

## Book Reviews

**Sorin Mitu**, *Transilvania mea. Istorie, mentalități, identități [My Transylvania. Histories, Identities, Mentalities]*, Polirom, Iași, 2013, 691p.

**Maria Loredana Toroczkaï (Iov)\***

Sorin Mitu (b. 1965) is a professor in the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the Cluj-Napoca “Babeș-Bolyai” University (Romania), where he teaches modern world history. A prolific author, he specializes in the history of Transylvania, comparative imagology and the study of nationalism.

This book follows these same coordinates and can be viewed as a synthesis of the research made by Sorin Mitu on various aspects of Transylvanian history. However, its uniqueness lies in the personal, subjective character of the work, an aspect suggested by the title itself: *My Transylvania*. This possessive determiner could prompt the reader to believe he is dealing with a declaration of love from a man who knows the region – its history, mentalities, and identities, and he would be right to believe so. This is a contemplation through the eyes of love, but without idealization. Although it may seem incongruous in relation to the selected theme, the first chapter, on historiography, juxtaposes the research method with the nationalist rhetoric on Transylvania in the communist period. The author managed to escape the risk of slipping into “mere insincere ideology”, the enforcement of an anti-Hungarian approach, again, by a personal choice: marriage to a Hungarian woman.

The chapter on nationalism became twice as long as originally planned, says the author, through the reevaluation of the Transylvanian legacy. With roots that are documented to date back to the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it would have been impossible that Sorin Mitu would not raise the issue of the multi-ethnic and multi-denominational context of this geographic and symbolic region. Here, Romanian identity also means an acknowledgement of the imperial aspect of its identity. Since it was part of Austria-Hungary, it owes its economic development and entry into the modern world to the Habsburg rule. On the other hand, this same chapter of the book shows that in Transylvania the Austrians did not only build factories, bridges and mines; they also

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\* Maria Loredana Toroczkaï (Iov), PhD student at “Andrei Șaguna” Faculty of Orthodox Theology, “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu. Adress: Str. Mitropoliei nr. 20, 550179, Sibiu, Romania; e-mail: lore2cipi@yahoo.com