Flight behind the “Ottoman Curtain” Religious Refugees in Transylvania

Already in the Middle Ages Transylvania was able to enjoy strong intellectual and economic bonds to Central Europe. While the conduct of such relationships between the south of Germany, Silesia and Małopolska were indeed affected in the 16th century, they were never really interrupted.¹

A very unique situation emerged out of the political scene, however - after the Hungarian army’s devastating loss to the Ottomans at Mohács in 1526, which also took out the previously dominant families, the rules of play in the region were fundamentally changed. The medieval kingdom of Hungary collapsed and was divided into three entities.²

Excursus: Background History and Conditions

a) Disposition as “Refugee Region”

Lying in the Carpathian mountains between the Habsburgs and the expanding Ottoman empire under Suleiman, the three united political estates (the “nationes” of the Hungarian magnates, the quasi-noble Székelys and the privileged Saxons, each having their own jurisdictions) experienced peculiar developments in the Hungarian kingdom. The rights of belonging to each “natio” were important integration factors for the immigrants. The legal protections, economic prosperity and religious (Christian) conformity (which, however, did already have experience with parallel societies of Latin-European Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy) created a basis for heterogeneous provincial societies. The “Saxones,” who had been privileged since their 12th century settlement in the fundus regius, had

¹ Konrad G. Gündisch, Siebenbürgen, pp. 58–59; Harald Roth, Hermannstadt, pp. 22–23; Roth, Kronstadt, pp. 54–56; Marco Bogade, Memoria, pp. 2–3.
² Katalin Péter, Studies; Márta Fata, kingdom, pp. 68–91; Gerald Volkmer, Völkerrechtliche Stellung, pp. 28–42; Harald Roth, Kleine Geschichte, pp. 47–49; István Keul, Early, pp. 39–41 (map on p. 52); Zoltán Csepregi, Konfessionsbildung; Márta Fata, Ungarn, pp. 16–17.
their political representation in the Nationsuniversität, grounded in 1486. More distant, smaller settlements, in neighbouring counties (including German villages with serfs subject to the Hungarian lord), were represented by the Magyar nobility but had partial rights under the Saxons’ religious rights (the right to elect their own German pastor, for example). These German-speaking communities spanned various regions of ecclesial law: the free Saxons (with their exempt St. Ladislaus provostship) belonged to the missionary bishopric of Milkow and later to the Archdiocese of Esztergom. (Map 6) The other (serf) parishes however belonged to the (Latin) bishopric of Alba Iulia. Generally, the tithe of the fundus regius was paid to the pastors. A general dean, who conveyed the fees to the bishop in Alba Iulia, managed the tax obligations of the ecclesial chapters. The clergy was generally academically educated by the 15th century, and concubinage was still quite common.

The overlapping area of Habsburg and Ottoman influence was characterized by diverse legal areas (both in ecclesiastical and political terms) with a differentiated framework of conditions, i.e. structured around a variety of centers and without a stringently enforced option of internal or regional “homogeneity,” which became a principality from 1541 onwards. Heterogeneity also prevailed for the churches
(think about the partial episcopal rights for the pastor/dean in Sibiu), particularly because of the humanist understanding of religious practice as a posture and in its basic constant, which continued to remain pervasive as the Reformation began to develop confessional texts. An intermediate Protestant homogenization was limited and could never really occur due to the diffusion of theological viewpoints. Imprecise Confessional boundaries remained the case until the turn of the 17th century, largely based on humanistic attitudes, and to some extent consciously driven by mediating theology. In contrast to provinces ruled directly by Constantinople (where the Ottomans preferred a centralized Christian headquarter and representative), the Ottomans maintained a clear interest in a fragmented Christendom through the 16th and 17th centuries (thus weakening the anti-Ottoman opposition) in Transylvania (dâr-al-‘ahd), which lay on the periphery of their zone of influence and paid tribute, but was not directly governed by them. The princes’ loyalty towards the Ottomans and their political-economic pragmatism was more important than confessional orientation.

These were very unique conditions for Europe and predestined Transylvania to be a laboratory for religious discourse as well as a refugee region for individuals and groups of various religious backgrounds and orientations.

b) Developments in the 16th Century

After the double election in November and December of 1526, the Voivod John I Szápolyai and the Habsburg Ferdinand fought for the Hungarian throne.³ The siege of Buda (Img. 116) in 1541 allowed Transylvania to establish itself as a tribute-paying, but domestically quite sovereign, principality, a basic condition for its public life since 1529. A monarchy of the estates had come into existence, in which the three privileged “nationes” ruled and administered together with the princely chancellery. The historical Transylvania with its so-called partes adnexae (the Principality of Transylvania since 1570/71, the official title had been Regnum Transsilvaniae cum Partibus regnis Hungariae eidem adnexarum) made up the eastern “successor state” of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. The central region was governed directly by the Ottomans as a Paschalik. The west and north were dominated by the Habsburgs and, apart from short moments of importance, largely were no longer power players within Transylvania.⁴

Wracked by repeated civil-war style conflicts starting in 1526, Transylvania developed a special religious culture, becoming a pioneer region of religious free-

³ Roth, Kleine Geschichte, p. 48.
⁴ Volkmer, Völkerrechtliche Stellung, p. 113.
In 1595, and after several stages of development, the Diet established the recognition of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and anti-Trinitarian/Unitarian faiths with the Romanian-Orthodox being more or less tolerated. Eastern Europe, and Transylvania even more so, had thus decoupled themselves from the developments occurring in Central Europe. Thus there are two things we can establish here. 1) We can agree with Thomas Maisen, when he says, “On the other hand, a confessional ‘neighbourhood’ was possible in the east, which should however not be misunderstood as tolerance in the modern sense. It was based upon the fact that the nobles did not want to curtail the political-religious domains and rights of use of their peers, as they claimed the same rights in their territories.” We have to remember that in Transylvania, with its various legal jurisdictions, a freedom of proclamation had been established in 1564 and 1568 for the territory of the entire principality and the Partes adnexae. This corresponds to trends,

5 Ulrich A. Wien, Religionsfreiheit, pp. 7–16.
7 Thomas Maisen, Folgen der Glaubensspaltung, p. 196; see also the de-mythologizing position from: Mihály Balázs, Tolerant Country.
which Maissen describes. Most likely, however, the following scenario was playing out: The demagogues, Franz Davidis and Giorgio Biandrata, were seeking to use their position in the shadow of the king John II Sigismund Szápolyai (1540–1571) to establish an Evangelical, homogeneous (Unitarian) Landeskirche. However his early death foiled their plans. A 1572 ban from Stephen Báthory against any religious innovations (meant to limit the Unitarians), which was tied with a censorship from the Roman Catholic (but Ottoman-loyal) regent (Voivod/Prince) Stephen Báthory (1571–1585)\(^8\) achieved its goal in only some cases but certainly stopped further development of Protestant diversification. 2) The regulations of the Diet of 1595 actually applied to more than just freedom of proclamation. The consolidation of the Protestant confessional groups, achieved with intermittent help from princes, included the forced recognition of the Roman Catholic confession and thereby proclaimed a formal pluriconfessionalism and coexistence of the developed “denominations”, subject as it was to trends of princely preference and hindrance. This fact stood in stark contrast to the 16th century’s principle of religiously homogeneous territories.\(^9\)

Behind the “Ottoman Curtain” (which existed until about 1688), a sort of religious haven for refugees took shape, which could turn into a collecting sink for religious refugees or deviant individuals/groups from other regions of Europe. The Diet however did repeatedly drive the Jesuits from the land and forbid the recapture of the vacant diocese of Alba Iulia and Oradea.\(^10\)

This text is going to explore six aspects of the mobility and migrations, which occurred in the context of Reformation-inspired theology.

1. **The Political Refugee Johannes Honterus Becomes the Reformer of Braşov**

Johannes Honterus (1498/99–1549), of whom very little is known aside from a preliminary note from the humanist Aventinus, probably left his hometown of Braşov for political reasons. Aventin describes him as *fleeing*.\(^11\) Later known as a pedagogue, teacher, printer and ultimately reformer of Braşov, Honterus was no longer tolerated in his hometown, probably for political reasons. Nuremburg (as of 22 October 1529), Kraków (Img. 117) and Basel served as stations of his flight/
exile between 1529 and 1532. While in Basel in 1532 he produced a map of Transylvania, upon which a dedicatory verse indicates that he had sent a signal of his political about-face. In any case he could return to his home in the summer of 1533, having had ample opportunity to get to know reformational thought and its practical realization. The first concrete steps of his humanist educational reform are only recorded in 1539, but it is very likely that he was influenced by examples Nuremburg and Oecolampadius (Basel) during his exile. The former political exile imported the ideas of the Reformation.

2. The Exiled Paul Wiener Becomes Superintendent

The canon of Ljubljana (Germ. Laibach) Paul Wiener, who was highly prized by King Ferdinand as a financial expert, lived in a humanist-inclined atmosphere, which was open for Evangelical theology. With his colleagues, including Primož Trubar, he revealed himself as a proponent of the Evangelical position. A wid-

12 Thomas Şindilariu, Beginn, pp. 3–9; Ludwig Binder, Johannes Honterus; Karl Reinerth, Gründung, pp. 50–59. Oskar Wittstock, Johannes Honterus; Karl Kurt Klein, Honter; Oskar Netoliczka, Beiträge.
13 Erich Roth, Reformation, pp. 49–55.
14 Reinerth, Gründung, p. 67–68; Şindilariu, Beginn, pp. 15–18; Ulrich A. Wien, Johannes Honterus, p. 27.
15 Erich Roth, Reformation, pp. 78–86; Ute Monika Schwob, Beziehungen, pp. 82–140; Heinz Heltmann, Robert Offner, Tiere, pp. 73–74.
16 Jan Andrea Bernhard, Konsolidierung, pp. 81–82.
ower, he even married a second time. Due to the rather slow princely development of an accusation (1547) he was persecuted and thrown into jail. His close personal connection to King Ferdinand probably spared him a martyr’s death. He was transferred to Vienna where he was investigated and attained an opportunity to renounce his position in a vaguely formulated protocol. He answered this demand with an extensive apology “Inn causa fidei,” taking 255 pages to use the chance offered by the Augsburg Interim to present a case for Martin Luther’s theology. King Ferdinand “graced” him by transferring him to Transylvania. This was not without consequences. The accounts of the mayor authorize an alm of 2 Guilders on 12 June 1549 for a poor minister released from jail (Lat. cuidam presbytero pauperi in captivitate detento), who was exiled to Sibiu in 1548. Initially reserved, the Sibiu Council quickly supported him, not only installing him as a well-paid preacher on 22 July 1549, but also calling him to be the head pastor of Sibiu on 11 May 1552 and on 6 February 1553 granting him the honour of being the – first (!) – Evangelical Superintendent. His Wittenberg oriented and quite refined theological position marked Sibiu and its theologians (most particularly his successor Matthias Hebler) well after his death from the plague on 16 August 1554. Living in exile, he stabilized the Reformation in Transylvania and led it toward ecclesial independence.

3. Rest Stop for Italian Itinerant Preachers

At about the same time as Wiener, Francesco Stancaro made a short stop in Sibiu. The idea of founding a University in Transylvania did not come to fruition in 1549, and Stancaro continued on his way in 1551, possibly because his Swiss-Reformed theology and Christologically subordinating positions did not find much reso-
nance there. Only in 1553 as he returned from Königsberg did he find support with the influential nobleman Péter Petrovics (ca. 1551–1557), whom he served as a physician. Petrovics’ protection allowed him to begin influencing the controversial-theological debates in Transylvania. Still, the theologians, synods and the National Assembly rejected the Swiss-Reformed theologian (so-called Sacramentarians). But his interventions and disputation prepared a soon-to-be fertile ground for Swiss-Reformed theology, so that the following itinerants could pick up seamlessly where he left off.

4. Area of Refuge and Retreat for the European anti-Trinitarians

“The numbers of religious migrants grew after the 1550s–1560s as religious identity became more closely tied to political disputes.” With the end of the Council of Trent, theological efforts to define confessional boundaries more precisely became more intense. The mostly Italian critics of traditional dogma, interpreting Luther’s principle of sola scriptura in a radical, early-Enlightenment, anti-traditional manner, sought a biblicistically grounded “historical-ethical model of religion,” with which they could connect their ideas. More than a few departed from the doctrine of the Trinity, established as a norm in the great ecumenical councils of late antiquity. This caused them to be rejected by Roman Catholic and nearly all Protestant theologians and to be persecuted as heretics. Giorgio Biandrata, had a position of trust as royal physician of Queen Isabella Jagiellonica (Img. 118), who was living in Exile in Poland from 1551–1556. Fleeing Poland in 1563, he availed himself of aid from the anti-Trinitarians in Alba Iulia, hoping to be taken in by

23 Philipp Melanchthon’s evaluation de controversis Stancari. Scripta anno MDLIII was printed by Valentin Wagner in Kronstadt in 1554. The theologians, who were still oriented toward the Wittenberg Reformation, also published texts against this: Kaspar Helth (Confessio de mediatore generis humani Jesu Christo vero Deo et Homine, ... Vitebergae, anno 1555 ... Ex officina typographica Viti Creetzer) and Franz Davidis (Diaulosis scripti Stancari ... Claudioipi 1555). The Synod positioned itself against him in 1557, and Davidis ultimately with Stancaro before witnesses in Klausenberg on 31 December 1557. Stancaro left before it could be completed. After the Hungarian synod condemned his theology on 1 May 1558, Davidis published a final controversial-theological text against Stancaro: Apologia adversus maledicentiam et calumnias Francisci Stancari, iussu et voluntate omnium docentium coelestem doctrinam incorrupte in ecclesis Transilvanicis conscripta. ... Claudioipi 1558. See as well Adolf Schullerus, Augustana, pp. 169–177.
24 Wien, Disputes, pp. 360–361.
25 Nicolas Terpstra, Refugees, p. 115.
26 Kestutis Daugirdas, Anfänge.
the queen’s son, the Hungarian king and Transylvanian prince John II Sigismund Szápolyai. The young, sickly and politically rather weak ruler let the humanist physician exercise great influence on governmental and, particularly, religious policy.

Biandrata’s ultimate goal was probably to use the politically-legitimized Swiss-Reformed theology to develop Unitarianism into a “state-religion,” a kind of homogeneous reunion of the fragmented Abrahamic religions with roots in Protestantism and a proto-Enlightenment tendency. Although this was never achieved, as we have seen above, it did lead to the declaration of freedom of proclamation in 1564 and 1568. As the Diet decided on a formulation, which would have legally secure the theological diversity (including the Swiss-Reformed direction), the Court Preacher and Saxon Pastor Franz Hertel/Davidis (Hung. Dávid Ferenc) in Cluj availed himself to the help of the anti-Trinitarians with the protection of Biandrata in 1565. He made his allegiance public knowledge in 1566. With Biandrata’s support he engaged in multiple interventions and disputations. In 1568 the Diet repeated its resolution securing freedom of religion and proclamation (that preachers preach, proclaim the gospel in every place according to his understanding and if the congregation wants to accept it, fine, and if not, then they [the superintendents] cannot use force against [the congregations] in a violent...

27 Mihály Balázs, Franz Davidis, p. 70; see as well Mihály Balázs, Gizella Keserű, Unitarismus, pp. 11–36; also the other essays on the first 300 pages of this volume: Wien, Brandt, Balogh, Radikale Reformation; Kestutis Daugirdas, Anfänge, pp. 165–176.
28 Balázs, Franz Davidis, pp. 70–71; Reinerth, Gründung, pp. 278–289; Keul, Early, pp. 106–111.
29 EKO 24, pp. 76; Edit Szegedi, Uneindeutigkeit, pp. 100–103; Ulrich A. Wien, Abschied, pp. 82.
30 Schullerus, Augustana, p. 272; Fata, Ungarn, p. 105; Szegedi, Lutherrezeption, p. 66; Mihály Balázs, Ferenc Dávid, p. 28.
manner [...] for faith is God’s gift). Ultimately King John II Sigismund Szapolyai weighed in at the disputation in Oradea in November of 1569, clearly preferring the anti-Trinitarian movement. The prince’s religious preferences reinforced the application of the freedom of proclamation in January of 1571. As we have already mentioned, this was not a form of religious tolerance in the modern sense; there was an expectation on the part of the princes, that the attitude of the sympathizers of the Reformation would stand in contrast to the Habsburgs. It was in agreement with Davidis’ tract “De falsa et vera unius Dei ... cognitio.” This attitude was based on a biblicist discourse and did not consider the historical dogmatic decisions from antiquity. This was to guarantee the formal unity of the church organization.

![Image 119a: St. Michael’s Church in Cluj where the unitarian service took place for more than a century.](image-url)

![Image 119b: Unitarian college/Old Dominican Conventory in Cluj.](image-url)

31 EKO 24, p. 84. The Transylvanian anti-Trinitarian reception of Castellio also belongs here. See also Balázs, Franz Davidis; see also Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer, Glaubenskonformismus; see also Daniela Kohler, Unkrautgleichnis, p. 266.
32 Wien, Disputes; Wien, Abschied, pp. 100–110.
33 EKO 24, p. 86.
34 Mihály Balázs, Antitrinitarism, p. 182.
In this era of innumerable religious refugees,35 many of the refugees inclined to anti-Trinitarianism worked with Biandrata and Franz Davidis in Transylvania. Rumors coursed through some regions of Central Europe that Transylvania had even become an anti-Trinitarian oriented principality.36 More refugees assembled there such as Jacobus Palaeologus (originally a Dominican from Chios),37 Johannes Sommer (from Pirna/Saxony),38 Matthias Vehe-Glirius (an anti-Trinitarian from Kaiserslautern/Heidelberg),39 Christian Francken40 and Fausto Socini41. Johannes Sylvanus was one of the anti-Trinitarians in Heidelberg, who was executed and burned.42 One of his compatriots Adam Neuser43 fell under suspicion but, warned of his impending arrest, was able to flee. After a year and a half of wandering he tried to justify his position with materials published in Transylvania. But Transylvania did not allow foreigners to print materials, so he went to Ottoman-controlled Hungary, where he planned to use a mobile printing-press to justify his position. He was captured by the Ottomans in Timișoara and was arrested on the suspicion of espionage. He let himself be circumcised and converted to Islam, was brought to Constantinople and received the name Mustafa Beg.44 “It is fair to regard him as a religious refugee.”45 He continued correspondence with the anti-Trinitarians in Transylvania46 and vainly supported Kaspar Bekes, who inclined toward anti-Trin-

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35 Terpstra, Refugees, p. 5: “Even a mass phenomenon, religious exile had an individual face”.
36 Martin Mulsow, Haupttäter, p. 4.
37 Martin Rothkegel, Palaeologus.
38 Lore Poelchau, De clade Moldavica, pp. 10–16.
39 Baláz, Ferenc Dávid, pp. 38–41; Christopher J. Burchill, The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians, pp. 125–168; Robert Dán (ed.), Vehe-Glirius. Vehe also participated in the discussion with Franz Davidis concerning Fausto Sozzini, whose help had been solicited from Biandrata. (“Et sane memini, cum ipso Francisco praesente Gliirium eius symmysstam et ex parte praeceptorem inter colloquendum urgerem, ut mihi diceret, an crederet Jesum Nasarenum iam revera esse Christum, illum nihil respondere voluisse, et sermonem nostrum praefracte alio detorsisse,” see Dán (ed.), Vehe-Glirius, p. 130).
40 József Simon, Religionsphilosophie, p. 117).
42 Burchill, The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians, pp. 16–84; Paul Philipp, Sylvanus.
44 The occasional interpreter and tragic double agent tried to present himself as a undercover-agent to western visitors. He was trying to achieve a mixture of Islam and anti-Trinitarianism by researching Christian texts from late-antiquity, which were accessible in Constantinople. (“Ex quibus [sic!] historii videtur aparire Christianismum et Alcuranum non dissentire”, Martin Mulsow, Antitrinitarians, p. 190, footnote 25) and worked on the translation (of parts) of the Qur’an in Latin. The alcohol abuse, which had already been testified in Heidelberg, (Christopher J. Burchill, The Heidelberg Antitrinitarians, pp. 10, 85, 89) grew worse in exile. See also: Mulsow, Haupttäter, p. 6; Tobias P. Graf, Renegades, pp. 82, 101, 149–155, 166, 197–201.
45 Graf, Renegades, p. 82. Graf does not believe the sources are sufficient to seriously determine the number of refugees in Istanbul. However graphic 4.1 shows a German-Hungarian network with about 20 people. See: Graf, Renegades, p. 150.
46 Graf, Renegades, p. 154, footnote 145.
itarianism (but nevertheless was loyal to the Habsburgs) in his struggle against the Catholic Ottoman puppet Stephen Báthory. As the anti-Trinitarian Jacobus Palaeologus visited Constantinople (Turk, Istanbul) Mustafa Beg sought to convert him to Islam with a tract from Murad ibn Abdullah. His plea was rejected.

Matthias Vehe, who was influenced by Johannes Sylvanus in Kaiserslautern, found his private spiritual theology no longer in accordance with the public church around him in 1569/70: he nurtured private opinions and was probably a clandestine Unitarian. He then moved away and became a teacher at the Unitarian college (Img. 119b) in Cluj, taking the name Glirius. Rejecting Palaeologus’ ideas, he wrote “Mattanjah” and is considered to be the inspiration of the Sabbath-piety movement in Transylvania. He wrote a “Defensio” of Franz Davidis, who died imprisoned in the Deva Castle in 1579. He had engaged with Judaism in Cologne in 1574, taking courses with a Rabbi. The Jesuit Possevino described him as Glirio tutto dato al Giudaismo, whose goal it was to translate the Hebrew Bible in an anti-Trinitarian manner. His radical theology helped him strengthen the increasingly isolated position of the nonadorantist Franz Davidis. After his dismissal from the school (lector scholae Claudiacae) in Cluj he moved to Poland, where he lived about 10 years. In autumn of 1589 he returned to Germany and was immediately detected. After a year of imprisonment he died in a dungeon (Germ. Verließ) in Greetsiel (East Friesland) in 1590 and was buried in a grave without honour because he had been circumcised and accommodated Jewish practices and held their opinions.

5. Admission and Employment of Displaced Reformed Professors at the Academy in Alba Iulia

As the Thirty-Years War raged through Central Europe and victory shifted quickly from one party to the other, the victors set their own confessional requirements of their subjects and personnel. The University in Heidelberg was closed, initially

47 Graf, Renegades, p. 154.
48 Mulsow, Fluchträume, pp. 49–51.
53 Dán (ed.), Vehe-Glirius, p. 137.
54 Dán (ed.), Vehe-Glirius, p. 131.
55 Dán (ed.), Vehe-Glirius, p. 221.
only during 1626–1629, but then for 22 years in 1632. The Reformed princes of Transylvania Gabriel Bethelen (Img. 120a) and Georg I Rákóczi (Img. 120b) had a small part in the Thirty-Years War. Gabriel Bethelen was particularly ambitious, seizing the opportunity offered by the availability of displaced Reformed professors and founding a Reformed Academy in Alba Iulia. His goal was to have a faculty of international renown. Friedrich Pauli, Jakob Kopisch and Martin Opitz (1597–1639) taught there. Opitz’s time was especially important for his personal and individual development. The first to follow them were the Reformed theologians Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588–1638), Johann Heinrich Bisterfeld (1605–1655) and Ludwig Piscator (ca. 1575–1656?). They arrived in Alba Iulia in autumn of 1629, leaving the devastated Herborn in the Westerwald. Alsted was appointed leader of the development of the institution and began building up the school with his colleagues in early 1630. The academy was funded with 20,000 Gulden/Florints per year; nobles and commoners were segregated during instruction. The academy even drew students from Holland, Germany, Bohemia and Poland. Other schools in Orăștie, Dej, Târgu Mureș and Cluj also received material assistance. Jan Amos Komenský/Comenius (1592–1670) even taught in Sárospatak begin-

56 Eike Wolgast, Universität Heidelberg, pp. 36–37.
57 Achim Aurnhammer, Tristia.
58 Gerhard Menk, Restitutionsedikt pp. 722–734.
59 Menk, Restitutionsedikt, p. 733.
ning in 1650, and in Alba Iulia from 1654 onwards.\textsuperscript{60} Despite criticism from some individuals, the international educational community among the Hungarian-Reformed Transylvanians was beloved because the efforts to raise the educational standards were seen as a fundamental step in the process of religious reform which could lead to the Reformed church being stronger against its confessional rivals.\textsuperscript{61}

Thus we can see that an academy of high standards was established in Alba Iulia, Transylvania, helped in no small part by internationally renowned intellectuals, some of whom were refugees.

6. Refuge for the Hutterites after 1622

As of 1536 the Anabaptist communities were almost completely exterminated in Habsburg territories. In 1537, new Anabaptist congregations were founded in Moravia, where there were already 31 “Haushaben” (hamlets with up to 500 inhabitants).\textsuperscript{62} These were particularly resilient in South Moravia, where groups of refugees from South Germany, Tirol and Switzerland survived until 1622. They lived in a community of shared goods, had shared kitchens and cafeterias, and their children were raised collectively. The crafts practiced by most of the Hutterites led to their acceptance as “orderly,” de facto tax-paying citizens by the Moravian Diet.\textsuperscript{64} However, the imperial Governor and Cardinal Franz von Dietrichstein (1570–1636), who governed Moravia beginning in January of 1622, ordered the group of Anabaptists (who numbered about 20,000 at the turn of the 17th Century) to convert or be expelled. About a third of the Hutterites chose to emigrate to Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia) and Transylvania.\textsuperscript{65} 1629 is the last possible date for the departure of the Hutterites, who did not want to assimilate. The Transylvanian Diet

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60} Graeme Murdock, Calvinism, pp. 82–83 und 86–93; MEnK, Restitutionsedikt, p. 733.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Murdock, Calvinism, p. 109.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Astrid von Schlachta, Tirol, p. 29.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Thomas Winkelbauer, Hutterer, p. 211; see also Astrid von Schlachta, Austrian Lands.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Winkelbauer, Hutterer, pp. 212–213.
\item \textsuperscript{65} von Schlachta, Tirol, pp. 40–41; von Schlachta, Austrian Lands, p. 85; Heinold Fast, Hutterische Brüder, p. 754; James M. Stayer, Täufer, pp. 605–606. und 613.
\end{itemize}
promised them in 1622 that they could freely practice their religion and all trades, as long as they did not attempt to conduct missionary work. After their expulsion from Moravia, about 1200 of them moved to Vințu de Jos in Transylvania – about half of them died. Further similarly inclined groups followed them in 1629, 1635, 1644 and 1649. Their early specialization as potters and glazers propelled them to reknown in the region, establishing the brand “Habaner”-Pottery (Images 122a–b). In Großschützen (in Slovakia) and Vințu de Jos, between 1667–95 the communal property was abandoned. Now only a few dozen in number, the Hutterites from Vințu de Jos were joined by clandestine Carinthian “transmigrants,” who had temporarily settled in Apoldu de Sus and now joined the community, ultimately saving the Hutterites, who had nearly ceased to exist. These converts followed the earlier ways of life, but the settlement in Vințu de Jos was dismantled by the Habsburgs, who distributed them throughout Transylvania. The Hutterites managed to coordinate efforts to avoid political persecution, traversing the Carpathians to Walachia. In 1770/71 they reached Russia and today’s Ukraine. In 1874 they fled in the face of a military draft to the United States and Canada, establishing about 300 brotherhoods.

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67 von Schlachta, Tirol, pp. 36–38. See the Image of Habaner crockery from the Transylvanian Museum (Gundelsheim/Neckar)
Effects of the Fall of the “Ottoman Curtain”:
Consignment to the Habsburg Empire

Clandestine Protestants of Upper Austria, Carinthia and Styria suffered three waves of persecution between 1734–37, 1752–57 and 1773–75. They were labeled “transmigrants” and were deported by Emperor Karl VI and Empress Maria Theresia to a Transylvania no longer behind the “Ottoman Curtain.” The formal recognition of Transylvania’s religious laws, including the ecclesial independence in the Habsburgs’ Diploma Leopoldinum (1690/1), had led to the underground Protestants being resettled in this multi-confessional and multi-religious region. Heretics, disturbers of the peace and agitators were all terms employed to criminalize the Evangelicals and curtail their rights of property and private life. They often had to leave their country without first receiving the proceeds from the sales of their land, often having to leave children under the age of 16 behind. These so-called “transmigrants” were deported in three stages and for religious reasons. The imperial government had learned from the mistakes of the Bishop of Salzburg Leopold Anton von Firmian (1679–1744), who had expelled 20,000 Evangelicals from his domain in 1731/32. This inspired Emperor Karl VI to resettle the stubborn Evangelical population within his empire. On the one hand, he and the other rulers wanted to rule over purely Catholic areas, so as to maintain their grip on power. On the other hand, he wanted to keep the displaced “transmigrants” as tax-payers and at the same time repopulate and economically jump-start war-devastated Transylvania. There were in any case “Acatholics” there, whom he already had to tolerate, and to whom he could send the “heretics” from Austria.

In the first phase between 1734 and 1737, more than 700 Evangelicals were removed from the Salzkammergut and Carinthia regions, shipped by way of the Danube and Theiß rivers to end up in the Transylvanian villages of Turnişor and Cristian (Germ. Großau).

The second phase of exiling was carried out under Maria Theresia between 1752 and 1757, in which Evangelical families were resettled from Upper Austria, Carinthia and the Styria. (Map 7) Initially they had to leave their children, but after 1755 the families were no longer ripped asunder to such a great extent. A total of 39 shipments occurred between 1752 and 1757, carrying a total of 3000, of whom the vast majority landed in the Transylvanian village of Apoldu de Sus. These “exiles” suffered great losses – although many could have been considered

71 Paul W. Roth, Diploma Leopoldinum, pp. 1–11.
72 This section gives a quick overview of the latest research. It is based on the essays from Stephan Steiner, Transmigration; Rudolf K. Höfer, Geheimprotestantismus und Andreas Hochmeir, Geheimprotestantismus.
prosperous, most came to Transylvania with essentially nothing. But only upon their arrival did they discover how bad things would be. The leader of the “transmigrant-inspectorat”, Court-Advisor Martin Vankhel von Seeberg, squandered most of the proceeds from the sales of the previous property from the deportees. He built a barracks-style apartment building, the “Retranchment” (bastion) in Sibiu, in which the forcefully resettled farmers were all to live in one room. Although most were not craftsmen, they were also to have their workshops there. Within a year, almost 40% were dead, some already during the journey (which was supervised by the military until the very last day and occurred by means of ships on the Drau and Danube and a march from Temeswar until Sibiu) or directly after arriving. The fact that deportation practically meant a death-sentence for about a third of the deportees was just seen as part of a day’s work by those responsible. More elderly people died than the young, not only because of the physical exertion, but also because of the great spiritual burdens.

Von Seeberg’s successor, Court-Advisor Johann von Dietrich, properly distributed parcels of land in Apoldu de Sus in 1756 and built 90 houses (Img. 123–124) for the settlement of the surviving, prosperous transmigrants. Of the 3000 deported, only 2000 had survived.

MAP 7: Origins of the “Transmigrants” to Apoldu de Sus from Austria (Carinthia, Styria and Upper Austria).

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74 Buchinger, Hutterer, p. 57. Just shy of 40 houses were bought or built in Broos.
Between 1773 and 1775 there were four more deliveries of human cargo from Styria (mostly from the parish Stadl) consisting of 188 people, who landed in Transylvania. Those in the Upper-Austrian Hausruck region, who were openly Evangelical, were doomed for deportation.75

Henceforth the groups lived in three compact settlements, the so-called Landler-Villages Neppendorf, Großau and Großpold (Turnișor, Cristian and Apoldu de Sus) and did not integrate to any great extent. They maintained their identities until their emigration at the end of the 20th Century. They speak their Austrian vernacular until this very day.

75 Hochmeir, Geheimprotestantismus, pp. 163–164.
Conclusion

Various aspects of Reformation Theology and its relation to the haven for refugees in Transylvania have been explored here. Under the dominance of the Ottomans, we see 1) Johannes Honterus imported Reformation impulses to Transylvania, which he had adopted during his exile. After some delay, a humanist reformation was realized. 2) Paul Wiener, forced to migrate to Transylvania, where he quickly became Superintendent, stabilized the Wittenberg-oriented Reformation. 3) Many itinerants passed through with controversial-theological agendas – such as Francesco Stancaro – and prepared the region for the coming waves of immigration. 4) The anti-Trinitarian Giorgio Biandrata and his allies sought to establish a Unitarian “state-religion” particularly among the gentry but also within the whole of Transylvania. It did not succeed. The ambiguously-worded compromises from the Diet (1564 and 1568) helped to make Transylvania a pioneer region of religious freedom, in which various Evangelical congregations were politically recognized. For a while, Transylvania became a refuge for deviant religious views, and in particular anti-Trinitarian refugees from all over Europe. The system agreed upon by the Diet in 1595 sanctioned the four received religions (Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Unitarianism) and more or less tolerated Eastern Orthodoxy. This is considered to be constitutional law in the principality of Transylvania. Even the Habsburgs had to formally recognize this in the Diploma Leopoldinum as they reconquered the region. 5) During the Thirty-Years War, several renowned professors from Central Europe fled to the Reformed academy in Alba Iulia in 1622, where they taught. 6) At the same time, several Anabaptist congregations of the Hutterites were brought into Transylvania (particularly in Vințu de Jos), whose survival were helped by the addition of the exiled “transmigrants” in the 18th century.

Once the Ottoman preponderance in Transylvania has faded, the Habsburgs Karl VI and Maria Theresia used the religious-legal situation in this pioneer region of religious freedom to secure their own absolute rule. To force the religious, Roman Catholic homogeneity in their core territory, large regions of underground/Krypto-Protestants in Upper Austria, Styria and Carinthia are collected and forced to resettle within the Habsburg empire, without any consideration of their losses. Despite their initially high mortality rate, these groups of transmigrants were able to build up and conserve individual cultures in three areas, ultimately becoming special groups which strengthened the ethnic minority of Protestant Diaspora “Saxons” of Transylvania.
Results and Perspectives

The political and religious peculiarities of Transylvania in the late Middle Ages predestined the region to be a laboratory for religious heterogeneity. The specifically regional, heterogeneous jurisdictions promoted the development of religious cultures, which, in view of humanistic attitudes, were somewhat diffuse and certainly did not cling to rigid confessional contours.

Paired with political-economic pragmatism and limited by the preponderance of the Ottomans (1540–1688/90), a pioneer region of religious freedom emerged, in which a “refuge” was able to be stabilized. This should not be idealized. If we compare these circumstances with other Eastern and Central European territories, it was really the only region, in which a multi-confessional community, grounded in legal standards, remained stable.

Many areas remain to be researched: the exchange of mutual influences between Istanbul and Transylvania, the changing motives and strategies of the heterogeneous classes/nationes as well as the question, if the non-absolutist model of government in Transylvania helped this to take place.