

## Considerations on The History of the Saxon Church in Reghin before the Lutheran Reformation

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**Abstract:** *This article presents the administrative situation of the Saxon church in Reghin and its surroundings before the Lutheran Reformation, within the Catholic archdeaconry of Ozd. The second subchapter presents the divisions of land and property in the Reghin area during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The queen was placed on noble land, following a royal donation in the thirteenth century. The „city” of Reghin was divided between the four sons of the magistrate Thomas de Losoncz, with a church built on each side. In addition, there was a church belonging to the Saxon population, as well as a temporary monastery.*

**Keywords:** Transylvania, Catholics, landlords, Ozd archdeaconry, decanal districts.

The history of the Saxon church in Reghin has not been extensively studied. Information on its past can be found in the city’s monograph published in Bochum in 1991, signed by Ernst Philippi and Wigant Weltzer.<sup>1</sup> This is based on notes by Helmut Czoppelt at the Transylvanian Archive in Gundelsheim/Neckar (Germany), and is largely summarized in architectural aspects, chronology of repairs and donations. Based on existing sources, this study aims to clarify some shortcomings in the field, such as expanding the jurisdiction of the church district of Reghin-Saxon, and the relationship between landowners in the area and existing churches during the period.

### The Church District of Reghin within the Archdiocese of Ozd

We can find data regarding church life in royal Hungary, and, respectively, the parish villages and the administrative forms of which Reghin was part, from the lists of papal taxes for the years 1332-1337.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hungarian historian Ortvy Tivadar tried to represent the church organization of Hungary at that time using these documents.<sup>3</sup> According to him, in the German-colonized region of northern Transylvania, as well as the deanery of Bistrița (*decanatus of Bystricia*) there was the archdeaconry of Ozd, which included 58 villages. This superior deanery of Ozd was divided into two deaneries: the deanery of Ozd with 16 villages and the deanery of Reghin with 42 villages. Regarding this unequal division and remarkable delimitation (see Map 2), the author gives no explanation.

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst H. Philippi, Wigant Weltzer, *Sächsisch-Regen-Die Stadt am Berge. Lebensbilder aus der Vergangenheit einer kleinen Stadt in Siebenbürgen*, Bochum, Schürman&Klages, 1991, pp. 69-111.

<sup>2</sup> *Monumenta vaticana historiam Regni Hungariae illustrantia, Seria I, Tom. I: Rationes collectorum pontificiorum in Hungaria 1281-1375*, Budapest, Esso, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Ortvy Tivadar, *Magyarország egyházi földleírása a XIV század elején, a pápai tizedjegyzékek alapján feltüntetve* [The ecclesiastical land description of Hungary at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, based on the papal tithe registers], Budapest, Históriaantik Könyvesház, 1892.

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Map 1: *The Sub-division of the Diocese of Transylvania at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.* Reghin (Germ. Reen) was the seat of the deanery *Regun* in the archdeaconry of Ozd (Source: Köpeczi Béla, *Kurze Geschichte Siebenbürgens*, Budapest, 1990, p. 209) (1. Headquarters of archdeaconry; 2. Headquarters of decanal district; 3. Boundaries of diocese; 4. Boundaries of archdeaconry)

Franz Zimmermann rejects this division on the grounds that it does not correspond with the documents.<sup>4</sup> The peripheral position of the 16 villages of the deanery of Ozd presupposes a later establishment of these localities, because these were parts of the compensation that the Hungarian kings gave to various noble families of these countries, which they damaged during the wars. The settlements belonging to the deanery of Reghin were probably all established on noble land, and were all later given to Hungarian noble families.

The legal-ecclesiastical position may have played a significant role here, which is outlined in the remarkable division of the Archdiocese of Ozd. That everything was still in motion here is shown by the development of the deanery of Reghin, dependent on the bishop, to a free deanery of the Saxon clergy.<sup>5</sup> „[...] *This development seems to have been possible*”, writes Gustav Rösler, „[...] *also in the field of the Transylvanian episcopate, by the decrease of the archbishopric power. It is at the same time an*

<sup>4</sup> Franz Zimmermann, „Zur siebenbürgisch-deutschen Geschichtsschreibung, besonders über die Besiedlungsfrage”, in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, volume 6, 1901, pp. 705-738.

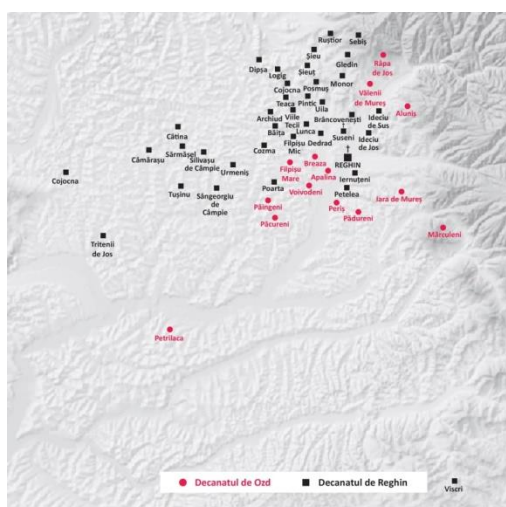
<sup>5</sup> Gustav Rösler, „Zur Geschichte der Stadt Sächsisch-Regen (Reen) und ihrer sächsischen Umgebung bis zum Aussterben der Arpaden”, in *Siebenbürgisches Archiv*, volume 7, 1968, p. 229.

*emancipation from the episcopal power, whose omnipotence and violence have made self-protection necessary. Communities and priests defended and made possible their rights as German settlers, following the model of the luckiest brothers raised on the safe Saxon royal land”*.<sup>6</sup>

When, on January 25, 1403, the Saxon chapter complained to Pope Boniface IX (1389-1404) against the abuses of the Transylvanian bishop, we find for the first time the deanery of Reghin on the side of the other Saxon deaneries.<sup>7</sup> This transformation from being an episcopal deanery to a free deanery of the Saxon clergy probably caused the separation of all parishes with Hungarian population west of the Comlod brook, which contained 12 communities. From various mentions in the specialized literature it appears that about 30 villages remained in the Reghin deanery. On February 12, the same pope asked the dean of Sibiu to defend the other deanships, including that of Reghin, from the abuses of the bishop of Alba-Iulia.<sup>8</sup>

Overview of parishes in the archdeaconry of Ozd (after Ortvay):

a) *The Deanery of Ozd* (red; in parentheses are the documentary mentions from before 1332). 1. Apalina, 2. Breaza (1319), 3. Pădureni, 4. Vălenii de Mureș (1319), 5. Iara de Mureș, 6. Periș, 7. Mărculeni, 8. Petrilaca, 9. Filpișu Mare (1391), 10. Păișgeni, 11. Râpa de Jos (1319), 12. Păcureni, 13. Voivodeni, 14. Glodeni (1236), 15. Dumbrăvioara (1319), 16. Adrian.



Map 2: Overview of parishes in the archdeaconry of Ozd and Reghin

b) *The Deanery of Reghin*: (black) 1. Cojocna (1213), 2. Viscri, 3. Batoș (1319), 4. Bohard (now deserted), 5. Comlod (1315), 6. Dedrad (1319), 7. Archiud (1293), 8. Băița (1315), 9. Gledin (1319), 10. Dipșa, 11. Ideciu de Jos (1319), 12. Ideciu de Sus (1319), 13. Viile Tecii (1322), 14. Cătina (1327), 15. Cămărașu (1325), 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 229.

<sup>7</sup> *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, edited by Franz Zimmermann, Carl Werner, Georg Müller, Hermannstadt, 1902, (1391-1415), III, p. 290, document no. 1485.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 294-296, document no. 1487.

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Cosma (1231), 17. Kebolcut (1297, now deserted), 18. Logig (1322), 19. Poarta (1319), 20. Monor (1316), 21. Ormenișul de Câmpie (1321), 22. Posmuș (1319), 23. Pintic, 24. Filpișul Mic (1319), 25. Petelea, 26. Suseni (1319), 27. Reghin (1228), 28. Ierņuteni, 29. Sângiorgiu de Câmpie (1329), 30. Sârmașu Mic, 31. Ruștior (1319), 32. Sebiș (1319), 33. Șieu (1319), 34. Șieuț (1319), 35. Trittenii de Jos, 36. Teaca (1318), 37. Tușinu (1325), 38. Brâncovenești (1228), 39. Uila (1319), 40. Uifalău, 41. Uifalăul de Câmpie, 42. Silivaș (1329).

Of the listed parishes, only the following villages with a German population remained in the deanery of Reghin: 1. Archiud, 2. Petelea, 3. Batoș, 4. Dedrad, 5. Dipșa, 6. Viile Tecii, 7. Ideciu de Jos, 8. Ideciu de Sus, 9. Ierņuteni, 10. Filpișul Mic (or Saxon), 11. Vălenii de Mureș, 12. Voivodeni, 13. Băița, 14. Gledin, 15. Logig, 16. Poarta, 17. Monor, 18. Uifalăul Săsesc, 19. Păsmuș, 20. Pintic, 21. Suseni, 22. Râpa de Jos, 23. Cojocna, 24. Reghinul Săsesc, 25. Ruștior, 26. Sebiș, 27. Șieu, 28. Șieuț, 29. Sângiorgiu de Câmpie, 30. Teaca, 31. Uila, 32. Albeștii Bistriței, 33. Batoș.

The capitulary of Reghin is also mentioned in other works from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, in *Chronografia Transilvaniae* from 1550, Georg Reichersdorff notes „[...] *Regnense Capitulum habet pagos plus quam triginta*”.<sup>9</sup> In 1564, Johan Andreas Gromo mentions in his summary made to King John Sigismund (1556-1571): „[...] *The chapter of Reghin has currently 30 communities*”.<sup>10</sup> A century later, in 1666, Johannes Tröster mentioned the chapter of Reghin with 30 villages.<sup>11</sup> The same was noted by Kreckwitz in 1668.<sup>12</sup>

Tröster, who was forced to stay in the Brâncovenești castle for almost a month in 1658, taking refuge from the „[...] *tyranny of the Tartars*”, did not list the 30 villages. Kreckwitz did not provide a list either, and as such this information is unattainable. However, we know that after the Reformation, the chapters Teaca and Șieu were mentioned together with the chapter of Reghin. According to Peter Bod (1768), the chapters of Teaca and Șieu had the following parishes (without indicating the year):<sup>13</sup>

-the 13 communities of the chapter Teaca: 1. Teaca, 2. Archiud, 3. Sălcuța, 4. Băița, 5. Viile Tecii, 6. Logig, 7. Herina, 8. Ocna, 9. Posmuș, 10. Pintic, 11. Jimboru Săsesc, 12. Frunzeni, 13. Uila.

-the 19 communities of the chapter Șieu: 1. Șieu, 2. Bidiu, 3. Budacul Mic, 4. Orheiu Bistriței, 5. Fântânele (former Iuș, Szász-Újős), 6. Galații Bistriței, 7. Iacobeni, 8. Arcalia, 9. Chintelnice, 10. Chiraleș, 11. Mateiaș, 12. Morii, 13.

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<sup>9</sup> Johann Georg Schwandtner, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum veteres ac genuini*, volume I, Vienna, Johann Paul Kraus, 1746, p. 778.

<sup>10</sup> Johann Andreas Gromo: „Übersicht des ganzen im Besitz des Königs Johann (Sigismund) von Siebenbürgen befindlichen Reiches und allen Merkwürdigkeiten desselben”, in *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, N. F., volume 2, 1857, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> Johann Tröster, *Das Alt- und Neu-Teutsche Dacia. Das ist: Neue Beschreibung des Landes Siebenbürgen*, Nürnberg, Kramer, 1666, p. 203.

<sup>12</sup> Georg Kreckwitz, *Totius Principatus Transylvaniae Accurata Descriptio. Das ist ausführliche Beschreibung des gantzen Fürstentums Siebenbürgen*, Nürnberg und Frankfurth, 1668, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Georg Müller, „Die deutschen Landkapitel in Siebenbürgen und ihre Dechanten 1192-1848. Ein rechtsgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Landeskirche in Siebenbürgen”, in *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, volume XLVIII, 1934, p. 64.

Corvinești, 14. Blăjenii de Sus, 15. Sărata, 16. Simionești, 17. Șieu Măgheruș, 18. Blăjenii de Jos, 19. Țigău.

The 21 communities of the chapter Reghin: 1. Reghinul Săsesc, 2. Petelea, 3. Batoș, 4. Dedrad, 5. Ideciu de Jos, 6. Ideciu de Sus, 7. Dipșa, 8. Iernuțeni, 9. Văleni de Mureș, 10. Voivodeni, 11. Gledin, 12. Monor, 13. Suseni, 14. Râpa de Jos, 15. Ruștior, 16. Sebiș, 17. Șieut, 18. Sângiorgiu de Câmpie, 19. Albeștii Bistriței, 20. Brâncovenesti, 21. Filpișu Mic.

It is doubtful whether Sângiorgiu and Viscri belonged to the Reghin chapter, as both villages were isolated. According to Robert Csallner from Bistrița, the chapter of Reghin included 11 villages after the Reformation, namely: Reghin, Petelea, Batoș, Dedrad, Iernuțeni, Filpișu Mic, Ideciu de Sus, Ideciu de Jos, Suseni, Șieut and Magyarrégen.<sup>14</sup>

At the establishment of the church donations in 1563, only 8 communities were mentioned: Reghinul Săsesc, Petelea, Batoș, Dedrad, Ideciul de Sus, Ideciul de Jos, Suseni and Șieut.<sup>15</sup>

The disappearance of the German population in three villages, Iernuțeni, Filpiș and Monor, results from events described later by the historian Friedrich Tetsch: „[...] In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Șieut, because it was completely destroyed and devastated, was abandoned by the Synod of 1666 at the request of the Dean of Reghin, and deleted from the registers of the evangelical communities and of the chapter of Reghin”<sup>16</sup>.

It seems that in 1673, Calvinists from the Hungarian Kingdom were brought to Magyarrégen (the Hungarian part of Reghin city today), and occupied the church-a former chapel, which in 1910 was transformed into a church-and drove away its evangelical priest.<sup>17</sup> According to Scharsius, Reghin had seven brothers (clerics) in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; however, with the authority of Mihai Teleki, a Hungarian Calvinist was installed as a priest in Magyarrégen.<sup>18</sup> In the same locality, three evangelical priests are mentioned: Ambrosius Wagnerus in 1627, Thomas Leprich in 1673 and Johannes Adleff between 1744 and 1748,<sup>19</sup> whose reference as a priest to Ideciu de Jos (between 1748-1756) determined the relocation of the Saxons from this village to Reghin city.<sup>20</sup> As an independent church community, Magyarrégen is not mentioned anywhere. It is possible that it has always been included within the community of Reghin city.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Robert Csallner, „Aus der ältesten Vergangenheit der deutschen Ansiedlungen im Norden Siebenbürgens”, in *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, no. 3, 1908.

<sup>15</sup> Georg Daniel Teutsch, *Urkundenbuch der evangelischen Landeskirche A.B. in Siebenbürgen*, volume I, Hermannstadt, Franz Michaelis, 1862, p. 183, no. 86.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Siebenbürgen. Band 1, 1150-1699*, Hermannstadt, 1921, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Friedrich Teutsch, *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche*, volume I, p. 518, document no. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Schmeizel, *De statu Ecclesiae Lutheranorum in Transilvania*, Jena, 1772, p. 82, no. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Siebenbürgische Bibliothek Gundelsheim, Sammlung Alzner: Erich Alzner, *Konrektoren, Rektoren, Prediger, Plebane Pfarrer und Dechanten des alten Sächsisch-Regener Kapitels. Zusammengestellt nach den Unterlagen im Reener Kapitelsarchiv*, Manuscript, 1940.

<sup>20</sup> Josef Haltrich, „Zur Geschichte von Sächsisch-Regen seit den letzten hundert Jahren”, in *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, volume III, 1858, p. 293.

<sup>21</sup> Georg Müller, „Die deutschen Landkapitel”, p. 54.

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One hundred years later, in 1774, or in any case, before 1776, Suseni was lost by the Reghin chapter. The dean of Reghin, Georgius Schuller (1751-1781) wrote to the Saxon University: „[...] *As a result of the turbulent events, Susenius was alienated from our church and the Reghin chapter and joined the Hungarian church*”.<sup>22</sup>

In the Reghin chapter, six communities remained: the two markets Reghin and Batoș, and the villages Petelea, Dedrad, Ideciu de Jos and Ideciu de Sus.

According to Benkő, in 1778 the chapters of Reghin, Teaca and Șieu had the following communities:<sup>23</sup> Chapter of Reghin: 1. Reghin, 2. Batoș, 3. Petelea, 4. Dedrad, 5. Ideciu de Jos, 6. Ideciu de Sus. Chapter of Teaca: 1. Teaca, 2. Dipșa, 3. Viile Tecii, 4. Logig, 5. Posmuș, 6. Uila. Chapter of Șieu: 1. Șieu, 2. Orheiu Bistriței, 3. Iacobeni, 4. Arcalia, 5. Chiralieș, 6. Uifalău, 7. Blăjenii de Sus, 8. Șieu-Măgheruș, 9. Uifalău de Câmpie.

Rösler’s assumption that the two chapters, Teaca and Șieu, which appeared after the Reformation, would have belonged to the former deanery of Reghin can only be valid for the communities of the chapter Teaca, while within those of the chapter of Șieu, only the locality of Șieu belonged to the deanery of Reghin.<sup>24</sup> But the other communities did not appear in the deanery of Bistrița before the Reformation or in that of Kiraleu in 1488, apart from Dipșa.

In this regard, Müller said: „[...] *The legal relations of the communities then included in the chapters of Șieu and Teaca with the neighboring communities are best characterized as a relationship of subordination, as well as in other chapters and even in the chapter on Bistrița, such subordination relations are demonstrated, for each one, not towards the member communities of this chapter*”.<sup>25</sup>

Benkő points to the communities of the Șieu chapter as former branches of Bistrița.<sup>26</sup> The reasons for this assumption are unknown at this time. Corresponding to the territorial principle, both chapters mentioned, Șieu and Teaca, belonged to the Hungarian-Reformed superintendence and were incorporated for the first time only in 1852 by the evangelical church of the Augsburg Confession.

Karl Gottlieb von Windisch, in his famous geography of Hungary, wrongly considers the parishes of Dedrad, Logig, Teaca and Uila as helvetic.<sup>27</sup>

The new administrative division of the church in 1861 finally joined the chapter of Teaca with that of Reghin in the Saxon district of Reghin, while that of Șieu, along with that of Bistrița, constituted the church district of Bistrița. This division remained in this form until emigration in 1944.

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<sup>22</sup> Josef Haltrich, „Zur Geschichte von Sächsisch-Regen”, p. 276, note 2.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Benkő, *Transsilvania. Sive Magnus Transsilvaniae Principatus olim Dacia Mediterranea dictus*, volume II, Wien, 1778, p. 212.

<sup>24</sup> Gustav Rösler, „Zur Geschichte”, p. 230.

<sup>25</sup> Georg Müller, „Die deutschen Landkapitel”, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Benkő, *Transsilvania*, p. 181: „[...] *Sunt vero Ecclesiae Capituli Sajonensis, praeter filialem Besztertze, Com. Dobocensis*”.

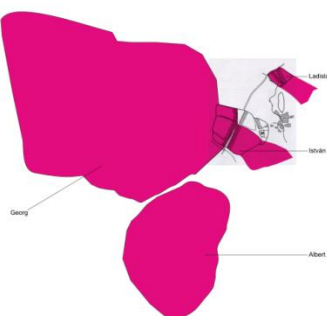
<sup>27</sup> Karl Gottlieb von Windisch, *Geographie des Grossfürstentums Siebenbürgen*, Pressburg, 1790, p. 341, 342, 343.

## The lords of Reghin and their churches

During 1319, there were some important changes in the structure of the properties around Reghin. On 14 May 1319 King Carol Robert de Anjou (1308-1342) gave a gift of 26 villages in the Reghin-Bistrița area and the Transylvanian Plain, in favour of Master Simon, a great-grandson of Treasurer Simon, who was expropriated in 1228. The villages included Șieu, Posmuș, Filpișu Mare and Filpișu Mic, among others. After this, the descendants of Dionysius made a division of the paternal inheritance.

The first division of the possessions of the sons of the magistrate Dionysius that were located around Reghin took place at the end of 1319. The initiative was taken by the magistrate Stephanus (István), the youngest of the family of Dionysius, who, on December 12, 1319, asked the Chapter of Alba-Iulia to divide the possessions located in Reghin.<sup>28</sup>

An act issued by the Chapter of Alba-Iulia on December 14, 1319, confirms that the three brothers, Thoma, István and Desideriu, shared among themselves the territory inherited from their father, Dionysius III: „[...] *Possessiones ipsorum ad Regum pertinentes*”. It follows that Reghin became the central administrative point of a large territory where the lords had their headquarters and where they led the administration. Through this, Magister Thomas, the count of the Szekler and the eldest of the three brothers, obtained the following localities: Reghin, Breaza, Șieuț, Monor, Roosk (now deserted), Săcal, Vălenii de Mureș, Aluniș, Solovăstru, and half of villa Sânmihaiu de Câmpie. In total, 10 possessions. Magister István obtained the following localities: Dedradul de Jos, Dedrad, Gledin, Veci (Brâncovenești), Ideciu de Sus and Ideciu de Jos, Mureș-mort, and Solovăstru de sus. In total, 8 localities. Magister Desideriu obtained the localities of Batoș, Uila, Săcal, Disnăieu, Vereszek (disappeared), Suseni, and Luieriu. In total, 7 localities.



Map 3. The division of Reghin in 1319

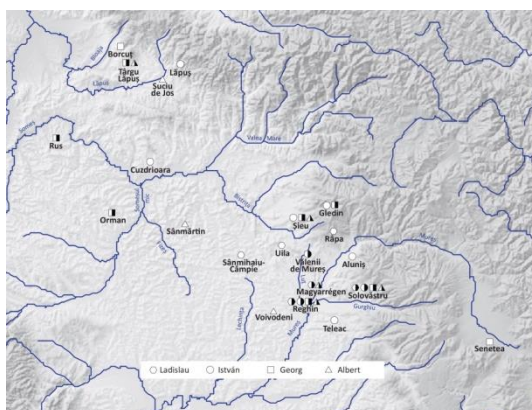
<sup>28</sup> Varjú Elemér, *Oklevéltár a Tomaj nemzetségbeli Losonczi Bánffy család történetéhez, volume I (1214-1457)*, Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1908 (henceforth: *Bánffy Oklevéltár*), p. 46; *Documente privind istoria României*, series C, Transilvania (henceforth: *DIR*), C, XIV, volume I, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 1953, document no. 379, p. 332.

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The document states further: „[...] *Let these localities keep each one for himself and use with their inhabitants the fields, pastures, forests, groves and other places of use, according to the old customs, in their borders and according to the given signs. Instead, the large forests on the high places (referring to the mountains on the right and left of Mureș) to use and own them together with the population there. Whoever violates this agreement in the future, [is] to pay a fine of 200 marks*”.<sup>29</sup>

In 1348, a misunderstanding arose between Thomas Jr., (Tamás) son of Thomas, and his sister, Klara, who was married to the magistrate Jakob de Lonya. On the orders of Lajos I, King of Hungary (1342-1382), the Archdeacon of Borsod, Magister Johannes, who was vicar of Bishop Nicolaus of Agna, postponed the lawsuit between the two brothers on February 27, 1348.<sup>30</sup> They reached an agreement three years later, according to a document dated 13 January 1351.<sup>31</sup> It is possible that an agreement was reached through the exchange of one of the properties, because a year earlier, on April 12, 1347, in front of the Transylvanian chapter, Thomas junior, son of Thoma of Reghin, received an interdiction from his father which prohibited the disposal of any property.<sup>32</sup>

Later, on October 6, 1354, Magistrate Thomas, son of Dionysius of Reghin, reproached the sons of Magistrate Desiderius, his brother, in front of the chapter in Oradea, for not bearing with him the sum of 200 marks, the expense of a joint court case against the magistrate Johannes, son of Ladislaus of Warada, for an estate.<sup>33</sup> This provision was mentioned in the act of December 14, 1319, as seen above. At the same time, the chapter states that Master Thomas stopped his sons, Magister Thomas and Magister Stephanus, from disposing of any of their estates.<sup>34</sup>



Map 4. The division of possessions around Reghin, 1319

<sup>29</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, I, p. 47-48; *DIR*, C, XIV, I, No. 3 81, p. 332-333.

<sup>30</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, p. 155-156; *DIR*, C, XIV, volume IV, document no. 602, pp. 417-418.

<sup>31</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, pp. 175-176; *Documenta Romaniae Historica, series C, Transilvania, volume X (1351-1355)*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 1977 (henceforth: *DRH*), document no. 4, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, p. 119, 139.

<sup>33</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, pp. 199-200; *DRH*, C, volume X, document no. 270, p. 280.

<sup>34</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, pp. 200-210; *DRH*, C, volume X, document no. 271, p. 280.



A new process of inheritance of parts of Reghin began sometime between late 1355 and early 1356. A lawsuit was filed by Stephan (known as Polhus), son of Matthew Rufus of Erdutheluk, against the three sons of Dionysius (Thomas, Stephanus and Desideriu), and Stephanus's son Dionysius. From an act of postponement of the case, from May 6, 1356, signed in Agria by Dominicus-presbyter of the church of Transylvania, canon of the church of Agria, and vicar general of Bishop Nicolaus of Agna-we learn that it was about granting Polhus the quarter due to his daughters.<sup>35</sup>

We find proof that Thomas had two sons from a document dated February 7, 1362, when Peter, vice-voivode of Transylvania, issued from Sântimbru an act for Thoma, son of Thoma, son of Dionysius of Reghin, and for his brother István. The two are therefore the sons of Master Thoma of Reghin.<sup>36</sup>

One of the two sons of Thomas, mentioned above, namely István of Reghin, had four sons, Ladislau, Albert, István and György, who, on July 18, 1381, in front of the Cluj-Mănăştur convent, divided their inheritance between them. Master Ladislau obtained a quarter of the Reghin possessions, comprising those in the eastern part and in the central part of Magyarrégen with the mills (not including the curia), as well as the Râpa estate, the western quarter of Solovăstru, half of Sarvasmező,<sup>37</sup> half of Sânmihaiu de Câmpie with its ponds, and a quarter of Târgu Lăpuş. István obtained the southern quarter of Reghin and the neighboring forest, half of Vălenii de Mureş with all the mills, a quarter of Solovăstru close to the villa Aluniş with the paternal curia, half of Gledin (not including the curia), as well as Teleac and half of Zunugzegh<sup>38</sup> and Cuzdioara with the mills, a quarter of Lăpuş and half of the mills from Şieu. György obtained a quarter of the Reghin possessions, a quarter from Villa Solăvăstru and the forests, half from Şieu with three water mills, a third from Orman, the curia from Gledin, a quarter from Târgu Lăpuş, and half from Rus with Borcut and Sennesnnew.<sup>39</sup> Albert received a quarter from Reghin, on the border from Vojvodeni, the curia from Magyarrégen, half from Şieu with two mills, a quarter from Solovăstru and Târgu Lăpuş with the villa Zeuchud<sup>40</sup> and the possession of Sânmărtin.<sup>41</sup>

On November 27, 1392, Magistrate Dionysius, son of Thomas, began a new division of his property in Reghin. As such, Sigismund, King of Hungary (1387-1437), ordered the Chapter of Alba-Iulia to participate in establishing the boundaries of this possession.<sup>42</sup> It is not known how this division was undertaken, only that in 1453, the situation of possession in the Saxon Kingdom was as

<sup>35</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, pp. 207-209; *DRH*, C, volume XI, document no. 16, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> *Urkundenbuch*, volume II, document no. 788, p. 195; *Sächsisch Regener Wochenblatt*, 21/1913; *DRH*, C, volume XII, document no. 84, pp. 64-65.

<sup>37</sup> Most likely Szarvasmező, a town near Uila, Mureş County, now deserted.

<sup>38</sup> Zunugzegh, a deserted town, was a *praedium* near to Cuzdioara.

<sup>39</sup> Now deserted; it is probably the town Senetea/Szenéte, Szenéta, Nyírtartomány/Senneth, Zenneth.

<sup>40</sup> Suci de Jos, nowadays in Country Maramureş.

<sup>41</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, document no. 257, p. 361.

<sup>42</sup> *Bánffy Okleveltár*, volume I, document no. 318, pp. 443-444; *Zsigmondkori okleveltár*, volume I, document no. 2695, p. 292.

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follows: three quarters of it belonged to Losonczy Bánffy István, and one quarter to his brother, Albert. István's property also housed the church, which suffered after the death of the commoner Bartolomeus. Albert could now raise his claim to patronage over the church. However, the Transylvanian bishop of Alba-Iulia decided to appoint the priest Nagyfálusi until the problem was properly resolved. An inheritance process began, which continued until the bishop forbade, for unknown reasons, the entry of Bánffy István and Nagyfálusi Miklos into the church. Bánffy addressed Pope Nicholas V, who ordered the dean of Sibiu to install Nagyfálusi Miklos, and Bánffy István to recognize him as patron of the church.<sup>43</sup>

In front of the Ság convent, Ladislau, son of Albert de Losoncz, pledged, on June 21, 1469, in his own name and that of his cousin István, the possessions located in Turda and Cluj counties, for 800 gold guilders, to the vice-voivode of Transylvania, János Erdei and Ladislau, son of Mihály Demjendi. Among other things, they pledged their parts of Reghin city and Șieu, and all their property in Magyarrégén, Dedrad, and Dedradul de Sus.<sup>44</sup>

A new transfer of ownership took place on September 9, 1385, when Ladislaus and Albert, sons of István Losoncz, exchanged their possessions with Dionysius, son of Thoma of Reghin.<sup>45</sup>

In the evangelical church from Reghin, in the south side nave, there are two vault keys, one of which is decorated with a rampant griffin. A figure can be seen from the second keystone, but it cannot be determined what it represents, because the stone is damaged. Undoubtedly, this is the old coat of arms of the Tomaj family, who founded the church.<sup>46</sup>

Dionysus, son of Thoma de Losoncz, ordered on October 25, 1385, in a letter to all his subjects in Reghin („[...] *Universis nostri jobagiones in Regen*”) and other subjects, Wallachians and Ruthenians from Transylvania, to obey in all respects, his proxy, Johannes Roth (Johannes Rufi).<sup>47</sup>

### St. George's Chapel and St. Mary's Church

During this period, there were four places of worship in Reghin city. In the large church, on the north wall of the choir, there is an inscription, which leads to the assumption that this church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, was built in 1330 during the time of plebeian Nicholas by Master Thomas, from his own means. It is

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<sup>43</sup> Kollányi Ferencz, *A Magán Kegyuri Jóg hazánkban*, Staatsbibliothek München, J. Austr. 28 OX.

<sup>44</sup> Iványi Béla, *Oklevéltár a Tomaj nemzetségbeli Losonczy Bánffy család történetéhez, II. 1458-1526*, Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1928 (henceforth: *Bánffy Oklevéltár*, volume II), document no. 103, p. 125.

<sup>45</sup> *Bánffy Oklevéltár*, volume I, document no. 268, p. 376.

<sup>46</sup> The first to give his opinion on this issue was Prof. Dr. Norbert Adleff, in his speech on the occasion of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church. From the images from that time, one can only guess what it is about, because over time the church has undergone many re-plasters and modifications, and the stone itself is damaged.

<sup>47</sup> *Bánffy Oklevéltár*, volume I, document no. 269, p. 377.

a gallery church, like Herina. Both churches are late evidence of the private churches of the nobles, which were generally widespread, and used for participating in the liturgy in the western gallery, together with the family. The church of Herina with its Romanesque elements is older, while the church of Reghin, an early Gothic basilica, belongs to a interim style.<sup>48</sup>

The luxurious endowment of the church in Herina, which was probably built by a representative of the Kacsis family, greatly impressed the master Tomaj, inspiring him to become one of the founders of the church of Reghin.

The first reason for the construction of this church was the demographic growth in the population of Reghin city. The church was able to offer greater coverage than the existing four chapels, which, according to the documents, were available. Additionally, there must have been an acceptable and very good relationship between the senior and the settlers, if he felt compelled to build, for the salvation of his soul and his subjects, a larger stone church, appropriate to the new demographic situation.

Given that until 1347 there was a population growth curve, and the localities developed uniformly and somewhat identically, it can be assumed that of the 50-60 households in the city, about 15 were due to the multiplication of families that survived the Mongol invasion, and 35-45 families were descended from those established when the city was founded. The increase in the number of inhabitants (Reghin city had at this time about 50 households, and Reghin village, or Magyarrégen, about 20) led to the construction of a new place of worship, which was larger, and on the territory of the first, in 1330. The church naves have an area of 275 sq m, which corresponds to about 55 families, i. e., the existing population in 1350. The number of households in this period was probably this: 40-60 until 1400, 75 until 1425, 60-100 until 1450, 100-125 until 1475, and 150-175 around 1500, in the „city”, while in the village their number must have been much smaller, reaching from about 20 until 1400, and to about 40-60 around 1500.<sup>49</sup> So, if we start from the premise that a family had four people, it follows that Reghin city had about 200 people around the time of 1300, and the village had 80 people. By 1350 there would have been 220 people, in 1400 between 160 and 220, in 1425 between 300 and 350, then in 1450 about 400, in 1475 between 400 and 500, and in 1500, between 600 and 700.

Haltrich says that „[...] no trace remained of the four chapels dedicated to the four saints of the city-Susanna (February 19), Pancratius (May 12), Laurentius (August 10) and Severinus (October 23)-which, according to tradition, existed at that time in earlier periods”.<sup>50</sup> It is especially noteworthy that the only chapel that is mentioned in official documents, the chapel of St. George, is not mentioned by him. It was used as early

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<sup>48</sup> Paul Niedermaier, *Städtebau im Spätmittelalter. Siebenbürgen, Banat und Kreischgebiet (1348-1541)*, Köln/Weimar/Wien, Böhlau Verlag, 2004, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> Dorin-Ioan Rus, „Contribuție la cunoașterea evoluției urbane a Reghinului”, in *Reghinul Cultural*, volume IV, edited by Grigore Ploșteanu, Marian Șara, Reghin, 1999, pp. 11-23.

<sup>50</sup> Josef Haltrich, „Zur Geschichte von Sächsisch-Regen”, p. 12.

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as 1380,<sup>51</sup> and its stone foundations, which were covered with the paving of the central square in 1851, were „[...] *three-fathoms wide and four-fathoms long, with a round apse facing NNE*”.<sup>52</sup> Friedrich Müller attributes the walls to the Romanesque period.<sup>53</sup> If we consider 1 *fathom* = 1.97 meters then the chapel had the size of 5.70/7.60 meters.

The chapel of St. Laurentius was probably where Lord Thomas built his church, and until 1848 it was believed that it was on the site of the current large church (St. Mary).<sup>54</sup> This mistake was corrected only after the church fire of 1848, when, during the repair works of 1851, an inscription was discovered in the choir, which announced that the church was dedicated to St. Mary.<sup>55</sup>

But St. Lawrence was not „dethroned” without further effort. The name of the saint was given to the building that was built around 1630 near the south nave to enlarge the church. A relief on the outer wall of this construction probably represents Saint Lawrence, who is depicted only here, at the so-called „Chapel of Saint Lawrence”. The former chapel of the Hungarian part of Reghin (Magyarrégen), reformed in 1673, could have been one of the four chapels mentioned above, the saint of which, unfortunately, we do not know. The chapel was completely renovated in 1911, „[...] *however, it is known that it was originally a single-nave building with a straight apse*”.<sup>56</sup>

In the Saxon settlements of the noble land, the cultural constructions were made by the community of settlers, whether they were chapels or churches.<sup>57</sup> It was different in Reghin. The „patrons” of the chapel were the settler community, which, at the time, had been placed on royal land. By the donation of this royal land in 1228 to the nobleman Dionysius,<sup>58</sup> Reghin and its surroundings submitted to the noble Losonczy family, so that they exercised their patronage in their own church. This shows that, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the rights of the settlers were already so well established that the lord could not build anything else in the main square of the centrally located settlement without infringing upon the rights of the inhabitants. By the end of the fourteenth century, the situation was already completely different, as can be seen below. We do not know anything for sure yet about the relationship between seniors and settlers. The question would therefore be whether the settlers were still in possession of the rights and freedoms that their parents had when they built the defense system on the upper Mureș

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<sup>51</sup> Franz Zimmermann, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, volume II (1342-1390)*, Hermannstadt, Carl Werner and Georg Müller, 1897, document no. 1169, p. 563.

<sup>52</sup> Josef Haltrich, „Zur Geschichte von Sächsisch-Regen”, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> Friedrich Müller, „Die kirchliche Baukunst des romanisches Styles in Siebenbürgen”, in *Jahrbuch der k. k. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale*, Band 3, Wien, 1859, p. 190.

<sup>54</sup> Josef Haltrich, „Zur Geschichte von Sächsisch-Regen”, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup> Ernst H. Philippi, Wigant Weltzer, *Sächsisch-Regen-Die Stadt am Berge*, p. 75.

<sup>56</sup> Géza Entz, „Die Baukunst Transsilvaniens im 11.-13. Jahrhundert”, I. Teil, p. 41, in *Acta Historiae Artium Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae*, tom XIV, Budapest, 1968, p. 549.

<sup>57</sup> Gustav Müller, „Die evangelische Kirche von Sächsisch-Regen“, in *Siebenbürgisch-Sächsisches Hauskalender/Jahrbuch*, München, 1965, p. 112.

<sup>58</sup> Franz Zimmermann, Carl Werner, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, volume I (1191 bis 1342)*, Hermannstadt, 1882, document no. 56, p. 47.

valley. Or were there changes when the land was transferred to the Tomaj and Kacsics family? The historian Gustav Rösler endeavored in his work on the history of Reghin to clarify these important issues, and came to the following result: „[...] *The solution must be sought in the general Hungarian law on settlers and guests, which was based on the ancestral rights in their home country. The old „guests”, who lived on the aristocratic territory, could not achieve the autonomy that 7 + 2 seats, Burzenland and Näsäud located on royal soil had won, and perhaps lost it towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> or in the 14<sup>th</sup> century*”.<sup>59</sup>

„[...] *All the documents*”, Rösler wrote, „[...] *that remain, which demonstrate the liberties and privileges of Batoș, Dedrad, Reghin, Petelea, and Teaca, speak of rights, which from ancient times were customs and usages*”.<sup>60</sup> Undoubtedly, the other communities of the Reghin area also enjoyed these privileges, which, of course, disappeared much faster than was the case with the larger communities.

„[...] *It can be assumed that the German communities experienced legal declines, which had more and more serious consequences in the period that followed, until, of course, in their isolated place, they fell into servitude, without reluctance, in the fourteenth century as all the other free peasants of the country*”.<sup>61</sup>

However, even small communities maintained a certain freedom over the centuries, which Bishop Georg Daniel Teutsch describes it as follows: „[...] *That even these communities of true diaspora... have been able to preserve their Germanity is a no less important thing and points significantly to those roots which are the school and the church, from which they essentially drew their sap. To this was added, of course, in each community a piece of self-government, and of privileged law, here smaller, there larger, which, although often interrupted by isolated attacks, were at least not exiled by the state. Thus, in Uila, in order not to indicate Teaca, Reghin or Batoș, the usual reasons were judged by the advice of the elders of the community, and the appeals did not go to the county, but to ‘foreign men’, who are two judges elected from neighboring communities. Thus, pride and the wisdom of life developed in them, which also found the right ways with the foreign ‘lords’. [...] And so those communities have preserved and saved their ethnicity, despite their political isolation, with its cultural assets and the goals of civilization through the hardest times*”.<sup>62</sup>

From a document written between 1380-1387 we have information about the parish church of St. Mary, whose history is described here in particular, and about the chapel of St. George. Then, Lord Ladislaus de Losoncz, who visited Rome as knight and messenger of Queen Elizabeth I of Hungary (1370-1376), submitted to Pope Urban VI (1364-1389) the request, with the queen’s support, to organize an Augustinian priory at Reghin. In his „villa Regen” there is a church, dedicated to St. Mary, and a chapel, dedicated to St. George. The senior’s proposal was to hand over the church to the Augustinian priory, for the accommodation of which he undertook to build, with his own means, a house with sufficient space for a prior and at least six brothers. In addition, the monastery had to be granted the same

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<sup>59</sup> Gustav Rösler, „Zur Geschichte”, p. 245.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 249.

<sup>62</sup> Georg Daniel Teutsch, *Die Generalkirchenvisitationsberichte, volume IV, Der Reener Kirchenbezirk*, edited by Landeskonsistorium der evangelischen Kirche A. B. in Siebenbürgen, Hermannstadt, 1925, p. 112.

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freedoms, restrictions and immunities as in the other Augustinian convents. The chapel of St. George had to be raised to the rank of a parish church with all its characteristics and rights. The right of patronage was transferred from the church of St. Mary to the chapel of St. George, with the right to appoint the priest given to Ladislaus and his successors.<sup>63</sup> The fulfillment of this wish would undoubtedly have led, as Csallner writes,<sup>64</sup> to a weakening of the revenues of the Reginian clergy and the bishop of Transylvania, especially with the removal of the Augustinian order from the jurisdiction of the bishops, since the time of Pope Alexander IV (1254-1261).<sup>65</sup> Particularly remarkable is the fact that the noble Ladislaus made completely independent decisions about the chapel of St. George, without listening to the inhabitants. Had they become deprived of rights, or had they participated in his plans? There is no evidence that the plans of the feudal lord Ladislaus were fulfilled. However, Teutsch says that in 1382 „[...] in Reghin city there were Augustinian hermits”.<sup>66</sup>

In a document from 1452, the church of St. Mary is mentioned as a parish church, on the occasion of a dispute between Albert and Ștefan de Losoncz over the right of presentation (*[...] parochiali ecclesia plebani nuncupata beatae Mariae oppidi Regen*).<sup>67</sup> It is quite unlikely that the period of the Augustinians was so short that the church of St. Mary was again, after 70 years, the parish church in Reghin. A document from 1420, which could remove any existing doubt, in which Pope Martin V (1417-1431), grants to the priest of Reghin, Georg Ladislau (*[...] presbytero plebano of Regen Transolvane diocese*), full indulgences, is printed only as a regest, without mentioning the church to which Georg Ladislaus was priest,<sup>68</sup> so we cannot find out more details in this regard.

The documents of indulgence had, among other things, the concrete purpose of allowing measures to be taken spiritually and economically in order to provide financial protection. Therefore, it is possible that the receipt of the indulgences was for the purpose of endowing the church, and respectively its organization, with these privileges. We have information that monastic settlements existed in Reghin, as in other parts of Transylvania. Rösler mentions in his work, quoting Stephanus Szegedi,<sup>69</sup> that *[...] in 1220 there was a monastery at Reghin*,<sup>70</sup> without indicating the order to which it belonged.

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<sup>63</sup> *Urkundenbuch*, volume 2, document no. 1169, p. 563.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Csallner, „Aus der ältesten Vergangenheit der deutschen Ansiedlungen im Norden Siebenbürgens”, in *Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 31, 1908, pp. 34-41.

<sup>65</sup> Georg Schwaiger, „Alexander IV”, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, volume 1, München/Zürich, 1980, column 373.

<sup>66</sup> *Urkundenbuch*, volume II, document no. 1169, p. 563.

<sup>67</sup> Varju Elemér, *Oklevéltár a Tomaj nemzetségbeli Losonczy Bánffy család történetéhez*, volume 1, Budapest, Hornyánszky Viktor, 1908, document no. 471, p. 670.

<sup>68</sup> Gustav Gündisch, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, volume IV (1416 bis 1437)*, Hermannstadt, 1937, document no. 1877, p. 121.

<sup>69</sup> Stefan Szegedy, *Decreta et vitae Regum Ungariae qui Transylvaniam possederunt*, Klausenburg, 1763, p. 366: „[...] As a result of the Reformation, the religious convents: Alba, Sibiu, Orăștie, Reghin etc were dissolved”.

<sup>70</sup> Gustav Rösler, „Zur Geschichte”, p. 190.

Pope Martin V confirmed on December 7, 1427 in Rome, the founding of a Franciscan settlement („[...] *ordin fratrum minorum et observantia*”) at Suseni, through John, son of Desiderius of Losoncz („[...] *in possession of his Felfalu iuxta oppidum Regen prope flumen Marus*”).<sup>71</sup>

On June 4, 1431, Pope Eugene IV (1431-1447) ordered the bishop of Transylvania („[...] *ad supplicationem nobilis Joannis Deseu de Losoncz, domicelli Transilvaniensis diocensis*”), to persuade the Franciscan vicar to send some brothers to the monastery of St. Michael of Suseni, founded by John.<sup>72</sup>

In 1505 Ursula Meister Paulin, widow of the rich mayor of Bistrița, Hans Kohler, left in her will: „[...] *and to the nuns from Reghin 4 florins [...] also to the monks from Suseni 5 florins*”.<sup>73</sup>

In the will of the priest Antonius Schwarz of Daia in 1570, he thanked all the priests who remained Catholic at heart, and their churches, monasteries and inhabitants; at the same time, he left a legacy to the nuns from both Reghin and Târgu-Mureș, consisting of three buckets of wheat each, from his tithes.<sup>74</sup>

The monastery in Reghin, in which nuns were present, either Franciscan or Dominican, certainly had very modest dimensions. The sisters of the order were called by the people, after the colour of their cloaks, „gray” or „black”.<sup>75</sup>

As stated above, the right to appoint the priest belonged to the senior as the patron of the church. Because of this patronage, quarrels arose between the brethren, as this was not clearly established in the inheritance. From 1443 to 1453 the quarrels continued, with the confusing decisions of the appealed church courts being taken to the pope in Rome.<sup>76</sup>

Except for the mention of Fallenbüchel Ferencz in 1943, there is no evidence in the literature of this Augustinian monastery in Reghin city.

The Saxons from the Reghin area, belonging to the Catholic denomination until the Lutheran Reformation, and settled on noble land, were subject, from an administrative-religious point of view, to the bishop of Alba-Iulia. These states of affairs led to tensions between the Saxons living on noble land, who wanted to be subject to the bishop of Gran, to whom those of southern Transylvania belonged, and the bishop of Alba.

The four mentioned churches, respectively Susanna, Pancratius, Laurentiu and Severinus, may have belonged to the four masters of the city, for which we find evidence throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century in the acts and processes of inheritance. St. George’s Chapel belonged to Lord Ladislaus, and not to the local community, and St. Mary’s Church belonged to the monastic order mentioned in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which later became, in turn, a city church.

<sup>71</sup> *Urkundenbuch*, volume IV, document no. 2021, p. 322.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, document no. 2126, p. 442.

<sup>73</sup> Siebenbürgisches Archiv, Gundelsheim, Nachlass Czoppelt: Helmut Czoppelt, *Die Kirche*, manuscript, *A VIII, Sächsisch-Regen*, Bd. 3, A-4333, s. p.

<sup>74</sup> Georg Daniel Teutsch, „Das Testament des Denndorfer Pfarrers Antonius Schwarz vom 8. Dezember 1570”, in *Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, volume 1, 1853, p. 363.

<sup>75</sup> Helmut Czoppelt, *Die Kirche*, s. p.

<sup>76</sup> Kollányi Ferencz, *A Magán Kegyuri Jóg hazánkban*, Staatsbibliothek München, J. Austr. 28 OX.

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Urban development took place in parallel with population growth and economic evolution, based on crafts, agriculture and trade. It also created the possibility of building the five places of worship, as well as the temporary existence of a monastic life, about which there is very little information.