

**BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF REFORMED THEOLOGY**

**EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORKS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
FĂGĂRAŞ**

SUMMARY

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The first Chapter

The thesis examines the history of educational institutions from Făgăraș in the 17th century.

Considering the specific juridical status of the Făgăraș domain (liber baronat), and the ecclesiastical and juridical status of the Reformed church in Făgăraș expressed its influence including at the level of the schools, we analyzed above all, the formation and organization of the parish, and the process which led to the development of this special legal status. Since the control of students and school management, the maintenance and administration of the institution came into its range of activity, we sought to clarify particularly the circumstances of the establishment and function of the consistory. Given that, the consistory supervised the Lutheran and Orthodox communities from Făgăraș district, it was essential to extend our investigation to the complex issue of cohabitation between the three confessions, taking into account the fact that, for instance, the orthodox community's reform, which attempted to renew their church, had significantly influenced the Romanian school's establishment and function. Following we presented the history of schools from Făgăraș. The borough populated also by Hungarians, Saxons and Romanians had throughout the 17th century two schools: a Hungarian (Reformed) one, which functioned with some interruption since the second half of the 16th century, and the Romanian school, founded in 1657 by Susana Lorántffy. The knowledge we have about smaller Reformed “*Particular*” school form Transylvania are incomplete, which already justifies our research regarding its function and structure. The analyze of the oldest register

of the Calvinist school from Transylvania, the conclusions derived from the examination of the rector's biography and the recruiting area of the school has a significant contribution to the ecclesiastic and educational history of Transylvania, also contributing, to the refinement of the image we have of the cultural history of Transylvania in the 17th century.

The few written data that have survived referring to the Romanian school of Făgăraș have already been published, so the aim of this thesis is not the presentation of new sources, but the interpretation of the already existing ones. The Romanian school, which's establishment is a significant moment in the reforming attempt of the Romanian community from the Făgăraș district, played for a half century, a substantial role in the cultural and ecclesiastical life of this land. The history of the Romanian school, essentially, it is already known, however outlining an overview of the educational system in Făgăraș, seems to justify the re-interpretation of the related records, and the revision of the existing conclusions.

The thesis is therefore structured around the three major themes discussed in advance; containing three chapters. Certainly the variety of sources we have operated with required several kind of approaches.

The second Chapter

Therefore, the three distinctive characteristics of the church of Făgăraș district, such as the *canonica visitatio*, the early establishment of the consistory and the supervision of Orthodox and Lutheran churches are due to several causes:

- a. the special juridical status (*liber baronatus*) of Făgăraș district (because of which the hierarchy of Orthodox and Lutheran churches could not exercise their usual jurisdiction, this authority being partly taken over by the consistory),
- b. the geographical position (because the church could not be included into the Archdeaconry, therefore it has been placed under Episcopal and not Decanal *visitatio*, and some functions of the council (*Synodus Partialis*), such as judging matrimonial cases, were taken by the divorce court composed by priests and members of the consistory)
- c. the ethnic and religious heterogeneity (the existence of a significant Saxon Lutheran and Orthodox Romanian community, because of which the borough council could not coincide with the parish council).

We believe that the disposition of princess Anna Bornemissza from 1664 regarding the priest's salary suggests first of all the fact that the Calvinist Church had taken the Lutheran's place, so the former Lutheran Church of the borough became in the late 1610 Reformed and Hungarian, even if the Saxon population has not embraced the new phase of the Reform, as well as neither the Romanian communities nor the Greek traders from Făgăraș district renounced to Orthodoxy. The Reformed Church's first clergyman which we know of was Laskói Csókás Péter, the records about his person dating from 1581.

The prince Gabriel Bethlen pay distinctive attention to the parish, and in the last years of his reign he started the construction of the Reformed church, and by a decree from 1629 he had established in Făgăraș the first consistory of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. So Bethlen in order to administrate the parish, decided to set up a lay body distinct from the borough's council, which was necessary because the composition of the magistrate was neither ethnic nor religious homogeneous. The new ecclesiastical leadership, composed by men of consequence, offered guarantee to prevent possible disorders within the parish, but especially strengthened the position of the congregation in the borough.

We have only a few written records before 1660 about the structure of the parish, but we know that its consolidation was taking place under Princess Susana Lorántffy. We suppose that detailed regulations regarding the consistory were made by Bethlen, or – given the support provided for the followers of Presbyterianism – by Susana Lorántffy herself (the earliest records on the consistory's activity are from 1657 and have been preserved in connection with the establishment of the Romanian school), but the first statutes we have, dates from 1664 and were granted by Michael Apafi. The analysis of the regulation from 1664 reveals the fact that, the supervision of the church discipline, which was the most important task of Calvin's consistory, was an important, but not the most significant task of the consistory from Făgăraș.

In the district of Făgăraș, the village Șercaia, the boroughs of Făgăraș and Beclean were partly inhabited by Saxon Lutherans. Clearly the district had a significant Saxon community, some of which, probably concomitant with the Hungarian population of the settlement, or because the restrictions on Lutheran's religious liberties, converted to Calvinism, or at least have accepted the service of the Reformed priest. The converted ones, apparently, were integrated into parish's life, but the others have suffered, because the religious rights of the Lutheran community had been seriously impaired, they had no right to keep a priest of their own. The only way for these Lutherans to maintain their

religious identity was to attend the Lutheran church in Beclean, and to invite its Lutheran priest to Făgăraș on occasion such funerals, weddings and baptizes. Clearly, the Lutherans from Făgăraș district have maintained close relations with the secular and ecclesiastical authorities of the Saxon nation, with the support of which, most likely after several attempts, in the spring of 1700, have reintroduced Lutheranism. Time when the Saxons once converted to Calvinism rejoined the Lutheran Church.

The Reformed Church from Făgăraș – with the support and probably at the initiative of Făgăraș district's possessors – sought for the conversion of the Saxon population, particularly by restricting their religious rights, attempt which clearly would have led to success if Făgăraș wouldn't be situated in the proximity of the Saxon Land. We suppose that, between the Calvinist and Lutheran communities of Făgăraș, there have been a constantly tension, which was probably felt since the beginning of the 17th century, and not only in the religious life of the borough.

Finally we analyzed the cohabitation between Calvinists and Catholics. The number of Catholics was almost negligible throughout the 17th century. After the death of Balthazar Báthory (1595), the Catholic community has declined considerably and over several decades has integrated among Calvinist, respectively in the Lutheran community. For this reason they are rarely mentioned in the sources, but the decrees given by Michael Apafi and Anna Bornemissza against Catholics, even more, forbidding the presence of Catholic priests and missionaries in Făgăraș, suggests that among the officials and inhabitants of the district there still were some *papists*. In the last two decades of the 17th century Catholicism reappears in Făgăraș, due to a Franciscan missionary who was allowed to entry into the fortress, moreover we have some records from 1702 relating the existence of a Jesuit missionary in Făgăraș. But the Catholicism returned to its natural course only at the beginning of the 18th century.

The third Chapter

This chapter presents the history of the Reformed “Particular” school from Făgăraș. The history of the most important Reformed educational institutions from Transylvania is well known, but the information we have about the small Calvinist “Particular” school (excepting the one from Orăștie), are incomplete, and in some cases – such as Făgăraș – are barely known. This already justifies our research regarding the function and structure

of the “Particular” school from Făgăraș, which has a significant contribution to the ecclesiastic and educational history of Transylvania.

When we express about the beginnings of Protestant education in Făgăraș, we do not refer to the founding of a new institution. The borough’s school, which previously offered practical training, appropriate to its cohabiters demand, in the second half of the 16th century came under Protestant control, and with the rise of the Calvinist community from the beginning of the 17th century, will suffer a series of changes, some of which aimed its structure, and other its curriculum. However, the process itself cannot be traced because the lack of sources. After some difficulties the Reformed church have passed through in the late 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, from the reign of Gabriel Bethlen, the parish will receive substantial support from the Transylvanian princes, which had beneficial consequences on the evolution of the educational system too. Given the educational and religious support activity triggered by the wife of George Rákóczi I, Susana Lorántffy, we suppose that the princess had taken under her protection, since Făgăraș district (1634) entered in her possession, both school and its students.

The Reformed “Particular” school from Făgăraș can be classed among the so-called academic promotions. This denomination covers a school institution, where young college graduates could work as schoolmasters, for a determined period, usually 2 or 3 years, after which they were free to continue their academically training at prestigious universities. Being a rector therefore means only a transient function for those who were to become clergymen. During the research we have compiled the list of rectors of Făgăraș. The catalog shows that between (1577) 1639-1704 the school from Făgăraș had 35 rectors, among which we find the names of illustrious representatives of the Transylvanian culture such as: Laskói Csókás Péter, Tiszabecsi Gáspár, Misztótfalusi Kis Miklós, Bonyhai György etc. We extended our investigation regarding the education of these rectors, and our research revealed that 3 of them studied at Alba Iulia, 8 at Aiud, 11 at the College of Sárospatak exiled to Alba Iulia, 1 at Cluj. According to the previous data, results that, the school from Făgăraș, until 1672, was the “Particular” school of Alba Iulia-Aiud, after 1672 of Sárospatak-Alba Iulia. So the Reformed school from Făgăraș, within its possibilities, follows in structure, curriculum and methods of teaching the example of the educational institutions mentioned above.

The schoolmaster’s salary came partly from the contributions paid by the citizens of Făgăraș (regardless their ethnic or confessional identity), partly from the payment in kind and money allocated by the Lord of Făgăraș from the domain’s income. These

earnings were completed by fees (*didactrum*) and by quarters and meal. These data shows that the school from Făgăraș was among of those educational institutions, where skilled teachers managed to accumulate, in just 2-3 years, the money required for their further academic studies.

Schoolmasters were assisted in their teaching duties by assistant teachers (*praeceptores*). The use of older students as class teachers was required, because of the considerable increase in student's number the rector couldn't accomplish his teaching duties among all classes. The assistant teachers came either among students who interrupted their studies at the college or among eminent pupils from Făgăraș. They had the task to train the elementary classes; meanwhile they had to continue their studies under the guidance of the rector. Their teaching work was honored with the modest sum of 20 forints a year, to which were added some payments in kind.

In terms of school regulations (*Leges scholae*), we came to the conclusion that the statutes only sporadic contains elements borrowed from the regulations of the colleges from Alba Iulia/Aiud. These statutes can be grouped into two units: the first contains general items, the second (*Leges speciales*), contains articles regarding the functions held by students in the congregation, and articles about fees.

The statutes above reveal some details about the school's structure too. According to our analysis the students can be grouped, based on their payment of fees and curriculum, into six units: 1. *Abecedarii* (50 denar), 2. *Rudimentarii* (1 forint), 3. *Grammatistae* (2 forints), 4. *Syntaxistae* (2 forints), 5. *Poetae, Rhetores, Oratores* (3 forints) and finally 6. *Studiosi Logicae, Theologiae, Philosophiae* (4 forints). Therefore the school from Făgăraș offered instruction for those who wanted to continue their studies at college.

According to the current state of research the school register from Făgăraș (1639) is the oldest Calvinist register from Transylvania. Record-keeping in Calvinist schools in Transylvania has become a common practice in the middle of the 17th century, although researchers assume that the college founded in 1622 in Alba Iulia already had a register.

The register shows that the school from Făgăraș was a small Reformed "Particular" school, the number of pupils studying under the rector rarely exceeded 18. In our opinion regarding the upper classes attendance, the school is situated on the same range as Orăștie, which's register shows 132 students for the years 1669 to 1695, while in Făgăraș we have 124 pupils for the same period. Compared to this, at Târgu Mureș there have been studied 692 scholars between 1670-1695.

The recruitment area of a school can be determined by identifying the provenance of those who frequented it. In this investigation we followed the method applied by professor Zsigmond Jakó in the processing of the registers from Aiud. We assumed that the names derived from the denomination of a settlement actually reflect the provenience of students. In this way we were able to identify the origin of 207 (73.92%) of the 280 students listed in the register.

Our survey shows that about half of the students were from Szeklerland (105, 50.72%), of which an overwhelming proportion, 77.13% came from Trei Scaune (81 students). The Szeklers were then followed by the Saxons (39 students, 18,84%). Not all students from Saxon Land were Saxons, but as analyzes revealed almost the half of them were Hungarians. We believe that the main reason why a Saxon student chose the school of Făgăraș (or another Hungarian school) was to learn Hungarian language. The third group was composed by scholars from the counties (27 pupils, 13,04%), and the school also had 36 students (17,39%) outside of Transylvania. So applying the methodology mentioned above we concluded that the students came primarily from the Calvinist communities of Szeklerland. This could be easily explained, the district of Făgăraș was a land populated essentially by Orthodox Romanians, and the Saxons form north of the river Olt were Lutheran communities.

The fourth Chapter

The development of the special relations between the Orthodox and the Reformed churches in Făgăraș district, in which the founding of the Romanian school in 1657 marks a significant step, is characterized through efforts made in approaching the Romanian population to Reformed church. We intended in this chapter to analyze the complexity of these relations, but especially to highlight rarely discussed issues in literature, related to the circumstances which made possible the setting and functioning of the Romanian school.

The analysis so far allows us to draft some special features regarding the relations between Calvinism and Orthodoxy: decrees granted by the princes and the possessors of Făgăraș, influenced also by their political relations with the Romanian principalities, through which the Orthodox communities from the district had been placed under the supervision of Alba Iulia's *vlădică* (*bishop*), or the Bishop's of the Reformed church, either just under the control of the Orthodox Archdeacon or Bishop from Făgăraș, or the

consistory, reveals the fact that, principles and lords of this domain have not found the proper way to improve the spiritual life of the Orthodox communities, or to approach them on long-term to Calvinism. Certainly, we could outline some sporadic successes, (for instance, in several communities the Romanian was introduced as a cult language, Romanian priests instruction has improved considerably due to the Romanian school), but there were discrepancies between the intentions and results. Influences of Reform have come by conversions too. The reform was embraced especially by Romanian office-holder working in the domain's administration.

The Romanian school founded in 1657 in Făgăraș, which during the 50 years of its activity, has become an important cultural and ecclesiastical nucleus of the Romanian population from Făgăraș, sparked in the second half of the last century the interest of Hungarian researchers, while Romanian have made several investigations on this topic already from the first half of the 20th century. The Calvinist princes and bishops have established schools for the Romanian population to instruct them to read and write in their own language, aiming in this way to bring them close to Reform. Given that the Reform could be achieved only if the Romanian priests assimilated the Latin theological literature, writing and reading in Romanian soon was followed by the Latin, and the assimilation of Protestant culture. The founding of this school in 1657 has to be placed in this context. Its main purpose was to train well educated priests and qualified teachers for the Romanian community of the district, and the statutes permitted for outstanding students to pursue their studies in Latin schools. The teaching language in Făgăraș was the Romanian. The Romanian schoolmaster just as the institution; were under the supervision of the Calvinist consistory. The School's structure resembled to the Reformed "Particular" school, organized in three levels: the youngest found themselves at the lower level, followed by the *succrescentes*, on the superior level were instructed the future priests (*grammatikok*).

Excepting the act of foundation a few written data have been survived on the functioning of school. Records mention the existence of the first Romanian schoolmaster, Mihai Szilvási, only in 1662. He received dazzling salary from the princess, income which exceeded not only the Hungarian schoolmaster's salary, but competed even with the head pastor's earnings too. The last data referring to the Romanian school dates from 1695, after which as a consequence of the union of the Transylvanian Orthodox Church with Rome, the school ceased to exist.

We do not have much information about the origin of students who attended school in Făgăraș. Some of them came from among the uneducated future priests, who could keep

their jobs only by attending the school and accumulating the necessary knowledge for their profession. The other part consisted of young students eager to become teachers or priests. We believe that most of the students, just as in the case of the Reformed “Particular” school, attended the school in order to acquire only basic skills, which were enough to obtain an office in the administration of the domain and borough. We can’t make considerations on the number of students and their provenance. Many historians believe that the school was popular, even if this statement is based on a single source, according to which the monk Ionaşcu from Moldova have studied in 1677 grammar in Făgăraş.

The conclusions of the Romanian researchers related to the school from Făgăraş are contradictory. The establishment of the school by Princess Susana Lorántffy is seen by researchers, generally, as being an attempt to convert the Romanians to Calvinism, although most of them admit the benefits of the foundation on the cultural life of the Romanians from the district of Făgăraş. Clearly the Princess’s initiative was motivated not only by the desire to lift out the Orthodox community from the *great ignorance in which they lie*, but by that of approaching them to Calvinism. In our opinion, the foundation of Susan Lorántffy can be assessed to its real value only if we are placing it in the context of the ecclesiastical dispositions of princes and possessors of Făgăraş district regarding the Romanian Orthodox. Her gesture has to be analyzed not only from the perspective of its cultural benefits on the Romanian communities but also from the Orthodox religious life.

The failure of Susan Lorántffy’s decrees regarding the *canonica visitatio* from 1657 can be attributed to the aversion of the traditional Orthodox community against Romanian liturgical language, against the Hungarian *canonica visitatio*, the regularity and novelty of them, but especially versus the jurisdiction of the consistory – namely the fear of a new and foreign, more rigorous ecclesiastical order. From this perspective of course, neither the school, nor the establishment of *visitatio*, cannot be evaluated as being a success, even if they clearly serve the interests of Romanians. Possessors of the district of Făgăraş – even if they aimed at improving the ecclesiastical life of Romanians within the frame of Orthodoxy, and not necessarily tended to a forced conversion to Calvinism – with their decrees tempted to disrupt the traditional Orthodox world, because of which the Romanian population was able to maintain its religious identity.

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