A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY
IN ROMANIA FROM THE BEGINNING
OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION UNTIL
THE END OF THE 19th CENTURY

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1. Introduction

The end of the 15th century found a Europe divided between the Eastern Byzantine, Western Catholic communities and a growing Muslim community. The Byzantine Empire that for nearly a millennium had been a leader in civilization and a bulwark of Christendom against invasion from the East, was now succumbing to the Ottoman attack. The Muslim Turks captured Constantinople (May 29, 1453) and were advancing into Europe. Already the Balkan Peninsula was under Turkish rule, and the Greek Church became subject to the Muslim Sultan. In 1454 Sultan Mohamed II appointed Gennadios Scholarios as Patriarch of Constantinople. This inaugurated the dependence of the Byzantine Church on the Muslim Turks. Each newly elected Patriarch had to be recognized by the Sultan. The Eastern Orthodox Church accepted the political subjection to Muslim rulers and from the end of the 16th century, alongside with the sums of money that the Patriarchs paid for their recognition, the Church had to pay an annual tax. To cover such large sums of money the Ecumenical Patriarchate introduced the practice of selling the ecclesiastical offices. That meant that bribery often entered into the appointments and that those elected owed their position not so much to their spiritual qualities as to their willingness to co-operate with their leaders and Muslim officials. Western

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2 Ibid., 3.
4 Ibid., 209.
5 Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity. Three Centuries of Advance, vol. 3 (Grand
Europe was characterized by division and jealousies between competing powers, and consequently it was impossible to form a united front against the invaders. Western Christianity was suffering from internal weaknesses, and Rome was no longer the political leader of the West.

In this depressive atmosphere created by the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the disintegration of the western world, a new spirit started to move in Europe. The people started to read books from the pre-Christian culture of the Greco-Roman world. The power of the human mind and body was rediscovered and exalted. Geographically, Vasco da Gama, Columbus and Magellan opened the ways toward new lands. Copernicus and later Galileo discovered a new heaven, and demonstrated that the earth is a tiny planet, spinning around a great sun. There was, also, remarkable progress made in the fields of mathematics, physics, mechanics, zoology, anatomy, etc. The invention of the printing press by John Gutenberg was epoch making. One other great step that was made at this time was the founding of universities in all the countries of Western Europe. In Germany from 1450 to 1517, nine new academies were started. During the same period, three new universities were founded in France, seven in Spain, one in Hungary, one in Sweden, and one in Denmark. Important changes also took place economically where the old feudal, manorial, and agricultural structure had long been disintegrating. The transition from a society in which payments were made chiefly by exchange of goods to one in which money was both the agent of exchange and standard of value, led to the increase of production and wealth. This has been in large part the cause of the rise of bourgeoisie, nationalism and individualism. The bourgeoisie, as the new class of the cities, was open to culture, arts, philosophy and new religious movements. From a political point of view, we see during this time the development of strong national states with powerful monarchs, who tried to extend their control over the Church within their realms. The decline of the Catholic Church and the moral corruption of the clergy, generated attempts at spiritual renewal from other groups within the Church. At the beginning of the 16th century the western world was confronted by three major movements: the

Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 443.
6 Ibid., 3.
8 Ibid., 5.
end of the Renaissance, the rise of Capitalism and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.\(^\text{10}\)

2. The Protestant Reformation and the Romanian Principalities

At the beginning of the 16\(^{th}\) century Transylvania was a vassal state of the Ottoman Turks, but in spite of paying tribute to the Sultan, it was allowed to maintain its links with the western world. Because of those links, the new developments in the area of culture, philosophy and religion found their way into Transylvania. The principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia also had to pay tribute to the Turks but were more isolated from the western world and dominated by the Byzantine culture.

Of a special interest for this study is the expansion of the Protestant Reformation into the Romanian Principalities. From a religious point of view, the Romanian population belonged to the Orthodox faith and the ethnic minorities (German and Hungarian) belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. The 16\(^{th}\) century brought the encounter between Protestantism and Catholicism on one side and between Protestantism and Orthodoxy on the other side.

During the previous five centuries, since the official schism between the Catholic and Orthodox churches (1054), there was but little success of either church in converting the other’s members. But because the Protestant movement experienced a rapid growth by reaching out into the Catholic Church, one might expect the same success in the countries with Orthodox population. However, the fact is that there was very limited impact of the Protestant Reformation on the Orthodox Church in the Romanian principalities. Instead, it had significant success in converting the Catholic population of Transylvania.

How can these phenomena be explained? Is Orthodoxy deeper and stronger than the Protestant faith? And, therefore is very difficult, if not impossible, to convert an Orthodox to Protestantism? Were the Protestants interested to reach out the Romanian Orthodox? If yes, were the missionary methods appropriate? Were the socio-political circumstances favorable for the spread of the Protestant faith among the Orthodox? Why were the Protestants so effective in reaching out the Catholics in Transylvania?

\(^{10}\) Smith, *The Age of the Reformation*, 4.
Transylvania

After the battle of Mohacs in 1526, when the Turks defeated Hungary, Transylvania under the rule of prince Ioan Zapolya (1526-1540) became and remained vassal state of the Turks\textsuperscript{11} until 1699.\textsuperscript{12} Transylvania was fragmented ethnically into Magyars, Saxons, Szeklers and Wallachs (or Romanians).\textsuperscript{13} From a religious point of view the Magyars, Saxons and Szeklers were Catholic and the Romanians were Orthodox. The initial steps of the Reformation into Transylvania were ethnically conditioned.

The Saxons

They came into Transylvania during the 12\textsuperscript{th} century. The privileges that were given to them at their arrival by the Hungarian kings, were taken away from them by the Magyar nobles and Catholic bishops.\textsuperscript{14} Because of the political problems with the Magyars, the Saxons enjoyed close ties with Germany. Luther’s writings reached Sibiu (Hermanstadt) in 1519, and his ideas of The Freedom of the Christian Man and the Universal Priesthood of Believers rapidly caught fire in the hearts of the Saxon settlers. Among the first who accepted Protestantism were the scholars and the civic leaders of the Saxons in Transylvania. The leader of the Reformation among the Saxons was Johannes Honterius (1498-1549), under the protection of the city patron Johannes Fux.

Honerius traveled to Basel and studied under the Basel reformer, Oecolampadius. When Honterius came back to Transylvania he established himself at Cluj (Kronstadt) and in 1533 he revitalized the school system by publishing and printing many textbooks. Honterius followed the principles of the Wittenberg Reformation, because he felt that Luther’s position was more firmly grounded in the Scripture than that of the Swiss reformers.\textsuperscript{15} In the early 1540’s, Honterius was cited before the diet of Weissemburg to answer for his work. Johannes Fuchs, the city judge, and Jeremias Jeckel, the city pastor, were sent in his place and Honterius’ position won over the governor and clergy.\textsuperscript{16} In

\textsuperscript{12} Nicolae Iorga, Istoria poporului românesc (Bucureşti: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985), 470.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 278.
\textsuperscript{14} J. Bodensieck, The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, vol. 3 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), 2408.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. 2408-2409.
\textsuperscript{16} Cameron, The European Reformation, 279.
Honterius reformed the liturgy, in 1543 he produced a draft of the Church ordinance at the Estates of Transylvania and in 1544 the Saxons accepted the Augsburg Confession.\footnote{Ibid., 279.}

The Protestant Saxons had to face the problem of state-church relationship, especially with the Catholic dominated, state of Transylvania. To address this issue, Honterius wrote the Apologia Reformationis in which he explained his position as a reformer. Here he introduced the idea of the authority of God, and declared that one must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).\footnote{Bodensieck, The Encyclopedia, 2409.}

One other problem of the newly converted Protestants was the role and the place of icons and saints in the life of the believer. Honterius supported the removal of the altar and pictures from the churches in Cluj by iconoclasts and he campaigned for \textit{sola Scriptura}. Honterius succeeded in converting the city pastor from Sibiu, to the Reformation, and at the synod at Mediaş 1545, the two Saxon dioceses united to form one body – “The Church Order for the Germans of Transylvania”.

Honterius’ work was continued by Paul Wiener (1550-1572), who had been driven from his home in Ljubljana for his Protestant faith, and came to Transylvania, where he was elected bishop of the Saxon Church. Paul Wiener was succeeded in 1556 by another great reformer, Mathias Hebler. Mathias Hebler was personally acquainted with Luther. He enrolled at Wittenberg in 1546, and was ordained by Bugenhagen in 1553, expressly for Sibiu. Hebler was well trained in the Lutheran faith and he opposed Calvinism which was creeping in from Hungary.

In 1561 at the synod in Medias, professor Tilemann from Heidelberg was invited to present the Lutheran “Confession of the Holy Supper of the Lord Jesus Christ”. The synod also requested four German universities – Wittenberg, Leipzig, Rostock and Frankfurt on the Oder – to render an opinion on the Lutheran-Calvinist dispute, and all four of them approved Bishop Hebler’s “Short Confession Concerning the Lord’s Supper”.

In 1572 at the synod in Mediaş the Augsburg Confession was formally accepted, each Saxon pastor taking a solemn oath.\footnote{Ibid., 2409.} Hebler was also very successful in safeguarding the rights of the church over against the government.
After Hebler’s death in September 18, 1571, just a few months before the Augsburg Confession was accepted, the synod elected Lukas Unglerus to succeed Hebler.

Unglerus studied with Melanchthon, and when he wrote the summary of the most important article of the Lutheran faith to be presented to the Sovereign, Unglerus followed the spirit of Melanchthon in the articles on Law and Gospel, justification by faith, good works, the free will and predestination, and in the articles on Communion he followed Hebler.\textsuperscript{20}

By this time the Augsburg Confession was completely accepted by the Saxon Church in Transylvania, and they did not deviate from it in the following centuries. Under the influence of the Protestant Reformation, the Transylvanian Saxons founded schools and encouraged printing and publishing of Protestant literature. Those schools were instrumental in maintaining the links with the German schools and to facilitate the penetration of western culture and philosophy into Transylvania.

\textit{The Hungarians and Szeklers}

After the defeat of the Hungarian King Luis II by the Turks at the battle of Mohacs in 1526, one part of the Magyar nobility elected Ferdinand of Habsburg as his successor in the hope that his brother Emperor Charles V would protect them from further assaults from the Turks. The other part, more nationalistic, elected the Hungarian John Zapolya in Transylvania. For eight years, Zapolya’s prime minister was Jerome Lasky, the brother of the well-known Erasmian-Reformer, John Lasky (1499-1560)\textsuperscript{21}, nephew of the primate of Poland. Zapolya had married Isabelle, the daughter of King Sigismund I of Poland and his son John Sigismund Zapolya (1540-1571) succeeded him as king of Transylvania. Francis David became his court chaplain. The strong links of Transylvania with Hungary, Poland and Germany, created the conditions for an early spread of the Lutheran ideas among the Hungarian and Szeklers. The Hungarians followed the Saxons in adopting the Lutheran faith and very soon some strong Hungarian leaders emerged.

In 1530 Johannes Sylvester established a school and a printing house in Ujsziget. He printed a Grammar and New Testament in Hungarian.\textsuperscript{22} In 1540’s

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 2410.
\textsuperscript{22} Cameron, \textit{The European Reformation}, 279.
emerged a group of very influential Magyar protestant leaders: the preacher Matyas Devai Biro (1504-1545), the theologian and pedagogue Istvan Szegedi Kis (or Stephanus Szegedinus, 1502-1575), the preacher and hymn-writer Mihaly Sztarai (1500-1575); and two Hungarian-speaking Transylvanians of German descent, Kaspar Heltay and Ferenc David (1510-1579), who were very effective in the conversion of the Magyar population to Lutheranism.

The three Transylvanian nations (Saxons, Szeklers, and Hungarians) were united in one Lutheran Church, under a general superintendent, or bishop, but divided in two sections: German-speaking (Saxons) and Hungarian-speaking (Magyars and Szeklers). The Protestant movement was so strong in Transylvania that in 1556 the Catholic bishop had to leave the country and for a century and a half his see remained vacant. However, Magyar Lutheranism was very soon influenced by the Swiss interpretation of the Communion and for a while even some Saxons were influenced by a more moderate position favored by Melanchthon. Peter Petrovics was a leading figure of the royal council in Transylvania, and being a strong Calvinist he was very instrumental in the spread of the Helvetic faith. The Calvinist sacramentarian sentiment took roots rapidly among the Hungarians, partly because it was not German.

After a period of confrontations between the Lutherans and Calvinists in Transylvania and Hungary, at the synod of Debrecen in 1567, the Hungarians adopted the second Helvetic Confession. During 1560’s and 1570’s the Calvinist in Transylvania split into Orthodox reformed, who wanted to follow exactly the Swiss faith, and a more free-thinking group.

The Romanians

They had few possibilities to establish a corporate Romanian life in Transylvania, because of the barbarian invasions and the Hungarian occupation of the land during the 11th century. When, finally the Hungarians conquered Transylvania, the Romanians lost both their properties and freedom in favor of the Hungarian nobles. Since that time most of them were serfs, but some achieved Hungarian nobility. The Orthodox faith of the Romanians was persecuted, and the Church was not very well organized, because the papacy pressed the

23 Williams, The Radical Reformation, 711.
24 Ibid., 711.
25 Cameron, The European Reformation, 280.
26 A. Grabois, The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Medieval Civilization (Mayflower: Octopus, 1980), 676.
Hungarian kings to suppress the schism on their territory. Therefore, to the Orthodox it was denied the right to have a metropolitan and the bishops led a precarious existence.

In 1456, Ioan, the Orthodox bishop at Hunedoara was removed by John Capistro, the papal inquisitor, and taken to Rome. From a social and political point of view the Romanians were considered second-class citizens, and their possibilities to have connections with the western world were very limited. Being oppressed by the German and Hungarian nobles and clergy, there was very little opening among the Romanians toward either Catholic or Protestant faith.

After the success of the Reformation in Transylvania the religions that were subsequently “received” were: Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist. The Orthodox religion was “tolerated”. From a political point of view the liberties were granted to the three nations (Saxons, Szeklers and Hungarian), but there were no concession made to the Romanians.

The first results of the Reformation among the Romanians were seen in the area of culture. Certain attempts to convert the Romanian to Protestantism led to the translation of the Lutheran catechism in the Romanian language in 1544 at Sibiu. Also, deacon Coresi, influenced by the protestant writings, and understanding the importance of the vernacular, translated the book of Psalms into Romanian. He also produced more than 22 religious works between 1557-1588. The first Romanian writings from the 15th-16th centuries used the Cyrillic alphabet, but under the influence of the Hussites and Protestants the Latin alphabet was introduced gradually. This was a very important step toward the liberation from the Slavonic influence. There are no records about a significant response of the Romanians from Transylvania to the Protestant faith during the 16th century.

Moldavia

During the second part of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, Moldavia had a flourishing time under the Prince Stephan the Great (1457-1504). He was a valiant defender of Christianity, and he managed to stop the advancement of the Turks North of Danube. Pope Sixtus IV called Prince Stephan an "athlete of Christ". Under Stephan protection the Orthodox Church in Moldavia experienced a time of prosperity. The Prince gave large gifts to the Church and helped her to built a significant number of monasteries, which became important centers for the religious and cultural life.

The Catholics in Moldavia traced their roots from the work of the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries during the 13th century. But, the relatively small impact of the Catholics in Moldavia is due to the fact that the bishops were either Polish or Hungarians and they only visited those places from time to time. Also, from a political perspective, both Poland and Hungary were a threat for the sovereignty of Moldavia. However, in 1370 Lațcu, the prince of Moldavia, struggling to keep the country independent of Poland and Hungary, and being influenced by two Franciscan missionaries appealed to pope Urban V, promising his own conversion and that of his own people.

In 1371, Siret became a city with a Catholic bishop see, directly dependent on Rome. But, Lațcu’s decision was not followed by the people, and besides the Saxon and Hungarian colonists, there were very few Romanians, mainly from the towns, that accepted the Catholic faith. The ground for the Reformation in Moldavia has been prepared by the spread of the Hussites and their ideas into Bohemia, Hungary, Poland and Moldavia during the 15th century. For the first time, under the influence of the Hussites, the Bible was translated into Romanian language, and circulated in the Northeastern parts of Transylvania and Moldavia. Other religious books were translated into Romanian, in order to reach the Romanian population. The book of Psalms was found at Scheia by Asachi and it is known as Psaltirea scheiană, and a copy of the

33 NCE, vol. 12, 715.
34 Ibid., 714.
35 Baker, Studies in Church History, 280.
36 Ibid., 280.
38 Țirgă, Istoria românilor (București, 1920), 152.
Book of Acts was found at Voroneţ and is known as Codicele voroneţean.\textsuperscript{39} This was the first attempt to replace the Slavonic language with the Romanian language.

The Protestant ideas were spread in Moldavia among the Saxons and Hungarians, from the early 1530’s. There are records about a large number of Catholics who were converted to Lutheranism and Calvinism between 1530 and 1580.\textsuperscript{40} For a short period of time Moldavia had a protestant prince, named “despot Iacob Heraclid”. He was born on the island of Samos, studied in France, had been converted to Lutheranism and traveled through Germany, Scandinavia and finally to Poland. Claiming relationship with the wife of the Moldavian prince Alexandru Lapușneanu (1552-1561 and 1564-1568), he moved to Moldavia. In 1561 with the support from the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand, the protestant noble Albert Laski and from Polish troops, Iacob Heraclid overthrown Lapușneanu and sized the throne of Moldavia. Then, the despot brought to Moldova a protestant bishop from Poland, Lusinski. Before long the despot alienated his supporters and in 1563 he was murdered, and Lapușneanu returned to the throne.\textsuperscript{41}

The Lutheran confession translated into Romanian language in Transylvania was spread among the Lutherans in Moldavia and after on this confession was attacked by the Orthodox bishops. The Protestant Church in Moldavia was not as strong and well organized as in Transylvania.

Wallachia
The principality of Wallachia succeeded to withstand the invasion of the Turks for a short period of time during the rule of Mircea the Great. After the successful confrontation at Kosovo 1389 and Nicopolis 1396, Mircea was forced to submit to the sovereignty of the Porte in 1412. There was one other attempt to overthrow the Turkish dominion during the reign of Prince Vlad IV, in 1456. After few years of independence, in 1462, Vlad was defeated and fled to Hungary. The country became a vassal state to the Turks.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} G. Călinescu, \textit{Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent} (Bucureşti: Editura Minerva, 1965), 7.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 281.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 282.

The political relationships of Wallachia were limited at that time, mainly to Hungary, Moldavia and the Ottoman Turks. The Hungarian and Saxon exiles from different parts of the Austrian Empire, settled in Bucharest, were in touch with the German and Hungarian communities from Transylvania and were influenced by Protestant ideas. In 1550 a Lutheran church was founded in Bucharest. The Lutheran congregation that still exists in Bucharest in our days was founded in 1690. The Romanian speaking people were not reached by the Protestant movement which remained mainly the religion of the German and Hungarian immigrants.

3. The Radical Reformation

The confrontation between different groups that sprung from the initial Reformation has been reflected into Romanian principalities to a smaller degree. Some of them disappeared over the years, but others still exist as well established groups.

Unitarianism

The free-thinking group of the Hungarian Calvinists began to reject the traditional understanding of the Trinity and to question the relationship between God the Father and Christ. Under the influence of Italian immigrants Francesco Stancaro and Giorgio Blandrata the ideas that limited the participation of Christ in the Godhead, took roots rapidly in Poland.

In 1554 Stancaro visited Transylvania and became a court physician to the prince. Immediately he started to spread his anti-Trinitarian ideas, but was publicly attacked by Ferenc David in Cluj. Unitarian doctrine would not have made such a progress in Transylvania, but for the leadership of Giorgio Blandrata (1515–1588), who was a court physician to the Queen Bona of Poland, of Queen Isabelle of Transylvania and of her son John Sigismund. Ferenc David was the court preacher to Sigismund at Alba Iulia (Gyulafehervar), and interacting very often with Blandrata, he was converted to the later ideas.
Thereafter the reformed Church of Transylvania moved toward formal Unitarianism.

In 1567 Blandrata and David replaced the Calvinist catechism with an Arian one. On January 1568 a royal edict extended formal religious toleration for the Unitarian, Trinitarian, Lutheran and Catholic churches. A large part of the Hungarian Calvinists were converted to Unitarianism, and from about 1569 under the leadership of Ferenc David and Gaspar Heltai, Unitarianism became the most powerful protestant creed in Transylvania. The Unitarian faith was not effectively spread into the other Romanian principalities, but remained primarily a religion of the Hungarian and Szeklers in Transylvania.

Mennonites

When the Hutterites were persecuted by the rising power of the Catholic Austria, Gabor Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania offered the refuge in his principality. In 1622 they settled at Alwinz (Vint) in Transylvania and were given by the prince land and vineyards. In 1623 another group of exiled Hutterites from Moravia joined them and enduring the persecution they survived until 1767. In 1755 the Hutterites offered shelter to a persecuted group of Lutherans and subsequently the Lutheran were converted to the Bruderhof. Their leaders were Joseph Kuhr, Johannes Stahl and Johannes Waldner. During the time spent at Alwinz they corresponded with the Dutch Mennonites.

The severe Catholic persecution during the Counter-Reformation forced them to move to Wallachia and then through Moldavia into Ukraine, where Count Romanzov offered them a place to live. The Hutterites did not have the opportunity to settle down for a long period of time and to interact with the Romanian-speaking people, therefore there are no records about Romanian Mennonites.

4. Post-Reformation and Counter-Reformation 1600-1859

Historical background

Following the reign of Mircea the Old (1386-1416) in Wallachia, Stephan the

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49 Cameron, *The European Reformation*, 332.
51 Ibid., 83.
Great (1456-1504) in Moldavia and Ioan Zapolya (1526-1540) in Transylvania, the Romanian Principalities became vassal states to the Ottoman Turks. During the first part of Turkish domination, the princes for the principalities were elected by each principality and were confirmed by the Porte. Later on, the Porte appointed the princes from among the legal successors of the ruling families. In the last part of the Turkish dominion, the princes were appointed by the Sultan from the reach and influential Greek families from Phanar, Constantinople.\(^{52}\)

Transylvania escaped this painful and humiliating process due to the Hungarian and Austrian influence. The political status of the Principalities was decided to a large degree by the balance of the “Great Powers” (Ottoman Empire, Poland, Hungary, Austria and from the second part of the 17th century Russia, France, England and Germany). The big political decisions were made by the Powers and usually imposed on the Romanian Principality.

From a religious point of view, there were a plurality of religions in each principality, and in this time religion became a very important element for the national identity. The spread of one faith or the other is no more a pure religious problem, but more and more a political problem. Also, because of this aspect, the different churches had a growing impact on the policy making body of each principality. The development of the religious life, was also, influenced in a positive way by the flourishing monastic life and the spreading of the Christian literature. The gradual penetration of the Western culture into the Principalities also had a positive effect on the religious and political life of the Romanian Principalities. Within this general framework, however, each principality had its own, specific evolution and/or devolution, and it is very important to focus on the specific situation of Christianity in each principality.

**Transylvania**

After the election of Prince Stephen Bathory of Transylvania (1571-1576) as King of Poland (the 11th of December 1575), the throne of Transylvania was occupied by Stephen’s brother, Christophher, until 1581, and then by Sigismund Bathory, his son, until 1599. Sigismund had been trained in a Jesuit school, and when he became prince of Transylvania, his dream was to form a strong Christian coalition against the Turks.\(^{53}\) Since 1570, the Pope had been interested again


about the situation of the Christian in the East and sent a special envoy to the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia asking them to join Sigismund Bathory in the Crusade against the Turks.  

Because the war was long and difficult, Sigismund ceded his throne to a Catholic Cardinal, Andrew, who signed a treaty with the Turks. This turn around in the policy of Transylvania created a great problem for the prince of Wallachia, Michael the Brave (1593-1601), who had risked everything in this war.

In 1599, Michael conquered Transylvania, and when Sigismund, who fled to Poland, moved to Suceava in Moldavia to influence the prince of Moldavia against Wallachia, Michael conquered Moldavia as well, in 1600. Michael succeeded for a short time (1601) to unite the Romanian Principalities. This event fired the imagination of the Romanian people and planted the seed of aspirations towards national unity.

During his reign, Michael obtained from Emperor Rudolf the status of recognized religion for the Orthodox Church in Transylvania. Subsequently, the bishop of Transylvania became the Metropolitan of Alba-Iulia, and the Emperor issued a decree about the officially received religions in Transylvania: Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Lutheranism. In return, Michael protected the Catholics in Wallachia.

Michael was murdered in 1601, and with that the hope of the religious freedom for the Orthodox Church in Transylvania came to an end until the time of Gabor Bethlen. The Protestants had a very prosperous time under the rule of Calvinist prince, Gabor Bethlen (1613-1629). He was the first protestant ruler who made an attempt to convert the Romanian population to the Protestant faith. Bethlen encouraged the printing in vernacular and the development of the Romanian schools. Also, he restored the properties of the Orthodox churches and clergy and exempted them from taxes.

In 1627, Bethlen appointed an Orthodox monk, Ghenadie, as the archbishop of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania under the following

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55 Ibid., 229.
56 Ibid., 232-233.
59 Ibid., 283.
conditions: subordination to the Calvinist superintendent; to introduce the Romanian language for the church services and printed books; to root out the superstitions. In 1629, Bethlen wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril Lukaris (1624-1638) and asked him to help in the conversion of the Orthodox in Transylvania to Calvinism.\(^6^0\) Lukaris replied that thought he could do nothing to prevent their conversion, he would commit an unforgivable sin to support in.\(^6^1\) In the same year Bethlen died, and his successor, Gyorgy Rakoczy, continued the same policy.

Because archbishop Ghenadie refused to print and spread Calvinistic books, Rakoczy got two Romanian priests to translate and print a Calvinist catechism.\(^6^2\) Ghenadie died in 1640, and his successor also refused to spread Calvinist teaching and very soon he was imprisoned. During the reign of the Protestant princes, the Protestant movement continued to maintain its influence, but their fragmentation and internal struggles had already weakened the movement.

### The Counter Reformation. The Uniates

After the siege of Vienna in 1683, the Turks started to lose their influence in Southeastern Europe. In 1690 Austria liberated Transylvania from Turkish dominion, and from 1696 Transylvania became part of the Habsburg Empire. Under the rule of Catholic Austria, the Jesuits who had been expelled by the protestant princes returned to Cluj and Alba-Iulia and began to work among the Romanians. The Emperor Leopold confirmed the right of the three nations (Hungarian, Saxon, Szekely) and of four receive religions (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian). The Romanians were considered second-class citizens and their Orthodox religion "tolerated".\(^6^3\) The economic and social conditions of the Romanian in Transylvania were very poor. They were overburden with

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\(^{60}\) Cyril Lukaris was influenced by the Protestant writings, especially of Calvin, and tried to reform the Orthodox Church. In 1629 he published in Geneva *Confessio fidei*. He embraced the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, expressed regret at the veneration of icons, and call the invocation of saints idolatry. Lukaris dreamed to created a united front of Orthodox and Calvinist and to fight against Rome. Also, he had close relationship with the western diplomacy. Jedin and Dolan (eds.) *History of the Church*, vol. 6 (London: Burns & Oates, 1981), 210-211; Tappe, "The Romanians", 283; George H. Williams. "New England Puritan Interest in the Christian East" in *Andover Newton Quarterly* 15/4 (1975), 268-269.

\(^{61}\) Tappe, "The Romanians", 282.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 283.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 284.
In 1696 the Jesuit Baranyi published a Catholic catechism in Romanian and in 1698 Leopold issued a decree, promising that the privileges of the four religions would be granted to those who joined one of them and in particular those who acknowledged the pope as the head of the Church would enjoy the privileges of the Catholic clergy.\textsuperscript{64}

The result was that bishop Teofil accepted the union, but he died that summer (1697). His successor, Atanasie Anghel, went to Wallachia to be consecrated by the metropolitan, and he was received with suspicion. He was consecrated only after he swore to preserve Orthodoxy as defined by Petru Movilă\textsuperscript{66} in his confession of the Orthodox faith.

On that occasion Atanasie met Dositheus, the Patriarch of Jerusalem who was living in Wallachia at that time, and received instructions from him concerning the danger of the Catholic invasion.\textsuperscript{65} In June 1698 Kollonics, the primate of Hungary, informed the Orthodox priests of the four points that they would have to accept if they became united: the pope as the head of the church, the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist, the \textit{filioque} clause in the creed and the doctrine of the purgatory.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1698 during the synod of the Romanian Orthodox clergy, 38 protopopes signed the document for the union with Rome together with 1563 priests. Following the decision of the Romanian priests, Leopold published in the same year a diploma formally establishing the Romanian Uniate church, with tax exemption for its properties and that of its priests.\textsuperscript{68} On the 5\textsuperscript{th} of September 1700 at the synod chaired by Atanasie Anghel, 54 protopopes and 1563 priests\textsuperscript{70} ratified the union, accepted the four dogmatic points, but in liturgical and disciplinary matters, they kept their own rite. Also the synod was authorized to

\textsuperscript{64} NCE, vol. 12, 720; Tappe, "The Romanians", 284; Iorgă, \textit{Istoria poporului românesc} (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1985), 540-542.
\textsuperscript{65} Iorgă, \textit{Istoria poporului românesc}, 542; Tappe, "The Romanians", 285.
\textsuperscript{66} Petru Movilă was the son of a ruling Moldavian family. He tried to seize the throne of Moldavia, but failed and then he decided to become a monk. Later he became the metropolitan of Kiev and played a very important role in refuting the confession written by Lukaris, and also fought the catholic influence in the Orthodox world. Iorgă, \textit{Istoria românilor}, 250.
\textsuperscript{67} Iorgă, \textit{Istoria poporului românesc}, 542 and Tappe, "The Romanians", 284.
\textsuperscript{69} Tappe, "The Romanians", 285.
\textsuperscript{70} Giurescu, \textit{Istoria românilor}, 326.
elect their bishop-metropolitan and to keep the Romanian vernacular as the liturgical language. However, there was a strong opposition to the union among some Romanian priests and they appointed Ioan Tirca as the new Orthodox bishop. The opponents of the union got the support of Teodosie, the Wallachian metropolitan, Dositheus, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Constantin Brâncoveanu, the prince of Wallachia between 1688-1714.

To counteract the effect of the Orthodox attacks against the union, Leopold issued a diploma promising the same privileges for the Uniate layman as for the Catholics. The new rights for the Uniates were not implemented by the diet of Transylvania and the opposition to the union grew so rapidly that in 1702 Atanasie was summoned to Vienna to appear before a judicial commission. Under pressure he promised to break ties with Wallachia and to accept a Jesuit as his assistant. After that promise, the primacy of Hungary, Kollonics, re-ordained him as priest and re-consecrated him as bishop. A second diploma proclaimed the same rights of the three “nations” for the Uniate laymen. The diet of Transylvania protested to the emperor claiming that the Romanians would in time become to powerful, and so the status of the first class citizenship was withheld. Also, a strong protest against the emancipation of the Romanians came from the Transylvanian landlords and the Serbian hierarchy who wanted to keep the Romanian of Transylvania under their jurisdiction. The Orthodox metropolitan see of Alba Julia was transformed into a Uniate bishopric under the jurisdiction of the primacy of Hungary, and thereafter there was no Orthodox metropolitan in Transylvania till 1864.

Atanasie fought, without too much success, for the promised privileges of his people and having been excommunicated by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem as well as by the metropolitan of Wallachia, he also became disillusioned with the union and died in 1713. Atanasie was succeeded by Ioan Patachi (1713-1727) who after few years came into conflict with the Roman-

71 NCE, vol. 12, 720.
75 NCE, vol. 12, 720.
78 Iorga, Istoria poporului românesc, 543.
Catholic bishop of Transylvania and was moved from Alba Iulia to Făgăraș. In 1721 pope Innocent XIII established the first Romanian Catholic Diocese of Făgăraș, which later was transferred to Blaj, and became independent of the Hungarian primate.79 Patachi had no more success than Atanasie either in gaining the rights for his people or in consolidating the union.

After Patachi’s death in 1727 the Uniate synod elected Inochenție Micu-Klein (1730-1751) as bishop. By that time he was a student at a Jesuit college at Târnava.80 He had to spend two more years at Muncaciu in a monastery before he took de facto the office of Uniate bishop at Blaj in 1730. He strove heroically to gain the rights of a “nation” for his people. Micu went to Vienna to present the fact that the promised privileges had not been given to the Romanian and asked the Queen, Maria Theresa, without much success, to secure those rights for his people. Since 1731 Micu started a monastic movement, encouraged printing and founded a primary school and a seminary for his diocese.

In 1738 Micu was given the right to use the income from the property that was given to the Uniate diocese, for the ministry of 11 monks, 20 interns and three scholarships at Rome.81 Grigore Maior, Caliani and Cotore were the first three Romanians to study in Rome and to understand besides the Catholic dogma the Latin origin of the Romanian people. This was the spark that started the fire of the Latinist movement in the Romanian history and culture. Because the promised privileges were still not granted for the Romanian lay people, Micu summoned a synod in 1744, at which he proposed that the union should be cast off if the imperial promises were not fulfilled.82 Inochenție Micu was summoned to Vienna to appear before a judicial commission and to answer to eighty-two charges. In 1751 he resigned from his office and slipped away to Rome, where he lived until his death in 1768.83

Micu’s successor was Petru Pavel Aron (1752-1764). He continued the same policy of encouraging schools, publishing and the emancipation of the Romanian population.84 The new ideas fostered in the people a militant

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79 Ibid., 543.
80 Ibid., 544.
81 Ibid., 548.
82 Tappe, “The Romanians”, 286; Giurescu, Istoria românilor, 328.
84 NCE, vol. 12, 720.
patriotism that yearned for the day of liberation from their Hungarian masters and complete reunion with the other Romanian principalities.\textsuperscript{85} During Aron’s time the Orthodox monks and priests launched a campaign against the union. Between 1716-1762 the number of the Uniate priests dropped from 2747 to 2253, while the number of the Orthodox priests rose from 456 to 1380.\textsuperscript{86}

To counter the decline, empress Maria Theresa created the frontier militia regiments of Romanians. Those who enrolled as a militiaman were exempted from serfdom, but had to accept the union. The Uniate bishop, Grigore Maior, supported this measure and in a report send to the emperor Joseph II, claimed that between 1762 and 1782 the Orthodox had lost 746 churches and 54697 of their flock. Before this report reached Vienna, the Emperor had signed an edict of toleration, according to which any confession with at least one hundred families could build a church, a school and a hospital. Many Romanian Uniates begun to return to Orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{87} But the backward social conditions led to much unrest especially among the Romanian serfs, who in 1784-1785 rose to revolt under the leadership of Vasile Nicula Ursu from Albac (also known as Horia).\textsuperscript{88} After this revolt, and in spite of the repression of the rebels by the official armies, Joseph II introduced some reforms for the Romanians. Among them was the abolition of serfdom, but with his death in 1790 his reforms also disappeared.

For the Orthodox in Transylvania the persecution continued and from 1761 to 1790 the see was filled with Serbs according to the secret plans of count Kaunitz (1711-1794), the Austrian Chancellor.\textsuperscript{89} From 1796 to 1810 the see was vacant, and only in 1811 the government allowed the election of Vasile Moş (1811-1845) as bishop. Moş was strongly supported by the Uniate bishop Ioan Bob and the governor G. Banffy.

Moga was succeeded in 1845 by Andrei Şaguna, a strong man who worked for the rights of the Romanians and the restauration of the Orthodox metropolitan see in Transylvania. His goal was achieved in 1864, when he became metropolitan and established his residence at Sibiu.\textsuperscript{90}

The Uniate Church continued to grow between 1782-1840. In 1840 there

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 720.\textsuperscript{86} Tappe, "The Romanians", 286.\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 286.\textsuperscript{88} Giurescu, \textit{Istoria românilor}, 329-332; Iorga, \textit{Istoria poporului românesc}, 546-548.\textsuperscript{89} Iorga, \textit{Istoria poporului românesc}, 545.\textsuperscript{90} Tappe, "The Romanians", 287.
were in Transylvania: 571 400 Uniates, 686 300 Orthodox, 601 000 Protestants and 207 400 Roman-Catholics. The Uniates received scholarships for some young, intelligent Romanians to study in Rome and Vienna. There they were awaken to the Latin lineage of the Romanians, and when they return to Transylvania were very active in starting the "Latinist School" of Blaj. This school had a very strong influence on the development of the nationalist literature and also made way to Western humanism. Among the leaders of the new movement were: Samuel Micu (1775-1806), Gheorghe Şincai (1758-1816), Petru Maior (1755-1821) and Iosif Vulcan, the bishop of Oradea (1806-1839).

The schools started by the Uniates in Transylvania open the door for the Romanian towards Western philosophy and literature. The schools were spread allover Transylvania and the new movement cross the mountains into Wallachia and Moldavia. The Romanians experienced a cultural renaissance under the influence of Uniate schools. The School in Blaj played an important role in Revolution of 1848 in Transylvania.

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91 Jedin and Dolan (eds.), History of the Church, vol. 7, 186.
92 NCE, vol. 12, 717.
93 For the role of the "Latinist school" in Blaj see Iorga, Istoria poporului românesc, 548-552.