
TRANSILVANICA

EVROPAE NATIONES

Allegories Painted in a House in Braşov in the Early Seventeenth Century

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The paintings discovered and restored in the middle house on the former Short Row of Town Hall Square in Braşov represent the only known example of murals inspired by Hans von Aachen's QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES drawings engraved by Jan and Raphael Sadeler (c. 1594) in monumental European Mannerist art.

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IN RECENT decades, restoration work undertaken in the premodern houses of the cities of Transylvania has revealed that mural painting in Late Renaissance or International Mannerist style was a frequent component of their decoration.¹ Such phytomorphic and figural compositions are preserved inside the three houses situated at Town Hall Square no. 15–16 in Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó), on its south side, between the Fish Market and the Black Church Court,² which formed the previously called Short Row (*Kurze Zeil am Ring*), Apple Market (*Apfelmarkt*) and, later, Fruit Row (*Obstzeile*).³

My present contribution refers to the paintings in the middle house no. 16,⁴ in the principal room on the ground floor, with a floral ensemble on the vaults and featuring panels with mythological figures only on the west wall, datable to the first decades of the seventeenth century. The murals were discovered in 1991 but restored only in 2013, by a team coordinated by Maria Dumbrăveican.



FIG. 1. The ensemble of the three houses on the former Short Row in Braşov, today no. 15–16 Town Hall Square, after restoration.

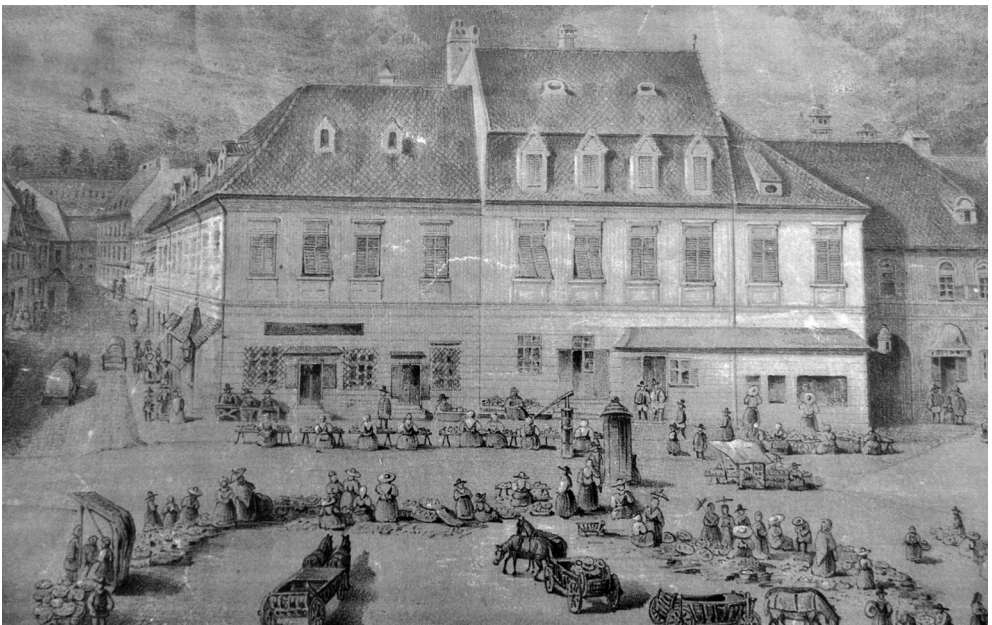


FIG. 2. The ensemble of the three houses in the nineteenth century, detail of the drawing by Edward Hullverding, 1848, today in the Museum of Urban Civilization in Braşov.

The house, like the others flanking it, saw successive phases of construction, in medieval times and during the Renaissance.⁵ The access to the principal room is from the passageway parallel to the house, through a vestibule originally formed by the first two bays of the five extant, and separated by a wall, later removed, although its imprint is still visible; the walls and vaults of the space preserve a later linear black, white and grey floral decoration, rudimentarily rendered. The entrance to the back room, with a much higher floor level and traces of decorative lines at the base of the vaults, is from the former vestibule as well.

IN THE principal room, facing the square, the phytomorphic decoration does not cover the vaults in a regular scheme, as in other examples of the so-called “Transylvanian Floral Renaissance”; here small flowers—buds and blooms with various efflorescences, short stems and linear stylized leaves—are painted on the white background, perpendicular to the edges of the cross-vaults. At the base of each vault segment, a single plant with a straight stem and a rich efflorescence in harmonious blue and brown tones is rendered, while in the centers of the vaults we see Italianate wreaths (now very degraded), and on the surfaces of the penetrations there are bouquets of fruits and flowers.

Two rectangular panels of equal size with figural paintings were uncovered on the west wall only, centered according to the tympana of the vaults. They survive in a fragmentary state with the lower part lost, and the color layer seriously degraded, due to the *Kalkmalerei* technique employed, the most widespread technique for murals at this period, according to the painter-restorer. Above them, grotesque masks hold garlands of flowers and fruits which hang down symmetrically.

Each of the panels represents a pair of mythological deities, a god who stands beside a seated goddess in front of a central tree displaying a coat of arms.

The better preserved image depicts Hermes and Athena who, in this age characterized by an interest in alchemy and the esoteric, combined to form the motif of *Hermathena*, as indicated in my original report. Hermes is represented in profile, dressed *all’antica*, but “modernized” in accordance with the fashion of the decades around 1600, with a winged hat over his curls, holding the caduceus in his right hand and supporting a sword on his left shoulder, while Athena wears armor and a feathered helmet.

The *Hermathena* motif first appeared as Gualtiero Scoto’s printer’s device, on the title-page of Pietro Bembo’s *Historiae Venetae libri XII* (1550/1551)⁶ and, subsequently, in emblem-books such as Achille Bocchi’s *Symbolicarvm quaestionvm de vniverso genere quas serio ludebat libri qvinqve* (1555, with engravings by Giulio Bonasone, after the drawings of Prospero Fontana and Parmigianino),⁷ and Girolamo Ruscelli’s *Imprese illustri* (1566, with plates ascribed to Giacomo Franco and Girolamo Porro).⁸ The motif was painted as a hybrid figure, literally



FIG. 3. *FRANCIA*, painting inside the principal room of the middle house in Braşov, first decades of the seventeenth century.

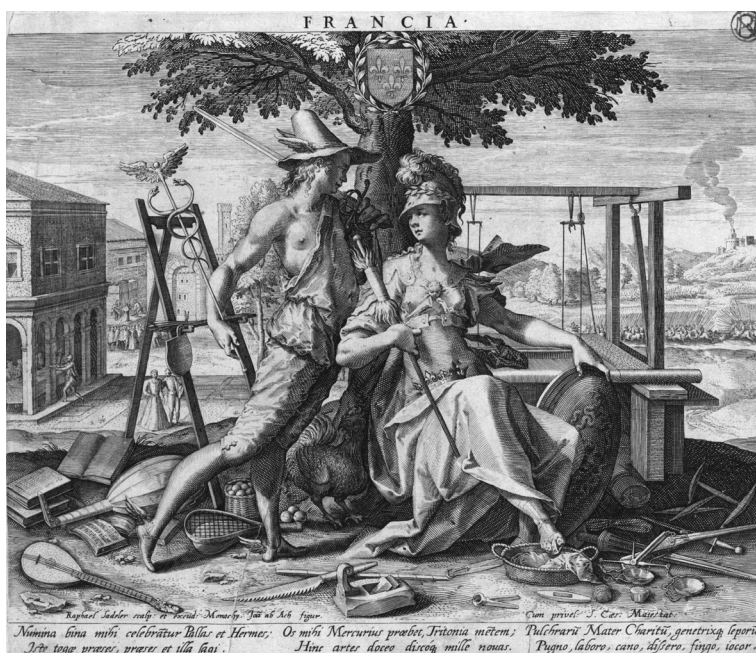


FIG. 4. *FRANCIA*, engraving after Hans von Aachen's drawings of the *QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES*, by Jan and Raphael Sadeler and dedicated to the cartographer Abraham Ortelius (c. 1594).
SOURCE: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-3.

expressing the fusion between *eloquenza* and *sapienza*, by Federico Zuccari in the Caprarola Palace (1566–1569), on the vault of the cabinet of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, known for his penchant for the esoteric sciences. Bartolomäus Spranger, court artist of the Emperor Rudolf II (1576–1612), painted a *Hermathena* inside the White Tower in Prague (c. 1585), while Aegidius Sadeler did an engraving (c. 1595) after a drawing by Hans von Aachen (1552–1615),⁹ the artist whose work is connected to the Braşov paintings. Von Aachen was the author of the drawings representing the allegories of the “Four European Nations” (c. 1594), engraved by Jan Sadeler (1550–1600) and Raphael Sadeler (1560/1561–1628/1632), and dedicated to the cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598), as the caption declares:

*Clariss: et Doctiss: viro Abrahamo Ortelio, Geographo
Regio, QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES. Joannes
et Raphael Sadelerij authores, obseruant: ergo dedic.*¹⁰

The production details given in the lower part within the images show the series to have been executed in Munich, while Jan Sadeler and Hans van Aachen were in the service of Duke William V of Bavaria.

IN THE specific context of the “Four Nations,” the representation of *Hermathena* in the engraving copied at Braşov has—exceptionally—a different connotation, as here it symbolizes France.¹¹ Identifying the graphic source enables us to piece together the lower part of the image which is lost at Braşov, but the paintings omitted the landscapes in the prints, as the format was changed from horizontal to vertical. Athena is seated with the royal crown of France on her lap, below the central tree which supports the royal crest with three lilies in a laurel crown, and she holds the Medusa shield—as befits the goddess of war—and a distaff, as patroness of the household, having also a loom behind her, weaving implements, woodworking tools and weapons at her feet; a battle scene is rendered in the background, to the left of the viewer. Hermes is presented as patron of arts and recreation, being surrounded by books, musical instruments and sheet-music, a painter’s easel, a tennis racket and balls, while that part of the background behind him features a banquet and a theatrical production. The engraving is lettered in the lower margin with six lines of verse in Latin, disposed in three columns:

*Numina bina mihi celebra[n]tur Pallas et Hermes,
Iste togæ præses, præses et illa sagi.
Os mihi Mercurius præbet Tritonia me[n]tem;
Hinc artes doceo discoq[ue] mille nouas.*

*Pulchraru[m] Mater Charitu[m], genetrixq[ue], lepore[m],
Pugno, laboro, cano, dissero, fingo, iocor.*¹²

The Braşov painter was clearly not familiar with the true colors of the coat of arms of France and transposed them from the engraving with three stylized black lilies (instead of gold) on a background of red (instead of blue).

In addition, the painting was originally framed by *putti*, whose fragmentary figures are preserved on each side of the panel, indicating the extremely high quality of the original painting: small winged shoulders and hands holding a bunch of grapes, a vase and a shield, respectively. The upper part of the frame is adorned with a mask and hanging garlands, and recalls the decorations in emblem-books.¹³

The second panel painted on the west wall, similarly framed, was damaged by the interventions of the 1990s, but spectacularly recovered by restorers in 2013. As Von Aachen's motif from the suite shows, it depicts Spain, symbolized by Juno and Mars.¹⁴ Juno is seated beside a standing Mars, shown here as a helmeted knight in armor with a sash across his chest, in vogue around 1600, a drum by his foot, and a flag bearing a sheaf of arrows device in the crook of his arm. The lost details of the damaged painting are revealed by its graphic source: in the engraving, Juno wears the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece, holds a pomegranate like an orb in her left hand, a scepter in the other, and the Imperial Spanish crown in her lap. Behind her is the peacock, her attribute, and at her feet there are exotic fruits, a treasure-chest and coin-purse, playing-cards, a *vihuela*, a globe showing *AMERICA*, *Peru*, *Brasil*, and the hypothetical continent *Terra Australis*, then instruments of navigation including a compass, an astrolabe and an anchor, as symbols of exploration, naval power and New World conquests. In the background, to the left, there are some soldiers playing cards and a lover who has brought along a guitarist to serenade his beloved, who leans out of the window of a house, while, to the right, an army and a fleet on the ocean are attacking a castle, already on fire. These elements were not represented in the painting, only the small heraldic shield above, which initially sported the coat-of-arms of Spain, and the central tree whose dark tonality is still visible in the background of the rather deteriorated mural. The engraving is again captioned with six lines of verse in Latin arranged in three columns:

*Regna tot una rego, quot caetera Numina ge[n]tes:
Et cum possideam plurima, plura peto.
Sed peto regna soli Coelestibus addere regnis,
Huc mihi Mars, huc ars, huc referu[n]tur opes.
Sydera me nigros duxere per equor ad Indos,
Quos ego nunc superis insero syderibus.*¹⁵



FIG. 5. *HISPANIA*, painting inside the principal room of the middle house in Braşov, first decades of the seventeenth century.



FIG. 6. *HISPANIA*, engraving after Hans von Aachen's drawings of the *QUATVOR EUROPAE NATIONES*, by Jan and Raphael Sadeler and dedicated to the cartographer Abraham Ortelius (c. 1594).
SOURCE: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-4.

Given that the designs are from a suite of four images, and the original internal architecture of the Braşov painted room has a symmetrical configuration on both longitudinal sides, it is reasonable to suppose that Italy and Germany were once depicted on the east wall and were removed by later works.

Italy was evidently the first of the “Four Nations” in Hans von Aachen’s graphic series, as the inscription on a tablet in lower center shows, including the dedication to the cartographer Abraham Ortelius. The caption underneath the image reads:

*Me beat ingenium, pietas, ioca, suada, salesq[ue];
Et quicquid pulchri pulcher Apollo docet.
Singula dant reliquę mihi fert una o[m]nia tellus,
Arma, viros, palmas, emula tecta polo.
Orbis ego sum pulchra parens, oculusq[ue] Europae:
Una Venus cunctas contineo Veneres.*¹⁶

The allegorical scene shows a seated Venus with the crowns of the major Italian states on her lap, holding a cornucopia and an arrow; she offers an apple to Apollo, who stands with a laurel wreath on his head, a *viola da gamba*, and books in his hands. A variety of objects litter the foreground: in the lower left corner, a fragmentary Antique torso, a sculptor’s tools, an alchemical furnace, books, a croquet mallet and balls, a large ball and a *bracciale*; in the lower right corner, a money pouch, dice, theatrical and carnival masks, a dagger, a *cornetto* and a *ciaramella*, and more books. In the right background there are musicians, riders and ruins in the distance and, in the left background, soldiers in Roman armor marching through a triumphal archway with the Roman *SPQR* device on its entablature. Behind the central tree with the arms of the Vatican is what is perhaps intended as the Castel Sant Angelo, while on each side is depicted an obelisk from those discovered, re-constructed and re-positioned by Pope Sixtus V in the years immediately prior to the print, while Hans van Aachen was still in Italy.

The fourth and last plate of the series of engravings, which would have been featured at Braşov on the east wall, alongside Italy, represents Germany in the person of Ceres, with corn in her hair, scepter in hand, and the imperial crown on her lap, referring to the *Romano-Germanicum Imperium*, as does the double-headed eagle on the coat of arms which hangs from the central tree. A youthful Bacchus stands beside her to the right, a garland of vine-leaves on his head, offering her a covered cup and a spear wound around with vines. In the foreground, objects symbolizing German ingenuity in the mechanical arts are displayed: tools and weaponry, a copper-plate and two burin needles, a printing-press; a rebec and a flute in the center, armory, a gun, a cannon and a clock in the lower right corner. In the background we see an army on the march, while

peasants drink at a village tavern, against a rural landscape with mountains, lakes and timber-framed buildings. The caption in the lower margin again consists of six lines of Latin verse arranged in three columns:

*Hic Regina suas orbi Germania gazas
Mo[n]strat, et impertit quas Dea gignit opes:
Thesauros almae Cereris, fontesq[ue] Lyei,
fulme[n] in aere cavo, cuncta[que] arata typis.
Liber ei pater est, hinc viuere libera gaudet,
Arma coacta capit, pocula sponte rapit.¹⁷*

ON THE same west wall of the room in Braşov, above the niche which is all that remains of the walled-up former portico of the facade, is a portrait bust of a woman within an oval frame, painted between bunches of flowers and fruits, wearing a circular headdress on her long disheveled hair, an Antique garment draped over her right shoulder, and holding in her left hand a scepter which seems to terminate in a cross. In the context of the representation of the nations, this figure could hypothetically represent Europe, but more in the style of Crispijn de Passe the Elder's *Sibylla Europaea* (1601) than a *Europa* from a "Four Continents" series.

During the late Renaissance and Mannerist eras, allegory becomes almost the default mode of representing the world, in images and symbols adorning the frontispieces, title pages and cartouches of works of geography, cosmography, exploration and travel, designed by the most important artists of the age.¹⁸ On the title page of the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), the first standardized world atlas created by Abraham Ortelius, the most important representative of Dutch Golden Age cartography, to whom Hans von Aachen's "Four Nations" series was dedicated, Europe is rendered for the first time as the queen of the "Four Parts of the World," wearing the crown, and holding the scepter and the orb which symbolize temporal power. The personification of Europe as an allegorical female embodying the continent, rather than as one of Zeus's mythological amours, is foreshadowed by the tradition of anthropomorphic cartography. As early as 1537 Johannes Putsch designed the map entitled *Europa prima pars terrae in forma virginis*, subsequently known as *Europa Regina*, which was first copied in the later editions of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (1570),¹⁹ and it was perhaps the knowledge of this tradition that inspired the engraver of the *Theatrum's* title page to represent *Europa* as a fully human queen. Other similar personifications, illustrating "the civilizational ideal rooted in Classicism and Christianity, the two traditions defining pre-modern Europe,"²⁰ appear in such single-sheet

prints as Adriaen Collaert's (1586–1591),²¹ or such works as the allegory *DOMUS AUSTRIACAE* (c. 1580, also by Collaert, after Jan van der Straet),²² Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (first illustrated edition, 1603),²³ *Les Estats, Empires, Royaumes et Principautes du Monde* (1625, Crispijn de Passe the Younger),²⁴ or Sir Thomas Herbert's *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Asia and Afrique* (1638).²⁵

The glorification of the power and culture of the European nations, “built on the geographic literature of humanism, within an encyclopedic-allegorical context”²⁶ and personified by women with standardized attributes, is illustrated by figures such as *Germania im Dienst des Kaisers*—an allegorical figure placed under Charles V's portrait engraved by Enea Vico (1550),²⁷ *Qyiqvnx Polonia*—a bas-relief by Bernardo Morando on the Old Lublin Gate in Zamość (1588), or *Italia turrita*, seated on a globe and holding a scepter and a cornucopia—in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (first illustrated edition, 1603).²⁸ Malcolm Jones has also brought to my attention William Hole's *Great Britaine* on the title page of *Poly-Olbion* (1612), and the same engraver's title page to *Coryat's Crudities* (1611), with the author's portrait surrounded by three women symbolizing France, Germany and Italy, the latter wearing the same courtesan's corset-dress as Venus wears in the “Four Nations” engravings, and displaying the famous horned hairstyle.²⁹

In this context, Hans von Aachen's designs of the *QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES*, each symbolized by two Classical gods, seem to be a rare, if not a unique theme in Central European Mannerist art. These “emblematical motifs” were reproduced on Peter Overadt's maps (1598), also embellished with portraits and verses:³⁰ *ITALIA TOTIVS EVROPAE BRACHIV[M]*, with the portrait of *CLEMENS VIII PAPA FLORENTINVS*; *GERMANIA TOTIVS EUROPAE REGNVM*—with *INVICTISSIMUS RUDOLPHUS II D. G. ROMAN IMPERATUR SEMPRES AVGUSTUS*; *GALLIA*—with *HENRICVVS IIII DEI GRATIAE FRANCLAE GALLIAE ET NAVARRE REX CHRISTI*; and *HISPANIA REGNVM*, with *PHILIPPVS D. G. HISPANIARVM. INDIARVM, NEAP. SICIL. HIEROSOL. ETC. REX CATHOLICVS*. The maps themselves were copied after Gerhardt Mercator (1554), with the exception of Spain, which reproduces Abraham Ortelius' *Regni Hispaniae* (1570). As the arms of each nation were represented on the left hand side of the maps, the central trees supporting the escutcheons in the “Four Nations” engravings have been removed.

Hans von Aachen's drawings were freely interpreted by Giacomo Franco and Alessandro Fabri (with Italian verses—end of the sixteenth century),³¹ by Robert Boissard (before 1603)³² and Pierre Firens (before 1625),³³ while the Latin epigrams were transcribed by Sigmund von Birken for the Nuremberg print-publisher, Paul Fürst (1652).³⁴

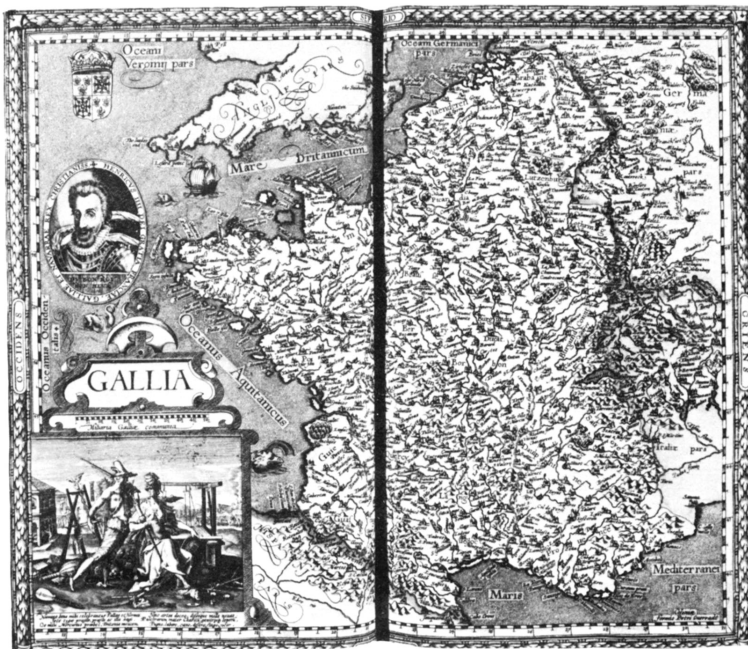


FIG. 7. GALLIA, map by Peter Overadt (1598), including Hans von Aachen's motif of FRANCIA, in the QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES (c. 1594), engraved by Jan and Raphael Sadeler, W. R. Streitberger, "Five Rare Maps: Peter Overadt's 'Italy,' 'France,' 'Germany,' and 'Spain' (1598); and Peter van den Keere's 'England' (c. 1600)," *Imago Mundi*, 2nd ser., 27, 1 (1975): 48, fig. 2.
SOURCE: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1150572>.

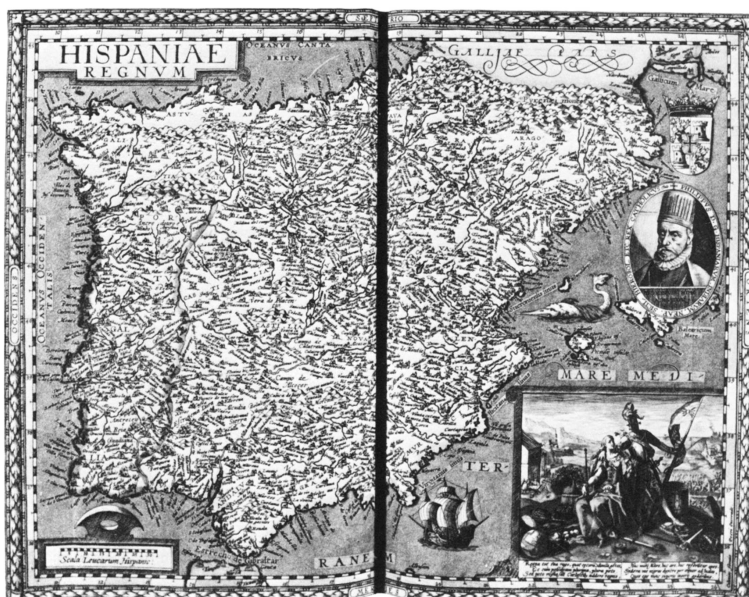


FIG. 8. HISPANIAE REGNUM, map by Peter Overadt (1598), with Hans von Aachen's motif of HISPANIA, in the QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES (c. 1594), *ibid.*, 49, fig. 4.

THE ONLY painter linked to the city of Braşov in the early decades of the seventeenth century, when the “European Nations” murals are datable, is János Brassai Képiró, as mentioned in the Hungarian documents, a German painter who was recorded as twice travelling through the city of Cluj, in the summer of 1629, from the site of the princely castle in Oradea to Cetatea de Baltă, at the invitation of Gabriel Bethlen’s brother, Stephen Bethlen, himself prince for a very short time, in 1630.³⁵ An artist of sufficient stature to be appreciated by the Transylvanian princes could well be the author of the Braşov “Four Nations,” the only known representation of the motif derived from Hans van Aachen’s designs in European mural painting.

The then owner of the house, who chose the models for the paintings, is not known, as archival research takes us back no further than approximately a century after the murals were done. Gernot Nussbächer identified the earliest known owner as Johannes Albrich (1687–1749), city physician from 1715, senator from 1729, and author of such works as *Observationes de peste Barcensi in Transilvania annorum 1718 et 1719, praesertim Coronae saeviter grassatae* and *Palladium Coronense*, a collection of City Privileges.³⁶ Albrich would have been responsible for the interventions from 1720, when other further works altered the house, after the previous medieval and premodern phases. Several new spaces were added in the rear of the house, comprising a vestibule with two small cross-vaulted bays adorned with flowers in relief at the center, opening onto the back yard, with window- and doorframes of very friable sandstone, now extremely degraded. The door lintel indicates the year of execution—1720—on the central cartouche.

After the Albrich family (1713–1777), the house was the property of the Hiemesch family (1777–1824), who also owned the neighboring building next to the Black Church, and who unified the ground floor spaces. Starting in 1824, Petrus Giesel, the owner of both houses, gave the façades a Classicist appearance, with the portico completely hidden by the new masonry, as seen in the 1848 drawing of Eduard Hulverding, displayed today in the Museum of Urban Civilization in Braşov.³⁷ Since then, the ground floor openings to the square have undergone minor alterations, as can be seen in the photographs in the Stenner Collection (c. 1875, Archiv und Bibliothek der Honterusgemeinde, Braşov). In 1872, the two houses became the property of Senator Joseph Trautsch, and subsequently of his heirs, the Pleckers von Pleckersfeld, who finally donated them to the Peter Czeides Foundation of the Evangelical Church of Braşov, in 1905. The restoration works ended in 2013, with the final phase coordinated by the architect Johannes Bertleff.

THE MURAL paintings discovered and restored in the principal room of the ground floor of the house at no. 16 Town Hall Square in Braşov, in the middle of the former so-called Short Row, represent one of the most valuable premodern ensembles in Transylvania, with floral decorations on the vaults and unique figural compositions on the west wall representing the “European Nations,” the only example of murals inspired by Hans von Aachen’s *QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES* drawings engraved by Jan and Raphael Sadeler (c. 1594) known in monumental European Mannerist art.

The ensemble commissioned by the rich members of the Transylvanian Saxon urban elite who owned the house in Braşov, together with the painted decoration of the same era preserved in the centers of other cities, such as Sibiu and Sighişoara, completes the lesser-known chapter of the history of art in Transylvania, from the early decades of the seventeenth century. □

Notes

1. Dana Jenei, *Renaşterea transilvăneană—identitate culturală în context european* (Bucharest, 2013), 113–134; ead., “Pictura murală din Transilvania Renaşterii în secolele XVI–XVII,” in *Arta din România din preistorie în contemporaneitate*, vol. 1, edited by Răzvan Theodorescu and Marius Porumb (Bucharest–Cluj-Napoca, 2018), 611–622.
2. Dana Jenei, “Casele din Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15–16 din Braşov: Studiu de istoria artei în vederea restaurării,” mss. (Braşov, 1990–2011), Archives of Romanian National Heritage Institute (INP), coll. DMASI (Direction of Monuments, Ensembles and Historical Sites), Bucharest, with the information of the report used by several authors without acknowledgements; ead., *Renaşterea transilvăneană*, 114–117, with the names of the three houses according to the List of Historical Monuments in Romania: Closius-Hiemesch-Giesel; ead., “Pictura murală din Transilvania Renaşterii,” 620.
3. Erich Jekelius, “Kronstadts Gassen und Plätze,” in *Das Burzenland*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Kronstadt, 1928), 28.
4. The middle and west houses have the same number, 16, as they were the property of a sole owner since the end of the eighteenth century; the so-called Hiemesch-Giesel Houses (as they are mentioned in the List of Monuments of Romania), or Albrich-Hiemesch (after their first known owners), were part of the *Chatarina* quarter, while the east Closius House, at no. 15, belonged to the *Corpus Christi* quarter. Gernot Nussbächer, “Documentaţie istorică preliminară privind complexul de clădiri ‘Turist’ din Braşov, Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15–16,” mss. (Braşov, 1991–1993), INP Archives, coll. DMASI Bucharest.
5. Dana Jenei, “Casele din Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15–16 din Braşov,” *Renovatio: Foaia monumentelor istorice şi de artă* (Bucharest) 11–12 (1991): 5. In the second part of the

sixteenth century, important works were undertaken in all three houses, built in a *Nachbarschaft* system, and characterized by an oblong plan with the rooms disposed longitudinally, an upper level covering the ground floor and the passageway, and an open portico on stone pillars built onto the square, similar to the house in Sibiu, Piața Mică no. 26 (1568), which in the case of the middle house was preserved only in front of the passageway. Here the access was marked by a rectangular carved stone doorframe, of the type most commonly found in the Transylvanian Renaissance, but altered by the construction of the later vaults of the passageway. Another carved stone doorframe of the same date was found dismantled in the filling of the basement of the house next to the Black Church (1566).

6. Enrico Parlato, “Hermathena nelle Imagini di Vincenzo Cartari e nei libri illustrati del secondo Cinquecento,” in *Vincenzo Cartari e le direzioni del Mito nel Cinquecento*, edited by Sonia Maffei (Rome, 2013), 233–236. Among the representations of the motif in the second half of the sixteenth century are Fulvio Orsini’s *Imagines et elogia* (1570) and an illustration by Bolognino Zaltieri (1571).
7. <https://archive.org/stream/achillisbocchiib00boc#page/216/mode/1up>, with the motto: *SAPIENTUM MODESTIA, PROGRESSIO ELOQUENTIUM, FELICITATEM HAEC PERFICIT.*
8. <https://archive.org/stream/leimpreseillustr00rusc#page/284/mode/2up>.
9. <http://www.kulturpool.at/plugins/kulturpool/showitem.action?itemId=4295030730&kupoContext=default>. The inscription, *Me duce perficies tu modo progredere*, is taken from Bocchi’s plate, and shows the Italian source of inspiration.
10. https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3576517&page=1&partId=1&peoA=138246-2-23&people=138246. Joachim Jacobi (comp.), Ger Luijten, and Robert Zijlma, eds., *The New Hollstein German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts 1400–1700*, vol. 1 (Rotterdam, 1996), 121–127, nos. 48–51.
11. The source of the representation in Brașov is not Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia*, as János Fehér erroneously stated in *Az olaszteleki Daniel-kastély es 17. századi falképei* (Olasztelek, 2016), 150, and who, in the Romanian-English edition, pp. 146–147, took the information regarding paintings in houses in Brașov, Sibiu and Sighișoara without citing my book, *Renașterea transilvăneană*, 113–134.
12. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-3.
13. Of the kind of Ruscelli’s *Imprese illustre* (1566): <https://archive.org/details/leimpreseillustr00rusc/mode/2up>.
14. Before finding the graphic source, I considered the goddess to be Venus.
15. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-4. Lettered within the image with production details: *R. S. scalp [sic]: excud: Monachy. cu[m] priv: S. Caes: Maiest: Joan. ab Ach figur:.*
16. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-1. Lettered within the image with production details: *Cu[m] priu: S. Caes: M:Ioan. Sadeler sc. J. ab Ach fig.*
17. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-2. Lettered within the image with production details: *Sereniss: Bavar: Ducis chalcog: I.S. scalp [sic]: et excud: Monachy. Joa[n] ab Ach / Colonies figur.*

18. Rodney Shirley, "Allegorical Images of Europe in Some Atlas Titlepages, Frontispieces, and Map Cartouches," *Belgeo: Belgian Journal of Geography* 3–4 (2008): 341–354, <https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.8811>.
19. Peter Meurer, "Europa Regina: 16th Century Maps of Europe in the Form of a Queen," *Belgeo: Belgian Journal of Geography* 3–4 (2008): 355–370, <https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.7711>. The author dates the first posthumous edition of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmography* containing the *Europa Regina* map in 1588. Other anthropomorphic maps are signed by Heinrich Bünting and Matthias Quad in 1587.
20. Ellen R. Welch, "Picturing Europe," *Journal 18: A Journal of Eighteenth-Century Art and Culture* (May 2017), <http://www.journal18.org/1812>.
21. <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-BI-6063>.
22. https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?assetId=232574001&objectId=1667551&partId=1.
23. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/370219>; https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ocsQcOQLh5MC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Cesare+Ripa&redir_esc=y&hl=en#v=onepage&q=Cesare%20Ripa&f=false, 304 and 418.
24. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2016/travel-atlases-maps-natural-history-116405/lot.121.html>.
25. Shirley, fig. 5.
26. Rainer Schoch, "Germania," *RDK Labor* (2014), <http://www.rdklabor.de/wiki/Germania>.
27. Ibid. An earlier personification of *Germania* by Albrecht Altdorfer und Werkstatt: *Das Reich Germaniae* (1512/15).
28. Ursula E. Koch, "Allégories féminines de la nation," in *Encyclopédie pour une Histoire Nouvelle de l'Europe*, accessed 27 March 2020, <http://ehne.fr/en/node/2618>; [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Polonia_\(personification\)](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Polonia_(personification)).
29. Malcolm Jones, *The Print in Early Modern England: An Historical Oversight* (London, 2010), 84. See also Conraad Goltzius' series of the *Months of the Year in the Habits of Twelve Nations* (1595), copied in the early 1620s by Robert Vaughan, *ibid.*, 44. I thank Malcolm Jones for the suggested analogies and for the revision of the text.
30. W. R. Streitberger, "Five Rare Maps: Peter Overadt's 'Italy,' 'France,' 'Germany,' and 'Spain' (1598); and Peter van den Keere's 'England' (c. 1600)," *Imago Mundi*, 2nd ser., 27, 1 (1975): 47–51, accessed 29 March 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1150572>.
31. Chiara Stefani, "Giacomo Franco," *Print Quarterly* 10, 3 (1993): 273, respectively <https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/1020722>. The Italian editions have a vertical format, but they do not include the coats-of-arms of the nations in Sadeler's engravings, also depicted in the murals of Braşov. An edition with the verses translated into Italian by G. A. Bianchino is also mentioned on the British Museum's website: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2013-7090-1.
32. Lettered within the image with *Ioan ab Ach Colonios figuravit / Robert Bossart scalpesit [sic]*: <https://www.boijmans.nl/en/collection/artworks/151723/allegory-of-italy>.

33. Lettered within the image with *Petrus Firens excud / J ab ach fig*, <http://diglib.hab.de?grafik=22-1-geom-00384>. <http://diglib.hab.de?grafik=22-1-geom-00385>.
34. Klaus Garber, Christoph Hendel, and Hartmut Laufhütte, eds., *Stigmund von Birken: Werke und Korrespondenz*, vol. 2, *Birken-Wälder*, pt. 2, *Apparate und Kommentare* (Berlin–Boston, 2014), 704–705. The Italy epigram appears in a later poem by Genesius Golt (Leontius von Eggs), in *Oestrum Poëticum Ephemericum* (Munich, 1712): <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ElhEAAAaAAJ&pg=PA332&lpg=PA332&dq>. The collection of the information concerning the history of the motif in premodern Europe could not have been made without the contribution of Malcolm Jones, Rhoda Eitel-Porter and Michael Bury, to whom I express my gratitude.
35. Jolán Balogh, *Varadinum: Várad vára* (Budapest, 1982), vol. 1: 61; vol. 2: 150–154.
36. <http://forumkronstadt.ro/kultur/kronstaedter-persoenlichkeiten/#c1693>. Albrich studied medicine in Halle and Leiden (from 1706), obtained a doctoral degree in Utrecht (1709), and was a member of the city council during the most serious outbreak of plague in Braşov and Burzenland, in 1718–1719. In 1740, he became a member of the Leopoldine Academy of Science under the pseudonym Chrysippus III.
37. The stone slab embedded outside the opposite east side wall is incised with the date 1835 and not 1635, as some authors have mistakenly written, and it actually refers to the neighboring Closius House.

Abstract

EVROPAE NATIONES: Allegories Painted in a House in Braşov in the Early Seventeenth Century

The present study analyses the premodern wall paintings discovered and restored in the principal room of the house situated at no. 16 Town Hall Square in Braşov, in the middle of the former Short Row, which are datable to the early decades of the seventeenth century. Two fragmentary figurative panels with mythological figures are preserved on the west wall, and vegetal decoration on the vaults, with flowers painted perpendicularly to the edges, unlike the other regular schemes of the known “Transylvanian Floral Renaissance” murals of the period. The pairs of mythological deities in the panels are derived from the drawings of Hans von Aachen, engraved by Jan and Raphael Sadeler, and represent allegories of the “European Nations” (c. 1594). Hermes and Athena (who usually make up the composite alchemical motif *Hermathena* in Mannerist art), have here a different meaning and symbolize France, while Juno and Mars represent Spain. The other two motifs of Hans von Aachen’s series, Italy and Germany, may have been shown on the opposite eastern wall, but they were probably destroyed by the later works which remodeled the house. This ensemble commissioned by the rich members of the Transylvanian Saxon urban elite who owned the house is the only example of murals inspired by Hans van Aachen’s *QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES* (c. 1594) known today in monumental European art.

Keywords

Transylvania, Braşov, mural painting, *QVATVOR EVROPAE NATIONES*, “Four European Nations,” Hans von Aachen, Jan and Raphael Sadeler