Acknowledgements

This book is based on my doctoral dissertation defended at the Department of History, Central European University. I want to thank Marsha Siefert and Susan Zimmermann for their unstinting support and guidance. At an early stage of research, I benefitted from the advice of Joszef Böröcz, Constantin Iordachi, the late Jacek Kochanowicz and Sandrine Kott, I am grateful to Maria Bucur and Lewis Siegelbaum for suggesting ways to improve the manuscript. My new home, the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg has been the ideal place to finish the book. I want to thank Ulf Brunnbauer and Heidrun Hamersky for their generosity and help. Ulf has also been part of the project throughout, providing me with much needed feedback on earlier draft chapters. I was fortunate enough to be able to discuss some of the arguments developed in this book at a week-long summer school organized by IGK Work and Human Life Cycle in Global History. I want to express my gratitude to Andreas Eckert, Jie-Hyun Lim, Alf Lüdtke, Mahua Sarkar, Joshi Chitra and Jürgen Kocka. I was equally fortunate to benefit from the remarkable scholarship of a levy of gifted young scholars. They took time out of their own busy schedules to reply to my emails, shared their knowledge gratuitously and sacrificed nerves to go through my prose: Alina Cucu, Mara Mărginean and Dan Cîrjan. Two of my intellectual role models – Ştefan Guga and Andrei State – patiently read most of what I wrote and did their best to make me avoid errors of judgement and sloppiness of thought. Finally, archivists and librarians in Bucharest, Budapest, Vienna and Caransebes patiently listened to my inquiries and kindly offered their knowledge to this grumpy, often disoriented, seldom enthusiastic researcher.

My deepest gratitude goes to my family in Bucharest, Piatra Neamţ, and La Spezia. In writing my chapters, I have been inspired by their memories, illusions, past disappointments and current hopes. My work, much like my life, belongs with my partner Alexandra Sindreştean. This book is dedicated to her.