

THE CITY, THE PRINCE AND THE PORTE: ON THE FEASIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF THE URBAN PRIVILEGES AND PRINCELY POWER IN TRANSYLVANIA DURING THE 17TH CENTURY

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George Michael Gottlieb von Herrmann, a former clerk in Braşov, who was deposed following the Josephinism, describes an episode in the 17th century, in his history of the old Braşov¹:

“It was on the 25th of June 1677 when the town council of Braşov rejected the demand of the Reformed minister who had come in Braşov, on prince Apafi’s command, to find out if the Magistrate might allow the Reformed to receive the Lord’s Supper in the town suburb. More than this, the members of the town council vehemently opposed in August 1680 to the princely desire and also to the Diet article from the 18th of May 1680 related to a Reformed church building there. They sent two delegations with supplications to the prince who was at Iernut at that time, so that they be able to reject those demands. On the 6th of May 1681, the prince tried with kind words to persuade the town council to order a place for that church. As the Magistrate had still suspicious about allowing it, the Reformed preacher wanted to know if he were allowed to preach in a private house at least? But the town council rejected that demand too. So, on the 3rd of July more Szeklers came with wattles to delimit of their own accord the plot for the church. No more than five wattles they had put there than the magistracy ordered to wrench the wattles away and throw them into the water. And so it rested. A short time after, Apafi went off the stage. In time of war, another

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¹ Georg Michael Gottlieb Herrmann, *Das alte Kronstadt: eine siebenbürgische Stadt-und Landesgeschichte bis 1800* (Böhlau, Köln-Weimar-Wien, 2010).

prestige came over the country so that the prestige of the Reformed Church, which had dominated by then, started its decline”².

This story that may be largely corroborated with the contemporary narrative sources³ (only an episode of the facts was omitted in) is a sample of the pre-Enlightenment intolerance and brains’ muddleness for the author who was educated under the Aufklärung rules:

“We might ascribe on the spirit of that time the fact that any different opinion, anyone that was not in all its parts and riders correspondent with the adopted dogma seemed to be repellent to all of them, and so they went off of the Christian Church tolerance”⁴.

Indeed, from a contemporary point of view the facts might be really taken for an illustration of religious intolerance and xenophobia in a Early Modern Transylvanian Saxon town or of the pre-modern town in general.

But Herrmann’s story has also some elements to vary the image, to tell us that the incident in 1680–1681 was not only an outburst of religious intolerance: the prince and the Diet’s involving, the dominant part of the Reformed Church that was already history in the memoir-writer’s time, and the obstinate refusal of Brasov magistracy to build a church out of the fortified area of the city, in one of the suburbs down there. All of them might speak on an ampler and deeper question to be understood only in a larger context, namely that one of the towns in the Principality of Transylvania, of their relations with the central authority, and of relations between Transylvania and the Porte; the last one is not a question of Herrmann’s story, but one that results from the diplomatic sources of that time.

1. The facts chronology on the basis of the contemporary sources

Although M. G. M. Herrmann offers quite an accurate reconstitution of the events, a reconstitution based on the contemporary references becomes useful in order to understand especially the contemporaries’ behavior and also the general evolution.

² Ibid., 366.

³ “Diarium des Paulus Benckner d.Ä. (1421–1693),” in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó* (further: *Quellen*) IV (Brassó, 1903), 205–206; Martinus Ziegler, “Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae eximiorum ac illustrium vita, honores et mors*,” in *Quellen* V (Brassó, 1909), 115, 119–120; “Tagbuch des Johannes Stamm, Gemeinen Wortmanns wie auch Cronstädtischen Leinwebers (1658–1697),” in *Quellen* VI (Brassó, 1915), 204.

⁴ Herrmann, *Das alte Kronstadt*, 366.

1677:

– on the 28th of April, princely commissar János Nemes arrives to appoint a plot in the suburb of Blumana for a Reformed Church building; the council in Brasov rejects that demand⁵;

– on the 25th of June, sent by the prince the Reformed preacher arrives there to celebrate the Lord's Supper in Blumăna, inside a private house, but he is also refused to do it⁶;

1680:

– the Diet article on the 18th of May grants a plot for the Reformed who were also named Orthodox at that time:

“The Orthodox faithful are granted a plot for their church on the street Blumăna. We decided, gracious Lord also with Your Highness' agreement, as seeing that the service of the Orthodox had suffered lots of impediments in the town of Brasov and to put an end to those ones, that the inhabitants in Brasov should appoint and put a plot at the disposal of their Reformed brothers, in the presence of the noblemen Nemes Janos, Mikes Kelemen, Judex Regius of Sibiu and Miko Istvan ab exspiratione praesentis Diaetae ad bis quindenam, and their activity should be not hindered: the Orthodox Church members in that town should pay (152) their own minister and not the others' one”⁷

– On the 28th of August, 4 delegates of Braşov: Valentinus Plecker and Georg Jeckel, senators, and Johannes Leiss and Georg Blasius, centumiviri, take part into the Diet hold in Iernut to stop the church building;

– As that delegation had no success, another one, with Valentinus Plecker, Georg Jeckel, Johannes Leiss, and Andreas Krauss, directs towards the Diet on the 15th of September, as the prince ordered the works there be quickened⁸;

– On the 18th of September Mikó István writes prince Apafi on the echo of the situation in Braşov at the Ottoman Porte:

“[...] I have heard here from two honest fellow countrymen, gracious Lord, news against your person and to our whole country prejudice: that our Saxon fellow

⁵ Ziegler, “Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae*,” 115.

⁶ Ibid., 115.

⁷ Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Monumenta Comititalia Regnum Transilvaniae. Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek* (further: MCRT), vol. XVII (Budapest, 1894), 94–95; Georg Daniel Teutsch, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Evangelischen Landeskirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen*, vol. I (Hermannstadt, 1862), 151–152.

⁸ Ziegler, “Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae*,” 119; “Tagbuch des Johannes Stamm,” 204.

countrymen belonging mostly to the estate of the burghers in Braşov burst in saying that if the Hungarians would assume this work [of that church building] they'd rather break with them and give the country tribute to the Turkish nation, rather than to bear the Hungarian yoke henceforth [...]"⁹

– On the 30th of September prince Apafi briefs András Szekhalmi, the Principality delegate at the Porte, on what he has to interest in, a context that contains a post-script with the following brief and finding:

“P. S. In the case that Braşov inhabitants would send, as they have always informed, delegations with supplication or turned against us: we must find out rigorously who is this one? Who has sent him and agreed his way? [...] As regarding the church we may say that a Hungarian church existed from the very beginning and still it lays in the city, but to understand the situation [we have to say] that they are so disobedient on account of the place for the Hungarian Church the Diet ordered; and some of them rebelled but no one punished them, they rather enjoyed forgiveness not penalty for such a insubordination”.¹⁰

– On the 12th–13th of December the Diet in Alba Julia is convoked and delegates of the Saxon nation are ordered through the letters to the Saxon cities and seats, identically in a great part, to impose the princely sentence through the Diet and the princely councilors' means in the question of appointing a plot for the Reformed Church in Blumăna, also reminding them which are the risks to insubordinate to the prince's desire and the Diet decisions¹¹;

1681:

– On the 12th of March, the Chapter of Țara Bârsei writes to the Saxons' bailiff Georg Ambruster on the church point of view and the effects on Braşov and, generally, on the Fundus Regius:

“The Royal Re(s)public of Braşov on the question of a Hungarian church building within the Fundus Regius [...] not only our re(s)public, but all the Saxon nation together with their churches and schools should suffer irreparable losses [...] as our beloved re(s)public remain to its old privileges and religion”.¹²

⁹ *Török-magyarkori állam-okmánytár* (further: *Török-magyarkori*) VI (Török-magyarkori Emlékek. Első osztály: Okmánytár, VIII) (Pest, 1871), doc. no. LXV, 98.

¹⁰ *Török-magyarkori*, doc. no. LXVII, 102.

¹¹ *MCRT*, vol. XVII, 140, 143, 146, 148, 151, 153–154.

¹² “Das Burzenländer Capitel wendet sich an Comes Georg Ambruster um Unterstützung gegen die Erbauung einer ungarischen (reformierten) Kirche.” Friedrich Müller, “Materialien

– On the 21st of April prince Apafi orders the Saxons' bailiff to be present at the requiring of the verdict concerning the church plot appointing:

“As the Diet have even two articles on a church building in the city of Braşov for those of Orthodox religion it should that the inhabitants in Braşov appoint and put at their disposal an adequate plot for this church [...], but they have neglected both the Diet article and our notifying [...] as according to the [Diet] article, to put an adequate plot for building a church for the Orthodox [Reformed] faithful, in the presence of Your Highness [...]”¹³

– On the 6th of May, the princely commissars János Nemes, Kelemen Mikes and István Mikó arrive in Braşov but the senate rejected them on the reason that not the magistracy, but the whole (Saxon) University should decide on the question;

– Yet, on the 7th of May, the princely delegation measures the plot of the future church;

– On the 25th of May, the Reformed preacher arrives and asks in the name of the prince to be allowed to preach in a private location, but his demand is rejected¹⁴;

– On the 3rd of July, a group of Szeklers come to enclose the church plot with wattle, but the magistracy ordered the wattles wrenching and throwing into the water.¹⁵

There is a sequence in Paul Benckner' diary (*Diarium*) that explains on the one hand why the wattles were wrenched up and, on the other hand opens a new perspective on the events:

“When the common citizens heard about that, namely that the wattles had been thrust in ground there, lots enough of them came in the house of the Centumviri (*Hundertmannschaft*) spokesman¹⁶, and say: it seems that the magistrate have already succumbed to the Calvinists' demand for a church. Had it be true, they would put all their wealth and blood just because the municipality might not give (the Calvinists) even a bit of plot. The centumviri's spokesman quieted them

zur Kirchengeschichte Siebenbürgens und Ungarns im siebzehnten Jahrhundert,” *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, Neue Folge 19 (1884): doc. no. 18, 641.

¹³ “Der Fürst Mich. Apafi fordert den Sachsencomes Armbruster auf, der Execution des Gerichtsspruches hinsichtlich eines Platzes für eine reformirte Kirche beizuwohnen.” Müller, “Materialien,” 642–643.

¹⁴ Ziegler, “Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae*,” 120; “*Diarium*,” 205.

¹⁵ Ziegler, “Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae*,” 120; “*Diarium*,” 205.

¹⁶ *Orator*.

with kind words, and saw them to the Town Hall where they were told not to fear about [...]. So, following the hubbub, the wattles were wrenched up and thrown away in the river".¹⁷

If so far the authority's point of view was illustrated, the sequence above – it is absent in Herrmann's story – presents the common people's point of view. Even if quite ironically represented, an attentive reading of the rebellion reasons shows a revolt both against the intention to build a church belonging to another confession than the official one in the town, and against the magistrate which seemed to have succumbed to the pressure of princely demands. It is less important, in the context, if the yielding was or not a real one. From the common people's point, the Magistrate did not perform its duty, so they, in the name of whom the town council should lead the city, take the place of the magistrate. But the revolt was soon stopped, the revolted citizens having been persuaded on how the town council did its duty. But in July 1681 a new precedent was created, so that the rebellion of 1688 may be taken for a sequel of the former protest: the citizens revolted against the magistrate that had yielded to the enemy – the Imperial army this time – and so took the place of a magistrate that had not fulfilled its duty to defend the city.¹⁸

2. The real dimension of the conflict: why building/ not building a church in the poorest suburb of a free royal city should not have remained only a local question

The protest of the citizens in Brasov resembles of that one of the dean of the Țara Bârsei: a Calvinist church building in the suburb Blumăna comes to sap the liberties of Brașov, of the Saxon nation, and of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania. The magistrate as maximum a piece of blackmail, menaces even to pass under the direct Ottoman domination and does it in order to stop the church building. What was the fact to disturb the inhabitants in Brașov?

As the prince's briefing shows a Hungarian church, by language of the creed and preach, had already existed in Brasov, within the City.¹⁹ Being a Lutheran one, that one was taken for a Saxon church from the point of view of the

¹⁷ "Diarium," 206.

¹⁸ See the case of Stefan Stenner, one of the leaders in the revolt of 1681 and of the rising of 1688, Maja Philippi, "Der Bürgeraufstand von 1688. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Siebenbürgens am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts," in Paul Philippi, ed., *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen* [Siebenbürgisches Archiv 17] (Böhlau-Köln-Wien, 1984), 242.

¹⁹ On Str. Vămii (Mănăstirii, Mureșenilor today), in the former church of the Dominican Monastery Sts. Peter and Paul. Ziegler, "Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae*," 99–100. Since 1716 there is the Roman-Catholic church.

society of estates. Even if the potential Reformed church was also known as the Hungarian's church²⁰, both the parts took it for the church of a confession, even if belonging to the major part of nobility and of the prince. So, the Calvinism has not an ethnic-linguistic valence, but a political and juridical one.

When the dean of the Țara Bârsei as well as the the burghers of Brașov protests in the name of the urban and estates' liberties and privileges – of the Saxon nation – their worry was not an exaggerated one. By disposing the building of a Calvinist church, the Diet and the prince violated a juridical basis of the Saxon nation as important as the Diploma Andreanum: Diploma of Stephan Báthory from the 4th of July 1572 that confirms the exclusivity of the *Confessio Augustana* within the *Fundus Regius*:

Ipsam veram et Sacrosanctam, atque cum puro verbo Dej consentientem Augustanam ut vocant confessionem profiterentur, cui quidem honestae et piae Institutioni et ordinationij ad eorum instantem Requisitionem consensimus Imo in praesenciarum quoque tenore presencium consentimus, eamque Approbamus et ratificamus Cum autem Saxonica gens ab initio in eadem perstissit fide, potestatemque habuisset, Schismata inter sese prohibere temerarios autem punire aut loco privare. Vos quoque per oratores vestros, una cum alijs oratoribus Nominibus et in personis universae gentis Saxonicae, in conventu publico Thordensi, proxime celebrato, magno omnium vestrum Assensu ac zelo, Eandem Religionem Approbaveritis et Supplicaveritis Nobis humiliter, ut tam conscientiarum vestrarum, quam Reipublicae adeoque totius Regni tranquillitatj, cum inter tanta et tot interna Externaque incendia, tranquillus et firmus vestrae Reipublicae status, plurimum ad permansionem Regni pertinere dinoscerentur, clementer consulere dignaremur, et nunc Ecclesiarum Dej pastores, presentata Nobis Synodaliū decretorum formula, idem a nobis Suppliciter et per viscera Jesu Christi Salvatoris nostri precati essent. Idcirco vobis harum serie firmiter committimus, ut a modo in posterum praefatis pastoribus ubique in Jurisdictione vestra, praedictam puram et Synceram Augustanam confessionem, citra omnium impiorum Scandalum profiteri et Ceremonias ac ritus antiquitas ordinatos, quod tamen vos sponte et fecisse et facturos esse Intelligimus, observare permitti facere debeatis[...].²¹

The Diploma does not mention the version of the Augustana, namely the *Invariata* (1530), or the *Variata* (1540), a fact that increased the theological

²⁰ Ziegler, "Auszug aus *Virorum Coronae*," 115.

²¹ "Stefan Báthory bestätigt die ausschließliche Gültigkeit des Augburgischen Bekenntnisses auf dem Königsboden und befiehlt dem Kronstädter Rat, den Pfarrern in der Ausübung des Bekenntnisses und der Übung der alten Kirchenbräuche kein Hindernisse entgegenzusetzen." Teutsch, *Urkundenbuch*, vol. I, 207–208.

disputes between the adepts of the Philipp Melancthon' theology (Variata), derogatory named Crypto-Calvinists, and the adepts of the Lutheran Orthodoxy. Even Báthory's Diploma refers to internal variances as it orders both the allegiance to Augsburg Confession and the free practice of the "old ceremonies and rites". Those problems took another dimension in 1680, but the exclusive viability of the Augustan Confession within the Fundus Regius remained unmingled. Nonetheless, during the 17th century, in two localities within the Fundus Regius, Calvinist communities²² came to life, namely at Ocna Sibiului and in Orăștie, the last one being nor less than a royal free city; except the two ones, other such communities couldn't be founded.

Having been disposed a Calvinist church building in the Țara Bârsei, in a suburb of the royal free city of Brașov, even if outside the City, so to say the fortified perimeter of the locality, prince Apafi had encroached upon a fundamental law of Transylvania. The second juridical reason of the conflict results from the question of the city and the suburbs; in the context, it reveals the real dimension of the conflict. A basic problem refers to the juridical dimensions of the town, namely if the urban laws cover exclusively the City perimeter or, on the contrary, they are extended over the suburbs too.²³ Speaking about the town of Brașov in 1680–1681, the questions is: whether a Calvinist church building in a suburb of Brașov is to encroach or not both the Diploma from 1572 on the Augsburg Confession exclusivity within the Fundus Regius, and the privileges of the town which extend beyond the City walls?

The sentence is an ambiguous one in the prince's letter from the 21st of April 1681²⁴: the church was to be built in "the town of Brașov", and the "inhabitants in Brașov" were to give the plot for that building. If the Diet article from the 18th of May 1681 refers to the impediments the Calvinists suffer "in the town of Brașov", but the church is to be risen in Blumăna²⁵, the princely letter ignores this distinction. Certainly, we might speculate on a deliberate position or on a "simple" negligent couching; any case, that coaching could have jeopardized not only the privileges of Brașov, but also of the royal free cities, which didn't mean only of the Saxon ones.

The relation between the prince and the cities was regulated in the 17th

²² "Simonius naplőja [Diary of Simonius]," *MCRT*, vol. XIII (Budapest, 1888), 443; Petrus Bod, *Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica, unde ad exordio Novi Testamenti ad nostra usque tempora* I (Lugduni-Bavorum, 1888), 302–303.

²³ I wish I gave my thanks to Mr. Bernhard Heigl (Archives of the Black Church) to have turned my attention to this issue.

²⁴ Cf. footnote 13.

²⁵ Cf. footnote 7.

century through more articles of the Diet²⁶, and the article in the *Approbatae* (Pars III, Tit. LXXXI, Articulus I) is a synthesis of them, which stipulates:

“That the country’s legitimate princes might enter the fortified cities, with privileges and royal free ones, as well the fiscal towns, any moment they want to, both in times of peace and in times of war, together with their court, the diet, and the armies lieutenants or the dignitaries, according to the state and needs, and they have to guard, to carry and defend all together the gates, bulwarks, and the arsenals of the cities, for the good of country and of princes, but without encroaching their [of the cities] privileges and liberties”²⁷

Even if the paragraph above leaves space for interpretations, it is clear that the prince might enter at any time any of the towns in the Principality and stay as long as he wants here, but he is not allowed, personally or through his representatives, to involve into the urban life. The prince’s presence wasn’t to substitute or overrule the magistrate’s power or the city regulations. Historian József Benkő notes that the articles in the *Approbatae*, regarding the cities, as the above cited one, were related to the town of Braşov.²⁸ The diet articles that founded the stipulations on the relation between the prince and the towns were put in the times the princes of Transylvania tried to modify a privilege of the Saxons cities that limited the visits of the central authorities and their length, in order to allow the prince to enter the city at any time and stay here as long as he likes.²⁹

But it rested a delicate question whether such an unconditional allegiance

²⁶ Diets from 1607, 1614, 1625. Cf. “*Approbatae Constitutiones Regni Transylvaniae & Partium Hungariae Eidem Annexarum. Ex Articulis ab Anno Millesimo Quingentissimo Quadragésimo, ad praesentem huncusque Millesimum Sexcentessimum Quinquagesimum tertium conlucis, compilatae. Ac primum quidem per Dominos Consiliarios revisae, tandemque in Generali Dominorum Regnicolarum, ex Edicto Celsissimi Principis, D.D. GEORGII RÁKOCZI II. Dei Gratia Principis Transylvaniae, Partium Regni Hungariae Domini, & Siculorum Comitibus, & Domini eorum Clementissimi, in Civitatem Albam Juliam ad diem decimumquintum mensis Januarii Anni praesentis 1653,*” in *Erdély Országának Három Könyvekre osztott Törvényes Könyve Melly Approbata, Compilata Constitutiokból és Novellaris Articulusokból áll* [Juridical Code of Transylvania in three parts: *Approbatae, Compilatae Constitutiones* and *Articuli Novellares*] (Kolozsvár, 1815), 182.

²⁷ “*Approbatae,*” 182

²⁸ József Benkő, *Transilvania specialis. Erdély földje és népe* [Transilvania specialis. The Land and the People of Transylvania] (Bukarest, Kolozsvár: Kriterion, 1999), 419.

²⁹ Zsuzsanna Cziráki, *Autonóm közösség és központi hatalom. Udvar, fejedelem és város viszonya a Bethlen-kori Brassóban* [The Autonomous Community and the Central Authority. Court, Prince and the City – their Relations in Braşov in Bethlen’s times] (Budapest: ELTE, 2011), 63–67.

of the urban liberties and privileges meant the fortified perimeter or did it extend also on the suburbs. We may better understand this administrative-juridical delimitation if using the example of a city outside the *Fundus Regius*, namely Târgu-Mureş that Gabriel Bethlen's Diploma from the 29 of April 1616 raised to the rank of a royal free city.³⁰ It stipulates that the noblemen might keep their personal titles (Art. V), but had no right to oppose to the urban privileges, their dwellings and lands are submitted to the city authorities and they must contribute to the city tasks:

*QUINTO [...] Ne aliquando Nobiles personae inter ipsos hactenus creati, et in posterum creandi prerogativa sua nobilitari praesumptione contra privilegia ipsius civitatis liberae MarusWasarhely haeredesque et posteritates eorum utriusque sexus universae, quovis quaesito sub colore, aliquam contentionis materiam acquirere, nedum excogitare possent, ob hoc ipsi nobiles et ipsorum posteri in privatis quidem ipsorum personis Nobiles maneat etiam deinceps; verum ratione domorum, ac aliarum haereditarum suarum in annotata civitate MarusWasarhely libere, et territorij eius existens, iurisdictioni eiusdem Reipublici, se se submittere omniaque et singula eiusdem civitatis onera civilia, tanquam quaelibet civitatensium persona privata, et optimus pariae civis, non obstante praerogativa sua nobilitari, suffere, et ad normam civitatis inter ipsos vivere debeant et sint adstrictj; alioqui contra contumaces et rebelles, ipsa civitas libera MarusWasarhely pro libero suo arbitrio, iure civitatis reservato, semper uti valeant atque possint.*³¹

Strictly read, the article shows that the noblemen loose *de facto* their titles of nobility within the fortified city, so they opposed and referred to the prince.³² Two were the reasons that judge János Angyalos and noble Mihály Köpeczi used in their supplication to prince Gabriel Bethlen, in 1616: the nobiliary privileges are older than the urban ones, and the new privileges refer only to the fortified precincts³³, not to „Hostát“, the suburb namely.³⁴ So, the strict delimitation of the juridical state within City will also involve a juridical strict difference

³⁰ Sándor Pál-Antal, *Marosvásárhely története. I. A kezdetektől 1848-ig* [Târgu-Mureş History. I. From beginning to 1848] (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2009), 59.

³¹ *Marosvásárhely történetéből* [From the history of Târgu-Mureş] (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 1999), 41.

³² Sándor Pál-Antal, *Marosvásárhely XVII–XVIII. századi jogszabályai és polgárnévsorai* [Rules and citizens' lists in Târgu-Mureş the 17th–18th centuries] (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2006), 15.

³³ It refers to “City” or rather “Citadel”, the fortress built in 1603, in Toma Borsos' times, around the Reformed Church, Sándor Pál-Antal, “Ki a polgár Marosvásárhelyen?” [Who is a citizen in Târgu-Mureş?] *A Székelyföld és városai: történelmi tanulmányok és közlemények* [The Szekler's Land and its towns], (Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2003), 66; Pál-Antal, *Marosvásárhely története*, 45.

³⁴ *Marosvásárhely XVII–XVIII*, 16.

between City and suburb: the nobiliary privileges were not valid within the City.³⁵ The rank of a royal free town juridically meant the noblemen's sending from the City to suburb, as the incompatibility between the nobles' privileges and the urban ones had been so decreed.

This is why the ambiguous couching of prince Apafi's letter on a Reformed church building in the town might have made the town vulnerable through repealing the juridical difference between City and suburb. But, in the same time in the case of Braşov, the City together with the suburbs formed the town; even if different entities, they were together submitted to the same administration.

3. The conflict in Braşov as a problem of Transylvania relation with the Porte

The dispute on building/unbuilding the Reformed church in the suburb of Blumăna takes other lines that a simple local quarrel in the princely correspondence on the conflict in Braşov. The High Porte is present as a factor of a menacing and blackmailing action in the letters I have spoken about within the 1st part of this issue, namely that one of István Mikó to prince Apafi, from the 18th September 1680, and that of the prince to András Szekhalmi, from the 30th of September 1680. The letter from the 30th of September presents the conflict in Braşov together with Sava Brancovici's turning out from the metropolitan seat of Alba Julia.³⁶ So that the conflict the magistrate in Braşov created by refusing the Reformed church raising in the suburb of Blumăna was part of a inner political crisis but which surpassed the principality borders.

To better understand why the inhabitants in Braşov threaten and even blackmail with the Porte and the central power seriously deals with such a menacing, we might refer to the relations between the Principality and the Porte beginning with 1660, the year Oradea was conquered by the Ottomans and the former county of Caransebeş became part of a sanjak, even if it was a part of the Principality until 1658.³⁷ The Conquest of Lugoj, Caransebeş and Oradea meant more than territorial lost for the Principality of Transylvania. According to Halil Inalcik's typology, the Ottoman suzerainty imposing – beginning with 1541 in

³⁵ *Marosvásárhely XVII–XVIII*, 60; Sándor Kolosvári, Kelemen Óvári, ed., *Monumenta Hungariae juridico-historica. Corpus Statutorum Hungariae Municipalium. Tomus I. Statuta et Constitutiones Municipiorum Transsylvaniae ab antiquissimis Temporibus usque ad finem seculi XVIII*. [Magyarországi Jogtörténeti Emlékek. A Magyar Törvényhatóságok Jogszabályainak Gyűjteménye. I. Kötet. Az Erdélyi Törvényhatóságok Jogszabályai] (Budapest, 1885), 83, 87–88.

³⁶ *Török-magyarkori*, doc. no. LXVII, 101.

³⁷ Călin Felezeu, *Principatul Transilvaniei în epoca suzeranităţii otomane 1541–1688* [The Principality of Transylvania in the Time of Ottoman Rule] (Cluj-Napoca: Bybliothek, 2013), 248, 260.

Transylvania – was seen as the first step of a proper conquest.³⁸ By conquering Lugoj and Caransebeș, Transylvania was punished and began to lose its military and political role of a buffer-state. A deeper intrusion of the Ottomans within the territory of the Principality came with Oradea conquering, as the hinterland to keep up the garrison of Oradea laid to the county of Satu Mare, and the Ottoman occupancy of Oradea aimed to the counties of Crasna, Solnocul de Mijloc, Solnocul Interior, Dabâca and Cluj, and that is the Ottomans troops' entering the center of Transylvania; it was the reason of the prince and population's protest.³⁹ Nevertheless, the Ottomans advanced between 1664 and 1670 up to Maramureș, respectively, to Hațeg in the south-western part of Transylvania.⁴⁰ Another sample to show the degradation of Transylvania statute at the Porte was how its messenger was took for a hostage there.⁴¹ The Porte tended to involve into the Principality inner affairs up to 1683.⁴²

Under such conditions the Principality became more vulnerable before the Porte than it already had been, and any domestic question could change in a reason for the Porte to intervene there. Two major questions were present in 1680: Sava Brancovici's turning out, a fact that awakened the reaction of the voievode of Walachia⁴³, and the conflict in Brașov. The prince and his representative at the Porte had to find justification for the central power behavior and this is the element to show how vulnerable the prince was in fact. Even he insistently reverted to his disposition concerning the Reformed church building at Blumăna, he simultaneously had not to exceed the limits of his own authority by encroaching those of a privileged nation. On the other hand, the inner question of a tolerate church (the Orthodox one), which was not connected to the faith fundamentals, might become an ample political question.

4. *A confessional conflict or Sprachkampf avant la lettre?*

Another juridical basis of the conflict, regarding the confessional and political system in the Principality of Transylvania, results from a law dating from Stefan Báthori's times, the law of innovation and against the innovators:

“In what concerns the religion, the Diet decided that the article from our late Lord's times hold good, namely that no one have to suffer on account of his religion; if somebody should dear to introduce renovations (to innovate)

³⁸ Ibid., 250.

³⁹ Ibid., 260.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 262.

⁴¹ Ibid., 281.

⁴² Ibid., 201.

⁴³ *Török-magyarkori*, no. LXIV, 97.

encroaching the diet article by this, as his Highness told us that there are such innovators, his Highness should call Ferenc David and the superintendent and find from them whether there are some to be in other religion [i. e. the doctrine fundament] than the one they were in our dead Lord's times; whether they are in a different and innovating religion, his Highness should excommunicate them".⁴⁴

The law was initially, as the text shows, put against the Antitrinitarians, more exactly, against a specific feature of them, namely the theological pluralism and their open theology that accepted doctrinal innovations.⁴⁵ But as the *Approbatae* shows, all the official [received] religions are referred to in that law.⁴⁶ It is right that only the doctrine innovations were impeachable, not those concerning the ecclesiastic administration or ritual ones. Even with this precaution the law of innovations obliged to a strict obeying of the theological bases as they were put up to 1571/1572.

Under those circumstances, Calvinist church building at Blumăna or even serving in a private hose became an extended question out of Braşov or the Țara Bârsei. From the point of view of that Transylvanian town, two were the aspects to worsen the situation: the cult language and the confessional situation at Blumana and within the Burzenland. At the end of the 17th century, particularly Lutheran Hungarians and Szeklers lived at Blumăna. The Hungarian Lutherans came from the rural hinterland of Braşov, from Săcele or Şapte Sate (Baciu, Turches, Cernatu, Satulung, Tărlungeni, Purcăreni and Zizin), as well as from the villages of Crizba and Apaţa that passed in 1651 from the possession of Bran domain into that one of Braşov.⁴⁷ It is hard to assess what was the confessional status of those villages before 1651. Possibly, those ones were Crypto-Calvinist; Instead of referring to a well classified confessional delimitation, it would be more appropriate to assess that they had an open confessional situation, as the villages from the Church districts of Rupea and Sighişoara, i.e. they were only formally Lutheran villages until 1654. After 1651, the confessional ambivalence of the Hungarian villages which came into Braşov possession was substituted, theoretically at least, by a clear affiliation to the Orthodox Lutheranism of the Țara Bârsei and Transilvanian Lutheran Church.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Diet of Turda, the 25th –29th of May 1572, *MCRT*, vol. II (Budapest, 1876), 528.

⁴⁵ Mihály Balázs, *Az erdélyi antitrinitarizmus az 1560-as évek végén* [Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism by the end of years 1560] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1988), 40, 86; M. Balázs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism (1566–1571). From Servet to Palaelogus* [Bibliotheca Dissidentium 7] (Baden-Baden & Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 1996), 6, 44.

⁴⁶ "Approbatae," Prima Pars. Titulus Primus. Articulus III, 1–2.

⁴⁷ "Approbatae," Titulus LXXXII. Törts-Váráról, és ahoz való jószágáról. Articulus I, 188–189.

⁴⁸ Edit Szegedi, "Konfessionsbildung und Konfessionalisierung im städtischen Kontext. Eine Fallstudie am Beispiel von Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen (cca. 1550–1680)," in *Berichte und*

If we can work with the assumption in the case of the Hungarians of Blumăna that they had been Lutherans before 1651 or had been following the theological direction of Braşov at least, things were completely different in the case of the pro-Hungarian hinterland. The Hungarian Lutheran preachers were suspected of Crypto-Calvinism⁴⁹, and that was not an uncommon situation if we take into account that the majority of the preachers followed Calvinist schools, although the Gymnasium in Braşov had developed since 1637 a Hungariann class for the Hungarian schoolmasters in the area; but it wasn't necessarily a sign of the confessional denomination as the Reformed colleges themselves had had also Saxons students.⁵⁰ On the other hand, that confessionally ambiguous hinterland was the reservoir of the Hungarian community in Braşov and therefore made it a very unstable from the confessional point of view. Building a Calvinist church there would have aggravated the situation from the Saxon ecclesiastic and politic perspective and it might have been used in order to accuse the city for religious innovation.

So, the Calvinist church building at Blumăna was a dogmatic and a political question, not a linguistic one. The political dimension of Calvinism might result from the Burzenland dean's protest and it is clearly put in Herrmann's account. Calvinism is the prince's religion, so to say, religion of the political power. The Hungarian language was in Braşov also the language of the Lutherans and was not associated exclusively with Calvinism. The problem was not the language of worship, but the theological content transmitted by means of the language. The inhabitants in Braşov did not protest against the estate system, the Prince or the Hungarian language as the official language in the Principality. It is not to undermine, that that protest of the magistrate and the inhabitants had in view but the defense of the existing political and religious status-quo.

5. *A hypothesis: the true reason of the protest*

The social composition of the potential Reformed congregation hasn't been yet discussed. Given the difficulty of re-constructing the social composition of the Reformed faith in Blumăna at the end of the 17th century⁵¹, we consider as being more that appropriate to introduce here the term "hypothesis". The contemporary sources display that the clerks of the Tricesima the hosted nobles

Beiträge des Geisteswissenschaftlichen Zentrums Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas an der Universität (Leipzig, 2006), 187–189.

⁴⁹ Josef Trausch, *Geschichte des Burzenländer Capituls* (Kronstadt, 1852), 54.

⁵⁰ Szegedi, "Konfessionsbildung," 188.

⁵¹ Data from Mr. Thomas Şindilariu, archivist at the Archive of the Black Church.

in the town were the pillars of the community.⁵² The situation described by József Benkő, namely that the Reformed believers mainly servants from Trei Scaune corresponds to the end of the 18th century, a period when the Reformed Church ceased to exist as the Church of central power.

If we start using the hypothesis that the Reformed in Braşov had also been especially common people at the end of the 17th century, as the Lutheran inhabitants of Blumăna had been, but backed by the nobles and clerks connected to the prince and not to the city⁵³, we might accept that the real reason for forbidding the construction of a Reformed church in Blumăna, was the fear for having a nobiliary community in the town, although it was outside the City's walls. May we consider this refuse as a conflict concerning the matter of concivility?⁵⁴ To what extend?

Relation between nobility and the town redirects us to the difference between City and suburb. This political-administrative difference calls in turn to leave the strict level of the Saxon towns and of the Fundus Regius, considering the situation of Târgu Mureş and Cluj; the last one abandoned in 1666 its rank of a royal free town to become, after Oradea falling, a border-city (*végőrség*).⁵⁵ The article of the *Approbatae* concerning the right of the privileged nations to buy houses in towns was one of the most disputed.⁵⁶ The article clearly stipulates that these who buy houses in a town have to comply with the liberties of this town; more than this, the next paragraph presents the people who have no right to buy.⁵⁷ It was a compromise that might be taken for the towns defeating in the end.

What could have happened if the noblemen were granted the right to settle down into the town? As the case of Târgu-Mureş reveals us, the nobles would live out of the fortified perimeter, rather than obey the responsibilities of the townfolk, the inhabitants within the city. In the case of Cluj, the difference between nobles and townfolk disappears in 1666 and the documents speak about nobles-townfolk and nobles from the outside (*beszármazott*). But the relation between the two categories was a conflictual one, as those from outside

⁵² Molnár János, *A brassói magyarság és ev.ref. egyház története* [History of the Hungarians in Braşov and of their Reformed community] (Brassó, 1887), 68.

⁵³ Benkő, *Transsilvania specialis*, 443.

⁵⁴ Krista Zach, "Toleranță religioasă și construirea stereotipurilor într-o regiune multiculturală. "Biserici populare" în Transilvania," in *Transilvania și sașii ardeleni în istoriografie. Din publicațiile Asociației de Studii Transilvane Heidelberg* (Sibiu, Heidelberg: Hora: Arbeitskreis für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 2001), 91.

⁵⁵ Elek Jakab, *Oklevéltár Kolozsvár története második és harmadik kötetéhez* (Budapest, 1888), nr. CLXXVIII (1666), 392–394.

⁵⁶ "Approbatae," 182; cf. "Simonius' naplója," [Simonius' Diary], in *MCRT*, vol. XIII, 458.

⁵⁷ "Approbatae," 182.

used to refuse to take part into the common responsibilities of the urban life.⁵⁸ The situation in Cluj was known in Braşov as an example of low town from the political-juridical point of view: one of the 7 cities which lost such a rank from religious reasons (imposing of Antitrinitarianism/ Unitarianism as the dominant confession) that Oraştie⁵⁹ substituted, and as the town that lost its statute of a royal free town being obliged to let nobles settle in and become its citizens without contributing to the public obligations. It is less important in the context if the town of Cluj was or not a Saxon town from a juridical point of view, what is important is the reason belonging to the Saxon mentality. Martin Kelp is the one to sum up the close connection of confession, right and Saxon identity: Lutheranism and towns closed to nobles:

*Jamdudum omnes Saxones in Hungaricos mores, linguam, forsan & gentem, facile fuisse transmigraturos, nisi Urbes ipsorum hoc vallarentur privilegio: quod nulli etiam Potentissimo Nobili (quantominus ignobilibus) ex Hungarico genere concedatur in Saxonum Urbibus comparate domos; cum tamen Germanis omnibus, quicunque ex Germania vel Hungaria eo commigrant, aut casu feruntur, Civitatis jus inter ipsos pateat, Evangelicae modo Religioni sint addicti, aut ei se, illuc venientes, adjungant.*⁶⁰

Conclusions: For a new reading of sources

The conflict of the years 1680–1681 concerning a Reformed church building in Blumăna suburb of Braşov shows another side than a simple outburst of religious intolerance and xenophobia as, finally the church beneficiaries were but inhabitants of Transylvania with different levels of privileges. It was not a *Sprachkampf avant la lettre*, as even within the City of Braşov they served and preached in Hungarian Neither the language of the local administration or of the state, nor the liturgical language was the reason. Nevertheless, the Hungarian language was a question, not for having been different from the language of the administration in Braşov, but for being identical with that one of the Hungarian Lutherans who attended the church of the former Dominican monastery. It was a similar situation with the one in Cluj in the first half of the 17th century, when the Unitarians and the Reformed used the same liturgical languages, Hungarian and German.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Jakab, *Oklevéltár*, no. CLXXXVI (1675), 414–416.

⁵⁹ Martin Kelp, *Natales Saxonum Transsylvaniae, Aposciasmate Historico Collustratos, Consensu & Autoritate Incluti Philosophorum Ordinis in Academia Lipsiensi, publicae Eruditorum disquisitioni submittent* (Lipsiae, MDCLXXXIV), 7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶¹ Edit Szegedi, “Practica bilingvismului în Clujul premodern (sec. XVI–XVII.), in Liviu Țirău,

The linguistic identity was an undesirable one because of a possible doctrinal contamination; in the case of Braşov, from Calvinists to Lutherans. But for this linguistic identity we might re-read the sources and reconsider the relation between nation and religion in early-modern Transylvania. If taking into consideration the classic scenario of Saxon nation and Lutheranism identification, while Calvinism is the religion of Hungarian nation (the nobiliary one) and of a part of the Szeklers it is hard to understand why the town council in Braşov insisted to hinder the building of a Reformed church in the Hungarian-speaking suburb of the town. Instead of delimiting themselves from the Hungarians through Lutheranism, the Saxon elite in Braşov tried to force people of a different nation to become Saxons from the confessional point of view. It is right that those Hungarians didn't belong to the Early Modern Hungarian nation, and those from from Şapte Sate were serves of Braşov. It is exactly this situation which might be difficult to understand due to the identity perspective induced by the 19th century historiography – and if possible, deepened with post-modernist literature –, but which was utterly logic for early modern thinking and practice. The confessionalization in Braşov integrated and delimited simultaneously, both the processes being fundamental. It integrated the Hungarian population of Blumăna and of the former domain of Bran and delimited itself from the Romanians in Şcheii Braşovului who remained Orthodox and, given the magistracy's support, freely practiced their faith. As belonging to a tolerate religion, the Orthodox were not a rivalry from the inside of the political-religious system.⁶² Nevertheless, the Lutheran Church in Transylvania remained open to individual conversion of Romanians to Lutheranism.⁶³

The conflict of 1680–1681 might be interpreted as the history of a success and of a failure: a success from the town point of view, a failure for the prince and nobility. The failure was an integral part in the system relying on estates, as the the prince's incapacity to impose his own will is a clear proof of the limits that any component of that system used to bear. The prince failed not because he had a weak authority or weaker than Gabriel Bethlen or Gheorghe Rákóczy I. He failed because his success would have signified the abolition of several principles that sustained the functionality of such a system. The menace of a probable Ottoman intervention was, in that context, less a desperate action of a town in danger, but a guarantee that the political system wouldn't be violated.

Ştefan Melancu, eds., *Interferențe euro-atlantice. 20 de ani de studii europene la Universitatea "Babeş-Bolyai"*, (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2013), 33–43.

⁶² Zach, "Toleranță religioasă," 91.

⁶³ Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Sibiu, Colecția Brukenthal, y1–5, no. 282, Michael Bertleff, *Urkundenbuch der evang. Landeskirche A.B. 1767* (subsequently added title), 278.

For this reason we need a new reading of sources, free of the 19th century obsessions or the desires of the 20th–21st centuries. It is time maybe to read and find out in the frequent martial language of sources rather the emitters' incapacity in front of the limits of their power than their (apparently) unlimited power.

**ORAȘUL, PRINCIPELE ȘI POARTA: DESPRE POSIBILITĂȚILE
ȘI LIMITELE PRIVILEGIILOR ORĂȘENEȘTI ȘI ALE PUTERII
PRINCIARE ÎN TRANSILVANIA SECOLULUI AL XVII-LEA**

Rezumat

Pornind de la un conflict iscat la Brașov în anii 1680–1681 legat de ridicarea unei biserici în suburbia brașoveană Blumăna și care a implicat nobilimea calvină, principele și Înalta Poartă, studiul de față încearcă să prezinte complexitatea relațiilor dintre oraș, stări, puterea centrală din cadrul Principatului Transilvaniei, precum și locul unui oraș ardelean în relațiile cu Poarta. Studiul se concentrează asupra limitelor privilegiilor stărilor dar și a puterii princiare în problemele legate de confesiune și politică. În același timp, problema orașului săsesc Brașov este discutată comparativ cu situația orașului liber regesc Târgu-Mureș și a fostului oraș liber regesc Cluj, arătându-se similitudinile problemelor orașelor premoderne dincolo de apartenența confesională și lingvistică.