

SAXON TRANSYLVANIA, AN IDENTITY POTPOURRI AND A CULTURAL CATALYSIS IN THE SOCIAL NETWORK CONTEXT OF THE LAST MILLENNIUM

ALINA ELENA VOINEA*

Abstract: Saxons from Transylvania are a strong ethnic group. The present study brings to light an internal point of view of the Saxon identity. In the Transylvanian space, the Saxon identity is shaped by the interaction between the inhabitant ethnic groups present concomitantly in the same space. Saxons, Romanians, Hungarians and Roma coexist and interact, developing cultural exchange as a foundation for ethnic identity coagulation. Through their interaction, Saxons are identifying themselves within the ethnicity, thus maintaining identity. Also, Saxons are differentiating from other ethnic groups, thus maintaining authenticity. Therefore, Saxons are different together, and similar apart, both authentic and identical.

Keywords: Saxon, Transylvania, social networks, ethnicity, identity, culture.

Trade, Cultural Exchange

The commercial exchanges that take place on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains are catalyzing the economic development, while the interactions between Saxons, Romanians, Hungarians and Roma result in cultural interferences. The interethnic and rural-urban exchanges participate in the identity transformation of the Saxon culture. In this process, the elements of language, garment and architecture, from the urban registry (European and from the Romanian and Hungarian culture) are assimilated.

* *Technical University of Cluj-Napoca. alina.voinea@arch.utcluj.ro.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26424/philobib.2022.27.2.02>.

This paper was financially supported by the Project "Network of excellence in applied research and innovation for doctoral and postdoctoral programs" / InoHubDoc, project co-funded by the European Social Fund financing agreement no. POCU/993/6/13/153437.

The cities near the Carpathian gateways, Bistrița, Brașov and Sibiu situated along the commercial routes took shape in the 13th and 14th centuries. The multiple connections (economic, political, military and cultural) between Moldova, Walachia and Transylvania took place through one of the most important channels of cultural communication, namely commercial exchange. Due to the production function, Saxons receive the free trade right in 1368, the Saxons trade being a catalyst for the economic development of the region.

“Neighboring states are involved in a lively trade, especially with Moldova and Muntenia, but also with more distant states from the Balkans, and towards the north, with Poland.”¹

The Kraft products exchange takes place between Transylvania (Brașov, Bistrița and Sibiu) and the south Carpathian regions (cereals, wines, honey, leather and furs), or with the south of the country, towards Bulgaria and Turkey, which provide spices, silks, cotton, colorants. Oriental products transit the Romanian territory by being exchanged with the occidental products of Transylvanian merchants, Sibiu and Brașov being two important commercial points mediating between the areas separated by the Carpathian arch passed through by the Rodnei, Bicz, Tulgheș, Oituz, Ghimeș, Buzău, Teleajenului, Bran, Turnul Roșu passages directly to Brașov. Textiles, iron objects manufactured by Saxons, textiles from Silezia or Cologne are traded by Saxons, while Romanians that pass the Saxon boundaries through Bistrița, Brașov and Sibiu are trading over the Danube wool, spices from the east, fabrics and precious metals.

The German people from Transylvania have influenced the development of the intra-Carpathic area in search for a space for fructifying their knowledge and experience. They contributed to agrotechnical methods, crafts, published first-edition books in the languages of the co-inhabiting nationalities, and disseminated new research and scientific discoveries in all domains.²

Walter Kuhn argues that due to the western colonists, eastern regions received the elements of the agrarian revolution (triannual crop rotation, land measurement, cereal culture predominance, the plough with mobile mechanism, horse yoke, the windmill) invented earlier in the west, new judicial and colonization forms.³ The main achievements included the conservation of peasants and civil liberty, the religious freedom, the protection against the Turkish assault and the Transylvanian autonomy.⁴

The German colonizers are the “*agents of exchange*”. Having departed from Transylvania or Poland in search for commerce opportunities, they passed the Carpathians from

¹ Original quote: “*Un comerț foarte viu se făcea cu statele vecine, mai ales cu Moldova și cu Muntenia, dar și cu țările mai îndepărtate din Balcani, iar la Nord, cu Polonia.*” Nicolae Iorga, *Ce sînt și ce vor sașii din Ardeal Expunere din izvor competent* (Bucharest: Cultura Neamului Românesc, 1919), 6.

² Ernst Wagner, *Istoria Sașilor Ardeleni* (Bucharest: Meronia, 2000), 107-110.

³ Thomas Năgler, *Așezarea Sașilor în Transilvania*, (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1992), 42.

⁴ Wagner, *Istoria Sașilor Ardeleni*, 107-110.

south to east, where they met “our old town organization, imitating [...] Saxon city types.”⁵ Administrative, judicial and economic elements, urbanistic principles are attributed to colonizers introducing the medieval urbanism tradition identified in the country’s oldest cities. The great number of the cities developed in Germany allows the diffusion of the German city law in Central and Eastern Europe, in Bohemia, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Transylvania. The law is implemented by the central and eastern cities considering that it will trigger the development.⁶

The Transylvanian urbanization process takes place in parallel with the transit commerce accelerated by Germans in Transylvania between Moldova and Muntenia, and with Wallachia and Dobrogea. After the second half of the 13th century, the German colonists are settling in the southern and eastern part of the Carpathian Mountains, in Moldova and Wallachia. Curtea de Argeș and Târgoviște are cities of German colonization.⁷ The influence of German colonizers is spreading beyond the Carpathian Mountains, all the way to the Siret River, in Muntenia, Moldova and Wallachia. Cities such as Baia de Moldova, founded in this area for silver mining around the 13th century are granted political urban rights in the 15th century.⁸ The cities to which the Saxons contribute are not direct transpositions of the territories of their origin, but they are developed in accordance with the economic and urban context in the country of settlement.⁹

The genesis of the cities in Romania situated in the West and East of the Carpathian Mountains is part of a model spread on a large area of the continent. Research shows similarities between cities in Transylvania and other Central European cities. The German colonizers are credited for the beginnings of the country and as founders of the Romanian cities. Nicolae Iorga states: “*there is no doubt that our cities are not founded by Romanians.*”¹⁰ Regarding about the cities in Moldova, Miron Costin states that “*most of the cities have been founded by Saxons.*”¹¹ However, historian Thomas Năgler considers that the urbanization process had started before the colonization. Saxons contributed to the founding of the oldest cities in the Romanian Countries: the city centres hold a central position and a regulated topographic structure, each city having one or more Catholic churches, German origin

⁵ Original quote: “au dat de organizarea târgurilor noastre vechi, ce era imitată [...] după tipul orașelor săsești” from Petre Panait Panaitescu, “Comunele medievale în principatele române,” in *Interpretări românești*, eds. Ștefan S. Gorovei, Maria-Magdalena Szekely (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), 141, in Laurențiu Rădvan, “Coloniștii germani, fondarea orașelor din țările române și metamorfozele istoriografiei românești din secolul al XX-lea,” *Historia Urbana, XIX* (2011): 119-140, 128.

⁶ Năgler, *Așezarea Sașilor în Transilvania*, 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 171-173.

⁸ Iorga, *Ce sînt și ce vor sașii din Ardeal*.

⁹ Thomas Năgler, *Românii și Sașii până la 1848 Relații economice, sociale și politice* (Sibiu: Thausib, 1997), 75-82.

¹⁰ Original quote: “nu e nici o îndoială astăzi că orașele noastre nu sunt întemeiate de români” Nicolae Iorga, „Istoria industriilor la români”, in *Opere economice*, ed. Georgeta Penelea (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1982), 175, in Rădvan, “Coloniștii germani”, 119-140.

¹¹ Original quote: “orașele mai toate au fost întemeiate de sași” in Rădvan, “Coloniștii germani.”

institutions. Moreover, the German privileges obtained by the city communities have common elements in Transylvanian and in Polish German cities.¹²

The Saxon colonizers settlement model is absorbed in the household organizations and architecture by other ethnic groups in the region. The Saxon architecture influence is noticeable over the Romanian and Hungarian communities' architecture in Transylvania. Grigore Ionescu observes the compact structure of the villages, along the main road; the models were also implemented by the Romanian population following the Saxon settlement model. The historian mentions the villages founded in Banat, Dobrogea or the Danube Lowlands in the 19th century, structured in accordance with a pre-established circular or rectangular plan.¹³ The Romanian peasants from Saxon villages adapted their households to Saxon traditions, but so did the ones living in Seckler lands, as is the case of the Dârjiu village, where the types of settlements and the architecture of the households are similar to the Saxon villages.¹⁴

Saxons are mediators between the East and the West. The expansion tendency towards the West (Drang nach Osten) of the German colonizers is considered to be "a great German deed," in the absence of which the eastern population would not have evolved.¹⁵ Despite this viewpoint being an exaggeration, one cannot overlook the multiple contributions that German colonizers brought and, in fact, continue to bring. The most important role played by the Saxons in Transylvania is that of catalysts and mediators for the cultural exchange through commerce. The trading relationships based on the exchange of goods between Saxons from the Romanian Countries and the rest of Europe enable the cultural export and import.

Interethnic Interactions

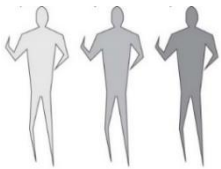


Figure 1 Saxon Villages' inhabitants – Author's drawing

Saxon villages are socially segregated, while the social hierarchy is well established in the ethnic dynamic. Saxons are the majority and define the local identity, while Romanians and Roma are minorities. The Romanians are the majority population in the country, but the Roma are still a minority. In this context, in order to conserve their identity, Saxons, Romanians and Roma live together, but they do not form homogenous communities. Romanians and Roma live at the periphery.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Grigore Ionescu, *Istoria arhitecturii în România. De la orânduirea comunei primitive până la sfârșitul veacului al XVI-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1963), 20.

¹⁴ "Pattern Book for Saxon Village Architecture." Project Information Sheet Conference Project Brief Number (PBN): 9 (2005), http://www.cimec.ro/Evenimente/SighisoaraConference/PBN9_INTBAU_patternbook.pdf. (accessed on 12 July 2018).

¹⁵ Iorga, *Ce sînt și ce vor sașii din Ardeal*, 25.

The ethnic relationships in the Transylvanian space are

“not pure and immaculate, but nor are they horrible and disastrous.”

“Beyond the confrontations between Romanians, Hungarians and other people, there have also been times of common struggle and cooperation when they intermarried and displayed a common destiny.”¹⁶

Saxons are interested in harmonious cohabitation with other nations, states and confessions. There are, however, moments when they need to defend their rights in this consciously cultivated harmony. Cautious, circumspect and alert, their achievements are facilitated by the privileges that had been offered to them by the Hungarian kings. As group of free peasants and citizens (initially local nobles with limited rights), they developed freely, constituting a development model. Saxons were structured into social states, the citizens on the royal lands having both the rights and the ability of defending themselves from abuse.¹⁷

The religious differences reflect the ethnic differences. The Saxons are Protestants, the Romanians are Orthodox and the Roma are irreligious and, as such, they have different value systems. Following the bipolar spirituality theory of Lucian Blaga, the Church represents the transcendent and the human transcendence rapport expressed by the infinite distance between the material world and the transcendence. For the Protestant Saxons, the Church is the community to which the individuals adhere deliberately. The Church is an extension of the everyday life, where the individual and his freedom are valued. “Protestantism is freely choosing a nation that is loyally served afterwards.” The Gothic Church is vertically mediating the relationship between the human and the transcendence. “However, for the Orthodox, the Church is a cosmic instance – similar to an organism. Each individual is culpable for the sins of others but can also be absolved through the collective communion offered by the Church. [...] The nation is an organism with members bound by ‘language and blood’ and other common ‘roots’.”¹⁸ In the Byzantine spirit “The transcendent comes down in order to become palpable.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Original quotes “pure imaculate, dar nici oribile și pline de dezastre.” “Dincoale de confruntări, între români, maghiari, germani și alte neamuri, au existat și momente în care au luptat și au construit împreună, în care s-au înrudit și au ilustrat un destin comun,” in Ioan Bolovan, Sorina Paula Bolovan, “Transilvania până la Primul Război Mondial: (oportunități și/sau vulnerabilități demografice),” *Sașii și concetățenii lor ardeleni: Studia in Honorem Dr. Thomas Năgler*, eds. Ioan Marin Țiplic, Konrad Gündish (Alba-Iulia: Altip, 2009): 413-429, 413.

¹⁷ Năgler, *Așezarea Sașilor în Transilvania*, 42.

¹⁸ Original quote “Protestantismul optează liber pentru națiune apoi o servește fidel”. “Pentru ortodocși, în schimb, biserica este o instanță cosmică – asemănătoare unui organism. Fiecare om e vinovat de faptele tuturor și de asemeni el poate fi izbăvit prin comuniunea colectivă ce o oferă biserica. [...] națiunea e un fel de organism ai cărui membri sunt legați «grai și sânge» și alte «rădăcini» comune.” Adriana Matei, *Identitate culturală locală* (Cluj-Napoca: U.T. Press, 2004), 66-67.

¹⁹ “transcendentul coboară spre a se face palpabil” Lucian Blaga, *Spațiul mioritic* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994), in Matei, *Identitate culturală locală*, 68

“Orthodoxy focuses on the collective telluric contact with God, almost as a physical attachment with the supranatural world. In Catholicism, the individual redemption through material creation is awarded more importance, but individualism is strongly tempered by the sense of hierarchy and organization inherited by the Church of Rome. [...] in protestantism [...] the individual has the tendency of freeing himself more and more, paving the way towards free thought and rationalism [...], the spiritual European path from intuitive religiosity to rationalism.”²⁰

For the Roma, the meaning of life in this world is connected to atonement for a sin. Known as a nomad population or as musicians, the Roma are defined by their attitude towards their own vulnerability. The Roma cultural unity is a continuous tendency to adapt, to exist or to survive. The Roma are trapped in a continuous tendency of compensating for a psychological drawback, interpreted as an inferiority or weakness, through an excess of survival techniques. This leads to overcompensation, the individual and the community are dissipated in a continuous readjustment of the personality.²¹

“Saxons are a circumspect people, who do not blindly enter unknown situations and who do not befriend people from whom they expect no good in return.”²² Nicolae Iorga considers the 210.000 Saxons as stereotypes for “honesty, work, economy and ideal.”²³ Moreover, he notes that “Anyone familiar with the Saxon people knows that they are a precious element, that they have a centuries-old glorious past, that they are hard workers and can be true role models of discipline and good morals.”²⁴

“The Saxon people, however, are still a people of farmers and citizens that, along with their freedom, retained their German nature. Saxon democracy dates back to time immemorial and has been conserved by the Saxons in the name of their common wealth. According to the

²⁰ Original quote “Ortodoxia pune accentul pe contactul colectiv, teluric cu Dumnezeu, ca un atașament aproape fizic față de lumea supranaturală. În catolicism, mântuirea individuală prin opere dobândește mai multă importanță, dar aici individualismul e puternic temperat de simțul ierarhiei și al organizării pe care care Biserica Romei l-a moștenit, [...] în protestantism [...] individul are tendința să se elibereze din ce în ce mai mult, pregătind calea gândirii libere și a raționalismului [...] mers al spiritului european de la religiozitate intuitivă la raționalism,” in Neagu Djuvara, *Civilizații și tipare istorice. Un studiu comparat al civilizațiilor*, transl. by Șerban Broché (Bucharest: Serii de Autor Humanitas, 2006), 147-148.

²¹ Vasile Ionescu, “Casa, ca trup public. O introducere în arhitectura interioară a sufletului (oriental) rrom în exil,” in *Kastello, Palate ale rromilor din România*, ed. Bruno Andreșoiu și Adrian Ciocăzanu (Bucharest: Editura Igloo, 2008), 73-6.

²² Original quote “Sașii sunt un popor circumspect, care nu intră orbiș în împrejurări necunoscute și nu se împrietenește cu oameni de la cari nu poate aștepta nici un bine,” in Iorga, *Ce sînt și ce vor sașii din Ardeal*, 47.

²³ Original quote “cinste, muncă, economie și ideal,” in *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁴ Original quote „Orișicine cunoaște poporul sășesc știe că el alcătuiește un element foarte prețios, că are un trecut de veacuri glorios și plin de muncă și poate servi ca un model de ordine și de moravuri,” in *Ibid.*, 9.

old Saxon belief, the cultivated land belonged to the entire commune. The individual, on his own land, was merely the steward of the common land, and, if a family perished with no heirs, the land became the property of the commune. The grassland, the forests and the waters were considered common property; they could neither be divided nor be transformed into private property.”²⁵

As a confined people on a foreign territory confronting many assaults, Saxons developed a strong national spirit through the mother tongue, certain cultural elements and their attachment to the German people. Saxon achievements are based on solidarity and internal unity.²⁶

“Every Saxon feels an unwavering duty to work for the common good of their people. The Saxons developed the fiercest sense of solidarity, which makes the Saxon people appear as a single, monolithic personality. It is true that this results in a kind of separatism which, for such a small people, is a primary condition for their preservation. The simple morals, of which the Roman writer Tacitus also made note in the case of the Germanic people, are still upheld today by the Saxons, despite the fact that they have not remained untouched by the supercivilization of modern times. Simplicity, sincerity, honesty and loyalty are qualities recognized by both friends and foes of the Saxon people. They have strict conceptions of law and respect for the property of the other. Their cohesion would not have been possible without these principles. Here we must add the diligence and conscientiousness of the Saxons, through which they developed their culture and increased their welfare. When the Saxons are casted by fate into the wide world, they immediately find their bearings and they become highly valued workers in all fields. If, in addition to these characteristics, we also take into account their deep sense of order, prudence and tranquillity, their relentless efforts towards progress and ethnic cultivation, then an impressive set of high civil values is outlined, which make Saxons a precious element in the life of the State to which they belong. This is how, they were known by the Hungarians and as such they will be known by the Romanians.”²⁷

²⁵ Original quote: “Poporul sășesc a rămas însă și mai departe un popor de țerani și de cetățeni și si-a păstrat, odată cu libertatea, și caracterul german. Democratismul acesta sășesc datează din timpurile cele mai vechi, și a fost susținut la sași prin gândul la averea comuna. Pământul de arat aparține, după vechea părere a sașilor, totalității comunei. Individul era pe pământul său numai un fel de administrator al teritoriului comun, iar, dacă o familie muria fără moștenitori, el revenia comunei. Pășunea, pădurile apele erau însă și formal considerate ca proprietate comună: ele puteau fi împărțite și nu puteau ajunge în posesiune particulară.” Ibid., 9.

²⁶ Ibid., 45.

²⁷ Original quote: “Fiecare sas simte nestrămutata datorie de a lucra pentru binele poporului întreg. La sași s-a dezvoltat cea mai înaltă formă a sentimentului de solidaritate, prin care se dă poporului întreg

Community life defines the Saxons, while the individual and individuality is subordinated to the community. In his journey across Transylvania in 1868, writer Charles Boner observes:

“Saxon villagers have something conventional, ceremonious and constrained, something practiced that has become their second nature. They all express the same calmness and rigid uniformity in their behaviour. The interaction with Saxons is an excessively formal experience. They respect the will of the community, they do not make decisions. The spontaneity of will and pathos are absent.” “In my encounters with the villagers, when I got to know them better, I could not help but notice that there is something mannered and at the same time forced in their behaviour, something that, through prolonged practice, has become their second nature... these people showcase the same calmness and rigid uniformity in attitude and conduct... In the relationships with Saxons you will notice an exaggerated formality... The strict discipline and wonderful regularity were the basis for their existence. Their political and social life depended on the latter in a time in which, without it, they would have perished. I saw that even today the Saxon does not seed and does not harvest whenever he feels like it, but when the commune decides it – and the Saxon obeys. This probably explains why these people avoid making decisions for themselves and why they have little to no spontaneity of will and spirit.”²⁸

înfățișarea unei personalități unitare. E adevărat că de aici rezultă în afară un fel de separatism, care la un popor așa de mic e o condiție principală pentru conservarea ei. Moravurile simple, care au fost remarcate încă de scriitorul roman Tacit la Germani, se pot afla și astăzi la Sași, deși n-au rămas nici ei neatinși de supercivilizația timpului modern. Simplitate, sinceritate, cinste și loialitate sînt însușiri recunoscute de prieteni și de adversari la poporul săsesc. El are o concepție severă despre lege și drept, și respectă avutul celuilalt. Fără de principiile acestea nici n-ar fi posibilă menținerea lor laolaltă. Aici mai trebuie adăugată hărnicia și conștiinciositatea Sașilor, prin care și-au dezvoltat cultura și și-au sporit bună starea. Când Sașii sînt aruncați de soarta prin lumea largă, se știu afla îndată în situație și sînt pe toate terenurile muncitori foarte apreciați. Dacă mai luăm în samă, pe lîngă însușirile acestea ale Sașilor, simțul lor pronunțat de ordine, chibzuială și liniștea, străduința neîncetată spre progres și de cultivare etnica, atuncia avem o mulțime de virtuți înalte de cetățeni, care fac ca Sașii să fie un prețios element în viața de Stat căruia îi aparțin. Ca atare au fost cunoscuți de Unguri și ca atare vor fi cunoscuți de Români.” Ibid., 45.

²⁸ Original quote: “Sătenii sași au ceva convențional, ceremonios și constrâns, ceva practicat care a devenit a doua lor natură. Toți exprimă aceeași liniște și uniformitate rigidă în comportamentul lor. Interacțiunea cu sașii este o experiență de formalitate excesivă. Ei respectă voința comunității, nu iau decizii. Lipsesc spontaneitatea voinței și a sentimentului.” „Nu pot să nu remarc că în cadrul întâlnirilor mele cu locuitorii satelor, ocazii în care i-am cunoscut mai bine, mi s-a părut că au ceva manierat și totodată forțat în comportamentul lor, ceva care, prin practică îndelungată le-a devenit o a doua natură... oamenii aceștia dau cu toții dovadă de aceeași liniște și de aceeași uniformitate rigidă în ținută și conduită... În relațiile cu sașii îți vei da seama de un formalism exagerat... Ordinea strictă și minunata regularitate a constituit piatra de temelie a existenței lor. De acestea a depins viața lor politică și socială

In the Middle Ages, the Romanian autochthony and the Romanian preponderance is acknowledged in the Transylvanian space, but it was subjected to Hungarianisation. In 1399, Ludovic the First endorses the ethnic and confessional affiliation of the Saxon and Hungarian nobility. Romanians are not yet represented ethnically and confessionally.²⁹

During the first centuries of coexistence between Saxons and Romanians, one can observe similarities in the social structure, as well as differences in the Saxon agrarian occupation and the Romanian pastoral life. The western European colonists are at an advanced stage of development having the work division in agriculture and crafts ever since their privileges had been granted in the 13th century. Saxons are organized in agrarian, agrarian-kraft and kraft-commercial communities. With similar social structures, the Romanian and Saxon farmers were in the same social situation on the territory of nobiliary counties, given that they were “treated identically, regardless of their ethnic origins.”³⁰ Saxons have a preponderantly agrarian life, the farmers surpassing the craftsmen and merchants in number, while the Romanians led a pastoral life. As a result of the colonization, new borders are established so as to restrict Romanians rights to use the arable lands and non-arable lands for grazing.³¹ The Romanian pastoral life is in dissonance with the Saxon agrarian life. In the 14th century, Saxons and Romanians practicing the agrarian-pastoral activities are in conflict, simultaneous Romanian revolt taking place in “*Marginimea*” Sibiului (1382). The Romanians from Transylvania collaborated with the ones in Walachia and Muntenia to defend their common ground. Saxons maintained favourable interethnic connections in various fields in the context of political and social sporadic turbulations.³²

Between the 15th and the 16th centuries, under Ottoman oppression, Romanians and Saxons developed a strong economic bond. The relationship was bidirectional. On the one hand, the Saxon manufactured products were requested in the outer Carpathian area, while the Saxon economic interests implied a close collaboration between the Romanian countries, with the city of Braşov as a commercial empire for the surrounding countries.³³

Romanians and Saxons interacted economically, socially and politically, bringing together the Romanian culture acquired in Transylvania and the Saxon Western culture from the Roman-German Empire. The peasantry forms the majority for both the Romanians and the Saxons, given that the Romanian serf and the Saxon serf are essentially no different. They are

într-o vreme în care, în absența acestora, ar fi căzut pradă pieirii. Am văzut că și în ziua de azi sasul nu seamănă și nu recoltează când i se năzărește, ci atunci când hotărăște comuna, atât de mult se supune voinței acesteia. Probabil că așa se explică faptul că acești oameni se feresc să hotărăscă singuri, că dau dovadă de o redusă spontaneitate a voinței și simțirii,” in Charles Boner, *Siebenbürgen, Land un Leute*, (Leipzig, 1868) in Hermann Fabini, *Universul Cetăților Bisericești din Transilvania* (Sibiu: Monumenta, 2009), 35.

²⁹ Bolovan, Bolovan, 415.

³⁰ Original quote: “tratați identic indiferent de originea lor etnică,” in Năgler, *Români și Sașii până la 1848*, 71.

³¹ Ibid., 89.

³² Ibid., 91.

³³ Ibid., 93.

allies in their resistance against the enslavement imposed by the Hungarian nobility. "It is a reality that Saxons have contributed to maintaining and reinforcing the economic relations between all spaces inhabited by Romanians."³⁴ In the anti-Ottoman struggle, Iancu de Hunedoara established a strong collaboration with the Saxon authorities. During the Ottoman and Habsburg domination, the Romanian-Saxon political relationships are diminished. In 1848, Saxons and Romanians fought together for their liberation from servitude and formed a common front against the Cluj Diet for the Unification of Transylvania with Hungary. The Union of the Romanian Principalities was welcomed by the Saxons. After 1867, in the Magyarization process, the Saxons consolidated the position of their community. In 1919, Saxons adhered to the Union between Transylvania and Old Romania on the basis of self-determination.³⁵

Between the 15th and 19th centuries, the fight for equal rights takes place of Romanians with Hungarians, Szecklers and Saxons. After having been left outside the three privileged nations, the Romanian elite from Transylvania emigrated to the South of Carpathians. During Habsburg domination, a considerable number of the Romanian inhabitants left the country due to harsh conditions of the Austrian administration. In this period, the number of ethnic Saxons rose, while the number of ethnic Hungarians and Romanians decreased. In the second part of the 16th century, after the unification of a part of the Orthodox Romanians with the Church of Rome, a social, intellectual and political ascent of the Romanians began in the context of the loyalty towards the emperor. At the end of the 18th century, in 1791, the Romanians demand the right to the ancestral law, *Supplex Libellus Valahorum*. Romanians are supported indirectly in the attempt of the Empire to create an "internal opposition" in order to diminish the power of the privileged states.³⁶

In the 19th century, the Romanians asserted their rights. They issue petitions for equality, liberty and fraternity, thus sending a message of tolerance and collaboration with Saxons, Hungarians and Szeklers. In 1848, they elaborate The National Petitions through which they request national independence, equality in rights, serfdom abolishment, economic and political liberty, abolition of censorship in the Romanian language education. This petition is ignored by the Nobles Diet from Cluj that decided the Union of Transylvania with Hungary. Emperor Ferdinand I denies the Romanian nationality existence. In Blaj, in 1848, the political alliance between the Romanian revolution and Austria against the Hungarian revolution takes place. In 1849, the Pacification Project is elaborated for voting the nationalities law that also grants the rights to Romanians from Hungary for using the Romanian language in administration and the Orthodox Church independence. Romanians declare themselves neutral in the confrontation between the Turks and the Austro-Hungarians. At the end of the 19th century, the legitimacy of Romanians in the Transylvanian space is recognized, Emperor Franz Josef invoking the natural right in detriment to the historical right given by the majority

³⁴ Original quote: "Este o realitate că sașii au contribuit la menținerea și întărirea relațiilor economice dintre toate spațiile în care locuiau români," in *Ibid.*, 390.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 390.

³⁶ Bolovan, Bolovan, 416-419.

principle. Between 1850 and 1910, the Hungarian speaking population increases until 1867 naturally, through mixed marriages, and later through a demographic policy of the Hungarian authorities. From a majoritarian Romanian and German ethnic structure, the Hungarian population becomes majoritarian in Transylvania.³⁷

Regarding the Romanian culture, scholar Petre Andrei notes:

“We lived in a context so complex that any tendency of awakening to another life was repressed. We had no respect for the moral, judicial or social values, which is why we could only create very few values of our own. Yet, we all very much respected the material values, despising all that diverted from egoism and materialism.”³⁸

At the beginning of the European Renaissance, the Roma emigrated in Europe in search for a home after the oriental crusades and the rise of Islam. In 1416, Emperor Sigismund granted the Roma the freedom to travel in Europe. Without belonging to a state, they created survival strategies that differed from the ones developed by a stable culture and determined the Roma organizational structure to adapt to nomadisation, this way adapting to the a type of influence necessary in order to survive. “[R]oma have their own spiritual geography, one completely different from ours.”³⁹

The Roma, in contrast with the Saxons, distinguish themselves as nomad actors, loud, passionate, deceiving, inactive, disorganized. Between the two cultures, there are also similarities. Respect, caring and family hierarchy, as well as the clearly defined gender roles are traits shared by the Roma and Saxon communities. Other convergent elements are the visibility, symbols and legends or traditional myths.

Both Saxon and Roma communities are organized in guilds showcasing mastery and reaching a stage of civilisation development. Bakers, weavers, tailors, blacksmiths, masons, stove builders, girdle manufacturers, goldsmiths and carpenters are the most important Saxon guilds from the 14th century. The Saxon guilds are similar to the ones found in Western Europe, reflecting the social situation of Transylvania.⁴⁰ The Roma are organized in fourteen guilds,

³⁷ Ibid., 420-429.

³⁸ Original quote: “am trăit într-un așa complex de împrejurări încât a fost înăbușită orice tendință pentru deșteptarea la o altă viață. Noi nu am respectat nici o valoare morală, nici pe cea juridică, nici cea socială, de aceea nu am putut crea decât foarte puține valori proprii. Am respectat însă cu toții foarte mult valorile materiale, disprețuind ceea ce se abătea de la egoism și materialism,” in Petre Andrei, *Filosofia valorilor* (Bucharest: Fundația Regele Mihai I, 1945), 11-12.

³⁹ Original quote: “[R]omii au propria geografie spirituală, una cu totul diferită de a noastră,” in Bruno Andreșoiu, “Kasteloo. Palate ale Rromilor în România. Castelul și maneaua,” in *Kastello. Palate ale rromilor din România*, eds. Bruno Andreșoiu, Adrian Ciocăzanu (Bucharest: Editura Igloo, 2008): 7-9.

⁴⁰ Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*.

depending on their crafts: broom and brush manufacturers, craftsmen, blacksmiths, carpenters, craftsmen, carvers, locksmiths, musicians, salesmen, florists, shoemakers, wizards, workers.⁴¹

The Roma are present in the Saxon culture. The literature of the 18th and 19th centuries portrays Roma as anomic strangers and as radical others to which they identify by contrast. They refer to the Roma culture considering the origins and ethnicity, religious identity, nomadism, delinquency, femininity and musician artist troupes. Saxons depict them in terms of anomy, deviance, degenerative, consequences of an indolent, changeable, unreligious nature, diverted from laic and religious principles, etiquette and morality. While Saxons identify themselves with the western European culture, they also delineate a hierarchic rapport with Roma to justify their surveillance and to fortify the symbolic borders in order to protect their own culture. The denigrating perception on Roma is based on their being considered intruders, outsider-Europeans with Indian origins, primitives with no religion, considered to belong to the Greco-oriental religion. In the context of the evolutionary theories and national characterology, a hierarchy is instated between the sedentary and the nomad people, the nomad people represented by Roma in Saxon imaginary. The precarious material condition, paired with an unstable lifestyle reinforces the label of primitivism on the Roma, although the majority of Roma become sedentary while living among Saxons. The nomad Roma is considered exotic, a symbol of social anomaly, and they incarnate the image of the unlawful or the criminal, in addition to the image of the rhapsode. The musician-poet posture is a backup occupation, while through Roma-Hungarian hybrid music is assumed the mediator role in the German and Hungarian cultural wars. In Saxon literature, there are two paradigms of the Roma image as perceived by the Saxon culture. One is characterised by orientalizing and exotism, the racist attitude and the derogatory language borrowed from the German world. However, there are some Roma heads in the Saxon community and solutions are sought to transcend the Roma underdevelopment situation.⁴²

Saxons are guiding their lives based on values: order, discipline, control, solidarity, collective sense, simplicity, honour and loyalty. Saxons are known by their compatriots, characterized by historians and writers as exemplary diligent people, with respect for work, not perceived as individuals, but as a part of the family, of the community and of the ethnicity, with a powerful sense of belonging. The Saxons seem to have lived by the rule “all for one and one for all.” In this spirit they have built the family, the community, the village and Transylvania. The respect for the surrounding and the collective spirit is reflected in every aspect of the rural life, agriculture, craft, housing, the church.

⁴¹ Sacheverell Sir Sitwell, *Călătorie în România* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011).

⁴² Marian Zălogă, *Romii în cultura săsească în secolele al XVIII-lea și al XIX-lea* (Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, 2015).

Identity Crystallization through Acculturation

Saxon acculturation in the Intra-Carpathian space takes place through cultural exchange by cohabitating with the autochthonous population and via commerce. The latter two facilitate the cultural contribution in the Carpathian and European space. As skilled builders, Saxons bring into the colonized territories, besides their language, tradition and customs, a particular means of building. The Saxon artisans built many of the Romanian Churches (Sân–Nicoară, Curtea de Argeș in the 16th century, Feleac Monastery in Cluj, Ion Hunyadi foundation, Sântimbre Alba village). Nicolae Iorga attributes to Saxons the *role of transmitters of Gothic elements*, such as the windows and door frames or the epigraph fonts.⁴³

Cultural traits are exchange elements and the acculturation effects are visible through the ethnic garment, habitat and language, elements of the identity “hard core”.⁴⁴ At a first glance, the garment, the outer image, brings out the ideal individual model. Language is an inner and profound form of tradition representation, revealing the collective psyche, language and ethnicity.⁴⁵

Cultural trade facilitates colonization understood as an appropriation of a space. Transylvanian Saxon colonists’ identity is modelled over time through exchange manifesting at a cultural level. The space is modelled and the space models in turn through the living process. The exchange relationships or commerce are catalysts of cultural shaping through Saxon interactions with other cultures. Architecture, language, and popular garment are elements of identity manifestation. The cultural connections between Saxons, Romanians and Roma are materialized through identity elements assimilated in a time span through cultural exchange, and value exchange in architecture.

Language and garment are ways of individual and group identity expression. Through garment and language, there are borrowed and assimilated values in the traditional register. By understanding the Transylvanian Saxon colonists’ transformations of language and garment in the adaptation process of assimilating change in a more dynamic rhythm, one can understand the architecture transformation process.

Local Interferences in Culture Sedimentation

Since their settlement in the intra-Carpathian space, Saxons are cohabiting with the local population. The architectural resemblance is due to cultural interaction exchange and coexistence in the same geographical, temporal and historical context. There is a striking similarity (in the housing evolution stages) between the Romanian house and the Saxon house, bearing characteristic architectural loans.

⁴³ Iorga, *Ce sînt și ce vor sașii din Ardeal*, 7.

⁴⁴ Djuvara, *Civilizații și tipare istorice*, 348.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 323.

Ethnographer Valer Butură observes that in the contexts in which Saxons, Romanians and a small number of Hungarians coexist, the architecture expression is contaminated with intercultural aspects, interiors and textile decorations conserving each ethnic character.⁴⁶

“A new flourishing of the higher culture from the Latin-German Western world would have been impossible in this faraway wild East, were it not for a preparatory local civilization, together with its natural bearers. The language, the customs, the poetic creation of the Saxon people, but moreover the garment, popular art – do they not contain the elements borrowed from the previous culture that had been spread out all across the Balkan Peninsula and across the entire Carpathian chain?”⁴⁷

The spatial horizon theory of the unconscious explains why a single landscape, may contain cultures with different spatial views and why, within different landscapes, a culture with a stable and permanent spatial vision can be maintained and can dominate. In the manner in which the Saxons transfer their spatial vision of the shores of the Rhine and Mosela rivers to the Transylvanian space:

“in this landscape of great and dense spiritual interferences, the existence of the Saxon people has lasted for hundreds of years alongside the Romanian popular culture, of a very high level, under which lies a no less characteristic imponderable spatial vision. In the Saxon people’s spatial vision, we may identify that of the western Europeans, as if to say the one that embodied the Gothic spirit, the mystical liberty enclosed by nothing, and the resilient engineering spirit, of a gigantic battle with nature.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Valer Butură, *Străvechi mărturii de civilizație românească, Transilvania - Studiu etnografic*. (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1989), 27.

⁴⁷ Original quote: “Nu era cu puțință o nouă înflorire a culturii mai înalte din Apusul latino-germanic în acest colț al depărtatului Răsărit sălbatic, dacă ar fi lipsit o civilizație localnică pregătitoare, împreună cu fireștii ei purtători. Și nu se găsesc în limba, în datinile, în creația poetică în poporul sășesc, dar mai ales în îmbrăcăminte, arta populară, elemente împrumutate acelei culturi anterioare care se întindea asupra întregii peninsule balcanice și asupra tuturor povârnișurilor Carpaților?” in Iorga, *Ce sînt și ce vor sașii din Ardeal*, 5.

⁴⁸ Original quote: “Teoria orizontului spațial al inconștientului explică de ce în același peisaj pot exista culturi cu viziuni spațiale diferite și, respectiv, de ce în peisaje diferite poate să se mențină și să domine o cultură cu viziune spațială stabilă și permanentă.” „în acest peisaj de mari focare și dense interferențe spirituale, poporul saxon rezistă de sute de ani alături de cultura populară românească, de un foarte înalt nivel dedesubtul căreia deslușim de asemenea imponderabilul unei viziuni spațiale nu mai puțin specifice. Identificăm în viziunea spațială a poporului saxon pe aceea a europenilor apuseni, adică aceea în care s-a întrupat spiritul gotic, mistica libertății de nimic îngrădită, și duhul dărz ingineresc, al unei gigantice lupte cu natura,” in Ibid.

Amidst the cultural coexistence, there is a value identity exchange with the autochthonous population, visible in architecture. In the context of the inter-ethnic relationships, the value transmission process is approached by ethnographer Paul Petrescu as an “acculturation”. Elements of local influence are grafted in the popular culture.⁴⁹

Jan Hülsemann wonders if the colonists’ strong cultural bond explains their rigid construction habits. The notion of “tribal type” is used by Paul Ehmgig in order to define the configuration and to differentiate the household categories. He starts from the hypothesis according to which the developments take place in small ethnic communities microcosms and are narrowed down to a limited range of peasant enclaves bounded to their native lands. Although the colonizing and the autochthonous ethnic groups are not blending, these groups have a reciprocal influence as a consequence of their cohabitation.⁵⁰

“Hungarian, Szekler and, later, the Saxon breaches have understandably coloured the ethnographic landscape in a particular way, the interpenetrations being numerous and by no means easy to establish. [...] the ethnographic entanglements born of autochthonous Romanians and alloigenous population living together for hundreds of years, bringing West-European (and some farther away) cultural echoes, but strongly converted by the Habsburg Monarchy Central-Europeanism, offers a tempting terrain to the ethnological comparativism, capable of understanding and perhaps of explaining some of the confluences and synthesis that occurred in the heart of Transylvania.”⁵¹

The identity values exchange is reified by the ethnographic relationships. In the case of the Romanians and the “*unio trium nationum*” people (Hungarians, Szeklers, Saxons), cultural contamination is a by-product of their simultaneous presence in the Transylvanian space. New ethnographic, sociological and architectural forms of synthesis appear by virtue of the cultural contamination. Paul Petrescu points out that:

“in this tightly knit network of relationships, that continuously changed in structure over time, the local ethnographic realities have acquired an incomparable variety,

⁴⁹ “aculturație,” in Paul Petrescu, “Tradiția francofonă în arhitectura populară săsească din sudul Transilvaniei,” *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei Seria Artă Plastică*, Tome 18, (2)(1971): 235-248.

⁵⁰ “*tip tribal*” Jan Hülsemann, *Casa țărănească săsească din Transilvania, Ghid pentru restaurarea caselor vechi* (Sibiu: Simetria, 2014), 4.

⁵¹ Original quote: “Pătrunderea ungurească și secuiască, apoi cea săsească, au colorat, firește, într-un mod aparte peisajul etnografic al locului, întrepătrunderile fiind numeroase și nu ușor de stabilit. [...] învrăstrările etnografice născute din conviețuirea de sute de ani a românilor autohtoni cu populația alogenă aducând ecouri culturale vest-europene și unele mai depărtate, dar convertite puternic de central-europenismul monarhiei habsburgice, oferă un ademenitor teren comparatismului etnologic capabil să înțeleagă și poate să-și explice unele din confluențele și sintezele petrecute în inima Transilvaniei,” in Paul Petrescu, *Tentația confluențelor* (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1985), 53-4.

often disconcerted, but always charming, the popular creation repeatedly acquiring new accents, probably supporting the acceptance of the idea of a new «synthesis» for certain ethnographic phenomena.”⁵²

Ethnographer Roswith Capesius argues that the basic constructive forms of traditional Saxon residential architecture are similar to the Romanian ones.⁵³ About the Romanian house from the Saxon villages, painter Viorel Mărginean, originally from the Saxon Village of Cenade, recollects:

“In the past, Romanians living in Transylvanian villages were serfs. They had houses made from wicker and adobe. Not very big. The main chamber had no ceiling, and the stove was attached to the bread oven, while the polenta cast-iron kettle hung over the fire tied with a chain. The wicker walls caught a gleam of smoke, a copper luster, from the stove smoke that went to the attic.”⁵⁴

The longstanding coexistence under the same cultural influence has resulted in similarities between the Romanian villages from Mărginimea Sibiului and the Saxon neighbouring villages. “Similarities concern the exterior of the buildings, their ornamentation, the street design, rather than the plan layout.” “The Romanian village from Mărginimea Sibiului sometimes ends up having the same massive character as the Saxon village, with continuous buildings and attached households.”⁵⁵

Each aspect of architecture from the area of Mărginimea Sibiului is a result of the relationships with the Saxon population. The house, the annexes, the street design “cannot be correctly interpreted without linking it to the culture of the villages inhabited mostly by the

⁵² Original quote: “În acest împăienjenis de relații, mereu altfel structurat de-a lungul timpului, realitățile etnografice locale au căpătat o neasemuită varietate, deseori deconcentrată, dar totdeauna plină de farmec, creația populară căpătând de multe ori accente noi îndreptățind probabil acceptarea ideii de «sinteză» pentru anume fenomene etnografice,” in Petrescu, *Tentația confluențelor*, 55.

⁵³ Hülsemann, *Casa țărănească săsească din Transilvania*, 3.

⁵⁴ Original quote: “Înainte, în satele ardelenesti, românii au fost iobagi. Și aveau casele din nuiele împletite și chirpici. Nu foarte mari. Odaia lor principală n-avea tavan, iar soba de gătit era lipită de cuptorul de pâine și ceaunul de mămăligă era legat cu un lanț, atârnat peste foc. Fumul se ducea în podul casei, și nuielele alea de lemn, din care erau făcuți pereții, prindeau un glanț de la fum, un luciuri arămiu,” in Viorel Mărginean, “M-a fascinat întotdeauna albul iernilor.” *Formula AS* (1198) (2016), “Planete culturale”, interview by Valentin Iacob, <http://www.formula-as.ro/2016/1198/planete-culturale-30/viorel-marginean-m-a-fascinat-totdeauna-albul-iernilor-20164> (accessed on 15 October 2019).

⁵⁵ Original quotes: “Asemănările privesc exteriorul construcțiilor, decorul lor, aspectul străzilor, mai curând decât organizarea planurilor,” “Satul românesc din Mărginime ajunge câteodată să aibă același caracter masiv ca satul săsesc, cu construcții ce se continuă neîntrerupt, cu gospodării lipite unele de altele,” in Paul Stahl, *Case și acareturi din Mărginimea Sibiului (1953-1958)* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2005), 16.

Saxon population.”⁵⁶ Consequently, the architecture and civilization of the Saxon villages is better understood in connection with the autochthonous civilization. The Romanian and Saxon villages’ similarities are not only the result of exterior forces, but the population communication expression. Agricultural crops based on the three fields establishment, the neighbourhood system similar to Saxon “*Nachbarschaft*”, the strict organization forbidding Romanian families property division changing agricultural rhythm, animal husbandry generating new forms of housing are modifying the rural community structure. The villages’ expression highlights German-Romanian intercultural relationships having multilevel effects on the rural life.⁵⁷

Architecture is the expression of the ethnic diversity within a village community. In the Viscri village, Romanians cohabit with the Saxon majority population, the Romanian and the Saxon household are distinct by the position of the house towards the street. In the case of regular plotting, Romanian households are less hermetically sealed with wooden fences, compared to the Saxon walled enclosures. The Saxon house is placed on the street alignment, while the Romanian house has a flower garden that detaches the building 4-5 m from the street. In the mountains, on irregular plotting specific to mountainous areas there is the terrain limitation that closes the courtyard. The cross on the façade as a decorative element symbolizing a first house crowning is a distinct feature missing from the Romanian houses. More recent Romanian houses do not resemble Saxon typical houses, usually having an open extrovert character in keeping with the rural and the village’s character. The Roma houses are generally simple, improvised and built isolated, at the village periphery.⁵⁸

Hermann Müller, an inhabitant of the Viscri village, referring to the window carpentry, mentions that it had been crafted by Hungarian artisans.⁵⁹ With regard to the interethnic craft relations, painter Viorel Mărginean, born in the Cenade Village, remembers: “Back then, all occupations were clearly ethnically distributed. Romanians, for example, were carpenters. Every wood by-product was crafted by Romanians. Alternatively, the Roma people were crafting bricks fired in large furnaces. Wearing white shirts, white trousers and white coats, the Romanians could not be brick makers! Saxons were masons. All houses in my village are built by Saxons.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Original quote: “nu poate fi corect interpretat fără a-l apropia de cultura populației din satele locuite majoritar de către sași,” in Stahl, *Case și acareturi din Mărginimea Sibiului*, 93.

⁵⁷ Stahl, *Case și acareturi din Mărginimea Sibiului*, 93-5.

⁵⁸ Herman van der Haegen, Paul Niedermeier, *Weisskirch. Ein Siebenburgisches Dorf im Griff der Zeit* (Leuven: Geografisch Instituut Katholieke Universiteit, 1997), 238.

⁵⁹ Dr. Ioan-George Andron, in Ligia Fulga, *Sașii despre ei înșiși* (Brașov: Transilvania Express, 2008), 27-30.

⁶⁰ Original quote: “Pe atunci, toate meseriile erau bine împărțite, pe etnii, chiar. Românii, de pildă, lucrau lemnul. Tot ce era din lemn, făceau românii. [...] În schimb, cărămida o făceau țiganii, arșă în cuptoare mari. Că nu puteau fi cărămidari românii, cu cămeșile lor albe, cioareci albi și cojoc alb! Iar sașii erau zidari. Toate casele de la mine din comună sunt zidite de sași,” in Viorel Mărginean, “M-a fascinat întotdeauna albul iernilor.”

Conclusions

In the Transylvanian space, Romanians and Saxons share human values, as well as economic, social, and political values – the former acquiring the values in the Carpathian space, while Saxons inherit from the Rhine area. For both Romanians and Saxons, these are common values of the Occidental Culture. In relation to the Roma, Saxons are in a cultural opposition, Roma belonging to the Oriental culture. Saxons are in a political position superior to that of the Romanians through their privileged statute; however, socially and economically, they share the same principles and aspirations, supporting each other. Throughout their coexistence, Romanians and Saxons built collaboration relationships following common aspirations in order to overcome the Hungarian oppression. The three nations (Romanians, Hungarians and Saxons) united, however, in the anti-Ottoman fight. The relations with the Roma are seen through the Occident and Orient cultural opposition lens; economically and politically, for Saxons, the Roma are underdeveloped, aid and assistance being initiated for Roma to overcome their condition.

Saxons are culturally developing together with the majority autochthonous people, Romanians and Hungarians, and the minority, Roma. Romanians represent the majority nation maintained in an inferiority state, and having been freed from serfdom in 1848. The Roma are an underprivileged minority as opposed to the Saxons. If between Saxons and Romanians there is a partnership, with Roma the relations revolved around inferiority and contradiction. In Saxon communities with an isolation tendency in order to preserve identity, Romanians and Roma are peripheral. The relations between Saxons, Hungarians and Szeklers evolved from partnership against Romanian peasantry in early stages to cultural wars disputed over the supremacy over the Transylvanian space. The Hungarian aspiration for majority and the tendency to culturally and politically dominate has consequences in the collective memory and on the intercultural communication.

Today, we can view Saxons actions as heroic, an example of connection and harmony. Saxons are cultural heroes. They assume the heroic role to protect the European borders by stopping the Turkish invasion and advance towards the occidental civilization. The protection role is extending on the individual protection and further on to the cultural and identity protection. In the culturally crystallization phase, Saxons defended the borders by oppressing the Turkish offensive and by protecting their own physical integrity; in the formation phase, they defended their identity; in the apogee, the Saxon culture is protected and conserved in the collective memory.

A Saxon value is the cultural connection with time and place. A diversity of people with the same purpose (defending culture) and sharing the same values (antiquity and Christian) reunited under the same identity. They create real and virtual connections between the occidental and the Balkan cultures. They are connecting Europe and the Romanian countries through commercial, cultural and political exchange. They are following the European Christian values but borrow Balkan culture values. Saxons are following the solidarity and unity principles, the connections between individuals shaping the community.

Saxons harmonize the spiritual and material, time and work, individual and social life, community and religion manifesting in a life rhythm. Saxons are culturally coordinated with the occident, the orient and Transylvania. They harmonize the opposed and represent a cluster of Europe and Balkans connection, as well in the past and today in the virtual realm.

These values illustrate the mental image that Romanians have about Saxons. The Saxon culture and civilization became a cultural model, a representation for an occidental enclave at the base of the Carpathian Mountains. What is different in this enclave is considered antithetical and wrong. The Saxon cultural model transitions several main stages: historic growth, tradition formation and contemporary mutation. The values are transmitted over time along with the social transformation and the lessons of evolution. The contemporary mutations are a reflection of the identity values of the inhabitants of today. There is a value judgement demand in the light of concordance, contradiction and potential for harmonization in contemporary architecture.