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# CLUJ: A JESUIT EDUCATIONAL OUTPOST IN TRANSYLVANIA, 1693-1773

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*For 80 years the Society of Jesus operated a complex of institutions in the Transylvanian town of Cluj, including an academy, a school for aristocratic boys, a residence, and an architecturally distinguished church. The Jesuits endeavored to convert the local population, which included Orthodox Romanians, Jews, Roma (Gypsies), Armenians, Lutherans, and Unitarians, to Catholicism and to introduce the program of studies outlined in their curricular guide, the Ratio Studiorum. While their conversion efforts met with only modest success, the Jesuits had a major impact on the culture of the region, training the local elites, introducing the Baroque aesthetic in the visual arts, operating a printing press and pharmacy, and employing outstanding scientists as teachers. The reasons for the failure of the Jesuits to make more progress in their missionary efforts may be found in both local circumstances and in the institutional culture of the Society itself. Political forces beyond the control of the Society sealed its fate, and it was suppressed by order of the pope in 1773. The vestiges of the Jesuit era in Cluj, however, are still visible today.*

## THE SETTING

Few places in Europe are less well-known and more shrouded in legend than Transylvania, a land of rolling hills and forested mountains located in northwestern Romania. Familiar to most Americans only through Hollywood-enhanced images of vampires and castles perched on crags, Transylvania has long been home to a complex collection of ethnic and religious groups. Three hundred years ago the Principality of Transylvania, after a long period of union with Hungary followed by periods of semi-autonomy and Turkish domination, had just passed into the hands of the House of



Habsburg, a remarkable family that had made the Holy Roman Empire its dynastic possession. Devoutly Catholic, the Habsburgs hoped to spread the faith to a region whose inhabitants included German-speaking Lutherans, Unitarians, Armenians, Orthodox Romanians, Jews, Roma (Gypsies), and even a few Muslims (Kiraly, 1969). The strategy for advancing Catholicism was an Act of Union promulgated in 1698 that united the Orthodox clergy to Rome while allowing the continuation of Eastern rites. Adherents to this Act were known as Uniates.

Many days' journey from the cultural centers of Vienna, Prague, and Budapest, Transylvania would serve later in the 18th century as a place of internal exile for fractious non-Catholics from the western reaches of the Habsburg lands (O'Brien, 1969). In fact, Catholics throughout the century probably never exceeded 30,000, or less than 3% of the entire population (Bahlcke, 1999). Literacy, outside the "Saxon" and Szekler (Hungarian-speaking Transylvanian) communities, was low (Pál, 1996). From a defense standpoint, the region was of great importance, bordering as it did the Ottoman Empire. Transylvania was therefore a prime candidate for missionary and educational efforts.

The obvious choice as an instrument for the conversion and education of the people of Transylvania was the Jesuits, who had become known as the leading educators of Europe (Bangert, 1972; Paulsen, 1906). The Society of Jesus had worked closely with the Habsburg dynasty since the 1550s, pressing home the message of the Church in Bohemia, Austria, Hungary, and anywhere else within the family's domain where heresy was suspected (Shore, 2000). The story of the Jesuits in 18th-century Transylvania, however, is even more obscure than the history of the region itself. Standard histories of the Society make no mention of the Jesuits' work in Transylvania during this period; and while some scholars have conducted studies on the work of the fathers in this area most of their publications are in Romanian and Hungarian, and many of these are not available in this country (Bangert, 1972). Yet the story of the Jesuit mission in Transylvania is both fascinating and instructive, a tale of achievement and failure, of contact and collision between cultures. It makes an object lesson in the application of the Society's policy of inculturation. This policy called upon Jesuits to incorporate elements of the local culture in their presentation of the message of the Gospel. While this approach occasionally resulted in accusations that the Society was compromising its principles in order to gain converts on the cheap, inculturation was often a successful strategy for reaching groups who had proven resistant to other attempts at conversion. Yet Transylvania would pose great challenges to even this missionary strategy.

The largest city and the capital of Transylvania in the 18th century was Cluj, a walled town of perhaps 8,000 inhabitants (Toca, 1983). (Throughout this essay the current, i.e., Romanian, names of locations are used; it should



be noted, however, that most localities in Transylvania have been known by German, Latin, and Hungarian names as well.) The Society had conducted missions and erected a school in Cluj as early as the end of the 16th century, but had been expelled in 1613 (Balázs, 1889; Marza, 1995). In the 1700s Cluj retained a medieval appearance, with late baroque additions: The center of this compact municipality was a market square where a 15th-century church, formerly the focal point of Catholic life in the community, was located. For several centuries this church had been in the hands of the local Reformed Christians, but the Habsburg Emperor Charles VI had it returned to the Catholics of Cluj, a sure sign of the intent of the dynasty to promote its religious agenda (d'Eszlary, 1959-1965). A crowded, filthy community that was also an important trade crossroads, Cluj was devastated several times by the plague during the 18th century and had experienced a disastrous fire in 1724 (Nilles, 1885; Raduțu & Gyémánt, 1995[?]). The town had survived civil insurrection led by Prince Francis II Rakoczi and was close to the scene of battles with the heathen Turks. Its population included an aristocracy numbering dozens of families, a German-speaking class of craftsmen: pharmacists, wheelwrights, goldsmiths, tradesmen, tailors, book binders, carpenters, saddlers, pipe makers, and members of other trades. Even a group of Unitarians from Poland had found their way to Cluj (Tazbir, 1969). Cluj was something of a cultural outpost as well: The nearest bookseller to the north was in Lwow, hundreds of kilometers away in Poland, while to the east the closest bookshop was in Iași, in Turkish territory (Magosi, 1993).

The Jesuits, who arrived in Cluj in 1693, lost no time establishing a church a short distance from the town center; this structure is said to be the first baroque building erected in Transylvania. This church, which is still standing if in a somewhat dilapidated state, was completed in 1724, its twin towers echoing the silhouette of the Jesuit church in Vienna, the Habsburg capital. The church's interior features many of the mainstays of Jesuit iconography, including busts of Saints Ignatius and Francis Xavier and a painting of the Society's Protector, St. John Nepomuk. But occupying a prominent place was also the Merciful Mary of Cluj, a painting commissioned in the first years of the church's existence (Mansi, 1997). This painting shows the influence of the local Orthodox iconic tradition and is a fitting symbol for the Jesuits' efforts to reach this population through the appropriation of local artistic styles (Sas, 1999). The region around Cluj was rich with instances of miraculous cures brought about by holy images, and the Society was happy to promote an image in their own church as a source of health, as they had elsewhere in the Habsburg lands (Royt, 1999).



## THE ACADEMY

Although Cluj was a small city, the Society had great ambitions for the academy it established there (Vencel, 1945). Starting with an enrollment of 50 in 1703, the school could claim 493 students by 1773, which meant that its students and teachers together constituted perhaps 20% of the adult male population of Cluj (Pascu, 1972). This dramatic growth is all the more remarkable when contrasted with the gradual decline in total enrollment at German universities during the second half of the 18th century (McClelland, 1980). While many of these students were of aristocratic backgrounds, others were from the burgher families of the town. Research has shown that while ethnic Hungarians and Germans predominated, ethnic Romanians were also counted among the students, a circumstance more remarkable than it might seem at first glance, as the Romanian "nation" was denied political recognition at the time (Câmpeanu, 1999). From time to time other ethnic and religious groups were numbered among the students. In 1738 a fund of 1,000 florins (The value of a florin is difficult to estimate, especially in an economy such as that which existed in Transylvania, and which was not entirely based on cash. It is known, however, that a gentleman could live comfortably in a large city on 400 florins a year. A peasant family no doubt subsisted on a tenth of this or less.) was established, the interest from which was to support a student who was a communicant of the Armenian Rite (Jakab, 1888). Twenty years earlier, a fund was created to aid 12 orphans, "the sons of Arians [Unitarians], of converts, and of those who were in the process of conversion." Yet the donor rather uncharitably specified that "deaf, mute, blind, lame, feeble minded, sufferers from ulcers and others unable to study or earn a living" were ineligible (Jakab, 1888, p. 514). While there is evidence that Roma children were enrolled in schools under Jesuit direction elsewhere in Transylvania, no Roma students have been identified in the records of the Cluj Academy.

The curriculum followed the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599, with an emphasis on ancient languages and rhetoric, but neglecting the physical sciences and mathematics (Jesuits, 1850). Doctoral theses were defended in public rituals that closely copied those conducted at the Jesuit-dominated universities of Vienna and Prague (Heller von (de) Hallerstein, 1737). In the decades before the suppression of the Society in 1773, major talent was recruited to teach there. One of the most distinguished astronomers of the day, Miksa Hell (1720-1792), spent several years working in Cluj, where he built a small observatory (Kisbán, 1942) and published scientific and pedagogical works (Hell, 1755). The intrepid Jesuit later made a journey above the Arctic Circle to observe a transit of Venus and ultimately served as astronomer to Maria Theresia and as professor of astronomy at the university of Vienna (Kink, 1854). A table of altitudes of the sun above the horizon surviving in the Cluj



Academy collection may be his work (ARC, 478; MsC, 478). Adam Fitter, a convert to Catholicism and the rector of the Cluj *collegium*, played a prominent role in the community and did much to promote Catholicism in the region (Someșan, 1999).

The collection of books acquired for the use of the professors (but not the students) of the *collegium* in Cluj was probably the largest such collection in the region. Its catalogue has not survived, but a catalogue of books concerning heterodox theology compiled for the Royal Library of Cluj in 1797 may include books originally in the *collegium* library. Some of the titles may surprise, considering the efforts made by the Society to convert non-Catholics, but Habsburg Jesuits were noted for acquiring the theological works of their competitors. The very cataloguing of this manuscript among other "Catholic documents" makes this possibility likely. Among the titles are Luther's translation of the Bible into German in a 1663 edition, John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the *Colloquies* of Erasmus, and even a Pietist book from Halle (ARC, MsC, 678ff). These volumes were probably used by Jesuit teachers and preachers to help them prepare their arguments against "heretics" and to familiarize missionaries with the beliefs of the locals. Even more intriguing is an account of a German translation of Benjamin Franklin's letters on electricity surviving in the library of the Catholic secondary school in Cluj (Mitu, 1993). Many Habsburg Jesuits were aware of Franklin's work; and one Bohemian-born Jesuit, Christian Mayer, was even a member of Franklin's Philosophical Society. Thus it is possible that Franklin's research would have been known to 18th-century instructors and students in this remote region.

In addition to the Academy (which was promoted to a *collegium* in 1753), the Society operated a school specifically for the noble boys of the region. Wealthy donors supported the institution: In 1740 the school received an anonymous gift of 2000 florins (Jakab, 1888). This school, located in the cluster of buildings that made up the Jesuit compound, offered the same curriculum as the lower classes of the *collegium*, with Latin composition playing a prominent role. The Latin poems of students at this *Convictus Nobilium* testify to the high level of mastery attained and the continuing importance of this language among the upper classes.

Music was an integrated element of the Counter-Reformation liturgical and educational program of the Society. The Jesuit church in Cluj was the scene of musical performances, some of which may have included original compositions by the members of the academy's faculty. After the Society's suppression, an inventory of the *Templum Academicum* included 18 solemn symphonies, 15 solemn vespers, 39 antiphonies to the Virgin, 1 requiem mass, and 51 other sacred works (ASC-N, Fondul Liceal Romano-catholic dosar 1, folio 10r). These polyphonic works reinforced the connection between the local culture and the artistic forms current in Central and



Western Europe that the Society constantly sought to promote. The structure of the high mass, in the context of the elaborate baroque church, reinforced the message that the Jesuits sought to convey in their schools: that of an orderly, hierarchical universe, systematic in its organization but suffused with the miraculous. The creation of beauty within the limits set by baroque compositional rules echoed the employment of syntactical and rhetorical rules in the composition of Latin and Greek prose by the students of Cluj's two Jesuit schools.

## JESUIT DRAMA AND PERFORMANCE

The *Ratio Studiorum* prescribes the uses of drama as a pedagogical tool. Plays produced by the Jesuit school not only showcased the talents of boys enrolled in the schools, but also conveyed moral lessons and theological arguments. Dramatic productions likewise were excellent publicity for the school that staged them. Like public disputations and defenses of theses, also mainstays of Jesuit education, the performance of a play was an occasion to invite the most distinguished members of the community to the Jesuit school. By the 18th century the heyday of Jesuit school drama had passed, but some of the Society's schools in Transylvania continued to produce plays until the eve of the Suppression (Shore, in press).

The Jesuit schools in Cluj produced plays in both Latin and Hungarian in 1723, 1741, 1758, 1759, 1762, and 1765 (Takács, 1937). Among the Latin plays was *Stephanus*, probably a tribute to Hungary's first Christian king; *Alexis, a Pastoral Drama*; and *The Third Declamation of Quintus Fabius Maximus*, the famed general of the Roman Republic. While neither the names of the authors nor the texts of these plays have survived, the titles themselves suggest some of the major themes favored by Jesuit playwrights. Hungarian Jesuits, fired by the notion that Hungary, whose first Christian king was said to have received a crown from the Pope and whose rulers were afterward designated as "apostolic" kings, had a special mission in Catholic history. Jesuit writers therefore often dwelled on the achievements of Hungary's Catholic heroes. Themes from Roman and less frequently Greek history were also favorites. In particular, the Roman Republican virtues of endurance and self-sacrifice were entirely compatible with the values that the *Ratio* sought to impart; and Roman settings, not coincidentally, were ideal opportunities to showcase the Latin of the pupil-performers. Audiences of that day would have had less difficulty following the action in Latin than theatregoers today, for in the 18th century Latin was still widely used among Hungarian speakers.

Virginity—its value, desirability, and relationship to holiness—was a recurring theme in Jesuit teaching. St. Stanislaus Kostka, a noble Polish youth who became a Jesuit and died nursing plague victims, was held up as



a model to students. Another theme in Jesuit drama and teaching was the cruelty and perversity of the Jews, who had rejected Christ. A play published in Cluj in 1754 combined both of these themes: *Mariophilus* (literally, "lover of Mary") *Murdered by the Jews and Restored to Life Through the Help of the Virgin* (Staud, 1984, p. 280). It is not certain whether Mariophilus was a virginal youth himself, but reports of Jews seizing and killing Christian children were rampant in the Habsburg lands, and Jews had even been linked symbolically with witches in medieval Hungary (Trevor-Roper, 1967); so it seems likely that the play, performed by young students, would have as its central character someone close to them in age. Demonization of the Jews was likely to be a crowd pleaser, although plays such as *Mariophilus* would not have helped Jesuit efforts to convert local Jews.

Jesuits also produced plays and poetic recitations in vernacular. Performances of Hungarian poetry were staged in Cluj in 1747, 1756, and 1763 (Staud, 1984). An undated manuscript of a play probably performed in Cluj in the 18th century is entitled *The Shoemaker's Shop: A School Play in Three Acts*, while another Hungarian manuscript bears the title *A Merry Play of Botfalva* (ARC, MsC 417, 418). The language and setting of these pieces were meant to appeal to a broader, less classically educated audience. Yet although Jesuit school plays in the region to the north were sometimes performed in Ruthenian (a Slavic language akin to Ukrainian and associated primarily with the peasantry), there is no trace of any performances in Cluj offered in Romanian (Takács, 1937). This may be because the town of Cluj itself had only a Romanian-speaking minority, but was also because the Society focused its attention on the upper classes, which meant that Romanians, wherever they lived, would be ignored. On the other hand, Hungarian historians have sometimes claimed that the Jesuit-supported Uniate Church was a tool of the Habsburgs against the Hungarians and that this Church, by educating ethnic Romanians, promoted Romanian culture (Szász, 1927).

The Jesuit employment of drama and poetry in a public setting shows a resourcefulness and adaptability to local circumstances that went farther than most educational programs of the day. But in retrospect this adaptability was limited by the cultural baggage of the Jesuits themselves and by the Society's slowness to perceive the changes in Habsburg policy that appeared as the century wore on. Attacks on Jews and appeals to glorious martyrdom, as exemplified by the play *St. Sebastian Martyr* (ARC, MsC 160b.), were the stuff of the Counter-Reformation. Rationality, reform, and toleration would become the watchwords of Joseph II, who became coruler with his mother Maria Theresa in 1765. Jesuit drama, conveying universal truths and a unified conception of knowledge, epitomized an approach to learning diametrically opposed to the Enlightenment *encyclopédistes* who produced specialized, independent articles on specific topics in their influential reference



work (MacIntyre, 1990). While individual Jesuits contributed to the collection and classification of knowledge along the same lines as this new encyclopedic model, the Society as an educational institution persisted in its ambitious fusion of broadly conceived themes and moral instruction, a model that was becoming obsolete. The didactic plays and public poetry performances of the students of the Jesuits of Cluj were among the last examples of this earlier educational model.

## JESUIT TEACHERS AND WRITERS

During the last decade before the Suppression, the *collegium* in Cluj had a faculty of four professors, in the fields of theology, philosophy and mathematics, languages and antiquities, and natural and civil law (*Titulare Daicium*, 1767). Lower-level classes in the *collegium* may have been taught by other Jesuits as well. The school was identified as a university by 1759, making it the only institution bearing this title in Transylvania (Hübner, 1759). While smaller than the universities of Vienna and Prague, the Cluj school had a viable program: For 1751, the last year for which complete data exist, 21 students were examined for the baccalaureate and 5 for the doctorate (Câmpeanu, 1999).

The lecture notes and other curricular material of the teachers at the Cluj *collegium* and *convictus nobilium* (children of the nobles) are lost, but it is possible to gain some picture of the interests and activities of these men by looking at the careers of a few representative Jesuits (*Catalogus personarum*, 1773; Sommervogel, 1890-1919). Next to Miksa Hell, the most distinguished Jesuit scientist to work in Cluj was Joannes Fridvalsky, who was born in Altsol, Hungary, in 1740 and served as the "historian of the house" in 1773. Fridvalsky published works on mineralogy and Roman inscriptions and received a pension from Maria Theresia for inventing a new method of making paper. Like many other Habsburg Jesuits, Fridvalsky left few traces of his activities after 1773, but it is believed that he died about 1784. The rector of the *convictus nobilium* in 1773 was Joannes Illei, who made translations of Latin verse. Following the Suppression, Illei wrote several tragedies, although there is no record of his producing dramas for Jesuit schools. Georgius Bíró spent much of his career teaching and administering in Jesuit schools of eastern Hungary and Transylvania. He served as a librarian in Cluj and remained there after the Suppression, dying in 1784. Not an author of great originality, Bíró limited himself to orations and excursions on the writings of others.

The Jesuits of Cluj were a heterogeneous group: A few had the temperaments and talents of scientists and scholars, while many others had less remarkable careers reflecting their varying degrees of ambition, talent, and motivation. The pre-Suppression Jesuits of Cluj, like Jesuits in other parts of



the world, were themselves products of the system in which they taught. These men were also shaped by circumstances that provided few other opportunities to boys seeking an education. While Transylvania and Hungary proper, from which the majority of Cluj Jesuits came, were by no means the poorest lands in 18th-century Europe, war, rebellion and Turkish occupation had retarded growth and prosperity. The urban middle class was tiny; and the nobility, although numerous (Pascu, 1982), included many poor families. The Society therefore held obvious attraction for a youth seeking to escape the drudgery of farming or the rigors of an apprenticeship.

Yet while the Jesuits could offer a sense of identity, a classical education, and the prestige of the most visible order in the Church, an assignment to a community such as Cluj was filled with difficulties. Despite their familiarity with local languages, the Jesuits of Cluj seem to have achieved a doubtful connection with the community in which they worked and the students whom they taught. After 80 years of educational and pastoral work, the Jesuit priests had not recruited any known local boy to their ranks (some Jesuit brothers, or *coadjutores temporales*, were probably from the region; these men did not receive the same education as a Jesuit priest). This fact, coupled with the modest degree of interaction the Society maintained with the Romanian community and the meager number of Jews, Gypsies, and Protestants who were converted through the efforts of the Jesuits, compels us to modify the impression left by the Society's baroque edifices and the confident Latinity of its annual reports (OSK, sign. 2039, FMI/1608). Counterbalancing the image of success and expansion is a less distinct picture of a solitary group of men far from home, laboring in an environment valuing their work as teachers but more resistant to their theological message. Talented, organized, and with the power of both church and state at their backs, the Jesuits were still strangers in Cluj.

In assessing the impact of the educational mission of the Society throughout the eastern Habsburg lands, we must distinguish between curriculum and instruction. The *Ratio* curriculum did not survive the Suppression in schools in central Europe, except for the handful to which the Jesuits were eventually allowed to return. The *Ratio educationis* promulgated for Hungary in 1776 bore little resemblance to the Jesuit educational program (Fazakas, 1997). In Cluj, the Piarists, who took control of the Jesuit schools and church in 1773, continued to teach Latin but did not follow the rigorous model of the Jesuits (ASC-N, Fondul Liceal Romano-catolic [The holdings from the Roman Catholic secondary school], dosar 1). In fact, the reaction against the Jesuit model had begun earlier in the 18th century. By the 1750s the *Ratio* curriculum had few defenders outside of the Society, in part because it was seen as outdated, but also because of the unpopularity of the Society itself.

The specifics of actual classroom practice in 18th-century Cluj are lost to



us today, but clues remain of the surviving writings of some of the teachers. The anonymous author of Hungarian language plays exhibited imagination and adaptability, as well as an awareness of everyday life as his students might have experienced it. A Romanian historian has pointed out that the professors of the Cluj *collegium*, while they were not themselves Romanian, produced works on Romanian history (Mălinas, 1994). Like many other Jesuit missions, the Cluj undertaking counted in its ranks men who were curious about the cultures around them and who sought to reach these cultures through investigations into their languages and histories. How these traits translated into teaching techniques and to what degree these Jesuit teachers made use of the modest amount of instructional freedom allowed by the *Ratio* can never be known for certain.

## TEACHING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

The distinction between missionary and educational activity that is easily made in the 21st century would have been largely incomprehensible to a Jesuit educator of the 18th. While there were obvious differences between academic lectures and rural missions, all the activities of the Society were unified by the central goal of all the Jesuit undertakings, to bring people to a knowledge of God. The institutional structure of the Society reinforced the integration of these two activities, one primarily academic and the other evangelic, through its constant moving of Jesuit priests from site to site and through the employment of the same priest successively in academic and missionary assignments. Not all Jesuit academics served as missionaries and many missionaries did not return to the classroom, but the educative and evangelizing elements of the Jesuit mission remained intertwined. Theology informed the curriculum and pedagogy shaped the context in which religious experiences took place and the manner in which they were recorded.

Popular piety in Transylvania, as in many other locations in early modern Europe, manifested itself in special veneration for holy objects. One of the most frequently encountered of these objects was the image of a saint or Jesus that behaved in some particularly human fashion. An example of this phenomenon was the "weeping icon," whose tears were attested to by witnesses (Nicoară, 1997, p. 125). Other holy images might have rolled their eyes or emitted a pleasant fragrance. In 1768, the convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Kolosmonostra, a short distance from Cluj, reported that an icon of the Virgin had shed tears. The credibility of the report was bolstered by the testimony of a Calvinist witness (ASC-N; Fundul Liceal Romano-catholic, folios 21r-24v).

Jesuits also reported the miraculous behavior of images. Joannes Baptista Josa recorded in 1756 that as far back as 1728 sweat had appeared on the forehead and face of an image of Christ on the cross (ASC-N; Fondul Liceal



Romano-catholic, folios 5rff). Jesuit missionaries and pastoral clergy placed special emphasis on such events because of the evidence they offered of the capacity of God to intervene directly in the material world. Instead of aberrations to be feared, the miraculous behavior of images showed that health and escape from untimely death were possible through the actions of an all-powerful and merciful God (Pammer, 1994).

By choosing not to combat local expressions of folk magic but instead to use these familiar forms to convey their own cosmology, the Jesuits avoided conflict either with Orthodox clergy, who had long endorsed such miracles, or with pious laypersons. But when belief in the miraculous was promoted within a teaching order that included scientists working within a rationalist framework, individual Jesuits had to negotiate their own theological and philosophical positions. Evidence suggests that some Jesuits were able to hold rationalist positions on scientific matters while simultaneously hewing to an intolerant line when it came to theology. An autographed letter by Hell denounces Lutheran-dominated universities as "incubators of whoredom" with all the ferocity of a 16th-century polemicist (OSK, sign. 405.558). Clearly the prerationalist view of knowledge was still a force in Hell's thinking.

Eighteenth-century Jesuit educators had to cope with a tension between rationalist and prerationalist ways of knowing, between empirical and revealed knowledge. Their mission called them to use the miraculous as a pedagogical tool, even as they trained their own students to think systematically. Moreover, the Jesuits of Cluj confronted an especially strong local tradition of folk magic that encouraged them to pay particular attention to prerationalist modes of thinking. In the classrooms of the Cluj *collegium*, systematic scientific inquiry was scarcely visible. Beyond the classroom, it was nowhere to be found.

## THE JESUIT CONTRIBUTION

While the Jesuits who labored in Cluj were not successful in their efforts to bring the majority of the population to the faith, they did make important contributions to the local culture. For eight decades they trained the elites of the region, both Hungarian- and Romanian-speaking, establishing a library and a printing press, producing plays, and erecting buildings that still dominate the center of Cluj. While the Society experienced considerable success worldwide in its efforts to draw upon elements of whatever culture in which it found itself, the Jesuits in Transylvania were stymied by ethnic differences and by the Society's association with the dominant dynasty. The overwhelming majority of Jesuit fathers working in Cluj were ethnic German or Hungarian, in some cases originating from distant corners of the Habsburg realms. As such they would have been viewed as foreigners by many of the



residents of Cluj. Even more importantly the Jesuits, as loyal supporters of the Habsburgs, would have been associated in the minds of many of the locals with the religious and political repression undertaken by the dynasty.

A major project of the Society, the Uniate Church, which preserved the rituals of the Orthodox faith while acknowledging the authority of Rome, gained the support of much of the local clergy but never garnered much enthusiasm among the laity, who perhaps did not grasp the significance or necessity of acknowledging the authority of Rome (Ghibu, 1924). Decades of religious instruction and missionary work were unable to dispel the mistrust and hatred stemming from the repression of all vestiges of regional independence. In 1773, despite years of effort by Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries including a special Jesuit mission from Bohemia, only 11% of the more than 1,000,000 inhabitants of Transylvania had become Uniates (Bodea & Căndea, 1982). While the Habsburg dynasty lent political authority and frequently functioned as a source of artistic inspiration for Jesuit educators, the imperial family was a potential liability in a remote setting hundreds of kilometers from the center of Habsburg power. To both Hungarian-speaking and ethnic Romanian residents of the region, the Society represented an alien force not only in the areas of ethnicity and religious practice but also in its allegiance to the champions of a triumphant Catholicism tied to imperial pretensions, the Habsburgs. Yet sectarian divisions occasionally had to be set aside: The fathers were still useful to the community even after the Society had been banned, for in the years following 1773 former Jesuits continued to teach at the town's *Gymnasium*.

## CONCLUSION

The Jesuit teachers and missionaries who established themselves in Cluj during the 18th century did so armed with the resources the Society carried to all parts of the world: rigorous academic training; a tested curriculum; the support of a hierarchy with close ties to the centers of political power; and, perhaps most importantly, the human capital of the Jesuits themselves. Why then did the educational project of the Cluj Jesuits not meet with more lasting success? The answer lies not only in the circumstances in Transylvania mentioned above but also in some of the characteristics of the Society as an educational and missionary organization. While the Jesuits strove to be an international, even supranational, organization, they were inevitably drawn into the local political scene. In Transylvania, this meant contending with the desire for independence from Habsburg control, cultural differences between the constituent groups of the community, and the ethnic associations of the Jesuits themselves.

Despite the willingness of many of the local Orthodox clergy to accept the authority of the Pope, there remained, as we have seen, a large number of



Orthodox communicants separated from their Uniate brethren. In 1766, three quarters of a century after the Habsburgs promoted the union of the two churches, there were still 56,000 Orthodox communicants in the Cluj region alone who remained separate from the Uniate Church (Beju & Hitchins, 1991). The roots of this resistance lay in the linguistic and cultural gulf between the preaching and teaching fathers and the Orthodox Romanian peasantry. While the Jesuits embarked with their typical enthusiasm for linguistics on the project of studying Romanian, they did not write or publish in this language. Only three Jesuit priests teaching in Cluj—Stefan Dorna, Ioan Illei, and Vasile Dobra—can be identified even provisionally as being of possibly Romanian origin. While difficult to assess, longstanding animosities between Hungarians and Romanians may have contributed to the failure of the Jesuits to score the sort of success they achieved in converting and educating predominantly Protestant Bohemia during the previous century.

While we must view with caution the claims of Romanian and Hungarian nationalist historians concerning the degree of national consciousness evident in the various groups living in Transylvania, the Romanian character of a bloody popular uprising in 1784 does point to an evolving sense of Romanian identity among the rural peasantry (Prodan, 1971). Much of what the Jesuits brought to Cluj in the way of doctrine and discipline remained alien to the local population, for whom Orthodoxy and Romanian culture were a unified whole (Gyémant, 1995). The Uniate clergy, whatever their motives for joining with Rome, seem to have known little Latin and depended on communications written in Romanian, which in the 18th century still used an alphabet related to Cyrillic (Moldavanu, 1872). The Jesuits concentrated on their customary strategies of using holy and miraculous objects and absorbing local healing practices into their own repertoire (ARC dosar 1, folio 12r; Hsia, 1998). By building a sizeable library, producing didactic plays, and cultivating ties with local aristocratic families, the Society repeated the techniques it had used in other parts of the Habsburg lands to establish itself securely. Had external events taken another turn, these strategies might eventually have been enough to overcome the peculiar local difficulties the Society confronted in Cluj.

Yet at the very moment when enrollment in the Cluj *collegium* was rising and the literary output of the fathers was being maintained at a remarkably high level, the future of the entire project was in jeopardy. In Rome, emissaries from the Bourbon courts of France and Spain would soon pressure the Pope into suppressing the Jesuits. Even their longtime patrons, the Habsburgs, would tacitly approve this move, recognizing that they stood to gain from the confiscation of Jesuit properties, which could then be parceled out to allies and favorites (Krones, 1871). The Jesuits of Cluj, like their confreres elsewhere, seem to have known nothing of this momentous change of heart by their greatest allies. There is no evidence that the Cluj Jesuit com-



munity made any provisions for the impending loss of their schools and church to the Piarists, their rivals. The very optimism and determination that enabled the Society to establish such a strong presence in the Habsburg lands ultimately blinded it to the dangers it faced both externally and internally.

## POSTSCRIPT

The Society of Jesus survived the 41 years of its official suppression in a greatly reduced condition, shielded by the Imperial Court of Russia (Gagarin, 1872). After their restoration in 1814, the Jesuits made a partial return to the Habsburg realms but never regained their preeminent position in education. In 1918 Transylvania became part of Romania, and Catholics found themselves a tiny minority in a predominantly Orthodox society. The Jesuits remained underground during the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu, reemerging after the revolution of 1989. Meanwhile Cluj had exploded with the influx of villagers forced from their homes by Ceausescu's industrial programs. A small Jesuit community now works in one of the high-rise clusters surrounding the old city. Its records dispersed or destroyed, its memory clouded by nationalist and Communist historiography, the story of Jesuit mission to 18th-century Cluj awaits further investigation and its proper inclusion in the cultural and educational history of the region.

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 ASC-N = Arhivele Statului Cluj-Napoca [The State Archives]  
 Fondul Liceal Romano-catolic [The Holdings from the Roman Catholic Secondary School]  
 MsC = Manuscrite catolice [Catholic manuscripts]  
 OSK = Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest [The National Széchényi Library]  
     sign. 405.558 *Diplomata Bullae, Privilegia, Libertates...*  
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