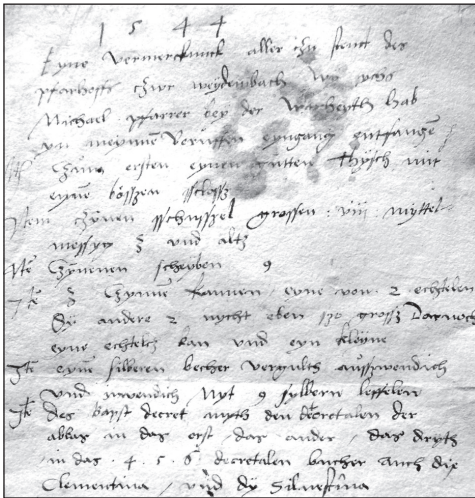

TRANSILVANICA

Medieval Literacy in Transylvania Selective Evidence from Parish Churches

ADINEL DINCĂ



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Braşov County Division, *Primăria oraşului*
Braşov. *Colecția socoteli și impozite ale satelor*
din Țara Bârsei, XXX/1, fol. 1r (fragment)

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A SHORT MEMORANDUM written in the year 1544 (but most likely referring to an earlier occasion) by a certain Transylvanian Saxon named Michael, as he entered office as a priest in Ghimbav (in Romanian, Weidenbach in German),¹ lists various objects from the parish house and includes information that draws attention to the question concerning literacy in the parish churches of pre-Reformation Transylvania. Shortly after mentioning the first item, “a good table” (*Item, czum ersten, eynen gutten thysch . . .*), Michael records the fact that he also found *Item, des Bapst decret myth den decretalen der ablas in das erst, das ander, das dryth, in das 4, 5, 6 decretalen bu-*

The present study is part of a larger research project concerning pragmatic writing in medieval and early modern Transylvania, CNCS PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0579: “Între public și privat: Practici ale scrisului în Transilvania (sec. XIII–XVII)” (Between public and private: Writing practices in Transylvania during the 13th–17th centuries), 2013–2016.

cher, auch die Clementina und dy Silvestrina: a papal privilege (an indulgence, perhaps), and a small collection of very useful legal texts, composed of six volumes (!) of Pope Gregory IX *Decretals*, a volume of the *Clementinas* of Clement V and finally the alphabetic compilation on ethics and canon law by the Dominican author Silvestro Mazzolini (1456–1527), known as *Summa summarum* (first edition, Rome, 1516). The information provided by this small inventory—obviously raising many questions of confessional or book-historical nature²—is for now to be seen simply as an illustrative embodiment of the prevalent forms of the manifestation of literacy in the late medieval environment of the Transylvanian parish church: we meet the “author” of a text, the “librarian” or “reader,” respectively, the “archivist,” the one who looks after the important privileges of his community.

Beyond the lack of research and publications regarding the forms in which the written culture manifested itself in the parishes of medieval Transylvania, the historiographical approach concerned with this historic space and chronological segment faces two crucial theoretical issues: the first one concerns terminology, while the other deals with the methodological aspect, especially underpinning the sources for this type of investigation. Thus, the present few pages do not and cannot include a discussion on theoretical and methodological terminology; it is my belief that some examples based on various sources and lines of enquiry will illustrate, in a sufficiently convincing manner, various aspects that can be developed in a later independent monograph. In this limited editorial context it suffices to indicate that, at the present time, any approach to such a topic of cultural history should also include the corollary of Romanian scientific language and of the historical realities it covers, as everything must be filtered through the specialized terminology commonly used internationally. It is hard to find unambiguous matches in Romanian for the terms “literacy” or “Schriftlichkeit” (and their various combinations and derivatives, such as “written culture,” “pragmatische Schriftlichkeit” etc.);³ this is a question that every Romanian researcher of medieval history faces when wishing to approach the topic according to the international analytical practice and historiographical discourse.⁴ A larger discussion on the precise Romanian expressions focused on the historical phenomenon of writing practices in the Middle Ages (in Latin), accompanied by a lexicographical recording⁵ of the main linguistic tools dealing with the sources of classical education, writing, reading, etc. would be a mandatory preliminary step.

Other preliminary perspectives that should be considered complement the methodological plan of the debate. Anyone and everyone who will study in any detail the interaction between the phenomenon of writing and the parish

churches of Transylvania will have to take into account two essential facets of the topic. The involvement of the Transylvanian parish clergy in written culture occurs both in a direct, active manner, as a “transmitter,” therefore as a creator of text, author, issuer, glossator, scribe or editor—depending on the type of written text in question—and from an indirect and passive perspective, as the “recipient” of a document, either short or long, that is, as the beneficiary, addressee, reader, librarian, archivist, etc. Only by studying the fluid relationship between the two planes can one channel the survey results towards answers in agreement with historical facts. However, there are aspects that cannot be so easily assigned to one or another of the structures mentioned above. The parish clergy’s involvement in the educational process through elementary schools, established by the more important churches, emphasizes the ambiguity of an accurate attribution to the direct or indirect manners of interaction with writing.

The same plurality can be observed when discussing the types of sources related to the topic. Traditionally, and not only in Romanian research, academics have approached the documents and other old texts by specific categories, mostly for the sake of the effective “management” and control of historical sources. However, in a manner analogous to the one already highlighted on the direct or indirect involvement in the flow of medieval writing, a complete image of the range of texts that came into contact with a parish priest or one of his assistant priests in the course of their careers may only be achieved by simultaneously combining the information conveyed by the archival document (under its many forms of expression) and the significant details mediated by the medieval book, handwritten or printed. It is this variety of texts accompanying the parish priest in the development of his career—from books for liturgical services, to volumes dedicated to solving other associated duties of his office, such as preaching, settlement of matrimonial disputes etc., to documents maintaining a formal contact with the church or secular authorities at every level, supervising the parish finances, and much more—that makes it difficult to approach the topic in a uniform manner. Not only the variety of sources, but also their editing and processing have created a challenge for the researcher.

A wider editorial effort focused on archival documents, covering a wider time range, is recorded only for the Saxon *Urkundenbuch*, whose online version reaches the beginning of the 16th century;⁶ two other major Transylvanian projects are still dealing with documents from the last decades of Angevin rule (the 14th century).⁷ As far as the medieval book, whether handwritten or printed, is concerned, things are more complicated. An overview regarding the volumes of manuscripts is beginning to emerge from those holdings that retain relevant material preserved in Transylvanian parish churches;⁸ for the early printed books,

the researchers of the Middle Ages can rely on a recent cumulative catalogue, which unfortunately does not contain, in addition to the identification of bibliographical data, the historical elements that may be associated with the former owners of books, namely, the Transylvanian parish clergy. Thus, the current state of research compels the book historian to call upon the older catalogues of individual collections. However, for the first half of the 16th century, that is, for the last decades of medieval Transylvanian Catholic unity, which, as we will see in this text, represents the pinnacle of the written culture's evolution in the area under consideration, effective working tools are missing or are inefficiently substituted.⁹

The time segment most generous in information starts with the death of King Matthias (1490) and concludes with the replacement of the Catholicism with the Protestant Reformation (chronologically placed between two moments: 1542, the adoption of the Lutheran Reformation by the Transylvanian Saxons, and 1556, the dissolution of the Bishopric of Alba Iulia by the Transylvanian Estates). It is precisely this time period which is poorly covered by document editions and catalogues. This imbalance between available sources and published editions described above has a fairly faithful correspondence in the geographical distribution of relevant sources for this topic. The territories colonized in the Middle Ages by *hospites* from Central and Western Europe, especially from German-speaking regions, focused around the Sibiu, Braşov and Târnava areas, supply the largest concentration of medieval documentary sources that provide a foundation for the cultural history of the Transylvanian parishes. They include archives of Saxon chapter churches, either privileged or subject to the jurisdiction of the Transylvanian bishop, and libraries that not only preserve the medieval bibliophile rarities purchased by modern collectors (Batthyaneum Library in Alba Iulia is a well-known example), but also books that prove beyond any doubt a local Transylvanian use since the Middle Ages.

The history of the medieval parish in Transylvania is definitely not a history of ecclesiastical structures created by German settlers and their descendants; however, the quantity, quality and topography of preserved sources convey such a distorted image across the region. An essential contribution from historical sources outside Romania still available must not be forgotten, especially the excellent Hungarian National Archives' digitization project¹⁰ of a very important part of the documentary heritage from the medieval kingdom of Hungary. This project makes an extremely important contribution to the topic discussed here, but cannot completely substitute direct research in Romanian document collections, mainly for the period after 1526. There is currently a very superficial knowledge of the relevant documentary material preserved among the vast holdings in the Vatican archives of the Holy See. Such material could provide,

in many cases, unique information on the personal instruction of Transylvanian parish priests; this drawback is more difficult to overcome over the short term by Romanian medievalists.

Some important details pertaining to European or regional historical contexts require and demand a special treatment of the development of literate education and of written culture within the parish churches of Transylvania before the Protestant Reformation. The main phenomenon that comes to support the working hypothesis is defined by the expansion of higher education in universities. Rational (i.e. efficient) production of handwritten books—facilitated by the increasing use of paper during the 14th century as material support for writing, which produced a wide range of texts used in administration and justice—organically evolved in the 15th century, bringing together the emergence and affirmation of printing with movable type and the spread of universities in Central and Northern Europe. The founding of the University of Prague in 1348, the first university north of the Alps and east of Paris, meant lower costs for education, and therefore a better access for interested students from those regions of Europe that had adopted Christianity around the year 1000 or later, thus filling an important gap in ecclesiastical institutionalization. Such realities are intertwined and affected by the efforts of states to create a modern bureaucracy and those of the Holy See, which asserted its continuous desire for reform of the secular clergy by imposing a higher level of education. A meaningful moment in the cultural history of the medieval Catholic parish clergy is represented by one of the famous Decretals of Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303), a text known as *Cum ex eo*, issued in 1298.¹¹ The pope intended, by means of this decree, to reply to those who criticized the uneducated parochial clergy, often associated with “the blind leading the blind,” as stated in the Bible (Matthew 15: 13–14 and Luke 6: 39–40), and allowed parish priests to take leave of absence for up to seven years in order to complete their studies (*licentia studendi*). The measure did not remain without consequences and recent investigations have demonstrated its impact: in the first half of the 14th century, therefore immediately after the promulgation of the aforementioned decree, around 1,200 priests from the Lincoln diocese, the largest in England, left for university studies according to the stipulated conditions;¹² this type of information is confirmed by similar facts from other areas. Certainly, the dissemination of this generous idea must have met specific political and religious contexts in each medieval Catholic European state. There is only need to remember that Andrew, elected bishop of Transylvania, required papal dispensation in 1320 for the confirmation of his election due to his poor education¹³—and this episode is by no means the only one of its kind. A real increase in the Transylvanian parish clergy’s university attendance is recorded only in the second half of the century, after the founding of the

University of Vienna (1365) and other German universities. For the same time period (and especially after 1400) manuscripts from Sibiu (Brukenthal Library) have been found containing texts specific to university studies, especially the *Sentences* of Petrus Lombardus, in a form very similar (binding, writing, etc.) to other texts known to have circulated in Vienna's academic environment in the 15th century (details taken from personal research yet unpublished). This phenomenon of a Transylvanian presence in the milieu of medieval universities highlights the privileged position of the Transylvanian Saxons.¹⁴

The need for a solid educational basis was required by the complex tasks the medieval parish priest faced. He was more than a liturgical official; he was also responsible for the moral integrity of the parishioners and was the mediator between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the secular world, representing the local community in the outside world. The parish priest was therefore an administrator of the sacraments, a local judge in cases of moral and Christian conduct, a political, military and tax agent of the higher authorities, regardless of their nature, but also a messenger of the community. Moreover, local education was in the hands of religious institutions, as priests were responsible for primary education. All these activities involved a form of authority, an authority that ensured and involved the use of the written word in various forms.

BEYOND THESE brief theoretical considerations, necessary for positioning the research topic within medieval studies, some selective evidence can be brought forth by focusing almost exclusively on the Transylvanian Saxon parishes.¹⁵

Several perspectives for the analysis of the relations between Transylvanian parish priests and the written word can be highlighted. However, only some of them will be brought forward in the context of the present study: namely, the issue of documents drafted by parish priests, the role of writing in the administration of the parish and the very interesting phenomenon of the parish library. Other aspects, such as the recourse to the services of those offices specialized in issuing documents, places for authentication (*loca credibilia*) or notaries public, the differences between urban and rural parishes or some epigraphic aspects of the writing will be deliberately avoided in this study.

Priests from the communities of German settlers in Transylvania are mentioned as issuing legal documents from the beginning of the 14th century onwards in the context of trials involving several Saxon chapters against what was perceived as a series of abuses perpetrated by the episcopal authorities of Transylvania. During the investigation it was concluded that the documents submitted by the Saxons, issued by secular and ecclesiastical authorities in the Sibiu area, had no probative value.¹⁶ During this early stage of development, during

the Angevin century, the deans of Sibiu sometimes sealed documents with the seal of the Sibiu administrative region.¹⁷ The evolution is rapid, and the documents issued by the Saxon parish priests grow in number: for example, a simple combined survey of the online version of the *Urkundenbuch* provides more than 70 documents issued before 1500. Other relevant documents are still in the archives, most of them as yet unpublished. For instance, from only two thematic collections preserved at the Sibiu County Division of the Romanian National Archives, *Documente episcopale* (Episcopal documents) (also known as “Bischofsurkunden” and “BU”) and *Capitulul Evanghelic Bistrița* (Bistrița Lutheran Chapter) over 30 documents could be extracted covering mainly the third and fourth decades of the 16th century.¹⁸ These documents present in a very interesting manner the literacy level of the parish priests, as many such documents bear the autograph signature, *manu propria*, of the issuers. The issuing process reaches maturity sometime in the second half of the 15th century, attested by the presence of a notary especially hired by the dean of the Sibiu chapter.¹⁹

If such documents, capturing various external aspects of parish life, represent a form of communication with the outside world, then the registers, called *matriculae* or *ecclesiae libri*, in an ambiguous terminology, represent written forms for the internal management of the church. Such administrative record books, widely used after the middle of the 16th century, are particularly interesting because they cover a complex variety of topics: the register of the parish church’s household contains inventories of goods, whether movable (books, vestments and religious objects, etc.) or property (*Matricula Plebaniae Cibiniensis*²⁰ or the register from Jelna),²¹ while at a higher ecclesiastical level such inventories can evolve into strictly specialized types. Thus, in certain situations, such sources retain copies of documents important to the community (*Liber promptuarius capituli Barcensis* of Brașov)²² or, in the case of specialized registers held by chapters, even decisions and sentences issued during trials (*Protocollum capituli Cibiniensis*).²³ Depending on the status of the church that preserved such registers, the records were made directly by the parish priest, such as in Jelna, or by a *vitricus* in the case of the Sibiu *Matricula*, or even by experienced professional scribes, as attested by their handwriting, in the case of specialized inventories.

Certainly, particularly generous information is provided by an analysis of parish libraries. Books from the 14th–16th centuries were gathered by parish priests through private donations of the local clergy or laymen; their purpose was to support priests in their complex work. As a result, the books best represented in the libraries were parochial liturgical texts, biblical exegesis and homiletics: interpretations and biblical commentaries, sermons and other thematic compilations of the same kind. They accounted for the majority of manuscripts preserved; less numerous, but still present, are texts referring to canon law. In the

parochial school, glossaries (Latin and German) were used as support material. In addition to Latin texts, parish libraries in southern Transylvania included texts in German, an important aspect of the early beginnings of writing in the vernacular in the region.

There are several kinds of evidence concerning such parish libraries,²⁴ which place this European phenomenon in the late 15th century. We encounter, on the one hand, those fortunate situations of contemporary sources, or “catalogues,” compiled and continuously adjusted whenever an important gift (rarely a purchase) of books was introduced into the library—such a case can be found at St. Mary’s Church in Sibiu. Then, there are the more numerous cases when only notes have survived about the former library, contemporary or not, as is the case of the library belonging to the Black Church in Braşov or the small book collection of Jelna (or even the abovementioned memorandum from Ghimbav). The third situation, represented by churches in Sebeş and Cîsnădie (we may as well add other similar situations, such as Sighişoara, Mediaş, Braşov, etc.) are characterized by the preservation of medieval volumes, which are not accompanied by any adjacent written source. Certainly, the prime example for the expression of this phenomenon in Transylvania remains the parish church of Sibiu, where the 1442 list, to be found in the aforementioned *Matricula*, already lists over 150 books, which were later supplemented by other acquisitions. Several dozens of these can still be found in the collection of codices preserved at Brukenthal Library. Besides manuscripts, there are also some *incunabula* that can be linked to the same library, and future research on books in the first half of the 16th century could contribute enormously to a virtual reconstruction of the previous Catholic collection.

Special mention must be made of the church and parish library at St. Walpurga’s Church of Cîsnădie (Heltau in German) (today the Evangelical Church) where 12 manuscripts and 3 *incunabula* are still preserved today. This collection is one of the few parish libraries that are still *in situ*, i.e. in the place where it was constituted and used during medieval times. Around 1500, Cîsnădie library probably had at least 20 books, if one takes into account other manuscripts and printed books that can now be found in Sibiu, Cluj and Budapest.

THE PRESENT considerations have, to be sure, an expository role rather than an analytical one. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, the importance of the parish milieu for Transylvania’s cultural history is obvious, and future detailed research would mark an important step forward in answering questions concerning the importance of the parish milieu for Transylvania’s cultural history.

Notes

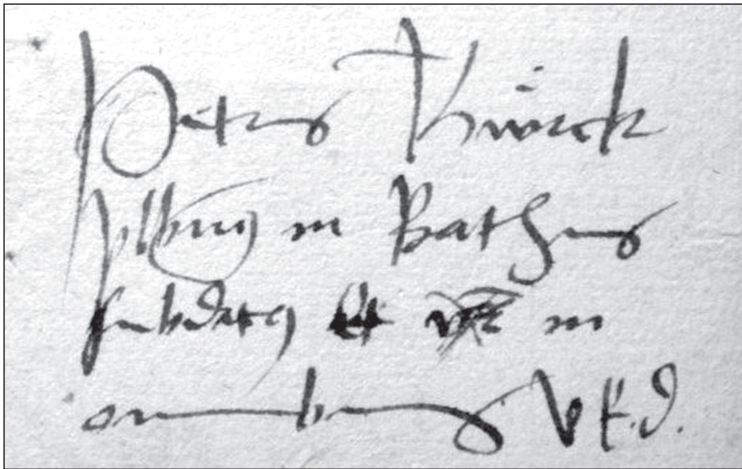
1. Romanian National Archives, Braşov County Division, collection *Primăria oraşului Braşov. Colecția socoteli și impozite ale satelor din Țara Bârsei*, shelf mark “Pachet XXX/1,” fol. 1 recto: *Eyne Vermerkunk aller czu stand des pfarhoffß czwr weydenbach wo ychs Michael pfarrer bey der Warheyth hab yn meinnen beruffen eyngang entfangen* (“A note about the status of everything that I, priest Michael, truly received in the parish house of Weidenbach upon entry in my profession”). The document is in fact a paper *bifolium*, written only on both sides of the first fol. The author of the present paper intends to deal thoroughly with this source in a separate article.
2. Michael Lieb (*Amicinus*), parish priest in Ghimbav from approximately 1529 to 1557, is mentioned at least one more time by his contemporaries dealing with books: *dominus Michael ligavit libros 3 parochio Cibiniensi ex iussu domini decani . . .*. See *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen*, vol. 3 (Kronstadt: Theochar Alexi, 1896), 602.
3. A short bibliographical list comprising theoretical and terminological approaches, not only aspects of historical evolution: Michael T. Clanchy, *From memory to written record: England 1066–1307* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979; 2nd edition Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Franz H. Bäuml, “Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,” *Speculum* 55 (1980): 237–265; Hagen Keller and Klaus Grubmüller, eds., *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit im Mittelalter: Erscheinungsform und Entwicklungsstufen* (Munich: Fink, 1992); Konrad Ehlich, “Text und sprachliches Handeln: Die Entstehung von Texten aus dem Bedürfnis nach Überlieferung,” in *Schrift und Gedächtnis: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation*, eds. Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann, and Christof Hardmeier (Munich: Fink, 1993), 24–43; Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, “Das Gestern im Heute: Medien und soziales Gedächtnis,” in *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien: Eine Einführung in die Kommunikationswissenschaft*, eds. Klaus Merten, Siegfried J. Schmidt, and Siegfried Weischenberg (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 114–140; Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999).
4. Adrian Papahagi, ed., Cristiana Papahagi, and Adinel Dincă, *Vocabularul cărții manuscrise* (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei Române, 2013).
5. Mariken Teeuwen, ed., *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).
6. <http://siebenbuergen-institut.de/special-menu/e-transylvania/urkundenbuch-zur-geschichte-der-deutschen-in-siebenbuergen-online/>.
7. A recent overview of the publication of Transylvanian diplomatic sources from the voivodeship era (before 1542), can be found in András W. Kovács, *Magyar vonatkozású oklevélközlések Romániában* (Kolozsvár: Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület kiadása, 2009). The same author briefly presents the theme under the title: *Ediții de documente medievale privind Transilvania*, available on-line <http://enciclopediavirtuala.ro/articoletematice/articol.php?id=80>.

8. <http://codex.centre.ubbcluj.ro/>.
9. Useful suggestions on the topic can be found in Ádám Dankanits, *Lesestoffe des 16. Jahrhunderts in Siebenbürgen* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1982).
10. <http://mol.arcanum.hu/dldf/opt/a110505htm?v=pdf&a=start>.
11. Leonard E. Boyle, "The Constitution 'Cum ex eo' of Boniface VIII," in *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200–1400* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), 263–302.
12. F. Donald Logan, *University Education of the Parochial Clergy in Medieval England: The Lincoln Diocese, c. 1300–c. 1350* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).
13. Adinel Dincă, "Aprecieri preliminare privind alegerea episcopului Transilvaniei în sec. XIII–XIV," in *Transilvania: Studii istorice (sec. XIII–XVII)*, ed. Susana Andea (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei Române, 2005), 162–186.
14. Georg Daniel Teutsch, "Über die ältesten Schulanfänge und damit gleichzeitige Bildungszustände in Hermannstadt," *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 10 (1872): 193–232; Sándor Tonk, *Erdélyiek egyetemjárása a középkorban* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1979); Maja Philippi, *Die Bürger von Kronstadt im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Sozialstruktur einer siebenbürgischen Stadt im Mittelalter* (Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 1986); Astrik L. Gabriel, *The University of Paris and its Hungarian Students and Masters during the Reign of Louis XII and François Ier* (Notre Dame, Ind.: United States Subcommission for the History of Universities, University of Notre Dame; Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Josef Knecht, 1986).
15. Marie-Madeleine De Cevins, "La formation du clergé paroissial en Hongrie sous les rois angevins," in *Formation intellectuelle et culture du clergé dans les territoires angevins (milieu du XIIIe–fin du XVe siècle)*, ed. Marie-Madeleine De Cevins (Rome: École française de Rome, 2005), 47–78.
16. Franz Zimmermann, Karl Werner, and Georg Müller, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, vol. 1 (Hermannstadt, 1892), no. 314, 239–292. See also Enikő Csukovits, "Egyházi és világi oklevelek hitelessége a szentszéki bíróságok előtt (Egy vizsgálat tanulságai)," in *Emlékkönyv Jakó Zsigmond születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 1996), 126–134.
17. For instance 12 March 1372, Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, UI 25.
18. Bishopric documents nos. 30, 52, 72, 103, 105, 110, 116, 117, 118, 119, 132, 133, 139, 146, 156; Bistrița Lutheran Chapter nos. 13, 26, 44, 49, 56, 60, 62, 65, 67, 68, 69g, 70, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104.
19. 4 May 1479, *Urkundenbuch*, vol. 7, no. 4306.
20. Robert Szentivanyi, *Catalogus concinnus librorum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Batthyanyanae* (Szeged: Hungaria, 1958), no. 294, 158–169; Endre Ivánka, "Két magyarországi plébániai könyvtára a XV. században," *Századok* 72 (1938): 137–166, 332–334.
21. Gustav A. Schuller, "Ein Blick in das kirchliche Leben einer sächsischen Landgemeinde vor der Reformation," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der ev. Kirche A. B. in Siebenbürgen* (Hermannstadt, 1922), 1–45.

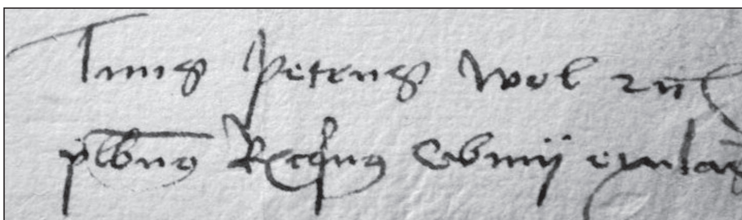
22. Gernot Nussbächer, “Das Verzeichnis der Privilegien des Burzenländer Kapitels aus dem Jahre 1493,” in *Emlékkönyv Kiss András születésének nyolcvanadik évfordulójára*, eds. Pál-Antal Sándor, Sipos Gábor, W. Kovács András, and Wolf Rudolf (Cluj: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2004), 411–416.
23. Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, *Protocollum Capituli Cibiniensis*, I, 1523–1540, Holding: Sibiu Lutheran Chapter.
24. Adinel Dincă, *Schriftkultur im südsiebenbürgischen Raum um 1500/Cultura scrisului în Transilvania de sud în jurul lui 1500*, exhibition catalogue edited by Begegnungs- und Kulturzentrum Friedrich Teutsch der Evangelischen Kirche A. B. in Rumänien (Sibiu: Smart Print, 2013).

APPENDIX: DOCUMENT SAMPLES

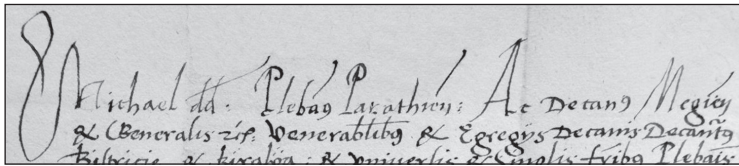
Peter Thwrck, priest of Batoș parish, 18 June 1528,
Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, Bischofsurkunden, no. 110



Peter Wol, priest of Richiș parish, 21 January 1530,
Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, Bischofsurkunden, no. 132

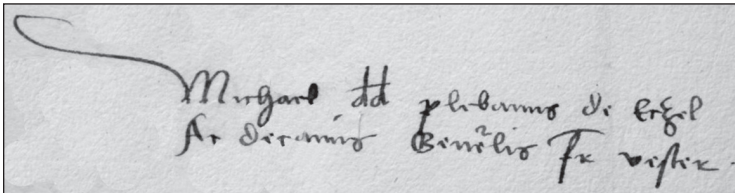


Michael, priest of Brateiu parish and general dean, 13 January 1531,
Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, Bistrița Chapter, no. 26



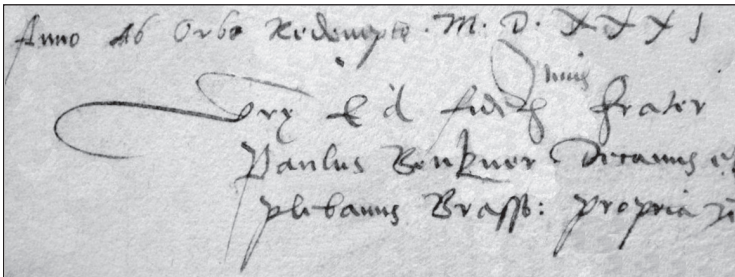
Michael d. Pleban Parathien: Ac Decan⁹ Me⁹ty
& Generalis r⁹: Venerabilib⁹ & Egregis Decanis Decanib⁹
Bistri⁹ & hinc⁹ & uniuersis & singulis fr⁹ibus Plebanis

Michael, priest of Ațel parish and general dean, 31 January 1531,
Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, Bistrița Chapter, no. 44



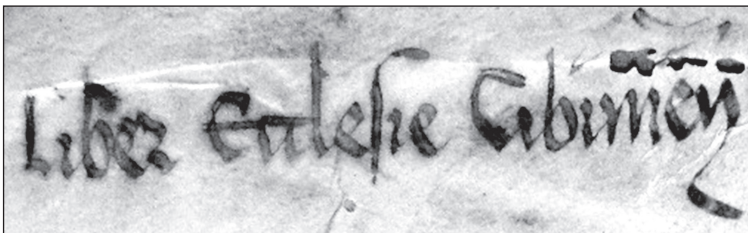
Mihail d. plebanus de Ațel
Ar. Decanus Benefic⁹ fr. vester.

Paul Benkner, priest and dean of Brașov parish, 11 February 1531,
Romanian National Archives, Sibiu County Division, Bischofsurkunden, no. 139



Anno ab orbe condito .M. D. XXXI
S⁹rg⁹ & d. fidei⁹ frater
Paulus Benkner Decanus &
plebanus Brass: propria

Ownership marks on manuscripts from Sibiu and Cisnădie

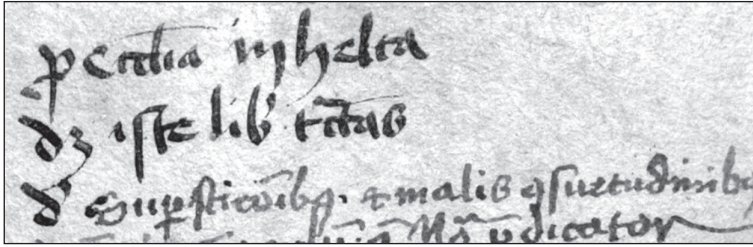


Libez Ecclesie Sibimien



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**Abstract**

Medieval Literacy in Transylvania: Selective Evidence from Parish Churches

For the first time in Romanian historiography, this article deals with the question of written culture among the parish priests during the medieval period in Transylvania, with specific emphasis on the theoretical approach to the topic. It highlights the importance of the parish milieu for Transylvania's cultural history, surveying the written material generated in this environment and still available today in various collections, in an attempt to pave the way for a future investigation of the importance of the parish milieu for Transylvania's cultural history.

Keywords

Transylvania, Middle Ages, parish church, literacy