

LATE-RENAISSANCE TRANSYLVANIAN ARCHITECTURE

1541–1720

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

The first version of this study was written in the winter of 1997–1998 as a chapter of an encyclopedic work summing up Transylvanian renaissance architecture within the historical Hungary. Both its structure – according to the included monuments, illustration and reference – and its volume were determined by the editors. The author deals especially with those monuments that he has been studied during the last decades.

PRECEDENTS

A truly exceptional and early appearance of the influences of Italian renaissance architecture north to the Alps namely in Hungary after the year 1476 was merely meant to serve the humanistic personal representation of the King Mathias (1458–1490). Evidence of their spreading – regardless of a few exceptions – are dated only by the decade following Mathias's death, mostly after 1490. Therefore in the architecture of Transylvania (Erdély, Siebenbürgen) these influences appear only in the last decade of the 15th century as decorative sculptures on the late gothic buildings.

Two centres of great importance regarding later development are to be mentioned in this respect: those of the Episcopal Residences in Oradea (Várad, Großwardein) and Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Weißenburg, Karlsburg) where several parts of the surrounding buildings bear the marks of antiquisating Renaissance ornamental carvings made at that time. They are followed by the most important buildings that carried out the Renaissance programme in Alba Iulia, the chapel of John of Lazo (Johannes de Lazo, Lazoinus, Lászai) (1512), the steps/stairs of Bishop Francis of Várda and his chapel of St. Ann by 1524.

The renaissance sculptures originated from Buda and Esztergom were spread all over the country as well as in the Transylvanian villages after the lost battle of Mohács (1526) that was a fatal mark upon the history of the Hungarian Kingdom. It is probable that the construction work led by the royalty was stopped at that time, the masters had spread and the taste of civil and noble orderers in the towns and villages had completely changed.

During these decades the late-gothic structures co-existed with provincialized sculptures originated from the heritage of Buda bearing with no exceptions early renaissance features. Pieces that keep abreast of the Italian mode or even with that of contemporary central Europe can rarely be found. Among the former pieces there is to be mentioned a lintel fragment on the town house of Bernandus Piktör from Cluj (Koloszvár, Klausenburg) decorated with volutes (1514) and the latter ones can be illustrated by the portal of the vicar Joannes Clyn (Klein) in Cluj (1528). A similar style indicating carving models from Augsburg may be found on the sarcophagus of John of Hunyad (Hunyadi János, Iancu de Hunedoara – died in 1456) whose tomb was carved in 1533 in Alba Iulia to the order of John Statileo Bishop of Transylvania (1528–1542). The influence of the Renaissance upon Transylvanian stone-cutters may be observed on a series of frames bearing profiles already renaissance but still intersected at the corners, similarly to gothic-styled framings (Brâncovenesti – Marosvécs – 1537, Cluj 1539, Târgiu – Törpény, Treppen – 1522 etc.). In the church of Târgiu, besides these transitional forms of the portals, there is a renaissance mask decorating a console that supports the ribs of the gothic vaulting, in its sanctuary there is a “grünes Gewölbe” typed fragment of a fresco (1504) – similar to those from Hunedoara (around 1490) or Daia Secuiască (Székelydála, before 1526) – and in the nave there is a fresco that reminds us Dürer's series of Appocalipse (after 1522). Both these features and the elegant structure of the late-gothic nave reflect the modern taste of the priests of the time from the chapter of Alba Iulia cathedral.

The first purely renaissance structures appear in the area of military architecture together with the beginning of principality towards the year 1540. Soon after this date simultaneously with the classical architectural pieces (frames of portals and windows) more and more graphically inspired frames appear showing characteristics of the German Renaissance.

They can hardly be originated directly from Italian models as well as the scrollwork decorations in the last decades of the century: their patterns are already to be found in Central Europe, in areas closer to Transylvania.

The above facts suggest that neither an autonomic development of Transylvanian architecture originated directly from the Italian Renaissance should be mentioned nor stylistic levels of mature or late Renaissance can be determined according to classical criteria. At the present state of affairs concerning research in this respect it is methodically obvious that the history of the Principate (lasting one and a half centuries) offers an adequate framework to the investigation of the present study from the appearance of late Renaissance features (by 1540) until the appearance of the Baroque forms (second decade of the 18th century).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TRANSYLVANIAN ART

In the autumn of 1541 when the widow queen Isabelle (died in 1559) and his son John Sigismund (1540–1571) have left the castel of Buda after the Turkish occupation, contemporary public life did probably not realize that a new form of state came into being: the Principality of Transylvania. During the 150 years of Turkish suzerainty Transylvania was keeping a strong connection with the Habsburgic Empire as well, balancing between the two great neighbours, and the Principality came to an end when this balance upset in favour of the Holy Roman Emperor and Hungarian King reigning in Wien.

The Principality of Transylvania inherited the eastern parts of Medieval Hungary and at the beginning its frontiers reached Kosice and the river Tisza.

The Turkish offensives in 1552 and 1556 ended with the occupation of Timișoara (Temesvár, Temeschwar), Lipova (Lippa) and Gyula, thus the territory was limited to the Transylvanian Countries, to the Banat of Lugos (Lugosch) and Caransebeș (Karánsebes) and to a part of Partium: the Countries of Zărând (Zaránd), Bihor (Bihar) and Maramureș (Mármaros). Gabriel Bethlen (Bethlen Gábor, 1613–1629) had to renounce to Lipova for a second time in the favour of the Turks (1616). As a result of the anti-Habsburgic campaigns during the first two courses of 30 years' war Gabriel Bethlen then – after 1644 – George Rákóczi I. (1630–1648) too followed by his omonymous son (1648–1658) managed to obtain the seven Countries of the Habsburgic Kingdom neighbouring Transylvania.

As a direct results of George Rákóczi II.'s disastrous Polish expedition the Turks invaded Ineu (Borosjenő) and Oradea together with the boundary fortifications in the Countries of Zărând and Bihor and the regal army was installed again into the fortress of Satu Mare (Szatmár), and for a while also into Chioar (Kővár) and Cluj.

The Turkish – Tatarian predatory expeditions between 1658–1661 had put a definite end to the constructive activity of the preceeding decades guided by the Prince–Court. The frontiers of the Principality were marked at Pietra Craiului (Királyhágó) and Sălaj (Szilágyság) whilst Cluj, Bologa (Sebesvár) and Șimleul Silvaniei (Szilágysomlyó) as well as Ilia (Marosillye) or Deva (Déva, Diemrich) on the river Mureș (Maros) became boundary-fortresses. It is obvious that reconstruction – even of a slower rythm determined by unfavourable condition – took place in the time of Prince Michael Apafi I. (1661–1690) but it is also evident that creative endeavours after the year 1661 cannot be compared with those of the preceeding decades. This is an evident statement even if we are aware of the fact that research concerning history of art attached no importance to the artistic results of this era though they were much more accessible because of the surviving monuments and for the sources that are available for interpretation.

As a consequence of the treaty from Blaj in 1687 the army of the Hungarian King occupied the most important fortifications of Transylvania and in 1693 the Transylvanian orders were forced to accept the Leopoldine Diploma which had put a definite end to the autonomy of the Principality.

The political regime of the Principality, the preponderance of treasury demesnes besides the personal estates of the Báthory and Rákóczi families ensured to the Princes of Transylvania a relatively higher capacity of action than that of the Hungarian Kings residing in Prague or Vienna, the latters being preoccupied mainly by the wars being carried out in Italy or beyond the West-side frontiers of the Empire. Within these conditions the Transylvanian Principality became a place of refuge for the Hungarian opposition against the catholic Habsburg rulers and the Prince's Court was a real center of Hungarian Protestant culture. In the same time

the patronage of arts and constructions conducted by the Prince's Court set a stimulating example to the customers/patrons all over the country who – due to patriarchal organization of the princial building sites – benefited from the knowledge, experience and talent of their masters. Besides the ethnic and religious variety of the Transylvanian population, their cultural ranges were determined by economic and juridical differences as well. Noblemen and serfs of the countries, civilians of the chartered towns or Székler and Saxon privileged people as well as refugees of all ranks arrived from the neighbouring regions that had been conquered by the Turks were possible customers of renaissance art each of them ordering pieces according to their tastes, traditions or material means.

In the first decades artists having escaped from Buda marked the renaissance artistic value of the Episcopal Courts from Alba Iulia and Oradea reflecting their artistic taste. In the same time during a considerable period of the investigated epoch the architecture of the Principality is marked by the influence of experienced “fundatores” who were brought mainly from the North of Italy being engaged either indirectly by the War Council from Vienna in order to consolidate the line of fortifications against the Turks that extended from the Adriatic sea reaching the mountains of Maramureş or coming directly to the request of the Transylvanian Princes. According to the few data being available it is evident that these dynamic, talented, architecturally well trained masters had been spread all over Europe bringing to Transylvania not only the traditions of Italian Renaissance but also the architectural peculiarities of the countries through which they arrived to these territories. A direct Polish influence is also remarkable showing its early characteristics during the rule of Prince John Sigismund (1556–1571) and then under the Polish reign of Stephen Báthory (Prince of Transylvania: 1571–1586, King of Poland: 1576–1586) when the Transylvanian war-veterans returned from the Polish battlefields and the Principality's economic life took a new direction. These influences are mainly reflected by the funerary monuments. Our historiography of arts overestimating Italian premises and models disregarded a series of features that demonstrate other, Central European sources of Transylvanian art. In the lack of key-monuments a vague image can slightly be sketched by these connections but which certainly gains significance on the basis of an objective interpretation of economic and cultural relations. After the death of Gabriel Bethlen about two decades can be delimited when the princial building sites were conducted by “German” masters only and neither can be ignored the more and more relevant stylistic phase-displacement between the Baroque of the great Italian centers and Central-European Manierism ignored where the first signs of the Baroque could intrude only after the Westfalian Piece (1648). This phase-displacement was partly stressed by the limits marked by confessional difference that allowed to very few of the Transylvanian Protestant Maecenas to get to Italy while lots and lots of them peregrinated to Western Europe where they could accumulate experiences that marked their later habits as customers. The less lucky ones could have had the opportunity to see illustrations of books, decorative elements of applied arts, drawings of sample books used by the masters working for them.

Due to Transylvania's provincialism, to its periferic position and to its relative isolation we can surely state that in many cases influences of Italian resources reached our land through Cracow, Prague or Vienna. The conservative eclecticism and the absence of the formal renewal of the Italian cinquecento characterizing not only the carvings but also the entire decorative art of the period being under investigation can be interpreted in no other way. Though some examples of 17th century patrons of arts may also be quoted who could get into touch with several examples of the Baroque, these experiences seem to have been without any effect regarding the remained artistic monuments.

The relative isolation of Transylvania; its position at the Eastern frontiers of Western culture, its mostly protestant spiritual atmosphere may serve as an adequate explanation to the hindrance of Baroque forms spread by counter-reformation and by the army of the Habsburg ruler.

On the other hand the lack of professional masters could explain the fact that Transylvanian customers preferred simplified ornamental forms of the late Renaissance even in the first decades of the 18th century.

Though after the Treaty of Satu Mare (1711) on the occasion of the rebuilding of the fortress of Alba Iulia – that was renamed into Karlsburg – a Baroque building site was established by masters recruited from the Empire the reception of the new Baroque style is still not obvious for that time: – Baroque forms appear only

about 1730 on the buildings requested of aulic and pro-Habsburgic political upper circles, and even such mixed with renaissance structures or motives.

Thus it is not strange that beginning approximately with the forming of the Principality, Transylvanian art is characterized by an eclectic parallelism of the surviving early renaissance elements mixed with mature and late Renaissance forms, occasionally influenced by “modern Germanic” Manierism.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE TOWNS

The urban structure of Transylvanian towns was formed in the preceding period.

During the 16th century the homes and public buildings were enlarged and adapted to the new way of life through reconstructions into renaissance style. The inherited fortifications were adapted to the new conditions, in most of the cases they were articulated systematically in their depth. The towns being at the saddles of the Carpathians (Braşov – Brassó, Kronstadt, Sibiu – Szeben, Hermannstadt, Bistriţa – Beszterce, Bistritz) flourished owing to their trans-frontier trade while Cluj, Mediaş (Medgyes, Medwisch), Sighişoara (Segesvár, Schässburg) became important centres of commerce and craft. Though Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely, Neumarkt) managed although to obtain the title of royal free borough in 1614 but it could not catch up with the former ones concerning the characteristics of a town. The development of Sebeş Alba (Szászsebes, Mühlbach) and Orăştie (Szászváros, Broos) had balked at the beginning of 15th century as consequence of the Turk invasions.

The Episcopal Residence of Oradea and Alba Iulia show different ways of development: the former developed as one of the most important fortifications of the Western frontier of the Principality the latter one – owing to its favourable situation at the crossways of trade – became the capital of the Principality and the residence of the Prince.

The architectural aspect of the towns was determined by their buildings of defense. Through the extension of their fortifications Cluj, Sibiu, Braşov, Sebeş became place of refuge in the Transylvanian society of those centuries. The fortresses were strong enough to resist to the outer attacks as the offenders, mostly due to the length of the rear boundary of the line-of-communications area, were not equipped with efficient artillery.

The Lutheran German majority of most of these towns was keeping strong cultural and economic connections with the Germanic centers of Europe enriching the architectural view of their towns with artistic monuments of German Renaissance taste.

Cluj (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg) during the 16th–17th Century. The inner town was formed by the square shaped town-wall having been built in the 15th century. This framework was not changed during the following centuries characterized by a contradictory, all in all negative demographic and economic development, according to a recent investigation. The fortified inner town was surrounded by the three suburbs situated along the main ways of trade that were mentioned by documents as early as the 14th century. The defense of these suburbs was meanly ensured by barriers situated at the end of the streets. In the lack of remained analogies we do not know whether the buildings of two or three premises in the vedute of 1617 were mere inventions of authors or not.

At the background of the picture the contour of the public cemetery – the Házsongárd – can be recognized (1584–1585) though until the end of the 18th century many civilians continued to be buried into the “porticos” of the churches or into the wards of the fortresses. The most important public buildings of the town, the fortifications were finished until the beginning of the 16th century. Later sources testify about their upkeep and about the building of the wards built in front of the mostly offended western, southern and eastern lines of the fortress. These buildings were also continued after 1687 especially in the time of the Austrian commandant, Prince Phillips von Lichtenstein as it was stated by Giovanni Morando Visconti after 1691. The chronological order of the most important modifications of the 16th–17th centuries can be observed by their inscriptions only. The present shape of the Tower of the Tailors (1475) that exploded in 1627 is due to its reconstruction in 1627–1629 and the inscription was carved by the masons Stephen Diószegi and John Molnos in 1629. Other inscriptions remind us of the reconstruction of the Someş (Szamos) bridge, and the

privileged birthplace of King Mathias is marked by an inscription and by the golden raven in the emblem of the building. The birthplace of Prince Stephen Bocskai (1605–1606) was marked in 1606 (quite in his life) by a stone tablet with an inscription and the coat-of-arms of the family on it. The one-floored Town House is known from the remained descriptions only. The parish church of St. Michael was continuously repaired. The nearby St. James funeral chapel had also been enlarged into a hall church of 5–5 bays. The two neighbouring churches had alternatively been used by the congregations of the Hungarian and Saxon Unitarians (Antitrinitarians) according to the “nation” of the Chief Justice who were yearly changed in their charges of town-leaders. The ceremony differed only concerning the language of the liturgy. This renewed building which could include some 700–800 persons became the scene of the Diets that were called together in Cluj in those days. The church was surrounded by a wall of cemetery and in the middle of the 16th century the tradesmen, the guilds and the chemist had their “vaults”(shops) built round the wall. The Franciscan monastery was donated by Stephen Báthory to the Jesuit Monks who had it rebuilt after 1581 using it until 1603 with an interruption between 1588–1595.

At beginning of the 17th century the Calvinist (Reformed) community gathered under the gateway of a Middle-street (Platea Media, Közép utca) house, then under the rule of Prince George Rákóczi I. they reconstructed the Jesuit Church of the Woolf street (Platea Luporum, Farkas utca). Later, in 1672 as the congregation had grown a great deal, the reformed community built also a wooden church outside the town in the street of Hungarians (Platea Hungarorum, Magyar utca). Cluj became the most important schooling town of Transylvania after Reformation. While the Unitarian school took place in the former Dominican monastery, the Jesuits who arrived to Cluj in 1579 built a new school for themselves near the monastery in the Woolf street. The remained projects of the constructions were made or adapted to the local needs by the monk Fra Massimo Milanese (died in 1586). On the place of the Jesuit buildings demolished after 1603 a considerable calvinist school was built (between 1651–1654) according to the projects of the Venetian architect Agostino Serena (died in 1654). Its picture is shown in an 18th century xylograph. The principal gate that has been preserved in its old form can be dated to the first decades of the 18th century.

A decisive mark on the aspect of the town was made by the citizens' houses. In the period of its full development (1593, 1596) in a register of the taxes 1703 paterfamilias (householders), citizens and libertines are mentioned. Together with the 199 tenants the population of the town grows approximately to 9500 inhabitants. The town was divided into five districts having mostly the some streets as it has in our days. The five districts were divided into smaller units of 10 neighbouring houses. The outer part of the town besides the Old Town (Vetus Castrum, Óvár) but yet being within the walls of fortifications was funded by colonisation, each inhabitant owning a 10 meters wide area which practically determined the structure of the town.

In the years preceding 1660 Cluj could vindicate its right according to which noblemen were allowed to settle down within the town-walls only in case they renounced to their privileges willing to become tax-payers of the town. As a result of a reasonable sense of self limitation properties of more than one plot with the corresponding large were completely absent in those days. The inherited gothic buildings with double axed façades, consisting of two or three premises were built above vaulted cellars. The cellars had usually two entrances (one from the street and the other one from the house), so that they did not have to roll the wine barrels through the courtyard into the cellar. The town carried out an intensive trade of wine in those centuries.

Georg Hoefnagel's xylograph shows a series of houses with triangle-shaped gables with wooden tiles.

A more sophisticated form of the same roof characterizes the houses of the tradesmen from the Market-place which were preserved until the second half of the 19th century. Analogies of the first type can be found even in our days in the Saxon villages round Sibiu while those of the latter type with more complicated roofs can only be found in Sighișoara.

The gothic planimetric structure of the houses did not change. Most of the cellars are covered by tunnen vaults, sometimes having lunettes above the openings. Until the end of the 16th century the houses of the Market-place and those of the nearby streets gained a second level. The existence of an upper floor can be deduced from the vaultings of the gateways and from its datable parts. The frequent visits of the

Transylvanian Princes in the 17th century required that the partition – walls of 2–3 neighbouring houses be cut down so that greater set of rooms could be formed. At the end of the 16th century new forms of frames appear – window frames with triangular pediment or others with angled gable – with richer decorations bearing sometimes figural ornamentation inspired from engravings.

The most representative monument of this evolution is the Wolphard-Kakas house. A gothic building with cellars and ground-floor consisting of three premises was transformed beginning with the constructions of the last vicar of Cluj, former student of Bologna, Adrian Wolphard (died in 1544) and continued by his nephew Stephen, former student of Vienna and Wittenberg, a famous astrologer Chief Justice of Cluj (died in 1586) and finalized by his successor Stephen Kakas (between 1590–1592) former student of Bologna and Padova. All the three of them contributed to the enlargement and decoration of the house which was considered to be the most beautiful and valuable building of the town in 1603. The carved decorations of the so-called zodiac-room was inspired from the cuttings of John Honterus printed in Basel in 1541 and 1551. The orderer, Stephen included the emblem of King Matthias (1458–1490) into the series of zodiac signs carved in the consoles. According to the remained monuments the constructive prosperity slowed down in the next century.

In *Bistrița* (Beszterce, Bistritz, Nösen) the facade of the so-called Goldsmith's House was made between 1560–1563. Its forms are due to the workshop of Petrus Italus da Lugano who had been working at the reconstruction of the Church in those days.

In *Sibiu* (Nagyszeben, Hermannstadt) the reconstructions in renaissance style were carried in the town by Haller family from Nürnberg who moved from Buda to Sibiu after 1526. The most important promoter of the family's settlement in Transylvania was Peter Haller (died in 1557) who became the count of the Saxons. The reconstruction of this house into renaissance style after 1537 exemplifies a process similar to that of Cluj.

At *Alba Iulia* – after having developed to the rank of the capital of Principality – the most important difficulty was that of the drinking-water. After several attempts (Stephen and Andrew Báthory) the final solution was carried out by Gabriel Bethlen (1624). Among public buildings of the time the most important one is the reconstruction of the former Dominican Monastery into a Jesuit Church and School (1581–1588). Its buildings got into the possessions of the Reformed “Academicum Collegium” (1622). In the last years of his rule Gabriel Bethlen began the construction of the new College, a bigger edifice having been projected probably by Giacomo Resti. The latter was also the initiator of an utopistic project of town-planning works as well known through historical sources only. A testimony of the exigent constructions of the town is the Apor-house, a considerable building, double levelled already at the end of the fifteenth century which was re-built at the end of the 17th century by Stephen Apor the treasurer, and after its reconstruction begun after 1711 it became the residence of the Transylvanian Military Governor being the first Baroque building in Transylvania.

FORTRESSES

The building of fortresses in the 16th – 17th centuries is linked to the history of Principality and – owing to the military revolution of the time – the first purely renaissance solutions were realized in this domain.

The most important defensive line of the principality was formed at the western frontiers as far as it was allowed by the poor constructive capacity of the state which through organizing public building-sites inherited patriarchal solutions based on the efforts of a rare population. Between 1564–1567 Giovanni Andrea Gromo visited Transylvania and observed three fortifications “alla moderna” that were constructed in Italian way, with bastions and casemates: Alba Iulia, Gherla (Szamosújvár) and Beclean (Bethlen, completely disappeared in our times). Beside the above mentioned fortifications we must take into account the defensive line of Sibiu, that of Braşov – Schloßberg and the bastioned fortress of Tăuți (Tótfalud).

The semicircular tower of Braşov (built after 1520) was completed after 1560 with four smaller towers of artillery inspired from the plan of the Italian bastions. Later, at the beginning of the 17th century the whole was

surrounded by a square-shaped wall with four bastions at each corners with a low tower above the gate having a mobile bridge in its front.

Except for the constructions at Gherla (having begun earlier, in 1538), all the other newer fortifications are due to the architects sent by King Ferdinand I., who arrived to Transylvania in the escort of General Giovanni Battista Castaldo about the years 1551–1556. The bastions had to be enlarged according to the continuous development of the artillery, the biggest one being that of Haller's Bastion in Sibiu with casemates protected by "ears". The length of the faces varied from 40 m (Gherla) up to 120 m (Oradea, Alba Iulia). In spite of the opinions of earlier specialists the flankers did not belong to the newer Italian system: until the 17th century no intention of flanking can be recognized in front of the neighbouring bastions nor outer fortifications can be found.

In the first centuries of the principality's history the tendency to build Italian typed fortifications can be found everywhere. Later these structures were built above all at the Western frontiers of the principality (Ineu, Oradea, Pocsaj – Hungary, Săcuieni – Székelyhíd, Satu Mare).

At Gherla the construction of a four bastioned fortress started in 1538 to the order of King John I. and George Martinuzzi, carried out at the first by the royal architect Domenico da Bologna. Originally the gate and the two eastern bastions were ornamented by the coat of arms of the builders. The original ground-plan was completed before 1564 when an outer fortress had already been built in front of the principal-gate. Its curtain-wall sheltered by two semi bastions and a gate-tower was enlarged with another bastion stretching across the ditch. In the same time lower wards with smaller bastions were being carried out throughout the rule of John Sigismund, the Báthory family and that of Gabriel Bethlen having been finished at the beginning of the 17th century when an inscription was placed on the western semi-bastion before the gate of the fortress reconstructed probably by Giovanni Landi. In the following period the ditch of the fortress became insufficient for an adequate defence. The palace built in the time of George Martinuzzi (died 1551) flanked by the inner gate and by the chapel stuck to the western walls of the fortress. The double levelled facade of the building was decorated by trisected windows. Similar inscriptions and details of the inner gate can also be found at Cluj and at Gilău (Gyalu). The so-called Rákóczi palace was built during the rule of George Rákóczi II. After the year 1562 the fortresses of the Prince were also re-built in Italian system in the Szeklerland: Odorhei (Udvarhely) and Cetățeni (Várfalva). The modernization of the fortification of Oradea was begun in 1568 with the foundation of a new bastion and later Giulio Cesare Baldigara(?) elaborated the pentagonal planimetric conception.

These conceptions were carried out in consecutive phases though the building of the bastions of Broken- (1571), Golden- (1572), Red- (1584) and the Soil-bastion (ante 1598, finished in 1627). The bastioned fortresses at Săcuieni (1634), Pocsaj – Hungary (1638) and Ineu (1658) were built during the rule of the two princes George Rákóczi, as well as the partial modernization of some medieval fortresses at Deva, Chioar and Gurghiu (Görgény). The Princiar Residence at Alba Iulia was fortified by Gabriel Bethlen with two great bastions (1618–1628) but its modernization was suspended about 1630 probably because of the unfavourable defensive conditions. The fortifications at Făgăraș (Fogaras, Fogarasch) were made about 1594–1644, a residence fortress realized according to the new Italian system.

FORTIFIED CHURCHES

Fortified Churches have been preserved in Transylvania in a great number. It is a medieval, archaic form of defensive architecture. Initially the later towns (civitates) had also passed through this stage of architecture but in this case the archaic fortifications were changed by the walls of the towns. Their maintenance reflect the slowness of town development within the Saxon and Szekler counties and in the case of smaller towns of counties (Huedin – Bánffyhungyad, Turda – Torda, Thorenburg, Dej – Dés, Aiud – Enyed, Strassburg) as well. The first wave of constructions in this respect can be observed during the 15th century mostly in the southern part of Transylvania among the Saxon settlements having been directly threatened by Turkish offense. During the 16th and mainly in the 17th century this wave was extended over the relatively isolated Szeklerland where the economical structure – the growing of animals that could not be fenced into smaller areas – as well as the duty of participation at military expeditions and the fear of being turned into the status of feudal tenant

because of certain public works that could have been transformed into socage – slowed down the extension of fortified churches. Thus for instance the civilians of Tîrgu Mureş who had put up resistance to the building of fortifications during the 16th century – being Szeklers as well – they decided to build a fortification only after 1600 as a consequence of a lot of suffering.

The formal elements reflecting the influence of Italian typed fortifications – regular geometric plan, rhomboid defense-towers – are relatively more rare at southern Saxon fortified churches than in Szeklerland where in the 17th century being directly influenced by the princiar building -sites fortresses were built to the churches of Ilieni (Illyefalva), Aita Mare (Nagyajta) and Arcuş (Sepsiárkos). A particular case is the fortified church of Sânzieni (Kézdiszentlélek) which completely contradicting to the rules of defense is a very peculiar polygonal star-shaped building with cylindrical towers. The plan of the building reminds the historian of a 15th century sketch drawn by Giorgio Martini.

CASTLES AND MANOR-HOUSES

The architecture of Transylvanian castles in the period being under investigation is directly linked to the examples of the princely buildings projekted in most of the cases by Italian architects engaged by the court. Among these model-buildings specific influences had been exercised by the Prince's Palace in Alba Iulia. The group of buildings situated in the south-western corner of today's fortress including the roman catholic archiepiscopal court and the two courts of the nearby barracks represent one of the most important monuments of Transylvanian Renaissance. After the year 1714 – the beginning of the Baroque-styled construction of the fortress – the buildings of the former Princely Residence were divided: one third situated at the western side was transferred into the possession of the Roman Catholic Episcopy and two thirds got into the possession of the Austrian Military Government. In the following decades (before 1736) these two parts of the castle were separated by demolishing the eastern wings that practically linked the group of buildings. The medieval kernel of the Episcopal Palace, being resided from the year 1542 by Queen Isabella and his minor son, is situated in the northern and in the transversal wings dividing the western court from that of the middle one. At the joint of the two wings the steps of honour lead from the inner court to the residence being at the same level with the Cathedral's Spire. This building was closely linked to the cathedral: a corridor ensured the access to the Várdai steps of the Cathedral and not far from there other steps were leading to the Old Sacristy. The coffered ceiling of John Sigismund's palace are remarked by the historians. Probably under the rule of Sigismund Báthory (1588–1603) the transversal wing was united with the old gothic palace of the provost situated at the eastern side of the cathedral surrounding the so-called middle-yard. After the damages of the years 1600–1603 the palace was ruined and then rebuilt by Gabriel Bethlen. The last courtyard, that of the stables, was delineated during his rule, at the eastern end of the buildings. The northern facade having a length of approximately 200 m was decorated (from 1624) with an attic above the windows with a triangular pediment of the first floor. The western gate was marked by the actual rustic frame decorated with small obelisks and strap work (1626–1627). Above the gate, on the second floor there was a "summerhouse" and the suspended garden of the prince consort. The last stage of the constructions was performed during the rule of George Rákóczi I. when the eastern court was outlined by the Hall of the Diet partly sustained by a "loggia" of arcades (1643). At the western side of the palace the private rooms of the prince consort were extended by a Lusthaus. The attic was demolished and a high roof was built instead. The rooms of representation were in the western wing (the dining-room for instance) then it continued in the northern wing westward: the Prince's Council Hall, the "antecamera", the throne-room and the Prince's Bedroom followed by the Prince's and his Consort's private rooms. Eastward there were a series of "palaces" with stuccoed ceilings ending with the Hall of the Diets.

The Castles were the most beautiful representatives of Transylvanian Renaissance architecture. A varied and rich type of architectural genre with different extension and exigence owned by the members of the Prince's family and by the 20 families approximately who were members of the Prince's Council. The first adaptations of geometrically regular Italian plans with small bastion-like towers at the corners can be found in Transylvania at the beginning of the last decades of the 16th century. At that time the Bocskai Castle at Aghireş (Egeres, 1569), probably the castle of John Gálfi of Buia (Bolya, Bell, in the years after 1580) and the

transformation of the medieval interior palace at Făgăraş (before 1594), the castle of Báthory family at Şimleu (before 1594) as well as the castle with four corner-bastions in Ilia were built (1552–1590). To the latter group of buildings belonged the so-called Red Bastion, the only one meant to be inhabited, having been built by the father of Prince Gabriel, Volfgang Bethlen (1582). Inside the fortress took place the medieval home-tower and a double tracted palace built after 1620 and extended by Emeric Thököly (before 1648).

The actual angulation at the ruins of the castle in Mănăstirea probably marked the first stage of Cristofor Kereszturi's constructions the master of the Habsburgic Maria Christitierna, Sigismund Báthory's wife. The castle was amplified in the following century by the Gasper Kornis (died in 1696) and Sigismund Kornis (died in 1731).

During the Bethlen–Rákóczi era projects with a planimetric conception inspired from the architecture treatises of the Italian Renaissance were performed: the hexagonal castle at Vinţul de Jos (Alvinc, Winz, 1615–1629), the pentagonal palace inside the fortress in Oradea (1618–1648), the castle in Blaj (Balázsfalva, Blasendorf, 1617–1629), the castle in Iernut (Radnót, 1617–1629, 1649–1656), the castle of the Lázár family in Lázarea (Gyergyószárhegy, after 1630, and probably in 1696), the castle of Francis Mikó in Miercurea Ciuc (Csíkszereda, 1623–1635). The majority of these buildings were shaped through the transformation of former edifices, having been built formerly in the 16th century which – as far as it can be observed – illustrate the differences of taste between the commanders of the two centuries. The fashion of towers imitating Italian bastions situated at the corners, that of the windows with triangular pediments, and the attic above the windows reflect the taste of Prince Gabriel Bethlen and his Italian architect Giacomo Resti da Verna (died in 1637). Variations of this type are the castle of George Sükösd (died in 1631) at Racoşul de Jos (Alsórákos), the castle of Sigismund Lónyai (died in 1653) at Medieşul Aurit (Aranyosmeggyes, the disappeared castle of the Haller family at Albeşti (Szászféhéregyháza, Weisskirch, at about 1625) and the castle of Mikola family in Someşeni-Cluj (Szamosfalva). An other type of plan rooting from Italy as well – are the castles having a compact *rectangular* body fortified with corner-towers, for example Volfgang Bethlen's (died in 1618) castle at Țopa (Kisbún), that of Cetatea de Baltă (Küküllővár, Kokelburg, 1624–1630) belonging to the later Prince Stephen Bethlen (died in 1648). The fortress of the Transylvanian Bishops at Gilău was reconstructed between 1639–1648 through the linking of living-wings to the existing square-shaped building. After 1661 the castle of Dennis Bánffy (died in 1674) at Bonţida (Bonchida) was outlined probably according to the model at Gilău. The buildingworks here were carried on by his son George around 1700. The castle of the Bethlen family at Criş (Keresd, Kreisch) inherited the living tower of Michael Bethlen (1598) and the neighbouring mansion and during the 17th century mostly by the constructions after 1667 the interior living-site was rebuilt, the loggia, the upper floors of the tower and the exterior fortifications were made.

The Chancellor Nicolas Bethlen (died in 1716) in the years 1667–1668 began to built at Sânmiclăuş (Bethlenszentmiklós, Niklasdorf) a castle according to his own plans. The Baroque elements of these buildings bare the marks of Franz Schweininger in 1765, therefore they have nothing to do neither with the initial plan nor with the investigated epoch.

We do not know too much about the interior decorations of these buildings. No painted details of the palace in Alba Iulia are known, their reflections in Oradea, Medieşul Aurit, Iernut, Lázarea and Mănăstirea are noted in written sources only. At Hunedoara (Vajdahunyad, Eisenmarkt) a frieze was preserved containing “portraits” enclosed into medallions of some persons wearing clothes and beards being characteristic of the 3rd – 4th decades of the 17th century. These medallions having been initially inscribed within the frames were “re-named” by other inscriptions that were placed underneath in the years after 1664, thus the frieze became a Gallery of Hungarian Rulers and Kings.

ECCLESIASTIC ARCHITECTURE

As the successive waves of Reformation radically transformed the ecclesiastic topography of Transsylvania, relatively few monuments illustrate the ecclesiastic architecture of the time. In the majority of the towns having converted into Protestantism a single church – usually the parohial one – was used, the inhabitants of the monasteries had converted or had been chased away, thus the abandoned buildings became mere stone pits. The parochial church of Saint Nicolas at Bistriţa was successively re-built in the late gothic period. Later

– between 1559–1563 under the leadership of Petrus Italo de Lugano, a citizen of Lviv (Ukraine) the former arches of the church were demolished and changed into stellar vaults, renaissance organ lofts, gates, gables and an attic were built to the former building. In Iernut Francis Kendi had built a renaissance porticus (gateway) to the reformed church in 1593, that of Făgăraș has preserved only a few pieces of 17th century ornaments. After the devastation of 1600 Gabriel Bethlen restored the church of Alba Iulia. The reformed church of Hunedoara was renewed with portals in 1644 by Peter Bethlen (died in 1646) and his wife Catherine Illésházi. In Oradea a calvinist wooden church was built (in the years after 1620) below the town-walls covered with a tiled-roof supported by five pairs of pillars.

The most important ecclesiastic buildings are that of the Jesuits in Cluj and Alba Iulia. The Jesuit church in Cluj was restored by the Prince helped by the calvinists between 1639–1647. Its stone chancel (1646) is the common work of the sculptor Elias Nicolai and the joiner Hannes Lew Rechner. The baldachin was made by the Polish cabinet maker Stanislavski being in the service of the prince. Among the most important monuments of catholicism –very few in Transylvania – are the Salvator-chapel in Șumuleu (Miercurea Ciuc, before 1686) and the Franciscan Monastery at Călugăreni (Mikháza, after 1634). In 1686 was built the St. Stephen chapel on a hill above Sânzieni. Its central plan has nothing to do with the Romanic architecture, it is due to a renaissance model. The Orthodox churches of the time imitated those of Moldova and Wallachia. Exceptional cases of renaissance details can be found at Prislop (Priszlop), Teiuș (Tövis, Dreikirchen), Lupșa or in Șcheii of Brașov (Bolgárszeg, Obere Vorstadt).

Translated by Tonk Márta