

**“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY
CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
DOCTORAL SCHOOL “HISTORY. CIVILIZATION. CULTURE”**

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**Defensive Missionary Activity of the Catholic Orders in Seventeenth-Century Transylvania in the Context of the Post-tridentine Catholic *Reconquista*. Perspectives on the Franciscan Order in the Calvinist Principality
-Abstract-**

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Key-words: Early modern Catholicism, Catholic missions, seventeenth-century Transylvania, confessional tolerance, Franciscan missionary strategies, noble patronage, senior missionary Counter-reformation

Analysing a topic related to the history of the Church represents a real challenge, because we assist permanently at a clash between two visions, on which we have to meditate: a theological vision of the events discussed and a laic one. The challenge becomes even greater when the chosen topic illustrates a turning point in the history of the Church due to its complexity and its consequences, as it appears to be the problematic of the Catholic Church in the period after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), period known also under the generic term of the “epoch of the Reformations” or the “epoch of confessionalization”, when the old continent has scored important institutional, cultural and religious transformations.

There are two fundamental motivations that have determined us to focus our research on the activity of the Catholic orders (particularly, the activity of the Franciscan order) in seventeenth-century Transylvania: a historical motivation and a historiographical one. From a historical point of view, the Christendom (*Christianitas*) has scored an irremovable transformation during the 16th century, beginning with the emergence and the spread of the ideas of the Protestant Reformation. Luther’s Reformation has brought a different perspective of understanding the Christianity, ensuring a new possibility of gaining the soul’s salvation—the divine grace—and expressing the potential of the new movement regarding the offering of doctrinaire solutions, independently of the Roman models. In one century *Respublica christiana* has disbanded, ceasing to constitute the bond of the European society and giving birth to a plurality of new “Orthodoxies” (understood as truths of faith). In this context, the introduction of the Catholic missions under the careful guidance of Rome and, subsequently, of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, as well as the dispatch of well-trained missionaries have been imagined as tools of counteracting the success of the innovative ideas and of restoring and consolidating the positions held by the Catholic Church one century ago. The apparition of the new goals related to the Catholic mission during the 17th century has brought an essential transformation within the missionary territories, the Catholic missionaries becoming the “champions” of an offensive oriented *ad intram Christianitatis*.

From a historiographical point of view, the reaction of the Roman Church towards the Protestant Reformation and the process of affronting the success of the innovative ideas spread by the sixteenth-century reformers have represented topics found in the sphere of the theological and historical debates. The major contributions of the contemporary epoch have tried to fix a series of key-words, meant to capture the major evolutions scored by the post-tridentine

Catholicism; as a result, the European and extra-European historiography regarding the Counter-reformation/Catholic Reformation/early modern Catholicism in Central and Oriental Europe consists of numerous papers with a general character, articles and studies that cover a large range of problematics. In spite of the debates found at a global level and of the richness of the written materials, the Romanian researches centered on the particular elements of the Catholic *reconquista* in Transylvania can be divided into two categories: *narrative, factual, chronological histories* (the religious policy of the central authority during the 17th century, a list of the Catholic churches and of the Catholic orders' residences, the restructuring of the events that regard the conflict between the Protestant nobility and the Catholic supporters of the Habsburgs); at the antipole there can be found a few *thematic histories*, dealing with the particularities of the Counter-reformation in Transylvania during the second half of the 16th century, the Transylvanian devotional literature, the religious iconography as way of expressing the spiritual demands of the Transylvanian laics, histories that have been generated by the modern tendencies of the Romanian historical writing through its alignment at the European standards.

The present approach aims to bring into discussion the topic of the Catholic missionary activity (especially, the activity of the Franciscan order) in seventeenth-century Calvinist Transylvania from the point of view of a defensive activity belonging to a Catholicism strongly affected by the Protestant Reformation. Taking as a starting point the Romanian historiographical cliché arguing that the activity of the mendicant orders (Franciscans, Dominicans) has reached a final point in the year 1556 as a result of the impact of the Protestant Reformation's ideas and of the loss of the positions held by the Roman Church a century ago, the research proposes to explore the particularities of the confessional situation from the Calvinist Transylvania, emphasizing a continuity at the level of the Franciscan presences during the entire 17th century. Moreover, the analysis intends to outline the way in which the techniques used by the Franciscan missionaries have served to affront the popularity of the Protestant Reformation in the Transylvanian Principality; at the same time, the way in which they have been meant to restore the positions of the Roman Church in this territory at the end of the Middle Ages rather than generate new conversions. These aspects show us that in the seventeenth-century Transylvanian Principality we can talk about a "Counter-reformation" instead of a "Catholic Reformation", hypothesis that represents the substance of the new approach.

From the point of view of the written sources, we propose an innovation of the founts, exploring documents published in the European space and also documents identified in the Transylvanian Roman-Catholic Archives (The Archbishopric Archive, The Archive of Collection from Alba-Iulia and the Archive of Collection from Cluj) with the intention of a better evaluation of the particularities of the Transylvanian Catholicism. Not only the primary (direct) historical sources, but also the secondary literature prove to be of great importance for the historian: if the study of the secondary literature produced by the historians is compulsory for gaining a general approach upon a period and upon a historical process, on the other hand, the appeal to the primary historical founts is essential for verifying and validating the hypothesis found in the papers belonging to various specialists, enriching from a cantitative point of view the historical knowledge. In what concerns the methodology, a closer restructuring of the Catholic missions' universe and, of course, of the missionary strategies found in seventeenth-century Transylvania demans a cantitative analysis, focused on the numerical evaluation of certain aspects specific to the studied phenomena in order to test the causal hypothesis, as well as a qualitative approach, intended to ensure the comprehensive description of a phenomenon and to generate new directions in the historical investigation. In our case, the analogical method has proved to be of great importance. Taking as a starting point the Catholicism and the Catholic missionary strategies in post-tridentine Europe, we have made a comparison with the situation identified in seventeenth-century Transylvania so as to evaluate if we can admit a reflection of the European transformations or if we can talk about a particular evolution of the Transylvanian Catholicism in the matter of confessional options.

From the very beginning we have established a conceptual demarcation and we have considered it necessary to reject the old vision that says that the Counter-reformation and the Catholic Reform have been a predominantly conservatory reaction or a defensive answer formulated by the Roman Church towards the shock provoked by the Protestant Reformation and, of course, to outline the way in which both movements have had their roots in a common set of necessities and the modality in which both movements have shared numerous priorities. Both moments have tried to intensify and to spiritualize the popular piety, to elimin the "corruption" supposed to have been accumulated by the Christendom during its institutionalization in the last half of millenium, to eradicate the "superstition", to lay clearly the frontiers between sacred and secular and, finally, to stimulate the interior faith and the moral fervour of the laity. We think that the reflection of the Catholic perception and of the Protestant one of the divided Christendom implies much more profound and much more complex

evolutions that cannot be explained in a superficial manner, through the simple use of the terms “Catholic Reformation”, “Counter-reformation”, “Catholic renewal”, “early modern Catholicism”, all these concepts being only necessary tools in the restructuring of the general cadre of the history of the Roman Church in the post-tridentine epoch. As a result, following the German historians (Hubert Jedin, Heinz Schilling, Wolfgang Reinhardt), we have appealed during our research to notions such as “confessionalization”, “confessional culture” and “confessional age”.

In what regards the research structure, aware of the vastity of the analysed topic, we have dedicated the first part of the chapter entitled “*Catholic Reformation*”-“*Counter-reformation*”-*Catholic missions in Central-Eastern Europe in the 17th century* to the premises of the idea of *reformatio Ecclesiae* in the late Middle Ages, outlining the fact that every discussion about the Reformation should have as a starting point the events dated one century before the display of Martin Luther’s thesis (1517). In the late Middle Ages, from the end of the 14th century and during the entire 15th century, the Western Church has become the field for the Reformation’s seed, as it has been demonstrated by different innovative movements, such as the councillorism, the Lollards, the Hussites, *devotio moderna* and Humanism. The Christian nation has felt the necessity for a clear instruction through the doctrinaire preaching, for a solid and well-defined theology (that could be explained by an educated, renewed and disciplined clergy, who could be able to assume his pastoral responsibilities). The organized expression of the reforming movements has been given by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the council deliberations touching parallelly dogmatic and reform aspects since there have been three major problems to deal with-fixing the dogma, reforming the faithful life and pacifying the Christendom through the reduction of the “dissidents” at the same “flock”. Trent has brought an answer to the disintegrating forces found in *Christianitas*, appealing to the Roman and papal unity and stating that the Holy See has been the unique structure able to avoid the emergence of the “deviations” within the Catholicism. What has been missing from the tridentine equation has been exactly the individual formative action, needed for the education of the consciences: the zeal of the few and the religious fervour of the largest part of the faithful have not managed to change the hypocrite atmosphere and the rule of a life that has been searching an “accommodation” between the Christians and God, the same *fedeli* that have accepted the ecclesiastical decisions, but that have aimed at the salvation of the personal welfare.

In this chapter we have also proposed a new reading of the Protestant Reformation and of the Catholic Reformation, analyzing briefly the motivations that have laid behind each

movement's success. Luther's answer has proved to be more consonant with the modernity, with the shaping of the old continent after the new territorial dislocation of the power: the appeal to the Christian freedom, to the universal priesthood of the faithful and the direct approach to the Bible have been principles that have allowed on one hand, to meet the individual demands and on the other hand, to mediate between the spiritual authority, the government of the Church (understood as visible structure) and the secular authority, the State, the princes. Nor the Counter-reformation's modernity can be underrated: the measures regarding the discipline and the christianization, the reforms related to the Church administration, the dissolution of the primary, archaic power relations, the stimulation of individualism, the accentuation of the values and activism' internalization (the main supporters being the Jesuits), the impulse given to the State so as to ensure the social assistance, the modification of the European ethnocentrism (the missions) and its relations with a new didactic system, with new political themes and new economic ethics have been elements that have challenged and have called in question the Protestant monopole upon the modernity. As a matter of fact, we consider that the evolutions that have shaped the post-tridentine Catholicism must be related to the larger context of the process of "confessionalization" or "confessional construction" developed in Europe-a predominantly *top-down* approach meant to explain the constitution of the religious identities and based on the emergence of different denominations and, of course, of various "confessional cultures". In what regards the territory of Central-Eastern Europe, one must observe the fact that the process of confessionalization has developed itself on a multi-confessional ground, becoming a regional, local phenomenon and not necessarily initiated by the central authority.

Of a great importance for the confessional evolution of the old continent have proved to be the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the Peace of Westphalia (1648), the 1648 moment consecrating the European final division in distinct confessions without taking into consideration the papal protests. The European political organization, unitary and submitted to the Pope up to that moment, has been replaced by a system based on the balance of the Great Powers, independently of the religious beliefs: the medieval religious unity has been followed by the confessional pluralism, by the imposition of a cult by the authorities to practice a religion differing from the officially recognised confession, by the close cooperation between the civil power and the religious one, by the theoretic recognition of the politics' submission to the moral, whereas the major influence exerted by the head of the Church regarding the ecclesiastical problems' solving has been replaced with the gradual, but inevitable process of the laicization of the political life.

We have considered it necessary to insist on the policy of the Holy See in the post-tridentine age in order to remake the Rome's principal action directions in the context in which after the 1648 moment, the Papacy has left the circle of the Great Powers and has found itself in the situation of giving an answer to the challenge of the Roman universalism launched by the apparition of new models of territorial Churches, having the common characteristic of identifying themselves with the political power of the newly-emergent modern states. We are talking about a gradual revival of the theory of the pontifical primate, an antique concept, essential for the renewal of the papal monarchy opposed to the councillorism that has followed the Schism, but at the beginning of the modern epoch, the idea has been used in an innovative manner, in polemical replies against the Protestantism.

In relation with the policy of the Holy See in Europe, we have built the second part of this chapter by developing one of Rome's action directions regarding the revival of the pontifical monarchy, the vitality of the renewal specific to the Catholic Church manifesting itself through an intensification of the missionary activity. The papacy's interest for the North and Central Europe has gained and accentuation after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), because having reached the conclusion that the reconciliation with the Protestants is no longer possible, the Catholicism has started to search for new supporters in the North and Eastern parts of the continent, basing itself on the individual conversions. The post-tridentine Catholicism has been a militant and missionary one, the mission meaning in this period the Catholic Reformation and the ecclesiastical reorganization. We have paid attention to the concept of "Catholic mission", outlining the fact that during the first 15 centuries of the Christian era, variations of the Latin word *missus* (*mittere*) have been used rarely; the earliest authors (Ignatius of Antioquia, Justin the Martyr) have used the term "apostle", deriving from the Greek word ἀποστέλλειν (*apostellein*) and meaning "to send". Through the papal bulls, we have demonstrated that we cannot talk about the use of the concept of "Catholic mission" earlier than the 16th century, the Society of Jesus being the one that has generalised the use of the term "mission": the first Jesuit document included by pope Paul III in the bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* (1540) has started by referring to the propagation of the faith, but has introduced the term "mission". "Missioned" with the meaning of being sent has appeared in the *Constitutiones circa missiones* (1544-1545), one of the first drafts of the future Constitutions, in the seventh part of the Jesuit Constitutions where the person who sends the missions is whether the Pope, whether the Jesuit general, but also in the Jesuit vote (*votum de missionibus*). The decisive moment in the institutionalization of the Catholic missions has been represented by the

foundation of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* (1622). Initially the Congregation has assumed a double responsibility: to defend the Catholic religion before the “infedele” from the perspective of *missio ad gentes* and to defend the sacred patrimony of faith in the regions devastated by the “heresy”, from the perspective of restoring the unity of the Christian nation after the Reformation’s moment, so from the perspective of *missio ad intra*. From the two initial attributions, the first has predominantly developed itself; beginning with the year 1623, the Congregation started to exert its control upon the missions in an exclusively manner, assuming progressively for all the missionary territories the functions hold by various Roman congregations within the territories of the antique Christendom. Congregazione di Propaganda (*Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) or the Congregation for missions has become the central organism in propagating the faith, responsible for all the problematics concerning the Catholic missions: sending the missionaries, controlling the constitution of the missionary hierarchy, naming the vicars and the apostolic prefects, determining the territories and the responsibilities of different missionary congregations. At the same time, it has been brought into discussion the idea of a “domestic mission” related to the new experience or re-evangelization of the nations of the antique Christendom, that has received during the 17th century a structured expression in the so-called “popular missions” or “missions of the poor”. From this moment there has been a change in the relation between the Christian identity and the confessional alterity, defining as a Christian implying the knowledge of certain aspects: the element that has made a difference between the notion of “Christian identity” in the age of the printing and of the Protestant Reformation and the one dated earlier has been exactly the necessity of knowing and being educated.

The chapter entitled *The place of the seventeenth-century Calvinist Transylvania in the equation of the post-tridentine European Catholicism* has been dedicated to the relation between the Holy See, the Central Europe and the Ottoman territories, applying the analysis model proposed by the French historians Henri Godin and Yves Daniel, with the mention that the Christian, but fragile, endangered Europe, divided by the hostilities between the various churches, by excommunications and religious wars, becomes metaphorically speaking an India and, of course, not only a *paese di cristianità*, but also a *paese di missione*. At this point, we have tried to reconstitute various patterns of re-catholicization. In the hereditary territories/possessions of the Habsburgs (Austria, Styria, Tyrol, Carniola), the Counter-reformation has been promoted by the dynasty rather than by the bishops, the policy of the Wittelsbachs (and later of the Habsburgs) not being any more a simple answer to the

Protestantism: beginning with Albert V (1550-1579), Wilhelm V (1579-1598) and especially duke Maximilian I (1598-1651), the Wittelsbachs have tried to shape the idea of a *Bavaria sancta*, a sacred Bavaria where the Roman Catholicism/Orthodoxy and the ducal absolutism have interacted so as to build an uniform/unitary, authoritarian, pious and disciplined state. In Austria and Bohemia, the Catholic *Reconquista* until the peace of Westphalia (1648) has been initiated by the religious orders (Jesuits, Franciscans, Capuchins), cadre in which the bishops have used to choose their collaborators for the pastoral activity and preaching. As opposed to the bishoprics, the religious orders have represented a force in re-establishing the Catholicism, a valid information for the centralized Society of Jesus as well as for the provincial organization of those orders combining the medieval tradition and the modern one (Premonstratensians, Franciscans, Capuchins). After the Protestant Reformation and the Ottoman conquest, the destiny of the Catholic Church has become unsure in the Ottoman Hungary; for this reason, the arrival of the Bosnian Franciscans has had a major impact upon the life of the Catholic Hungarians, Croatians, Romanians and Bosnians living in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries. Beginning with the year 1612 the Jesuits have also begun a missionary activity in the territories found under Ottoman domination, benefitting from an important support of an exponent of the local clergy, the Bosnian Simone Matkovic, key-figure of the Catholic missions for more than 20 years. The centres of the Jesuit missions have been Belgrad and Pécs, but the Jesuit activity has not limited itself to these two residences; on the contrary, the members of the Society of Jesus have moved to the territories lived by Catholics and submitted to the Ottoman authority, whereas the Franciscans have limited themselves to the meridional regions. Compared to other Catholic preachers, operating in the territories under Ottoman domination, the Spiritual Sons of Saint Francis have managed to establish a closer relationship with the Ottoman authorities, being provided with a larger leeway in their apostolic activity. The Franciscans from Bosnia have managed to preserve their influence even after the territory has been occupied by the Ottomans; like the merchants and the bargainers for whom the Ottoman advance has meant the creation of a uniform commercial territory without frontiers and barriers, from Buda to Istanbul, the Franciscans from Bosnia-as members of the unique Catholic institution from the Balkans, recognized by the Turks-have been able to augment their influence within the Ottoman dominance. The Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* has tried many times to counter-balance the major presence of the Bosnian Franciscans, sending secular priests, educated in the Illyric College of Loreto. The Jesuits from Pécs, Andócs and Gyöngyösi, as well as the Franciscans from Szeged și Gyöngyösi have

struggled to meet the pastoral demands of the Catholic population through their itinerant missions and have assumed the bishops' attributions.

At this point, we have focused on Transylvania as Catholic missionary territory. After the Council of Trent (1545-1563), due to the apostolic nuncios, the Holy See has manifested its interest for the situation of the Christians living in the territories that should have been brought again to the Catholicism, and also for the responsibilities and the possibilities of the Catholic conversion. At 1580 Pope Gregory XIII has sent two apostolic nuncios, Pietro Cedulini, bishop of Nona, who should visit Constantinople and the meridional regions, while the Franciscan Boniface of Ragusa, bishop of Stagno should direct himself to the northern parts with the aim of collecting information regarding the situation of the Catholics living in Dalmatia, Bosnia, Slavonia, Croatia, Serbia and Hungary. Boniface should have visited Transylvania, but he has died at Timișoara, at the beginning of the year 1582. The Holy See's plans have included a visit in Transylvania and after the foundation of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, the situation of the Calvinist Principality and especially of the Catholic population living in the Szeklers' land, has occupied an important place in the Roman policy. At 1607 Antonio Velislavi, abbot of San Sergio and Bacco (Albania) and Ignatio Alegretti have been sent by the Pope and by the Holy Office in the Kingdom of Hungary, in the provinces of Posega, Lrieni and Timișoara, as well as in the surrounding areas in order to visit the Catholic population and to assist it in the soul's salvation. Transylvania has been integrated in the equation of the European post-tridentine Catholicism, so it has been included in the category of the missionary territories. Moreover, from the permanent dialogue Congregation-missionaries we can find out that Transylvania has not been included in the category of the *in partibus infidelium* missionary territories despite the fact that a bishop has not resided any more in this territory until the beginning of the 18th century. In the case of the seventeenth-century Transylvania, the term "missions" has not had the same significance as for the Catholic majoritarian territories, but it has shown first and foremost a flexible ecclesiastical organization, without a bishop, without properties, sometimes without churches, that has directly depended on Rome on the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*.

Another chapter of the research, entitled *Confessional tolerance and intolerance at the margins of the Christendom. The legal cadre of the Transylvanian Principality during the 17th century and the universe of the Catholic missions*, has been dedicated to the juridical universe that has shaped the religious coexistence and, of course, the Catholic missionary activity in the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional space of the Transylvanian Principality. We have started

from the simple question “Was Transylvania an ideal isle of religious freedom in a Europe in which thousands of persons have been massacred and condemned to death for their religious faith?”. One more time we have proved to show that the historical reality is far from the mythology by making a demonstration on the system of the “*religiae receptae*” that has functioned *de jure* in seventeenth-century Transylvania. At a first sight, it seems that we are dealing with a modern system, in which more ethnicities and confessions have established an accord upon the power exercising and the leading mechanisms’ functioning, the historians arguing the fact that the seventeenth-century Calvinist Principality has brought into discussion the elements of a “unique case of religious freedom” due to its big number of denominations and churches that could function freely in this territory. Despite the fact that it has been based on accepting the “other”, the sixteenth-seventeenth-century tolerance has assumed another significance, different from the contemporary meaning and becoming synonymous to another phase of discrimination, *de jure et de facto* in what regards the Romanian population and *de facto* in what concerns the Catholic population. If we are referring to sixteenth-seventeenth-century Transylvania, we do not have to think of the actual meaning of the concept of tolerance since in the mentioned period there has been no accepting and understanding the other confessions, but an accord between the central authority and the Estates as a *sine qua non* peace condition with the purpose of avoiding the intestine fights. In Transylvania’s case, we consider that we can talk about “permission”, “concession” and “tolerance”. It appears that the initiatives of the Catholic nobility have represented a demand regarding the “permission”, the “concession” gained from the prince, an aspect meaning “the official approval of the existence” of the Catholic group within the political and juridical system and not about “toleration”, because being tolerated has not allowed the access to the political sphere. The initiatives belonging to the Catholic nobles have consisted of being recognized as part of the system, of becoming the thing which the modern diplomacy has defined as “a pressing group based on religion”. The most important example in this respect, as the major proof that the situation of the Catholic population has not reached a *de facto* improving in spite of all the assurances of the Calvinist princes related to the religious freedom, comes from the year 1640, when the *Status catholicus* from Transylvania has formulated its discontents.

Another chapter of the present paper, entitled *Catholic missionaries in seventeenth-century Transylvanian Calvinist Principality*, has explored first of all the relation between the Transylvanian central authority and the Franciscan missionaries under the aspect of the positions, the obligations, the incomes. We have started from the idea that the religious policy

of the reformed princes (1604-1690) has centred on imposing the control upon the own Church and on implementing measures of social discipline on a confessional basis, but at the same time it has followed the extension of their own confession, supporting the currents and the personalities closed to Calvinism or simply getting involved in the situation of the other confessions since the Transylvanian princes have exerted a larger authority than the Hungarian kings. It is true that Gabriel Bethlen's reign has been characterized in the sphere of the ecclesiastical measures by a policy of religious tolerance, but this aspect cannot be explained through the prince's intention to favour certain confessions; on the contrary, it can be understood in the larger context of the predomination of the political aspects and not of the confessional ones. In the year 1615, an organism that has assumed the Catholic interests since the end of the 16th century has appeared for the first time in the Diet: *Status catholicus*. Consisting of clerics and laics, *Status catholicus* has been preoccupied with the school's administration and with other spheres of the Roman Church and-as representative of the Catholic Estate-has dealt with the extra-theological preoccupations of the Transylvanian Catholics since they have been leading a life as an isle in a Protestant ocean. So, a unique model of participation of the laity in the government and the ecclesiastical administration has emerged, having as a starting point a group of laics that have possessed a partial *potestas jurisdictionis* and that from the Catholic theocratic perspective has been an unusual fact.

The first Catholic vicars from the seventeenth-century can also be found during Gabriel's Bethlen reign, Martón Fehérdi (1618-1626) și Miklós Fehér (1626-1634). The vicars, elected within the ecclesiastical assemblies and confirmed by the prince have been the formal leaders of the Catholic Church from Transylvania since none of the bishops nominated by the emperor (as "apostolic king" of Hungary) have been recognized by the Pope or have resided in the territory. So important not only for the evolution of the Catholic Church from the Principality, but also for the situation of the Catholic missions have proved to be the concessions made by the prince George Rákóczi I to the Bosnian Franciscans franciscanilor observanți bosniaci, followed by the election of the Observant minorite Stefano de Salinis as general vicar. However, the Catholics's demand for a bishop has been rejected by the prince. The peace of Westphalia (1648), that has coincided with the last year of George Rákóczi's I reign has modified the official position against the Transylvanian Catholicism through the tightening of the laws against the Jesuits and through the accentuation of the Calvinist princes' opposition towards the Catholic missionaries and the Orthodox population: a contrasting reality with the

Catholic missionaries' beliefs in a progress of the apostolic activity after the death of the Calvinist prince.

Transylvania has continued to have during the entire seventeenth century different religious identities not because its princes have manifested "illuminated" ideas before the Illuminist current, but because it has been habited by numerous nationalities and because the central authority has remained fragile. When after 1630 the Rákóczi princes have considered that their *dominium* was stable enough, they have tried to transform *de facto* the Calvinism into a state religion, an aspect that has generated the persecution of the Catholic priests, particularly the Jesuits, that have been expelled *de facto* from Transylvania although they have been *de jure* tolerated. Hungary and, of course, Transylvania have become territories with a Catholic majority not in the years of the Counter-reformation terror (1670-1680), but during the 18th century when as a result of the Transylvanian Principality's annexation, it appears to be no longer another option to the Catholicism-the unique existent authority being the Catholic state of the Habsburgs that has been favouring openly the Catholics in all spheres of the public life, from the career possibilities to the opportunities of education and instruction.

The second section of this chapter has been dedicated to the reconstitution of the Franciscan missionaries' figures, of the activity centres and of the missionary supporters (The Transylvanian Catholic nobility). According to the Romanian historiography, the year 1556 has been perceived as the end of the Mendicant activity within the Transylvanian space. In spite of this, in the Ciuc region, even after the monks condemn in 1556, there has been functioning a Franciscan convent at Şumuleu-Ciuc (Csíksomlyó, Schomlenberg), the unique Catholic institution to be stable and organized on canonical principles. In what regards the consolidation of the Transylvanian Franciscan community, there have been proceeded on two directions: on one hand, the missionaries have been coming from the province of the Holy Saviour to which the Transylvanian Franciscans have belonged; on the other hand, there have been Bosnian Franciscan missionaries. The first mission of the Bosnian Franciscans established under the guidance of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* has been that from Timișoara, meaning that the missionaries have been moving into a territory defined by a vacuum of authority from the Catholic perspective. In 1626 Marco Bandini (Bandulović) that lately has been nominated the apostolic administrator of Moldavia, has founded a mission at Karasevo, in the Ottoman territory. Accompanied by another Franciscan, Bandini has been sent in this mission by Alberto Rengjich, bishop of Belgrad and Smederevo, concerned with the situation of the Catholics from the region of Timișoara.

From the year 1630 we can talk about an intensification of the missionary presences in the Transylvanian territory, this being also the year of arrival in Transylvania of Stefano de Salinis, Stefano of Lopara, Mariano of Sarajevo and father Elias, Franciscan missionaries coming from the Bosnia-Argentina province. An important step in the evolution of the Transylvanian Catholic missions has been made during the reign of George Rákóczi I, in the year 1632, when, according to the information given to the Congregation by Filippo a Camengrado in the year 1634, the Transylvanian prince has convoked the missionaries in the territory as a result of the initiatives of the Catholic nobles, the Catholic missionaries being provided with the religious freedom and the right of founding residence within the Principality. At the same time, beginning with the year 1635 we can observe the collapse of the Jesuit mission, the main attributions of the Society of Jesus regarding the spiritual assistance of the Transylvanian laity being undertaken by the Franciscans. Relevant in this respect are the mentions of the Bosnian Observant Franciscan Stefano of Lopara and of the Catholic noble in what concerns the number of the Jesuits still active in Transylvania-four; even if we can admit a deliberate decay on behalf of the Franciscan activity, we cannot neglect the fact that the Jesuit mission within the Calvinist Principality has lost its consistence, Jesuit presences being chronicled at (Daniel Vásárhely), Alba-Iulia (István Albensis, Gábor Simon), Caransebeş (János Sebessi), at the court of the Catholic nobles István Erdély (Gáspár Rajky) and of Franciscus Kornis (István Kornis).

In the year 1636 it has been founded the prefecture of Transylvania, consisting of five Franciscan residence (Şumuleu-Ciuc, Călugăreni, Albeşti, Teiuş, Lăzarea-Ciuc), being elected as prefect Stefano de Salinis, while four year later it has been instituted the new Observant custody of the Franciscans (Saint Stephen), separated by the mother-province of the Holy Saviour and including three Franciscan convents (Şumuleu-Ciuc, Călugăreni and Albeşti). In the year 1648 the prince George Rákóczi I has decided to allow the activity of two Franciscan residences within Transylvania (Şumuleu-Ciuc and Călugăreni), constraining the brothers to abandon the other convents (Albeşti, Teiuş, Lăzarea-Ciuc). In the year 1661 the Tartar attack has affected the Sicilian sees, being destructed the Franciscan convent from Şumuleu-Ciuc and being burned the church and the cells, the reconstruction of the convent beginning with the year 1665. At 6th of August 1666 the convent of Călugăreni has been occupied by the Hungarian Franciscans after a long period of time in which it has been the centre of the Bosnian Franciscans' activity; in spite of the actions of the Bosnian Franciscan Simone de Imota before the prince Mihail Apafi with the aim of receding the convent from Călugăreni to the Bosnians,

the Catholic Estates have rejected this concession. In an epoch definitely marked by the absence of the ecclesiastical personnel, the number of the souls that could have been converted has been too high: one could believe in the pieces of information shared by the Catholic missionaries according to which it has been possible to find a number of souls to be converted ten times bigger than the number of the *religiosi*. The missing element has been the support of the central authority and of the ecclesiastical structures that could have manifested their generosity: so as to gain the grace of the spiritual patrons there has been a tight fight from which the Franciscans have been the winners.

The chapter entitled *Catholic missionary discourse in seventeenth-century Calvinist Transylvania* has been based on the Catholic missionary literature and its importance as historical fount. We are talking about different series of documents, all of missionary character: letters, manuscript relations belonging to the missionaries or to the external perceivers with the purpose of bringing into notice to the superiors the situation of the apostolate and of supporting the other preachers; a few, but important reflections upon the method, conceived as autonomous systematizations, rich in questions and exemplary solutions addressed to the brothers sent in missions; prescriptions, recommendations from the superiors; different relations and biographies; and rarely, model for preaching, written by the missionaries for their brothers, all these being reunited under the generic term of “missionary literature”. The narration of the religious experiences by the Catholic missionaries has implied the intersection of the Gospel’s progress and of the ethnographic information. Of course that we cannot neglect another aspect, that of the missionary relation as instrument for informing the superior authorities in order to determine the disciplinary intervention. We have outlined the fact that the principal goal of the missionary reports has been that of providing the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* with an inventory of the situation of the Transylvanian Catholicism, so the missionary relations and correspondence have begun to assume a predominantly administrative character in this period. For the aim-territories of the Catholic missions, excepting the relations sent to the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, a particular type of document has been the report based on the questionnaire, considered by the Romanian historian Violeta Barbu as the first initiative of bureaucratic globalization from the history of the humanity since once evaluated and compared, the answers have constituted the primary material for building universal drafts for global strategies.

We have dedicated a part of this chapter to the evaluation of the Catholic missionary discourse from the perspective of the tradition and the innovation, in other words, of the relation

between the tridentine precepts and the traditional forms of devotion as components of the missionary discourse. The Catholic mission in Central-Eastern Europe has become aware of the ethnic and confessional diversity of the faithful, aspect that has determined an adaptation of the missionary discourse to the realities found in the territory and that has been able to confer success to the actions directed by the Catholic Reformation. In what concerns the institution of the Catholic missions in Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that they have been distributed or concentrated on well-defined spaces or divided by geographic items and missionary priorities. The components and the goals of the missionary programme related to the European Catholic Reformation have followed two action directions: recovering the positions lost because of the Protestant Reformation and the social, theological and educative discipline of the clergy and laity. This has also been the period that has channelled the missionary fervour *ad intram Christianitatis* and has reposed the Catholic offensive within Christendom by creating an autochthon clergy, by stimulating the loyalty towards Rome, by cultivating the good relations with the sovereigns, by respecting the traditions, the customs and the devotional practices of the people as well as re-bringing within the Roman Church the older communities and by using the prints and the vernacular languages when preaching and catechizing. The Franciscan missionaries have been interested in establishing a clear relation between the divinity and the laity, the post-tridentine Catholicism being situated at the antipole of the Protestant thought, rejecting the Protestant concept of *Deus solus* and promoting the social dimension of the faith. The post-tridentine Catholicism has promoted a return to the sacraments to whom it has attributed important significates, the attention paid to the sacraments being explained through their rejection by the Protestant Reformation and also through the return to the individual as “protagonist” of the sacrament. According to the opinion of Violeta Barbu, in the period of the Counter-reformation the sacraments have been imagined not as a cyclical, static reiteration of the community (family, community), but as the path the individual has to follow so as to achieve the Christian perfection and the soul’s salvation.

Surely one of the most consistent parts of the research can be found within the chapter entitled *Recordare Sancta Matre Ecclesia, quod steterim in conspectu tuo, ut loquerer pro eis bonum et averterem indignationem tuam ab eis. Defensive missionary strategies of the Catholic orders in seventeenth-century Transylvanian Principality*. We have tried to reconstitute first of all the instruction of the Franciscan missionaries that have been active in seventeenth-century Transylvania, emphasizing the fact that the life and the activity of the Catholic missionaries have been regularized and monitored by the Congregation which has had clear expectations

from its collaborators. The missionary discipline as mark of the tridentine instruction of the Catholic preachers and lately, under the patronage of the Congregation has represented a constant element of the missionary relations, the obedience transmitted to the Catholic preachers being obvious from the modality of addressing to the Propaganda: “master and mother of the missions”. The prudence, the enthusiasm and the charitable facts have been essential virtues, to which it has been added the total obedience, the discipline, expressed through the obligation of the annual report about the evolution and the situation of the mission. From 1623 it has been noticed that the success of each mission has depended on the primary knowledge of the language in which it has been made the predication, the topic of the liturgical and of communion language receiving important ethnical connotations and the missionaries giving numerous testimonies about the way in which they have managed to integrate themselves into the local reality. This is the reason why the Congregation has become more interested in organizing linguistic courses, obliging the missionaries to learn a language before travelling to the missionary territory, the knowledge of various idioms from different parts of the world being able to strengthen the effort deposited by the missionaries with the purpose of communicating with the autochthon population so as to determine its conversion or to preserve its Christian faith by initiating the laity in the doctrinaire principles and in the practices of a correct behaviour from a canonical point of view. At the same time, we have tried to point out the major attributions of the Transylvanian Franciscan missionaries, capturing their responsibilities in the educative (the instruction of the leading classes of the Catholic states within the Jesuit colleges), social (the social pacification, the social discipline) and the spiritual spheres (predication; the correction of the doctrinaire “errors” and “deviations”; the diffusion of a new conception about the sacramentary dogma; the development of original forms of collective religiosity; spiritual guidance in the individual path towards the perfection).

So as to make more accessible their message, the Catholic religious orders have formulated/elaborated a large range of strategies (of communication, of pacification, of stimulation the devotion, of disciplining) with the intention of maximizing the missionary effort in accordance with the particularities of their identity: the communication methods used by the Catholic missionaries have been varied and eclectic. Focusing on the means of communication preferred by the Franciscans, the historian Martin Elbel has considered that these methods have integrated two fundamental, but at the same time contrasting dimensions: the traditions inherited, the identity of the order with a focus on the cult of the saints and the nature of the confraternities and the necessity of adapting to the particular conditions of the mission. The

method used from the very beginning by the Franciscans has been one opposed to what has mentioned the revival of the Roman Church: the attitude chosen by the Franciscan *religiosi* has not been the violence, but the dialogue.

The strategies/techniques used by the Franciscans during the 17th century have included mainly the print, the orality, the images such as the engravings, the paintings and the sculptures, the music and the theatre, elements that the brothers have involved in the administration of the sacraments, in the organization of the religious ceremonies, in the celebration of the rites of passage, in the realization of the exorcisms. In the Ottoman Hungary and, especially in Transylvania, the printing has played a less important role in the Catholic propaganda due to the high level of illiteracy (the theological written debates between the Catholic priests and the Protestant pastors has been limited to a numerically reduced, educated public) of the population and the large number of spoken languages (Hungarian, German, Croatian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Turkish), the missionaries perceiving these territories as a real Babylon. The orality has played an important role within the great diversity of Franciscan missionary strategies, the preaching being developed under the sign of the challenging the will and the intellect, being based on the corporal and affective implication and being structured in proper sermons, catechetical instructions, processional preaching, segments of devotions and practices of piety. As a result of the orality of the missionary sermons and of the religious debates, we are not able to give detailed information regarding their content, but certainly the missionaries who have been active in Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania have dealt with numerous difficulties of linguistic nature that have not passed unobserved by the eye of Counter-reformation's Rome.

With the purpose of transmitting a message to the laic population of Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania, the visual propaganda-images, sculptures, ceremonies, processions-so important in the whole Catholic universe of the Counter-reformation age, has become one more relevant in the case of the "frontier Catholicism", the missionaries being conscious of the decisive role of the visual elements in persuading the faithful. So many objects appearing to be common for Italy have been perceived as rarities in Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania, being admired and appreciated for their value. During the displacement supposed by the apostolic activity within the towns and villages, the missionaries have distributed massive quantities of objects of this kind, particularly images of small dimensions and medallions with the Virgin Mary and the saints. The necessities of the missionary practice and the establishment of the conversions through the ecclesiastical edifices have been doubled by a religious imaginative

and sensible message, with finalities proving to be efficient for the devotional practice of the laity. The religious image, generated by the elements that the historians have defined as *Biblia picta* has supported and strengthened the missionary offensive in an epoch in which the Catholic Reformation, through its iconographical, artistic programme of baroque nature, has affronted the Lutheran “heresy” and has reproduced the triumphant victory of the Catholicism against the “heresy”.

Probably the most important missionary technique has remained the compromise, the knowledge of the local particularities of the Transylvanian Catholicism determining certain compromises regarding the religious practices. Why these compromises? On one hand, we are talking about the perpetuation of the rituals and popular practices in spite of the division of the Churches and on the other hand, we have to admit the accords as originated in a necessity of practical nature-ensuring the peaceful coexistence between the Catholics, the Orthodox and the Protestants.

Finally, the chapter analyses the preaching, the catechization and the foundation of schools in relation with the trinomial “confessionalization”-“modernization”-“social discipline”. It is important to outline the major role of the catechism in transmitting the elementary notions related to the Catholic confession. From the moment in which the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* has begun to concentrate its attention on Transylvania as a missionary territory, the missionary relations providing Rome with information have been talking about the school foundations. Sending the youth to study has constituted a proper way to make more accessible the devotional message meant to be transmitted to the faithful and of course, to bring new souls within the Catholic faith; the absolvents have returned to their natal territories as teachers within the theological seminars where they have adapted the Roman reformatory ideals to the local circumstances. With few exceptions, the Catholic devotional literature that has circulated in Transylvania during the first half of the 17th century has been printed outside the Principality, a tendency that has continued until the last decades of the 17th century. We cannot deny the fact that the Franciscan hagiographical literature has been addressed to a limited audience, being read by the clergy, by the urban patriciate as well as by the noble patrons to whom the books have been dedicated. In spite of this, the ideas contained by the Franciscan literature have been aiming at a larger public, reason that has explained the considerable efforts of the brothers to “export” the books outside the external universe of the order and of the reduced circle of laic supporters.

A typography has been founded at Șumuleu-Ciuc by the Franciscan János Kájoni in the year 1675. According to the founding documents, the typography has been intended to serve the brothers' and the other Catholics' necessities: *pro necessitate Missionis Apostolicae et Catholicorum huius regni*. The seventeenth-century Catholic missionaries have developed a work under the sign of the "evangelization", being perceived as "people of method", an aspect that has been demonstrated by the rhythm and the programme of the devotional exercises, by the arguments of the sermons, by the way of speaking and setting the fundamentals for the "long-term mission".

The last chapter, entitled *The impact of the Catholic missions in seventeenth-century Calvinist Transylvania* has proposed to analyse the participation of the Transylvanian laics in the religious life as a consequence of the Franciscan missionary message and, of course, their role in the survival of the Catholic confession in the Calvinist Principality. The missions have represented just a minor part of the ecclesiastical process of mass acculturation during the Counter-reformation age, an action that has been integrated in the larger context of monitoring and reorganization evolving at a cultural, devotional and religious level within the Roman Church. The impact of the Franciscan activity and, of course, the success/failure of the Catholic missions in the Calvinist Principality can be evaluated through the relation with the laity, through the active implication of the laics in the religious life as a result of the missionary discourse. In Central-Eastern Europe the popularity gained by the Franciscan order during the 17th century can be explained due to the advantage held by this order against the newly-founded orders (Jesuits, Capuchins): the tradition, based on the cult of the Franciscan saints, a *sine qua non* condition for the order's existence, for its longevity and its legitimacy. The seventeenth-century reports have brought into spotlight the cooperation between the ecclesiastical personnel (seculars, regulars) and the Catholic nobles with the purpose of eliminating the faith "errors" and of promoting a devotional pattern, an authentic model of Christian life; the active participation of the Catholic elite and the necessary support for the development of the Catholic missions within a predominantly Calvinist territory have constituted essential elements in the equation of Transylvanian Catholicism's survival. In spite of the success gained at a European level, we think that in seventeenth-century Transylvania the efficacy of the Franciscan activity has not meant re-bringing new souls within the Roman faith, persuading new supporters, but defending and consolidating a Catholic conscience in the case of a Catholic population. For this reason, the information provided by the missionaries must be analysed critically; the larger the number of conversions is, the lesser the level of reliability is.

The sources provided by the missionaries have often registered elements of geography, biology, economy, politics and culture specific to the mission territories. All these writings have remained texts marked by the subjectivity of the authors, reflecting the way in which the Catholic preachers have perceived the world of the “others”, the diverse, the distinct. But we have emphasized that the other voices have been rare: the voices of the people met during the missions, converted or not, manifesting curiosity or hostility, or just the voices of the largest part that has proved a silent indifference. For this reason, the restructuring of the voices belonging to the various social categories has imposed the appeal to other indicators: the third order, the sodalities, the manifestations and the religious practices specific to the popular piety such as the pilgrimage, the chapels and the indulgences. We must not neglect the fact that in the post-tridentine age the Jesuit order has not represented the unique model of piety and social discipline, as the Catholic nobility, the main supporter of the missionaries has not been a passive receptor of a top-down “confessionalization”. On the contrary, the Catholic nobles have been active participants in the process of Catholic renewal, have established distinctions between the religious orders, being “vocal” through their freedom to choose, through their patronage and prayers and remaining tributary to specific devotional patterns. The hostilities and the tensions met between the Franciscan and the Jesuit orders are an important argument for the idea that in the post-tridentine age the catholicization has become a consensual and integrative process and not an authoritarian, of division one. The devotional associations under the spiritual guidance of the Catholic religious orders (confraternities, congregations, sodalities) have played a major role in the urban religion of the late Middle Ages, but about their ingress and spread in the Catholic rural space we can talk only after 1650. They have been truly described as “the primary, organized expression of the Catholic religious laic life from the 13th century to the 18th century”, proving to be relatively flexible institutions: they have been utilized by the religious orders or by the parish priests with the purpose of promoting new forms of devotion or of directing the popular piety to existent practices, but at the same time they have been founded by laic groups or by rural communities. A Marian sodality, but under the spiritual guidance of the Franciscans, as a proof of the laic preferences regarding the devotional aspirations can be identified in the seventeenth-century Calvinist Transylvania, the *informatio* dated 1648, the report from 1649 and the album of this sodality discovered in the Transylvanian Roman-Catholic Archives from Alba-Iulia being of great importance for identifying its members and, of course, for evaluating the involvement of the Transylvanian laics in the sphere of the religious life. Taking into consideration the confessional pluralism and, of course, the

competition/hostility between the numerically reduced Catholic community and the representatives of other confessions (especially the Protestant denominations), a sodality dedicated to the Virgin Mary has been able to ensure the fraternal support necessary to encourage its members in the Catholic faith.

A particular role in the devotion of the Catholic laity in seventeenth-century Transylvania has been held by the pilgrimage. During the 17th century, the target-object of the pilgrimage from Șumuleu-Ciuc has been represented by the miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary with Jesus. The sanctuary of the Virgin Mary from Șumuleu-Ciuc has been built in the year 1440 by Joan of Hunedoara, the workings being continued by his son, Mathias Corvin. Assigned to the Franciscans that have had a convent in the proximity, the sanctuary has become in a short period of time a centre for diffusing the Marian cult as well as an outpost of the Catholicism in the Transylvanian Principality. The pilgrimages have contributed to the creation and the consolidation of the process of confessionalization crossed by the Catholic Church since from the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, the Jesuits, the reformed bishops and also other Catholic leaders have promoted the pilgrimage as a strong anti-Protestant measure, as a “spiritual medicine for the heretical poison”. As we move within the hierarchy of the sacred spaces, crossing from structures of big dimensions, such as convents, cathedrals and parish churches to buildings of small dimensions (chapels, sites), crucifixes and statues exposed in the open air, we arrive at a “natural” category of sacred spaces. These have included natural elements, springs, trees, considered to be gifted with miraculous powers.

Beginning with the medieval period, the altars have fulfilled like the devotional images various functions, from prayer and meditation tools to efficient elements in transmitting and facilitating the mysteries of the faith for the illiterate people, in memorizing visually the scenes of *Passio Christi*, the life of the Virgin Mary, the life of the saints and also in stimulating the devotion. To these functions we have to add another dimension specific to the medieval altars, these constituting a proper indicator not only for the theological messages meant to be transmitted to the Christians, but also for the devotional demands and necessities of the laity. One of the main goals of the tridentine Reform has been not necessarily to suppress the local liturgical traditions, but to universalize, to generalize the particular, being sure that the regional and local forms of devotion should operate within the cadre shaped by Rome. Such a programme imagined by Rome has stimulated the local devotional variety to such extent that the popular initiatives in the sphere of the religious life have led to the celebration of different feasts dedicated to various saints and also to the localization of the great holidays. At 1644

when writing to the Congregation referring to the progress scored by his activity of apostolate within the Calvinist Principality, Fulgenzio da Jesi has assimilated the results obtained due to the catechization to the success achieved as a result of providing the Christians with indulgences. The early modern Catholicism has been and has remained a ritual religion, the faithful returning enthusiastically to rituals as an answer to the Lutheran critics against the insignificant rituals of the medieval Christendom. The popular Catholicism has remained in its substance during the entire seventeenth century a communal and public religion, only during the 18th century transforming itself into a trend towards the individual, private religious devotion. In spite of the raising popularity of the individual devotional practices promoted by the clergy, the popular Catholicism has not ceased to exist before the efforts of the clerical and laic elite of regularizing, systematizing and simplifying the religious practices. The laity has continued to get involved regularly into a series of different, but interconnected practices, reaffirming and proving the validity of Robert Scribner's assertion related to the implication of the Catholic faithful in the sphere of the religious life before the Protestant Reformation: "the majority of the individuals has experienced the religion from the point of view of the ritual practice at least under two forms. One of them has been through the passage rites, marking the phases of the individual life cycle. The second has been through the annual cycle of rituals reunited under the form of the liturgical year".

In conclusion, through our research we have outlined the particularities of the Counter-reformation in seventeenth-century Transylvania, elaborating a personalized analysis model for the Catholic missions within the territory situated at the margins of the *Christianitas*, showing that the existence of a cooperation between the Franciscan missionaries and the Transylvanian laics has prepared the path for the Catholic Reformation initiated by the Habsburgs beginning with the 18th century. Imagined as a defensive movement, of affronting the various Protestant denominations and of restoring the Catholic institutional structures, the Counter-reformation has assumed in Transylvania the dimension of a campaign directed from the centre (Rome, the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*) with the purpose of dealing with a constant danger generated by the so-called "rebels" that have abandoned the "true" Church by defying its authority and by adopting the primate of the Bible. Often the missionary strategies imagined by the Holy See have been adjusted to the local realities, the key of the re-catholicization in Transylvania being the appeal to the traditional Catholicism, not to that guided by the tridentine precepts. From this point of view, the Jesuit activity and lately the Franciscan apostolate have assumed a predominantly militant and restoring character and not a reformative one, being able

to talk about a Catholic Reformation only after the Principality's annexation by the Habsburgs at the end of the 17th century. Taking into consideration the fact that such an analysis does not manifest the exigence of being exhaustive, we consider that the present approach could offer new historiographical perspectives to be used within future independent researches that should encourage the development of the Romanian historical and historiographical domains.