

The Reformation and Its Configuration in Early Modern Transylvania

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Preliminary Remarks

A GAINST THE backdrop of the Schism of 1054, the separation between the Western Latin Church with its center in Rome and Eastern Orthodoxy grew. In the West, canon law as well as the doctrine and liturgy allowed for innovations, which in turn increased the distance between the two legal spheres and also interrupted partially the continuity present since the Late Antiquity. These innovations included the formerly excluded institutionalization of parallel structures (dioceses and parishes), in competition with the Eastern Church, the celibacy of priests, but also the insertion of *filioque* in the Trinitarian creed (*Nicaenum*) of the ancient ecumenical church councils.¹ Finally, the Schism was also defined by the theology and practice of the Eucharist. In the East, the use of leavened bread and the distribution of both elements of bread and wine during the Lord's Supper were essential to liturgy and preserved the tradition. In the Western Church, at the end of the High Middle Ages, the lay participants were no longer presented with the wine chalice and were only given the bread (the Host). The 1215 Council of the Lateran focused on one interpretation of the theological meaning of the Lord's Supper (Greek *Deipnon kyriou*), which the Church fathers interpreted in a variety of ways; the Western Church elevated the doctrine of transubstantiation to the level of dogma.

The relationship between officials of the church on the one hand and the political power and the secular elites, on the other, underwent a dramatic turn: until the eleventh century, the German King (*rex*) and Emperor (*imperator*) of the Holy Roman Empire as the sacred/anointed king had a (layperson's) claim to ecclesiastical power. Pope Gregory VII, in his dispute with Emperor Heinrich IV, started the investiture controversy as part of the reforms entailing theocratic claims. The investiture controversy ended with the Concordat of Worms (1122), a compromise reached after violent clashes. The feudal rule of the clergy retained its constitutional role, and the bishops and prelates of the empire continued to rule over their territories similarly to the secular lords who swore allegiance to king and emperor. In return, however, the ruler refrained from appointing bishops. The aura of the sacred royalty had faded.

This federal distribution of power was a constitutional reality at the beginning of the early modern period in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation: ² the secular and clerical prince electors and the higher nobility of the princes, as well as the newly joining imperial cities of the fifteenth century, decided during the Imperial Diets the fate of the

German kingdom, as the King/Emperor could not rule without them and their consent. Imperial politics and imperial reforms could not function without the financial might and taxes of the estates. The King and the princes became reliant on the cities. Ultimately, the negotiation of imperial policy required the consensus and the consent of the decision-making delegates, because the administrative implementation of the resolutions by imperial diets was in the hands of the decentralized estates, i.e., the imperial cities and the princes in their respective territories, generally small and fragmented.

However, while the political actors at the imperial diets could take opposite positions, they nevertheless reached agreements³ on reforms in 1495 and 1500 and presented a united front against the strengthened but secularized papacy of the Renaissance era and its insatiable need for money. In the cities themselves, but sometime also in wealthier villages, the secular elite, educated in a humanist spirit, took the initiative to limit the abuses of the clergy. The increased piety in Germany at the end of the fifteenth century was reflected not only in the construction and adornment with high-quality artistry of the churches. In this respect, citizens and town councils took the initiative and provided financial means to employ qualified preachers, whose payment came from the local budgets. The “piety theology,”⁴ including the reception of monastic and scholarly treatises as well as the adoption of monastic forms of piety in the everyday life outside the monasteries, was a decisive prerequisite for the subsequent perception of Reformation ideas and impulses.

The rural and urban communities insisted that the priests paid by them should perform the liturgy in person on site (“Kommunalismus”⁵), i.e., the benefices should not be given to non-local clergymen, who did not serve in the parish. In the cities, the institutionalization of the “preaching office” (Latin: *praedicatura*) meant the permanent employment of the priests who were spiritually and rhetorically talented, usually well-educated.⁶ Moreover, the election of educated and competent individuals in these positions by the local political elite indicates a new trend, which can be seen in some territorial lordships as well, in the so-called *Vogteirechte* (“bailiff rights”), whereby landlords were in the influential position to protect, but also to advise the monasteries. This was the phenomenon of the “land ruler’s church government,” when the respective local or regional political authority declared its competence over the external regulation of ecclesiastical affairs and even put this claim into practice.

Returning to the imperial level, we can see that despite other differences, imperial estates were united in one matter, namely, the complaints against the measures decided by the *curia* in Rome. The “Gravamina nationis Germanicae” were a constant issue on the political stage and at the imperial diets and resulted in a relatively united opposition of all the actors at the imperial diets against the Roman Curia. Martin Luther captured the critical point of this attitude in his writing *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation / An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation* (1520)⁷, which was met with the expected positive response.

In Hungary and Transylvania, the reign of Matthias Corvinus represented a period of unprecedented cultural flourishing. Still relatively protected from the menace of the Ottoman expansion, the humanism emanating from the royal and episcopal courts left its mark on the land and its elites. In Transylvania, the three estates consolidated their political union as the *unio trium nationum*, which marginalized both the Orthodox inhabitants on account of their confessional difference (the Romanians) and the Romani, considered “alien” because of their strange lifestyle and customs. For the *fundus regius*, the Royal

Lands where the privileged Saxon colonists lived, the *Universitas Saxonum* was recognized officially in 1486 as their juridical and administrative community.⁸ Concurrent with or shortly after the establishment of settlements and urban centers by German-speaking colonists in twelfth and thirteenth-century Hungary—including the mining towns of Altsohl, Neusohl, Kremnitz, and Schemnitz, as well as in the Spiš and Saros counties (Bardejov)—a similar colonization process occurred in northern Transylvania (Bistrița/Bistritz) and southern Transylvania (near Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár). Specifically, this took place in the province of Sibiu/Hermannstadt (Latin *Cibinium*), extending from Orăștie to Drăușeni (“von Broos bis Draas”), and subsequently in Burzenland—Țara Bârsei.

The rights and privileges granted in 1224 in the “Andreanum” royal charter and reinforced over the centuries included, among others, the right of the Saxon communities to elect their own priests, but also that these priests were entitled to the entire tithe. Thus, the “confraternities” of the local priests in the church chapters also acted as financial districts that collected church taxes (the contributions to the cathedral, *census cathedralicus*, and other payments). A dean (*decanus*) was in charge of an ecclesial district (*capitulum*). Around the year 1500, the entire structure was represented by the “clergyman fully collecting the contributions,” the so-called “general dean,” whose office was first documented in 1502. Around 1520, from an ecclesiastical point of view, the Saxon communities were not included in a unified structure, but were organized around two centers: the privileged colonists from the *fundus regius* were subordinated directly to the archbishopric of Esztergom (Latin: Strigonium, German: Gran), more precisely, they were not under the jurisdiction of the regional bishopric of Alba and thus exempt. On the contrary, the settlements located in the counties of Transylvania were subordinated to the Catholic bishop of Alba Iulia and had to pay him a quarter of the tithe. The formerly influential Cistercian abbey of Cârța/Kerz was dissolved in 1474 and incorporated into the parish of Sibiu/Hermannstadt. The same fate had already befallen in 1424 the provostship (*praepositura*) of Sibiu. This increased influence of the parish church in Sibiu was officially acknowledged in 1503, when a papal breve granted the senior parish priest a partial episcopal status: on ten feast days a year, he was allowed to celebrate the pontifical high mass with all the insignia of a bishop, together with the pontifical blessing. The main church in Sibiu was serviced by 24–26 chaplains, including the 15 priests of the former provostship, all under the authority of the town’s senior priest. Thus, the building of the parish church in Sibiu, whose construction was completed in the second half of the fifteenth century, had a cathedral-like function and was fitted out and adorned accordingly. In parallel with these developments, the status of the parish church in Brașov/Kronstadt and that of the chapter of Țara Bârsei was also elevated with pontifical rights, also granted to the local parish priest in 1503.

I. The Reformation Movement and the Three (Respectively, Four) Centers of Influence

THE REGIONAL divergence within the territories of the Catholic church in the West can be discerned since the fourteenth century. After the end of the Avignon papacy (1376/1377) and its dependence on the French elites, the future of the papacy was

still undecided. Competing popes (1414) had to be renounced, and the effort to lead the church collegially (*conciliarism*) temporarily received broad support. Eventually, power was consolidated under the Renaissance popes, while the centralist and monarchical constitution, including the theological prerogative of the pope (*papalism*), prevailed.

During the stages when this development was still incomplete, however, deviant reform currents and groups not only emerged, but they also coagulated into structures. Even if the separate phenomena have to be differentiated, the overall perspective can discern a first “surge of segregation,” which could be said to have reflected the tendency towards dissolving the unity of the Western Church. This refers to the movement of John Wycliffe, the Waldenses, and the followers of Jerome of Prague and Jan Hus. For the latter, the Utraquists, the peace of Kutna Hora of 1485 meant that they were granted an ecclesiastical “separate area” within a defined territory in Bohemia. In France, the 1516 concordat of Bologna represented a similar sort of ecclesiastical autonomy.⁹ Under the surface of a seemingly homogenous Western Latin Church, lead from Rome, tendencies towards pluralization were already manifest to some extent.

The Reformation ideas from Wittenberg, stemming from the university professor Dr. Martin Luder (Graecized: ELEUTHERIOS: i.e., “freed,” “liberated”), an observant Augustinian monk, appeared without any reference or connection to the segregation tendencies mentioned above. As Helmar Junghans phrased it so aptly, Luther (1483–1546) was a humanist of the Bible, a biblical studies scholar with a focus on the Old Testament. He was interested in the source texts in their original languages, the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. From a hermeneutical point of view, Luther distanced himself from the usual scholastic method, namely, from the interpretation methods influenced by Aristotelian philosophy. His university reform broke with scholasticism. His theological reform focused on the contents of the biblical books that had to be taken in with a critical mind, while distancing oneself from the dominant model since Antiquity of the four senses of Scripture. Luther defined his hermeneutics with three important maxims (aphorisms), which thus became the model for the Protestant interpretation and also for the social ethic and political vision.

The first one referred to the difference between *Law* and *Gospel*: Luther defined Law as God’s claim that his word be obeyed; however, people realize how much they trespass against this law and therefore come to despair.¹⁰ They fear eternal damnation as punishment. The Gospel (*Evangelium*), on the other hand, is God’s promise to have already realized the salvation of mankind in Jesus Christ. The redemption and eternal salvation are based on the faith (*fiducia*) in atonement from the Christ’s death on the cross, which has been representing and including the sinners, and has its effects in the everyday life ethic of the “fruits of faith” but without a fearful observance of the law.

The second principle was that of *claritas Scripturae* (“the perspicuity of Scripture”), which held that the Holy Scripture and its message are clear in themselves, despite some passages of the Bible which are obscure and difficult to understand. This means that on the basis of internal reference, the statements needing explanation can be elucidated and interpreted rigorously.

The third principle propounded by Luther was the dictum “*Was Christum treibet*” [“What drives Christ home” / “What promotes Christ’s cause”].¹¹ Herein lies, on the one hand, the essence of the prophecy of Christ’s coming in the Old Testament, but on the other hand

it holds the focus of Christ's proclamation and message transmitted in the Holy Scripture, especially in the Gospels and the Epistles.

It was precisely from this perspective of interpretation that biblical humanism made possible the return to the "good news" of the early Christianity for Luther and the theologians following him, who were thus living in a "simultaneity" with the first Christian congregation.

The evangelical theologians recognized the decisions of the early church councils as legitimate quintessential biblical texts, but the church tradition was being questioned and scrutinized, and in many cases rejected or abolished for not conforming to the Bible.

The general principle developed by Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) and Martin Luther in 1520/1521 was *sola scriptura*—"(by) Scripture alone."¹² All further developments are based on this biblical humanistic principle and on the application of the three hermeneutical maxims discussed above (Law and Gospel, the clarity of the Holy Scriptures, and "what drives Christ home"), as they were essentially recognized by all the main figures of the evangelical Reform currents, albeit with shifts in emphasis. Even the "authorities" resorted, among others, to this line of argumentation and to the authority of the Holy Scripture in their political or social ethical decisions.¹³

With the presence of the theologian thinker and author Martin Luther, with that of Philipp Melanchthon, known as *praeceptor Germaniae* (the teacher of Germany), with that of Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558), an expert in church ordinances, and with that of other thinkers, Wittenberg was a significant center for the nascent Reformation movement. Initially, the reception areas were the German-speaking urban centers (as far as Riga or Sibiu), but also humanist circles in episcopal or university towns as far away as England, southern Spain, or southern Italy. They also included Zurich and Strasbourg, and from there the movement reached individuals and communities from rural areas, open to the theology of piety and to biblical humanism.

Humanist and theologian Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) was active in Zurich, where he managed to introduce the Reformation into the Swiss urban "republic." From there, the Reformation spread in Switzerland and to southern / Upper Germany. At the same time, Zurich and the surrounding region were proving less suitable for theological movements that undermined or questioned the solidarity of the community with apocalyptic ideas, such as the Anabaptists: citizens were bound by the civic oath in the urban context. The consequence was the theological and juridical demarcation as well as the political persecution of such deviant ideas. A stronger emphasis on the social and ethical aspects of the commandments of the Old Testament characterized this urban humanist reformation in Zurich. In addition, Zwingli outlined a communion theology with a specific symbolism, which in turn led to fierce theological controversies and conflicts and ultimately divided the Protestant movement and later denominations.¹⁴

In the free imperial city of Strasbourg, the third center of the German evangelical Reformation, many actors were active against the bishop and his claims for power.¹⁵ Furthermore, certain political and theological factors played their role. The town authorities, oriented towards humanist ideals, the mayor (*Stettmeister*) Jakob Sturm (1489–1553), educated in theology and a confident politician within the empire, together with the local elites, and the challenges represented by the refugee groups under the care of Johannes Calvin (1509–1564) were all key elements in the progression of the Reformation within their city.¹⁶ In addition to other humanist-minded pastors and their wives (!), Martin

Bucer (1491–1551) had a similarly significant influence. Owing to his indefatigable efforts to bridge theological differences, Bucer succeeded to have “religious dialogues” with the adherents of the old faith in a consensus-oriented manner. Together with Melancthon, Martin Bucer achieved a breakthrough in the agreement known as the Wittenberg Concord (1536), between upper German and Wittenberg communion theology. Bucer’s writings were also received in Transylvania and his printed works have been preserved in libraries until now.

In sixteenth-century Transylvania, the first place of reference and correspondence was considered to be Zurich. After Zwingli died on the battlefield in the second battle of Kappel in 1531, his place was taken for the next five decades by Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575).¹⁷ Johannes Honterus (eventually), Martin Hentius and, first of all, the Hungarian Reformed figures were all in correspondence with him, especially after the Consensus Tigurinus (1549) concluded between John Calvin and Bullinger. Geneva, together with the Dutch universities under the strong influence of the evangelical Reformed theology, such as Franeker, but also Heidelberg in the Palatinate or Herborn in Hesse, became thus the fourth center of the Reformation, spreading the Reformation ideas to Hungary and Transylvania. This influence was decisive for the Evangelical-Reformed (Calvinist) confessionalization and its establishment in Transylvania before and after 1600.¹⁸

II. Thematic Focal Points and the Specificity of Their Regional Reception with Special Emphasis on Church Ordinances

The sola scriptura Principle and Its Consequences

THE REFORMATION was a movement of the Bible. The biblical humanism of Luther and the interest in the books of the Bible in their original languages were not confined to the auditorium halls. Melancthon asked Luther to translate the Holy Scripture from the ancient texts into the vernacular language. Luther’s intention was to make the Holy Scripture and its message accessible and understandable to all people, who were baptized almost without exception. According to the dictum of the clarity of the Scripture, all faithful should be able to understand it, either by reading it themselves, or by “reading by listening.” Luther’s translation emphasized the rhetorical and acoustic features of the texts, considering the high illiteracy rate in the sixteenth century. This promoted the growth of the congregational church, aiming to awaken the faith, to realize it within the community and to make it possible to reason and articulate it clearly.¹⁹ These fundamental motifs provided the impetus for the translation work: so that the biblical message reaches the people through the language of their daily life (as it was spoken “at home” and “in the street”) and thus touch their hearts.

This impulse had an effect in all regions and language areas of Europe and promoted not only translations of the Bible but also the use of lectionaries (*Agenda*) and of hymn-books with the church songs (*Gesangbuch*). The dissemination of the basic Christian notions through catechisms configured as dialogues became important formats for popu-

larizing the new teachings. Moreover, in Wrocław/Breslau there was a Polish edition, in Sibiu a Romanian translation, in Cluj a Hungarian one, in Cracow a Hebrew edition, in Tübingen a Slovenian one. The *sola scriptura* principle acquired a special characteristic in Transylvania, which can be considered a pioneering act in Europe. Here I am anticipating the last decades of the sixteenth century: as Mihály Balázs has been able to show, the historical critical exegesis and interpretation of the Bible, which is only available in manuscripts, emerged in the context of the anti-Trinitarian reception of the Bible. The late humanist Jacob Palaeologus (ca. 1515–1585), active in Alțâna/Alzen, was the first who developed this method which was discovered in the scholarship only in regard to later discourses during the early Enlightenment.²⁰

The Role of Education

The Reformation was a movement of education. In the beginning, the rejection of the scholastic method and of traditional educational content, together with the renunciation of monastic vows and the subsequent draining of the monasteries and their schools, as well as the questioning of traditions led to a brief collapse of the school system in many places. Luther called on the urban elites first of all to invest in the education of boys *and* girls, in order to educate future leaders, clergymen and leaders/disseminators, i.e., to educate responsible people overall.²¹ Melanchthon formulated school regulations and curricula for the elementary education system.²² The educational canon was redefined: among others, from 1529 onwards, the Small Catechism became basic reading, but at the same time the simplified and illustrated version of the Bible (“Passional”) was published in the same year, for the “simple-minded” (namely, illiterates and people with limited reading skills). Furthermore, there were prints with texts for other forms of educational institutions, with content compatible with the Protestant ethic. In addition, newly devised school theater plays were introduced, based on biblical or non-biblical texts, which popularized these and in the best case prepared pupils for university. Martin Bucer even pleaded for a form a late baptismal instruction for those who had been baptized in infancy, the confirmation, which was introduced more widely only in the eighteenth century (in Transylvania as well).

For the case of Transylvania, we can identify clearly the echo of the drive for education: Johannes Honterus,²³ humanist and council member in Braşov/Kronstadt, opened a *trivium* and a *quadrivium* in his home town; these were education programs based on the liberal arts. Furthermore, he founded a printing press in 1538/1539, which in the beginning published school “textbooks.”²⁴ Among other things, Honterus published a *Cosmography*, in fact an encyclopedia composed in Latin hexameter and with a school atlas as its appendix.²⁵ Moreover, Luther’s Small Catechism, a lectionary (*Agenda*), and a hymnal (*Achtliederbuch*) with strong influences from Anabaptist theology²⁶ were printed in the press run by Honterus. German translations of the Bible were still imported. School play performances are documented in Braşov in that time. The seminal church ordinance known as the *Reformatio Coronensis*, written and printed by Johannes Honterus for his home town, will be discussed below.

We know that in 1544 the printing press in Sibiu also produced a Romanian translation of the Catechism, unfortunately lost.²⁷ In 1550, the first print of Luther’s Catechism

was published in the town of Cluj, followed by a wide range of other Reformation prints in Hungarian.²⁸

Liturgy and Eucharistic Theology

These vernacular prints, which need to be understood in the context of education and piety practice and which promoted understanding and articulate expression, i.e., maturity, go hand in hand with the efforts to offer the liturgical services in the vernacular language of the respective congregation. The reformation of the ritual in Wittenberg took place in two stages: the first phase, from 1523, introduced the baptism in the mother tongue and from 1524 introduced the use of German songs during the liturgy. The songs were first printed on broadsheets but were quickly collected into the form of hymnals. The second phase of the reform of the liturgy and its crowning point was the introduction of the lectionary (*Agenda*) for the Lutheran service in 1526.²⁹ With the elimination of the sacrificial character and the dogma of the transubstantiation, the Lord's Supper was again distributed to the faithful in both forms (bread and wine). The idea of the "transformation" of the elements was rejected, and in turn the faithful held the theological view of the mysterious presence of Christ *in actu* (in the faithful reception of the sacrament). In line with this, a German-language lectionary was printed by Honterus in Braşov and a Hungarian one in Cluj by Kaspar Helth (Heltai Gáspár, ca. 1515–1574). Later, a Calvinist lectionary followed, in line with the Swiss theology; moreover, a Unitarian version of the Heidelberg Catechism as well as a Unitarian gradual have been preserved.³⁰

Ecclesiastical Law and Church Ordinances

Since papal jurisdiction had been disputed starting with the demonstrative burning of the canon law in Wittenberg in December 1520, it followed that the papal or the episcopal legal system had to be replaced. This replacement happened at a different pace and in different fashion in the German territories: sometimes as a revolution, and often as a transformation or a moderate reform, respectively. Political (secular) authorities thus seized the opportunity to regulate church matters based on their claim to sovereign church rule, as Luther had already advised them to do in his "Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation." With the emperor's nimbus of sacred rule finally negated because he had made a pact with the "Antichrist" in Rome, the secular, Christian (i.e., Protestant-minded) authorities, initially in the cities and later the territorial rulers (including female regents), took the regulation of external church affairs into their own hands. This was done by means of the respective church ordinances.³¹

Kings, princes and city councils gained legitimacy for their ecclesiastical actions from their self-representations as custodes utriusque tabulae and from the model of the pious kings of the people of Israel. Their inherent secular tasks, such as keeping the peace and care for the common weal (bonum commune) were expanded. From the princely point of view, favoring the Reformation included oversight of the proper worship of God in sermons and the admin-

istration of sacraments, since the (secular) authorities understood this as an indispensable prerequisite for the well-being of their subjects and no longer saw it guaranteed by the previous church officials. The secular authorities therefore now know that they were equally responsible for the secular and spiritual salvation of their subjects and claimed the right to Reformation, the *ius reformandi* as their sovereign right. Although the reformers from Wittenberg prohibited the coercion of conscience, they nonetheless conceded that the secular authorities were in charge of establishing external ecclesiastical conformity as a condition for civil conformity.

In the preface to the church ordinance of 1537, King Christian III of Denmark formulated his understanding of his role in church matters in a striking manner: he saw *cura religionis* and *custodia utriusque tabulae* as a genuine task of the political authorities. He divided the questions pertaining to the church into two areas: *ordinatio Divina* and *ordinatio nostra*. The divine ordination, which was unchangeable, included preaching, administration of sacraments, church doctrine, maintenance of church servants, schools and welfare for the poor. Everything else was subject to the *ordinatio nostra*. In this group, Christian III included orders about people, times and places, about the manner and form of the liturgy, visitations, proper behaviour, church singing, ceremonies and so on. However, even for this area the following applied: *Omnia enim talia debent servire verbo Dei* (All these things are meant to serve the word of God). At the same time, the care for one's salvation and for the salvation of the subjects was by no means the most stringent motive for the Reformation. Alongside this reason, and sometimes even more importantly, there were also political and state interests at play.³² (transl. by Mária Pakucs-Willcocks)

As mentioned, as Eike Wolgast has put forward, the justification and spiritual basis for the introduction of the Reformation

was generally the appeal to the Holy Scripture, while the concrete ways differed greatly in their detail: there was the adoption of the Reformation as a single action or a processual introduction through ordinances and measures. In cases when orders of the authorities concerning the Reformation were not directly addressed to the clergy or to the subjects in general, then the addresses were princely or municipal officials. They were given the task of ensuring that the remodelling was carried out according to the official prescription and had to supervise its local implementation. Often, as a first step, they inventoried the vasa sacra, the church adornments and then confiscated valuables that had been declared incompatible with the new ritual, such as monstrances, pacificals and reliquaries, as well as superfluous communion utensils, especially chalices and precious vestments. What was materially usable usually quickly disappeared into the state mint. In various cities and occasionally also in small territories, the old doctrine was discredited through disputations, in which only the Holy Scriptures were admitted as arguments and the secular officials acted as mediators. As a result of disputations, the city councils regularly felt entitled to decide to introduce the Reformation. The most important instruments for the introduction of the Reformation in Central and Northern Europe were visitations for the practical part and church ordinances for the theoretical part. While church visitations were an institution already practiced in the old church and in the sixteenth century were used by state authorities for the reformation, church ordinances in turn represented a new form that formally followed the pattern of land and police regulations that had become

*common since the late Middle Ages. Therefore, the church ordinances were the product of the Reformation by secular authorities; they were issued by the sovereign, who often had his coat of arms printed on the title page to vouch for their official character, or by the city councils/magistrates, even if their actual content was provided by theologians. Church ordinances were legislative acts of the state authorities, which fixed bindingly the confessional status of a territory. More than any other documents, church ordinances indicated that the ecclesiastical sphere had become the responsibility of the state. Now it was the task of the state to put into law doctrine and ceremonies and to ensure their homogeneity in the realm.*³³ (transl. by Mária Pakucs-Willcocks)

In Transylvania, the introduction of the Reformation by the councils of towns from the *Universitas Saxonum* was prepared in an unusual way. In 1538, a religious discussion had taken place in Sighișoara/Schäßsburg in the presence of King John I (Szapolyai), but the outcome remained undecided.³⁴ However, in the following months, in Brașov the reformation of the education began, in a manner similar to the reform of studies in Wittenberg before 1517. The first school textbooks were printed in the printing press of Johannes Honterus, which could be read in a reformist key even before the introduction of the Reformation by the town council (but not exclusively). The education and school reform in Brașov preceded the introduction of the Reformation. It seems that a religious debate was not taken into consideration at all, and the liturgy was reformed directly. When the organist Hieronymus Ostermeyer wrote in 1542 that “in mense octobris the papist mass had been abolished,”³⁵ the new edition of Honterus’s cosmography could also allude to this event as the application of the Reformation. In this regard, the revised edition of the *Rudimenta cosmographica* contained an addendum that Brașov/Kronstadt was the first Evangelical city of the Western world to be hit by sunlight.³⁶ Brașov was therefore considered the easternmost point of the Western (Evangelical) Christianity and was thus placed within the community of the Western Church threatened by the Ottomans. The official introduction of the Reformation in Brașov began with the introduction of the Evangelical mass in the turbulent weeks of October and November 1542, followed by the visitation of the parishes in Burzenland in December and the election of the new town council after Christmas. There are three programmatic writings from 1543 that express this process: the school regulation in four parts (*Constitutio Scholae Coronensis*), the German hymnal (Eight-Songs-Hymnal) by Andreas Moldner and the *Reformatio ecclesiae Coronensis ac totius Barcensis provinciae* by Honterus.³⁷ These texts were supplemented with the *Apologia reformationis* that Honterus wrote and printed when he was summoned for a debate (*in negotiis religionis*) by Queen Isabella and Governor Georg Martinuzzi to Alba Iulia, at the princely palace.

This *Reformatio ecclesiae Coronensis* represents the precursor and the first version of the later church order of the Transylvanian Saxons. The introduction of the Reformation in Kronstadt and Burzenland in the weeks of the autumn in 1542 was achieved and implemented in a coordinated action by the ecclesiastical chapter of Burzenland and the town council of Brașov together with the political elite of the district.³⁸ For the territory under the jurisdiction of the *Universitas Saxonum*, an assembly of learned men, namely, the Saxon town pastors, formulated a revised version of Honterus’s “Church reform.” The *Kirchenor-*

dnung aller Deutschen in Sybembürgen respectively the *Reformatio ecclesiarum Saxonicarum in Transylvania* was debated, decided, translated and printed in the Latin and German versions,³⁹ and finally introduced in 1550 for the entire area of the *Universitas Saxonum*.⁴⁰ In order to designate these events with the precise terminology of the scholarship, I propose to define them as follows: the introduction of the Reformation in the territory of the Saxon National University was based on the decisive actions that were agreed upon and carried out in cooperation with the members of the secular and ecclesiastical elites. These events took place over a short period of nearly ten years, with an initially rather conflict-ridden drastic change, but in the following period became a relatively moderate transformative process, which retained many traditional elements. The process consisted primarily in a turn away from the medieval Latin Western Church and in a consolidation as an Evangelical Church in the jurisdictional territory of the Saxon National University, but also in the secondary settlements of the counties, governed by Hungarian nobles.

The transformation process outlined above can be illustrated with the following example: in the first phase, the position of the priests and their pay were questioned. The tithe and its collection by the pastors, as in the pre-Reformation period, is not mentioned in the *Reformatio ecclesiae Coronensis*. However, we cannot prove whether this was the reason for the conflict between the Braşov town council and parish priest Jeremias Jekel, who left and became a pastor in Prejmer/Tartlau. The text only mentions that the “church servants” (*diaconi*) as helpers to the priest should be paid “better” than before (*peşser*)⁴¹ and not hired and fired like servants on one-year contracts. The church order of 1547, however, reveals that attempts had been made to remove the tithes and other church revenues and property from priests and to transfer them into the management of the town or village, and that local authorities had tried to take advantage of parish vacancies.⁴² For this reason, in 1547 the retention of the complete tithe by the local clergy was expressly stated in the text. This privilege that had been part of the Saxons’ rights since the Andreanum of 1224 was finally defended by the Saxon National University, especially during the last third of the sixteenth century, when Transylvanian princes first obliged the Saxon clergy to “lease” one quarter of the tithe and to give it up as a state tax in the seventeenth century. The disputes and legal proceedings continued until the time of the Habsburg rule, before the *Productional Forum*, in the eighteenth century, but were lost in the end. In principle, however, the pastors received the remaining tithe as a tax on the *Hattergrund* (i.e., the tithe was considered a land tax for the entire living population in the local district), even in parishes that continued to exist as sinecures. These were pastors positions in the parishes that since the seventeenth century were no longer held by Lutheran Saxons, and the non-Protestant inhabitants living in their place paid the land tax to the Lutheran pastor, usually without any spiritual counter service. The taxation of the tithes continued until it was abolished in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution in 1850. The Austrian state replaced the old tax form, which was protected by privilege, with the payment of “tithe equivalents.”

However, an opposite tendency can also be observed, namely, the one regarding the socio-ethical questions of the care of the poor, but especially the protection of orphans, as well as in marital conflicts or sexual morality, where an improvement, or at least a biblically based welfare and social control, respectively social disciplining, were initially strived for (in the *Reformatio ecclesiae Coronensis*). These regulations were specified and emphasized

in the church order of 1547.⁴³ Finally, the legal code of the Saxons, the *Eygen-Landrecht* was printed and approved in 1583, which completed and competed with certain juridical competences that used to belong to the church. The code of law was meant for use in practice in communities and led to a certain form of legal pluralism (forum shopping) and to individuals being able to choose their preferred way of legal action. This development stood in contrast to the church's claim to sole jurisdiction in matters related to marriage. The appeal process for divorce petitions led from the local priest to the dean and to the highest instance with the superintendent (and later the Ecclesiastical Synod). At each level, they strived for reconciliation, and the ultimate evidence for these efforts is the marriage tower in the fortified church in Biertan/Birthälm, where quarreling couples were locked up together for a certain amount of time to encourage them to make peace.⁴⁴ The fact that this sometimes merciless attempt could also fail is proven not only by the rare divorces, which are possible in Protestant canon law and therefore pronounced after all, but also by the information collected from the church registers by genealogists, that some of the spouses left the other partner in order to flee to distant territories far away, unreachable by the authorities.

Conclusions

THE ECHO of the Reformation in Transylvania reveals that the fundamental **theological** decisions from Wittenberg (the Holy Scriptures as the source of norms and the *custodia utriusque tabulae*) were adopted in their essence without much change, which can also be seen in the texts of the church orders. Nevertheless, it was above all the clergy, with the later support and cooperation of the secular elite of the estate of the Universitas Saxonum, who succeeded in securing the traditions and legal status inherited from the Middle Ages and in sustaining them in a long transformation process. These two aspects gave the Wittenberg-oriented Reformation a thoroughly hybrid character (cf. the definition formulated above). However, one should emphasize several essential characteristics as the essential differences between the ecclesial situation in Transylvania and in the Lutheran territorial churches in central Germany, concerning the application and practice of ecclesiastical law; the comprehensive independence of the ecclesiastical University (Synod) in the secular Universitas Saxonum (as the political authority), and the sometimes fierce controversies about visitations. Furthermore, other roles and responsibilities of the religious institutions defined their relationship to the political power, such as: the financial independence of the parish priests from the secular authorities based on their collection of the tithes together with the right to jurisdiction in matrimonial matters, and the competence of ecclesiastical authorities to impose death sentences and to have them carried out by the secular authorities.

All these realities show that until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Transylvanian case was different from the church organizations in German territories. The Transylvanian Saxons had no consistories, and the superintendency was not a "territorial church" in the usual sense, because its authority extended also to the tenant peasant communities of the counties ruled by the Hungarian nobles.

The hybrid character of this church system can also be observed in another thematic area, as shown by a report by the French traveler Pierre Lescalopier from 1574, who reported on a church service in Cristian (Neustadt/Burzenland), where he attended the liturgy in a pre-Reformation-like church interior decorated with murals, in which a Latin-language liturgy was held and the clergy officiated in chasubles. It was only at the Eucharistic celebration that he became aware that a Protestant service was being celebrated there and that the “papist mass” had been rejected.

It remains a task for future research to further trace these ambiguities and to show the regional characteristics and the echo of the developments coming from the German areas. It is crucial to understand that in the case of Transylvania, a pluri-confessional region with a hybrid character, there were never “direct” imports, but all these influences and transfers were adapted and transformed.

(Translated from the German by MÁRIA PAKUCS-WILLCOCKS)



Notes

1. This Latin addition represented for the Eastern Church, and justly so, the theological danger of the subordination of the “pneuma” (πνεῦμα) within the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to the Eastern Church Orthodoxy, such a “hierarchy” (as a ranking of Father and Son over/above the “pneuma”) did not respect the unity of God (*homo-ousios*) of the three persons of the Trinity.
2. Emperor Frederic II (1192–1250) was obliged to share his power in the German kingdom with the leading nobility, especially the princes. In the charter known as *Statutum in favorem principum*, Frederic II had to grant secular princes similar privileges and territorial rights as the ecclesiastical princes had received in 1220, in the agreement known as *Confoederatio cum principibus ecclesiasticis*, including important *regalia* such as coin minting, market and customs rights, the right to build fortifications and the administration of justice.
3. In the case of lasting differences, the various imperial diet colleges (*curiae*) contributed to reaching a consensus: the compromise was reached with an ambiguous formulation, which in turn allowed for the respective executive bodies to interpret the wording differently. This form of a not similar (Latin: *dis-simul*) understanding of the agreement was applied in order to “get over the matter” temporarily with a moratorium on decision-making but without a final decision. The art of “dissimulation” was used frequently especially in the sixteenth century, in the religious controversies.
4. Berndt Hamm, *Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts. Studien zu Johannes von Paltz und seinem Umkreis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1982); Berndt Hamm, “Was ist Frömmigkeitstheologie? Überlegungen zum 14. bis 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Praxis pietatis*. FS Wolfgang Sommer, ed. Hans-Jörg Niden and Marcel Niden (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999), 9–45.
5. Peter Blickle, *Kommunalismus: Skizzen einer gesellschaftlichen Organisationsform*, 2 volumes (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000).

6. Adinel C. Dincă, “Die Prädikatur der siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Pfarrkirche vor der Reformation. Quellenauswertung und lokale Zusammenhänge,” in *Initia Reformationis Transylvaniae. Vielfalt, Aufbrüche und Rezeptionsräume in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed Ulrich A. Wien (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2025), 65–98.
7. Martin Luther, *An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation. Von des Christlichen standes besserung* [Melchior Lotter: Wittenberg, 1520; VD 16 L 3759], in: WA [Weimarer Ausgabe] vol. 6, 416–427.
8. Márta Fata, *Ungarn, das Reich der Stephanskronen, im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung: Multiethnizität, Land und Konfession 1500 bis 1700* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2000); Edit Szegedi, “Konfessionsbildung in Klausenburg und Kronstadt – Der Anspruch der Homogenität und die heterogene Wirklichkeit,” in *Exportgut Reformation. Ihr Transfer in Kontaktzonen des 16. Jahrhunderts und die Gegenwart evangelischer Kirchen in Europa*, eds. Ulrich A. Wien and Mihai D. Grigore (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 185–195; István Keul, *Early modern religious communities in East-Central Europe: ethnic diversity, denominational plurality, and corporative politics in the principality of Transylvania, 1526–1691* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Ulrich A. Wien, *Crossing Borders - impact of reformation in Transylvania since the 1520s: Diversity of Faith and religious Freedom in the Ottoman Zone of Influence*; with a foreword by Volker Leppin (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022).
9. The apostolic majesty in Upper Hungary also gained special conditions.
10. Albrecht Peters, *Gesetz und Evangelium* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1981); Bernhard Lohse, *Luthers Theologie in ihrer historischen Entwicklung und in ihrem systematischen Zusammenhang* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995) [Engl. *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, transl. and ed. by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999)].
11. Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God* (Grand Rapids/MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 125.
12. See the contributions in Stefan Alkier (ed.), *Sola Scriptura 1517–2027. Rekonstruktionen – Kritiken – Transformationen – Performanzen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019).
13. Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Gottes Wort und Menschenherrschaft: politisch-theologische Sprachen im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich: Beck, 2015), 131–184.
14. Amy Nelson Burnett and Emidio Campi (eds.), *A Companion to the Swiss Reformation* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016).
15. Georges Livet et al. eds., *Histoire de Strasbourg au coeur religieux du XVI^e siècle* (Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, 1977); Thomas A. Brady, *Ruling Class, Regime and Reformation at Strasbourg: 1520–1555* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Matthieu Arnold, “Strasbourg – Martin Bucer and Katharina Zell,” in *Europa reformata*, ed. Michael Welker, Michael Beintker and Albert de Lange (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 399–408; Marc Lienhard, “An der westlichen Grenze des Deutschen Reiches. Die Stadt Straßburg und die Reformation,” in *Exportgut Reformation: ihr Transfer in Kontaktzonen des 16. Jahrhunderts und die Gegenwart evangelischer Kirchen in Europa*, ed. Ulrich A. Wien and Mihai-D. Grigore (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2017), 75–84.
16. Matthieu Arnold (ed.), *Johannes Sturm (1507–1589): Rhetor, Pädagoge und Diplomat* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Matthieu Arnold ed., *Jean Calvin: les années strasbourgeoises (1538–1541). Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (8–9 octobre 2009) à l'occasion du*

- 500e anniversaire de la naissance du Réformateur Jean Calvin (Strasbourg: Presses Univ. de Strasbourg, 2010).
17. Emidio Campi, "The Reformation in Zurich," in *A companion to the Swiss Reformation*, ed. Amy Nelson Burnett and Emidio Campi (Leiden /Boston: Brill, 2016), 59–125.
 18. Jan-Andrea Bernhard, *Konsolidierung des reformierten Bekenntnisses im Reich der Stephan-skrona: ein Beitrag zur Kommunikationsgeschichte zwischen Ungarn und der Schweiz in der frühen Neuzeit (1500–1700)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2015).
 19. Herman J. Selderhuis explains that "Faith is crucial, because believing is the only good work that we have to do. Everything that does not originate from faith is sin. In this way, Luther wanted to articulate a vision of Christian obedience that was devoted to God but not weighed down by the demands of the law," in Herman J. Selderhuis, *Martin Luther. A Spiritual Biography* (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2017), 139.
 20. Mihály Balázs and Gizella Keserű, "Kühne nonadorantistische Pioniere der Bibelexegese: Die siebenbürgischen Antitrinitarier und die europäische Bibelwissenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Initia Reformationis Transylvaniae. Vielfalt, Aufbrüche und Rezeptionsräume in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ulrich A. Wien (Berlin/ Boston: de Gruyter, 2025), 501–528.
 21. Martin Luther, *An die Radherrn aller stedte deutsches lands: das sie Christliche schulen auf-frichten vnd halten sollen* (Wittenberg: Cranach, 1524) [VD16 L 3800], reprinted in: Martin Luther *Deutsch-Deutsche Studienausgabe* 3 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 360–405.
 22. Nicole Kuropka, *Philipp Melanchthon: Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft: ein Gelehrter im Dienst der Kirche (1526–1532)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); Heinz Scheible, *Mel-anchthon. Vermittler der Reformation. Eine Biographie* (München: Beck, 2016); Markus Wriedt, "Bildung, Schule und Universität," in *Philipp Melanchthon. Der Reformator zwischen Glauben und Wissen. Ein Handbuch*, ed. Günter Frank, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 141–154; Christine Mundhenk, "Philipp Melanchthons Beziehungen zu Un-garn und Siebenbürgen im Spiegel von Netzwerken und Korrespondenzen," in *JEMC* (2021.1): 103–118.
 23. Ulrich A. Wien, *Crossing Borders – Impact of Reformation in Transylvania since the 1520s. Diversity of Faith and Religious Freedom in the Ottoman Zone of Influence*. Refo500 Aca-demic Studies 86 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 2022), 67–83; Andreas Mül-ler, "Kronstadt and Honterus," in *Europa reformata*, ed. by Michael Welker, Michael Beintker, and Albert de Lange (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 217–226; Agnès W. Sálgo (ed.), *Honterus-emplékkönyv* [Honterus "Festschrift"] (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2001); Ludwig Binder, *Johannes Honterus. Schriften, Briefe, Zeugnisse* (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1996); Karl Kurt Klein, *Der Humanist und Reforma-tor Johannes Honter: Untersuchungen zur siebenbürg. Geistes- und Reformationsgeschichte* (Hermannstadt: Krafft & Drotleff, 1935).
 24. Thomas Sindilariu, "Johannes Honterus," in *Johannes Honterus, Reformatio ecclesiae Cor-onensis ac totius Barcensis provinciae, Corona 1543 = Reformation der Kirche in Kronstadt und der gesamten Burzenländer Provinz, Kronstadt 1543 = Reforma bisericii în Braşov şi a întregii provincii a Țării Bârsei, Braşov 1543 = A Brassói Egyház és egész Barcaság re-formációja, Brassó 1543*; übersetzt von Anne Türk-König und Raduch Zsolt, ed. Bern-hard Heigl and Thomas Şindilariu (Kronstadt: aldus Verlag / Heidelberg: Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 2017), 12–14.

25. Johannes Honterus, *Rudimenta Cosmographica: Grundzüge der Weltbeschreibung* (Corona/Kronstadt: Honterus, 1542), eds. Robert Offner, Harald Roth, Thomas Şindilariu, and Ulrich A. Wien (Bonn/Hermannstadt: Schiller 2015, ³2020).
26. Ulrich A. Wien, "The Hymnal (1543). Spiritual Openness and Ethical Emphasis in the Urban Reformation of Kronstadt (Transylvania)," in *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 23.2 (2021): 134–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14622459.2021.1923267>; Wien, *Crossing Borders*, 85–104.
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29. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, vol 2: *Ordnung und Abgrenzung der Reformation 1521–1532* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1986), 123–138, 246–253.
30. Edit Szegedi, *Ringens um den einen Gott: Eine politische Geschichte des Antitrinitarismus in Siebenbürgen im 16. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023).
31. Sabine Arend, "Emil Sehling: Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnung des 16. Jahrhunderts. Die wechselvolle Geschichte eines Editionsprojektes (1897–2020)," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 159 (2023): 171–197. The author defines this term as follows: "Kirchenordnungen sind Regelungen, die seit dem 16. Jahrhundert auf der Grundlage der evangelischen Lehre Richtlinien für Kultus, Sozialfürsorge und Schule sowie für die innere Organisation und das Recht der entstehenden evangelischen Landeskirchen geben. Landesherren und städtische Magistrate, die sich zu Luthers Lehre bekannten, verstanden sich als christliche Obrigkeiten, die sich in göttlichem Auftrag zum Handeln aufgefordert sahen, in einer als Endzeit empfundenen Epoche den Zorn Gottes abzuwenden. Mit Kirchenordnungen griffen sie in einem bis dahin nicht gekannten Maße in den kirchlichen Rechtsbereich ein. Sie trafen Regelungen für viele Bereiche, zu denen der Kultus (Gottesdienst, Abendmahl etc.), die Organisation des Kirchenwesens (Ämterstruktur, Kirchenleitung), das Eherecht, die Armen- und Krankenfürsorge sowie die schulische Bildung gehörten." See also as further literature on the current state of research: Eike Wolgast, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts als kodifiziert Reformation. Ergebnisse eines Heidelberger Editionsprojektes* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2021); Sabine Arend and Gerald Dörner (ed.), *Ordnungen für die Kirche - Wirkungen auf die Welt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015); Sabine Arend, Norbert Haag, and Sabine Holtz (ed.), *Die württembergische Kirchenordnung von 1559 im Spannungsfeld von Religion, Politik und Gesellschaft* (Epfendorf am Neckar: Bibliotheca-Academica, 2013); Heiner Lück, "Kirchenordnung," in *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. 2, ed. Albrecht Cordes et al. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, ²2012), 1805–1812; Gottfried Seebaß, "Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen und ihre Bedeutung für das neuzeitlich-europäische Staatsverständnis," *Jahrbuch für badische Kirchen- und Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2009): 15–28; Jürgen Kampmann, "Kirchenordnung," in *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit*, vol. 6, ed. Friedrich Jäger (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), 662–667; Anneliese Sprengler-

- Ruppenthal, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zu den Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Anneliese Sprengler-Ruppenthal, “Kirchenordnungen II/1,” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 18 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 670–703; Karla Sichelschmidt, *Recht aus christlicher Liebe oder obrigkeitlicher Gesetzesbefehl? Juristische Untersuchungen zu den evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).
32. Eike Wolgast: “Die Einführung der Reformation im internationalen Vergleich” [hereinafter “Vergleich”], in *Kirche und Politik am Oberrhein im 16. Jahrhundert*, eds. Ulrich A. Wien and Volker Leppin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 13–15.
 33. Wolgast, “Vergleich,” 17–19.
 34. Wien, *Crossing Borders*, 157–158.
 35. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt*, vol. 4: *Chroniken und Tagebücher*, Vol. 1 (1143–1867), ed. Julius Groß (Kronstadt: 1903), 504.
 36. Johannes Honterus, *Grundzüge der Weltbeschreibung*, transl. by Lore Poelchau, ed. Peter Pauly, in: Johannes Honterus, *Rudimenta cosmographica*, 225–263, quote from page 235: “Diese Stadt folgte als erste Europas der christlichen Lehre, wird von den Strahlen der aufgehenden Sonne wirksam erleuchtet.” (Engl. translation: This city was the first in Europe to follow the Christian doctrine and is effectively illuminated by the rays of the rising sun.) As the author Honterus was aware of the existence of Eastern Orthodoxy, the wording he chose most probably alludes to Protestant Christianity.
 37. *Evangelische Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 24: *Siebenbürgen (Das Fürstentum Siebenbürgen, Das Rechtsgebiet und die Kirche der Siebenbürger Sachsen)* [henceforth: EKO 24], ed. Martin Armgart in collaboration with Karin Meese (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 177–190 (Latin), (German) 191–202; cf. Wien, *Crossing Borders*, 85–104.
 38. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt*, vol. 3: *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Kronstadt (1475) 1541–1550 (1571)* (Kronstadt: Zeidner, 1896), 178.
 39. EKO 24, (Latin) 206–225, (German) 226–246.
 40. EKO 24, 258: “Est igitur conclusum, ut in singulis civitatibus, oppidis et villis ecclesie iuxta Reformationem ante triennium editam reformari debeant ac quique pastores ecclesiarum secundum eandem Reformationem sese accomodare et vivere debeant.” The church ordinance had an immediate impact on the town council of the major Saxon towns, who adopted the role of legitimate authorities and took heed of the measures included in the text: Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, “The Honterian Reformation and Its Influence on Transylvanian Town Magistrates,” in *Initia Reformationis Transylvaniae. Vielfalt, Aufbrüche und Rezeptionsräume in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ulrich A. Wien (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2025), 47–64. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111376530-003>
 41. EKO 24, 199.
 42. EKO 24, 229 (1547), I.6 “Es sol auch niemand aus keinerley ursachen unterstehen, abzubrechen der pfarrhen oder dergleichen kirchen amter gerechte zugeng ... [translation: Nor should anyone, for any reason whatsoever, take the liberty of reducing or abandoning the lawful contributions to the parish or similar church offices]”; analogue to the Latin version.
 43. EKO 24, 238–241.
 44. Richard Schuller, *Der evangelisch-sächsische Pfarrer in seiner kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung* (Schäßburg: Markus, 1930), reprinted as *Der siebenbürgisch-sächsische Pfarrer. Eine Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Ulrich A. Wien (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), 320–346; *Synod-*

alverhandlungen der Evangelischen Superintendentur Birtihalm 1601–1752. Urkundenbuch der Evangelischen Landeskirche A. B. in Rumänien, vol. 3/1 (Hermannstadt: Honterus 2019), 468–471; see also the contributions of Julia Derzsi, “Unzucht und Ehebruch vor Gericht. Sexualdelikte bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts,” in *Common Man, Society and Religion in the 16th Century: Piety, Morality and Discipline in the Carpathian Basin / Gemeiner Mann, Gesellschaft und Religion im 16. Jahrhundert: Frömmigkeit, Moral und Sozialdisziplinierung im Karpatenbogen*, ed. Ulrich A. Wien (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2021), 275–296 and Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, “The idea of good marriage at the end of the sixteenth century Transylvania: Mathias Raw vs. Catharina Birtalmer,” in *Common Man*, 309–320. It remains an imperative task for future research to investigate the abundant archival material of church marriage records (up to 1897).

Abstract

The Reformation and Its Configuration in Early Modern Transylvania

The present study provides an overview of the main political and religious events in European history that led to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and discusses the particular traits of the reception of Reformed ideas in Transylvania, especially the church ordinances and their political impact. Emphasis is put on the Reformation in the Saxon communities of the Transylvania, who adopted a Wittenberg-inspired but nevertheless hybrid form of Reformed theological ideas. The author presents the main characteristics of the ecclesiastical and theological setup of the *Universitas Saxonum* and the reciprocal influence and cooperation of ecclesial and secular elites, with mental and spiritual consequences not only for the Saxons, but also for the tenant peasant communities in the Transylvanian counties.

Keywords

Catholic Church, Reformation, Transylvanian Saxons, parish priests, church ordinances, tithes, social discipline, hybridity