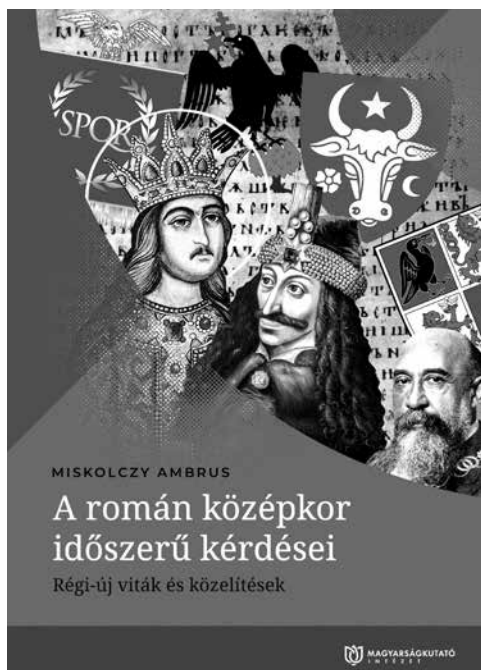

CONCERTATIO

Doloris sopitam recreant volnera viva animam Reformed Views on Past, Present and Future Medievalism

ALEXANDRU SIMON



AMBRUS MISKOLCZY,
A román középkor időszerű kérdései (2021).

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ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE,¹ otherwise an advocate of the Transylvanian dissolution of the modern Kingdom of Hungary, but also of the Romanian-Russian partition of Bassarabia,² would have certainly enjoyed an experimental pleasure if he had focused on the eastern and southeastern borders of the medieval realm of Saint Stephen,³ a challenge for which few scholars were ever suited, although several of them attempted to rise to that challenge.⁴ Devoted to yet another of “God’s playgrounds” in Central and Eastern Europe,⁵ that is, the historiography of the Hungarian-Romanian medieval coexistence (something that is still difficult to stomach),⁶ Ambrus Miskolczy’s recent book is most revealing in this respect.⁷

The cover features a provocative succession of images *en dégradé*: Stephen III the Great (†1504), Vlad III the Impaler (†1476/1477) and Nicolae Iorga (†1940), even though—in that same context—Ioan Bogdan

(Iorga's brother-in-law)⁸ would have been a better choice, because Ioan Bogdan, in 1896,⁹ and Vilmos Fraknói, a year later,¹⁰ authored the “scientific damnation” of Vlad III on the occasion of the Hungarian Millennium.¹¹ But one would search in vain for any such contextual references in the book, or for Fraknói's mentioned work on the famous depiction of Vlad III, carved by Nicholas, bishop of Modruš (c. 1473).¹²

Built largely—still much less than it should have been—on the highly researched “Benedictine inventories” of András W. Kovács,¹³ the book could have been a much needed complement, and prelude, to Levente Nagy's elaborate analysis of the impact and spread of the Reformation among the Romanians.¹⁴ It would have put into perspective the “master reset” experienced in the 16th century by areas mustered by imperial Vienna and by imperial Istanbul.¹⁵ Nonetheless, for that, a “half-way decent” Romanian historiography of the Reformation would have been required.¹⁶ Shifting any blame to Professor Miskolczy's work would consequently be a grievous mistake, more severe than the nationalist abominations of the (living) past, eloquently listed across the borders.¹⁷

The book has few real shortcomings (meaning also shortcomings that can be traced in Romanian historiography as well). A couple of them deserve—subjective—highlighting.¹⁸ First, our study on King Béla III's *contra furorem Bulgarorum et Rumenuorum* charter (1194),¹⁹ already mentioned by Klára Jakó,²⁰ which might be relevant for the (ad)migration of the Vlachs/Wallachians (i.e. of the medieval Romanians).²¹ Second, Ioan-Aurel Pop's study on Pope Pius II image and title of Matthias Corvinus as king of both Hungary and Dacia (1462),²² already known to Ludwig Pastor,²³ which reveals a different picture of the region on the eve of *Dracula*'s rise and of the Peace of Wiener-Neustadt.²⁴ Last but not least, a “pairing” of recent Romanian and Hungarian scholarship, by no means deprived of critical analysis or of documentary additions,²⁵ would have been most useful for all the parties involved. Yet, it would have implied removing the altogether futile “Kosovo historiography” of medieval Transylvania (i.e. Marius Diaconescu, Adinel Ciprian Dincă,²⁶ Radu Lupescu,²⁷ Dan Ioan Mureșan and Adrian Andrei Rusu). This would have however been “a border too far.” Despite such academic and contextual slips, Ambrus Miskolczy's synthesis constitutes a post-Trianon 100 “bridgehead.”

□

Notes

1. Toynbee used the quote—included in this paper's title—from *Anon.*, as in anonymous, as a motto for his monumental *A Study of History* (1934–1961), abridged by D. C. Somervell (1946–1960).

2. In his *Nationality & the War* (London–Toronto, 1915), 305.
3. See the three versions (Hungarian, English and Romanian) of Pál Engel’s skillful synthesis.
4. E.g. the colliding “manifestos” authored—in the final days of World War II (but not only)—by Constantin Daicoviciu, *La Transylvanie dans l’Antiquité* (Bucharest, 1938, 1945), and by László Makkai, *Histoire de Transylvanie* (Budapest, 1946), not to mention the—post 1989—ostensibly *Herrenvolk* studies and volumes of Gottfried Schramm or Oliver Jens Schmitt.
5. A classic title: Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland in Two Volumes* (Oxford, 1981).
6. E.g., a paradox in fact, the book of Matei Cazacu and Dan Ioan Mureșan, *Ioan Basarab, un domn român la începuturile Țării Românești* (Kishinev, 2013), also cited by Miskolczy. We recall that Cazacu was one of the signatories of the “Declaration of Budapest” in the tormented summer of 1989 (see in this respect also our <https://gazetadecluj.ro/cand-am-inceput-sa-uram-diaspora-si-invers-declaratia-de-la-budapest-a-din-vara-anului-1989/>).
7. *A román középkor időszakú kérdései: Régi-új viták és közelítések* (Budapest: Magyarországtudató Intezet, 2021), 632 pp. The English translation fails however to capture Hungarian nuances: *Current Issues [Questions] of the Romanian Middle Ages: Old-New Debates and Approaches*.
8. Radu Mârza, *The History of the Romanian Slavic Studies: From the Beginnings Until the First World War*, translated by Leonard Ciocan (Cluj-Napoca, 2008), 269–278. Fortunately, even though under duress, the Historical Class of the Romanian Academy forfeited the “honor” of granting an award to the cited book, a well-rehearsed *Provincia* product of the separatist Transylvanian “intelligentsia.”
9. *Vlad Țepeș și narațiunile germane și rusești asupra lui: Studiu critic, cu cinci portrete* (Bucharest, 1896).
10. “Miklós modrusi püspök élete, munkái és könyvtára,” *Magyar Könyvszemle*, new ser., 5, 1 (1897): 1–23.
11. Not only the Hungarian historiography of the 1890s has to be reviewed. The Romanian works from the last decade of the 19th century are also worth a closer inspection. The same applies to the 1920s and the post-Trianon talks for a personal union between the kingdoms of Hungary and Romania; see Lucian Leuștean, *România și Ungaria în cadrul “Noii Europe” (1920–1923)* (Iași, 2003). The “obliterated”—by Miskolczy as well—study (1939–1942) of Ștefan Pascu, “Contribuțiunile documentare la istoria românilor în sec. XIII–XIV,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* (Sibiu) 10 (1945): 149–220, deserves special mention.
12. Chiefly Luka Špoljarić, “Nicholas of Modruš, ‘The Glory of Illyria’: Humanist Patriotism and Self-Fashioning in Renaissance Rome,” doctoral dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2013, 293. The printed version of the thesis will prove equally relevant in this context.
13. *Magyar vonatkozású oklevélközlések Romániában* (Kolozsvár, 2009); *Magyar vonatkozású oklevélközlések Romániában (Pótlások és a 2009–2020 között megjelent közlések)* (Kolozsvár, 2021).

14. “A román reformáció, mint magyar-román kulturális és irodalmi transzferjelenség a 16–17. században,” habilitation thesis, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 2019. Published as *A román reformáció: Egy 16–17. századi magyar-román kulturális és irodalmi transzferjelenség* (Budapest, 2020). For the Romanian translation: *Reforma la români: Un fenomen de transfer cultural în secolele XVI–XVII* (Oradea, 2021), especially 12–13 (under the circumstances).
15. See the recent studies of Ovidiu Olar and Ovidiu Cristea on the *Lives* of Saint Nephon (II).
16. In spite of the so-called “*Colloquia* school of Cluj,” the Romanian historiography on the subject is largely limited, above all in the case of the 16th century, to two major valuable works: Șerban Papacostea, “Moldova în epoca Reformei: Contribuții la istoria societății moldovenești în veacul al XVI-lea,” *Studii. Revistă de istorie* 11, 4 (1958): 55–78; Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Cultural Diffusion and Religious Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Transylvania: How the Jesuits Dealt with the Orthodox and Catholic Ideas* (Lewiston–Queenston–Lampeter, 2014). For the Romanian version of the latter study: *Biserică, societate și cultură în Transilvania secolului al XVI-lea: Între acceptare și excludere* (Bucharest, 2012).
17. The commendable collection of studies *A Divided Hungary in Europe: Exchanges, Networks and Representations, 1541–1699*, edited by Gábor Almási, Szymon Brzeziński, Ildikó Horn, Kees Tszelszky, and Áron Zarnóczki, 3 vols. (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014) deserves a Romanian pair.
18. One of Professor Miskolczy’s greatest qualities, but also disadvantages, is the fact that he is not a trained medievalist. The Enlightenment in the East is his area of expertise.
19. “Între coroanele Arpadienilor și Asăneștilor: Implicațiile unui document de la Béla III,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 28 (2010): 127–136. For the revised English version: “Wallachians, Arpadians, and Assenids: The Implications of a Lost Charter,” in *The Steppe Lands and the World Beyond Them: Studies in Honor of Victor Spinei on his 70th Birthday*, edited by Florin Curta and Bogdan-Petru Maleon (Iași, 2013), 689–696.
20. “Három román tanulmány ismertetése,” *Történelmi Szemle* 55 (2012). Available—only—online: <https://tti.btk.mta.hu/intezetunk/szemle/218-ismerteto-harom-roman-kotetrol.html>.
21. On this “never-ending story,” see also Florin Curta, *Eastern Europe in Middle Ages (500–1300)*, vol. 1 (Leiden–Boston, 2019), 152–178.
22. “Matthias Corvinus, ‘Re de Ungaria, de Dacia etc.’ in 1462,” *Transylvanian Review* 20, suppl. 1 (2020): 41–52. For the Romanian version: “Matia Corvin, ‘re de Ungaria, de Dacia etc.’ în anul 1462,” *Revista istorică*, new ser., 31, 3–4 (2020): 235–248.
23. *Acta inedita historiam pontificum Romanorum praesertim saec. XV, XVI, XVII illustrantia*, vol. 1, A. 1376–1464 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1904), no. 125, pp. 150–162.
24. E.g. Ioan-Aurel Pop and Alexandru Simon, “The Hunyadis and Dacia: From the Fall of Constantinople to the Peace of Wiener-Neustadt,” *Banatica* 30, 2 (2020): 35–57. For the Romanian version: “Reapariția pontificală a Daciei Romane din răsăritul Europei (1453–1462),” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 38 (2020): 271–294.

25. See, for instance, the studies of Tibor Neumann, largely left out of the volume, e.g. “Békekötés Pozsonyban-országgyűlés Budán: A Jagelló-Habsburg kapcsolatok egy fejezete (1490–1492),” *Századok* 144, 3 (2010): 335–372; 145, 3 (2011): 293–347, and—for “Count Stephen of Transylvania”—especially “A gróf és a herceg magánháborúja (Szapolyai István és Corvin János harca a lipitói hercegségért),” *Századok* 148, 2 (2014): 387–426. On the Romanian side, the “forgotten” study of Adrian Magina should be mentioned: “Răufăcători sau... schismatici? Statutul ortodocșilor bănățeni în jurul anului 1400,” in *România în Europa medievală (între Orientul bizantin și Occidentul latin): Studii în onoarea Profesorului Victor Spinei*, edited by Dumitru Țeicu and Ionel Căndea (Brăila, 2008), 283–294.
26. Conspicuously omitted from Miskolczy’s references, in spite of Dincă’s involvement in George Copos’ mitigated—and protracted—release from prison, based on a booklet on the medieval matrimonial ties of the voivodes of Wallachia (e.g. <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-20757916-universitatea-din-bucuresti-george-copos-plagiat-subtil-prin-repovestire-carte-scrisa-inchisoare.htm>). See, however, most recently Adinel Ciprian Dincă and Mihai Kovács, “Considerații preliminare privind documentele medievale din arhiva familiei Căndea (Kendefi) la jumătatea secolului al XVI-lea,” *Corviniana* 14 (2021): 73–94.
27. Tellingly abridged Radu (not Lupescu) in *A román középkor időszerű kérdései*, 622.

Abstract

Doloris sopitam recreant volnera viva animam:

Reformed Views on Past, Present and Future Medievalism

The publication of Ambrus Miskolczy’s latest book (2021) provides the author with an opportunity to reflect (sometimes on a polemical note) upon the Hungarian and Romanian historiography devoted to the Hungarian-Romanian coexistence during the Middle Ages.

Keywords

historiography, Ambrus Miskolczy, Hungarian-Romanian medieval coexistence