

**Ioan-Aurel Pop**, *Hunedoreștii: o familie europeană/ The Hunyadis: a European Family*, Editura Școala Ardeleană, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, 428 pag. + 44 de ilustrații.

The claiming of historical figures by various nationalities happened frequently in the last centuries. Historians have tried, using a number of more or less convincing arguments, to survey their ethnicity and their attachment to that people. The Hunyadi family is an example, many controversies rising between the Hungarian and Romanian scholars. This subject is all the more relevant because John Hunyadi (approximately 1396–1456) and Matthias Corvinus (1443–1490) had considerable influence over East-Central Europe.

Ioan-Aurel Pop (born in 1955) is one of the best known and appreciated Romanian medievalists. He is professor at the Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, being specialized in Medieval History, medieval institutions, and Latin paleography. He was Rector of the same university, and currently the Director of the Center for Transylvanian Studies in Cluj-Napoca and President of the Romanian Academy since 2018. He published many articles, studies, essays, and books. I will mention only some of them: *Instituții medievale românești: adunările cneziale și nobiliare (boierești) din Transilvania în secolele XIV–XVI* (1991), *Românii și maghiarii în secolele IX–XIV. Geneza statului medieval în Transilvania* (1996), *Națiunea română medievală: solidarități etnice românești în secolele XIII–XVI* (1998), *Istoria, adevărul și miturile. Note de lectură* (2002), and “*Din mâinile valahilor schismatici... Românii și puterea în Regatul Ungariei medievale (secolele XIII–XIV)*” (2011). He had an important contribution in coordinating several volumes, including the three volumes of *Istoria Transilvaniei*. His endeavors in understanding the past of the Romanians are remarkable, showing great devotion to this field.

The structure of the book is well balanced, having a *Foreword*, a *Note on the book*, eight chapters, a bibliography, an index, and 44 colour illustrations. The chapters are called: *The Middle Ages among the Romanians*, *At the Beginnings of the Hunyadis*, *Iancu’s Family*, *Iancu’s Legacy*, *Matia’s Wars*, *Matia and the Romanians*, *Matia’s Legacies*, and *The Hunyadis and Us*. Almost all of them were originally articles, studies, and essays, having been published separately. This is not a monograph, but a series of thorough and complex investigations. The style is accessible, engaging and compelling. The author’s literary talent is obvious.

He used a wide range of primary sources. He searched for information in many archives and libraries from Romania, Hungary, Italy, the Vatican, France, Austria, Slovakia, and Germany. Noteworthy are the researches carried out in Milan, Genoa, Mantua, Modena, and Venice, clarifying certain historical

events. He extensively scrutinized many medieval chronicles and charters, having an excellent understanding of the juridical system and chancery practices in the kingdom of Hungary. He studied many books, published in Romanian, Hungarian, English, Italian, German, and French. All of these indicates the efforts made and the perspectives through which the Hunyadis have been examined.

Ioan-Aurel Pop has a particular knowledge of the political, economic, and social circumstances in which John Hunyadi and Matthias Corvinus lived. He analyzed the Romanian and Hungarian origins of the family, its rise, and genealogy over six generations. He paid special attention to the period when John Hunyadi was voivode of Transylvania and supreme captain of the kingdom. He pointed out the reason why king Matthias was named after the eponymous apostle, not after the evangelist Matthew. The Romanians from Transylvania, nobles or from other social categories, were granted many types of privileges by the Hunyadis and fought in their wars. Furthermore, the above-mentioned family had a great impact on Wallachia and Moldavia. The author assessed several controversial issues and proposed many interesting hypotheses, demonstrating his good judgement and deep insight.

The medievalist from Cluj shows admiration for John Hunyadi and Matthias Corvinus. The first one he considers to be a “[...] true folk hero” (p. 366). His son was “[...] one of the most important sovereign Hungary ever had and even a great European king” (p. 232). He highlighted their qualities and successes, as well as posterity’s perception.

Some intellectuals, including historians, and Hungarian and Romanian politicians continue to fuel inter-ethnic conflicts, emphasizing several disputed episodes from the lives of the Hunyadis. Many Romanian and Hungarian nationalists have exaggerated their achievements, displaying arrogance and contempt for the other nation. Ethnic sensitivities have been affected, often hiding political agendas under the guise of patriotism. At the same time, there have been and still are many biased interpretations and anachronisms in the speeches of politicians and history buffs, which complicates the work of specialists. It is doubtless that the Hunyadis have been incorporated deeply in the public consciousness of Romanians and Hungarians, including their textbooks.

Ioan-Aurel Pop believes that “[...] to claim the Hunyadis today according to ethnic criteria would be a great error, precisely because they were historical figures situated above the medieval peoples and nations” (p. 386). It is almost impossible to find out their affinities, which people they were more attached to, but we must remember that religion was much more important in those times. John Hunyadi and Matthias Corvinus are even today Romanian and Hungarian symbols, but also symbols of Christian Europe and representative for our

common values. Cities like Hunedoara, Cluj-Napoca (Koložsvár, Klausenburg), Timișoara, Budapest, Visegrád, and Belgrade commemorate them, disseminating political and military actions in which they were involved in.

Marian Horvat

**Alexandru Borza**, *Amintirile unui botanist din Alba-Iulia. Notițe autobiografice de Alexandru Borza*, ediție, note și studiu introductiv: Emilia Cismaș, Ovidiu-Emil Iudean, Florin Nicolae Ardelean, Editura Mega & Editura Muzeului Național al Unirii, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, 205 p.

Alexandru Borza (1887–1971) a fost primul profesor universitar doctor docent de Botanică la Universitatea românească din Cluj (din 1919), întemeietor și director al Grădinii Botanice, al Muzeului Botanic și al Institutului de Botanică Sistematică din Cluj, rector al universității clujene (1944–1945) și membru al Academiei Române.

De-a lungul timpului, cu predilecție, colaboratorii săi apropiați au publicat studii și lucrări care conturează personalitatea și activitatea științifică a profesorului clujean, în diverse etape ale vieții, oferindu-ne imaginea “omului Borza”, filtrată de personalitatea fiecărui autor. Prin lectura volumului prezentat în rândurile de mai jos, *Amintirile unui botanist din Alba-Iulia. Notițe autobiografice de Alexandru Borza*, avem privilegiul de “a asculta” direct vocea lui Alexandru Borza. Și-a redactat memoriile în 1963, la vârsta de 75 de ani, în contextul în care Consiliul de Stat al Republicii Populare Române i-a conferit titlul de “om de știință emerit al Republicii Populare Române” (p. 33).

Paginile publicate în acest volum valorifică doar prima parte a lucrării autobiografice întocmite de Alexandru Borza, respectiv partea referitoare la copilărie, educație și anii de început ai carierei didactice (1887–1919). Aceasta a fost singura accesibilă editorilor, pentru că se păstrează la Muzeul Național al Unirii din Alba-Iulia. Manuscrisul integral se află în posesia urmașilor profesorului Borza.

Textul memorialistic este precedat de un consistent studiu introductiv, “Alexandru Borza – din epoca fericitei copilării. Drumul spre Cluj”, elaborat cu scopul de a-i familiariza pe cititori cu aspectele cele mai importante ale vieții și activității marelui botanist. Lectura acestuia ne oferă o imagine complexă a omului și a savantului, care a lăsat urme adânci în școala botanică clujeană și un număr de peste 400 de publicații științifice și de popularizare, din domenii precum: floristica, taxonomia, filogenia, geobotanica etc. Informațiile oferite