

**Muckenhaupt Erzsébet: *A Csíki Székely Múzeum “Régi Magyar Könyvtár”-a I. (1498–1710), (Early Hungarian Library Collection of the Szekler Museum of Ciuc I. (1498–1710)*, Miercurea-Ciuc, 2009. pp. 215, ISBN 978-973-0-07154-2 (vol.I)**

– Review –

*Hajnalka ILYÉS B.\**  
*Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj*

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**E-mail:** [ilyes.hajnalka@gmail.com](mailto:ilyes.hajnalka@gmail.com)

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Apart from their obvious artistic values, which delight the viewer simply by their existence, old books are silent witnesses of different historical epochs, mirrors of people’s mentality and reflections of cultural history. Acknowledging their immense value we can be grateful to all those people who are willing to present old books collections and to highlight the possibilities in using them in the reconstruction of different aspects of the former centuries.

The author, Erzsébet Muckenhaupt, is museologist of the Szekler Museum of Ciuc and a well-known researcher, who dedicated her life and knowledge to the preserving of these rarities. She published many articles and books dealing with old books and libraries. Her articles, published mainly in Romanian and Hungarian journals, are all valuable tools for scientists and it would be rather impossible to rank them according to their importance. Her main concern is the Franciscan printing press and library of Csíksomlyó (Şumuleu-Ciuc, Romania) and she is one of the “book-rescuers” of some extremely precious and rare books which once belonged to the former Franciscan Library and were considered lost till 1980. This famous event is presented in every detail in her book *A csíksomlyói Ferences Könyvtár kincsei. Könyvleletek 1980–1985.*, Budapest/Cluj. 1999 (*The Treasures of the Franciscan Library of Şumuleu-Ciuc. Bookfindings 1980–1985.*)

Such works are always welcomed in Romania because many treasures are hidden on the dusty shelves of Romanian libraries. As we can read in the *Foreword*, written by Mr Zsolt Gyarmati, Director of the Szekler Museum, this book is meant to be the first of a sequence of catalogues aiming to present the different collections owned by them. They consider that the Early Hungarian Library Collection is the

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most valuable of all; so it should be the first volume to start with. At the same time this is also a tribute to Zsigmond Jakó whose competent help contributed to the research and scientific evaluation of these books.

First of all, this book is a catalogue and it is designed to meet the specialists' expectations. It is built around two main parts, the *Catalogue* and the *Indexes*, which represent the core of the book, both literally and figuratively, because they are placed in the middle part and at the same time they form the basis of this book.

The *Catalogue* consists of the presentation of 152 early Hungarian books. This means that it includes prints in Hungarian published in any country before 1711, prints in any language published in Hungary before 1711, and foreign language prints published anywhere abroad being completely or partially the works of Hungarian authors. Some of them were donations or acquisitions (12 books) but the majority were parts of prestigious Catholic institutions: the Franciscan Monastery in Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu-Ciuc; 108 books), the Roman Catholic Gymnasium (13 books) and the Sodality of Our Lady (9 books). This explains why the majority of the books are Catholic works, Protestant ones being only the purchased books or the fragments extracted from the book covers. Also, it is very important to mention that the value of this collection is enhanced by the 11 unique copies that are in their property.

The catalogue has four parts: the *Incunables*, the *16<sup>th</sup> Century Prints*, the *17<sup>th</sup> Century Prints* and the *18<sup>th</sup> Century Prints*. The five incunables are the work of two members of the Observant Franciscans, Osualdus de Lasko and Pelbartus de Themeswar, who were extremely famous and appreciated authors of their times. Three of them preserved their original Gothic book covers and what makes them even more interesting is that all of them were found in 1985, inside the wall of the Franciscan Monastery. The extreme humidity and mould led to the partial destruction of these books and unfortunately some parts could not be saved even after the meticulous restoration process.

Then the presentation of the forty-three books printed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (from CsSzM-Kat 6 to CsSzM-Kat 47) follows. The book with number 43 is one of the most important prints because it is a Hungarian calendar fragment for the year 1590, extracted from a German type renaissance book cover during the restoration of the composite volume under inventory number 6170-71. The calendar was printed in Nagyszombat (Trnava, Slovakia) in 1589, and prior to this discovery it was just a presumable print (RMNY 631) but now, as we can find out from the author, the Museum of Ciuc is the proud owner of the first known copy. And this is just one of the many discoveries, because during the reconstruction of the binding of another 16<sup>th</sup> century book (the Clenardus-volume, inventory number 2057) fourteen various prints and the fragment of one manuscript were found. The printed fragments contain Calvinist sermons, pamphlets, partial Bible translation, church laws, essays, prayers, catechisms, chronicle songs, and love stories; only nine of them were bibliographically known works.

The enumeration of rarities continues. There are two books that are not known in either the publications included in RMK III or in the German VD 16-catalogue. One of them was published in Wittenberg in 1578 (CsSzM-Kat 32) and the other in Frankfurt in 1598 (CsSzM-Kat 47); both of them contain poetic works.

And finally we can mention here the Regulation of the Pauline Order translated by Gregorius Coelius Pannonius (Venice, 1537) and the 1581 Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) copy of Cicero's family letters, both of them being unique copies.

The majority of the books from this collection belong to the 17<sup>th</sup> century: eighty-seven prints. This section also provides us interesting items, for example the unique copy of the 1699 Şumuleu-Ciuc print (CsSzM-Kat 124), which contains explanations of the regulation of the Franciscan order and statements by Popes Nicholas III and Clement V.

The Şumuleu-Ciuc print functioned almost continuously from 1676 to 1700, yet its publications have survived only in a small number. The fact that in those times it was the only Catholic typography in Transylvania makes the books even more interesting to investigate from a scientific point of view. It is also known that the books printed in 1685, containing sermons of Hungarian and Franciscan saints, are rare worldwide, so it is easy to imagine what a priceless value they represent to this collection (CsSzM-Kat 92, 93 and 93A).

The actual description of each print is divided in two parts: the bibliographic description and the copy description. The bibliographic description starts with the name of the author followed by the abbreviated title, place of publication, printer's name, year of publication, format, length and finally, in the last line, the bibliographic references. The description of the copy has five well delimited parts marked with a capital letter each. The first part "A" attracts attention to the missing pages, then comes part "B" which contains the description and the literature of the binding. Part "C" provides information about the possessors in a chronological order wherever it is possible, while part "D" contains the further inscriptions in the volume, age and language of marginalia, and the handmade ornaments. The penultimate part "E" is used only in the case of composite volumes when a reference to the item number of the first member is included and under the first member are listed the item numbers of all the Hungarian prints presented in the book and bound together with the first. Finally, if there is any bibliography on the copy, that information can be read in part "F" of the copy description. Obviously, each copy ends with its present shelfmark or archive number.

After this chronological enumeration follow some useful Indexes, that of printing places and printers, names, possessors, titles, fragments, bindings, and a topographical one. All these can help the search for certain specific items in the catalogue or simply just ease scholarly work. The abstracts in foreign languages, in this case Romanian and English, are placed towards the end of the book and they are also helpful in forming an image about the content.

The rest of the chapters, dealing with different issues related to the collection itself (*Historical Introduction*) or containing some sort of guidance or explanations (*User's Guide to the Catalogue*, *List of Bibliographic Abbreviations*, *General Abbreviations*, *Annexed Images*) can be found at the very beginning or end of the book. The only problem occurs in the case of the *Historical Introduction* because the title itself does not cover exactly the content and the complexity of this chapter. Here, through the length of twenty eight pages, a detailed presentation of the history of the collection, the possessors and the bindings can be read. It is remarkable to find out that the author succeeded to identify 155 former owners of

these books and to provide information about the life and work of some of the most important priests, monks, teachers, and noblemen. At the same time, it is an extraordinary thing that we can also read about the 39 historical bindings of this collection. They belong to different Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque bookbinding workshops. I consider this part extremely useful and important because Erzsébet Muckenhaupt is one of the well-known specialists in this area, and her views regarding the historical bindings are always worth considering. The description of the activity of the Șumuleu-Ciuc bookbinding workshop and the identifying of twelve 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century Transylvanian bindings belonging to workshops from Cluj and Șumuleu-Ciuc have an outstanding cultural value.

The annexed images at the end of the book are all coloured and of very good quality. There are fifty pictures showing title-pages, different illustrations, or bindings of some outstanding prints.

The book itself is a sort of mirror regarding Erzsébet Muckenhaupt's admirable work and it is not just the catalogue that has to be praised but also the complex image of how many aspects can and should be taken into consideration when somebody is working with old books. The more this partial information about the print, the inscriptions, and the binding are viewed together, the more faithfully it reflects the path of books from reader to reader. And through this "voyage" of the prints, the researcher is provided with precious facts not only about the book but the social and cultural atmosphere of different periods.

**Creatures of the Night in Folk Imagination  
Mythological Characters in the Oașul Region. A Corpus of Texts  
Volume Edited by Eleonora Sava**

– A Review –

*Maria CANDALE  
Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj*

**Keywords:** ethnology, archive, corpus, mythology, Țara Oașului (Oașul region)

**E-mail:** mariacandale2005@yahoo.com

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The volume edited by Eleonora Sava and published by the Napoca Star Publisher in Cluj in 2010 (179 pages, ISBN: 978–973–647–748–5) puts together and publishes a corpus of texts, part of the ethno-folkloric documents preserved in the Archives of the Folklore Circle in Cluj, selected according to geographical and subject criteria. The researcher excerpts cards from the Archives, manuscripts referring to mythological creatures in the imagination of the people of Țara Oașului (Oașul region, northern Romania). She proposes "an image over the mythology of Țara Oașului, as it is configured by the documents extant [...]. The texts were collected