

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE RAȚIU FAMILY TO FOUNDING THE MUSEUM OF TURDA

Abstract: The foundations of the museum in Turda were certainly laid with the help of private collections that had been assembled since the nineteenth century. Orbán Balázs mentions, in his monograph of Turda, the existence “of genuine collections” gathered in various locations of the town.

The location of the future museum was inaugurated in the headquarters of the Cultural House on 12 October 1913, after extensive renovation works.

After the official opening of the institution, numerous purchases of antiques were made for a long period of time. Among the artefacts that entered the custody of the Cultural House at that time there are ethnographic objects from the Trascău area. It should be noted that numerous items of historical value were stored there even before that period.

The project of establishing a museum was resumed immediately after the war, when there were hopes for acquiring the Téglás collection. The attempts of the Historical Monuments Commission failed, most of this collection being scattered and only a few of the items reaching the patrimony of the Turda museum.

The idea of establishing a museum in Turda was not abandoned. In subsequent years, the Rațiu family was directly involved in this project.

Its establishment was largely “the fruit of the mind” of Dr. Augustine Rațiu. An active politician, the former mayor of Turda (1932), President of the Craftsmen’s Assembly of Turda, Dean of the Bar Association in Turda and a prominent member of the National Peasants’ Party, he launched an action that was publicised by the press and took the necessary steps for setting up the museum of Turda. Although the museum of Turda was officially set up on 22 November 1943, its foundations had been laid by Dr. Augustin Rațiu in as early as 1933. The donations made by Emilia Rațiu and other members of this family were decisive in this respect.

Keywords: Turda, history museum, Cultural House, Augustin Rațiu, the Rațiu family

Immediately after the union between Transylvania and Romania, Romanian cultural activities in this province intensified. At the level of the museums, there was “an explosion” in terms of the development and reorganisation of existing Romanian museum institutions. In the cities with ancient cultural traditions from Transylvania, where such institutions did not exist, various museum collections were promoted, forming the basis of the future museums, mostly according to the regional or local interest.

The foundations of the museum in Turda were certainly also laid with the help of several private collections that had been gathered ever since the nineteenth century. In his work, Orbán Balázs mentioned the existence “of genuine collections” gathered in various locations of the town.¹ He had knowledge of numerous artifacts collected by Nagy Olivérné and those assembled at the Reformed Parish House in Turda.² Balázs’s proposal concerning the establishment of a museum in the Town Hall, which would

¹ Balázs Orbán, *Torda város és környéke*, Budapest, 1889.

² *Ibidem*, p. 39.

acquire and accommodate the numerous private collections, seems interesting to us. It is possible that the Municipality did house such a collection of antiques, given that Orbán mentioned the fact that here was deposited the inscription which was dismantled from the Monumental Gate of the Revenue Office Building in 1883.³

On 12 October 1913, the Cultural House opened in Turda after the extensive renovation works undertaken by the Hungarian architect Lux Kálmán between 1911 and 1913.⁴ Built out of stone, the building had 10 rooms. On the ground floor, there were four rooms, a hall (vestibule), and two residential rooms, while in the basement, there were vaulted cellars. Upstairs was arranged a conference room, a library and a reading room. A museum was envisaged to be set up in the numerous rooms of the Cultural House. This historical monument from Turda served as a Hungarian Cultural House: “as a foundation for eternal times, for cultural, historical and decorative art purposes, as a museum and as a magazine (storehouse for collections of historical objects), it shall not be remised or used for any other purposes.”⁵

For a substantial period of time after the official opening of the institution, numerous purchases of antiques were made. Among the artifacts that entered the custody of the Cultural House at that time, there are generally ethnographic objects from the Trascău area. It should be noted that even before its inauguration, it housed many items of historical value. Thus, point 2 of the contract whereby the Cultural House was taken over by the Society for Hungarian Defence (“Magyar Védő Egyesület”) on 28 March 1912 talks about a collection that was already in existence: “the supervision, classification, care, handling and development of the cultural house, the arrangements and all the collections and values gathered there.”⁶

Based on the above-mentioned contract, concluded on the said date between the town of Turda and the Hungarian society, the building was taken over by this society.⁷ The contract drafted in Hungarian contained 8 points and point 7 stipulated: “If the Society for Hungarian Defence from Turda should be dismantled, the cultural house with all the arrangements and its whole content shall pass into the property of the town of Turda.”⁸

After 1918, this society was dissolved and under Article 7 of the contract, the Cultural House passed into the property of the town of Turda.

Shortly after the demise of Istvan Téglás (1853-1915), the school inspector from Turda, the idea that circulated was that the important collection he had gathered

³ *Ibidem*, p. 343.

⁴ Horațiu Groza “Un monument de arhitectură medievală: Palatul Voievodal din Turda,” in *AMN*, 45-46, II, 2008-2009, pp. 233-252.

⁵ *Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, year 1919, doc. no. 2, The documentary fund used in this article may be consulted at the Museum of History in Turda.

⁶ *Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, year 1912, doc. no. 1, the History Museum of Turda.

⁷ *Ibidem*, the History Museum of Turda. In relation to rescript no. 45899/1911 of the Ministry of Public Instruction, under decision no. 65/1910, the population of Turda ceded the old edifice “Bathory House,” which had been in its property, to the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction, for cultural purposes. The Town Hall created a public foundation, whereby it delivered it to the “Society for Hungarian Defence in Turda,” represented by the director, Horvath Domokos, and the secretary, Pal Gabor.

⁸ *Ibidem*, the History Museum of Turda.

throughout his lifetime should form the basis of the future museum, but the war prevented the realisation of this initiative.

The project of establishing a museum on the premises of the Cultural House was resumed immediately after the war, when hopes towards the purchase of the Téglás collection were reignited. The attempts made by the Historical Monuments Commission, the Transylvania Section (founded in 1921), with a view to purchasing this collection failed, most of it being scattered and only a few of its objects ending up in the museum of Turda. At that time, the collection was impressive, comprising about 1,500 artifacts from the Roman period, as well as from other historical periods. It contained numerous ethnographic objects, books and old letters, amounting to 4,068 pieces in all.⁹ According to the press of the time, most of the collection was purchased by a foreign antiques dealer for 25,000 lei.¹⁰

After 1918, there occurred changes affecting the destination of the interior spaces in this building. The festive hall (probably the conference hall) of the Cultural House, located upstairs, was ceded to the Romanian “Casina” (a cultural and political society), the remaining space being reserved for the future museum, whose leadership was expected to be the responsibility of the Headmaster of King Ferdinand High School in Turda.

The idea of establishing a museum in Turda emerged more poignantly in the following years, the Rațiu family being directly involved in this project. In a letter Dr. Augustin Rațiu wrote in Turda on 25 December 1919 and addressed to “Astra,” the Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People in Sibiu, he proposed that the Turda Branch of “Astra” should take over the Cultural House in town and have a museum organised there: “I proposed that I should be allowed to establish the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum on the ground floor of this house.”¹¹

In the article entitled “Turda” that the same Augustin Rațiu submitted to the local Gazette on 7 December 1921, he launched an appeal towards establishing a Romanian museum in Turda. In the conclusion to the article entitled “We Need a History Museum,” what is emphasised is the importance of collecting all the artifacts and documents in the area, indicating that the proper exhibition space should be the Princely Mansion in Turda: “Here might be gathered all the documents of times past. The Government should hastily appoint a custodian, so that he may gather all the historical documents from the Turda-Arieș County in this mansion.”¹²

Attempts to lay the foundations of a museum institution in Turda were also made by Professor A. Nanu from Turda after 1920.¹³ The professor’s activity was limited to collecting some artifacts and storing them in King Ferdinand High School.

Subsequent accidental discoveries of inscriptions, sarcophagi, sculptures and architectural fragments on the territory of the locality enriched the cultural heritage of

⁹ Coriolan Petranu, *Muzeele din Transilvania, Banat, Crișana și Maramureș. Trecutul, prezentul și administrarea lor*. București, 1922, pp.158-159.

¹⁰ *Ogorul Școalei*, no. 6, 1937/1938.

¹¹ *Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, year 1919, doc. no. 2, the History Museum of Turda.

¹² *Gazeta “Turda”*, no.5/7 December 1921.

¹³ Ioan Opriș, “Despre începuturile muzeografiei la Turda,” in *Potaissa*, II, 1980, p. 303.

the future museum. To these findings were added the small private collections of Augustin Rațiu and K. Kovrig, which were put on display in the Cultural House and in the local schools. All these collections and items coming from discoveries or acquisitions had to be housed in an institution specially created and arranged for this purpose.

The fact is that in the fourth decade of the twentieth century, the idea and necessity of establishing a museum that would house these artifacts - according to well-conceived conservation and security regulations - became increasingly pressing.

The idea of establishing a museum was largely "the fruit" of Dr. Augustin Rațiu's mind. An active politician, the former mayor of Turda (1932), President of the Craftsmen's Assembly of Turda, Dean of the Bar Association in Turda and a prominent member of the National Peasants' Party, he launched an action that was publicised by the press and took the necessary steps for setting up the museum of Turda. Although the museum of Turda was officially set up on 22 November 1943, its foundations had been laid by Dr. Augustin Rațiu in as early as 1933. The theme and the personality of this collection may not have been well established, but the Historical Monuments Commission nonetheless submitted to the Chairman of "Astra" Augustin Rațiu's request concerning the establishment of a museum in Turda, the commission noting that this would save "from destruction a series of archaeological, ethnographic monuments... monuments which, if collected and displayed in a museum, would represent a beautiful icon of the past and the present of our nation in the region of Turda."¹⁴

We shall insist below on Augustin Rațiu's year-long efforts and activity for the establishment and opening of a museum in Turda. 33 documents have been researched and examined for documentation purposes.

In 1932, new steps towards setting up the museum of Turda were taken. Felicia Rațiu, the daughter of Dr. Ioan Rațiu the Memorandist, was informed in a letter Augustin sent her on 13 September 1932 about the visit that the President of the Romanian Lawyers' Union undertook to Turda, on the occasion of a convention.¹⁵ This letter provides concrete information on the location of the future Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum: "After the festive meeting, I went to the Cultural House located in the old princely mansion, where I showed him the room where I want to install, with your and your family's hep, a museum in honour of Dr. Ioan Rațiu. Detailed reports have been issued and published about all this in the newspaper *Dimineața* from Bucharest, in the issue of 14 September 1932, and in the newspaper *Universul* from Bucharest on the same day, in the page devoted to Transylvania. In Turda I published in the local gazette everything that happened, with a photo of Dr. Ioan Rațiu's statue on the front page."¹⁶ This location was not chosen randomly. One of the local newspapers wrote the following: "The Cultural House is the place where almost all the public lectures are organised..... it has a conference hall with a gallery of original paintings by Hungarian artists, a library, an ethnographic house."¹⁷

¹⁴ The accompanying address in the archive of the C.M.I., the Transylvania section, reg. no. 426/10 August 1933.

¹⁵ *Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, year 1932, doc. no. 4.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ "Viața Culturală în orașul și în județul Turda," in *Arieșul*, year VII, no. 9-10, of 10 September 1932, p. 4.

On 15 January 1933, the first items necessary for the establishment of the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum of Turda were shipped from Sibiu to Turda:¹⁸

No.	Name of the Object	No. of items
1	Veneer wooden bed (owners - Dr. Ioan Rațiu and Emilia Rațiu)	2 items
2	Nightstand	2 items
3	Persian rug (wall-hanging carpet) representing two dogs	1 item
4	Painting - Emiliei Dr. Rațiu	1 item
5	Rocking chair	1 item
6	Writing table	1 item
7	Round chair	1 item
8	Cabinet - bookcase (with three shelves)	1 item
9	Bookshelf	1 item
10	Sideboard	1 item
11	Watch (in glass box)	1 item
12	Ornamental mug	1 item
13	Lion statue - iron	1 item
14	Stone hammer (without a handle)	1 item

Felicia Rațiu specified in the letter that she would shortly send five more pieces of furniture that had belonged to her family. In the conclusion to her letter, she left it to Augustin Rațiu to arrange these objects in the room ceded by “Astra” for the organisation of the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum.¹⁹

A month and a half after this donation, Felicia visited the premises of the future museum. Outraged by what she saw there, she wrote a letter to the President of the “Astra” Association on 27 February 1933:

Mr. President!

Having spent a few days in Turda, I investigated the “Cultural House” that is under the protection of the Astra Branch - and found the following:

The Dr. Ioan Rațiu Room in which the items I donated are stored was blocked with some wire on which some freshly laundered clothes had been left to dry. Passing under this obstacle, I entered the room, which I found in indescribable disarray. I had the impression that it had not been swept or cleaned since autumn. The dust was so thick you could not touch any object. The rocking chair - broken. On the writing table, pigs seemed to have feasted and it was so dirty, both its wood and its cloth. The wall-

¹⁸ *Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, year 1933, doc. no. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

hanging rug was stretched on the ground and had been trampled under foot. Unlocked cabinets - which means that only those who did not want anything didn't steal anything. The adherence and devotion albums received by my beloved parents were torn, loose or damaged. The bedspread..., then the bed curtain - a work of art of the Slovak women from Turocz St. Martin, dusty and moth-eaten. Broken furniture and the glass missing from a picture.

Given all these, you may imagine what a terrible impression this made on me, this sheer lack of interest in the objects I donated for the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Room.

You will kindly take note of the fact that I seized the bedspread, the Slovak embroidery and the two albums to have them cleaned and repaired.

I ordered that the furniture and the other damaged things should be fixed. I have entrusted Mr. Dr. Augustin Rațiu, Dean of the Bar Association in Turda, with overseeing these works, and then with the inventory of the objects.

You will kindly demand that the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Room from the Cultural Palace, together with all the items stored there, should be better taken care of in the future, because otherwise I shall be forced to revoke the donation I made and collect all the items I donated away from there.

In order for the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Room not to end up in future in the state in which I found it now, I have requested Mr. Dr. Augustin Rațiu - a descendant of our family - to oversee that this room is well taken care of and report to me from time to time. You will kindly take note of this directive and grant the aforementioned the proper authorisation to enter the Dr. Ioan Rațiu chamber for this purpose at all times, and insofar as cleanliness is concerned, please take any measures you will deem necessary."

From another letter we find that Petre Suciu, the chairman of the Turda Branch of "Astra," was appointed as supervisor of this collection,²⁰ and that the Cultural House had an employee responsible for maintaining cleanliness.²¹

The establishment of a museum in Turda required monetary funds that were difficult to obtain at that time, when there was a severe global financial crisis. To obtain funds, various methods were used. One of them was to valorise the pictures taken of the statue of Dr. Ioan Rațiu that had been erected in front of the County Prefecture. Thus the letter no 109/15.05.1933 sent by Augustin Rațiu to the mayor of Turda requested that the Town Hall should purchase large photographs of Dr. Ioan Rațiu's statue in order to collect the necessary funds for establishing the museum in Turda.²²

The new funds came from the Association "Cultul Eroilor" ["Hero Worship"]. Under application no. 125/1933 issued by the Turda Bar Association, this association was requested an annual subsidy for the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum in Turda and for repair works on the Tomb of Michael the Brave. The legal statutes of the Association "Cultul Eroilor" did not include such annual donations, so the fixed amount of 3,000 lei was transferred for the establishment of the museum and another 200 lei for the purchase of a photograph of Dr. Ioan Rațiu's statue.²³

²⁰ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 12.

²¹ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 7. The letter is dated 27 April 1933.

²² *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 9.

²³ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 11.

The official letter no. 1633 of 30 June 1933, sent by the “Astra” Association to Augustin Rațiu, the Dean of the Bar Association in Turda, informs us that the above-mentioned association transferred the amount of 1,000 lei into the account for setting up a museum in Turda. Another financial aid of 600 lei was sent by the Chamber of Deputies.²⁴

Under Decision no. 5879/27 July 1933, the Town Hall of Turda approved the sum of 1,000 for buying back Dr. Ioan Rațiu’s paintings as financial assistance to setting up the museum.²⁵ A possible subsidy that was to be paid for maintainin the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Room by the Town Hall was to be discussed in the budget meeting.²⁶ Another donation came from the Factory “Uzinele de alabastru” [“The Alabaster Plants”], which donated a writing set for the Dr. Ioan Rațiu desk to the museum.²⁷

Under appeal no. 125/6 July 1933, the *well-meaning people* in town were asked to support the enrichment of the collections housed by the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum in Turda.²⁸ Starting in June 1933, the museum began to be arranged. Various paintings were displayed in the entrance hall; Mrs. Lucreția Mureșan, together with the Women’s Convention from Turda - which donated a painting depicting Emilia Rațiu to the museum, arranged a room in peasant Romanian style in the Cultural House.

Unfortunately for the institution that was supposed to be established, there were some disagreements regarding the space allocated to it, between Dr. Augustin Rațiu and Petre Suci, the Headmaster of the Boys’ High School, who was also Chairman of the “Astra” Branch in Turda. The latter warned Augustin Rațiu that he should confine himself to a single room, which he could arrange as he pleased.²⁹

The letter Dr. Augustin Rațiu addressed to the Chairman of the “Astra” Association, issued in Turda on 8 July 1933, requested a permit that would allow the collections of the museum to be organised: “I hereby request you give me full license so I can organise the entire museum on new Romanian bases, grouping the ancient, Roman objects, then the Hungarian items separately, and giving foremost place to the objects related to our national struggle and, in particular, to my great uncle, Dr. Ioan Rațiu.

I need this special authorisation lest the beautiful plan I have been contemplating should be frustrated and impeded by all manner of proposals and possible protests and so that I may oust from the museum rooms all the objects that do not belong there, such as books, notebooks, office supplies and other objects of the former “Teaching Staff Cooperative,” which prevent me from entering one of the rooms downstairs. It is too bad that a hall of the Museum has so far been used as a public storage room for objects that do not belong to the cultural house and the museum.”³⁰

Although the Central Office of Astra in Sibiu approved the establishment of the museum collection, Augustin Rațiu encountered difficulties in organising it from Petre

²⁴ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 15. Information taken from the letter Dr. Augustin Rațiu wrote to Felicia Rațiu on 11 July 1933.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 18.

²⁶ *Ibidem*. Extract from the minutes of the Turda Twon Council, of 14 July 1933.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, year 1958, doc. no. 29.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 13.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 16. A letter issued in Turda on 24 July 1933.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 14.

Suciu, who restricted his access to the other rooms on the ground floor, which he needed in order to store the objects there.

Although Augustin Rațiu wished to donate all the things that had belonged to the Rațiu family and that were in his custody to the museum, he imposed the condition of being allowed to manage the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum throughout his lifetime. In a letter that has been preserved, he stated: “a museum must be open permanently, and not be forsaken, inaccessible to the public, with all its valuable objects having to suffer from the point of view of conservation.” In the conclusion to his letter, he requested a special authorisation from the Historical Monuments Commission for organising this museum.³¹

The Historical Monuments Commission promised its help in organising this museum if Augustin Rațiu was authorised by “Astra” to organise collections of the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum.³² In the same document, we are informed that Felicia Rațiu had the intention of donating all the remaining objects from her parents to the newly established museum.³³

In a new request dated 29 august 1933 and addressed to the Ministry, it was stated that for the purpose of establishing the museum in Turda, help should be granted through various donations consisting of Romanian paintings for adorning the walls of the Cultural House.³⁴

Starting from the spring of 1933, specialists were hired for cleaning the furniture. All the expenses related to the opening of the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum and all receipts were kept and adnotated by Augustin Rațiu in a notebook; several albums that contained family photographs were purchased with a view to the museum being opened.³⁵

We do not know the period in which the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum was open. What we do know for certain is that in 1939, the museum was already closed. Starting in 1937, the archaeological discoveries from Turda were shipped to Cluj because the “old archaeological museum in Turda, from the Cultural House, is in total disarray and about to be dismantled.”³⁶

The testament Felicia Rațiu left after death, which occurred on 31 October 1938, included the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum of Turda. Entitled “My Last Wish,” Felicia’s will left the Turda institution: “the altar, the *Luize XI* pendulum clock, the writing desk of my unforgettable Mother, the Japanese room divider, the note tray with bronze ornaments, the glove box with the same decoration - objects that belonged to my beloved parents and the black box that was my beloved grandmother’s, Revia Orghidan.”³⁷ The will list also included books with dedications, such as: *Mein Peusterwinkel* by Carmen Silva, *Viforul [The Whirlwind]* and *Apus de Soare [Sunset]* by B. Ș. Delavrancea, *Acțiunea*

³¹ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 17.

³² *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 20.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, year 1933, doc. no. 21.

³⁵ *Ibidem*. Expense notebook. Document no. 31. The list of expenses and donations from the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum in Turda.

³⁶ Daniela Deac, *Turda orașul care nu vrea să moară*, Turda, 2006, vol II, p. 48.

³⁷ Vișinescu Valentin, *Turda – Leagăn de civilizație românească*, Cluj Napoca, 2006, p. 147.

diplomatică a României [*Romania's Diplomatic Action*] by Viorel Tilea. In her testament, she left the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum of Turda numerous paintings: "The Vandalism of Turda," "General Panaitescu on the Bridge in Budapest," "Revia Orghidan," "Emilia Rațiu," "Dr. Ioan Rațiu in National Costume" and various paintings of the Rațiu family members, Aureliu, Dorina, and Emilia with her husband Octavian. Once they entered into the custody the executor, Dr Augustin Rațiu, there was no longer any information on what happened with these objects.

The Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum seems to have functioned for a relatively short period, its space being claimed by several societies in town. In a complaint filed on 20 February 1939 by Augustin Rațiu, addressed to the Chairman of the "Astra" Association in Sibiu, it was mentioned that Dr. C. Aldea had evacuated all the furniture from the Museum exhibition, and that the room had received an altogether different destination, namely that of a rehearsal place for the Choir of the Orthodox Church in Turda. In conclusion, the Chairman of the "Astra" Association was asked to intervene and take appropriate measures.³⁸

A year later, Petre Suciu, the Chairman of the Turda Branch of "Astra" demanded a response from Dr. Augustin Rațiu about maintaining the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum in the Cultural House. If the answer was affirmative, he was urged to return the inventoried objects or evacuate the exhibition space.³⁹

On 16 September 1940, by Royal Decree, Romania was declared a National Legionary State. Between September 1940 and January 1941, the headquarters of the Turda Legionary Movement was established in the Cultural House.

On 17 December 1940, a detailed report was drafted on the movable cultural patrimony of the Cultural House at the time.⁴⁰

In paragraph II of the report, it was stated that: On 17 December 1940, following the official note of 16 December issued by the Town of Turda, no. 11848, the delivery-receipt protocol was drafted for all the objects and furniture that were owned by the Town Hall and were used by Legionnaire Headquarters. This document was also signed by the delegate of the Turda Legionnaire Garrison, Popa Gheorghe, a financial controller.

The delivery and receipt of these items was done at the scene of the place, a round label with the seal of the Town Hall being previously applied to each object, all of them remaining in custody at these headquarters.

The report informs us that all these objects belonging both to the Town Hall and to the Cultural House, and, respectively, to the "Astra" Branch, were stored in two rooms on the ground floor of the building that had not been occupied as Legionnaire Headquarters.

Below we shall present a table containing a list of the objects identified and inventoried by this commission, with the names and descriptions from that time.⁴¹

³⁸*Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, year 1939, doc. no. 23.

³⁹*Ibidem.*, year 1940, doc. no.25.

⁴⁰*Ibidem.*, year 1940, doc. no.26.

⁴¹*Ibidem.*

No.	Name and description of the object	No. Items	Value (lei)
1.	Wooden bed (painted in various colours)	1	300
2.	Peasant mattress (hemp)	1	100
3.	Bed linen (hemp)	1	100
4.	Bed covers (hand sewn)	2	200
5.	Pillows with pillow cases (hemp)	6	600
6.	Peasant table (painted)	1	200
7.	Peasant chair (painted)	1	200
8.	Wooden peasant chairs (painted in various colours)	2	100
9.	Wall dish hanger (painted in various colours)	1	50
10.	Enamelled plates	-	100
11.	Burnt clay wall-hanging mugs (enamelled - various colours)	5	100
12.	Burnt clay bedpan (enamelled - various colours)	5	150
13.	Wooden peasant table (painted in various colours)	1	100
14.	Wooden peasant chest (painted in various colours)	1	300
15.	Wooden peasant salt-cellar (painted)	1	20
16.	Clay mug (painted)	1	20
17.	Writing set (alabaster)	1	100
18.	Ornamental mug (porcelain)	1	100
19.	Vase (burnt clay)	1	50
20.	Iron statue (representing a lion)	1	50
21.	Hammer (stone)	1	10
22.	Turda's coat of arms (paper, round wooden frame)	1	-----
23.	Old watch (glass box)	1	200
24.	Square black frame without a photograph	1	50
25.	Fir wood cabinet, with shelves	1	1,000
26.	Fir wood cabinet, painted, with shelves	2	2,000
27.	Framework and window that has a flower in the middle	1	100
28.	Old wooden cabinet, made of hard wood, with shelves	1	200
29.	The map of Europe (fabric paper)	1	100
30.	Wooden room dividers with cerecloth	2	400
31.	White linen room dividers in wooden fir frames	2	100
32.	Persian woollen rug (2x2 m)	1	1,000
33.	Linen curtains	2	100
34.	Cabinet with glass doors, painted, with four shelves, containing geological pieces and various old seals	1	500
35.	Wooden fir cupboard with shelves and glass doors	1	800
36.	Wooden fir bookcase	1	100
37.	Wooden fir table (with a projection apparatus)	1	5,000
38.	Wooden box with 50 glass clichés	1	500
39.	Beech-wood chairs - damaged	-	60

40.	Arms rack with three old rifles	1	100
41.	Wooden chest with various registers and old documents	1	-----
42.	Wooden chest with various documents and wood inscriptions	1	-----
43.	Enamelled clay bowls	-	50
44.	Iron bowl (cylindrical)	1	50
45.	Silk embroidery on velvet in glassless frame	1	-----
46.	Small chest with books and old documents	1	-----
47.	Cardboard box with old papers and documents	1	-----
48.	Small wooden cabinet with old papers and seals	2	-----
49.	Silver-plated brass cup	1	1,000
50.	Iron statues (awards - with Hungarian inscriptions)	2	200
51.	Szekler fir gate	1	300
52.	Oil painting (2/1,8 m), in gilded frame - Autumn Landscape	1	1,000
53.	painting - watercolour - Olgzai Francisc - Peasant House	1	1,000
54.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Zombori Ludovic - Yoked Oxen	1	1,000
55.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass - King Carol I	1	100
56.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass Queen Elisabeta	1	100
57.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass Dragoș Vodă and the Bison	1	100
58.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass Sobieski and the Highlanders	1	100
59.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass The Barbarians' Invasion	1	100
60.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass The Battle of Șelimbăr	1	100
61.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass The Crossing of the Danube in 1877	1	100
62.	Painting - oil, black frame - Ioan Huniadi	1	1,000
63.	Painting - oil, black frame - Matei Corvin	1	1,000
64.	Painting - oil, black frame - Ioan Corvin	1	1,000
65.	Lithograph painting, wooden frame and glass - Cheile Turzii	1	300
66.	Lithograph painting - old print with sights from Turda	1	300
67.	Framed picture - Photograph of the Bridge across the Arieș	1	100
68.	Photograph - 100 Years Since Avram Iancu's Birth	1	50

69.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame The Nobiliary Assembly from Turda in 1542	1	-----
70.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame The Declaration of Freedom of the Unitarian Cult	1	-----
71.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame Three Princes of Transylvania	1	-----
72.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass - Gabriel Bathory	1	-----
73.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass - Mihail Apaffi	1	-----
74.	Colour lithograph painting, wooden frame with glass Sigismund Bathory	1	-----
75.	Burnt clay bust - Francisc Rackoczi	1	-----
76.	Colour lithograph painting - Andrei Bathory	1	-----
77.	Colour lithograph painting – Turda's Coat of Arms in 1610	1	-----
78.	Colour lithograph painting - Mihail Apaffi	1	-----
79.	Colour lithograph painting, gilded frame The Corronation of Franz Joseph	1	-----
80.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Czigler Carol Hungarian Peasant Costume	1	-----
81.	Painting - oil, no frame - In Memory of the Fallen Hungarian Soldiers	1	-----
82.	Painting - oil, gilded frame – Abrami Ludovic	1	-----
83.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Baron Ludovic Orban	1	-----
84.	Painting - oil, gilded frame- Transylvanian Prince	1	-----
85.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Transylvanian Prince	1	-----
86.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Gabriel Bethlen	1	-----
87.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Baron Ioan Kemeny	1	-----
88.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Sigismund Bathory	1	-----
89.	Painting -oil, gilded frame - Balkani Iuliu	1	-----
90.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Ioan Zapolya	1	-----
91.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Apaffi Ioan	1	-----
92.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Rackoczi	1	-----
93.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Transylvanian Prince	1	-----
94.	Painting - oil by Raczini Ödön	1	-----
95.	Painting - oil, gilded frame - Kriesch Aladar - Hungarian Peasant	1	-----
96.	Painting - oil, gilded frame – Edvi Ilyes - Dusk	1	-----
97.	Colour lithograph painting, gilded frame with glass The Hungarian Graf Szekeny Ștefan	1	-----
98.	Colour lithograph painting, gilded frame with glass The Hungarian Graf Miko Emeric	1	-----

99.	Colour lithograph painting, gilded frame with glass Prince Gheorghe Racokzi	1	-----
100.	Colour lithograph painting, gilded frame with glass Four Transylvanian Princes	1	-----
101.	Hungarian commemorative painting	1	-----
102.	Colour lithograph painting 1000 Years since the Hungarians Settled in Panonnia	1	-----
103.	Picture, wooden frame with glass – four photograppgs Four Princes of Transylvania	1	-----
104.	Small-size paintings - Hungarian National Costume	15	-----
105.	The Turda Firefighters' Flag (silk)	1	-----
106.	Hungarian Flags (silk)	3	-----
107.	Old objects (swords, knives)	8	-----
108.	Old books and Hungarian historical documents	15	-----

In conclusion, the report stated that two of the cabinets in which the mineral collections were exhibited were taken to the Boys' Commercial High School and their reception was confirmed by official note no. 1271/1940, file no. 12463/1940.

The same report also makes reference to a picture, an oil painting, set in a black, golden-edged frame, representing a Hungarian peasant with his kneeling daughter,⁴² and to a smaller picture, both of which were displayed on the staircase of the Cultural House.

In the conclusion to the report, during the period of "legionnaire nationalism," some members of the commission took a radical stand, proposing that all the objects belonging to the Hungarian ethnicity should be filed away and removed from the inventory. Another idea that was advanced was that these items should be sold to various Hungarian societies or the Hungarian state, to which they were of particular value.

Another, more moderate proposal of the Commission was to cede this collection for free to the Simu Museum in Bucharest.

During the Second World War, in 1941, the room in which the museum Collection was organised was plundered and pillaged.⁴³

Although the Turda Town Hall took note of the museum's establishment, by Decision no. 5873/14 July 1933, some experts consider that "the birth certificate" of the institution from Turda ought to bear the date of 22 November 1943.⁴⁴ The central press tried to support the re-establishment of the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Museum in the very house in which the Memorandist had lived. In an article which appeared in the newspaper *Curentul*, Ludovic Ciato launched the idea of redeeming or expropriating the

⁴² Today the painting is exhibited in the small hall on the first floor on the museum building.

⁴³ *Fond Înființarea unui muzeu la Turda*, doc. no. 29, year 1958.

⁴⁴ Dariu Pop, "Cronica Muzeului. Spațiul arheologic al Potaissei și muzeul turdean," in *Apulum*, II, 1943-1945, p. 431.

Memorandist's house and organising a museum there.⁴⁵ He argued that the large number of items that were in the possession of Augustin Rațiu and Augusta Orghidan, Dr. Ioan Rațiu's sister-in-law, would ensure the necessary fund for organising this collection.⁴⁶

In the autumn of 1943, the school inspector from Turda, Dariu Pop, started a museum society. Shortly after this event, a group of 12 signatories, including Dr. Augustin Rațiu, laid the foundations of the Museum of the town and county of Turda.⁴⁷ In the presence of Professors Constantin Daicoviciu and Ioan Berciu, who adopted an official position at the establishment of the institution from Turda, the articles of association were signed. The signatory members who have not been mentioned so far included: Dr. Valer Moldovan, Petre Suci, Ion Modrigan, Vasile Candrea, Dariu Pop, Bârlea Ioan, Vasile Iluțiu, Albin Moraru and Dr. Iosif Chioreanu, the mayor of the town.⁴⁸ In the establishment meeting, Mr. Ion Modrigan, a professor and Chairman of the Federal Company "Zorile" provided the Town Hall, for this purpose, with 100,000 lei as the necessary fund for starting the works. Other sums that were donated came from Cooperativa Turda - 50,000 lei, the Central Bank - 20,000 lei and the County School Board - 20,000 lei. Numerous individuals and factories in the town also provided financial support for this purpose.⁴⁹

In the 21 November 1943 issue of *Gazeta dela Turda*, Dariu Pop signalled the historical importance of Turda and of the vestiges on Dealul Cetății. The article revolved around the creation of a museums institution that would house the collections, given that the furniture was already there.⁵⁰

"We have decided not to stop the agitation on this ardent matter, with a view to reestablishing the most important institution that we are entitled to have here, at the crossroads of epochal highways, where, on the surface of the tillage, there are real traces from times when history was not written, and also, tangible traces from the times of our ancestors, the Dacians and the Romans."

Another hypothesis advanced as the start date of the Turda museum was 29 November 1943, which marked the formation of a self-standing institution with a patrimony and with judicial authority.⁵¹

The establishment of the Turda institution was also confirmed by the local newspaper *Gazeta dela Turda*.⁵² On the first page, in the article entitled "The Establishment of Turda Museum," we are informed that Dariu Pop was entrusted with gathering the existing material and organising the museum until the appointment of the tenured person, which could not be made before 1 April 1944, when the new budget would be approved. The mayor's office approved the creation of two positions for this museum.⁵³

⁴⁵ "Un muzeu Ion Rațiu la Turda," in *Curentul*, year XIV, no. 4686, 1941.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Ioan Opriș, *op. cit.*, p. 305

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ Dariu Pop, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

⁵⁰ Dariu Pop, "Un muzeu la Turda," in *Gazeta dela Turda*, no.176/21.11.1943.

⁵¹ Ioan Opriș, *op.cit.*, p. 305

⁵² "Înființarea Muzeului turdean," in *Gazeta dela Turda*, year IV, no. 178, 12.12. 1943.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

The precarious economic situation, the war years and the political instability immediately after the Communists seized power made it impossible to open the exhibitions to the general public. The Turda museum was open to the visitors only in 1951, on Communist Romania's National Day of - 23 August.

In an article from the press of the time it was said: "These days, the work of reorganising the Regional History Museum of Turda, in its new improved form, is coming to a close, and the museum aims to present the geographical picture of the raion as completely as possible. Particular attention has been paid to the section devoted to the building of socialism, which boasts rich stands, presenting the achievements accomplished here during the regime of popular democracy" (photo).⁵⁴

Over the years, the collection of the History Museum in Turda has been enriched permanently, so much so that today it has over 30,000 artifacts. Augustin Rațiu's dream has come true. There is now a history museum in the hometown of Dr. Ioan Rațiu the Memorandist, which since the 1990s, has provided exhibition space for the collections of documents donated by the Rațiu family throughout time.

Today, the one who was Dr. Augustin Rațiu has become history, his documents and images being present in the permanent exhibition of the museum from Turda. The prestige and renown of this outstanding intellectual of the town has led to the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in his honour at one of the Turda high schools in recent years and the Rațiu Foundation has erected a monument for him in the courtyard of its premises.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Făclia*, year 1951.

⁵⁵ A commemorative plaque was unveiled at the entrance of the Dr. Ioan Rațiu Technical College in Turda, on 3 Aurel Vlaicu St., as an homage to his entire activity in the service of the town.