

„Babeş-Bolyai” University

**Image of Magyars in Romanian Culture in Transylvania  
(1867-1918)**

**Summary**

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## Summary

Romanian-Magyar mutual images occupy an important role in the ethnic landscape of Transylvania, being the fruit of a long cohabitation, subject to changing historical political realities. 1867 - 1918 was a period marked by the union of Transylvania with Hungary, decided by diet in Cluj in 1865 and enshrined at the conclusion of the compromise. For Romanian, the loss of Transylvanian autonomy was perceived as a political disaster in the context of the Hungarian political class proclaimed as the ultimate goal the transformation of Hungary in the Magyar national state and non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary felt threatened their national existence. 1867-1918 period saw also the strengthening of Romanian political class in Transylvania, engaged in the struggle for political and national rights, amid economic modernization and cultural development. This framework puts his stamp on an image above the Magyars already well defined; possibly changing political realities emphasizes certain features.

Historical imagology has the disadvantage of distancing in time by attitudes researched, historian, unlike the sociologist, has no possibility of direct questionnaire survey subjects, it must highlight these attitudes from research written records, which show how the elite was thinking. Image obtained is still a credible one, since the intellectual has a dual role in relation to attitudes, whilst he occupied the functions of shaping the mentalities and the expression thereof, the "spokesman" of collective attitudes and feelings among whom he lived. He also expressed in writing the feelings of the social category to which he belongs, and those of ordinary people from among whom he comes and in the name of whom he sometimes speaks.

Magyars image is presented as shown in the historical and political writings, press and other periodicals, from textbooks, literature, memoirs, folklore and correspondence. Transylvanian Romanians expressed in this variety of written sources numerous opinions and attitudes about "how to be" Magyar, about Magyar national character. This ethnic image includes several elements, such as physical and moral portrait, Magyar culture and language, inclinations and specific talents, but also political attitudes, the legacy of history, economic management capacity. Detailed presentation of this image is our main objective. In addition this work will be

required some considerations on the factors behind the image shape and placing it in comparative context.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter attempts to provide a context of ethnic representations in which to be placed Magyars image, the context of symbolic geography and ethnic images also have a determinant role in the creation of a specific image of Magyars.

Chapter II presents the image of Magyars in the historical and political writings, with references to Hungarian history. Here is surprised the image of Magyars as it emerged in the past further or closer. The third chapter captures some aspects of the Magyar ethnic character: physical portrait, moral portrait, Magyar culture and language, economic management capacity, Magyar civilization as it reflected the country's capital. Political talent or how Magyars pursuit of political power are also aspects of national character. But considering the importance of political factors in the Romanian-Magyar relations, but also in shaping the image of the Magyars, Magyar politician is described as a chapter by itself. This last chapter takes a snapshot of the Hungarian state, central state institutions, provides a characterization of parties and political ideologies, the Magyar politician.

The first chapter of the work, entitled "Romanian and Hungarian: Ethnic images in comparative context", includes a number of methodological considerations, a presentation of symbolic geography and an overview of some ethnic images of Magyars and Romanians and some about Magyars and Romanians. All this provides a context of ethnic representations in which we place the image of Magyars in the Transylvanian Romanians vision, to obtain a comparative perspective. Analyzing the image of Romanians and Magyars in the Western Europe, we see an ideological placement of both peoples in the east with more or less significant differences (in the sense that in some cases Magyars are located in Eastern Central Europe and Romanians in Balkan). Analyzing the Magyars' image about Romanians, we can identify a semi-orientalized image of Romanians, who are conceived as being inferior to Magyars in almost all respects. Romanians respond to this no flattering image. And the image that Romanians made up about Magyars is similar to those defined by other non-Magyar peoples of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It also borrows elements of Magyar self-image, and of the characterizations made by Germans about Magyars.

Hungarian history, as it was surprised by the historical and political writings of Romanians in Transylvania, was marked by increasing power of Magyar aristocracy, who

refuses to obey the king, political decentralization being a major cause of the collapse of St. Stephen's prestigious medieval kingdom. The Magyar aristocracy, having no sense of political responsibility and indulged in a life of ease, is guilty of Hungary's division between Turks and the Habsburgs. Arrogance and propensity to excesses are the defining features for this nobility, features linked to Asian origin of Magyars. These features characterize the Magyar nobility at the early twentieth century too, but they are not the only "historical reminiscences" of Magyar character. For Romanian memoirists of 1848 revolution, the violence committed by Magyars remember the cruelty of the migrating Magyar people that took possession of Pannonia to the end of ninth century, but also the alleged Hun origin of the Magyars . With the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth-century feudal oppression of Romanian peasant by Magyar landowner becomes the oppression of Romanian minority by Magyars who hold political power. And "aristocratic selfishness" of the Magyar nobility becomes "national egoism". Interweaving of "national egoism" and contempt for non-Hungarian nationalities inhabiting led to chauvinism.

Another trait that has characterized the Magyars since the XVI century is the lack of loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty. Which Magyars define as fighting for freedom, in the eyes of Romanians in Transylvania is betrayal, disobedience to the legitimate sovereign, showing ingratitude towards the dynasty who released them under Turkish domination and has been restored Hungary among Europe leading states.

Among "medieval reminiscences" present in the psychical structure of Magyars are the predestined nature of professions, because Magyar nobility preferred political, military or ecclesiastical career, while financial and economic field and sciences are "hereditary" neglected, which is, in view of Romanians in Transylvania, a cause of backwardness of Hungary compared to Western European countries.

Romanian historiography in Transylvania, while asserting with conviction their own national myths (Roman origin, the primacy and continuity of the Romanians in Transylvania, etc..) tries to show, in the spirit of political activism, the weakness of the Hungarian national myths, expressing skepticism on legends of conquest of the homeland by Magyar migrants, the "blood link" between leaders of the seven Magyar tribes, which underlies the Magyar constitution and the founding of the Magyar state, the Magyars claim to have been the defenders of Christendom in Middle Ages against the Turks, etc. . For Romanians, Magyar revolution of

1848-1849, regarded by Magyars as the culmination of their struggle for freedom, was just simply rebellion, a serious act of disobedience against their legitimate sovereign.

Transylvanian Romanians write the history of Transylvania; this is the context in which the Magyar history is presented, focusing on those events that had repercussions on the development of Transylvania. And the tone could only be described as critical because of political goals which lacked these writings. However, there are in Magyar history personalities described positively by Romanians. They included King Saint Stephen, who Christianized Magyars and took honors in state centralization and solid organization of it. Also, there were Magyar nobles who have shown great courage in fighting the Turks (eg Zrínyi Miklós), and nobles who distinguished themselves in the early nineteenth century by truly admirable patriotism and who acted very strongly for the development of the Magyar nation (Count Széchenyi István). And in the context of building the compromise between Magyar and Austrians, Magyar politicians as Deák and Eötvös have demonstrated political wisdom, understanding that the problem of nationalities can be resolved only through reasonable concessions made by the Hungarian state in their favor.

Moral portrait of the Hungarians took shape over several centuries, but the Asiatic characteristics as vanity, inconsistency, luxury are attributes of Magyars remained even in early twentieth century. Traits most often attributed by the Transylvanian Romanians to Magyar remain pride, a specific attribute for nobility, but is sometimes present in ordinary people characterization. Nobility, the protagonist of public life, is in fact concerned with preference in Transylvanian Romanians writings. Nobility is generally characterized, in addition to pride, by questionable morality, lack of accountability, life of comfort and extravagance. Literature presents morally, physically and financially ruined noble type. Other literary epitomized are insolent servant, snooty soldier, intellectual chauvinistic, arrogant and reluctant city folk, simple man from the country proud, but cheerful and hospitable, the capital flightiness woman, virtuous woman in the country, etc. ...

As regards Magyar culture, Transylvanian Romanians findings are heavily influenced by political realities. In the context that Magyars tend to justify the policy of magyarization by benefits of an upper culture upon backward populations, sometimes Romanians denies the originality of Magyar culture and often the superiority of this culture, putting into question the value of Magyar cultural productions. For the Transylvanian Romanians, Magyars claim to have

the mission to spread Western culture among non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary is ridiculous, as Magyar culture, even though over time it received a Western character and developed into an original style, not superiority is so great, no power of attraction so sure to be able to influence the culture of non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary. Denial of Magyar cultural values is sometimes present in the writings of Romanians in Transylvania, but it is always made by the policy position from which these authors write, political militancy is why, of all findings to the Magyar culture, the Romanians choosing to give agreement with the Hungarian self-criticism (which betrays cultural inferiority complex) or with insulting German (who describe Magyar culture in terms of those convinced of the superiority of their own culture).

Imposed by force, Magyar language, although it is known by many Romanians, is not a language seen as positive. Romanians noted the difficulty of learning that language, which does not have the musicality of Romanian language, is a language that abounds in consonants and that observes, in the vision of Romanians, Magyars' barbarous origin. In a context where both Magyars and Romanians see the language as a central element of magyarisation, Magyar language was perceived as a threat to national existence of the Romanians. Therefore, there are Romanian writers expressing through literary characters created by them the disagreement with the Magyar language acquisition, which the Romanians should refuse to learn by principle. Transylvanian Romanians in their writings emphasize foreign character of the Magyar language and Calvinist religion, regarded as "Magyar" religion.

With regard to politics and politicians, Deák Ferenc and József Eötvös are, in the political speech of Romanians in Transylvania, the only Magyar state men who have shown true liberal thinking in their politics. Magyar politicians of the dualistic period, especially from Kalman Tisza's government (1875) are characterized primarily by giving evidence of chauvinism in pursuing a goose: the transformation of multinational and multilingual state as Hungary in Magyar national state. Whole Magyar political system is characterized by false liberalism and pseudo - constitutionalism, as the political regime is based on a restrictive vote that favors Magyars, therefore can not speak of genuine representation, Magyar governments adopt laws that violate nationalities' rights. The problems of Magyar political system are caused, according to the Romanians in Transylvania, by Magyars' fear of losing political supremacy in Hungary, which would amount, as Count Széchenyi already formulated, the end of Magyar nation in the context of numerical inferiority of the Magyars in Hungary and their status as people without



"relatives" in Europe. Political talent, one of the clichés often conveyed to the Magyars, is questioned by a number of Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania, the most obvious proof for rebutting the talent is certainly the policy of magyarization of the non-Magyar nationalities.

Governments policy towards non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary and the relations of Magyars with the emperor-king are aspects of political life that are causing the most comments from the Transylvanian Romanians and the main features of Magyars in these contexts are assigned chauvinism and lack of locality, two attributes that characterize not only the political class but in general the whole Magyar society. Of course, not be overlooked that several Romanian authors take to make a distinction between elite and ordinary people when they talk about chauvinism, saying that in mixed villages, Romanians and Magyars generally live in harmony. And if detectable contempt for Romanian and Hungarian place sometimes, this is due exclusively elite unrest, which sometimes turn wrong the naturally good and gentle people.

In the Magyar portrait, as it was drafted by the Transylvanian Romanians, prevailing negative features, but not missing certain qualities: cheerfulness, hospitality, political sense, patriotism.

Image of Magyars in the vision of Transylvanian Romanians during dualistic period, as the fruit of some subjective assessments, is a complex one, totaling a number of elements to define "the Magyar national character", as it is perceived by the Romanian emotional level. This image is influenced by several factors (political, social, cultural, etc.). Transylvanian Romanians characterize Magyars in terms of cohabiting nation in Transylvania, an ethnic minority who feels disadvantaged by the Magyar political and state government, bearing the consciousness of a historical tradition marked by constant oppression of Magyars. Political realities determined a lower economic and social status of Romanians, Magyars being drawn from the perspective of those who are denied equal opportunities to assert themselves.

Magyars image described by Transylvanian Romanians in dualistic period was strongly influenced by political realities. This is due to the Romanians emphasize the negative side of this image. But beyond political differences, coexistence between Romanian and Magyars in Transylvania was generally peaceful, chauvinism manifested, most times, just at the speech.