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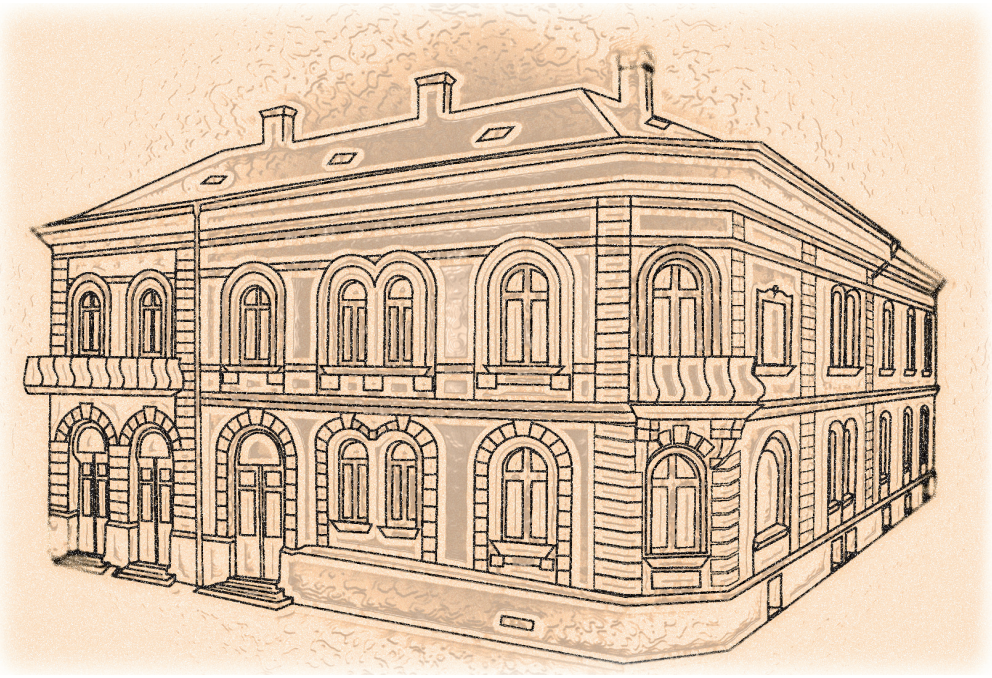

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The Price of Success: Adaptation or Assimilation? Romanian Officials of Maramureș Under Hungarian and Romanian Rule (1822–1945)*

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Abstract: The study argues that in 19th-century Maramureș, assimilation was not a prerequisite for achieving high office. When it occurred, it largely resulted from adaptive strategies in marriage and education, combined with the dynamics of local politics. Depending on the wider political climate, both Hungarian and Romanian nationalism, as well as the personal interests of the families, could either hasten or counteract these tendencies. The article examines the history and national identity of the Romanian Iurca (Jurka), Man (Mán), Mihalca (Mihálka), and Mihalyi (Mihályi) families of Maramureș through a prosopographical approach. In the Reform Era, these families formed a tightly knit alliance, rallying the Romanian petty nobility in pursuit of their shared goals. Their *Hungarus* identity further bolstered their political weight during the 1848 – 49 Revolution. In the Dualist period, intermarriage with Hungarian families accelerated their social integration, while they also accumulated estates surpassing those of competing Hungarian landowners. Through pragmatic political agreements with both Hungarian and Romanian governing parties, they not only consolidated their authority but also maintained it through successive regime changes – from the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and the dissolution of the Monarchy to the Second Vienna Award.

Keywords: Maramureș, nationalism, elite studies, prosopography, county officials.

* The present study builds on and substantially expands a previous article by the author, published: Szabó Zsolt, "Adaptation, Assimilation, Integration or Opportunism? The Case of a Family of Romanian Functionaries in Maramureș Under Changing Regimes," in *Civil servants under changing Regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in the First Half of the 20th Century*, ed. Veronika Szeghy-Gayer (Košice: Institute of Social Science, CSPS Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2024), 33–53.

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Rezumat: Studiul argumentează că, în Maramureșul secolului al XIX-lea, asimilarea nu a constituit o condiție esențială pentru ascensiunea profesională. Atunci când a avut loc, ea a fost mai curând rezultatul unor strategii de alianțe matrimoniale, de instruire și de adaptare la contextul politic local, procese care – în funcție de conjunctura politică – puteau fi accelerate sau inversate de naționalismul maghiar ori român, precum și de interesele proprii ale familiilor. Lucrare examinează istoria și transformările identității naționale ale familiilor românești Iurca (Jurka), Man (Mán), Mihalca (Mihálka) și Mihalyi (Mihályi) din Maramureș, utilizând o perspectivă prosopografică. În perioada pașoptistă, aceste familii au format un grup strâns unit, capabil să mobilizeze mica nobilime românească în sprijinul propriilor interese. Apartenența lor la identitatea *hungarus* le-a sporit influența în timpul revoluției din 1848 – 1849. În epoca dualistă, căsătoriile mixte au facilitat integrarea în societatea maghiară, iar proprietățile funciare acumulate au depășit pe cele ale familiilor maghiare concurente. Prin înțelegeri politice cu partidele aflate la guvernare, atât maghiare, cât și românești, aceste familii și-au consolidat și ulterior și-au menținut poziția de putere în ciuda schimbărilor de regim – de la Compromis, trecând prin Marea Unire, până la cel de-al Doilea Arbitraj de la Viena.

Cuvinte cheie: Maramureș, naționalism, elite studies, prozopografie, funcționari comitatenși.

Introduction, methodology and sources

The Romanian county official families of *hungarus* identity so far have not been properly studied.[1] Hungarian historiography has so far paid no attention to this specific *hungarus* group,[2] and the study of Romanian county officials in the Dualist era remains incomplete. The main reason is that most elite research has focused on the territory of present-day Hungary, on counties that were more ethnically homogeneous. In Romanian historiography, these

[1] The study was supported through the OTKA K20 K137378 project entitled "A dualizmus kori parlamentarizmus regionális nézőpontból" [Parlamentarism in the dualist era from a regional perspective].

[2] For the definition of *hungarus* see: Ambrus Miskolczy, "A „hungarus-tudat" a polgári-nemzeti átalakulás sodrában," *Magyar kisebbség* 3–4, no. 65–66 (2012): 196, 199. For other types of *hungarus* see: Károly Halmos, "A hungarus, a fia az osztrák tiszt és a magyar nemzeti szabadságharc. Hild Rafael megmenekülése és bukása," in *A város örök. Tanulmányok Bácskai Vera emlékére*, eds. Gábor Czoch, Csaba Sasfi, Árpád Tóth (Budapest: Korall, 2022), 182–194.

same families long fell outside the scope of scholarly inquiry.[3] Owing to their pro-government stance, they were counted among the "official" elites of the Monarchy, while scholarly attention was centred on the Romanian national elites.[4] Consequently, they received little attention – most of it negative. Although a revision of this narrative has begun in recent years,[5] no study has yet been produced that examines several Romanian official families over an extended period of time in a comparative manner.

In this study, therefore, I examine the history of the Iurka, Man, Mihalca, and Mihalyi families of Maramureș, from their rise during the Reform Era to the end of the Second World War. I analyse the conditions of their social advancement, their adaptation to the Dualist state, their integration into the Romanian administration, and their reintegration into the Hungarian state following the Second Vienna Award. Finally, I explore what these strategies of adaptation to shifting political circumstances reveal about their national identity, and to what extent assimilation was a prerequisite for a successful career.

The method employed in my research is prosopography. The sources include school matriculation registers, minutes of the general assembly of the county, contemporary press, obituaries, genealogies, biographical lexicons, parliamentary almanacs, investigative documents of a royal commissioner, memoirs, and private correspondence. The prosopographical analysis brought to light the group's shared social characteristics, which I compared with the major county-level political events of the period. This approach made it possible to interpret the individual motivations of the officials and to reconstruct their strategies of adaptation. At the same time, the analysis was complicated by the fact that the sources varied not only from family to family but also from

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[3] Ioan Chiorean gives a general overview of the Transylvanian officials, mentioning the Man and Mihalyi families. Ioan Chiorean, "Funcționarimea din Transilvania în perioada dualismului austro-ungar (1867–1918)," in *Anuarul Institutului de cercetari socio-umane "Gheorghe Sincai" al Academiei Române*, 5-6 (2003):43–60.

[4] Judit Pál, Vlad Popovici, "O perspectivă comparativă asupra cercetării elitelor politice din secolele XIX–XX în Ungaria și România," in *Analele științifice ale universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași* 61 (2015):598–599.

[5] See: Ovidiu Emil Iudean, *The Romanian Governmental Representatives in the Budapest Parliament (1881–1918).* (Cluj: Mega Publishing House, 2016); Vlad Popovici "Considerații privind funcționarii publici români din Transilvania. Studiu de caz: comitatul Sibiu și scaunele săsești care l-au format (1861–1918)," in *Anuarul Insititutului de Istorie George Barițiu din Cluj-Napoca* 54 (2015): 159–177.

period to period in both quantity and nature. In some cases, the information was contradictory, which made the assessment of objectivity in certain questions a particular challenge.[6]

Laying the foundations of success: the reform era

One of the distinctive features of Maramureș County was the presence of a large Romanian petty nobility with roots reaching back to the Middle Ages.[7] Until the mid-eighteenth century, they provided the majority of the county officials,[8] since until the early part of the century, only the Romanians possessed a sufficiently numerous nobility capable of fulfilling administrative duties. It was at this time that the noble self-government of the Reformed crown towns began to take shape,[9] and in parallel, the number of central offices increased,[10] with their occupancy increasingly tied to formal education.[11] The nobles of the crown towns were employed by the Transylvanian magnates who commanded the castle of Khust (Huszt). However, after the expulsion of the Ottomans, the castle lost its significance,[12] and the educated urban Reformed nobility was left without positions. Meanwhile, some Romanian noble families fell into poverty at the end of the seventeenth century and moved out of the county,[13] while the influential Szaplonczay and Baron Sztojka families assimilated into the Hungarian nobility. As a result, county leadership was

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[6] K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, "Introduction: Chameleon or Chimera? Understanding Prosopography," *Prosopography Approaches and Applications, a Handbook*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007), 27–28.

[7] Ioan Drăgan, "Studiu introductiv: Nobilimea românească din Transilvania," in *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania,* ed. Marius Diaconescu (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 1997), 22; Vilmos Bélay, *Máramaros megye társadalma és nemzetiségei* (Budapest: Sylvester Nyomda, 1943), 100.

[8] National Archives, Maramureş County Service (hereinafter A.N.S.J. MM), Baia Mare, Prefectura Județului Maramureș, F 45, inventory no. 629, folder no. 1. "Evidența funcționarilor comitatului Maramureș pe anii 1629–1849" (hereafter Evidența funcționarilor), 2, 2–32.

[9] László Glück, *Az öt máramarosi város társadalma a 16–18. században* (PhD diss., Pécsi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kara, 2013), 230–236, 241.

[10] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 14–25.

[11] Andor Csizmadia, *A magyar közigazgatás fejlődése a XVIII. századtól a Tanácsrendszer létrejöttéig* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), 21–26, 73.

[12] László Glück, *Az öt máramarosi*, 19.

[13] Livia Ardelean, "Contribuții la studiul nobililor maramureșeni," in *Istoria ca datorie: omagiu academicianului Ioan-Aurel Pop la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, ed. Ioan Bolovan, –Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de studii Transilvane, 2015), 471–479.

gradually taken over by the Reformed nobles of the crown towns, while the Romanians were increasingly confined to the district offices.

Despite this, the Dunca (Dunka), Petrovay, and Rednic (Rednik) families continued to play an active role in the county administration until the dissolution of the Monarchy. In the early nineteenth century, however – presumably due to overpopulation and impoverishment within these families – they were pushed out of county leadership.[14] A similar decline also afflicted the Roman Catholic landowning Hungarian families of Szaplonczay, Sztojka, and Pogány.[15] The resulting power vacuum was filled by the Iurka, Man, Mihalca, and Mihalyi families. Although the noble origins of all four families can be traced back to the fifteenth century,[16] they only came to play a decisive role in the life of the county from the late eighteenth century onward.

The Reform Era generations typically had long careers, advancing through every rung of the official hierarchy. The best example of this is Ladislau Manu (László Mán). His ancestors had already served as deputy chief magistrates in the early eighteenth century, but his father, Ștefan Man (István Mán), secured the family's place in the elite as chief county attorney (*vármegyei főügyész*).[17] Ladislau entered the administration in 1805, first as an honorary deputy county attorney (t*iszteletbeli vármegyei alügyész*). In 1812, he became deputy county attorney (*vármegyei alügyész*), in 1822, high sheriff (*főszolgabíró*), in 1833, second county commissioner (*másodalispán*), and three years later, first county commissioner (*első alispán*).[18] His son, Iosif Man (József Mán), began his career in 1836 as an honorary deputy county attorney, and by the time his father retired, he was already high sheriff; two years later, he was also elected to the Diet.[19] Gavrilă Mihalyi (Gábor Mihályi) served first as an honorary deputy county attorney and then as deputy sheriff (*alszolgabíró*); he was high sheriff for seven years, a delegate to the Diet in Bratislava (Pozsony),

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[14] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 14–32.

[15] Iván Nagy, "*Magyarország családai czimerekkel és nemzedékrendi táblákkal.* I. (Pest: Kiadja Ráth Mór, 1863), 372; Iván Nagy, *Magyaroszág családai I*, 873–874; György Petrovay: "*A Szaplonczay család leszármazása 1360-tól (Három czímerrajzzal),*" *Turul* 11, no. 2 (1901): 78.

[16] Pál Joódy, *Máramaros Vármegye 1749–1769. évi nemesség vizsgálata* (Máramarossziget: Varga Béla Könyvnyomda Vállalata, 1943) 100, 126, 140–141.

[17] Pál Joódy: *Máramaros vármegye*, 126.

[18] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 33–35, 38, 40; *Jelenkor* (August 3, 1845): 371.

[19] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 41, 43; A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 338 Inventarul Protocoalelor de Ședinte ale Congregației comitatului Maramureș 1629–1848, 164, Vármegyei közgyűlési jegyzőkönyv (hereafter Vm. kgy. jgy.) 1836: 1808; *Pesti Hírlap* (October 29, 1847): 685.

and in 1845 became second county commissioner.[20] In the same year, Ioan Iurca (János Jurka) also became high sheriff, having earlier served as deputy sheriff.[21] Vasile Mihalca (László Mihálka) was the only one who did not enter the elite – he was still deputy sheriff at the end of the era.[22]

The successful careers can be attributed to several factors, including family background, education, the network of connections built through marriage, and the county's distinctive political climate. Of the officials listed, all but Vasile Mihalca and Gavrilă Mihalyi had fathers who were also officials. Mihalyi's father was a Greek Catholic priest, while Mihalca was "born to poor,[23] noble-descended farming parents."[24]

Education was also an important factor. The officials generally lived in or near Sighetu Marmației (Máramarossziget) and attended the Piarist Gymnasium (Máramarosszigeti Piarista Gimnázium) there. From there, they continued to the Catholic Gymnasium in Satu Mare (Szatmárnémeti Királyi Katolikus Líceum), and then pursued studies in the humanities and law at the law academies of Kassa or Nagyvárad (Kassai Jogakadémia, Nagyváradi Jogakadémia). Once again, Vasile Mihalca was an exception: because of his modest family circumstances, he had to interrupt his studies in Satu Mare. Iosif Man's case was the opposite. He studied at both the Reformed and Piarist Gymnasiums of Sighetu Marmației, with the Premonstratensian Order in Levoča (Lőcsei Premontrei Rend Gimnáziuma), philosophy at the Reformed College in Cluj (Kolozsvári Református Kollégium), and at the Archiepiscopal Law Academy in Eger (Egri Érseki Jogakadémia), while he studied law at the Evangelical Lyceum in Bratislava (Pozsonyi Evangélikus Kollégium) and at the Law Academy of Košice (Kassai Jogakadémia).[25]

Three of the four families formed a nexus centred on the Man family. Of Vasile Man's daughters, one married Gavrilă Mihalyi, the other Ioan

[20] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 338, 140, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1830:1633; A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 40, 43; *Nemzeti Újság* May 12, 1843, 299.

[21] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 338, 140, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1830:1634; A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 38, 43.

[22] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 629, 1, Evidența funcționarilor, 41.

[23] A.N.S.J. MM, F 430 Gimnaziul Romano Catolic Sighetu Marmației, 948, Inventory of archival documents, 11. Informatio primo semestrialis de juventute in r. gymnasio Szigethiensi Anno 1820–21, 4.

[24] *Fővárosi Lapok* (July 4, 1886): 1328.

[25] *Vasárnapi Újság* (February 4, 1877): 67–68, 70.

Iurca.[26] Through the Man family, all three families were also connected to the Roman Catholic Hungarian Baron Sztojka family, as Vasile Man's son, Iosif Man, married Klára, the daughter of Baron Imre Sztojka.[27] Imre Sztojka was one of the most influential figures in Reform Era Maramureș: he was elected as a delegate to the Diet on three occasions, and, in 1848, briefly served as the senior president of the Upper House.[28] The four families thus represented a politically significant force. Vasile Mihalca also belonged to this alliance system, but due to his lower social standing, he acted more as an election agent (*kortes*) than as an equal ally.[29]

The marriages ultimately crystallized into political alliances that, within Maramureș's distinctive political climate, facilitated the rise of Romanian official families. Owing to the county's isolation, the major political fault lines of the era had little impact; instead, political relations were shaped more by generational and confessional divisions. In the 1843 election of delegates to the Diet, the four families, allied with the Sztojkas, formed the "Man Party," named after Ladislau Man, while their opponents – the Reformed officials and the Pogány and Szaplonczay families – organized into the "Pogány Party," named after second county commissioner Károly Pogány. The election ended in victory for the former.[30] The result outraged the Reformed population of Sighetu Marmației, as two Catholic delegates – Gavrilă Mihalyi (Greek Catholic) and Imre Sztojka (Roman Catholic) – won mandates. An enraged crowd ransacked the county hall and drove the Romanian petty nobility out of the town.[31]

The electoral system of the time worked to the advantage of Romanian officials. In the elections and delegate selections held in the county seat, only

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[26] *Familia* (January 22, 1895): 37.

[27] *Ellenőr* (December 19, 1876): 3.

[28] *Magyar Kurir* (June 15, 1827): 372; *Jelenkor* (December 5, 1832): 769; *Nemzeti Újság* (May 12, 1843,): 299; *Pesti Hírlap* (July 5, 1848): 620.

[29] Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, hereafter MNL OL), Budapest, C 44 Magyar Királyi Helytartótanács Departamentum politicum comitatuum, F8:1848, 11117/1844, A királyi biztos vádjai Hatvany József tiszteletbeli esküdt ellen, 264–266

[30] Cluj County Branch of the Romanian National Archives (Direcția Județeană a Arhivelor Naționale Cluj, hereafter DJ ANR CJ), F 245, Mihalyi Family Fund, 204, Documents on the election of deputies 1843–1844, 288, Mán László elsőalispán kérvénye a főkancelláriához (hereafter Mán László elsőalispán kérvénye), Máramarossziget, 06 May 1843, 2.

[31] MNL OL, C 44, F8:1848, Történeti vázlat tekintetes Mánn László 1sőalispán pártjának nyilatkozata szerint, 115.

members of the nobility had the right to vote,[32] and the majority of Maramureș's nobility was Romanian. A significant proportion of them lived in villages near the county seat, under the influence of the Mihalyi family.[33] Clergymen wielded great influence over the inhabitants of these villages, making them easy to mobilize; in Gavrilă Mihalyi's case, his father assumed the role of chief election agent. By contrast, the Pogány Party could rely on the Hungarian nobility of the crown towns and on the small Ruthenian nobility living in the county's more isolated areas. The latter, however, did not even reach the polling place, as they were forcibly prevented from doing so in Săpânța (Szaplonca), a village with a Romanian majority.[34]

The tension between the two political camps gradually subsided. In the 1845 election of county officials, Ladislau Man retired from his position as first deputy county head, thereby creating an opportunity for his own allies to advance while also giving room to the younger generation of the rival Szaplonczay family, which had been excluded from the elite.[35] The outbreak of the 1848 Revolution brought the conflict to an end. Under the new parliamentary system, instead of two delegates to the Diet, five members of parliament had to be elected, making it possible to satisfy the demands of both sides. The formerly rival parties fought together for the cause of the revolution. Through their extensive family networks and close ties with the Greek Catholic Church, the Romanian officials maintained the peace in the Romanian-inhabited areas of the county. In return, the revolutionary situation offered them the same opportunities for advancement as to their Hungarian counterparts. Both Gavrilă Mihalyi and Iosif Man became members of parliament.[36] In August 1848, Mihalyi was appointed government commissioner for the counties of Maramureș, Ugocsa, Bereg, Ung, Satu Mare (Szatmár), Közép-Szolnok, and Crasn (Kraszna), for the Țara Chioarului (Kővár) region, and for the

[32] Alajos Degré, "Szavazási rend a megyegyűléseken 1848 előtt," *Fejér megyei történeti évkönyv* VII., ed. Gábor Farkas (Székesfehérvár: Fejér Megyei Levéltár), 125.

[33] MNL OL, C 44, F8:1848, Vlád László nyilatkozata a királyi biztosnak, Máramarossziget (April 03, 1844): 349–350.

[34] MNL OL, C 44, F8:1848, A fennálló országgyűlésre nemes Máramaros megye részéről 1843ik évi április hónap 26ik napján véghezment követválasztás körülményeknek, s elkövetett kihágásoknak valóságos történet leírása, 150.

[35] *Jelenkor* (July 24, 1845): 354.

[36] *Közlöny* (June 30, 1848): 81.

17th Border Guard Infantry Regiment.[37] His assistant was Iosif Man, who, in early 1849, was appointed by the government as commissioner responsible for recruitment and military provisioning in Maramureș.[38]

The rise to success: the dualist era

Because of their *hungarus* identity, the Romanian officials could sincerely identify with the cause of the Revolution. A significant proportion of the Romanian nobility of Maramureș linked the exercise of their liberties to the feudal *natio hungarica*. Therefore, when modern nationalism emerged, they envisioned their opportunities for advancement within the framework of the Hungarian political nation. This meant that their fate was tied to that of the Reformed, national-liberal officials, who constituted the bulk of the local revolutionary forces. After the Revolution's defeat, they too suffered reprisals. In 1851, Iosif Man was sentenced to four years and Gavrilă Mihalyi to six years of fortress imprisonment, along with the confiscation of their property.[39] However, a year later they were released and their property was restored. When a political shift favourable to Hungarian liberals occurred in imperial policy, the careers of the Romanian officials also took a favourable turn. The issuance of the October Diploma in 1860 brought the neo-absolutist era to an end, and Hungary regained part of its autonomy. At the same time, the county system was reinstated.[40] Iosif Man became the county's lord lieutenant (*főispán*), Gavrilă Mihalyi its parliamentary representative, Ioan Iurca its first deputy county head (*első alispán-helyettes*), and Vasile Mihalca was elected high sheriff.[41]

By the end of 1861, another major political shift occurred. The government of Anton von Schmerling – this time on liberal foundations – attempted to centralize the empire. The Hungarian legislature was dissolved,

[37] A.N.S.J. MM, F 48 The personal collection of academician Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, F 48, 427, 8, Mihályi János és Mán József kegyelmi kérelme, October 31, 1849, 1–2.
[38] Szinneyi József, *Magyar írok élete és munkái*. I (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor Könyvkereskedése), 473–474.
[39] *Pesti Napló* (October 09, 1851): 2–3.
[40] Jenő Gergely, *Autonómiák Magyarországon 1848–2000* (Budapest: ELTE Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola – L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2005), 278–279.
[41] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 1, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1860:6; *Politikai Újdonságok* (November 1, 1860): 691; *Sürgöny* (January 1, 1862): 1.

and the county administrations established in 1860 resigned.[42] Péter Dolinay, a royal commissioner (*királybiztos*) of Ruthenian origin, was appointed to lead Maramureș. In place of the Romanian and Reformed crown-town nobility who had traditionally led the county, Roman Catholic Hungarian and Ruthenian officials from other counties were appointed.[43] Dolinay consciously sought to marginalize the Romanians. In 1856, the Romanian-inhabited part of Maramureș had been transferred from the Diocese of Mukacevo (Munkács) to that of Gherla (Szamosújvár), but the position of the Sighetu Marmației parish, which lay on the boundary between the two nationalities, remained unresolved – both dioceses sought to claim it.[44] Like the Romanians, the Ruthenian Greek Catholic clergy wielded significant influence over the functioning of the county. As an outsider in Maramureș, Dolinay may have aimed to strengthen his ties with the local Ruthenian clergy by displacing the Romanian officials.

Thus, instead of the "customary" Romanian–Hungarian antagonism found in Transylvania, Maramureș had a Romanian–Ruthenian one. Moreover, Ruthenians made up half of the county's population, yet up to that point they had had almost no representation in the county leadership, so they could justifiably feel marginalized. This became especially evident after Dolinay was dismissed in 1862 over a corruption scandal.[45] Schmerling's government fell in 1865, initiating the process that led to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise.[46] This also brought about a realignment of power relations in the county. The local elite had to regain its positions, but without completely excluding the Ruthenians. The solution was offered by Iosif Man – who again held the office of lord-lieutenant from 1865 – through the Agreement of Călinești (Kálinfalva), concluded in the house of Ioan Iurca. The agreement settled the ecclesiastical question and stipulated that for the next Diet the county would send two

[42] József Pap, *Magyarország vármegyei tisztikara a reformkor végétől a kiegyezésig* (Szeged: Belvedere Meridionale), 65–66.
[43] *Sürgöny* (January 5, 1862): 4.
[44] Gábor Várady, *Hulló levelek* II. (Máramarossziget: Sichermann Mór Nyomdája, 1892), 241; MNL OL D 191 Magyar Királyi Helytartótanács. Elnökségi iratok (a továbbiakban MNL OL D 191), I. D. csomó, 17467, Máramaros megye királyi biztosa a szigeti vicariatus kérdésének tárgyalásakor történt dolgokról, 289–293.
[45] Ágnes Deák, "Vizsgálat egy megyei királyi biztos ellen hivatali visszaélés ügyében, 1863," *Századok* 152, no. 1 (2015): 210–212.
[46] László Csorba, "Az önkényuralom kora (1849–1867)," in *Magyarország története a 19. században*, ed. András Gergely (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2005), 313.

Romanian, two Ruthenian, and two Hungarian representatives.[47] The spirit of the agreement was also reflected in the 1867 county elections, as the county leadership was composed of one Romanian, one Ruthenian, and one Hungarian county commissioner, and each nationality received at least one high sheriff's office.[48]

The agreement also consolidated the position of the four Romanian families. From 1865 until his death in 1876, Iosif Man served as the county's lord-lieutenant.[49] His only son (see Appendix 2), Isidor Manu (Izidór Mán), died two years later, bringing his branch of the family to an end. In 1867, Ioan Iurca was once again elected first deputy county commissioner,[50] but he retired two years later. His son, Basiliu Iurca (Bazil Jurka), served for two years as deputy sheriff,[51] then won two terms in parliament.[52]

Vasile Mihalca, by marrying into the Roman Catholic Hatfaludy family – which held the position of county commissioner several times – and taking advantage of the retirement of his peers, reached the peak of his career when he was elected county commissioner in 1869.[53] He held this office for seventeen years, until his death in 1886. From his second marriage, he had six sons (see Appendix 3), four of whom reached adulthood. Ioan (János) became a Greek Catholic priest;[54] Vasile II (László) served for seventeen years as chief magistrate of the Sziget district;[55] Pavel (Pál) was high sheriff for nine years, then for one year president of the orphans' court, but died young, at the age of 41, in 1899;[56] and George (György) worked as a lawyer and in 1915 became the county's chief prosecutor.[57]

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[47] Várady Gábor: *Hulló levelek* II, 241.
[48] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 6, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1867:6.
[49] *Vasárnapi Újság* (February 4, 1876): 70.
[50] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 6, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1867:6.
[51] *Pesti Napló* (May 24, 1878): 3.
[52] Judit Pál, Vlad Popovici, Andrea Fehér, Ovidiu Emil Iudean, *Parliamentary Elections in Eastern Hungary and Transylvania (1865–1918)* (hereafter Pál: *Parliamentary elections*) (Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2018), 240–241.
[53] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 14, Vm. kgy. jgy 1869: 769.
[54] Mihálka László gyászjelentése, accessed 9 August 2025, https://dspace.oszk.hu/handle/20.500.12346/425049#.
[55] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 41, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1877:274; *Pesti Hírlap* (March 28, 1894): 7.
[56] *Magyarország tiszti czím- és névtára 1891* (hereafter MTCN 1891) (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda-Részvénytársaság, 1891), 107; *Budapesti Hírlap* (April 28, 1898): 9; Mihálka Pál gyászjelentése, accessed 09 August 2025, https://dspace.oszk.hu/handle/20.500.12346/425058#.
[57] MTCN 1916, 136.

The Mihalyis (see Appendix 4) became the most successful and influential. Gavrilă I Mihályi served as regency councillor (helytartósági tanácsos) during the liberal period. As a result, he fell into the camp of the politically "compromised" and was not re-elected to the legislature in 1865, but after the Compromise he was immediately appointed a judge of the Supreme Court. He died in 1875. From his marriage to Iuliana Manu (Julianna Mán) he had five sons.[58] The youngest, Gavirlă II (Gábor), a district judge (*járásbíró*), died at just 41 years of age in Sighetu Marmației.[59] The eldest, Iuliu Mihalyi (Gyula), became a colonel in the common army's hussar regiment and died at 61 in Blaj (Balázsfalva).[60] Victor Mihalyi (Viktor), born in 1841, entered the church; in 1875 he was appointed Greek Catholic bishop of Lugoj (Lugos), and in 1895 archbishop of Blaj.[61]

Petru I Mihalyi (Péter) served as high sheriff between 1867 and 1869, then represented the county in the Budapest legislature for 41 years almost without interruption.[62] His elder son, Gavrilă III (Gábor), became high sheriff. His brother, Petru II, first served as captain of the border police and was later elected to parliament.[63] Their youngest brother, Florentin (Florent), entered neither politics nor administration; instead, he became a wealthy lawyer,[64] running a successful practice in Sighetu Marmației and served as the "economic backbone" for his two brothers. Gavrilă I had only one son who chose a career in the county administration: Ioan Mihalyi (János Mihályi). He served as the county's chief prosecutor for 43 years, from 1871 to 1914.[65] Of his sons, two reached adulthood: Silvestru Mihalyi (Szilveszter Mihály), who became a bank clerk,[66] and Longin, who, like two of his cousins, entered the

[58] József Szinney, *Magyar írok élete és munkái*. VIII (Budapest: Hornyánszky Viktor Könyvkereskedése, 1902), 1284; *Magyarország és Nagyvilág* (September 12, 1875): 452.
[59] *Tribuna* (March 21, 1892): 267.
[60] Mihályi Gyula gyászjelentése, accessed August 09, 2025, https://dspace.oszk.hu/handle/20.500.12346/425620#.
[61] Nicolae Bocșan, Ion Cârja, *Memoriile unui ierarh uitat: Victor Mihalyi de Apșa (1841–1918)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2009), 8, 13–51.
[62] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 6, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1867:6; Pál: *Parliamentary elections,* 240–241, 243.
[63] *Az "Athenaeum" Magyar Közigazgatási Kalendáriuma 1902-dik évre* (Budapest: Athenaeum Irodalmi Nyomdai- és Részvény-társulat, 1902), 169; MTCN 1907, 151; MTCN 1910, 166.
[64] MTCN 1910, 209.
[65] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 340, 41, Vm. kgy. jgy. 1871:1659; *Alkotmány*, October 16, 1913, 13.
[66] Museum of Maramureș in Sighetu Marmației (Muzeul Maramureșului din Sighetul Marmației, hereafter MMSM), Fund Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, Obituary of Silviu Mihalyi de Apșa.

administration. In the interwar period, he served as high sheriff and later as deputy prefect.[67]

The career paths clearly show that the four families successfully consolidated their power during the Dualist period. This is remarkable because, in the late Dualist era, imbued with nationalism, the county elite had become almost entirely Magyarized, yet these families retained their positions throughout. By 1918, only 4 of the 16 senior county officials were of non-Hungarian nationality. Two of them have already been mentioned: chief county attorney George Mihalca and high sheriff Gavrilă III Mihályi. As in the Reform Era, the reasons for success in the Dualist period can be found in education, marriage strategies, the local functioning of the political system, and the landholding patterns of official families. Most members of the Dualist-era generation studied at the Royal University of Budapest (Budapesti Királyi Tudományegyetem). In the Iurka and Mihalyi families, the younger generations often began their schooling outside Sighetu Marmației. Petru II, for example, began at the Premonstratensian Gymnasium in Košice (Kassai Premontrei Gimnázium); Gavrilă III studied at the Roman Catholic Lyceum in Lugoj (Lugosi Római Katolikus Líceum) and then at the Archiepiscopal Gymnasium in Nagyszombat (Nagyszombati Érseki Főgimnázium), before continuing in Budapest.[68] Flaviu Iurka (Fláviusz Jurka) attended the Piarist Gymnasium in Budapest (Budapesti Piarista Főgimnázium). Petru I and Petru II both studied law at the University of Vienna,[69] while Victor studied theology in Rome.[70]

From the Reform Era onward, the families no longer intermarried among themselves. In fact, a marked change occurred. The wives of Gavrilă Mihalyi and Ioan Iurca were Romanian, as was the first wife of Vasile Mihalca. Naturally, all the wives were Catholic, but in the Dualist period marriages were also contracted with Protestant families. The four officials had 10 sons and 7 grandsons. Of these, eight married into Hungarian families, three into

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[67] Alexandru Filipașcu: *Istoria Maramureșului* (Baia Mare: Editura „Gutinul", 1997), 214.

[68] István Schlick, *A nagyszombati érseki főgymnasium értesítője az 1888–89. tanév végén*, (Nagyszombat: Nyomatott Winter Zsigmondnál, 1889), 97; Márton Billmann, *A lugosi róm. kath. magy. főgymnasium értesítője az 1881–82. tanévről. Wenczel János és fia könyvnyomdájából* (Lugos: 1882), 33.

[69] *Magyarország* (September 16, 1900): 8.

[70] Bocșan and Cârja, *Memoriile unui ierarh uitat*, 8–13.

Romanian families, four remained unmarried, and for two we have no data. They also had seven daughters and seven granddaughters; of these, six remained unmarried, six married into Romanian families, one into a Hungarian family, and one into a Ruthenian family.

The examples of the Mihalca and Mihalyi families best illustrate the emerging mixed marriage strategy: the men tended to marry into Hungarian families, while the women tended to marry into Romanian ones. Of Vasile I Mihalca's four sons, one remained unmarried and three married into Reformed Hungarian families. For instance, chief county attorney George Mihalca's wife, Margit Székely, came from a Unitarian family in Kis-Küküllő County; her father, Mihály Székely, had been appointed chief forester (*főerdőtanácsos*) in Maramureș, which facilitated the family's local integration.[71] Vasile I Mihalca had two daughters: Iustina Mihalca married the Ruthenian-born high sheriff Miklós Szilágyi, and Dora Mihalca became the wife of Iosif Pop Jr. (József Papp), a member of parliament and lawyer from Somcuța Mare (Nagysomkút).[72]

Of Gavrilă I Mihalyi's five sons, two married. Petru I married Lujza Simon, a member of an Armenian-origin lawyer family from Budapest. Petru II found his spouse in the Kovássy family, one of the most influential Reformed official families of the crown towns.[73] Florentin's wife was Karola Hieronymi, daughter of Károly Hieronymi, Minister of the Interior, and Gabriella Várady. The latter was the daughter of Gábor Várady, member of parliament and second county commissioner, who also belonged to one of the distinguished Reformed families of the crown towns.[74] Gavrilă I Mihalyi's younger son, Ioan, married twice, both times to Romanian women. His first wife was Dunca Paula from Sibiu (Nagyszeben), whose father served as a councillor to the Gubernium during the liberal era. His second wife was Iustina Popp,[75] whose father was a Greek Catholic priest in Vișeul de Sus (Felsővisó).

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[71] *Unitárius Élet* (January 1, 1962): 1; Mihálka Györgyné szül. Székely Margit gyászjelentése, accessed July 3, 2025, https://dspace.oszk.hu/handle/20.500.12346/425042#.

[72] Mihálka Jusztina családfája, accessed July 03 2025, https://www.geni.com/people/Jusztina-Mih%C3%A1lka/6000000002930298828.

[73] *Kárpáti Híradó* (Febraury 20, 1944).

[74] *Alkotmány* (February 2, 1905): 8.

[75] *Fővárosi Lapok* (April 28, 1878): 480; *Krassó-Szörényi Lapok* (July 21, 1881): 4.

The secret of success: adaptation strategies in the Hungarian and Romanian states

As shown in Table 1, among the official families the Romanians possessed the largest and most valuable estates. There are no sources on their landholdings during the Reform Era, but it is likely that their accumulation of wealth took place during the Dualist period, which had a political dimension. The Dualist electoral system no longer favoured the Romanian officials. The right to vote was no longer limited to the nobility but extended to anyone who met the property or literacy requirements prescribed by law. County official elections were still held in the county seat. Voters were members of the county assembly (*törvényhatósági bizottság*), half of whom were elected by the enfranchised citizens and the other half composed of *virilists* – those paying the highest amounts of direct state tax.[76] Romanian petty nobles born in or before 1848 retained the vote "by ancient right," regardless of their property status, but their numbers steadily declined toward the end of the period.[77] Meanwhile, the number of wealthier Hungarian voters from the crown towns, as well as Ruthenian voters from the northern part of the county, increased.

Table 1: Landholdings of Romanian, Hungarian Landowning, and Reformed Official Families Combined, in acres

Families	Pastures	Arable land	Total amount
Mihalca, Mihalyi Iurka	4078	789	11 996
Szaplonczay and Pogány	870	1076	4086
Protestant families of the five royal cities	61	199	542

Nevertheless, in two of the county's ten districts – the Sziget and the Visó – Romanians formed a relative majority, while in the Izavölgy district they were an absolute majority.[78] In 1896, the Sugatag district was created

[76] Dezső Márkus, *Magyar Törvénytár 1000–1895. 1869–1871. évi törvényczikkek* (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1900), 212–213, 215–218.

[77] András Gerő, *Az elsöprő kisebbség. Népképviselet a monarchia Magyarországán* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1988), 31–32.

[78] *A magyar korona országainak 1900. évi népszámlálása* (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda-Részvénytársaság, 1902), 299, 301, 303, 305.

from part of the Sziget district,[79] and here too the Romanians were an absolute majority. Of the county's six electoral constituencies, Romanians also formed an absolute majority in both the Sugatag and Visó constituencies. In these areas, the influence of the three families remained strong, making them valuable allies in the eyes of the Hungarian governing parties.

From Budapest, Maramureș was a distant, isolated county. For this reason, the governing party sought to secure its positions through informal agreements with the local elite.[80] Essentially, the bargain meant that the Romanians would support, or at least not openly oppose, the government's nationality policy, and would guarantee the government the mandates from the Romanian districts. In return, the positions of the Romanian elite were likewise guaranteed, and the government turned a blind eye to their questionable dealings.

This mode of operation may explain the spectacular rise of the Mihalca family. County commissioner Vasile Mihalca was the local president of first the Deák Party, then the Liberal Party, and in his public appearances often declared that he "knew of no nation in this homeland other than the Hungarian."[81] In March 1879, minister of education Ágoston Trefort submitted a bill that made the teaching of the Hungarian language compulsory in public education institutions. This step had been preceded by a petition from Vasile Mihalca to the King, signed by 400 Romanians of Maramureș, requesting that the monarch give prior approval to the bill so that it could be submitted to parliament.[82] At the same time, he was president of seven joint landholding associations.[83] This attracted attention in the county, and one member of the county assembly, Simon Hollósy, accused him of abusing his position to appropriate land from the associations.[84] The affair turned into a national scandal; the pro-government press rallied behind Mihalca, and Prime Minister

[79] *Pesti Napló* (April 2, 1896): 1.

[80] Gábor Egry, "Unruly borderlands: border-making, peripheralization and layered regionalism in post-First World War Maramureș and the Banat," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 27, no. 6 (2020): 715.

[81] Gábor Várady, *Hulló levelek*. III (hereafter *Hulló levelek* III) (Máramarossziget: Sichermann Mór Nyomdája, 1895), 86.

[82] Gábor Várady: *Hulló levelek* III, 244.

[83] A.N.S.J. MM, F 45, 818. Presidential documents of the supreme court, written inventory by subject, 1883: 5; Mihálka László alispán levele Lónyay János főispánnak, Máramarossziget (November 25, 1885).

[84] *Közérdek* (September 16, 1883): 1; *Máramarosi Lapok* (May 1, 1896): 1.

Kálmán Tisza himself defended him during a parliamentary interpellation.[85] Mihalca died in 1886, at which point the matter lapsed, but the accusations could not have been unfounded, since in 1893 the three sons of the county commissioner, who had come from poor petty noble origins, together owned 7,117 acres of land.[86]

Petru I Mihalyi represented the Sugatag constituency in parliament for the governing party between 1865 and 1869, and the Visó constituency between 1869 and 1881. During his last mandate, he joined the United Opposition and then the Apponyi-led National Party. He paid the price for this, losing in the 1881 election to the pro-government Ödön Jónás, but in 1884 he managed to defeat him. In the 1887 election, Lord Lieutenant János Lónyay brokered a "peace" between Mihalyi and the governing party: Mihalyi would no longer run in the Visó constituency, and in return, the Liberals would not field a candidate against him in Sugatag. As a result, both the constituency and the district became the "property" of the Mihályi family. Gábor III served as chief magistrate of the district for 18 years, and Péter II was elected to parliament immediately after his father's retirement.[87]

This strategy proved successful in Greater Romania as well. In the final year of the Great War, it was still not certain that Maramureș would become part of the Romanian state. On October 23, 1918, Petru II declared in the Budapest parliament that the Romanians of Maramureș did not wish to join Romania.[88] His brother, Gavrilă III, the chief magistrate, was arrested in early 1919 by the Romanian army that occupied Maramureș because he refused to take down the Hungarian flag from the official building of the Sugatag district.[89] However, once it became clear that Romanian rule would be permanent, both Mihalyis adapted. Petru II, alongside his "Hungarian gentry overcoat," began wearing a "Romanian large, tall, sheepskin cap." They hosted soirées for Romanian officers, attended even by Petru II's Hungarian wife, who did not

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[85] Károly P. Szathmáry (ed.), *Az 1884. évi szeptemberhó 27-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója* IX (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Részvény-Társaság, 1886), 339–342.

[86] Károly Baross, József Németh (ed.), *Magyarország földbirtokosai* (Budapest: Hungária Könyvnyomda, 1893), 406–407, 410–413, 415–417.

[87] Pál: *Parliamentary elections* 240–241, 243.

[88] *Az 1910. évi június hó 21-ére hírdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója*. XL (Budapest: Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársulat Könyvnyomdája, 1918), 425–427.

[89] Alexandru Filipașcu, Istoria Maramureșului, 208, 211, 214; *Patria* (February 11, 1923: 3); *Patria* (May 14, 1927): 2.

speak Romanian.[90] The adaptation was successful: Gavrilă became president of the Maramureș branch of the National Liberal Party, and both brothers held the office of prefect and were decorated with the Iron Cross of Romania. Petru II also served for a time as mayor of Sighetu Marmației and as the county's senator.[91] The bargain was possible because the Liberals from the Old Kingdom had no political infrastructure in Maramureș, whereas their rivals, the National Peasants' Party, did – having built upon the foundations of the former Romanian National Party. The Mihalyis guaranteed Liberal influence, and in return, their "renegade" past faded into the obscurity of the war.

An example of reintegration after the Second Vienna Award is provided by their distant relative, Flaviu Iurca, appointed lord lieutenant in 1940. The son of Basil Iurca (see Appendix 1), he had also navigated the interwar Romanian political scene successfully, serving as both high sheriff and prefect.[92] His appointment served as a tool of legitimacy for the Hungarian state, as he was "the scion of a respected family of the local Romanian community […] eloquent proof of the government's intention to pursue a policy of understanding and fairness toward the nationalities."[93] Iurca and the Mihalyis were the last two official families in the county to retain their power and survive the changes brought by both the fall of the Monarchy and the Vienna Award. By contrast, the Reformed official families of the crown towns had already been pushed out of Maramureș county leadership during the Dualist era, while the landowning Szaplonczay and Pogány families, as well as the Mihalcas, lost their positions in the interwar period. With the establishment of the communist regime, however, Iurca fled to Hungary.[94] The fate of the two Mihalyis remains unclear, though they likely remained in Romania.

The price of success. Assimilation?

Ioan Iurca, Vasile I Mihalca, Gavrilă I Mihalyi, and Iosif Man considered themselves Romanians belonging to the Hungarian political nation. This is how they described themselves in the sources, and their contemporaries also

[90] Aurél Szent-Gály-Faur, *Máramarosszigeti napló 1919. január– 1919. július* (Budapest: Erdélyi Szalon Kiadó, 2023), 65.
[91] *Patria* (February 11, 1923): 3
[92] *Monitorul Oficial* (October 11, 1925): 11425; *Aradi Újság* (May 11, 1931): 1.
[93] *Budapesti Közlöny* (November 20, 1940): 1.
[94] Jurka Fláviusz gyászjelentése, accessed July 3, https://dspace.oszk.hu/handle/20.500.12346/123187#.

perceived them as such.[95] Owing to their leading roles, they sought to support the development of the Romanian language and culture in Maramureș. All of them contributed financially to the establishment of the Maramureș Romanian Popular Education Association (*Asociațiunea pentru Cultura Poporului Român din Maramureș*).[96] Man and Mihalka served as presidents of the association.[97]

It is more difficult to determine the loyalties of their sons and grandsons. Although he corresponded with his elder brother, Petru I, alternately in Hungarian and Romanian, and often in a mixed language,[98] Ioan II was politically drawn to the Transylvanian Romanian national movement and was convinced that the Romanians had a historical right to autonomy. This is no coincidence: during his university years he had a keen interest in the history of the Romanians in Hungary.[99] His work in the field later earned him election as an external member of the Romanian Academy, and he also corresponded with Nicolae Iorga.[100] Locally, together with his brother Petru I, he mortgaged their estates to take out a loan for the construction of a boarding school for the association's students.[101] His children also retained their Romanian identity: Longin, for example, was raised in Blaj by his uncle, the archbishop. He brought the first Romanian flag from Cluj to Sighetu Marmației, which was hung on the house of his father, who had already passed away.[102] Of his seven daughters, three remained unmarried, while three married Romanian colonels and one a Romanian state official.[103]

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[95] Gábor Várady, *Hulló levelek* III, 68, 86; *Vasárnapi Újság* (February 4, 1877): 67.

[96] *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (October 11, 1902): 2.

[97] Jenő Gagyi, *A magyarországi románok egyházi, iskolai, közművelődési, közgazdasági intézményeinek és mozgalmainak ismertetése* (Budapest: Uránia Könyvnyomda, 1909), 247.

[98] A.N.S.J. MM, F 245, 1204, 183, Letter from Petru Mihalyi to his brother Ioan Mihalyi, Sighetu Marmației, February 23, 1871, 2–6; MMSM, Mihályi Péter levele Mihályi Jánosnak, Szarvaszó, June 02, 1907.

[99] Mihai Dăncuș, "Casa muzeu Mihalyi de Apșa în Pantheonul neamului românesc," *Acta Musei Maramorosiensis* 3, no. 3 (2005): 395

[100] Ibid., 381.

[101] Jenő Gagyi, A magyarországi románok, 248.

[102] *Anuarul institutelor de învățământ gr.-cat. Din Balázsfalva (Blaj): gimnaziul superior, institutul pedagogic, școala civilă și elementară de fete, școala de aplicație, școala învățătorilor de meserii și negustori pe anul școlastic 1914–15* (Blaj: Tipografia seminariului teologic greco-catolic, 1915), 107; Mihai Dăncuș, Casa muzeu, 382.

[103] MMSM, Fondul Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, *Necrologul lui Longin-Virgil Mihalyi de Apșa*; *Necrologul lui Marie Theodora născută Mihalyi de Apșa*.

Most members of the second and third generations found themselves situated between acculturation and assimilation. Petru I may have thought much like his father: he integrated well into the highest circles of the Hungarian elite, while also seeking to devote part of his wealth to supporting Romanian cultural life. He too served as president of the Popular Education Association.[104] His sons displayed no national commitment until 1919. Petru II was born in Košice and spent his early years there. As a student, he was a member of the Arany Self-Education Circle (*Arany-Önképző-kör*), and as a university student he served as president of the University Circle under the colors of the National Party (Nemzeti Párt); he also worked as a journalist for the nationalist newspaper *Magyarország*.[105] The second generation of the Mihalca family was likewise indifferent to the Romanian cause. In the same article, the Romanian newspaper *Unirea* referred to Vasile I Mihalca as a "good Romanian," spelling his name in Romanian, while giving his son George Mihalca's name in Hungarian form and noting that he no longer spoke his father's language.[106] According to Alexandru Filipașcu, all three officials' children moved to Hungary after the change of sovereignty.[107]

The social environment played an important role in shaping attitudes toward Romanian roots. The second and third generations of both the Mihalyi and Mihalca families were educated in a Hungarian milieu. Above all, however, the most decisive factor was marriage. The Mihalca family is the only one that can be said with certainty to have assimilated. Of the Reform Era officials, only Vasile Mihalca had a Hungarian wife. The Romanian press attributed the Magyarization of his sons to the upbringing provided by his wife, Mária Hatfaludy, and their wives were also Protestant.[108] By contrast, all five male members of the Mihalyi family's second generation "received a national upbringing" from Iuliana Man, and thus retained their identity.[109] The worldview of Ioan Mihalyi and his children was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that his first wife came from Sibiu, a centre of the Romanian national movement.

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[104] Jenő Gagyi, A magyarországi románok, 254.
[105] *Magyarország* (September 16, 1900): 8.
[106] *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (July 30, 1899): 3; *Unirea* (July 30, 1914): 1.
[107] Alexandru Filipașcu, "Înstrăinarea unor familii și averi maramureșene," *Transilvania* 63, no. 10 (1942): 749.
[108] *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (November 26, 1899): 3.
[109] *Familia* (August 16, 1881): 393–394.

The Iurca family presents something of an exception. Basil Iurca's wife, Baroness Aurelia Popp, was the daughter of Baron Ladislau Popp, president of the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People (*Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People*, hereafter ASTRA). Flaviu was even provided with a Romanian governess from Bucharest.[110] However, in shaping his identity, the years he spent studying in Budapest and his marriage to Anna Klíma, the daughter of a Hungarian ministerial councillor (*minisztertanácsos*), proved decisive. After the Second World War, he converted to Roman Catholicism and was buried in his wife's family crypt in Vác.[111]

Two further important factors were the families' local interests and nationalism. These exerted both a pull and a push effect on the officials' identities. In the second generation of the Mihalyi family, although Romanian identity was present, their political and economic interests hindered its full expression. Ioan, as the county's chief prosecutor, only openly embraced sympathy for the national movement after losing the contest for the position of county commissioner.[112] Following this defeat, he changed strategy: unable to realize his power ambitions with a moderate stance, he began investing in mining, and only after securing a stable economic base did he attempt to organize a local branch of ASTRA.[113] Petru I, as a large landowner, was for a long time a member of the National Party, which represented agrarian interests but was more strongly nationalist than the Liberals. He only spoke out against his former party when, in connection with the Lex Apponyi, it endangered the teaching of the Romanian language in schools.[114] His sons found themselves in a reverse situation but similar in essence under the Romanian state: owing to their socialization, they moved far more comfortably in the Hungarian cultural milieu, but they could preserve their wealth and power only by "rediscovering" their Romanian roots within the framework of the National Liberal Party.

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[110] Alexandru Filipașcu, "Contribuțiuni documentare la administrarea Maramureșului," *Transilvania* 63, no. 7–8 (1942): 553–556.

[111] *Váci Hírlap* (November 15, 1931): 2; Jurka Fláviusz gyászjelentése, accessed 9 August 2025, https://dspace.oszk.hu/handle/20.500.12346/123187#.

[112] *Tribuna* (April 21, 1898): 345–346.

[113] *Pesti Hírlap*, (October 22, 1904): 13; *Budapesti Hírlap* (January 14, 1913):19.

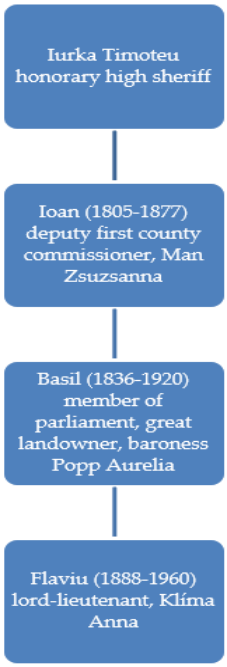
[114] *Az Újság* (September 9, 1909): 3.

Conclusion

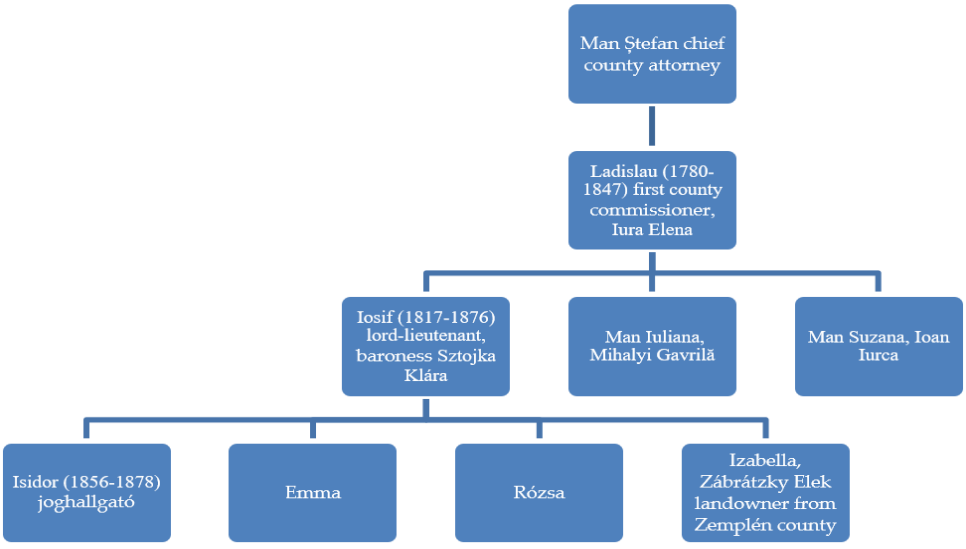
In the late eighteenth century, the power vacuum in Maramureș was filled by the Iurca, Man, Mihalca, and Mihalyi families. Their forebears had held lower-ranking offices or served in ecclesiastical careers, but they ensured a proper education for their children. Marriages between the families were used as political alliances, and by exploiting the advantages of the electoral system they secured their place in the elite. During the Revolution, they fought on the Hungarian side, and the prestige thus gained was converted into political capital at the time of the October Diploma and during the Dualist period. The Agreement of Călinești further strengthened their position. They often married their children into influential Hungarian and Romanian families far from the county, and sent them to prestigious educational institutions – something made possible by their growing landed wealth. This accumulation of property was secured through political bargains with the government: the local Romanian elite guaranteed pro-government mandates and did not oppose official nationality policy. In return, their local influence was consolidated and the government overlooked their questionable dealings. Following the same logic, they reached similar arrangements with the governing parties in Bucharest after the change of sovereignty, and later again with those in Budapest.

Marriage was the factor with the greatest impact on national identity. Officials who married into Hungarian families raised their children in a Hungarian milieu. Assimilation, therefore, was not a prerequisite for successful advancement. The process did exist, but it was more often the result of adaptive mechanisms of marriage and education aimed at social ascent or the consolidation of existing power, as well as of the local political climate. Depending on the political context, this could be reinforced or reversed by either Hungarian or Romanian nationalism, as well as by the private interests of the families.

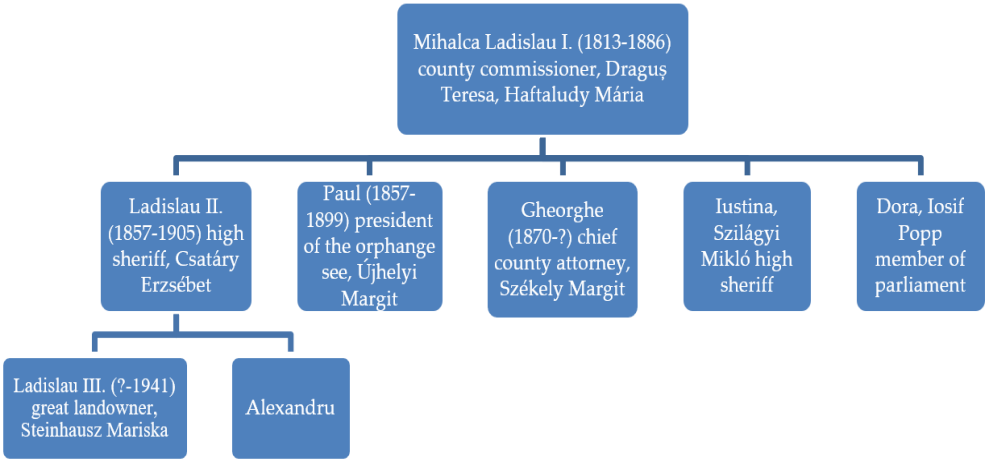
Appendix



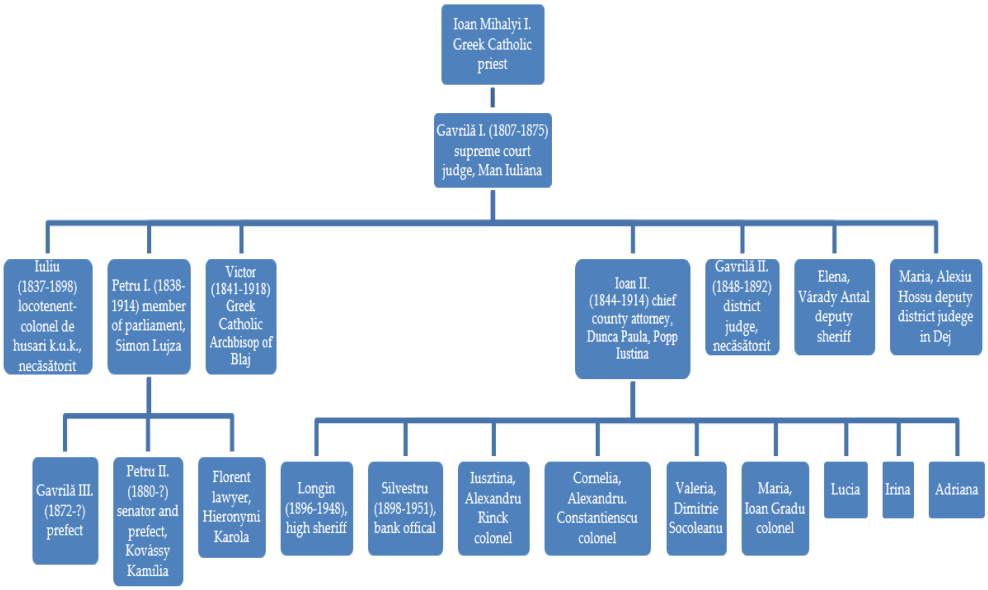
Appendix 1: The Iurca family tree



Appendix 2: The Man family tree



Appendix 3: The Mihalca family tree



Appendix 4: The Mihalyi family tree

Romanian Attitudes and Stereotypes Towards Hungarians During the 1848 Revolution

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Abstract: This article analyses the Romanian political attitudes towards the Hungarians during the 1848 Revolution. The main sources used are the political statements of the revolutionaries, selected from political manifestos, historical works, letters or press articles. Their analysis highlights Romanian symbols, stereotypes and ideological positions, in relation to the Hungarian revolution. The conflicting nature of the relations between the Romanians and the Hungarians, and the fact that this situation was interiorised precisely when modern national solidarities were gaining shape meant that their images of the other would become a stock ingredient of the two peoples' political mythologies. The image of the age-old enemy, who had for centuries been their opponent, was to serve as the cornerstone of national identity both for the Romanians and for the Hungarians.

Keywords: Romanians, Hungarians, 1848 Revolution, ethnic stereotypes, historical imagology

Rezumat: Acest articol analizează atitudinile politice ale românilor față de maghiari în timpul Revoluției de la 1848. Principalele surse utilizate sunt declarațiile politice ale revoluționarilor, selectate din manifeste politice, lucrări istorice, scrisori sau articole de presă. Analiza acestora evidențiază simboluri, stereotipuri și poziții ideologice românești în raport cu revoluția maghiară. Natura conflictuală a relațiilor dintre români și maghiari și faptul că această situație a fost internalizată tocmai în momentul în care solidaritățile naționale moderne prindeau contur a făcut ca imaginile reciproce să devină un ingredient de bază al mitologiilor politice ale celor două popoare. Imaginea dușmanului, care le-a fost adversar timp de secole, avea să servească drept piatră de temelie a identității naționale atât pentru români, cât și pentru maghiari.

Cuvinte cheie: români, maghiari, Revoluția de la 1848, stereotipuri etnice, imagologie istorică

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In the fatidic year of 1848, the prospects of Romanians and Hungarians living together in harmony were called into question and two possible scenarios had been outlined. On the one hand, these nations could understand and tolerate one another, in keeping with the Enlightenment tenets; on the other hand, they could continue the tradition of medieval conflicts and peasant uprisings, exalted by the Romantic ideology. It is quite clear that history—that is, the sum of countless causalities, conditionalities, and chance occurrences—chose the latter scenario.

In the history of the relations between the two nations, the Revolution of 1848 was possibly the most significant event. It quite likely exceeded the importance of the union of Transylvania with Romania in 1918, because what happened in 1918 was the logical consequence of the rift created seven decades earlier. Suffice it to think that Romania's present-day national anthem, which evokes the historical dispute between the Romanians and the Hungarians (or the "barbaric tyrants"), dates from 1848, not from 1918.

At the same time, one cannot say that this revolution substantially changed the Romanian society. Like Horea's uprising, which lasted only two months, the 1848 battles waged between the Romanians and the Hungarians in the Apuseni Mountains lasted under a year, from October 1848 until August 1849. The importance of the revolution resided not in what it managed to accomplish, but in the significance assigned to it later, as a pathbreaking event. As both the Romanian and the Hungarian historians wrote afterwards, both revolutions "had been defeated."

It is true that this was the first time in history when thousands of Romanians and Hungarians had slaughtered one another (also) because of their ethnicity. In a way, this was also the last time, because the disputes in which the Romanians and the Hungarians were involved during the two world wars of the twentieth century were not bilateral conflicts (for the most part) and had also other causes than interethnic or national adversity, largely pertaining to international politics.

In 1848, the Romanians and the Hungarians did not raise arms against one another just for the above reasons. They also went to battle because they were nobles against serfs, rich men against poor men, soldiers loyal to the emperor against followers of Kossuth, or defenders of Transylvania's union with Hungary against champions of the region's autonomy. Many of these conflicting affiliations overlapped the ethnic differences between the Romanians

and the Hungarians, albeit not completely. In Banat, Arad, Bihor and Maramureș, regions not included in the Great Principality of Transylvania (which begs the question why its union with Hungary should have caused discontent amongst the Romanians), most of the Romanian leaders sided with the Hungarian revolution and Kossuth. They were followed by thousands of their countrymen who had enrolled in the revolutionary troops. To them, being Romanian did not mean being against the Hungarians, as it happened in Transylvania, but fighting on their side against the reactionary politics of the Viennese court, which imperilled everybody's freedom.

However, the option that came to prevail amongst the Romanians and was subsequently regarded as having been the only just choice (because history tended to confirm it) was to go to arms against the Hungarians.

To the Hungarians, the Romanians were not as important as the Hungarians were to the Romanians. Austria was their great enemy in 1848. Russia had dealt them a final blow. The nationalities that had been involved in the revolution had been deceived and manipulated into doing so by the Viennese court. This was their real foe, so the Hungarians couldn't really consider the Croats, Serbs, and Romanians as true enemies. Only their leaders, agitators, and instigators, who had led the innocent masses on a wrong path, were to blame. The Romanians were among those nationalities, but they represented only one of the many heads of a much larger and dangerous hydra.

As a result, the Hungarians' patriotic anthems make no reference to the Romanians. Still, the fact that they battled the Romanians in their historical struggle for freedom remains imprinted in their historical memory. As shown above, plenty of Romanians had sided with the Hungarians in this struggle and it was only the Hungarians in Transylvania that would have perceived the Romanians as an inimical population.

In the Hungarian historical consciousness, the Revolution of 1848 is linked to several important sites of memory in Transylvania: the battlefield near Sighișoara, where Petőfi died in the fight against the Russians, the battlefield of Șiria, where General Görgei capitulated to the Russians, and Arad, where the Austrians executed thirteen high-ranking Hungarian military commanders. Aside from the violent outbursts of the Romanians in Aiud, Abrud and Zlatna, Transylvania is not perceived as a space in which the Hungarians fought primarily against the Romanians in 1848.

However, the Romanians' and the Hungarians' major national symbols date from this very period. This was the time in which these two modern nations came into being. The two tricolour flags, reminiscent of the flag launched by the French Revolution, the two national anthems, written by Andrei Mureşanu and Kölcsey Ferenc, and the two prominent leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians and Hungarians, Avram Iancu and Kossuth Lajos, all these originate from this foundational moment for the national mythology of the two peoples. But if we consider that the Romanians' heroes were the Hungarians' enemies and the other way around, that the flag of one nation was the detested, subversive or dominating symbol of the other, it becomes clear that the rise of the two nations coincided with the birth of hostile images towards the Other.

Kőváry László, the foremost representative of Hungarian historiographic romanticism in Transylvania, described Michael the Brave, the Romanians' national hero, as follows: "This man, who is featured in the history of Wallachia as its greatest ruler, behaved like a usurper in Transylvania, smearing his good name through acts of vandalism."[1] This was the same kind of sentence that Romanian historians could pass against the Hungarians' national hero, Kossuth Lajos, after 1848.

For any human community, whether ethnic or national, the rejection of foreigners represented a major strategy of asserting self-identity. However, the conflicting nature of the relations between the Romanians and the Hungarians, and the fact that this situation was interiorised precisely when modern national solidarities were gaining shape meant that their images of the other would become a stock ingredient of the two peoples' political mythologies. The image of the age-old enemy, who had for centuries been their opponent, was to serve as the cornerstone of national identity both for the Romanians and for the Hungarians.

The birth of the Hungarian and Romanian nations occurred in the presence of the foreign and oftentimes detested Other. From then on, the two national constructs remained indelibly connected by this twisted fraternity, as if they were united in a family torn by rivalries and mutual hostility. It is equally true that in liminal situations, this cultivated familiarity with adversity, this notion that we can only live together even though we have every reason to hate one another also fostered a genuine attitude of tolerance, or a sceptical,

[1] László Kőváry, *Erdély történelme*, Vol. 4 (Kolozsvár: Stein-Ráth, 1859-1866), 102.

albeit realistic science of cohabitation, embraced by both communities in Transylvania. This can be seen, for instance, in a letter Avram Iancu, head of the Romanian resistance in the Apuseni Mountains, sent to the Hungarian commander he was fighting against at that time, in June 1849:

> *Brothers! Trust us that we see all too clearly and lucidly that in these two sister countries of ours, there can live no Hungarian, now or in the future, without Romanians, nor can Romanians live without Hungarians. We believe and all too clearly realise that some giant power may soon be upon us or you, in the near or distant future, and they will crush us, leaving behind only the traces of our existence [a hint at the Russian menace]. Both our camps can see that the threat is well-nigh upon us and yet we cannot see eye to eye. I know not why but enmity and pride are swishing their swords between you and us lest we should get together to speak even as we are being plunged into agony.*[2]

The historian Kőváry László (a former revolutionary combatant himself) said something along the same lines in his book about the 1848 revolution in Transylvania: "The fate of nations living side by side is just like the fate of families with numerous children: they either make peace after breaking up, or mutually destroy themselves."[3]

This mechanism of identity-building adversity is not specific just to the Romanians or Hungarians. For other people too, the image of the enemy has played a central role in shaping their ethnic and, later on, national identity. In the Middle Ages, the Spaniards' fight against the Moors during the Reconquista, or the rivalry between France and England during the Hundred Years' War, contributed not just to the political unification and the administrative centralisation of those kingdoms, but also to the emergence of "popular proto-nationalism," which could generate collective solidarity and identity.[4] Similarly, in the modern period, the activation of national sentiment because of external attacks clearly fuelled the rise of the first cases

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[2] Letter of Avram Iancu to Lieutenant-Colonel Simonffy, June 1849, published in Liviu Maior (ed.), *Avram Iancu. Scrisori*, Cluj, Dacia, 1972, 86-89. If not marked otherwise, all translations from Romanian into English were made by the author of the present article.

[3] László Kőváry, *Erdély története 1848-49-ben* (Pest: Emich, 1861), 103.

[4] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Naţiuni şi naţionalism din 1780 până în prezent. Program, mit, realitate* (Chişinău: Arc, 1997), 48-80.

of nationalism in European history: for instance, the French one, started off by the foreign invasion that preceded the battle of Valmy (1792), the Polish one, after the dismantling of Poland in the late eighteenth century, and the German one, spurred by Prussia's catastrophic defeat by Napoleon in 1806.

When the Hungarian revolution broke out in Pest, on 15 March, 1848, many Romanians reacted enthusiastically because it announced an age of freedom and promised to carry out universally desired political and social reforms, which had been obstructed by Chancellor Metternich's conservative regime. Timotei Cipariu and George Barițiu, the opinion leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians, did not reject the last point of the Hungarian revolutionary programme, which stipulated Transylvania's union with Hungary, because they believed that the Romanians' national rights would be guaranteed in the new, liberal Hungary, alongside all the other positive transformations:

> *There can be no longer any doubt that the union with Hungary is desirable not just everywhere [in general], but also for the Romanians […] the country's laws will guarantee special rights to all the nationalities, different from the Hungarian one, in Hungary. […] Hungary wishes the Romanian provinces to adopt such liberal measures, to go hand in hand with Hungary, in strong brotherly communion, against the colossal absolutism that threatens the freedom of Europe.*[5]

But before long, this nebulous brotherly atmosphere was dispelled by the much more persuasive intervention of other, more radical Romanian intellectuals, who believed that their conationals ought to reject the union of Transylvania with Hungary and adopt a national agenda of their own. To them, it seemed that the generous principles avowed by the Hungarian revolution were but a ruse. Even though they laid the foundations of a liberal state, the Hungarians would never grant national rights to the Romanians. Therefore, the Romanians would have to walk their own path, which diverged from that of the Hungarians. This was the path Avram Iancu and his tribunes would walk in their fight against the revolutionaries led by Kossuth, thus becoming allies of the Habsburg imperial court.

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[5] Timotei Cipariu, "Uniunea," *Organul luminării* 2, no. 65 (1848): 368.

The one who first gave clear shape to this national programme was an intellectual, Simion Bărnuțiu. In the speech he gave in Blaj in May 1848, he offered a historical overview of the relations between the two nations over the course of one thousand years. He imprinted the image of Hungarians in the Romanian national consciousness as no one else would later be able to do. If we read the conclusions reached by today's Romanian historians, as they appear in school textbooks or scholarly articles, we can notice that this mode of interpretation has changed rather little since Simion Bărnuțiu.

The main argument Bărnuțiu brought to reject the union and the political offer of the Hungarian revolutionaries was history itself. Ever since the Hungarian Tuhutum had sneaked into Transylvania like a cunning fox and slain Duke Gelu, the Hungarians had oppressed the Romanians in every way possible: "All the evils that have beset the Romanians for one thousand years come from the Hungarians." What is more, contemporary Hungarians "are even more barbaric today than they were a thousand years ago."[6] The barbarity that was attributed to the Hungarians would resound even in the lines of the anthem written by Andrei Mureșanu. It would become one of the defining features of their image as viewed by the Romanians. Its historical explanation lies in the invading Hungarians' Asian roots, but it is also clearly attested by their current behaviour, as well as by their tyranny and the acts of cruelty they have consistently committed against the Romanians.

While most of the Romanians had imagined—and would continue to do so for the next seven decades—that their national emancipation would be achieved through a division of political power in Transylvania, Bărnuțiu believed they could lay claim to everything. "Transylvania truly belongs to the Romanian nation," he said, first and foremost because the Romanians had been the owners here for one thousand and seven hundred years (ever since their ancestors, the Romans, conquered it), and secondly because they were the most numerous inhabitants of the province. The crucial issue of political modernisation, that is, of freedom, which had been fundamental for the revolutionaries of 1848, was also approached in national terms, contradicting the Hungarian point of view. Freedom could only be national and "in the Hungarian land, freedom itself will be Hungarian."[7]

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[6] Simion Bărnuțiu, "Raporturile românilor cu ungurii şi principiile libertății naționale," in Ştefan Pascu (ed.), *Documente privind revoluţia de la 1848 în ţările române. C. Transilvania*, Vol. 4 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1988), 3.

[7] Ibid., 15, 19.

Through his speech, Bărnuțiu managed like no one before to raise a symbolical barrier between "us" and "them," showing that the Romanians and the Hungarians were two nations with irreconcilably opposed goals. Their Good could only mean Evil for us, since "it is life to the Hungarians but death to the Romanians; boundless freedom to the Hungarians but eternal servitude to the Romanians."[8]

Bărnuțiu's disciple, Alexandru Papiu Ilarian (whose father had been executed by the Hungarian revolutionaries in 1849),[9] enlarged upon these ideas in a historical work he published right after the revolution:

> *The history of the Hungarians, their character, their geographical position and, above all, that inherent evil of human nature won't let them be just and kind towards the other nations, for evil will drive a nation, just like an individual, to oppress, to subdue, to devour the weak, just like big fish devour the small. This human weakness is typical, to a larger or smaller extent, of all nations. The culture of even the most advanced nations is not genuine unless it is predicated on justice and not on shallow refinements. This human weakness is perhaps most evident in the case of the Hungarians and their relations with the cohabiting nations. This inherent desire to oppress others is the result of several circumstances: for instance, that insufferable, immeasurable national pride that is so specific to the Hungarians; their history of one thousand years, in which the sole purpose of the Hungarian nation has been to oppress the Slavs and the Romanians.*[10]

The Hungarians' tendency to oppress other peoples is therefore explained through their historical circumstances, geographical position, and their "ethnic psychology." In the spirit of the Enlightenment, Papiu admits that such tendencies could be found among any other nation—including the Romanians, we might add. But this provisional concession, which puts forth a universalist and tolerant vision inherited from Enlightenment ideology, is immediately withdrawn and replaced with the Herderian theory which lays emphasis on the unique features of each individual nation. The Hungarians, Papiu believes, are by nature inclined to commit injustices and are driven by

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[8] Ibid., 27.

[9] Ioan Chindriș, Gelu Neamțu (eds.), *Procese politice antiromâneşti care au zguduit Transilvania în toamna anului 1848* (Bucharest: Viitorul Românesc, 1995), 12, 86.

[10] Alexandru Papiu Ilarian, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Superioară*, Vol. 2 (Vienna: Gerold, 1852), LXXXIX-XC.

a national pride that has no limits. Throughout history, these features have led to endless conflicts between the two nations, and this has left its mark on the Romanians: "The history of the Romanians in Dacia Superior has been nothing but ceaseless oppression at the hands of the Hungarians: a continuous struggle between these two nations."[11]

Without a doubt, the events that took place during the revolution and the mutual crimes and atrocities that were committed exacerbated the Romanians' negative image of the Hungarians. It is also true that nationalist principles of Herderian extraction also influenced this evolution. The historical past and the present were largely explained through the filter of national antagonisms, rather than by reference to religious, political or social causes. In June 1848, the young revolutionary Constantin Romanu-Vivu wrote to Nicolae Bălcescu about an incident that had occurred in Mihalţ:

> *Their barbarity is beyond words, for such cruelty could not be encountered even in the darkest ages. Despite such acts of terrorism, Romanians will stick to their own. And we [the revolutionary leaders] are to blame for what happened because we ordered the Romanian people to keep the peace, thinking that this is the age of liberty and even the nomadic Hungarians and Szeklers may have been contaminated by the European spirit. But we were wrong to think so and their deeds have proved to us that they are very much the same as the ones who invaded us from Mongolia. Yet this is their loss, for we will live in peace while they will perish.*[12]

An isolated event like the clash of forces in Mihalţ, which caused the death of a group of Romanian peasants who were shot by the troops sent to restore order in the region,[13] was "explained" and could be understood through the prism of the Hungarians' negative image. Their barbarian behaviour happened due to their "nomadic" history for they were surely not "Europeans" like the Romanians. A nation's Europeanness was first and foremost a matter of political conduct, defined by its attachment to liberal political values. At the same time, Europeanness was a matter of a nation's origins. It could be inherited historically.

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[11] Ibid., Vol. 1, 224-225.

[12] Cornelia Bodea, *Lupta românilor pentru unitatea naţională. 1834-1849* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1967), 319.

[13] For two different interpretations of this episode, see Gelu Neamţu, *Revoluţia românilor din Transilvania 1848-1849* (Cluj: Carpatica, 1996), 46-50; Ákos Egyed, *Erdély 1848-1849*, Vol. 1 (Csíkszereda: Pallas—Akadémia Könyvkiadó, 1998), 132-135.

Indelibly connected, politics and history shed light on one another and reinforced the logic underpinning the Romanians' attitudes towards the Other.

Geographical realities were of lesser importance compared to the two other factors. Although they were geographically positioned closer to the centre of Europe than the Romanians, the Hungarians could not be regarded as genuine "Europeans" because of their "barbaric" political attitude. This could also be explained by their Asian origins. They appeared to be "Mongolians," from that viewpoint. By contrast, the Romanians were truly "European" because they respected the values of the continent's civilisation, in keeping with their historical legacy. Last but not least, considering that only the nations that respected the European principles of freedom and equality could have a future (the Hungarians were incapable of embracing such values, unlike the Romanians), the Hungarians "will perish," while the Romanians will have a political destiny that will mirror their "European" conduct.

Given these irreconcilable conflicts, was it still possible to forge an alliance between two nations that were facing countless foreign threats? Did the brotherhood of peoples (a watchword of the 1848 Revolution) still have a chance to materialise and unite the Romanians and the Hungarians? At first glance, we might be tempted to answer yes, especially if we read the following lines with which Bărnuțiu concluded his speech:

> *We shan't forgive the Hungarians because they do not regret the evil they have committed but wish to perpetrate even greater evils; we shall unite with and befriend them when they deserve it […] that is, when they acknowledge the freedom of our nation, just as they demand that the Romanians and other nations should acknowledge their freedom. Only when the Romanian nation is formed and founded on the grounds of freedom, shall we federate with the Hungarians for the sake of a common defence, for this is only possible between free nations.*[14]

In other words, we could *theoretically* become allied with the Hungarians, but this cannot be achieved *in practice*. A union with the Hungarians would conceal the deadly threat of denationalisation. Consequently, the idea of a pact with them was advanced only as a rhetorical argument meant to show that the Romanians actually desired peace and the Hungarians were to blame for the outbreak of the conflict. Alexandru Papiu Ilarian illustrated this idea with

[14] Bărnuțiu, *Raporturile*, 28.

outmost clarity. Even though the Romanians and the Hungarians appeared to be predestined, because of their geographical position, to form a "natural barrier" against the Slavs, such an alliance could only be made "with just Hungarians who respected the nationalities, though history has yet to produce such Hungarians."[15]

Papiu's irony suggestively addressed the problem of "national alliances." A true Romanian nationalist could only be anti-Hungarian because the Hungarians were the ones who posed the greatest threat. We might state that we can cooperate with the Hungarians, but we are well aware that this would be impossible. As the poet Corneliu Vadim Tudor wrote, more than 150 years later, "we will never get along!"

Along the same lines, a Hungarian journalist asked himself the following question in March 1849: "Will future Romanian and Hungarian generations ever forget their mutual hatred and desire for vengeance?"[16] The answer he gave, in the midst of the civil war, was again *no*.

Despite those seemingly definitive verdicts reached by Bărnuțiu and Papiu, the prospect of the Romanians' cooperation with the Hungarians remained open. As seen above, there were Romanians who did not just cooperate but identified with the Hungarian revolution, who were elected members of the Hungarian Parliament and joined the Hungarian revolutionaries into exile after 1849. It is also true, on the other hand, that the idea of an alliance between the two revolutions was never given up even in the anti-Kossuth Romanian revolutionary camp. Avram Iancu himself did more than just dispatch a few letters stating his good intentions. He eventually agreed to maintain a position of neutrality during the final battles between the Russians and the Hungarians. In the midst of the fights against the Hungarian troops he addressed himself to the enemy and surprisingly reconciliatory terms:

> *Brother Hungarians, nature has placed us in one and the same homeland so that together we may work the land assiduously and together we may suck up the sweetness of its fruit. We are not against you. On the contrary, we are the sons of the same homeland, and we wish to have the same friends and enemies as the Hungarians if, that is, we deem that our conditions have been met.*

[15] Papiu Ilarian, *Istoria*, Vol. 2, CX sq.

[16] V., "Debrecen, márc. 22. 1849," *Márczius Tizenötödike* (Debrecen) 2, no. 32 (1849): 125-126.

> *To prove our brotherly sentiments towards the Hungarian nation, we have decided to stay neutral towards the Hungarian army. Taking up arms shall never settle things between us.*[17]

Paradoxically, although these letters were sent straight from the battlefield, their message was almost the reverse of the verdict passed by the above-mentioned intellectuals. Romantic ideology did not promote just national emancipation but also the solidarity of peoples against reactionarism and absolutism. Moreover, the idea that the Romanians and the Hungarians were living in two "sister countries" (Hungary and Transylvania), or that they were the "sons of the same homeland" in Transylvania was too strong for Avram Iancu not to invoke it when the "brothers" acted out as adversaries.

Iancu's fraternal rhetoric was to be exploited in different ways by subsequent generations. In the 1950s, the communists, champions of the brotherhood of these two oppressed nations, emphasised it as proof that the Romanians and the Hungarians from the exploited classes had been fighting side by side against their oppressors. It was also employed by Romanian nationalists, who could find no fault in their favourite hero's words and deeds. In their view, Iancu's reconciliatory gestures showed that the Romanians were peaceful and tolerant even when they defended their rights with spears in hand. What their argument hinged on was that the Romanians were superior to the Hungarians from a moral standpoint. Even when they fought against Hungarians, not only did the Romanians not wish to destroy their enemy but they were always willing to shake their hands if their just claims were accepted.

Epitomising this idea, the statue erected in Cluj during the mandate of the nationalist mayor Gheorghe Funar (1993) represents Iancu with sword in sheath, held with poise in his left hand. His attitude is far from threatening.[18] Legend has it that most of the Romanian hero's lovers were Hungarian.[19]

Two decades before, when Dinicu Golescu was undertaking his voyage in Europe, the Romanians across the Carpathians were barely concerned with the issue of the relations between Romanians and Hungarians. Shortly afterwards, however, the Romanian journalists in Transylvania and the Transylvanian intellectuals who had meanwhile settled in Iași or Bucharest

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[17] Maior, *Scrisori*, 86-89, 94, 99.

[18] Sorin Mitu, "Rumänische Erinnerungsorte in Klausenburg," *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 43, no. 114 (2020): 18.

[19] Idem, *Transilvania mea. Istorii, mentalități, identități* (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 305-318.

managed to bring it to the attention of the public in the Principalities. The 1848 uprising of the Romanians in Transylvania gave further urgency to this issue.

Should we fight or cooperate with the Hungarians? This was a question with geopolitical implications that Nicolae Bălcescu would also attempt to answer later. A prominent leader of the 1848 Revolution in Muntenia, Bălcescu was to be exalted, much like the Romanian Avram Iancu or the Hungarian Kossuth, as a quintessential figure of national mythology. The political triangle they formed in 1849 was hailed as another crucial moment in the entangled history of Romanian-Hungarian relations.[20]

Bălcescu was a romantic ideologue who dreamed of uniting all Romanians in a national state. Any realistic politician of the time would have regarded this as an impossible utopia. Such a goal would have entailed disrupting the European political order and entering a conflict with the Hungarians, whose national project was to integrate the Romanians from Transylvania in a Hungarian state and civic (or even ethnic) nation. The solution Bălcescu proposed to address this twofold dilemma was derived from the ideological arsenal of the European revolution, endorsed by the Italian Mazzini or the Polish Mickiewicz. Every nation that had been subjugated by tyrants (the despotic regimes of Austria and Russia) had to join forces and fight side by side, for this was the only pathway to victory. So how could the conflict between the Romanians and the Hungarians be settled? Simply, through an alliance between the two peoples, in the form of a vast democratic Danubian confederacy. Within this generous framework, all nations would be free to resolve their bilateral disputes in peaceful manner.

So, in that spirit, during the military chaos from the summer of 1849, Bălcescu embarked on an apparently impossible mission to reconcile Avram Iancu's Transylvanian Romanians with Kossuth's Hungarians. However, the alliance he wished to create was not a pragmatic *Realpolitik* solution but an idealistic—and, ultimately, morally compulsory—union between two nations whose destinies had been entwined. That was the only way, Bălcescu believed, not simply because that was the only military solution for defeating the reactionary Austrian and Russian empires. An even stronger argument was

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[20] Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Hungarian Exiles and the Romanian National Movement, 1849-1867* (Boulder: Columbia University Press, 1991); Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Au berceau de la nation roumaine moderne / Dans le miroir hongrois. Essais pour servir à l'histoire des rapports hungaro-roumains aux XIX^e^ et XX^e^ siècles* (Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2018).

that Providence itself, invoked by both the Hungarians and the Romanians in their national anthems, was in fact a God that belonged to all nations. However naive such a profession of faith might appear, Bălcescu managed to persuade the revolutionary leaders in Debrecen, Szeged, or in the Apuseni Mountains. Neither Kossuth, nor Iancu wished to breach the general principle according to which nations—in this case the Romanians and Hungarians—had to strike an alliance and fight for freedom together, even though they were butchering one another at present. Without a doubt, their treaties or mutual pledges were influenced by the actual balance of forces. When this balance visibly tilted in favour of one of the camps, as was the case of the Hungarians in the summer of 1848 or of the Romanians in the winter of 1918, they could, of course, claim everything for themselves and make no concessions to the others.

Since Bălcescu, the idea of Romanian-Hungarian treaties has been consistently employed in steering political relations between the two nations. It is true that such bilateral negotiations never amounted to much because neither of the two parties was willing to make any concessions to the other, so effective solutions had to be imposed either unilaterally or internationally. Notwithstanding all this, negotiations continued to be made, as if neither the Romanians nor the Hungarians could once and for all decide whether "we will never get along" or "taking up arms shall never settle things between us." To give some examples, the Romanian and the Hungarian revolutionaries who emigrated after 1848 consistently held such talks all the way into the reign of Cuza (1859-1866) and even later. The Hungarian government and the leaders of the Romanian National Party engaged in negotiations in 1913-1914. Other examples include the talks held in Arad between the Hungarian Government and the Central National Romanian Council in November 1918, or the Budapest Declaration of June 1989. Even Ceaușescu's regime, in one of the last foreign policy projects it launched at a time of growing international isolation, proposed a summit with the Hungarian communist leaders in August 1988. That summit was held in Arad, marking the contact zone between the two nations—the very same town where Jászi Oskár had discussed possible solutions with Iuliu Maniu in 1918 and where Bălcescu had met Kossuth for the last time in 1849.

Elements of the Near and Middle East in the Culture of the Transylvanian Romanians from Brașov (1848-1918)

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Abstract: In the present paper, we first aim to provide a brief historical context of the issue (second half of the fourteenth century – beginning of the nineteenth century) aiming to highlight the means by which the inhabitants of the Transylvanian town of Brașov / Kronstadt came into contact with the multiple facets of the Near and Middle East. We also intend to chronologically and thematically reconstruct the various oriental elements found in the culture of the local Transylvanian Romanians between the 1848 Revolution and the end of World War I. The aim of this approach, which is a novelty for the Romanian historical writing, is to examine whether and how the inhabitants from Brașov maintained their contacts with this exotic space throughout modernity. Our analysis is based on a series of articles, correspondence, literary creations (anecdotes, fairy tales, poems, short stories, proverbs, prose, translations), different editions of documents, school textbooks in geography, history and Romanian language, memoirs, press magazines of the time (*Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și Literatură*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*), culinary recipes, as well as on Romanian and foreign historiography relevant to the subject.

Keywords: Near East, Middle East, Transylvania, Brașov, identity, otherness, modernity

Rezumat: În lucrarea de față, ne propunem mai întâi să formulăm un scurt context istoric al problemei (a doua jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea – începutul secolului al XIX-lea) pentru a vedea cum au început cetățenii Brașovului să intre în contact cu multiplele fațete ale Orientului Apropiat și Mijlociu. De asemenea, ne dorim să reconstituim cronologic și tematic variatele elemente orientale regăsite în cultura românilor ardeleni din Brașov între Revoluția Pașoptistă (1848-1849) și sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial (1914-1918). Scopul acestui demers, care este o noutate pentru scrisul istoric românesc, este de a examina dacă și cum au perpetuat

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brașovenii contactele lor cu acest spațiu exotic pe parcursul modernității. Întreaga noastră analiză se va baza pe o serie de articole, corespondențe, creații literare (anecdote, basme, poezii, povestiri, proverbe, proze, traduceri), ediții de documente, manuale școlare de geografie, istorie și limba română, memorii, presa epocii (*Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și Literatură*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*), rețete culinare, dar și pe istoriografia română și străină relevantă subiectului.

Cuvinte-cheie: Orientul Apropiat, Orientul Mijlociu, Transilvania, Brașov, identitate, alteritate, modernitate

Brief historical context

Since the Middle Ages, the Transylvanian Romanians possessed a wide and varied geographical and historical knowledge of oriental ethnic groups, such as the Abkhazians, Anatolians, Arabs, Armenians, Circassians or Persians. Of these, the Circassians were noticeably more present in their onomastics and toponymy, having a Turkish onomastic origin. Some popular works, such as *Alexandria* or the local cosmography from Brașov / Kronstadt, *The Story of the Countries of Asia,* depicted in maps, images and texts the rulers, ethnicities, events and representative geographical landforms of Arabia, the Caucasus, India, Mesopotamia or Persia, in the manner of fantasy literature, with Amazons, fortresses, ships, "anthropomorphic, anthropophagous monsters carving up human bodies" and "huge, terrifying mountains," which the Transylvanian people clichéd as an evil otherness of Tatar origins. However, these Tatar ethnic groups, which also included Turks, were also depicted positively as brave fighters in an exotic, unknown and inferior Asia, an image perpetuated in school textbooks until the flowering of Orientalism in the 19th century.[1] Starting from this, a question arises – when and how did the inhabitants of Brașov come into contact with the many facets of the Near and Middle East?

[1] Sorin Mitu, "Barbarie, virtuți războinice și exotism. Cecenii și cerchezii văzuți de românii ardeleni în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea," in Ioan Bolovan - Melania Gabriela Ciot (coord.), *Românii și România în context european. Istorie și diplomație. Omagiu profesorului Vasile Pușcaș la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani* (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2022), 808-811.

We must note that the first such contacts date back to the second half of the fourteenth century in the commercial, diplomatic, military and political field. At the time, they started buying oriental products from Dalmatia thanks to the safe-conduct received from the Kingdom of Hungary, which opened trade routes to the Adriatic Sea (1370). The Wallachian ruler Mircea the Elder and the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg signed the first Balkan anti-Ottoman alliance treaty in a royal camp in the centre of Brașov (March 7, 1395). Moreover, in 1412, the Transylvanian voivode, Știbor, imposed the payment of a special tax, *tricesima*, on local merchants for goods from the Ottoman Empire (cotton, cloves, ginger, mohair, pepper, saffron). Later, the city was successively besieged by the Ottomans (1421, 1438, 1479, 1493, 1530, 1683, 1788), and was forced by a privilege issued by the Hungarian King Matei Corvin (1467) to permanently take part in the anti-Turkish campaigns,[2] despite the spendings caused by the Council House and the fortification system, which had been substantially damaged during the sieges, being restored.[3]

With the conquest of the Kingdom of Hungary and the *de facto* establishment of the Autonomous Principality of Transylvania under Ottoman suzerainty (1541), due to their victory against the Hungarians in the well-known battle of Mohács (1526), Brașov, despite having been built as a strong fortress with a solid fortification system to defend its citizens from possible external influences and dangers, became a paradoxical border town between Transylvania and Wallachia. It was formed as a multi-confessional, multicultural and multi-ethnic space in which its own identity was open to the tolerance and even integration of various ethnic groups. These ethnicities, projected in the eyes of each other by the concept of *otherness*, lived outside the city walls (e.g., the Romanians from Șchei) and had the mentality of Orthodox-Byzantine

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[2] Ion Dumitrașcu - Mariana Maximescu, *O Istorie a Brașovului (din cele mai vechi timpuri până la începutul secolului XX)*, preface by Gernot Nussbächer (Brașov: Phoenix, 2002), 44-45, 55; Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, "Transit Trade and Intercontinental Trade during the Late Middle Ages. Textiles and Spices in the Customs Accounts of Brașov and Sibiu," in Balazs Nagy - András Vadas - Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *The Medieval Networks in East Central Europe. Commerce, Contacts, Communication* (London: Routledge, 2018), 367; Part of the Ottoman attacks on Brașov have been analyzed and documented archivistically by Gernot Nussbächer, "Dokumente aus dem Kronstädter Staatsarchiv über die Türkeneinfälle im Burzenland in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Forschungen zur Volks-Und Landeskunde*, 22/1 (1979): 25-30; Markus Peter Beham, "Kronstadt in der "Turkenabwehr" (1438-1479)," *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 32/1 (2009): 46-61.

[3] Irina Băldescu, *Transilvania medievală. Topografie și norme juridice ale cetăților Sibiu, Bistrița, Brașov, Cluj* (Bucharest: Simetria, 2012), 235, 254.

Orientalism, but they communicated and coexisted with the Saxons from the hinterland, who adhered to Western Catholicism, the radical otherness being diluted and gradually becoming a familiarity. Although the humanist pedagogue Johannes Honterus (1498-1549) and the Magistrate steered it towards Lutheranism as a first for Transylvania and as a resistance against the anxiety and pressure brought on by the threats of the Porte (1542), Brașov successfully adapted to the new political-administrative changes. Through these changes, together with the compromises made and the permanent information received from the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, the city evolved from individualism and regionalism to a distinct confessional, ethnic, geographical and socio-economic micro-frontier of Orientalism, Occidentalism and Transylvanianism.[4]

In her quantitative analysis of pre-modern Brașov customs registers, researcher Mária Pakucs shows that citizens were interested in purchasing spices (cumin, cloves, nutmeg flowers, ginger, nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon, saffron), foodstuffs (almonds, figs, raisins, olive oil, oil), dyes (alum, indigo) and oriental textiles (aba, bogasia, brocade, cotton, camelot, camucas, velvet, damask, halbatlas, yester, wool, silk, mohair, leather, taffeta). The customs duty on these goods was paid in kind and they were recorded in the registers as *res turcales* and *Türkische Waren*, being measured with the well-known *chintal*, which weighed between 60 – 120 pounds.[5]

The Black Church in Brașov is an evangelical place of worship, built in Gothic style between 1380 and 1470, in the immediate vicinity of the Council Square, which holds the largest collection of Anatolian carpets in Transylvania, totalling about 200 small classical artifacts from donations from the guilds, the faithful and patricians, but also from the heritage of the Saxon churches of Brașov. Until the end of the 19th century, they were taken

[4] Irina Mastan, "Urban Identification Agents and Historical Discourse in a Frontier City. Case Study: Brașov during the 16th and 17th Centuries," *Prace Historyczne*, 141/1 (2014): 16, 18-22, 24, 33; For an exhaustive analysis of the problem, see Irina Mastan, *Brașovul și Principatul Transilvaniei în contextul rivalității osmano-habsburgice (1526-1613)*. PhD thesis, manuscript, Babeș-Bolyai University. Cluj-Napoca, 2013.

[5] Mária Pakucs, "Comerțul cu mirodenii al orașelor Brașov și Sibiu în prima jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XX (2002): 76-77, 80-82; Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, "Transylvania and its International Trade, 1525-1575," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 16/II (2012): 176, 178-179; Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, *Transit Trade*, 270; See also the facsimile registers in Radu Manolescu, *Socotelile Brașovului: registrele vigesimale*, 5 vols., an anastatic edition edited by Ionel Cândea and Radu Ștefănescu (Brăila: Istros, 2005-2007).

out of the sacristy by the youngest priest, stretched by bell-ringers paid by the organizers and used at weddings ("for the bride and groom in front of the altar"), funerals (on the coffin, under/to the bier of the deceased) and religious services. Their purpose was to increase the solemnity of the festivities, to cover the pulpit, choir, organ gallery, magistrates' and priests' pews, altar stairs or tabletops, and also as christening/wedding presents. These woollen objects, measuring 200/150 cm in length, are characterized by the presence of chilim (woven strip) and fluffy plush, fringes, undyed or dyed warp in various colours using natural pigments (indigo blue, brown, chrome yellow, purple, black, red, green), and Ghiordes-style cut knots. They were manufactured in workshops in Bergama, Demirci, Gediz, Gordes, Kula, Küthaya, Selendi, Șaphane and Ușak, from where they were transported by sea/land by merchants to Brașov, respecting the stage duty and paying customs duties partly in kind. Thus, Anatolian carpets from the 15th-17th centuries were recorded in the registers as Persian/Turkish Cintamani, Ghiordes, Ghirlandaio, Kula, Lotto, Selendi, Transylvanian, Ușak, featuring double niches and central medallion/ large stars, with bird/scorpion motifs, or six-column prayer designs.[6]

With the overthrow of the Ottomans and the Habsburgs' seizure of political power in Transylvania following the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Karlowitz (January 26, 1699), Brașov turned predominantly towards Austrian values, but we must note the local perpetuation of Near and Middle Eastern elements throughout the 18th and 20th centuries. For example, a Romanian document written in Cyrillic script (1761) reveals that the merchant Nicolae Dumitrașcu and the professor Ioan Stoica were delegated by the Church of Saint Nicholas in Șcheii Brașovului to obtain from the Wallachian lord Constantin Mavrocordat several documents based on a 13-point program. By complying with the program, the delegates obtained the Turkish firman, which was intended to grant them privileges on behalf of Moldavia and Wallachia (August 6, 1763).[7]

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[6] Ágnes Ziegler - Frank-Thomas Ziegler, *Spre lauda Domnului și pentru cinstita breaslă, pentru a fi podoabă și de folosință. Covoarele otomane din Biserica Neagră* (Brașov: Foton, 2020), 5-8, 14-16, 19-20, 25-36, 48-49; Stephanie Armer - Anja Kregeloh - Ágnes Ziegler, ""Unsere alten Kirchenteppiche". Anatolische Teppiche und ihre Verwendung im Kirchenraum in Bistritz und Kronstadt," in Anja Kregeloh (hg.), *Anatolische Teppiche aus Bistritz/Bistrita Die Sammlung der Evangelischen Stadtkirche A. B. im Germanischen Nationalmuseum* (Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2023), 69.

[7] *Acte, documente și scrisori din Șcheii Brașovului*, text chosen and set, notes by Vasile Oltean, preface by Alexandru Duțu (Bucharest: Minerva, 1980), 18-19; Dumitrașcu - Maximescu, *O Istorie*, 61.

The end of Tudor Vladimirescu's Revolution, which resulted in an Ottoman military victory (1821), brought 7,204 emigrants to Brașov, who took refuge in fear of the Turks until they left Wallachia (1822), returning home between 1822 and 1829. Gradually, the Romanian merchants of the city asked Baron Miske to support them in obtaining the indissoluble privileges of founding the Levantine Guild, which was intended (among other things) to strengthen trade relations with Turkey (November 1835), the Balkans and the Romanian Principalities. Thus, the Romanian Levantine Trade Guild of Brașov was legalized in 1838 as a cross-border trade company,[8] consolidating and perpetuating the previous efforts of the *Greek Company* of Brașov, founded in 1678.[9]

Brașov's contacts with the Near and Middle East (1848-1918)

With the end of the 1848-1849 Revolution, we may wonder whether and how the people of Brașov perpetuated their contacts with the Near and Middle East throughout modernity.

First of all, the journal *Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și Literatură (Leaflet for the Mind, Heart and Literature)* contains Oriental historical analyses such as *Slavery among the Turks* (1850), which shows that Europeans were aware of the very real slavery problem in Turkey. Here, not only the common people, but even the mothers and wives of the padishahs and sultans were slaves, but they were housed, clothed, fed and respected by the wealthy lords because they, too, were originally slaves, and the wives could divorce their husbands at any time, thus noting that "nothing can surpass the kindness of the Turks in the regard of slave housewives."[10] At the same time, one can read other programmatic works such as *Cercularulu contelui Neselrode în causa orientală din ziurnalulu de Petropole din 31. Mais (12 Iuniu) dupe rușește scosu în traducere în „Gazeta Moldaviei"* (1853), *Actele diplomatice turcești în causa locurilor*

[8] Al. Bărbat, "Dezvoltarea și decăderea ultimei grupări de negustori de intermediere ai Brașovului în sec. al XIX-lea," *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, XVI/4 (1963): 921; Dumitrașcu - Maximescu, *O Istorie*, 100-101; For a broader approach to the problem, see Ambrus Miskolczy, *Rolul de intermediere între Est și Vest al burgheziei comerciale levantine române din Brașov (1780-1860)* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 2000).
[9] Olga Cicanci, *Companiile grecești din Transilvania și comerțul european în anii 1636-1746* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1981), 7.
[10] *Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și Literatură*, XIII/8 (1850): 62-63.

sânte și cea orientală (1853)[11] or *Trăptatulu de statu înceiatu între Austria, Frância, Britania mare, Prusia, Russia, Sardinia și Turcia, în privința Principatelor Moldova și România* (1858).[12] Also present is a relevant series of *Sentences and Sayings* (1853) of the prophet Mohamed ("He who loves, and is silent, and is absent, and dies, that one dies like a martyr"),[13] of *Statistical Data from the Oriental Church* (1859), covering the churches and patriarchates of Alexandria, Antiohia, Constantinople, Egypt, Jerusalem or Syria,[14] aspects concerning the *Romans in the European Turkey* (1863),[15] or lyrical creations with exotic themes such as those by Andrei Mureșanu, *Persian peasant with fruits* (1851), *The Phanariot and the tax* (1855).[16] Thus, we can highlight several lines from the first poem:

> *In Yerevan / There was a peasant /*
> *Who lived on day to day / Earning his black bread / From a pear garden / And having no other wealth.*
> *A large pear tree / Which stood in his garden / Provided a delicate fruit / Known even by the emperor;*
> *Its thin yellow strip / Could drive you out of your senses, / Its juice would have freshened / Even to the one who dies.*[17]

S. Mihali published an article in the same ~~Brașov~~ newspaper, titled *Una privire asupra Constantinopolei* (1854), in which he described the eastern capital as "the most interesting fortress in all of Europe," "the key to the Orient," crossed by the Bosphorus and situated between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. At the time, it had 700,000 inhabitants, an attractive exterior, but an interior crowded with dark, crooked and narrow streets, with aqueducts, bazaars, slums, 90,000 wooden houses and numerous tourist attractions (Hagia Sophia Cathedral, Edikule Fortress, Hippodrome, Serai etc.).[18]

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[11] Ibid., XVI/25 (1853): 187-192; Ibid., XVI/29 (1853): 213-217.
[12] Ibid., XXI/2 (1858): 9-13; Ibid., XXI/3 (1858): 17-23.
[13] Ibid., XVI/51 (1853): 378.
[14] Ibid., XXII/34 (1859): 261-262.
[15] Ibid., XXVI/1 (1863): 6-8.
[16] Ibid., XVIII/15 (1855): 80.
[17] Ibid., XIV/26 (1851): 206-207; "La Erivanu / Era un țeran, / Ce trăia de aici, pe mâne, / Însămănându'și neagra pâné, / Din o grădină cu pere, / Ne având altă avere. / Un păru mare ce s'afla / În mica grădina sa, / Da un frupt preadelicat, / Cunoscut și la împărat; / Coja'i galbină supțire, / Sta să te scoată din fire, / Sucu'i ar fi dat recoare, / Încă și la cel ce more." Translation mine.
[18] Ibid., XVII/37 (1854): 198-200.

Local companies such as "Ioan V. Cepescu", "Oprea P. Sfetea", "Stoia și Barbu" or "Teclu Nicolae & Alexiu Dumitru" brought goods from the Levant and exported manufactured goods to Bulgaria, the Romanian Principalities and Turkey (1811, 1851), while Constantin Ioanovici's mechanical cotton spinning mill in Zărnești obtained cotton yarn from about 200-245 quintals of Turkish cotton (1850, 1854). The Brașov merchants were thus already involved in the so-called intermediary trade (import-export).[19]

Throughout the Russian – Turkish – Romanian war of 1877-1878 (the War of Independence in Romanian Historiography), *Gazeta Transilvaniei* constantly provided both the people of Brașov and all the inhabitants of Transylvania with news of the conflagration from Major Moise Groza, who was directly involved in the fighting. The newspaper also supported the efforts of the Committee of Romanians from Brașov for the Relief of Wounded Romanian Soldiers in Romania, founded on 10/22 May 1877, under the leadership of local merchant Diamandi Manole, to mobilize citizens and to manage the collections distributed to those at the front by the Romanian Red Cross. In spite of attempts by the Hungarian authorities to stop them, given that they would have apparently disrespected the neutrality of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the collections saw an upward trend with Dimitrie Stănescu (2,000 francs), Diamandi Manole (1,000 francs) and Sevastia Mureșianu, who, as a permanent member of the Romanian Women's Reunion in Brașov, sent 30 kilograms of bandages and lint to the soldiers. The periodical also reinforced this initiative by publishing articles such as *Appeal to the Romanians!* (June 12/24, 1877), *The Red Cross Society and the Romanian Women of Transylvania* (June 16/28, 1877) or *Appeal to the Romanians* (June 23/ July 5, 1877), as well as the list of donors under the heading *Help for the Wounded*. Sevastia Mureșianu and Hareti D. Stănescu were among the women from Brașov who were decorated with the "Elizabeth Cross" by Queen Elisabeth of Romania for their charitable work during the war (1878).[20]

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[19] Al. Bărbat, *Dezvoltarea*, 923-925, 928-929.

[20] Marinela-Loredana Barna, "Ajutor pentru răniți". "Colectele transilvănenilor pentru soldații români reflectate în paginile "Gazetei Transilvaniei" (1877-1878)," *Țara Bârsei*, 17 (2018): 91-93, 97; The portraits and charitable actions of the inhabitants of Brașov are also recounted by Dr. V. M. Plătăreanu - Matilda Hoephner, *Trei medici sași (Brașoveni) în războiul independenței (Comunicare Soc. de ist. Medicinei on June 15, 1939)* (Craiova: Scrisul românesc, 1939); Michael Kroner, "Participarea unor medici și ingineri sași brașoveni la războiul de independență din

The two-volume school textbook authored by the Brașov teacher Ioan G. Meșotă (1837-1878), translated from the German original and edited by W. Pütz (1879), maps (among other things) the broad cultural, geographical, historical, literary and political picture of the Near and Middle East with the aim of familiarizing pupils from the Transylvanian region with the various facets of this exotic space. The contents of the first volume reveal that the Mohammedans divided their time according to the course of the moon, the Jews according to the life of the patriarchs and the reign of their monarchs, the Syrians according to the year of the conquest of Babylon by Seleucus Nicator (312), and the Eastern Christians according to the Diocletian and Seleucid epochs. Other attractive details summarize the culture, geography and history of Africa, Assyria, Babylonia, Carthage, Egypt, Phoenicia, Iran, Palestine and Persia, the Oriental languages or the Jordan region (Ashkelon, Gaza Strip, Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea, Jaffa, Lakes Geniza and Merom, Dead Sea, Samaria etc.). For example, Africa was generally seen "as an island cut off from the other continents of the ancient world, lying in the fertile zone in the large part, and cut by the equator into two almost equal halves," of which Egypt "in springtime is like a scorched and sun-cracked desert, in summer like a great lake [...]; [and] towards the end of autumn [...] it becomes a field full of grains." Phoenicia was also a country of sailors, linking East and West by its location on the edge of Asia and in close proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, but also "the centre of trade linking the lands of India and Arabia with the shores of the Atlantic Ocean." Last but not least, Libya was "dotted here and there (especially in the eastern side) with bones, whose fountains, surrounded by palms, fruit-bearing trees and vines, offered recreation and rest to the trading caravans," while Palestine was paradoxically a country well situated and well connected with the oriental ethnicities, but small and isolated, "hidden among rocks, caves and mountains, it had nothing to attract foreign peoples, nor did it compel its inhabitants to leave."[21]

1877/1878," *Transilvania*, 6/3 (1977): 17-18; Vasile Olteanu, "Războiul pentru independență și românii brașoveni," *Mitropolia Ardealului*, 22/4-6 (1977): 268-295; Ștefan Suciu, "Contribuții brașovene la sprijinirea războiului de independență," *Astra*, 1 (1977): 10; Ștefan Suciu, "Voluntari din Brașov pe frontul independenței", *Astra*, 2 (1977): 11.

[21] Ioan G. Meșotă, *Geografia și Istoria Evului Vechiu, Mediu și Modern. Manual prelucrat pentru clasele superioare gimnasiale și reale*, 2nd edition revised and completed under the care of Andreiu Bârseanu, vol. I (Bucuresci: Editura Librăriei Socecu & Comp., 1879), V-VI, 4-5, 10-38, 48-90, 198-205.

The second volume of the above-mentioned textbook draws our attention to the history and extent of the Vandal Empire in Africa (429-534), but also to the geography, history and religion of the Arabian Peninsula, the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Empire. From here, the Arabian Peninsula stands out as "the bridge from Asia to Africa," a broad plateau with a mostly stony and desolate relief (except Yemen, "which, for its fruitfulness, was called in ancient times *happy Arabia*"), where patriarchal families and tribes of shepherds, bandits and Bedouin hunters led by emirs and sheikhs, lived alongside farmers, industrialists and merchants from the cities of Mecca and Medina, believing in the Islam preached by the Coran. The fall of Constantinople (1453), where "Constantine fell fighting like a hero, and *Constantinople became the residence of the Sultan*," established the Ottoman Empire as a very large, well-organized legal, military, political and religious area, with central leadership held by the Sultan and the Imam, and regional leadership by the agha, bey, beilerbei and pasha.[22]

In his memoirs, the philologist from Brașov, Sextil Pușcariu (1877-1948), recounted his childhood spent among oriental landmarks of the city at the end of the 19th century by capturing several relevant aspects. For example, he reveals the wagon journeys of his grandparents and great-grandparents to Leipzig and Smyrna, the settling of some Cuman and Turkish horsemen from Întorsura Buzăului, or how he threw wood and stones at the Turkish walnut trees in Groaveri. Alongside these, he evoked historical facts such as the refuge taken by the Bulgarians (who had fled the Turks) in Brașov, Codlea and Râșnov and their employment as labourers for the construction of the Black Church (1392), the Turkish incursions in Țara Bârsei (1421-1788), the sealing of a gate near the Bastion of the Weavers during the Turkish invasion of 1788, or the evolution of the collection of Anatolian carpets in the Black Church. He also recalled the houses demolished to build the synagogue in Șchei Gate Street, the transition of Turkish merchants in the Citadel from Turkish to Austrian clothing, the Armenian, Jewish and Saxon domination of local trade, or the house of an Armenian tobacco seller in Customs Street (today's Mureșenilor Street). There was also the architectural perception of St. Nicholas Church in Șcheii Brașovului, as an oriental and, at the same time,

[22] Ioan G. Meșotă, *Geografia și Istoria Evului Vechiu, Mediu și Modern. Manual prelucrat pentru clasele superioare gimnasiale și reale*, 2nd edition revised and completed under the care of Andreiu Bârseanu, vol. II (Bucuresci: Editura Librăriei Socecu & Comp., 1879), 23-24, 35-41, 93-94, 137-140.

western monument, the description of the arrival of the Turks in the city "with their monkeys dressed in red clothes, with caps on their heads, tumbling every time the Turks pulls the chains" or his shopping under the Customs Gate, on Apollonia Hirscher Street or in the Street Market (lollipops with rose water, *braga*, white/pink Turkish delight, caramelized figs and edible bottles of sugar syrup infused with "rosol" [rose water]). He also mentions how, on the second day of Easter, he would take part in the ritual of the dousing of girls, which took place at each of the girls' houses, from where they would leave with baskets full of red eggs and oranges. He recounts having been mesmerised by his grandmother's telling of the story of Aladdin's magic lamp while crocheting. He also notes that, after a tiring day's work, the Romanians from Brașov used to drink *rachiu/rozol* in the taverns of the Șchei, and that the city was full of Armenian merchants (Avedik Popovici, Bogdan Carabet, Garabet Cerkez etc.) and Levantines (Dossios, Panaiotis, Safrano etc.). Moreover, he emphasised the Armenian shops' practice of selling oriental products (atlas, halva, cloth, olives etc.), such as László's shop in Flax Row, the Simayi brothers and Folyovics' shop in Grain Market (today's Council Square), Karácsonyi's shop in Customs Street or Eremias' shop, which had a life-size painting of "Osman Pasha on horseback" at the entrance.[23]

Also, in his memoirs, Sextil Pușcariu recalls how his grandmother and his uncle, Niculiță Ciurcu, sometimes cooked him "veal head with ginger, very flavourful and gelatinous," tongue with lemon peel, almonds and raisins or meat soup with saffron. The author smoked Turkish cigarettes with "bectimis" or "sultan flor" tobacco and received delicacies such as halva, Turkish delight and caviar (seasoned with lemon and olive oil) brought from Galați by his father, dishes spiced with cloves, cinnamon and Turkish olive oil or snails with horseradish, vinegar and oil. The menu was rounded off with citron jam, indians (a form of sponge cake), lemon ice-cream, raspberry sherbet, Turkish coffees "served in old merchant houses from small filigrees in dice" and baklava bought from a Greek. This Greek had a workshop in Cauldroners' Street (today's Republicii Street) and used to walk around "with a large tin tray on his head, which he would take off every time he cut a brown slice filled with walnuts for someone." However, we must also note

[23] Sextil Pușcariu, *Brașovul de altădată*, foreword by Ioan Colan, edited by Șerban Polverejan (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1977), 24, 32, 35, 59, 67, 74, 82, 91-92, 94-95, 97, 113-114, 118, 127, 131, 136, 171-173, 178-179.

Pușcariu's more or less exotic readings, such as the Indian stories in German literature, George Coșbuc's *Pe pământul turcului* (a "long epic poetry, which I particularly liked") or Henry Morton Stanley's *Journey through Central Africa*, which he had received as an achievement award in high school. Of the latter work, he confessed that "it had, for my taste, too many ethnographic descriptions and geographical details and too little of the sentimental episodes, such as the discovery of Livingstone's death. I spent an entire summer reading it."[24]

Recently, the historian Georgeta Filitti brought to light 488 recipes by late-modern Brașov women: Maria Branișteː, Mărioara Popovici, Valeria Căliman, Sânziana Migia, Mălina Dumitrescu. The recipes were their own or were procured from various wealthy ladies, governesses, aunts and friends (Camilla, Coca Frătilă, Cristina, Delia, Mrs. Alexandrescu, Mrs. Bordog, Mrs. Brediceanu, Mrs. Burducea, Mrs. Ciortea, Mrs. Florescu, Micula, Pop, Simionescu, Tripon, Văleanu, Zoltner, Epe, Eva, Ida, Lelia, Lizzie Vincze, Marie, Mărioara, Mela, Mioara Costea, Nuți, Protoane, Risa, Sara, Sofia neni, Tassi, Tenzi, Terfaloga, Victoria, Virgini). The approach is based on a paginated register by Maria Branișteː (1880-1890), Mărioara Popovici's notebook *Arta bucătăriei*, and on the notes of Valeria Căliman, Sânziana Migia and Mălina Dumitrescu.[25]

Reading the 224-page work, we find many oriental specialties or from other cuisines, but with exotic ingredients. For example, Maria Branișteː suggests desserts such as honey/ almond marshmallows, coffee/lemon/pecan pudding, orange cream (for cakes), *Dalauzi* (Armenian cake), lemon jelly, indians or orange jam. There is also coffee/orange liqueur, honey cake, orange tart, coffee/almond/rum/orange cake, bishop's cake, deer back cake or rose sherbet. Mărioara Popovici shows us how to make baklava, lemon baguettes and bars, chocolate fries, *Crème Sultan*, citron/roses jam, Turkish halva, tangerine jelly or *Le Zenzibar*. The menu also includes Indian apples, emperor rice, orange breadcrumbs, lemon souffle, pineapple/coffee/pistachio/lemon/orange/roses sherbet, Moka cake, wheat and almond filling.[26]

An issue of *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (1889) hosts 13 Armenian proverbs, more or less comical, four of which are worth noting: "The ways are not cleared until the chariots are overturned"; "Before you enter a house, think

[24] Ibid., 185-190, 196-197, 253, 256-257.

[25] Georgeta Filitti, *Rețete culese de la cinci brașovence* (Brașov: Creator, 2017), 5 *sqq*.

[26] Ibid., 37, 40, 44-45, 47, 49-52, 57-59, 61, 64, 66, 128-129, 136-137, 140, 142, 146, 148, 162-166, 171-172, 178-180, 185-186.

of how you would get out of it"; "The quarrelsome man ages quickly"; "No one knows if the candle will last until morning."[27] A year later, we find the Arabian fairy tale *Alu the 11th*, translated by an author with the pseudonym A.C., which deals with the Arabs' belief in the power of prophetic dreams, based on the Muslims' ability to convince the sceptical European travellers in this regard. Specifically, the case of a European who arrived in Cairo after the plague epidemic (1835), where he met an old man who told him that during the epidemic, "a Muslim merchant dreamed that 11 dead people were being carried to their graves in front of his courtyard. When the merchant woke up from his sleep, he was seized by fear and horror, for counting the members of his family, including himself, he discovered there were exactly eleven of them." Then he called his friends and neighbours to his home to tell them about the dream, and they consoled him and advised him to calm down and thank God for showing him the future. Before long, the dream was partially fulfilled as all the members of the family and his servants gradually died out, and after the last member was buried, the merchant asked his friends to bury him in case he also died. At night, he thought he saw and spoke to the angel of death, Azrael – however, it had actually been a thief who knew of his fear and played this role to steal his silver candlesticks, his friends showing him the thief in the morning, lying dead by the plague in the courtyard of the house. In the end, the merchant got out of bed and thanked God that "the thief was the eleventh and, thus, I am saved."[28]

Although trade relations with the Ottoman Empire declined significantly, the people of Brașov continued to be interested in buying oriental products. For example, gypsum and glazed materials processed at Gottlieb Fleischer's factory on the Timiș Canal (1841), *Brassova Scherg* wool cloth and fine fabrics were exported to Turkey and the Romanian Principalities through contacts established with Bulgarian merchants by representatives of the Scherg factory during a visit to Bulgaria (1888), but also paper and woollen goods manufactured in Brașov, Cisnădie, Petrești and Zărnești to Egypt and Turkey via the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Brașov (1892).[29]

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[27] *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LII/126 (1889): 3.

[28] Ibid., LIII/124 (1890): 1-2.

[29] Marin Iosif Balog – Măriuca Radu, "Camera de Comerț și Industrie din Brașov și implicarea sa în eforturile de modernizare economică a sud-estului Transilvaniei (1851-1900) (I)," *Arhiva Someșană*, III (2004): 90, 109; Vasile Aldea, *Fabrica de postav și țesături de modă Wilhelm Scherg & Cie. 1823-1948 – din începuturile industriei brașovene* (Brașov: Haco International, 2017), 11-12.

In *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, the articles *The Last Begu between the Mamluks* and *Harun al-Rashid and Abdallah* (1891) depict several historical sequences concerning the reign of the Egyptian and Sudanese khedive Mehmet Ali and the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid.[30] We also find numerous translations from Oriental literature, such as the Arabic story *The Liberation of Fatima* (1893),[31] the Anamite story *The Luck of a Sloth* (1894),[32] *A Negro Bible. The Myths and History of Yoruba Land* (1896),[33] the Persian fairy tale *The King and the Parrot* (1896),[34] the Armenian story *The Spy* (1900)[35] or the Turkish story *The Severed Hand* (1903).[36] The Arabian story *Great are you, creator, and boundless is your mercy* (1904),[37] Waldi Efendi's short prose *Turkish Justice* (1906)[38] the Persian poet Hafez's verses *From "Divan" (*1908),[39] the Turkish writer Nazim's *From "Oriental Anecdotes"* (1910),[40] the Persian story *The Slippers of Abdul-Casem* (1911) or the story *A Piece of Bread* (1911)[41], complete this exotic literary panoply. Of these, it is worth noting a part of Hafez's aforementioned love lyric:

> *Mighty kings, emperors even, / Unloved by all the world are / Ungodly beggars only, / Beggars in their fine robes / Beloved beggars, embraced by / Sweet love's flame / They are crownless kings, / Emperors without a country.*
> *Shade from the Heaven I am, dear, / Your beautiful eyebrows. / Beneath their masterful canopy / Angels have their home / So clear and serene: / Your eyes' angels'. / Banish the night to hell, / The whole earth is filled / With their heavenly splendour.*[42]

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[30] *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LIV/74 (1891): 1-3; Ibid., LIV/75 (1891): 1-2; Ibid., LIV/76 (1891): 1-2; Ibid., LIV/177 (1891): 1-4.
[31] Ibid., LVI/96 (1893): 1-5; Ibid., LVI/101 (1893): 1-4; Ibid., LVI/107 (1893): 1-3.
[32] Ibid., LVII/1 (1894): 4.
[33] Ibid., LIX/144 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/145 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/146 (1896): 1-3; Ibid., LIX/147 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/151 (1896): 2; Ibid., LIX/152 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/153 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/154 (1896): 2-3.
[34] Ibid., LIX/280 (1896): 1-3; Ibid., LIX/281 (1896): 1-3.
[35] Ibid., LXIII/54 (1900): 1-2; Ibid., LXIII/55 (1900): 1-2.
[36] Ibid., LXVI/260 (1903): 1-3.
[37] Ibid., LXVII/116 (1904): 3-5.
[38] Ibid., LXIX/73 (1906): 3.
[39] Ibid., LXXI/169 (1908): 6.
[40] Ibid., LXXIII/10 (1910): 3.
[41] Ibid., LXXXIV/56 (1911): 6; Ibid., LXXXIV/138 (1911): 3.
[42] Ibid., LXXI/169 (1908): 6; "Crai puternici, împărați chiar, / Neiubiți de nime'n lume-s / Cerșitori netrebnici numai, / Cerșitori în haine scumpe - / - Cerșitori iubiți, cuprinși de / Dulcea

The Romanian language school textbook (1894) signed by Virgil Onițiu, the director of the Greek Orthodox Romanian Central Schools in Brașov (today, the "Andrei Saguna" National College), points out that the Romanian language also has Turkish origins, that Arabic and Hebrew are inflectional and Semitic through suffixes that "lose all their independence and *merge* into a whole, inseparable from the root of the words," and that Turkish is agglutinative and Turanian because "some words weaken and become suffixes, to be *allied* with other words as needed."[43]

Against the backdrop of their massive settlement (be it permanent, temporary or transient) in Brașov since the beginning of the 19th century, after multiple expulsions and delays, the Jews were finally able to establish their own *Community* (May 8, 1826). It was run administratively by a president and religiously by a rabbi, in line with its statutes. They had churches, hammam and schools, they received approval to perform marriages from the first district rabbi of Alba Iulia, Ezekiel Paneth (December 9, 1829) and even became autocephalous (1852). Although they continued to be marginalized and faced numerous futile requests for expulsion from the Saxon authorities (1830, 1834, 1841, 1851), the Jews did not allow themselves to be intimidated, but instead tried to integrate into the community. They developed demographically, economically and institutionally by perpetuating immigration, practicing itinerant trade at fairs, and opening workshops, groceries, law/notary offices, medical practices, cafes, shops and printing presses. They lived predominantly in the neighbourhoods of Blumăna and Brașovechi or on the Castle, Deer and Șchei Gate streets. Their numbers increased gradually but consistently from 56 Jews (1849) to 67 (1850), 13 (1856), 39 (1857), 610 (1880), 769 (1890), 1,198 (1900) and 1,147 (1910). Measures such as the establishment of a Jewish cemetery over the former Wächter garden in Post Orchard (1855), a Jewish school, where even Turkish pupils studied (1860), and the philanthropic associations *Hevra Kadișa* (1863), *Carolina Löbl* (1867), *Jacob Löbl* (1868), the *Israelite Women's Association* (1882), the *Orthodox Israelite Women's Society* (1901) and the *Society of Israelite Girls of Brașov* (1907), contributed to this pendulum swing.

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dragostii văpaie / Crai sunt și făr de coroană, / Împărați și făr de țară. / Umbriș din raiu sunt, dragă, / Frumoasele-ți sprâncene. / Sub bolta lor măiastră / Își au lăcașul îngeri / Așa senini și limpezi: / Îngerii ochilor tăi. / În iad alungă noaptea, / Pământu 'ntreg îl umple / Cerească lor splendoare." Translation mine.

[43] Virgil Onițiu, *Limba română. Ființa, originea, rudeniile și istoria ei. Manual pentru gimnasii, școle reale și pedagogice (normale)* (Brașov: Editura Librăriei Nicolae I. Ciurcu, 1894), 16, 32-33.

The division of the *Community* into a Neologized and an Orthodox one (August 1, 1877), the local activity of figures such as Rabbis Papp Ludovic Rosenbaum (1863-1953) and Wezel Adalbert (1865-1938) and Professor Sigismund Steinhardt (1823-1896), but also the construction after 1877 of the Orthodox synagogue in a building in Ciucaș Street (today's Apollonia Hirscher Street) and the non-Orthodox synagogue in Orphans' Street (today's Șchei Gate Street), no. 29 between 1898-1901 by the Austrian-Jewish architect Leopold Baumhorn for 1,200,000 gold crowns, are complementary measures.[44]

Inaugurated on August 20, 1901 by the President of the *Community* of Brașov, Aronshon Heinrich and its Chief Rabbi, Ludovic Papp Rosenbaum, the Neolog Synagogue presents itself architecturally as a large, simple and sombre temple in Gothic, Moorish and Romanesque style with "the facetted turrets with plastered ashlars alternating with others of brick, turrets bordering the main entrance," "the three-lobed windows on the upper floor," "the window sashes" and "arches in the centre, exterior and interior." Inside, it has a vestibule, an assembly hall and an ark, and outside, several annexes (offices, canteen, staff and rabbi's quarters, school). At that time, the Israelites were seen not as a religion, but as a denomination, and the construction of the synagogue and its annexes over several squalid houses as "an act of sanitation" for the area. Incidentally, it was the only area where changes to the parcel system had been completed as early as 1886.[45]

Unlike the economist Emil Tișca (1881-1965), from Bran, who visited Constantinople with his colleagues and professors during his studies at the Oriental Academy of Commerce in Budapest (1901),[46] *Gazeta Transilvaniei* also brings to our attention various oriental news such as *Statistics of the Muslim population worldwide* (1909), based on information taken from Turkish newspapers. Here, we are told that there were then about 27 million Muslims

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[44] Carmen Manațe – Sami Fiul – Viorica Oprea, *Comunitatea evreilor din Brașov. Secolele XIX-XX* (Brașov: Transilvania Expres, 2007), 20-23, 25-29, 35-36, 40, 85, 89, 91-92, 94-95, 129-130, 136, 141, 155, 164-166, 169, 174, 176-177.

[45] Edit Szegedi, "Between Necessity and Utopia: The Central Cemetery in Brașov," in Mihaela Grancea (coord.), *Death and Civilization. Transdisciplinary Studies* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009), 161, 176; Manațe – Fiul – Oprea, *Comunitatea*, 130, 133-134; Băldescu, *Transilvania*, 219.

[46] Emil Tișca, *În Constantinopol* (Gherla: Tipografia Institutului de Arte Grafice Alexandru Anca, 1913), 4 *sqq.*

living in the Ottoman Empire, 65-70 million in Africa (Algeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia), 20 million in Afghanistan, Arabia, Persia and other Asian states, 600,000 in the Balkans (Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania), and globally about 270 million.[47]

The same newspaper also gives a brief description of Egypt (1914) as "the first corner of Africa to hear the whistle of the ships" (1852), and that it underwent extensive railway modernization with the construction of the railway between Wadi Halfa and Khartoum as a strategic aid in the context of the Anglo-Egyptian fighting in Sudan (1896-1899).[48] Equally interesting are the 14 Arab proverbs on marriage, love and the beauty of women (1915), showing that the Arabs saw marriage as indissoluble in life and were willing to marry a beautiful and wealthy woman or even a cousin. A proverb portraying the women among this exotic community is illustrative in this regard:

> *he who wants to have a beautiful woman, let him marry a Georgian; he who wants to have a cunning woman, let him marry a Jewish girl; he who wants to have a rest, let him marry a Christian woman. Pride and fancy characterize the Turkish woman, and noble and distinguished thinking, the Arab woman.*[49]

In a recent analysis, the museographer Cristina Seitz has exploited 24 illustrated postcards and personal German documents of the Brașov-born sergeant Arthur Schulz (1893-1966) from 15 May 1917 to 8 June 1918, when he was mobilized to fight in the First World War with the 41st Artillery Regiment of the Austrian-Hungarian Army. They record his correspondence with parents Roza and Peter Schulz, siblings Margarete, Oskar, Viktor and Willi, fiancée Hermine Antosch and cousin Emil, sent from Buczacz and Constantinople. Some of the 15 Constantinopolitan correspondences depict sights such as the Bosphorus, Princes' Island, Galata Bridge and Galata Tower, together with short, standardized notes, typical for soldiers' correspondence, such as those on an illustrated postcard dated March 6, 1918:

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[47] *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LXXII/89 (1909): 4-5.
[48] Ibid., LXXVII/256 (1914): 1.
[49] Ibid., LXXVIII/200 (1915): 1.

Face: Greetings from Turkey, Arthur Schulz.
Verso: 6.III.1918, Dear Margit, I send you word that I am healthy and lively here in Turkey where I am. Greetings to all from me, Arthur Schulz.[50]

Returning to the historical course of the collection of Anatolian carpets in the Black Church, we note that their use gradually declined in the modern era due to the shift of the interest of the people of Brașov towards other matters. They covered the tombs of local figures, rarely served at liturgies, or were either fixed to the lecterns of the pews or cut as cushions for the pews of parishioners, some of which ended up in the museum of the Evangelical Gymnasium as a preservation measure against moths, but especially as a security measure against the foreign merchants' questionable interests in them (August 1886). Subsequently, they were rediscovered and revalued with the large painting *The oath of the City Council of Brașov on the Book of Reformation* (1898) by the Brașov painter Fritz Schullerus (1866-1898), which depicts the community's pledge of Lutheranism in a room decorated with rugs on the table and floor, and with the undated *Self-portrait* by the local artist Friedrich Miess (1854-1935). Here, the carpet arranged in the background embodies the idea that "the contemporary artist must be able to compose a painting as virtuoso as the Anatolian workers succeeded with carpets." They also appeared against the backdrop of drawings and photographs such as the undated drawing *Johannes Honterus in the study office* of the professor Ernst Kühlbrandt (1857-1933), the photograph of the local economist Karl Czekelius (1908) or the Black Church pulpit by Ludwig Hesshaimer (1913). The culmination was the research of the Austrian professor Alois Riegl (1858-1905) who, following his visit to Brașov, where he discussed the matter with the parish priest Franz Oberth (1895), began to compile an inventory of the carpets with the help of Ernst Kühlbrandt (1897). Kühlbrandt was involved both in the conservation and protection of these artifacts by commissioning the Scherg factory to clean, mend and equip them with hanging rings, and by presenting them in an exhibition in the Black Church (1910). His work was continued not only by Albert Eichhorn's (1906-1969) archival analyses of the import and public/private use of the carpets,

[50] Cristina Seitz, "Un brașovean în armata austro-ungară în Primul Război Mondial," *Țara Bârsei*, 17 (2018): 106-116.

but also by the establishment of the workshop in the town, coordinated by Era Nussbächer (1973-1998), and latter a group of conservators and restorers from the Transylvanian, Austrian, German and Hungarian regions (2010), who restored, reorganized and maintained these oriental artifacts more rigorously.[51]

Conclusions

Since the Middle Ages, but mainly since the second half of the 14th century, the inhabitants of Brașov have developed multiple commercial, diplomatic, military and political contacts with the Near and Middle East through the purchase and sale of exotic products (food, dyes, spices, textiles), the consultation of popular works, the involvement in anti-Ottoman campaigns, the obtaining and application of substantial rights and privileges, but also through the presence of a surprising heritage (the collection of Anatolian carpets of the Black Church).

The removal of the Ottoman suzerainty of the Autonomous Principality of Transylvania (1541-1699) and the successive seizure of political power by the Habsburgs (1699) did not affect, but perpetuated and even consolidated Brașov's status as a substantial pole of Transylvanian oriental trade and an ideal refuge from the Ottomans. The interventions at the Porte in order to obtain advantageous concessions, as well as the exotic influences in local food and trade, were founding elements of the culture of the Transylvanian Romanians from Brașov.

The historical and statistical analyses, the articles and collections in support of the soldiers on the front lines of the Romanian War of Independence (1877-1878), the literary creations, the programmatic documents, the news and the translations of oriental literature found in *Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și*

[51] Ziegler - Ziegler, *Spre lauda*, 10-11, 14, 37, 39-40, 42-47; See also Ernst Kühlbrandt, "Die alten orientalischen Teppiche der Kronstadter ev. Stadtpharrkirche," *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins fur Siebenburgische Landeskunde*, 21/8-9 (1898): 101-103; Ernst Kühlbrandt, "Unsere alten Kirchenteppiche", *Die Karpathen*, 1/2 (1907): 41-43; Ibid., 10/17 (1911): 525-531; Ibid., 10/18 (1911): 570-574; Ernst Kühlbrandt, "Die alten orientalischen Teppiche in der evangelisch-sachsischen Stadtpfarrkirche zu Kronstadt," *Cultura*, 1/4 (1924): 320-328; Albert Eichhorn, "Kronstadt und der orientalische Teppich," *Forschungen zur Volks-Und Landeskunde*, 11 (1968): 72-84.

Literatură, respectively in *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, together with the information in school textbooks, demonstrate the interest of modern education and the local press in introducing pupils and people from Brașov to the culture, geography, history, linguistics, literature, politics and religion of the Near and Middle East.

The memories and oriental historical facts in the memoirs of Sextil Pușcariu, the incorporation and integration into everyday life of many exotic culinary recipes, and the establishment of the Jews as a solid community, complete the panoply of elements designed to show us that oriental otherness gradually became a familiarity. This familiarity subsequently built the identity of the powerful city of Brașov as a multicultural, multi-confessional and multi-ethnic area, a paradoxical border city and even as a confessional, ethnic, geographical and socio-economic micro-frontier distinct from Orientalism, Occidentalism and Transylvanianism.

The Road to the Metropolis. The Ascension of Miron Romanul to the Highest Ecclesiastical Dignity

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Abstract: After Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna's death, the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania entered a transitional period, during which administrative continuity was maintained by his former collaborators, alongside other clergy and lay leaders. The intellectual elite, whose influence increased during Șaguna's final years, played a key role in guiding Church institutions. Through the adoption of the *Organic Statute*, Șaguna had delegated much of his authority, creating a durable institutional framework that continued to evolve after his passing. In the late 19th century, the dynamics between power groups within the archdiocese and suffragan bishoprics significantly shaped Church life. These interactions became particularly evident during the 1874 Metropolitan elections, which revealed internal rivalries and political manoeuvrings. Personal sympathies and antipathies often took precedence over the stated goal of the electoral congresses—the appointment of new hierarchs—highlighting the complex and often contentious process of leadership succession within the Church. In this context, the one who benefited from a fulminating *cursus honorum* was Miron Romanul, who occupied the metropolitan seat after several election rounds.

Keywords: The Romanian Orthodox Church from Transylvania, metropolitan elections, intellectual elites, political elites, Metropolitan Miron Romanul

Rezumat: După moartea Mitropolitului Andrei Șaguna, Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Transilvania a intrat într-o perioadă de tranziție, timp în care continuitatea administrativă a fost menținută de foștii săi colaboratori, alături de alți clerici și lideri laici. Elita intelectuală, a cărei influență a crescut în ultimii ani ai lui Șaguna, a jucat un rol cheie în îndrumarea instituțiilor bisericești. Prin adoptarea *Statutului* Organic, Șaguna și-a delegat o mare parte din autoritate, creând un cadru instituțional

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durabil care a continuat să evolueze după trecerea sa în neființă. La sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea, dinamica dintre grupurile de putere din cadrul arhiepiscopiei și episcopiilor sufragane a modelat semnificativ viața bisericească. Aceste interacțiuni au devenit deosebit de evidente în timpul alegerilor mitropolitane din 1874, care au scos la iveală rivalități interne și implicații politice. Simpatiile și antipatiile personale au avut adesea prioritate față de obiectivul declarat al congreselor electorale - numirea de noi ierarhi - evidențiind procesul complex și adesea controversat de succesiune a conducerii în cadrul Bisericii. În acest context, cel care a beneficiat de un *cursus honorum* fulminant a fost Miron Romanul, care a ocupat scaunul mitropolitan după mai multe tururi de scrutin.

Cuvinte cheie: Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Transilvania, alegeri metropolitane, elite intelectuale, elite politice, Mitropolitul Miron Romanul

Already a decade had passed since the re-establishment of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Transylvania, and the Metropolitan Seat of Sibiu was twice widowed – namely, in 1873, with the death of the venerable Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, and a year later, with the election of Metropolitan Procopius Ivascovici as Patriarch of the Serbs. Thus, in the final months of 1874, in the metropolitan province elections for the person who would occupy the highest ecclesiastical dignity were once again organized. In the transitional period that the Church was going through after the death of Șaguna, those who ensured administrative continuity were, first and foremost, the former metropolitan's collaborators, as well as other clergy and lay people who were active in the leadership of the Church institutions. The role of the intellectual elite in the Church became increasingly more important during the final years of Șaguna's leadership, given the significant trust the reforming hierarch placed in them. By adopting the *Organic Statute*, he delegated many of his responsibilities and created an institutional scaffolding that continued to evolve after his death.[1] The way in which the power groups in the archdiocese and in the two suffragan bishoprics interacted during the final decades of the 19th century had a decisive influence on the life of the Church, especially in the context of the establishment of new hierarchs. From this perspective, the 1875 Metropolitan

[1] Keith Hitchins and Aurel Jivi, *Ortodoxie și naționalitate. Andrei Șaguna și românii din Transilvania (1846–1873)* (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 1995), 316.

elections were the setting for real behind-the-scenes games, in which personal sympathies or antipathies overshadowed the main purpose of the electoral congresses, namely the establishment of new hierarchs.

At the beginning of its constitutional life – only six years had passed since the adoption of the *Organic Statute*[2] as the fundamental law governing the functioning of the Orthodox Church – the Transylvanian Metropolis went through a series of crises during the period following the pastoral leadership of Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna. The turmoil that unfolded during the 1874 electoral congress marked its dynamics, as we will see in this analysis. The "surprise" caused by the resignation of former Metropolitan Procopie Ivașcovici (as Șaguna's successor) from the archbishopric seat in Sibiu did not go unnoticed by those in the leadership structures of the Metropolis, with remarks being made as early as the plenary session of the metropolitan consistory on August 31, 1874. For instance, one of the consistorial members, politician and president of the Albina Bank at the time, Iacob Bologa, pointed out that the election of Metropolitan Ivașcovici as patriarch of the Serbs was "a violation of the canons of the Church."[3] His pecuniary interest led him to request that Ivașcovici either return or compensate for all the items purchased from the inheritance left by his predecessor.

Regarding the functioning of the bodies at the top of the metropolitan administration in the period following Andrei Șaguna's pastorate, some of the archdiocese accused the metropolitan consistory of conducting its activities with certain "inconveniences" that affected the course of the meetings.[4] For example, they criticised the fact that Metropolitan Ivașcovici's resignation had not been analysed and discussed thoroughly enough, or they commented on the fact that Ioan Mețianu was illegally listed in the Consistory, given that he was no longer part of the archdiocese (after being elected vicar of the Consistory in Oradea Mare). It was written that members of the school and episcopal senate had been operating illegally, as their terms of office had expired, or that, for example, Ioan Bran de Lemeny and Iacob Bologa were more concerned with personal interests than with the problems of the Church.

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[2] Johann Schneider and Ioan I. Ică, *Ecleziologia organică a mitropolitului Andrei Șaguna și fundamentele ei biblice, canonice și moderne* (Sibiu: Deisis, 2008), 232.

[3] *Protocoalele ședințelor Consistoriului mitropolitan de la 1874 până la 1880,* Arhiva Mitropoliei Ardealului, no. 101/F. M., 31 August 1874.

[4] *Cele doue congresse naționali bisericesci electorali din 1873 şi 1874. Materialu la istori'a bisericescă națională* (Sibiu: Tipografia eredei lui G. de Closius, 1875), 52.

The race for the metropolitan seat sparked a genuine confrontation between the intellectual and clerical elites, who did not refrain from personal attacks, insinuations, or provocative statements. However, the stakes for obtaining a seat in the electoral congress were high. Given that the conflict was being waged on several fronts, two main groups distinguishing themselves in this regard: the archdioceses and the suffragans. The debates between the two large groups of electors took place both during the congress (through articles published in *Telegraful Român*, *Albina*, etc.) and after its end (through the publication of anonymous brochures in 1875, 1880, and 1881). The main strategy employed by both influential groups was to secure the necessary number of votes for their desired candidate during the election period by resorting to tactics revealed to us by sources of the time. One of the publications that provides details from behind the scenes of the election is *Cele doue congresse nationali bisericesci electorali din 1873 şi 1874. Materialu la istori'a bisericesca nationala* [*The Two National Church Electoral Congresses of 1873 and 1874. Material for the National Church History*], published in 1875, which received a response five years later in another anonymous pamphlet, *Anticritic'a brosiurei anonime publicate asupr'a celoru doue congrese naţionali bisericesci din 1873 şi 1874 (de mai mulţi deputaţi ai maioritatiei congreseloru dela 1873 şi 1874)* [*Anti-criticism of the anonymous pamphlet published about the two national church congresses of 1873 and 1874 (by several deputies of the majority of the congresses of 1873 and 1874)]*. A year later, the reply was published under the title *Respuns la anticritica brosurei anonime publicate asupra celor doue congrese nationali bisericesci din 1873 si 1874. De mai multi deputati ai maioritatii congreselor dela 1873 si 1874 de unii din cei atacați* [*Response to the Anticritica of the anonymous pamphlet published on the two national church congresses of 1873 and 1874. By several deputies of the majority of the congresses of 1873 and 1874 by Some of those attacked*].[5] These three sources dating from the time attest to the fact that the metropolitan elections were only a pretext for a series of attacks that were not necessarily related to the elections themselves, but rather to the power groups within the Metropolis. If the first pamphlet was written by Ioan Borcia, the attorney of the Archdiocesan Consistory, the response to it

[5] *Respuns la anticritica brosurei anonime publicate asupra celor doue congrese nationali bisericesci din 1873 si 1874. De mai multi deputati ai maioritatii congreselor dela 1873 si 1874 de unii din cei atacați* (Sibiu: Tipografia eredei lui G. de Closius, 1881).

was formulated by George Barițiu, each of them supporting a certain candidate for the Metropolis.[6]

According to the *Organic Statute*, the organization of the electoral congress was the responsibility of the Metropolitan Consistory, which, on August 31, 1874,[7] announced the convening of the national church congress for October 27 of the same year, in its dual forms (ordinary and extraordinary). Although the two congresses were convened for the same day, the ordinary one was postponed until November 3. The two months that had passed between the preparatory meeting and the installation of the new metropolitan created the favourable context for some of the most heated debates in the Romanian Orthodox Church. The frictions and biases that arose among the congress deputies revealed the variety of views on the future of the Church and increased the importance of placing, at the head of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania, a person who was in tune with the national values increasingly embraced by the Romanian intellectual elite.

In the afternoon of October 26, a preparatory meeting for the metropolitan elections was held, presided over by the Bishop of Caransebeș, Ioan Popasu, elected delegate[8] of the Metropolitan Consistory, with Ilie Măcelariu replacing Ioan Borcia as secretary of the congress. As provided for in the procedure for electing the metropolitan[9] contained in the *Organic Statute*, the agenda of the first organizational meeting included the presentation of the following documents: the act of resignation of Metropolitan Procopie Ivașcovici of 13 August, 1874; the circular of the Metropolitan Consistory; the address and response of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction regarding the convening of the electoral congress and the reports of the diocesan consistories on the election of deputies. Behind closed doors, there was much debate until the first round of voting, and the postponement of

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[6] Paul Brusanowski, *Reforma constituțională din Biserica Ortodoxă a Transilvaniei între 1850-1925* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 265.

[7] *Protocolul Congresului extraordinar național-bisericesc al Mitropoliei românilor greco-orientali din Ungaria și Transilvania convocat la 15/27 Octombrie 1874 pentru alegerea de mitropolit* (Sibiu: Editura Mitropoliei, 1876), 3.

[8] *Protocoalele ședințelor Consistoriului mitropolitan de la* 1874, 31 August 1874.

[9] Ioan A. de Preda, *Constituția bisericei gr.-or. române din Ungaria şi Transilvania sau Statutul Organic comentat şi cu concluzele şi normele referitoare întregit* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1914), 242.

the election was the result of lengthy disputes over the legitimacy of certain deputies, protests against others, or the rigging of the voting process in several electoral districts. For example, there were discussions about the intervention of a Roman Catholic notary from Remetea in the election of the congressional deputy there, or the flawed voting procedure in the election of Nicolae Paulovici from Teregova,[10] or other protests that postponed the election date. In that context, the idea arose that the validation of the candidates from the archdiocese had been postponed in order to "attract as many members of Popea's party as possible to Popasu's."[11]

In the race for the highest ecclesiastical dignity, three candidates initially expressed their open or veiled interest in the metropolitan seat, all of whom were prominent figures in the administrative structures of the Metropolis: Bishop Ioan Popasu of Caransebeș, Archiepiscopal Vicar Nicolae Popea, and Vicar of Oradea Mare, Ioan Mețianu. For Ioan Popasu, it was the second election he had run in, having lost a year earlier to former Metropolitan Procopiu Ivașcovici.[12] In the electoral game, however, those around the candidates were essential, as they were the ones responsible for gaining the trust needed to ensure their victory. The support groups formed around the contenders for the high office were the result of long-standing sympathies or antipathies between the archdiocese and those in the suffragan dioceses. In the midst of the election campaign, they turned to prominent figures who could tip the balance in favour of one candidate or another. Thus, in the archdiocese, Archpriest Ioan Hannia encouraged people to vote for Nicolae Popea, while Vincențiu Babeș lobbied for Popasu in Banat and part of the archdiocese. Among those who sympathised with Popasu were lawyer Popa from Mediaș, Dr. Tincu from Orăștie, and teachers from the gymnasium in Brașov, who would have chosen him because of his origins, the latter's vote being motivated, according to some, by obtaining subsidies for the Romanian gymnasium at the foot of Tâmpa. Accused of "corruption" or "electoral trafficking,"[13] Popasu's supporters defended themselves against criticism by arguing that all the deputies who supported a particular candidate "informed

[10] *Protocolul Congresului extraordinar național-bisericesc,* 26-27.
[11] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 56.
[12] Teodor Păcățian, "Două alegeri de mitropolit în Sibiu," *Transilvania* 60, no. 7-8 (1929): 522.
[13] *Cele doue congresse nationali,* 63.

each other."[14] In fact, their choice for Popasu was based on their admiration for his merits related to the gymnasium in Brașov, his work as a founder of schools in the archpriesthood, the measures he took as bishop in Caransebeș, etc. For other congress members, such as Vincențiu Babeș's close associates, Alexandru Mocioni, and Partenie Cosma, it was much more important to clarify issues such as the defence of the Church's autonomy and the measures that the future metropolitan would take in this regard.

Rumours circulating in the archdiocese announced Archimandrite Nicolae Popea, a devoted disciple of Șaguna, as the future metropolitan, supported by some of the people of Arad, according to *Telegraful Român*.[15] To ensure that luck would be on their side, the archdiocese organized a trial election[16] during the congress, in which Nicolae Popea obtained 37 votes and Ioan Popasu only 2. Popea's popularity was rooted in the vicariate period during Șaguna's time, as he was considered a continuator of his projects and the person who could consolidate the Church reforms that had been begun by the former metropolitan. However, these premises were not enough to secure his path to the metropolitan seat in Sibiu. One of the main vectors of support for the vicar's candidacy was the metropolitan's official newspaper, which fuelled the debate between the archdiocese and the suffragans. Under the coordination of editor Nicolae Cristea, a series of articles appeared in *Telegraful Român* over the first few days of the congress, in which the supporters of the other candidates were characterized as a group interested in disturbing the peace "in order to put their influence above all moral interests of the Church,"[17] with Vincențiu Babeș as the first to be directly accused. Regarding the trial elections organized by the archdiocese, a dispute arose between Babeș, Mocioni, and Simeon Mangiuca on one side, and Ioan Borcia, Ioan Cavaler de Pușcariu, Zaharia Boiu, and Nicolae Găetan on the other. The reason for the division was not strictly electoral but was also related to the way in which the archdiocese related to the suffragans and vice versa. Basically, the archdiocese believed that they pursued the

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[14] *Anticritic'a brosiurei anonime publicate asupr'a celoru doue congrese naţionali bisericesci din 1873 şi 1874 (de mai mulți deputați ai maioritatiei congreseloru dela 1873 şi 1874)* (Sibiu: Tipografia lui S. Filtsch W. Kraft, 1880), 14.

[15] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 83 (1874): 330.

[16] *Cele doue congresse naționali,* 58.

[17] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 83 (1874): 329-330.

"common good," while the suffragans were accused of prioritizing "their own interests."[18] At the same time, the electors coming from Arad and Oradea Mare believed that the election should have been "dictated by the Holy Spirit"[19] and not by selfishness.

On the morning of November 1, the deputies were called upon to express their choice. The candidacy of Bishop Ioan Popasu forced him to resign from the presidency of the congress, a mission assumed by the bishop of Arad, Miron Romanul. On this occasion, Romanul addressed those present and delivered a message reaffirming the importance of the congress, at which freedom of speech and the rights of each deputy were to be guaranteed, and invited the deputies to cast their votes without regard to "kinship, friendship, or any party affiliation."[20] Meanwhile, the congress notary, Paul Rotaru, had prepared the necessary documents for the voting process: the lists of deputies, the files with the names of each deputy (for drawing lots in case of inequality between the number of deputies from the archdiocese and that of the deputies from the suffragan dioceses), and the voting register. In the first round of voting, 56 deputies from the archdiocese were present, and 53 from the dioceses of Caransebeș and Arad. Thus, it was decided to randomly eliminate three of the archdiocese's electors to ensure parity within the meaning of the regulations for the organization of the congress.

After the deputies cast their votes, Bishop Ioan Popasu obtained 64 votes, surpassing his main opponent, Nicolae Popea, by 24 votes, with one vote going to Bishop Miron Romanul and another left blank. The result surprised the archdiocesan circles, who were counting on the success of Vicar Nicolae Popea, who, until the day of the election, had been relying on at least 48 votes.[21] The victory achieved by the bishop of Caransebeș was significant, but only the monarch's confirmation made it final and irrevocable, and, thus, the wait lasted about three weeks. After the election, Ioan Popasu thanked the congress, promising good relations with the representatives of the clergy and laity for "moral, intellectual, and national growth and culture."[22]

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[18] *Cele doue congresse naționali,* 62.

[19] *Anticritic'a broșiurei anonime,* 6.

[20] *Protocolul Congresului extraordinar național-bisericesc*, 38.

[21] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 84 (1874): 333.

[22] *Protocolul Congresului extraordinar național-bisericesc*, 44.

During the same session, a delegation led by Ioan Meţianu was appointed to present the election results to Francis Joseph.[23] Those sent to Budapest spent three weeks there, incurring expenses of 1,400 florins, which was considered too long a stay given the monarch's absence. During this period, Bishop Ioan Popasu waited for the decision in Sibiu, while Miron Romanul is said to have gone to the Hungarian capital immediately after the departure of the congress representatives. Thus, some suspected that he had been summoned by the Hungarian rulers of the time to negotiate his political support at the head of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania, a fact reinforced by the long period he spent in Budapest, until the reopening of the congress.[24]

While awaiting the monarch's resolution, various topics and issues that could be resolved in the Metropolis were discussed in the press, given the simultaneous convening of the ordinary and electoral congresses. The issue of re-establishing the bishoprics of Oradea Mare and Timişoara, a proposal addressed to the ordinary congress, was then brought up again. The election of bishops for the two new suffragan dioceses was considered an opportune moment, given the holding of the electoral congress. In this context, Ioan Cavaler de Puşcariu proposed, in the pages of *Telegraful Român*, the voting method in the event of the (re)establishment of the bishoprics (the archdioceses to take part in the election of suffragan bishops, just as those in the dioceses elect the archbishop and metropolitan) and the territorial reorganisation of the entire metropolitan province (taking into account the endowments and common funds), with the decisions taken incorporated into the *Organic Statute*.[25] During the time that elapsed until the official confirmation of the new metropolitan was received, doubt and suspicion increasingly took hold in the hearts and discourse of those involved in the metropolitan's domain. Rumours about the monarch's decision to invalidate the election of Ioan Popasu were quick to surface, and the press circulated various reasons why the confirmation of the bishop of Caransebeş to the highest ecclesiastical office was delayed. The Hungarian press also commented on the metropolitan election in Sibiu, revealing a certain dissatisfaction with

[23] Teodor V. Păcăţian and Vasile Oltean, *Mitropolitul Ioan Meţianu (1828-1916)* (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2015), 73.
[24] *Cele doue congresse naţionali*, 67.
[25] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 84 (1874): 333.

it.[26] However, the archdiocese, supporters of Vicar Nicolae Popea, were suspected of having intervened to prevent the strengthening of the opposing camp's candidate, an accusation they denied in a pamphlet published in 1875, which stated that "if the archdiocese had wanted to prevent Popasu's confirmation, they would have protested immediately."[27] Moreover, they claimed that they had mandated Ilarion Pușcariu to support the official delegation from Budapest that was seeking confirmation of Popasu's election.

In the Hungarian capital, discussions surrounding the election took shape during the following week. The decision of the Council of Ministers on November 8[28] regarding the electoral congress in Sibiu reveals several pieces of fundamental information that explain the decision to invalidate the election results. Formally, the document does not raise any objections regarding the legal framework of the election or its legitimacy. However, the Hungarian authorities' problem was a substantive one, strictly tied to Bishop Popasu's personality, as he was not particularly well-liked in high government circles. Some measures taken during his seating in Caransebeș were also contested, as was his sympathy for the Romanian National Party and his insufficient knowledge of the official language (which would have prevented him from taking the oath). Nonetheless, the authorities in Budapest would have liked to have a hierarch in Caransebeș who would thus strengthen the sense of belonging to the Hungarian Crown[29] within the bishopric structures there, given the overlap of jurisdiction with the territory of the former border regiment. Furthermore, the Budapest Ministry was aware of the agreement that Ioan Popasu had made with Vincențiu Babeș and Ioan Mețianu to secure the necessary number of votes for the metropolitan seat – a pact considered to be immoral. Another issue included in the motivation for rejecting Popasu's confirmation was the interpretation of an article in the congress's organizational regulations regarding the confirmation of the metropolitan by the monarch. Specifically, the text of the government document emphasized that the validation of the elections was not mandatory, as it was also possible to reject them.

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[26] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 85 (1874): 337.

[27] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 70.

[28] Kemény G. Gábor, *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában (1867-1892),* vol. I (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1952), 473.

[29] Ibid., 474.

In addition to formulating arguments that did not allow the confirmation of Bishop Ioan Popasu in the metropolitan seat, the decision of the Council of Ministers also put forward the name of the preferred candidate: Miron Romanul. By expressing its direct support for the bishop of Arad at that time, the Hungarian Council of Ministers became responsible for influencing his election.[30]

After the delegation returned from Budapest, the next meeting of the electoral congress was announced, scheduled for November 28, during which the decision made by the emperor at the suggestion of the Hungarian ministers was to be presented. Until the next round of elections was organized, articles appeared in the Metropolitan newspaper suggesting that Popasu's rejection was the result of political interference and encouraging deputies to set aside their personal affinities and work together for the good of the Church in the next election. The same article also refuted some of the information published by the *Tageblatt* newspaper regarding the re-entry into the electoral race of Nicolae Popea, whose responsibilities as vicar were to be taken over by Ilarion Pușcariu in the event of his victory.[31]

On November 28, 1874, under the chairmanship of Bishop Miron Romanul, the electoral congress resumed its work, which, in the absence of other administrative issues, allowed for the organization of the election in a shorter period of time. As expected, the monarch's resolution was not justified during the meeting, which generated numerous interpretations. At the same time, the congress rejected the request of the Minister of Cults and Public Instruction to be notified of the date of the new elections, a request that could not be granted due to a misunderstanding of Article 151 of the *Organic Statute*. The article in question was related to notifying the monarch about the convening of the congress.[32] We must also note the flagrant absence of Bishop Popasu, who had left Sibiu a few days earlier following signals received from Budapest, citing illness.[33] Thus, at the suggestion of lawyer Mircea Vasiliu Stănescu from Arad, a commission of three deputies was elected, responsible for composing an official letter informing of the rejection of Bishop Popasu's

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[30] Ibid., 475.

[31] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 90 (1874): 356.

[32] Article 151 of the *Organic Statute* is commented in Ioan A. de Preda, *Constituţia bisericei gr.-or. române*, 233.

[33] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 67.

election as metropolitan. As we saw in the first round, the polarization of deputies around their favourite candidate heated up the atmosphere when the vote was resumed. Since a new candidacy by Ioan Popasu was unlikely (prevented by the authorities in Budapest[34]), the archdiocese and suffragans sought new ways to configure their voting options. In the case of the deputies from the archdiocese, the candidate remained Nicolae Popea, for whom they allegedly demanded that the majority of the congress "blindly obey their will[35] thus violating constitutional procedure. At the same time, the suffragans were looking for the most suitable candidate, taking into account, however, that Miron Romanul had the confidence vote of the government authorities.

In order to test the opinion of the electoral deputies, a trial vote was organized once again, in which Miron Romanul obtained 29 votes, surpassing Meț ianu by only 3 votes.[36] A compromise was therefore needed. Thus, Ioan Meț ianu renounced his metropolitan aspirations in favour of Miron Romanul "in the best interest of the Church"[37] (as he later confessed to Vincenț iu Babeș). The price Romanul paid to remain the only candidate from the suffragans was to support the vicar of Oradea Mare in the upcoming elections for the episcopal seat in Arad. This was not the only condition that Miron Romanul had accepted, but there were also other courses of action that he had undertaken before his supporters. These courses of action were related to the agreement with other Romanian prelates on national issues – the liberal interpretation of the *Organic Statute*, or the reform of the *Telegraful Român* program.[38] This last measure could be considered a direct attack on those in the archdiocese. In fact, Miron Romanul's support was not strictly political or conditional on the acceptance of these conditions, but was also linked to his merits in the diocese of Arad or the vicariate of Oradea Mare. A few years after his election, in a brochure published in response to the attacks of the archdiocese, he was described by his supporters as a man dedicated to his priestly career, with the merit of "having ensured the application of the *Statute* in the diocese."

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[34] Kemény G. Gábor, *Iratok a nemzetiségi*, 474.

[35] *Anticritic'a broșiurei anonime*, 6-7.

[36] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 77.

[37] Vincenț iu Babeș and Ștefan Pascu, *Corespondența lui Vincenț iu Babeș. Scrisori primite*, vol. I (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1976), 138-139.

[38] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 80.

His efforts related to the Arad National Association for Romanian Culture, as well as his work in the House of Magnates in the context of legislative initiatives related to the introduction of the Hungarian language, were also appreciated.[39]

Although Vincențiu Babeș supported Romanul in the race for the Metropolis, he was not always a sympathiser of the former bishop of Arad. In 1873, in the race for the bishopric of Arad, two groups emerged, each supporting their favourite. On one side, Partenie Cosma and Ioan Popovici Desseanu supported Romanul, and on the other, Vincențiu Babeș supported Ioan Meșianu. They used the two press outlets, *Lumina* and *Albina*, to support their favourite and to publicly debate the reasons each of the two candidates deserved the episcopal seat. The context of the elections in Arad prompted the publication of an article in *Lumina* by Ioan Slavici (a close associate of Miron Romanul at the time) entitled "Ad rem", in which Romanul was described as having "impeccable morals, a man whose conduct was matched by a national political orientation."[40] Shortly thereafter, a response article (also called "Ad rem") appeared in *Albina*, in which Babeș, while acknowledging Romanul's intellectual and social abilities, accused him of giving up his position as professor of theology for "a government-salaried position contrary and incompatible with the functions of our Church and our law"[41] or that he was "morally dead."[42] Therefore, the context of the 1874 elections represented a reconfiguration of the relationship between the two.

With the resumption of the congress on December 2, 1874, a new round of metropolitan elections was organized in the presence of the new president of the congress, Ioan Meșianu. After the presentation of the documents for the ballot by the congressional notary Paul Rotaru, the inequality between the number of deputies from the archdiocese and that of the deputies from the dioceses was once again noted. Specifically, the archdiocese had 53 electors, the diocese of Arad had 25, and the diocese of Caransebeș had only 19, which required the removal, by drawing lots, of nine deputies from the archdiocese. The nine were: Ioan Papiu, Ioan Cavaler de

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[39] *Anticritic'a broșiurei anonime,* 29.

[40] Mihaela Bedecean, *Presa şi bisericile româneşti din Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea (1865-1873)* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010), 252.

[41] *Albina* 8, no. 85 (1873): 1-2.

[42] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 84.

Pușcariu, Nicolae Rusu, Vasiliu Buzdug, Dr. Avram Tincu, Teodor Vrasmasiu, Ioan Codru-Drăgușanu, Nicolae Cristea, and Moise Lazăr. The voting commission was made up of: Ioan Rațiu, Antoniu Mocioni, and Partenie Cosma. We must thus note that the number of deputies with voting rights in this round was much smaller than in the first round, many of them being absent for a variety of reasons. After the procedures were completed, the voters expressed their choice, but the result remained unconvincing. Regarding this round of elections, the anonymous authors of the critical brochure from 1875 mentioned the presence of an "emissary of the regime"[43] named Kiss, who was supposed to ensure Romanul's election. His presence was not enough, given the result obtained by the bishop of Arad. With 43 votes for Romanul and 45 blank ballots (cast by the archdiocese clergy who protested against Popea's opponent), the election of the metropolitan had to be repeated the following day. Although there were rumours that the election could be confirmed by the monarch even under these circumstances (the arrival of a telegram from Budapest stating this), Miron Romanul preferred that the election be in accordance with the *Organic Statute* so as not to leave room for interpretation or possible challenges.

Hoping that the third round of voting would yield a convincing result, the deputies gathered on December 3 at the "Church of the Transfiguration" in Sibiu Fortress to cast their votes. Since there was no parity among the deputies this time either, it was necessary to eliminate eight of those representing the archdiocese, namely: Ioan Zaharia, Vasile Buzdug, David Almășianu, Dr. Ioan Meșotă, Ioan Bran de Lemeny, Ioan Preda, Nicolae Popovici, and Ilie Măcelariu. With the 88 deputies present, the candidate had to win a minimum of 45 votes to have an absolute majority.

The result? The Bishop of Arad finally won the electoral congress vote with a majority of 51 votes against Vicar Nicolae Popea, who received no more than 31 votes, with the remaining six being blank votes. Of course, the victory did not belong only to Miron Romanul, but to his entire support group, which would gain more and more ground in the decision-making structures of the Metropolis in the coming period. Among the most active and deeply involved in future decision-making, we mention here: Vincențiu Babeș, Alexandru Mocioni, and Partenie Cosma. At the same meeting, the

[43] Ibid., 80.

commission responsible for composing the address announcing the election of the new metropolitan to the emperor was appointed, consisting of Ioan Hania, Vincențiu Babeș, and Traian Miescu. Before concluding the meeting, the newly elected metropolitan expressed his gratitude for the vote of confidence he had received and assured those present that he would strive to work on "building the great national ecclesiastical edifice, whose foundation has already been laid in our *Organic Statute*."[44]

Three weeks later, the monarch's confirmation of Miron Romanul's election as metropolitan arrived in Sibiu, reaching the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy at only 46 years of age.[45] In fact, *Budapesti-Közlöny* and *Wiener Zeitung*, had already announced his confirmation.[46] From the report of the Minister of Cults and Public Instruction, we learn that the election also fulfilled the wishes of the Hungarian government, which proposed to Francis Joseph I the confirmation of the newly elected hierarch, requesting that he be granted the status of private advisor.[47] From then on, all that remained was the installation of the new prelate in the metropolitan seat of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania and Hungary, an event scheduled for December 27, 1874. Following the protocol established by the *Organic Statute*, after the Matins service performed in the Church of the Transfiguration, the members of the congress and the priests were to lead the new metropolitan from the metropolitan residence to the church where he was to be installed. The ritual was followed by the reading of the ministerial document confirming the election and the speech of the president of the electoral congress, Ioan Mețianu. This was followed by the inaugural speech of Metropolitan Romanul, after which the Holy Liturgy was celebrated. Although those who did not look kindly on Romanul criticized the installation as being "too pompous" to give the impression that "the joy was universal,"[48] the scale of the event was doubled by the anniversary of the first decade since the reestablishment of the Metropolis of Transylvania, which was now in its third ecclesiastical leadership in such a short time.

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[44] *Protocolul Congresului extraordinar național-bisericesc*, 80.

[45] Ilie Dinurseni, *Arhiepiscopul și metropolitul Dr. Miron Romanul. Date adunate și edate* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1898), 4.

[46] *Telegraful Român* 22, no. 95 (1874): 374.

[47] Kemény G. Gábor, *Iratok a nemzetiségi*, 475.

[48] *Cele doue congresse naționali*, 84.

In his speech as president of the congress, Ioan Meţianu spoke about the importance of electing a metropolitan for a Church bereft of a hierarch, about the legacy of Andrei Șaguna and the pastoral care of Metropolitan Ivașcovici, and about the concerns caused by the cancellation of the first metropolitan elections. At the same time, the vicar of Oradea Mare thanked the deputies for putting the interests of the Church above their personal interests, voting for the one who "will know how to combine the interests of the Church with those of the homeland in the best sense,"[49] emphasizing that the goal of the Church and the priests was to ensure "the good and happiness of the faithful of our Church, both here on earth and beyond the grave," the elections of bishops or archbishops being only the means by which this goal could be achieved.

"The ways in which providence has designated individuals to contribute to the common goals of human society are unforeseeable."[50] This is how the new metropolitan began his inaugural speech. He also highlighted the legacy left by Metropolitan Șaguna, declaring himself ready to assume the responsibilities of his new pastoral work, which he exercised for the next 24 years: to shepherd the Church of Christ in accordance with the Gospel and church canons, to develop church institutions based on the *Organic Statute* and to strengthen the role of priests in the community. He also spoke about obedience to the authorities and to the emperor, assuring them that he would also be concerned with maintaining the autonomy of church institutions. Last but not least, the metropolitan spoke to those present about the importance of ties with people of other nationalities or religions, and about the spiritual and moral formation of believers through the network of confessional schools.

Much has been written about the 1874 electoral congress in the period that followed, and what was discussed behind closed doors remains largely unknown to this day. What is certain is that during the two months of the congress (which was extended due to the repeated elections, as we have seen), the competition between the various power groups became increasingly acute. This state of affairs continued for many years thereafter, and the attitude of Metropolitan Romanul proved decisive in either smoothing over or fuelling the differences.

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[49] *Protocolul Congresului extraordinar național-bisericesc*, 118.
[50] Ibid., 123.

In the Romanian political landscape of the final decades of the 19th century, the competition between passivists and activists involved figures from the ecclesiastical world who were present in the political movements of the time. This division also animated those interested in the political orientation of the person who was to represent the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania. The activist past of the former hierarch Șaguna called for caution in choosing the metropolitan in the context of the passive orientation increasingly promoted by the leaders of the Romanian National Party in Transylvania.

Coming from a region part of the former (pre-1867) province of Hungary, where interaction and collaboration with the authorities in Pest and then Budapest was part of normal political life (unlike in Transylvania), Miron Romanul inherited the habit of collaboration with the political decision-makers of the time, which placed him, to a certain extent, in line with the activist attitude promoted by Andrei Șaguna. However, part of the intellectual elite of the time, who gained an essential role in the decision-making structures of the Church, adopted a passive attitude, which they tried to impose on the head of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Present in government structures since his time in Arad and Oradea Mare, Miron Romanul adopted an open attitude in his collaboration with the Hungarian authorities. Initially, the hierarch's interest in politics began in 1861, when he was involved in organizing the Romanians in Arad into a national party, which he presided.[51] Eight years later, in 1869, he held the position of deputy in the Parliament, a position that allowed him to become familiar with government policy.

As a metropolitan, although he continued to defend the autonomy of the Church following the model of Șaguna,[52] he was criticized for his moderate stance on the national cause. The criticism he attracted was mostly articulated by representatives of the Romanian National Party, who could only conceive of the relationship between the Church and the nation in terms of the former's subordination to the latter.[53] Contested by some and appreciated by others, Metropolitan Miron Romanul was far from having led an easy

[51] Ilie Dinurseni, *Arhiepiscopul și metropolitul*, 2.
[52] Keith Hitchins and Sorana Georgescu-Gorjan, *Afirmarea naţiunii. Mişcarea naţională românească din Transilvania (1860-1914)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), 167.
[53] Ibid., 169.

pastoral life.[54] In order to manage the metropolitan province, he needed, first and foremost, a good understanding and collaboration with the archdiocese, which he also served as archbishop, most of whom were devoted and deeply attached to the Șaguna legacy. Throughout his pastorate, Miron Romanul expressed his admiration for Șaguna, aware of the pressure that succession to the metropolitan throne placed on his shoulders. The context that favoured his becoming metropolitan has often been questioned. And not without reason. Although he enjoyed the support of a significant part of the intellectual and ecclesiastical elite of the time, the support he received from Hungarian political circles caught the attention of his critics. During his nearly quarter-century of ministry, his activity constantly oscillated between those at the top (high government politics) and those close to him (the metropolitan administration), navigating with tact and diplomacy among the measures imposed by political decision-makers and striving to defend the interests of the Romanian people.

[54] Antonie Plămădeală, *Lupta împotriva deznaţionalizării românilor din Transilvania în timpul dualismului austro-ungar în vremea lui Miron Romanul, 1874-1898. După acte, documente şi corespondenţe* (s.n., 1986), 33.

The Spatiality of Prostitution in Budapest During the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

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Abstract: This study examines the spatial structure and social embeddedness of prostitution in Budapest during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, with particular focus on the Dualist era. Drawing on an extensive topographic database compiled from police records, prison registries, and archival maps, it documents the activities of 13,891 individuals and the locations of 2,615 prostitution-related establishments across 559 streets. The findings challenge the concept of a single, segregated red-light district: prostitutional institutions – brothels, private apartments, and entertainment venues – were dispersed throughout the city, albeit with notable concentrations in Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and the Inner City. Spatial patterns were shaped by urban morphology, population density, transport networks, and regulatory frameworks, while also reflecting social stratification and moral geography. The analysis operates at multiple spatial scales, from district-level distributions to individual buildings, and applies network analysis to identify 45 key hubs that structured the city's prostitutional system. The results highlight both the historical continuity of certain prostitution sites and the adaptability of the sex industry to urban modernization, revealing its integration into Budapest's economic, social, and cultural life.

Keywords: Urban history, prostitution, urban space, spatial history, Budapest, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, social geography, network analysis

Rezumat: Acest studiu examinează structura spațială și înrădăcinarea socială a prostituției în Budapesta în timpul Monarhiei austro-ungare, cu accent deosebit pe epoca dualistă. Bazându-se pe o bază extinsă de date topografice, compilată din înregistrări ale poliției, registre ale închisorilor și hărți de arhivă, acest studiu documentează activitățile a 13.891 de persoane și locațiile a 2.615 unități legate de prostituție pe 559 de străzi. Constatările contestă conceptul unui singur cartier

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roșu segregat: instituțiile de prostituție - bordeluri, apartamente private și locuri de divertisment - erau dispersate în tot orașul, deși cu concentrații notabile în Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros și în centrul orașului. Modelele spațiale au fost modelate de morfologia urbană, densitatea populației, rețelele de transport și cadrele de reglementare, reflectând în același timp stratificarea socială și geografia morală. Analiza operează la scări spațiale multiple, de la distribuții la nivel de district la clădiri individuale, și aplică analiza rețelei pentru a identifica 45 de centre cheie care au structurat sistemul de prostituție al orașului. Rezultatele evidențiază atât continuitatea istorică a anumitor locuri de prostituție, cât și adaptabilitatea industriei sexului la modernizarea urbană, dezvăluind integrarea acesteia în viața economică, socială și culturală a Budapestei.

Cuvinte-cheie: Istorie urbană, prostituție, spațiu urban, istorie spațială, Budapesta, Monarhia Austro-Ungară, geografie socială, analiză de rețea

Introduction

From the second half of the 19th century, Budapest emerged as a model city of East-Central European modernization. The intensive urbanization, economic development, and social differentiation that followed the unification of the city significantly transformed both the physical and functional structure of urban space, bringing new social practices to the surface. Among these was prostitution, which – despite being under state regulation and enveloped in social stigma – became deeply embedded in the everyday life of the city. The spatial manifestations of prostitution in Budapest were highly diverse: brothels, private apartments, boarding houses, cafés, music halls, and even caves served as venues for the sex industry.[1] Regardless of their legal status or ownership structure, these establishments together constituted a structured

[1] In the United States, brothels were also referred to as "disorderly houses," "immoral resorts," and "houses of ill fame." Áron Tőtős, "'A főváros kellő közepén ott fetreng a prostitúció.' A budapesti prostitúció topográfia (1873–1928)," in *Hogyan lett Budapest a nemzet fővárosa? Tanulmányok Budapest 150. és a Társadalom– és Gazdaságtörténeti Doktori Program 30. Születésnapjára*, edited by Kövér György, Koloh Gábor, Somorjai Szabolcs, (Eötvös Publishing House, 2023), 517. In some cities, even public lavatories were used for the purposes of prostitution. Howard Brown Woolston, *Prostitution in the United States* (New York: The Century Company, 1921), 143, 153.

network, which this study interprets as a system of prostitutional institutions. Although these spaces were both well-known and yet hidden elements of the urban fabric, their study has long remained peripheral within both domestic and international urban history scholarship.

Until the end of the 20th century, the spatiality of prostitution remained a marginal topic of academic inquiry. Phil Hubbard, professor at King's College London, also drew attention to this, emphasizing that the spatial-forming role of sexuality had long been ignored in social-historical discourse.[2] His own research interprets the geographical location of the sex industry in the context of social exclusion and power relations. A similar approach was adopted by Angela Serratore, contributor to *The New York Times* magazine, who described the sites of prostitution as moral geographies.[3] Markian Prokopovych, history professor at Durham University, while studying several cities in the region (Vienna, Prague), particularly emphasized the role of Józsefváros as the central space of Budapest's sex industry.[4]

In the Hungarian academic literature, the history of prostitution has been explored in several provincial towns (e.g., Szeged – Márta Knotik[5]; Cluj – Zsolt Gyarmati and Zsuzsa Bokor[6]; Veszprém – György Hogya[7]; Sopron – Péter Güntner[8]; Miskolc – Mihály Szécsényi[9]; Székesfehérvár – József Horváth

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[2] Phil Hubbard, *Sex and the City: Geographies of Prostitution in the Urban West,* (Routledge, 2020), 1–2.

[3] Angela Serratore, ''A Preservationist's Guide to the Harems, Seraglios, and Houses of Love of Manhattan: The 19th Century New York City Brothel in Two Neighborhoods." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013.

[4] Markian Prokopovych, "Prostitution in Prague, in the Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Century," *Trafficking in Women* 9, no. 7 (2017): 1–10. Prokopovych, "Prostitution in Budapest, in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," in *Trafficking in Women (1924–1926): The Paul Kinsie Reports for the League of Nations*, edited by Elizabeth Kelly (United Nations Publications, 2017), 38–43.

[5] Márta Knotik, "Kávéházak, vendégfogadók, korcsmák és bormérések Szegeden,'' in *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum évkönyve. Történeti Tanulmányok. Studia Historica 5.*, edited by Zombori István (Móra Ferenc Museum, 2002), 67–68; 70; 73–74; 77; 84.

[6] Zsolt Gyarmati, *Nyilvánosság és magánélet a békeidők Kolozsvárán* (Komp-Press – Friends of Korunk Association, 2005), 83–112.

[7] György Hogya, *Örömlányok és bordélyházak Veszprém városában* (Veszprém: Viza Printing House, 2008), 84.

[8] Péter Güntner, "A soproni prostitúció története (1862—1918)," *Aetas* 12 (1) (1997): 54–57.

[9] Mihály Szécsényi, "A belvárosi bordélyházak kitelepítése és kisajátítása Miskolcon (1907–1926)," *Levéltári Évkönyv IX* (Miskolc, 1997): 270–291.

Csurgai[10]; Oradea – Áron Tőtős[11], etc.). However, a complex investigation into the spatial organization of prostitution in Budapest has thus far been lacking. The present author has addressed the spatiality of the Hungarian capital and, as part of it, the topography of prostitution within the framework of a doctoral dissertation on the social history of prostitution in Budapest.[12]

The central thesis of this study is that prostitution in Budapest was not concentrated in a single "red-light district," but was spatially fragmented across the city. At the same time, certain neighbourhoods – primarily Belváros, Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, and Józsefváros – became significant nodes of prostitution due to greater tolerance, economic opportunities, and the concentration of entertainment industries. It is plausible to assume that this spatial pattern was not accidental but was instead connected to the functional segmentation of the urban structure, population density, and transport infrastructure.

The aim of this research is to explore how these spaces were organized in Budapest during the Dualist era. I examine the evolution of institutional frameworks, the types of sex workers, and the roles of public, semi-public, and private spaces. Through various scales of urban space (district, street, building), we can also understand how prostitution-centred practices were tied to modes of urban spatial usage. These overlapping spatial scales formed the living environments of prostitutes. This is the scale, the physical and simultaneously mental space, where human interactions occurred.[13]

Based on the typology of public–semi-public–private spaces (following Gábor Gyáni), the social categorization, spatial location, and moral evaluation of prostitution can be linked to broader processes of social stratification.[14] These spatial concepts not only shaped the moral interpretation of women

[10] Csurgai Horváth József, ''Székesfehérvár és a prostitúció (Fehérvár piros lámpás századai),'' in *Piroslámpás évszázadok,* edited by Bana József (Archives of the City of Győr with County Rights, 1999), 45–54.

[11] Tőtős, "Bordélyházak és kéjnőtartók a polgárosodó Nagyváradon," *Socio.Hu Társadalomtudományi Szemle* 5, no. 1 (2015): 77–104.

[12] Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció társadalomtörténete Magyarországon (19. század második fele – 20. század eleje). Különös tekintettel Pest-Budára és Budapestre." PhD diss. Eötvös Loránd University 2025.

[13] Tőtős, "A főváros kellős közepén," 517.

[14] Gábor Gyáni, *Az utca és a szalon. A társadalomi térhasználat Budapesten 1870–1940* (Új Mandátum Publishing House, 1998), 22.

as "respectable" (moral) or "disreputable" (immoral), but through the notions of public and private, we may also understand why discourse distinguished between "common" street prostitutes and elite-serving courtesans who remained outside of public view. Thus, prostitutes may be placed along the axis of private and public. Luxury courtesans worked in private clubs and apartments, while "common" street prostitutes moved through the spaces of urban public life.[15] Between these poles were those who engaged in sex work as a supplementary source of income. The private sphere of prostitution primarily provided a discreet environment for wealthier social classes, served by private apartments and exclusive clubs.[16] Between public and private spaces were the semi-public venues, where intimacy was enacted in the presence of others. These locations – while partially shielded from the public – were accessible to paying clients. This category included brothels, meeting spots, and various hospitality and entertainment venues, even small shops (e.g., vegetable, fruit, or fashion boutiques), whose back rooms were illegitimately used for prostitutional purposes.[17]

Research Methodology and Sources

In this research, I define spaces of prostitution as all locations where prostitution-related activities occurred, regardless of their visibility or social acceptance.[18] A space becomes a prostitution-centred space when sex work takes place there regularly and repeatedly. Such spaces are created and reproduced through social practices and interactions among participants – prostitutes, clients, and agents of power. The spaces of power helped shape these places through regulation and law enforcement, while their meanings and social functions were also formed by everyday use.[19]

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[15] Tőtős, "A főváros kellős közepén," 520.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Malte Fuhrmann, "Western Perversions' at the Threshold of Felicity: The European Prostitutes of Galata–Pera (1870–1915)." *History and Anthropology* 21, no 2 (2010): 166.

[18] My definition was influenced by the conceptualizations of Sascha Finger and Judith Butler. According to their approach, spaces of prostitution come into existence only through the activity of the prostituted woman who performs and thereby constitutes them. Judit Butler, "Performance acts and gender constituion, An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory, *Theatre Journal*. 40, no. 4 (1988): 519–531. Sascha Finger, "Prostitúciós terek performativitása – szexmunkások és nyilvános tér Magyarországon," *Tér és társadalom* 2, no. 4 (2013): 118.

[19] Tőtős, "A főváros kellős közepén," 521.

The spatial structure of prostitution in Budapest can be examined at the levels of neighbourhoods and streets, as demonstrated by international examples such as the research conducted by Louise Settle in Edinburgh, Mark Wild in Los Angeles, and Jamie Schmidt Wagman in St. Louis.[20] All three concluded that prostitutes were surrounded by social contempt, which led to their spatial segregation. In light of these findings, this study aims to explore how the topography of Budapest reflected the spatial organization of prostitution: whether 'red-light districts' developed in the Western sense, or if the sex industry was diffusely present throughout the city.

The core sources of this research are the files of the Budapest City Archives concerning morality policing.[21] In particular, the relatively little-studied police records from the years 1891–1895 and 1897 have been utilized. In addition to personal details of the prostitutes, these records documented exact addresses (district, street, house number, floor, door), and, in some cases, they also specified the nature of the establishment (such as a brothel or private prostitute). These handwritten, tabulated records were maintained by the police on a daily and monthly basis, listing individuals who acquired or terminated their pleasure cards, or were referred to a hospital.

The topographical database has been further expanded with spatial data from the prison registries of the Budapest City Archives,[22] from the Hungarian National Archives,[23] and from the official yearbooks of the capital city of Budapest.[24] In addition, I have integrated locational references from

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[20] Louise Settle, "The social geography of prostitution in Edinburgh, 1900–1939," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 33, no. 2. (2013): 238. Mark Wild, "Red light Kaleidoscope, Prostitution and Ethnoracial Relations in Los Angeles 1880–1940," *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 6 (2002): 728. Jamie Schmidt Wagman, "Women Reformers Respond during the Depression. Battling St. Louis's Disease and Inmorality," *Journal of Urban History* 35, no. 5 (2009): 706–707.

[21] BFL VI.1.b. BFL VI.15. BFL VI.15. f.3. For detailed references to the sources used, see Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 465–471.

[22] BFL VII.1.d. BFL VII.2.c. BFL VII.5.c. BFL VII.18d. BFL VII.101.c. BFL VII.101.d. BFL VII.102.a. BFL VII.103. BFL VII.104.a. BFL VII.106. BFL XV. BFL XVI.2.a.

[23] MNL OL K150.

[24] Gusztáv Thirring (ed.), *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II, évfolyam 1895–1896* (Published by the Statistical Office of the Capital City of Budapest, 1898),143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III évfolyam 1897–1898* (1899), 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV évfolyam 1899–1900* (1901), 88. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V évfolyam 1902* (1902), 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VI évfolyam 1903* (1903), 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII*

relevant literature and published sources. As a result of the research, a database has been compiled documenting the life events and activities of 13,891 individuals—primarily prostitutes, and, to a lesser extent, institutional managers. It records the sex industry establishments with which they were associated at specific moments in time.[25]

Period	N	%
1860–1869*	114	0.82
1870–1879	1140	8.21
1880–1889	922	6.64
1890–1899	9138	65.78
1900–1909	692	4.98
1910–1919	1298	9.34
1920–1929	268	1.93
Unknown	319	2.30
Total	13891	100.00

**The earliest data originates from 1863*

Table 1. Temporal distribution of sources used for the topographic database of Budapest prostitutes[26]

évfolyam 1904 (1904), 77. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII évfolyam 1905* (1905), 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI évfolyam 1907* (1907), 95. Gábor Doros, József Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten* II (Budapest Statistical Communications 61/2.) (Budapest Municipal Printing House, 1930), 800. *Fővárosi Közlöny* (Budapest Municipal Gazette) 1900–1937.

[25] The database comprises 8,057 prostitutes (appearing in a total of 12,770 records) and 668 managers of prostitution-related establishments—of whom 457 were brothel keepers and 211 operated various entertainment and hospitality venues or other commercial premises. The database includes a small number of cases from Kispest, Újpest, Erzsébetfalva, and Pesterzsébet as well. However, the present dissertation focuses exclusively on the nine districts that fell within the administrative boundaries of Budapest at the time. I published my research findings concerning Újpest in an edited volume in 2023. Tőtős, "A főváros kellős közepén," 517. See also the references in footnote 17: Tőtős, "A főváros kellős közepén," 465–471; 517.

[26] Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II.*,143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III.*, 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV.*, 88. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V.*, 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai*

Data processing was supported by Mihály Ráday's *Handbook of Budapest Street Names*[27] and the *Budapest Time Machine* application[28] operated by the Budapest City Archives (BFL). Ultimately, 11,310 names and their associated precise addresses (district, street, house number; in several hundred cases also floor and door number) were identified. Among these individuals, 1,639 were associated with more than one sex industry location, totalling 4,276 links. This indicates the mobility of prostitutes, as well as the fact that certain brothel keepers and business owners operated multiple establishments simultaneously or consecutively. These phenomena also highlight some structural limitations of the database.

The primary value of the topographic study of prostitution in Budapest lies in the detailed locational data. The database covers all nine administrative districts of Budapest as established in 1873, with data pertaining to 559 individual streets and 2,615 identified buildings.[29] Since the overwhelming majority of the sources date from the years 1890–1899, visualizing the spatial distribution of institutions became feasible through mapping this particular decade. Over 70 map sheets from the 1895 administrative map series of Budapest were digitized and augmented with identifiable prostitution sites using *CorelDraw*.

Évkönyve VI., 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII.*, 77. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII.*, 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI.*, 95. 1907: 95. Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 800. *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1900–1937. BFL VI.1.b. BFL VI.15. BFL VI.15.f.3. BFL VII.1.d. BFL VII.2.c. BFL VII.5.c. BFL VII.18d. BFL VII.101.c. BFL VII.101.d. BFL VII.102.a. BFL VII.103. BFL VII.104.a. BFL VII.106. BFL XV. BFL XVI.2.a. MNL OL K150. For detailed references to the sources used, see Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 465–471.

[27] Mihály Ráday, *Budapesti utcanevek: A-Z. Budapest* (Budapest: Corvina, 2013).

[28] *Hungaricana*, "Budapest Time Machine," accessed November 20, 2024: https://www.hungaricana.hu/hu/adatbazisok/budapest-idogep/.

[29] Terézváros and Erzsébetváros were officially separated in 1882. Dezső Ekler, "Madách út vagy szerves városfejlődés. A Belső–Erzsébetváros történetéről,'' in *Tértörténetek: válogatott írások*, edited by Ekler Dezső (Budapest: L'Harmattan – Kossuth Club, 2018), 11–32.

The visualization encompasses three temporal snapshots:[30] 1870–1879,[31] 1890–1899,[32] and 1910–1919.[33] Their aim is to illustrate the spatial distribution and temporal evolution of prostitution. The maps represent locations in Pest by district, while in the case of Buda, data deficiencies limited comprehensive coverage. One constraint of historical cartography is that all snapshots are based on the 1895 map series, even though the city's street layout had changed over time. Nevertheless, the maps—offering such detailed coverage for the first time—are able to depict the full urban extent of prostitutional institutions, including both legitimate and illegitimate sites. While the maps will require further refinement in the future, it is reasonable to assume that such modifications will not significantly alter the overall picture.

Based on the information gathered from the maps, what is clear is that Budapest did not have a classic "red-light district": prostitutional institutions were scattered throughout the entire city. However, comparing the three temporal snapshots reveals a concentration process in which, starting from the 1870s, the number of sex industry establishments increased and gradually shifted toward areas beyond the Small and Grand Boulevards. This trend reflects the impact of urban development and modernization on prostitutional spaces, as well as the effort to push brothels out of the city centre toward the periphery.[34] To better understand the spatial dynamics of prostitution, district-level analysis is indispensable. It enables the detailed mapping of local characteristics, concentrations, and spatial usage patterns.

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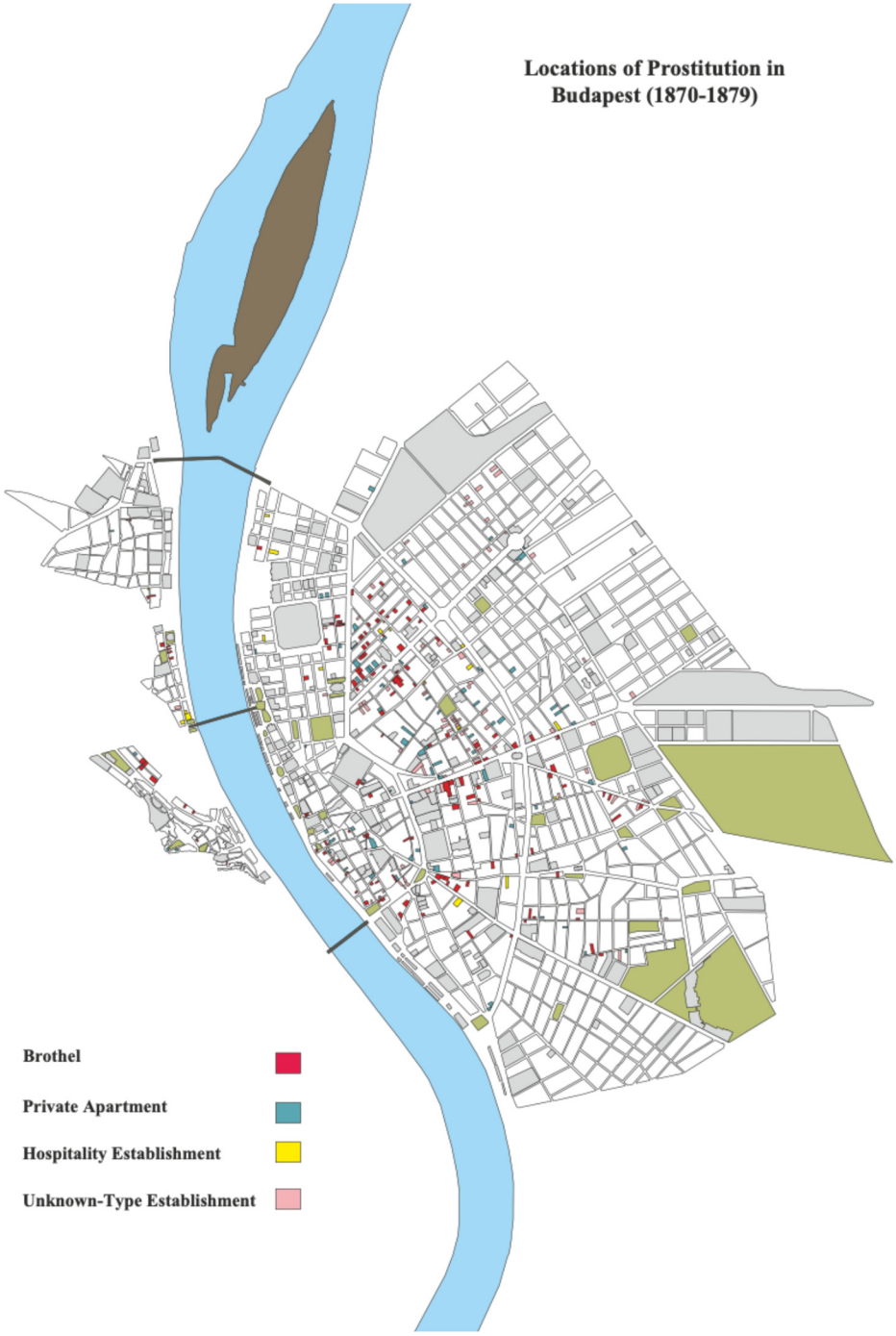
[30] Throughout period under scrutiny, a total of 1,719 unique prostitution-related locations were successfully mapped. The individual establishments were consolidated. In addition to brothels, private apartments, and meeting places, venues of entertainment and hospitality, as well as prostitution-related institutions of unknown category – most of which were likely private apartments – were also marked with distinct colors.

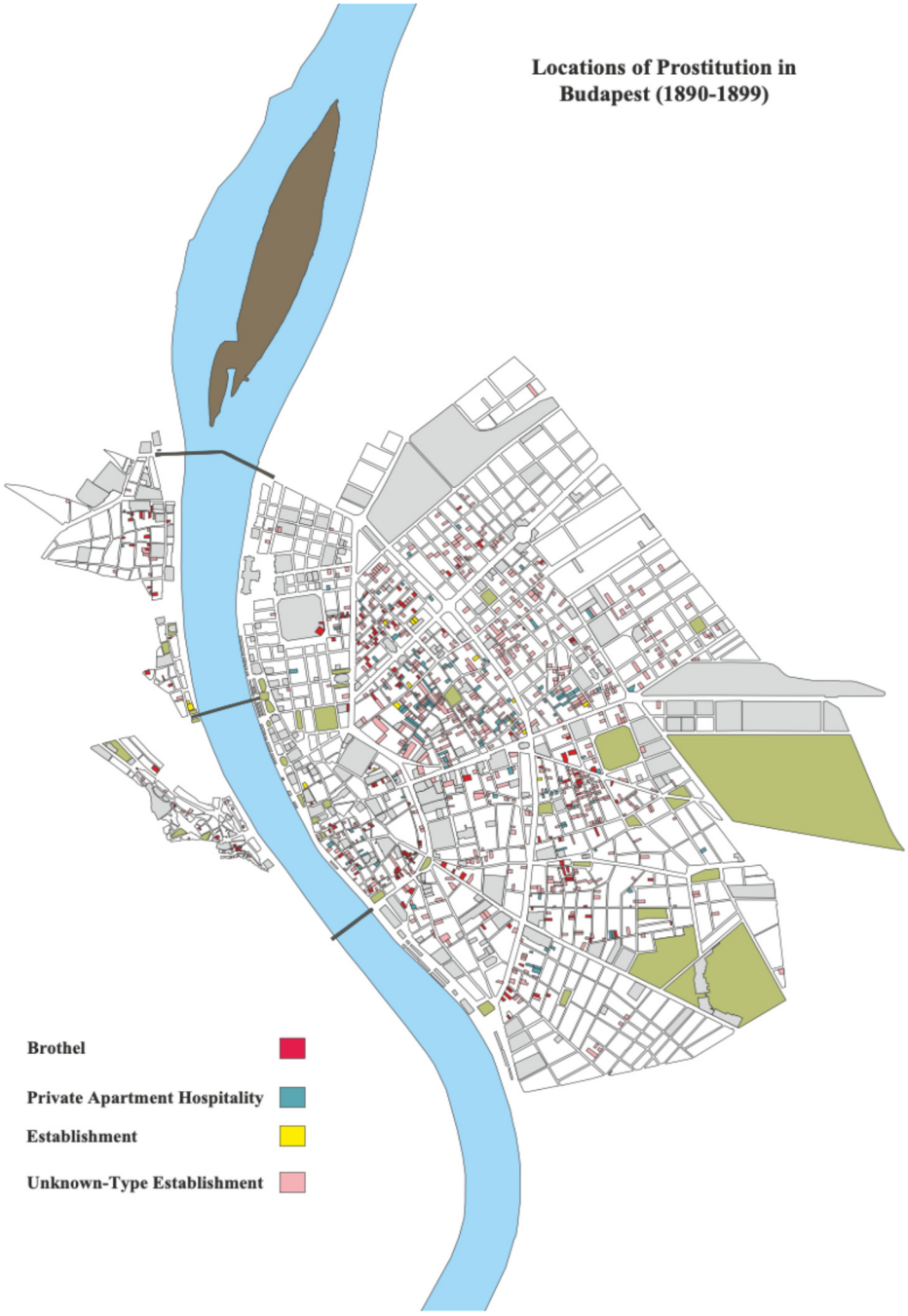
[31] A total of 238 prostitution-related locations from this period were successfully mapped.

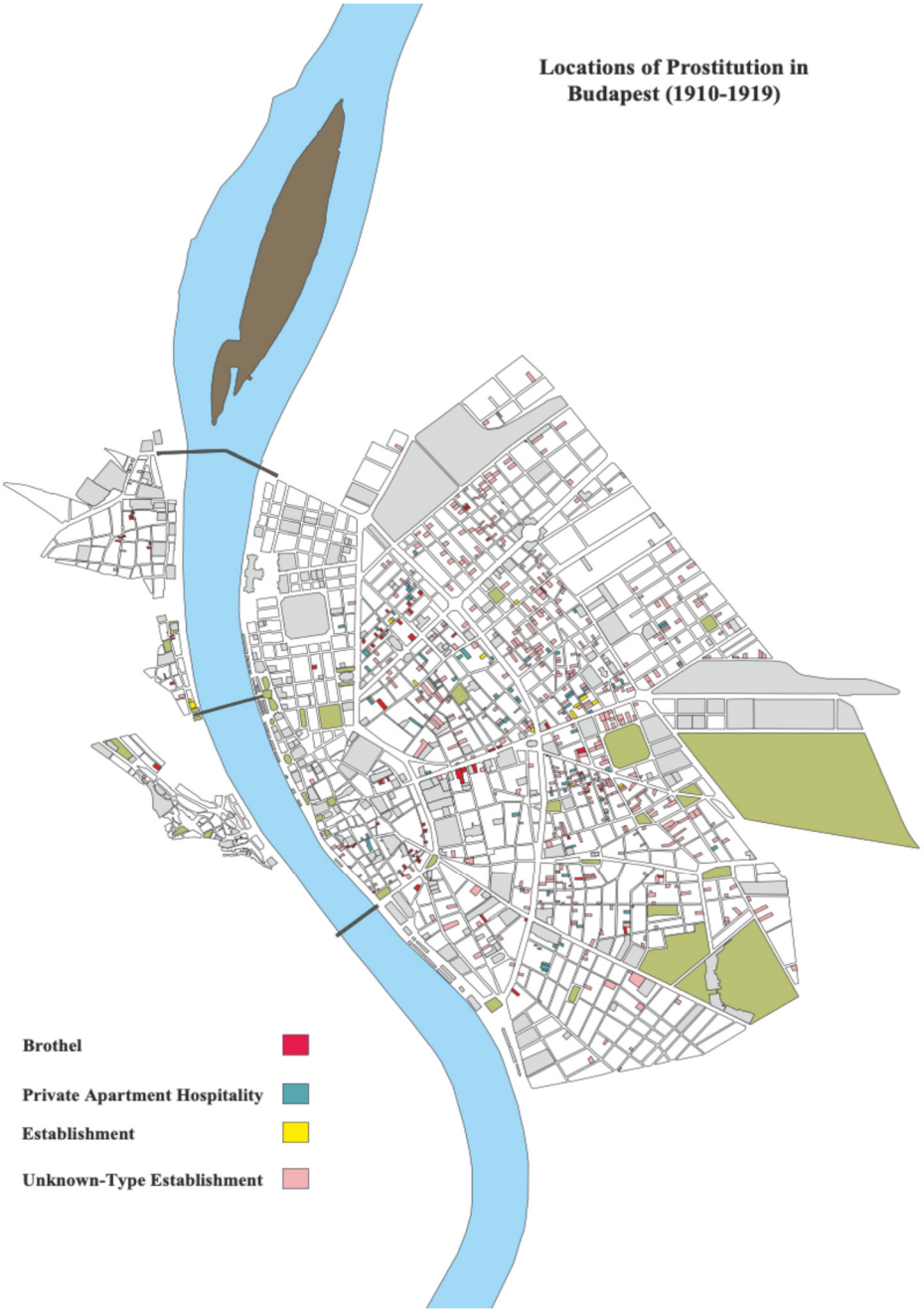
[32] A total of 943 unique prostitution-related locations from this period were successfully mapped.

[33] A total of 538 unique prostitution-related locations from this period were marked on the map.

[34] Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 82; 85.


Locations of Prostitution in Budapest (1870-1879)
Brothel
Private Apartment
Hospitality Establishment
Unknown-Type Establishment


Locations of Prostitution in Budapest (1890-1899)
Brothel
Private Apartment Hospitality
Establishment
Unknown-Type Establishment



Prostitution by district

In 19th–20th century Europe – though less prominently than in the United States[35] – red-light districts also emerged. However, these never exercised exclusive spatial use. The term refers to urban areas where prostitution was more concentrated and somewhat separated from the general population. According to studies by French social historian Alain Corbin, in several French cities – such as Marseille, Montpellier, or Toulon – prostitutional activities were indeed tied to specific districts, though other social groups lived in these neighbourhoods as well.[36] The areas labelled as red-light districts did not enjoy exclusive spatial use at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In the case of Hungarian cities – such as Győr,[37] Székesfehérvár,[38] Sopron,[39] Oradea,[40] or Cluj[41] – no segregated red-light districts developed. Institutions were typically located on the outskirts or on the periphery, partly due to the smaller size of these cities. However, overlap between downtown entertainment quarters and prostitutional sites was frequent. The streets hosting prostitutional institutions were not closed off, and city residents could move freely between these areas and the rest of the city.[42]

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[35] Some of the more well-known red-light districts operated in New Orleans (Storyville), New York (Tenderloin), Chicago (the Levee), and San Francisco (Barbary Coast). Eric R. Platt, Lilian H. –Hill, "A Storyville Education: Spatial Practices and the Learned Sex Trade in the City That Care Forgot,'' *Adult Education Quarterly* 64, no. 4. (2014): 285; Neil Larry Shumsky, "Tacit acceptance: Respectable Americans and Segregated Prostitution, 1870–1910," *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 4. (1986): 665. L. Craig Foster, "Tarnished Angels: Prostitution in Storyville, New Orleans, 1900–1910," *Louisiana History* 31, no. 4 (2007): 387–397. Alecia P. Long, "Poverty Is the New Prostitution: Race, Poverty, and Public Housing in Post–Katrina New Orleans,'' *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 3 (2007): 798. Joel E. Black, "Space and Status in Chicago's Legal Landscapes," *Journal of Planning History* 12, no. 3. (2013): 234.

[36] In Montpellier, prostitutes and prostitution-related institutions were concentrated in the so-called *Cité Pasquier* district, while in Toulon, they were placed in the area known as the *quartier réservé Chapeau Rouge*. In 1907, the mayor of Provence established a separate *quartier réservé* specifically for brothels. In 1874, authorities in Marseille made significant efforts to situate brothels in streets close to the port. Corbin *Women for Hire*, 54–55.

[37] József Bana, *Piroslámpás évszázadok* (Győr: Győr Megyei Jogú Város Levéltára, 1999).

[38] Csurgai Horváth, "Székesfehérvár és a prostitúció," 45–54.

[39] Güntner, "A soproni prostitúció története," 49–64.

[40] Tőtős, "Bordélyházak és kéjnőtartók," 77–104. Tőtős, "Prostitúció a polgárosodó Nagyváradon," in *Előadások a magyar tudományos napján az erdélyi Múzeum–Egyesület I. szakosztályában*, edited by Egyed Emese – Pakó László, (Transylvanian Museum Society, 2015), 293–310.

[41] Bokor, *Testtörténetek,* 41–49.

[42] Shumsky, "Tacit acceptance," 666–667. Laura Vaughan, *Mapping Society*. *The Spatial Dimension of Social Cartography* (UCL Press, 2018).

In Budapest, the distribution of prostitutional institutions varied significantly by district, as evidenced by cartographic sources, archival documents, and printed materials (see the attached maps). In the Inner City (Belváros), brothels were predominantly concentrated along the lines of the former city walls, in areas historically affected by prostitution, especially in the parallel streets around the Károly barracks, the County Hall, and Kálvin Square. By the 1910s, however, prostitutional sites linked to entertainment venues and private apartments had nearly vanished from this district, though a few brothels remained. Lipótváros was in a unique position: it had the fewest prostitutional institutions, most of which were linked to the Újépület (New Building). The demolition of this structure at the end of the 19th century also marked the disappearance of the prostitutional presence in the area, allowing the local elite and city administration to justifiably claim the district's 'cleanliness.' In contrast, Terézváros was one of the most densely developed districts of the sex industry, particularly in the area bounded by Teréz Boulevard, Andrássy Avenue, and Váci Boulevard, where brothels, private apartments, and entertainment venues all operated.

Prostitution extended into the streets around the Nyugati Railway Station, and although the number of such sites declined by the 1910s, the area maintained a strong presence. In Erzsébetváros, prostitution was predominantly linked to private apartments and hospitality venues. From the 1870s onward, brothels gradually receded into the background. The area around Keleti Railway Station, known as "Hungarian Chicago," became notorious not only for prostitution but also for its high crime rate. In Józsefváros, prostitutional institutions were present on multiple streets, though a few concentrated zones can be clearly identified: around Nagyfuvaros, Kender, Fecske, Conti, and Bérkocsis Streets, as well as the area near the Market Hall. In Ferencváros, brothels and private apartments clustered around the parallel and perpendicular streets connected to the Mária-Terézia barracks. As for Buda, data scarcity limits general conclusions, but prostitutional activity was traceable in the streets across from the Ganz factory and surrounding areas. Overall, sex industry establishments were frequently located near military sites, industrial plants, and major transportation hubs – especially in the Inner City, Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, and Józsefváros. Notably, no classic red-light district developed in Budapest, and prostitutional institutions were not confined to a single part of the city. The sex industry extended across densely populated and built-up

urban areas, although certain districts – such as Terézváros – hosted fewer such locations, as confirmed by cartographic representations. Nevertheless, many streets in Budapest became prostitutional hotspots where both legal and illegal establishments operated.

From an international perspective, one notable example is the Bremen model, which became known in several German cities (e.g., Bremen, Hamburg).[43] According to this system, prostitutes were concentrated into a single street – the so-called *bordellstrasse* – where other residential functions (e.g., domestic servants) were prohibited.[44] In Budapest, no street existed where housing outside prostitution was formally banned, though there were instances to the contrary. Authorities attempted to limit prostitutional activity to certain streets, but these efforts never resulted in sustained spatial segregation. Returning to the Bremen system: its goal was to spatially control prostitution and curb the spread of venereal diseases. Bremen's example is particularly notable because the strictly regulated zone was established through the cooperation of the local government, police, and medical professionals.[45] News of the model reached Budapest as well: police officer Emil Schreiber[46] personally studied the system and, in his 1917 professional publication, advocated for its implementation. He argued that the capital's 1909 prostitutional regulatory decree already reflected this approach. However, Budapest's unique legal and economic environment – particularly the lack of investor interest – ultimately prevented implementation.[47] Nonetheless, the authorities continued striving to restrict prostitution, ideally to the level of specific streets.

According to district-level data from the Metropolitan Statistical Office between 1894 and 1906 (*see Figure 1 and Table 2*), approximately 72% of prostitutes were concentrated in three districts – Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, and Józsefváros.

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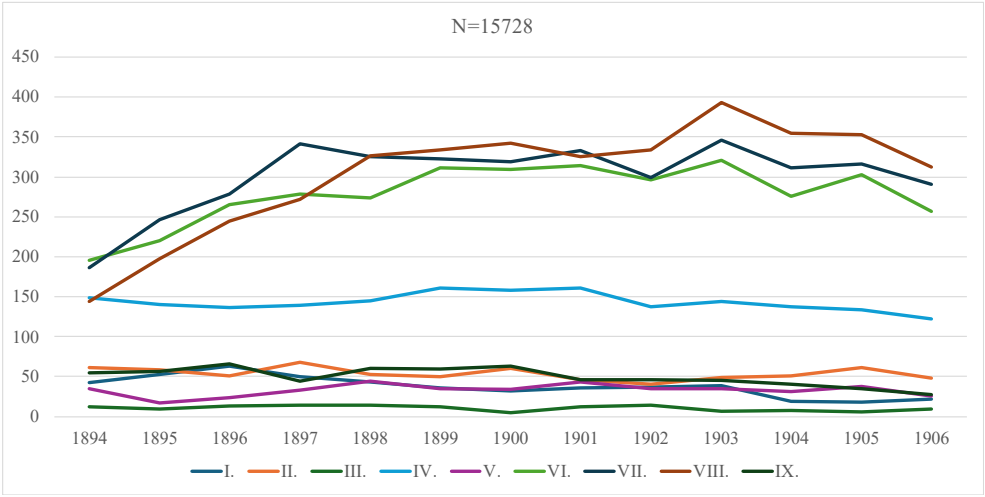
[43] Emil Schreiber, *A prostitúció* (Budapest: Pátria, 1917), 253.

[44] Richard J. Evans, "Prostitúció, állam és társadalom a birodalmi Németországban," in *A nyilvánvaló nők. Prostitúció, társadalom, társadalomtörténet*, edited by Léderer Pál (Budapest: Új Mandátum Publishing House, 1999), 251.

[45] Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe* (New York: The Century Company, 1914), 173; 177–178.

[46] Emil Schreiber (1863–?) was born in Kaposvár and earned a doctoral degree following his legal studies. He first worked as a police writer and was later appointed chief of police. Between 1886 and 1920, he served within the ranks of the Budapest police. In addition to prostitution, his primary areas of focus were vagrancy control and industrial law. He participated in numerous study trips and international conferences, where he also delivered lectures. His research focused on prostitution and human trafficking.

[47] Schreiber, *A prostitúció*, 117; 119.



Year	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	Total
1894	42	61	12	149	35	196	186	144	55	880
1895	53	58	10	140	17	220	246	198	57	999
1896	63	51	13	136	24	265	278	245	66	1141
1897	50	68	14	139	33	278	341	272	44	1239
1898	43	53	14	145	44	274	325	326	60	1284
1899	36	50	12	161	35	311	323	334	59	1321
1900	32	60	5	158	34	309	319	342	63	1322
1901	36	46	12	161	43	314	333	325	46	1316
1902	37	41	14	137	35	296	299	334	46	1239
1903	39	49	7	144	35	321	346	393	45	1379
1904	19	51	8	137	31	276	311	355	41	1229
1905	18	61	6	134	38	303	316	353	35	1264
1906	22	48	10	122	26	257	291	312	27	1115
Total (count)	490	697	137	1863	430	3620	3914	3933	644	15728
Total (%)	3.12%	4.43%	0.87%	11.85%	2.73%	23.02%	24.89%	25.01%	4.09%	100.00%

Figure 1 and **Table 2**. Temporal distribution of the number of registered prostitutes in Budapest by district (1894–1906)[48]

[48] Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II.*,143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III.*, 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV.*, 88. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V.*, 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VI.*, 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII.*, 77. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII.*, 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI.*, 95. 1907: 95.

In the Inner City (Belváros), they were also significantly present, accounting for about 12%, while their numbers remained negligible in other Pest and Buda districts. Temporal analysis of the data indicates that by the late 1890s, the number of prostitutes in Józsefváros surpassed those registered in Terézváros and Erzsébetváros, making it one of the most important centres of prostitution in the capital. Contemporary press outlets, including *Fidibusz*, often morally stigmatized Lipótváros and Terézváros as the most immoral districts.[49] Certain parts of Józsefváros were associated with a distinct set of values, where poverty, crime, and prostitution formed an organic, everyday part of urban life. Especially notable were areas around Rákóczi Square, Horváth Mihály Square, Mátyás Square, Üllői Road, and the zone bordered by Népszínház and Szigony Streets – sources identified these as locations with a heightened presence of social deviance.[50] These localized hotspots clearly illustrate that prostitution was not only concentrated on the district level, but also within smaller urban neighbourhoods, closely tied to socio-economic marginality.

The data published by the Metropolitan Statistical Office merits some refinement.[51] Through the topographic database of prostitution in Budapest, the spatial distribution of prostitutes can be examined not only by district, but also by institution type (see Table 3). The chart below also clearly shows that on the Buda side, most prostitutes operated in brothels, while on the Pest side, they resided primarily in private apartments. In terms of their presence in entertainment and hospitality venues, as well as other businesses, prostitutes were most commonly found in Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, Ferencváros, and the 2nd District of Buda. In Viziváros, prostitution was limited to cafés and licensed prostitution zones (*kéjnőtelep*), and in other Buda districts, authorities similarly did not tolerate other types of establishments. In contrast, in Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and Ferencváros, prostitutes worked in a wide

[49] Zsúron. *Fidibusz*, no 2. (1906): 9.

[50] Balázs Varga, "Városnézés A kortárs magyar film Budapestje," *Budapesti Negyed* 9, no. 31 (2001): 97.

[51] At the current stage of the research, the district-level distribution of prostitutes does not allow for the calculation of a segregation index. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile in the future to continue the investigation in this direction and to examine the issue in proportion to the population at the level of city blocks, streets, or districts. Furthermore, the spatial distribution of entertainment venues within the city and their relationship to prostitution should also be further refined in future research, although the present framework did not allow for such an analysis.

array of venues: cafés, licensed zones, boarding houses, restaurants, bodegas, pubs, massage salons, cabarets, concert halls, music halls, and meeting places. Notably, Terézváros was the only district where sexual services were documented even in fruit shops – a striking illustration of the spatial and institutional diversity of prostitution.[52]

The district-level data published by the Metropolitan Statistical Office provides a useful foundation for investigating the geographical distribution of prostitution; however, the topographic database of prostitution in Budapest also enables analysis by institution type (see Table 3). According to the database, prostitutes in Buda mostly operated in brothels, while in Pest, they were primarily present in private apartments. Prostitution in entertainment venues and commercial spaces was especially notable in Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, Ferencváros, and the 2nd District of Buda.

1. In absolute numbers

Category / District	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	Total
Brothel	98	73	34	162	39	246	76	160	29	917
Private Apartment	55	44	17	135	74	198	176	192	55	946
Entertainment, hospitality venue and other business	15	34	5	37	13	30	77	83	20	314
Total	168	151	56	334	126	474	329	435	104	2177

2. In percentages

Category / District	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.	VIII.	IX.	Total
Brothel	58.33%	48.34%	60.71%	48.50%	30.95%	51.90%	23.10%	36.78%	27.88%	42.12%
Private Apartment	32.74%	29.14%	30.36%	40.42%	58.73%	41.77%	53.50%	44.14%	52.88%	43.45%
Entertainment, hospitality venue and other business	8.93%	22.52%	8.93%	11.08%	10.32%	6.33%	23.40%	19.08%	19.23%	14.42%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 3. Distribution of Prostitutes in Budapest by District and Major Categories of Sex Industry Institutions (1865–1929)[53]

[52] Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 87.

[53] Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II.*,143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III.*, 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV.*, 88.

In Viziváros, prostitution was limited to cafés and licensed zones, with other institution types prohibited in this and other Buda districts. Conversely, in the Pest districts – especially Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and Ferencváros – prostitutes worked in a wide variety of venues: cafés, licensed zones, boarding houses, restaurants, bodegas, pubs, massage salons, cabarets, concert halls, music halls, and meeting points. Special attention should be given to Terézváros, where fruit shops were the only ones to also document the presence of sexual services – clearly illustrating the spatial and institutional diversity of prostitution. The examined data highlights that prostitution in Budapest was organized not only territorially, but also institutionally, in a differentiated manner. This reflects distinct social norms, regulatory practices, and local urban fabric characteristics.

District-level statistical data provides an important starting point for analysing the geography of prostitution in Budapest. However, due to their limited explanatory power, such data must be nuanced. These datasets offer a bird's-eye view of the phenomenon, while overlooking differences in population density, built environment, and architectural structure. Whereas the inner districts (especially Districts VI–VIII) were densely populated and intensely built-up, outer areas retained a less urbanized character.[54] Between 1869 and 1900, Budapest's population tripled, but population distribution remained uneven across districts. The distribution of prostitutes followed this pattern of concentration: most lived in Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and the Inner City, as confirmed by police reports from 1899. During the winter months, the number of prostitutes typically increased compared to the summer.[55] At the time of the city's unification, the built-up area of Pest extended only as far as the Grand Boulevard (Nagykörút), but after the Millennium, intensive urban development began: one-story buildings were replaced by three- or multi-

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Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V.*, 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VI.*, 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII.*, 77. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII.*, 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI.*, 95. 1907: 95. Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 800. *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1900–1937. BFL VI.1.b. BFL VI.15. BFL VI.15.f.3. BFL VII.1.d. BFL VII.2.c. BFL VII.5.c. BFL VII.18d. BFL VII.101.c. BFL VII.101.d. BFL VII.102.a. BFL VII.103. BFL VII.104.a. BFL VII.106. BFL XV. BFL XVI.2.a. MNL OL K150. For detailed references to the sources used, see Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 465–471.

[54] Károly Vörös "A Fővárostól a Székesfővárosig, 1873–1896," in *Budapest története a márciusi forradalomtól az őszirózsás forradalomig*, edited by Vörös Károly (Budapest: Akadémiai Publishing House, 1978), 382.

[55] Jelentés a Budapest Fő- és Székvárosi állami rendőrség 1899. évi működéséről, 213.

story houses, and on the eve of World War I, even the areas beyond the Boulevard had become densely developed. Urban planning aimed to spatially separate the working class from the bourgeoisie, partly for public health reasons.[56]

The spatial patterns of prostitution were not random: the location of prostitutes was shaped by market logic, accessibility, proximity to transportation nodes, and regulatory measures. This is why prostitutional institutions were often located in downtown business and entertainment districts, as well as busy transport zones. Both sex workers and establishment owners preferred central, well-connected areas—especially important for street workers, who sought to align with the movement patterns of potential clients. While the police partly restricted this through regulations, they also attempted to manage it. The persistence of prostitutional sites depended not only on supply and demand, but also on the tacit acceptance of urban society. As long as prostitution was considered isolatable and controllable, most city dwellers – at least implicitly – tolerated its presence. However, prostitutional spaces were symbolically stigmatized: locals noted them and often avoided them, while others deliberately sought them out.

The Urban Sex Industry at the Level of Streets, Squares, and Buildings

The street was one of the most important arenas of prostitution in the period. It served as the primary site of solicitation: prostitutes approached potential clients there, whom they then guided to private apartments, boarding houses, or meeting places. It is thus essential to examine this spatial level specifically.

The spatial structures of urban prostitution had already developed by the Middle Ages: many European cities had side streets or squares associated with prostitution. According to Richard J. Evans and other historians, the spatial patterns of 19th-century urban prostitution remained largely unchanged until World War I.[57] This is also true for Budapest: while the topography of the city's sex industry changed over time, historical continuity of certain locations is also observable. In the 18th and 19th centuries, brothels were primarily

[56] Gyáni, *Bérkaszárnya és nyomortelep: a budapesti munkáslakás múltja* (Budapest: Magvető Publishing House, 1992), 21.
[57] Evans, "Prostitúció, állam és társadalom," 250.

concentrated in Buda, especially in the Tabán area and along the Danube bank between the Sáros and Rác Baths. According to Frigyes Korn's 1833 report, the right bank of the Danube was crowded with prostitutes in the evening, while Ferenc Keller's 1841 report mentions significant prostitutional activity in the outskirts of Krisztinaváros and beyond the Tabán.[58] In Pest, brothels were mostly located at the base of the old city walls, on the inner side of what is now the Small Boulevard (Kiskörút), extending to Deák Square and through Deák Ferenc Street to the Danube. Based on the research conducted by Mihály Szécsényi and contemporary reports by Béla Bíró and László Siklóssy, the brothels on Bástya and Magyar Újvilág Streets were permanent fixtures in this area from the 18th to the 20th century.[59] Zsuzsanna Kalla reached similar conclusions: in reform-era Pest, prostitutional institutions clustered along the Small Boulevard, near Nagy Híd Street, Kálvin Square, and Vámház Boulevard, while in Buda, the area around Gellért Hill was prominent.[60]

In summary, between the 18th and 19th centuries and the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a significant portion of prostitutional institutions in Budapest remained in the same streets and neighbourhoods across generations. Urbanization and spatial restructuring only partially altered this geographical continuity. Thus, the topography of the sex industry was shaped not only by modernization processes but also by local traditions and the historical embeddedness of spatial use.

Before the unification of Budapest, the Inner City was defined by narrow, winding streets and low-rise one- or two-story buildings. After unification, intensive urban development led to a cityscape increasingly dominated by multi-story rental buildings.

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[58] Béla Bíró, *A prostitúció* (Publication of the Royal Hungarian Police National Specialized Training Courses, 1933), 50. János Cséri, *Budapest Fő- és Székváros prostitutió–ügye* (Separate reprint from Klinikai Füzetek, 1893),13.

[59] Bíró, *A prostitúció*, 47; Szécsényi, "A budapesti prostitúció átalakulása az 1960-as években,'' in *Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv V*, edited by Á. Varga László (Budapest City Archives, 2010): 314. According to the description by László Siklóssy, "in the old files, we read about suburban prostitution. In any case, it is peculiar that in Pest, even today, a line of prostitution can be traced along the former city walls. This spatial pattern – which I will elaborate on shortly – has existed for generations. Whether, in the old intolerant times, such women could only be found in the suburbs, and whether they gradually drifted toward the edge of the Inner City in more tolerant eras, is difficult to determine. But that this prostitution line already existed at the beginning of the 19th century is beyond doubt." László Siklóssy, *A régi Budapest erkölcse* (Budapest: Osiris, 2002), 238.

[60] Zsuzsa Kalla, "Prostitúció a reformkori Pesten,'' *Rubicon* 14, no. 1 (2011): 56–57.

1. Brothels

District	Brothel		Street with brothels		Number of brothels per street
	N	%	N	%	
I. (Krisztinaváros, Tabán, Vár)	58	9.70%	17	8.67%	3.41
II. (Viziváros)	47	7.86%	19	9.69%	2.47
III. (Óbuda)	18	3.01%	7	3.57%	2.57
IV. (Belváros)	88	14.72%	29	14.80%	3.03
V. (Lipótváros)	35	5.85%	14	7.14%	2.50
VI. (Terézváros)	116	19.40%	28	14.29%	4.14
VII. (Erzsébetváros)	72	12.04%	23	11.73%	3.13
VIII. (Józsefváros)	112	18.73%	46	23.47%	2.43
IX. (Ferencváros)	52	8.70%	13	6.63%	4.00
Total	598	100.00%	196	100.00%	3.05

2. Private apartments

District	Private Apartment		Street with private apartment		Number of private apartments per street
	N	%	N	%	
I. (Krisztinaváros, Tabán, Vár)	24	6.19%	15	6.64%	1.60
II. (Viziváros)	13	3.35%	8	3.54%	1.63
III. (Óbuda)	8	2.06%	7	3.10%	1.14
IV. (Belváros)	55	14.18%	42	18.58%	1.31
V. (Lipótváros)	25	6.44%	15	6.64%	1.67
VI. (Terézváros)	88	22.68%	35	15.49%	2.51
VII. (Erzsébetváros)	81	20.88%	50	22.12%	1.62
VIII. (Józsefváros)	76	19.59%	46	20.35%	1.65
IX. (Ferencváros)	18	4.64%	8	3.54%	2.25
Total	388	100.00%	226	100.00%	1.72

3. Hospitality and entertainment venues and other businesses

District	Other prostitutional institution		Street with other prostitutional institutions		Number of other prostitutional institutions
	N	%	N	%	
I. (Krisztinaváros, Tabán, Vár)	25	9.47%	11	8.03%	2.27
II. (Viziváros)	26	9.85%	15	10.95%	1.73
III. (Óbuda)	4	1.52%	4	2.92%	1.00
IV. (Belváros)	38	14.39%	24	17.52%	1.58
V. (Lipótváros)	22	8.33%	11	8.03%	2.00
VI. (Terézváros)	32	12.12%	16	11.68%	2.00
VII. (Erzsébetváros)	61	23.11%	22	16.06%	2.77
VIII. (Józsefváros)	40	15.15%	26	18.98%	1.54
IX. (Ferencváros)	16	6.06%	8	5.84%	2.00
Total	264	100.00%	137	100.00%	1.93

Table 4. Spatial Distribution of Prostitutional Institutions and Streets by Urban District (1860–1929)[61]

[61] Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II.*,143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III.*, 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV.*, 88. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V.*, 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VI.*, 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII.*, 77. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII.*, 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI.*, 95. 1907: 95.

The construction of Liberty Bridge and Elisabeth Bridge, ordered in 1893, accelerated this transformation: Kígyó Square, Irányi Dániel, Duna, and Kötő Streets, along with landmark buildings such as the old City Hall, the Curia, and the baroque buildings of the Athenaeum were demolished.[62]

The structure and architectural character of the Inner City changed drastically, with new buildings offering previously unknown levels of comfort. A striking example of the transformation of prostitutional spaces is the Tabán. From the 18th century onward, the Tabán was one of the most significant sites of prostitution in Buda, where sexual services were mainly provided in small taverns. Between 1860 and 1890, the rural character of this neighbourhood and its association with prostitution gave it a poor reputation. By the early 20th century, however, the Tabán underwent social and spatial rehabilitation: brothels disappeared, the district lost its sex-industry identity, and with it, its earlier stigmas faded.[63]

The topographic database of prostitution in Budapest does not permit a qualitative description of sex industry spaces, but it is suitable for their spatial analysis in quantitative terms. The database contains 2,615 buildings on 559 individual streets where prostitutional activity occurred. Statistically, this means an average of 4.67 prostitutional institutions per street. By institution type: 3.05 brothels, 1.72 private apartments, and 1.93 other venues (e.g., hospitality businesses) per street (see Table 4).

Brothels were particularly concentrated in Terézváros and Ferencváros, where the average number per street reached or even exceeded four. In contrast, the lowest values were found in Viziváros, Óbuda, and Lipótváros. The relatively low average for Józsefváros (2.43) is due to the fact that, while Terézváros had more brothels concentrated on fewer streets, in District VIII they were more evenly dispersed across a wider area. According to the database, one-quarter of all brothels in the capital operated in Józsefváros, but with a more even spatial distribution. As for private apartments, Terézváros and Ferencváros had the highest average number of such residences per street – 2.5 on average.

Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 800. *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1900–1937. For detailed references to the sources used, see Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 432–433.

[62] András Sipos, *A jövő Budapestje 1930–1960. Városfejlesztési programok és rendezési tervek* (Budapest: Napvilág Publishing House, 2011), 83.

[63] Péter Buza, *Pest–budai történetek. Rendhagyó városnéző séta* (Budapest: Tourism Promotion and Publishing Company, 1984), 22; 136.

Streets with these types of institutions were mostly concentrated in Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and the Inner City, accounting for 61%, with a significant presence also in Terézváros. The lowest numbers of streets with private apartments were found in Buda, as well as in Ferencváros and Lipótváros. Semi-public spaces – such as cafés, cabarets, boarding houses, etc. – were also predominantly located on the Pest side, especially in the Inner City, Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, and Józsefváros. More than 64% of streets with such venues were found in these four districts. Interestingly, Víziváros also exceeded the 10% threshold, in contrast to other parts of Buda. Overall, between 78% and 86% of prostitutional institutions were located in Pest, while only 14% to 22% were in Buda. This spatial distribution clearly highlights the dominance of the Inner City and Districts VI–VIII, a pattern confirmed by archival sources and scholarly research. In his studies, Markian Prokopovych also emphasizes these districts: in Terézváros, he identifies Király, Mozsár, Nagymező, and Ó Streets; in Erzsébetváros, the areas around Akácfa, Dob, Dohány, and Hársfa Streets; and in the Inner City, Bástya, Magyar, Képíró, and Királyi Pál Streets as frequented by prostitution.[64] A 1905 article in *Népszava* even mentioned specific addresses, including Magyar Street 34, Vármegye Street 10 and 15, and Királyi Pál Street 9 – the latter being owned by spice merchant Péter Egressy, who rented out his apartment to prostitutes.[65]

During the interwar period, Budapest's prostitutional institutional system underwent significant transformation, especially following the closure of brothels in 1928. As a result of these changes, the number of legally registered prostitutes, as well as the proportion of streets and buildings used for prostitutional purposes, declined markedly compared to the conditions of the dualist era. In 1929, only 35 officially registered "houses of ill repute" (kéjnőlakás) – known at the time as bárcásház – were operating in Budapest, offering a total of 424 rentable rooms for use by prostitutes.[66] These establishments were most heavily concentrated in Józsefváros. In certain streets, these bárcásház appeared in clusters: four operated on Rózsa Street in Terézváros;

[64] Prokopovych, "Prostitution in Budapest," 39.

[65] Bűntanyák a Belvárosban. *Népszava* 141 (1905): 6.

[66] In Víziváros, 15 rooms were located in 2 houses; in the Inner City, 32 rooms in 2 houses; in Terézváros, 66 rooms in 8 houses; in Erzsébetváros, 119 rooms in 8 houses; in Józsefváros, 135 rooms in 11 houses; and in Ferencváros, 57 rooms in 4 houses. Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 804.

three each in Conti and Kender Streets in Erzsébetváros, and in Liliom Street in Ferencváros.[67] The official records distinguished between public[68] and private[69] meeting places. The former included 75 rooms in seven buildings, while the latter comprised 119 rooms in 22 buildings, rented by prostitutes. Therefore, the Budapest authorities documented a total of 618 rooms used for prostitution in 1929, indicating both the spatial contraction and the increasing regulation of prostitution.

One of the most striking examples of the spatial and social conflicts associated with prostitution in Budapest is Conti Street in Józsefváros. Prostitutional presence in this urban area was continuously documented from the 18th century onward, and by the dualist period it had come to be regarded as one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the city.[70] The Public Safety Almanac (*Közbiztonság Almanachja*) of 1914, citing a report by Mrs. Géza Antal, described the corner of Conti and Bérkocsis Streets as "the most dangerous police post in the capital:"[71] a site of pickpockets, pimps, jassz boys, noisy taverns, apache dancing, and even murders. One emblematic incident illustrating the everyday violent conflicts was the attack on police officer Alajos Balázs, who had attempted to send a streetwalking woman home.[72] This example clearly demonstrates how prostitution-related deviance and policing problems were densely concentrated in this urban space. Conti Street's social perception was dual in nature: on the one hand, it was notorious for its shady bars and its role as a prostitutional hotspot; on the other, it also functioned as a cultural and journalistic centre. The editorial office of *Népszava* operated here, and nearby were the headquarters of *A Hét* and the *Budapesti Hírlap*. The cafés and nightlife venues of the district were frequented by journalists,

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[67] Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 804.

[68] In Erzsébetváros, 32 rooms were located in 3 houses, while in Józsefváros, 43 rooms were found in 4 houses.
Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 806.

[69] In the Inner City, 25 rooms operated in 3 houses; in Terézváros, 52 rooms in 10 houses; in Erzsébetváros, 27 rooms in 6 houses; and in Józsefváros, 15 rooms in 3 houses. Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 806.

[70] Géza Buzinkay, "A budapesti sajtónegyed kialakulása,'' in *Urbanizáció a dualizmus korában. Konferencia Budapest egyesítésének 125. évfordulója tiszteletére a budapesti történeti múzeumban*, edited by Szvoboda Dománszky Gabriella (Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 1999) 291.

[71] Gézáné Antal, "Három őrszem,'' *Közbiztonság Almanachja* 5, (1914): 211.

[72] Ibid., 213.

actors, musicians, and prostitutes alike. As Géza Buzinkay put it, the "dubious reputation" of these venues was closely tied to the district's complex social composition.[73]

By the late 1920s, the regulation of prostitution had become a matter of political debate. In 1927, Christian Democrat politician András Csilléry expressed concern at a meeting of the Administrative Committee over the presence of prostitutes operating on Conti Street. He cited the proximity of children living in the area and nearby industrial schools as particularly troubling. He proposed relocating prostitutes beyond the Grand Boulevard.[74] A similar position was voiced during the 1927 budget debate by József Büchler, a Social Democratic printer,[75] and Ernő Weiller, a Democratic Party lawyer, who in 1930 also emphasized the necessity of 'managing' prostitution, highlighting the problems around Conti, Fecske, Népszínház, and Víg Streets.[76]

The decade-long continuity of debates surrounding Conti Street illustrates the persistence of social resistance to prostitutional spaces. The moral discourse typical of petitions and parliamentary interventions against brothels and other prostitutional institutions often concealed specific economic interests. According to the pamphlet *Revelations from the World of Prostitution* (*Leleplezések a prostitúció világából*), prostitution-related areas truly became "the scenes of street scandals,"[77] where not only sexual services but also crimes (thefts, robberies, murders) occurred regularly. This is supported by publications and studies by Mónika Mátay, Roland Perényi, and Réka Völgyi, which document numerous examples of violent acts committed against prostitutes.[78]

The use of public space by prostitutes was increasingly subject to strict regulation. Paragraph 19 of decree no. 49.465/fk.900, issued by the Chief of Police in 1900, stipulated that 'public women' were forbidden from lingering

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[73] Buzinkay, "A budapesti sajtónegyed kialakulása,'' 291.
[74] *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1927, 1700.
[75] *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1927, 9.
[76] *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1930, 2161–2162.
[77] *Leleplezések a prostitúció világából*, 5.
[78] Mónika Mátay, "Egy prostituált lemészárlása: a Város, a Nő és a Bűnöző,'' *Médiakutató* 3, no. 1 (2003): https://epa.oszk.hu/03000/03056/cikk/2003_03_osz/01_egy_prostitualt/index.html – Accessed August 29, 2024. Roland Perényi, *A bűn nyomában. A budapesti bűnözés társadalomtörténete 1896–1914* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2012). Perényi, *Holttest az utazókosárban. A Mágnás Elza-rejtély* (Budapest: Kiscell Museum, 2014). Réka Völgyi, "*Az utcaszögletek mártírjai*." *Prostituált képek a XX. század eleji Budapesten* (Budapest: Clio Institute, 2020).

in the streets for extended periods, especially near public institutions—churches, schools, kindergartens, theatres—or from appearing in an indecent manner. They were also prohibited from loitering in gateways or on street corners, and from behaving or dressing in an ostentatious way. Prostitutes were allowed to receive only with one man at a time in a room, and only if the apartment in question was located at least 150 meters from a school or church.[79] Despite these strict regulations, urban practice often told a different story.

Despite legal restrictions, sex industry institutions often operated in the immediate vicinity of prestigious areas. Regulation explicitly forbade brothel owners and prostitutes from appearing or renting apartments on Andrássy Avenue, Kossuth Lajos Street, and the Grand Boulevard, among other prominent locations.[80] In practice, however, sex-related institutions functioned in the adjacent side streets. This phenomenon was not unique: as in New York's Broadway district,[81] luxury prostitution in Budapest concealed itself along the edges of high-status zones. Over time, these areas became increasingly marginalized, and the clientele of prostitutes transformed. A notable example is the case at 70 Kerepesi Road. The six-room, luxuriously furnished apartment of actress Matild Losonczi, rented in a palace owned by Izidor Weisz, functioned as a hidden brothel for elite clients.[82] Police investigations revealed that she paid 850 forints in weekly rent and initially advertised in newspapers, later expanding her clientele through recommendations. Clients usually arrived by car, and operations continued with the tacit consent of the police. In 1905, after uncovering police corruption, Police Chief Béla Rudnay suspended the officer responsible for patrolling the area.[83] This example illustrates that prostitution's public presence was not merely a policing issue, but intersected with moral, social, and urban-political conflicts. Despite formal prohibitions, prostitution remained present in the vicinity of representative spaces – mostly in more concealed forms, such as private or semi-public apartments – clearly evidenced in archival sources, press reports, and official documents.

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[79] These restrictive provisions were not novel; earlier regulatory decrees had already contained them. What was new, however, was that specific streets and squares were explicitly designated as prohibited and inaccessible to prostitutes. Miklós Rédey, Imre Laky, *Rendőrségi Lexicon* (Budapest: Pátria Joint-Stock Company, 1903), 258.

[80] Ibid., 259.

[81] Serratore, *A Preservationist's Guide to the Harems*, 6–7.

[82] Emberhús a piacon. *Népszava*. 1905. 120. 7.

[83] Emberhús a piacon. *Népszava*. 1905. 120. 7.

The Spatial Network of Prostitution

Mapping the locations of prostitutional institutions is insufficient in itself for the topographic study of Budapest's sex industry. It is essential to identify the primary hubs – i.e., the streets and buildings where prostitutes were most concentrated. To answer this, I applied network analysis methods,[84] which enabled the mapping of relationships between prostitutes and prostitutional institutions.[85] The analysis, conducted with *Gephi* network software, was based on the topographic prostitution database of Budapest, which contains the names of 7,769 prostitutes and 2,348 unique addresses (street and house number) – a total of 10,117 data points. The database covers all nine districts of Budapest. The links between prostitutes and institutions (e.g., brothels, private apartments, licensed zones, meeting places, etc.) were established based on their documented presence during specific phases of their careers. In total, 9,848 such connections were identified.

The analysis revealed the main nodes of prostitution: 45 prominent locations to which a significant portion of the prostitutes were connected. Around these, other contact points—prostitutes and smaller sex industry sites—were drawn as if by a forcefield, illustrating the structured nature of prostitution in Budapest. The thickness of the lines and the density of the network diagrams also point to the recurring associations of prostitutes with certain institutions. The smaller dots represent groups of prostitutes connected to only a single institution, while the larger nodes indicate more frequent

[84] International scholarship has shown that prostitution operated within a networked system, in the sense that individual prostitution-related institutions were closely linked to specific clothing, beverage, and food shops, fashion houses, and laundries. These relationships were essential for the continuous operation of brothels and other establishments. In the future, it would be worthwhile to examine these economic connections as well. Harald Fischer–Tiné, "White women degrading themselves to the lowest depths: European networks of prostitution and colonial anxieties in British India and Ceylon ca. 1880–1914,'' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 40, no. 2 (2003): 180.

[85] The roots of social network analysis go back to the interwar period. However, the strengthening of this research approach only occurred in the final third of the 20th century. As with other methodologies, it is important to recognize that network analysis is not applicable to all areas of historical research. A concise overview of both international and Hungarian historiography is provided by György Kövér in the preface to the 2020 volume of the *Yearbook of Economic History*, which exempts the present study from elaborating on the historiography of the topic. György Kövér,"Előszó,'' in *Hálózat & Hierarchia. Magyar gazdaságtörténeti évkönyv 2020*, edited by Kövér György, Pogány Ágnes, Weisz Boglárka (Research Centre for the Humanities – Hajnal István Foundation, 2020), 10–15.

institutional changes and actors with more dynamic roles in the prostitution market. The network not only visualizes the hierarchy of prostitutional spaces but also reflects the social embeddedness of the "public women." Prostitutes were not merely isolated individuals living on the periphery, but social agents embedded in complex relationship networks—across sex industry employers, authorities, clients, citizens, and family members—integrated into urban society. Network research thus offers a new perspective for the historical analysis of this social phenomenon, contributing to the exploration of previously under-researched dimensions of Hungarian social history.

A detailed analysis of the 45 key nodes identified through the network study of Budapest's prostitution shows that 35% of the 9,848 documented connections in the database can be linked to these sites.[86] These centres – typically containing between 3 and 9 institutions – exhibited an outstanding concentration of prostitutes, with some buildings associated with 50, 100, or even more than 200 "public women."

The most frequented sites were located in the following districts and streets:

- In Krisztinaváros, Tabán, and the Castle District: Horgony Street (nos. 8, 12, 16);
- In Viziváros: Gancz Street (nos. 20, 28) and Gyorskocsi Street (nos. 32, 36);
- In Óbuda: Bécsi Road (no. 21) and Viador Street (no. 10);
- In the Inner City: Bástya (nos. 18, 20), Himző (no. 4), Képíró (no. 8), Lövész (no. 10), Lőwy (nos. 10, 11, 15, 21), Magyar (no. 50), Megyeház (no. 7), and Rostély (no. 7);
- In Lipótváros: Hajnal Street (no. 47);
- In Terézváros: Ó Street (nos. 10, 16), Rózsa (nos. 70, 101), Lázár (no. 7), Szerecsen (no. 49), Petőfi (no. 6), and Aradi (no. 28);
- In Erzsébetváros: Dohány (no. 60) and Kazinczy (no. 55);
- In Józsefváros: Nagy Templom (no. 32), Conti (no. 6), Futó (no. 11), József (no. 57), Őr (no. 4), Fecske (no. 3), and Népszínház (no. 35);
- In Ferencváros: Liliom (no. 4), Mester (no. 1), and Kinizsi (no. 23) Streets—these institutions were associated with between 50 and 242 prostitutes.[87]

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[86] See also Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 474–475.

[87] Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II.*,143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III.*, 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV.*, 88. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V.*, 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VI.*, 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII.*, 77. Thirring, *Budapest*

These locations were the main nodes of prostitution in turn-of-the-century Budapest. According to sources – including the memoirs of Frigyes Podmaniczky[88] – these urban areas represented the "gravitational centres" of prostitution, while Lipótváros, with the exception of Hajnal Street, remained only marginally affected.

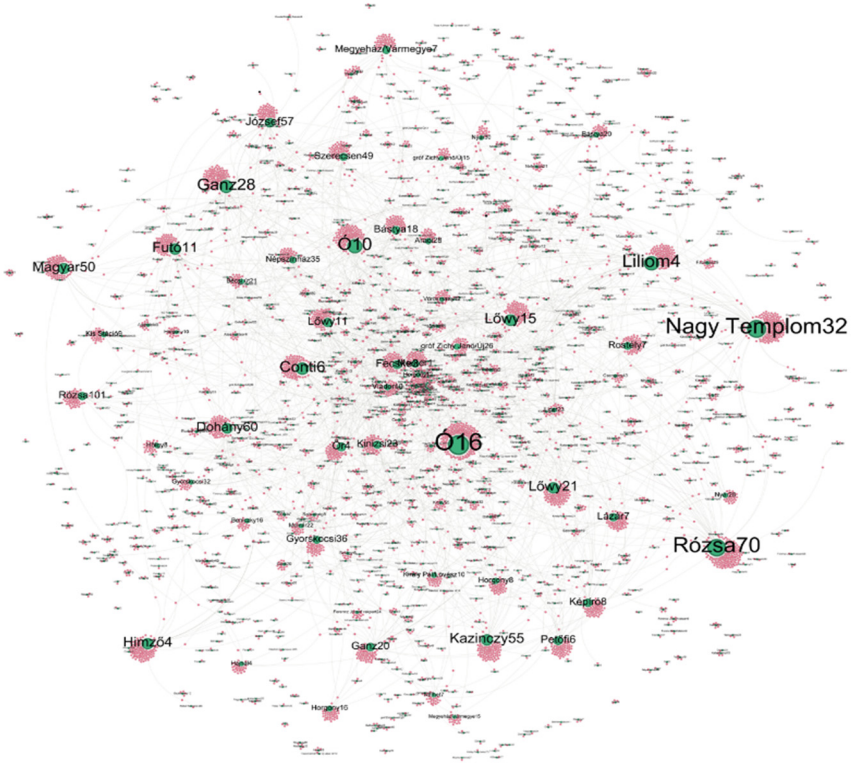

Figure 9. Prostitution networks in Budapest, 1863–1929[89]

székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII., 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI.*, 95. 1907: 95. Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 800. *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1900–1937. BFL VI.1.b. BFL VI.15. BFL VI.15.f.3. BFL VII.1.d. BFL VII.2.c. BFL VII.5.c. BFL VII.18d. BFL VII.101.c. BFL VII.101.d. BFL VII.102.a. BFL VII.103. BFL VII.104.a. BFL VII.106. BFL XV. BFL XVI.2.a. MNL OL K150. For detailed references to the sources used, see Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 465–471.

[88] As cited by Siklóssy, 281.

[89] Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve II.*,143. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve III.*, 155. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve IV.*, 88. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve V.*, 61. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros*

Overall, the functioning of sex industry institutions extended beyond the prostitutes themselves: numerous economic actors were connected to them. In addition to pimps, local businesses – particularly clothing stores, laundries, and doctors – and service providers were direct or indirect economic beneficiaries of the presence of prostitution. Prostitutes themselves also appeared as active consumers in the economies of the affected urban neighbourhoods, thereby becoming part of the complex economic and social network of the sex industry.

Conclusions

This study provides a detailed analysis of the spatial structure and social embeddedness of prostitution in Budapest. The investigation revealed the topographical distribution of prostitution within the city. The empirical foundation of the research was a large-scale database concerning more than ten thousand individuals, thousands of buildings, and nearly five hundred streets. This database was compiled from documents held in the Budapest City Archives and other public collections. The topographic data, when mapped, clearly demonstrated that Budapest had no formally designated red-light districts. Institutions of prostitution were embedded throughout the urban fabric, although a strong concentration could be observed in specific districts—primarily in Terézváros, Erzsébetváros, Józsefváros, and, to some extent, in the Inner City. Brothels, private apartments, and entertainment venues all functioned as sites of prostitutional activity. Their spatial location was related to patterns of urban transportation, the real estate market, population density, and urban spatial practices shaped by social norms. The perception of prostitutional spaces was often defined in moral terms, and, at the level of streets, such spaces became etched in the collective memory of city residents as "problematic" or to be avoided. Nonetheless, as long as prostitution seemed containable and separable, it remained an accepted phenomenon for the majority of the urban population.

Statisztikai Évkönyve VI., 71. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VII.*, 77. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve VIII.*, 79. Thirring, *Budapest székes főváros Statisztikai Évkönyve XI.*, 95. 1907: 95. Doros–Melly, *A nemibetegségek kérdése Budapesten*, 800. *Fővárosi Közlöny* 1900–1937. BFL VI.1.b. BFL VI.15. BFL VI.15. f.3. BFL VII.1.d. BFL VII.2.c. BFL VII.5.c. BFL VII.18d. BFL VII.101.c. BFL VII.101.d. BFL VII.102.a. BFL VII.103. BFL VII.104.a. BFL VII.106. BFL XV. BFL XVI.2.a. MNL OL K150. For detailed references to the sources used, see Tőtős, "A városi prostitúció," 465–471.

Annex

Archival Sources

Budapest City Archives (BFL)

VI.1.b. *Records of the Royal Hungarian State Police Headquarters of Budapest*.
VI.15. *Records of the Budapest Police Headquarters Law Enforcement Agencies*.
VI.15.f.3. *Sample Document Collection 4. Large Box – White Slave Trade* 3/a.
VII.1.d. *Litigation Records of the Royal Court of Appeal of Budapest*.
VII.2.c. *Litigation Records of the Royal Court of Budapest*.
VII.5.c. *Criminal Litigation Records of the Royal Criminal Court of Budapest*.
VII.18d. *Criminal Litigation Records of the Royal Prosecution of Budapest*.
VII.101.c. *Records of the Royal National Penitentiary of Budapest. Convict Registers*.
VII.101.d. *Records of the Royal National Penitentiary of Budapest. Prisoner Registers*.
VII.102.a. *Records of the Royal Penal Court Prison of Budapest. Prisoner Registers*.
VII.103. Rec*ords of the Royal District Court Prisons of Districts IV–X of Budapest*.
VII.104.a. *Records of the Royal Penal District Court Prison of Budapest. Prisoner Registers*.
VII.106. *Records of the Pest (Budapest) Royal Court Prison*.
XV. *Records of Collections*.
XVI.2.a. *Records of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Records of the Budapest Revolutionary Court*.
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K150. *Archives of the Ministry of the Interior*.

Constraints and Failures in Bucharest During the German Administration (1916-1918) as Reflected Within the Romanian Memoirs*

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Abstract: Beyond the classic relations between the occupier and the occupied, the German occupation of the Kingdom of Romania during the Great War implied an interesting cohabitation between two nations which, until the conflict, had practically nothing to quarrel about. Various aspects of this cohabitation can be identified and analysed using the Romanian memoirs, whose authors have presented, in a specific manner, the period in question. Through this text, we attempt to provide an overview of the relations between the German occupation administration and the population of Bucharest, as they emerge from the Romanian memoirs of the time.

Keywords: First World War, Kingdom of Romania, German occupation, hardships, memoirs.

Rezumat: Ocupația germană a Regatului României în timpul Marelui Război a presupus, dincolo de clasicele raporturi dintre ocupant şi ocupat, o interesantă coabitare între două popoare care, până în timpul conflictului, nu avuseseră nimic de împărţit. Diverse aspecte ale acestei coabitări pot fi identificate şi analizate prin parcurgerea textelor memorialistice româneşti, ai căror autori au prezentat, în manieră specifică, perioada respectivă. Prin intermediul acestui text, încercăm să oferim o privire de ansamblu asupra raporturilor dintre administrația germană de ocupație şi populația Bucureştilor, aşa cum reies acestea din scrierile memorialistice româneşti ale epocii.

Cuvinte-cheie: Primul Război Mondial, Regatul României, ocupație germană, greutăți, scrieri memorialistice.

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Romania's entry into the Great War in August 1916 brought the armies of two nations face to face in a major confrontation, for the first time in modern times – namely the German and the Romanian armies – which, until then, had had nothing to quarrel over. From the Romanian point of view, there was no historical rivalry, as in the case of the Hungarians, nor any other recent territorial dispute, as in the case of the Bulgarians and the Russians. Until the outbreak of the world conflagration, the image of Germany and the German people in the eyes of the Romanians was almost exemplary, defined by rigour and thoroughness, order, conscientiousness and fairness, attributes that found their natural expression both in the work of the ordinary German citizen, in the rhythm of daily life, and in the institutional practice that ensured the efficient functioning of the German state.

The relations between Germans and Romanians had undoubtedly progressed in the decades before 1914, and there was a fairly large German community in the Old Kingdom, well integrated into the Romanian society and generally appreciated by ordinary Romanians, even though the sympathies of most natives were directed towards France.[1] The fact as such was admitted even by some of the supporters of the Entente involved in the campaign promoting the idea of achieving Greater Romania:

> *Despite his stodginess and narrow spirit, the German was, before this war, if not loved, at least esteemed and to a certain extent, very admired in Romania. He was admired for that great enterprising spirit which, unfortunately, we have not had the opportunity to witness in either the French or the English; he was admired for his wonderful spirit of organisation, which Europe appreciated, at its true value, even during this war; he was admired, above all, as a compatriot of Beethoven, Goethe, Schiller…*[2]

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[1] Claudiu-Lucian Topor, *„Auf nach Rumänien!". Beligeranța germano-română 1916-1918* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2020), 52.

[2] N.P. Comnène, *Războiul românilor 1916-1917. Însemnări şi documente din prima conflagraţie mondială* (Iaşi: Editura Moldova, 1996), 83. Romanian original: "În ciuda greutății sale și a spiritului său îngust, germanul era înainte de acest război, dacă nu iubit, cel puțin foarte stimat și până la un punct, foarte admirat în România. Era admirat acel mare spirit întreprinzător, pe care din nenorocire n-am avut ocazia să-l constatăm nici la francezi și nici la englezi; era admirat minunatul spirit de organizare, pe care Europa l-a apreciat, la justa sa valoare, chiar și în timpul acestui război; era admirat, mai ales, ca fiind compatriotul lui Beethoven, Bach, Goethe, Schiller..."

The outbreak of the Great War led to a change in the mutual perceptions, a process that experienced an increasing trend during the neutrality of the Romanian Kingdom (1914-1916). Obviously, before Romania entered the war, the two political and military structures, the Entente and the Central Powers, fought each other through propaganda. All the clichés and stereotypes used by the two warring sides were thrown into the battle of words and images, guilty historical complicities were instantly uncovered, and the supporters and promoters of the Entente fervently and persistently presented to the Romanian public opinion the atrocities that suddenly made the German the barbarian of Europe and the enemy of human civilisation as a whole.[3] As a somehow normal consequence of the spreading of this rhetoric in the public space, the harmony and good understanding that had existed up to then disappeared, gradually replaced by the growing suspicion and hostility of many of those who, until then, had viewed the Germans quite differently.[4] Unquestionably, the proven cases of espionage for the Central Powers and the various incidents involving the Germans further strained this tense atmosphere dominated by mutual distrust.

The radical change in the rhetoric and the way of relating to Romania and the Romanians was triggered by the country's entry into the war on the side of the Entente in August 1916. After overcoming the initial surprise and shock caused by the intervention of their former ally, the political and military establishment, the propaganda apparatus and the entire German press reacted practically in unison in condemning Romania for its act of treason. By their action, the leaders in Bucharest placed the country alongside the other traitors, namely the Italians. While the latter were described as a "people of bandits," the Romanians were immediately labelled as "a band of gypsies" and the famous "Schweinehunde."[5] All the sympathy and goodwill that had existed towards them went up in smoke. The attack on Austria-Hungary, Germany's faithful ally, was an attack on Germany itself, so the punishment of this very real act of treason had to be carried out as soon as possible.

The subsequent course of hostilities is well known and we believe there is no point in insisting on this aspect, especially as the aim of our research is to address certain realities of the occupation period. Since their

[3] Topor, *„Auf nach Rumänien!"*, 52-54.
[4] Ibid., 54 and the following.
[5] Ibid., 41.

installation in the Romanian territory and, in particular, after the occupation of Bucharest, the Germans were concerned with the organisation and control, in a specific manner, of the conquered regions and localities. Anticipating the annihilation of the Romanian resistance in the southern part of the country, the representatives of the Central Powers had discussed and prepared, since October and November 1916, in working meetings held in Berlin and Vienna, the institutional architecture following the occupation of the Romanian territory.[6]

From December 1916 to November 1918, for two whole years, Bucharest, the former capital of the Kingdom of Romania, was under German occupation. The Romanians felt the full impact of this situation, according to numerous statistics and official reports, as well as the testimonies recorded within the memoirs that were published, for the most part, in the interwar period. Like any other regime thus installed, the German occupation of Romania qualified for dramatic descriptions, most of those who left their recollections to posterity depicting images of great mental and emotional impact. Having endured at first hand the rigours and constraints of this occupation, witnessing the despoliation of their country of all possible resources, it was also difficult for the authors of these works to find anything positive in those trying times for the Romanian nation.

Nevertheless, at a closer look, one can also identify some voices, even among those who had to deal with the abuses and rigours of the occupation back then, and who, shortly after the Great War, saw things somewhat differently. They have even pointed out in their works that not all measures taken by the Germans were inherently harmful, but certainly the timing and the manner chosen for their application condemned them to failure from the very beginning. In the present text, we refer to several of these essentially useful actions taken by the German occupiers, but which, given the situation in the country, were seen as abusive and even offensive by the Romanians. Ironically, some of these measures were, however, applied later, after the end of the war.

First of all, one should mention the German attempt of changing the calendar, materialized in an ordinance signed by August von Mackensen, which specified that "in all official documents and acts, the date and time will be indicated exclusively according to the Gregorian calendar and the

[6] Ibid., 149-150.

Central European Time."[7] The issue turned out to be much more complicated than the occupiers had anticipated, especially as it involved changing the dates of the most important Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, which the initiators only later realised.[8] Thus, the date of 19 December 1916 should have become 1 January 1917, which meant that Romanians would no longer celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in 1916! The foreshadowed difficulties finally drove the Germans to give up on this intention, recorded in the Romanian memoirs in different tones, ranging from revolt and concern to self-pity and irony.[9] However, beyond these aspects, the question of changing the calendar threatened to cause a real turmoil for the Orthodox Church and the Romanian population in the territories occupied by the Germans, so they were forced to bow to the evidence. The prospect of eliminating the holy celebration of Christmas in a country which, in terms of morale and fortitude, was almost on the verge of complete disaster at the end of 1916, could not have contributed to calming the spirits and establishing the good relations that the occupiers would have wanted with the occupied. The problem of changing the calendar style in use, which had been discussed in the Romanian society for several decades, was not definitively resolved until after the war, between 1919 and 1924.[10]

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[7] N. Georgescu, *În puterea „Pumnului de fer". Ordonanţele Comandamentului German. Viaţa la Bucureşti şi în ţara invadată* (Iaşi: Editura Tipografiei P. Iliescu, [1917]), 91.

[8] Raymund Netzhammer, *Episcop în România într-o epocă a conflictelor naţionale şi religioase*, second edition, revised and added, edited by Nikolaus Netzhammer in collaboration with Krista Zach, volume I, translation from German by George Guţu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 699, 704-705.

[9] Pia Alimăneştianu, *Însemnări din timpul ocupaţiei germane 1916-1918* (Bucharest: Imprimeriile Independenţa, 1929), 23; M. Theodorian-Carada, *Efimeridele. Însemnări & Amintiri*. Vol. II, 1908-1928 (Săbăoani: Tipografia „Serafica", 1937), 69-71; Al. Marghiloman, Note politice. Vol. II – 1916-1917 (Bucharest: Editura Institutului de Arte Grafice „Eminescu" S.A., 1927), 356-358; Virgiliu N. Drăghiceanu, *707 zile subt cultura pumnului german* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1920), 24; Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni şi păreri personale din timpul războiului României. Jurnal zilnic. 13 august 1916 – 31 decembrie 1918*. With an introductory letter by Take Ionescu, vol. I (Bucharest: Atelierele Societăţii „Universul", 1921), 255; C. Bacalbaşa, *Capitala subt ocupaţie* (Brăila: Tiparul Institutului de Arte Grafice, 1921), 68.

[10] The Union of 1918 was undoubtedly the one that finally led to the adoption of the Gregorian style. As early as January 1919, the War Ministry had asked the Government to introduce the new calendar style for practical reasons (various actions and activities of the army were encountering all sorts of difficulties, errors and confusion due to the new realities, since in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, Maramureș, and Bucovina, which formerly had been a part of the Austro-Hungarian

One issue that would most certainly spark protests and dissatisfaction nowadays for the way it was handled was that of the stray dogs in Bucharest. As some contemporaries pointed out, "in the Capital, the enemy found a large number of dogs, which they promptly disposed of."[11] The thousands of stray dogs in the city represented a real public danger, not only because of their bites and attacks on passers-by and soldiers of the occupying troops, but also because of the diseases they could spread. Without much hesitation, the Germans promptly took the necessary actions to eradicate the stray dogs and imposed fines on those who let their companion dogs loose on the streets or walked them without a muzzle:

> *An ordinance appeared, announcing that all dogs found loose on the streets or in the yards would be picked up and killed at the veterinary school. Owners of unchained dogs will also be fined 1000 marks, while insolvent owners will be sentenced to 6 months in prison.*[12]

Of course, there were also excesses, in the sense that, on occasion, even dogs that simply barked at German officers were shot on the spot.[13]

Empire, the Gregorian calendar was in force, while in the Old Romanian Kingdom and Bessarabia, the Julian calendar was used). On 5/18 March 1919, the Romanian Government passed the Decree-Law no. 1053 for the *Adoption of the Gregorian calendar on 1 April 1919 old style*, published in "Monitorul Oficial" ["The Official Gazette"] on 6 March. Thus, the date of 1 April 1919 old style became 14 April new style. From then on, all dates in Romania were subject to the Gregorian calendar.

The issue was more complicated in the Romanian Orthodox Church, for institutional and dogmatic reasons, which also had to do with the specific realities of the community of Orthodox Churches internationally. However, following the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Constantinople in 1923, the Romanian Orthodox Church decided to replace the Julian calendar with the Gregorian one. The change was implemented in October 1924.

[11] Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni şi păreri personale…*, 250. Romanian original: "În Capitală inamicul a găsit o bună recoltă de câini, de care a profitat numaidecât."

[12] Ibid., 250-251. Romanian original: "O Ordonanță apărută, anunță că toți câinii ce se vor găsi liberi pe străzi sau în curți vor fi ridicați și uciși la școala veterinară. Proprietarii câinilor, ce nu vor fi găsiți în lanț, vor suferi și o amendă de 1000 de mărci, insolvabilii 6 luni închisoare."

[13] C. Bacalbaşa, *Capitala subt ocupaţie*, 74-75.

However, the overall result, although it caused dissatisfaction among most of Bucharest's inhabitants, was appreciated by some Romanians: "In a few weeks, Bucharest was dog-free. It was not a big sin."[14]

Moreover, in the first part of the occupation of Romania, in the winter of 1916/1917, the occupying troops and the population of the occupied territories were confronted with "a number of epidemics that were unavoidable in wartime. Especially epidemic typhus. […] At one point, smallpox broke out, a black pox with haemorrhages, of great virulence."[15] In this context, as the Romanian memoirs show, the Germans quickly implemented the general vaccination of the population to stop the spread of epidemics. "Everybody had to be vaccinated whether they wanted or not."[16] The results were as expected, and the measure turned out to be salutary and it was promptly applied even in the case of other infections, despite the various inconveniences that some Romanians had to endure because of the excessive German bureaucracy.[17]

In order to rapidly clear the city's roads and traffic routes during winter, the Germans issued an order to remove the snow from the sidewalks. For various reasons, some of the inhabitants did not comply with this measure, which is why several people were picked up by German soldiers, taken out of the city and forced to walk back through the snow which was about one metre high.[18] Sometimes, however, the rigours of the occupiers were doubled by the overzealousness of the Romanian officials who thus sought to get into the good graces of the temporary masters of the country.[19]

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[14] Ibid., 75. Romanian original: "În câteva săptămâni Bucureștii au fost curățiți de câini. Păcatul nu erea mare."

[15] Ibid., 123. Romanian original: "un număr de epidemii de neînlăturat în timp de război. Mai ales tifosul exantematic. […] Într-un moment a izbucnit și vărsatul, un vărsat negru cu emoragii, de o mare virulență."

[16] Ibid. Romanian original: "Toată lumea vrând nevrând, a trebuit să se vaccineze."

[17] Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni şi păreri personale...*, vol. II (Bucharest: Atelierele Societăţei "Universul", 1921), 297, 442, 445.

[18] One such situation was mentioned by Pia Alimăneştianu, *Însemnări din timpul ocupaţiei germane...*, 89: "On Christmas Eve, they picked up two ladies (one was in her late 70s) in the evening and took them 3 kilometres out of town on foot, in snow that was almost a metre high, because they had not cleared their sidewalk."

[19] Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni şi păreri personale...*, vol. I, 506: "The Romanian deputy commissioner is unrecognizable. He is excessively severe when the German is next to him. Even where the German finds it clean, the deputy is displeased. Mrs. Motru was telling us one day at the Imperial [a hotel in Bucharest – our note] that during the heavy snow that fell last winter, in the absence of

While in the winter the population had to take care of the snow, in the summer they had to sweep and wash the sidewalk in front of their yards four times a day. Refusal or failure to do so was severely punished by heavy fines. However, quite often these fines were applied even to those who had complied with the provision, but had the misfortune of living in an area where there were several persons who had not.[20] After all, this measure was met with such hostility that it was only partially implemented in the summer of 1917, only to be abandoned by the Germans the following year.

As a general prophylactic measure, the German administration also considered the problem of the sanitation of streets in Bucharest. Thus, each owner was obliged to collect and dispose of his garbage in the street for later collection by the sanitation service. Even one of the memoirists who harshly condemned the German occupation acknowledged, in the context of the beginning of the occupation regime, the usefulness of the concern for the prompt sanitation of the streets: "Measures were taken to carry away household waste, which, through decomposition, was an endless health hazard."[21]

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servants, her daughters were trying to clear the snow from the sidewalk in front of their house. One day, this operation was not going so well, when here came the Bavarian gendarme and the Romanian deputy commissioner. Scandal, the Romanian official got the homeowner's name, pulled out the fine booklet, shouted, threatened with sky thunder. The crying children said they had no servant and they shovelled the snow as best as they could. The Kraut smiled, patted them on the shoulder with '*gutt, gutt*' and left without a fine, much to the discontent of our agent." Romanian original: "Subcomisarul roman e de nerecunoscut. E de o severitate excesivă când e neamțul lângă el. Chiar acolo unde neamțului i se pare curat, subcomisarul este nemulțumit. D-na Motru ne istorisea într-o zi la Imperial că pe timpul zăpezii mari ce a căzut astă iarnă, în lipsă de servitori, fetițele ei se străduiau să depărteze zăpada de pe trotuarul, din dreptul casei lor. Într-o zi operațiunea aceasta nu tocmai reușise prea bine, când iată jandarmul bavarez și subcomisarul român. Scandal, funcționarul român a luat numele proprietarului, a scos carnetul de amendă, a sbierat, a amenințat cu trăsnetul cerului. Copilele plângând au spus că n-au servitor și că pe cât au putut ele, au îndepărtat zăpada. Neamțul a zâmbit, le-a bătut pe umăr, cu «*gutt, gutt*» și a plecat fără amendă, spre marea nemulțumire a agentului nostru."

[20] Ibid. Pia Alimăneştianu, *Însemnări din timpul ocupației germane...*, 83: "Anyone who does not water the sidewalk and half the street four times a day is fined 100-200 lei. That would not be bad, but since they need the money, they fine whole neighbourhoods, no matter if they get wet or not". Romanian original: "Cine nu-și stropește trotuarul și jumătate stradă, de patru ori pe zi, este condamnat de la 100-200 lei amendă. Asta n-ar fi rău, dar cum au nevoe de bani, pun la amendă cartiere întregi, de se udă sau nu."

[21] Virgiliu N. Drăghiceanu, *707 zile subt cultura pumnului german...*, 26. Romanian original: "Se iau măsuri pentru cărarea gunoaielor menajere, care, prin descompunere, erau un veșnic pericol pentru sănătate."

We shall not elaborate further on other aspects which, in times of peace, if proposed by a national administration, might have been accepted and well received by the whole of the population, like the cultivation and use of fruits and vegetables, various measures regarding the perimeter of horticulture and zootechnics, or the reconstruction of the railway system which had been heavily damaged during the autumn campaign of 1916 and the withdrawal of the Romanian troops.[22]

One of the few Romanian memoirists who plainly admitted the fact that some of the measures taken during the German occupation were undoubtedly useful was Constantin Bacalbaşa. In his book, published in 1921, he summarized the benefits of the German administration that were dismissed by the inhabitants of Bucharest because of their association with the corrupt and abusive regime of occupation:

> *As good administrators, the Germans took some excellent measures.*
> *First, they obliged all residents to sweep, water and clear the sidewalks of snow.*
> *Second, they obliged everyone to sow vegetables on all empty spaces, in the larger yards and in the gardens.*
> *Third, they showed that fortunes could be made by turning a good deal of fruit into marmalade.*
> *Fourth, they profited by many things which we, in our ignorance, despised; for instance, the gathered wild chestnuts from the chestnut trees on the boulevards, for their industries.*
> *Fifth, they prohibited the eating of too young potatoes, chickens, calves (as veal), and lambs, showing how much we would gain by allowing all these products to reach their maturity.*
> *And many other good measures.*
> *Of all these, we kept nothing.*[23]

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[22] C. Bacalbaşa, *Capitala subt ocupaţie*, 115: "Although there was not much railway stock, they still organized a number of trains in which people could move around in a decent manner, while the trains in Moldavia were in a terrible state of misery." Romanian original: "Deși nu prea era material rulant, totuși au organizat un număr de trenuri în care lumea putea circula cuviincios, pe când trenurile din Moldova erau într-un hal de mizerie fără nume."

[23] Ibid., 196. Romanian original: "Ca buni administrative germanii au luat câteva măsuri excelente. Întâi au obligat pe toți locuitorii ca să-și mărture, să ude și să curețe de zăpadă trotuarele.
Al doilea au îndatorat pe toată lumea să semene legume pe toate locurile virane, în curțile mai mari și prin grădini.

What were the reasons why none of the actions taken by the Germans remained in force? Why were even the provisions of obvious immediate utility not preserved after the occupation ended?

One should mention here that it is easily understandable that every occupant wants to enforce their own regulations in order to ensure the maximum material, economic, and political profit for their mastery within the occupied territory, obviously drawing the antipathy of the local population. The Germans were no exception. Besides, they were also uninspired in their choice of certain measures and especially of the moment to impose them, the appropriate example in this regard being, indisputably, in our opinion, the attempt to change the calendar.

Then, various provisions were applied in a discretionary or abusive way, which was deemed vexatious by the citizens of Bucharest. Practically all of the useful measures, which could have been true lessons in administration, were imposed in a brutal manner, accompanied by numerous fines and excesses. Therefore, somewhat naturally, the population regarded them only as decisions of the occupying regime and not as measures of management that could have been further adopted by the Romanians. It was then easily visible that the obligations incumbent on the Romanians did not apply to foreigners, namely the subjects of the Central Powers and their allies. In other words, the rules did not apply to everyone. Plagued by the corruption virus, suffering from the "baksheesh syndrome" (in which they were also strongly influenced by the Romanians[24]), and showing, in many cases, a terrible

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Al treilea au arătat că se pot câștiga averi transformând o bună parte din fructe în marmeladă.
Al patrulea au tras foloase din multe lucruri pe cari noi, în neștiința noastră le despreţuim; de pildă au adunat castanele sălbatice de la castabii de pe Bulevarde spre a le întrebuința în industriile lor.
Al cincilea, au interzis să se mănânce cartofi prea noi, puii, viţeii şi miei prea tineri, demonstrând cât am câștiga dacă am lăsa ca toate aceste produse ale naturei să ajungă la maturitate.
Și încă alte multe măsuri bune.
Din toate acestea, noi n-am păstrat nimic."

[24] Vasile Th. Cancicov, *Impresiuni şi păreri personale...*, vol. I, 352-353: "It is curious what influence our mores had on German mores. When he came to us, the German soldier was a man of duty; unyielding, his orders were mechanically and faithfully carried out. The Turks taught us the baksheesh, we taught the Germans during the occupation. When, at first, for small services, they were given their first pennies – the baksheesh – they were astonished, asking for all sorts of explanations, unable to conceive how, for a service owed as a soldier, he could receive money, and from the enemy, no less. In the beginning, I did not even dare to

degradation of morals, the Germans lost the trust and authority they had enjoyed, at least in the eyes of some Romanians, at the beginning of the occupation.

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give them money, but in order to spare their susceptibility, I offered them cigarettes, which they were tempted to take, given that they were fond of good cigarettes; even the cigarettes I offered them with great fear. […] Today, however, things have changed and have gone even further; the smallest service must be paid with a baksheesh, you feel him serving you with malice when he weighs that what you have given him would not be enough. The guard now accepts to treat him with wine or beer, and the sentries who accompany the permittees to the dentist accept to be treated through the taverns with food and drink, fully aware that what they do is an abuse for which they would be severely punished. Well, at first this would have been an aberration. It is even said in the city that, in order to gain access into an office or to arrange some matter for which you must contact their authority, you cannot take a single step without paying. The baksheesh opens the door anywhere. In this respect, the German has become easily accustomed. All officers serving through the police, the komandaturs, and the economic bureaus went into business. Each has attached to his person a businessman, usually a Jew who works and gives advice on his behalf. This is common knowledge. More often than not, the individual attached and with whom the business is dealt even bears an official status, he is given the task of interpreter. Their offices are full of these interpreters swarming the halls of the komandatur." Romanian original: "E curioasă influența ce a avut moravurile nostre asupra moravurilor nemțești. Soldatul german când a venit la noi era omul datoriei; neînduplecabil, ordinele primite erau mecanicește și cu sfințenie executate. Turcii ne-au învățat bacșișul, noi i-am învățat cu ocazia ocupațiunii pe nemți. Când la început pentru mici servicii li s-au pus în palmă primii gologani – bacșișul – au rămas uimiți cerând tot felul de explicațiuni, neputând concepe ei, cum pentru un serviciu datorat în calitatea lui de soldat, poate primi bani și încă de la inamic. Eu la început nici n-am îndrăznit să le dau bani, ci menajându-le susceptibilitatea le ofeream țigări pe cari erau tentați să le primească ca amatori de țigări bune; chiar țigările le ofeream cu multă frică. [...] Azi însă lucrurile s-au schimbat și au ajuns chiar departe; cel mai mic serviciu trebuește plătit cu bacșiș, îl simți cum te servește cu răutate când cântărește el că ceea ce i-ai dat n-ar fi suficient. Garda primește acum să o tratăm cu vin sau bere, iar sentinelele ce întovărășesc pe permisionari la dantist, primesc a fi tratați prin birturi cu masă și băutură, știind că ceea ce fac e un abuz pentru care ar fi aspru pedepsiți. Ei bine, la început acest lucru ar fi fost o aberațiune. În oraș chiar se spune că pentru a pătrunde în vreun birou sau a-ți aranja vreo chestiune pentru care trebue să ai raporturi cu autoritatea lor, nu poți face un pas fără a plăti. Bacșișul îți deschide ușa oriunde. În această privință germanul s-a împământenit ușor. Ofițeri slujbași prin poliții, komandaturi și birourile economice înființate, toți s-au vârât în afaceri. Fiecare și-a atașat persoanei lui un om de afaceri, de regulă un evreu, care lucrează și dă sfaturi în numele lui. Lucrul e cunoscut de toată lumea. De multe ori individul atașat și cu care se tratează afacerea are chiar o situațiune oficială, i se dă însărcinarea de interpret. Birourile lor sunt pline de acești interpreți ce mișună pe sălile komandaturii."

Political Union Without Religious Unity? Debates and Projects Around the Confessional Union of Romanians in the Interwar Period

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Abstract: The present study debates the issue of biconfessionalism among the Romanians during the interwar period and the solutions proposed by different opinion leaders for achieving religious union between the Greek-Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The ideological and symbolic valences of Orthodoxy in the Old Romanian Kingdom and the fortified status of the Orthodox Church in the interwar period were taken into account. The public discourse surrounding the Greek-Catholic Church was analysed, as an institution that had, in fact, fulfilled its role with the union of all Romanians in 1918. The present study discusses several of the primary projects for the union of the two Romanian Churches formulated by public figures, such as Onisifor Ghibu or Marius Theodorian-Carada, in addition to the findings of a series of sociological investigations regarding the issue of the religious unification of Romanians.

Keywords: National identity, confessional union projects, Orthodox Romanians, Greek-Catholic Romanians, religious division

Rezumat: Prezentul studiu dezbate problema biconfesionalismului în rândul românilor în perioada interbelică și soluțiile propuse de diferiți lideri de opinie pentru realizarea unirii religioase dintre Biserica Greco-Catolică și Biserica Ortodoxă. Au fost luate în considerare valențele ideologice și simbolice ale Ortodoxiei în Vechiul Regat și statutul consolidat al Bisericii Ortodoxe în perioada interbelică. A fost analizat discursul public referitor la Biserica Greco-Catolică, ca instituție care, de fapt, și-a îndeplinit rolul odată cu unirea tuturor românilor în 1918. Prezentul studiu discută câteva dintre proiectele de unire a celor două Biserici Românești

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formulate de personalități publice, precum Onisifor Ghibu sau Marius Theodorian-Carada, pe lângă concluziile unei serii de investigații sociologice privind problema unificării religioase a românilor.

Cuvinte cheie: Identitate națională, proiecte de unire confesională, români ortodocși, români greco-catolici, diviziune religioasă

1918 will forever remain, in Romanian history, as the year in which the national ideal became a reality. Like other peoples who, for centuries, had lived divided, the Romanians could rejoice in the fact that, at the end of the Great War, the state borders finally encompassed most of them. The price paid for such an important achievement was by no means small. Quite the contrary. Even if we were to only take into account the difficult years of the war, it meant hundreds of thousands of victims and immense material damages. Additionally, one must also consider the immeasurable traumas that many of the survivors of the cataclysm carried on their bodies and in their souls in the years that followed.

Even before the guns fell silent, the Romanians demonstrated their desire to live united under the same sceptre. Through the decisions of the Romanian communities in the provinces integrated into the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, the future outline of Greater Romania had already been foreshadowed. A true Romanian miracle. This is how the sequence of events from the final year of the war, which made the emergence of the new state possible, was recorded.[1] However, despite their desire to share their future, the unification decisions expressed in Chişinău, Cernăuţi and Alba Iulia were subject to debates and deliberations at the Paris Peace Conference. A true battle for borders unfolded in the French capital and beyond. Even those who had emerged defeated from the war dared to hope for a lasting peace. The meeting of the leaders of the post-war world was meant to offer life-saving solutions to the old problems that had plagued the European scene for hundreds of years, solutions on which the durability of peace depended.

[1] Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român* [The Romanian paradox] (Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1998), 58.

Romania started with high hopes on the road to achieving peace.[2] It was among the European states that could make territorial claims from all neighbouring countries.[3] However, the Romanian diplomatic mission was received with certain reservations in the French capital, given the fact that Romania had not proved truly irreproachable military loyalty during the war, having signed a peace treaty with the enemy.[4] However, the chancelleries of the victorious powers did not remain inert to the lobby made by the states with which Romania disputed its territorial possessions. A veritable mechanism of political pressure and public propaganda operated behind the scenes of the Peace Conference, aiming to tilt the balance in favour some of the competitors and to the disadvantage of others.[5] The declared goal of the Romanian diplomats was to obtain the drawing of political borders in accordance with the ethnic ones, something extremely difficult to achieve in the amalgamated central and south-eastern Europe. Despite these difficulties, the Peace Conference confirmed, the borders of the Romanian state as configured since 1918, albeit with certain territorial adjustments.

But the hard times for the young Romanian state were only just beginning. The reconstruction of the country after the difficult years of the war had to be matched by the effort of welding the barely united provinces to the older body of the Romanian state. Two were to be the main methods by which the step forward, from union to unification, was to be made: legislative standardization and homogenization, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the expansion and diversification of the network of Romanian

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[2] Sherman David Spector, *România şi Conferința de Pace de la Paris. Diplomația lui Ion I. C. Brătianu* [Romania and the Paris Peace Conference. The Diplomacy of Ion I. C. Brătianu] (Iaşi: Institutul European, 1995), 91-114.

[3] Peter F. Sugar, "Naționalismul, ideologia victorioasă" [Nationalism, the victorious ideology], in Peter F. Sugar, *Naționalismul est-european în secolul al XX-lea* [Eastern European nationalism in the 20th century] (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2002), 19; Amedeo Giannini, *Le vicende della Rumania (1878-1940)* (Rome: Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1940), 21-30.

[4] Keith Hitchins, *România 1866-1947* [Romania 1866-1947], 2nd edition (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1996), 303-304; Glenn E. Torrey, *Romania and World War I. A Collection of Studies* (Iaşi-Oxford-Portland: Center for Romanian Studies, 1998), 301-311; Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român* [The Romanian paradox], 100.

[5] Emile Joseph Dillon, *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1920), 136-183.

institutions in the new territories.[6] Although laborious and demanding of political (and other) resources, both processes represented mandatory stages in the efforts to impose and consolidate Romanian authority in the new centre of political power: Bucharest. Additionally, the governors there sought solutions to ensure the good management of the minority ethnic groups that had become part of the new Romanian state.

The much more accentuated ethnic diversification of the Romanian state after the First World War was matched by the increasing variety of the religious spectrum within it. If we were to refer strictly to Transylvania, we must say that in addition to the denominations that represented the Romanians, the most important confessions were: the Roman Catholic (with approx. 860,000 believers), the Calvinist (with approx. 650,000 believers), the Lutheran-Saxon (approx. 260,000 believers), the Unitarian (approx. 70,000 believers), the Lutheran-Hungarian (with approx. 30,000 believers), while the mosaic community consisted of approximately 300,000 members.[7]

But confessional polychromy was not only characteristic for ethnic minority groups. Even within the Romanian bloc, the political unity achieved at the end of the war seemed threatened by the confessional divisions within it. In a country where the vast majority of the population identifies as Orthodox, the existence of a different confessional reality within the same ethnic group (in this case, the Greek-Catholic Church) could appear to some as an element of its vulnerability. That is why this religious fracture that appeared in the heart of the Romanian community at the end of the 17th century needed to be "repaired". Therefore, at the level of the public image, after the First World War, the United Church became the bearer of an unwanted stigma that evoked the religious schism that appeared more than two centuries before, within the same nation.[8] At the same time, it symbolizes the perpetuation of a tradition (reconfirmed over time) of loyalty to the Austrian ruling House, but

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[6] Cătălin Turliuc, "Construcţia naţională românească şi identităţile regionale. Modernizare şi omogenizare în secolul al XX-lea" [Romanian national construction and regional identities. Modernization and homogenization in the 20th century], in *România interbelică în paradigma europeană. Studii* [Interwar Romania in the European paradigm. Studies], coordinator Ion Agrigoroaiei (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2005), 78-79.

[7] Z. Străjanu, "Cultele minoritare în Transilvania" [Minority cults in Transylvania], in *Transilvania, Banatul, Crişana, Maramureşul 1918-1928*, 2nd volume (Bucharest: Cultura Naţională, 1929), 835.

[8] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare 1918-1930* [Culture and nationalism in Greater Romania 1918-1930] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998), 167.

also of the solid connections of culturalization and intellectual closeness to the Catholic West.[9] Therefore, this ecclesiastical community (for the first time since its creation) was faced with the prospect of cohabitation in a predominantly Orthodox confessional environment, strongly connected to Eastern traditions and values and the Byzantine tradition.

In fact, for both Romanian Churches in Transylvania, the change that was foreseen in the context of the integration of the province into the Romanian Kingdom was major. With a comparable institutional architecture (at the time of the union of Transylvania with Romania, the United Church had a metropolitan seat with three suffragan bishoprics, while the Orthodox Church additionally had the metropolitan rank, and two subordinate dioceses, of Caransebeş and Arad – within the latter, a second consistory operated, namely in Oradea)[10] and with a relative balance in terms of the number of believers,[11] the Greek-Catholic and the Orthodox Church had managed to acquire independence in relation to other ecclesiastical institutions until the beginning of the war, a status also recognized by the laws that governed Hungary. The place that each of the two Romanian confessions had acquired in the corpus of Hungarian legislation was also rather similar. Article XXXIX of 1868 recognized the independence of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church; in the same way, article IX of the same year admitted the independence of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Hungary and Transylvania and its organization on an autonomous basis.

With a status and a quasi-equal approach from the state in which they functioned until the First World War, the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania longed for similar behaviour from the Romanian authorities. However, the realities of the Old Kingdom were fundamentally different in terms of the role and the primary position granted to the Orthodox Church. Having (rightfully) assumed a central role in the cultural and spiritual development of the Romanian people over time, Orthodoxy came to occupy a place of honour in the definition of the Romanian nation – a fact that was

[9] Liviu Maior, *In the Empire: Habsburgs and Romanians. From Dynastic Loyalty to National Identity* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy, Center for Transylvanian Studies, 2008), 223-240.

[10] See in detail Marius Eppel, *La frontiera ortodoxiei româneşti. Vicariatul de la Oradea (1848-1918)* [On the frontier of Romanian Orthodoxy. The Vicariate of Oradea (1848-1918)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa universitară Clujeană, 2012), *passim*.

[11] Zsombor de Szász, *The minorities in Roumanian Transylvania* (London: The Richards Press, 1927), 217-220.

also reflected in the pre-war legislative corpus, which assimilated it as a state religion. Within the broader paradigm of the relations between the state and the Church, specific to the countries of the South-Eastern European cultural and civilizational area, the close cooperation between the two institutions shaped the identity features of each.[12] Taking part in the "birth" of the modern Romanian nation, Orthodoxy was rewarded with a place of honour in the legislation of the extra-Carpathian state, which offered it a privileged role and the protection of the "secular arm." With this rather flimsy border that separated it from the political world – a boundary the Orthodox Church was often tempted to overstep –, the Church had grown complacent, considering that it had much more to gain from the fact that it was recognized by the Constitution of 1866 as "the dominant religion of the Romanian state."

After the First World War, the Orthodox Church became fully aware of the strength conferred by its large number of adherents and of the advantages it could derive from this position. Gathering under its dome, at the end of the third decade of the last century, almost ¾ of the total population of the Kingdom, the Orthodox Church was numerically superior to any other denomination.[13] Flanked by this indisputable numerical superiority, the Orthodox Church was fully interested in being the holder of a special status in the constellation of confessions of the entire Romanian Kingdom. This happened, first of all, through the text of the Constitution from 1923 (reconfirmed by the provisions of the fundamental law from 1938), by which Orthodoxy was assigned the status of "dominant Church in the Romanian state." Then, the prioritization of the interests of the Orthodox Church was reflected in its elevation to the highest hierarchical rank used in the Eastern Christianity (that of the patriarchate) and in the elaboration of a unitary normative framework for its organization and operation.[14]

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[12] Romulus Cândea, *Biserică şi stat. Câteva consideraţii istorice şi principiale* [Church and State. Some Historical and Principled Considerations] (Cernăuţi: Glasul Bucovinei, 1926), 15, 19-20.
[13] In 1930, 13,108,227 of the total 18,057,028 inhabitants of Romania (representing 72.6%) were registered Orthodox, and 1,427,391 Greek-Catholics (representing 7.9% of the total population of Romania): Sabin Manuilă, *Recensământul general al populaţiei României din 29 decembrie 1930. Volumul II: neam, limbă maternă, religie* [General census of the population of Romania of December 29, 1930. Volume II: race, mother tongue, religion] (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial, Imprimeria Naţională, 1938), XXIV.
[14] Alexandru Lapedatu, *Amintiri* [Memories] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Albastră, 1998), 204.

Under these auspices, the Greek-Catholic Church found itself in obvious inferiority. Not only numerically, representing barely 8% of the total of 18,057,028 inhabitants of Romania since then, but especially in terms of the political decision-makers' attitude and of the overall the public opinion. Although the United Church was recognized for its undeniable merits in the cultural and social history of Transylvanian Romanians, with the fulfilment of the ideal of national unity, its purpose was considered finished.[15] Despite the fact that it was regarded as one of the pieces of the Romanians' approach to Western European civilization, the Greek-Catholic Church was criticized for its hierarchical and dogmatic submission to Rome, and it was considered responsible for both the destruction of national sovereignty and the "spoiling of the law" and traditions of the Eastern faith. In addition, the membership of the United Church in the great universal ecclesial family gave it a touch of cosmopolitanism, not exactly favourable to the same feeling of affirmation of the Romanian ethos. To these evaluations, made according to a rigidly nationalistic grid, other imputations, of a subjective nuance, were added. First of all, Greek Catholicism was perceived in Greater Romania as a specifically Transylvanian "brand".[16] Although the presence of Greek-Catholics in the extra-Carpathian space was not a recent element, those communities, geographically scattered, only accentuated the image of the confessional division present among Transylvanian Romanians. Secondly, one cannot overlook the fact that a significant percentage of Transylvanian political leaders belonged to the incriminated denomination. After the failed attempt, from the beginning of the third decade, of political collaboration between the Romanian National Party and the National Liberal Party, we must note that the public discourse condemning the regionalist aspirations, perceptible within a Transylvanian political group, also included the Greek-Catholic Church, as an institution which by its very presence maintained those

[15] Nicolae Gudea, "Reflecţii privind relaţia Stat-Biserică – o abordare teologică greco-catolică" [Reflections on the State-Church relationship – a Greek-Catholic theological approach], in Babeş-Bolyai University / Pázmány Péter Catholic University, *Theological Doctrines on the Ideal Church-State Relation* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 54.

[16] Gúdor K. Botond, "Biserica Greco-Catolică între 1918-1948. Considerații generale" [The Greek Catholic Church between 1918-1948. General considerations], in *Coordonatele preoției greco-catolice. Istorie și actualitate* [Coordinates of the Greek Catholic priesthood. History and current affairs], coordinators Călin-Daniel Pațulea, Anton Rus, Andreea Mârza (Blaj: Editura Buna Vestire, 2002), 273.

centrifugal tendencies.[17] Finally, the involvement (overt or behind the scenes) of some priests, media outlets or even organizations within the Greek-Catholic Church in the electoral campaigns or in supporting certain candidates of the Romanian National Party gave the impression of a politically engaged Church, stepping well beyond the bounds of its primary spiritual mission.[18]

Under these conditions, the solution that could be considered for the fortification of the Romanian nation and the completion of its unity was the religious union of the two Romanian Churches.[19] This generous idea of religious union had taken strong roots among the Romanians, immediately after the end of the war. For some the ardent supporters of this idea, it had become an imperative placed at the service of the internal consolidation of the nation, in the conditions of the fulfilment of the national ideal.[20] For most, however, it offered a good opportunity to highlight, sometimes with sufficient aggression, confessional partisanship. In order to make up for this shortcoming, which affects the image of the perfect cohesion of the Romanians, various options were taken into account, some of them far from applicable. But these plans, beyond their content, managed to shed light on the image that their authors projected both on the denomination to which they belonged, as well

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[17] *Biserica noastră şi cultele minoritare. Marea discuţie parlamentară în jurul Legii Cultelor* [Our Church and Minority Religions. The Great Parliamentary Discussion Around the Law on Religions], with an introduction by N. Russu Ardeleanu (Bucharest: Imprimeria "Universul", 1928), 8-9.

[18] In this sense, see the campaign that Alexandru Rusu did in the pages of the publication *Unirea* in favor of the candidates of the Romanian National Party, then of the National Peasant Party. The open involvement of the canon from Blaj in the electoral campaigns for the main Transylvanian party was considered at the time to be responsible for propelling him, in 1930, to the dignity of the first bishop of the Diocese of Maramureş.

[19] Onisifor Ghibu, *În jurul catolicismului şi a unirii Bisericilor* [Around Catholicism and the union of the Churches] (Arad: Editura Librăriei Diecezane, 1925), 3-54; *Id.*, *O imperioasă problemă naţională: unitatea religioasă a românilor* [An urgent national issue: the religious unity of Romanians] (Beiuş: Tiparul Tipografiei "Ateneul", 1931), 3-64.

[20] Charles Upson Clark, *United Roumania* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932), 102-103; George Enache, "Religie şi modernitate în Vechiul Regat. Dezbateri privind rolul social, politic şi naţional al Bisericii ortodoxe române în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea şi începutul veacului al XX-lea" [Religion and modernity in the Old Kingdom. Debates on the social, political and national role of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century], in *Schimbare şi devenire în istoria României* [Change and development in the history of Romania], coordinators Ioan Bolovan, Sorina Paula Bolovan (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008), 392.

as on the confessional alterities.[21] The Orthodox hypothesis was based on the idea of the common destiny shared by the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church within it. Given this near-total identification, placing the equal sign between "Romanian" and "Orthodox" truly seemed entirely natural.[22] In other words, in the logic of post-Constantinian relations between the state and the Church, Orthodoxy played an essential role in defining the ethnic component.[23] Moreover, belonging to the Orthodox confession had become a symbol of national loyalty and a vector of its acquisition. This osmosis between nation and confession encouraged the plea that saw Orthodoxy as the source of the Romanian people's spiritual unity.[24] In these conditions of doctrinal intransigence, it was evident that other variables of the state-Church equation were difficult to admit.

Nonetheless, at the elite level of the Greek-Catholic Church, a broad horizon of expectation was created regarding the benefits of a cohabitation with "blood brothers" from beyond the Carpathians. However, reality would disprove, little by little, the ambitious ideals.[25] The first and certainly the most

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[21] Cesare Alzati, Laura Evola, "Il dibattito confessionale nella Grande Romania e i suoi echi nella pubblicistica prima e dopo l'89. Alcune considerazioni," in *Storia religiosa dello spazio romeno*, 2nd volume, edited by Luciano Vaccaro (Milano: Collana promossa dalla Fondazione Ambrosiana Paolo VI, Centro Ambrosiano, 2016), 646-650.

[22] See Dumitru Stăniloae, *Ortodoxie şi românism* [Orthodoxy and Romanianism] (Sibiu: Tipografia Arhidiecezană, 1939), *passim*.

[23] Olivier Gillet, "Orthodoxie, nation et ethnicité en Roumanie au XXe siècle: un problème ecclésiologique et politique," in *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Maria Crăciun, Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 1995), 348.

[24] Ibid., 349; James P. Niessen, "Naţionalismul românesc: o ideologie a integrării şi a mobilizării" [Romanian nationalism: an ideology of integration and mobilization], in *Naţionalismul est-european în secolul al XX-lea* [Eastern European nationalism in the 20th century], edited by Peter F. Sugar (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2002), 236; Dumitru Stăniloae, *Reflecţii despre spiritualitatea poporului român* [Reflections on the spirituality of the Romanian people] (Bucharest: Editura Elion, 2004), *passim*.

[25] Being part of the delegation mandated by the Governing Council to present in Bucharest the resolution of the Alba Iulia Assembly, Iuliu Hossu declared in front of the political personalities from the south of the Carpathians, at the festive dinner held in honor of the Transylvanian guests, that Bucharest represented the "Jerusalem of our political and spiritual aspirations": *Credinţa noastră este viaţa noastră. Memoriile cardinalului dr. Iuliu Hossu* [Our faith is our life. The memoirs of Cardinal Dr. Iuliu Hossu], edition by Rev. Silviu Augustin Prunduş OSBM (Cluj-Napoca: Casa de Editură "Viaţa Creştină", 2003), 109. See Ioan-Marius Bucur, *Din istoria Bisericii greco-catolice române (1918-1953)* [From the history of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church (1918-1953)] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Accent, 2003), 30-31.

demanding idea in this sense was precisely the one that sought to attract all Romanians to the Greek-Catholic confessional formula.[26] Not only the Latin branch of the ethnic ancestry of the Romanians was meant to encourage them to step courageously on such a path, but also the capital of prestige that the Catholic Church had, even and within the Orthodox world.[27] But this admiration was undoubtedly marked by subjective values, given that there was no official dialogue, at the institutional level, between the Orthodox Church in Romania and representatives from the top of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church to debate with involvement the mentioned theme.

A first possibility of accomplishing the confessional union of Romanians appeared precisely at the end of the First World War, when both Transylvanian metropolitan seats were vacant. Given the delay in the process of establishing the new Greek-Catholic metropolitan[28] and the death in Budapest of Vasile Mangra,[29] the moment seemed opportune to achieve a religious union within the Romanian ethnic body.

Becoming a topic of reflection among public opinion, the issue of the religious reunification of the Romanians was debated and argued, often from confessionalist positions, by the press bodies supervised by the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania. *Unirea* and *Telegraful român*, in particular, competed in an argumentative effort to promote the idea of including all Romanians under the auspices of the same faith. But these press materials were often marked by the self-justifying rhetoric of each side, thus limiting the real possibilities for dialogue and for reaching a consensus.

There seemed to be three possibilities for the concrete achievement of the confessional union: one was that of imposing the reunification through a decision of a political nature. With very little chance of being implemented, this option was frequently part of the speech of some opinion leaders, who

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[26] Biró, *The Nationalities Problem in Transylvania 1867-1940*, 464; Nóda, "The Historical, Political and Ecclesiastical Background," 289.

[27] George Enache, *Ortodoxie şi putere în România contemporană. Studii şi eseuri* [Orthodoxy and Power in Contemporary Romania. Studies and Essays] (Bucharest: Editura Nemira, 2005), 459.

[28] Lucian Turcu, *Între idealuri şi realitate. Arhidieceza greco-catolică de Alba Iulia şi Făgăraş în timpul păstoririi mitropolitului Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)* [Between ideals and reality. The Greek Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș during the pastorate of Metropolitan Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2017), 231-278.

[29] Marius Eppel, *Un mitropolit și epoca sa. Vasile Mangra (1850-1918)* [A metropolitan and his era. Vasile Mangra (1850-1918)] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2006), *passim*.

invoked the method by which the Greek-Catholic Church appeared within the bosom of the Romanian community. Seen as an institutional artifice of the House of Habsburg –subordinated to the Counter-Reformation program at the end of the 17th century and driven by its political interests to alter the balance between confessions in Transylvania in favour of the Catholic Church – the Romanian United Church could also separate from Rome through a similarly political decision. The probability of achieving church union in the era through such a method was small, considering that no political authority could afford to resort to such an extreme measure. All the less since at the top of the Romanian Kingdom at that time there was a sovereign who only after the end of the war had achieved, at the end of long and complicated negotiations, reconciliation with the Church led by the pope.[30] Even this docile behaviour imposed on King Ferdinand I encouraged some pontifical circles to hope that the sovereign of Romania would become a promoter of the idea of the religious union of the Romanian people.[31]

The second way of achieving the religious union of Romanians could be "from top to bottom" approach, which meant carrying out negotiations at the level of the episcopal choir of each Church. This approach was rather

[30] Lucian Turcu, "Com'è avvenuta la riconciliazione del re Ferdinando I di Romania con la Chiesa cattolica? (la fase postbellica), in *Dal cuore dell'Europa. Omaggio al professor Cesare Alzati per il compimento dei 70 anni*, a cura di Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ovidiu Ghitta, Ioan Bolovan, Ana Victoria Sima (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2015), 363-376.

[31] The ambitious plans of the first diplomatic representative of the sovereign pontiff in Romania, Francesco Marmaggi, to attract the Orthodox Romanians to the union with the Catholic Church required the tempering of the discontent of the local Catholic communities towards some Romanian political decisions, a goal for the achievement of which the Holy See was willing to comply with the requests made by the Romanian authorities, including those to transfer some persons from the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy who had become undesirable, as was the bishop of Cenad, Glattfelder Gyula, or the archbishop of Bucharest, Raymund Netzhammer: Nicolae Brînzeu, *Memoriile unui preot bătrân* [Memoirs of an old priest], edition, preface and notes by Pia Brînzeu and Luminița Wallner-Bărbulescu (Timişoara: Editura Marineasa, 2008), 338-339; Attila Varga, "Primul război mondial şi consecinţele Marii Uniri din 1918 asupra relaţiilor dintre Biserica romano-catolică din Banat şi guvernul de la Bucureşti (1918-1923)" [The First World War and the consequences of the Great Union of 1918 on the relations between the Roman Catholic Church in Banat and the government in Bucharest (1918-1923)], in *Războiul şi societatea în secolul XX. Lucrările sesiunii italo-române Cluj-Napoca – Arcalia, 6-8 mai 2005. Guerra e società nel XX secolo. Atti del convegno italo-romeno Cluj-Napoca – Arcalia, 6-8 maggio 2005*, coordinators Gheorghe Mândrescu, Giordano Altarozzi (Cluj-Napoca – Rome: Accent, 2007), 161.

encouraged by a series of statements launched in the public space even by some senior members of the clergy. In this sense, for example, in 1919, on the occasion of the synod of the diocese of Lugoj, its superior proposed that the hierarchies of the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania should meet and identify, based on the irenic dialogue, the ways forward for religious unification.[32] During the debates held in the Romanian Parliament on the ratification of the Concordat, the Bishop of Gherla at the time, Iuliu Hossu, managed to create an outpouring among his fellow senators by making statements such as: "There are no two other Churches in the world that are so close! Are we truly unable to find a way of rapprochement between us?"[33] Seen from this perspective, religious union was treated as a strictly ecclesiastical matter, starting from the premise that there were indeed more similarities between the two Romanian Churches than there were differences. Replication of the rapprochement from the level of the hierarchies to that of the clergy and believers was believed to be possible through: (1) personal contacts, namely "to meet, for the time being at least, the publicists and theology professors of the two national churches"; (2) intensifying prayers for the achievement of union; (3) press articles to promote the idea of union, "cycles of conferences on religious topics of common interest," but also by eliminating any false ideas about the other Church found in various learning tools (school textbooks, brochures, etc.).[34]

Finally, the third and most sensitive way of achieving religious unity was the "bottom-up" approach. This path required the development of a vigorous proselytization at the basic level of the church organization: that of the parish communities. There, villagers could be more easily encouraged to break away from the Church to which they belonged, especially if tensions simmered between the priest and some parishioners, or if some local leaders succeeded in creating them. Encouraged by some directions of action formulated from the top of the Orthodox Church (in his 1920 installation speech as Archbishop of Sibiu and Metropolitan of Transylvania, Nicolae Bălan made a programmatic declaration, stating that "he would not rest his bones until he embraced, as a father, all the sons of our nation"[35]), the rather forced attempts of religious union managed to produce some results (Poiana, Cib, Hamba, Gâmbaş,

[32] *Vestitorul*, VI (1929), no. 15-16: 3.
[33] The full speech, in *Monitorul Oficial. Partea a III-a. Senatul* [Official Gazette, Part III. The Senate], no. 54 (1929): 1833-1842.
[34] *Vestitorul*, VII (1931), no. 13-14: 4-5.
[35] *Vestitorul*, VIII (1932), no. 21: 6.

Sâniacobul de Mureş, etc.) by transferring some communities of believers from the Greek-Catholic Church to the Orthodox Church. The price, however, was the escalation of maximum tension between the two ecclesiastical institutions.[36]

Many intellectuals at that time were highly interested in identifying the optimal ways that could lead to the accomplishment of the spiritual unity of the Romanians. It was a fairly natural sentiment, considering the duty that many of them felt towards the general good. As expected, many took partisan positions. Their writings and public positions testify to this. Some of even went beyond the stage of *pro domo* pleas. They thought of actual scenarios for the rapprochement or even the merger of the two Romanian Churches, plans that they repeatedly presented to dignitaries with the highest ecclesiastical rank. That was the case of Onisifor Ghibu.[37] The dialogue that the renowned pedagogue had engaged with officials from the top of the Roman Curia was held in the context of the opening of negotiations between the Romanian state and the Holy See in order to conclude a concordat.[38] Unfortunately, the Romanian side's terms regarding the fulfilment of the church union are still unknown,[39] but we do know the answer and the conditionalities received

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[36] *Monitorul Oficial. Partea a III-a. Senatul* [Official Gazette, Part III. The Senate], no. 51 (1928): 1266-1270.

[37] See the biography of this figure in Teodor Gal, *Onisifor Ghibu, pedagog şi educator naţional-militant* [Onisifor Ghibu, pedagogue and national-militant educator] (Cluj-Napoca: Napoca Star, 2002).

[38] The chronology of the steps to conclude the concordat, in Vasile Goldiş, *Concordatul* [The Concordat] (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei diecezane, s.a.), 5-6; Marius Theodorian-Carada, *Acţiunea Sfântului Scaun în România. De acum şi de întotdeauna* [The Action of the Holy See in Romania. From Now and Always] (Bucharest: Editura Autorului, 1936), 6-8.

[39] The plan to restore church unity included two main phases: the first was supposed to be that of the return of the Romanian Greek-Catholics to the Orthodox Church. Secondly, that the Romanian Orthodox Church, preserving its communion of faith with the Orthodox Churches of the East and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, would recognize the spiritual authority of Rome, enjoying a series of benefits from it results from the establishment of a Romanian patriarchate, so insistently claimed by the author. Although he stated that he enjoyed the support of "several heads of our Church," the ideas proposed by the illustrious pedagogue lacked ecclesiological substance, but they managed to arouse a series of debates in Romanian society: For a global view of the author's ideas, see Onisifor Ghibu, *Necesitatea revizuirii radicale a situaţiei confesiunilor din Transilvania* [The need for a radical revision of the situation of confessions in Transylvania] (Cluj: Tipografia Naţională, 1923), 37; *Id., Catolicismul unguresc în Transilvania şi politica religioasă a statului român* [Hungarian Catholicism in Transylvania and the religious policy of the Romanian state] (Cluj: Institutul de arte grafice "Ardealul", 1924), 274-275; *Id., În jurul catolicismului şi a unirii Bisericilor* [Around Catholicism and the union of the Churches] (Arad: Editura librăriei diecezane, 1925), 42-54; *Id., O imperioasă problemă naţională*, 19-31.

from the officials of the Holy See.[40]

On behalf of the young congregation *pro Ecclesia Orientali*, Monsignor Enrico Benedetti conveyed, on April 1, 1921, the perspective of the Catholic Church on the exciting idea of church union. First of all, the assurance was given that "the Holy See was willing to facilitate in any way possible the return of Romanian dissidents to the Catholic unity," reintegration which was to be carried out under the guarantee of the further application of the rights derived from the discipline and rite of the Eastern Church. Seen as an outpost of Latinity in the Slavic East, the Romanians had returned to the framework of the "true Church" were encouraged to preserve their traditional Latin culture as long as its manifestations did not conflict with the Eastern rite and discipline they professed. Regarding one of the Romanian side's non-negotiable conditions, namely the granting of the patriarchal rank for the Church in Romania, the Holy See saw no impediment to its implementation. Just as institutions of a similar rank had been created in that era for Maronite, Syrian or Armenian Catholics, the pontifical officials considered that a patriarchal ecclesiastical structure could function in Romania too, to which all Catholics throughout the country would be subordinate, "not only the archbishops and bishops of the Romanian rite (i.e., Greek) but also, within the limits set by the Code of Canon Law functional in the Latin Church, archbishops and bishops of the Latin rite, as well as religious orders and congregations." Referring to the Romanians remaining outside the country's borders, the same reply letter advanced the proposal that they should be placed under the authority of the Romanian patriarch, a measure that was to be reconciled with the canonical rights of the local ordinaries. Onisifor Ghibu's demand that the Holy See grant the future Romanian patriarch the title of apostolic vicar for all Greek-rite Catholics in Eastern Europe was not refused either. Since it was an Eastern Catholic Church, the submission was to be direct to the Holy See through the Congregation for the Eastern Churches. The seventh point of the negotiations concerned the establishment, in Rome, of a Romanian seminary where future priests could receive quality instruction.

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[40] National Archives, Alba County Service (hereinafter A.N.S.J. Alba), *Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolis of Alba Iulia – Făgăraş, Blaj Fund. Inventory documents*, file no. 4147 (1934), volume one, f. 18r-22r.

The idea seems to have delighted the sovereign pontiff who, according to the respondent, had shown himself willing to allocate a significant sum to achieve that goal. Religious orders and congregations were designed to foster the revival of spiritual life among Romanians. The Holy See assured that it fully understood the role of monasteries and the rigorous monastic principles in maintaining a high degree of religiosity and devotion among Romanians, which is why it was prepared to support the establishment of Romanian religious communities. The proposal for the Romanians to have convents in Italy or France, where the novices could benefit from the appropriate instruction in the western monastic environment, so that when they returned to their homeland, they could become the apostles of the acquired spiritual qualities, was also approved. Point ten contained the assurance that the Holy See would have a non-differentiated treatment of Romanian Catholics in relation to their ethnicity and that it would collaborate with the country's government in taking the necessary measures against the Hungarian and German clergy and believers who threatened the security of the state. Regarding the relationship between the future Church and the centre of the Catholic world, it was specified that the Holy See would refrain from any intervention that did not concern religious matters, and regarding the grounded political tutelage over the Orthodox Church, it was clearly stated that relations of that kind would not exist in the new context. In accordance with the norms of Eastern canon law, the patriarch and the bishops would be assisted to resolving ecclesiastical issues by a permanent synod from which the laity would be excluded. The latter's cooperation would be welcomed and even encouraged in the management of cultural-religious works, in the field of confessional schools, charitable actions, etc. Finally, the last item of the discussion referred to the means by which material support was to be provided by the patriarch, the bishops, the clergy and the actions of the Church in general, advancing the proposal that this should be the fruit of the collaboration between the Holy See and the Romanian government.

Clearly, what emerges from the above-described document is the generous response of the Holy See to the proposal for a church union, advanced by Onisifor Ghibu. Although it did not generate immediate effects, the discussion surrounding this project represented one of the most advanced steps of the intention to unite the Orthodox Church in Romania with the

Catholic Church, a step discussed by intellectuals, clerics and laymen alike, throughout the entire interwar period.[41]

Another great supporter of the idea of the religious union of Romanians was Marius Teodorian-Carada. Born a century and a half ago in Craiova, Marius Theodorian-Carada was part of the gallery of intellectuals deeply involved in the life of the Church in the years before the First World War and in those that followed. Of the two halves of his last name, the second obviously had the greatest resonance for the efforts to modernize Romanian society from a political, economic and cultural perspective, attributed to his illustrious predecessor,[42] Eugeniu Carada, to whom he dedicated an opus honouring his merits.[43] A lawyer by training, Marius Theodorian-Carada, like other intellectuals, was involved in the Romanian political life, promoting the values he believed in not only from the rostrum of the Parliament, but also through press articles, as a tireless contributor to the most important periodicals of those times.[44] As arolific author, he was strongly involved in the debates around the political and cultural ideas of the time, repeatedly proving his qualities as a talented polemicist.[45]

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[41] At that time, the theme was discussed repeatedly in the religious press, brochures were published and it was the subject of epistolary correspondences, such as the one between Elie Daianu and patriarch Miron Cristea. See, in this regard, National Archives, Cluj County Service, *Ilie Dăianu Personal Fund*, file no. 221 (s.a.), f. 3r – f 7r; file 738 (1936), f. 4r; *Memoriile cardinalului dr. Iuliu Hossu* [Memoirs of Cardinal Dr. Iuliu Hossu], 52-53.

[42] Dinică Ciobotea, Aurelia Florescu, "Contribuţii genealogice la o biografie a lui Eugeniu Carada" [Genealogical contributions to a biography of Eugeniu Carada], in *Analele Universităţii din Craiova. Seria Istorie* [Annals of the University of Craiova, History Series], XVI, No. 1(19)/2011: 119-122.

[43] Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Eugeniu Carada* [Eugeniu Carada] (Bucharest: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1922).

[44] *Id.*, *Efimeridele. Însemnări şi amintiri, 1908-1928* [Ephimerides. Notes and Memories, 1908-1928] (Săbăoani: Tipografia "Serafica", 1937), 124-125; Dinu Bălan, "A piece of Mariu(s) Theodorian Carada's journalism. His collaboration with *Decalogue* magazine", in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol"* [Yearbook of the "A. D. Xenopol" Institute of History], tome LVII (2020): 369-372. The attachment to the Catholic cause in Romania was also materialized in Theodorian-Carada's involvement, between 1921-1924, in the publicist project *Albina*, supported by the Nunciature from Bucharest.

[45] Dinu Bălan, "Chemarea strămbunilor: Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada şi activitatea lui istoriografică" [The Call of the Ancestors: Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada and his historiographical activity], in *Perspectivele și problemele integrării în spațiul european al cercetării și educației* [Prospects and problems of integration into the European research and education space], volume VII, part 2 (Cahul: Editura Universităţii din Cahul, 2020), 326-328; Miltiade *Adamescu, Bibliografia tuturor*

Theodorian-Carada was also a careful observer and commentator of religious life in Romania. He vehemently criticized the spiritual immobility of antebellum Orthodoxy, condemning the selfish interests behind certain promotions among the high clergy. He argued the inability of the Romanian hierarchs to convey to the faithful the aspiration towards higher values, based on his conviction that a Church servile to politics (as he considered the Orthodox Church to be) could not offer its pastors the all so necessary means for cultural and spiritual elevation.[46] Instead, he admired the existing discipline within the Catholic Church, the good intellectual training of the clergy and the strategies for mobilizing hundreds of millions of believers. This freshness of Catholicism led Theodorian-Carada to embrace, at the end of the first decade of the last century, the faith teachings of the universal Church, but in their Greek-Catholic version. After the end of the war, his plea in favour of the idea of uniting the Orthodox Church in Romania with the Church led by the sovereign pontiff returned repeatedly in his public statements, or in his correspondence, but the plans he stated in this regard were not quite clear or convincing enough to be put into practice.[47] He remained faithful to the paschoptist leitmotif of a single Romanian Church, "which must be neither orthodox nor united, but simply a Romanian church."[48]

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scrierilor domnului Mariu Theodorian-Carada [Bibliography of all the writings of Mr. Mariu Theodorian-Carada] (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice, 1923), *passim*. Mia Frollo, *Un scriitor original: Mariu Theodorian Carada* [An original writer: Mariu Theodorian Carada] (Bucharest: Tipografia "Dorneanu", 1940).

[46] Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Decăderea Bisericei Ortodoxe Române şi causele ei* [The Decline of the Romanian Orthodox Church and its Causes] (Bucuresci: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1897), *passim*.

[47] Theodorian-Carada's perspective on the binomial nation-confession (with a plea for the union of the Orthodox Church with the Church led by the sovereign pontiff), in his work *Biserica română din punct de vedere naţional* [The Romanian Church from a national point of view] (Bucharest: Tipografia Profesională Dimitrie C. Ionescu, 1913). See also Dinu Bălan, "Naţiune şi religie în România modernă: cazul lui Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada" [Nation and religion in modern Romania: the case of Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada], in *Perspectivele și problemele integrării în spațiul european al cercetării și educației* [Prospects and problems of integration into the European research and education space], volume VIII, part 2 (Cahul: Editura Universităţii din Cahul, 2021), 182-188.

[48] See Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Unirea Bisericilor* [Union of Churches] (Galaţi: Tipografia "Moldova", 1928). The author also designed a project for the unification of the Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church, edited under the pseudonym Protosinghelul A. Otmenedec, *Unificarea Bisericii. Organizație autonomă și canonică* [Unification of the Church. Autonomous and canonical organization] (Bucharest: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1920). See also Dinu Bălan, "Un mediator

Theodorian-Carada's attachment to the cause of restoring the faith unity of the Christian world was appreciated by the papacy, which granted him private audiences (the first, shortly after his conversion, in 1910)[49] and honoured him with the distinction of Commander of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great Great and with the cross *pro Ecclesia et Pontefice*.[50]

The issue of the means for the religious unification of the Romanians returned recurrently in the contents of his letters addressed to the Holy See. It happened, for example, at the end of the third decade of the last century, when Theodorian-Carada sent an extensive memorandum to Pius XI.[51] The author of the letter expressed his opinion about the strategies that the Catholic Church used to attract the peoples of Eastern Europe, primarily the Russians and the Greeks, to the unity of faith, expressing his gratitude that the Holy See overlook the Romanians in his plans to restore Christian unity, the proof of success, even if partially up to that date, being precisely the Greek-Catholic Church. This Church, Theodorian-Carada hastens to add, was exposed, immediately after the union of Transylvania with the old Romania, to virulent attacks from the Orthodox confessional circles and from certain politicians, who aggressively promoted the idea of the return of the Greek-Catholic believers to the Church they had once left.

Another theme touched upon by the author of the letter referred to the possibility of creating a confessional party in Romania. The lack of such an organization had also been noted by the former Nuncio in Bucharest, Francesco Marmaggi (at that time diplomatic representative of the Holy See in Poland). However, when he submitted an offer of that kind to the Greek Catholics, the hierarchs opposed, declaring that they were satisfied with the way in which the political group led by Iuliu Maniu defended their interests.

între confesiuni: Marius Theodorian-Carada în jurnalul arhiepiscopului Raymund Netzhammer" [A mediator between confessions: Marius Theodorian-Carada in the diary of Archbishop Raymund Netzhammer], in *Identități etno-confesionale și reprezentări ale Celuilalt în spațiul est-european: între stereotip și voința de a cunoaște* [Ethno-confessional identities and representations of the Other in the Eastern European space: between stereotype and the will to know], coordinators: Cristina Preutu, George Enache; foreword by Gheorghe Cliveti (Iaşi: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2018), 83-102.

[49] Theodorian Carada, *Efimeridele* [Ephimerides], 28-31.

[50] Archives of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (hereinafter A.C.O.C.), *Romeni. Affari generali*, 166 (1929), doc. 1a (p. 1-18).

[51] Ibid..

Nonetheless, despite the fact that a political formation based on religion was strictly prohibited by the recently adopted law on the regime of cults in Romania, Theodorian-Carada believed that its usefulness could not be denied, considering that the nationalist-peasants would not always be in power. The problems of the Catholic community in Romania, however, regardless of the rite, would continue to exist. In addition, such a group could programmatically adopt the idea of the religious union of all Romanians with the Church of Rome, which could make that ideal easier to achieve. At the same time, the party could withstand the attacks that the Orthodox press and part of the Romanian political world launched against the Catholic Church. In order to prepare such a movement, it was absolutely essential, Theodorian-Carada believed, to establish a journal with a large circulation, which would support the project of the religious union. Theodorian-Carada explains that there was no such publication in Romania at that time, taking into account that *Unirea* from Blaj was published only once a week, having "un caractère trop exclusivité religieux et un ton de polemique bien désagrèable," written in a language that was not purely Romanian, but one specific to Transylvania, with all of its provincialisms and specific expressions. The project initiated by the former diplomatic representative, Francesco Marmaggi (the *Albina* newspaper) was short-lived, due to the fact that the editorial group from Blaj perceived him as a competitor and, through political obstruction, led by director Zenovie Pâclişanu from the Ministry of Cults. This was not the only instrument identified by Theodorian-Carada through which the seeds of the idea of ecclesiastical union could be sown among the Romanians. Taking into account the predominantly agrarian profile of Romania, he also proposed the founding of agricultural-type cooperatives, under the name "Peasant Farms", which would develop a network of branches in as many villages as possible in old Romania and which, attracting Italian investors, could become the instrument of a successful pro-unionist propaganda. In addition to other objections related to the confusion in which the Greek-Catholic Church found itself regarding the date of the celebration of Easter, Theodorian-Carada resumed the idea that the shortest and most successful way to fulfil the desired religious union of all Romanians with the Church led by the sovereign pontiff was that the United Church should re-identify, as much as possible, in its external manifestations (without paying attention, of course, to the integrity of the dogma) with the rite of the Orthodox Church.

The fact that the issue of religious union was primarily attributed to national valences and only subsidiarily meanings related to the placement in the "true faith" matrix is also clear from the investigation carried out by Ioan Georgescu, the results of which were published in the middle of the fourth decade of the last century.[52] The respective investigation sought to test the attitude of no less than 40 figures of the Romanian public life[53] in relation to the issue of the union of the Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The vast majority of respondents declared themselves open to the idea of the religious union of Romanians, which they also saw as a way to strengthen the Romanian bloc in the face of the dangers that minority ethnicities/confessions could represent. The possibility of the rapprochement, followed by the union of the two Churches was justified by all those who considered the respective approach achievable through the prism of the lack of fundamental dogmatic differences between them. Also, the majority opinion of those polled was that the biggest obstacles standing in the way of the confessional union of Romanians were the personal ambitions or the fanaticism of certain senior clergy members or the political interests that often further complicated the matter. Regarding the direction of the union, the opinion of the majority of the respondents was that it should be done in the sense of bringing the Orthodox Church closer to Western culture and spirituality, which confirmed the prestige enjoyed by the Catholic Church. But this was not the only (and most convincing) argument for the entry of the Romanian Orthodox Church into the communion of faith with the Church of Rome, according to the figures who formulated opinions on this sensitive issue. The Greco-Slavic ethos, of which the Orthodox Church considered itself to be "imbued", and which made it alien to the Latin soul of the Romanian people, seemed to be the main argument for the orientation of the union in the direction of Western Christianity (Catholicism). An immediate consequence of the Romanians's entry into communion with the Catholic Church was not only the correction of an anomaly – i.e., the incompatibility between the Romanians' Latin roots and their adherence to Eastern Christian dogma and ritual –, but also their

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[52] *Bisericile româneşti. Anchetă de Ioan Georgescu* [Romanian Churches. Survey by Ioan Georgescu] (Oradea: Tipografia românească, 1935), *passim*.

[53] Among them: Vasile Băncilă, Ion Bianu, Nichifor Crainic, Iosif Frollo, Claudiu Isopescu, Simion Mehedinţi, Sextil Puşcariu, August Scriban, Victor Smighelschi, Pamfil Şeicaru, Octavian Tăslăuan, etc.

seating at the table of prestigious and civilised European nations (Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.). The levelling of the asperities created by the prejudices sedimented over time had to be done through the moral education of the younger generations. However, all of these theories were burdened by one major handicap: the difficulty of putting them into practice.

As a fairly thorny issue, the matter of the religious union of the Romanian people represented a passionate topic of debate in the interwar period, one that engaged numerous figures on the Romanian public scene, from high-ranking church figures, secular personalities, politicians, journalists, etc. The vast majority was open to the achievement of the confessional union, and these opinion makers treated the delicate enterprise as a necessity of a national order, rather than a merely religious matter. The religious dichotomy of the Romanians was considered a sign of their national fragility, which could only be cured by uniting everyone under the dome of the same faith. But precisely the transposition of this ideal into reality further deepened the distance between the two Romanian Churches, considering the confessional perspectives that were laid at the foundation of the welding of the two church communities. This intransigence can be considered responsible for the radical solution that would be resorted to in the issue of the religious union of the Romanians: the one of December 1, 1948.[54]

[54] Namely, decree 358 of December 1, 1948, by which the Romanian Church United with Rome (i.e., Greek-Catholic) was outlawed by the communist state.

Masculinity and Sexual Pluralism: The Evolution of Gendered Practices and the Affirmation of Sexual Orientations in the Romanian Public Space

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Abstract: This study explores the emergence of new cultural models of masculinity in the context of the freedom of expression and consumer society in post-Decemberist Romania. The decriminalization of homosexuality facilitated the expression of both gay and heterosexual identities in the public space. Simultaneously, the development of consumer society, aligned with the European consumer market, contributed to the emergence and expression of new representations and forms of masculinity, distinct from those of the communist period, which were hegemonic due to the limits of expression imposed by the regime. The study examines how these masculine patterns began to be expressed in both small towns and large cities, amidst rising affluence and the proliferation of consumer goods that enabled the cultural instrumentalization of masculinity through new gendered practices. It further exemplifies how gay individuals have objectified representations of masculinity through sexual fantasies, shaping their understanding of gay sexuality. Cultural masculine models have been instrumentalized through culturally gendered practices, with different sexual identities leading to the emergence of sexual pluralism.

Keywords: Masculinities, Sexual Identity, Sexual Fetishism, Sexual Objectification, Sexual Pluralism

Rezumat: Acest studiu explorează apariția unor noi modele culturale de masculinitate în contextul libertății de exprimare și al societății de consum din România post-decembristă. Decriminalizarea homosexualității a facilitat exprimarea identităților atât gay, cât și heterosexuale în spațiul public. Simultan, dezvoltarea societății de consum, aliniată cu piața europeană de consum, a contribuit la apariția și exprimarea unor noi reprezentări și forme de masculinitate, distincte de cele din perioada comunistă, care erau hegemonice datorită limitelor de exprimare impuse de regim. Studiul examinează modul în care aceste modele masculine au început să fie exprimate

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atât în orașele mici, cât și în orașele mari, în contextul creșterii abundenței și al proliferării bunurilor de consum care au permis instrumentalizarea culturală a masculinității prin noi practici de gen. De asemenea, exemplifică modul în care indivizii gay au obiectificat reprezentările masculinității prin fantezii sexuale, modelându-și înțelegerea sexualității gay. Modelele culturale masculine au fost instrumentalizate prin practici culturale de gen, diferite identități sexuale ducând la apariția pluralismului sexual.

Cuvinte-cheie: Masculinități, Identitate sexuală, Fetișism sexual, Obiectivizare sexuală, Pluralism sexual

Preamble

The events of December 1989 in Romania laid the groundwork for the emergence and development of a liberal society, built upon key concepts such as respect for human rights, the rise of the market economy, and the gradual establishment of a consumer society. Homosexuality had been criminalized under Article 200 of the Penal Code, adopted in 1969, which stipulated that sexual relations between individuals of the same sex, if conducted in public or causing public scandal, were punishable by imprisonment for up to five years.[1] Therefore, the matter was then brought into the public discourse. Both of the Criminal Procedure Codes adopted during the communist regime—the 1948 Criminal Procedure Code and the 1969 Criminal Procedure Code—incorporated provisions criminalizing homosexuality from the interwar period, when it had been criminalized under the 1936 Criminal Code. In all of these Romanian penal codes, homosexuality was criminalized in relation to the concept of "public scandal," which significantly hindered the social and cultural expression of the local gay community. Following extensive parliamentary debates, Article 200 was repealed in 2001 under the government of Adrian Năstase, pressured by different non-governmental organizations, including the *Accept Association*, founded in 1996. These organizations emerged in Romania after receiving external funding from donors such as the Open Society Institute, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and PHARE. In the absence of an active civil society in Romania, the movement for the social

[1] *Penal Code of 1968*, Art. 200, accessed February 15, 2025, https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/38070.

rights of LGBTQ+ individuals was largely driven by these non-governmental organizations, with their members often working independently of an active gay community.[2] Thus, a series of myths and narratives regarding the appropriateness of decriminalizing homosexuality in Romania have emerged and been perpetuated in the public discourse. Among the most common of these claims is that Romania does not have a "gay problem." In the collective imagination of both the public and political elites, homosexuality was viewed as a phenomenon specific to Western society and, therefore, as a Western vice, with the West often being accused of imposing these so-called "anomalies" on the country.[3] Following these public debates, more than 20 years after the decriminalization of homosexuality, members of the LGBTQ+ community began to express themselves freely, leading to the emergence of a visible local gay community in Romania. Today, the gay sexual identity is openly expressed in the public space alongside the heterosexual identity, with members of both communities undergoing a process of mutual cultural hybridization of gender practices, particularly those defined as masculine.[4]

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[2] Shannon Woodcock, "Gay Pride as Violent Containment in Romania: a Brave New Europe," *Sextures – A Virtual Forum and E-journal for Sexualities, Cultures and Politics*, no. 1 (2009): 1-17.

[3] This is one of the generic opinions expressed by members of the Romanian political class during that period, who accused the West of attempting to erase what they considered to be the true Romanian values, defined as traditional. The opinion quoted was voiced by MP Emil Teodor Popescu, who served in the 1996–2000 legislature. The transcripts regarding the repeal of Article 200 are available on the official website of the Chamber of Deputies under the "Parliamentary Debates" section. For a more comprehensive analysis of these debates among the Romanian political class, see Florin Buhuceanu, *Homoistorii. Ieşirea din invizibilitate*, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Editura Maiko, 2016), 104–105.

[4] The observation regarding the existence of a cultural process of hybridization of gender practices defined as masculine, in relation to biological sex, between heterosexual and homosexual individuals, is made by R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, who have questioned the historical and cultural process of redefining traditional/hegemonic masculinity through cultural hybridization, driven by changing gender practices. According to gender studies theories, masculinity and femininity are not fixed, normative categories, but rather undergo changes depending on the cultural and social context in which individuals express their gender practices. For further details, see R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 845; D. Z. Demetriou addresses the same process of approximation of gender practices, mentioning their reconfiguration and adaptation, see D. Z. Demetriou, "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (2001): 355.

This study, utilizing the tools of historical anthropology, explores how the transition from a totalitarian state to a democratic one has influenced the redefinition of male cultural models in contemporary Romanian society. Moreover, particular emphasis is placed on how these male cultural models emerge and are publicly expressed in Romania, and how they impact homosexuality. This study is part of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Masculinity and Sexual Identity in Contemporary Romania*, which aims to identify the main male cultural categories that have become sexually relevant within the gay community in Romania. The study involves seven participants and traces the process of hybridization of gender practices that define and shape masculinity between individuals with gay sexual identities and those with heterosexual identities. It also investigates the sexual desires and fantasies of young gay individuals, aged up to 30, in relation to members of the heterosexual community. Through access to consumer goods and Western fashion, the heterosexual community has redefined the relationship between gender, attitude, and dress—factors that also influence the sexuality of young gay individuals. All participants in this research were aged between 18 and 30 and were educated in the post-Decemberist era. The research is qualitative in nature and was conducted through direct, non-directive interviews with both gay individuals, who provided information on the relevance of masculine cultural models for their own sexuality, and individuals who identify as heterosexual, offering personal motivations regarding gender expression and dress codes influenced by new Western brands. Male cultural models that instantiate masculinity through various culturally gendered practices have become sexually relevant within the gay community, with the entire process contributing to the emergence of forms of sexual pluralism.[5]

Thus, cultural models of heterosexual identity become relevant not only for women but also for gay men, with masculinity, formed through culturally universal gender practices, acquiring a dual significance in terms of sexual identity and the messages it conveys. The primary research area is the municipality of Brad, a city of approximately 14,000 inhabitants in Hunedoara

[5] For a discussion on sexuality, which, beyond its unquestionable biological foundation, is shaped by social and cultural constructs, leading to the emergence of forms of sexual pluralism, see Fatmagül Berktay, "The Social Construction of Sexuality and the Debate over 'Sexual Pluralism'," *Kadın Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7 (2001): 65-74.

County, though the study also includes individuals from larger cities such as Timișoara, Arad, Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Alba-Iulia, and Deva. The gay community in Brad gravitates towards these very cities, a process mirrored throughout the country, though with inherent fluctuations and discontinuities shaped by specific sexual desires, as well as by the search for gay partners on dating apps such as Grindr, where such sexual fantasies can be fulfilled. It is important to note that the sexual exploration discussed in this study is specific to a segment of the gay community and does not represent those individuals who do not affirm their sexual identity or actively explore their sexuality.

Masculinity and Sexual Identity in Liberal Societies: Toward a Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The public expression of sexual identity is a phenomenon specific to liberal societies built on respect for human rights, market economies, and consumer culture. In 1993, more than 30 years after World War II, when the consumer society had developed in Western European countries and the decriminalization of homosexuality had been achieved through the direct civic activism of gay individuals during the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, American historian John D'Emilio highlighted the direct relationship between liberalization, capitalism, consumer society, and the expression of gay sexual identity. He argued that the emergence and expression of sexual and feminist identities are closely tied to individuals' financial independence in a liberal and capitalist society, which also entails social independence. As individuals no longer belong to an interdependent family system but participate in the labour market, this financial and social independence is also reflected in terms of identity and sexuality. The transformation of traditional family structures has allowed homosexual desires to become part of one's personal identity, which is freely expressed in a liberal society.[6] Processes such as industrialization, followed by urbanization and demographic growth, have undermined traditional family structures

[6] John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, edited by Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (New York, London: Routledge, 1993), 470.

and their power dynamics, wherever these phenomena have occurred, thus creating the conditions for the expression of sexual identities, as well as other forms of identity, such as the post-colonial ones.

In this climate of liberalization and social emancipation, which contributed to the decriminalization of homosexuality, the consumer society has fostered and promoted the development of masculine and feminine cultural models. Cultural models associated with gay sexual identity have not been an exception, gradually incorporating elements of gender representation and dress patterns from masculinities associated with heterosexual identity, resulting in a process of cultural hybridization of gender practices. This process of hybridization between heterosexual and gay cultural patterns began to be observed and recorded soon after 1900, when the expression of homosexual behaviour by certain individuals also led to the emergence of homosexual gender expressions and gay masculinities.[7] The process continued throughout the interwar period until the rise of totalitarian regimes, which re-criminalized homosexuality and imposed stricter measures against it.[8] As a result, this cultural expression was halted, only to be resumed in certain countries in the post-war period. In England, France, and the United States, the expression of sexual identity was similarly slowed by economic crises and war.

The liberalization that characterized post-war Western societies, along with economic growth and the emergence of welfare states, facilitated a new expression of sexual identity. During this period, the understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation became increasingly tied to the cultural expression of gender, thus contributing to the development of the theoretical and conceptual framework of gender studies. Homosexuality ceased to be viewed as a form of degeneracy based on sexual behaviour, and no longer regarded as a eugenic issue, as it had been prior to World War II. Instead, the homosexual was reconceptualized as an individual category, or "species,"

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[7] For an overview on the expression of gay sexual identity in the early 20th century, see Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe,* vol. 1 & 2 (Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939), part I, "A Brief Apogee: The 1920s, A First Homosexual Liberation; The Homosexual - Between Dandy and Militant."

[8] Homosexuality was re-criminalized by the Soviet regime in 1934, following its initial liberalization under the Bolshevik government. Meanwhile, the relative tolerance that gay individuals experienced in Italy and Germany was replaced by outright persecution after the rise of Fascism and Nazism.

as Michel Foucault termed it, in which sexual orientation is integrated into gender, and the gay individual is understood as a subject with a culturally constructed identity.[9] This conceptual framework emerged and developed only in the post-war period, following decolonization, which catalysed the expression of post-colonial, non-heteronormative, and feminist identities. The expression of gay sexual identity in Western public spaces, alongside gender practices defined as universal, regardless of sexual orientation, contributed to the development of a conceptual model that began with a limited empirical foundation, but that gradually expanded into a comprehensive research framework for masculinity patterns across diverse cultural contexts.[10]

The evolution of the Romanian state and society from a totalitarian regime to a democratic state, particularly the decriminalization of homosexuality, coupled with the emergence of a consumer society and the financial independence of individuals within the market economy, inevitably facilitated the expression of gay sexual identity in Romania. This process mirrors, with inherent chronological differences, the stages of gay sexual identity affirmation that occurred in Western European countries.

The Expression of Sexual Identity in the Post-Decembrist Society: The Decline of Hegemonic Masculinity and the Emergence of New Masculinities

The redefinition of masculine patterns in Romania has been a gradual process, evolving alongside the expansion of the consumer society that emerged after 1990. Prior to the December 1989 revolution, the expression of masculinity was constrained by the egalitarian principles of the communist regime, which emphasized moral and reproductive order, discipline, and social equality. The cultural expressions of masculinity were primarily confined to the image of the worker, the central symbol of the regime, who was portrayed as contributing to the country's prosperity, or to the "comrade," if one belonged to the ruling party, its leadership, or the intellectual elite. The social pressure on the individual and the shortages of the 1980s, driven by the regime's self-inflicted economic crisis, further restricted the cultural expression of gender.

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[9] Tamsin Spargo, *Foucault and Queer Theory* (UK: Icon Books, 1999; USA: Totem Books, 1999), 20.
[10] R.W. Connel and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 845.

Sensuality, eroticism, and sexuality, especially when associated with personal identities—particularly masculine ones— were rarely recognized as elements worthy of valorization, often inhibiting individual gender expression.[11] Men were required to wear their hair short and to be clean-shaven, in accordance with the image promoted by the regime. Because of these cultural patterns imposed by the regime, masculinity in the communist period had a hegemonic character, even if the hegemony was not strongly enforced. The absence of consumer society and consumer goods in the context of the economic crisis also meant that masculinity during the communist period was unitary, not segmented by consumer goods, and had a somewhat monolithic character[12]. In the aftermath of the revolution, as gender practices began to diversify with the advent of consumer goods, a narrative emerged in the public discourse: at that time, individuals who did not conform to societal norms were at risk of being apprehended by the authorities, who would then shave their heads and force them into employment, often under threat of detention.[13]

After 1990, new male models and cultural patterns gradually emerged, which had been suppressed under the totalitarian regime. Following the entry of Western brands into the Romanian market after 2000, these brands promoted new cultural images and postures of masculinity, which were appropriated by both heterosexual and homosexual individuals within the evolving mass culture. The proliferation of these patterns was further accelerated by the rise of the internet and social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.[14] However, smartphones played an even more significant role than the brands themselves, as individuals, unable to always

[11] For a discussion on the condemnation of eroticism during the communist regime, see the chapter "Tot ce trebuie să știm despre sex. Din cărți," in **Alexandru Ofrim**, *Farmecul discret al patinei și alte mici istorii culturale* (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2019), 39.

[12] For a discussion on the concept of monolithic masculinity in economics as a division of consumer goods, see Salim L. Azar, "Exploring Brand Masculine Patterns: Moving Beyond Monolithic Masculinity," *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 22, no. 7 (2013): 502-512.

[13] This type of narrative remains prevalent in society, particularly among older individuals who lived during the communist regime and who did not fully embrace the changes introduced by the December 1989 Revolution, which brought to the forefront the concepts of freedom and individual choice in areas such as gender, profession, and personal life.

[14] The social media networks mentioned are among the most prominent platforms that have contributed to the expression of new masculine gender identities. While these networks may evolve in response to changing trends, the internet and social media continue to play a key role in the dissemination and promotion of these models.

afford original clothing, sought alternative or second-hand items that aligned with the new cultural patterns emerging in the internet age. The post-2000 period, marked by globalization, not only facilitated the development of the LGBTQ+ movement in line with its transnational nature, but also promoted new gender patterns within the broader cultural discourse.

Attitudes towards the body and sexuality underwent significant transformation after the state abandoned its pro-natalist policies, and eroticism became increasingly dissociated from procreation, coinciding with the broader availability and use of contraception. In the context of consumer society, ideals of masculinity have evolved, particularly among young people aged 18-40, where male role models have become more diverse and more prominently emphasized. Masculinities now interact within a broad process of cultural, social, and psychological exchange, and social networks, by enhancing individual interactions and the visibility of the body as a form of cultural expression, have contributed to the spread of masculine models and patterns across both heterosexual and homosexual communities. The cultural hybridization of masculinities is unfolding within both groups. Heterosexual men are increasingly engaging in bodybuilding, attending fitness gyms, or adopting grooming practices such as shaving their legs, while gay men are embracing masculine traits by frequenting fitness centres, adopting heterosexual masculine codes, cultivating facial hair, getting tattoos, piercings, or wearing sportswear to reinforce their masculinization process. Fitness and bodybuilding gyms are ubiquitous in every city, and attitudes toward the body are evolving among youth not only in large urban centres, but also in smaller towns. While traditional collective structures persist in many cities and in rural areas – where the consumer society has taken hold more gradually while continuing to uphold certain norms –, the process of social emancipation on an individual level is expanding and becoming increasingly visible in both small and medium-sized communities, not only in major cities. Traditional life patterns based on marriage, family, and reproductive norms are no longer singular; they are increasingly challenged by attitudes influenced by the relaxation of state pressure on procreation, which has simultaneously facilitated the emergence of modern masculinity models inspired by consumer society. In contrast to the post-war emancipation movements in the West, which were characterized by large-scale mobilizations in urban centres against restrictive state policies, emancipation in Romania

is more gradual and occurs at an individual level. However, this process is reshaping and competing with traditional models, diminishing their former dominance.

Models of masculinity expressing gay sexual identity have begun to assert themselves and gain visibility in both public and online spaces. For gay individuals, fashion has always served as a significant mode of expression. On the one hand, fashion can perpetuate the invisibility of gay groups lacking a communal identity, while, on the other hand, it can subtly signal adherence to codes not readily embraced by the general population. In Romania, the expression of these masculinities and sexual identities is still often perceived by the wider public as a mere emergence of masculinities and styles within the new consumer society. However, among heterosexual models, gay individuals are increasingly infiltrating and publicly expressing themselves, thus redefining traditional masculinity. Practices such as tweezing, shaving legs, wearing trousers with bare ankles or tight fits, which have become widespread among heterosexual men, have been significantly influenced by gender practices specific to the gay community. Whether the hybridization process has occurred through local gay influences or through the adoption of Western masculinities promoted on social media, the impact is clear. Over the past decade, as the visibility of the gay community in public spaces has grown, the hybridization between heterosexual and gay masculinities has largely occurred via the heterosexual intermediary model drawn from Western consumer society, with its influence spread through advertisements, Western brands, and the internet.

The general population in Romania has largely ignored the expression of gay identity in the public sphere, as they do not clearly distinguish between the two identities. However, certain remarks, occasionally made by individuals who also lived under the former regime, such as the perception that men have been "effeminized,"[15] suggest that some people are aware of the broader

[15] On a considerable number of occasions, I have observed discussions in which men over the age of 50, who had experienced the pre-consumer society era, voiced opinions about the masculinities around them. For instance, in the summer of 2019, in the commune of Băița, Hunedoara County, during a visit to the village shop, a woman remarked that all men "look gay" and that being gay has become fashionable. Such opinions were also reported by other gay and heterosexual individuals whom I interviewed for my anthropological research. These views are particularly prevalent in rural areas but are not exclusive to rural populations; they

transformation of masculinities in Romania. For most, these dress codes are associated with masculinities linked to a gay sexual identity: *they appear gay*, *dress gay*, *think gay*. Yet, such opinions are often expressed in a vague manner, especially when the individuals being referred to do not openly identify as gay. In Romania, few have had the courage to openly assert their sexual identity. Gay men remain somewhat distant in the public imagination, particularly in small towns and rural areas, and in large cities, they often blend into the crowds. They are still perceived as part of a small minority within the social imagination, yet their culture and masculinities interact with the broader process of masculinity transformation, contributing to the reshaping of gendered practices. Despite this, individuals who interact with openly queer people can often identify them. The interaction between openly gay individuals and their accepting heterosexual friends inevitably leads to the paradox that other gay men, who express their masculinity without publicly affirming their sexual identity, are recognized by heterosexuals who have openly gay friends. Ultimately, the growing public discourse around gay identity reflects the increasing visibility and acceptance, in Romania, of sexual identity expression and the redefinition of masculinity ideals through new gender practices.

Ten years ago, in Brad, a small provincial town in Hunedoara County with a population of 14,000, discussions about gay individuals were limited to associating certain people's dress styles with Western gay cultural models or hybridized masculinities, without any direct link between the cultural models expressed and the sexual identities of those embodying them, as no one in the town had openly affirmed their sexual identity. Today, the situation has changed, with more than ten openly gay local individuals, aged between 16[16] and 25. At the very least, their close friends are aware of their sexual orientation. They come out in some contexts, but remain closeted in others, depending on the individuals they interact with. Extending the area around

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emerge wherever there are noticeable discrepancies between new cultural patterns and traditional masculinities.

[16] It is important to note that the age of sexual consent in Romania is 16, and the expression of sexual orientation typically begins during adolescence. However, the sexual fantasies of some gay individuals involving people over the age of 16—whether they are 17, 18, or 19—represent a reality that I could not exclude from this study, which was conducted with the consent of adults over the age of 18, under strict confidentiality.

the town to a 15 km radius, including the surrounding countryside, the number exceeds twenty. Some openly affirm their sexual identity to close friends, and their families are aware of their orientation, which allows them to disregard any rumours that may circulate. Although they are often advised not to make it widely known, each individual shares their orientation with a limited circle of close friends, which gradually expands due to the curiosity of others. In the town, some people who are familiar with these individuals take an interest in their sexual orientation. As a result, the topic of gay people becomes a subject for social reality testing, often mixed with jokes and mean-spirited comments intended to provoke small subcultural conflicts and test opinions on the matter. The presence of gay individuals in the town matters primarily insofar as certain social subgroups take notice of them. For those who do not, the topic of sexual identity affirmation remains merely a rumour not worth exploring. However, for others, it becomes an interesting subject, particularly when the individuals involved are well-known, and for those who have interacted with at least one openly gay person, sexual identity becomes a certainty.

The process of expressing and affirming sexual identity is not linear and is characterized by numerous discontinuities, influenced by the social environment in which individuals live, as well as by personal or family values. In contrast, the situation is significantly more dynamic in larger and medium-sized cities in the surrounding areas, such as Timișoara, Arad, Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Alba Iulia, and Deva, where the gay community can express itself freely. In these cities, members of the community often use dating apps such as Grindr, which facilitate easier connections with other men. In these urban areas, where the business and IT sectors dominate, traditional patterns of masculinity, influenced by reproductive norms still prevalent in some rural regions or provincial towns, have been more extensively disrupted. This shift has led to the emergence and more visible expression of new masculinities, both homosexual and heterosexual, influenced by Western cultural models and the fashion promoted by major brands, particularly through the presence of shopping malls and large retail stores, which have become widely frequented by Romanians.

Fetishizing Male Models: From Brand Fetishism to Sexual Fetishism

In the evenings, urban areas often witness groups of young people gathering to socialize. Their fashion choices are heavily influenced by Western brands and labels, which align with broader global cultural trends, particularly in terms of masculinity. Small towns, such as Brad, are no exception to this cultural expression. Young men, in particular, distinguish themselves from older generations through their clothing, often opting for popular Western brands such as Nike, Adidas, Jordan, and North Face. These choices are prominently displayed, often alongside symbols of status like cars or other behaviours that signal strength and assertiveness. Such young men are frequently labelled as "bombers"[17] by outsiders—a term typically applied to a social group of individuals aged 16-21, often unemployed (although some may be students), who use brand-name clothing as a means to assert their still-developing sense of maturity and to impress peers, both male and female.

The manifestation of new masculinity models, particularly through visual cues, can stimulate sexual attraction, fantasies, and desires, especially among gay individuals. Sexual arousal is a cognitive process that occurs in the brain, with individuals responding to sexually relevant stimuli. These stimuli are present in both heterosexual and homosexual contexts and are shaped by both biological factors and, predominantly, cultural influences. The physical appearance of an individual, coupled with their style, dress, and behaviour, plays a critical role in this process. Visual sexual stimuli combine these physical and behavioural elements, which are inseparable in how masculinity is both represented and perceived. Whether individuals are heterosexual or homosexual, the perception of attractiveness integrates both physical traits and clothing choices, with people constructing mental representations of those they find appealing. As individual expression continues to diversify, preferences and tastes vary widely among individuals,

[17] The term "bombers" is predominantly used in small towns, where the social divide between the affluent and the less privileged is more pronounced. In these contexts, the distinction between those who have adopted Western cultural models and those who do not fully conform to these patterns is more noticeable. In contrast, in Romania's larger cities, this label is gradually losing its relevance, although the underlying motivations for adopting these brands and the relationship between clothing and gender remain unchanged.

adding complexity to how masculinity and attraction are understood and experienced.[18]

For instance, a 28-year-old man expresses attraction to peers of his own age but also does not exclude the possibility of engaging in sexual relationships with younger men over the age of 18, whom he meets on Grindr, a popular gay dating app. He acknowledges having sexual encounters with a diverse range of male cultural identities, although he is particularly drawn to younger men and has sexual preferences that involve certain elements of bodily transgression:

> *All boys are beautiful. And these ugly guys, like, with the skin... they're cute... they're, like, raw, they're smooth. They turn you on more. And so they are. There aren't really any uglies. They're pretty much all good. When I see them dressed sporty in Nike pants, and Jordan sneakers for example, or Nike with their white socks up, slender, I can smell their body odour and their socks. It turns me on to the max. I can almost feel their flesh. I want to taste them, smell their socks. Feel them on my nose. I want to kiss them hot and feel their saliva, almost experience the feel and smell of his flesh. That's why I like to be dominated.* (Adrian – 28 years old)

In the conceptualization of sexual attraction, both cultural patterns and physical appearance play a significant role. The example provided illustrates the relationship between body, clothing, and behaviour. Individuals who may not conform to conventional standards of beauty are often considered attractive due to the cultural models they represent. Sexual arousal can be triggered by cultural symbols, such as Nike or Jordan footwear, or other clothing brands, which over time have acquired sexual significance due to their association with the behaviours and personalities they are perceived to promote. It is important, however, to exercise caution when using terms like "ugly," as these terms may overlook certain physical features, particularly

[18]A significant body of research exists on the influence of culture on sexuality, covering both social and cultural studies and medical research that examines how individuals respond to sexual stimuli. For example, a medical study has analysed such responses through eye movement tracking, shedding light on the effects of these stimuli, Peter Fromberger et al., "Initial Orienting Towards Sexually Relevant Stimuli: Preliminary Evidence from Eye Movement Measures," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 41, no. 4 (August 2012): 919-28, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9816-3; Regarding the relationship between sexuality and culture, see Steve Loughnan et al., "Exploring the Role of Culture in Sexual Objectification: A Seven Nations Study," *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale* 28, no. 1 (2015): 125-152.

those related to face or body. While cultural attitudes and modelling may mitigate these physical limitations, they cannot entirely compensate for them. Additionally, the individual in question acknowledges consuming pornography that promotes male sexual role models characterized by rebellious or playful attitudes. His attraction to physical traits such as body odour or the desire to wear certain socks further underscores the inseparable link between physical appearance, clothing, and attitude. Items such as socks or sneakers are emblematic of the behaviours, language, and temperament associated with certain subcultures. Sexual fetishes, including sock fetishes, foot fetishes, or spit fetishes, are closely intertwined with brand identity, physical appearance, and attitude. In the imagination of individuals, boys wearing branded footwear like Nike, Jordan, or Adidas are often associated with the emerging "bomber" subculture and linked to attitudes of defiance or naughtiness.

In consumer society, where brands have become widely accessible, brand fetishism has emerged and evolved. This phenomenon has given rise to universal cultural role models, including male cultural figures. The example provided, in which an individual expresses sexual desires based on attitudes, physical appearance, and dress codes explicitly linked to individuals wearing brands such as Nike, Jordan, or Adidas, exemplifies brand fetishism.[19] In this context, brand fetishism intersects with pornographic cultural models that individuals visualize, transforming it into sexual fetishism. This process, often referred to as the objectification of individuals,[20] involves reducing people to their physical attractiveness and sexual utility, as defined by culturally constructed gender norms. For gay men, brand fetishism often unconsciously transitions into sexual fetishism, where sexual desires and fantasies about men dressed in sportswear—typically involving imagined expectations of rebelliousness or naughtiness—are projected onto culturally embodied individuals. In this process, the desired person is perceived holistically (appearance, style, and gender), rather than as merely a physical body.[21]

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[19] Regarding brand fetishism, see Katya Asaff, "Brand Fetishism," *Connecticut Law* 43, no. 1 (November 2010): 83-148; On brand eroticization, see Maja Gwóźdź, "Footwear on, underwear off: fetishism and brand eroticization," *Porn Studies* 3, no. 4 (2016): 460-463.

[20] Regarding sexual objectification, see Rae Langton, *Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Aura Schussler, "Pornography and Postmodernism," in *Postmodern Openings* 4, no. 3 (September 2013): 7-23.

[21] Roger Scruton, *Dorința Sexuală – o cercetare filosofică*, transl. by Teodora Nicolau (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2019), 145.

Sexual attitudes such as naughtiness, spitting, or aggression are frequently mentally constructed within these sexual expectations, as individuals may have limited knowledge of the sexual fantasies of the men they are attracted to, who may, in fact, be heterosexual. Just as gay men may fetishize male cultural role models, heterosexual boys may similarly fetishize these role models to affiliate with subcultures, such as the "bombers" subculture, the majority of whom are heterosexual.

Another interviewee sees a boy who attracts him: *I was turned on by a 19-year-old guy with black earrings in his ears, blond hair dye and a tattoo on the back of his neck in the shape of wings. A friend thought he was gross. She said he was a "cyut," but I was attracted to him*. The interviewee then spends two months reflecting on his sexual orientation, only to conclude that he is heterosexual. Subsequently, in real life, boys with wing-shaped tattoos on their necks become sexually relevant cultural role models for him, even if the tattoo alone is the defining feature. When he notices such individuals on the street, he is immediately drawn to them, comparing the first person to others. If they evoke the same attraction, they become models similar to the initial sexually relevant individual. All such individuals then become sexually relevant and intriguing for his sexual fantasies. At the level of fantasy, this represents just the beginning of a new journey—the search for similar men on platforms like Grindr. On Grindr, without much effort, he can find individuals with similar features and fulfil his sexual fantasies. Despite the app lacking specific search filters for niche details such as tattoos, it is still possible to find partners with similar tattoos and comparable age, as the winged neck tattoo has become a universal trend within consumer society, with tattoos serving as an expression of bodily consumerism.

Other sexual fetishes emerge in a similar way. White socks worn with Air Force 1 shoes are considered sexually attractive, as are the legs, which convey virility and strength through their musculature. Interestingly, several individuals have reported developing a sexual fetish for white socks in young men. In all cases, white socks are emphasized by footwear, and together they enhance the attitude and movement of the leg or highlight the hairiness of the legs when paired with shorts. White inspires both purity and dirt, because on white, dirt and dust are much more visible. Thus, an imaginary of dirtiness emerges in which the white sock worn is contaminated with human residues such as foot perspiration, which is associated in the imaginary with the virility and odour of the wearer. These elements create sexual

arousal produced by a number of internal chemical factors, which are triggered by this stimulus that has become sexually relevant and will inevitably lead to physiological internal states such as faster blood circulation or one's own sweating, which creates sensations different from those of the body when not in a state of arousal. The sweating and the smell of the young fetishized boy's socks are imagined and are perceived through his own state changes, determined by the chemical factors involved in this process. One's own perspiration and physiological changes alter the senses, perceiving, on an imaginary level, the sweat of the other's socks.

White socks and Air Force 1 brand footwear, which are fetishized by the wearer because they are fashionable and are initially taken up as a brand fetish, become sexually relevant to another boy who will perceive them as a sexual fetish. The sock is a leftover, it becomes impure by being worn by a 19-year-old. During an imaginary or real sexual act, placing it somewhere other than on the young man's leg, namely on the genitals or on the nose, contributes to heightening arousal and creating a pattern or classification scheme in which the initial sock-shoe relationship model, which is equivalent to a simple accessory, is transformed into a new relationship pattern in which sock-shoe becomes by association foot-young man's foot-smell. These impressions of the dirty imaginary are schematically determined from the beginning. The initially impure leftover is mentally re-schematized and becomes useful because, even if the used white sock is initially associated with a leftover, for the gay individual it is a leftover of the desired person, a useful leftover. However, if the sock belonged to an individual with no attitude, or to a man of a different age than these young men, or with body deformities, the change would remain merely a leftover, repulsive by association, given that the dirty sock would no longer be associated with the young man's body but with something sexually unattractive. At that point, the sexual fetish disappears.[22] However, white Nike socks and Air Force 1 shoes are indeed overwhelmingly worn by young boys. All other fetishes are imagined and constructed in the same way, as is the sexual attraction to the models of masculinity that

[22] In explaining this schematization, I have used the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 1984), 37, which explains the associations that individuals make with certain categories of objects. The paper was cited in the article, George Alexandru Condrache, "The Edge as the Rest, the Rest as the Edge. Two Case Studies: Milan Kundera and Attila Bartis," in *Marginea ca rest, restul ca margine*, eds. Valentin Trifescu et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2016), 85-95.

have emerged in society, sexuality thus being heavily influenced by cultural expression.

Objects and accessories that enhance the body and highlight its parts have all become sexually relevant stimuli. It is worth noting the following comment by a 45-year-old heterosexual man from the rural area surrounding Brad on the role of piercings in enhancing the body and sexuality, and a comparison of the current situation (from his perspective) with the time of his grandfather's youth, born at the end of the First World War.

> *It's the age of tattoos, piercings. Guys do it for girls a lot to look good on women, but 100 men look after them. Look at that one, I'd suck his dick. You think old people today when they were young didn't have fantasies? Grandpa Avram used to tell me how they measured their dicks by the centimetre, looked at each other when they pissed. They got excited in a way, but they stopped, they didn't suck each other, they had a certain fear, but I don't think they didn't get excited.* (Laurențiu – 45 years old)

Without knowing the details of my own research on this topic, his observation actually demonstrates the interest of rural male inhabitants in the sexual organs of other men, even if such testimonies are rare and harder to identify. The prudishness of the peasant world and the values of this world did not lead to the recording of such testimonies, and the gazing and observation of same-sex sexuality was often done in an unconscious way. In any case, what we are interested in is that homoerotic attraction has been a fantasy of many men throughout the ages, but it did not develop as a perpetual sexual behaviour correlated with an affirmed masculine gay male archetype, as it will in modernity. Liberalizing homosexuality has created individuals who have expressed their gay sexual identity. In turn, the gay individual who related to the other male models in society fetishized and worshipped them. Piercings, tattoos, and clothing emphasized the body in new relationship schemes and cultural associations that also involved sexuality. The succession of brands and objects shaped and influenced various categories of individuals. These elements configure and activate moods and impulses. The evolution of sexuality in relation to consumer goods reflects the culture of the present – a culture of an industrial nature that derived from the industrial revolution that started around 1760 and that made man, an

individual with cultural value, almost mechanical, like the industrial society in which he lives and in which the multiplication of goods has acculturated attitudes and gestures, the body thus becoming a capital, a consumer object in relation to the current structures of production/consumption.[23] To this re-schematization of the cultural imaginary, which has become a sexual one, pornography has also contributed, as we have seen, by becoming a relevant cultural material in terms of the sexual imaginary. Pornography and its models were superimposed on the social realities of the consumer society, in which new masculine patterns emerged. The masculine patterns in pornography and their sexual behaviours have restructured the sexual imaginary, which, coupled with individual freedom, has led to the expression of sexual identity and the search for people interested in the same sexual fantasies.

Cultural Pluralism and Sexual Pluralism. The Influence of Culture on Sexuality

The cultural overlap between the cultural pattern of male groups with heterosexual identity and the same male cultural pattern but with homosexual identity shows how cultural norms transform and dilute in a society where genders become multilayered and are used for different purposes. The cultural pattern of heterosexual youth (e.g., that of the social sub-group of bombers) instrumentalizes the same shoe brands and brands that gay people instrumentalize. For heterosexual young people, these footwear brands are used to maintain a dominant attitude within their groups. In this sense, for instance, a brand such as Jordan's is a brand of footwear produced to be used as sportswear in the game of basketball, and any deviation from the original purpose is an example of a change in the meaning of the use of this particular product. This dilution of the meaning of goods for different purposes expresses how consumer society has led to this explosion of cultural patterns and found new meanings and uses for them. Beyond the sexual scenario imagined by a particular gay boy, beyond their appearance and attitude, for a gay individual not sexually attracted to this model of masculinity, these boys are perceived as *inwardly timid, they epitomize this style, but in reality, they have the courage of a frog*. (Valentin, 30 years old)

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[23] Jean Baudrillard, *Societatea de consum: mituri și structuri; La Société de consommations*, transl. by Alexandru Matei (Bucharest: Editura Comunicare.ro, 2008), 166.

The closeness of masculinities through common gender practices, irrespective of sexual orientation, often confounds expectations about the latter. Individuals exploring their sexuality engage in the pursuit of possible sexual partners as a type of game, in accordance with the cultural models to which they are attracted. Gay people can often be confused with heterosexuals. Regarding these masculinities, Rareș states that: *very many gay people have a kink to corrupt straight people. What you can't have you covet very much.* In reality, this is not a corruption in the true sense of the term, but an interrogation of the sexuality of the other, which thus becomes uncertain through the closeness of masculinities and the increasing diversity and interaction of the two communities with different sexual identities. Uncertainty sustains fantasies, while imagination maintains the ongoing play and exploration of the other. Imagination is sustained by various cultural patterns, attitudes, furtive glances and biological impulses. Some have *a slightly frowning, fierce look enhanced by the density of arched eyebrows.* Others have *stumpy, bony, big gym-worked fingers* that inspire masculine strength. Still, others *have youthful faces laden with acne*, *taut lips combined with a seemingly insensitive expression*, *cropped hair on the side with a low bob revealing fine skin*, *bare ankles revealing a slight pilosity* or *short pants showing off the calves* – these are just some of the physical and cultural characteristics that spark the imagination.

Individuals become veritable constructs that incorporate a multitude of physical and cultural traits. In the case of cultural constructs, heterosexuals can be mistaken for homosexuals.[24] But even within the same culturally constructed patterns of masculinity, physical features and attitudes create differences. The uniqueness of the self is inexhaustible, and the idolatry that

[24] For example, Murray Healy, in *Gay Skins: Class, Masculinity and Queer Appropriation* (Sexual Politics) (UNKNO: 1996), describes how young gay men in England have taken up the cultural pattern of expression of skinheads (young working-class masculine men, shaved, tattooed and wearing boots), a cultural pattern that belonged to heterosexual men, sympathizers of the far right. The adoption of this pattern of masculinity by gay people led to the spread of this cultural model among gay people, making it very popular and leading to the initial groups of heterosexual skinheads of the far right being overshadowed by gay groups who took over and used this pattern for sexual purposes, which led to heterosexuals being mistaken for homosexuals. This made the former feel anxious and outnumbered. In the West, the parodying and instrumentalization of these masculine stereotypes has been very visible due to the expression of sexual identity, but also due to the high population density in big cities which allowed the affirmation of various social groups.

mentally builds around these cultural models, fostered by the online environment, drives the individual to seek out other similar models to fulfil their sexual needs and fantasies. The game then moves to social networks, where desires can be expressed directly and approaching an individual becomes easier. Imagination play is enhanced by smiles, smells imagined based on attitude, interpretable gestures and impressions. An *energetic, hot lad with an earring* can only convey masculine energy and vitality, and pairing his image with Nike Air Force1, Nike Air Max III Plus grey or black Nike Air Max III Plus shoes or other sporty models, maintains this idea which materializes into a sexual fantasy. He can be approached on Instagram if known, or quizzed through mutual friends. The smile of a bearded young man in a store (who seems to fit the *bear* masculinity) becomes a reason for sexual interrogation for one of the gay individuals in town. The supposedly straight man knows the other man's sexual orientation but continues to smile suspiciously whenever they meet. Among the younger generation, flirting between boys takes place openly and without much inhibition. Things get more complicated in a society where *you don't know who is who.* For example, a local 19-year-old boy received a message on Instagram from another boy, who playfully complimented him, implying that he found him attractive. The boy's response was simple and candid: "No offense, but I don't really hang out with boys like you." Although the other boy apologized, this exchange was not regarded as problematic in a society increasingly open to the inclusion of various sexual identitites and where individuals are aware of their sexual orientation, but simply an honest expression of identity: *it's no big deal, but I just told you what I'm about.*

Gay boys are not corrupters in the true sense of the word. However, some are explorers of sexual desires and experiences and, by taking on models of masculinity within their own sub- groups and exploiting cultural genders to fulfil sexual fantasies, they go beyond the limits of sexual exploration that heterosexuals face. Sexuality involves a lot of imagination. For some gay individuals, men wearing certain sports brands of pants, T-shirts or footwear, such as Nike, Adidas, Jordan are associated with certain imagined sexual practices, such as spitting or smelling socks. If, in real life, male cultural role models exude virility and symbolic violence by going to the gym, having tattoos, wearing sportswear or engaging in habits such as spitting, these aspects of social attitudes and behaviour stimulate the sexual imagination. Because they appear socially and culturally animalistic, they are also sexually animalistic in the imagination:

> *18–19-year-old boys who wear tracksuits and go to the gym are so brawny. They look really good. They're big, well-built. They appear to be well hung. They're getting pretty hormonal and super good-looking. Most of them seem to have it thick, you can tell. There was one... he was scratching his dick...gosh, what a sight he was!* (Alex - 25 years old)

In these gay depictions of masculinity, we see the fascination with the other and the inner metamorphosis. Sexuality transcends cultural barriers imposed by class and social status, and fantasy and imagination take the place of social reality. Because they are *massive, full-bodied, hormonal and beautiful*, they become, by association, *well hung*. If, in reality, there is no conditionality between an individual's corpulence and penis size, in the imagination, corpulence becomes an indication of the latter. The inner metamorphosis is obvious and actually goes beyond the sense of reality. Different social classes fascinate as much as different masculinities, and sexuality becomes a form of communication. The social perception of certain masculinities as dominant creates, in the imaginary, the desire for vigorous, violent sexual acts that emphasize the imagined representations of masculinity, generally heterosexual masculinity, because it is the majority. Though dating apps, individuals who have such fantasies will find other gay individuals who have masculinized heterosexual social dominance in the homosexual sexual act. If, for heterosexuals, masculinity means power and a socially dominant image, the image of dominant masculinities becomes a model of sexual attitude for the fulfilment of these homoerotic fantasies. Below, we render two examples of sexual acts with fetishized cultural models in which the sexual fantasies described above are enacted. The first testimony is that of the dominant who plays the role of the heterosexual boy perceived as energetic and violent:

> *I was on Grindr, but, like, I was talking to another guy. He said he wanted to be a slave and for me to humiliate him. I'm like, let's meet up. We met right in front of the Profi* (small grocery store – author's note), *and then we went to an abandoned building and walked around there. He gave me oral... I gave him two slaps and pulled his hair... and shoved him down to suck me off right there. Then I gave him a phlegm... He said it louder, louder. I pushed in his mouth up to his throat and stuck two fingers in his mouth... then I stuck my dick in his ass. He said he wanted it rough and I shoved it up his ass, deep. And I'm like, shut up! and zbang!, I slapped his ass twice. That felt so good. I took all my*

> *frustration out on him. I was fucking him to the max. But I couldn't take it no more, brother. I was banging him like I was banging a doll. Then I took off the condom and I was like this* (he mimics rubbing his penis when he tells the story – author's note). *You know how it came out. On his hair! He was full, from the forehead to the hair, he had a little in his hair. There was a lot of it, from his mouth to his hair. I took it all out on him - for all the people who had made me suffer.* (Paul - 23 years old)

The second testimony belongs to a boy who allows himself to be dominated in a sexual act, fulfilling his sexual fantasy with boys perceived as energetic and violent. Even if it is fulfilled with a gay individual merely playing the role of the dominator, in the sexual imaginary the fantasy with heterosexual individuals is thus fulfilled:

> *He told me he was a soldier. He was young anyway. He made me get down on my knees. He pushed my head down to suck his cock. He looked into my eyes with a penetrating gaze. Then he actually told me to stick out my tongue. He spit in my mouth. He kissed my tongue, then he kissed my lips. Then he took off one of his sneakers and put it on my face. Then he slapped me twice, made me smell his socks and then grabbed me by the head and put me back down to sucking his cock. It was the hottest sexual experience.* (Andrei – 24 years old)

The concepts of the dominator and the dominated are highly technical within the framework of sexual hierarchy. However, they are not merely reduced to the sexual submission of one partner to another; they also encompass the ideas and images these terms convey, which in turn dominate the psyche. These concepts construct sexual scenarios based on existing fantasies, with sexual acts unfolding according to fictional narratives generated by images and social representations of dominant masculinities, typically associated with the heterosexual identity. In sexual acts between men, these roles adopt social attitudes and behaviours associated with marginalized groups. The imagery of "dirtiness" is enacted through energetic sexual acts, in which sexual violence is mediated and, due to arousal and physiological changes, is not perceived by the body as actual violence. In this context, the sexual imaginary is elevated – a view articulated by a heterosexual individual who recognizes that his socially dominant heterosexual behaviours are being instrumentalized by members of the gay community into a form of sexual dominance: the act of

making sex an art. Simultaneously, through this form of sexual communication, the confrontation between culture and nature emerges, specifically between the cultural aspect, or gender, and the underlying biological attitude.

Conclusion

The transition from a totalitarian to a democratic regime and Romania's integration into a global consumer society, following the Western model, have visibly contributed to the emergence of new models of masculinity in the Romanian public space. The new masculine cultural models have redefined cultural norms and have decisively contributed to the emergence of new representations, hypostases and social perceptions of masculinity and sexuality. In parallel with this general process of cultural expression of masculinities with heterosexual sexual identity, models of masculinity with gay sexual identity have also been increasingly openly asserted, especially among young people. This has led to a process of cultural hybridization of gender practices between heterosexual and gay individuals, where the same male gender identity is expressed through different sexual orientations. Thus, cultural models of masculinity influence the sexual fantasies of gay individuals, with masculinity and its typologies becoming cultural images and markers of gay sexuality. In the sexual acts of gay individuals, they adopt social attitudes and behaviours from fetishized social groups, including members of the heterosexual community. These attitudes are then culturally and sexually re-instrumentalized and reintegrated into a culture of homoerotic sexuality. The examples presented in this study, such as the clothing styles of young men influenced by Western brands, represent just one model of how cultural expressions of masculinity influence sexuality. Sexuality, in turn, is always shaped by various cultural factors, which are constantly in flux.

Without intending to make predictions, and within the context of the emergence of new cultural models of masculinity, it is anticipated that, in the near future, these new masculinities will become increasingly more visible in Romania's public and social spaces. This cultural process is expected to further influence the expansion of cultural hybridization and, by extension, the fostering of tolerance and accommodation between members of the gay and heterosexual communities.

BOOK REVIEWS

Sorin Mitu, *Românii și ungurii. Un război imagologic de o mie de ani (cu o continuare virtuală până în anul 2100)* [Romanians and Hungarians. A Thousand-Year Imagological War (with a Virtual Continuation Until the Year 2100)], Iaşi, Polirom, 2024, 612 p.

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In 2024, Professor Sorin Mitu presented us with one of his most beautiful and substantial books: *Românii și ungurii. Un război imagologic de o mie de ani (cu o continuare virtuală până în anul 2100)* [Romanians and Hungarians: A Thousand-Year Imagological War (with a Virtual Continuation Until the Year 2100)]. This is a topic that the distinguished academic from Cluj has reflected on extensively, and previously explored in other editorial projects, such as the following volumes: *Românii văzuți de maghiari: imagini şi clişee culturale din secolul al XIX-lea* [Romanians as seen by Hungarians: Cultural Images and Clichés from the 19th Century] (1998), and *Ungurii despre români. Naşterea unei imagini etnice* [Hungarians on Romanians. The Birth of an Ethnic Image] (2004), both written in collaboration with Melinda Mitu. This is therefore a long-term topic for Professor Mitu, who has chosen to examine an issue that has been widely discussed and written about in the shared space of the two peoples over time, from the perspective of comparative imagology.

The book opens with an argument in which methodological considerations are intertwined with aspects of the author's biography and life experience. This preludes the scientific approach and systematic research of the topic. The book is divided into five sections, comprising 22 chapters. The final section is titled *Instead of Conclusions: The Age to Come (A Virtual*

Continuation Until the Year 2100). Here, the author imagines the potential political evolution of Romania and Hungary, as well as Romanian–Hungarian relations and mutual perceptions.

The author has set himself an ambitious and far-reaching task: to "catalogue" the entire Romanian–Hungarian relationship from the perspectives of attitudes, perceptions, and mutual representations over the course of a millennium – from the arrival of the Hungarians in the Pannonian Plain to the present day. In doing so, he captures the contributions and specificities of the great eras of history in this area of imagological relations between the two peoples. The titles of the five sections of the book are suggestive in this regard: *The Middle Ages and Early Modernity (896–1699)*; *The Modern Era (1700–1918)*; *The Century of Extremes: Between the Wars (1919–1944)*, *The Century of Extremes: Communism (1945–1989),* and *The Recent Era (1990–2024...)*. The final part of the volume contains a concluding chapter entitled (*Instead of Conclusions...*), as well as Notes, a final Bibliography and an Index of names.

The book is structured according to the principle of chronological succession. It invites readers to embark on a fascinating journey through time, spanning a millennium. This journey allows readers to "encounter" two interacting models of identity and culture, which have given rise to a particularly rich imaginary, whether through peaceful or conflictual interaction. By examining the content of the book, we can gain an understanding of how ethnic and ethno-national perceptions were formed, how Romanians and Hungarians viewed each other, and how the major Romanian and Hungarian identity myths emerged and gained power under the influence of the nationalist ideology of late modernity.

Through its approach, considerations and conclusions, the work presents a compelling argument for an "unbiased" interpretation of Romanian–Hungarian relations. It calls for a history of mutual relations that transcends vindictive logic and perpetual polemics. It encourages us to move beyond the well-known axiom, "We were right; you are to blame." This approach would benefit both historiographies, which have been under constant pressure from nationalist logic since at least the 19th century.

The book poses the question, "How much and how hard did the Romanians fight with the Hungarians?", in the form of a subchapter title. By asking this question, the author aims to move beyond historiographical clichés and numerous other commonplaces in order to accurately assess the duration of the Romanian–Hungarian conflict. This is an original approach

to relations between the two peoples, through which the author attempts to demonstrate that there has never been a permanent Romanian–Hungarian conflict throughout history. His thoughts on the nature of bilateral relations over the last two centuries, which make up the modern and contemporary periods, are telling in this regard, stating that "the historical rivalry between Romanians and Hungarians has manifested itself in its true magnitude." Thus, since the two modern states, Romania and Hungary, came into existence in 1866 and 1867 respectively, a period of approximately 160 years, they "have been official allies for 91 years, through treaties signed and respected by both parties at every major stage of their historical existence. Between 1883 and 1914, Bucharest and Budapest were partners in the Triple Alliance. Between 1940 and 1944, they were part of the Tripartite Pact. Between 1955 and 1991, they were allies within the Warsaw Pact. Since 2004, both countries have been members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *In effect*, this constitutes more than a hundred years of alliance. A hundred-year alliance between Hungary and Romania!" (page 19).

Sorin Mitu examines this "casefile" of the Romanian–Hungarian conflict, a topic that has been widely discussed and written about in both the past and present. Attempting to move beyond the well-worn clichés of historiographical discourse and the image of "the other," he considers the duration of these conflictual relations and the number of recorded victims. For instance, Romanian historians estimate that 40,000 Romanians died in 1848–1849, whereas Hungarian researchers estimate that 10,000 Hungarians died during this period. This attempt to "reassess" the duration and scale of the Romanian–Hungarian conflict is rather unusual in Romanian historiography, making the book highly original. When considered in a broader context and compared with other peoples or nations who have been enemies and fought each other throughout history, the scale of this conflict was nowhere near as terrible in terms of the number of casualties or how long it lasted. As it says on page 25, "the two peoples did not fight as much as they used to say."

We must acknowledge that this is an alternative approach to the topic. Its aim is to remove the study of Romanian–Hungarian relations from the well-trodden ground of fierce and endless controversy. This is truly a much-needed perspective in the historiographical debate on the subject, as well as in historical writing in Romania in general, as it shifts the focus from confrontation to dialogue with Hungarian historiography. This dialogue is based exclusively on scientific reasoning and a genuine desire to discover the truth.

Reading the book familiarizes us with images and representations — elaborate constructs of the collective imagination and mentality — which, according to the author, shed light on the long-term dynamics of relations between the two peoples. The interaction and coexistence of the two identity models, Romanian and Hungarian, alongside the many happy and unfortunate events, with a vast and rich collection of facts that have accumulated over time, has created a rich and diverse universe of imagological constructions and elaborations, from the earliest depictions of one group by another, dating back to the beginning of the Middle Ages, to the modern era and the present day. The book's merit lies in its provision of a documented and rigorous inventory of the entirety of the Romanian-Hungarian imagological "casefile." It serves as a veritable "database" of collective beliefs that Romanians and Hungarians have held about each other over time. The list of these images and representations is long and varied. It includes "the conquering Hungarian" and "the Wallachian shepherd," as well as multiple depictions of "the other" (be it Romanian or Hungarian) as different in ethnic, social and religious (confessional) terms. There are also romantic images, such as "the Romanian good savage," "the wild Moți," "the Daco-Romanian irredentists," "the revisionist Hungarian," "the polenta that doesn't 'explode'" and "the cheap Hungarian sausage," among many others, both older and more recent.

This book is based on an extensive research endeavor that falls under the methodological aspect and historiographical genre of studies on the history of the imaginary, particularly comparative imagology. Professor Mitu is a leading expert in this field, having contributed significantly to both theoretical debates on the issue and applied research based on Romanian sources and realities, particularly those of Transylvania. The author's approach can also be categorized as cultural historical research. This relatively new investigative perspective has become popular in Romanian historiographical research projects in recent decades.

Last but not least, despite being a dense and substantial work, it is a pleasure to read thanks to its clear, flowing, pleasant style. This book offers an alternative history of Romanian–Hungarian relations, providing a fresh, serene interpretation of their long-standing past. Written without bias or prejudice, it is instead characterized by great empathy and a deep commitment to the subject matter and its key players: the Romanians and the Hungarians.

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Some time ago, I was chatting with a colleague—a fellow historian and friend—about the age up to which historians, and in fact scholars in the social sciences more broadly, tend to produce important work. After 50, he argued, nothing spectacular really happens anymore in terms of scholarly output. In other words, if you haven't made a splash with some innovative work by then, once you start descending the gradual slope into deeper old age, it becomes increasingly harder to believe you'll ever shine again on the academic stage with critical or commercial blockbusters. I agreed with him at the time—thinking, with some dread, mostly about myself—so as not to offend anyone.

Well, the book under scrutiny here is irrefutable proof that we were both seriously mistaken. Because just as Sorin Mitu was nearing the sobering milestone of turning sixty (by the time you're reading this, he will already have passed it), he produced a work that genuinely deserves to cause a stir in our small academic world.

You might wonder: what's so special about this book? Why should it be read? First, because it's written by Sorin Mitu—a well-known and highly regarded figure, both within our field and among the broader educated public. Personally, after devouring it in a single sitting, I found the book remarkable, exceptional—words I would continue piling on, were I not worried that such strong praise might do both the volume and its author a disservice. Clearly, I liked it—very much.

Twenty-seven years ago, Sorin Mitu published his doctoral thesis with the most prestigious Romanian publishing house of the time (*The Genesis of National Identity among Transylvanian Romanians*)—a book that has since become a classic on the ever-popular topic of national identity. To sum up briefly, between 1997 and 2024, Sorin Mitu devoted himself to advising doctoral students, teaching undergraduates, and conducting research, especially on Romanian nationalism over the past two centuries, as well as ethnic imagery—particularly in Transylvania.

Now, he returns in full force with a massive volume (which, as I'll explain later, should not intimidate readers) in which he pours his entire life's work researching the subject of national identities—identities that are shaped significantly, he argues, by both self-images and those imposed by others. In short: ethnic representations. Professor Mitu has spent his entire scholarly life studying what Romanians think of Hungarians and vice versa.

This is an ambitious, mature work in which the author dares to step outside the comfort zone of his specialization in modern history (how many of us do that? How many of us *can* do that?) and ventures into the longue durée—tracing the threads of history all the way back to the appearance of the Hungarians in this part of Europe; from the year of grace 896 to, well, yesterday. So, not merely a thousand years of history—but, to be precise, 1,128 years! As the old chronicler would say, "The mind recoils!"

The narrative of this book begins no less than at the moment when the first Hungarians—newly arrived in lands today considered "ours"—encountered the first Romanians. According to some authors, this would have been sometime at the end of the ninth century. But did they actually meet? According to modern Romanian historians, the answer is yes, since they uphold and build upon the theory of continuity, which holds that the ancestors of today's Romanians have lived more or less continuously on present-day Romanian territory—basically, forever. In other words, Romanians were already in Transylvania when the Hungarians arrived. Even Romanian jokes today affirm this view.

Hungarian historians, equally modern, subscribe instead to a rival theory—immigrationist—which places the ancestors of today's Romanians somewhere south of the Danube, arriving in Transylvania only after the Hungarians were already established there. Naturally, both historical theories dovetail neatly with the modern national ideologies of these two rival nations. That's exactly why they ought to be viewed with suspicion—the motive for intellectual "crime" is too obvious.

So, what came first: the chicken or the egg? Wisely and sceptically, Sorin Mitu refuses to answer this trap of a question, for the simple reason that, in the absence of clear, contemporaneous sources, it simply can't be answered. Whatever the case—whether it was the Hungarian arrival in Transylvania or the migration of Romanian shepherds into the area—Romanians and Hungarians eventually came to live side by side; right up to the present day.

One group consisting mostly of peasants (though not exclusively), the other mostly of nobles (again, not exclusively). Which means that in the medieval era, the images held of "the Other" were primarily rooted in social, rather than ethnic, distinction. That is, the noble (usually Hungarian, though not always) looked down on the peasant (usually Romanian, though not always), just as the peasant-serf didn't feel any particular love for his lord.

This medieval social antagonism—eventually fused with and mapped onto ethnic categories (Romanians/peasants vs. Hungarians/nobles)—would, over time, give rise to the negative ethnic stereotypes that Hungarians developed about Romanians and vice versa. Still, up until the end of the 16th century, this conflation didn't result in systematically derogatory ethnic discourse on either side.

But in the following century, with the dawn of modernity, something does change. As the author puts it, beautifully, we begin to see "the first ethnic gossip and invective" (95). The former social distinction—Romanian peasant as subordinate—now fuses with the ethnic one, and takes root. No longer are Romanians viewed as partners in the old medieval sense, but as serfs, bearers of a glaring social otherness (105). In the eyes of the nobility, peasants—rebellious, lazy, ignorant, ill-willed—become synonymous with Romanians.

These ethnic images start appearing—tentatively, at first—even in official legal documents. More steps follow. In 1784, the uprising of Horea marks another leap. But the real rupture, Mitu argues—and I wholeheartedly agree—comes during the 1848 Revolution, especially during the civil war from October 1848 to August 1849. That is the first time thousands of Romanians and Hungarians take up arms against one another, solely (though not only) because they are Romanian or Hungarian—with familiar consequences: thousands dead and a historical trauma that still lingers today. It's during this period—from the ruins of Abrud and at Mihalț—that the negative ethnic stereotypes Romanians hold about Hungarians are crystallized. It's also now that Avram Iancu becomes, and remains, a national symbol.

1848 is the parting of the waters—the beginning of the "eternal" conflict between Romanians and Hungarians. A conflict that Sorin Mitu strives mightily to show is neither eternal nor innocent. And when you think about it, Transylvania's civil war, for all its victims and massacres on both sides, cannot really compare to the Vendée War (1793–1796), where 25% of the region's population perished. As the author notes, others have succeeded in killing

each other far more systematically and effectively than Romanians and Hungarians ever did.

These sorts of contextualisations are extremely helpful—especially for the contemporary reader, who tends to be poorly acquainted with world history—and point us toward another of Mitu's areas of expertise: global history.

But let's return to our Romanians, who, after 1848 and particularly after 1867, struggle under the so-called "Hungarian yoke"—at least, that's the narrative embraced by Romanian intellectual and political elites both then and now. There is some truth here, to be sure—but statistical data from the late 19th century and the years just before World War I show that the yoke was fairly loose. In fact, thanks to the rule of law and liberal ideology of the Dual Monarchy, Romanians managed to hold their heads high and preserve their national identity—most notably through some 2,000 denominational schools teaching in Romanian.

Thus, in dualist Hungary, only about 20–30% of Romanian children were educated in state-run Hungarian-language schools. And the 1910 census reveals that just 15% of Transylvania's non-Hungarian residents (mostly Romanians and Saxons) could speak the state's official language. After 1918, it's Romanian rule that follows...

We'll stop here, since our aim is not to summarize Sorin Mitu's entire book—readers can do that for themselves. Our more modest goal is simply to whet our readers' appetites. This is a premium product, worth savouring slowly.

What's particularly interesting here is that Mitu himself—and his life experience—is omnipresent in the narrative: from the introduction, where he recalls Imi, his Hungarian childhood friend who, on Easter, fails to understand and takes the entire basket instead of a single red egg; to personal family vignettes, like the uncle who was a member of the Iron Guard (a quote from whom, by the way, appears dutifully somewhere in the book); to the bewilderment of people from the Old Kingdom at seeing Transylvanian couples practicing bilingualism.

More than in perhaps any of his other works, Sorin Mitu is everywhere in this one. In the end, the volume is boldly confessional—which, for me, only increases its value.

The book is also significant because it offers a real methodological lesson in how to write history on an extremely sensitive, ideologically explosive

topic. Mitu approaches the ethnic imagery in Transylvania with deep empathy—for the topic, for the people who created these images, and for those who spread them. He uses humour to disarm the traps of the subject—and it works beautifully.

As in all his work, Sorin Mitu pulls off the rare feat of liberating himself from the Romanian nationalist angle and historiography—in other words, from within national ideology. That's a venture very few Romanian historians even attempt (and those who do—Lucian Boia, for instance—know the risks involved).

Does Mitu fall instead into the ideology of the opposing camp? Not at all. He positions himself above and beyond both competing nationalist ideologies. I almost said "beyond good and evil," but that would be a mistake—because Mitu's historical judgment is always moral: he consistently sides with the weak, as any well-meaning person—historian or otherwise—should.

So, whose side is Professor Mitu on? The Romanians' or the Hungarians'? His genial, generous answer: both, of course. In fact, Sorin Mitu openly embraces the identity of *homo transilvanicus*: a Romanian-Hungarian hybrid being, sympathizing with and emotionally attached to both sides of the linguistic and ideological divide; a Hungarian-Romanian who feels just as at home in Bucharest as in Budapest; someone who no longer buys into either Romanian or Hungarian nationalist mythology.

In the end, he is a professional historian in search of truth and balance, striving to escape the vicious circle of nationalist ideologies and the historical narratives they generate. In Romania—and I suspect in Hungary too—this kind of attitude is iconoclastic and, at a certain point—especially in the future—potentially dangerous.

And that's exactly why this book shatters the foundation of Romania's historical mythology. I'd place it alongside other monumental works that have shaken our local historiography in recent decades—*Myth and History in the Romanian Consciousness* (published the same year as Mitu's 1997 thesis; coincidence?) or Marius Turda's unsettling *In Search of the Perfect Romanian*. These are the books that stir things up, shake the bowl so thoroughly that nothing settles quite the same afterward.

I've always imagined Romanian historiography as a glass bowl filled with water, with a thick layer of sand at the bottom. Most history books, at best, manage to add a few extra grains of sand that settle gently beside

the rest. Truly great books, however, vigorously stir the entire bowl—kicking up the whole base layer and reconfiguring everything. This book is one of those.

And yet nationalist ideology and its attendant historiography also have a magnetic pull—like iron filings attracted to a magnet, they impose a specific order on what would otherwise be chaos. It's hard to say which of these opposing forces—disruption or order—will eventually prevail. Or whether one should prevail.

Which brings us, at last, to style. Writing style matters, because it shapes readability. We don't write just for our academic peers—we also write for an informed general public, right? And let's face it, a book of this size—one that takes both hands to hold—isn't likely to get read if it's written in a baroque style (no offense to anyone). Fortunately, that's not the case here.

If you've read any of Sorin Mitu's earlier books, you already know his prose: fluid, unpretentious, and highly readable. He's not just a great historian—as a writer, he's exceptional. Alongside Constanța Vintilă, he belongs to that blessed category of historians who actually write well. I've always envied them, and I'm not ashamed to admit it.

This volume is an erudite journey through a thousand years of history—from the Middle Ages all the way into the present—and even into the future, where, in a playful, three-part counterfactual scenario, we meet Sorin Mitu again in three different projections of how Romanian society—and the world—might evolve: a progressive paradise, a sovereigntist hell, or a vaguely defined purgatory.

A few months ago, when the book first appeared, any one of these possible outcomes still seemed plausible. Now? I'm not so sure... but the sovereigntist hell seems more likely. Still, I could be wrong... I hope I'm wrong.

And in the end, *Romanians and Hungarians* is, above all, a book about the self—a reflection, written in old age (forgive me, professor!), on one's personal life, the times one lived through, and the world in which one still lives. And how deeply human and comforting that vision is.

We each have something to learn from Sorin Mitu's story. The greatest achievement of both the book and the man who wrote it is this: that by reading it, by getting to know the author and connecting with him and his text, we come away—undoubtedly—better people.

Happy reading!

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Attempting to present Sorin Mitu's book to the public—the synthesis of a lifetime's work by one of the most renowned and influential Romanian historians of recent decades—can sometimes leave the reviewer with the disheartening impression of performing "román munka." In the end, after an intellectual marathon covering a millennium of interethnic relations, one finds that only a set of reading notes has emerged, reflecting deeply personal and subjective interests rather than the wealth and the thematic and interpretative diversity of the work itself. Then, what comes to mind is how even reputable historians have reviewed similarly vast works in exhaustive fashion, often with somewhat questionable results, leading to the conclusion that, ultimately, it is the diversity of opinions—rooted in the diversity of formative experiences—that powers knowledge creation, at least as long as it does not descend into the mire of exaggeration or pseudoscience.

Therefore, the present reading notes will unavoidably bear a deeply personal character. This is due not only to the inherent limits of condensing hundreds of thousands of words into about 2,500, but even more so because "Romanians and Hungarians" is a book that must be read—and will most likely be absorbed and internalized by most readers—in a personal register, through their own life experiences and interactions with Romanians, Hungarians, or merely with the broader imagological struggle between the representatives of these two ethnic groups.

For the potentially curious reader who stumbles upon this text before delving into the book itself, a few words regarding its structure and contents are in order. The work opens with an introduction in which the personal and professional roots of the author's endeavour intertwine with the methodological and historical foundations of his research. Perhaps its most provocative aspect, both for traditionalist historiography and the wider public, is the demonstration that, over time, even during the great and bloody armed clashes of the last two and a half centuries, Romanians and Hungarians inflicted far less harm upon each other (when considering both the chronological scope of these conflicts and the scale of human losses) than

the representatives of other classic historical conflict dyads, such as the Irish and English, the Russians and the Caucasian peoples, the French and Maghrebis, the French and Germans, or the French revolutionaries and the Catholic loyalists in the Vendée (equally French, one might say, though perhaps, at the time, they would not all have agreed to this ethnic label). The human losses of the Romanian-Hungarian armed conflicts, ranging from hundreds to thousands, are tragically eclipsed, even in the disputed territories, by the hundreds of thousands of Jews (many with mixed cultural and national identities, Hungarian or Romanian) and tens of thousands of Roma who were killed during the Holocaust.

The body of the analysis is organized chronologically into five parts, covering the Middle Ages and early modernity, the modern era, the interwar period, the communist period, and the post-1990 era. Each section comprises a varying number of thematic chapters, grouped in a stained-glass fashion that allows the author to build his argument by selecting those subjects for which the existence of sources (for earlier periods) or their selective use (from the nineteenth century onwards) make them most suitable for investigation. From "Genetic and Linguistic Profiles, Myths, and Cuisine," to "Popular Images: the Hungarian is a dog, the Romanian is a dog only if he has no pig" or "From the Wisdom of the Romanian People: Jokes about Hungarians," the arc traced by Sorin Mitu reveals how historical traumas and stereotypes—identifiable as early as the medieval period—are mirrored in a multitude of spheres, including the construction of national identities, reaching into both the modern and contemporary eras and manifesting even at the level of popular humour or opinion polls. There is, of course, a Conclusion, in which the author outlines three equally dystopian possible trajectories of Romanian-Hungarian relations until the end of the twenty-first century, each with its own darker or lighter facets (no spoilers!).

Yet, since my aim here is not to guide the reader step by step through the universe of Sorin Mitu's book, but merely to entice them to read it—or to revisit it, should they have done so already—I shall instead dwell on those threads that struck me as most relevant. And, in the spirit of the book, I will begin with a personal recollection.

My first shot in this imagological war occurred when I was seven years old, in the spring of 1990. At the time, the events of 20 March in Târgu Mureș / Marosvásárhely and their echoes in the Romanian media led to the unfortunate outcome whereby one of my female classmates in the second

grade, whose surname was Ungur (incidentally, a Romanian by every measure), became the target of intense bullying from the boys, for (pseudo-)ethnic reasons. Now, thirty-five years on, that shameful and foolish behaviour strikes me as stemming equally from the dynamics of gender interaction at a young age, but that does not negate the presence of the imagological component. It was a small "friendly fire" incident in a much larger war, which would probably have remained unknown to history had Sorin Mitu's work not prompted me to recall and record it in writing.

I made a point of introducing the previous paragraph, whose ego-historical nature is less specific to book presentations, because the book's main distinguishing feature is the admirable blend of the author's personal experience—often reflected through childhood and adulthood vignettes—and his vast professional expertise acquired over nearly four decades devoted to the study of Romanian-Hungarian interethnic relations. This interweaving is complemented by a remarkable delicacy of interpretive tact, a key ingredient that confers depth, authenticity, and analytical balance to the work.

Sorin Mitu frames his subject both in relation to the epistemic space at his disposal—bounded by the self-assumed limits of knowledge—and in relation to research initiatives that partially overlap with his own inquiry. He therefore does not claim to answer all the questions raised by the subject, whether they are purely scientific or ideologically infused (Who were the first in Transylvania? What was the proportion of Romanian nobles within the *Natio Hungarica*? Did Hungarians kill more Romanians, or vice versa?), on the one hand because the sources do not always allow the historian to formulate a response, and, on the other, because this is a work of imagology. From this vantage as a specialist in comparative imagology, Sorin Mitu observes, for example, how, as early as the sixteenth century, the discourse of a given author changes according to circumstances and frustrations; how contemporary authors refer to the same population sometimes from an ethnic perspective, sometimes from a social position; or how differently the imagologically competing ethnic groups (Romanians and Szeklers) end up being accused of the same reprehensible acts (101–102). Sorin Mitu works with sources without granting any one of them absolute authority, remaining ever attentive to the nuances required by others, according to the questions posed by historians: "only these [solid truths] are solid insofar as we are aware of the precise limits within which our cognitive endeavour unfolds. Including, therefore, the slices we make." (73)

Staying within the realm of method, one of the red threads running through the entire work is the constant analysis of the perspectives of the two historiographies on various historical events, as well as the recurrent and somewhat bitter conclusion that the dialogue between them has not always been complete or fruitful, but has often turned into either a fierce battle or a dialogue of the deaf. However, Mitu notes that, regarding topics sensitive from the perspective of history interwoven with Hungarians, Romanian historiography has consistently chosen to ignore even indigenous sources (the Hungarian Chronicle, the Cantacuzino Chronicle) and the nonconformist theories of recent Romanian works (Neagu Djuvara) when these did not correspond to the official or self-imposed line. Moreover, to this day, it insists on glossing over more delicate moments, such as the Romanian-Hungarian cooperation of late 1918 and even the pro-Hungarian stance of some Romanian politicians of the time. Conversely, the historiographical aporia "oppressed but prosperous" flourished, especially in the historiography of the nineteenth-century national movement, insidiously nourishing another socio-historiographical myth, tenaciously propagated through the mass media, that the treatment of ethnic minorities in Romania is the most liberal in Europe.

Another red thread of the book is the constant presence, in the construction of reciprocal images, of individual and collective frustration and complexes, sometimes highlighted by the author, sometimes emerging naturally from dozens of pages of analysis. Mitu is fully aware of this inescapable component of imagological studies. "But what do you do when the social phenomena you are studying are merely emotions?" (259), he asks semi-rhetorically, attempting to resolve the issue through a methodologically balanced position. Is the history of Romanian-Hungarian relations a history of emotions? Most likely, YES; whatever analytical model might be applied to this ethnic dyad in Central Europe, the matter of psychological—especially collective—weight must always be taken into consideration.

It is indicative, in this respect, that the negative image of Romanians in Hungarian writings becomes increasingly visible in the sixteenth century, against a backdrop of general frustration and the tensions that followed the Battle of Mohács (*Több is veszett Mohácsnál*!). From there, to the Trianon and further, up to March 20, 1990 or even the debates over the skating rink near the statue of Matthias Corvinus in Cluj's Union Square, the entire history of the interaction between the two peoples—especially interactions mediated

by the press, politicians, or historians—seems to be one of frustration. The major milestones along this road are well known, and Sorin Mitu discusses or at least touches on each: 1784, 1848–1849, 1867, 1918–1919, 1940, 1944, 1956, 1990, and the story continues, according to the conclusions each reader chooses among those proposed by the author. The imagological war of a thousand years can thus always be reread through the lens of an emotional history—of complexes, frustrations, fleeting impulses that, collectively, rarely seem positive.

Naturally, it is difficult to read about Romanians, Hungarians, their interactions, and reciprocal ethnic images without referring to other works addressing the subject. In this regard, reading Sorin Mitu's book offers the opportunity to observe, on a much broader geographical and chronological scale, using different types of sources and methodological tools, dynamics similar to those analysed by Rogers Brubaker in his research focused on the Cluj urban microcosm. In fact, Mitu dedicates a subchapter to everyday ethnicity (445–455) and an entire chapter to the special situation of Cluj/Kolozsvár (chapter 20). The conclusions are not perfectly identical—nor could they be, as the research questions differ—but they exhibit striking similarities, sufficiently notable to be considered complementary. Even though Brubaker refers primarily to the everyday social reality, while Mitu uses factual material largely to study reciprocal imagology, both studies indicate that ethnicity, its assumption, and the derivatives of identity choices in daily life are fluid aspects, often overestimated, hard to fit neatly or maintain, in the long term, within the strict boundaries of the ethnic cubicles so beloved by nationalists and top-down nationalism.

Without question, the most entertaining part of the book, for the general public and probably for most historians, is the one that discusses the ethnic jokes (chapter 21). From the "good old days" when young men would climb into girls' windows, to the omnipresent jokes about blondes, the anthropological universe of popular humour offers the author an endless source of ethnic images drawn from the essence of folk wisdom, which serve only to confirm—with a more colourful lexicon and through the use of trivial or even obscene expressions—the results obtained from analysing traditional historical sources and historiography. One of these findings is of particular interest to us as historians, but also as Romanians and as people, as it would certainly rank among the book's key takeaways (and of Sorin Mitu's life's work). It concerns the asymmetry in the mutual interest of the two ethnic

groups, reflected from jokes to historical writing: while Romanians have made Hungarians the primary representative of ethnic otherness and strive to maintain the intensity of the imagological struggle of the past millennium, Hungarians spread their attention more evenly among the former ethnic groups within the Kingdom of Hungary and other European nations. This, of course, does not make the jokes any less enjoyable (or less trivial), and the fact that the author chose to include this source in the imagological repertoire presented is commendable, and hopefully will serve as an example for future Romanian practitioners of comparative imagology.

At the end of its 550 pages of text, plus roughly 50 pages of notes and bibliography, Sorin Mitu's "Romanians and Hungarians" stands out both as an impressive fresco of comparative imagology with a historical grounding and as an exercise in intellectual probity that explores the subtleties of interethnic relations through a wide array of tools. The balance between analytical rigor and personal empathy enables the author to recast a theme often fraught with tension into fertile ground for critical reflection and authentic dialogue. The volume not only offers a multitude of answers, but also highlights those questions with no definitive solutions, urging the reader to reconsider both the old and the contemporary fissures, as well as to cultivate mutual understanding in a society rooted in a fabric of myths, emotions, and often fragmentary histories.

Timothy Olin, *The Banat of Temesvar. Borderland Colonization in the Habsburg Monarchy*, California, Stanford University Press, 2025, 344 p.

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At the beginning of 2025, Banat – the region between the Danube, river Tisza, river Mureș and the Carpathian Mountains – became the subject of a new book published by Stanford University Press: *The Banat of Temesvar, Borderlinde Colonization in the Habsburg Monarchy*. The work, by American historian Timothy Olin, is the result of a diligent 13-year-long research project. The title evokes the eighteenth-century Banat, but the book, in its meticulous analysis, does not neglect the "century of nations" either, including Banat's status as a border region, the colonization policies and their impact, as well as the region's cultural diversity and inter-ethnic relations.

Timișoara's Banat was a Habsburg creation. This is the author's opening sentence, which sets the tone for the pages that follow. The historian sees the Banat, on the border between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire, and thus the frontier between West and East, as a meeting place of cultures, a contact zone, a cross-border region. In reading this book, we discover a land ravaged by wars and internal conflicts, but also its people of the past, as the author focuses on both the settler communities, and the indigenous population, as well as the relationship between the two.

The work is built around the idea that populating the Banat with predominantly German families was a deliberate act of colonization, characteristic of a newly conquered frontier area, which the Austrian authorities wanted to stabilize and legalize and whose profitability they wanted to maximize. The book is structured into nine chapters as follows: *Conquest and Construction,*

Security and Loyalty, The Religious and Ethnic (Re-)Construction of the Banat, Expectations Fulfilled, Settler Culture, Local Responses to Habsburg Rule I and *Local Responses to Habsburg Rule II*. The topics covered in these nine chapters start with Banat's incorporation into the Habsburg Monarchy and then turn to colonization, examining its motivations, the importance of the religious and confessional dynamics in shaping the colonization policies, the living conditions of both the settlers and the indigenous population, and the impact of colonization on the relations between the natives and the authorities, as well as between the settlers and the authorities. There is also a closing epilogue that traces the fate of the Germans in the Banat, the inter-ethnic relations and the policies that affected ethnic minorities in the region, from the 1848-1849 Revolution to the end of the tumultuous twentieth century. The epilogue shows us the differences and similarities between the problems of a multi-ethnic borderland within an empire and within nation states.

Given the long period of time during which Timothy Olin has carried out his in-depth research on the colonization of Banat in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the substantial and thorough bibliography of the work comes as no surprise. The historian has left no stone unturned and has scoured the cities of Serbia, Austria, Romania and Hungary in search of archival documents to complete the often-ambiguous puzzle of eighteenth-century Banat. To these are added published primary sources and scholarly works, most of them by English- and German-language authors, but the names of Hungarian and Romanian historians are also well represented.

One of the merits of this work is its even-handed overview of the population of Banat, the cultures and ethnicities that lived – and continue to live – in this small region of Central and Eastern Europe divided between Romania, Serbia and Hungary. The subject of colonization and the state of Banat in the eighteenth century has been addressed in the historiographies of all four countries, but they tend to focus on their own nationals. This is not the case in Olin's work. The American historian approaches and analyses the topic with professional detachment, unaffected by local tensions or political positions. From this stance, Olin does not see the population movements that marked eighteenth-century Banat (and the later ones as well) as mere migration, but situates them within the global framework of colonialism, in this case orchestrated by the Habsburg Empire. In this context, perhaps a more in-depth discussion on what colonialism meant within a European empire as compared to the colonizing actions across the oceans might have been welcome.

To conclude, *The Banat of Temesvar* is a good read for those who want to understand Modern Banat and how it influences Contemporary Banat, and it earns its place among the essential readings for understanding the complexity of the processes of colonization and their impact on ethno-religious identities and relations between the communities of Central and Eastern Europe. This work is not only rigorously researched, but also well written and easy to follow, making it an enjoyable read not only for historians, but also for history buffs or readers who have been just made curious by the Banat and by its "Little Vienna" – Timișoara / Temeschwar / Temesvár / Темишвар. The American historian's work, published in English, a modern-day *lingua franca*, is also a wonderful opportunity for readers from Banat and beyond, from all the nation states involved in the region's history to meet each other through the pages of this book.

Ioan Bolovan, Rudolf Gräf (coordonatori), *O istorie a Banatului. Compendiu* [A history of Banat. Compendium], Cluj-Napoca, Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2023, 682 p.

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It seems that the most important works on the history of Banat tend, at least in recent years, to be published anywhere but in the Banat. Thus, two years before *The Banat of Temesvar* appeared in the USA, an equally important, but quite different work on Banat was published in Cluj-Napoca – namely, the collective volume *O istorie a Banatului: compendiu*, coordinated by historians Ioan Bolovan and Rudolf Gräf and published under the aegis of the Romanian Academy. The work, now in its second edition, is dedicated to historian Nicolae Bocșan and opens with a *word of appreciation* by Romanian Academy president Ioan-Aurel Pop, a preface signed by Dan Dubină, member of Romanian Academy, and a foreword by the coordinators of the volume. I said that it differs completely from Timothy Olin's work, and it does. While the latter is focused on a century and a half of the region's history and presents it through the focal point of colonization, *O istorie a Banatului*, as the title suggests, is a compendium intended to provide a coherent synthesis of the history of the region, from prehistoric times to the present day. The work brings together the efforts of researchers from Timișoara, Reșița and Arad, it approaches the history of the Banat in a chronological manner and briefly analyses and explains each significant historical fact, event or process.

The work is structured into nine chronological sections, except for the first and last two sections, which deal with the natural setting, Banat figures and chronological milestones in the history of the region. The first section, *The Natural Setting*, authored by Petru Urdea, presents the relief,

climate, hydrography and vegetation of Banat, and anticipates the impression the reader will most likely have by the end – namely, that Banat is a distinctive region.

After locating Banat on the map and imagined himself in the wide expanse of the Banat Mountains or fishing on the Bega Canal, the reader is then introduced to the Banat's distant past. The section dedicated to prehistory and antiquity is authored by Florin Drașovean and Adrian Ardeț and, as already mentioned, covers the history of the region from the Palaeolithic (which, on the plains between the Mureș, Danube and Tisza, began around 700 000 BC) to the end of antiquity, around 400 AD. The chapter covers the main archaeological discoveries made on the territory of the Banat and the cultures that left their archaeological traces, their way of life and their beliefs. It naturally includes sub-chapter on the Dacians and the Romans, illustrating the evolution of the region in that period, and the premises of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people.

The Middle Ages is the historical epoch that receives the most attention in the compendium, with three sections and more than 200 pages. The Banat of the Middle Ages is chronologically divided into three periods: the 5th-6th centuries, the 6th-10th centuries and the years 1000-1715. Historian Daniela Tănase divided the first six centuries of Banat's Middle Ages into the *Early Age of Migrations* and the *Period of Crystallization of Medieval society*. The first section focuses on the migratory peoples, especially the Huns, and the policies of the Byzantine Empire that influenced the history of the Banat. The migratory peoples also play an important role in the unfolding of the events recounted in the second section, the climax of which is the Hungarian settlement. The third and last section dedicated to the Middle Ages is written by historians Adrian and Livia Magina, who trace the political, military, administrative, demographic, social, economic, cultural and confessional course of Banat's history over the course of about seven centuries. It is a chapter that treats Banat from the perspectives of society, and is invaluable for understanding its within the Hungarian Kingdom and later on. The last sub-chapter of this section is atypical, dealing separately with the Ottoman period, seen in the same multi-perspectival manner, on a smaller scale.

Extremely important and well researched is the sixth section of the compendium, *Modern Banat*, authored by historians Rudolf Gräf and Sandra Hirsch. Modernity begins in the Banat with the Habsburg conquest in 1716,

following which the history of the region is captured passing from Ottoman to Austrian and then Hungarian administration. The section deals with the conquest of the Banat, the administrative system, demography, colonization policies, economy, education, religion, art and daily life, as well as the national movements of the 19th century, the involvement of the Banat nations in the 1848-1849 Revolution and the labour movement in the region.

The last section, whose title includes a historical epoch, is *Contemporary Banat,* written by historians Vasile Rămneațu and Miodrag Milin. This chapter captures Banat's distinct position at the end of the First World War during the peace conferences, its administrative reorganization within Greater Romania, the evolution of inter-ethnic relations, the involvement of its inhabitants in politics, economy, society, culture and education in the inter-war period. The part devoted to the establishment of communism is rather brief and focuses on the attitude of society towards the changes and the tragedy of the deportation of the Swabians. The authors also shed light on the anti-communist resistance, the deportations to the Bărăgan, the influence of alternative culture on the outbreak of the 1989 Revolution and, finally, all the events of December 1989 that deeply marked the collective consciousness of the region's inhabitants.

The volume concludes with a section dedicated to the illustrious figures of Banat, a testament to the province's multiculturalism, followed by a section dedicated to chronological milestones.

The book is substantial in size, but makes up for it in its writing, making it a pleasant read for both the general public and specialists. The title page of each section includes an image representative of the historical period covered, and at the end of each chapter is a wealth of images of archaeological finds, historical monuments, archival documents and maps, which complement and solidify the information gained through reading. The Compendium does not exhaust any of the topics discussed, but it is a perfect starting point for any topic related to the history of the Banat through its synthesis, the classical structure of the information and the generous bibliography, with dozens of references to valuable works of Romanian, German and Hungarian historiography, which are found at the end of each chapter.

Reading the history of the Banat from beginning to end, the inquisitive reader will discover that administrative changes, the threat of war – whether on the border or within the territory – and population movements, whether voluntary or forced, premeditated or not, have been the constants in the history of this small province.

Marius Turda, *În căutarea românului perfect: specific național, degenerare rasială și selecție socială în România modernă* [In search of the perfect Romanian: national specifics, racial degeneration and social selection in modern Romania], Iași, Polirom, 2024, 307 p.

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Professor Marius Turda's work is a new and intriguing history of how the national character was defined after the formation of the modern Romanian state, with the upper limit of investigation set at the year 1950. Shaping national identity gradually became more problematic, as the process of finding a proper specificity gradually turned into one of distinguishing oneself from the Other; it became easier to say what a Romanian was not, rather than what a Romanian truly was. Turda analyses this process of identity distinction from two perspectives: on the one hand, antisemitism and racism, involving the exclusion (physically and spiritually) of Jews, Roma, and other ethnic minorities from the "body of the nation;" on the other hand, through eugenics and the identification of dysgenic elements and factors contributing to both individual and national degeneration.

The peasant served as the leitmotif of all literary, philosophical, and cultural works concerning Romanian identity, so it also became central to scientific attempts to define the nation. Ultimately, culture and science gave rise to a form of scientism that sought to discover—and even improve—the Romanian. Doctors viewed things beyond the romanticized vision of rural life; the peasant needed to be civilized, and this process is described as "a true experiment of civilization, culture, and social selection, without which the Romanian state could not be conceived as national" (13). Beyond the individual

peasant, rural families were seen as the wellspring of physical and moral national regeneration. Plans were drawn up to protect the nation's biological capital, involving direct state intervention in the private sphere, a phenomenon known as biopolitics.

Divided into six chapters, the study addresses the issues thematically and chronologically, also considering international events that influenced the evolution of these ideas. Drawing upon his expertise in the history of European eugenics and medicine, Marius Turda offers a comparative perspective on the history of racism and eugenics, demonstrating that these phenomena were not merely pale imitations of their European counterparts. On the contrary, eugenics, racism, and antisemitism were part of a national "weltanschauung," with Romanian doctors, anthropologists, and philosophers engaging in the exchange of ideas with important foreign scholars.

The first chapter studies the ideas of Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, A.C. Cuza, and Aurel C. Popovici, highlighting the early problems brought by modernity in Romania, the emergence of anti-modernist, anti-urban attitudes, and increased antisemitism—especially as the Great Powers forced the Romanian state to regulate the "Jewish question." Early attempts to define national specificity are noted, drawing from Houston Stewart Chamberlain's ideas and raising the notion of the Jew-Romanian peasant conflict as a national security problem, particularly for A.C. Cuza, who considered antisemitism necessary for national defence.

Early forms of "biologizing the nation" are observed, with spiritual and physical rebirth becoming interdependent. Nationalist-anthropological views strove to regenerate the man / citizen, both spiritually and physically, while simultaneously defining the Romanian in biological, cultural, geographic, historical, and linguistic terms.

The next chapter explores the idea of racial degeneration and the rise of racial antisemitism in the second half of the 19th century, when anthropologists discussed the Jewish racial type. Degeneration was identified in two ways: either as a result of modernization or as caused by either racial mixing or mere interaction with other ethnicities. The classification of races arose against the backdrop of pre-existing representations of the Other—the non-European. Anthropometric measurements sought to demonstrate what was already "common knowledge": that the non-European was firstly different, and secondly inferior.

For doctors and eugenicists, "Greater Romania" had to be consolidated biologically, achievable only through strengthening the physical, psychological, and moral health of the peasantry. Gheorghe Banu was concerned with the sanitary measures needed in rural areas, proposing the concept of "village biology." Conversely, some doctors argued that degeneration was caused by racial mixing—Nicolae Roșu being one example. Analyses of psychiatric clinic records supported racial antisemitism: Ludwig Erich and Petru Tipărescu claimed that Jews were predisposed to mental illnesses because they were racially degenerate, while Romanians suffering from similar disorders were not degenerate but affected by their environment.

There were also moderate opinions on racism and antisemitism, but these became increasingly rare in the 1930s, and, by the 1940s, ethnic purification became a reality rather than just a topic of dispute.

The third chapter underlines how, in anthropology, anthropometric and cultural studies combined to define Romanian national (or racial) identity. Historiographical issues were sought to be resolved through craniology and serology, but these anthropometric measurements revealed another issue: there was no homogeneous Romanian racial type. Yet, because Romanian racism proved "flexible and adaptable" (102), the existence of various racial types in Romania became an opportunity to search for a racial archetype, for an ideal Romanian who once existed and whose traits could still be identified in the blood, albeit dispersed and thus requiring social and racial selection.

Petru Râmneanțu wrote the boldest works in sero-anthropology, showing that the Székelys and Csángós were actually Magyarized Romanians. For Râmneanțu, cultural, linguistic, or religious aspects were meaningless; only blood mattered for national belonging—probably the pinnacle of the ethnicist nation, while the voluntarist view of nationhood was not so much rejected, as rendered useless. Turda also highlights the politicization and nationalization of anthropology, comparing anthropological studies of Hungarians and Romanians: the same subject could have different scientific answers.

The study then focuses on methods discussed to halt degeneration—that is, forms of "negative" eugenics. Until the 1930s, the United States served as a model for such policies; after the Nazi laws of 1933, attention turned to Germany. For some, the German model was too radical, while for Iordache Făcăoaru, Ioan Manliu, or Eugen Relgis it could be extended to other social groups. However, for most, the German model was irreconcilable with the

dominant spirit of "Latin eugenics" in Romania. Doctors like Gheorghe K. Marinescu, Emilia Daneș, or Iosif Leonida emphasized environmental improvement. The Romanian delegation at the International Congress of the Penal and Penitentiary Commission in Berlin in 1935, led by Nicolae Iorgulescu, is also noteworthy for rejecting a resolution to sterilize criminals across all participant countries.

The fifth chapter reveals how the Roma were considered irreconcilable with Romanian identity, while "Romanianized" Roma—although seen as "civilized"—posed a dual threat of degeneration: racial and social. Antisemitic laws and the deportation of Roma were another way of defining the Romanian by eliminating what was not it, via, as Mihai Antonescu put it, ethnic purification. Sabin Manuilă was one such scholar entirely hostile to the Roma, while Liviu Stan provided a theological perspective to explain discriminatory measures.

The stigmatization of the Roma continued during the communist period, and the final chapter investigates the change in the eugenic discourse that accompanied the shift in political regime. The new model became the Soviet Union, but the aspirations remained the same: the search for the "new man." The Soviet example prompted calls for medicine and anthropology—long dominated by nationalist ideas—to serve the official ideology; true research was to be materialist-dialectical, marking a fresh chapter in both communism and eugenics, albeit in altered forms.

Ultimately, Turda demonstrates the influence of ideology and official politics even on science, showing that how scientific knowledge meets, at its edges, both speculation and popular culture. The search for national specificity oscillated between cultural studies and science: nationalist ideas served as groundwork for research, shaping both objectives and results, with research gaps later filled with sophistry. The work undoubtedly achieves its aim of highlighting "the role the concept of race played in the debate about national specificity in modern Romania" (22).

Daniela Stanciu-Păscărița, *Loisir în vremuri de pace și război. Germanii din Sibiu și Timișoara* [Loisir in times of peace and war. The Germans in Sibiu and Timișoara], Cluj-Napoca, Mega, 2024, 340 p.[1]

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La Belle Époque continues to exert a unique fascination, both in historiography, literature or visual arts, regardless of the geographical setting where the research or narrative takes place. It is as if, even a century later, we are still living with the psychological aftermath of the Great War, still orienting ourselves chronologically through a "before" (a patriarchal world where modernity emerged slowly) and an "after" (a time of triumphant, accelerated modernity on all fronts, though one whose fast-forward momentum conceals the sinister grin of interwar extremisms and looming war).

Recent historiography of the Habsburg Monarchy—including notable Romanian contributions—has made a credible case (and the evidence continues to grow) that in order to understand the collapse of the modern empires, it is not enough to analyse only the breaks and ruptures; one must also recover and examine the continuities. However, in Romanian historiography—particularly in works focused on the Great War—less attention has been paid to the continuities of the prewar era: how individuals and institutions adapted to a state of conflict and managed to preserve everyday structures in their least altered forms.

[1] The Romanian version of this book presentation was published in *Studii și Articole de istorie*, 92 (2025): 288-290.

This is precisely what Dana Stanciu's book does, taking on a compelling subject: leisure—the daily use of free time—in two southeastern cities of the Habsburg Monarchy with predominantly German communities: Sibiu / Hemannstadt / Nagyszeben and Timișoara / Temeschwar / Temesvár, in the decades before the First World War, during the war years, and in some cases, even into the early interwar period. The volume builds on the author's doctoral dissertation and retains much of its structure, providing readers with a substantial introductory chapter, where sources and relevant historiography are discussed, the conceptual and methodological framework is laid out, and the anthropological perspective underpinning the work is brought into focus.

Throughout the entire book, the author consistently shows how the historian—particularly one focused on urban life—can and should be an anthropologist as well. The reconstruction of daily life she offers (drawn from hundreds of fragments of documents, newspaper notices, ego-documents, and letters) revolves around people— "everyday people," "ordinary individuals" in all their social diversity, the kinds of persons you might have met and interacted with if time travel, in defiance of scientific laws, were possible.

Moreover, the book does not speak merely about those who enjoyed leisure, but also about those who made it possible. Behind the cafés, terraces, and gardens that hosted a variety of events are local entrepreneurs—those who constructed the framework for leisure activities, naturally with business motives. The reader is thus granted access to both perspectives: the one from behind the counter and the one in front of it—from the person pouring the beer to the one drinking it.

Still within the anthropological scope are discussions related to etiquette in public spaces and norms of social interaction, attention to fashion and the transfer of aesthetic styles in clothing and cosmetics, as well as urban rituals such as coffee drinking, promenading, or attending balls—the latter receiving a dedicated chapter.

As we move slowly toward the tragedy of the years 1914–1919, the author and her book explore issues of economy, demography, public health, modernization, and prosperity—in essence, the social, material, and mental preconditions for the development of a leisure culture in spaces inherently shaped by urban sociability. Naturally, leisure continues even during less favourable times (epidemics, economic crises, wars), but the specific *joie de*

vivre implied by the concept requires a certain level of well-being—a level that, as the book shows, was not entirely extinguished by the war's hardships and deprivations.

The reconstruction offered by the author is a dynamic one: motor-driven and consumer-oriented, and the backdrop of these daily activities is painstakingly recovered as well. The book contains hundreds of place names, most of them now lost—be they establishments, streets, or neighbourhoods in both cities. In doing so, the recovered topography and toponymy of urban space bring back the cities of Sibiu and Timișoara of over a century ago as they might have appeared to a contemporary visitor's eyes. This is one of those rare works of history that could easily be projected onto an interactive map. Indeed, the appendices at the end—with street name equivalents and addresses of venues—alongside period illustrations, greatly contribute to this effect.

As for the term "consumerism"—a bit of terminological license on the part of the reviewer, since the author herself consistently refers only to "consumption"—a large portion of the book can also be read through that lens: a history of early 20th-century consumerism on the geographical edge of the Habsburg Monarchy. It is not only a matter of goods consumption but also of public services and trends (such as fashion)—in other words, the birth of the service-based economy as we know it today.

Finally, but no less importantly, we must emphasise the fact that the history reconstructed by Dana Stanciu is also a history of civil society—of the ways in which urban gregariousness gives rise to institutional entities or at least social initiatives intended to help those less fortunate, transforming sociability into a useful community tool ("charitable leisure").

Dana Stanciu's work manages to provide a deep, nuanced, and multifaceted perspective on everyday life in early 20th-century Sibiu and Timișoara, connecting social and cultural history with economic and anthropological dimensions in a way that enriches our understanding of the Habsburg Monarchy and of urban development in regions that, after 1918, became part of Romania. Due to its thorough documentation, scholarly rigor, and interdisciplinary approach, the book demonstrates that the history of leisure is an integral and necessary part of understanding societies of the past—especially those undergoing rapid modernization.

Cecilia Cârja, Ioana-Mihaela Bonda (coordonatori), *Universitari și universități în spațiul românesc (secolele XIX–XX). Studii și interpretări* [Academics and universities in the Romanian space (19th–20th Centuries). Studies and interpretations], Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2023, 161 p.

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Universities represent more than mere centres of intellectual formation. They are dynamic communities where academic traditions, human relationships, and professional trajectories intertwine, shaping the cultural identity of a society. The volume entitled *Universitari și universități în spațiul românesc (secolele XIX–XX). Studii și interpretări* brings together a series of scholarly contributions authored by various Romanian researchers united by a common interest in the history of Romanian higher education. Functioning as a thematic collection of studies, the book offers, through each chapter, distinct perspectives on the development of university institutions, as well as on the professional and intellectual trajectories of academic staff within the Romanian space throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. This volume emerged following the National Congress of Romanian Historians, held in Alba Iulia between 8–10 September 2022, which featured a section dedicated specifically to university history. In the aftermath of this event, the volume's coordinators, Cecilia Cârja and Ioana-Mihaela Bonda, archivists and historians within the Archives of the "Babeș-Bolyai" University, published six of the studies presented at the congress, acting not only as editors but also as contributors through their own studies.

The first study, authored by Andrei and Valentina Eșanu and entitled *Repercusiuni internaționale ale întemeierii primelor universități românești (teze la o ipoteză)*, analyses how the founding of the first higher education institutions in the Romanian space, specifically those in Iași (1860), Bucharest (1864), and the Romanian Academic Society (1866), prompted neighbouring empires to establish new universities as a means of counteracting Romanian educational influence over the Romanian-speaking populations under foreign rule. These new academic institutions included the University of Odessa, founded in 1865 by the Tsarist Empire, the Hungarian "Franz Joseph" University in Cluj (1872) and the German University in Cernăuți (1875). The languages of instruction adopted by these institutions reflected the assimilationist policies pursued by the dominant powers.

Further on, Alexandru-Bogdan Bud's study, entitled *Momente din activitatea profesorului Petre Grimm la Catedra de limba și literatura engleză a Universității clujene (1919-1924)*, focuses on the professor's role in promoting the English language in Transylvania and his notable contributions to consolidating philological education at the University of Cluj.

The next two articles focus on the remarkable figure of Alexandru Borza, the botanist and founder of the city's Botanical Garden. One of these is Florin Nicolae Ardelean's work, *Alexandru Borza și cercetarea botanică la Universitatea din Cluj: stabilirea rețelei de cooperări internaționale (1919-1924)*, which sheds light on Borza's correspondence with various institutions and individuals from Western countries. This correspondence reveals his efforts to facilitate the exchange of publications and scientific materials, to acquire academic works (particularly from the German-speaking world), to initiate scientific partnerships and to design the Botanical Garden. The second study, by Ovidiu-Emil Iudean, entitled *O mobilitate academică peste Ocean în perioada interbelică: Participarea profesorului Alexandru Borza la Congresul Internațional de Botanică din Statele Unite ale Americii*, is the volume's most extensive contribution. Based on archival documents, personal letters, postcards sent home by Borza himself, as well as his memoir, *Amintirile turistice ale unui naturalist. Călător pe trei continente*, published in the autumn of 1926, shortly after the Ithaca Conference, the study reconstructs Borza's journey, the challenges he faced, and the connections he established with scholars from around the world during the summer and autumn of 1926.

Cecilia Cârja's study, *Ani de pribegie. Universitatea din Cluj refugiată la Sibiu în perioada celui de Al Doilea Război Mondial*, describes the tense situation and collective efforts involved in relocating and accommodating the university's academic staff, students, and institutional assets following Romania's territorial losses in 1940. The study also captures the university's ultimate return to Cluj after the end of the global conflict. The author employs numerous archival documents and draws upon diaries and memoirs of key contemporary figures who experienced those troubled times firsthand, such as Professor Onisifor Ghibu's journal and the memoirs of Valeriu Anania, later bishop of Cluj, who, in his writings, recounted the hardships he faced as a student. The study provides insights into the transfer process, administrative and logistical difficulties, and the efforts made to maintain academic activity in exile.

Finally, the volume concludes with the study co-authored by Ioana-Mihaela Bonda and Cecilia Cârja, *Peregrinatio academica în România comunistă. Studenți străini la doctorat și în stagii de specializare la Universitatea "Babeș-Bolyai"*. This article focuses on analysing the presence of foreign students at the Cluj University, pursuing doctoral studies or specialization programs, coming from various regions such as the United States, the German Democratic Republic, Belgium, Venezuela, and Iran. The study relies exclusively on archival documents to reconstruct the profiles of these international students.

Overall, the studies presented in this collective volume offer a comprehensive perspective on how universities functioned during the period in question, and how academics played a significant role in shaping relationships among universities not only on a European level, but globally as well. The volume provides a well-defined image of the efforts invested in consolidating the community of historians and facilitating exchanges of experience and knowledge. The work, in its entirety, reveals a history of these cultural and academic interactions and presents a comprehensive portrayal of the chosen subject. The themes investigated by these scholars are not limited to presenting, in a merely positivist manner, the trajectory of Romanian universities and the people who made history within them; rather, they highlight the difficulties these institutions faced over time and the sacrifices made during turbulent periods to keep them afloat and to ensure quality education for their students.

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