

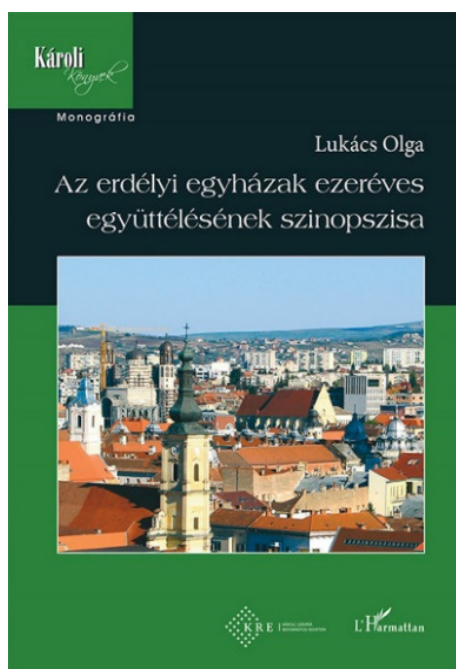
*HERDEÁN Gyöngyi*<sup>1</sup>:

***Olga Lukács: Az erdélyi egyházak ezeréves együttélésének szinopszisa***  
**[*A Synopsis of the Thousand-Year Cohabitation of Transylvanian***  
***Churches*], L'Harmattan, Budapest, 2020, 244 p.,**  
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Olga Lukács is a professor at Babeş-Bolyai University in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca, a dedicated and renowned Transylvanian historian who was a research fellow in the international *Healing of Memories* (HoM) project for seven years. Many of her publications and studies can be read in prominent national and international journals.

The book titled *Az erdélyi egyházak ezeréves együttélésének szinopszisa* is the shortened form of the author's doctoral thesis published by Károli Gáspár Reformed University and L'Harmattan Publishing House in Budapest in 2020.

In presenting historical events, Olga Lukács does not strive for continuity but presents the past millennium from a peculiar



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historical perspective, a kind of cross-section of side-by-side and successive historical events in relation to the ethnic groups and denominations living in Transylvania. This individual and unconventional historiographical approach is also indicated by the term “synopsis” in the title of the book. The discussion of historical events has a unique approach because it not only reflects the position of her church and the author’s individual historical approach, but it also presents the opposite theses, hypotheses, and historical approaches. The introduction speaks about it in the following way:

“Over the past millennium, Transylvania has belonged to various states, and as a result the centuries-old relations between different ethnicities and denominations have been characterized by lasting cooperation, but also by frequent contradictions, mutual retaliation, and wars. Cooperation was fuelled by the common interests of socio-economic development and Christian affinity, while the differences were characterized by cultural and social underprivilege and religious oppression. As a result of divergent interests, opposite views on and explanations of history have arisen, and, consequently, the historiography of different denominations takes a special position in judging and assessing past events. Historiography has had a significant contribution to the development of contradictions and conflicts.”/p. 7/

This unusual personal historical belief, which entails objectives other than the traditional historical approach, has been largely shaped by the scientific criteria of the HoM project, thus describing the thousand-year history and development of the churches in Transylvania based on a synthesis of the outlook and studied history of the different parties.

The author divides the presentation of historical events spanning a thousand years and their synopsis into seven major chapters and 32 subchapters.

In the first major chapter, she primarily discusses the internal tensions of the Transylvanian Catholic Church, the conversion of Hungarians to Christianity, and the construction of the administration of the Kingdom of Hungary. We also find out that: “the history of the Saxons in Transylvania intertwined with the history of the church from the beginnings”/p. 10/; “the settler congregations” strived to “obtain a certain kind of freedom from the perspective of the church.”/p. 12/; “the number of the Romanian population increased in Transylvania starting from the 14<sup>th</sup> century”/p. 19/, who, according to István Szamosközi, “were forced to plunder and revolt because of their socially excluded status.”/p. 24/ A list of Orthodox archbishops has been known since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The second major chapter presents the formation of new churches in

Transylvania born in the spirit of the Reformation. The author also discusses here the religious anarchy that erupted as a result of the emergence of the three main trends in the Reformation: “the debates around the communion”/p. 26/, “the losses of the Catholic Church”/p. 38/, the extraordinary decision of the Edict of Torda/Turda of 1568 on religious freedom, the consolidation of the Unitarian Church, and the status of the “Calvinist Romanians” /p. 53/. The third big chapter examines the relationship between the churches in the age of the Transylvanian princes, and the fourth chapter discusses the consequences of the Habsburg rule and the Enlightenment. Here we get a glimpse of the history of the “emergence of the Greek Catholic Church” /p. 102/, “I. Rákóczi Ferenc’s belief on the pursuit of unity” /p. 135/, and the relationship between the Greek Catholic and the Orthodox Church. The fifth major chapter examines the aspirations of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant ecclesiastical union. “The idea of the union was embraced with great enthusiasm mostly by the leaders of the Evangelical Church.” /p. 160/ The sixth chapter discusses the institutionalization of the ecumenical movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, of which the “most significant event of the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue is the publication of the Leuenberg Concord.” /p. 183/ In the last big chapter, she discusses the events that took place within the new state with regard to the churches in Transylvania “in the time of the terror-oriented regime”. /p. 203/

Olga Lukács’s monograph, which examines the ecclesiastical relations in Transylvania from the time of the founding of the Hungarian state up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is a milestone in terms of its unique outlook and scientific approach in the field of historiography. In her work, the author undertakes to list the various historical ages and events not only on the basis of the historical view of her own church and nation but also based on the historical view of the “other”, the “offended party”, in order to facilitate the mutual knowledge of each other’s historical views among the different denominations living together in Transylvania. For this very purpose, she uses a very rich scientific literature amounting to hundreds of titles, especially printed publications, archive sources, books, volumes, journals, studies, articles, and also web resources. Reviewing the bibliography, we can state that in addition to authenticity and historical validity, the author is driven by respect and honesty in the scientific immersion and authentic publication of events since in addition to Hungarian historiography, she also used a vast literature produced by many historians of other denominations and ethnicities living in Transylvania.

The author uses very demanding, eclectic, and scientific language in writing her monograph, which makes it understandable and readable. The book was written in the author's native language, Hungarian, but, taking into account the interfaith and -ethnic conditions of Transylvania, the prestigious authentic sources, the author's authentic historical position, it would be advisable to have the book translated into Romanian as well as into German and English in order for it to be known and used by the professionals in the field and even by the community of history teachers.