
BOOK REVIEWS

ULRICH A. WIEN, ed.

Common Man, Society and Religion in the 16th Century/Gemeiner Mann, Gesellschaft und Religion im 16. Jahrhundert

Piety, Morality and Discipline in the Carpathian Basin/Frömmigkeit, Moral und Sozialdisziplinierung im Karpatenbogen

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THE ARTICLES in this volume were presented at an international research conference held at the Institute for Humanities of the Romanian Academy, in Sibiu, in June 2017 (“Kirche und Bevölkerung auf dem Dorf in Siebenbürgen: Rahmen- und Rezeptionsbedingungen sowie Einflüsse von Gesellschaft, Ethnie, Kirche und Politik im Reformationsjahrhunderts”). The conference was initiated by Ulrich A. Wien, project leader and president of the Research Association for Transylvanian Studies. The languages of the presentations were German and English.

The first chapter (“Common Man and Local Priests: Behaviour and Religious Life in Transylvanian Villages and Beyond”) starts with Eike Wolgast’s article about the perception, status and aims of the “common man” (“Der gemeine Mann zwischen Bauernkrieg 1525 und Religionsfrieden 1555”).

The second article (“Dorfkirche und Schriftlichkeit in Siebenbürgen um 1500”) is written by Adinel C. Dincă and success-

fully demonstrates that the already high intellectual level of the parish priests in the Transylvanian German settlements was further increased in the second half of the 16th century.

Paula Cotoi (“Pre-Reformation Sermon Collections in Transylvania: Evidence Concerning Their Circulation in Rural Areas”) focuses on the circulation of sermons from the pre-Reformation period and shows that Transylvanian Saxon theologians were important and devoted vectors of the cultural exchange between Central and Eastern Europe.

Alexandru Ștefan (“Seals of Transylvanian Saxon Parish Priests from the First Half of the 16th Century”) analyzes the seals of Transylvanian Saxon pastors and concludes that in the 16th century things evolved towards the use of a single seal which brought together two functions—sealing for the purpose of secrecy and, on the other hand, for authenticity.

Emőke Gálfi (“The Secularization of the Castle District in Alba Iulia, Second Half of the 16th Century”) presents the situation of the estate and the living conditions within the castle area of the former bishop’s residence in Alba Iulia (Weißenburg, Gyulafehérvár), which was secularized after 1556.

Edit Szegedi shows, in a well-documented text (“Von der Uneindeutigkeit zur konfessionellen Konkurrenz im Fürstentum Siebenbürgen”), that that the legendary resolutions of the regional diets in 1568 and 1571 did not have anything to do with the recognition of “accepted religions,” which was formally made only in 1595.

Zoltán Csepregi (“Ketzerakten, Glaubenswechsel, Kirchenvisitationen Landpfarrer und ihre Gläubigen im Königreich Ungarn”) analyzes the visitation protocols of the Gran (Esztergom) Archdiocese (1559–1562) seeking to identify the expectations of the common man and the local priests’ ambivalent reactions to them. From these visitations it can be seen that the common man could choose between the old and the new forms of faith. The successful priests were only those who competently met the exacting demands of piety.

Mária Lupescu Makó and Radu Lupescu (“Mendicant Friars and Religious Revival in Sixteenth Century Cluj, Transylvania”) use the example of Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár) to investigate the mendicant congregations and demonstrate that they show no evidence of having fallen out of relevance before the Reformation. Despite their qualities, they could not manage to react appropriately to the demands of the Reformation in the second quarter of the 16th century, and the vicariate of the Dominicans and the province of the Augustinian hermits were completely abolished in the country by the middle of the sixteenth century, only the Franciscans did not disappear completely from Transylvania.

Ciprian Firea (“Last Wills of Transylvanian Saxon Parish Priests on the Eve of the Reformation, ca. 1500–1580”) uses both edited and unedited sources and compares the wills of Transylvanian Saxon pastors from the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era. These wills show clear changes concerning legacies, particularly pertaining to the inheritance for the pastors’ families, some of which were official, some of which were not.

The second chapter (“Social, Economic and Moral Life”) starts with Zsolt Simon’s investigation (“The Financial Administra-

tion of the Parish Churches of Kronstadt (Braşov/Brassó) in the 16th Century”) of the parish churches’ financial administration in Kronstadt, where the Reformation was introduced very early, in 1542.

András Péter Szabó (“Städtischer Haushalt von Bistritz in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts”) analyzes the households of the dominantly German city of Bistriţa (Bistritz, Beszterce) in the second half of the 16th century. He concludes that the church recipients of the city’s money were the main pastor and the clergy under his care (preachers). The Hungarian pastors, probably in temporary roles, received small sums. Just as in Braşov (see the previous article), the school was considered as part of the parish and the personnel was paid by the church.

Adrian Magina (“The City and the Church Religious Life in Lipova, the 14th–16th Centuries”) shows a very interesting and atypical situation: a town, Lipova, with cohabitating Christian denominations superposed by Islam, could develop from the confessional point of view.

Florin Nicolae Ardelean (“Piety, Morality and Discipline in the Military Regulations of the Transylvanian Principality, 1577–1683”) presents a complex relation between military conflict and religion in the Early Modern Era. Religion was undoubtedly a major cause for wars, but it was also used as a means of tempering violent and immoral behavior among soldiers. It is also stated that, especially during the seventeenth century, the death penalty was often associated with moral and religious crimes like blasphemy and adultery.

Julia Derzsi (“Unzucht und Ehebruch vor Gericht: Sexualdelikte bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts”) shows that the various legal norms concerning marriage and mo-

rality, which had been characterized by Reformation thought, were known throughout society in the second half of the 16th century. Divorces, engagements and complaints against persons who were forbidden to marry due to their close familial relation, were all part of the church's responsibility. All other civil affairs, including pregnancies, wedding-vows, and adultery were handled by the lay authorities.

Enikő Rűsz-Fogarasi ("Consequences of the Reformation: Priest Wives, a New Role for Early Modern Women") discusses the image and understanding of women after the introduction of the Reformation in Transylvania, focusing particularly on pastors' wives. Analyzing the lives of several prominent clergy families, it becomes evident that the status of priest or priest's wife entailed no legal privileges, but they enjoyed significant social respect.

Mária Pakucs-Willcocks ("The Idea of Good Marriage at the End of the Sixteenth Century in Transylvania: A Mathias Raw vs. Catharina Birthalmer") studies a divorce case from 1590 in order to present the standards, norms and patterns of behavior of the upper classes of Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben). The approach to love and marriage is very similar to that found in other parts of Reformed Europe, based on the "sacred household" of a ruling father and an obedient yet respected wife.

Livia Magina's article ("The Transylvanian Rural World at the End of the 16th Century Reflected in the Minutes of Săliște"), although part of this chapter, was placed at the end of the volume for technical reasons. The author identifies the presence of a parallel legal system bound up with the Romanian Orthodox Church and with traditional rituals among the legal and administrative culture of the farmers in the Romanian district of Săliște (in the vicinity of Sibiu).

Chapter 3 is entitled "An Echo of Wittenberg: The Example of Village Pastor Damasus Dűrr." The first article ("Die Edition der Predigten von Damasus Dűrr"), written by Martin Armgart, presents biographical and bibliographical elements concerning the Melancthon student Damasus Dűrr, whose sermons are thematically relevant for the history of medicine, law, and theology.

Robert Kolb ("Damasus Dűrr's Preaching in Wittenberg Context") analyses Dűrr's sermons through a theological-historical lens. They reflect Dűrr's training and his experiences as a student in Wittenberg. His absorption of the Wittenberg ecclesiastical culture during his few months there enabled him to take this culture back into his homeland and to transplant and cultivate it there.

Ulrich A. Wien ("Supervision of 'Authority' and 'Community' by the Church As a Warden of Order: The Positioning of Damasus Dűrr between Demand and Reality") analyzes the self-understanding of the pastors and the related question as to what extent the village pastor Damasus Dűrr carried out the church's role of warden/supervisor of order on his own parish as well as the worldly institutions.

The fourth and last chapter is entitled "Art and the Lutheran Confession" and contains only one article ("The Voice of Pulpits: Word and Image in the Construction of the Confessional Identity of Lutheran Communities in Early Modern Transylvania"), that of Maria Crăciun. The author draws attention to a feature of churches, which has held a central role in church services and buildings since the time of the Reformation: the pulpit as the place of proclamation.

