

über Akteurszentriertheit und „Raum“ ist keineswegs das Problem, allerdings ist deren Operationalisierung bzw. Kategorisierung nicht immer schlüssig ausgewiesen. So könnte man die Beiträge von Lőkös, Forgó, Pelizaeus und Bogár mit ähnlicher Rechtfertigung in einen als „biografisch-individuell“ aufgefassten Block zusammenführen, wie auch etwa die Essays von Vízkelety, Tusor, Brunert, Sarbak, Berzeviczys und Hargittay ebenso unter der Rubrik „kirchliche Lebens- und Erfahrungswelten“ firmieren könnten. *Wie* die einzelnen Beiträge jenseits der recht knapp wie allgemein gehaltenen einführenden Bemerkungen, die zudem weitgehend ohne Ausführungen zur ungarischen Historiografie auskommen, zusammenpassen, geht aus der Einleitung leider nicht eindeutig hervor, und einige Ausdeutungen am Ende des Bandes finden sich leider ebenso wenig.

Ungeachtet der zum Teil spannenden und quellengesättigten Studien sei abschließend auf die konzeptionelle Ausrichtung bzw. deren letztlich nicht allzu schlüssige Ausführung verwiesen. Ungeachtet eindrucksvoller Schlagworte (z. B. „hybrider Kommunikationsraum“) sowie Verweisen auf „Überlappungen und Überschneidungen, intensive Transferprozesse und externe Vernetzungen“ (S. 3) schwächelt der Band in konzeptioneller Hinsicht. Zwar wird letzten Endes auf die kulturhistorischen Kriterien nach Moritz Csáky rekurriert, aber just die Ideengeschichte bzw. Diskrepanz zwischen dem, was in der deutschsprachigen Forschung unter „Mittel- und Zentraleuropa“ firmiert, und den Inhalten des englischen Begriffs „Central Europe“ wird nur oberflächlich, wenn überhaupt, thematisiert; dies wäre nicht zuletzt aufgrund der Tatsache, dass sich in dem Band Beiträge in beiden Sprachen finden, in jedem Fall zu schärfen gewesen.<sup>1</sup> Dies zeigt sich auch in dem fragwürdigen Umgang mit Ortsnamen und Raumbezeichnungen, und ggf. wäre es sinnvoller gewesen, den Band entweder ganz auf Deutsch oder einheitlich auf Englisch zu veröffentlichen – nicht zuletzt, da dadurch gewiss eine größere Leserschaft hätte angesprochen werden können. Dessen ungeachtet findet der interessierte Leser viele spannende Details zu so manchen eklektisch anmutenden Themen, die so leider weiterhin eher ein Nischendasein fristen werden.

Bergen

Stephan Sander-Faels

---

<sup>1</sup> Vgl.: ROBERT J. W. EVANS: *Central Europe. The History of an Idea*, in: ROBERT J. W. EVANS (Hrsg.): *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs. Essays on Central Europe, 1683–1867*, Oxford 2006, S. 293–304.

**Catherine Roth: *Naturaliser la montagne?*** Le Club Carpatique Transylvain (XIXe–XXIe siècle). Presses Universitaires de Rennes. Rennes 2022. XXXII, 528 S., Ill. ISBN 978-2-7535-8773-1. (€ 28,–.)

With this book, Catherine Roth, a French researcher in information and communication sciences now employed at the Université de Haute Alsace, has delivered an analysis of a mountain club that manages to be both immersive and distanced. R., whose career to date includes positions as the director of culture at the Council of Europe and the director of the Institut français in Frankfurt and the Institut franco-tyrolien in Innsbruck, has family roots in Romania. She uses the mountain club as a lens to examine the construction of a national identity dissociated from any state construction. The author's mobilization of an international historiography on the construction of national identities and mountaineering, handwritten archives, publications spanning more than 150 years, and oral testimonies gathered during interviews and participant observations, in German, Romanian, Hungarian, English and French, is particularly admirable. The analysis, though sometimes a little long-winded, is served by a fluid style that makes this work a pleasure to read.

The main subject of the book is the Transylvanian Carpathian Club (Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein, SKV), founded in 1880 in the wake of other similar associations and modeled on the German and Austrian Alpine Clubs. The club disappeared in 1945 because it was associated with Germany, which had lost the war, and because its German members

were seen as having sided with the Nazis and most of them were expelled. The documents were hidden and forgotten, but the club was re-founded in 1996. Although not written in its statutes, this club brought together the Saxon community of Transylvania (a German-speaking minority that had been present since at least the twelfth century) and helped resist Magyarization following the abolition of the Saxon self-administration territory and the Saxon assembly in 1876. The Saxons had lost their institutions but, in order to survive as a community in a Hungarian nation-state that wanted to unify the population, they created new ones, both educational and athletic. In this context of seeking symbols for their identity, the mountains took center stage. The Carpathians, previously little explored, become a means of anchoring this minority, of making it possible to “naturalize the human community, to make it as indisputable as a mountain” (p. 11). The community appropriated the mountains in such a way that they then provided common practices and points of reference, in other words a shared culture of nature. The SKV has all the trappings of the European Alpine clubs, which advocate a learned and cultivated approach to the mountains (through botany, geology, history, and ethnology) and not just a sporting one. Although it had no desire for independence, the club maintained relations with Transylvania’s German-speaking urban bourgeoisie. It promoted “endotourism” (p. 93), domestic tourism which, more than a leisure activity, was an instrument for the development and education of the nation. Hiking itself enables the idea of nationhood to be “embodied,” assimilated in and through the body, the senses and the emotions.

The author, drawing on the writings of Anthony D. Smith, Karl W. Deutsch, and Bernhard Giesen, develops a central idea: national communities are forged and maintained by intensive forms of internal communication, sometimes explicit, but above all full of implicit elements that make it possible to read, between the lines, the cultural horizon shared by a community. The SKV, like other alpine clubs, is a medium and a producer of media that establishes links, brings people together, and conveys this communication of identity. Remembrance is important for building a community, but according to Jan Assmann’s precepts, we only remember what is communicated. This is why words, writings, monuments, iconography, and natural elements such as animals, plants, rivers, and mountains (through the names they bear, the maps we make of them, the practices we carry out there, the marking of paths, or the provision of refuges) can maintain this community memory. The SKV is active on all these fronts.

The title, “Naturalizing the Mountains,” should be understood in two senses. The first of these is about passing off social phenomena as natural in order to make them indisputable—this concerns both the Saxon and then Romanian communities, and the Transylvanian Carpathians themselves, which become a recognized natural entity, delimited (the chapter on botany is very convincing in this respect), and coinciding with a population. The second sense refers to the past attempt to give the mountain a nationality, in other words, to the appropriation of this geological and biological entity by the community of Transylvanian Saxons. According to classic Hippocratic determinism, the mountain is deemed to convey upon the Saxon people their immemorial characteristics, even if these were only formalized at the end of the nineteenth century following the loss of their political prerogatives in 1876. And the Saxon people have turned the mountains into a common, unifying space, the basis of their identity and history. Every people has its own nature, in every sense of the word. “For most nationalisms, the mountain is the epitome of the natural” (p. 251), because it allows us to overcome political upheavals and provides a more secure foundation for nations. Immovable and eternal, the mountain adds a time, the very long time, to the three historical times defined by Fernand Braudel (the geographical time or the almost immobile history of the relationships between people and landscape, the social time or the history of the economy, the States, the civilizations, and the individual time or the event history). The very long time of geology allows us to go beyond the all-too-turbulent time of history. But why would these Carpathians have forged a singular

Saxon soul when three nationalities share it? To answer this question, “all you have to do is not read the others” (p. 473).

R. also analyzes the use of mountains under Nicolae Ceaușescu’s “national-communist” regime (1965–1990): in the process of constructing a national identity for Romania, to which Transylvania was attached in 1918, the Saxon heritage was rendered invisible (maps being symptomatic of this). The mountains thus became a symbol of the freedom of the Romanian people, a support for the original Romanian, the shepherd of the mountains, and, in practice, an escape from the constraints of the regime. The regime appropriated tourism and the mountains with identity-related objectives similar to those expressed in the nineteenth century: to get to know, love and feel the homeland, to naturalize it, even if it was recent and anything but self-evident in a multicultural area. “By the mountain, Romania for thirty years will be forever” (p. 476). The same processes were used to create a different identity. Meanwhile, the memory of the SKV was preserved by the Saxon families that remained and by substitutes such as the German high school and the clubs created under communism. The end of communism saw the rebirth of two clubs that were heirs to the SKV, one in Germany and the other in Romania. Unlike in the club’s early days, sport was now the central focus, as it enabled internal communication and set the club apart, through merit and practical excellence, from the rest of the Romanian population, who were less interested in alpine sport. The author also examines the gradual opening up of memories and highlights the success of the communist nationalization process, due to which it is practically inconceivable to contemporary Romanians today that the dominant identity of the region could have once been Saxon.

The author concludes with a reflection on the future of this cultured nature during our age of ecological upheaval. Gone is the idea that nature is that which does not depend on humans, that which goes without saying. The discourse that bases national identity on nature is obsolete. Nature bears the more or less devastating imprint of humankind. Ecology is becoming a strong point of reference for mountain clubs, renewing ties. The pure nation is being challenged, and it is no longer possible to conceive of natural habitats as coinciding with human cultural units; biotopes are becoming the cross-border reference point. Nature now transcends nations.

Versailles

Steve Hagimont

**Central Europe and the Non-European World in the Long 19th Century.** Hrsg. von Markéta Křížová und Jitka Malečková. Frank & Timme. Berlin 2022. 253 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-7329-0867-7. (€ 49,80.)

The present volume contributes in important ways to a developing area of inquiry that focuses on how the study of Central European encounters with the non-European can nuance our understanding of Central Europe and its modernity.<sup>1</sup> The underlying paradox of this research agenda needs little explanation: while colonial domination was a primary framework for European encounters with the non-European in the nineteenth century, Central Europeans were not significant participants in colonialism. In light of this, the editors encourage us to concentrate less on the intensity of contacts between Central Europe and the colonized world, and instead to look at how markers of European modernity were articulated in relation to the non-European, and how these markers influenced Central European self-fashionings (pp. 16, 25). In their methodological introduction, Markéta Křížová and Jitka Malečková suggest that instead of taking hierarchical binaries of East and West for granted, as the concept of Eastern Europe<sup>2</sup> implies and which is

<sup>1</sup> For some selected works dealing with Central European encounters with the non-European, see footnotes 5, 6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> A concept famously theorized by: LARRY WOLFF: *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford 1994; and MILICA BAKIĆ-