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Timotei Cipariu, the First Romanian Scholar of Arabic and Collector of Oriental Books in Transylvania

1 Introduction

As a Romanian historian and theologian from Transylvania, I am especially grateful to be given the opportunity to write about one of the outstanding personalities of Romanian culture in general and of Transylvania in particular: Timotei Cipariu (Fig. 1). I have to admit from the very beginning that the topic was a challenge for me, because the eminent Greek Catholic theologian, philologist, linguist, educator, historian and Orientalist Timotei Cipariu is an extremely complex figure about whom much has been written in Romania.¹ It is no coincidence that his profile page on the *europaea.eu* platform describes him as “a Transylvanian Erasmus”, considered “the father of Romanian philology”.² However, I noticed that, on an international level, he has been forgotten, being almost unknown today, which is unfair, considering his status as a self-taught Orientalist, appreciated in the 19th century for his vast knowledge by scholars such as the German historian Theodor Mommsen (1817–1902), who visited him in Blaj in 1857, or the French Romance philologist Émile Picot (1844–1918), private secretary of Prince Charles of Romania (1866–1867), vice-consul of France in Timișoara (1868–1872), and professor (1875–1909) at the *École des langues orientales vivantes* in Paris (today, Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, INALCO), who also visited him in Blaj in 1868 and with whom he corresponded.³

1 See four bio-bibliographical notes on his life and work in M. Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici, profesori și vicari foranei din Biserica Română Unită (1853–1918). Dicționar*, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, p. 135–141; M. Păcurariu, *Dicționarul teologilor români*, Sibiu, 2014 (3rd, revised edition), p. 143–145; M. Păcurariu, D. N. Rusu, *Teologi români și străini membri ai Academiei Române*, Sibiu, 2016, p. 178–180; E. Simion (coord. ed.), *Enciclopedia literaturii române vechi*, Bucharest, 2018, p. 227–229.

2 <https://www.europaea.eu/en/blog/timotei-cipariu-a-transylvanian-erasmus> (accessed December 2, 2023).

3 V. Nițu, T. Vedinaș, *Timotei Cipariu: arhetipuri ale permanenței românești*, Cluj-Napoca, 1988, p. 71–72, 76.

2 Transylvania

Many readers may be wondering where the town of Blaj lies. Answering this question gives me the opportunity to start off with a brief account on Transylvania. The next two sections are dedicated to Timotei Cipariu's biography, activity, and library, with a special focus on his Oriental manuscripts and printed books, including the Arabic ones.

Unfortunately, after the publication of the Irish writer Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* in 1897 and its screen version distributed by the Hollywood film industry, Transylvania has become internationally associated with vampires, Prince Dracula, and horror films.⁴ I can assure you that this is all a legend, fiction that bears no connection to historical or contemporary reality. Neither I, nor my Romanian colleagues have ever encountered vampires in our home region.

Transylvania is a geographical and historical region of Romania,⁵ surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains. Due to its history and the nations that have lived here, it is known historically by several names: *Transsilvaniae* and *Transilvania* in Latin, *Transilvania* and *Ardeal* in Romanian, *Erdély* in Hungarian, and *Siebenbürgen* in German. Over the last two millennia, it was first part of the Kingdom of Dacia, then, for two centuries, a province of the Roman Empire, in the Middle Ages it was a voivodeship within the Kingdom of Hungary,⁶ and then an autonomous principality under Ottoman rule (1526-1688).⁷ Between the Treaty of Carlowitz and the Treaty of Trianon, it was part of the Habsburg Monarchy, and on December 1, 1918, it united with Romania, in accordance with the democratic will of the majority of the local population.⁸ And since the conference in preparation for this volume took place in “die einstige thüringische Residenzstadt”, where, thanks to the Saxon Electors, the town and the region became a “Schauplatz” of Martin Luther and the history of German Protestantism, I feel compelled to point out that the Principality of Transylvania played a significant role in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) on

4 For details, see <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jonathan-Harker> (accessed December 2, 2023).

5 K. W. Treptow (ed.), *A History of Romania*, 3rd ed., Iași, 1997; K. Hitchins, *The Identity of Romania* (2nd, enlarged edition), Bucharest, 2009; I. A. Pop, I. Bolovan (eds.), *History of Romania. Compendium*, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

6 I. A. Pop, Th. Năgler (coord. eds.), *The History of Transylvania, Volume I: (until 1541)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005.

7 I. A. Pop, Th. Năgler, A. Magyari (coord. eds.), *The History of Transylvania. Volume II: (from 1541 to 1711)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2009.

8 I. A. Pop, Th. Năgler, A. Magyari (coord. eds.), *The History of Transylvania. Volume III: (from 1711 to 1918)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

the side of the Protestant coalition.⁹ It is no coincidence that some of the Calvinist princes of Transylvania had links to Thüringen, and a statue was erected in Bad Kissingen to honor one of them, Franz Rákoczy II (1676–1735), the “Erzfeind der katholischen Habsburger” (“a sworn enemy of the Catholic Habsburgs”).

Blaj is a small town (around 18,000 inhabitants at the 2021 census) located in the middle of Transylvania, which developed due to the establishment there of the See of the Romanian Uniate Episcopate in 1738 and, from 1855 onwards, that of the Romanian Greek Catholic Metropolis of Făgăraș and Alba Iulia, which turned it into the religious and cultural center of the Romanians united with the Church of Rome. Greek Catholicism in Transylvania was created between 1697 and 1701 through the union of a part of the Transylvanian Romanians with the Church of Rome, in the spirit of the Unionist Council of Florence (1438–1439). The union was controlled by the Court of Vienna and the Jesuit fathers and signed by the (formerly) Orthodox Metropolitan Atanasie Anghel and by most of the Romanian archpriests of Transylvania.¹⁰ In 1754, thanks to the Bishop Petru Pavel Aron, the first public school in Transylvania that used Romanian as the language of instruction was opened in Blaj. In the decades that followed, a Greek-Catholic theological school was added, followed by a secondary school for the four to eight grades, which functioned until the autumn of 1948, when the Greek-Catholic Church was dissolved, according to the Soviet model, and “reunified” with the Romanian Orthodox Church.¹¹ Timotei Cipariu studied and then taught at these schools in Blaj.¹²

3 Timotei Cipariu

Throughout its history, Transylvania has produced personalities and scholars famous in Romanian and European history and culture. Among these personalities is the Greek Catholic canon Timotei Cipariu. Cipariu was born on February 21, 1805, in the village of Pânade, 10 km north-east of Blaj. His parents, Jacob Cipariu

9 J. Arndt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg 1618–1648*, Stuttgart, 2009; G. Volkmer, *Siebenbürgen zwischen Habsburgermonarchie und Osmanischen Reich. Völkerrechtliche Stellung und Völkerrechtspraxis eines ostmitteleuropäischen Fürstentums 1541–1699*, Oldenbourg, 2015, p. 335–357, 372–409.

10 On the history of the Romanian church united with Rome, see A. V. Sima, *Afirming Identity: The Romanian Greek-Catholic Church at the Time of the First Vatican Council*, Milan, 2013.

11 C. Vasile, *Între Vatican și Kremlin. Biserica Greco-Catolică în timpul regimului comunist*, Bucharest, 2023; E. Cosmovici, *Desfășurarea „lichidării” Bisericii Române Unite în 1948*, Târgu Lăpuș, 2020.

12 N. V. Fola, *Școlile Blajului între anii 1850–1918: evoluția instituțională și contribuții la dezvoltarea elitelor intelectuale românești*, Târgu Mureș, 2009.

and Salomia Truța, were Romanian serfs, descendants of families of priests. Timotei was the fourth of the family's five children, four boys and a girl, of which only two boys reached adulthood. In his autobiographical notes, Cipariu reveals that, as a child, he began to learn to read Romanian, Latin, and Greek.¹³ In the spring of 1814, at the age of nine, he writes: "I have learned to read Greek, using a grammar book by Alvári, using the Latin alphabet".¹⁴ The same source suggests that he had a remarkable memory and was able to memorize whole pages after a single reading. The example he gives is the *Odes* of Horace.¹⁵ Between 1814 and 1821, he attended primary and secondary school in Blaj, then studied philosophy and theology at the Greek Catholic Seminary, from which he graduated in 1825. At that time, not only Latin, but also Greek and Hebrew were studied at the Blaj Seminary, which was also a tradition in German Evangelical secondary schools in Transylvania. The canon Ioan Micu Moldovan (1833–1915), who knew him, mentions that Timotei Cipariu was taught Hebrew at the theological seminary by Professor Teodor Pop (1782–1835), then learned Arabic on his own, writing in Latin and Arabic as fluently as in his mother tongue.¹⁶ Noticed by his superiors, Cipariu was appointed teacher at the Blaj Secondary School the very year he completed his studies.¹⁷

In 1826, he joined the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Blaj as a novice, but gave up after a few months. In 1828, he was appointed professor of philosophy, then of dogmatics and later of biblical studies at the Blaj Seminary. In the records of the Făgăraș Episcopate in 1835, he is mentioned as a teacher of Hebrew and Greek at the Episcopal Secondary School, professor of biblical studies, philosophy and religion at the Theological Seminary, and director of the diocesan press,¹⁸ which he headed until 1866. In 1827, the Bishop Ioan Bob ordained Cipariu as a celibate priest. In 1842, he became a canon, and in 1876, a capitulary provost.

In addition to his teaching positions and honorary titles, he also held a number of administrative positions at the Archdiocesan Center of Blaj, such as archiepiscopal vicar general and president of the marital court,¹⁹ director of the Secondary School,

13 T. Cipariu, *Jurnal*, edition, preface, notes and glossary by M. Protase, Cluj, 1972, p. 71–78.

14 Cipariu, *Jurnal*, p. 82–83.

15 Cipariu, *Jurnal*, p. 77–78.

16 I. M. M[oldovan], "Timotei Cipariu, date biografice", *Unirea*, XV, 1905, 25–26, p. 223.

17 Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici*, p. 136.

18 *Schematismus venerabilis cleri graeci ritus catholicorum Dioeceseos Fogarasiensis in Transilvania, pro anno a Christo nato MDCCCXXXV, ab unione cum Ecclesia Romana CXXXVIII*, Blaj, p. 5, 7.

19 Until 1894, when civil marriage was introduced in the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Transylvanian churches held broad legal powers in marital matters. During the 19th century, the Greek Catholic Diocese of Făgăraș had a consistory court that judged all marital

and school inspector in Blaj (1854–1875).²⁰ In the summer of 1868, after the death of the Metropolitan Alexandru Sterca Țuluțiu (1794–1867), Timotei Cipariu was one of the three candidates nominated by the electoral synod for the Metropolitan See. Ioan Vancea received 59 votes, Timotei Cipariu, 49, and Ioan Negruțiu, 36. Thus, on November 21, 1868, the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austro-Hungary appointed Ioan Vancea de Buteasa, the bishop of Gherla, who was confirmed as metropolitan by the Holy See on December 21, 1869.²¹

Timotei Cipariu was also involved in the national movement of the Romanians of Transylvania and Hungary as a member of the national committee of 1848, a member of the Romanian deputation that travelled to Pest and Vienna to advocate for the Romanian cause, then as a deputy in the Transylvanian Dieta (Parliament) of Sibiu (1863–1864).²² In 1861, he participated in the founding of the Association for Romanian Literature and Culture of the Romanian People of Transylvania, the most important Romanian cultural forum in Hungary until 1918. He contributed to the development of the association as its vice-president (1861–1867), then president (1877–1887). In 1866, he was one of the founding members of the Romanian Literary Society of Bucharest (Societatea Academică Română), forerunner of the Romanian Academy.²³

He was one of the pioneers of Romanian journalism in Transylvania, founding and publishing the first Romanian newspaper that used the Latin alphabet: “Organul luminării” (“The Organ of Enlightenment”), in 1847–1848. He was the editor of “Învățătorul poporului” (“The People’s Teacher”), in 1848, and editor of “Archivul pentru filologie și istorie” (“Archive for Philology and History”), the first Romanian journal of philology, published in Blaj in 1867–1870.²⁴ Timotei Cipariu wrote works of history, literature, linguistics, philology, folklore, poetry, and memoirs.²⁵ He was an avid collector of rare Romanian and foreign books, manuscripts

matters of the Greek Catholic clergy and laity. This was the only court to judge and pronounce divorce. For details, see: D. Deteșan, D. Covaci, E. C. Holom, “Laic laws governing the Romanian families in Transylvania in the second half of the 19th century”, in A. Fauve-Chamoux, I. Bolovan (eds.), *Families in Europe between the 19th and the 21st Centuries. From the Traditional Model to the Contemporary PACS*, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 575–591.

²⁰ Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici*, p. 136–137.

²¹ I. Cârja, *Biserică și societate în Transilvania în perioada păstoririi Mitropolitului Ioan Vancea (1869–1892)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 44.

²² Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici*, p. 137–138.

²³ Nițu, Vedinaș, *Timotei Cipariu*, p. 42–46, 53–56; S. Maier, C. Necula, *Asociațiunea ASTRA – recuperarea unei Memorii culturale*. Volume II: *Președinții*, Bucharest, 2021, p. 33–49.

²⁴ Nițu, Vedinaș, *Timotei Cipariu*, p. 35–52; Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici*, p. 139.

²⁵ Popa-Andrei et al., *Canonici*, p. 139–140.

and coins and came to own the largest private Romanian library in Transylvania.²⁶ He entertained a rich correspondence with his contemporaries in Transylvania and the Romanian Principalities, as well as with various scholars of his time, and with publishing houses and bookshops throughout Europe, the Levant, and Egypt.²⁷

Contemporary witnesses and book titles in his library testify to the fact that Timotei Cipariu was a true polyglot and a Renaissance encyclopedist with an obvious vocation for universality.²⁸ The fourteen languages Cipariu mastered were: his native Romanian, Hungarian and German, commonly spoken in Transylvania at the time, alongside the classical languages (Greek, Latin and Hebrew), then the modern European ones (French, Italian, Spanish, and English); also, curiosity drove him to the study of Oriental languages (Arabic, Turkish, Syriac, and Persian). He acquired and collected early printed Romanian and Western books and manuscripts, especially incunabula, and Oriental manuscripts throughout his life. His notes and letters, preserved to this day, reveal that he wrote in Romanian, Latin, German, Hungarian, Italian, Greek, and Arabic.²⁹

Scholars of his life and work have shown that Cipariu's fields of excellence were linguistics and philology.³⁰ He conducted systematic research in the history of language, philology and comparative linguistics. Carmen-Gabriela Pamfil, the author of a doctoral thesis entitled *Timotei Cipariu, Linguist and Philologist*, states, among others, that Timotei Cipariu showed great interest in the study of ancient languages, which is evident from his numerous readings from the works of the great Indo-Europeanists of the time, which he cited in his writings and even translated to some extent. He has lists of equivalents between Sanskrit, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and Arabic, which are found in his notebooks that amount to over 5,000 pages.³¹

Timotei Cipariu passed away at the age of 82 on September 3, 1887, in Blaj, and was buried in the cemetery of the Greek Catholic parish church.

26 See S. Puiu, D. Daisa, *Biblioteca lui Timotei Cipariu. Catalog*, vol. I–V, Cluj-Napoca, 1990.

27 I. Botezan, Al. Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală Timotei Cipariu. Catalog*, Bucharest, 1982, p. 15–459; L. Botezan, I. Botezan, Il. Cuibus, *Timotei Cipariu: corespondență primită*, Bucharest, 1992.

28 C.-G. Pamfil, *Timotei Cipariu – lingvist și filolog*, Iași, 2009, p. 10–11.

29 Botezan, Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală*, p. 42–453.

30 M. Popa, *Timotei Cipariu, ipostazele enciclopedistului*, Bucharest, 1993, p. 166.

31 Pamfil, *Timotei Cipariu*, p. 21–22.

4 Timotei Cipariu's Library and Oriental Books

Writing in 1884, the German ethnographer Rudolf Bergner, author of *Siebenbürgen. Eine Darstellung des Landes und der Leute*, reports that he visited Cipariu in 1883 at his home in Blaj and was deeply impressed by his erudition and his library:

Everywhere there are Latin, Greek and French scholarly works, while on the tables and floor lie clustered huge stacks of Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Turkish, and Persian books. All these languages are known to the old man around whom the Blaj school was formed. What a wealth of knowledge, what a mountain of work is concentrated here! In his study, unadorned and simple, worthy of a philosopher, one sees Hungarian, German, Romanian, Spanish, French, Italian, and English writers, all in a row, all read through, all well-known.³²

The Hungarian historian Jakó Zsigmond (1916–2008) was the one who recreated the history of Cipariu's library by reconstructing the stages of its assembly.³³ Cipariu's extant correspondence reveals his extensive network of contacts with prominent booksellers and antiquarians across Europe, including Vienna,³⁴ Leipzig,³⁵ Berlin, Gotha, Wrocław (Breslau),³⁶ Sibiu,³⁷ Budapest,³⁸ Cluj,³⁹ Alba Iulia, Timișoara, Brăila, Oradea, Aiud,⁴⁰ Bucharest,⁴¹ and Istanbul. He also had contacts in Cairo, London, Lviv, and St. Petersburg.⁴² It is not known exactly how much he spent on books, but it is certain that investments were substantial and constant. Even after Cipariu was buried, the post still kept delivering his orders to Blaj. Despite the destruction of a large part of his library during the revolution of 1848, when he lost more than half of the over 3,000 volumes he owned, at the end of his life, the library amounted to more

32 R. Bergner, *Siebenbürgen. Eine Darstellung des Landes und der Leute*, Leipzig, 1884, p. 117.

33 Z. Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, with an introduction by V. Căndea, Bucharest, 1977, p. 310–361.

34 Such as Wilhelm Braumüller, Carl Gerold, J. F. Gress, Josef Klemm, Carl and Markus Greif, then Johann Schratt, Prendel et Meyer, Carol Sartori, and the Mechitharisten-Congregation.

35 F. A. Brockhaus, Kirchhoff, Wigand, and K. F. Köhler.

36 Such as A. Ascher and Friedländer in Berlin, Friedrich Andreas Perthes in Gotha, and H. Skutsch-Schlettersch in Breslau.

37 Theodor Steinhausen, Samuel Filtsch, Johann Thallmayer, and W. Krafft.

38 Adolf Hartleben, Johann Liebrich, and Friedrich Liedman.

39 Such as Emil Mathernay, Johann Stein, and Burián Pál.

40 Moses Klüger (Alba Iulia), F. G. Rösch and Gabriel Bettelheim (Timișoara), Ioan Faranga (Brăila), Karoly Fenyvessy and Daniel Pauker (Oradea), and Johann Winkler (Aiud).

41 Visarion Rusu, Johann Scarlat, Soccec, C. H. Wartha, and Iosif Romanov.

42 Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 352–354; Botezan, Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală*, p. 139, 154, 163–164, 192–205, 208, 210, 216–218, 223–225, 239, 290–296, 320, 330, 332–334, 342–348, 358, 381–384, 397, 400–401; Botezan, Botezan, Cuius, *Timotei Cipariu*, p. 146–247.

than 6,000 volumes and manuscripts.⁴³ In the autumn of 1862, Cipariu wrote the following to Ioan Maiorescu⁴⁴ in Bucharest:

I have a library of about 4–5,000 volumes (including around 200 manuscripts, mostly Oriental and Latin), which I would sell if I could find a buyer. [...] And, if you don't need them, I will sell them to some German or Englishman, for which purpose I first intend to publish a catalogue of the manuscripts and Oriental books, then of the others.⁴⁵

He then gave up on the idea of selling it and continued to expand his library. In his will, he left the library and his material possessions to the Greek Catholic Capitulary of Blaj, on condition that the library be made available to the public in a suitable location and be carefully kept as a separate unit. Such a location was only completed in the summer of 1916, but, because of the war, the collection was moved to the cellar, then transported to Oradea. During these hasty operations, the Cipariu collection became mixed up with the legacy of Augustin Bunea and Ioan Micu Moldovan. Zenovie Pîclișianu attempted to separate them to some extent, as most of Cipariu's books bore no mark of ownership. In 1949, the Cipariu library was moved to Cluj and is now part of the collections of the Library of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca.⁴⁶ Years later, Cipariu's library was inventoried and an alphabetical catalog of the books was published in five volumes. The catalog of the Cipariu library includes 5,577 volumes, 4,627 of which are preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Cluj and 950 are part of the Timotei Cipariu Documentary Library in Blaj. However, the Oriental books, which have not been inventoried, are not included in this catalog; they add up to about 885 volumes.⁴⁷

In 1834, Timotei Cipariu bought his first Oriental books and manuscripts from Iosif Romanov in Bucharest. His first trip to Vienna opened his eyes to the European book market and, on all his subsequent trips, he acquired books directly or through the bookseller Steinhausen of Sibiu.⁴⁸ In 1840, he contacted Simion Petroviciu in Istanbul, then Petroviciu's broker in Cairo, with the intention

⁴³ Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 335–348.

⁴⁴ Ioan Maiorescu (1811–1864), Transylvanian intellectual with theological studies in Blaj, Pest and Vienna, involved in the 1848 revolution in Wallachia and Transylvania, later, professor in Bucharest, Cernăuți, Iași and Craiova.

⁴⁵ Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 357.

⁴⁶ Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 358–359.

⁴⁷ Puiu, Daisa, *Biblioteca lui Timotei Cipariu*, vol. I, p. I–XIV.

⁴⁸ Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 320–321.

of enriching his Oriental collection.⁴⁹ He subscribed to the London bookshop of W. H. Allen, a company specialized in importing Oriental works to Europe. Through Allen, Petroviciu and Steinhausen, Cipariu's library received Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Syriac and Hebrew manuscripts, as well as the latest literature in the field of Oriental studies published in German.⁵⁰ His library catalogs include Oriental manuscripts from the Gesenius and William Morley collections. Cipariu also obtained information by consulting the reports published in the journals of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* and the *Journal Asiatique*. Before 1848, Cipariu's library contained the latest analytic and synthetic works, as well as dictionaries concerning the language, literature, history, geography, and ethnography of the Oriental peoples, composed by 76 authors, such as Adler, Biesenthal, Bohlen, Caspari, Dombay, Gesenius, Hoffman, Henzius, Leberecht, Moser, De Rossi, De Sacy, Westergaard, Ullmann, Vuller, Zunz, and others.⁵¹ Based on his travel notes and correspondence, it appears that, on all his visits to cities of the Austrian Empire, Germany, Italy, Romania, and the Ottoman Empire, Timotei Cipariu would visit libraries, take notes, and establish contacts. It is known for certain that he himself collected excerpts from manuscripts and books at libraries in Vienna, Rome, Gotha, and Jena, either copied by himself or commissioned to others.⁵² It is also important to note that in his library is stored a two-hundred-page address book of all German libraries, published in Dresden in 1845.⁵³

One may, of course, ask what motivated a Greek Catholic priest like Cipariu to learn Arabic. How, from which professor, and when did he learn it? His first request for Oriental books and manuscripts to the bookseller Romanov in Bucharest dates from 1836, which means that he approached Arabic and other Oriental languages on his own. In 1838, he travelled to Vienna, where he met Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856), the famous Austrian Orientalist, with whom he corresponded

49 Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 314–317, 322. Excerpts of Petroviciu's correspondence with Cipariu can be found in Botezan, Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală*, p. 297–301, and Botezan, Botezan, Cuibus, *Timotei Cipariu*, p. 227–234.

50 Jakó, *Philobiblon transilvan*, p. 331–332.

51 M. Guboglu, "Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul 'T. Cipariu' al Bibliotecii Filialei din Cluj a Academiei R.P.R.", *Limbă și Literatură*, III, 1957, p. 151–166; Y. Goldenberg, "Timotei Cipariu – un arabisant roumain du XIX^e siècle", *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, 9, 1977, p. 67–73.

52 Guboglu, "Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul 'T. Cipariu'", p. 151, 166; Goldenberg, "Timotei Cipariu – un arabisant roumain", p. 68; Y. Goldenberg, "Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu", *Analele Universității București. Seria Științe Sociale. Filologie*, 11, 1962, 25, p. 475–479, 487–488.

53 *Adressbuch deutscher Bibliotheken*, herausgegeben von Julius Petzholdt (2nd, improved ed.), Dresden, 1845. Recorded in Puiu, Daisa, *Biblioteca lui Timotei Cipariu. Catalog*, vol. I, p. 9.

and from whom he acquired 20 books.⁵⁴ During that same year, he wrote to his friend George Barițiu⁵⁵ that he was striving to copy “the poetry of the Arabs with diligence”.⁵⁶ From his correspondence with George Barițiu in the summer of 1841, we find out that on his journey to Istanbul he stopped for almost two weeks in Bucharest, where he met an Arab and took daily lessons in Arabic diction: “I have been going every morning for two hours and we both read a course about Jews and Christians from the Koran and others. We tell each other stories”.⁵⁷ Among Cipariu’s manuscripts, there are several notebooks containing extracts and notes in Arabic written by himself between 1839 and 1877.⁵⁸ The first copied notebook dates from 1839–1844 and contains reading notes, the rules of Arabic grammar and spelling, fragments of classical Arabic poetry, metrical and prosody rules, as well as a list of 24 titles of Oriental manuscripts, which, in 1840, were part of his library (Fig. 3).⁵⁹

Having studied Cipariu’s Oriental books and handwritten transcripts, the Arabist and philologist Yves Goldenberg (1929–1979)⁶⁰ remarked that the theologian of Blaj possessed some of the most valuable Arabic books and made notes and corrections on them:

[Timotei Cipariu] was an Arabist who not only mastered the reading and writing of Arabic to perfection, alongside several Semitic and Oriental languages, but also had a broad understanding and deep knowledge of both the Arabic language and Arabic history and culture. [...] He was a valued Arabist who researched the most important works of classical Arabic literature with great passion and competence, and studied most of the fields that Arabic culture

54 Goldenberg, “Timotei Cipariu – un arabisant roumain”, p. 67.

55 George (or Gheorghe) Barițiu (June 4, 1812 – May 2, 1893) was a Romanian publicist, historian, politician, and founder of the Romanian press in Transylvania. He was a founding member (1861), then president (1888–1893) of the “Astra Association for the Literature and Culture of Romanians in Transylvania”, a founding member of the Romanian National Party in Hungary and Transylvania (1869), its president in 1884–1889, and a founding member of the Romanian Academy (1866). His chief historical work is *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pre două sute de ani în urmă* (*Selected Moments of the History of Transylvania over the Past Two Hundred Years*), published in Sibiu in three volumes between 1889 and 1891.

56 Cipariu to Barițiu, Blaj, 10 June/29 May 1838, in Șt. Pascu et al., *George Bariț și contemporanii săi*, vol. IV, Bucharest, 1978, p. 131, and in T. Cipariu, *Epistolar 1836–1877*, ed. I. Chindriș, Bucharest, 2005, p. 65.

57 Cipariu to Barițiu, Bucharest, 18/30 August 1841, in Cipariu, *Epistolar 1836–1877*, p. 100.

58 Botezan, Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală*, p. 449–453.

59 Botezan, Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală*, p. 449.

60 Yves Nathaniel Goldenberg (1929–1977) taught Arabic language and literature at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Bucharest between 1957 and 1977. See https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yves_Goldenberg (accessed December 18, 2023).

included during its periods of splendor: language, grammar, lexicography, literature, prosody, history, geography, philosophy, theology, and Islamic law.⁶¹

It was no wonder that Timotei Cipariu was elected ordinary member of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* of Halle and Leipzig on May 1, 1846, a year after the founding of the society.⁶² Cipariu corresponded with the members of the society and paid his annual fees, as shown by his archives.⁶³ Between 1849 and 1852, he dedicated part of his time to the study of Arabic rhyme and versification and worked on Jean Humbert's Arabic anthology, published in Paris in 1819, from which he copied excerpts. During that same period, he travelled to Gotha, Halle, and Vienna, where he copied Arabic texts and poems. For example, at the Gotha library he copied the Arabic poems in *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-Aghānī*.⁶⁴ His passion for Arabic poetry can also be seen in the chapter titled "Arabic versification" devoted to Arabic metrics in his book *Elemente de poetică, metrică și versificațiune* (*Elements of Poetics, Metrics and Versification*) published in Blaj in 1860.⁶⁵ Cipariu learned Arabic so well that his corrections can be seen on some Arabic and bilingual volumes. For instance, on Dr Wolff's study *Zwölf Gedichte Abu Ishak's*, published in *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Göttingen, Band III, Heft 1, p. 64), Cipariu's corrections consist of vowel markings on the Arabic poetic texts. He addressed a letter in Arabic to Professor Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer of Leipzig, in which Arabic lines of poetry, corrected by Cipariu and translated into French, are reproduced at the end.⁶⁶ He could memorize Arabic verses, as recorded in his autobiographical notes.⁶⁷ Ioan Bianu (1856–1935), the director of the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest (1884–1935), who knew Cipariu well, mentions that until his old age, the Blaj

61 Goldenberg, "Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu," p. 475–476.

62 C. Tatai, O. Rotaru, "Materiale arhivistice referitoare la activitatea lui Timotei Cipariu", *Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis*, 11, 1973, p. 796. On page 802, the authors reproduced Cipariu's certificate of membership of the society, issued in Halle and Leipzig on May 1, 1846. See below, Fig. 2.

63 Botezan, Matei (eds.), *Arhiva personală*, p. 26–28.

64 On June 22, 2023, while participating in the 2nd international conference of the TYPARABIC project, I studied, thanks to Feras Krimsti's kindness, two of the Gotha Research Library's foreign visitors' catalogs (*Einschreibebuch der Fremden*, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha der Universität Erfurt, Gotha, Signatur A. 2032) dated between 1803 and 1895, but did not find Timotei Cipariu's name among the readers who signed in these registers. For the Gotha Research Library, see <https://www.uni-erfurt.de/en/gotha-research-library> (accessed December 18, 2023).

65 T. Cipariu, *Elemente de poetică, metrică și versificațiune*, Blaj, 1860, p. 153–159. The book is accessible in the digital library of the Central University Library "Lucian Blaga" of Cluj-Napoca: https://documente.bcucuj.ro/web/bibdigit/fg/BCUCLUJ_FG_184808_1860.pdf (accessed December 20, 2023).

66 Goldenberg, "Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu", p. 482–488; Goldenberg, "Timotei Cipariu – un arabisant roumain", p. 71–73.

67 Cipariu, *Jurnal*, p. 78, 86.

philologist read Arabic literature in particular, “about which he loved to speak, and spoke with great enthusiasm”.⁶⁸

Yves Goldenberg, alongside Mihail Guboglu (1911–1989), a known scholar of Turkish studies, who both studied Timotei Cipariu’s collection of Oriental manuscripts and printed books in the Library of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca, concluded that there are about 600 volumes (from a total collection of 885), including 550 Arabic books and 159 Oriental manuscripts (a total collection of 197), of which 115 are Arabic and 36 Turkish and Persian, while the rest are Hebrew, Chinese and Tibetan. Most of the Arabic manuscripts and printed books are works of philology, grammar, literature and poetry.⁶⁹ Here is a brief statistical presentation of them:⁷⁰

a) Twenty-nine grammars of the Arabic literary language, some of which address the dialects spoken in Egypt, Syria, and Algeria. Evidently, he was interested in the dialects spoken in Arab countries. His library also contained grammars of the Arabic language in French, Latin, and German.

b) Twenty-three Arabic dictionaries, among them the famous Arabic-Latin dictionary *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum* compiled by Georg W. Freytag and published in Halle in five volumes in 1830–1837; other Arabic dictionaries published in Cairo, Constantinople, Beirut; three Arabic lexicographic works; catalogs of Arabic and Oriental manuscripts from the great libraries of Europe, such as Gotha, Munich, Leiden, the British Museum in London, and Vienna, as well as from Cairo, which is a clear indication that he had direct connections with Arab countries.

c) Forty-three texts, divided in 88 volumes, represent a rich collection of classical literary anthologies known in Arabic as *adab*.

d) Forty-one volumes of poetry collections, comprising masterpieces of Arabic poetry. Cipariu’s passion for Arabic poetry can be seen in his notebooks that contain Arabic poems copied from various manuscripts. These are poems from the pre-Islamic era, the Abbasid epoch, the Middle Ages, and Arabic poetry from Spain. Cipariu was in touch with the literary movement in Arab countries and followed developments closely. He owned four volumes by the poet Nāṣif al-Yāziji, published in Beirut in 1853, 1856, and 1864.

e) Forty history books in 90 volumes, written in Arabic, which were his sources for the study of the history of Muslim countries in the Middle Ages, including the writings of the Arab historian Ibn Khaldūn, published in seven volumes at Cairo,

68 I. Bianu, *Monumente culturale*, Bucharest, 1904, p. 48.

69 Guboglu, “Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul ‘T. Cipariu’”, p. 147–151; Goldenberg, “Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu”, p. 479; Goldenberg, “Timotei Cipariu – un arabisant roumain”, p. 68; Nițu, Vedinaș, *Timotei Cipariu*, p. 153.

70 Based on Goldenberg, “Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu”, p. 479–488.

1865. He owned Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary of famous people of the Islamic world, *Wafāyāt al-a'yān*, the Paris edition of 1842, Göttingen, 1835–1850, and Cairo, 1858. Alongside these works there are 15 titles of books on geography.

f) Twenty-eight titles of works of Muslim dogmatics, mysticism, and exegesis, in 58 volumes, including al-Zamakhshārī's commentary on the Qur'ān, Cairo, 1864, in two volumes; books on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, such as *Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, Ferdinand Wustenfēld's edition, vol. I-II; several books on Muslim jurisprudence and translations into Arabic.

g) Biblical texts, such as *Pentateuchus Mosi*, *Arabice*, Leiden, 1622, alongside Christian Arabic texts: *Novum Testamentum Arabice*, Leiden, 1616, the *Interpretation of the Psalms* by Eusebius of Caesarea in the translation of Bernardus de Jenisch (1791), a Syriac Gospel book, and the Four Gospels in Arabic, Leipzig, 1864.

h) Six Arabic-language notebooks written by Timotei Cipariu contain notes extracted from various Arabic books and manuscripts, signed "T. C." and dated in Romanian, with the registration shelfmarks of the manuscripts from which they were copied. Another eleven large notebooks, copied in Arabic and bound in cardboard, contain Arabic poems.⁷¹

According to Yves Goldenberg, who studied the Arabic manuscripts in Cipariu's collection closely, they are written either on high quality, glazed, thick paper of a yellow hue, or on white, pink, and rose-colored paper, but of inferior quality. The older ones are of Turkish-Levantine origin, the newer ones of European origin. Some are bound in yellow morocco leather, silk, velvet or good quality cloth, with artistically executed designs, some embroidered in gold in the form of Oriental arabesques. Other items are paperback, while others are preserved only in part, without a beginning or an end. They all carry various notes to the texts, in the beginning and end of the manuscripts, most of them mentioning historical events, solar eclipses, birthdays, reproductions of Ottoman Turkish documents, and most often the names of the owners, sometimes confirmed by round seals, or accompanied by a brief religious formula or a verse from the Qur'ān. A few are adorned with beautiful miniatures drawn in vivid hues, the preferred colors being red, gold, and blue.⁷²

Arabic manuscripts, in verse or prose, are written in classical and medieval Arabic, with linguistic influences ranging from Baghdad to northern Spain. Persian manuscripts are written in pre-Modern Persian, the language of Firdawsī (d. 1020),

71 Goldenberg, "Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu", p. 487–488; Y. Goldenberg, "Quelques notes concernant les manuscrits arabes autographes de Timotei Cipariu", *Analele Universității București. Limbi clasice și orientale*, XX, 1971, p. 113–123.

72 Guboglu, "Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul "T. Cipariu", p. 147–148.

Iran's greatest poet. Turkish manuscripts are written in *fasih türkce*, a heavily Persianized and Arabicized literary Turkish. Most of the manuscripts begin with the familiar religious formula: *Bi-smi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, "In the name of the all-merciful and gracious Allāh" (the *basmala*). Some manuscripts end with the name of the copyist accompanied by the epithet *al-faqīr*, "the humble one", and the date of completion.⁷³

The Islamic manuscripts (Arabic-Turkish and Persian), which make up much of this collection, are written in Arabic script. Most manuscripts have a literary content: poems, written in *ta'liq* script, or educational, in *thuluth* script, with thick strokes and decorative markings. A few are historical or religious, financial or accounting-related (*siyākat* script). They are written in very dark black ink (*mürekep*), which has not lost its luster, and in some of them red ink (cinnabar) was also used, to highlight headings or the most important passages and to frame texts. Other colors can be seen in the miniatures, such as blue, purple, rose, pink, green and yellow. The final parts are sprinkled with grains of golden sand (*altun rik*).⁷⁴

The content is rich, diverse and of great interest. Most of the volumes are of a linguistic and literary nature. They include dictionaries, encyclopedias, vocabularies, conversation guides, poetry, prose, works on grammar and style, treatises on calligraphy, ceremonial speeches, templates of epistolary correspondence used by the chancelleries of the Muslim Orient. This should come as no surprise, given that their owner, Timotei Cipariu, was primarily concerned with Arabic philology and literature, not with historical matters or theological works.

Twenty-five of them were copied by him personally from rare manuscripts found in the libraries of Vienna, the Vatican, Gotha and Jena. Timotei Cipariu even wrote an incomplete *Grammatica Arabica (Pars. I)* that remained in manuscript. There is also a small number of philosophical, judicial and ethical manuscripts, some treatises on geometry, physics, astronomy and medicine. Out of Cipariu's 159 Oriental manuscripts, fifteen are religious, of which eight are copies of the Qur'ān and various studies or commentaries on it.⁷⁵ A considerable number of manuscripts belong to the famous Arab grammarian and writer al-Ḥarīrī of Basra (al-Baṣrī, 1054–1123). The most important of these is the *Maqāmāt*, which contains 50 stories recounting the adventures of one Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī. According to Mihail Guboglu, in 1864, Timotei Cipariu copied a series of extracts from the collected

73 Guboglu, "Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul 'T. Cipariu'", p. 148–149.

74 Guboglu, "Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul 'T. Cipariu'", p. 149–151.

75 Guboglu, "Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul 'T. Cipariu'", p. 151–159.

Arabic manuscripts, which, in his notes, is titled *Collectie poetica e carmenibus celeberriorum poetarum arabicum XLIX dicta "Gehre al'arabi"*.⁷⁶

5 Conclusions

This passion for Oriental studies, and especially for Arabic studies, is remarkable in the case of Timotei Cipariu, as he had no academic background in Oriental studies, but was self-taught. This shows his great passion for culture, capacity for work, discipline, and perseverance. Yves Goldenberg points out that Cipariu was not merely a collector of Oriental books and manuscripts, as some Romanian scholars claimed, but “the first outstanding figure of 19th-century Romanian culture who succeeded in studying in depth the Arabic language, literature, history, and culture in general”.⁷⁷ It is now up to the contemporary Arabists of Romania to draw up a rigorous catalog of the Oriental manuscripts in Cipariu’s collection instead of the only one available now, incomplete and faulty (in an improvised form, in a single copy on typed sheets), and a complete catalog of the Oriental printed books held by the Library of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Guboglu, “Manuscrisele și tipăriturile orientale din Fondul ‘T. Cipariu’”, p. 156.

⁷⁷ Goldenberg, “Preocupările de arabistică ale lui Timotei Cipariu”, p. 488.

⁷⁸ See the chapter signed by Nicholas Bishara in the present volume.



Fig. 1: Timotei Cipariu, lithography, Public Domain, <https://www.europeana.eu/ro/blog/timotei-cipariu-a-transylvanian-erasmus> (accessed December 19, 2023).

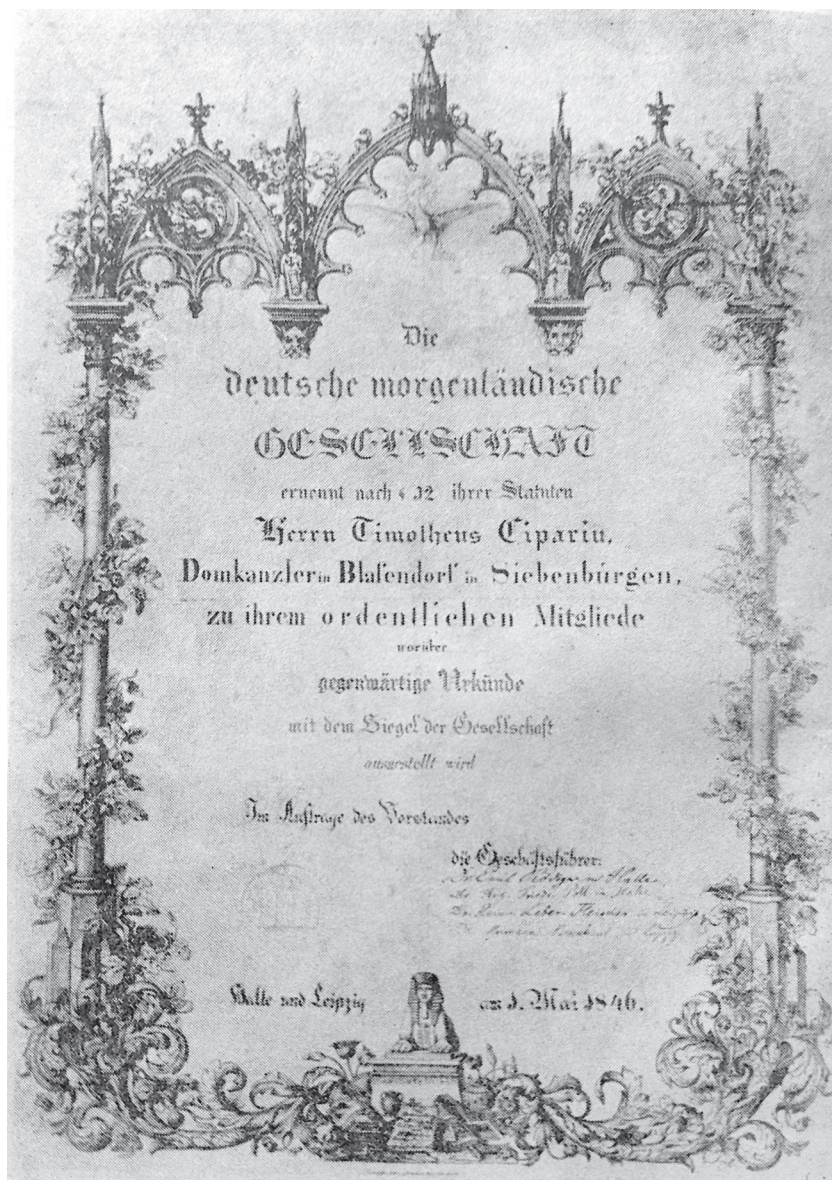


Fig. 2: Timotei Cipariu's certificate as a member of the German Oriental Society, Halle & Leipzig, 1846 (cf. Cornel Tatai, Octavian Rotaru, "Materiale arhivistice referitoare la activitatea lui Timotei Cipariu", *Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis*, 11, 1973, p. 802).

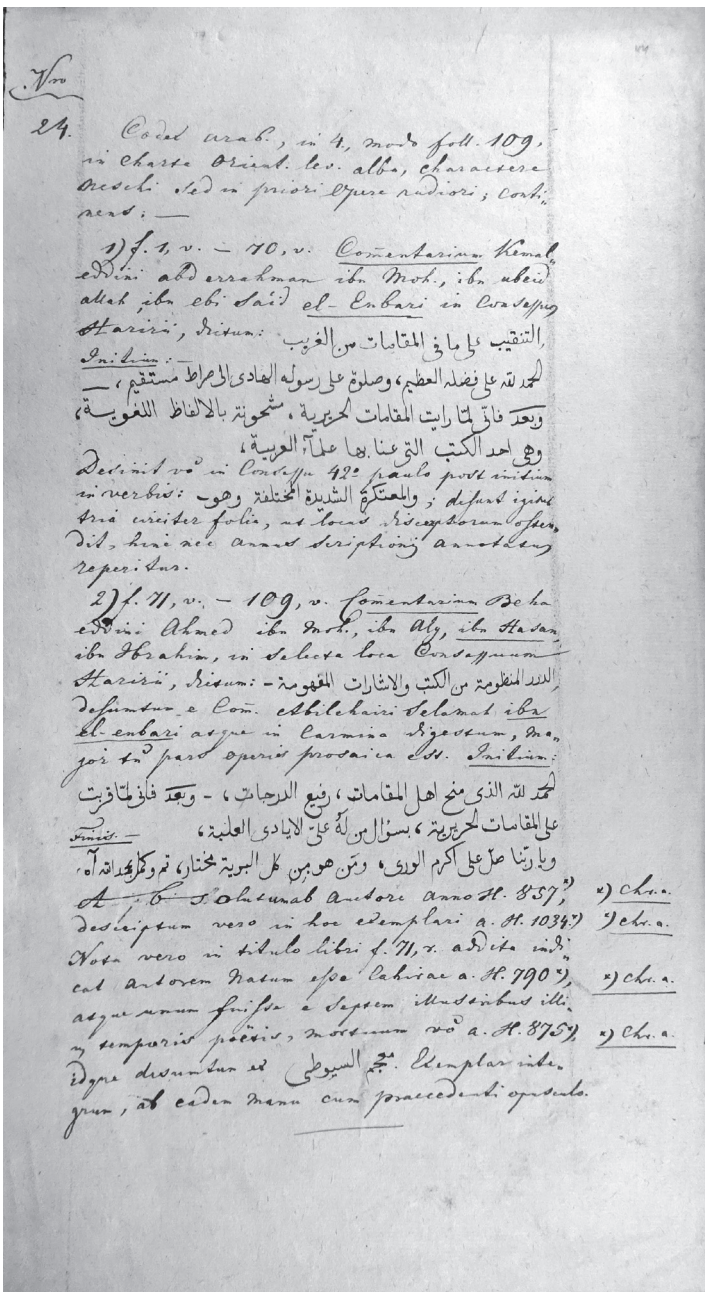


Fig. 3: Timotei Cipariu's Arabic notes in MS 02, f. 44, Library of the Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca (by permission of the Library).

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