

Benő Karácsony (1888-1944) și Alba Iulia / Benő Karácsony (1888-1944) and Alba Iulia

Abstract:

The relation of Benő Karácsony with Alba Iulia was not just a relation between childhood and youth, but one that influenced the entire life of the writer. The spiritus loci of Downtown animated the writer's adulthood work. Living in the area, at the time inhabited especially by Hungarians and Jews, the writer fully relives the dichotomy of the military and, at the same time, administrative town, over which the Citadel rose with its distinct life. The inward tragedy of the writer cannot be understood without relation to his native town. Benő Karácsony (Bernát Klärman) grew up in the spirituality of Jewish cultural assimilation with a Hungarian cultural identity. Talking about himself, he allows us to recognize a hybrid identity: he considers himself Hungarian, and of the Jewish religion. He spent his childhood under the romanticism bestowed on him by the livelihood of the small bourgeoisie from the town on Mureș. The memories of his childhood and youth further prevailed during the adulthood period spent in Cluj. Karácsony uniquely grasped the spirit of the town, whose two elements, the Citadel and the Downtown, seemed to have been dueling for centuries. His writings are pierced by the lightness of the spiritual and administrative connection between the two differently organized urban entities, the conflicts of this connection, towns inside a town, which seemed to live schizoidly and simultaneously under the great transformations of history. However, the humor, often critical and bitter, allows the reader to grasp urbanization and modernization in Alba Iulia in the early twentieth century. The Hungarian Jew, Benő Karácsony, one of the most notable characters of the Transylvanian literature of the twentieth century, died, exterminated as a Jew in Oświęcim (Auschwitz) in 1944, despondent of the falseness of the society in which he lived.

Keywords: Alba Iulia, Jews, Karácsony Benő, Bernát Klärman, identity