ABSTRACT

SFIRLEA, TITUS G. “THE TRANSYLVANIAN SCHOOL: ENLIGHTENED INSTRUMENT OF ROMANIAN NATIONALISM.” (Under the direction of Dr. Steven Vincent).

The end of the eighteen and the beginning of the nineteen centuries represented a period of national renaissance for the Romanian population within the Great Principality of Transylvania. The nation, within a span of under fifty years, documented its Latin origins, rewrote its history, language, and grammar, and attempted to educate and gain political rights for its members within the Habsburg Empire’s family of nations. Four Romanian intellectuals led this enormous endeavor and left their philosophical imprint on the politics and social structure of the newly forged nation: Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Șincai, Petru Maior, and Ion-Budai Deleanu. Together they formed a school of thought called the Transylvanian School. Micu, Maior, and Șincai (at least early in his career), under the inspiration of the ideas of enlightened absolutism reflected in the reign of Joseph II, advocated and worked tirelessly to introduce reforms from above as a means for national education and emancipation. Deleanu, fully influenced by a combination of ideas emanating from French Enlightenment and French revolutionary sources, argued that the Romanian population of Transylvania could achieve social and political rights only if they were willing to fight for them.
THE TRANSYLVANIAN SCHOOL: ENLIGHTENED INSTRUMENT OF ROMANIAN NATIONALISM

by

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BIOGRAPHY

Titus Gabriel Sfirlea was born in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, on September 26, 1962. He has graduated with a BS degree in Mathematics from Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan in 1988. He worked as a software engineer until he could not suppress his ever-present desire to study European intellectual history, desire that brought him to North Carolina State University.
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PORTION OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE AROUND 1740............................................3
TRANSYLVANIAN SCHOOL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The last half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries witnessed the propagation of the philosophy of the Enlightenment across southeastern Europe. As ideas crossed cultural zones, new centers for the diffusion of Enlightenment thought appeared.¹ The Enlightenment’s winds of change swept across the Great Principality of Transylvania bringing with them an era of national renaissance for its Romanian population. Within a span of fifty years, the majority national group in the Principality, the Romanians, succeeded in documenting their Latin origins, rewriting their history, language, and grammar, and building the pedagogical foundation needed to educate and gain political rights for its members within the Habsburg Empire’s family of nations. Four Romanian intellectuals led this enormous endeavor and left their philosophical imprint on the politics and social structure of the newly forged nation: Samuil Micu (1745-1806), Gheorghe Şincai (1754-1816), Petru Maior (1760-1821), and Ion-Budai Deleanu (1760-1820).² Together they formed an enlightened school of thought commonly named the Transylvanian School. Their historical, philosophical, philological,

¹ Ioan Mircea Bogdan, "Les Idées des Lumières et de la Révolution Française chez les Roumains de L'Empire des Habsbourgs (1750-1825)," History of European Ideas 11 (1989): 109. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

and scientific works and translations formed the basis for the development of Romanian cultural identity in Transylvania for the next century.

The Enlightenment in Transylvania occurred in a specific historical context. All the major powers in this part of Europe, Austrians, Russians, and Ottoman Turks, jostled with each other for regional supremacy. Romanians lived in three provinces - Transylvania, Walachia, and Moldavia - all of them occupied by a foreign power. Walachia, Transylvania’s southern neighbor, and Moldavia, east of Transylvania, chafed under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Habsburg Empire wrenched the principality of Transylvania from its Ottoman rulers and added it to its many possessions. Habsburg imperial troops led by Charles of Lorraine, in 1686, pushed the Ottomans forces out of Transylvania, and occupied the province. In the Treaty of Karlowitz (Jan 26, 1699), the Ottoman Empire ceded to the Austrian emperor all of Hungary and Transylvania (Fig.1). Transylvania remained under the authority of the Habsburgs until the Empire’s demise in the aftermath of World War I.³

To maintain and strengthen its hold on its easternmost territory, Vienna had to pay attention to specific historical conditions in the principality while attempting at the same time to adapt them to its political interests. In 1691, after a series of negotiations, Leopold I promised to respect the traditional constitution of the country dating from its feudal past.\(^4\) The document named *Diploma Leopoldinum* guaranteed Transylvanian confessional pluralism alleviating the fear of the majority Protestant Hungarian nobility of forced conversion to Catholicism.\(^5\)

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Transylvania’s governing laws recognized three nations—Magyars, Szeklers (sharing ethnicity with the Magyars), and Saxons—and four religions—Calvinistic, Catholic, Lutheran, and Unitarian. A 1733 computation done by General Preiss for the Habsburg Emperor Francis I and cited by David Prodan counted 677,308 Romanians, 130,884 Saxons and 257,825 Hungarians and Szeklers in Transylvania. Robert Forrest asserted that over fifty percent of the population in Transylvania was Romanian. Using any contemporary census, the Romanians represented the majority ethnic group of the principality’s population, but the Habsburgs, as the Hungarian rulers before them, acknowledged neither their religion (Orthodox) nor their nationality. “The oldest and the most numerous inhabitants of the Transylvanian Principality remained barely tolerated in their own country.” The overwhelming majority of Romanians, 63.68 percent by Forrest’s calculations, were serfs. The rest “generally could not live in towns controlled by one of the privileged estates, own property in those towns, join guilds, own small businesses such as public houses, obtain positions in the principality’s administration, 


7 David Prodan, *Transylvania and again Transylvania* (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 1996), 64.


attend school, or freely obtain and have title to property of any type."  

The example of Cluj (Kolozsvar, Klausenburg), a city located in the heart of the principality where the Transylvanian provincial Diet occasionally met, can shed some light on the Romanian intellectuals’ difficulty in obtaining citizenship in a city. In 1734, there were 1525 families in the city of which 10 families were of Romanian origin. Fifty years later, in 1785, there were 9703 families in the city including 375 of Romanian origins.  

The percentage of Romanians in Cluj remained insignificant.

The Habsburgs in Transylvania, as throughout the Empire, promoted a policy of political centralization with the help of the army, and particularly, of a well-disciplined bureaucracy. The local Hungarian nobility strongly opposed the aims of the Viennese monarchy. Consequently, the Imperial Court at Vienna saw the largest segment of the Great Principality’s population, the Romanians, as a counterweight against the separatist tendencies of the “recognized” nations. The Catholic Church also had an historic opportunity for significant inroads in the territory of the Orthodox Church. When Leopold I (1657 – 1705) offered full rights to the Romanian Orthodox clergy if they would accept unification with the Catholic Church, a large number of Romanian Orthodox bishops and priests formed the Uniate Church. At the great synod of Alba-Iulia, on October 17, 1698, fifty-four archpriests (protopopes) and fifteen hundred sixty three Orthodox priests ratified their unification with the Catholic Church.  

11 Forrest, "Sources of the Supplex Libellus Valachorum," 96.


ecclesiastical power of the new religion originally centered in the city of Alba-Iulia, later moved to Blaj, in the heart of the Transylvanian Principality. Their decision had an historic effect on the development of Romanian Enlightenment in Transylvania.

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI (1711 – 1740), in the Diploma of August 21, 1738, allowed the building of a Catholic monastery, at Blaj, that would educate twelve Romanian children. The Diploma also permitted three Romanian alumni, recommended by the school’s faculty, to finish their studies at the Catholic college De Propaganda Fide in Rome. Rome desired the establishment of a learned Uniate clergy with the intended mission of continued Catholic expansion in the lands of the Orthodox Church. While the Catholic Church followed its strategy of proselytism, the Habsburg emperors were implementing policies aiming at the consolidation of their hybrid domains into a unified state. Transylvanian students benefited greatly from the policy of integration carried out by emperors Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and Joseph II (1780-1790) by getting the opportunity to study in the imperial capital.

“It was in Vienna, especially, that they came into direct contact with the enlightened thought of the age.” In Vienna, Romanian students attended the Jesuit college Pazmaneum, founded in 1623 by Petrus Pazmany. Other Transylvanian students

14 Pall, Inochentie Micu, 4.
15 Ioan Chindris, Cultura si societate in contextul scolii ardelene (Cluj-Napoca: Carimpex, 2001), 229.
16 Chindris, Cultura si societate, 252.
17 Hitchins, "Samuel Clain," 661.
attended the courses of a Uniate institution, St. Barbara College, which opened its gates October 15, 1775.\textsuperscript{19} They read avidly the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Christian Wolff, Samuel von Pufendorf, and Christian Baumeister.\textsuperscript{20} All the major members of the Transylvanian School, Micu, Şincai, Maior, and Deleanu, studied in Rome, Vienna, or both. Short biographical sketches for each of them can provide the background necessary to analyze the adoption and adaptation of Enlightenment thought in their philosophical, historical, linguistic, and scientific works.

\textsuperscript{19} Chindris, \textit{Cultura si societate}, 253-255.

\textsuperscript{20} Bogdan, \textit{Les Idées des Lumières}, 110.
SAMUIL MICU

Micu, the oldest member of this elite group of Romanian intellectuals, was born in 1745, and in many ways, he is representative of the Romanian Enlightenment. He spent six years (1766 – 1772) following the courses of the Pazmaneum and at the same time courses of the University of Vienna graduating with a doctorate degree in theology. Many institutions of higher learning in Vienna underwent significant changes just before or during Micu’s arrival. In an effort to curtail the Jesuit influence at the University of Vienna, the Habsburg court ordered the replacement of the Jesuit rector of the University in 1757. The Jesuit college Pazmaneum, under direct order from the Court, required that students, starting May 12, 1769, must attend lectures in cameral science given by Joseph von Sonnenfels at the University of Vienna.21

Sonnenfels taught that everyone, including the church, should serve the interests of the state. The state prospered, Sonnenfels argued, when its citizens prospered materially and culturally.22 After graduation, Micu returned to Blaj where he taught courses in ethics and mathematics. He returned to Vienna in 1777 as prefect of studies at the St. Barbara College, helping to prepare the next generation of Uniate priests of the


Empire. After six years spent in Vienna, Micu went back to Blaj spending the next twenty-one years as a teacher and writer. In Blaj, in an experience similar to all the other members of the Transylvanian School, Micu came in conflict with his church superiors due to the nonconformist tone of his writings. His efforts to escape the confines of the monastery at Blaj succeeded with his appointment as censor of Romanian books printed at the publishing house of the University of Buda in 1804.

24 Ghise, Fragmentarium Iluminist, 44.
The Uniate episcopate at Blaj sent two of its more gifted students, Gheorghe Şincai and Petru Maior, a fourteen and a twenty year old, to Rome to pursue their higher education at the college De Propaganda Fide in August 1775. Born into a small noble family, Şincai proved to be an excellent student, finishing his early education at local Hungarian and German schools showing great talent for foreign languages. In 1773, he arrived at Blaj as a professor of poetry and rhetoric where he became a monk of the order of St. Basil, as did all the other members of the Transylvanian School in this study. His superiors quickly recognized Şincai’s great potential as they recommended him as a scholarship student for the Roman college De Propaganda Fide. At Propaganda Fide, Şincai obtained doctoral degrees in both philosophy and theology. Here, Şincai displayed great interest in the history of the Romanian people and spent an enormous amount of time examining the school’s rich library. The school’s secretary, Stefano Borgia, took Şincai under his wing, directing his archival research and introducing the young student to the abundant archives of the Vatican Library. Borgia was instrumental in obtaining an authorization from Pope Pius VI himself for Şincai to consult secret Catholic libraries in


the city. While in Rome, Şincai began buying or copying every manuscript connected with the history of Romanians that he came across during his research. After graduating in 1779, Şincai left with Maior for Vienna where for one year they both studied natural and canonic law at the University of Vienna. That year, 1780, found Micu (prefect of studies at St. Barbara), Şincai, Maior, and Deleanu (student at the University of Vienna) all in the same place at the same time. Şincai returned to Blaj in 1781, and in the following year, 1782, obtained the post of director of all the Romanian Uniate schools in Transylvania. In 1784, together with Maior, Şincai renounced his monastic vows. During the next twelve years, Şincai frenetically started new Romanian schools with the blessing of the Emperor Joseph II who promoted an empire-wide policy of education for the illiterate masses. After the death of Joseph II in 1790, his successor, Leopold II, under the pressure of the events unleashed by the French Revolution retracted many of the reforms that allowed for the education and relative security of the Transylvanian Romanians. Şincai, deeply disillusioned, increasingly disagreed with his Church superiors. His bishop, Ioan Bob, in 1794, falsely accused him of a Jacobin conspiracy, a response to the personal affronts he found in Şincai’s historical work. In the process

28 Popovici, *La littérature Roumaine*, 203.


30 Chindris, *Cultura si societate*, 256.

31 Popovici, *La littérature Roumaine*, 204.

32 Ghise, *Fragmentarium Iluminist*, 125.

that followed, the Imperial authorities condemned the Romanian historian to a short stay in jail and the loss of all privileges.Șincai spent the rest of his life traveling between Blaj and Vienna searching for justice. With the help of a Hungarian poet friend Nagy, Șincai, in 1804, found a job as editor of Romanian books printed at the printing shop of the University of Buda where Micu was working as an editor. Micu died in 1806, and Șincai lobbied heavily for an appointment as Micu’s replacement. The authorities rejected Șincai’s application and appointed Maior to fill Micu’s position. Șincai spent the last ten years of his life working as a tutor for the children of a Transylvanian count.

34 Popovici, *La littérature Roumaine*, 209.


36 Popovici, *La littérature Roumaine*, 211.
PETRU MAIOR

Like Şincai, Maior performed brilliantly in Rome, graduating with doctorates degrees in philosophy and theology. A son of a Romanian archpriest (protopope), Maior together with Şincai arrived at Rome via Blaj. Unlike Şincai, Maior did not spend his time hunting through archives but enjoyed following and reading about different currents of thought in the Catholic Church. Maior resented what he considered “Papal and high clerical abuses, an attitude that will be present in his first work with a pronounced Enlightenment character (The Procanon).” Both Maior and Şincai left Rome and on their way back to Blaj spent one year (1779-1780) at the St. Barbara College in Vienna. After returning to Blaj, Maior taught logic, metaphysics, and natural law. In 1784, together with Şincai, Maior asked and obtained his release from his vows followed by an appointment as protopope of the Reghin region. There he spent the next fifteen years of his life preaching, writing, and corresponding with all the members of the Transylvanian School. As protopope of Reghin, Maior had forty villages under his direction. He lived and traveled among the poor and was particularly driven to educate the numerous illiterate children that earned a living as farmhands. Speaking about himself in a pamphlet published in Buda, Maior described his desire to help children.

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37 Ghise, Fragmentarium Iluminist, 185.

38 Lungu, Transylvanian School, 118.

39 Popovici, La littérature Roumaine, 223.
During the summer, he would go to the fields and forests where he knew there were children working as cowhands; he would call them to him and ask them what have they learned in school.  

The many years spent among the poor Romanian peasantry allowed Maior to see first hand the high mortality rate of young children. His concern for the fate of the children became apparent with the publication in Buda of a collection of funerary sermons for children full of educational advice to parents.

In 1809, Maior succeeded in getting the job of editor of the Romanian books printed at the University of Buda after Micu’s death. As editor, in 1812, he was able to publish his primary historical work, *Istoria pentru începutul românilor in Dachia* (History of the beginning of Romanians in Dacia). Until his death in 1821, Maior busily published, edited, and translated works in Romanian.

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40 Chindris, *Cultura si societate*, 164.

ION-BUDAI DELEANU

Ion Budai-Deleanu (1760-1820), born into a priest’s family, followed his early local studies by entering in 1772 as a student at the Romanian high school in Blaj. After graduating from Blaj in 1777, Deleanu enrolled as a philosophy student at the University of Vienna where he spent the next ten years oscillating between studying philosophy and law.42 In Vienna, he attended Joseph von Sonnenfels’s lectures in cameral science.43 Through Sonnenfels lectures, Deleanu “came into contact with the most important ideas of the representatives of the French and English Enlightenment.”44 During his stay in Vienna, he maintained close relationships with a number of members of leftist Masonic lodges.45 Historians have uncovered his participation in the sessions of the Viennese secret society Kreuz-Bruderschaft.46

In 1787, Deleanu obtained the post of court secretary in the capital of Galicia, Lwow. The Habsburg Empire incorporated the province of Galicia during the 1772 partition of Poland. As a magistrate, Deleanu had access to foreign publications. Thus, he

42 Ion Lungu, Şcoala Ardeleană (Transylvanian School) (Bucharest: Viitorul Romanesc, 1995), 121-125.

43 Alexandru Duţu, Cultura Româna în civilizatia europeana moderna (Bucharest: Minerva, 1978), 169.


45 Lungu, Şcoala Ardeleană, 124.

46 Lungu, Şcoala Ardeleană, 268.
was able to follow closely the events of the French Revolution as described in the Parisian newspaper *Journal des débats et des décrets*. In Lwow, between 1793 and 1812, Deleanu composed his greatest literary and philosophical contribution to the Transylvanian Enlightenment thought, the epic poem *Ţiganiada (The Gypsiad).*

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47 Lungu, Şcoala Ardeleană, 366.
TRANSYLVANIAN SCHOOL INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATION

Young Romanian intellectuals sent to Vienna and Rome to finish their education came in contact with and absorbed much of the contemporary Gallican and Jansenist religious reformist ideologies as well as the state-driven Josephine social reformist ideology. The first consistent contacts with these currents in European thought dated from Micu’s studies in Vienna (1766). While attending the University of Vienna, Micu attended the lectures in church law of Paul Joseph Rigger (1705-1775). Rigger’s lectures added legal arguments to the anti-Jesuit policies of the Empire. While in Vienna (1779-1780), Maior, sharing much of Micu’s philosophical attitudes, purchased Rigger’s \textit{Jus Canonicum} (Canon Law). Echoes of Rigger’s arguments would surface in both Micu and Maior’s later works. All of Micu’s book purchases would end up in the library of the Uniate Seminary at Blaj. The inventory of the library, done by Micu himself in 1777, listed four volumes of Rigger’s 1773 work \textit{Institutionum juris prudentiae Ecclesiasticae}.50

During his second long-term stay in Vienna (1777-1784), Micu translated Claude Fleury’s \textit{Histoire ecclésiatique} in ten volumes. He used much of the translation in a new work \textit{Cunoştinţă pe scurt a istoriei bisericeşti} (A Short History of the Church). Fleury’s

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49 Lungu, \textit{Transylvanian School}, 415.

work challenged the infallibility of the Pope and argued for the importance of the early
synods in establishing church policy. Micu, attracted to the Gallican idea of an
autonomous national church, followed closely Fleury’s reasoning and ran into the
Imperial censors who after Joseph II’s death refused to publish the work.51

The second point of contact between Romanian intellectuals and religious
reformist ideologies was Rome. In Rome, Maior took notice of the Jansenist movement
and of the various strains of Catholic Enlightenment.52 While studying in Italy, Maior
read the works of the Italian historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750), works
that later influenced the writing of his historical masterpiece History for the beginnings of
Romanians in Dacia. Muratori objected to the spreading of the Pope’s earthly influence.
Maior would use the same arguments used by Muratori in defending the rights of the
d’Este princes against papal attempts to take over their domain in defending the right of
an autonomous Uniate church to oppose papal religious intrusions.53 In Maior’s personal
library, researchers have found Muratori’s work supporting Catholic reform, De
ingeniorum moderatione in Religionis negotio (1714). In addition, Maior owned other
works of the same inspiration, all acquired during his studies in Rome. His library list
included Blaise Pascal’s Jansenist work Lettres Provinciales and Bossuet’s Gallican work
Defensio cleri galicani.54

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51 Pompiliu Teodor, Interferențe Iluministe Europene (European Enlightenment
Crossings) (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1984), 91.

52 Teodor, Interferențe, 96.

53 Ovidiu Papadima, Ipostaze ale Iluminismului Românesc (Aspects of Romanian
Enlightenment) (Bucharest: Minerva, 1975), 247.

54 Teodor, Interferențe, 95.
Vienna presented Maior new opportunities for intellectual growth. As a student at University of Vienna, Maior attended the lectures of Professor Van den Hyde who habitually cited works of representatives of the French Enlightenment during his orations (particularly Rousseau). He also attended the lectures in natural and Roman law of Karl Anton von Martini (1726-1800). Martini advocated a rational restructuring of the law that condemned the usage of torture in legal proceedings and demanded a marked decrease on the reliance on death penalty. Maior’s private library included Martini’s major work, *History of Natural Law*. The list of his 137-volume library included many of the books Maior bought while studying in Vienna. In the Austrian capital, he bought Pufendorf’s *De jure naturae et gentium libri octo* (1672). Heineccius is represented in Maior’s library by a selection of his works: *Antiquitatum Romanorum jursprudentiam illustratium Syntagma* (1719), *Corpus Juris Romani, Jurisprudentiam romana*, and *Recitationes in Elementa Juris*. 

While works of church law constituted a significant portion of Maior’s library, his interests ranged much further. Similar to his experience in Rome, Maior’s reading habits strayed into the field of Catholic reformist thought. Researchers point out Maior’s familiarity with the works of Jansenist Van Espen and his interest in the banned works of

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56 Lungu, *Transylvanian School*, 413.
58 Lungu, *Transylvanian School*, 118.
Honthem (Justin Febronius). He even attempted a translation of Febronius’s *De statu ecclesiae* in spite of the book’s presence in the Catholic Index of prohibited works. Among other works of prohibited authors, Maior owned Voltaire’s *Lettres Anglaises* (1734).

Historians have uncovered the records of two personal libraries of Romanian students at St. Barbara College, Ştefan Solcivai and Alexandru Fiscuti, during Micu’s time there as prefect of studies. Included in the two libraries are works by Erasmus, Martini, Hugo Grotius (*De iure belli ac pacis*), Wolff, Steinkellner, Fleury, and Muratori. The contents of those libraries provide insight into the reading habits of Micu, Maior and Şincai and, more generally, of the Romanian generation of students in Vienna. Most of the students’ personal books would end up either with them as they obtained various teaching employment or at the library of the Blaj Seminary. In 1777, Micu produced an inventory of the books at Blaj that sheds some light on the reading habits of the Seminary’s faculty (all the members of the Transylvanian School discussed here had at one time or another taught in Blaj). The library, besides owning an overwhelming majority of the books already mentioned, included Wolff’s *Jus naturae methodo scientifica pertractatum* (printed in Magdenburg 1742-1747) in eight volumes and eight volumes of his *Philosophia rationalis, sive logica methodo scientifica pertractata*

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60 Teodor, *Interferențe*, 95.


63 Ghise, *Fragmentarium Iluminist*, 35.
The Roman and Viennese education of Romanian intellectuals and the content of their private libraries reflect their antipathy toward the Catholic Church’s attempts to integrate their faith within the Catholic universalism. The Transylvanian School’s strong reaction against the Catholic policies in Transylvania would be manifested in their later writings. Their intellectual stance brought a majority of them in direct conflict with their ecclesiastical superiors and specifically with their direct superior, Bishop Ioan Bob. The Uniate bishop Ioan Bob brought Şincai to trial and facilitated his temporary imprisonment, forced Deleanu into a self-imposed exile, pushed Maior out of Blaj, and humiliated Micu and his work.
The members of the Transylvanian School had an adversarial relationship with their ecclesiastical superiors. In 1782, Emperor Joseph II appointed Ioan Bob as bishop of the Uniate Church despite his appointee receiving the lowest number of votes of the three candidates for the leadership of the Church. Micu, Șincai, and Maior all voted for another candidate, Ignatie Dorobant. Bob considered their vote a personal affront and the relationship between him and these Romanian intellectuals continued to deteriorate as both sides dug in within their theological positions.66 The Emperor’s choice was surprising (ignoring the vote count), but without any knowledge of the candidates and consistent with his policy of curtailing the power of monasteries, Joseph rejected the other two monks and picked the priest.67 Bob would be the leader of the Uniate Church for the next forty-eight years and would be violently attacked in the historical and religious works of the Transylvanian intellectuals he was supposed to lead.

Bob wanted to align the doctrine and practices of the Uniate Church with those of his Catholic overseers. His desire for close identification with the Catholic Church ran contrary to the beliefs and incipient writings of the members of the Transylvanian School under his authority at Blaj.68 After Bob’s election, Micu immediately started his Fleury translation in Vienna and Maior his anti-papal work Procanon (1783) in Blaj. All three, Micu, Șincai, and Maior, soon requested to be released from their monastic vows. Maior


67 Chindris, Cultura si societate, 132.

68 Lungu, Transylvanian School, 94.
and Șincai succeeded and departed from Blaj, Maior as archpriest in Reghin and Șincai as director of Romanian Schools in Transylvania. Bob refused to allow Micu his freedom and for the next twenty-three years used the Romanian historian’s writing talents to enhance his own personal intellectual reputation.

None of the members of the School was in favor of continued distancing between the two Romanian Churches (Uniate and Orthodox) believing that it would lead to the weakening of the nation. Their fight for the repairing of the divisions between the two churches brought them in increased conflict with their bishop and his allies. Maior and other clergymen tried in 1798 to unite the Romanian churches in Transylvania using the convocation of a general synod. The national church they wanted to organize, inspired by Gallican principles, would be autonomous within Catholic universalism.

During this time, Maior deluged the congregation at De Propaganda Fide with letters accusing Bob of engaging in the pursuit of earthly riches and worldly practices – a common Jansenist complaint against the Church. Maior proposed that the bishop be removed and another installed who would govern with the full approval of the community and for the benefit of the people. In a letter to the Congregation, in November 8, 1794, Maior contended that Șincai was arrested “after the opinion of some at the request of his bishop.” In a following letter, Maior further complained that “in my absence, he [Bob] threatened that he will do his best to destroy me.”

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71 Chindris, *Cultura si societate*, 167.
The tension between the Uniate bishop and the Transylvanian School spanned more than religious issues. All the members of the Transylvanian School thought of themselves as members of the Romanian nation not just as members of the Uniate Church. In 1788, the Austrian authorities arrested Maior for allegedly over-reporting the number of Uniate Romanians in his district. After spending some days defending himself against the state charges, Maior challenged his bishop to take a leadership role in defending his nation. “If we were to be attacked because of our religion maybe we should rely on our faith, but we are attacked as Romanians.”72 Bob never took up Maior’s challenge and the Romanian intellectual, in his writings, made sure to emphasize all of Bob’s character and intellectual defects.

The Romanian Uniate intellectuals resented the Vatican’s control over the doctrines and practices of their church. That opposition explains the presence at Blaj of so many works dealing with the reform of the Church; writings by Muratori, Febronius, Bossuet, and Fleury among many others. Romanian clerics found in Jansenism echoes of their own orthodox traditions of praise for the first centuries of Christianity. They also found attractive the Gallican emphasis on national autonomy within Catholic universalism.73

72 Chindris, *Cultura si societate*, 165.

73 Teodor, *Interferențe*, 89.
Micu, Șincai, and Maior, under the influence of the Joseph II’s enlightened absolutism, held similar views on the necessity of change from above rather than through massive social movements from below. The Transylvanian illuminists wanted to effect change inside society; they were not concerned with international recognition of their nation or with European politics. They desired to bring the Romanian nation out of its backwardness and, through education, bring it up to the level of “recognized” nations of the Principality (Magyars, Szeklers, and Saxons). For a number of years, the objectives of the Romanian intellectuals and the enlightened policies of Joseph II coincided.

Joseph II wanted the abolition of serfdom and all other feudal relationships. In 1781, he published the Edict Abolishing Personal Servitude. All the major contributors to the Romanian Enlightenment were present in Vienna that year to enjoy the emancipation of 63.68 percent of the Romanian population in Transylvania.74

From the beginning of our reign, we have directed our paternal care and our constant efforts to promoting the happiness of the peoples subject to us as much as possible, and to establishing it on a lasting basis, without distinction of class, nationality, or religion. . . . It is therefore our gracious pleasure that it be brought to the attention and notice of every man everywhere in the province that we abolish completely the so-called status of ‘serf’ in so far as this has hitherto given rise to a

74 Forrest, "Sources of the Supplex Libellus Valachorum," 96.
permanent obligation on the part of the subject and has bound him to the land
where he resides.75

Joseph’s words brought a renewed sense of purpose to the Romanian intellectuals in
Transylvania.

As an enlightened monarch, Joseph sought to raise the cultural level of the people
in his empire through massive educational programs. Against the wishes of the Catholic
Church, Joseph believed that learning and public life should be secular.76 In a 1765
confidential letter to his mother, Joseph II bemoaned the status of education in the
Empire.

I begin with education. . . . All that parents want is to see their children adopt
certain attitudes of mind and manners corresponding to their own. The good souls
think that they have achieved everything and have produced a good man for the
State, if their son goes to mass, tells his beads, confesses every fortnight and reads
only what he thinks his narrow-minded confessor would permit. . . . Who would
venture to refuse to say: ‘He is a very nice young man, very well brought up’? ‘Yes’, I would like to reply, ‘if our State were a monastery and our neighbors
Carthusian monks’.77

75 A. Lentin, Enlightened Absolutism (1760-1790). A Documentary Sourcebook

76 Ion Lungu, "Les Lumières en Transylvanie et le Joséphisme," in La Culture
Roumaine à L’Époque des Lumières vol II, ed. Romul Munteanu (Bucharest: Univers,
1985), 53.

77 Lentin, Enlightened Absolutism, 183.
Romanian intellectuals in Transylvania enthusiastically adopted Joseph’s educational reforms and they used the power of the Imperial bureaucracy to force the Transylvanian lawmakers into allowing the opening of schools for Romanian children. Şincai, during his twelve-year tenure as director of Romanian language schools (Uniate) in Transylvania, opened over three hundred new schools across the province. Many intellectuals saw in Joseph’s social reforms a means to obtain the restoration of their nation’s rights with the distant (undeclared) goal of possible national independence. The Romanians’ desire for national rights ran contrary to Joseph’s policies of national consolidation under the Austrian monarchy. That incompatibility became painfully obvious when in 1790 the new Emperor Leopold II rejected the Transylvanian School’s formal petition for national recognition. The activities of the Transylvanian School on behalf of their Romanian nation touched every facet of knowledge. The Transylvanian intellectuals assumed the roles of historians, philosophers, linguists, and poets.

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80 Lungu, "Les Lumières en Transylvanie," 64.
Micu, Șincai, and Maior wrote similar histories of their nation emphasizing common themes. All of them highlighted the Latin origins of the Romanian population in Transylvania. In 1778, Micu published *Brevis historica notitiae originis et progressus nationis daco-romanae* (Short historical note on the origin and development of the Daco-Roman nation).  

This historical work, written in Latin, foreshadowed his later historical attempts to prove the Latin origin of the Romanian population in Transylvania. “The first modern Romanian historian in Transylvania” used his last great historical work, *Istoria și întîmplările românilor* (History and Events of Romanians), to frame the history of Romanians in all three Romanian provinces within the confines of their Roman origins.  

Written after 1800, Micu succeeded in publishing a very small part of it in 1806. The rest remained in manuscript form. In the preface of the work, Micu addressed the reader, emphasizing the educational value of history.

> Receive this history of your people. It is a modest work, but it cost the author much effort. It contains the origins of the Romanians and their political beginnings and the vicissitudes they went through from antiquity until today. Read this work

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82 Ghise, *Fragmentarium Iluminist*, 46.
Micu, throughout his work, followed Joseph II’s enlightened absolutist principles. While condemning the unjust treatment of Romanians, Micu rejected violent uprisings as a remedy. He displayed a high regard for Joseph and his policies. While examining Joseph’s reign, Micu wrote, “He was a good emperor, a righteous lord, and a good parent for the poor. He smashed serfdom, a type of pagan servitude where the serf had to work four days a week for his lord and where every child of a serf stayed a serf. The serf could not move away from his lord’s domain and if he moved, the lord would bring him back, and many other troubles the poor serfs had.”

While studying in Rome, Şincai edited a massive historical work, *Rerum Spectantium ad Universam Gentem Daco-Romanam*, one of the earliest collections of manuscripts emphasizing Romanians’ uninterrupted continuity in Transylvania. This collection, plus all the other sources added to it throughout the years, formed the foundation for Şincai’s historical masterpiece, *Hronica Românilor* (the Romanian Chronicles). By 1808, he had collected twenty-six volumes of data. He finished the

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83 Popovici, *La littérature Roumaine*, 197.


manuscript by 1812 and to obtain approval for its publishing sent it to the censorship board in Cluj. The censor, Iosef Mártonfi, after reading a few Latin fragments rejected the manuscript. The rejection words were brief and harsh. “Opus igne, author patibulo dignus” (the work deserves to be burned, the author to hang). 88

For Șincai, the history of the Romanians started in year 86 A.D. when the Roman emperor Domitian started a military campaign to conquer the territory north of the river Danube. That territory became the future Roman colony called Dacia. Șincai intended to write the history of his people until his present times, but due to lack of time and resources, he ended his history in the year 1739. The historian published the first forty pages of his manuscript in the Hungarian capital Buda in 1808 covering years 86 A.D. through 169 A.D. The following year, he published another 40 pages covering 174 A.D – 264 A.D. 89 Due to the refusal of Austrian authorities, Șincai could not publish the rest of the manuscript during his lifetime. Șincai died in 1816 and the first complete edition of his masterpiece saw the light of day in Jassy (Moldavia) in 1853. 90

Șincai used an enormous variety of sources to buttress the controversial themes of his work. He was familiar, from his studying days in Rome, with many of the more influential ancient Greek and Roman authors. The author often mentioned Tacitus, Dio Cassius, and Quintus Curtius Rufus when referring to the Latin origin of the Romanian population in Transylvania. As the Byzantine Empire grew in power and influence in the region north and south of the Danube River, Șincai increasingly relied on his own

88 Lungu, Transylvanian School, 117.
89 Lungu, Școala Ardeleană, 116.
90 Popovici, La Littérature Roumaine, 215.
translations of the historical works by Byzantine chroniclers. Starting with the seventh and eighth centuries of our era, Şincai added to his bibliography material from German, Hungarian, Italian, and French sources. He also consulted contemporary historical works, such as Johann Engel’s *Geschichte der Moldau und der Walachien* (History of Moldavia and Walachia) published at Halle in 1804. Throughout the *Chronicles*, Şincai challenged Engel’s interpretation of many common historical sources with the expressed purpose of weakening Engel’s position that Romanians migrated into the Transylvanian lands sometime during the thirteenth century. Şincai used over 450 different sources (primary and secondary) for the theoretical foundation of his history.91 Şincai posited that Romanians have always lived in Transylvania in stark opposition to Engel’s theory.

Şincai approached the writing of history with a well-defined set of principles. He considered history to be a science.92 He warned the reader to pay close attention to an historian’s reasoning when examining his works. Concerning his ideological opponent Engel, Şincai urged his readers “not to be amazed at the errors that Engel made, because the man who does more than one thing at a time [like him] can easily err.”93 Şincai was referring to Engel’s researching in parallel the histories of Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks, and Ukrainians.

The Romanian historian saw an historical work as an edifice. Without a firm foundation the building will not stand. Manuscripts formed the greater part of that foundation and therefore historians should take great care to use all available primary

91 Şincai, *Hronica*, vol I, LIV.


93 Şincai, *Hronica*, vol I, 593.
sources in building their arguments. He reproached Engel for his lack of discipline in consulting all available material and pointed out factual errors in his historical work, errors due directly to the author’s lack of diligence in research. Şincai’s scientific approach to writing history compelled him to insist that historians should read the manuscripts in their original language. The Romanian historian even criticized Engel for misspelling a name in his history book. “It is no wonder that Engel erred,” commented Şincai, “that is what happens when one gets his nourishment by using other people’s mouths.”

Historians, Şincai declared, must always tell the truth. Commenting on what he considered Engel’s biased approach in writing history, Şincai complained that the German historian “everywhere where he can skews the facts toward the Hungarian point of view not trying to find the truth – that which every historian searches.” His own approach, Şincai asserted, would be scrupulously impartial. He will “only write correctly (the truth) without taking anyone’s side.”

To prove that assertion to his readers, Şincai employed a rather modern methodology when dealing with sources that contradicted each other. Before Şincai, historians in Walachia and Moldavia (Ureche, Cantemir, Costin) gave a personal interpretation of the events they were describing. Şincai exhaustively cited his sources to allow the reader to verify the veracity of the historical interpretation presented. “Because

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97 Şincai, *Hronica*, vol II, 125.
I don’t want to be a judge between them, dear reader I give you both their words so that you may pass judgment on them. ”\(^9^8\) When his sources advocated drastic changes in society, Şincai wisely refrained from editorializing. He fully cited sources containing controversial ideas allowing the reader to read between the lines, trying to avoid the careful eye of the censor. When the author could not reproduce documents, he presented the opinions of many historians on the event in question. Logic and reason would decide which point of view was correct.

Şincai had three main purposes in mind when writing his *Chronicles*. First, he wanted to prove the noble origins of the Romanian population north of the Danube River. Romanians in Walachia, Moldavia, and particularly Transylvania, he argued, were the noble descendants of the purely Latin population of the Roman province Dacia. The year 105 A.D. represented the final phase of Emperor Trajan’s conquest of the land north of the river Danube called Dacia.

Year 105. After building a stone bridge over the Danube, the Roman legions crossed the river and defeated the Dacians so badly that there remained no one to work the fields or to live in cities. Because of that, in that year and the next two years, Trajan brought many colonists to Dacia from the entire Roman world, especially from Rome and from Italy according to the inscriptions that we can read even today in Transylvania. From these inscriptions, we can prove that not only unlearned colonists but also many noble families were moved into Dacia.\(^9^9\)

Of note is Şincai’s insistence that no native Dacian has survived the Roman conquest and that many of the new colonists had noble backgrounds. This argument, sustained by all the members of the Transylvanian School, guaranteed the nobility and Latin purity of their Romanian ancestry in comparison with the Magyar and Saxon nations.

Second, not only were the origins of Romanian Transylvanians noble, but they also had lived continuously in the same geographical area since the first century of our era. These two arguments challenged the entrenched Hungarian historiography that maintained the relatively late arrival of Romanians in the province (sometime during the thirteenth century – well after the Magyar tribes moved into the region during ninth and tenth centuries). Şincai, like all the other intellectuals of the Transylvanian School, needed history on his side to reject the feudal concept, adopted by other Transylvanian “nations,” that the land belonged to the first-comers (Magyars closely followed by Saxons). The three “accepted” nations maintained that all other newcomers (i.e. Romanians), should not have the legal right to ask for recognition. That was the barrier that Romanian historians tried to break when arguing for Romanian continuity in the region.

Third, Şincai wanted to counter the arguments made by the powerful Hungarian landed nobility that they conquered the country and therefore it is theirs by the “right of the sword.” To accomplish this aim, the Romanian historian appealed to the manuscript text of the anonymous chronicler of the tenth century Magyar king Bela that described the conquest of Transylvania by one of the generals of the Magyar king Arpad named Tuhutum. The ancient source detailed the 904 A.D. battle between Tuhutum and the
Romanian leader Gelu that ended with the defeat of the Romanian army. Șincai continued the story from the manuscript.

When the local inhabitants saw that their leader Gelu died in battle, with one accord they elected Tuhutum to be their new king. From the words of Bela’s Anonymous Chronicler you reader can understand: that the Hungarians did not defeat the Romanians in Transylvania in battle, but that the Romanians, to stop future bloodshed, elected to submit and unite with the Hungarians to be exactly like them. 100

This historical theory, accepted by all the members of the Transylvanian School, allowed them to petition Vienna for the restoration of the ancient rights that Romanians enjoyed before they lost them during the Ottoman occupation of Transylvania.

Șincai, as an historian, believed strongly in the power of knowledge and culture to enlighten a people. The years spent in Rome and Vienna infused him with the enlightened spirit of the age. He had an overwhelming trust in the power of culture. In spite of many historians believing that the decaying of the great powers of antiquity was due to the explosion of culture, Șincai rejected that theory.

When, in the year 269, the Goths destroyed Athens, some of them started burning all the books they could find, but as they gathered them for the burning, others argued that books make a nation weak and therefore they should stop the burning. Were the barbarians right? During my times there are two nations more learned

100 Șincai, Hronica, vol I, 265.
then any other, the French and the English, and yet no one has ever succeeded in conquering them.\footnote{Șincai, \textit{Hronica}, vol I, 46.}

Culture, in Șincai’s view, strengthened a nation’s defenses. His strong belief in the power of education informed the rest of Șincai’s life and it fueled the enormous intellectual and physical energy needed to write dozens of textbooks and start hundreds of schools.

On the subject of Romanians’ religion, Șincai maintained that it existed from the first centuries of Christianity and therefore it was more ancient than either the Orthodox or the Catholic faiths.

In those times of unrest, the Romanians strove to keep the faith they had received from the beginning, and learned from the Church, the holy synods of the world and the saintly fathers. The Greeks [Orthodox] quarreled with the Romans [Catholic] for their faith, but the Romanians know nothing of their discord, but, as I said, lived in faith and by the ancient teachings which their fathers and forefathers received from the first Christian church.\footnote{Șincai, \textit{Hronica}, vol II, 78.}

Șincai refused to acknowledge the distinction between the two faiths of the Romanians in Transylvania. For him, as for Micu and Maior, nationality took precedence over religion. Labels imposed from the outside should not divide the nations in its drive for legal recognition.
Maior used many of Şincai’s arguments to buttress his demands that Romanians should have equal rights with all the Transylvanian nations. More of a polemicist, Maior published his historical masterpiece, *Istoria pentru începuturile Românilor in Dachia* (History of the beginnings of Romanians in Dacia) in Buda (1812). The author indicated in the preface of the work that his history would be a polemical rebuttal of all the foreign historians that rejected the pure Latin origins of Romanians and the uninterrupted continuity of the Romanian people in Transylvania. True to his word, Maior attacked Franz Joseph Sulzer (1727-1791), the favorite historian of the Hungarians and Saxons in Transylvania. 103 Sulzer’s theory (still accepted by some contemporary historians) pointed to heavy Romanian immigration from Walachia and Moldavia (especially during the 18th century) as the primary cause for their numerical superiority in Transylvania. Contemporary Romanian historiography continues to emphasize the tenets developed by the Transylvanian School and argue for the continuity of the Romanian population in Transylvania. 104

For Maior, religion strengthened nationality. Romanians conducted their liturgy in their own language and therefore were superior to all other Christian nations. “This blessing grants the Romanians superiority over all other Christian nations, be they Greeks, Russians, Serbs or papists of any tongue for none of these understand what is being read in the sacred liturgy and other religious books . . .; while with the Romanians, the language that the common people speak is the same as that in which the holy books

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are written."\textsuperscript{105} Consistent with his support of Catholic reform movements, Maior rebuffed all attempts to introduce Latin in Uniate liturgy.

Maior, in his \textit{History}, took notice of the “long governorship of Ioan Bob,” who only lived to acquire material possessions. Ostensibly, to highlight something positive about his bishop, Maior pointed out that Bob gave the Romanian reading public a translation of Turneli’s Latin \textit{Theology}. He followed with the observation that the bishop could have spent his time a lot better by building wheels for carts instead of wasting time on a useless translation.\textsuperscript{106} Bob tried hard, but was unsuccessful in stopping the publishing of Maior’s work.

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\textsuperscript{106} Popovici, \textit{La littérature Roumaine}, 236-237.
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PHILOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

To emphasize the Latin origins of the Romanian population in Transylvania, Micu and Şincai cooperated to publish the first Romanian grammar written using the Latin alphabet, *Elementa linguae daco-romanae sive valachicae*, in 1780. In the preface of the second edition of the work, Şincai clarified the authors’ intentions. “In our daco-roman Grammar we tried to prove, using all the tools available, the forming of the Romanian language from Latin.” They believed that Romanian was a form of Latin and this grammar book intended to formalize that belief. The immediate audience for the book consisted of the community of Romanian students at the Barbareum. Şincai explained that many of those Romanian students clamored for this type of work.

We wanted not only to standardize our language but also to prove our love for the needs of our community and listen to the wishes of the daco-romanian students at the Greek college St. Barbara. They, loving knowledge so much, repeatedly asked us to write such a work and helped in many places. We loved to fulfill their desire knowing that many other people from different parts of society will have a great use for our work.

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All the members of the Transylvanian School at one time or another produced philological works. Micu, while in Blaj, started a comprehensive Romanian dictionary in 1795. He continued working on it during his activities as censor of Romanian books in Buda, but was unable to finish it. Maior, Micu’s replacement, picked up his predecessor’s work and finished the *Buda Dictionary* (Lexiconul de la Buda) but did not live to see it published in 1825.\(^\text{110}\) Deleanu, himself a highly skilled user of the language, finished a broad *Lexicon românesc-nemțesc* (Romanian-German Dictionary) while working in exile in Lwow (1818). In the preface of the work, Deleanu contended that “all the cultured nations of Europe first produced a dictionary in their own language before anything else.”\(^\text{111}\) During the last decades of the eighteenth century, the Habsburg educational policies began paying dividends for the Romanian population of Transylvania. Between 1780 and 1826, members of the Transylvanian School wrote seventeen grammar books demonstrating the Latin origin of the language.\(^\text{112}\)

With the help of the new Latin-based grammar, Romanian intellectuals attempted to bring to their nation the philosophical works of German enlightened rationalism. Micu translated and adapted a philosophy manual written by Christian Baumeister, *Elementa philosophiae*, originally published in 1747. He used an edition published in 1771 in


Cluj.\textsuperscript{113} Baumeister, a prolific writer of philosophical textbooks used throughout the empire, popularized the philosophical thought of his master, Christian Wolff (1679-1754). In 1736, Baumeister published \textit{Institutiones philosophiae rationalis methodo Wolffii conscriptae}, in which he indicated that his philosophy reflected the method of Christian Wolff.\textsuperscript{114} Micu finished the translation of Baumeister’s manuscript in 1781, but he was unable to publish all of it. He published the first part of the manuscript \textit{Loghica} (Logic) in 1799 at Pesta and another part, \textit{Filozofia cea lucratoare, Legile Firii, Ithica si politica} (Productive Philosophy, Laws of Nature, Ethics, and Politics) the following year at Sibiu.\textsuperscript{115}

The translation taxed the vocabulary of the Romanian philosopher enormously. Micu repeatedly needed to bring into the language new Latin-based Romanian words to be able to represent coherently difficult philosophical concepts written in scholastic Latin.\textsuperscript{116} For example, Micu in the last chapter of his \textit{Logic} dealt with the subject of academic disputations. Throughout the chapter, the Romanian philologist needed to define new composite words that could reflect the Latin original. To represent the Latin word \textit{opponens} (the opponent in a formal disputation), Micu invented the composite


\textsuperscript{114} Popovici, \textit{La littérature Roumaine}, 193-194.

\textsuperscript{115} Ovidiu Papadima, \textit{Ipostaze ale Iluminismului Românesc (Aspects of Romanian Enlightenment)} (Bucharest: Minerva, 1975), 14.

\textsuperscript{116} Alexandru Duțu, \textit{Sînteza si originalitate în cultura româna (1650-1848)(Synthesis and originality in Romanian Culture (1650-1848))} (Bucharest: Editura enciclopedica română, 1972), 124.
Romanian word împrotivă-puitorul (a person who is against another person – a somewhat awkward word combination that is no longer used in current Romanian).\textsuperscript{117}

Nevertheless, Micu tried hard not to use neologisms due to their limited circulation and their potential to confuse his readers.

Where our Romanian language does not have the words to be able to express certain ideas – primarily in the scientific domain – we can prudently borrow, only where it is absolutely necessary, words from Greek as it is the most advanced language, or from Latin, as from our mother, because our language was born from it.\textsuperscript{118}

Micu’s philosophical work framed the educational upbringing of an entire generation of Romanian intellectuals. In the second chapter of the \textit{Filozofia cea lucratoare} (Productive Philosophy), Micu pressed his readers to persevere when reading difficult passages. “When you read and find yourself unable to continue due to lack of understanding do not throw the book out of your hand saying that it is too deep; force yourself to persevere because with discipline you will find the meaning that the writer had buried deep into the book.”\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{117} Lungu, \textit{Transylvanian School}, 322.

\textsuperscript{118} Marino, "Les Lumières Roumaines," 347-348.

Micu achieved for the Romanian language what Wolff dared accomplish for the German culture decades before. Micu was the first intellectual, writing in Romanian, to bring philosophy to the Romanian reading public.\footnote{Ghise, \textit{Fragmentarium Iluminist}, 97.}
AGRICALTURAL WORKS

While the audience for the Transylvanian School’s philosophical works represented a very small percentage of the reading public, the School’s works on popular science and religion reached the majority of the Romanian intellectuals in Transylvania. Şincai translated and adapted the work of the German physicist H. Helmuth, *Volks Naturlehre*, with the title *Învăţătura firească spre surparea superstiţiei norodului* (Elementary education designed to stamp out the people’s superstition).\(^{121}\) In his translation, Şincai adapted the ideas of the German physicist to the needs of a general audience less sophisticated than Helmuth’s German peasantry. Şincai produced not just another abstract physics textbook, but also a work ready for the direct usage of the unlearned Romanian peasantry.\(^{122}\)

The utility of natural science or physics is greater than anyone can say because we use it so much in the economy. Because, if anyone knows physics, then that knowledge gives him understanding to work his land better, to plant and grow a variety of plants and trees, and to feed his animals the proper food.\(^{123}\)

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\(^{121}\) Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 115.


As director of Uniate schools in Transylvania, Şincai implemented a policy of mass education for the illiterate Romanian peasantry. In 1783 he published at Blaj two writing textbooks for elementary schools and a Latin grammar followed by a mathematics textbook, Îndreptare către aritmetica (Invitation to arithmetic) two years later. Even after his forced dismissal from the position, Şincai continued his work of writing general economic “how-to” books for the public. In 1806, he published at Buda, Povătuire către economia de câmp (Advice as to the Field Economy) a general agronomic textbook. With chapters dealing with the proper tilling of the land, gardening, fruit growing, and grapevine growing, the book represented a significant source of information, in Romanian, for a rural economy ready for unprecedented growth.

124 Ghise, Fragmentarium Iluminist, 132.

RELIGIOUS WORKS

Members of the Transylvanian School also used religious works to slow down the Catholic Church’s drive to eradicate all remnants of Orthodox beliefs in the Uniate Church. Maior wrote one of the earliest books attacking the papacy and its influence within the Uniate Church, the *Procanon*, in 1783. In the work, he justified via Jansenist and Gallican arguments the church politics of emperor Joseph II.

By the Lord’s grace, the Germans have finally begun to see and discover all those schemes devised in Rome, and are now searching into the teachings of the Holy Fathers and into the old customs of the church and are putting them into practice, as can be seen from most of the decrees issued by the mighty emperor Joseph II, which he has made known and obeyed everywhere.¹²⁶

Maior continued his argument of rejection of Catholic intrusion clearly influenced by Jansenist thought. “We should all be with one thought; that we need to learn the early teaching of the Church and the teaching of the early fathers to understand what is ours and what belongs to someone else.”¹²⁷

In 1795, Petru Maior defended the ancient rights of the Orthodox protopopes in his work *Protopapadichia* (Judicial rights of the protopopes).\textsuperscript{128} In the preface to the work, Maior rejected Catholic attempts to deny the consultative power of the Orthodox synods (made up in the majority of protopopes) in matters of doctrine. “Because those who graduated from Latin schools do not know the privileges and powers bestowed on our protopopes, I wrote this work for their benefit.”\textsuperscript{129} All power in the Catholic Church emanated from its head, the Pope. The Uniate Church, like the Orthodox Church, moderated the power of its hierarchy through the convocation of synods where protopopes (archpriests) could influence Church policy. Moreover, while the Catholic Church outlawed divorce, the Uniate Church entrusted its protopopes with the power to grant divorces. Maior emphatically rejected the Catholic teaching on divorce.

Let anyone who has a soul be a judge: if the wife of a man runs away to another country and marries there, her first husband must feed, clothe, and raise the children left behind. How can we deny his right to marry again? What is worse: to forgive the man of this example and allow him to remarry in the Church or to keep him unhappy here on earth and then in heaven?\textsuperscript{130}


\textsuperscript{129} Petru Maior, *Protopapadichia* (Cluj-Napoca: Clusium, 1997), 33.

\textsuperscript{130} Maior, *Protopapadichia*, 99.
Both his works, Procanon and Protopapadichia, echoed the ideas of Gallicanism and Febronianism that empowered the lower clergy to the detriment of the higher clergy and the pope.\textsuperscript{131}

Micu, after returning to Blaj from Vienna in 1783, started a monumental translation of the Bible. The work lasted nine years. The Romanian Uniates already had a translated Bible that followed the Latin Vulgate, but Micu wanted a Bible without the Catholic connection. As a primary source, Micu used a Greek Septuagint translation of Protestant Lambert Bos (1670-1717) printed in 1709 in Franeker, Holland.\textsuperscript{132}

After Micu finished the translation, his bishop, Ioan Bob, appointed a commission to verify the quality of the work. Maior reacted violently at the appointment of a commission made up of people who in his words “do not know Romanian; I have tested them and they do not understand even elementary grammar. Moreover, they do not know Greek which is a prerequisite for understanding this translation.”\textsuperscript{133} Allowing for Maior feeling slighted for not being selected as part of the overseeing committee, one can see in Bob’s actions his desire to humiliate the illustrious elderly historian. The committee rejected the finished work, pointing out the un-Orthodox sources used by Micu in the translation. Referring to Micu’s other translation, Fleury’s History, Bob complained that Micu “read in Vienna with great curiosity books full of Gallican errors, of which he adopted some.”\textsuperscript{134} He believed that some of those errors slipped into Micu’s translation of

\textsuperscript{131} Ghise, \textit{Fragmentarium Iluminist}, 189.
\textsuperscript{132} Chindris, \textit{Cultura si societate}, 323.
\textsuperscript{133} Chindris, \textit{Cultura si societate}, 167.
\textsuperscript{134} Teodor, \textit{Interferențe}, 90.
the Bible. Micu tried to have his work published with the help of the Orthodox bishop Gherasim Adamovici to avoid further battles with his own bishop. Immediately, Bob accused Micu of wanting to abandon his own Church and become Orthodox. The accusation further constrained Micu’s ability to obtain publishing help from outside his denomination. He absolutely did not want to break with his Church, and therefore acquiesced to Bob’s request to relinquish his author’s rights to the Uniate diocese as a prerequisite for publication. Micu, desiring the quick printing of his Bible, surrendered his rights for 600 florins. By November 1793, Bob started the printing process. The work was a publishing success. In 1799, a Romanian intellectual, Ioan Molnar-Piuariu, bought one hundred copies of the book at ten florins apiece. By 1818, twenty-five years from the publishing date, the printing press at Blaj still had eighty-seven Micu Bibles in stock.

137 Chindris, *Cultura si societate*, 341-342.
Interested in obtaining equal political and religious rights for Romanians within the Habsburg Empire and encouraged by the enlightened policies of Joseph II, the members of the Transylvanian School formalized their requests in a memorandum, the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, sent to the emperor Leopold II in 1791. The timing of the *Supplex* could not have been worse. On his deathbed, Joseph II retracted most of the reforms implemented during his reign (with the notable exception of the abolition of serfdom). Little did the Romanian intellectuals understand that the words of Joseph’s Edict of Revocation (January 28, 1790) would erase just about every advancement they had obtained during his reign.

And in order not to limit the benevolence of our fatherly intentions toward the Hungarian nation, . . . we have decided of our own accord, as from 1st May this year, fully to restore the constitutional and legal basis of government to the position it was in when we came to power in 1780 after the demise of our beloved mother, Her Majesty the Empress and Apostolic Queen. Since that time, we have altered several aspects of the constitution with the aim of promoting the general welfare of the kingdom and in the hope that experience would modify your opinion and win your approval. However, since we are now informed that you prefer the previous

form of government, and seek your happiness and find it in the maintenance of the
same, we therefore have no objection to complying with your wish in this matter.  

In the *Supplex*, they asked for major concessions from the Diet in Vienna: Romanians
should not be called ‘people tolerated’ anymore; their ancient civil and political rights
should be restored; the Romanian aristocracy, clergy, and peasantry should have the same
rights as all the other Transylvanian nations; and Romanians should have a proportional
representation in the provincial Diet. The opening of the document provided the
Transylvanian School with the opportunity to state forcefully its thesis. “The Romanian
nation that lives in the Great Principality of Transylvania, through this petition publicly
submits to your Majesty’s throne and begs with all its power that all its ancient rights be
returned to them.”

The Romanian intellectuals based their arguments in the *Supplex* on the long
historical presence of Romanians in Transylvania, on the fact that they were the most
numerous of all the ethnic groups in the region, and on a version of the social contract
theory. The “Clergy, Nobility, Military Estate and City Estate of the entire Romanian
nation in Transylvania” signed the petition. The Transylvanian School wrote the
memorandum in the name of the Romanian population and not in the name of the Uniate
religionists. They all believed that resistance against abuses must be organized on a

139 Lentin, *Enlightened Absolutism*, 274.


141 David Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Vlachorum* (Bucharest: Editura Stiintifica,
1967), 493.

national base and not on a confessional one. The Diet summarily dismissed the Supplex, but the Transylvanian School’s efforts for political recognition did not stop. Through the efforts of another member of the Transylvanian intelligentsia, Piuariu-Molnar, the Supplex’s message reached deep into the interior of the Principality in its published or hand-copied form.

143 Popovici, La littérature Roumaine, 207.
144 Bogdan, Les Idées des Lumières, 115.
The Transylvanian School also employed poetry to spread its ideas. In Lwow, between 1793 and 1812, Deleanu composed his greatest literary and philosophical contribution to Transylvanian Enlightenment thought, the epic poem Țiganiada (*The Gypsiad*).

In the Prologue, the poet paid homage to Homer and Virgil for leaving a written record of the heroic deeds of their ancestors. The honor however, did not belong to the ancient heroes, but to the poets that mastered the art and beauty of language to display to the world the greatness of their nations. Following the Prologue, Deleanu further developed the themes of the poem in a “Letter to Mitru Perea – renowned singer.”

Mitru Perea was an anagram of the name of his friend, Petru Maior (Maier in Deleanu’s spelling), another member of the Transylvanian School. In the Letter, the poet recounted the sources used to write the poem – it was a story told from father to son for many generations until written down some time in the past on a manuscript kept in an ancient monastery. However, the poem was not just a simple versification of an ancient story. “However, you must take heed because this story seems to me to be, in many places, only an allegory, where Gypsies represent many others, who acted and even now act like the

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146 Deleanu, Țiganiada, 23.
Gypsies in the story, the careful reader will understand.\textsuperscript{147} In the poem, Deleanu analyzed the huge social problems of the Transylvanian Romanians under the cover of a fictional narrative.\textsuperscript{148}

The epic poem \textit{Tiganiada} contains twelve songs in 1381 stanzas. Deleanu also added explanatory notes to many words and concepts he thought the reader might have difficulty understanding. The story takes place during the times of Vlad Vodă (Vlad the Impaler), a Wallachian prince facing a vast Turkish military invasion sometime during the middle of the fifteenth century. Responding to the external threat, the Prince raised a local army and sent word to the Gypsy clans asking for their help against the common enemy. The Gypsies entered in an alliance with the Wallachians, but they did their best to avoid any fighting by hiding themselves in the deep forests of the country. After a protracted scorched-earth campaign against the Sultan’s armies, Vlad stopped their forward progress and forced the Sultan to consider withdrawing. Unwilling to live in constant fear of loss of life and property due to constant warfare with a powerful neighbor, Vlad’s nobles betrayed their prince and asked the Sultan to replace him with a Porte appointee and avoid further conflicts. Meanwhile, the Gypsy clans hiding in the forest, without Vlad’s friendships and protection, organized themselves into a functional society.

Deleanu used songs ten and eleven of his epic poem to demonstrate his deep attachment to the Enlightenment and to the revolutionary ideas coming out of France.

\textsuperscript{147} Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 25.

\textsuperscript{148} Ovidiu Papadima, \textit{Ipostaze ale Iluminismului Românesc (Aspects of Romanian Enlightenment)} (Bucharest: Minerva, 1975), 168.
They also show his desire to adapt them into the Transylvanian national emancipation movement. Together, these songs allowed Deleanu to assert his firm belief that change for Romanians should come through their own actions and not through the reforms instituted by others. The tenth song opens with the Gypsies in the forest having a great feast. Philosophical discussions, Deleanu asserted, cannot occur when people are hungry.

When the stomach is full
Then can the mouth utter speech,
Advice as much as you can take
The mouth gives and teaches everyone;
But when the food is lacking,
Even the mind breaks down
And doesn’t have advice for any:
Therefore in a full stomach resides
The entire learned philosophy.149

The second necessary condition that society must meet in order for enlightened philosophy to prosper is a high level of civilization. Philosophical ideas did not occur within the confines of isolated monasteries but in cities where people follow a complex secular ritual of social interaction.

Tell me what wholesome thought ever came out
From the mouths of monks living in the wilderness?

...They have never put forth any notable instruction

149 Deleanu, Tiganiada, 265.
That could enrich mankind;  
It was neither the wilderness, nor the desert  
That started philosophy, but in cities  
By men with polite manners.\(^{150}\)

For Deleanu, scholastic thought emanating from the great religious institutions did not serve society; however, the culture of the salons, “men with polite manners,” gave rise to philosophical ideas that could “enrich mankind.”

After the feast, the Gypsy clans began the process of deciding the format of their new society. Everyone had their own theory. Some proposed that laws were appropriate only for the rich and powerful; therefore, the new Gypsy society should not enforce any of them. Others recommended that if their society should have laws, the laws should apply equally to all, nobles and peasants, as they are all of the same nature. Another member of a clan advised the Gypsies to acknowledge a king and a parliament of nobles as many other nations have. Proposals to eliminate poverty and taxes raised the passions of the crowd to greater heights. The Gypsies could not reach any consensus. Furthermore, every proposal had its own adherents that fought pitched battles against the others. Chaos reigned supreme in the Gypsy camp. The elders, influential members of the various Gypsy clans, put an end to the pandemonium inside the camp and conceived a different method of debate.

Because of the fights, the elders thought,  
To maintain order and achieve agreement  
Not everyone should participate in the nation’s counsel,

\(^{150}\) Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 266.
But each clan to send a delegate.\textsuperscript{151}

The representatives to the general assembly should be members of the clans known for their honesty, virtue, and learning. In a clear reference to the French National Convention, the poet described the new legislative body.

    Here we can see together
    The best and brightest minds,
    Building a new citadel,
    Exactly as today in Paris those from the Mountain;
    At whose high and learned thoughts
    Many nations marvel.\textsuperscript{152}

Deleanu’s reference to the “Mountain” illustrated his admiration not only for the Convention in general, but particularly for its Jacobin wing. Among the many nations that should “marvel” and learn from the Jacobins, Deleanu certainly included his own: the Romanians in Transylvania. The assembly, in an orderly fashion, took up the subject of deciding the best form of government for the Gypsy nation.

    Baroreu, a supporter of the monarchy, addressed the assembly first. The name has the Latin root \textit{baro, -onis} can mean either simpleton or baron – representative of the aristocracy. Deleanu used the names in the poem to communicate subtly different messages to the careful reader.

    Baroreu, one of the delegates,
    Tried with much learning.

\textsuperscript{151} Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 271.

\textsuperscript{152} Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 272.
To show to the assembly,
From history and Scripture
That a monarchy is the best
Form of government for the Gypsy nation.\textsuperscript{153}

Baroreu pointed to religion and nature to strengthen his argument in favor of the monarchy.

There is one truth – he said
One God, one soul, one sun
Therefore the kingdom should belong to just one.

\ldots

Even as the human body has just one head,
That leads and counsels
All the other members of the body,
So should we who want of wisdom,
To set a right base for our country,
One head to set for its foundation.\textsuperscript{154}

Not only was the monarchy, as a form of government, in harmony with nature, it also protected the nation against the evils of democracy. The “never-resting” democracy, in Baroreu’s opinion, continually encouraged factional fighting among the citizenry.

Therefore, he who gives to the people
Control and power,
Breaks up the nation’s unity,

\textsuperscript{153} Deleanu, \textit{Ţiganiada}, 273.
\textsuperscript{154} Deleanu, \textit{Ţiganiada}, 273.
Loses the country, in my opinion!

Gives a sword to a madman
And a knife to an infant.\textsuperscript{155}

People, by their nature, have always craved power over their equals.

Men are made by their nature
To want preeminence over their equals,
Each one thinks more highly of himself,
And believes he should be first.\textsuperscript{156}

Another commentator on *The Gypsiad*, Ion Lungu, has observed that Deleanu followed Hobbes when pointing out the selfish nature of individuals that would lead to *bellum omnium contra omnes* without the intervention of the absolute monarchy.\textsuperscript{157}

Shifting his attention from the role played by the monarchy in stopping the evils of democracy, the orator proceeded to build a case for the monarchy by examining the history of human evolution. Much of Deleanu’s history of human institutions followed Rousseau’s description in his work *Of the Social Contract*.\textsuperscript{158} At the dawn of time, the existing human relationships had been limited to family relations.\textsuperscript{159} As the earth’s population grew, family ties faded, the mighty and powerful began asserting control over

\textsuperscript{155} Deleanu, *Ţiganiada*, 276.

\textsuperscript{156} Deleanu, *Ţiganiada*, 276.

\textsuperscript{157} Ion Lungu, *Şcoală Ardeleană* (Bucharest: Viitorul Romanesc, 1995), 393.


\textsuperscript{159} Dimitrie Popovici, *La Littérature Roumaine à L’Époque des Lumières* (Sibiu: Centrul de studii si cercetari privitoare la Transilvania, 1945), 113.
their peers, and societies descended into anarchy. The masses reacted to the prevailing anarchy by organizing themselves into city-states where they enacted weak democratic laws to allow political participation for all. These weak democratic institutions could not survive long against the onslaught of “citizen-wars” fueled by the ambitions of a few wealthy aristocrats who succeeded in setting up the oligarchy (the rule of a few) as a form of government. The oligarchs were not content to rule together, so each one constantly plotted against the others to become an authoritarian tyrant. Tired of conflicts, dissensions, and wars, the people finally gave their allegiance to an all-powerful leader, a monarch, who would bring peace, prosperity, and security to all. The monarch would defend the country, protect private property, and enact virtuous and holy laws, all to gain the love of his people.\footnote{Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 279-282.}

This way for ever they lasted through time
The reigns one after another,
Each one climbing up the ladder step by step,
Until one reached the highest rung,
We called it a monarchy,
The rule of a single one.\footnote{Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 283.}

Popovici, in his analysis of the text, has concluded that for Baroreu the only acceptable form of government was an enlightened monarchy. For him, Baroreu represented the Josephine point of view.\footnote{Popovici, \textit{La Littérature Roumaine}, 114.} A closer analysis of the text would compel the historian to
reject this interpretation. Deleanu did not invoke any divine support for the monarch, but presented the monarchy as more of a social contract between the king and his people. The people gave their allegiance to the king in return for peace and prosperity without the blessing of divinity. Deleanu’s monarchy existed because of a social contract between the sovereign and the nation and not because of a divine directive. Each party to the contract needed to fulfill its responsibilities for the institution to survive. Rousseau directly influenced Deleanu’s prescription of an ideal monarchy.

All the services a Citizen can render the State, he owes to it as soon as the Sovereign requires them; but the Sovereign, for its part, cannot burden the subjects with any shackles that are useless to the community; it cannot even will to do so; for under the law of reason nothing is done without cause, any more than under the law of nature.\(^{163}\)

Slobozan, a defender of the republic, provided the rebuttal to Baroreu’s oratory. The root word for Slobozan in Romanian is slobod meaning free; therefore, one could translate the name of the new speaker as “free man.”

Slobozan then from the other side,
With proof and careful words,
Wanted to show with reason and book,
That there is not a happier reign,
Than a stable republic.\(^{164}\)


\(^{164}\) Deleanu, *Ţiganiada*, 283.
Slobozan, in his opening statements, allowed that a monarchy, under certain conditions, could present the assembly with an attractive form of government. If chance would reveal the wisest, noblest, most virtuous person among them to be their absolute monarch, he would make a great king, as long as he lived forever.

And we all know that eternal life,

Does not belong to any human,

That’s why I think they are all dreamers,

Who believe that a monarchy,

Would give us a secure and easy living.165

Monarchs have descendants that seldom if ever follow their parents’ example. How can a parent guarantee the behavior of his offspring? Even if this guarantee could be given and sustained through time, Sobozan pointed out that kings do not reign all by themselves; they have advisors. Who can guarantee their moral integrity or the appropriateness of their advice? History proved that kings always surrounded themselves with sycophants without character or virtue. Moreover, Sobozan asserted, history also bears witness to the fact that absolute monarchs always become despots. He concluded his condemnation of the vices of the monarchy by focusing on the corrupting influence a monarch has on society.

A ruler of a nation,

Is like a worm eating at the roots,

Of a large, beautiful tree

... 

Slowly the little parasite,
Will drain the tree of all its life,
Leaving behind a rotted husk ready to fall,
And the reason for the rot,
Was that worm around its roots.166

Deleanu’s diatribe against the monarchy in general and the king in particular had much in common with the contemporary Jacobin speeches in the Convention. Saint-Just had a similar attitude toward the king in a speech made on 13 November, 1792.

Monarchy is an outrage which even the blindness of an entire people cannot justify;
. . . and all men hold from nature the secret mission to destroy such a domination wherever it is found. No man can reign innocently. The folly is all too evident.
Every king is a rebel and a usurper.167

Slobozan forcefully declared that a republic with natural laws for its foundation provided the best form of government for the Gypsy nation. In a republic, the orator proclaimed, an individual’s station in life was determined by his or her personal merit and not by birth or wealth. Furthermore, all laws applied equally to the rich and the poor, the weak and the powerful. Deleanu’s idea of a republic closely mirrored Rousseau’s solution for Geneva.168

In a republic all the citizens

166 Deleanu, Țiganiada, 289.


168 Lungu, Școala Ardeleană, 395.
Brothers and sons of a good mother,
They are their country’s inheritors,
The law keeps all of them equal
And if one has a higher status
Is because of his achievements.169

In a republic, maintained Slobozan, the citizens elect judges to uphold the nation’s laws and not to follow the whims of an authoritarian figure.

The monarchy, for Slobozan, represented a place where vice and lawlessness reigned supreme. Laws could not constrain a monarch’s actions. An absolute ruler, Slobozan protested, can force the poor to pay excessive taxes, while in many instances exempting others (nobles and aristocrats). As a result, everyone competes for the sovereign’s attention using any corrupting method available to gain visibility at the court.

Knowing that his intended audience was rural and largely uneducated, Deleanu used an allegoric tale to illustrate the vices of a monarchy. Anyone reading or hearing the poem would have been familiar with a ubiquitous Transylvanian trade: the raising of sheep.

To explain to you more clearly,
The monarchy could be likened,
To a sheep herd grazing in the sun;
The monarch is the shepherd
Resting in the shade of an oak tree.170

Continuing the allegory, the wolves would represent the country’s enemies, the sheepdogs would be the nation’s soldiers, the sheepfold symbolized the town, and all the products made by raising sheep (wool, milk, cheese) would stand for the treasury.

This shepherd, Slobozan contended, milks the sheep daily and every so often sells them and their lambs to the butchers. When the sheep’s wool grows long, he shears it for his own profit, telling the sheep that it is easier to graze in the hot sun without a thick wool coat. His conclusion is revolutionary.

So many thousand sheep to shear
To milk, to kill for the treasure
Of a hungry, gluttonous shepherd;
Those for whom their wool is too heavy,
Can choose him [the shepherd] as their master.
That choice is not mine, gladly will I die instead.¹⁷¹

The tenth song ends with Slobozan’s oratory. As the third, and last, orator, Janalău from Roșava, gets ready to speak, but night falls and the assembly decides to reconvene in the morning.

The eleventh song contains Janalău’s speech preceded by a short intermezzo where Deleanu, in an aside to the reader, with revolutionary fervor, highlighted what he considered humanity’s greatest shortcomings. Deleanu lamented humanity’s constant urge to subjugate its members. Men have waged conquering wars throughout history all in the pursuit of vain glory and material possessions. He had great empathy for the inhabitants of Mexico dying at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors for what he called

¹⁷¹ Deleanu, *Țiganiada*, 296.
“gold rocks.” To cover their own depravity, men have invented religions that teach unnatural ideas that cannot be proven through reason.

To cover your own evil

You invent new laws, new Gods,
New churches and new worships,
All judged as fables by precise reason.172

Deleanu, like many of the French philosophes, did not believe that any religion could have a beneficial impact on society. He denounced all religions as weapons in the hands of the monarchy pointed at the lives and livelihoods of the poor.

All clerics quarrel among themselves,
Who follows the right religion,
Everyone maintains God is behind his own,
And want you to admit it!
That’s why the clerics shout,
Give to God to have wealth,
We give, they take,
And promise you a faraway heaven.173

In Deleanu’s pleading one can hear Rousseau’s words.

I beheld the multitude of diverse sects which hold sway upon earth, each of which accuses the other of falsehood and error; which of these, I asked, is the right? Every one replied, “My own;” every one said, “I alone and those who agree with me think

172 Deleanu, Tiganiada, 300.

173 Deleanu, Tiganiada, 303.
rightly, all the others are mistaken.” And how do you know that your sect is in the right? Because God said so.\(^{174}\)

Deleanu held the common people’s lack of reason responsible for the power enjoyed by the aristocracy and clergy. He wanted to issue a wake up call to all those oppressed by these powerful institutions, in the enlightened spirit of the age, that change could happen if people were willing to follow reason rather than tradition. After the short anti-clerical diatribe, Deleanu is ready to present to his readers Janalău’s argument.

Janalău, in his opening statement, paid homage to the people that elected him as their representative in the assembly. He was here to represent their interests to the best of his ability. Many commentators believe that Janalău speaks for the poet, but examining his speech, I find this identification difficult to support.\(^{175}\) For Janalău, decisions about forms of government should be made with a clear understanding of the moral characteristics of the nation. In accordance with the Transylvanian School’s belief in the necessity of educating the masses, Janalău contended that the assembly’s responsibility was to teach virtue in order to form an informed citizenry instead of enacting laws.

With a word, I believe that all
Forms of government known,
Could be useful for a good and virtuous people;
And again, they could be useless
For a corrupted people.


\(^{175}\) Lungu, *Școala Ardeleană*, 401.
Therefore, now follows,
That a legislator’s first duty
Is to correct the people’s habits,
And fashion full citizens,
Instead of making laws. 176

A nation whose citizens practice virtuous habits could survive and even thrive under any
form of government. However, the legislators when deciding on the type of their nation’s
government should be aware of the geographical conditions and the climate of their
country. Deleanu’s emphasis on geography and climate reflected Montesquieu’s
principles laid out in his *The Spirit of Laws*.

If it is true that the tempers of the mind and the passions of the heart are extremely
different in different climates, the laws ought to be in relation both to the variety of
those passions and to the variety of those tempers. 177

Deleanu, through Janalău’s oratory, reasoned that different geographical conditions and
climate might necessitate different forms of government and not just different laws. After
setting up the principles that needed to be considered, the speaker, much like Rousseau,
gave equal rights of participation in the political life of the city to all citizens.

If we understand,
That all men from nature,
Are born the same,


And there is no difference among them,
We should also discover,
That all should have a place in the city.178

Janalău, at his core, was an unabashed republican.

What right does one have to rule over us,
Or two, or a few, what is the cause
That gave them angelic wisdom?
I, willingly, will never put
My neck in the stock.179

Instead of human masters, virtuous laws should govern the city. Government officers needed to enforce the laws fairly. They should all be elected and hold their offices for a limited amount of time. Term limits would ensure that the lawgivers would have to live under the laws they themselves enacted after one, two, or a maximum of three years in office. Surprisingly, Janalău proposed that the Gypsies should adopt a monarchy severely limited by stringent laws when the nation was under attack.

So, I advise you that the rule
That you should adopt among all,
To be a monarchy;
Yet, it should be between solid boundaries
And only during stressful times,
When there is no other alternative.180

178 Deleanu, Țigania, 308.
179 Deleanu, Țigania, 309.
180 Deleanu, Țigania, 311.
Deleanu adapted his views to the historical context of his nation. The Romanians in Transylvania, while the majority in the province, were not a large population. If independence were the ultimate goal of their political emancipation, this small and fragile nation would have to battle long and hard against its more powerful neighbors. For Janalău, democracy in a small country, with its inherent tergiversations when reaching consensus, could not act decisively and promptly against internal or external enemies. However, the internal mechanisms of the country’s judicial system had little in common with an enlightened monarchy.

All offices should be without pay,

And open to all commoners,

\ldots

The army should be just temporary,

And not paid through general taxes,

But citizens should be ready to serve,

At a moment’s notice in any capacity his country required.  

Janalău’s stringent conditions for a monarchy expressed Deleanu’s core beliefs. Laws and not men should govern the Gypsy nation. Insisting that public office should be a temporary (unpaid) duty, Deleanu reflected the wording of the Jacobin Constitution of 1793. “Article 30. - Les fonctions publiques sont essentiellement temporaires ; elles ne

\begin{footnote}
181 Deleanu, Tiganida, 313.
\end{footnote}
peuvent être considérées comme des distinctions ni comme des récompenses, mais comme des devoirs."

After hearing the three speakers, the legislative body formed a select commission to study all the alternatives and make a proposal to the assembled deputies. The commission, after considering all the points of view, proposed that the Gypsies should have a “demo-aristo-monarchy” as their unique form of government. Their government should be neither a monarchy, nor an aristocracy (oligarchy), nor a democracy but a combination of all three. Unfortunately, outside groups of Gypsies, each with their own local leadership, brutally challenged the decisions of the assembly. As a result, the Gypsy camp exploded again into violence and chaos, each faction fighting against all others for supremacy. The fighting ended with the Gypsies dispersing throughout the country without having another chance to rebuild their nation.

While all this was happening in the Gypsy camp, Vlad and his followers were planning their next actions in response to the treacherous behavior of the Romanian nobility. The poet intervened into the story, using the voice of God, with a message to all those ready to go on fighting.

God told the angel Gabriel,

Go tell Vlad and his army,

That they will never win their fight,

---


183 Deleanu, Tiganiada, 314.
As the people still are willing to be slaves.\textsuperscript{184}

God wanted Vlad to go into exile, as his people were not ready to be free. Deleanu answered the heavenly restriction with revolutionary fervor using the voice of Romândor (root word for Romanian) addressing the Wallachian troops.

Where would you all go lost into the wide world,

Without country, home, or food?

No, dear companions! Either to freedom,

Or to death: our road should be.\textsuperscript{185}

Deleanu’s words echoed the cry of the French revolutionaries that had succeeded, through violent means, to free their country from the “parasite” that kept it enslaved.

\textsuperscript{184} Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 351.

\textsuperscript{185} Deleanu, \textit{Tiganiada}, 354.
The Transylvanian Enlightenment adopted ideas from French, German, and Austrian sources, but followed a unique path in implementing its ideals. In the Romanian lands, unlike what was true in France, the enlightened aristocracy and clergy were the main proponents for change. Moreover, most of them wanted change “from above.” Romanian intellectuals were less interested in breaking the church’s influence in society than in co-opting all national institutions as partners in their fight for political reform. The Transylvanian intellectuals desired an equal status for their nation among all the nationalities of the Habsburg Empire. They wanted equal civil and political rights inside Transylvania and within the confines of the Austrian monarchy. To achieve their goals, Romanian intellectuals rediscovered the noble origins of their nation, Latinized the orthography of their Slavic writing, and engaged in a massive education effort. The contributions of the four main pillars of the Transylvanian School, Micu, Șincai, Maior, and Deleanu, represented a defining moment in the history of the social and political emancipation of the Transylvanian Romanians.

All four major figures of the Transylvanian School shared a common historical and philological view of the Romanian nation and its language. Micu, Șincai, and Maior founded an historical tradition that directly influenced the radical demands of the 1848 generation of Transylvanian intellectuals. Moreover, the historical exegesis of the Transylvanian School, without the arguments for the complete Latin purity of the Romanian population, has been in large measure adopted by the contemporary Romanian
historians. Şincai’s collection of primary sources provided the fuel for historical arguments among Romanian, Hungarian, and German scholars throughout the nineteenth century. Deleanu publicly defended the School’s theories on the Latin origin and continuity of the Romanian population in Transylvania by writing polemical pamphlets addressing foreign historians’ alternative theories.

The Transylvanian School’s philological body of work irreversibly altered Romanian orthography and grammar. One must conclude that Romanian today is written using a Latin alphabet because, two hundred fifty years ago, Micu, Şincai, and Deleanu were consumed with the idea that the language had Latin origins. Micu and Şincai published the first Latin-based grammar and orthography of the language. Deleanu followed with a monumental Romanian-German dictionary, elevating Romanian to the level of the great European languages and extending its audience to the enlightened populations of Western Europe.

The majority of the members of the Transylvanian School were churchmen who used their religion as a tool for forming and maintaining a Romanian national identity. For the Romanian intellectuals of the eighteenth century, the Church represented the only national institution that operated in the public sphere. To resist the pressures of denationalization, Romanian Uniate intellectuals co-opted the religious sentiments of both Uniate and Orthodox Romanians. To achieve a purpose that exceeded narrow religious definitions in order to facilitate the formation of a Romanian national identity the Transylvanian School supported the severing of the connection between religion and nationality. Changing denominations should not bring about a questioning of nationality.
Within its own denomination, the School fought for religious autonomy following Fleury and Bossuet’s Jansenist arguments. It attempted to carve out a distinct religious space of a Romanian mélange of Eastern and Western elements within a Catholic religious framework. Their religion should support a universal drive for national emancipation and therefore should strive to keep its autonomy in doctrine and practice from their Catholic overseers. The need for religious autonomy to buttress national identity explains the deep influence of Gallican ideas within the Romanian Uniate Church.

The Josephine wing of the Transylvanian School, Micu, Şincai, and Maior, shared a common understanding of the path for national emancipation. The best way for the Romanian population in Transylvania to attain parity with all the other nations of the Habsburg Empire was through a consistent application of Josephine social and political reforms. Joseph II’s drive to build an enlightened and informed citizenry coincided with the Romanian intellectuals’ goal of national awakening through education. The rejection of the School’s crowning political document, the Supplex, brought disillusionment within the Romanian intellectual milieu. Enlightenment through reform seemed to be an illusionary, unattainable goal. Their petitionary efforts on behalf of the Romanian “nation” effectively formalized many of the political and social demands of the next generation.

From his exile in Lwow, Ion-Budai Deleanu significantly reshaped and radicalized the philosophical ideas of the Transylvanian School. “The most important literary creation from the era of the Enlightenment,” (The Gypsyad) foreshadowed the
1848 revolutionary discourse of Romanian intellectuals. The intellectual descendants of the Transylvanian School, following Deleanu’s direction, rejected “reform from above” as a viable method of obtaining national emancipation. The Josephine wing of the Transylvanian School lost much of its political influence once Deleanu’s work began circulating in manuscript. Deleanu popularized Rousseau’s ideas of the general will and the social contract among the Transylvanian intellectuals. Rousseau’s views, together with increased influence from French revolutionary sources that emphasized armed resistance against oppressors, contributed significantly to the Romanian intellectuals’ rejection of Vienna’s “enlightened absolutist” policies at the end of the eighteenth century.

Deleanu, contrary to many of his contemporaries, believed that the Romanian nation could obtain national emancipation only through social and political struggle. The Austrian authorities, Deleanu asserted, would never override the local Hungarian and German interests to deny Romanians a proportional representation in the Principality’s government. Without a chair at the national governing table, the Romanians could never enact any favorable legislation and would forever be relegated to the role of a “tolerated nation” in their own country.

Romanians, Deleanu contended, could not even rely on religious institutions to further their national agenda. Deleanu did not share Micu, Șincai, and Maior’s conviction that the Church could provide assistance to Romanians’ drive for national recognition. For him, religion represented a divisive force within society. Religion could not serve the interests of the nation as it always served its own interests. The later generations of

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186 Duțu, Cultura Româna, 125.
Romanian intellectuals did not fully share Deleanu’s radicalism, but followed closely his arguments favoring social unrest over intellectual acquiescence in pushing a national agenda.

Due to the extraordinary achievements of the Transylvanian School, as the nineteenth century ended its second and third decades, the Romanian population of Transylvania began resembling in its formation its more powerful neighbors. A significant Romanian minority provided a reading audience for an increasingly large amount of printed materials. The Romanian bourgeoisie after a late and sputtering start was extending throughout the Principality and was penetrating in large numbers the previously closed cities of the Hungarian and Saxon minorities. The intellectual descendants of the Transylvanian School continued to demand recognition and representation in the province. They participated in the armed struggle for national emancipation during the year of the revolutions, 1848. A direct line can be drawn to the unification of Transylvania with Romania proper in 1918 from the efforts of a handful of individuals that refused to accept their “tolerated” status in the country of their birth.
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