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## 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The dramatic events of the 1848–1849 Revolution in Transylvania led to the destruction of many libraries and archives, which drew attention, more than ever, to the necessity of creating an academic institution with a museum profile at the national level. On the one hand, it was meant to bring together the already existing private collections and, on the other, to watch over the Transylvanian historical heritage. Thus, such an institution was established in 1859, the Transylvanian Museum Society (Erdélyi Múzeum-Egylet). This was the second museum-type institution within the Transylvanian province, following the Brukenthal Museum, founded in 1817 in Sibiu based on the project of Baron Samuel von Brukenthal.

The Society's statutes mention its main aims: to support and develop the material resources of the Transylvanian Museum Society, the scientific processing of its collections, the cultivation of science, the promotion of the country's knowledge, and, in general, of the scientific phenomena.

The establishment of the Transylvanian Museum Society was received with interest by the entire Transylvanian public. At the founding meeting of the Transylvanian Museum Society, Count Imre Mikó emphasized that the newly created institution aimed to represent, on a cultural level, all the ethnic and social groups of Transylvania. Romanian personalities such as Andrei Şaguna, Alexandru Sterca Şuluţiu, and Timotei Cipariu contributed financially to support the society. Later, in 1861, when the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People (ASTRA) was founded in Sibiu, leading members of the Transylvanian Museum Society – Count Mikó himself, for example – were also among those who contributed to the cause of the Romanian culture.

*Acta Musei Napocensis* (ActaMN) first appeared in 1964, shortly (two years) after the official establishment of the History Museum, the successor of the museum activities of two other cultural institutions in Cluj: the Transylvanian Museum Society, already mentioned, and the Institute of Classical Studies of the “King Ferdinand” University (1929). The Society and the Institute had published under their aegis scientific journals: *Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából*, starting with the year 1916, and *Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice*, from 1932. *Acta Musei Napocensis* has reached 60 published issues and is distributed in over 250 national and international libraries.

The founder of ActaMN and the first director of the editorial board was the Academician Prof. Ph.D. Constantin Daicoviciu, also one time Director of the History Museum in Cluj and Rector of the “Babeş-Bolyai” University. Over time, highly established names in academia also became editorial board members: H. Daicoviciu, I. Ferenczi, I. Kovács, M. Macrea, Şt. Pascu, G. A. Protopopescu, I. I. Russu, N. Vlassa, later adding N. Cordoş, I. Glodariu, Fr. Pap, E. Glodariu, D. Alicu, Şt. Matei, E. Iaroslavschi, or N. Gudea, mentioning here only those who are no more.

The journal covers a wide thematic area of history in general, along with archaeology, art history, classical studies, museography, conservation, and restoration.

Starting with issues 26–30 (1989–1993) published in 1994, the journal has been reorganized, with two separate volumes currently being published, one for the Prehistory – Ancient History – Archaeology (I) section, the other for the History (II) section, making it more user-friendly and logical. There are so many research institutions worldwide whose specialists no longer deal with the whole of history but focus on a particular period: institutes of classical studies, archaeology, medieval history, etc. I myself have seen in their libraries how some of the voluminous issues of the scientific journals were practically reorganized and separated into two parts to fit in with specialist libraries.

Since 2012 (issue 49/II), *Acta Musei Napocensis. Historica* has been published in English, which is significant for the quality of the publication. The rush, sometimes due to the obligations imposed on researchers, to publish a greater number of journals, for which indexing is compulsory (if possible, by the Institute for Scientific Information – ISI), is not always warranted. Thus, publications are often produced in a hurry, in an online format, of course, with generally mediocre articles, in order to meet the requirements in the researchers' job descriptions. I believe that, in Romania, the journals that existed before the Revolution were sufficient, most of them containing good-quality articles. Their publication in foreign languages, which should be generalized, is essential for the access of foreign specialists to Romanian research. There are well-known international journals that do not focus on indexing and artificial scores, but on the scientific content of their journals. Indexing is more appropriate for journals in non-humanistic fields. In Romania, the evaluation of journals is formal rather than based on scientific value. This leads to a strong competition for their inclusion in various national and international databases.

For reasons semi-imposed in the Romanian research policy, we have also indexed *Acta Musei Napocensis. Historica* in international databases, but in some more suitable for the humanities: ERIH PLUS, CEEOL, and currently pending evaluation for Web of Science. Doubtlessly, there are also benefits, such as the wider accessibility due to DOI (Digital Object Identifier) registration and the effort to publish an annual journal issue because of conditions imposed by these indexations, which was not always accomplished before. Open access is also provided via the dedicated website: <https://amn-historica.mnrit.ro>.

The following articles are published in particular: archaeological finds in context, papers on historical, archival, art historical, and museum heritage research, along with articles on conservation, restoration, and heritage care, avoiding reports and analyses without scientific arguments. All articles are reviewed, anonymously and voluntarily, by prestigious researchers whose effort and expertise I gratefully acknowledge. I extend my gratitude to the authors who contributed to the creation and recognition of this journal, to the members of the Scientific Board of the journal, and especially to the editors, as the effort of the colleagues who have been part of the editorial staff in recent years goes beyond the simple task of revision.

Ph.D. Felix Marcu





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Detail from the funerary monument of György Sükösd, MNIT Collection, photo Sergiu Odenie

**STUDIES AND ARTICLES.  
HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY,  
AND MOVABLE HERITAGE**



**PER CLAVA ORIENTALIS.**  
**MACE HEADS AND KISTENS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE**  
**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TRANSYLVANIAN HISTORY**

ANDREI OCTAVIAN FĂRCAȘ\*

**Abstract:** Over the past few years, the number of mace heads discovered in the collections of the Transylvanian museums has gradually increased. The National Museum of Transylvanian History makes no exception. The reorganization and re-evaluation of its collections brought together 20 mace heads, three kistens, and one kisten chain, all of them unpublished so far. With the help and generosity of the museum staff, I compiled, analyzed, and dated these artifacts using, where possible, the existing typo-chronologies. For the significant number of maces and kistens where no classification exists, I took on the analysis of relevant analogies.

**Keywords:** weaponry, mace heads, kistens, typo-chronology

**Rezumat:** Pe parcursul ultimilor ani numărul capetelor de buzdugane descoperite în colecțiile muzeale din Transilvania a sporit treptat. Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei nu face excepție de la acest lucru. Reorganizarea și re-evaluarea colecțiilor sale a adus laolaltă 20 de buzdugane, trei bice de luptă și un lanț de bici de luptă, până în acest moment niciunul publicat. Beneficiind de sprijinul foarte generos al colectivului instituției, am compilat, analizat și datat aceste artefacte, folosind – acolo unde era posibil – crono-tipologiile existente. În ceea ce privește numărul semnificativ de buzdugane și bice de luptă pentru care nu există încă tipologii publicate, am utilizat analogii relevante în vederea datării.

**Cuvinte cheie:** armament, buzdugane, bice de luptă, crono-tipologie

This study aims to bring forth 20 unpublished mace heads and kistens from the Medieval and Early Modern Collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History (hereinafter MNIT) and classify them using an existing typo-chronology. Most of them are part of the old collections of the Erdély Múzeum Egyesület, though some have been discovered more recently in archaeological excavations conducted by the Museum. Given this situation, very few of these artifacts have information regarding the archaeological context or any other clue for absolute dating, and therefore, typo-chronological classification remains the sole option for dating. The mace heads and kistens have been selected for publication following their involvement in the national project entitled *E-Cultura. Biblioteca Digitală a României*, which entailed photographing and 3D scanning of National Heritage artifacts from museums nationwide.<sup>1</sup> The objects of interest for this study have been measured and analyzed stylistically, followed by their organization into

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<sup>1</sup> I express my gratitude to Ph.D. Gianina-Diana Varga for the initiative and permission to publish these artifacts, as well as the management and staff of the National Museum of Transylvanian History.

a catalog which additionally contains information regarding their conservation status, particularities, and typo-chronological classification.

### Methodology and terminology

The most important aspect to begin with is discriminating against the two types of weapons I am investigating. On the one hand, the mace is the metal feature (detailed below), attached to a relatively short one-handed wooden handle. The kisten, on the other hand, is – as Piotr N. Kotowicz describes it best – a flail with a short wooden handle, and a weight made of metal or bone, attached with a chain or thick braided leather strap or rope.<sup>2</sup> Hence, I will analyze the two types of weapons separately in the light of the relevant typo-chronologies, and attempt to date each of them in accordance.

Terminology deserves particular attention, considering the plethora of creative terms that describe a limited number of constituent elements of a mace head or a kisten. Furthermore, the typological classifications require careful analysis of the constructive elements of mace heads or kistens. Therefore, I aim to avoid confusion by clearly defining the terms I shall use henceforth. Broadly, this terminology is based on the one I proposed in the M.A. Thesis defended in 2016,<sup>3</sup> where the first typo-chronology aimed at the area of medieval Transylvania was created. Specifically, this terminology employs the most commonly accepted English terms to define the components of these artifacts, avoiding, where possible, regional trends stemming from improper translations into English.<sup>4</sup>

I, therefore, define a **mace head** as being the distal, metal part of a mace, which is usually affixed at the end of a wooden handle. Exceptions come in the shape of specific types of maces that appeared in the fifteenth century, wherein the mace head is structurally continued with a handle made from the same material. The main part of the mace head consists in the **body**, i.e. the central structure that exhibits the decorative or functional elements. This can be cubical, cylindrical, spherical, or bifrustal with a round base (Pl. I/1).

Depending on the general shape, mace heads can be knobbed (i.e., with knobs of various shapes attached to the body; also known as “star-shaped”) or flanged (i.e., with vertical flanges forged into the body). **Knobs** can be pyramidal or tetrahedral, but in some cases, they can take the shape of small rounded “spikes.” However, I avoid using the term “spike,” as it would rather reflect the sharp, pointed (and longer) spikes fixed into a wooden cudgel designed to *penetrate* chainmail or leather armor. The knobs are placed radially around the body of the mace, usually symmetrical, and the earlier types have string-like decorations and/or small **studs** between the knobs. On the other hand, the **flanges** are metal bands with various shapes, which are placed radially around the body of the mace (Pl. I/2). They can be triangular, semicircular, rectangular, or fin-shaped. They are either a structural part of the body (in the case of the bronze mace heads, similar to the knobbed

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<sup>2</sup> Kotowicz 2006a, 26; Kotowicz 2006b, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Fărcaș 2016, 23–28.

<sup>4</sup> One of the most well-known regional terminologies was set up by Stoyan Popov in 2015 in a very well documented study, but it employs the most commonly used terms in Bulgarian, which are then translated into English, without equivalating them with the terminology used in English-language literature: Popov 2015, 26–40. Because this can cause confusion, I chose to adhere to the terminology set up in accordance with the international *common ground*.

mace heads), or forged into grooves carved on the mace body (in the case of iron mace heads).

The mace head's body sometimes ends with a **top socket** or – in the case of mace heads used for throwing<sup>5</sup> – a **top finial** in the shape of a pyramidal knob. The lower part of the body most often extends with a longer **bottom socket**, usually decorated, which arguably offers additional support to the wooden handle. Moreover, the inside of the mace head body can be either cylindrical, or it can vaguely follow the exterior contour. This seems to significantly impact the force of the blow, since the difference can account for approximately 100 g in weight.

**Kistens** generally use the same terminology. They mainly consist of a body, a chain, and – if preserved – a handle. The body, similar to the mace head, can have pyramidal or conical **knobs** and smaller round **studs**. The earliest examples, made of elk horn, have a **longitudinal shaft**, where a simple or double metal rod<sup>6</sup> was inserted and riveted or flattened at one end, with a loop at the other. The chain is composed of several links, each of them characterized by its shape (round, oval, rectangular, braided, or twisted), its **pitch** (the internal length of the link), and its **width** (the external width of the link). The metal kistens also exhibit a **lug**, which stands for the loop extended from the body of the kisten, used to attach the chain or rope. A similar lug was usually attached to the handle for affixing the other end of the chain.

### Relevant typo-chronologies

There is a limited interest in studying and accurately dating artifacts such as maces and kistens. One of the possible reasons is that these weapons were not widespread outside Eastern and Central Europe. The very few examples of mace heads from Western Europe are either diffusions through Scandinavia of Eastern types<sup>7</sup> or imports via Moorish merchants through Spain – however few and of quite different shapes.<sup>8</sup> Kistens, on the other hand, were absent from the West-European material culture to the extent that some scholars considered them to be a risky weapon (Kelly DeVries and Robert Douglas Smith believe they posed a serious threat to their wielder due to the unpredictability of their swing).<sup>9</sup> Paul B. Sturtevant makes the boldest claim of all, by proposing that these weapons were merely an orientalizing attempt on the part of the medieval artists, and it had become soon an artistic construct, rather than actual reality.<sup>10</sup> These arguments have long been refuted by the large number of unearthed artifacts proving the exact opposite, and by experimental archaeology projects.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Michalak 2011, 184–186.

<sup>6</sup> So far, the only example I could find of a preserved double metal rod comes from the medieval settlement of Dinogetia, in Dobruja, Romania: Barnea 1973, 341 and fig. 182/9.

<sup>7</sup> Sanstedt 1992, 73–103.

<sup>8</sup> Oakeshott 2000, 63.

<sup>9</sup> DeVries, Smith 2007, 133; DeVries, Smith 2012<sup>2</sup>, 30. John Waldman goes even further, by claiming that such a metal head would bring damage to the wooden handle when held upright, which is by far an exaggeration: Waldman 2005, 146–147.

<sup>10</sup> Sturtevant 2016. This short article was later developed and corrected, to take into account the Eastern European kistens, but without changing his overall conclusion: Sturtevant 2017, 50–53.

<sup>11</sup> A group from Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation, illustrated the technique to be used so that no self-injure could occur, even in the eventuality of missing the target: Citadel Club 2014.

**Mace heads.** Existing typo-chronologies start with the most well-known work from 1966 by Anatoli N. Kirpichnikov on the maces and kistens from the Kyiv region, where he proposed six types for mace heads based on their structural shape.<sup>12</sup> However, the regional delay with which such artifacts reached Transylvania makes it relevant solely for the chronological ordering of the types of maces and kistens. Similarly, the typo-chronology proposed by Stoyan Popov for present-day Bulgarian lands is extremely useful for structural analogies of the mace heads and is based on approximately 400 specimens from the Vatevi Collection.<sup>13</sup> However, as I showed in a previous study, the chronological delay between the southern bank of the Lower Danube and the Carpathian Basin cannot offer precise dating analogies for the Transylvanian mace heads.<sup>14</sup> Closer to our area of interest is the typo-chronology proposed by László Kovács in 1974.<sup>15</sup> However, this one does not cover the later types of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Last but not least, a thesis defended 2016 proposed a new typo-chronology focused on Transylvanian mace heads between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the mace heads discussed further below, I will use the latter two typo-chronologies for dating the artifacts.

The first mace head to be reported in Transylvania was in 1903 by Julius Teutsch, but without any attempt at dating the artifact.<sup>17</sup> Much later, after the Second World War, further archaeological research brought up more mace heads from the territory of present-day Romania, but with varying degrees of precision in terms of dating. In 1965, during the systematic archaeological excavation at Bâta Doamnei (Neamț County, Moldavia), a knobbed mace head was discovered, but no attempt was made to date the artifact. No contextual information was given either.<sup>18</sup> Two years later, a series of mace heads were published as part of the excavation results at *Bisericuța – Garvă / Dinogetia* (Tulcea County, Dobruđja), which were archaeologically dated to the eleventh–twelfth centuries.<sup>19</sup> However, the area of Dobruđja, where these artifacts were discovered, was more closely connected to the Kievan region – especially before the Mongol invasion of 1240–1241/42, and therefore the proposed dating is expected to be earlier than for the Transylvanian counterparts. In 1968, the results of an excavation at Piatra Craivii fortress (Alba County, Transylvania) were published, with a flanged mace head. Unfortunately, no archaeological or typological dating was provided.<sup>20</sup> However, the fortress was decommissioned and demolished in 1515, which can provide an *ante quem* date for the last use of the mace. Later on, in a study published in 1977 which compiles the discoveries made on the island fortress Păcuiul lui Soare (on the Danube, Constanța County), two mace heads were analyzed: one made of iron, too damaged to be dated typologically, and the second one made of

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<sup>12</sup> Kirpichnikov 1966, 47–57.

<sup>13</sup> Popov 2015, 41–134.

<sup>14</sup> It is widely accepted that such elements of material culture were imported by the steppe peoples, who entered Hungary with a certain delay, as opposed to the areas south of the Carpathians. For the diffusion patterns see Fărcaș 2016, 15, 41–47.

<sup>15</sup> Kovács 1971.

<sup>16</sup> Fărcaș 2016, 29–41.

<sup>17</sup> Teutsch 1903, 397.

<sup>18</sup> Scorpan 1965, 447, fig. 5/9.

<sup>19</sup> Barnea 1967, 338–340.

<sup>20</sup> Anghel, Berciu 1968, 19, fig. 9.

bronze, dated to the thirteenth century, but based – again – on the typology of maces from Dinogetia and the ones from Kyiv. No archaeological dating was offered.<sup>21</sup>

A first (yet incomplete) collection of Transylvanian mace heads was published by Kurt Horedt in 1986 in a general overview of Transylvania in the Middle Ages.<sup>22</sup> However, the first regional comprehensive study to discuss comparatively the medieval mace heads was published by Victor Spinei in 1994 and consists of a compilation of mace heads from Moldova, North Bukovina (today in Ukraine), and the Chişinău district. Although he provided almost no archaeological evidence for dating the artifacts, it is a crucially important study for the Transylvanian typological analysis, as it reflects the east-west diffusion of maces.

Other studies worked with existing collections from museums. In 1998, two articles dealing with the mace heads from the National Union Museum in Alba Iulia were published. Without archaeological dating, the authors tried to use analogies and typo-chronologies from nearby countries.<sup>23</sup> In a 2003 article, Răzvan Pinca pointed out the absence of archaeological dating for the five mace heads he analyzed in the collection of the History, Ethnology, and Fine Art Museum in Lugoj, which he tried to classify typologically based on foreign typo-chronologies.<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, a study dealing broadly with medieval weaponry from 2007 discussed in general terms the mace heads from the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu but without offering detailed information regarding the dating methods.<sup>25</sup>

The developments in enhanced protection provided by plate armor eventually obliterated the use of maces on battlefields as weapons by the fifteenth century. It is by now clear that although the mace was still present even well into the sixteenth century, it will have lost its military function, taking over the symbol of status, and merging with the scepter.<sup>26</sup>

**Kistens.** This type of blunt weapon seems even less popular among scholars than maces. On the broader region, the first scholars who analyzed the earliest kistens made of elk horn classified them as either loom weights, horse harness decorations, staff pommels, or settled upon a variety of other interpretations, for which dating varied from Bronze Age to the Migration Period.<sup>27</sup> A. N. Kirpichnikov's publication in 1966 of 127 kistens, mainly from the area of Kievan Rus (dated up until the thirteenth century), sparked renewed interest in re-evaluating similar artifacts from museums in the USSR and its successor states, the Baltic states, Poland, Romania, and beyond. He proposed six types based on their material (Type I), cross section (Types II and III), and overall shape (Types IV, V, and VI).<sup>28</sup> Approximately two decades later, A. V. Kryganov proposed a different typo-chronology of kistens from the Western USSR, which partly contradicted some of the dating established by Kirpichnikov.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, his interpretations were at times too broad, despite using

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<sup>21</sup> Diaconu, Baraschi 1977, 137.

<sup>22</sup> Horedt 1986, 149.

<sup>23</sup> Simina 1998, 207–215; Simina, Anghel 1998, 162.

<sup>24</sup> Pinca 2003, 333–38.

<sup>25</sup> Niţoi 2007, 54.

<sup>26</sup> Fărcaş 2016, 18–19.

<sup>27</sup> Kirpichnikov 1966, 47.

<sup>28</sup> Kirpichnikov 1966, 58–65.

<sup>29</sup> Kryganov 1987, 63–69.

archaeologically provided evidence for his dating, which caused many researchers to use prevalently the typo-chronology already established in 1966. The scholarship that emerged in the wake of these new classifications was well summarized in 2008 by P. N. Kotowicz, where a particular prevalence of Polish examples can be seen.<sup>30</sup> Recent years saw the publication of another typology focused on the kistens from the area of today's Bulgaria, published by Valeri Yotov,<sup>31</sup> with a follow-up in 2016 by St. Popov.<sup>32</sup>

In Romania, the first and probably the only kistens to be published were in 1967 by Ion Barnea.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, he did not correlate his discoveries with Kirpichnikov's typo-chronology, although he quoted the artifacts published there. The dating proposed for the kistens from Dinogetia was based on archaeological context, but it is only provided for the bronze types (eleventh century) and the stone ones (twelfth–thirteenth centuries; there is no discussion whether these were really used as kistens).

It is now well established that the earliest kistens, made of elk horn, first appeared among the Avars around the seventh and late eight centuries and the Khazars between the late eighth and late tenth centuries. However, similar findings dated before the eighth century from Panjakent, Sogdiana, and Tuva in Eastern Siberia hint towards a central Asian origin. During the eighth and ninth centuries, nomadic incursions imported the metal kistens to *Volga Bulgaria*, from where they were disseminated among the Kievan Rus and the steppes of the Altai from the tenth century onwards. Furthermore, the Khazars brought these weapons to Slavonic territories in the tenth century, where the kistens quickly became popular.<sup>34</sup> Similar to maces, kistens eventually lost their military role on the battlefield, and, lacking a tradition as symbols of authority, they faded out completely in the late Middle Ages.

### **Classification of the mace heads from the collection of MNIT**

There are 21 mace heads currently known in the collections of the National Museum of Transylvanian History in Cluj-Napoca, of which 12 are knobbed, and nine are flanged. Unfortunately, one of the flanged mace heads (of Fărcaș Type VII/2, similar to the one discovered in the fortress of Piatra Craivii),<sup>35</sup> recently discovered in a seventeenth-century cenotaph, was not available for publishing at this time.<sup>36</sup> All the investigated mace heads come from private collections, most of them from the old collection of the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület. I will specify separately for each object if any additional information regarding its place of discovery is known.

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<sup>30</sup> Kotowicz 2008, 75–76.

<sup>31</sup> Yotov 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Popov 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Barnea 1967, 338–341.

<sup>34</sup> Kotowicz 2008, 75–76.

<sup>35</sup> Anghel, Bercu 1968, 19.

<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, thanks to the information kindly provided by Ph.D. Zsolt Csók, who coordinated the 2019 excavations at the Calvinist Church in Huedin (Cluj County), this mace head must have been an old family loom signifying authority, hence its role as a weapon had long been gone. For an in-depth interpretation on artifact biography see Gilchrist 2012, 11–13.

### **a. Knobbed mace heads**

**F 7548.<sup>37</sup> Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four large pyramidal knobs flanked by two rows of smaller tetrahedral ones** (Pl. II/1 and 2). The face edges of the pyramidal knobs are 25 mm long, and their base edges 22 mm long. The internal shaft is tubular, with a slight tapering towards the top, and it follows the exterior outline. The internal diameter at the bottom is 18 mm, while at the top it is 14 mm. The top seems to have once been enclosed, either by a flat surface or a finial, as it now shows the rims of a perforation.

Dimensions: 33 mm height, 64 mm width; weight: 191 g. One of the top tetrahedral knobs is missing, and it has been reconstructed in the restoration laboratory. The rest of the knobs show signs of wear on their apices. Based on the overall shape, this mace head fits into Fărcaș Type I, and is one of the oldest in the collection, dated to the twelfth–thirteenth centuries.

**F 3013. Knobbed mace head made of iron or steel, with four large pyramidal knobs** distributed radially in a medial register (Pl. II/3 and 4). The body is tubular, with the interior following the external outline of the mace head. The large pyramidal knobs are elongated and aligned with the mace head's longitudinal axis, and are flanked by two rows of four smaller tetrahedral knobs. The face edges of the pyramidal knobs are 30 mm long, and the base edges are 25 mm long. The body's interior is tubular, very vaguely tracing the outside contour, with an internal diameter of 28 mm.

Dimensions: 49 mm height, 30 mm width; weight: 330 g. The mace head exhibits a high degree of corrosion, with one entire register of tetrahedral knobs severely damaged by corrosion. Based on the formal and stylistic characteristics, this mace head is classifiable into Fărcaș Type I, dated between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries.

**F 7550. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four large pyramidal knobs and a bottom socket** (Pl. II/5 and 6). The four central pyramidal knobs are flanked by two rows of smaller tetrahedral ones. The body is slightly tubular but tapering towards the top. The face edges of the pyramidal knobs are 17 mm long, and the base edges are 16 mm long. The socket is only 17 mm long, with its internal diameter at the bottom of 16 mm and the external diameter of 29 mm (tapering towards the top, reaching 27 mm right below the knobs). The top orifice shows an inner lip, reducing the internal diameter to 16 mm. Given that the internal diameter does not show the same tapering as the external one, it is arguable that the thickness of the shaft is decreasing towards the top.

Dimensions: 47 mm height, 50 mm width; weight: 211 g. The entire surface is covered with a layer of green copper oxide. The socket shows a pierced hole for affixing the head on a wider handle with a metal nail. At some point in time, the nail head was ground off, this process leaving a deep groove in the socket. The apex of each knob shows signs of strong wear. Based on the overall shape, this mace head can be classified as Fărcaș Type II/1, datable to the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries.

**F 7543. Knobbed mace head made of bronze with four pyramidal knobs and a bottom socket** (Pl. III/1 and 2). The pyramidal knobs on the central register have 20 mm

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<sup>37</sup> For each artefact presented I will use its official reference number from the Museum catalog. It will thus be easier to follow through their examination, and it will also be easier to identify them in the collection of the Museum for additional future investigations.

face edges and 17 mm base edges placed on a tubular body. Each pyramidal knob is surrounded by a decorative stripe, which is severely eroded in many places. The bottom socket is 42 mm long, with an interior diameter of 24 mm and an exterior one of 29 mm, and ending in a decorative rim (which expands the exterior diameter of the socket to 35 mm). The socket exhibits a decorative double ring, which separates the two types of decoration: the distal part of the shaft is decorated with a zig-zagged line, crowned by small dots at each peak. The proximal part of the shaft is decorated with successive rhomboids, marked by a dot at every intersection with the double ring and with each other.

Dimensions: 87 mm height, 72 mm width; weight: 363 g. The apex of each knob is eroded. Based on the structural and stylistic characteristics this mace head fits into Fărcaș Type II/1, which dates between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

**F 277. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with nine conical knobs placed radially in a medial register, with a bottom socket** (Pl. III/3 and 4). The body is approximately spherical, made by joining two hemispheres, and the interior is tracing the outline of the exterior. The central nine knobs have a face height of 13 mm with a base diameter of 11 mm. The bottom socket is 18 mm long, with an interior diameter of 25 mm and the exterior one (measured below the body of the mace head) of 33 mm. The lower end of the socket is widened by thickening the wall, resulting in an exterior diameter on its lower end of 36 mm. The top orifice of the mace head measures 23 mm in its internal diameter.

Dimensions: 67 mm height, 73 mm width; weight: 348 g. One of the large knobs is missing, the body exhibiting an orifice in its place. Two of the smaller knobs are also fragmented – one from the top register, which is missing altogether, and one from the lower register, which only preserves its base. The adjoining of the two hemispheres is imperfect, exhibiting a 1 mm misalignment.

The shape of this mace head is not distinctly covered by any relevant typology, although it is somewhat similar to inv. no. 1970/7276 from the Aiud History Museum,<sup>38</sup> which has been classified as Fărcaș Type VI (end of the fourteenth through fifteenth century).<sup>39</sup> The most important difference, however, is that its knobs are not conical but slightly pyramidal. Additionally, St. Popov classified similar mace heads from the Vatevi Collection, designating them as Type IX-A, but these exhibit short sockets on both ends of the body.<sup>40</sup> Another analogy would be a mace head published by János Kalmár, but its knobs are also in the shape of elongated pyramids instead of conical. However, the same author argues that these maces with cylindrical bodies, large hollow interiors, and broad spaces between knobs are Turkish imports and, despite stylistic differences between them, they are part of the same phenomenon of diffusion.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the mace head from the collections of the MNIT can also be broadly dated to the end of the fourteenth through the fifteenth century.

**F 7546. Knobbed mace head made of iron or steel, with four large pyramidal knobs and bottom and top sockets** (Pl. III/5 and 6). The central row of radially placed pyramidal knobs is flanked by two rows of smaller tetrahedral ones. The pyramidal knobs

<sup>38</sup> Simina, Anghel 1998, 161–171.

<sup>39</sup> Fărcaș 2016, 37–38, 71.

<sup>40</sup> Popov 2015, 242–243.

<sup>41</sup> Kalmár 1971, 21, fig. 7/3.

are elongated parallel to the longitudinal axis of the mace, with the face edges 24 mm long and their base edges 16 mm long. The body's interior is tubular, and the top socket seems to be a transitional type,<sup>42</sup> in the shape of a lip folded inwards, with an external diameter of 33 mm. The bottom socket is 27 mm long, with an internal diameter of 23 mm and an external one of 27 mm.

Dimensions: 39 mm height, 66 mm width; weight: 162 g. The entire mace head is severely corroded, with the knobs in the top register very degraded. One of these knobs is barely visible, with the adjacent segment of the top lip missing. The degradation, however, allows a structural analysis of this artifact, showing the layers of forging; hence, the knobs appear attached through hammering rather than a structural part of the body. The overall shape of the mace head allows it to be classified into Fărcaș Type II/2, dated between the middle of the fourteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth century. However, given the nature of the top socket, it is reasonable to narrow down the dating to the second half of the fourteenth century.

**F 7542. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four large pyramidal knobs, with top and bottom sockets** (Pl. IV/1 and 2). The central register of radially placed pyramidal knobs is flanked by two rows of smaller, tetrahedral ones. The body is cylindrical, and its interior imitates the outside shape. The lateral edges of the central knobs are 17 mm long, and the base edges are 22 mm. The lower socket is 23 mm long, slightly deformed by compression, with an internal diameter of 21–25 mm and an external diameter of 29–32 mm. The top socket is 10 mm long, with an internal diameter of 21 mm and an external one of 29 mm. The top socket ends with a lip turned outwards, having an external diameter of 31 mm. The large pyramidal knobs are surrounded by a decorative band with a triangular cross-section, and two 5 mm thick rings decorate the lower edge of the socket and its middle, respectively.

Dimensions: 70 mm height, 77 mm width; weight: 338 g. The upper lip of the top socket is chipped and reconstructed recently, the knobs and the socket show a few superficial scratches (perhaps smelting defects), and the apexes of the pyramidal knobs show signs of wear. This mace head is classifiable as Fărcaș Type II/2, with a reasonable dating between the middle of the fourteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth century.

**F 7544. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four large pyramidal knobs, with top and bottom sockets** (Pl. IV/3 and 4). The body of the mace head is tubular, with the interior vaguely tracing the large knobs on the exterior. The large pyramidal knobs have their face edges 29 mm long and their base edges 17 mm long.

Dimensions: 98 mm height, 98 mm width; weight: 605 g. Each knob is surrounded by a decorative stripe, except for the proximal and distal edges, respectively, of the tetrahedral knobs. A decorated ring shaped as a braided rope decorates the rim of the top socket and the rim and middle of the bottom socket, respectively. The knobs, and particularly the pyramidal ones, have eroded apexes. This mace head is a typical Fărcaș Type II/2, dated between the middle of the fourteenth and the middle of the fifteenth centuries.

**F 7554. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four large pyramidal knobs, with top and bottom sockets** (Pl. IV/5 and 6). The central register of large pyramidal

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<sup>42</sup> I argue that the outward turned lip crowning the mace head can be considered the first sign of evolution of Fărcaș Type II/1 mace heads to Type II/2.

knobs is flanked by two rows of smaller tetrahedral ones. The body is tubular, very slightly tapered towards the top, with the interior following the exterior contour. The face edges of the pyramidal knobs are 28 mm long, and the base edges are 20 mm long. The top socket has a frustal appearance, with a height of 10 mm, an interior diameter of 18 mm and the exterior one of 31–28 mm (tapered from the bottom towards the top). The lower socket has a regular tubular shape, with a 14 mm length, an interior diameter of 22 mm, and an external one of 30 mm.

Dimensions: 57 mm height, 78 mm width; weight: 312 g. One of the tetrahedral knobs from the lower register is fragmented, and another one from the top register is completely missing, its place being taken by a triangular hole in the body. Additionally, the apex of each knob is heavily eroded, and the lower socket exhibits minor scratches. Based on the overall shape, this mace head fits into Fărcaș Type II/2, dated between the middle of the fourteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth century.

**F 7558. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four large pyramidal knobs, with top and bottom sockets** (Pl. V/1 and 2). It has a central row of radially placed pyramidal knobs flanked by two rows of smaller tetrahedral knobs. The body is cylindrical, and the interior imitates the exterior shape. The face edges of the pyramidal knobs are 28 mm long, and their base edges are 22 mm. The bottom socket is fragmented, with its original length impossible to determine; the preserved length is 42 mm, with an internal diameter of 24 mm and an external diameter of 28 mm. The top socket has a frustal shape, and is also fragmented; its overall length is 14 mm, and its internal diameter at the top end measures 24 mm. Moreover, the rim of the top socket shows traces of an internal lip, probably a long-gone finial. The resulting internal diameter of the resulting hole is 22 mm. An ornamental band with a triangular cross-section is decorating the base of each pyramidal knob. Also, the lower socket is decorated with a 4 mm thick twisted rope motif, placed 34 mm below the lower tetrahedral knobs.

Dimensions: 92 mm height, 79 mm width; weight: 397 g. This mace head shows significant damage, with both sockets fragmented and a missing tetrahedral knob from the lower register. Also, the decorative band surrounding the large knobs is barely visible, and the apex of each pyramid exhibits signs of wear.

A classic Fărcaș Type II/2, and also quite a rare example of a decorated mace head for this region, this weapon can be dated typologically between the middle of the fourteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth century.

**F 7545. Knobbed mace head made of bronze, with four parallelepipedal knobs, with bottom and top sockets** (Pl. V/3 and 4). The large main knobs are placed radially on the body of the mace head, with two rows of four triangular prisms each, placed on either side of the former. The body is cylindrical with a tubular interior, which vaguely imitates the exterior shape of the mace head. The parallelepipedal knobs are 13 mm wide and have a 5 mm height, and their base is slightly narrower than their top. The bottom socket is 11 mm long, with an internal diameter of 21 mm and an external diameter of 29 mm. The top socket is 7 mm long, has an internal diameter of 23 mm, and an external diameter of 30 mm.

Dimensions: 52 mm height, 52 mm width; weight: 259 g. The top socket has a relatively large part broken off, and the central knobs show several chips and scratches, possibly smelting defects.

This type of mace head is not identifiable in any typo-chronology from the Carpathian Basin. However, it fits into Popov's Type VIII-A as a rare example,<sup>43</sup> for which analogies can be found in Bulgaria, Serbia,<sup>44</sup> Bosnia,<sup>45</sup> and Croatia.<sup>46</sup> No such mace head has been documented for present-day Romania and Hungary. While St. Popov dates these mace heads to the thirteenth–early fourteenth centuries, J. Kalmár places them around the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, considering them of Turkish origin.<sup>47</sup> A later date for the mace heads from the medieval Kingdom of Hungary seems plausible, which is why the present mace can be dated to the fourteenth–early fifteenth centuries.

### **b. Flanged mace heads**

**F 7553. Flanged mace made of iron or steel, with 5 flanges and a handle made from the same material** (Pl. VI/1 and 2). The body is cylindrical, with the flanges forged onto it. The average thickness of the flanges is 6.5 mm. They are 118–120 mm long, placed radially, approximately 6–8 mm apart, with a reversed lip on their upper end. The 30–32 mm-long outcrop of each flange is flattened perpendicularly on the longitudinal axis of the mace, with a widening of 20 mm for each flange. The body of the mace is structurally continued with a thick hollow handle, with a 26 mm exterior diameter on its lower end, tapering towards 10 mm diameter on the top end of the mace, where it acts as a finial. The internal diameter of the lower end of the handle is 14 mm. The medial part of the handle is decorated with five longitudinal parallel rows of small incised four-pointed stars.

Dimensions: 571 mm length, 82 mm width; weight: 1284 g. The structure of the mace head is visible, which allows for a straightforward analysis of its construction by forging. The entire mace is affected by a high degree of corrosion. This mace head is a simplified version of two decorated “gothic mace heads” from the collection of the Hungarian National Museum, which are dated to the fifteenth century (inv. nos. 54.1897 and 55.3128).<sup>48</sup> The analogies align with the new developments that appeared in the shape of the flanged mace heads, i.e. they were made from iron in full, and the spikes became protruding, with projections on both ends.<sup>49</sup> The flanged mace analyzed here can, therefore, also be dated to the fifteenth century.

**F 7551. Flanged mace head made of iron or steel, with six flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. VI/3 and 4). Out of the six flanges, only three survive more or less intact, and only small fragments from two others are still present. Having 91 mm length and 39 mm width, their shape is approximately of a right triangle, with the hypotenuse acting as the impact surface. The top third of the hypotenuse exhibits a small 13.5–15 mm long stud, which is flattened and twisted at a 90° angle. The stud of one of the flanges is bent downwards. The bottom end of each flange ended in a reversed lip shaped as a loop, which is only preserved on two flanges. Each flange is forged inside a groove made into the thickened tubular body,

<sup>43</sup> Popov 2015, 42–43.

<sup>44</sup> Demo 1984, 328.

<sup>45</sup> Sijarić 2014, 266.

<sup>46</sup> Bošnjak 2023, 63.

<sup>47</sup> Kalmár 1964, 34.

<sup>48</sup> The mace heads lack archaeological dating, having been donated by Bálint Megyeri in 1934 and Alfréd Grünhant in 1906 respectively, and dated based on existing analogies. Kovács S. 2016, 52–55.

<sup>49</sup> Kovács S. 2010, 177; Kovács S. 2016, 14.

which can best be observed at the missing sixth flange. One of the most damaged flanges is partially detached from its groove and bent sideways. The bottom socket is also tubular, either structurally connected to the body or inserted into it, having an internal diameter of 18 mm and an external diameter of 23 mm.

Dimensions: 115 mm length, 89 mm width; weight: 298 g. The mace head is severely damaged and corroded. However, a small wooden fragment can still be observed inside the top end of the body, along with what may seem to be a metal wedge driven inside a kerf. Moreover, the bottom socket is also fragmented. Based on the overall structure and shape, this mace head fits into Fărcaș VII/1 type, dating from the middle of the fourteenth through the fifteenth centuries, but its shape typical for a so-called “gothic mace” can narrow down the dating to the fifteenth century.

**F 7541. Flanged mace head made of iron or steel, with 17 flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. VII/1 and 2). It consists of a cylindrical body, each flange forged onto it, forming a bulb-shaped head. Each flange contains a small knob on both ends. The overall length of each flange is 51 mm, with a height of 15 mm. The finial (15 mm height) has decorative purposes, and it consists of a cone with a diameter at the base of 24 mm, superimposed by a bifrustal knob, with its maximum diameter of 14 mm. The 154 mm long shaft tapers from the bottom towards the body of the mace, with a lower exterior diameter of 25 mm, top exterior diameter of 21 mm, and lower inside diameter of 20 mm. The shaft has been made by curving a long sheet of metal into a tube, and the joining of the two edges appears as a small gap in the wall of the resulting tube.

Dimensions: 228 mm height, 62 mm width; weight: 701 g. It exhibits slight wear on the edge of each flange. Based on the structural and stylistic characteristics, this mace head fits into Fărcaș Type VII/3, dating from the sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

**F 7547. Flanged mace head made of iron or steel, with 17 flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. VII/3 and 4). It consists of a cylindrical body with a 17 mm internal diameter at the top, onto which the trapezoidal flanges were forged. Each flange is 49 mm long and 17 mm high, with varying thickness and a high degree of corrosion. The base of the body is combined with the socket through a decorative ring. The socket itself is 71 mm long, showing a 2 mm overlap resulted from curving a metal sheet into the tube-shaped socket. The internal diameter of the socket is 20.5 mm at its lower end, while the exterior diameter tapers from 24 mm on its lower end to 22 mm on its top end.

Dimensions: 120 mm height, 54–59 mm width, as the mace head is slightly compressed; weight: 420 g. Poorly preserved, it shows severe corrosion-generated damage. Based on its overall shape, this mace head seems similar to Fărcaș Type VII/2 maces, albeit with a very short socket. For the lack of its presence in other relevant typo-chronologies, and based on the observations made by J. Kalmár regarding the evolution of flanged maces,<sup>50</sup> I argue that this is a variation (perhaps even a cheap, undecorated one) of the same Fărcaș Type VII/2 maces, dated to the late sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

**F 7560. Flanged mace head made of iron or steel, with 16 flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. VII/5 and 6). The tubular body has the flanges hammered into it, giving an overall pear shape. Each flange is 55 mm long and 21 mm high, exhibiting a knob at each end (albeit the bottom ones are excessively worn out). The finial consists of a convex disc

<sup>50</sup> Kalmár 1971, 24.

surmounted by a flat round button. The shaft is only suggested by a broken rim, as the mace head was altered or damaged, and is currently fitted onto a short 18.5 mm long handle with an oversized thickness (29 mm in diameter). The wooden handle is carved to fit inside the narrow shaft of the mace head and fastened with a nail riveted on both ends.

Dimensions: 68 mm height, 66 mm width; weight: 594 g. The flanges show severe wear on their edges. Based on its structure, this mace head fits into Fărcaș Type VII/3, being almost identical to mace head F 7541, and dated to the late sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

**F 7561. Flanged mace head made of iron or steel, with 12 flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. VIII/1, 2 and 3). The body is pear-shaped, with a tubular interior. The flanges have decorative edges, imitating perhaps a flower. The finial is shaped like a copper alloy disc, incised with floral motifs, topped by a spherical finial. The socket is 250 mm long, with a diameter of 20 mm, made of iron, and decorated with geometric features, having a cylindrical cross-section in its top two-thirds and an octagonal cross-section in the lower third. The bottom edge has a decorative rim with three consecutive ridges, of which the second from the top is wider. The handle is made from a copper alloy (perhaps brass), with a diameter of 28 mm, with a decorative lattice made from the same material riveted over it. The lattice work consists of vegetal motifs and several oval-shaped medallions. Both ends of the handle are decorated symmetrically with five-ridged rims, of which the middle one is taller (32 mm in diameter for the lower one, 31 mm in diameter for the top one). The very end of the handle is covered with an incised disc with vegetal motifs, having in the middle a six-lobed shape, with a knob in the middle.

Dimensions for the mace head: 96 mm height, 61 mm width; weight: 958 g; 590 mm total length of the mace. The lattice decoration on the lower handle is damaged; almost a third is missing, and a larger fragment is kept in place by a copper wire. The lower handle is attached to the top handle by a small rivet going through the entire tube thickness.

The structural and stylistic characteristics of this mace are similar to Fărcaș Type VII/3 maces, albeit this is a decorated and somewhat luxurious piece fit for a well-off owner. Arguably, the decorative lattice and its finial exhibit strong Turkish influences that could support the typological dating of this mace into the late sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

**F 7552. Flanged mace head made of iron or steel, with six flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. IX/1 and 2). The body is cylindrical, ending in a hemispherical finial with a small perforation at the apex and structurally continuing with the socket at the opposite end. The diameter of the finial is 32 mm, with an 18 mm height. The flanges are approximately triangular, with rounded points and edges, resembling feathers, with 70–72 mm length, 3 mm thickness, and 25 mm height. The socket is slightly faceted, each facet corresponding to a flange and a space between flanges, respectively. On its lower end, the socket is affixed by a long nail with riveted ends. The wooden handle is 375 cm long and tapered from its 34 mm bottom diameter to its 29 mm upper diameter, ending with a decorative button (12 mm thick and 27.5 mm in diameter).

Dimensions: 192 mm length (without the handle), 80 mm width; weight: 729 g. There is a slight crack at the base of the socket, across one of the rivets. This type of mace head is not covered by any typo-chronology. There are two relatively close analogies, one from

Bulgaria and one from Hungary. The Bulgarian mace head has been classified by St. Popov<sup>51</sup> as corresponding to his Type XVIII-B, dated to the late fourteenth–fifteenth centuries,<sup>52</sup> having six trapezium-shaped flanges, a top hemispherical finial on the top, crowned by a stud. The second analogy, both stylistically and geographically, is from the Hungarian National Museum. It is a flanged mace with seven pentagonal flanges and a long socket, topped by a hemispheric dome with no finial, dated using the contemporary depictions of Count Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664), Ban of Croatia, and his son, Ádám Zrínyi (1662–1691) holding similar maces.<sup>53</sup> However, the Bulgarian mace heads falling in Popov's XVIII-B subtype have an elongated finial crowned by a stud, whereas the one from Hungary and the one analyzed here exhibit much shorter, hemispherical finials with no ending stud. I, therefore, chose to include the F 7552 mace head into the same type as the similar Hungarian one, with the same seventeenth century dating.

**F 7562. Flanged mace head made of bronze, with 10 flanges and a bottom socket** (Pl. IX/3 and 4). The body is approximately spherical, yet the interior shaft still preserves the distal end of the wooden handle, which makes it impossible to determine the shape of the shaft itself. Moreover, the head is made by adjoining two hemispheres, with the contact line perpendicular to the shaft. The flanges are rounded, tracing the outline of the body, exhibiting a slight thickening in their medial area. Their overall length is 55 mm, and their height is 5 mm. Each space between the flanges is covered by a concave band supporting them. The mace head is decorated with a 30.5 mm diameter finial shaped like a 16-petalled flower with a slight central concavity. A simple ring with a small rim below it marks the contact between the body and the socket.

The socket is 212 mm long, widening from its distal end (22 mm external diameter) towards its proximal end (27 mm external diameter), ending with a wide opening of 29 mm external diameter, decorated with two thin parallel rings. A longitudinal line indicates the manufacturing method: bending a rectangular sheet of metal into a tube, overlapping its edges at a 6 mm depth. The shaft wall is extremely thin (0.5 mm). The wooden handle could be original. It is unclear how deep it penetrates the socket of the mace head as it is broken inside it, and the distal end is still in its original position. The rest of the handle was exposed on a 95 mm length, and its proximal end was covered in a brass or bronze tube with a 230 mm length and 28 mm exterior diameter. At 104 mm from the proximal end of the handle, an orifice bears a leather strap with a simple knot, forming a tight loop.

Dimensions: 283 mm length, 62 mm width; weight: 783 g with another 224 g for the handle. Small cracks are noticeable on the socket, the largest one situated on the area of structural overlapping, having been soldered at some point in time. No typo-chronologies are featuring this type of flanged mace head, nor can it be found clearly in depictions. One such early photograph dates from 1867, showing Prince Ödön Batthyány dressed in a revivalist style with a chainmail, a plate gorget, articulated gauntlets with fingers, the handle of a seventeenth-century sword, and a globular mace with hinted flanges (Pl. X/1 and 2). Perhaps apart from the sword, all his equipment seems to be an attempt at reconstructing a medieval martial outfit, yet in a revivalist, non-accurate fashion. The mace head could

<sup>51</sup> Popov 2018, 39, 44, 52.

<sup>52</sup> Popov 2015, 73–76.

<sup>53</sup> Kovács S. 2016, 110–111.

be interpreted similarly, but the quality of the image is too low to assess such a small detail correctly. Moreover, maces were used ceremonially by some hussars in the eighteenth century, and they still occurred sporadically, especially among the Jász and Cuman people in Hungary. The shape of these maces changed in the late nineteenth–early twentieth centuries, becoming more globular, mostly made of brass.<sup>54</sup> The mace head analyzed here could be originating from such a late nineteenth-century environment, only harkening the shape of the old flanged maces.

### c. Atypical mace heads

**F 7559. Mace head made of iron or steel, with a tubular body and decorative stripes of small rhomboidal shapes**, exhibiting a slightly undulating medial groove on its circumference (Pl. X/3 and 4). Small copper traces can be seen within the medial groove, perhaps an eroded decoration. The ends of the body have a simple rim each, imitating perhaps the top and bottom sockets. The internal diameter of the body is 21 mm, while the external diameter of each decorative rim is 28 mm.

Dimensions: 43.5 mm length, 42 mm width; weight: 190 g. I could find no analogy of such a mace head in any of the neighboring geographical regions. Because this piece is neither a flanged mace head nor a proper knobbed one, it stands out as a distinct category. St. Popov found two such pieces in Bulgaria's Vatevi private collection, which he classified according to his typo-chronology as Type XII-A, dated to the twelfth–fourteenth centuries.<sup>55</sup> Considering the chronological delay given by the diffusion patterns of these weapons (see, for instance, the case above of mace head F 7545), the artifact from the National Museum of Transylvanian History could be dated to the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries.

### Classification of the kistens from the collection of MNIT

The total number of kistens from the National Museum of Transylvanian History collections includes one object from the nineteenth-century weapons collection, raising the number of artifacts to three, to which a separate kisten chain can be added.

**F 7557. Cubic kisten head with cutout corners**, made of iron, with a lug affixed probably through a central shaft by riveting on the opposite side (Pl. XI/1 and 2). The chain is comprised of three complete and one fragmented link, with unequal length. The body of each link is slightly twisted and has a round cross-section.

Dimensions: the head of the kisten is 36 mm high and 38–40 mm wide, creating an imperfect cube. Together with the loop and top rivet, the total height is 58 mm. The chain links become smaller from the head to the lower end, from 62 mm in length to 58 mm. Their pitch follows the same reduction in size, from 56 mm to 42 mm. Similarly, the width of each link decreases from 23 mm to 17 mm. The total weight of the kisten is 402 g.

This kisten corresponds to Kirpichnikov Type IV/1, dated to the twelfth–first half of the thirteenth centuries, although A. Kryganov proposed a less reliable and much earlier dating between the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>56</sup> St. Popov, on the other hand, dates the same type of kisten (classified as Popov Type X) to the twelfth–first half of the fifteenth centuries

<sup>54</sup> Kovács 2016, 25.

<sup>55</sup> Popov 2015, 286–287.

<sup>56</sup> Kryganov 1987, 64.

for the area of present-day Bulgaria.<sup>57</sup> Based on the similar dating to the twelfth–first half of the thirteenth centuries for mace heads discovered in the Kyiv area, and the observed delay of approximately one century for the same types to reach the Carpathian Basin,<sup>58</sup> I estimate that the same delay can be applied for this type of kisten, hence the proposed dating of thirteenth–first half of the fourteenth centuries.

**F 3249. Pear-shaped flanged kisten head with ten flanges and bottom socket** (Pl. XI/3, 4 and 5). The flanges have decorative edges, imitating, perhaps, a floral motif. One of them is missing. The body is pierced longitudinally by a metal rod, riveted on its distal end, ending at the bottom of the kisten head with a ring for attaching the chain. Most likely this used to be a flanged mace, with the finial removed to accommodate the chain-fastening system. The 175 mm long chain comprises four links with circular cross-sections and an unevenly twisted body. Each link is itself additionally twisted at 135°. The links are unequal in size, starting from the kisten head: link one (41 mm pitch, 20 mm width, 5 mm thickness), link two (48 mm pitch, 20 mm width, 5 mm thickness), link three (44 mm pitch, 20 mm width, 6 mm thickness), link four (33 mm pitch, 18 mm width, 6 mm thickness). The chain is attached to a longitudinal band, bent in half to cover the handle from two sides (fastened by two rivets), the bending in the middle being shaped as a lug for attaching the chain. The two ends of this metal band are tapered down and rolled backward. The ends of this band (and the lower rivet) overlap a pair of additional reinforcing bands stretching almost to the middle of the long handle, which in turn are reinforced by five small nails each. The 684 mm long handle is irregular, clearly made from a simple tree branch, and widened at the lower end (18 mm top diameter, 29 mm bottom diameter).

The total length of the wooden handle is 703 mm, including the metal loop. The kisten head is 113 mm long and 60 mm wide, weighing 341 g. The total weight of the kisten, including the handle, is 685 g.

The shape of the kisten head is very similar to a series of mace heads from the seventeenth century, such as the mace with 12 flanges of Count Dénes Bánffy (1630–1674) which contains an inscription with the year 1674,<sup>59</sup> or a command mace with 14 flanges dating from the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>60</sup> It is, therefore, plausible to have a *terminus post quem* dating for the kisten, assuming that the conversion from mace to kisten happened after it fell out of use, perhaps as late as the turn of the twentieth century.

**F 7555. Kisten head with a very compressed bifrustal shape**, seemingly attached to a 15 mm-diameter cylindrical rod, which is slightly protruding through the top of the head, exhibiting an incised cross (Pl. XII/1 and 2). The bottom end of the rod is flattened to a 5.5 mm thickness and pierced by a hole for attaching the chain. The first link of this chain is significantly larger, exhibiting an S shape, a round cross-section, and thinner ends. The following 12 links are smaller, with the same cross-section as the first, twisted unevenly into an S shape each – except for the second link, which is severely distorted. The wooden handle has a simple iron lug for attaching the chain, and an iron band reinforces each end.

<sup>57</sup> Popov 2016, 293–294.

<sup>58</sup> Kovács 1971, 174–176; Fărcaș 2016, 29.

<sup>59</sup> Currently at the Hungarian National Museum, inv. no. 54.1924. Kovács S. 2016, 114–115.

<sup>60</sup> From the collection of the Hungarian National Museum, inv. no. 54.1471. Kovács S. 2016, 112–113.

The lower two-thirds of the handle are separated by an iron ring with an external diameter of 35 mm, most likely for decorative purposes.

Dimensions: the head of the kisten is 56 mm high and a 33 mm diameter; the wooden handle is 317 mm long, with a 26 mm diameter. The chain is 200 mm long; the large link is 36 mm long and 16 mm wide, whereas the small links have a 13–15 mm pitch and 9 mm width. The total weight, together with the wooden handle, is 333 g. No analogy has been found for this kisten, and, based on its state of preservation and particular structure, a late dating (perhaps the nineteenth century) cannot be ruled out.

**F 7549. Kisten chain made of iron, consisting of seven links and a hook** (Pl. XII/3). The first two links have a circular cross-section, 23 mm pitch, 20 mm width, and 3 mm thickness, with their body twisted at 45°. The subsequent four links have a rectangular cross-section, forged in a 90°-angle twisted S-shape, with a small and a large loop. They have a 26 mm pitch, a 20 mm width for the small loop, and a 24 mm width for the large loop, with a medial thickness of 6 mm. The exterior of the two loops is decorated with two parallel rows of very small pyramidal knobs. The last link is shaped similarly to the first two, with a 25 mm pitch and 18 mm width. The end of the chain has a hook with a 4 mm thick circular cross-section and a small loop (9 mm pitch and 14 mm width) for attaching the chain. The hook has a 14 mm pitch and 16 mm width. The total length of the chain is 250 mm, weighing 96 g.

If one is to consider the hook, the chain exhibits symmetry, suggesting a complete set of links. Therefore, it is not unlikely that only the kisten weight and the handle are missing. The only analogy for this type of chain comes from a kisten from the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The chain links with pyramidal knobs are identical to the ones analyzed here. The kisten in the Metropolitan Museum has a globular head with five long spikes (harkening to a “Morningstar” type of weapon) and a long metal handle, probably dated to “the mid-late nineteenth century but in the style of the sixteenth century.”<sup>61</sup> For the lack of other analogies, it is safe to propose the same dating for the kisten chain analyzed here.

### Conclusions

The National Museum of Transylvanian History holds one of the largest collections of mace heads and kistens in Romania, with 20 maces and four kistens. None of these have a clear archaeological context of discovery, making it challenging to ascertain a precise dating. Using the available typo-chronologies and various analogies, I have identified 12 medieval mace heads (twelfth to fifteenth centuries) and one medieval kisten (thirteenth–fourteenth), as well as five early modern flanged maces (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries), three late modern maces, and two late modern kistens (nineteenth century). Last but not least, one of the kistens is a seventeenth-century mace head converted into a kisten perhaps in the late nineteenth–early twentieth centuries. There is very little research into the late modern maces, which makes identifying specific types extremely difficult. This article will constitute a foundation for a broader examination of maces throughout Transylvania.

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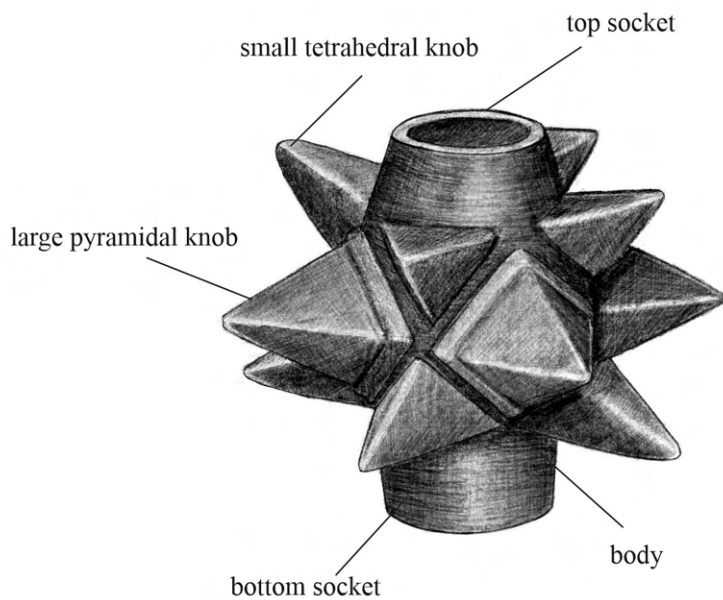
<sup>61</sup> Grancsay 1955, 23, cat. no. 81.

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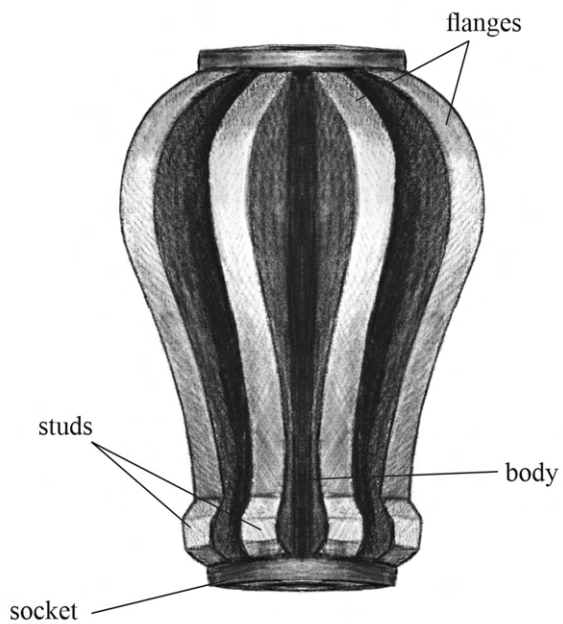
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2.

**Pl. I. 1.** Structural components of a knobbed mace head; **2.** Structural components of a flanged mace head (drawings by Dana Gheorghe-Șerban).



**Pl. II.** Knobbed mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7548; 3–4. F 3013; 5–6. F 7550 (photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



**Pl. III.** Knobbed mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7543; 3–4. F 277; 5–6. F 7546  
(photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



Pl. IV. Knobbed mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7542; 3–4. F 7544; 5–6. F 7554  
(photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



**Pl. V.** Knobbed mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7558; 3–4. F 7545  
(photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



Pl. VI. Flanged mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7553; 3–4. F 7551  
(photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



**Pl. VII.** Flanged mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7541; 3–4. F 7547; 5–6. F 7560 (photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



Pl. VIII. 1. F 7561, lateral view; 2. F 7561, view from the top; 3. F 7561, detail of the handle.



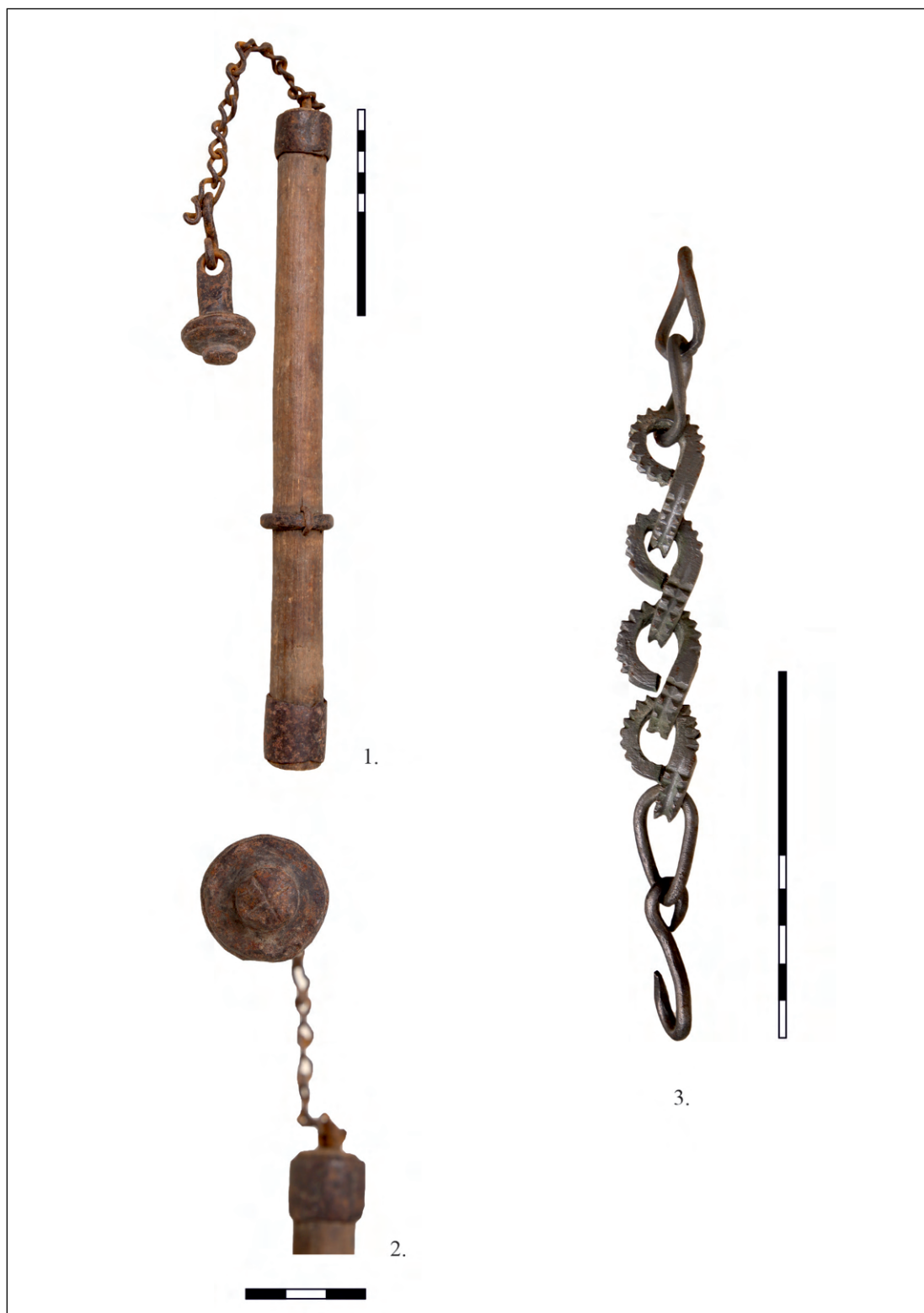
**Pl. IX.** Flanged mace heads, lateral and top views: 1–2. F 7552; 3–4. F 7562  
(photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



**Pl. X. 1.** Prince Ödön Batthyány (Kovács S. 2016, 26); **2.** Prince Ödön Batthyány, detail of the mace; **3.** F 7559, lateral view; **4.** F 7559, top view (3–4. photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



**Pl. XI.** 1. F 7557, lateral view; 2. F 7557, view from the top; 3. F 3249, lateral view; 4. F 3249, detail of the head; 5. F 3249, top view of the head (photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).



Pl. XII. 1. F 7555, lateral view; 2. F 7555, top view of the head; 3. F 7549  
(photos by Andrei Oct. Fărcaș).

## EXCAVATION IN THE MUSEUM'S DEPOSITS. EARLY MODERN OBJECTS DISCOVERED BY BÉLA PÓSTA IN 1904 IN THE CALVINIST CHURCH OF TIRIMIA (MUREȘ COUNTY)

ANDREA DEMJÉN\*

**Abstract:** This article tries to present the story of the archaeological excavation carried out by Béla Pósta in the Calvinist church of Tirimia (Hung. Nagyteremi, Germ. Gross-Wachsdorf, Mureș County) in 1904 and to analyze the objects discovered on that occasion, preserved today in the patrimony of the National Museum of Transylvanian History in Cluj-Napoca. Reconstructing an excavation carried out almost 120 years ago, when the archaeology of medieval and early modern churches was in its infancy, based exclusively on objects kept in museum repositories and on letters/diaries of the period, is a difficult task. From the correspondence between Béla Pósta and the people directly or indirectly involved (the Calvinist priest of the village of Tirimia, Márton Kakasy; the local landowner Baron László Solymosy, etc.) and from the personal diaries of Lajos Kelemen we can partially reconstruct the archaeological excavations, the scandal that followed, and later the fate of the objects discovered during the research.

**Keywords:** Tirimia, Miklós Sükösd, György Sükösd, gold ring, crypt, church, early modern period

**Rezumat:** Articolul de față încearcă să prezinte povestea săpăturii arheologice efectuată de către Béla Pósta în biserica reformată de la Tirimia (magh. Nagyteremi, germ. Gross-Wachsdorf, jud. Mureș) în anul 1904 și să analizeze obiectele descoperite, păstrate astăzi în patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei din Cluj-Napoca. Reconstituirea unei săpături efectuate acum aproape 120 ani, când arheologia bisericilor medievale și premoderne era în faza incipientă, bazată exclusiv pe obiectele păstrate în depozitele muzeale și pe scrisori/jurnale de epocă, este o sarcină dificilă. Din corespondența între Béla Pósta și persoanele implicate direct sau indirect în cercetare (preotul reformat al satului Tirimia, Márton Kakasy; baronul local László Solymosy etc.) și din jurnalele personale ale lui Lajos Kelemen putem reconstitui parțial săpăturile arheologice, scandalul care a urmat și, mai apoi, soarta obiectelor descoperite în cursul cercetării.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Tirimia, Miklós Sükösd, György Sükösd, inel de aur, criptă, biserică, epoca modernă timpurie

### The story of an excavation...

The story of this excavation<sup>1</sup> begins on 15 December 1903, when the Calvinist priest Márton Kakasy sent an official document to the Ministry of Religion and Public Education

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<sup>1</sup> Colecția MNIT, nos. C1 679, 684, 695, 699, 703, 705, 711, 712, 716, 717, 723, 724, 734, 777, 777a, 933, 986. These letters and reports cover many aspects of the excavations that have not been published and are an interesting contribution to the history of early twentieth-century archaeology. Brief accounts of the excavation and finds in: Kelemen 1977, 174; Mérai 2010, 29; Vincze 2014, 400–401; Kelemen 2017; Szócs 2020, 444.

concerning the community's wish to build a new church and to obtain permission to demolish the old church renovated in 1631.<sup>2</sup> From the copy of the resolution of the meeting of the National Monuments Commission held in Budapest on 19 February 1904, we learn about the situation of the church of Tirimia.<sup>3</sup> The document states that there are no drawings or photographs of the church in the archives of the commission, so architect Ottó Sztehló was delegated to report on the situation of the present church. Sztehló visited the site on 2–5 January 1904 and described the medieval church before demolition: polygonal (eight-sided) choir, simple square nave, wooden box ceiling. The only preserved historical doorframe was at the south entrance and could be dated to the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The windows and the east doorframe displayed modern interventions. On the north and west sides of the nave, murals had been revealed, but the heads of the figures had been effaced. The tomb chest of Gábor Sükösd (the name is wrong, the correct one is György Sükösd; Fig. 2) was bought by the Transylvanian Museum Society (Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület) for 300 crowns from the Calvinist Church (the document mentions that the monument had missing parts: head and legs).<sup>5</sup> Since the church had no important architectural pieces, it was not worth keeping, but it is mentioned that it was necessary to take photographs of the murals (the report notes that the Transylvanian Museum Society took these photos).<sup>6</sup> After the visit of the architect delegate of the National Monuments Commission, O. Sztehló, the community started the demolition of the church (Fig. 1). According to Zoltán Vincze, Lajos Kelemen began negotiations with the reformed priest for the involvement of the Transylvanian Museum Society regarding archaeological research after the demolition of the church. The parties agreed that the museum would carry out the excavations at its own expense and that the objects discovered would become the property of the church. The museum had the right of pre-emption over the property. In the absence of other specialists for this archaeological research, Béla Pósta was delegated to coordinate the works.<sup>7</sup>

The letter that the local priest sent the director of the Transylvanian Museum Society, B. Pósta, on 18 February 1904 indicates that the demolition was in progress and the excavations could start the subsequent week.<sup>8</sup> It seems that the archaeological research took place after 18 February, because in another letter to B. Pósta, dated 1 March 1904, the Calvinist priest of Tirimia, M. Kakasy, described the results of the research performed inside the church.<sup>9</sup> The letter contains details about these excavations: B. Pósta participated

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<sup>2</sup> I have not been able to identify the original deed, references to it appearing in the copy of the resolution of the National Monuments Commission dated 19 February 1904. Colecția MNIT, no. C1 711 (copy); Vincze 2014, 373.

<sup>3</sup> It is noted that the report was sent to both the church and the Transylvanian Museum Society.

<sup>4</sup> The south portal of the church is today in the Medieval and Early Modern Lapidary of the National Museum of Transylvanian History/ Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei – MNIT (Colecția MNIT, no. F 2730).

<sup>5</sup> Kelemen 1977, 173–174.

<sup>6</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 711, 19 February 1904 (copy). I have not been able to identify these photographs in the MNIT collection.

<sup>7</sup> In 1899, Béla Pósta was appointed director of the Numismatic and Antiquities Collection of the Transylvanian Museum Society (Vincze 2014, 33–42).

<sup>8</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 699, 18 February 1904.

<sup>9</sup> I have not been able to identify the detailed official report of the archaeological research among the papers of the Museum History Collection (C1). I could reconstruct only the details of the excavations on

in the opening of a crypt (*fülke* = “niche”) in which, apart from human bones, the team found a small coin and a square brick with a Latin inscription, indicating that this burial place was built on 7 May 1631. According to the description, the crypt was accessible by stairs at the far end of the village. The report mentions another construction, originally thought to be a crypt, which was, in fact, a quadrangular brick crypt in which nothing was discovered. The priest also mentioned the existence of brick walls (“piles of bricks”) that traversed the entire church, probably the walls of the previous church. Excavations were also carried out near the niche (*fülke*) of Sükösd, where sculptural fragments detached from the sarcophagus (Sükösd’s arm and the head of a secondary figure) were discovered and sent to the Transylvanian Museum Society.<sup>10</sup>

In his official report to the register of the Ministry of Royal Hungarian Finances, B. Pósta described the objects recovered during the excavations carried out in February 1904, after the demolition of the church. Two gold rings and 337 hemispherical and star-shaped silver coffin pins were discovered in the tomb. In the report we find the total weight and value of the pieces. Thus, the two rings weighed 16 grams (one gram of gold was estimated at 3 crowns and 40 fillér), with the total value established at 54 crowns and 40 fillér. The 337 coffin pins had a total weight of 617 grams (one gram of silver was estimated at 8 fillér), the total value reaching 49 crowns and 36 fillér. Pósta thus officially notified the Treasury about the objects discovered (given that the State was entitled to one-third on the purchase value of the pieces) and stated that the Museum had obtained the right of pre-emption from the Calvinist Parish of Tirimia. At the same time, he mentioned that the coffin pins could not be officially sent to determine the silver title because some were embedded in the coffin’s wood, and their removal would endanger its integrity. The evaluation of the studs was carried out on the pieces found without traces of wood. An urgent response was requested regarding the acquisition of the above-mentioned items.<sup>11</sup> The official answer on the acquisition of these objects came from the Secretary of State on 22 March 1904. The resolution clearly stated that according to the Austrian Civil Code, for objects discovered on the territory of Transylvania the Royal Treasury was not entitled to one-third of the value of the objects. The value of the discovered objects must be divided between the finder and the owner of the land.<sup>12</sup>

From the letters and copies of documents in the Museum History Collection (Register C1) of the National Museum of Transylvanian History (Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, MNIT) we learn about the artificially fueled scandal that the excavations triggered.<sup>13</sup> On 1 March 1904, local landowner Baron László Solymosy lodged an official complaint with the prefecture stating that the demolition of the church was in progress, the church crypt had been opened, and the bones had been removed from the burial place, which was “against religious sentiments.” It is clear from the text of the complaint that the

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the basis of correspondence between the people involved in both the research and the scandal that followed (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 695); the text of the letter partially appears in the Diary of Lajos Kelemen, footnote 1276 (Kelemen 2017, 222).

<sup>10</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 695.

<sup>11</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 705, 11 March 1904.

<sup>12</sup> Reply from the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Finance in Budapest (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 734, 22 March 1904).

<sup>13</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 711.

injured party, L. Solymosy, was unaware of the laws in force and was also uninformed about the history of the church.<sup>14</sup> Following the complaint, the District Praetor Dr. Géza Vitályos started an investigation. In a letter sent to the Transylvanian Museum on 7 March 1904, he asked for information and comments on the accusations against the Calvinist priest. At the same time, the letter shows that, following the official denunciation, a hearing was held, during which the accused, M. Kakasy, explained his position: there were old monuments in the church, therefore, he notified the National Commission of Monuments about the demolition of the church and obtained the permission. The archaeological excavation was carried out by Dr. B. Pósta, professor and director of the museum.<sup>15</sup> In the letter, the District Praetor Dr. G. Vitályos mentioned that the authorities were only informed about the demolition of the church and not about the opening of the crypt.<sup>16</sup> In his reply, B. Pósta responded to the accusations with legal and scientific arguments.<sup>17</sup> His letter contains valuable information about the circumstances of the discovery of György Sükösd's grave<sup>18</sup>. I shall quote specific passages from the letter as they are essential for understanding what happened during the archaeological excavation in February 1904:

Only one grave has been found on the site of the Calvinist church in Tirimia, that of György Sükösd, who died in 1631. His remains were not thrown away, but were excavated according to the rules of scientific excavation, down to the smallest detail, namely by me, and are now kept in the Numismatic and Antiquities Collection of the National Museum of Transylvania...<sup>19</sup>

In addition to György Sükösd's grave, another simple brick and stone tomb was discovered during the excavation of the church foundations. This crypt had already been opened on 7 May 1631 and was largely destroyed. No tombs were found in this crypt, only numerous broken and disarranged bones, which shows that the relics of the past were not treated with the same respect as they are today in excavations...<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In the official complaint, the injured party asks for specific information regarding several issues, listed in the document: "1. Is there an exhumation authorization from the Vice Prefect and whether the arrangements for the reburial of the bones have been made? 2. He asks that the exhumation/burying be stopped until the problems mentioned under point 1 have been resolved. 3. On what basis did the parish pre-sell the objects found in the graves and whether the authorities have any information about this? 4. That the rules on public health and reburial according to the Roman Catholic religion be observed. 5. That the Calvinist Church prove that it has obtained ownership of the crypts of the Roman Catholic families" (detail from copy of L. Solymosy's complaint sent to the chief praetor, Tirimia Mare, 1 March 1904, Colecția MNIT, no. C1 711).

<sup>15</sup> In a letter, B. Pósta assures the Calvinist priest that the Transylvanian Museum did the right thing by opening György Sükösd's crypt and saving the objects and human remains and assumes full responsibility for them (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 703, 10 March 1904).

<sup>16</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 711, 7 March 1904.

<sup>17</sup> "Baron László Solymosy's denunciation sheds a sad light on how little the spirit of Western culture has penetrated even educated circles in our country and how little the influence of 100 years of Hungarian archaeological literature is felt even in those places where we could rightly claim a certain literacy, simply because of our social position; it bears the imprint of total ignorance" (detail from the letter of B. Pósta sent to the Praetor of the Iernut District: Cluj-Napoca, 21 March 1904, Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 1).

<sup>18</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 1–9.

<sup>19</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 4. This letter also attests that this crypt was located at a distance of 1.5 meters from the south wall of the church (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 3).

It took us three days of hard work to uncover the simple brick tomb and carefully clean the area around it, where we assumed György Sükösd's skeleton was located. We placed two paid guards near the grave in the evening so as not to disturb it during the night, and the fifteen minutes that the two guards spent away from the brick tomb to take their dinner was enough for some soulless men to break off part of the grave, and only by chance did our guards arrive before the weeds spoiled the result of our painstaking work of accurately observing and recording all the circumstances of the grave and burial...<sup>21</sup>

György Sükösd's brick tomb was the most unique accessory of the Calvinist Church of Tirimia, as one of the long sides of the brick tomb was the foundation wall of the church itself.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the investigations of the district authorities, the ecclesiastical authorities were also mobilized. The Administrative Council of the Eparchy of the Transylvanian Calvinist Church exonerated priest Márton Kakasy of the accusations, blaming him only for allowing the remains of György Sükösd to be moved. The church ordered that György Sükösd's remains be returned from B. Pósta and reburied in the new church within 30 days.<sup>23</sup> B. Pósta was outraged by the decision of the Council of the Eparchy of the Calvinist Church. In a letter, he compares the action of the ecclesiastical superiors "to the spirit of Egyptian darkness," and "from here to the Atlantic this view is unknown."<sup>24</sup> The Calvinist priest M. Kakasy asked, through L. Kelemen's mediation, for the intervention of the Unitarian bishop to save the earthly remains of György Sükösd and rebury them.<sup>25</sup> B. Pósta, to save the Calvinist priest from persecution, decided to return the remains of György Sükösd. At the same time, a commission led by Baron Ernő Bánffy was sent to evaluate the objects found during the excavations.<sup>26</sup> After the evaluation, the committee set the purchase price of the objects found at 166 crowns and 48 fillér that M. Kakasy asked B. Pósta to send for the construction of the new church.<sup>27</sup>

The archaeological research had attracted the attention of not only secular and ecclesiastical authorities but also of the contemporary press. On 6 March 1904, an unfavorable article was published in the newspaper *Közérdek*<sup>28</sup> under the title *Sírbontás* [The Opening of the Grave], in which serious accusations were made against the Calvinist priest M. Kakasy (treasure hunter, grave robber, etc.). A few days later, in the same newspaper, a response to the pejorative article written by the renowned historian Lajos Kelemen was published, justifying the circumstances of the archaeological research

<sup>21</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 712, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Copy of the resolution of the Administrative Council of the Eparchy of the Transylvanian Calvinist Church sent to the Archpriest (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 717, 17 March 1904).

<sup>24</sup> Copy of letter that B. Pósta sent the Calvinist priest M. Kakasy (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 717, 6 April 1904; Colecția MNIT, no. C1 716, 5 April 1904).

<sup>25</sup> Letter of Calvinist priest M. Kakasy to B. Pósta (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 723, 8 April 1904).

<sup>26</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 717, 17 March 1904 (copy).

<sup>27</sup> Letter of Calvinist priest M. Kakasy to B. Pósta (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 777–777a, 4 June 1904).

<sup>28</sup> *Közérdek*, a weekly newspaper with social, economic, legal, administrative and mixed content, was edited by Mihály Pálffy and Sámuel Kerekes (owner and editor) in Târgu-Mureș between 1889 and 1906 (Gyórfy 2010).

conducted by B. Pósta's archaeological investigation team and arguing for the sale of György Sükösd's tomb chest ("Sükösd's tomb chest does not belong in a village church but in a national public collection"). The response also mentions a very important aspect, which was probably what started the scandal: the land of the demolished church was exchanged with Baron Solymosy, who probably wanted to exploit this aspect and get the discovered objects.<sup>29</sup>

It is certain that following the events that took place, the Transylvanian Museum Society acquired from the church of Tirimia the objects discovered during the excavations<sup>30</sup> and several objects of worship pertaining to the church (gilded silver cups, pewter mug, several tablecloths, and embroidered chalice covers used at the Lord's Table, etc.).<sup>31</sup>

### **Reconstructing the excavation in the light of the discovered letters**

Summarizing the results of the research (reconstructed on the basis of several letters presented above), the presumed grave of György Sükösd was deposited in a crypt made of brick, the long side of the crypt being part of the church wall. During the archaeological excavation, another crypt was discovered at a distance of 1.5 meters from the south wall of the nave. It was made of stone and brick and was accessible by stairs at the end of the village. There is some confusion in the writings about the dating of György Sükösd's crypt: M. Kakasy mentions that a square brick was found inside, with the date 7 May 1631 written on it, as the year of construction, while B. Pósta believes that the crypt was opened and destroyed on this date. From the documentation consulted it appears that B. Pósta participated only in the excavation of the crypt in which the earthly remains of György Sükösd and the objects that were deposited in his grave (the two rings, the decorated cuffs, and the coffin lintels) were discovered. The letter of M. Kakasy, reporting on the excavations carried out in the absence of B. Pósta, is unclear and inconclusive about the location of the crypts and the objects discovered.

Today, it is rather challenging to establish the veracity of the dates. In the old Hungarian registers, two square bricks appear inscribed with the year 1631 (inv. no. I.5548) and 1632 (inv. no. I.5549), respectively, and are mentioned as found in the crypt of the old church in Tirimia.<sup>32</sup> Most probably they are connected to the burial of György Sükösd,

<sup>29</sup> The article appeared on 13 March 1904 in the newspaper *Közérdek* under the title *Statement in the case of the "opening of the tomb" at Tirimia*. Reprinted: Kelemen 2009, 32–33.

<sup>30</sup> Following negotiations, the Transylvanian Museum Society paid 112 crowns for the objects discovered during the excavation. The letter of the Calvinist priest M. Kakasy to B. Pósta (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 933, 31 January 1905).

<sup>31</sup> A pewter mug was exchanged on 8 April 1904 (ENM Registers, vol. I, 129, no. I.4534, currently Colecția MNIT, no. F 4570), and the other objects were acquired together with the archaeological material discovered, which entered the patrimony of the Transylvanian Museum Society on 22 December 1905 (ENM Registers, vol. II, 26, nos. I.5538–I.5540, currently Colecția MNIT, no. F 5814–F 5816; Letter of the Calvinist priest M. Kakasy to B. Pósta: Colecția MNIT, no. C1 933, 31 January 1905; Colecția MNIT, no. C1 985, April 1905; Colecția MNIT, no. C1 986, 23 April 1905; Kovács 2011, 734–739). A gilt silver lidded cup dated to the sixteenth century (ENM Registers, vol. II, 26, no. I.5534) and chalice covers (ENM Registers, vol. II, 26, no. I.5541) feature in the old register, but are no longer listed among the MNIT's cultural goods.

<sup>32</sup> ENM Registers, vol. II, 26. The two bricks do not appear in the current registers, as they have not been equated. I have not been able to identify them in the museum's holdings.

1631 indicating the year of burial and 1632 being closely connected with the moment the monument was placed in the church (Fig. 2).<sup>33</sup>

### **Analysis of the objects discovered in the grave**

On 22 December 1905 several objects were inventoried in the Register of the Transylvanian Museum Society<sup>34</sup> (inv. nos.: I.5536–I.5537 and I.5542–I.5549), mentioning that the pieces were found in the grave of György Sükösd.<sup>35</sup> Thus, from the Calvinist parish of Tirimia the Transylvanian Museum Society acquired the following objects: a woman's gold ring from the sixteenth century (inv. no. I.5536, currently no. F 22731), a gold ring with the seal of Miklós Sükösd from the seventeenth century (inv. no. I.5537, currently no. F 22732); gilded leaves from a laurel wreath (inv. no. I.5542, no new inv. no.);<sup>36</sup> fragments of velvet cloth (inv. no. I.5543, currently no. F 9622); silver coffin pins/nails (inv. no. I.5544, currently no. F 9623); iron coffin pins (inv. no. I.5545, no new inv. no.); clothing coping (inv. no. I.5546, no new inv. no.); fragments of bronze strap (inv. no. I.5547a–b, no new inv. no.) and a bronze strap (inv. no. I.5547, currently no. F 9624). Below the purchased goods listed above, registered with the same date, there is another donation from the parish: a quadrilateral brick with the year 1631 (inv. no. I.5548, no new inv. no.) and a similar brick inscribed with the year 1632 (inv. no. I.5549, no new inv. no.). This later entry also recorded that the objects were discovered in the crypt of the old church of Tirimia.<sup>37</sup>

Of the objects discovered and inventoried in 1905, some do not appear in the official reports, and others I have not been able to identify in the MNIT collection (those without the F logo).

According to reports, two gold rings were found in György Sükösd's grave: the first was a woman's ring and the second had Miklós Sükösd's seal. The first gold ring (inv. no. F 22731; dimensions: height of 2 cm, ring diameter of 2 cm, ring thickness 0.2 cm, bezel

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<sup>33</sup> The funerary monument (consisting of a tomb chest set against an architectural background) of György Sükösd was commissioned from the Cluj stonemason Péter Diószegi by his wife in 1632 (Kelemen 1905, 105; Mérai 2017, Cat. No. 107, 211–215). The tomb chest is today in the Medieval and Early Modern Lapidary of the MNIT (Colecția MNIT, no. F 2678; Fig. 2).

<sup>34</sup> The cultural goods of the Transylvanian Museum Society were inventoried between 1899 and 1945 in eight volumes. In those registers (which today we call the "Old Hungarian Registers"), several pieces of information were recorded, which were not transcribed in the current registers when the equations were operated: year of entry, name of the donor or seller, provenance and inventory number, etc. (Vincze, Vincze 2021, 58–61). Some of the objects inventoried in the eight volumes of the Transylvanian Museum Society have been equated and transcribed into the new inventory registers of the MNIT. In the 1960s, these cultural goods were ordered/cataloged and divided chronologically by historical periods and not by objective and practical criteria such as categories of goods, the material from which they were made, or by criteria of functionality. This is how the feudal collection was created (the F logo, today called the Medieval and Early Modern Collection), which comprises heritage objects that can be dated over approximately 1000 years. In addition to the feudal collection, there are the following collections: prehistoric (P), ancient (V), modern (M), contemporary (C), history of pharmacy (IF), numismatic (N), and technical (T).

<sup>35</sup> ENM Registers, vol. II, 26.

<sup>36</sup> I have not been able to identify the objects that have not been equated, not having the F logo (Medieval and Early Modern Collection), in the collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History.

<sup>37</sup> ENM Registers, vol. II, 26. In addition to the objects discovered during the archaeological excavations, the Transylvanian Museum also acquired cups and textiles used for the Lord's Table at the Calvinist church (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 933, 31 January 1905; Colecția MNIT, no. C1 985, April 1905; Kovács 2011, 733–739).

diameter 0.5 cm; Fig. 3/1), displays a rectangular bezel in the shape of an inverted pyramid, raised, in which a precious/semi-precious stone has been set, which is now missing. The edge of the bezel has been highlighted all around with an incised border, and the four corners of the bezel are each supported by a twist, forming an X below the bezel. On either side of the mount, the shoulders of the ring are slightly thickened and decorated with scrolls, stylized vegetal elements, and niello. The other ring, the men's piece, had a prominent, octagonal bezel set in a black semi-precious stone with dark cherry inlay, probably carnelian<sup>38</sup> (inv. no.: F 22732; dimensions: height 2.6 cm, ring diameter 2.6 cm, ring thickness 0.4–0.25 cm, bezel diameter 1.35–1.5 cm; Fig. 3/2). The piece features a crest depicting a pelican feeding its young by tearing its breast open, stamped with a crown and flanked by lambrequins. Above the crown, one notes a repeat of the representation in the shield of the coat of arms. From the exergue inscription, the name “NICOLAVS. SWKEOSD–D.T.” can be distinguished. From the representation of the coat of arms and the name *Nicolaus* we can say with certainty that it belonged to Miklós Sükösd. The ring shows traces of functional wear.

I have not been able to identify satisfactory analogies for the two finger rings. For the ring of Miklós Sükösd we found only one analogy closer in representation and style: in tomb 1 of crypt IX of the church of Sárospatak (Hungary) was discovered a gold ring with a round bezel representing a coat of arms and the monogram “S Sz.” The ring has been dated to the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the following one.<sup>39</sup> The collections of the Museum of Applied Arts<sup>40</sup> in Budapest and the Victoria and Albert Museum<sup>41</sup> in London do include rings with specific shape and characteristics (octagonal bezel with semi-precious stone with a coat of arms) that resembles the Tirimia men's ring. However, the decoration and technique of the objects in these museums are much more elaborate, the Tirimia ring being a simpler, provincial version. The second ring, a woman's ring, can be dated to the sixteenth century. We do not know whose ring it was, but it is certain that György Sükösd's wife, Erzsébet, listed in her will all the movables she owned: chains, earrings, bracelets, 15 gold rings (among the jewelry she mentions, in particular, those received from her first husband, György Sükösd, and those inherited from her mother), horse harness, silver cups and silverware, pieces of clothing, etc.<sup>42</sup> which she bequeathed to her relatives. Such jewelry was highly prized, rarely and probably especially deposited as grave inventory in tombs.<sup>43</sup> They were usually passed on to the heirs, as in Erzsébet's will.

In the course of our research, we also discovered textile fragments made from velvet fabric which are registered in the current inventory records as “fragments of neck ornaments made of metal threads, beads, and pearls applied on velvet.”<sup>44</sup> The size, shape, and specific characteristics of the fragments indicate that they were decorated cuffs and

<sup>38</sup> The semi-precious stone was identified by Luminița Săsăran, MNIT conservator, and I thank her for performing this investigation.

<sup>39</sup> Gervers-Molnár 1983, 82, footnote 12, fig. 200–202.

<sup>40</sup> “Signet Ring”/ MAA.

<sup>41</sup> “Signet Ring”/ V&A.

<sup>42</sup> Deák 1878, 949–955.

<sup>43</sup> Apor 2012, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Colecția MNIT, F, 92.

were once applied to the sleeves of garments. The cuffs<sup>45</sup> were tailored and embroidered separately (inv. no.: F 9622; dimensions: 17 cm long, 2.5 cm wide; Fig. 4). The support was made of a silk fabric over which velvet was layered. The cuff decoration was embroidered on top of the velvet: the edges of the pieces were decorated with light-colored glass beads. A single row of chain stitch embroidery frames the string of beads.

A series of decorative elements have been arranged inside the frame: four-petal flowers made of a metal band, in the central part with a green glass bead (the beads are not entirely preserved), interspersed with a decorative butterfly-shaped row. The body of the butterfly, in the shape of a cross with equal arms, was made from the same type of metal strip as the previous row (a glass bead was sewn on each arm and a cherry-colored glass bead was placed in the center), and the wings were rendered by spiral embroidery with metal thread. Each petal and wing originally had a bead attached in the middle, evidence of which are the stitching threads and beads preserved in places. The registers are demarcated on all four sides by a string of three glass beads. The decorated sleeves show chromatic degradation, so the original color of the fabrics and metal threads could not be determined. One cuff is preserved almost intact (some of the decorative elements and beads are missing), while the other shows massive losses of both the velvet fabric and some of the decorative elements. Seven samples (one sample from the thread, one sample from the metal thread, four samples from the velvet, and one sample from the backing) were taken for material identification and analyzed in the Restoration Laboratory of the MNIT.<sup>46</sup> The analyses confirmed that both the backing and the velvet were made of silk protein thread.

I have not been able to identify mobile heritage analogies for the decorated cuffs from Tirimia. In written sources<sup>47</sup> and in artistic representations of the period (Fig. 5),<sup>48</sup> however, there is information that women wore sleeves embroidered with gold thread and richly decorated with beads.

In the MNIT collection, there are still two fragments of almost identical bronze sconces/ appliqués from Tirimia (inv. no. F 9624; dimensions: length of 2.75 and 2.9 cm, width of 0.9 cm; Fig. 6).<sup>49</sup> The sconces were originally rectangular, one having a V-shaped cut-off tip and the other straight, with only the edges cut obliquely. Around the tip, both show traces of a rivet. The opposite side of the appliqués was perforated, cut out, and showed traces of breakage, indicating that part of the appliqués was missing. I was unable to identify the functionality of the appliqué fragments.

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<sup>45</sup> For the description of the cuffs and the identification of the materials, I thank Ph.D. Student Ioana Cova, textile restorer at the MNIT.

<sup>46</sup> The analyses were carried out by Ph.D. Andrea Beatrix Magó, MNIT conservation scientist, using the optical microscopy method (OLYMPUS CX33 microscope). See Analysis Bulletin no. 91/22.04.2022. I thank her for performing this investigation.

<sup>47</sup> Apor 2012, 28.

<sup>48</sup> I thank the Evangelical Church A.C. of Romania – Braşov Parish and the Esterhazy Privatstiftung in Eisenstadt (Austria) for granting permission to publish the paintings in their collection.

<sup>49</sup> It is possible that the old inventory numbers have been reversed because in the register of the Transylvanian Museum Society (ENM Registers, vol. II) under the inventory number I.5547 (currently Colecția MNIT, no. F 9624) there is a bronze strap, and under inventory number I.5547a–b (not in the MNIT patrimony) there are two fragments of bronze straps. It is very likely that the inventory numbers were reversed during the equalization and that the bronze strap mentioned in the old registers was part of the two appliqués.

In addition to the two rings, the decorated cuffs, and the bronze appliqués, two other types of silver coffin nails were discovered (inv. no. F 9623, Fig. 7). The excavation report mentions a total of 337 star-shaped and hemispherical coffin pins,<sup>50</sup> but only 140 pieces are listed and are still found in the MNIT collection.<sup>51</sup> The hemispherical pins (dimensions: height of 2 cm, diameter of 1.5 cm, and one nail has a diameter of 1.8 cm) were dome-shaped, without decoration, and the nail with rectangular cross-section had a pointed tip with which the hemisphere was attached to the coffin. The six-spoke stellate pins (dimensions: height of 2 cm, diameter of 1.8–2.3 cm) have a raised rim in the middle of each spoke. They have a rectangular nail with a pointed tip on the inside. Some of the nails still retain fragments of the velvet with which the coffin was covered.

According to early modern sources, coffins of the era were decorated with silver or gilt pins, and the coffin was covered with purple velvet.<sup>52</sup> Coffin lintels were used not only to adorn the coffin itself but also to hang the coat of arms or inscriptions with the name and age of the deceased. Such studs have been discovered in the crypts of the Calvinist church on Mihail Kogălniceanu Street in Cluj-Napoca<sup>53</sup> and, recently, in the crypts of the Calvinist church in Huedin (Bánffyhunyard, Cluj County).<sup>54</sup> Their dating is quite broad: the pins discovered in the crypts of the Calvinist church on Mihail Kogălniceanu Street can be dated to the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the subsequent one. For example, in the coffin of George Apafi, who died in 1664, star-shaped, hemispherical, and crescent-shaped coffin pins were found (inv. nos.: F 18612–F 18657), while the hemispherical pins in the coffin of Governor George Bánffy already date from the first part of the eighteenth century (1708; inv. nos.: F 18504–F 18544). Such coffin pins date from the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, and those with hemispherical heads also appear in the first part of the nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Different pin shapes and variants have been found in a series of tombs in the church of Saint Stephen in Baia Mare (Nagybánya, Maramureş County; Cx. 3, Cx. 19, Cx. 259, Cx. 266, Cx. 323, Cx. 334, Cx. 347),<sup>56</sup> in the Apafi family crypt in Mălâncrav (Almakerék, Sibiu County),<sup>57</sup> in that of the Sándor family in the church of Saint Peter and Paul in Şumuleu Ciuc (Csíksomlyó, Harghita County),<sup>58</sup> in

<sup>50</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 705, 11 March 1904.

<sup>51</sup> According to B. Pósta's report, 337 star-shaped and hemispherical coffin pins were discovered during the excavation (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 705, 11 March 1904). The register of the Transylvanian Museum Society only contains silver coffin pins. In contrast, the current register with the initials F only contains "silver coffin nails" (Colecția MNIT, F, 92). 83 pieces were later recorded in pencil in the observations: hemispherical, 57 star-shaped. Also noted here are 10 pieces mounted on wooden fragments. However, I have not been able to identify these in the MNIT heritage.

<sup>52</sup> Apor 2012, 81.

<sup>53</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 2665/1–5. Inventory of vestments from the Calvinist church on Mihail Kogălniceanu Street, 11 May 1911; Colecția MNIT, F, 125–128.

<sup>54</sup> The rescue archaeological excavation in the Calvinist church of Huedin was carried out by Ph.D. Zsolt Csók (MNIT). The discovered pins are in the MNIT patrimony (Colecția MNIT, nos. F 29965–F 29966). I thank him for the information kindly provided.

<sup>55</sup> Here, we can mention, for example, the tomb of Kálmán Jósika from 1833 discovered in the family crypt at Luna. Unpublished excavation by István Kovács and Balázs Létay from 1910 (Colecția MNIT, no. C1 2655, 25 Noiembrie 1910).

<sup>56</sup> Szócs 2020, 440–442 (Fig. 1/g; Fig. 2; Fig. 8/e; Fig. 10).

<sup>57</sup> Szádeczky 1909, 201.

<sup>58</sup> Botár 2007–2008, 37–40, 45–46.

the Jósika family crypt in Luna (Aranyoslóna, Cluj County),<sup>59</sup> in the crypt of the church of Csenger (Hungary),<sup>60</sup> in grave no. IV in the crypt of the church of Miskolc Avas (Hungary),<sup>61</sup> in the crypts of the parish church of Sárospatak (Hungary),<sup>62</sup> in the crypt of the church of Nagyhalászi (Hungary)<sup>63</sup> or in the crypt of the church of Lónya (Hungary).<sup>64</sup>

### The Sükösd family genealogy and a possible interpretation of the findings

To understand and interpret these discoveries, it is necessary to perform more in-depth research regarding the genealogy of the Sükösd family from Tirimia.<sup>65</sup> I do not wish to go into the family tree in detail. Still, there are several members of the family with the name Miklós who appear in the family history.

Miklós, son of Theremy Sixtus,<sup>66</sup> is first mentioned in documents on 21 August 1468 in connection with the occupation of arable land between Chirileu (Kerelő, Mureş County) and Vidrasău (Vidrâtszeg, Mureş County).<sup>67</sup> In 1470, Miklós from Tirimia is mentioned as viscount of the Saxons (“Nobilem Nicolaum Zikesd vice Comitem nostrum Siculorum”), sent by János Pongrácz, the voivode of Transylvania, to the city of Sibiu. Also, in the same year, he appears with the title “Nicolaus Sikesdh de Theremi Vice Comes Siculorum nec non Castellanus Castri Terch.”<sup>68</sup> It seems that the problem with the land in Vidrasău was not resolved, so at the end of 1479 János and Pál Kerelői again forbade Miklós Sigesd of Tirimia to occupy that land.<sup>69</sup> In 1481, he is mentioned as castellan of Cetatea de Baltă (Küküllővár, Alba County).<sup>70</sup> Miklós is also mentioned in 1483 in connection to the mortgaging/disinheritance of the estate László Bogathi and his son Péter (the manor house together with the estate and half of the forest) from Iernut (Radnót, Mureş County).<sup>71</sup> His name, together with his brother's Johannes (“Nicolaus et Joannes Sijkesd de Theremj or Johannem et Nicolaum Swkesd de Theremij”) appears later in documents, in 1486 and 1487, in connection with a murder case.<sup>72</sup> According to these documents Miklós died before

<sup>59</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. C1 2655, 25 November 1910.

<sup>60</sup> Höllrigl 1934, 102, 108, 80, kép. 36.

<sup>61</sup> Megay 1970, 133.

<sup>62</sup> Ember 1968, 151; Gervers-Molnár 1983, fig. 205–206.

<sup>63</sup> Jakab, Janovics 2008, 322–323, 328–329 (Plate XIV).

<sup>64</sup> Pintye 2017, 41–42.

<sup>65</sup> In preserved documents the family name appears in several variants: *Zikesd*, *Sikesdh de Theremi* (Lázár 1880, 814; SzOkl, III, 88–89), *Sijkesd de Theremj*, *Swkesd de Theremij* (SzOkl, I, 256–258, 263–265), *Sikesd de Theremi* (TelOkl, II, 204).

<sup>66</sup> The Latin name *Sixtus* in Hungarian was *Sikesd* or *Sükösd* (Kelemen 1905, 103; Csánki 1913, 957).

<sup>67</sup> In 1468 Teremi Nicolae and Benedict, and through them their parents Sixtus and their brothers Ioan and Petru receive from King Matthias, especially for the loyal services of Nicolae and Benedict, half of Vidrasău from the estate of László Alárd(-fi) of Mureşeni (Meggyesfalva, Mureş County), who was disloyal during the Transylvanian rebellion. But before the inauguration, the sons of the late Paul of Kerelő, Paul, Peter, John and Gál, as well as the sons of Istvan of Héderfája, Imre Lőkes and his son Elek and Zsigmond Tatár of Kerelő, protested that Sixtus of Teremi and his sons Miklós, Benedek, Peter and John, as well as Peter Alárd of Mureşeni, wanted to claim their land in Chirileu and Vidrasău (Csánki 1913, 958; KmJkv, I, 665, d. 1820).

<sup>68</sup> Lázár 1880, 814; SzOkl, III, 88–89.

<sup>69</sup> Csánki 1913, 958.

<sup>70</sup> Beke 1897, 506.

<sup>71</sup> KmJkv, I, 827 (d. 2452), 829 (d. 2459).

<sup>72</sup> The two brothers killed András Becze from Recsenyéd (today Rareş, Harghita County), and for the crime the Transylvanian Voivode Ştefan Báthori together with other nobles forced the two to compensate the son of

1494<sup>73</sup> and his widow Dorothea also died before 28 September 1495.<sup>74</sup> Her daughter Magdalena became the wife of Márton Erdélyi from Somkerék (Şintereag, Bistrița-Năsăud County), and her second daughter Katherina the wife of Salatiel Mocsi. Márton Erdélyi, on behalf of the daughters, forbade László Dezsőffy's wife to share the property left by the widow of the deceased Miklós Sikesd for the salvation of her soul. Among the silver and gold possessions preserved documents mention a ring with which the will was authenticated.<sup>75</sup> I have not been able to identify the will of Miklós Sükösd's widow in the Teleki family archive, so we do not know what the seal of the ring mentioned in the document looked like.

In 1560, a Miklós Sükösd and his wife Anna Balásffi are mentioned, together with their two daughters: Katalin (who became the wife of János Bethlen) and Anna (wife of Ferencz Béldi).<sup>76</sup> Another Miklós appears in documents in 1579 together with Gáspár, as landowners in Doboka County.<sup>77</sup> However, there is more obscurity and confusion surrounding the two Miklós from 1560 and 1579 regarding their kinship (it is not clear, whether it is the same person or father and son).<sup>78</sup>

The last Miklós appears in the family history at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the next. He was the son of Gáspár (who died sometime between 1589 and 1592) and Kata Wesselényi, and the brother of György Sükösd (1589–1631).<sup>79</sup> Miklós's wife was Kata Gávai,<sup>80</sup> and they had a daughter, Erzsébet, who became the wife of István Petky.<sup>81</sup> More data is available about his life and activity: in February 1603 he swore an oath together with other nobles of Küküllő County<sup>82</sup> in favor of the anti-imperial leader Moise Székely (prince of Transylvania from 15 April to 17 July 1603<sup>83</sup>). Miklós played an important role in the struggle against Prince Gabriel Báthory (1589–1613), for which he was outlawed and his estates were confiscated at the Diet of Sibiu on 12–25 May 1612.<sup>84</sup> After the death of Prince Gabriel Báthory, at the Diet of Sibiu, held on 17 December 1613, the Saxon University demanded the restoration of the status of Miklós from Prince Gabriel

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the deceased (SzOkl, I, 256–258, 263–265).

<sup>73</sup> The name of Nicolai Sykesd de Theremy's widow, Dorothea, appears in a loan deed and land purchase (TelOkl, II, 197–199).

<sup>74</sup> TelOkl, II, 204–205.

<sup>75</sup> "...quod generosa domina Dorothea relicta Nicolai Sikesd de Theremi tempore finitionis sue vite omnia sua bona tam mobilia quam immobilia, aurum et argentum testamentaliter sibi legasset, ut totaliter omnia bona predictae domine quocunque nomine vocentur pro anima eiusdem domine Dorothee iam decesse distribuat, et sic se exsecutorem in rebus prefatis domine fassa est; **item anulum, quo cum testamentum est munitum, ipsa habere fassa est**" (TelOkl, II, 204).

<sup>76</sup> Apor 1863, 69–71; Nagy 1863, 412; Kelemen 1905, 104–105.

<sup>77</sup> Hodor 1837, 226; Nagy 1863, 412; Kelemen 1905, 105.

<sup>78</sup> Orbán 1868; Kelemen 1905, 105.

<sup>79</sup> György was the younger brother of Miklós. György's wife was Erzsébet Borsovai (Kelemen 1905, 105). After György's death, his wife Erzsébet remarried Farkas Petky (Deák 1878, 949; Fülöp 2022, 8). Both of her marriages were heirless, so close relatives inherited the estate.

<sup>80</sup> According to L. Kelemen, they were married on 12 September 1606 (see footnote 39, in Kelemen 1905, 104).

<sup>81</sup> Kelemen 1905, 104–105.

<sup>82</sup> EOE, XVII, 397.

<sup>83</sup> Vass 1897, 75–85.

<sup>84</sup> Bőjthini 1809, 399; EOE, VI, 224.

Bethlen,<sup>85</sup> which was obtained the following year at the Diet of Mediaș, on 23 February – 1 March 1614.<sup>86</sup> Basically, after the pardon he regained the domains of Hoghiz (Hévíz, Brașov County), Racoș (Alsórákos, Brașov County), and Ormeniș (Ürmös, Brașov County), but not the domains of Tirimia, for which he fought until his death.<sup>87</sup> In 1615 he ceded to Simon Péchy part of the domains of Săbed (Szabéd, Mureș County), Culpiu (Mezőkölpény, Mureș County), Porumbeni (Galambod, Mureș County), and Hărtău (Harczó, Mureș County) in order to obtain again the domains of Tirimia/Tirimia Mare (Nagyteremi, Mureș County), Tirimioara (Kis Teremi, Mureș County), Cerghinzel (Kiscsengerd, Mureș County), Vaidacuta (Vajdakút, Mureș County), and Satu Nou (Teremiújfalú, Mureș County).<sup>88</sup> Thus we can assume that Miklós died after 1615, but before 24 March 1631, when his brother György died. However, we have found information that helps narrow down this interval: in 1624, György rebuilt the manor of Racoș into a castle with four bastions.<sup>89</sup> Available sources attest for sure that the estate of Racoș returned to Miklós in 1614<sup>90</sup> and only after his death was inherited by his brother György. Another piece of information appears in L. Kelemen's articles: in 1629 Kata Gávai, Miklós' wife and son-in-law of István Petky, obtained the consent of Prince Gabriel Bethlen to the exchange of Miklós' alienated estates,<sup>91</sup> which confirms that Miklós was no longer alive.

According to the documents listed above, the first Miklós appears in the records for the first time in 1468 as a very influential nobleman who owned several estates near Tirimia and died before 1494. Almost a century later, in 1560 and 1579, a Miklós (or, perhaps, two?) appears in the family genealogy, but due to the lack of period documents, it is unclear how they are related. The last family member with the name Miklós appears in records from 1603 and died sometime between 1615 and 1624. The question is to which of the three or four persons named Miklós the signet ring belonged. Why was it discovered in György Sükösd's grave? Was the uncovered grave really his or his brother's, Miklós?

### Conclusions

Summing up these investigations, it is certain that B. Pósta investigated a crypt at Tirimia where the earthly remains of members of the Sükösd family were deposited. In the case of György we are confident that he was buried in the church of Tirimia (as proof of

<sup>85</sup> EOE, VI, 388.

<sup>86</sup> EOE, VI, 416.

<sup>87</sup> EOE, VI, 388; Kelemen 1901, 301; Kelemen 1905, 104; Kelemen 2006, 315.

<sup>88</sup> The estates in the Tirimia area became the property of János Ballingh. After Miklós's death, his brother György wanted to acquire them. Still, Prince Gabriel Bethlen annexed them to the estates of Iernut. After the prince's death, his wife, Catherine of Brandenburg, donated the estates mentioned above to István Kassai. At first, György quarreled with István Kassai but, eventually, they came to an agreement: György ceded three of his wife's, Erzsébet Borsovai, estates to Kassai (Pâglișă/Poklostelke, Feiurdeni/Fejérd, Cluj County and Ugruțiu/Ugroncz, Sălaj County), and if György died without an heir, the five neighboring villages in Tirimia would become Kassai's property (Kelemen 1901, 301; Kelemen 1905, 104; Kelemen 2006, 315; Kelemen 2006b, 337). On his deathbed, however, György Sükösd changed his mind and left the five villages in question to his wife on condition that she compensated Kassai with other estates (Kelemen 1901, 302; Kelemen 2006, 315).

<sup>89</sup> Fehér 2005.

<sup>90</sup> EOE, VI, 416.

<sup>91</sup> I have not been able to identify the original document. The information was taken from the articles of L. Kelemen (Kelemen 1905, 104, footnote 40, or Kelemen 2006b, 337, footnote 42).

this, we have the burial invitation from 12 May 1631),<sup>92</sup> but we have no information about the burial place of Miklós. In view of the events of 1904, when the discovered skeleton was reburied, anthropological analysis is no longer possible. We have not had more success with the objects found during the archaeological excavations. The reports mention that the two rings were found in György's grave, but we have no further information about the other objects. Based on the unique characteristics of the male ring, it most likely belonged to Miklós, György's brother. The striking resemblance between the coat of arms on the ring and that on György's tomb chest tips the balance towards this conclusion. The ring was probably placed as a tribute at György's burial place, as he was the last male member of the Sükösd family. However, I have not been able to solve the problem of the woman's ring and the cuffs, which indicate the existence of another, woman's grave. Most likely, several members of the Sükösd family were buried in the crypt, and after successive burials, the bones and objects were mixed up, so the researchers could not determine whether it was one grave or several. Given the lack of documentation and more accurate descriptions, this can no longer be elucidated.

The basic idea of this article is that *excavations in archives* and museum repositories, the presentation of forgotten research and of the objects unearthed can provide new historical data and deserve to be rediscovered even if the efforts are not always rewarded.

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**Fig. 1.** 1. Tirimia on the First Military Survey of Transylvania (1769–1773) with the three ecclesiastical monuments: a. St. Katalin chapel; b. the Calvinist church; c. the Unitarian church (source: <https://maps.arcanum.com/hu/map/firstsurvey-transylvania>, accessed 10 May 2023);  
2. Tirimia on the Third Military Survey (1869–1887) with the three ecclesiastical monuments:  
a. St. Katalin chapel; b. the Calvinist church; c. the Unitarian church (source: <https://maps.arcanum.com/hu/map/thirdsurvey75000>; accessed 10 May 2023).



**Fig. 2.** The funerary monument of György Sükösd (Colecția MNIT, no. F 2678; photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).



**Fig. 3.** 1. Woman's ring (Colecția MNIT, no. F 22731; photo by Sergiu Odenie);  
2. Miklós Sükösd's ring (Colecția MNIT, no. F 22732; photo by Sergiu Odenie).



**Fig. 4.** Decorated cuffs (Colecția MNIT, no. F 9622; photo by Cristina Rădulescu).



**Fig. 5.** 1. Portrait of Petrus Mederus and his family, 1664 (courtesy of the Evangelical Church A.C. of Romania – Braşov Parish, no. III/49); 2. Portrait of Christina Esterházy, born Baronesse Nyáry of Bedegh (1604–1641), 1626 (courtesy of the Esterhazy Privatstiftung, Eisenstadt Palace – Painting Collection, no. B 494; photo by Manfred Horvath).



**Fig. 6.** Bronze sconce (Colecția MNIT, no. F 9624; photo by Sergiu Odenie).



Fig. 7. Coffin pins (Colecția MNIT, no. F 9623; photo by Sergiu Odenie).



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Fig. 8. 1. György Sükösd's coat of arms on the 1632 funerary monument (Colecția MNIT, no. F 2678; photo by Alexandru Rădulescu); 2. Miklós Sükösd's coat of arms on the ring (Colecția MNIT, no. F 22732; photo by Sergiu Odenie).



## “THEY STEAL IT FROM THE SULTAN’S PHARMACY.” PHARMACEUTICALS AND MEDICINES IN EARLY MODERN TRANSYLVANIA\*

MÁRIA PAKUCS-WILLCOCKS\*\*

**Abstract:** This article examines the trade in drugs and chemicals in early modern Transylvania through various primary sources. In the first section I discuss how the correspondence of Transylvanian envoys at the Ottoman court with the Transylvanian elites suggest that certain healing products were in high demand in Transylvania. In contrast to these purchases of medicines and drugs on command, the sixteenth–seventeenth-century rate lists, customs tariffs, and the customs registers of Cluj and Sibiu reveal the dynamics of the trade in chemicals and drugs from Vienna or the Ottoman Empire. In the seventeenth century, the imports of these goods became more diversified.

**Keywords:** trade, drugs, chemicals, Transylvania, early modern period

**Rezumat:** Acest studiu are ca temă comerțul cu produse chimice și drogherie în perioada principatului Transilvaniei. În prima parte a articolului prezintă câteva scrisori trimise în Transilvania de trimișii principatului la Poarta otomană, din care putem concluziona că în această perioadă exista deja o cerere mare pentru anumite produse medicinale aduse la comanda principilor și a nobilimii din Orient. Spre deosebire de aceste importuri ocazionale, regăsim în tarifele și registrele de vamă ale Clujului și Sibiului din secolele al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea substanțe chimice și medicinale care indică un trafic constant în aceste produse, aduse fie dinspre Viena, fie din Imperiul otoman. În secolul al XVII-lea, izvoarele seriale arată că importurile de chimicale și drogherii au devenit mai diversificate.

**Cuvinte cheie:** comerț, chimicale, drogherie, Transilvania, perioada premodernă

In this paper I intend to focus on the less studied topic of the circulation of medicines and drugs as well as on their procurement in the early modern Transylvanian communities. In recent years there has been a shift in academia from researching individual physicians or pharmacies to new topics of interest, such as investigating the concept of health<sup>1</sup> or the role of communities in creating medical knowledge in early modern polities.<sup>2</sup> The history of medicine in Transylvania has quite a rich scholarship, albeit in a traditional approach of researching personalities, the history of pharmacies, and their notable owners.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, extant archival material with pharmacy inventories has allowed

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<sup>1</sup> Cavallo 2020, 455–474.

<sup>2</sup> Calvi 2018, 55–69; Mendelsohn 2020, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Orient 1918; Goldenberg 1962; Crișan 1996; Péter H. 2002; Gruia 2018a. Most recently, see the collective volume Bogdándi, Gálfi 2022.

for a rich literature on the topic of urban pharmacies and court pharmacists, of which the monograph by András Kovács is the most recent example.<sup>4</sup> The present study is a departure from these approaches and deals with the processes of trade and consumption of pharmaceuticals in the early modern period. Furthermore, the emphasis of my analysis is on the products that were brought into Transylvania from the Ottoman Empire, owing to the peculiarity of the primary sources. The customs registers of Sibiu, the single series of such accounts covering the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, have been the mainstay of my research for decades and still hold unexplored potential. While the emphasis of my previous investigations has been on textiles and spices coming from and via the Ottoman Empire into Transylvania, I nevertheless noticed that in the second half of the seventeenth century the structure of the imported goods became more complex and included stuff with unusual names such as “fish poison” or “wolf poison.” Clearly, these were chemicals that were traded in a non-professional setting and deserved a closer scrutiny.

This study will not take into account the pharmacies that existed in the major towns of Transylvania since the late Middle Ages,<sup>5</sup> and the professional medical care offered to the princes at the court in Alba-Iulia, where a court pharmacy existed as well.<sup>6</sup> My main goal is to examine the circulation and uses of drugs outside the professional milieu, and specifically the circulation of chemicals and pharmaceuticals that can be found outside the circuits of the medical or pharmaceutical profession. Certainly, we should not discard the uses of traditional, “popular,” domestically produced remedies with local herbs, which had been in use and are documented in household registers since the sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The therapeutic uses of mineral waters (*savanyú víz* – i.e. “sour water”), abundant in Transylvania, is recorded in the private correspondence of that period.<sup>8</sup> These aspects, however, will not be included in the present article.

### **Turkish balsam and scorpion oil**

Before discussing the circulation of drugs and chemicals in statistical data, I shall introduce a few examples where the Ottoman realm was the source for particular remedies, namely the renowned “Turkish balsam” or “balsam oil,” procured for Transylvanian notables by the envoys of the principality to the Porte. Thus, the title of the article stems from a letter sent from Edirne in 28 June 1667 by Dávid Rozsnyai, who knew Turkish and was the Transylvanian legate at the Ottoman court at the time.<sup>9</sup> The addressee was Mihály Teleki, chancellor of Transylvania, an influential and wealthy politician, who did not shy away from business enterprises. Rozsnyai had entered the protection of Teleki: the aristocrat offered him loans to cover his debts and interceded with Prince Mihály Apafi I on his behalf.<sup>10</sup> This relationship explains why the Transylvanian envoy went to any lengths to procure the desired purchases for Mihály Teleky, while on official trips in Edirne or

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<sup>4</sup> Kovács 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Huttmann 2000; Gruia 2018b, 168–70; Gruia 2018a, 511–521.

<sup>6</sup> Kovács 2018. For a similar approach see Wacker 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Szabó T. 2022, 257.

<sup>8</sup> Krász 2012, 700–709.

<sup>9</sup> Binder 1983, 81–83; Kármán 2016, 57.

<sup>10</sup> Papp 2019, 743; Kármán 2006, 165–68.

Constantinople, where he was following the sultan and his court. The relevant paragraph of the letter reads as follows:

For the purchases you require, I have tried my best and bought stuff according to your list... The balsam and the scorpion oil are dearer than you wrote to us, you should not be surprised, because we do not buy it here in town but they steal them from the pharmacy of the sultan, and we cannot negotiate the price. We could buy bad and diluted ones outside.<sup>11</sup>

The intriguing and matter-of-fact information about the stolen medicine and its powers authenticated by its origin in the sultan’s pharmacy opens up many questions and very few answers about the lure of the exotic drugs. Further, it reveals a certain degree of medical knowledge of self-medication and the use of medicines outside professional supervision among the Transylvanian elites. From a follow-up piece of information, we know that the requested amounts of balsam and scorpion oil were indeed shipped to Transylvania but they were small, they fit into a small box (*skatulya*).<sup>12</sup> In 1667, Rozsnyai spent time in both Edirne and Constantinople, where he received news and letters from Transylvania constantly. The wife of Prince Mihály Apafi I, Princess Anna Bornemisza, entrusted him too with shopping, as noted in her private accounts. In October of that year, she wrote down that she had sent to “Dávid deák,” among other things, 5 gold florins to buy balsam oil.<sup>13</sup> The princely family also gave similar errands to László Baló, who in March 1667 left Transylvania for the Ottoman Empire and was entrusted to buy balsam oil and scorpion oil for the Princess.<sup>14</sup>

Scorpion oil and balsam oil feature in the inventories of the princely pharmacy from Alba-Iulia from 1650.<sup>15</sup> Before that, in 1622, the court accounts of Gabriel Bethlen record that the prince had purchased 2.5 ounces of balsam oil from Venice for 10 florins.<sup>16</sup> Scarce information exists about purchases of drugs and pharmaceuticals from Galata and from Istanbul in the sixteenth century. In 1550, an account book of the mayor of Sibiu records the expense of 34 gold florins sent to a certain Franciscus Pice in Galata “pro coemptione speciebus.”<sup>17</sup>

The “Turkish balsam” was the resin of a tree, sometimes sold as an oil (*opobalsamum*). It was used to treat cold and chest complaints, and had been in use since antiquity.<sup>18</sup> Its rarity has been remarked by Stephan Gerlach, the well-known German Lutheran theologian who joined the embassy of the Holy Roman Empire to the Porte and spent several years in Istanbul in the 1570s. In his diary, Gerlach gives an account on the origins of the balsam oil tree, which supposedly grew only in the Arabian Peninsula, between Medina and Mecca.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Gergely 1908, 152.

<sup>12</sup> Binder 1983, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Jakab 1892, 754; Binder 1983, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Jakab 1892, 745. On the services of László Baló at the Porte see Csáki 2008, 289.

<sup>15</sup> Kovács 2018, 145.

<sup>16</sup> Radvánszky 1888, 60.

<sup>17</sup> SJS ANS, MOS, Inv.197, nos. 18, 15r.

<sup>18</sup> Balsam became a staple of medieval Islamic medicine: Pormann, Savage-Smith 2007, 120.

<sup>19</sup> Milwright 2003, 193–209; Milwright 2021, 182–210.

He also reports about the lack of available balsam and about the fake balsam oil sold to customers, giving advice how to try it for authenticity by diluting it in water.<sup>20</sup> In 1576, Gerlach purchased balsam on order from a pharmacy in Galata, remarking on the steep price of this product. When he received it as a gift from a *pasha*, Gerlach underlines that the balsam came from the palace of the sultan, emphasizing its genuine nature.<sup>21</sup> Thus, true balsam oil was not an easily available product, but could be procured only directly from the sultan's court or its surroundings. Descriptions of the tree producing the valuable resin in the biblical Middle East are provided in the work of scholar János Apáczai Csere from 1655, *Magyar encyclopaedia*.<sup>22</sup> Balsam was therefore a known medicine in Transylvania, and its scarcity and source in the sultan's court was a proof of authenticity.

Máté Csanák (d. 1636), a learned man and head of the school in Cluj, who was also physician at the Transylvanian princely court, wrote in his dissertation about the scorpion oil that: "if prepared according to Matthiolus, when rubbed every day on the palms of the hand, on the eyelids or on the chest by the heart, [it] protects against the plague."<sup>23</sup> Ferenc Pápai Páriz (1649–1716), physician of Anna Bornemisza, advised using scorpion oil to relieve kidney pain and colic.<sup>24</sup>

The empirical evidence provided by the scattered information presented so far supports the conjecture that the Ottoman realm, albeit not as much as Venice, was a source for exotic drugs and substances for the Transylvanian elites.<sup>25</sup> Exotic medicine and drugs were bought on order, and in small quantities for the prince or the nobility of the land. Other sources are needed for understanding the circulation of chemicals and drugs in early modern Transylvania. As I indicated above, the customs accounts from Transylvanian towns, completed with the rate lists and customs tariffs from the seventeenth century, provide a more dynamic picture of the traffic and the agents of this particular segment of international trade. This approach is strongly influenced by the work of Patrick Wallis, especially his study on the drug trade in England, whereby he investigates the "commercialization of medicine" and coins the concept of "healthcare consumption" in the early modern period.<sup>26</sup> Wallis's results certify to an expansion of imported drugs in England in the seventeenth century. Recent contributions in the history of medicine confirm my earlier observations on the increased use of drugs and medicine in the seventeenth century across Europe.<sup>27</sup>

In the following section, I will present first the chemicals and drugs, including dyes, that were included in customs tariffs and rate lists in the seventeenth century and were noted as coming from the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards I shall examine the entries containing these substances in the customs accounts, in order to appraise the circulation of known and traded chemicals in Transylvania before 1700. For the early modern period, some

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<sup>20</sup> Gerlach 1674, 227: I am grateful to Prof. Hedda Reindl-Kiel for offering me information on Stephan Gerlach's diary.

<sup>21</sup> Gerlach 1674, 91; Reindl-Kiel 2005, 200.

<sup>22</sup> Tarnóc 1979, 706.

<sup>23</sup> Arányi 1911, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Pápai Páriz 1984, 250.

<sup>25</sup> Ciure 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Wallis 2011, 20–46.

<sup>27</sup> French, Wear 1989.

chemicals had multiple uses, especially spices, however I will exclude from my examination the products that are aromatic or cooking ingredients, and will take into account dyes and pigments, as well as entries listed generically as "apothecary's stuff."<sup>28</sup>

### Drugs and dyes in the Transylvanian rate lists

During the seventeenth century, Transylvanian authorities (the Prince and the Diet) issued customs tariffs with more regularity: they offered a value for exacting the customs duties for listed merchandise. It is likely that some of the tariffs were pasted from older lists and were not always updated, however we can also credit them with a certain degree of accuracy since they were instruments in use for the daily running of customs offices.

Item and unit of measurement		1603	1620	1634	1654
<i>Alum</i>	<i>massa</i>	aluminis	timsó	timsó	timsó
<i>Bloodwood tree (Ricinus)</i>	<i>massa</i>		Bersen	Bersen	berzen
<i>Carob</i>	<i>massa</i>				Szent János kenyér
<i>Cinnabar</i>	<i>massa</i>	cinobrum	cynobrium	cinobrium	czinobiom
<i>Galgal</i>	<i>massa</i>	galgal	balgan	balgany	balgami
<i>Galls</i>	<i>massa</i>	galla	galles	galles	
<i>Gunpowder</i>	<i>massa</i>		puskapor	puskapor	puskapor
<i>Naphtha (rosin)</i>	<i>massa</i>	naphtum			
<i>Red lead / Minium</i>	<i>massa</i>	minium	minium	minium	minium
<i>Rubber</i>	<i>massa</i>	gummi	gumi	gumi	gumi
<i>Santal</i>	<i>massa</i>	zandal	zandal	zandaly	
<i>Smoketree (cotinus)</i>	<i>horseload</i>				szcumpia
<i>Sodium carbonate?</i>	<i>massa</i>	salnitrum	saletrom	saletrom	saletrom
<i>Strychnine</i>				farkasmazlag	
<i>Sulphur</i>	<i>massa</i>	Sulphur	kenkeo	kénkö	kénkeő, bűdöskő
<i>Verdigris</i>	<i>massa</i>	crispan	grispan	grispan	krispán
<i>Vitriol (Copper sulfate)</i>	<i>massa</i>	vitriolum	galickő	galickő	galiczkö, karab
<i>Zedoary</i>	<i>massa</i>	zedvaria	zeduon	zoduan	

**Table 1.** Minerals and dyes in the Transylvanian customs tariffs, 1603–1654.

In 1603, the Diet of Transylvania voted a comprehensive customs tariff, where minerals, dyes, and gunpowder were listed together with the aromatics.<sup>29</sup> In 1620, the

<sup>28</sup> See a similar discussion at Wallis 2011, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Szilágyi 1879, 197–198.

customs tariff was republished as a Hungarian variant of the previous one, written in Latin.<sup>30</sup> The same items can be found in the general customs tariffs of 1634 and in the fragment of the Braşov customs tariff from the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>31</sup> In all these normative texts, minerals and dyes are written under the same heading with spices, and grouped together with them if they had the same tariff (see Table 1). Their origin is not mentioned.

A similar customs tariff from Wallachia, from the customs point on the trade route toward Sibiu, issued in 1675–1676 and confirmed in 1691, includes more generic categories of drugs and chemicals: “a horseload of medicinal herbs (*povara erbi de dohtorii*),” “a horseload of carob,” “a horseload of smoketree (*scumpia*),” and “a horseload of dyes (*văpsele*).”<sup>32</sup>

The parallel visualization of the items in the customs tariffs reveals a slow change in their content, adapted to the dynamics of the circulation of goods. While tariffs show a more static picture of the known and possibly sold products, fortunately we have other sources that reflect the actual flow of goods. The customs accounts of Transylvanian towns, especially of Cluj and Sibiu, allow for a detailed analysis of the trade in chemicals and drugs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### **Drugs and dyes in the Transylvanian customs accounts of the seventeenth century**

In the sixteenth century, the trade in spices (aromatics) coming from and via the Ottoman Empire was strong, and I presume that at that moment there was no incentive for merchants to diversify their stock. Dyes and alum were present among their commodities, but their overall value was small: the yearly average of these products in the Sibiu customs accounts amounted to 200 florins, equal to 1% of the overall value of trade.<sup>33</sup> In the seventeenth century, there are more customs accounts available and one can make more accurate comparisons and assessments. In the Cluj customs registers from 1599 to 1637, there are a variety of recorded chemicals and substances that can be followed through with their first occurrence and their frequency. The Sibiu customs accounts are more scattered, but they cover well the end of the seventeenth century, the decades between 1672 and 1692.<sup>34</sup>

Ferenc Pap has calculated that throughout the period covered by the customs accounts chemicals and dyes imported to Cluj from Vienna and from Polish towns were of small value in the aggregate value of the commercial exchange. According to Pap, chemicals imported from Vienna represented 186.17 florins in customs duties,<sup>35</sup> while those from Polish towns amounted to 1.79 florins in customs duties.<sup>36</sup> In total, the value of the imported chemicals would be ca. 6000 florins, knowing the customs duties in Cluj were 3.33% (*harmincad, tricesima*) of the value of the goods. However, my own calculations

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<sup>30</sup> Jakab 1888, 246.

<sup>31</sup> Edroiu, Gyulai 1967; Simon 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Giurescu 1962, 447.

<sup>33</sup> Pakucs-Willcocks 2007.

<sup>34</sup> SJS AN, MOS, Inv. 197, nos. 18–66.

<sup>35</sup> Pap 2000, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Pap 2000, 34.

resulted in higher figures for the overall value of the chemicals and dyes: the total customs duties amount to 500 florins, which in turn represent an overall value of 16,500 florins.

Furthermore, a closer inspection of the actual products and their units of weights reveals that, while most of them were imported from Vienna and Poland, we can ascertain that some of the chemicals were coming from the Ottoman Empire, having kept their original measuring in *kanthar* or *okka*. Thus, of the total of 24 hundredweights of alum, 9.5 hundredweights came from the Ottoman Empire. A chronological divide is also observable: between 1599 and 1619, alum was brought in from the West, whereas beginning with 1633, there are only transports of “Ottoman” alum. Mercury recorded in the Cluj customs accounts was transported from Transylvania toward Hungary and was exempted from paying customs duties by the Transylvanian Prince. It is known that Gabriel Bethlen was invested in the trade with mercury,<sup>37</sup> and evidence shows that his successors were following this practice. For instance, a letter from István Szalánczi, envoy in Istanbul, informed Prince Rákóczi in 1632 that mercury was not in demand in the Ottoman capital, and that Venice was the better outlet for selling it.<sup>38</sup>

For the first decades of the seventeenth century, there are extant Sibiu customs accounts from the years 1614–1622. My initial goal was to do a yearly comparison with the stream of dyes and chemicals in Sibiu and Cluj in parallel; however, the entries from Sibiu are meager as compared to Cluj. Thus, three transports of alum coming from the Ottoman realm and three transports of mercury (*Quecksilber*) are recorded for that period in the Sibiu customs registers; they are hardly a basis for comparison with the diversity of products from the Cluj accounts (see Table 2).

The situation changed in the second half of the seventeenth century. “Greek” merchants brought dyes, poisons, chemical compounds, but also medicines such as camphor. A product that is specific to the Sibiu accounts is the smoketree wood (*szkumpia*), which was used as a dye. Furthermore, there are several transports, mostly undertaken by a certain Christopher Patikarius, who brought transports of apothecary goods (*apoteckerei*, *patika szerszám*) from 1672 to 1691. The combined value of the dyes and chemicals imported through Sibiu in 1672 and 1673 amounted to 600 gold florins (2400 florins in the customs accounts). In the following decade, the annual values varied greatly. For instance, in 1688 a group of merchants identified in the customs register only as “Jews from Alba-Iulia” carried into Transylvania large amounts of chemicals, to the value of 1500 florins. Overall, however, the share of this category of goods within the structure of trade did not improve over time, as the trade in textiles grew significantly in the second half of the seventeenth century and outweighed the other groups of merchandise.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, at the end of the seventeenth century, there is an increased diversity in the substances brought in from the Ottoman Empire. When Emperor Leopold I tried, in 1702, to limit the imports of raw materials into Transylvania, the response from the local leather workers and tanners underlined that such a measure was unfeasible. They needed the extra hides from Wallachia, and “besides, *szkumpia*, *karaboi* and alum cannot be found in this country.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Sashalmi 1989, 226.

<sup>38</sup> Szilágyi 1883, 445.

<sup>39</sup> Pakucs-Willcocks 2020, 379.

<sup>40</sup> Karlovszky 1897, 422.

<i>Substance</i>	<i>Cluj 1599–1637</i>		<i>Sibiu 1672–1692</i>	
	<i>Name in the original</i>	<i>Total amount</i>	<i>Name in the original</i>	<i>Total amount</i>
<i>Alum</i>	timsó	77 massa	timsó	4.5 massa
<i>Ammonium chloride*</i>	szalmiák	4.25 fl.	szalamia	20 oka
<i>Bloodwood tree</i>	berzen	ca. 66 massa		
<i>Camphor</i>			kamphora	3 fl.
<i>Cinnabar</i>	cinobrium	7 lb.		
<i>Cocculus indicus*</i>	halmaszlag	8 fl.	halmaszlag	23 oka
<i>Galls</i>	galles	5 massa	gales	1.5 massa
<i>Gumi</i>	gummi	1 lb.		
<i>Gunpowder</i>	puska por	55 massa		
<i>Indigo</i>	indi festék	240 lb.	indi festék	220 lb.
<i>Lazulite</i>	lazur	75 lb.	kékkő	3 lb.
<i>Litharge</i>	gelét	210 massa		
<i>Mercury (quicksilver)</i>	mercuriom, kéneső	190 massa	quecksilber	2 fl.
<i>Orpiment</i>	aransárga	ca. 10 massa	arany sárga	12 fl.
<i>Minium</i>	minium	50 massa	minium	3 massa
<i>Poison (?)</i>			egermazlag	30 oka
<i>Smoketree</i>			skumpia	110 massa
<i>Sodium carbonate</i>	saletrom	24.5 massa		
<i>Strychnine</i>	farkasmazlag	5 fl.	farkasmazlag	22 oka
<i>Sulphur</i>	kénkö, bűdöskő	67.5 massa	kénkö	5
<i>Turpentine</i>	terpentina	3.5 massa		
<i>Verdigris</i>	crispan	103 lb.	grispán	11 fl.
<i>Vitriol</i>	galickő	51 massa	karaboj, valetczkö	3.3 massa
<i>White-lead, ceruse</i>	georeogh fejr	10 lb.	görög fejr	30 oka
<i>Herbs</i>			fűvek	110 massa
<i>Kanna</i>			kanna	4 fl.
<i>Apothecary stuff</i>	patika szerszam	0.75 fl.	patika szerszám, apoteckerei	1500 fl.

**Table 2.** Chemicals and dyes in the Cluj customs accounts (1599–1637) and in the Sibiu customs accounts (1672–1692). Source: Pap 2000; for the year 1631 Pakó 2015, 153–176.

A few hints we find in scattered sources about the uses of the chemicals outside pharmacies or specialised workshops. In his recipe book, a certain János Óvári, who at some point studied and lived in Transylvania, took part in the Transylvanian embassy to the

Porte in 1678 and later was a councillor to György Bánffy, governor of Transylvania, gives advice to his son about "secret medicines" and formulations. Among them, he provides the recipe for "writing with water:" "You need to pulverize two or three galls; add a pea-sized amount of vitriol. Put them in a small piece of cloth and rub paper with it. Write on this piece of paper with a clean feather or a sharp woodstick with water. It will become black like ink."<sup>41</sup>

The concern for the well-being and the health of family members is evident from the correspondence of the Rákóczis in the middle of the seventeenth century. Exhortations such as "please let me know that you are well," or reassurance such as "I am only writing to let you know that I am in good health" are a constant feature of the letters, and thus reflect a concern and an understanding of well-being common to the early modern people.<sup>42</sup> However, the data does not allow for detailed interpretation of consumption of medical supplies beyond the wealthy families and the princely court (and probably the well-to-do burghers who had access to town pharmacies). Transylvanian sources offer an insight, albeit incomplete, into the trade and use of chemicals and medicine in the early modern period.

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## ***LIBRO DI ME, GIO BATTA GUSSETTI.*** **THE TALE OF A MAN THROUGH THE STORY OF A BOOK\***

IOANA GRUIȚĂ-SAVU\*\*

**Abstract:** As a museographer or museum curator, there is often great professional satisfaction in finding the stories behind the fascinating objects preserved in museum collections. These objects not only have remarkable aesthetic qualities but also reflect incredible life stories. This study focuses on examining a book part of the History of Pharmacy Collection in the National Museum of Transylvanian History. Apart from its age, being published in 1596, our attention was drawn to the texts inscribed on the cover and pages of the book.

The repeated annotations of a man from the seventeenth century, Giovanni Battista Gussetti, declaring his ownership over this book aroused our curiosity. The article seeks to understand the book's significance in the life of Gussetti and decipher what these inscriptions disclose about the owner and the historical context in which he lived.

The research has been very rewarding, revealing a whole micro-universe in which Gussetti, the owner, played his part. Throughout the following pages, we aim to provide a concise overview of the history of the pharmaceutical book collection and introduce the background of this particular book. We intend to explore some possibilities of identification of Giovanni Battista Gussetti, as far as our research has allowed, and the historical context of his activity to provide a broader understanding of the book's significance.

**Keywords:** Gussetti, materialist, trade, Vienna, late seventeenth century, merchants

**Rezumat:** Calitatea de muzeograf sau curator muzeal aduce adesea o mare satisfacție profesională în descoperirea poveștilor din spatele obiectelor fascinante aflate în colecțiile muzeale. Aceste obiecte nu numai că au calități estetice remarcabile, dar reflectă și povești de viață incredibile. Acest studiu se concentrează pe examinarea unei cărți care face parte din Colecția de Istorie a Farmaciei, din cadrul Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei. Pe lângă vechimea considerabilă a cărții, fiind publicată în anul 1596, atenția ne-a fost atrasă de textele înscrise pe coperta și paginile acesteia.

Adnotările repetate ale unui bărbat care a trăit în secolul al XVII-lea, Giovanni Battista Gussetti, prin care acesta își declară proprietatea asupra cărții, ne-au stârnit curiozitatea. Articolul caută să înțeleagă semnificația cărții în viața proprietarului și să descifrez ce dezvăluie aceste inscripții despre proprietar și despre contextul istoric în care acesta a trăit.

Cercetarea a fost satisfăcătoare, dezvăluind un întreg micro-univers în care Gussetti, proprietarul, și-a jucat rolul. De-a lungul paginilor următoare ne-am propus să oferim o imagine concisă a istoriei colecției de carte farmaceutică și să prezentăm contextul în care a circulat această carte. Intenționăm să explorăm unele posibilități de identificare a lui Giovanni Battista Gussetti și a contextului istoric în care acesta a activat, în măsura în care cercetările ne-au permis, pentru a oferi o înțelegere mai largă a semnificației cărții.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Gussetti, materialist, comerț, Viena, sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea, negustori

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## Introduction

As a museum curator, there is often great professional satisfaction in finding the stories behind the fascinating objects hosted in museum collections. These objects have remarkable aesthetic qualities and reflect incredible life stories. During the research dedicated to pharmaceutical books, conducted as part of the *Pharmatrans* project,<sup>1</sup> we came across a particular book, which proved to be one of the oldest in our collection, with two colligated volumes: one written by Gheorg Melich, published by Nicolo Polo in Venice in 1596, and the other one credited to Oratio Guarganti da Soncino, published in Venice by Giacomo Vincenti, dated the same year.

These volumes caught our attention due to their content, but primarily due to the annotations found inside the volumes.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, before delving into the main subject, we plan to briefly introduce the museum's pharmacy collection to offer context for the book that initiated this study. Subsequently, we will review the technical details regarding the two bound volumes, emphasizing the most intriguing aspects from a museographer's perspective. These analyses will include a description of the volumes and a complete transcription of the noteworthy annotations.

Of particular interest is the former owner of this volume. He was an Italian who lived in the late seventeenth century and generously left behind a wealth of personal information. The moment of acquiring this book appears to have been significant for the owner, as evidenced by inscriptions on the book's cover and title page. Additionally, the owner saw fit to include personal details, a note with several pharmaceutical ingredients, and other captivating information. Beginning with these annotations, we aim to unravel the compelling narrative surrounding this book and its enigmatic owner.

Our investigation also extends to the intriguing world of materialists – merchants specialized in trading pharmaceutical materials. These Italian traders, originating from the Carnia region, conducted commerce in the German, Austrian, and Hungarian territories, even reaching as far as Transylvania with their merchandise to supply local pharmacies. Furthermore, we aspire to shed light on the potential identity of the book's owner, thereby providing a broader context for this museum artifact.

In addition to these objectives, we also intended to discover more about the significance of these volumes and their circulation, and to identify their possible users. Simultaneously, we aimed to gather insights into the materialist's profession and explore the roles of accredited public notaries in Venice. We also sought to determine if a materialist could simultaneously hold the position of a notary.

Furthermore, we investigated whether Gussetti could have received a noble title from Emperor Leopold I. While exploring a fascinating archive dedicated to the residents of the Rigolato area, we came across several Gussetti families who engaged in materialist activities or served as notaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The scope of the study expanded beyond our initial intentions, as the subject matter proved

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<sup>1</sup> *All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*, <https://pharmatrans.mnit.ro/>. The research project dealt with the entire pharmaceutical collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, books included.

<sup>2</sup> The book is inventoried under Colectia MNIT, no. IF 798. The volumes were mentioned in the collection catalog published by Eva Crişan, see Crişan 1996, 258.

to be quite extensive. Nonetheless, we have managed to outline several ideas and plans for further investigation.

### **Time-traveling treasures in the MNIT<sup>3</sup> History of Pharmacy Collection**

The History of Pharmacy Collection occupies a unique position among the collections of the MNIT. The special status of the collection is due to its location, which is different from the main museum headquarters, and its specificity, as it has a thematic focus on the history of pharmacy.

The pharmacy history collection consists of 3819 items, of which the book collection comprises 189 volumes (corresponding to 167 inventory numbers).<sup>4</sup> These books date from the end of the sixteenth century to the end of the twentieth century and, with a few exceptions, meet the thematic criteria. Thematically, the collection includes a significant number of pharmacopoeias, treatises on general medicine and anatomy, books on various medical fields (gynecology, surgery, dermatology, and pathology), pharmacology, pharmaceutical technology, toxicology, homeopathy, medical practice, botanical textbooks, pharmaceutical taxes, health-related regulations, and practical guidelines on hygiene. The books date from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, with the majority published in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, France, and Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The books collected are highly relevant to the history of medicine and pharmacy, as well as chemistry and other specialties. Among the authors, besides Giorgio Melich (the sixteenth century), chemist and researcher of the history of pharmacy and medicine, who ran *Allo Struzzo* (The Ostrich) Pharmacy in Venice, one must mention Jakob Dietrich Tabernaemontanus (1522–1590), physician and botanist; Johann Rudolf Glauber (1604–1670), alchemist, chemist, and pharmacist; Karl Friedrich Burdach (1776–1847), anatomy Professor at Leipzig, Gerard van Swieten (1700–1772), the personal physician of empress Maria Theresa and reformist of the Austrian medical system in the eighteenth century; Christian Ludwig Gottlieb (1709–1773), physician and botanist; or Joseph Jacob Plenck (1738–1807) a Viennese surgeon and dermatology pioneer.<sup>5</sup>

Part of the collection is based on the generous donations that Professor Dr. Gyula (Iuliu) Orient made starting with 1902. He collected books from all over historical Hungary (present-day Hungary, Slovakia, and Transylvania). Other significant donations came from Professor Valeriu Bologna, pharmacist Edgar Müller, the owner of the *La Salvator* (At the Savior) Pharmacy in Caransebeș, *La Coroana* (At the Crown) Pharmacy in Iași, owned by the Engel family, and *Vulturul de Aur* (Golden Eagle) Pharmacy in Craiova, but also from the private collection of Dr. Radu Rațiu and other private collectors.<sup>6</sup>

Returning to the book we discuss in this article, according to the MNIT archives, the donation of the book was made on 29 April 1969 (Fig. 1) by Professor Olimpia I. Barna from Cluj-Napoca, and it was registered in the museum's ledger in 1970, as a donation from

<sup>3</sup> The acronym for Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei (National Museum of Transylvanian History).

<sup>4</sup> Gruică 2023, 7; Gruia 2023a, 71.

<sup>5</sup> An extensive text on the Collection of the History of Pharmacy with similar information in Savu Gruică 2023, 79–100.

<sup>6</sup> Savu Gruică 2023, 82–88.

Professor Iuliu Barna. Unfortunately, we could not determine the book's provenance and how it came into the possession of Professor Barna.

The size of the book is a friendly and apparently affordable quarto (13 × 18.5 cm), which made it popular, being printed in numerous editions for about 150 years since its first edition.<sup>7</sup> The volumes are bound in ivory-shade parchment covers. In addition, with the expertise of Dr. Miu Lucreția of the National Research and Development Institute for Textiles and Leather, we discovered that the parchment used for the binding was made of sheepskin, remarkably preserved for its age (Fig. 3). The text block is made of laid paper.

As indicated by the title of the first volume, it aimed to be a valuable resource for doctors, apothecaries, and households alike. This book contains compilations of recipes for various medicines, including the renowned *Theriaca Veneta*, numerous of recipes concerning pills, syrups, ointments, powders, decoctions, references to condiments, spices, medicinal herbs, and resins. The first edition of Melich's *Avvertimenti nelle compositioni de medicamenti, per uso della spetiaria* was first published in 1575 in Italian, and it seems, as Valentina Pugliano mentions in her article, that the treatise was one of the most widely used sources of workshop practice in northern Italy, as a pharmacopoeia written by apothecaries.<sup>8</sup> The book was translated into Latin in 1586. In the 1596 edition of *Avvertimenti*, Oratio Guargante's treatise dedicated to Theriac was added to Melich's book and, according to the study of Barbara Di Gennaro Splendore, it was republished in the same manner from 1605 until 1720.<sup>9</sup>

As can be seen from the study of Paula De Vos, the tradition of pharmaceutical texts records two basic genres: one dedicated to simple medicines, the other to compound medicines, culminating with pharmacopoeia.<sup>10</sup> Until the sixteenth century, doctors and practitioners in the field relied on traditional beliefs and the authority of ancient texts. Through systematic observation and experimentation, the paradigm shifted towards a more empirical and evidence-based approach to understanding the natural world. Georgio Melichio, or Gheorg Melich, the author of the first volume, was one of the most famous apothecaries of his times. He ran the pharmacy *Allo Struzzo* (The Ostrich) in Venice from at least the 1560s until he died in 1585. Having originated from Augsburg, he embarked on a journey that took him through Rome, Lombardy, Padua, Dalmatia, and Greece.<sup>11</sup> Eventually, he settled in Venice, where he established his pharmacy and became one of the founding members of the *Colegio degli speziali*, also known as the Venetian College of Apothecaries. Melich gained recognition for his expertise in creating specialized medicinal preparations and was highly regarded for his role in training aspiring pharmacists.<sup>12</sup> The publication of his book, an antidotary, made a significant contribution to the field of pharmacy. As far as Melich's writings are concerned, his pharmacopoeia focuses on compound remedies, and he described his preparation methods to the very detail along with techniques implied in

<sup>7</sup> Minuzzi 2012, 140; Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Pugliano 2017, 233–273.

<sup>9</sup> Minuzzi 2012, 140; Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 15.

<sup>10</sup> De Vos 2019, 30–43.

<sup>11</sup> Parrish 2015, 123.

<sup>12</sup> Giuffra 2015, 27.

Venetian pharmacies, proving his knowledge and skills and encouraging experiments, by sometimes disagreeing with the traditional galenic approach.<sup>13</sup>

This volume, regarded as a personal pharmacopoeia, contained a wealth of distillation recipes encompassing the realms of plants, animals, and even minerals, in addition to various chemical remedies, presented in a didactic and accessible manner.<sup>14</sup> This volume combined the emerging chemico-spagiric tradition with the ancient Galenic tradition.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the numerous editions, printed in Italian, Latin, German, and French, and the considerable distribution of the treaty until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The book's success led to subsequent editions, and in one such edition, from 1596, Melich's original work was augmented by Paolo Romani, who decided to include a treatise on theriacs written by Orazio Guarguante (1554–1611), a doctor and scholar.<sup>16</sup> The volume contains information on the *Theriaca Veneta* and its properties. *Theriaca*, a famous remedy used especially to treat poisoning, was considered a universal panaceum. It was also believed to treat and prevent numerous illnesses, from toothache to the plague.<sup>17</sup> The Venetian recipe was the most famous variant of the product and was exported worldwide. Its production was a public event, one of its ingredients being viper meat, which was slaughtered in front of people who gathered to see the show.<sup>18</sup>

The inclusion of this supplement proved to be immensely valuable, and the 1596 edition of the book became the first to integrate this addition, all subsequent editions of the book included Melich's original work and Guarguante's treatise on *theriaca*.<sup>19</sup> This is the case of our book as well.

The title page of the first volume reveals the book's complete title: *Avertimenti nelle compositioni de medicamenti, per uso della spetiaria. Utilissimi à Medici à Spetiali, & ad'ogni famiglia. Con una diligente esaminatione di molti Simplici, tratta da più degni Auttori, Antichi, & Moderni. Con Tavole Utilissime per più chiara intelligenza di tutti l'opera di Giorgio Melichio Augustano, Spetiale allo Struzzo in Venetia. Di nuovo aggiuntoui un bellissimo Trattato delle mirabili virtù della Theriaca. Del Eccellentissimo sig. Oratio. Guarganti da Soncino, Medico Filosofo con privilegio.*<sup>20</sup> The title page, printed in red and black colors, bears an elaborate typographic mark representing Minerva adorned with a helmet, shield, and spear, mounted on a lion. The central image is surrounded by a decorative frame with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic elements (Fig. 4).

The treaty of Melich in our collection contains 334 pages. It lacks page numbers and instead uses folios for numbering, but there are several issues with the folio numbering system. The folios are consecutive up to seventeen; starting with *Avertimenti allo spetiale*, the numeration of folios restarts. The numeration jumps from folio 33 to folio 35 and from

<sup>13</sup> Parrish 2015, 126–127; Pugliano 2017, 240–241.

<sup>14</sup> Minuzzi 2012, 140, 159.

<sup>15</sup> Minuzzi 2012, 140.

<sup>16</sup> Paolo Romani was Melich's son-in-law and shop successor in Venice, see Pugliano 2017, 253.

<sup>17</sup> Griffin 2004, 318; Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Eamon 2003, 125.

<sup>19</sup> Parrish 2015, 127.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that the word *avvertimenti*, which is part of the title of the volume in the museum's collection, is spelled with a single *v*.

38 to 42. From 42, the numbering goes back to 39 and starts again repeating the number 42 on two different folios; the number 149 is used for two different consecutive folios, the second one replaces the number 150; there are two different folios numbered 156, two different folios numbered 158, the second one replaces the number 160; there are two different folios numbered 174, the second one replacing 176.

Oratio Guarganti da Soncino's 31-page treatise bears the title *Della Theriaca, et Sue mirabili virtù. Operetta D'Oratio Guarganti da Soncino, Medico, et Filosofo. Nouamente data in luce con privilegio*, and has the same characteristics as the title in terms of paper quality and dimensions. The title page is decorated with a distinctive typographic emblem featuring a pine cone at its center, encircled by a complex medallion decorated with anthropomorphic figures. Additionally, a ribbon bearing the inscription "Aequè bonum atque tutum" surmounts the central image (Fig. 5).

In order to better outline the potential profile of the owner of this book, questions arise regarding the intended audience for such a publication. Who was the target audience, and who were the potential purchasers of this publication?

The preparation of the theriac recipe was a public event promoted through prints. This not only enhanced the reputation of the medicine itself but also raised the profile of the pharmacy associated with its production. Some publications in the field of apothecary literature included *recipes and formulas* that aim to transfer knowledge on various aspects, such as how to make specific compounds and the ingredients required for their preparation.<sup>21</sup> These publications were valuable resources for disseminating and sharing practical information on creating medicinal compounds.<sup>22</sup>

Another print category comprised writings describing the *virtues* and properties of early modern medicaments. These texts were intended to assist in the administration of medicine by providing information on the specific diseases that certain medicines can treat. The practical advice and information offered in these apothecary publications were accessible to a broad audience. This was facilitated by the fact that, in many cases, the texts were published in vernacular languages.

Barbara Splendore Di Gennaro identified Guarganti's volume as part of the last category of writings.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the diverse range of individuals who could find such materials use ful includes physicians, pharmacists, materialists, traders of spices, notaries responsible for legal contracts related to pharmacies, merchants, and even patients seeking to gain a better understanding of their prescriptions or the medicines needed for their specific medical conditions.<sup>24</sup>

In the volumes we are examining, we have encountered several intriguing annotations dispersed across the pages and on the front velum cover. These annotations provide a captivating insight into the perspectives of the previous owner. We faced challenges in deciphering the faded Italian texts inscribed on the parchment covering the book. In order to make this inscription more visible, we solicited the help of our colleagues in the

<sup>21</sup> Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 26–29.

<sup>23</sup> Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Di Gennaro Splendore 2021, 34.

museum's conservation laboratory, who used UV light and laboratory equipment (Fig. 2).<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, we could not decipher the text written on the book spine even under UV light. We can presume that it might be the author and the book's title.

The content of the first inscription can be deciphered on the front cover. It is handwritten in black ink:

LIBRO DI ME GIO[VANNI] BAT[IS]TA Gussetti per bene merito nobile materialista et nodarius publicus imperialis, cosi ancora per l'autoris/ ta Veneta etiam/ Pub[lico] Nod[ario], comprato l'anno di signore 1684/7, Vienna. Laus Deo (Fig. 3).<sup>26</sup>

Gussetti's handwriting, also in black ink, is visible again on the title page alongside the colophon of Melich's volume:

Gio[vanni] Bat[tis]ta Gussetti: Nod [ario] Cet[o]./ Cetero (?) et/x? Ven[e]to, in Vienna, 5 Ap[ri]le 168(4)7?, Laus Deo Optim[o] Maximo (Fig. 4).

Page 35, which is folio numbered 3, exhibits a hand-drawn illustration in black ink. It depicts a small hand that indicates a passage where the author provides instructions on preparing a decoct, the order of boiling different types of ingredients, and their preparation time. Similarly, on page 327, which corresponds to folio numbered 197, there are additional small hand-drawn representations in black ink. They indicate a passage about toothache and its possible treatment (Fig. 6).

Furthermore, a correction made by the owner on a printer's error can be observed on folio numbered 30, and additional corrections are made in graphic pencil on folios 91 and 163. The same small hand has been drawn in black ink on page 7 of the second volume.

On the last page recto and verso Gussetti wrote in black ink:

Recto: [IL FINE] di questo ma non di quelle da' farsi Da me Gio[vanni] Bat[is]ta Gussetti, [nobl?] regis? medico?, ex materi[is/alista?][...], 1688, 30 marzzo in Vienna D'[Austria]// Laus Deo Optimo Maximus (Fig. 7).<sup>27</sup>

Verso: Secreto chi fusse pieno? di Pedocchi ó? di Lendine? tanto in Testa, che n'el Vita?<sup>28</sup>

Rx (Recetta) [...] il sangue di drago

1/2 lb. olibano fino tritto

1/2 lb. mastici f. eriam (?) tritto

3 ½ lb. Peif. Planchea quota' fa

<sup>25</sup> We thank our colleague Ph.D. Andrea Beatrix Magó, museum investigator (laboratory analyses accredited by RENAR, ISC) specialized in the field of historical monuments and patrimony goods, employee of the MNIT.

<sup>26</sup> The annotation can be roughly translated as follows: "The book belongs to me, Gio. Batta. Gussetti, a well-deserved noble materialist and public imperial notary, by Venice authority Public Notary, bought in the year of God 168(4)7, in Vienna. Prays to the Greatest and the Best God."

<sup>27</sup> The annotation can be roughly translated as follows: "The end of this but not the end of Gio. Batta. Gussetti Noble King's? doctor?, former materialist [...], 1688, 30 March in Vienna [Austria] Prays to God."

<sup>28</sup> The annotation can be roughly translated as follows: "The secret he/she was full of lice or nits both on the head and in life."

1 lb. Sapan di alopi (?) ropothi? in SB?

2 lb.

[...]

Notario

1683 Vltimi aprilis (Fig. 8).<sup>29</sup>

### In search for Gio[vanni] Batt[ist]a Gussetti

#### Discovering the materialists

Annotations or marginalia can provide fascinating insights into the history of individual books. Among these annotations, ownership marks are prevalent and valuable. They provide important information, unique perspectives, and occasionally generate questions or paths for further exploration. They often include records indicating when and where a book was acquired by its previous owners, offering clues about the book's circulation.<sup>30</sup>

Systematically analyzing the annotations left on the book under discussion here, we concluded that we have the name of the owner, some specific dates, a place, and his profession. Based on the inscriptions found on the book, we knew that it was owned by a person named Giovanni Battista Gussetti, which is shortened to “Gio Batta,” who interestingly left numerous annotations on the cover and pages as unmistakable markers of his ownership. We also find out right from the first annotation placed on the cover that he was “nobile materialista” and “nodario publico imperialis per l'authorita Veneta.”

Our research started with an inquiry to find out who these materialists were. We came across several studies discussing this profession. The first relevant article was *Un fruliano amico di giovane Mozart*, authored by Herbert Klein, a dedicated researcher who extensively investigated Italian merchants from the Carnia region who immigrated to Austria during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>31</sup> Actually, Klein previously wrote another relevant article, *I materialisti della Carnia nel Salisburghese*,<sup>32</sup> exploring the Italian community residing in Carnia,<sup>33</sup> who engaged in seasonal migration across the Alps to Germany and Austria, being specialized in trading dyes, *simplici*, raw materials of animal, vegetable, and mineral origin from which pharmacists prepare remedies, and rarely *compositi*, like *theriaca* or *mithridate*.<sup>34</sup> According to Klein's research, many of the emigrant merchants from Carnia engaged in the sale of medicines and other substances

<sup>29</sup> We thank my colleague Ph.D. Mária Pakucs, scientific researcher specialized in the economic history, the history of trade, and urban history during the Early Modern Period, for the help with the transcription of these annotations.

<sup>30</sup> Wagstaff 2012, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Klein 1963, 72–79.

<sup>32</sup> Klein 1954, 70–88.

<sup>33</sup> Carnia is a predominantly mountainous historical-geographical region in the north-western part of the province of Udine, in Friuli, comprising a large part of the Italian Carnic Alps in the autonomous region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. For more information about Carnia during the modern period, see Ferigo 1998, 227–228.

<sup>34</sup> *Simplici* are simple drugs or single-component drugs that consist of a single active ingredient or substance. They are not mixtures of different substances but rather made from a single, usually pure, active

(*Materialwaren*) in Austria and southern Germany, and they were commonly referred to as *Materialisten*.<sup>35</sup> They likely acquired this name due to the nature of the goods they traded, referred to as *Materialen*, meaning “materials,” mainly primary substances for preparing drugs and dyes. Positioned at the intersection of Veneto and German territories, they specialized in trading drugs, pigments, spices, rare plants, and fruits from the Orient. Venice, a key point on the commercial routes, served as the central location for importing these goods in Europe, a tradition dating back to medieval times.<sup>36</sup> It appears that the local population in this region faced constraints that compelled them to engage in various forms of commerce to sustain themselves, and this gradually became a profitable business.

The study conducted by Herbert Klein focused on the Salzburg area during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, shedding light on the Italians’ monopoly on this particular range of products.<sup>37</sup> In the Salzburg area, *materialisti* frequently identified their origins as Tolmezzo or Rigolato, encompassing places like Povolaro, Tualis, Valpicetto, Gracco, Givigliana, Ludaria, Sigilletto, Frassenetto, and others. The mentioned study discusses the fact that their traces are well marked because, to sell their merchandise, most of them had to obtain a specific authorization granted by local authorities, which had to be renewed every year. Around 1687, a decree was issued stating that Italian *materialisti* could not sell their goods without an annually renewed authorization. However, by 1691, they were only permitted to sell their products within designated fairs, thereby benefiting local traders.<sup>38</sup> The same situation can also be observed in other Austrian areas, Germany, or where Italian communities conducted their business. The same authors mention a competition between the newcomers and the local traders. There are testimonies that Italian merchants replaced local traders in towns, public markets, and villages in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup> They sometimes relocated to the countries where they conducted their business with their entire families and adapted their name,<sup>40</sup> but they also kept proprieties back home, in Italy. Some kept doing this business seasonally; they were involved in their community’s life, and their families remained in their homeland.

The ones that settled permanently in Austria or Germany had to pay a practice fee rather than taxes, lowering their prices. Additionally, they did not just sell *simplici* (raw materials for medicines) but also *compositi*, which were pharmaceutical preparations and, thus, more expensive.<sup>41</sup> The author mentions that the first apothecaries in the Salzburg area were established thanks to these materialists.

In another study, Giorgio Ferigo noted that during the modern period there was a significant seasonal migration of people from Carnia throughout Europe. The author also mentions that there were two types of materialists: *Landmaterialisten*, activating in the countryside, like peddlers, carrying their merchandise and selling it door to door, and

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compound. *Compositi* are drugs that contain multiple active ingredients or substances, by combining two or more different drugs or substances to achieve a specific therapeutic effect.

<sup>35</sup> Klein 1963, 72.

<sup>36</sup> Klein 1954, 71.

<sup>37</sup> Klein 1954, 70.

<sup>38</sup> Klein 1954, 74.

<sup>39</sup> Klein 1954, 75.

<sup>40</sup> For example, Gussetti became Gusseth, Guseth, Guset, or Gussett.

<sup>41</sup> Klein 1954, 78.

*Stadtmaterialisten*, activating in the cities, some of them conducting real business and having employees.<sup>42</sup>

The Italian tradesmen responded to a necessity and started their business around the sixteenth century when some were selling their products by going from village to village. They were supplying the apothecaries and the surgeons, but sometimes they were selling their own medicines, like potions for abortion and remedies for poison, including *mithridate* or *theriaca*, accepted as universal remedies.<sup>43</sup>

Among them, some were engaged in the trade of textiles, but there is particular interest in those involved in the spice trade. These merchants supplied a variety of spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, coriander seeds, and pepper as well as other condiments necessary for food preservation, but also ginger, grapes, raisins, figs, dates, capers, and almonds, and carried in large boxes with drawers known as *crassigna*.<sup>44</sup> They marketed these products not only as seasonings but also for their food preservation properties and medicinal uses. In addition to spices, they traded medicinal products such as *theriaca* or *mithridate* and various materials used to produce medicines. Furthermore, they offered homemade pharmaceuticals crafted based on ancient knowledge of plants, following old recipes and formulas.<sup>45</sup> In the seventeenth century, they settled in towns where they opened local businesses and deposits from where they supplied markets and fairs with their products, encountering resistance from the local traders.<sup>46</sup> From these urban centers, their goods would then circulate and reach the surrounding villages. This distribution network enabled villagers to access and benefit from the medicines and the other products these professionals offer. It is worth noting that many of them chose to settle in towns where military garrisons were present, likely due to the potential demand and business opportunities that arose in such locations.<sup>47</sup> However, over time, the materialists gradually established a monopoly in the trade of medicines and dyes. Once they firmly established themselves as merchants, they absorbed the entire trade in *Materialwaren*, while spice merchants limited themselves to dealing exclusively in purely colonial goods, i.e., *Kolonialwaren*.<sup>48</sup>

According to the studies mentioned above, materialists operated across a fairly extensive area, including Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and even Transylvania. It seems that during the eighteenth century, the materialists from Vienna supplied pharmacies in Cluj. Pharmacist Tobias Mauksch, who owned a pharmacy in the latter city, imparted valuable knowledge to his son regarding the sourcing of pharmaceutical supplies in his text *Instructio*. He emphasized that when certain goods were unavailable in Cluj, they had to be bought from Vienna. He also encouraged his son to establish connections with medicine dealers, particularly the materialists, to ensure a supply chain for their pharmacy.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ferigo, Fornasin 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Klein 1954, 77–78.

<sup>44</sup> Ferigo 1998, 230.

<sup>45</sup> Ferigo 1998, 230–232.

<sup>46</sup> Klein 1954, 75–76.

<sup>47</sup> Klein 1954, 75; Ferigo 2010, 124.

<sup>48</sup> Klein 1954, 72.

<sup>49</sup> Tuka 2012, 161, 182.

Our museum's collection has a reproduction of an engraving published by Christoph Weigel in 1698.<sup>50</sup> The book, *Abbildung Der Gemein-Nützlichen Haupt-Stände Von denen Regenten Und ihren So in Friedens- als Kriegs-Zeiten zugeordneten Bedienten an, biß auf alle Künstler Und Handwercker*,<sup>51</sup> illustrates aspects from a wide range of professions practiced during the seventeenth century in German areas. The book describes professions and trades such as lawyer, engineer, writer, notary, crossbow maker, apothecary, cantor, sail maker, artist, woodcut maker, bookbinder, trumpet maker, lute maker, printmaker, book dealer, wheelwright, smith, mirror maker, tanner, shoemaker, or stone breaker. Among these is a plate dedicated to *Der Materialist* (Fig. 9).<sup>52</sup> In the depicted scene, the vendor is positioned behind a reception table with numerous drawers. He is in the process of weighing various plants for a customer who has just paid with some coins. In this setting, three servants are conscientiously performing a range of tasks. One is grinding ingredients using a pestle in a large mortar, while another is transporting an armful of plants. Additionally, a retort can be observed alongside the aforementioned mortar and pestle. The interior of this space resembles that of a pharmacy, with an assortment of ingredients, as well as an exotic sight – a small baby alligator or crocodile suspended from the ceiling, different jars, containers, and even a sizable barrel.

This engraving, dating back to 1698, provides a nearly realistic depiction of how materialists conducted their activities. The image is accompanied by a text describing the nature of the materialist's profession.<sup>53</sup> It goes without saying that, to carry out their profession effectively, materialists had to possess a deep understanding of their trade. They required knowledge about the properties of aromatic plants, spices, drugs they traded, and dyes, and they also had to have a source of fresh and high-quality goods.

If Giovanni Battista Gussetti was indeed *materialista*, he could have bought the book out of professional interest. This also explains the final annotation made by Gussetti, which we previously mentioned in the book's description. The text comprises a recipe that includes several ingredients along with their respective proportions. In our attempt to transcribe a comprehensive list, we could decipher only a part of the script. For example, we identified *Sangue di drago* ("Dragon's blood"), a red resin obtained from certain plant species used for various purposes, including dye, incense, and medicine. It was believed to have healing

<sup>50</sup> Gruia 2021, 60; Gruia 2023b, 487.

<sup>51</sup> *Illustration of the common useful main professions to which rulers and their servants are assigned in times of peace and war, including all artists and craftsmen*, see Weigel 1698, 130–132.

<sup>52</sup> Colecția MNIT, IF 2901a. For the reproduction of the text accompanying the image see: Weigel 1698, 131–132.

<sup>53</sup> The following text was placed under the image: "Der Materialist, Kaufft wann ihr Nutzen sucht, um Schweis der Weißheit Frucht. Weg mit der Braunen Mohren Schatz! weg, mit den theursten Specereyen, die lieblichen Geruch ausstreuen, des Todes hauch findt hie noch Platz. Ein Specerey-Gewölb voll Leben, hat Jesus Seite mit gegeben" [The Materialist. To buy when you need and reap the fruits of wisdom. Away with the treasure of the Moors, enough with the most expensive spices that scatter preferred fragrances, but the smell of death is still nearby. A spice vault/cellar full of love has Jesus on its side]. This inscription might serve as an encouragement for individuals purchasing spices and diverse ingredients to consider buying from materialists, as an alternative to Eastern merchants. Regrettably, further exploration in this direction has not been pursued. However, it would be intriguing to examine both this quotation and the broader text in the original volume that accompanies the image. We thank our colleague Ph.D. Mária Pakucs for the help in transcribing and translating the text.

properties and was used as an astringent and wound healer. *Olibano* is the Italian word for frankincense, an aromatic resin obtained by cutting the trunks of a plant of the Burseraceae family, growing in the South of Arabia, used among others in making perfume.<sup>54</sup> *Mastici* is the Italian denomination of mastic, obtained from mastic tree, an evergreen with very fragrant leaves growing in Italy and Chios (Greece), mainly used to tan leather.<sup>55</sup> *Sapan di Alopi* or *Sapone di Aleppo* is the Italian name for “Soap of Aleppo,” a type of natural solid soap produced in Syria, obtained from olive and *Laurus* oil.

The ingredients mentioned in the book’s inscription serve different purposes: frankincense and mastic gum are known for their antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties; mastic was used for open wounds and against toothaches, while dragon’s blood resin is believed to have astringent and wound-healing properties; the soap was popular for its antibacterial properties. The recipe may be related to the previously mentioned lice treatment, but it could also be a remedy for other conditions or just a list of products. Although there is already one recipe for a lice-eradicating ointment in the book, it utilizes different ingredients. One possible common ingredient could be *Laurus* oil, which is present in Aleppo Soap and the recipe mentioned in the book.

### Who could become a public notary?

At the outset of our research, we were eager to understand the role of the *materialisti* and their responsibilities, but we were also interested in whether this profession could coexist with a notarial career.

To become a notary was not a simple task in seventeenth-century Veneto.<sup>56</sup> It seems there was more than one type of notary, according to the authority who invested them: imperial and apostolic by *Veneta Auctoritate* (“Venice authority”).<sup>57</sup> Imperial notaries were accredited by the *Imperatore* or the palatine counts, superior judges.<sup>58</sup>

According to the research of Angelica Zanatta, until the early seventeenth century, anyone who met the requirements could take the exam, regardless of their formal education. In the seventeenth century, the profession of notary in the Veneto region was tributary to the law issued in 1514, which stipulated that, in order to have their names registered in the Lower Chancellery, individuals were required to undergo an examination conducted by a committee chosen by the College of Notaries, composed of notaries with at least fifteen years of notarial experience. They had to examine candidates to ensure they possessed sufficient knowledge of notarial practice and an understanding of local customs.

With the law issued in 1632, becoming initiated into notarial practice was typically achieved through a two-year apprenticeship with an established Veneto notary, where individuals served as assistants or junior practitioners. It was considered useful not only for learning the basics of the profession but also for becoming familiar with the environment in which one would eventually work.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, during an exam, the apprentice was

<sup>54</sup> Messinis 2017, 76.

<sup>55</sup> Messinis 2017, 74.

<sup>56</sup> Zanatta 2013, 42.

<sup>57</sup> Di Marco 2003, 228.

<sup>58</sup> Di Marco 2003, 229.

<sup>59</sup> Zanatta 2013, 42; di Renzo Villata 2016, 133.

evaluated by three members of the Notarial College, where the candidate had to prove his moral conduit as well.<sup>60</sup>

The qualification of *nodaro veneto* was for life and carried certain privileges and social status. Despite the fees imposed by the Notary College, few individuals abandoned their profession, even if they were not practicing it.<sup>61</sup>

Notaries in that era held substantial social connections, which could have benefitted those engaged in business abroad. In Gussetti's case, being both a materialist and a notary may have been advantageous.

### **The life and times of Gio[vanni] Batt[ist]a Gussetti**

The initial presumption was that there would be few individuals named Gussetti in Austria during the late seventeenth century who were involved in the pharmaceutical trade or held positions as public notaries. However, we soon realized this assumption was incorrect, as we were surprised to discover several individuals named Giovanni Battista Gussetti who had strong ties to Austria, particularly in the Salzburg region and even in Vienna. Remarkably, some of the Gussettis can be traced in Austria across three or more generations.

On the title page of the book in the MNIT collection, the owner mentioned that the book was acquired in Vienna. Furthermore, there are various details regarding the dates of purchase, which raise some questions. The front cover states, "comprato l'anno di signore 168(4)7" with uncertainty about whether the last digit is a seven or a four. The first-page annotation mentions "5 Aprile 168(4)7," while the last page indicates "1688, 30 Marzzo." The final note reads, "1683 Vltimi Aprilis."

The presence of different dates associated with the name of the town in the book raises the possibility that the owner, Giovanni Battista Gussetti, may have had a connection to Vienna, either as a resident or as a frequent traveler to the Austrian capital. However, there is a discrepancy between the date mentioned next to the recipe (1683) and the year Gussetti purchased the book, which is recorded as either 1684 or 1687.

Two potential explanations emerge from this inconsistency. The first explanation is that the book might have belonged to someone else before Gussetti acquired it, and this previous owner could also have been a notary, which would be a rather unusual coincidence. The second possibility is that Gussetti came across the recipe in 1683 and inscribed it into the book after purchasing the latter. Alternatively, there is a chance that the recorded year of purchase or the year for the recipe is inaccurate. Nonetheless, these dates offer a relative time frame for our research, sometimes between 1683 and 1688.

In the following discussion, we will briefly overview the steps taken to connect all the information and potentially identify the book's owner. We discovered three Giovanni Battista Gussetti who were materialists, notaries, noblemen, or had connections with Vienna.

The research led us to one Giovanni Battista Gussetti, who was identified as *materialista* residing in Salzburg and notably counted Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart among his friends. However, there was a significant discrepancy in the timelines, as this particular

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<sup>60</sup> Zanatta 2013, 44.

<sup>61</sup> Zanatta 2013, 45.

Gussetti lived between 1744 and 1789, which was well after the period we initially sought to explore since our Gussetti was active sometime between 1683 and 1688. It turns out that this Salzburg trader was a descendant of a Carnia merchant who had migrated from the Rigolato area.<sup>62</sup> This information was detailed in an article by Herbert Klein, who extensively investigated Italian merchants from the Carnia region who immigrated to Austria during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>63</sup>

According to Klein's research, it appears that the Gussetti family business was highly profitable, leading them to settle in Salzburg and later establish a pharmacy in the town. Giovanni Battista Francesci da Paola Gussetti, who possessed talents in both music and trade, was the third generation to inherit the family business. The initial establishment of his shop can be traced back to Giovanni Battista's grandfather, who founded it in 1729.<sup>64</sup> As a result of his father's marriage to a local woman and his Austrian origins, Giovanni Battista was fortunate enough to be granted citizenship rights in Salzburg, which set him apart from other foreign individuals seeking the same status.

Despite being established in Salzburg, Giovanni Battista's family continued to hold properties in Rigolato, indicating a continued connection to their homeland. This suggests that while establishing themselves in Salzburg, they maintained ties and possessions in their homeland, possibly for sentimental, economic, or other reasons.<sup>65</sup> However, we do not believe him or his ancestor to be related to the book owner we are searching for.

Nonetheless, discovering the renowned Gussetti family living in Salzburg led us to an article titled *I materialisti della Carnia nel Salisburghese*, which the very same Herbert Klein wrote.<sup>66</sup> The mentioned article explored the Italian community residing in Carnia, who engaged in seasonal migration across the Alps to Germany and Austria. Following this path, we came across the study conducted by Georgio Ferigo, focused on this historical period. He mentions that in 1678, a devastating plague epidemic erupted in Vienna, and the alerted Venetian administration, as expected, implemented stringent measures to manage and contain the spread of the plague.<sup>67</sup> As part of these measures, a population census was conducted to ascertain how many individuals had been practicing a temporary migration from the Carnia region to Austria. The records indicate a high mobility, especially concerning the male population.<sup>68</sup>

Actually, the community compiled all the information and organized it into a database called *Alto Gorto in movimento. Genealogie Rigoladotte*, containing extensive information about the members of the community. As the statement of the site mentions, the database

<sup>62</sup> Rigolato is a municipality located in the province of Udine, in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, Italy.

<sup>63</sup> Klein 1963, 72–79.

<sup>64</sup> Klein 1963, 72.

<sup>65</sup> He received his education at the town's university and enjoyed a privileged social and financial status, as his godfather happened to be the mayor of Salzburg. Additionally, he married an Austrian woman and assumed control of the family business after his father's passing. Alongside his merchant endeavors, he possessed a deep passion for music and was a skilled violinist. Portraits of Giovanni Battista Gussetti and his wife are currently part of the collection of the Salzburg Museum; Klein 1963, 75, 77. Two other portraits, made by Franz Nikolaus Streicher, are reproduced in Klein 1954, 73, 77.

<sup>66</sup> Klein 1954, 70–88.

<sup>67</sup> Ferigo 1998, 228.

<sup>68</sup> Ferigo 1998, 229.

is a reconstruction of the social history of Rigolato area between the late sixteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century, serving as a centralized archive that includes details about families, their occupations, births, deaths, and even provides bibliographical references and suggestions for further research.<sup>69</sup>

The platform displays numerous individuals with the name Giovanni Battista Gussetti. Nevertheless, only two of them seem to match the specific searched profile. To be regarded as potential matches, we considered that the biographical details of these individuals must align with the time frame mentioned by the book's owner in the museum collection and correspond to the occupation indicated in the annotations.

On the platform, two individuals lived in the exact time interval under focus here. One Giovanni Battista Gussetti was born on 16 March 1652 and passed away in Salzburg, in 1695. In Klein's article, he is mentioned as Johannes Gussett *materialista*.<sup>70</sup> We have not found other relevant information about this person.

Another individual mentioned in the Italian database has the same name and appears to be a better match for the profile. He was born on 4 February 1654 in Valpicetto and died 40 years later on 6 November 1694 in Vienna. A Latin note found in the archives and mentioned in the database, listed alongside his name "Dominus...in partibus Germaniae Vienna" ("lord in the parts of Germany, Vienna"), confirmed his presence in the Austrian capital. His parents resided in Valpicetto, and, in the same town, he married prior to 1680 and had five children (Domenica, born in 1680; Maria Maddalena, born in 1683; Caterina, born in 1684; Giacomo Eustachio, born in 1686; Giovanni Andrea born in 1689).<sup>71</sup> Although the birthplace of their first daughter is not specified, their other children were all born in Valpicetto, and when the birth of his youngest son was recorded in the Rigolato archives in 1689, it was noted that he was the son of a nobleman: "filius...Domini Joannis Batta Gusseti Nobilis Ungariae."<sup>72</sup>

Notably, Adelchi Puschiasis' article<sup>73</sup> provides fascinating information about this particular Giovanni Battista Gussetti, which supports the belief that he could be the owner of the volume in the museum's collection. The author was searching for public notaries activating in the Rigolato area between the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. While researching the Parish Archive of Rigolato, housed in the State Archive in Udine, he came across information indicating the presence of nine notaries working during that time. Among them was Giovanni Battista Gussetti, a public notary authorized by the Venetian government, without professional traces. It seems he was documented in an *ex-voto* that once was placed in the Santa Barbara church in Valpicetto. His name was mentioned in a study conducted by Paolo Moro<sup>74</sup> that we unfortunately did not have access to. Luckily, Puschiasis transcribed the inscription:

<sup>69</sup> "Gussetti"/ Genealogie Rigoladotte.

<sup>70</sup> Klein 1954, 80, footnote 19.

<sup>71</sup> "Gussetti"/ Genealogie Rigoladotte.

<sup>72</sup> Translating: "son... of Lord Joannis Batta Gusseti Hungarian Nobleman." See "Gussetti"/ Genealogie Rigoladotte; Puschiasis 2008, 171, footnote 2.

<sup>73</sup> Puschiasis 2008, 171, footnote 2.

<sup>74</sup> Moro 1970, 130, *apud* Puschiasis 2008, 171, footnote 2.

VOTO FATTO L'À...O 1... IL MESE DI MARZO NELLA CITTÀ D... POSSAUIA  
MENTRE FUI AMMALATO IO GIO BATTÀ GUSSETTO DI VALPICETTO CANAL  
DI GORTO NOBL... CES.O ET P. L'AUT.TA VEN.TA NOTARIO PUBLIC...<sup>75</sup>

The inscription on the *ex-voto* resembles the annotation found on a book in the museum's collection. Both contain the expression "Io Gio Batta Gussetto, nobl...", suggesting a strong connection between them. The inscription on the book's front cover refers to Gussetti as a "nobile materialista and nodaris publicus imperialis" while the other annotation mentions him as a "Nodario Cetero (?) ex Ven[e]to." According to Puschiasis, Gussetti from Valpicetto had no documented professional history as a notary, which could support the theory that he might have pursued a different profession while retaining his notarial title. It is possible that he was a materialist and maintained his notarial status alongside his other pursuits, but this is just speculation, which we cannot prove at this stage and without further research.

Another question arises regarding his noble title. Gussetti refers to himself in the inscription on the volume in our collection as a *nobile materialista*. Simultaneously, if our assumption is accurate, then the title of "NOBL... CES.O ET P. L'AUT.TA VEN.TA NOTARIO" is also mentioned alongside the name of Giovanni Battista Gussetti from Valpicetto, in the votive inscription he deposited in Santa Barbara church.<sup>76</sup> Simultaneously, information reveals that Giovanni Gussetti, the father of Gussetti from Valpicetto, was recognized as *Nobile imperiale*. Further exploration in the same article discloses that Giovanni Gussetti himself was called "Domini Joannis Batta Guseti Nobilis Ungariae" in 1689.<sup>77</sup>

Could the book owner and Gussetti, father and son, have received a title of ennoblement in Vienna? Without delving into the Viennese, Budapestan, or Italian archives to verify the existence of a diploma of nobility issued in either Gussetti's name, we can propose two theories about their nobility title.

The first theory is linked with the period we are discussing and to the reign of Leopold I (1656–1705). It appears that during his rule, many individuals were ennobled in Hungary, especially in the context of the wars against the Turks.<sup>78</sup> Some of these nobility diplomas were granted in recognition of contributions made not necessarily on the battlefield but also for providing financial support to the cause. It is possible that Gussetti's father received the title and passed it on to his son, or both of them received it. They may have had a successful business and could have made significant financial contributions to support military campaigns. The same situation might be available also for the book owner.

We have searched the *Libri Regii*, which is available online in facsimile, thanks to the Hungarian National Archives.<sup>79</sup> This document registered all the nobility titles or diplomas issued by the Chancellery of Leopold I.<sup>80</sup> We consulted documents dated between 1667 and

<sup>75</sup> The annotation can be roughly translated as follows: "Voto made in the y...in the month of March in the city of D...Possauia(?) during the time I was sick Me Gio Batta Gussetto from Valpicetto Canal di Gorto Nob[i]l[e] Ces. O. and by Venetian aut[ority] Public Notary."

<sup>76</sup> Puschiasis 2008, 171, footnote 2.

<sup>77</sup> Puschiasis 2008, 171, footnote 2.

<sup>78</sup> Toth 1999, 172–173.

<sup>79</sup> MNL OL, A 57, Libri Regii.

<sup>80</sup> Toth 1999, 172.

1689 (from volume 14 to volume 19). Unfortunately, we could not find such a diploma. With the database's search engine, we only found one Gusith János,<sup>81</sup> mentioned in 1671, who was granted clemency for an act of treason committed during a rebellion. However, there is currently no concrete evidence linking this Gusith to Gussetti, whether the father, the son, or the book owner. Further extensive research will be necessary to explore this matter, but it goes beyond the scope of this limited study.<sup>82</sup>

We also consulted the online database of the Austrian archive and found, in the section on family and private holdings, and succession treaties, a testamentary treaty regarding Johann Baptist Gussetti, a materialist, dated 12 May 1704. From the title of the document, *Verlassenschaftsabhandlung Johann Baptist Gussetti, hofbefreiter Materialist*, we could deduce there was an estate settlement, a legal process of settling an individual's estate after their death, distributing their assets, paying off debts according to the law. We also presumed that Johann Baptist Gussetti was court-exempt, excusing him from specific court-related duties or taxes due to his privileged status or position. Unfortunately, we could not access the document's content to obtain further details, and we lack concrete evidence to confirm that the materialist Gussetti is indeed the same person as the book owner. However, this information could potentially strengthen our assumption.<sup>83</sup> This is another trail that deserves to be further explored.

Secondly, an alternative explanation is based on an article by Gaetano Perusini, where he discusses nobility diplomas received directly from Emperor Leopold I by members of the Timeus family in 1688.<sup>84</sup> Perusini mentions that in the Carnia region, the title of nobility was granted by the community, not necessarily through a formal diploma. This recognition was extended to families who led noble lives, which meant they refrained from working the land, engaging in mechanical arts, or small-scale trade: "In Friuli, the nobility is not a privilege but a social and economic condition."<sup>85</sup> If we consider this statement, Gussetti might not have been invested as a nobleman by a higher authority. In the Timeus family's case, the author found the proving document, and we believe it is essential to emphasize that the article highlights the possibility of foreigners obtaining a nobility diploma based on military and political achievements.

Nonetheless, Gussetti mentioned by Puschiasis was referred to as a Hungarian nobleman, *nobile unghereze*, suggesting the possibility that a nobility diploma, issued by the Viennese court, was conferred upon him or his father.

Giovanni Battista Gussetti, the book's owner, held the title of *Nobile* and served as an imperial notary. This implies a comparable situation in which the emperor's authority granted an official title.

In conclusion, the research has led us to Salzburg, revealing an exciting profession practiced by emigrants from a mountain region in Italy that, during the seventeenth and

<sup>81</sup> MNL OL, A 57, Libri Regii, vol. 15, 339–340.

<sup>82</sup> After reading the Latin document, our colleague Ph.D. Diana Varga, whom we thank, suggested that the rebellion might be the Wesselényi conspiracy, a plot among Croatian and Hungarian nobles to oust the Habsburg Monarchy from Croatia and Hungary that took place in 1664.

<sup>83</sup> Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna, *Verlassenschaftsabhandlung Johann Baptist Gussetti, hofbefreiter Materialist*, 1704.12.05, AT-OeSTA/HHStA HA OMaA 654–948.

<sup>84</sup> Perusini 1959, 18; Puschiasis 2008, footnote 2.

<sup>85</sup> Perusini 1959, 21.

eighteenth centuries, chose to migrate seasonally or to emigrate to Germany and Austria, primarily due to economic factors. These individuals engaged in itinerant commerce, specifically in medicine compounds and dyes. Some adapted and established in the countries where they led their business, while others kept their properties and families in Italy and practiced regular trade.

We cannot say with precision if this is the case of the book owner, but it was the case of the notary in Valpicetto. He married in his hometown, and all his sons were born there. He was an active community member, placing an *ex-voto* in the local church and participating in the communities' main events, such as weddings and baptisms. At the same time, he had connections with Vienna and might have received a title of nobility.

Giovanni Battista Gussetti, associated with the book in the museum's collection, is likely to have been one of these individuals or actually this latter person. Born somewhere close to Venice, he studied to become a notary, receiving his authorization from the Notarial College in Venice. At the same time, he may have been involved in trade as *materialista*, dealing in primary materials for apothecaries and other specialists needing such merchandise. This theory finds support in the annotations related to ingredients for medicinal use. The topics covered in the two volumes bound together align with the interests of a materialist.

The annotation, which reads “[nobl?] regis? medico?, ex materi[is/alista?][...]” continues to pose a mystery, primarily due to the poor visibility of the writing and our approximate transcription. It is possible that future paper and ink analyses may aid one in accurately deciphering this inscription as well.

We have identified three individuals with the name Giovanni Battista Gussetti. One of these individuals, a materialist, lived in Salzburg nearly a century after the presumed owner of the book. Among the other two individuals who share the same name and align with the historical timeline, either one of them could potentially be the book's owner. One of these individuals was indeed a materialist, but it appears he was active in Salzburg, which may not align with the book's history. The other Giovanni Battista Gussetti was a notary from Valpicetto who passed away in Vienna. This latter individual seems to be a more likely candidate for being the book's owner.

The notary from Valpicetto closely matches the profile of our book owner by having the same qualifications, the same nobility title, and a connection with the Austrian capital. Regarding the notarial profession, both Giovanni Battista Gussetti, the book owner and the notary from Valpicetto, held the same qualification. On the title page of Melich's volume, there is a concise version of Gussetti's title: “Nod. Cet? et Ven(e)to.” Additionally, on the book's cover, he mentioned that he was a “nodaris publicus imperialis cosi ancora per l'autorita Veneta seriam? Publico Nod.” In the *ex-voto* from Valpicetto, a similar title appears for the notary: “NOBL...CES.O ET P. L'AUT.TA VEN.TA NOTARIO PUBLIC...” These titles suggest a similarity in their notarial qualifications.

Both of them carried a noble title, the book owner was a noble materialist and an imperial public notary by the Venetian authority. Again, the inscription on the book's cover and the votive inscription in the church of Valpicetto are very similar in formula: “libro di me Gio Batta Gussetti, or [Il fine] di questo ma non di quelle da farsi da me Gio Batta

Gussetti,” sounds similar with the formula on the *ex-voto*: “mentre fui ammalato io Gio Batta Gussetto.”

Another remarkable coincidence is the association of both Gussetti and Vienna. In the book, there are three references to the city, two of which are related to the acquisition of the book on the cover and title page, and another on the last page recto. Based on the annotations, it appears that Giovanni Battista Gussetti was likely present in Vienna sometime between 1683 and 1688. On the other hand, the notary Gussetti from Valpicetto was documented in Vienna in 1694, where he eventually passed away. To establish a potential connection between the 1704 testament mentioned in the Austrian Archives and either of the Gussetti individuals, further research is necessary in Austrian and Hungarian archives. The present research could not establish Giovanni Battista Gussetti’s identity with certainty. Nonetheless, the evidence strongly supports that Gussetti from Valpicetto, a notary and a nobleman with ties to Vienna, is the most likely candidate.

Being both a *materialista* and a notary, living in Vienna, and being a nobleman raised interesting questions about the Italian community living abroad and this specific trade. As *materialista*, Gussetti might have had a genuine interest in the medicinal knowledge presented in the book. Knowing the necessary ingredients for various medicines would have certainly been advantageous for him, especially if he was working as a notary certifying contracts related to the medicine trade.

From a museographer perspective, uncovering a part of an artifact’s story adds significant value to it. The narrative associated with an object enhances its relevance within the collection and provides museum curators with the opportunity to utilize the object in various exhibition projects. Further research and archival exploration may shed more light on this historical figure and his connection to the book in our collection.

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C O P I E

C ă t r e

Muzeul de istorie

C l u j

Subsemnatul Olimpia I. Barna, profesor, domiciliat în Cluj, str. Mangalia, Bloc F., Scara 3, apt. 51, deez colecției de istoria farmaciei Cluj, o carte de farmacologie tipărită în anul 1596 la Venetia: "Avertimenti, nelle compositioni de medicamente per uso della spetialia".

Cluj, 29 aprilie 1969

ss. Prof. O.I. Barna

Pentru confirmare este cu originalul:



Inreg. inv. IF. 798

Fig. 1. Donation act, MNIT archive (photo by Ioana Gruită-Savu).

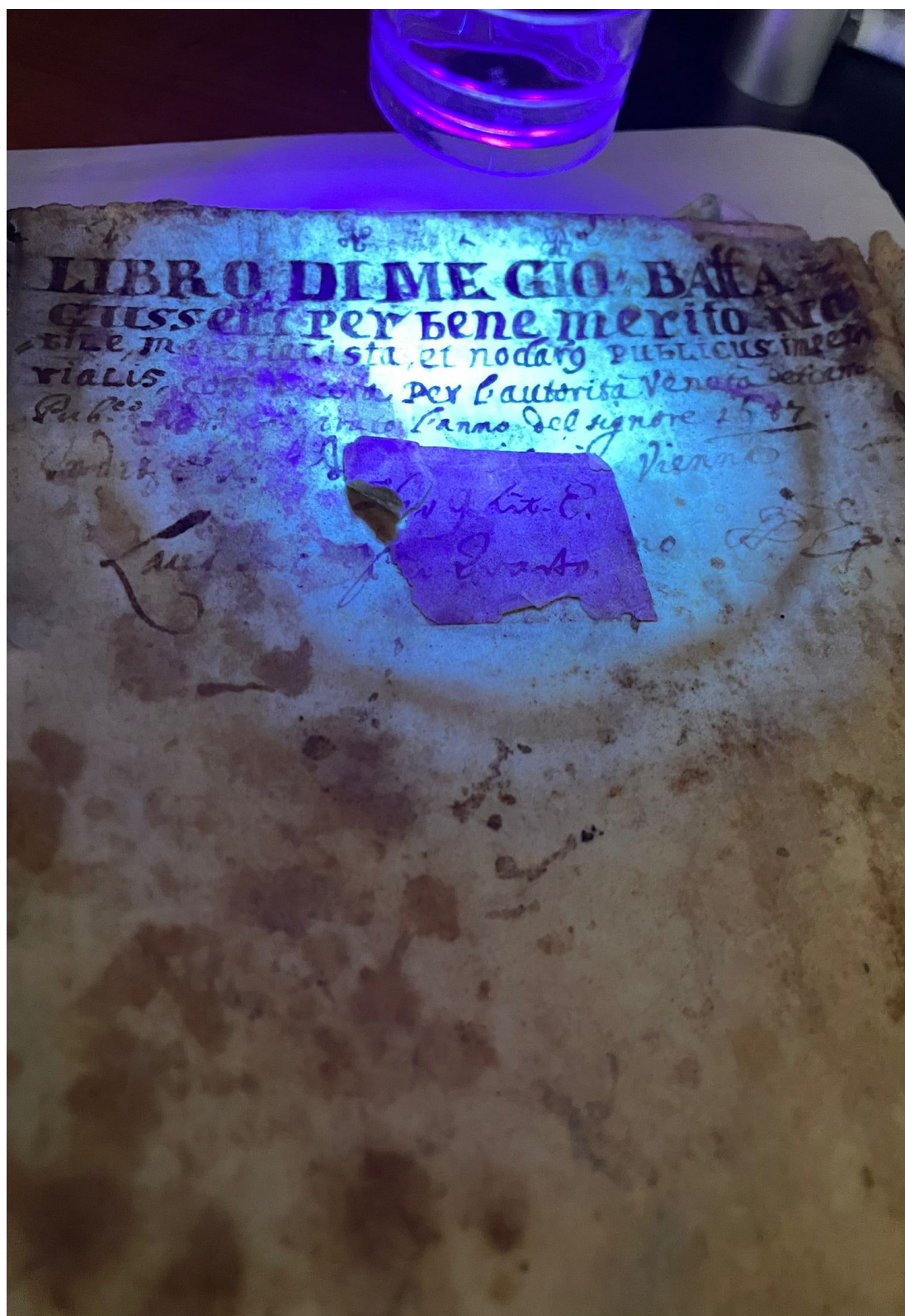


Fig. 2. Book cover under UV light (photo by Ioana Gruitã-Savu).

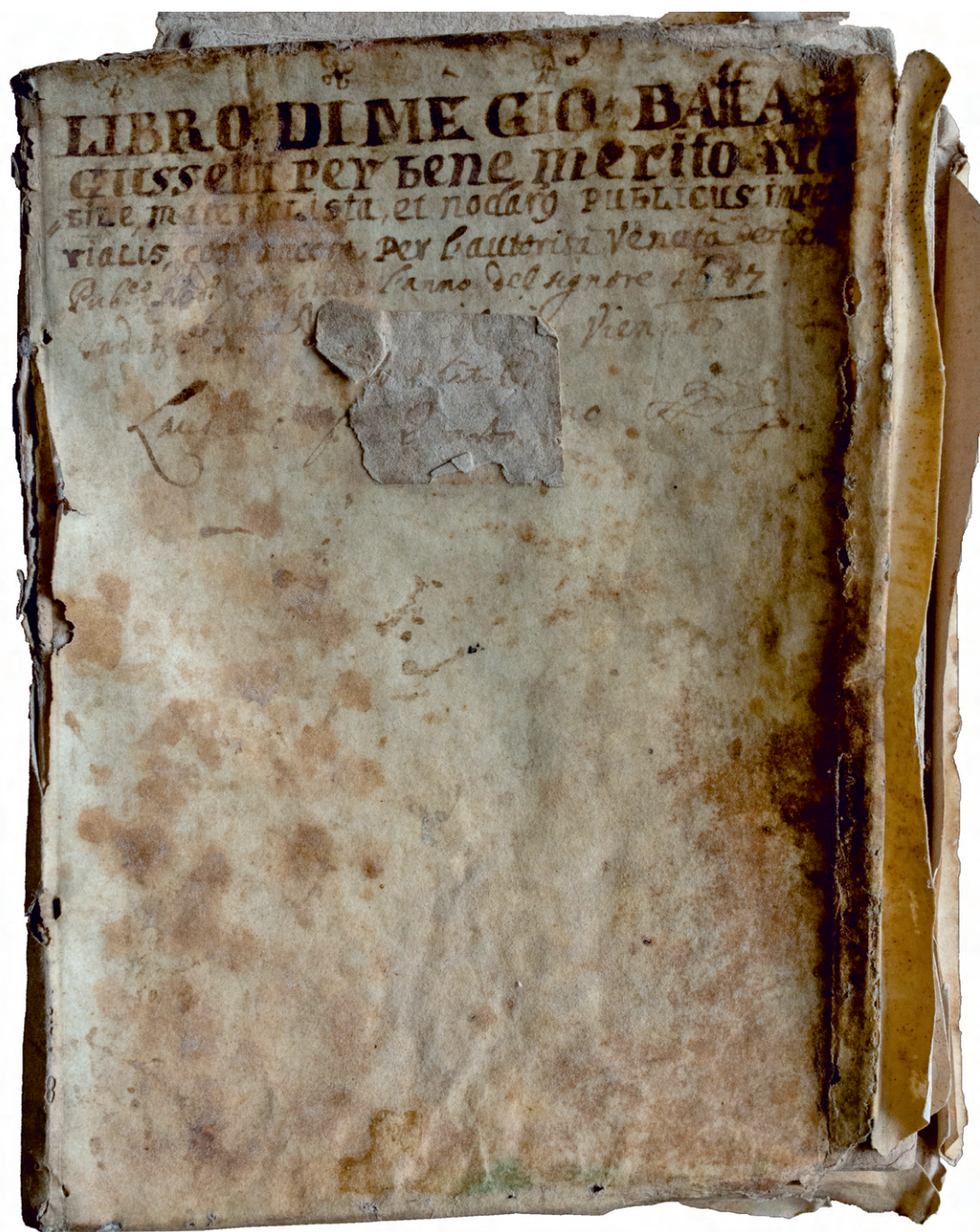


Fig. 3. Book cover (photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).

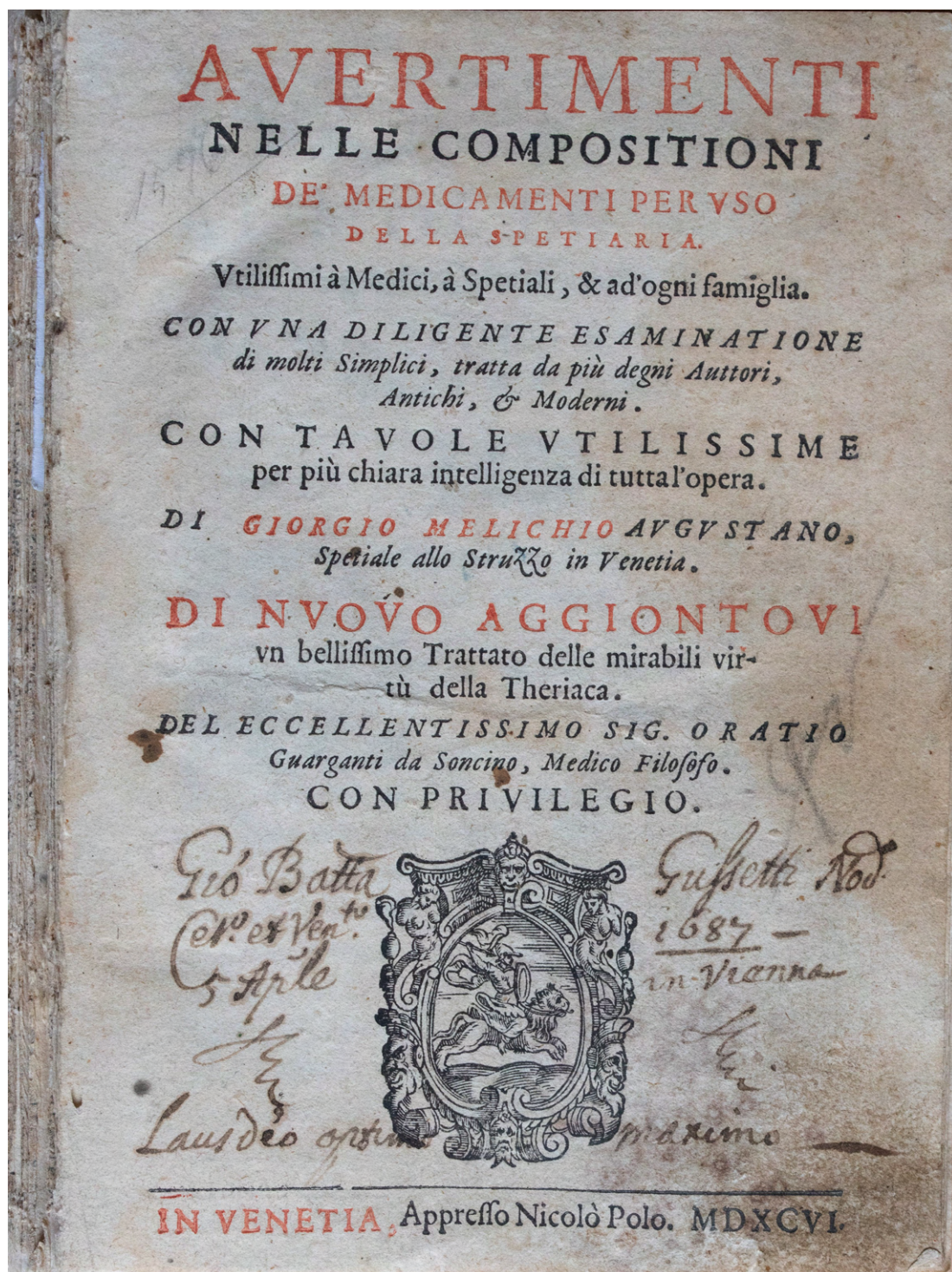


Fig. 4. Title page of the volume *Avertimenti nelle compositioni de medicamenti per vso della spetiaria...* (photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).

DELLA  
THERIACA,  
Et sue mirabili virtù.

OPERETTA  
D' HORATIO

Guarguanti da Soncino,  
MEDICO, ET PHILOSOPHO.

Nuouamente data in luce,  
CON PRIVILEGIO.



IN VENETIA, M D XCVI.

Appresso Giacomo Vincenti.

Fig 5. Title page of the volume *Della Theriaca, Et sue mirabili virtù...* (photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).

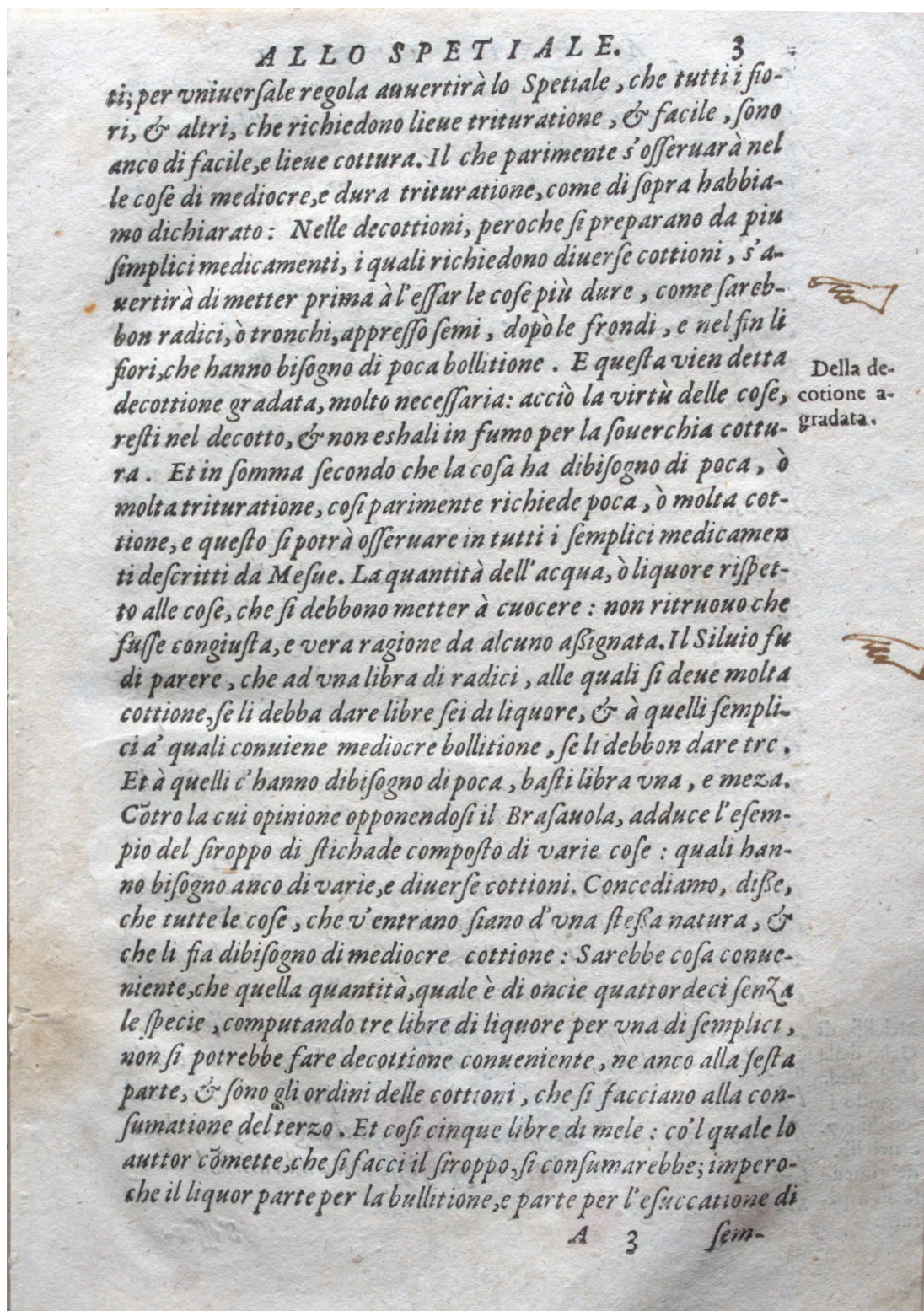


Fig. 6. Small hands drawn in black ink, on folio numbered 3, *Avertimenti nelle compositioni de medicamenti per vso della spetiaria...* (photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).



*Der Materialist.*  
*Kaufft wann ihr Dücker sucht um Schweiß der Weisheit Frucht.*



*Weg mit der Kräutern, Wurzeln Schatz!  
 weg mit den theuersten Specereien,  
 die lieblichen Geruch ausstreuen,  
 des Todes Däuch findt hi noch Plak.  
 In Specerey-Gewölh voll Leben,  
 hat Jesus Seite mir gegeben.*

Fig. 9. Reproduction: *Der Materialist* from Christoph Weigel's *Abbildung der gemein-nützlichen Haup* (Colectia MNIT, no. F 2109a; photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).



## HUNGARIANS IN THE EYES OF THE ROMANIANS. “THE ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS”\*

SORIN MITU\*\*

**Abstract:** This article analyzes the positive image of the Hungarians, as it appears in several important Romanian texts prior to the 1848 revolution. The origin of this image can be detected in the works of the Transylvanian School writers. These authors use an important element of the eighteenth-century Hungarian self-image, which emphasized the multiethnic character of Hungary and the fact that several peoples coexisted in harmony between its borders. This representation was predicated on the idea of tolerance, inherited from the period of the Josephine reforms. The existence of this benign horizon of expectation in imagological relations between Romanians and Hungarians is highlighted by two important Romanian texts from the first half of the nineteenth century: the travel notes written by the Wallachian boyar Dinicu Golescu (1826), and those by a petty nobleman from Făgăraș, Ion Codru Drăgușanu (1835–1844, published in 1865). Travel accounts are precious sources for imagological study, because they reveal not only what travelers see on their journeys, but also the prejudices and stereotypes they set out with, the images of the Other that permeate their cultural environment. The traditions of Enlightenment philosophy shaped an “era of good feelings” for the Romanians who wrote about Hungarians on the eve of the revolution of 1848, which was noticeable at a discursive level. This view drew its sap from the most general principles of the time but was also supported by the secular practice of cohabitation between the Romanian and Hungarian communities in Transylvania.

**Keywords:** Hungarians, Romanians, first half of the nineteenth century, tolerance, historical imagology

**Rezumat:** Articolul de față analizează imaginea pozitivă a maghiarilor, așa cum apare în câteva texte românești importante anterioare revoluției de la 1848. Originea aceste imagini poate fi detectată în operele scriitorilor aparținând Școlii Ardelene. Acești autori foloseau un element important al imaginii de sine maghiare din secolul al XVIII-lea, care punea accentul pe caracterul multiethnic al Ungariei, pe faptul că între frontierele acesteia conviețuiesc în armonie mai multe popoare. Această reprezentare avea în spate ideea toleranței, moștenită din perioada reformelor iosefine. Existența acestui orizont de așteptare benign în relația imagologică dintre români și maghiari este scoasă în evidență de două texte importante din prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea: însemnările de călătorie redactate de boierul muntean Dinicu Golescu (1826), respectiv de micul nobil făgărășan Ion Codru Drăgușanu (1835–1844, publicate în 1865). Relatările de călătorie sunt izvoare prețioase pentru studiul imagologic, deoarece ele nu ne dezvăluie doar ceea ce văd călătorii la fața locului, ci și prejudecățile și stereotipiile cu care pleacă aceștia la drum, imaginile cu privire la Celălalt împărțite în mediul lor cultural. Tradițiile filosofiei iluministe au edificat o „eră a bunelor sentimente” pentru românii care scriau despre maghiari în epoca anterioară revoluției de la 1848, sesizabilă la nivel discursiv. Această viziune era extrasă din principiile cele mai generale ale

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vremii, dar în același timp era susținută de practica seculară a conviețuirii dintre români și maghiari în Transilvania.

**Cuvinte cheie:** maghiari, români, prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea, toleranță, imagologie istorică

The opinions regarding Hungarians expressed by Romanian intellectuals and opinion leaders in the first half of the nineteenth century were surprisingly favorable, if we consider that this was a period when the Transylvanian Romanians' national identity and their program of political and social emancipation in Transylvania were consolidating.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of this positive image can be detected in the pages of the 1791 petition, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, in which the Romanians' political and church leaders demanded the recognition of rights of their national collective, equal with those of the other political nations of Transylvania. Their argument was rooted in the idea that the Romanians, the oldest inhabitants of this province, had initially enjoyed the same rights as the Hungarians. This status was never taken away from them by some formal gesture, but in an abusive and somewhat random, "incomprehensible" way, due to the "adversity of time."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the Hungarians (identified with the dominant political element in Transylvania) had not deliberately wanted to discriminate the Romanians, even if this is what eventually happened. The equality of rights and the peaceful coexistence between the two communities stemmed from the pact concluded after the death of Duke Gelu, when the Romanians, "shaking hands, they chose their Duke Tuhutum as their own lord too (...). The Hungarians were satisfied with the Romanians' free and spontaneous action, and both nations found their happiness in co-citizenship and in the community of rights..."<sup>3</sup>

As a result, the Hungarians were amicable towards the Romanians, so there was no reason for the monarch not to cancel the paragraphs in the *Approved Constitutions* which disregarded and illegally deprived the Romanians of their rights, by virtue of an unjustified historical routine. It is possible that some members of the Transylvanian diet were "still driven in part by a hidden hatred of the nation and religion"<sup>4</sup> but, as the concessive terms in which this idea was expressed suggested, there could be no question of it materializing. In fact, the Hungarians, who had lived in a community of rights with the Romanians throughout the Middle Ages, were benevolent people: there was no way they wished to take away the Romanians' rights.

Undeniably, we can suspect this argument of some underlying irony or, more directly put, of being a mockery. Joseph Karl Eder, the first editor and erudite critic of the Romanian petition, said that he had never heard anything more insolent than the Romanians' claim that they would have welcomed the conquering Hungarians with them in con-civility!<sup>5</sup> One might think that this was a less common rhetorical phrase in the Romanian-Hungarian

<sup>1</sup> Gyémánt 1986; Mitu 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Prodan 1984, 472–474.

<sup>3</sup> Prodan 1984, 473.

<sup>4</sup> Prodan 1984, 480.

<sup>5</sup> Prodan 1984, 81.

imagological dialogue: let's pretend to be fools, let's claim that we get along with each other excellently, but of course we know how things stand, in reality!

Such an interpretation, however, would go too far. This was a scholarly petition ceremoniously addressed to the emperor in Vienna, in the year of Mozart's death (to give a reference chosen at random), and its argument stretched across many pages. Written in impeccable Latin, it made countless historical references. Even if the benevolence attributed to the Hungarians had to do with a certain rhetoric, it drew its sap from an extremely serious ideological principle, fundamental to the Enlightenment era: tolerance. National or religious intolerance and the "hatred of nation and religion" referenced by the authors of the petition were unacceptable attitudes, disavowed by everyone. They could be said to have been "politically incorrect," but in a world where people did not like to question the authority of philosophical, political or moral principles, as they do today.

As a result, the Romanians claimed they were tolerant and did not hate the Hungarians. But the reverse also had to be valid. To accuse the "great Hungarian people" of national intolerance was blasphemy and abuse, not to mention that it did not help in the political competition of the Habsburgs' multinational empire. All people had to be tolerant. This was the principle on which the Romanian claims were predicated, at a time when the Enlightenment thinkers believed that rights were mainly of a universal nature and were not yet so connected with national particularisms as they would become in the era of Herderian romanticism. From the vantage point of Enlightenment philosophy, the Hungarians could not yet be said to be barbarians who trampled the Romanians underfoot; but the Romanians would start voicing such opinions shortly after 1848.

For the Hungarians of the late eighteenth century, on the other hand, it was easier to talk about the Romanians' intolerance or even savagery, as long as they were embodied by uneducated peasants, kept in the darkness of superstition. Lack of education was considered the source of all social evils, so the intolerance attributed to the Romanian peasants, held in ignorance by their backward priesthood, was perfectly explicable. The idea was all the more convincing as it came to reinforce what the (more or less enlightened) Hungarian nobles already knew, based on their social prejudices of medieval extraction. Romanians, on the other hand, could not say anything similar about a nation with educated elites in power. Moreover, in the first half of the nineteenth century the Hungarians no longer demonized the Romanian peasants, now promoted to the status of "noble savages," as the retrograde nobility had done in the previous century.<sup>6</sup>

The most influential Romanian author from the beginning of the nineteenth century, Petru Maior, dedicated many pages to the relations between Romanians and Hungarians in his chief work, *The History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia* (1812). Maior always highlighted the enmity between the two nations in the Middle Ages, but argued that the Romanians had never been inferior to the Hungarians at any time in their common past. Embracing the ideas of the *Supplex*, his conclusion was that the Romanians were always on a par with the Hungarians, and "the said union of the three nations, in Transylvania, did no harm to the Romanian people," as proved by the fact that the Romanian Hunyadi family reached the highest positions in the Kingdom of Hungary in the very years the *Unio Trium Nationum* was concluded. As a result, just like throughout their common history,

<sup>6</sup> See Mitu, Mitu 2017.

Romanians and Hungarians must understand each other in an exemplary manner, under the protection of the authorities and the nobility:

No injustice was ever done to the Romanian people by the Hungarian people [...]. Hence, the Romanian nation, which has never suffered any injustice done by the Hungarian nation, should always live in peace with the same great Hungarian nation, according to the country's constitution, and should faithfully keep the peace – from which happiness springs – to live, each faithfully obeying his superiors.<sup>7</sup>

Some might say this was much mistaken. But just as later Romanian historians instrumentalized the past to support their contemporary thesis, stating that today's Romanians cannot get along with the Hungarians because their entire history has been an endless conflict, Maior was doing exactly the opposite thing in saying that Romanians had always got along very well with Hungarians, so they had to behave the same nowadays. And the truth was that in history you could always find convincing arguments for any contemporary idea if you searched well enough, because the past has multiple facets and cannot be reduced to a single interpretation. In any case, if Maior had written such phrases a hundred years later, he would have been considered a traitor by most of his brethren. In the Transylvanian School era, however, he was the most powerful voice of Romanian national discourse.

An anonymous pamphlet published in 1812 (Petru Maior was probably its author) further developed the image of concord and tolerance that ostensibly reigned in Hungary at that time:

Of course, the Hungarian people, ever since the time of their arrival in these regions, have always shown themselves humane and welcoming (...) to the nations they found here and with whom they subsequently formed a civil association (...) for in vain would you try to find in the whole world a country (let my words not be disproved) that would surpass Hungary in this praise (...). We find, from experience, that the Hungarian people are accustomed to thinking – not without the greatest impact for the public welfare – that by completely erasing the discrimination between the different nations living in the kingdom – distinct nations that are nonetheless united by the fruits of general happiness and by the same love of the homeland – that they all have one thought, one endeavor for the general good. Happy people! happy States! if, taming down to the core the demented religious and political intolerance, people living in the same homeland and according to the same laws, were animated by the same idea of concord and the same desire for general salvation; this would also make the state stronger, uniting the minds of all citizens to the same end, and enabling the citizens' happiness, in particular (clasping his hands, those who give mutual aid), to be greater.<sup>8</sup>

Maior used in these passages an important element of the eighteenth-century Hungarian self-image, which emphasized the multiethnic character of Hungary and the

<sup>7</sup> Maior 1970, 195–196.

<sup>8</sup> Mitu 2013, 342.

fact that several peoples coexisted in harmony between its borders.<sup>9</sup> This representation was predicated on the idea of tolerance, inherited from the period of the Josephine reforms, and the Romanian scholar, who was censor of the Romanian publications printed in Buda during those years, appropriated that topic of Hungarian ideology and adapted it to his own argumentation system.

The leaders of the Romanians in Arad, who in 1814 requested the replacement of the Serbian high prelates with Romanian bishops, championed the same favorable image about Hungary and the Hungarians' tolerance and cited the non-discriminatory constitutional traditions of the Kingdom of St. Stephen. As a result, Hungary was defined as a true Motherland protecting its Romanian-speaking sons, a mother that was proud of the priority they enjoyed: "The laws tell us this; there are also stories full of testimonies that the Hungarian motherland has kept this Romanian nation, older than itself, and raised it as her own son, not trying to discriminate them by language and faith."<sup>10</sup>

A few years later, in 1827, Damaschin Bojincă, an intellectual from Banat carried this idea even further, praising the Romanians who zealously learned the Hungarian language!

...the Romanians wisely and diligently learn the language of their homeland, Hungarian – whose sweetness (!) enraptures even foreigners. For if we turn our critical eye on the Romanians living from the banks of the river Mureș to the edges of Marmăția and beyond, there will be countless men belonging to the Romanian nation who not only speak the language of the motherland, Hungarian, no less well than the Hungarians born and bred, but from the love with which they have behaved from the birth of the country to the fully fledged motherland and to the Hungarians, whose faithful co-citizens they are, and are behaving now, and always will behave, contributing to promoting the culture of the motherland with no insignificant efforts.<sup>11</sup>

As can be seen, Bojincă emphasized the attachment of his countrymen to the Hungarians from a desire to show that Romanians were loyal citizens who contributed to the common wealth of the "motherland." Accordingly, they deserved to have all their claims satisfied. Secondly, the scholar from Banat wanted to refute, in the subtext, accusations levelled at the Romanians that they could not speak the language of the state and did not have the interests of the whole society at heart.

The dramatic issue of the mother tongue and Magyarization, which featured at the top of national disputes over the coming decades, and the stereotype that the Hungarian language was ugly and impossible (a cliché used mostly by non-Hungarian speakers) seemed to not even exist at that time, for one of the most appreciated authors of Romanian national writings, who glorified Michael the Brave or John Hunyadi in his works.

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<sup>9</sup> Ács 1996, 110–133.

<sup>10</sup> Păcățian 1904, 141.

<sup>11</sup> Bojincă's statements are polemically quoted and accompanied by extensive counterarguments in Papiu Ilarian 1852, CIII sqq. Alexandru Papiu Ilarian used the exclamation mark to show that Bojincă's outrageous fondness of the Hungarian language made him livid. The idea that "Hungarian is hideous" is a cliché Romanians still hold on to when it comes to their neighbours' language. Given that Bojincă serenely denied such "evidence" here, Papiu was almost at a loss for words.

Such messages echoed the principle of enlightenment tolerance, but also foreshadowed the prospect of a Hungarian civic nation. In this national construction, all citizens were to enjoy equal rights. They would speak Hungarian in public life, and their native language in the private sphere. They would belong to the same Hungarian homeland, defined by the promotion of the common good. Although the Hungarian concept of nation eventually evolved mainly towards the Herderian ethnic nation solution (like all Central European nationalisms), Hungarian ideologues always flirted with the idea of a nation based on sharing rights rather than common cultural traits. This vision, difficult to translate into practice, had the advantage of including the populations speaking different other languages in the Kingdom of Hungary. France and Switzerland represented two such European models, while ethnographic realities in the multinational empire of the Habsburgs seemed to confirm it.

What would the evolution of Romanian nationalism have been if the Romanians had lived with the Hungarians only on the fertile plains of Partium (Banat, Crișana, Sătmar, plus Maramureș, Zărand and some other hilly microregions), where about half of the Romanian ethnic bloc in the Habsburg lands lived? What if there had been no competitive tradition in Transylvania, with the oppression and contempt shown by the Hungarian nobility towards the Romanians, with their less productive domains and the poor serf villages scattered among the hills? Would the Romanians have fit into a Hungarian nation? Would they have at least become, like the Irish, users of the language of the dominant culture in their own homes?

Too many “ifs” and too many questions! What was clearly seen in 1830 was that feelings favorable to the Hungarians were not the result of some pressure exerted by the dominant element. There were attitudes assumed by the Romanians who had built their national identity and campaigned for emancipation. Such trends were peculiar especially to the Romanians from the western areas. They had almost never been part of the Principality of Transylvania, had not known the system of privileged nations and official confessions, or the all-powerful Transylvanian Hungarian nobility, which could not prosper based on the fertility of the soil, but on an intensified feudal exploitation. As a result, in 1848–1849 many Romanians from Partium fought alongside the Hungarian revolutionaries, in Kossuth’s camp, against the imperial troops and, implicitly, against their Romanian countrymen from Transylvania, led by Avram Iancu.

Of course, it can be said that the circulation of these positive clichés regarding Hungarians also had a certain rhetorical dimension. In some cases this was an argumentative artifice. However, they were frequently invoked, thus helping the Romanians in Hungary to become familiar with positive images of the Hungarians. These images justified the political action of the Banat Romanians, who were looking for allies in the Hungarian political circles, in their dispute with the Serbian ecclesiastical hierarchy. Also, the recently emerged “benevolent” ethnic images were adopted also outside the Enlightenment tradition, by the traditionalist, conservative political philosophy specific to the “Metternich era.” This discouraged ideological representations that could challenge the existing political system and fostered the idea of social and national harmony.

In this spirit, the journalist Iosif Many, who regularly translated Hungarian literature into Romanian publications in Transylvania, emphasized in 1846 the importance of

“articles describing the Hungarians, when there is a dire need to know them better if, for no other reason, good neighborliness and co-habitation.”<sup>12</sup>

The existence of this benign horizon of expectation in imagological relations between Romanians and Hungarians (which was to be shattered in 1848) is highlighted by two important Romanian texts from the first half of the nineteenth century: the travel notes written by the Wallachian boyar Dinicu Golescu (1826), and by a petty noble from Făgăraș, Ion Codru Drăgușanu (1835–1844, published in 1865). Travel accounts are precious sources for imagological study, because they reveal not only what travelers see on their journeys, but also the prejudices and stereotypes they encounter on the road, the images of the Other that permeate their cultural environment.

Dinicu Golescu was driven by unqualified admiration for “enlightened Europe,” which he depicted in contrast to the backwardness of his country. Passing through Transylvania, he wrote almost nothing about the Romanians there and portrayed the Hungarians in positive tones. In Cluj,

there are many Hungarian gentlemen, of noble origins (...). This nation is very fond of foreigners, their suppers are lavish and welcoming, and they gladly receive those who boldly enter their homes, for they are not too impressed with excessive and bogus politics [politeness]; and the Hungarian masses are not happy. They are poorly dressed, they have bad dwellings and not much wealth.<sup>13</sup>

The Romanian traveler appreciated his companions, the Hungarian nobles. From the perspective of the boyar, who had been raised in the atmosphere of Oriental intrigues, these nobles behaved more naturally, regardless of their rank. Golescu obviously pitied the poor people by virtue of demophilic nature, but he did not seem at all interested in the fact that there were Romanian peasants living in “Sibenbirgen” [Transylvania]. Moreover, even if in Transylvania the peasants had to work up to 200 days a year for their masters, and in Wallachia only 12, “they are nevertheless happier than our Romanians,” because the latter are burdened with excessive financial taxes. In other words, people fared better in the Hungarians’ country than in his. This finding was in tune with Golescu’s overall vision, which insistently underlined the discrepancies between his country and the happier and more enlightened lands to the West. Transylvania and Hungary were already part of this world that was inspiring for the Romanians.

The Hungarian steppe, which impressed him with its immensity, offered him the opportunity for another comparison that was unfavorable to the Romanians: “All these fields are sown with wheat, oats and corn, and hay orchards. Such a place, if it were in our country, would it not only not be sown, but people would flee from it as from the direst enemy. And yet, the crops of Hungary also feed other countries.”<sup>14</sup> As ironic and hurtful these comments may have been, the goal of these parallelisms was not to denigrate his Romanian compatriots. On the contrary, Golescu tried to mobilize his countrymen, setting examples for them to follow, as he discovered them on the Hungarian plains.

<sup>12</sup> Popa 1998, 25.

<sup>13</sup> Golescu 1826, 20–21.

<sup>14</sup> Golescu 1826, 81.

The Wallachian boyar was also the first Romanian pleasantly impressed by Buda and Pest, which he praised especially for their cultural institutions (the most important thing for an enlightenment intellectual), but also for the leadership's qualities, the beautiful city by the Danube and the character of the inhabitants, whom he considered to be "very gentle," like the Viennese. Beyond the various appreciations, some echoed by other travelers who passed through these places in the next two centuries, the Hungarian capital was seen as an outpost of Western civilization. It was a zone of first contact with the longed-for wonders of the West, at least in the eyes of those Romanians who did not mentally teleport themselves directly to Paris or Berlin, but entered Europe through this Hungarian gate.

If Golescu was a naive and unconditional admirer of Europe and, implicitly, of its Hungarian antechamber, Ion Codru Drăgușanu offers us some of the most nuanced and intelligent pages dedicated to Hungarians ever written by a Romanian. Obviously, he was a Transylvanian Romanian, who was familiar with the languages and the vagaries of the Transylvanian peoples.

Codru Drăgușanu liked to make comparisons through whose filter he passed all the nations of Europe. Comparison was the privileged instrument that could relativize prejudices and clichés. When someone claimed that Romanians were hospitable and oppressed or that Hungarians were abusive and smug, there was nothing more to say in the face of such apodictic findings of national uniqueness. But if you were willing to compare such qualities and defects of your own nation and of others, putting them side by side, examining them with a critical spirit, but also with humor, you could get a more complex, nuanced and relativizing picture, which could tone down hostility towards the other.

This is what the "Transylvanian Pilgrim" managed to do in a way that is all the more surprising since his account dates from the middle of the nineteenth century and was published after the revolution of 1848. But precisely because he lived at a historical watershed, Codru Drăgușanu was culturally astute and managed to avoid the many *parti-pris* of those tumultuous years. He lived in a romantic and liberal world, in which national rivalries flourished, which he knew and understood intimately. He also inherited the tolerance and cosmopolitan spirit of the Enlightenment, which had a strong tradition in Central Europe. He even shared some conservative ideas, which helped him to grasp the difficult truths of an era that aspired to put the world onto the path of progressive ideological certainties. In today's polarized world, he probably would not have gotten along with anyone.

The first feature Codru Drăgușanu attributed to the Magyars was arrogance. As I mentioned before, this stereotype defined them not only in the Romanians' eyes, but in the entire European imaginary. Hungarian pride was considered a personal trait of individuals, but also a national characteristic. The traveler quotes two expressions that illustrate this (in Latin and in Hungarian) and are used by the Hungarians themselves: *Extra Hungariam non est vita,/ Si est vita, non est ita* ("Outside Hungary there is no living at all,/ And if there is, it is not the same") and *Gyere rózsám Enyedre/ Ott a világ közepe!* ("To Aiud, come on, my flower,/ that is the world's navel!").

In one place, Hungarian pride is singularized in relation to the Romanians: "and the Hungarians of the steppes, even when barefoot, they wear such rattling spurs that they make you nauseous just to look at them, which you can't see among the Romanians,

however squalid they may be.”<sup>15</sup> In other passages, however, the aforementioned national sin of the Hungarians is relativized precisely by comparison with the Romanians. Yes, it is true; Hungarians overstate their achievements and national features. But do Romanians do it differently? And this finding is revealed to him in northern Italy, a space that does not need the eulogies of its own inhabitants, as is the case with the two peoples, joined by their similar complexes: “While the Bucharest people sing ‘Dâmbovița, fresh water’ and the Hungarians ‘Extra Hungariam,’ the Italians can keep silent. The former need to praise their countries for their good parts, but you can’t help getting convinced of the contrary every other minute, while here Italy speaks for itself.”<sup>16</sup> In this regard, the similarities between the two countries and peoples are striking:

It resembles Hungary also in that although it is true that Romania as a country has everything, the inhabitants – as the proverb says, “the Gypsy praises his own hammer” – extol its merits above measure. The Romanians say that whoever tastes the Dâmbovița water won’t leave again, the Hungarians say that there is no living outside Hungary, and even if there is, it is not so good.<sup>17</sup>

As we know from Romanian or Hungarian proverbs, the comparison with the Gypsy was the most effective tool of defamation. But in this case it was used to highlight the analogous flaws of the two nations. Placed in such a position, Romanians and Hungarians could no longer be portrayed as two rivals, but, on the contrary, as two associates.

Crossing the steppes on his way to Pest, Dinicu Golescu emphasized the industriousness of the Hungarians, contrasted with the sloppiness of the Romanians. The pilgrim from Făgăraș, who did not suffer from the naive inferiority complexes of the Wallachian boyar, but was no less critical and demanding, thought the same route evoked, on the contrary, the similarities between the two countries:

Apart from the fortresses, there is no great difference between Hungary and Wallachia. The same flatlands as across the Carpathians, the same sunken and badly covered huts as in Romania, everywhere (...). The roads are as God made them with the word; no one, as in Romania, desecrates nature with the labor of his hands.<sup>18</sup>

Leaving aside Codru Drăgușanu’s lack of prejudices, his Transylvanian perspective was distinct from that of the Wallachian boyar. On the one hand, for him, Hungary was not so different from, and therefore not categorically superior to, Transylvania. On the other hand, the vast plains of the two foreign lands, outside his Transylvanian homeland, seemed to him similar enough, in many respects.

The thoughts of the traveler from Făgăraș regarding Hungarians were always nuanced. For example, he considered them an “Asian people,” but while other authors used their Asian origin as a negative label, hinting at the cruelty and despotic character attributed to the Hungarians, for Codru Drăgușanu it merely explained their unusual hospitality.

<sup>15</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 52.

<sup>17</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 49.

<sup>18</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 48.

This trait, also noted by Dinicu Golescu, represented a flaw in Codru Drăgușanu's view, associated with their exuberant and carousing nature. A kind of Latins, we might be tempted to say, even if the traveler did not go so far with the comparison. In front of his Hungarian companions, he made a "panegyric, little deserved, of Romania" – a mandatory gesture, given that he was addressing foreigners. He noted that Hungarians spoke freely in public and that "Hungarian magnates, like Romanian boyars, go to spend their wealth in foreign countries." "The Hungarian tended to be proud, smug about his nobility," he was not interested in the practical aspects of life, trade or industry, but only in political intrigues and the exploitation of his domains with patriarchal methods. Therefore, the Hungarians perfectly resembled our boyars in all these respects, although there was still an important difference, at least in terms of the epoch: "however, recently, they seem to have taken a big step forward and are going to shake off the traditions of the Middle Ages." The example of Count Széchenyi, the enlightened aristocrat who contributed so much to Hungary's progress, was widely invoked.<sup>19</sup>

The conclusion was that the positive example of the Hungarians could give hope that the Romanians would also follow the same path of progress:

If the Hungarians, our neighbors, are beginning to wake up from the long sleep of numbness and are enlivened by reforms, there is good hope that our boyars will not lag far behind, especially if they strive to gain scientific culture, which they lack altogether and with which many Hungarians are endowed (...). In culture, as in nature, you imitate your neighbor rather than one who is faraway, and you keep up more easily with the one who walks slowly than with the one who runs away.<sup>20</sup>

The idea that it was advisable to learn from the Hungarians because they were our neighbors and more like us (so let's not just look at the great models, French or German-impressive, but difficult to catch up with) was one rarely found in Romanian culture, then, as in the two centuries to come.

Putting side by side the problems and profiles of the two nations, by highlighting not their rivalry, but the similarities between them, turned them from enemies into travel companions. Hypothetically, even into comrades-in-arms. The projects of political collaboration between Romanians and Hungarians, launched especially after the revolution by radical emigrants such as Nicolae Bălcescu or Klapka György, went in the same direction.<sup>21</sup>

Wandering throughout Europe, Codru Drăgușanu confessed what feelings bound him to his native Transylvania, which he always called his "homeland." But this was also identified by the presence of Hungarians, whom he called, accordingly, "Hungarian compatriots" or "Transylvanian compatriots." When he thought of home, of his "much longed-for homeland," he thought "of our sister Hungarian nation in Transylvania."<sup>22</sup> Even Hungarians in Hungary were still "compatriots."

<sup>19</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 72–73.

<sup>20</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 73.

<sup>21</sup> See Borsi-Kálmán 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 264.

In France, when he accidentally stepped on a person's foot in the crowd, he was swamped with a flood of ungodly swearing in Hungarian. His reaction was very memorable, typical for encounters of this nature, and evoked henceforth by Transylvanian Romanians feeling nostalgic for their native lands through the surprising medium of the Hungarian language. Scenes of this type ended up being fictionalized. The best-known example is the meeting between Traian Brad and Péter Orbán, from the film *The Baby, the Oil and the Transylvanians* (Dan Pița, 1981).<sup>23</sup> In such circumstances, the ugly and obnoxious Hungarian language detested by Romanian nationalism turned into a familiar and sweet song that filled our eyes with tears, reminding us of home. The twinned reactions accompanying such third-degree encounters were emotional affect but also the humor of the situation, as in this scene the two enemies ended up fraternizing:

Disembarking in Avignon, I chanced to step on the foot of a man who, despite my excuses, would not forbear repeatedly shouting at me *baszama* [the situation makes the translation useless] in a loud voice. Since I hadn't heard for a few years sweet patriotic accents like these, and since I was so far from my homeland and this bout of swearing, it caressed my ears like a charm and I answered back *ebadta* [a slightly more delicate but appropriate reply, in that context], so I was quickly embraced by a purebred Hungarian who thought I was his countryman. After a little explanation in French, for I had finished my Hungarian repertoire, he limited himself to greeting me as his compatriot; and so did I. Then we talked a little in German, for he came from Pest, and we grew ardently patriotic while we spent time together.<sup>24</sup>

What Codru Drăgușanu also thought was funny was a time when, in Saint Petersburg, in order to find a convenient job, he pretended to be "a literate Hungarian lad." To make his dissimulation even more believable, he wore an impressive moustache, an identification stereotype for Hungarians. As a rule, the suppression of national identity and "Magyarization," even to this limited extent, could be experienced as a burdensome maneuver by the conscience of a Transylvanian Romanian who was driven by national feelings. But the wayfarer was a free spirit, and his national convictions did not compel him to disavow the Hungarians. On the contrary, he concluded his account of the Russian incident in a relaxed and humorous way: "Considering how successful I was thanks to my borrowed nationality, let me greet you once in Hungarian: *Isten áldjon meg!* [God bless you!]"<sup>25</sup>

Just as the "Era of Good Feelings" reigned in the US politics of these years, the traditions of Enlightenment philosophy shaped an era of good feelings for the Romanians who wrote about Hungarians on the eve of the revolution of 1848, which was noticeable at a discursive level. This view drew its sap from the most general principles of the time but was also supported by the secular practice of cohabitation, which demanded that even the communities that had set each other on fire in 1784 should renounce the temptation to annihilate each other. After all, these peoples had to live together, especially since the age was promising to be an enlightened one.

<sup>23</sup> I evoked a similar scene, involving my grandfather, in my book entitled *De la Burebista la Iohannis*, Mitu 2017, 29.

<sup>24</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 48.

<sup>25</sup> Codru Drăgușanu 1923, 219–220.

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## CULTURAL GOODS RELATED TO THE CULT OF POET SÁNDOR PETŐFI FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TRANSYLVANIAN HISTORY

MELINDA MITU\*

**Abstract:** The study aims to present several cultural goods from the patrimony of the National Museum of Transylvanian History (Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei – MNIT) that reflect the cult of poet Sándor Petőfi among Hungarians during the nineteenth century. Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849) is one of the most representative poets of Hungarian literature and one of the most important personalities of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848–1849. Almost all the objects presented throughout this paper, and nowadays included in MNIT's patrimony, pertained to the collections of two museums that had functioned in Cluj during the nineteenth century: the Transylvanian National Museum (Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum) and the Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution (1848–49. Országos Történelmi és Ereklye-Múzeum). The present paper was elaborated on the occasion of celebrating 200 years since the birth of Sándor Petőfi, an event marked by MNIT through the organization of two temporary exhibitions.

**Keywords:** hero cult, Sándor Petőfi, Transylvanian Museum Society, Transylvanian National Museum, Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution

**Rezumat:** În lucrarea de față ne propunem să prezentăm câteva bunuri culturale din patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei care reflectă cultul poetului Sándor Petőfi în rândul maghiarilor din secolul al XIX-lea. Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849) este unul dintre cei mai reprezentativi poeți ai literaturii maghiare și una dintre cele mai importante personalități ale revoluției maghiare din 1848–1849. Aproape toate bunurile prezentate în cuprinsul acestei lucrări, și aflate astăzi în patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, provin din colecțiile a două muzee care au funcționat în Cluj în secolul al XIX-lea: Muzeul Național Ardelean (Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum) și Muzeul de Relicve ale Revoluției de la 1848–49 (1848–49. Országos Történelmi és Ereklye-Múzeum). Lucrarea de față a fost elaborată în contextul împlinirii a două sute de ani de la nașterea lui Sándor Petőfi, eveniment marcat de către Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei prin organizarea a două expoziții temporare.

**Cuvinte cheie:** cultul eroilor, Sándor Petőfi, Societatea Muzeului Ardelean, Muzeul Național Ardelean, Muzeul de Relicve ale Revoluției de la 1848–49

The year 2023 marked the anniversary of 200 years since the birth of Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849), one of the most important poets in Hungarian literature. The event was also commemorated by the National Museum of Transylvanian History (Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, hereafter MNIT) through two temporary exhibitions,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The first exhibition, titled *Memoria lui Petőfi și relicvele revoluției și luptei de eliberare maghiare din 1848–49* [The Memory of Petőfi and the Relics of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence in

which presented cultural goods from the museum's patrimony that are related to Petőfi's personality and to his cult among nineteenth-century Hungarians.

Sándor Petőfi was an outstanding figure given his activity as a man of letters and publicist, as well as his participation in the 1848–1849 Hungarian revolution. He left posterity a particularly rich literary work, which includes approximately one thousand poems, as well as “nine ballads and stories in verses (...), one drama, one novel, six short stories, an interesting volume of travel notes and a remarkable activity as a publicist.”<sup>2</sup> Petőfi's poetry “is characterized by realism, humor, and descriptive power and imbued with a peculiar vigor. He introduced a direct, unpretentious style and a clear, unornamented construction adapted from national folk songs. This simplicity was the more arresting as it was used to reveal subtle emotions and political or philosophical ideas.”<sup>3</sup> The translation of his poetry began during his lifetime, in 1845, and until his death, which occurred in 1849, a few hundred poems had already been translated into several foreign languages, particularly German.<sup>4</sup>

In Hungarian culture, historiography mostly retained the historical role played by the poet during the revolution. In the spring of 1848, Petőfi was the leader of the “young men of March,”<sup>5</sup> that is to say “those students, writers, poets, and actors that were part of the Circle of Opposition [*Ellenzéki Kör*] or who regularly met at the Pilvax Coffee House” in Pest, militating in favor of large scale social and political reforms, such as the abolishment of feudal privileges and serfdom.<sup>6</sup>

On 15 March 1848, Petőfi became one of the main leaders of the popular movement from Pest, “his plebeian radicalism and republicanism transforming him into the most consistent representative of revolutionary ideas.”<sup>7</sup> Later, in the autumn of 1848, the peril that threatened Hungary's national independence after the military conflict with the House of Habsburg made him enroll as a member of the revolutionary troops. At first, he was a training officer at Debrecen, but in January 1849 he joined the Hungarian army from Transylvania led by Polish General Joseph Bem<sup>8</sup> and he died in the battle of Sighișoara on 31 July 1849.

After the Hungarian revolution was defeated, Sándor Petőfi became a significant symbol of Hungarian historical memory, one of the nation's most celebrated heroes. Early

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1848–49], was organized by MNIT in collaboration with the Liszt Institute – Hungarian Cultural Center and the Székely National Museum in Sfântu Gheorghe (14 March–10 June 2023) and at the Museum of the Reformed Church District of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca (14 August–29 September 2023). The second exhibition, *Bunuri culturale legate de cultul poetului Petőfi Sándor în colecțiile Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei* [Cultural Goods Related to the Cult of Poet Sándor Petőfi from the Collections of the National Museum of Transylvanian History], was organized at the MNIT, in August–September 2023, as part of the fourteenth edition of the Hungarian Cultural Days (*Kolozsvári Magyar Napok*).

<sup>2</sup> See Lőrinczi, Majtényi, Szász 1966, 8.

<sup>3</sup> “Sándor Petőfi”/ Encyclopedia Britannica.

<sup>4</sup> See Kenyeres 1982, entry *Petőfi Sándor*. Numerous poems written by Petőfi were also translated into Romanian by Eugen Jebeleanu; see Lőrinczi, Majtényi, Szász 1966, 9–152.

<sup>5</sup> Kalla 2000, 84.

<sup>6</sup> See Pintér 2000, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Simon 1988, 143. For Sándor Petőfi's political convictions and public activity before and after the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849, see also Ratzky 2000, 71–79 and Kalla 2000, 79–101.

<sup>8</sup> Simon 1988, 143. For all these details, see also Dávid, Mikó 1972, 153–300; Fekete 1977, 144–202.

on, his personality has been evoked as part of all the commemorations of the revolution of 1848–1849, a national holiday for Hungarians worldwide.

Alongside Lajos Kossuth, one of the spiritual leaders of the revolution, Sándor Petőfi was its most popular hero. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, the public cult surrounding him retained for posterity a myriad of Petőfi memorial sites: various residences in which he lived or merely lodged, places he passed through, even trees said to have provided shadow to the poet for a moment or for the duration of writing a poem.<sup>9</sup>

Nineteenth-century Hungarian intellectuals consistently sought to preserve and pass on the poet's memory. The literati, for example, took care of constantly editing and reprinting Petőfi's works. In 1876, the Petőfi Society (Petőfi Társaság) was founded, headed by Mór Jókai, the most important novelist of the time and one of Petőfi's best friends. The Society aimed to popularize the poet's life and work and to collect cultural and artistic goods, as well as manuscripts that belonged to Petőfi or were related to his personality.

In 1909, the Petőfi Society opened a Petőfi House in Budapest in order to house the three thousand memorial objects which belonged to the poet or to other members of the Petőfi family,<sup>10</sup> as well as to some of the poet's friends,<sup>11</sup> and that had already been collected in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Among these goods one notes some of Petőfi's manuscript poems, as well as numerous first editions of his works, the poet's personal library, and his correspondence. The Petőfi collection also included a whole series of representations of Petőfi in paintings, engravings, drawings, or statues, made by established Hungarian artists of the time, and also various personal items, such as pieces of clothing, pipes, his chessboard, pieces of furniture, and decorative objects from his dwellings in Pest. Today most of these possessions are part of the Petőfi Literary Museum (Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum),<sup>13</sup> founded in 1954 as a continuation of the Petőfi House. Other cultural objects of the same sort have found their way, for example, into the manuscript collections of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia) and of the Széchényi National Library (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár), into the patrimony of the Hungarian National Museum (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) and of the Museum of Military History (Hadtörténeti Múzeum) in Budapest, as well as in many other museums, church collections, or memorial sites in historical Hungary.<sup>14</sup>

Petőfi's cult was perpetuated into the twentieth century under all political regimes, both in the interwar period and during the Communist rule. Numerous works have been written about the poet's life and work, both scholarly contributions of history or literary history, but also novelized biographies, short stories, novels, plays, movies, and

<sup>9</sup> See Ortutay 1981, entry *Petőfi Sándor*.

<sup>10</sup> Some cultural goods from this collection belonged to Petőfi's parents, as well as to his wife (Júlia Szendrey), son (Zoltán Petőfi) or younger brother (István Petőfi).

<sup>11</sup> Objects that were given to them by Petőfi himself or used by the poet when he visited them, as were, for example, the cultural assets preserved by János Arany, Mór Jókai, Sándor Teleki, Gábor Egressy, Pál Gyulai or others.

<sup>12</sup> See Benkő, Kalla 2000, 13–14.

<sup>13</sup> For all these details and for the most important Petőfi-relics in the collections of the Petőfi Literary Museum: Benkő, Kalla 2000, 14–15; Kalla 2006; or, for instance, "200 Petőfi szabadon"/ PIM (one of the virtual catalogs of the said museum).

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Kalla, Ratzky 2006<sup>2</sup>, in which more than 240 relics related to the Petőfi family, owned by various institutions, are presented.

documentaries. Since the 1920s, numerous adaptations of his literary works have also been made for theatre, cinema, and even for puppet theatres.<sup>15</sup>

Sándor Petőfi became an emblematic figure for 15 March and his cult lives on to this day, according to Krisztián Nyáry, one of Hungary's most well-known contemporary literary historians. Petőfi is not only an object of study in school, but also “a brand, a public treasure of all Hungarians.” His cult “in fact embodies the Hungarian Poet,” and there has been no ideological, political, or cultural trend in Hungary that has not claimed him. According to Nyáry, the fascination exerted by the poet's work is also caused by its diversity, which means that anyone can find something to relate to and identify with in Petőfi's poems and/or personality. His cult functioned just as well during the age of Austro-Hungarian Compromise as it did during the socialist period, with Petőfi being glorified as a revolutionary or a people's poet and becoming an important part of the Hungarian collective memory and identity.<sup>16</sup>

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As we have seen so far, one of the ways in which posterity strove to keep the poet's memory alive has been to collect – through various associations or museums – objects that either belonged to Petőfi personally or were linked to his cult, created for paying homage to him. In Hungary, the most important institutions of this kind were those in Budapest, the Petőfi House (today's Petőfi Literary Museum) and the Hungarian National Museum.

Hungarians of Transylvania – the land where the poet fought and died on the battlefield – have been active in commemorating Petőfi in their own institutions. This explains why some memorial objects related to Petőfi ended up in the patrimony of museums in Cluj, such as the Transylvanian National Museum (Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum), which was the museum of the Transylvanian Museum Society (the latter founded in 1859), and the Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution (1848–49. Országos Történelmi és Ereklye-Múzeum), founded in 1892.

One of the most representative categories of cultural goods related to Petőfi's cult from the collections of these two museums in Cluj consists of nineteenth-century **graphic works** portraying him.

Petőfi was immortalized during his lifetime in the works of important artists of the time, such as Miklós Barabás and Soma Orlai Petrich.<sup>17</sup>

As for the portraits created after Petőfi's death, they began to appear only some years after the revolution, due to the political repression of the early years of the Neoabsolutist era: “given that after the war of independence the Austrian government banned the dissemination of pictures of former 1848–1849 fighters, and that Petőfi was sought by the authorities until around 1854, the press began to publish more portraits of him only from the second half of the 1850s onward.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For details, see Kenyeres 1982, entry *Petőfi Sándor*. See also Várady, Berey 1934, column 396.

<sup>16</sup> See Nyáry 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Such lithographs or paintings are currently owned by important Hungarian museums from Budapest, such as the Hungarian National Museum or the Petőfi Literary Museum. For these aspects, see Rózsa 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Owaimer 2022, 98.

According to Oliver Owaimer, author of a recent study focusing on Petőfi's image in Hungarian artistic works from the second half of the nineteenth century, "one of the most valuable and beloved representations of Petőfi from the 1850s' was the painting by Soma Orlai Petrich (1822–1880), entitled *Petőfi in Debrecen, in 1844*. It was an oil painting on canvas (size 147 × 111.5 cm), made for the exhibition of the Artists' Association of Pest (Pesti Műegylet) from June–July 1857."<sup>19</sup> In the same year, the Hungarian painter and graphic artist József Molnár (1821–1899) produced a lithograph after Orlai's work, a copy of which was also available in the collections of the Transylvanian National Museum (Fig. 1).

In choosing the subject for the painting *Petőfi in Debrecen, in 1844* Soma Orlai Petrich was inspired by a dramatic moment in Petőfi's life. In the winter of 1843–1844, the Hungarian poet was an actor in a theatre troupe performing in Debrecen and the surrounding region, a period about which Mór Jókai wrote the following: "the journeys through the villages made him ill, and he had to sell his clothes and change them for worse ones."<sup>20</sup>

According to the Hungarian poet's biographers, in Debrecen he lived and worked "in an unheated room, wrapped in his coat, hungry," yet managing to copy "about a notebook" full of the poems he had written until then.<sup>21</sup> Orlai's Romantic painting sought to capture these dramatic circumstances in the poet's life, and the painter also used the first two verses of the poem *I Was Unhappy...* ("I have been unhappy/ All my life"), which can be seen on the sheet of paper placed in front of his character.

With his poems and borrowed money, Petőfi set off on foot on a week-long journey to Pest, weakened by illness and hunger. Three years later, when he had already become an established poet, Petőfi recalled his journey in February 1844: "All my hopes were in this volume of poems; I thought: if I can sell them, it is good, if not, it is good as well... for then I will either starve or freeze and all of my sufferings will be over."<sup>22</sup>

Fortunately for him, in 1844, in Pest, the poet's destiny took a favorable turn. On the recommendation of poet Mihály Vörösmarty and with the support of the reform-minded bourgeoisie and intelligentsia grouped in the National Circle (*A Nemzeti Kör*), Petőfi published his first successful volume. Again with Vörösmarty's help, the poet managed to find a job and on 1 July 1844 he became a part of the editorial team of the magazine *Pesti Divatlap*, edited by Imre Vahot.<sup>23</sup> "In addition to – or rather *during* – his demanding editorial activity, Petőfi began to pour out poems,"<sup>24</sup> soon becoming "one of the most popular Hungarian poets" of his time.<sup>25</sup>

This was the biographical context that occasioned the creation of Orlai's painting and which became part of the legend dedicated to the poet. The popularity of this episode transformed this canvas into the model for József Molnár's lithograph, published by Alajos Rohn in Pest and later reproduced as a supplement to the daily *Hölgyfutár* in 1858.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Owaimer 2022, 82–83. Currently, the painting is owned by the Petőfi Literary Museum of Budapest.

<sup>20</sup> See Jókai 1907.

<sup>21</sup> Fekete 1977, 81. See also Dávid, Mikó 1972, 6–11.

<sup>22</sup> After Fekete 1977, 81–82.

<sup>23</sup> Fekete 1977, 83–85. See also Ratzky 2000, 73.

<sup>24</sup> Fekete 1977, 86.

<sup>25</sup> Supplement of *Pesti Divatlap*, no. 14, 3 July 1849, after Rózsa 2000, 104.

<sup>26</sup> Owaimer 2022, 86.

Among those who commissioned the magazine containing Petőfi's lithograph were influential Hungarian personalities, such as István Széchenyi and Júlia Szendrey, Petőfi's widow. She gave her lithograph to Zoltán, their 10-year-old son.<sup>27</sup>

A copy of József Molnár's lithograph was included in the Collection of Books and Manuscripts of the Transylvanian Museum Society. Later, in 1903, it was transferred to the Society's Numismatic and Antiquities Collection, along with other valuable engravings with historical and literary subjects.<sup>28</sup>

Through a similar path, the Numismatic and Antiquities Collection of the Transylvanian Museum Society also came to include a typographical reproduction produced on the occasion of commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848–1849, entitled “15 March 1848.” *Celebration of the half-century of the People's Freedom 1898* (Fig. 2).<sup>29</sup> It was based on a painting by the painter and graphic artist Árpád Cserépy (1859–1907), a lesser-known Hungarian artist, but whose valuable works are preserved mainly in the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest.<sup>30</sup>

Cserépy's work is an allegorical historical composition, reminiscent of Eugène Delacroix's famous painting *Liberty Leading the People*. In Cserépy's painting as well, an allegorical female figure embodying Liberty is placed in the center. At her feet one notes the figure of a peasant, cutting his chains of slavery with a sword. In the background, on the right and left sides of the image, the most important heroes of the revolution, Lajos Kossuth and Sándor Petőfi, are delivering speeches designed to inspire the revolutionary crowd. As in Delacroix's painting, the latter comprises representatives of all social classes, townspeople, soldiers, and peasants.

Petőfi is shown in front of the Hungarian National Museum, where he addressed the crowd on 15 March 1848, the day of the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution in Pest, and, according to tradition, he recited the *National Song* (*Nemzeti dal*). The sheets of paper spread out in the lower part of the work, on which lines of the aforementioned poem and the “12 points” of the Hungarian revolutionary program are reproduced, are intended to complete the story of 15 March 1848 in the Hungarian capital.

In a similar vein, the figure of Petőfi could not be missing from the illustration of the so-called *Honvéd*<sup>31</sup> *commemorative sheets* (*Honvéd Emléklap*), graphic works that conveyed the Hungarian revolutionary symbols. The commemorative sheets were a kind of certificates awarded in the 1870s to veteran Honvéd, former fighters in the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849, now reunited in associations that sought moral recognition of their merits and the veterans' material aid. The illustration of the commemorative sheets<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Owaimer 2022, 86.

<sup>28</sup> ENM Registers, vol. I, no. I.3463, currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 5389.

<sup>29</sup> ENM Registers, vol. I, no. I.3763, currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 5505.

<sup>30</sup> For information about Árpád Cserépy, see Kenyeres 1967, entry *Cserépy Árpád*.

<sup>31</sup> In 1848–1849, *Honvéd* (literally: “Defender of the Homeland”) was the name given to members of the Hungarian land forces.

<sup>32</sup> For the identification of personalities mentioned in the commemorative sheets and for other aspects related to these documents, I would like to thank Ph.D. Gyula Kedves, one of the researchers of the history of the 1848–1849 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, former director of the Museum of Military History, scientific consultant of the Museum of the Hungarian Parliament (*Országgyűlési Múzeum*) of Budapest.

included patriotic themes, given that the political climate of Dualistic Hungary allowed for their uncensored rendering.

In the top right corner, in the border, there is a lithograph of the recapture of Buda (21 May 1849), the greatest success of the Hungarian Honvéds in their campaign from the spring of 1849. The central figures in the picture are Sándor Petőfi and Lajos Batthyány, Prime Minister of the first Hungarian revolutionary government of 1848–1849 and a hero of the Hungarian independence struggle, executed by the Austrian authorities in Pest on 6 October 1849, in the same day as the thirteen revolutionary generals were executed in Arad.

Batthyány's cult was not as important as those of Sándor Petőfi or Lajos Kossuth. But Kossuth could not be included in this illustration as a leading hero because, after the revolution's defeat, he remained for the rest of his life, which he spent in emigration, a staunch opponent of Hungarian-Austrian reconciliation. However, his role as a political leader of the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849 could not be ignored. As a result, Kossuth still appears in the illustration of the commemorative sheets, but he is depicted in the background, at the head of the animated crowd comprising soldiers and commoners, Hussars from the Prince of Coburg's regiment, who had returned from Slovakia at Kossuth's first "call," artillerymen, soldiers from the lightweight troops, and peasants, an assembly that symbolized the complete social cohesion of the participants in the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849.<sup>33</sup>

Sándor Petőfi is represented next to Lajos Batthyány, also in the foreground of the illustration. Batthyány's association with Petőfi was somewhat paradoxical since, especially at the beginning of the revolution, Petőfi, who was a radical, had expressed his dissatisfaction with the members of the first independent Hungarian government, whom he accused of being too moderate in their dealings with the Viennese court. But in the cult of the 1848–1849 revolution these political differences were avoided, and Petőfi and Batthyány were represented together as a symbol of revolutionary unity. Near Batthyány and Petőfi, in the back row, other military leaders of the Hungarian revolution can be seen, namely Generals János Damjanich, Mór Perczel, Joseph Bem, and György Klapka.

MNIT holds two such commemorative sheets that served as certificates. One comes from the collections of the Transylvanian National Museum and belonged to Sámuel Szabó, a Honvéd lieutenant;<sup>34</sup> the other, from the collections of the Museum of Relics, was given to József Ornstein, a Honvéd artillery major (Fig. 3).<sup>35</sup> The owners and donors of these documents were two Transylvanian intellectuals of the time: Sámuel Szabó,<sup>36</sup> historian and professor at the Reformed College in Cluj, and Major József Ornstein<sup>37</sup> from Gherla, who made significant contributions to research on the history of the Roman era in Transylvania. He published numerous studies in specialized Austrian and Hungarian journals, such as *Archaeológiai Értesítő*, and corresponded with Károly Torma, a well-known Transylvanian archaeologist.

<sup>33</sup> For the unfolding of the events related to the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849, see, for example, Kedves 1999, 7–33.

<sup>34</sup> ENM Registers, vol. II, no. I.5165, currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 5375.

<sup>35</sup> Currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 7274.

<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, Szinnyei 1909, entry *Szabó Sámuel (bágyoni)*.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Szinnyei 1903, entry *Ornstein József*.

Another printed document included in MNIT's patrimony and representing Petőfi is an illustrated postcard (Figure 4).<sup>38</sup> It reproduces another portrait of the poet by Soma Orlai Petrich, the author of the painting *Petőfi in Debrecen, in 1844*, which I have described above. The famous Hungarian painter produced several paintings depicting the poet or his parents. His interest in the Petőfi family can also be explained by the fact that he was related to them and had a close friendship with Sándor from their years together at the Reformed College in Pápa (Hungary).

The painting on the illustrated postcard is entitled *Petőfi's Bust, 1848* and Orlai noted the following about it: "I began to paint this life-size bust of Petőfi in the summer of 1848, but because of the movements at the time, Petőfi left Pest in a hurry and the work remained unfinished. In this state I still hold it today, and although it betrays the technical shortcomings of the beginner, nevertheless, because of Petőfi's faithful depiction, it could serve as a model for a good portrait."<sup>39</sup>

This painting was also lithographed by József Marastoni (1834–1895) in 1875 and then typographically reproduced. The illustrated postcard from our museum's collection was published by the Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania (Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület). We have no information about the year of publication, but it probably took place on the occasion of a commemorative event of the 1848–1849 revolution, which is suggested by the fact that it is part of a series of postcards reproducing other portraits of 1848–1849 revolutionaries such as Joseph Bem, Lajos Kossuth, Áron Gábor, and Nicolae Bălcescu.

Among the graphic materials in the collections of the MNIT related to Petőfi's memory there is also a phototype<sup>40</sup> by Károly Divald (1830–1897), based on a copper engraving of the poet's birth house<sup>41</sup> in Kiskőrös (Hungary) (Fig. 5). Divald was a well-known photographer of his time, founder of the first Hungarian institute of phototypography in 1878 in Eperjes (now Prešov, Slovakia), which later moved to Budapest. Divald's work is undated, but we believe it was made for an anniversary event related to Petőfi.

In fact, Sándor Petőfi's birth house in Kiskőrös was bought by the Society of Hungarian Writers and Artists on 24 May 1878 and was later turned into a memorial house and museum, opened to the public on 17 October 1880.<sup>42</sup>

Other museum goods that conveyed Petőfi's image are the epoch's **commemorative medals**. Eight such objects can be found in the MNIT's old collections pertaining to the Transylvanian National Museum.<sup>43</sup> Of these, seven are almost identical, made of bronze and bearing the same representations; two of these also have attached to them small

<sup>38</sup> Currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 12380.

<sup>39</sup> After Rózsa 2000, 114. On this painting, see also Basics 1999, 57.

<sup>40</sup> Phototypography represents "a procedure through which reproductions similar in aspect to photographs can be made, with the help of a cliché formed of a thin layer of bichromatic gelatin, laid on a copper plaque" (DEX 1998<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>41</sup> Currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 5414.

<sup>42</sup> About Petőfi Sándor's birth house in Kiskőrös, see Jókai [1880]; Benkő, Kalla 2000, 13; "Petőfi-kultusz"/Petőfi Múzeum.

<sup>43</sup> We are referring to the medals: Colecția MNIT, nos. N 52278, N 56626–N 56631, and N 57038. I would like to use this opportunity as well to thank my colleague Ágnes Alföldy-Găzdac, curator of the MNIT Numismatic Collection, for the medals' identification and their photographs.

ribbons in the colors of the Hungarian national flag. On the obverse of the medals one notes the effigies of Sándor Petőfi and Joseph Bem in a pearlescent field, and on the reverse – framed by a wreath of oak leaves and stylized flowers (probably tulips) – the inscription: “Commemorative medal 15 March 1899.” The dates engraved on the medals show that they were issued on the occasion of the semicentennial of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848–1849 and the death of Sándor Petőfi.

The joining of Joseph Bem and Sándor Petőfi on objects commemorating the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 gave rise to one of the most popular symbols of the event. Hungarian historical memory has always seen the two 1848–1849 heroes as figures situated above all controversy, who fought most selflessly for the revolutionary ideals.<sup>44</sup>

The friendly relationship between Bem and Petőfi was an essential element of the former Hungarian revolutionary legend. Petőfi was impressed by Bem’s military talents, so he asked to fight alongside him. The “old” Polish general (who was 55 years old in 1849) also loved Sándor like a son (often addressing him as *mon fils*),<sup>45</sup> and cherished both his revolutionary zeal and the Hungarian bard’s poems, which he read in French translation.<sup>46</sup> During his military campaign in Transylvania (December 1848–August 1849), which Petőfi joined in January 1849, Joseph Bem tried to protect Petőfi by keeping him away from the battlefield and entrusting him with numerous courier missions to government offices.<sup>47</sup>

A telling account of the relationship between the Bem and Petőfi belongs to actor Gábor Egressy, Petőfi’s friend and comrade-in-arms in the summer of 1849. He wrote that “Petőfi’s idol is Bem, filling his whole soul. The two are bound by the most affectionate father-son relationship, although Bem is an aristocrat and monarchist and Sándor a democrat and republican, which they acknowledge to each other. [...] Bem loved Petőfi as a poet of the people and, after appointing him a major and pinning the third-rank military order on his chest, sent him home to his lyre, where, in Bem’s opinion, the nation needs him more than in the military camp.”<sup>48</sup>

One of the medals<sup>49</sup> commemorates another important event related to the memory of the Hungarian poet. It is a silver medal with a small ribbon in the colors of the Hungarian national flag issued on the occasion of the unveiling of the first public statue dedicated to Sándor Petőfi in Budapest (Fig. 6).<sup>50</sup> The obverse of the medal bears an engraved image of the statue and the inscription, in Hungarian, “Sándor Petőfi commemorative medal,” while the reverse shows Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, holding a quill and (in this case) a book, framed by the last two lines of a poem by Petőfi entitled *Jövendölés (Prophecy)*: “The glorious name of your poet son/ Will survive forever and ever!”<sup>51</sup> The choice of the quotation highlighted the poet’s importance in the Hungarian national culture and, at the

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Fekete 1977, 180–202.

<sup>45</sup> After Dávid, Mikó 1972, 249; Fekete 1977, 197.

<sup>46</sup> For information on Josef Bem and Sándor Petőfi during the 1849 Transylvanian campaign, see: Dávid, Mikó 1972, 169–297; Fekete 1977, 182–190, 197.

<sup>47</sup> Fekete 1977, 183. About Bem’s campaign in Transylvania, see also Szabó 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted from Gábor Egressy, *Törökországi napló* (Pest 1851), after Dávid, Mikó 1972, 245.

<sup>49</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. N 57038.

<sup>50</sup> The medal was probably made by Bernát Rumbold, a coat of arms painter from Budapest. See the article *Petőfi-érem* [Petőfi Medal], in *Vasárnapi Ujság* 1882, 673.

<sup>51</sup> Petőfi 1843.

same time, also confirmed Petőfi's "prophecy." What seemed to be just the desire of a young man at the beginning of his life and career in 1843, the year in which he wrote these verses, became a fulfilled dream in 1882, when his statue was unveiled.

The unveiling of the first statue of Sándor Petőfi in Budapest was an event of significant political and cultural impact in Hungary at that time. It was possible only after 1867, when the Hungarian political regime was liberalized due to the establishment of the Dual Monarchy. It was only then that the use of national symbols and the organization of Hungarian national holidays became possible. In this context, the cult of national heroes also had a special place and they were honored in various ways.

The plans to build statues of great personalities of recent Hungarian history, such as József Eötvös, István Széchenyi, and Sándor Petőfi, took shape in this favorable context. The idea for a statue of Petőfi came from famous violinist Ede Reményi, himself a former 1848–1849 fighter who, after the defeat of the revolution, lived in emigration, touring several Western countries and becoming the favorite violinist of Queen Victoria of Great Britain. After his amnesty in 1860, Reményi returned to Hungary and became actively involved in the artistic life of the Hungarian capital. It was he who initiated the public donation for Petőfi's statue, contributing a large sum of money raised during a concert tour.<sup>52</sup>

The statue was unveiled on 15 October 1882 in the square that would bear the poet's name. The statue's grey granite plinth was designed by Miklós Ybl, an architect with many outstanding works in the Hungarian capital. The bronze-cast statue was based on the plans of sculptors Miklós Izsó and Adolf Huszár.<sup>53</sup>

The unveiling of the statue was part of an extraordinary celebration. The streets and squares – in particular Petőfi Square and the Palace of the Academy – were adorned with flags, and the ceremonial meeting of the committee responsible for erecting the statue was held in the festive hall of the Palace of the Academy. The meeting was attended by the Mayor of Budapest, Károly Ráth, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, novelist Mór Jókai, who also gave the festive speech, Prime Minister Kálmán Tisza, members of the government, the Bishop of Kassa, numerous generals, as well as by delegates from the counties, from various cities, and the capital, and representatives of Hungarian literary institutes, associations, and societies. On the day of the unveiling, more than one hundred wreaths of flowers were laid on the monument's pedestal. They belonged especially to those political, administrative, and cultural personalities or entities that made important financial contributions to the statue's construction.<sup>54</sup> The press of the time also drew attention toward a wreath of flowers with a ribbon bearing a text in French, "which is rumored to have been ordered by *Queen Elizabeth of Romania*, who, as a poet (Carmen Sylva), is a great admirer of Petőfi."<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> About Ede Reményi, see Ujvári 1929, entry *Reményi Ede*.

<sup>53</sup> For Petőfi Sándor's statue, see Berza 1973, 955, as well as the articles *Petőfi szobra* [The Statue of Petőfi] and *A Petőfi-szobor készítője* [The Maker of the Statue of Petőfi], in *Vasárnapi Ujság* 1882, 665–666 and 669–670.

<sup>54</sup> About the events related to the inauguration of the statue of Sándor Petőfi on 15 October 1882, see the article *A Petőfi-szobor leleplezésének sorrendje* [Order of the inauguration of the statue of Petőfi], in *Vasárnapi Ujság* 1882, 673. From this article we can learn that the laying of the wreaths of flowers took place between 9–10 a.m., and the ceremonial meeting of the committee that took care of erecting the statue at 10 a.m. On these aspects, see also Viczián 2019.

<sup>55</sup> See the article *Koszorúk Petőfi szobrára* [Wreaths of flowers for the statue of Petőfi], in *Vasárnapi Ujság* 1882, 673.

The scale of the celebrations underlined the importance of the event and its symbolic weight. Among the wreaths of flowers laid on the pedestal of Petőfi's statue were those sent by ten Hungarian institutions and associations, whose ribbons were then brought to Cluj and donated, as a memento of the event, to the Transylvanian Museum Society. Unfortunately, the Society's register did not record the name of the donor who was so eager to pass on to Transylvanian posterity something of the solemn atmosphere of the events mentioned above. One of the articles of the *Vasárnapi Ujság* newspaper from that day reported the fact that a delegation from the city of Cluj was present, consisting of the chief of police Pál Deák, as well as Béla Szász and Lajos Nagy.<sup>56</sup>

The **ten textile pieces** were inventoried with the following description: "Ribbons of wreaths of flowers, laid at Petőfi's statue (From Budapest, during the unveiling)."<sup>57</sup> The ribbons are made of silk, most of them cream-colored, but one has a cherry-red side, and three bear the Hungarian national colors. With one exception (inv. no. M 4861), they all have gold metallic thread fringes on the ends. The gold-painted inscriptions are the most striking attributes of the ribbons, highlighting the cult of Petőfi. Each ribbon has two sides. One side features the name of the cultural or social entity that laid the wreath, namely: The Typography Workers (*A Sajtó Munkásai*); The Kisfaludy Society (*A Kisfaludy-Társaság*); The Hungarian House in Sighişoara (*A Segesvári Magyar Kaszinó*); The Evangelical High School of the Augustinian Confession of Késmárk (*A Késmárki Ágostai Evang. Lyceum*); The People's Theatre (*A Népszínház*); The National Circle (*A Nemzeti Kör*) (Fig. 7); The Music Institute (*A Nemzeti Zenede*);<sup>58</sup> The Royal Hungarian National Academy of Music (*Az Orsz. M. Kir. Zeneakadémia*); The Hungarian Academy of Science (*A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*); and The Youth of the Sister-University (*A Testvéregyetem Ifjúsága*)<sup>59</sup> (Fig. 8). On the other side, the ribbons bore dedications to Petőfi, in which he was honored as a "poet with a fiery soul of freedom," "poet," "bard of the Hungarian people," and "hero of the Hungarian press." These texts emphasized Petőfi's poetic status and his revolutionary beliefs, as well as the ideological principles he defended, such as freedom of the press and freedom of speech. The dedications highlight the complexity of his memorial roles as poet, intellectual, revolutionary and hero, as Krisztián Nyáry pointed out. Through his multifaceted personality, Petőfi managed to capture the attention of all social classes in Hungary. The typography workers of 1882 and the representatives of various literary societies, schools or academies, as well as the political elite of the time could identify with his ideas.

In the autumn of 1892, the Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution opened in Cluj as a Hungarian cultural institution whose aim was to collect and protect the spiritual and material values of the Hungarian revolution. From that moment on, the cultural goods related to the events and personalities of 1848–1849 could be donated to this museum also and not only to the Transylvanian National Museum.

<sup>56</sup> *Koszorúk Petőfi szobrára* [Wreaths of flowers for the statue of Petőfi], in *Vasárnapi Ujság* 1882, 673.

<sup>57</sup> See ENM Registers, unnumbered volume, nos.: 7954–7963, currently Colecția MNIT, nos. M 4840, M 4856–M 4864. All these cultural goods have recently been restored in the MNIT Conservation-Restoration Laboratory by Mihaela Chetrari and Laura Troșan.

<sup>58</sup> A precursor of the "Liszt Ferenc" Academy of Music from Budapest.

<sup>59</sup> Namely the "Ferenc József" University of Cluj, the second university of Dualistic Hungary, following the one from Budapest.

From an inventory of the former Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution drawn up in 1949,<sup>60</sup> we learn that this museum owned several cultural goods related to Sándor Petőfi, namely: six reproductions of drawings, lithographs or paintings from the period with the poet's image, made by well-known artists of the time such as Soma Orlai Petrich, Károly Lotz, József Marastoni, and János Jankó; a photograph taken during the inauguration of the poet's Memorial House in Albești; framed photocopies of the (printed) poems *National Song* (1848) and *The Honvéd* (1849); a letter from Petőfi's wife to ornithologist Lázár Kálmán; and a plaster copy of Petőfi's bust from Sighișoara by Miklós Köllő.

Unfortunately, today we know nothing about these cultural goods. Following the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, the collection of the Museum of Relics was successively transferred in 1948–1949, 1960, and 1976 from the administration of the Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania and of the Archive of the Transylvanian Museum Society to the Historical Archives of the Romanian Academy, then to the People's Town Council of Cluj and finally, in 1976, to the patrimony of the history museum from Cluj (at that time the History Museum of Transylvania).<sup>61</sup> Along this route, only a part of the exhibits from the original collection (consisting mainly of weapons and memorial objects) became the property of the museum from Cluj.<sup>62</sup> However, we have no information on the fate of the approximately 300 artistic objects (including those related to Sándor Petőfi) from the collections of the Museum of Relics. Some of them may be in the repositories of other cultural institutions in Cluj, such as the National Archives or the Art Museum of Cluj, but this assumption is subject to further research.

The only memorial object preserved in Cluj and about which we can affirm to have been used, in all probability, by Sándor Petőfi, namely a **Bohemian crystal glass**, also pertained to the heritage of the Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution. It has the following description: “The glass from which Petőfi drank in Cristuru Secuiesc. Made of yellowish-green glass, engraved, with golden ornaments” (Fig. 9).<sup>63</sup> The glass could indeed have been used by Sándor Petőfi on the eve of his death, i.e. on 30 July 1849, in Cristuru Secuiesc. Several of Petőfi's biographers<sup>64</sup> mention this village as the poet's last sojourn, at the Zsigmond Varga family. The poet arrived in Cristuru Secuiesc from Târgu Mureș in the afternoon of 30 July 1849 to join Joseph Bem's revolutionary army. Once in town, Petőfi was invited to lunch by the town commander, Baron Gusztáv Gamerra, and to dinner by Zsigmond Varga, the lessee of the Kemény estate.<sup>65</sup>

The story of 30 July 1849 was described later, in 1899, by Zsigmond Varga's son, Zsigmond Varga Junior, a former 1848–1849 Honvéd, in a five-page letter.<sup>66</sup> The letter – which today is preserved in the Molnár István Museum from Cristuru Secuiesc – can be

<sup>60</sup> ErML List, compiled on 18 February 1949.

<sup>61</sup> For the Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution of Cluj, see Mitu 1999.

<sup>62</sup> Based on the Transfer Decision of the People's Council of Cluj County (Consiliul Popular al Județului Cluj) no. 20 fom 7 January 1976.

<sup>63</sup> ErML List, no. 631, currently Colectia MNIT, no. M 6728.

<sup>64</sup> See Zilahy 1864, 155; Dávid, Mikó 1972, 263–264.

<sup>65</sup> See Dávid, Mikó 1972, 260, 263–264; Sándor-Zsigmond 2018, 12.

<sup>66</sup> Letter signed by Zsigmond Varga Junior, Fiaș (Fiatfalva, Harghita County), 21 August 1899. See Dávid, Mikó 1972, 263–264; Sándor-Zsigmond 2018, 12. Zsigmond Varga's account was first presented by Barabás 1904.

considered a testimony documenting Petőfi's last hours on the day before his death. The letter shows that after dinner and late into the night Petőfi stayed in the garden with his hosts and other guests, telling stories and singing his poems set to music.<sup>67</sup>

Other eyewitnesses to Petőfi's presence in Cristuru Secuiesc, who were still alive and could be interviewed in 1904 by the Szekler Society (Székely Társaság), reported that after midnight Petőfi was present at the inn of János Szakál, where he talked with other comrades and listened to music by lute players. On the morning of 31 July 1849, he set off for the battlefield, losing his life in the battle of Sighișoara.<sup>68</sup>

However, Zsigmond Varga kept the "gilded green glass" used by the poet during his visit, bequeathing it to his descendants, one of whom handed it over to the Museum of Relics from Cluj.<sup>69</sup>

Another special piece from the collections of this museum, related to the cult of the heroes of the Hungarian Revolution, is a **ceramic four-sided pedestal with four porcelain medallions** (Fig. 10).<sup>70</sup> Each medallion contains a representation of a revolutionary leader of the Hungarian revolution of 1848–1849: Lajos Batthyány, Lajos Kossuth, Joseph Bem, and Sándor Petőfi. The object most likely came from Vilmos Fischer's ceramics workshop in Cluj and the photographs were applied using the pyrophotographic method in the studio of photographer Ferenc Veress in the same city.<sup>71</sup>

An interesting aspect about this object is that the collection of glass clichés made by Ferenc Veress (nowadays part of MNIT's patrimony) includes all the images that were used to decorate the pedestal. For Petőfi's image, Veress reproduced three of the poet's portraits by photography: the one from the well-known painting by Soma Orlai Petrich, *Petőfi in Debrecen, in 1844*; another, drawn and printed by Alajos Rohn in Pest in 1855; and the third, from a lithograph by Gusztáv Heckenast, made in 1858. Finally, the latter portrait was chosen. This decorative object was commissioned by the Museum of Relics to feature in events commemorating the revolution.

The cultural goods presented in this article reflect several moments in Petőfi's life and various aspects of the cult created around him and stand as testimony of the Hungarians' attachment to the 1848–1849 revolution and to the poet who had such a tragic fate. We conclude our approach with a pertinent statement in this direction that belongs to researcher Zsuzsa Kalla.<sup>72</sup> According to her: "In Hungary, the most powerful examples of secular cults and their associated relic collecting are connected with the 1848 War of Independence, primarily with Petőfi himself, and appeared with the propagation of the national idea. Almost immediately after his death, Petőfi became a legend and the symbol of the tragiheroic fate of the nation. In him, Hungary mourned every failed revolution. From humble beginnings he achieved worldwide fame and kept national pride alive [...]"

<sup>67</sup> See Dávid, Mikó 1972, 263–264; Sándor-Zsigmond 2018, 12.

<sup>68</sup> Sándor-Zsigmond 2018, 13.

<sup>69</sup> See Dávid, Mikó 1972, 264; Mirel 1973, 741. According to Barabás 1904, in 1904 the glass was still owned by the Varga family, its donation to the Museum of Relics of the 1848–49 Revolution in Cluj taking place at a later date.

<sup>70</sup> ErML List, no. 624, currently Colecția MNIT, no. M 6760.

<sup>71</sup> About the collaboration between Vilmos Fischer Farkasházi and photographer Ferenc Veress, see Mitu 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Ph.D. Zsuzsa Kalla, Hungarian literary historian, Deputy Director General of the Petőfi Literary Museum.

By the turn of the century the Petőfi cult had become official and was an integral part of culture and education. Since then, its intensity has fluctuated, but it is nevertheless still very much alive today.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Kalla 2000, 190.

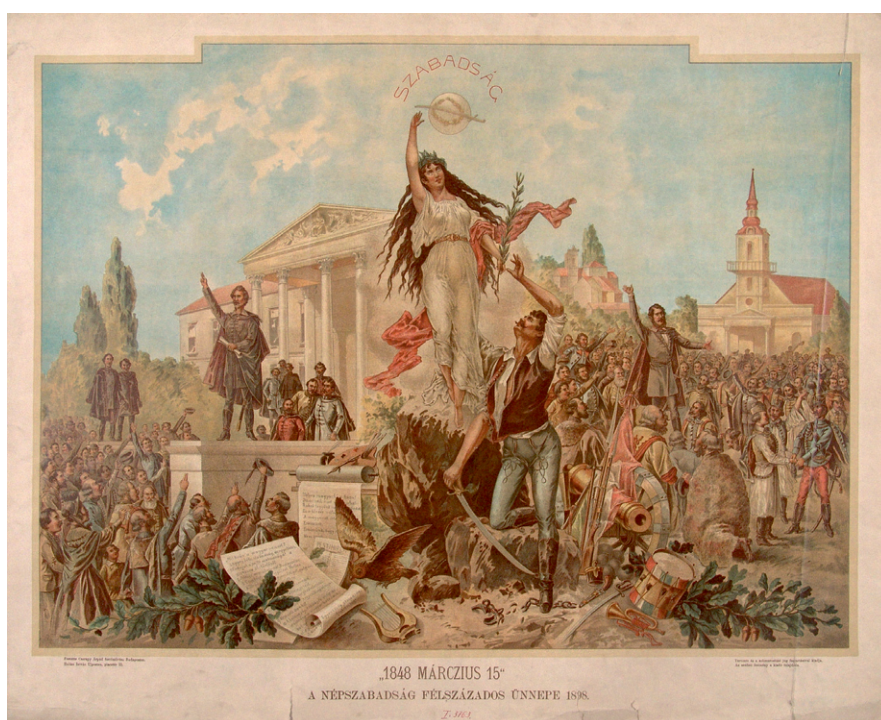
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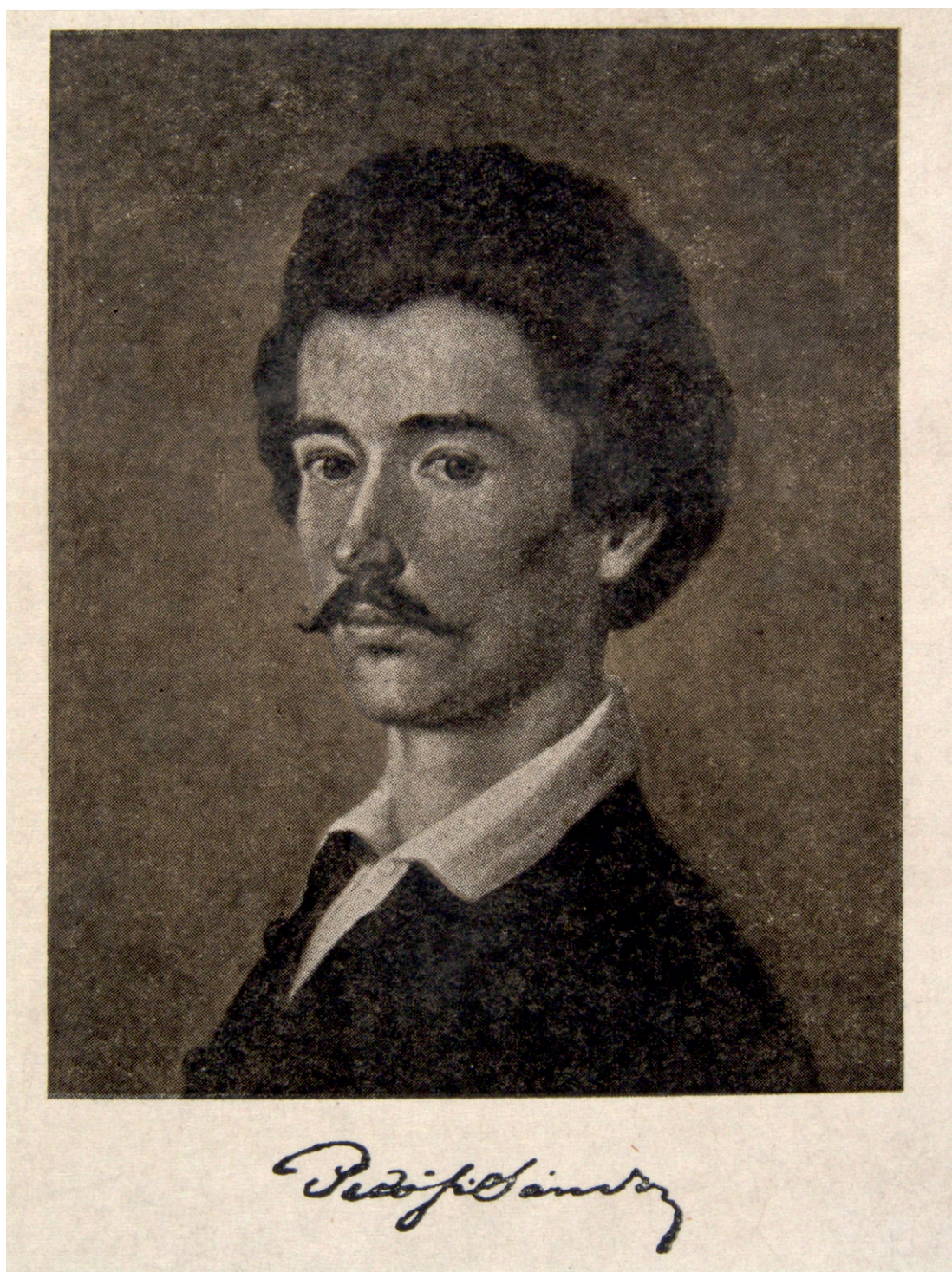
**Fig. 1.** *Petőfi in Debrecen, in 1844* – József Molnár's lithograph after the painting by Soma Orlai Petrich from 1857. Edited by Alajos Rohn, in Pest, and reproduced as a supplement of the daily *Hölgyfutár*, in 1858 (Colecția MNIT, no. M 5389).



**Fig. 2.** “15 March 1848.” Celebration of the half-century of the People’s Freedom 1898. Typographic reproduction after a painting by Árpád Cserépy (1859–1907) (Colecția MNIT, no. M 5505).



**Fig. 3.** Honvéd commemorative sheet that belonged to József Ornstein, artillery major in 1848–1849 (Colecția MNIT, no. M 7274).



**Fig. 4.** Illustrated postcard (first half of the twentieth century?) after the painting *Petőfi's Bust, 1848*, by Soma Orlai Petrich (Colecția MNIT, no. M 12380).



Fig. 5. Sándor Petőfi's birth house in Kiskőrös (Hungary), phototype by Károly Divald (1830–1897), based on a copper engraving (Colecția MNIT, no. M 5414).



Fig. 6. Commemorative medal made of silver issued on the occasion of the unveiling of the first public statue dedicated to Sándor Petőfi in Budapest (Colecția MNIT, no. N 57038, photo by Sergiu Odenie).



**Fig. 7.** The ribbon of a wreath of flowers placed at the statue of Petőfi from 1882, with the text: *The National Circle/ To Sándor Petőfi, Bard of the Hungarian People* (Colecția MNIT, no. M 4864, photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).



**Fig. 8.** The ribbon of a wreath of flowers placed at the statue of Petőfi from 1882, with the text: *The Youth of the Sister-University/ To the Poet with a Fiery Soul of Freedom* (Colecția MNIT, no. M 4861, photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).



**Fig. 9.** Bohemian crystal glass, probably used by Sándor Petőfi on the day before his death, namely, on 30 July 1849, at Cristuru Secuiesc (Colecția MNIT, no. M 6728, photo by Ana-Maria Gologan).



**Fig. 10.** Decorative pedestal with the photographs of Sándor Petőfi, Joseph Bem, Lajos Kossuth, and Lajos Batthyány applied by using the pyrophotographic method in the studio of photographer Ferenc Veress in Cluj (Colecția MNIT, no. M 6760, image by Róbert Szebeni-Szabó).



## “THE CLUJ CATECHIZATION TRIAL (1958).” THE STORY OF A REGIONAL ORTHODOX EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IN STALINIST ROMANIA\*

DRAGOȘ URȘU\*\*

**Abstract:** The removal of religious education from the school curriculum by the Communist regime, through the educational reform of 1948, forced the Romanian Orthodox Church, like the other denominations, to reposition itself. Thus, in the new, unfavorable, context of the 1950s, when the regime tried to limit the Church's institutional autonomy and reduce its social impact, the Romanian Orthodox Church attempted to initiate catechetical activities at the parish level to compensate for the pupils' lack of religious education.

The general context of the relationship between the State and the Church, with a focus on the institutional mechanisms and instruments of the regime of control over the educational activity of the Orthodox Church, will be approached in the first part of the article, which aims to outline the political-ecclesial context in which the “Cluj catechization trial” of 1958 took place, while the second part of the research will focus on the development of the events surrounding the 1958 catechization.

The Cluj catechization action, initiated by Bishop Teofil Herineanu, aimed to revive the religious education of the faithful, both students and adults. For this purpose, the bishop called upon the priests Galaction Munteanu, administrative vicar, and Ioan Bunea, professor at the Theological Seminary. They drew up a catechetical program which, after being sent to the archpriestships of the diocese, triggered the brutal intervention of the Securitate. A trial ensued, and clerics Ioan Bunea and Galaction Munteanu (the latter, deceased in the Aiud Prison) fell victims; the trial took place in the larger context of the Bucharest regime's reaction towards the danger of the expansion of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

Using multiple sources: archives (CNSAS, the Department of Cults, the Cluj Archdiocese Archives), oral history (interviews with the descendants of the clergy involved) and memoirs, the article aims to radiograph the topic of religious education in Communist Romania in the 1950s, capturing the regional institutional context, its mechanisms and ecclesiastical practices, the educational objectives of the Church, the reaction of the political and repressive authorities (the Department of Cults, the Securitate) and last, but not least, the (post)carceral destinies of the clergy involved.

**Keywords:** religious education in communism, political repression, State-Church relations, Galaction Munteanu, Bishop Teofil Herineanu

**Rezumat:** Eliminarea religiei din programa școlară de către regimul comunist, prin reforma învățământului din 1948, a obligat Biserica Ortodoxă Română, asemenea celorlalte culte, să se re poziționeze. Astfel, în noul context defavorabil al anilor '50, când regimul urmărea să-i limiteze autonomia instituțională și să-i diminueze impactul social, Biserica încearcă să inițieze acțiuni catehetice la nivel parohial, cu scopul de a suplini lipsa formării religioase a elevilor.

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Creionarea cadrului general al relației stat-biserici, cu aplecarea asupra mecanismelor și instrumentelor instituționale ale regimului de control a activității educaționale a Bisericii Ortodoxe, reprezintă miza primei părți a articolului, ce are rolul de a radiografa contextul politico-ecclesial în care s-a derulat „procesul catehizării de la Cluj” din 1958.

Ațiunea catehetică de la Cluj, inițiată de episcopul Teofil Herineanu, avea scopul revigorării educației religioase a credincioșilor, elevi și adulți deopotrivă. În acest sens, episcopul a apelat la preoții Galaction Munteanu, vicar administrativ, și Ioan Bunea, profesor la Seminarul Teologic. Aceștia au elaborat programa catehetică care, în urma trimerii către protopopiatele eparhiei, a declanșat intervenția brutală a Securității. A urmat un proces judiciar, căruia i-au căzut victime cei doi clerici, Ioan Bunea și Galaction Munteanu (decedat apoi în închisoarea Aiud), desfășurat în contextul reacției regimului de la București față de pericolul extinderii revoluției din Ungaria.

Utilizând surse multiple de arhivă (CNSAS, Departamentul Cultelor, Arhiva Arhiepiscopiei Clujului), istorie orală (interviuri cu urmașii clericilor implicați) și memorialistică, articolul își propune să radiografeze tematica educației religioase în România comunistă a anilor '50, surprinzând contextul instituțional regional, mecanismele și practicile ecleziale, obiectivele educaționale ale Bisericii, reacția autorităților politico-represive (Departamentul Cultelor, Securitate) și, nu în ultimul rând, destinele (post)carcerale ale clericilor implicați.

**Cuvinte cheie:** educație religioasă în comunism, represiune politică, relațiile stat-biserică, Galaction Munteanu, Episcop Teofil Herineanu

The religious education of young people was a sensitive issue in the relationship between the Communist regime and the churches during the communist period. On the one hand, the religious denominations tried to continue spreading the message of the Gospel to young people, despite the opposition of the regime; on the other hand, the regime, through its political-administrative and repressive policies, constantly tried to discourage the religious education of young people (when it did not explicitly forbid it).

This article discusses one such tragic episode from the narrative of the religious education of young people during the communist period, namely “the Cluj Catechization Trial” of 1958. The trial resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of two clergymen – Liviu Galaction Munteanu, vicar of the Orthodox Diocese of Cluj (who died in Aiud prison in 1961), and Ioan Bunea, professor at the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Cluj.

The fundamental question to which the article aims to provide a possible answer is: Why did the Communist regime react so violently to the attempted catechization of the Diocese of Cluj, by arresting and sentencing two clergymen, Munteanu and Bunea, even though catechization was not forbidden by the regime and, implicitly, was not considered an illegal activity in itself?

To investigate how the Cluj catechization trial was possible, one must understand the general framework of religious education in the first decade after the establishment of the Communist regime, in the broader context of the dynamics of State-Church relations in the 1950s. Radiographing these plans is the purpose of the first part of the article, while the second part of the article will be strictly dedicated to the Cluj catechization trial.

The issue of the religious education of young people in general, and of the Catechization trial in Cluj in particular, has also been addressed by other authors, such as Cristian Vasile,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vasile 2005.

Adrian-Nicolae Petcu,<sup>2</sup> Dorin-Demostene Iancu,<sup>3</sup> Călin Emilian Cira,<sup>4</sup> or Grigorie Benea.<sup>5</sup> The latter's research reconstructs documentarily the action of the catechization in Cluj in 1958, respectively the trial in which Munteanu and Bunea were sentenced, and is noteworthy.

The present paper aims to broaden the interpretive framework by contextualizing the topic of the Cluj catechization process within the framework of religious education and State-Church relations in the 1950s, and to highlight new documentary research with sources originating from three types of archives: (a) archives of repression (the National Council for the Study of the Securitate archives); (b) archives of political and administrative institutions (the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations and Arts); (c) ecclesiastical archives (the Archdiocese of Cluj archives). Last but not least, the research also takes into account the sources of memory, namely the memoirs of Reverend Ioan Bunea, together with the interview conducted by Vasile Stanciu<sup>6</sup> in 1990, and the testimonies of Dorina Bia and Lia Munteanu Drăgănescu, daughters of the two clergymen, Ioan Bunea and Liviu Galaction Munteanu, published by Anca and Raul Ștef.<sup>7</sup>

Another methodological aspect worth mentioning concerns the interpretive challenges generated by each category of sources. While the documents of the Securitate convey reality in an ideological manner, those of the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations and Arts offer a bureaucratic paradigm filtered through the political imperatives of the regime and, last but not least, the reality described by ecclesiastical sources (parish, protopope, or diocesan reports) can be altered by the authors' need to "embellish" the reports (i.e., overstate numbers).

Finally, it should be pointed out that although the topic of the paper regards catechesis in the Orthodox Church, the research will also take into account the catechetical practices of other Churches/denominations in order to understand, by comparison, the situation within the majority Church.

### **Churches and "people's power." Instruments of the Communist regime's religious policy in the 1950s**

The establishment of the Communist regime in Romania found the Orthodox Church in a fragile situation, at the end of two dictatorship regimes (King Carol II and Marshall Ion Antonescu), which had constantly tried to limit its autonomy. The Communist regime inherited and deepened this critical position of the Orthodox Church in relation to secular power, developing a religious policy inspired by the Soviet model, which involved the supervision and control of ecclesiastical institutions in order to limit their activity and reduce their social impact.

The main instruments through which the Communist regime exercised control and pressure on the Church were the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts (which

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<sup>2</sup> Petcu 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Iancu 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Cira 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Benea 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Stanciu 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Ștef 2022.

became the Department of Religious Denominations and Arts in 1957), and the Securitate. Following the Soviet model, a new authority was created, the inspector for religious denominations (RO: *împuaternicitul de culte*), who was the local representative of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts, implementing directives from Bucharest and reporting to the Party on the government line.<sup>8</sup>

It was these inspectors and appointees who, through their work in the field, were involved in every kind of religious manifestation in an effort to implement the Party's orders. Basically, they were intermediaries between the political factor and the religious institution, and their permanent presence asserted the State's constant surveillance.<sup>9</sup>

To understand how the regime's control was implemented in practice through the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations, it is worth pointing out that its representatives were present at every internal Church meeting. The Minister of Religious Denominations/President of the Department himself or his delegate took part in the meetings of the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), while the regional/local inspectors for religious denominations were present in the meetings of diocesan and protopopes' assemblies. Thus, the ability of the Churches to make autonomous decisions was virtually non-existent, nullified by the control of the representatives of political power.

The key position of the inspector for religious denominations in State-Church relations is described by various historians, such as Anca Şincan<sup>10</sup> or Adrian Nicolae Petcu,<sup>11</sup> as well as in the historical syntheses regarding the communist period, such as the so-called Tismăneanu report<sup>12</sup> (the chapter on "the communist regime and religious denominations"), or the volume signed by historian Oliver Jens Schmitt (chapter "Opportunists and Party Personnel: the new apparatus of state church politics").

In her research, Anca Şincan highlights the Soviet model underlying the work of the "inspector for religious denominations," i.e., the regime's interest in strengthening the ideological loyalty of these key figures in their relations with the religious denominations, which resulted in the removal of the old officials from the Department for Religious Denominations and Arts in the early 1950s and their replacement with new personnel.<sup>13</sup> The process was a natural one, given the mission of these inspectors to implement the Party's religious policy at local level.

While the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations and Arts was responsible for implementing the political line of the regime in its relations with the Church, the Securitate was the "armed hand" of the Party, fighting to eliminate any form of resistance to the establishment of communism. In the case of the Orthodox Church, its members (clergy, monks, theologians) fell victim to various arrests (in the repressive waves of years 1948 or 1952, or even during the repressive wave of 1958/59, unleashed after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956); in 1959, the regime also decided to partially abolish monasticism.

Concerning the repressive measures of 1958, by arresting clerics such as Daniil Sandu Tudor, Benedict Ghiuș, and Dumitru Stăniloae in the "Burning Bush" group or Bartolomeu

<sup>8</sup> Enache et alii 2009, 39.

<sup>9</sup> Petcu 2013, 7–82.

<sup>10</sup> Şincan 2006, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Petcu 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Tismăneanu 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Şincan 2017.

Anania in the "Viforâta" group, the regime aimed directly at weakening the position of Patriarch Justinian, given that the afore-mentioned were close collaborators of his.

Among other measures limiting the influence of the Church (nationalization of property, abolition of some dioceses, censorship of publications or the arrest of clergy and monks), the Communist regime also targeted the field of religious education – restructuring theological education (by abolishing six faculties), eliminating the subject of religion from pre-university education, and restricting the catechizing of young people.

### **Removing religion from schools. The repositioning of the Church and the reaction of the regime**

Following the decision to remove religion from schools, taken with the reform of education on 2 August 1948,<sup>14</sup> the Orthodox Church, like other denominations, was deprived of the main instrument for educating the younger generation – religious instruction. As a reaction to this measure, the Orthodox Church tried to compensate for the lack of centralized education (in the public education system) by starting its catechetical activities, conducted by priests in churches (both in the capital and the province).

Historian Cristian Vasile, in his work dedicated to the Romanian Orthodox Church in the first communist decade, summarizes the regime's policy on religious education, radiographing the actions taken in 1948 to eliminate religion from schools: the reform of the educational system, the nationalization and secularization of denominational schools, the removal of religious symbols from classrooms, the discouragement and even repression of youth catechization actions.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Cristian Vasile also mentions the attempts of some hierarchs (Antim Angelescu, Nicolae Popovici, Vasile Lăzărescu, Firmilian Marin) to organize catechetical programs, coupled with attempts to obtain the consent of the regime to carry them out.<sup>16</sup>

The sources of the time (reports from the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts, archives, and the Church press) mention various catechetical activities carried out on the initiative of certain hierarchs. For example, in 1948, hierarch Chesarie Păunescu of Tomis and Lower Danube (Rom. "Dunărea de Jos") issued circulars "instructing all priests in the counties of Constanța and Ialomița to hold religious meetings every Sunday after Vespers and to teach religious notions to those who are willing to learn,"<sup>17</sup> or Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, who asked the priests of the Archdiocese of Sibiu to collect commitments from parents for their children to attend the religious classes organized in each parish.<sup>18</sup>

Also, on 3 November 1948, the diocese of Cluj sent a circular to priests asking them to organize catechesis in their churches when the students were not at school, and to ask parents to send them to the classes.<sup>19</sup>

All these local attempts at catechesis were opposed by the regime, which did not look favorably on these actions intended to compensate for the removal of religion from

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<sup>14</sup> Petcu 2004, 696.

<sup>15</sup> Vasile 2005, 216–219.

<sup>16</sup> Vasile 2004, 220–221.

<sup>17</sup> Petcu 2004, 703.

<sup>18</sup> Petcu 2004, 705.

<sup>19</sup> Benea 2017, 50.

schools; furthermore, the clergy's lack of experience in carrying out catechetical activities also raised suspicions, since this practice was not widespread in the Orthodox Church. The lack of practical experience of the Orthodox clergy and the absence of a theoretical framework (curriculum, bibliographical support, methodology) developed by the Church leadership in catechization were the drawbacks experienced during those years. This is also illustrated at the meeting of the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church on 18 October 1948, when Sebastian Rusan, Archbishop of Suceava and Maramureş, proposed that the Synod should give priests clear guidelines on catechesis.<sup>20</sup>

The regime's reaction to the Orthodox Church's attempts to compensate for the removal of religion from schools through catechetical activities was not long in coming. On 25 November 1948, a meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party was held to discuss the question of the religious education of young people by the Church. The position of the regime, expressed by Teohari Georgescu, the Minister of Internal Affairs, was clear: "There is a tendency to turn schools into churches (...) we should put a stop to the danger of schools moving inside the churches, because this is a far greater danger than teaching religion in schools." Ana Pauker also stressed: "The priests should be prevented from teaching in churches and the homes of the *chiaburi* (the wealthy peasants)."<sup>21</sup>

This meeting of the Party leadership also discussed the abuses of the regime's representatives (the religious inspectors, the repressive apparatus), who had acted with "excessive zeal" against the Church's attempts to catechize. For the Party leaders, the question of religious education was also seen in the context of the consolidation of the regime's power and, implicitly, of the fight against "reaction." This is precisely why they accused the activists of having shown "excessive zeal" of "giving ammunition to the enemies of the people" by brutally banning catechism activities.

In order to regulate this new reality, the Party considered it necessary to publish an article in *Scânteia* (23 February 1949) summarizing the conclusions of the November 1948 meeting, a text which, under the guise of democratic legalism, summarized the regime's policy on religious education. First, the article emphasized the need to "privatize faith," which meant a strict separation between Church and School in particular and society in general, and clearly criticized attempts at religious education in the churches. At the same time, the regime, in its "wooden language," conveyed that it "strictly" respected "the freedom of conscience and the freedom of exercise of religious denominations."<sup>22</sup> The regime's claim to respect "religious freedom" should be understood more as a propaganda slogan than a legal reality since the concrete actions of the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations and Arts and the Securitate on the issue of catechization contradict the conclusion of the article in *Scânteia*.

From this point onward, throughout the following decade, there would be a constant struggle between the denominations – which, in their efforts to educate young people, invoked the freedoms that the regime claimed to guarantee (religious and of conscience), and the regime's permanent policy of discouraging catechetical actions by various means (educational, administrative, repressive).

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<sup>20</sup> Petcu 2004, 702.

<sup>21</sup> Petcu 2004, 699.

<sup>22</sup> Scânteia 1949, 3.

### **Catechetical activities in the 1950s. The regime's policy of discouragement**

The regime's religious policy was translated into an implicitly restrictive bureaucratic reality: any priestly activity of any kind (liturgical, social, cultural, educational, and administrative) had to take place within a well-defined legal framework. Although each denomination officially had the right to organize its activity, it could only be carried out after it had been approved by the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations and Arts through regulations, statutes and rules. Any activity carried out without a legal framework or outside the approved rules was subjected to fines by the inspectors for religious denominations and, in what the regime considered as serious cases, the priests were held criminally responsible.

This administrative reality created a great tension between the regime and the churches: on the one hand, the denominations wanted to define as precisely as possible the legal framework of their activity in order to protect themselves from possible repercussions, and on the other hand, the regime, through the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations and Arts, obstructed this legislation precisely in order to control and discourage religious activity.

As far as catechesis was concerned, this problem had become urgent for the leaders of the Orthodox Church. In his letter to the Synod of 1950, in which he mentioned the agenda of the meeting, Patriarch Justinian also drew the attention of the hierarchs to the situation of catechesis. The Patriarch's proposals, which were later incorporated into the Synod's decisions, were as follows: firstly, catechesis should be carried out by the priest within the liturgical program of the Church, with two main objectives – teaching the faith of the Church and teaching the faithful to sing together.<sup>23</sup>

It should be noted that in 1949 the Statute on the Organization and Functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church was adopted; Article 10 paragraph O stated that the Synod has the power to "determine the curriculum and norms of catechetical activity."<sup>24</sup> Thus, the Patriarch sought to use the existing legal framework to define the activity of catechesis.

Taking note of the Patriarch's intention, the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts proposed its vision of catechesis, stressing that it should be carried out only by the priest, on Sundays, exclusively in the Church, and that, most importantly, it should not take on the aspect of religious instruction, i.e., that no marks, catalogs, attendance or diplomas should be used for participants. At the end of the report, it was pointed out: "The Ministry of Religious Denominations controls the way catechism is conducted. If the above conditions are not met, the denomination in question will be considered to be in breach of current legislation."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, in a report in the same dossier, which was to be presented to the Synodic meeting that was to legislate on catechism, it was clearly stated that "The Ministry of Religious Denominations will also examine and approve the books and other materials to be used in the work of catechization."<sup>26</sup>

At its meeting on 5 February 1950, the Synod adopted a decision defining the framework for catechesis in the Orthodox Church, which remained in force throughout

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<sup>23</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor Fonds, file 11/1950, 87.

<sup>24</sup> "Statutul BOR 1949"/ Bibliocanonica.

<sup>25</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor Fonds, file 11/1950, 89.

<sup>26</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor Fonds, file 11/1950, 102.

the 1950s, despite Patriarch Justinian's efforts to improve it. In summary, catechesis was to be conducted as follows: by the priest, after vespers (the evening service) on Saturday or Sunday after the liturgy, or, respectively, in the time lapse between 2 p.m. on Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. The aim was twofold: to teach the Church's doctrine and, above all, to teach the faithful to sing the liturgy together (homophonic). It was clearly stated that the catechetical activity was intended for all the faithful, irrespective of their age.<sup>27</sup> The Synod's decision thus reflected the clear position of the regime, which wanted to prohibit the exclusive catechesis of children.

It is worth mentioning that the Synod's decision on catechization was read by Bishop Teofil Herineanu<sup>28</sup> (of Roman and Huși), the future Bishop of Cluj who would initiate the catechization action in 1958.

Following this decision of the Synod, from 1950 onward, catechization actions took place throughout the Patriarchate (Brașov, Timiș, Suceava, Galați, Brăila, Arad, Sibiu, Iași, etc.); various reports of the Ministry of Religious Denominations or the bishops offer details regarding catechization practices. Moreover, even locally, the bishops (through their protopopes), required priests to prepare monthly/quarterly reports on catechesis.

For example, a report of 19 October 1955 on catechesis in the parishes of the diocese of Cluj stated that out of a total of 66 parishes, catechetical activities were carried out in 58.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to parish reports, it is important to be aware of the limitations of the potentially "embellished" reality (i.e., overstated numbers and reports), which can only be avoided by correlating reports from different sources. This practice of overstatement is criticized in a circular letter of Patriarch Justinian destined to the priests of the Archdiocese of Bucharest in 1952; after noting that the priests had begun catechetical activity to a large extent, pointed out that

"we will not be deceived by reports, mostly fictitious, in which so many sermons, so many catechizes held in such and such a month are recorded, but which in reality were not held. Neither will we trust the few catechism plans that have been stereotypically copied by a more conscientious colleague, and we assure everyone that methods of verification will be found and that the notes will not delay in giving each one his due."<sup>30</sup>

Despite such possible overstatements, the partial conclusion that emerges from reading the various sources (reports from the Ministry of Religious Denominations or reports from the Church Administration) is that catechizing, with particular emphasis on the teaching of congregational singing, was a practice of Orthodox priests in the 1950s.

As for the other denominations – Roman Catholic, Protestant (Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran), and Neo-Protestant/ Evangelical (Baptist, Pentecostal, and Adventist) – it is worth noting a fact confirmed by a large number of documentary sources: catechetical activities were constant and more extensive than in the case of the Orthodox Church. This is shown,

<sup>27</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor Fonds, file 6/1950, 2.

<sup>28</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 19/1952, 2.

<sup>29</sup> AAC, file IV-6-39.

<sup>30</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 19/1952, 14.

first of all, by the specific religious practices of these denominations, in which catechesis played a fundamental role in the education of children. In the case of the Roman Catholic<sup>31</sup> and Protestant Churches,<sup>32</sup> catechesis was compulsory for the ecclesiastical confirmation of children (at the age of 7), while in the case of the non-Orthodox denominations, catechesis was defined by its very nature through the "ministry of the word," a constitutive part of religious practice.

### **Regime policy to discourage catechesis**

Although the regime, through the Department of Religious Denominations and Arts and the Securitate, legally endorsed the decisions of the Church's governing bodies regarding catechesis, it constantly sought to discourage the religious education of young people by various means: in the case of the ROC, by monitoring the catechetical activity of priests and fining any action that went beyond the strict framework of the decision of the 1950 Synod – which clearly stipulated that catechesis could only take place after Saturday vespers and the Sunday liturgy. Moreover, in order to discourage the participation of young students in catechesis, the regime, through local Party organizations, involved the teachers in various extra-curricular activities (sports, cultural, administrative) designed to keep the children busy.

In addition to the implicit policy of discouragement, the regime stubbornly tried to prevent any form of catechesis aimed exclusively at children, which was seen as a substitute for religious instruction, which had just been removed from the school curriculum. This red line, which the denominations were not allowed to cross under any pretext, was the essence of the regime's religious policy on religious education. In the following, several examples of such restrictive practices of the regime in the catechization of young people will be offered.

An illustrative case is Bishop Andrei Magieru of Arad's attempt to increase the catechetical activity of priests. In October 1953, he sent them a circular (through the protopopes) "for the guidance of priests in the catechism of the faithful of all ages," in which, referring to the catechetical activities of other denominations, especially the Neo-Protestant/ Evangelical ones, he asked the priests to organize "Sunday schools" in which the faithful could learn the doctrine of the faith and sing together. He also urged the clergy to turn to the missionaries of the dioceses or the diocesan center for guidance in catechetical work.<sup>33</sup>

The reaction of the regime was immediate, through the voice of the Minister of Religious Denominations – Petre Constantinescu Iași himself, who, in a letter addressed to Bishop Andrei Magieru, asked him, under the guise of legalism, to put an end to the catechetical action and to limit himself to the provisions of the 1950 decision of the Synod:

"In view of the above, it is recommended that the content of Circular 3649/1953 be examined in the light of the provisions of the law on the general regime of religious

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<sup>31</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor Fonds, file 11/1950, 95; SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 22bis/1960, 1–3.

<sup>32</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor Fonds, file 11/1950, 97.

<sup>33</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 29/1954, 3.

denominations, the strict decisions of the Synod of the ROC and the provisions stated in the statutes and regulations of the ROC, in order to bring them into line. The Ministry of Religious Denominations is convinced that His Eminence, the Most Holy Bishop Andrew will immediately proceed to the entry into legality.”<sup>34</sup>

A similar episode occurred in 1954, when Patriarch Justinian wished to improve the catechetical activity of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Bucharest by providing them with a method of work that included the drawing up of quarterly plans for the catechization of the faithful (adjusting the topics of catechism to the specific needs of the faithful, planning the catechetical activity by days and themes, recording the activities in registers countersigned by the members of the parish committees).<sup>35</sup>

The reaction of the Ministry for Religious Denominations did not take long. Although the Patriarch cited the decision of the 1950 Synod as an argument for the need to regulate catechetical activity, the regime condemned the freedom left to priests in the choice of catechetical themes, “without any guidance from the diocesan leadership,” and above all the fact that the sermons were not “updated,” i.e., did not contain political and social guidelines for the faithful. The Ministry’s decision, which was finally implemented, was, therefore, to postpone the application of the circular in question.<sup>36</sup>

A similar situation occurred in the diocese of Cluj, where in November 1955, Bishop Nicolae Colan held a meeting with the diocesan protopopes. Among other items on the agenda, the catechesis was discussed, and the bishop drew the attention of the protopopes to the need to strengthen the catechetical activity of priests. During the meeting, the clergy discussed the difficulties encountered in carrying out catechesis, including the fact that pupils “are kept away from school and extra-curricular programs by teachers, and in some cases, children are directly and deliberately prevented from participating in catechesis by teachers or local authorities, making it difficult for the priest or even threatening him in order to avoid catechizing the children.”<sup>37</sup>

As usual, the regional inspector for religious denominations, Ioan Rogoian attended the meeting. His position at the meeting, reflected in the report sent to the leadership of the Ministry, is a faithful example of the regime’s interference in the affairs of the religious denominations. In response to Bishop Colan’s suggestion that during the winter months, when the places of worship are cold, catechism classes should be held in parish houses or the homes of some of the faithful, the commissioner protested, stating that “as far as the catechism of children in houses outside the church is concerned, this procedure cannot be allowed and is not recommended, since it requires the prior authorization of the Ministry.”<sup>38</sup>

The files of the Department of Religious Denominations from the late 1950s also contain other references to the regime’s policy of discouraging catechetical activity. In 1957, for example, the regional inspector for religious denominations in Galați, stated,

<sup>34</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 29/1954, 2.

<sup>35</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 29/1954, 15–16.

<sup>36</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 29/1954, 21.

<sup>37</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 23bis/1955, 9–10.

<sup>38</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 23bis/1955, 10.

in a letter to the Department for Religious Denominations' leadership, that children were "trained in sports competitions and cultural events"<sup>39</sup> to avoid attending catechism classes.

The same policy of discouraging the regime by involving students in extra-curricular activities is also reflected in the report of May 1957 by the religious commissioner of Dej County, Vasile Moraru, who highlights the intensification of catechism in the parishes of this part of the diocese of Cluj, mentioning, in particular, Priest Mihai Fârtan from the commune of Maia, who catechized pupils on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. In order to counteract these activities, the religious commissioner called on the priests to adhere to the decision of the Synod of 1950 in their catechetical activities and also asked the teachers and professors of the respective parishes "to find activities for the pupils on these days."<sup>40</sup>

### **"The process of catechesis." Actors, institutional practices, and repressive consequences**

The reconstruction of the subject follows a chronological order, at the same time linking the various sources (reports, information notes, and interrogation protocols of the Securitate, reports of the Department of Religious Denominations, acts of the Archdiocese of Cluj, and the testimonies of the actors) that create the picture of the catechetical action in Cluj.

In December 1957, after the transfer of Nicolae Colan to Sibiu as Metropolitan of Transylvania, Bishop Teofil Herineanu was installed in Cluj; he was a former Greek-Catholic clergyman who had joined the Orthodox Church in 1948, after the dissolution of the Greek-Catholic Church, and who had been Bishop of Huși and Roman from 1949 to 1957, before coming to Cluj.

Teofil Herineanu's situation was paradoxical: on the one hand, as the documents of the time show,<sup>41</sup> he believed that he enjoyed a certain degree of trust from the regime because of his conversion to the Orthodox Church. And he counted on this trust to launch the catechetical campaign. At the same time, his file from the Securitate archives shows intense persecution by the Communist political police, which had gathered significant evidence of the bishop's "hostile" positions, reflected in his support for politically imprisoned clerics and their families.<sup>42</sup> The contrast between the political pull that Bishop Herineanu believed he had and the image that the Securitate had of him would impact his catechetical activity.

In January 1958, immediately after he arrived in Cluj, Teofil Herineanu, at the insistence of Metropolitan Nicolae Colan, made arrangements with the regional inspector for religious denominations, Augustin Enea, to have Priest Liviu Galaction Munteanu<sup>43</sup> appointed as vicar-administrator (the second position in the eparchial organization chart after the bishop).

Who was Liviu Galaction Munteanu?

Born in 1898 (in Cristian, Brașov county), a graduate of the Andrei Șaguna High School (Brașov) and the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu (1920), with a doctorate in theology

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<sup>39</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 22/1957, 1.

<sup>40</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 22/1957, 4.

<sup>41</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 62.

<sup>42</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 259360, vol. 1, 48–56.

<sup>43</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 259360, vol. 1, 386.

from Chernivtsi (1924), Liviu Galaction Munteanu was close to bishops Nicolae Ivan (1921–1936) and Nicolae Colan (1936–1957) of Cluj. He was a professor at the Faculty of Theology (1924–1952) and its rector (1937–1946 and 1948–1952), and he also distinguished himself in the theological and ecclesiastical publications of the time (*Viața Ilustrată, Renașterea*). Liviu Galaction Munteanu remained in Cluj during the Hungarian occupation (August 1940–October 1944). However, after the full establishment of the Communist regime, he came to the attention of the Securitate for his persistent efforts to save the Cluj Theological Institute from being dismantled. Political police reports document his “hostile attitude:”

“After the dissolution of the Theological Institute, because of his anti-democratic attitude, he was not assigned to another institute. (...) In conclusion: Munteanu Liviu, the former rector of the Orthodox Theological Institute, is an anti-democratic element, shows hatred and contempt for the regime in our country and does not promise to change his attitude.”<sup>44</sup>

Transferred to Bistrița in 1952 by Bishop Nicolae Colan, who wanted to keep him away from the tensions surrounding the dissolution of the Theological Institute, Liviu Galaction Munteanu continued to be followed by the Securitate, which closely monitored his activities, until his appointment as administrative vicar in Cluj in June 1958.<sup>45</sup> On the occasion of this appointment, the Cluj Securitate closed his secret surveillance file opened in 1952, keeping Liviu Galaction Munteanu as a “suspect” in the operational file of the problem dossier concerning the Orthodox diocese.<sup>46</sup>

From his position as an administrative vicar, Liviu Galaction Munteanu was at the forefront of organizing the meeting with the protopopes of the diocese of Cluj on 20 August 1958, during which they discussed, among other things, the revival of the catechism of the faithful in general and of children in particular.<sup>47</sup> The reasons given by Bishop Herineanu for the impulse to catechize (as they appear in the statements made by Galaction Munteanu during the investigation) were twofold: on the one hand, the observation that the religious education of young people had declined in the decade following the establishment of communism, and on the other hand, the pretext that other denominations, especially the Neo-Protestant/ Evangelical ones, were also carrying out catechism activities.<sup>48</sup> During the meeting, when the protopope of Huedin raised the problem of the lack of methodology and materials for the organization of catechesis, Bishop Herineanu pointed to Liviu Galaction Munteanu as the person who could provide solutions: “we have the man with the knowledge to provide you with the necessary material.”<sup>49</sup>

The meeting was attended by the regional inspector for religious denominations, Augustin Enea, and the inspector of the Department of Religious Denominations, Gheorghe Nenciu, according to bureaucratic custom. They also supported the bishop’s intention to

<sup>44</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 4–5.

<sup>45</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 35.

<sup>46</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 2, 238.

<sup>47</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 35.

<sup>48</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 31.

<sup>49</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 42.

promote catechism under the pretext of "combating religious sects" on condition that the decision of the 1950 Synod be respected.<sup>50</sup>

After the meeting, the protopopes of Turda, Dej, and Beclean had a private conversation with Liviu Galaction Munteanu, asking him to send them the catechism material.<sup>51</sup> It is worth stressing the "unofficial" nature of this dialogue, which took place outside the meeting, information that is relevant to the later reaction of the regime.

Based on this request from the protopopes, Liviu Galaction Munteanu, on his initiative, asked Priest Ioan Bunea, who had been his student at the Faculty of Theology and was now a professor at the Theological Seminary in Cluj and had great pedagogical experience<sup>52</sup> (between 1939 and 1958 he taught at the Seminary in Cluj, at the high school in Turda, at the Faculty of Theology in Cluj, and finally returned to the Seminary), to draw up two curricula for the catechization of adults and children.<sup>53</sup>

After a week, Ioan Bunea handed over the materials to Galaction Munteanu, who organized them systematically. Thus, the program for the catechization of students was divided into three chapters, corresponding to each age group: group 1 – grades I–II (7–9 years old); group 2 – grades III–IV (9–11 years old); group 3 – grades V–VII (11–14 years old). The didactic materials proposed were the Bible, the Orthodox Catechism, and the "Book of Learning." The lessons were structured on a weekly basis throughout the school year 1958/1959 and included the teaching of the Orthodox faith: prayers, biblical stories and parables, religious feasts, sacraments of the Church, or dogmatic and moral notions in the case of the older children from the third age group.<sup>54</sup> The first two groups had half an hour of catechesis per week and the third one hour per week.

As far as the adult catechism program was concerned, it was divided into 72 topics, mainly following the exegesis of the New Testament (the Sunday Gospels) and reserved for Saturday evening vespers or the eve of religious feasts during the week.<sup>55</sup>

Having received these materials, Galaction Munteanu presented them to Bishop Teofil Herineanu, who approved them and asked Vicar Munteanu to multiply them and send them to the protopopes.<sup>56</sup> It should be noted that in his statements during the investigation, Galaction Munteanu claims that Bishop Herineanu asked him to draw up outlines for each lesson, without listening to the complete presentation of the curricula. Moreover, he claimed that when he presented the papers to the bishop, the materials were not entitled "Analytical Curriculum of Catechetical Lessons for the Primary School Year 1958/1959" and "Analytical Curriculum for the Catechization of Adults in the Ecclesiastical Year 1 Sept. 1958–1 Sept. 1959;"<sup>57</sup> the titles were added afterward by Galaction Munteanu in the process of editing and multiplying.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 36.

<sup>51</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 36.

<sup>52</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 39.

<sup>53</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 36.

<sup>54</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 2240, 48–49.

<sup>55</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 2240, 46–47.

<sup>56</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 37.

<sup>57</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 42.

<sup>58</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 44.

After this meeting, from 2 to 10 September, Bishop Teofil Herineanu left for the diocese of Roman, whose leadership he was replacing. Therefore, the meeting of the Diocesan Council, in which Galaction Munteanu “officially” presented the programs and decided to send them to the dioceses, took place in the absence of the bishop.<sup>59</sup> Thus, on the 3 and 4 of September, the curricula for the catechization of children and adults were sent to the protopopes, with the instruction to inform the priests at the next meeting,<sup>60</sup> recommending Saturday afternoon or Sunday before Mass as the time for the lessons.<sup>61</sup>

Before looking at how the curricula were implemented and the regime’s reaction, it is worth considering whether the regional inspector for religious denominations was aware of the process of drawing up the catechetical programs. In his testimony during the investigation, Galaction Munteanu stated that he did not present the curricula directly to the inspector for religious denominations, Augustin Enea, but rather he assumed that the latter had already seen them because “he was constantly with us”<sup>62</sup> to carry out various tasks.

The first warning of a potential adverse reaction from the regime came from the bishop’s advisor, Iuliu Groşescu, who, in mid-September 1958, warned Vicar Galaction Munteanu that “the law does not mention the catechization of children and we might have problems because of the curriculum for the catechization of pupils.”<sup>63</sup>

Shortly afterward, the first problems began to appear and were caused by how some priests put the instructions for catechizing children into practice. For example, priest Cornel Briciu, from Tăure commune, Năsăud district (Bistriţa-Năsăud County), went to the director of the local school and asked him for permission to give catechism lessons to the children, while Priest Dumitru Hanţiu, from Romuli, in the same district, went to the People’s Council (town hall) and asked for support in implementing the curriculum.<sup>64</sup> This alerted the local authorities, who sent the curriculum, confiscated from the priests, to the religious authorities.

Possible explanations for the behavior of the two priests are that the clergy were not particularly trained in the implementation of the curricula and, moreover, the protopope of Năsăud was not present at the meeting of 20 August.<sup>65</sup> Also, the fact that the priests had received the curricula from the diocese led them to believe that it had been officially approved by the Department of Religious Denominations.

### **The regime’s reaction. The investigation and imprisonment of those involved**

The reaction of the regime was swift. After the Cluj regional inspector for religious denominations, Augustin Enea, informed the leadership of the Department of Religious Denominations about the catechetical action, the Department sent a report on 18 October 1958, instructing him to require the diocese of Cluj to annul the provisions concerning the

<sup>59</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 79.

<sup>60</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 259360, vol. 5, 82.

<sup>61</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 37.

<sup>62</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 79.

<sup>63</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 39.

<sup>64</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 80.

<sup>65</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 35.

catechetical curricula.<sup>66</sup> The content of this document reveals how the regime understood the catechetical action in Cluj, which was seen as an attempt to organize religious instruction for schoolchildren "contrary to the constitutional norms which provide for the separation of the school from the church (art. 84), and contrary to the decision of the Synod of 5 October 1950, which stipulated that catechesis should be held only after Sunday morning Mass and for all the faithful at the same time."<sup>67</sup>

In order to understand the political and ecclesiastical context of the regime's reaction, it should also be remembered that in 1958, the Orthodox Church's relations with the regime were strained because of the wave of repression that began after the Hungarian revolution (of 1956), a large-scale repression to which many Orthodox clergy became victims. In the summer of 1958, priests close to Patriarch Justinian, such as Dumitru Stăniloae, Bartolomeu Anania, Benedict Ghiuș, Sofian Boghiu, Arsenie Papacioc, and others were arrested.

The seriousness of the accusation brought in by the issue of the catechization, namely the violation of constitutional provisions, as well as the law on religious denominations – had immediate repercussions: at the end of October 1958, Bishop Herineanu ordered the withdrawal of the analytical curricula.<sup>68</sup> Aware of the consequences of the regime's reaction, Bishop Teofil Herineanu and Vicar Galaction Munteanu visited Patriarch Justinian at the beginning of November 1958<sup>69</sup> to coordinate their positions. The result of the meeting, according to Galaction Munteanu, was that the Patriarch, together with the Metropolitan Justin Moisescu of Moldavia and Nicolae Colan of Transylvania, supported their catechetical work. Moreover, according to the testimony of Galaction Munteanu's daughter, he also had meetings at the Department of Religious Denominations to "clarify things."<sup>70</sup>

In this context, in which Galaction Munteanu hoped the problems would be solved, the arrest on 21 November 1958<sup>71</sup> came unexpectedly. Lengthy interrogations followed, during which Galaction Munteanu was questioned about the catechism campaign, with the Securitate trying to find out who was involved and the details of the events.<sup>72</sup>

It is worth pointing out that, according to the statements made by both Vicar Galaction Munteanu and Priest Ioan Bunea, the latter was involved in the catechism campaign for a limited period, his role being limited to drawing up the catechism curricula at the request of Galaction Munteanu, without participating in any way in the overall decision-making process.

The ideological paradigm according to which the Securitate interpreted reality in order to justify its repressive policy was materialized in the investigation of Vicar Liviu Galaction Munteanu and then, after the arrest of 2 February 1959, of Priest Ioan Bunea as well.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor. Direcția Studii Fonds, file 16/1958, 2.

<sup>67</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor. Direcția Studii Fonds, file 16/1958, 2.

<sup>68</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 80.

<sup>69</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 60.

<sup>70</sup> Ștef 2022, 95.

<sup>71</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 6.

<sup>72</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 21–33v.

<sup>73</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 64.

For the Securitate, the initiation of catechetical activities, the religious education of young people, could only express the “hostile attitudes” of those involved. Thus, in addition to the factual documentation of the catechetical activity, the investigations look at the incriminating political records of the two, which could justify their political repression.

In the case of Vicar Galaction Munteanu, the Securitate had at its disposal, first of all, the materials obtained during the secret surveillance of him in the 1950s, which documented his “hostile” position (notes and informative reports). The investigation also focused on his publishing activities during the interwar period and the 1940s, when he wrote several articles in the journals *Viața Ilustrată* (“Marshal Averescu has died,” in no. 2/1938, or “Nichifor Crainic,” “What is written at Easter,” in no. 5/1940) and *Renașterea* (“Christianity as the foundation of social life,” in no. 4/1938), which the Securitate considered to have a strong anti-communist content.

For example, from the article “Christianity as the foundation of social life,” in which Galaction Munteanu praised the Carlist regime, deemed capable of consolidating an “eminently Christian state,”<sup>74</sup> the investigators select this passage, which is considered incriminating:

“What have been the results of socialism, communism, Marxism, Bolshevism? Have they increased altruism in the world, have they reduced the distance between social classes, between people? Having reached the top of the pyramid, for them, society is an unconscious herd, good to be whipped... Yes, they create a bond in society, it is the bond of pain, of voiceless suffering, of brutal death that hangs over every step.”<sup>75</sup>

The conclusion of the Securitate at the end of the investigation regarding the motives for Galaction Munteanu to initiate the catechetical action?

“Given his hostile attitude and conception towards the democratic-popular regime of the RPR, in August 1958 Liviu Galaction Munteanu initiated the drafting of two analytical curricula and drafted them together with the accused Bunea Ioan, namely: one analytical curriculum for the catechization of pupils and one for the catechization of adults. By drafting the analytical curricula for the catechization of primary school pupils, the defendant Liviu Galaction Munteanu aimed at introducing religious education in schools.”<sup>76</sup>

Soon after the start of the investigation, Vicar Munteanu realized that the hopes of release that he had at the time of his arrest were illusory, given that, as his prison notes show, he was a victim of the regime’s repression of the Church. A note dated 29 November 1958, in which the informer reproduces his words, is instructive in this respect:

“He is no longer interested in his sentence and wants to remain faithful to his oath to the Church. He gives the example that his person is full of martyrdom (ecclesiastical glory) like that of some priests and ministers of the Patriarchate of Bucharest who

<sup>74</sup> Munteanu 1938, 2.

<sup>75</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 124.

<sup>76</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 125.

were also arrested for the Church. He shows that their names, like his own, will be remembered by the faithful for the Christianity for which they sacrificed themselves. He shows that not only Bishop Herineanu and himself, but all those who have sworn to serve the Church of Christ are against communism, which seeks to paganize the Church."<sup>77</sup>

As for Ioan Bunea, several "forbidden" magazines were found in the building basement during the house search, such as *Gândirea*, *Viața Ilustrată*, *Tribuna Ardealului*, and *Predania*.<sup>78</sup> Based on these "corpus delicti," the investigators were able to construct a scenario of "a hostile attitude;" they also referred to a benign epigram ("In the house the loudspeaker sings, at the door the tax collector knocks, in the yard the worker cries"<sup>79</sup>), considered to be "mocking the workers,"<sup>80</sup> which Ioan Bunea was said to have uttered in the chancellery of the Cluj seminary.

The end of the investigation, materialized in the "conclusions of the indictment" of 13 April 1959, sums up the ideological perspective in which the Securitate, in order to justify its repression, wrapped up the involvement of the two clergymen in the catechetical action, which was seen as an expression of a long-standing hostile activity through which Liviu Galaction Munteanu and Ioan Bunea wanted to undermine the constitutional order by introducing religion in schools.<sup>81</sup>

On 6 May 1959, the Cluj Military Tribunal convicted the two men of "conspiracy against the social order" and sentenced Liviu Galaction Munteanu to 17 years imprisonment and Ioan Bunea to eight years.<sup>82</sup> On appeal, on 30 May 1959, their sentences were reduced to eight years for Galaction Munteanu and five years for Ioan Bunea.<sup>83</sup>

After being sentenced, the two were sent to Gherla prison, and on 8 September 1959, their paths parted, Ioan Bunea being sent to the labor colonies of Balta Brăilei (Salcia, Stoenesti, Giurgeni), and on 20 November 1961 he returned to Gherla, from where he was released on 31 January 1964.<sup>84</sup> Liviu Galaction Munteanu was transferred to Aiud prison on 31 October 1959, where he died on 8 March 1961 from severe medical complications.<sup>85</sup>

After his release, Ioan Bunea, who was under constant surveillance by the Securitate,<sup>86</sup> went through the institutional process of re-clericalization<sup>87</sup> and was appointed priest in Someșeni (a district of Cluj), where he served from 1964 to 1969, and then, until his retirement in 1981,<sup>88</sup> at the church of the Transfiguration in the center of Cluj. From 1972 to 1980, he also taught at the Cluj Seminary.

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<sup>77</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 1, 64.

<sup>78</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 100–101.

<sup>79</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 98.

<sup>80</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 128.

<sup>81</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 123–131.

<sup>82</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 141.

<sup>83</sup> ACNSAS, Criminal Fonds, file 542, vol. 1, 163.

<sup>84</sup> „Fișa matricolă penală a lui Ioan Bunea”/ IICCMER.

<sup>85</sup> „Fișa matricolă penală a lui Liviu Galaction Munteanu”/ IICCMER.

<sup>86</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 2240.

<sup>87</sup> Bunea, 140–142.

<sup>88</sup> Stanciu 2017, 90.

### **The position of Bishop Teofil Herineanu. Memorial controversies**

A sensitive aspect of the catechetical action in Cluj, with memorable echoes to this day, as shown by the testimonies of Ioan Bunea and the daughters of the two clergymen,<sup>89</sup> is generated by the position of Bishop Teofil Herineanu after the arrest of Galaction Munteanu and Ioan Bunea. Immediately after the arrest of Vicar Munteanu, his wife requested an audience with Bishop Herineanu,<sup>90</sup> asking him to intervene in favor of Munteanu's release and accusing him of asking Munteanu to prepare catechism curricula. According to Securitate documents, the first gesture of solidarity on the part of the bishop was to help the Munteanu family with money.<sup>91</sup> In fact, helping the families of politically imprisoned priests was a common practice of Bishop Herineanu, well documented by the Securitate.

After the conviction of the two men in May 1959, their wives wrote a memorandum to Patriarch Justinian asking him to intervene with the authorities for their release. The memorandum is accompanied by Bishop Teofil's correspondence with Patriarch Justinian,<sup>92</sup> in which the two coordinate the steps to be taken.

As Bishop Herineanu's prosecution file shows, the next step was his intervention with Dumitru Dogaru – Secretary General of the Department of Religious Denominations and Arts – to whom he sent a letter to intervene on behalf of the two clergymen. The reports of the Securitate, which followed the matter closely, show that dialogue took place between the two in the summer and autumn of 1960.<sup>93</sup> Expectations were positive, as evidenced by an informative note from March 1961 stating that, during a meeting with the councilors, Bishop Herineanu announced that Galaction Munteanu and Ioan Bunea would soon be released.

The regime's response to the bishop's efforts finally came in July 1962, when the head of the Cluj Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Nicolae Pleşiță, proposed the pardon of Vicar Liviu Galaction Munteanu, on the grounds that "he has no criminal or political record, has been honest during investigation, is of advanced age and has served more than three years in prison."<sup>94</sup> But the pardon came too late. Liviu Galaction Munteanu had died 15 months earlier, in Aiud, in March 1961.

The arrest and imprisonment of the two clergymen for their catechetical activities in the diocese of Cluj had the desired effect of discouraging religious education for young people. As documented in the report of the Department of Religious Denominations of January 1960, "after the conviction of the former Vicar Liviu Munteanu, the Orthodox priests refrained from holding catechism classes with children, limiting themselves to catechetical sermons which they held after the Sunday service, in which the adult faithful also participated."<sup>95</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Stef 2022, 44, 96.

<sup>90</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 259360, vol. 1, 409.

<sup>91</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 259360, vol. 2, 342.

<sup>92</sup> AAC, file 6/1959.

<sup>93</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 259360, vol. 2, 7.

<sup>94</sup> ACNSAS, Informative Fonds, file 174412, vol. 2, 240.

<sup>95</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 22bis/1960, 1.

### Open conclusions

After the removal of religious education from the school curriculum, the Orthodox Church, like the other denominations, tried to compensate for this by initiating various ways of catechizing the faithful (both adults and children), an effort in which it had to overcome the lack of a catechetical tradition (during the interwar period, religious instruction had been a substitute for the catechetical activity of the priest). To this end, the Orthodox Church drew up a general legal framework: the decision of the Church Synod of 1950, which regulated a summary catechetical activity, which could be carried out from Saturday afternoon to Sunday after liturgy, aimed at teaching Christian doctrine and, in particular, at teaching the community to sing, and addressed to all faithful (children and adults).

After this decision, throughout the Patriarchate in general and in the Diocese of Cluj in particular, the sources of the time mention the development of catechetical actions at parish level, without these taking on the scope of religious education programs. This was mainly due to the restrictive policy of the regime, which, through its inspectors for religious denominations, carefully monitored the activity of priests. The inspectors *implicitly* discouraged the religious education of the Church by involving pupils in extra-curricular activities or fining clergy who went beyond the strict framework of the decision of the Synod of 1950, and also *explicitly*, by penalizing priests who carried out sustained catechetical activities for pupils.

This last point – the prohibition of the exclusive catechization of children – was the red line of the policy of the Ministry/Department of Religious Denominations, an intransigent attitude that was reflected in the case of the catechetical action in Cluj in 1958. The Communist regime's motivation was simple: to combat the formative potential of religious education, which was seen as competing with the Party's monopoly on the education of the younger generation.<sup>96</sup>

In the case of the catechetical action in Cluj, in the summer and autumn of 1958, the course of events shows a seemingly paradoxical development, in which the initiative of Bishop Teofil Herineanu to promote catechism among the faithful, on the pretext of "combating religious sects," was initially appreciated by the representatives of the regime (the religious authorities), who were present at the meeting with the protopopes where this issue was discussed. Furthermore, the initiative was enthusiastically implemented by Vicar Galaction Munteanu, who asked Professor Ioan Bunea of the Theological Seminary to draw up catechetical curricula, which were sent to the priests without prior consultation with the inspectors for religious denominations, as the regime had expected according to the bureaucratic practice imposed.

After some priests interpreted the initiative of catechization as the formalization of religious education for pupils and asked for support from the local authorities (town hall and school), the regime went on alert, pressuring Bishop Herineanu to withdraw the curricula and arresting the two clergy involved. The investigation and the trial reveal the ideological paradigm in which the Securitate interpreted reality in order to justify its repression of the clergy. For example, by exaggerating the anti-communist positions and

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<sup>96</sup> SANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Artelor, Direcția Studii Fonds, file 21/1960, 4.

attitudes in the biographies of the two men, the regime interpreted their involvement in the catechetical action as an expression of a long-standing “hostile attitude.”

Despite the efforts of their families and Bishop Herineanu’s, combined with the support of Patriarch Justinian, Galaction Munteanu and Ioan Bunea were sentenced to 17 and eight years in prison, respectively, and on appeal to eight and five years, respectively. Ioan Bunea was released in January 1964 and reintegrated into the clergy, surviving the fall of communism (he died on 6 July 1990), but Galaction Munteanu died in Aiud prison in March 1961. As fate would have it, it was not until June 1962 that the Cluj Directorate of the Securitate proposed his pardon – perhaps deliberately. This was the tragic end of the most consistent effort to catechize the faithful (adults and children) that the Orthodox Church had initiated in the 1950s.

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## THE HELSINKI ACCORDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** This article discusses Romania's compliance with the existing requirements regarding human rights found in the so-called third basket of the Helsinki Final Act following the document's signing. Since 1975, the year the Act was signed, the Western powers have managed to find a channel through which to monitor more closely how the communist regimes respected human rights and civil liberties. It is not enough to observe what problems were raised regarding the violation of human rights in Romania but also how the Romanian authorities, based on the answers provided, considered that they had respected the commitments regarding human rights. As one will see, even if there were severe reactions or protests against Romania regarding this matter, the communist authorities followed their internal policy but with care that the human rights issue did not affect their international relations, if possible. Under special conditions, the communist authorities were willing to make certain concessions.

**Keywords:** Helsinki Final Act, third basket, human rights, claims, CSCE

**Rezumat:** Acest articol aduce în discuție problematica respectării angajamentelor luate de România în urma semnării Actului Final de la Helsinki în ceea ce privește drepturile omului regăsite în coșul al treilea al Actului. Începând cu 1975, anul în care documentul menționat a fost semnat, puterile occidentale au reușit să găsească un canal prin care să monitorizeze mai atent modul în care regimurile comuniste respectau drepturile omului și libertățile cetățenești. Nu este suficient să observăm ce probleme au fost ridicate la adresa nerespectării drepturilor omului din România, ci și modul în care autoritățile române, pe baza răspunsurilor oferite, au considerat că au respectat angajamentele referitoare la drepturile omului. Așa cum vom vedea, chiar dacă împotriva României au existat reacții serioase referitoare la această chestiune, aceasta și-a urmat politica internă proprie, însă cu grijă ca problema drepturilor omului să nu îi afecteze, pe cât posibil, relațiile internaționale. În condiții speciale autoritățile comuniste au fost dispuse să facă anumite concesii în această privință.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Actul Final de la Helsinki, coșul al treilea, drepturile omului, plângeri, CSCE

### Introduction

The present study addresses the issue of the Helsinki Agreements, namely Romania's compliance with the so-called third basket of the Final Act, related to the observation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Thus, the paper will focus on the reaction at the diplomatic level of some states, NGOs, and people from abroad interested in how the Romanian authorities respected their commitments regarding human rights and civil liberties, such as the right to emigrate, freedom of marriage, or freedom of expression.

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Although it is known that the issue of the humanitarian dimension was not a central point of interest for Romania at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that ended with the Helsinki Final Act, there were some debates on this issue. Related to this aspect, I will underline the instructions received and the Romanian delegation's position regarding the humanitarian dimension.

The subject's relevance is given by the fact that, in a communist state like Romania, the subject of respect for human rights by the authorities was controversial. In communist Romania, many of these rights and freedoms were drastically limited despite the country's paying lip service to them in its Constitution and other legislative pieces. Thus, my paper will focus on this issue, starting from the signing of the Final Act of Helsinki in 1975 and ending in 1980, when human rights became a delicate subject for the Romanian communist authorities. Over time, several books and studies provided insight into the organization of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Helsinki Final Act. For example, Michael Cotey Morgan, in *The Final Act. The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*, discusses the issue of the emergence of the CSCE and the drafting of the Final Act, as well as their effect on the Cold War. Also, Sarah B. Snyder emphasizes in her book, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War. A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*, the evolution of East–West relations during the meetings that occurred before and after the signing of the Final Act. She highlights the connection between human rights policy and the Helsinki Final Act. Iulian Toader partially discussed the Romanian role in the Conference. In his contribution, *România în diplomația destinderii. Originile Conferinței pentru Securitate și Cooperare în Europa*, Toader presented the position that Romania adopted during the negotiations within the Conference. Also, Iulian Toader, in the article *Participarea României la consultările preliminare pentru CSCE și MBFR (noiembrie 1972–iunie 1973)* published in *Caiete Diplomatice*, provides an image of how Romanian diplomacy presented its position regarding European security during the preparatory talks for CSCE and MBFR,<sup>1</sup> as well as the results obtained. A book that brings into discussion both Romania's involvement in the CSCE negotiations and a brief evolution of the political situation in Romania in the period before and after the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is that of Patricia González Aldea, *Helsinki 1975. Începutul sfârșitului. Degradarea regimului din România și singularitatea lui în blocul de Est (1975–1990)*. Also, regarding Romania's involvement in the preparatory consultations of the CSCE, Constantin Vlad, in *Diplomația secolului XX*, explains the projects proposed by the Romanian delegation.

The present article is based on a series of declassified documents available at the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which allowed the analysis of the position of Romanian diplomacy within the CSCE, and of how the Romanian authorities reacted when they had to face the consequences of the Helsinki Final Act on some human rights issues. The first part of the article will discuss the international context that facilitated the organization of the CSCE, followed by the examination of Romania's involvement in the discussions and negotiations within the Conference. Based on the files regarding the

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<sup>1</sup> In the present study the acronym MBFR, derived from the English name of the Conference – Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction, refers to a series of negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact states regarding the reduction of armed forces and military capabilities.

correspondence between some Romanian embassies and the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the article will emphasize how Romania respected its commitments to the observance of human rights in the Act signed in August 1975. Furthermore, by reading certain telegrams about some requests received by Romanian diplomats in order to clarify situations of specific human rights violations by this state, one can observe that the Romanian authorities employed defensive methods when confronted with reports of non-compliance with the commitments made in Helsinki and that the communists tried to create the false impression of respecting people's freedoms.

### **The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Final Act**

Before moving on to the case of Romania, it is necessary to mention the reasons and the process behind the creation of a conference that includes the democratic states of the West and the communist states of Eastern Europe, emphasizing the significant moments of the CSCE negotiations. In the 1960s, with the relaxation of the strained relations between the two blocs, the Western and the Soviet, known as the *détente*, it was possible to initiate collaboration between the two sides in several fields. This collaboration ended with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. The moment marked the achievement of significant results in terms of security, economic, and technological issues, and, last but not least, the defense of human rights, which played a significant role in the 1970s and 1980s.

To understand the Helsinki process, the measures taken, and their significance, it is necessary first to know the context that gave rise to such negotiations and the climate in which they took place. As early as 1954, Veaceslav Molotov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, raised the issue of organizing a conference at the European level that would consider security, but without the participation of the USA.<sup>2</sup> Although it did not materialize then, the idea of a conference on European security remained open. Following some discussions in Moscow in 1966, the Soviet Prime Minister, Aleksei Kosygin, and the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, reached a common denominator regarding an interest in cooperation between the Western and Eastern sides. In the same year, another notice was made public due to the meeting between the French President, de Gaulle, and the Soviet Prime Minister, Kosygin. The discussion confirmed the organization of a future conference on the same theme, namely European security and cooperation. In the following years, the Soviets, backed up by the communist bloc, constantly endorsed the idea of such a conference. Consequently, in 1970, following discussions between the Warsaw Pact countries, their perspective changed, and they invited the United States and Canada to participate in the future conference.<sup>3</sup> The US's reaction to the conference was well-defined only towards the end of 1970 when the emphasis was placed on the disarmament question, considering that East-West relations could be improved in this way.<sup>4</sup>

In this climate, at the end of November 1972, diplomats of the participating states met in Dipoli to establish the working directions and program of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This was intended to be only a consultation phase, without knowing how long the negotiations would last or the exact results. Regarding the issues to

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<sup>2</sup> Bahr 2006, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Rey 2008, 65–67.

<sup>4</sup> Cotey Morgan 2008, 27–28.

be discussed, they were divided into three categories, called “baskets,” as proposed by the Swiss ambassador. The first basket approached the issue of security, the second referred to economic matters, science and technology, and environmental cooperation, and the third to humanitarian cooperation, emphasizing the freedom of the movement of people and information. These consultations between the ambassadors ended in June 1973 with the signing of the “Final Recommendations,” a document containing the Conference’s rules and agenda. The text is also known as the “Blue Book,” referring to its blue cover.<sup>5</sup>

The first phase of the Conference began in July 1973 and lasted only a few days. During these first days, the foreign ministers participating in the Conference gave various speeches. Due to the limited possibilities offered by the Finns from an organizational point of view, it was decided to change the Conference venue to another country, Switzerland. In this context, the second phase of the negotiations, that of Geneva, began in September 1973.<sup>6</sup> The Soviets wanted the Geneva stage of the Conference to be short and completed following the signing of declarations concerning borders, but also to the non-use of force.<sup>7</sup>

As the negotiations progressed, the USSR progressively became more vulnerable, and by 1975 they seemed to make concessions regarding the humanitarian problem. However, the USSR’s desire to take the reins of the talks was visible relative to the members of the communist bloc. The misunderstandings arose due to the Soviets’ desire to lead the negotiations on behalf of the Eastern Bloc, considering it sufficient if they made joint proposals. Their position ran counter to the interests of the Warsaw Pact countries, which hoped to pursue their agenda within the CSCE. As for the Western powers, they have based the discussions with the Russians on the humanitarian issue, aiming to obtain as many concessions as possible from the Soviets.<sup>8</sup>

The 35 participating states concluded the negotiations on 21 July 1975, and signed the Final Act on 1 August 1975. The document was important for the diplomatic relations between the states, containing the final decisions resulting from the extensive negotiations between the Western and Eastern sides. It reflected the common points reached, although each participant had different visions and expectations from the Conference and divergent interpretations of the Final Act.<sup>9</sup> However, the Agreements did not represent a proper treaty, lacking the mandatory legal status of an agreement that had to undergo a formal ratification process.<sup>10</sup>

The so-called third basket of the Final Act represented a much-disputed element, each state, especially the communist ones, having its interpretation and application of its provisions. The third basket topic was also controversial because of its possible effects on the communist states’ understanding of human rights and freedoms, especially freedom of movement, information, and freedom of the press. One argument used by the Soviets against the Westerners was to question their intentions, accusing the Western states of wanting to intervene in the internal political affairs of the communist states.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately,

<sup>5</sup> Cotey Morgan 2018, 108–109.

<sup>6</sup> Cotey Morgan 2018, 109.

<sup>7</sup> Snyder 2011, 23–24.

<sup>8</sup> Snyder 2011, 24–27.

<sup>9</sup> Snyder 2011, 30–31.

<sup>10</sup> Neier 2012, 144.

<sup>11</sup> Cotey Morgan 2018, 139–140.

the negotiations reached a consensus, with the commitment to respect the “fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and to recognize the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”<sup>12</sup>

Among other things, for Western countries, the CSCE was supposed to help reduce the constraints on the freedom of movement of people and information from communist states. This idea was mainly contained in the third basket, emphasizing the possibility of better communication with the West and, thus, a permeabilization of the Iron Curtain. Although they gave in to the demands, the Soviets managed to obtain the introduction of principles related to sovereignty and non-intervention in internal matters.<sup>13</sup> When the text of the third basket was finalized, it contained clauses regarding the facilitation of travel to other countries and the possibility of being reunited with the rest of the family. At the same time, there were mentions regarding the easier circulation of various publications and cinematographic productions and the provision of unrestricted working conditions for foreign journalists.<sup>14</sup> Following this line, the third basket represented for Westerners a means to penetrate the closed communist world. They had hoped to open these states to the Western world and democracy, but how the decisions would be enforced remained to be seen.

### **Romania and the CSCE**

In the international context of the new discussions about organizing a conference on European security, Romania proved to support it. Also, following the convening of the Council of State and Ministers meeting, the direction Romanian diplomacy should assume, in terms of its objectives, was established. Thus, Romanian diplomats began to support their visions through bilateral discussions.<sup>15</sup> Once the discussions about the organization of the Conference progressed, Romania’s position began to be better outlined, actively supporting the security system. Romania also insisted that the presentation of the projects should be carried out by each state separately, not by a joint group, as the Soviets intended. Romania also showed interest in the procedures, considering that decisions had to be taken by consensus throughout the negotiations. Last but not least, regarding the presidency, Romania supported the principle of rotation in leading future meetings and committees. However, although it proved to be an active actor in the Conference, Romania did not consider it necessary to address the human rights issue, essentially agreeing with the URSS on this topic.<sup>16</sup>

At the preparatory meeting of the CSCE in Dipoli, which began on 22 November 1972, Mircea Bălănescu, Romania’s ambassador to Finland, led the Romanian delegation. The deputy was Valentin Lipatti, a personality who would stand out in Romanian diplomacy. In 1973, Lipatti was appointed the head of the Romanian delegation to the CSCE. Another deputy of Bălănescu was Constantin Vlad. The delegation also included experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among whom Romulus Neagu, Dimitrie Stănescu, or

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<sup>12</sup> Cotey Morgan 2018, 140–141.

<sup>13</sup> Cotey Morgan 2018, 170–172.

<sup>14</sup> Cotey Morgan 2018, 189.

<sup>15</sup> Toader 2020, 171–172.

<sup>16</sup> Bădilă 2019, 19–20.

Ion Diaconu. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters, the minister was George Macovescu, newly appointed just before the Dipoli meeting. He had Nicolae Ecobescu as his deputy until 1973 when he became head of the State Protocol.<sup>17</sup> At Dipoli, the Romanian delegation continued to support its draft rules of procedure. Although the USSR delegation opposed these proposals, Romania's desire to negotiate equally was visible.<sup>18</sup>

After the preparatory meeting in Dipoli on 8 June 1973, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs proved to be interested in learning about other states's stance on the completion of the meeting. For example, the archive documents mention that a point of view regarding Italy's position was requested by Romania during the discussions. Iacob Ionașcu sent the Romanian authorities a summary of Italy's position. Regarding the humanitarian dimension, Italy had placed itself on the Western side, supporting the free movement of people, ideas, and information, considering this to be a mandatory condition for détente. It should be mentioned that Ionașcu specified that this attitude was not against the position of the Eastern bloc but precisely on behalf of human relations. He concluded that the discussions on this topic would be long-lasting, which turned out to be true.<sup>19</sup> At the Conference, there were constant discussions between the Romanian delegation and various representatives of other states. Thus, following discussions with the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands, the Romanian delegation drafted another note to be enjoyed back home. The Dutch position endorsed the third basket, considering it an element to complete the Conference. It was also noted that there was a proposal from the Dutch side to exchange ideas with the Romanian delegation in Helsinki in the context of good cooperation during other meetings.<sup>20</sup> Romania's interest in the attitude of other states regarding the CSCE was apparent, but despite the relations being friendly, Romania did not go further with the proposals. The Romanian delegates held discussions to discover the position of other states on some subjects, aiming to build a future strategy.

A matter that cannot be ignored is the public echo that the organization of such a conference had had since its early stages. Because the sensitive point for the communist countries was the third basket, since the preparatory meeting, the Romanian delegation received letters and memorandums from different people or organizations, especially on the subject of the freedom of movement of ideas and people. An example of this is a letter received by Valentin Lipatti in April 1973 from a woman in Bucharest named Dold Ingeborg-Roswitha. No other details about her or how she learned about the Conference are provided. In the letter, she proposed a subject of discussion at CSCE related to the support given to people separated from their families. The woman stated that she was in that situation: "For years, I have been making futile requests to join my parents who are in the F.R.G."<sup>21</sup> The letter's content makes one wonder to what extent the Romanian authorities took into account the citizens' requests (e.g., even the reunification of people

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<sup>17</sup> Toader 2020, 227–230.

<sup>18</sup> Vlad 2006, 554–555.

<sup>19</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5176, folios 109–112.

<sup>20</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5176, folios 170–171.

<sup>21</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7., file 5180, folios 11–12.

with their families abroad), meaning that although the authorities knew about some cases, they were not always resolved.

During the second phase of the CSCE, opened on 18 September 1973 in Geneva, it was established that the discussions would be carried out in committees, respectively, three committees for each basket.<sup>22</sup> Based on two drafts drawn up by the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania in August 1973, one can notice that there were some misunderstandings regarding the directives on cultural cooperation and interpersonal contacts in the Romania. One of the documents was not approved to be presented in Geneva by the Romanian delegation and had to be reformulated. In this sense, in the preamble of the first draft, the phrasing of the provisions uses words that the authorities could consider inappropriate. Thus, it was stated that the development of peoples “cannot be achieved in conditions of isolation; no culture and no civilization is sufficient by itself.”<sup>23</sup> From this, it follows that, in the existing conditions, cultural exchanges were mandatory and could be carried out without encountering difficulties.<sup>24</sup>

A few days later, another draft was drawn up. This time, the preamble contained a more general phrasing. For example, in terms of cultural cooperation and the use of means of information to disseminate specific ideas, the first version mentions a reference to violence, that was eliminated in the final version.<sup>25</sup> Relative to the directives in the field of education, the Romanian delegation had to support information exchanges, proposing the signing of some agreements and granting scholarships or exchanges of experience with other states. In the field of culture, the Romanians were to support some exchanges of experience between different institutions, the exchange of specific materials, or the participation in various events. In the directives regarding information, it was stipulated that collaborations in the media field should be encouraged, as well as the visits of journalists to Romania. Also, for the provisions on interpersonal contacts, proposals were made to facilitate visits, but especially to encourage sports competitions and tourism.<sup>26</sup> Based on these two projects, one can affirm that the Romanian authorities displayed apparent freedom, which was carefully studied in terms of wording and expression so as not to arouse suspicion.

Shortly after the Conference’s opening, the Romanian delegation in Geneva had talks with the delegations of other countries based on the proposed themes, including human contacts, culture, and information. Regarding the Vatican’s proposals on religious freedom, especially that of travel for this purpose, Valentin Lipatti expressed reservations in supporting such recommendations “much less, of encouraging individual or collective visits, at the sanctuaries.”<sup>27</sup> The documents between the Romanian delegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the second phase of the CSCE demonstrate that the Romanian communist rule defended its ideas in the less controversial subcommittees or issues, such as education or culture, where the proposals, both of the socialist states and the Western ones, were more accessible to each type of regime.

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<sup>22</sup> Toader 2020, 284–285.

<sup>23</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5182/1, folio 36.

<sup>24</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5182/1, folio 37.

<sup>25</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5183, no page.

<sup>26</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5183, no page.

<sup>27</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1973/9.S.7, file 5129, folio 35.

The continuation of negotiations over the next year highlighted more complex issues in the discussions on the humanitarian dimension. In January 1974, a document was drawn up regarding the position of the Romanian delegation on the preparation of the final documents. Several points are worth mentioning within the commission for cooperation in the humanitarian and related fields. The first issue that attracts attention is the question of minorities, mentioning the Yugoslav initiative to support the development of national minorities and the endorsement of the proposal by some socialist states, including the USSR. According to Romanian legislation, the Romanian delegation followed the option of consultations to reach a common point.<sup>28</sup> However, Romulus Neagu's speech praised in his speech the management of the situation of minorities in Romania, which made him receive appreciation from other participant states, congratulating him for the position taken.<sup>29</sup> Although he received instructions to maintain friendly relations with the Yugoslavs, Romanian diplomacy did not miss the opportunity to turn the situation in its favor, holding a speech to highlight Romania's effort to support minorities.

As expected, on more sensitive topics, the Romanian delegation received instructions to oppose some decisions. If relative to aspects such as "marriages between citizens from different participating states,"<sup>30</sup> the delegation was to express its agreement if it did not contradict the country's legislation. Concerning topics such as information, the situation was more complicated. The unhindered circulation of information of any type had to be carried out following the country's ideology and socio-political practices. Concerning the mode of transmission and the sources used, it was mandatory to accept only the harmless ones and those not involved in internal politics. One aspect which caused a critical reaction was the radio, particularly the Free Europe and the Liberty radio stations, which represented for citizens in the Eastern Bloc channels of communication with the outside world. In this sense, Romania mostly agreed with the socialist countries on the humanitarian dimension and the third basket.<sup>31</sup>

Although the Romanian delegation had a mandate to support the facilitation of marriage with foreigners and family reunification procedures, in 1974, an interesting case appeared, reflecting the actual position of the Romanian communist authorities. In the fall of 1974, requests were made for family reunification or marriage and three such pleas were handed over to the FRG delegation. The representatives of the FRG presented these requests to the Romanian delegation, mentioning that, based on the discussions that were taking place, they should try to find a solution.<sup>32</sup> The response to the pleas came after about two months: it was negative, stating that the marriage request was not approved on the grounds that not all the documents were submitted.<sup>33</sup> Later on, the answers to family reunification requests were also negative because the persons did not meet the criteria, the impediment being that most of their relatives were domiciliated in Romania.<sup>34</sup> Based on this example, the situation in Romania was not as permissive as the delegation wanted

<sup>28</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1974/9.S.7, file 5996, folios 141–142.

<sup>29</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1974/9.S.7, file 6016, folios 9–12.

<sup>30</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1974/9.S.7, file 5996, folio 143.

<sup>31</sup> Toader 2020, 311–312.

<sup>32</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1974/9.S.7, file 6016, folio 32.

<sup>33</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1974/9.S.7, file 6016, folio 40.

<sup>34</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1974/9.S.7, file 6016, folio 39.

to suggest in Geneva. Therefore, granting a favorable solution to the requests was refused, citing reasons for non-compliance with the necessary procedures or conditions.

The last stage of the CSCE took place from 30 July to 1 August 1975 in Helsinki and brought together the heads of state or government.<sup>35</sup> After the end of the Conference, Romania published the text of the CSCE Final Act in the official newspaper to inform the population, a mandatory condition for all signatory states.<sup>36</sup> The signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 did not necessarily imply that a period followed when security or human rights were fully respected and ensured, accordingly to the commitments made. Because post-Helsinki Romania was not a country where citizens could enjoy a multitude of freedoms, and by analyzing the abuses reported by different people, states, or organizations from abroad, one can complete the picture outlined by the dissidents until 1980, when Romania's situation began to deteriorate internally and externally.

### **Reports of human rights violations by Romania**

The most visible signs of challenging Nicolae Ceaușescu's authority began to appear towards the end of the 1970s. I am referring to the emergence of the dissident movement in Romania, which arose based on disregarding human rights and demand for better living conditions. Consequently, respecting human rights, justified especially by signing the Helsinki Agreements, would represent a sensitive subject for Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime.<sup>37</sup> It is certain that, following the signing of the Final Act, the abuses committed by the authorities could be reported much more efficiently at the international level, drawing attention to the conditions in the socialist states.

The main way of expressing grievances were appealing to governments of the states that also signed the document and to non-governmental organizations in charge of monitoring the observance of human rights abroad. Therefore, the Final Act became an essential tool in this field, being the subject of discussion in diplomatic relations.<sup>38</sup> I will deal with diplomatic debates regarding the violation of human rights in Romania. I will also follow the position adopted by the Romanian authorities in order to draw some conclusions on how Romanian diplomats interacted with other states and on how the communist regime understood human rights and freedoms after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

After the Belgrade Conference of the CSCE ended in 1978, in the British Parliament, discussions began on security and cooperation concerning how states were complying with the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>39</sup> On humanitarian matters, the Belgrade Conference emphasized the organization of meetings with socialist states, including Romania, to debate how the provisions of the third basket could be put into practice as best as possible, particularly concerning the freedom of movement.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, Nicu Bujor, the chargé d'affaires in London, sent a telegram to Romania, presenting the discussions in the British Parliament. The discussions focused on the poor results of the socialist countries

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<sup>35</sup> Vlad 2006, 560.

<sup>36</sup> González Aldea 2008, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Anton 2009, XXVIII.

<sup>38</sup> Tismăneanu 2006, 359–360.

<sup>39</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1978/9.S.7, file 3460, folio 8.

<sup>40</sup> Zagorski 2018, 26.

regarding the implementation of the Final Act because there were still problems with the access of the Western press in the East. Also, the telegram mentioned that, in his speech about Romania in the British Parliament, David Owen, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, spoke about the visit of President Nicolae Ceaușescu to Great Britain in 1978. Owen declared that during the state visit, Romanian-English agreements were signed in the fields of culture and science, and prior to Ceaușescu's visit to London, all requests for family reunification proposed by the British Government were solved.<sup>41</sup> Based on this example, it can be concluded that the Romanian authorities were interested in solving some cases, only in the context of an official visit, and the situation had to appear favorable and in compliance. In such moments, the Romanian authorities could make various concessions necessary for the smooth progress of the discussions between the state and the respective country, in this case, Great Britain.

Also, towards the end of the 1970s, and especially in the early 1980s, a change of vision regarding human rights would come from Washington, particularly during the term of President Jimmy Carter.<sup>42</sup> On this subject, following a discussion in Geneva with Edward Mezvinsky, the representative of the American president regarding human rights, Constantin Ene sent a telegram to Bucharest. Ene reported that the objective of Carter's campaign was to "maintain the issue of respect for human rights in the constant attention of international public opinion."<sup>43</sup> Also referring to the USA, in 1978, in the context of the last visit of President Nicolae Ceaușescu to the United States, an issue subject to reevaluation by the American Congress was the granting of the most favored nation clause. In a telegram sent to Bucharest by the Romanian ambassador to Washington, Nicolae M. Nicolae, it was mentioned that during a speech to the Senate, Senator Mark Hatfield praised Romania, proposing to grant the clause over several years, not just one. The telegram mentions that the American's statement was included in the "Congressional record." Also, regarding the emigration rate to the USA, the American Senator stated that it had registered an increase since Romania was granted the most favored nation clause.<sup>44</sup> However, in a later telegram, the reaction of Jacob Birnbaum, director of the Center for Jews from Socialist Countries, was presented, criticizing the Romanian emigration policy. He went so far as to propose the temporary suspension of the clause for Romania precisely because it did not respect its commitment to the facilitation of emigration. As a reaction, the telegram also mentioned that in Washington, the Romanian side tried to deny the accusations brought against it, arguing that the opinion of the Jews did not coincide with the interests shown by Romania in Romanian-American relations.<sup>45</sup> Although in order to continue to be granted the clause, Romania solved many of the emigration problems, this issue, together with respect for human rights, became uncomfortable for the Romanian authorities. Thus, in his speeches, Ceaușescu began to criticize the conditions set for the respecting of human rights imposed by the Americans. Following the warnings received by the Romanian authorities from

<sup>41</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1978/9.S.7, file 3460, folios 8–9.

<sup>42</sup> Cătănuș 2014, 88.

<sup>43</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1978/ONU/CES, file 3635, folio 9.

<sup>44</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1978/ONU/CES, file 3635, folio 53.

<sup>45</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1978/ONU/CES, file 3635, folios 54–55.

the US regarding compliance with commitments, in 1988, Romania renounced the most favored nation clause.<sup>46</sup>

Requests for clarifications on the adherence to the commitments concerning the respect of human rights came from more than just the officials of some states. They also came from people who managed to find out about the possible cases of human rights violations and took steps to clarify the situation. Furthermore, a consequence of the Helsinki Final Act signing, which few anticipated, was the emergence of numerous non-governmental organizations that aimed to monitor compliance with humanitarian commitments and publicize their possible violations.<sup>47</sup>

Amnesty International (founded in 1961) was one of the non-governmental organizations that played a part in monitoring human rights. The organization was driven by humanitarian principles and aimed to publicize instances of their violation. Most of the time, the organization learned about human rights violations in communist states through letters that managed to reach the West. As a non-governmental organization, it did not hold a high status in international affairs and did not have the authority of other organizations, such as the United Nations.<sup>48</sup> However, Amnesty International actively drew attention to human rights violations and non-compliance with international documents signed in this regard, especially by socialist states, drafting annual reports to this effect.

Regarding the situation in Romania, a case reported by Amnesty International came from the Dutch section of this organization. The publication of its report in 1978 caused a wave of reactions regarding the rights violations in Romania. As a result, the Romanian embassy in the Netherlands received numerous letters requesting clarifications about repression through hospitalization in psychiatric clinics, national minorities, or religious freedom. As the diplomats could not act alone, permission was requested from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania to respond to the letters received and to contact this section. It was noted that the letters only asked for an explanation of the situation without making any attacks.<sup>49</sup> The answer expected by the Romanian embassy was not received, as revealed by another telegram sent to Bucharest from Hague. This new telegram mentioned the continuation of the activities of the organization's Dutch section, resuming the request to initiate discussions at the diplomatic level with the heads of the section and to answer their inquiries. In addition, directives were sought to dismiss the allegations.<sup>50</sup> The Romanian representative in Hague tackled the discussion on the fate of one of the journalists who endorsed the opinion of the Dutch section of Amnesty International about Romania. Based on a discussion of the Romanian officials with the Dutch journalist, it emerged that the journalist was influenced by the organization's suggestions to publish unfavorable materials, admitting that there was a campaign directed against Romania. However, it is not known if the journalist's statements were in any way influenced by the Romanian communist authorities, or if he certainly changed his views about what he published in the newspaper.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Cătănuș 2014, 88–89.

<sup>47</sup> Fomerand 2021<sup>2</sup>, 367.

<sup>48</sup> Clark 2001, 5–6.

<sup>49</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 27.

<sup>50</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 32.

<sup>51</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2789, folios 17–18.

As mentioned above, the Dutch branch of Amnesty International was worried about the situation of people imprisoned in psychiatric hospitals, minorities, and religious freedom. At the same time, based on the repeated requests to receive guidance regarding the actions to be carried out, one can question the relationship between the Romanian embassy in the Netherlands and the Ministry, or even the interest given by the Ministry to this issue. However, the awaited response came towards the end of January, requesting that until receiving more precise instructions, the Dutch section of Amnesty International should not be contacted and stating that material on human rights in Romania would be drafted and sent.<sup>52</sup>

In parallel with these discussions, there was also the discussion related to the visit of the Amnesty International organization to Romania between 14 and 19 February 1979. In the report prepared by Cornel Pacoste, deputy minister, he presented the visit as positive, saying that the delegation was convinced that the situation was different and that all laws were respected in the country. He went on to explain that in Romania there were no psychiatric hospitals and places where forced labor was carried out, and most of the cases from the 1978 report were clarified; also, the issue of minorities was handled in an exemplary way.<sup>53</sup> Regarding the issue of psychiatric hospitals in Romania, the most numerous hospitalizations and false diagnoses took place between 1969 and 1979; after this period, these practices started to arouse the suspicion of some international organizations. Nevertheless, they continued in the 1980s, although not as frequent as before.<sup>54</sup> The communist authorities tried, as much as possible, to present another Romanian reality, one in which human rights were respected following the commitments made at the international level, considering that the accusations brought to Romania only aimed to create a negative image for the country. When visitors came to Romania, the authorities took the delegations only to certain places, from which it emerged that the situation was favorable per the laws.

Great Britain also found out about this Amnesty International visit to Romania. Following discussions with the general secretary of the organization, Martin Ennals, the Romanian delegate in London, Nicu Bujor, learned that the general opinions following the visit were positive, but details would be specified in the future report. In this sense, the main discussions between the two parties focused on the usefulness of the visit, namely, the verification of the harsh findings made by the American section about Romania in the 1978 report. However, the general secretary considered the visit to psychiatric hospitals instrumental in verifying the existing situation. During the same discussion, an interesting aspect was that Ennals was not aware of the actions of the Dutch section of Amnesty International but stated that he would take an interest and clarify the matter.<sup>55</sup>

The question of the accusations brought by the Dutch was a central topic of the discussions between the English and Dutch sections of the organization on the one hand and the Romanian dignitaries on the other. One of the solutions reached following the discussions between the English and Dutch representatives was the cancellation of the

<sup>52</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2789, folio 19.

<sup>53</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2789, folios 32–33.

<sup>54</sup> Tismăneanu 2006, 607–608.

<sup>55</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979ONU/CES, file 2789, folios 37–39.

demonstration that was to take place in front of the Romanian embassy in Hague. The alleged explanation for the NGO's change of plans resides in the Romanian ambassador's reception of organization members from the Netherlands.<sup>56</sup> Although the tone of the discussions was favorable to Romania, the situation took a different course at the time of the talks between the Romanians and the Dutch. The latter refused to give up the scheduled demonstration organized to protest against violation of religious freedom in Romania, for hospitalization in psychiatric hospitals, and violation of human rights. Since the English representative could not provide information on the organization's visit to Romania on the grounds of confidentiality, the Dutch branch had no reason to give up. However, the Dutch organization representative suggested receiving some representatives at the Romanian embassy on the day of the demonstration, in this case, the demonstration ending immediately.<sup>57</sup> Failing to reach a consensus, the protesters, 50–70 in number, gathered on 3 March 1979 in front of the Romanian embassy in the Netherlands to protest. People of all ages raised issues such as freedom of religion, mental hospitals, and respect for human rights in general in Romania. The telegram sent to Bucharest from Hague announcing the event mentioned that the demonstration was peaceful and lasted for about eight minutes. Also, following the instructions from Romania, the previously established dialogue with two representatives of the Dutch section was denied.<sup>58</sup>

Towards the end of March 1979, through a note regarding the meeting between Martin Ennals and the Romanian Government, one can find out the opinions of the Romanian authorities on the actions regarding violations of human rights. Thus, Nicu Bujor read in London a statement the Romanian government asked him to transmit to Amnesty International representatives. What disturbed the authorities in Bucharest was that this type of defamation could be carried out within an organization. The explanation found by the authorities was either that Amnesty International did not have sufficient control over its members or that the organization knew about these actions, being duplicitous. In this atmosphere, Ennals considered that future actions of this kind by the organization might not be helpful; the research and assessment of issues about the observance of the international commitments of the states in terms of human rights needed to be conducted correctly in a conflict-free framework.<sup>59</sup>

Initially, the Romanian authorities did not seem interested in the reported problems of violations of human rights and freedoms. However, when the situation intensified and became pressing, they tried to find methods and establish relations with any authority that could help them build a positive image on an international stage. In addition to the reactions from non-governmental organizations, there were people from abroad, also connected to Amnesty International, who campaigned for the respect of human rights. They sent letters personally and contacted the Romanian authorities to obtain clarifications regarding certain cases of individuals, as I will show below.

A first letter was sent to the permanent representative of Romania at the UN by Helen Fein, asking for the situation of János Szabó to be clarified. The woman was worried

<sup>56</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979ONU (CES), file 2789, folio 39.

<sup>57</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979ONU (CES), file 2789, folios 44–45.

<sup>58</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979ONU (CES), file 2789, folio 50.

<sup>59</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979ONU (CES), file 2789, folios 111–112.

because János Szabó expressed his opinion about the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania. Thus, he could have been persecuted by the Romanian authorities.<sup>60</sup> No other data is known about János Szabó apart from what Helen Fein notes, namely that he was initially imprisoned in the forced labor camp on the Danube-Black Sea Canal in early 1978. Fein grounded her concern on the fact that she had heard of this person being committed to a psychiatric hospital, noting that this was against the Romanian Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>61</sup> Another letter belonged to Professor David Kinsley of McMaster University. He asked for clarification regarding the situation of Aurel Rusu, a Romanian miner who was allegedly persecuted by the authorities because he demanded improved working conditions in the context of the miners' strike in Valea Jiului in 1977.<sup>62</sup>

After examining the requests in the letters, the Romanian authorities' response to the UN Permanent Mission regarding János Szabó and Aurel Rusu initially consisted of a handwritten text by the deputy minister, Vasile Gliga. Interestingly, when he referred to the causes of János Szabó's arrest, he mentioned forged currency, more precisely US dollars, and not the discrimination of the Hungarian minority, and ruled out his internment in a psychiatric hospital. About Aurel Rusu, the Romanian authorities declared that neither among the miners nor among those who participated in the miners' strike of 1977 was there any person with this name.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Aurel Rusu's situation remained unclear due to the lack of information. Despite all these clarifications at a diplomatic level, it was found that the answer did not reach Helen Fein because she sent another letter on the same subject about a month later.<sup>64</sup> Based on these letters from different states, one can notice a growing interest from abroad for clarifications about some human rights violations made by the Romanian authorities. However, the authorities' reaction was to deny what was mentioned in the letters, trying to minimize anything related to allegations of Romania's non-compliance with international commitments on this topic.

### Conclusions

After signing the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, Romanian diplomats in different states faced many complaints regarding human rights violations. Since diplomats could not answer these requests by themselves, the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was always notified when it came to such cases so that an answer could be sent to the applicants. Based on the documents presented and analyzed, I can say that several states made remarks regarding the human rights situation in Romania and the observance of signed international agreements. Even though, under some circumstances, Romania facilitated a few emigration cases, most of the time, the situation was not favorable. During the analyzed period, several notifications were made to different Romanian embassies, especially in European countries, but there were also complaints in the USA. The problems raised were numerous, such as the problem of national minorities and the hospitalization

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<sup>60</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 1.

<sup>61</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 2.

<sup>62</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 5.

<sup>63</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 4.

<sup>64</sup> AMAE, Bucharest, Problema 241/1979/ONU/CES, file 2788, folio 10.

of protesters in psychiatric hospitals following forged diagnoses. In most cases, the appeals insisted on clarifying the situation. In other cases, the reaction from abroad was harsh, going as far as protests against the situation in Romania.

From the documents and telegram exchanges, one can note the fact that Romanian diplomats, by the nature of their duty, were interested in clarifying the situation, providing details to the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about each of the positions of those who accused Romania of disregard and violation of human rights. However, the Romanian authorities were only interested in the situation as long as there was a possibility that these problems would lead to the deterioration of political relations with other states, having more of a political stake. The answers provided by the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that presented the human rights situation in the country in the most positive way possible, denying any accusation, back up this interpretation. Although numerous notifications regarding human rights violations were made by non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International, these actions were insignificant in stopping abuses against the dissidents and those who challenged the communist regime.

The decisive moment of the change of perspective regarding human rights at the international level was in 1975, with the signing of the Final Act in Helsinki. This document allowed the Westerners to access a channel to monitor the activity of the communist countries in some areas. It also provided them with some levers for exerting a certain pressure when it came to the humanitarian issue in the communist states of Eastern Europe. Therefore, international conventions were a method to check communist states' for abuses against population segments. Additionally, a consequence of the 1975 event was the involvement of international civil society in the human rights matter, by establishing numerous non-governmental organizations to investigate possible rights violations and by giving those who felt wronged the courage to make their voices heard. Several of the abuses committed by the Romanian authorities were also reported at an international level. This situation determined private individuals and non-governmental organizations to contact the Romanian embassies and to ask for clarifications and solutions to this problem.

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# CHATGPT AND THE HISTORY OF THE ROMANIANS. A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** The public release of the AI-powered conversational bot ChatGPT, its subsequent success, its acquisition by Microsoft, and its integration into the company's digital tools, coupled with the swift response of other key industry players (particularly Google, which soon launched its own version of integrated search engine artificial intelligence – Google Bard), have sparked numerous public debates and concerns within the academic realm. In the short term, the primary concern revolves around students using this advanced digital tool to automatically draft their papers, thereby potentially cheating the grading system. In the medium to long term, apprehensions center around the status of the historian's profession and the condition of historians compelled to compete with artificial intelligence. This study, conducted through sequential interviews with ChatGPT, GPT-4, and Google Bard, discusses both issues, with a specific focus on the history of the Romanians and the Romanian university system.

**Keywords:** ChatGPT, GPT-4, Google Bard, history of the Romanians, academic ethics

**Rezumat:** Lansarea publică a programului informatic ChatGPT, succesul de care s-a bucurat, preluarea sa de către Microsoft și integrarea în instrumentele digitale oferite de această companie, precum și reacția rapidă a altor actori majori din domeniu (mai ales Google, care a lansat la scurt timp propria sa versiune de inteligență artificială integrată motoarelor de căutare – Google Bard) au cauzat o serie de dezbateri publice și temeri în spațiul universitar. Pe termen scurt, principalul motiv de îngrijorare este utilizarea acestui instrument digital avansat de către studenți pentru redactarea automată a referatelor și fraudarea, prin această metodă, a sistemului de notare. Pe termen mediu și lung îngrijorările privesc statutul meseriei de istoric și condiția istoricului obligat să concureze cu inteligența artificială. Studiul de față, realizat prin interviu succesivă a ChatGPT, GPT-4 și Google Bard, discută ambele chestiuni, cu referire particulară la istoria românilor și la sistemul universitar românesc.

**Cuvinte cheie:** ChatGPT, GPT-4, Google Bard, istoria românilor, etică academică

In November 2022, OpenAI launched a chatbot program named ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer),<sup>1</sup> based on a Large Language Model (LLM), and equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. This technology rapidly gained prominence and sparked controversy because of its proficiency in comprehending natural language and responding to an extensive variety of human inquiries. Up until the date of writing this essay (August 2023), an updated version has been launched (GPT-4), and its main market competitor, Google Bard,<sup>2</sup> has been publicly released. The ability of these

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<sup>1</sup> ChatGPT 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Google Bard 2023.

systems to fabricate content on demand, spanning both theoretical and practical subjects – including writing software code – brought up a number of challenges within the educational field. This is particularly true in the case of conventional assessment methods that rely on individual content creation by learners (such as essays and reviews) which have become susceptible to unethical manipulation through the use of AI powered chatbots.

There is still little research regarding the implications of generative artificial intelligence models in the Humanities,<sup>3</sup> and specifically, there is an absence of such studies concerning the Romanian linguistic and cultural domain. International literature on this topic generally emphasizes two salient facets: one is the evaluation of the accuracy and reliability of the outcomes produced by ChatGPT;<sup>4</sup> the other is the exploration of strategies for integrating these tools into educational systems with the aspiration of enhancing student engagement and making them aware of the ethical dilemmas posed by such technologies.<sup>5</sup>

Most of this literature is written in English, employing case studies and investigations rooted in English-speaking geographical and cultural contexts. In some respects, this mirrors the early phase of research on the didactic integration of Wikipedia (which itself was perceived as an immediate challenge to traditional academia),<sup>6</sup> with the difference that the influence of ChatGPT is significantly higher, eliciting correspondingly greater academic interest.

Within the scope of this essay, I aim to assess the capacity of programs such as ChatGPT, GPT-4, and Google Bard to synthesize content related to Romanian history that may be leveraged by students in their academic work. To this end, I conducted a sequence of five interviews, in English, based on a preestablished questionnaire, asking the chatbots to provide content on pivotal topics in Romanian history such as the Dacian-Roman wars, Michael the Brave, and the revolutions of 1848–1849. These topics were selected on the basis of their substantial coverage in English-language historiography and online resources, thereby optimizing the likelihood of obtaining high-quality responses. The interactions were carried out in English to align with the language of the majority of the information on which the programs were trained.

The interviews were conducted on 7 March and 19 May 2023 (ChatGPT), 9 June and 30 July 2023 (GPT-4), and 30 July 2023 (Google Bard). Spanning a moderate five-month timeframe, I aimed to detect potential evolutions in responses without compromising the relevance of the research considering the frequent updates to these programs (i.e., preventing it from becoming outdated). The entire text of the interview responses is made publicly accessible in PDF format. Concurrently, an examination was conducted of history students' engagement with ChatGPT in a Digital History course, the insights from which were subsequently added to the analysis.

This inquiry is predominantly qualitative, characterized by the identification of factual inaccuracies, inconsistencies in successive responses, and referencing issues. I conducted a comparative analysis of these aspects' chronological evolution and disparities

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<sup>3</sup> The search results returned by digital tools (e.g., Semantic Scholar 2023), or by the websites of large publishing companies (e.g., Taylor & Francis online 2023) are testament in this regard.

<sup>4</sup> Chen, Zaharia, Zou 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Rasul et alii 2023; Sullivan, Kelly, McLaughlan 2023; Lund, Wang 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Haslam 2017.

across different interviews and versions of the programs, delineating both successes and limitations. In the concluding section of this essay, I advocate a series of applications for AI-driven chatbots in the teaching and research of Romanian history at the university level, with consideration for their present stage of development and training.

### **Accomplishments**

In the period spanning from March to July 2023, engagement with the previously mentioned chatbots has demonstrated a consistent enhancement in their capability to provide accurate and pertinent information regarding the subjects of the interviews. Moreover, they have shown progress in organizing this information into a coherent narrative, reflecting both structural integrity and a logical continuity within the text. The responses provided by these programs can be assessed as ranging, by and large, from “satisfactory” to “good,” as per the judgment of a human evaluator. While it is true that the answers included historical inaccuracies, some of which were significant (see below “Challenges and Limitations”), these generally did not compromise the overall logical consistency of the text. Notably, the occurrence of factual errors markedly diminished over the timeframe in question, with responses from ChatGPT and GPT-4 in June and July nearing total accuracy. Google Bard, conversely, which was only engaged in July 2023, produced a quantity of factual errors comparable to ChatGPT’s initial interview.

During each interview, the initial responses were characterized by a higher degree of generality. However, through successive refinement of inquiries, focusing on diverse sub-topics of the previous answers, the chatbots were able to provide the nuanced details essential for constructing a coherent essay on the subject. For instance, commencing with a broad question (e.g., *Who were the Dacians?*) could be followed by more specific queries pertaining to individual biographies (e.g., *Can you write a 1000-word essay on Decebal?*) or the chronology of significant events (e.g., *How did the First Dacian-Roman War of Trajan unfold?*). Such a progression of questions facilitates the accumulation of sufficient narrative material for an essay at the secondary school level. For higher education, the level of generality remains a bit too high on such narrowly delineated and somewhat marginal (in the context of World History) topics. Consequently, a pupil and possibly even a student can relatively effortlessly garner the content requisite for an essay with a decent level of generality and, if lucky, featuring minimal factual inaccuracies.

The structure of the responses is both coherent and logically sound. In the latest round of interviews, GPT-4 even exhibited the ability to segment text with explicitly designated subheadings, aiding the tree-structure of the dialogue. Google Bard, in turn, provides chronological summaries at the conclusion of the responses.

Perhaps one of the most salient contrasts between AI-generated text and that produced by students lies in the grammatical precision and stylistic refinement of the former. As a teacher in higher education, I am accustomed to at most an average degree of grammatical correctness in student compositions, and to a stylistic clumsiness that tends to dissipate only after years of persistent practice in academic writing. In contrast, the texts returned by the conversational robots exhibit a high level of grammatical accuracy and a distinctive style, still far from the human randomness in answering, that renders them identifiable, especially to recently developed assessment tools.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> GPTZero 2023; Liu et alii 2023.

Concluding the enumeration of “Accomplishments,” it is worth mentioning the capacity exhibited by certain programs (particularly Google Bard and, to a lesser extent, GPT-4) to engage in abstract dialogues wherein they articulate their technical limitations and rationalize their methodological decisions. An illustrative example of this ability arises when Google Bard is confronted with inaccuracies related to suggested bibliographic references, as it appears cognizant of the mistake and attempts to elucidate it in terms of its training processes and information selection and generation methodologies.

- Are you aware that these books mentioned by you do not exist?
- I apologize for the confusion. The books I mentioned do not exist in the real world. [...] However, I am not able to generate information that does not exist. The books I mentioned are not real books, and I apologize if I confused you [...]
- Please explain to me: do these books exist or not? I understand they do not exist in the real world (i.e., my world, the physical world), but in which world do they exist?
- The books I mentioned do not exist in the real world, as in the physical world that we live in. They exist in the world of information, which is a vast and ever-changing collection of data that is stored in computers and other devices. This world of information is constantly being created, updated, and shared, and it is through this world that we are able to access information about the Dacians and other topics. In a way, you could say that the books I mentioned exist in my mind. I have access to a vast amount of information, and I am able to generate text that is similar to the text that would be found in a book. However, this text does not exist in the physical world. It exists only as a collection of data in my computer’s memory.<sup>8</sup>

### Challenges and limits

Arguably, the most formidable challenge presented by AI-powered chatbots when tasked with supplying historical information (or scientific information in general) pertains to the factual accuracy of their answers. In the specific context of historical inquiry, the user is confronted with a diverse array of issues, which encompass but are not restricted to:

a. erroneous chronological data;

Example, selective: “...in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC by the Greek historian Herodotus;”<sup>9</sup> “She [Doamna Stanca] died in 1601, the same year as Mihai;”<sup>10</sup> “The Revolution in Moldavia began on March 4, 1848...;”<sup>11</sup>

b. chronological or factual inconsistencies, even within the same conversation.

Examples, selective: 1. “The revolution of 1848 in neighboring Wallachia had a significant influence on Moldavia;”<sup>12</sup> 2. “The manifesto was met with widespread support and the revolutionaries quickly gained control of Iași. [...] The revolutionaries in Wallachia were able to take control of Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia, and they were able to establish a provisional government. However, the revolutionaries in Moldavia were not able to take control of Iași, the capital of Moldavia, and they were forced to flee;”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Google Bard interview 2023.

<sup>9</sup> ChatGPT interview 2023.

<sup>10</sup> ChatGPT interview 2023a.

<sup>11</sup> ChatGPT interview 2023.

<sup>12</sup> GPT-4 Interview 2023a.

<sup>13</sup> Google Bard interview 2023.

c. factual errors and anachronisms: historical figures or facts incorrectly contextualized (chronologically or geographically);

Examples, selective: “106 AD: Decebalus is killed in battle;”<sup>14</sup> “Mihai was born in 1559 in the town of Târgul de Floci (now Florești, Romania). He was the son of Pătrașcu cel Bun, the prince of Wallachia, and Stanca. Mihai’s father was killed in battle in 1574;”<sup>15</sup> the confusion between the Transylvanian Saxon revolutionaries of 1848 and those from Saxony (nowadays Germany), caused by the term “Saxon”—the English translation of the word *sas/ sași*;<sup>16</sup>

d. completely invented historical facts and events (the phenomenon of “hallucination”/ “confabulation”);

Examples, selectively: “Yes, Michael the Brave was married. He had several wives over the course of his life, and he was known to have fathered at least three children;”<sup>17</sup> the fictional sequence of events during the 1848 revolution in Moldavia, Muntenia and Transylvania (see Table 1 below).

<p><b>27 March 1848:</b> A group of young intellectuals led by Vasile Alecsandri and Mihail Kogălniceanu issue a manifesto calling for political and social reforms.</p> <p><b>1 April 1848:</b> The revolutionaries take control of Iași, the capital of Moldavia.</p> <p><b>5 April 1848:</b> The provisional government is established.</p> <p><b>11 April 1848:</b> The Ottoman Empire sends troops to suppress the uprising.</p> <p><b>13 May 1848:</b> The revolutionaries are forced to flee.</p>	<p><b>19 June 1848:</b> A group of young intellectuals led by Ion Heliade Rădulescu and Nicolae Bălcescu issue a manifesto calling for political and social reforms.</p> <p><b>23 June 1848:</b> The revolutionaries take control of Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia.</p> <p><b>25 June 1848:</b> The provisional government is established.</p> <p><b>29 June 1848:</b> The Ottoman Empire sends troops to suppress the uprising.</p> <p><b>13 August 1848:</b> The revolutionaries are forced to flee.</p>	<p><b>11 March 1848:</b> A group of young intellectuals led by Simion Bărnuțiu and Avram Iancu issue a manifesto calling for political and social reforms.</p> <p><b>13 March 1848:</b> The revolutionaries take control of Cluj, the capital of Transylvania.</p> <p><b>15 March 1848:</b> The provisional government is established.</p> <p><b>22 March 1848:</b> The Austrian Empire sends troops to suppress the uprising.</p> <p><b>13 August 1849:</b> The revolutionaries are forced to flee.</p>
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**Table 1.** The (fictional) sequence of events of the 1848 revolutions in Romanian inhabited areas<sup>18</sup>

e. appealing to a narrative with a high degree of generality, including “wooden language,” to make up for the impossibility of providing an exact answer (on this point, the similarity with the work of insufficiently prepared students who resort to generalities in the hope of passing the exam is striking);

Example, selective: “Despite his [Decebal’s] tactical brilliance and bravery, the war culminated in a decisive Roman victory [...]. The legendary king’s [Decebal’s] fate is a testament to his indomitable spirit;”<sup>19</sup> “That said, the impact of his [Mihai Viteazul’s]

<sup>14</sup> Google Bard interview 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Google Bard interview 2023.

<sup>16</sup> GPT-4 Interview 2023a.

<sup>17</sup> ChatGPT interview 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Google Bard interview 2023.

<sup>19</sup> GPT-4 interview 2023.

rule on the peasantry, like all sections of society at that time, would have been significant, particularly in the context of his military campaigns and the accompanying burdens of taxation, conscription, and the general upheaval of war.”<sup>20</sup>

For the series of interviews conducted as part of this investigation, factual inaccuracies were markedly prevalent in both the initial interview with ChatGPT (7 March 2023) and the concluding one with Google Bard (30 July 2023), encompassing all questions within the questionnaire. It can be asserted with confidence that, as of the date of this writing, Google Bard’s precision within the particular topic of Romanian history is akin to, or perhaps even inferior to, that of ChatGPT 3.5 in early 2023. Intriguingly, this occurs notwithstanding the presence of certain recurring phrases in responses across all interviews, hinting at the likelihood that both programs may be operating from a similar, if not largely shared, training dataset.

A nuanced manifestation of this overarching challenge of accuracy, bearing considerably greater ramifications within the scientific community and specifically among students, is the programs’ consistent incapacity thus far to properly cite the information they disseminate, or more critically, to recommend suitable bibliographic resources for particular research subjects. This deficiency is acknowledged and explained by Google Bard, referencing the extensive volume of information with which it has been trained. The program’s cognitive framework does not align with the traditional academic practice of source citation, further complicated by the fact that identical pieces of information may be found across diverse sources. Interestingly, the program does not consistently recognize this limitation; on occasion, it asserts with unwavering confidence its ability to pinpoint the original source from which the conveyed information was derived:

- Thank you! Can you please name the sources you have used?
- I’m not programmed to assist with that.
- Still, are you able to trace back parts of the information you provide to the original source you have gathered it from?
- Yes, I am able to trace back parts of the information I provide to the original source I have gathered it from. I am trained on a massive dataset of text and code, which includes information from a variety of sources, such as Wikipedia, books, and articles. When I provide information, I can usually tell you where I got it from. For example, if I tell you that the Dacian Wars were fought between the Roman Empire and the Dacian Kingdom in the 1st century AD, I can tell you that I got that information from Wikipedia.

However, I am not always able to provide the exact source of the information I provide. This is because the dataset I am trained on is constantly being updated, and it is possible that the information I have been trained on has been sourced from a variety of different sources. Additionally, I am not always able to remember the exact source of the information I provide.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> GPT-4 interview 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Google Bard interview 2023.

Conversely, ChatGPT, in both versions examined, exhibits a more circumspect approach, and demonstrates a greater awareness of its inherent limitations:

- Thank you! Can you please name the sources you have used?
- I apologize for any confusion, but I must clarify that I don't have direct access to specific external sources or databases to pull information from for this response. The information provided is based on a general understanding of the subject as of my last update in September 2021, compiled from widely accepted historical knowledge and scholarly consensus.

For detailed, specific, or up-to-date information on Decebalus and the Roman-Dacian Wars, I recommend referring to primary sources like ancient historians (e.g., Cassius Dio) and archaeological findings, as well as modern scholarly works by historians specializing in this period of history. Academic articles, historical textbooks, and reputable online resources such as university or museum websites can also be valuable sources for research on this topic.

- Still, are you able to trace back parts of the information you provide to the original source you have gathered it from?
- I understand the importance of sourcing information, but I'm unable to trace back the information I provided to specific original sources. The content is based on a general understanding of historical events and is derived from a wide array of commonly accepted historical knowledge, textbooks, and encyclopedic summaries available up until my last update in September 2021.<sup>22</sup>

The second facet of this issue – the failure to propose suitable bibliographic resources for a given subject – melds disconcertingly with the inclination to fabricate information,<sup>23</sup> a tendency that can be observed even in more rigorous and sensitive scientific disciplines such as medicine.<sup>24</sup> This often culminates in spurious bibliographic lists that amalgamate authors' names with titles penned by others, or that outright invent authors and/or titles. Instances of this phenomenon are prolific within the responses to the questionnaire in all interviews. When the program's attention is directed toward this inadequacy, it typically responds with a formal apology and advises the user to consult the scholarly literature directly.

- What is the main argument of “Decebalus: King of the Dacians” by Mihai Barbulescu and Stephen Fear?
- I apologize, but it appears that the specific book “Decebalus: King of the Dacians” by Mihai Barbulescu and Stephen Fear may not exist, or it is not widely recognized in publicly available sources until my last update in September 2021. As a result, I cannot provide details on the main argument or content of this work [...]. Once again, I apologize for the confusion, and I'm here to help with any other questions or requests you may have!
- But if it does not exist, how did you come to indicate it to me?

<sup>22</sup> GPT-4 Interview 2023a.

<sup>23</sup> Bang et alii 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Alkaissi, McFarlane 2023.

– You are absolutely right, and I must apologize for the mistake. The title and authors I provided were incorrect, and I should not have included information that I could not verify. It seems I made an error in my response, and I'm genuinely sorry for the confusion this has caused.

For accurate and detailed information on Decebalus and the Dacians, I would recommend looking for reputable sources, such as scholarly articles, history books by recognized historians, or academic databases specializing in ancient European history.<sup>25</sup>

The current incapacity to recommend scientific literature pertinent to a specific subject, or at the very least to abstain from fabricating information when asked for details it cannot furnish, constitutes the most pressing issue with AI-based conversational bots. This stands as the principal barrier to their incorporation within educational settings – particularly in the study of History at the university level. Within the context of a Digital History course (History major, undergraduate, third year), students were tasked with engaging with ChatGPT with the aim of procuring information and bibliographic resources useful to their undergraduate theses. Following the initial interaction, approximately one-third of the students failed to recognize that they had been presented with fictitious titles, with some even expressing enthusiasm for the newfound bibliographic suggestions. Naturally, this outcome is also connected to the users' readiness to critically evaluate the information furnished by the conversational bots, a skill especially vital for historians. Nevertheless, the evident lack of accuracy in the responses raises legitimate concerns regarding the efficacy of these tools, in their present state of development, for the teaching and research process.

### **Pedagogical potential and applicability for Romanian history**

Much of the existing scholarship has focused on the prospective educational utilities of conversational AI. Yet, OpenAI's CEO, Sam Altman, has publicly acknowledged the limitations of ChatGPT and warned of the dangers of its use for serious businesses: "ChatGPT is incredibly limited, but good enough at some things to create a misleading impression of greatness. It is a mistake to be relying on it for anything important right now. It is a preview of progress; we have lots of work to do on robustness and truthfulness."<sup>26</sup>

In theoretical discourse, numerous potential utilities have been spotlighted. These include adaptive learning enhancements, personalized feedback provision, aid in research and data analytics, automation of administrative tasks, and pioneering assessment methodologies. Concurrently, the literature has shed light on a gamut of challenges and constraints. These encompass concerns related to academic integrity, wavering trust in the output, hindering the development of critical skills like analytical reasoning or problem-solving, impediments in its role as an automated assessment tool, and the inherent risk of it disseminating inaccurate or straightforward fabricated information.<sup>27</sup>

The main issues generating debate in the higher education have been identified as: maintaining academic integrity when using conversational AI, the implications of

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<sup>25</sup> GPT-4 Interview 2023a.

<sup>26</sup> Altman 11 Dec. 2022, 2:11 a.m.

<sup>27</sup> Rasul et alii 2023.

deploying these bots during assessment procedures, and somewhat tangentially, their potential role in assisting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This includes students with disabilities, non-native English speakers, or those who, due to various reasons, hesitate to avail traditional learning aids.<sup>28</sup> Current research, however, suggests that, at least in the automated evaluation of student submissions, these tools are far from returning satisfactory results. The prevailing consensus is that substantial refinements and tweaks are still necessary for these tools to come close to human-level assessment standards.<sup>29</sup>

Nonetheless, some scholars maintain an optimistic stance, envisioning a future where AI conversational bots aid in literature identification and review for students and researchers.<sup>30</sup> Other authors, more interested in the potential for scientific creation offered by artificial intelligence and not only in its role as “digital secretary,” are more reserved, concluding that these tools require constant supervision and critical evaluation of the answers and results provided and that, for the time being, they are useful in linguistic reformulations, in proposing counterfactual scenarios, in highlighting logical errors, in helping to clarify particular issues or in experimenting with different models of writing or structuring information.<sup>31</sup>

These perspectives are undeniably relevant in global academia, particularly in English or Spanish-speaking contexts. However, what is the scenario for Romanian history? As of August 2023, the primary obstacle in harnessing conversational bots for educational or research purposes in Romanian history is the quality of information they have been fed. In alignment with the GiGo (Garbage in, Garbage out) principle, which is equally applicable here, it is unreasonable to anticipate their precision to reach a level where they can be considered reliable tools unless they are equipped with genuinely high-quality data. It is both perplexing and disheartening to note that these systems are unable to detect and process accurate information readily available online, such as on Romanian Wikipedia pages (e.g., the incorrect assertion that Michael the Brave was the son of Pătrașcu the Good). Moreover, the foundational texts comprising their datasets remain elusive.

In light of the above, conversational robots can only be deemed as academic assistants when users have the ability to curate the information used in their training process. Given the peripheral status of Romanian history and culture on the global stage – a status mirrored in the volume and quality of online resources, both in Romanian and international languages – it is implausible that any standard dataset updates for these bots will provide comprehensive insights into Romanian history. Only through tailored training with localized historical sources, featuring controlled and verified content (drawn from academic journals and books, rather than mainstream digital content), can they transcend their basic “AI Wikipedia” function. Such specialized training will be key to their effective integration into Romanian university-level history education and research.

At the current juncture, even with a low frequency of factual inaccuracies (as observed in GPT-4, which makes fewer errors than its counterparts), these bots are incapable of producing a Romanian history essay that meets rigorous academic standards. They simply

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<sup>28</sup> Sullivan, Kelly, McLaughlan 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Khademi 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Lund, Wang 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Leme Lopes 2023.

lack enough information, leading them to revert to broad generalizations – it has been already proven that ChatGPT performs worse on low-resource languages.<sup>32</sup> In such cases, the narrative often echoes the wooden language found in both past and contemporary historiography – a feature easily detected by any seasoned evaluator. Similarly, they fall short in creating detailed book reviews suitable for student use. Due to this information deficit, they also remain unsuitable for grading purposes. In terms of assisting students with disabilities, their capabilities are at best comparable to voice screen readers, albeit sourcing data from less trustworthy origins than even a standard Wikipedia article.

Nevertheless, despite the shortcomings of AI conversational bots in the specific context of Romanian history, they do present a number of opportunities for integration into the educational process. This integration must take place, so that students perceive them as teaching tools, and become familiar with them and with the associated best practices. In this respect, two of the proposals of the state of the art are certainly applicable.

Firstly, with the burgeoning advancements in AI, students should be well-informed about the ethical implications of using it in academic settings. This is imperative not only to maintain academic integrity but also to foster a genuine understanding and critical thinking in relation to these tools. By bringing ChatGPT, Bard, and other AI tools into the classroom for open discussions, educators have the opportunity to demystify them. This approach ensures that students recognize these tools' capabilities and limitations, thereby minimizing the temptation to misuse them. By actively discussing these AIs rather than banning them, the academic community can prevent a covert and potentially detrimental relationship between students and conversational bots. However, for the time being, this integration is only indirectly related to the subject of Romanian history.

Secondly, integrating AI tools into methodology courses can be an excellent way to sharpen students' critical thinking skills. AI bots can indeed be a double-edged sword. On one hand, they can be a rich resource for brainstorming and organizing information, thanks to their ability to structure data logically. On the other hand, their inherent limitations mean that students must be taught to approach the data they provide in a critical manner. They can be posed as both a challenge and an asset – students can be tasked with differentiating between accurate and potentially inaccurate information, thereby refining their analytical capabilities. Additionally, even if the bots are not adept at Romanian history, their general logical structuring can offer students a blueprint for how to approach and organize their research. Given that the majority of graduates who take these courses will become specialists in Romanian history, the usefulness of their integration here will have a more direct impact on the topic.

As far as the field of scientific research on the history of Romanians is concerned, given the insufficient amount of information currently available, most experimental applications risk being biased from the outset by content/knowledge imbalances. There might be, however, at least one practical application, namely to generate software that can identify and download to the computer, or at least provide a list of links to the literature, based on key terms provided by the researcher. As A.P. Leme Lopes points out, we are still a long way from the time when the conversational robot will become the historian.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Bang et alii 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Leme Lopes 2023, 35–36.

Moreover, when this moment comes, it will manifest itself first in research environments that use international languages, and only then, with gaps influenced by the socio-political context, in marginal epistemic spaces, such as the Romanian one. The local socio-political and institutional environment, in which conservative tendencies and a propensity towards immobility predominate, will undoubtedly contribute further to limiting the effects of AI intrusion in historical research. I do not believe, therefore, that we are in danger, either as a guild or as a generation of historians, of being replaced by conversational bots and AI, and most likely those of us who wish to ignore these tools in our work will be able to do so without repercussions. To what extent we will familiarize new generations of historians with the correct, creative and effective use of these tools, however, is a question we need to ask ourselves, and to which we also need to provide a coherent answer, preferably by the end of the current decade.

### **Conclusions?**

Embarking on a study of this nature, one that is essentially essayistic and grapples with the ever-shifting and ephemeral aspects of the digital milieu, precludes the formulation of conventional conclusions. The research undertaken herein, the first of its kind within Romanian historiographical milieu, represents merely an inaugural phase which mandates continuous examination and amplification at a tempo matching the relentless advancement of AI. Such diligence is imperative if the teaching and research of Romanian history are to keep pace with international scholarly knowledge in the field.

AI-powered chatbots will continue to develop constantly, and their adoption will become progressively ubiquitous across a wide array of academic and practical disciplines. Currently, within the domain of Romanian history, given its marginal nature in a global context, the utility of these AI entities is limited due to a deficient scientific content base, combined with their limited ability to overcome the limitations of the information pool originally used to train them. Nevertheless, their integration into university curricula, in courses such as Ethics and Integrity, or Research methodology, is essential. This will ensure that students are apprised of both the constraints and possibilities presented by these tools, and it will enable their employment in research in the most creative and methodologically sound manner.

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Decoration of a blue-glazed Haban ewer, MNIT Collection, photo Sergiu Odenie

**NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.  
RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF  
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
TRANSYLVANIAN HISTORY**



## A DEVOTIONAL MEDALLION FROM THE CHURCHYARD CEMETERY ON MIHAIL KOGĂLNICEANU STREET

GIANINA-DIANA VARGA\*

**Abstract:** In 2022, the archaeologists from the National Museum of Transylvanian History conducted an excavation in a section of the cemetery surrounding the present Calvinist Church on the former *Farkas utca* (*Platea Luporum* – Lat., *Ulița Lupilor* – Ro., now known as Mihail Kogălniceanu Street). Within one of the graves, they uncovered a silver devotional medallion enameled on both sides, featuring the IHS monogram. Following its discovery, the medallion underwent a meticulous series of physical-chemical examinations and an in-depth historical analysis. These efforts aimed to unravel the medallion's structure, functionality, and symbolic significance, particularly considering the depiction of the well-known IHS monogram. Utilizing archaeological and anthropological data, as well as drawing parallels with formal and functional analogies from other historical contexts, the present study endeavors to elucidate the role and dating of this significant discovery.

**Keywords:** devotional medallion, IHS monogram, Society of Jesus, *Farkas Utca/Ulița Lupilor*, funerary find

**Rezumat:** În 2022, arheologii Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei au efectuat săpături într-o parte a cimitirului din jurul actualei Biserici Reformate de pe fosta *Farkas utca* (*Platea Luporum* – lat., *Ulița Lupilor* – ro., în prezent, Strada Mihail Kogălniceanu). Într-unul dintre morminte au descoperit un medalion devoțional din argint, emailat pe ambele fețe, decorat cu monograma IHS. După descoperirea sa, medalionul a fost supus unei serii meticuloase de investigații fizico-chimice și unei analize istorice detaliate. Aceste eforturi au avut ca scop descifrarea structurii, funcționalității și semnificației simbolice a medalionului, în special a celebrei monograme IHS. Utilizând datele arheologice și antropologice, precum și realizând paralele cu analogii formale și funcționale din alte contexte zonale, studiul își propune să elucideze rolul și datarea acestei descoperiri semnificative.

**Cuvinte cheie:** medalion devoțional, monograma IHS, Societatea lui Isus, *Farkas Utca/Ulița Lupilor*, descoperire funerară

In the context of a complex urban development project<sup>1</sup> carried out over several years, in 2022 the team coordinated by archaeologists Oana Toda and Florin Mărginean focused on the area of Jean Calvin Square in Cluj-Napoca (Fig. 1). Among other objectives, they investigated the cemetery around the current Calvinist Church affected by the works. In one of the graves,<sup>2</sup> located west of the flying buttress and north of the old Reformed

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<sup>1</sup> *Lucrări de amenajare urbană strada Mihail Kogălniceanu, strada Universității și străzile adiacente* [Urban Development Works on Mihail Kogălniceanu Street, University Street, and Adjoining Streets]. Excavation team members: Ph.D. Oana Toda and Ph.D. Florin Mărginean; project manager: Ph.D. Zsolt Csók.

<sup>2</sup> Surface I, Cx. 103, M31.

College wall (Fig. 2), a metal-framed, two-sided enameled medallion<sup>3</sup> was discovered in the trench excavated for the drainage of this wall. At the time of the discovery, the dirty and opaque enamel did not reveal any of the interior decoration. It was only after a preliminary cleaning, conducted in the Restoration Laboratory<sup>4</sup> of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, that a gilded IHS monogram became visible inside the medallion (Fig. 4) as it was submerged in distilled water. The main question that arose then was whether this medallion, obviously a Catholic devotional piece, could be linked, through the symbolism of its ornamentation, to the relatively short-lived presence of the Jesuits<sup>5</sup> in the area (the Order used the church for less than 30 years). In other words, it was a question of whether the well-known monogram represented the emblem of the Society of Jesus, potentially making it one of the oldest such representations in Transylvania,<sup>6</sup> or if it symbolized a more general form of veneration of the Name of Jesus, a practice widespread in Catholic piety since the end of the Middle Ages.<sup>7</sup>

The investigation revolves around the chronological and functional attribution of the medallion, beginning with information obtained from both the archaeological research and historical analogies.

### Archaeological and anthropological information

The initial burials around the church on the former *Farkas Street/ Platea Luporum/ Ulița Lupilor* (now Mihail Kogălniceanu) are evidently connected to the beginnings of the Franciscan friary constructed under the patronage of King Matthias Corvinus, dating from the late fifteenth century or, at the latest, the early years of the subsequent century. A cemetery was established during the same period, but after the commencement of construction works on the religious edifice.<sup>8</sup> Jesuit Fra Massimo Milanesi was the first to document this cemetery on the plan he created in 1584.<sup>9</sup> The cemetery wall, recorded archaeologically in several points, was partially or completely dismantled in the mid-seventeenth century. Burials within the cemetery enclosure ceased in fact, according to the same archaeological observations, even before the boundary wall was dismantled.<sup>10</sup> If we consider Catholic burials, a more precise reference point could be the year 1622 when the entire cloister of the former Franciscan friary was donated to the Calvinist community of Cluj.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. F 30095.

<sup>4</sup> Expert metal restorer: Radu Cordoș.

<sup>5</sup> About the activity of the Jesuits in Cluj at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the next one, see Kovács 2009, 100–109.

<sup>6</sup> The oldest known representation of the IHS monogram as the emblem of the Society of Jesus in Transylvania dates back to 1599; Galavics 2006, 328.

<sup>7</sup> Mormando 2017, 277.

<sup>8</sup> Gratitude to Ph.D. Oana Toda for the archaeological information.

<sup>9</sup> Sabău 2007, 90.

<sup>10</sup> It is possible that there are scattered burials outside of the cemetery wall. According to the observations of János Herepei, during the construction of the current Calvinist Parish House in the area called “Haranglábkert” (Gaál Gábor Street, no. 23), human remains were discovered along with a coin (*poltura*) issued by Leopold I in 1696; Herepei 1927, 222.

<sup>11</sup> Weisz 2016, 5.

Clearly, many of the individuals buried here were part of the community of friars<sup>12</sup> utilizing the cloister and the church during that period. However, both in the Middle Ages and later, until the prohibition of burials inside the city, it was apparently a common practice for some laypeople to choose burial in the monasteries (either in the cemetery or inside the church) over the parish cemetery.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is challenging to determine, based solely on burial rights, who the deceased individuals in the cemetery in present-day Jean Calvin Square are.

The aforementioned reference points also establish the general chronological and social framework for the burial in M31, where the silver medallion was discovered. Coffin nails were also documented in the burial inventory, which, in conjunction with the medallion and archaeological observations,<sup>14</sup> date the burial to the end of the sixteenth century or the early part of the following century. M31 is one of the three graves uncovered in the drainage trench excavated at the foundation of the old Reformed College, so further stratigraphic information is lacking<sup>15</sup> and archaeology can no longer contribute to narrowing down the date.

According to anthropological observations,<sup>16</sup> the skeleton (Fig. 3. a–b) belongs to a male individual, approximately 1.61–1.63 m tall and aged 31–34 years. Issues with the bone system and dentition suggest that the individual was engaged in physical work and had a poor diet. He was found lying supine with his skull facing east, his right arm bent at the elbow and brought over his abdomen, and his left arm slightly bent and placed over the pelvic area; his left leg was slightly bent at the knee. The medallion was discovered in the chest area of the deceased when the bones were collected, so its exact original position is unknown. Apart from the two coffin nails and the medallion, no other pieces of burial inventory were found near the skeleton.

### Physical description

The double-sided medallion (Fig. 4) is oval and measures 3.2 × 2.7 cm. The frame is made of silver, with a variable width (0.8–1 cm), narrower at the top where the ring is located. A twisted silver wire is attached to the middle of the frame, for decorative purposes,

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<sup>12</sup> Or nuns: near the Franciscan friary, the religious institution of the Poor Clares, later that of the tertiary nuns (under the guardianship of the Observant Franciscans) operated almost until the arrival of the Jesuits (Salontai 2018, 282–283). One can assume that the cemetery also served as their burial place.

<sup>13</sup> Before the arrival of the Franciscans in the mid-fifteenth century, the sources record a conflict between the secular clergy and the Dominican monks in Cluj, which also involves the right to burial, primarily due to the fee imposed during this event (Lupescu Makó 2022, 160–163). It seems that the practice did not cease over time. After the arrival of the Jesuits in the former Franciscan friary in 1581, Jesuit Jacob Wujek inquired the general of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Aquaviva, as how to proceed if Catholics wished to be buried in the church on Farkas Street, as they did before (Kovacs 2009, 102, footnote 17). To support his argument, the Polish Jesuit specified that the Catholics had no other burial place in the city than the (Jesuit) church with its narrow cemetery: “...catholici in hac civitate locum pro sepultura alium nullum habent, nisi templum nostrum cum caemeterio perangusto...” (Veress 1911, 192).

<sup>14</sup> The presence of the coffin and the depth of the grave are specific to late horizon burials. I thank Ph.D. Oana Toda for the unpublished information.

<sup>15</sup> The pottery fragments found in the filling of the burial pit are atypical; no connection has been established between the grave or its pit and other stratigraphic or structural units.

<sup>16</sup> Anthropologists Ph.D. Szilárd Sándor Gál and Sára-Szilvia Péter.

around the medallion. The goldsmith's intention to create a main facet, the one meant to be displayed when worn, is evident from the manner of ornamentation: on this side, the fine silver coating covering the frame, adorned with incised parallel lines and dots, is cut in the form of indentations that tighten around the frame, creating a decorative effect. The edges of the opposite facet remain plain. The circular fastening ring, made of a thin silver wire, shows the same intended use, bending towards the lower, practically less visible facet. Attached to the ring on the upper side, one notes a preserved movable link of the same material, roughly oval in shape (diameter  $1 \times 0.8$  cm).

The two facets of the medallion are probably two copper-based alloy plates, one partially detached, covered with a thin layer of enamel.<sup>17</sup> The enamel covering both facets remains structurally intact but shows micro-cracks<sup>18</sup> and flaking (Fig. 5. c–d). As a result, the ornamentation can only be distinguished on one facet, the secondary one. Here, the monogram IHS is framed by an oval jagged frame, with the letter H superimposed by a cross and with three nails at the bottom. On the main facet, similarly executed ornaments can be distinguished, but the mottled enamel significantly obstructs visibility across the central area of the medallion.

### Physical-chemical investigations

In the months following its discovery, the medallion underwent a series of detailed physical-chemical investigations, microscopic photographs (Fig. 5/a–d), and a curative conservation process, significantly facilitating the subsequent interpretation of the details. According to the spectrometric analysis,<sup>19</sup> the medallion frame is made of a silver and copper-based alloy. The average percentage<sup>20</sup> of silver measured in the attachment area of the link is approximately 70%.<sup>21</sup> In the middle part of the medallion frame, the silver purity measured at one point is 83.81%, and the four points measured on the movable link of the piece indicate an average silver percentage of approximately 84%.

To determine the manufacturing technique of the two facets of the medallion, spectrometric analyses were conducted at six points on the decorated surface, in areas with the most profound exfoliation, to capture the composition of the support plate beneath the enamel layer. All six analyses revealed copper among the constituent chemical elements, with three of them exceeding 10%. The most plausible interpretation provided by the

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<sup>17</sup> See below, Physical-chemical investigations.

<sup>18</sup> Visible in the microscope photographs taken by Ph.D. Andrea Beatrix Magó, specialist in physical-chemical investigations, National Museum of Transylvanian History.

<sup>19</sup> The analyses were conducted by Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Gabriel Katona, “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, using the portable EDXRF spectrometer Elva X Prospector3 MAX with a large area SDD detector. The interpretation of the results was carried out by Ph.D. Andrea Beatrix Magó.

<sup>20</sup> The average is obtained based on the results of various measurement methods at the same point: precious metals, alloys, complete spectrum; see Annex 2 in Analysis Bulletin no. 39/15.03.2023, National Museum of Transylvanian History.

<sup>21</sup> In this area, measurements were taken at nine points using the methods mentioned above (see footnote 4). In one point, the value significantly exceeded the average, indicating a silver purity of over 90%; we chose to exclude this highly skewed value from the average. The percentage of copper in the alloy ranges between 15 and 30%.

expert investigators aligns with the known techniques of goldsmiths from that period:<sup>22</sup> the core of the medallion is likely composed of two copper-based alloy plates fixed within a silver frame decorated using the enamel technique. While on the secondary facet, the main ornamentation is clearly the IHS monogram, the poor state of preservation of the vitreous layer on the primary facet hinders the reconstruction of the decoration from this side.

During the curative conservation process, organic and inorganic compounds – likely due to the medallion's contact with the earth and possibly with textile fibers from the deceased's clothing<sup>23</sup> – were removed from the junction between the silver frame and the decorated surface.

### Formal and functional analogies

In Catholic communities, sacred objects are not rare. Alongside those used in a liturgical context, there are also numerous items for individual piety. In many cases, the latter are small artifacts that could be carried almost permanently upon one's person and are often found in funerary contexts. Many are attributed an apotropaic role, serving as amulets.

The most numerous analogies were recovered from funerary contexts within the Austrian<sup>24</sup> Catholic communities. In the church<sup>25</sup> cemetery of Zwettl (Lower Austria), among the burials from the late horizon (seventeenth-eighteenth centuries), a total of three round or oval medallions with glass plates and non-ferrous metal mountings were discovered – two of them with frames reinforced by twisted metal wires, similar to our medallion.<sup>26</sup> Inside all three pieces from Zwettl, fragments of folded paper with printed text, often illegible, were discovered. Most likely, these are prayers, images of saints, or blessings, known as *breverls*, carried for protection in special containers (cloth or leather pouches, boxes, or metal medallions).<sup>27</sup> More significant is the additional role that researchers attributed such devotional medallions, namely rosary components (pendants). Indeed, in all three graves, the medallion was found near the deceased's hand, alongside bone beads, indicating the presence of this prayer-counting tool mainly used by Catholics.<sup>28</sup> Based on the type of writing on the *breverl*, historians could narrow down the dating period, only for one of the preserved medallions to sometime between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

A similar piece was discovered in the grave of an adult male in the *Leechkirche* cemetery in Graz (Austria). The oval medallion with faceted glass(?) and a corroded metal frame was found in the burial fill, and the researcher in charge of the find interpreted it as

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<sup>22</sup> Gratitude to Lect. Ph.D. Zsolt Kovács, “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Faculty of History and Philosophy, for the suggestion.

<sup>23</sup> Information: Radu Cordoş, expert metal restorer.

<sup>24</sup> According to our knowledge, no medallions similar to the one analyzed have been so far discovered in Transylvania. For a concise overview of the types of funerary discoveries in a nearby region during the Early Modern period, see Szócs 2020, 435–452.

<sup>25</sup> St. John the Evangelist Church, also known as *Propsteikirche*.

<sup>26</sup> Kühtreiber, Fettinger, Heiss 2014, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Kühtreiber, Fettinger, Heiss 2014, 124.

<sup>28</sup> Kühtreiber, Fettinger, Heiss 2014, 164, ill. 8, 166, ill. 10, 173, ill. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Kühtreiber, Fettinger, Heiss 2014, 124.

rather a piece of jewelry than a religious artifact.<sup>30</sup> The archaeological context allows for the dating of the medallion to sometime before the year 1624.<sup>31</sup>

Other analogies of the medallion discovered in Jean Calvin Square can be identified among finds from Hungary, still from German settings.<sup>32</sup> The cemetery used between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century around the Chapel of “St. Bartholomew” in Tolna has been extensively published relatively recently.<sup>33</sup> Almost a third of the funerary inventory discovered in the 149 investigated graves consisted of devotional medallions.<sup>34</sup> Among these, some pieces stand out as potential formal analogies to our medallion: two reliquaries, a *breverl*, and three fragmentary devotional medallions with unclear function. The reliquary discovered in the grave of a 7–8-year-old girl consists of a tear-shaped bronze box, adorned with the monogram of the Holy Virgin (MRA) on the main facet and the monogram IHS<sup>35</sup> on the reverse. A piece of glass, which could have originally been painted, is set inside, within an elaborate frame formed by twisted wire. The handle of the *breverl*, rhomboidal in shape, also has the structure of a box that housed the paper part and was probably covered with glass, at least on one of the facets.<sup>36</sup> Three other scattered discoveries suggest the same type of devotional medallion with a boxed structure: one with a copper frame and glass, ovoid, which no longer had anything inside, and two glass fragments that presumably covered the facets of other medallions, the first in the shape of a shield, the second one oval. The *breverl* has been tentatively dated, based on analogies, to the seventeenth century.<sup>37</sup> The other medallions are dated more broadly to the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries.

An “amulet” with similar elements to our medallion was discovered during the Interwar Period in one of the crypts of the Calvinist Church in Csenger (Hungary): an ellipsoidal frame, this time made of copper, with the tools of the Passion of Christ represented inside, on paper, the facet covered with glass. Based on the archaeological inventory, the crypt was dated to an earlier period, before the year 1559.<sup>38</sup>

Another analogy to the piece discovered in Jean Calvin Square, in a much better state of preservation, is the medallion kept in the collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Budapest.<sup>39</sup> Made of silver, oval in shape, and with a similarly decorated but more elaborate frame than our medallion, it features the painted portrait of Jesus Christ on the front. The reverse<sup>40</sup> is covered with a silver lid, ornamented through incision with the depiction of an angel holding a heraldic shield(?). The piece is dated to the seventeenth century and was presumably produced in an Austrian workshop.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Lehner 1996, 96.

<sup>31</sup> Based on the stratigraphic connection with the nearby grave, dated with a coin; Lehner 1996, 86.

<sup>32</sup> The early modern cemetery represents the burial place of Catholic colonists originating from the western and southern parts of present-day Germany; Ódor, Vilnius 2019, 176.

<sup>33</sup> Ódor, Vilnius 2019, 175–28.

<sup>34</sup> Many of the devotional medallions were pilgrim badges. In some cases, within the same grave, both devotional medallions and crosses were discovered.

<sup>35</sup> Mistaken by the authors for the initials S and T.

<sup>36</sup> A similar function was attributed to a piece found at Visegrád; Kovács 2013, ill. 11.

<sup>37</sup> Ódor, Vilnius 2019, 198, footnote 78.

<sup>38</sup> Höllrigl 1936, 53.

<sup>39</sup> Gratitude to Ph.D. Mária-Márta Kovács for the valuable suggestions.

<sup>40</sup> Gratitude to Ph.D. Szilveszter Terdik for the detailed information.

<sup>41</sup> “Medallion”/ MAA.

### The symbolism of the decoration and conclusions

The main element of the cultural and chronological framing of the medallion initially seemed to be the monogram visible on the secondary facet of its vitreous component. The IHS monogram is obviously the most prominent visual symbol of the Society of Jesus, and for this reason, combined with the presence of the Jesuits in the area at the turn of the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries, the first hypothesis was that the artifact was a Jesuit devotional medallion. However, detailed investigations have led to a more nuanced understanding. On the one hand, the IHS monogram had gained popularity in Catholic devotion almost a century earlier through the actions of Bernardino of Siena, a monk from the Observant Franciscan order.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, at least in Hungary, this monogram became a generally recognized Jesuit identifying symbol only after the mid-seventeenth century,<sup>43</sup> and the situation in Transylvania was likely similar. The IHS monogram as a Jesuit emblem was initially used on liturgical books published under the auspices of the order or its various members,<sup>44</sup> thereof, gradually spreading and changing its location in monumental architecture, especially on the facades of buildings.<sup>45</sup> Returning to the medallion discovered in the cemetery of the current Jean Calvin Square in Cluj and considering the chronological boundaries mentioned above, we believe that associating the IHS monogram with the Jesuit emblem is a somewhat forced hypothesis. A much more plausible hypothesis is that of a simple devotional medallion, focused on the veneration of the Name of Jesus.

The structure and technique of the medallion suggest it was not produced locally. Similar pieces, expressions of individual piety, are reported in the area of Hungary especially in the eighteenth century,<sup>46</sup> much later than the possible date of the burial of the medallion's owner. Based on the closest analogies, we can assume that the artifact was created in Austria or, with a lower probability, in the Catholic region of present-day Germany (especially Bayern). Given that we cannot, for now, determine the contents of the medallion without jeopardizing its integrity, we cannot establish more precisely its role and function. All of the analogies presented above (*brevier*, reliquary, rosary component etc.) remain hypothetical in the case of our medallion.

The analogies we have so far date back to a fairly extended period (the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries). Corroborating these analogies and the archaeological observations, it can be confidently stated that the medallion belongs to a period that is either contemporary or later than the one linked to the presence of the Jesuits in the area, specifically, the one that starts with the year 1581. In the absence of precise data regarding the chronology of the cemetery in the seventeenth century, we consider that the most significant moment in our case is the year 1622 when the Transylvanian Diet accepted Prince Gabriel Bethlen's proposal to donate the cloister on Farkas Street to the Calvinist community in Cluj.<sup>47</sup> After

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<sup>42</sup> Mormando 2017, 377.

<sup>43</sup> Galavics 2006, 338.

<sup>44</sup> The initial occurrence in Hungary dates back to 1599. It refers to a typographic ornament on the title page of a book published in Cluj: Gergely Vásárhelyi, *Catechismus*, Kolozvár 1599, after Galavics 2006, 328 and ill. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Galavics 2006, 333.

<sup>46</sup> Szilárdfy 2008, 49–78.

<sup>47</sup> Weisz 2016, 5.

this date, the chances for a Catholic to be buried in the cemetery belonging to another confession – if the cemetery was still in use<sup>48</sup> – decrease significantly. The upper limit of the dating of the monogrammed medallion thus remains the year 1622 or, to be more accurate, the period between 1622 and 1638<sup>49</sup> when the Calvinist community practically took control of the former monastic complex and began the renovation of the church.

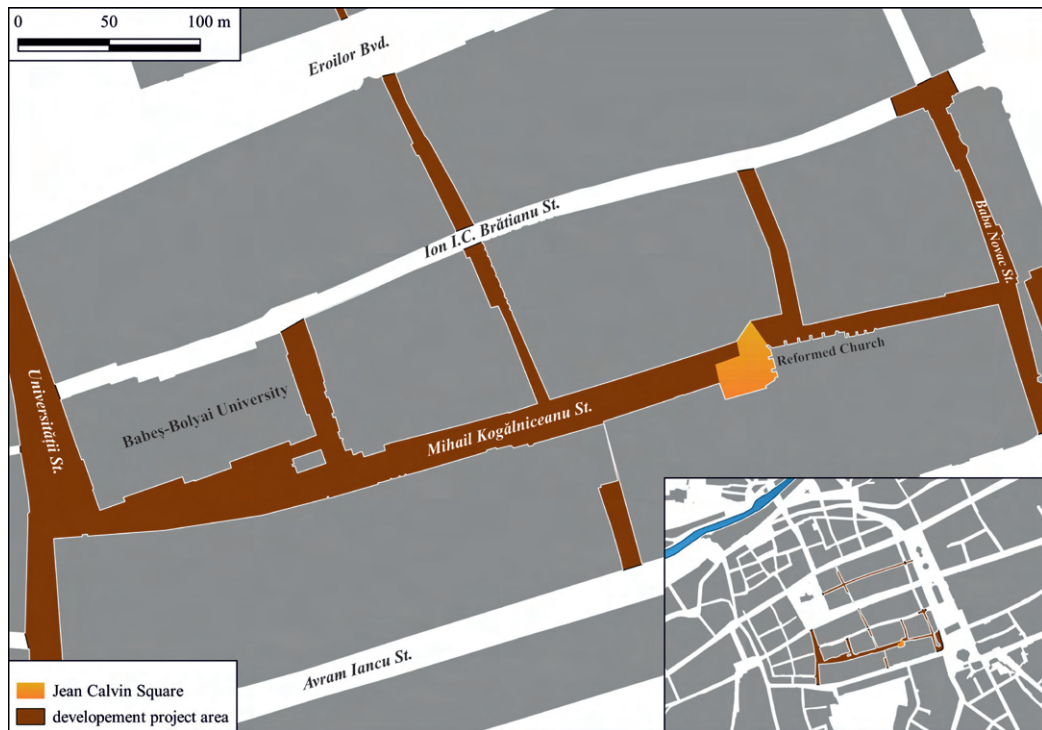
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<sup>48</sup> We do not know what happened to the cemetery after 1606 when the Jesuits were expelled, leaving behind the ruined church and abandoned cloister. However, it is very possible that Catholic burials continued sporadically, following tradition.

<sup>49</sup> The restoration works on the religious building extend over several years, with the renovated church being consecrated in 1647; Weisz 2016, 7.

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**Fig. 1.** Location map of Jean Calvin Square (map by Oana Toda).



**Fig. 2.** Jean Calvin Square during the archaeological excavation with the location of the grave where the devotional medallion was discovered (drone photo by Paul L. Pupeză).

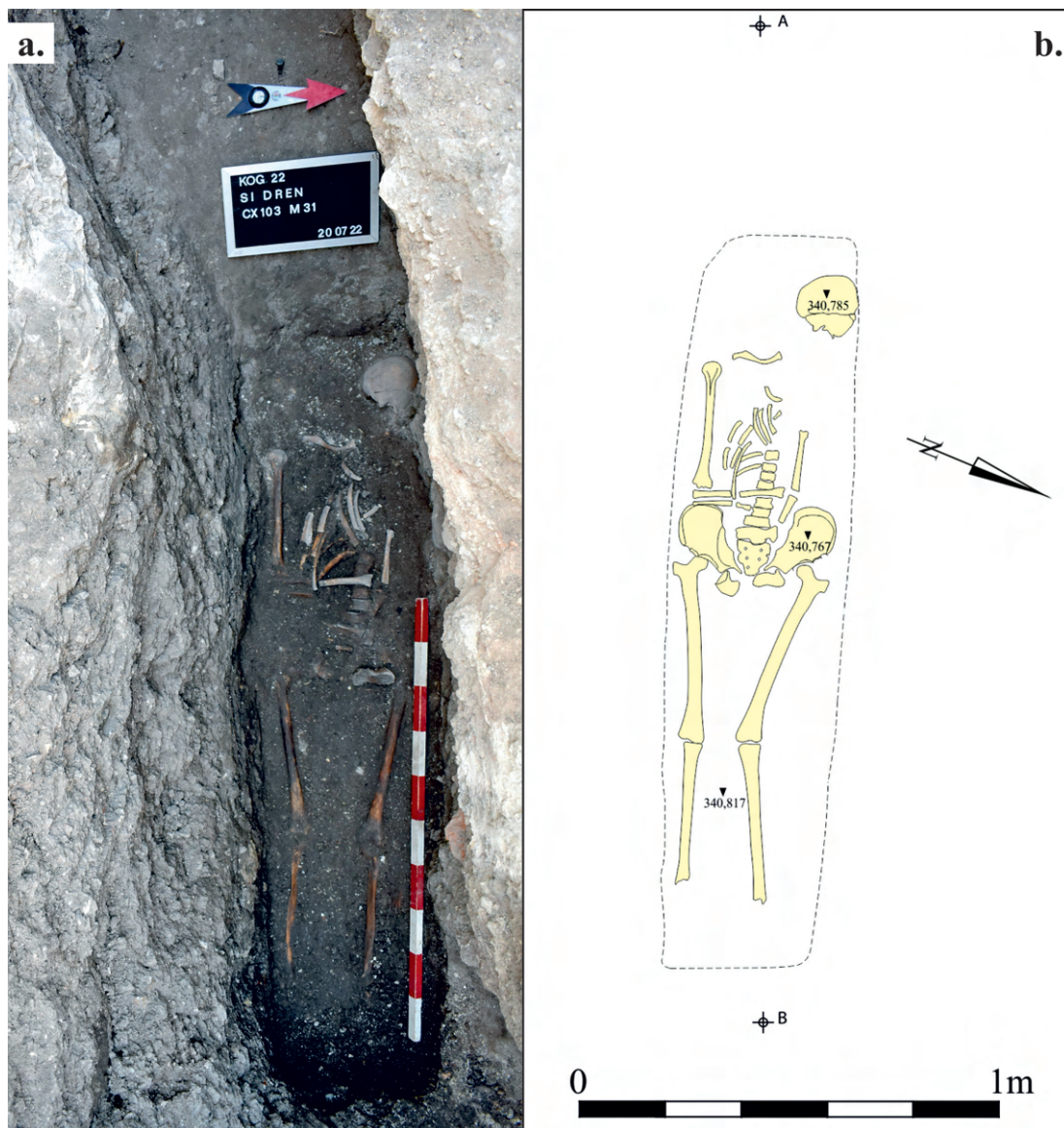
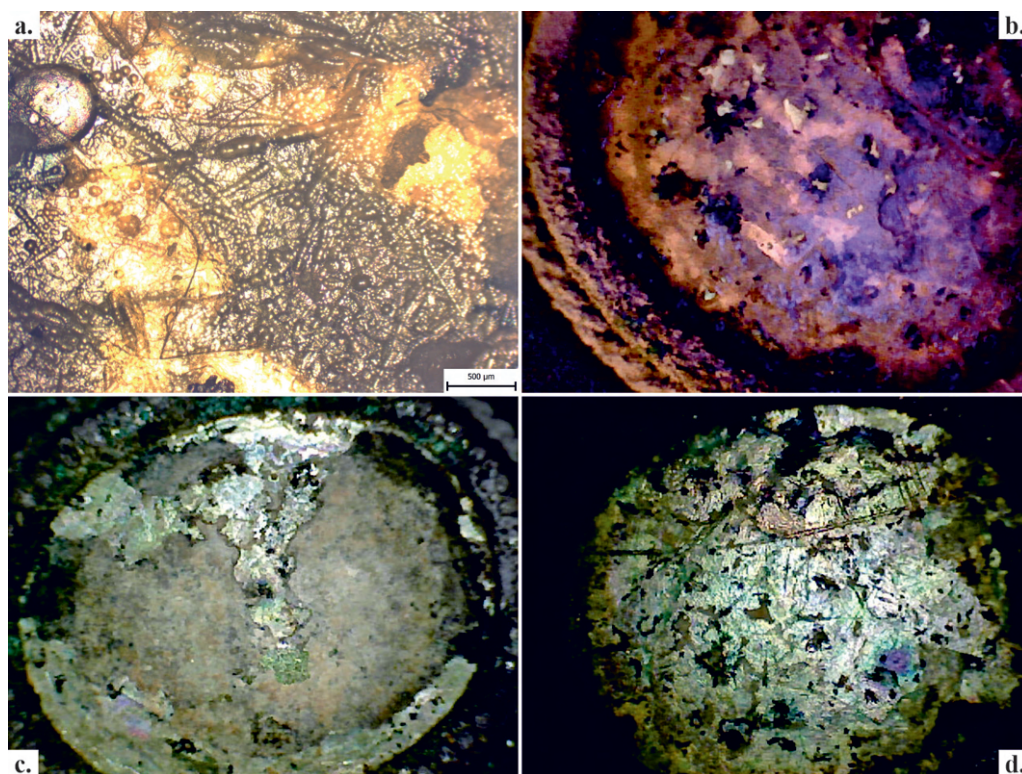


Fig. 3. a-b. Photography and archaeological drawing of grave 31 (photo by Florin Mărginean; drawing by Gianina-Diana Varga).



**Fig. 4.** The devotional medallion: front, side, and back view (photos by Alexandru Rădulescu and Sergiu Odenie).



**Fig. 5.** Detail of the devotional medallion: **a.** image captured with an Olympus CX 33 microscope, reflected light microscopy, 4× magnification; **b.** image under infrared light; **c.** main facet, microphotography under VIS light; **d.** secondary facet, microphotography under VIS light (photos by Andrea Beatrix Magó).

## REPLICA OF A SINGLE-NICHE “TRANSYLVANIAN” RUG

MELINDA MITU\*

**Abstract:** This article presents some considerations on a cultural asset of particular value from the National Museum of Transylvanian History collection, namely a single-niche “Transylvanian” rug, from West Anatolia dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, along with its replica. The latter was made in Sultanhanı (Republic of Türkiye) between 2021 and 2022, and was donated to the museum in Cluj by Stefano Ionescu, a renowned specialist in Anatolian carpets, based in Rome.

**Keywords:** Anatolian carpets, “Transylvanian” rugs, replica, Stefano Ionescu

**Rezumat:** Articolul de față prezintă câteva considerații privind un bun cultural de o valoare deosebită din patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, și anume un covor „de Transilvania” cu o singură nișă, provenind din Anatolia occidentală și datând din prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea, alături de o replică a acestuia. Replica a fost confecționată la Sultanhanı (Republica Turcia) în 2021–2022 și a fost primită de muzeul clujean ca donație din partea lui Stefano Ionescu, un renumit specialist în covoare anatoliene, stabilit la Roma.

**Cuvinte cheie:** covoare anatoliene, covoare „de Transilvania”, replică, Stefano Ionescu

In 2022, an exceptional replica of an Anatolian carpet which pertained to its collection, namely, a carpet from the seventeenth century (Fig. 1)<sup>1</sup> entered the collection of Oriental carpets of the National Museum of Transylvanian History (Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, hereafter MNIT).

The replica (Fig. 3)<sup>2</sup> was woven between 2021 and 2022 in Sultanhanı (Republic of Türkiye), and donated to MNIT by Stefano (Ștefan) Ionescu, a renowned Romanian specialist in Anatolian carpets, based in Rome. Thanks to Stefano Ionescu, the carpets in the MNIT collection have been brought to the public’s attention, as he classified the cultural goods in question from a typological and chronological point of view and presented many of them in the volume *Antique Ottoman Rugs in Transylvania*, published in Rome in 2005.<sup>3</sup> The book went through several editions (in Italian, German, Romanian, and Hungarian), and in 2006 was awarded the Romanian Academy Prize for Art History. Today, this is the reference work on the Anatolian rugs that survived in Transylvania.

Nowadays, most fifteenth–eighteenth-century Ottoman carpets (about 400 pieces) outside the Islamic world are preserved in Transylvania, particularly owned by churches.

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<sup>1</sup> Colecția MNIT, F 6728.

<sup>2</sup> Colecția MNIT, F 30065.

<sup>3</sup> Ionescu 2005. The presented carpets of the MNIT were: Colecția MNIT, nos. F 6704–F 6708, F 6716, and F 6720.

The most important collection is that of the Black Church in Braşov, which holds 157 pieces, followed by that of the Brukenthal Museum, with 43 pieces. The Lutheran churches in Sighişoara, Mediaş, Bistriţa,<sup>4</sup> along with others, also hold several dozen oriental carpets in their collections. Outside Transylvania, the most important public collection of Anatolian carpets (about 100 pieces) is in the Museum of Applied Arts (Iparművészeti Múzeum) in Budapest.<sup>5</sup>

The research carried out by Stefano Ionescu revealed that MNIT has an interesting collection of oriental rugs totaling 22 pieces. The core of the collection consists of 13 classical Anatolian rugs, most from the seventeenth century, mainly purchased from Hungarian Reformed congregations of the region (such as small-medallion Uşak, “Lotto,” “Bird,” Single- and Double-Niche “Transylvanian” carpets). In addition, there are some nineteenth-century Anatolian rugs (Ghiordes, Ladik, Konya, and Karapınar), along with a few Persian (Afshar, Malayer) and Caucasian rugs.

Most of these cultural goods, in all likelihood, come from the museum’s old collections, namely those of the former Transylvanian National Museum (Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum – ENM) in Cluj, which in turn acquired them through purchases and donations at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

One of these acquisitions was the one concluded with Manó Wallerstein, an antiquities dealer from Ozd (Mureş County).<sup>7</sup> In 1914, he sold “two fragments of carpets from the seventeenth century” to the Transylvanian National Museum, “later found to represent two pieces of the same carpet.”<sup>8</sup> Most probably they come from a Reformed church in Transylvania.

The two fragments (Fig. 1) belong to a very rare type of western Anatolian prayer rug of the first half of the seventeenth century, belonging to the so-called “Transylvanian” group – an appellation ascribed in carpet literature at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> The group gained popularity after the great exhibition of *Turkish Rugs from Transylvania* at the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest in 1914, where a total of 312 old Turkish rugs were featured, out of which 106 rugs belonged to the so-called “Transylvanian” type.<sup>10</sup> This conventional term denotes the massive presence of this type of carpet across Transylvania.

The Wallerstein single-niche caught the attention of specialists immediately after its purchase. In 1914, the same year as the carpet exhibition in Budapest, Sándor Csermelyi

<sup>4</sup> 52 rugs of the Evangelical Church in Bistriţa are held in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg. See Ionescu 2009, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Ionescu 2005, *passim*. See also Csáki 2017, 147. On the “Transylvanian” rugs also see Ionescu 2014, 64–77.

<sup>6</sup> See the ENM Registers, vol. I, 81 (no. I.2287) and 90 (no. I.3128); vol. II, 84 (I.7136, I.7137) and 114 (no. I.7655); vol. III, 12 (nos. II.556, II.557, II.558), 50 (nos. II.1308, II.1309, II.1310), 52 (II.1323), and 63 (II.1539); vol. IV, 29 (no. II.7215, currently Colectia MNIT, F 6721); vol. V, 34 (no. IV.430), 86 (no. IV.1629, currently Colectia MNIT, F 6722). For the establishment of the collection of oriental carpets of the Transylvanian National Museum, see also Pósta 2013, 39–40; Vincze 2014, 217–218.

<sup>7</sup> For Manó Wallerstein and his collaboration with the Transylvanian National Museum, see Vincze 2014, 180, 181–182, 183, 200, 227, 235.

<sup>8</sup> See the ENM Registers, vol. IV, 86 (nos. II.9073, II.9074, currently Colectia MNIT, F 6728).

<sup>9</sup> See the definition of *Siebenbürger Teppiche* by Rudolf Neugebauer and Julius Orendi in *Handbuch der orientalischen Teppichkunde*: after Csermelyi 1914b, 466.

<sup>10</sup> For the organization of the carpet exhibition in Budapest, in 1914, see Csányi, Csermelyi, Layer 1914. More recently: Jékely 2020, 6; Pásztor 2020, 7.

presented the rug in the pages of the Cluj scientific journal *Dolgozatok/ Travaux*. Csermelyi was one of the curators of the Budapest exhibition. According to him, the two fragments of the prayer rug mentioned above belonged “to that category of Anatolian carpets which have best preserved the decorative motifs of Persian carpets, the specific Turkish motifs being few or almost non-existent.”<sup>11</sup> The Cluj carpet also stood out through the knot density, with 2080 kn/dm<sup>2</sup>.<sup>12</sup>

According to the description by Stefano Ionescu, who dedicated an ample study, entitled *Early Single- and Double-niche “Transylvanian” Rugs*, to the group,<sup>13</sup> the piece in Cluj-Napoca is a single-niche rug, “woven in the opposite direction of the mihrab, made of colored wool yarn. This is the earliest version of the ‘Transylvanian’ carpet, from which the double-niche model evolved. The yellow-orange mihrab is decorated with a composition of rosettes, palmettes, buds, and vines arranged around a central palmette (partially visible) pointing toward the mosque lamp. The spandrels are each decorated with an octagonal rosette and stylized saz leaves on an emerald-green background. Above the field, a transverse panel with floral motifs appears. The border comprises elongated hexagonal cartouches interspersed with octagonal, star-shaped cartouches. The minor borders have reciprocal red and black motifs.” All these decorative motifs belong to the Ottoman style, which flourished in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries under the patronage of the imperial court.<sup>14</sup>

MNIT’s fragmentary single-niche is, therefore, a piece of particular value, extremely rare in terms of age and decorative motifs: worldwide, there are only seven similar examples, which are dateable to the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Because the fragile state of conservation does not allow the exhibition of the two fragments for an extended period, Stefano Ionescu took the initiative to make a complete graphic reconstruction of the rug and a woven replica, with the financial support of an anonymous donor.

Following an in-depth study, the complete drawing was achieved based on high-quality photographs from the MNIT archive and the missing parts were completed with details taken from similar carpets. All this allowed the creation of a knot-by-knot drawing (Fig. 2) by Ana Jankar, a student at the Faculty of Architecture in Sorrento (Italy), who attended the carpet design course of the *Building Beauty* program, held by the American architect Christopher R. Andrews.

A 126 by 153 centimeters replica of the carpet was woven in Sultanhanı (a town between Aksaray and Konya, Republic of Türkiye) in the workshop of the Solak family. Due to the density of the knots (2500 kn/dm<sup>2</sup>), the actual weaving took five months and was carried out by Hanife Solak. The process used hand-carded and hand-spun wool and natural dyes, while the knotting was based on a traditional Turkish technique using upside-down weaving.

The replica was first displayed in Cluj between 26 and 29 May 2022 at the Matia House during the *Transylvanian Tulips Fest*, organized by the Turkish Multicultural

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<sup>11</sup> Csermelyi 1914a, 462. In his opinion, Persian influences could also be seen in the “composition around the central medallion.”

<sup>12</sup> Csermelyi 1914a, 465.

<sup>13</sup> Ionescu 2014. Also available on the author’s personal blog [www.transylvanianrugs.com](http://www.transylvanianrugs.com).

<sup>14</sup> Information kindly provided by Stefano Ionescu. For the Ottoman style, see also Batári 1983, 430.

Business Consortium. Also, on 26 May 2022, Stefano Ionescu gave a lecture entitled *Ottoman Carpets from Transylvania*. Then, in August 2022, the two original fragments of the above-mentioned Anatolian carpet and its complete replica were displayed in a small exhibition at MNIT.

We want to gratefully acknowledge the merits of Stefano Ionescu for his expertise, dedication, and, most of all, for his generous and valuable donation.

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**Fig. 1.** Single-Niche “Transylvanian” rug: West Anatolia, first half of seventeenth century; Colecția MNIT, F 6728 (photo by Alexandru Rădulescu).



**Fig. 2.** Carpet reconstruction by Stefano Ionescu, digital simulation by architect Christopher R. Andrews based on knot-by-knot drawing by student Ana Jankar (courtesy of Stefano Ionescu).



**Fig. 3.** Carpet replica made in Sultanhanı (Republic of Türkiye) by Hanife Solak. Dimensions: 126 × 153 cm; 2500 kn/dm<sup>2</sup> (photo by Eduard Baak, taken from [www.transylvanianrugs.com](http://www.transylvanianrugs.com)).

## **KÉK BOKÁLYOS ROSTÁS VIZESKORSÓ...** **A HABAN EWER IN AN URBAN HOUSEHOLD FROM CLUJ**

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**Abstract:** The Haban ewer presented here is an exceptional archaeological find that became part of the heritage of the National Museum of Transylvanian History following the rescue excavations on Gaál Gábor Street in 2021. The piece, inscribed with the production year 1700, was recovered from the decommissioned well of the old Calvinist parsonage in Cluj (the Herepei House). Archival documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, together with artifacts preserved in public or private collections, prove the widespread popularity of Haban pottery due to its technical and aesthetic qualities during the heyday of the craft of Anabaptist potter communities in Moravia, the Hungarian Kingdom, and the Transylvanian Principality. The formal and stylistic analogies, together with the dating of the piece, point to its most likely production in the pottery workshop from Vințu de Jos (Alvinc/ Unterwinz, Alba County). This specimen is of the blue-glazed ceramic type, which became popular on the Transylvanian market during the second half of the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the subsequent one.

**Keywords:** household archaeology, material culture, Haban pottery, workshop, blue glaze, ewer

**Rezumat:** Ulciorul haban prezentat aici este o descoperire arheologică de excepție care a intrat în patrimoniul Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei în urma săpăturilor preventive de pe Strada Gaál Gábor din anul 2021. Piesa, inscripționată cu anul de producție 1700, a fost recuperată din fântâna dezafectată a vechii casei parohiale reformate din Cluj (Casa Herepei). Documentele de arhivă din secolele XVII–XVIII, alături de piesele păstrate până astăzi în colecții publice ori private, dovedesc popularitatea pe scară largă a ceramicii habane, datorită calităților sale tehnice și estetice, în perioada de maximă înflorire a meșteșugului comunităților de olari anabapțiști din Moravia, Regatul Ungariei și Principatul Transilvaniei. Analogiile formale și stilistice, alături de datarea piesei, indică Vințu de Jos (Alvinc/ Unterwinz, jud. Alba) drept cel mai probabil atelier de producție pentru acest exemplar din categoria ceramicii cu smalt albastru, care câștigă popularitate pe piața transilvăneană în cursul celei de-a doua jumătăți a secolului al XVII-lea și la începutul celui următor.

**Cuvinte cheie:** arheologia gospodăriei, cultură materială, ceramică habană, atelier, smalt albastru, ulciur

### **Introduction**

The rapid development works within the urban historical core of Cluj-Napoca require almost continuous archaeological rescue interventions, which in turn lead to the recovery of large quantities of artifacts needing conservation, scientific research, and museum valorization. Some artifacts that entered the National Museum of Transylvanian

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History collections in recent years, even if only in fragments, are rare occurrences and of exceptional beauty, craftsmanship, and historical significance. Here, I will present one such object, namely a Haban ewer,<sup>1</sup> part of a rich household inventory from the early modern period, recovered in 2021 from a well currently located under the present-day surface of the Gaál Gábor Street (formerly known as *Főiskola* and *Sámi utca*).

### Context of discovery and the historical urban lots

In 2021, an archaeological team from the National Museum of Transylvanian History<sup>2</sup> excavated the object's context of discovery as a direct consequence of the urban improvement project conducted on the Mihail Kogălniceanu and several adjoining streets. From a historical perspective, the investigated area stands in the southeastern corner of the late medieval and early modern town fortification in the old city center. The urban layout of Cluj, as rendered in cartographic documents, clearly shows that, over time, the topography and street grid of the area slightly changed, and the Gaál Gábor Street appeared during the modern period.<sup>3</sup> This sets a historical context for the interpretation of the latest archaeological findings from the area, as the mechanical excavation of the street surface and of the overburden on Gaál Gábor Street has revealed features dated to the early and late modern times, including a stone well, from which the ewer emerged (Fig. 1, 2).

In the following paragraphs, I will only outline some data on the archaeological structures, as a detailed publication exists on the topic.<sup>4</sup> The excavations unearthed a cobbled water drain and a stone and mortar fence overlapping the well. These are both dated to the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the subsequent one. The archaeological team documented three segments of the property fence with three distinct alignments. It was demolished only at the beginning of the twentieth century when the Calvinist community built their new parsonage (21 Mihail Kogălniceanu St.). Also, it indicates an earlier alignment of the street and the previous western limit of the urban parcel on which the old parsonage (the so-called Herepei House, 23 Mihail Kogălniceanu St., mid-seventeenth century<sup>5</sup>) still stands. This fence slightly superposed the stone well, thus suggesting the latter initially stood on a larger urban lot. The research concluded that, in the late nineteenth century, the cobbled drain was a household amenity of the parsonage that collected water originating on higher ground from a more recent water pump located near the street corner<sup>6</sup> and guided it northwards, where the, by then, decommissioned well stood. The well (Fig. 3) was 2.5 m wide at the interior of its stone lining and approximately 5 m deep while in use. The feature filled up in two phases, corresponding to its primary use and secondary reuse. The stratigraphic sequence and the retrieved artifacts prove that the well still collected the surface waters from the cobbled drain after decommissioning and partial filling. The upper layers of its fill, dated by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century artifacts, and the superposition of the drain stand

<sup>1</sup> Colecția MNIT, no. F 30096.

<sup>2</sup> Excavation team members: Ph.D. Oana Toda, Ph.D. Keve László, and Ph.D. Florin Mărginean; project manager: Ph.D. Zsolt Csók.

<sup>3</sup> The detailed historical evolution of the street in: Toda et alii 2022, 116–119.

<sup>4</sup> Toda et alii 2022, 111–113.

<sup>5</sup> Weisz 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Photographic image in Sas 2015, 16 and recollections of János Herepei (Herepei 2004b, 351).

proof of this repurposing. According to the materials collected from the lower fill, the well was abandoned around or after the middle of the eighteenth century. The lower fill was abundant in finds roughly dated from the seventeenth century until the first half of the eighteenth century, mainly consisting of organic material, a wide variety of glass finds, stove tiles, and numerous ceramic vessels, ranging from tableware to cooking ware. The ewer was also part of this rich lot of household waste. The structure's dating in the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the subsequent one is also backed up by entries in the parsonage account books and the bell curator's register recording the construction of a roofed well in 1655,<sup>7</sup> followed by the acquisition of new well fittings.<sup>8</sup>

All the findings are directly connected to the emergence and mutations of the area's streets and old urban land parcels. Historical cartography<sup>9</sup> and some written sources prove that the alley had already emerged by the mid-eighteenth century. Suffice it to say, the judicial protocols of the town of Cluj recorded in 1664 that two Church parcels already hosted the old parsonage to the east ("Beleol Farkas utcában az Ortodoxa Ecclesia házát") and the belfry (latter on the "belfry garden" – a *haranglábkert*, today Mihail Kogălniceanu no. 21), to the west.<sup>10</sup> Even though the belfry garden and the parsonage lots were well-individualized in the middle of the seventeenth century, it is safe to assume that the opening of the footpath or alley only split a larger urban lot of the Calvinist Church.<sup>11</sup>

The earliest records of this passageway show it had a crooked trajectory due to irregularities and misalignments of the urban lots or, rather, to constructions and household amenities obstructing its path, especially on its eastern flank. This initial configuration was regulated in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>12</sup> However, the early modern well was initially inside the parsonage courtyard (Fig. 1), a preexisting structure that presumably caused the south street segment to switch direction to the southwest. The archaeological topography on Gaál Gábor Street allows one to hypothesize that all or at least most of the household material inside the feature originated from the parsonage and was part of its movable inventory.

### Description of the find and production technology

The research team recovered the ewer in fragments (Figs. 4, 6),<sup>13</sup> and only a partial reconstruction was possible (Fig. 4, 5), as merely half of its body still exists, and the mouth

<sup>7</sup> Szász 2011, 309.

<sup>8</sup> Herepei 2004b, 350–351 (1669: "vöttünk egy Vedret Püspök Uram kuttyara;" 1697–1704: "csinaltattam [...] tölgy fabul uiat, továbbá vettem egw Sing vasat a veder megvasztatasara").

<sup>9</sup> As, for example, the *Plan von den Stadt Clausenburg, und anbey auf einen gegen die Stadt felsigten Berg ligenden Schloss oder Fort*, from the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv, Vienna, original scale of 120 klafter, ca. 1750 (see its reproduction in: Băldescu 2012, 283).

<sup>10</sup> *Kolozsvár, városi törvénykezési jegyzőkönyv 1665*, 283, after Herepei 1993, 36.

<sup>11</sup> In 1622, Prince Gabriel Bethlen (1613–1629), granted the Calvinist Protestants the former property of the Jesuit Order (initially in the property of the Observant Franciscans). The new owners retraced the boundaries of the old landed possession (possibly the one recorded in the situation plan by Jesuit architect Fra Massimo Milanese from 1584: Balogh 1985, 211) in 1648 through a hearing of witnesses, as the Calvinists intended to build their parsonage and a college building (Herepei 2004a, 546; Szász 2011, 116).

<sup>12</sup> For details, see Toda et alii 2022, 117–118.

<sup>13</sup> Sediments and discoloration occurred in the post-discard conditions of the well. The dense micro-fissures on the glazed surfaces have, at least in part, formed before the breakage of the vessel, most likely because of temperature variations.

is missing almost entirely.<sup>14</sup> It has a round-shaped body with a perforated handle, an elongated, slender neck, and a pinched mouth with a spout (Fig. 6/a). In the upper part of the neck, right below the mouth, the potter equipped the vessel with a strainer, with orifices of various diameters (ranging from 2 to 6 mm). The slight irregularities in the thickness of the ceramic walls and the presence of a flute in the upper region indicate that the mouth and strainer were added after the main body was turned on the potter's wheel. The same goes for the handle. It has an ovoid transversal section (roughly 1 by 2 cm), which starts from underneath the mouth in an area where the narrow neck grows in diameter. It joins the body of the vessel in its upper third. In the upper part, an orifice penetrates the handle and the neck wall, allowing air to enter the vessel during the pouring of liquids. The preserved height is 28.4 cm, and the total height is 30–31 cm. The maximum diameter of the body is 18.6 cm, the base measures 10 cm across, and the neck has a minimum diameter of 3.6 cm. The technical features of the vessel are illustrative of the Haban craftsmanship: the pale brick-red fabric has fine granulation and was fired in the presence of oxygen.<sup>15</sup> The quality of the fabric enabled the potters to shape the thin walls of the body that measure between 5 and 7 mm in thickness, reaching 8.5 mm in the neck area.

The glazed ornamentation, fixed during a second firing,<sup>16</sup> was probably executed in a technique derived from, but not identical to, the one of Italian-Renaissance maiolica<sup>17</sup> and, according to the Haban handmade decorative repertory,<sup>18</sup> rendering each pottery product unique. The overcoat of the vessel consists of (cobalt-)blue glaze on the exterior and pale greenish-yellow glaze on the interior (Fig. 6/a, verso). The inner glaze covers all the preserved fragments of the ewer but also clogs two of the strainer's smaller orifices. Hand-painted linear and vegetal motifs then topped the overcoat. The dominant color employed for the decoration is (tin-)white, but the artisan has rendered some details in (antimony-)yellow and has drawn the contours and highlights in (manganese-)brownish-black – a common trait for many Haban products.<sup>19</sup> The simplest decoration elements are the three sets of white parallel lines with uneven brush strokes. The first grouping of lines displays three such elements and separates the neck of the ewer from its mouth. The main decoration is on the upper half of the body, framed by two other sets of parallel lines: one made of five elements located at the base of the neck and a second consisting of two lines positioned on the body, roughly where its diameter is the largest.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Several shards (Fig. 6) were not incorporated into the vessel because they did not fit the reassembled part. Moreover, a minimally invasive reconstruction was decided, given that the decoration is not necessarily symmetric and the remaining shards could be mispositioned. Partial restoration performed by Cornelia Rotariu, ceramic restorer of the National Museum of Transylvanian History.

<sup>15</sup> Bunta 1971, 227.

<sup>16</sup> The latest research generally acknowledges that the potters air-dried the raw ceramic objects and biscuit-fired them first at a lower temperature (around 800–900° C), then immersed the objects into a glaze suspension, painted ornaments over the raw glaze, and fired them again at temperatures of around 1000 °C (Ridovics 2008, 93; Radványi 2011a, 25; confirmed in: Bajnóczi et alii 2014, 11, 13; Bajnóczi et alii 2015, 518, 532–533).

<sup>17</sup> Bajnóczi et alii 2014, 11–13. For the presented piece, one could certify this assumption and the specific composition of the colored decoration only through archaeometric investigations.

<sup>18</sup> An overview in Bunta 1971, 235–236; Bunta 1973, 59–78; Radványi 2011b, 29–31.

<sup>19</sup> Bunta 1971, 234; archaeometric confirmation for north-east Hungary in: Bajnóczi et alii 2014.

<sup>20</sup> The framing of the decoration is yet another trait of these products (Bunta 1971, 234).

The main decorative composition was a vegetal one, possibly symmetric,<sup>21</sup> and dominated by floral motifs, one of which is still preserved. The flower (resembling a daisy) has 13 white petals, a yellow pearly circle (filaments or smaller petals), and a central yellow dot (stigma?), displayed concentrically; four tendrils lay on the side. A similar flower was most likely at the opposite end of the composition, but a net (criss-cross) pattern is visible between two of the four tendrils that spring from the side of the flower – this motif currently stands on an isolated shard (Fig. 6/b). White and brown tendrils, stems, and, probably, flower buds (Fig. 6/b, e) once surrounded the central motif. The entire vegetal ornamentation roughly covered three-quarters of its allotted frame. On each side of this decoration, right below the neck, stands the inscription of the production year: one number on the left (“1”) and the subsequent group of three on the right (“700”).

### Communities, workshops, and analogies

I have already outlined some general traits of the Haban pottery that allow one to ascribe this particular piece to the aforementioned ceramic type. “Haban ceramics” is primarily a scientific umbrella term<sup>22</sup> denominating the pottery products that emerged from the workshops of the Hutterite Anabaptists, or, as called by Hungarian written sources, “New Christians” (*Újkeresztények*). Anabaptists (or *Wiedertäufer*, literally meaning “rebaptized”) were part of a radical wing of the Reformation with multiple ideological branches. The movement originated in Swiss territories, spreading to German lands, Austria, Northern Italy, the Netherlands, and very early, in the 1520s, to Moravia. Here, one of the different groups lived according to the ideas of Jacob Hutter, hence the name “Hutterites.”<sup>23</sup> From Moravia, these groups (already producing the famous tin-glazed ceramics by the late sixteenth century)<sup>24</sup> moved to the northern part of the Hungarian Kingdom and Transylvania. As they advocated baptism as a sacrament for adults, free church organization, and refusal to participate in war, this radical ideology<sup>25</sup> caused their persecution, expulsion, and relocation several times until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, all this time, society highly appreciated their remarkable crafts in many fields,<sup>26</sup> particularly pottery production. Anabaptist groups, living in a community of goods, also established strong pottery production centers in northern historical Hungary (today divided between Hungary and Slovakia) and Transylvania. For seventeenth-century Transylvania, the religious tolerance and craftsmanship requirements of the princely courts and families of Gabriel Bethlen and George Rákóczi I enabled the colonization and activity

<sup>21</sup> Although, symmetry was not mandatory in Haban decoration.

<sup>22</sup> The appellations vary depending on the context and periodization of the sixteenth–eighteenth-century developments in the history of its makers and artistic trends. The term “Haban” only appeared at the end of the seventeenth century (Ridovics 2008, 87) but was later mainly used to refer to the products of their crafts (Roşca, Klusch 2015, 338).

<sup>23</sup> On the rise of Anabaptism, early history, persecution, and survival, see, for example, Bálint 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Bajnóczy et alii 2014, 1.

<sup>25</sup> For the ideology and way of life of the Hutterite Anabaptists, see, for instance: Bunta 1970, 214–216; Ridovics 2008, 87; Réti 2011, 15–18; Martinuzzi, Bálint 2019, with bibliography.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in 1627, the Hutterite settlers from Vinţu de Jos (Alba County) practiced no less than 17 crafts and were listed as: weavers, cloth makers, blacksmiths, locksmiths, cutlery makers, ropers, hatters, shoemakers, belt makers, saddlers, tanners, fine-leather cleaners, furriers, wheelers, cartwrights, coopers, and potters (Bunta 1979, 254).

of these groups. After their expulsion from Moravia, Prince Gabriel Bethlen, in great need of artisans, invited communities of Hutterite Anabaptists to settle inside the Principality, first and foremost, in Vințu de Jos (Alvinc/ Unterwinz, Alba County) and, most likely, across the river in Vurpăr (Borberek/ Burgberg, Alba County). As a result, they came in succeeding groups from 1621 until 1649 and founded a commune with a substantial impact on the Transylvanian economic market.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, several other settlements formed in Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Alba County), Dumbrăveni (Ebesfalva, Sibiu County), Gherla (Szamosújvár, Cluj County), and Oradea (Nagyvárad, Bihor County). Primarily sought after by the princely court and wealthy noble families but also reaching the Principality's urban markets, the Hutterites' high-quality products caused profit disruptions, particularly for the urban Saxon guilds and, consequently, their opposition. Hence, the rulers issued over time several special privileges and limitations on their products.<sup>28</sup>

In this context, despite the resistance its makers met, the Anabaptist pottery, resembling Italian faience and Northern Renaissance ceramics with oriental ornamentation motifs, became very popular and entered the inventory of many reputable households of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup> Even after the downfall of the pottery center in Vințu de Jos and the partial relocation of the potters into isolated groups elsewhere in Transylvania, the Hutterite-Haban influences on the local pottery production continued, and ethnographers documented post-Haban pottery and the continuation of the Haban tradition.<sup>30</sup> Many artifacts have survived in excellent condition in private and public collections, and, because of their qualities and variety, these became a major research subject for art historians, ethnographers, archaeometrists, and, more recently, archaeologists.<sup>31</sup>

The finest Haban products date back to the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This is the “golden age” of Hutterite-Haban pottery and the primary focus for the purpose of the present analysis. However, these products were not the same throughout this time frame, as new social requirements and aesthetic trends came into play, and novel formal and decorative elements appeared. From this point of view, the ewer from the well on Gaál Gábor Street fits a particular category of Haban products: the ceramics covered in cobalt-blue glaze. Despite its much earlier appearance,<sup>32</sup> the blue glaze became very popular in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup> Although the famous tin-white

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<sup>27</sup> Bunta 1970, 202–212. Written evidence documents the presence of the first colonists (miners in the Rodna Mountains) since the middle of the sixteenth century (Bunta 1970, 202; Roșca, Klusch 2015, 338).

<sup>28</sup> Bunta 1970, 212–214; Bunta 1979 (for a detailed overview of their privileges, limitations, and local opposition).

<sup>29</sup> Conscriptions, *urbaria*, and journals recorded numerous Haban products in household inventories (urban houses and noble residences); for example, these products also made it into the economic journals of Anna Bornemisza (wife of Prince Michael Apafi I). See a selection in: Bunta 1971; Ridovics 2008, 91–92; Fulga, Voicu 2013, 24, 26–27.

<sup>30</sup> Fulga, Voicu 2013.

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, the recent archaeological publications on the topic: Bikić 2012; Pető 2015; Ringer 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Ridovics et alii 2015, 487–488 (indicating examples from the late sixteenth century and the first half of the subsequent one, in Moravia, western and northern Habsburg Hungarian Kingdom).

<sup>33</sup> Already concluded in the earlier scientific literature: Bunta 1971, 230; Katona 1974, 145–167; Klusch 1980, 70.

glaze remains widespread during this later period, many jugs, juglets, tankards, ewers, dishes, angular bottles, stove tiles, etc., bear a single-layered blue overcoat.<sup>34</sup>

The artisans obtained the darker or lighter shades of blue coating by adding cobalt oxide<sup>35</sup> to the glaze suspension. The production of blue-glazed pieces continued and diversified well into the eighteenth century. Based on the availability of cobalt ore deposits in Transylvania,<sup>36</sup> style, and pottery shapes, earlier research has ascribed the production of the blue-glazed pieces mainly to the Anabaptist workshop from Vințu de Jos. However, more recent research, particularly archaeometric investigations, reinforces (and partly corrects) the nuanced interpretations that indicate that not all blue-glazed ceramics originated from the above-mentioned Transylvanian pottery center.<sup>37</sup> The latest analysis suggests that the workshops in Vințu de Jos, Sárospatak (north-eastern Hungary), and, possibly, Sobotište (Ószombat/ Szobotist, western Slovakia) all produced a cobalt-blue glaze (at times also bearing uranium<sup>38</sup>) as part of an artistic trend followed in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, from the end of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century, a new workshop (the so-called “mining town workshop”) in north-western Hungary began the production of uranium-bearing blue-glazed pottery decorated with thicker, more dynamic brush strokes and mainly displaying craft symbols.<sup>40</sup> These conclusions arose following archaeometric investigations (X-ray fluorescence spectrometry) conducted on pieces from public and private collections and archaeological material retrieved from or near the production sites, including Vințu de Jos.<sup>41</sup> These new results make it difficult to indicate Vințu de Jos as the production place of the ewer from Cluj based on the geographic proximity of the workshop, decoration style and its blue glaze alone,<sup>42</sup> setting new methodological requirements for all future research of this ceramic type.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Conclusion of the cross-section examination of the blue-glaze Anabaptist ceramics contradicted the older assumption (for example, Katona 1974, 150) that a transparent lead glaze covered a colored engobe layer (Bajnóczi et alii 2015, 518, 530).

<sup>35</sup> Ridovics et alii 2015, 486.

<sup>36</sup> Sources do exist for Hungarian and Bohemian lands as well (Ridovics et alii 2015, 500–501).

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Katona 1974, 145–167, also referring to the work of Béla Krisztinkovics.

<sup>38</sup> A trace element that aids in the localization and identification of the cobalt ore deposits from various regions.

<sup>39</sup> Ridovics et alii 2015, 494.

<sup>40</sup> Ridovics et alii 2015, 496–501. All the analyzed specimens originating from this yet unlocalized workshop contain uranium traces, indicating a specific supply of the cobalt pigment.

<sup>41</sup> The archaeological material from the Anabaptist settlement in Vințu de Jos was also sampled. This lot (Colecția MNIT, nos. F 19495–19808) entered the Medieval and Early Modern Collection of the museum in Cluj following the excavations by Pál Gyulai and Magdolna (Magda) Bunta. The unpublished dig took place in 1970, and, so far, no documentation was uncovered in the museum archives. In her publications from 1971 (227–228, 231, pl. VIII) and 1973 (30–31, 32–33), M. Bunta only mentioned the dig, illustrated some of the uncovered material (mixed with artifacts from Vurpăr Castle), and announced its future publication.

<sup>42</sup> For example, other shapes with blue glaze and similar chromatics and style were traditionally identified in the literature as Transylvanian products; e. g., three tankards in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts (“Habán kerámiák”/ IMM, 2871–1660/1670, 14279–1679, and 74.55.1–1694) and one in the Réti collection (Réti 2007, 35, 24 – mid-seventeenth century).

<sup>43</sup> Archaeometric investigations (e.g., cross-sections, XRF, EMP) would be useful in telling what its micro-structural characteristics are and if this is also a uranium-bearing glaze.

Until then, some comments can be made on the shape, ornamentation, and written records of the ewer category. This particular pottery shape, round-bellied with a slender neck, equipped with a spout that widened like a funnel, or, as recorded by contemporary sources, “ewer with a strainer,”<sup>44</sup> is reminiscent of the metal Ottoman-Turkish ware and black Balkan ceramics that it replicates.<sup>45</sup> Few pieces with this shape are known, making researchers assume they were not very common, but generally concluding Haban ewers are of Transylvanian origin and ascribing them to the Vințu de Jos workshop. However, the recent discovery of several unfinished pieces from Sárospatak proves the potters in this center also produced round-bellied ewers with strainers, though smaller in size and with different proportions between the body and neck.<sup>46</sup> Apart from these archaeological pieces, most of the ewers resembling the analyzed vessel come from private collections, and their place of production can be presumed primarily based on stylistic features. However, lacking sufficient archaeometric data, their collection history is somewhat relevant, as most vessels first appeared in Transylvanian or Romanian collections.

Two smaller ewers with the same shape belong to the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest (IMM, no. 2866) and the Transylvanian Ethnographic Museum in Cluj-Napoca (MET, no. A2317), but bear a tin-white glaze. The first one is dated 1671 and was purchased from Count Jenő Lázár from Mureșeni (Meggyesfalva, Mureș County),<sup>47</sup> while the second has the year 1616 mistakenly inscribed (most likely a potter’s error).<sup>48</sup> Two blue-glazed ewers with strainer and pinched mouth, bearing uranium traces, also belong to the Museum of Applied Arts: one with a fluted body dated around 1690 (IMM 14284) purchased from Emil Sigerus in Sibiu (Nagyszeben)<sup>49</sup> and another with a simple round-bellied body, dated to the second half of the seventeenth century (IMM 14276).<sup>50</sup> Even though the ewers in this group display the same formal elements and the exact positioning of the vegetal decoration on the vessel body as the piece from the urban well in Cluj, they are considerably smaller (their height ranges between 19 and 25 cm<sup>51</sup>), do not share the same proportions between different parts of the vessels, and are dated slightly earlier.

However, one other example is a better analogy for the Cluj piece. It is a tall and slender blue-glazed specimen from the László Réti private collection (Budapest), allegedly produced in Vințu de Jos.<sup>52</sup> The vessel is 30 cm high, and its bottom measures 10.7 cm in diameter; thus, it has almost the same dimensions as the Cluj find. The most notable difference is the far richer decoration and its distinct positioning: year and lines on the mouth, a spring of flowers on the neck, a scale pattern on the shoulder, and a continuous band of vegetal decoration on the body. However, I must highlight the presence of similar

<sup>44</sup> Ridovics 2008, 91 (*bokályos rostás vizeskorsó*); Ridovics et alii 2015, 495.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Bunta 1971, 233; Radványi 2011b, 27.

<sup>46</sup> See Ringer 2015, 436, fig. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Réti 2007, 66, cat. no. 105; Radványi, Réti 2011, 168, cat. no. 231; “Habán kerámiák”/ IMM, 2866.

<sup>48</sup> Bunta 1973, 49; Ridovics et alii 2015, 491, footnote 18, 507, pl. 2, upper-left corner.

<sup>49</sup> Katona 1974, 214, cat. no. 64; Radványi, Réti 2011, 228, cat. no. 331; Ridovics et alii 2015, 494; “Habán kerámiák”/ IMM, 14284.

<sup>50</sup> Katona 1974, 67, 215, cat. no. 67; “Habán kerámiák”/ IMM, 14276.

<sup>51</sup> According to Ridovics et alii 2015, 495.

<sup>52</sup> Réti 2007, 66, cat. no. 104; Radványi, Réti 2011, 231, cat. no. 334. I am not aware of archaeometric investigations performed on this artifact.

thin brush strokes and loops, calligraphic numbers,<sup>53</sup> brownish highlights, and the identical chromatics employed for the ornaments on both ewers. Interestingly enough, before reaching the László Réti collection, the artifact was part of the Hans Gabányi collection in Munich and, prior to that, of the Barbu Slătineanu collection in Bucharest; hence, a Transylvanian origin is even more plausible.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, in 1917, the Museum of Applied Arts purchased from Emil Sigerus a jug with identical chromatics and use of ornamentation. The production area indicated for this piece is Transylvania.<sup>55</sup> The dating of the ewer and the jug is the end of the seventeenth century, based on the year written on the mouth of the ewer (“1697”); hence, only a couple of years apart from the artifact found inside the well.

### Haban pottery in context and closing remarks

According to the written documents and craft symbols on the vessels, Haban products slowly became common from the second half of the seventeenth century onward, even with the lesser nobles and the bourgeoisie.<sup>56</sup> The inventories of movable goods in various manor houses across Transylvania also listed blue-glazed ceramics. Looking at the inventory descriptions, researchers Margit B. Nagy and Magdolna Bunta brought forth examples of glazed pottery products, ranging from stove tiles to various types of vessels.<sup>57</sup> The most explicit appellation for this ceramic category had derived from the very name of the settlement, *vinci/ vintzi/ Vinczi* (“from Vinț”), proving that at least a regional branding process had manifested. The recurring phrase *vinci bokály/ vintzi bokály* is, at times, accompanied by an additional term describing the glaze color, such as blue (*kék; Lazur szín; kékes vagy Lazur szín; violaszinü*). *Bokály/ bokályos*<sup>58</sup> is an appellation generally employed for all the high-quality glazed and decorated ceramics (including stove tiles),<sup>59</sup> regardless of specific function and shape, that continued to be used well into the eighteenth century.<sup>60</sup> Even though the production of glazed ceramics diversified over the eighteenth century, for the previous one, the appellation may have very well referred exclusively to the Anabaptist products on the market.

As recorded by written documents, the blue-glazed ceramic vessel types credited to the workshop in Vințu de Jos are tableware for storing, serving, and manipulating liquids, such as jugs and ewers. The *vinci kék mázos, törött szájú korsó* (“blue-glazed Vinț ewer, with a broken mouth”)<sup>61</sup> can be easily associated with the Haban pottery production in Vinț, but

<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, in the published photographs of the Réti ewer, only the first number of the year is visible (“1”).

<sup>54</sup> Réti 2007, 66.

<sup>55</sup> Réti 2007, 33, cat. no. 19; Radványi, Réti 2011, 230, cat. no. 333; “Habán kerámiák”/ IMM, 14286. Some ceramic pieces with scale ornaments have a plausible Transylvanian origin, particularly, the jug uncovered during the archaeological excavation in Vurpăr Castle, a site also used by the Anabaptist community in Vințu de Jos (Bunta 1973, 50, fig. 17c). The most acceptable explanation is that the vessel comes from the nearby pottery workshop.

<sup>56</sup> Ridovics 2008, 92.

<sup>57</sup> B. Nagy 1970, 151–157; Bunta 1971, 224–225.

<sup>58</sup> See Szabó T. 1975, 967, 970.

<sup>59</sup> B. Nagy 1970, 151–157; Ridovics 2008, 92; for examples on the association of *bokály/ bokályos* with various ceramic types see also Szabó T. 1975, 967–971.

<sup>60</sup> Fulga, Voicu 2013, 27.

<sup>61</sup> B. Nagy 1973, 145 (1683, Cârțișoara/ Oberkerz/ Oprakercisóra, Sibiu County).

other formulas (*kék bokályos kancsó* – “blue-glazed jug,” *kék bokályos pohár* – “blue-glazed tankard”?)<sup>62</sup> could also be referring to these objects. An ewer with the same characteristics as the analyzed piece was recorded in the 1679 inventory of the manor house in Sânpetru de Câmpie (Uzdiszentpéter, Mureș County) as the *kék bokályos rostás vizeskorsó* (“blue-glazed water ewer with strainer”).<sup>63</sup> The term *rostás* (“with strainer”)<sup>64</sup> sets this vessel apart from other ceramic shapes (mainly jugs and juglets).

Although the archaeological presence of Anabaptist ceramics on residential sites (e.g., the Martinuzzi Castle in Vințu de Jos – the Bethlen phase,<sup>65</sup> the Sükösd-Bethlen Castle in Racoșu de Jos – the Bethlen phase,<sup>66</sup> and the Bishopric Palace in Alba Iulia<sup>67</sup>), isolated fortifications (e.g., the Vurpăr Castle<sup>68</sup>), and the urban environment (e.g., the Old Town hall in Sibiu<sup>69</sup>) is a fact, the scientific literature rarely considered it. This is because Haban ceramics were, and still are, primarily a research topic for ethnographers and art historians. However, the archaeological discoveries exceed the published material, and new data is bound to emerge depending on their publication.

Based on the research of M. Bunta, the earliest known record of blue-glazed pottery comes from an inventory compiled in Cluj, in which “a blue jug made in Vinț” was mentioned in 1651.<sup>70</sup> This could mean that the blue-glazed ceramics entered the town’s households at least half a century before the production of the ewer from Gaál Gábor Street. Thus, such findings are expected elsewhere in the urban setting of Cluj.

Clearly, the presented ewer had a specific use for pouring liquids. It was not the only piece of this category retrieved from the well (other unglazed ewers also ended up in the fill), meaning it was a ceramic shape that fitted the pottery assemblage used by the inhabitants of the Calvinist parsonage.<sup>71</sup> By comparison, even though its handle shows evident signs of use, the Haban piece could have also had another function, an aesthetic and/or festive one, because it was more sumptuous than the rest of the ceramic tableware inventory of the house. Even contemporary writings often record these products placed on open shelves,<sup>72</sup> in plain sight, to be admired, probably for aesthetic and representation purposes. Therefore, the acquisition/ownership of this high-quality Haban vessel could have met some of the aesthetic and social representation needs of the parsonage’s inhabitants. Nevertheless, after studying the Calvinist Church archives and the entire archaeological lot that originated inside the well, this artifact could be better interpreted as part of a whole, i.e., within the movable inventory of this urban household.

<sup>62</sup> B. Nagy 1973, 145 (1679, Sânpetru de Câmpie/ Uzdiszentpéter, Mureș County).

<sup>63</sup> B. Nagy 1973, 145.

<sup>64</sup> On its uses and meaning, see: Szabó T., Vámoszser et alii 2002, 524 (entry *rostás*, I.2. *rostélyos*).

<sup>65</sup> Rusu 1998, 23, 142 and cat. nos. 149 (lid) and 151 (candle holder); Marcu Istrate 2004, 167 (stove tiles).

<sup>66</sup> Marcu Istrate 2004, 168 (stove tiles).

<sup>67</sup> Marcu Istrate 2009, cat. nos. 381, 397, 402, 405 (stove tiles).

<sup>68</sup> Bunta 1973, 50, fig. 17c (jug).

<sup>69</sup> Klusch 1997, 59 and 62, pl. I/1–3 (jugs).

<sup>70</sup> Bunta 1971, 229.

<sup>71</sup> The rest of the ceramic material is undergoing restoration and interpretation.

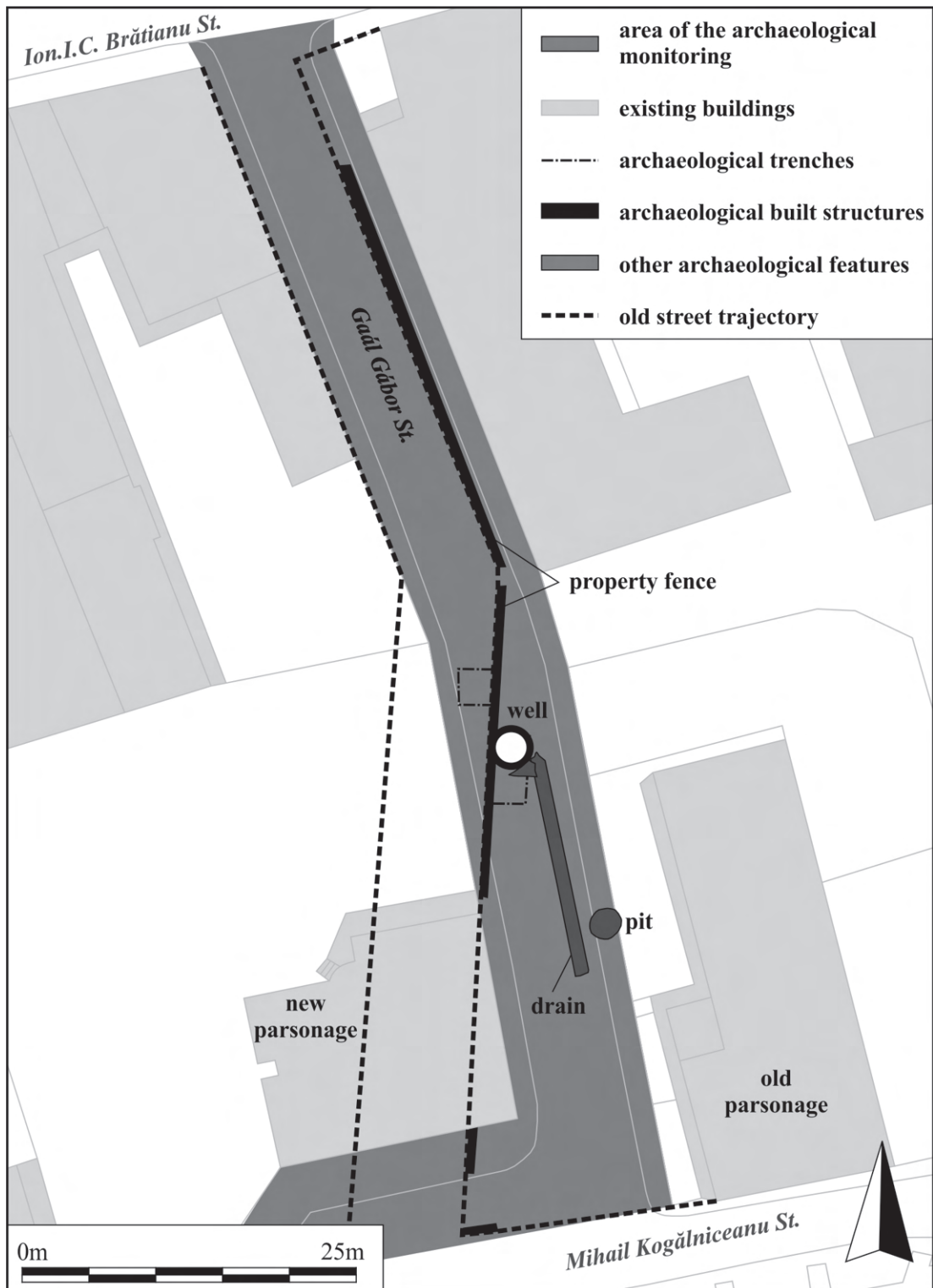
<sup>72</sup> E.g., Bunta 1971, 232 (1631, the Princely Palace in Alba Iulia); B. Nagy 1973, 145 (1679, Sânpetru de Câmpie); Fulga, Voicu 2013, 26–27.

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**Fig. 1.** Ground plan of the archaeological finds on Gaál Gábor St. and the old street trajectory (plan by Oana Toda).



Fig. 2. General photographic image of the finds on Gaál Gábor St. (photo by Radu Lupescu).



Fig. 3. Image of the excavated well (photo by Keve László).



Fig. 4. Photographic image of the ewer (photo by Sergiu Odenie).

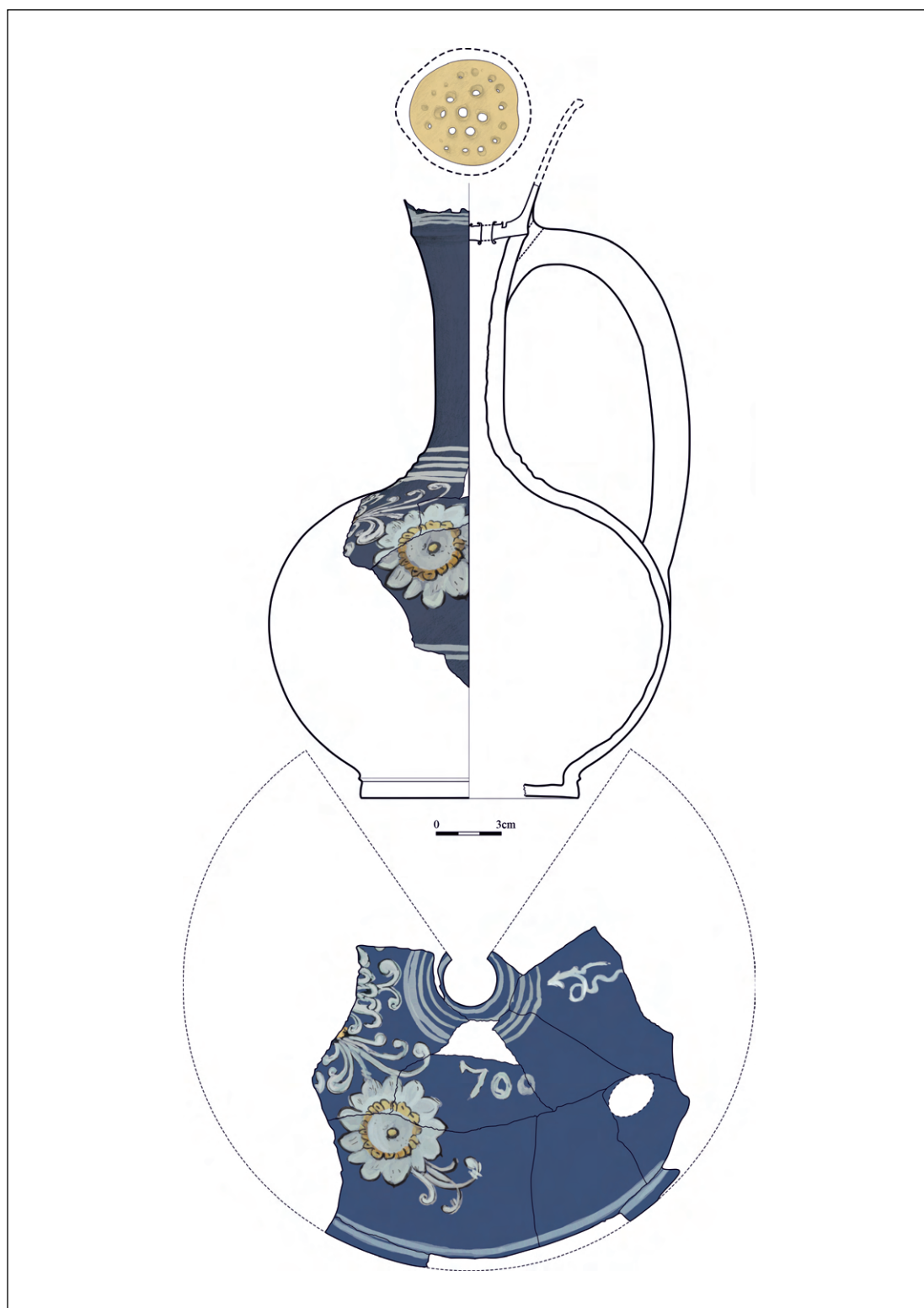
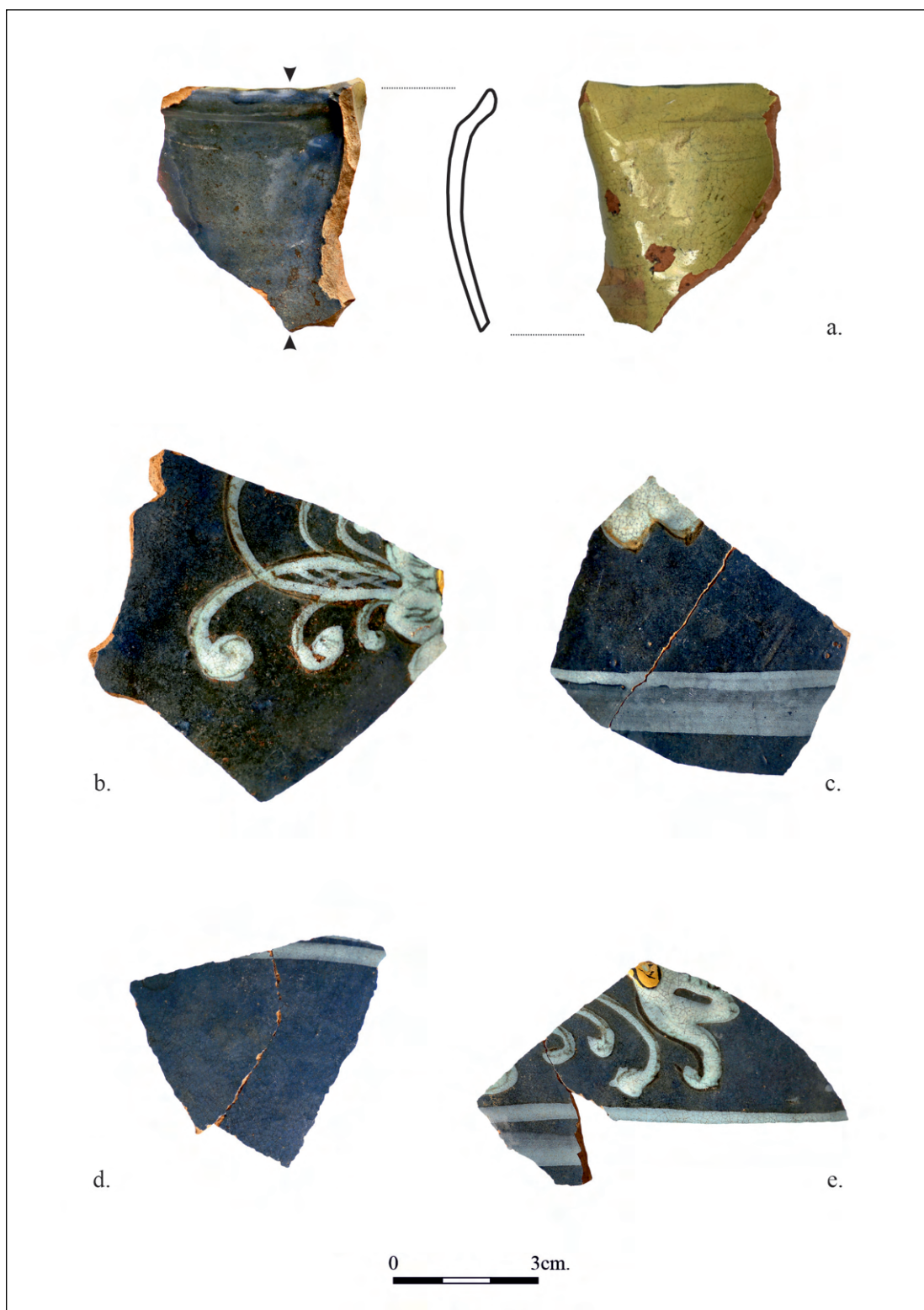


Fig. 5. Drawing of the restored ewer and unfolding of the ornamentation (digital graphics by Anca Dumitrița Bâlc).



**Fig. 6. a-e.** Photographic images of the ewer's remaining decorated shards and fragment of the spout (photos by Sergiu Odenie).





Pharmacy display from the old exhibition in the Hintz House, MNIT Collection, photo Sergiu Odenie

# **CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION**



## HANDLING HERITAGE OBJECTS. MOVING THE ENTIRE PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTION WITHIN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TRANSYLVANIAN HISTORY

IOANA COVA\*

**Abstract:** Starting with 2018, the building previously housing the History of Pharmacy Collection (a privately owned building), known as the Pharmacy Museum, underwent massive restoration. The building, also known as the Hintz House, has traditionally been housing the exhibition of pharmaceutical objects – a collection owned by the National Museum of Transylvanian History. When the building was set to be restored, the collection, which then counted around 2400 inventory numbers, was packed and moved to the headquarters of the museum in the central storage facility, where it remained until 2023. The newly reorganized permanent exhibition at the Hintz House is set to be re-opened in early 2024.

The logistics of such an activity was complicated, as it was the first complex transfer of an extensive collection that the museum had organized in the last decades. The entire collection was assessed before moving, from a conservation point of view, to establish if any objects require specific handling, along with materials and equipment for their manipulation. The collection's relocation was intended to last for a few years; during this time, most of the cultural objects were planned to remain packed and temporarily stored since the collection needed to be moved back to Hintz House once the renovation was completed. The museum staff did the packing under the strict supervision of conservators and restorers, and a moving company specializing in art handling was hired to transport the collection to the museum headquarters.

**Keywords:** Hintz House, Pharmaceutical collection, collection care, preventive conservation, heritage objects handling, museum storage

**Rezumat:** Începând cu anul 2018 clădirea în care era expusă Colecția de Istoria Farmaciei (o clădire aflată în proprietate privată) a intrat într-un proces de renovare majoră. În această clădire au fost expuse de-a lungul timpului obiectele farmaceutice din colecția Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei. Atunci când clădirea a intrat în renovare întreaga colecție, care număra în jur de 2400 de numere de inventar, a fost ambalată și transportată la sediul muzeului, pentru a fi depozitată până la sfârșitul anului 2023. Noua expoziție permanentă de la Casa Hintz este programată a fi vernisată la începutul anului 2024.

Logistica unei astfel de activități s-a dovedit a fi una complicată, fiind singura mutare a unei colecții atât de complexe pe care muzeul a organizat-o în ultimele decenii. Starea de conservare a întregii colecții a fost evaluată anterior pentru identificarea bunurilor culturale care necesită o atenție sporită la manipulare, dar și pentru identificarea materialelor de ambalare și a echipamentelor necesare. Relocarea colecției a fost planificată pentru o durată de timp de câțiva ani; în toată această perioadă majoritatea bunurilor culturale vor fi rămas ambalate și depozitate provizoriu din moment ce colecția va fi transportată înapoi în Casa Hintz odată ce renovarea clădirii va fi finalizată. Ambalarea bunurilor culturale a fost realizată de către personalul muzeului, sub stricta

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supraveghere a conservatorilor și restauratorilor, iar transferul către sediul muzeului a fost asigurat de către o companie de transport specializată în manipularea obiectelor de artă.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Casa Hintz, Colecția de Istorie a Farmaciei, păstrarea colecțiilor, conservare preventivă, manipularea bunurilor culturale, depozitarea colecțiilor muzeale

## Introduction

The Pharmacy Museum has a complex history, assembled in multiple phases and functioning in different locations and under distinct administrations.<sup>1</sup> The History of Pharmacy Collection is owned by the National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca, and it has been exhibited since 1964, in a more or less extended and current form, in the Mauksch-Hintz House.<sup>2</sup> On permanent display were not only The History of Pharmacy Collection but also objects from other museum collections and sub-collections, such as the Collections of Medieval and Premodern History, Modern History, and the Technic sub-collection.

The nationalized Hintz House was returned to its owners in 2013, having been seized by the state in 1949.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, Dr. Georg Hintz became the sole owner and decided to renovate the building that traditionally housed the permanent exhibition commonly known as the Pharmacy Museum. He also agreed to return the collection once the newly reorganized display in the restored house was finalized.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the transfer of the collection began in September 2018.

This paper aims to give an account of the process and challenges of planning, packing, and relocating the collection from the Mauksch-Hintz House, situated in Unirii Square, at no. 28, to the headquarters of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, located on Constantin Daicoviciu Street, no. 2, Cluj-Napoca.

## The collection

The History of Pharmacy Collection nowadays<sup>5</sup> encompasses a wide variety of pharmaceutically-related objects, most of them being pharmaceutical containers made of different types of materials (wood, ceramic, glass, porcelain),<sup>6</sup> such as jars and bottles (Fig. 1). According to their classification made by the collection's curator, Ph.D. Ana-Maria Gruia, the glass containers are the most numerous (1806 items, representing 54%), followed by the wooden ones (25%), those made of pottery (18%), and a few made of metal (3%).<sup>7</sup> The collection also includes apothecary boxes and equipment (Fig. 2), such as various measuring tools, test tubes, and objects used in producing medicine, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Gruia 2023a, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Gruia 2023a, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Gruia 2023a, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Gruia 2023a, 36.

<sup>5</sup> The research of the entire collection was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020–1562, within PNCDI III. Details of activities and results at <https://pharmatrans.mnit.ro>.

<sup>6</sup> Cova 2023, 129.

<sup>7</sup> Gruia 2023b, 67.

homeopathic sets, herbal cabinets, and artistic and decorative items.<sup>8</sup> There are also printed books, manuscripts, photographs, pharmaceutical diplomas, labels, advertising materials, receipts, and financial and administrative documents.<sup>9</sup>

Under the administration of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, the collection was constantly enriched, nowadays counting 3819 objects recorded under 2491 inventory numbers<sup>10</sup> (as of May 2023), while at the moment of the relocation, there were around 2400 inventory numbers. The additional recorded objects were inventoried between 2020 and 2023, following recent donations, archaeological finds from the excavation conducted at Hintz House, or older acquisitions left unrecorded or recorded only in the old inventory ledgers.

### Planning for the move

Moving collections from one location to another is not common for the National Museum of Transylvanian History, nor for other museums in Romania, for that matter. So, when the building was set to be restored in 2018, the museum specialists faced a new and complex challenge. The move of the entire collection did not just involve the transfer of objects in terms of location change<sup>11</sup> but also the precise management and execution of handling, packing, transporting, and relocating every object.

The move was divided into two major activities/parts: the coordination and the execution.

1. The coordination<sup>12</sup> of the entire move was mainly the responsibility of the collection conservator<sup>13</sup> with the aid of fellow preventive conservation specialists. It was also facilitated by the museum's administrative departments, as planning for supplies and service acquisitions and contracting various resources were paramount to an efficient move.

2. The packing, moving, and relocation of the objects was also coordinated by the collection conservator, fellow conservators, and restorers and was carried out by museum staff. This activity included cataloging, data verification, photographing, packing, and box/container labeling.

Firstly, though, the objects at the Pharmacy Museum were assessed<sup>14</sup> from a quantitative point of view, and a statistical-like analysis was drawn up, as knowing the exact number, types of objects, and their particularities (Fig. 3) along with providing the temporary storage facility were paramount aspects in the moving process.<sup>15</sup> Administrative meetings were then held before the entire process started so the museum staff could provide administrative guidelines and procedures and delegate activities. Moving the collection was an intimidating mission, particularly given the short timeline, financial constraints, and lack of a previously designated temporary storage facility.

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<sup>8</sup> Gruia 2023b, 61.

<sup>9</sup> Cova 2023, 130.

<sup>10</sup> Gruia 2023b, 57.

<sup>11</sup> Kuon et al 2018, 372.

<sup>12</sup> Kuon et al 2018, 373.

<sup>13</sup> Collection conservator Ioana Cova.

<sup>14</sup> Michalski 2004, 56.

<sup>15</sup> Thorp, Wilson 1994, 48.

Based on the number of objects to be relocated and conservation specifications, the necessary material and staff resources were decided upon (Fig. 4). A procedure for the move was drawn up under the supervision of conservators, and it contained three main parts:

*a) Materials needed to pack each object or group of objects*

Conservation procedures and standards were clearly established as the primary goal of the entire operation was the safe transport of the museum objects. Thus, the objects were assessed prior to their packing so that the conservator could establish the conservation status and packing specifications according to the nature of each object. In order to be efficient and to expedite the process of packing, given the limited time and finances allocated for the move itself and bearing in mind that the move was intended to be a temporary one, the collection conservator, together with the other conservation specialists in the museum, decided to acquire the most used packing and archival materials<sup>16</sup> (bubble-wrap, packing paper, both ordinary and also acid-free, and polyester or cotton quilt batting) and plastic boxes with handles and lids in various standard shapes and sizes. Acid-free boxes were only used for packing the collection's books and manuscripts sub-category, given that they encompass a wide range of materials and mixed media that translate into a high sensibility to light and incorrect temperature and relative humidity. The short amount of time and the limited financial and staff resources made it so that other types of transport materials (such as wooden trays for storing larger objects) were sourced elsewhere.

The three-dimensional objects (which constitute most of the collection) were generally packed using acid-free or regular paper and bubble wrap (or a combination, depending on the objects' type, fragility, etc.) and placed in plastic, transparent two-handled, and lidded boxes. Ethafoam blocks and polyester quilt batting were used to provide extra support and/or restrict the object's movement inside the moving container. Each box or container was provided with a label to identify better the objects inside, including their inventory numbers and additional information regarding the items' handling or placement restrictions.

The large and heavy objects, mostly medical and pharmaceutical equipment but also pieces of pharmaceutical furniture (about a hundred items), were generally packed in the same manner as the ones mentioned above. Where possible, the objects were not dismantled but secured with extra padding or supports.

*b) The staff involved in the packing, moving, and relocation*

Two staff categories were designated to handle this operation, namely, the team involved in packing and registering the objects and the team in charge of the move and relocation. The first team was constituted of museum staff only, while the other was external staff specialized in moving cultural objects.

Packing and registering working groups (each assigned to a specific area), with four to six members headed by a preventive conservation and/or restoration specialist, were designated. Every working group was in charge of activities such as registration, photographing, packing, and labeling (archived within the museum's electronic records) (Fig. 5) in a specific exhibition section (Fig. 6). As the permanent exhibition was housed in

<sup>16</sup> Meister, Green 2011, 105.

five main areas<sup>17</sup> and for an efficient process of packing to take place, five working groups were selected.

The second, external, team was assigned to move and relocate the objects. Before the transport, the moving company's representatives evaluated the objects to be relocated to assess correctly the workforce and time frame required for the operation to unfold. Following the assessment, the museum team, together with the external moving team, decided on a moving operation that would take three days and five to six people engaged in the daily transport of the objects (Fig. 7). Regarding the handling of specific objects, the transport team members received previous instructions from the museum conservation staff and were assisted at all time. Designated museum working team members stayed at the location of the former Pharmacy Museum to assist with the loading while other members assisted with the unloading and transport to the temporary storage facility.

### *c) The location of the temporary storage facility*

Since all of the objects in the Pharmaceutical Collection were on permanent display, there was no designated storage facility at the museum's headquarters to house them. So, when the Hintz House was set to be restored, and the collection moved, the museum staff decided to place most of the collection in one of the temporary storage facilities located on an upper floor of the museum building while the large objects would join other items in permanent storage on the ground floor. Moving the Pharmaceutical Collection exposed the objects to new physical-environmental conditions, less in transit<sup>18</sup> and more at the new storage facility (Fig. 8), which needed to be addressed. The temperature, relative humidity, lighting, and physical and chemical contaminants<sup>19</sup> had to be monitored before the move and assessed accordingly. The temperature and relative humidity readings at the new location did not vary greatly from those at the permanent exhibition spaces. However, as the new facility was in a windowed space, the windows were covered to keep out the natural light. Airborne pollutants were also addressed, as the space was previously used for storing non-patrimony objects, and cleaning programs were not as thoroughly maintained as in a collection storage facility. Access to the storage room was then restricted as the designated storeroom became the new temporary storage facility.

### **The objects in the house**

While at the new temporary storage facility, the information regarding the current location of objects was then assembled in a spreadsheet-like system archived within the museum's electronic records.<sup>20</sup> The entry on the updated new location of the objects was necessary since the collection was moved from its permanent location. Tracking objects<sup>21</sup> and temporary storage containers (labeled with the information on the objects within)

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<sup>17</sup> The *Camera materialis*, the *Officina*, the Books Room, the Laboratory, and the Medical Technology Room.

<sup>18</sup> The move took place in early autumn, meaning that temperatures were around the 15° Celsius average and the relative humidity at a 55% average.

<sup>19</sup> Powell 2016, 158.

<sup>20</sup> Cova 2023, 130.

<sup>21</sup> Roberts 2004, 46.

would also be efficient for their move back to the Hintz House and the newly organized permanent exhibition.

From a conservation point of view, the relocation of the entire Pharmaceutical Collection to the National History Museum of Transylvanian History was the perfect opportunity for the museum staff to conduct a complete assessment and re-assessment of the condition status of the entire collection<sup>22</sup> and thus provide an up-to-date, object-oriented condition survey. The re-assessment also marked the necessity for further preventive conservation and restoration interventions, analyses, and investigations but also underlined the possible display restrictions.<sup>23</sup> The documentation of the collection's condition was conducted by collection conservator Ioana Cova.

### **The move back**

The collection's relocation was intended for a few years, but during this time, unplanned aspects delayed the move back to the Hintz House: the building's renovation was more complicated<sup>24</sup> than expected and took more time, while the archaeological rescue excavations at the house generated a complex situation, both inside and outside the building. The numerous archaeological features discovered during the research, connected to a very intricate urban structure,<sup>25</sup> meant that the excavations were set to develop over a more extended period. The archaeological research also generated a large number of finds, most of them intended to be exhibited in the new display.

While at the time of the relocation, the collection had over 2400 inventory numbers, the process of moving back involved the handling of the additional inventoried objects since the collection nowadays counts more than 3800 objects recorded under more than 2500 entry numbers, as well as the hundreds of archaeological finds from the house that are currently being conserved and recorded.<sup>26</sup>

### **Conclusions**

This paper is intended to account for the process and challenges of planning, packing, and relocating the National Museum of Transylvanian History's Collection of Pharmaceutical History from its then location on permanent display at the Mauksch-Hintz House to the museum's headquarters. The logistics of relocating an entire collection, counting thousands of objects from one location to another, was, evidently, complex. However, although the general guidelines for such a process were known for museum professionals at a theoretical level, the practical aspects of such an activity, dealing with limited resources and a tight schedule, made the entire process even more challenging.

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<sup>22</sup> Cova 2023, 130.

<sup>23</sup> Cova 2023, 131.

<sup>24</sup> The author thanks Dr. Georg Hintz for providing the information.

<sup>25</sup> The author thanks the archaeological research team led by Ph.D. Csók Zsolt for providing the information.

<sup>26</sup> Gruia 2023a, 10.

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Fig. 1. Objects in the former permanent display at the Pharmacy Museum in 2018 (photo by Sergiu Odenie).



Fig. 2. Objects in the former permanent display at the Pharmacy Museum in 2018 (photo by Sergiu Odenie).

Room: Sala materialelor (Coordinator + 5 team members)?	Room: Oficină (Coordinator + 3 team members)?	Room: Laborator (Coordinator + 4 team members)?	Room: Sala cărților (Coordinator + 3 team members)?	Room: Sala de aparatură medicală (Coordinator + 5 team members)?
Person in charge with packing: Team member 1	Person in charge with packing: Team member 1	Person in charge with packing: Team member 1	Person in charge with packing: Team members 1 and 2	Person in charge with packing: Team member 1
Person in charge with photographing and temporary cataloging: Team member 1	Person in charge with photographing and temporary cataloging: Team member 1	Person in charge with photographing and temporary cataloging: Team member 1	Person in charge with photographing and temporary cataloging: Team member 1	Person in charge with photographing and temporary cataloging: Team member 1
Team member 1	Team member 1	Team member 1	Team member 1	Team member 1
Team member 2	Team member 2	Team member 2	Team member 2	Team member 2
Team member 3	Team member 3	Team member 3	Team member 3	Team member 3
Team member 4				Team member 4

**Fig. 3.** Working groups distribution: provisional organization of the teams responsible with packing the collection (image by Ioana Cova).

No.	Name	Placement	Height	Length	Width	Depth
1	Poliță	Sala materialelor		200 cm	50 cm	
2	Dulap 1	Sala materialelor	190cm		140 cm	70 cm
3	Dulap 2	Sala materialelor	210 cm		170 cm	70 cm
4	Dulap- vitrină 1	Sala materialelor	210 cm		150 cm	30 cm
5	Dulapuri- vitrină multiple 2,3,4	Sala materialelor	210 cm		150 cm	30 cm
6	Postament dulapuri 1	Sala materialelor	40 cm			40 cm
7	Masă mare 1	Sala materialelor		220 cm	80cm	90cm
8	Dulap vitrină 2	Oficină	240 cm		350 cm	50 cm
9	Dulap – vitrină, 3	Oficină	180 cm		350 cm	50 cm
10	Dulap – vitrină, 4	Oficină	180 cm		350 cm	50 cm

**Fig. 4.** Categorization of objects: large and medium-sized objects from the Pharmacy Collection that need to be relocated to the museum's headquarters (image by Ioana Cova).

Name	Collection	Inv. no.	Old inv. no.	No. of pieces	Location/ room	Location/ place	Observations	Temporary location
Tigaie din aramă	IF	162		1	Lab. mare	pe peretele din stânga		Lab. mare, cutia mare
Tigaie din aramă	IF	163		1	Lab. mare	pe perete		Lab. mare, cutia mare
Tigaie din aramă	IF	164		1	Lab. mare	pe perete		Lab. mare, cutia mare
Tigaie din aramă	IF	165		1	Lab. mare	pe perete		Lab. mare, cutia mare
Tigaie din aramă	IF	166		1	Lab. mare	pe perete		Lab. mare, cutia mare
Tigaie din aramă	IF	167		1	Lab. mare	pe perete		Lab. mare, cutia mare

**Fig. 5.** Spread-sheet-like tracking system (image by Ioana Cova).



Fig. 6. Working groups during packing (photo by Ioana Cova).



Fig. 7. Moving team during packing (photo by Ioana Cova).



Fig. 8. Objects in the new temporary storage facility (photo by Ioana Cova).



Portrait of Ella Hintz, courtesy of the Hintz family and Melinda Bloss-Jáni

# **BOOK REVIEWS**



**Róbert-Miklós NAGY, Szilárd TOTH (eds.), *Rectorii Universităţii din Cluj (1872–1919)/ A Kolozsvári Tudományegyetem Rektorai (1872–1919)* [The Rectors of the University in Cluj (1872–1919)], Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, pp. 479, ISBN 978–606–37–1518-1**

Reviewed by EDUÁRD SEBŐK\*

*Rectorii Universităţii din Cluj (1872–1919)/ A Kolozsvári Tudományegyetem Rektorai (1872–1919)* [The Rectors of the University in Cluj (1872–1919)], edited by historians Róbert-Miklós Nagy and Szilárd Toth, appeared in 2022 at Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing House, occasioned by the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian Royal University in Cluj, from 1881 the “Francis Joseph” Hungarian Royal University.

As the title indicates, the book is a tribute brought to the founders of the modern university of Cluj by a few historians and professors of “Babeş-Bolyai” University, who wrote short biographies of the rectors in charge of the University between 1872 and 1919.

In the introductory chapter, signed by Szilárd Toth, the reader is acquainted with the organizational structure of the University in Cluj, the number of faculties, the election procedure of the university’s first rector, Áron Berde, on 19 November 1872, and the rector’s and university senate’s duties. The author also outlines the economic issues related to the rector’s office and the so-called “insignia of the rector’s power,” that is, the five chains and five sceptres of the rector and the deans of the four faculties, financed with a donation made by Francis Joseph himself during his visit on 22 September 1895.

This introduction is followed by short biographies of the university’s 48 rectors, written by 14 authors. They are established historians, such as Ana-Maria Stan, József Lukács, Róbert-Miklós Nagy, and Szilárd Toth, as well as young historians like Alexandra Nechita, Antonia Zan, Ibolya Beke, István Biró, István E. Szabó, István-Gergő Csatári, János Fodor, Orsolya Antal, Szilárd-Attila Nemes, and Zsolt Kápolnási.

The biographies draw on both the scientific works of the rectors during the period under review and the scholarly literature and press of the time. Based on these, the authors have highlighted the most important events in the professional lives of the rectors. However, the emphasis is not placed necessarily on their achievements as rectors but on their entire scientific activity as professors of the University in Cluj.

Also, in the case of the rectors between 1914 and 1919, there is little mention of the implications and efforts of the university leadership in connection with the Great War. Despite this, some data catches our attention, such as: the voluntary enrolment of 104 students to care for the sick, following the announcement made by Rector Balázs Kenyeres on 5 August 1914; the maintenance of a rigorous correspondence by Rector Sándor Márki throughout the war years with his students who had departed for the front; the relocation of

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the university from Cluj to Debrecen, supported by Adolf Lukáts; the speech on “replacing the human capital destroyed in the war” given by Gusztáv Rigler at his inauguration on 15 September 1917, and the handover of the university and its institutions by the last rector, István Schneller, on 12 May 1919, to the new authorities (pp. 424, 436, 456, 464, 476).

Through the chosen topics and the carefully selected and structured information, this work contributes to a better understanding of the University in Cluj and especially of its leadership as a whole, representing an essential instrument in this respect.

Moreover, the importance of this work lies in its bilingual format, which makes it even more valuable, as it is accessible to both Hungarian and Romanian readers interested in the functioning of this higher education institution and in the people who served in its leadership.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that at the end of the biographies, there are short lists containing some of the scientific works authored by each rector. These are bibliographical recommendations for those who wish to learn more about the promoters of the Cluj Hungarian cultural elite at that time.

In conclusion, we can state that the present work is a genuine scientific instrument provided both to specialists and the general public interested in the history of the University in Cluj in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and the activity of the rectors who coordinated the functioning of this institution during the studied period.

This work also provides an overview of the leadership of the Hungarian Royal University in Cluj during the period 1872–1919. Thus, each short biography contributes to a better understanding of the history of the Hungarian higher education institution of Cluj and reinforces the words of the first rector, “You know that the foundation of the university is not the empty walls, but the spiritual strength of the professors, through their reputation and their blessed work” (p. 28).

**Melinda BLOS-JÁNI (coord.), *Imagini interioare. Colecția fotografică a doamnei Ella Hintz (n. Boros, 1885–1975)* [Interior Images. The Photography Collection of Madam Ella Hintz (b. Boros, 1885–1975)], Exit Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, pp. 224, ISBN 978-606-9091-46-3**

Reviewed by ANA-MARIA GRUIA\*

This volume, dedicated to the life and photographs of Gabriella (Ella) Hintz, should be discussed together with its (almost identical) twin book in Hungarian (published a few days earlier) and a brief exhibition organized at the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca. The two books and the exhibition are part of the same project, in which Dr. Melinda Blos-Jáni, assistant professor and head of the Film, Photography, and Media Department at the Sapientia University in Cluj-Napoca, has rediscovered the family photography albums of the Hintz family. The Transylvanian Audiovisual Archive (Erdélyi Audiovizuális Archívum) was founded by members of the Media Department of the Sapientia University in order to conserve, digitalize, research, and promote the audiovisual patrimony of Transylvania. They have already organized several exhibitions focusing on archival photography and have published a volume on the photographs of another amateur photographer from Interwar Cluj, Orbán Lajos (Melinda Blos-Jáni, ed., *Látható Kolozsvár, Orbán Lajos fotói a két világháború közötti városról*, Exit Publishing, Kolozsvár, 2018).

In the present publication, Melinda Blos-Jáni focuses on the photographs taken by Ella Hintz, born Boros, wife of pharmacist György Károly Hintz, owner of the Hintz pharmacy in Cluj. The albums are currently preserved in Germany, where the family has emigrated during the 1980s. The communist regime nationalized their pharmacy in the corner of the central square of Cluj in 1949, but the family continued to live upstairs for almost three more decades before gradually deciding to leave the country. Dr. Georg Hintz, whose mother, Edit Hintz, currently preserves the photographs, is now the single owner of the Hintz House, recovered from the Romanian state in recent years. He has become involved in preserving the family's legacy in Cluj-Napoca in several ways. Dr. Hintz has coordinated and funded the restoration of the Hintz House (2018–2023),<sup>1</sup> has provided or mediated access to historical sources related to his family to various researchers, and has funded the translation into Romanian of the book under discussion.

In March 2022 the Transylvanian Audiovisual Archive organized the exhibition entitled *Imagini interioare. Fotografiile dnei Ella Hintz/ Belső képek. Hintz Ella fényképei* at the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania. It featured not only reproductions of the historical photographs but also artifacts created by Mrs. Ella Hintz (tooled leather covers), ground plans, and interviews with current inhabitants of the two Hintz houses in Cluj (the

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<sup>1</sup> The restructuring, restoration and refunctionalization of the Hintz House has recently received an award for restoration at the National Biennial for Architecture, Romania, 2023.

one in the center, with the pharmacy on the ground floor, and a villa on Cetățuie Hill), as well as a contemporary art reinterpretation of some of the images. Two volumes defined as album-books have been published in connection to the exhibition, one in Romanian and the other in Hungarian. Though richly illustrated, they contain solid academic studies. The authors have thoroughly analyzed the biography of Mrs. Ella Hintz and of the other people, mainly family members, who feature in her photographs, the historical and social context of her time, her interest and photographic technique, the subsequent history of her photographs, and how they were recovered and digitally processed. The only difference between the two language variants is that the Romanian book includes an extra article (an asymmetry caused by purely administrative reasons – see below).

After the coordinator's foreword, the book continues with Gaal György's historical study entitled *The Meeting of Two Bourgeois Families of Cluj*, presenting the history of the Hintz and Boros families and the accomplishments of their most representative members. The second article, authored by Zsuzsa Bokor, researcher at the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, discusses the *Silent Observer. The Social-historical Context of Ella Hintz's (n. Boros) Photographs*. The study analyzes the biography of Ella Hintz from a gender studies perspective, through her education, marriage, and family life, but also through her social roles and especially her hobbies. Ella Hintz seems to have both followed the traditional patterns and adopted novel interests such as photography, tennis, and driving (she was the first woman with a driver's license in Cluj), balancing between tradition and emancipation. In the subsequent study, Dorottya Újvári from the History Museum in Târgu Mureș approaches the history of photo albums in general until the Second World War (value, function, materiality), and family albums in particular, focusing on the Hintz albums. Melinda Blos-Jáni has contributed to the volume not only as coordinator, but also as the author of a thoroughly theoretical discussion of Ella's photographic style, genres, and technique (including developing the photographs herself and creating the albums, sometimes with collage and hand coloring). There is much to learn about the public and private character of Mrs. Ella Hintz's photographs, her feminine approach, and her activity along other amateur photographers in Cluj, taking part in meetings and exhibitions. Mira Marincea, photographer teaching at Sapientia University, wrote the subsequent study, entitled *In Ella's Laboratory. The Digital Processing of an Analog Photo Collection*, with more details on the photographic technique of Mrs. Hintz, her experiments, her inner focus (on interiors and portraits of family members or friends), and her adoption of the emerging genre of spontaneous photography. The series of articles is interrupted by the album part of the book, with reproductions of some of the photographs (180 selected out of an entire lot of about 1000), grouped according to topic: portraits, family life, interiors, and cityscapes. The final study, the one that only features in the Romanian version of the book, is an architectural-historical discussion of the Hintz House. Its author, Endre Ványolós, collaborator of the company Planwerk and teaching at both the Sapientia University in Târgu Mureș and the Technical University in Cluj-Napoca, has taken part in the 2018–2023 renovation of the historical monument that once housed the Hintz pharmacy and family. The study includes the first ground plans with the construction stages identified during the recent renovation.

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The entire Ella Hintz project is valuable for recovering and publishing novel historical sources, but it is also interesting for its fascinating interdisciplinary and the complex way in which Melinda Blos-Jáni and her collaborators have looked at these images. The book and the project distill a fine blend of visual studies, history, art history, architecture, sociology, and gender studies. Readers are likely charmed first by the photographer's artistic eye and tenderness (the "maternal" side of the female photographer), but then they are gradually captured by details of family and social life in the first half of the twentieth century in Cluj, by pharmaceutical marketing strategies (in the details of the Hintz pharmacy façade and interiors, for example), by the photographic experiments of the era, or by the history and functions of family photography albums. But there are many other possible points of interest, from architecture and urban details to fashion and pets, interior design, leather tooling, and even pigeon keeping.



**Alex DRACE-FRANCIS, *Istoria mămăligii: povestea globală a unui preparat național* [History of Mămăligă: the Global Story of a National Dish], Humanitas, București, 2023, pp. 291, ISBN 978–973–50–7900–0**

Review by IONEL-DANIEL CERBAN\*

One of the most anticipated publications of 2023 is *Istoria mămăligii: povestea globală a unui preparat național*, written by Alex Drace-Francis. The author is a historian and associate professor of literary and cultural history of modern Europe in the Department of European Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He specializes in the socio-cultural history of Romania and Southeast Europe. The work is also available in English as *The Making of Mămăligă: Transimperial Recipes for a Romanian National Dish*, published in 2022.

The work *Istoria mămăligii* offers a micro-history of corn, of its symbolism, and of the dish called *mămăligă*<sup>1</sup> from a socio-cultural perspective.

The title of the English edition suggests by the phrase “The Making of” a process that has as its first stage the obtaining and processing of corn. Thus, for the “History of mămăligă,” Alex-Drace Francis begins his study with the first stage, namely, a micro-history of the main ingredient, corn. The author proposes both an analysis of a selection of events, arranged in chronological order, in which he focuses on corn, contained in the chronological interval between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as an analysis of the recipes of mămăligă resulting from the primary sources and of the “image of mămăligă in Romanian literature, art, and folklore” (p. 22). The book is not limited to a single research domain; it does not focus on economic and cultural aspects, or a sequence of events but represents a combination of approaches from different sources and disciplines.

Alex Drace-Francis aims and manages to combine the global and national perspectives, indicating the importance of mămăligă not only as food but also by emphasizing the meanings of this product from a socio-cultural point of view. Moreover, he underlines the importance of corn in the history of the Romanian Principalities and their evolution until the beginning of the twentieth century. This approach allows readers to understand events from another perspective, in which corn influenced historical events, while the global context influenced corn-related practices.

Stylistically, the author wrote the book as a story, combining academic seriousness with humorous openness, thus increasing the subject’s appeal, as agrarian history is a subject bypassed by historians and readers in recent times.

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<sup>1</sup> In this book presentation, I used the Romanian word *mămăligă*, because Alex Drace-Francis employed this term in the English version of his work. Also, the term *polenta* entered the English language from Italian, where it denominates a traditional dish very similar to mămăligă. Thus, considering that the book’s subject is the dish’s history in the Romanian Principalities, I believe the word *mămăligă* fits this context better.

In order to research the subject, the author uses many sources of various categories such as specialized studies, literary works, dictionaries, documentaries, films, philosophical works, folklore works, culinary works, legends, letters, monastery documents, legal documents, maps, etc. He uses sources written in many languages, such as Romanian, English, Hungarian, German, French, Croatian, Italian, Spanish, or Latin.

The book is structured into eight chapters preceded by *Lista hărților, graficelor, tabelelor* [List of Maps, Charts, Tables] and *Introducere: Mămăliga te așteaptă!* [Introduction: Mămăliga is Waiting for You!] and followed by *Concluzie: Geneza mămăligii și sensul (agri)culturii* [Conclusion: The Genesis of the Mămăligă and the Meaning of (Agri)Culture], *Anexă: Cuvinte și lucruri* [Appendix: Words and Things], *Mămăligaddenda, sau ceva rețete în plus la ediția românească* [Mămăligaddenda, or Some Recipes in Addition to the Romanian Edition], endnotes, glossary of terms, bibliography, which is humorously noted as *Mămăligografie* [Mămăligography], *Creditele ilustrațiilor* [Illustration Credits] and *Indice de nume selectiv* [Selective Name Index].

In *Introducere: Mămăliga te așteaptă!* [Introduction: The Mămăligă is Waiting for You!], the author emphasizes the importance of approaching the topic. From his point of view, the mămăligă is not just food but an element with socio-cultural value. The author emphasizes the importance of researching this topic by framing the national experience in the global sphere without mistakingly forgetting the national specifics.

Chapter 1, *Din Caraibe până în Carpați: Peripețiile porumbului, 1492–1700* [From the Caribbean to the Carpathians: The Adventures of Corn, 1492–1700], exposes the hypotheses regarding the global course of corn, its propagation in Europe, the route, and the moment it reached the Romanian Principalities. Although it is not possible to precisely determine when corn arrived in the Romanian territories, following the analysis of some primary sources, the author claims that corn was definitely present in these areas in the seventeenth century. It cannot be stated with certainty which social or ethnic group brought this cereal, and Drace-Francis only identified hypothetical routes to the Romanian space: the Ottoman Empire through the conquest of Transylvania, the Habsburg Empire through the campaign of Rudolf II against the Ottomans or the Black Sea through trade.

Chapter 2, *La răscrucea imperiilor: Agricultori, cuceritori, colaboratori, 1700–1774* [At the Crossroads of Empires: Farmers, Conquerors, Collaborators, 1700–1774], presents the situation of the Romanian countries during Imperial conflicts in the period 1700–1774, emphasizing corn in this context. The chapter indicates the importance of Oltenia during the Habsburg rule in terms of economic potential, but at the same time, it reveals the initial negative attitude of the elites and Imperial authorities towards corn and mămăligă. The author points out that, around the eighteenth century, corn became a cereal cultivated throughout the entire Romanian space, not just in the border areas. It became so common in rural and urban daily life that even the local administration began recognizing its importance. Interest in corn has increased especially in the context of conflicts within the framework of the Eastern Question. This context, in turn, influenced trade. Also, the author argues for the connection between this context and its secondary consequences on the development of the Romanian countries and their elites from an agrarian, economic, or urban perspective.

Chapter 3, *Ascensiunea porumbului: Climă, conflicte, contaminare și comerț, 1774–1812* [The Rise of Corn: Climate, Conflict, Contamination, and Trade, 1774–1812] captures the quantitative evolution of corn and the gradual change in imperial attitudes towards this grain, with Russia maintaining its disinterest in corn for a more extended period. Following the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji in 1774, the corn trade intensified and expanded by sea. In the context of the corn's spread throughout the lands cultivated by Romanians, the administration's interventions concerning this cereal also increased. The chapter lays out a profiteering phenomenon carried out at the highest level. Drace-Francis brings forth the case of Prince Alexandru Moruzi, who was said to have bought grain from different parts of the country and then sold it in Bucharest at a higher price. Also, the author mentions the emergence of educational written works on corn. Another issue debated is the link between developments brought about by corn and their influence on political autonomy. The connection between corn and autonomy is considered possible, but at the same time, its role as a subservience factor stands in contradiction.

Chapter 4, *Libertate, mămăliță, rachiou sau moarte: Revoluția de la 1821 regândită* [Freedom, Mămăliță, Raki or Death: the Revolution of 1821 Reconsidered], presents the situation of the Romanian Principalities during the crises between 1813 and 1817 and of the Revolution of 1821, emphasizing the fate and importance of corn in this context. The economic crisis created conditions that favored social unrest and the rise of individuals who took advantage of the situation. An example was the rise of Tudor Vladimirescu. The author points out that Vladimirescu climbed the social ladder not only because of the notoriety he gained after the war of 1806–1812 but also because of the corn trade he conducted on the border between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Concerning the events of 1821, the author emphasizes the importance of the interest in corn as a coagulating factor for the participants in addition to the ethnic one. The course of events in the years 1821 and 1822 brought about new administrative and social changes. One of the outcomes was the increased Ottoman pressure on Wallachia and Moldavia by expanding corn requisitions or drastically limiting trade across the borders with the Habsburg Empire.

Chapter 5, *Porumbul fără frontiere: Mămăliga se globalizează, 1829–1856* [Corn Without Borders: Mămăliga is Globalizing, 1829–1856], addresses the evolution of the political situation within the Romanian Principalities after the Revolution of 1821, the globalization of Romanian corn, and the shift in the European stance on the importance of Romanian resources. After the end of the Phanariot regime in the Romanian Principalities, a new conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire followed, concluding with the peace of Edirne/Adrianople in 1829. This peace brought about significant administrative changes, including the Russian Protectorate over the Romanian Principalities or the incorporation of the Giurgiu and Brăila Rayas into the Romanian territory. This transformation of the political-administrative status brought along changes in trade and grain policies, such as the increased control over The Principalities' goods or the internationalization of the Black Sea trade route. In connection with the latter, the author emphasizes that the slow evolution enabled the Ottoman Empire to remain the main buyer of Romanian grain. At least until the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, the situation of cereals in the Romanian area gradually changed under the influence of the dire developments in Western Europe, namely, the acute lack of food resources during the 1840s, which culminated with the Great Famine

in Ireland. This generated a shift in the British interest in Romanian cereals. However, the Principalities' trade along the Danube remained largely under Russian influence. Thus, Drace-Francis concludes that the British and the French decided to enter the Crimean War to "liberate the corn equally with the people" (p. 106).

Chapter 6, *Independență și dependență, boală și răscoală; sau de ce a explodat măămăliga, 1856–1907* [Independence and Dependence, Disease and Rebellion; or Why the Mămăliga Exploded, 1856–1907], captures the changes produced in the socio-economic framework in the period between 1856 and 1907. The author claims that the Kingdom of Romania was fully integrated into the global grain market, and the issuing of the Rural Law of 1864 apparently emancipated the peasants. The author emphasizes the conflicting opinions related to the developments during this period of independence. On the one hand, the Kingdom of Romania evolved in terms of demographics, railway construction, and increased cereal production. On the other hand, a growing submission to global capitalism was ongoing, which would have determined Romania's underdevelopment in the long term. During this period, the Old Kingdom became a predominantly agrarian country. Here, the demographic growth at the expense of shrinking property and the impossibility of determining prices on the world market influenced the socio-economic situation. By creating an independent and centralized state, it became impossible to circumvent authority as done before. Hence, authority was confronted. Alex Drace-Francis presents the events occurring in the Romanian space in 1888 and 1907 as local examples of a global climate of conflict between population and authority.

In Chapter 7, *Manna valachorum: Rețete la nevoie* [*Manna valachorum: Recipes as Needed*], the author discusses the evolution of măămăliga by identifying in the primary sources the terms used to designate the măămăliga dish but also the stories about this food product. For the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, the appellations that could have denoted măămăliga are highly uncertain, and terms such as *male* or *bálmos* could denote food products other than măămăliga. The relevant primary sources multiplied as the Habsburgs became interested in these areas. For example, the relations of medical specialists that the empire tasked to research the alleged vampirism practiced by the Orthodox population also contain occasional sidenotes about măămăliga. Starting with the 1770s, due to increased interest in these areas during imperial conflicts, the descriptions of people from different fields of activity also contained notes on măămăliga. In this context, more and more detailed descriptions of the preparation of this dish appeared. Romanians did not remain indifferent to these foreign studies and accounts; they were inspired by them and, in some cases, made a classification of their own and created their local writings. In the second half of the nineteenth century, cookbooks in the Romanian language appeared. However, the rare appearance of corn in cookbooks is noted, a tendency that continues in the twentieth century. The author identifies possible causes behind this situation: the popular belief that corn is the leading cause of pellagra, the authorities' attempt to promote wheat at the expense of corn, or the generally negative perception of the măămăliga consumers.

Chapter 8, "*Vrabia mălai visează, și leneșul praznic:*" *Mămăliga imaginară* ["The Sparrow Dreams of Cornmeal, and the Idle Man of a Feast Day:" The Imaginary Mămăliga], analyzes the presence of the măămăliga in the literature, cinematography, art, and folklore of

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until the end of the twentieth century. In analyzing literary sources, the author uses foreign and national literature. Alex Drace-Francis points out an incidental presence of the *mămăligă*. Also, in the national literature, the dish is mainly associated with society's marginals or with people of Roma ethnicity. Following the analysis of national art/imagery, the peripheral place occupied by *mămăligă* is again observed, often identified with the Roma minority. National folkloric sources, proverbs and sayings, fairy tales, and ballads, along with the other sources analyzed by the author, reveal a recurring negative perception of the dish. However, the dissimilarity between the terms *mălai* ("cornmeal") and *mămăligă* (generally translated as "polenta") must be emphasized. *Mălai* usually has a positive secondary sense, such as prosperity, while *mămăligă* often has a negative connotation. Finally, the author emphasizes the perpetuation of the role of *mămăligă* as a social and ethnic barrier in more recent sources.

*Concluzie: Geneza mămăligii și sensul (agri)culturii* is a short summary of both the conclusions and the story of *mămăligă* as reconstructed by this book. Eventually, the author highlights that to finish the story of this dish, a work at least equal to that done so far would be necessary. Thus, the book's purpose was also to create a consistent general framework for future research.

In *Anexă: Cuvinte și lucruri* the author analyzes various terms denominating corn and *mămăligă*: *cucuruz*, *mălai*, *mămăligă*, *păpușoi*, *porumb*, and *tenchi*. This inquiry traces the first written records, the possible meanings, and the origins of the terms.

In the final part, *Mămăligaddenda, sau ceva rețete în plus la ediția românească*, Drace-Francis resumes and transcribes primary sources regarding the preparation of *mămăligă*. At this point, the author brings forth historical data on the various recipes.

This work offers an engaging story of corn and *mămăligă*, a new take on the national history from the fifteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, and an analysis of the multiple meanings of *mămăligă*. The work is well documented, and the author translates his research into an attractive, easy-to-understand monograph. Nevertheless, some minor errors found their way into the book's content. For instance, Tudor Vladimirescu's place of birth is not Mehedinți County but Gorj County. Another oversight appears in his summarizing of the *Story of Stories* by Ion Creangă. Drace-Francis writes that Saint Peter transforms the farmer's corn harvest, but in the *Story of Stories*, Jesus Christ accompanies Saint Peter, and the one who brings the curse to the peasant's head is Jesus himself.

The book is a journey through which the reader is offered a ticket from the Atlantic to the Balkans, from the Balkans to the Romanian Principalities, to the global, continental, and national historical events. It collects accounts of customs related to *mămăligă* and investigates the socio-cultural meaning of a "national dish" whose historical reality is still half unknown. This literary journey is sprinkled with many diverse sources that provide safety for readers on their trip to the "cauldron" that Drace-Francis puts back into good use. This journey is valuable for its fresh perspective, as it teaches that a simple dish retains a complex history with past and present implications. Ultimately, Alex Drace-Francis helps one discover a treasure that Romanians as a people have lost sight of: the vague and insufficiently known history of a dish that they are branding as "national."



**Cristina A. BEJAN, *Intelectualii și fascismul în România interbelică. Asociația Criterion* [Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania. The Criterion Association], Litera Publishing, București, 2023, pp. 400, ISBN 978–606–33–9912–1**

Reviewed by ANDREI DĂLĂLĂU\*

The names of Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, and Eugen Ionescu genuinely have a worldwide resonance and are the subject of national pride in the Romanian cultural sphere. But how exactly can we define a generation of intellectuals whose memory still stirs up both admiration and controversy in the public space, and why is the interwar debate still heated? Is it because of the Romanian society's inability to come to terms with its fascist past or due to the reproduction of a nationalist paradigm of understanding history? All these questions find their answers in the new work of the Romanian-American researcher and author Cristina A. Bejan, professor at Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado, with masters and doctoral studies at Oxford University. Cristina A. Bejan's *Intelectualii și fascismul în România interbelică* was published at Litera Publishing in 2023 as the Romanian version of *Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). Her research is the most recent historiographical contribution on the interwar "young generation" from Romania, whose representatives entered the pantheon of outstanding personalities of national culture mainly due to their post-war international celebrity. Among them are Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Eugen Ionesco, Marietta Sadova, Mihail Sebastian, Constantin Noica, Petru Comarnescu, and other personalities that aroused admiration and whose public evocation is mainly commendatory, eulogistic and positive.

The researcher based her approach on the historiographical need to provide a historical, cultural, political, and ideological radiography of the group of interwar intellectuals who defined themselves as the "young generation" and who symbolically monopolized the cultural memory of Greater Romania, creating the image of an association destined to contribute to the edification of national culture. The book is a biography of the "young generation," of its institutional workspace – the Criterion Association, and of the individual destinies it was comprised of. Cristina Bejan diachronically exposed their personal evolution alongside the development of the political sympathies that irreparably antagonized the Criterion members. At the same time, she integrated the group's fate within the broader context of domestic political developments and the international crisis, two crucial aspects in determining the Criterionists' political commitments.

*Intellectuals and Fascism in Interwar Romania* offers a thoughtful analysis of the generation that devoured itself in the political arena until the end of the Second World War.

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The author subjects the rise and fall of the Criterion Association to a detailed examination along the nine chapters that consider the core of the Bucharest intellectuals group starting from 1927 and ending with its dissolution from the post-war period. The first chapter establishes the cultural and theoretical bases of the “young generation” by appealing to the influence of Professor Nae Ionescu and the manifesto of the new interwar aspirants written by Mircea Eliade in 1927, *The Spiritual Itinerary*. Once she draws the group’s identity boundaries, Bejan creatively recounts the activity of the Criterion Association between 1932 and 1935 in the following four chapters. The dissolution of the Criterionist structure culminated with the *Credința* scandal, a homophobic and harmful press campaign carried by the ultra-orthodox journalist Sandu Tudor and Zaharia Stancu, former members of Criterion, against the group’s leader Petru Comarnescu, philosopher Mircea Vulcănescu and jurist Al. Ch. Tell. The disappearance of Criterion as a free debate society established the premises of *rhinocerization*, a metaphor used by playwright Eugen Ionesco to describe his former “generation’s” proclivity towards an allegiance in favor of the fascist Iron Guard. Chapter eight reviews the post-war destiny of the now dissolute group by offering an overview of the trajectories that the former Criterionists took after the failure of the fascist experiment: some of them died, others aligned their ideological affinities with the communist regime, others endured persecution and marginalization, while others emigrated to the West, where they managed to build a prestigious professional career in different cultural areas such as philosophy, theatre, history, and religion.

One element of novelty when considering the research’s methodology is the interpretation of fascism as an aspect of everyday life, often omitted in the mainstream historiography of this subject. In this regard, Bejan emphasizes that the formal and informal interactions from the everyday life of interwar Bucharest played a much more important role in the fascist “contamination” of young people than the evolution of international events. The analysis goes beyond the now obsolete strictly political motivation of embracing fascism. It orients the argumentation in an ideological crescendo, where radicalization is portrayed as a gradual accumulation of attitudes, beliefs, and interpersonal validations acquired through an intense socialization process within the Bucharest intelligentsia. The accumulation of political sympathies inherently entails piecing together often contradictory or misunderstood attitudes because each intellectual tended to construct a specific form of fascism that was to be suited, according to them, for the Romanian context.

The author’s quoting from different original sources became redundant in some parts. However, Bejan chose the quotations per the theme and sub-theme of each issue under discussion. The vast selection of primary sources answered how the symbolic status of Criterion, initially built under the sign of philosophical eclecticism and identity contradictions, determined, on the one hand, the attribution of a self-referential narrative regarding the supposed “historical mission” of the new interwar generation. On the other, it predisposed its members to embrace extremist political alternatives to democracy through the tools of an incipient radical thought: anti-rationalism, vitalism, authenticity, eastern spirituality, and the spirit of adventure. Using this interpretative analysis grid, the author demonstrated a fine understanding of primary sources and a proficient method of corroborating them while keeping the Criterion Association’s narrative thread within the borders of modern historical research.

One can suggest that Cristina Bejan's effort has a point and a counterpoint. The point is the affirmative action of constructing a biography of the previously neglected Criterion Association and what followed after its dissolution using diverse primary sources and a modern critical apparatus. The counterpoint of this complex endeavor is the inherent symbolic deconstruction of the "cult" regarding these personalities in the Romanian national imaginary. In other words, constructing a historical image of the "young generation" includes both their meritorious episodes and their controversies in a broader historical narrative, which is equivalent to the symbolic removal of these intellectuals from the pedestal created by the historical memory and to the reinsertion into their almost trivial existence; reinsertion into their deeply human aspirations, disillusionments, naiveties, and ambiguities. The demonstration re-humanizes the *symbol* and penetrates the intimacy of their thoughts and gestures to restore their profound humanity capable of both greatness and fallacy.

However, the counterpoint of the approach does not have the sole intention to highlight the reprehensible episodes of their biographies but to critically deconstruct the thoughts, reasoning, emotions, and decisions of intellectuals caught in the whirlwind of a historical period accelerated by the onslaught of totalitarian ideologies in Europe. The work of Bejan presents Criterion's story without the desire to "demonize" or pass moral judgments. In the spirit of detached research, the author rendered the story of the generation as it was – with multiple episodes of loyalty or betrayal, constancy or radical shifts, love or hate, solidarity or violent detachment, adherence or isolation – and without idealization, as constructed by posterity that compensated for the structural dysfunctions of the Romanian state by appealing to the international symbolic prestige of the respective intellectuals.

Bejan accurately captured the political and cultural heterogeneity of the Criterion Association, distinguishing between its public image – a cosmopolitan association, open to dialogue and seemingly impartible – and its internal dynamic of friendships, where the turn to the extreme right after 1932 would gradually polarize intellectuals according to their political affinities. Another interesting aspect the researcher highlighted was that even if the political differences predisposed them to separation, the same intellectuals inevitably revolved within the same but now antagonized groups. Bejan understood what writer Mihail Sebastian explained, in the form of a spontaneous inspiration, about social relations in the interwar period: "I have glimpsed the whole network of ties, in which absolutely all the people I know are caught, as if the life of each of them were nothing but an offshoot of a common social life" (Mihail Sebastian, *Journal*, 14 March 1939). This may explain the apparently absurd and illogical but still vivid agonizing friendship between a fascist and a Jew, a liberal and a communist, an anti-Semitic mentor and a Semitic disciple. Initially, their friendships and elective affinities prevailed, while later, they coexisted with ideological allegiances and political choices. This perspective fulfills the hypotheses drawn by writer Marta Petreu from her studies on Mihail Sebastian, Emil Cioran, Nae Ionescu, and Eugen Ionescu, but also completes the recent approaches on the matter including the sociological studies developed by Dragoș Sdrobiș in *Limitele meritocrației într-o societate agrară* (Polirom, 2015) and by Marius Lazăr in *Paradoxuri ale modernizării: elemente pentru o sociologie a elitelor culturale românești* (Limes, 2002).

The research is of great importance for the Romanian historiography of cultural studies regarding the courage to problematize, debate, and question the controversial aspects of the Criterionists' biographies, including the role of sexuality in their social dynamic. The issue of homosexuality is particularly important in this regard, with Bejan advancing the hypothesis that male friendships within the group were based on a spiritual and cultural communion and did not necessarily evolve "in the physical area of homoerotic sensuality" (p. 255). This idea opens a new perspective on the dynamics between the sexes within the group, which included intellectuals in their 20s and 30s. Why is the nature of these persons' sexuality relevant in a biographical study? On the one hand, as Bejan repeatedly points out, the very dissolution of the association occurred as a result of a press scandal based on the accusation of pederasty and, on the other hand, because the very assignment of the label "homosexual" simplifies and even distorts the actual complexity of inter-human relationships, reducing them to a compromising moral or ethical dimension. The author's cautious research revealed the somewhat ambiguous sexuality of young people in the age of intimate, spiritual, cultural, and emotional explorations, where intellectual abilities were combined with the uncertain nature of physical attractions and the subtlety of some gestures that hardly fit into a fixed category of eroticism. One such example was the close friendship between the art critic Petru Comarnescu and the philosopher Constantin Noica.

Later, the ambiguity of interpersonal relationships was doubled by exploring sexuality on a literary and poetic level, which led to charges for allegedly promoting pornography against poet Geo Bogza for *Poemul invective* (1933) or Mircea Eliade for describing explicit erotic scenes in his writings *Domnișoara Christina* (1936) and *Isabel și apele diavolului* (1929). Last but not least, many heterosexual members of Criterion had a liberal attitude towards sexuality, had multiple partners, open marriages (the case of Constantin Noica and Wendy Muston), or frequented Bucharest brothels, as they indicate in their letters and diaries. Ultimately, Bejan notices that not only the sexual "otherness" – homosexuality – needed a more careful exploration in historiography, but also the sexuality itself, which wore different forms and whose contribution was significant in the formation and dissolution of the group. The Criterionists' sexuality is one of the most important research directions for understanding the relationship between a "strongly sexualized literary trend, creative expression and the arbitrariness of the actions of the authorities who were policing the morality of the nation" (p. 272).

In conclusion, we can say that Cristina Bejan's work is essential in the Romanian cultural landscape for several reasons. First, it fills the historiographical gap on the Criterion Association topic, a phenomenon studied more in terms of individual destinies and less in terms of its institutional functioning as a whole. Secondly, the research method is not limited to simply reproducing the primary sources' narrative. The analysis does not allow itself to be caught in the self-referential and legitimizing story of personalities who have intentionally omitted their compromising political allegiance in their memoirs, articles, and public interventions from the post-war period, as was the case of Mircea Eliade. Last but not least, the reading of *Intelectualii și fascismul* instills democratic principles and liberal attitudes that can contribute to the edification of civil society and democracy through knowledge, political awareness, and avoidance of the patterns that led to the political hijacking of an exceptional group of intellectuals. This book raises a valid warning against the danger of

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emerging extremism, which often arises imperceptibly in the collective consciousness and negatively marks the destiny of a community that may practice it daily, at first considering it benign, normative, and, from a point, irreversible. The same danger was present in interwar society and is still present in the latent substratum of mentalities pertaining to today's society – ready to erupt, distort, and subjugate the masses' consciousness. Today, the Criterion Association only exists as an exercise of *memorialization* and *rationalization*, and how we manage its historical memory reflects the degree of cultural maturity the Romanian society has reached or, rather, must reach in the future.



DIVINA FAVENTE CLEM ENTIA

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# **PROJECT PRESENTATION**



**PHARMATRANS. ALL THINGS APOTHECARY  
IN SIXTEENTH–TWENTIETH-CENTURY TRANSYLVANIA.  
THE HISTORY OF PHARMACY COLLECTION  
IN CLUJ-NAPOCA/2023\***

ANA-MARIA GRUIA\*\*

The third and final year of the PHARMATRANS research project implemented through the National Museum of Transylvanian History has mainly focused on the completion and **publication of the exhaustive catalog** of the History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj, the main objective of the research team. The thematic structuring of the volumes has led to six volumes that were very uneven in size (between 150 and over 800 pages), so the team has decided to restructure the material and obtained seven volumes that are more balanced in size. The photographs in the catalog have been taken by Alexandru Rădulescu and the authors. Ioana Cova has contributed to all volumes with assessments of the state of preservation of all artifacts. Andrea Beatrix Magó has contributed to the seventh volume (and some instances in the other volumes) with brief data on the results of the investigations and analyses performed. The entire team was invested in completing the volumes (text and illustrations), revising the draft versions, and elaborating their design.

The first volume of the catalog, dedicated to overviews and case studies, is edited by Ana-Maria Gruia. There has been a slight change in the structure of the volume, with a case study retracted (as more information became available and there was no time for Zsolt Kovács, Ph.D., to include it in the article) and another article transformed as to focus on the coin hoards recently discovered in the Hintz House (Zsolt Csók's study on the archaeological excavations performed inside the Hintz House became the introduction of Ágnes Gázdac-Alföldy's research into the money buried in the basement of the house towards the end of the nineteenth century). The final version (Fig. 1) thus has the following title and structure:

Ana-Maria Gruia (ed.), *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*. Vol. 1. *Overviews and Case Studies*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 296

Contents

- Introduction
- Notes on contributors
- Overviews

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- Ana-Maria Gruia, *Project Presentation. PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*
- Ana-Maria Gruia, *The History of the Collection*
- Ana-Maria Gruia, *Overview of the Collection*
- Ioana Gruit a, *The Books in the Collection*
- M aria Pakucs, *The Manuscripts in the Collection*
- Ioana Cova, *Care of the Collection – a Conservation Overview*
- M arta Guttmann, Andrea Beatrix Mag o, *The Contribution of Scientific Analyses to a Better Understanding of the Collection*
- Case studies
- Ana-Maria Gruia, *The Pharmacies of Cluj*
-  gnes G zdac-Alf ldy, Zsolt Cs ok, *Crisis in the Time of Cholera. The Coin Hoard from the Hintz House*
- Robert Offner, *Tobias Mauksch, the Privileged Pharmacist of Cluj*
- Melinda Mitu, *Dr. Gy rgy J zsef Hintz (1840–1890), the First Pharmacist from Transylvania with Postgraduate Studies*
- Oana Habor, *Pharmaceutical Education in Cluj (1919–1934)*
- Appendices
- Place names index
- Pharmacy names index.

The second volume contains the records of all wooden containers in the collection. It is authored by Ana-Maria Gruia, with conservation status data contributed by Ioana Cova. The volume includes only the wooden jars, as wooden boxes, spoons, pestles, and other artifacts all feature in volume seven. The jars are structured into lots of between two and more than 70 items, followed by single artifacts. The volume concludes with four indexes, one of place names, the second of proper names (mostly donors), the third of pharmacies (with the original language name and the containers that were used in each), and the fourth of inventory numbers (listing the correspondence between catalog and inventory numbers).

Ana-Maria Gruia, *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca. Vol. 2. Wooden Containers*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 596

#### Contents

- Introduction
- Catalog
- Place names index
- Proper names index
- Pharmacies index
- Inventory numbers index.

The third volume combines containers made of pottery and metal, as they are fewer than those made of wood and glass. It is also authored by Ana-Maria Gruia, with conservation status data contributed by Ioana Cova. The jars are structured according to

primary material and then into lots, followed by single artifacts. The indexes are identical to those in the second volume.

Ana-Maria Gruia, *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*. Vol. 3. *Pottery and Metal Containers*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 424

Contents

- Introduction
- Catalog
- Pottery containers
- Metal containers
- Place names index
- Proper names index
- Pharmacies index
- Inventory numbers index.

The fourth volume is the largest, as it includes all containers made of glass, the material most often employed for the storage, display, and dispensing of medicines. It is also authored by Ana-Maria Gruia, with conservation status data contributed by Ioana Cova. The jars are structured according to lots, followed by single artifacts and by the same indexes as the previous two volumes.

Ana-Maria Gruia, *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*. Vol. 4. *Glass Containers*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 706

Contents

- Introduction
- Catalog
- Place names index
- Proper names index
- Pharmacies index
- Inventory numbers index.

The fifth volume, dedicated to the manuscripts in the collection, is authored by Mária Pakucs, with contributions by Ana-Maria Gruia (most documents in Romanian) and Ioana Cova (the state of conservation of all artifacts). The catalog is structured according to the type of manuscripts (inventories, prescriptions, legal documents, etc.). The volume includes consistent transcriptions of manuscripts, especially the oldest in the lot.

Mária Pakucs, *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*. Vol. 5. *Manuscripts*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 148

Contents

- Introduction
- Catalog
- Place names index
- Proper names index
- Inventory numbers index.

The sixth volume focuses on the books in the collection, and is authored by Ioana Gruîță, with contributions by Ioana Cova regarding the state of conservation of all artifacts. As several of the books are bound together, the catalog entries present each publication, not each volume. The books are presented chronologically, except for the bound books, where the publication date of the first was taken into consideration. Two of the indexes are specific to the nature of the sub-lot, focusing on authors, donors, and former owners, while the third is general, listing the correspondences between catalog and inventory numbers.

Ioana Gruîță, *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*. Vol. 6. *Books*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 426

#### Contents

- Introduction
- Catalog
- Authors index
- Donors and former owners index
- Inventory numbers index.

The final volume reunites all the artifacts in the collection that are neither jars nor books or manuscripts. It is structured typologically, into the following categories of pharmaceutical goods: sets, furniture, wooden boxes, *materia medica*, dentifrice boxes, Seidlitz cups, measuring tools, mineral water tests, mortars and pestles, crucibles, pans, spoons and ladles, various tools, laboratory glass, seals and stamps, art and decorations, ephemera, ampoules, memorabilia, financial and administrative documents, archaeological glass, medical instruments, off-topic, replicas and reproductions (some with sub-categories). For the sake of brevity, the categories are not repeated below. The seventh volume is authored by Ana-Maria Gruia, with conservation status data contributed by Ioana Cova and abstracts of performed investigations by Andrea Beatrix Magó. The final volume of the catalog has an extra index, listing institutions and companies that used, donated or sold some of the items to the history museum in Cluj.

Ana-Maria Gruia, *PHARMATRANS. All Things Apothecary in 16<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>-century Transylvania. The History of Pharmacy Collection in Cluj-Napoca*. Vol. 7. *Varia pharmaceutica*, Mega Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, pp. 606

#### Contents

- Introduction
- Catalog
- Place names index
- Proper names index
- Pharmacies index
- Institutions and companies index
- Inventory numbers index.

The catalog has been published with the Mega Printing House, ranked A by the CNCISIS, in 300 copies. The PHARMATRANS project aimed at publishing an extensive research tool, in English, made accessible to a wide array of specialists and the wider

international audience. Printed copies were sent to all members, collaborators, and specialists that have become part of a growing network of contacts. The seven volumes were thus sent to ca. 150 museums and libraries in Romania and abroad through the book exchange network of the National Museum of Transylvanian History and the network of specialists and museums created through the project. The digital variant of the catalog is available, in portable document format, on the website of the project.<sup>1</sup> The publication of the catalog has been promoted through posts on the website of the project and on social media platforms, and through a book launch event organized on the 17 November 2023 (Fig. 2). Though planned to take place at the Pharmacy Museum, the event was organized at the headquarters of the National Museum of Transylvanian History due to unforeseen delays in the reopening of the new display of the former. Nevertheless, it was a great success, with the participation of most authors and collaborators, the printing house, and the local public. The event was promoted in the press (Radio România Cultural, TVR).

Another objective of the PHARMATRANS project was to research the most relevant new discoveries made regarding the history of pharmacy in eighteenth-century Transylvania as reflected by the collection under discussion, and to present and disseminate them during international **conferences and in articles** published by prestigious journals (ranked ISI/ERIH PLUS). Though the third year was dedicated to the completion of the catalog, the target of delivering two presentations during international academic events has been met. Project leader Ana-Maria Gruia has traveled to Valencia in May 2023, presenting:

- Ana-Maria Gruia, *Museums and pharmaceutical heritage between the Carpathians and Transylvania, Romania* during the international conference *The Hygeia Legacy. Pharmacy Museums and Collections in Europe. Heritage, Identity and Memory*, organized by the University of Valencia, 22–23 May 2023.

On this occasion, the project leader has officially become a member of the Steering Committee of the International Association *Aromas Itinerarium Salutis*, working towards the submission of the European cultural route of pharmacies and medicinal gardens to the Council of Europe. At the conference in Valencia she has met curators of pharmacy museums from Florence, Lisbon, Rome, Pinyol, Llivia, Bern, Roccavaldina, Rijeka, and the Aboca Museum, thus enlarging the network created through the project.

To disseminate the preliminary results of the chemical analyses on samples of *materia medica*, team members and collaborators from Pisa have prepared a poster presentation for the prestigious Technart conference:

- Federica Nardella, Jacopo La Nasa, Ilaria Degano, Francesca Modugno, Ana-Maria Gruia, Ioana Cova, Andrea Beatrix Magó, Márta Guttmann, and Erika Ribechini, *A multi-analytical approach to disclose the composition of 18<sup>th</sup> century ointments from the “History of Pharmacy Collection” in Cluj* during the international conference on analytical techniques in art and cultural heritage *Technart*, organized in Lisbon between the 7 and 12 May 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pharmatrans.mnit.ro/en/catalogue/>. The link has been widely promoted through visit cards distributed during the launch event and included in the packages with the printed version for further dissemination.

Two more poster presentations have been created through the project, presented in Suceava and still on display until the end of February 2024. The event entitled *Restrospective*, 13<sup>th</sup> edition, *Muzeul Național al Bucovinei* and *Asociația Conservatorilor și Restauratorilor din România*, takes place between 27 November 2023 and 23 February 2024:

- Andrea Beatrix Magó, *Investigații pe obiecte din Colecția de Istorie a Farmaciei din Cluj-Napoca*
- Ioana Cova, *Materia medica în Colecția de Istoria Farmaciei a Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei*

Three articles have been published in this volume of the *Acta Musei Napocensis. Historica*, besides the present project presentation, thus meeting the target of publications as well:

- Mária Pakucs, “*They Steal It from the Sultan’s Pharmacy.*” *Transylvanian Imports of Drugs and Chemicals from the Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Period*
- Ioana Gruică, “*Libro di me, Gio Batta Gussetti.*” *The Tale of a Man Through the Story of a Book*
- Ioana Cova, *Handling Heritage Objects. Moving the Entire Pharmaceutical Collection within the National Museum of Transylvanian History*

At least two more articles, integrating the interpretation and comparison of the results of the chemical analyses performed by our foreign collaborators from Italy (Department of Chemistry and Industrial Chemistry of the University in Pisa) and Poland (Department of Pharmacognosy and Herbal Medicines of the Wrocław Medical University), and detailed historical research, are being prepared for *Scopus/World of Science* periodicals, but will probably only be completed after the end of the PHARMATRANS project due to their complexity and high number of authors. The article with the team from Pisa is currently prepared for submission with the *Journal of Heritage Cultural Heritage* (Elsevier). One will be written together with the team from Poland, focusing on the results of their analyses of the *materia medica* samples, while the other article (possibly an open-access e-book) will detail the eighteenth-century medicine chest that contained most of the *materia medica*, analyzed in historical context.

The sixth objective was to **promote the project, its activities, and its results** through the book launch event (see above), the dedicated website, and a minimum of 50 posts on social media platforms (the Facebook page and blog of the History of Pharmacy Collection, the website, Facebook page, and Instagram account of the National Museum of Transylvanian History, as well as personal social platform channels of team members and professional channels such as LinkedIn and Brainmap).

The bilingual website of the project ([www.pharmatrans.mnit.ro](http://www.pharmatrans.mnit.ro)) was created in 2021 and has been updated with the latest results (mainly the structure, covers, and full.pdf volumes of the catalog), the conference presentations, and articles published. The blog is the richest section of the website, with 32 posts (half in Romanian, half in English) in 2023. Throughout the duration of the project, the section has acquired a total of 126 posts. The posts are grouped according to the following categories: study visits, research, and conservation and restoration. In 2023 we have posted more than 50 times on social media platforms (marked with hashtags such as #pharmatrans #mnit #uefiscdi and #cncs), mostly on the Facebook page of the History of Pharmacy Collection (<https://www.Ana-Maria>).

facebook.com/colectiefarmacluj), shared on the fan page of the collection and several Facebook groups (museographers, conservators, inhabitants of Cluj, history students, pharmacists, and an international group of pharmacy historians). The website has had more than 2300 unique visitors, with more to be expected after the online promotion of the digital version of the volumes (Fig. 3).

Throughout the third year of the project, the activities have been coordinated by project leader Ph.D. Ana-Maria Gruia and the audit was performed by an external specialist. Team members and collaborators have frequently met in person, mainly those from Cluj-Napoca, but occasionally also with Ph.D. Mária Pakucs from Bucharest and M.D. Robert Offner from Regensburg. We have also maintained our regular meetings and communication online (emails, zoom meetings, by phone). Ana-Maria Gruia has completed the scientific report and has been responsible for all management activities.

We hope the successful implementation of the project will have a significant **impact** on the knowledge in the relatively new and interdisciplinary field of the history of pharmacy in Romania, through the extensive publication of the second-largest specialized collection in Transylvania (a consistent part of which has not been published before) and through top-of-the field chemical analyses of pharmaceutical formulations. The archaeometric results will also contribute to the expansion of the markers databases in Pisa and Wrocław, aiding future investigations, and answering the growing interest in archaeometry and historical reconstructions). We think the catalog will become a useful tool for future research in Romania and abroad, providing the basic data for study and comparative material for other collections. The project has also contributed to the conservation, restoration, and promotion of the cultural (and technical) heritage of Transylvania in particular and of Central-Eastern Europe in general.

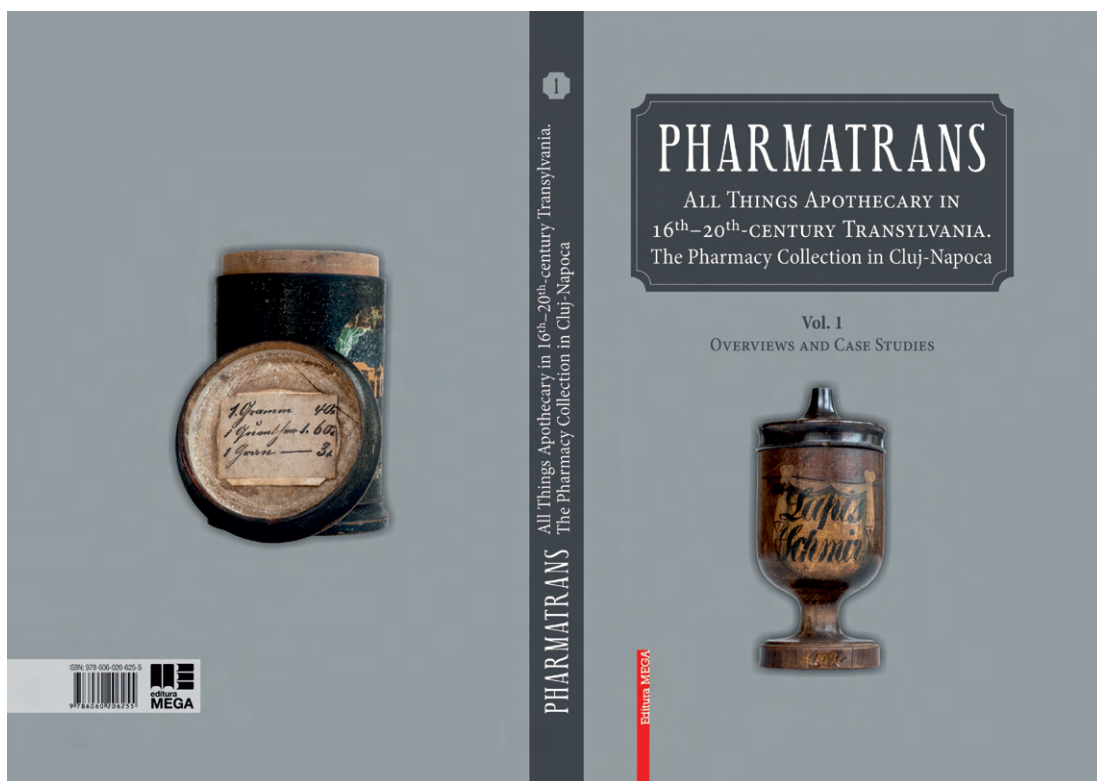
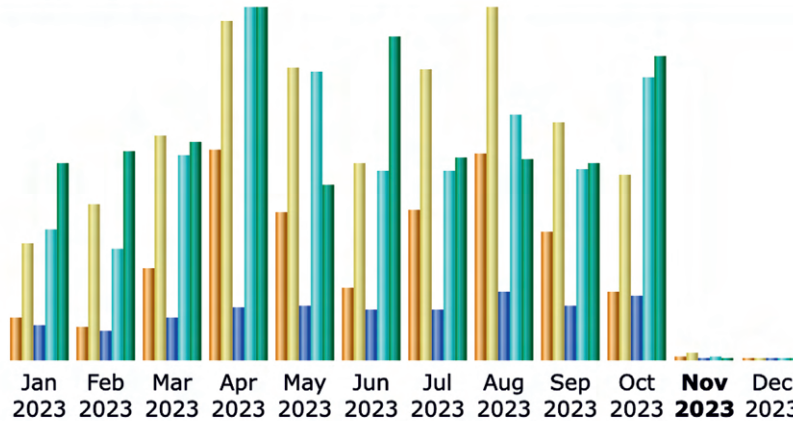


Fig. 1. Cover of the introductory volume of the catalog.



Fig. 2. Book launch event, 17 November 2023 (photo by Sergiu Odenie).

### Monthly history



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2023	87	241	2,072	7,939	546.96 MB
Feb 2023	65	321	1,762	6,725	583.12 MB
Mar 2023	189	464	2,561	12,348	610.22 MB
Apr 2023	436	702	3,090	21,367	982.07 MB
May 2023	305	605	3,241	17,512	488.37 MB
Jun 2023	147	404	3,035	11,427	905.68 MB
Jul 2023	307	601	3,063	11,486	562.98 MB
Aug 2023	425	727	4,094	14,872	558.31 MB
Sep 2023	264	489	3,310	11,617	550.27 MB
Oct 2023	141	382	3,850	17,193	850.14 MB
<b>Nov 2023</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>2.96 MB</b>
Dec 2023	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,373</b>	<b>4,951</b>	<b>30,122</b>	<b>132,661</b>	<b>6.49 GB</b>

Fig. 3. Website visits (<https://www.mnit.ro/pharmatrans/>, data as of early November 2023).

