

Urban History Research in Romania in the Last 30 Years: Sources, Topics, Methods, Limits

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Abstract:

This paper deals with the evolution of historical research on urban history over the past 30 years. The communist period was a break from the years before the Second World War, when a number of writers, professional historians or people passionate about history published monographs of urban settlements to which they felt attached. With some exceptions, the years of communism represented a blank from this point of view, the interest shifting to the aspects contained in the classical schemes that formed the Marxist interpretations of the past, in which the urban world occupied a completely marginal place. Only archaeology or the history of monuments managed to make some progress. Ideological restrictions were removed after 1989, but this did not coincide with an immediate recovery of the place that urban history should have rightfully occupied in the research of history. Obvious progress has been made especially in the publication of primary sources: volumes of documents have appeared for towns such as Iași, Huși, Tecuci, Târgoviște and Câmpulung Muscel; several historical plans of towns and atlases were published; several syntheses of history have appeared regarding the towns in the historical regions of Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia. However, progress is mainly quantitative, not always qualitative, although a plus must be emphasized in this last regard as well. There is an obvious lack of systematic or coordinated research, as there is no coherent support from the institutions that coordinate the research process in Romania, whether we are talking about the central or local, academic or university level. Existing initiatives are most often individual, with inconsistent results.

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