

ABSTRACT

ALBA IULIA AND ITS ESTATE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY

This volume aims to present the society of the princely residence of Alba Iulia and its estate between 1541 and 1600. The author presents the town of Alba Iulia and its estate in two major chapters, considering the fact that it played two basic functions as it was, on the one hand, the princely residence, and on the other hand, the main center of the estate. The starting point was given by 1541, not just because that was the date of fall of Buda, but because Alba Iulia presented at that time the level of evolution gained at the end of the Middle Ages, as well.

In the premodern era, the first basic change in the life of the settlement was the transformation of the bishop's seat to a princely residence in 1542. After the death of János Statileo (1542), the last medieval Transylvanian bishop, the bishop's seat remained vacant, and the bishopric's estates and the bishop's market town itself was given to the recently arrived Queen Isabella Jagiellon for the upkeep of her court. At that time, the chapter town, which was about the same size as the bishop's market town, had not yet been handed over to the queen. In 1551, as the queen was leaving, under the rule of the Habsburg House the city of Alba Iulia was again put under the authority of the bishop, but in 1556, with the return of the queen and her son, and the secularization of the Church estates in the country, the town began to undergo radical changes.

The history of Alba Iulia, as the residence of the prince of Transylvania, began in 1556. The rise of the city as the residence of the prince is tied to the person and the second rule of Queen Isabella (1556–1559). The most important change was that, as part of the process of secularization, from that time on, the entire settlement became the estate of the queen and, later, of the ruling prince of Transylvania. Because the entire settlement was brought under the rule of one landlord, the separate quarters of the

city were unified under the same chief judge of the town (*iudex primarius*). The bishop's market town, which previously had been under its own judge, and the chapter town (Major), which was probably led by a so-called *kenéz* before 1556, came under the authority of the town judge, although on a lower level of administration the Major still remained under the authority of the *kenéz*.

The change in the town's leadership and the number of people who served as members of the inner and outer councils can also be dated to this period. In the Middle Ages, the town magistracy was led by a judge, four jurors (*iurati*), and an unknown number of external councilors. After 1556, the membership of the magistracy rose to six jurors and 20 councilors (*consules*), who were led by a judge. In the mid-sixteenth century alongside the chief judge, a judge of the townspeople of Lipova and of Timișoara appears among the members of magistracy. The quarter of townspeople from Lipova and Timișoara established after 1552 had self-government and was led by the two judges under the authority of the chief judge of Alba Iulia.

The return of Queen Isabella in 1556 also meant the bestowal of economic privileges. One of the economic privileges of Alba Iulia was the right to have an annual fair. During the reigns of Queen Isabella and John II, the princely court of Alba Iulia took possession of the lodges that had belonged to the clergy until the process of secularization, but the Prince did not envision keeping the center of his court as prince there for the long term. He planned the development of a new seat at the nearby Sebeș, but due to his death at a young age, this plan was never realized.

In light of John II's plans regarding Sebeș, it is beyond dispute that, with the death of the elected king, Alba Iulia remained the residence of the rulers because of the decision of the prince, István Báthory. Certainly thanks to István Báthory and perhaps because of the growing population of the princely center, the urban magistracy was extended to a degree that was visible in the town's government. Accordingly, in the last third of the sixteenth century, the town's government was represented by a judge, 12 jurors, and 40 external councilors. The latter appears in the sources not as *consul* but *senator*. After 1571, Lippa quarter probably lost its right to elect its own judge and probably was only able to elect senators, like the other quarters.

The second part of the book aims to present the princely estate of Alba Iulia which has been established around the residency of the princes. The estate was composed of two separate parts: the domain of the bishop and the estate of the chapter. The domain of the bishop included 17 possessions, while the chapter's estate consisted of 50 possessions. After 1556,

Alba Iulia became not only the residence of the Transylvanian princes, but also the administrative, economic and judicial center of this huge estate. There were no royal towns on the estate, only eight market towns: Alba Iulia, the princely residence, Abrud, Aiud, Cricău, Ighiu, Șard, Teiuș, and Zlatna.

The territorial increase of the domain, beginning with the secularization of the church estates, had a major impact on its organization and administration. The main difference compared to the medieval period, when the estate was managed by a provisor, seconded by a vice-provisor, officials and rationists, was the appointment of a princely provisor with two vice-provisors and several officials.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the estates of the bishop and of the chapter consisted of small scale territorial units named *officiolatus*, ruled by the officials (*officiales*). This situation remained unchanged even after the secularization, the *officiolatus* functioned in the same way it did in the Middle Ages. The *officiales* were placed under the authority of the *provisores* and they had economic, administrative and judicial duties. The centres of these *officiolatus* were the major urban centres on the domain, such as Abrud, Aiud or Zlatna and they functioned as secondary centres, along with Alba Iulia.

The possessions and the market towns near the princely residence constituted an important demographic and economic backup for Alba Iulia. The market towns (such as Cricău, Șard and Ighiu) had an economy based on viticulture and had close ties with Alba Iulia, even in the Middle Ages. These connections became even closer after the members of the princely army or the court nobility had settled in these market towns.

On the basis of my research, I have presented, on the one hand, the process during which the residence of the bishop became the princely residence, and on the other hand, the transformation of the ecclesiastical domains in princely estate. The book gives particular emphasis to the presentation of those decisive transformations that influenced the development of the society in Alba Iulia and its estate.