

Aspects of the Saxon Identity in Transylvania in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

SORIN MITU, ANCA GOGÂLTAN

THE IDENTITY and the self-image of the Saxons were explored in numerous studies especially in the last decades of the last century when this topic drew the attention of the researchers.¹ According to the constructivist view, dominant in that period, the Saxon identity was seen an unchanged phenomena. The above-mentioned studies did not intend to discover a set of general features and even less the “essence” of a “Saxon spirit” in the way Friedrich Teutsch attempted to do it a century ago when he wrote: “Like in the case of separate individuals, those who try to comprehend the development of the nations observe first a natural layout that, in general, in the course of time changes itself very little, but it develops in different ways under the influence of the events. The inner bond, which leads from past to present, is no less connected to this basis level. This is why, until today, the Rine Franks in Transylvania are recognisable as such.”²

Contrary to this previous imobile perspective, contemporary studies focus on modifications in the self-image of the Transylvanian Saxons. They emphasize the way in which changing historical contexts and events forced Saxons to constantly reshape their identity.³ These transformations in the self-image represented usually reactions to main events in the history of the community such as the settlement in Transylvania, the Reformation, the loss of the political privileges in the nineteenth century or the radical changes imposed by the communist regime. Due to the fact that, generally speaking, the history of the Saxons ended with their massive emigration to Germany in the last decades of the twentieth century, many studies analyze the way in which this final moment was prepared by the development of the Saxon identity in the previous periods. Therefore, a great emphasis was put on contemporary history.⁴

The goal of the present article is to analyze the problem of the Germanity of the Saxons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It will focus especially on the intellectual discourse in order to understand the modifications that occurred in various moments in relation to the political and cultural context. Taking into consideration that, according to the existing bibliography, in the modern period the historical writing represented the most

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important means of characterization and self-definition of the Saxons,⁵ the analysis will focus most of all on historical texts.

The Saxon historical writing developed very much during that period. Edit Szegedi, who analyzed the Saxon historiography produced in the seventeenth and in the beginning of the eighteenth century, emphasized the way in which Baroque intellectual climate shaped those writings.⁶ On the other hand, Andreas Möckel argued that beginning with the end of the eighteenth century historical Saxon writing represented a reaction to the reforms of emperor Joseph II and, later, a response to the political dangers of the following century.⁷ However, studying the most important themes of the Saxon self-image we may first of all notice their surprising continuity and only later may we notice the gradual changings of the old clichés.

Beginning with the Middle Ages, the most important identity element of the Transylvanian Saxons was their Germanity. Besides emphasizing and underlining their German character this issue usually included the presentation of several particularities and details such as the problem of the (German) origins of the Saxons; what kind of Germans were the Transylvanian Saxons, what were their specific features in relation to their *mother nation*; the German purity of the Saxons and their excellence in the general context of the German population; their direct connections (political, cultural and identity ones) with the German homeland. As we may notice in the following paragraphs, the Saxons were tempted to maintain their traditional repertory of stereotypical characteristics (revalued according to different demands of the argumentation), instead of inventing or discovering new ones.

Martin Felmer (1720-1767), a teacher and (like many other Saxon historians) a Lutheran priest, wrote at the middle of the eighteenth century a treatise about the origins of the Saxon nation.⁸ His work focused on two major aspects: the Saxon distinct identity among the Transylvanian people and their loyalty towards the Habsburg rulers. As Adolf Armbruster pointed out, Felmer's interest in various aspects of the Saxon identity (historical, religious, economic, ethnographic, cultural, linguistic) may be explained by the Transylvanian political context at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁹ That was a time when the expectations of the Saxons were little by little demolished by the Habsburgs' politics in relation to the variety of nations living in their empire. The reaction of Saxon intellectuals like Felmer was to resort to scientific arguments in order to prove the economic and cultural importance of the Saxons, claiming their historical rights to enjoy a privileged position in Transylvania.

In Felmer's opinion, the Germanity of the Saxons was first of all proved by their oldest ethnonim mentioned in Latin medieval historical sources: "In the oldest documents and writings the inhabitants of Transylvania who belong to the Saxon nation were denominated German guests (*Hospites Teutonici*) or even Germans (*Teutones*). Beginning with the fourteenth century, one finds them under the name Saxons (*Saxones*) or even as Royal Saxons (*Saxones Regii, Saxones Regales*) . . . From the sixteenth century, the whole population was denominated Saxon nation and all their highest rulers considered together and representing them all, were given the title Saxon Nation. In Hungarian, the members of this nation are named *Szászok* and from this comes the Wallachian word *Szászi*. In their common language the Saxons use to call themselves Germans and Saxons."¹⁰ It

may be noticed that Felmer used the concept of “Saxon nation” in the sense of privileged nation, in accordance to the national-political semantics of his time. The members of this Transylvanian political and social body presented a specific identity (ethnic as we would call it today), and that was a German one. Originating in a political terminology (*Saxones Regii*), the denomination “Saxons” became an exonym, used both by Hungarians and Romanians and also a Saxon endonym. However, as Felmer pointed out (simultaneously expressing both a tautology and a contradiction), the Saxons used first of all the denomination “Germans” and then “Saxons.”

On the other hand, Felmer resorted to ethnonyms in order to underline the local features of their identity. Compared to the “foreign” Germans the Saxons were considered to be different: “If the Saxons are recognised as a local German population they are still differentiated from the Germans outside Transylvania. Even the Hungarians and the Romanians name them differently. Whereas the Hungarians call them *Németek* to which it corresponds the Romanian *Niams*, the Transylvanian Saxons use the ancient denomination *Mueser* to name them.”¹¹

The problem of the Saxon specificity in comparison to the rest of the Germans was discussed by Lorenz Töppelt (1641–1670) already a century earlier. Töppelt underlined the fact that the Saxons called the Germans with a different name (“Muesr”). Concerning the German origins of the Saxons the author mentioned three possible theories (that the Saxons and the Germans were different populations; that the ancient Germanic tribes and the Daciens, who were considered to be the ancestors of the Saxons were two separate populations and only finally that the Saxons were Germans and both originated from the Daciens).¹²

Töppelt’s ideas expressed the intellectual context of Baroque historical genealogies, strongly influenced by religious sensibilities. Scholars like him believed that the peculiar and changing fate of populations was solid proof for the existence of the divine will.¹³ Contrary to him, Felmer’s historical writing expressed more the concerns of the contemporary politics than religious and spiritual ones. Therefore, we may say that he made the transition to a period in which the problem of the Germanity of the Saxons was neither an exercise of Baroque erudition nor a simple curiosity or ethnographic surprise (like in the Renaissance period). This became more and more an instrument of reshaping the ethnical and cultural modern identity of the Saxons.

Beginning with the end of the eighteenth century, in the writings of modern authors the question of the Germanity of the Saxons was intensely debated. This tendency could be already observed at Michael Lebrecht (1757–1807), geographer, historian and (like Felmer) Lutheran priest at Sibiu as well as author of a work focusing on the “national character” of the Transylvanian nations.¹⁴ Inspired by Enlightenment ideas about the “spirit of a nation,” this was an attempt to present the populations living in Transylvania by relating their physical and moral characteristics with ethnographical features. According to the author especially typical for Transylvania was the fact that the local populations were determined to preserve their specific national features (customs, clothing, religion and way of thinking) in conditions of co-habitation. However, the author stressed that the true, “heroic” spirit of the Hungarians, Szeklers, Saxons, and Wallachians was not to be found in the cities but in the villages.

Similar to his forerunners from the Baroque period Lebrecht also focused on the question of the Saxons' origins. He based his theories on historical documents already mentioned by other Saxon scholars. Lebrecht was aware of the fact that like in previous times a noble and ancient origin was indispensable for building the ethnical identity and defending the existing political status. However, compared to seventeenth century historians, in Lebrecht's writings the scholarly demonstration was not a goal in itself. Without being concerned with possible contradictions he combined all the existing hypothesis about the origins of the Saxons with a single goal: to demonstrate without doubt the Germanity of the Saxons using all known historical arguments. "Nobody denies that the Saxons from Transylvania have German blood and German origins" wrote Lebrecht.¹⁵ Concerning the question about when and how they came here any answer seemed to be valid for Lebrecht as long as it supported the theory of the Germanity of the Saxons. Therefore, he pointed out that the eldest German forefathers of the Saxons were not the twelfth century colonists but the Goths from the Roman times. After these came the German soldiers of Charlemagne, crusaders who remained in Transylvania on their return from the Holy Lands and only after these came the colonists brought in these lands by king Géza II. The last addition were the Landler in the eighteenth century. Each Germanic wave was rooted in the ancient seed and made the "German blood" stronger. Therefore, "the Transylvanian Germans are a combination of ancient and newer settlers from Germany who were planted above the ancient root represented by the Goths."¹⁶

Concerning the problem of their origins and settlement in Transylvania the Saxons had two suitable options that were necessary from a political point of view during that period. The differences between theories were, however, irreconcilable. The hypothesis of the autochthonous origins (Dacian, Gothic or Carolingian) stressed the indigenous character of the Saxons in Transylvania in relation to rival nations. The other theory that placed the founding moment of the Saxon history in the twelfth century colonisation had the role to legitimate their special privileges granted by the Hungarian kings. Obviously, this argument served as well the political interests of the Saxons in the constitutional disputes at the end of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Aware of the advantages provided by both theories in that difficult political moment in the Saxon history, Lebrecht did not hesitate to combine them in order to reinforce the identity discourse of the Saxons with all legitimating arguments.

Especially in the period between the Josephine reforms and the abolishment of the Saxon autonomy (1781–1876) the Saxon community had to adjust to a series of major transformations. In spite of the disturbing events of that period, dramatically expressed by the formula "Finis Saxoniae"¹⁷ (that showed the feelings caused by the gradual loss of their privileges), the Saxons managed to survive as a strong community from an economic, social, and cultural point of view. They also adapted their identity discourse to the new political circumstances in order to be able to preserve the self-esteem of the Saxon society.

As all the researchers noticed, there is no doubt that during that period the debate on the Germanity of the Saxons was stronger and it was also added new features. Whereas until the eighteenth century the texts made reference especially to the historical past and briefly mentioned the similarity of language with the rest of the German speaking populations, beginning with the nineteenth century the Saxons developed a Herderian

view on the nation. As a sign of this conceptual redefinition of their community they used more often the term people (*Volk*) instead of the nation (*Nation*).¹⁸ The Saxon nation referred to the old political community, the privileged estate in the Transylvanian constitutional system. The formula Saxon “people” instead was that ethnolinguistic community theorised by Herder. It was based on language, heredity, tradition and animated by a specific spirit. In these new terms, from a cultural point of view, the Transylvanian Saxons began to consider themselves as part of the German nation,¹⁹ whereas, from a political point of view they tried to approach the new Germany unified under Prussian lead.

This cultural and political background influenced the writings of Georg Daniel Teutsch (1817–1893), one of the most influential Saxon historians. Similar to all previously analyzed authors he was both a teacher and a Lutheran priest. Due to his intellectual and moral capacities Teutsch became a bishop and a true leader of his nation. His most important work was a history of the Saxons, initially published in five volumes after the Revolution of 1848.²⁰

Although his writing style was influenced by the romantic spirit, as a former student of Ranke Teutsch was in favour of a critical approach in historiography. Therefore, he credited none of the previous fantastic theories concerning the origins of the Saxons and established the beginnings of their history at the time of the twelfth century colonization during king Géza II. Respecting the information provided by documents and the methodology of the positivist history Teutsch found another way to support the precedence of the Saxons in Transylvania and their importance as a civilizing element (a German one) in this part of Europe. When the Saxons came, wrote him (invoking medieval papal documents as proofs), the regions where they settled down were a “desert”: “The distant area between Mureş, Olt and the two Târnava rivers, where now the Saxon Chairs are located and look like a garden, was a desert in the past.”²¹

Developed in several ideas, the image of the Transylvanian desert had the role to emphasize the qualities of the Saxons, their capacity to change, in a positive way, the savage and hostile environment in which they settled (both from a natural as well as human point of view): “The reason for which King Geisa II brought German settlers in the deserted, far located border, on the other side of the forest, was the consequence of the already mentioned situation of the Hungarian Kingdom during those times. They came to work and defend the land, for the preservation of the crown and the protection of their rights against enemies from inside and outside. In this way it is written on their seal and the same is indicated by their whole history. They came as free people with full property rights on the land because they first had to tame the savage nature and the wild local people.”²² In these passionate sentences Teutsch made an essential self-portrait of the Saxons from the middle of the nineteenth century: industrious, defenders of the country, loyal to the crown, free people whose property rights upon their own home may not be disputed by anyone because they were the ones who “tamed” and civilized it. In this way the author delineated a symbolical geography²³ based on the differences between the western German civilization (from which the Saxons emerged like an isolated island) and the “savage” border lands, where they settled: the Germans “moved from civilized areas into the wilderness, from the circle of edu-

cated co-nationals in the distant border of Christianity in order to fight against wild populations.”²⁴

One may also notice the fact that for Teutsch the main point of reference for the history of the Saxons was not Transylvania, like in the works of the previous historians, but Hungary. Even if he fought against the Hungarian revolution in the summer of 1848 Teutsch had accepted the union of Transylvania to Hungary out of a legalist spirit and “understanding the contemporary situation in the world.”²⁵ The old Transylvania in which the Saxons represented one of the three privileged nations and four accepted confessions was disappearing. Therefore, the Saxons had to build up a new situation for themselves from a political and identity point of view corresponding to the new constitutional context.

In those circumstances, during the second half of the nineteenth century the geographical borders of the Saxon identity were reshaped. These included the Saxon lands (the ancient “Sachsenboden” changed for a short period in 1849 into the Sachsenland), Transylvania (that disappeared from a political point of view after 1867), Hungary, that from a constitutional point of view and recalling the medieval status of Transylvania as part of the Hungarian medieval Kingdom, became the fatherland (in 1848 and after 1867), the Habsburg Empire (that became more and more distant and foreign for the Transylvanian Saxons)²⁶ and finally the newly identified motherland, represented after 1871 by the impetuous and tempting German Empire.

Consequently, the Transylvanian Saxons structured their symbolic geography on three levels, each of them representing a country with a specific role to fulfill.²⁷ At the first level was the “*Heimat*”—a place that was the home of the ancestors, identifiable with the realms lived by the Saxons, united in the national territory of the Sachsenland. The second country was the “*Vaterland*”—with constitutional and political role, to which the citizens owned loyalty and had to pay their taxes and where they enjoyed rights and liberties. Following the medieval contractual relations between the German colonists and the Hungarian royalty that were prolonged in the changed political realities of the dualist regime after 1867, this country was represented by Hungary. In this symbolic architecture, the Habsburgs found their place also as kings of Hungary (and less as Austrian emperors, position in which they often harmed the Saxons). Finally, the last country was the “*Mutterland*”—represented in a linguistic, herderian sense, by Germany, the cradle of the Saxon mother tongue. Even if the political relations between the Saxons and the German Empire were not always cordial (the Saxons being sacrificed sometimes by Germany on the sake of the higher interests of the Triple Alliance),²⁸ Germany became more and more the leading light of the Transylvanian Saxons.²⁹ This referred to cultural aspects as well as to a more profound loyalty, spiritual and national located somewhere above (and not necessarily in contradiction to) the current political loyalties that were directed towards the Hungarian homeland and the Dualist Empire.

Georg Daniel Teutsch clearly expressed in his writings this tripartite symbolic geography. In the conclusion paragraph, highly representative for the self-image of the Saxons, he managed to combine all three identity components: “From times immemorial, the Saxon nation in our Homeland [*Heimat*] kept her inner strength due to her extraordinary spiritual and moral education, her devoted attachment to the law, Prince and Fatherland

[*Vaterland*], and the heroic spirit that never abandoned those values. She settled, thus, and served a higher purpose, whose sanctity was not always recognised. She created a place of light and freedom at the border of Christianity, far away from dear Motherland [*Mutterland*]. The means that lead to her foundation may be and will be preserved if she remains true to herself."³⁰

The work of Georg Daniel Teutsch was continued in all aspects by his son, Friedrich Teutsch (1852–1933) who, similarly to his father, was a teacher, priest, bishop, respected leader of his nation. He developed the historiographic work of his father paying also attention to the portrait of the Saxon identity sketched by his predecessors. In one of his historiographic writings published at the beginning of the twentieth century, Friedrich Teutsch dedicated a chapter to the “national individuality” of the Saxons. For him, as well, underlining the Germanity of the Saxons was extremely important. However, he approached this theme more subtle and sophisticated (expected from a student of Treitschke and Mommsen), in accordance to the scientific methods of his time. More than probable he was well aware of contemporary studies concerning the “psychology of nations” made by scholars like Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920).³¹

Dealing with the problem of the Germanity of the Saxons Friedrich Teutsch oscillated between emphasizing their belonging to the great family of the German people and stressing their particular characteristics: “In time, influenced by land, location, configuration and also by the peculiar historical development during hundreds of years and the influence of the specific surroundings, an interesting development took place. In the family of the German Nation, the Saxons developed as a special breed with individual historical and cultural features. They became a specific group that enriched, in their own way, the image of the German population. This individuality bears typical German features but it is Transylvanian-Saxon.”³²

Resulting from the methodology Teutsch used in this chapter, the typical features of the Saxons were mostly psychological, which, at their turn emerged from the particular historical development. As a consequence of their belonging to the franconian branch of the Germanic populations, the ancestors of the Transylvanian Saxons were “the most mobile of the Germans.” In spite of that, their descendants who settled in Transylvania became “reserved” and “paced.” In the Saxons, the exuberance of the old Franks became melancholy, whereas their character changed into a distrustful and a cautious one.³³ All the above-mentioned features constructed through opposition between the welcoming realms of the motherland and “the ferocious hardships” faced by the colonists “in their unfriendly exile” had the role to emphasize the difficult fate of the Saxons as well as their capacity to overcome all the hardships.

In the end, all these nuances did not represent much because “the most important thing was that the population remained German.”³⁴ The “subtleties” introduced by the psychology of the nations were easily changeable according to the interests of those who supported them.

In this case how could the Transylvanian Saxons be identified among the Germans? The answer was simple: through their superiority and authenticity, arguing that the Saxons were “the most German among the Germans” meaning that they were the best Germans. The fact that this image was a stereotype was significantly indicated by

Teutsch's choice to refer to famous quotations that created and supported them like the "germanissimi Germani" of Martin Opitz,³⁵ continuing with Schlözer's praising words (the Saxons "preserved themselves unmixed and their entire Germanity remained pure among and near non-Germans") and finishing with a quotation from Bismarck ("the Saxons from Transylvania have always been a brave nation, the best Germans from Hungary").³⁶

In conclusion we may argue that the initial hypothesis according to which the theme of the Saxons' Germanity represented a constancy in their identity discourse, and was continuously reconfigured according to the ideological necessities of the time, was confirmed by the studied texts. Another general aspect concerned the fact that the self-image of the Saxons was extremely positive, they were very proud of themselves, this being also the context in which they displayed their pure Germanity. This fact may be interpreted as a reaction to the menaces and frustrations felt in the modern period, following the loss of their privileged status. The Saxons needed a high self-esteem in order to be able to cope with menaces of their numerous and various rivals like: the Hungarian nobility, that competed them in Transylvania, the Habsburgs who dissatisfied them, the Dualist Hungary that aimed to denationalize them as well as the prolific Romanians, who outnumbered them. The fear of "Finis Saxoniae," that appeared first in the end of the eighteenth century after the reforms introduced by Joseph II, was balanced by a counter-feeling, that of the superiority of the Saxon community, having as a central element the idea of their Germanity. As Friedrich Teutsch wrote: "The greatest inheritance, which is in the same time the greatest deed, is the fact that from various colonists having various rights appeared a nation that consciously preserved herself German through progress and development in time. Once this was a co-determining grandness in the conditions of the Transylvanian smallness, today is a little part of a whole, making efforts to serve the country in her specific way."³⁷

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Notes

1. Among the most important studies should be mentioned: Harald Roth, "Autostereotype als Identifikationsmuster: Zum Selbstbild der Siebenbürger Sachsen," in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen. Stereotype in einer multiethnischen Region*, ed. Konrad Gündisch, Wolfgang Höpken, Michael Markel (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), 179–191 (with the bibliography until the date of the publication. See footnote no. 12, p. 183); Joachim von Puttkamer, *Schulalltag und nationale Integration in Ungarn* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2003), 363–371.
2. Friedrich Teutsch, *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Koehler, 1916), 281.
3. See for example Marilyn McArthur, *Zum Identitätswandel der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999).
4. James Koranyi, Ruth Wittlinger, "From diaspora to diaspora: The case of Transylvanian Saxons in Romania and Germany," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 17, 1 (2011): 96–115; Christian Rausch, "Partikulare Ethnizität: Transnationale und globale Veränderungen der ethnischen

- Identität bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen in Rumänien," *Forschungen zur Volks- und Landeskunde* 55 (2012): 131–144.
5. Andreas Möckel, "Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewusstsein bei den Siebenbürger Sachsen," in *Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Paul Philippi (Köln: Böhlau, 1967), 1–23.
 6. Edit Szegedi, *Geschichtsbewusstsein und Gruppenidentität: Die Historiographie der Siebenbürger Sachsen zwischen Barock und Aufklärung* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002).
 7. Möckel, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 1–2.
 8. Martin Felmer, *Abhandlung vom dem Ursprung der Sächsischen Nation*, manuscript first published in 1935, in Berlin, by Gottlieb Brandsch.
 9. Martin Felmer, *Schriften* (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1974), 19–24 (see the introduction by Adolf Armbruster).
 10. Felmer, *Schriften*, 93–94.
 11. *Ibid.*, 94.
 12. Szegedi, *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, 357.
 13. *Ibid.*, 399.
 14. Michael Lebrecht, *Über den Nationalcharakter der in Siebenbürgen befindlichen Nationen* (Wien: Hörling, 1792).
 15. *Ibid.*, 48.
 16. *Ibid.*, 49.
 17. Harald Roth, *Kleine Geschichte Siebenbürgens* (Köln: Böhlau, 1996), 86.
 18. Möckel, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 10–11.
 19. Roth, *Autostereotype*, 182–183; Möckel, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 10–12.
 20. Georg Daniel Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen für das sächsische Volk*, vols. 1–4 (Kronstadt: Gött, 1852–1858).
 21. *Ibid.*, 16.
 22. *Ibid.*, 18–19. These aspects were also analyzed in Puttkamer, *Schulalltag*, 366–367.
 23. The representation of the Saxon identity as a sign of a superior culture in contrast to the Romanian Balcanic spirit was analyzed in Cristian Cercel, "Transylvanian Saxon Symbolic Geographies," *Civilisations* 60, 2 (2012): 83–101.
 24. *Ibid.*, 19.
 25. Möckel, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 8.
 26. For the evolution of the relations between the Saxons and the Habsburgs see Harald Heppner, "Habsburg und die Siebenbürger Sachsen (1688–1867): Zum Thema politische Kultur," in *Siebenbürgen in der Habsburgermonarchie: Vom Leopoldinum bis zum Ausgleich (1690–1867)*, ed. Zsolt K. Lengyel, Ulrich A. Wien (Köln: Böhlau, 1999), 47–58.
 27. See Nicolae Teșculă, "The media, the idea of German affiliation and the Transylvanian Saxons in the 1860s," *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai: Historia* 57, 2 (June 2012): 31.
 28. See Jonathan Kwan, "Transylvanian Saxon politics, Hungarian state building and the case of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein (1881–82)," *English Historical Review* 127, 526 (June 2012): 592–624.
 29. A situation that was very similar to that of the Transylvanian Romanians. In texts published in the review *Tribuna* (1884) was often underlined that the sun of all Romanians raised in Bucharest, without necessarily implying irredentist connotations. It is interesting that the Transylvanian Romanians also shaped a symbolic geography on three levels, similar to that of the Saxons. This included Transylvania, the Habsburg Empire and the pan-Romanian space. See Sorin Mitu, "Formation de l'idée de patrie chez les Roumains de Transylvanie pendant la première moitié du XIX^e siècle," *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review* 2, 2 (Fall 2002): 369–375.

30. Teutsch, *Geschichte*, 806–807.
31. Wundt published in the beginning of the twentieth century (1912–1913), also at Leipzig, the well known work *Elemente der Völkerpsychologie: Grundlinien einer psychologischen Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschheit*.
32. Teutsch, *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 281.
33. *Ibid.*, 281–282.
34. *Ibid.*, 282.
35. For the fate of this formula see Roth, *Autostereotype*, 182. See also Karl Kurt Klein, “Zur Frage der ‘Germanissimi Germani’ des Dichters Martin Opitz,” *Südostdeutsches Archiv* 4 (1961): 19–29.
36. Teutsch, *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 282.
37. *Ibid.*, 292.

Abstract

Aspects of the Saxon Identity in Transylvania in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

The present article focuses on the question of the Germanity of the Saxons in eighteenth and nineteenth century historical writings of Martin Felmer, Michael Lebrecht, Georg Daniel Teutsch and Friedrich Teutsch. Beginning with the Middle Ages, the most important identification element of the Transylvanian Saxons was their Germanity. Besides stating and underlining their German character this problem usually implied invocation of specific features and details concerning this subject such as: the problem of the (German) origins of the Saxons what kind of Germans were the Transylvanian Saxons, which were their specific characteristics in relation to the mother nation; the German purity of the Saxons and their exelency in the general context of the German populations; the connections (political, cultural and identity ones) with the German homeland.

Keywords

Transylvanian Saxons, eighteenth-nineteenth century, historiography, self-image, national identity