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**PHD THESIS**

**- abstract -**

**The history of Romanian and hHungarian cultural institutions  
in Trei Scaune County 1867-1940**

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**Keywords:** cultural institutions, cultural associations, religious associations, peoples education associations, youth associations, associations of songs, culture, museum, reading societies, casinos, public libraries, itinerant theater, amateur theater, drama, donation, foundation, choir, choral society, urban development, reading, newspapers, books, parties, cultural houses.

## Abstract

The choice of the research topic arose as a challenge and the satisfaction of an old curiosity about the cultural life of Trei Scaune county, while I was dealing with the history of museums in the county, in the early 2000, I succeeded to collect more data. Due to the fact that in the period under review the cultural institutions were represented mainly by associations or societies, I have chosen to address these actors of civil law, both Hungarian and Romanian. The main objective of the research is to demonstrate that in the reviewed area cultural and educational activities of the people were a major concern in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. This was aligned to the cultural movements of the big cultural capitals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Romania after 1920.

As a research method, I used the analytical-synthetic one. First, using the analytical method I tried to identify the main actors of cultural life, then, by the synthetic method I have described proper cultural activities in the period under review. Trying to identify the contacts between the actors of cultural life, I took in consideration their work product and cultural services offered to smaller (specific target group) or larger social groups (public).

As documentation procedure and informing about bibliographic possibilities first I consulted archival funds: state archives from the country and abroad, archives and libraries of institutions, church archives and private archival documents. These include(s) custom printed documents of cultural institutions, statutes and regulations collections, operating reports, running reports, yearbooks. To describe the legal framework in which cultural institutions had been functioning, I have studied legislation in field. The collection of newspapers and magazines from the period I have studied was also very helpful; by using information contained in these publications I have been able to fill the gaps in the past of cultural institutions. Newspapers also gave me an image of how the citizens of that time were thinking about the cultural work performed. Specialized articles published in collections of past studies dealing with certain cultural institutions helped to deepen research, integrating their findings in thesis. I have also consulted several reference works on the history of associations, cultural institutions, municipalities or monographs of cultural history. Through this work I gained an insight view of the social history of the people in the reviewed area and in urban development as an indispensable element of cultural and historical past of region. Dictionaries and encyclopedias helped me to explain certain terms and obtain biographical information about people identified as important players in the cultural life. I also used a series of online publications and documents relating to the topic. A special challenge was the correlation of information found in several literature sources.

The research activity was structured on some specific objectives. I analyzed the establishment of cultural institutions, cultural activities performed by these, emphasizing their role in rural and urban communities. I was also interested of how such institutions and events affected the mentality of the local communities. The development of European and Eastern European cultural institutions represent for me a linear evolution. From this point of view (Through this angle) I was able to compare the development recorded in the Trei Scaune county compared to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Romania and Europe. Taking as starting points the mentioned objectives, I have set the work into chapters and subchapters, as follows: introduction, nine chapters, conclusions, and references. I have divided the chapters focusing on past of cultural institutions into subchapters according to the topic and to the reviewed period. Thus, I defined two periods: the 1867-1918 and 1919-1940 years. The First World War was a transitional period in which only some institutions have worked, others have been removed while others made it impossible to operate.

In the first chapter I described **the history of cultural movements and institutions in countries of Europe, in Hungary and Transylvania**. In the first part of this chapter I took a

few definitions for concepts such as culture and mass culture, quoting Elemér Hankiss, József Kovalcsik and Iván Vitányi. The latter distinguishes two categories of cultural institutions. The first category includes institutions organized by work, home, nationality, social background and world view of members. These institutions, among others, had several cultural functions. The second category includes specific cultural institutions, divided into three subcategories: institutions based on self-organization of local communities - clubs, reading societies, choral societies; institutions with well-defined goals - schools, scientific institutions, institutions specialized in organizing exhibitions; institutions that are at the limit of two previous categories – cultural houses, amateur movement. This part is divided into four subchapters dealing with historical and social conditions which formed the first major cultural institutions in European countries. I brought examples from England (clubs, reading societies, public halls, public libraries) and the German states (reading societies, evening schools, educational associations of workers, German companies, people's homes, homes of workers) of which many were examples for cultural institutions established in the Habsburg Empire. In this chapter I introduced into question the role of church associations in cultural activities in the reviewed period. Urban development and establishment of museums I have considered as an activity that universal civilization has become richer due not only for systematically collecting preserving and conserving antiques, but for cultural and educational role of these institutions, a role that has manifested in the reviewed area, by the museum. In this chapter I considered necessary to discuss the main provisions of the Hungarian law of 1848 and the Austro-Hungarian Empire law, which stood on the basis of functioning of cultural institutions and associations. This aspect of cultural life is particularly important because in the reviewed period (1867-1940) the established cultural institutions survived the First World War. After 1920 they have operated under Romanian law, which affected in organizational terms, most of them being forced to reorganize according to Romanian law of legal personality appeared in 1924.

In the second chapter I present **the population dynamics of the county and neighboring counties, the people from the area** being both promoters and consumers of services of culture offered by cultural institutions. Because the human factor is the central element of my research, being the key element in cultural development too, I considered necessary to address the social history of local residents, using reference works of specialists in social history. The discussions topic I extended to 1830's, decade when the changes within the Transylvanian Society with the decline of agriculture based on the old forms of exploitation and decline of traditional retail market became evident. In those years appear the first intentions of reform even within the Hungarian nobility, which was completed by the revolution of 1848. Even if intentions to change the structure of society, by removing conservatism inherited from medieval times have been only partially achieved in the 1870s we are dealing already with a society partially changed. This year there were already fewer farmers, and the number of merchants and industrialists increased. The development of cities triggers a growing number of citizens becoming less dependent on agriculture. The increased number of officials and intellectuals, along with pastors, teachers, lawyers, writers, doctors, pharmacists form a social group become more aware of the needs of education and culture. In the case of the szekely population there is an issue in addition which diversify the big picture of society: the stratum of soldiers and former soldiers - a category with a strong conscience beside the serfs. These people's living conditions in local communities were not necessarily related to agriculture. The benefits they had for decades have differed from the rest of the society. This is a social class educated in the Empire schools of the time. The existence and manifestation of these social strata may explain a higher degree of literacy in the area from the rest of Transylvania. Even if none of the social categories of szekely people has embraced

the occupation of merchant, and the cities economically were less developed, the presented area shows a general need for education through school and culture.

I tackle the topic of **cultural institutions history of Trei Scaune County** starting from chapter four. Casinos, clubs and reading societies were the first forms of cultural institutions rising in the area. With the reforms in the 1830's, the first casinos of nobility were founded in Transylvania. The casino of Sfântu Gheorghe was established in 1835. Even if it had been opened for a few years, the idea of this form of leisure was rooted within the inhabitants. The first casino was abolished in the years 1842-43 and then used by the city for various commercial purposes. In the 1870s, 1880 was still referred to it by locals as the pub casino or stables casino. In 1842 new casinos appear in Târgu Secuiesc and villages of Cernat and Covasna. The second wave of establishment of such associations in the county dates back to 1860, during Habsburg absolutism. In 1860 was established *Baraolt Reading Society*, in 1865 the *Ilieni Reading Society*, and in 1866 the *Casino of Zagon*. A third wave of reading societies dates back to 1870-1890. In the last three decades a reading society was established in every village. Their activity was similar. They had reading rooms, libraries, newspapers collections, facilities for play. During celebrations they were organizing cultural and artistic activities for the public. Most of these associations were founded for a certain type of members, who came from the local nobles, merchants and craftsmen, priests, doctors, lawyers, teachers and other intellectuals. Artisans, merchants and farmers felt excluded from these organizations and there are many cases when they set up societies with similar objectives and activities. A very good example we have in Covasna, where besides the old casino in 1891, local craftsmen have set up the *Citizens' Society of Covasna*. In this chapter I described the simplest forms of reading societies called public libraries. These institutions were founded in the early 1900s, by the Hungarian government and *Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania (Erdélyi Közművelődési Egyesület – EMKE)*. Localities received in donation books in various fields of interest to villagers. Books were placed in existing association or newly established societies established by EMKE. Thus, before the First World War all localities had reading societies or public libraries accessible to all social categories.

In chapter five, divided into four chapters, I follow **the educational evolution of the institutions**. Although the theme of the thesis not allowed me to treat schools, regarded as common practice in the nineteenth century as cultural institutions, I have extended my research to associations which directly or indirectly aimed at educating people, larger masses or persons belonging to specific groups. First I treat the history of *Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania* in the cultural life of county. The association was established in 1885 and it was known as EMKE. It was actually the organization with the largest number of members, especially in areas where the Hungarian population was minority. Association has set up branches in each county, and the larger cities could set up local organizations too. In Trei Scaune County such organizations existed in Sfântu Gheorghe, Tg. Secuiesc, Baraolt and Covasna, and the most active at county level. Because the centralized organizational structure, county and local organizations have fairly limited range of decision. Their work was limited to developing proposals and measures to improve the situation of Hungarian communities in economic and cultural need. Thus organization supported the development of spas. In this regard was held at the initiative of the county's prefect Pótsa József, and the Association a congress spa in Sf. Gheorghe, in 1891. Also the development of *Transylvanian Carpathian Society (Erdélyi Kárpát Egyesület - EKE)* is related to the name of Pótsa, an active organization today. Due to its persistence, his association had 200 members active in the county, only one year after its establishment, in 1893. The *House of Institutionalized Children* was developed also by the county's prefect. Organization of Targu Secuiesc in 1886 proposed the establishment of a public school or nursery school and a Romano-Catholic parish for

Hungarian minority in Poiana Sărată. At the late nineteenth century, the trade of the county, and especially the economical situation of Tg. Secuiesc was in decline because of the duties war, so the local EMKE asked central organization for help. This, as a measure to improve the financial situation of families in the town in 1887 brings home some workers to produce 3000 army boots for the army. The result of the activities of the association was felt in all areas of life. Due to the EMKE's activity in last decades of the nineteenth century, many organizations have been established: public libraries, choirs, young associations. They wore the name of the central body in their name. I mention these associations in Chapters IV., VI. and IX.

Also in chapter five I study the past of Transylvanian *Association for Romanian Literature and Romanian People's Culture (ASTRA)* in Trei Scaune County. The organization had huge effect on the cultural life of the Romanian people in Transylvania County and Trei Scaune County. Its establishment in 1861 stimulated the Hungarian intellectuals in Cluj to set EMKE. In the history of ASTRA in the county we can delineate three periods of development. Between 1870-1900 functioned the *Brasov-Trei Scaune Territorial Organization*. In 1900 Trei Scaune County has retreated setting up *Ciuc-Trei Scaune Territorial Organization*. It functioned until 1916. Association activity then resumed in 1919 with the establishment of *Trei Scaune Territorial Organization*. About ASTRA operation in the county in the last three decades of the nineteenth century we have limited data. By investigating the activity of the Brasov-Trei Scaune Territorial Organization we know about the general meetings held at Valcele, in 1874, in Covasna in 1893 and Araci in 1913. General meetings of the county assemblies were similar to the central body's meetings. These meeting were opportunities for people to celebrate, by organizing various cultural performances and evenings for locals and guests. Also from this period we have information about education courses organized by ASTRA Brasov held by teachers Andrei Bârsanu and Nicolae Bogdan. Association activity became more intense in the early twentieth century, due to priest Aurel Nistor from Araci village, who became propagandist of ASTRA in 1904. Between 1907 and 1908 he held numerous presentations with topics on agriculture in the villages situated along the Olt River. In 1910 due to his insistence a cultural house was built in Araci village, where in the following years there were held numerous cultural events. Central organization attention in these years was directed to help Romanian schools and churches. Constituent meeting was held on September 28<sup>th</sup> 1919, at which by the active presence of officials and priests the county organization was founded, having as president priest Aurel Nistor and directed by Eugen Nistor school inspector. Its members came from different social classes: craftsmen, teachers, officials, priests, farmers, doctors, pharmacists, engineers. Thus from the 42 members in 1919 the organization reached in 1938 to 86 members. The maximum number of members (196) was registered in 1930. After establishing the association a period of stagnation followed up in 1925, period in which the founders were involved in events related to the installation of new state administration. In this time of stagnation we remark the activity of Aurel Nistor, who in 1920 received assignment of propagandist within counties Ciuc and Trei Scaune counties. During these years we have information about the work on a voluntary basis for the association by regional director of forestry Baiu Crăciun. In 1923 the prefect, Rauca Răuceanu, then president of the county organization, gathers local intellectuals, organizing cultural evenings for Romanian citizens. At the insistence of the central body, association has been removed from passivity by the local doctor Ioan Popa, in 1925. He was succeeded as president of the organization by Ulici colonel in the years 1925-1926, period of reorganization of the territorial organization at country level. After the visit of Vasile Goldis, president of the central organization for the mentioned purpose, the county organization will celebrate the day of December 1<sup>st</sup> each year. ASTRA's attempts to get own building dates back to 1925. Initially the city hall of Sfântu Gheorghe offers a room which was used at that

time by the local casino. With the coming of Mihai Tigoianu as association chairman, in 1926, this office was transferred to the Court building of Sfântu Gheorghe. In 1929 the association purchased from a local merchant a building in the city center where the final office was arranged. The acquisition was carried out through donations offered by several organizations and individuals. A major event of the county organization was held in September 1931 when it hosted the general meeting of the central ASTRA. For this occasion the leadership of the county organization has prepared numerous events, including an ethnographic procession and an exhibition of old and new objects specific to the county. Among the major initiatives of the association we mention publishing a magazine in 1929 titled Buletinul ASTRA and establishment in 1935 the first casino for Romanian intellectuals. With the coming at the head of the association in 1938 of Eugen Sibiiianu the activities of association were further diversified. In this period the activity of local cinema rented by the association became more intense. In this period many schools are organized for the peasant from the county, and new local societies are created (31). With the entry into force of social service law in 1939, this changed the activity ASTRA. The association's name was changed and intensified cultural campaign was set up through cultural houses, key institutions under new law. After suspending the law, in the autumn of 1939 ASTRA has resumed its activity in the frame of Region ASTRA Bucegi. At county level several ASTRA organizations and cultural societies have functioned in villages and towns. The *Territorial Organization of Tg Secuiesc* was established in 1926 under the leadership of V. Basarabescu, its activity resumed to organizing annual festivities. Historical sources speak of increased activity - organizing cultural evenings, peasant schools, exhibition of books - starting in 1931. *Territorial Organization of Ozun* was established also in 1926, but effectively worked from 1930. This organization was characterised by the good organization of the surrounding villages, carrying out activities at the time in 23 communes, of which 9 had public libraries. Organization of Romanian language courses, setting up a sports club, establishment of church choirs, organizing cultural clubs from villages Chichis and Lisnau were among the main concerns of this organization. In village Baraolt ASTRA has become visible since 1935. This year they held cultural evenings twice a week for the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. Increased activity recorded in this organization in Ormenis (now Brasov County) and Batanii Mari villages. Besides the mentioned organizations sources speaks about functional cultural societies in some other villages: Zagon, Valea Mare, Ariuşd, Vâlcele, Breţcu, Aita Mare, Belin, Ilieni, Bixad, Hăghig, Micfalău, Băţanii Mici, Brăduţ, Vârghiş.

Further on I present the results of the research regarding *Teachers Association in Trei Scaune County*, professional organization whose members were teachers. Its objectives were to support the work of teachers through summer courses, setting up libraries, participation in conferences, trips at home and abroad respectively providing support for them and their families. Through their periodical *Era Noua*, specialized magazine that appeared during 1933-1940 I managed to identify key concerns and plans of the organization. Teachers planned among others establishment of schools in villages Poiana Sarata and Ghelinta, composition monographs of localities in the county, supporting the teachers choir, development of school museums and establishing of an ethnographic museum. Among the greatest achievements include establishment of Credit Cooperative Progresul, which in 1936 had 246 share-holders. The cooperative was open to association members. Also in the economic field they have managed to establish credit unions in 55 public schools. These institutions were designed to support teachers in primary schools. Their cultural activity was diversified by a choir called *Renasterea* and a teacher's library. The periodic of association presented articles written by teachers in the county and short monographs of schools. By organizational perspective it was subordinated to the *Association of Regional Association of Teachers from Transylvania*,

*Crisana and Maramures*, which in 1933 became a member of the *Association of Teachers in Romania*. Due to their work profile in this chapter I present the history of *General Society of Teachers from Trei Scaune County* and *Eötvös Association from Sfântu Gheorghe*. Both associations were established after the appeal of Eötvös József cultural minister, who has thought that beside educational institution the establishment of civil organizations is necessary for completion of school reform at all levels of education. Establishment of the association in 1873 by teachers from all regions of the county was part of a stream in the Empire in these years, under which were established professional organizations of teachers in every county. Association was defined as a professional one among its objectives being the popularization and development of public education. As main activity, association members were divided into three branches. They lectured at every meeting about education issues in public education activities by teachers, the role of public libraries, about credit unions in the schools, the role of songs and games in children's education. Some of the material presented at the 46 conferences, 10 practical lectures and 14 communications during 1873-1897 have appeared in printed form. Some of these texts were awarded papers of teachers. The association's board conception about the role of public libraries was that these institutions are needed especially for people not attending any form of education. So they stipulate that every school has to provide sufficient funds for development. The organization has established its own library, a museum of school supplies and as support to members established *Aid and Funeral Association*. Association Eötvös with similar activity established in 1875 has gathered members from the teaching staff of schools from Sfântu Gheorghe. During meetings the organization members presented communications about relationship between school and child education in the family, about education of women on the harmonious development of families, about the role of parents meeting. The main purpose was to support public education by numerous lectures and organizing a choir of teachers and by initiating a periodical: *Székely Tanügy*, together with *Teachers Association from Brasov area*.

The history of two organizations established at central level – *Székely Association for Culture and Development* and *Szekely Society from Targu Mures* - in terms of cultural development throughout the county are found in chapter five. These associations were set up in 1875 in Budapest, respectively in 1899 in Targu Mures. They were marked by achievements in the development of szekely manufacture, a potential area of development in the reviewed area. In statements and publications of the societies are listed development measures in the cultural field area in which the view of leadership of both organizations was closely linked to economic development. Association founded in Budapest on the initiative of intellectuals coming from the reviewed area follows up surveys on szekely industrial products, about rules, the operation and maintenance of forests, about the szekely population's migration. Their aim was to elaborate a draft law about the development of property rights. The result was a study written by Ferenc Kozma titled *State of székely population in terms of economy and culture* document that became the association's operational basis. As concrete measures, the organization has supported several craftsmen in the county by training and qualification studies, offered prizes for students from industrial schools and financially supported vocational, educational schools and also access to market of some craftsmen from the county. Establishment of association based in Targu Mures with similar objectives was a response to serious economic problems faced by counties in the Carpathians curve at the end of the XIX. century. Main concerns of local branches created in the first years of twentieth century were among others: problem of economic exploitation of forests, support of local manufacture, especially those who produce traditional local products, controlling the effects of emigration from the county, proposals on extending the rail network in the north of the

county (Augustin-Malnas-Bixad). Effects of measures taken by the two associations were not as expected, but few remained in the history of the county.

According to their activities youth associations set up in the early twentieth century were an important link of continuing joint extracurricular activities for young people. Data for these associations are presented also in chapter five. The common element with other associations presented in this part of the thesis is the education of people, in this case the younger generation. Since 1902, youth associations in the Trei Scaune County were established mainly at the appeal of *Ministry of Religion and Culture*, Wlassics Gyula. The aim was the education of young people over 15 years. Among the concrete measures of education associations organized literary events, cultural evenings of poetry recitations performed by young, studying and presentation of plays, organizing youth choirs, initiating charitable activities. Among the existing associations in the county is noted *Youth Association of Ilieni*, founded in 1875.

In chapter six I discuss the results of the research on **theatrical activity in the county**. The data resulting from research on theatrical activity in the county I could not synthesize in a single chapter as the dramatic art were among several institutions cultural activities presented in other chapters. After a summary outline of theatrical movement in the area until the 1860s in the first part of the chapter I present the history of the most important amateur theater troops in the county whose legal form of operation was the association. During 1867-1918 in the county played itinerant theater troops come from big cities of Transylvania, parallel with the *Amateur Theatre Association of Sfântu Gheorghe*, *Cultural Association of Târgu Secuiesc*, *Amateur Theatre Society of Borosneul Mare*, and several amateur theater troupes in the villages. The work of these organizations and itinerant troops intersect in many cases. Consulting reference literature I found that amateur theater performances in many cases were postponed until the end of the itinerant theater season in cities. It is a very interesting aspect that the local authorities found important promoting through this form of cultural activity. They supported the establishment of all forms of presenting theater plays for local people. In 1887 amateur theater members plan to set up a cultural gallery in Sf. Gheorghe and to provide space for the *Székely National Museum* was supported both by local and county administration. The project was realized in 1896 when the hall auditorium of the local council was transformed into theater. As another measure to support ambulant theater troop's activity, in 1901 at the mayor's Gödri Ferenc initiative was to set up the *Support Association of Theatre*. Through its activity it is hoped that will provide continuity to quality theatrical performances in the county. Theatrical activity was alive and in the interwar years, when theater performances of itinerant troops from Hungary and Romania were the main attraction. In the interwar period amateur theatrical activity decreased, at least in the cities. Romanian amateur theater troupes were active only. This type of activity we find in **the** villages, where, at the initiative of teachers and local priests, theater troops of young people were set up often without any legal form.

**Cultural activity of religious associations of Trei Scaune County** is an area that cannot be neglected in the research. Data on these associations have been processed in chapter seven. Institutions established with the approval and in many cases at the call of Reformed, Roman Catholic and Unitarian Churches had a very extensive work in the interwar years—some with roots in the Austro-Hungarian period, while others established after the First World War. The work of these associations was related to the needs of the period, when most actors of civil life operating under the Hungarian laws stopped the activity. In many cases the authorities have delayed recognition of their legal personality, others during the war have lost their material basis and the members showed no interest for previous activity. Establishment of new associations appears to be a solution, and the most reliable seemed to be inside the

churches. These associations have tried to fulfill spiritual needs of Hungarian communities from the county reached the status of minority after 1920. They have identified all the deficiencies and through their work succeeded to fill some gaps occurred in cultural and educational life. Charitable activities, the cultural and part of the teaching activities of different organizations have been taken by the union of women and girls, enthusiasm of members contributing to the achievement of objectives of general interest in the villages like renovation of churches, construction of houses of culture and establishment to public libraries. Also through the activity of the *Reformed Women's Union* and *Association of Shrine* of traditional szekely tissue have kept many of these parts in the memory of county residents. These associations have a lot of young people as members. Historical records are rich in data on the activity of *Youth Christian Association of Transylvania* and *Youth Association David Ferenc*.

Chapter eight is dedicated to **museums of Trei Scaune County** and their activity in the cultural field. These institutions, besides the fact that presented the historical vestiges of the region, have important role in cultural and scientific life. Popularization of culture has become a major task of their activity, achieved by presentations of dissemination among citizens in cultural evenings. We followed with interest the evolution of thinking among the intellectuals of county, especially of Cserey Zathureczky Emilia founder of the Székely National Museum regarding to keeping collections in the county and not handing them over to the Museum of Cluj. The decoration of Kossuth donated to the museum has special significance. This gesture fully convinced the founder about the fact that the museums place is in the county. Because of this gesture Ms. Cserey says that the museum is not only of the citizens of the county but of the entire szekely population. These are very important steps in the cultural life of a county located far from the capital of the Empire, where the ideas of Romer Floris shows up in the 1870's. Personal enthusiasm coincided with the national aspiration, when the largest museum in the region was founded, and with the administration of that have been charged a number of counties from the reviewed area.

During research I realized that most data from archives and local newspaper refers to the **activity of choirs and choral societies and other institutions which aimed to spread culture through music and song**. Their work is presented in chapter nine knowing the fact that these data are random, and that the reconstruction of their past is difficult. Organizations in question had the purpose to offer local communities the possibility of leisure wisely. In some villages they were the only source of recreation for local people. So it's easy to understand that local intellectuals were trying to establish choirs in most villages and towns. At the beginning of the reviewed period they occur in schools and churches, and then are created laic choirs, like *Choir of Sfântu Gheorghe*, founded in 1870, the choir of the *Amateur Theatre Association of Sf. Gheorghe* in 1881, *Songs Association of Covasna* in 1875 and *Choir of Baraolt* in 1875. In most cases the data shows that smaller organizations from villages do not obtain permission to function from the *Ministry of Interior*. Their development was closely linked to active members and the support they have received from inhabitants. Choral society's role has changed after the First World War. Like many religious associations societies that led the choral art to the perfection have become real cultural institutions and by presenting choral works have provided a meeting place for the inhabitants. Preparations for competitions and regional competitions organized in the interwar years by *Choral Association of Hungarians in Romania* provided entertainment for art lovers which were present in large numbers at each event. These events provided the opportunity for village choirs to promote their village.

Characteristic to the reviewed area, as the most eastern territorial administrative unit within the Empire was late modernization and urbanization. This however has not been felt in

the cultural development compared with the center of Empire. The first cultural institutions – casinos - were founded in the same decade in: Turda, Zalău, Aiud, Târgu Mureș and Sfântu Gheorghe. With general development after 1867 and the construction of railway network that went through the county the reviewed area comes out of economic isolation. The status of some localities as Aita Mare and Covasna villages and the city of Sfântu Gheorghe and Târgu Secuiesc has changed in the years 1875 and 1876, after the administrative reform, which led to changes in their cultural life. Extended tasks of government in education, justice and public administration has brought varied cultural requirements of inhabitants. In spite of modernization the order of szekely society and territorial division still remained conservative for decades. This was felt in the organizational structure of cultural institutions, they often being created for certain social categories and in some traditional local structures. The dynamics of local communities and strengthening of the social category of traders in the late nineteenth century led to the establishment of their own institutions in Baraolt and Covasna. In the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century all local community members in villages and towns have longed for a theater play, a choir piece or a carnival. Cultural services were diverse, the category "of consumers" the same. Active members of the associations in question present a typical picture of the reviewed period. In rural area teachers, priests, officials appear as members of cultural associations. In localities where there were descendants of nobles we find among the supporters of association with foundation and donations. In urban area members of societies come(s) from officials, industrialists, traders, teachers. High officials from the local and county administration were elected as honorary members of cultural associations. By doing this the institutions were better seen in the society. In the case of religious associations the activity was guided by priests and church teachers or singers. At the head Reformed and Unitarian associations we find priest wives, voluntary associations and activities were run by wives of public figures in the county. Teachers involved in cultural activities as external collaborators, being present in cultural events and scientific sessions or as theater directors. Cultural institutions were gathering places for members of local communities, contributing to the development of solidarity of community members. Another feature of these institutions was the temporary work. Agricultural activities in rural areas made it impossible to organize cultural events in summer time. Activity of associations started in autumn and kept until next spring. Associations, the focus of research were part of civic life. Establishment and operation in each case link the work of one charismatic person in the local community. Without such a leader they lose persistence in their work. The relationship of the local leaders with the local community was very important, who may accept or criticized cultural activity undertaken. First World War was a turning point in the activity of associations. In most cases the activity was suspended during the war, and after 1920 resumed in a completely changed situation, to which had to adapt. According to research we found that some institutions were forced to change its overall objectives disappear or make huge efforts to integrate the new legal system of the Romanian state. Associations with activity centered on fun and recreation persist and take part from tasks of other organizations. From the cultural institutions that I have presented in the thesis just a few had the necessary force to maintain their existence in the reviewed period. Among these organizations are the casinos, church associations, museums and choral societies. At the same time social and economic conditions of the interwar years allows the establishment of new organizations, especially within the church. During the interwar years intensified the work of Romanian cultural associations in the county, for understandable reasons. Even if the legislation during the Austro-Hungarian Empire has made possible the operation of these institutions, population which addressed was represented by a small social group. Romanian population in the surrounding areas of the county, which although they kept

old customs and preoccupations have been almost completely integrated into local communities. It is not coincidence that the county organizations ASTRA in Trei Scaune and Ciuc with reorganization of structures of the association in 1925 have included among activities keeping Romanian language courses for Romanians in the counties. Political and administrative situation of the period allowed ASTRA to develop a comprehensive program of cultural propaganda targeted primarily on entire Romanian population but also the rural community, Hungarians and Romanians. Teachers association in the county as a professional one in an attempt to provide financial support but also professional addressed the whole community of teachers.

The thesis resulted from the research demonstrates that the activity of cultural institutions in Trei Scaune County during 1867-1940 was very diverse and complex. My goal was to present the results of the research started in 2004 and analyze the results within the parameters of universal and Hungarian cultural history. During the research I have studied numerous archival documents, studies and specialized works. Through their analysis I was able to draw up a picture of cultural life of the reviewed period. Collecting, analyzing and publishing data cannot stop here. I am convinced that in state and church archives there are still a number of sources to complete the reconstruction of history of cultural and educational institutions. I believe that through this work I managed to reconstitute the past of institutions which until now were very little known. I believe that is a study covers a deficiency in the study of history of the county, and thought this I open the way for future research on the history of other institutions in the county whose activity takes effect on social life of that time.

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