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Continuity and Discontinuity in Transylvanian Romanian Thought
An Analysis of Four Bishopric Pleas from the Period between 1791 and 1842

Based on the analysis of four Romanian bishopric pleas, the article examines the connection between the reform movements of the 1790s and 1830s. The subject of the analysis is the political and intellectual-historical background of the 1791 Supplex Libellus Valachorum and the pleas of 1834, 1838 and 1842, with particular focus on how the authors of the pleas formulated their concepts of the future and the relationship between the pleas and concepts of natural law. If one examines the pleas side by side, the key concept in each of them, with the exception of the plea of 1838, was repositioning (reponere, repositione, repunere), but the meaning of this concept changed significantly over time. In the case of the Supplex Libellus Valachorum, the argumentation based on social contracts and the customary law definition of feudal rights was replaced with a positive legal argumentation built on actual acts of laws. On the other hand, in the plea of 1838 the concept of handling nations as living beings is unmistakably recognizable, together with the idea of their rise through civilization and culture. This change of paradigms caused a change in the aims of the pleas as well. Eventually, their main aim was not merely to secure rights, but to establish auspicious circumstances for the development of a nation conceived of as a living being. The goal became to prepare for cultural development and establish the conditions necessary for culture to flourish. Thus, although at first glance the argumentations of the documents seem to have a lot in common, in fact one can clearly discern how the community-related concepts of Transylvanian Romanian Romanticism started to gain ground, while at the same time the tropes appearing in the Supplex Libellus Valachorum started to undergo a transformation.

Keywords: Transylvania, Transylvanian Romanians, Supplex Libellus Valachorum, social contract, natural law, eighteenth century, nineteenth century, political thinking, Romanian Enlightenment, Romanian Romanticism

The debate regarding whether the end of the eighteenth century and the reform movements of the 1830–1848 period are one single concept or two separate events has not been as thoroughly discussed in the case of Transylvanian Romanians as
it has in the case of Hungarian history. David Prodan’s work the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*¹ and Ladislau Gyémánt’s *Mişcarea naţională a românilor din Transilvania între anii 1790 şi 1848* (The national movement of Romanians in Transylvania between 1790 and 1848)² conceive them as one single set of events. Even when other works on Romanian history contend that there was a sharp border in this period (and this typically done only in works that offer narratives of the whole history of the Romanian people), the borderline is 1821, the Wallachian revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu. For instance, the book series *Istoria Românilor* (History of the Romanians)³ and the *History of Romania: Compendium*⁴ divide these two periods like this; at the same time, the relevant chapters of these works often refer back to the events of the 1780s and 1790s when discussing the 1830s.

This essay examines the connection between the two reform movements based on four Romanian bishopric pleas between 1791 and 1842. The subject of this analysis is the political and intellectual-historical background of the abovementioned documents, with a particular focus on how the authors of the pleas formulated their concepts of the future and the relationship between the pleas and concepts of natural law. Under the latter term, I mean a branch of legal philosophy which draws a sharp distinction between *a priori* existing natural law considered as a norm and the conventions determined by people and society. According to this view, the goal of the latter is to approach natural law and thus arrive at a perfect state of law and order.⁵

The importance of the sources used in this essay is established by the contexts in which they came into existence. The Transylvanian Romanians did not have collective rights in the political system of the Grand Principality. Transylvania, in the first half of the nineteenth century, still existed within the legal-political framework that had been established in the late medieval and early modern times. Three privileged groups, or *natio*, (the nobility, the Saxons and the Székelys) formed different territorial and administrational units within the country. The most numerous among them was the nobility, the so-called *Natio*

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⁴ Ioan-Aurel Pop and Ioan Bolovan, eds., *History of Romania: Compendium* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Cultural Institute, 2006).
*Hungarica*, which was found in 11 noble counties of Transylvania and Partium (a region to the west of Transylvania often conflated with it today). Although most of the nobles were of Hungarian ethnic origin, the nobility cannot be considered an ethnic category. It included every noble family of Transylvania, regardless of ethnicity and mother-tongue. Due to this, the noblemen of Romanian origin in the districts of Fogaras (today Făgăraș, Romania) and Hátszeg (today Hațeg) were represented by the *Natio Hungarica*. Alongside them, two other major political groups participated in the governance of Transylvania: The *Saxon Universitas*, an administratively autonomous group of German ethnic origin living in the region called Fundus Regius, based on the 1224 privilege of Andrew II, called Andreanum, and the Székelys, a Hungarian-speaking ethnic group of contested origins who had served as frontier guards since the Middle Ages. These three *natiōs*, as political bodies, had the right to send representatives to the Diet, the parliament of the estates, the origins of which also lay in the Middle Ages. The Romanians as a community were not part of the political system of Transylvania. Until the end of the 1830s, the appearance of the secular clerisy and their political representation was practiced by their bishops, the Greek Catholic bishop of Fogaras (Făgăraș) and the Orthodox bishop of Nagyszeben (Sibiu). The political pleas written in the name of the whole community could only reach the royal court through them. For a long time, these documents were the only way to represent the political interests of the Romanians in national political life. The abovementioned pleas also represented the final stage of a long-lasting political tradition. With the clerisy being laicized and the Transylvanian Romanian press being born, a political practice was beginning to emerge that was much more public and different radically from the one that had existed before, in part because the role of the two church leaders significantly decreased.

Eighteenth-century East Central Europe, with the age of the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, a petition submitted to Leopold II in 1791, serving as the starting point of this analysis, bore witness to a unique headway of the different social contract theories. As pointed out by Sándor Pruzsinszky in his analysis, the different social and political groups derived the rightfulness of their often opposing goals from basically the same principles. Enlightened absolutism, the enlightened estates of the realm, and the bourgeois and Jacobin direction of the Enlightenment all drew arguments and philosophical support from the

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same axioms of the natural law of the Enlightenment. Martini\(^7\) used the social contract theories in favor of the court, while the diet of 1790 applied them in opposition to the deceased ruler, Joseph II. These same ideas also provided an important foundation for the Hungarian Jacobin Movement in the 1790s. As has also been noted by Gábor Zoltán Szűcs, the modern Protestant theories of natural law became an integral part of Hungarian political thinking in the eighteenth century. Szűcs does not consider them to have been ideas mechanically imported from Western Europe, but rather regards them as ideas that were adapted to the local specifications of the political system and society. Their aim was to try to reposition individuals and social groups to their erstwhile perfect status dreamt up by the authors of social contracts, and in doing so, to restore the natural rights they actually never had. In their argumentation, there was a sharp distinction between natural and manmade law. They regarded natural law as an unattainable, absolute truth, which transcended social conventions. The main purpose of the actual laws (conventions) was to approach this state of perfection. Thus, through this distinction, when referring to the natural law, they were actually asking for the restoration of their imagined natural rights based on eternal truths that stand above laws.\(^8\)

Thinking based on this concept of natural law had significant influence on the Transylvanian Romanians as well, as highlighted by both David Prodan and Zoltán I. Tóth. They found one of the most important bits of evidence of this in the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, a central text of Transylvanian Romanian political thinking, formulated in 1791.\(^9\) With the help of this plea, utilizing the legal methodology of the period, the Greek Catholic, Orthodox and laical


\(^9\) The *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* movement, according to Zoltán I. Tóth, began in 1789 in order to secure rights for the Romanian people in Transylvania. The list of the participants and the authorship of the plea is still a question. Zoltán I. Tóth suspects Iosif Méhesi and Samuil Micu to have been the authors, but several other personalities of the Transylvanian Romanian Enlightenment participated in the work. The first version of the plea was submitted to the court on 11 March, 1791. After its failure, it was followed by a second *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* in 1792. Zoltán I. Tóth, *Az erdélyi román nacionalizmus első százada 1697–1792* (Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2005), 259–66.
Romanian intellectuals tried to establish an elite in the eighteenth century which would have the same legal and governmental status as the Hungarians, Saxons and Székelys. For this reason, the authors worked out a historical argument that bore many of the characteristics of the social contract theories. The assessments of David Prodan and Zoltán I. Tóth to the contrary, this argumentation had an important role in supporting the plea both from the perspective of the Tripartitum-based feudal rights and from the perspective of natural rights: it proved the existence of a social contract between the Hungarians and the Romanians and the existence of the neglected but still existing rights of the Romanians. On the other hand, the feudal judicial argumentation of the plea sought to assert the claim that the rights of the Romanian people were common rights, based on the customary law definition of the Tripartitum. Thus, the authors of the plea could support their political ambitions from two sides with the help of historical argumentation.

The authors of the petition expressed the ideal, taintless state of the society with the concept of civil society. In their interpretation, this meant a monarchy in which the main objective of the monarch is to establish social balance. This balance can be achieved through the development of civil rights and the establishing of a kind of equality before the law. Thus, no group of citizens can acquire a position in which it can deprive the others of their rights by force or oppress them. According to the authors of the Supplex Libellus Valachorum, such a perfect social order had once already been established in Transylvania, allegedly in the age of the Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin, when a religious and legal equality was established between the Romanians and the Hungarians. But how did this founding act of Transylvanian society look? The Supplex built

11 Prodan called the historical argument of the plea a naïve interpretation (Prodan, Supplex Libellus Valachorum, 459–62), while Zoltán I. Tóth considers it a “constrained and perfectly erroneous historical concept” I. Tóth, Az erdélyi román nacionalizmus első százada, 260.
12 Tripartitum: the collection of the customary laws of the Hungarian Kingdom, compiled by István Werbőczy, published for the first time in Vienna in 1517. István Werbőczy, Hármaskönyve (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1894), V–XXXII.
13 Regarding history becoming a tool of politics in the case of the Transylvanian school, especially in the case of Ioan Budai-Deleanu, one of the presumed authors of Supplex Libellus Valachorum, see: Neumann, Essays on Romanian Intellectual History, 16–17.
its arguments on the *Gesta Hungarorum*, a twelfth-century chronicle written by an anonymous author. According to the plea, at the time of the Hungarian invasion of Transylvania in the ninth century, Gelou, the leader of the so-called Wallach people, who held themselves to be descendants of the Romans, was killed in the defensive battles. The Wallachs stopped fighting after his death; they rather “shook hands in free will, choosing Tuhutum, the leader of the Hungarians as their lord.”

“The rights of the citizens of the two nations [the Hungarians and the Wallachs] were melded in one company” from the beginning of the reign of Tuhutum. If this is considered from the perspective of social contracts, this means, that the two groups of people established a collective society. After the Romanians accepted the Hungarians “into a common homeland,” the two nations had the same exemptions and civic freedoms. Thus, the *Supplex* sees the agreement between Tuhutum and the Wallachs as a contract. With the mutual acknowledgement of each other’s rights, it established perfect isonomy and the taintless, almost paradisiac state of society.

According to the interpretation of the petition, the religious equality can also be dated back to this period, to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Transylvania turned to Eastern Christianity in the tenth century with the conversion of Tuhutum’s grandson, Gyula. Western Christianity gained ground in the province only after the fall of Gyula. This took place at a rapid pace, and soon only the Wallach population remained in the Eastern Church, although they were able to practice their religion undisturbed.

This historical summary was used to assert the existence of a social contract and equality before the law and strengthen the feudal judicial argumentation. This is based on the customary law definition of Werbőczy. The *Tripartitum* defines this legal institution as a set of rights with moral origins, which act as a law when there is no applicable law. For the purposes of my analysis, its main significance is that it does not need to exist in a written form. As long as it serves the common good and is a long-standing practice, it must be considered equal.

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15 “Propria voluntate, dexteram dantes, Dominum sibi elegent Tuhutum, Hungarorum Ducem, ac fidem inreiuando firmaverunt.” Ibid., 49.
16 “Utrique genti, Hungaricae scilicet et Valachicae, a tempore quo sub Duce Tuhutum in unam societatem coalescere communia erant.” Ibid., 50.
17 “Hungaricae scilicet et Valachicae, a tempore quo sub Duce Tuhutum in unam societatem coalescere communis erant.” Ibid., 50
18 “Ad concivilitatem.” Ibid., 58.
19 Ibid., 49–51, 57–58.
20 Ibid., 62–64.
21 Ibid., 48–50.
As according to the interpretation of the plea given above all the previous points were realized, in the Middle Ages the customary laws of the Romanians functioned concepts of a status equal with the status of written law.

There was a huge difference between the allegedly ideal historical age and the lack of rights endured by the Romanian-speaking communities in their own age. The connection was established by the authors of the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* by stating that the rights of the Romanians had never been legally abolished. Rather, they had been taken away by “the cruel ages.” The plea explained the history of this in two steps. First, laws had been established that did not affect the Romanians; thus, those laws did not mention the Romanians. Later, since the customary laws were built on written laws that did make no mention of the Romanians, their rights were seriously limited. This process allegedly began with the *Unio Trium Nationum* and the Reformation. The plea saw the union as an alliance between the Hungarian, Saxon and Székely nationes forged in 1437, and not as an agreement determining the governmental form of the country. According to this interpretation, the union of the three estates of the realm was their own private matter, and it did not affect the legal status of Romanians, as it existed only in the form of customary law. The authors used the same analogy regarding religions as well: the changes that took place in Western Christianity in the sixteenth century did not affect the situation of those belonging to the Orthodox church, including the Romanians. According to the plea, the church-related acts of law established in 1540–1563 were not intended to define the religions accepted in the country. The authors interpret these regulations as providing a legal description for the Roman Catholic Church, the legal state of which had undergone a change at the time, and the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian Churches, which were gathering ground in Transylvania at the time. The regulations had been intended merely to secure the legality of these four Churches. If we examine this from the perspective of the Orthodox Church, there was no change in its situation because of the Reformation, so it was unnecessary to mention it in these laws. The authors are trying to prove via leading cases that the above method of interpreting the law is perfect and that Romanians did not have to face any kind of disadvantageous legal discrimination after the union and the acceptance of the Church-related

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23 Ibid., 47.
acts. They recall that the Romanian people gave several high ranking people to the Kingdom of Hungary, including kings, governors and archbishops of Esztergom in the ages before the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*.  

The authors believe that the misinterpretation of the abovementioned acts started with the introduction of the *Approbatae Constitutiones*. The authors of this document carelessly or deliberately included several regulations among the acts that had severe effects on the situation of the Romanians. Forgetting about their equality granted by customary law but never registered in written form, the *Approbatae Constitutiones* categorized them as received, tolerated people. Their deprivation of rights was not declared in a separate act, it only appeared in the preamble of other acts. One of the sections in the legal code about which they had a grievance was the introduction to the chapter concerning Romanian priests. “Though the Walachian nation does not belong to the Estates in this land nor does its religion belong to the recognized religions, yet it is further tolerated for the advantage of the kingdom (propter emolumentum Regni), subject to its priests observing certain conditions.” According to the authors, this new approach swiftly made its way into customary law, and it found support among “many citizens of the Homeland,” thus establishing a legally flawed practice.

Thus, the reasons for the situation of the Romanians were not to be found in the acts, but in customary law based on the preambles of the acts and in “the cruelty of the ages.” The *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, in accordance with the natural rights-based thinking widespread in eighteenth-century Hungary, considers it to be the Sovereign’s task to grant an order to the community, which

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27 *Approbatae Constitutiones regni Transylvaniae et Pratium Hungariae eidem annexarum*: the law corpus of the Transylvanian legislation, codified between 1541–1653, compiled on the order of Prince György Rákóczi II in 1653. (Sándor Kolosvári and Kelemen Óvári, trans., *Magyar Törvénytár: 1540–1848. évi erdélyi törvények* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1900), 1.) The use of *Approbatae Constitutiones* as an argument is not unique to the *Supplex*. As highlighted by Victor Neumann, starting with Inochenţie Micu-Klein, the herald of the Romanian Enlightenment, this played an important role in the political struggles of the Romanians. Victor Neumann, *Tentaţia lui homo europaeus* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2006), 139–40.
30 “complures Patriae cives” Ibid., 56.
31 Ibid., 55–58.
32 Ibid., 60–61.
would make morality possible. Therefore, the predecessors of monarch Leopold II—including Leopold I, Maria Theresa and Joseph II, who fully understood “the natural and real rights of men and citizens”—were trying to change the situation of the Romanians. According to the authors of the plea, their charters, orders and commands were useless, because the diets openly opposed them.

The authors emphasize in their arguments that since the rights had never been lost, they were still in effect. Based on this claim, the aim of the plea was not to achieve new rights and overthrow the constitutional order of the country, but to reestablish the Romanians into their earlier position of equal rights. They wanted to achieve this with the help of the monarch. Alternatively, there was the declaration of their deprivation of rights, which could only be interpreted according to the authors as the dismissal of the agreement. They thought it meant the restoration of the relationship between the two nations before the agreement, and this relationship was war. In such a case—six years after the Horea revolt—they foresaw the danger of a new peasant rebellion, which could be started by the Romanian peasantry if they continued to be treated differently than the peasants of other nationales.

The authors of the Supplex phrased their actual requests in five points. These were the following: First, the phrases “received,” “tolerated,” and “does not belong to the Estates of this land” had to be withdrawn once and for all, and the Romanians had to be repositioned to citizens of the country with equal rights. Second, the old-established equality of the Romanians had to be restored. Third, all groups of Romanian society, regardless of religion, had to enjoy equal treatment to the other nationales. Fourth, in the parishes, seats, districts and counties the officers must ensure that the Romanians get representation in proportion to their numbers. And finally, the counties, seats and parishes that had a Romanian population must be allowed to use a Romanian name, too.

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33 Szűcs, “Természet, jog, teológia,” 103.
34 “qui equidem pura et simplicia tum hominis, cum civis iura intellexit” Köllő, Supplex Libellus Valachorum, 64.
35 Ibid., 62–69. The myth that the monarch did everything to help the people of the monarchy and his orders were hindered locally was widespread among the people. For further information: Gyöngy Kovács Kiss, A Habsburg-uralom erdélyi kiteljesedésének folyamata a korabeli magyar emlékirodalom láttatásában, 17 század vége – 19. század eleje (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2000).
36 A revolt of Transylvanian Romanian peasants at the turn of 1784–1785. Its leaders were three serfs: Horea, Cloșca and Crișan. I. Tóth, Az erdélyi román nacionalizmus első százada, 222–28.
38 Ibid., 69–72.
As can be seen, the requests aimed to reestablish rights and achieve equal legal status with the Hungarians, and not to acquire additional rights. As an example, they followed the continuous grievance policy of the Hungarian estates that were present until 1838. The reference basis in this case was “the truths of nature,” “the basic laws of civil society” and the “agreements bound,” i.e. the norms and conventions of customary law. The use of the argumentation based on the concept of social contracts made it possible to refer to an imaginary status based on natural law interpreted as supreme truth. The plea was consequential in using the terms restoration and reestablishing, trying to draw the Romanians near this status. Thus, the words restoration and reestablishment do not refer to the past; the authors used the legal methodology of the period to describe their demands regarding the future political situation of the Romanians.

Another key characteristic of the Supplex Libellus Valachorum is that although we cannot yet speak of nationalism in its modern form, the document bears the first signs of the evolution of a new group identity that was not Church-based. One of the main arguments of the plea was the primordiality of the Romanians. It finds evidence in support of the view according to which the Wallach people were the oldest inhabitants of Transylvania and the descendants of the veterans settled by Traianus in the region in historical sources and similarities in language, morality and customs. This can be considered the first sign of a cultural-national model, but it appeared only among the intellectuals at the time. The identity of the Romanian peasantry consisted of totally different elements.

In the plea, there another idea emerges that was going to be very important later, and that was the need for the education of the Romanian people:

Nothing can be expected from the education of this nation while its clergy and nobility are kept in squalor, and because of this there is no accession in diligence; rather, ignorance, indolence, and slothfulness come from it, together with those greater sins to which it usually gives birth, for the destruction of the province.

39 “aequitati naturali principisque societatis civilis pactisque conventis imitii petita haec e supradictus abunde patet” Ibid., 70.
41 “nulla Nationis huius quamdiu eius Clerus et Nobilitas in abjecto statu conservabitur sperari possit cultura, proinde nec industriae ulla accessio, sed potius ignorantiam, deditiam et ignaviam cum omnibus quae abinde generari solent vitis maiora adire apud ipsam, in desolationem Provinciae” Köllő, Supplex Libellus Valachorum, 69.
The clergy and nobility, as the two determinant groups of Transylvanian Romanian society, were given an extraordinary role in this statement. Thus, the enrichment of the whole nation, expressed with the phrase “accession in diligence,” depended on their education. Their ignorance and indolence led to the failure of progress. This endeavor, since there was no organic concept of the nation as a living being, was, implicitly, in the interests of the state.\footnote{On the Viennese government’s educational policy in the Enlightenment age and the connection between education and state interests, see: Iacob Mârza, “Conceptul de educaţie în gândirea iluminist-romantică a românilor din Transilvania,” in \textit{Istoria României prin concepte: Perspective alternative asupra limbajelor social-politice}, ed. Victor Neumann and Armin Heinen (Iaşi: Polirom, 2010), 81–98.}

The Supplex Libellus Valachorum was followed by several petitions from the circles of the Orthodox and Greek Catholic prelacy. In these, the methods of argumentation and the principles from the pleas of 1791 and 1792 return; however, they are now parts of a partially or totally different system of concepts.\footnote{For the pleas written between 1792 and 1834 see Gyémánt, \textit{Mişcarea naţională a românilor din Transilvania între anii 1790 şi 1848}, 119–29, 250–68.} The document handed over to the monarch in 1834 by Ioan Lemeni\footnote{Ioan Lemeni was Greek Catholic bishop of Făgăraş from 1833 until 1850. Szinnyei József, \textit{Magyar írók élete és munkái} (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor Könyvkiadóhivatala, 1900), 7:1017–18.} and Vasile Moga,\footnote{Vasile Moga was Romanian orthodox bishop of Transylvania from 1811 until 1845. Nicolae Iorga, \textit{Istoria Bisericii Româneşti şi a vieţii religioase a românilor} (Bucharest: Editura Ministeriului de Culte, 1930), 2:221, 238.} with a reassurance from commissioner Ferenc Wlassits,\footnote{Ferenc Wlassits was lieutenant-general, the Ban of Croatia. In 1833 he was appointed as plenipotentiary commissioner of the court of Transylvania, a position from which he was displaced in November of the same year. Ambrus Miskolczy, “Társadalom, nemzetiség és ellenzéiskiség kérdései az erdélyi magyar reformmozgalomban (1830–1843),” \textit{Századok} 117 (1983): 1077.} also fits into this tradition. The plea itself was completed only some months before the reopening of the diet, which had been a burning demand for about a quarter of a century. It was supported by commissioner Wlassits because he considered it as a tool for the weakening of the liberal opposition, which was gaining ground. The plea consciously relies on the traditions of the documents written in the beginning of the 1790s, and its aim was to renew the pleas of the Supplex Libellus Valachorum. The authors based their work on the monarch’s reply to the Supplex Libellus Valachorum, dated 21 July, 1792. This reply made a declaration of intent to eradicate the grievances of the Romanian people; however, as the authors pointed out, this had not been realized in the 41 years that had passed between the two pleas. As they emphasized, this was in spite of the fact that during this time there had been two attempts\footnote{The authors may be referring to the peasant movements of 1819 and 1831 in the Apușeni Mountains.} to start a rebellion, while the Romanians had
been waiting in peace to have their rights restored and to join the other nationales in an alliance of mutual cooperation.\textsuperscript{48}

The authors tried to support their contention that the Romanians possessed rights in two ways: they referred to the Transylvanian acts and the natural laws, as in the case of the \textit{Supplex Libellus Valachorum}. However, the demonstrative argumentation already differed from the plea of 1791: the social contract theory was no longer part of the argumentation, which was based on concepts of natural law, and its arguments concerning public law did not try to present Romanian legal equality on the basis of customary law anymore. Its fundamental idea was that the Romanians were not to be excluded from the national rights and monarchical benefits, neither through nature nor by law.\textsuperscript{49} On the contrary, nature guaranteed them the same rights as the other nationales and all the benefits of the law. Via this formula, the plea of Lemeni and Moga delimits the “acts of laws rooted in human nature”;\textsuperscript{50} that is, the natural laws and the acts that are ideally codified based on this law. Since it saw the Romanians as entitled to equal rights “designated by nature,”\textsuperscript{51} indirectly it declares that all acts that deprive Romanians of such rights and benefits are contrary to natural law. The same formula is repeated by the authors again at the end of the plea in a different way. Here, in order to prove the just nature of the requests, the basis of reference was the fact that they are rooted in nature, so “they can never be ripped out of their hearts.”\textsuperscript{52}

In addition to the arguments based on natural law, the plea used other methods as well to try to achieve the restoration of former rights.\textsuperscript{53} Alluding to the fact that the Romanian nobility and also the free men had the same rights as the respective groups among the Hungarians, Saxons and Székelys, the latter three could not demand any privileges over the Romanians. According to the plea, the determination of the three estates of the realm, the three nationales, constituted such a privilege, so the plea sought recognition of the Romanian

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\textsuperscript{49} “Quod supplicans natio Vallachica nec a natura, neque etiam per Leges a Juribus et Beneficiis regnicolaribus exclusa sitc” Lemeni and Moga, “Memoritului episcopilor Lemeni și Moga 1833/1834,” 111.

\textsuperscript{50} “Jure […] in ipsa natura humana radicentur” Ibid., 113.

\textsuperscript{51} “natura enim eandem quoque qualificatam esse, quo jurisbus concivitatis”

\textsuperscript{52} “illa ex animis ejus numquam evelli poterunt ita” Ibid., 114–15.

\textsuperscript{53} “Cum ergo per sanctionandum publicam Legem super Repositione Valachorum in Statum avitum systema Transilvaniae non modo turbaretur” Ibid., 112.
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community as the fourth *natio*. At the same time, the plea rejected the idea that the epithets related to tolerated legal status could be applied to the Romanians and that the Romanians would not count as a part of the constitutional system of the Grand Principality of Transylvania. The plea approached the problem along the logical system of cameral economics: as long as they are not part of the constitutional system, they should leave the country. In this case, the country would not find enough people to compensate for their absence, people who would take on the same burdens without the rights and privileges of the people living in the country, and without being treated as a constitutional factor.

Thus, the plea of 1833/34 bears strong affinities with the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* in two respects. The norm-based argumentation concerning natural laws was partially taken from the *Supplex*, together with the expression *repositioning* (*repositione*), the technique aiming at the delineation of future political positions. The real difference between the two documents is that the historical argumentation that supported the social contract concept of the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* was neglected. While the *Supplex* elaborates on the whole history of the social contract as the foundation of Transylvanian society, it is not mentioned in the plea of 1834. The cardinal referential basis of this plea is natural law and concrete acts of law, and not a hypothetically established contract. Apart from these changes in the legal sources, the logical structure was similar to the one introduced in the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*. The Romanians have always had these rights, they only needed to be recognized again. The bishops continued to phrase their requests in the name of the *natio*, and they wanted to achieve a status for all social groups that the respective groups with same legal standings had. Thus, the plea adhered to the conceptual framework outlined in the 1790s. The aims for the region did not include changing the structure of society, which would remain within the framework of the estates.

Ibid., 114–15.

55 Ibid., 114. Beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century, a new, agrarian-centered mercantilist economic policy began to emerge in the Habsburg and Hohenzollern monarchies. Its representatives Johann Heinrich Justi (1720–1771) and Joseph Sonnenfels (1733–1817) united the economic principles of the Austrian cameralism with the economic control principles of Western Europe of the eighteenth century. Sonnenfels, who had a greater impact on the Habsburg state and the establishment of the Josephinist views than Justi, made a case for the expansion of cultivated lands, technical innovation, and an increase in the number of producers, that is, for the settling of peasants, whose role was becoming increasingly important as a result of this. János Barta, Ifj., *A felvilágosult abszolutizmus agrárpolitikája a Habsburg- és Hohenzollern-monarchiában* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982), 148–60.
The plea of 1834 was sent out for assessment by the court to the Transylvanian chancellery, which replied with its 1792 rejection of the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* as an answer and forwarded the plea itself to the diet. This latter could not discuss it because it was dissolved. After the failure of this document, the next plea was handed over to the monarch by Vasile Moga, acting alone, in July, 1837. In this, one discerns a significant change in strategy compared to the former pleas. The set of questions were narrowed down to *Fundus Regius* by the authors with the open aim of exploiting the disagreements between the Hungarian nobility and the Saxons. Of its five points, three concerned only the Romanians living in that region. The plea submitted in 1837, like the one submitted three years earlier, lacked the historical introduction related to the social contract. The most important difference was that even the elements functioning as norms disappeared from the plea, and their place was taken by a positivist legal approach. The only legal source here is the codified acts of law. In addition to references to these acts, instead of allusions to natural truths, the authors introduced elements in the plea that played important roles in the coming years, such as morality and culture. This theme appears at the beginning of the document, in a part clarifying the role of the clergy:

All the clergy of a religion, consequently also the not united Greek clergy, are considered educators and promoters of religion, morality, as well as evanescent and eternal happiness, and for this progressive force to have the desired effect, they must have the necessary authority to educate the common people.

In the citation, the clergy is presented as the leading group of social life. According to the authors, the role of the clergy is to educate the common people and be a “progressive force” through religion and morality. They are the ones who guide the people in the direction of evanescent and eternal happiness.


If we read this plea while considering the future positions at which it is aiming and the intended manner of reaching these goals, the citation is significantly different from what we have seen previously. Both its goals and the concepts describing the processes that will lead to them have changed. The goal of innaintaire (progress), as opposed to the concepts of restoration and reestablishment, is not a concrete concept anymore, hidden behind the restoration of an imagined ideal state, as it was in the case of the earlier pleas, the goal of which was to achieve equal legal status and legal rights. This has been replaced by the state of evanescent and eternal happiness, which is at a transcendent distance. At the same time, some new key elements emerge that are, purportedly, essential to the quest to reach future positions, such as morality and culture, the spread of which is a prerequisite of progress. All of this points to the appearance of the humanistic ideal of Herder and the impacts of historicism. Herder described nations as human beings with a soul and a limited lifetime. However different they are, they each bear a universal humanity and some kind of nobility and dignity. The aim of their existence is to improve their humanity, which can be achieved via improving morality and culture. The requests of the authors served this purpose as well. Improving the living conditions of the clergy meant, in their eyes, the promotion of morality and culture. That is one of the reasons why they request the establishment of an Orthodox Seminary in Nagyszeben (Sibiu) and the release of clergy from the onerous burdens of corvee, tithe and taxa. They also wanted the clerics to receive canonica portio, and they requested that the Orthodox clerics in Fundus Regius should be entitled to allowances from the cassa allodialis. Their last request was that the Romanians in Fundus Regius have the right to hold public office, learn trades and be accepted by guilds.

The authors defined the above requests based on the “justice and rights of the poor Romanian people.” Their public legal argumentation is similar to that of the 1833/34 plea, leaving speculative legal interpretations behind. They refer accurately to acts and rescripts in each case. 32 of the 34 acts referred to in the plea were created after 1791. In addition to all of the above, securing progress through culture also appeared as an aim in the justification of the requests. The

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59 Iggers, The German Conception, 61–73. The ideas of Herder have been present in the cultures of the Hungarian Kingdom and Transylvania since the end of the eighteenth century. For the responses to these ideas see: János Rathmann, Filozófia és irodalom határán (Budapest: Kalligram, 2014), 135–45.
60 Moga, “Rugamintea episcopului Grecesc neunit,” part 1, 345–46.
document supports the request for the release of the clergy from the burden of paying the tithe with the 60th Articulus Novellares of the year 1791, and argues that the Romanians are superior in numbers within the population and that their request concerning the tithe is in accord with the monarchial will, that is, with “improving the culture of the people through the clergy.” They use the same arguments for the entitlement to allowances from the alodial funds as well: the Saxon villages finance their clerics, teachers and village schools from the alodial funds, from the incomes of allods, mills, taverns, lands and funds. According to the authors of the plea, the Romanian communities in Fundus Regius must do the same, and their investments will be paid off by in the form of cultural progress: “but those as beatific consequences would fall back to them because of the proper talent of the clergy, and through the progress of culture,” they write. Since according to the authors of the petition the Romanian people did not or (for an unspecified reason) could not consider this goal significant enough, such support must be ordered by the government.

Thus, the petition of 1838 differs from the earlier ones both in form and legal argumentation. In comparison to the Supplex Libellus Valachorum and the petition of 1833/34, the greatest change can be found in its legal philosophical foundations. The references to social contracts, natural laws, and phenomena functioning as norms are replaced by a positivist legal approach. The authors cite concrete acts of law and monarchial orders. They support their requests with exterior, not legal, but moral and religious arguments, such as the preponderance of Transylvanian Romanians and the need to spread morality and culture. Parallel with the shifts in the arguments, the aim of the plea changed as well. The main goal was not to secure rights, although this still played an important role, but rather to establish the right circumstances for the development of an organic nation.

62 The person preparing the legal argumentation of the plea cites the first sentence of the 60th articulus novellares of 1791 (De libero religionis Graeci ritus dis-unitorum exercitio) only partially: “Religio orientalis graeci ritus non-unita, quae juxta leges hujus provinciae hactenus inter tolleratas religiones recensita fuit” and referring to its past tense, it considers the Romanians as a people of accepted and not just tolerated religion. The whole of the article does not say that Orthodoxy is an accepted religion, but it supports the Orthodox people in their free practice of religion and orders that they must be treated properly according to their feudal state. Concerning public taxation and other services, they should not be encumbered more than others. Kolosvári and Óvári, Magyar törvénytár: 1540–1848. évi erdélyi törvények, 546.
64 Ibid., 354.
65 Ibid.
Shortly after beginning the discussion of the plea, the diet of 1838 established a committee to examine the document. It had a mandate until the next diet to clarify the grievances of the Romanian people. The Saxon Universitas used the time thusly won to begin collecting materials as early as June, 1838 in order to refute the arguments of the plea, so by January, 1842, when the plea was presented to the new diet, they had a complex argument against it. The only declaration of the committee appointed by the previous diet, which was in favor of the Romanians, was related to the practicing of trades. It recommended rejection of the request for tax exemption for the clergy and advised that the document itself be handed over to the Systhematica Deputatio. This decision meant that the plea had failed.66

The opportunity for a further plea came with the draft bill of 1842, which aimed to change the official language of Transylvania to Hungarian, and the debates concerning it.67 Bishop Vasile Moga wanted to exploit the disagreements between the Saxons and the Hungarians, and he hoped to get the support of the Hungarian estates for his plea. The compilation of the document was started by Aron Budai,68 who belonged to the circles of Moga. The first version of the plea produced at the time was sent to the Greek Catholic bishop Ioan Lemeni by Moga. Lemeni commissioned Alexandru Bohătel, a lawyer in Kolozsvár (Cluj), to finalize the document. It was presented on 20 January, 1842.69

This plea differs from the others in many aspects. Its subjects are defined as the citizens (cetăţenii), and it is addressed to the diet, not the monarch. The context of its preparation included in the text is also different compared to the earlier pleas. The authors put major emphasis on the question of the changing of times. This served as the starting point of their argumentation as well. They considered their own age as an age of the extension of rights, and they based the whole plea on this idea. “Now, when the voice of freedom and liberty is heard in the whole enlightened world,” the authors characterize their age, “people not free are liberated, and those who were outside of the shield of the constitution

66 Gyémánt, Măicarea națională a românilor din Transilvania între anii 1790 și 1848, 256–59.
67 The draft itself was met with an intense response among Romanians. Several of the most important Romanian program articles of the first part of the nineteenth century were formulated at this time, for example the Românii și maghiarizmul by Barțiu and the O tocmeală de rușine și o lege nedreapta by Simion Bărnuțiu.
68 Aron Budai was the secretary of the Gubernium, the central government of Transylvania. He also served as a notary of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Nagyszeben (Sibiu). His brother was Ioan Budai-Deleanu, a prominent figure of the Transylvanian Romanian Enlightenment. Annalile Societatei Academiei Române: Sesiunea anului 1870 (Bucharest: Noua Typographia a Laboratoriloru Romani, 1871), 3:115.
69 Ibid., 259–62.
will be taken in.”

In the age of an extension of constitutional rights, the writers of the plea referred to “the holy voice of freedom” as well, the words of which, in their view, should be understood by the lawmaking establishment.

The concept of freedom, which is a focal part of the argumentation, played a key role in the Romanian literature of the period. Gheorghe Barițiu, the most influential Romanian publicist of the 1840s, stated in one of his early program articles, entitled *Scriitori clasicii* (Classical Authors), that cultural development is the measure of the state of a nation. Thus, when writing about classics, he went beyond its interpretation as the highest stage of literature and described it as the desirable state of nations. Using Herder’s analogy, he saw it as the adulthood of the nation, which he considered to be a living entity, and the pinnacle of its development. He declared freedom to be the most important precondition of achieving this state, which made the “development of the forces” and the work of the genius possible. Considering this from the opposite point of view, he interprets the loss of freedom as the extinction of the medium providing for the flourishing of the nation and as the starting point of the nation’s death.

The authors of the plea see the state as the depositary of freedom interpreted in this way. The diet, as a “representative establishment,” has the task of guaranteeing this to the people governed by forming law and order and contributing to the material and intellectual welfare of the people, which is the most important long-term aim of the plea itself. The authors also consider that its task is to bind outsiders to the country and lift up people who have been deprived of their rights to the status of active practitioners of rights. They think that acting this way ensures that all of the people can enjoy the benefits of the constitution and the delights provided by it, which indirectly strengthens the security of the homeland.

One finds another positive legal argument in the plea, in addition to the one concerning the spirit of age and freedom. This one is a method familiar from the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, referring to existing but neglected rights. The authors of the plea of 1842 were also asking for the restoration of these rights and, through this restoration, the improvement of the situation of the Romanians.

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71 Ibid., 150–51.
73 Similarly to the plea of 1837, in this document the contention is also made that the spread of morality and culture and the “intellectual welfare” of the people are the key to the nation’s development.
The real difference between the two documents is that in the plea of 1842 the demand for the restoration/reestablishment of rights is not an integrated part of the framework of a social contract anymore. The authors simply used the trope according to which the Romanians of Fundus Regius, as the oldest inhabitants, had these rights when the Hungarians invaded the Carpathian Basin as a historical argument. This situation, according to their interpretation, was not changed by the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin or by the arrival of the Saxons. Their rights were confirmed upon the arrival of the Hungarians and the Saxons, so they considered all privileges on the land of Fundus Regius valid for the Romanians as well. They interpret the Andreanum of Andrew II in this way, but they also refer to several monarchical decrees from the eighteenth century.75

Based on all of this, the authors question even the notion that Fundus Regius should be called Saxon Land. They support this idea with the argument that according to the census of 1838, most of the inhabitants of the region were Romanians, and the privileges of the territory had not been granted exclusively to the Saxons by Andrew II. They also tried to annul the argument of the Saxons, according to which, although they only rule one-sixth of the country, they pay one-third of its taxes. The authors consider it a false argument, since most of these taxes were paid not by Saxons, but by the Romanians of Fundus Regius.76 Thus, they introduce the Romanians as legal equals to the Saxons, but superior in numbers and representing greater economic power.

On the basis of this, they request that they be repositioned into their existing civil liberties, which had been taken away from them by some “egotist elements”77 of the Saxon nation. As opposed to earlier pleas, the authors do not simply avoid mentioning the deprivation of rights; there is no discussion of

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75 Ibid., 151, 153–54. Moga started to collect the legal arguments in 1840, when he asked the Orthodox clergy to send all old documents that could be used for national purposes to the archives of the commissary. Gyémánt, Mișcarea națională a românilor din Transilvania între anii 1790 și 1848, 140.
76 The question of the economic roles and influence of the Saxons was brought up by the Saxons during the debate concerning the official national language in 1842. The authors were reacting to this. Ibid., 260. For example, David Prodan presents the commercial data of the period between 1830 and 1832 to demonstrate the role of the Romanian traders. In this period, the Romanian and Greek traders paid seventeen and a half times as much in tolls as the whole Saxon trading community. Prodan, Supplex Libellus Valachorum, 429.
77 Egotism as a concept also appears later in the article Unele pregătiri of Gheorghe Barițiu. In this work, the author names rationality as the only source of just law and the foundation of the relationships among people. Egotism is the counter-concept of a just law. It is “a passion outside of the realm of the intellect.” Georgie Bariț, “Unele pregătiri,” part 2, Foaie pentru minune, inimă și literatură, no. 5 (1844): 33–35.
the corruption of acts either, the only problem supposedly being the execution of these acts. As a consequence, when the administration acknowledges these rights again and ensures their execution, the situation of the Romanians will be reestablished.\textsuperscript{78}

What practical steps did they consider taking in order to reestablish the status of the Romanians? One of the aims of the plea was to solve the administrative and religious representation of the Romanian inhabitants, since the Romanians did not delegate any of the representatives of Fundus Regius to the Diet. The gravity of this issue derived from the privileged role of the representatives of interests. The authors, as was noted at the beginning of the plea, considered the representatives to be the depositary of the financial and intellectual welfare of the people through their ability to establish justice, law and order, which were seen as the preconditions of the flourishing of an organic nation. Without representation, their “misfortunes” would not be heard, and no one would attempt to remedy them. According to the petitioners, the Saxons, who were in control of the political and administrational institutions, worked only to secure their own interests. Their aim was to reap all the benefits of the administration and, since there were no proper regulations, to exclude the Romanians from every level of administration, even including the administration of the villages.\textsuperscript{79}

Although according to the authors of the plea the Romanians had a youth “properly trained for all intents and purposes,” they were never given access to positions within the administration. Like the sons of lesser nobility, they were not welcomed by the Saxons to work with their magistrates. The administration tried to discourage them from pursuing professions, and if they do not succeed, there is no hope of any kind of magisterial promotion.\textsuperscript{80}

The other significant question for the Romanians was the matter of the county and town bursaries. Since the Saxons reserved the right to manage these institutions themselves, the incomes of the bursaries were used for the benefit of the financial and intellectual welfare of the Saxons. They helped further the education of Saxon students with scholarships from these bursaries, and they also came to the aid of the Saxon churches with significant amounts of

\textsuperscript{78} Lemeni and Moga, “Rugăminte episcopilor Moga și Lemeni,” 151–54.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 154–55.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 156–57; in the 1840s, it resulted in serious responses when the Saxon authorities declined the application of three young people from Brasov, who graduated from the Piarist Lyceum of Cluj, for an internship, referring to the state of their religion as “tolerated.” Ambrus Miskolczy, \textit{A brassói román levantei kereskedőpolgárság kelet-nyugati közvetítő szerepe} (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987), 140.
money, while the Romanians were excluded from these benefits. According to
the Romanians, this was done deliberately in order to ensure that the Romanians
remained uneducated. Education, they believed, was the only path to cultivation,
which was important for the development of the nation. The authors thought
that this was motivated by fear: “If they are denied ways to earn their bread,
then the great things born of the genius, the spirit, go into a deep sleep. A dream
falls over them, and they are suffocated if their body has no ailment.” Thus,
according to the authors of the plea, the Saxons were afraid of the awakening
national consciousness and national spirit of the Romanians. From the Romanian
point of view, funds were available to finance education, and the development
and spread of culture would lead to works of genius so that the nation would be
able to fulfil its fate and reach its classical state.

These demands were justified with the mention of several other financial
grievances. According to the authors, this fear is the reason why the Saxons
excluded the Romanians and the Hungarians from the guilds, and this is why
the Romanians of Fundus Regius did not have the right to engage in forestry or
tavern keeping and had no share of the yields from the common lands. Another
disputed issue in the plea is the question of the tithe, since the Romanians had to
pay the tithe to the Saxon clergy instead of their own Orthodox clerics. The latter
had to do their own husbandry, and, as the plea puts it, even the Greek Catholic
clerics get only a small amount of money as a favor. Similarly, the issue of
boundaries arose after the agricultural transformations of the age. The bishops
complained that the Saxons held back the related documents, and in cases of
disputes, the Romanian communities could not prove that they had owned certain
lands for several generations. According to them, the Saxons used legal acts to
take away these lands, thus stealing the ancient heritage of the Romanians. As
far as the petitioners knew, the Saxons established special committees to control
the boundaries and drive away the Romanians or impoverish them in Fundus
Regius. In their assessment, this practice was possible because the first level of
jurisdiction was in Saxon hands, as was the highest judiciary forum.

The fate of the document did not differ much from the fate of the earlier
documents. It was sent to committee after a short debate at the diet; the
committee asked the Saxons to give an assessment, and the Saxons refused to

82 Ibid., 156–58.
83 Ibid., 159.
84 Ibid., 160.
discuss the plea. It surfaced again in February, 1843. This is when it was sent to the *Systematica Deputatio*, which rejected it.\(^{85}\)

If one examines the pleas side by side, the key concept in each of them, with the exception of the plea of 1838, was repositioning (reponere, repositione, repunere), but the meaning of this concept changed significantly over time. In the case of the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, the argumentation based on social contracts and the customary law definition of feudal rights was replaced with a positive legal argumentation built on actual acts of laws. On the other hand, in the plea of 1838 the concept of handling nations as living beings is unmistakably recognizable, together with the idea of their rise through civilization and culture. This change of paradigms caused a change in the aims of the pleas as well. Eventually, their main aim was not merely to secure rights, but to establish auspicious circumstances for the development of a nation conceived of as a living being. The goal became to prepare for cultural development and establish the conditions necessary for culture to flourish.\(^{86}\) Thus, although at first glance the argumentations of the documents seem to have a lot in common, in fact one can clearly discern how the community-related concepts of Transylvanian Romanian Romanticism started to gain ground, while at the same time the tropes appearing in the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* started to undergo a transformation.

Together with the conceptual changes, significant changes can be detected both in the structure of Transylvanian Romanian society and in its relationship with the public spheres. By the end of the 1830s, a clerisy had been formed, which was low in number, but together with the foundation of the Transylvanian Romanian press, it acquired significant cultural influence. Beginning in the 1820s, the Transylvanian press began to quicken, and with the establishment of the Hungarian *Erdélyi Híradó* in 1831, a liberal newspaper came into existence, which aimed not only to report news, but also to form public opinion. The Romanians followed this trend with a bit of a delay. In 1837, after the unsuccessful attempts of Ioan Barac, George Barățiu founded the papers *Foia pentru minte, inimă și*

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85 Gyémánt, *Mișcarea națională a românilor din Transilvania între anii 1790 și 1848*, 262–68.
86 The primarily literal and cultural programs and ideas that aim to build the foundations of the national culture are very prevalent among the Romanian intellectuals of the period. These are present in the press until 1848. A non-exhaustive list of examples: A din Ungaria, “Românii în privința literaturii,” *Foia pentru minte, inimă și literatură* 6, no. 25–26 (1843); Barățiu, “ Scriitori clasici”; Barățiu, “O încercare de traducție,” *Foia pentru minte, inimă și literatură* 8, no. 33 (1845); Timotei Cipariu: “ Critica și redactorii,” *Organul Luminării* 1, no. 2 (1847); Ioan Rusu, “Ceva despre ortografia latino-românească,” *Foia pentru minte, inimă și literatură* 1, no. 10 (1838); Ioan Rus, *Ioana pamentului sau carte de geografie*, vol. 1 (Blaj: Tipografica Seminarului, 1842); J. J. Mány, “Idei despre creșterea poporului,” *Gazeta Transilvaniei* 9, no. 57 (1846).
literatură and Gazeta de Transilvania, which soon became the central media of the Romanian clerisy. The importance of the two newspapers is eloquently illustrated by the fact that at its first appearance the former had about one hundred subscribers, but by 1842 this number had grown to 630 and by 1848 it had grown to 820.\footnote{George Em. Marica, \textit{Studii de istorie și ideologie culturii române ardeleene din secolul al XIX-lea} (Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Dacia, 1977), 1:19–44. The press became a part of everyday life and the most important opinion shaper by the 1840s, as was true in the case of Hungarian politics. Organs of the press involved groups of people in political life who earlier had had only shallow contact with it; with the establishment of new genres, it altered the frameworks of the expression of political opinion; and by furthering the emergence of a new terminology, it changed the linguistic elements of politics as well.\footnote{For further information on the Hungarian context see János Veliky, “A programalkotó politikai viták nyelvi-kulturális kerete a reformkor második évtizedében,” \textit{Irodalomtörténet} 42, no. 3 (2011): 291–320.} In this aspect, the two Romanian papers of Brassó (Brașov) can be considered exemplary. Thanks to the work of Barițiu, these papers added huge intellectual energies to some of the political debates. Their significance is further enhanced by the fact that through translation of the most important Hungarian and Saxon writings, the papers created opportunities for Romanian intellectuals to join these debates in their own language. As intellectuals were beginning to gain ground in this way, the influence of the bishops as political leaders was weakening, and with the publicity of the press, the role of the pleas as the only forum for the demonstration of public political opinion was over. In light of all this, the 1830s bore witness to radical changes in the ideological foundations of political thinking, in the ways and scope of political activity, and in the social status of the participating entities. Taking this into consideration, we can say that although the Transylvanian Romanian political movements of the 1790s, 1830s and 1840s are intricately intertwined, they cannot be discussed as part of a single movement or period.

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