

## GUEST EDITORIAL: A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN THE ROMANIAN SPACE (19TH-20TH CENTURIES)

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The studies included in this thematic issue of the *Territorial Identity and Development (TID)* journal boost knowledge on the status of women and the dynamics of gender relations in the Romanian space. The editorial approach is part of the subordinated concerns of „Rețeaua pentru cercetarea istoriei femeilor și promovarea studiilor de gen în spațiul românesc” [“The Network for Women's History Research and Promotion of Gender Studies in Romania”] (IFSGen) - <https://ifsgen.umfst.ro/>

The authors – historians, philologists and geographers – explore visual and documentary sources to present different female poses and discourses about women during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the interwar period. Supplemented by two reviews of Cecilia Cârja and Ionela Bogdan, all five articles are addressed both to researchers and specialists concerned with this topic, as well as to the casual reader, curious about the topics addressed.

The first study signed by Ghizela Cosma is dedicated to the Romanian female activism in interwar Cluj. Through a descriptive, analytical and discursive approach, the author presents the most relevant societies in Cluj (church-sponsored, charitable societies, etc.), by defining their individual peculiarities. The information is supplemented with micro-biographies of the Cluj women's movement key representatives of the time. The study highlights the local particularities of interwar Romanian female activism originating in the antebellum period, which mainly focused on a national, not a radical emancipatory militancy for rights, whose ultimate goal was women's emancipation.

From a gender perspective, Georgeta Fodor analyses the presence of women (either allegorical embodiment or real characters) as subjects of the commemorative monuments dedicated to the First World War. The sources of her research are 79 public monuments built between the two world wars (individual statues, ronde-boss compositions, statuary groups, etc.). Underlining the need to re(consider) the presence and involvement of women in the collective practices of remembrance, Georgeta Fodor explores the presence of the female personality as subject, commissioner, and creator/author of such monuments. The author also aimed to evaluate the way in which people in general, and women in particular resonated with these monuments, particularly following the involvement of the Romanian women in their creation and sponsorship.

The study signed by Eliza Deac captures how six major roles performed by women during the First World War (nurse, patriot, diplomat, wife, mother, and writer) were shaped by the unfolding of the conflict. The sources of the research are the war diary compiled by Yvonne Blondel (1916-1917), the diary of Queen Maria (1916-1918) and the memoirs of Sextil Pușcariu. The reason for these choices is argued by the author from the desire to offer a geographical perspective to her analysis (the unfolding of the events in Bucharest/Iași, southern Romania and Transylvania), on the one hand, and to illustrate the way in which women perceived and became involved in the unfolding of the world conflict through the experience of the three women, extremely different in terms of status, social position, etc. on the other hand.

In the fourth study of this current thematic issue, Georgeta Ghionea analyses the articles from the memorial journals in Oltenia since late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of the author is to illustrate the steps undertaken by several ladies from the local elite, who in their own name or through various societies and committees, contributed to the modernisation of Oltenia society by assuming new social responsibilities, by funding the arts, supporting education, and promoting traditional crafts.

Subordinated to the gender studies, the article of Oana-Ramona Ilovan, Ioana Alexandra Ciupe and Adrian-Daniel Muntean aims to explore the visual discourse about women and their roles in the Romanian countryside during late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By using critical visual analysis and discourse analysis applied to a number of 114 illustrated postcards, the authors aimed to create a typology of the research material studied, to identify the main representations of women and to analyse the relationship between the representations of women and the other represented elements.

Above all, the value of the contributions published in this thematic issue results from mapping the Romanian women's different roles, in different periods and historical contexts, by using a wide variety of sources: press, brochures, commemorative architectural monuments, diaries, letters, memorials, and picture postcards. Each author has chosen a specific theme, subordinated to her/his own concerns, and applied research methods specific to the field of activity, adding new interdisciplinary perspectives and innovative opinions. We hope that by publishing this special issue we will open new ways of research and analysis to the fascinating field of women's history and gender studies in Romania.