

GERMAN COMMUNITIES IN WALLACHIA. DENOMINATIONAL EVOLUTION, 1542-1650

ALEXANDRU CIOCÎLTAN

The German communities living south of the Carpathians were set up in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as a result of the German colonisation into Southeast Europe, in the framework of the expansion of the Hungarian Kingdom. They flourished as long as they maintained their commercial and denominational links with the Saxons living in southern Transylvania. Their fall began in the second half of the sixteenth century, under the impact of the Counter-Reformation which penetrated in Wallachia, from the region south of the Danube, that is from the Ottoman Empire, and was rendered complete a century later.

I. *The Reformation in Transylvania*

In 1517 Martin Luther published the 95 theses of Wittenberg; the event marked the beginning of the Reformation in Germany¹.

Several years later, Saxon merchants and students are reported to have brought the Lutheran writings to Transylvania. The authorities tried to prevent the spreading out of the new dogma, seen as heretical, but were hindered in their efforts by the breakdown of the Hungarian Kingdom after the battle of Mohács (1526) and the creation of the autonomous Transylvanian Principality under Ottoman suzerainty (1541)².

The Lutheran dogma spread especially in the Saxon area and, further on, throughout Transylvania, in the Counties (*comitatus*) and in the Szekler Region. In 1542, Johannes Honterus reformed the Church of Braşov (Kronstadt) and Țara Bârsei (Burzenland). The other Saxon towns and villages marked a similar evolution. In 1547, the “Kirchenordnung aller Deutschen in Siebenbürgen” was drawn up by the senior members of the Saxon Church. It would become a ruling document for all the Saxon communities in Transylvania, including those living on the nobles’ domains³.

The Diet of Turda (1557) acknowledged to the Estates of Transylvania the right to freely choose the religion in their territories. In 1564 and 1568, the Calvinists and the Unitarians obtained recognition of their denomination. The constitutional system of the Transylvanian Principality included four recognized denominations (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian); the Orthodox denomination of the Romanian population was merely tolerated⁴.

¹ K. Randell, *Luther și Reforma în Germania, 1517-1555*, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 28-31.

² Ș. Papacostea, *Moldova în epoca Reformei. Contribuție la istoria societății moldovenești în veacul al XVI-lea*, in *Evul mediu românesc. Realități politice și curente spirituale*, Bucharest, 2001, pp. 289-291.

³ K. Gündisch, *Siebenbürgen und die Siebenbürger Sachsen*, München, 1998, pp. 82-86.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

By the adoption in 1572 of the *Confessio Augustana*, the Saxon Church perfected the evolution initiated by Johannes Honterus in 1542.

II. The Reformation in Wallachia

1) *The Catholic Church in Wallachia until the Reformation (Sixteenth Century)*

Despite the scarcity of sources, some aspects in the evolution of Catholicism in Wallachia can be illustrated.

In 1519, the series of the Catholic Bishops of Argeş came to an end⁵. At the beginning of the century, the Franciscan Cloister of Câmpulung (Langenau) was deserted by its monastic community. Some Romanian historians argued that the Franciscans relocated to the parochial church of the Saxons in Câmpulung, dedicated to Saint Jacob the Great⁶. The assertion was based on the existence in the St. Jacob's Church of a bell, nowadays lost, with the following inscription : "S(anct)e Iacobe et Anna sint nobis grata hac munera. Franc(isci) O(b)s(er)vantia) A(nno) D(omini) 1525"⁷. Several important aspects were overlooked in the issue. The Saxon communities of Transylvania – be they free or in serfhood – enjoyed the privilege of freely choosing their minister (*plebanus*). The Saxon communities living in Wallachia may have enjoyed the same privilege. Indeed, a minister would not be replaced, as a rule, by the monastic community. The mission of a monastic community in providing for the spiritual needs of a community was complementary, while the main role was devolved upon the minister. The monastic community was also involved in activities of proselytism, of conversion of the schismatic and unbelievers, a task never to be assumed by a minister. As a result, the Franciscans who deserted the Cloister could have only taken over the parochial church of the Saxons after having driven out or replaced the minister; such an act would have been an infringement upon the liberties of the Saxons. Neither could a minister accede to the leadership of a monastic community: when the Wallachian voivode Vlad Dracul (1436-1442, 1443-1447) tried to place Michael, the minister (*plebanus*) of Târgovişte at the head of the Cistercian Abbey of Cârţa (Ţara Făgăraşului), the monks voiced their protests, arguing that the Hungarian kings had acknowledged them the right to choose their abbot from among themselves. It is only after the Counter-Reformation that Catholic monks were entrusted with the mission to drive the "heretic" ministers out of their parishes, and take over the pastoral mission.

There are two pieces of information that can settle the issue: on 22 December 1528, a Latin document mentions the vice-minister of Câmpulung, Petrus Morei⁸, and in 1540, the ledgers of the town of Braşov bear the record of the *plebanus* of Câmpulung⁹.

⁵ C. Auner, *Episcopia catolică a Argeşului*, in "Revista catolică", III, 1914, 3, p. 439.

⁶ P. Chihaia, *Monumente gotice din Câmpulung-Muscel*, in *Artă medievală. Monumente din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, I, Bucharest, 1998, p. 286 ; M. Muţescu, A. Muţescu, *Cloaşterul Câmpulungean*, in "Argessis. Studii şi comunicări", Seria Istorie, t. IX, 2000, pp. 124-125, 135.

⁷ M. Muţescu, A. Muţescu, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

⁸ E. Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, XV, 1, *Acte şi scrisori din arhivele oraşelor ardeleni (Bistriţa, Braşov, Sibiu) 1358-1600*, published by N. Iorga, Bucharest, 1911, p. 309.

⁹ *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó*, II. Bd, *Rechnungen aus 1526-1540*, Brassó, 1889, p. 673.

It is quite clear that the Franciscans did not take up residence at the parochial church of the Saxons after having deserted the Cloister in the early sixteenth century. The cause of their departure remains unknown. In Pavel Chihaiia's view "the destruction of the 'Cloister' may have occurred during the retaliation set afoot after the pro-Catholic reign of Mihnea cel Rău (1508-1509), accused by the chronicle of Wallachia of having planned to 'burn all the hegoumenes of all the monasteries", and of having committed by the end "the heresy of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost"¹⁰. The above mentioned bell may have come either from the Observant Franciscans of Braşov, who only around 1530, after the conflict with the authorities (*magistratus*) of the town, were forced to leave for Şumleu-Ciuc in the Szekler Region¹¹, either from the Monastery of the Observants of Târgovişte, with whom the inhabitants of Braşov had been in contact since 1521¹². In the account of his travel to Wallachia (1532), Francesco della Valle of Padoua mentions the presence in Târgovişte of "a St. Francis's Church <with> only a handful of Observant monks, who perform the service according to the rules of the Roman Church"¹³. Franciscan Ieronim Arsengo believes that the Observant brethren departed from Târgovişte only in 1571¹⁴.

There is indication that in the first half of the sixteenth century the Roman-Catholic Church of Wallachia was in decline: the desertion of the Cloister of Câmpulung by the community of the Observant Franciscans at the beginning of the century and the end put in 1519 to the series of bishops of Argeş seem to point to such an evolution. There is no available information on the situation of the parish clergy.

2) *Lutheran Proselytism in Wallachia*

In a first stage, Lutheranism won over not only the German communities living on the domains of the king and of the nobles, but also the Hungarian population. The Hungarians living on the domains of the Counties would eventually embrace Calvinism and Unitarianism only in the second stage of the Reformation in Transylvania. Important Catholic enclaves were conserved in the Szekler Region. The religious tolerance consecrated by law in the Transylvanian Principality allowed every Estate to choose its denomination, within its territory. Lutheranism took root on the territory of the Saxon University (*Universitas*

¹⁰ P. Chihaiia, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

¹¹ *Dicţionarul mănăstirilor din Transilvania, Banat, Crişana şi Maramureş*, coord. Adrian A. Rusu, Cluj-Napoca, 2000, p. 81.

¹² *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó*, I. Bd., *Rechnungen aus 1503-1526*, Brassó, 1886, pp. 341, 346.

¹³ Fr. della Valle Padovanul (? – după 1545), *Relaţia călătoriilor din 1532 şi 1534 în Ţara Românească şi Transilvania*, in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române*, I, ed. M. Holban, Bucharest, 1968, p. 322.

¹⁴ I. Arsengo (?-1610), *Relaţia fratelui Ieronim Arsengo despre starea bisericii catolice în Ţara Românească 1581*, in *Călători*, vol. II, ed. M. Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, P. Cernovodeanu, Bucharest, 1970, p. 509.

Saxonum) and the territories in serfhood under Saxon rule, including the Hungarians and the Slavs living in this area¹⁵. The Saxon University excluded from its territory any Reformed denomination other than Lutheranism¹⁶. Here the Reformation was complete, no Catholic church or community being preserved; only the tolerated Orthodox denomination survived, despite the unfruitful efforts of converting the Romanians by translating church books into Romanian language.

Professor Paul Philippi believes that “no proselytism was ever reported in association to the Lutheran Reformation in Transylvania”¹⁷. Undoubtedly, the translation of the Lutheran Catechism into Romanian and Greek, under the supervision of the Saxon authorities, did not target the ethnic assimilation of the Romanians or Greeks by the Saxons¹⁸. However, when considering that the translation of the Catechism into the languages of the two Orthodox peoples could have offered the Romanians and the Greeks the possibility to reform their Churches in the spirit of the Lutheran dogma, the proselyte intention becomes obvious.

One may consider that Lutheranism, implicitly the Transylvanian one, also had a proselyte side that can be traced into the foreword to *Formula pii consensus* on the occasion of the adoption of the *Confessio Augustana* at the Synod of Mediaş (22 June 1572): “It pleased God that these communities of the Saxon people should offer in a way an example to the neighboring peoples as to His divine presence and merciful grace.”¹⁹ Beside the Romanians and the Greeks, there were also Catholic Ragusan merchants trading at Braşov. In 1581, the Ragusans of Silistra complained to the Catholic missionary Ieronim Arsengo that “traveling across the Danube, on their way to Transylvania, they find in Wallachia many Lutherans of German origin, always willing to discuss about the faith, and handing out books of their perverted faith”²⁰.

This text marks out an evolution: the Saxon communities living in Wallachia had not only been converted to Lutheranism, but were also making religious propaganda, by spoken and by written, with the Catholic Ragusans as a target.

The Saxon communities of Wallachia may have embraced the Lutheran denomination towards the middle of the sixteenth century, when the new dogma was adopted by the Saxon University of Transylvania.

¹⁵ *Die Pfarrer und Lehrer der Evangelischen Kirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen*, vol. I, *Von der Reformation bis zum Jahre 1700*, ed. Ernst Wagner, Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1998, pp. 1-5 (Schriften zur Landeskunde Siebenbürgens).

¹⁶ K. Zach, *Toleranța religioasă și construirea stereotipurilor într-o regiune multiculturală. “Biserici populare” în Transilvania*, in *Transilvania și sașii ardeleni în istoriografie*, Sibiu, 2001, pp. 74-75.

¹⁷ P. Philippi, *Wittenbergische Reformation und ökumenische Katholizität in Siebenbürgen*, in *Luther und Siebenbürgen. Ausstrahlungen von Reformation und Humanismus nach Südosteuropa*, ed. Georg und Renate Weber, Köln, Wien, 1985, p. 75.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁹ *Ex Formula pii consensus*, in vol. *Geschichtswirklichkeit und Glaubensbewährung. Festschrift für Bischof D. Dr. h.c. Friedrich Müller*, ed. Franklin Clark Fry, Stuttgart, 1967, pp. 14-15.

²⁰ I. Arsengo (? - 1610), *Vizitație apostolică 1581*, in *Călători*, vol. II, p. 508.

In 1556, the Wallachian Voivode Pătrașcu cel Bun (1554-1557) asked the Mayor of Brașov for a copy of the Lutheran Catechism²¹. In 1562-63, Wolfgang Schreiber, emissary of the German Lutheran circles, arrived in Wallachia and Moldavia with Cyrillic church books of Lutheran inspiration. He offered Jacob Heraclides Despoth (1561-1563), a Protestant voivode, his assistance in setting up a printing press in Moldavia and having the Gospels translated into Romanian. Suspecting that Schreiber had been sent out to him by his Transylvanian enemies so as to compromise him before the Ottomans, Despot had him seized up and sent over to the Sublime Porte²². On 3 March 1563, the Wallachian boyars at the Ottoman Porte were admonished by the Pasha for having allowed Wolfgang Schreiber to cross into Moldavia by way of Wallachia. They argued in their defense that his dealings had been of religious nature²³.

The fact that Pătrașcu cel Bun requested a Lutheran Catechism from Brașov and that W. Schreiber, a Lutheran emissary, had been given free access to Wallachia indicates that the new dogma was not persecuted or hindered in any way by the Wallachian authorities. Wallachia saw no religious persecutions against the Protestants, such as the ones that started out in Moldavia in the time of Ștefăniță Rareș (1551-1552) and were resumed by other Voivodes. In Wallachia the situation changed only in the time of Petru Cercel (1583-1585).

The Lutheran Reformation met with no opposition from Catholicism in Wallachia, due to the lack of a bishopric structure liable to put up such an opposition, and the desertion of the Franciscan monastery of Câmpulung in the early sixteenth century. Considering that the minister of Câmpulung was recorded in 1540 in the ledgers of Brașov, one may assume that he was well informed about the spiritual developments on the eve of the Reformation in Brașov.

The Saxons living in Wallachia adopted the Lutheranism in a different way as compared to the Transylvanian Saxons.

In Transylvania, the Town Councils had a fundamental role in the introduction of the Reformation among the Saxons. On the territory of the Saxon University, Lutheranism, the only accepted religion, was a state religion.

In Wallachia, the German communities of Câmpulung, Târgoviște, Râmnic, and Argeș were urban enclaves of an ethno-denominational type, within the majority of the Orthodox Romanian population. Orthodoxy was the state religion here, under the protection of the lay and ecclesiastic authorities. Before the Reformation, the Germans living south of the Carpathians had lost to the Romanians the leadership of the Town Councils in the settlements they inhabited²⁴.

²¹ L. Demény, L.A. Demény, *Carte, tipar și societate la români în secolul al XVI-lea*, Bucharest, 1986, p. 154.

²² Schreiber's biography in *Călători*, II, pp. 273-276.

²³ N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. XIX, Bucharest, 1910, pp. 48-49.

²⁴ In 1521, Câmpulung was led by a Romanian, Mayor Stoica Hurduzău; in 1545-46, by Mayor Vlaicu; R. Manolescu, *Comerțul Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Brașovul (secolele XV-XVI)*, Bucharest, 1965, pp. 209-210.

Therefore, the introduction of the new denomination enjoyed no support from the urban or state authorities. The Lutheran Church was a tolerated Church in Wallachia, whose adherents were exclusively the members of the Saxon communities living in the Principality. Even if in permanent contact with the Saxons of Transylvania, before and during the Reformation, the German communities living in Wallachia were not ecclesiastically integrated into the Transylvanian Saxon chapters (*capitula*) and deaneries (*decanatus*).

An important question is the legal statute of the Lutheran clergy in its relations to the Wallachian authorities. They could not have carried out a pastoral mission if they had not enjoyed privileges granted by the Wallachian princes. There is evidence in this respect.

In 1602-1610, Radu Șerban granted a privilege to “the Saxon ministers of my town of Cămpulung”, by which two men, were being exempt “of tribute ... and of any other duties, since such exemption was also ordered by other princes”²⁵. The fact that other princes had granted such privileges, as mentioned in the document, is of great consequence; Radu Șerban’s successors would also confirm them²⁶.

Historian Johann Filstich (1684-1743) notes that the superintendent of Biertan (Birthälm), Lukas Ungleich (1572-1600), ordained a number of scholars to serve as ministers for the Saxons living in Wallachia²⁷. This fact is confirmed in other Transylvanian sources. The ordaining records of the Lutheran Church of Transylvania, drawn up to begin with 1573²⁸, mention several names of ministers who served in Wallachia: in Râmnic (Marcus Remnikensis, 1574; Benedictus Balaham, 1577; Christianus Roth alias Wolkendorfius, 1579), Târgoviște (Martinus Leo, 1575), and Cămpulung (Christian Roth Ruffinus, before June 1587)²⁹.

In 1571, the Observant Franciscans left the monastery of Târgoviște and settled down in the Szekler Region³⁰. A year later, their example was followed by the Franciscans of Bacău, as the series of guardians, begun in 1531, ended in 1572.³¹ The latter also settled down at Șumleu-Ciuc. The reasons for their departure were “heresy” and the wars³². The departure of the Franciscans from Târgoviște marked a new step in the decline of Catholicism in Wallachia.

²⁵ N. Iorga, *Documente scoase din arhiva mănăstirii catolice din Cămpulung și privitoare la istoria catolicismului în Țara Românească în Studii și documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, I-II, Bucharest, 1901, p. 273.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 273-274.

²⁷ J. Filstich, *Încercare de istorie românească*, ed. A. Armbruster, Bucharest, 1979, p. 239.

²⁸ *Die Pfarrer und Lehrer*, p. 27.

²⁹ P. Binder, *Közös múltunk. Romanok, magyarok, németek és délszlávok feudalizmus kori falusi és városi együttéléséről*, Bukarest, 1982, pp. 96, 103, 105, 331-333; *Die Pfarrer und Lehrer*, pp. 112-113; *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Brassó*, t. IV, *Chroniken und Tagebücher [1143-1867]*, Brassó, 1903, p. 101.

³⁰ I. Arsengo, *Relația fratehii*, p. 509.

³¹ N. Iorga, *Studii și documente*, I-II, pp. 78-82, 153-159.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 80.

In the account of his travel to Wallachia, Pierre Lescalopier, a Frenchman, notes the presence of a wooden Lutheran church in Bucharest in 1574³³; although he also visited Târgoviște, and very likely Câmpulung, he made no mention of the Lutheran stone buildings in these two towns. Only beginning with the eighteenth century is the presence of a German Lutheran community recorded in Bucharest. There is no other source dating to the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries mentioning any Lutheran church in Bucharest. The information of Lescalopier is probably erroneous.

All this information points out to the fact that the Reformation had triumphed among the German communities living in Wallachia (Câmpulung, Râmnic, and Târgoviște), which belonged to the "Church of God of the Saxon People" (*Ecclesia Dei Nationis Saxonicae*). In 1581, as already mentioned, the Saxons living in Wallachia were carrying out an activity of proselytism, targeting the conversion of the Ragusans of Silistra to Lutheranism.

III. The Counter-Reformation

1) *The Roman-Catholic Church and South-East Europe after the Council of Trento (1545-1563)*

The Protestant Movement launched by Martin Luther estranged a large part of the Western Christendom from the Roman Church. The decline of the Roman Church could only be stopped by a common effort of reform from within the Catholic institutions. This effort was initiated by Pope Paul III (1534-1549) and pursued by his successors through the General Council of Trento (1545-1563). The Council was attended, beside the higher prelates in Rome, by the representatives of the Catholic States³⁴. The Council was the response of the Catholic hierarchy to the Protestant surge: it defined the dogma explicitly and refuted the innovations of the Reformed in key fields, such as the sources of the Christian truth, the doctrine on redemption and the sacraments. In addition, the Council strengthened the discipline in the Church, with stress being laid on the restructuring of the bishop office³⁵. The Counter-Reformation brought back into obedience several territories lost to the Reformation, and allowed the conversion of the "pagans" in Central and South America, as well as in the Far East. It also strove to bring the Eastern Christian Churches into obedience to Rome.

The evolution of Catholicism in the Balkan Peninsula, that is in the territory under the authority of the Ottoman Empire, where the action of the Roman Church was tolerated, also had a considerable impact.

The Catholic ecclesiastic structure was created in Bulgaria in 1565³⁶, during the one but last year of reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566). This

³³ P. Lescalopier, *Călătoria în Țara Românească și Transilvania*, 16 June -16 August 1574, in *Călătoria*, II, p. 427.

³⁴ K. Randell, *Reforma catolică și Contrareforma*, Bucharest, 2001, pp. 47-63.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 72-79.

³⁶ *Acta Bulgariae ecclesiastica ab A. 1565 usque ad A. 1799*, ed. P.Fr. Eusebius Fermendžin (Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium), Zagrabiae, 1887, doc. I, 1565, p. 1.

evolution could not have taken place without the consent of the sultan. The tolerance showed to the Roman Catholic Church may be explained by the alliance signed in 1536 between the Ottoman sultan and the French King Francis I, against Emperor Charles V. The sultan's policy towards the Roman Church was continued by his successors. It influenced the entire South-East European space, and was applied by the local representatives of the Ottoman power. Quite significant in this respect was the attitude of the Pasha of Timișoara, recorded on 10 March 1585 by Jesuit Antonio Possevino. According to him, the inhabitants of Timișoara (under Ottoman administration since 1552) requested the Jesuits of Transylvania to ordain "a lame youngster": "And they also said that the pasha had ordered them, under the threat of having their noses and ears chopped off, to bring over a minister of the old religion, and should they bring over such a minister, he would provide for all his needs. Another one, also Turkish, had the church rebuilt from the ground."³⁷ A considerable success was recorded by the Counter-Reformation missionaries in Bulgaria, where several thousands of Paulicians were converted, and two bishoprics were created, in Sofia and Nicopolis.

2) Catholic Restoration in Wallachia. Stages

Not only Bulgaria, but also Wallachia and Moldavia fell under the influence of the Counter-Reformation. For centuries, the Catholic influence in Wallachia had come from the North and the West (Transylvania and the Banat). Things changed in the ninth decade of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century: Catholic proselytism had started to act from south of the Danube.

In 1580, an account from Pera (Constantinople) by citizen Benedict of Galiano to the Bishop of Nona, Pietro Cedulino, notes that "in Wallachia and Bogdania that is Moldavia, there are churches partly held by our Latin brothers, partly by the Lutherans ..."³⁸.

However, the first signals of the Counter-Reformation in Wallachia belong to the following year, with the Apostolic Visitation of the Conventual Franciscan Ieronim Arsengo, the envoy of the aforementioned Bishop of Nona³⁹. During his visit to Silistra, made during the same year, he marked the presence of some Ragusans, who were trading with Wallachia, and whom the Germans living there were trying to convert to Lutheranism⁴⁰. The Ragusans were under the pastoral care of "Brother" Celestin the Venetian, who had been serving for three years, six months in Silistra and six other months at the Monastery of Târgoviște⁴¹.

The Apostolic Visitation of Wallachia in 1581 paints an image of the denominational situation of the German communities living in the Principality. There were 1,000 households of Orthodox Romanians at Târgoviște, and 22

³⁷ F. Capeci, (1549-1587), *Către iezuitul Girolamo Piatti 1585 martie 10*, in *Călători*, III, p. 111.

³⁸ *Acta Bulgariae Eccl.*, doc. no II, pp. 1-2.

³⁹ *Călători*, II, p. 504.

⁴⁰ I. Arsengo, (? - 1610), *Vizitație apost.*, p. 508.

⁴¹ Idem, *Relația fratelui Ieronim Arsengo despre vizitarea Silistrei 1581*, in *Călători*, II, p. 509.

households of "Catholic" Saxons⁴², counting 130 individuals of Roman Rite and German, Hungarian and Romanian language. The believers had a Lutheran minister and were "poor people, stone cutters, oven workers, and diggers by trade"⁴³. The Lutheran minister served at the parochial church, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and had "six phelonious of red velvet, six surplices, six silver chalices, five silver disks, two silver crucifixes, and a silver censer, a silver tabernacle ... and a vineyard. The Saxons have all these things. The wine they make from the grapes in the vineyard is given to the minister who serves at that church"⁴⁴.

There was yet another Catholic building, the Monastery dedicated to St. Francis, deserted ten years before by the monastic community, where Brother Celestin lived. The church was in good condition, did not have any sacerdotal attire at the altar, and Celestin was working on the rebuilding of the cells. The monastery had a beautiful garden⁴⁵. The monk lived on "charity and the assistance from the wife of the Wallachian prince"⁴⁶. His precarious means were due to the fact that the Saxon community was Lutheran. Arsengo considered the situation intolerable. He ordered Celestin to chase away the Lutheran minister, hoping that the Saxons would desert their minister easily, as the brother had also learned Romanian⁴⁷. One may infer that it was a community of preponderantly if not exclusively Romanian speaking Saxons and Hungarians⁴⁸.

Four hundred Saxons lived at Câmpulung. There was a Franciscan monastery there, in very poor condition, and the chaplain, who was a Lutheran and a speaker of German, Hungarian and Romanian, was serving in the parochial church. At Râmnic there were 20 Saxon households counting 180 individuals, also under the pastoral care of a Lutheran⁴⁹.

Brother Arsengo's account indicates that in 1581 the German communities living in Wallachia (Târgoviște, Râmnic, and Câmpulung) were entirely Lutheran, and counted 710 individuals.

The situation remained unchanged in 1582, as on 16 March, Arsengo wrote from Silistra that Brother Celestin, although having finished the work on the

⁴² Inverted commas by A.C.; the Counter-Reformation considered them *de iure* Catholics keeping a Lutheran minister for want of a Catholic one, even if they were *de facto* Lutherans, as clearly seen in all the preserved accounts.

⁴³ I. Arsengo (? - 1610), *Relația fratelui Ieronim Arsengo despre starea bisericii catolice în Țara Românească 1581*, p. 509.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 510.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 509-510.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 510.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 509.

⁴⁸ The same opinion was expressed by B. Morariu, *Notizie storiche sul convento francescano di Târgoviște (Valacchia) (sec. XVII)* in *Acta Historica*, IV (1965) (Societas Academica Dacoromana), München, 1965, pp. 91-92.

⁴⁹ I. Arsengo (? - 1610), *Relația fratelui Ieronim Arsengo despre starea bisericii catolice în Țara Românească*, p. 510.

monastery, had been unable to drive away the Lutheran minister. Arsengo believed that Benedict Galiano should send a letter to the wife of the Wallachian prince, Ecaterina Salvaresso, as she could bring about the elimination of the Lutheran minister⁵⁰. Ecaterina Salvaresso, the wife of Prince Alexandru II Mircea (1568-1577), was the daughter of an aristocrat of Chios⁵¹. Upon the prince's death in 1577, she took over the guardianship of her young son, Mihnea Turcitul (1577-1583, 1585-1591). In Wallachia there were some Genoese who had fled from Chios, mentioned in 1574 by Pierre Lescalopier⁵². One may assume that these Genoese of Târgoviște were the flock Brother Celestin had under the pastoral mission at St. Francis's Church, six months a year, in 1578-1582⁵³.

A significant change in Catholicism in Târgoviște occurred during the reign of Petru Cercel (1583-1585). If on 16 March 1582 there was only one brother at the monastery of Târgoviște, namely Celestin, who had completed the work on the cells, after 8-10 September 1583⁵⁴, the new Prince Petru Cercel "provided important funds for six monks of the St. Francis's Order, who had a beautiful church in which service was in accordance with the Roman Rite". The church was attended by "all the Italians, French, and many Ragusans who are trading in Wallachia"⁵⁵. Although the Franciscans may have come here after 16 March 1582, before Petru Cercel's accession to the throne, it is more likely that the event occurred during his reign and at his initiative. His candidateship to the throne was supported by the Catholic circles in the West, especially by the French King Henry III and, his ambassador to the Porte, Germigny⁵⁶. Petru Cercel had embraced Catholicism, but the event had not been made public, and was only known by his close acquaintances, the Italians and the French, whom he brought over to Wallachia and appointed to high offices. An account of Cluj (10 March 1585), which at first sight casts a doubt on the veracity of the facts recorded in the time of Petru Cercel, was made by the Transylvanian Jesuit Ferrante Capeci: "I had a letter sent to the Prince of Wallachia, whose messenger came these days to the Transylvanian <prince>, and right away, being Catholic, he came over to our church and greeted me in the most elegant manner. I offered my services to the Prince, verbally, but put nothing in written. The prince is a Catholic, and he speaks Italian as if he were one of us; he has many Italian servants, and a country much larger than Transylvania. They are free from heresy, even some of the heretics of Transylvania who went there to preach, first had some controversies with the St.

⁵⁰ *Acta Bulgariae Eccl.*, doc. no XIII, p. 13.

⁵¹ I. Paleologul (c. 1520-1580), *Călătoria în Țara Românească 1573*, in *Călători*, II, p. 413.

⁵² P. Lescalopier, *Călătoria*, p. 428, see also note 85.

⁵³ In a letter of 1578, Ecaterina Salvaresso mentions a church where service was held "alla romana".

⁵⁴ For Petru Cercel arrival in Bucharest, see Fr. Sivori (c. 1560? – after 1589), *Plecarea spre Țara Românească*, in *Călători*, III, p. 8.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ E. Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, Suplement I, vol. I, 1518-1780, Bucharest, 1886, doc. no LXXXIX-CVI, pp. 46-57.

Francis's brethren, who, being simple minded and unable to answer, requested a delay, in order to bring over one of them, a wiser man; and after this man, Fra Francesco, whose memory may be blessed, came before the prince, he shamed them, after which they were immediately burned at stake; and since then, none dares to be a heretic."⁵⁷

In his undated account to the Pope on the state of Catholicism in Wallachia and Moldavia, the Franciscan monk Francesco Pastis of Candia (? – after November 1596) notes: "in the Wallachian town of Târgoviște there are two churches, in which service is held in accordance with the Roman Rite: one belongs to the Saxons, and the other one is the monastery where the Franciscan monks dwell. These monks hold service in both churches, and those who live in accordance with the Roman Rite are Saxons, and they make some thirty families, and a few Ragusans; and those Saxons had lived before after the Lutheran Rite and had had a Lutheran minister. After I had arrived and taken over, I converted them and drove away their minister; by the grace of God, they lived and are now living by the Roman Rite."⁵⁸ In the opening part of this account, he noted that he remained "in these places some seven years in a row"⁵⁹. The biography of the Franciscan may throw a light on the date of this account. In 1588, Francesco Pastis was in Moldavia⁶⁰ and in 1595 in Transylvania, where he was appointed Prince Sigismund Báthory's confessor⁶¹.

His presence in Târgoviște is confirmed by a "brother" of Târgoviște, the Franciscan Giuseppe Pisculo, who mentions that the Transylvanian prince confessed "to a conventual monk of the St. Francis's Order, born in Candia, who had been before at the monastery of Târgoviște"⁶². Cesare Alzati believes that Francesco Pastis' account is anterior to 1592⁶³. It is known that Franco Sivori's embassy to Transylvania, mentioned by Jesuit F. Capeci, occurred before 10 March 1585. As a result, the elimination of the Lutheran minister and the conversion of the Saxons of Târgoviște were made by Francesco Pastis of Candia between 8-10 September 1583, during the reign of Petru Cercel, and before 10 March 1585, when Sivori headed the embassy to Transylvania⁶⁴. Francesco Pastis of Candia's account dates back to 1590 or 1591. Then why did he only mention the elimination of the Lutheran minister, but not the burning at stake of the Lutherans of Târgoviște?

⁵⁷ *Epistolae et acta Jesuitarum Transylvaniae temporibus principum Báthory (1571-1613)*, ed. Dr. Andreas Veress, volumen secundum, 1575-1588, Budapest, 1913, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁸ Fr. Pastis din Candia (? – after November 1596) *Informațiuni despre Țara Românească și Moldova*, in *Călători*, III, p. 639.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 638.

⁶⁰ Șt. Andreescu, *O scrisoare a lui Francesco Pastis di Candia*, in "Studii și materiale de istorie medie", t. XXI, 2003, pp. 379-380.

⁶¹ *Călători*, III, pp. 635-637.

⁶² G. Pisculo, *Despre fortificațiile lui Sinan, 1595 august*, in *Călători*, III, p. 632.

⁶³ C. Alzati, *Terra Romena tra Oriente e Occidente. Chiese ed etnie nel tardo '500*, Milano, 1982, p. 263.

⁶⁴ Fr. Sivori, *Plecare*, pp. 19-20.

The answer can be found in Sivori's account of the embassy to Transylvania, whose secret purpose was not only to arrange the marriage between the voivode and Prince Sigismund Báthory's sister, but also to bring the Jesuits to Wallachia: "And when I was in Transylvania, I contacted, such I had been instructed by His Highness, the Jesuits who were to send two brothers to Wallachia, so that little by little they could set foot in the country, and carry out for the glory of our Lord the mission they had carried out in other countries ... and they had informed me about their decision to send them as soon as possible, as we were waiting for several other brethren to come from Rome."⁶⁵ Sivori was to go to Rome "accompanied by six young people, the sons of the most prominent boyars of the country ... in order to discuss other secret mission with His Holiness Pope Gregory XIII"⁶⁶. The boyar sons were to be educated there by the Jesuits, "so that they should learn both the Italian language and customs, and be won over to the Catholic faith, for he believed that it would be an excellent means to fulfill the ardent wish of His Highness to bring his country back to the true faith ..."⁶⁷. The burning at stake of the Lutherans, related by Sivori to Possevino, could have persuaded the Jesuits to come to Wallachia, by suggesting that they could resort to this odious practice in the area south of the Carpathians, a thing impossible to be done in Transylvania. One may assume that, in fact, the Lutheran minister had been chased away and the Saxon community of Târgoviște converted, both events taking place during the pontificate of Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585).

This is attested by a document of 15 December 1585, by which Mihail, a high rank boyar (*jupan*), bought "the houses of the so-called *barați* (franciscans) by the river", who are explicitly mentioned: Pătru Bățșar, Andreiaș Lăcătariul, Ișvan Sasul, and Gheorghe Botezat⁶⁸. The fact that they are called "*barați*", one of them even bearing the name of "Baptized", speaks of their conversion to Catholicism.

This information points out to the fact that the reign of Petru Cercel was dominated not only by the Humanist influence⁶⁹, but also by the Counter-Reformation.

One should note that in the entire Carpathian-Danubian space, at that time, the Counter-Reformation was at its utmost: in Transylvania the Jesuits had a great influence on Prince Sigismund Bathory (1581-1599), who had been raised and educated by Jesuits, and in Moldavia, Petru Șchiopul (1578-1579, 1582-1591) was an active promoter of the anti-Protestant movement of the Counter-Reformation, which seems to have begun before 1583⁷⁰. The policy of the Moldavian prince culminated in the bringing over into Moldavia of the Transylvanian Jesuits.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁸ *DIR*, B, XVI, V, 230, 219, *apud* P. Chihaia, *Trecutul bisericii Botușari din Curtea de Argeș*, in *Țara Românească între Bizanț și Occident*, Iași, 1995, pp. 54-55, 59.

⁶⁹ C. Luca, *Petru Cercel un domn umanist în Țara Românească*, Bucharest, 2000.

⁷⁰ M. Crăciun, *Protestantism și ortodoxie în Moldova secolului al XVI-lea*, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, pp. 177-178.

As a result, the policy in support of the Counter-Reformation initiated by Petru Cercel in Wallachia was not an isolate occurrence in this central and southeast-European space, but rather fell within a general evolution. His successors to the throne continued to support the Catholic Church in their country.

Pavel Chihaiia attributed the conversion to Orthodoxy of the Saxon community of Argeş to the same reign of Petru Cercel⁷¹, a fact rather improbable. Had the community been Lutheran in that period, such a policy of conversion would have been applied not to the benefit of Orthodoxy, but rather of Catholicism⁷². It remains unknown when and how the conversion to Orthodoxy occurred, or whether there had ever been a Lutheran stage in the life of the Saxons of Argeş⁷³.

The new prince, the Catholic Mihnea Turcitul (1585-1591), who returned to the throne, endowed in 1586 the Franciscan monastery of Târgovişte with an inheritable plot of land (ocină), a part of the village of Şotânga, with families of serfs⁷⁴. He was continuing thus the pro-catholic policy inaugurated by Petru Cercel.

The anti-Ottoman war launched by Michael the Brave (1593-1601) laid an impact on the Catholic community of Târgovişte. In August–October 1595 the Turks seized the town and destroyed the St. Francis's Monastery⁷⁵; the brethren fled to Transylvania, from where they returned with the Christian armies. They settled down at the parochial church St. Mary, as the monastery was in ruin. This explains why Filippo Pigafetta mentions in November 1595 "the new St. Francis's Church, where several monks live"⁷⁶, which was "new" not because the Saxons had been recently converted⁷⁷, but rather because the "old" St. Francis's church was in ruin. Michael the Brave, allied to the Habsburg Empire, supported in his turn the Franciscans of Târgovişte: "quia sub ipso Conventus Tergovestiensis post tertiam ruinam refluoruit"⁷⁸.

⁷¹ P. Chihaiia, *Trecutul*, pp. 45-69.

⁷² The reports of missionaries Ieronim Arseno 1581 and Pastis de Candia 1590-91 make no mention whatsoever of the community, which indicates that it had become Orthodox before 1581, the Counter-Reformation being no longer able to extend its proselyte influence over it.

⁷³ P. Bakšić (c. 1601-1674), *Descrierea Țării Românești. Așezare. Produse 1640*, in *Călători*, vol. V, Bucharest, 1973, pp. 212-213; A. Bogoslavić (? – after 1649) *Relație despre Țara Românească 1623*, in *Călători*, vol. V, p. 9.

⁷⁴ N. Iorga, *Studii și doc. I-II*, p. 416, P. Bakšić, *Descrierea*, p. 214; idem, *Viziția în Țara Românească 1648*, in *Călători*, V, pp. 257-258; *Dicționar istoric al județului Dâmbovița*, ed. N. Stoicescu, M. Oproiu, Târgoviște, 1983, p. 206.

⁷⁵ G. Botero (1533 or 1540-1617), *Descrierea Transilvaniei (1596)*, in *Călători*, IV, p. 576; the author includes in his geographical study information on Wallachia from the account of Ieronim Arseno (1581) on the state of Catholicism in Wallachia.

⁷⁶ F. Pigafetta (1533-1604), *Către Belisarie Vinta cancelarul Marelui Duce de Toscana*, in *Călători*, III, p. 550.

⁷⁷ P. Chihaiia *Monumente gotice în Târgoviște*, in *Artă medievală, I. Monumente din cetățile de scaun ale Țării Românești*, Bucharest, 1998, p. 292.

⁷⁸ B.P. Hasdeu, *Cronica mănăstirii catolice din Târgoviște 1761*, in "Arhiva istorică a României", t. I, 1865, 2, p. 48.

The letter of the Provincial of Austria to his superior, written in Vienna on 25 February 1612, gives notice not only of the strategic political and military importance of Wallachia to the Habsburgs, but also of the policy of Radu Șerban (1602-1611) towards the Catholic Church in his country. The author of the letter believes that “if Wallachia were to be kept into devotion towards the House of Austria, together with Transylvania, the Hungarians ... would be much more obedient than they are now, when they do whatever they please.”⁷⁹ Therefore, “not only the House of Austria, but all the Christian princes should assist this good prince [=Radu Șerban], since, although schismatic, he is very inclined towards the Catholics, and especially towards our people, and gives them full freedom in religious matters, and endows them with Catholic churches where service is held in accordance with the Latin Rite ... ; we have especially a monastery at Târgoviște, the capital town of Wallachia, and we have a father who was the guardian in the aforementioned monastery.”⁸⁰ It appears that, beside the wandering guardian, there were several other monks, quite willing to return to Târgoviște. Based on this letter, one may assume that not only Radu Șerban, the Habsburgs’ ally, but also the former guardian and the Catholic monks left Wallachia when, in September 1611, the Ottoman armies had marched into the country and set Radu Mihnea on the throne (1601-1602, 1611-1616, 1620-1623)⁸¹.

Radu Mihnea also supported the Catholics. In 1614 he asked in a letter to the Bishop of Sofia Petrus Solinatus that the latter should send three or four Observant Franciscans to the monastery of Târgoviște, for the existing ones could not cope with the pastoral tasks, seeing that the believers were settled in various parts of the country. The prince assured the bishop “that he must not worry about any expenses incurred, since beside the two monks that are now living here, the monastery of Târgoviște can keep four more, for it has long benefited from sufficient almonds, and even if there were to be any problems, we are ready to provide for them ourselves.”⁸²

On 15 May 1623, Pope Grigore XV (1621-1623) recommended Franciscan Andrea Bogoslavić to Prince Radu Mihnea, showing that together with six other brethren “he was to work in the service of the Catholic faith and take over the pastoral mission to the Catholic believers.”⁸³ The arrival of the Conventuals in Târgoviște opened a long dispute with the Observants living in the Bulgarian ecclesiastic province (created in 1624) over the jurisdiction of the monastery, to be only settled in 1656⁸⁴.

⁷⁹ I. Moga, *La contesa fra Gabriele Báthory e Radu Șerban vista dalla corte di Vienna*, in *Diplomatarium Italicum*, III, 1934, doc. L, p. 115.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁸¹ In my opinion, the monks of Târgoviște who fled to Vienna where they are mentioned in 1612 may have been the Conventual Franciscans who had come to Wallachia in 1583-1585 at the request of Petru Cercel, and whose guardian Fr. Pastis of Candia had converted the Saxons living in the town; subsequently, in 1595, when Sinan-Pasha marched into the country, the brethren fled to Transylvania, and returned with the Christian armies.

⁸² *Acta Bulgariae Eccl.*, doc. no XVI, pp. 15-16.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, doc. no XIX, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁴ B. Morariu, *Notizie storiche*, p. 101.

Bogoslavić's activity had a negative influence on the Saxon communities living in Târgoviște and in Râmnic. He took the title of Bishop of Râmnic, but when he tried to impose a tax on the community, the Saxons embraced Orthodoxy; the Saxons living in Târgoviște reacted alike⁸⁵.

The Apostolic Visitation of the Bishop of Sofia Elia Marinić to Wallachia (1625) witnessed the following situation: "In Wallachia there is only one monastery of brethren, where at present there is a Conventual missionary having under his pastoral care the Catholics, who are eight families in all, as the rest have turned Orthodox as a result of the bad example given by some foreign brethren who, like the Schismatics, tried to extort money out of those people. Not to mention that two Catholics Turkified themselves."⁸⁶ Therefore, there were about 40 Catholics in Târgoviște at that time, the Wallachian Principality belonging to the ecclesiastic province of Bulgaria, which counted, such as estimated one year later (1626), over 10,000 believers⁸⁷.

In 1640, there were only foreign Catholics in Târgoviște: "approximately one hundred souls ... who receive the sacrament, and they all belong to the court of the prince, some are soldiers, other merchants ; they are of various origins, Polish, Hungarian, Slav, or Serbian, and others, any very few of them have a family. When the prince is in town, the Catholics are in greater number, and when he goes to Bucharest, very few are left here, but there are always some Catholics here."⁸⁸ Bogoslavić seems to have also attempted to convert the community of the Lutheran Saxons of Câmpulung, to no avail though⁸⁹. He mentions in 1626 the existence of 60 Lutheran families⁹⁰.

The detrimental action of Bogoslavić in Wallachia caused the German communities of Târgoviște and Râmnic to be broken forever from the Roman Church. Lutherans ordained in Transylvania were still in pastoral mission at Câmpulung. In 1632, missionary Angelo Petricca of Soninno wished to undertake the conversion of the Saxons in the town, but the ruling prince (Leon Tomșa or Radu Iliăș), the predecessor of Matei Basarab (1632-1654), did not allow it, "for fear that, if the Lutheran preachers were to be chased away, those town dwellers might flee to Transylvania."⁹¹

⁸⁵ *Socotelile Brașovului și scrisori românesce către Sfânt în secolul al XVII-lea*, by N. Iorga, Bucharest, 1899, p. 65, "1628. 27 Martii Khombt Andreas Bogozlovith; ein Bischoff in der Terwisch wohnend, vom Wayda, bey unserm Fürsten Ablegatus"; P. Bakšić, *Descrierea*, p. 212; *Acta Bulgariae Eccl.*, doc. no LXX, p. 139.

⁸⁶ *Acta Bulgariae Eccl.*, doc. no XXIII, p. 25.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, doc. no XXV, pp. 27-28.

⁸⁸ P. Bakšić, *Descrierea*, p. 215.

⁸⁹ D. Găzdaru, *Un aventurier dalmatin prin Țările Române în secolul XVII*, in "Buletinul Bibliotecii Române. Studii și documente românești", Serie nouă, t. I (V), 1967/1968, Freiburg im Br., doc. no IV, pp. 64-65.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 64.

⁹¹ B. Morariu, *Series chronologica praefectorum apostolicorum missionis fr. min. conv. in Moldavia et Valachia durante saec. XVII et XVIII*, Vatican, 1940, pp. 26-27, *apud* Șt. Andreescu, *O relație de "călători străini" în Țara Românească și Moldova din anii 1632-1633*, in *Izvoare străine pentru istoria românilor*, in *România în istoria universală*, III, Iași, 1988, pp. 53-54.

The two Lutheran preachers are mentioned in 1633-1634 in the reports of brother Gregorio of Bari: one was Sarosi György the Hungarian, and the other Ananias Benedict the Saxon of Râmnic⁹². According to the reports of the Franciscan to the Congregation De Propaganda Fide, the two ministers, who had been ordained by the Lutheran bishop of Biertan (Transylvania), were married and had families. They were forced by the missionary into swearing an oath of fidelity towards the Pope and the Catholic Church: "We, the last of all the ministers of the Holy Roman Church, publicly declare in this way, now for then, that if we have sinned before, as we were without shepherd on the arrival of father Grigore of Bari of the St. Francis's Order, the latter has rescued us, by the grace of God, from the lion's claws, and showed us the right path; of which fully convinced, we come now and ask the permission of Your Eminence, to give the aforementioned father Grigore the power to forgive us and do all that is needed for the confession of our souls and of all these Christians who are here ; and that the aforesaid father may write all that is needed and all that we are suffering in these parts inhabited by the unbelievers. We, all too unworthy, humbly bow our heads before Your Eminence."⁹³ The signatories of the documents were "Ego Georgius Sarossi Ungarus, Sacerdos Sancte Ecclesia Catholice in Valachia Campolongine, confirmo ut supra. Ego Annanias Benedicti Remnicensis Saxonus, Sacerdos Sancte Ecclesie Katolice in Valahia Kampolongine, confirmo ut supra"⁹⁴. The oath of submission to the Roman Church was taken in public, with the participation of the town dwellers, "Romanians, Saxons, and of other origin", and with the agreement of Prince Matei Basarab⁹⁵. Gregorio of Bari notes the presence of 60 families of Saxons, who were poor because of the burden of taxes weighing upon them⁹⁶. One year later, in 1634, he took part in a colloquy held in Constantinople, together with the prefect of the Catholic missionaries of Wallachia and Moldavia. On the occasion, he gave an account of the situation in Câmpulung: preacher Giorgius Sarossi had died, and Benedict Ananias "born then of a Slav father, also a minister, has a wife, but no sons, and numerous relatives of the same origin; he was ordained in Transylvania by a heretic; he is very ignorant, drinks throughout the day, does not hold mass, but merely reads out of the Gospels in Slavonic, and then out of some books his father left him; he does not listen to confession, but gives the sacraments to those people with the holly hostia, performs marriages in the Romanian way, buries the dead; he does not preach because of his ignorance ..."⁹⁷. Ananias had also declared that he would let the missionaries come and preach for him at the parish⁹⁸.

⁹² APF, SOCG, vol. 76, cc. 234r-234v, c. 235, cc. 241r-242v, B. Morariu *La Missione dei Frati Minori cit.*, p. 37, *apud* Eugen Zuică, *Appunti sulla missione del Minore Conventale Gregorio da Bari nei Principati Romeni della prima metà del XVII secolo*, in *L'Italia e l'Europa Centro-Orientale attraverso i secoli*, ed. C. Luca, G. Masi, A. Piccardi, Brăila-Venezia, 2004, pp. 178-181.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 178-179.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 179.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 180.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 180.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 181.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 181.

The information of Gregorio of Bari gives an insight into the state of the Lutheran Church and the Lutheran community at Câmpulung in 1632-1634, on the backdrop of the Counter-Reformation offensive backed up by the Prince. One should also note that the arrival of the father in Wallachia was made with support from the Venetian Bailo Pietro Foscarini and from the French ambassador Philippe Harlay, Count of Césy, both accredited at Constantinople, who had written to Matei Basarab⁹⁹.

The death of the Franciscan of Bari in 1634¹⁰⁰ gave a respite of five years to Lutheranism in Câmpulung. The following year, he was replaced at Târgoviște by the Conventual Franciscan Giovenale Falco da Cuneo, who succeeded in getting into the good graces of the Prince¹⁰¹.

The Transylvanian sources paint a complete picture of Lutheranism in Câmpulung. The Saxon chronicler Georg Kraus notes: "I met myself, during my travels, a Saxon minister called Father (Popa) Ananias. He wore a Saxon frock, a large hat, grey trousers in the Romanian fashion, and peasant sandals (*opinci*). He was ordained for Câmpulung at Biertan by Bishop Schiffbaumer. He was our host for 12 years, and died in 1642. This Ananias also served as a schoolmaster (Schulmeister), bell ringer, and was the only one to sing in church, for lack of a choir. He held the service in Latin, and sang alone Dominus Vobiscum, Oremus, and Benedicamus. I am writing all this in good faith."¹⁰²

Quite interesting would be a comparison between Ananias' portrait painted by Gregorio of Bari and by the Saxon chronicler G. Kraus. Ananias appears to have been ordained a minister for Câmpulung sometime in 1601-1611, during the office of Bishop Mathias Schiffbaumer¹⁰³. The other minister who served at Câmpulung, Sarossi Giorgius, was ordained for the town on the Râul Târgului on 14 January 1618¹⁰⁴ by Bishop Zacharias Weyrauch (1614-1621)¹⁰⁵.

On 7 March 1639 (old style), minister Ananias Benedict was still in Câmpulung.¹⁰⁶ However, in the summer of the same year, by the order of Matei Basarab, he was driven away, and the Conventual Franciscan monks Giovenale Falco da Cuneo, Francesco da Castro, and Girolamo di Aquapendente began the conversion of the Saxon population. The operation enjoyed the support of the French ambassador to Constantinople, Philippe Harlay count of Césy, who wrote a new letter to Matei Basarab¹⁰⁷.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 176-178.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 181-182.

¹⁰¹ Șt. Andreescu, *Giovenale Falco da Cuneo și "enigma" crucii de la Galda*, in *Istoria românilor: cronicari, misionari, ctitori (sec. XV-XVII)*, Bucharest, 1997, p. 173; E. Zuică, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182.

¹⁰² G. Kraus, *Cronica Transilvaniei 1608-1665*, Bucharest, 1965, p. 12.

¹⁰³ H. Jekeli, *Die Bischöfe der Evangelischen Kirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen, I. Die Bischöfe der Jahre 1553-1867*, Köln, Wien, 1978, pp. 38-44.

¹⁰⁴ *Die Pfarrer und Lehrer*, p. 320.

¹⁰⁵ H. Jekeli, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁶ Where he signs a document "Mărturie Ananya ku to tenoria. Anno Di 1639"; N. Iorga, *Documente scoase din arhiva*, p. 277.

¹⁰⁷ Șt. Andreescu, *Giovenale Falco da Cuneo*, pp. 181-182.

The traces left by Lutheranism in the Saxon Church can be measured in the account of the Catholic missionary P. B. Bakšić, who made four visits to Câmpulung in 1640-1653. The simplification of the cult, a specific feature of the new denomination, was made here by removing icons, burying relics, and whitewashing the mural painting. The church is also mentioned to have had a wooden cross atop¹⁰⁸. However, the church was built in stone, and a wooden cross would have been totally unfit. The cross may have been erected after the conversion of the Saxons back to Catholicism, as in the time of the Reform, Saxon churches in Transylvania bore no cross¹⁰⁹. In the church, in front of the main altar, the believers used to bury their Lutheran ministers¹¹⁰. According to Bakšić's account of 1640, the Reform had tensioned the relations between the Saxons and the Romanians in Câmpulung: "when I was ready to leave, the elders came to see me, and asked me to give them the blessing, saying, 'we wished to ask you to go out in town in pontifical dress, at least once, so that the Romanians could see you, for they greatly despise us, and say our faith is a heresy, and our faith the worst of them all.'"¹¹¹

Petru Bakšić notes that in 1640 there were only 500 Saxons in Câmpulung, but they had forgotten their native tongue, and spoke only Romanian. Church service was performed in Romanian by parish priest Giovenale Falco (1639-1646). Eight years later, approximately half of the members of the community relocated to Transylvania, as a result of the tax imposed by Matei Basarab¹¹². Giovenale Falco was succeeded in the office of minister by the conventual Francesco Maria Spera of Narni (1646-1652). He noted that in 1650 he had converted "3 households, which had been disregarded in the past, and 3 other households of Lutheran Saxons of Braşov"¹¹³. Therefore, by the mid-seventeenth century, the last traces of Lutheranism had been erased in Wallachia, at approximately one century after the introduction of this religious trend among the German communities living in the region south of the Carpathians.

IV. Conclusions

Seven Lutheran ministers on pastoral mission to Wallachia in 1574-1639 are known, all ordained at Biertan by the bishops of the Lutheran Church A.C. of Transylvania (1572-1621).

¹⁰⁸ P. Bakšić, *Descrierea*, p. 210; idem, *Vizitația*, pp. 262, 264.

¹⁰⁹ During his campaign in Transylvania, Michael the Brave stopped at Braşov, where he ordered the Saxons to have a cross erected on their church: "And he [Voivode Michael] told the local Saxons, whether they were Christians, for their churches had no cross, so he ordered them to have crosses erected on their churches, and so they did, as one may witness nowadays"; N. Iorga, *Însemnări de cronică ale clericilor din Şcheii Braşovului*, in "Buletinul Comisiei istorice a României", t. XII, 1932, p. 67.

¹¹⁰ P. Bakšić, *Descrierea*, p. 210.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 212.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 209-212; idem, *Vizitația în Ţara Românească 1648*, p. 264: "by the minister's records, there are 229 Catholics in all, of Saxon origin ...".

¹¹³ A. Lăpedatu, *Sigiliile Romanului și Câmpulungului muntean*, in *Un mănunchi de cercetări istorice*, Bucharest, 1915, p. 49.

In 1581, the Counter-Reformation was introduced in Wallachia. That year, the Lutheran Saxon communities living in the Principality (Târgoviște, Râmnic, and Câmpulung) counted together a number of 710 individuals. In 1648, only 229 were left, all living in Câmpulung. The decline of the Saxon communities is owed mainly to the impact of the Counter-Reformation and partially to the fiscal policy of the Princes. The triumph of the Counter-Reformation severed the links between these communities and the Saxons living in Transylvania.

One should note the importance of Câmpulung, which in 1640 numbered 500 Saxons, thus being the settlement with the most numerous Saxon population in the entire extra-Carpathian space¹¹⁴.

In 1643, a census of the ecclesiastic province of Bulgaria, which also included Thracia, Moldavia and Wallachia, showed the following situation: the total number of Catholics was of over 13,438 individuals, of whom Moldavia counted over 4,000, and Wallachia 610 (Câmpulung 500, Târgoviște 100, and Bucharest 10)¹¹⁵. It is known that in this time in Târgoviște and in Bucharest, only the foreigners (Poles, Hungarians, Italians, Ragusans, and Bulgarians), and not the autochthonous Saxons, were members of the two Catholic communities. However, in 1648, the Saxons, with 229 individuals at Câmpulung, made most of the Catholic population living in Wallachia, which amounted to the double of the Catholic foreigners living in Bucharest and in Târgoviște (110).

The information preserved to this day shows a considerably higher number of Catholics in Moldavia as compared with Wallachia¹¹⁶. It is only natural that most of the Franciscans who came to Wallachia (Ieronim Arsengo, Fr. Pastis of Candia, Andrea Bogoslavić, etc.), preached also in Moldavia.

One should note that whenever they converted a Lutheran community in Wallachia, the missionaries of the Counter-Reformation did so with support from the Prince; the driving away of the Lutheran preachers was made with the agreement and support of the Prince. Also, an important role in the success of the operation was played by the ambassadors of France to Constantinople, a country that became the protector of Catholicism in the Ottoman Empire, as a result of the anti-Habsburg alliance. The French ambassadors were very influential at the Porte, and the Wallachian and Moldavian princes were well aware of this situation. The Catholic missionaries would come to the country armed with letters of recommendation from the French ambassadors, and the princes would offer their support, in the hope of being themselves supported at the Porte. For instance, without the assistance of France, Petru Cercel would have been unable to secure the throne of Wallachia.

¹¹⁴ In 1641, Cotnari ranked first in Moldavia with 494 Saxons and Hungarians; Gh. Vinulescu, *Pietro Diodato e la sua relazione sulla Moldavia (1641)*, in "Diplomatarij Italicum", IV, 1939, pp. 114-117.

¹¹⁵ *Acta Bulgariae Eccl.*, doc. nr. LXVIII, pp. 136-138.

¹¹⁶ Angelo Petricca of Sonnino believes that in 1634 there were "1000 families of Catholic Transylvanians" in Moldavia, that is approximately 5,000 people; *apud* Șt. Andreescu, *O relație de călători străini*, p. 58.

Princes supported the Counter-Reformation out of various reasons: Petru Cercel, Mihnea Turcitul and Radu Mihnea because they were Catholics, and Michael the Brave and Radu Șerban, as part of their anti-Ottoman policy and their alliance with the Habsburgs. Matei Basarab even considered the possibility of an anti-Ottoman crusade, but was also in great need of the assistance of the French ambassador to the Porte; these were the reasons that prompted him to assist the Franciscans¹¹⁷.

Defeated in its clash with the Counter-Reformation in the extra-Carpathian space – Wallachia and Moldavia – in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, the Lutheran Church A.C. of Transylvania would hold out under the further attacks of the same enemy, supported in Transylvania in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries by the authorities of the Habsburg State.

The denominational evolution of the German communities living in Wallachia in 1542-1650 was marked by the clash between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation which took place on the fringes of the Western world, in an Orthodox state vassal to the Ottoman Porte.

¹¹⁷ E. Zuică, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-182, Șt. Andreescu, *Giovenale Falco da Cuneo*, pp. 182-183.