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„HISTORY, CIVILIZATION, CULTURE” DOCTORAL SCHOOL

**COUNTRY HOUSE-BUILDING IN
TRANSYLVANIA IN THE AGE OF
HISTORICISM (1840–1918):
THE FORMER KOLOZS, TORDA-ARANYOS AND
ALSÓ-FEHÉR COUNTIES.**

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– *Summary of the Ph.D. dissertation* –

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CLUJ-NAPOCA
2013

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Key words:

Architecture, country houses, aristocracy, Eclecticism, interior design, parks, art collectors, Transylvania, Kolozs (Cluj) County, Torda-Aranyos (Turda-Arieș) County, Alsó-Fehér (Alba Inferior) County, Lajos Pákei, Antal Kagerbauer.

The topic of the Ph.D. dissertation consists of Transylvanian country houses that were built or substantially transformed in between 1840 and 1918. This period, called in the Hungarian scholarly literature the period of “Historicism” or “Eclecticism,” constituted the last boom of country house-building. However, the Transylvanian country houses of this period have not yet received the due attention and their systematic analysis has not been undertaken. Country houses, usually raised outside of urban environments, have brought together various branches of artistic production (Architecture, Interior design, Garden design, Applied arts, etc.), and were also “cultural centers”, hosting libraries and art collections. The country house reflected the personal ideas of the commissioner; at the same time, through its representative appearance and sumptuous interior design, it symbolized the noble family's ancient roots and distinguished role within society. This architectural genre was unique also due to the fact that the building was composed of a series of rooms and halls with

distinguished functions (housing, representation, reception, catering, storing, etc.), which satisfied the needs of the different classes of society.

As a first step of a comprehensive synthesis on the construction of historicist country houses in Transylvania, in the present dissertation I proposed to identify the country houses of the aforementioned period (the years 1840-1918) built in the former counties of Kolozs, Torda-Aranyos and Alsó-Fehér. The selection of these three counties was based on their connected geographical position, but also on of their wealth in monuments, which illustrate perfectly the trends in country house-building of the discussed period. In the future, I plan to expand the research on the other Transylvanian counties as well, which will result in a synthesis of historicist country houses built in the former territory of Transylvania.

The analysis of the country houses was concentrated mostly on stylistic features and architectural history, so the emphasis was on presenting the building process, on the stylistic description and on the process of design (the person of the architect). I researched the history of the estates and the building history of the country houses; respectively I tried to collect written and graphic sources referring to the former interior design and parks of the buildings. Within the researched country houses, five monuments are considered particularly important, of which I have developed more voluminous monographic studies. These studies highlight certain aspects of the country house culture, such as the design process of these buildings, interior design in the age of Historicism, garden design, the relationship between the commissioner and the architect, and the choice of style. Thus, the broader studies about the country houses of the Bánffy family at *Bonchida* (Bonțida), *Válaszút* (Răscruți) and *Enyedszentkirály* (Sâncrai), the Mikó country house at *Marosújvár* (Ocna Mureș) and the Ugron Country House at *Mezőzáh* (Zau de Câmpie) discuss these issues.

Within the three former counties, I further identified eleven country houses, which were newly built or were significantly modified during the studied period of time. Some of these have already disappeared, and often do not even appear in the scholarly literature. The most distinguished demolished buildings were the Thoroczkay country house at *Torockószentgyörgy* (Colțești), the Teleki country house at *Drassó* (Drașov) and the Urmánczy country house at *Jósikafalva* (Beliș). The eleven country houses are presented in the three chapters dedicated to the researched counties. In some cases, due to the scarcity of scholarly literature or to the lack of archival sources, I was unable to identify the date of construction, but my research has resulted in the rise of new hypotheses regarding the

historicist transformation of some of these buildings. In addition to these sixteen country houses, I have briefly presented six other buildings, from which three noble residences (the ones at *Csucsá*, *Magyarzsombor* and *Kutyfalva*) appear in the public opinion as country houses, but in my view they can be considered only manor houses or villas. Due to the lack of sources, the country houses at *Gyalu* (Gilău) and *Gyeke* (Geaca), as well as the presumed country house (but of which no representations are known) in *Tordaszentmihály* (Mihai Viteazu) were only mentioned in the dissertation. The thorough research of the sixteen country houses was completed with the analysis of the houses designed by architect Lajos Pákei (1853–1921). Among these are the Bánffy country house at *Enyedszentkirály* (Sâncrai) and the Ugron country house at *Mezőzáh* (Zau de Câmpie), as well as the Sándor manor house at *Mezőkapus* (Capușu de Câmpie), the transformation (unimplemented) of it into a country house was designed by the same architect. Besides those in the three researched counties, Pákei also drafted the designs for the Bornemisza country house at *Várhegy* (now demolished), the Béli country house at *Bodola* (Budila), and the Teleki country house at *Kővárhosszúfalu* (Satu Lung), respectively the façade of an unidentified country house. Therefore, in the dissertation I undertook the analysis of twenty-one country houses. In the recapitulative chapters dealing with the interior design, art collections and parks of the country houses, I made references to other Transylvanian country houses as well, thus enlarging the breadth of the research.

Sources and bibliography

The dissertation is based on primary¹ and secondary literature, respectively on the collected archival sources and figural representations regarding the topic. The secondary

¹ The most important general works on Transylvanian country houses are: BIRÓ József: *Erdélyi kastélyok*. [Singer és Wolfner kiadása, Budapest, 1943.] Reprint: Heraldika, Budapest, 1997. – KERESZTES Gyula: *Maros megyei kastélyok és udvarházak*. Impress, Marosvásárhely, 1995. – SISA József: *Kastélyépítészet és kastélykultúra Magyarországon. A historizmus kora*. Vince Kiadó, Budapest, 2007. – HORVÁTH Hilda: *Stílus, szellem, tradíció. A történelmi Magyarország kastélyai*. Trianon Múzeum – Szindbád, Várpalota, 2010. – BICSOK Zoltán–ORBÁN Zsolt: *„Isten segedelmével udvaromat megépítettem...”*. *Történelmi családok kastélyai Erdélyben*. Gutenberg, Csíkszereda, 2011.

Selective bibliography on interior design and spatial arrangement: BENICZKY Irma: (Falke munkája után): *A művészet a házban*. Budapest, 1882. – WOHL Janka: *Az otthon. Útmutató a ház czélszerű és izlésteljes berendezésére s vezetésére*. Athenaeum, Budapest, 1882. – RÉV Ilona: *Építészet és enteriőr a magyar századfordulón*. Gondolat, Budapest, 1983. – THORNTON, Peter: *Authentic Decor. The Domestic Interior 1620–1920*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1985. – PÉTER Márta (szerk.): *Az európai iparművészet stíluskorszakai. Historizmus és eklektika. Kiállítás az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményéből*. Katalógus I. (Szövegkötet).

literature consists mainly of memoirs (which include some basic information about certain country houses and the lifestyle of the Transylvanian aristocracy) and genealogical works.²

I have researched the archives of the Bánffy, Bethlen, Jósika, Mikó, Teleki, Ugron, Lázár and Wesselényi noble families, in the hope of discovering written sources, documents, architectural plans and representations referring to the country houses commissioned by these families.³ Postcards, which have spread starting from the end of the 19th century, constitute important figural sources for the researched country houses, because in some cases these are the only known representations of buildings that have perished ever since. I have researched

Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 1992. – FEKETE J. Csaba: Főúri lakóhelyek reprezentatív térrendszerének fejlődése a XIX. század második felében. *Építés-Építészettudomány* XXXIII(2005). 1–2. sz. 45–81. – VÁCZI Piroska – FEKETE J. Csaba: *Főúri térrendszerek a dualizmus korában*. In: Csáki Tamás–Hidvégi Violetta–Ritoók Pál (szerk.): *Budapest neoreneszánsz építészete*. Tanulmányok a 2008. november 18-án Budapest Főváros Levéltárában rendezett konferencia anyagából. Budapest Főváros Levéltára, Budapest, 2009. 51–68.

Selective bibliography on collecting artworks: BÍRÓ Béla: A bonchidai kastély képei. *Erdélyi Helikon* XVI(1943). 595–603. – BIRÓ József: *A bonchidai Bánffy-kastély családi arcképei*. In Petrovics Elek (szerk.): *Lyka Károly Emlékkönyv. Művészettörténeti tanulmányok*. Új idők Irodalmi Intézet (Singer és Wolfner), Budapest, 191–220. – TAKÁCS Gábor: *Műgyűjtők Magyarországon a 18. század végétől a 21. század elejéig*. *Art Collectors in Hungary from the Late 18th to the Early 21st Century*. Kieselbach Galéria, Budapest, 2012.

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Selective bibliography on garden design: RAPAICS Rajmund: *Magyar kertek. A kertművészet Magyarországon*. Egyetemi Nyomda, Budapest, [1940]. – ZÁDOR Anna: Az angolkert Magyarországon. *Építés-Építészettudomány* V(1973). 1–2. sz. 3–53. – ORMOS Imre: *A kerttervezés története és gyakorlata*. 2. kiad. Mezőgazdasági Kiadó, Budapest, 2000. – ALFÖLDY Gábor: Historical Revivalism in Hungarian Country House Gardens between 1880 and 1930: an Exploration and Analysis. *Acta Historiae Artium* XLVIII(2007), 115–189. – FEKETE Albert: *Az erdélyi kertművészet. Maros menti kastélykertek*. Művelődés, Kolozsvár, 2007. – FEKETE Albert: *Az erdélyi kertművészet. Szamos menti kastélykertek*. Művelődés, Kolozsvár, 2012. – Despre grădinile istorice din Transilvania a fost elaborată o teză de doctorat, despre care am aflat numai după finalizarea tezei noastre (Andreea Paraschiva Milea: *Grădini istorice în Transilvania*. Teză de doctorat, UBB Cluj-Napoca, Facultatea de Istorie și Filosofie, 2011.)

² PALMAY József: *Háromszék vármegye nemes családjai*. Jókai Nyomda, Sepsiszentgyörgy, 1901. – LUKINICH Imre: *A bethleni gróf Bethlen család története*. Athenaeum, Budapest, 1928. – GUDENUS János József (összeáll.): *A magyarországi főnemesség XX. századi genealógiája*. I. kötet (A–J). Natura, Budapest, 1990. – SIEMERS Ilona: *Wass-kor*. Mentor, Marosvásárhely, 1999. – KORNIS Gabriella: *Elődök és utódok: Erdélyi főnemesség a XX. században*. Unikornis, Budapest, 2002. – SÖVENYHAZYNE Judit: „Ember lenni mindig, minden körülményben”: *egy családfa levelei és virágai*. Bába, Szeged, 2002. – MAROSI Ildikó: *Örökbe hagyott beszélgetés gróf Teleki Mihálllyal*. Argumentum, Budapest, 2004. – KOVÁCS KISS Gyöngy (szerk.): *Álló- és mozgóképek. Vázlat az erdélyi főnemességről*. Korunk, Kolozsvár, 2004.

³ The above mentioned family collections are kept in the Cluj Direction of the National Archives of Romania (Direcțiunea Județeană Cluj a Arhivelor Naționale Române).

several postcard collections in Budapest,⁴ among which the most extensive collection was that of Countess Júlia Teleki, kept in the Museum of Applied Arts.⁵ Besides the postcards, old photographs constitute primary sources on the arrangement and appearance of former country houses. The photographs of József Fischer from the 1930s⁶ have an increased value; and the important photographs of Ferenc Veress, taken in 1869 of the country house in Bonchida, have also been preserved.⁷ Some of the period's Hungarian illustrated magazines intended mainly for the aristocratic public (*Szalon Újság*, *Vasárnapi Újság*), contain photographs and valuable information about several country houses. Among the online sources, the webpage of the project *Monumente Uitate* (Forgotten Monuments) distinguishes itself.⁸ The project aims at surveying the noble residences in Transylvania and Romania, and the photographs published on the website have been very helpful to me.

The structure of the dissertation

The **introduction** (pages 4–10.) presents the goal and structure of the Ph.D. dissertation, and contains the definition of the term “country house” in connection to the Transylvanian realities. This same chapter also contains the description of the research methodology, and also the general bibliography and the sources I consulted.

Chapter 2 (pages 11–41.) includes the monographic presentation of the Bánffy country house at *Bonchida* (Bonțida), being divided into four subchapters: the first one on the research history, the second on the building history of the country house in the 19th and 20th centuries, the third one on the park design during those same centuries, and the last one on the description of the building's former interior furnishing. The country house ensemble at Bonchida was built mainly in the Baroque period, but at the middle of the 19th century (presumably between 1844 and 1850) the ensemble's western wing, together with the south-

⁴ The collection of postcards before 1945 of the National Széchényi Library, Budapest (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Plakát és Aprónyomtatványtára, 1945 előtti képeslapgyűjtemény) and the postcard collection of the Hungarian Architectural Museum, Budapest (Magyar Építészeti Múzeum képeslapgyűjteménye).

⁵ The collection was digitized and published in 2010, see the compact disc annexed to the book: HORVÁTH Hilda: *Stílus, szellem, tradíció. A történelmi Magyarország kastélyai*. Trianon Múzeum – Szindbád, Várpalota, 2010.

⁶ The photographs are kept in the Repertory of the Research Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest (MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Művészettörténeti Intézet, Adattár).

⁷ In the “Budapest” Collection of the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library in Budapest (Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár, Budapest Gyűjtemény).

⁸ The project team, composed by the professors and students of the “Ion Mincu” University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest, has drawn up monument records on both Transylvanian country houses and manor houses. In some cases the descriptions contain erroneous information, but the recent photographs are very useful. (www.monumenteuitate.org.)

eastern wing – which hosted the kitchen – was transformed in a Gothic Revivalist manner. These transformations marked the beginnings of this style in Transylvanian country house architecture. The rebuilding was commissioned by Count József Bánffy (around 1770–1858), whose architectural patronage was discussed in detail in the present dissertation. In the absence of archival sources, it is uncertain if the English styled transformation of the western wing was designed by architect Antal Kagerbauer from Cluj (1814–1872), since the terrace’s large opening with an ogee arch and cast iron moldings (according to some researchers) raises questions about the attribution. This chapter also exemplifies the interior design and landscaping of the country house’s grounds in the researched period. The transformation, around the years 1835–1837, of the French Garden into an English landscape garden preceded the aforementioned construction. I presented the design history of the 19th century garden through the reconstruction of its phases of development, among which the landscaping works of the early 20th century. The presentation of the country house’s former interiors was done mainly on the basis of photographs from the 1940s. The research was also based on archival sources, especially the inventories from the 19th and 20th centuries. Among the contributions brought in the subchapter on the building’s interior design I mention the reconstruction of the different functions of the building’s halls in the 1840s, and the description of the rooms and of the furniture pieces.

The monographic elaboration of the Mikó country house at *Marosújvár* (Ocna Mureș) is to be found in **chapter 3** (pages 42–74.). This country house may be considered the most important Neo-Gothic monument of this architectural genre in Transylvania, due to the high quality of the details found on the façades and interior furnishing. The country house occupies an accentuated role both in the period’s architecture and in the oeuvre of architect Antal Kagerbauer. The building is in a desolated state, which motivated its highly detailed description. I produced several new findings referring to the building history, in addition to those described by art historian Margit B. Nagy. The state of the Baroque country house, which preceded the rebuilding in Romantic style, is unknown in the scholarly literature, thus I included this construction phase in the research as well, based on the inventories and graphic representations. I also tried to reconstruct the former park surrounding the country house. In the second subchapter I delimited the construction phases of the country house, I presented the estate’s history and the members of the Mikes, Mikó respectively Teleki families, who have influenced the constructions. The rebuilding of the Baroque country house, which was

destroyed in the 1848–1849 revolution, started in 1856 and ended probably in 1858, while small-scale works and the completion of the outbuildings lasted until 1862. The commissioner of the works was Count Imre Mikó (1805-1876), an outstanding character of the Transylvanian public life. The dissertation also presents the patronage relationship between Mikó and architect Kagerbauer, which was fruitful but not exempt from dispute, and has resulted in the construction of several important buildings. The park of the former country house was discussed in a separate subchapter, similarly to the Baroque country house (built in 1742), which was transformed subsequently in Neo-Gothic style. The last subchapter relates about the interior design of the Neo-Gothic country house, based on a limited number of archival photographs.

Chapter 4 (pages 75–107.) presents the Bánffy country house at *Válaszút* (Răscruci), whose historical value is mainly due to its lavish interior design, the elements of which have been preserved until our days. The main hall and the dining room are decorated with wooden paneling and coffered ceilings; the dining room furniture, made in the mid 1870s, as well as several tiled stoves, were all designed and manufactured by the owner of the house, Baron Ádám Bánffy (1847-1887). The ample chapter on this country house reflects especially the artistic creations of the baron, also the presentation of the building phases illustrates perfectly the building of historicist country houses. The first subchapter, similarly to the previous cases, treats the history of research. The second subchapter presents the history of the estate and the country house's construction phases. The most important result of my research is the description of the building's state at the beginning of the 19th century (the arrangement and functions of the rooms) and the discussion on the “Neo-Gothic phase of the country house”, an erroneous assumption which has rooted in scholarly literature. A subchapter presents the diverse (artistic and agricultural) activity of Baron Ádám Bánffy, in parallel with his friends (Count Jenő Lázár) similar activities. The description of the former park was based on military surveys, as well as archival illustrations and sources. The key subchapter of this part, the one dealing with the interior design of the building, follows the description of the eclectic façades of the country house. Based on the inventories from the 1880s, I have identified the former functions of the rooms, the description focusing on the main hall and on the dining room. The latter is furnished with Neo-Renaissance furniture and a large tiled stove decorated with beautiful reliefs. I was able to identify the models of these reliefs (the engravings of Peter J. N. Geiger, a fashionable Viennese painter), which were taken over meticulously by Bánffy.

The fourth country house, the one at *Enyedszentkirály* (Sâncrai), was presented in detail in **chapter 5** (pages 108–122.) of the dissertation. Due to its location and impressive façades, the building was one of the most picturesque country houses of the early 20th century. The building is lesser known in the scholarly literature, and the archival sources referring to it are missing. Despite the lack of precise information, I tried to reconstruct its building history, and I performed the stylistic description of the country house. The building was most probably commissioned by Baron József Jenő Bánffy (1845–1903), and only one survey has been preserved about the façade looking towards River Maros, drawn by architect Lajos Pákei (1853–1921) from Kolozsvár (Cluj). It seems that he was helped by the contractor Frigyes Maetz (C. W. Friedrich Maetz, 1847–1896). With the aid of possible analogies, I narrowed down the date of construction to the last decade of the 19th century. In the last subchapter I undertook the stylistic description of the façades and presented the interiors. The most important pieces of the interior design are the wrought and cast iron railings of the stairways.

The Ugron country house at *Mezőzáh* (Zau de Câmpie) is the last monument among the ones presented in detail, found in **chapter 6** (pages 123–150.) of the dissertation. It is one of the last historicist country houses in Transylvania that evokes medieval architectural elements, perfectly illustrating the architectural style of the period. The rich material of the construction plans has been preserved almost entirely, so I was able to reconstruct the building process of the country house; respectively, based on other correspondences and inventories, the confrontational relationship between the commissioner and the architect has emerged. The country house was commissioned the noble diplomat István Ugron (1862–1948), whose biography I have also elaborated here. The subchapter named “The design and construction of the country house” describes the design process, the duration and costs of the construction and the masters engaged in execution, but the most important part is the analysis of the construction plans, preserved in the collections and archives of Cluj and Budapest. The material reveals that the building’s initial concept was developed by Baron János Bánffy, the brother in law of Ugron (as given on a memorial plaque on the rear façade of the country house), but the amateur drafts have been redesigned by architect Lajos Pákei (1853–1921). The analysis of the plans helps in delineating the roles that the two designers have had. The country house was built between 1908 and 1912, but the interior design was completed only in 1918. I performed the stylistic analysis of the country house and presented the former

interiors, placing emphasis on the description of the rooms' furniture and on Ugron's significant art collection, untreated until now in the scholarly literature.

The next three chapters deal with the country houses of the three former counties, which were not discussed in the monographs mentioned above. The presentation of each country house is organized as follows: the history of the estate, the building history (building conditions and biography of the commissioners), the stylistic description of the building (façade, layout and function of the rooms), the interior design and the description of the parks. **Chapter 7** (pages 151–184.) contains the country houses of the former territory of Kolozs (Cluj) County, with the exception of Bonchida and Válaszút, which were described in the more elaborate chapters. Most of the country houses from the researched period (between 1840 and 1914) were built in this county, i.e. a total of eight buildings, from which this chapter deals with the country houses at Drág (Dragu), Felsőzsuk (Jucu de Sus), Jósikafalva (Beliş), Kolozsborsa (Borşa) and Magyarfenes (Vlaha). No archival sources have been preserved on the construction of the Wesselényi-Bethlen country house at *Drág* (Dragu), and the scarce literature only deals with the building's transformation in Romantic style at the middle of the 19th century. However, based on some illustrations (watercolor, postcards), a reconstruction phase can be outlined after the year 1903, for which I have identified two potential commissioners. The Teleki country house at *Felsőzsuk* (Jucu de Sus) was most probably built in the second half of the 19th century, by the conversion or rebuilding of a previous edifice. The result was a two-storey building with 17 rooms, the stylistic elements of which resemble vaguely those of the neighboring country house at Kolozsborsa. After 1903, Count Géza Teleki (1881–1937) became the owner of the country house, and he had an important activity as a painter and art patron, which was presented in the dissertation.

The country house of the Urmánczy family at *Jósikafalva* (Beliş), which is almost unknown in the scholarly literature and has disappeared ever since, is known only due to a few postcards from the early 20th century. I have identified a possible architect, Virgil Giacomuzzi, and a commissioner, János Urmánczy (1849–1933). Its structural composition and certain of its details (especially the short tower's helm and the Art Nouveau elements) astonishingly resemble the country house of Jeromos Urmánczy at *Maroshévíz* (Topliţa, 1903–1906), this is why we suppose that the one at Jósikafalva was built probably between 1906 and 1910. No archival documents have been preserved in reference to the building of the Bánffy country house at *Kolozsborsa* (Borşa), so I concentrated on the reconstruction of the estate's history, I

analyzed the stylistic features of the building, and I described in detail the country house's park. I identified Baron Dániel Bánffy (1812–1888) as a possible commissioner of the country house. The most important interior design elements in the house are the wrought iron railings of the stairs and the chandelier (from the same material) in the stairwell, respectively an Art Nouveau wardrobe. The Jósika country house at *Magyarfenes* (Vlaha) was demolished in the 1930s, thus its research was only possible on the basis of the scholarly literature and of archival photographs. A small manor house, dated presumably to the 18th century, was enlarged with a new historicist wing in 1879, the corners of which were articulated by towers with different appearances. The commissioners of this amplification were Baron Andor Jósika (1851–1900) and his wife Anna Wesselényi (1856–1902). We also have information about the former interior design of certain rooms.

Chapter 8 (pages 185–199.) presents two country houses that were built on the former territory of Torda-Aranyos (Turda-Arieș) County. The most striking building of this genre in the county was the country house at *Mezőzáh*, discussed separately in chapter 6, and the alleged Miske “country house” at *Szentmihály* (Mihai Viteazu) is not known even from postcards. The Mikes-Széchen country house at *Tordaszentlászló* (Săvădisla) is lesser known in the scholarly literature, and my researches have resulted in delimiting a new building phase, carried out possibly at the beginning of the 20th century. Prior to this construction, in the 1870s, a Neo-Gothic country house was erected, commissioned by Count Miklós Mikes (1841–1893). After analyzing its stylistic characteristics and a few analogies, we assume that the country house was designed by Ferdinánd Hottner (around 1824– ?), the apprentice of architect Kagerbauer. The country house of the Thoroczkay family's baronial branch at *Torockószentgyörgy* (Colțești), now demolished, does not appear in the scholarly literature, and no archival sources have been preserved regarding its construction, with the exception of a postcard. Based on some brief information, I have deduced that the country house was built in the years 1909–1915, for Baron Viktor Thoroczkay (1860–1939). The Eclectic country house (with mostly Neo-Romanesque elements) was sold and partially demolished shortly after its completion.

In **chapter 9** (pages 200–214.) I analyzed the historicist country houses of the former territory of Alsó-Fehér (Alba Inferior) County. Six country houses were built in this county in the researched period, of which the most significant ones (at *Enyedszentkirály* and *Marosújvár*) were treated in chapters 5 and 3 of the dissertation. Chapter 9 thus includes the

descriptions of the country houses in Alvinc, Drassó and Obrázsa, all of which are dated to the last decade of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, respectively the presentation of the country house in Marosgezse (Gheja), with a smaller architectural importance to those above. *Alvinc* (Vințu de Jos) is known for its Renaissance country house, but opposite to this stands another building, dating from the late 19th century, commissioned probably by Baron Ödön Horváth-Inczédi (1827–1906). The former Teleki country house at *Drassó* (Drașov) was demolished after World War I, but was once an imposing Neo-Gothic construction. The importance of the country house was further enhanced by the fact that, according to the family memoirs, it was designed in the 1890s by the owner himself, Count Árvéd Teleki (1865–1942). The count's wife, Bella (Izabella) Teleki (1861–1949) and their son, Ralph Teleki (1890–1982) were famous painters. The country house at Drassó was interesting also because it adopted the “castellated” manner (particular to the English Gothic Revival, which went out of fashion in the 1860s) in the treatment of its façades, with few analogies in the surroundings. The Wesselényi country house at *Obrázsa* (Obreja) is almost unknown in the scholarly literature, despite the fact that it has an interesting stylistic character, being akin to Italian villas through its volume and façades. The date inscribed on the façade's attic and on the small windmill motifs (1901) mark the date of construction, which corresponds to the marriage date of the country house's commissioners, Baron Miklós Wesselényi (1869–1921) and Ilona Paget (1862–1932).

The design process of historicist country houses and the architects employed in these constructions are discussed in **chapter 10** of the dissertation (pages 215–237.). This first synthesis chapter examined also the following aspects of the culture of country houses: who were the commissioners of these buildings, what intentions influenced them in erecting these residences, the professional training of the architects employed (the role of training within the guilds), and aristocrats as amateur architects (designing country houses). In the period between 1840 and 1918, most of the country houses in Transylvania were built in the central counties, i.e. the three counties that are discussed in this dissertation, as well as in Szolnok-Doboka (Solnoc-Dăbâca) County in the northern part of the region.

The commissioners of these country houses were mostly members of the traditional Hungarian aristocracy (the Bánffy, Teleki, Bethlen, Wesselényi, Mikes, etc. families), the case of the wealthy merchant János Urmánczy, of Armenian origin, whose imposing country house was built in *Jósikafalva*, is an exception apart. Building a country house or amplifying,

rebuilding an existing building could have had different motivations, but most often it was connected with the enlargement or establishment of a family, or with representational needs, but we know of cases where the promoter of a construction was simply the passion to build. Certain aristocrats are known to have designed country houses, such Count Árvéd Teleki (his country house at *Drassó*) or Baron János Bánffy (who developed the general concept of the country house at *Mezőzáh*), but the only Transylvanian aristocrat, whose higher education in architecture is well known, was Count Aladár Bethlen (1854-1941), who presumably designed his residency at *Élesd* (Aleşd).

Only a few of the architects that were engaged in planning historicist country houses in Transylvania are known, the activities of which I have presented in detail. In the first half of the period in question, the most famous architect was *Antal Kagerbauer* (1814–1872), who originated from Torda (Turda) and settled down in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca). He designed the first Romantic country houses in Transylvania, i.e. the western wing of the country house at *Bonchida* (between 1844 and 1850) and the one at *Marosújvár* (designed in 1856), so largely it is due to him that the Neo-Gothic Romantic style spread in Transylvania. The most distinguished of his disciples were *Ferdinánd Hottner* (ca. 1824–?) and *Balázs Debreczeni* (ca. 1830–after 1910), whose professional activities I have tried to reconstruct. The former presumably designed the first variant of the Neo-Gothic country house in *Tordaszentlászló* (Săvădisla) at the end of the 1860s and the beginning of the 1870s, while in 1871 Debreczeni developed the designs of the cast iron railings of the terraces and interior stairs of the country house at *Marosújvár* (Ocna Mureş). Kagerbauer also employed for a short time *Frigyes Maetz* (Carl Wilhelm Friedrich Maetz, 1847–1896), who developed the volumetric design of the country house in *Enyedszentkirály* (Sâncrai). I thoroughly researched the previously unknown activity of this “self-taught” architect, who was also a renowned building contractor, and who established a private school in Kolozsvár for the training of craftsmen. I dedicated a separate subchapter to the country houses designed by the architect *Lajos Pákei* (1853–1921), which illustrates the importance of this topic. Pákei was Transylvania’s most remarkable architect at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, but surprisingly his activity has not been studied in detail. On the basis of the plans and sketches preserved in four different collections (in Cluj-Napoca and Budapest), I analyzed five country houses designed by him, as well as a sketch of the façade of an unidentified country house and his designs for the transformation of the Sándor manor house at *Mezőkapus* (Căpuşu de Câmpie). After describing these plans and

buildings I drew certain conclusions on the style and characteristics of the country houses designed by this famous architect.

In **chapter 11** (pages 238–247.) I defined the stylistic currents that have influenced the architecture of historicist country houses. These currents have either developed simultaneously or one after the other during the studied period; their presentation in this chapter is supplemented by examples of the researched country houses. Historicism does not designate a uniform architectural style; it refers rather to the architecture of the period between the years 1840 and 1918. During this period several stylistic trends (“neo-styles”) were in fashion, and the architects and commissioners have chosen and combined the forms of these trends without inhibition. In this chapter I also indicated certain factors that have influenced the choice of style for a country house, such as personal preference, fashion, known models, etc. After the discussion about the used styles, I undertook the chronological organization of the researched country houses.

Chapter 12 (pages 248–274.) addresses several aspects of the interior design of country houses, such as layout and the functional arrangement of the rooms, the furniture pieces found in these buildings, and general considerations on the stylistic currents which have influenced the setting. An extensive subchapter deals with the various collections (paintings, pieces of applied arts, weapons, oriental rugs, scientific collections, etc.), exhibited in the rooms of country houses. The subchapter addresses some issues related to these collections, such as the painters and portrait painters engaged by the Transylvanian aristocracy, as well as some members of this social class, who had an artistic activity (sometimes outstanding) in various domains of art.

Continuing the practice of Neo-Classicism, in the period of Historicism the ground floor of the country house was destined for the public and for representation. This floor housed the spaces for public events and for receiving guests, i.e. the parlors, the main dining hall, the billiard room, etc. The upper floor contained the private establishments of the owners (bedrooms, separated by sexes, the nursery, bathrooms), but the guest rooms and staff accommodations were also to be found here. The most lavish spaces were the dining room, the drawing room, the library, the cabinet and the main hall. The interior design of the country houses was influenced by the stylistic trends in vogue, which I have also presented. Respectively, I have listed the most common pieces of furniture in these buildings, based on inventories. The most interesting subchapter deals with the art collections of Transylvanian

country houses, especially the portrait galleries of the ancestors. I presented the works of the most popular portrait painters of the period, such as Miklós Barabás (1810–1898), Miklós Sikó (1818–1900), and Gábor Papp (1872–1931). The painter of Bohemian origins, Vince Melka (Venceslav Melka, 1834–1911), painted portraits as well, but he was famous for his genre paintings and hunting scenes. He was the favorite painter of Rudolf, the Crown Prince of the Monarchy; the scenes painted by him about the hunts in the Görgény area adorned the halls of the country houses at *Görgényszentimre* (Gurghiu-Mureș) and *Sáromberke* (Dumbrăvioara). His paintings were also exhibited in the dining room of the country house at *Válaszút* (Răscruți), but also in those of *Abafája* (Apalina), *Marosillye* (Ilia), *Gernyeszeg* (Gornești), *Branyicska* (Branișca), *Bonchida* (Bonțida) and *Magyarfenes* (Vlaha).

In addition to the collection of paintings, applied arts collections were also widespread, especially those of ceramics and porcelain, as well as collections of trophies, books, weapons, and oriental rugs. In addition, I presented some special collections, such as the ornithological collection in the Kornis country house at *Szentbenedek* (Mănăstirea), the African art collection of Count Samu Teleki (1845–1916) in his country house at *Sáromberke* (Dumbrăvioara), and the archaeological collections of the country houses at *Őraljaboldogfalva* (Sântamarie-Orlea) and *Marosnémeti* (Mintia). Some Transylvanian aristocrats had various artistic activities, among which the most popular was painting, practiced on a high level especially by the members of the Teleki family. From these I have presented the activity of Countess Bella Teleki (1861–1949) and that of her son, Ralph Teleki (1890–1982), as well as that of Count Géza Teleki (1881–1937). Count Miklós Bánffy (1873–1950), the last owner of noble descent of the country house at Bonchida (Bonțida), was highly talented in several domains of artistic production (illustrations, painting, stage design, architecture), but he is known mainly due to his rich literary work. The activity of Baron Ádám Bánffy (1847–1887), who carved furniture pieces and manufactured porcelain objects, was presented in detail in the present dissertation, alongside other lesser known aristocrats of the time.

The last comprehensive **chapter**, no. **13** (pages 275–300.) treats the landscaping of parks around of country houses. The time limits of the research were expanded for this topic, as I analyzed the gardens from the early 19th century until the first half of the 20th century, and I also included in the synthesis several parks found outside of the three discussed Transylvanian counties. The design of these gardens was determined by the commissioners' requirements, by the available material resources, by the size and geographical condition of

the grounds, but especially by the fashionable landscaping trends at certain times. For this reason, in the first subchapter I presented the characteristics of the sentimental English landscape gardens (common from the second half of the 18th century), of the botanical gardens, having a collection of rare and precious trees (in fashion from the years 1830-1840), and finally the features of the gardens of the historical revivalism („eclectic” gardens), widespread in the 1870s. The eclectic parks of the late 19th and the early 20th century were enriched near the façade of the country house with *parterres* (a formal garden with ornamental lawns composed of flower beds and groups, hedges of trimmed vegetation and exotic plants raised in the nursery), while the rest of the park was preserved in English style.

The second subchapter lists the components of the gardens of the historical revivalism, such as the hunting grounds, the pleasure ground, the rockery, functional outbuildings (kitchen, laundry, stables, shed, etc.), funerary or liturgical buildings (chapel, mausoleum, and crypt), and practical gardening buildings (greenhouses, water tower). Several sports facilities were also included in these parks of country houses, for example bowling pavilions and areas for riding, shooting, tennis, and croquet. Sculptural works had an important decorative role within eclectic parks, but these were at the same time considered as status symbols. The last subchapter presents the design process of parks and their maintenance staff. More importantly, I described the activity of the few known landscape engineers and architects, who have designed the parks of Transylvanian country houses. We have too little information on this topic, but we know of two famous foreign landscape architects who worked in our area. *János Hein* (Hamburg, 1866 – Pilisszántó, 1935), the most gifted Hungarian landscapist of the time, was hired at around 1900 to transform the park of the Bánffy Country House at *Válaszút* (Răscruci). The renowned French landscape architect and garden restorer, *Achille Duchêne* (1866–1947), was commissioned by Count Ármín Mikes to redesign his park at *Zabola* (Zăbala). We have scarce information (some family records) about certain aristocrats, who planned (or contributed in the design of) their residences’ parks, such as Ráchel Bánffy, the wife of Count Béla Wass (the manor house at *Vasasszentgothárd* / Sucutard) or Ilona Bethlen, the wife of Count György Haller (the country house at *Kerelőszentpál* / Sânpaul).

The summary (pages 301–305.) ads up the main findings and conclusions of the dissertation, with the specification that the material studied in this research constitutes only the first step of a future synthesis work regarding the country house culture in Transylvania in the Age of Historicism.