

Transylvanian Germans' Contributions to the Development of the Architecture of the 19th and 20th Centuries

Summary

The German ethnicity's life and work, the Saxons' especially, coexisting for more than 850 years alongside Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania, has aroused and still sparks a great attraction for laymen and experts from various fields: philologists, historians, lawyers, etc.

Assuming the task of drawing up this work, without ignoring the difficulties and risks that such endeavour could pose, we have considered an investigation as thorough as possible. Thus we have provided mentions regarding the builder's trade up to the modern era, seeking to include a greater number of architects who have made themselves known through their achievements, to present the fruits of their labour, being aware that the theme chosen for the doctoral work is vast and complex.

We express our conviction that the chosen subject cannot be considered as being dealt with in an exhaustive manner or even exhausted. We consider that the approach that we offer now, in this form, is part of a necessary and welcome step of recording the aspects of a valuable contribution on behalf of the Transylvanian Saxons' representatives regarding the development of the cities' architecture in this part of Europe and beyond.

Accomplishing this task has required, in the absence of some substantial studies of this kind in the field, to research some relevant related published literature, especially the contemporary press as well as the information available on the Internet, subject to the veracity of information provided by this source.

For studying the theme in a thorough manner we have also made use of the sources of information offered by the rich archives funds identified by us (drawings, sketches, projects, etc.) housed in Sibiu, Bistrița, Brașov, Constanța, and Ploiești or at “Friedrich Teutsch” Centre for Dialogue and Culture belonging to the Evangelical Church of Romania, based in Sibiu.

Without doubt, further research, undertaken in other archives or even in those listed above, could bring more information, with greater opportunities to complete, to validate, or to combat the conclusions that were reached so far.

The ethnic Germans' history (especially the Transylvanian Saxons') inhabiting the current territory of Romania has constituted and constitutes even today an important part of the research undertaken on behalf of humanities (in this case History). The Saxons' arrival and settlement in Transylvania, over 850 years ago, at the Hungarian royalty's initiative and under their organisation, in view of strengthening and defending the borders of the newly conquered territories, the cohabitation with Romanians and Hungarians in those territories, all of these are as many topics of importance, not

insignificant ones, both for the Romanian History and for the European one.

In this context we emphasize the German element's contribution regarding Transylvania's architecture starting with the Middle Ages, by raising fortified churches (over 300 units) and an impressive number of other buildings, but also the complex phenomenon of urbanization of the settlements where they have played a determinant role.

In the modern epoch appears the profession of architect, the Transylvanian Saxons capitalizing now upon the possibility of studying in the West, especially at German universities, to bring and implement in our areas the latest news in the field, both in the Transylvanian area and in the extra-Carpathian areas, territories also targeted by them.

The interests of some Saxon authors for the historical evolution of the cities and the current state of the monuments, concentrated mainly in the historic centres, might be due to the fact that the Saxons have founded cities in the Transylvanian places where they were colonized.

The Transylvanian Saxons' contributions to the development of the Transylvanian architecture, of urbanism, are little known, the need to study them is undoubtedly necessary in order to complete the image regarding their contribution to the culture and civilization of this European geographical space.

Chapter I. GERMAN COLONIZATION IN TRANSYLVANIA. CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING BUILDINGS AND ARCHITECTURE UP TO THE DAWN OF THE MODERN AGE

An immediate consequence of the development of urban life and hence of regulating production was mainly reflected in the emergence of the associative spirit. In this context, it is noted the emergence of associations, corporate/confraternities, and guilds. These typical organisms for the medieval epoch had their own statutes, characteristic elements (insignia, seals, flags, tables of call) and were structured by grades (apprentices, journeymen, and masters).

The guild's tables and seals render, in general, specific tools and products of the crafts of the epoch. The bricklayers-masons guild symbols are their typical tools (shovels, pickaxes) or the results of their work (walls, fortress towers). The stonemasons and the bricklayers (*muratores, lapicidae*) have conducted an intense activity both in Transylvania and in other regions, fact sustained by the numerous military, secular, and religious buildings.

Contemporary documents also mentions alogenes craftsmen called to contribute in the process of building some of the works from this period, but their ratio is undoubtedly much lower. A special role in the craft of masonry in the 15th century has been performed by some centres of reference, such as Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu, and Cluj. The stonemason - bricklayer craftsmen have as symbols either specific tools or working stances.

Related to the woodcutting craft there coexisted several branches that, at a certain time, have parted themselves, each having their own evolution: joiners, carpenters, wheelwrights, staves, window craftsmen. Carpenters had as symbols either specific tools (planer, square, compass saws, chisels, hammers, carpenter's scrapers, punches) or finished products (pieces of furniture, tables).

Chapter II. ARCHITECTS OF SIBIU

In this chapter we have included outstanding architects from Sibiu, such as: **Buermes Fritz** (1871 - 1951), **Czekelius Otto** (* 21 Aug. 1895, Sibiu - + 21 March 1974, Sibiu) **Cernea (Czern, Czernil)**, **Alfred Hugo** (1883 - 1968), **Fabritius, Julius Alfred** (* 1897, Sibiu - + 1974, Sibiu), **Scharberg, Joseph Bedeus von** (1889 - 1960).

History records a number of buildings designed by them, the most important being: **The Evangelical Orphanage** of Sibiu (1912 - 1913), **The Palace of Telephones** of Sibiu (1947 - 1948), **Ambrosi House and Cellars** of Mediaş (1937), **The Church of Turnișor**, **"Vitrometan"** **Glass Factory** of Mediaş, and so on.

In the city located on the banks of Cibin have also activated, together with many others, through time, the following architects: **Stenzel Ernst** architect of Sibiu in 1936, **Schuschning Joseph**, and **Thalgott, Michael Dr. Arhitect** for whom, up to the current date, there have not been found concrete data, information, or news about their life and work.

Chapter III. ARCHITECTS OF BRAȘOV

The municipality under the foot of Mount Tâmpa had outstanding Saxon architects among which we mention: **Bartesch, Peter** (November 9, 1842 - January 11, 1914) **Bertleff, Johannes Andreas** (* February 7, 1877, Braşov), **Brang, Peter Paul** (27 April, 1852 - March 27, 1925) **Fink Andreas** (1845, Bucharest – 1919, Vienna) **Kertsch, Christian** (* February 10, 1839 - + March 10, 1909) **Neugeboren, Heinrich, Prall, Paul** (1922 - 2007), **Schuller Albert** (December 25, 1877 - October 27, 1948), **Schmidt, Wilhelm** (1885 - 1959), **Stenner, Martin** (1848 - 1915) and **Zeidner, Helmut** (March 23, 1905 - August 30, 1994).

Among the works achieved by the architects of Braşov in Transylvania and beyond it, we can mention: **The Black Barracks, The General Pension Institute, The Skating Pavilion of Braşov** (1894 - 1895), **The Casino of Vatra Dornei** (1896 - 1898), **The Evangelical Gymnasium of Bistriţa, The Administrative Palace of Suceava** (1903 - 1904), **The New German School in Codlea town** (1883 - 1885), **The Evangelical Parsonage of Cristian, The (Saxon) National Bank - Burzenländer Bank - (1908) Palác Včela v Českých Budějovicích** (1896), **Někdejší okresní dům v Českých Budějovicích** (1901), **Kolonada v Jánských Lázních** (1904), **The Public Baths of Liberec**, the headquarters of **BNP Parisbas Bank** in Sofia, the building of **Dimitar Hadjivasiliev State Commercial High School** in Sistov (1895) and the building of the former **Embassy of Austria** at Sofia.

Chapter IV. ARCHITECTS OF SIGHIȘOARA

The list of Sighișoara's architects includes **Balthes Friedrich** (June 20, 1882 - December 14, 1914), **Jacobi Robert Dr. Eng.** (* December 7, 1877, Sighisoara - + 1954), **Leonhard Kurt** (* October 26, 1911, Sighisoara - + June 26, 2012, Geretsried, Germany) **Mild Wilhelm Dr. Eng.** (1828 - 1910) and **Letz, Franz** (April 11, 1900 - June 6, 1978 Germany).

A brief overview of the most important works of the architects of Sighișoara is more than suggestive: "**Golden Stern**" Hotel of Sighisoara – "Golden Star", "**Stephan Ludwig-Roth-Gymnasium**" of Mediaș, **The Evangelical Primary School C.A. (Schulgebäude)** of Cincșor, **The Dwelling House of Samuel Karres** a manufacturer of Mediaș, and so on.

Chapter V. ARCHITECTS OF BISTRIȚA, REGHIN, MEDIAȘ, CLUJ

The German architects' picture is completed by other personalities, such as: **Paulas Erika** (1875 -?), **Theil Hans Wolfram** (* Bistrita - 1921 -) and **Maetz, Carl Wilhelm Friedrich** (* January 30, 1847, Mediaș - May 17, 1896, Sibiu).

Their work is illustrated by various projects, some of them truly architectural masterpieces: **The Palace of Forestry Directorate** of Bistrita ("Forstdirektionspalais"), **The Chemistry Institute** belonging

to Cluj University, **Stats Elementarschule** and **Mädchenschule** of Sibiu.

Chapter VI. SAXON ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS BEYOND TRANSYLVANIA

Among the German architects born in Romania, who have emigrated for different reasons, there can be mentioned **Caspari, Hubert** (October 26, 1926, Mediaş - April 17, 2004, Ebenhausen bei Munich), **Kisch, Robert** (March 18, 1897, Sibiu - July 16, 1977, Wuppertal), **Klößner Wilhelm** (* April 4, 1913, Braşov -?) **Konnerth, Alfred Josef** (* Reghin, December 17, 1873 - + Vienna 1923), **Linz, Adolf** (August 3, 1855, Braşov - August 19, 1927, Constanţa), **Müller, Richard Julius** (* February 18, 1877, Rupea - November 18, 1930, Dresden), **Orendt, Alfred** (* May 24, 1909, Braşov - June 29, 2008, Munich), **Phleps, Hermann Ludwig** (June 1, 1877, Biertan - April 1964, Marburg an der Lahn), **Setz, Friedrich** (* August 20, 1837, Sibiu - + February 26, 1907, Vienna), **Schweger, Peter Paul** (* 1935 Mediaş -), **Zamp Kelp, Günther** (* August 26, 1941, Bistriţa -) and **Werz, Helmut von** (* 1912 Braşov - + 1990, Munich).

The repertoire of architectural projects bearing their signature is much larger, reason for which we mention only a few examples: **The Synagogue** of Constanţa, **Cavalry School** of Potsdam, **The Evangelical Church** of Schaftlach, **The Transylvanian Asylum** of

Lechbruck, "**Christuskirche**" of Danzig - Langfur (1916) and **The Neanderthal Museum** of Mettmann.

Chapter VII. HISTORIANS AND RESTORERS OF MONUMENTS

The ethnic Germans' activity has also stood out in a positive manner within the history and restoration of monuments realm, as demonstrated by **Fabini Hermann** (* October 8, 1938, Braşov), **Kühlbrandt Ernst** (* May 10, 1857, Braşov - + September 5, 1933, Braşov), **Niedermaeier Paul** (* July 15, 1937, Sibiu), **Machat Christian** (*January 18, 1946 Sighişoara), **Schuller Gunther** (October 10, 1904 - July 14, 1995), **Treiber Gustav** (* January 1, 1880, Braşov - 1973) and **Roth Viktor** (August 28, 1874, Sebeş - April 12, 1936, Sebeş).

In this phase of research we can say that the contribution of researchers and architects to the study and preservation of the historic centres of Saxon towns has been and it is at the height of the achievements of their predecessors who built these settlements and have made them known in Europe.

It may also be noted that this intake exceeds the numerical share of Saxon researchers out of the total number of specialists within the country, as, in general, the Saxon population (9-10% in good times, the interwar years) in relationship with the total population of Transylvania has exceeded that ratio through the achievements in various fields of activity (economics, culture, social activities, for example over 50% in the graphics industry, textiles, etc.).

Currently, being faced with the extremely difficult task of restoration and conservation of historical centres, we can still see the same major contribution, although the dwelling place for the vast majority of Saxons has changed. They went to Germany, but together with those who have remained here they are aware that, along with the Romanians, they have a duty to preserve for future generations this legacy of an inestimable value.