

Habilitation Thesis
Commission of History and Cultural Studies

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NATION BUILDING THROUGH CULTURE
TRANSYLVANIA AND
CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE (20TH CENTURY)

(a) Abstract¹

I have started the writing of this thesis attempting to emphasize the thematic and methodological directions which my doctoral thesis² developed for the subsequent research work: cultural history, social and political in subsidiary, quantitative analysis, etc.

In 2006, participating in the projects competition organized by CNCISIS, I achieved the position of director of the research project based on type “A” grant, code 735, entitled *The European Model of National Self-Determination. Society and Institutions in Transylvania of the year 1918*.

The initial result of the project was a two-section volume.³ The first contains historiographical studies. Each text appears in double version, Romanian and English. The second contains “The Bibliography of Year 1918 in Transylvania and Central-Eastern Europe”. In 2007, I undertook a documentary tour in Paris to extend my investigation at Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne, Bibliothèque Nationale de France and at the Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères.

Returning to the historiographic section of the volume, I shall further refer to the studies for whose drafting I was exclusively responsible.

The first provides a synthetic view of the Romanian historical literature devoted to the Union of Transylvania with Romania and similar events in Central-Eastern Europe.⁴ I also undertook the drawing up of a larger text.⁵ The period considered in the new study (1945-1967) was chosen in light of a radical change in perspective. After 1945, the Union of 1918 became a marginal event. Beginning with 1958, in several stages, we see a return of the Union in the attention of the ruling circles in Bucharest, with effects on the historiography.

The next stage of the research activity within the above mentioned project focused on *the analysis of the political discourse* of the second decade of the 20th century, manifested amid geopolitical changes in Central-Eastern Europe.⁶ I had ensured thus the possibility of progressing to an important phase in the approach of the Romanian political discourse

¹ I followed the recommendations on the number of characters choosing the option “no spaces”.

² Valer Moga, „Astra” și societatea 1918-1930 [“Astra” and Society 1918-1930], Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2003, 584 p.

³ *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică. Contribuții bibliografice și istoriografice / The Year 1918 in Transylvania and East-Central Europe. Bibliographical and Historiographical Contributions*, Valer Moga and Sorin Arhire eds., Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2007, 400 p.

⁴ Valer Moga, “The Year 1918: Nine Decades of Historiography”, in *The Year 1918 in Transylvania and East-Central Europe*, p. 91-105.

⁵ Id., “The Union of 1918 in the Historiography of 1945-1967”, in *The Year 1918 in Transylvania and East-Central Europe*, p. 135-172.

⁶ *Problema Transilvaniei în discursul politic de la sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial* [The Problem of Transylvania in the Political Discourse of the End of the World War I], Valer Moga and Sorin Arhire eds., Cluj-Napoca, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2009, 236 p.

analysis in Transylvania.⁷ In terms of sources, in addition to the archive documents, the most important discursive tribune was *Românul* [*The Romanian*] newspaper. A certain conjuncture directed me towards the French methodological school, with positive results for my research activity.⁸ The political context and collective mental state, at local and European level, imposed the maximum occurrence of terms from the semantic family of the concept of “nation”. Less predictable was that immediately after the “nation”, ranged the terms of religious denotation. This fact motivated the undertaking of a new study based on the same methodology.⁹

A thematic area which can be discussed almost in the same terms is *the history of the Church*. While for the two previous centuries there are important contributions, the twentieth-century, without being ignored, is far from receiving the attention it deserves in historiography. This prompted me to carry out, firstly, two studies. The first departs from the finding of an apparently paradoxical situation.¹⁰ The beginning of World War I prompted the hierarchy of the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches in Transylvania to declare their loyalty to the Habsburg crown and to Hungary. Nevertheless, in November 1918, the same Romanian clergy had a steady presence in the action that led to the union of Transylvania with Romania. The thesis of the study construes the response to the dilemma contained in the title: “From the Dynastic Patriotism to Greater Romania”. In addition to specific bibliography, documents from the *Romanian Greek-Catholic Metropolitan of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș* fund, held by the Alba County National Archives Service, and the Archives of the Metropolitan of Ardeal, Sibiu, were used. The second study in the same thematic area represents an introduction to the issue of political involvement of the Church.¹¹

The works of the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia was the result of an intense electoral activity. The research of the legal grounds of this process is insufficient. Consequently, I decided to decrease, by a study, a gap in the literature on the modern history.¹²

In the spring of 2013 I was part of the Organizing Committee of the international conference *Economy and Society in Central and Eastern Europe. Territory, Population, and Consumption*. The conference was held by the Department of History, Archeology and Museology of “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia.

⁷ Valer Moga, “Națiunea în discursul politic românesc din Transilvania anului 1918” [The Nation in the Romanian Political Discourse from Transylvania in 1918], in *Problema Transilvaniei în discursul politic de la sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial* [The Problem of Transylvania in the Political Discourse of the End of the World War I], p. 31-111.

⁸ Jacques Guilhaumou, *La langue politique et la Révolution française. De l'événement à la raison linguistique*, Paris, Méridiens Klincksieck, 1989, 212 p.; Michel Launay, *Le vocabulaire politique de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Geneva, Librairie Slatkine, Paris, Librairie Champion, 1977, 278 p.; Paul Garde, *Le discours balkanique. Des mots et des hommes*, Paris, Fayard, 2004, 479 p.

⁹ Valer Moga, “Religious Vocabulary in the Discourse of Romanian Political Elites in Transylvania, 1918”, in *Transylvanian Review*, Supplement no. 4, 2011, p. 305-320.

¹⁰ Id., “De la patriotismul dinastic la România Mare. Bisericile românești din Transilvania în tumultul politic al anilor 1914-1918” [From Dynastic Patriotism to the Great Romania. Romanian Churches from Transylvania in the Political Turmoil of 1914-1918], in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, no. 15/2, 2011, p. 347-368.

¹¹ Id., “Church and Political Behavior in Transylvania at the End of World War I”, in *European Journal of Science and Theology* (Iași), October 2014, vol. 10, no. 5, p. 139-146. <http://www.ejst.tuiasi.ro/issue10.html>, 27 sept. 2014.

¹² Id., „Introducere în cercetarea activității electorale din Transilvania, în noiembrie-decembrie 1918” [An Introduction to the Research of Electoral Activity in Transylvania, November-December 1918], in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, no. 16/I, 2012, p. 253-264.

I was also co-editor of the volume in which were published the proceedings of the conference, including a text under my signature, at a prestigious European publisher¹³.

Social mobility is an omnipresent phenomenon, its amplitude determined by the degree of modernisation in the society under examination. The Romanians of Transylvania in the 1910s were far from the upper limits of mobility, but formed a social group that underwent renewal and diversification at the time.

In what follows, I will summarize the **section (b) (ii)** of the thesis, namely the one relating to the development plans of one's professional career, respectively the perspective for coordination of a research activity carried out by others.

The "Astra" Cultural Society implies the availability of a thematic and chronological framework that cannot be settled in one thesis. A promising direction of investigation could be a comparative study of "Astra", Matica Srpska and Matica Slovenska¹⁴.

In 2011, I inaugurated a personal program of research dedicated to a dual purpose. As first aim, I undertook for the first time in the Romanian historical research a complete socio-professional analysis on the group represented by the delegates to the Great National Assembly on 1 December 1918. The investigation process itself imposed a second goal: I considered that by its extent, the group could be considered a sample that would expand its relevance of the analysis of the Romanian elites in Transylvania at the end of the First World War.

I included the presentation of the project in this section of the thesis for several reasons. On the one hand, it is still ongoing. On the other hand, it can refine a methodology that would underpin other socio-professional approaches applied to representative samples: members of cultural institutions, economic enterprises (joint stock companies), etc.

The first issue that must be addressed is that of the sources. It is for the first time when a scientific project starts with a full investigation of the *Documents. The Great National Assembly convened at Alba Iulia on 1 December 1918* fund, six tomes preserved by the National Museum of Union in Alba Iulia. The source material envisioned by the project includes more than 30 periodicals of that time with political, cultural or economic content.

Benchmarks such as social background, education, profession, political affiliation will be **capitalized** in the proposed work depending on the occupational classification of the individuals. They will help expand the research on social mobility.

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¹³ Id., "Social Mobility in Transylvania at the End of the First World War", in *Economy and Society in Central and Eastern Europe. Territory, Populations, Consumption. Papers of the International Conference Held in Alba Iulia, April 25th-27th 2013*, Daniel Dumitran, Valer Moga eds. Wien, Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2013, p. 323-342.

¹⁴ National Archives, Sibiu County Service, "Astra" fund; Novi Sad (Serbia), Biblioteka Matice Srpske (Matica Srpska Library); Martin (Slovakia), Matica Slovenska Archives.