

The Medieval Book in Early Modern Transylvania

Preliminary Assessments

Adinel Dincă

Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of History and Philosophy,

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

E-mail: adinel.dinca@gmail.com

Abstract: The present paper aims to resume, after an intermission of more than 100 years, a generous research subject, well represented on the international and regional scene, but completely out of the spotlight of Romanian historians: the history of the medieval book from Transylvania and its post-medieval destiny. The research perspectives focus on two major directions: on the one hand, the analysis of the historical contexts that favoured the keeping and uninterrupted use of medieval books during the 16th-17th Centuries, on the other hand the study of fragments detached from medieval manuscripts and re-used as materials for the covers and bindings of modern volumes. The destiny of the books, *fata libelli*, in the interval between their pragmatic use and their transformation into cultural heritage objects during the 19th century, comes forth as a distinct research theme at a national level. The preliminary assessments on this research topic in Romania concern the circumscription of the topic, the review of sources at the disposal of researchers, and also a scrutiny of international research and results.

Keywords: Transylvania, medieval and early modern period, manuscript, printed book, fragmentology

Rezumat: Cartea medievală în Transilvania premodernă. Preliminarii la o cercetare. Articolul de față își propune să reia, după o întrerupere de mai bine de 100 de ani, un subiect de cercetare generos, bine reprezentat pe scena internațională și regională, dar cu totul ieșit din atenția cercetătorilor din România: istoria cărții medievale din Transilvania din perspectiva destinului post-medieval al acesteia. Perspectivele de cercetare se axează pe două direcții majore: pe de o parte, analiza circumstanțelor istorice în care cartea medievală a fost păstrată și eventual folosită continuu în secolele XVI-XVII, pe de altă parte, este vorba de studiul fragmentelor desprinse din manuscrisele și tipăriturile medievale aflate în circulație locală, refolosite în secolele XVI-XVII drept materiale în legarea copertilor volumelor moderne. Destinul cărților, *fata libelli*, în perioada intermediară dintre folosirea lor pragmatică și transformarea lor în obiecte de patrimoniu cultural în decursul secolului al XIX-lea, se desprinde astfel ca o temă de cercetare distinctă pe plan național. Considerațiile preliminare privind aceasă temă de cercetare în România privesc circumscrierea subiectului și o privire generală asupra surselor aflate la dispoziția cercetătorilor, în paralel cu o primă evaluare a progreselor în domeniu pe plan internațional.

Cuvinte-cheie: Transilvania medievală și modern-timpurie, manuscris, carte tipărită, studiul fragmentelor.

“Whereas, in former Ages, it ha’s been customary, in Binding of books, to affix a Leaf or Leaves of some other old books, at the beginning and end of them; as also sometimes to Past a Leaf upon the inside of the cover of a book newly bound up [...]. Which Fragments having no Relation to the Subject or Matter of the books they belong to; nor contributing in the least to their Value; nor having been ever thought worth taking notice of in any Catalogue whatsoever; nor being of any manner of use in the Library to any man, as they now lie, hid, dispersed and unknown.”¹

These are the words of Humfrey Wanley (1672-1726), the first keeper of the Harleian Library² and “a great palaeographer”³, famous for his *Catalogus historico-criticus* of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, printed 1703-1705, as he accurately described what *fragmenta codicum* are. With these phrases he was drafting a memorandum meant to persuade the curators of the Bodleian Library to allow him to detach such fragments of earlier texts, “without damage to the books”, and to form with them a separate collection. He carries on describing the utility of his proposal: “Which Collection [...] will also furnish [...] with other Observations, of the different kinds of Parchment, Paper & Ink, different manners of Colouring & Illumination, Different ways of spelling, writing or abbreviating such words [...]”⁴. Wanley composed his plan probably in 1689, while he was working on a palaeographical album inspired by the prestigious work *De re diplomatica* (1681) of the French Benedictine monk Jean Mabillon, who is now seen as the founder of the academic disciplines of palaeography and diplomatic. Maybe precisely because the afore-mentioned project was disallowed, Wanley decided to concentrate his attention on the catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, an *opus* of capital importance, in which he omitted to include descriptions of

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¹ Milton McC. Gatch, *Humfrey Wanley's proposal to the curators of the Bodleian Library on the usefulness of manuscript fragments from bindings*, in “Bodleian Library record”, 11(1983): 94-98, here p. 94.

² Michael Murphy, *Humfrey Wanley on How to Run a Scholarly Library*, in “The Library Quarterly”, 52 (2) (1982): 145-155.

³ Neil Ripley Ker, *Catalogue of manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1957), p. xiii.

⁴ Milton McC. Gatch, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

fragments he had surely seen in the books he worked with. However, the librarian's observations reflect a well-known historical reality. Since late antiquity, covers for books and other components in bindings were often made by pasting together pieces of aged, worn or outdated papyrus or parchment manuscripts. Even fragments with decoration or important texts were recycled randomly⁵.

What is relevant now from this very early attempt to start collecting and organizing reused parchment and paper fragments is the clear scientific perspective over the entire activity and its usefulness. Thus, academic involvement with such remnants of medieval literate communication transmitted through later medieval and (early) modern intermediaries is by no means a newly-discovered discipline, as it is sometimes stated. Rather recent is only its naming and perhaps the intense attention directed to the subject, especially because of the internet exposure and the involvement of many non-European institutions, which only possess medieval books starting with modern times.⁶ From a different perspective, this significant increase of preoccupations with "relics" of books, has reopened the interest towards the post-medieval history of medieval librarian collections⁷, a topic of particular relevance for the cultural history of Transylvania⁸, too.

Each collection or every single book of medieval origin reached the present times bearing the obvious marks of the events experienced in the interval between the end of their pragmatic use and their rediscovery and appreciation as objects of cultural patrimony in the last 150 years. Some of them were just trimmed on the margins and rebound according to the fashion of specific periods of time; others were divided or deprived of their most valuable constitutive elements, such as decorations or covers, and reached us today mutilated. Some were forgotten and left to decay, not a few were

⁵ Nicholas Pickwood, Rosamond McKitterick, *A Carolingian Manuscript Fragment from the Ninth Century in Amsterdam University Library, used as the Binding for 'Band 1 E 22'*, in "Quærendo" 43 (2013): 185-213, here p. 186.

⁶ For instance, Carol Steyn, "Fragmentology, the new manuscript study – with reference to manuscript fragments in South Africa" 2016, <http://www.litnet.co.za/fragmentology-new-manuscript-study-reference-manuscript-fragments-south-africa/> (27.09.2017) mentions 150 web-sites containing fragments of medieval books.

⁷ Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 106-107.

⁸ Adrian Papahagi, *Lost Libraries and Surviving Manuscripts: The Case of Medieval Transylvania*, in "Library & Information History", 31 (2015), 1, 35-53; Adinel Dincă, *The Lost Libraries of Transylvania: Some Examples from the 15th and 16th Centuries / Les bibliothèques perdues de Transylvanie: quelques exemples des 15^e et 16^e siècles*, on line edition: www.ifla.org/past-wlic/2009/78-dinca-fr.pdf; www.ifla.org/past-wlic/2009/78-dinca-en.pdf, IFLA World Library and Information Congress Milan, Italy 23rd-27th August 2009 (3.10.2017).

publically and symbolically destroyed, and many were practically reused as wrappers and binding material for prints or instruments of evidence commissioned by public authorities or for private avail. By comparison, a rather small number of collections were blessed and remained undisturbed, *in situ*, in the very place of their making and/or medieval use, suffering only minor interventions related to their modern librarian inventorying, such as labels or short annotations.

Oversimplifying, one can say that there are two main categories of events that determined in a drastic manner the fate of medieval books.⁹ In the first place, there is the random and catastrophic event of a violent nature, such as a war or a rebellion. Either medieval or modern, it caused physical destruction of volumes and dismemberment of library collections.¹⁰ On the other hand, there are the radical cultural and political mutations. The latter rather ambiguous category may include circumscribed processes, like the introduction of the printing press or liturgical renewals, but also far-reaching events, like the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century or the secularisation of the late 1700's and early 1800's, triggered by the confrontation of ideas between the Catholic conservatives and "Aufklärung" or Liberalism. The second category of events usually didn't lead directly to a violent end of books, but – identifying them as *libri inutiles* – forced their "retirement" and/or relocation. The loss of prestige and utility opened the door for various practical solutions, which allowed the reuse of the writing material (paper, parchment), either to write on (palimpsests) or as binding materials.¹¹

Transylvania – the only large province of present-day Romania that evolved in the Middle Ages within the cultural landscape of Latin Christianity – experienced a wide variety of factors that shaped the present stock of medieval books still to be found in the libraries of the country. While a significant phenomenon, the bibliophilic mania of the Enlightenment and the 19th century, responsible for as much as three-quarters of the medieval

⁹ Regarding survival factors of medieval books, either manuscript or printed, see Uwe Neddermeyer, *Von der Handschrift zum gedruckten Buch*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1998); Eltjo Buringh, *Medieval Manuscript Production in the Latin West: Explorations with a Global Database*, (BRILL, 2011).

¹⁰ The famous *Bibliotheca Corviniana* was such a victim in 1541, when Ottoman Turks pillaged the Hungarian Kingdom's capital Buda, see Csaba Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library: History and Stock*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), pp. 91-92; Martyn Rady, *The Corvina Library and the Lost Royal Hungarian Archive*, in James Raven (ed.), *Lost Libraries: The Destruction of Great Book Collections Since Antiquity*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 91-105.

¹¹ Gerhardt Powitz, *Libri inutiles in mittelalterlichen Bibliotheken: Bemerkungen über Alienation, Palimpsestierung und Makulierung*, in "Scriptorium" 50 (1996): 288-304; Frank-Joachim Stewing, *Bibliothek und Buchbesitz einer spätmittelalterlichen Pfarrkirche im mitteldeutschen Raum: Das Beispiel Rudolstadt*, in Enno Bünz (ed.), *Bücher, Drucker, Bibliotheken in Mitteldeutschland: neue Forschungen zur Kommunikations- und Mediengeschichte um 1500*, (Leipzig, 2006), pp. 207-303, especially p. 297.

manuscripts available now in Romania¹², plays no part in the present paper.¹³ This essay is rather concerned with some thoughts about the fortune of medieval manuscripts and printed books of Transylvania roughly in the first half of the century after 1556, when the Catholic Diocese of Alba Iulia¹⁴, after three decades of regress that followed the battle of Mohács, was disestablished.

The eroded faith in, and eventually the rejection of the authority of the Pope, accompanied by the fundamentally different view on several theological and doctrinal positions of the Catholic Church caused violent reactions in many parts of Europe that led collaterally to massive destruction of books. Between 1536 and 1540, in a formal process entitled the *Dissolution of the Monasteries*, King Henry VIII suppressed monastic communities in England, Wales and Ireland (over 800 monasteries, abbeys, nunneries and friaries), leading to the destruction and loss of thousands of books¹⁵. A similar development occurred in 16th century Sweden, where King Gustav began in 1527 the disbanding of Catholic monasteries. As a result, most service-books were re-used during the following 100 years to cover the account registers of several royal administrations.¹⁶ The Transylvanian Catholic libraries suffered a

¹² According to the results made available on-line by "CODEX. Centre for the History of the Book": *Manuscrisele medievale occidentale din România: Censuș* - [http://codex.centre.ubbcluj.ro/ro/categorie/proiecte/\(15.09.2017\)](http://codex.centre.ubbcluj.ro/ro/categorie/proiecte/(15.09.2017)). As far as the early printed books are concerned, the proportion of surviving volumes that existed in Transylvanian libraries since the Middle Ages is considerably higher.

¹³ Jeffrey Garrett, *Aufhebung im doppelten Wortsinn: The Fate of Monastic Libraries in Central Europe, 1780-1810*, in "Verbum Analecta Neolatina", 2 (1999): 15-27 still represents a solid overview on the subject.

¹⁴ Marton József, Jakabffy Tamás, *Az erdélyi katolicizmus századai*, (Alba Iulia, 1999), p. 49; János KARÁCSONYI, *Die konfessionellen Verhältnisse in Siebenbürgen und den angeschlossenen Gebieten (1526-1571)*, in Joachim Bahlcke, Krista Zach (eds.), *Kirche - Staat - Nation: Eine Geschichte der katholischen Kirche Siebenbürgens vom Mittelalter bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, (Institut für deutsche Kultur u. Geschichte Südosteuropas, 2008), pp. 41-52.

¹⁵ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, (Yale University Press, 1992), p. 469. For instance, the library of the convent of the Augustinian Friars at York, comprising 646 volumes, was destroyed, leaving only 8 known survivors, see David Michael Palliser, *The Reformation in York, 1534-1553*, Borthwick Publications, 40 (1971): 16.

¹⁶ Jan Brunius, *The recycling of manuscripts in sixteenth-century Sweden*, in Åslaug Ommundsen, Tuomas Heikkilä (eds.), *Nordic Latin Manuscript Fragments: The Destruction and Reconstruction of Medieval Books*, (Taylor & Francis, 2017), p. 66. The author cites about 23000 manuscript fragments, currently preserved and catalogued by the National Archives in Stockholm, "Medeltida Pergamentomslag" (MPO) <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/mpo> (1.10.2017); see also Jan Brunius, *Medieval Manuscript Fragments in the National Archives - a Survey*, in Jan Brunius (ed.), *Medieval Book Fragments in Sweden: An International Seminar in Stockholm, 13-16 November 2003*, (Almqvist & Wiksell, 2005), pp. 9-17 and Jan Brunius, *From Manuscripts to Wrappers: Medieval Book Fragments in the Swedish National Archives*, (Swedish National Archives, 2013), pp. 11, 24.

similar fate.¹⁷ It must be underlined though that in Transylvania, as in other areas of Catholic Europe, the religious change was not the decisive element for the disuse of old manuscript books.¹⁸ The spreading of printing was primarily responsible for discarding older texts with liturgical or legal function.

Nevertheless, the dissolution of libraries, experienced vastly for instance in England, was not an inseparable detail of the Reformation in every part of the continent. A conference on the topic of how the secularization of religious houses transformed the libraries of Europe during the 16th-19th centuries, organized in 2012 in Oxford by Richard Sharpe, Cristina Dondi (both Oxford) and Dorit Raines (Venice), offered a much welcomed overview on different circumstances in which various regions of Europe from the 16th to the mid-19th century experienced the dissolution of historical libraries of learned monastic or religious orders.¹⁹ While the political transformations in Central Europe from the 1780's onwards influenced rather positively the number of medieval books existing now in Transylvania, allowing selected collectors to buy individual pieces or entire libraries from secularized religious institutions, the original inventory of texts that circulated in the most eastern province of the Hungarian Kingdom was profoundly altered in an earlier period.

Exceptionally, some of the medieval libraries in Transylvania remained after the middle of the 16th century in the place of their initial use, like those of the Franciscans from Șumuleu-Ciuc²⁰ or that of the Lutheran Church in Cisnădie; the former church dedicated to Saint Walpurga²¹; and others were relocated carefully quite close to their earlier storage site. For the latter situation the case of Sibiu serves as an illustrative example, pre-Reformation stocks – of Saint Mary's parish church, respectively, of the Dominican Convent

¹⁷ Sigismund Jakó, Radu Manolescu, *Scrierea latină în evul mediu*, (București: Ed. Științifică, 1970), pp. 84-85 and p. 96, mentioning the mandate issued in 1603, that "all service-books must be destroyed, and other large volumes must be handed over to schools, for the pupils to bind their own books".

¹⁸ Michael Perkin, *A Directory of the Parochial Libraries of the Church of England and the Church in Wales*, (Bibliographical Society, London, 2004), p. 31.

¹⁹ "Secularization and the libraries of Europe" Conference, 22-24 March 2012, Bodleian Library and St Anne's College, Oxford, www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/courses/projects/how-the-secularization-of-religious-houses-transformed-the-libraries-of-europe; www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/122187/2012_MonasticABSTRACTS.pdf (27.09.2017). See also Jeffrey Garrett, *Klostersturm and Secularization in Central Europe: What Happened to the Libraries?*, in "Theological Librarianship", 8/1(2015): 61-69.

²⁰ Fodor Sándor, *A csíksomlyói ferences könyvtár kincseiről*, Csíkszereda, 1991; Muckenhaupt Erzsébet, *A csíksomlyói ferences könyvtár kincsei*, (Budapest-Kolozsvár, 1999).

²¹ Balázs J. Nemes, Cora Dietl, Adinel Dincă, *Heltau*, in Cora Dietl, Anna-Lena Liebermann (eds.), *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Literatur in Ungarn und Rumänien*, (De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2015), pp. 182-185.

of the Holy Cross – being kept and continuously inventoried in a nearby location, in the chapel of Saint Jacob (*Kapellenbibliothek*).²² A swift transfer must have happened in Braşov, too, as medieval books – no longer relevant at that time, like the liturgical texts of the local Dominicans – can still be traced in the library catalogue of the Lutheran Gymnasium²³ copied in 1575. Were it not for the Great Fire of 1689, we might still have had today the chance to actually study those manuscripts and prints. Other books were used after the Protestant Reformation, at least for some decades, with some modifications required by the changed religious context. An excellent example for such a situation is the legal compilation with “constitutional” value from Sibiu, known as *Codex Altemberger*, kept in use until the 1580s.²⁴

If for Sibiu or Braşov we are still in possession either of original medieval books or substantial information about their post-medieval fate, in northern Transylvania, in the case of urban settlements such as Cluj or Bistriţa, the state of affairs is radically different. The assumption that such towns, home of important ecclesiastical institutions, entirely comparable with those mentioned above, must have had their librarian collections, extremely relevant under local circumstances, is not supported by too much evidence. The nine incunabula allegedly preserved in the archive of the Saint Michael’s parish church in Cluj are poorly described²⁵ and virtually inaccessible. But regarding the library of the Dominicans from Cluj, who used to have a large hall for storing books²⁶, practically nothing is transmitted to us. In Bistriţa, in the county library, one can still find ten printed works: one *incunabulum*²⁷ together with other nine volumes printed before 1541²⁸. A small number of books,

²² Friedrich Teutsch, *Der älteste Katalog der Hermannstädter Kapellenbibliothek*, in “Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde”, 3 (1880): 93-94; Friedrich Müller, *Die Incunabeln der Hermannstädter “Capellenbibliothek”*, in “Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde”, Neue Folge, 14 (1877): 293-358 and 489-543.

²³ Julius Gross, *Zur ältesten Geschichte der Kronstädter Gymnasialbibliothek*, in “Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde”, 21 (1887): 591-708, especially 592 sq., 620-625.

²⁴ *Masterpieces from the Collection of the National History Museum of Romania*, (Bukarest, 2014), pp. 33-47 (with additional bibliography). See also Carmen Florea, *Identitate urbană și patronaj marian în evul mediu târziu*, in “Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis. Series Historica”, 5 (2008): 59-80, especially 59-60.

²⁵ Elena-Maria Schatz, Robertina Stoica, *Catalogul colectiv al incunabilelor din România*, (CIMEC - Institutul de Memorie Culturală, Bucureşti, 2007), pp. 25-26.

²⁶ Sigismund Jakó, Radu Manolescu, *op. cit.*, p. 95; Mária Lupescu Makó, *The Book Culture of The Dominican Order in Transylvania*, in “Philobiblon: Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities”, 22 (2017) 1, 187-204.

²⁷ Elena-Maria Schatz, Robertina Stoica, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²⁸ Elena Dorobont, *Carte veche în Biblioteca Judeţeană Bistriţa-Năsăud: secolele XV-XVII*, vol. I, (Eikon, Cluj, 2005), p. 15-24; Horst Göbbel, Michael Weihrauch, “Ein wahrer Schatz: die alten Bücher des Evangelischen Gymnasiums in der Kreisbibliothek Bistritz-Nasod”, in *Wir Nösner: Beiträge zur*

printed around 1500, have survived in the parish church of the Lutheran community.²⁹ And this although even a small village church like that from Jelna, situated only three kilometres away from the town, had a dozen books, according to a list from 1489.³⁰ Two collections of incunabula linked to Mendicants from the northern regions of Transylvania resurfaced recently: respectively 11 volumes from the Bistrița Dominicans³¹, and 20 books from the Franciscans in Dej.³² One may still hope for pleasant surprises of this kind, especially considering that the printed book from the first three decades of the 16th century is entirely unstudied. Isolated manuscripts and early-printed books can also be connected to other religious communities from medieval Transylvania: Sebeș, Mediaș, Sighișoara etc., none of them exceeding three to five volumes.

The attitude of the Reformation period towards the book from the Catholic past – at least among Lutherans – was that of moderation.³³ The surviving books or the extensive library catalogues from Sibiu and Brașov are proof enough in this case. But such an attitude may be exemplified in some other ways, too. Liturgical vestments and other cultic objects were carefully preserved and, if necessary, modified according to the new requirements.³⁴ The practical aspect and functionality, together with a certain sense of personal and familial attachment were preferred over a destructive approach. Even medieval papal letters were preserved. An early piece of evidence of this sort, of a papal document deposited in a local archive of an already Lutheran Church, comes from a short memorandum, written in 1544³⁵ by a Transylvanian Saxon named Michael, as he entered office as a priest in

Geschichte und Kultur der Stadt Bistritz und des Nösnerlandes, (Haus der Heimat, Nürnberg, 2010), pp. 97-100.

²⁹ These books have not yet attracted the attention of modern scholars.

³⁰ SJAN SB, *Colecția Brukenthal*, B 268, f. 19r.

³¹ I would like to thank my colleague, Adrian Papahagi, for the manuscript of his paper, *The Incunabula of the Dominicans from Bistrița at the Central Piarist Library in Budapest*, to be published shortly in "Philobiblon: Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities".

³² The author's research, in progress.

³³ See, for instance, two papers published recently in Andrew Spicer (ed.), *Parish Churches in the Early Modern World*, (Ashgate, 2016): Evelin Wetter, *Staging the Eucharist Adiphora and Shaping Lutheran Identities in the Transylvanian parish church*, pp. 19-146 and Maria Crăciun, *Unitarian Parish Churches in Early Modern Transylvania*, p. 199-242.

³⁴ See, for instance, Evelin Wetter, *Liturgische Gewänder der Schwarzen Kirche zu Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen*, 2 Vols., (Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, 2015).

³⁵ SJAN BV, *Primăria orașului Brașov. Colecția socoteli și impozite ale satelor din Țara Bârsei*, shelf mark "Pachet XXX/1" fol. 1 recto: *Eyne Vermerkunk aller czu stand des pfarhoffs czur weydenbach wo ychs Michael pfarrer bey der Warheyth hab yn meinnen beruffen eyngang entfangen* ("A note about the status of everything that I, priest Michael, truly received in the parish house of Weidenbach upon entry in my profession").

Ghimbav. Among the items from the parish house, he records *Item, des Bapst decretal myth den decretalen der ablas in das erst, das ander, das dryth, in das 4, 5, 6 decretalen bucher, auch die Clementina und dy Silvestrina*. So, a papal document and a small collection of very useful legal texts. Another 16th century source is the inventory of Sibiu's urban archive, compiled by Christian Pomarius (Baumgartner, 1500-1565). During the first year as notary of the Sibiu province (1546), Pomarius drew up the inventory of existing privileges from the provincial archive under the title *Regestum literarum in cellas ordinantarum*³⁶, written entirely in Latin. Among the first ten entries of this inventory, significant details are recorded: *littere papales, or donacio a papa data, or a transsumptum bulle super donacione prepositurae*. Similar transcriptions were executed by Emericus Amicinus (Emerich Lieb) for the Bistrița Chapter³⁷ towards the end of the 16th century, sometimes indicating even the location of the original document: *huius originale in ladula universitatis est, in pergameno cum pendente sigillo*.³⁸ Naturally, one may argue that such examples from the very early phase of the Protestant Reformation (like the Ghimbav inventory from 1544) are less relevant and must be understood as a phenomenon of continuity. However, similar information mentioning works of the Catholic canon law can be traced in the parochial inventories even later, as proven by an example from Dumitra dated February 11th 1596: *Decretorum volumina tria*.³⁹ The texts of the Catholic time are mixed with the new Lutheran ones, in German, in the inventory of the Jelna parish, already mentioned. The three examples selected above underline the relevance of the hundreds of unedited registers and inventories of the Lutheran parochial churches from

³⁶ SJAN SB, *Colecția de documente medievale*, U IV, no. 542; see also Agnes Flora, «*Laborem circumspecti domini notarii*». Town notaries in early modern Transylvania, in *Writing and the Administration of Medieval Towns. Medieval Urban Literacy I*, edited by Marco Mostert, Anna Adamska, Turnhout 2014, p. 322-323; Gernot Nussbächer, *Din activitatea arhivistică a lui Christian Pomarius*, in «*Revista. Arhivelor*», VIII/2 (1965): 169-180; Gernot Nussbächer, *Pionier der Archivarbeit: Christian Pomarius, ein siebenbürgischer Humanist*, in «*Volkszeitung*», Brașov, no. 566, IX(1965). His professional career has taken him, over 20 years, from Bistrița, where he was *notarius* from 1534 to 1541, to Cluj, 1541-1543, as town clerk, and later to Sibiu, 1546-1547 and Brașov, 1552-1553, where he secured the office of town notary.

³⁷ Emericus Amicinus (Lieb) was born in Bistrița in 1522 and was parish priest from 1562 to 1602 (the year of his death) in Minarken (Monariu, currently in Bistrița-Năsăud County). He was dean of the Bistrița Chapter and notary of the «*geistliche Universität*». Most of his writings have been lost, only 3 of them are still preserved in manuscript form. See Joseph Trausch, *Schriftsteller-Lexikon der biographisch-literarische Denk-Blätter der Siebenbürger Deutschen*, (Kronstadt 1870), II, pp. 355-356.

³⁸ SJAN SB, *Capitulul evanghelic C.A. Bistrița*, no. 712 (1-59), p. 15r.

³⁹ SJAN SB, *Capitulul evanghelic C.A. Bistrița*, no. 720.

Transylvania⁴⁰ for the study of the modern fate of medieval books in the province.

There is also a different way to retrace the history of the medieval book in Transylvania, and that is leading the discussion back to the introduction of this essay: the fragments. As already mentioned briefly, the interest concerning such *membra disiecta* is newly rediscovered, an incredibly prolific direction, described by the renowned specialist Christopher De Hamel as “the next generation” in medieval manuscript studies.⁴¹ This “new” wave already produced a considerable number of on-line academic research projects⁴², symposiums and publications⁴³, analysing from a multitude of perspectives the nature, provenance, possibilities of identification, inventorizing, digitising, restoration etc. of books’ remnants. Not an usual place for the history of the medieval book, the archive plays a crucial role in this “hunt” for fragments, because obsolete volumes regularly furnished parchment wrappers needed by administrative instruments of evidence, such as account or tax registers. It must be also underlined that this research of medieval fragments places a special emphasis on recuperating remaining parts of early-printed books⁴⁴, too, not only from manuscripts.

⁴⁰ Although discussing different sources, see Attila Verók, *Zur Lesekultur der Siebenbürger Sachsen im 16.-18. Jahrhundert anhand der Bücherverzeichnisse*, in István Monok, Péter Ötvös, Attila Verók (eds.), *Lesestoffe der Siebenbürger Sachsen 1575-1750*, (Budapest, 2004), pp. X-XV.

⁴¹ 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, 2015: *Manuscript “Fragmentology”: Perspectives on the Scholarly and Pedagogical Value of Medieval Manuscript Fragments*, http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval_icms/2015/Schedule/546/ (27.09.2017).

⁴² Some examples: “Research Group on Manuscript Evidence”, New Jersey, USA, www.manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/tag/fragmentology/ (2.10.2017); The *Fragmenta membranea* collection at the National library of Finland, fragmenta.kansalliskirjasto.fi/ (1.10.2017); “From Manuscript Fragments To Book History” Project, University of Bergen, Norway, www.uib.no/en/rg/manuscript_fragments (28.09.2017).

⁴³ To name but a few: Linda L. Brownrigg, Margaret M. Smith (eds.), *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments of Medieval Books (Proceedings of The Seminar in the History of the Book to 1500)*, (Los Altos Hills, CA & London: Anderson-Lovelace & The Red Gull Press, 2000); Perani, Mauro & Ruini, Cesarino (eds.), «*Fragmenta ne Perant*», *Recupero e Studio dei Frammenti di Manoscritti Medievali e Rinascimentali Riutilizzati in Legature*, (Longi Editore, Ravenna, 2002); Christian Gastgeber, Christine Glaßner, Kornelia Holzner-Tobisch, Renate Spreitzer, (eds.), *Fragmente: der Umgang mit lückenhafter Quellenüberlieferung in der Mittelalterforschung: Akten des internationalen Symposiums des Zentrums Mittelalterforschung der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, 19.-21. März 2009*, (Wien, 2010).

⁴⁴ Oliver Duntze, Falk Eisermann, *Fortschritt oder Fidibus? Zur Bestimmung, Bewahrung und Bedeutung von Inkunabelfragmenten*, in Hanns Peter Neuheuser, Wolfgang Schmitz, (eds.), *Fragment und Makulatur. Überlieferungsstörungen und Forschungsbedarf bei Kulturgut in Fragment und Makulatur: Überlieferungsstörungen und Forschungsbedarf bei Kulturgut in Archiven und Bibliotheken*, (Wiesbaden, 2015), pp. 281-308.

However, there are two distinctive projects of particular relevance for Romania. On the one hand, the Hungarian national project of *Fragmenta Codicum* has produced a wonderful series of publications⁴⁵ and it is definitely a model to be followed. On the other hand, there is the impressive activity in the Scandinavian lands⁴⁶. The latter is operating in similar historical circumstances as in Transylvania: a rather late formation of a medieval literate mentality, then the Protestant Reformation that transformed the medieval books into recycling materials.

The conclusions of the “Nordic Conference on Medieval Book Fragments”, hosted by the Swedish National Archives in May 2013, stressed the need to move beyond the isolated and segregated study of sources within a given national archive, and to begin promoting the scholarly field of medieval Nordic fragment studies homogeneously. A similar input might be relevant to Romania, and especially in the case of Transylvanian libraries, archives and scholarly institutions, influenced only marginally so far by this generalized interest in the subject. Although local researchers have tried at a very early date to call the attention of the academic circles to such unusual documents⁴⁷, a future Romanian initiative to collect, organize and study fragments of medieval books will need to restart the investigation. An approach of this kind will contribute to the reconstruction of the medieval book culture in Transylvania, and will also stimulate the struggle to redefine the regional intellectual and cultural identity.

⁴⁵ A survey of the topic in Edit Madas, *Trente ans de recherches en Hongrie sur les fragments des manuscrits médiévaux*, in “Cultura Neolatina. Rivista di filologia Romanza fondata da Giulio Bertoni”, 65 (2002): 233-243 and András Vizkelety, *Fragmentenforschung: Ein Beitrag zur regionalen Rezeptionsgeschichte mittelalterlichen Schrifttums*, in Christian Gastgeber, Christine Glaßner, Kornelia Holzner-Tobisch, Renate Spreitzer, (eds.), *Fragmente: der Umgang mit lückenhafter Quellenüberlieferung in der Mittelalterforschung: Akten des internationalen Symposiums des Zentrums Mittelalterforschung der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, 19.-21. März 2009*, (Wien, 2010), pp. 71-75.

⁴⁶ In addition to the works cited above, see the overview of the Scandinavian sources regarding fragmentology in Marie Lennerstrand, Åsa Karlsson and Henrik Klackenborg (eds.), *Fragment ur arkiven. Festschrift till Jan Brunius* (Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet 37), (Stockholm, Riksarkivet, 2013).

⁴⁷ Franz Zimmermann, *Aus alten Einbänden von Rechnungen aus den Jahren 1506 bis 1691*, in “Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde” 19 (1884): 78-98; Fr. W. Seraphin, *Ein Kronstädter lateinisch-deutsches Glossar aus dem 15. Jahrhundert*, in “Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde” 26 (1894): 60-132; Idem, *Eine Kronstädter Handschrift des Jacobus de Voragine*, in “Programm des evangelischen Gymnasiums A. B. zu Kronstadt und der damit verbundenen Lehranstalten” 1900/1901, pp. 1-14; Idem, *Zwei lateinische Passionslieder des 14. Jahrhunderts*, in “Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde” 26 (1903): 96-98 and 138-139.



Serviciului Județean Sibiu al Arhivelor Naționale Române,
 „Magistratul orașului și scaunului Sibiu”,

U. V. (*Nova collectio posterior*), no. 1926, f. 1v-2r: Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, book xxv (*Tempora Henrici Quarti*), chapters xxxiv (fragment) – xli (fragment), re-used as a wrapper for a local tax register in 1618.