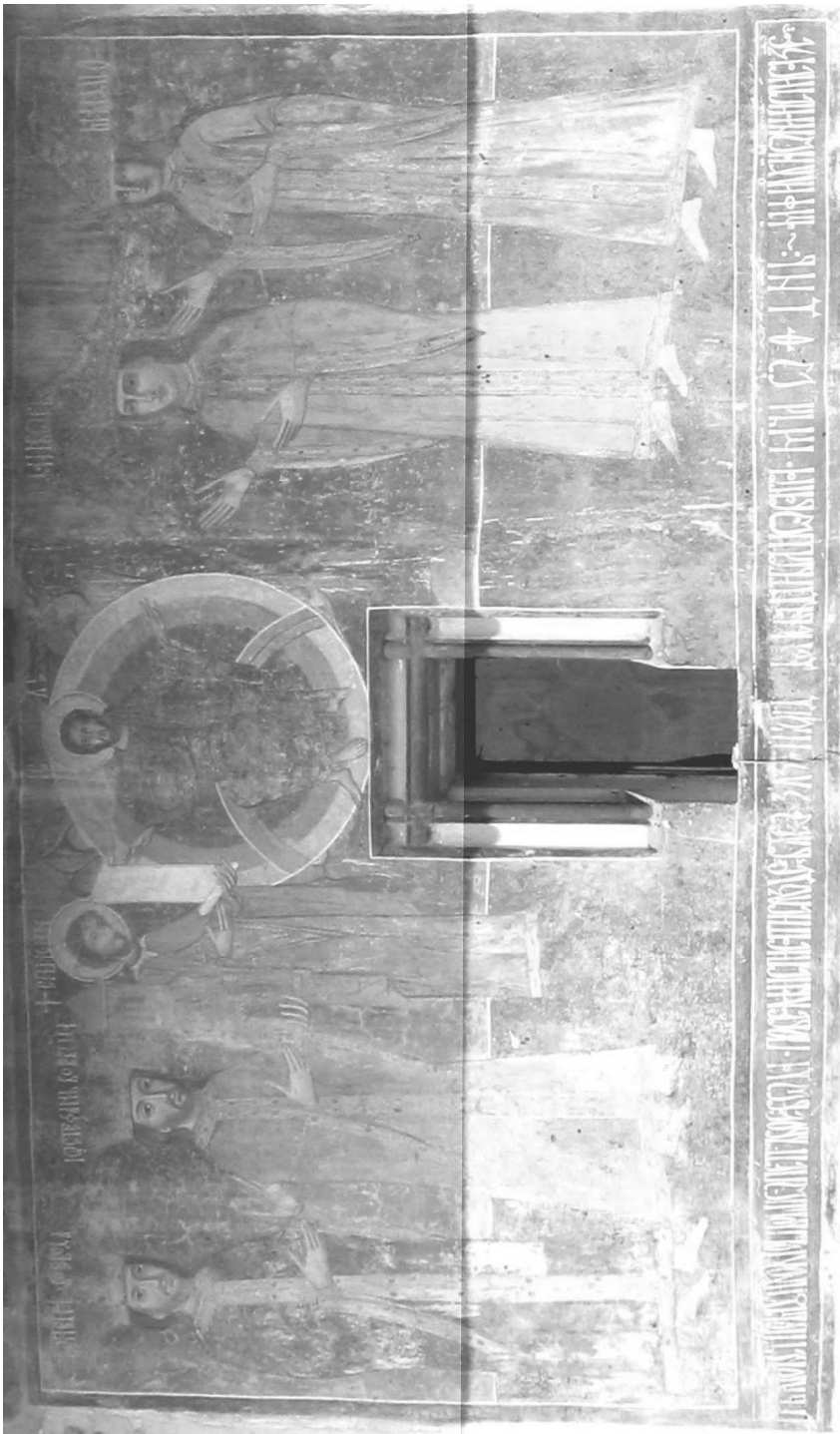


Fig.3



**Fig.4**





Fig. 5



Fig. 6

## *When the time is coming...* **Childbirth in Eighteenth Century Transylvania**

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**Abstract:** The article examines childbirth in early modern Transylvania. Drawing on a vast range of personal narratives, such as correspondence, diaries, autobiographies and other family papers, the essay shows the diversity in childbirth practices and some attitudes regarding early modern midwifery.

**Keywords:** women's history, midwifery, social history, early modern Transylvania

*Când vine timpul... Nașterea în Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea* Articolul analizează anumite concepte ale practicilor legate de naștere în Transilvania permodernă. Bazându-se pe o gamă largă de narațiuni personale, precum corespondență, jurnale, biografii și alte documente de familie, articolul prezintă perioada de sarcină și nașterea propriu zisă, precum atitudinile cu privire la profesia de moașă din epoca modernă timpurie.

**Cuvinte cheie:** istoria femeilor, moașă, istorie socială, Transilvania premodernă

Historians of the early modern period have long neglected the presence of women in history,<sup>1</sup> and if they haven't, they presented them as social actors, playing distinct roles in the household, being defined by their relation to men, work and family. We can only reconstruct their actions within the context of domestic and economic duties present throughout the female life cycle, from which the most essential was that of motherhood. Despite its importance, the subject drew relatively little interest from historians until the development of social history in the twentieth century. Historians saw the lives of women and children as something of little historical importance, belonging to the private world, while they focused on exposing the public world of men: "Public and private had thus become codes for male and female – whether what men did was simply defined as public, in most societies, and what women as private".<sup>2</sup> The second half of the twentieth century changed that perception, and brought the unknowns of the population more into view, so that there was increasing interest to present women in some other roles, as wives and mothers. This new

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<sup>1</sup> Georges Duby, *A History of Women in the West: Renaissance and Enlightenment paradoxes* (Harvard, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Merry E. Wiesner, *The midwives of south Germany and the public/private dichotomy* in Hilary Marland, *The art of midwifery: early modern midwives in Europe* (London – New York, 1994), p. 78.

current was not quite favorable to them,<sup>3</sup> but the most recent studies of the early modern family are more positive.<sup>4</sup>

In the following pages we would like to make a contribution to this issue, by presenting Transylvanian women during pregnancy and confinement, offering at the same time an image of the crowded birthing chambers, but mostly of female midwives.

The study aims at interpreting a wide range of published and unpublished biographical works, in the form of correspondence, diaries, autobiographies and other family papers, written by members of the political elite or by representatives of the nobility and civil servants from the eighteenth century, such as: György Bereczk (Vízaknai), Miklós Bethlen, Kata Csáky, Mihály Cserei, György Rettégi, László Vass, and István Wesselényi. These records belong to the class of personal documents, which we have to admit, in the eighteenth century were barely intimate. Most of them were written with another person in mind, usually the offspring, and this affects the choice of events recorded and the narrative itself. Therefore, the use of ego-documents as a main source of evidence presents a number of methodological problems: that of representation, of censorship and of generalization.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, in the following pages we would not make general statements regarding the past and will certainly not conclude about our ancestor's attitudes towards childbearing or confinement.

Taking into account that these personal records are mostly written by men, most of them contain little useful information on pregnancy, labour or postpartum complaints, but even so, the details revealed, allow us to make a more personal and intimate study. In order to complete the picture offered by these ego-documents, we have also used legal or medical treatises outlining the historical, social and medical milieu of early modern Transylvania.

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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Crawford, *The construction and experience of maternity in seventeenth-century England* in Dorothy McLaren and Valerie A. Fildes, *Women as mothers in pre-industrial England: essays in memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London – New York, 1990), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death. Ritual, Religion, and The Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1995); Natalie Zamon Davis, *Women on the Margins - Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Harvard, 1995); Judith S. Graham, *Puritan Family Life: The Diary of Samuel Sewall* (Upne, 2003); Steven Ozment, *Ancestors. The Loving Family in Old Europe* (Harvard, 2001); Idem., *Three Behaim Boys: Growing Up in Early Modern Germany. A Chronicle of Their Lives* (Yale, 1990); Idem., *Magdalena and Balthasar: An Intimate Portrait of Life in 16th Century Europe Revealed in the Letters of a Nuremberg Husband and Wife* (New York, 1986); Idem., *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Harvard, 1983); Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 2001); Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Linda Pollock, *Forgotten children: parent-child relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 69; Andy Alaszewski, *Using Diaries for Social Research* (Sage, 2006), pp. 24-46.

### *Pregnancy*

The traditional perception of married life was unthinkable without births. A woman's social existence was influenced by her maternal potential, irrespective of whether or not she actually gave birth.<sup>6</sup> Pregnancy also changed women's position in the family, because children were regarded as God's gift, and at the same time, as a wife's proof of love and devotion.<sup>7</sup> But birth also had a pragmatic meaning as it redefined the roles of men and women (assuming the role of father, and respectively mother – women became wives in order to become mothers<sup>8</sup>), ensuring the integrity of accumulated goods, and providing ample opportunities and perspectives to extend the already existing kinships.<sup>9</sup>

The period preceding the birth is rarely mentioned in the memoirs we have studied, and we know surprisingly little about the actual situation. We know nothing about the morning sickness and other unpleasant symptoms. However, pregnancy is more present in the mixed annotations of family chronicles. Each family had concrete ideas about how they had to care for a pregnant woman. She had to be: "first of all filled with devotion to God, realizing the significance of the moment", than "take care to not idle too much or eat much, she must be balanced, active, walk as much as she can, but not to run, because she can miscarry, still to move, in order to keep the child small, because if she lives too quiet, the child will get fat, risking then to kill them both". Pregnant women also had a severe diet, they were prohibited to eat food hard to digest such as beef or rabbit; then milk, cabbage, rice, chestnuts, etc... instead they should eat prunes, figs, chicken, ginger, apple with honey, but it was strictly forbidden to drink, especially dry wines.<sup>10</sup> These prohibitions and recommendations were kept in every family, especially the noble ones, all seemed to have special recipes for their pregnant wives and daughters.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, English or German social historians prove in their works the existence of the same restrictions and precautions for pregnant women across Europe.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Crawford, *The construction and experience of maternity*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ozment, *When fathers ruled: Family life in Reformation Europe*, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup> Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> XVI. századi magyar orvosi könyv (ed. Varjas Béla) (Kolozsvár, 1943), p. 365.

<sup>11</sup> Gellén Gergely *orvosságos könyve mindenféle nyavalyákról embereknek és lovaknak betegségeiről, méhekről és az esztendőnek hónapjairól*. Írtam én Gellén Gergely Losonc városában anno 1680, BCU – Colecții Speciale, Mss. 679, pp. 102-118; *Diariul familiei Cserei*, BCU – Colecții Speciale, Mss. 658.

<sup>12</sup> Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 21; Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, p. 78.

Our data were collected mostly from the aristocracy, who could easily meet these requirements, but needy women with child probably worked until the last moment, often preparing their laying in chambers themselves. The lack of sources does not allow us to sketch attitudes related to pregnancy and the postnatal period in various social structures. Our analysis is mostly limited to the noble families.

Negligence occurred in noble houses too, determining Miklós Bethlen to remember that his wife “lost” (miscarried) because of *St. George’s cup*, namely because of drinking too much wine.<sup>13</sup> Without noting the causes of abortion, our narrative sources and especially aristocratic family correspondence show that, in early modern Transylvanian society, we can rarely find women who have not passed through the experience of miscarriage: “I’ve written you before, that certain letters that I receive from you remind me of my own life, in which all the joy was mixed with sadness. Great was my joy that we will soon meet, but I became more upset when you wrote that nature has been on you. Worse news I can not imagine, because believe me, I am writing with respect, but in these things I am very experienced, because I had myself gone through this eight times ..., the biggest was three months old, the rest were so small that no midwife could notice... but me, with watery eyes, roving through the coagulated blood and so I found and showed them to the midwives. And because they are so small, you will not feel anything, they will go without pain [...] I did not do anything, just treat myself with white tea (*Albis Essentia dulcis*) and I was lying down for two weeks”.<sup>14</sup>

Women in early modern Transylvania, despite being aware of the importance of prudent behavior during the nine months, did not perceive pregnancy as a disease, and sought to carry out the same activities they normally did. So the physical work, riding or long journeys were seen by women and doctors too,<sup>15</sup> as beneficial activities to the mother and the fetus as well, considering that physical activities contributed to an easier birth. However, at the end of the century more physicians pronounced their fears about the consequences of these wanton acts. Thus, in Mátyus’s opinion in premature births (in the seventh or eighth month) pregnant women were the only ones to blame for causing miscarriage because of demanding physical labor or an irregular diet.<sup>16</sup> It is curious that he also recommended pregnant

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<sup>13</sup> Nicolae Bethlen, *Descrierea vieții sale de către el însuși* (Cluj Napoca, 2004), p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> Kata Csáky’s letter (from 1777) to her daughter Rozália „*minden öröömöm elegyes volt bánattal*”. *Csáky Kata levelezése*, (ed. Klára Papp) (Debrecen, 2006), p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> Kata Csáky’s letter (from 1778) to her son-in-law *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup> Physician Mátyus is the author of the first Hungarian dietetical work (1766). In his book he dedicated a chapter to pregnant women and young mothers giving them specific advices on eating habits in order to maintain the good health of the fetus and newborn, and of course themselves as well.

women some really shocking therapies. In his view, women would be wise to stay for as long as they could in cold and wet rooms, asking their relatives to sprinkle the walls with cold water to create an ambiance as cool and moist as possible. Moreover, in the opinion of the physician, pregnant women should be carried in carriages because the speed of horses and the chaotic motion of the vehicle would help the child to find the ideal position for birth. Riding was also not out of the question.<sup>17</sup> Bethlen's wife fell ill because of such a voyage in the winter of 1680: "on a very cold weather with wind, snow and blizzards, in a closed carriage with windows, and like in old carriages there were some iron chairs with four legs, which on that day were not put there, so the cold came through the hole destroying my wife's uterus and thigh [...] So she fell very ill, that lasted four months, later gave birth to a boy, until then remained still lying in bed, tormented. A great miracle was that the child, however, came into the world safely and healthy, and after a while the mother was healed as well".<sup>18</sup> This child was her last child, although Ilona Kun survived six years after this incident.

Another controversial and extremely dangerous example is the case of István Wesselényi's wife, who was forced to bleed in the last month of pregnancy, because most doctors used to *bleed* their patients in an effort to cure them. The relatives' stupor (and even the surgeon's) shows that extreme interventions, such as bleeding or purgation were contraindicated in the last months of pregnancy. Kata Bánffi happily survived the surgery, bringing to life a healthy baby a few days later. In the perception of contemporary medicine, bleeding was one of the procedures commonly used in the first months of pregnancy. Medical opinions were divided on being bled after the fifth month. Some have become reluctant to use this method, as apparent from the notes of Apáczai,<sup>19</sup> others recommended this intervention even in the ninth month, in order to prevent the pain of childbirth.<sup>20</sup>

### **Birth**

Giving birth was a private event, but with public significance. The child came into the world in a private place in the room where his parents

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<sup>17</sup> István Mátyus, *Diaetetica, az az: a jó egészség megtartásának módját fundamentumosan eladó könyv*, (Kolozsvár, 1766) in Mária Sztatky (ed.), *A jó egészség megtartásának módjáról. Szemelvények Mátyus István Diaetetica valamint Ó és Új diaetetica című műveiből* (Budapest, 1989), pp. 357-359.

<sup>18</sup> Bethlen, *Descrierea vietii sale de către el însuși*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>19</sup> József Spielmann, *Mechanikus materialista elemek Apáczai Csere János élettani és orvosi felfogásában* in József Spielmann (ed.), *A hazai orvostudomány történetéből* (București, 1957), p. 100.

<sup>20</sup> Zita Deáky and Lilla Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete. A szülés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon (XVI-XX. század)* (Budapest, 2005), p. 157.

lived, but surrounded by entourage consisting of relatives and neighbors, so birth became a public act.

The actual delivery was a time of fear. Women were continually called upon to witness their friend's agonies in similar circumstances: "and so these sociable childbed gatherings - which were intended to provide maximum support for the woman in labor - became a means of equitably distributing her terror to the rest of her female acquaintances".<sup>21</sup> It is understandable then, that not all women welcomed the signs of pregnancy. Women with too many children, or those who feared childbirth, could perceive their condition with a range of negative emotions.<sup>22</sup>

Our sources reveal that birth normally was regarded as a happy event. It is understood that in an environment where feeding, educating and raising children did not present great difficulties (we refer to the material aspects), new members were welcomed with enthusiasm; moreover the number of children is also a source of pride for a man: "It is not proper to write about my sleeping chamber and I do not even need to: the proof are the 17 children, five of them from my first wife in my youth (for 17 years and half) and 12 from the second wife, within 16 years; if my first wife would have been just as healthy and prolific as the second one and if we would not have been set apart [...] maybe we would have had numerous children".<sup>23</sup> We therefore think that the wives of Bethlen, and not only (Halmágyi sen. had 8, Rettégi 9, and Vass and Apor each 12 children) always enjoyed the grace of God, because they experienced birth every two years, to the great happiness and contentment of their husbands.

As in Western Europe, Hungarian women have accepted the presence of their husbands at birth in a few extreme cases, as were those in which physical force was required to bring the child into the world. Although the birth was a well organized and highly populated event, men were not welcome. They could make themselves useful by preparing the water, calling the midwife or, in extreme cases, the priest and the doctor; otherwise they spent time with friends or servants.<sup>24</sup>

So most of the time (as across Europe), men remained outside the chamber; we rarely have testimonies of fathers who were present at the birth.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Sara Heller Mendelson, *Stuart women's diaries and occasional memoirs* in Mary Prior, *Women in English society 1500-1800* (London - New York, 1985), p. 142.

<sup>22</sup> Crawford, *The construction and experience of maternity in seventeenth-century England*, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Bethlen, *Descrierea vieții sale de către el însuși*, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete. A szülés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon (XVI-XX. század)*, p. 127.

<sup>25</sup> Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 15.



Many were not in their domains. Mihály Cserei notes "August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1703 The Lord my God had given my wife, between 4 and 5 o'clock, a boy, whom she gave the name of Mihály. Even then I was not home, but at a wedding in Alba".<sup>26</sup> Or Bethlen "I was at Iernăuț when my first born son Mihály Bethlen came into the world in our new house in Sânmiclăuș. The third day after the birth, my wife had written me about herself and the baby".<sup>27</sup> This certainly does not mean that in most occasions husbands were away from home, but given the naturalness of annotations, it seems that these cases were accepted and tolerated by the wives.

As we've mentioned before, giving birth or witnessing the event was one of the main roles of women. Almost each time young children came to the world, they did so under the eyes of their grandmothers or aunts. Many of the studied memories or daily annotations prove this. We are familiar with some cases when wives did not give birth at home, but at relatives' or friends' houses. On these occasions not only the grandparents were present, but often neighbors or family friends. Neighbors were necessary as helpers, who, of course, apart from their useful role were present primarily out of curiosity. Those who were not married were excluded from childbirth, and those who had not borne children themselves were "deemed to lack authority".<sup>28</sup> Thus, the birth was a very crowded public event.<sup>29</sup>

We can reconstruct the actual birth from the contemporary medical treaties. According to them, when the pregnant woman entered labor, she had lain on her bed, waiting for about an hour, after that she began to walk around the room, or scream, or kick different objects, gestures which were supposed to release tension and prepare for the birth itself. The situation was quite similar in the whole of Europe. Various ointments and baths were recommended before labor: "The mother was to bathe in water on which have been seethed Malowes, Holyoke, Camomel, Mercury, Maiden haire, Lyneseede, Fenegreke seede, and such other things which have virtue to mollifie and sople. She was also to exercise the bodye on doing some thinge, stiring, moving, gounge or standinge, more than otherwise she was wont to do. When labour pain have commenced: to go up and down, crying and reaching so loud as she can"<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Mihály Cserei, *Históriája* (ed. Kazinczy Gábor) (Pest, 1852), p. 314.

<sup>27</sup> Bethlen, *Descrierea vieții sale de către el însuși*, p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> Patricia M. Crawford and Laura Gowing, *Women's world in seventeenth-century England* (London - New York, 2000), p. 194.

<sup>29</sup> Alain Macfarlane, *The family life of Ralph Joselin. A seventeenth century clergyman* (London - New York, 1977), 85.

<sup>30</sup> Jean Towler and Joan Bramall, *Midwives in history and society* (Taylor&Francis, 1986), p. 49.

Sources indicate that, in Transylvania, in most cases women gave birth sitting, except the obese ones, which were recommended to be left on four legs, “like animals”, because it was too difficult to them to sit on the chair for a long time:<sup>31</sup> so women bore children sitting, standing, squatting or kneeling. It sometimes happened that they used each of these positions. It was important that the obstetrician or the midwife did not quarrel with mothers about appropriate ways of birth, “due to custom or instinct to choose the most convenient way”. With respect to the seats, they could be drilled, resembling some classical flap seats, or constituted from two parts, with an opening angle varying from case to case. Midwives were sitting before the women on their knees; the future mothers were dressed in long robes, so nobody could have any direct, visual contact with the genitals of women. The midwives held a piece of cloth or put a vessel under the seat holes.<sup>32</sup>

We have two records and multiple descriptions that show that Transylvanian women delivered sitting on a chair. It is difficult to reconstruct, we suspect that it was a traditional birthing seat with support, or two chairs placed so as to support women’s thighs. On the ground were different litter sheets, respectively straw and the midwives were kneeling before the pregnant woman waiting for her child. However, some cases show that newborns had suffered injuries because of these methods. Rettegi’s son remained marked for life because of the carelessness of the midwife: “Look what misery has happened to us, when my poor wife felt that the time is coming, she sat down, but once out, the child fell into the pot placed under the seat, hitting his lips, which started to swell, and unfortunately it remained so”.<sup>33</sup> At that time when Rettegi wrote his memoirs, Zsigmond was 8 years old. Rettegi’s subsequent notes show that his boy’s lips had never returned to their original form, despite the fact that Zsigmond spent several years abroad consulting different doctors. In addition to its ugly wound “and so I wonder how could so many love him”, the swelling often caused, especially in childhood, dangerous diseases, fevers and bizarre chills. The mistake considered insignificant at the moment proved to be an indelible stigma.

Another entry refers to one of the births in the Bethlen family: “when my wife gave birth to our second daughter Ágnes, it was an awfully cold winter, and in the cold house from Făgăraș, because of sitting too much

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<sup>31</sup> *XVI. századi magyar orvosi könyv*, p. 376. Otherwise researchers revealed the same recommendation for obese women in the whole Europe. Steven Ozment, *When fathers ruled*, p. 108.

<sup>32</sup> Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete. A szülés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon (XVI-XX. század)*, p.163.

<sup>33</sup> György Rettegi, *Emlékezetre méltó dolgok* (ed. Jakó Zsigmond) (Bukarest, 1970), p. 70.

on an inappropriate seat, nearly bore a dippy child, and caught some serious diseases, such as lithiasis or colic".<sup>34</sup>

In the absence of internal notes, we haven't got a clear picture of the birth, and due to the fact that women haven't left traces of their existence, from documents written by men we rarely can decipher the mysteries of this event.<sup>35</sup> The only exception being that of course György Bereczk, who being a doctor, felt entitled and obliged to be present at the birth of his first child: "On November the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1699, at six o'clock in the evening, my young wife gave birth to a child, that she had carried over 10 months, she lived some unimaginable ordeal, nobody left her for a moment from 10 am, and when the time finally arrived, the fetus was already dead in her womb, and she seemed to have eased a little, but she was running again in horrible pain for 12 hours. I had no hope, when, much to the astonishment of those who were present, following the intervention of the surgeon Matthias, but with the inexperienced hands of an ignorant midwife, they have taken out of her a child, it was fat and thick, an inch wide and long as three hands, but God manifested His grace upon us leaving us at least the mother".<sup>36</sup> Not so lucky was the Bethlen family: "In that winter my mother died [...] she was with a child, but the child died because of her illness, and then she passed away because of the dead child. In my opinion, the apothecary should have given her some medicine for abortion, to take out the dead baby from her womb, but my father and the apothecary did neither dare nor wanted to do so. So God has willed".<sup>37</sup> The case is more curious because, such as English or German social historians pointed out, even ecclesiastical legislation offered instructions in cases of caesarean section.<sup>38</sup> If the child had died in the womb of a woman, the midwife was required to perform caesarean section, pulling the baby through a cut made on the left side of the abdomen. If women were not strong enough to perform this procedure, the doctor, or the husband had to intervene.<sup>39</sup> However, the surgical intervention presented a great danger to the mother's life.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bethlen, *Descrierea vieții sale de către el însuși*, p. 213.

<sup>35</sup> Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> György Vizaknai Bereczk, *Diary*, BCU - Colecții Speciale, Mss 117r-117v.

<sup>37</sup> Bethlen, *Descrierea vieții sale de către el însuși*, p. 92.

<sup>38</sup> The first medieval mention of caesarean sections is not in medical literature, but in synodal legislation, because it was important, not as medical, but mostly as spiritual life-saving procedure. This explains why the directions on how to perform such operations are placed in the sections dealing with baptism. Kathryn Taglia, *Delivering a Christian Identity* In Peter Biller, Joseph Ziegler, *Religion and medicine in the Middle Ages* (Boydell & Brewer, 2001), pp. 86-87.

<sup>39</sup> Shulamith Shahar, *Gyermek a középkorban* (Budapest, 2000), p. 68.

<sup>40</sup> Ozment, *When fathers ruled*, p. 110.

These passages generate more questions: first, the role of the midwife in the chamber; second, the usage of modern surgical instruments. We know from social historians' works that the midwives negotiated the entry of a male medical practitioner into what was traditionally a feminine territory. It was the midwife's decision to call for a male doctor.<sup>41</sup> The midwife was compelled to do everything she could in order to take out the child alive or dead, whole or piecemeal.<sup>42</sup> If the childbearing ran out of control and the traditional manual removal did not help, midwives were obliged to call for a surgeon, who was permitted to use some instruments such as: hooks, knives and crochets.<sup>43</sup> However surgeons thought that they should never use instruments in the lying-in chamber. Even those men who used them urged their fellow practitioners to use tools only when it was absolutely necessary and *doing so with the utmost discretion so as not to frighten clients*.<sup>44</sup>

However, the description provided by Bereczk is unique in Hungarian historiography, as memoirs and journals generally neglected intimate aspects, remaining silent when it came to pain experienced by women, usually writing a few words such as: "it was a prolonged labor", or "easy confinement", "the birth-throes lasted more ...". Even in the absence of descriptions, the narrative sources show that during those terrible hours, the men implored God for mercy and grace, to keep their partners and the unborn children alive.<sup>45</sup>

Regardless of the explanations offered by contemporary men on the nature of biological or spiritual pain (the curse shared by every woman because of original sin), women have taken some steps to reduce pain intensity. Thus, traditional medical practice considered as very useful hip-bathing, drinking and the application of herbal bandages which served to facilitate labor.<sup>46</sup> Such recipes are found in each family chronicle. Older women noted their experience of teas and herbal recipes that have been favorable in those moments. These books kept in every household, inherited from mothers or mothers-in-law, included remedies for labor and for most of the known child diseases.<sup>47</sup> It is curious that medical treatises did not

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<sup>41</sup> Lianne McTavish, *Childbirth and the display of authority in early modern France* (Hampshire, 2005), pp. 57-58.

<sup>42</sup> Towler and Bramall, *Midwives in history and society*, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> Hilary Marland: *The art of midwifery: early modern midwives in Europe* (London - New York, 1994), p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> McTavish, *Childbirth and the display of authority in early modern France*, p. 154.

<sup>45</sup> Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>46</sup> XVI. századi magyar orvosi könyv, p. 375.

<sup>47</sup> Gyula Magyary Kossa, *Magyar Orvosi Emlékek* (Budapest, 1940), vol. I, p. 98.

recommend non-scientific aids for women in difficult labor. The Transylvanian sources are silent about traditional prayers and appeals to saints, which could be explained only by the fact that most of our personal narratives belong to Protestants.

### *The midwife*

The notes above exhibit the desire of the young couple, that midwives, well trained and skilled women, be present in the room full of neighbors and relatives. They had an important role in directing events and dealt mainly with the mother, while the other women from the room focused on the new born. Curiously, the midwives had no “competition” in eighteenth-century Transylvania, because male doctors considered their work unworthy and even demeaning to their person: they did not even take part in the autopsy of a dead fetus. Thus, midwives often fulfilled the role of the pediatrician today, offering to help both children and mothers, also advising those who had gynecological problems.<sup>48</sup> Annotations from diaries and memoirs, however, provide a negative image of midwives. Social historians talk about “*the midwife question*”. Until now the image of the midwife throughout history was one of an ignorant, superstitious woman, without formal training and with low social standing.<sup>49</sup> Recent works proved the opposite: that midwives often were from affluent families, and that the skilled ones became relatively prosperous.<sup>50</sup>

As seen from the quotation submitted in Bereczk’s journal or Rettegi’s memoirs, midwives were considered by husbands as unwise and sometimes accused of being careless. Thus, many women would remain in bed after birth because of their incompetence (which mainly means cutting the umbilical cord and taking the placenta out). Wesselényi’s wife was “ill because of the midwife, she could not get out of bed for nine weeks, I have tried all sorts of remedies, but they all left me with no hope”.<sup>51</sup> Despite the mistakes, most people believed that the midwives’ presence was indispensable at birth. In the eighteenth century midwives proved to be more knowledgeable: they sometimes attended various classes and became respectable members of society. Even towns had some qualified midwives as it is shown by this passage from 1713 (Cluj): “As we are used since our

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>49</sup> Edwin R. van Teijlingen, George W. Lowis, Peter McCaffery, *Midwifery and the medicalization of childbirth: comparative perspectives* (New York, 2004), p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> McTavish, *Childbirth and the display of authority in early modern France*, p. 143.

<sup>51</sup> Wesselényi István, *Sanyarú világ. Napló 1703-1708*, (ed. Magyarai András) (Bukarest, 1983), vol. II., p. 587.

ancestors, we continue to require in our town the exercise of some serious midwives, who work in good faith and serve their peers under oath, make no discrimination between the poor and rich, but rejoice if the rich pay more, but not mortify the poor with their expectations. And those who fall into such a sin have to be driven out of town".<sup>52</sup>

At the end of the century the first training manual for midwives appeared, written by István Weszprémi – the work is in fact the translation of the medical book of a Viennese doctor named Crantz. Weszprémi finished his medical training and even graduated in London under Smellie, the famous Professor of Obstetrics. After coming back to his country, he could not use his knowledge because Hungarian women were very shy and wary of men, and not least because the husbands did not allow the presence of strangers at the birth of their children, and especially not men who could have physical (intimate) contact with their wives.<sup>53</sup> This explains why the wife of Bereczk was treated by the surgeon "through the hands of the midwife"; women were not familiar with male doctors. Therefore, attitudes toward doctors in such times vary from case to case. As we know, members of the aristocracy sought to finance the training of some talented physicians and therefore received their medical assistance. Nevertheless they were not called to birth; the aristocracy preferring to seek help and assistance of renowned and skilled midwives. In some noble circles it even became fashionable to borrow midwives. When birth or the pregnancy was complicated, only a few resorted to medical help, which, as apparent from the passages above, was an indirect act, as doctors were not allowed private consultation. On such occasions the room was populated by maids, the husband himself, or even other family members, in order to prevent further controversies and disputes, and to avoid intimacy. At the end of the century the obstetricians' practice had spread particularly in Calvinist environments, Catholic communities remaining very conservative in that regard.<sup>54</sup>

The situation was quite similar all over Europe. In 1708 physician Philippe Hecquet published his critique of male midwives; he argued that the profession of *accoucheur* was both of recent invention and at odds with Christian morality because of its reliance on the dangerous touching of woman's bodies.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, female midwives could make reference

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<sup>52</sup> Magyary, *M.O.E.*, vol. IV., p. 67.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>54</sup> Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete. A szülés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon (XVI-XX. század)*, p. 135.

<sup>55</sup> McTavish, *Childbirth and the display of authority in early modern France*, p. 144.

to their own bodily experiences of maternity, while male practitioners were obliged to invoke their roles as brothers, sons, fathers and husbands.<sup>56</sup>

So without any professional guidance, the entire responsibility fell on the midwives. They had to cut the cord immediately after birth and through various techniques, accelerated out the placenta. Women were told to blow into a bottle with a narrow mouth, the assumption being that because of the pressure the rest of the placenta should come out easily.<sup>57</sup> Talented midwives took care of the woman's abdomen too, wrapping and gathering as much material as possible around her belly in order to help the abdominal wall to regain its original shape. There were certain techniques that "tightened back the vagina", but these were often abused by the unmarried women who had lost their virginity.<sup>58</sup>

Another important task of midwives referred to baptism. Baptism celebrated shortly after birth marks the entry of the new-born into the Christian life. Indeed this is the mystery which reversing the original sin makes the baby a Christian.<sup>59</sup> Not all children had the chance to be baptized in time, so that in England midwives were allowed to baptize the child since the reign of Henry the VIII.<sup>60</sup> According to Article 10 of the Book of Oaths (1649) all midwives were prepared to perform the service in compliance to Anglican regulations even if they were not members of the Anglican Church.<sup>61</sup>

In Transylvania the *baptissimus necessitatis* was imposed by Maria Theresa in the first half of the eighteenth century, only to become obligatory by the decree of 1731, which also marks the (official) start of the secular baptisms. This process presented a major risk especially for Protestant families, which is why many representatives of the Calvinist and Unitarian churches protested. However the ritual of secular baptisms was strictly taught: midwives were required to pass an oral examination before the Catholic clergy, proving, on the one hand, their skills in this direction, on the other hand, compliance with Catholic ritual. This form had to be learned and practiced by non-Catholic midwives too. Any prematurely born infant or aborted fetus had to be baptized.<sup>62</sup> Thus, due to pressure from Hebrew

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>57</sup> Placenta was called by Hungarians *gyermektartó*, *gyermek*=child, *tartó*=support.

<sup>58</sup> *XVI. századi magyar orvosi könyv*, pp. 378, 381.

<sup>59</sup> Francios Lebrun, *Reformele: devoțiunile comunitare și pietatea personală* in Ph. Ariès. – George Duby, *Istoria vieții private. De la renaștere la epoca luminilor* (București, 1995), vol. V., p. 107.

<sup>60</sup> Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion and life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 64.

<sup>61</sup> Towler and Bramall, *Midwives in history and society*, p. 60.

<sup>62</sup> Magyary, *M:O:E.*, vol. I., p. 226.

and Protestant communities, Maria Theresa issued a new decree in 1762 (renewed by Joseph II in 1787), which prohibited the forced baptism of children.<sup>63</sup>

### *Conclusions*

Childbirth formed an extremely hazardous event in a woman's life, one which many women approached with great fear and anxiety. Unfortunately most of the women did not leave us their stories. It was recorded like all history by the educated elite, so that today we know childbirth mostly through the eyes of male relatives. This paper, then, is not an exhaustive presentation of the subject, but an exploration of certain personal records, written by men.

However, the personal narratives we have analyzed revealed that there is a duality of discourse. There are two types of women these narratives are referring to: one is the beloved wife, the other the malicious and ignorant midwife. Yet male authors did not write about their wives suffering from sickness in the early stages of pregnancy, and just rarely about their fear of confinement, however, they mention the midwives, mostly blaming them for any inconvenience that occurred. Even so, these medical women governed the birthing room throughout the early modern period. Therefore, childbirth took place in the domestic sphere under female authority. Female midwives could invite a male practitioner into the birthing room in especially difficult cases, but these doctors for the most part had exclusively theoretical knowledge. Our study underlines the fact that midwifery was based on experimental rather than academic learning and so women's knowledge concerning childbirth comes from observation and learning from the stories of others.

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<sup>63</sup> Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete. A szülés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon (XVI-XX. század)*, p. 276.



## Reviews

**Jean Bérenger, *La Hongrie des Habsbourg, Tome I de 1526 a 1790*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010, 401 p.**

This book is written by a consecrated and most famous author working on the Habsburg Monarchy, Jean Bérenger. However, the particular stress is set here on “the Hungary of the Habsburgs” between the Battle of Mohács (1526) and 1790, the end of the Josephine era. As one may notice from the very beginning, the timeframe represents the Early Modern Hungarian History, which is addressed in a traditional manner: the political and religious evolution after the Battle of Mohács, “the constitutional conflict” of the seventeenth century and eventually, “the reconstruction” of the eighteenth century. But by “Hungary of the Habsburg”, Jean Bérenger actually means the entire territory of the medieval Kingdom, thus including in his analysis Transylvania and Ottoman Hungary before their political incorporation into the Habsburg Monarchy (the end of the seventeenth century).

The book is less a polemic or a “new interpretation” of Hungarian history. Very concisely, the author describes the most important events and phenomena in Hungary. Thus, after a brief introduction, which addresses the political and social structure of the land, in the first part Jean Bérenger analyses the reorganization of the kingdom after Mohács: he displays the particular political and administrative organization of the land, how the country was divided into three parts and how they evolved in the new regional context. Here he also addresses the confessional peculiarity of the region after the Reformation by referring to “tolerance and confessional peace” in Hungary. Jean Bérenger provides a succinct description of how the Catholic Church lost its power and the emergence of the Protestant Churches. Not excluded are the Sabbatarians and Orthodox Romanians. In the last chapter of this part are described the military events on the eve of the sixteenth century, ending with the Peace of Vienna.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the seventeenth century. It is a complex epoch for Hungary, marked by many wars and treaties, around the Ottoman-Habsburg conflicts. Jean Bérenger’s selection is chronological: he starts with the famous Diet of the year 1608 and discusses the compromising politics of the Habsburgs, a particular stress being set on the anti-Ottoman fight and the tumultuous reoccupation by the Habsburgs by the end of the seventeenth century, including the conspiracy of the Magnates, and the war of independence of Rákóczi.

The last part of the book represents the reconstruction of the long eighteenth century. Central issues are addressed here, which may be perceived as bringing a change in the old order: the compromises (the diets of 1712-15, the Pragmatic Sanction, the fiscal conflicts), the economic development, and

especially the Enlightenment of Joseph II. However, the confessional issues are not ignored. Jean Bérenger refers to the “Catholic re-conquest”, whereas by means of that term he describes not only the continuation of the Habsburg Counter-Reformation after 1715 (named by the author, the Babylon captivity), but also the transformations occurring under Emperor Joseph II., the reform of the Catholic Church and the famous edict of tolerance. A generous part of this section is dedicated to the enlightened reforms, censorship, education, national cultures and, naturally the Josephine epoch with its final “failure”.

The book also brings into discussion classical issues, such as absolutism, Counter-Reformation, “national consciousness” or modernization. Jean Bérenger verifies their application and on a large scale, one may notice their successes and limits. Nevertheless, due to its broad scope, certain aspects such as absolutism or the Counter-Reformation would have needed a deeper insight in order to establish to what extent the Viennese program succeeded at local level, how effective were the control mechanisms in the epoch.

This classical presentation is in the end pedagogically completed. The book contains maps, a Hungarian chronology and a glossary. Furthermore, some of the most important books and studies on Early Modern Hungarian history are included in the bibliography. On a whole, the work by Jean Bérenger provides us with a better understanding of Early Modern Hungary. Moreover, this book may represent a clear introduction for non-experts in the field, who simply desire to acquaint themselves with an introductory view of the history of this Central European region.

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**Bogdan Bucur, *Devălmașia Valahă (1716-1828). O Istorie Anarhică a Spațiului Românesc*, Pitești: Paralela 45, 2008, 308 p.**

The history of Walachia in the eighteenth century – so much distorted by stereotypes and by the delegitimizing discourses of the nineteenth century national movement – was in great need of a fresh perspective. Regrettably, the work of Bogdan Bucur on the topic is not up to the mark. Three great limitations impinge on the quality of the book: ethical, empirical and methodological. Below, I will explain the title and offer a brief description of the structure of the book and its content. Then I will discuss the above mentioned limitations which surface time and again in the pages of the work, the most serious being the lack of a critical approach to the sources.

The title of the book is misleading. The word *devălmașie* meant and still means, according to the Romanian dictionary communal property, a form of land ownership very widespread in the pre-modern Romanian villages, retaining its share even today (for example, the pastures in Romanian villages

are still communal property). Therefore, at first sight, one would guess that the book is about communal property in eighteenth century Walachia (and its possible transformations). Yet the subtitle would cast doubt on this understanding. Indeed, upon skimming through and reading some pages one realizes that the subject of the book has nothing in common with the established understanding of the notion of *devălmășie*. The term seems to be employed with a rather metaphorical sense and to signify turmoil, jumble, and chaos. This interpretation is suggested by the subtitle "An Anarchic History of the Romanian Lands"; just that it is difficult to understand – since anarchy implies disorder due to absence of regulatory power – why it fits the history of Walachia during the so-called Phanariot century; besides, the expression Romanian Lands is imprecise since the book covers only Walachia.

The matter of the book is divided in nine chapters including introductory and concluding ones. The introductory chapter, "Start of Journey through the Walachian 'Night'", sets the tone of the entire book. Since the image of the country is negative, the rest of the chapters detail several aspects of the "night": the apparent paradox between, on the one hand, fertile land and, on the other, its lack of prosperity and demographic density; the fires which periodically destroy a large number of houses; the primitive infrastructure of transportation; the misery and terror induced by war and pillage; the destructive effects natural hazards; the corrupt, ineffective and abusive administration; the miserable state of the peasantry; the Oriental manners and clothing styles; the dirt and unhealthy air of Bucharest. The ending chapter is a real passage to light "with the hope for a new beginning, the nineteenth century".

As I announced, one of the greatest faults of the book is ethical, and without absolving completely the author, the responsibility for it belongs to Adrian Majuru who has signed the foreword. Briefly put, the book delivers less than Majuru claims and particularly three of his assertions are blatantly false. Firstly, the reader is informed in the foreword that the author "has used information and interpretations" from cultural anthropology, sociology, psychology, urban pathologies, human and economic geography, demography, ethnography, mythology, mentalities and the history of ideas (p.5). The interdisciplinary approach invoked by Majuru is practically impossible (what scholar can master almost all social sciences?). Moreover, there is no trace of these disciplines in the book, there is no reference to works of anthropology, sociology, psychology etc or the relevant concepts and theories and it has nothing to do with mythology for it analyses no myths.

Further, the book is allegedly based on a vast array of sources: "archival sources; edited documents; memoires; journals and periodicals; monographs; biographies anthologies; encyclopedias; plans, maps, atlases, censuses; dictionaries; literature in the field, belletristic works and other various works" (p.6). Nonetheless, the documentary support of the book is much more modest than Majuru asserts. Bogdan Bucur relies for the greatest part of the book on several volumes of documents comprising the letters, reports and memoirs of

foreign “travelers”<sup>1</sup> (*Călători străini...*) and a volume of annotations on Walachian books. Otherwise, there is no trace of periodicals, plans, maps and censuses; there is an atlas of Bucharest monuments and a Small Encyclopedia of Phanariot Princes cited – rather decoratively – in the introductory chapter; while the mentioning of archival evidence among the sources of the book is simply gross. No archival fund is used in the book or mentioned in the bibliography.

The book is also presented as “A historical monograph of the historical periphery from an interdisciplinary perspective” which “represents a novelty in the literature in the field” (p.6). However, the claim is impossible to verify since Majuru did not bother to define periphery, to specify from what point of view and in relation to what entity eighteenth-century Walachia constitutes a periphery. Nor does he mention the relevant literature in relation to which the book is a novelty; is it the world-system theory formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein? Is it the literature of post-colonial studies? Is it the historiography dedicated to the “Phanariot century” in Walachia? Even if the latter version is correct, there is one book at least which conceptualized Walachia as a periphery.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of these questions, the book has nothing to do with the notion of historical periphery and the word does not ever occur in its pages.

After comparing the foreword and the content of the book, one wonders, whether the author of the foreword has looked through (not read) the book. In any case, what he delivers is not just a forcefully positive presentation of the book but shameless advertizing.

I call the second limitation empirical because the author holds a curious view on the use of evidence. He often cites in the footnotes the original title of a letter or memoir of an eighteenth-century “traveler” although by *apud* he indicates that he read that document in the translation provided by the collection *Călători străini în Țările Române [Foreign Travelers in the Romanian Countries]*. The author should have indicated if he had read the text in the original version and language or in the translated version; in the first case he should have cited the original text, in the second the Romanian collection without *apud*. In any event, the construction of the footnote is incorrect since *apud* indicates that a certain text was accessed in the pages of another one (another work). Besides, from the 62 titles mentioned in the bibliography, only two or three occur frequently in the footnotes; all other titles are concentrated in

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<sup>1</sup> I use the disclaimers for the work “travelers” throughout my review because they are mostly diplomats, generals and merchants; so they transit or stay in Walachia with a precise purpose, they are not just travelling. To avoid repetition, I will alternate this word with more precise qualifications like consuls, ambassadors, military officers etc. according to the case.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society. The Creation of a Balkan Colony*, Academic Press: New York, 1976 [Romanian translation: *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică. Formarea unei colonii balcanice*, traducere și postfață Victor Rizescu, Corint: București, 2002].

the introductory and concluding chapter and are used for background information or just to swell the footnotes. With or without them, the content of the book would be more or less the same.

The third limitation of this work, and the most important, pertains to the way the book is built and to the method employed. The subject of the book is not expressed clearly in the first chapter so that one cannot follow it throughout the book; only from the conclusion one sees that the aim of the work was to “restore what can be called the contemporary image of Walachia in the perception (naturally subjective) of contemporary people (Walachians and foreigners)” (p. 292). The argument of the book, if one can call it that, is that this image was thoroughly and justifiably negative.

Although presented in the foreword as a novelty, the book reproduces the stereotypical views on eighteenth-century Walachia; by calling it “Walachian ‘Night’” (Nocturnul Valah) the author confirms the conventional tripartite division of Romanian history in the Golden Middle Ages of brave princes, the Phanariot Dark Ages and the National revival in the nineteenth century. The only novelty is that the Phanariot period is depicted in more gloomy colors than usually; even nineteenth century historians like Nicolae Bălcescu and Mihail Kogălniceanu, who generally regarded the eighteenth century as the worst historical epoch for the Romanians, were more nuanced than Bogdan Bucur. His approach is characterized by a selection of sources to confirm the negative stereotype of the Phanariots and a passive attitude towards the evidence; he merely limits himself to paraphrasing and glossing on the quoted paragraphs. This lack of skeptical distance from his sources in order to analyze them is reflected in several ways.

1. The author seems to accept as veridical all the statements made by the “travelers” he uses as sources; anyway, he never doubts them. Although he formally acknowledges, in the introductory and concluding chapters, the subjective character of such evidence, he treats it as disinterested observations. This is revealed by the frequent qualification of various authors of reports as “well informed”. He ignores that most of these authors were diplomats and carried implicit or explicit political interests. One of them was to demote, deride and delegitimize the Ottoman rule and culture, despotism and barbarity, to make room for the conquest of “civilized” powers.

Moreover, the author does not notice that the astonishment of foreign diplomats in front of various signs of backwardness is hypocritical. Therefore, a Hungarian nobleman observes that the Walachian boyars “suck the spinal marrow” of their serfs, in the sense of harsh exploitation (pp. 130-131); but did the situation of the serfs in Hungary justify such an observation? Were they much better treated by aristocrats from Hungary? Or, were the Russian peasants treated better by the Russian aristocrats - because there are similar comments from Russian “travelers”? In 1777, an English author criticizes the venality of offices in Walachia (p.123); but this was common practice in France while in England “the Old Corruption” (pensions and sinecures paid from

public money to political clients) was a well-known phenomenon during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

2. The author also ignores the inherent cultural bias of Western "travelers" who take part in the wider process of inventing Eastern Europe,<sup>3</sup> imagining it as the negative and backward counterpart of the West. This bias translated into an attitude of superiority and condescendence towards "Oriental" clothes, manners, customs, music, interiors of houses, architecture etc. which become inferior in comparison to Western ones. If not outright disdain, these items provoke laughter, as often happens with the Western "travelers" who come into contact with Walachian realities. Alternatively, the luxury of the Walachian elites scandalizes the Western travelers, as if the French, English or Russian elites were examples of austerity. However, when the Walachian boyars purchase Viennese coaches (i.e. an element of Western luxury), they are mocked for buying them second-hand (p.221-223). Thence, one can easily notice that there is no escape from the colonial laughter: luxury is bad because it is expensive while cheaper or second-hand luxury is ridiculous.

3. There are contradictions between or within the quoted documents, which would cast doubts on the negative image of Phanariot Walachia. For instance, while some travelers show contempt towards the interior of the Walachian boyars' houses (finding them dirty, uncomfortable and full of parasites), other travelers are enthusiastic about the reception in a boyar's house, the clothes of the host (boyar's wife) and her servants, the comfort and the hygiene of the accommodation facilities. Nonetheless, neither does Bogdan Bucur attempt to solve this contradiction nor are we told why the first view has preeminence over the second.

The French "traveler" d'Hauterive compared the poverty of the Walachian plain villages to "that of our villages in Beauce and Sologne" (p. 189) - a strange failure for an Enlightened Western country which Bogdan Bucur does not notice. A Russian general decries the terrible abuses of the Walachian administration in 1811; he is just omitting that the Walachian officials were working under the order of the Russian military administration and managed to strike a record: they collected four times the regular amount of taxes paid by the Walachian contributors during the rule of Phanariot princes (p.80).

4. The selection of the evidence is problematic; there is no distinction made between the letters and reports written in times of peace and in times of war (or in the aftermath of a war). It would be easy to notice that the misery and depopulation of the Walachian towns and villages is recorded mostly in the context of military conflicts and associated disorders. In addition, the evidence coming from internal sources (chronicles, marginalia) is selected so that the

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<sup>3</sup> Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994 [Romanian translation by Bianca Rizzoli: *Inventarea Europei de Est. Harta civilizației in Epoca Luminilor*, București: Humanitas, 2000]

sequence connecting various examples gives the sensation of continuous and thoroughly spread (generality across the country) natural disasters (draughts, fires, locusts, hailstone etc). The distance in time and space between these natural hazards is compressed in the narrative of the author so that even nature is conjured up against the Phanariots.

5. Finally, and this is the limitation underscoring all other faults, there is no trace of reflexivity in the approach to the sources. The author pays little attention to the immediate context in which the foreign traveler wrote his memoir or letter and even less to the original context from which the travelers came (country, class, cultural background and audience for which the texts were written). All reports are merged in a single and homogenous class of "well-informed" and disinterested sources. In spite of the recognition of their subjectivity, this aspect is not seriously and consistently taken into consideration, being merely a rhetorical figure.

Consequently, one of the most striking features of the letters and reports which the author does not tackle is the "colonial gaze"; the foreign ambassadors, the consuls, the generals were looking at the Walachian territory and population with a desire to possess and exploit them. They were astonished by the fertility of the land; it nevertheless had a disappointing productivity due to the Ottoman exploitation mediated by the Phanariot corrupt and inefficient administration. With an "equitable, liberal" administration – the Russian general Ciceagov believes (p.41-42) – the productivity of the land would increase exponentially. It is not difficult to guess that the liberal administration he had in mind was that of Russia. The same point is made by French and English travelers (p.42-43). It is plain that not the standard of life of the poor Walachian peasants was the concern of these foreign diplomats, but rather the potential maximization of resource extraction from Walachia – seen only as a source of revenues.

The "colonial gaze" becomes manifest in the depicting of the "immorality" and "easiness" of women. Allegedly, Walachian women felt no embarrassment in taking off their clothes in front of foreigners; it comes as no surprise that they were beautiful, "eager to copulate" and always ready to become involved in debauchery. These sexual fantasies cohabit very well with another sort of observation according to which Walachian women had no agency in choosing their husbands; they were mere objects of exchange in matrimonial strategies. Like the fertile land, the only thing the Walachian women lacked was a foreign conqueror to free them from servitude and abuses.

All in all, the image of the Phanariots created by Bucur is not convincing because it is essentialist he doesn't establish clearly the responsibilities. By equating Phanariotism with corruption, venality, greed, abuses Bogdan Bucur is simply reproducing the anti-Phanariot discourse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Phanariots were a group of families who rose to prominence in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the seventeenth century and remained in that position until the first half of the nineteenth. It is

simply absurd to assume that all these individuals had the same traits, especially when we know of some outstanding princes like Nicolae and Constantin Mavrocordat and Alexandru Ipsilanti. One had better study carefully the origin of such a view.

Moreover, not only were the administrative shortcomings, the natural disasters, the depopulation, poverty and misery not peculiar to the Phanariot epoch; leaving aside the natural hazards, the responsibilities for the other problems cannot be attributed solely to Phanariots. Corrupt, abusive and venal administration preceded and followed the Phanariot rule and were not restricted to Walachia and Moldavia of that time; the administration was even in the late eighteenth century mostly composed of local boyars and the allegation that they were "Phanariotized" (p. 24) or behaved in a Phanariot manner is ridiculous.

It is also obvious from the documents cited or quoted by Bogdan Bucur that a great deal of the problems were caused by warfare between the three neighboring empires and the stationing or incursion of foreign troops in Walachia, phenomena that the Phanariot rulers and their retinues could not control. The same documents show that the plunder of the Russian troops matched that of the Ottoman units while the Russian administration "managed" to exploit far more mercilessly the Walachian tax-payers than the Phanariot administrations. Hence, following the logic of Bogdan Bucur, the Russian administration run by its "fully westernized" officers was also "Phanariotized".

I believe that one of the primary tasks of a historian is to be critical towards the sources he/she uses. Unfortunately, Bogdan Bucur abdicates from such a task and adopts a credulous and passive stance towards them. He agrees with all his "travelers", he is not bothered by the contradictions between them and is not attentive to the more or less explicit biases underpinning their accounts. As a result, the book reads like a long list of paraphrases on excerpts from diplomatic reports and contemporary Walachian marginalia, almost all of them selected in order to support the image of a "Walachia night" in the eighteenth century. It is an image that, when subjected to critical scrutiny is not very convincing.

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**Neagu Djuvara, *Există istorie adevărată? Despre relativitatea generală a istoriei. Eșeu de epistemologie (Is there a real history? About the General Relativity of History. Epistemology Essay)*, Ediția a IV-a, Editura Humanitas, București, 2009, 150 p.**

During a recent meeting occasioned by a series of lectures regarding the contemporary status of the history writer, I observed a main idea common to all the exegetes: *How does one write about the past?* Of course, apparently it is a dusty



question that comes from the philosophic sphere than from the historical one, the one of the professional historian who only seeks to return to the sight of the contemporary world fragments, epoques, events, biographies etc. from the humanity's past. He tries to recreate the past from its own remains, to rewrite the pages of a human symphony from the the basket with music scores of a waltz performed decades, hundreds or thousands of years ago. Consequently, a new question is born: how can such a music sheet be rewritten on the basis of scores spread chaotically and difficult to identify, if not missing entirely. This way how is it possible to believe that the history that you learn from school books and the history books written by professionals is a true one, or at least close to the historical events that took place? In the same direction, two new ideas are born: What is really history? And can we believe that there is a real history? Of course, to this question, many historians and exegets tried to answer, which explains the number of answers that we currently have.

Such an answer appears in the volume „Is there a real history?“ by Neagu Djuvara that we have intended to present here. Quite similar to Lucian Boia, the diplomat and historian Neagu Djuvara, returned to Romania after the events that occurred in December 1989, doesn't require a wide presentation, being well-known not only among his colleagues but also among the men of culture and in contemporary society.

The notoriety he enjoys in the cultural Romanian circles is undoubtedly due to his numerous volumes published by Humanitas Publishing House, the success of his books in Romania being highlighted by numerous reprints of his works, some of them re-edited two or three times like the one we are going to discuss. I have not intended to insist on seeking an explanation for his success in Romania, but I think that the allure of "old man of the Romanian culture" educated in the West, in the great universities of France, and especially his way of writing and expressing opinions about some topics of the universal and Romanian history made his writing extremely accessible outside the rather narrow circle of the historians, succeeding in captivating through his story-teller style the vast masses of the ones preoccupied with historical reading, ranging from children and pupils to university students, researchers and simply readers. He received recognition for his historical and historiographical contributions from his fellow historians, the ones who were his colleagues between 1991 and 1998, Djuvara being an associate professor at the University of Bucharest and an honorary member of The History Institute "A. D. Xenopol" of Iași and The History Institute "N. Iorga" of Bucharest.

The book we are focusing on is the result of the lectures given by professor Djuvara at the Faculty of History (University of Bucharest) being an attempt to debate essential issues raised by the critical philosophy of history, a discipline initially called this way by Raymond Aron, the author's mentor. Desiring to distinguish this new philosophical perspective on history from the speculative philosophy of history, Aron finished in 1938 his grand work *Introduction à la*

*philosophie de l'histoire*, its Romanian version was published by Humanitas in 1997, synthesizing the issues raised by the critical philosophy. Considering himself a disciple of Raymond Aron, Djuvara confesses in the *Introduction* that what he will try to show in this book is that the relativism assumed by his mentor in the subtitle of his thesis – *Essay about the limits of historical objectivity* – is too prudent and timid, relativism that had also been reproached by professional historians. The paradox the author tries to prove in this volume is connected to the idea that the „matter” of history is not stable and motionless but is in continuous movement, the present uninterruptedly creating past, so the thesis of his mentor that was based only on the inevitable imperfection of the observer and his means of research is not entirely sustained, because, actually, the fundamental relativity of the synthesis resulted from his work is not connected mainly with the one observing and his environment but also with the object of his study (p.7), because, the past is not forever petrified and the fire is smoldering under the ashes (p.8), and it is impossible to have a final perspective on the past. This fact becomes, according to Djuvara, the drama of the historian, an inexorable drama because whatever knowledge, talent and skill they might have, their vision on the past is fatally outdated after two or three generations. There are two exceptions to this rule, that Djuvara highlights: an extraordinary power to evoke drawn from literary talent like in the case of Michelet or Iorga (we might also mention Ranke from the German historiography) or the chance to be the unique witness of the narrated events, like in the case of Tucidide and the war of Peloponnesus (p.8).

For the sake of clarity, Neagu Djuvara organises this work in seven chapters preceded by an introduction and an index of names.

The first chapter intends to answer an apparently simple but actually complicated question: *What is history?* Starting from placing history among the other humanistic sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) with which history communicates permanently, Djuvara defines the primary and narrow meaning of history: „knowing and narrating the human past” (p.14), the same meaning being highlighted by the German historian Droysen through the statement: „Geschichte ist Geschehenes das aus dem Handeln des Menschen hervorgegangen sei oder darauf einwirke”<sup>4</sup>. History is consequently, in the author’s vision, „trying to narrate and understand something human from the past, starting from the present reality”, this researching the human past from the moment of the discovery of an organized society that left interpretable marks (p.16). By focusing on the historical phenomenon in itself, the author suggests three meanings or steps: History as Actuality, History as Thought, and History as Record (p.19).

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<sup>4</sup> Ernst Opgenoorh, Günther Schulz, *Einführung in das Studium der Neueren Geschichte*, 6., grundlegend überarbeitete Auflage, durchgesehene Neuauflage, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, München-Wien-Zürich, 2001, p. 16.

In the next chapter, Djuvara makes clear the concept of „historic fact“, trying to show the circumstances in which the historian decides that a happening from the past becomes a historic fact worthy of being used as a brick in the historic building. Starting from the need of a historic perception, the author evoking the first legends and historical dates, exemplifying with the lists of kings of Egypt, and listing the first professional historians - Herodot, Thucydides, Tacit - „who were the first men to make history“ as Heinrich Treitschke beautifully put it. After he gives several historical examples to the reader, including events of his own biography, and using different methods and conjunctures that influence a historian in rebuilding a historic fact, Djuvara concludes by saying that a historic fact is considered to be any experience that seems necessary for understanding a bit of the human past. Thus, the historic fact, although compatible „with a malignant tumour with metastasis risk“ (p.52) proves to be a necessary link for a chain of events to form a coherent story.

The third chapter is dedicated to the nature of historical knowledge, more precisely to the attempt to clarify which are the mental instruments that help the historian in his work of penetrating the past and narrating his discovery coherently. With the purpose of simplifying the subject that aroused significant discussions and different interpretations, Djuvara insists only upon two main theories discussed in the last decades: the comprehension and the explanation. Presenting the main backers of the two theories, the author does not hesitate to place himself amongst the first backers, because, if for the analytic philosophers - like Russel and Wittgenstein or Karl Popper - at the basis of history there is only the explanation, the comprehension stemming from the first and is without scientific value, appearing in the shape of the psychical phenomenon called empathy, Heidegger's school of existentialist hermeneutics considers comprehension (*Verstehen*) as immediate and primordial through intuition (*Einfühlung*). Consequently, in Djuvara's view, history, is comprehensible only through psychic, that means through direct communication with the other, through logical reasoning that can only be subsequent, like a control, not a discovery through intuition. Thus, comprehension is a primary element in the historical science, the explanation being more than an attached comment (p.63). For advocating and highlighting, through concrete examples, his point of view, the author browses - by the means of „historic curiosity“ and „biography validity“- the tools and personal experiences, in other words the psychical, sentimental and instrumental baggage of the historian in the journey for returning the past. Our historian ends his plea by stating that intuition precedes explanation, although this continues to remain an element that cannot be avoided in the historical speech, because, without interpretation, the studied moment or issue cannot integrate in the evolution of mankind. Thus, „interpretation is the activity through which the historian gives, in the evolution of mankind, meaning to some phenomena from the past in which he acknowledges some value“ (p.82).

Showing, thus, that the whole process described above implies a chain (the studied phenomenon having consequences, springing in its turn from something) Neagu Djuvara passes in the next chapter to exemplifying the notion of „cause” in History. Departing from the simple fact that any event has causes and that these causes need to be looked for in its antecedents, the author evokes and quotes the great philosophers of antiquity and modern times – Aristotle and Kant – concluding that the concept of „cause” is „used by historians universally and without exception, being of absolute heuristic necessity” (p.94). Despite all these, Djuvara doesn’t hesitate to state that its definition remains imprecise, while using it remains the observer’s decision, who, studying the circumstances of an event, considers that he is able to discover how it happened and what caused it to happen, trying, thus, to get closer to the truth. The truth and more precisely how can the notion of truth in history be circumscribed is the issue raised in the fifth chapter of the book. The historian, as well as the researcher and the reader want and expect to know the truth regarding a past event, according to Leopold Ranke’s motto: „wie es eigentlich geschehen ist”. Of course, the importance of truth for history cannot be denied „stricto sensu”, the issue Djuvara raises is that this truth, towards which the researcher and the reader aspire sincerely, can be asserted only on the basis of documents and the scholars’ statements. This truth based on a statement, if not verifiable as a fact, can easily become a lie through incorectness, omission, addition of invented events to the real ones through the intentionally wrong interpretation of some precise events (p.96). Although practically the historians consider certain an entire series of events, the author draws attention to the fact that these can have a narrow applicability.

By proving, with concrete examples from the universal history, the difficulty of establishing the historical truth, even through the accordance of a statement with a real event, Neagu Djuvara goes on to highlight the most frequently used model in historiography, the truth as a state of cohesion between two concepts. This is used to explain the way in which the attributes of truth and true can only mean „the correlation between our statements and a network of already accepted statements” (p. 101). For this method to survive, very high internal cohesion is needed, accompanied by trustworthiness of the image that is projected and of the explanations he presents to justify it, then the lack of desire to control the notion of truth, especially the accuracy and the entirely good intentions of the researcher. Djuvara also mentions two very sensitive issues: the meaning of history and the historian’s need for objectivity. Referring to the meaning of history, the author only briefly presents the great philosophical debates and the christian explanation of history, evaluating these thoughts as „exterior to our preoccupations referring to the quality of truth” (p.114); regarding objectivity, Djuvara is very clear and explicit when he advocates that „the historian does not have to be objective” (p.116), because his mission is to understand and discover from the inside of conscience the human

deeds, intentions, ideas and ideals, nor from the outside, because these concern the human, the individual and the society; thus the author prefers to replace the concept of „objectivity“ with „impartiality“ or „evenness“. The way in which this can be attained is „a succession of partiality“, that requires every time a great effort of subjectivity (p.117). To sustain his thesis, the author gives two eloquent examples, the history of Transylvania and the province of Kosovo, projecting on them different internal and external visions, his conclusion being very clear: „somebody who would want to be objective would understand nothing from this millennial history“ (p.122).

Although concise, the next chapter lightens up even more the idea of creativity, highlighting the connection between narration and narrator, thus the limits from this perspective of the historical objectivity. Just by highlighting the historiographical mutations and the succession of the historical schools in France, Neagu Djuvara reaches the reasonable conclusion that the first obvious, immediate and incontestable relativity is the one of the individual perception, because two observers cannot have totally identical perceptions. This makes the author conclude that „the relativity of the historical piece of writing is continuous and not only due to the observer's personality but also because as time passes, the meaning of the past changes“, the reality concentrated in the paradoxical formula „the present creates the past“ (p.129).

The previous statement constitutes the centre of the last chapter of the volume – „the objective causes of the relativity of history“. The core of this demonstration is based on the fact that the image that we have about the past – no matter the epoch, but the further this is the more chances are for new discoveries to be made and fructified, these might even change the image completely – is continuously enriched through new discoveries, researches, lived by unnoticed elements, that give it a new color by the latest researches. Djuvara concludes by saying that the historian is condemned to have a rather unhappy fate as „he has to accept the thought that his work can never represent an edifice built for eternity but just a brick or a wall corner of a building that crumbles continuously, as in master Manole's legend“; building that, we are doomed to rebuilt over and over again as in Sisyphus's myth (p.145). This reality makes the author state that history is „first of all art“ and only then a long and meticulous and scientific research and only in the end, a science (knowledge) but never a pure one; in this case the greatest chances to survive are the poet's, not the historian's.

Proving to be a poet in the larger meaning – a real saviour of the logos – Neagu Djuvara brings, before our eyes, not only the fruit of a rich bibliography, very well synthesized and presented orderly in a book with the purpose of answering the question „Is there a real history?“, and succeeds in enriching the conclusions picked from the meditations and theses of great scientists with his own thoughts and conclusions, gathered in over 90 years of life. This explains the fact that in a few pages, the old historian, man of culture shows

professionalism, honesty and wisdom, writing about the great passion of his life: History and the inquiries derived from it, manage to place in the hands of the professional historian and the simple Romanian reader a book necessary from the point of view of the correct understanding of the historical phenomenon in itself, and especially of the becoming of historical writing in time.

Neagu Djuvara manages to prove that history as science and the historian as researcher have limits, the limits of a human, history revealing itself as the resuscitated and reconstructed present, which inevitably becomes subjective, because the historian as simple human subjected to time is, even unwillingly, influenced by the times in which he lives.

Thus, the presented volume proves to be a superb piece of reading for everyone interested, passionate and preoccupied by history, being also a real lesson taught eloquently by a great historian, that can only be admired and of course read.

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**Gábor Gyáni, *Az elveszített múlt. A tapasztalat mint emlékezet és történelem (The losable past. Experience as memory and history, Nyitott Könyvműhely, ), Budapest, 2010, 376 p.***

*Are we asking too much of history?*<sup>5</sup> is a question raised by a renowned researcher, Allain Megill, quoted by Gábor Gyáni numerous times in his articles. Well, after reading the present volume, the question arises involuntarily, whether Gyáni, to paraphrase Megill, *does not claim too much from historians?*

The Hungarian scholar has already accustomed us with his provocative ideas in his volumes dedicated to the theory of history.<sup>6</sup> The situation is somehow similar with this work (which is otherwise his eighteenth volume). The aim of this book is to goad one to rethink. In the author's opinion, historical research has come to the end of the illusion, maintained by the scientism of the last two centuries, precisely that of absolute truths. More specifically, the postmodern has brought the inevitable, the emergence of collective memory, which had a major impact on public consciousness, and that seems to announce the crisis of national historiography. In this context it is necessary to conceive again, and in a different way, as soon as possible, our historical consciousness and experiences. So it is assumed that history "as it really was" (Ranke) may be

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<sup>5</sup> Allain Megill, *Are we asking too much of history?* in Donald A. Yerxa, *Recent themes in historical thinking: historians in conversation* (Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2008), pp. 9-16.

<sup>6</sup> *Emlékezés, emlékezet és a történelem elbeszélése* (Budapest, 2000. 200 p.); *Posztmodern kánon* (Budapest, 2003. 135 p.); *Relatív történelem* (Budapest, 2006. 297 p.).

reconsidered, even more, it can be revised using the infinite amount of individual and collective experiences of the past. Therefore, this volume gives us some alternatives to use the knowledge gained through the study of the Past.

The topics discussed in the articles arranged in four units, were mostly written by request, they have appeared in journals and collective volumes, and are representative for an intellectual issue and attitude, which reflects on the one hand, the author's concerns, on the other hand the public's curiosity.

The three articles of the first unit are part of a theoretical system (*Historiography in the postmodern era*). The first chapter, suggestively titled *Rethinking history*, aims to exhibit the new emerging trends in historical theory. The author is actually warning the professional historians, pointing out the fact that today history is made not only by historians. The phenomenon is by no means a new one. Resurrecting the past in historically inspired literature is likely to become more convincing than the detailed and possible fair reconstruction practiced by professionals. Assuming that reading is no longer fashionable and that the historical novel is not read, the public will satisfy its curiosity about history through cinema and television. The visual and emotional impact on people watching the programs written by non professionals and reading literature are far more powerful than those that a professional historian can offer. According to the author here comes the huge success of *public history*. In Gyáni's opinion, this conjuncture will give birth to two types of historians; namely those who will place the act of rethinking the past above improving our knowledge of it, and who will join the international historiography, becoming cosmopolitans; and those who are still marked by national paradigms, which in turn, will use media, television appearances, etc.... and will eventually contribute to the creation of political discourse. The second chapter (*Archival canon and the historiographical experience*) applies to a large extent the pre-set ideas, the author trying to capitalize the current ideological trends in probably the most sacred place of historians, the archives. Not surprisingly, shortly after its appearance in the *Archival Review* the article generated lively reactions, from 'fellow cosmopolitans' as well as from the absolute defenders of this institution.<sup>7</sup> The author exposes first his general ideas related to archives, citing classics such as Droysen, and evoking some of his own experiences as archivist. The article ought to shatter the illusion of the archival source's supremacy, by presenting the institution of the Archives, as having primarily an administrative function, that of classification and not necessarily that of retaining the traces of historical reality. Furthermore, ranking the documentary sources and detaching them

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<sup>7</sup> Katona Csaba, Szeriális történetírói kánon és történetírói tapasztalat in *Levéltári Szemle* (2009/1); Nagy Sándor, Levéltárak és használói igények in *Levéltári Szemle* (2009/1); Bolgár Dániel, Levéltári kánon és egy tapasztalatlan történetíró in *Levéltári Szemle* (2009/2); Takács Tibor, Sancho Panzától az álmok palotájáig: néhány megjegyzés a levéltárról in *Levéltári Szemle* (2009/2).

from the wider context, seems to be a part of a selection process; and the result of this selection, the chosen documents would still remain open to a variety of interpretations. The last chapter of this unit (*Everyday-life as analytical category*) combines in a fortunate way theory with practice, presenting a comprehensive analysis of everyday life in Horthy's Hungary.

Therefore, the first unit reflects the author's anxieties about the function and role performed nowadays by history and historians. But Gyáni did not take into account another important element. Despite the exhortation to the cosmopolitan attitude, most historians, even more so in Transylvania, are writing for a small public. Moreover, in our case, for several decades, we felt a sharp drop in the interest of learning the Latin, German and Hungarian paleography, so that the past can easily be lost, foremost because those who are supposed to decipher it will no longer exist. And if the future is cosmopolitan we have all the chances to lose not only the past but our future as well. Even so, clearly the author's theory is a mental challenge that should be, for any historian, a call for reflection.

The volume proceeds further, in three units, experiences of the past in the dynamic relation of memory – history – narrative.

The second unit (*Past experience as memory*) includes five items clustered around personal and collective experiences, and which, except the last article (case study: *What do László Németh's autobiographies witness about?*) presents historiographical issues related to collective memory and identity. The first item (*Collective memory and historiography: a contradictory relationship*) reviews some ideas expressed by the most prominent theorists of the subject, from the French tradition of historiography (Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Paul Ricoeur), Jewish (Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi), German (Walter Benjamin, Georg Iggers, Jan and Aleida Assmann) to the most recent works in the field (Peter Burke, Allain Megill, Jeremy Black). The article discusses the duality of memory and commemoration, namely the national consciousness and conscience of heritage, and the postmodern critique of the dual system of collective and historical memory. In the author's view the fact that in our day history is equalized with collective memory is indirectly a consequence of the Holocaust. In this statement, the author's conclusions are based on Megill and Black, both researchers criticizing the fact that the whole literary and film production, including the historical ones, lends credence to the primacy of collective memory over history. Despite the fact that there are connections between habits, traditions and historiography, they should be treated with discretion and separately, because otherwise historiography may lose all of its critical functions. The next article (*The two forms of collective memory: traditional and historical knowledge*) takes over topics from the previous one, in order to specify, and why not, deepen them. The author will discuss the importance of historical education in schools and the need for vulgarized scholarly historiography in order to penetrate the public sphere. The following articles are centered on identity (*Identity, memory, place – Identity, religion,*



history) and intend to elucidate the various types of identities: national, ethnical and group, especially since today, according to Gyáni, we are witnessing the inflation of the term, that seems to hinder the correct perception of identity. Articles discuss issues of local and popular histories, which created confusion between myth and reality, and the public's refusal to assume the history made by historians. Gyáni illustrates the creative power of the national mythology through concrete Hungarian cases, such as the worship of the chronicler Anonymous in the nineteenth century, the Mohács syndrome, (even in the equation Şiria / Trianon – creating the impression that Hungarian history is in a continuous fall since Mohács), or Széchenyi and Kossuth.

The volume continues with five articles, grouped around the experiences reflected in history (*Past experience as history*). The unit begins with an article, which, in our opinion, is by far the most elaborate and developed study in this collection (*Historicising the concept of historical experience*). We are initiated in the philosophical world of impression experiences defined by Dilthey, in the world of post-feelings, in the visual culture of Flanders, seized successfully by Johan Huizinga, Simon Schama and Frank Ankersmit, into Michel de Certeau and Hayden White's characteristic skepticism, into the narrative continuity of Paul Ricoeur, David Carr and Alasdair McIntyre, in Hans Georg Gadamer, László Tengelyi and Reinhart Koselleck's hermeneutics. The historiographical presentation made by Gyáni is not easy reading; readers will be confronted with their own limitations in perceiving the past. The article suggests that despite the historian's professional aspiration to reconstruct the past as it was, without the use of appropriate theoretical tools, the historian will fail to satisfy its scientific ambitions. The past is not an opposed extension of the present, neither its preparation, but especially not a direct factor of the prevailing present (192), the past receives its meaning and significance in the present, being also dependent on contemporary structures. Gyáni suggests that the issue discussed, has to become a plausible topic to contemporary historians, who, we have to admit, are quite skeptical about the ideological and theoretical essence of their science.

The following articles present the relationship between history and myth (*The Past recounted in myth and folklore*), between past and historical time (*Narrative and non-narrative historical time, Discursive time in Historiography*), and between space and history (*Nationalizing the space: acquirement and expropriation*). The author urges historians to patience; because historical time is an area with many traps. According to Gyáni, historians must have forbearance, wait for the past to come to an end and to become history, until not only the importance but the significance of the events is revealed.

In the last unit of the volume, Gyáni examines the fundamental components of trauma. This part actually includes most articles, all focusing on topics of contemporary history, either having a concrete subject, such as the *First World War and peasant memory* or *Suppression and the narratives of Memory* (1956), either theoretical, such as *Trauma, memory, worship; Visible and invisible violence*

and *Remembrance and oblivion as political strategy*. We would like to draw attention to the last articles: *Our place in Holocaust historiography* and *The twentieth century as a mental event*. The first one, at the time of its appearance, sparked major agitation among researchers concerned with Jewish history,<sup>8</sup> who accused Gyáni of superficiality and ignorance. Despite the fierce criticism, some of it even biased, the author included this article in the present volume, assuming its content, even indicating in his footnotes the divergent position of its critics. The last article of this volume, *The twentieth century as a mental event*, proposes to rethink the traditional chronologies, pointing out the limitations of the classical system of centuries and ages. The situation is particularly complicated for those who are concerned with contemporary history. These researchers face an immense amount of stories regarding the tragedies of the twentieth century, because these events withdraw themselves from scientific explanation. According to the author those who are interested in the contemporary era are deprived of scientific narratives and will remain with a strong feeling of frustration, mostly because it is impossible to give a reasonable explanation of the events, so that most historians could offer, nothing but mere descriptions.

Returning to the question we raised at the beginning of this review, the answer is definitely yes! Gyáni seems to demand a lot from historians, first of all to think through history, to throw away the old historiographical clichés, to abandon the chronicler's style and to assume their responsibility, not for the authenticity of their work, but for their point of view, taking into account that their narratives and discourse are relatively autonomous elaborations from the past; and are at the same time dependent of the chosen methodology and contemporary influences. To whom does such an endeavour serve? Certainly not Truth, but mainly to professional exigency, because it offers a new approach, as contemporary as possible, we dare to say cosmopolitan.

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**Keiji Fujiyoshi e. a., *Archives, Accountability and Democracy in the Digital Age*, Japan Society for Promotion of Science, Koyasan University, Wakayama, Japan, 81 p.**

This work, realized in the spirit of Japanese management and efficiency, is the result of a research project designed to examine Archive record keeping and research management. The comparative research was conducted between 2006 and 2009, in Japanese, Hungarian and Australian Archives, and it was finalized

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<sup>8</sup> Pók Attila, Én, mi és ti. A magyarországi Holokauszt kutatásról in *Kommentár* (2008/5); Karsai László, A magyar holokauszt-történetírásról in *Kommentár* (2008/6); Frojimovics Kinga: Helyünk a holokauszt történetírásában Yad Vashemből nézve in *Kommentár* (2008/6).

in this short, but very thorough volume, which contains seven studies. Head of the research group was Keiji Fujiyoshi, Associate Professor at Kayasan University, sociologist by profession. The research group is characterized by interdisciplinary members: among them we can find historians, economists, sociologists, lawyers and archivists.

The introductory chapter, signed by Keiji Fujiyoshi, is an interdisciplinary essay about Archive Management and perspectives of its development from methodological, technical and institutional points of view, in a liberalized, research-friendly environment. Kazuhito Isomura's study examines – as its title suggests – “the gap” between Knowledge Management and Record Management, basically – but not only – using a technological approach, relying heavily on research methods characteristic to managerial sciences, the case-study itself is containing the examples from several international corporations. Its bibliography also relies first of all on articles from prestigious Management Journals, like “Information Management Journal”, “Harvard Business Review”, “Management Decision”, “Records Management Journal”, etc. It is also well illustrated with tables, figures and schemes.

It is noteworthy, by the way that all of the authors – who are Japanese by ethnicity – beside bibliography in their own, Japanese language, are well qualified in results of research on international level in their domain, a fact proved by the large volume of works in English included in the bibliography.

Genaro Mizuyaki's work, the *Ombudsperson NGO's and Effective Information Disclosure in Japanese Local Government* explores those factors which determine the effective process of information disclosure in case of Japanese local units of Government Administration. The text contains very few references and many practical data, based on domains of Japanese Politics and Public Administration. Junta Ohada's study is a classic piece in the field of Constitutional Law. Bearing the title *Meaning of Archivists in the Japanese Constitution*, it operates with the methodology of Legal Analysis. Following a longer introduction, the study presents the historical roots of the current situation of Archive Administration in the USA and in Japan, making also some – but not quite in a complete manner – comparisons, displaying admiration for the more liberalized American system. The study ends with constructive criticisms and suggestions, urging the reform of the Japanese system. Sakiko Morimoto's study, *Is it possible to conduct genealogical research in Japanese Archives? Examining the possibilities* presents the major characteristics of research in Genealogy in contemporary Japan, comparing it to Australia. It is based mostly on the author's personal experience – he himself being a teacher of Archival Sciences – and his conclusions speak for themselves. Because of this, we will cite entirely the last two paragraphs:

*In addition, amateur researchers should be welcomed into the reading rooms, and Archives should do their best to support their research as far as possible. A little consideration in the preparation of funding aids could support them.*

*Archivists in Japan are working very hard to serve society by opening access to as many records as possible despite regulatory and other restrictions. The archival system in Japan will develop further when both archivists and the users understand and appreciate each other's efforts and need.*

As we can see, the suggestions not only have a rather general Character, they also reflect well our own current situation too.

Keiko Tamura's *Archives as Record and Memory Keepers of War* could easily be a basic reading for anyone interested in the History of World War II history in the Far East. It contains a brief introduction to major Japanese Archives and Collections that are dealing with Documents in this field.

The closing chapter has only five pages together with diagrams, but it can be very interesting for anyone interested in internal ( internal = inside an Institution – a . n. ) document – and data management systems. It also examines the possibility of applying the data-management systems of the English-speaking world in other cultural environments, the case-study being, naturally, about Japan.

In conclusion, we have to appreciate this interdisciplinary and original research initiative, including its present results. In our opinion, the same initiative can be adopted and initiated in our own cultural-geographic region too. It might contribute to the improvement of our own archivist and research systems too.

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**Ralf Emmers, *Geopolitics and Maritime Territorial Disputes in East Asia*, Routledge Security in Asia Pacific, Routledge Publishers, London, 2010.**

This book is, in its primal sense, a geopolitical analysis and even more than that. Edited in the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon geopolitical school, / which places, first of all, special emphasis on the Maritime Power – Continental Power relationship – and applies ideas of great classics of Geopolitics to the present realities of the East Asian region.

The author – as Routledge authors generally are – is an expert of his field of research: he is associate professor and head of Graduate Studies Institute at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of the Nanyang Technological University from Singapore. The present work has a large and selected bibliography, whose titles contain 16 pages beginning on page 188, documenting what the book has in total. As we are accustomed to with Anglo-Saxon authors, the bibliography is in English, and is formed not only by general works and specialty books, but also by numerous articles from prestigious journals (such as *Asian Survey*, *Security Dialogue*, *China Quarterly*, etc.),

articles in current newspapers, printed or online, from recent years, and also some official statements and documents, conference and working papers, and also dissertations. Among the authors of works mentioned in the bibliography alongside the Anglo-Saxon majority, we can find many Chinese names, and also some Indian sources as well.

The central theme of this book is well synthesized in its title. It tries to understand (and also to present) the dynamics of maritime territorial disputes in East and South China seas, by using methodology characteristic to geopolitics, geostrategic and in part, of theory of international relations. The first chapter is an introduction that defines the notion of geopolitics as part of international relations and describes the conceptual framework applied in this volume. Bearing the title *The Influence of Geopolitics on Maritime Territorial Disputes*, it deals with the key-concepts of territory, natural resources, distribution of power, but also with the much more complex notion of geopolitical interplay. This chapter does not surpass the theoretical level: its few pages contain no case-studies, while concrete events are the subject of subsequent chapters.

Chapter two, *The Geopolitical Considerations of East Asian Claimant States* introduces us to the general characteristics of East Asian geographical and political realities. One by one, the author presents, in a few pages in a synthetic analysis, the current situation of China's geopolitical interests (continental China: a. n.), Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. In these presentations, the role of internal political forces is mentioned very rarely: on the other hand, general economic aspects – especially those related to natural resources, like the energy export of Vietnam, or the dependence of the Philippines's economy on coal from China, Indonesia and Australia – are pointed out.

The next chapter, *The Senkaku/ Diao yu Dispute* introduces the reader into a less known issue for most of the western people, even for specialists. It is however a very old issue and represents an important Apple of Eris between the two Chinese states and Japan. The whole issue is about a series of small, uninhabited islands, having first of all, strategic and symbolic value for the parties involved in the dispute. However, presumably, there are also gas and oil resources in their area, a significant potential for fishing and the issue itself can represent a parallel for Romanian analysts too: it reminds us of course, in a different setting and on a different scale, of the issue of the Serpents Island.

If the Sakaku/Diao yu dispute has only a few participants, the issue of the Paracell and Spratly Islands, as the author formulates it, is complicated by the great number of disputants: the claimers of the Paracels are China, Taiwan and Vietnam. In the case of the Spratly Islands, there are six claimants: China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. The balance of power is asymmetric and constantly changing in favor of the rising continental power, Red China.

The two chapters discussing concrete case-studies are followed by two more general and theoretical ones. The *Geopolitical interplay in the East and South China Seas* is based on the comparative analysis of the two case studies, followed by the investigation of the interplay of three geopolitical considerations of the post-cold War era. The chapter further examines the possible future evolution of these issues. It presents the possibility of a possible escalation of a maritime territorial dispute, but also a positive scenario concerning the possible role of the interaction of different geopolitical considerations in diffusing tensions. The author considers that a possible one-sided intervention of the USA could be much more a source of unrest and risk, than a real solution. In addition, chapter six *Conflict Management and Revolution in the East and South China Seas* deals with the issue of managing the previously presented maritime territorial disputes, and their possible resolution. Probably this chapter has the most interdisciplinary structure and characteristics, relying heavily on knowledge from the domain of Conflict Management. The appendix consists of several maps, notes (of the chapters), bibliography and index of names and locations.

This analysis is to great extent a comprehensive and complete work. Besides illustrating the growing importance of other parts of the world for the Far East, it introduces the reader to the past reasons for some of its complicated issues, related to territory defined first of all as being a symbolic space. Much more could have been written- for example, the possible impact of involvement of "outsider" powers like the USA, the Russian Federation, India, Australia, etc. - in these disputes. Nevertheless, the book itself is - and probably will remain - a valuable contribution to the complicated, but more and more important issue of East Asian geopolitics.

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