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**Romanian teachers from Transylvania between 1870-1918. Their
pedagogical, social and national role.
(PhD thesis abstract)**

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The present research, *The Romanian teachers from Transylvania between 1870 to 1918. Its pedagogical, social and national role*, plans to achieve a cultural history of Romanian teachers. The research aims to investigate the teachers and the primary school in a period of time between 1870-1918. It is the period with the most intense and persevering actions of the Transylvanian elite for the establishment of Romanian schools. The school stake has proved decisive for preserving the Romanian identity, not only in Transylvania, but also in Bucovina and Bessarabia (under the Tsarist regime), for five decades. The paper is structured in seven chapters, each consisting of subchapters. To meet the scientific requirements, we used a significant number of sources and a methodology that combines the narrative with comparative studies. The paper examines a number of aspects Romanian teachers life in the two confessional, Orthodox and Greek-Catholic schools. The role of the teachers in this period was extremely important for the Romanian communities, together with their priests they act as a link between the population and the cultural, national and political movements of the time. In a highly polarized society like Transylvania where most of the population lived in the countryside, with only 6.5% of the population living in the urban area at the middle of the nineteenth century, the role of the teacher becomes more important. He is in direct contact with the people, having the greatest influence on them, shaping them in a national and cultural spirit. The teacher's role becomes more important when looking at the structure of the Romanian elite in Transylvania, consisting of civil servants, clergy, teachers, representatives of liberal professions and people with wealth of which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, priests and teachers were the most numerous categories, surpassing each 3000 people. Under these circumstances, the greatest influence on the population of the villages was achieved by the representatives of the two social categories, each in different aspects of life, the priests offered a spiritual education, while the teachers were the exponents of the pedagogical and cultural world.

Being one of the main characters in the Romanian villages, we tried to realize a profile of the Romanian teachers in Transylvania, following their configuration from the perspective of their education, influence in the village, the relationship with the community and the fight against the increasingly aggressive politics of denationalization of the Romanian population. Since the mid-19th century, the teacher's image has changed. The evolution of the teacher, from the less knowledgeable teacher, to an intellectual, a well-known representative of the village, was a tedious and unevenly distributed effort in the Transylvanian province. While at the beginning of the century and up to the middle of it, the teacher was not a central figure of the village, and he had to

earn his bread using his hands, passing on to the children some of his little knowledge, wandering, dressed in peasant clothes, from house to house to gather his wages, mistreated by the priest, humiliated by the jude, towards the end of the century we meet a person who has a better pedagogical training, approaches the image of the intellectual educator, is an active part of the village, and keeps a link with the movement of ideas from the period. The teacher had the difficult task of giving the next generation not only a school education, but he had to offer a religious and moral culture, so that the pupils who left school would become men worthy of the Romanian people. The influence of the teacher is not limited to the school level, his involvement being required in all aspects of society. The school border is overcome, the teacher is required to actively participate in the modeling of society by providing the peasants, through the power of example, the levers needed to achieve economic welfare. The peasant's house and the way it cares for it denotes great shortcomings in education, shortcomings that the teacher had to cover. Order, discipline, health education are a few things missing out of the peasants education that had to be compensated through school and through the teacher's influence.

The duality of the teacher's image during this period is an aspect of shaping his profile. On the one hand, depending on historical sources, we meet a loving, gentle, educated teacher, ready to enlighten the people, on the other hand we see a teacher consumed by economic problems, who neglects his job and is seen by peasants as a financial burden. The salary offered to him was often too small to cover his needs, and the duty to provide cantorial services resulted in humiliating subordination to the priest. The harsh reality of the teachers' life contrasts strongly with the ideal created by the pedagogy of the period. The teacher had the mission to raise the people from the difficult state they were in, to be a guide to them, and in order to accomplish this, he is given the valences of a hero, his destiny having mystical aspects. This image is closer to that of the teacher we find in the literature.

To provide a historical context, I presented in the second chapter of this paper, *Schools and Teachers in Transylvania, up to the dualism*, a brief history of the school and teachers pre-1868, starting with the first school efforts made by the Emperors Maria Teresa and Joseph II. This gives us the opportunity to better observe the evolution of the condition and the social and professional status of the teacher, a transformation that during the nineteenth century changed the image of the teacher from a teacher almost assimilated to the great peasant mass to that of an intellectual, leader of the village. In the next subchapter, *Development and state of the confessional school*, we

followed the development of the school and teachers of the period before 1868. For the establishment of a historical context, we dealt with the school legislation, the development and confessional school in the first half of the nineteenth century, after which we have dealt with the activity of the teachers in the school, following their level of training, the teaching methods, the material used in the school, etc. Finally, in the last subchapter, From Teacher to Scholar. The long transition of Romanian teachers to intellectuality, we have tried to see how the teacher evolved during the nineteenth century up to the First World War. His image changed radically in this period, from a teacher almost assimilated to the peasant mass, to an intellectual, one of the village leaders.

The third chapter of this research, *The Fate of Primary Schools in the Dualist period*, has as main topic the Romanian school from 1867-1918. The school was the realm of the teacher's activity, and his image is often confused with that of the institution he was leading. State law has direct effects on school and teachers and produces conflicts, either voluntarily or involuntarily, between the Hungarian state and the Romanian community in Transylvania. This subchapter follows the three major school laws issued during this period: Law 38 of 1868, introduced by József Eötvös, Law of School Authorities (AL 28/1876), introduced by Trefort Ágoston and "Apponyi's Law", which deals with three legislative acts: AL 26/1907, on the improvement of salaries of teachers from state schools; AL 27/1907, On the Legal Report and Salaries of Teachers in Communal and Confessional Schools; AL 46/1908, About Free Elementary Education. We then presented the Romanian school in Transylvania providing information about its structure, the internal organization, the state it was in this period, but also how it was seen by contemporaries. Based on AL38 / 1868, we want to describe the types of schools present in Transylvania, their way of setting up, functioning, their common points, but also the differences between elementary schools, differences based on religious character. In the next subchapter, *The State of the Romanian Confessional Schools in Transylvania*, we intend to present the condition of the Romanian confessional schools and the efforts of the communities to improve its condition. A valuable contribution to the history of our schools is represented by the school monograph, the subject of the next subchapter, *School Monographs*. These are a valuable source of information that allows us to compare the individualism of each school and to discover how they have evolved in the broad historical context. Finally, we tried to compare the confessional school in Transylvania to that of the other Romanian provinces.

The fourth chapter of this research, *The Romanian teachers from Transylvania in 1868-1918*, revolves around the teachers life. We followed various aspects of his social life, from the education he received to his relationships with his community. In the first subchapter, *Teachers professional training*, we dealt with the professional training of teachers, what the future teachers were learning at schools, how the educational process took place in these institutions, but also how the qualifying exam took place. After the graduation, the teachers had to employ in a school. In the next subchapter, *Employment of Teachers*, we followed the process of hiring teachers, as well as the difficulties encountered in finding a school. Once they came to the teaching staff, they were advised to continue their professional education. In order to come to their aid, conferences and educational meetings were set up, where subjects of interest to the teacher were discussed. The beneficial role for teachers conferences was seen when the metric measurement system was introduced into school. As the teachers did not understand it from the beginning, this theme was put on the agenda of a conference, and the teachers who knew the metric system explained it to their peers. In the next subchapter, *The Material Situation of the Teacher*, we followed the material status of the teachers and how the educational process was affected by the small salary received. The material situation of the Romanian teacher in Transylvania was an intensely discussed issue in the dualistic period. Despite the importance he had in the community, his salary was in many places a wretched one. School legislation in this period has repeatedly regulated the salary level of teachers throughout Hungary, but Romanian communities, too poor or disinterested in this aspect, have ignored the legal provisions. This situation has caused countless conflicts, situations in which the teacher was promised a certain salary but received only a small part of it.

The relationship between the teacher and the community was directly influenced by the salary, so in the next subchapter, *The Teacher and the community*, we focused on the relationship between them and how he had to address this relationship. The role of the teacher within the community goes beyond the boundaries of the school and incorporates the entire local universe. This becomes more obvious when looking at the image of the Romanian villages in Transylvania, a desolate image that forces the teacher to intervene in the community, to provide the villagers with knowledge that would improve their lives, inspire their diligence. The peasant's house and the way it cares for it denotes great deficiencies in education, shortcomings that the teacher has to cover. The deficiencies in the education and culture of the villagers had to be covered by the teacher and the school education, considered the pedagogical press, which put even greater

pressure on the teacher. Criticism for villagers and their lifestyle was also a criticism for the teacher because he had to be an ideal for the community he was part of. We will thus address the teacher's social life. He had to be careful about the places he frequented and the people he met because the eyes of the whole community were on him. The teacher was considered a moral and behavioral model and a cultural intermediary between the members of the community and the exigencies of the state and of the Romanian society.

Another important aspect of the teacher of this period was the obligation to provide cantorial services. This activity was closely linked to the confessional teacher, but became more and more criticized towards the end of the nineteenth century. Obtaining a teaching position was conditional in many villages by providing cantor services. We will look at the effects of this on the teaching activity, but also how it affects the relationship between the teacher and the priest. The teacher's duty to provide cantor services was considered to be embarrassing and humiliating by the pedagogical press of the period. The provision of cantor services renders the teacher inferior in relation to the priest, and this is not accepted by pedagogy who wanted the teacher to have a strong image within the community.

In Chapter V, *The teacher in school*, we dealt with his work in school. We started with the presentation of the school building. For the teacher, the school building was more than just a location, it had the valences of an entire universe, it was the place where it worked, but most of the time it was also the place of his personal activity. We will follow the duality between imaginary and real in the construction of a school. Legislation and pedagogy of the period had strict rules in this regard from the location of the building, the material used, the layout of the windows, the school furniture, etc., but the poor financial condition of the school makes these rules impossible to implement. The last part of this subchapter is dedicated to the relationship between the school building and the health of the pupils and the teacher. An improper school building had health consequences. Even though school could not care for the food or clothing of schoolchildren, it was required to take care of the other things that contribute to the healthy development of children (air, heat, light, etc.).

The next subchapter follows the process of organizing the class and conducting a school day. Romanian teachers in Transylvania were required extraordinary qualities to practice their profession. Classroom organization, teaching methods, personal cultural development,

relationships with parents and other members of the community are all governed by the pedagogy of the period. In class, the teacher had to consider various aspects, from the material used, the way he passed the information, the place chosen in the class, etc. In an attempt to provide a help to the teacher and an ideal of school, *Magazinul pedagogic*, publishes an article detailing how a day of school should be held. It is an imagined school day, presenting the ideal in the classroom, a day that strongly contrasts with the reality encountered in the Romanian school. In the last part of this subchapter we will focus on the curricula. These were a complete guide that teachers could use in school organization. The curriculum addresses subjects such as receiving, arranging and classifying schoolchildren; caring for educational establishments; educational objects; time division and order of hours; rehearsal school; discipline. Each subject is widely dealt with, it describes the purpose of each subject, but also the way it is taught by the teacher. After studying a school day, we will focus our attention on the teaching material used by the teacher. For pupils enrolled in the Romanian confessional schools in Transylvania the textbooks were one of the main sources of information to which they had access. The Romanian textbooks used in school after the introduction of the school law of 1868 tried to form a Romanian national consciousness. However, this impetus was limited at the end of the nineteenth century by the government in Budapest who prohibited the use of certain textbooks in schools. We will focus on the alphabet and reading books used during this period, but also on the other textbooks used in the school.

The following subchapter, *Methods of discipline used by teachers*, has as its theme the school discipline. Discipline was essential for conducting education under the best conditions. The responsibility for imposing discipline in school was of the teacher, and in the dualist era there were many debates on how to impose it. There have been debates on the need to use punishments and rewards in school for the establishment of discipline. The school rewards were meant to help strengthen the student's good impulses, determining him to fulfill his duties in the future, and the purpose of the punishment was seen as to wright the student's behavior, and its use was justified as many times as needed to defeat lusts , bad applications, or damaging impulses. Establishing a discipline in school was not enough for the school to fulfill its purpose. In the next subchapter we will deal with the school frequency. Throughout the dualistic period, the school frequency was low for Romanian pupils, especially in relation to the other nationalities in Transylvania, and the teacher was responsible for reducing absenteeism. Although pedagogy at the time recognizes the existence of several factors that caused a reduced frequency in the Romanian school, they consider

them secondary. The pedagogical press sees the teacher as the main culprit. At the end of this chapter, as at the end of a school year, we will be following the school exams. At the end of each school year students had to pass an exam where their knowledge was tested. For the teacher, this moment was special because it provided the opportunity for parents and supreme authorities (church, state, or patrons) to evaluate the progress made in school and to see the efforts of the students. We will see how these exams were conducted in general, but also on different subjects.

In the next chapter, *Teacher and National Struggle*, we focused on the efforts made by teachers in promoting Romanian culture and their national struggle. We have pursued their involvement in cultural associations and societies, namely ASTRA. Further on, we replayed some representative figures of militant teachers, as they were described at the end of the nineteenth century. They are teachers who have made efforts to help school and promote culture. For example, teacher Ioan Gherman, along with his colleague Nic. Herlea, organized a party in 1876, after which over 200 florins were gathered. This money was the basis for the Sebeş school library. Moreover, in the school year 1876/7, together with the other colleagues, they started a lecture cycle for people gathering 200-300 men and women. Teacher Candid Muşlea organized a feast called "Maialul" in spring where the pupils were trained in national songs and different games.

The teachers efforts to promote national culture had reactions from the Hungarian state, one of which was the *David Pop Case*. Following an investigation carried out by the Hungarian counter-intelligence during the First World War, 16 Romanian intellectuals, four of whom were teachers, were arrested and sentenced to death. Following the efforts of their lawyer, Dr. Ioan Erdely, and through the means made available by Al. Vaida Voevod, Bucovinean deputy Isopescu Grecu and monk Seipel, the case of the 16 arrived in Vienna. After a speech by Deputy Isopescu Grecu in the Vienna Parliament, his speech was published the next day by the Viennese newspapers and had a large European resonance, the Emperor appointed a commission consisting of five military judges, who re-examined the case and released the 16 intellectuals.

In the last chapter of this research, *the Romanian Teacher in the pedagogical press of the dualistic period*, we followed the efforts made by the teachers in the pedagogical press. Pedagogical magazines wanted to be a theoretical and methodological tool for teachers in their school work. In their pages were included subjects of methodology, pedagogical-didactic studies, practical lessons from each educational object, treatises from the history of Romanian pedagogy and literature, biographical sketches, scientific treatises, etc. Calls are being made to teachers to

contribute with articles on various topics in the school field, calls to which teachers have responded through school methodological articles, school and community monographs, biographies, school news, etc. Finally, watching the pedagogical press, we will try to discover a profile created for the teachers, as professional and cultural entities that fit the demands of the age. The pedagogical press offers, on the one hand, the ideal image of the teacher, confronting it with the complex realities of social and cultural life, dotted with imperfections, which need to be remedied. The pedagogical press during this period tries to transform the teacher into a model of social virtue, but also into a real hero of the national language and culture, which manages to confront with the Austro-Hungarian authorities. The press reflects the face of the Savior, a Messianic Savior of the Romanian nation, along with the other figures of the national elite (priests, teachers, lawyers, officials, writers, etc.). The same mythological construction (meaning the transformation of the teacher into a model of professional, social and cultural involvement) is also found in the pedagogical magazines, which endow the teacher with a martyr aura for the welfare of the Romanian people.

Teachers' activity in this period is not limited to the efforts of the school realm. The importance of teachers goes beyond the boundaries of the school, they had an important social role, but also an important political role. At the village level, the teacher was among the few characters who could spread the national ideals to the people, especially under the increasingly aggressive policy of denationalization of the Hungarian government. Teachers have done an intense activity of supporting and promoting Romanian culture by setting up libraries, organizing adult courses, setting up various school funds to help poor pupils, etc. For Romanian schools and teachers in Transylvania, an important help came from the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Romanian People's Culture, ASTRA. It contributed to the dissemination of Romanian culture and literature, it supported through scholarships and prizes the cultural and scientific activity, and fought for the establishment and support of the Romanian schools. Astra's contribution to the development of Romanian education in Transylvania was extremely important, especially towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the 20th century. In addition to its scientific and cultural work, Astra contributes directly to the life of teachers by setting up funds to help them fill their teachers' wages, by awarding prizes to intellectual activity, or by supporting scholarships for young students.

The Romanian teacher of this period is characterized by a word, paradox. He lived in an eternal paradox because, at the official level, his importance in school and society was always highlighted, both the pedagogy of the period and the authorities show their support for the teachers, insist that he receive a better payment, gives him the "aura" of a hero, but down, at the village level, the situation was different. The teacher received a small payment, often even it was difficult to gather from the villagers, which is why he neglected his school obligations, seeking other occupations to complete his income. Also, the duty to provide cantorial services takes up much of the time, the journal *Ludimagister* insisting that the teacher be given the freedom to escape the yoke of this service. Even in these circumstances, the Romanian teaching in Transylvania played an extremely important role in the school, social and political world. They have done an intense activity in supporting the Romanian culture and school, increasingly threatened by the denationalization policy coming from Budapest. The teaching was, together with the priesthood and professor, the most solid professional category in preserving the identity of the Romanians in Transylvania. The last decade, before 1918, we find it in school, but also in the great assemblies of cultural associations, at the great national jubilees, such as that of Astra in 1911. Teachers contributed to the civilization work before and after 1918 being the cultural instrument most effective against illiteracy, ignorance of all kinds.

My doctoral research has gone through a long and laborious investigation route, trying to probe many and various sources, accessible, or less accessible, spread across the Transylvanian areas. Although it has no exhaustiveness pretentions, it has surprised, described, analyzed and compared the most relevant aspects that such a theme required them to approach. *Romanian Teacher in Transylvania between 1870-1918. Its pedagogical, social and national role* is an original contribution to the history-based research on the subject.

Key words: Teachers, confessionnal school, Transylvania, pedagogical press, teacher training, teacher employment, teacher-community relationship.

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