

# Identifying the Other.

## Transylvanian Ethnicities in the First Half of the 19th Century as Viewed by Foreign Travellers\*

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### Transylvania – A multicultural province

**T**RANSYLVANIA HAS always housed various nationalities, usually cohabiting in a peaceful manner. As obvious as this remark appears to a contemporary, ascertaining this fact still amazed 19<sup>th</sup>-century foreign travellers. The multitude of different ethnicities, spoken languages and religions perplexed them and provided them with the chance and reason to create long lists of attributes meant to clarify the characteristics of this region for their potential readers.

For example, the French military man and diplomat Auguste de Lagarde considered that “from all of Europe’s countries, Transylvania is perhaps the one which, on a territory not vast at all, comprises so many distinct peoples. You can count up to twelve distinct peoples, who preserve their national spirit, costume, distinct mores and who live in good understanding.”<sup>1</sup> A decade later, the Irish traveller Robert Walsh further detailed this rather unusual situation by mentioning an approximate number of individuals for each ethnicity. According to his sources, in 1824, Transylvania was the homeland of 753,000 Romanians, 480,000 Saxons, 305,000 Hungarians and Szeklers, 72,000 Gypsies, 7,600 Slavs, 5,500 Armenians, 1,900 Jews, 800 Greeks and 200 Bulgarians.<sup>2</sup>

The Banat area offered an even more impressive picture, as its inhabitants were brought here by “the course of events, through all sorts of circumstances, from every possible part of the world. *Rapi*, who call themselves Serbians, then Romanians, Bulgarians, Gypsies, Jews, Italian and French settlers, Hungarians and Germans, and, as a matter of fact, all these nations who match together as fire and water, live here in peace.”<sup>3</sup> The German traveller F. S. Chrismar further adds that “at Becicherec even a colony of Spaniards (from Biscaia) had been established.”<sup>4</sup>

Due to the presence of these numerous ethnicities, some travellers identified more than 20 spoken languages,<sup>5</sup> a situation that could easily bring to mind the Tower of Babel. And the different religions professed in Transylvania offered a similar picture, as the foreigners remark the presence of Orthodox believers, Greek-Catholics or Uniates, Catholics, Protestants (sometimes called “Reformed” or “Evangelicals”), such as Lutherans, Calvinists

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and Unitarians (or Arians), Jews and a number of Catholic orders: Jesuits, Franciscans, Piarists, Pauline fathers, Ursuline sisters, Cistercians and others.

As tempting as it would be to further detail the outsiders' opinions on each of these different peoples, the purpose of the present study are less extensive. The following pages are devoted to providing information about the impressions stirred up by the Hungarians, Saxons, Szeklers and Romanians encountered by the travellers during their journeys through Transylvania. The first section thus includes the notes concerning these four ethnicities' spoken languages, denominations and habitual clothing, while the second one deals with the descriptions of their homes and with certain specific cultural inclinations. The final part of the paper completes this overview by presenting the manner in which the observers identified the various ethnic groups based on their occupations and on other general traits. The conclusive remarks section emphasises a few distinctive features of the images constructed by the foreigners in order to interact with and describe the Other in his natural environment.

## Language, religion and clothing as essential identity elements

ONE OF the most striking characteristics of the Hungarian language appears to be its speakers' attachment towards it. As Robert Walsh discovers, "at the inn where I checked in, the personnel spoke only Hungarian and after several attempts at making myself understood, during which all those from the house came to me in turns, trying each individually and sometimes all of them together [to comprehend me], I gave up insisting seeing that there is no hope."<sup>6</sup>

Andrew Archibald Paton enumerates other traits of this language, but they are not flattering: he considers that Hungarian is rather illogical from a grammatical viewpoint and that its vocabulary and pronunciation are not musical enough.<sup>7</sup> And, apparently, the same could be stated about the tongue used by the Szeklers, as they were related "by language and origin" to the Hungarians. This close relationship was undoubtedly proven by the former type of connection, as the Szeklers used a "slightly sung Hungarian dialect,"<sup>8</sup> while the other numerous resemblances between the two ethnicities determines P. D. Holthaus to speak about the "Hungarian-Szeklers, [who are] used as border guards."<sup>9</sup>

As for the Saxons, some travellers completely identify the language used by these Transylvanian inhabitants with German, while others remark and emphasise the differences they could ascertain while comparing this particular dialect with the language's literary form. Generally speaking, the "Saxon" tongue's sonority was not positively appreciated by the foreigners, especially if they spoke German.

In fact, the evolution of the Saxons' self image was sinuous. After an initial strong devotion towards the Transylvanian homeland, from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, concomitantly with the Habsburgs' takeover, they started emphasising the tight connections they maintained with the other lands inhabited by Germans.<sup>10</sup> This attitude was actually related to their political projects: by accentuating their German origin, language and cul-

ture within the frame of a Pan-German solidarity,<sup>11</sup> the Transylvanian Saxons hoped to prove that they were similar to the new rulers of the province and perhaps even gain some benefits from it.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, this perspective could also prove valuable in the context of the Saxons' relations with the other Transylvanian "nations," especially when it came to protect their political interests against those of the Hungarians and the Szeklers.<sup>13</sup> As a result, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term "Saxon" became more encompassing, as it was no longer used restrictively with reference to its juridical meaning (namely *Königsboden's* inhabitants), but described all the Lutheran Transylvanians who spoke German.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hungarian gradually replaced German and/or the Saxon dialect in most urban communities in which the two ethnicities cohabited. Such an example is provided by Cluj, a former Saxon centre in which, as Táncsics Mihály observes in 1839, the names of the streets were written in both languages.<sup>15</sup> And in Timișoara, "almost all of the shops' suspended painted boards bear Hungarian words, everywhere one hears people speaking Hungarian; German only still flickers, like a few shining rays of sun in a dense and dark forest, and this is the work of ten years, before which almost everybody spoke German in Timișoara."<sup>16</sup>

Travellers' accounts are much more unanimous with respect to Romanians: the latter are clearly Rome's offspring and are therefore very similar to Italians, this particular observation usually referring, without being limited, to their mother tongue. As Auguste de Lagarde notices, at Orăștie "the same language as in Wallachia is spoken, namely the corrupt Latin dialect. With a little imagination you can easily believe that you hear the Caesars' or the Ciceronians' descendants speaking."<sup>17</sup>

Religious identity, on the other hand, had the potential of posing a number of problems, as the categories were not so clear-cut. Hungarians were Catholics or "Reformed," almost all of the Saxons were Lutherans, most Romanians were Orthodox believers, while others had embraced Greek-Catholicism and the Szeklers were chiefly Catholics, although with time many of them adhered to other Christian denominations. As Andrew Archibald Paton informs his readers, these Szekler Protestants "are either Calvinists or Unitarians and, from what I could learn, no Lutherans exist amongst them."<sup>18</sup> As for the religious observations concerning the Romanians, the travellers typically mention such general aspects as the presence of richly embellished churches or the fact that most priests are improperly instructed in dogmatic issues,<sup>19</sup> but sometimes they also include a number of picturesque details. For example, while in Lugoj, Edward Daniel Clarke witnessed a ceremony designed to bring rain during a time of drought.<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting to note that the relations between the Habsburg court and the various types of Protestants which could be encountered in Transylvania were not always good, as the former usually considered that these churches promoted rebellion and an oppositional attitude towards the Empire.<sup>21</sup> These denominations' autonomy was perceived as a threat that could only be eliminated through the implementation of a governing apparatus organised by the state. Although some measures were taken in the direction of setting up a centralised absolutist system in the religious domain, in the seventh decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Habsburgs were compelled to recognise their defeat: they were not able to profoundly alter the Protestant churches' internal administration and were thus forced to opt for decreeing religious tolerance in their Empire.<sup>22</sup>

Apparently clothing represented a more accurate indicator of ethnic identity than religion. As Charles Lemerancier de Longpré phrases it, “the costumes’ diversity helps the observer study the mores and the structure of the nationalities inhabiting Hungary. These costumes mix everywhere, but can never be confounded. Each fragment of a people, however remote from its origin, however isolated it would be, preserves alongside the tradition of its language that of the costume from its old motherland.”<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, it was rather easy for 19<sup>th</sup> century travellers through Transylvania to identify the various ethnicities. For example, the above mentioned French baron informs his readers that Hungarian peasants wore excessively large trousers held together with a belt, a short shirt and a tall hat with brims that were similar to a house’s eaves. In his trips, Edward Daniel Clarke encountered Hungarians who wore “military boots equipped with spurs,”<sup>24</sup> while other foreigners observe that the noblemen usually dressed in good taste and used precious stones for adorning their attire.<sup>25</sup>

In stark contrast to this display of wealth, Szeklers usually wove the fabrics and manufactured their own clothes. Unfortunately, the result was not necessarily a qualitatively elevated one, at least according to some of the travellers.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the Romanian national costume received both positive and negative appreciations on the part of the foreigners, depending on their taste and preferences.<sup>27</sup>

Apparently, only the Saxons’ clothing had the potential of confusing the observers, because they mostly wore the Hungarian costume.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the baron d’Hausez considers that “the Saxons distinguish themselves through their long hair that flutters on their shoulders, through the large hats they wear, the collarless shirt, the sheepskin vest and the trousers whose folds are gathered in the very wide boots.”<sup>29</sup>

## **The Transylvanian nationalities’ different dwelling conditions and cultural predispositions**

**T**HE HOUSES’ general aspect can undoubtedly provide valuable information about their inhabitants. From this viewpoint, the Saxons are unequivocally the Transylvanian ethnicity that enjoys the best living conditions. All travellers agree that everyone can easily become aware that (s)he has entered a Saxon locality, as “the streets are better planted with trees and bushes than the Hungarian villages. The houses are usually higher and less oriental in style. And, speaking about the same class of the peasants, there are more signs of comfort and material improvements.”<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the foreigners are delighted to discover that special attention was paid even to the exterior decorations of their well-built and clean houses and that “the Saxons’ towns have an utterly medieval appearance, with towers and old walls.”<sup>31</sup>

Szeklers occupy a somewhat intermediate position amongst the Transylvanian nationalities. Their houses are usually better than the Romanian ones, but do not attain the Saxon homes’ quality. The fact that the Szeklers’ political status was better than the Romanians’ partly explains this peculiarity and “a certain indolence [that] keeps them away from an additional gain”<sup>32</sup> in comparison with the Saxons is responsible for this

contentment that becomes noticeable after they had reached a particular level of convenience.

The foreign travellers' opinions about the Romanian villages differ markedly from one account to the other. Some of them describe this nationality's homes as wretched, dirty, poor and not well taken care of, while others confess that they are not as bad as they had expected. For instance, Adolf Schmidl reports that the Romanians' houses are "for the most part, [made] of clay or of wood, often only earth huts and rarely comprise more than a room and a kitchen."<sup>33</sup> Andrew Archibald Paton further adds that their yards are "the dirtiest and untidiest."<sup>34</sup> On the contrary, Vince Batthyány notes that "their homes were not that bad, and some rooms were adorned with white towels."<sup>35</sup> Reverend George Fisk also considers that the Romanian villages were "very beautiful in their own way and charming as appearance—often resembling the Swiss ones. It was delightful to see again the Christian churches' towers looming above the rich foliage."<sup>36</sup>

Apparently, even more so than the inhabiting conditions, cultural achievements were closely related to politics. Thus, the travellers mention the existence of denominational schools, libraries or museums founded by or belonging to the Hungarians, the Saxons or the Szeklers in the province's most important towns. On the other hand, the Romanians' socio-political inferior status did not leave room for any higher forms of culture and the travellers were (or soon became) well aware of this fact.

As they mostly interacted with the nobility, the foreigners got acquainted with a number of the dominant families' cultural activities. For example, these visitors mention the Cluj theatre<sup>37</sup> or the large libraries that could be consulted in the Hungarians' mansions. Nevertheless, a few travellers, such as Andrew Archibald Paton, considered that the Transylvanian nobles' culture was inferior to the Occidental one.<sup>38</sup> As for this nationality's commoners, dancing was one of the elements had in view by the foreigners and Joseph Adalbert Krickel described the Hungarian national dance as "artificial and alluring."<sup>39</sup>

The accounts are almost unanimous in concluding that the Saxons were without a doubt culturally superior in comparison with the other Transylvanian ethnicities. They were characterised by cleanliness, diligence and a visible, yet not opulent wealth and usually foreigners saw their habits and traits as being Occidental. Such an observation was most frequently made by those coming from the Ottoman Empire, but other travellers as well considered that Braşov, a town inhabited by a Saxon majority in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was situated "at civilised Europe's Eastern extremity."<sup>40</sup> Actually, the Saxon elites also viewed themselves as messengers of the Western culture at its Oriental borderland<sup>41</sup> and the fabulous museum founded by Samuel Brukenthal, highly valued and praised by all its foreign visitors, represented one of the best arguments that could be brought in support of such a claim.

The Szeklers are again placed between the Romanians and the Saxons with reference to their culture. They clearly have a better status than the former, but do not reach the latter's level, as they are usually merely "peasant-soldiers". But even this is preferable to being a Romanian, because, unfortunately, "the Romanian is a primitive man, who somehow assimilated little of civilisation, although it was offered to him a long time ago by other European peoples through the intermediation of the Romans."<sup>42</sup> However, some of the travellers are capable of identifying valuable aspects of the Romanians'

customs and traditions. For example, a number of authors remark the peasant women's ability to embellish their costumes and to practice "the art of dyeing" the fabrics used for manufacturing the entire family's clothes.<sup>43</sup> Romanian folk dances also draw the strangers' attention and Krickel notes on an appreciative tone that they are "exuberant, stimulating sensuality."<sup>44</sup>

## Habitual occupations and general traits as marks of ethnic identity

**M**OST TRANSYLVANIAN Hungarians were nobles and owned a number of estates, but some of them also occupied administrative positions. As a result, only a few travellers came into contact with lower status Hungarians. For example, Vince Batthyány encountered in 1801 a few Hungarian bootmakers at the annual fair of Șugatag.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, Saxons were mostly artisans and handicraftsmen, although they were also skilled in agricultural work: foreigners usually emphasise the care with which they tended the vegetable gardens and orchards situated near their houses. A number of Saxons were employed in the province's administration and an anonymous traveller from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century remarks the growing tendency to imitate the Hungarians in buying arable land.<sup>46</sup> Szeklers also owned land and had interests in agriculture and crafts, but their most striking quality, at least from the travellers' viewpoint, was the military role they played in Transylvania.

Perhaps due to the fact that they accounted for half of Transylvania's population, Romanians seem to impress the travellers with their variegated occupations. Felice Caronni has no hesitation in calling them the province's "most hardworking and useful for society" ethnicity,<sup>47</sup> because they provided nearly all the food consumed both by them and by the other nationalities. Besides their primary role in agriculture, they also occupied themselves with animal husbandry,<sup>48</sup> tended the orchards and grapevines and manufactured certain artisanal goods.<sup>49</sup> A number of blanket makers and lace makers are reported at Brașov and in the same area Romanians also acted as commercial agents and intermediaries in the export of Saxon merchandise in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>50</sup> In Zlatna and Roșia Montană, most Romanians were mineworkers and, although most of them lived dire lives,<sup>51</sup> some managed to gather substantial fortunes in the latter locality.<sup>52</sup>

As for the Transylvanian ethnicities' general characteristics, it should be noted that most foreigners' opinions of the Hungarians are not flattering. They describe them as arrogant, haughty, unfair, unreliable or even possessing "the stupidity and stubbornness of a mule."<sup>53</sup> Count István Széchenyi thus concludes that, although immediately after you make their acquaintance, the Transylvanian Hungarians positively impress you because they are hospitable, later on, "due to their petty ideas, their ignorance and prejudices, they become insufferable."<sup>54</sup>

The Saxons, on the other hand, seem to gather all the praises once again. Despite their wealth, they are industrious and economical. Moreover, "a true joyfulness, spread among

all the [social] classes, a real appanage of freedom, universally reigns amidst this people.<sup>55</sup> They are well organised and appreciate cleanliness, sobriety and moderation, one proof of this latter characteristic being offered by the much-debated issue of the two-children family.<sup>56</sup> Ernst Anton Quitzmann also enumerates prudence, a keen sense of justice, modesty, loyalty and courage amongst their traits<sup>57</sup> and F. S. Chrismar sums it up: “these Saxons are a hardworking, honest and hospitable people.”<sup>58</sup> Most travellers are also amazed by the democratic equality they encountered in the Saxon villages, as no nobles or serfs existed amongst them.<sup>59</sup>

The Szeklers are usually described in positive tones as well. For instance, Count de Locmaria sees them as “brave, industrious, full of vigour and audacity, being born for wars.”<sup>60</sup> John Paget considers that they are proud, although rather poor, hardworking and possessing an enterprising spirit.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, their habitual rudeness is compensated for by the fact that most of them are well educated<sup>62</sup> and take part in the province’s political life.

The travellers’ beforehand personal preferences become obvious in their notes regarding the Romanians. Some view them as diligent and honest, while others as lazy and mainly thieves. Friedrich Uhl considers that they combine naturalness and grace with “gross vices and shameful habits,”<sup>63</sup> while Joseph Adalbert Krickel discovered that although they were unmannerly and uneducated, they could nevertheless demonstrate such superior qualities as being kindhearted, generous and extremely affectionate towards their animals.<sup>64</sup> But the negative opinions about them counterbalance this rather romantic stance, as they are frequent and particularly harsh. For example, Charles Lemerrier de Longpré thinks that “the pettiest inclinations, theft, lying, the most absurd superstition, immorality in all [its] forms compose this people’s character and bring with them a state of brutalisation and complete political subordination.”<sup>65</sup> Indolence, carelessness, suspicion, the tendency to consume large quantities of alcoholic beverages and a troublemaking attitude represent other flaws attributed to the Romanians by the foreigners. Fortunately, some of the travellers were able to find a few positive traits and thus we are informed that, at least under certain circumstances, Romanians can be sturdy, correct, helpful, hospitable, sincere and kind.

## Concluding remarks

**A** PERSON’S IDENTITY comprises numerous facets, amongst which ethnicity, as defined by the community’s spoken language, religion or culture,<sup>66</sup> is one of the most important. Belonging to a particular ethnic group usually deeply impacts upon the interactions with the Other(s), chiefly (but not only) because characterising your perceived alterity actually means characterising yourself.<sup>67</sup>

Although they were not necessarily aware of this significant source of bias, 19<sup>th</sup>-century travellers at least acknowledged the existence of other perturbing factors, such as the reference point. Edward Daniel Clark confesses that “an Englishman suddenly moved from his country with cleanliness habits to inland Germany, will certainly complain about the inhabitants’ rough manners and dirtiness, but after he has travelled for a long time in Turkey, the contrast offered to him upon entering Transylvania . . . yields an entirely

different impression on his mind and the same people that seemed dirty when they were compared with the English are clean, if you compare them with the Turks.”<sup>68</sup>

In light of this rather straightforward observation, one can safely affirm that the Other’s image is always distorted. Nevertheless, the fact that observers belonging to different peoples repeatedly use similar adjectives in describing the same ethnicity indicates that a number of characteristics are constant in time and from one situation to another.

The various categories used in this study in order to pin down a portrait of the Transylvanian Hungarians, Saxons, Szeklers and Romanians (namely language, religion, clothing, dwelling conditions, culture, occupations and general traits) thus merely provide a frame – and not the only possible one – for identifying (and narrating about) the alterity. And beyond all the positive and negative attributes ascribed to one ethnicity or the other, I believe that the most striking discovery made by each and every 19<sup>th</sup>-century traveller through Transylvania was that, despite the extremely variegated ethnic, denominational and cultural environment, the relations between the province’s various peoples were actually dominated by harmony and tolerance and that ethnic or religious differences do not inevitably lead to conflicts, but can entail respect for the Other’s values and beliefs.



## Notes

1. Paul Cernovodeanu, ed., *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 2004), 582.
2. Paul Cernovodeanu, Daniela Bușă, eds., *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 2005), 138. For more details regarding Transylvania’s peoples, see Ioan Bolovan, Sorina Paula Bolovan, “Transylvania until World War I: Demographic Opportunities and Vulnerabilities,” *Transylvanian Review* 19, 1 (January 2010): 83, Sorina Paula Bolovan, Ioan Bolovan, *Transylvania in the Modern Era: Demographic Aspects* (Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Cultural Institute, 2003), 175-176 and Ioan-Aurel Pop, “State and Population: The Social and Socio-Professional Structure of Transylvania in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Transylvanian Review* 19, 1 (January 2010): 49.
3. The author of these remarks, Ludwig von Stürmer, passed through the region in 1816. His account can be found in Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 700.
4. Paul Cernovodeanu, Daniela Bușă, eds., *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. 3 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 2006), 73.
5. Joseph Adalbert Krickel notes the nationalities inhabiting the region as a manner of counting the spoken languages. Thus, he enumerates: “Saxons, with 7-8 kinds of dialects, Hungarians, Szeklers, Armenians, Serbians, Jews, Romanians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Slovaks, Frenchmen, Italians, Poles and Gypsies.” For details, see Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 194.
6. *Ibid.*, 125-126.
7. Daniela Bușă, *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. 5 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 2009), 479.
8. This observation belongs to a Czech, Adolf Schmidl (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 264), but John Paget remarks the same characteristic of this language (see *Ibid.*, 838).



9. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 438.
10. Harald Roth, "De la națiunea medievală la națiunea modernă: Identități etnice în Transilvania secolelor XVIII-XIX," in *Biserică, societate, identitate: În onoare Nicolae Boșsan*, ed. Sorin Mitu, Rudolf Gräf, Ana Sima, Ion Cârja (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 780.
11. 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): 38.
12. Marian Zăloagă, "Professing Domestic Orientalism. Representing the Gypsy as *Musikant* in the Transylvanian Saxons' Writings of the Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century," in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai: Historia* 57, 2 (June 2012): 9.
13. R. J. W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe, c. 1683–1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 215.
14. Roth, "De la națiunea medievală": 782. See also Rudolf Gräf, "Identitate păstrată, identitate asumată: Despre viața culturală a germanilor din Banat și Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea," in *Biserică, societate*, 285-296.
15. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 853.
16. Paul Cernovodeanu, Daniela Bușă, eds., *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. 4 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 2007), 580.
17. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 584.
18. Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 521.
19. This characteristic of the Romanian (Orthodox) clergy is emphasised by a number of the foreign travellers who passed through Transylvania in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of them linking this state of affairs to the Romanians' unfavourable political situation. See, for instance, the accounts of Christine Reinhard (Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 281), Rainer Joseph, archduke of Austria (*Ibid.*, p. 533) or Adolf Schmidl (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 265).
20. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 78.
21. Olga Lukács, *Biserica reformată din Ardeal în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2006), 11-14.
22. *Ibid.*, 21-22, 37-49.
23. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 503.
24. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 80.
25. Charles Lemerrier de Longpré thoroughly describes "the most wondrous costume that humans' coquetry has ever imagined;" Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 504-505.
26. See Andrew Archibald Paton's opinion, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 518.
27. Joseph Adalbert Krickel (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 198), F. S. Chrismar (*Id.*, vol. 3, 75) and Michael Quin (*Id.*, vol. 3, 223) affirm that the Romanian peasants' clothing is beautiful, while Felice Caronni (Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 488) and Charles Lemerrier de Longpré (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 504) share the opposite opinion.
28. See the accounts of Adolf Schmidl (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 265) and Joseph Adalbert Krickel (*Id.*, vol. 3, 216).
29. *Ibid.*, 514.
30. Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 585.
31. *Ibid.*, 494.
32. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 137-138.
33. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 265.
34. Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 477. F. S. Chrismar (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 75) and Charles Loring Brace (Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 585) express similar views.
35. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 98.
36. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 4, 202.

37. The Hungarian or Austrian anonymous traveller who passed through Transylvania in 1802 also remarks the existence of a theatrical group in Sibiu; Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 149. Christine Reinhard saw a play written by the German author A. F. F. von Kotzebue in Cluj in 1807; *Ibid.*, 283.
38. Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 479. By analysing the accounts of other British travellers, Adriana Cupcea discovers the same elitist attitude towards the Hungarian cultural level. See Adriana Cupcea, "The Image of the Cluj Society as Reflected in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Travel Accounts," *Transylvanian Review* 21, 3 (Autumn 2012): 322–323.
39. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 212.
40. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 140. In a similar manner, British travellers of the same period consider Cluj to be "a territory of cultural interference between West and East." For details, see Cupcea, "The Image": 321–331.
41. Zălogă, "Professing Domestic Orientalism": 9, 18.
42. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 4, 543.
43. See especially Felice Caroni's notes; Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 495.
44. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 212.
45. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 115.
46. *Ibid.*, 148.
47. *Ibid.*, 486.
48. Their skilfulness in raising sheep is repeatedly mentioned by the foreign travellers.
49. Felice Caronni enumerates some of these products: baskets, ploughs, various household tools, carts and their accessories; Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 495.
50. This latter occupation of the Romanians inhabiting Șcheii Brașovului was noted both by a Hungarian or Austrian anonymous traveller in 1802 (see *Ibid.*, 143–144) and by F. S. Chrismar, a German who passed through Transylvania in 1833 and whose remarks can be consulted in Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 81.
51. See Wilhelm Gottlob Ernst Becker's account in Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 211–214.
52. Detailed descriptions of these Romanians' homes are provided by Joseph Adalbert Krickel (Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 209–210) and Adolf Schmidl (*Id.*, *Călători*, vol. 3, 279).
53. This latter opinion actually belongs to a compatriot, Count István Széchenyi; Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 959.
54. *Ibid.*, 962.
55. Auguste de Lagarde was very positively impressed by the Saxons. For other details, see *Ibid.*, 582–583.
56. For more details about this peculiarity of the Saxon family, see Bogdan Crăciun, "Sistemul familial cu doi copii în comunitatea evanghelică din Transilvania: Studiu de caz," in *Om și societate: Studii de istoria populației României, sec. XVII–XXI*, ed. Sorina Paula Bolovan, Ioan Bolovan, Corneliu Pădurean (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 353–387.
57. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 4, 553.
58. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 79.
59. John Paget clarifies this statement by mentioning that ennobled Saxons were considered Hungarian noblemen; *Ibid.*, 841.
60. *Ibid.*, 778.
61. *Ibid.*, 838.
62. Paget's compatriot, Andrew Archibald Paton disagrees. In his opinion, "the persons with an education are a rare exception" amongst the Szeklers. See Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 5, 519.
63. Cernovodeanu, Bușă, *Călători*, vol. 4, 599.

64. Cernovodeanu, Buşă, *Călători*, vol. 2, 167.
65. Cernovodeanu, Buşă, *Călători*, vol. 3, 500.
66. Gheorghe Şiştean, *Etnic, confesiune și căsătorie în nord-vestul Transilvaniei* (Zalău: Caiete Silvane, 2002), 15, shows that language, religion and the family name are the most certain criteria that can help a researcher identify the members of a particular ethnic group. Moreover, up to the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, confession represented an extremely relevant factor in ascribing a particular ethnic-national identity to a person or a group (for details, see Cecilia Cârja, Ion Cârja, "On the Eastern Identity of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai: Historia* 57, 2 (June 2012): 53). This observation is particularly relevant for the Romanians, because, as Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Manifestări ale sentimentelor etnice referitoare la români în evul mediu," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai: Sociologia-Politologia* 37, 1–2 (1992): 25, affirms: "Ever since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Orthodox faith and the Romanian language had become a mark of the Romanian ethnicity."
67. Cârja, "On the Eastern Identity:" 42.
68. Cernovodeanu, *Călători*, vol. 1, 68–69.

### Abstract

#### Identifying the Other. Transylvanian Ethnicities in the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as Viewed by Foreign Travellers

Travellers who passed through Transylvania in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century discovered a multicultural province, inhabited by several ethnicities. Amongst these, the Hungarians, the Szeklers and the Saxons drew their attention due to their political status and privileges, while the Romanians' most conspicuous trait was their clear numerical preponderance. Although a series of differences are evident with respect to these perceptions from one observer to another, the foreigners' accounts of these four Transylvanian nationalities converge in concluding that the Saxons had attained the most elevated level of cultural development, while the Romanians seemed to embody all the negative characteristics imaginable, despite also having a number of good qualities. Hungarians and Szeklers were placed somewhere in between these two extremes, their image combining positive and unflattering attributes.

### Keywords

Romanians, Hungarians and Szeklers, (Transylvanian) Saxons, identity and alterity, Transylvania, foreign travellers, 19<sup>th</sup> century