

## OLD ROMANIAN BOOKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE REFERENCE LIBRARY “BETHLEN GÁBOR” FROM AIUD\*

GORDÁN EDINA

“Bethlen Gábor” Reference Library Aiud

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Cultural establishments set up on the private initiative of the members of the most important nobiliary families: Teleki, von Brukenthal or Batthyány, to only give several examples, are predominant among the XVIII<sup>th</sup>-XIX<sup>th</sup> century libraries from Transylvania. Beside these libraries also existed others, of smaller dimensions, belonging to religious denominations or operating in educational institutions. Such a case is that of the library initially used by the pupils from the “Bethlen Gábor” College from Aiud. The number of volumes held by the library from Aiud increased throughout time, with more and more subjects covered.

Currently, the library had in view, addresses researchers from the Romanian area and not only. Among the copies of old book preserved in the library, alongside incunabula, XVI<sup>th</sup>-XVII<sup>th</sup> century printings or manuscripts, in Latin, Hungarian, German etc. are also found books in the Romanian language.

In the current phase of the research, we identified 18 old Romanian printings and other 14 modern Romanian printings. Inevitably, we focused on the 18 titles that belong to the past period of the Romanian printing (1508-1830). Of these, 12 copies are proper books, and other 6 are leaflets that include different decrees and norms on Transylvania, being printed in Blaj and Sibiu, at the end of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.

The 12 copies of old Romanian book were printed in centres such as Leipzig, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Vienna, Buda, Sibiu, Blaj, București or Cluj and covered the period between 1720 and 1825. At a glance, the volumes to be presented deserve their place in the library from Aiud, their vast majority representing scientific works, that were searched for not only in the Romanian area but also whole Europe in the moment of their appearance. They are printed in German, Latin and Romanian language (the last one with Cyrillic alphabet, but also with Latin one)

The oldest preserved title is a copy of *Octoih (Octoechos)* appeared in Bucharest, in 1720<sup>1</sup>. The book came out of the printing house that operated near the Monastery of All Saints from Bucharest, under the patronage of the metropolitan bishop Daniil and prince Ioan Mavrocordat<sup>2</sup>. Dionisie Floru begun

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\* The article has been published in a first version, in Romanian: see Gordán, Bogdan 2018.

<sup>1</sup> Call number: 573. BRV, II, no. 179, pp. 2-4; Râpă-Buicliu 2000, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> Mârza, Bogdan 2013, p. 89, 194.

printing – meanwhile deceased – and Savva<sup>3</sup> ended it. The copy is incomplete, only pp. 83-86, 89-286, 291-464 of the first numbering sequence are preserved and pp. 1-147 from the second, the [4] leaves from the beginning are missing, as well as pp. 1-83 from the first numbering and pp. 148-159 from the second numbering; the volume has a modern binding made of cardboard, the corners of covers and the spine being made of leather. The pages of the book still preserve some handwritten notes relevant both to the circulation of the volume, and information on the events from the life of those who held it throughout time. Thus, on pp. 168-182 one finds the following text: „Să se știe de acest Oftoic cându adus-o la mine [...] din [...] Madefalău [Siculeni, jud. Harghita] de la Popa On în cinci zile a lui ghen[u]arie la anul de la H[risto]s 1781” (The text mentions the locality of Siculeni and the holder of the book Popa On on 5 January 1781). P. 464 – p. 11 (second numbering): „Scris-am să știu de când au făcutu [...] Vorișca [?] pre fiica sa Rebeca în luna lui noemvr[i]e 12 zile anul de la H[risto]s 1784. Scris-am să știu de când au răposatu maica noastră Safta în luna lui octomvrie 25 de zile anul de la H[risto]s 1784” (The note records events from a holder’s family life – the birth of daughter and death of mother – from 1784). P. 105: “1758”. Pp.107-120: „Scris-am să știu de când au răposatu jupânul Terek Lazlou din Șopteri [jud. Bistrița-Năsăud?] tatăl jupânesi[i] Vârvari și [...] a jupânesi[i] Anușcă surori și a coconului dumisale Iancu în sâmbăta lui Lazăr în anul de la H[risto]s 1784” (The text records the death of Terek Lazlou from 1784). The book entered the collection of the library following the donation made by Ercsey János from Mădăraș (Mureș county), in 1954.

Chronologically, the following title is the second edition of Nicolae Mavrocordat’s work *Despre datorii (On obligations)*, appeared in Leipzig, in 1722<sup>4</sup>. The text is printed in Greek and Latin, the translation being made by Ștefan Bergler from Brașov. The book appeared in the printing house of Thomas Fritsch<sup>5</sup>. The copy is almost complete, only the engraving depicting the author, prince Nicolae Mavrocordat, and made by Johann Wolfgang – engraver of Prussia’s court – in Berlin, in 1721<sup>6</sup> is missing. The work is in good condition and has a binding that is specific to the first half of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century: cardboard wrapped in leather, gilded floral ornaments are found on the spine. On the title page is also preserved a stamp bearing the text “A N. ENYEDI REF. COLEGIUMÉ”. It is the first stamp of the library from Aiud, likely from around

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 110, 246.

<sup>4</sup> Call number:1903. BRV, II, no. 181, pp. 19-20; Râpă-Bucliu 2000, pp. 232-233; Veress 1931, I, no. 310, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> Renowned typographer, editor and bookseller from Leipzig; he lived between 1666-1716. See also Mârza, Bogdan 2013, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Mârza, Bogdan 2013, p. 296.

the 1850s. Another stamp preserved on the title page, referring to the same institution, is much more recent: “BETHLEN-FÓISKOLA Könyvtára”. The volume entered the collection of the library by donation of Salamon József (1790–1871), Reformed priest, teacher, editor of the nine volumes *Erdélyi Prédikátori Tár* (includes sermons, it appeared in Cluj, between 1833 and 1837). He donated more than 600 volumes to the library of the College from Aiud.

The following work is that of Dimitrie Cantemir: *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reichs*, printed in Hamburg, in 1745<sup>7</sup>. The work does not preserve anymore the final plates, only the text part with 64 pp. + 852 pp. The volume is in good condition, with a cardboard binding wrapped in paper. The copy is also valuable by its former holder: an ex libris pasted on the inside of the first cover attests that the volume was part of the library of count Mikó Imre, governor of Transylvania in 1849 and 1860-1861. Mikó Imre was a Transylvanian bibliophile, an important political man and historian; he collected books on the history of Hungary and neighbouring countries. The call number Th. Mik. I. 18 is also above the mentioned ex libris. Presence of the work of Cantemir in the library of one of the political and cultural personalities of late XIX<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania evidences the fact that the work was still topical and enjoyed success one century later from its release<sup>8</sup>!

The following title also belongs to Dimitrie Cantemir. We refer to the edition of the work *Beschreibung der Moldau [Descrierea Moldovei (Description of Moldavia)]*<sup>9</sup> appeared in Frankfurt and Leipzig, in 1771. The volume is complete, including [2] leaves + 341 pp. and a map of Moldavia at the end. The volume does not have the proper binding, the two covers being made of paper. Just like the case of the previous work, also written by Dimitrie Cantemir, similarly, the copy of *Beschreibung der Moldau* preserves on its pages the ex libris of count Mikó Imre.

A captivating work from the Aiud library is that of Ioan Molnar Piuaru *Economia stupilor (Economy of beekeeping)*, appeared in Vienna, in 1785<sup>10</sup>. The work was written by the Transylvanian physician<sup>11</sup> and was considered to be one of the first Romanian works on the economy, appeared in the renowned

<sup>7</sup> Call number: 610. BRV, II, no. 238, p. 84; Râpă-Buicliu 2000, pp. 249-251; Veress 1931, I, no. 405, pp. 211-212.

<sup>8</sup> Four editions of this work are known: two in English language (London 1734 and 1756), one in French (Paris, 1742) and the fourth in German (Hamburg, 1745).

<sup>9</sup> Call number: 1616. BRV, II, no. 375, pp. 196-197; Râpă-Buicliu 2000, pp. 284-285; Veress 1931, I, no. 537, pp. 269-270. On the genesis of the appearance of *Beschreibung der Moldau* see also Dudaş 2013 and Ploeşteanu 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Call number: 2147; BRV, II, no. 493, pp. 307-309; BRV, IV, no. 493, p. 264; Râpă-Buicliu 2000, p. 314; Veress 1931, II, no. 657, p. 39; CRVIH 2016, pp. 870-872.

<sup>11</sup> About biography of Ioan Molnar Piuaru see Popa 2016.

Viennese printing house of Joseph Kurzböck<sup>12</sup>, who also worked as a bookseller in the capital of the Empire. The studied copy is complete, containing 188 pp. and another [10] leaves and is in a relatively good condition. The binding is made of cardboard wrapped in marbled paper. The title page also bears – besides the stamp of the Bethlen College library – a handwritten ex libris: “Zeyk Danielé”. The person in question was the assessor of the King’s Bench, member of a paramount nobiliary family from Transylvania. Zeyk Károly (1810–1885) was the son of Zeyk Dániel (1745–1796) and inherited his library; he was the superintendent of the College and in 1852 he donated his whole library from Aiton.<sup>13</sup>

*Supplex Libellus Valachorum Transsilvaniae*<sup>14</sup>, a significant work appeared in Cluj, in 1791, in the branch from the locality of the printing house of Martin Hochmeister<sup>15</sup> from Sibiu. The copy kept in the collection of the reference library from Aiud is complete, preserving the 59 pages. The binding is simple, of cardboard wrapped in marbled paper, on the cloth spine being recorded the title of the work framed by gilded ornaments. The volume appealed to the intellectual environment from Transylvania, the most famous holder of it being count Mikó Imre whose ex libris label is kept on the first cover.<sup>16</sup> The title page also bears the initials *S. M.*, likely belonging to a former holder.

A new religious text part of the collection had in view belongs to Samuil Micu, *Teologie morală (Moral theology)* (first part and second part), printed in Blaj, in 1796<sup>17</sup>. The work seems to have been printed in a quite significant number of copies, in the following year of its printing, 1797, some 1297 copies<sup>18</sup> were mentioned in the stocks of the publishing house. The copy is incomplete, [2] leaves+ 296 pp. are preserved from the first part and [2] leaves+ 367 pp. from the second part; the volume, in good condition, has a binding made of cardboard wrapped in marbled paper, the spine and corners of covers being made of leather. The book entered the collection of the library in 1893 by

<sup>12</sup> Mârza, Bogdan 2013, p. 178.

<sup>13</sup> Turnowsky, Vita 1957, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Call number: 2501.BRV, II, no. 548, pp. 343-344; Petrik, III, p. 463; Veress 1931, II, no. 760, pp. 76-77; CRVIH 2016, pp. 615-616. About *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* see also Prodan 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Renowned typographer and bookseller from Sibiu, son of Martin Hochmeister (1740-1789), at the death of whom he took over the family business. See Mârza, Bogdan 2013, pp. 145-146.

<sup>16</sup> *Supplex* appealed to the Hungarian intellectual environment from Transylvania, a fact evidenced by the presence of another copy at some moment held by jurist Mike Sándor (1795-1867), which subsequently reached the library of the Unitarian Gymnasium from Cristuru Secuiesc and, finally, the collections of Mureş County Library. See Bogdan, Borzan, Ciugudean, Bogdan 2014, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> Call number: 3061 Th; BRV, II, no. 600, pp. 385-386; Petrik, V, p. 260; Răpă-Buicliu 2000, p. 340; Mârza, Rus 2004, p. 21; CRVIH 2016, pp. 263-265.

<sup>18</sup> Mircea 2008, p. 313.

donation of Lócsey Spielenberg Lajos's widow. Lócsey Spielenberg Lajos was editor, bookbinder in Aiud.

Samuil Micu translated the work of Friedrich Christian Baumeister: *Logica (The Logic)*<sup>19</sup>, which appeared at the printing house from Buda, in 1799. The copy kept in Aiud is complete, encompasses the 205 pp. and is in good condition, the binding is made of cardboard wrapped in marbled paper. Besides the ownership marks of the Bethlen College library is also preserved on the title page a call number that the book was assigned at some point: Phls. Ib 12. Teleki Lajos donated the book to the library from Aiud.

In Cluj, appeared in 1805, in the printing house of the Reformed College from the locality, the work of Ștefan Crișan (Körösi) *Ortographia latino-valachica*<sup>20</sup>. The volume, bound in paper, is in good condition and complete, including [1] leaf + 10 pp. + [1] leaf+ 37 pp. + [1] p. The copy kept in the Reference Library from Aiud is exquisitely important due to the handwritten note and ex libris from the inside of the first cover. Thus, it seems that, initially, the book was given to György Aranka (1737–1817) – important writer and Hungarian translator from Transylvania at the turn of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century – by the author himself. Subsequently, before reaching the library from Aiud, the book was held by count Mikó Imre, the one who purchased the whole library of Aranka György.

Of considerable success enjoyed the editions of the *Psalter* appeared in Sibiu, at the end of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, especially those printed by Petru and Ioan Bart<sup>21</sup>. Such a case is also that of Sibiu edition from 1817<sup>22</sup>. The work part of the collections of the library from Aiud, like the rest of known copies, does not preserve the first two pages and ends with page 288. The volume, severely affected by the xylophagous attack, has a binding made of wooden boards wrapped in leather, the covers are decorated with a pattern complemented by floral decorations and a crucifix in the foreground of the first cover, a floral composition on the second cover. On p. 3, the first kept, is found a stamp of the library from Aiud and an older call number belonging to the same institution. On the end papers are several handwritten texts, in Cyrillic alphabet: „Această Saltire [sic!] au cumpărat cu prețu [?] [...] sloți [sic!]”, „Aceasta Saltire [sic!] au cu[m]părat jupa[n] [...] cu 4 [?] s[l]oți [?]” (The notes attest the purchase of the book in exchange of 4

<sup>19</sup> Call number: 2507; BRV, II, no. 622, p. 418; Râpă-Buicliu 2000, pp. 344-345; Petrik, V, p. 49; CRVIH 2016, p. 375.

<sup>20</sup> Call number: 8172; BRV, II, no. 684, pp. 462-463; Veress 1931, II, no. 923, pp. 143-144; Râpă-Buicliu 2000, p. 360; CRVIH 2016, pp. 618-619.

<sup>21</sup> See also Maria 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Call number: 1285. Poenaru 1973, pp. 120, 122; CRVIH 2016, pp. 786-787.

zlotys). No other information is preserved on how the volume reached the collection from Aiud.

In the printing house of Martin Hochmeister from Sibiu, appeared in 1822, another work of physician Ioan Molnar: *Wörterbüchlein Deutsch und Wallachisches/Vocabular nemțesc și românesc (German and Romanian Vocabulary)*.<sup>23</sup> It is a printing – dictionary – bilingual, in German and Romanian (with Cyrillic and Latin alphabet). The volume is complete, with [2] leaves + 184 pp. + [44] leaves, bound in cardboard wrapped in marbled paper, the spine is made of leather. It is in a relatively good condition. On the leaves of the book are preserved several notes that reveal names of persons who, we assume, held the book: Iosif Șinco in 1881 (inside of cover one and title page) and priest Ignatie Cerbicean (title page). The copy reached the library by donation of pupil Molnár József in 1902.

Chronologically, also the last old Romanian book kept in the library from Aiud: *Lexiconul de la Buda (The Lexicon of Buda)*<sup>24</sup> (Buda, 1825) falls within the same category. The outcome of the efforts of the Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania, the *Lexicon* is the first great lexicographic achievement to a great extent owed to the Transylvanian School. The copy, in a relatively good condition, only preserves the leather spine of the original binding, and as for the body of the book, one can notice that it is complete, with 8 pp + VIII pp. + 103 pp. + 771 pp. On the title page existed a handwritten ex libris which is illegible, being erased on purpose. Also, on the title page are preserved the initials “A. H.” and “J. P.” that likely belonged to some of the former book holders. The book was donated by Székely Gyula to the library of the College from Aiud.

Old Romanian printings from the collection of the Reference Library “Bethlen Gábor” from Aiud, although reduced numerically, provide an overview both on the reception of Romanian culture in Wallachia and Moldavia from the first part of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century in the Transylvanian area if it were to think about the presence of works of Nicolae Mavrocordat and Dimitrie Cantemir, but also on the activity and work of the Transylvanian School and Romanian illuminists from Transylvania considering the copies that have as authors or translators in the person of Samuil Micu, Ioan Molnar Piuariu, Ștefan Crișan, Vasile Coloși, Ioan Corneli or Petru Maior. Presence of the religious books in a reduced number (3 copies) suggests a possible lack of interest for this category of works in Romanian and printed with Cyrillic alphabet.

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<sup>23</sup> Call number: 13087; BRV, III, no. 1159, pp. 462-463; Veress 1931, II, no. 1138, p. 234; CRVIH 2016, pp. 798-799.

<sup>24</sup> Call number: 4227; BRV, III, no. 1240 pp. 460-464; Veress 1931, II, no. 1138, p. 244; Petrik, II, p. 583; CRVIH 2016, pp. 551-552.

## Cărți românești vechi în colecția Bibliotecii Documentare „Bethlen Gábor” din Aiud

## REZUMAT

Una dintre cele mai importante biblioteci documentare ale Transilvaniei și României este cea care s-a dezvoltat pe lângă Colegiul „Bethlen Gábor” din Aiud, colegiu care poartă numele principelui Transilvaniei de care se leagă întemeierea sa, la Alba Iulia, în prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea. Mutarea acestei instituții de învățământ de la Alba Iulia la Aiud a însemnat și începerea unui nou episod al activității, episod de care este strâns legată și evoluția bibliotecii documentare. În zilele noastre biblioteca aiudeană a ajuns să fie una dintre cele mai valoroase și importante, în colecția sa regăsindu-se incunabule, manuscrise valoroase, dar și tipărituri din secolele XVI-XIX.

O categorie distinctă a cărților vechi o constituie cartea românească, tipărită în general cu litere chirilice, dar și cu litere latine sau în limba latină ori germană. Cele 12 exemplare de carte românească veche păstrate la Aiud aparțin secolului al XVIII-lea și începutului secolului al XIX-lea, fiind opere ale unor personalități ale culturii românești: Dimitrie Cantemir, Samuil Micu sau Ioan Molnar Piuariu.

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**Keywords:** old Romanian book, XVIII<sup>th</sup>-XIX<sup>th</sup> centuries, “Bethlen Gábor” the Reference Library, Aiud, ex libris

**Cuvinte-cheie:** carte românească veche, secolele XVIII-XIX, Biblioteca Documentară „Bethlen Gábor”, Aiud, ex-libris