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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**ANA GRAMA and IOAN LĂCĂTUȘU**  
**Românii din Arcul Intracarpatic și**  
**instituțiile lor identitare (sec. XVII–XX)**  
(The Romanians in the Intra-Carpathian  
Arc and their identity institutions, 17<sup>th</sup>–  
20<sup>th</sup> centuries)  
Edited and foreword by TĂȚIANA SCURTU  
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**T**HE RESEARCH strategy on the history and culture of the Romanians in the Intra-Carpathian Arc—as developed by the Metropolitan Nicolae Colan Ecclesiastical Documentation Center (CEDMNC) and the European Center for Covasna-Harghita Studies (CESCH) of Sfântu Gheorghe (Sankt Georgen, Sepsiszentgyörgy)—includes among its priorities the support for the development of works on the history, ethnography, demography, and sociology of the Romanians in the Intra-Carpathian Arc and on the main aspects of interethnic coexistence and Romanian-Hungarian cultural exchanges over the centuries, as well as the publication of these works by Eurocarpatica and Grai Românesc publishing houses, as well as by other partner publishing houses.

Between 2000 and 2022, 400 works related to the history and culture of the Romanians in the Intra-Carpathian Arc and their coexistence with the Szeklers/Hungarians and other nationalities appeared at the publishing houses Eurocarpatica, Angvstia, Grai Românesc and other

partner publishing houses, of which 14 doctoral theses, 100 volumes in the “Centenary of the Great Union” collection, 35 volumes in the “Our Professionals” collection, etc.

The volume *The Romanians in the Intra-Carpathian Arc and Their Identity Institutions (17<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)* is part of the project “Promoting Cultural Identity Through Romanian Representative Works from Southeastern Transylvania,” a project co-financed by the General Secretariat of the Government of Romania, through the Community Development Service. The main objective of the project is to introduce into the public circuit some works related to the history, culture and evolution of the region of Southeastern Transylvania, from the perspective of the presence of the Romanian population in this region. The published works are just as many opportunities to learn about the complex realities of Southeastern Transylvania and the specific contribution of the Romanians, along with the Szeklers/Hungarians and other communities in this part of the country, to the national and universal cultural heritage.

Numerous articles and studies on the history and culture of the Romanians in Southeastern Transylvania, signed by the researchers Ana Grama and Ioan Lăcătușu, have been published in the collective volumes and in the *Angvstia*, *Acta Carpatica*, *Sanghidava*, *Grai Românesc* yearbooks. The publication of a selection of these valuable

documentary sources in one volume, under such a comprehensive title, offers specialists as well as the history-loving public the opportunity to find out more about the history of the Romanian communities living in the former Szekler counties, in the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environment specific to an area which is, as a rule, reticent towards otherness.

The two authors are well known and appreciated for their research on the history and culture of the Romanians in the southeast of Transylvania, as well as for their involvement in numerous cultural-scientific and civic projects implemented in the counties of Sibiu, Covasna, and Harghita, and, on a wider scale, in Transylvania and the other historical Romanian provinces.

The CEDMNC archive holds a rich correspondence between Ana Grama and Ioan Lăcătușu spanning several years, documents which, with the passage of time, will surely increase in informative value and national significance.

One of the leading experts in the complex realities of Southeastern Transylvania is the distinguished researcher Ana Grama, from Sibiu. In the climate of freedom after 1989, the Romanian scholar Ana Grama (b. 1940) became a steadfast and dedicated supporter of the Romanian minority in Covasna and Harghita counties, amid the efforts undertaken by their representatives to preserve and assert their national identity. Ana Grama is part of a group of researchers who have been constantly and pragmatically involved in researching the history of the Romanians in Southeastern Transylvania. Since 1992, from the first events organized by the Andrei Țaguna Cultural-Christian League and the Co-

vasna National Archives, Ana Grama has participated in numerous conferences, symposia and other scientific and cultural events organized in Sfântu Gheorghe, Arcuș, Miercurea-Ciuc, Covasna, Izvoru Mureșului, and Toplița.

The results of this laborious research on the Romanians of the Intra-Carpathian Arc were published in the yearbooks *Angustia*, *Sangidava*, and *Acta Carpatica*, in the *Grai Românesc* magazine, as well as in other secular and religious publications. Ana Grama's studies and articles introduced into the scientific circuit new information regarding the Orthodox communities, their churches and schools, the local leaders and their relations with the secular and church authorities, and even their daily life. Ana Grama also initiated a research project devoted to the specific "dynasties" of Transylvanian intellectuals in the Intra-Carpathian Arc. Ana Grama understood the importance of the apparently minor "everyday fact" for local and regional history, and she highlighted the results of Orthodox solidarity by inventorying the numerous donations and mentioning the founders and benefactors coming from the entire Romanian space. Her research is recognized for its interdisciplinary approach, for its presentation and interpretation of documents from a historical, demographic, ethnographic, anthropological, linguistic perspective, etc.

Through rigorous documentation and a balanced approach, Ana Grama has contributed to demolishing some clichés and prejudices regarding the Transylvanian Romanians and their coexistence, as equals, with the Hungarians, the Transylvanian Saxons, and the Szeklers. Ana Grama is an excellent connoisseur of the language of

documents, whether they were written in Cyrillic characters or in the difficult “transitional alphabet.” Without the documents researched and published by Ana Grama, we would be much poorer, deprived of the chance to know the pulse of daily life, the main dimensions of the collective mind in the Romanian communities living in the villages of Transylvania. The documents presented by Ana Grama speak convincingly about the vital role of the Orthodox Church and of the religious schools in preserving and affirming the linguistic, cultural, confessional and national identity of Romanians in Transylvania, until 1918.

We owe to the researcher Ana Grama the knowledge of the life and activity of some personalities who profoundly changed the life of the Romanian communities in the Intra-Carpathian Arc in the nineteenth century. These authentic leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians were not inferior to their fellow citizens, be they Saxons, Hungarians, or Szeklers. On the contrary, through their education, culture, strength of character and their activity in the service of the Romanian communities in the studied area, they successfully managed numerous difficult moments and contributed decisively to the material and cultural progress of the main identity institutions: church, school, culture (Holy Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, Bishop Vasile Moga, Archpriests Petru Pop, Ioan Petric, Ioan Moga).

Whenever he speaks about his research—a publishing and editorial activity carried out within the cultural and civic institutions and associations of Sfântu Gheorghe, where he has worked for the last 30 years—Dr. Ioan Lăcătușu (b. 1947) always points out that the results obtained came

from the teamwork done in the company of his main collaborators, with the blessing and support of His Holiness Bishop Ioan Selejan, after the establishment of the Orthodox Bishopric of Covasna and Harghita (1994), and since 2014, of His Holiness Bishop Andrei.

From the very outset, Dr. Ioan Lăcătușu and the group of intellectuals gathered around His Holiness Bishop Ioan Selejan were concerned with the founding of institutions intended to promote the Romanian identity: the National Museum of the Eastern Carpathians (1997, Sfântu Gheorghe); the Metropolitan Nicolae Colan Ecclesiastical Documentation Center (1996) (within the Orthodox Bishopric of Covasna and Harghita); the Covasna-Harghita European Studies Center (1999, in Sfântu Gheorghe), etc. These institutions organized annual cultural-scientific events, with the participation of numerous researchers from all over the country; under these circumstances, there was a clear need to establish Romanian publishing houses and publications belonging to the aforementioned institutions (the publishing houses Eurocarpatica and Grai Românesc, the publications *Angvstia*, *Acta Carpatica*, *Grai Românesc*, etc.).

Ioan Lăcătușu instituted, together with his collaborators, “moral rewards awarded to personalities who support the Romanian survival in the Intra-Carpathian Arc,” such as the annual awards I. I. Russu, Fr. Ilie Moldovan, Vasile Lechințan, and the title of *Honorary Citizen of the Romanian community* in Sfântu Gheorghe. His achievements include the establishment of the CEDMNC Archive, the Metropolitan Nicolae Colan Public Library, with over 10,000 volumes, and the Eurocarpatica Digital Library.

The selected bibliography of the archivist, sociologist, publicist and editor Ioan Lăcătușu includes over 30 authored/co-authored volumes in various fields (history, sociology, demography, ethnography, journalism), to which are added over 180 volumes edited or prefaced, 250 studies in history, archival science, sociology, demography, journalism, ethnography (in specialist magazines) and over 2,500 articles (in the local, regional, and national press). All this recommends him as one of the leading specialists in the history, culture, traditions and complex issues of the Intra-Carpathian Arc area.

From the works of Mrs. Ana Grama, the present volume features the piece titled “Transylvanian Syntheses,” with direct and essential references to the Romanian communities in Southern and Southeastern Transylvania. We owe to the distinguished researcher Ana Grama the transliteration from the Archives of the Transylvanian Metropolitan See and the Transylvanian Metropolitan Library of documents such as the Protocols of the consistorial sessions.

The general preliminary studies, such as “The Dramatic Fate of a Siberian Archive (March 1849),” “The Message of the Romanian Writing in Transylvanian Village Documents (1780–1850)” etc., are particularly valuable, capitalizing on the new information introduced into the public circuit.

From the more than 250 studies bearing the signature of Ioan Lăcătușu, with the approval of the author, the present volume features those that pertain to the theme of the volume, namely, the identity institutions of the Romanian communities in Covasna and Harghita counties. Thus, we find here pages from the history of the

Romanian churches in the Orthodox Diocese of Covasna and Harghita, until the establishment of the diocese; episodes in the life of the Orthodox Diocese of Covasna and Harghita (1994–2023); information about the religious and state education in Romanian in Covasna and Harghita counties (19<sup>th</sup> century), the main coordinates of the cultural institutions and associations (museums, memorial houses, cultural centers, archives, libraries, publishing houses), cultural-scientific events, publications, research activities, the authors of literary texts and monographs, Romanian-Hungarian cultural exchanges, etc.

Thus, whereas Ms. Ana Grama’s studies are chronologically circumscribed to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, those of Mr. Lăcătușu mostly refer to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the pages of this volume, the Romanian communities living in ethnically mixed localities, limited in numbers and permanently subjected to the Hungarianization process, but also those numerically strengthened, integrated into the Romanian society, sharing the same ideals of freedom and affirmation, with the same respect for the sacrifices of the ancestors, are presented as steadfast in their ancestral faith, eager for cultural emancipation and seeking a peaceful interethnic coexistence.

Although numerically a minority when compared to their fellow Hungarian/Szeckler citizens, the Romanians from this corner of the country have benefited from the solidarity of their brethren in faith and ethnicity from the entire Romanian space. At the same time, they have given the country valuable personalities: academics, hierarchs, researchers, university profes-

sors, specialists in all areas of public life, whose professional achievements can also be found in this volume.

The volume comes to complement the other collective works that include studies on the history and culture of the Romanians in the Intra-Carpathian Arc, signed by Ioan Ranca, Vasile Lechințan, Cornel Sigmirean,

Liviu Boar, Ana Doboreanu, Elena Mișu, Ioana-Cristache Panait, Dorel Marc, Mihai Racovițan, Nicolae Bucur, Constantin Catrina, Costel-Cristian Lazăr, Ilie Șandru, et al.



TATIANA SCURTU