
P A R A D I G M S

Romanian Historiography of the 19th and of the First Half of the 20th Century about Medieval Banat

TIBERIU CIOBANU

History was a fundamental path to knowledge, but also a means of legitimating the collective identity.

Tiberiu Ciobanu

Associate professor with the Department of History of the Western University of Timișoara and with the Department of Humanities of Ioan Slavici University of Timișoara. Author, among others, of the vols. **Domnitori români mai puțin cunoscuți. Less Known Romanian Voivodes** (2005), **Voievozi și domnitori români (sec. XIV–XVI)** (Romanian voivodes and princes, 14th–16th centuries) (2006).

THE BANAT historiography between 1800 and 1950 approached the Middle Ages with interest and concern, first for knowledge in general—man is an inquisitive being, eager to know more and more—, then for the discovery of the origins, for legitimating various rights, and for the need to make comparisons with others. It was both an erudite and a militant historiography. It recorded and reconstructed, but it also demonstrated and justified. It did not differ much from the progress of historiographical writing in general, and despite its local character it produced memorable pages, worthy of any major historiographical school.

Nevertheless, because of the restrictions imposed by some local imperatives, it did not always become integrated, in a symphonic and synchronic manner, in the great trends of national and continental historical writing. Even so, the historical works about the medieval and pre-modern Banat, about

different aspects of those times and places, show, with some temporary lack of synchronization, an integration into the general evolution of world and European spirituality. Around 1800, the late Enlightenment and the militant pre-Romantic ideas, with their echoes of national identity, hopes for emancipation and condemnation of the foreign dominations, clearly penetrated. A spirit of national pride was awakened, seeking the illustrious origins and assuming the personalities of the past. This spirit was perfectly represented by Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg. This “chronicler of the Banat” was one of the distributors of *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dacia* (The history of the beginning of the Romanians in Dacia, 1812) by Petru Maior. Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg did not use Maior’s above-mentioned work as his source for *Cronica Banatului* (A chronicle of Banat) (written between 1826 and 1827), but provided a personal and local perspective on the beginnings of the historiography of the province. That is why he based his documentation on Francesco Grisellini’s history of Banat, published in German in Vienna in 1780. From this book we can see how, with the passing of time, a Banat historiographical vision crystallized, having its own, distinct track, as the history of this land has its own highly individual character. Unfortunately, Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg, whose works remained in manuscript form, did not leave the mark of his great personality on the development of Banat historical culture.

By reading *Cronica Banatului*, we understand that the author did not provide a detached presentation of his sources. On the contrary, he showed a profound implication, whenever the sources referred to historical figures or important events from the past. This is explicable if we take into account the specificity of the central and East European Enlightenment, employed in the spirit of the national ideals of the peoples living in the area. Moreover, in Central Europe, the first early Romantic impulses coming from the German space oriented historical writing towards an exultation of the peoples and an exaggerated emphasis on national specificity. In spite of the multi-ethnic Austrian milieu and the Orthodox traditions, the Romanian scholars of Banat warmly lingered over the national past, feeling proud of their origins. So did Stoica of Hațeg, eager to transmit this feeling to his readers and to educate the youngsters in the national spirit: “because the Romanians are a great race and have always been wise by nature.”²¹

With obvious satisfaction, Stoica laid stress on the Romanian origin of some brilliant army commanders in the medieval Hungary, such as John Hunyadi, Matthias Corvinus, and Pavel Chinezu (Paul Kinizsi). This feeling strongly pervaded the Romanian historiography on medieval Banat. By evoking the decline of the Hungarian royalty at the beginning of the 16th century, the chronicler wrote, with lyricism: “At times some thought: where are now John Hunyadi Corvinus and his son, King Matthias, where is Pavel Chinezu, all Romanians, to come and see this.”²² Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg managed to organize a wealth of historical

information on Banat—from the end of the 14th century to the beginning of the 19th century—producing a coherent text according to the chronology of the events, in which the dry presentation of facts was often surpassed due to a personal involvement, specific to a sensitive storyteller of a great wisdom.

In the Romanian historiography crystallized the opinion that Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg was not a historian, but only a chronicler. His bibliographer, Damaschin Mioc, explained this opinion: “Unlike the historians of the Transylvanian School, Nicolae Stoica never cites his sources, like the majority of the chroniclers did, that is why we regard him as a chronicler not a historian.”³³ As a matter of fact, Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg seemed to be a proper chronicler only in the final part of *Cronica Banatului* (that section being, practically, a memoir) in which he presented the events between 1788 and 1791, when he took part in the Austrian-Turkish war. As this period is not concerned with the history of medieval Banat, the subject is of no interest for us. Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg was more than a chronicler, because not only did he record the facts of the past, but he also commented on them. Like other contemporary Romanian chroniclers, Stoica clearly evinced a detachment from that sentiment of “the confessional multiethnic nation” (mentioned by Emanuel Turczynski)—if it ever actually existed—in favor of a distinct nationalist sentiment.

If in Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg’s case the evocation of the Romanian past came as a passive acknowledgement, in Damaschin Bojincă’s case things changed appreciably, and his passionate speech changed into a polemical one. Having the chance of seeing his works published, he became an influential cultural personality of his time. Subsequently, for a long time—from 1830 to 1978—Bojincă’s historical works remained first editions. In 1978, historian Nicolae Bocșan—the great specialist in the Banat Enlightenment—edited a volume containing Bojincă’s writings, with an exceptional critical appendix: Damaschin Bojincă, *Scrieri* (Writings, Timișoara, 1978).

Between 1829 and 1830 Damaschin Bojincă was the principal editor of the new series of *Biblioteca românească* (Romanian library) and the author of the published historical works. Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg had only mentioned John Hunyadi’s Romanian origin. Damaschin Bojincă dedicated special attention to the issue. In “Descrierea nașterii și a eroiceștilor fapte a mult vestitului și de toată Europa minunatului erou Ioan Corvinus de Huniad” (“The birth and the valiant actions of the famous hero praised by the whole of Europe, John Corvinus of Hunyadi”), published in *Biblioteca românească* (Buda, 1830), the first section, “John Corvinus is of Romanian blood or origin,” is an eloquent argumentation about John Hunyadi’s Romanian origin. According to Nicolae Bocșan, this part of Bojincă’s work was “a response to Magyar historiography, which was beginning to adopt Romantic concepts and in full process of national awakening.”³⁴ Camil Mureșan

established that, in the second part of the work, the author rewrote Mátyás Kovács' *Biographia Ioannis Huniadi*, published at Eger in 1817.⁵ According to the same researcher, Bojincă claimed that the book was his own translation, due to his concern to avoid the censorship. Nicolae Bocșan thought that the first sequence of Bojincă's study, "was suggested by a few passages of Petru Maior's *History*" (pp. 111–115).⁶ After a thorough analysis of Damaschin Bojincă's work, the same Nicolae Bocșan claimed that the author of *Anticile romanilor acum întâia oară românește scrise* (2 vols., Buda, 1832–1833) lacked originality in his historical writings since, with few exceptions, they were compilations, having national education and not proper science as their main purpose.⁷ Bojincă's works about the great personalities of the three Romanian provinces—John Hunyadi, Matthias Corvinus, Michael the Brave, Radu Șerban, Dimitrie Cantemir—inaugurated a special historiographical genre in Romanian culture, with a "popularizing character" which, in Banat especially, would see a significant development felt even in the present. The originality of Bojincă's writings "consisted of the themes and the topics he approached. The fact that he was mainly interested in our medieval history and chose to deal with its most significant characters was something new in our historiography. In the context of the ideology specific to *Biblioteca românească*, these remarkable princely figures, glorious examples of a whole nation, were expected to legitimate the place the Romanians truly deserved among the other peoples."⁸ Altogether, Damaschin Bojincă's historiographical legacy was a testimony for "the moment of the contact and interferences between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, the moment which prepared the ground for the historiography of the revolutionary ideological movement of 1848."⁹ Among other things, the cult of the great voivodes from Moldavian and Wallachian history would manifest itself boldly as a means of national education.

Then followed the proper Romantic generation which showed a special appetite for the medieval past. The Christian heroes were studied not only in order to make their deeds known, but also for resurrecting them as role models. Our Romantic movement not only evoked in a sterile mode the ruins theme and lamented over the end of heroic past epochs, but also came out in the arena of confrontation. It was the epoch of the militant historians who fought in the social, political and cultural domain and made the Revolution of 1848–1849, people like August Treboniu Laurian. They studied medieval Banat to set a pattern to be followed, to stir the spirits and wake the nation from lethargy.

August Treboniu Laurian—the author of *Temisiana sau Scurtă istorie a Banatului Temisian* (Temisiana or Short history of the Temisian Banate, Bucharest, 1848)—proved to be a very good expert in the past of the province for that time. *Temisiana* is the first representative historiographical work of the Transylvanian scholar August Treboniu Laurian. There is a significant avowal of the author regarding

the province about whose history he wrote, the Banat he so warmly evoked. He stated that *Temisiana* was a part of Dacia Maior, the Western Dacia, the first territory occupied by the Romans and colonized by “our ancestors,” the place of numerous wars in the past 1,800 years and a province which preserved the primal Romanian language, the great deeds of the Romanians which deserved the foreigners’ gratitude.¹⁰ In the final section of his work the author revealed his patriotic and educative goal: “We finish here this very interesting history and remind the Romanians that, since we have not perished through so much suffering and terrible ordeals during long centuries, they should not lose hope for the future. Our heavenly Father, who has been watching us throughout these centuries, will grant His divine providence to them from now on, but only if they grow in virtue, cultivate their mind, ennoble their hearts, and show they are worthy of a happier destiny.”¹¹ Laurian set the territory of *Temisiana*, by giving the degrees for the latitude and longitude of the zone, between the Mureş River and the Danube. It was the first time when such a delineation was made in Romanian history, a standard practice specific to historical geography.

The author considered that the Middle Ages began for “*Temisiana*” in the time of “the duchies formed by the Romanians under Bulgarian suzerainty, since, in *Temisiana*, history recorded the duchy of Claudius [Glad, our note] between the Maresiu, the Tisza and the Danube...”¹² For the first time in the Romanian historiography on medieval Banat, the presentation of the Hungarians’ advance across the province was based on the *Gesta Hungarorum*, written by “Bela’s chronicler,” as Laurian noted. According to the *Anonymus Belae Regis Notarius Historia septem Ducum*, chapter 7 et sq., he presented the confrontation between Claudius (Glad) and the Hungarians, starting with the battle on the Timiş. In addition to it, the author showed that, once his army was defeated, Glad sought refuge in the fortress of Keve (Civin), as he could no longer withstand the enemy attacks. A truce was called between Duke Glad and leaders chiefs of the Hungarian army, Zuard, Cadusa and Boyta. August Treboniu Laurian emphasized an historical truth, perfectly valid today, according to which: “the Hungarians . . . conquered *Temisiana*, but they did not populate it with Hungarians, and they did not govern it through Hungarians either, but they let it under the government of Claudius’ successors, until Stephen’s time.”¹³ The author gave a lot of information about “Optum” (Ahtum), drawing on the chronicle of the anonymous notary and on the *Legend of St. Gerard*. From the latter he quoted, in Romanian, the whole paragraph about Ahtum, which was a notable first in our historiography on the medieval Banat. August Treboniu Laurian wrongly considered that *ban* had been synonymous with *comes* ever since the time of “Cinad’s rule”—Ahtum’s successor—and that it explained “the name of ‘*Temisian Banate*,’ which the province has borne until our days.”¹⁴ The term “banate” was the

name of an administrative territorial district whose main purpose was to protect the borderlines, like the Western feudal marches. In the Middle Ages, in the province bordered by the Mureș River and the Danube, the term was first mentioned with reference to the Banate of Severin, in the 13th century. This was set as a military march by the Hungarian royalty to protect its borderlines—a buffer against the incursions from the east along the line of the Danube and the Carpathians. In the 14th–15th centuries, the Kingdom of Hungary had five banats on its frontiers: the Banat of Severin, Mačva, Sói, Ozora and Slavonia. The last became the Croatian-Slavonic Banate.¹⁵

Laurian knew that the “position of the bans was so important that they regarded themselves as equal to the Transylvanian dukes (voivodes).”¹⁶ Using the *Chronica Hungarorum* (part II, chapter 9) by Johannes de Thurocz, the author of *Temisiana* presented “Charles Robert’s battle against Mihaiu Bassarabă who ruled Wallachia at that time.”¹⁷ A significant section of his work was dedicated to John Hunyadi, based on the most relevant documentary sources of the time (*Chronica Hungarorum* by Johannes de Thurocz, Aeneas Silvius, *Rerum Ungaricarum* by Bonfinius). A Romantic nationalist militant, Laurian criticized those authors who did not recognize John’s Romanian origin, accusing them of unwillingness to accept that such a prominent personality could actually have a Romanian ancestry. In a chapter titled “Temisiana Under the Rule of Matthias Corvinus,” Laurian especially pointed out the military and diplomatic activities of Paul Kinizsi and Josa of Somu, *comes* of Temisiana, both of them—in his opinion—of Romanian descent. Using some Magyar sources, the author presented the situation of Temisiana during the Turkish occupation, and thus introduced a new and very interesting topic in Romanian historiography. August Treboniu Laurian ended his *Temisiana* with the introduction of the Habsburg administration in Banat. After the complete reading of the text one can conclude that by presenting the historical realities of that time the author managed in large part to outline the historical individuality of the province and highlight the characteristics of its evolution as compared to the bordering territories.

August Treboniu Laurian also made references to the medieval past of Banat in *Istoria românilor* (History of Romanians, 3 vols., Iași, 1853). In general, the historian used what he considered to be very significant in *Temisiana*, from the perspective of an organic and exhaustive representation of the history of the Romanians north of the Danube. In a relatively unitary historical vision, he portrayed the histories of Maramureș, Crișana, Banat, Transylvania, Moldavia, Bukovina and Bessarabia. Thus, Laurian was the first Romanian historian who dealt with the history of Banat in the context of the history of the Romanians living in the territory of the former Dacia.

THE SECOND half of the “century of nationalities” brought various and sometimes controversial suggestions, ranging from liberalism and conservatism to Marxist materialism. Above all these, as a common denominator, came the idea of national progress, with the foundation of the national state and with rights for the Romanians. The Romantic ideals pervaded historiography—well illustrated at national level by Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, and for Banat by Vasile Maniu—, gradually restrained by the positivist influx and by the pursuit of truth and objectivity and by the cult of documents, of written sources.

Starting with the second half of the 19th century, historical research in Banat was carried on by Vasile Maniu of Lugoj, a fervent supporter of the Transylvanian School. In 1857 in Timișoara, he published his *Dizertațiune istorico-critică și literară tractând despre originea românilor din Dacia Traiană* (Historical-critical and literary dissertation on the origin of Romanians in Trajan’s Dacia). In this work he included a substantial section, “The History of Banat Romanians,” in which medieval Banat was presented beginning with the nature of the relationships between the natives and the Bulgarians and, later, with the Hungarians. The author made a thorough analysis of the anonymous *Chronicle* and of the *Legend of St. Gerard*, underlining the importance of some data therein for the history of the Banat Romanians. He pointed to the Romanian districts of Banat and the significance of the privileges they enjoyed. He showed that the growing military role of the Romanian districts in the Banate of Severin gained supreme notoriety mostly during their long involvement in the anti-Ottoman fight, from the 15th century to the middle of the 16th century. He ascertained that on 29 August 1457 King Ladislaus V the Posthumous issued a document for eight districts—Caransebeș, Lugoj, Mehadia, Almăj, Comiat, Carașova, Bârzava and Ilidia—which certified “the Romanians’ and the knezes’ old privileges regarding the liberties, the prerogatives and the rights they had gained . . . as if they were mentioned word by word in the present diploma.”

Vasile Maniu intended to write a history of Banat. Its structure was detailed in his unpublished “Programa pentru istoria critică a Banatului Temișan” (Curriculum for the critical history of Temisian Banate).¹⁸ The detailed presentation of the chapters is amazing, and the whole plan proves his exceptional, profound knowledge of the history of Banat. If Maniu’s project had materialized, it would have been a great asset for Romanian historiography in general and especially for that of Banat. Vasile Maniu’s “Raport de cercetare în Banat” (Research report concerning Banat), addressed to the Ministry of Religions and Public Education of Romania, also remained unpublished. The first part contains information on Maniu’s scientific research in Banat, and the second illustrates the author’s historical knowledge and seems to be written as preface to *Istoria criti-*

că a Banatului Temișan (The critical history of Temisian Banate), outlined in the abovementioned “Programa.” Unfortunately, since it remained unpublished, this part of the “Report” could not serve as a useful guide for the two historians of the Banat at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Patriciu Drăgălina and George Popoviciu. So, one of the most eloquent historical outlines, based on a rich experience in scrutinizing the historical phenomena—mostly those regarding Banat—and likely to generate a representative work about the past of this Romanian land, failed to bear fruit.

Among the significant historical facts which “cannot be overlooked” whenever the writing of a new history of Banat is concerned we find “the independence of the eight Romanian districts of Banat until 1791, when the 1779 law was put into effect and the country was incorporated into Hungary.”¹⁹ Maniu’s statement about the Banat districts, whose past he had no time to study personally, remained as a spiritual testimony for Romanian historians. Practically, there would never be an important historian of medieval Banat to disregard the privileged districts.

Nicolae Tincu-Velia’s most important work was published in Sibiu in 1865, under the title *Istoriații Bisericească politico-națională a Românilor peste tot mai ales a celor ortodocși orientali din Austria și cu distincțiunea Bănățenilor față de pretențiunile ierarhice și politice ale colonilor sârbești din Austria* (An ecclesiastical political-national history of the Romanians everywhere and especially of the Eastern Orthodox ones in Austria, with the opposition of the Banat people to the hierarchic and political claims of the Serb colons in Austria). I. D. Suciuc wrote a dissertation called “Viața și opera lui Nicolae Tincu-Velia” (The life and work of Nicolae Tincu-Velia), presented at the University of Bucharest, in 1943. In 1945, he published it in Bucharest, under the title *Nicolae Tincu-Velia (1816–1867): Viața și opera lui* (His life and work). Velia was aware of the historical and geographical individuality of Banat. That is why he considered it a “land” separated from Transylvania, with a clearly bordered territory, with its own history and an old autonomous ecclesiastical organization. He called this province “the land of Romanian Banat” or “the Banat land.” Velia offered an interesting panorama of medieval Banat starting from the reality of the advantages and rights granted to these districts: “The Romanian inhabitants living on the other side of the land [the Banat] divided into eight districts . . . were free by virtue of the privileges they enjoyed.”²⁰ The author claims that the privileged districts were autonomous within the Kingdom of Hungary, and until 1537 they had not been incorporated even into Transylvania. He saw this autonomy continuing under the Turkish occupation and later under the Austrian one, whose authorities had to take into consideration the old administrative organization—thus perfunctorily recognizing the districts. A great part of the *Istoriații Bisericească* is a

direct or indirect polemical argumentation with the Serbian historians who claimed that the Serbs were the first settlers in Banat, before the Romanians. With solid documented information, Velia presented the Serbs' colonization in Banat. There was a fundamental contradiction in the Serbian historiography of the time. While the old historical works had given a relatively objective account of the Serbs' arrival south of the Danube, the newer ones gave a biased one: "For the olden times we have Serbian information according to which the Banat of Temeswar [Timișoara] had never been under Serbian rule. Not even in the 6th century, when the Serbs settled in Europe. Not when they were divided in župas or counties, nor under the Roman-Greek rule between the 7th and 12th centuries. Never from that time on, under their kings, emperors, knezes or princes and despots, until the fall of Serbia in 1389."²¹

I. D. Suciū claims that "judging by the method involved, Velia made the transition from chroniclers to the future historians; he attached great importance to tradition and to 'the argumentation of the sound mind.'"²² This was a poor argument, as Suciū confused methodology ("the method involved") with historical thinking. Velia had nothing in common with the period of the chroniclers (even less so than Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg), but he became integrated within the cultural movement of the transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism. As a belated supporter of the Transylvanian School, Velia stated the Roman descent of the Romanians, their uninterrupted continuity in Trajan's Dacia, and their unity.²³ Nicolae Tincu-Velia was sure that his *Istoriaomă* would cast some light on the past and the present of the Romanian Church, especially of the Banat of Temeswar.²⁴ In addition to the history of religious life in Banat, the Romanian monasteries of the province were presented, which was a first in the Romanian historiography.

Vincentiu Babeș was included in our work because of his important initiatives in the investigation of Banat and of his work about the history of the province. He was mainly concerned with medieval Banat, with the "critical," comprehensive study of the "autonomous Romanian districts from the Banat of Temeswar."²⁵ As a native of Banat, he wanted to write a history of his province. He collected data, information, and documents in the hope that he would have time to accomplish this goal.

There was still time and there was no dearth of projects, even though some of them would never materialize. More and more evidence about the past was sought, as many objective argumentations and numerous sources were published. In order to reconstruct the past "as it was"—according to Leopold von Ranke's famous formula—data and information were needed, and they appeared without delay. It is true that some of them were incomplete, others wrongly or *pro domo* interpreted, but there were plenty of them. And the historians of Banat—

among them Patriciu Drăgălina and George Popoviciu—were aware of it. Soon they realized that all these documents had not been favorable to the Romanians, as their editors were of other nationalities. It became obvious that the Romanians, discriminated for centuries as people subjected through conquest and a “schismatic” nation, had never had an elite to promote their interests in all aspects: economic, social, political and cultural. That was why their historiography was the latest as compared to those of the other dominant ethnic groups—the Hungarians, the Germans and even the Serbs. In this context, with the Romanians—and with their neighbors—the demands of the positivist “critical school” combined with the commands of the national ideal, still animated by the Romantic momentum of 1848.

The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century brought to the foreground of the Romanian historiography on Banat the publication of some good syntheses about the history of the Banate of Severin, written by Patriciu Drăgălina, professor of History and Geography at the Theological and Pedagogic Institute of Caransebeș. Drăgălina’s work, *Din istoria Banatului Severin* (From the history of the Banate of Severin), was edited in three parts, published in 1899, 1900 and 1901 at Caransebeș. The section on the history of the Middle Ages contained in its first part and called “The History of the Banate of Severin until the Turkish Seizure of Turnu-Severin in 1524” is the best structured one. The author tried hard to build up a consistent presentation of the Romanian presence in Banat in the early Middle Ages. Special attention was given, in a long chapter, to the Romanian districts, stressing their historical importance and their political and administrative significance, which not even the Magyar royalty could overlook. For the first time in our historiography he presented the districts from Timiș county. Drăgălina wrote memorable pages about John Hunyadi—who was a ban of Severin. Patriciu Drăgălina (like Damaschin Bojină) pointed out the Romanian origin of the Hunyadis, a delicate subject in the Romanian historiography on medieval Banat. Drăgălina’s work gave the first comprehensive synthesis of the Turkish rule of the Banate of Severin. The historical information was noticeable and it was based on the works of the Hungarian historians from the 19th century. This information would be in the attention of the future researchers into the history of Banat, but Drăgălina’s pioneering contribution to the matter passed unnoticed. This was mainly the case of the documentation regarding the privileged districts and the Turkish rule over Banat.

AT THE beginning of the 20th century, George Popoviciu, the proto-priester of Lugoj, published a voluminous and well-documented work, *Istoria românilor bănățeni* (The history of Banat Romanians) (Budapest and Lugoj, 1904). The author made a pertinent presentation of the history of

Glad's and Ahtum's times, arguing with those who contested the Romanians' existence in Banat at the turn of the second millennium. Popoviciu was the first to give a solid presentation of the sources regarding the first records of the Romanians living north and south of the Danube. There are important references to the Romanian knezes, John Hunyadi, the privileges of the districts of Lugoj, Sebeș, Mehadia, Almăj, Caraș, Bârzava, Comiat, Ilidia in "From the End of the Arpads to the Turkish Conquest of Timișoara." Significant are the substantial chapters "The Turkish Rule over Banat" and "The Romanian Orthodox Hierarchy and Its Decline."

We can consider that due to *Istoria românilor bănățeni*, the Positivist-Romantic historiography (A. D. Xenopol's influence was obvious at with Drăgălina and Popoviciu) reached its maturity and became a solid foundation for historical research after World War I.

The struggle for national emancipation, the consequences of World War I and the victory of the principle of national self-determination led to the fall of multi-national empires and the foundation of national states in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Thus, the Kingdom of Romania—covering an area of approximately 300,000 square kilometers, almost as large as Italy—proudly joined the other European nations, with serious problems to be solved but also with the enthusiasm of a great achievement. Overwhelmed by the great accomplishment of 1918, but animated—like Lucian Blaga—by the *Poems of Light*, the historians of Banat took action in a favorable context that guaranteed the pluralism of opinions. In the interwar period, a variety of historiographical trends and orientations manifested themselves, and research made obvious progress in terms of methodology. The Middle Ages were studied under all of their aspects, the most various topics were approached, political, cultural or economic problems were dealt with, but, above all, the Romanians' role in the history of South-Eastern Europe was emphasized, their life and specificity, their accomplishments, the personalities emerged from the bosom of this nation—in other words, all issues which had been neglected and deliberately obscured before.

In the interwar period the Romanian historiography of Banat was called upon to educate and, more than that, to build a national dignity needed at that time. First rank institutions like the Banat-Crișana Social Institute, prestigious periodicals, noteworthy personalities, all felt that it was their duty to educate and to develop the civic and historical conscience of the masses, their pride to be both Romanians and people of Banat.

Once Banat became a part of Greater Romania, the cultural reorganization became a top priority and historiography would play a major role in the process. It was thought that the Romanians had the right and the possibility to finally know their past as it was, not distorted, not in the manner the old rulers used

to present it. On the other hand, according to the ideas of the time, research was expected to bring to the Peace Conference viable arguments demonstrating that Banat belonged to Romania. That was why historians and institutions involved in historical research were to play an important role in the life of the city.

Ioachim Miloia's appointment, in 1928, as the administrator of the Banat Museum prepared the ground for the institution to become a genuine cultural establishment and a center of historical research. In the same year, Ioachim Miloia began to edit *Analele Banatului* (The annals of Banat) (1928–1931), a magazine in which he planned to publish the results of that research.

A significant impulse to the development of the Romanian historiography of Banat was given by the Banat–Crișana Social Institute, founded in 1932 and managed with skill and devotion by Cornel Groșorean until 1946. The institution printed a periodical, *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana* (Review of the Banat-Crișana Social Institute) (1933–1946), praiseworthy for publishing numerous valuable studies on the history of Banat, many of them dedicated to the Middle Ages. It was claimed that it was difficult to “talk about a proper school on medieval Banat in the interwar period.”²⁶ With a little tolerance, it was accepted that it was “a historiographical orientation.”²⁷

No matter how we define the interwar Romanian historiography on medieval Banat, we have to accept that from the perspective of “local creativity” (Al. Zub) the respective activity brought appreciable results. Looking at the vast interwar historiographical research done by the Banat researchers, we can say that the local intellectuals proved a strong vocation for historical investigation. Two historians from Cluj—Victor Motogna and Ștefan Manciulea, during their temporary stay in Timișoara, after the Faculty of Geography belonging to the University of Dacia Superior had been moved from Cluj to Timișoara—found a well prepared ground for historical research. The new university stimulated the local cultural milieu. The publication of a history of Banat was needed. In order to accomplish this desideratum, a systematic activity of research was launched and some important parts of this synthesis were written (especially those referring to the Middle Ages). Unfortunately, after World War II, it was no longer possible to resume this meritorious historiographical research and complete the ongoing projects.

A study on the Romanian districts of the Banat written by Iuliu Vuia (1865–1933) appeared in two issues of *Analele Banatului* (year 2, nos. 2 and 3, Timișoara, 1929) and next year it was republished in a volume of 49 pages: *Districtus Valachorum: Cercurile românești bănățene. Cele din Timiș reconstruite pentru prima oară* (Districtus Valachorum: Romanian circles in Banat. First presentation of the ones in Timiș) (Timișoara, 1930). Unfortunately, Vuia's work owes much to

Patriciu Drăgălina's *Din istoria Banatului Severin*—never acknowledged as a source!—and brings nothing new concerning medieval Banat. It is rather a compilation of data and facts recorded by his forerunners. Vuia's merit was that he insisted more than Drăgălina on the Romanian districts of Timiș county. He allocated a generous space, in independent sections, to the districts of Mănăștur, Bujor, Margina and Fârdea. His modest contribution to the matter remained almost singular until the publication of Viorel Achim's excellent "Districtele medievale românești de pe Valea superioară a Begheiului" (Romanian medieval districts in the upper Begheiu Valley).²⁸

Ioachim Miloia's vast knowledge of art history—he had specialized in mural paintings and restoration in Italy between 1920 and 1927—was put to good use since 1928 when he did some research restorations in the Orthodox church in Lipova (an historic monument). In issue 1 of *Analele Banatului* he published a study titled "Biserica română din Lipova (Banat)" (The Romanian church in Lipova, Banat), thus inaugurating the professional presentation of the ecclesiastical monuments from a large, artistic and well documented perspective. Under the mortar of the mentioned monument, Miloia discovered two successive strata of frescoes—which he restored—the first dated back to the 14th–15th centuries. From them, St. Theodosius's and St. Pachomius's portraits were recovered and preserved on the wall of the nave and the narthex. These cenobitic saints, presented in the manner of the monastic painting of Hesychast influence supported Miloia's supposition that the church of Lipova was a monastery for the Romanians living in the Mureș gorge during the Middle Ages. In *Analele Banatului* (4, 2–4, April–December 1931), Ioachim Miloia published "Mănăstirea 'Săracă'—centru de cultură și artă bănățeană" (The 'Săracă' monastery: A center of Banat art and culture). The author dated the building of the church of the monastery to the 15th century or to the first two decades of the 16th century.

The study "Biserica medievală de la Căvăran" (The medieval church in Căvăran) (*Analele Banatului*, October–December issues, 1930) placed the author among the pioneers of medieval Banat archaeology. Archaeological evidence from Căvăran made Miloia date the monument back to the 13th century. Very important from a scientific point of view was Miloia's commentary regarding the possible transformation of the building by the native Orthodox Romanians, which might have happened no later the 15th century, when the decline of the town of Căvăran began, many citizens moving from here to Sebeș (today's Caransebeș). Except for this, the majority of his opinions about the medieval church of Căvăran remained valid. The church is considered now to be at least one and a half century older. Miloia's study was complex and elaborate, containing a 25 pages-long introduction presenting the writings that had mentioned the mound of Căvăran (previously interpreted as the remnants of a former fortress). It also contained

a diary of the diggings which contradicted this theory and claimed that the archaeological discovery was a medieval church. Except for the dating—the church is considered now to be at least one and a half century older—the majority of Miloia's opinions about the medieval church at Căvăran remained valid.²⁹

In *Anchetă monografică în comuna Belinț* (Monographic investigation in the village of Belinț) (Timișoara, 1938), Miloia published a “Historical Report” which presented the archaeological discoveries made in the center of this locality, among them the relics of a medieval church, dated “in the 16th century or earlier”; then, he had a change of heart and specified that “its building can not be earlier than the 17th century.”³⁰ Like the church of Căvăran, the relic of Belinț appeared to also be a hall church, but with a semicircular apse. It is considered that the two archaeological discoveries are of extreme importance in revealing some significant historical aspects: both are founded by medieval Romanian knezes and nobles, “showing either influences of the Gothic style when it comes to Căvăran—like in the neighboring areas of Zarand, Hunedoara and Hațeg—or the preservation of Byzantine building traditions, illustrated by a plan discovered at Belinț.”³¹

Miloia's documentation on the past of Căvăran was so solid that the vast material he had collected became the object of a study titled “Căvăranul în Evul Mediu (O rectificare istorică)” (Căvăran in the Middle Ages: A historical rectification) (in *Analele Banatului* 1, 1931). The presence at Căvăran of such an important building such as the medieval church, the information about the locality and the whole area gathered from different authors, the local testimonies about the old building materials—slabs and blocks of marble, bricks, stones as well as cobblestones belonging to a former road or (as the local people thought) a former market—made Miloia believe that this was a very important ancient settlement. Miloia realized that Frigyes Pesty had “made an error”³² by applying the historical information on Căvăran (Kavarán) to the town of Caran (Karan), which he erroneously set somewhere in the heart of the area of Caransebeș. In his elaborate study—covering 22 pages of the magazine—Miloia clarified the issues concerning the name of Căvăran, manifest with Frigyes Pesty, regarding the information gathered by the Hungarian author on Karan and Kavarán as “his own manner of reviving the past.”³³ Then he gave a detailed presentation of the historical evidence about Caran and Caransebeș and ended his work with a chapter titled “The Historic Role of Caran.” The author concluded that as it had no fortress, Căvăran went under the “military jurisdiction” of Sebeș and had an administrative relation with it. Later, once its socio-economic life consolidated, Căvăran became independent and the center of the district it formed with some neighboring villages. It is not known exactly for how long this district lasted. It was first mentioned in a document of 1391, and last in 1422. After the district of Căvăran ceased to exist, the town became officially a part of the

district of Sebeș, but continued its independent existence as *oppidum* and *libera civitas*. Later the town had its own magistrates and a chief justice presiding over a panel of judges. In the final section of his work, Miloia acknowledged that he did “not claim to have said something definitive [about Căvăran], but rather to have opened the way for future research.”³⁴ In his time, the thirties of the previous century, he would have been the most suitable person to continue the historical research on Căvăran, as well as on the past of the whole medieval Banat, as he had a solid preparation and an indisputable vocation. It should be said that Miloia’s work about medieval Căvăran is also an exceptional study on the district bearing the same name. In our opinion, when the bibliography of the Romanian districts of the Banat is presented, mention should be made of Miloia’s work.

SO FAR no further evidence on Caran was given in addition to the data gathered by the Timișoara researcher, as we can see from a recent presentation of the district.³⁵ Unfortunately, the most recent synthesis neglected the territorial delineation of the districts of Caran and Sebeș made by Miloia, perpetuating an older opinion according to which Caran was situated on the opposite side of the Sebeș. Today, the town of Caransebeș lies there. Due to Miloia and his contemporaries, the scholars especially, a particular vision on the Banat formed, the province being regarded as a distinct “land,” with a specific past and its own culture. At the time it was called “Banatism.”

It is interesting that “Banatism,” in its authentic and well-tempered manifestations, did not oppose Romania and the Romanian spirit, but contributed to the consolidation of the nation-state. It could not be otherwise, as long as once the war was over the revisionist threats began. At the historiographical level, revisionism meant the revival of the denials of the Romanians’ historical role, of their autonomy north of the Danube and a disparagement of their accomplishments. At Banat level, the offensive of neighboring histories—especially the Hungarian and the Serbian ones—supplied the Romanian historians with many subjects. The favorite one, discussed over and over, was the autonomy of the privileged Romanian districts, a theme approached by almost all historians and publishers, with more or less success. It is a fact that the internal and mostly the international political circumstances played a major role in stimulating the historians to bring arguments even for the political treaties. This is why important works on the medieval and pre-modern history of Banat were published, and practically there was no major theme left out. Naturally, national militancy, exaggerated at times, and amateurism, had a bad influence upon these works and upon their objectivity, but these flaws were present almost everywhere in that epoch, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

In 1934, the publishing house of the *Vreera* (Will) magazine (1932–1936, 1945–1947) of Timișoara published Traian Birăiescu's study *Banatul sub turci* (Banat under the Turks). It was the first distinctive work about the Ottoman domination of the province. Containing only 52 pages plus 11 pages of notes, the work is a good synthesis regarding the structure of the military and religious Ottoman authorities. The work gave a clear picture of the political, administrative and juridical framework of Banat under the Turks, from its transformation into an eyalet—an administrative, territorial and military division of the Ottoman Empire, led by a beylerbey and composed of sandjaks, basic administrative, territorial and military divisions—until the fall of this regime and the beginning of Austrian domination in the early 18th century. Whenever the documents from the Viennese archives permitted, the author emphasized the presence of the dominant Romanian element in the Eyalet of Temeswar. At the same time he insisted on the beneficial economic and demographic consequences of the *iradea* issued by the Ottoman Porte in 1690, a decree which recognized the Banat peasants' rights to pass their inheritance from father to son and also their right to sell or swap their lands.

Another of Traian Birăiescu's works, *Cultura apuseană: Turcii și maghiarii (Turcii în centrul Europei)* (Western culture: Turks and Hungarians—The Turks in Central Europe), was published in Timișoara in 1935. The author presented “European culture and the civilization of Hungary 500 years ago,” “the ethnic culture of Hungary” in the same period, “social classes and Hungarian justice in the medieval era,” “Political Hungary,” “the Magyar constitution and the finances of the Kingdom of Hungary,” “the military organization of Hungary,” “the ‘Magyar’ army as a military asset,” “Hungary from the perspective of public right,” “the era of the Corvins (including the family tree),” “the Mohács disaster,” “the recovery of the related races” (Magyar and Turkish), “the Turks and the Hungarians’ common fight against the West,” “Magyar and Turkish relations in occupied Hungary.” For the purposes of our work, the most interesting part is the one dedicated to the time of the Corvins, this chapter ranking among the best studies about John Hunyadi written up to that moment. The interesting presentation of his relations with Banat is remarkable.

Traian Birăiescu's two studies—especially the latter—revealed some important aspects regarding “the increased dependence of history upon political factors,”³⁶ a phenomenon caused by the “issue of Banat at the Peace Conference,”³⁷ after World War I. Historian Nicolae Bocșan pointed out that in Banat, in the fourth decade of the previous century, “the impact of politics on historical writing deepened.”³⁸ Among other factors which contributed to this he mentioned “Nazi ideology and politics, the rise of Magyar revisionism or of right-wing extremism in Central Europe, Romania included.”³⁹

Often cited but seldom read—like Iuliu Vuia’s study on the Wallachian districts—is *Organizarea politică a Banatului în Evul Mediu* (The political organization of Banat in the Middle Ages) (Lugoj, 1941) by Traian Simu. If that work had been read carefully, its dilettantism would have been obvious—especially when it comes to the issue of Banat districts and counties. The greatest part of Simu’s work is an enumeration of the “most important fortresses of Banat.”⁴⁰ The author was the first researcher to produce a historical guide to the fortifications of Banat, being a modest forerunner for the study of Banat constructions—the “science of castles” being a fascinating domain of contemporary historiography.

Until 1948 Gheorghe Cotoșman published numerous studies about various aspects of the Middle Ages in Banat, although his research continued well after that year. Of relevance to our subject are: *Din trecutul Banatului: Studiu introductiv de istorie național-bisericească* (From the history of Banat: An introductory study in national-ecclesiastical history), book 1 (with a preface by His Holiness Grigore Gh. Comșa, Ph.D., bishop of Arad), Timișoara, 1934; “Episcopia Mehădiei din Banatul Severinului” (The Bishopric of Mehădia in the Banate of Severin), *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana* 2 (1943); “Privilegiile românilor în cadrul districtelor valahe bănațene: Nobilii și cnezii români bănațeni” (The Romanian privileges in the old Wallachian districts of Banat: Romanian nobles and knezes in Banat), *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana*, September–December 1944; *Autobtonia românilor din Banat: Pe baza toponimiei* (The autochthony of Banat Romanians: On the basis of place-names) (Caransebeș, 1946). From this works a chapter caught our attention: “Imigrarea sârbilor în Banat” (Serb immigration in Banat), included in *Din trecutul Banatului*. Cotoșman presented there, based on a solid documentation, the successive colonizations over time of some groups belonging to this population, on the territory bordered by the Mureș, the Danube and the Tisza. At the same time he argued with historian Jovan Radonić who, in his *Histoire des Serbes de Hongrie* (Paris, 1919), had claimed that the Serbs populated the Banat before the Romanians. In addition, he wrote about the hierarchical relations of the Romanian Church of Banat with the Serbs. “Episcopia Mehădiei din Banatul Severinului” was such a well-documented study (perhaps containing too much information, a waste of erudition, resorting to historical, geographical and linguistic arguments), where the author presented hypothetically the circumstances in which the diocese of Mehădia was created. He began with the old name *Ad Mediam* or *Aguas* and evoked the migrations in the time of the Calvinist prosecutions, then the scourge of the Ottoman occupation, with the dioceses subordinated for a long time to Severin, later to Râmnic, as part of the metropolitan seat of the Banate of Severin. Closely related to this work is another study written by Cotoșman, “Vechimea

organizației național-bisericești la românii bănățeni” (The old national-ecclesiastical organization of the Banat Romanians), published in *Revista de istorie bisericească* (Review of Church history) (Craiova) 1, 1 (April–June 1943). The two works have been appreciated in the recent historiography on the Orthodox Church of Banat.⁴¹ Cotoșman was very well informed about the Romanian districts. He did not bring any new information, but he updated the knowledge, in Romanian, of the contents of the diploma issued in 1457 by king Ladislaus V the Posthumous, by publishing it integrally and highlighting its capital importance for Romanian historiography. He gave much prominence to the districts of Timiș county, but he did not approach this subject in a separate study.

Cotoșman provided a bold historical and philological interpretation in *Autoltonia românilor din Banat*. The historical information has remained the most solid, since there were deficiencies in understanding the etymological phenomena, even though the author was informed about the linguistic bibliography of the time.

The consistent sequence about *Mehadia* deserves the philologists’ interest, and perhaps so does the one about *Tape*, even though the etymology of the last place name seems to be completely clarified.⁴² With Cotoșman’s work, we read for the first time about the historical content of the Banat place names which mentioned the word *ohabă* (from the Slavic *ohaba*—meaning manorial estate). This author deserves special mention as, following the path opened by his fore-runners—especially Nicolae Drăganu⁴³—he inaugurated in the culture of Banat the fields of toponymy and history, which developed rapidly in the past decades.⁴⁴

After the Great Union, the first professional Romanian study on the history of Banat was published by Silviu Dragomir, a professor at the Department of South-Eastern European history and South-Slavic diplomacy at Cluj University. “Vechimea elementului românesc și colonizările străine din Banat” (The old Romanian element and foreign colonization in Banat) was published in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* (Annals of the Institute of National History) (Cluj) 3 (1924–1925): 275–291. The genesis of this study was rooted in the disputes occurred during the Peace Treaty of Paris, when, at the partitioning of Banat, the Serbian historiographical arguments supported by Jovan Radonić were given a lot of weight.

By using historical evidence, the historian of Cluj demonstrated the prevalence of the Romanians in Banat, both in the past and at the end of World War I. A good part of the documentation contained in that study was used by Silviu Dragomir in *Le Banat Roumain: Esquisse historique*, published in Sibiu in 1944, under the auspices of The Center for Studies and Research Concerning Transylvania. It contained the following studies: “Les Roumains du Banat et la royauté hongroise”; “Les Roumains et les Serbes dans le Banat”; “Le Banat et la politique de

la colonisation austro-hongroise”; “Le Banat, partie integrante de l’unité roumaine.” Silviu Dragomir’s four studies contained in *Le Banat Roumain* corresponded to the preoccupations of the Ministry of National Propaganda to “prepare public opinion as well as the international political opinion for the ratification of the future peace treaty”; it was addressed to the foreign public, less familiar with the issues regarding the history of Banat, and aimed at proving the Romanian character of the province based on historical and demographic evidence.⁴⁵ The studies “The Banat Romanians and the Hungarian Crown,” “Romanians and Serbs in Banat” and “Banat and the Austro-Hungarian Colonization Policy” combine into a comprehensive historiographical corpus. The texts are well-structured, according to the “political status of the province.”⁴⁶ Each of the three sections comes to demonstrate “the autochthonous and numerically dominant character of the Romanian population” of Banat.⁴⁷

In the interwar historiography of the Banat, Cornel Grofșorean successfully organized research activities as a cultural leader who promoted Timișoara’s historiographical movement through the Banat–Crișana Social Institute and the *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana* magazine. He took the initiative to mobilize the members of his institute to do research in order to publish *Istoria Banatului* (History of Banat). In 1944, under his leadership, they published *Banatul de altădată: Studiu istoric* (The Banat of yesteryear: A historical study), which contained very important and well-documented works about the Banat Middle Ages.

Grofșorean’s historiographical concerns materialized in the following studies: “În țara dacilor” (In the land of the Dacians) (in *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana*, nos. 27, 28–29 and 33–34, 1940), excerpted as *Studiu juridic asupra dreptului cutumiar român din Valea Almăjului (Banat)* (Judicial study on Romanian common law in the Almăj valley, Banat), 80 pages; “Din obiceiul pământului” (The custom of the country) (in *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana*, April 1940); “Originea comunității familiale la români în colaborare cu jus Valahicum” (The origin of family communities with the Romanians, in cooperation with jus Valahicum) (in *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana*, May–August 1942); “Un cuib de vulture daco-valah” (A Dacian-Wallachian nest of eagles) (in *Revista Institutului Social Banat-Crișana*, May–June 1943). His last published volume was *Banatul de altădată și de totdeauna: Sinteză problemelor istorice și social-politice* (The Banat of yesteryear and of forever: A synthesis of historical and social-political problems) (Timișoara, 1946), a study based on the information gathered by the Institute for Banat History, and a report, “Realizări în Banat după unirea din 1918” (Achievements in Banat after the Union of 1918). This work also has its own place in the Romanian historiography on Banat, as it focused on the most significant moments of the Banat Romanians’ history up to 1918 (with a special attention for the Middle Ages), and then after the Great Union, being

an eloquent survey of the Banat accomplishments in the interwar period, a history lived by the author himself and often marked by his strong personality.

The most prolific researcher of the Middle Ages during the Second World War was professor Victor Motogna from the Cluj Faculty of Geography, which sought refuge in Timișoara. In *Banatul de altădată: Studiu istoric* he published: 1. “Romanian Banat in the Era of Barbarian Migrations (271–1300): The Issue of the Romanian Continuity in Dacia”; 2. “The Romanian Banat in the First Centuries of Hungarian Rule (The Arpadian Period, 1030–1301)”; 3. “Romanian Banat in the 14th Century (The Angevin Period)”; 4. “Romanian Banat in the First Half of the 15th Century (The Era of Sigismund of Luxembourg)”; 5. “The History of Banat Romanians at the Time of John Hunyadi (1437–1457): Political Events”; 6. “Contributions to the Medieval History of Banat Romanians: The Romanian Districts.” These works written by Victor Motogna and presented in detail in our dissertation represent a genuine history of the Banat Middle Ages, still unfinished but extraordinarily useful. In the hard times following World War II and after Motogna’s death in 1948 it was difficult to gather in a synthesis the precious historiographical material left. From Motogna’s studies mentioned here—all very well documented and structured—the one about the districts has maintained its scientific relevance intact, even though the claim that the districts of Timiș County—not mentioned in the diploma of 1457—“enjoyed the same rights and liberties in the first centuries of the Hungarian dominance”⁴⁸ requires further explanations.

Ștefan Manciușea, a professor at Faculty of Geography of Cluj, during his refuge in Timișoara, like Motogna, was a member of the research group of the Banat–Crișana Social Institute led by Cornel Grofșorean. In *Banatul de altădată: Studiu istoric* (Timișoara, 1944) he published a 60 pages-long study titled “Elemente etnice streine așezate în Banat între anii 1000–1870” (Foreign elements settled in Banat in 1000–1870). The study contained the following chapters: 1. “Infiltrations of Foreign Populations in Banat until 1526”; 2. “The Population of Banat in 1526–1699”; 3. “The Population of Banat in 1700–1780: The Time of Massive Foreign Colonization: The Native Romanian Element. The Infiltration of German Elements in 1786–1792; French Colonists; Italian Colonists; Spanish Colonists; Bulgarian Colonists; Hungarian Colonists”; 4. “Attempts at De-nationalizing the Romanians in Banat in the 19th Century by Way of Hungarian Colonization.” For our dissertation we had under consideration only the first two chapters of this study. This part represented the author’s scientific reply to the manner in which—starting with the last quarter of the 19th century—Hungarian historians had been treating the issue of the Romanians’ continuity in Trajan’s Dacia. They were trying to “scheme and prove tendentiously that our settlement in Transylvania and the Tisza Plain began with sporadic

penetrations from the south, not earlier than the 13th century.”⁴⁹ They ignored “evidence about the length of our existence and our organization in this province,”⁵⁰ “documents from the chancery of the Kingdom of Hungary” which certify “the old age of the Romanian knezates and voivodates, from the eastern slopes of the mountains and foothills to the plains, then the existence of the Romanian districts in the highlands, districts which enjoyed complete political and administrative autonomy, and even the autonomy of their own Church—recognized by so many diplomas issued by the Hungarian kings.”⁵¹

Manciulea presented scientific and documented arguments against the Serbian historians and ethnographers who claimed the autochthonism of their people in Banat. The main argument of the Romanian historians was the late moment of the Serbian colonization of Banat. Manciulea made a chronological presentation of the stages of their settlement in the province.

In *Banatul de altădată: Studiu istoric*, Traian Popa published “Românii din Banatul medieval” (The Romanians in medieval Banat) and “Familia Mutnic” (The Mutnic family). In the first study the author approached a very important topic of the historiography on medieval Banat, i.e. the native noble Romanian families. The study presented the documented data (according to Frigyes Pesty) about the Romanian families: the Baciús, the Bracans (or Brathans), the Dobrotas, the Bogdans, the Lucaciús, the Socols, Petru din Valea (the Woyas) and the Neacşus. About Petru din Valea family, Traian Popa published a 15 pages-long sequence which anticipated Maria Holban’s work, “Deposedări și judecăți în Banat pe vremea Angevinilor și ilustrarea lor prin procesul Voya (1361–1378)” (Seizures and trials in Angevin Hungary and their illustration by way of the Voya trial, 1361–1378), in *Studii și materiale de istorie medie* (Studies and materials of medieval history) (Bucharest) 5 (1962): 57–131.

Ion Stoia-Udrea was in his way an “independent” historian. He did not belong to the Banat–Crişana Social Institute group. He was the editor-in-chief of *Vreerea* magazine and its publisher, and probably was seeking to found a circle of intellectuals of Timișoara around him (as a matter of fact there were three cultural personalities: Romul Ladea, Virgil Birou and Ion Stoia-Udrea, also known as “the Caraş clover leaf”). The only historical researcher of Timișoara who collaborated with his magazine was Traian Birăiescu.

Ion Stoia-Udrea published *Marginalie la istoria bănăţeană* (Marginalia to the history of Banat) (Timișoara, 1940), a volume of polemical essays—very well documented—against the Magyar, Serbian and Austrian tendentious theses about the history of the Romanians of Banat. Ion Stoia-Udrea’s most important historiographical work was “Banatul în prima jumătate a mileniului nostru” (Banat in the first half of our millennium), published in *Studii și documente de istorie, artă și etnografie* (Studies and documents of history, art and ethnography) 1, 1

(Timișoara, 1943). This study offered conclusive evidence about the occupations of the people in the Middle Ages, their political and administrative organization, the fortresses of Banat and the boundaries of Glad's voivodate. Ion Stoia-Udrea stressed the importance of the Romanian districts as forms of administrative and territorial organization, regarding them as a basic element of the continuity of the autochthonous Banat natives. Ion Stoia-Udrea's work was a successful insight into the history of medieval Banat until its occupation by the Turks, the work being elaborated in accordance with the scientific demands of the fifth decade of the previous century.

The interest in the history and the culture of the province led to the publication of a great number of monographs of localities, regions, or of the entire Banat. It all began in 1859, when a survey was carried out by the Austrian authorities for information about the Serbian Vojvodina and the Banat of Temeswar. The latter was an administrative and territorial district formed in 1849 by joining Vojvodina with the Banat of Temeswar and led by an imperial governor; this artificial administrative district ceased to exist in 1860. As the monograph on Serbian Vojvodina and the Banat of Temeswar was not completed, a great part of the questions contained in the survey were either lost or remained in archives, still not recovered. We can find information about what happened in 1859 and the answers to that survey in *Cercetarea monografică în Banat (1859–1948)* (Monographic research in Banat, 1859–1948) by Carmen Albert (Reșița, 2002). It is interesting that the structure of the survey reflected the manner in which the first Romanian monographs were conceived at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. We have in mind *Topografia satului și hotarului Măidan* (Topography of the village and of the Măidan territory) by Sofronie Liuba and Aurelie Iana (Caransebeș, 1895) and *Monografia orașului Caransebeș* (A monograph of Caransebeș) by Andrei Ghidiu and Iosif Bălan (Caransebeș, 1909).

Taking into consideration the attention paid to the history of Middle Ages by the authors of these works, we see that the abovementioned monograph of Caransebeș was followed by other monographs after World War I: *Monografia orașului Caransebeș* by Andrei Ghidiu and Iosif Bălan (Caransebeș, 1909); *Istoricul Cetății Timișoara: Perla Banatului* (The history of Timișoara city: The jewel of Banat) by Iosif Knezy (Timișoara, 1921); *Micul Cicerone pentru orașul Timișoara* (A short guide to the city of Timișoara) by Virgil Molin (Timișoara, 1921); *Istoria Timișoarei* (A history of Timișoara) by Emanuil Ungurianu (Timișoara, 1925); *Monografia Banatului* (A monograph of Banat), vol. 1, *Situația geografică. Locuitorii—Comunele* (The geographical situation. Inhabitants—Communes) by Ioan Lotreanu (Timișoara, 1935); *Ghidul Banatului* (A guide to Banat) by

Emil Grădinaru and Ion Stoia-Udrea (Timișoara, 1936); *Timișoara: Monografie istorică* (Timișoara: A historical monograph) by Nicolae Ilieșiu (Timișoara, 1943).

In the monograph dedicated to the town of Caransebeș by Andrei Ghidiu and Iosif Bălan, and especially in the monograph of Timișoara written by Nicolae Ilieșiu, there is plenty of historical information, the authors having good knowledge of the documentary sources, mostly of those published by the Magyar historian Frigyes Pesty. A solid documentation welcomes us in Ioan Lotreanu's monograph, which contains historical data for each locality of Banat. A historiographical outline of the Middle Ages of the province is contained in *Ghidul Banatului* by Emil Grădinaru and Ion Stoia-Udrea. In the interwar period, among the most active scholars of Timișoara in the historical research of the Banat, we mention Ilieșiu, Lotreanu and Stoia-Udrea, the first two standing out due to their monographs, which are their lifetime achievements.

FROM NICOLAE Stoica of Hațeg and Damaschin Bojincă to Silviu Dragomir, Victor Motogna and Ștefan Manciulea there is not only a century and a half of chronological distance, but also a long ascending way for a historiographical culture set well on its track and oriented towards modernity. It is obvious how the reception and interpretation of the Middle Ages through the scholars' eyes of the 19th and, partially, the 20th century can be a reliable barometer of the evolution of historical thought and method in Banat. In Banat the sinuous path of historiography went from the Enlightenment to the critical school and from the Romantic drives to a variety of realistic approaches in the second half of the 20th century.

The thirst for knowledge of the medieval past was quenched in different ways, the theme grew larger and larger, the methodology progressed, the sources multiplied, but the militancy remained a means to prove rights, priorities, and merits via history. History was a fundamental path to knowledge, but also a means of legitimating the collective identity. While in the West the involvement of political and national factors in the study of the past diminished after World War II, giving way to professionalism, individual and group talent, modernization of methodology, objectivity, etc., in the East, behind the Iron Curtain, "the social command" in the service of the communist dictatorship prevailed. But this is another topic, beyond the scope of the present approach. □

Notes

1. Nicolae Stoica de Hașeg, *Cronica Banatului*, introductory study, edition, glossary and index by Damaschin Mioc, 2nd edition (Timișoara, 1981), 63.
2. *Ibid.*, 126.
3. Damaschin Mioc, "Preface" to *Cronica Mehădiei și Băilor Herculanee*, in Nicolae Stoica de Hașeg, *Scrieri* (Timișoara, 1984), 4.
4. Nicolae Bocșan, "De la idealul luminării la idealul național," in Damaschin Bojincă, *Scrieri* (Timișoara, 1978), 49.
5. Camil Mureșan, *Iancu de Hunedoara*, 2nd editon (Bucharest, 1968), 28.
6. The reference is to Petru Maior, *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dachia*, ed. Florea Fugariu, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1970).
7. Nicolae Bocșan, "Un istoric uitat: Damaschin Bojincă," *Banatica* (Reșița) (1971): 299.
8. *Ibid.*, 298.
9. *Ibid.*, 299.
10. August Treboniu Laurian, *Temisiana sau Scurtă istorie a Banatului Temisian* (Bucharest, 1848), 2.
11. *Ibid.*, 145–146.
12. *Ibid.*, 32.
13. *Ibid.*, 35.
14. *Ibid.*, 31.
15. Marius Bizerea, "Banatul ca unitate și individualitate istorico-geografică în cadrul pământului locuit de români," in *Tibiscus-etnografie* (Timișoara, 1975), 10.
16. Laurian, 31.
17. *Ibid.*, 59.
18. Documentation presented by Victor Neumann, in *Vasile Maniu: Monografie istorică*, preface by Paul Cornea (Timișoara, 1984).
19. *Ibid.*, 181.
20. Nicolae Tincu-Velia, *Istoria Bisericească politico-națională a Românilor peste tot mai ales a celor ortodocși orientali din Austria și cu distincțiunea Bănățenilor față de pretențiunile ierarhice și politice ale colonilor sârbești din Austria* (Sibiu, 1865), 136–137.
21. *Ibid.*, 284.
22. I. D. Suci, *Nicolae Tincu-Velia (1816–1867): Viața și opera lui* (Bucharest, 1945), 138.
23. Ștefan Ștefănescu, ed., *Enciclopedia istoriografiei românești* (Bucharest, 1978), 326.
24. *Ibid.*, XIX.
25. *Analele Academiei Române* (Bucharest), 2nd ser., vol. 18 (1896): 168.
26. Alexandru Rădulescu, "Observații privind istoriografia Banatului medieval: o privire de ansamblu," *Studii de istorie a Banatului* (Timișoara) 21-22 (1997–1998) (2000): 83.
27. Radu Ardelean, "Problematica Evului Mediu în sud-vestul României în istoriografia română bănățeană interbelică," *Studii de istorie a Banatului* 14 (1988): 26.

28. In *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie* (Cluj-Napoca) 30 (1990–1991): 23–35.
29. Dumitru Țeicu, “Registrul așezărilor medievale,” in *Banatul Montan în Evul Mediu* (Timișoara, 1998), 308–309.
30. Ioachim Miloia, “Raport istoric,” in *Anchetă monografică în comuna Belinț* (Timișoara, 1938), 33.
31. Nicolae Săcară, “Ioachim Miloia cercetător și protector al monumentelor istorice,” in *Un erudit cărturar Ioachim Miloia* (Timișoara, 1997), 101.
32. Ioachim Miloia, “Căvăranul în Evul Mediu (O rectificare istorică),” *Analele Banatului* (Timișoara) 1 (1931): 33.
33. *Ibid.*, 37.
34. *Ibid.*, 54.
35. Țeicu, 440.
36. Ștefan Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, vol. 4 (Cluj-Napoca, 1989), 43; Alexandru Horvath, “Contribuții la delimitarea administrativă și juridică a districtelor Sebeș și Caran,” *Studii și cercetări de etimologie și istorie* (Caransebeș) 2 (1977): 404.
37. Nicolae Bocșan, “Istoriografia bănățeană între multiculturalism și identitate națională,” *Banatica* 14 (1996): 270.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. Traian Simu, *Organizarea politică a Banatului în Evul Mediu* (Lugoj, 1941), 28.
41. Constantin Cilibia, “Episcopia Mehadieii,” in *Mehadia, vatră istorică* (Timișoara, 2007), 73–96.
42. Dan Slușanschi, “Țapa, Țapae,” *România pitorească* (Bucharest) 17, 5 (1988): 17.
43. Nicolae Drăganu, *Toponimie și istorie* (Cluj, 1928).
44. Octavian Răuț and Vasile Ioniță, *Studii și cercetări de istorie și toponimie* (Reșița, 1976); Octavian Răuț, “Toponimie și istorie bănățeană,” *Studii de limbă, literatură și folclor* (Reșița) 4 (1975): 257–270.
45. Nicolae Bocșan, “Silviu Dragomir,” in Silviu Dragomir, *Banatul românesc: Schiță istorică*, ed. Viorica Goicu, trans. Simona Goicu with an introductory study by Nicolae Bocșan (Timișoara, 1999), 14.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. Victor Motogna, “Contribuții la istoria românilor bănățeni în Evul Mediu: Districte românești,” in *Banatul de altădată: Studiu istoric*, vol. 1 (Timișoara, 1944), 17.
49. Ștefan Manciușea, “Elemente etnice streine așezate în Banat între anii 1000–1870,” in *Banatul de altădată: Studiu istoric*, 1: 330.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*

Abstract

Romanian Historiography of the 19th and of the First Half of the 20th Century about Medieval Banat

We attempted to present a synthesis of the most important Romanian historiographical works on the medieval Banat, published between 1830 and 1950. For the period until the first World War we mentioned the contributions made by Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg, Damaschin Bojincă, August Treboniu Laurian, Vasile Maniu, Nicolae Tincu-Velia, Vinčențiu Babeș, Patriciu Drăgălina and George Popoviciu. During the interwar period the research on the medieval history of this province was carried out by the employees of the Banat Museum, the Banat–Crișana Social Institute—who edited prestigious publications—and of the *Vreerea* magazine. Some of them stand out due to their remarkable achievements: Iuliu Vuia, Ioachim Miloia, Traian Birăiescu, Traian Simu, Gheorghe Cotoșman, Cornel Groșorean, Victor Motogna, Ștefan Manciulea, Traian Popa, Ion Stoica-Udrea. Great attention to this theme was also given in the monographs of some places, especially Timișoara (Nicolae Ilieșiu), of some areas, or of the whole Banat (Ioan Lotreanu).

Keywords

Banat, monographs, the Middle Ages, national militancy, medieval documents, ethnic identity