

**IGLESIA, CULTURA  
Y SOCIEDAD  
EN LOS SIGLOS XVI-XVII**

**EDS. REBECA LÁZARO NISO,  
CARLOS MATA INDURÁIN, MIGUEL RIERA FONT  
Y OANA ANDREIA SÂMBRIAN**



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(EDS.)

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COLECCIÓN «BATIHOJA»

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JOHANNES HONTERUS (1498-1549), HUMANIST, PRINTER,  
PROFESSOR, THEOLOGIAN AND RELIGIOUS REFORMER  
OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS

*Gudrun-Liane Ittu*  
*Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Sibiu*

Johannes Honterus (1498-1549) was one of the most prodigious personalities of the Transylvanian Saxons, a scholar of European scope. With his religious writings, «Honterus put Transylvania on the European map of Religious Reformation. Due to him the situation of the principality became well known by Martin Luther and his followers»<sup>1</sup>. During the centuries there very much has been written about Honterus and his writings. Consequently, in my paper I'll try to sum up the most important data, referring mainly to the latest monographs<sup>2</sup>.

I. TRANSYLVANIA AND THE TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS – A HISTORICAL  
OVERVIEW FROM THE 12<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

For those who aren't familiar with the history of Transylvania, a province in the center of nowadays Romania, it will be useful to point out some important data in connection with the topic of my paper.

The ancient inhabitants of Transylvania were the Dacians, whose state was conquered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century by the Roman Empire. During the third century, increasing pressure from the Free Dacians and the

<sup>1</sup> Armgart, 2013, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Wittstock, 1970; Binder, 1996.

Visigoths forced the Romans to abandon Dacia. Early Middle Ages are characterized by the great migrations, a period when several migratory people settled for longer or shorter periods of time in the former Daco-Roman territories. During the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, Transylvania was reached by the Hungarians, who conquered it step by step and incorporated it in the Kingdom of Hungary. During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Székelys, a Hungarian speaking population, were brought to eastern and southeastern Transylvania as border guards. When the Hungarian king Géza II (1130–1162, king from 1141) invited in the 12<sup>th</sup> century German colonists to settle in the south and northeast Transylvania, the Székelys were moved to the eastern border of the kingdom. The Germans, called in early documents *hospites* or *flandrenses*, were colonized for border defense, but also to develop the region's economy. The territory colonized by Germans covered an area of about 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Most colonists, later known as *Saxons*, came from Luxembourg and the region around the Moselle River. Later phases of German colonization consisted of settlers coming primarily from the Rhineland, Southern Low Countries, from Thuringia, Bavaria, and even from France. The German name for Transylvania, *Siebenbürgen*, derives from the seven principal fortified towns the Saxons had founded, namely Kronstadt/Braşov, Hermannstadt/Sibiu, Mediasch/Mediaş, Schässburg/Sighişoara, Mühlbach/Sebeş, Bistritz/Bistriţa, Klausenburg/Cluj. The most important cities were Kronstadt and Hermannstadt. While the first mentioned was the economic and trade center, the second, the Saxons' capital city, was the seat of the most important institutions. The German *hospites* enjoyed large administrative and religious autonomy, having in return strictly specified obligations towards the kings of Hungary. Géza II offered the advantageous conditions of the «Hungarian right of hospitality» to all those he invited to his empire. His successor Andrew II put it in writing, issuing the document of privileges, the so called «Golden Bull» (Goldener Freibrief) in 1224<sup>3</sup>. It contained the most

<sup>3</sup> *Document of Privileges of the Transylvanian Saxons* (1224).

In the name of the holy Trinity and indivisible Unity. Andrew by the grace of God King of Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Galicia and Lodomeria for always.

As it behooves the royal dignity, to suppress the supercilious refractoriness, it is proper for the royal kindness, to alleviate the humble affliction mercifully. To protect the service of the loyal and show and provide to all what is deserved with grace.

Here are our loyal guest settlers, the Germans beyond the forests (Transylvania), having approached in unity our majesty, presented to us humbly their complaints and

refined and extensive privileges any settlers from the West had received

pleas that they risk to lose entirely their freedom provided by our grandfather, the all merciful King Geysa, unless our royal majesty continues as in the past to keep a merciful eye on them. Therefore, out of poverty and despair they could not provide service to the royal majesty.

In listening mercifully as usual to their just complaints we wish to announce for the present and the future to follow the trail of our predecessors, and emotionally touched, grant the freedoms they previously had. And as to:

1. All peoples from Waras to Boralt including the Szekler region of Sebus shall create a political union (*unus populus*) responsible to one judge. Simultaneously all counties (*comitatus*) excluding Hermannstadt shall suspend (their activity).

2. Who, however, becomes count of Hermannstadt may appoint (as judges/administrators) only permanent residents in the mentioned counties, and the political units (*populi*) shall always elect such (judges/administrators) which are assumed especially capable in their authority. Nobody of the county of Hermannstadt shall make an attempt to buy an administrator.

3. They shall contribute every year 500 Silvermarks to the benefit of our court. We want to make certain not to exclude any landlord or anybody else who resides in the area of these contributions unless he has a special privilege. We also allow to pay the moneys owing in no other weight but Silvermarks, as defined by our Father Bela in pious memory, namely 4 ½ Vierdung (= 1 Mark und 2 Lot) Hermannstadt weight, like the Cologne penny (*Kölner Pfennig*) to avoid any discrepancy when weighing. They shall not refuse to pay three Lot for every day to the royal messenger appointed to collect the moneys, to cover his expenses while staying in their region.

4. They shall provide 500 armed personnel (*milites*) to serve the king during a campaign in the empire. They shall provide 100 armed personnel for a campaign outside the empire, provided the king is participating personally. Whenever he sends a nobleman (*iobagionem*) across the borders of the empire only 50 armed personnel are to be provided. The king may not demand more armed men nor must they send them.

5. They shall elect their priests (*sacerdotes*) freely and introduce the elected (to the bishop). They shall pay every Tenth to them and shall be conventionally accountable to them in all church laws.

6. We wish to rule lawfully, nobody may prosecute except us or the Count of Hermannstadt, whom we will appoint for a location and a time. Should one stand before any judge, the court proceedings must comply with the common law (of the settlers). Also, nobody may order them to our court unless the case cannot be decided by their own judge.

7. Beyond the aforementioned, we provide the regions Vlachen- and Bissenenwald and the respective waters for common use with the mentioned Vlachs and Petchenegs without having to provide services for the mentioned freedom.

8. In addition we have permitted their own seal which is to be publicly accepted by us and our great (*magnates*).

9. Should any of them be before the courts for money matters, only residents of the region may be called as witnesses. We release them of any other (foreign) jurisdiction.

in Eastern Europe. Due to these privileges the Saxons started to make soil arable, improved agricultural methods, exploited precious metals in the West and East Carpathians, exploited Transylvania's rich salt deposits and advanced handicrafts and trade. The Mongol invasion from 1241 brought great damages to the settlements and decline to the budding economy, so that the Hungarian kings had to change their defense and economic policies. In the aftermath of this disastrous event cities were increasingly fortified. The Hungarian kings Carl I Robert of Anjou (1308-1342), his son Ludwig I the Great (1342-1382) and Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437) consistently supported the development of the cities as well as the transition from a resource to a commerce economy. From the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, the fortified cities and fortified churches<sup>4</sup> in villages formed a unique defense system, protecting their inhabitants against invaders, especially against the Osman Turks.

10. In compliance with the old freedom, we allow them all for a period of eight days free collection of Salt for personal use on or about every holiday of St. Georg (April 23rd), St. Stephen (September 2nd) and St. Martin (November 11th). In addition, no customs duty collector may obstruct their journey during departure nor when returning.

11. The forest, and all its contents and use of the waters with the course of the rivers, which only the king may distribute, we provide to them all for their free use, to the poor and the rich.

12. We rule with royal authority, none of our nobles (iobagiones) may dare to request from the royal majesty a town or land. Should one request (a town or land), they shall object, based on the freedom provided by us.

13. We specify that the mentioned loyal provide only three meals to us when we must travel to them during a campaign. But when a Wojwode in matters of the king is sent to or through their region, they shall grant hospitality twice, when entering and departing.

14. We add to the freedoms of the aforementioned, their trades people may travel freely everywhere in our kingdom, where they may enforce their right by referring to the royal highness.

15. We order their markets to be free of taxes.

16. To ensure the above mentioned freedoms remain in force and unshakeable, we apply to this sheet our two seals for enforcement.

Provided in the 1224<sup>th</sup>

year after the incarnation, in the 21<sup>st</sup>

year of our Kingdom. <[http://sibiweb.de/geschi/history\\_of\\_transylvania\\_and\\_the\\_transylvanian\\_saxons.php#TofC16](http://sibiweb.de/geschi/history_of_transylvania_and_the_transylvanian_saxons.php#TofC16)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>4</sup> Fabini, 2013, pp. 12-14.

The «Golden Bull» of Andrew II was the document offering the Saxons the basis on which they developed and grew into an entirety, a unity called *Sächsische Nationsuniversität* (Universitas Saxonum). The *Nationsuniversität* became the superior political, administrative and judicial representation of the free Germans in Transylvania, an institution similar to the alliance of cities in Western Europe.

Three privileged groups, Hungarian nobility, Székelys and the Saxons—all of them belonging to the Catholic Church— played a decisive role in the political, economic and religious life of Transylvania. They had the right to veto in the assembly and block laws which did not meet their own interests. Romanians, who gave the majority of population, had no political rights and their religion, the orthodox one, was but tolerated.

Early recent history started in the medieval Hungarian kingdom with a catastrophe. In 1526 Sultan Suleiman I defeated Hungary near Mohács, and even King Ludwig II has fallen in the battle. West and Northeast Hungary was claimed by the Hapsburgs, the central part was occupied by the Ottomans and transformed in a Turkish province (1541), while Transylvania became an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. As the Austrian dynasty claimed Transylvania, the principality was drawn into the secular struggle between the Hapsburgs and the Ottoman Empire. The Hungarian aristocracy opposed the Hapsburgs pretensions, while the Saxons, loyal to a German dynasty, supported them. Doing so, they also hoped for support from the West against the Turks.

## 2. KRONSTADT/BRAȘOV, A SAXON TOWN AT THE END OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY; THE RECEPTION OF RENAISSANCE HUMANISM

The humanist Georg Reicherstorffer, born in Hermannstadt, worked between 1522 and 1525 for the magistrate of his native town and afterwards for Queen Maria of Hungary. When her husband, King Ludwig II, died in the battle of Mohács (1526), Reicherstorffer joined the party of Ferdinand von Hapsburg, who claimed the Hungarian crown, and went to Vienna. Reicherstorffer became secretary and secret advisor of the Austrian aspirant. In this quality Reicherstorffer was sent in 1528 in a diplomatic mission to his native country. His mission was to convince the Transylvanians, especially the Saxons, to

support Ferdinand in the civil war which had been broken out after John Zapolya was elected king. Reicherstorffer assiduously tried to accomplish his mission, but finally Zapolya triumphed<sup>5</sup>.

The diplomat spent two months in Kronstadt, enough time to know the town and its inhabitants, who were prepared to receive the generous ideology of renaissance humanism. In his report *Acta legationis Georgii Reicherstorffer Transylvani, Secretarii ac oratoris Regii*, first published in 1806 in Munich by Christoph Baron of Aretin in *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Literatur vorzüglich aus den Schätzen der königlichen Hof- und Staatsbibliothek*, (volumes 6 and 7), Reicherstorffer draws a very nice picture of the town with its massive towers, bastions and fortification walls. The writer is impressed by natural elements like the high mountains surrounding the city, by rivulets of crystal-clear water flowing through the streets, by the richness of goods traded in the markets by craftsman and by Székely, Walachian, Greek and Armenian traders and also by the cultural life of the city<sup>6</sup>. Concerning the cultural life of Kronstadt, Reicherstorffer mentioned a recently established library, which he considered the most important one in Hungary since King Matthias Corvinus' book collection in Buda was destroyed<sup>7</sup>. The vivid economic and cultural life of the town was possible due to its wise and well educated leaders, determined to work for its development and for prosperity and the good of its citizens<sup>8</sup>.

Education was a main concern of the Saxons and consequently they established schools shortly after their arrival in Transylvania. The existence of a school with four teachers is documented in Kronstadt before 1388<sup>9</sup>. Many young Saxons studied abroad, a proof that pupils from urban and rural schools were well prepared. At the University of Krakow, for instance, from 1416 to 1495 there were registered eighteen students from Kronstadt and two from nearby villages, namely one from Rosenau/Râșnov and one from Marienburg/Feldioara<sup>10</sup>. More attractive than the University of Krakow was Vienna for Transylvanian Saxons, which had a university established in 1365. Thanks to the

<sup>5</sup> <[https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB:Reicherstorffer,\\_Georg](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB:Reicherstorffer,_Georg)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>6</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 20.



relations with Italy, Vienna became the main center of Renaissance Humanism in Central Europe and its influence in South-Eastern Europe was quite important. Among the exponents of humanism who animated the movement in Vienna, there were Enea Silvio Piccolomini, the later Pope Pius II, Wilhelm von Savona, Konrad Celtes and others<sup>11</sup>. They enjoyed high esteem not only in university circles but also at Court. Celtes established the *Literaria Soldalitas Danubiana*, a society which aimed at improving the study of classical languages and disseminating humanist ideology<sup>12</sup>.

At the Philosophy department of the University of Vienna there were registered between 1411-1472 thirteen students from Kronstadt and three from the surroundings, while the Law department was attended between 1413 and 1499 by thirty two students from the same city<sup>13</sup>. In Vienna, the students did not prepare only for a scientific career, but came in touch with the leading ideology of the time. Distinguished scholars taught at the university or served at the Hapsburg Court. Many young Saxons, returning to their native country, brought with them the new ideas, thus becoming vectors of ideological change and implicitly of progress.

But we must not idealize the spiritual life of the Transylvanian cities which was poor compared to university centers from abroad. Valentin Krauss from Kronstadt, who attended both departments of the University of Vienna during the time period 1481-1492, enjoyed high consideration in the scientific community of the Hapsburg capital city. At least two of the leading humanists of the time, Hieronymus Balbus<sup>14</sup>, poet, diplomat, professor of Roman Law and bishop of Gurk, and Konrad Celtes<sup>15</sup>, a well reputed poet, belonged to Krauss' circle of friends. As recognition of his extensive knowledge, Krauss was appointed «procurator» of the Hungarian nation (1492), a very important dignity<sup>16</sup>. In 1499 he was back in Kronstadt, but the reason why he took this decision is unknown. Maybe he was invited by the local authorities as physician, but soon he was dissatisfied and disappointed. In two letters

<sup>11</sup> Wittstock, 1970, pp. 35-36.

<sup>12</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hieronymus\\_Balbus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hieronymus_Balbus)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>15</sup> <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conrad\\_Celtes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conrad_Celtes)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>16</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 21.

addressed to his friend and *magister* Konrad Celtes, the one dated 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1499 and the second dated 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1500, Krauss complained that he felt as if he was living in exile. He considered his fellow citizens, uneducated, more ignorant than the Saxons from other cities, especially those who did not travel or study in Germany or in another foreign country. At the same time his income was a source of dissatisfaction, the epistler claiming that he was on the verge to leave Transylvania if he will not be better paid. A positive aspect Krauss emphasized in his letters was the low cost of living due to the low prizes of groceries<sup>17</sup>. He was impressed by the recently built church, by its marvelous organ and by the wonderful music played by the young organist of the church, a disciple of the well-known J. Grünpeck, master of Emperor Maximilian's Court orchestra<sup>18</sup>.

What a great difference between Reicherstorffer and Krauss! While the first was enthusiastic with everything he saw, the second, returning home with great expectations portrayed almost everything in dark hues. We also can suppose that in almost a third of a century, lying between the descriptions of the two humanists, in Kronstadt much had changed for better.

As Johannes Honterus, the protagonist of my paper, is known primarily as a religious reformer, I find it important to present the monument which became the emblem of Kronstadt, the so-called Black Church (*Schwarze Kirche*), the first place of worship where the Catholic mass was in October 1542 replaced with the Lutheran divine service. Built by the Saxon community, the Black Church is the main Gothic style monument in Romania and in Southeast Europe, as well as the biggest one. Construction on it began during the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, replacing an older building in Romanesque style, which had been erected before the Mongol invasion from 1241. Construction was interrupted for several times. Around 1450 the most intensive work took place, as a large number of portals had been finalized. Completed soon after 1476, the church belongs to the high Gothic architecture. As most of the architects and masons originated from the German Empire, they transferred the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> German model to remote Transylvania. The result of their work was a three naved basilica, all the naves of the same height. Many parts of the building show similarities with the

<sup>17</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 23.

church in Mühlbach/Sebeş and St. Michael Church in Klausenburg/Cluj-Napoca. The design was itself an inspiration for other religious buildings in the region. The church is adorned with numerous valuable statues. The building got its name after the Great Fire from 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1689, which destroyed parts of the city and the church. Besides the damages on the monument, the organ, altar, pulpit, epitaphs, carpets and chairs were reduced to ashes. The baptistery dated 1472 and the treasure of the church, which was stored in the vestry, survived the disaster<sup>19</sup>. When Krauss wrote in 1500 his second letter to Konrad Celtes, work on the church was still in progress, as between 1500 and 1515 the vestry was enlarged. He also mentioned the existence of an organ, which for sure was the instrument, which in 1689 went up in flames.

### 3. JOHANNES HONTERUS – A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

#### 3.1. *Childhood (1498-1515)*

In the previous paragraph I tried to emphasize the most important characteristics of Kronstadt from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the time when the city became receptive for humanistic ideas. Born two years before the turn of the century, Johannes Honterus grew up in an atmosphere of cultural effervescence and economic prosperity. He was the only son (or even the only child) of a wealthy craftsman from Kronstadt, a tanner, who wished to give his son a good education, offering him as much as possible. His father's name was Jörg Austen and it is not yet clear why, being a student, Johannes opted for Honterus (also Honter, Hynter). The legend says, that he fell in a river and saved himself from drowning by clinging on a branch of elder (Lat. Sambucus), which in literary German is Holunder and in the Saxon dialect Honter.

Johannes was trained in Kronstadt in the local school and his biographers also suppose that the monks of the Franciscan Order, who run a monastery in Kronstadt, taught him Latin, Greek and Hebrew. It is also thought that Jörg Austen took Johannes with him when he traveled outside the city to deliver, buy or sell his products, so that the boy had the opportunity to know the geographic configuration of Transylvania and use the valuable knowledge later, when he wrote the

<sup>19</sup> Nussbächer, 1997, pp. 1-4.

«Cosmographia» (1530) or designed the «Map of Transylvania» (1532). Honterus must have been a smart and precocious child, because in 1515, April 27, aged only 17, he registered at the University of Vienna, an institution which was very attractive for many young Transylvanian Saxons, as I have emphasized in the previous paragraph.

### 3.2 Johannes Honterus, student at alma mater Vindobonae (1515-1525)

When Honterus put his feet on the Viennese soil, humanism was already in blossom. His generous ideology was embraced not only by academic scholars and by Court, but also by large circles of the well-educated bourgeoisie. At Vienna University the foundation stone of Honterus' encyclopedic knowledge was laid, knowledge later reflected in his original works. Among the professors who decisively improved the Transylvanian's knowledge of classic languages and poetry are, according to his biographers, Joachim Vadianus, from 1516 Dean of the University of Vienna<sup>20</sup>, Camer and Kaspar Ursinus Velius<sup>21</sup>. But they admit that much more professors of lesser importance contributed to his education<sup>22</sup>. Another domain the University of Vienna was brilliant, was geography and cartography. Georg Transtetter (Georgius Collimitius)<sup>23</sup>, since 1503 professor of mathematics and astronomy and since 1513 Dean of the faculty of medicine, had also outstanding geographic and cartographic preoccupations<sup>24</sup>. Even if Honterus was not Collimitius student, the scholar enjoyed high reputation and became an intellectual model, all the more Honterus' attraction for geography originated in his childhood, when he traveled together with his father. Vienna University also cultivated the interest in history, Konrad Celtes being one of the outstanding figures of the domain. Having in mind Publius Cornelius Tacitus' book *De Origine et situ Germanorum*, Celtes planned a continuation of the work in several volumes by the German scientific societies. Honterus was fascinated by the idea of elaborating a work like *Germania illustrata*, a project he still mentioned when he was a mature person<sup>25</sup>. Studying history made him understand the broader or larger

<sup>20</sup> <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jochim\\_Vadian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jochim_Vadian)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>21</sup> <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaspar\\_Ursinus\\_Velius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaspar_Ursinus_Velius)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>22</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg\\_Tannstetter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Tannstetter)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>24</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 46.

contexts of the events. In the same time, dealing with the history of Transylvanian Saxons strengthened the national proud of the young student. Honterus also attended courses of Roman law and acquired knowledge in the medical domain<sup>26</sup>.

During the decennium 1515-1525 he lived in Vienna, Honterus accumulated not only scientific knowledge, but also cultivated his artistic skills. The talented drawer painted maps and was trained as xylographer and printer<sup>27</sup>. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February he had his *magister artium* exam<sup>28</sup>. One may ask why such an intelligent person needed ten years to complete his studies. The explanation is the following: after the death of Emperor Maximilian, which occurred in 1519, there took place revolts of the Viennese population, followed by plague. The University was closed and most of the professors left the capital city. In 1521 the activity of the University was interrupted again, caused by the outbreak of an even more horrible plague epidemic<sup>29</sup>. There is no direct evidence about Honterus' place of residence when the epidemic raged, but only a hypothesis. Wondering about his perfect *Lutherdeutsch* (German language as the Reformer Luther spoke and wrote), the linguist Andreas Scheiner asserted that Honterus could not learn it neither in his native Transylvania, nor in Vienna, as the German dialect spoken in both places was different from Luther's. So he established the assumption that Honterus must have lived for a while in Nuremberg, a city where the upper classes had adopted *Lutherdeutsch*<sup>30</sup>. Nuremberg could have also been attractive for him, because during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the city became an important scientific center, especially in the field of mathematics and geography.

Shortly after his graduation, the increasing Ottoman danger determined Honterus to leave Vienna.

### 3.3. From Vienna to Transylvania, Regensburg, Krakow, Basel/Bale, Kaschau/Kosice and Back to Transylvania (1525-1533)

In older writings it is said that Honterus lived in Vienna when the battle of Mohács took place and returned to Transylvania after the

<sup>26</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> Wittstock, 1970, pp. 47-48.

<sup>28</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 48.

<sup>29</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> Wittstock, 1970, p. 49.

outbreak of the civil war, but there is no proof of authenticity. They claim that back in Kronstadt Honterus joined the *Jungen*, the group of youngsters who were fervent supporters of Ferdinand von Hapsburg's party. After the Hapsburg party was defeated by the followers of Zapolya on 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1529 near Marienburg/Feldioara, the city of Kronstadt joined the winner. As a consequence Honterus had to leave the city<sup>31</sup>. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October until the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 1529 he is attested in Regensburg, so that historians like Ludwig Binder doubt Hontrus' participation in the civil war<sup>32</sup>. In 1530 the Transylvanian scholar doubtlessly lived in Krakow, the city where his first works, a *Latin Grammar* and *Rudimentorum cosmographiae libri duo* were published. The first edition of *Rudimentorum* appeared in Matthias Scharfenberg's printing officina. It is Honterus' most famous work which knew during the 16<sup>th</sup> century about thirty editions, being published in almost all important European printing centers as Antwerp, The Hague, Paris, Cologne, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Rostock. The book is composed of two parts (*libri*). The first one contains important knowledge in the field of astronomy, while the second is dealing with geography. In the foreword the author addressed to his Transylvanian fellow citizens «ad Transylvanos». The work, which is written in prose, was meant to be a textbook for students studying the *Quadrivium*. In 1534 Scharfenberg printed the second edition of *Rudimentorum*. In the same year the work appeared also in Basel, not as an independent book but included in Dionysius Apher's *De totius orbis situ* on pages 65 to 99<sup>33</sup>.

When in 1532 the Silesian editor Franz Mimerus published the second edition of the Honterus' *Latin Grammar*, the scholar already left Krakow, as Mimerus mentioned in the preface of the work<sup>34</sup>. Although Honterus had good connections to Krakow humanists, he did not become a University professor. Maybe he was an independent teacher, gathering a small group of *alumni* around him<sup>35</sup>. His next stop was in Basel, where he joined the circles of humanists and printers, but also came in contact with the ideas of Swiss religious reformers. The stay in Basel is well documented, as several personalities mentioned him

<sup>31</sup> Binder, 1996, pp. 25-26.

<sup>32</sup> Binder, 1996, pp. 27-28.

<sup>33</sup> <[http://mek.niif.hu/03300/03301/html/bgkvti\\_2/bgki0259de.htm](http://mek.niif.hu/03300/03301/html/bgkvti_2/bgki0259de.htm)> [18/09/2015].

<sup>34</sup> Binder, 1996, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Binder, 1996, p. 29.

in their letters. Among them was the well-known Sebastian Münster, who characterized Honterus as a skilled engraver<sup>36</sup>. In Basel Honterus manufactured in 1532 a map of Transylvania, entitled *Chorographia Transylvaniae Sybembürgen*. It was the first map of a part of nowadays Romania worked out by a Transylvanian. The map bears the coats of arms of Hermannstadt/Sibiu and Kronstadt as well as two cartouches with poems written by Honterus himself in which he is speaking about the history of the Saxons. Also in Basel Honterus engraved two stellar maps entitled *Imagines constellationum Borealiū* and *Imagines constellationum Australiū*, which were included by the editor Heinrich Petri in *The complete Works of Ptolemy* and published in 1541 and 1551.

There is evidence that in 1533, after a short sojourn in Kaschau/Kosice, Honterus was home again.

### 3.4. Sixteen Years in the Service of his Country and Hometown (1533-1549)

#### 3.4.1. Honterus – Founder of a Grammar School (Studium Coronense)

From the moment of his return, Honterus devoted all his knowledge and energy to the good of his country and hometown. In 1536 he was elected alderman, a dignity which permitted him to take initiatives to improve things in Kronstadt. According with the theologian Paul Philippi, the most important was his attempt to establish a humanistic grammar school<sup>37</sup>. But before bringing the school into being, the basis for modern teaching had to be laid. Thus, in 1539 Honterus opened a printing office of his own, where already in its first year of existence eleven textbooks were printed. Nowadays some of them belong to *rarissima* in libraries collections. In 1541 the *Studium Coronense*, the famous grammar school, opened its doors, being the most important institution of this type in southeastern Europe, comparable with western European ones. As in other humanist grammar schools, in Kronstadt *Trivium* (grammatical–dialectica–rhetorica) and *Quadrivium* (arithmetica–geometria–musica–astronomia) were taught. *Studium Coronense* also had an important library. In their leisure time the students performed theatrical plays, practiced sports and went on excursions in the nearby mountains. Honterus also introduced a students' organization of self-government, named *coetus*.

<sup>36</sup> Binder, 1996, p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Philippi, 2008, p. 115.

The *coetus* was meant to teach its members to assume responsibility, to be self-reliant and independent and to help each other. All these skills and capacities were trained to prepare them for adulthood. Hierarchical organized the different ranks within the association beard Latin names as *rex, praetor, orator, primus musicus* etc<sup>38</sup>. The *coetus* had been adopted by all grammar schools of the Saxons and was forbidden only in 1941 when the so called «German Ethnic Group» (*Deutsche Völkgruppe der Deutschen in Rumänien*), a Nazi organization, took the Saxons' schools over. In 1543 Honterus published in his printing *officina* the Regulations, *Schulordnung*, according to which the grammar school was managed. The *Schulordnung* comprised obligations and rights for both teachers and students. The thirty-three paragraphs which addressed to students were written in verses in order to be easier memorized.

### 3.4.2. Honterus – the Printer

Besides textbooks Honterus printed philosophical and legal literature, works concerning the religious Reformation, one of the first Transylvanian music books entitled *Odae cum harmonis* (1548)<sup>39</sup>, as well as many other important works.

In 1541 he started to improve his main work *Rudimenta* and printed just a few copies for friends whom he encouraged to make suggestions for improvement. His new *Rudimenta cosmographica* was written in 1260 hexameter verses and the content was considerably enriched. In this draft geography was divided in two parts, the one was dealing with Europe and the other with Asia and Africa. The author also added two other parts which he entitled *Animalium et membrorum nomina*, *Plantarum et fructuum nomina*, *Rerum artificialium nomina* and *Officiorum et morborum nomina*. The last one provided the proof that he had considerable medical knowledge. In 1542 Honterus published the work, adding one hundred and six new rows and thirteen maps. The maps were engravings in wood worked out by him as the monogramme *Coronae MDXLII I. H. C.* (Ioannes Honterus Coronensis) proves<sup>40</sup>. This final form of *Rudimenta* was reprinted all over Europe.

<sup>38</sup> Schullerus, 1963, pp. 3-15.

<sup>39</sup> Nussbächer, Philippi, 1983 (reprint in facsimile).

<sup>40</sup> <[http://mek.niif.hu/03300/03301/html/bgkvti\\_2/bgki0259de.htm](http://mek.niif.hu/03300/03301/html/bgkvti_2/bgki0259de.htm)> [18/09/2015].



### 3.4.3. Honterus – «The Transylvanian Luther»

In Basel, Honterus came in touch with reformist tendencies, but it took a decennium since he himself became a reformer. Some of his writings from the thirties adumbrate that he disliked the tradition of the Catholic Church, advocating the returning to the Word of God (*sola scriptura*). After 1540 the conditions in Kronstadt became ripe to undertake some changes as there were young intellectuals who studied at the University of Wittenberg and had known the new religion. Parts of the local authorities were also favorable to reformist ideas. Under these circumstances in the Black Church the Catholic mass was replaced with the Lutheran divine service in October 1542. The next year Honterus printed the *Booklet of Reformation (Reformationsbüchlein)*, valid only for Kronstadt. In 1543 Honterus traveled to Wittenberg, where he met the great reformers Luther and Melanchthon, the latter becoming his friend and advisor<sup>41</sup>. In 1544 Johannes Honterus became pastor of the city of Kronstadt. In the meantime the great majority of the Transylvanian Saxons embraced the new creed of Martin Luther, but many confessional actions needed a unitary approach. Therefore Honterus published in 1547 the *Confessional Regulations for all Transylvanian Germans (Kirchenordnung aller Deutschen in Siebenbürgen)*, which became mandatory for Saxon pastors. The regulations were highly appreciated by Melanchthon<sup>42</sup>.

There has to be added that the Saxons adopted the Lutheran creed quite peacefully. Only small groups refused to convert. They were permitted to have service in one of the chapels or towers of the fortified churches. Although the Reform was not radically iconoclastic, all images which were not in accord with the new religion were covered, painted over or even destroyed.

One of the consequences of the Reformation was the emergence of an almost perfect equivalence, in the Transylvanian context, of Lutheran and Saxon, the Lutheran Church being *de facto* the «national church» of Transylvanian Saxons.

As Honterus was one of the most important personalities of the Saxons, his writings, prints and religious contributions still represent major interest for researchers.

<sup>41</sup> <<http://brigittegastelancestry.com/melanchthon.htm>> [18/09/2015].

<sup>42</sup> Binder, 1996, pp. 106-111.

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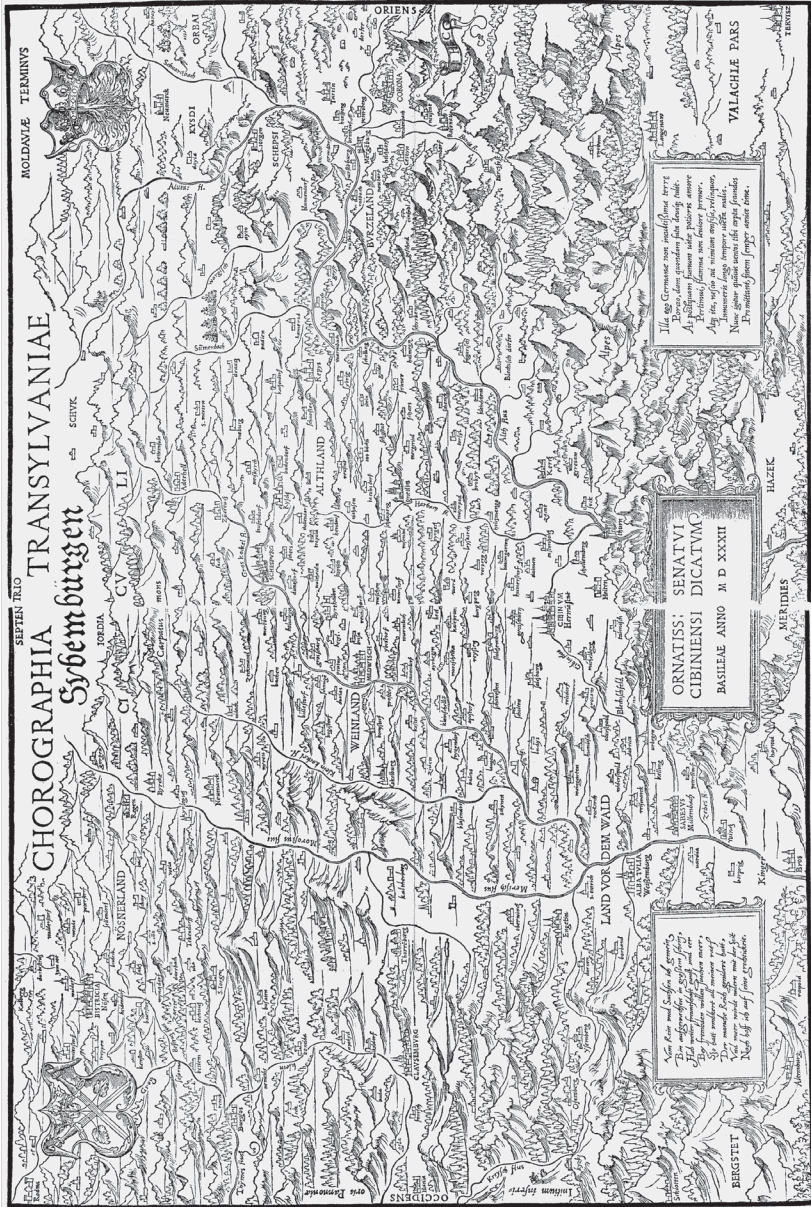


Image 1. Map of Transylvania 1532, source <[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Chorographia\\_Transylvaniae\\_Sybemb%C3%BCrgen\\_1532.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Chorographia_Transylvaniae_Sybemb%C3%BCrgen_1532.jpg)> [18/09/2015].



Image 2. Southern sky hemispherical celestial chart. First published in: *Claudii Ptolemaei Pelusienis Alexandrini Omnia, quae extant, opera, Geographia excepta*. Basileae, Apud Henricum Petrum, mense Martio, 1541, source <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-rm4340>> [18/09/2015].



# C o l e c c i ó n B a t i h o j a



El presente volumen recopila una serie de trabajos que, con enfoque multidisciplinar, abordan la relación entre Iglesia, cultura y sociedad en los siglos XVI y XVII. Los temas varían desde la perspectiva filológica e histórica hasta la teológica y filosófica, todas las cuales aplican su método específico de análisis a las obras del Siglo de Oro español (con extensión, en algunos casos, a la cultura rumana), destacando así la multitud de perspectivas desde las que dicho periodo se puede pensar y (re)interpretar.

Rebeca Lázaro Niso es profesora de la Universidad de La Rioja e investigadora del grupo BITAE de la misma universidad.

Carlos Mata Induráin es investigador y Secretario del Grupo de Investigación Siglo de Oro (GRISO) de la Universidad de Navarra.

Miguel Riera Font es investigador de la Universidad de las Islas Baleares (beca pre-doctoral de la comunidad balear financiada con fondos FEDER).

Oana Andreia Sâmbrian es investigadora titular de la Academia Rumana. Su especialidad son los estudios culturales y las relaciones rumano-españolas.



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