

## THE SIGNS OF MODERNIZATION IN CLUJ DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD: THE STREET NETWORK, THE HEALTHCARE/SANITATION SYSTEM AND PUBLIC STREET LIGHTING

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*Abstract: In the last decades of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Romanian towns went through numerous changes that ultimately contributed to the advancement of the modernization process. The development of capitalism and the enforcement of various regulations at the municipal, urbanistic and architectural level led to the formation of a specific urban landscape in all the country's towns. One of the most important goals of urbanism was the rational use of the territory, appropriate landscaping and the responsible management of the natural resources, automatically leading to the improvement of the social conditions of the human collectivity. In the modern period, urbanism became an art or a science placed in the service of the inhabitants of the settlements, regardless of their category (villages, towns or cities), "to ensure a harmonized economic and social development of the environment"<sup>1</sup> and thus be able to optimize the living conditions, the infrastructure, the housing and the public services through efficient planning and the expansion of constructions, respecting certain urbanistic plans and regulations. Thus, Cluj was one of the most important cities in Romania due to its geographical location, its natural surroundings, the evolution of its administrative-territorial organization and socio-economic life, which developed especially in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.*

*Keywords: modernization, street network, healthcare, sanitation system, public street lighting, Cluj.*

If we were to define the term "town," we could say it is the very symbol of modernity, but we should not overlook the fact that modernity is not confined to the nineteenth-twentieth centuries. Towns appeared in ancient times and flourished when advanced civilizations understood the significance of this concept. In the modern era, the contrasting image between the center and the outskirts of urban areas tended to be maintained. There was a cliché that was found throughout the Romanian urban space: unpaved roads, the lack of railroads, rudimentary bridges, nonexistent sewerage, small, unsanitary and chaotically erected buildings, due to the absence of a plan to address these issues.<sup>2</sup> With the intensification of modernization, the term "town planning"<sup>3</sup> which occurred ever more often in the specialized literature, was intended to provide, through its content, a high degree of comfort in an urban settlement. Efforts were made to accomplish this desideratum in the city of Cluj throughout the interwar period.

### **The urban space and the street network**

After World War I had come to an end, the urban settlements underwent an entire transformation process, which was due not only to population growth or the migration of labor from villages to towns, but especially to the acute need for (re)building a (new) image of

<sup>1</sup> Dorin Victor Popa, *Amenajarea teritoriului și urbanismul*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Risoprint, 2010, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Orașele României. Sfârșitul secolului XIX – începutul secolului XX*, Bucharest: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2008, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Carmen Oprescu, "Activitatea edilitară și modernizarea orașului Câmpulung Muscel (Sfârșitul sec. XIX – prima parte a Sec. XX)", in Laurențiu Rădvan, *Orașul din spațiul românesc între Orient și Occident. Tranziția de la medievalitate la modernitate*, Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2007, p. 325.

towns that would take into account the needs of society at that time. Cluj was no exception to this rule, as proved by the dramatic expansion of its built-up area, especially after 1919. Thus, while in 1700 the built-up area was 48 ha, in 1881 it reached 544 ha and in the year that marked the outbreak of the war, its surface was around 1018 ha.<sup>4</sup>

The waging of the global conflict froze not only the economy, but also the expansion of the towns, because of the critical situation the world was confronted with. The sources from the interwar period suggest that the area of the city was 22,650 acres (*iugăr*),<sup>5</sup> of which 450 acres were forest land and 1,813 hectares were build-up area<sup>6</sup> - rather a small surface if we compare it with the capital. Insofar as Bucharest is concerned, while its surface was 5,614 ha in 1918, it reached 7,800 ha in 1939, which automatically stimulated population growth: from 382,853 inhabitants in 1918, the number had almost doubled to 870,000<sup>7</sup> by 1939, a demographic sum that exceeded by far the population of the other towns in Romania.

Pavement Type	Year 1918	Year 1938
	<i>Sidewalk pavement</i>	
Asphalt	147,801	184,062
Cobblestone	84,959	174,499
Ceramite	2,006	2,006
Boulders	81,538	1,213,246
Gravelled and cylindered pavement	454,340	1,226,571
<b>Total</b>	<b>622,842</b>	<b>1,773,384</b>
	<i>Sidewalk pavement</i>	
Asphalt	156,700	191,137
Cobblestone	26,437	27,048
Boulders	250,000	743

<sup>4</sup> Octavian Buzea, *Clujul: 1919-1939. Glas Izbânzilor românești!*, Cluj: Editura Tip. „Ardealul”, 1939, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> A *iugăr* was an old unit of measurement for agricultural surfaces that was used in Transylvania, the rough equivalent of 0.5775 hectares (in <http://dexonline.ro>, accessed 16.04.2014).

<sup>6</sup> Octavian Buzea, *Clujul: 1919-1939. Glas Izbânzilor românești!*, Cluj: Editura Tip. „Ardealul”, 1939, p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Andrei Pippidi, *Bucureștii: istorie și urbanism*, Iași: Editura Domino, 2002, p. 10.

In the late nineteenth century and, in particular, in the early twentieth

Total	433,137	218,928
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century, there was a planned expansion of the city of Cluj by modifications that were brought to the street network, these changes leading to the emergence of new thoroughfares and new public spaces for relaxation and leisure, as well as to the positioning of newly erected buildings in relation with the other existing buildings. It was also during this period that there were issued regulations attempting to introduce systematization and to prevent construction activities and initiatives that might prove detrimental to the interests of the city and of the urban landscape.

Paving the streets and the sidewalks was one of the ideas that were constantly on the agenda of the city authorities, who wanted to introduce numerous modern standards and techniques that would improve road traffic networks in the public space and beyond. The following paving materials were used: granite, cobblestone, boulders, asphalt and artificial basalt. For a better understanding of how the street network of Cluj evolved between the two world wars, we shall make, in what follows, a statistical analysis of the number of streets and the facilities they were provided with, but not before mentioning that the process of paving the streets (driveways and sidewalks) increased significantly between 1918-1938, by approximately 88.7%, growing from 1,055,797 sqm to 1,992,312 sqm.<sup>8</sup> In the years 1918-1919, the existing pavement surface in Cluj was very low: the majority of the surface was covered with asphalt or granite cubes, and a good deal of the streets lacked any kind of pavement. If we were to make a comparison between the total roadway pavement during the year of the union and the period of the 1930s (see the table below),<sup>9</sup> we could say that the surface had almost tripled (from 622,842 sqm 1,773,384 sqm), but the sidewalk pavement had reduced by half (from 433,137 sqm to 218,928 sqm).<sup>10</sup>

### Beautifying the streets: bridge building and green space landscaping

The picturesque aspect of the streetscape in Cluj was the result of the construction of numerous bridges over the Someș, creating the possibility for the people to see the water reflections of the historic buildings that abounded in this part of the city. All the great cities of the world which are crossed by rivers tend to build their bridges as sheer works of art. In Cluj, their importance derived primarily from their location according to zonal circulation, as well as their necessity and usefulness. In the interwar period, the idea of building bridges over the Someș, a river that flowed through Cluj, was implemented. Thus, the connection between the train station and the downtown area was ensured by constructing a reinforced concrete bridge; the districts Mănăstur and Grigorescu were connected through a bridge made of iron; the question of replacing the iron bridge on King Ferdinand Ave. was raised, in light of the intense traffic on that stretch of road; and it was decided that the wooden bridge near the Slaughterhouse should also be rebuilt.<sup>11</sup> The existence of the city's green space and its landscaping represented an essential and indispensable prerequisite for urban life during the

<sup>8</sup> Lazăr Marian, *Primarii Clujului 1919-2012*, vol. 1, Cluj-Napoca: Editura GPO Graphics S.R.L, 2013, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> The data is taken from Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

interwar period. The parks and the gardens became real competitors of the coffee-houses, as the Cluj society realized that their role was not merely aesthetic, but also one fostering socialization and leisure. It was also now that there were planted thousands of trees across the urban center, as the authorities wished to create the atmosphere of a Western garden in the Transylvanian metropolis.

One of the peculiarities of Cluj, which lent the city its specific color, was the existence of green spaces and forests adjacent to the locality. Thus, Făget and Hoia Forests were two elements that were fully present in the planimetry of the city, representing an oasis of fresh air. In the latter green space, the Village Museum was established after 1920, as part of the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania, founded in 1922 in the building of *La Redoute* Palace (a nineteenth-century building where the trial of the Memorandists took place in 1894) under the directions of Romulus Vuia.<sup>12</sup>

Central Park, which was established in Cluj in as early as 1812, remained a recreational area, being turned into a strolling area. In the second part of the nineteenth century, the *Society for the Promenade* took over the administration of this park for 20 years, during which time numerous changes were made: the lake was built, enabling the organization, in summer, of boating cruises and, in winter, of skating sprees; the summer theater was erected (1872); a music pavilion was built in 1870, becoming a park of European standing during that period.<sup>13</sup>

The Botanical Garden in Cluj has enjoyed a tremendous reputation over the years: having been established by Professor Alexandru Borza on 13 hectares of land, in 1920, it became accessible to the public five years later. The numerous plant species, both Romanian and foreign, brought from the other continents (America, Japan, Africa and Australia)<sup>14</sup> represent the major highlights of this garden. It is also known as “the Garden of Five Continents,” being one of the most highly appreciated tourist attractions in Cluj. Due to the variety of its plant species and the vast space it stretches across, the Botanical Garden was and remains an area for research in the field.

### Public transport

When we talk about public transport in the interwar period, we should not and cannot make an association with the idea of travel in the current period, when the streets are thronged by numerous vehicles from dawn to dusk. At the beginning of the previous century, the mechanization of public circulation boasted a mere 60 hackney carriages and two buses, while in the 1930s there was a quantitative improvement in this respect: there were 102 buses in Cluj, 130 autocabs and hansom cabs.<sup>15</sup>

To better understand the situation of Romania by comparison with the West, in 1550 there were only two carriages in Paris, in 1650 there were about 300, while in 1928 the number of automobiles exceeded 100,000. As regards public transport, in 1861 the number of Parisians who travelled across the town and its surroundings amounted to 80 million people

<sup>12</sup> Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, Ioan Ianoș, *Orașele României. Mică enciclopedie*, Bucharest: Casa Editorială Odeon, 1998, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.bjc.ro/wiki/index.php/Parcul\\_central](http://www.bjc.ro/wiki/index.php/Parcul_central) (accessed on 16.04.2014).

<sup>14</sup> Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, Ioan Ianoș, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

per year, while in 1921 there were more than 1.5 billion passengers; in 1929, the number of passengers in Bucharest amounted to only 130 million.<sup>16</sup>

Although the improvement of transport and the appearance of automobiles represented a step forward for humanity, this mode of travel also created a big disadvantage: accidents, which engendered the loss of human life on countless occasions. Cincinat Sfințescu claimed that at world level, the death toll caused by car accidents had increased annually: in 1928, in just three months, there were more than 13,936 accidents in London; in the U.S., there were recorded around 80,000 accidents annually, of which 17,000 were caused by cars; while in our capital, during the period 1921-1929, the highest number of accidents was that caused by trams (0.7 accidents per year per vehicle), by cars (0,087) and by cartage (0.013).<sup>17</sup>

If by the 1870s, German investments had been channeled mainly into the field of gold mining in Transylvania, after this period the foreign authorities turned their attention to other important economic sectors of the province: the construction of railways, the steel industry, coal or methane gas extraction, and the communication network.<sup>18</sup> In the modern period, the greatest achievement in terms of the infrastructure was the construction and development of railways, which not only improved the transport of people, but also revolutionized and facilitated trade. Thus, on September 7, 1870, the train station was inaugurated in Cluj, the first train covering the Cluj-Oradea route.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding air transport, the Someșeni airport was built in 1922, linking the city to airborne transport lines. The first permanent Cluj-Bucharest travel route was inaugurated in 1928 and flights were scheduled every week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, while the return flights occurred every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.<sup>20</sup> Thereafter, connections were ensured with other major centers, such as Arad, Chernivtsi, Satu Mare, or Târgu Mureș.

### **The sanitation/sewerage systems in the public and private space**

The most urgent problem faced by the authorities at the national and local levels was the *development of an urbanistic infrastructure*,<sup>21</sup> which entailed primarily supplying the urban settlements with water and sewerage facilities, with electricity, telecommunications, heating, etc. The safety and hygiene of the towns became the major objectives towards the advancement of urbanization, but this issue was not a conceptual invention of the modern age. In the works of the writers Titus Livy, Tacitus and Cicero, there often appeared the phrase *saluberrimi colles*,<sup>22</sup> which referred to the positioning of towns in a favorable, healthy environment, a principle that would be taken into account over the centuries. There were also many disadvantages which affected “the health of towns.” For instance, the soil, (static) water and the climate were factors that could negatively impact not only the proper development of

<sup>16</sup> Cincinat Sfințescu, *Urbanistica general*, Vol. III. “Economia-Circulația”, Bucharest: Tipografia “Bucovina,” 1933, p. 386.

<sup>17</sup> Cincinat Sfințescu, *Urbanistica general*, Vol. II. “Igiena”, Bucharest: Tipografia “Bucovina,” 1933, p. 233.

<sup>18</sup> Teodor Pavel, *Tradiție și modernizare în societatea transilvăneană: 1850-1918*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Accent, 2003, p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> Gheorghe Vais, *Clujul eclectic : programe de arhitectură în perioada dualistă: (1867 – 1918)*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura UT Press, 2009, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Gazeta Ilustrată*, year II (1933), no. 6, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> A term used by Dorin Victor Popa in the work *Amenajarea teritoriului și urbanismul*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Risoprint, 2010, p. 64.

<sup>22</sup> Cincinat Sfințescu, *Urbanistica general*, Vol. II. “Igiena”, Bucharest: Tipografia “Bucovina,” 1933, p. 209.

the urban environment, but also that of the population. Why do we say this? Because most towns were built near a source of water, which, during the medieval and modern periods, was often the cause of so many epidemics, like malaria, leading to the decimation of the inhabitants of urban areas. The humidity of the soil influenced the conditions of the houses built, at the time, directly on the damp earth, which caused various unsanitary situations and created a favorable environment for many pathogenic bacteria.<sup>23</sup> Tuberculosis was the main disease that affected the population, due to the insalubrious housing conditions in towns and not only.

In the nineteenth century, the city of Cluj lagged rather far behind the European standards, so attempts were made for the swift improvement of its hygiene and cleanliness. The first attempt occurred in 1894,<sup>24</sup> when the sewerage and water system was created, managing to improve to some extent the problem of the unpleasant smells encountered during ordinary strolls along the street network. The authorities' interest in solving such problems led to the extension of the water network, so within four years, it measured 13 km, while by 1908 it had grown to 35 km.<sup>25</sup>

The lack of hygiene and the numerous diseases particularly prevalent in the peripheral urban sprawls made the state aware of this problem and causing it to impose an "appropriate sanitary organization" based on preventive, curative and social medicine, in order to "lessen the mortality rate," which had been on the increase due to the high rate of infant mortality.<sup>26</sup> To achieve this improvement of living standards, it was necessary that the central administration should cooperate with the health and sanitation services, an idea that was also found in Czechoslovakia during the 1930s.

A foremost role in the proper organization of urban area hygiene was granted to engineers, who had to design wide traffic arteries so that modern methods of hygiene could be imposed, since they were so necessary for the development of the systematization process in Cluj. Consequently, after 1918, there was an increase in the number of the staff responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the city's major arteries. While prior to the union, the number of street sweepers was 50 and they used only animal-drawn vehicles, in 1938 the personnel responsible for public cleaning amounted to 221; they had 18 modern trucks (transporting the garbage) and 4 modern watering trucks.<sup>27</sup> The total stretch of the streets that were swept in the interwar period was 90 km, but maintaining the cleanliness of the sidewalks was the obligation of the house owners.<sup>28</sup>

As regards the food markets, the local authorities realized that they needed to improve the marketing place of their products and to protect them from dust or the elements. The intention was to relinquish the old fairs, where people used to sell their products in the street, and to create food halls, protected, fitted with "freezers and various cleaning devices and a flawless treatment of food."<sup>29</sup> Another proposal of the local authorities was that new markets

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 215.

<sup>24</sup> Tibor Kálmán Dáné, *Kolozsváar 1000 éve*, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 263.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Sabin Manuilă, "Urbanizare și ruralizare", in *Adevărul*, 1931, 31 October, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

<sup>29</sup> O. Bodascher, "Considerentele igiene în urbanism", in *Revista de igienă socială*, year IV, 1934, no. 4, Bucharest, p. 232.



should be built in different neighborhoods, so as to decongest the central market on Mihai Viteazu Street. On this occasion, the wood market was moved to the Florești-Gilău area so that traders would no longer have to cross the city in order to get to the market with their firewood and timber, since the former market had been positioned “exactly in the opposite direction of movement from where the wood came to Cluj.”<sup>30</sup>

The construction of the Water and Sewerage Works attempted to solve the sanitation problems of the city. The Carolina Hospital established these works in 1888, and in 1892 this small factory was taken over by the municipality of Cluj, which later chose to build a new one in Florești and to close down the one used initially. Thus, in the interwar period, the Water Works operated as a commercial public company, led by General Manager Eng. Suceava Teodor.<sup>31</sup> In 1918 the water delivered was 180 l/s, while in 1938 there was an increase of up to 127.8 %, i.e. 410 l/s. during this period there was also an increase in the water (from 76.4 km to 81 km of new networks) and the sewerage networks (by 1938 there had been created 21.7 kilometers of new networks).<sup>32</sup>

Another aspect of public health pertained to the private sector. Without seeking to offer a value judgment, we may state that the outer image of private buildings always conveyed a sense of the inside of those houses. A mere glance at those houses may reveal not only their architectural style, but also the structure of the families living in them, the social status or even the profession of the owners in some cases. Therefore, we may say that when we talk about the “appearance” of a house, we automatically also refer to the social influence of its existence. The construction of these houses was not the result of a mere improvisation, out of “four fence walls covered with reed,” because collective coexistence abided by certain rules at that time, foremost among them being those relating to hygiene and aesthetics. Hygiene was to ensure the healthy lifestyle of the population, while aesthetics was meant to beautify the city, giving it its specific character, harmony and charm, which enchanted the eye and pleased the spirit.<sup>33</sup>

Poverty was also part of this world of change, and many times it migrated to the periphery of the city, a phenomenon specific to the Romanian urban environment. The slums<sup>34</sup> - as this peripheral space was known - were a fairly densely populated area, also because of the acute shortages experienced by the majority of society. The houses were tiny, with small windows, constructed as if they wanted to prevent the light outside from reflecting the dearth of the private space. The furniture was simple, consisting of a makeshift bed (straws covered with a mat), a table with a few chairs, and a stove. For George V, the King of England, the dismantling of this type of housing was an issue of utmost importance back in

<sup>30</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 122-129.

<sup>32</sup> Lazăr Marian, *Primarii Clujului 1919-2012*, vol. 1, Cluj-Napoca: Editura GPO Graphics S.R.L, 2013, p. 28.

<sup>33</sup> I. D. Enescu, “Structura marilor orașe și gruparea locuințelor”, in *Revista de igienă socială*, year I, 1931, no. 3, Bucharest, p. 184.

<sup>34</sup> The idea of the slums was also encountered in Șcheii Brașovului, according to Octavian Șuluțiu, who, in his book *Brașov (Monografie)*, Brașov: Editura Fundației pentru Literatură și Artă, 1937, p. 91, described the atmosphere thus: “The children heartily bathe in the dust; filthy and snotty, happily unconscious, they fight amongst themselves or waylay the passers-by with their attention of beautiful eyes, or get angry in their specific accent. By the gates, or at the windows, there are wenchies chattering among themselves as if they were in the village, when they do not walk with their swinging gait to the public fountains on the street corner.”

1919, when he proposed in the English Parliament a project for popular houses that entailed the “destruction of those insalubrious and overcrowded houses”<sup>35</sup> and their replacement with new, properly equipped ones - a necessity that was also realized in Cluj. The growth of the population of Cluj, especially after 1918, required the intervention of the local authorities with a view of organizing the habitable space and the erection of new buildings. For example, while over a span of three decades (1870-1900) the number of houses nearly doubled from 3,296 to 5,878, single-storey houses<sup>36</sup> prevailing, in the interwar period things started to get on a different track and the number of buildings was estimated at 12,983,<sup>37</sup> even though another source indicates a much smaller number, of only 5,600 houses.<sup>38</sup> The solution found was simple: grouped at first across a horizontal surface, the dwellings now began to be conceived in terms of height.<sup>39</sup> Out of this total number, 3,357 were built on a surface of 376,375 sqm in the period 1922-1938.<sup>40</sup>

### Public lighting

The modernization of the “treasure city” was also accomplished at the level of lighting, through the introduction of gas lighting in 1827.<sup>41</sup> In modern times, it was understood how important the construction of installations that could provide the entire city with electricity was. As a result of this initiative, two hydroelectric units were built at Someșul Rece in 1905 and a steam engine was constructed, these works being completed only in 1909.<sup>42</sup> At the end of the war, the power plant was in a fairly advanced state of disrepair and with a greatly reduced capacity, incapable of facing the demand of the inhabitants and ensuring normal living conditions for the citizens of Cluj. The situation was such that new applications for power installations were denied because the maximum overload of the power centers could not solve the problem, but could cause serious damage. To solve this deficiency, new investments were made into the Power Plant by reconstructing the hydroelectric unit on the Someșul Rece<sup>43</sup> and imposing new amplifications, conceived as a solution to the numerous power outages to which Cluj was exposed. The first action to solve this energy shortage was the conclusion of an agreement with the company “Șorecani,” which had to build a regional station close to the coal mining area of Aghireș and to supply the entire city with energy,<sup>44</sup> managing to solve the lack of electricity in the urban environment.

<sup>35</sup> Cincinat Sfințescu, *Urbanistica general*, Vol. III. “Economia-Circulația”, Bucharest: Tipografia “Bucovina,” 1933, p. 460.

<sup>36</sup> Ștefan Pascu, Viorica Marica, Mircea Țoca și Rudolf Wagner, *1850 – Clujul istorico-artistic*, The Popular Council of the Cluj Municipality, 1974, p. 156.

<sup>37</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>38</sup> Victor Lazăr, *Clujul*, Bucharest: Editura Cultura Națională, 1923, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> The star of the cities preferring tall buildings was New York, which had adopted this style not only because of its population growth, but also because of the configuration of the land (an idea taken over from the article written by the architect I. Enescu, “Structura marilor orașe și gruparea locuințelor”, in *Revista de igienă socială*, year I, 1931, no. 3, Bucharest, p. 184).

<sup>40</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>41</sup> Ilie Susan, “Funcția culturală a orașului Cluj,” in Al. Matei (ed.), *Ștefan Meteș la 85 de ani. Studii și documente arhivistice*, From the publications of the State Archives, Cluj-Napoca, 1977, p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>43</sup> Lazăr Marian, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>44</sup> Octavian Buzea, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.



## Conclusions

Urban settlements represent one of the most important points of historical analysis, as bring to the fore of research several essential aspects (political, economic, administrative-territorial, socio-cultural, demographic, etc.), which are necessary for outlining the general picture of local history. In other words, the identity of an urban community represents the central core of the history of any geographical location, but in order to define the origin or originality of such a location we need to resort to a diverse group of sources, which can offer us the overall picture of a world undergoing constant development and change. In terms of urban representativeness, the city becomes the first thing studied in discovering the major importance that this element acquires in the environment. Thus, depending on the events it witnessed and the urbanistic capacities at its disposal, the city acquires an essential feature in the policy of describing the foundations underlying the local historical construction.

During the modern period and especially in the late nineteenth century, Cluj underwent an intense process of modernization, which automatically generated territorial development, an increase in the number of its inhabitants, a proper valorization of labor, the adaptation of social life to the conditions or the policies imposed by the state. Legal, administrative, fiscal, economic, and cultural reforms positively influenced the society of Cluj, and the progress of industry and trade gave a boost to urban planning, constructions, landscaping works, the sanitation system, transport and public lighting. There appeared thus a conscious desire to beautify and endow the city, raising the standard of urban development in Cluj to a higher degree of systematization.

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