

Legacy of two crowns: Romanians and Vlachs in contemporary Serbia

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Abstract:

The Romanian community living in the post-post Yugoslav Republic of Serbia presents the particularity of being split between two groups self-naming themselves with different yet equivalent names: Romanians and Vlachs. Their different modernization experiences explain this particularity of self-identification. The two cases confirm the thesis that the modern nation is a construct, a build community while the primordial elements of identity, the ethnicity, the similarity of spoken idioms, and (in some cases) the confessional particularity, does not evolve into a modern national identity without the action of an agent. The role of the state is crucial: depending on its agenda it may foster or block the group's emancipation and identity conservation efforts. Assimilation programs may have different results depending on the general development degree of the cultural-ethnic community – modernized communities, with strong intelligentsia and bourgeoisie are able to resist successfully to strong pressure and repressive acts, while less modernized, traditional communities are more easily assimilated.

The Romanian community post-post¹ Yugoslav Republic of Serbia presents the particularity of being split between two groups self-naming themselves with different yet equivalent ethnonyms: *Romanians* and *Vlachs*. The two groups are locally identifiable in

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¹We considered that Yugoslavia embraced forms under three different political regimes as a multinational Kingdom, after the Second World War, than as Socialist Federal Republic and, finally after the fall of Communism, as Federal Republic. The territory of Serbia, as part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and of the Socialist Federal and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia took shape after the First World War based on the international agreement concluded at Trianon. However, the territory of the actual Republic of Serbia is smaller than the one of the pre-1929 Kingdom of Serbia, which was a component of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. The post-Trianon Kingdom of Serbia also included the territory of actual Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Vojvodina and Kosovo. Skopje/Macedonia became a distinctive republic within the Socialist Federal Republic and proclaimed its independence in the early nineties. Vojvodina and Kosovo received administrative autonomy within the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia - based on this administrative autonomy the later claimed its independence, which is recognized by a significant part of the international community, yet not by the actual Republic of Serbia.

regions with different historical experiences, both modern and pre-modern: Voivodina/Banat and the East Serbia. While Serbia (the state of citizenship for all these individuals) considers them as part of two different communities (see Census categories) and draws institutions accordingly, a significant number of them, from both groups, acknowledge their relation with Romania (as *related state*²), formally assuming the Romanian cultural identity³. We consider that this particularity of self-identification is explained by the different experiences during modernity (from the end of the Ottoman rule to the creation of the Yugoslavia/The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians).

Romanians and Vlachs in actual Republic of Serbia – location and origins

As we mentioned above, the two groups composing the Romanian community in actual Serbia are identifiable by regions. Thus most of the self-identified *Romanian* individuals live in Voivodina (statistical region) in the three Banat districts (North Banat, Central Banat and South Banat), while the most of the self-identified *Vlach* individuals live in Eastern and Southern Serbia (statistical region) in Nis, Branicevo, Zajecar and Bor districts. An alternative approach, which takes into consideration the traditional (pre-modern) regions indicate more clearly that the two groups are located in some transborder cultural regions. These two regions are *Banat* (which includes territories that are part of actual Romania, Hungary and Serbia) and the *Valley of Timoc* (which includes territories which are part of actual Serbia and Bulgaria), both of them supporting trans-border local identities assumed by their inhabitants – (ro. *bănăţean* and *timocean*, referring both to a person which is originated in the area of Banat/Valley of Timoc and a way of saying/doing/performing which is specific to people living in the area as cultural mark⁴).

The TOPONYMES of the two historical regions⁵ reflect their pre-modern experiences. Thus, the toponyme *Banat* originates in the common noun *banat* (present in various languages in the region, a word with disputable origin⁶) which refers to a territorial unit with a defensive role within the Hungarian Kingdom in its vicinity with the Balkan Slavic states (led by Bulgarian, Serbian or Croatian rulers). The toponym *Valley*

² See the definitions given by the Venice Commission (a consultative body of the Council of Europe) within its Report regarding the preferential treatment granted to the national minorities by the related state (2001)

³ See the Declaration of the Romanian cultural identity assumption, as stipulated in the Romanian Law no.299/2007 *regarding the Romanians abroad support*, permanent link <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/87091>, accessed last time on February 2, 2018

⁴ On the Romanian character of both communities see the field research of scholars from the University of Timișoara, especially Otilia Hedeșeanu, *Mă razumești, fata mea...*, *Note de teren pe Valea Moravei*, București, Paideia, 2007; *Idem*, “Timocenii - documente pentru identitate, Provincia”, 2010 a series published in several monthly issues of the review

⁵ Following Sven Tagill (see *Regions in Central Europe: The Legacy of History*. West Lafayette, Ind., Purdue University Press, 1999) we assume that at the level of most local communities some may find mental structures formed in historical ages (see *la longue durée*) which shape regional identities (sometimes ignored at the level of the nation-states)

⁶ On the etymology of the noun *banat*, Vasile Docea proposes an Iranian-Avar origin (see Vasile Docea, *À la recherche du Banat disparu* in Adriana Babeți and Cécile Kovacsazy (coord.) “Le Banat: un El dorado aux confins”, Paris, Circe, 2007.

of *Timoc*, on the other hand, echoes the Greek-Latin hydronym *Timacus/Tymakos*. Both historical regions conserved their territorial unity for a significant period of time of more than half of a millennium:

Banat is bordered by the water flows of Mures, Tisa, Danube and Timis in the Western Romanian Carpathians Mountains (called locally The Mountains of Banat, see ro. *Munții Banatului*). The cultural region was shaped by several successive administrative units centred by the city of Timisoara/Temesvar/Temeschwar/ Temeschburg under the rule of the Hungarian Kingdom (between the 12th and the 16th centuries), the Ottoman Empire (between the 16th and the 18th century), and the Habsburg Empire (between the 18th and 20th centuries). The *Valley of Timoc* is encompassed by the tributaries of the Timoc River streaming from the low mountains between Vidin, Negotin, Bor and Zajecar. The region was shaped by its natural borders and the distinctive identity of its Romanian inhabitants, the beneficiaries of the privileges granted by the Bulgarian Czars of Vidin and then after by the Ottoman Pashas of Vidin referring to their traditional occupations (pastoral activities and wood exploitation).

Both *Banat* and the *Valley of Timoc* were split as the modern frontiers emerged in the larger South Eastern Europe. Thus in 1833 the *Valley of Timoc* was split as the river set an administrative-internal border within the Ottoman Empire establishing the limit of jurisdiction between the *autonomous Serbian principality* and the *Pashalik of Vidin* - later a segment of 15 km of the water flow became an international border between modern and contemporary states of Serbia and Bulgaria. *Banat* was split in 1920 between the Kingdom of Romania, the Kingdom of Serbia and Hungary.

Modernity in context – an ad hoc periodization

Each periodization is conventional and subject to debate. The marks that separate ages of time, defined by specific social, economic and cultural processes are hard to be delimited with precision. Social phenomena, like any other, yet, have a beginning and an end. For the purpose of our comparative approach and the cases we have in attention, we shall consider ad-hoc as *marks of modernity*, the *end of the Ottoman rule* (comprising, as well, the regain of the autonomy in the borders of the Ottoman Empire) as *starting point* and *the formation of the post-Versailles states* (which comprise the *unification* or the reappearance as subject on the international scene of the nations involved), as an *ending point*. We notice that for *Romanians in Banat* and *Vlachs in the Valley of Timoc* the beginning of modernity refers to moments separated by almost a century – it is rather irrelevant. At the end of the direct Ottoman rule (which is either the Hapsburg conquest or the recognition of autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, a step prior to independence), the degree of social, cultural development was very much the same. What differentiate the two groups are the experiences they have under post Ottoman states. Using the two temporal landmarks that encompass modernity, we may be able to set aside the factors, which are responsible for the differences now existing between the two groups, notably their different identification choices.

As pre-modern communities (1) both groups must be considered aboriginal (even if not exclusive) of this regions (they were there in the moment of their inclusion

within the Hungarian and Bulgarian pre-modern states), their long lasting habitation in the same areal fostering a collective sentiment of belonging, and the perception that the space represents a *cradle*;(2) both enjoyed cultural autonomy in the logic of pre-modern states (due one or more of the following factors: the localism specific to pre-modern societies, linguistic or religious barriers, accessibility of the areas and granted privilege); (3) both groups were under the Ottoman rule as the Hungarian and Bulgarian pre-modern states were subjugated, being part of Ottoman direct administered units (Pashalik of Timisoara, Pashalik of Vidin), and, finally, (4) they were both identified as Vlachs (or variants of this ethnonym in Serbian, Bulgarian, Slavonian, Hungarian, German, Academic Latin or Turkish) by their neighbours (see other cultural groups) and self-identified as Romanians (or variants). What we notice is that at the end of modernity - the formation of Yugoslavia the two groups identify themselves using different mechanisms and referring to labels of different age (pre-modern labels vs modern labels).

Vlach and Romanian - Historical Etymology

Vlach and *Romanian* are both pre-modern and equally old words. They appear at the end of Antiquity while the ethno genesis of the Neo-Latin people is completed in the larger context of the Roman Empire dissolution and of the so-called Barbarian Migrations. Each word reflects the three historical processes in a very specific way. Thus *Romanian* (ro. noun *român*) indicates the claim of a group which no longer lives under the Roman rule of being a part of the Roman culture and civilization, and is affirmed in a Latin or a Neo-Latin idiom, while *Vlach* (with its many variants) indicates the encountering of a Latinized population by a non-Latin one (a so called *Barbarian*). The origins of *Romanian* (as *român*) are to be found in the period of transformation of the Vulgar Latin into the Neo-Latin Proto Romanian, as an echo of the 212 A.D *Edict of Caracalla* (which granted the Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire), while the origins of *Vlach* are to be found in the early period of the *Great Migrations*, when the Germanic tribes entered in areas formerly controlled by the Roman Empire where they found Latinized populations⁷.

Even if the two words are about the same age, being in use uninterruptedly since their appearance, they had over time different status and referred to different social and political realities. Due its entry in the chancellery languages of the first medieval states, neighbours or suzerain powers (the Byzantine Empire, the Serbian and Bulgarian Tsardoms, the Hungarian Kingdom) but, as well, Romanian⁸, the word *Vlach* (ro. noun

⁷ According to Adolf Armbruster the roots of Vlach are to be found in the name of the Latinized Celtic tribe of *Volcae*, which in old German idioms took the form of *Walh* to designate the Romans and the Gallo-Romans. It was extended to all Latinophone people, and borrowed with this sense by Slavic populations and also by Byzantine Greeks in Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor. Istoria unei idei*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 2012.

⁸ Some may question why Romanian themselves have chosen the word Vlach/Walach to identify. We consider that the most certain answer is that Romanians used Slavonian and not Latin or Byzantine Greek as chancellery language under the influence of Bulgarian and Serbian Orthodox monks before and after the formation of the premodern principalities of Muntenia (Ungro-Vlahia) and Moldova.

vlah, with its many variants in Romanian and other languages) received a *political function*. Thus, the term *Vlach* is used to identify a *political subject*, including a person (see Transylvania – where it is used in both Hungarian as *olahok* and Medieval Latin as *blachus* or *vlachus*) or a *country* (*Ungro-Vlahia* in Slavonian, *Valahia Transalpina* in Chancellery Latin used at the Hungarian Court, or *Iflak* used in Ottoman Turkish texts). In first pre- modern writings Romanian (under the form *rumân*) defines generally a social reality identifying a serf.

We notice that the word *Vlach* (and its variants), as *ethnic label*, presents an atypical use in pre-modern context – while, generally, pre-modernity favours local and regional identities, most of them derived from toponyms or tribal names, in some cases are in use labels that identify related groups across different regions (see the use of Germania/Germanus nouns in Medieval Latin texts). Similarly, *Vlach* identifies different Romanian groups living in a larger area (from the South of Balkans to North of Carpathians)⁹.

Indeed, with the first medieval texts written in Romanian language, which dates from the 16th century, the noun *Romanian* identifies a national group (see *Palia de la Oraştie* 1582 – a collection of texts, including a Romanian translation of the *Genesis* and *Exodus*, under Protestant influence, which mentioned in its prolegomena for the first time the term with this use (Netea 1980). In the 17th century, the chronicles written in Romanian language start to translate the Slavonian term *Ungro-Vlahia* or the Medieval Latin term *Valahia Transalpina* with *Ţara Românească*, referring to a *political subject*, a Romanian Land/State, even if in the most of cases the inhabitants are designated as *muntean*, derived from the toponyme of the larger historical region *Muntenia*). There is no doubt that both *Vlach* and *Romanian* (as ro. *român*) were used to identify nationality in pre-modern times (see Netea 1980, Stănescu 1968, Armbruster 2012). Yet the mark of the national idea's inception, in modern sense, is the moment when *Romanian* (as standard ro. noun *român*) starts to be use as national denomination, while *Vlah* and its versions are abandoned.

The Romanian representatives of the Romanian Transylvanian Enlightenment are the intellectual fathers of the emancipation program that fostered the national ideology crystallization and the process of a modern nation building. Even so, the first two generations of Romanian Transylvanian Enlightenment, still used in their general petitions (the several *Supplex Libellus*) written in Academic Latin a term derived from *Vlach* (*Valacus* see *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* petitions, first in 1744, second in 1792¹⁰). Nonetheless, the second generation of representatives of the Romanian Transylvanian Enlightenment, grouped in the so called *Şcoala Ardeleana*, are the first that start to use the noun *Romanian* (in *standard modern form* as *român* and not the *premodern form* *rumân*, which was used in 17th and 18th centuries to indicate either social status or ethnicity or *roman* used in the same period to indicate the Latin origin. The authors of this generation

⁹ While in the case of *Germania/Germanus* the sense is clearly rooted in the geographies of Antiquity (see Ptolemy), in the case of *Vlach* we consider that the explanation resides in the special role given to the Slavonian language in the culture of the Slavic and non-Slavic (see Hungarian) populations in Eastern Europe.

¹⁰ The signatories of the second *Supplex Libellus*, in 1792 claimed to represent *Clerus, Nobilitas, Civicusque Status Universae Nationis in Transilvania Valachicae* (Ene 2016)

(active in the five decades between 1780 and 1850) which are also accountable for the creation of the modern Romanian language, coin the word *Romanian* (in standard form *român*) as national denomination and a part of the national ideology discourse¹¹.

The creation of a modern standard form of the noun *Romanian*, at the beginning of the 19th century in Romanian language, is mirrored by the appearance of its equivalents in other languages too, with the similar use and status – thus in Hungarian language *Romanians* would be named using *romanok*, in German language, *Rümanien*, while the premodern terms as *olahok* or *Wallachien*, both derived from *Vlach* would be considered as archaisms).

We may conclude that, in broad sense, while being as old, the two words distinguish between pre modernity and modernity – the use of *Vlach* and its variants indicating a *premodern level of identity development*, while the use of *Romanian*, a *modern level of identity development*, and a mark of a modern national identity.

Vlachs in the Valley of Timoc between 1833 and 1918

As we mentioned above, the historical region *Valley of Timoc* was split between the autonomous Serbian principality and the Pashalik of Vidin, as the river flow was set as a natural demarcation line in 1833. From this very moment the separation involved a change of *regime*: (1) the *Vlachs* situated on the Serbian side of the river lost all the pre-modern type privileges granted by the Ottoman rulers (which, in fact, were initially granted by Bulgarian rulers), (2) as the border became a closed one, they were separated by their relatives (see extended pre-modern type family, clans and so on) or other people of the same kin, while the economic, social and human flows supported by the natural dimension of the region were disrupted.

The recognition of the autonomy of the Serbian Principality (as a consequence of the 1826 Convention of Ackerman and the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople) was equal to full independence in what concerns internal politics. This is the start of the creation of the modern state of Serbia, which after the First World War became a pivot in the creation of Yugoslavia, the future construction that would include a part of Banat.

The Serbian modernization process favoured centralism as administrative philosophy and *Serbization* as nation building strategy. Both affected negatively the community of *Vlachs* living in the *Valley of Timoc* as the local communities lost their autonomy and their specific economic activities (pastoral activities and wood exploitation) became subject to regulation and taxation.

Serbian national ideology may be called semi-modern as it was based on two pillars of pre-modern type: one *religious* (Christian Orthodoxy) and other ethnolinguistic (Serbian-Slavic). The commissioners of this ideology were, first, the Serb priests and then after the civil servants representatives of the State - they both replaced the traditional elites of the *Vlachs*.

¹¹ See the use of *Romanian* noun, as *român* and its derivatives in Petru Maior's works (1812 - *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dacia*, including annexed *Disertație pentru începutul limbei românești* and *Disertație pentru literatura cea veche a românilor* or 1819, *Ortographia româna și latino-valachica* including annexed *Dialog pentru începutul limbii române întră nepot și unchiu*.)

For the Vlachs living in the Valley of Timoc, the primary form of integration within the new political community of Serbia was their inclusion within the Serbian Orthodox Church and the loss of their religious specificity – Serbian priests appointed from Belgrade replaced local born priests of Vlach descent. This opened the door of the *Slavization* process as the religious service in Romanian idiom spoken by Vlachs was replaced by one in Serbian Language. Even more, with the pretext of eliminating the risk of a hermetical translation from Romanian to Serbian, the religious books written in Romanian (most of them printed in Wallachia during the 18th century and donated to Vlach perishes and monasteries) were burnt and replaced with ones written in Serbian.

Maybe the most eloquent example of cooperation and self-enforcement between the representative of the rational bureaucracy and the one of the Church is the *Slavization* process – Thus, while the Serbian priests were choosing at the baptism of the individual a Slavic name as a Christian name (in the majority of cases a Slavic version of a Romanian name), the civil servants added the Slavic/Serbian termination *ovic* to the family name.

The first official census that takes into account ethnicity is carried in 1866 (Vuletic, 2012), at three decades (one sociological generation) after the Serbian annexation and inclusion within the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The role of the Orthodox Serbian Church is crucial in the process of assimilation, also due its role in the primary the education before the creation of the national compulsory education system. In the parish schools a clerk (usually the *cantor*) taught children to read Serbian and Slavonian and basic writing (Berend & Berend, 2013, Anscombe 2014). The elementary school became compulsory in 1882, but the attendance remained low, especially in the rural areas, until the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and Yugoslavia. The low rates of literacy, found in the case of Vlachs living in the Valley of Timoc, as well, are explained by the inexistence of some structural incentives to follow a longer cycle of education in the case of a population that earned its means of living from traditional agriculture activities.

As the modernization and the nation building process in Serbia referred to the creation of a homogenous Serbian nation state (in terms of religion and ethnicity), there was no place for the modernization of the pre-modern ethnic identity of the *Vlachs* into a modern national Romanian identity but only for assimilation as *Serbization* and *Slavization*. Thus, while in the immediate vicinity, in the Habsburg Empire (later Austria-Hungary) and in Romania (after 1861), the national denomination for Romanians was the modern *Romanian* (standard form ro. *român*, ger. *Rumänien*, hun. *romanok*), in Serbia the pre-modern noun *Vlach* remained in use¹².

As a consequence of the many factors responsible for the general and national modernization after less than one century under the Serbian rule, the *Vlachs* had no *intelligentsia*, no notion of national modern identity (which is substantially different than perceiving of being related with speakers of other Romanian idioms spoken in the Balkans or North of Danube, including here equally Aromanian dialects and literary Romanian, developed in modern 19th century Romania and Transylvania) and presented at the end of the First World War as an ethnic group with only a pre-modern rudimentary identity.

¹² One possible explanation may reside in the national state building symbolism which echoed the Czardom of Stefan Dusan as a *Serbian Golden Ages* – in his Code of law (Law of the pious Emperor Stefan) the *Vlachs* are mentioned as subjects while *Roman* is used to designate Byzantines not Latin speaking populations of Balkans.

Romanians under the Habsburg rule between 1718¹³ and 1918

The Habsburg rule in *Banat* lasted two hundred years. We admit that this is a very long period in term of administrative and political regime changes, not to mention of what happens in terms of general development (in social, economic and cultural terms). Yet the Habsburg State, no matter if we refer to the Austrian Empire or the Austria-Hungary, had, even with local notes, a common philosophy of government and a common idea about the treatment of its subjects. The most relevant differences appear with the 1867 Compromise. Yet, we state that the processes of national modernization – socio-economical (the formation of a national *intelligentsia*, of a national *corps de cadres*, a national *bourgeoisie*) and cultural (the formation of a modern national language, of a national culture and the crystallization of a national discourse) – were concluded and irreversible at that moment, as the collective and individual political behaviour would indicate in the decades to come till 1918.

The Habsburg monarchs assumed from the beginning to the end that they ruled over a multinational political community, they struggled to mobilize and lead in a common effort by offering to each group a minimal satisfaction as incentive for the compliance of its members. This functioned even if some groups were more privileged than others (the perception of this by the subjects of the Habsburg monarchs off all nationalities, even by those belonging to the less privileged national groups is the narrative of *The Good Emperor*¹⁴).

The development program assumed by the Habsburg monarchs set further the path of national modernization of the Romanians in the Austrian Empire. The reforms of Maria Theresia and Josef II aimed to create a *power of Europe* based on an “advanced” society and economy able to support an efficient state and a strong and well-equipped army. This involved the creation of *intelligentsia*, of a *corps de cadres* (specialists in all fields) and of independent entrepreneurs. Most of all, that meant the creation of an educated *subject/citizen*, emancipated from the *darkness of prejudicism* and *chains of servitude*, able to serve his country in peacetime as taxpayer and in wartime as soldier. All this effort contributed to the national modernization through the modernization of

¹³ We take into consideration the moment when the former Pashalyk of Timișoara, comprising the geo-cultural region Banat, became a possession of Habsburg Austria. Yet, most analysis refers to realities regarding the Romanian *nationality* within the *Habsburg Empire/Austro-Hungary*

¹⁴ See the studies of several scholars on the narrative of the *Good Emperor* of Romanians under the Habsburg rule for the entire period - 18th century: Petre Din (“Mitul ‘Bunului Împărat’ în Transilvania sub Iosif al II-lea”, *Revista Bistrița*, 2001, “Românii ardeleni și împăratul Leopold al II-lea. Continuitatea mitului ‘Bunului Împărat’”, *Revista Bistrița*, 2003, “Românii transilvăneni între sentimentul identității naționale moderne și cel apartenenței la Imperiul Habsburgic în secolul al XVIII-lea”, *Revista Bistrița*, 2005), first half of the 19th century: Mirela Andrei (“Românii ardeleni și împăratul austriac- Avatarele mitului ‘Bunului Împărat’ de la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea la perioada post pașoptistă”, *Revista Bistrița*, 2001), second half of the 19th century to First World War, Nicoleta Hegedus (“Imaginea Împăratului la românii ardeleni de la Memorandum la izbucnirea Primului Război Mondial”, *Revista Bistrița*, 2008) and for the general subject Pieter Judson, (*The Habsburg Empire*, Harvard University Press, 2016), Daniel Unowsky (*The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916*, Purdue University Press, 2005), or Daniel Unowsky and Laurence Cole (*The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, Berghahn Books, 2007).

nationalities while the Habsburg monarchs admitted they ruled over a multinational community and assumed to address the individual as part of a national group with its own language and specificity¹⁵.

Within the political community of the Habsburg state, Romanians in *Transylvania* and *Banat* had a lesser privileged political, social and religious status inherited since the time of the Hungarian Kingdom (see *Fraterna Unio Trio Nationem*, 1438). Orthodox confession and ethnic origin were criteria of exclusion – there were no political rights and no political representation. Yet, Habsburgs offered to Romanians the possibility of gaining political representation through their religious subordination to the Catholic Church (the so-called *Union with Rome* or the *Greek-Catholic Church*). The first Romanian Greek Catholic Bishop, Ioan Inochentie Micu-Klein, was raised to a noble rank (which was impossible for Romanians of Orthodox confession) and became the representative of his co-nationals in the *Diet of Transylvania*. The Greek Catholic Romanian clergy had access to higher education (including most prestigious theological centres and universities in Rome, Vienna and elsewhere within the Empire).

While assuming the emancipation of their *nationality*¹⁶ (meaning the recognition of political and civil rights, gaining of economic and social freedoms) these representatives of *intelligentsia* made use of arguments valid for all Romanian people, no matter where they lived, *like the common Roman-Dacian origin*, that became the core of the national Romanian ideology, trans regional and trans border.

Copping with the literacy issue, the Habsburg monarchs considered the alphabetization of their subjects in their vernacular language. The introduction of the compulsory education (enforced by the Imperial decree Ratio Educationist issued on August the 22nd, 1777) supposed in the minimal the creation of so-called *trivia* schools organized by the local churches which taught in one general class comprising all children between six and twelve years old, to read, to write in their mother language. That was crucial for the modernization of the ethnic group into a national group for several reasons – the creation of a modern language by standardization, the creation of a national narrative as a curriculum component and the creation of a mass of individuals sharing same narrative as a base of a national program and ideology. Even more the Habsburg state strengthened the importance of the national languages while emphasising their function as medium of in knowledge dissemination and formation of specialists and by the role given to various specialized units of broad sense specialists organized on nationality criteria (see only the military regiments organized on nationality criteria). As the individual was not constrain to learn a different language (Academic Latin, later German-Austrian or Hungarian) to make accessible science and technology at medium level or to interact in the performance of his institutional

¹⁵ See the case of linguistic modernization for the purpose of educating medical specialists documented by Sechel Teodora Daniela (“Medical knowledge and the improvement of vernacular languages in the Habsburg Monarchy: A case study from Transylvania (1770–1830)”, in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 2012) september issue), R.G. Răcilă, Irena Răileanu, V. Rusu (“Influențe germane asupra terminologiei medicale românești”, *Rev. Med. Chir. Soc. Med. Nat. Iasi*, 2008).

¹⁶ Nationality – refers here to a pre-modern community distinguished by language, origin and confession.

function or social and economic role, the primordial elements¹⁷ of its national identity were able to crystallize into a modern national identity.

While this program of reforms was abandoned after the 1867 Compromise, despite the policies of uniformization and *Magyarization*, carried by the state authorities in Hungarian lead *Transleithania*, the national building process is completed and a complex modern national identity, based on a modern national language (with a standard form, studied grammar, and mechanisms of adaptation and borrowing neologisms), a national modern culture and a national political program based on a shared narrative is irreversibly acquired.

Romanians in two modernity contexts		
<i>Serbian Kingdom</i>	vs	<i>Hapsburg Empire/Austro-Hungary</i>
1833-1918		1718-1918
<p>The state assume to be mono-national and as homogenous as possible.</p> <p>The state uses the national Church as assimilation tool while there is no cultural and religious autonomy.</p> <p>The access to education and general knowledge is possible only in the state's official language.</p> <p>The state undermine collective emancipation of its national minorities.</p>		<p>The state assumed to be multinational and that all individuals and groups enjoy a notion of equality as contributors to the state's welfare and security.</p> <p>The state grants cultural and religious autonomy to the ethnic and religious groups and use their language to transfer knowledge and to emancipate them.</p> <p>The state foster the creation of a national elite which it use as an agent of its development program.</p>
<p>The individual success within the state's establishment is conditioned by his/her assimilation within the majority group and culture. He/She manifests only as a representative of his origin group within the culture of majority.</p>		<p>The individual success within the state's establishment could foster the affirmation of the group as he/she is allowed to perform as part of a national <i>intelligentsia</i> or to act as a part of a national <i>bourgeoisie</i>.</p>

¹⁷ See what C. Geertz defines as primordial elements of national identity. A se vedea Clifford Geertz (ed.), *The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States. In Old Societies and New States, The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, New York, Free Press, 1963.

Conclusions

The two cases confirm the thesis that the modern nation is a construct, a *build community* (see authors like Ernest Gellner (1994) and Karl Deutsch (1953)) and not a natural one (see authors like Clifford Geertz and other primordialists).

The primordial elements of identity, the ethnicity, the similarity of spoken idioms, and (in some cases) the confessional particularity, does not evolve into a modern national identity without the action of an agent. Traditional-local and religious elites cannot be the agent of modernization unless they transform in modern type *intelligentsia*. General modernization in social and economic terms offer access to education, wealth and position within the state's establishment, but the individuals does not form a national elite, an *intelligentsia* and a *bourgeoisie* unless they assume an emancipation program and do not create a national narrative. A national narrative (in our case the *myth of Dacian and Roman descent*) is in the core of a national ideology, but is a national culture (a series of intellectual works of all forms of expression) that shapes national identity as a common assumption and base of a collective action. The attitude of the state toward the group's emancipation and identity conservation efforts is crucial; the state may foster these processes or may block them according to its own political program.

Assimilation programs may have different results depending on the general development degree of the cultural-ethnic community - modernized communities, with strong *intelligentsia* and *bourgeoisie* are able to resist successfully to strong pressure and repressive acts, while traditional communities less modernized are assimilated.

The level of cultural and social sophistication of the pre-modern community is important as it defines the basis upon each the process of nation's building develops. In this respect, the existence of a national Church, with its own national organization and leadership, giving a central role to cultural production in the language of the respective group may be sufficient to foster complex and lasting modern developments. Simple religious specificity within a national Church of a different national group is insufficient to conserve identity, as it may be easily erased, while religion itself becomes a strong assimilation instrument.

National minorities may be formed of different related groups, which due their different historical experiences express different identification formulas, even if they belong to the same cultural family and acknowledge being related and affine to the same nation state.

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