

Preface to the English Edition

According to current usage, the geographical name "Transylvania" refers to the Romanian province lying west and north of the Carpathians and bordering on Hungary. Originally, only the territory between the Carpathians and the Bihar Mountains constituted historic Transylvania, which in mediæval times used to be an organic part of the Hungarian state. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the so-called Partium (the areas lying west and north of the mediæval Transylvania), and even the Banat, belonged to the Principality of Transylvania, then under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. (Before 1526 these regions belonged to different administrative units of the Kingdom of Hungary.) Historic Transylvania was a Habsburg principality from the late seventeenth century until 1867, except for a brief interval from 1848 until 1849 when it was reunited with Hungary. From 1867 until 1918 Transylvania belonged to Hungary, with both being included in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The modern definition of Transylvania was formulated after 1920 to include areas outside historic Transylvania. This new Transylvania was split into two by the so-called Second Vienna Award (30 August, 1940), which gave the northern and eastern parts back to Hungary. Then, in late 1944, these same areas were given back to Romania and this arrangement was sanctioned by the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947.

From the previous paragraph it must already be apparent that the history of Transylvania right up until the twentieth century, has been characterized by a series of annexations predominantly determined by considerations of power politics. In Transylvania, Romanians, Hungarians and Saxons have been living side by side for centuries, together with other, smaller, ethnic groups. Ever since the nationality issue came to the fore, ethnic factors have played an increasingly important part in the changes. Since the early eighteenth century, Romanians have constituted the greater part of Transylvania's population. By the end of that century the idea of uniting all Romanian-populated regions had already achieved a prominent place in the thinking of the intelligentsia, and in the nineteenth century incorporated into the concept of a unitary Romanian nation-state. At the same time, the Hungarian population of Transylvania was bound to Hungary in numerous ways, politically as well as culturally, and wanted Transylvania's reunion with Hungary. The third major nationality in Transylvania, the

Saxons, wished to secure their own autonomy under any prevailing régime. Transylvania was twice united with Romania: once in 1920, and then again in 1947. On both occasions the ethnic majority principle formed the basis of the decision and the Hungarian minority was not consulted in the matter. As a result, areas predominantly populated by Hungarians were also handed over to Romania. This fact became a source of friction, since there existed neither bilateral nor multilateral agreements to settle the minorities' problems in any acceptable form, and at a time when the practice of forced assimilation was continuing.

As a result, Transylvanian history has long been subject to dispute not only among politicians, but also among scholars. The truth of this assertion was indicated by the reception given to *Erdély története* (A History of Transylvania), the three-volume work published in cooperation with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Institute of History in 1986. Although the authors attempted to avoid the pitfalls of a nationalist approach, to write the history of Transylvania with the greatest possible objectivity, and to apply the criteria indispensable to a scholarly work, Romanian politicians, together with certain historians, accused them of having nationalist prejudices, of advocating territorial revision and even of falsifying history. We rejected these accusations, but welcomed those critical comments which, while appreciating the concept, methodology, and novel approach of the work, called attention to its unevenness and to the omissions and mistakes it contained. With these criticisms in mind, we decided to publish an abridged version in English to help inform and orientate the foreign reader.

Sadly, not all the original authors and editors could participate in this work. The deaths of András Mócsy and Zsolt Trócsányi were a great loss. To revise the sections written by them, we had to call on Gábor Vékony and Ambrus Miskolczy: the resulting chapters should be seen as the joint work of the authors of both the original and the abridged version. István Bóna took over the editorial work of András Mócsy. László Makkai died shortly after the completion of the abridged manuscript.

The criticism and the arguments put forward confirmed the authors and the editors in their earlier conviction that writing a history of Transylvania is a task which touches on the fundamental questions of scholarly research, and places a great responsibility on historians both in the eyes of their colleagues and of the public. We all share the belief that in the interest of learning about our past we have to consider facts which need to be presented, analyzed, and interpreted with respect to circumstances prevailing at the time. Our authors and editors reject the traditional argument of nationalist romanticism, which invokes so-called "historic rights" to support a political ideology or a national identity, and all those reductionist explanations which attempt to derive historical processes from a single factor — i.e. ethnicity. They are unable to accept the finalist approach of certain historians, who attempt to project the ethnic and state structures of the twentieth century into the past. Although our authors assign great significance to the independence movements and the efforts to form nation-states, they do not regard them as the sole driving forces of history. They are convinced that, partly independently of the ethnic composition and partly embedded in it, economic and social conditions were crucial right up until the formation of

the modern nation-states, and continued to be relevant even later on. Last, but not least, historical experience taught our authors that co-operation between the various nations is in the interests of each nation. They believe that only the observation of collective and individual human rights and mutual respect for the language, the culture and the history of each nation can form the basis for such co-operation.

In writing a history of Transylvania, the authors addressed themselves to the economic, social, political and cultural history of all three major nationalities, knowing full well that in the current state of research a certain disproportion was unavoidable. The authors were careful to base their work on the analysis of facts and to avoid value judgments as much as possible — realizing that there is always a great temptation simply to replace old values with new ones when one writes a history of such controversial subject. For this reason, they paid much attention to the economic, social, and cultural trends of the "long period", trying to fit it into the framework of the region's history.

We have listed in the annotated bibliography the works written by historians of other nations, calling attention to views that are at variance with our own. We take the opportunity to express our hope that the time will come when historians will discuss their differences according to the norms of scholarly research and that their work will serve not only scholarship itself, but also better understanding between nations.

With regard to the period after 1918, we had to content ourselves with a brief summary of events up to 1945, since there are neither reliable source documents, nor sufficient research work to facilitate an authoritative appraisal of the last decades. We hope that within a few years there will be enough material available to permit the writing of respectable and scholarly works.

Transylvania is a special part of Europe, where different nationalities, religions and cultures meet — sometimes competing, but mostly co-operating with each other. The events of the last years prove that such co-operation between the various ethnic groups of Transylvania is in the interests of the whole of Europe.