

Beyond the Norms: Religious Practices in Late Medieval and Early Modern Transylvania

(Project PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0359)

NEWSLETTER

December 2013

WORKSHOP

TEXT, IMAGE, OBJECT: ITINERARIES IN EXPLORING MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN PIETY
(APPROACHES AND METHODS)
CLUJ-NAPOCA, THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER 2013



The altarpiece from Armășeni, detail

One year after the international workshop From “Popular Religion” to “Popular Culture”. The Development of a Concept in Historical Research (held on the 1st of November 2012) and the national workshop The Religion of the Laity, a Popular Religion? Concepts and Research Directions (held on the 2nd of November 2012), where the debates were mostly theoretical and conceptual, a new national workshop with the topic Text, Image, Object: Itineraries in Exploring Medieval and Early Modern Religiosity was organised in the framework of the Project (on the 15th of November 2013). The goal was to discuss possible approaches and methods of analysing the sources, in order to get an image as vivid and accurate as possible with

regard to religious practices from the Middle Ages to the modern period.

Initially designed with a larger scope, the workshop was drastically resized due to major cuts in the budget of the project for 2013 while its aims were significantly adjusted. In the context of the meeting attended only by a limited number of participants, mainly from the universities of Cluj and Bucharest, the aim was to present the ongoing research of the members of the project.

The topics discussed pertained to the civic religion of the Transylvanian medieval towns (Carmen Florea), the pious and devotional acts of the aristocracy and urban inhabitants in medieval Transylvania (Mária Lupescu Makó), the role of women in drafting and financing memorial programmes (Ciprian Firea), the implementation of the Reformation amongst the Transylvanian Saxons and the role played by craftsmen in this process (Maria Crăciun), the enforcement of Church regulations and of rules of moral conduct by the clergy of the Mukachevo (Munkacs) bishopric and the response of both clergy and laity to this standardising effort (Ovidiu Ghitta), as well as norms of the Greek-Catholic Church with regard to marriage at the end of the nineteenth century (Diana Covaci).

The presentations, built on conceptual and methodological bases forged during the implementation of the project aroused a deep interest in the audience. The discussions following each paper (often longer than the presentation itself) played an important role in the clarification of the arguments. The contributions of some of the participants (Violeta Barbu – The Nicolae Iorga History Institute, Bucharest; Cristina Codarcea

– The Institute for South-Eastern European Studies, Bucharest, Mihaela Sanda Salontai – The Archaeological and Art History Institute (Cluj) were extremely relevant in this regard.

According to one of the participants: 'The quality of the workshop was outstanding due to the terminological precision and because it highlighted continuities of mentality in the area of popular piety from the Middle Ages until today. Both presentations and discussions were highly relevant on the nature of available sources from Transylvania and their

limitations and advantages, on possible methods and interpretative angles, and especially on reconstructing general frameworks of research. I have high hopes regarding the final results of the project.' (Ana-Maria Gruia – art historian, museum curator at the Transylvanian History Museum, Cluj-Napoca).



The Church of Meșendorf (German: Meschendorf), visited during a field trip on the 25-26th of July 2013

BEYOND THE NORMS: RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TRANSYLVANIA

- MONTHLY MEETINGS-

Continuing the monthly colloquia organised by the members of the project and the presentations in their framework, initiated at the beginning of 2013, the team organised several meetings during the second half of the year as well:

On the **27th of June 2013**, Mária Lupescu Makó presented the paper 'Donations for the Salvation of the Soul in Medieval Transylvania', in which she focused on a less usual type of donation, namely that of a serf to an ecclesiastical institution.

On the **31st of July 2013**, Maria Crăciun and Ciprian Firea presented the results of the field research they conducted in the counties of Brașov, Sibiu, Mureș, and Alba. The two researchers aimed at outlining an optimal methodology for the analysis of the monuments from the perspective of the evolution of the cult they hosted.

On the **4th of October 2013**, the project team invited Dr Diana Covaci, who conducts similar researches with

regard to the religion of the laity in modern Transylvania, to present her research results. The paper 'Recording Transgressions from the Ecclesiastical Norm in the Documents of the Greek-Catholic Parish of Bucium-Șasa' dealt with the way in which the church documents of the Romanian Greek-Catholic community recorded a marriage case. The case revolves around the requirement to obtain a marriage dispensation for a member of the parish who was part of the elite of the afore-mentioned rural community. The example emphasises the deep involvement of the ecclesiastical authorities at local level (priest, archpriest) in order to favourably solve the problem, so that harmony in the community could be preserved. From a methodological point of view, the paper strived to show that scrutinising a less investigated case of bottom-to-top religiosity proves to be very useful from the perspective of enforceability of the ecclesiastical norms at the dawn of modernity.

On the **31st of October 2013**, another member of the team, Ovidiu Ghitta, presented his paper on 'Law and Lawlessness in the Bishopric of Munkacs in the eighteenth Century'. The series of circular letters sent by the hierarchs of the Greek-Catholic bishopric of Munkacs represent excellent sources for analysing what was considered to be a rule and what was a transgression for a church in search of identity.

On the **29th of November 2013**, Maria Crăciun presented the sources and the method she used for her research in this project, 'The Reformation of the Artisans, or the Artisans of the Reformation?'; the paper dealt with the contribution of the craftsmen in the Transylvanian towns in implementing the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The research focuses on the concept of 'confessional identity', whose shaping is closely followed by the author in this case-study dedicated to a well-defined social segment in the Transylvanian urban environment, the craftsmen.

The series of meetings dedicated to the project's methodology ended with the meeting on the **13th of December 2013**, which had as a topic the use of visual and material sources in exploring lay religiosity. This meeting was organised as a workshop, attended by the members of the team.



The Church of Meşendorf, interior

ACTIVITIES

PARTICIPATIONS IN CONFERENCES / WORKSHOPS

The project manager, Maria Crăciun attended between the 30th of June and the 2nd of July 2013 the conference Intellectual Networks in the Long Seventeenth Century at the University of Durham, where she presented a paper entitled 'At Home and Abroad: the Academic Peregrinations of Transylvanian Saxons (1545-1700)'. She also gave a 45 minutes lecture at the Institute of History, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with the title 'Stage Sets and Props. Material Evidence for Lutheran Liturgical Practice in Early Modern Transylvania'.

To mark the 400 years anniversary since the enthronement of Gabriel Bethlen as ruler of Transylvania, the Babeş-Bolyai University together with the Eötvös Loránd University, the University of Debrecen, the Institute of History, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Transylvanian Museum Society, organised the International Scientific Conference Bethlen Gábor és Európa / Gabriel Bethlen and Europe, Cluj-Napoca, 24th-26th of October 2013. The symposium gathered 70 professionals from the fields of history, art history, archaeology, literature, linguistics and theology. From the members of the project, this conference was attended by Mária Lupescu Makó with the paper "'...arani es ezöst mivetis, kicintől fogvan mindeneketh haggia es w szerelmes hites attiafianak" - Az erdély anyagi kultúra aspektusai a 17. Század első felében' ("Gold and Silver Objects from the smallest....she leaves all of them to her beloved husband". Aspects pertaining to the Transylvanian Material Culture in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century). The paper aimed to present the rich material culture in the first half of the seventeenth century based on a well-defined category of sources, the testaments. The author intended to highlight the relationship between the accepted written norms and the customs regarding certain objects of the material culture (especially

clothing) and how the inhabitants of the Transylvanian towns related to them.

Carmen Florea presented the paper 'The Franciscan Order and the Shaping of Cultural Identity in Late Medieval Transylvania' in the framework of the exploratory workshop (financed by the European Science Foundation): Monasteries in the Shadow of Empires: Comparative Approaches to the Role of the Cistercian and Franciscan Orders in European State Building (Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries), 7th-9th of October 2013, Eichstätt, Germany.

She also attended the workshops 'Non-Textual Sources for the Mendicant Economy in East-Central Europe (ca. 1220 – ca. 1550): Architecture, Archaeology, Urban Topography', the 21-22nd of November, and 'Franciscan Observance and the Construction of Europe' on the 23rd of November 2013, taking place in Budapest.

Text, Image, Object: Itineraries in Exploring the Medieval and Early Modern Religiosity (Approaches and Methods), Cluj-Napoca, the 15th of November 2013.



The workshop Text, Image, Object: Itineraries in Exploring the Medieval and Early Modern Religiosity (Approaches and Methods), Cluj-Napoca, the 15th of November 2013 was organised in the framework of the project. All the members of the project as well as one guest delivered presentations:

Carmen Florea, Was there a Civic Religion in Medieval Transylvania?

Mária Lupescu Makó, Devotional Acts in Medieval Transylvania

Ciprian Firea, Women as Founders of Memorial Programmes in Late Medieval Transylvania. A Discussion on Visual and Written Sources.

Maria Crăciun, The Reformation of the Artisans or the Artisans of the Reformation? The Role of Craftsmen in the Implementation of the Reformation in the Community of Transylvanian Saxons.

Ovidiu Ghitta, Law and Lawlessness in the Bishopric of Munkacs in the Last Decades of the Eighteenth Century

Diana Covaci: Dumitru and Elenuța: A Transylvanian Love Story at the End of the Nineteenth Century

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Between the **18-24th November 2013** Carmen Florea carried out a documentation visit to Budapest, to the Central European University Library and to the Library of the Department of Medieval Studies.

Between the **25-26th of July 2013**, Maria Crăciun and Ciprian Firea conducted a field research in the counties of Braşov, Sibiu, Mureş, and Alba, in order to visit the monuments from Meşendorf, Caţa, Drăuşeni, Ungra, Cristian, Vulcan, Sibiu, Cisnădioara, Şura Mare, Nocrîh, Iacobeni, Peleşor, Țapu.

Between the **18-19th of July 2013** Ciprian Firea undertook a documentation trip to visit monuments in the following villages: Agnita, Aţel, Brădeni, Copşa Mare, Daia Secuiască, Dârjiu, Feliceni, Mugeni, Netuş, Noiştat, Porumbenii Mari, Sighişoara, Valchid (counties Sibiu, Mureş, Harghita)



Gravestone (1631), Cristian (Braşov county)



Şura Mare (Sibiu county) the interior of the Evangelical Church