

European and Banat history: “I. The Pre-historic Era” (Paleolithic–Iron Age); “II. Antiquity” (5th century BC–mid-5th century AD); “III. The 5th–10th Centuries” (the Migration Period); “IV. The Medieval Era” (10th–18th century); “V. The Modern Era (1718–1918)”; “VI. The Contemporary Era (1919–1944)”; “VII. The Contemporary Era (1945 to the Present).”

The chronological section is compiled by Alexandru Kósa, scientific researcher at Titu Maiorescu Institute of Banatian Studies, and by Tatiana Ostroveanu of the Iris Special Theoretical High School in Timișoara.

The volume *A History of Banat: A Compendium*, published in 2023, at a time when Timișoara was the European Capital of Culture, emerges as a new calling card for the history of that province geographically outlined by the Danube, the Tisza, the Mureș, and the Southern Carpathians. The work is coordinated by two nationally and internationally acknowledged modernist historians and written in a clear language accessible to the general public by 15 specialists (geographers, archaeologists, historians) pertaining to different generations, ethnicities, and schools of historiography, brought together by a shared passion for the fascinating history of Banat from Prehistory and Antiquity, through the Migration Period and the Middle Ages, all the way to modernity and the contemporary times. In time, by expanding the number of specialists and detailing the historical eras, the synthesis now proposed to the Romanian reader may become a monograph which can be the starting point of a genuine treatise on the history of Banat, a desirable goal proclaimed by historians and scholars from Banat in the last three decades.

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MIRCEA-GHEORGHE ABRUDAN

ANDREI CORBEA-HOIȘIE and RUDOLF GRÄF, eds.

Limbă și cultură germană în România (1918–1933): Realități postimperiale, discurs public și câmpuri culturale

(German language and culture in Romania, 1918–1933: Post-imperial realities, public discourse and cultural fields)

2 vols. Iași: Polirom, 2023

THE WORK we briefly present below is the result of a comprehensive research project conducted by a group of renowned specialists (historians, linguists, etc.) from both Romania and abroad, addressing an extremely complex topic, namely, the German language and culture in Romania (1918–1933). Based on two key concepts of cultural studies, “intercultural communication” and the “contact between cultures,” the authors chose to investigate the relationships between Romanian and German culture by presenting and analyzing some specific historical events or processes. The existence of a significant number of connections between the two cultures entailed the study and analysis of both individual and collective communication networks, as well as the identification of the factors that underpinned the flows of cultural “transfer,” “import,” and “export” among the actors involved in the social and cultural landscape of Romania during the chronological period under investigation.

Beginning with the three main directions outlined in the subtitle of the work, namely, the “post-imperial realities” of a Greater Romania that incorporated the historical provinces (Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia) along with the entire material, legislative, and cultural heritage of the Austro-Hungarian and Tsarist empires, of which they were a part until 1918, the “public discourse” as a vector of cultural

expression, and the complex and evolving “cultural fields” through which communication between the “Romanian” and “German” cultural poles took place, this book naturally proposes an interdisciplinary research approach to achieve the ambitious objectives pursued by the authors. This approach harmoniously combines historical and linguistic research. Thus, it presents and analyses the main constitutive elements (historical, geographical, cultural, anthropological, etc.) of the complex concept of “Romanian cultural identity,” while also showing how the evolution of this concept has been influenced by interactions with the European cultural space, particularly the German one.

Moreover, to address and analyze the connections between the Romanian and German cultural spaces, the authors chose a specific timeframe defined by the end of World War I and the year 1933, which saw the establishment of the National Socialist regime in Germany. This choice is by no means incidental, considering that—despite existing difficulties—the parliamentary democratic regime in Romania experienced a process of consolidation, while Romanian society was characterized by a broad openness to Western cultures, with the German cultural space occupying a particularly important place. Moreover, the studies included in the book detail both the historical and cultural aspects of the interaction between the Romanian and German cultural spaces.

If in the period preceding the Great Union, the German language and culture served as a vector for the modernization of Romanian society and its connection to the standards of European civilization, the studies included in the work reveal that, despite the prestige they continued to enjoy

within Greater Romania, the German language and culture faced significant challenges. These challenges were generated, on one hand, by the (sometimes excessive) centralization policies promoted by Romanian governments and, on the other hand, by the decline of ethnic Germans from a dominant nationality to a minority. This status compelled the German minority to make considerable efforts to preserve its identity (including the cultural one), which, as expected, naturally generated tensions in the context of the national homogenization policies pursued by Romanian governments.

The work coordinated by professors Andrei Corbea-Hoișie and Rudolf Gräf certainly represents a fundamental contribution to the understanding of the history and culture of the German minority in Romania during the period 1918–1933, as well as of the interaction between the Romanian and German cultural spaces (institutions, actors, communication networks, etc.). Despite the large number of topics (particularly historical and linguistic) addressed in the work, it is especially noteworthy for the novel information introduced into the scientific discourse, the quality of the analyses and interpretations provided by the specialists involved in researching such a complex subject, and the truly impressive documentary basis of the work. All these elements make this volume a reference work aimed primarily at specialists, as well as a model for future research in this promising field.



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