Cultural Medium And Mentality Problems Of The Romanian Orthodox Population In Transylvania
1848 - 1918

Abstract

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Cluj-Napoca
2013
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Introduction

This work aims to examine how it was possible to form an elite community of Transylvanian Orthodox confession, starting from the base of the Romanian village, regarded as a source of emanation of psycho-values that identifies the Romanian who lived and grew up in Transylvanian area and was educated in schools of different levels.

Also, regarding from theoretical perspective, the paper aims to highlight the contribution of Orthodox confession in structuring and training elites who is seen from a rural point a view where the term “elite” may overlap the idea of forming spiritually people which include the experience of an idea or values prevalent in the community of people creating tangible, material values. Another perspective is that of the classic cultural medium formed in the academies and who imposed that type of personalities whose knowledge are able to outline their own destiny, but simultaneously are motivated by the countrymen experience.

The relevance of the issues exposed in the paper can be found in the strong relationships between culture and attitudes/training mechanisms and selection of the elites in community of Orthodox religion, also insisting upon the major role played also in defining personal and national consciousness as person with national identity.

This thesis contains also environmental matters, problems of mentality, social relationship and defines the role of these factors in outlining the elites selection.

- What was the role of elites in social and political transforming attitudes?
- What was the nature of the religious contribution in the development and training the elites of Transylvanian nationalists?
- What was the role of marginalization of policy implying on aggressive magyarization process?
- The role of traditional habits and Christian rites, general and particular customs, in consolidation the Romanian original communities.
- The role of the elite grown up in that context.
- The preservation of cultural and religious peculiarities in that historical context of the Orthodox Romanian Communities.
Studying the meanings of such key issues that have profoundly marked the Transylvanian Romanians development is a process of rediscovering and assuming the past seen like a recalibration and reconsideration of ancient values in the day-time. In this sense, this thesis is based on the reconstruction and analysis of the national consciousness and, despite some anxious states and disappointed events that accompanied a large part of our history and instead of isolate or reject us, had historically contributed to strengthening of self-awareness and self-identity.

**Purpose and objectives of the thesis**

To achieve its purpose and to validate the hypothesis asserted, the following objectives are structuring the thesis content:

1. Cultural environment, social mentalities and appearance of the national self-consciousness in the Transylvanian Orthodox Communities.
2. Teaching and developing the religious mentalities.
3. Mechanisms for educating the elites.
4. Elite selection mechanism.
5. The rural elite and Romanian Orthodox mentalities.
6. Elites structured on moral, cultural, political, social and professional status.
7. The national self-consciousness developed in rural areas.
8. Orthodoxy and national feelings among elites.
9. Cultural and religious benefits brought by elites in the Romanian Orthodox intellectual communities.
10. What was the role of elites?

Annexes were settled to establish, illustrate and strengthen the hypothesis of work. Through carols, seen as an expression of religiosity, by a folk-art production and understood as the totality as spiritual manifestations and cultural techniques implying pre-Christian elements associated with social customs was edificated a certain level of the rural elites who formed the Romanian national cultural treasure or was considered like a coagulation factor.
New results of scientific research

This thesis illustrates the archetypal and cultural background, in parallel with classical institution of cultural and religious education in Romanian communities. Scientific novelty of the work is determined by the following aspects: theoretical approach, subject matter, the approach of development of the two educational pillars is Romanian rural community, popular culture, secular and religious educational school. The thesis is based upon theoretical and methodological papers published in the country and abroad, printed in the bibliography.

Theoretical importance and practical value of the thesis

This work reflects from different point of view the relationship between society and person, the history of mentality and Romanian folk culture and the elite’s education determined by the educational academic level. Elites become real prototypes for the future generation. Beyond the concept of mentality and spiritual archetype of person and society and a special emphasis has been focused on defining the role of ethos, the way of being of Transylvanian Romanian in the context of interpersonal relation conditions by interreligious, spiritual, economic, social and political terms.

After studying the subject presented in the thesis we wanted to restore some ways of conceiving the spiritual framework related to the elites belonging to nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. First of all we wanted to redefine the cultural act through modern spirituality when the value scale is depreciated and elites are considered to be made up of only that kind of person which produces broadcasting media sensation, on the one hand, or rapacious, politically people, financists or people whose cultural criteria are limited to concrete immediate profits. The discrepancy between intellectual qualities those embodied by the elites of academic rural community from the period referred to, and the so-called “elite from our day-time” is totally different regarding the way of thinking, the way of being, the way of addicting for them and community.

Highlighting the real elites that in an obvious unfavorable period from Romanian community new who to rise up the Romanian national aspiration, accompanied by a reference to their acts performed in building up the social and cultural education of the Romanian communities, represents the way in which we try to avoid the alienation of the Romanian society in our day-time.
Keywords

Elite Orthodox Church in Transylvania, Romanian Nation, Romanian politicians from Transylvania, Orthodox confessions, selections elites, elites training Orthodox confessions. Orthodoxy and Romanisms in Transylvania national movement, national struggle, mentality and attitudes, Orthodox religion education, Orthodox Diocesis from Arad, Sibiu, Caransebeș, between 1840-1918.

Summary

For Transylvania, historical background was adequate for the emergence of a leader, these conditions leading and revealing the appropriate type of a person at the right place and time Providence having a decisive role in selecting and shaping them.

In that historical area, the main factor in transforming the chief mentalities of the Romanians was education. In this respect is undeniable the contribution of the United Church through its cultural organization “Școala Ardeleană”. Without denying or minimizing other Orthodox scholars who translated, wrote, compiled and printed various theological works or novels of that time, ancient theoretical works or new ideological printings, they had not imposed a decisive direction. Writing as an act of culture was used and become a real motivating instrument by prominent leaders starting with united bishop Micu-Klein, continuing with George Barțiu and Andrei Șaguna. Writing as a cultural expression, combined with financial strength, major causes, a good example being the great patron Emanoil Gojdu and also the rest of cultural foundations, made possible the rise of prominent leaders of the Romanian community in every academic, educated generation. Such trainers, leaders succeeding generations made possible the Great Union of 1 December 1918.

The training process and selection of elites in Romanian communities of Eastern and Greek Orthodox confession was initiated in rural areas. This environment was mostly the best place for developing the Romanian ethos because urban medium didn’t offer good opportunities. That social reality imposed certain traditional forms. This way of training and selecting elites in Transylvanian Orthodox Community took into account the cultural relationship patterns in the Romanian countryside which involved the church as an
authority and source of value in maintaining traditions and Romanian law, especially so called: “The Walachian Right”.

Church had spiritual organization who imposed spiritual stratification and social distribution even by selecting members and benefactors of the church, teachers, trustees and distributing even the space in the church according to certain rule: males in the front of the Holy Shrine and females in the back of the church, most members seated closer to the Holy Shrine where usually a well-off men, those who had pews and armchairs, which were inherited in the family, made donations or offered bread and wine for the Holy Easter. This opportunity to offer the Pass-Over Bread was reserved for wealthy families, usually financially able to support the necessities for the Easter Celebration.

Local traditions, here including both the artistic form of expression – play, music, poetry, theater, crafts and pottery, sculptures and the plowing habits through which was designated the thrifty man of the village, can be mentioned related to birth, marriage and so on, including rules that contributed to highlight the type of popular cultural elite whose publicly expressed opinions were accepted in the community even when that expression was not strictly professional.

These two factors: church and tradition were powerful formative elements of Transylvanian Romanian horizon until mid XIXth century when Bishop Andrei Șaguna together with his collaborators had traced out an ideological program for the nation of Transylvanian Romanians, designed to bring not only recognition and legal rights in Romanian Orthodox community, but also transformation and recovery for Romanian Orthodox nation.

The period of Andrei Șaguna represents the starting moment for the Orthodox community, who was undeveloped and ignored, the stage debut regarding the elevation of educational status. It is a time that coresponds to the role and importance of the „Școala Ardeleană” cultural organization, both for Greek-Catholic Romanians and for the Orthodox ones. Schools, scholarships offered for study at universities in Western Europe, efforts made for good preparation in Orthodox religious school by students coming from the smallest parishes, governed by the great personality and patronage of Emanoil Gojdu and Mocioni Family, made possible that the period 1850-1950 to be a source of excellent time for developing great personalities who have contributed not only to the great union of 1 December 1918, but also made possible the emergency of a “Golden Generation” for Romanian culture, before World War I, and between the wars. This large variety of people from various fields: from medical school represented by Victor Babeș, on math,
represented by Traian Lalescu, from culture, engineering to social and cultural fields, generation after generation had formed several elites who paved the way for other elites, everything ending up in communism who annihilated the elites and imposed the “class struggle” as a main factor in the progress of society.

That was the greatest spiritual decline of Romanians in all Romanian provinces. At the beginning of the studied period, elites are important by the contribution they have had to national movement, towards the end of a period referred to elites were real models in developing national pride, every of them being exceptional individualities who have distinguished in their areas of competence even in international field.

In this way we have political leaders who had traced out ways of action or contributed to the elevation of the community for rising up national awareness and preparing ways for coagulating energies for the Romanian National movement, organized cultural actions or had actually fought for the right of being Romanian in Transylvania.

After 1867 the transfer of national struggle was ended on the political, law, culture and intellectual field, the novelty being the appearance of several models that demonstrate the high level of intellectual and cultural education existed in various social fields. Professional successes contributed to enhance their own individuality that made the Romanian community to stop the real struggle. Despite severe constraints applied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, victimizing or accepting the “pariah status”, models like Victor Babeş, in medical field, Nicolae Teclu, in chemistry, or Traian Vuia and Aurel Vlaicu in aeronautical field, become top leaders in their professional activity, recognized all over the world. Another social and professional categories starting with banking officials, lawyers, doctors whose role as a model was to offer certainty to succeed in areas that were “taboo” for Romanians, reinforcing the confidence that in those conditions the Romanians ideals can and must be accomplished.

From now on the Romanians from Transylvania were building up their destiny, day by day, making real efforts for consolidating an image of dignity and proud backed up on their national history considered to be a representative and unique way of defining them among other nations in Austro-Hungarian Empire. This image was made up of work and ambition.

The role of Transylvanian elites in shaping and updating national and political horizon was overwhelming because in their quality as models supplied the institutions endowed with authority in defending human rights. The perception and representation of Parliament was regarded as existing in Church Assembly of Orthodox Metropolis of Sibiu
– Budapest Parliament being rather a forum for asserting the existence and individuality of Romanians from Transylvania and Banat.

In Romanian Academy some representative members from Transylvanian cultural areas had contributed to the achievements of pre-political and cultural union opening the way for unprecedented, large scale developments in cultural life ending with the Great Union from 1 December 1918.

Must be mentioned the decisive role in political, social, cultural field played, between wars, by the Romanians from Transylvania. Those efforts were based on the conviction that they must play a special role in Romanian public life. We can mention some of the most important personalities, without the ambition of finishing the list: Octavian Goga, Lucian Blaga, Petru Groza, Liviu Rebreanu, Ioan Slavici.