

ROMANIAN STUDENTS FROM TRANSYLVANIA AT EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES. UNIVERSITY AS EDUCATIONAL IDEAL (15–17TH CENTURIES)

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Abstract

Beginning with the 12th century, universities became, gradually, the main centers for shaping European culture and civilization, European elites. The development of cities and states imposed the promotion of trained, capable individuals to administer business, to master the laws. Spiritual, religious and ethnic connections ensured for centuries the attending of universities in Europe by Transylvanian youths of Catholic, Lutheran, Calvin and Unitarian religion. Romanians, most of Orthodox religion, with a tolerated status in Transylvania, had a limited access to universities in the Middle Ages. However, in the context of the Council of Florence decisions, or by converting to the Catholic religion a part of the Romanian noble elite, in the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries over 20 Romanians studied at universities in Central and Western Europe, in Vienna, Rome, Trnava (Slovakia) etc. Some of them, after completing their studies, got to occupy important positions in the Catholic Church hierarchy in Hungary, like the case of humanist Nicolaus Olahus, and others to be promoted in leadership positions at universities in Vienna and Košice (Slovakia). Gabriel Ivul was for twelve years chancellor at the University of Vienna, and between 1669 and 1672 he was dean of the Theology Faculty in Trnava.

Keywords: Universities, Transylvanian Romanians, attending European universities, the Catholic path, the formation of intellectual elites.

Historians consider that, second to the church, university is the oldest institution in the world, since the first university was created in 1155,¹ with the mention that historians still cannot agree on the establishment of the first university. The universities of Bologna, Sorbonne, Oxford, Montpellier are still debating the creation of the first associations of students and teachers or school federations. The priority of the University of Bologna is generally accepted. It is the place where Emperor Frederic Barbarossa granted the Bolognese schools a special protection (*Constitutia Habita*), *Royal Charter* or *Imperial Constitutions* in 1155.²

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¹ Jacques Verger, *Universitățile în Evul Mediu* (Iași: Polirom, 2019), 31–32.

² Verger, *Universitățile în Evul Mediu*, 47.

Beginning with the 12th century, universities progressively became the foremost training centers of European culture, civilization, and elites. The development of cities and states required the promotion of trained people, capable of managing affairs and understanding the laws. For instance, in King Matthew Corvinus' chancellery, most of the clerks were licensed. The Council of Trento, held between 1545 and 1563, imposed a doctorate in theology as a condition for the position of archpriest. In this context, for hundreds of years, to acquire higher knowledge, numerous young people from Central Europe attended European universities on the initiative of the family, then the church, urban communities, or states. Around the year 1500 there were about 60 universities in Europe and reached a total of 143 in 1790. The increase in the number of universities is explained both by the development of national states and principalities, as well as by the religious reform, the Protestant states developing their own system of universities. Two types of universities were born, Catholic, maintained or taken over by the Jesuits, except for those in Paris, where the Jesuit professors could not take hold of them, together with Protestant, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican universities.

Universities in Central Europe

In the Kingdom of Hungary, universities had an ephemeral existence. During the reign of King Louis of Anjou, on September 1, 1367, Pope Urban V issued the founding diploma of the University of Pécs.³ In 1395, during the reign of King Sigismund of Luxembourg, Pope Bonifacius IX granted the "studium generale" foundation diploma for the first university in the capital of the kingdom, in Buda.⁴ Under the influence of Italian humanism, Cardinal Branda founded the University of Veszprém. In the same climate, the University of Bratislava was created on the initiative of King Matthew Corvinus and his adviser, János Vitéz. On May 29, 1465, Pope Paul II entrusted Vitéz and Janus Pannonius (Bishop of Pécs), – based on King Matthew Corvinus' proposal – to establish a new university on the territory of Hungary. According to the university establishment papal encyclical, at that date there was no other university in Hungary, since the old universities existing in the previous period had ceased their activity. This way, the foundation of a university in Bratislava was decided on June 20, 1467, which was known as the *Istropolitan Academy*.⁵ Organized on the model of Paris and Vienna

³ László Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek emlékezete :válogatott dokumentumok a magyarországi felsőoktatási történetéhez 1367–1777* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 1995), 12.

⁴ Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 9.

⁵ Stephen D'Irsay, *Histoire des Universités françaises et étrangères des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Picard, 1933), 1: 251; Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 11.

universities, in the first years of its foundation, the Istropolitan Academy had a series of famous teachers invited by Vitéz, such as Johannes Müller from Königsberg and Martinus Ilkusz from Krakow. But none of the created universities made history and we have little information about the students who attended them.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the religious Reformation and then the Catholic Counter-Reformation generated the emergence of new higher education institutions throughout Europe. In Transylvania, in Cluj, in 1581, the first university foundations were laid, organized and patronized by the Jesuit order.⁶ In Hungary, in Debrecen, Sárospatak, and Papa, reformed colleges were created in the 16th century, which would later also create their higher academic classes. A reformed academic college was established in 1622 in Alba Iulia, on the initiative of Prince Gabriel Bethlen. In the same confessional atmosphere, specific to the 16th – 17th centuries, Cardinal Pázmány Péter founded the Catholic University of Nagyszombat (Trnava) in 1665, from which the modern Budapest University is claiming the origin, with the mention that the university was the continuation of the old Jesuit college in Trnava, created by Nicolaus Olahus in 1561.

In the absence of a representative university in historical Hungary, in the Middle Ages most of the elites studied at the universities of Central and Western Europe, predominantly at the universities of Vienna (in 1365), Prague (1384) and Krakow (1363). In a study on students from Banat, who studied in Europe in the Middle Ages, until 1552, the historian Costin Feneşan noticed that out of 173 students from Banat, 107 studied at the University of Vienna, 55 at Krakow, 3 at Wittenberg, 1 in Prague, 3 Bologna, 2 Paris, 1 Padua and one more at an unidentified Italian university.⁷ The book titled of historian Tonk Sándor was published in 1979, titled as *Erdélyiek egytemjárása a Középkorban*, in which he reconstructed the academic pilgrimage of Transylvanian young people to European universities. Based on the previous researches of Andrei Veres,⁸ Dr. Schrauf Károly⁹ and transcripts from various universities, he reconstructed the presence of 2,494 young people from Transylvania studying in European universities between

⁶ Kolozsvári Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem, *A Kolozsvári Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Alamanachja. Az MCMXIV – XV Tanévre* (Kolozsvár: Ajtai K. Albert Könyvnyomdája, 1914) 3–4; Sándor Márki, *M. Király Ferencz József Tudományegyetem története 1872–1922* (Szeged: Szeged Városi Nyomda és Könyvkiadó Rt., 1922), 4–6; Gyula Bisztray et al., *Erdély Magyar Egyeteme* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Tudományos Intézet, 1941), 31–32.

⁷ Costin Feneşan, “Studentii din Banat la universitățile străine până la 1551”, *Revista de istorie* 29, no.12 (1980): 1945–1965.

⁸ Endre Veress, *Matricula et acta Hungarorum in Universitatibus Italiae Studentium. II. Roma. Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum I. Matricula 1559–1917* (Budapest: Fontes Rerum Hungaricum, 1917); Endre Veress, *Matricula et acta Hungarorum in Universitatibus Italiae Studentium 1221–1864* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1941), 28.

⁹ Károly Schrauf, *Magyarországi tanulók a bécsi egyetemen* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1892); Károly Schrauf, *A bécsi egyetem magyar nemzetének anyakönyve 1453-tól 1630-ig* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1892).

1184 and 1520.¹⁰ In a subsequent work, published by the same author, in association with Szabó Miklós, he published the list of the 2,950 young people who studied at European universities between 1521–1700.¹¹

From the mentioned studies, it appears that the Transylvanian students' main destinations in the first centuries were the universities of Paris, Bologna, Padua. With the emergence of universities in Central Europe at the end of the 14th century, interest in studying in Vienna, Krakow and Prague grew. The distance, the prices, more accessible, encouraged the attendance of the universities in the vicinity of Transylvania. For example, Johannes Ruedel from Braşov left Transylvania on February 3, 1454, and arrived in Vienna on March 10, more than a month later.¹² Numerous traveled in merchant caravans, which were not always safe and could be attacked by thieves. The reasons for choosing a destination also included the situation in Europe, conflicts between states, the Ottoman threat, economic crises, epidemics, such as the "black death".

Generally, students from Transylvania went to those university cities about which they could get information from other young people who studied there. They also chose cities where they could benefit from scholarship, such as those who went to Krakow, where they received aid from the *Bursa Hungarorum*, created in 1452.¹³ Most of the young people from Transylvania attended the universities of Vienna, where 1,588 students studied between 1368 and 1520, and Krakow, where 811 enrolled between 1405 and 1520. In Vienna, they were attracted by the presence of university professors recommended by a beautiful humanistic culture and the academic climate created around them. Furthermore, there was the support the university received from Hungarian kings, such as Matei Corvin. The prestige of the University of Krakow was also offered by the presence of brilliant teachers – Jan Sakran, Johannes Saeranus – trained at Western universities and capable to provide important knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, essential to the students.¹⁴

Once they arrived at the university, the students presented themselves to the rector where they paid the registration fee. Those who had a more difficult financial situation were exempted from the tax, on the condition that they submit proof of the family's financial condition within one month at most. Then, enrollment was completed without an exam, but knowledge of the Latin language was mandatory. Since some did not know Latin, the university provided them with courses for six months or a year to acquire the language. During their studies,

¹⁰ Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a Középkorban* (Bucureşti: Editura Kriterion, 1979).

¹¹ Miklós Szabó and Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása korai újkorban 1521–1700* (Szeged: József Attila Tudományegyetem, 1992).

¹² Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a Középkorban*, 9.

¹³ Feneşan, "Studentji din Banat", 1947.

¹⁴ Feneşan, "Studentji din Banat", 1947.

numerous students attended several universities, registering the well-known phenomenon of university migration, in the established formula of “academic peregrination”.

This way, the adventure, the academic pilgrimage of 5,444 Transylvanian students, who studied at universities in Europe between 1184 and 1700, was written.

Romanian students at European universities

In a book published in 2000 and dedicated to the attendance of European universities by Romanians, we considered that: “Spiritual-religious and ethnic ties have ensured the attendance of European universities by young Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian religions for hundreds of years. The Romanians, the majority belonging to the Orthodox religion, with a status of tolerated in Transylvania, considered outside the acknowledged religions, did not benefit from the facilities offered to members of other confessions for attending the large university centers in Central and Western Europe. Between 1521 and 1700, out of the 2,854 young people from Transylvania, who studied at foreign universities, only 5–6 can be considered with certainty of Romanian origin”.¹⁵

New research has nuanced the opinions on the Romanians’ presence at European universities.

The first Romanian registered as a student at a European university dates back to October 23, 1424: Johannes Wolahus de Welenis, from Beiuș (Bihar county), student at the University of Vienna; a Romanian, however, about whom we have no other data.¹⁶ After 20 years, in 1445, another Romanian, named Ștefan Ciula, was registered at the Catholic University of Krakow.¹⁷

The 15th century proved to be favorable for the Romanian nobility, which became very active at the level of the Kingdom of Hungary, some with studies in Catholic and town schools, or even in universities, promoted to high dignities in the Kingdom of Hungary: governors of Hungary (Iancu de Hunedoara), kings (Matei Corvin), voivodes of Transylvania (Iancu de Hunedoara, Bartolomeu Dragfi), comes (leaders/*comite*) of the Szeklers, governor (*ban*) of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slovenia, governor of Severin, governor of Belgrade (Iancu de

¹⁵ Cornel Sigmirean, *Istoria formării intelectualității românești din Transilvania și Banat în epoca modernă. Studenți români la universități din Europa Centrală și de Vest* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 13.

¹⁶ László Szögi, *Studenți români din Transilvania* (Târgu-Mureș: Editura Universității Petru Maior, 2011), 43.

¹⁷ Tonk, *Erdélyiek egytemjárása a Középkorban*, 330.

Hunedoara, Ladislau Ficior de Ciula, Gheorghe More de Ciula), in positions of comes, knights of the royal court, etc.¹⁸ This ascent was facilitated by their belonging to the Catholic religion. As is known, the Hungarian Arpadian kings generally respected both the religion of the Romanian population and the social organization, based on customary law, that “jus valachicum”, which allowed the nobility and princes (*cnezi*) to keep the hereditary character of the domain, with the possibility to be transferred, inherited, mortgaged, or sold. The change occurred under the Italian kings of the Angevin dynasty, starting with King Ludovic I (1342–1382), who conditioned the possession of the land on loyalty to the king and confession by the diploma of 1366. The Diploma tried to enforce the decision that no one should own land in the Kingdom unless he was noble or Catholic.¹⁹ Belonging to the Catholic confession represented a fundamental condition of belonging to the noble status.²⁰

We don't know the consequences of Catholic proselytism, which were concretely, statistically, those outcomes, but certainly a part of the Romanian nobility succumbed to Catholic proselytism. However, many Romanian nobles kept their Orthodox religion. In 1476, Matei Corvin asked the pope to forbid the minorites from Banat to offend the Orthodox as if they were wrongly baptized. Confrontations with the Ottoman Empire, the Council of Florence, which legitimized the Eastern confession, allowed a relaxation of the kingdom's policy towards the Romanian nobles.²¹ Nevertheless, only those of the Catholic religion studied at the universities of the Middle Ages. After almost 50 years since the presence of a Romanian at a university, in 1494, another member of the Romanian noble family of Ciula, Ioan, studied in Krakow.²² In the same year, 1494, Gheorghe Pâclizaru from Caransebeș was also registered at the University of Krakow.²³ In the 16th century, another member of the Ciula de Hațeg family distinguishes himself, Filip More, from Mădăraș, Satu Mare county, where he was born in 1470. He studied at the University of Bologna between 1491–1500, having Philipus Beroaldus as teacher. Between the years 1520–1526, he reached the high dignity of bishop of Pécs, being today considered the first Romanian humanist. He was a secretary in the royal chancellery, carrying out important diplomatic missions in Venice and Moldova.²⁴ In Venice he became friends with the great typographer of

¹⁸ Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania 1440–1515* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), 419–435.

¹⁹ Ligiă Boldea, “Înnobilare și confesiune în lumea feudală românească din Banat (sec. XIV–XVI)”, *Banatica* 2, no. 13 (1995): 29.

²⁰ Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Hunedoreștii. O familie europeană* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2020), 256–258.

²¹ Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 175

²² Tonk, *Erdélyiek egytemjárása a Középkorban*, 266.

²³ Feneșan, “Studentii din Banat”, 1952.

²⁴ Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, 357.

the time, Aldo Manusio.²⁵ According to the historian Ioan Piso, he had a collection of inscriptions from Ulpia Traiana Sarmisegetusa. He died at the Battle of Mohács in 1526.

In the 16th century, the dominant figure of the Romanian elites was Nicolaus Olahus, one of the great scholars of humanist culture, bishop of Zagreb and Agria (Eger), then archbishop of Strigoniu (Esztergom), who came from a family of Romanians.²⁶ We do not have exact data about his university studies, but we know that he traveled to Paris and there, evidently, he also arrived at the Sorbonne, but it is not recorded in the transcripts. In his later career, he supported the education abroad of several young people, which leads us to believe that he had a very good understanding of the importance of university level studies.²⁷

Another humanist of Romanian origin was Martin Haczaki, canon and suffragan bishop of Oradea. He was born in Șardu, Cluj County, around the year 1495, in a family of Romanian nobles, originally from Ostrov, in the Hațeg area.²⁸ After his birthplace, the name Haczaki was created in the Latinized form, Martinus Haczus. He studied at the University of Vienna between 1516–1518,²⁹ where he had Joachim Watt or Vadiumus as a poetics teacher, who enabled the publication of some verses in a volume containing the works of Pomponiu Mela.³⁰

In 1518 he enrolled at the University of Krakow, where he obtained his *bacalaureus* degree in two months.³¹ After finishing his studies, probably around 1526, he settled in Oradea, encouraged by the humanist atmosphere created there by bishop Francisc of Perényi Oradea. In 1538, he was appointed canon of the Oradea cathedral chapter. On August 8, 1544, the Pope, considering his intellectual prestige and administrative qualities, named him honorary bishop of Citrum in Macedonia and suffragan bishop of bishop Gheorghe Martinuzzi of Oradea. In

²⁵ SeptemCastră “Primul umanist român, aproape anonim” published on November 12, 2009, <https://7castra.wordpress.com/2009/11/12/primul-umanist-roman-aproape-anonim/>.

²⁶ For the biography of the great humanist of Romanian origin, see: Ștefan Bezdechi, “Familia lui Nicolaus Olahus”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* 5 (1928–1930): 63–86; Ștefan Bezdechi, *Nicolaus Olahus, primul umanist de origine română* (Aninoasa: Editura RAM, 1939); Ioan Lupaș, “Doi umaniști români în secolul al XVI-lea”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* 4 (1926–1927): 337; Sándor Tonk, “Diplomele de înnobilitare ale lui Nicolaus Olahus”, *Revista Arhivelor* 12 no. 1 (1968): 13–31; Sándor Tonk, “Cariera unui intelectual în secolul al XVI-lea (Drumul lui Nicolaus Olahus spre scaunul episcopal)”, in *De la umanism la iluminism*, ed. Ioan Chiorean, (Târgu-Mureș: 1994), 7–14; Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, “Stema lui Dan al II-lea, în legătură cu familiile Huniade și Olah”, *Revista Muzeelor* 5, no. 1 (1968): 5–17; Corneliu Albu, “Temeiurile acordării unui nou titlu de noblețe la Nicolaus Olahus”, *Revista Muzeelor* 6, no. 6 (1969): 535–538.

²⁷ Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 43.

²⁸ Jakó Zsigmond, *Philobiblon transilvan* (București: Editura Kriterion, 1977), 66; see also Cosmin Pop-Gorjanu, “Un cărturar de origine română”, *Medievalia-Transilvanica*, no. 1–2 (2000), 4: 75–89, <https://biblioteca-digitala.ro/>.

²⁹ Tonk, *Erdélyiek egytemjárása a Középkorban*, 287.

³⁰ Zsigmond, *Philobiblon transilvan*, 66.

³¹ Gorjanu, “Un cărturar”, 82.

1457, Haczaki renounced the mission of suffragan bishop, according to historian Jakó Zsigmond, as resistance to Martinuzzi's secular policy, or for reasons of age.³² Martin Haczaki is considered one of the greatest 16th century bibliophiles. A Greek codex of Claudius Ptolemy's writings, bearing the ex-libris of Haczkius, one of the most valuable pieces that made up his collection, arrived at the National Library in Vienna. Haczki's library also included Pliny the Elder's *Historia naturalis*, a volume of Plato's works, an edition of the Alexandrian poet Claudius Claudius' poetry, the works of Aristotle, the *Utopia* of Thomas Morus, an edition published in Basel in Switzerland, etc. Part of Haczki's library collections reached the university created by Báthori in 1581 in Cluj. Today, the remaining books from Haczki's library are in Cluj-Napoca, in the Library of the Romanian Academy.³³

In the 16th century, the nephews of the humanist Nicolae Olahus are enrolled in studies.³⁴ First, Gheorghe Bona Sibianul, son of his sister Ursula, who studied between 1552 and 1559 at the University of Padua.³⁵ Nicolae Olahus would have intended to make him his successor to the Episcopal see. But the young man, whom the well-known humanist and Venetian typographer Paolo Manuzio, in a letter to Zsámboki János, considered a potential glory of the entire continent, died in 1559, on his way back from his studies, in the town of Lánzsér near Sopron.³⁶ In *Oratio in obitum {...} Georgi Boni Transylvani*, Zsámboki János believed that Bona's personality harmoniously combined the brilliant spiritual qualities of his mother, originally from a Romanian noble family, with the strength of character and deep love for people of his father.³⁷ Other two nephews of the great humanist, Sebastian List³⁸ and Nicolaus Woll³⁹ studied in 1555 in Vienna.

The 16th century ends with three Romanian students at Grac: Yayzi/Jayzius Jacobbus, Valachus, from Sobniensis (Zsobok?), probably Jebucu, enrolled at Grac, on November 27, 1592,⁴⁰ Puskarius Ladilaus, Transylvanus, from Oradea, where he was born in 1570, who became a student of theology at Graz in 1597, with the mention that he also studied philosophy between 1592 and 1594 at Olmütz.⁴¹ Dobrovici/Dobrovitius Martinus Valachus,

³² Zsigmond, *Philobiblon transilvan*, 66.

³³ Zsigmond, *Philobiblon transilvan*, 66.

³⁴ The Romanian origin of the great Romanian humanist is undeniable. His father was the son of the Boer of Argeş, Mânzilă, married to Marina, the sister of Iancu de Hunedoara. He had two children, Stanciu and Stoian (Ştefan). To escape the terror of Vlad Dracul, Stefan moved to Transylvania, where he married Barbara Hânzar, with whom he had four children, Nicolaus Olahus, Matei, Ursula and Elena.

³⁵ Károlyi Köllő, *Confluențe literare. Studii de literatură comparată româno-maghiară* (Bucureşti: Editura Kriterion, 1993), 236

³⁶ Köllő, *Confluențe literare*, 237.

³⁷ Köllő, *Confluențe literare*, 237.

³⁸ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 243.

³⁹ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 205.

⁴⁰ Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 143.

⁴¹ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 148; Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 143.

born in Bosnensis (probably in Transylvania), who enrolled in philosophy studies on February 8, 1600, also studied at the University of Grac, at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, which he completed in 1605. But the most spectacular presence at Western universities is that of the student John Voulpe (Vulpe Johannes), from Pécs, where he was born in 1524 and studied at the University of Cambridge, in the “Caius” College, where he enrolled in 1562 as a fee-paying student (“follow-commoner”), aged between 30–40 years. He was one of the first foreign students accepted at the English university. It is also known that he entered the Anglican Order.⁴² After completing his studies, he became the physician of Count of Sussex.⁴³ Hungarian historiography does not register him as a Romanian but recognizes that his name is not of Hungarian origin and attributes it an Italian origin, removing it further from its Romanian derivation.⁴⁴ Also, at the beginning of the 17th century, Tallian Paulus, Valachus, from Czikkliniensis (Oláhciklany?), possibly Ciclova Română, from Banat, is recorded as a student of philosophy between 1603–1605 at the University of Grac.⁴⁵

In the 17th century, European universities were attended by personalities who had influence in Romanian society, in contrast to the 15th and 16th century intellectuals, who distinguished themselves for their contribution to the development of the Hungarian kingdom’s culture and of the Catholic Church. The central character of the 17th century academic pilgrimage owing to his work, was Gheorghe Buitul, originally from a Romanian family of nobles from Caransebeș where he was born in 1591, and who studied between 1619 and 1623 in Rome, in the Germanico-Hungaricum College.⁴⁶ We have some information about his life from a letter found in the Bathianum Library in Alba Iulia, sent on September 15, 1619, by the exiled bishop Csiki István to Cardinal Borghese in Rome.⁴⁷ In the respective letter, the bishop asserted that he raised Buitul since a small child, while he was a missionary in Lugoj and Caransebeș. He asked the cardinal to accept him in the College, because after completing his studies “he would work for the good of the country and religion”. In the Caransebeș area there were about 10,000

⁴² John Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College. 1349–1897* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 1: XIX; see also György Gömöri, *Magyarországi diákok Angol és skót egyetemeken 1526 1789* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2005), 46.

⁴³ Robert Theodore Gunther, *Early Science in Cambridge* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), 252.

⁴⁴ Carmen Maria Andraș, *The English Enlightenment Model and Its Transylvanian Reflections 1750–1850* (Târgu Mureș: Editura Mica Doris, 1996), 43; Carmen Maria Andraș, *România și imaginile ei în literatura de călătorie britanică. Un spațiu de frontieră culturală* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 2003), 138. See Gömöri, *Magyarországi diákok*.

⁴⁵ Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 143.

⁴⁶ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 72, Szögi, *Régi Magyar Egyetemek*, 74.

⁴⁷ Árpád Bitay, “George Buitul. Cel dintâi român care și-a făcut studiile la Roma”, *Dacoromania* (1922), 789–791.

Romanian Catholics converted by Ioan Capistran. Initially, Buitul began his studies at a reformed school in Caransebeș.⁴⁸ Under the influence of father Szentandrassy (the future bishop Csiki István) he converted to Catholicism around 1602. Also, through him he arrived in Rome in 1609, being accepted at the Collegium Germanicum-Hungaricum, founded in 1552 by Pope Gregory XIII, under the influence of the Jesuit Ignatius of Loyola for the education of the Jesuit order members, to serve the counter-reformation interests. Until 1700, 37 Transylvanians, Hungarians and Szeklers studied at the College.⁴⁹ According to the curriculum, Buitul, started with the study of philosophy. However, he was expelled due to a behavioral mistake and had to leave for Vienna. Between 1617 and 1618 he worked at the Alba-Iulia College under István Szini, where he taught “liberal disciplines” and was appreciated as “the best and most virtuous” among the “masters and philosophers”.⁵⁰ At the intervention of Szini István, Szentandrassy (Csiki István) and Pazmány Péter, Buitul was re-admitted to the Germanic-Hungarian College in 1619. Three years later he was ordained a priest.⁵¹ In May 1623 he entered the probation house of the Jesuit order in Rome. According to the regulations, he completed his novitiate in two years. In absence of a priest, the Catholic community invited him to return as a priest to Caransebeș. Receiving the acceptance of the “father general”, Gheorghe Buitul left for Transylvania, as a missionary of the Trnava College. During his studies in Rome, he translated Kanizius Peter’s *Catechism* into Romanian, which was only published in 1636, after his death. Between 1627 and 1635 he pursued his ecclesiastical career in Caransebeș, being initially mentioned as “concionatur walochus”, and from 1632 “superior concionatur et operarius walachicus et hungaricus”, militating for the expansion of Catholicism in Banat. In 1626 he converted 50 people to Catholicism, officiating 20 marriages and 67 baptisms.⁵² He also contributed to the development of education in Caransebeș. In 1626 he opened a “grammar school” “Scuola di lettere”, as it is called in the Jesuit missionaries’ reports, intended for the sons of Romanian nobles. In 1627 there were 32 students, most of them sons of nobles, and at the end of the year there were 45.⁵³ Catholic students from Wallachia and

⁴⁸ Livia Magina, “Imprimări religioase la frontiere instabile: George Buitul și orașele din sudul Transilvaniei (secolul XVII)”, *BANATICA* 25 (2015), 91–102, <http://banatica.ro/media/b25/091-102.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Ioan Chioreanu, *Intellectualitatea din Transilvania în epocile premodernă și modernă* (Târgu Mureș: Editura Universității Petru Maior 2008), 150.

⁵⁰ Doru Radosav, “Cultura românească din Transilvania în secolul al XVII-lea”, in *Istoria Transilvaniei: (De la 1541 până la 1711)*, ed. Ioan-Aurel Pop, Thomas Năgler and András Magyari (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română/Centrul de Studii Transilvane), 2: 315.

⁵¹ Radu Iacob, *Foști elevi români- uniți ai școalelor din Roma* (Beiuș: 1929), 7–8; Ladislaus Lukács S. J., *Catalogi personarum et officiorum provinciae Austriae S. I. II. (1601–1640)* (Romae: Inst. Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1982), 300, 312, 324, 330, 353, 371, 390, 408, 427, 555.

⁵² Magina, “Imprimări religioase”, 97.

⁵³ Magina, “Imprimări religioase”, 99.

Bulgaria also studied at the school founded by Gheorghe Buitul. The secretary of the Wallachian prince Radu Mihnea invited Buitul to establish a Romanian Catholic school in Wallachia, but the invitation was not honored due to the obligations he had in Caransebeș.⁵⁴ On September 5, 1635, he died prematurely, but his life marked the entry of the Romanians from Transylvania and Banat into the great debate of European culture, “a formidable combatant in the dispute with the reformed theologians from Transylvania, schooled in Heidelberg”, as the historian Doru Radosav remarked.⁵⁵

The list of Romanian intellectuals who studied at the universities of Central and Western Europe in the 17th century also includes Stefan Vegesc, alumnus of the Urban College of Propaganda Fide between the years 1648–1659.⁵⁶ Founded in 1627 by Pope Urban VIII, it was considered a true worldwide Catholic university. The duration of studies in the College was five years, of which two were dedicated to the study of philosophy and three years to theology.

The studies of Gabriel Ivul, coming from a noble family in Caransebeș, a member of the Jesuit Order, who studied theology at the universities of Trnava (Slovakia),⁵⁷ Grac (1640–1642) and Vienna (1647–1648) belong to the same Catholic direction.⁵⁸ After obtaining his doctorate in theology in Vienna, he taught philosophy in Košice, a city in present-day Slovakia, then theology in Vienna, where he was chancellor of the university in the Austrian capital for twelve years.⁵⁹ Between 1669 and 1672, he was the dean of the Faculty of Theology in Trnava. A brother of his was a provost in Alba Iulia. He published several volumes of theology and philosophy, out of which we mention: *Propositiones ex universa logica*, Vienna, 1654, *Poesis lyricu*, Vienna, 1655, *Philosophia*, Vienna, 1655, *Philosophia Novella*, Košice, 1661, Zagreb, 1663, *Theses Et Antitheses Catholicorum & Aatholicorum*, Košice, 1667 etc.

Szaplonczay Ladislaus, a Wallachian nobleman from Maramureș, also studied at the University of Trnava between 1666 and 1668, obtaining the *Baccalaureate* degree in 1667.⁶⁰

At the end of the 17th century, with part of Transylvanian elites’ transition to the Reformed Church, the first Romanians of Calvinist religion were registered at European universities. As is known, the 16th century witnessed a powerful offensive of religious reform in Transylvania, culminating during John of Luxemburg’s reign, “the last king of Hungary and the first prince of Transylvania”. Tempered under the princes

⁵⁴ Radosav, “Cultura românească”, 315.

⁵⁵ Radosav, “Cultura românească”, 315.

⁵⁶ Eugen Denize, *Italia și italieni în cultura română până la începutul secolului al XIX-lea* (Târgoviște: Mica Valachie, 2011), 42

⁵⁷ Krisztina Bognár, Mihály József Kiss and Júlia Varga, *A Nagyszombati Egyetem fokozatot szerzett hallgatól 1635–1777* (Budapest, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2022), 135.

⁵⁸ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 60.

⁵⁹ Radosav, “Cultura românească”, 315.

⁶⁰ Bognár, Kiss and Varga, *A Nagyszombati Egyetem*, 160.

of the Báthory family, the reform would return in force among the Orthodox Romanians in the 17th century through the Calvinist princes.⁶¹ A part of the Catholicized Romanian nobility converted to the reformed religion, following the denominational fashion of the time, in order to preserve the social status and the public positions they held.⁶² Suggestive in this regard is the statement of the Diet from 1577, namely that “today, especially the nobles have left the Greek law [Orthodox faith n.n.], for the gifts and ranks they received”. In an attempt to attract Romanians to the Calvinist religion, in the middle of the 17th century, the *Gospel with Teaching* (1641), the *Catechism* (1642) and the *New Testament* (1648) were translated into Romanian.

Mihail Halici also came from a family of Romanian nobles of Calvinist religion, a Caransebeș nobleman, where he was born in October 1643, son of the Humanist scholar Mihail Halici (1617–1671), rector of the Calvinist school in Caransebeș. He was a humanist scholar, poet, author of the *Dictionarium valachico-latinum*, of great importance for the history of Romanian literature. He attended the Evangelical High School in Sibiu and the Academic College in Aiud and he enrolled at Leyden University in 1665.⁶³ It was believed for a long time that he studied in Nurnberg. But with the publishing of the *Album* containing the teachers and students who attended the four faculties of the University of Leyden, the hypothesis that he studied law in the Dutch city between 1679 and 1685 is confirmed, where he was mentioned as “Michael Halicius Valachus of Caransebeș in Banatu qondam Severiensi”.⁶⁴ During his studies, he encountered many English and Scottish students whom he befriended, as for instance Thomas Neale. Halici lived in London for one year, as an educator, “ephoros” of his peer Thomas Neale.⁶⁵ After completing his studies, he was invited as rector at the Orăștie Reformed College, where he assumed this position between 1674 and 1679. Following a conflict with the school’s authorities, he left Orăștie and settled in Sibiu, he then travelled to Austria, the Netherlands, France and England. In London, he was met by Michel Bethlen, the son of the Chancellor of Transylvania. In a manuscript of literary compositions in different languages, collected by Humphrey Wanley, on a page

⁶¹ Zenovie Pâclișanu, “Biserica românească și calvinismul de la moartea lui I. Sigismund până la urcarea pe tron a lui Gavrilă Bethlen”, *Cultura Creștină*, no. 19 (1911): 614–615; Ioan Matei, “Preoțimea românească ardeleană în veacul al XVII-lea”, *Transilvania*, no. 1 (1911): 13–14; Ana Dumitran, *Religie ortodoxă-Religie reformată. Ipostaze ale identității confesionale a românilor din Transilvania în secolele XVI-XVII* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2004); Pavel Binder, “Începuturile Reformei din Transilvania și românii din Hunedoara”, *Limba Română*, no. 3 (1971): 275; Iosif Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoara la începutul secolului al XVI-lea. Studii și documente* (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1973), XXX.

⁶² Florin Dobrei, “Prezențe româno-calvine în spațiul hunedorean în secolele XVI-XVII”, in *Istoria ca datorie. Omagiul academicianului Ioan-Aurel Pop la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, ed. Ioan Bolovan and Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română/Centru de Studii Transilvane, 2015), 193.

⁶³ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 198.

⁶⁴ Köllő, *Confluente literare*, 13; also see Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 198; Crișu Dascăl, *Enciclopedia Banatului. Literatura*, general (Timișoara: David Press Print, 2016), 300–301.

⁶⁵ Köllő, *Confluente literare*, 14.

with “The Lord Prayer in Hungarian language”, with Latin equivalent for each word, there is a note: “Written in London by hand of Michael Halicus a Transylvanian, A.D. 1712” and on the other side “Given by Mr. Thomas Grainger of the East India House, 8 June 1715”.⁶⁶ His proficiency in languages from Eastern European countries, Romanian, Hungarian, German, alongside classical languages, Latin and Greek, led to his employment at the Foreign Office on Oriental matters. He passed away in London in 1712.

A complex individual, Halici, self-titled “Valachus Poeta”, authored several philology, lexicology studies and published poems. He authored a Romanian – Latin vocabulary, *Dictionarium valachico-latinum*, containing 5,000 words, valuable as it illustrates the language spoken then in the Banat villages. He owned an important library, with over 500 items, including philosophy, philology, poetics and rhetoric books, grammars and encyclopedias, works in psychology, pedagogy, law, etc. In the University of Cluj-Napoca Library, which holds some books from the old Orăștie Reformed Collegium, there are a few copies with Mihail Halici’s ex-libris. In 1674, in an epigram dedicated to doctor Francisc Parisz he wrote: *The beautiful citadel of Geneva gave such a just law / Here comes Franciscus, hold it Leida, Paris! / Hold your hands sisters, with this new guest: forward / Brothers, fellows, the Nymphs soon allow / Good gentlemen, great doctors, teachers and good Ladies / Be in peace, with bread and salt, we pray.*⁶⁷

Another Romanian of Reformed denomination, Mihai Talabă coming from a family of nobles from Făgăraș, participant in Rákóczi’s War of Independence, was born in 1678 and studied in Frankfurt on the Oder (1696).

The list of Romanians identified to have studied in European universities in the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries ends with Mihai Talabă. We mention that the enumeration retained only those students who declared themselves as Romanian or were part of families known for their Romanian origin. Otherwise, probably other Romanians can be identified among the 5,444 Transylvanian students who attended foreign universities, like Csulai Georgius/Csulay György/Gheorghe Ciula from the Romanian noble family Ciula, Hungarized, between 1650 and 1660 being Superintendent of the Calvinist Church, who attended the Heidelberg University.⁶⁸ Member of the Transylvanian Diet, he was involved in engaging Romanians to the reform in the Hunedoara County. He was preacher at the Princely Court and Superintendent of Transylvania, connected to the land of Hațeg through his estates in Ciula and Mălăiești.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Paul Cernovodeanu, “Contactele umanistului bănățean Mihai Halici cu literatura engleză”, *Orizont*, no. 12 (1969), 74; See also Andraș, *The English Enlightenment Model and Its Transylvanian Reflections 1750–1850*, 43–44.

⁶⁷ George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române. De la origini până în prezent* (București: Fundația Regală pentru Literatură și Artă, 1941), 53.

⁶⁸ Szabó and Tonk, *Erdélyek egyetem járása*, 72.

⁶⁹ Dobrei, “Prezențe româno-calvine”, 192.

From a methodological standpoint, it was particularly difficult to ascertain from the published database which person was of Romanian ethnicity. Before the 19th century, in school documents, ethnic background was not mentioned in most cases, on the contrary, the expression *Hungarus* or *Transylvanus* appears frequently, referring more to the student's origin country. Record details are not certain, except for cases when next to the name *Valachus* is mentioned. Beginning with the mid-nineteenth century, the student's mother tongue or ethnic background was mentioned in the records. Also, religion was added, without this identity element to be probative every time. The Greek-Catholic denomination was encountered for Romanians but also for Ruthenians, Slovaks, Hungarians. In the former Danubian Empire Romanians as well as Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians, Aromanians, etc. belonged to the Orthodox denomination. These are aspects that appear with the 18th and 19th centuries. But it is most difficult to establish identity by name, reproduced either in a Latinized, or a Germanized or Hungarized form. We inquire, for instance, if Szkaricza Martin is Romanian (Scăriță) or Hungarian. Yet, we have cases of individuals who are claimed by several cultures and civilizations, by several peoples, by Hungarians, Romanians and Slovaks, as it is the case of the Enlightenment scholar Nicolaus Olahus. As historians, however, we must assert that in the Middle Ages ethnicity was not as important as today. Of course, historians could simplify matters saying that in the past there were individuals with multiple identities, Romanians by origins, perhaps also by religion, but assimilated to the Hungarian nobility as social and political standing.

Obviously, now we have a limited list for the Middle Ages, with few names, around 20, especially if we relate it to the large number of German and Hungarian youths who throughout the 13th–17th centuries attended European universities. As for the universities, 5 studied in Vienna, 4 in Krakow, 1 in Bologna, 1 in Paris, 1 in Padova, 5 in Graz, 1 at Cambridge, 2 in Rome, 2 in Trnava, 1 in Leiden, 1 in Frankfurt on the Oder. For the Romanians, it is firstly noted that the majority pursued studies on a Catholic path. They were hence formed on the Latin culture direction, a spiritual legacy which later, in the 18th and 19th centuries, will represent the foundation of the Romanians' national rebirth entire literature. Secondly, the presence of the Romanians for education in European universities demonstrates the ethnic Romanians' capacity for openness towards the values of European culture and civilization, as a proof that in the 18th century, when the union with the Church of Rome created educational opportunities in colleges from Transylvania and the Empire, thousands of Romanians followed the school path for social and even political rise. The essential factor in frequenting foreign universities was religion, belonging to Catholicism or, after imposing the religious reform, to Calvinism,

Lutheranism or the Unitarian religion. Modernity liberated the access to universities for the Orthodox as well, in fact, universities were created in Orthodox cultural spaces, in Russia, Greece, Serbia, Romania, etc., and women's access to university studies was liberated in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, even under the conditions of confessionalization access to education in medieval universities, Transylvanian Romanians were not absent from the university education phenomenon.

