

# THE EUROPEANA COLLECTIONS – TRANSYLVANIAN PRINTS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNION FROM ALBA IULIA

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## **Abstract**

The Europeana Collections, inaugurated in 2008, represents the completion of an ambitious project intended to be a journey and an instrument for the access to the culture, the history and the identity of the Europeans. Nowadays, Europeana contains in its collections more than 58 million digital units, organized on domains and themes, from art works, artefacts and books to movies and music. The patrimony of the Europeana enriches yearly and constantly by the contribution of the European Member States, as response to the common aspiration to open the access to knowledge beyond the national or territorial borders. The Europeana Project represents the implementation by digitization of a set of standards and of a unitary approach on the valorisation by digitization of the patrimony of the European states. The country reports reflect the most accurate the measures and the achievements of each contributing state to Europeana. Therefore, the Romanian report – a document updated in January 2019 – presents punctually the achievements of our country and of the Romanian institutions contributing to the enrichment of the Europeana collections. The list of the contributors contains, next to the names of well-known libraries, the name of the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia, with 986 digital units. Related to the field of the prints, the National Museum of the Union is not a direct contributor, but its collections are uploaded by other contributors. The National Museum of the Union has a remarkable and extremely valuable collection of Transylvanian books, mainly printed in Cluj during the 18th century. There are 78 titles with a preponderantly religious, juridical and educational content, representing an important segment of the national cultural heritage. The present paper aims to approach the above mentioned works and to identify them in the Europeana collections.

*Keywords: Digital library, Europeana collections, Transylvanian prints*

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## **1. The Europeana Collections – the largest digital European project**

Opened in 2008, Europeana has today over 58 million units in its collections, organised on domains and themes. And the number is growing day by day. The mission of Europeana is very simple: "We transform the world with

culture! We want to build on Europe's rich heritage and make it easier for people to use, whether for work, for learning or just for fun" [1].

Several milestones have been recorded in its evolution:

In January 2011, the European Commission released its New Renaissance report which endorsed Europeana as "the central reference report for Europe's online cultural heritage". In 2015, Europeana's collection-related websites e.g. its search engine, exhibitions and blog, started to come together in one place, now called Europeana Collections [2].

March 2017. The Expert Group on Digital Cultural Heritage and Europeana ("the Group") is set up. The Group's tasks: to review and discuss policies for digital cultural heritage, notably by assisting the Commission in monitoring and assessing the progress and the impact of the implementation of the European Commission Recommendation of 27 of October 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (2011/711/EU) and related Council Conclusions, in particular those of 31 May 2016 on the role of Europeana for the digital access, visibility and use of European cultural heritage [3].

September 2018. In response to the Council's request, the Commission carried out an evaluation of Europeana based on the five mandatory criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value) of the Better Regulation Guidelines of the Commission.

Europeana has one of the largest digital collections in the world and is the only pan-European platform of its kind to provide access to image, text, sound, video and 3D material from the collections of over 3700 European libraries, archives, museums, galleries and audio-visual institutions. Europeana further stands out by offering material in a large number of languages (37 languages). Europeana's relevance to EU policies and priorities was rated high. Europeana fares well in some aspects but there is significant potential for improvement in others. The provision of common standards, best practices and promotion of open cultural data are considered among its key achievements. Europeana's common solutions and publishing frameworks have been taken up by cultural heritage institutions. However, the many user groups involved pointed out weaknesses in the technical infrastructure (including the aggregation infrastructure) and in the platform's functionality in terms of multilingualism search and filtering facilities in the portal and the APIs and the quality of the data.

### **1.1. Orientations for the future development of Europeana**

The future scope of Europeana will be mainly focused on the needs of primary stakeholders in the cultural heritage sector, in particular the cultural heritage institutions, which the initiative should support and steer in their efforts towards achieving digital transformation. Europeana will strengthen its ties

with the cultural heritage institutions. Furthermore, the Commission considers that the Europeana initiative should be established around the empowerment of cultural heritage communities in Member States. Europeana should provide substantial support to data providers and aggregators for an efficient data ingestion and update. The Commission considers the aggregators —local, national and domain-related —to be essential to the Europeana initiative and considers, that their role as intermediaries between cultural institutions should be actively supported by Member States.

Europeana will continue to be funded under the CEF programme through a mix of grants and procurements until the end of the current multiannual financial framework. While the core services will be funded through procurements in order to assure the stability of the service provided, the financial instruments of grants will be used to support cultural institutions in order to contribute to Europeana. Under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (COM(2018) 321 final), the Commission has proposed to fund Europeana under the Digital Europe programme which will aim to strengthen the capacity building of various sectors and the flagship projects in these sectors making use of this capacity building. The work carried out under the this programme will be complemented through research and innovation activities in Horizon Europe on digitisation of cultural heritage monuments and sites, automatic interpretation of cultural heritage as well as virtual museums.

The evaluation represents a turning point, 10 years into Europeana's existence, with a number of achievements as well as shortcomings as described above. Europeana needs to renew its added value to the cultural heritage sector, for instance through capacity building, tools for high quality content and metadata supply and enrichment, an efficient infrastructure for data delivery and continuous support. To this end, the Commission will continue to support Europeana and its network of aggregators, institutions and professionals in their efforts to the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector [4].

## **2. The National Museum of the Union in Europeana Collection**

According to the Report of Romania on the 20th of January 2019, available on the site Europeana [5] the contribution of our country to Europeana is of 147.173 digital units and the contact point for Romania is National Heritage Institute.

The National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia is among the Romanian contributing institutions to the Europeana project. There are only two Romanian museums contributing to Europeana, with the National Institute for Heritage as aggregator.

We depict in our paper the contribution of the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia, based on the following considerations: the importance of the

local and national heritage in the custody of the institution and its efforts to bring visibility to this heritage. Europeana represents visibility and multiple possibilities to connect with similar institutions in order to promote the cultural and historical heritage. Nowadays, the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia is present in Europeana with 986 digital units [6], representing religious artefacts, funerary artefacts and icons. Their aggregator is the National Heritage Institute.

National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia also preserves in the Museum Library an old books collection fund of national importance. The Museum Library, established at the end of the 19th century, originally contained a fund of 1.000 volumes [7]. It contains today 67.126 volumes, organised on the following domains: Romanian and foreign periodicals, art, archaeology, history, literature, miscellaneous, ideology, philosophy, science, geography, ethnography, Romanian old books, foreign old books and the fund "The Old Library". A valuable fund of local and national periodicals (1922-2009) is also available in the Museum Library.

The funds of the library increased significantly in the period between the wars, while Ion Berciu was the manager of the institution. Starting from the initial funds of books and periodicals, three "special collections" formed: The Old Library, the Romanian old books collection – 684 units and the foreign old books collection – 349 units. We mention only a few titles that are significant for the history of prints and books in the Mediaeval and Modern period: *Pravila de la Govora*, 1640; *Evanghelia învățătoare*, Deal, 1644; *Biblia*, București, 1688; *Noul Testament*, Bălgrad, 1648; *Chiriadromionul*, 1699; *Pânea pruncilor*, 1702 [8].

The Old Library is important for the scientific field, possessing 78 titles of Transylvanian old books, more than half of them printed in Cluj in the 18th century. 23 of these titles have been classified since 2014 [9] as treasury items. The catalogue Transylvanian prints in the collections of the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia edited by Florin Bogdan and published in 2015, offer details on the 78 titles for those intending to find out more on the subject [10].

The 23 works classified as treasury items are related to religion, juridical studies, geography and history. They are relevant for the Transylvanian cultural heritage in the Age of Enlightenment and also for the Central European area. The classification of the books as treasury items confirms and increases their value. Still, legally, the classification generates a restriction of the access at the respective work regarding the research and display conditions in exhibitions. Digitisation proved to be the best solution in order to maintain the access to this kind of works. Thus, we followed the list of the 23 titles in Europeana. For the books enthusiasts, identifying a rare book or a limited edition of an old book represents an investigation similar to a detective work or to an archaeologist work. Therefore, due to the fact that Europeana grows day-by-day, enriching with the patrimony of European representative libraries, we investigated if there is possible to find copies or editions of the

books from the collection of the National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia in the large digital collection of Europeana. From the list of 23 treasury books we identified 3 titles in Europeana:

### **2.1. Erdély országának Három könyvekre osztatott törvényes könyve. Melly aprobata, compilata constitutiokból, és novellaris articulusokból áll**

The work contains the well-known law corpus that regulated the juridical situation of Transylvania in the 16th-18th centuries: *Approbatae Constitutiones* and *Compilatae Constitutiones*. *Approbatae Constitutiones* is a synthesis of the decisions of the Transylvanian Diet during the Principality, 1540-1653, and represents the most important document of Transylvanian law for the 17th century[11], while *Compilatae Constitutiones* covers the period 1654-1669. These collections of laws remained in force after the Austrian military occupation and received an official recognition from the Habsburg power through *Diploma Leopoldina* (1691). The Transylvanian privileged classes used these legal provisions, especially during the 18th century, in order to defend the rights they had previously gained, in the relation with the imperial authorities[12]. Their originality consists in the fact that they are not a translation of foreign laws, but a local juridical construction, with particularities specific to Transylvania.

The National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia possesses two copies of the 1779 edition[13], printed to the Typography of the Reformed College of Cluj, and also two copies of the edition from 1815-1816 [14], printed to the Typography of the Royal College of Cluj. The edition from 1815-1816 was proposed in 2016 for classification in the category of the cultural mobile goods.

The edition from 1779 is formed from: Part I, *Aprobates Constitutiones Regni Transilvaniae & Partium Hungariae eidem annexarum*, Part II, *Compilatae Constitutiones Regni Transilvaniae & Partium Hungariae eidem annexarum*, and Part III, *Novellarum articulosok* (New articles). Last part comprise decisions of the Transylvanian Diet between 1744-1755.

The edition from 1815-1816, printed in Cluj, appears under the title *Erdély országnak három könyvekre osztatott törvényes könyve, melly aprobata, compilata constitutiokból és novellaris articulusokból áll* and is formed from: "*Novellaris articulosok*", "*Index novellarium articulorum, diaetalium ab anno 1744 usque annum 1792*", Cluj, 1816; "*Statuta jurium municipalium Saxonum in Transylvania*", Cluj, 1815, and "*Index Statutorum seu Jurium Municipalium Saxonum in Transylvania*", Cluj, 1816.

We can find in the Europeana collections the digital format of the integral 1815-1816 edition from Cluj, with The European Library as aggregator, available to the Bavarian State Library [15]. The book contains *Novellaris articulosok*, *Aprobata* and *Compilata* (Table of contents), *Index Novellarium articulorum, diaetalium ab anno 1744. usque annum 1792*, *Approbatae*

Constitutiones and Compilatae Constitutiones. Halmágyi Istvan, secretary of the Transylvanian Gubernium, appears as author of Index Novellarium articularum.

Understanding the Medieval Transylvanian law and its evolution to modernity is an important subject, offering interesting directions of research. The integral availability of the primary sources, in digital format, encourages the research, in total agreement with the motto imposed by the Enlightenment: Sapere aude – Dare to know.

## **2.2. Instructio pro tabula regia Judiciaria Transylvanica**

The second book is also a juridical work, printed in 1777 in Cluj-Sibiu, at Hochmeister Typography, as indicated by the title page. The reference to the printing place can be explained by the fact that the Hochmeister family owned at the end of the 18th century – the beginning of the 19th century more libraries in Transylvania, at Sibiu, Cluj or Blaj [16]. The National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia possesses one copy [17]. The book is available integrally in digital format to the Romanian National Library and to the Austrian National Library. The aggregators are the Romanian National Library and, respectively, The European Library [18].

Instructio pro tabula regia Judiciaria Transylvania presents an Instruction for the organisation of the most important law court from Transylvania.

Tabula regia (The Royal Board) was the Supreme Court in Transylvania. It functioned from 1754 in Târgu Mureş, previously functioning in Mediaş [19]. The Instruction was issued by Empress Maria Theresa and approved by the Transylvanian Diet on the 6th of August 1777 [20]. It refers to the organisation and the functioning of the court. Documented for the first time in 1542, The Royal Board functioned until 1890, when it was abolished by the Law XXV related to the Appeal Courts [21]. There was a 4 year period between 1786-1790 when Tabula regia was moved to Sibiu by the emperor Joseph II [22]. The most important court in Transylvania, the Royal Board had the jurisdiction to judge inclusively the treason offences. It also judged the appeals against the solutions of the County Courts, the Transylvanian Saxon University and the Szeckler Courts. When the solution was against the solution of the inferior courts, the parties can appeal to Gubernium, and, exceptionally, after the Gubernium, to the Aulic Chancellery or even to the Emperor, who was the last decisional instance.

The book is a very important study instrument for understanding the evolution of the judicial system in Transylvania in the 18th century and for the amplitude of the Habsburg reformism [23].

## **2.3. Concordia orthodoxorum patrum orientalium et occidentalium De Spiritus Sancti Processione, ex**

**Comentarijs Gennadij Patriarchae Constantinopolit:  
excerpta per reverendissimum dominum  
Christophorum Peichich Missionarium Apostolicum,  
nec non Abbatem S. Georgii de Csanád, Laureatis  
Honoribus Specabilium Praenobilium, Reverendorum  
Nobilium, ac Eruditorum DD. Neo-Baccalaurerorum,  
Dum In Alma, ac Regio Principali Universitate S. J.  
Claudiopolitana promotore R. P. Michaelae Salbeck e  
S. J. AA. LL & Philosophiae Doctore, ejudémque  
Professore Ordinario Prima AA. LL. & Philopsophiae  
Laurea insignirentur a condiscipulis dicata Anno M.  
DCC. XLV [1745].**

The third title owned by The National Museum of the Union from Alba Iulia and identified in Europeana is Concordia Orthodoxorum Patrum Orientalium et Occidentalium, printed at the Typography of Jesuit Academic Society from Cluj in 1745 [24]. It has 112 pages. We find the entire work in digital format at three locations: The Romanian National Library, with the Romanian National Library as aggregator, the Bavarian State Library and the Austrian National Library, with The European Library as aggregator [25].

The work was printed for the first time in Trnava (Slovakia) in 1730 [26]. The second edition appeared in 1745. The work has a theological content and supports the policy for the consolidation of the Catholicism by the Habsburg Empire. The author is Christophorus Peichich, an Apostolic missionary, Bulgarian by his origin.

Peichich was the author of four books, divided in two groups. The first group concerns the question of the schism between Eastern and Western Churches and consists of three publications: Zarcalo istine (The Mirror of Truth between the Eastern and Western Churches), Speculum veritatis (The Mirror of the Truth) and Concordia orthodoxorum Patrum orientalium et occidentalium. Zarcalo istine (Venice 1716) was Peichich's first publication and was written in a variant of Southern Slavic ("Illyrian") language. Speculum veritatis (Venice 1725) was an enlarged version of the Mirror in Latin. Concordia orthodoxorum Patrum orientalium et occidentalium (Trnava 1730) was a closer examination of an aspect of the question. All three are designed according to the literary genre of controversistic theology, yet seem animated by a concordistic spirit, aiming to promote the reunification of the Eastern and Western Churches. The second "group" of works actually consists in only one publication: the Mahometanus in lege Christi, Alcorano suffragante, instructus (Trnava 1717), a "catechism" for Catholic missionaries carrying out their activity among Muslims.

Within the context of the Hapsburg's policy, a policy aimed at the religious integration of their subjects and the consolidation of Catholicism as the "state religion" in their Empire, Peichich's books had to serve the cause of the union

of the "schismatic" Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church and of converting Lutheran and Calvinist "heretics" and Muslim "infidels" to Catholicism.

According to Peichich's view, the European Powers were to join forces under the leadership of the Catholic emperor in order to form a Christian front united against the Ottoman Empire. The project of the author as a missionary and a man of letters was to contribute to the fulfillment of that end by providing the militia christiana with the "spiritual weapon" of his polemical works [26].

## Conclusions

We started our investigation encouraged by the Europeana mission: "we aim to transform the world through culture". The digital technology of the 21st century and the effort of the libraries, museums and cultural institutions to capitalize and make visible the cultural and historical inheritance transform Europeana in the largest and most dynamic cultural resource at the present time. It creates working instruments and connections beyond the geographical borders for all researchers and, in general, for all people.

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