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## 17 AND 18 CENTURY RELIGIOUS BOOKS: AN EXHIBITION AT THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPT. OF THE "LUCIAN BLAGA" CUL

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The exhibition is a survey of European religious books in the 17 and 18 centuries.

At the end of the 16 century there were crucial changes in printers' and booksellers' attitude parallel to the relation between authors and editors.

As Jean Delumeau points out in his book entitled *Renaissance Civilisation*, the Catholic and Protestant reforms were the denunciation of the conscience of evil by Luther and an impulse to answer the thirst for religion of the faithful.

On a political level the Thirty Years War endangered the new equilibrium of Europe, representing the final act of a religious war that lasted for 150 years. As opposed to the Catholic reform the Thirty Years War corresponds to the Catholic counter-reform and the resistance of Protestant Europe.

In the 17 century there was an acute need for Christian doctrine; printers and booksellers were in the service of the church: they published and republished the works of the Fathers of the Church, the Bible, Catechisms and religious books. This was also stimulated by the religious orders which experienced a revival at the beginning of the 17 century.

The exhibition is conceived chronologically. It is a brief but revealing presentation of religious books in the 17 and 18 centuries in Europe but also in our country. The work of Rodolphus Hospinianus from Tiguri (Zürich) entitled *De monachis hoc est De origine et progressu monachatus ac ordinum monasticorum*, 1610, is one of the most remarkable books of the exhibition. It is about the Jesuit order founded by Ignatius Loyola.

From the several Bibles printed and reprinted the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata* printed in Lugduni (Lyon) in 1613 is exhibited. It bears the inscription of the *Colegii Societis Jesu in Cluj*. The *Lexicon Theologicum* of Joh. Henricus Alstedius printed in Hanoviae in 1620 financed by Conradus Eifridi is also between the exhibits. We should also mention the work of Jacobus Laurentius, Joannes Evangelisti et Apostoli. *Patmos hoc est Expositio septem Epistolarum, quas B. Joannes in insula Patmos scripsit*. It was printed in Holland by Hardervici Geldrorum, costs undertaken by Henricus Laurentius, bookkeeper in

Amsterdam. The author offers explanations on the preachings of John the evangelist and apostle, told in seven Asian churches in Patmos.

The life and work of Joannes Caioni, Franciscan writer and printer has a central place in the exhibition. His activity as a printer and founder of a printing press in the building of the Franciscan Monastery in Șumuleu Ciuc is placed in a European context.

From the works of Caioni we chose the second part of *Cantionale Catholicum* which contains songs, sermons, psalms and litanies. It was printed by Cassai Andras in 1676, with the permission of the superior. It has a binding from Ciuc, black leather with floral ornaments in various frames; there is a diamond-shaped floral motif in the middle of the cover, it bears the mark of two metal fasteners.

The printing press in Șumuleu Ciuc continued its activity to the 18 century. This period is represented in the exhibition by the first part of *Cantionale Catholicum*, printed in 1619. The title page of this bears the inscription that proves that it belongs to the *Conventus Mediensi* (the Franciscan Monastery in Mediaș, Sibiu county). Besides *Cantiones Catholicum* a 1993 edition of the *Codex* (private property of Papp Leonard, superior of the Franciscan Church in Cluj) also represents the monumental work of Caioni.

Publications of the Franciscan order are also exhibited, referring to problems within the order. For example, *Ortus progressus sacri ordinis Fratrum Minorum S. Francisci* by Mathias Kreislinger, printed under the auspices of Joannes Haller de Hallerstein. The inscription (*Typis Academicis Societatis Jesu, per Simonem Thadeum Weichenberg, 1736*). The *ex libris* dating from 1790 confirms that it is part of the *Biblioteca Regiae Academiae M. Varadiensis*.

A new *Ortus Progressus* of the Transylvanian Province of the Minor Order of S. Francis appears in 1737, under the auspices of the same Joannes Haller. It is printed at the Franciscan Monastery in Șumuleu Ciuc. It can be found among the exhibits.

*Imitatio Christi*, written by Thomas Kempis (between 1420 and 1430) is one of the most widely read books in the 15 century; it is a book of meditation of the Franciscan order. It presents a personal experience: it is the diary of a person who retires from the world to converse with Providence. Our library has a French version of this book entitled *De l'Imitation Jesus Christ* by his Eminence Abate de Bellegarde, printed in Liege in 1706 by Jean François Broncart, printer, merchant and bookseller. The engraving that accompanies the book represents a meditating monk. It is entitled *Oevre spirituelle*. The exhibition calls attention to the Latin work of Francis of Assisi entitled *Vita per S. Bonaventura* (*Editio novissima*, printed in Rome in 1710).

Rare books can also be found in the exhibition: *Vita da Fra Cieremia Valacco*, printed in Naples in 1670 tells the life of a Franciscan monk in Moldova. It is written by Francisco Severini. The only extant copy was found in an antiquary in Rome by Gheorghe Sion, Moldavian scholar, in March 1905. It entered the Special Collections of our library through the donation by Gheorghe Sion.

Ioan Robu, Catholic Archbishop in București wrote a preface to the 1988 edition of the above mentioned book in which he underlined that every name of saint in the Catholic calendar is a gate in history that silently waits for its opening which helps us to know the stages of the dialogue between creature and Creator.

A small section of the exhibition focusses on Franciscan reference literature. Giovanni da Capistrano (1386-1456) and two other works about Francis of Assisi represent this section: one of them in Italian, entitled *Sanct Francesco e il Cantico de Sole*, printed in Milan in 1927 and the other in German written by Henry Thode. There is also a work by Pater Gemelli entitled *Franciscanismus*, translated in Hungarian by Pater Takács Incze.

In addition to its documentary aspect the exhibition invites acquaintance with Franciscan religious literature in Europe as well as with the printings of the Franciscan printing press in Șumuleu Ciuc.