

studies such as Hațeg-Orăștie, Târgu Secuiesc valley or the Sighișoara-Șaeș-Heitur. These cases point out some characteristics of artefact distribution like separating gold and silver pieces both in inventories and in territories and concentration of discoveries either concentrically around certain settlements or linear around access routes.

The thesis ends with a brief but eloquent chapter of conclusions (Chapter XIV, *Dacian precious metalwork, an original way of cultural expression. Conclusions*, pp. 162-166) and a very interesting *excursus* about the very recent discovery of the golden bracelets from Grădiștea de Munte. There are also two detailed summaries in English and German (pp. 179-212), an artefact and discoveries catalogue (pp. 231-255) and an impressive bibliographical list (pp. 259-276). The written part is completed by 195 illustrations of remarkable quality depicting most of the silver and gold known artefacts which the author has drawn using the original pieces (approximately 800 pieces).

Last, but not least we have to acknowledge the impeccable methodological approach of the subject in a clear, elegant and pragmatic style that makes the thesis an enjoyable reading. It is obviously the result of hard work, it demonstrates professionalism and it can be therefore considered one of the most remarkable achievements of the Romanian pre- and protohistorical archaeological literature of the last years. It is a valuable resource with a well founded contribution to the study of ancient Dacian civilization on one hand and to the general phenomena of prehistorical votive deposits on the other.

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Irina Băldescu, TRANSILVANIA MEDIEVALĂ. TOPOGRAFIE ȘI NORME JURIDICE ALE CETĂȚILOR SIBIU, BISTRIȚA, BRAȘOV, CLUJ. Editura Simetria, București 2012, 367 pages, 205 figures, ISBN: 978-973-1872-25-4

The volume published in Romania is a revised version of the PhD thesis defended by Irina Băldescu in 2004 at Sapienza University in Rome, under the guidance of Professor Enrico Guidoni, who is also the author of the preface of the Italian edition from 2005.

The work is divided in three parts, firstly referring to general themes of urban development concerning the territory and the settlements founded by the Saxon colonists, who came to Transylvania beginning with the twelfth century, following the invitation of the Hungarian royalty. The second part consists of the inventory cards of Sibiu, Bistrița, Brașov, Cluj, and the last one is a documentary apparatus containing prescriptions of the statutes discussed in the book. Each chapter is accompanied by an English summary.

The text is richly illustrated with photographs,

maps, historical surveys, and original proposals of reconstruction of the urban development of the four cities, treated as case studies: hypotheses regarding the geometric interpretation of streetscape and plot system, reconstruction of urban topography, alignment between streets and defensive towers, interpretation of the fortifications geometry and others. Noteworthy are the mid eighteenth century plans of the Transylvanian cities and monuments, preserved in the archives in Vienna, which are published for the first time here, and used in certain cases for recovering the original lost configurations of the streets.

From the preamble, consisting of a short presentation, three prefaces and a foreword, one learns that the work applies the research method of the “school of Rome”, developed by the coordinator of the thesis, Enrico Guidoni, the author of the works *La campagna e l'origine dello spazzio* (1972), respectively *La città e gli ordini mendicanti* (1992). Ugo Soragni completes that “the model of analysis defined in studying Italian cities (...)”, based on “a thematic grid of ordering the historical information and a re-elaboration of cartographic and cadastral sources” was used, while Nicolae Lascu underlines “the new methods of investigation”, which could lead “to unexpected perspectives and meanings”.

A first observation is due to Professor Guidoni and concerns the documents used that are “generally successive to the considered period”. Most written sources date, indeed, after the middle of the sixteenth century and reflect, at least in part, the new historical reality of Transylvania after 1541, when it was proclaimed as an autonomous principality under Turkish suzerainty. In the following years, the Catholic population adopted the Reformation and the values of Humanism exalted during Renaissance, which determined, among others, the taste for collecting antiquities and the nomination of Transylvania as Dacia. We thus understand that the author considers the period of Middle Age in Transylvania stretching until the end of the seventeenth century (p. 218).

The author analyzes the *Roman heritage and the medieval territorial structures*, trying to detect the relationship between the new settlements founded in the Middle Ages and the Ancient ones. Besides the practical reason of reusing *spolia* taken from the pagan ruins as raw material by the Christian colonists, it is several times mentioned the magical-apotropaic dimension of this act, statement not explained by Irina Băldescu. The study of O. Mittelstrass (1961) regarding the network of Roman streets in Transylvania is completed with information from additional documentary sources, new medieval roads are being included in the debate.

The chapter *Juridical culture: the determination of the normative behavior* is the most original part of the book, reflecting the civic obligations for the welfare of the city through the corpus of Saxon regulation consisting of the

rules, nowadays known as urban planning, based on the *statuta* of the cities, guilds and neighbourhoods. One example is the system of fortifications during the times of peace and war, in the latter case being harnessed the Defense Regulation of Braşov from 1491, a document of great value because of its rarity. Other issues concern the limits and superposition of public and private propriety, the maintenance of fortifications and of public buildings, the Magistrate control of the real estate, public space and private business, fire prevention, the aesthetic and hygiene of the urban zones, pavements and street cleaning.

The chapter *Mendicant Orders, the territory, the cities* investigates the role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the topography of the city, searching for the Italian model to the different reality of the Central European civilization of Transylvania, expressed in specific architectural forms. Analyzing the impact of the Mendicant Orders on the medieval civilization, an excursus into the Transylvanian medieval mural iconography is an unfortunate example of the so fashionable multidisciplinary approach, which in the absence of a solid art historical knowledge remains at the level of amateurism, generating confusion for the reader.

The second part of the paper presents the cities of Sibiu, Bistriţa, Braşov and Cluj as case studies, through the written and cartographic sources, the historical context and development of street planning, urban topography and public institutions.

The predominant bibliography used by Irina Băldescu is the Transylvanian Saxon interwar literature, including several titles published in the last 50 years and rather few recent references. The author states at the end of the 2012 edition that “the bibliography has not been updated in a systematic way since 2004, still some recent papers relevant to the subject of study have been selectively inserted”, but these are not referred to in the footnotes. For Bistriţa, the main source remains Dahinten (1944), for Cluj – Goldenberg (1959), for Sibiu there are no references in the text to the *Topography of monuments in Transylvania* (1999),¹ which is only formally listed in the bibliography, while the volume *Kronstadt*, edited by Erich Jekelius (1928), is not only the main source of scientific information for Braşov, but a fundamental model for the conceptual frame and methodological structure of the whole material, as indicated in the foreword. We have to stop to this latter case in order to point out that information about the medieval buildings is mostly outdated or erroneous. For instance, Irina Băldescu affirms that the location of the chapels around the Black Church is unknown, although Jekelius himself gives clear indications about the location of Saint Lawrence

chapel, the building being not “completely destroyed by fire in 1689”, as shown in the present work, but its ruins were demolished in 1804. The grounds of the Cistercian Chapel St Catherine were identified *in situ* by Gernot Nussbächer since 1976,² the same author showing that the main settlement of the colonists on the territory of the city subsequently surrounded by walls – *Corona* –, was founded as an administrative headquarter, in an area deprived of agricultural land, theory recently confirmed by the archaeological excavation. Consequently, the author’s assertion that the settlement was founded on the model of French agricultural colonies, once with the construction of the Premonstratensian convent in 1225–1235 is incorrect, same as the statement of the primacy of the settlement of the current suburb “Bartolomeu”. The medieval architectural configuration of the area south of the Black Church has been largely elucidated in 2004 and the parish house, with structures dating from the fourteenth century, couldn’t be built on the site of the chapel of *Corpus Christi*, erected after 1461. There are also to be noted the confusion of the cardinal points, as a portico on Polish model (?) mentioned on the northern side of the Town Hall Square (p. 194), and the location of the Goldsmiths Tower from the south-eastern corner of the city enclosure (assumed in 1646 by the Clothiers), to the west (pp. 238, 239). Moreover, after decades of systematic efforts to impose in official documents and to raise the public awareness regarding the correct name of Red Tanners Bastion,³ which protects the Goldsmiths/ Clothiers Tower, Irina Băldescu returns to its erroneous attribution to the Furriers (p. 248, 249). The Catholic parish church of St. Peter and Paul, built on the site of the medieval Dominican monastery in the current Mureşenilor street (*Klostergasse*) is wrongly presented as a Jesuit church (p. 93, 101), *lupanar* is considered “in the Protestant context, also a guest house” (p. 260), and the German *Pranger* – pillory – is translated as scaffold (p. 253). This example is also given while treating the city of Sibiu (p. 142), where we find the confusion of the Orthodox term “*troiţă*” (a cross sometimes protected by a small chapel) with the Catholic tabernacle (p. 153). We come back to Braşov, where the towers of Black Church

¹ Al. Avram, I. Bucur, *Denkmaltopographie Siebenburgen Bd.5.1.1, Stadt Hermannstadt. Die Altstadt / Topografia monumentelor din Transilvania Municipiul Sibiu. Vol. 5.1.1, Municipiul Sibiu. Centrul istoric, Köln, 1999.*

² G. Nussbächer, *Die Honterusschule in den ersten Jahrzehnten ihres Bestehens*, in G. Nussbächer, *Aus Urkunden und Chroniken. Beiträge zur siebenbürgischen Heimatkunde*, 1, Bukarest, 1981, p. 118; D. Jenei, *Construcţii succesive pe locul Liceului „Johannes Honterus” din Braşov. Capela Sfânta Ecaterina*, in D. Nazare, R. Nazare, B. F. Popovici (eds.), *In honorem Gernot Nussbächer*, Braşov, 2004, pp. 401–410.

³ G. Nussbächer, *Din cronici şi hrisoave. Contribuţii la istoria Transilvaniei*, Bucureşti, 1987, p. 118. For the correct denomination of the objectives, see the *List of Historical Monuments* of the Ministry of Culture in Romania, revised in 2004 and 2010.

are baseless dated in the thirteenth century, the church “de *Bartholomae*” has its beginnings fixed once “by 1230” (p. 261) and then “in the second part of the thirteenth century” (p. 222). The Snails Hill/*Schneckenberg* appears as the Pitchfork Hill/“Dealu Furcilor” (p. 222), the Merchants House/*Kaufhaus* is named Guilds House and *Heiligleichnamsthor* is listed as “poarta Schei” (p. 232), the name of a different much later access from 1827-1828, the data concerning the western gate ensemble presenting many other inaccuracies. The author does not know neither that the *Bulgerei* and *Blumenaw* suburbs, with the Romanian names “Șchei” and “Blumăna” still in use, had a different ethnic profile, which is the real reason for their citizens not being accepted to possess shops in *Corona* (p. 58).

The ambition to accomplish a work which combines “the historical and archaeological data with aspects of the history of anthropological or artistic cartography”, as stated in the presentation of the book, without the advice of experts in these lateral areas and ignoring a large part of scientific literature dedicated to medieval Transylvania led to inaccuracies and linguistic anomalies, with obsolete and contradictory historical information that may likely question the verity of the whole work.

Some general historical problems, not yet elucidated, are here presented as certainties, such as “the Transylvanian Orthodox Church dependence of the Bishopric of Ohrid/Skopje, until late in the Middle Ages” (p. 15), while general accepted theories are reversed. For the etymology of the name Saxon – *Sachsen*, the author gives credit to the *Sessen* version, meaning settled (p. 18), although it is known that the term *Saxones* (appearing in the early documents together with *Flandrenses* and *Teutonici*) was generically referring to the Germanic populations north of Bavaria and Austria within the medieval Hungarian chancellery language. Also, the Archdiocese of which the Saxon Chapters of Brașov and Sibiu depended – *Strigonium* – appears with the Hungarian equivalent Székesfehérvár (p. 90) and not Esztergom. Considering the recent researches, the four Cistercian settlements from Bârsa Land did not belong to the Cârța monastery (pp. 11, 261), but directly to the General Chapter in Burgundy.⁴ We stop here to mention the errors of information, whose number is far from being exhausted.

The Romanian edition also requires certain linguistic observations. The first impression of the reader is that he deals with a translation from German, lacking in most cases the accuracy of terminology, toponymy and even language. The author talks about

Burzenland instead “Țara Bârsei” (Bârsa Land), about *Schwarzkirche* (correct *Schwarze Kirche*) instead “Biserica Neagră” (Black Church), while the names of the streets still existing nowadays, are entirely written in German. Systematically, the words are seconded or preceded by their German correspondent, and the quotations from medieval texts are replaced by a mix of bilingual or trilingual succeeding terms, randomly placed in brackets, which instead of conferring the color of the medieval Transylvanian milieu, complicate the reading of the text. At the end of the volume there is a glossary of technical terms in Latin and German but not in Romanian, according to usage.

We also find the denomination of king “Geza cel Pios” (Geza the Pious) – an approximate translation of *piisimo re Geysa* in the Latin text (p. 19), or the abbreviation preceding the feminine patronymics *Ste.* (from French or American English in the Romanian edition), followed by the name spelled different, leading to formulations like “biserica *Schwarzkirche*, *Ste. Maria*” (church *Schwarzkirche*, *Ste. Maria*). At masculine there is used *St.* (!) Antonius, Antoniu, Antonie, but never the Romanian correct form of Sf. Anton.⁵ The Italian phrases forgotten in plates or notes, and several words, such as “tardo-medieval”, “Sf. Rocco”, “Aragona” or “Papa Niccoló V”, complete the amalgamate linguistic picture of the Romanian edition, also characterized by inappropriate forms of consecrated historical terms.⁶

In short, the work of Irina Băldescu is a thesis about Transylvania written in Italy, which mainly relies on the interwar or even older Saxon (*Sachsen*) literature, and has language and information deficiencies that oblige the reader to a parallel research.

Beyond these observations, the attempt of comprising a vast multidisciplinary material approached from the urban planner point of view, proposing new research themes, based on the careful study of the documents needs to be highlighted. The chapter concerning the development of the juridical contexts remains the real contribution to historiography of this volume.

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⁴ M. Tănase, *Avatarurile unui act de donație. Donația făcută cistercienilor, în Țara Bârsei, de către Bela IV, la 17 martie 1240, in Revista Istorică* S.N. 4, 1-2, 1993, p. 69.

⁵ In Romanian, the word Saint is spelled “Sfânta” at feminine gender, and “Sfântul” at masculine, both abbreviated as “Sf.”.

⁶ “Anjovin” – instead of “Angevin” (Angevine), “cei trei regi Arpad” – instead of “cei trei Sfinți Regi ai Ungariei” (the three Saints Kings of Hungary), “Turnul Ceasului” din Sighișoara – instead of Turnul cu Ceas (The Clock Tower), “biserica de sus” din Sighișoara – instead of “Biserica din Deal” (the Church “on the Hill”), “turn *rundel*” – instead of rondel, “franciscani contrareformați”, “statuia contrareformistă”, “acte notărești”, “hrube de grâu”, “turnul de clopotniță”, “strada ex-*Pfempflingergasse*”, and so on.