

**BABEȘ – BOLYAI UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY**

**SOCIETY AND MENTALITIES IN  
OLTENIA OF HABSBURGIC EMPIRE**

PHD THESIS

Summary

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### **Summary**

Sensibility and history – a new subject. I do not know books where this subject would be approached, neither do I see that the multiple issues that it implies would be drawn somewhere. And therefore, (forgiven to be this call of artist to this poor historian) – look, thus, a beautiful subject. This way, Lucien Febvre was beginning the study which was to remain a true program for the mindset history, stimulating the efforts of rebuilding the emotional life of past times.

Allow me to begin with the same words from which I've chosen the title of the present demarche (Society and mentalities in Oltenia of Habsburgic Empire) which wants to be a survey in the history of collective sensibility in the XVIIIth century.

The present work relies on the documentary stuff from the Viennese archives edited decades ago, in the Hurmuzaki collection, in the volumes published by C. Giurescu and N. Dobrescu and on the protocols of Austrian Administration from Oltenia, kept in the State Archives at Sibiu. To these main sources of information we could add several issues of documents concerning the two decades of Austrian governance in Oltenia appeared during different periods of time and unprecedented documentary stuff kept in the State Archives at Bucharest and in the manuscripts department at the Academy library.

We could add something more about the documentary sources. The desarming stereotype in language of clerical acts, of registers and economic registers, of the annotations on book or of the epigraphic sources makes that the needed information to

this kind of investigation to be offered stingily. In exchange, the chronicles and the testifications of foreign travellers are, by far, the most important, richest and intended.

Despite the fact that, for the two concerning decades, the documentary stuff is published, the angle from which it had been examined is, this time, absolutely new. But we've also used interesting data from the documents collection of the Romanian Cultural Institute „ Nicolae Iorga” from Venice and the University library from Padova, Italy ( after the probation stage between October 2010 and February 2011). The structure of the documentary stuff has also determined the work structuring in: society part and the one of mentalities or otherwise said, the way in which daily social realities are perceived by the collective thinking, parts that would sustain and emphasize mutually.

During its great expansion in the South-East Europe, carried out through the Passarowitz treaty of peace, the Habsburg Empire also attached the five counties of Oltenia. Still effectively conquered from the end of 1716 and the beginning of 1717, Oltenia was framed into the borders of the Empire after the peace negotiations during the summer of 1718, into the Empire borders by the principle of *uti possidentis* which offered legal sanction to the great territory transfer as a result of the military operations for almost 20 years, as a fact until the end of 1737 when the imperial troops were banished from the province by the Ottoman offensive, as a right until the autumn of 1739 – Belgrad treaty of peace – Oltenia was therefore under Austrian occupation. I've reduced to what is strictly necessary the presentation of military and political events that led to the instauration of the Austrian Dominion in Oltenia because they represented several times the object of detailed presentations.

Minor episode and without sustainable results on the international relations, the Austrian dominion has therefore a great meaning from a historiographic point of view throughout the major revelations that it offers to the investigation on all the Romanian society aspects at the beginning of the Phanariot era.

The Austrian dominion organized by other principles than those which were on the basis of Romanian State the way it had developed under the Ottoman dominion, was a strong ferment. The perspective of great renewals put in motion all social classes and categories which demonstrated both in writing and in action their willings and desires; and throughout the social dynamics initiated by the implementation of reforms introduced

by the Austrian, the fundamental realities of the Romanian society are seen clearer than in its very slow evolution under the Ottoman dominion.

The central axis of the first chapter is represented by the Habsburg Reformism Toscana-Modena-Oltenia emphasized eloquent similarities. The Austrian dominion in the XVIIIth century in Northern Peninsula by its reforms; unequal outspread throughout Italy depending on the development of each province and on the State trends, the lights of the XVIIIth century gave a great impulse to the economic life especially in the territories controlled by the Court of Vienna, before it came to an end as in many other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, with the outbreak of the uprising in France. The fiscal, social, administrative and judicial successive reforms introduced by the Austrian in Oltenia strove to limitate the political power of the dominant class, to limitate its advantages and to reserve the State the main benefit of exploiting the population namely the rustic world. The essential for the political history of the province during the Austrian occupation was provided by the confrontation of these two opposed tendencies.

The clergy – trying to remake the horizon of the past sensibility – worth to discuss about the clergy situation in Oltenia.

The relationships between the Habsburg State and the Orthodox Church of Oltenia were actually tense, the explanation being in the politics of limiting the clergy's benefits and of controlling the church goods and of economical managing of hegumens: the dependence of the Ramnic bishopric on the Serbian Mitropoly of Belgrade; the political dependence (Vienna was reserving the right of nominating the bishop); permanent control on the monasteries, stress unit, the monastic life itself became an object of settlement and surveillance by the administration.

The entire evolution of the relationships between the two forces is synthetized by the severe tone of the text through which the on March 1737 the Administration was striving to return the bishop to order, more and more insubordinate regarding the state authority.

Eloquent are our intercessions regarding the material, social condition, the bishop's part in spreading the religious ideas and perceptives.

Chapter IV. We can clearly see the program and politics of boyars; the reinforcement of the manorial state by creating a system dominated by the oligarchy of boyars and ruled

by a ruler with nominal authority the preservation and extension of advantages are main features of the political program of the boyars. Socially, the boyars were striving to maintain unspoiled the system of agrarian relationships, the way in which its main institution had developed in the past centuries.

However, an incursion in the collective sensibility is hard to understand without the daily actions that made the life of the two decades. That's why I've decided to present some moments of the daily existence, convinced that these ones represent a schedule of a more complex scenery which continues to ask careful analysis.

Maybe more than ever the Austrian administration influenced the psychology of the „little” but also on the „little” (variety of buildings, types of clothes, gastronomy, way of life).

Chapter V. Caught up between the two forces which disputed the dominant position in the province and the right to exploit it, the peasantry carried out its own programme, not in memorials and political documents but in action.

But the peasants the great majority of the population? By judging their way of life seemed quiet. The peasant makes do with seeding and cropping as much as he needs for his living for fear not to see his excess of production taken away by the boyar. Describing the Romanian, Felice Coronni was convinced that they had been hard working and accustomed to face both the hot and the cold.

The daily life of the peasants was a poor life, dedicated to work without benefits. From here the their indolence, only apparently, because the great challenges to fight proved their ideals and hopes for a better life.

In conclusion, we want to offer the society of Oltenia from the two decades, its human dimension, we believe to have managed to offer an interesting image of this society to those interested in it.