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Historical and Ecclesiastical Realities in the Southwest of Transylvania during the Principality (1541-1688)

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Abstract

Inaugurated in 1541, the period of Principality represented a period of profound political, social, economical, cultural and religious changes. The Church, an omnipresent institution in the medieval life, went through major transformations, their effects being felt nowadays. In general, the confessional dialogue of the Orthodoxy with the Reformation was not too friendly. The Calvinist proselytism had two distinct periods. If in the 16th century Romanians were attracted to the Protestantism by their unification in a Calvinist bishopric, in the following century the main target of the protestants in Transylvania was the obligation for every bishop to accept Calvinist conditions. An integrant part of the space between the Carpathians, the territory of the present county of Hunedoara faced the same historical suffering; this study wants to present some aspects of the Romanians' past from these lands.

Keywords

Principality of Transylvania, Hunedoara county, Orthodox Church, Reformation, Romanian population

I. Historical preliminary

Confronted with the perspective of constituting a strong anti-ottoman coalition under the jurisdiction of the Habsburg's House, the powerful sultan Soliman I the Magnificent (1520-1566) started the offensive to Central Europe. Belgrade was the first conquered city in 1521. The military failure from Mohács in 29th August 1526 where the Hungarian army was defeated by the Turkish and the Buda's conquering (8th September) released the fight for supremacy in Hungary the Habsburgs and the voivode John Zápolya of Transylvania – supported by the majority of Hungarian nobles, traditionally hostile to Vienna and having the support of the High Gate – asking the legacy of Hungarian crown's heritage. The double election – in November and December – of Ferdinand of Habsburg and John Zápolya released a powerful military conflict between the two claimants to Hungary's crown that lasted more than a decade¹.

The hostilities temporarily closed in 1538 when, by the agreement made in Oradea on 24th February, it was decided that after the death of Zápolya, Transylvania and parts of Hungary ruled by him to be offered to the Habsburgs. The agreement was not respected because on July 1540 the sultan recognized John Sigismund (1540-1551; 1556-1571), the minor son of the late Hungarian king; the conflict started again. Against the Habsburgs expansion, the sultan conquered Buda again (29th August 1541), transforming the central and southern Hungary into a Turkish pashalic for almost 150 years. The territories on the left of Tisa – Transylvania, Banat, and so called “Partium” (the counties Sătmar, Bihor, Zarand, Crasna, Middle Solnoc, Exterior Solnoc and, sometimes, Maramureş) entered the Transylvania Principality, having the capital in Alba Iulia, under ottoman suzerainty but enjoying a wide autonomy. Transylvania was being lead by the prince chosen by the Dieta and acknowledged by the sultan².

¹ Ștefan ȘTEFĂNESCU, Camil MUREȘAN (coord.), *Istoria românilor IV. De la universalitatea creștină către Europa „patriilor”*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2001, pp. 503-507; Ioan Aurel POP, Thomas NÄGLER, András MAGYARI (edit.), *Istoria Transilvaniei II. De la 1541 până la 1711*, Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane / Editura Episcopiei Devei și Hunedoarei, Cluj-Napoca / Deva, 2016, pp. 13-80.

² In extenso: Cristina FENEȘAN, *Constituirea Principatului Autonom al Transilvaniei*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1997, passim; I. A. POP, Th. NÄGLER, A. MAGYARI (edit.), *Istoria Transilvaniei*, II, pp. 107-120.

II. Some aspects regarding the past of southwest Transylvania during the Principality

The south-west Transylvanian area, Hunedoara county nowadays, faced these difficult times, the economical and political crisis provided by the army conflict between 1526-1538 having negative consequences over the local society. As an example, all those years, the Deva's fortress and the castle from Hunedoara were the reasons for the fight between those who were loyal to Ferdinand and those who were loyal to John Zápolya. Despite the efforts of keeping them in the group of the Habsburgs till 1535, they were both lost. The situation was not natural as long as the Hungarian noblemen and the Romanian knezes of Hunedoara remained faithful to the king of Transylvania³.

The crisis continued after 1540. The Turkish forays from Banat maintained an uncertainty climate deepening the population dissatisfactions. On 1st November 1550 there was bloody fight in the place called "at the barrier" (the custom from the foot of the Deva's fortress) between the Feru's Turkish people – the vanguard of the Kasim's great army, having the residence in Lipova – and the Romanian people of Török János from Hunedoara; the last won⁴.

The sixth decade was not a peaceful one too. Although Soliman I appointed the bishop George Martinuzzi (1541-1551) the governor of Transylvania instead of the minor prince John Sigismund Zápolya, he meant to defend the country letting it, after many secret negotiations, to the Habsburgs. In the five years that followed (1551-1556) Transylvanian Romanian people suffered a lot⁵; the people from Hunedoara felt the shock of those new changes.

In front of Deva fortress, considered "the key of Transylvania" due to its excellent position, there was installed a big military camp in the autumn of 1551 under the command of the cruel commander Giovanni

³ Iosif PATAKI, *Domeniul Hunedoara la începutul secolului al XVI-lea. Studii și documente*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 1973, p. XXVIII-XXXIV; Constantin TĂNĂSESCU, "Date privitoare la orașul și cetatea Deva în secolele XVI și XVII", in: *Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis*, XVIII-XIX (1984-1985), p. 206.

⁴ Octavian FLOCA, Beniamin BASA, *Cetatea Deva*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1965, p. 17.

⁵ Șt. ȘTEFĂNESCU, C. MUREȘAN (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, IV, pp. 511-513.

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Castaldo. More than 13,000 of the 60,000 soldiers were Spanish and German mercenaries. The market and Deva's fortress were devastated and many Romanian soldiers were killed because of the lack of payment of the pays and because of the misunderstandings among them and with the local population⁶. A petition to the new political authority of Transylvania from the small nobility of Hunedoara showed that the crimes did not stop there. Being grouped in 40-50 mercenaries the Castaldo's men attacked and plundered all the villages around in 1552. Those who tried to oppose had been killed or ran away and the administrations had been burst out⁷. The tragedy of the people of Hunedoara did not stop there. In the summer of 1552, scared by the perspective of ottoman occupation, more than 100,000 people from Lugoj and Caransebeş area took refuge in the county by the Iron Gate of Transylvania and Mureş Valley. Some of them moved to the centre of Transylvania but most of them stayed still⁸. Then, in 1554, a powerful plague epidemic widespread the Transylvania adding to the misfortunes already existing there⁹.

The Turkish people were not inferior. Dissatisfied by the lost of Transylvania, they launched many attacks over the Austrian garrisons. The first in sight was Deva's fortress too. But their repeated attacks – a first attack over the fortress in the winter of 1552 of an army of 600 Turkish people and 400 Tartars under the command of the Romanian priest George from Ciurila, followed by another one on 29th December 1552, both being rejected with great loss – did not hit their target; the fortress was taken instead without fight in 1555 by Peter Petrovici in the name of Isabella, the garrison that stayed there leaving it as a form of protest for no payment of the pays¹⁰.

Starting with 1556, the political situation of Transylvania started to reestablish. It was succeeded, as a result of the decisions of the Dieta from Sebeş and with the help of the Romanian voivodes over the Carpathians Pătraşcu cel Bun of Romanian Country (1554-1557) and Alexandru Lăpuşneanu of Moldova (1552-1561; 1564-1568), the bringing back of John Sigismund to rule the country. At the same time, the Turkish people

⁶ C. TĂNĂSESCU, "Date privitoare la oraşul şi cetatea Deva", pp. 207-208.

⁷ Şt. ŞTEFĂNESCU, C. MUREŞAN (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, IV, pp. 511-512.

⁸ Victor ŞUIAGA, *Deva. Contribuţii monografice* (ms.), vol. I, Deva, 1985, p. 48.

⁹ C. TĂNĂSESCU, "Date privitoare la oraşul şi cetatea Deva", p. 208.

¹⁰ V. ŞUIAGA, *Deva. Contribuţii monografice*, I, p. 198.

struck the south flank of the Habsburg Empire. Entering through the Vâlcan mountain pass, they attacked and conquered the fortress giving it to the new political authority of Transylvania¹¹. The internal anarchy continued despite the county's independence. Under the following princes – Stephan (1571-1575), Cristofor (1576-1581), Sigismund (1581-1597; 1598-1599) and Andrew Báthory (1599) – the fight for the consolidation of the internal independence between the forces that wanted a noble regime and those that wanted a central power with an absolutely monarchic feature spread on the background of the confrontations between the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empire, emphasized the tensions that existed in the Transylvanian society¹².

The end of 16th century promised new changes: the Romanians' dream of bringing back a ruler of the same people and the same religion was, at least for the moment, fulfilled. In his short reign in Transylvania, Mihai Viteazul (1593-1601), the ruler of Romanian Country, tried to restore the Romanian people in its rights; the situations opposed him¹³. By his vile murdering not only a Romanian citizen disappeared but a symbol too. The county of Hunedoara, with its fortresses and inhabitants, fully participated in the events of those years. During the battle of Șelimbăr, on 28th October 1599, a Romanian citizen from Hunedoara – Daniel from Zlaști – left for the Muntenia camp; his valuable information helped Mihai to stabilize the Transylvanian front¹⁴. Then, according to the vow of faith of the nobility from Hunedoara, the fortress of Deva (called “our fortress“ by the ruler of Muntenia on 18th April 1600) and the castle of Hunedoara had been included by Mihai Viteazul in the defensive system of Transylvania. Then, unfortunately, a dramatic episode took place: the slaughtering of 180 soldiers from the Huniade castle's garrison by the Magyar nobility was followed by the burning of the entire borough, Romanians and Hungarians suffering together¹⁵. At last, in November 1600, the Romanian ruler headed to the imperial court from Prague and was met with hostility all his way through Hunedoara (Vâlcan - Hațeg - Deva - Baia de Criș), the nobility ordering shoot on him from the fortress of Deva¹⁶.

¹¹ C. TĂNĂSESCU, “Date privitoare la orașul și cetatea Deva”, p. 209.

¹² Șt. ȘTEFĂNESCU, C. MUREȘAN (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, IV, pp. 514-523.

¹³ Șt. ȘTEFĂNESCU, C. MUREȘAN (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, IV, pp. 623-626.

¹⁴ Ion RUSU, “Daniel din Zlaști (Un aderent hunedorean al lui Mihai Viteazul)”, in: *Acta Musei Apulensis*, XIV (1976), pp. 161-172.

¹⁵ C. TĂNĂSESCU, “Date privitoare la orașul și cetatea Deva”, p. 210.

¹⁶ O. FLOCA, B. BASA, *Cetatea Deva*, p. 19.

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The fortress of Deva remained in the centre of the events in the following years. In 1601 it became a place of refuge for the prince Sigismund Báthory, recently returned from the Polish exile. From October the same year, as a result of the rejection of Turkish army at its foot by the general George Basta, the fortress belonged to the House of Habsburg. In the “Magna Curia” Palace, the Dieta of Transylvania was convoked on 9th September 1603, where the nobility from Ardeal accepted, under the pressure of the general, to swear forever obedience for the emperor Rudolf II (1576-1612). After two years, on September 1605, the fortress came back to the people of Transylvania after a long exile of prince Stephan Bocskay¹⁷.

The 16th century started under bad signs. After the insecure reign of Sigismund Báthory (1601-1602), ended on July 1602 by the retreat from Bohemia and the giving up of Transylvania to the emperor, George Basta – governor, supreme commissary, military commander of the country and of the imperial commissars – got the power. The efforts of transforming the Principality of Transylvania into a simple House of Habsburg, doubled by the efforts of forced catholic proselytism of the country, all of them being realized on a background of a excessive taxation policy, of internal violence, of generalized hunger and of a terrible plague epidemic, lead to obeying to the Ottoman Gate and to the two countries beyond the Carpathians of the princes of Transylvania – Stephan Bocskay (1604-1606), Sigismund Rákóczi (1607-1608), Gabriel Báthory (1608-1613), Gabriel Bethlen (1613-1629), Stephan Bethlen (1630) in the first decade of that century¹⁸.

In the period that followed the good relations of vicinity of Transylvania with Romanian Country and Moldova, in the context of the common fight for independence to the Gate, became one of the foreign political priorities of the princes from Ardeal, George Rákóczi I (1630-1648) and George Rákóczi II (1648-1660). After 1650 these treaties of alliance had been understood by accurate actions of removing the Turkish suzerainty, finishing with the great action against the ottomans in the autumn of 1659. Unfortunately, the Transylvanian area faced one of the most difficult period of its history; Turkish-Tartar invasions, internal

¹⁷ V. ȘUIAGA, *Deva. Contribuții monografice*, I, pp. 200-201.

¹⁸ Virgil CÂNDEA (coord.), *Istoria românilor V. O epocă de înnoiri în spirit european (1601-1711/1716)*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2003, pp. 83-95.

anarchy – the concomitant ruling of Transylvania between 1658 and 1660 by two princes: George Rákóczi II, a promoter of the anti ottoman policy, and Barcsai Ákos (Magyar Romanian citizen from Ardeal, native from the village Bârcea Mare) –, who let behind them a ruined country¹⁹; a good example is the city of Orăștie that was burnt down by the Turkish people of Ali Pașa in 1661 on the reason that its citizens did not punish the run away prince John Kemeny²⁰. Not even under the following prince Michael Apafi I (1661-1690) the politico-military and economical situation of the country reestablished²¹.

From an administrative and territorial point of view, the division of the Transylvania's principality into counties, Saxon and Szekler reign chairs, Romanian and Szekler districts did not suffer important changes from the previous historical period. This structure was maintained in Hunedoara too, in the composition of the county entering Mureș Valley and Hațeg district²². After the peace of Oradea in 1538, the northern part of the present county, entered the composition of the new Principality, this situation lasting till 1716, when the entire territory of Zarand was reincorporated to Hungary²³. In the eastern part of Hunedoara the Szekler reign chair existed in 1550 being made up of 14 free localities (nine of them being situated in the present county: Beriu, Căstău, Orăștie, Pricaz, Romos, Romoșel, Sereca, Turdaș and Vaidei²⁴. In a leading position of the Hunedoara county there was a comite (Magyar nobleman, named by the prince) helped by two vicecomities (the rulers of two circles) and an numerous administrative personnel. The chair of Orăștie was ruled county lord helped by a royal county lord and by the general council, all of them obeyed to Szekler Sibian University²⁵.

¹⁹ V. CÂNDEA (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, V, pp. 182-201.

²⁰ Anton DÖRNER, "Cetatea Orăștiei în lumina unor informații manuscrise inedite", in: *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie*, XXVIII (1975), 6, p. 410.

²¹ V. CÂNDEA (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, V, pp. 341-355.

²² Ion FRĂȚILĂ, "Prefectura județului Hunedoara", in: *Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis*, VIII (1971), p. 245.

²³ V. MERUȚIU, *Județele din Ardeal și din Maramureș până în Banat. Evoluția teritorială*, Institutul de Arte Grafice „Ardealul”, Cluj, 1929, pp. 165-166; Sabin BELU, "Contribuții la istoria satelor din Munții Apuseni în Evul Mediu (sec. XVI-XIX)", in: *Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis*, X (1973), p. 203.

²⁴ Thomas NÄGLER, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, Editura Kriterion, București, 1992, pp. 262-270.

²⁵ Șt. ȘTEFĂNESCU, C. MUREȘAN (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, IV, pp. 734-737.

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The entire period represented only suffering for the Romanian people of Ardeal. The worst seemed to have been the plundering of the Habsburg army. For example, during the occupation of Deva fortress by the Austrian army of general George Basta, from years 1603-1604, the savage treatment that some villages were put to, determined the local people to do desperate gestures: the grains were taken from the kettles manure, the bread was made by the flour obtained from the dead animals' bones; there were rumors of cannibalism²⁶. The Turkish-Tartar invasions were devastating, especially those in 1551-1556 and 1569-1662²⁷. The plague, the natural disasters (drought, floods, fires) and hunger filled up that sinister painting.

A legislation against Romanian people was added to all these problems – codified in the law collections *Approbatæ Constitutiones* from 1653 and *Compilatae Constitutiones* from 1669²⁸ – with the perpetuation of slavery seigniorial servitudes²⁹ and of a discriminating social stratifying³⁰. Starting with the 17th century there was equality between the Magyar nobility and nation (“Magyar nemzet”). The free peasants got the so called “privileged” new categories, related to some military services: the gunmen, drabantes and libertes. Most of the population was formed by serves and jeleries. The agricultural census at the end of 17th century shows these movements and social realities³¹.

All these troubles had lively reactions among the Romanian population³². As in the previous centuries some of them crossed the mountains; in 1552, the Magyar noblemen from Hunedoara complained the authorities that Romanians around Deva ran away in Romanian Country because of Castaldo's mercenaries; their return was not possible with all the efforts done. Others ran in the forests, the decisions of the Transylvania's Dieta

²⁶ V. ȘUIAGA, *Deva. Contribuții monografice*, I, p. 50.

²⁷ Aurel DECEI, “Extrase din istoricii turci contemporani privind județul Hunedoara în anii 1659, 1660/1661 și 1666”, in: *Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis*, VII (1970), pp. 97-118; C. TĂNĂSESCU, “Date privitoare la orașul și cetatea Deva”, p. 209.

²⁸ V. CÂNDEA (COORD.), *Istoria românilor*, V, p. 483.

²⁹ David PRODAN, *Iobăgia în Transilvania în secolul al XVII-lea*, vol. I, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1986, p. 127.

³⁰ V. CÂNDEA (COORD.), *Istoria românilor*, V, pp. 483-486.

³¹ Vasile IONAȘ, *Roșcani, Mihăești, Panc, Panc-Săliște. File de istorie*, Editura Emia, Deva, 2002, p. 17.

³² Ioan CIOLAN, Constantin VOICU, Mihai RACOVIȚAN, *Transilvania – istorie și dăinuire românească. Documente oficiale maghiare confirmă*, Editura Sirius, București, 1995, p. 27.

referring to the groups of peasants retreated in the mountains because of the feudal persecutions³³.

In exceptional cases many of them took the guns in their hands to get their rights. A first attempt against feudality of the peasants of Hunedoara burst out in the first decade of the Transylvanian principality in 1550 on the land of the Kendeffy family in Râu de Mori. Taking advantage of the absence of the Hațeg nobility drawn in the Turkish-Habsburg conflict on the side of Isabella and of minor prince John Sigismund, jeleries revolted occupying the Colți Fortress and sequestering the family of the Magyar Romanian nobleman; the fury and their number seemed to have been large as long as the price they asked for was 25,000 florins (a sheep at that time cost 1 florin) and it was accepted. A huge expansion was the rebellion in 1659-1660, when more than 600 armed peasants, lead by the Romanian priest Chirilă, devastated and fired up the boroughs of Hunedoara and Deva. All these were finally failures³⁴.

III. Orthodoxy and confessional diversity

Starting with the acceptance of Transylvania as an independent state in 1541, for the Romanian nation and for the Orthodox Church, excluded from any political and religious rights, it was announced another crisis. In the new political context, the rise of the catholic proselytism was replaced by a subtle and more perfidious one: the introduction of a protestant doctrine and a total obey of the Orthodox Church³⁵.

We can not talk about a Lutheran missionary among the romanian population; if there were isolated converts they were something else than the consequence of the social opportunism. Without having the political, administrative, legislative and juridical levers of the Principality, the Saxons from Transylvania were not able to impose their Lutheran belief;

³³ Ștefan METEȘ, *Emigrări românești din Transilvania în secolele XIII-XX*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1977, p. 79; V. CÂNDEA (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, V, p. 486.

³⁴ Iosif JIVAN, "Mișcările țărănești de pe domeniul Râu de Mori (jud. Hunedoara) în secolele XV-XVI", in: *Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis*, VIII (1971), pp. 86-87; V. ȘUIAGA, *Deva. Contribuții monografice*, I, p. 52.

³⁵ Mircea PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, ed. III, vol. I, Editura Trinitas, Iași, p. 439.

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then, being a privileged people, a mass movement of the Romanian people to the Evangelic Church – in a period when the religion seemed to mingle with the nation – would have endangered that status³⁶.

Calvinism, the official religion of the province, was a proselytism action only. Its only purpose was to bring back the Christians contaminated by the catholic and orthodox heresies³⁷. The Calvinist proselytism promoters were John II Sigismund Zápolya, the first prince of Transylvania. He also was the first supporter of the Reformation, the idea of foundation a Romanian Calvinist bishopric for the orthodox people being his idea. Weakened in the last three decades of the 16th century under the Báthory catholic princes – Stephan, Cristofor, Sigismund and Andrew³⁸ –, the reformation proselytism kept enough force to be seen in the Romanian orthodox church by the decisions of Transylvania's Dieta, almost entirely formed up by Calvinist representatives. The unification of the Romanian provinces under Mihai Viteazul, the forced attempts to move Transylvanian people to the catholic religion forseen by the general George Basta, the political anarchy of Stephan Bocskay and Sigismund Rákóczi and the religious tolerant policy of Gabriel Báthory, did not stop the Calvinist offensive³⁹.

After 1620, due to the European Protestantism, generated by the 30 years War (1618-1648), Transylvania got a status of bulwark for the reformation being active on the side of those against the Habsburg catholic people. That was the debut of the second step of the Calvinist proselytism whose specific purpose was the subordination of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the Magyar reformatted bishopric. The next princes – Gabriel Bethlen, George Rákóczi I, George Rákóczi II, Acatius Barcsai and Michael Apafi I – lead this action, but the ways of convincing Romanians was more developed⁴⁰.

³⁶ Petre FILIMON, *Protestantismul și românii din Ardeal. Combaterea unei teorii uniaste*, Tipografia Diecezană, Arad, 1938, pp. 15-17; Ioan LEB, *Biserică și implicare. Studii privind istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Editura Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, p. 33.

³⁷ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, I, p. 439.

³⁸ ZENOVIE PĂLIȘANU, "Biserica românească și Calvinismul de la moartea lui I. Sigismund până la urcarea pe tron a lui Gavrilă Bethlen", in: *Cultura Creștină*, I (1911), 19, pp. 614-615.

³⁹ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, I, pp. 438-441.

⁴⁰ Ana DUMITRAN, "Aspecte ale politicii confesionale a Principatului calvin față de români: confirmările în funcțiile ecleziastice și programul de reformare a Bisericii Ortodoxe din Transilvania", in: *Mediaevalia Transilvanica*, V-VI (2001-2002), 1-2, pp. 313-314.

The attempt of crossing the Romanian people to Calvinist in the county of Hunedoara must have had a careful attention, especially that some princes who lead Transylvania were masters of some lands on the present county and some of them, permanently or occasionally, living in the palace “Magna Curia” from the foot of the Deva fortress. It is about the princes Stephan Bocskai, Gabriel Bethlen (born in Ilia), George Rákóczi I and Acatius Barcsai; the last came from a Romanian family that become Magyar and Calvinist from Bârcea Mare⁴¹. The case of the prince George Rákóczi I was eloquent. Being in the castle of Hunedoara, he was bothered by the women’s laments from the nearby church and he destroyed it⁴².

Alongside the princes of Transylvania, the Calvinist superintendents of the reformattd church were involved in the action of getting Romanians to the Calvinist beliefs. It is about: Keserői Dajka János (1618-1633), Geleji Katona István (1633-1649), Kovásznai Péter (1668-1673), Tiszabecsi Nagy Gáspár (1673-1679) and Tofaeus Dobos Mihály (1679-1684). For example, after their insistence, the royal authority imposed the orthodox metropolitan bishops to respect that package of Calvinist rules. Then, naming themselves “vlach bishops” they pretended to be the rulers of the orthodox church of Transylvania, that issue being a simple adding to the Calvinist bishopric. They are the artisans of many measures taken for the mass moving to Calvinist church⁴³. Among these opponents of the Romanian church we can mention here: Csulay György (1650-1660) – successor of a noble family from Ciula, that adopted catholic religion in the 15th century and, finally, took Protestantism – the initiator of printing *Catehismul calvinesc* (1642) and *Scutul Catichizmuşului* (1656), but the main opponent of the metropolitan bishop Ilie Iorest (1640-1643)⁴⁴.

The reformation’s promoters were members of Transylvania’s Dieta where was established the legislative structure of the Calvinist proselytism among the orthodox Romanian population. Most of them being members

⁴¹ O. FLOCA, B. BASA, *Cetatea Deva*, pp. 21, 31.

⁴² *** *Diecesa Lugojului. Şematism istoric*, Tipografia Ioan Virányi, Lugoj, 1903, pp. 348-349.

⁴³ P. FILIMON, *Protestantismul şi românii din Ardeal*, p. 48; M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, II, 2006, pp. 56-60, 68-78.

⁴⁴ Ana DUMITRAN, Gúdor BOTOND, Nicolae DĂNILĂ, *Relaţii interconfesionale româno-maghiare în Transilvania (mijlocul secolului XVI - primele decenii ale secolului XVIII)/ Román-magyar felekezeti közötti kapcsolatok Erdélyben (a XVI. század közepe - a XVIII. század első évtizedei között)*, Editura Altip, Alba Iulia, 2000, p. 122.

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of the Magyar nobility, their contributions for maintaining Calvinist proselytism tendencies were seen in the second half of the 16th century, when the reformation trends kept their value despite the efforts of Báthory princes of reestablishing the catholic religion in Transylvania⁴⁵.

Thus, among the supporters of the Calvinist trend must be included the majority of the Transylvania's noblemen; the activity of Geszti Ferenc was representative for a Calvinist direction⁴⁶. Supporters of the Reformation were the members of the local Romanian families who adopted Calvinist religion and after that became Magyar: Kendenffy, Nalaczy, Budai, Csulay, Ribiczei a.s.o. For example, one of the opponents of the metropolitan bishop Sava Brancovici (1656-1680) was Nalaczy István or Ștefan from Nălațvad⁴⁷.

From a juridical and legislative point of view, the dispositions of the famous laws *Approbatae Constitutiones Regni Transilvaniae et Partium Hungariae eidem anexarium* (promulgated by the prince George Rákóczi II, on 15th March 1653, that comprised the articles of Dieta from 1540-1653) and *Compilatae Constitutiones Regni Transilvaniae et Partium Hungariae eidem anexarium* (a completing of the previous laws of 1654 and 1669, initiated by Michael Apafi I) were representative for the confessional climate of Transylvania of the 17th century. Not even after 1669 the legislation was more tolerant. Two decisions of the Dieta on 1st October 1678 and 12th January 1680 directly hit the Romanian values, partially represented by the priests with a high status. According to these, the orthodox people were not allowed to be ennobled. Those who had that status were forced to present their nobility documents. It was not mentioned that those documents were retained and the holders were left without the prerogatives mentioned in that superior status⁴⁸.

Another dispositions have been given by the princes of Transylvania or by the county's authorities. For the example, at Deva, between 1640-

⁴⁵ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, I, p. 439.

⁴⁶ V. ȘUIAGA, *Deva. Contribuții monografice*, I, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Adrian Andrei RUSU, *Cititori și biserici din Țara Hațegului până la 1700*, Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, Satu Mare, 1997, pp. 48-49.

⁴⁸ George BARIȚIU, *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei. Pre două sute de ani din urmă*, vol. I, Sibiu, 1889, p. 135; Atanasie MARIENESCU, *Izvoare pentru istoria bisericească ortodoxă*, vol. II, Sibiu, 1911, p. 172; Gheorghe BICHICEAN, "Religia românilor din Transilvania în cuprinsul Constituțiilor Aprobate (Dieta din anul 1653)", in: *Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis*, XXV (1992-1994), pp. 278-281.

1645, the old orthodox church was stolen by the catholic people, and after 1545 it was passed to the reform people – the Romanians had being given humiliating conditions: to help and to undertake the Calvinist church (the priest's payment, the teacher's payment, the bell ringer's payment), not to go out for (Epiphany, funerals a.s.o), not to hit the bell board and not to draw the bells before the Calvinists. The previous interdictions had been completed on 19th September 1662, when in the letter to captain Udvarhelyi János and to Michael Apafi I, following the complaint of the preacher David Szentgyörgyi, it was said that the Romanian peasants of Deva should serve him two days of mowing or pay 50 moneys, and the priests were not allowed to do any "superstitious ceremony". On 19th July 1679, the prince ordered punishments for not respecting those rules⁴⁹.

The measures referring to the orthodox churches were incisive. Thus, the reformed authorities disposed transferring some buildings to the Romanian Calvinist communities; it is known the case of Turdaş's church in Hunedoara, stolen in 1652 and given to the 26 calvinist believers from locality⁵⁰.

The passing of some Romanian families to Calvinist religion was accompanied by the transforming of some churches into reformed ones. Moreover, the process was accompanied by a more destroying action for the Transylvanian spirituality whose consequences, at the art church level, are still visible today. It is about the medieval "new-iconoclasm" of protestant nature⁵¹. The first wave was over the Hunedoara's churches during the reign of prince Gabriel Bethlen, reaching its highest point in the mid of the 17th century. The Calvinist structures, opposing to all kinds of icon representations, disposed the plastering, the whitewashing or the destroying of all the paintings from the churches transferred to Calvinist communities. (the fragments of the paintings still have the mutilated faces of the orthodox saints). There are still visible the damages of the churches' paintings from Densuş, Ostrov, Suseni-Colţ and Crişcior. The results of the

⁴⁹ Ioan LUPAŞ, *Documente istorice transilvane (1599-1699)*, Cluj, 1940, pp. 308-309; Victor ŞUIAGA, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din Deva. Contribuţii monografice* (ms.), Deva, 1972, pp. 25-27.

⁵⁰ Augustin BUNEA, *Ierarhia românilor din Ardeal şi Ungaria*, Tipografia Tiparului Arhidiececan, Blaj, 1904, pp. 42-43.

⁵¹ Vasile V. MUNTEAN, *Exegeze istorice şi teologice*, Editura Marineasa, Timişoara, 2005, pp. 64-65.

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new icon's persecution were such devastating that not even the heritage of simple wooden churches was preserved⁵².

Difficult situations faced the Hunedoara's monasteries, Transylvania's legislation being unfavorable for the orthodox monasticism. Being left out by the financial support of old families – now at Calvinist religion – and transferred in the possession of other masters and with debts to the principality's treasury, most of them ruined themselves. The Suseni-Colț monastery disappeared at the end of 16th century; the following century the same fate had the Cerna monastery (in this case the orthodox monks were victimized too by the members of Csermenyi family). The Prislop monastery could have had almost the same fate in the 17th century of being vanished from the map of the Hunedoara's county⁵³.

As a whole, the Calvinist proselytism had two distinct periods. If in the 16th century Romanians were attracted to the Protestantism by their unification in a Calvinist bishopric, in the following century the main target of the protestants in Transylvania was the obligation for every bishop to accept Calvinist conditions⁵⁴. The new plan supposed: the submission of the archbishops and priests to the protestant bishop; support for those who wanted to accept Calvinist religion; the organization of the Orthodox church in a protestant way; the discipline of the clergy and the believers by canonical visits, the introduction of the Calvinist ceremony in the orthodox cult, offering the divorce, giving up the icons, the cross, the cult of saints and so called "superstitions"; giving up The Holy Tradition; the young people must learn the *Calvinist Catehism*; the use of the Romanian language in schools, printing works and in the religious ceremonies⁵⁵. These actions had a major impact on the life of the Romanians of Hunedoara.

⁵² Adrian Andrei RUSU, Ioachim LAZĂR, Gheorghe PETROV, "Mănăstirea Vaca (județul Hunedoara)", in: *Ars Transsilvaniae*, II (1992), p. 162; A. A. RUSU, *Citori și biserici*, pp. 46-47.

⁵³ Adrian Andrei RUSU et alii (coord.), *Dicționarul mănăstirilor din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, passim.

⁵⁴ Ana DUMITRAN, "Activitatea tipografică bălgrădeană din secolul al XVII-lea – sursă de evaluare a influenței Reformei asupra Bisericii românești din Transilvania", in: *Studia Universitas Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Graeco-Catholica Varadiensis*, XLIV (1999), 1-2, p. 160.

⁵⁵ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, II, p. 72-73.

Although the success of the Reformation seemed clear, in reality the new religious trend faced the Romanian traditions, the Romanians' faith and only a few cases of proselytism were met and for economical reasons too. For example in the Hateg area the changing of "idol icons" in some churches is a proof. We can talk only about a formal Calvinist movement by adopting elements of liturgical practice⁵⁶.

The Orthodox Church of Hunedoara remained up despite all the difficulties due to the connections of the Romanians with their brothers beyond the Carpathians during the reign of Mihai Viteazul. The circulation of documents from Moldova and Romanian Country, the gifts of the noblemen strengthened the Orthodoxy from Transylvania. The same importance had the connection with Russia by the travel of three monks from Prislop to Moscow for a financial support that was paid to local Hungarian noblemen⁵⁷.

The dialogue between the Reformation and the Orthodoxy had positive consequences too. Many books had been translated and printed into Romanian. It is known that the first translations of biblical texts had been done in Transylvania half a century before the Protestantism appeared in Ardeal⁵⁸.

IV. The establishing of Habsburg ruling in Transylvania

The rejection of the ottomans under the walls of Vienna in 1683 by the Austrian-Polish army lead by the king Jan III Sobieski of Poland (1674-1696), opened the Habsburg conquest in Hungary and Croatia against the ottoman's interests. The successive victories brought the Austrian people till the customs of Transylvanian Principality, still under ottoman suzerainty. Taking advantage of the internal crisis, generated by the consolidation of economical and political positions of the great Transylvanian nobility,

⁵⁶ G. BARIȚIU, *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei*, I, p. 149; P. FILIMON, *Protestantismul și românii din Ardeal*, pp. 31-32; A. A. RUSU, *Cititori și biserici*, p. 45.

⁵⁷ Mircea PĂCURARIU, "Legăturile Bisericii Ortodoxe din Transilvania cu Țara Românească și Moldova în secolele XVI-XVIII", in: *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XIII (1968), 1-3, passim; Șt. METEȘ, *Emigrări românești*, pp. 79-80.

⁵⁸ Ion GHEȚIE, Alexandru MAREȘ, *Începuturile scrisului în limba română. Contribuții filologice și lingvistice*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 1974, p. 31; M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, I, p. 454.

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opposed to Michael Apafi I, on a background of taking the power by the group gathered around Michael Teleki, The House of Habsburg succeeded to impose its rule over the the Romanian space between the Carpathians. As a result of the imperial political insistence, a first treaty – “the hallerian treaty” (after the name of its founder, Ioan Haller) was signed in Vienna on 26th June 1686, between Leopold I (1658-1705) and prince Apafi. It followed another agreement on 27th October 1687, the treaty from Blaj marking the beginning of the Austrian military presence in Transylvania; 12 cities and fortresses from Ardeal had been forced to accept troops and the paying of important sums of money. Despite the Transylvanian society’s opposition, the general Anton Caraffa supported by the military troops from the inner Carpathians, imposed the imperial protection over the Transylvania on 9th May 1688. Released under the ottoman suzerainty, the land of Ardeal entered in the possession of the Habsburgs⁵⁹.

The consolidation of the new political and military regime in Transylvania was made gradually in a juridical environment, offered by the “diploma leopoldina” (4th December 1691) considered to have been a real “constitution” of Transylvania; this new political reality was internationally recognized by the treaty of peace from Karlovač (Karlowitz), in 1699, reestablished by the Transylvanian status by the treaty of Satu Mare (1711) and, finally, strengthened by “the peace” from Pojarevač (Passarowitz), in 1718, where the Turkey made new territorial concessions in favor of the Austrian people (Banat, Oltenia a.s.o.). In the eight points of the diploma was sketched the new status of Principality. Thus, a governor ruled the Transylvania with a council made up of 12 members, chosen by the Dieta and confirmed by the emperor. The connection between The Court and “Gubernium” from Ardeal was realized, starting in 1694 by the “Cancelaria Aulica” having the residence in Vienna. Other institutional bodies were: “Tezaurariatus” (financial issues), “Tabla” (the supreme law body), “Dieta” of Transylvania (legislative body) and “The general military commandment” (Transylvania’s section of war Viennese council)⁶⁰.

⁵⁹ V. CÂNDEA (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, V, pp. 358-374; I. A. POP, Th. NÄGLER, MAGYARI A. (edit.), *Istoria Transilvaniei*, II, pp. 345-356.

⁶⁰ Paul CERNAVODEANU, Nicolae EDROIU (coord.), *Istoria românilor VI. România între Europa Clasică și Europa Luminilor (1711-1821)*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2003, pp. 352-372; I. A. POP, Th. NÄGLER, MAGYARI A. (edit.), *Istoria Transilvaniei*, II, pp. 357-368.

From a legislative point of view, the statements of *Tripartitum* of Werboczy, of *Approbatae Constitutiones* and *Compilatae Constitutiones* had been still kept valid, reestablishing the privileged status of the three “indigene nations” (Hungarians, Saxons from Transylvania and Szeklers) and the four “receptes religions” (Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran and Unitarian). Romanian people remained tolerated with their orthodox faith being refused to have access in the representatives forums of the country. The recognition of the social status had been conditioned again by the affiliation to the Church of Rome; the wrong consequences of the decisions of some clerical leaders – tempted by the political, social and religious privileges promised – are perceptible in the present days⁶¹.

V. Conclusions

From the facts previously presented we can say that the Principality represented a period of profound changes in the history of Transylvania, that period being felt at all levels of every day life. From a churches point of view, due to the lack of that aggressive proselytism promoted by the protestant reformation, the face of the orthodoxy would have probably been different. An integrant part of the space between the Carpathians, the territory of the present county of Hunedoara faced the same historical suffering.

⁶¹ M. PĂCURARIU, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, II, pp. 290-291.