

Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

Faculty of Reformed Theology

PhD Thesis

Summary

THE REFORMED PARISH OF CLUJ IN THE SECOND
HALF OF THE 17TH CENTURY

The Parish's Patrimony and Income Management; The Participation
of the Secular Office Holders to the Administration of the Parish's
Worldly Affairs

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2011

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Keywords

Reformed Parish of Cluj, patrimony and income management, secular office holders, manorial court, account book.

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Summary

INTRODUCTION

The Hungarian church- and civilization historiography alike tackles the issues of the Reformed Parish of Cluj with great interest, however the emphasis is placed on more important events of the Parish's development as for instance: the construction of different edifices as churches or school buildings, or the study of the biography of ministers and teachers. The most significant, momentous events of the 17th century concerning the life of the Parish were already highlighted by Gerő Szász, Elek Jakab and József Pokoly, however the source material discussing that particular era has been elaborated in greater amount by János Herepei, the later being in charge of the Parish's archives as well. Lately, the overall studies of Gábor Sipos provide a comprehensive and broad view on the Parish's 17th century development; with respect to the circumstances of its establishment the work of András Kiss delivers a clear description.

There are, nevertheless, such details of the Parish's history, which are left uninvestigated. The elaboration of the tumultuous source material contained in the Parish and the city archives, as well as a most thorough investigation of the literature concerning this issue can easily lead to the comprehension of the Parish's 17th century husbandry management, furthermore it can facilitate the possibility to replenish and refine former statements. This assignment is greatly impeded by the lack of basic investigation and lack of processed data and source material concerning the management of 17th century institutions' husbandry in Transylvania. Furthermore, there has been no possibility to access other partial studies of the kind.

The main purpose of the paper is to present the Reformed Parish of Cluj in the 17th century, as the latter had been one of the most significant Parishes of Transylvania, namely its function of a husbandry institution. This purpose will be achieved by investigating its assets, its proceeds and the particularities of its

husbandry and patrimony handling machineries. We intended to reveal the political and economic reasons for the prompt development and acquired strength of the Parish in the 17th century, furthermore the manner and the alteration of the wealth attendance and the husbandry management will be investigated. However, due to the shortage of the source material dated from the first half of the 17th century – even if our analysis also uses the surviving data from this period – our discourse engaged in analyzing the function of the Parish' husbandry succeeded to cover merely the second half of the century in question. Due to the alterations in the church policy, which occurred shortly after 1690, we appointed this significant date, the abolishment of the Transylvanian Principality, as the time-border of our investigation.

The Parish archives of the Reformed Church from Cluj, more accurately the part which tackled the 17th century had served as primary source in elaborating this discourse, these documents can be found in the Archives of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese. In addition to this main source, other important documents had been consulted as the registers and account books of the city council, the registers of the convent of Cluj-Manastur and the registers named Libri Regii, which tackle this period, the later is part of the National Hungarian Archives; furthermore the 17th century account books of the Unitarian Parish of Transylvania, data, which is guarded in the Archives of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church.

Methodologically speaking the chapters of the paper are mainly descriptive; however in the third and fifth chapters statistic methods are applied. The economic analysis and the statistic operations applied in the paper follow the methodology of the below quoted works of authors such as Erik Fügedi, Richárd Hörcsik, István Rácz és László Makkai, these methods were applied in grouping, adding and percentage calculation as well. In writing this paper we endeavored to compare the discussed processes and phenomena with similar or analogous processes and phenomena.

THE STRUCTURE AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAPER

In the first chapter of the paper through a thorough delineation of the Transylvanian Reformed Church's history we intended to illustrate the process by which this Church, during the 17th century had acquired a leading role amongst other Churches in the Principality of Transylvania. Having acquired this particular information it is easier to comprehend why the reformed Parish of Cluj had equaled in many respects: in number of followers and in social influence the authority of the Unitarian Parish of Cluj.

During the complicated process of the Transylvania Reformation between the years 1555 and 1605 a religious system consisting of the four consecrated religions had been established; a system, which had been maintained throughout the whole period of the autonomous Transylvanian Principality and for long after its collapse. Ioan Sigismund did not succeed in his endeavor to unify the whole of the Transylvanian Principality in one protestant religion, on the other hand, neither could the Báthory princes and the Habsburgs restore the catholic religion. In the year 1605, with the election of the Calvinist Stefan Bocskai, as prince of Transylvania such a fortunate situation had occurred that the prince as well as the majority of the Dieta and of the citizens shared the same religion; such a situation insured the lack of future religious conflicts. This situation enabled the Reformed Church to become the most important Church of the Transylvanian Principality, without damaging the established rights of the other Churches.

The second half of the chapter contains a small analysis of the Church's organizational form, an analysis, which had facilitated our understanding and our proper appraisal of the 17th century organizational forms and their alterations of the reformed Parish in Cluj. The governance of the Reformed Church favored, at the beginning, the Episcopal system; however, from the 17th century onwards in worldly matters the secular staff had gradually gained more important roles, the representatives in question were patrons of the Church. After the establishment of the mixed, secular-ecclesiastical assembly in the year 1682, and after the formation of the mixed *Curatorium* (board of curators), the organizational practices of the Reformed Church had favored the synodo-consistorian system, which was different from the

synodo-presbyterian organizational form in the manner that the former included secular members, who were members of the Transylvanian Dieta.

The second chapter engages in following and delineating the most important events of the 17th century in the history of the Reformed Parish of Cluj, pointing out the political reasons, which fostered its establishment and its rapid development. At the beginning of the 17th century in Cluj, with mainly Unitarian inhabitants, the establishment of a Reformed Parish had been triggered mostly by political reasons, since the later Church had enjoyed the privilege of being the leading Church of Transylvania. The Reformed Parish of Cluj was established with the support of the prince Gabriel Báthory, who in the year 1609 donated the church's building from the old castle, and made its function possible by further donating the two main takings of the Parish in 1610, namely a quarter of the tithe from Cluj and the annual sum deriving from the *tricesima*. The above listed donations of Gabriel Báthory were upheld by the later princes as well. After the introduction of the college education the Parish benefited from further offertories by gaining the proceeds derived from the salt mining income of the Principalities.

In the second half of this chapter in order to illustrate the particularities of the Parish's income and husbandry management we intended to present the process which enabled the secular representatives of the Parish to partake in its management. Furthermore we sought to define the duty scope of these representatives, to trace the function of the main office-bearer practices by which they endorsed the Parish's continuous and spectacular development.

Between the years 1609–1652 the reformed Parish of Cluj was managed by the minister, the work of the later cleric was supervised and guided by the bishop and the dean. In his duties he was also attended by the patrons, the church council and the Parish clerk. However, from the year 1625 onwards the secular office-holders had gained more and more influence in the management of the Parish's worldly affairs, in the administration of the church assets and in the handling of its income. Since Gabriel Bethlen in his deed of gift had ordained the election of some respectable men, members of the Reformed Parish, who would have as post the superintendence of the Parish's wealth and income, they would also be in charge of conducting the accounts, the payment of the wages from the income, the foresight of the college students' boarding and the edifices of the Parish. With the decree enacted in the year 1625

Gabriel Bethlen confines to the secular office-holders not only the income deriving from the donations but the whole wealth of the Parish.

These mentioned secular office-holders were most certainly elected from the patrons often mentioned in the sources. Due to this aspect one might righteously consider that the management of the so-called worldly affairs and the wealth and income administration had been undertaken gradually, from 1625 onwards, by the patrons and the main minister had exercised his authority in ecclesiastic fields exclusively. The patrons were citizens belonging to the prosperous layer of the city's society: craftsmen, merchants and noble settlers, who gained civilian rights.

In the year 1652 the Parish had undertaken the organizational form of a consistory, within which the dual management of the Parish had been institutionalized, dual meaning the equal right of the secular and ecclesiastical members of the church to participate in the administration of its affairs. The main duty of the Parish Consistory consisted of the foresight of the Parish's movable and immovable properties, of the representation of the Parish's interests, of the election of the ministers and their maintenance at post, of the control and guidance of the office-holders' work. The members of the Consistory were members of the elite social circle of Cluj, shire noblemen with civil rights, officials of the Principality, people who had most likely been patrons of the Parish previously. The analysis of the activity of the secular officials elected from the members of the Consistory, of the curators, of the tithe collectors, of the Parish clerks, of the official in charge of the tolling, of the bailiffs reveal the particularities of the Parish's husbandry management and its function as an institution. The close examination of the sources reveals the fact that the main handler of the Parish's patrimony and income had been the main curator, in charge of the money, while the tithe collectors mainly dealt with the contributions-in-kind and the management of the building operations.

The number of the Calvinists had been constantly increasing in the city, on one hand by the coming of new settlers, and on the other by the conversion of the Unitarians to Calvinism. At the very beginning in the mainly Unitarian city of Cluj the Calvinists did not enjoy rights of participation in the leadership of the city. The researches demonstrate that a considerable number of the privileged Calvinist civilians, who later detained leadership were previously secular officials of the Reformed Parish of Cluj.

The third chapter, which engages in discussing the patrimony of the Parish presents the edifices of the Church in Cluj, its estates situated in the nearby villages, more accurately the villain allodium and soccages belonging to the former, furthermore the manner in which these goods had entered in the property of the Parish.

The immovable estates which enabled the proper function of the Parish had entered in its possession by means of a donation from the Prince, by hypothec, from needy individuals, by inheritance or by purchase. Such donations were the churches from the old castle and from the Farkas street, as well as the convent the site which will later host the construction of the college. The Parish's other immovable properties, namely edifices in the city and village estates constituted the main source of wealth for the Parish. The later institution used these buildings in order to provide periodic dwelling or possibility of rent for its employees, and some of the edifices served as storage possibilities for the material income, which did not consist of currency.

After careful analysis of the source material we concluded that the goods situated outside the city entered in the possession of the Parish by way of heritage or hypothec. The partial estates owed by the Parish through succession were those situated in Aiton, Gădălin and Feiurdeni, furthermore the village of Feleac was gained through hypothec, by such means were acquired the following goods as well: half ownership of the mills from Cluj and Apahida, as well as the partial estates from Filea de Sus, Filea de Jos, Săcel and Apahida. The Parish similarly to a landlord exercised its right of purchase in the case of its properties in and nearby the city, it also enjoyed the goods which fell in its property by donation and heritage, and hypothec, and finally it could enjoy all the privileges of the princes granted to the privileged Reformed Church.

The chapter in question also features an analysis of the situation of the Parish serfs, due to the fact that this aspect also reveals the particularities of Parish's role of a landlord. Based on the above mentioned analysis, which tackles the situation of the serfs who inhabit the Parish properties it has been revealed the fact that the Parish serfs' taxation and service liabilities were similar to all the other serfs who lived on the territory of the Transylvanian Principality. Typically to that era husbandry of the allodium of the Parish was not significant, in the meantime the third part of the

soccages were deserted, and the number of the soccagers and cottars gradually decreased because of the desertion. Due to the universal lack of manpower the main endeavor of the Parish had been the maintenance of its serfs, the settlement of new serfs on the deserted villain lands, as well as the retrieval of the runaway serfs.

In the fourth chapter we intended to investigate the issue of the Parish's litigation practices. Since the Parish had detained possessions outside the walls of the city, one of its duties had been to exercise its jurisdiction over the serfs who lived on its land, similarly to a landlord. As well as the majority of the Transylvanian manorial courts the Parish's court had been of limited jurisdiction, a court which had the right to preside over any case involving its serfs, with the exception of cases which introduced capital punishment, cases which had to be further transmitted to the shire courts. After examining a considerable number of the cases discussed in the Parish's manorial courts, the investigation revealed that the officials of the Parish had used summary and formal legal practices; meanwhile in these courts in addition to cases of penal and civil law and cases involving private accusation they were also discussed issued of manorial jurisdiction. The cases were discussed according to the adequate and legal regulations and under the supervision of the shire.

One of the main goals of the present paper had been the detailed analysis of the particularities of husbandry management through the presentation of the Parish's income and expense attendance. Throughout the fifth chapter based on the surviving material we engage in defining and analyzing the income and the expenses of the Parish, grouping them in the following three categories: wine, wheat and money. Even if, due to the shortage of sources there are scarce opportunities of defining the total annual income of the Parish, we sought to shed light on the process by which the management of the Parish's husbandry succeeded to provide the material support needed for its function.

With regard to the management of the Parish's husbandry it may be concluded that in the 17th century its wealth and currency administration was handled by the curators, and main part of the income was attended by the tithe collectors and the officials in charge of tolling, who duly kept the account of their practices. The account books were organized in journal fashion, however they applied a method similar to the double booking, they kept records of expenses and incomes of currency and other

goods; at the end of an economic year they prepared a balance or in rare cases they made an inventory of the movable and immovable assets of the Parish.

The three main categories of the Parish's income are as follows: wheat, wine and money. Its contribution incomes sprung from wheat tithe, and the wheat acquired as toll for the use of the mills, the grain from the allodium and the wine tithe. According to the data on the subject it can be determined that the income derived from the tithe constituted a significant and permanent source of income for the Parish. Through the presentation of the collection and distribution practices of the wine and wheat tithe one might conclude that the tithing proved to be a serious task for the office bearers entrusted with this duty.

Other sources of income for the Parish were the proceeds which derived from the *tricesima* and the salt mining incomes, furthermore, the incomes collected from foundations, bequests, from vendition of the wine and wheat, taxes paid by the serfs eventually the money originated from the interest rates and offertory money boxes.

The income from the *tricesima* and the salt mining as well as from foundations had been handled by the main curator, who kept the money in the ecclesial money box. The vendition of the movable and immovable assets, the sum of money acquired by means of heritage, replayed loans as well as money collected from office bearers lead to the acquisition of highly irregular and altering sums of money. The two main typologies of income handled by the tithe collectors were as follows: the sum collected from the main curator and the sum derived from the vendition of the tommy goods. Thus, it can be determined that the latter sum in certain years might have equaled the income collected by the main curator.

The contribution-in-kind expenses consisted of the wages of the officials, the sold and stored quantities of wheat and wine. The regular expenses of the main curator were the sums distributes to the office bearers, necessary for their work, the travel expenses, the sums used for the sake of legal affair managements, different taxes, while the non permanent expenses were the purchases of real state and the provision of loans. The primary endeavor of the main curator was to give rated loans from the income collected from foundations, donations and the unused parts of the Parish's income, the interest rates gained in such manner were used to cover other expenses.

The money expenses of the tithe collectors consisted of the wages of the Parish office bearers, the sponsorship of the students, building expenses, reparation. After comparing the minister's wages from Cluj with those clerics who served in the prince's courts one might conclude that the income of the former is identical with the wages of court ministers and bishops in Transylvania.

Due to the surviving accounts of the office bearers numerous partial evaluations can be conducted with respect to the husbandry of the reformed Parish of Cluj, however, taking into consideration the fact that the records of different office bearers are from different years, there could not be established an adequate balance of the annual management of the husbandry.

After a close investigation of the source materials one may determine that the 17th century husbandry management of the Parish had been household-like, similarly to other such religious institutions. Through the collective work of the wealth and income handlers the expenses necessary for the adequate function and maintenance of Parish were duly covered. In case the incomes have increased the officials of the Parish stored or sold the goods originated from contributions-in-kind, on the other hand the currency was used to acquire immovable assets or to give rated loans from these sums, according to regulations of the foundations.

In conclusion we consider that the discourse provides a minute presentation and analysis of the Parish's establishment and recruitment circumstances, furthermore of the process by which the participation of the Parish's secular officials in its administration had been admitted, and in its dual, i.e. secular and ecclesiastic management had been institutionalized. The paper presents the particularities of the Parish's income and husbandry management, the manner in which the estates had entered in the property of the Parish, the situation of its serfs, also reveals the particularities of its role of a landlord. One of the main accomplishments of the present paper had been the detailed analysis of the particularities of husbandry management through the presentation of the Parish's income and expense attendance.

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