

ROMANIAN COMMUNITY OF TRIANON HUNGARY. ABOUT BEGINNINGS IN VIEW OF ROMANIAN RESEARCHERS IN HUNGARY

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ABSTRACT: *Beyond the directions and trends professed by the Romanian researchers in Hungary remains the manner how they write the history. Subject of time, they have close views to the general trend of the Hungarian historiography. Thus, for example, when talking about their minorities beginnings in nowadays Hungary they start as early approach to the 17th century.*

But sometimes, but not all, especially taking advantage of the post-communist openings, they write the history according to their beliefs. We learn as about the phenomenon of ethnic assimilation that the Romanians in Hungary are subject to, one extremely stressed beginning with the 60s of the 20th century, or how about the Trianon Treaty of Peace is perceived by them.

Related to this latter aspect is interesting the way how the Trianon is discussed, for the Romanians in Hungary receiving specific connotations. Remaining outside the Romanian state has made that moment to mean for them, from a certain perspective, what it meant for Hungarians.

KEYWORDS: *Historiography, Romanians, Hungary, Trianon, Hungarians*

REZUMAT: *Dincolo de direcțiile și tendințele existente în cercetările privitoare la românii din Ungaria, aparținătoare*

elitei intelectuale românești din această țară, rămâne modul în care se scrie istoria. Concluzia care se impune cu acuitate este aceea conform căreia scrisul istoric al cercetătorilor români din Ungaria rămâne ancorat în marea sa majoritate în tendința generală a istoriografiei oficiale maghiare. Astfel, bunăoară, atunci când se vorbește despre începuturile comunității românești din Ungaria de astăzi, aproape toate abordările pornesc cel mai devreme cu secolul al XVII-lea.

Totuși, mai ales după căderea comunismului, cercetătorii români din Ungaria scriu despre trecutul comunității mai aproape de adevărul istoric. Aflăm astfel inclusiv despre anvergura procesului de asimilare al românilor din Ungaria, inclusiv în anii regimului comunist din Ungaria începând cu anii '60 ai secolului trecut sau despre modul în care este perceput de către românii de aici Tratatul de la Trianon.

Referitor la acest din urmă aspect este interesant modul cum este discutat acest document. Rămăși în afara spațiului românesc peste noapte, aceștia trăiesc o adevărată tragedie națională, fapt sesizat în toate lucrările referitoare la Tratatul de la Trianon.

CUVINTE-CHEIE: *Istoriografie, Români, Ungaria, Trianon, Unguri*

“Whether we like it or not, Romanians history cannot begin with the year 894 AD, or Hungarians St. Stephen’s coronation”¹. This phrase belongs to the researcher Mihaela Bucin, being inserted in a study on the need for the honest research of the past of the Romanian community in Hungary.

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¹ Bucin, 1998, p. 80–82

In the absence of some archaeologists coming from the Romanian community in Hungary to pursue the issue of a possible presence of some Dacian-Roman, Romanic and Romanian elements in the area inhabited today by the Romanians in Hungary, the majority views of the Romanian researchers here supports the idea that their ancestors were “colonized” in those areas as early as the late 16th century, as in the 18th and 19th centuries to be based then most of the communities. However they believe that the Romanians in Hungary are “*native to these places*”². The Romanian historiography has generally a different view, arguing that many historical sources and archaeological discoveries speak about the presence of some Dacian-Roman, Romanic and later, Romanian elements in the Crisis area since before the arrival of the Hungarians in the Pannonian plain³.

In the absence of some archaeological, but also documentary searches, older than the 18th century, the Romanian authors in Hungary start to rebuild the history of the Romanian community, but only in this century. Basically, the earliest documents used by researchers are created by the Romanian Orthodox parishes. But they are not older than the 18th century, according to their words. As beginning of each Romanian community in Hungary is considered that moment when the parish documents are talking about the parish setting up. The classic examples of this view are the works of Elena Csobai on the Romanians in Bichişciaba⁴, Aletea⁵, Ciorvaş⁶, Giulia⁷, Veched⁸, Cenadul Unguresc,⁹ Bedeu, Micherechi¹⁰ and Bichiş¹¹, but others, too, such as the summaries of the Romanians history in Hungary: Gheorghe Petruşan, Emilia Martin and Mihai Cozma, *The Romanians in Hungary*, editor responsible Ioan Ciotea, Elena Csobai, *The History of the Romanians in the Nowadays Hungary*, discussing issues related to the history of the Romanian communities in Hungary.

Elena Csobai reiterates her point of view according to the earliest Romanian colonists settled down in and Giulia and Bedeu, being of Orthodox religion¹². The same views are also embraced by Gheorghe Petruşan in the historic part that he signed in *The Romanians in Hungary*. Both Elena Csobai and Gheorghe Petruşan are the adepts of the two-step colonization of the Romanians in the Eastern sides of the nowadays Hungary. The first stage begins in the late 17th century and lasts for a century, and the second stage begins, they say, in the late 19th century and extends to just around World War II, when by “swarming” a part of the Romanian residents in neighboring areas formed Otlaca Pustă and Cserekert¹³. It is a view widely embraced also by the Hungarian historiography, the so-called origin of the Romanian settlers being a controversial topic, too. Most authors take easily the phrase “we are living in Hungary for almost 300 years”. Nobody, practically, reflected on this historiographical context. Professor Mihai Cozma reported this inert state of things referring to the mechanical assumption of this theory¹⁴. For him this finding is too little thought, simply false, the result of an error. According to his opinion, the statement is completely mantled in a brume “*the denser, the never specified the other country where it is considered that we have moved from to the places today. It would be impossible, because – the historical data convince us – that all Hungary was the country we came from here*”¹⁵. The error, according to Mihai Cozma’s opinion, comes from the misinterpretation of

² Misaroş 2002, p. 13–14; Petruşan, Martin, Cozma 2000, p. 3

³ Giurescu, Giurescu 1975, p. 155; Pascu, 1944, p. 8–9; Popa 1975, p. 317; Papacostea 1993, p. 59–60

⁴ Munteanu Csobai 1991, p. 35–39

⁵ Csobai 1996, p. 112–119

⁶ Idem, 1997, p. 76–90

⁷ Idem 2005, p. 68–85; Idem, 2006, p. 89–100

⁸ Idem 2000, p. 92–105

⁹ Idem 2002, p. 95–108

¹⁰ Idem 2004, p. 107–113

¹¹ Idem 2009, p. 90–99

¹² Idem ’90–93, p. 7

¹³ Idem, p. 7

¹⁴ Cozma 1994, p. 22

¹⁵ *Ibidem*

the population movements from the mountainous area of Crișana towards the area of Tisza, under well-known historical conditions and already defined – a space where already a Romanian population was. This displacement has occurred, says the author, from Hungary to Hungary, therefore no question of migration from one state to another. Thus, he said “*for our ancestors did not mean a real integration in another state. Way can not be taken seriously when it is about our places of origin, as, for example, no the Romanian in Wallachia, fugitive over the mountains, in Transylvania, was not considered once originating from Turkey, only for that the Romanian Country (his) was under Ottoman occupation. We were and we are Romanians from Hungary in all respects*”¹⁶. Mihai Cozma carries out here a very subtle logical argument of the theory of the Romanian continuity in the Transylvanian area.

However, some researchers, referring to a series of chance archaeological discoveries and documentary information suggest that on the nowadays territory of Hungary, the Romanians’ presence can be already documented in the Arpad’s times. Teodor Misaroș, for instance, in his doctoral thesis entitled *Of the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church Communities in Hungary*, published in two editions, 1990 and 2002, speaks about the vestiges of a Byzantine church, in Giula, dating from 1295¹⁷, concluding that those who raised this church could only be the Orthodox Romanians. The same Teodor Misaroș showed data overtaken from the conscription of Giula area in 1525 where many Romanian families¹⁸ were recorded, while the Giula borough was beleaguered by the Ottomans in 1566, Romanian locals also attended to defend it¹⁹. The information on Romanian multiply in the decades that followed, in 1651 being reported even an Orthodox bishop named Sofronie, the so-called “metropolitan of the boroughs Lipova and Giula”²⁰.

Teodor Misaroș’s volume provides new and new information, especially documentary, about the Romanians’ early presence in the Eastern current area of Hungary, outlining clearly the view that beginning with the 15th century, the number of the Romanians has increased considerably by the colonization of a large number of Romanians in the area of the Crișul Alb River, where they settled down definitively²¹.

Very interesting, Teodor Misaroș brought in the support of his suggestions the opinions of some Hungarian historians as Hunfalvi Pál, who argued that even in 1404, the villages Vitha, Keresztúr, Csernetfalva and Zvalt-pusztá were donated by the King Sigismund to Bolya and his sons, populating these abandoned parts with Romanians, which settled down on these lands changing including the names of some localities as Keresztúr in Crîstor²².

Thus, Teodor Misaroș brought evidences including archaeological and documentary which could suggest the presence of the Romanians in the Eastern Hungary even earlier than the data officially accepted by the Hungarian historiography and favorable *wise*, nolens volens by the Romanian scientists. Perhaps precisely because of this, the work could not see the light of print until 1990 when the freedom of speech has created this opportunity.

Late 90s of last century have brought new historiographical talks on the “*dismounting of Hungary*” on the occasion of celebrating the mille-centenary in Hungary.

Even in the first issue of *Conviețuirea*, the late Mihai Cozma opened an exciting bracket on the colonization of Hungary and the “Romanian problem”²³. The study raises questions rather than to discuss them since Mihail Cosma does nothing but to sit in mirror the Romanian and Hungarian historiography in the issue “Anonymus”, being known that the Hungarian historiography does not recognize the veracity of those written by the anonymous notary in opposite with the Romanians presence in Transylvania

¹⁶ *Ibidem*

¹⁷ Glück 1994, p. 479; Misaroș 1990, p. 122

¹⁸ Glück 1994, p. 479

¹⁹ Arădeanul 1992, p. 132–134

²⁰ Arădeanul, Emandi, Bodogae 1980, p. 48

²¹ Misaroș 2002, p. 18

²² Hunfalvi 1894, p. 57–58

²³ Cozma 1997, p. 14–19

at the moment of the Hungarian colonization in 896, at the same time accepting the information about Hungarians. Providing the reader with the information of “Anonymus” about the realities in Crișana and Transylvania and the antagonistic views of the two historiographies, Mihai Cozma permits the reader to formulate his own opinions, not before to iterate that the Hungarian historians continue to reject categorically the idea that the Hungarians should have met at the moment of the Hungarians’ “dismounting”, besides Slavs, Bulgarians, Moravians, Avars, and Romanians²⁴.

Gheorghe Santău, a prominent member of the Romanian intellectual elite in the postwar Hungary, on his turn, initiates a discussion on the seniority of the Romanians in Crișana, including in the Eastern Hungary, and on the Hungarians “dismounting”²⁵. Formed at the University of Cluj in the ‘40s, Gheorghe Santău, is trenchant in his findings related to the Romanians presence in Crișana. Based on the data provided by early medieval chronicles, he considers that at the moment of the Hungarians’ arrival, the Romanians were living here with the Slavic tribes. Alongside the information of the historiographers’ works, in supporting his views, Gheorghe Santău uses also the toponymy²⁶. He points including the fact that some Hungarian historians claimed that the Romanians were in the parts of the nowadays Eastern Hungary when the Hungarians came. Unlike the other Romanian scientists from Hungary, Gheorghe Santău believes that even after the Ottoman Empire conquest of Hungary, the Romanians continued to live in the plain of Tisza, this fact being confirmed by the remarks in the official registers and the notes regarding the villages in the Eastern Hungary²⁷. Gheorghe Santău has an original perspective also on the Romanians alleged massive colonization beginning with the 18th century in the Eastern parts of the nowadays Hungary. He believes that this colonization was not massive and was made entirely by chance, unlike Banat, where this phenomenon was conducted under the state close control. Moreover, he believes that at that time the whole plain between the Mureș, Crisis and Someș Rivers was populated mainly by Romanians and only towards the Tisza River Hungarian communities numerically smaller appeared²⁸. That after two centuries, this area is predominantly Hungarian, and the Romanians are reduced only to a few scattered communities, is due to a Hungarian policy of denationalization of the Romanians and of a systematic colonization of the Hungarians between the years 1800–1910²⁹.

In conclusion we can say that the majority of the Romanian researchers in Hungary, in the absence of some systematic archaeological and documentary investigation, consider the beginnings of the Romanian communities in the nowadays Hungary somewhere in the 18th century. Without taking into account that this is also a point of view dominant in the Hungarian historiography, it must be said that the arguments offered by the Romanian scientists from Hungary, as there is no older evidence, nor archaeological and nor documentary belong to the historian’s logic and instrumentation who cannot pronounce for an opinion or other without arguments. Even they recognize this and support the need for research in those directions that could make arguments in the favor of the Romanians’ presence before the Hungarians’ arrival. The problem is that this is unlikely to happen because there is no Romanian of Hungary to conduct such research. No cultural or educational institution in Hungary has employed any Romanian ethnic to make these scientific approaches, and whether this would form in a university in Romania it would remain without employment option. The wishes expressed over time by the leadership of the *Research Institute of the Romanians in Hungary* to be budgeted 5–6 positions for Romanian researchers to investigate aspects of the history of this community were doomed to failure. Basically, thus any attempt of a young Romanian willing to be formed as a historian in a university in Romania, as subsequently to return to research the history of the ethnic he’s belonging to, is doomed to failure. The potential youth who would form as historians in Hungary would be

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 14

²⁵ Santău 1999, p. 75–111

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 77

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 85–86

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 89

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 97–98

and even are tributary to the dominants of the Hungarian historiography regarding the Romanian community in Hungary. The views expressed by Gheorghe Santău and Teodor Misaroș belong to some researchers trained in Romania, the first at Cluj and the second at Bucharest.

The brave opinions expressed by Gheorghe Santău and Teodor Misaroș saw the light of print under specific circumstances. Teodor Misaroș was passed into nonexistence when his work was published, before 1989 this being impossible, and Gheorghe Santău was already retired when the occurrence of study, came practically under any pressure, under the “*lectureship of the Hungarian historians*”³⁰, so without to jeopardize his careers or, at best “*to be tolerated, but also marginalized*”³¹.

Until these goals are not achieved, the Romanian community in Hungary has *established* its beginnings at the earliest in the late 17th century and early 18th century. The question remains whether in future will be one to study the beginnings, and especially, who's beginnings.

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³⁰ Petrușan, 1997, p. 91–92

³¹ *Ibidem*