

**Résumé:** La décoration murale peinte découverte et restaurée à l'intérieur de la Maison Closius, qui abrite aujourd'hui le Musée de la Civilisation Urbaine de Braşov, située dans la place principale de la ville, reflète les phases historiques de construction, datant entre le XVI<sup>e</sup> et le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles. L'étape de 1800, mieux documenté et préservé, se caractérise par un programme néoclassique unique, avec des têtes antiques peintes en grisaille et des motifs allégoriques rococo adaptés d'après le Livre des Arts de François Boucher, qui ont été intégrés dans le concept général.

**Keywords:** Braşov, Transylvania, mural painted decoration, Renaissance, Baroque, François Boucher, Neoclassicism.

The Closius House, No.15 Piaţa Sfatului / Marktplatz / Town Hall Square in Braşov, which hosts today the Urban Civilization Museum, preserves structural and artistic components from several historical stages of evolution<sup>1</sup>, being one of the three residential buildings that form what was previously called the Short Row / *Kurze Zeil am Ring*, Apple Market / *Apfelmarkt* and, later, Fruit Row / *Obstzeile*, on the southern side, between the Black Church and the Merchants' House (Fig. 1). According to Gernot Nussbächer's research, the building situated on the corner, at the intersection with Apollonia Hirscher Street, formerly the Fish Market / *Fischmarkt*, which connects the main square of the city with the Upper Walls via the Cloths Market / *Cotzenmarkt*<sup>2</sup>, belonged at least from the second part of the seventeenth century to the Closius family, which was one of most important Saxon patrician families of Braşov<sup>3</sup>, and was part of the *Corpus Christi* neighbourhood, unlike the other two buildings from no. 16, the Albrich/Hiemesch and Giesel Houses, which belonged to the *St. Catherine quarter*.

## THE MURAL PAINTED DECORATION OF THE CLOSIUS HOUSE IN BRAŞOV

*In memoriam Gernot Nussbächer (1939–2018)*

Dana Jenei

The three buildings of the Short Row had a parallel evolution in the Middle Ages and in the Premodern Period, but the Closius House was significantly remodelled later than the other two, so that its appearance today is largely due to the interventions made in 1800. Nevertheless, the architectural elements and artistic components preserved *in situ*, show that the residence was rebuilt several times on the medieval foundations preserved at basement level, with the walls much withdrawn to north and east, compared to the ground- and first-floor levels. Originally, the house of an elongated rectangular plan, with the short side facing the square, had a longitudinal roof with a triangular gable, and a narrow parallel uncovered side passage towards the adjacent house, as seen in J. I. Haas's cityscape, from the *Prospect der in Fürstenthumb Siebenbürgen*, 1735, compiled by Johann Conrad von Weiss, Colonel of the Austrian Imperial Army and Director of Fortifications in Transylvania / *Fortifikations-Director in Siebenbürgen*, beginning with 1729<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 2).

The oldest mural of the Closius House preserved is a green *Rankenmalerei*, from which only a small fragment was found during the exploratory works, on the east wall of the ground floor corner *Saal* above the later vault, showing that the space originally had a ceiling

(Fig. 3). The wall painting in black on a green background is enclosed by a simple rectangular frame preserved on two sides, and has figures hidden within the vegetation: the bust of a woman to the left of the bunch of scalloped notched leaves symmetrically arranged, and below, the heads of three children or *putti* with a hairstyle current in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, when art at Braşov was dominated by Gregorius Pictor, mentioned in documents between 1521

and 1551<sup>5</sup>. The most important example of the kind is preserved in Transylvania in the choir of the church in Daia (c. 1510, Harghita county), but Green Chambers, as the festive halls of the noblemen and urban aristocrats residences were known, are mentioned by inventories of the castles of Chioar (Maramureş district) and Mănăstirea (Cluj district), a fragment being still preserved in the castle at Iernut (Mureş district)<sup>6</sup>.



Fig. 1 – The Houses Closius-Albrich/Hiemesch-Giesel, on the southern side of the main square in Braşov.



Fig. 2. – Closius House in J.I. Haas's Braşov cityscape, for Johann Conrad von Weiss' *Prospect der in Fürstenthumb Siebenbürgen*, 1735, detail.

<https://maps.hungaricana.hu/en/HTITerkeptar/34909/view/?pg=3&bbox=162%2C-2220%2C3989%2C-2>.





Fig. 3. – Closius House, the lower corner room, fragment of green *Rankenmalerei* c. 1530.  
Photography by Ioana Munteanu-Zărnescu.



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Around 1560, the Closius House was reconstructed and redecorated in the late Transylvanian Renaissance style, as were the other two houses of the row, being provided at ground floor with a gallery with arcades on pillars, at least on the side facing the Fish Market, as mentioned in the later documents, but the portico in front of the Giesel and Albrich/Hiemesch Houses, highlighted by restoration, could have existed along the entire façade of the three buildings towards the *Marktplatz*, with any trace of it in front of the Closius House, as it was more aggressively altered than the others. Fragments of Renaissance tripartite windows with mullions were discovered above the two window gaps facing the

square, but were removed by the architects who regarded them as merely reused lintels (Fig. 4). These sculpted decorative stones, contemporary with the portico, and extremely important for the history of the house during the early modern period, however, are today exhibited inside the museum (Fig. 5), alongside other stone fragments which actually come from the Giesel House, such as the door-frame dated 1566 and a bifora window, which have no connection to the Closius House<sup>7</sup>. Another erroneous information perpetrated is that the Giesel House accommodated the first pharmacy of the city, which in reality functioned in a building on the site of the present no. 17 Piața Sfatului, as Gernot Nussbächer has clearly shown<sup>8</sup>.



Fig. 4. – Closius House, stone window frame in fragments found in the façade during restoration works, 1995. Photography by Daniela Marcu-Istrate.



Fig. 5. – Closius House, stone window frame fragments, c. 1560, the Museum of the Urban Civilization of Braşov.

During this phase of construction, the lower corner *Saal* of the Closius House was covered by the present semi-cylindrical longitudinal vault, which conceals the older fragmentary green wall-painting left above, while a thin wall, later removed, separated a narrow vestibule towards the entrance of the house from the Fish Market, with painted decoration now extremely abraded, the floral-vegetal motifs being best preserved at the intrados of the corresponding window (Fig. 6)<sup>9</sup>.

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The Great Fire of 1689, perpetrated by the Austrians in revenge for the resistance of Braşov's inhabitants against the inclusion of Transylvania in the Habsburg Empire, destroyed the most important buildings in the centre of the city. In the aftermath of the Fire, the Closius House underwent another significant remodelling, being extended to the square through a segment of vault of Baroque style, in 'basket-handle' section, visible in the lower corner room<sup>10</sup>, whose

vault and walls were covered by stalks, leaves and large flowers painted in delicate light pink-ochre tones against the dark blue background, the architectural surfaces being delimited by whitish borders (Fig. 7). This decoration was first repainted on the original outlines, then completely covered by a modern oil painting of peacocks in a garden, with a brown fence and flowers on a yellow background, applied at the end of the nineteenth century, after the removal of the partition wall, as stated in the restoration project (Fig. 8)<sup>11</sup>.

The former passage, partially covered by the first floor, was restricted to the length of the present inner courtyard, towards which was created a narrow vestibule with two cross-vaulted bays on consoles, decorative ribs and a central floral element made in plaster (Fig. 9), similar to the adjacent Albrich/Hiemesch house, whose introductory space to its own inner courtyard is dated by the carved stone frame of the doorway to 1720<sup>12</sup>. The twentieth century alterations removed the vestibule's northern and southern walls, substituted by central pillars.





Fig. 6. – Closius House, the lower corner room, traces of the wall decoration, c. 1560.



Fig. 7. – Closius House, the lower corner room, painted decoration of the first decades of the eighteenth century.



Fig. 8. – Closius House, the lower corner room, painted decoration of the end of the nineteenth century.



Fig. 9. – Closius House, the new vestibule to the inner yard, first decades of the eighteenth century.

The phytomorphic mural ensemble in the new lower room facing the square, covered by a hybrid semi-cylindrical vault, shares the same technical characteristics as the corner *Saal* decoration, but the large painted flowers on sinuous stems, which constitute a regular compositional network, are different in shape and colour, with a festive exuberant chromatic, predominant blue in complementary contrast to the orange background (Fig. 10), being very similar to the paintings of the Chapter House, known from older watercolour copies, descriptions<sup>13</sup> and samples of the restores in 2014 (Fig. 11)<sup>14</sup>. This first layer was later covered by a second decoration, also phytomorphic, but less accurate painted, with individual motifs on a white background, symmetrically composed, and not reticular, the architectural surfaces being outlined by a repetitive decorative motif of vegetable inspiration painted in black. The two fragmentary layers of floral paintings, both extremely fragile from a technical point of view, were preserved by the restorers “as they were found”, being difficult to perceive separately (Fig. 12).

During the first decades of the eighteenth century, when the house was rebuilt and redecorated after the destructive fire in 1689,

the owner of the house was Martinus Closius (1686–1752)<sup>15</sup>, styled as PRIMARIUS in the inscription which marks the reconstruction of the Merchants House in 1749<sup>16</sup> (date confirmed by the chronogram included in the first two lines, according to Malcom Jones), and IUDEX BRASOVIENS[IS], in his portrait aged 65, from 1751, now in the Art Museum in Braşov (No. inv. 248)<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 13). His eulogy of 1752, printed in *Cronstadt: gedruckt von Martino Fernolend*, is held by the Evangelical Church A. C. of Romania – Braşov Parish (No. inv. IV:F:97.12)<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 14), while his funeral monument is exhibited inside the western hall of the Black Church (No. inv. III.103)<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 15), facing the tomb slab of his father of the same name, Martinus Closius (1655–1691) (No. inv. III.106)<sup>20</sup> (Fig. 16).

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The acts of the Magistrate of Braşov from 1785 and 1858, brought to light by Gernot Nussbächer, provide important information about the interventions that radically changed the building and the architectural elements lost on the Fish



Market side, mainly the portico, first built-in, then demolished and, aligned to it, a small booth which protected the access to the cellar<sup>21</sup>.

In 1785, Martin Traugott Closius (1744–1789), Archdeacon at the Black Church and Rector of the German Gymnasium<sup>22</sup>, requested approval to enclose the portico arcades, claiming the need to strengthen the

construction, certified by the expertise of a military engineer. Despite the negative response of the City Magistrate, who did not accept the decommissioning of the portico, considered a public utility, the owner closed the space and arranged “sales vaults” with doors to the street<sup>23</sup>, for which intervention he obtained the agreement of the *Gubernium* of Transylvania in Sibiu retrospectively.

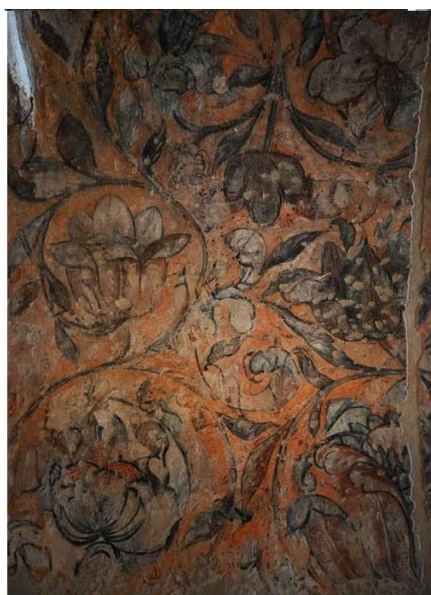


Fig. 10. – Closius House, the new lower room, painted decoration, first decades of the eighteenth century.

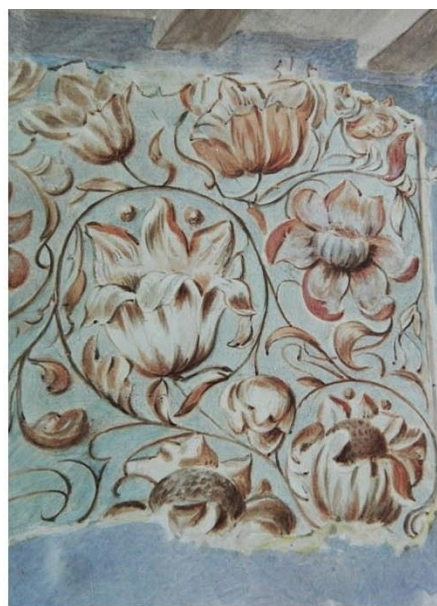


Fig. 11. – Chapter House of the Black Church, watercolour copy of the painted decoration, County Department of National Archives, Braşov.



Fig. 12. – Closius House, the new lower room, the two layers of painted decoration, eighteenth century.





Fig. 13. – Martinus Clovius 1751, The Museum of Art in Braşov © (No. inv. 248)



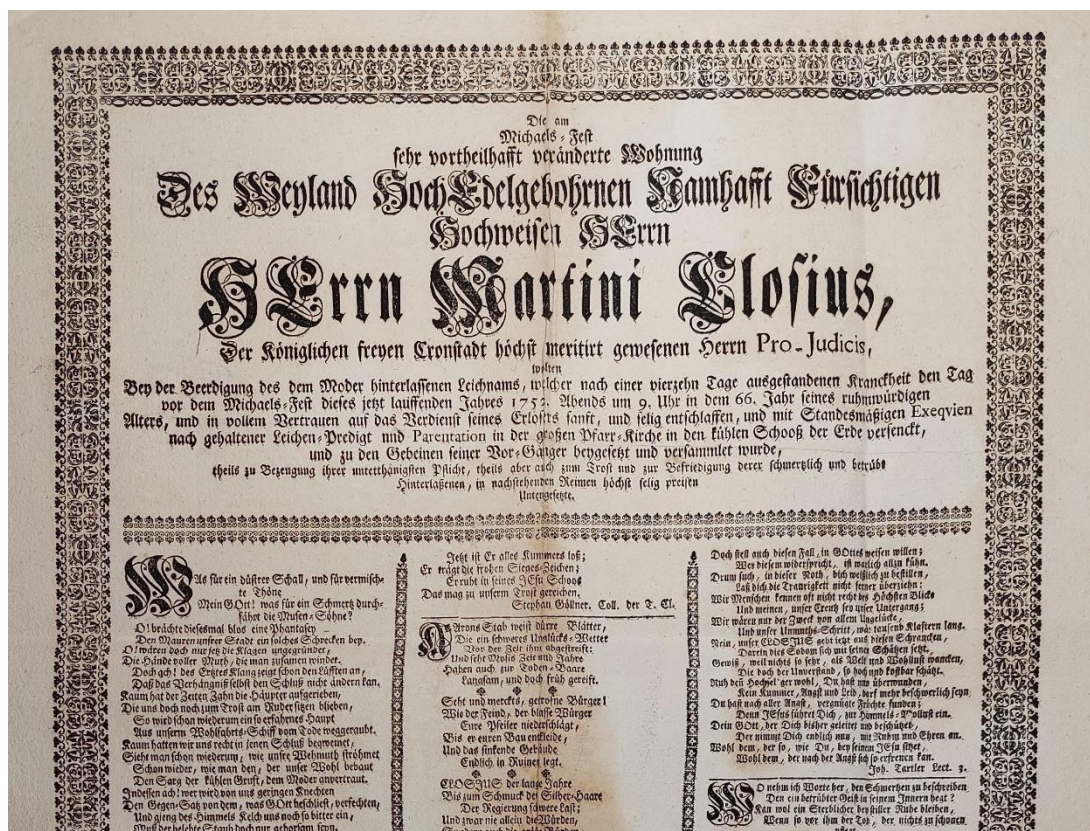


Fig. 14. – Martinus Closius 1752, eulogy, Evangelical Church A. C. of Romania – Braşov Parish © (No. inv. IV:F:97.12)

In 1800, Georg Stephan Friedrich von Closius (1758–1818), financier, lessee and actuary secretary, who left his family the impressive fortune of 124,369 Rhenish florins, made “essential changes to the building”, as his son, Stephan Friederich von Closius (1795–1873, senator, director of the police, and archivist), declared in 1858, in a Police investigation, requested by the Prefecture, for the removal of the annexes of the house protruding onto the Fish Market Street, in order that the sidewalk might be paved. The 84-year-old master clothier Thomas Zaunner, one of the witnesses to the Police inquiry, reported: “From my childhood, when I was still going to school, I remember that along the entire length of Mr. Closius’ house, opposite the place where cheese was sold

[in the building of the Merchants’ House] there were arches supported on masonry pillars, under which fish was sold. In the same line with these pillars was the booth where Sotir Manciu’s money-lender’s shop is now. This booth, which was in the same line as the arches, was then the entrance to the cellar and only later, but I don’t know when, it was transformed into a sales space”. Paulus Klein, master felter, 76-year-old, another witness, confirmed that the entrance to the cellar was first outside, then moved “to the place where it is now, whilst the mentioned booth was transformed into a place for sales”<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, the works from 1800 comprised the demolition of the portico and the closing of the external access to the cellar, with its relocation to the inner courtyard of the building, as well as the extension of the





Fig. 15. – Martinus Closius, 1752, tombstone in the Black Church, Braşov-Evangelical Church A. C. of Romania – Braşov Parish © (No. inv. III.103)



Fig. 16. – Martinus Closius, the father, 1691, tombstone, Black Church, Braşov-Evangelical Church A. C. of Romania – Braşov Parish © (No. inv. III.106)



Fig. 17. – Closius House, stone slab embedded in the west wall of the inner court, 1835.  
Photography by Ioana Munteanu-Zărnescu.



Fig. 18. – Eduard Hullverding, main façade of the Closius House, detail from *Ansich vom Marktplaz in Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen*, 1848.



Fig. 19. – Peter Bartsch, lateral facade of the Closius House, 1875, County Department of National Archives, Braşov.



house on the Fish Market street, new vaulted rooms with angular penetrations being added beyond its original limit, marked by a window with a stone frame and metal bars. A stone slab inscribed *Renovadum* [sic] A:1835 embedded in the west wall of the inner court (Fig. 17), refers to later interventions which would not be recorded in the Magistrate's Acts<sup>25</sup>.

The façades received the classicizing appearance, preserved at first floor level to the present day, while the commercial ground floor would undergo continuous change. In Eduard Hullverding's drawing of 1848 (Fig. 18), which provides the earliest known image of Closius House seen from Town Hall Square, the façade of the corner *Saal* has the two present rectangular windows, which framed a central access blocked by the last reconstruction works, and to the east, the annexes, which were the subject of the inquiry of 1858. In the drawing of the house seen from the Fish Market, signed in 1875 by Peter Bartsch (Fig. 19), the first "engineer of the city", the booth on the lateral façade has a classicizing appearance, while the photographs taken during the twentieth century show the continuous transformation of the shop-windows of the commercial floor<sup>26</sup>, until the remodelling of the whole building from 1988, and 2010, when the rehabilitation ended.

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The complex mural decoration, discovered and restored on the first floor in the corner room above the *Saal*, emphasizes the architectural elements, and comprises figurative motifs inscribed in oval medallions painted in *grisaille*. The windows have *all'antica* portraits painted on the sides of the jambs and, in the upper part, rosettes with symmetrical garlands of laurel leaves, such elements also marking the line of the socle, while the decoration of the door openings, discreetly outlined with Neoclassical motifs, is concentrated above, with allegorical compositions in horizontal medallions, and ribbon hangers which imitate in *trompe l'oeil* the fastening system of eighteenth-century cameos and picture frames<sup>27</sup>.

The door to the hallway has as pendant on the adjacent wall, an illusionistic niche of

similar dimensions with an urn-type vase inside, which best preserves in its upper part the *grisaille* painting in a medallion, a Rococo motif integrated to the Neoclassical decorative concept (Fig. 20). The image reproduces in reverse the Allegory of Painting from the *Livre des Arts* collection of drawings by François Boucher (1703–1770) (Fig. 21) rendered in *aqua-forte* by Louis Félix de La Rue (1731–1765), some time between 1738–1749<sup>28</sup>, when the atelier address was *A Paris, chez Huquier, rue (S. Jacques au coin de celle) des Mathurins*, as inscribed beneath<sup>29</sup>. Knowledge of the Parisian set also permits the identification of the Allegory of Astronomy<sup>30</sup>, the sixth and final plate, fragmentarily preserved above the door to the next room, while the painting of the third medallion over the door to the hall, almost completely lost, could have represented the Allegory of Music, the only plate with similarly positioned clouds at the top of the composition<sup>31</sup>. Above the fourth door of the room, the restorers did not find any trace of figurative painting.

François Boucher, painter to King Louis XV of France, is known as the artist who promoted the Rococo style throughout Europe, elevating the drawing, considered hitherto a simple academic exercise, to the status of art. The approximately 10,000 drawings produced throughout his career<sup>32</sup> – as *dessins préparatoires for the paintings*, works of art for the expanding market of collectors, or models for engravers<sup>33</sup> – furnished adaptable programs for all types of decorative arts, including the *dessus-de-porte* ornaments with paintings in *cadres chantournés*, such as the Allegory of Poetry (1753), today preserved in the Metropolitan Museum, New York<sup>34</sup>.

The Closius House's overdoor decoration of the upper corner room integrated into the general Neoclassical composition of 1800 the Rococo motifs copied after Boucher's "groups of children", as they were called at the time, a genre which the master himself was very fond of<sup>35</sup>. These motifs were reproduced in the nineteenth century as well, by artists such as Auguste Péquignot (1819–1878)<sup>36</sup>, both the original engravings and their replicas being used as models for paintings which still are sold on the international art market<sup>37</sup>.



Fig. 20. – Closius House, Allegory of Painting, mural in the upper corner room, 1800.



Fig. 21. – François Boucher, *La Peinture*, *Livre des Arts*, c. 1738–1749.  
<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl020521145>.



The Allegory of Painting of the Closius House in Braşov surmounts a *trompe l'oeil* niche with a lidded vase decorated with a drapery, painted inside it, thus completing the Neoclassical decorative program (Fig. 22). In the eighteenth century, model books such as the *Livres de vases* were just as widespread, as the *Livres des Arts*, Boucher himself making such drawings which were transposed into engravings by Jacques-Gabriel Huquier (1695–1772)<sup>38</sup>, who published his own *Recueil de plus de six cents vases nouvellement mis au jour composés et gravés en partie par Huquier, collection très utile à différents artistes* (c. 1745–1772). Numerous other artists dealt with the subject<sup>39</sup>, but



Fig. 22. – Closius House, vase in niche painted in *trompe l'oeil*, mural in the upper corner room, 1800

compositions with vases in semicircular niches can be found in the *Recueil élémentaire d'architecture*, by Jean-François de Neufforge (1714–1791)<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 23), a Belgian architect and engraver based in Paris, and in the engravings made by the German artist, Gottlieb Friedrich Riedel (1724–1784)<sup>41</sup>, published by Johann Gradmann in 1757<sup>42</sup>, who also edited Johann Thomas Hauer's *DESSEINS / de la Mode neuve / au Gout antique / pour les / Architects / en general / et specialment, / pour servir / à divers / Artisans* (1781)<sup>43</sup>, comprising models of urns, lidded vases and fountains in niches<sup>44</sup>, suggestive in the context of the decoration in Braşov.



Fig. 23. – Jean-François de Neufforge, *Recueil élémentaire d'architecture*, 1757.  
[https://www.1stdibs.com/en-gb/furniture/wall-decorations/prints/set-of-two-antique-architecture-prints-wall-niches-neufforge-circa-1770/id-f\\_17836751/](https://www.1stdibs.com/en-gb/furniture/wall-decorations/prints/set-of-two-antique-architecture-prints-wall-niches-neufforge-circa-1770/id-f_17836751/).

Gottlieb Friedrich Riedel also illustrated and edited the volume *Galerie der alten Griechen und Römer in zwey und achtzig Abbildungen, und einer kurzen Geschichte ihres Lebens* (1780)<sup>45</sup>, with text by Georg

Wilhelm Zapf, and antique portraits in medallions, in the spirit of those painted in Braşov on the window jambs of the upper corner room (Fig. 24).



Fig. 24. – Closius House, antique portraits in medallions on the window jambs of the upper corner room, 1800.



Riedel's book is part of the tradition of portraiture inspired by ancient artefacts treated as historical documents during the Renaissance, a trend inaugurated by the Andrea Fulvio's extremely influential *Illustrium imagines* (1517), illustrated with engravings attributed to Battista Palumba reproducing coins<sup>46</sup>, and connected to the debut of Classical archaeology<sup>47</sup>.

At least as important is the *Illustrium imagines, ex antiquis marmoribus, nomismatibus* [sic], *et gemmis expressae: quae exstant Romae, maior pars apud Fulvium Ursinum [...]*<sup>48</sup>, published for the first time in Antwerp in 1598/1606, with illustrations engraved by Theodoor Galle of artefacts mostly deriving from the antiquities collection of Fulvio Orsini, the librarian of

Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520–1589), the famous collector and patron of the arts<sup>49</sup>. The portraits drawn by Galle in Rome after the originals, then transposed into engravings, would be copied throughout the century, with the source cited as *Roma apud Ursinum in gemma et nomismate* (1680)<sup>50</sup>, or *ex Imaginibus Fulvii Orsini*, as in the opening of a London edition of The Roman History by Titus Livius (1686)<sup>51</sup>. Among these portraits can be found similarities, but not identities, to the portraits painted in Braşov (most notably the Marc Antonius), with the volumes discreetly indicated with intersecting hatches, and arranged in oval medallions ornamented with garlands of leaves in the upper part. (Figs. 25-26)



Fig. 25. – Closius House, antique portrait in medallion, 1800.

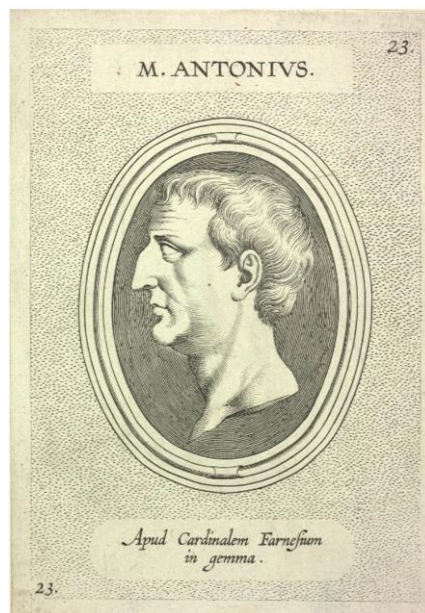


Fig. 26. – Theodor Galle, *Illustrium imagines, ex antiquis marmoribus, nomismatibus, et gemmis expressae: quae exstant Romae, maior pars apud Fulvium Ursinum*, 1606.

[https://books.google.ro/books?id=8Toio1kdWkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ViewAPI&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=8Toio1kdWkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ViewAPI&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Other books of this kind are *Icones imperatorvm romanorvm, ex priscis numismatibus ad vivum delineatae, & breui narratione historica*, by Hubert Goltzius

(1557), first published under the title *Vivae omnium fere imperatorum imagines*, reprinted with more portraits, by Jean-Gaspard Gevaerts and Peter Paul Rubens, in 1645, and later in

1687 and 1708<sup>52</sup>, *Gemmae Et Sculpturae Antiquae Depictae Ab Leonardo Augustino Senensi*, Amsterdam (1685), with engravings by Giovanni Battista Galestruzzi<sup>53</sup>, *Deorum et Heroum, Virorum et Mulierum Illustrium Imagines Antiquae Illustratae*, Amsterdam, 1715<sup>54</sup>, published for the first time under the title *Favissae Utriusque Antiquitatis tam Romanae quam Graecae in quibus Reperiuntur Simulacra Deorum, icones magnorum Ducum, Poetarum, Virorumque in quavis arte*, in 1707<sup>55</sup>, by Henricus Spoor and engravings by Pieter Bodart, as well as *Les vies des hommes illustres de Plutarque*, edited by Aegidius Paulus Dumesnil and translated in French by André Dacier, 1721–1735<sup>56</sup>.

The mural decoration with antique portraits in *grisaille* of the Closius House, which reflects a genre prolonged by humanism from Renaissance to Neoclassicism, is unique in Transylvanian art, but the theme of illustrious men had long been represented, the oldest example being documented in Braşov itself, where effigies of the philosophers decorated Johannes Honterus' lost school library (1547), while figures of scholars from Antiquity and humanists of the Renaissance, *doctissimorum virorum depictis imaginibus*, as they were called by Georg Soterius, were rendered on the walls of the *Kapellenbibliothek* in Sibiu<sup>57</sup> in 1592<sup>58</sup>. If these two ensembles are now lost, painted portraits and busts of

illustrious figures are still preserved on the vault of the Evangelical Church in Bistriţa (the last part of the sixteenth century), inside the Stag House and the Vlad Dracul House in Sighişoara (beginning of the seventeenth century). To all these should be added the castle in Sânmiclăuş, built according to the plans of its owner, the nobleman Nicholas Bethlen, between 1668 and 1683, where a marble bust in a semi-circular niche on a red cinnabar background illusionistically rendered, just came out from under the lime<sup>59</sup>.

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The Closius House was successively rebuilt on medieval foundations, with architectural and artistic components which mark its historical evolution, including the painted decoration of the interiors of different dates, styles, and fashions: Renaissance, Baroque, and Neoclassicism. Best documented and preserved is the phase of 1800, when the house was remodelled and the upper corner room was painted in *grisaille*, with figurative motifs in oval medallions marking the architectural elements: antique portraits at the intrados of the windows, and allegories of arts painted on the overdoors after François Boucher, these Rococo motifs being adapted to the general Neoclassical features of the residence<sup>60</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Dana Jenei, *Casele din Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15–16 din Braşov: Studiu de istoria artei în vederea restaurării*, mss. Braşov, 1990–2017, INP Archive, coll. DMSI, Bucharest, with the information from this unpublished report used by several authors subsequently without acknowledgement. Ead., *Casele din Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15–16 din Braşov*, in *Renovatio: Foaia monumentelor istorice şi de artă*, Bucharest, 1991, p. 11–12. Ead., *Renaşterea transilvăneană-identitate culturală în context european*, Bucharest, 2013, p. 114–117; Ead., *Pictura murală din Transilvania Renaşterii în secolele XVI–XVII*, in *Arta din România din preistorie în contemporaneitate*, vol. I, Răzvan Theodorescu and Marius Porumb eds., Bucharest Cluj-Napoca, 2018, p. 620. Ead., *Evropae Nationes. Allegories Painted in a House in Braşov in the Early Seventeenth Century*, in *Transylvanian Review*, Vol. XXX, No. 3 (Autumn 2021), p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> In the oldest numbered map of Braşov, Zultner-Seethal (1735/1796), the house was no. 618, in 1856 no. 94 *Apfelmarkt*, and from 1890 no. 18 *Obstzeile*. Gernot Nussbächer, *Documentaţie istorică preliminară privind complexul de clădiri 'Turist' din Braşov, Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15 şi 16*, mss., Braşov, 1991; Ead., *Documentaţie istorică continuată privind complexul de clădiri 'Turist' din Braşov, Piaţa Sfatului nr. 15 şi 16*, mss., Braşov, 1993, INP Archive, coll. DMSI Bucharest. For the old names of streets in Braşov, see Erich Jekelius, *Kronstadts Gassen und Plätze*, in *Das Burzenland*, vol. 3, 1, Kronstadt, 1928, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Georgius Closius (1630–1696), pastor in Sânpetru/Petersberg (Gernot Nussbächer, pers. comm.), Martinus Closius (1655–1691, senator), Martinus Closius (1686–1752, senator, judge, *villicus* and chief of police), Martinus Gottfried Closius (1715–1770, senator, notary, *villicus*), Martinus Traugott Closius



(1744-1789, archdeacon and rector of the German Gymnasium), Georg Stephan Friederich von Closius (1758-1818, financier, lessee and actuary secretary), Stephan Friederich von Closius (1795-1873), senator, director of the police, archivist, and Louise von Brennerberg (1875-1897), the latter's supposed daughter. In 1873, the house became the property of the previous tenants, Nicholas Eremias, and later, Gheorghe and Ilie Savu. In 1948, the house was nationalized by the Communist regime, then recovered by the owners' successors. For all the shops in the building at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, see Gernot Nussbächer, "Documentație istorică preliminară", p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> PROSPECT. *Der in Fürstenthumb Siebenbürgen ligenden Haupt-Stadt, undt Haupt-Festung, auch anderen Städten undt Schlössern, sambt denen in die Kayz undt Türck: Wallachey, wie auch in die Moldau gehende Reith undt Fahr-Pässen: bey verfertigung der Geographischen Landt Charten dieses Fürstenthumbs aufgenommen undt zusammengetragen im Jahr 1735*, in Andor Borbély, *Erdélyi városok képeskönyve 1736-ból*, Erdélyi Múzeum, 48, 2, 1943, fig. 7.

<https://maps.hungaricana.hu/en/HTTterkeptar/34909/view/?pg=3&bbox=162%2C-2220%2C3989%2C-2>.

<sup>5</sup> See the portraits of the Habsburg children painted by Jakob Seisenegger in the 1530's. A similar hairstyle also had Lucas Hirscher, the mayor of Brașov, in his portrait attributed to Gregorius Pictor by Gernot Nussbächer, who dated it in 1535, when he was also the castellan of Bran. The Bran castle and St. Martin chapel in Brașov are painted in the background of the portrait. Gernot Nussbächer, *Beiträge betreffend das Porträt des Kronstädter Stadtrichters Lukas Hirscher*, in *Culegere de Studii și Cercetări*, Brașov, I, 1967, p. 247-255.

<sup>6</sup> Dana Jenei, *Renașterea transilvăneană*, p. 98 and 137; ead., *Pictura murală din Transilvania Renașterii*, p. 616.

<sup>7</sup> Dana Jenei, *Casele din Piața Sfatului din Brașov*, in *Renovatio*, p. 11. I thank Dr. Alexandru Stănescu, the cultural manager of the museum, for supporting my research.

<sup>8</sup> Gernot Nussbächer, *Aus Urkunden und Chroniken*, 14, Kronstadt, II, Kronstadt-Heidelberg, 2014, p. 173. Dana Jenei, *Cadrul istoric și arhitectural al curții Bisericii Negre din Brașov*, in *Redescoperirea trecutului medieval al Brașovului*, Daniela Marcu Istrate ed., Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> The murals were restored by a team led by Pia and Tudor Stinghe, on the base of the documentation by Ioana Munteanu, *Documentație de specialitate, componente artistice privind conservarea-restaurarea picturilor murale și a tencuielilor originale de la casa medievală din Piața Sfatului nr. 15, Brașov. Capitolul I. Proiect Tehnic*, mss., Brașov, 2005, Archives INP, coll. DMSI, Bucharest.

<sup>10</sup> If the portico to the square has ever existed, it had the traces removed by this late intervention, which didn't affect the main facades of the other two houses of the row.

<sup>11</sup> Ioana Munteanu-Zărnescu, *Documentație de specialitate*, p. 8. A decoration of an even later date, imitating a curtain with motifs made by stencil, is preserved in the upper room above the former passage.

<sup>12</sup> Dana Jenei, *Evropae Nationes*, p. 95. Similar vestibule vaults are frequent in Brașov, one dated 1718 by the carved stone door frame being preserved in the house at no. 11, Poarta Șcheii Street.

<sup>13</sup> Fr. W. Seraphin, *Alte Wandmalereien*, in *Korespondenzblatt des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 25, Hermannstadt, 1902, p. 114-115.

<sup>14</sup> Dana Jenei, *Casa parohială a Bisericii Negre din Brașov. Studiu preliminar de istoria artei*, Brașov, 2014, p. 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Closius (1658-1752), *Stadthauptmann*, senator, *Stadthann*, *Projudex* (1748, 1750, 1752), and *Judex* (1749, 1751), was married first to Catharina Greissing, and then to Sara Fuchs. Erich Jekelius: *Genealogie Kronstädter Familien*, Kronstadt [Typescript], 1964, II, p. 23. Partial information on the members of the Closius family at Friedrich Stenner, *Die Beamten der Stadt Brassó (Kronstadt) von Anfang der städtischen Verwaltung bis auf die Gegenwart*, Brassó, 1916, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Eugenia Greceanu, Oliver Velescu, *Restaurarea halei vechi din Brașov*, în *Monumente istorice – studii și lucrări de restaurare*, I/1965, p. 131. Erroneous year 1759 in *Das Burzenland*, I, Kronstadt, Erich Jekelius [Hrsg.], 1928, p. 168.

<sup>17</sup> Julius Bielz, *Porträtkatalog der Siebenburger Sachsen*, in *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, vol. XXV, 1936, p. 15, no. 171, but with a wrong year, 1752, as Martinus Closius was 65 years old as *Judex* in 1751. The portrait could be attributed to Joseph Ölhan, the most important painter of the town in the mid-eighteenth century.

<sup>18</sup> <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP040-1-2-9#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=68&xywh=2072%2C273%2C777%2C1377&r=270>.

<sup>19</sup> Julius Bielz, *Porträtkatalog*, p. 23, no. 172. His funeral slab was also mentioned by Julius Groos, *Die Gräber in der Kronstadter Stadtpfarkirche*, in *Jahrbuch des Burzenländer Sächsischen Museums*, 1925, p. 147, with the inscription, the family coat of arms, but a wrong year, 1753, instead of 1752.

<sup>20</sup> Erich Jekelius, *Genealogie Kronstädter Familien*, p. 22-23. Martinus (1655-1691), senator, married to Catharina Letz in 1681, was the son of Georgius Closius (1630-1696), pastor in Sânpetru/Petersberg and Catharina Schnee Weiss (married in 1654). Georgius, son of Petrus Closius (+1659) and Martha Gokesch (married in 1640), was the first owner of the house identified by Gernot Nussbächer (pers. com). The item was not mentioned by Julius Groos, the information having perhaps been confused with his son's tombstone.

<sup>21</sup> Gernot Nussbächer, *Documentație istorică continuată ...*, anexes.

<sup>22</sup> Erich Jekelius, *Genealogie Kronstädter Familien*, p. 24. He studied at the Universities in Jenna and Leipzig and published a *Trauen-Oder* at the death of Emperess Maria Theresia, Kronstadt, 1781, and a *Denkpredigt* at 100 years after the Great Fire in Brașov of April 21 1689, Vienna, 1789. Josef Trausch, *Schriftsteller-Lexikon oder Denk-Blätter der siebenbürger Deutschen*. Kronstadt, 1868, p. 224.

<sup>23</sup> Gernot Nussbächer, *Documentație istorică continuată ...*, anexes.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*. He obtained the building within a change of proprieties in the family.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> In 1964-1966, the ground floor façades were altered again to accommodate the 'Tunist' shop, while some original twinned wooden frames of shop-windows on the Apollonia Hirscher Street were removed by last rehabilitation works finished in 2009, which opted for the present inexpressive aesthetic appearance.

<sup>27</sup> Christian Michel, *Les cadres ovales en France au XVIIIe siècle*, in *Revue de l'Art*, 1987 (no 76, p. 51-52). <https://theframeblog.com/2021/01/11/the-oval-frame-in-18th-century-france/>.

<sup>28</sup> <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl020521145>. The engravings are not dated, but Huquier's publishing house functioned at this address during the mentioned period, cf. Y. Bruand, M. Hébert and Y. Sjöberg, *Inventaire du fonds français: graveurs du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, Bib. N. Cab. Est. cat., XI) Paris, 1970, p. 446-538, on the title page of *Livre de Cartouches / Inventés par François Boucher Peintre du Roy, A Paris, chez Huquier, rue S. Jacques au coin de celle des Mathurins. Avec Privil. Du Roi*. <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/book/livre-de-cartouches-inventes-par-francois-boucher-peintre-du-roy>.

<sup>29</sup> Jacques-Gabriel Huquier (1695–1772) was an engraver, art collector and editor, who published over eighty prints by Boucher, and by numerous other contemporary artists, between 1731 and 1761, when he was active. Y. Bruand, M. Hébert, Y. Sjöberg, *Inventaire du fonds français: graveurs du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, Bib. N. Cab. Est. cat., XI) (Paris, 1970), p. 446-545.

<sup>30</sup> *Livre des Arts - Louvre Collections*.

<sup>31</sup> *Livre des Arts: la Musique - Louvre Collections*.

<sup>32</sup> Alastair Laing, *Les dessins de François Boucher*, Scala, 2003. [https://books.google.ro/books/about/Les\\_dessins\\_de\\_Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Boucher.html?id=1WzCPQAACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.ro/books/about/Les_dessins_de_Fran%C3%A7ois_Boucher.html?id=1WzCPQAACAAJ&redir_esc=y).

<sup>33</sup> Perrin Stein, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Metropolitan Museum of Art October 2003. François Boucher (1703–1770) | Essay | The Metropolitan Museum of Art | Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (metmuseum.org).

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/435741>.

<sup>35</sup> Alistair Lang, *François Boucher, 1703-1770*, exh. cat., New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986, p. 129.

<sup>36</sup> <https://ateliersartmuseesnationaux.fr/en/engraving/KM009427?guid=63b8705a7c512>. "An allegory of painting and sculpture; and An allegory of music", actually *La Peinture* and *La Poesie*, grisaille paintings, in oil on canvas were attributed to a "follower" of Boucher, on <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/An-allegory-of-painting-and-sculpture--a/739A74AD12C6054B?login=1>. "Huile Sur Toile Italienne De 1700 Représentant Des Anges Chérubins Sacrés" <https://www.proantic.com/en/display.php?id=990753#>.

<sup>37</sup> "Putti painting a portrait, a French Painting inspired by F. Boucher, C. 1870, Oil on canvas", [https://www.1stdibs.com/en-gb/furniture/wall-decorations/paintings/putti-painting-portrait-french-painting-inspired-f-boucher-c-1870/id-f\\_1185934/?modal=intlWelcomeModal](https://www.1stdibs.com/en-gb/furniture/wall-decorations/paintings/putti-painting-portrait-french-painting-inspired-f-boucher-c-1870/id-f_1185934/?modal=intlWelcomeModal). The quality of these works is not always of the highest, for example, *Allégorie des Arts*, Huile sur toile 64x66 cm(#). <https://www.aguttes.com/lot/20584/4351132-dapres-francois-boucherallégor>.

<sup>38</sup> *Nouveau Livre de Vases*, 3 suites of plates of vases together in 1 volume, engraved throughout, each suite with etched title and 6 plates by François Boucher, Boucher fils et J. Houdan. <https://www3.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/645904>. Alicia M. Priore, "François Boucher's Designs for Vases and Mounts", in *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, SPRING-SUMMER 1996, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 2-51 Chicago Press URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40662567>.

<sup>39</sup> Jean-Charles Delafosse (1734-1789), Jean-Jacques Avril (1744-1831), Jean-Claude Chambellan Duplessis (1699-1774), Jean-Claude-Thomas Chambellan Duplessis (c. 1730-1783) and so on.

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.1stdibs.com/en-gb/furniture/wall-decorations/prints/set-of-two-antique-architecture-prints-wall-niches-neufforge-circa-1770/id-f\\_17836751/](https://www.1stdibs.com/en-gb/furniture/wall-decorations/prints/set-of-two-antique-architecture-prints-wall-niches-neufforge-circa-1770/id-f_17836751/).

<sup>41</sup> Vase in a niche, *Samlung verschiedner Blumen, Früchte, gewöhnlicher Zierathen, Gefässe, Schilder, etc.*, 1778. Inscription: *G. F. Riedel, inv. del. et sculp. / Joh. Gradmann exc. A.V.* <https://www.graphikportal.org/document/gpo00203882>.

<sup>42</sup> Louis XVI-style lidded vases, 1779, by Jean François de Neufforge – inventor, Gottlieb Friedrich Riedel – engraver, Johannes Gradmann – editor. SKD | Online Collection.

<sup>43</sup> [https://recherche.smb.museum/images/3294210\\_2500x2500.jpg#3294210](https://recherche.smb.museum/images/3294210_2500x2500.jpg#3294210).

<sup>44</sup> Fountain with antique vase free public domain image | Look and Learn.

<sup>45</sup> [https://books.google.ro/books?id=vv5TAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=vv5TAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false). [http://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO\\_%2BZ206243509](http://digital.onb.ac.at/OnbViewer/viewer.faces?doc=ABO_%2BZ206243509).



<sup>46</sup> John Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance*, Princeton, 1999, p. 70–87.

[https://books.google.ro/books?id=KjA8AAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gb\\_s\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=KjA8AAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gb_s_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>47</sup> Brian Madigan, *Andrea Fulvio's Illustrium imagines and the Beginnings of Classical Archaeology*, Brill's Studies on Art, Art History, and Intellectual History, Volume: 64, 2022.

<sup>48</sup> <https://bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/dlibra/publication/40898/edition/134857/content>.

[https://books.google.ro/books?id=8Toi0l1kdWkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gb\\_s\\_ViewAPI&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=8Toi0l1kdWkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gb_s_ViewAPI&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>49</sup> Pierre De Nolhac, *Les collections d'antiquités de Fulvio Orsini*, in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, tome 4, 1884. p. 139–231.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.abebooks.com/art-prints/Ptolemy-Romulus-Greek-Roman-empire-emperor/17859283573/bd>.

<sup>51</sup> <https://catalogue.swanngalleries.com/Lots/auction-lot/Livy--Titus-Livius---6459-BCE-1217-CE--The-Roman-History-Wri?saleno=2549&lotNo=86&refNo=775099>.

<sup>52</sup> <https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/goltz1645/0001/image,info,thumbs>.

<sup>53</sup> [https://books.google.ro/books?id=qyiQ7ZlwMLYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gb\\_s\\_atb&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=qyiQ7ZlwMLYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gb_s_atb&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>54</sup> [https://books.google.com.pa/books?id=NyXx7qY68QgC&printsec=frontcover&source=gb\\_s\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.pa/books?id=NyXx7qY68QgC&printsec=frontcover&source=gb_s_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>55</sup> [https://books.google.ro/books?id=opZcAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gb\\_s\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.ro/books?id=opZcAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gb_s_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>56</sup> print; book-illustration | British Museum. The first edition unillustrated was published in Paris, in 1559, *Les Vies des hommes illustres, grecs et romains, comparées l'une avec l'autre, par Plutarque de Chaeronée (translatées premièrement de grec en français par maistre Jaques Amyot)*.

<sup>57</sup> Georg Soterius, *Cibinium. Eine Beschreibung Hermannstadts vom Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Böhlau, 2006, p. 40.

<sup>58</sup> Karl Schwarz, *Vorstudien zu einer Geschichte des städtischen Gymnasiums A.B. in Hermannstadt*, in *Programm des Gymnasiums A.B. in Hermannstadt und der mit demselben verbundenen Lehranstalten für das Schuljahr 1860/1*, 1861, p. 24–28. Dana Jenei, *Renașterea*, p. 120.

<sup>59</sup> I thank to arh. Letiția Cosnean-Nistor for bringing this fragment of wall painting to my attention.

<sup>60</sup> I thank to Malcolm Jones for revising of the English text.

