

French Opinions on the Specific Characteristics of the Banat Military Border

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SINCE THE Middle Ages, the Banat had had the status of a border province. The improvement of the military and defense system from the eastern border of the Habsburg Empire became a concern for the Imperial Court as the eastern frontier of the empire moved eastwards. The Banat military border was imposed for military reasons, which were caused, in turn, by the geopolitical and strategic situation of the area, in the context in which the border with Turkey on the Danube was stabilized. To this was added the effectiveness of the confinity system, already verified on the Croatian, Slavonic and Transylvanian border. It subsisted from its own resources, providing the empire with a considerable armed force and an efficient guarding of the frontiers. The organization of the Banat military border fit within the imperial court's broader plan to ensure the guarding of the borders with the Porte, from the Adriatic to Bukovina,¹ at a time of recoil for the Reconquista.

The organization of the Banat border was decided in 1764, being inaugurated through the establishment of a Serbian and a German regiment.² The militarization of the border was ordered in 1768 and it started under the leadership of Lieutenant colonel Papila.³ Its organization was done in several stages between 1769 and 1773, being completed in 1774, when the Romanian-Illyrian Regiment was set up.⁴

In the context of the expansion of Europe and the incorporation of its Oriental space in the 18th century, the West developed a particular interest in these territories of Eastern Europe, as illustrated by the large number of travelers crossing the area and producing valuable travel reports. Beyond the curiosity and exoticism specific to the time, the journeys were occasioned by the necessity for acquiring better knowledge of the region from the economic, political, military, ethnic and religious perspectives, as well as in terms of the culture and civilization of the nations that inhabited it.⁵

To this context belonged the interests of the French Oriental policy in acquiring documentation on Oriental Europe⁶ and the Austrian military confines of the Banat, which were visited by a large number of travelers or journalists who left travel descriptions of the Banat and the Banat military border. Notable among the latter were Marshal

Marmont, the Duke of Ragusa, Baron d'Hausser, Anatol Demidoff, De Gerando, A. de Carlovitz, H. Desprez, G. Perrot, the last ones publishing their travel accounts in the *Revue des deux mondes*.

The Banat was a center of interest for the French Oriental policy. Given its geographical position at the crossroads of important European communication routes, along the main fluvial continental artery, the Banat hosted several representatives of France, travelers, diplomats, and secret agents. In the late 18th century and early 19th century, there were attested Roger de Damas in Mehadia, on 26 May 1790, Auguste de Lagarde in 1812, and Madame de Reinhard,⁷ the wife of the famous French diplomat Roger de Damas, who left an interesting description of Orșova and of the Austro-Turkish War, which had ended not long ago.⁸

During the Revolution and the Napoleonic period, the Banat was a region through which several French envoys dispatched in different directions passed, especially those appointed to Constantinople, Vidin and Persia. They all traveled across the territory of the Romanian-Illyrian Regiment. Nicolae Stoica accurately recorded the sojourns of diplomats crossing from one side or another, who stopped by the military frontier: on 1 January 1806, a deputation of Bonaparte's to the Turks and to Persia, coming from Vienna, passed through Mehadia; two Turkish envoys returning from Paris stopped in Orșova at Marcu Țenovič's place. One of them was Hristodor, a Romanian from Iași, now in service at Tsarigrad (Constantinople), with whom Nicolae Stoica conversed at length.⁹ The same chronicler recorded the passage of Ambassador Sebastiani and his wife to Constantinople, of Sardan.¹⁰

Given the special strategic position of the Banat at the intersection of communication routes, near insurgent Serbia and the rebel Pasvanoglu, the Danubian Principalities and the main access routes to Hungary or Transylvania, the French interest in this area increased proportionally with the crystallization of France's consistent Oriental policy. France closely watched the situation in Hungary, Pasvanoglu's uprising and his relations with insurrectionary Serbia, about which Nicolae Stoica provided interesting information. In view of the French-Ottoman alliance against Russia and in order to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, Sebastiani was sent to Constantinople as Ambassador of France. To maintain a possible political continuum between the French-controlled areas of Dalmatia, Travnie and Vidin, Meriage, the commander-adjutant from the French legation to Vienna, was sent on a mission to Vidin. Vidin was a highly strategic point by way of its geographic position and the role played by Pasvanoglu, who was a great admirer of Napoleon. Meriage reached Vidin on 20 February 1807, after a useful stay at Orșova, where he was the guest of the Pasha in the city, who introduced him to the rather uncertain atmosphere from Vidin, after Pasvanoglu's death. His report of 20 April 1808 conveys interesting data about the border guards in the Banat. In his view, the real force of the Serbian insurgents resided in the Austrian border militias, which supported them when needed and even furnished them with soldiers. Meriage also confirmed the Austrian interference in the Serbian revolution. According to him, the Serbian uprising had made rapid progress because it was supported by the Austrian border regiments. The French envoy gave a brief description of the border militias to the Foreign Minister, presenting them as military colonies consisting of Serbian, Slavonic and Romanian peasants, who were soldiers and farmers at the same time. Three of them—

Meriage wrote—were formed only of Romanians, two in Transylvania and one in the Banat. The Austrian military commander in the Banat provided the Serbian insurgents with arms and ammunition and, Meriage stated, “if need be, he makes entire squads cross only with the title of defectors.”¹¹ The Banat border guards’ participation in Austria’s campaigns against France allowed the French observers to become more familiar with the Banat border. The camps of French prisoners in the Banat offered the French the possibility of direct contact with the province and the border. Camps were organized at Petrovaradin, Osijek, Gradeška, Vršac, Timișoara, Ciacova, Freidorf and Sânnicolaul Mare. 875 prisoners were confined at Vršac, 2630 in Lugoj, 2195 at Ciacova, 6155 in Timișoara and 5660 in Sânnicolaul Mare. As for the officers, the situation was as follows: Vršac—320 (one general, 8 senior officers, 310 junior officers, one medical officer); in Lugoj—322 (one general, 14 senior officers, 305 junior officers, two medical officers); in Ciacova—322 (12 senior officers, 310 junior officers); in Timișoara—248 (3 generals, 16 senior officers, 226 junior officers, 3 medical officers); in Sânnicolaul Mare—91 (3 senior officers, 85 junior officers, 3 medical officers). The French prisoners were used for different toils of military or economic interest. The lack of labor was felt acutely by the military border, where almost all the men were away on campaign. On 30 October 1813, the Romanian-Illyrian Regiment asked the Banat Commander to provide them with French prisoners for agricultural works. Their repatriation began in 1814, continuing until 1815. Some remained in the Banat.¹² This allowed for good documentary sources on the Banat border to become accessible in France, as attested by the interest of the publicists in this subject until the abolition of the border regiments.

In 1837 several travelers who crossed the Banat territory left descriptions of the military border. The most pertinent observations belonged to a renowned character of the Napoleonic era, Marshal Marmont, who in 1834 made a trip to Hungary, Wallachia, Southern Russia, Turkey, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. The old Governor of the Illyrian Provinces, now Duke of Raguza, who had been in the service of the House of Habsburg for four years and was forced to leave France with the king after the events of July 1830, published his travel accounts in Brussels in 1837.¹³ This work registered a great bookselling success, having several editions published in French, German or Italian.¹⁴ During a scientific expedition devoted to the study of physical and geographical phenomena, the journey of the old Marshal of France was aimed at the purely military purpose of recording strategic elements, such as the natural and economic resources, the topography of the area, the relief, the state of the fortifications, the weapons, troops, and ways of access. The observations recorded by a Frenchman who was in the service of Austria shows the interest of the House of Habsburg in the south-east area of the continent, consistent with Austria’s Oriental policy. In another order of ideas, the remarks made by the Duke of Raguza were always related to the Oriental Question, to the possible Austrian-Turkish or Russian-Turkish conflicts. The author did not conceal the particular interest of the monarchy in its Oriental provinces—Hungary, Banat and Transylvania—full of future prospects, he said, given their immense wealth and because they “are intended to become the main grounds of power for the House of Austria.”¹⁵

During the journey, he stayed for a longer while on the territory of the Romanian-Illyrian Regiment, about which he wrote many pages, showing an interest in the mili-

tary border institution he had become familiar with when he was Governor of the Illyrian Provinces and when he had drawn the attention of Emperor Napoleon—for the first time, according to his testimony—to the simplicity and effectiveness of the military border institution. Most of his text on the Banat is an apology of the military border, written by one of the most knowledgeable foreign observers.

Marmont evinced a detailed knowledge of the organization of the border not only from first-hand observation, but also from the already existing literature on this topic. Until then, numerous regulations governing the military organization of the border had been enacted and Hitzinger's book had come out.¹⁶ The wealth of information about the specific organization of the border that Marmont provided can only be explained by this preliminary documentation. He made this apology of the institution as he was convinced that it had decisively contributed to higher levels of civilization and welfare amongst the local population: "I cannot but admire," he wrote, "the salutary effects produced by this regime, because one can see the level of welfare and prosperity of the population that was subjected to it."¹⁷ He was the first to emphasize for the Western public opinion the value and originality of this institution, often establishing analogies between the Austrian military border and the military colonies in Russia, a commonly circulated idea in French journalism. The chapter devoted to the border abounds in accurate and detailed information on the organization of the military border institution, on the mechanism of economic and social relations, as well as on the military, judicial and matrimonial organization or on that of the border guards' houses. He stressed the efficiency of the border system in relation to the frontline units, noting the large number of soldiers whose maintenance required limited material efforts. In this context, he upheld the old ideas of the enlightened monarchy regarding its own populationist policy and military outlook, which saw populationism as an opportunity of increasing the number of soldiers. In his description of the old Marshal of France, one can detect an admiration for the policy of the 18th-century enlightened monarchy, illustrated by his portrayal of Joseph II, about whom he wrote that he had crushed in the bud the revolution that had threatened Austria, as well as Europe, launching a series reforms, sometimes by violence, in order to prevent its collapse. Of similar value was the information about the impact of the Josephine reforms on the public life of the empire at that time, which continued to exert their influence in politics, confirming the emergence of the myth of Joseph II in the empire after his death: "A full presentation should be made, which this book cannot accomplish, so as to make Joseph II, as he was, known and to assess the influence he still has and that is exerted by his actions in Austria,"¹⁸ concluding, however, that "he lacked the warrior spirit."¹⁹

Marshal Marmont, the Duke of Ragusa, was undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable French observers of the military border, it is true, after four years in the service of Austria. Through the book he published in Brussels, he made known to the Western public a specific institution of the Habsburg Empire, with which he found analogies only in the Cossack colonies from southern Russia.²⁰

In the same year (1837), the Baron of Hausser wrote a less favorable description, not so much of the institution itself as of the level of civilization on the border, directly condemning the imbalance and incompatibility between the Western urban civilization model, to which he was accustomed, and the rural realities on the border.²¹

In 1840 Anatole Demidoff published a description of his journey from 1837, which provided him with an opportunity to showcase to the French public the “beautiful and wise organization of the military colonies on the Danube,”²² considered to be “a perpetual camp.” “The entire population,” Demidoff wrote, “forms a disciplined and organized army body, which, in turn, is responsible for working the land, raising livestock and defending the frontiers.”²³ In his opinion, “the colonies by the Danube” represented a serious argument in favor of making associations, achieving the “prosperity of the peoples” in the area and ensuring border security.²⁴ Auguste Raffet, the painter who made the album of drawings annexed to Demidoff’s description, left us the portrait of an old shepherd in the Banat, an old border guard and a soldier at Marengo in his youth.²⁵

In 1839, Jean Baptiste Morot traveled across the border territory of the Banat,²⁶ where, he noted, “everyone is a soldier.”²⁷ Unlike other French travelers who regarded favorably the border institution, Morot lamented the sad conditions of the border guards, advancing the idea that such situations had to be put an end to in Europe at that time. From the same liberal and anti-militarist perspective, A. de Gerando also wrote about the border. He was closer to the opinion of the ruling circles in Hungary, which did not approve of the military border system, as it was directly subjected to the House of Habsburg, having been removed from the jurisdiction of the Government from Pest. In 1850 he published in Paris a description of his 1841 journey to Transylvania, with echoes on the events of 1848, contesting the notion that progress had been made in the military regime. His observations on the military border were meant as a response to Marmont’s praises, about which he wrote that “he has presented them on a happy day”: “such a simple mechanism, which is not disputed, being unable to restrain his admiration for it, though one cannot speak of the wealth, prosperity or satisfaction of the peasants subjected to the military regime.”²⁸

For Edouard Thouvenel, who passed through the territory of the Banat Regiment at the same time, the Austrian military colonies were an effective means of covering the flanks of the empire without increasing the costs. In his opinion, the picture drawn by Marshal Marmont, the Duke of Ragusa, was too laudatory. Thouvenel described the poverty of the autochthonous population, as well as the soil fertility, the lack of funds for increasing productivity, and contested the institutions he presented, questioning the merits Marmont had attributed to the increasing prosperity of the local population. He acknowledged, however, that the system contained the seeds of future social improvements, that hope existed, but, Thouvenel added, for now, it did not deserve praise. In military terms, however, the French publicist claimed that “Austria has no better troops than these frontier guards.”²⁹

In 1846, Mrs. A. de Carlovitz,³⁰ traveling across the border, noticed, above all, the people in the militarized region, and not so much the institution as such, leaving interesting ethnographic observations on their habits, dances and costumes.

One of the most lucid French analysts of the Austrian military border, given the objectivity of his judgments and the far wider perspective from which he conducted his analysis, was the well-known publicist H. Desprez, an excellent connoisseur of the Oriental problems, whose reflections on the military colonies came out in 1847,³¹ on the eve of the 1848 Revolution, having been occasioned by the publication of Carl von Pidoli’s book.³²

The comparison he made between the Russian and the Austrian military colonies had practical reasons, suggesting examples and models for studying the problems engendered by the colonization of France's African military frontier. The two models could provide few lessons, but he undertook a comparative analysis of the two institutions "to prevent errors or to enlighten us through some similarities that are more apparent than real."³³

According to Desprez, the Austrian and the Russian military colonies were aimed at distinct purposes. Austria had colonized its border to be able to defend itself against Turkish aggression. Russia had established colonies to strengthen its military system, without great expense and income. The institution of the Russian military colonies was initiated by Tsar Peter the Great, who had designed the defense system of the southern and eastern frontiers against the Turks and the Tatars, organizing the Cossacks from Kuban. This effort was continued by Catherine II, who organized the Zaporozhian Cossacks, and was completed by Emperor Alexander, who, in 1814, appreciated the value of the Austrian military colonies, distinguished in all of Austria's wars against France.³⁴

Another interesting observation made Desprez concerns the West's political rather than economic interest in the military colonies of the two empires. In his opinion, at the beginning of the 18th century, the Austrian colonies had a regular existence, before official confirmation. In this respect, he invoked the example of the Szeklers who, in the Middle Ages, had fulfilled special border defense functions, benefiting from certain privileges. In a historical perspective, according to Desprez, the Austrian colonies seemed to have been the work of necessity rather than deliberation. After the initial destination of the colonies had changed with the shifting of the threat of aggression in Europe, the Turks ceased to be feared, and the Austrian colonies remained an economical means of army recruitment, serving, in this regard, as a model for the Russian colonies. Even though Russia was inspired by the experience of the Austrian colonies, the Russian colonies did not represent a mere imitation of the Austrian military confines, since there were major differences between the administrative and legislative organization of the two institutions, generated by the distinct objectives they evinced.³⁵

Describing the military provinces of Austria and the geographical differences that existed between them, in relation to the political organization of the civil territories, the French journalist remarked the ethnic and confessional diversity of the Austrian border and the fact that the border population did not participate in the constitutional life of the civil provinces. The analysis of the economic and social mechanisms revealed, for Desprez, the feudal spirit that dominated the organization of the institution, in other words, the spirit of obedience, not that of serfdom, adapted, of course, to the demands of the military institution. The mark of feudalism was more evident, in the author's opinion, in the Romanian and Szekler regiments from Transylvania. The interest in all the economic and social problems, also illustrated by the details provided on these issues, was rooted in a democratic, liberal, anti-feudal conception, from the standpoint of which he condemned especially the anachronistic, feudal border system, even if he honestly admitted the positive effects of the military organization on the local population. An undissimulated free spirit, he attributed the progress of the border in relation to that of the civilian population, to a legislation that he deemed to be "salutary and progressive." He also noted the unequal development of the regiments, in Transylvania,

for example, in relation to those from Sirmiu, also taking into account the political status of the Romanians in Transylvania and of the Transylvanian serfs: “The great bondage and unprecedented dereliction pressing on the Romanian race in Transylvania spreads its influence on the Romanian regiments and even on the Szekler regiments, being placed lower than these among the agricultural classes of the principalities.”³³⁶

Unusual amongst the French observers’ accounts is H. Desprez’s analysis about the political and national orientation of the regiments. Talking about the close national and confessional link uniting the population of the regiments to the nations to which they belonged, the French publicist said that “the political movement came up within the military colonies, imposing a systematic direction to the national feeling,”³³⁷ in his opinion. He concluded with a very important statement for the year in which it was made, contending that at that time, the regiments represented a strong support for the nationality movements: “The three races,” Desprez wrote, “the Illyrians, the Romanians and the Hungarians, who also formed three very distinct camps, eagerly competed in debating political issues, to attach their particular causes to the regiments they represented and the success answered their efforts...”³³⁸

In 1847, the French publicist pointed out the phenomenon of the guards’ political involvement in the battles of nationality and democracy, “Nationality, legality, they care much about these issues,” Desprez commented, adding that “the Austrian military colonies tend to render themselves as national guards of Illyrianism, Magyarism and Romanianism,”³³⁹ which the 1848 Revolution would shortly thereafter confirm.

Despite their similar status, the regiments were not solidary and presented the same conflicts of nationality that also affected those respective ethnic groups. With remarkable insight, the author anticipated the events of 1848, writing: “The rather obvious community of interests will undoubtedly make the Illyrians align themselves with the Romanians to crush the pretenses of Magyarism,”³⁴⁰ expressing again the hope that if the Hungarians adopted a more conciliatory policy, “enmity will disappear, just like the causes that engendered it.”³⁴¹ The end of the study, which was very well informed and contained political analyses of remarkable objectivity and clarity, provided him with the opportunity to state the role of the Austrian and the Russian military colonies in the policy of two states, starting from the assumption that they accounted for a third of their military force. Evoking the Austro-Russian conflict for supremacy in South-Eastern Europe and the Russian expansion progress, the French publicist made a series of considerations on the directions of Austrian foreign policy, to which the territorial status quo and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire were useful.

In a pragmatic spirit, attempting to decipher models or examples for France in the experience of these colonies, the author found only one possibility of similitudes—the necessity to protect the frontiers, “but this resemblance . . . would disappear itself if it were considered in light of the means and conditions of an analogous institution for our conquest in Africa.”³⁴²

In disagreement with the points made by Marmont or Desprez later, in 1869, around the time of the dissolution of the border, George Perrot discussed, in *Revue des Deux Mondes*,⁴³ the same matter from a standpoint that was favorable to the dualist Austrian-Hungarian regime and to the policy of the Hungarian government, an opponent of

the frontier institution. Perrot's intervention was occasioned by the debate in the European press on the projects for the dissolution of the regiments. The central idea of the study was suggested by its title: *The Austria of Yesteryear*. The military borders and their laws were seen as the anachronism of a viable military system in an Austria of yore, and not the one at that time. The dismantling of several regiments after the 1848 Revolution was the beginning of a process, according to the author, and the first concession made by the monarchy on the border issue, to be continued in the next stage. Under the pressure of the public opinion and the debates of the provincial diets, the process was irreversible at that time: "After the generation in question disappears, the colonies of soldiers will only be a historical memory that folk poetry will perpetuate for a long time on the banks of the Cerna, the Sava and the Danube, while scholars will study the singularity of this organization with curiosity."⁴⁴

Based on direct observations made on the borders, from the Adriatic Sea to Transylvania and on the study of literature on this topic, of which he mentioned the work of M. Utiesenovici, published in Vienna in 1861,⁴⁵ G. Perrot upheld several very interesting ideas on the history and organization of the military border institution. The first precious observation was idea that the border army was one of the most effective tools of Austria's resistance against Ottoman expansion after the disappearance of Hungary. Second came the conclusion that the border institution had not been created all at once, that it still held on, that it had been created in stages, through the efforts of the Austrian commanders. This was a reality before it was officially established, being perfected over time. Serving directly the interests of the Austrian sovereigns, they encouraged the organization of the frontiers, despite opposition from the authorities in the neighboring provinces. According to Perrot, the Peace of Karlovitz was decisive in establishing the frontier system. After the stabilization of the Austrian-Turkish borders, "the frontier regime exists in its essential parts."⁴⁶

The study also mentions the conflict triggered between the Hungarian civil authorities and the military administration. In this dispute, which marked the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, the French publicist supported the viewpoint of the Hungarian political circles, lamenting the removal of the Hungarian authorities' control over the militarized territory. In his view, the militarized system was incompatible with the freedom of opinion existing in the counties. His opinions stemmed from an anti-feudal democratic conception. Convinced that the economic and social mechanisms from the borders bore the seal of feudalism, with the mention that the state was the sole senior on the borders, the author admitted that there were no seignorial rights or nobiliary privileges in the border region, that the peasant soldiers' status was better than that of the indentured peasants in the civil provinces. The reforms Vienna undertook in 1807 and 1850 to square the ownership regime from the border territories with the new realities in the civil provinces, especially after 1848, were only half measures, which attempted to perpetuate an outdated economic and social system. The legislation from the border regions was, in Perrot's opinion, an adaptation of the military institution to the traditions of the Slavic community and the frontier family or home institution. These were considered anachronistic in 1869, in full process of dissolution, being called cooperative societies, a sort of patriarchal communism reminiscent of the

old clan or gens communities. The emancipation of the serfs after 1848 accelerated the erosion of the system, which could only subsist in a few territories inhabited by the Slavic population. During the period of serfdom, the regime was preferred because it provided better conditions for the peasant soldiers compared to the serfs in the civil provinces, but, Perrot noted, “since access to property was launched, they started to want it, full and complete, in other words, personal, individual.”⁴⁷

Even if he admitted the military efficiency of the border system and the very low maintenance costs, the author exaggerated certain negative aspects found in the border areas: the lack of civilization, ignorance, superstition, immorality, the incapacity of the national languages to create culture: he inferred all these from the manner of existence of the guards under arms. The negative effects of the anachronistic system became more apparent and the populations from the border areas, Perrot contended, began to perceive their condition as outcasts of the empire. The conclusion of the study advocated the dismantling of the border system, because there were one million people “in a sort of bondage outside the movement of progress and freedom.”⁴⁸

The French observers noted an image of the border which ranged from admiration and apology to an anti-feudal and anti-militaristic spirit. We have seen that noting the virtues of the institution in economic and military terms, many observers refused to acknowledge its merits on the ground of progress and civilization, where, in our opinion, more was done than in the civil province, at least prior to 1848.

The image the French observers depicted of the Austrian military border represented an example of the manner in which the institution was perceived in Western Europe, at different levels of culture, of political or military education, providing an alternative to the image proposed by the older or more recent historiography. □

Translated into English by CARMEN-VERONICA BORBELY

Notes

1. Bujor Surdu, “Înființarea graniței militare bănățene descrisă de un martor ocular,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj* 4 (1961): 258; see also A. Dolga, “Condițiile înființării regimentelor grănicerești în Banat,” *Studii de istorie a Banatului* 4 (1976): 45–46.
2. Antoniu Marchescu, *Grănicerii bănățeni și comunitatea de avere (Contribuții istorice și juridice)* (Caransebeș, 1941), 72.
3. *Ibid.*, 77.
4. *Ibid.*, 82.
5. Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, second revised edition, vol. I–IV (Bucharest, 1928–1929); Iorga, *Les voyageurs français dans l’Orient européen*, Paris, 1928.
6. V. V. Hanes, *Formarea opiniei franceze asupra României în secolul al XIX-lea* (Bucharest, 1929), 87. From among a long list of French travellers, mention should be made of Xavier Marmier, Eugene Poujade, Saint Marc Girardin, Thouvenel, Auguste Lagarde, Hacquet, M-me Reinhard, De Gerando, Roger de Damas, Dominique Guillaume, Hommaire de Hell, A. M. Perrot, and Ch. Peyssonel.
7. Iorga, *Istoria*, vol. III, 53.

8. Ibid., vol. II, 286.
9. Nicolae Stoica de Hațeg, *Cronica Banatului*, second edition (Timișoara, 1981), 301–303.
10. Ibid., 306.
11. A. Boppe, “La mission de l’adjutant-comandant Meriage a Widin (1807-1809),” *Annales de l’Ecole libre des sciences politique* 1 (1886): 264-283.
12. I. Georgescu, “Les prisonniers français dans les camps du sud-est de l’Europe au temps des guerres de l’Autriche avec la France,” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 15, 3 (1976): 509–531.
13. *Voyage de M. le Maréchal, Duc de Raguse en Hongrie, en Transylvanie, dans la Russie meridionale en Crimée et sur le bords de la Mer d’Azoff a Constantinople et sur quelques parties de l’Assie Mineure : en Syrie, en Palestine et en Egypt*, vol. I–IV (Bruxelles, 1837) (*Voyage*)
14. Petru Florea, “Ducele de Ragusa, călător prin Banat și Transilvania în 1834,” *Academia Română. Memoriile secției de științe istorice* (1980): 123–162.
15. *Voyage*, vol. I, 73.
16. Hietzinger, *Statistik der Militärgränze des österreichischen Kaiserthums* (Wien, 1817).
17. *Voyage*, vol. I, 78.
18. Ibid., 87.
19. Ibid., 86.
20. Ibid., 68.
21. *Alpes et Danube, on voyage en Suisse, Styrie, Hongrie et Transylvanie par le baron d’Hausser* (Paris: Dupont, 1837). Vezi și Ernest Armeanca, “Peregrinările baronului d’Hausser prin Banat și Transilvania în 1831,” *Gând românesc* 3 (1935): 235–242.
22. *Voyage dans la Russie meridionale et la Crimée par la Hongrie, al Valachie et la Moldavie, executée en 1837 par M. Anatole de Demidoff. Edition illustrée de soixante-quatre dessins par Raffet. Dedié a S.M. Nicolas I^{er} Empereur de toutes les Russie* (Paris, 1840) 612. On Demidoff see also V. Bugariu, “Călătoria lui Demidoff în Banat,” *Analele Banatului* 3, 4 (1930); M. Kogălniceanu, “D. A. Demidoff în Banat, Valahia și Moldavia,” *Dacia literară* (1840): 140–196; (1859): 100–139.
23. V. Bugariu, “Călătoria.”
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Jean Baptiste Morot, *Journal de voyage de Paris a Jerusalem, 1839 et 1840* (Paris, 1869). See also Zaharia Macovei, “Un călător de acum o sută de ani,” *Revista istorică* 25, 79 (1939): 224–239; Nicolae Iorga, “Încă un călător în țările noastre pe vremea pe vremea Regulamentului Organic,” *Revista istorică* 28, 1–2 (1942): 18 sq.
27. Macovei, “Un călător,” 228.
28. A. de Gerando, *La Transylvanie et ses habitants*, vol. II (Paris, 1850), 312. On Gerando, see Christine Adriaenssen, *Auguste de Gerando, Ein französischer Zenge der ungarischen Reformära (1819–1849)* (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York, Paris, 1991).
29. *La Hongrie et la Valachie (Souvenirs de voyage et notices historique) par M. Edouard Thouvenel* (Paris, 1840) cap. IV.
30. Iorga, *Istoria*, vol. III, 256–257.
31. H. Desprez, “De la colonisation militaire en Autriche et en Russie,” *Revue des deux mondes* 17, 19 (1847): 722–735.
32. Carol Freiherrn v. Pidoli zu Quintenbach, *Einige worte über die Russischen militär-kolonien im vergleiche mit der K.-Kösterreichischen militär- Grenze und mit allgemeiner Betrachtungen darüber* (Wien, 1847).
33. H. Desprez, “Colonisation,” 724.
34. Ibid., 725.

35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 728.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 729.
40. Ibid..
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 735.
43. George Perrot, "L'Autriche d'autre fois. Les confins militaires et leur législation," *Revue de deux mondes* 39, 84 (1869): 37–70.
44. Ibid., 39.
45. Die Militärgränze und die Verfassung eine Studie über den Urspeung und das Wesen der Militärgränz Institution und die Stellung derselben zur Landesverfassung.
46. G. Perrot, "L'Autriche," 45.
47. Ibid., 56.
48. Ibid., 70.

Abstract

French Opinions on the Specific Characteristics of the Banat Military Border

This study presents several French opinions on the specific characteristics of the military border where the Romanian-Illyrian Border Regiment no. 13 was stationed. The organization of the border drew the attention of the French observers who journeyed through the Banat: travelers, diplomats and army members whose interest lay in the military border institution, which they compared with the military colonies of the Cossacks in southern Russia.

The French observers' opinions are divided between, on the one hand, special praises for the effectiveness of this institution, its very low costs and its ability to maintain a significant troop contingent during times of war or for the defense of the border and, on the other hand, the severe criticism, after the 1848 Revolution, of its anachronistic system, considered to be a perpetuation of the feudal regime.

Keywords

Romanian-Illyrian Border Regiment no. 13, the Banat military border, border guards, French observers, French journalists