

Elements of the Near and Middle East in the Culture of the Transylvanian Romanians from Braşov (1848-1918)

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Abstract: In the present paper, we first aim to provide a brief historical context of the issue (second half of the fourteenth century – beginning of the nineteenth century) aiming to highlight the means by which the inhabitants of the Transylvanian town of Braşov / Kronstadt came into contact with the multiple facets of the Near and Middle East. We also intend to chronologically and thematically reconstruct the various oriental elements found in the culture of the local Transylvanian Romanians between the 1848 Revolution and the end of World War I. The aim of this approach, which is a novelty for the Romanian historical writing, is to examine whether and how the inhabitants from Braşov maintained their contacts with this exotic space throughout modernity. Our analysis is based on a series of articles, correspondence, literary creations (anecdotes, fairy tales, poems, short stories, proverbs, prose, translations), different editions of documents, school textbooks in geography, history and Romanian language, memoirs, press magazines of the time (*Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă şi Literatură, Gazeta Transilvaniei*), culinary recipes, as well as on Romanian and foreign historiography relevant to the subject.

Keywords: Near East, Middle East, Transylvania, Braşov, identity, otherness, modernity

Rezumat: În lucrarea de faţă, ne propunem mai întâi să formulăm un scurt context istoric al problemei (a doua jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea – începutul secolului al XIX-lea) pentru a vedea cum au început cetăţenii Braşovului să intre în contact cu multiplele faţete ale Orientului Apropiat şi Mijlociu. De asemenea, ne dorim să reconstituim cronologic şi tematic variatele elemente orientale regăsite în cultura românilor ardeleni din Braşov între Revoluţia Paşoptistă (1848-1849) şi sfârşitul Primului Război Mondial (1914-1918). Scopul acestui demers, care este o noutate pentru scrisul istoric românesc, este de a examina dacă şi cum au perpetuat

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brașovenii contactele lor cu acest spațiu exotic pe parcursul modernității. Întreaga noastră analiză se va baza pe o serie de articole, corespondențe, creații literare (anecdote, basme, poezii, povestiri, proverbe, proze, traduceri), ediții de documente, manuale școlare de geografie, istorie și limba română, memorii, presa epocii (*Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și Literatură, Gazeta Transilvaniei*), rețete culinare, dar și pe istoriografia română și străină relevantă subiectului.

Cuvinte-cheie: Orientul Apropiat, Orientul Mijlociu, Transilvania, Brașov, identitate, alteritate, modernitate

Brief historical context

Since the Middle Ages, the Transylvanian Romanians possessed a wide and varied geographical and historical knowledge of oriental ethnic groups, such as the Abkhazians, Anatolians, Arabs, Armenians, Circassians or Persians. Of these, the Circassians were noticeably more present in their onomastics and toponymy, having a Turkish onomastic origin. Some popular works, such as *Alexandria* or the local cosmography from Brașov / Kronstadt, *The Story of the Countries of Asia*, depicted in maps, images and texts the rulers, ethnicities, events and representative geographical landforms of Arabia, the Caucasus, India, Mesopotamia or Persia, in the manner of fantasy literature, with Amazons, fortresses, ships, “anthropomorphic, anthropophagous monsters carving up human bodies” and “huge, terrifying mountains,” which the Transylvanian people clichéd as an evil otherness of Tatar origins. However, these Tatar ethnic groups, which also included Turks, were also depicted positively as brave fighters in an exotic, unknown and inferior Asia, an image perpetuated in school textbooks until the flowering of Orientalism in the 19th century.¹ Starting from this, a question arises – when and how did the inhabitants of Brașov come into contact with the many facets of the Near and Middle East?

¹ Sorin Mitu, “Barbarie, virtuți războinice și exotism. Cecenii și cerchezii văzuți de românii ardeleni în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea,” in Ioan Bolovan - Melania Gabriela Ciot (coord.), *Românii și România în context european. Istorie și diplomatie. Omagiu profesorului Vasile Pușcaș la împlinirea vârstei de 70 de ani* (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2022), 808-811.

We must note that the first such contacts date back to the second half of the fourteenth century in the commercial, diplomatic, military and political field. At the time, they started buying oriental products from Dalmatia thanks to the safe-conduct received from the Kingdom of Hungary, which opened trade routes to the Adriatic Sea (1370). The Wallachian ruler Mircea the Elder and the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg signed the first Balkan anti-Ottoman alliance treaty in a royal camp in the centre of Braşov (March 7, 1395). Moreover, in 1412, the Transylvanian voivode, Ştîbor, imposed the payment of a special tax, *tricesima*, on local merchants for goods from the Ottoman Empire (cotton, cloves, ginger, mohair, pepper, saffron). Later, the city was successively besieged by the Ottomans (1421, 1438, 1479, 1493, 1530, 1683, 1788), and was forced by a privilege issued by the Hungarian King Matei Corvin (1467) to permanently take part in the anti-Turkish campaigns,² despite the spendings caused by the Council House and the fortification system, which had been substantially damaged during the sieges, being restored.³

With the conquest of the Kingdom of Hungary and the *de facto* establishment of the Autonomous Principality of Transylvania under Ottoman suzerainty (1541), due to their victory against the Hungarians in the well-known battle of Mohács (1526), Braşov, despite having been built as a strong fortress with a solid fortification system to defend its citizens from possible external influences and dangers, became a paradoxical border town between Transylvania and Wallachia. It was formed as a multi-confessional, multicultural and multi-ethnic space in which its own identity was open to the tolerance and even integration of various ethnic groups. These ethnicities, projected in the eyes of each other by the concept of *otherness*, lived outside the city walls (e.g., the Romanians from Şchei) and had the mentality of Orthodox-Byzantine

² Ion Dumitraşcu - Mariana Maximescu, *O Istorie a Braşovului (din cele mai vechi timpuri până la începutul secolului XX)*, preface by Gernot Nussbächer (Braşov: Phoenix, 2002), 44-45, 55; Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, "Transit Trade and Intercontinental Trade during the Late Middle Ages. Textiles and Spices in the Customs Accounts of Braşov and Sibiu," in Balazs Nagy - András Vadas - Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *The Medieval Networks in East Central Europe. Commerce, Contacts, Communication* (London: Routledge, 2018), 367; Part of the Ottoman attacks on Braşov have been analyzed and documented archivistically by Gernot Nussbächer, "Dokumente aus dem Kronstädter Staatsarchiv über die Türkeneinfälle im Burzenland in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Forschungen zur Volks-Und Landeskunde*, 22/1 (1979): 25-30; Markus Peter Beham, "Kronstadt in der "Turkenabwehr" (1438-1479)," *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, 32/1 (2009): 46-61.

³ Irina Băldescu, *Transilvania medievală. Topografie şi norme juridice ale cetăţilor Sibiu, Bistriţa, Braşov, Cluj* (Bucharest: Simetria, 2012), 235, 254.

Orientalism, but they communicated and coexisted with the Saxons from the hinterland, who adhered to Western Catholicism, the radical otherness being diluted and gradually becoming a familiarity. Although the humanist pedagogue Johannes Honterus (1498-1549) and the Magistrate steered it towards Lutheranism as a first for Transylvania and as a resistance against the anxiety and pressure brought on by the threats of the Porte (1542), Braşov successfully adapted to the new political-administrative changes. Through these changes, together with the compromises made and the permanent information received from the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, the city evolved from individualism and regionalism to a distinct confessional, ethnic, geographical and socio-economic micro-frontier of Orientalism, Occidentalism and Transylvanianism.⁴

In her quantitative analysis of pre-modern Braşov customs registers, researcher Mária Pakucs shows that citizens were interested in purchasing spices (cumin, cloves, nutmeg flowers, ginger, nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon, saffron), foodstuffs (almonds, figs, raisins, olive oil, oil), dyes (alum, indigo) and oriental textiles (aba, bogasia, brocade, cotton, camelot, camucas, velvet, damask, halbatlas, yester, wool, silk, mohair, leather, taffeta). The customs duty on these goods was paid in kind and they were recorded in the registers as *res turcales* and *Türkische Waren*, being measured with the well-known *chintal*, which weighed between 60 – 120 pounds.⁵

The Black Church in Braşov is an evangelical place of worship, built in Gothic style between 1380 and 1470, in the immediate vicinity of the Council Square, which holds the largest collection of Anatolian carpets in Transylvania, totalling about 200 small classical artifacts from donations from the guilds, the faithful and patricians, but also from the heritage of the Saxon churches of Braşov. Until the end of the 19th century, they were taken

⁴ Irina Mastan, "Urban Identification Agents and Historical Discourse in a Frontier City. Case Study: Braşov during the 16th and 17th Centuries," *Prace Historyczne*, 141/1 (2014): 16, 18-22, 24, 33; For an exhaustive analysis of the problem, see Irina Mastan, *Braşovul şi Principatul Transilvaniei în contextul rivalităţii osmano-habsburgice (1526-1613)*. PhD thesis, manuscript, Babeş-Bolyai University. Cluj-Napoca, 2013.

⁵ Mária Pakucs, "Comerţul cu mirodenii al oraşelor Braşov şi Sibiu în prima jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie*, XX (2002): 76-77, 80-82; Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, "Transylvania and its International Trade, 1525-1575," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 16/II (2012): 176, 178-179; Mária Pakucs-Willcocks, *Transit Trade*, 270; See also the facsimile registers in Radu Manolescu, *Socotelile Braşovului: registrele vigesimale*, 5 vols., an anastatic edition edited by Ionel Cîndea and Radu Ştefănescu (Brăila: Istros, 2005-2007).

out of the sacristy by the youngest priest, stretched by bell-ringers paid by the organizers and used at weddings ("for the bride and groom in front of the altar"), funerals (on the coffin, under/to the bier of the deceased) and religious services. Their purpose was to increase the solemnity of the festivities, to cover the pulpit, choir, organ gallery, magistrates' and priests' pews, altar stairs or tabletops, and also as christening/wedding presents. These woollen objects, measuring 200/150 cm in length, are characterized by the presence of chilim (woven strip) and fluffy plush, fringes, undyed or dyed warp in various colours using natural pigments (indigo blue, brown, chrome yellow, purple, black, red, green), and Ghiordes-style cut knots. They were manufactured in workshops in Bergama, Demirci, Gediz, Gordes, Kula, Küthaya, Selendi, Şaphane and Uşak, from where they were transported by sea/land by merchants to Braşov, respecting the stage duty and paying customs duties partly in kind. Thus, Anatolian carpets from the 15th-17th centuries were recorded in the registers as Persian/Turkish Cintamani, Ghiordes, Ghirlandaio, Kula, Lotto, Selendi, Transylvanian, Uşak, featuring double niches and central medallion/large stars, with bird/scorpion motifs, or six-column prayer designs.⁶

With the overthrow of the Ottomans and the Habsburgs' seizure of political power in Transylvania following the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Karlowitz (January 26, 1699), Braşov turned predominantly towards Austrian values, but we must note the local perpetuation of Near and Middle Eastern elements throughout the 18th and 20th centuries. For example, a Romanian document written in Cyrillic script (1761) reveals that the merchant Nicolae Dumitraşcu and the professor Ioan Stoica were delegated by the Church of Saint Nicholas in Şcheii Braşovului to obtain from the Wallachian lord Constantin Mavrocordat several documents based on a 13-point program. By complying with the program, the delegates obtained the Turkish firman, which was intended to grant them privileges on behalf of Moldavia and Wallachia (August 6, 1763).⁷

⁶ Ágnes Ziegler - Frank-Thomas Ziegler, *Spre lauda Domnului şi pentru cinstita breaslă, pentru a fi podoabă şi de folosinţă. Covoarele otomane din Biserica Neagră* (Braşov: Foton, 2020), 5-8, 14-16, 19-20, 25-36, 48-49; Stephanie Armer - Anja Kregeloh - Ágnes Ziegler, "'Unsere alten Kirchenteppiche'. Anatolische Teppiche und ihre Verwendung im Kirchenraum in Bistritz und Kronstadt," in Anja Kregeloh (hg.), *Anatolische Teppiche aus Bistritz/Bistrita Die Sammlung der Evangelischen Stadtkirche A. B. im Germanischen Nationalmuseum* (Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2023), 69.

⁷ *Acte, documente şi scrisori din Şcheii Braşovului*, text chosen and set, notes by Vasile Oltean, preface by Alexandru Duţu (Bucharest: Minerva, 1980), 18-19; Dumitraşcu - Maximescu, *O Istorie*, 61.

The end of Tudor Vladimirescu's Revolution, which resulted in an Ottoman military victory (1821), brought 7,204 emigrants to Braşov, who took refuge in fear of the Turks until they left Wallachia (1822), returning home between 1822 and 1829. Gradually, the Romanian merchants of the city asked Baron Miske to support them in obtaining the indissoluble privileges of founding the Levantine Guild, which was intended (among other things) to strengthen trade relations with Turkey (November 1835), the Balkans and the Romanian Principalities. Thus, the Romanian Levantine Trade Guild of Braşov was legalized in 1838 as a cross-border trade company,⁸ consolidating and perpetuating the previous efforts of the *Greek Company* of Braşov, founded in 1678.⁹

Braşov's contacts with the Near and Middle East (1848-1918)

With the end of the 1848-1849 Revolution, we may wonder whether and how the people of Braşov perpetuated their contacts with the Near and Middle East throughout modernity.

First of all, the journal *Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă şi Literatură* (*Leaflet for the Mind, Heart and Literature*) contains Oriental historical analyses such as *Slavery among the Turks* (1850), which shows that Europeans were aware of the very real slavery problem in Turkey. Here, not only the common people, but even the mothers and wives of the padishahs and sultans were slaves, but they were housed, clothed, fed and respected by the wealthy lords because they, too, were originally slaves, and the wives could divorce their husbands at any time, thus noting that "nothing can surpass the kindness of the Turks in the regard of slave housewives."¹⁰ At the same time, one can read other programmatic works such as *Cercularulu contelui Neselrode în cauza orientală din zurnalulu de Petropole din 31. Mais (12 Iuniu) dupe ruseşte scosu în traducere în „Gazeta Moldaviei”* (1853), *Actele diplomatice turceşti în cauza locurilor*

⁸ Al. Bărbat, "Dezvoltarea şi decăderea ultimei grupări de negustori de intermediere ai Braşovului în sec. al XIX-lea," *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, XVI/4 (1963): 921; Dumitraşcu - Maximescu, *O Istorie*, 100-101; For a broader approach to the problem, see Ambrus Miskolczy, *Rolul de intermediere între Est şi Vest al burgheziei comerciale levantine române din Braşov (1780-1860)* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 2000).

⁹ Olga Cicanci, *Companiile greceşti din Transilvania şi comerţul european în anii 1636-1746* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1981), 7.

¹⁰ *Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă şi Literatură*, XIII/8 (1850): 62-63.

sânțe și cea orientală (1853)¹¹ or *Trăptatulu de statu înceiatu între Austria, Frância, Britania mare, Prusia, Russia, Sardinia și Turcia, în privința Principatelor Moldova și România* (1858).¹² Also present is a relevant series of *Sentences and Sayings* (1853) of the prophet Mohamed (“He who loves, and is silent, and is absent, and dies, that one dies like a martyr”),¹³ of *Statistical Data from the Oriental Church* (1859), covering the churches and patriarchates of Alexandria, Antiochia, Constantinople, Egypt, Jerusalem or Syria,¹⁴ aspects concerning the *Romans in the European Turkey* (1863),¹⁵ or lyrical creations with exotic themes such as those by Andrei Mureșanu, *Persian peasant with fruits* (1851), *The Phanariot and the tax* (1855).¹⁶ Thus, we can highlight several lines from the first poem:

*In Yerevan / There was a peasant /
Who lived on day to day / Earning his black bread / From a pear garden /
And having no other wealth.
A large pear tree / Which stood in his garden / Provided a delicate fruit /
Known even by the emperor;
Its thin yellow strip / Could drive you out of your senses, / Its juice would
have freshened / Even to the one who dies.*¹⁷

S. Mihali published an article in the same Brașov newspaper, titled *Una privire asupra Constantinopolei* (1854), in which he described the eastern capital as “the most interesting fortress in all of Europe,” “the key to the Orient,” crossed by the Bosphorus and situated between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. At the time, it had 700,000 inhabitants, an attractive exterior, but an interior crowded with dark, crooked and narrow streets, with aqueducts, bazaars, slums, 90,000 wooden houses and numerous tourist attractions (Hagia Sophia Cathedral, Edikule Fortress, Hippodrome, Serai etc.).¹⁸

¹¹ Ibid., XVI/25 (1853): 187-192; Ibid., XVI/29 (1853): 213-217.

¹² Ibid., XXI/2 (1858): 9-13; Ibid., XXI/3 (1858): 17-23.

¹³ Ibid., XVI/51 (1853): 378.

¹⁴ Ibid., XXII/34 (1859): 261-262.

¹⁵ Ibid., XXVI/1 (1863): 6-8.

¹⁶ Ibid., XVIII/15 (1855): 80.

¹⁷ Ibid., XIV/26 (1851): 206-207; “La Erivanu / Era un țeran, / Ce trăia de aici, pe mâne, / Însămănându-și neagra până, / Din o grădină cu pere, / Ne având altă avere. / Un păru mare ce s’afla / În mica grădina sa, / Da un fruct preadelicat, / Cunoscut și la împărat; / Coja’i galbină supțire, / Sta să te scoată din fire, / Sucu’i ar fi dat recoare, / Încă și la cel ce more.” Translation mine.

¹⁸ Ibid., XVII/37 (1854): 198-200.

Local companies such as “Ioan V. Cepescu”, “Oprea P. Sfetea”, “Stoia și Barbu” or “Teclu Nicolae & Alexiu Dumitru” brought goods from the Levant and exported manufactured goods to Bulgaria, the Romanian Principalities and Turkey (1811, 1851), while Constantin Ioanovici’s mechanical cotton spinning mill in Zărnești obtained cotton yarn from about 200-245 quintals of Turkish cotton (1850, 1854). The Brașov merchants were thus already involved in the so-called intermediary trade (import-export).¹⁹

Throughout the Russian – Turkish – Romanian war of 1877-1878 (the War of Independence in Romanian Historiography), *Gazeta Transilvaniei* constantly provided both the people of Brașov and all the inhabitants of Transylvania with news of the conflagration from Major Moise Groza, who was directly involved in the fighting. The newspaper also supported the efforts of the Committee of Romanians from Brașov for the Relief of Wounded Romanian Soldiers in Romania, founded on 10/22 May 1877, under the leadership of local merchant Diamandi Manole, to mobilize citizens and to manage the collections distributed to those at the front by the Romanian Red Cross. In spite of attempts by the Hungarian authorities to stop them, given that they would have apparently disrespected the neutrality of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the collections saw an upward trend with Dimitrie Stănescu (2,000 francs), Diamandi Manole (1,000 francs) and Sevastia Mureșianu, who, as a permanent member of the Romanian Women’s Reunion in Brașov, sent 30 kilograms of bandages and lint to the soldiers. The periodical also reinforced this initiative by publishing articles such as *Appeal to the Romanians!* (June 12/24, 1877), *The Red Cross Society and the Romanian Women of Transylvania* (June 16/28, 1877) or *Appeal to the Romanians* (June 23/ July 5, 1877), as well as the list of donors under the heading *Help for the Wounded*. Sevastia Mureșianu and Hareti D. Stănescu were among the women from Brașov who were decorated with the “Elizabeth Cross” by Queen Elisabeth of Romania for their charitable work during the war (1878).²⁰

¹⁹ Al. Bărbat, *Dezvoltarea*, 923-925, 928-929.

²⁰ Marinela-Loredana Barna, “Ajutor pentru răniți”. “Colecțiile transilvănenilor pentru soldații români reflectate în paginile “Gazetei Transilvaniei” (1877-1878),” *Țara Bârsei*, 17 (2018): 91-93, 97; The portraits and charitable actions of the inhabitants of Brașov are also recounted by Dr. V. M. Plătăreanu - Matilda Hoephner, *Trei medici sași (Brașoveni) în războiul independenței (Comunicare Soc. de ist. Medicinii on June 15, 1939)* (Craiova: Scrisul românesc, 1939); Michael Kroner, “Participarea unor medici și ingineri sași brașoveni la războiul de independență din

The two-volume school textbook authored by the Braşov teacher Ioan G. Meşotă (1837-1878), translated from the German original and edited by W. Pütz (1879), maps (among other things) the broad cultural, geographical, historical, literary and political picture of the Near and Middle East with the aim of familiarizing pupils from the Transylvanian region with the various facets of this exotic space. The contents of the first volume reveal that the Mohammedans divided their time according to the course of the moon, the Jews according to the life of the patriarchs and the reign of their monarchs, the Syrians according to the year of the conquest of Babylon by Seleucus Nicator (312), and the Eastern Christians according to the Diocletian and Seleucid epochs. Other attractive details summarize the culture, geography and history of Africa, Assyria, Babylonia, Carthage, Egypt, Phoenicia, Iran, Palestine and Persia, the Oriental languages or the Jordan region (Ashkelon, Gaza Strip, Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea, Jaffa, Lakes Geniza and Merom, Dead Sea, Samaria etc.). For example, Africa was generally seen “as an island cut off from the other continents of the ancient world, lying in the fertile zone in the large part, and cut by the equator into two almost equal halves,” of which Egypt “in springtime is like a scorched and sun-cracked desert, in summer like a great lake [...]; [and] towards the end of autumn [...] it becomes a field full of grains.” Phoenicia was also a country of sailors, linking East and West by its location on the edge of Asia and in close proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, but also “the centre of trade linking the lands of India and Arabia with the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.” Last but not least, Libya was “dotted here and there (especially in the eastern side) with bones, whose fountains, surrounded by palms, fruit-bearing trees and vines, offered recreation and rest to the trading caravans,” while Palestine was paradoxically a country well situated and well connected with the oriental ethnicities, but small and isolated, “hidden among rocks, caves and mountains, it had nothing to attract foreign peoples, nor did it compel its inhabitants to leave.”²¹

1877/1878,” *Transilvania*, 6/3 (1977): 17-18; Vasile Olteanu, “Războiul pentru independenţă şi românii braşoveni,” *Mitropolia Ardealului*, 22/4-6 (1977): 268-295; Ştefan Suciu, “Contribuţii braşovene la sprijinirea războiului de independenţă,” *Astra*, 1 (1977): 10; Ştefan Suciu, “Voluntari din Braşov pe frontul independenţei”, *Astra*, 2 (1977): 11.

²¹ Ioan G. Meşotă, *Geografia şi Istoria Evului Vechiu, Mediu şi Modern. Manual prelucrat pentru clasele superioare gimnaziale şi reale*, 2nd edition revised and completed under the care of Andrei Bârseanu, vol. I (Bucureşti: Editura Librăriei Sococu & Comp., 1879), V-VI, 4-5, 10-38, 48-90, 198-205.

The second volume of the above-mentioned textbook draws our attention to the history and extent of the Vandal Empire in Africa (429-534), but also to the geography, history and religion of the Arabian Peninsula, the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Empire. From here, the Arabian Peninsula stands out as “the bridge from Asia to Africa,” a broad plateau with a mostly stony and desolate relief (except Yemen, “which, for its fruitfulness, was called in ancient times *happy Arabia*”), where patriarchal families and tribes of shepherds, bandits and Bedouin hunters led by emirs and sheikhs, lived alongside farmers, industrialists and merchants from the cities of Mecca and Medina, believing in the Islam preached by the Coran. The fall of Constantinople (1453), where “Constantine fell fighting like a hero, and *Constantinople became the residence of the Sultan*,” established the Ottoman Empire as a very large, well-organized legal, military, political and religious area, with central leadership held by the Sultan and the Imam, and regional leadership by the agha, bey, beilerbei and pasha.²²

In his memoirs, the philologist from Braşov, Sextil Puşcariu (1877-1948), recounted his childhood spent among oriental landmarks of the city at the end of the 19th century by capturing several relevant aspects. For example, he reveals the wagon journeys of his grandparents and great-grandparents to Leipzig and Smyrna, the settling of some Cuman and Turkish horsemen from Întorsura Buzăului, or how he threw wood and stones at the Turkish walnut trees in Groaveri. Alongside these, he evoked historical facts such as the refuge taken by the Bulgarians (who had fled the Turks) in Braşov, Codlea and Râşnov and their employment as labourers for the construction of the Black Church (1392), the Turkish incursions in Țara Bârsei (1421-1788), the sealing of a gate near the Bastion of the Weavers during the Turkish invasion of 1788, or the evolution of the collection of Anatolian carpets in the Black Church. He also recalled the houses demolished to build the synagogue in Şchei Gate Street, the transition of Turkish merchants in the Citadel from Turkish to Austrian clothing, the Armenian, Jewish and Saxon domination of local trade, or the house of an Armenian tobacco seller in Customs Street (today's Mureşenilor Street). There was also the architectural perception of St. Nicholas Church in Şcheii Braşovului, as an oriental and, at the same time,

²² Ioan G. Meşotă, *Geografia şi Istoria Evului Vechiu, Mediu şi Modern. Manual prelucrat pentru clasele superioare gimnaziale şi reale*, 2nd edition revised and completed under the care of Andreiu Bârseanu, vol. II (Bucureşti: Editura Librăriei Sococu & Comp., 1879), 23-24, 35-41, 93-94, 137-140.

western monument, the description of the arrival of the Turks in the city “with their monkeys dressed in red clothes, with caps on their heads, tumbling every time the Turks pulls the chains” or his shopping under the Customs Gate, on Apollonia Hirscher Street or in the Street Market (lollipops with rose water, *braga*, white/pink Turkish delight, caramelized figs and edible bottles of sugar syrup infused with “rosol” [rose water]). He also mentions how, on the second day of Easter, he would take part in the ritual of the dousing of girls, which took place at each of the girls’ houses, from where they would leave with baskets full of red eggs and oranges. He recounts having been mesmerised by his grandmother’s telling of the story of Aladdin’s magic lamp while crocheting. He also notes that, after a tiring day’s work, the Romanians from Braşov used to drink *rachiu/rozol* in the taverns of the Şchei, and that the city was full of Armenian merchants (Avedik Popovici, Bogdan Carabet, Garabet Cerkez etc.) and Levantines (Dossios, Panaiotis, Safrano etc.). Moreover, he emphasised the Armenian shops’ practice of selling oriental products (atlas, halva, cloth, olives etc.), such as László’s shop in Flax Row, the Simayi brothers and Folyovics’ shop in Grain Market (today’s Council Square), Karácsonyi’s shop in Customs Street or Eremias’ shop, which had a life-size painting of “Osman Pasha on horseback” at the entrance.²³

Also, in his memoirs, Sextil Puşcariu recalls how his grandmother and his uncle, Niculiţă Ciurcu, sometimes cooked him “veal head with ginger, very flavourful and gelatinous,” tongue with lemon peel, almonds and raisins or meat soup with saffron. The author smoked Turkish cigarettes with “bectimis” or “sultan flor” tobacco and received delicacies such as halva, Turkish delight and caviar (seasoned with lemon and olive oil) brought from Galaţi by his father, dishes spiced with cloves, cinnamon and Turkish olive oil or snails with horseradish, vinegar and oil. The menu was rounded off with citron jam, indians (a form of sponge cake), lemon ice-cream, raspberry sherbet, Turkish coffees “served in old merchant houses from small filigrees in dice” and baklava bought from a Greek. This Greek had a workshop in Cauldroners’ Street (today’s Republicii Street) and used to walk around “with a large tin tray on his head, which he would take off every time he cut a brown slice filled with walnuts for someone.” However, we must also note

²³ Sextil Puşcariu, *Braşovul de altădată*, foreword by Ioan Colan, edited by Şerban Polverejan (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1977), 24, 32, 35, 59, 67, 74, 82, 91-92, 94-95, 97, 113-114, 118, 127, 131, 136, 171-173, 178-179.

Pușcariu's more or less exotic readings, such as the Indian stories in German literature, George Coșbuc's *Pe pământul turcului* (a "long epic poetry, which I particularly liked") or Henry Morton Stanley's *Journey through Central Africa*, which he had received as an achievement award in high school. Of the latter work, he confessed that "it had, for my taste, too many ethnographic descriptions and geographical details and too little of the sentimental episodes, such as the discovery of Livingstone's death. I spent an entire summer reading it."²⁴

Recently, the historian Georgeta Filitti brought to light 488 recipes by late-modern Brașov women: Maria Braniște, Mărioara Popovici, Valeria Căliman, Sânziana Migia, Mălina Dumitrescu. The recipes were their own or were procured from various wealthy ladies, governesses, aunts and friends (Camilla, Coca Frățilă, Cristina, Delia, Mrs. Alexandrescu, Mrs. Bordog, Mrs. Brediceanu, Mrs. Burducea, Mrs. Ciortea, Mrs. Florescu, Micula, Pop, Simionescu, Tripon, Văleanu, Zoltner, Epe, Eva, Ida, Lelia, Lizzie Vincze, Marie, Mărioara, Mela, Mioara Costea, Nuți, Protoane, Risa, Sara, Sofia neni, Tassi, Tenzi, Terfalogă, Victoria, Virgini). The approach is based on a paginated register by Maria Braniște (1880-1890), Mărioara Popovici's notebook *Arta bucătăriei*, and on the notes of Valeria Căliman, Sânziana Migia and Mălina Dumitrescu.²⁵

Reading the 224-page work, we find many oriental specialties or from other cuisines, but with exotic ingredients. For example, Maria Braniște suggests desserts such as honey/ almond marshmallows, coffee/lemon/pecan pudding, orange cream (for cakes), *Dalauzi* (Armenian cake), lemon jelly, indians or orange jam. There is also coffee/orange liqueur, honey cake, orange tart, coffee/almond/rum/orange cake, bishop's cake, deer back cake or rose sherbet. Mărioara Popovici shows us how to make baklava, lemon baguettes and bars, chocolate fries, *Crème Sultan*, citron/roses jam, Turkish halva, tangerine jelly or *Le Zenzibar*. The menu also includes Indian apples, emperor rice, orange breadcrumbs, lemon souffle, pineapple/coffee/pistachio/lemon/orange/roses sherbet, Moka cake, wheat and almond filling.²⁶

An issue of *Gazeta Transilvaniei* (1889) hosts 13 Armenian proverbs, more or less comical, four of which are worth noting: "The ways are not cleared until the chariots are overturned"; "Before you enter a house, think

²⁴ Ibid., 185-190, 196-197, 253, 256-257.

²⁵ Georgeta Filitti, *Rețete culese de la cinci brașovenice* (Brașov: Creator, 2017), 5 sqq.

²⁶ Ibid., 37, 40, 44-45, 47, 49-52, 57-59, 61, 64, 66, 128-129, 136-137, 140, 142, 146, 148, 162-166, 171-172, 178-180, 185-186.

of how you would get out of it"; "The quarrelsome man ages quickly"; "No one knows if the candle will last until morning."²⁷ A year later, we find the Arabian fairy tale *Alu the 11th*, translated by an author with the pseudonym A.C., which deals with the Arabs' belief in the power of prophetic dreams, based on the Muslims' ability to convince the sceptical European travellers in this regard. Specifically, the case of a European who arrived in Cairo after the plague epidemic (1835), where he met an old man who told him that during the epidemic, "a Muslim merchant dreamed that 11 dead people were being carried to their graves in front of his courtyard. When the merchant woke up from his sleep, he was seized by fear and horror, for counting the members of his family, including himself, he discovered there were exactly eleven of them." Then he called his friends and neighbours to his home to tell them about the dream, and they consoled him and advised him to calm down and thank God for showing him the future. Before long, the dream was partially fulfilled as all the members of the family and his servants gradually died out, and after the last member was buried, the merchant asked his friends to bury him in case he also died. At night, he thought he saw and spoke to the angel of death, Azrael – however, it had actually been a thief who knew of his fear and played this role to steal his silver candlesticks, his friends showing him the thief in the morning, lying dead by the plague in the courtyard of the house. In the end, the merchant got out of bed and thanked God that "the thief was the eleventh and, thus, I am saved."²⁸

Although trade relations with the Ottoman Empire declined significantly, the people of Braşov continued to be interested in buying oriental products. For example, gypsum and glazed materials processed at Gottlieb Fleischer's factory on the Timiş Canal (1841), *Brassova Scherg* wool cloth and fine fabrics were exported to Turkey and the Romanian Principalities through contacts established with Bulgarian merchants by representatives of the Scherg factory during a visit to Bulgaria (1888), but also paper and woollen goods manufactured in Braşov, Cîsnădie, Petreşti and Zărneşti to Egypt and Turkey via the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Braşov (1892).²⁹

²⁷ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LII/126 (1889): 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, LIII/124 (1890): 1-2.

²⁹ Marin Iosif Balog – Măriuca Radu, "Camera de Comerţ şi Industrie din Braşov şi implicarea sa în eforturile de modernizare economică a sud-estului Transilvaniei (1851-1900) (I)," *Arhiva Someşană*, III (2004): 90, 109; Vasile Aldea, *Fabrica de postav şi ţesături de modă Wilhelm Scherg & Cie. 1823-1948 – din începuturile industriei braşovene* (Braşov: Haco International, 2017), 11-12.

In *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, the articles *The Last Begu between the Mamluks and Harun al-Rashid and Abdallah* (1891) depict several historical sequences concerning the reign of the Egyptian and Sudanese khedive Mehmet Ali and the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid.³⁰ We also find numerous translations from Oriental literature, such as the Arabic story *The Liberation of Fatima* (1893),³¹ the Anamite story *The Luck of a Sloth* (1894),³² *A Negro Bible. The Myths and History of Yoruba Land* (1896),³³ the Persian fairy tale *The King and the Parrot* (1896),³⁴ the Armenian story *The Spy* (1900)³⁵ or the Turkish story *The Severed Hand* (1903).³⁶ The Arabian story *Great are you, creator, and boundless is your mercy* (1904),³⁷ Walid Efendi's short prose *Turkish Justice* (1906)³⁸ the Persian poet Hafez's verses *From "Divan"* (1908),³⁹ the Turkish writer Nazim's *From "Oriental Anecdotes"* (1910),⁴⁰ the Persian story *The Slippers of Abdul-Casem* (1911) or the story *A Piece of Bread* (1911)⁴¹, complete this exotic literary panoply. Of these, it is worth noting a part of Hafez's aforementioned love lyric:

*Mighty kings, emperors even, / Unloved by all the world are / Ungodly beggars only, / Beggars in their fine robes / Beloved beggars, embraced by / Sweet love's flame / They are crownless kings, / Emperors without a country.
Shade from the Heaven I am, dear, / Your beautiful eyebrows. / Beneath their masterful canopy / Angels have their home / So clear and serene: / Your eyes' angels'. / Banish the night to hell, / The whole earth is filled / With their heavenly splendour.*⁴²

³⁰ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LIV/74 (1891): 1-3; Ibid., LIV/75 (1891): 1-2; Ibid., LIV/76 (1891): 1-2; Ibid., LIV/177 (1891): 1-4.

³¹ Ibid., LVI/96 (1893): 1-5; Ibid., LVI/101 (1893): 1-4; Ibid., LVI/107 (1893): 1-3.

³² Ibid., LVII/1 (1894): 4.

³³ Ibid., LIX/144 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/145 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/146 (1896): 1-3; Ibid., LIX/147 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/151 (1896): 2; Ibid., LIX/152 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/153 (1896): 2-3; Ibid., LIX/154 (1896): 2-3.

³⁴ Ibid., LIX/280 (1896): 1-3; Ibid., LIX/281 (1896): 1-3.

³⁵ Ibid., LXIII/54 (1900): 1-2; Ibid., LXIII/55 (1900): 1-2.

³⁶ Ibid., LXVI/260 (1903): 1-3.

³⁷ Ibid., LXVII/116 (1904): 3-5.

³⁸ Ibid., LXIX/73 (1906): 3.

³⁹ Ibid., LXXI/169 (1908): 6.

⁴⁰ Ibid., LXXXIII/10 (1910): 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., LXXXIV/56 (1911): 6; Ibid., LXXXIV/138 (1911): 3.

⁴² Ibid., LXXI/169 (1908): 6; "Crai puternici, împărați chiar, / Neiubiți de nime'n lume-s / Cerșitori netrebnici numai, / Cerșitori în haine scumpe - / - Cerșitori iubiți, cuprinși de / Dulcea

The Romanian language school textbook (1894) signed by Virgil Onițiu, the director of the Greek Orthodox Romanian Central Schools in Brașov (today, the “Andrei Saguna” National College), points out that the Romanian language also has Turkish origins, that Arabic and Hebrew are inflectional and Semitic through suffixes that “lose all their independence and *merge* into a whole, inseparable from the root of the words,” and that Turkish is agglutinative and Turanian because “some words weaken and become suffixes, to be *allied* with other words as needed.”⁴³

Against the backdrop of their massive settlement (be it permanent, temporary or transient) in Brașov since the beginning of the 19th century, after multiple expulsions and delays, the Jews were finally able to establish their own *Community* (May 8, 1826). It was run administratively by a president and religiously by a rabbi, in line with its statutes. They had churches, hammam and schools, they received approval to perform marriages from the first district rabbi of Alba Iulia, Ezekiel Paneth (December 9, 1829) and even became autocephalous (1852). Although they continued to be marginalized and faced numerous futile requests for expulsion from the Saxon authorities (1830, 1834, 1841, 1851), the Jews did not allow themselves to be intimidated, but instead tried to integrate into the community. They developed demographically, economically and institutionally by perpetuating immigration, practicing itinerant trade at fairs, and opening workshops, groceries, law/notary offices, medical practices, cafes, shops and printing presses. They lived predominantly in the neighbourhoods of Blumăna and Brașovechi or on the Castle, Deer and Șchei Gate streets. Their numbers increased gradually but consistently from 56 Jews (1849) to 67 (1850), 13 (1856), 39 (1857), 610 (1880), 769 (1890), 1,198 (1900) and 1,147 (1910). Measures such as the establishment of a Jewish cemetery over the former Wächter garden in Post Orchard (1855), a Jewish school, where even Turkish pupils studied (1860), and the philanthropic associations *Hevra Kadișa* (1863), *Carolina Löbl* (1867), *Jacob Löbl* (1868), the *Israelite Women's Association* (1882), the *Orthodox Israelite Women's Society* (1901) and the *Society of Israelite Girls of Brașov* (1907), contributed to this pendulum swing.

dragostii văpaie / Crai sunt și fără de coroană, / Împărați și fără de țară. / Umbriș din raiu sunt, dragă, / Frumoasele-ți sprâncene. / Sub bolta lor măiastră / Își au lăcașul îngeri / Așa senini și limpezi: / Îngerii ochilor tăi. / În iad alungă noaptea, / Pământu 'ntreg îl umple / Cereasca lor splendoare.” Translation mine.

⁴³ Virgil Onițiu, *Limba română. Ființa, originea, rudenii și istoria ei. Manual pentru gimnasii, școle reale și pedagogice (normale)* (Brașov: Editura Librăriei Nicolae I. Ciurcu, 1894), 16, 32-33.

The division of the *Community* into a Neologized and an Orthodox one (August 1, 1877), the local activity of figures such as Rabbis Papp Ludovic Rosenbaum (1863-1953) and Wezel Adalbert (1865-1938) and Professor Sigismund Steinhardt (1823-1896), but also the construction after 1877 of the Orthodox synagogue in a building in Ciucaș Street (today's Apollonia Hirscher Street) and the non-Orthodox synagogue in Orphans' Street (today's Șchei Gate Street), no. 29 between 1898-1901 by the Austrian-Jewish architect Leopold Baumhorn for 1,200,000 gold crowns, are complementary measures.⁴⁴

Inaugurated on August 20, 1901 by the President of the *Community* of Brașov, Aronshon Heinrich and its Chief Rabbi, Ludovic Papp Rosenbaum, the Neolog Synagogue presents itself architecturally as a large, simple and sombre temple in Gothic, Moorish and Romanesque style with "the faceted turrets with plastered ashlar alternating with others of brick, turrets bordering the main entrance," "the three-lobed windows on the upper floor," "the window sashes" and "arches in the centre, exterior and interior." Inside, it has a vestibule, an assembly hall and an ark, and outside, several annexes (offices, canteen, staff and rabbi's quarters, school). At that time, the Israelites were seen not as a religion, but as a denomination, and the construction of the synagogue and its annexes over several squalid houses as "an act of sanitation" for the area. Incidentally, it was the only area where changes to the parcel system had been completed as early as 1886.⁴⁵

Unlike the economist Emil Tișca (1881-1965), from Bran, who visited Constantinople with his colleagues and professors during his studies at the Oriental Academy of Commerce in Budapest (1901),⁴⁶ *Gazeta Transilvaniei* also brings to our attention various oriental news such as *Statistics of the Muslim population worldwide* (1909), based on information taken from Turkish newspapers. Here, we are told that there were then about 27 million Muslims

⁴⁴ Carmen Manațe – Sami Fiul – Viorica Oprea, *Comunitatea evreilor din Brașov. Secolele XIX-XX* (Brașov: Transilvania Expres, 2007), 20-23, 25-29, 35-36, 40, 85, 89, 91-92, 94-95, 129-130, 136, 141, 155, 164-166, 169, 174, 176-177.

⁴⁵ Edit Szegedi, "Between Necessity and Utopia: The Central Cemetery in Brașov," in Mihaela Grancea (coord.), *Death and Civilization. Transdisciplinary Studies* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009), 161, 176; Manațe – Fiul – Oprea, *Comunitatea*, 130, 133-134; Băldescu, *Transilvania*, 219.

⁴⁶ Emil Tișca, *În Constantinopol* (Gherla: Tipografia Institutului de Arte Grafice Alexandru Anca, 1913), 4 sqq.

living in the Ottoman Empire, 65-70 million in Africa (Algeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia), 20 million in Afghanistan, Arabia, Persia and other Asian states, 600,000 in the Balkans (Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Romania), and globally about 270 million.⁴⁷

The same newspaper also gives a brief description of Egypt (1914) as “the first corner of Africa to hear the whistle of the ships” (1852), and that it underwent extensive railway modernization with the construction of the railway between Wadi Halfa and Khartoum as a strategic aid in the context of the Anglo-Egyptian fighting in Sudan (1896-1899).⁴⁸ Equally interesting are the 14 Arab proverbs on marriage, love and the beauty of women (1915), showing that the Arabs saw marriage as indissoluble in life and were willing to marry a beautiful and wealthy woman or even a cousin. A proverb portraying the women among this exotic community is illustrative in this regard:

*he who wants to have a beautiful woman, let him marry a Georgian; he who wants to have a cunning woman, let him marry a Jewish girl; he who wants to have a rest, let him marry a Christian woman. Pride and fancy characterize the Turkish woman, and noble and distinguished thinking, the Arab woman.*⁴⁹

In a recent analysis, the museographer Cristina Seitz has exploited 24 illustrated postcards and personal German documents of the Braşov-born sergeant Arthur Schulz (1893-1966) from 15 May 1917 to 8 June 1918, when he was mobilized to fight in the First World War with the 41st Artillery Regiment of the Austrian-Hungarian Army. They record his correspondence with parents Roza and Peter Schulz, siblings Margarete, Oskar, Viktor and Willi, fiancée Hermine Antosch and cousin Emil, sent from Buczacz and Constantinople. Some of the 15 Constantinopolitan correspondences depict sights such as the Bosphorus, Princes’ Island, Galata Bridge and Galata Tower, together with short, standardized notes, typical for soldiers’ correspondence, such as those on an illustrated postcard dated March 6, 1918:

⁴⁷ *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LXXII/89 (1909): 4-5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, LXXVII/256 (1914): 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, LXXVIII/200 (1915): 1.

Face: Greetings from Turkey, Arthur Schulz.

Verso: 6.III.1918, Dear Margit, I send you word that I am healthy and lively here in Turkey where I am. Greetings to all from me, Arthur Schulz.⁵⁰

Returning to the historical course of the collection of Anatolian carpets in the Black Church, we note that their use gradually declined in the modern era due to the shift of the interest of the people of Braşov towards other matters. They covered the tombs of local figures, rarely served at liturgies, or were either fixed to the lecterns of the pews or cut as cushions for the pews of parishioners, some of which ended up in the museum of the Evangelical Gymnasium as a preservation measure against moths, but especially as a security measure against the foreign merchants' questionable interests in them (August 1886). Subsequently, they were rediscovered and revalued with the large painting *The oath of the City Council of Braşov on the Book of Reformation* (1898) by the Braşov painter Fritz Schullerus (1866-1898), which depicts the community's pledge of Lutheranism in a room decorated with rugs on the table and floor, and with the undated *Self-portrait* by the local artist Friedrich Miess (1854-1935). Here, the carpet arranged in the background embodies the idea that "the contemporary artist must be able to compose a painting as virtuoso as the Anatolian workers succeeded with carpets." They also appeared against the backdrop of drawings and photographs such as the undated drawing *Johannes Honterus in the study office* of the professor Ernst Kühlbrandt (1857-1933), the photograph of the local economist Karl Czekelius (1908) or the Black Church pulpit by Ludwig Hesshaimer (1913). The culmination was the research of the Austrian professor Alois Riegl (1858-1905) who, following his visit to Braşov, where he discussed the matter with the parish priest Franz Oberth (1895), began to compile an inventory of the carpets with the help of Ernst Kühlbrandt (1897). Kühlbrandt was involved both in the conservation and protection of these artifacts by commissioning the Scherg factory to clean, mend and equip them with hanging rings, and by presenting them in an exhibition in the Black Church (1910). His work was continued not only by Albert Eichhorn's (1906-1969) archival analyses of the import and public/private use of the carpets,

⁵⁰ Cristina Seitz, "Un braşovean în armata austro-ungară în Primul Război Mondial," *Țara Bârsei*, 17 (2018): 106-116.

but also by the establishment of the workshop in the town, coordinated by Era Nussbächer (1973-1998), and latter a group of conservators and restorers from the Transylvanian, Austrian, German and Hungarian regions (2010), who restored, reorganized and maintained these oriental artifacts more rigorously.⁵¹

Conclusions

Since the Middle Ages, but mainly since the second half of the 14th century, the inhabitants of Braşov have developed multiple commercial, diplomatic, military and political contacts with the Near and Middle East through the purchase and sale of exotic products (food, dyes, spices, textiles), the consultation of popular works, the involvement in anti-Ottoman campaigns, the obtaining and application of substantial rights and privileges, but also through the presence of a surprising heritage (the collection of Anatolian carpets of the Black Church).

The removal of the Ottoman suzerainty of the Autonomous Principality of Transylvania (1541-1699) and the successive seizure of political power by the Habsburgs (1699) did not affect, but perpetuated and even consolidated Braşov's status as a substantial pole of Transylvanian oriental trade and an ideal refuge from the Ottomans. The interventions at the Porte in order to obtain advantageous concessions, as well as the exotic influences in local food and trade, were founding elements of the culture of the Transylvanian Romanians from Braşov.

The historical and statistical analyses, the articles and collections in support of the soldiers on the front lines of the Romanian War of Independence (1877-1878), the literary creations, the programmatic documents, the news and the translations of oriental literature found in *Foaie pentru Minte, Inimă și*

⁵¹ Ziegler - Ziegler, *Spre lauda*, 10-11, 14, 37, 39-40, 42-47; See also Ernst Kühlbrandt, "Die alten orientalischen Teppiche der Kronstadter ev. Stadtpharrkirche," *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins für Siebenburgische Landeskunde*, 21/8-9 (1898): 101-103; Ernst Kühlbrandt, "Unsere alten Kirchenteppiche", *Die Karpathen*, 1/2 (1907): 41-43; Ibid., 10/17 (1911): 525-531; Ibid., 10/18 (1911): 570-574; Ernst Kühlbrandt, "Die alten orientalischen Teppiche in der evangelisch-sachsichen Stadtpfarrkirche zu Kronstadt," *Cultura*, 1/4 (1924): 320-328; Albert Eichhorn, "Kronstadt und der orientalische Teppich," *Forschungen zur Volks-Und Landeskunde*, 11 (1968): 72-84.

Literatură, respectively in *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, together with the information in school textbooks, demonstrate the interest of modern education and the local press in introducing pupils and people from Braşov to the culture, geography, history, linguistics, literature, politics and religion of the Near and Middle East.

The memories and oriental historical facts in the memoirs of Sextil Puşcariu, the incorporation and integration into everyday life of many exotic culinary recipes, and the establishment of the Jews as a solid community, complete the panoply of elements designed to show us that oriental otherness gradually became a familiarity. This familiarity subsequently built the identity of the powerful city of Braşov as a multicultural, multi-confessional and multi-ethnic area, a paradoxical border city and even as a confessional, ethnic, geographical and socio-economic micro-frontier distinct from Orientalism, Occidentalism and Transylvanianism.