

A NEWLY DISCOVERED INCUNABULUM AT THE LIBRARY OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY IN CLUJ¹

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ABSTRACT. *A Newly Discovered Incunabulum at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Cluj.* Research in the collection of the Academy Library of Cluj led to the discovery of a previously uncatalogued incunabulum, initially mistaken for a sixteenth-century work. The volume contains an edition of William Peyraut's (Guillelmus Peraldus) *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, printed on the 20th of December 1497 in Venice by Paganinus de Paganinis. The paper examines not only the incunabulum, but also the binding, which consists of a partial leaf from a fifteenth-century Latin missal, and looks into the history of its owners, from an early sixteenth-century Dominican library in Timișoara to the library of a Catholic *Gymnasium* in Cluj.

Keywords: *Romanian Academy Library in Cluj, incunabulum, Guillelmus Peraldus, friar Andreas de Futhak, Dominican convent in Timișoara*

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The Romanian Academy Library in Cluj (BAR) preserves the historic collections of the city, dating back to the early modern period. The volumes come from the libraries of religious institutions active here from the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of seventeenth century: the Jesuit, Unitarian, and Reformed schools and colleges. Naturally, they needed books for teaching, preaching, but also for engaging in doctrinal quarrels. The libraries created around these schools carried a mix of incunabula and post fifteenth-century prints. While the latter received some attention and were catalogued by scholars in different formats,⁴ the collection of incunabula remains uncatalogued in a single comprehensive volume. Basic descriptions, which include author, title, and imprint can be found on internal records, filed from the 1950s onward on library cards. A general incunabula catalogue, which contains some information on holdings from main collections in Romania, is also available.⁵

The discovery of a new, uncatalogued, incunabulum this year is no surprise then. The book was identified while studying manuscript fragments found in bindings of early modern books, which were described and uploaded on the database Fragmentarium as part of the research project “Medieval Books in the Early Modern Period: The Case of Cluj in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries”.⁶ The description of its binding, which consists of a fifteenth-century manuscript fragment, led to the volume’s initial discovery. Further research on the host book revealed that it is in fact a previously undocumented 1497 edition of Guillelmus Peraldus’ *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis* (ISTC ip00087000; GW 12056; HC 12391*).

⁴ Incunabula from the Unitarian and Reformed schools were included in scholarly works that focus on the extant inventory and not on incunabula in particular. Examples include: Gábor Sipos, *A kolozsvári Akadémiai Könyvtár régi magyar könyvtár-gyűjteményeinek katalógusa – Catalogul colecțiilor Biblioteca Maghiară Veche ale Bibliotecii Academiei Cluj-Napoca* (Scientia/Biblioteca Filialei Cluj-Napoca a Academiei Române, 2004) and Elemér Lakó, ed., *The manuscripts of the Unitarian College of Cluj/Kolozsvár in the Library of the Academy in Cluj-Napoca* (József Attila Tudományegyetem, 1997).

⁵ Klára Jakó discusses the oldest phase of the Jesuit Library in her book *Erdélyi könyvesházak. Az első kolozsvári egyetemi könyvtár története és állományának rekonstrukciója 1579-1604* (Scriptum, 1991). Jakó includes a catalogue of the Catholic inventory from the Academy Library in Cluj with transcriptions of provenance records. However, the study does not focus on incunabula.

⁶ The project “Medieval Books in the Early Modern Period: The Case of Cluj in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (UEFISCDI PN-IV-P1-PCE-2023-0465) started in July 2025. It explores the practice of recycling fragments from medieval manuscripts and printed books as binding material in early modern Europe. Data collected from the available evidence reveals details about types of books dismembered, the movement of material culture throughout East-Central Europe, and the context of production and usage based on over 200 fragments preserved as wrappers, flyleaves, and pastedowns in the collection of the Academy Library of Cluj.

Not more than twenty incunabula copies are preserved from the schools founded locally by the Unitarians (c. 1610-1948) and the Reformed (c. 1610-1948). The largest surviving collection belonged to the school run on and off by the Jesuits between 1581-1773 in Cluj and at Cluj-Mănăştur.⁷ These books reached Transylvania in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even eighteenth century through students who completed their education abroad, travelling scholars, or members of religious groups, and ended up in local school libraries mainly through donations and bequests, and only rarely through direct acquisition. Although not of local interest, it should be mentioned that two smaller collections were brought to Cluj after the secularisation and nationalisation of 1948 from the former Diocesan Library of Satu Mare (Ge. Sathmar, Hu. Szatmárnémeti) and from the Central Archdiocesan Library of Blaj (Ge. Blasendorf, Hu. Balázsfalva). However, at the core of this collection is the extant Catholic inventory, which includes 107 copies printed in the fifteenth century, bound in 84 volumes.

What has now become Inc. 139 adds a new title to the list, bringing the total to 108 editions. The volume was not included in *Catalogul colectiv al incunabilelor din Romania (The Collective Catalogue of Incunabula in Romanian Libraries*, Schatz and Stoica 2007),⁸ and is not recorded by *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*⁹ or the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* among the holdings of the Academy Library in Cluj.¹⁰ Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139 is catalogued now for the first

⁷ The history of the Jesuits in Transylvania was largely dependent on religious and political factors. The growing influence of the Reformation affected not only the fragile and unstable confessional and geo-political situation in Cluj, but also the entire region, which led to the Jesuits being forced out of Transylvania in 1588. The mission stationed in Cluj was repeatedly banished from the city. Notable is the violent attack on their school and church from the summer of 1603. The situation continued until the beginning of the eighteenth century. When the Jesuits had to vacate their residence in the city of Cluj, they moved their headquarters to the former Benedictine Monastery of Cluj-Mănăştur, in the outskirts of the city. A contemporary account of the 1603 events can be read in Veress Endre, ed., *J. Argenti iratai 1603-1623* (József Attila Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kara, 1983). The fate of the Jesuits is also discussed by Jakab Elek, *Kolozsvár története* (Magyar Királyi Egyetemi Könyvnyomda, 1888).

⁸ Schatz and Stoica do not list items according to collections but give an alphabetical list of titles from holdings throughout the country. They provide very little background information on collections, and do not discuss the history of individual volumes. The entries are rather standard and lack provenance inscriptions, information on binding, decorations, or manuscript annotations.

⁹ The entry for Cluj in *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* is not updated and currently lists only 119 records out of the 177 copies preserved at the Academy Library.

¹⁰ General descriptions of Guillelmus Peraldus' *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis* are listed online. For GW see <https://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/docs/GW12056.htm>, accessed on April 18, 2026. The ISTC record is available at <https://data.cerl.org/istc/ip00087000>, accessed on April 18, 2026.

time for internal records, and on *Material Evidence in Incunabula* (MEI). The MEI database is run by the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) and is connected with the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC), managed by the British Library, as well as with other databases such as *Owners of Incunabula* (OOI). MEI collects information on the production and usage of individual copies from libraries throughout the world. The copy specifics are recorded on the platform in a way that helps reconstruct the volume's history by tracing each (documented) phase of its journey, from the printing house to owners across Europe and, in some cases, the Americas.¹¹

Two articles from 2010 by Mark Bland and Cristina Dondi emphasise the utmost importance of material evidence in book historical research. Bland talks about the “significance of books as artefacts” and stresses the fact that they have “a history that is separate to their texts” (Bland 2010, 18). Past practices separated texts from their materiality, which led to “the destruction of material evidence as bindings have been replaced, *Sammelbände* broken up, and manuscript annotations washed away” (18). Cristina Dondi also emphasises the link between books as material objects, and the contexts of their production and distribution when discussing the lack of proper studies on the Venetian book trade and its impact on the “socio-economic development of Europe” (Dondi 2010, 220). According to Dondi, the material evidence is still not used as a “systematic historical tool” that could provide vital information about fifteenth-century book trade throughout Europe (220). Hence, MEI collects relevant data on owners, bindings, contemporary or later alterations, decorations, reading marks, and many more. The *Summa* from Cluj was altered throughout its five hundred years existence. Not only its materiality was changed by rebindings, but also the history of its use. Fortunately, an account of its journey can still be somewhat reconstructed based on available evidence.

The most recent information on Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139 comes from a handwritten library card from the former Catholic college (*Lyceum*), updated at the Academy Library before 1955, when the stamp “Academia Republicii Populare Române – Biblioteca Filialei Cluj” was apposed¹² (fig. 1). The card lists two shelfmarks, the author and title, and a note from the librarian. The handwritten shelfmark identifies the book by its old, pre-1948 ID (106.C.15), while the stamp shelfmark was added at the Academy Library (C. 84208). The author and title were correctly identified from the *Incipit* of the first part, *De Virtutibus*, and

¹¹ The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) offers a wide selection of databases, which can be viewed on their main website: <https://www.cerl.org/resources/main> and on <https://data.cerl.org/all>, accessed on April 18, 2026.

¹² The Popular Republic of Romania (Republica Populară Română) was the official name of the country between 1947-1965.

probably from the label glued on the spine, and listed as *Paraldi, Gulielmi, Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*. The librarian recorded the missing folios from the beginning and end of the book in a short note in Hungarian, without commenting any further on the condition of the book: “Elején és végén hiányos!” (“Incomplete at the beginning and end!”). The Academy librarian typed the date “[15??]” and ascribed to the volume the shelfmark used for works printed after 1500. Thus, the volume was not recognised as an incunabulum, and was shelved among later prints.

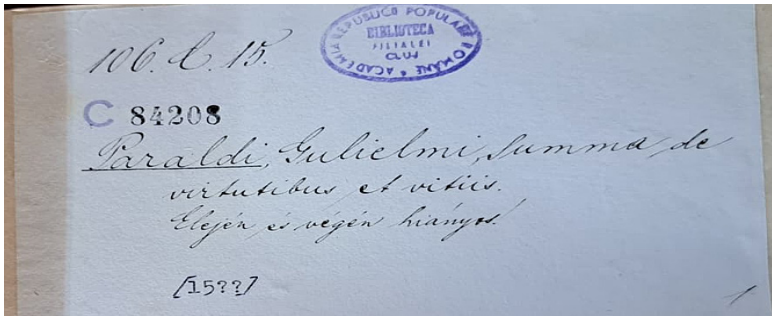


Figure 1. Library card containing the author, title, and shelfmarks of Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139 (formerly C.84208).

Comparison with editions digitized by the State Library of Bavaria (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Inc.c.a. 277) and the University of California, San Diego¹³ led to the identification of the copy from the Academy Library. The *Summa* from Cluj was published in Venice by Paganinus de Paganinis in 1497 (fig. 2). The title recorded on the first page of the edition in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek is *Summa aurea de virtutibus et vitiis* (fig. 3). The same adjective *aurea* appears on the label pasted on the volume found at BAR, whereas the title mentioned in the *Prologus* of this 1497 edition and the titles of other editions do not contain this adjective, being recorded as *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*. The label was, therefore, probably glued on the wrapper when the volume was intact, and the title still preserved on fol. a1 recto.

¹³ The copy from the State Library of Bavaria can be viewed at <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb00053999?page=,1>. The copy from California is available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31822035066752&seq=10>, accessed on April 18, 2026.

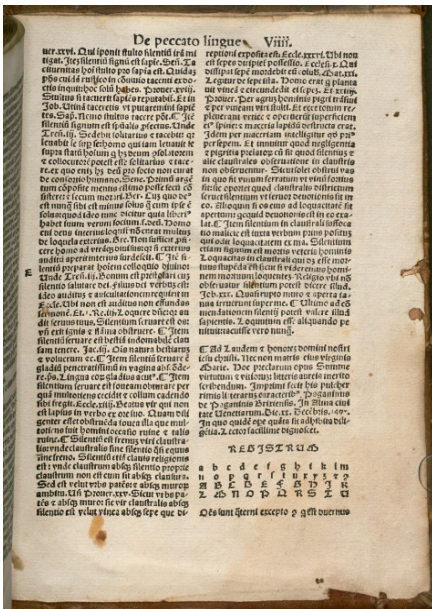


Figure 2. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Inc.c.a. 277. fol. U8 recto with preserved colophon.



Figure 3. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Inc.c.a. 277, fol. a1 recto. Title and woodcut.

According to *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, the title is preserved in 140 institutions, and at least one copy is in private collections. ISTC lists only 120 holdings, of which 29 catalogued the volume online. In its current condition, the text preserved by BAR is incomplete, wanting fols. a1, a2, and U8. The copy in Cluj opens with fol. a3 (fig. 4) and ends with fol. U7 (fig. 5). The following collation formulas apply for the two parts of the book: *De Virtutibus*, 206 leaves, a¹⁰a-z7⁸o⁴; *De Vitiis*, 159 leaves, A-U⁷.

The original dimensions of this copy were reduced by cropping the margins considerably. The upper margin was disposed of unevenly, which resulted in the top lines of the second column to be heavily trimmed, especially at the beginning of the book. The lower margin reaches 23-24 mm at maximum, while the outer margin measures between 4-10 mm. The leaf size is 158 x 106 mm and the binding measures 162 x 56 x 111 mm. Half of the MEI entries list measurements, which offers some terms for comparison. According to evidence from Valencia, Biblioteca Universitaria (BH Inc. 287), a full page could reach up to 180 x 120 mm. Another copy in Sassari, Biblioteca Universitaria (ANTICO 5 A51), comes to 179 x 116 mm. Slightly smaller formats are listed as well. For

instance, a copy from Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai (Inc. 5.052) has a size of 174 x 114 mm. Copies from other collections show similar measurements at around 170 x 110/120 mm. The smallest edition recorded on MEI is found in Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II (70.2.A.29), which has a height of only 153 mm and a width of 107 mm.

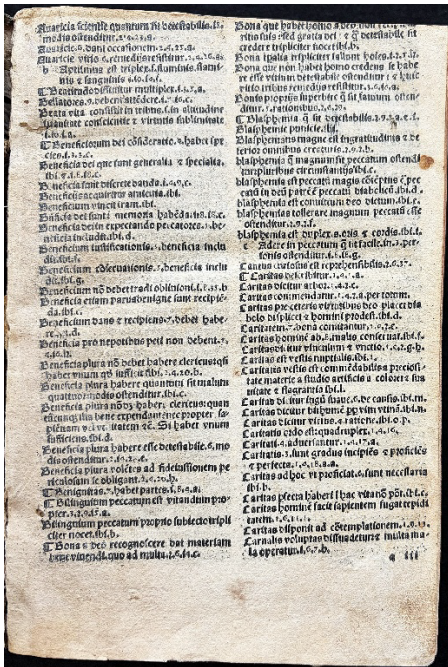


Figure 4. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139, fol. a3 recto. First page of the edition in Cluj.

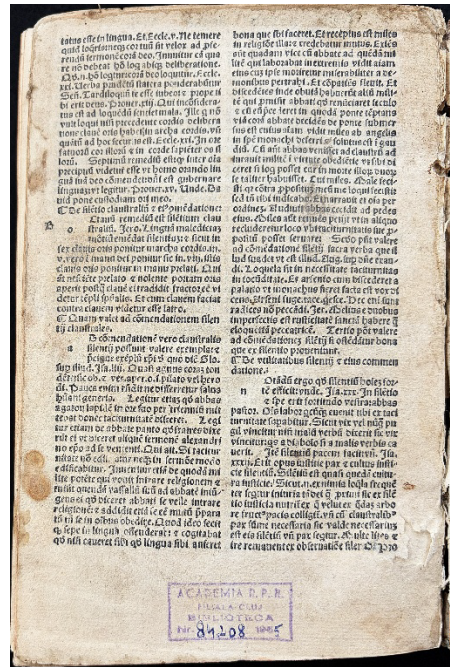


Figure 5. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139, fol. U7 verso. Last page of the edition in Cluj.

Previous owners spared no money on embellishing the book either. Unlike the copy from Munich mentioned above, which is decorated with red Lombards, the book from BAR is not rubricated but is decorated with red initials. The fore edge was stained red only at a later date. The two surviving annotations raise the question whether similar remarks were lost to trimming. However, the pages are quite clean and do not show signs of reading, such as interlinear notes or any other marks added directly in the text.

According to Sipos, and based on recurring dated ownership inscriptions, the library of the Catholic school was re-catalogued between 1831-1833 (Sipos 2004, 31), when the *Summa* also received a shelfmark. The

ownership note from the Royal Catholic High School (1773-1948), which dates from 1831, was added on the verso of the third front flyleaf: *Bibliothecae Lycei Regii Claudiopolitani 1831* (fig 6). Two handwritten labels were glued on the spine under the title. The first label is numbered “22” and the second one reads “9. I. 4”. The last shelfmarks is incomplete on the exterior label, however, it is rendered in full twice on the inner front pastedown: “N. 9 I. 4” (fig. 7).

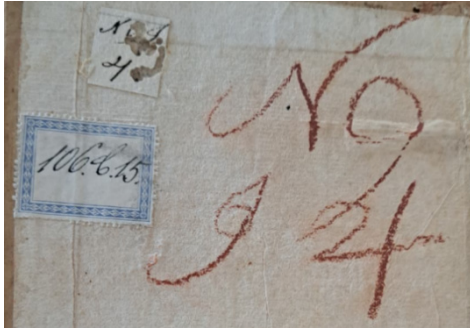


Figure 6. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139, front inner pastedown. Nineteenth-century shelfmarks from the Catholic High School.

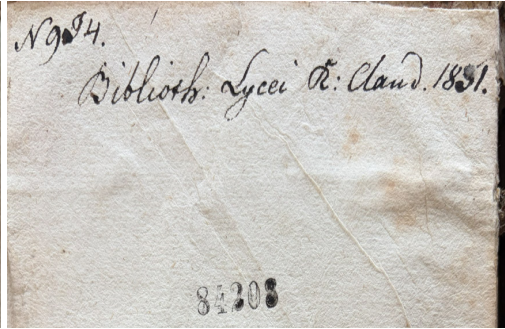


Figure 7. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139, front flyleaf. Dated shelfmark from the Catholic High School.

Notwithstanding, there is no note from the previous stage of this school – the Jesuit college. After the suppression of the Jesuit order by Pope Clement XIV in 1773 through the papal decree *Dominus ac Redemptor*, Jesuit institutions throughout Europe closed their gates, and Cluj was no exception.¹⁴ The Jesuits “could teach as secular priests until the 28th of August, 1778”, when the Piarist order took over teaching and preaching, as instructed by Maria Theresia (Varga 2007, 20). The school had the right to run as a higher education provider until 1850 (Sipos 2004, 32). Books from this period have the inscription *Bibliothecae Regii Lyceii Claudiopolitani*. From 1885 the library was included in the Roman-Catholic *Gymnasium* and the stamp *Kolozsvári Rom. Kát. Lyceum könyvtár* was issued in 1890 to mark items in the collection (Sipos 2004, 32). In 1948 the school was secularized, as were most religious institutions in Romania, and

¹⁴ The subject was discussed in depth by Paul Shore in *The Years of Jesuit Suppression, 1773-1814: Survival, Setbacks, and Transformation* (Brill, 2020) and in the collection of essays edited by Jeffrey D. Burson and Jonathan Wright, eds., *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context. Causes, Events, and Consequences* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). The restoration of the order following 1773 is studied by Robert A. Maryks and Jonathan Wright in *Jesuit Survival and Restoration. A Global History, 1773–1900* (Brill, 2014).

the books were transferred to the newly founded Academy Library (Sipos 2024, 32-34).¹⁵

The lack of evidence that would connect this book with the Jesuits does not exclude the possibility of it belonging to them. Based on data from other incunabula, the Jesuits inscribed their books on the first folio, using a variation of their standard ownership note: “Societatis Jesu Inscriptus Catalogo Collegii Claudiopolitani” or “Collegii Claudiopolitani Societatis Jesu”.¹⁶ Provided the book was catalogued by the Jesuits at some point, any evidence was lost with the first two leaves. Nonetheless, this is not an isolated case. Several volumes from the Academy Library have no formal association with the Jesuits, despite being used later at the *Gymnasium*. For instance, Cluj, BAR, Inc. 25 features only a stamp and the inscription from 1832, both from the Catholic High School, and no earlier ownership notes. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 78 is also catalogued at the school. However, the book was used in 1508 by the Franciscans of Ljubljana. The volume travelled to Alba Iulia in Transylvania, present-day Romania (Ge. Weißenburg / Karlsburg, Hu. Gyulafehérvár) and was recorded sometimes in the early nineteenth-century at the High School of the Roman-Catholic Status of Transylvania, before ending up in Cluj in the twentieth century. The Academy Library holds two other similar volumes, Cluj, BAR, Inc. 30 and 77. Both were used privately and by clergy before entering the collection of the Catholic High School in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The 1497 *Summa* might have circulated in a similar way before being donated to or acquired by the Catholic High School.

Extant evidence points towards its presence at Catholic religious institutions. Two undated notes left by a Dominican friar called Andreas de Futhak show that the book was present sometime around 1500 at the Dominican convent in Timișoara (Ge. Temeschwar, Hu. Temesvár). Andreas inscribed his name¹⁷ in

¹⁵ For further reading on the Academy Library in Cluj see Liviu Ursuțiu, “The Library of the Cluj-Napoca Branch of the Romanian Academy Library”, *Transylvanian Review*, vol. 2 (1995): 29-4. Another account of the history of the collection, which goes to its sixteenth-century history, was written by Lajos György, librarian of the Roman-Catholic Gymnasium, who oversaw the cataloguing of its collections between 1929-1948: Lajos György, *A kolozsvári római katolikus Lyceum-könyvtár története 1579-1948* (Argumentum Kiadó, 1994). Unfortunately, György does not cite his sources or list shelfmarks.

¹⁶ The Jesuits’ ownership mark changed in time, depending on their location. During their stay at the former Benedictine monastery of Cluj-Mănăștur, they inscribed their books with *Domus Monasteries. Residentiae Claudiopolitanae Societatis Jesu* marks the period when they were allowed to reside in the city. For more on this topic see Adrian Papahagi, *A Transylvanian Puzzle. Reconstructing Medieval Culture from Manuscript Fragments* (Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2022, 21).

¹⁷ Alternatively, the note may have been inscribed by the librarian of the Dominican convent in Timișoara.

a reserved space on fol. a1 recto, which marks the beginning of the first part: *Concessus ad usum fratri Andree de Futhak ordinis predicatorum et pertinet ad conventum Temeswaryensem* (fig. 8). A variant of this inscription is added on fol. A1, where the second part starts: *Fratri Andree ad usum concessus ordinis predicatorum et pertinet ad conventum Temeswaryensem* (fig. 9).¹⁸ When entering the Dominican order, the postulant renounced his worldly possessions, therefore the specification *concessus ad usum*, which indicates that Andreas was granted permission to use the volume, although he no longer owned it. Friar Andreas was the first or among the first users of this book, which belonged (as indicated by the verb *pertinet*) to the Dominican convent of Timișoara. A famous work written by a French Dominican in the thirteenth century is thus read and used three centuries later in a different part of Europe by another Dominican friar. Andreas' late Gothic hand cannot be identified anywhere else in the volume. The only two reading marks left on fols v7 verso (a *manicula*) and A5 recto (underlining accompanied by the abbreviation *prd*) cannot be safely associated with Andreas.

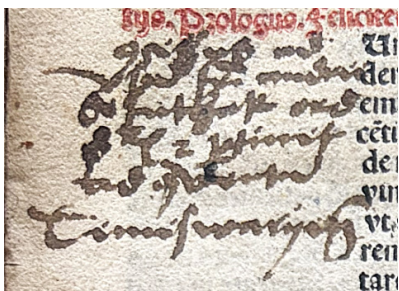


Figure 8. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139, fol. a1 recto. First inscription left by Andreas de Futhak.

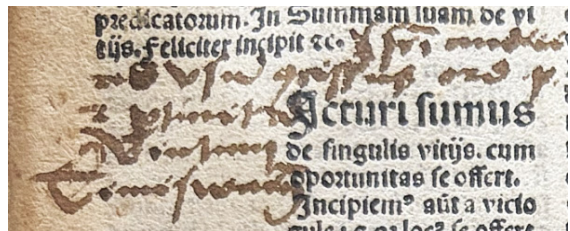


Figure 9. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139, fol. A1 recto. Second inscription left by Andreas de Futhak.

The book might also have already been at the Dominican Library in Timișoara at the time when Andreas wrote his name on the two leaves. In Cluj, the Dominicans acquired Italian prints as early as 1488, for which they paid large sums of money (Jakó/Manolescu 1971, 95). Did the Dominicans of Timișoara have similar resources to furnish their library, or was the book purchased abroad, and then donated to the monastery? It is not possible to trace how the volume came from Timișoara to Cluj either. The only certainty is that the book had arrived to Cluj by the year 1831, and was stored in the library

¹⁸ The authors would like to thank Prof. Adrian Papahagi for deciphering the handwritten notes.

of the Catholic Royal High School. By 1955 the incunabulum was part of the collection of the Academy Library, where it still is today.

Although the movement of this book from Banat to Transylvania cannot be conclusively reconstructed, not the same can be said about its first recorded user. Hinnebusch notes that “until the sixteenth century, the novice did not change his name when he took the habit but retained his baptismal name, being identified in addition by his place of origin” (Hinnebusch 1966, 292), thus Futhak must be a toponym. A possible location is modern-day Futog, a village found on the territory of nowadays Serbia. The area was part of the Kingdom of Hungary until 1526; hence, the village is also known today by its Hungarian name: Futak/ Futhak. Documentary sources from around 1525 mention that “the overwhelming majority of the 1,420 peasants living in the 26 villages of the domain of Futog bore Hungarian names” (Milivojevic 2024, 3). In 1528/1529, after the battle of Mohács and the destruction of the Hungarian kingdom, the village became part of the Ottoman Empire. The proximity between Futog and Timișoara (only about 170 km) further supports the identification of Futhak, mentioned in the inscription, and today’s Futog.

Unfortunately, we have very little information about the Dominican convent in Timișoara, which was part of the Hungarian Province established as early as 1221. Harsányi notes that the convent was attested as early as 1329, without additional details about its patron (Harsányi 1938, 81). Iványi mentions Timișoara among the cities where the Dominicans had religious houses in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century (Iványi 1930, 453). The actual location of the Dominican convent in Timișoara remains unknown. In *Dicționarul mănăstirilor din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș*, the following information can be found under the entry “Timișoara”:

“The only reliable source on the Dominican convent merely mentions its existence in the year 1329. It is possible that the founder was King Charles Robert of Anjou. A convent dedicated to the Virgin Mary, attested in the area since the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg, stopped its activity in 1526. This might have been the Dominican convent. However, there is no extant topographic evidence linked to either of these.” (Rusu 2000, 269; our translation).¹⁹

The latest possible date for the existence of a Dominican convent in Timișoara is July 1552, when the city was ransacked and destroyed by the

¹⁹ “M.d. despre care posedăm o singură sursă, cea care doar o menționează la 1329. Este posibil ca fondatorul ei să fi fost regele Carol Robert. O m. dedicată Sf. Fecioare, atestată în localitate în vremea lui Sigismund de Luxemburg și care a încetat să funcționeze în anul 1526, ar putea fi m. d. În nici unul din cazuri nu s-au păstrat indicii topografice.”

Ottoman Turks and the churches were turned into mosques (Munteanu, Munteanu 2002, 51).

The incunabulum probably left Timișoara at some point between 1526-1552, when friars must have sought refuge elsewhere. Maybe Andreas de Futhak or another friar brought the book to Cluj. This city, however, could offer only temporary shelter and protection, as the Catholic religious orders were expelled from Cluj by the Protestants on the 15th of March 1556 (Salontai 2022, 146). The library of the Dominicans, including Peyraut's *Summa*, could therefore have "ended up in the hands of the Protestants who occupied the Dominican cloister in 1556 – and this is why we do not find it among the Jesuit books at the Academy Library." (Papahagi 2023, 113)

The author of the printed text is William Peyraut (Guillaume Peyraut), known in Latin as Guillelmus Peraldus or Gulielmus Paraldus (about 1190-1271), a Dominican friar active in Lyon, recorded as the prior of the convent of Lyon in 1261. His most important work is the *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, "which reflects the Preachers' fight against Albigensianism" (Ashley 1990, 31). The text was very influential in the Middle Ages: "le succès de la *Somme* fut considérable; très peu d'ouvrages du moyen âge ont connu une diffusion aussi rapide et une fortune aussi durable" (Dondaine 1948, 187). The *Summa* consists of two treatises: Peyraut wrote the tract on sins around 1236 and added a second tract on virtues only a decade later. The second text was finalised either before August 1248 or before the spring of 1249 (Dondaine 1948, 186-187). The two independent treatises were assembled before the year 1250, and circulated together as a single work (187), as attested by the fact that in some manuscripts the chronological order is neglected and the treatise on virtues comes first. This is the case of the 1497 incunabulum. As its title, *Summa aurea de virtutibus et vitiis*, clearly indicates, the seven virtues (*fides, spes, caritas, prudentia, temperantia, fortitudo, iusticia*), together with the gifts of the Holy Spirit (*dona*) and blessings (*beatitudines*), are presented and discussed before the seven vices (*gula, luxuria, avaritia, accidia, superbia, invidia, ira*). The volume closes with a part dedicated to the sins of the tongue (*De peccato lingue*).

The medieval manuscript fragment wrapping the volume's binding, which triggered the present research, is also worthy of attention. Manuscript fragments can be found as wrappers, pastedowns, flyleaves, or in the spine, stabilizing the gatherings. An incunabulum from Satu Mare, which contains a copy of Johannes Herolt's *Sermones Discipuli*, printed in Strasbourg in 1488 (Cluj, BAR, Inc. 113; ISTC ih00114000, GW 12364), is wrapped in a fragment extracted from a missal, probably added to the binding after the book's arrival in Transylvania.²⁰ Similarly, a 1484 Bible, printed in Venice, preserves its original

²⁰ The complete description of this wrapper is available on Fragmentarium: <https://fragmentarium.ms/description/F-158g/5471>, accessed on April 2, 2026.

wooden boards, which are bound in a bifolium extracted from a gradual (Cluj, BAR, Inc. 38; ISTC ib00580000, GW 4255).²¹ Illegible fragments include the wrapper of a 1486 Strasbourg edition of Carolus Maneken's *Formulae epistolarum* (Cluj, BAR, Inc. 96; ISTC im00179000, GW M20536).²²

Most of the over 100 manuscript fragments identified, described, and published on Fragmentarium in 2025 by our team come from liturgical books: missals, breviaries, graduals and antiphonaries. The fragments are mostly written in Latin, but ten Hebrew fragments were also described. Similar to MEI, the Swiss database Fragmentarium, maintained by the University of Fribourg, collects detailed information on aspects such as type of text, production, usage, as well as current and original condition. The date of production can be roughly established on account of codicological evidence (decorations, script, ruling) and palaeographical evidence (script). However, the fragment's afterlife is equally important, hence the database includes a section entirely dedicated to the host volume, the context of its use, and to any relevant information on owners that can be retrieved from ownership inscriptions.

Similar to the other incunabula mentioned above, the *Summa* is covered by a parchment wrapper. In its present condition, the fragment is 320 mm in height and 200 mm in width. About three quarters of the original leaf are preserved, while the upper part of the leaf is missing. Originally, the leaf had a height of approximately 340 – 355 mm, and a width of about 250 – 260 mm. The text is written in two columns of 80 mm in width, of which the right column is preserved entirely. About 3 to 8 letters from the margin of the left column are hidden in the turn-ins. As can be seen in fig. 10,²³ some of the text preserved is not legible on the spine due to wear and tear, but also because of the four labels glued on the fragment. Each column has a height of 245 mm and contains 31 lines of text, each of about 8 mm in height. Two lines from the upper part of the leaf are not visible on the outer cover, but can be partially read on the turn-ins.

The Latin text is copied in Northern Textualis and is written by one hand. The decoration is minimal and consists of alternating red and blue Lombards spanning 2 to 5 lines. Considering the particularities of the script, such as the fact that the closing strokes of the upper bow of the letter *a* are hairlines, and the presence of the dotted *i*, the manuscript can be dated approximately to the third quarter of the fifteenth century. The fragment's origin cannot be determined with precision in the absence of more details. For this reason, the manuscript was ascribed broadly to Central Europe. Local origin from Banat and Transylvania cannot be ruled out. The partial leaf comes

²¹ Full MEI record available online: <https://data.cerl.org/mei/02148648>, accessed April 20, 2026.

²² Volume catalogued on MEI: <https://data.cerl.org/mei/02148361>. Wrapper description available on Fragmentarium: <https://fragmentarium.ms/overview/F-l6zx>, accessed April 19, 2026.

²³ The wrapper's description can be studied online on Fragmentarium: <https://fragmentarium.ms/overview/F-cnc0>, accessed April 23, 2026.

from a missal and contains some of the texts used in the mass for Saturday and Sunday at the beginning of Lent. The text of the fragment preserved in the library of Cluj is very similar, although not identical to that recorded in *Missale Nidrosiense*, printed, on Norwegian initiative, in 1519, in Copenhagen (*Missale Nidrosiense* 2019, 81-82). This is the transcript of the preserved Latin text:

(col. a) [*Sabbato in capite ieiunii. Cum sero esset factum erat navis in medio mari et Iesus solu*]/s in terra. Et videns eos [labo]rantes in remigando [era]t enim ventus contrarius eis. [Et] circa quartam vigiliam noc[tis] venit ad eos ambulans [supra] mare et volebat preterire [eos.] At illi ut viderunt eum [am]bulantem super mare pu[tave]runt fantasma esse. Et [excla]maverunt. Omnes enim [vide]runt eum et conturbati sunt. Et [stati]m locutus est eis et dix[it] illis]. Confidite ego sum no[lite ti]mere. Et ascendit ad il[los in] navim et cessavit ventus. [Et pl]us magis intra se stu[peban]t. Non enim intellexe[rant] de panibus. Erat enim cor [illorum o]bceca[tum]. Et c[um] transf[retass]ent perv[enerunt] in terram [Genes]areth [et appli]cuerunt. [Cum]que egressi essent de navi [continuo cognoverunt] eum. Et percurren[tes] universam regio[nem ill]am ceperunt in graba[tis eos] qui se male habebant [circumfer]re ubi audiebant eum [esse. E]t quocumque introibat [in vico]s vel in villas aut [in civit]ates in plateis po// (col. b) [nebant infirmos] et deprecabantur eum ut vel fimbriam vestimenti eius tangerent. Et quicumque tangebant eum salvi fiebant. (*Marc. 6: 47–56*) *Secreta*. Suscipe domine sacrificium cuius te voluisti dignanter ymolacione placari presta quesumus ut huius operatione mundati beneplacitum tibi nostre mentis offeramus effectum. Per. *Post communionem*. Celestis vite munere vegetati quesumus domine ut quod est nobis in presenti vita misterium fiat eternitatis auxilium. Per. *Super populum*. Da populo tuo quesumus omnipotens deus eterne promissionis gaudia querere et [quesita citius invenire.] *Dominica [prima in quadragesima. Officium.]* Invocavit me et e[go exaudiam] eu[m] erip]iam eum et glorificabo eum lon]gitu[dine] dierum adimp]lebo eum. (*Ps. 90: 15-16*) Qui habitat in adiut[orio altissimi. (*Ps. 90: 1*) *Oratio.*] Deus qui ecc[lesiam tuam annua quadragesima]li observacion[e purificas presta] familie tue u[t quod a te obtinere] abstinendo niti[tur hoc bonis] operibus exequa[tur. Per. *Ad Corinthios.*] Fratres. Hortamur vos ne in vacuum gratiam dei recipiatis. Ait enim. Tempore// [accepto exaudivi te et in die salutis adiuvi te.] (*II Cor. 6: 1-2*)

The newly discovered incunabulum at the Romanian Academy Library of Cluj, Inc. 139, is thus important not only because it belongs to one of the earliest stages of European printing history, but also because it offers a double glimpse into an age prior to its printing year (1497) through its binding, and into the following centuries by way of its owners and users. Although the history of this copy cannot be fully reconstructed, the available evidence shows the movement of both material culture, in this case from Venice to Timișoara,

and then to Cluj, and of people in the early modern period. The presence of the Dominican convent of Timișoara in the note left by the friar Andreas points to regional centres of religious activity otherwise poorly documented.

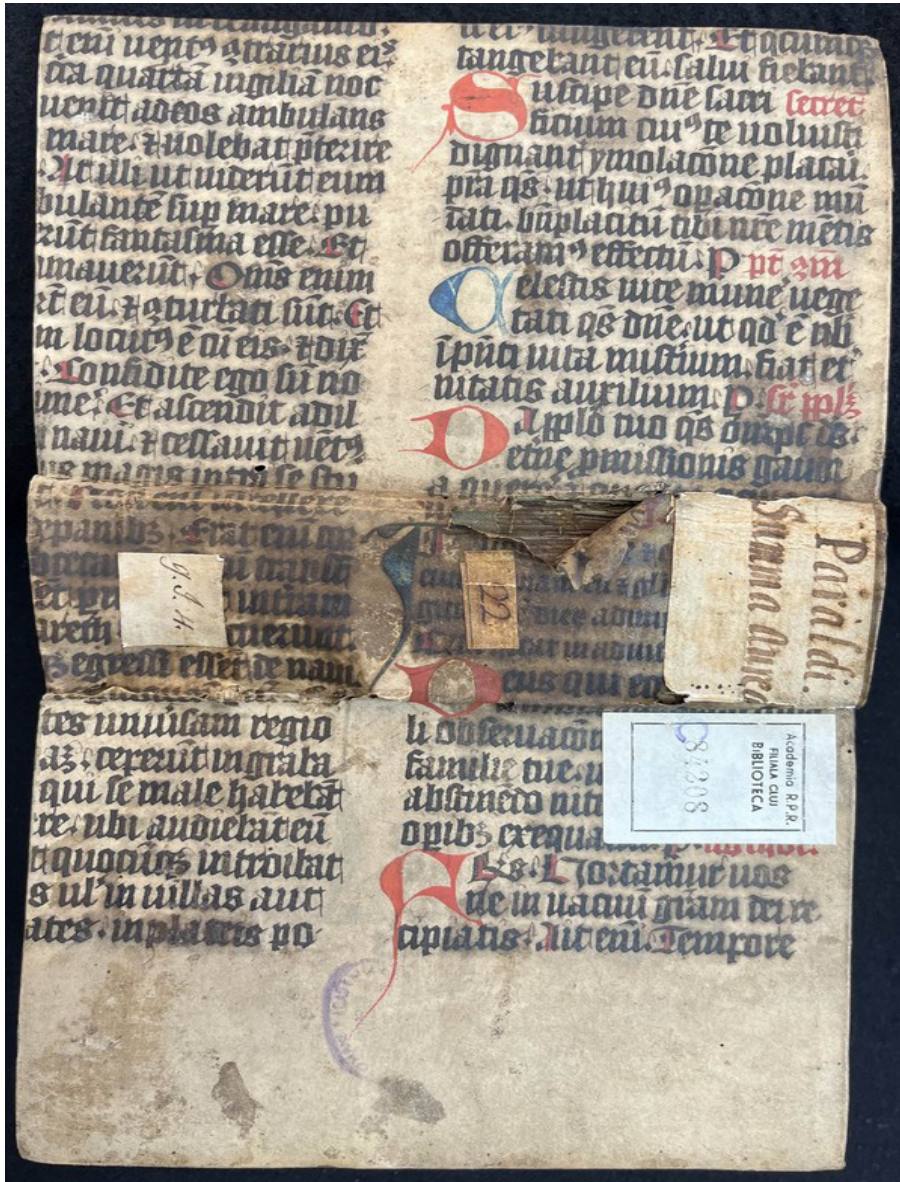


Figure 10. Cluj, BAR, Inc. 139. Manuscript wrapper.

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