REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE HISTORICAL DISCOURSE OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN SCHOOL •

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Abstract: The present study investigates the way in which the Transylvanian Romanians' national modern conscience developed and ripened in time. The fact that the language and history were two defining elements for shaping the modern national conscience makes the author strive for seeing the role played by the historical discourse in defining the Transylvanian regional national conscience between the 18th and the 19th century. The essential elements of the analysis and the provided answers focus on issues such as: how did the Transylvanian Romanians' discourse emerge and develop?; which were its inspirational sources? which were its defining characteristics?; what role did the historical discourse play for shaping the Transylvanian Romanians' national modern consciousness?

Keywords: Identity, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Intellectual Elites, Europe.

1. The roots of the historical discourse of Transylvanian Romanians in the eighteenth century and its representatives

There are a couple of influences which worked in the creation of the historical discourse of Transylvanian Romanians. The first influence was exerted by the learning environment represented by the schools attended by Romanians in the eighteenth century, such as the schools in Trnava (today Slovakia), Rome, Vienna, and Buda. In the Catholic universities, where most of the Transylvanian intellectuals studied, were dominating Jesuit theses. These theses regarded the Roman character of Romanians (Franciscus Fasching), a vision regarding the religious Union[1] (Martin Szent-Iványi), the theological polemic between Western and Eastern Chriastians (Cristofor Peichich) or the diversity of rites in the Catholic world (Francesco Bidera).[2] These topics were developed by the first generation of intellectuals who came to form what is called the Transylvanian School. These intellectuals, led by the bishop Inochentie Micu, were instructed in the ambience of the Catholic Reformation of that age. This detail maintained its weight for the entirety of their careers.

In all the memoirs that Inochentie Micu submitted to the Viennese Imperial Court (1735-1744), the historical argument of the ancient character and continuity of the Romanian

• This paper was written as part of the research project *Cuius Regio. An analysis of the cohesive and disruptive forces destining the attachment of (groups of) persons to and the cohesion within regions as a historical phenomenon*, financed by UEFISCDI, contract number 4EUROC/24.08.2011. Principal investigator: Dr. Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu.

[1] The religious union refers to the creation of the Greek-Catholic Church of the Romanians from Transylvania. This process started at the turn of the seventeenth century, as Transylvania came under the rule of the Habsburgs. In order to consolidate the Catholic component of Transylvania, the Habsburgs entice of Orthodox Romanians to accept Union with the Catholic Church was seen as a political instrument for strengthening the Habsburg influence over the Transylvanian estates dominated by Calvinist, Unitarian, and Lutheran confessions.

[2] Laura Stanciu „Pionierii Blajului sau despre prima generaţie a *Şcolii Ardelene*", în Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol", nr. 49, 2012, p. 225-242.

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population in Transylvania, from the Roman colonization until his time, had a defining role which prescribed to a large extent the role that history was to play in the political struggle of the Transylvanian Romanians for earning their constitutional place in the political system of the province. The genesis of the Latinist theory, the Roman character, the continuity on the territory of ancient Dacia represented the fundamental ideas that the Transylvanian Romanian elite inserted in the charters of the religious Union with Rome (1697-1701[3]) and which later, Gherontie Cotore, following into the steps of bishop Inochentie Micu, started to build the historical argument of the Roman character and continuity of Romanians.

The fundamental model was the work of Dimitrie Cantemir (prince of Moldavia), purchased in Vienna, in 1757, and later copied by monks from Blaj.[4] The work, entitled *Hronicul vechimii româno-moldo-vlahilor (Historia Moldo-Vlahica)*, 1717, provided a general survey of the history of the Romanian people from its origins until the second decade of the eighteenth century. Even though the Moldavian prince succeeded to deal only with the formation of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, he offered to the Transylvania the platform on which they later were to build their historical discourse, because the central question of the *Hronicul* was the Roman origin, Latinity of language, unity and continuity of Romanians on the territory of ancient Dacia.

Later, in a work of dogmatic theology, *Despre articuluşurile ceale* (On those articles), Gherontie Cotore stated an Enlightenment belief, typical for his generation in Transylvania.[5] Following Cantemir, Cotore and the other members of his generation of the Transylvanian School, were not limiting themselves to the history of Transylvanian Romanians, but included the Romanians of the Romanian Lands as well.[6] Using the writings of Jesuits,[7] in the writings of the theologian Cotore one finds the idea of Roman character of Romanians, known from works by Humanists and chronicles. This idea entered by now in the composition of the concept of *nation* (neam), becoming a ferment. Cotore was aware that on all sides of the Carpathians lived the same *neam* (a community defined by biological descent, see the reference to Roman blood).[8]

The ideas of Cotore found a direct descendat in the writings of Samuil Micu. In his histories, he dealt with the historical evolution of Romanians from all Romanian lands, but the

[3] Eadem, *Şedinţele sinodului român din anii 1697, 1698 şi 1700,* în vol. J. Marte, V. Ioniţă, I. Mârza, L. Stanciu, E. Chr. Suttner (ed.), *Unirea românilor transilvăneni cu Biserica Romei*, vol. I: *De la începuturi până în anul 1701*, Bucureşti, 2010, p. 192.

[4] Blaj, a town in southern Transylvania, became the seat of the Greek-Catholic Bishopric and one of the most important cultural and learning centers of Romanians from Transylvania in the eighteenth century.

[5] The declared goal of the work was "for the greater improvement of my nation which at that time had separated itself from the head of the Church", Gherontie Cotore, *Despre articuluşurile ceale de price* (Trnava, 1746), ed. L. Stanciu, Alba Iulia, 2000, p. 33.

[6] Idem, *Istoria despre schismăticia grecilor*, ed. by Alin Mihai Gherman and L.Stanciu, Cluj Napoca, *Argonaut*, 2006, p. 114-115.

[7] Louis Maimbourg, *Histoire du schisme des Grecs*, 1587; Martin Szentivány, *Dissertatio chronologico-polemica de ortu, progressu, ac diminutione schismatis Graeci [...]*, Tyrnavia, 1703; Cristof Peichich, *Speculum veritatis inter orientalem et occidentalem ecclesias [...]* Additamentum ad Speculum veritatis, eiusdem auctores, Tyrnavia, 1730. See L. Stanciu, *Între Răsărit şi Apus. Secvenţe din istoria Bisericii românilor ardeleni (prima jumătate a sec. al 18-lea)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Argonaut, 2008, p. 119-153.

[8] Gh. Cotore, *Despre articuluşurile ceale de price*, p. 88-89: „We should have no reason to separate ourselves from the Church of Rome because we are truly of Roman blood as our ancestors were sent from Rome in these areas in the time of Emperor Trajan. And the Greeks were punished for no other reason than for separating themselves from the Church of Rome".

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idea which was only starting to coalesce in Cotore's writings came to dominate the entire work of Samuil Micu.[9] For the beginning, the idea was still impregnated with a strong religious overtone. For Cotore and his contemporaries, in the conditions of the political system of the principality of Transylvania, dominated by the principle of "unio trium nationum", the acceptance of the Unions with the Church of Rome was instrumental for the granting of political rights to Romanians.[10] In the discourse of Cotore appears the old cliché with educative and moralizing aims which opposed a glorious past to a present seen as decadent.[11] In Cotore's personality is already outlined the Enlightenment attitude of the generation of Samuil Micu and his disciples, Şincai and Maior.

2. The birth of the pan-Latinist ideology. History as argument in the political struggle

From the early stage of his historical writing, Samuil Micu appears as an engaged historian, filled with the militantism characterizing his age, which proposed to continue the political program designed by Inochentie Micu. *De ortu progressu, conversione Valachorum* [1773], fragment of the future work *Brevis Historia Notitia,* introduces us in the tumult of the national struggle, to which history became a servant. The work argued with historical data the ancient character of the Romanian episcopate thereby justifying the granting of the title of metropolitan of all Greek-Catholics from the Empire to the bishop Grigore Maior.[12] He made efforts to cover the history of all Romanians, to decipher their origin and to present their situation in the eighteenth century in all his works (*Brevis Historica Notitia, Istoria românilor cu întrebări şi răspunsuri, Istoria* şi *lucrurile* şi *întâmplările românilor).*[13] He discovered the proofs for his arguments in the writings of ancient and humanist authors such as Dio Cassius, Xiphilinus, Eutropius, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Antonius Bonfinius. *Brevis Historica*

[9] Pompiliu Teodor, *Sub semnul Luminilor: Samuil Micu*, Cluj Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000, p. 210-248.

[10] The principle of "unio trium nationum" refers to the collaboration of the Transylvanian estates of the fifteenth century, namely the nobility, Saxons, and Szeklers for the defense against external and internal threats and resistance to royal appointees. The first written unions between the Transylvanian estates appeared in 1437, 1438 and in 1458. After the formation of the principality of Transylvania, in 1541, the political system maintained this model of exclusive participation in the diets of the principality for the three estates which after the Reformation was completed with the principle of political representation of the four confessions, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian. The constitutional agreements of Transylvania produced in the late sixteenth century pronounced Romanians as "tollerared for the benefit of the state" and denied them any political representation. Their Orthodox confession was not accepted as constitutional either. This is the reason why the Greek-Catholic intellectuals embarked in the eighteenth century on a political struggle for obtaining equal political rights for Romanians in Transylvania and access in the political system of the principality.

[11] Gh. Cotore, *Despre articuluşurile ceale de price*, p. 89: „The Romanian nation too was in the bygone times a famous and praised nation, but now it is obscure and suffers under the insults of everyone. In the bygone times it was curageous and strong at war, and now it is powerless and more fearfull than other nations. In the past it was wise, and now it is embedded in the cloud of ignorance. It was honored by everyone, but now it is despised by all. In the past it ruled in Transylvania as well, and now not even in its own country. In the bygone times other nations served it, and now it is despised by those nations. Earlier it was full of moral behaviour, and now it is rich in in immoral deeds. Earlier seldom was somebody punished with impalling, and now they hang in gallows and spikes".

[12] Keith Hitchins, *The identity of Romania*, Bucharest. The Enciclopedic Publishing House, 2009, p. 71 - 73, 100.

[13] P. Teodor, *Sub semnul Luminilor: Samuil Micu* , p. 188-193; 261-270. K. Hitchins, *The identity of Romania*, p. 73, 100.

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Notitia (1778),[14] was a work written on the basis of internal chronicles and external sources. This work was addressed to the foreign public aiming to present the Romanian nation, its origin, and its continuity in Dacia. It was published before the publication of the works by the Saxon Transylvanian authors, Franz Joseph Sulzer, Christian Engel, and Joseph Carl Eder, which disputed the idea that Romanians were autochtons in Dacia. Although written under the influence of Vienna, the *Brevis Historica Notitia* was fundamentally influenced be the ideas and even the formulations existing in the *Hronicul* written by Dimitrie Cantemir, to which Samuil Micu added nummerous literary informations and even archeological details. Being influenced by contractualist and Enlightenment ideas of his century, Micu envisioned in the past a contract signed by two peoples, on whose basis he imagined the existence of a former liberty, a happy society, in which Romanians and Hungarians were equals.

A new stage in the political discourse of the Transylvanian Romanians was opened by the rejection of the most important political writing of Romanians in the eighteenth century, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, and with the and the political reversal occuring in the Empire after the death of Emperor Jeseph II (1792). As a result, *Istoria românilor cu întrebări şi răspunsuri* (The history of Romanians with questions and answers) had primarily a political goal.[15] It was a history of Romanians from the ancient times, in an accessible composition, aiming to prove the justification of equal rights of Romanians with other Transylvanian nations. The Jacobine social literature inspired in Transylvania the revolutionary cathechisms. Samuil Micu anticipated these catechisms with this work having the goal of creating a Romanian political opinion favorable to the struggle for national emancipation. Just like other European illuminists, Samuil Micu believed in the force of "opinion". The representative work of Samuil Micu is *Scurtă cunoştinţă a istorii românilor (1792-1796)* (Brief knowledge of Romanians' history). In the paragraph entitled "Statul românilor din Ardeal" (The status of Romanians from Transylvania) appears the Romanian view about the Reformation. Samuil Micu concluded that from the time of Reformation dated the definition of Transylvanian Romanians as "tollerated" and "aliens in the country". He learnt about the legend of dismounting of Wallachia from a chronicle of Wallachia and used extensively the Wallachian and Moldavian chronicles in dealing with the process of formation of the two Romanian principalities. Different from other western Enlightenment historians, Micu discerned with more perception the lights and shadows of the Middle Ages. For the reason, his last work, *Istoria şi lucrurile şi întâmplările românilor* (The history, facts and deeds of the Romanians) is more valuable than his previous works being richly argumentated and allowing space for narrative and memorial literature. There is also a rich presentation of the political history of Wallachia and Moldavia, where the Wallachian, Moldavian, Polish, and Hungarian sources confer amplitude to the exposition.[16]

At a time when history became an *instrumentum regni*, it was necessary to provide sustained effort as concerns the modernization of content as well as methodology. A unitary history, without gaps between epochs, required command of sources, critical approach,

[14] The title of work is: *Brevis Historica Notitia Originis et progressu nationis daco-romanae seu ut quidem barbaro vocabulo appelant Valachorum ad initio usque ad seculum XVIII authore Samuele Klein de Szad, Anno Domini DLCCLXXVIII.*

[15] Pompiliu Teodor, *Despre Istoria românilor cu întrebări şi răspunsuri a lui Samuil Clain,* în *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, vol. 13, nr. 2, 1960, p. 203.

[16] P. Teodor, *Sub semnul Luminilor: Samuil Micu*, p. 210-236.

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organization of information, professional argumentation of the positions formulated. The distance of several decades between Dimitire Cantemir and the first representatives of the Transylvanian School had to be filled with substance capable to support the historical projects of this admirabile generation of intellectuals. This role was taked by Gheorghe Şincai.

One of Şincai's foremost achievements was the translation in Romanian of Greek, Latin, or Byzantine historical texts, the effort of making available the precious information of the Early Medieval sources, and in general sources in German, Hungarian, Italian, or French. For the second half of the eighteenth century his achievement represented a substantial gain both, in terms of language, as well as for the value of the information introduced in the circulation with the aim to sustain the national discourse. The number of sources employed by Şincai is impressive. In contrast to other contemporary historical works and of his colleagues of generation, the synthesis written by Şincai, *Hronica românilor*, has a special structure. Its construction is sustained by two massive collections of unpublished manuscripts, *Notata ex variis authoribus*, a real historiographic diary amounting to 26 volumes[17] and *Rerum spectantium.* Through form and content, the latter belongs to the conception and methodology of critical history.[18] Apart from the encyclopedic character and the historical information of the age, the two works encompass the plan of the history of Romanians conceived by Şincai in dialog with the ideas of Mabillon, Tillemont, Muratori, the historiography of S*taatenkunde* and mostly the Hungarian historiographical school for collecting primary sources.

There exist a series of recurrent concepts, reconstructions, that appear in the historical works of the age which appear not only in Samuel Micu, Gheorghe Şincai, but also to Petru Maior and Ioan Budai-Deleanu. Samuil Micu contributed to giving the idea of Latinity a new destination tightly connected with the objectives of the movement for national political emancipation. In Şincai's case, who continued the efforts of contributing to historical argumentation in support of a new ideological construction, the work resulted primarily in quantitative accumulation. A second characteristic of the historical writing aimed at the consolidation of national identity was the clear tendency of covering the history of all Romanians in unitary, across-provices, from the Antiquity to the Modern Age.[19] Şincai's *Hronica românilor*, was a massive work, from whose title one notices Cantemir's supra-regional approach aimed at writing the history of all Romanians. In this work the narration, interpretation and explanation follow the presentation of primary sources. The preference for writing exclusively in Romanian derives from the desire of sharing his work to all Romanians. Hronica transmits the feeling of love for one's own nation. Şincai considered patriotism as the most important quality of a historian, one of his goal being the cultural emancipation of Romanians.

[17] *Notata ex variis authoribus per G. Gabrielem Sinkay ordinis S. Basilii M. Transylvanum (*ediţie electronică de Ana Maria Roman Negoi), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Argonaut, 2006.

[18] *Rerum spectantium ad universam gentem Daco-Romanorum seu Valachi cum summaria collectio ex diversis authoribus facta a Georgio Sinkai de eadem secundum ordinem chronologicum,* în A. M. Roman Negoi, *Deconstrucţia discursului istoric la Gheorghe Şincai: analiză sursologică* (resursă electronică), Cluj Napoca, Editura Argonaut, 2007.

[19] See Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček (ed.), *Discourses of collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945). Texts and Commentaries, Late Enlightenment - Emergence of the Modern National Idea*, Budapest-New York, Central European University Press, 2006, *passim*.

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With the publication of *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dachia* (1812) (The history of the beginning of Romanians in Dacia) by Petru Maior, the history of Transylvanian Romanians received an emphasized political overtone from the perspective of national doctrine by the creation a real discourse on origin, definition and development of national identity in which religion, tradition, culture, language and history of Romanians were both subject and object of debates. This work illustrated the moment and requirements of that time, the Enlightenment ideals instrumentalised politically and set into the service of the nation.[20] This writing was conceived and produced as a response to the polemical attitude of the contemporaries towards the historical arguments used by Romanian intellectuals in the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* (1791). The main three ideas informing the historical writings before Maior, that is the Roman character, Latinity and continuity of Romanians, supplemented with a few more ideas, such as the role of Romanians in the defense and consolidation of Christianity, and the history of the Middle Ages populated with some medieval figures, themes favored by Cantemir, Samuil Micu, and Gheorghe Şincai, needed to be promoted in a work able to persuade both the public opinion as well as the detractors of the Romanian *Supplex*. Given the purpose, in case of Maior it was necessary to focus on a central theme, the most fit for polemical debates in the age in order to persuade the reader through an unbreakable logical organization of the historical arguments serving the achievement of national objectives.[21] Thus, in the discourse of the Transylvanian School, started the debate concerning the origin of Romanians. Maior's work aimed to make a synthesis of the conceptual and informational accumulations which was to provide to his citizens and the future generations an "attitudinal" history.[22]

Ion Budai-Deleanu dealt with the question of the origin of Romanians, and for the first time in Romanian historiography, he also approached the questions regarding the origin of Hungarians, Szeklers and Saxons. Analyzing the primary sources, based on the arguments of the origin of Romanians and the Latinity of the language, he focused also on the question of continuity of Romanians in the area north of the Danube. Budai-Deleanu and Maior asserted the idea of continuity of Romanians in Dacia and rejected the thesis proposed by Sulzer, of an immigration of Romanian from south of the Danube. After short presentations of the history of Dacia and the tenth-thirteenth centuries, both authors dealt with the legal and social evolutions of Transylvania starting from the fourteenth century. Possessing a good command of the legislation which defined the obligations of Romanians as serfs, Budai-Deleanu studied very closely the history of dependent peasantry in Transylvania. In several works, such as *De originibus populorum Transylvaniae,* and in *Introducere istoricească* la *Lexiconul românesc-nemţesc* (Historical introduction to the Romanian-German lexicon), he rejected some theories regarding Romanians proposed by Sulzer, Engel, Thunmann and Eder.

In the spirit of the Göttingen historical school, Budai-Deleanu considered necessary the integration of the national history in the general history in order to clarify the questions regarding the beginning and origins of the peoples on the territory of Dacia. Thus, he

[20] Moritz Csáky, *Von der Aufklärung zum Liberalismus Studien zum Frühliberalismus in Ungarn*, Wien, 1981, p. 171 - 176.
[21] Robert Wulthnow, *Comunities of Discourse. Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation*, in *The Enlightenment and European Society*, London, Harvard University Press,1989, p. 311 – 349.
[22] L. Stanciu, *Biografia unei atitudini: Petru Maior (1760-1821)*, Cluj Napoca, Editura Risoprint, 2003, p. 219-233.

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extended the limits of his investigation well beyond the traditional borders, using Armenian, Chinese, Persian, Scandinavian sources. The work *De originibus populorum Transylvaniae* was planned as a short compendium of the history of Dacia from the earliest historical mention of the geographical area to the end of the eighteenth century. The geographical span of his work covered the whole territory inhabited by Romanians. His work was a polemical synthesis specific for the Enlightenment in which the author attempted a modern debate on the origins and history of all peoples which crossed the territory of Transylvania, starting with Scythians, Thracians, Dacians, Slavs, Hungarians, Saxons, Szeklers in discussing the origin of Romanians. Erudition and tendency towards encyclopedic digression are present in all pages. The majority of historical ideas formulated aimed to sustain the political ideology, the development of the Romanian national consciousness. The work promoted the right to the land (*jus soli*) and the right of blood (*jus sangvinis*).[23] Historical arguments combined in Budai-Deleanu's work with legal arguments in the attempt at demonstrating that all people had equal rights. A fundamental criterion for establishing the origins and kinship of peoples was the language. The thesis reflects the influence of the Göttingen historical school, received through the works by August Ludwig Schlözer.

Another question on which Maior and Budai-Deleanu focused, where Schlözer's influence can be perceived, is the outlining of the Ancient and Middle Ages from the perspective of an exemplary past. For the sake of political argumentation and pleading, both historians focused on commenting of internal and external sources with the aim at clarifying the older chronologies for sustaining the thesis regarding the origin of Romanians, continuity of the Romanian people and demonstration of the Latinity of the language. Budai-Deleanu added an Appendix referring to the status of Transylvanian Romanians in the Middle Ages and tried to demonstrate with juridical arguments the invalidity of the laws which imposed the system of three nations, and the exclusion of Romanians from the system of Estates. In Budai-Deleanu's view, the alteration of the rights of Romanians and of their confession was produced by the Reformation (sixteenth century), the creation of the proselytizing protestant principality and of the adoption of law codes in the seventeenth century. In his opinion, it was a legislation in which, illegally and abusively, were introduced provision which excluded the Romanian people from the political activity of Transylvania.

Budai-Deleanu was the first to address the question of forms of government. The relation of the individual with the state, the relations between the lay, rational consciousness and the dominating religious mentality was discussed by him in the spirit of Voltaire, but in a prosaic manner. Following ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu, Budai-Deleanu presented the best form of governance and defended the natural equality of peoples. Politically, the previous historians were close to the prudent Josephine liberal concessions, but the ideas of Budai-Deleanu bring him in the proximity of the French Enlightenment.

[23] Victor Neumann, *Exegeza trecutului ca militantism politic. Cazul gândirii lui Ioan Budai-Deleanu. Geneza profeţiilor despre trecut, în AII George Barit,* XLVII, 2008, p. 345-361. Idem, *Neam, popor sau naţiune? Despre identităţile politice europene*. Ed. a II-a. Bucureşti, 2005, p. 51.

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Conclusions. The continuity between Enlightenment and Romanticism historical discourse

From the moment of signing the religious union of Romanians with the Church of Rome (1697-1701) the historical right became a pillar of the historical discourse. The union facilitated the birth of the historical argument of the Roman character and continuity of Romanians. Later, this discourse was employed in order to support the introduction of Romanians into the political system of Transylvania, together with the natural right, as it was invoked in all political petitions of Romanians in the eighteenth century (1743, 1744, 1748, 1791, 1792). These were not necessarily new ideas. In fact, these were the theses already developed by humanists (Bonfini), intermediated by the Jesuits and reintroduced in the public discourse by the bishop Inochentie Micu. This theory was then further transmitted in the public by the representatives of the Transylvanian School. The definition of the historical conception of the Roman character and continuity took place in stages, starting with the drafting of the religious union charters, through the moments of Inochentie Micu, Gherontie Cotore, and later through the stage represented by Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Şincai. The works by Petru Maior represent the stage of instrumentalization of a fully-fledged concepts of Roman character and continuity in the political struggle. The synthesis of the Daco-Romanist theory in the final formula of the Transylvanian school, a theory embraced by the Latinist school of the Transylvanians (Timotei Cipariu, August Treboniu Laurian) in the nineteenth century, was outlined by Ion Budai-Deleanu.

The historical discourse and all writings of the Transylvanian School followed a certain scheme, a program that was applied be three succeeding generations of Romanian Transylvanian intellectuals. The program was conceived by the generation of Gherontie Cotore and Grigore Maior and initiated by Samuil Micu. He collected and organized systematically the internal chronicles and the general plan of the historical discourse of the Transylvanian school. He was assisted and seconded nu Gheorghe Şincai, the representative of the second generation, the one who succeeded to create a coherent and convincing image, based on primary sources, of the history of Romanians. Using the same strategy applied by Samuil Micu, namely of a construction achieved by stages, he covered systematically the gaps in the documentation of the history of Romanians, using external sources. The third generation, through Petru Maior, popularized and set in the context of European ideas the discourse of the Transylvanian School. The polemical writing *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dachia* offered to the contemporary readers an atitudinal history, and through argument, the authority of written word. His friend, Ion Budai Deleanu, through a rich and poliglot, documented, and argumentated, introduced the discourse of the Transylvanian school in the European scholarly literature and gave a final contour to the identity and historical conception transmitted to the heirs of the Transylvanian School.

The historians of this province, regardless of ethnic origin, developed (in the seventeenth and eighteenth century) developed a strong regional consciousness. The obsessive question of origins, of the political and social situation referred, often, to the integral history of the principality, even though in this vision is present the polemic and confessional discourse. The Transylvanian historiography in the pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment periods focused on the special social-political-geographical, cultural and religious realities of the principality. The vision of the historian could not overlook the cluster

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of ethnic groups, different confessional structures and spiritual traditions. The patriotism of the historians led to the birth of the national idea, bearing with it the critical spirit, seeking a renewal because the state of Transylvania was saddening (Georg Krauss, Peter Bod, Gherontie Cotore). This critical stance urged the historians to serve the public interest, reconstruction, historical re-eavaluation, and a constructive socio-political attitude. Setting in order and improvement represented the rallying flags of the Transylvanian historiography on the eve of Enlightenment. To set in order the historical information, was beyond the utilitarian and confessional gestures, a political and patriotic action (Josef Benkö, S. Micu, Gh. Şincai).

The answers to the questions *how did the historical discourse produced by Romanians appear* and *what are its defining components* need to be looked after in the context of its birth. It grew from the desire of historical legitimation of Transylvanian Romanians and as a response/reaction to statements of the competing regional historiography, Hungarian and Saxon, which deemed Romanians as migrants settling in Transylvania in the ninth-tenth centuries, challenging also their Roman origin and character. The historiography represented an expression which translated the Eastern Christian religious belonging and the lower social status of the Romanian community in the province and its aspiration at stepping beyond its condition. Thus, the regional historiographical polemic appeared and the contribution of Romanians made it known at European level. As in the cases of Hungarians' or Saxons' historical discourse, the Romanians' one was also one of local history, which employed the arguments and the sources of the Jesuit historiography and pre-Enlightenment ideas of Dimitrie Cantemir on Latinity, Roman character and continuity of Romanians in Transylvania. In this mode came to age an identity concept which produced a polemical synthesis promoted by the Romanian elite which was later called *Şcoala Ardeleană* (Transylvanian School). The particularity of the historical discourse with a national touch promoted by these leaders consisted in the combination of Enlightenment arguments and components with the militant Romanticist ones.[24]

In the eighteenth century the the research focused on the discovery of the common origin of the Romanians. The new identitary analysis focused on all historical sources of the past of Romanian people, promoting the idea of the common origin. The identity consciousness, as preamble of the national consciousness, produced the history of Romanians through the works of Samuil Micu, a research which appeared in the search for origins. He aimed for a double goal, the affirmation of the identity of Romanians and the rejection of negative assertions made by foreigners about Romanians. Later, Maior concentrated on the Latinity, Roman character and Christian traditions of Romanians. Budai-Deleanu also focused on the origins of Romanians. Following the example of the Saxon historian, Laurentius Toppeltinus, Dealeanu tried to reconstruct the origins starting from a Baroque perspective of the Transylvanian historiography. He was influenced by the Göttingen school and practiced a "historia militans" in approaching the origins of the peoples of the province, focusing on the history and role of the Romanians in Transylvania. In his opinion, Transylvania was an area of contacts, living together, but also of conflicts between different ethnical groups.

[24] Idem, *Transylvanian Enlightenment European influences and local intellectual ambitions* în Laura Stanciu, Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu (ed.), *Transylvania in the Eighteenth Century. Aspects of Regional Identity*, Cluj Napoca, Mega Publishing House, 2013, p. 45-51.

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The discourse of the historians of the Transylvanian School was in fact the employment of historical ideas, in the ideological and political context of the age. Thus appeared a permissive discourse, situated between political and historical discourse, which made possible the conscious inclusion of the Enlightenment gains by the Romanian community. The historical element - build on the complementary ideas of origin, Latinity, Roman character, continuity, unity - gained precedence and constructed the national ideology. Following the steps of Cantemir, Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Şincai, and Petru Maior the consciousness of the unity of origin was becoming consciousness of unity of interests. There was an efficient relation between the Enlightenment and the national consciousness, on the stage of crystallization. Without stimulating the formation of the national consciousness, the Enlightenment favored its development. This was characteristic feature brought the Transylvanian Enlightenment closer to the Central European Romanticism.[25] Similar to the Romantic historiography, the "magnificence" of the past contrasted to the "decadence" of the present appeared like a leit-motif in the works of Cotore and Maior.

The idea of writing about the Romanian past as a whole rather than as a provincial history appeared in the works of Cantemir, Micu, Şincai, Maior and Budai-Deleanu. In contrast to Maior, Şincai achieved rather a repertory of documents, and date, facts regarding the history of Romanians from 86 AD to 1739. His polemic with the contenders were mostly indirect. For Şincai the document and its content had precedence. Maior was less of an erudite, but he compensated with setting ideas in context, subjectivity, and originality. He succeeded to turn the medieval figures in heroes of their time, Romanians of the Romanian land. Maior discovered the force of these symbols, given by the common land and blood of the nation, in the birth of the sentiments of patriotism. He prefigured the Romanticism of the next generation of historians.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Romanian society felt the need of a program of the Romanian sentiment in Transylvania. The Transylvanian School responded to this need by conceiving and applying this program. The intellectuals grouped in the Transylvanian School offered to the Transylvanian Romanians the modern conception regarding their language, history and culture. They offered the first coherent and credible discourse on the Romanian national identity. They collected the primary sources and articulated the first arguments of the history of the Romanian nation, thereby setting the basis of the Romanian modern culture.

Translated and adapted by Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu

[25] Iosif Wolf, *Herderianismul - componentă a ideologiei generaţiei române de la 1848 din Transilvania*, în *Marisia,* VIII. 1978, p. 151 - 155; P. Teodor, *Interferenţe iluministe europene*, p. 314 - 315; Rudolf Vierhaus, *Historische Interesse im 18.Jahrhundert*, în vol. Hans Erich Bödeker, Georg G. Iggers, Jonathan B. Knudsen, Peter H. Reill, *Aufklärung und Geschichte*, p. 268 - 269; Nicolae Bocşan, *Ideea de naţiune la românii din Transilvania şi Banat (secolul al XIX-lea)*, p. 77; Anne - Marie Thiesse, *Crearea identităţii naţionale în Europa. Secolele XVIII – XX*, Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 2000, p. 49.

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