

SORIN CRIȘAN*University of Theatrical Arts Targu-Mures****The Transylvanian Printing in the 16th-17th Century***

The present study, entitled “The Transylvanian Printing in the 16th-17th c.,” is meant to be an analytic approach on two levels: the first, a diachronic one, refers to the development of the printing from a historical, political, social and cultural point of view in the Transylvanian towns of Oradea, Brasov, Sibiu, Alba-Iulia, Cluj, Sebes, Orastie, Abrud, and the second approach is a synchronic one as it sets one’s sight on both the description of the generic elements of the printing art within the geographic area and on marking the cultural affiliation that highlights the preoccupation not only of the laic intellectuals, but also of the clergy (Orthodox, Catholics, Greek-Catholics, Protestants) of founding the production of autochthonous books.

The creation and development of printing art in Transylvania, and also the spreading of printed works in the Western workshops have to be considered within the context of the extremely disturbed period of the 15th-17th c. The multitude of political changes with dramatic consequences on the communities in the territories east of the Carpathians created on the one hand the book trade (when the propaganda of new ideas was intended), on the other hand it prevented or even forbade the spreading of printed matters, of any kind (when their contents offended the religious rules, the state, communities, guilds, or organizations). It is worth keeping in mind, that, starting with the second half of the 15th c, Transylvania was caught between the dependence of the Romanian Principalities to the Ottoman Empire and the wars of the Ottoman Empire with the Hapsburg Empire, wars that ended with the Turks’ hegemony in Central Europe and the “historical” moment of the Adrianople Peace (1452-1452), between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary. At the same time, the printed book was in the spotlight of the church, being promoted either by canonical printings and serving the interests of the clergy, or being overlooked or even forbidden, when opposing the ideas of the clergy. For this reason, the printing workshops (and later on the typographies) were subject to a strict surveillance, so that there was an obvious regress of the printing production in the second half of the 16th c. During the Renaissance, the printed book started its career as an art object, being appreciated as such by the art collectors in the following centuries. Book illustration by xylography, diminishes in the 17th c. in France, containing only two portraits per book. In exchange, the aqua-forte technique started to develop, favoring a superior alternation of shadows and lights, increasing the quality of the artistic work. Between 1500 and 1520-1525, the so-called “post-incunabula” were known, due to their common characteristics with the first printings, after 1525 the printed book acquires different qualities distinguishable from the mediaeval type. Thus, punctuation is used and paging enables an easy reading of the text. In the early years of the 16th c. colophony still exists to indicate the title of the work, the author, the translator, the printer, etc. The author and the title were mentioned in a “capitle”, the additional information appeared in an “cum indice”, “cum comentariis”, or “cum schola”, while at the bottom of the page, “basis”, the locality, the printer and the publication year were written. Colophony was frequently used in Venice in the late 15th c. and the beginning of the 16th c., as well as in Germany in the 16th c., in the form of half a clepsydra.

The 17th c. was considered a century of transition in the history of the book. It is the century when most literary genres appear, the folk creation having an important role. The book develops its role as an information or reading source. Most of the books are printed in almost 2,000 copies, except for the religious and theological works, the school books and popular literature books. Illustrations were still metal engraved, instead of wood and on the front page the author's portrait is more frequent. From the printed production in the 16th –17th c. only a quarter has been preserved, the more damaged books being the popularization ones, but also the leaflets, the manifests, the calendars, the "heretic" ones and the pamphlets.

The 16th-17th c. are important because of the great printing offices created in Europe, so that the printed book goes beyond a simple curiosity of the time, becoming a reading, information and educational object.

In the history of mentalities, the art of printing and book spreading play an important role, as the means of spreading the written works (different printing types and forms) may offer information about a historical, social, economic context, as well as about the extension and interference of the religious, cultural ideas or the spiritual atmosphere of the time. There are also some unquestionable effects of Transylvania becoming a principality as a result of the disputes between Ioan Zápolya and Ferdinand I, and of turning a part of Hungary into a pachalic. The influence of the Lutheran movement in Transylvania, ever since the first decades of the 16th c., was decisive for the cultural life in general and especially for printing. The first towns that promoted the ideas of the Reform and Lutheranism were those with a majority of German population: Sibiu, Brasov, Sighișoara, Bistrița. The Romanian Transylvanian printing in the 17th c. developed within a double context, a cultural one - promoting the autochthonous language – and religious – of resistance, or attachment to the Calvinist principles and the Counter-Reformation. After the printing activity was interrupted in Alba-Iulia, it started again, in Sebeș, where the *Golden Coffin*, by archpriest Ioan Zoba from Vinț, was printed in 1683

The history of paper within the Romanian area, started in the 14th c. In the 16th c., as a result of the battle from Mohacs (1526) and the limited trade relations with western Europe, and the dispute between Ferdinand I of Hapsburg and Ioan Zápolya, the authorities of the Principality of Transylvania had to purchase paper from abroad, through merchants, and to open some home printing offices and paper factories. In Cluj, Heltai Gáspár opened in 1563-1564, a factory for his own typography, and for the others in Transylvania, whereas in Sibiu, a new mill began to work in 1574 (after a first attempt failed in 1555), providing paper for the workshops and offices in Transylvania and Wallachia.

With the first paper mills – in Brașov, Cluj, Sibiu – the filigree was introduced (or the water mark), which had already been extremely spread in Europe since the 14th c., in a great variety of forms and images. Usually, these were applied in order to indicate the origin of the paper and to avoid counterfeiting. Today, the filigree is an important source of information and data about the year and place of the paper manufacturing, and with some acceptable error, the printing year. The most used for the water marks are of heraldic or religious inspiration, with vegetable, animal or anthropomorphous motifs.

In Wallachia, a decisive role in printing and spreading belonged to *the ruler of the principality*, patronizing the laic typographies, and *the church* when the office was meant to print religious books. In the 17th c., a special role was played by *itinerant book traders*, the later booksellers. The public library came into being by donations, such as the *princely*

donations (offered by the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia), from which many towns and villages in Transylvania benefited. The books also reached the Romanian area through priests and merchants. In the 16th c. the connections of the inhabitants of German descent, the Magyars, and the Romanians in Transylvania with the great European centres and especially with the German towns, enabled the trade and cultural relations. The students at western Universities (Heidelberg, Wittenberg, Tübingen, Königsberg, Leipzig, Vienna, Krakow, Padova, Bologna, Pavia, Ferrara), representing both the noble class and the high-middle class, were one of the main ways through which the ideas of the Renaissance and the Reform were spread in Transylvania. The Transylvanian libraries in Târgu-Mureș, Alba-Iulia, Sibiu, Cluj, etc. have many books in their collections brought by these students, who studied abroad in the 16th c. At the same time, the nobles and the wealthy townspeople wanted to have their own libraries, so that, in the 16th c. out of the 150-200 million books edited in Europe, around 100,000 reached the Transylvanian area, suggesting a high interest in the humanistic values that the intellectuals from here might have had.

Book purchasing is connected to the evolution of the autochthonous schools, and the growing interest for studying at western universities. Up to the 14th c., the only high education institutions that accepted the young Transylvanian students, were those in Paris, Italy, then Prague, Vienna and Krakow. The number of Germans—“sasi”, Magyars and Romanians who studied in Occidental universities increased, in the following centuries.

In the 15th-17th c., the ornaments in printing were greatly due to manuscript painting, the miniatures, ornamented letters (zoomorphous, floral, anthropomorphous motifs), on the frontispieces, frames, etc. Within the Romanian area, the ornament and book illustration started with Macarie's printings; later on, in the 16th c. in Transylvania and Wallachia these are due to the apprentices who had worked in Venice, or in other places under the influence of the Italian art decoration (such as Serbia, Muntenegru, Poland) Božidar Vuković's Venetian Cyrillic printings are exceptions, that attracted most of the Transylvanian and Wallachian typographers, such as Coresi, in the printings in Targoviste or Brașov, or D. Liubavici, in the ornaments and frontispieces of the *Slavonian Book of Sermons* (1545) and the *Acts of the Apostles* (1547). The typography of Božidar Vuković, created in Venice, in 1518, printed a great number of books for the Slavs in the south of Europe. In the books printed in the first half of the 16th c., the xylography was included in the text in a single colour, and afterwards corrected by hand drawing.

The ownership marks of most books offer information about the printing time, the ornaments and their route since they were printed. At the same time, they are relevant for the direction followed by the 16th c. intellectuals in Transylvania. The numerous side notes or the *ex libris* and *supralibrosis* may provide important data about the successive owners of a book, used by princes, clergy or ecclesiastical institutions.

The creation of a Roman-Catholic diocese in Oradea is due to Ladislau I, while the Library of the Capite, including first liturgical books, was created and enriched by donations from bishops and clergy, who studied abroad. The Roman-Catholic Library came into being with the setting of the Jesuits in Cluj, in 1579, in the building of the Superior School, that houses a rich collection of literature, including the Catholic Mediaeval books, which were not accepted by the Protestant Church in Transylvania. In the 15th-16th c, the library of the Franciscan Monastery in Șumuleu-Ciuc was considered one of the richest monk libraries in Transylvania, having survived the Reform. The library has also preserved the works of some abolished monk orders, like the Dominican.

In Braşov, Honterius, together with Theobaldus Gryphius, founded a typography, and between 1538-1539, it printed 11 works. The whole number of printings was 37, among which an 1366 hexameter-verses *Rudimenta Cosmografia* (1541-1542), a similar edition being published in 1530 in Krakow. Between 1539-1557 (since the foundation of the typography and till the death of Valentine Wagner, Honterius's collaborator and successor) the number of printings was 53, of which 33 in Latin, 14 in Greek and 6 in German. Honterius indicated the year and publishing place, but did not mention his name as printer.

Coresi was one of the most talented typographers of his time, offering his services to the Saxon or Magyar rulers (Hans Benckner, the noble Forró Miklós, or the judge Lucas Hircher), the Romanian ones (voivodes Alexander, Mihnea and Petru Cercel), or the clergy (as was the case of the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Ghenadie). Coresi also created capital, straight, more elegant Cyrillic letters. The initials of the paragraphs were decorated with geometric and floral motifs, like the Italian printings.

Sibiu was among the first important centres in Transylvania in book printing and spreading. In fact, there was a cultural tradition that started in the 15th c. In 1330, the Dominican monks created here the first library of manuscripts. Later on, the social, political and religious conditions, gave way to the ideas of the Reform, by its cultural trends and found a fertile land in Sibiu (as in all Transylvanian towns, with a majority of Saxon population), mainly by means of the books printed in the great European offices, or those belonging to the autochthonous typographies meant for the Romanians within the inter-Carpathians areal, who had to choose between old traditions and new tendencies, which provided social and cultural emancipation. The image of Sibiu, as a cultural centre, has to be associated with that of a political, military and economic centre of the Saxon University. The outstanding names are: deacon Lorinţ, Albert and Rudolf Hoffhalter, who, after 1547, started to provide different types of letters, patterns for ornaments, frontispieces, columns, etc.

As V. Ecsedy Judit mentioned, the printing activity in Cluj may be divided into three periods, according to the workshops' owners, or to the changes in the art, physiognomy and spreading of books. The first period, between 1550-1574, is that of Jacobus Lucius' typography, the second of the printed works of Heltai Gáspár's widow (1575-1582), while the third belongs to Heltai Gáspár junior (1584-1600).

In Alba-Iulia the printing activity was connected to the church life. The activity of Lorinţ, developed within the process of Calvinization of the Romanians in Transylvania, by Gheorghe de Sangiorz and Pavel Tordasi, which explains the temporary character of the printing activity in Alba-Iulia. It is worth mentioning the privilege obtained by Lorinţ to print *Tetraevangheliarul (The Four Gospel)*, which was mentioned at the end of the work.

Coresi's activity includes also the Sebeş stage, that of *Sbornicul slavonesc (Slavonian Sbornik)*, in 1580 and the work of Filotei the monk (a collection of texts about the life of the saints), starting the printing of *Pripeale (Book of religious services)* in Transylvania.

In *Palia (The Genesis and The Exodus)* – printed in 1582, by Şerban Coresi – the history of the printing mentions the only book printed in Orăştie, in the 16th c., and one of the most important Romanian texts of that time.

In Abrud – a small mining place in Transylvania – is supposed to have existed a typography that worked in 1569. The information is given in a volume *in-4^o*, with the title *Comoedia Balassi Menyhárt árultásáról*, in fact a political pamphlet of the Unitarian superintendent Karadi Pal.

The Cluj-Napoca Library of the Romanian Academy possesses 177 original incunabula, that is, books printed in the second half of the 15th c., representing the image of the European Renaissance and a hallmark for all those who study the spreading of the Occidental books in the Romanian Provinces, in the 15th-16th c. and the following ones. The Library in Cluj-Napoca is on the second to the Bruckenthal Library in Sibiu, as far as the number of incunabula is concerned. They represent a special fund, and belonged mainly to the Library of The Catholic College in Cluj (108 books, 14 with ex-libris stamp), 25 belonged to the Library of the Protestant College in Cluj (some with ex-libris stamp), 18 to the Library of the Unitarian College in Cluj (some with ex-libris stamp), 13 to the Roman-Catholic Diocese in Satu-Mare, 8 to the Central Library in Blaj ("Timotei Cipariu" collection), one was purchased in 1951, whereas 4 are of unknown origin (most probably they belonged to the Catholic College).

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The book circulation in Transylvania in the 16th c. was the main way of spreading the new ideas of the Renaissance and Humanism, as well as of the religious trends connected to the Reform, the Lutheranism, the Calvinism, the Unitarianism. All these have generated the transfer of the Counterreformation on the Romanian soil and the answer of the Orthodox Church, confused by the unexpected, great changes. At this time in Transylvania, as everywhere else, the book represented both an aim in itself (by its artistic qualities, preparing the taste of the public for new and surprising changes) and propaganda or information means. The intellectuality in Europe could not stay away from the volcanic impulse of renewal of the social, political, and especially religious life. Both trade and autochthonous book production grew rapidly in the following two centuries. In the 17th c., a major role was played by *The Gospel with teaching* in 1641, the *Catechism* in 1642, *The Calvinist Catechism* in 1648, *The New Testament from Balgrad*, in 1648, *The Book of Psalms* in 1651, *The Golden Coffin* from Sebeș, in 1683, and *Chiriadromionul* of Mihail Istvanovici, in 1699.

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