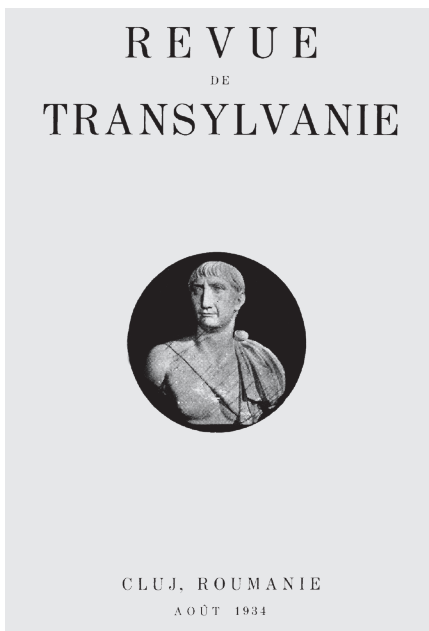


# History in the Service of the Nation

## The Role of History in Interwar Transylvania

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**T**HIS YEAR'S 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coronation of Ferdinand I and Marie as sovereigns of all Romanians on 15 October 1922 is a good opportunity to reflect on the huge obstacles and challenges faced by those who made Greater Romania. The Union of 1918 was only the beginning of a long and complicated process of integration, concerning not only political, economic and administrative aspects, but also those relating to the very soul of the nation. As sociologist Virgil I. Bărbat stated, the Romanians were, in the first years of their existence within the new borders, “a people who has achieved a physical union, but who still stands with scattered thoughts, without a deep understanding of the realities that must be handled and with its pride still numbed.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, this veritable nation-building project

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was carried out in an environment difficult from all points of view: the country, like the rest of the continent, was ravaged by war, to which was added, in the case of Transylvania, the intense and relentless hostility of the Hungarians.

The achievement of Greater Romania completely overturned the balance of power in Transylvania, putting an end to Hungarian rule in a province where the Hungarian population was a minority (according to the 1910 census, 53.8% of the population of the province were Romanians, 10.7% Germans, and 31.6% Hungarians). The latter, however, perceived the inclusion of Transylvania into Romania as a collective trauma, as they felt the economic and political power was rightfully theirs, because of their self-assumed superiority, given by their belonging to the Hungarian nation.<sup>2</sup> Therefore they constantly protested against the union by all means: they disseminated, through books and magazines, alleged arguments against the rights of the Romanians over Transylvania; they systematically questioned the continuing presence of the Romanians in the Carpathian-Danube area, their unity, or their numerical superiority in Transylvania; they made great efforts to present the Romanians as an intellectually and culturally inferior nation, not capable of notable scientific and artistic achievements and lacking the resources to manage a complex situation, such as that posed by the numerous minorities in the new Romanian state.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, history played a very important role during the interwar period. It was simultaneously a field of scientific research, an educational discipline, a weapon against the detractors of the Romanians, and an instrument of national construction. In this paper, I highlight the role of history as revealed by the Romanian scientific journals published in Transylvania at that time, especially *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* (Yearbook of the Institute of National History), *Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice* (Yearbook of the Institute of Classical Studies), *Revue de Transylvanie*, *Dacoromania*, *Anuarul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice: Secția pentru Transilvania* (Yearbook of the Commission for Historical Monuments: Section for Transylvania), *Dacia istorică: Studii și cercetări* (Historical Dacia: Studies and Researches).

*Yearbook of the Institute of National History* appeared in 1921–1945, as the journal of the institute of the same name that functioned within the University of Cluj; edited by Ioan Lupaș and Alexandru Lapedatu, the yearbook was intended to publish primarily the results of the research activity in the institute, but was also open to external contributors.

*Yearbook of the Institute of Classical Studies* was the journal of the Institute of Classical Studies, founded in 1919 at the initiative of Vasile Pârvan, within the University of Cluj; the yearbook published over 100 studies on classical philology, ancient philosophy, ancient history, archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy,

onomastics, as well as documentary restitutions from Latin and Greek, archaeological reports, bibliographical reports and critical book reviews.

*Revue de Transylvanie* was one of the most prestigious Romanian historical journals of the interwar period. Gathering around it great names of Romanian historiography, under the direction of Silviu Dragomir, the journal arose from the need of an elite to present objectively, on the basis of scientific arguments, certain issues pertaining to Transylvanian history. The journal appeared between 1934 and 1944, at first under the auspices of the ASTRA (Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People), then as a periodical of the Center for Studies and Research on Transylvania established at the University of Cluj–Sibiu in 1942. The studies published in the journal covered numerous and varied subjects pertaining to history, historical demography, cultural history, ethnography, linguistics, etc., thus having a strong interdisciplinary character.

*Dacoromania* is one of the most prestigious Romanian scientific journals. Founded in 1920 by Sextil Pușcariu as the journal of the Museum of the Romanian Language at the University of Cluj, it was, in its first decades of existence, the expression of the excellent activity of the Cluj school of linguistics (the first series covering the period 1920–1948). Among the authors were Sextil Pușcariu, Vasile Bogrea, Nicolae Drăganu, Theodor Capidan, George Giuglea, Constantin Lacea, Ștefan Pașca, Ion Mușlea, Emil Petrovici, Sever Pop, D. Popovici, Ion Breazu, Dimitrie Macrea, Al. Procopovici. The historical articles published in the journal made an important contribution to a better knowledge of some linguistic or literary subjects that cannot be investigated without reference to the past.

*The Yearbook of the Commission for Historical Monuments: Section for Transylvania* (1926–1938) is dedicated to archaeological research in Transylvania as well as to the numerous problems raised by the need to preserve the ancient architectural heritage of this province. Most of the papers focused on archaeology, ancient history and art history. At the same time, the journal was intended to be more than just a vehicle for scientific information. In the introduction to the first issue, authored by Em. Panaitescu and entitled “Problems and Archaeological Methods in Upper Dacia,” the need for a concerted, team effort for the development of Romanian historical research is stressed: “Individual scientific work and dedication are not enough. A whole generation of young scholars must be raised in the spirit of archaeological enthusiasm and passion.”<sup>24</sup>

The journal *Historical Dacia* (Cluj, 1937–1938) is entirely the product of a private initiative, being founded, and mostly written, by Ion Iosif Șchiopul (b. Reghin, 1876–d. Bucharest, 1946), writer, journalist, translator and historian,

and a deputy at the Alba Iulia Great National Assembly. The journal was primarily dedicated to the analysis of documentary sources referring mainly to the history of Transylvania from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The author pursued two major objectives: on the one hand, to fight against the theories promoted by Hungarian and Saxon historians, who questioned the continuity of the Romanians in the Carpathian-Danube area; on the other hand, to provide guidelines for working with historical documents.

**T**HE STUDIES and investigations on Romanian history were carried out, in the interwar period in Transylvania, mainly within the University of Cluj, founded on 12 September 1919 through a decree issued by King Ferdinand I, which sanctioned the transformation of the Royal Hungarian University Francis Joseph into a Romanian university on 1 October 1919. The Hungarian professors refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the king of Romania, left Cluj and took refuge in Szeged, where they founded a university intended to be a continuation of the one in Cluj.<sup>5</sup>

In the first years after the war, the University of Cluj faced huge challenges in terms of material endowment and recruitment of the teaching staff. The new institution needed buildings for its museums, seminaries and clinics, dormitories for students, books and materials in Romanian, in a context where the available funds were woefully insufficient.<sup>6</sup> The Institute of National History faced the same problems, plagued by the lack of resources for its offices, library and publications. The funds from the Ministry of Education were too small for their needs, so regular appeals were made to private donors. The activities pertaining to a scientific journal, such as reviews of historical and cultural books and publications, were difficult to carry out due to the lack of access to them: in the first years of operation, the library of the University of Cluj was not yet entitled to automatically receive all publications, as was the case with those in the Old Kingdom. Even when the books were available, the time of the specialists willing to review them was always limited, due to their numerous responsibilities. Added to this were the technical difficulties encountered by the printing houses in Transylvania, which meant that publications came out late or with errors.<sup>7</sup>

Another problem was the quality of the new students enrolled at the university. They had gone to high school under wartime conditions and therefore had major gaps in their education. In addition, some were graduates of Hungarian high schools, lacking basic knowledge of the Romanian language and the history and geography of Transylvania and Romania. “In these high schools our youth received an exclusive, intolerant, brutal education, incompatible with our nature”—Rector Iacob Iacobovici bitterly observed at the beginning of the 1922–1923 academic year. The university’s management made great efforts to

ensure a high level of excellence in the teaching and scientific research carried out there. These efforts were inspired, on the one hand, by the conviction that the Romanian people in Transylvania were capable of the same achievements as the Western nations; on the other hand, the Romanian elite felt the need to demonstrate to the whole world that the Romanian nation was in no way inferior to the Hungarian one, as some Hungarian historians claimed. At the same time, however, the university was given an essential role in fostering and conveying solid moral values, necessary for the health and progress of a nation:

*The university is not a factory of degrees, which ensure an easy life for their holders. The university is rather a school of the soul, it lifts man up to where he belongs.*

*It is called upon to guide the Romanian people along the right, great and uplifting path of the human ideal.<sup>8</sup>*

The materials published in the *Yearbook of the Institute of National History* fully embody these ideas. The journal was intended to be a place where original studies and research of the highest quality could be published, contributing to the progress of national historiography, especially that relating to the Romanians in former Hungary. The editors of the yearbook were aware that Romanian historical research was lagging behind the Western one, due to the unfavorable conditions for the Romanian scientific and cultural life under Hungarian rule. For this reason, they encouraged the training of competent, serious and dedicated young people with aptitudes for historical research, meant to contribute to the development of Romanian historical sciences.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the popularization of history among the masses was encouraged, through festivities or the celebration of places with rich historical significance. The recourse to heroic models of the past was intended to stimulate “the admirable forces of regeneration that lie in the soul of the Romanian people.”<sup>10</sup>

Researching the past of a nation was considered instructive and necessary not only from the point of view of pure science; it was seen as a duty to oneself, to the past and to “the very being of our nation,” because the past of a people was considered “a protective shrine of the sacred fire.” Good knowledge of the past can provide solutions and clarifications for the problems of the present. The activity of the present was considered productive and efficient only when it was based on the past, capitalizing on its experiences and evolution. For this reason, historical education and research could not be limited to the transmission of knowledge, but should also aim to awaken a sustained interest in the knowledge of the past. Much of the information acquired was inevitably doomed to oblivion; a genuine and passionate interest in history could instead last for a lifetime. “Let us lack neither patience, nor diligence, nor prudence, nor boldness!”

—urged Ioan Lupaş in the first issue of the yearbook. “For only with their help will we be able to overcome all hardships and turn national history into one of the levers for making our people aware of their value, dignity and destiny.”<sup>11</sup>

The past, therefore, was completely useless if those who studied it “did not succeed in extracting from it lessons, an inspiration for courage, discipline, principles with which the researchers of the past were, in turn, indebted to their nation.”<sup>12</sup>

During the interwar period, history was also considered an important tool in defending the interests of the Romanian nation. In the particular case of Transylvania, this province was for many years somewhat of a besieged fortress. Although its inclusion in Greater Romania was a *fait accompli*, Hungarian historians, vigorously embracing the revisionist perspective, orchestrated a veritable campaign to distort historical realities. Through numerous books and articles, many published abroad, they sought to dismantle the historical, demographic and legal arguments on which the Romanians’ rights over Transylvania were based. All the historical journals published in Transylvania during this period felt duty-bound to include articles exposing, with scientific arguments, the untruths disseminated by Hungarian historians.

Thus, for example, responding to these imperatives, many of the studies in the *Yearbook of the Institute of Classical Studies* (Cluj–Sibiu, five issues, 1932–1949) aimed to prove, with strong arguments, the permanent, uninterrupted existence of the Romanians in the Carpathian-Danube area. The knowledge of classical antiquity was put at the service of national interests, as Vasile Bogrea’s inspired words show: “Not classical antiquity in itself, for its own sake, but *antiquity for the present*, for the needs of the present and the future.” This conception was motivated by the importance of the legacy of antiquity, the Dacian-Roman roots, for the evolution of the Romanian people. This people, considered V. Bogrea,

*has faithfully preserved the substance of the Latin heritage, resisting foreign influences with the same elementary strength with which the pillars of the emperor’s bridge at Severin have resisted to this day against the waters that strike and pass over them; it represents, where it is found, twenty centuries of Latinity; it subsumes the entire Roman world of the East and continues, at the mouths of the Danube, the history and civilization of Rome; a people which, plagued by a thousand misfortunes and beset by a thousand dangers, has preserved itself as such only thanks to the Latin idea and the Christian faith.*<sup>13</sup>

In the same spirit, the journal *Historical Dacia* contains numerous articles that are veritable statements against the unfavorable or even denigrating theories against the Romanians of Transylvania, circulated by fellow Hungarian histo-



rians. One such example is the theory that the Hungarian names of most Transylvanian localities, together with the Romanian ones, show that the number of Hungarians was actually much higher than claimed by Romanian specialists. All these statements are polemical in character, combining the rigor of scientific reasoning with the passion of those convinced that their claims are based on irrefutable evidence.

In order to counter the offensive of Hungarian historians, especially abroad, a dedicated journal was established in 1934 in Cluj, addressed primarily to the Western public, to specialists interested in the Central-East European space: *Revue de Transylvanie*. Since its first issue, the journal embraced the goal of “educating readers in the West on various aspects in the life of an important province in the new Romania: Transylvania.” Although from a political point of view Transylvania was a part of the Romanian state, from a historical point of view this province had a singular profile, which the founders of the magazine wanted to make known to the West in a fair and unbiased manner. *Revue de Transylvanie* did not publish scholarly articles just for the sake of science; on the contrary, its contributors intended their studies to support the legitimate aspirations of the Romanians, the “oldest and most numerous population in Transylvania.” This aim was justified by the conviction that no form of international order had any chance of lasting in the future if it ignored the “natural rights of the Romanian nation.”<sup>14</sup> In order to ensure that the message of the journal reached its audience, 1,200 copies of each issue were distributed free of charge to specialists at home and abroad.

The studies published in the journal covered numerous and varied topics pertaining to history, historical demography, cultural history, ethnography, linguistics, etc., thus having a strong interdisciplinary character. More than 60 authors published in *Revue de Transylvanie*, such as Silviu Dragomir, George Sofronie, Ioachim Crăciun, Aurel Decei, Ioan Moga, Andrei Oțetea, P. P. Panaitescu, Ștefan Pascu, Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, D. Prodan, Virgil Vătășianu, and Th. Capidan. The journal also hosted a rich section of book reviews and editorial reports.

The journal was intended as an instrument for the dissemination of truthful information, based on scientific arguments, on sensitive issues related to Transylvanian history. One of these controversial issues was that of minorities. From this point of view, Transylvania had a unique position in the Romanian state, as it was home to numerous ethnic groups in addition to the Romanian majority: Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, etc. The status of minorities was used in a tendentious way by those who wanted to abolish the Treaty of Trianon, and who tried to convince the West that the Romanian authorities were incapable of properly managing the integration of minorities into the new state.<sup>15</sup>

*Revue de Transylvanie* sought to present, based on scientific documentation, various aspects of the history and existence of this important province, considered the “cradle” of the Romanian nation. The journal’s *raison d’être* was to clarify controversial issues for the benefit of the foreign public, which often had only incomplete or erroneous knowledge of Transylvania. Objectivity and the scientific foundation of any assertion were fundamental values assumed by the journal’s editors. In the fall of 1940, the journal was discontinued because of the war; it reappeared in 1943, published by the Center for Studies and Research on Transylvania at the University of Cluj–Sibiu; the journal also remained under the “high moral” aegis of the ASTRA, publishing the results of scientific research carried out at the Center in order to bring them to the attention of the Western public interested in this part of Europe. Published in times of great turmoil and conflict, the journal intended its scientific contributions to help find definitive, historically sound solutions to controversial issues that were stirring the political and social environment of the time; in addition, the journal aimed “to serve the cause of truth and justice.”<sup>16</sup>

The reasons that had required the establishment of such a militant journal remained valid throughout the interwar period. The very active and well financed Hungarian propaganda continued to systematically distort the truth about Transylvania’s historical, ethnic, geographical, linguistic and cultural past, spreading “fanciful theories” throughout Europe. It also claimed that the Romanian nation in Transylvania was not capable of contributing to the enrichment of humanity’s cultural heritage in the same way as the Hungarian people.<sup>17</sup> One of the favorite targets was the University of Cluj, rightly seen as the leading scientific and cultural center of the Romanians in Transylvania. Its detractors questioned the quality and competence of the teaching staff. In order to dismantle these false, insulting and unfair claims, Ioachim Crăciun compiled statistics comparing the scientific activity of the University of Cluj during the period when it was under Hungarian rule (1872–1919) to that carried out in the first decade after becoming a Romanian university. The figures clearly showed that the professors and researchers of the Romanian university were much more active, published many more studies in foreign languages, many more treatises and lectures, and received a lot more favorable reviews abroad than the professors and researchers of the Hungarian university.<sup>18</sup>

Many articles were designed to prove and support the historical, legal and demographic rights of the Romanians over Transylvania. Thus, for example, Sextil Pușcariu demonstrated the linguistic similarity of Transylvania with the entire Romanian territory:

*The political frontier crossed the peaks of the Carpathians. But this was never the dividing line between dialects, because it did not separate souls. Romanians on both*



*sides crossed the mountains constantly. The Carpathians have always been a reason for unity, the backbone of a Romanian people conscious of its unity.*<sup>19</sup>

Olimpiu Boitoș, describing the cultural progress in Transylvania from 1918 to 1940, presented the work of schools, cultural institutions, achievements in the arts, and the press. The author highlighted, thus, the contribution of the Romanians to a body of knowledge that went beyond state borders, affirming their desire to be part, on an equal footing, of the European scientific and cultural environment. In the author's view, the Union of 1918 acquired, beyond its national value, universal importance, because it allowed the enrichment of Europe's cultural heritage by unleashing the creative energies of the Romanians of Transylvania.<sup>20</sup> Ion Berciu, reviewing the archaeological discoveries made in Transylvania in 1942–1944, showed how they broadened the horizon of knowledge about the Romanian land and confirmed the realities of history through the “living proof of the brilliant spiritual life of the Dacians. They show us, amid the instability and pain of the present, the certainty of the past and the assurance of the future.”<sup>21</sup> Coriolan Petranu, for his part, described how art history was instrumentalized, in Transylvania, to serve political purposes. The role of the Transylvanian art historian was therefore very different from that of the Western specialist: the former could not enjoy the peace and serenity of the latter, because the analytical or synthetic study of the past had to be constantly interrupted by rectifications, denials, discussions or polemics with specialists from Budapest, in defense of the truth they distorted. The Romanian art historian thus found himself a permanent victim of these assaults and struggles. The author deplored the fact that the constant need to respond to these attacks diverted precious energies, which could have been much better used in scientific research:

*We have long made it clear that the purpose of the struggle, for our opponents, is not the discovery of scientific truth, but rather the political goal, sometimes hidden, most often openly stated, of confusing objective science . . . The renowned Hungarian historian M. Marczali has admitted . . . that during the war the Hungarian historiography lost its sense of justice.*<sup>22</sup>

All these examples are suggestive of the atmosphere in which historical research was conducted in the interwar period and of the militant character of historical writing, used to defend the national interests. The journal was complemented by a series of books published as part of the “Bibliotheca Rerum Transsilvaniae” collection, which aimed to provide foreigners with the necessary elements for a good knowledge and an accurate interpretation of the issues concerning Transylvania, issues which foreign interests and political passions often presented in a

partial and distorted way. Besides its scientific and documentary value, the “Bibliotheca Rerum Transsilvaniae” had “the character of a weapon in the national struggle for the despised rights of the Romanian people.”<sup>23</sup>

The idea of putting history and historical journals at the service of the nation in Transylvania was not limited to the University of Cluj. The journal *Arhiva someșană*, for example, published in Năsăud (1924–1940), set as its main objective to contribute “with our modest powers to the completion of the historical edifice of united Romania.”<sup>24</sup>

**A**NOTHER ROLE that history was invested with in the interwar period was that of an instrument for building and consolidating the character of the Romanian nation in Transylvania within the borders of united Romania. Among the professors at the university prevailed the belief that their duty was not limited to the classrooms alone. In spite of the fact that their teaching duties took up most of their time and effort, they were actively involved in society, through press articles, lectures, popular courses, all having to do with the history and culture of Transylvania. Their involvement was inspired by the conviction that knowledge of national history could help heal the wounds inflicted by the war on the fabric of society.<sup>25</sup> The research of history had, along with the strictly scientific aspects, also strong moral connotations. Therefore, its duty was not to merely transmit simple knowledge about the events of the past, but to provide moral education to present and future generations,

*enriching their spiritual life through the virtues revealed from the life and work of the immortal heroes, who by their faith, bravery, justice or holiness have become the best guides of the peoples on the path to perfection. In this way, the cult of the past is established as a factor of moral education, as a religion of humanity, perpetuating the mystical spiritual bond of past generations with those who live today and with those who are constantly preparing themselves for the mystery of the future, in order to guarantee the historical continuity of national development and human progress.*<sup>26</sup>

One of the most effective, beautiful and interesting ways of using history as a tool for educating the masses was the University Extension established at the University of Cluj in 1924,<sup>27</sup> with the following goals:

1. *To encourage the Romanian energy to manifest itself in all fields of life and foster confidence in the vitality and capability of our nation.*
2. *To bring about a spiritual unification by way of culture and through the free and intense circulation of values from all Romanian provinces.*

*3. To strengthen the idea of order and authority, and above all the idea of a Romanian national state and its social and cultural mission.*

*4. To ensure an objective debate on the main social, cultural and scientific trends of our time.<sup>28</sup>*

The Extension organized lectures on various topics, presented by university professors. In its six years of existence (1924–1930), 1,050 lectures were given in 52 towns in Transylvania on a wide variety of subjects. This success was due to the active involvement of local elites: school principals, directors of cultural associations, administrative authorities, etc. The positive impact of these conferences was acknowledged in many testimonials, published in newspapers or sent to the organizers as letters of appreciation. One such example is the letter addressed to the president of the Extension, Virgil I. Bărbat, by the president of the Blaj branch of the ASTRA, Ștefan Roșianu, where he thanked for the conferences delivered, among others, by V. Bogrea, G. Giuglea, and S. Pușcariu:

*These good missionaries will never be erased from the grateful hearts of the listeners.*

*At the same time we express the wish that God will help you to progress on the path of the apostolate you have begun, because, without the strong involvement of the good people, our souls will be broken and our country will fall apart.<sup>29</sup>*

The cultural history of Transylvania featured in about a third of all the conferences organized by the Extension, as shown by following titles of papers: S. Pușcariu, “The Romanian Character of our Language”; I. Lupaș, “Freedom and National Unity”; Gh. Giuglea, “Types of Heroes in Our Popular Ballads”; S. Dragomir, “Iancu’s Comrade, the Prefect Ioan Buteanu from Zarand”; V. Bogrea, “The Need for Classical Culture”; S. Dragomir, “N. Bălcescu and Avram Iancu”; I. Lupaș, “The Ideal of National Unity and the Process of Its Realization”; E. Panaitescu, “King Decebalus and the Romanians of the Someș Valley”; C. Diclescu, “The Beginnings of the Romanian People”; I. Paul, “Ion Creangă and the National Spirit in Literature”; V. Bogrea, “Language as a Mirror of Our Life”; O. Ghibu, “A Teacher from Banat a Century Ago: C. Diaconovici Loga”; Th. Capidan, “The Influence of the Romanians on the Slavs”; A. Lapedatu, “Old-time Patriots”; Th. Capidan, “Romanians in the Balkan Peninsula”; V. Ghidionescu, “Romanian Culture and the Unification of Its Elements”; Gh. Bogdan-Duică, “The Origins of Our Flag,” C. Marinescu, “The War of Independence”; D. Teodorescu, “The Country and the Power of the Dacians.”

These lectures reflect their authors’ belief in the inestimable contribution of history and culture to the shaping of a nation. Their stated intention was to cul-

tivate patriotism among the masses, a sense of pride and confidence in the value and superiority of Romanian culture, in the unity of the Romanian people. Another aim was to support the revival of the local cultural life; moreover, these conferences had the merit of bringing together members of the elite who were otherwise divided by political or confessional differences: “Our cultural action was the welcome and desired opportunity to unite all Romanian forces in an activity that rises above any dissension of a social, political or religious nature.”<sup>30</sup> More extraordinarily even, all this work was entirely voluntary and unpaid.

**T**HE ROMANIAN historiography of the interwar period has been the subject of many articles and books, which analyzed in detail its main characteristics, trends and achievements.<sup>31</sup> The aim of this paper is to highlight the set of values the historians of that time strove to convey along with the results of their scientific research. The interwar history journals are permeated by patriotism, manifested less in bombastic statements and much more in concrete actions. The representatives of interwar historiography were animated by a sense of duty to nation and country, by a sincere desire to give unconditionally of their knowledge, their time and their work; the results they achieved in scientific journals, in the classroom or in the agora prove that this attitude was genuine. Their work reminds us, in our age of so much focus on data and information, that it does matter what values animate a society, and that it is not wise to leave them to chance and ephemeral fashion. This journey through interwar historiography reminds us that we are heirs to strong moral values, which helped the generation of the Union successfully face hardships unimaginable to us today, and which have the potential to sustain, if we claim them, the resilience of the present generation in the face of various challenges.

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## Notes

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## Abstract

### History in the Service of the Nation: The Role of History in Interwar Transylvania

The achievement of Greater Romania was the beginning of a complex process of unification of territories very different from each other in many respects (administrative, political, legal, etc.). This process took place in an unfavorable geopolitical and economic context, dominated by the consequences of the war and of the Treaty of Trianon. Transylvania’s position was particularly difficult, as a territory claimed by both Romanians and Hungarians. Throughout the interwar period, the Romanian elite had to defend the Romanian rights over Transylvania in response to Hungarian revisionist efforts. The recourse to history provided most of these arguments. This article examines how history was used as a tool both to counteract revisionist attacks and to strengthen the sense of belonging to the Romanian nation. The main source was the Romanian historical journals of the interwar period.

## Keywords

Transylvania, interwar period, history, historical journals, revisionism, nationalism