

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

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NEWSLETTER

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ACTIVITIES

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS

AURAL OR VISUAL? THE EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP IN EARLY MODERN TRANSYLVANIAN LUTHERAN CHURCHES paper given by Maria Crăciun at the **REFORMATION STUDIES COLLOQUIUM, MURRAY EDWARDS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE**, 10-12 September 2014.

Focusing on the transformation of the Catholic Mass into an evangelical divine service this paper aimed to explore the experience of the congregation in early modern Transylvanian churches. Although long-held beliefs concerning the importance of the image in the Catholic liturgy as opposed to the primacy of the word in the Lutheran service have been substantially refined, there is still room to explore and qualify the complex sensorial experience of early modern reformed congregations. Taking into account the structure and the setting of the service, this paper has argued that while the faithful were asked to appeal to their sense of hearing (i.e. listen to the sermon and to the readings from the Gospels), their sense of sight was also actively engaged as they became aware of the spatial context and of the furnishings rearranged in the church for the staging of the liturgical ritual. While their eyes took in the images placed on the altars, pulpits, pews and galleries and the vestments of the ministers, they also followed closely the newly devised ritual and the gestures of the officiating clergy. Moreover, the congregation was encouraged to gain a different experience of the time dedicated to worship as well as a specific perception of the space where the service was enacted. Although this was no longer perceived as sacred it was also thoroughly cleansed of all mundane activities. Finally, other senses such as smell, touch and taste were activated while the faithful responded to the service through their own gestures, stood, knelt and received communion in both kinds.



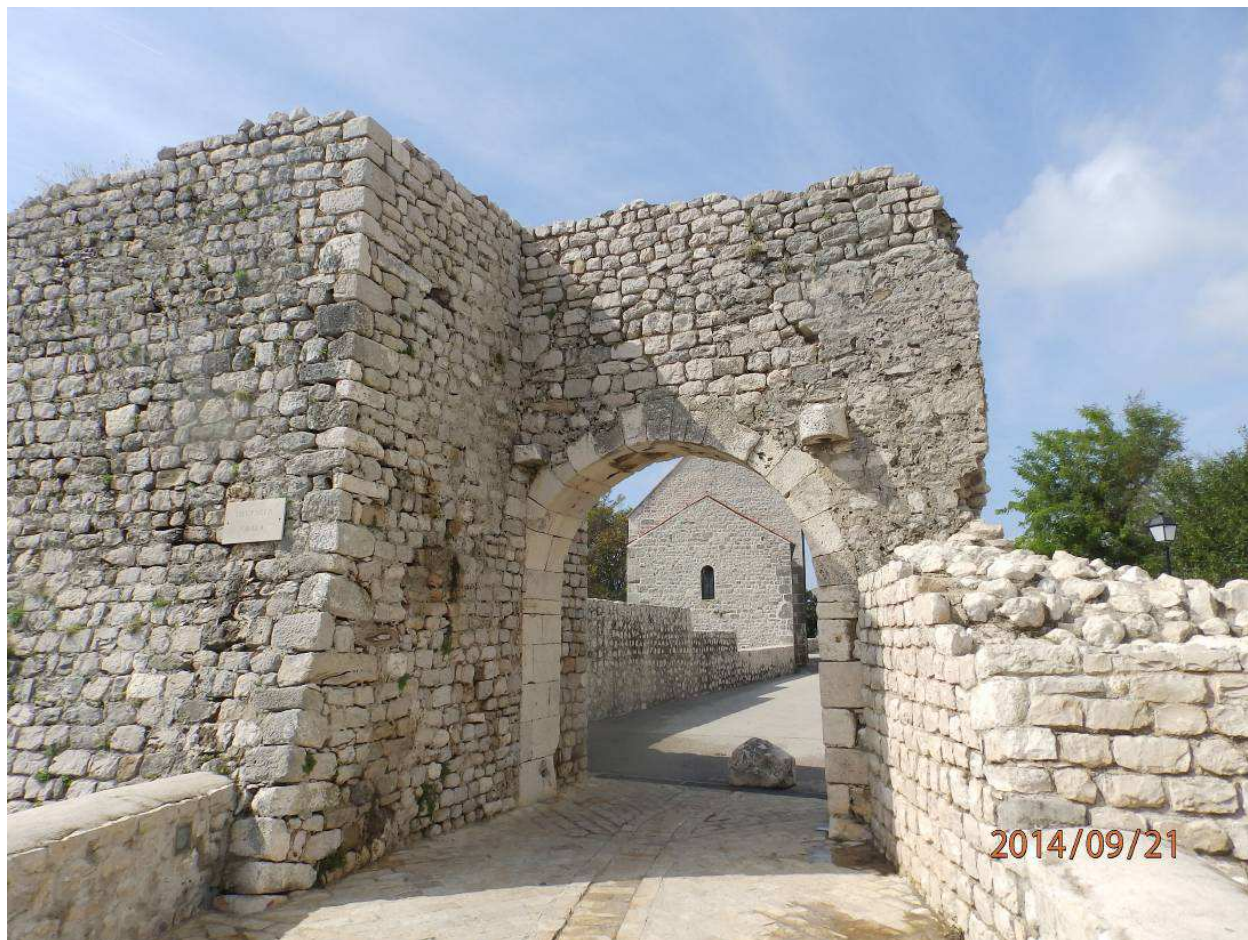
Lutheran Church in Șura Mare (Sibiu County): Pulpit

The Reformation Studies Colloquium is a bi-annual conference with international participation dedicated to the study of the Reformation in the broadest possible sense of the term, which refers to both Protestantism and the history of Tridentine reforms in all their aspects. In 2014 the conference was hosted by the Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. Due to the large number of participants the colloquium had to be held in three or four parallel sessions. Because of the very diverse research interests it has brought to the surface, the conference allows a detailed radiography of the field highlighting the themes that have primarily focused the attention of scholars. Among the more recent themes one could mention religious mobility and migration, material culture, the body, feelings and gestures, liturgical ritual, the religious experience of the laity, the relationship between pastoral strategies and piety and Old Testament iconography. Among the older themes that still arouse the interest of scholars one could mention women and the Reformation, the clergy, bishops, missions – in the old and new worlds – the court, Protestant culture, the book, reading, confessional identity, medicine, commerce, religious frontiers, music, witchcraft, images and iconoclasm, memory and myth, religious resistance and religious violence.

One of the attractions was the key note lectures given this year by Ben Kaplan (University College London), who presented 'Reformation, Religious War, Enlightenment? The Changing Forms of Religious Strife in an Early Modern Borderland', Mary Laven (Jesus College, Cambridge) who spoke about 'The Place of Piety in the Renaissance Italian Home' and Alec Ryrie (Durham), who, in a lecture entitled 'After Confessionalisation' has approached the confessionalisation paradigm with the intention of testing its validity and utility in the current historiographical context. The conference ended with a round table discussion focused on the work of Eamon Duffy (Magdalene College, Cambridge). The participants, Anne Dillon (Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge), Tom Freeman (Essex), Felicity Heal (Jesus College, Oxford), and Peter Marshall (Warwick) have critically discussed Eamon Duffy's contribution highlighting the directions of research he has opened and the paths that could still be explored.



Lutheran Church in Saschiz (Mureş County), tombstone of the parish priest Martinus Rosalerus (†1650)



Maria Crăciun has given a paper called *Saints in the church and in the prayers of mankind: attitudes towards „God’s creatures” in early modern Transylvania* at the conference entitled *Church Reforms and the Cult of Saints*, organised by the University of Zagreb, the University of Zadar and the Hagiotheca Society.

Starting from an analysis of the information provided by church orders, where saints are mentioned as „creatures” as opposed to Jesus, who is both Godly and sole saviour of mankind, this paper has explored the veneration of saints in the Lutheran community of early modern Transylvania. If one considers the issue of the cult of saints after the Saxon community adopted the Reformation, one is slightly confused by the apparent contradiction between the guidelines provided by church orders, the decrees of the synods of the Lutheran Church and visitation records, on the one hand and the presence of saints in the decoration of the altars in Lutheran churches, on the other. While the decisions of the clergy are clear in their wish to eliminate the veneration of saints from Lutheran worship, images of saints continue to appear on old as well as new furnishings within the church. A closer look at the visual evidence has served to refine this view and has suggested that the veneration of saints was discouraged not only by ecclesiastical prescriptions but also by visual means, by removing their images from the ecclesiastical space. In this sense a comparison between images of saints on medieval furnishings, particularly altarpieces with depictions of saints on so-called new furnishings, produced after the reformation of the Saxon community has led to a better understanding of the place of saints in Protestant worship. It has also helped define a specific Lutheran Pantheon and delve into the motives

for keeping some saints within the club while expelling others. Finally, the paper has tentatively addressed the issue of devotion to saints and its longevity in Lutheran context.



Monuments in Zadar region

**CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE INNOVATIONS OF THE HUMANITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN DEBRECEN, 7-9
OCTOBER 2014**

For commemorating the centenary of the foundation of its Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the University of Debrecen hosted a special conference with the participation of a broad range of international experts. The conference was held within the framework of Debrecen University Symposium under the title *Cultural Heritage and the Innovations of the Humanities in the 21st Century* in Debrecen, 7-9 October 2014 and was supported by a research project.

Apart from paying homage to their predecessors, the aim of the Debrecen University conference was to present a comprehensive outline of the remarkably effective role of the humanities in organizing and sustaining modern societies. Prompted by the various interactions experienced in basic and applied research, the conference sections arrayed the most recent findings and results that simultaneously meet contemporary demands and utilize the opportunities offered by the 21st century while validating the

applicability of arts and humanities for finding solutions to significant social problems. The topics addressed at the conference covered the theoretical bases of linguistic data processing as well as the issues related to cultural heritage, national history, and social conflicts. In eleven sessions various questions concerning the cultural life in Hungary throughout a longer time span were raised. The language of the conference was Hungarian and English.

The panel called *Learning, Intellect and Social Roles: the Changing Character of the Aristocracy* dedicated to the medieval and early modern period wished to introduce new theoretical approaches and research methods in the study of the aristocracy, which could bring forward new innovative possibilities. Aristocracy played an important, but continuously changing (even occasionally decreasing) role in the history of Hungarian political, social, economic and cultural elite. However, the higher nobility was never a uniform layer

that can be easily grasped and described with a few simple characteristics. As political-social relations were changing, its place and role did similarly vary, further deepening its inner, existing differentiation. It is worth highlighting a more complex and balanced investigation of the social role and activity of the aristocracy, since in recent decades it has been subject to many superficial, unfounded and ideological statements. Therefore, the session with its two sub-sessions dedicated to the medieval and early modern as well as modern period focused on the way the aristocracy played an active public role and the contexts where it did, and in relation to this, what tasks and positions they were assigned in accordance with their intellect and learning.

Mária Lupescu Makó presented her paper entitled *Piety and Remembrance of the Transylvanian Noble Testators in the Late Middle Ages* in the frame of the above mentioned medieval panel. The main

sources used for this analysis were the last wills and testaments in medieval Transylvania which expressed people's wishes, attitudes and intentions with respect to both worldly and otherworldly matters. They reflected attitudes towards other family members, to property, to life and death, and to communities. Most wills contained bequests for the soul which were to assist the deceased's passage into the world beyond. Making implicit donations, testators drafted a contract under which they both offered and received certain benefits. In offering different gifts to the mendicants, the most efficacious intercessors in the Middle Ages, the testators demonstrated their belief that such pious acts were themselves a useful way to gain entrance to Heaven. Thus, in her paper Mária Lupescu Makó focused on the analysis of the Transylvanian noble testators and on the bequests they made to the mendicants in the Middle Ages.



CITIES IN EUROPE - CITIES IN THE WORLD. 12TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN HISTORY – LISBON, 3-6 SEPTEMBER 2014



At this conference Mária Lupescu Makó presented a paper called ***Material Culture – Remembrance Culture in Late Medieval Transylvanian Towns***.

The paper explores the use of writing in strategies of remembrance in the late medieval Transylvanian towns. Through the material culture described in medieval last wills and testaments the paper has shown its important role in remembering the dead. The data demonstrates how mortuary rituals served as memorable events, and how material culture was employed in commemorating the dead. By examining the strategies, practices and performances involving material culture at funerals, we can attempt to identify how memories were produced and reproduced over time and space, using artefacts, bodies, structures and monuments. Thus, by exploring the structuring themes and the variability of mortuary practices, we might be getting closer to understanding the rituals surrounding death and their place in the lives of late medieval Transylvanian burghers.

Mária Lupescu Makó presented her paper in the session entitled: ***Sacred Spaces, Material Culture and Social Change in Western Europe (13th-17th Centuries)***, organized by Frederik Buylaert (Belgium, *Vrije Universiteit Brussels*), Koen Goudriaan (Netherlands - *Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam*), Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (Belgium - *Ghent University*)

To this day, relatively little is known about the functioning of religious spaces in late medieval European cities and how this changed in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation era. Yet, much suggests that the churches of the urban parishes and the various ecclesiastical institutions are important constituents of the socio-cultural organization of the medieval and post-medieval city. On the one hand, churches and churchyards were a cornerstone for urban community building. Together with markets, they formed the primary locus of the urban public sphere and collective religious experiences were closely linked to the ideology of the city as a spiritual community sanctioned by God. On the other hand, churches also functioned as the stage for individual actions that were charged with religious and social meaning, ranging from individual prayer over the establishment of a private altar or funerary monument to the disputes concerning the seating order during mass. Through a combination of about seven historical and art historical papers, this session contributed to the charting of both the

complementarity and the tension between the use of church spaces for individual and communal enterprises in the cities of Western Europe.

During the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the European urban network formed the stage of far-reaching transformations, in which some cities rose and others declined, and in which opportunities for upward social mobility shifted from one urban group to another. The first aim of this session was to assess how and to what extent those social dynamics were negotiated within the spatial setting of the urban church. Secondly, there is the equally important issue of continuities and discontinuities in the uses of sacral spaces in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation era, not only in the light of the theological discussions on the validity and functioning of ecclesiastical infrastructure, but also in relation to the changing conceptions about the social order in the Early Modern Era and the processes of inclusion and exclusion it engendered.

Both lines of enquiry were pursued through the perspective of material culture studies. First, attention focused on “embodied piety,” that is, devotion as an individual experience that was mediated to physical objects (e.g. the lighting of candles, the kneeling for religious diptychs and statues). Secondly, special attention was paid to commemorative monuments as attempts to imprint the public sphere in a durable manner (e.g. funerary monument).

For further details concerning this conference see:

<http://www.eauh2014.fcsh.unl.pt/index.php?conference=conference&schedConf=eauh2014>



Pew in the Lutheran Church in Şura Mare