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Dreams in History

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MIHAI OLARU

Towards a History of Romanian Dreams: Research Problems, Sources and Typology

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Abstract: *Towards a history of Romanian dreams: research problems, sources and typology.* This study suggests the establishment of a historical oneirology, a transdisciplinary field of research, dedicated to tackling the history of dreams. It succinctly presents the specific manner in which dreaming is studied by psychologists, literary historians and specialists in the history of religions, after which it discusses the motives due to which historians have more seldom addressed this subject. The study also propounds a typology of dreams, for research purposes, depending upon their nature and the specifics of the historical sources they mention. According to this typology, the oneiric manifestations can be classified into: real dreams (1), fictional dreams (2), reveries and dreams occurring during the waking state (3), interpreted dreams (4), visions, hallucinations and induced dreams (5).

Keywords: dreams in history, dreams in literature, typology of dreams, dream interpretation, historical oneirology

Rezumat: *Pentru o istorie a viselor româneşti: probleme ale cercetării, surse și tipologie.* În acest studiu se propune constituirea unei onirotologii istorice, un domeniu de studiu transdisciplinar, dedicat cercetării istoriei viselor. Este prezentat succint modul specific în care visul este abordat de psihologi, istorici literari și specialiști în istoria religiilor, după care sunt discutate motivele pentru care istoricii s-au aplecat mai puțin asupra acestui subiect. Studiul propune și o tipologie a viselor, pentru uzul cercetării, în funcție de natura acestora și de specificul surselor istorice care le menționează. Potrivit acesteia, manifestările onirice se clasifică în: vise reale (1), vise ficționale (2), reverii și visuri în stare de veghe (3), vise interpretate (4), viziuni, halucinații și vise induse (5).

Cuvinte-cheie: vise în istorie, vise în literatură, tipologia viselor, interpretarea viselor, onirotologie istorică

Dreaming and historians

Undoubtedly, dreaming represents a crucial subject for the human being, as proven easily by the trivial observation that we spend a third of our life sleeping, dreaming being our main activity during all this time¹. If

¹ James R. Lewis, *Enciclopedia visului* (Bucharest: Trei, 2006), p. 11.

we also have in view the fantasies that we entertain during the waking hours, the visions, hopes and all the products of our imagination that we invest with the name of “dreams”, then we obtain the image of an impressive continent of dreaming. As a result, the sciences which aim towards understanding the human being, if possible in its entirety, cannot ignore such an important research topic.

Naturally, dreams (almost exclusively those generated while being asleep) were analysed primarily by psychologists, with the purpose of comprehending what lies hidden behind them, that is to say beyond consciousness. Secondly, historians and literary critics have often examined dreams described in literature, since literary texts record a large number of dreams. This time, dreams that appear during the waking hours, fruits of fantasy and imagination, represented the chief focus for these researchers. Finally, historians of religion, specialists in mythology and even theologians have granted attention to dreams due to the close relationship between dreaming, myth and spiritual life².

On the other hand, proper historians, including those attracted to the history of mentalities, of representations and imaginary, to historical anthropology and to the new cultural history, have lingered less over this subject, as compared to the researchers from the domains mentioned above. And if we refer to the Romanian historiography, this lack of involvement in the fascinating issue of dreaming is even more obvious.

This situation is not accidental and can be explained with reference to more types of causes. Firstly, there are explanations that are related to the specifics of the Romanian historiography. On the one hand, for a long time there has existed a certain thematic and methodological lag between the Romanian historiography and the international one, the majority of the Romanian specialists being interested in subjects that were more “unadventurous” and traditional³. On the other hand, Romanian historians have always had at their disposal much scantier historical sources in comparison to those pertaining to, for instance, Occidental Europe or even Central Europe. This fact had even more dramatic consequences when concerning such a discreet subject as dreams, which have clearly left only a few written historical traces.

Secondly, historians’ limited interest in this domain can be explained also by more general causes, not connected to the Romanian

² See, for instance, Mircea Eliade, *Mituri, vise și mistere* (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2010).

³ Bogdan Murgescu, *A fi istoric în anul 2000* (Bucharest: ALL Educațional, 2000); Sorin Mitu, *Transilvania mea* (Jassy: Polirom, 2006), pp. 21-26.

historiography's characteristics, but which were aggravated in its case by the interaction with the elements evoked above. Most of the dreams that have reached us from the past are those noted in literary texts. Usually, they are not even dreams per se, dreamt and recorded by a real person, but are fictional dreams, imagined by poets or writers and decisively marked by the specifically literary conventions and means of expression. As a result, their studying was naturally taken over by literary sciences, with their specific methods of analysis and interpretation, due to the fact that these texts say more about the literature of an epoch and less about its dreams. The theme of the Romantic dream, for instance, has generated a very vast scientific output pertaining to literary historians specialised in studying this artistic phenomenon⁴.

At the same time, more recent dreams, those of the last hundred years (that is to say from the epoch inaugurated by the work of Sigmund Freud), were recorded in ever larger quantities, and now they were especially "authentic" dreams, the fruit of real people's sleep. But their scientific gathering and interpretation were ensured, this time, by psychologists, who created an unprecedented theoretical and methodological apparatus for researching dreams. This once again drew historians away from approaching this subject with inquiring methods specific to the historical science.

However, historians have tackled this theme with shyness not only owing to the rarity of dreams recorded in writing, but also due to other, more profound, reasons that are related to the specifics of the historical approach: firstly, dreams are ephemeral, unclear or sometimes meaningless and secondly, they seem to say too little about the epoch in which they were dreamt. If the dreams of all humans, living anytime and anywhere, are very similar, if they are moulded by the archetypes that generate universal myths of the collective unconscious, as Jung believed⁵, then what can the historian extract from them, especially as he is interested mainly in what is specific to an epoch and not in what is common to the entire humanity? The problem of the relation between dreams and the "historical reality" and between dreams and what really happened in the past at a given moment (even if that "event" comes under the heading of mentalities or even imagination), is of the greatest

⁴ Albert Béguin, *Sufletul romantic și visul: eseu despre romantismul german și poezia franceză* (Bucharest: Univers, 1998); Jacques Bousquet, *Les thèmes du rêve dans la littérature romantique: France, Angleterre, Allemagne. Essai sur la naissance et l'évolution des images* (Paris: Didier, 1964).

⁵ See Carl Gustav Jung, *Arhetipurile și inconștientul colectiv* (Bucharest: Trei, 2003).

importance to the historian. For the historian, everything that took place in the past is the object of his or her preoccupations and, consequently, at least theoretically, a history of dreams or even of the unconscious would be possible. The question is if in the dream or in the unconscious something did indeed “happen”, at a certain moment of the past, something that can be detected, described, analysed and understood by the historian. The difficulty in formulating a convincing response to this question explains to a large extent historians’ reticence towards this domain.

It must be mentioned from the very beginning that the present study is based on the premise that dreams reflect the realities and specifics of a certain historical epoch. As Albert Béguin wrote, “any epoch of the human thought could be defined, with enough profundity, by the relations that it establishes between dreaming and the waking state”⁶. And Jacques Le Goff, preoccupied, as any researcher of mentalities, with the collective dimension of the historical manifestations, legitimated the historiography of dreaming precisely by this quality it possesses: “dreaming – and this is unquestionably the first motivation of any historian interested in the problem of dreams – is a collective phenomenon”⁷. Thus, even if the “historical reality” can hardly be portrayed by this type of historical sources, a history of dreams is legitimate from a scientific viewpoint and, actually, more challenging due to the difficulties posed by such a subject.

Dreams’ classifications and their implications

In order to be able to study the manner in which dreams capture the specifics of a historical epoch, first we need to identify as precisely as possible the object of such a research endeavour, that is to say to understand, unequivocally, what a dream is. This is not an easy task, given the subject’s nature, which is, by definition, unclear. Due to the fact that the term “dreams” encompasses a very wide sphere of phenomena, ever since the antiquity, the majority of the ones who have studied dreams have tried to systematise this universe, employing numerous different systems for the classification of dreams.

In the European culture, Homer is the first to have performed such an exercise, dividing the oneiric manifestations into real dreams and deceptive dreams (those that pass through the horn gate and the ivory

⁶ Béguin, *Sufletul romantic*, p. 21.

⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *Imaginarul medieval* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1991), p. 412.

gate, respectively)⁸. This initial distinction was amplified and nuanced by numerous antique or medieval authors, such as Aristotle, Artemidorus, Macrobius, Tertullian or Saint Thomas Aquinas. Jacques Le Goff, the author of a referential study dedicated to dreams in the medieval Occident⁹, identified a general scheme comprising five categories of dreams, elaborated during the antique period and which was later adopted, nuanced or disputed by Christian authors. The most important difference is that between premonitory and non-premonitory dreams. Premonitory dreams (amongst which some are sent by God and other by various demons) can be divided into three smaller categories: enigmatic dreams (*oneiros, somnium*), that necessitate an interpretation, a qualified unravelling; clear visions, revelations (*horama, visio*), in which the foreboding is explicit and does not require a translation; oracular dreams, sent by God (*chrematismos, oraculum*), which are, most of the time, enigmatic. In their turn, non-premonitory, common dreams, generated by the human soul or having physiological, bodily causes, can be separated into dreams that reflect the past or the present (*enupnion, insomnia*) and completely illusory dreams (*phantasma, visum*)¹⁰.

The existence and abundance of such complicated typologies can be explained by the fact that the main type of cultural and intellectual approach to dreaming, throughout history, was the so-called dream interpretation. Dreams were recorded, described and analysed by most authors because they departed from the idea that dreams conceal significations that are utterly special, originating in other worlds, situated beyond the profane sphere. Until Freud's writings and modern psychology appeared, the most important role attributed to dreams was the divinatory one. Or, under these conditions, the above-mentioned typologies had the function of guiding the dreams' interpreter, because, in spite of the almost unanimous belief that dreams have a profound significance, the idea that access to this deep meaning is complicated and difficult was just as widespread. Thus, most of the time, dreams have to be translated, precisely since they are obscure, hard to understand and to believe. It is difficult for us also, just as it was for Homer, to know if a dream passed through the horn gate or through the ivory one.

⁸ See Ovidiu Moceanu, *Literatura și visul. Paradigme ale unei teme literare europene* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea "Babeș-Bolyai", Teză de doctorat, 1997), pp. 12-14; Eric R. Dodds, *Dialectica spiritului grec* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1983), the chapter "Model oniric și model cultural", pp. 125-159.

⁹ Le Goff, *Imaginarul*, the chapter "Visele", pp. 349-435.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-360.

Without any doubt, starting with Aristotle and Hippocratic medicine, there has also constantly existed a current of interpretation that can be labelled as rationalistic, which refused to attribute a supernatural, magical or divinatory significance to dreams¹¹. The motives for this refusal were however rather diverse. While medics and some antique philosophers considered that dreams were bred by the human body and soul, having mental or bodily origins (memories, emotions, physiological states), Christian theologians were opposed to dreams' interpretation for a very different reason: the belief that some dreams are deceits sent by the Devil, with the purpose of troubling the believers' minds and souls¹². As one cannot know which of the dreams have this malefic origin, it is better to guard ourselves from all of them, having certain reservations about all of them¹³.

But the "scientific" theory according to which many dreams, if not their majority, are simple illusions or phantasms lacking a deeper meaning¹⁴ was not successful at all, until today, in shaking the profoundly irrational beliefs, pursuits and practices inspired by the doctrine of dream interpretation. Paradoxically, the most "scientific", "positivist" and "experimental" modality of tackling dreams, namely the modern psychology initiated by Freud, is nothing else than another manner of "interpreting dreams" (as he even entitled his most important contribution to the domain)¹⁵. It still departed from the premise that dreams hide a series of profound significations, with the difference that the messages sent by demons or gods were now replaced by the unintelligible abysses of the unconscious.

The classifications mentioned above are important because they help us understand the manner in which dreams were defined in various epochs. On the other hand, they are not suitable for organising and studying the oneiric material that the historical sources place at our disposal. One of the reasons for this inadequacy has to do with the changing nature of the criteria that lay at the foundation of the division of dreams into real or deceptive, premonitory or common, good or bad,

¹¹ Lewis, *Enciclopedia*, pp. 35-38; Le Goff, *Imaginarul*, pp. 357-358.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 381-387.

¹³ The same type of approach can be found in the writings of the Romanian Orthodox theologian Ilie Cleopa, *Despre vis și vedenii* (Bucharest: Anastasia, 2002).

¹⁴ The most radical hypothesis of this type is the "activation-synthesis model", proposed by John Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley, according to which dreams are images generated randomly by the cerebral electric activity and thus practically lacking any sense (see Lewis, *Enciclopedia*, pp. 21-22).

¹⁵ See Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung* (Leipzig & Wien: Franz Deuticke, 1900).

visions, phantasms, apparitions or nightmares. As a result, in the present study I will suggest a clearer typology of the various manifestations to which the term “dreams” is attributed, a typology that will permit a uniform organisation of the study material, regardless of the changing criteria of the epochs in which they were recorded. This classification takes into consideration both the nature of those dreams and the types of written sources and textual discourses that documented them.

A typology of dreams for the use of historical research

1. *Real dreams.* The first category is that of “real”, proper dreams, that were effectively dreamt by different individuals over the course of history. Obviously, these dreams should be, by far, the most numerous ones, as compared to invented dreams, for instance. But real dreams are very seldom documented by historical sources and when we nevertheless have at our disposal written accounts it is very difficult to verify their accuracy and veracity. Unlike most of the other kinds of “historical facts”, whose existence can be recorded by more testimonies (which allows us to corroborate and/or to crosscheck them), a dream cannot be noted and depicted by anyone else than the one who lived it. We have no possibility of verifying the truth of his or her allegations, other than by the credit granted to his or her honesty, as well as to his or her capacity to adequately remember and represent the dream’s content.

However, although dreaming appears to be a particularly individual phenomenon, we often discover, as Jacques Le Goff, that dreams can also be collective. In other words, more individuals, unrelated and lacking opportunities to influence each other, can have the same dream or extremely similar dreams¹⁶. For the historian concerned with “real dreams”, such a situation makes a certain verification of the accounts’ veracity possible, through the comparative method, a method frequently employed by historians confronted with the laconic, fragmentary and limited character of the sources they can use.

Although they are not numerous, especially for older epochs, some historical sources that record “real dreams” nevertheless exist¹⁷. They

¹⁶ For instance, Carl Gustav Jung built his theory about the collective unconscious starting from the observation that individuals belonging to extremely different cultures have dreams with a similar content (see Jung, *Arhetipurile*, pp. 13-50).

¹⁷ Real dreams were recorded more seldom by pre-modern individuals also because they privileged the dreams that were “significant”, extraordinary and/or appeared during crucial periods, dreams capable of predicting special events and dreamt by exceptional personalities (prophets, kings, military leaders). A turn of attention towards common dreams (as well), dreamt by common people – a “democratisation

can be dispersed and present in the most diverse types of written texts, being necessary that you read hundreds of pages in order to discover one single such record of a dream. In fact, most of the time you find no such record and thus it is not surprising that historians have rarely approached such a subject. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that our ancestors have always felt the need to write down and recount the dreams they had during the night, due to the powerful emotions aroused by their oneiric and sometimes overwhelming experiences. For instance, the old Romanian culture, otherwise scarce in written texts, comprises dreams recorded as annotations on books, as is the case of the one cited below, belonging to a Transylvanian who lived in the first half of the 18th century: "Let there be known that when I went to Năcrina I dreamt a dream that a man came to me and told me that I will live fifty and eight years[;] then it was the year 1700+15[;] I have now written it down, the priest Danăj with my wife..."¹⁸.

Most frequently, the records of some dreams appear in the narrative sources that have an autobiographical and introspective character, as, for example, diaries, private correspondence or memoirs, typical of more recent epochs. There are even narrative sources that are specifically and exclusively oneiric, such as dream diaries (or journals), in which the narrator records his or her dreams systematically, over a long period of time – a veritable goldmine for researchers¹⁹.

Apart from the amplification of the volume of autobiographical sources, the last century has generated other types of compact and abundant oneiric sources as well. Such are the dreams recorded by psychologists, too little analysed so far by historians, or the dreams that were systematically gathered by ethnologists and anthropologists, especially amongst exotic populations²⁰. In addition to their abundance, these types of sources also have the great advantage of having been recorded for scientific purposes and thus, by comparison with traditional sources, they possess a much better accuracy.

of dreaming" – was possible only concurrently with the general process of democratisation that affected the entire society. The Romantic dream's explosion, for example, is connected to the importance attributed to the individual, including his affective and emotional sides.

¹⁸ Nicolae Comșa, *Manuscrise românești din Biblioteca Centrală de la Blaj* (Blaj: Miron Roșu, 1944), p. 129.

¹⁹ See Corin Braga, *Oniria. Jurnal de vise (1985-1995)* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia XXI, 2010), a massive dream diary, transposed so as to adopt a novelistic form.

²⁰ Lewis, *Enciclopedia*, passim; Jackson Steward Lincoln, *The dream in primitive cultures* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970).

2. *Fictional dreams.* The second large category of oneiric manifestations that can be the object of historical analysis is that of “invented”, imagined dreams, included, most of the time, in literary texts. The majority of the dreams that have reached us from the past were not dreamt by real people, but represent dreams of literary, fictional characters, yielded by some writers’ imagination. They are often encountered both in cultured literature and in folklore (in fairytales, for instance).

In the romanian bibliography, Ovidiu Moceanu, author of a PhD thesis and of several books regarding cultural oneirology, has granted an overwhelming attention to dreams with a fictional character, which provide the favourite material of analysis for his studies²¹.

Without any doubt, there exists a complex relationship between the dreams that we labelled “real” and the fictional ones. Oftentimes, the writer who narrates the dream of a novel character uses the content of his or her own dreams as raw material. On other occasions (and this is, probably, the most frequent situation), although the literary dream is invented in its entirety, it is created as if it were “real”, the author strictly respecting the psychological mechanisms that generate the dream, as well as the expressive conventions through which the dream is narrated by real persons. If the writer is talented and has the capacity to closely and graphically capture the oneiric reality, we can wonder: what is the difference between the “real” and the “fictional” dream?

For the historian, the answer is simple. If we intend to reconstitute some oneiric “facts” that have actually happened (for instance, what did Ionel Brătianu dream about during his prolonged siestas that preceded the nocturnal sessions of the Council of Ministers), the fictional dream does not help us in any way, as opposed to reading some letters in which this person narrates his dreams. On the other hand, if we wish to understand how people, in general, dreamt in the interwar period, the dreams comprised by the epoch’s literature (by the prose of Max Blecher or Mircea Eliade, for example) are also useful to the historian, because we can safely assume that these writers have accurately captured the manner in which people dreamt and narrated a dream during that epoch. Of course, after reading these books, the historian will try to compare Romanian dreams with those recorded in journal pages, by these authors or by others.

²¹ Moceanu, *Literatura*; Id., *Visul și Împărăția. O teologie a visului* (Cluj-Napoca: Antim, 1998); Id., *Visul și literatura* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2002); Id., *Tratatul despre vis* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2012).

3. *Reveries, dreams during the waking state.* Although, at first sight, reveries are something entirely different from dreams, which would justify their transformation into a different object of study, the bibliography of the oneiric manifestations demonstrates that dreaming and reverie are usually dealt with jointly, as if they represented a common subject, approachable with the same type of methodology. Especially the works of literary history that tackle the problem of dreams (especially fictional ones) place them alongside reveries. In the works dedicated to Romantic dreams, for instance, or in those that catalogue dreams recorded by lyrical poetry, dreams produced during sleep and those entertained during the waking state constitute a *continuum* and are impossible to dissociate. Ensuing some prestigious preoccupations from the international space²², literary historians from Romania, such as Sultana Craia²³ or Aurel Pantea²⁴, have accomplished referential works on this topic. In these studies, dreaming and reverie, reflected in the poetic creation or in the artistic prose, are analysed compactly, as phenomena having the same nature.

In the French language, where the Romanian term “reverie” originates, the kinship between the two types of phenomena is suggested by the doublet “rêve” – “rêverie”, meaning “dream” and “dreaming” during the waking state, respectively. Similarly, in the English language there exists the parallel between “dream” and “daydream”. In the Romanian language, the closeness between the two states is marked even more powerfully, because the same word, namely “vis”, designates both the nocturnal dream and the diurnal reverie. As could be remarked in the issue’s bibliography, in the Romanian language, only the plural form indicates the fact that there is however a distinction between the two, even if they are very closely connected: most of the time, for the nocturnal dream the form of plural used is “vise”, while the products of dreaming occurring during the waking state usually receive the plural label “visuri”²⁵.

Finally, the third related meaning of the terms “vis”, “rêve”, “dream” or “Traum” is that of “desire”, “hope”, sometimes even “chimera” or “utopia”, which enormously extends the sphere of manifestations to which the name “dreams” is attributed. As we are referring to a

²² Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de la rêverie* (Paris: PUF, 1960).

²³ Sultana Craia, *Vis și reverie în literatura română* (Târgoviște: Bibliotheca, 2003).

²⁴ Aurel Pantea, *Vis și reverie în poezia românească. Epifanii ale indeterminatului* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea “Babeș-Bolyai”, Ph.D. thesis, 2002); Id., *Literatură onirică. Aplicații în poezia românească* (Alba Iulia: s.n., 2004).

²⁵ Edgar Papu, “Ambivalența visului”, apud Craia, *Vis*, p. 6.

figurative, extended sense, it can be dissociated from the term “dream” (either nocturnal or appearing during the waking state), in its primary sense. As a result, hopes and desires – even if they are labelled as “vise” or “visuri” – can go beyond the interest sphere of the researcher of oneiric phenomena.

4. *Interpreted dreams.* One of the richest categories of sources, specific and compact, used by historians and other “oneirologists” in order to study dreams is represented by the so-called “books of dreams”, oftentimes ample treatises of dream interpretation (as is, for instance, that of Artemidorus from Daldis²⁶), whose origin we find in Antiquity. In the old Romanian culture as well there exist numerous works of this type, many of them preserved in manuscript form²⁷, and others that appeared later in popular editions. Writings of this type not only survived, but also presently proliferate, occupying, within the category “Dream interpretation” of the library catalogues, an ampler space than the psychological literature dedicated to this topic²⁸. Moreover, today they found a privileged shelter on the Internet, where countless websites with this profile can be consulted, websites that provide an excellent source of study for the researchers interested in the contemporary imaginary of dreaming²⁹. Usually, they are organised in the same way as printed works, in the form of dictionaries of dreams, with an attached “translation”, which facilitates in a manner that is typical of the web the searches of the users interested only in the meaning of a certain dream.

Of course, all these writings or sources cannot be considered a meta-literature regarding dreaming, capable of telling us something consistent about it, for the purpose of scientific knowledge. They can nevertheless be especially useful as primary sources, in order to study the oneiric manifestations and, most of all, the significations attributed to them, within a cultural history of dreams.

Habitually, the dreams mentioned in these works are not singular dreams, attributed to a certain person and as a result they cannot be

²⁶ Artemidoros Daldianul, *Carte de t alm acire a viselor* (Ia i: Polirom, 2001).

²⁷ See, for example, at the Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca, mss. no. 790; 3,204; 4,341.

²⁸ In recent years, representative for this genre are the works edited by the writer Eugen Mih escu (E. Mih escu, *Carte de vise. T alm aciri str avechi din Orient, t alm aciri moderne europene*, Third edition (Bucharest: C alin, 2008); Id., *Carte rom neasc  de vise. T alm aciri tradi ionale*, Third edition (Bucharest: C alin, 2008).

²⁹ www.vise.ro; www.visele.ro; www.vise-dictionar.ro; www.cevisez.ro; www.dezlegareaviselor.ro; www.interpretare-vise.ro; www.interpretarea-viselor.ro; www.oniromantie.ro; www.acvaria.com (last accessing for all the cited websites: 03.04.2013).

placed neither within the category of real dreams, but nor in that of fictional ones. We have agreed to call them “interpreted dreams” because these dreams (or, rather, these components of some dreams, divided into autonomous units of oneiric semantics) are considered fragments of repetitive, collective dreams, which can be discovered in anyone’s sleep and which are subjected to interpretations that have a universal validity.

5. *Visions, hallucinations, induced dreams.* The last category of oneiric manifestations comprises, firstly, those dreams, phantasms or apparitions whose reality is harder to accept by a sceptical observer, but which are authenticated through a powerful act of faith by those who narrate them. It is difficult to regard these manifestations as “real” dreams if our stance is external. However, they are not considered invented or fictional dreams by those (not few) who believe in their unquestionable truth. Beyond their plausible or unlikely character, these visions are seen as expressions of some essential truths.

The godlike apparitions from the Old Testament, as well as the dreams through which the divine truths were revealed to Mohammed are prototypes of this type of visions. Sometimes, as it was remarked in the case of the Old Testament, it is hard to discern if these visions appear during sleep or in the waking state³⁰. The exceptional nature of these experiences (which occasion revelations, initiatory journeys, contact with transcendence) makes such a distinction somewhat superfluous. When God shows Himself to you or you travel in one night to Jerusalem or the heavens, it does not really matter if it happens in your sleep or in another special state of altered consciousness. And this is true especially as the actors of these experiences cannot be regular people, who nurture common dreams, but are exceptional characters, gods, prophets, sovereigns or people touched by the aura of holiness.

Ensuing these divine prototypes, history had recorded a long row of such apparitions and visions. For example, Andrei Timotin has consecrated an ample analysis to visions with a political meaning present in the Byzantine culture³¹. For the Romanian area, historian Matei Cazacu is the one who has completed a well-documented inventory of phenomena of this kind, from the voivodes’ “royal” dreams, specific to medieval chronicles, to Petrache Lupu’s vision from

³⁰ The issue of dreaming from a Christian perspective is analysed at length in Moceanu, *Literatura*, pp. 18-63, with a vast bibliography; Id., *Visul și Împărăția*, passim.

³¹ Andrei Timotin, *Visions, prophéties and pouvoir à Byzance. Étude sur l'hagiographie méso-byzantine (IX^e-XI^e siècles)* (Paris: EHESS, 2010).

Maglavit³². Even when the protagonist is a wretched stuttering shepherd, his vision receives an out of the ordinary character and is possible due to a divine proximity³³.

Although they appear to have a profoundly different nature as compared to the prestigious visions from above, we have also included within this same category of dreams the hallucinations or other types of visions and oneiric experiences which distinguish themselves through the fact that they are situated beyond the accepted boundaries of "normality". Mystical ecstasy, shamanic trances, visions generated by various kinds of Oriental meditation, states of altered consciousness³⁴, hallucinations caused by drugs³⁵ – all these visionary phenomena highly valued in the contemporary period have in common with the miraculous apparitions from the past the idea that they occasion a transcendent or paranormal experience, an initiation into the mysteries of alternative worlds, situated "beyond" ours. And the common method to reach these thresholds is to parenthesise our mundane consciousness, through sleep or through other similar methods, capable of opening the horn gate of the essential oneiric revelations.

The lucid dream (namely that dream in which you are aware that you are dreaming)³⁶ could be included in the same category, as it represents an induced dream and a special oneiric experience. This categorisation is valid when the lucid dream is exploited in order to attain certain special, mystical, ecstatic states or some sort of spiritual initiation. On the other hand, a "normal" lucid dream (used even by psychologists, with therapeutic purposes) is undoubtedly a real dream and, if the characteristics that were previously enumerated are missing, it should be included in the first category of this typology and studied as such.

³² Matei Cazacu, *Minuni, vedenii și vise premonitории, în trecutul românesc* (Bucharest: Sigma, 2003).

³³ Numerous dreams, visions and apparitions connected with the religious phenomenon can be encountered at Ioanichie Bălan, *Patericul românesc. Ce cuprinde viața și cuvintele unor sfinți și cuvioși părinți ce s-au nevoit în mănăstirile românești. Secolele III-XX*, Fifth edition (Vânători: Mănăstirea Sihăstria, 2005); Mihail Urzică, *Minuni și false minuni* (Bucharest: Anastasia, 1993); Cleopa, *Despre vise*.

³⁴ Popularised especially through the literary work of Carlos Castaneda: see, for example, his novel *Arta visatului* (Bucharest: RAO, 2000).

³⁵ Whose incidence in the Romanian culture was analysed in the charming book signed by Andrei Oișteanu, *Narcotice în cultura română. Istorie, religie și literatură* (Jassy: Polirom, 2010).

³⁶ Lewis, *Enciclopedia*, pp. 252-253.

Towards a historical oneirology

The research objective that I bring to attention in the present study is that of tackling all these categories of dreams, over a long historical period or having in view certain temporal segments, with a unitary methodology, inter- and transdisciplinary. Historians must join psychologists, literary historians and specialists in the history of religions or anthropology in the effort to study oneiric manifestations. Moreover, given the historical science's synthetic nature, historians must adopt the information, methods and conceptual frameworks provided by these disciplines, in order to answer the research questions formulated from the perspective of the historical science. The establishment of a historical oneirology, as part of a comprehensive historical anthropology, represents the final goal of the type of studies that I am propounding.

This research is one pertaining to cultural history (but only half so), because it addresses the attitudes displayed towards dreaming, the meanings attributed to it and, besides all this, the manner in which these cultural aspects shape the *per se* content of dreams recorded in written sources, throughout history. On the other hand, this is also a "positivist" type of history, comprising dates and facts that have actually occurred. It has in view the identification, description and understanding of dreams that were really dreamt by people from the past, "wie es eigentlich gewesen", obviously, to the extent allowed by the historical sources and being aware that "narrating" the dream, transforming it into a text, modifies its content in a certain sense, impregnating it with various cultural significations.

There exist different levels of dreaming that are influenced or shaped by the cultural context. The profound psychological mechanisms that structure the dream are situated in the depths of the unconscious, the area that is hardest to reach by the historian. If we encounter in some dreams the longish objects described by Freud, they might have to do with some masculine sexual symbols; if we come across coloured mandalas, they are connected with Jung's archetypal images. Beyond the inherent exaggerations and the "folklorisation" of these theories, today dated, the fact that these "profound" mechanisms can also be influenced by the cultural context has been observed even in the psychological literature³⁷. During the Victorian period, when the manifestations of sexuality were hidden and repressed, it is probable that many people did indeed dream sharp objects related to their repressed sexuality. But is this interpretation valid for any historical epoch? In all likelihood, today,

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

when sexuality is expressed much more freely, this psychological mechanism is no longer necessary because, even in Jung's opinion, archetypes are merely force fields that generate certain configurations of dreams and not concrete images.

Concerning the particular shape taken by the dream, it is clear that the immediate cultural universe and the daily experience of the one who dreams will unmistakably hallmark his or her sleep as well. Cultured Greeks and Romans dreamt athletes at the Olympics, medieval people – horses and heroic actions and those of the 20th century – locomotives running on their tracks and high towers of sky-scrapers. Moving up to an even more visible level, we will notice that narrating that specific dream was marked by the epoch's discourse conventions. And in the case of fictional dreams, these expressive structures occupy an even more important place.

Historical oneirology's task is to decipher all these levels of meaning, obviously, with methods adapted to each and every one of them. Psychologists' interpretations are compulsory for understanding the manner in which the unconscious moulds our dreams, the literary-cultural ones are necessary for deciphering the significance of literary or religious texts, while historians' knowledge helps us understand the historical context that influences a dream, what were the objects (which seems easiest), but also the beliefs, ideologies and value systems of a certain epoch, present in the more turbid or clearer dreams written down by people from the past. Because dreams also can reflect the extinct age in which their ephemeral existence took place, thus helping us to know it better, in the magical mirror – less researched by historians – of dreams, reveries and visions³⁸.

³⁸ This work was supported by CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0081.

The Foreboding Dream in Romanian Folklore

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Abstract: *The foreboding dream in Romanian folklore.* This study analyses the premonitory dreams present in the Romanian folk creations, especially in the heroic epopees. The significations of these dreams are discussed within the wider context of the medieval and pre-modern Romanian popular culture, by comparison with a series of texts belonging to cultured literature. The analysis reveals the specific manner in which the popular mentality valorises dreams. On the one hand, dreams are invested with premonitory virtues and profound meanings, as in any traditional culture. On the other hand, in the analysed texts, one can notice a process of “taming”, of rationalising dreams, apparent from the appreciable dose of scepticism and mistrust concerning dreams’ premonitory value.

Keywords: dreams in folklore, premonitory dreams, Romanian folklore, dream interpretation, historical oneirology

Rezumat: *Visul prevestitor în folclorul românesc.* În acest studiu sunt analizate visele premonitorii prezente în creațiile folclorice românești, cu precădere în eposul eroic. Semnificațiile acestor vise sunt încadrate și în contextul mai larg al culturii populare românești medievale și premoderne, prin comparația cu o serie de texte aparținând literaturii culte. Analiza evidențiază modul specific în care mentalitatea populară valorizează visele. Pe de o parte, visele sunt investite cu virtuți premonitorii și sensuri profunde, la fel ca în orice cultură tradițională. Pe de altă parte, în textele analizate se observă un proces de „îmblânzire”, de raționalizare a viselor, manifestat printr-o doză apreciabilă de scepticism și de neîncredere în raport cu valoarea premonitorie a viselor.

Cuvinte-cheie: vise în folclor, vise premonitorii, folclor românesc, interpretarea viselor, onirologie istorică

Currently, dreaming constitutes a subject that is well represented in the international historiography. After it has been tackled, at first, within the history of mentalities¹, it has today given birth to a rich bibliography

¹ See, for example, Jacques Le Goff, *Pentru un alt Ev Mediu* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1986), Vol. 1, 84-121; Id., *Imaginarul medieval* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1991), 350-435.

within the so-called “cultural history”². As a result, the history of dreams deserves the inauguration of a systematic research site in the Romanian historiography as well.

The cultural history of dreams has produced a number of important works also in the specialised literature from Romania. They belong especially to some literary historians or to certain specialists in the history of culture, such as Ovidiu Moceanu³, Sultana Craia⁴ and Aurel Pantea⁵. The subject has also been tangentially touched by Andrei Oişteanu⁶, while amongst the historians the names Andrei Timotin⁷ or Matei Cazacu⁸ can be remarked. However, the presence of dreams in popular culture represents a less researched subject, both at the level of the ample works mentioned above and at the one of some less specialised investigations in this direction. We can mention only a series of older or newer titles that tap into the dreams circulated by popular books⁹.

² Mechal Sobel, *Teach Me Dreams: The Search for Self in the Revolutionary Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Dominique Bertrand, ed., *Penser la nuit (XV^e-XVII^e siècles): Actes du colloque international du CERHAC* (Paris: H. Champion, 2003); Daniel Pick, Lyndal Roper, eds., *Dreams and History: The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2004); Peer Schmidt, Gregor Weber, eds., *Traum und res publica: Traumkulturen und Deutungen sozialer Wirklichkeiten im Europa von Renaissance und Barock* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008); Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); Claire Gantet, *Der Traum in der frühen Neuzeit: Ansätze zu einer kulturellen Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Iain R. Edgar, *The Dream in Islam: From Qur’anic Tradition to Jihadist Inspiration* (New York: Bergahn Books, 2011); Annette Gerok-Reiter, Christine Walde, eds., *Traum und Vision in der Vormoderne: Traditionen, Diskussionen, Perspektiven* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012).

³ Ovidiu Moceanu, *Literatura și visul: Paradigme ale unei teme literare europene* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea “Babeș-Bolyai”, Teză de doctorat, 1997); Id., *Visul și Împărăția: O teologie a visului* (Cluj-Napoca: Antim, 1998); Id., *Visul și literatura* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2002); Id., *Tratatul despre vis* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2012).

⁴ Sultana Craia, *Vis și reverie în literatura română* (Târgoviște: Bibliotheca, 2003).

⁵ Aurel Pantea, *Vis și reverie în poezia românească: Epifanii ale indeterminatului* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitatea “Babeș-Bolyai”, Ph.D. thesis, 2002); Id., *Literatură onirică: Aplicații în poezia românească* (Alba Iulia: s.n., 2004).

⁶ Andrei Oişteanu, *Narcotice în cultura română: Istorie, religie și literatură* (Jassy: Polirom, 2010).

⁷ Andrei Timotin, *Visions, prophéties et pouvoir à Byzance: Etude sur l’hagiographie méso-byzantine (IX^e-XI^e siècles)* (Paris: EHESS, 2010).

⁸ Matei Cazacu, *Minuni, vedenii și vise premonitorii, în trecutul românesc* (Bucharest: Sigma, 2003).

⁹ Nicolae Cartoian, *Cărțile populare în literatură românească*, Vol. 2: “Epoca influenței grecești” (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română, 1974), 126-129; Mircea Anghe-

On the other hand, dreams recorded by means of folk creation have hardly drawn the specialists' attention, although the oneiric episodes present in fairytales, legends, epic songs or even in lyrical productions are frequent and well known. The popular hero, the brave one from the story or the ballad, is often depicted in oneiric or nocturnal states, tormented by premonitory dreams, caught unprepared by adversaries or, on the contrary, awoken from his sleep by a friendly warning. Nevertheless, in spite of this type of episodes' relative abundance and notoriety, the selection and systematisation of the folk texts that contain oneiric references does not represent an easy task. The narrative sequences or the lyrical episodes through which the theme of the dream is transmitted are scattered everywhere throughout the immense corpus of the Romanian folklore, which turns their systematic identification into a cumbersome activity. Moreover, the verses or phrases in which the oneiric elements appear are often sketchy, obscure, hidden by other subjects that are considered more attractive by researchers, which explains once more why specialists did not grant a special attention to this topic.

Still, there exists a manner of identifying folk references to dreams, by using the indices of motifs, types, subjects and keywords elaborated by the authors of the volumes published as part of the *National Collection of Folklore (Colecția națională de folclor)*. With the help of these valuable working instruments, I have tracked down a folk material specific to the theme under discussion, sufficiently rich and representative in order to allow us to carry out a detailed analysis, as well as to reach a number of general conclusions about this topic. The chief sources used for documenting this study were the books published by Al. I. Amzulescu¹⁰, Tony Brill¹¹, Sabina Ispas and Doina Truță¹².

lescu, "O carte populară puțin studiată: Cele 12 vise ale lui Mamer", *Limba română* 33, 6 (1984), 503-507; Al. Stănciulescu-Bîrda, *Cărți religioase populare*, Vol. 2: "Visul Maicii Domnului" (Bîrda: Cuget Românesc, 1991); Andrei Timotin, Emanuela Timotin, eds., *Cele mai vechi cărți populare în literatura română*, Vol. 6: "Scrieri eshatologice post-bizantine" (Bucharest: Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, 2002); Alexandru Mareș, ed., *Cele mai vechi cărți populare în literatura română*, Vol. 8: "Cărți populare de prevestire" (Bucharest: Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, 2003).

¹⁰ Alexandru I. Amzulescu, *Cântecul epic eroic: Tipologie și corpus de texte poetice* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1981); Id., *Balada familială: Tipologie și corpus de texte poetice* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1983).

¹¹ Tony Brill, *Tipologia legendei populare românești*, Edition published under the care of I. Oprișan, Vol. 1-2 (Bucharest: Saeculum, 2005).

¹² Sabina Ispas, Doina Truță, *Lirica de dragoste: Index motivic și topologic*, Vol. 1-4 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1985-1989).

The majority of the dreams recorded in the folk texts that I have studied have a premonitory character, are foreboding dreams, susceptible of a certain interpretation, which is capable of providing the key to understanding some important situations or events. This characteristic cannot be surprising for any researcher specialised in historical oneirology, given that almost all the dreams considered worthy of being preserved in the collective memory by the people from the past have necessarily fulfilled such functions. Beginning with the dreams recorded in writing by the old Egyptians and continuing with those from the Old Testament, with the books of dreams of the Greek-Roman Antiquity or with the "royal dreams" of the Middle Ages - we observe how this rule is obeyed throughout the epochs and the cultures. Paradoxically, even modern psychology, of a Freudian or Jungian origin (which, at first sight, distances itself from these prescientific traditions), is interested in dreams still because it desires to decipher a hidden meaning lying behind them, which necessitates an "interpretation", a "translation".

Due to the repetitive, sometimes stereotypical nature of folklore, in these texts we do not discover the richness of meanings and nuances that we encounter, for example, in dream interpretation books. In a very schematic way, the premonitory dreams from the folklore can be divided into "bad" or "good" foreboding dreams, the first category being, categorically, more frequently encountered.

In the epic heroic song, a typical episode is that of the hero whose "bad", "ugly" dream forebodes the ending of his adventurous life (in a rather transparent manner), after which the subsequent course of events, sometimes a very short one, confirms or contradicts the foreboding. The ballads *Burulean*, *Petrișor a lu' Sfârtoc*, *Voica Bălaca* or *Horea lui Vili*, for example, are constructed on this scheme: "Last night, starting at some point,/ I dreamt some bad dreams:/ I dreamt my moneybox,/ It was hanging, without its rod,/Suspended by its strap,/ My death will come;/I dreamt my pistols,/ They were hanging, without their mechanisms,/ Suspended by their straps,/ The shortening of my days;/ Other dreams I also dreamt:/ Some three-four green crows/ Sitting on top of a dead tree,/ Those are not green crows/ And they are advising boyars,/ Two hold me down, two tie me up,/ They send me to be judged/ Where the entire world is going."¹³

The dream is easily decipherable and its constituent elements are tightly related to the sombre significance it conveys directly, suggestively, without too many subtleties. The protagonist will be hanged as

¹³ Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 558.

his gun and the pistols from the dream become harmless, powerless, lacking their habitual functions and appearances (the gun without a ramrod or a firestone is extremely frequent) – thus foreboding their future uselessness in the face of the unavoidable predestined event.

Another example of a dream that is, at first sight, terrifying, filled with strange elements, which are however decoded step by step, is offered by the ballad *Haiducul Neacșu și frate-su Lupu* [*The outlaw Neacșu and his brother Lupu*]: “Lying leaning against my gun,/ I slept a little bit,/ An ugly dream I dreamt.../ Two trees joined together,/ With withered tops/ And with clean branches;/ But on the trees caw to me,/ Two crows knock on the hornbeam,/ But from the hornbeam blood flows/ So that the Gypsies were collecting it in dishes;/ I also dreamt a grey sow/ With a large snake in its mouth;/ Downhill of the sow,/ An old woman wailed!”¹⁴. After a few other verses, all these weird things are explained in detail: “Those two withered trees,/ With their tops reclining,/ Represent the gallows, the rope,/ Would it cease to exist for anyone!/ When they will hang us,/ Those two crows will caw,/ They will eat our flesh,/ The sun and moon will be surprised!/ But the sow that is grey/ And walks with a snake in its mouth,/ That is not a large snake,/ But it is the hard rope;/ And the old woman who wailed/ Downhill of the sow,/ Is our mother who is crying, is weeping,/ Under the gallows grieves for us.”¹⁵.

Obviously, these “dreams” manufactured by the authors of the folk ballads do not describe real oneiric experiences, but are fictional dreams, meant to send a certain message (“aesthetic”, ideological and mythological) to the ballad’s listeners. It is true that they tend to render an atmosphere specific to “real” dreams, by displaying strange, absurd or terrifying scenes and episodes: in the dream, guns do no work anymore, to the heroes’ consternation, ravens or crows (in Romanian: “cloncani” and “gărvani”) watch from the trees, bizarre associations appear (“I slept some more and I dreamt some more,/ I dreamt about a vulture with a snake in its mouth”¹⁶). But this nightmare is nothing but an appearance, because premonitory dreams described in folklore are built rather rudimentarily and their scenes have solely the purpose of providing, in an easily decipherable manner, a transparent allegory of the foreboded ending. As a result, the nightmarish atmosphere is in fact dissipated by the dream’s interpretation and the elements that were at

¹⁴ Ibid., 621.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 564.

first sight unusual and absurd become clear symbols of some predictable events. The popular logic rejects the dream's absurdity, by striving to transform all the strange elements into perfectly explainable signs.

The "bad" dreams from the folk creations, as well as other types of forebodings (fortune tellers' predictions, signs coming from the sky, etc.) precede and announce, almost always, the misfortunes or the dramatic events that are about to happen. These compulsory warnings fulfil an important function in popular psychology, having the role of explaining and, in this manner, of providing a meaning to the unwanted events. According to the traditional mentality, the daily misfortunes are not some simple arbitrary accidents. The fact that they are foreboded – by means of dreams, for example – permits the peasant to include them within a certain logic of things, within a destiny or scenario outlined by a superior force. In this way, the causes of the events that are on the verge of happening can be pointed out and explanations are identified, which leads, in the end, to a "rationalisation" of the unforeseeable¹⁷. By using this mechanism of explanation, comprehension and rationalisation, life's vicissitudes, at first sight absurd and unexplainable, are tamed and become bearable.

Within the context of this general need of explaining the unknown, dream interpretation, so frequent in all traditional cultures, gives the dream a meaning, thus dispersing the angst provoked by its inexplicable, potentially dangerous character. Dreams frighten, they threaten – and their interpretation represents an excellent means of dispersing these fears.

We encounter a similar mechanism of "rationalisation" and exorcisation of dreams through translations in one of the oldest popular books of the Romanian culture, *Cele douăsprezece vise în tâlcuirea lui Mamer* [*The twelve dreams in Mamer's interpretation*]. Dreams trouble and scare Emperor "Sihanci", just as they frightened the Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament or the King of Kosala in Buddhist traditions¹⁸. But the King's adviser, the scholar Mamer, comforts the sovereign: dreams are not a bad thing and their interpretation will reveal their hidden meaning, thus dispersing any fear or disquietude¹⁹. Through interpretation, dreams lose their strange and terrifying character, are understood and, as a result, tamed – an effort of "taming" the oneiric universe that we

¹⁷ Regarding the issue of causality in the traditional peasant mentality, see Ernest Bernea, *Spațiu, timp și cauzalitate la poporul român* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2005).

¹⁸ Mares, *Cele mai vechi cărți*, Vol. 8, 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

will encounter in all the attempts of deciphering dreams, including those of modern psychology.

Given the benefits presupposed by dream interpretation – in the sphere of individuals' and groups' psychological comfort – the issue of dreaming will be exploited by various discursive authorities, with the purpose of strengthening social control. The Church, for instance, will affirm and consolidate its symbolic authority by speaking to believers about dreams, by establishing norms and imposing interdictions in this direction. This is what occurs, for example, in 1667-1669, when Staico the grammarian of the Târgoviște Voivodal Church, translates from the Slavonic language a list of banned books, which includes *Socotitoriul de vise* [in English, roughly, *The dreams' calculator*]²⁰. "Sleep frightens", is shown here by enumerating the wrong and guilty, heretical interpretations of the various "signs". In other words, dream interpretation conducted by those unprepared, coming from outside the Church's authority, represents a deviation from the good faith, a guilty superstition. Due to dreams' destabilising potential, the Church desires to impose its own monopoly on interpretation in this domain as well and, as a result, it condemns and bans the books that interpret dreams. Considering that dreams could represent, at least sometimes, deceits sent by the Devil in order to trouble the believers' souls, theologians recommend treating this subject with much reservation²¹.

However, folk texts reveal a different attitude towards dreams, extremely complex and original, specific to peasant mentalities. The characters from ballads always pay a special attention to dreams and take into consideration their foreboding message. But, surprisingly, the manner in which the heroes of the popular epopees react to these forebodings signals a certain disbelief in their premonitory value; or, more correctly phrased: it shows considerable trust in the characters' ability to overcome their destiny and to invalidate, through their own actions, negative forebodings. The ballad hero disregards the omens on almost every occasion, even if they are clearly presented to him and are considered messages sent by a superior, clairvoyant force. This revolt against destiny gives him the possibility of displaying his exceptional virtues, thus avoiding what has been foreboded for him (a situation in which the foreboding can be interpreted only as a warning signal in the face of some perils that can be surmounted); other times, the foreboding

²⁰ Cartoian, *Cărțile populare*, Vol. 1, 333.

²¹ See Ilie Cleopa, *Despre vise și vedenii* (Bucharest: Anastasia, 2002).

comes true, showing that destiny follows its course, according to that ballad's or that story's logic.

Nevertheless, dreams preserve their premonitory value in both situations, regardless of whether the hero escapes or not, being perceived as warnings in the first case or as *ad litteram* forebodings, in the second case.

A text that illustrates well this interpretative versatility in what concerns dreams, as well as the refusal to grant credit to their negative message is represented by *Muscu's* ballad. The outlaw, hunted down by the posses, "Near a scrub he stopped,/ A little sleep I would like to get", a moment that occasions the foreboding dream: "An ugly dream I dreamt for myself:/ I dreamt my pistols,/ They hang, without their mechanisms;/ I dreamt my moneybox,/ It hangs, without its rod,/ My life has shortened!" However, his mother (she herself a messenger of destiny, given the fact that she is the one that awakens him, giving him the possibility of remembering his dream) belies, in extremely suggestive and convincing terms, the maleficent foreboding: " - Come on, Dinule, yourself,/ Mother, dreams of the night!/ (And she strengthened his heart...)"²². In other words, dreams that occur during the night are not worthy of being taken into consideration by a rational man and even less so by an outlaw such as *Muscu*. Of course, the text betrays her reassuring, even manipulative, intention (that of "strengthening the heart" of her son at a turning point of his perilous life). But her affirmation can be convincing because it relies on a powerful peasant conviction, on a veritable cliché: dreams should not be taken too seriously and their fearsome interpretations are downright frivolous! Even if, in the end, the black foreboding from the dream will be confirmed (*Muscu* will be killed, with a hatchet, by his traitorous companions), the hero disregards it, he is not afraid and dies courageously, by firing his "revolver" seven times - but too late however! - at his enemies.

The same mistrustful attitude regarding the dreams that forebode bad events is illustrated by the ballad *Horea lui Vili*. This time, the hero's "sweetheart" is the character who "sleeps and dreams" the premonitory dream, revealing to her loved one destiny's black threat, encoded into the same type of transparent images, encountered in numerous ballads: " - Hey, you dearest,/ Let me tell you, dearest, what I've dreamt:/ Your gilded feather/ I dreamt it scorched,/ And my new head kerchief/ I dreamt it torn in two!" The brave one's reaction is nevertheless one of categorical, violent rejection of this type of warning: "Do not lie, you

²² Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 561-562.

bitch of a dog,/ The feather is not scorched,/ Nor the head kerchief torn”.

In the following verses, the narrator insists upon confirming the o-neiric premonition, decoding it at the same time (“Down below Bârsana/ Vili lost his feather;/ Down below Rozavlea/ He lost his life as well!”). Nonetheless, the hero continues to defy the dangers, manifesting his courage and the song does not end with the outlaw’s death, but with his manly profession of faith, spread over nearly thirty verses (“I am Vili from the string,/ I do not know how to fear an entire country”²³).

In *Neacșu’s* ballad (evoked above for the terrifying, nightmarish atmosphere of its premonitory dreams), despite all the terrible forebodings, the outlaw not only expresses his total disbelief in their predictive value (“But that one is not a brave one/ Who fears such trifles”), but manages to escape from all the trials, the happy end representing an apotheosis (he saves himself in extremis while under the hanging rope and his enemies run desperately and hastily)²⁴. Things happen in the same manner in songs such as *Voica Bălaca*, *Botea* or *Petrișor a lu’ Sfârțoc*²⁵.

The situation is rather similar in the case of the first dream recorded by cultured Romanian literature, namely the Chameleon’s dream from Dimitrie Cantemir’s *Istoria ieroglifică* [*Hieroglyphic history*]²⁶, even if the narrative details are much more complex. Despite the aforementioned churchly interdictions (formulated only a few years before the *Istoria* was written), just as the ballad heroes, the characters from Cantemir’s novel are also fascinated by dreams and by interpreting their premonitory significations. But the Chameleon’s terrible dream, which sends a message that is as transparent as possible regarding the adversities that await him, as a well-deserved punishment for his moral decay, is not interpreted in a fatalistic manner by the Unicorn’s devious rival²⁷. Like the courageous men from the ballads, he refuses to think of the worst and dismisses the fears provoked by his dream, by interpreting it (in fact, by misinterpreting it) as favourably as possible. Even if popular epopees and Cantemir’s novel belonged to different cultural universes, this does not mean that the boundaries between them were unbridgeable. The manner in which the heroes of the two types of

²³ *Ibid.*, 575.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 622.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 521-528, 564-567.

²⁶ Analysed by Sultana Craia, *Vis și reverie în literatura română* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1994), 23-24.

²⁷ Dimitrie Cantemir, *Istoria ieroglifică*, Vol. 2 (Bucharest: Minerva, 1978), 5-14.

literary creations react in the face of foreboding dreams emphasises a series of similar attitudes, mentalities and behaviours.

The analysis of ballads containing premonitory oneiric elements thus spotlights an attitude that is totally different from the passivity and fatalism attributed as a rule (with various nuances) to the Romanian peasant from *Miorița*. The foreboding messages are almost always defied by the heroes' actions, as the protagonists never fear them. The ones who voice these omens (the mother, the sweetheart, the horse, the brave one himself) are always contested, alike Cassandras who are not taken seriously. But, in stark contrast to the situation depicted in the Homeric poems, destiny will often be rewritten by the heroes from the Romanian popular ballads, who, by courage and determination (sometimes in a sort of cheerful and blind unawareness), manage to invalidate the black forebodings. We decipher here, in the subtext, the peasants' huge hidden satisfaction, as they compensated through these symbolic victories, obtained in the imaginary, the frustrations caused by their repeated defeats in the real world, always suffered in the face of parvenus, boyars, the Turks or the omnipresent Evil in its different daily stances. The calamitous history, transformed into destiny by the forebodings from the dream, is avoided, contradicted and tamed at the level of the social imaginary by denying and rejecting these premonitory messages.

This "healthy" mistrust of dreams' foreboding power denotes, on the one hand, a certain rationalism, pragmatism and empirical spirit. On the other hand, it can be included in a larger culture of refusal and mistrust, specific to the moral universe of the Romanian peasants²⁸.

²⁸ This work was supported by CNCS - UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0081.

Sleep in Traditional Peasant Mentality

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Abstract: *Sleep in traditional peasant mentality.* In this article, sleep is analyzed, as it appears in Romanian folkloric texts from a historical and ethnographic perspective. The analysis highlights a number of issues concerning the specific conditions under which Romanian peasants slept and traditional attitudes about sleep. The findings show that sleep was overestimated in the peasant mentality, even if they sometimes slept syncopated in short sequences. At night, and in the case of Romanian peasants, sleep was interrupted on two occasions, as observed in other recent research on the history of nocturnal activities.

Keywords: sleep history, history of nocturnal activities, peasant mentality, Romanian folklore

Rezumat: *Somnul în mentalitatea tradițională țărănească.* În acest articol este analizat somnul, așa cum apare acesta în textele folclorice românești, dintr-o perspectivă istorică și etnografică. Analiza pune în evidență o serie de aspecte privind condițiile concrete în care dormeau țăranii români, precum și atitudinile tradiționale referitoare la somn. Concluziile arată că somnul era supravalorizat în mentalitatea rurală, chiar dacă adeseori se dormea sincopat, în secvențe scurte. Pe timpul nopții, și în cazul țăranilor români, somnul era întrerupt în două reprize, așa după cum arată și alte cercetări privitoare la istoria activităților nocturne.

Cuvinte-cheie: istoria somnului, istoria activităților nocturne, mentalitate țărănească, folclor românesc

The history of nocturnal activities, of night and sleep, generated an extensive bibliography in international literature¹. Mentioned works emphasize the idea that the phenomenon in question is an important topic for historians, being notably influenced by the historical context and cultural environment in which they are manifested. In Romanian historiography the issue of sleep from an historical perspective has not been

¹ Carlo Ginzburg, *Istorie nocturnă: O interpretare a sabatului* (Iași: Polirom, 1996); Brigitte Steger, Lodewijk Brunt, eds., *Night-time and Sleep in Asia and the West: Exploring the Dark Side of Life* (London: Routledge, 2003); Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: A History of Nighttime* (London: Phoenix, 2006); Alain Cabantous, *Histoire de la nuit: XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 2009); Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

addressed before, much less in the popular mentality. For this analysis I used folk texts containing references to sleep, which I have identified in the volumes published by Al. I. Amzulescu², Sabina Ispas and Doina Truță³.

To approximate the actual conditions in which characters in Romanian folklore sleep (and especially how these works reflect daily rural life) literary species marked stronger by the present should be queried. So are the lyrics of love and witty. If the heroes of ballads or tales sleep leaning on a sword, in the boat or on the tethered horse, these situations do not reflect the way of life of the peasants, but they illustrate the exceptional condition of historic and fantastic characters. However, literary works closely related to the present of the era in which they are conducted bear witness in this direction, similar to those provided by an archaeological or ethnographic investigation.

Even if there are not heroes of a story, peasants often sleep under makeshift conditions, like outlaws of ballads, even when we are dealing with sufficiently neutral and realistic descriptions. Sometimes the practice of specific occupations such as pastoral livelihood, requires sleeping in certain conditions: "Do not question why I am short,/ Because I have slept barefoot with the sheep,/ With my head on a heap,/ And thinking about the sheep"⁴. Sometimes, however, characters sleep outdoors on their own initiative: "Last night and the night before/ I've slept outside on the grass,/ With my head on a hassock,/ Waiting for my sweetheart to arrive"⁵; or: "I have jumped the fences of three gardens/ To arrive at my neighboring sweetheart,/ I have found the bruised grass/ And my asleep sweetheart"⁶; or "I loved a summer day,/ Spring, summer day,/ When women sleep outside/ Barefoot,/ With their hand on their breasts"⁷.

Sleeping outdoors when thermal conditions would allow it, represented a delight after winter months spent in small, dark rooms or unhealthy huts. Of course, after summer would pass, people would get back to their beds indoors: "I know it's summer when/ Anica's bed is

² Alexandru I. Amzulescu, *Cântecul epic eroic: Tipologie și corpus de texte poetice* (București: Ed. Academiei, 1981); Id., *Balada familială: Tipologie și corpus de texte poetice* (București: Ed. Academiei, 1983).

³ Sabina Ispas, Doina Truță, *Lirica de dragoste: Index motivic și tipologic*, vol. 1-4 (București: Ed. Academiei, 1985-1989).

⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, 266.

⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁶ Ibid., vol. 3, 51.

⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, 87.

outside/ [...] If Anica moved back in,/ I know summer's over"⁸ or: "The summer night was good/ And the spring night too,/ Because women sleep outside;/ But, now, since it has snowed,/ All the women have locked themselves in,/ And they locked themselves inside next to the stove,/ I will not have time to talk to them"⁹.

As we have already seen, sleeping in makeshift conditions, out of the house, in the garden, in the meadow, in the grass, etc., has not only sanitary reasons, but is in close connection with erotic activities, especially with the extramarital ones. The arrival of spring, when the girls go out to pick flowers in the forest and can be surprised during Valentine's Day, involves a release of the senses: "Look, my sweetheart crosses the hill/ Because I recognize his reins and horse/ And I recognize the dreadnought too,/ Because I have slept last night in it,/ On the warm dreadnought,/ Next to the gate,/ In my sweetheart's arms"¹⁰. In other cases, the attic of the stables is chosen, from similar reasons: "Sleep belongs to the eyes, mother/ And I can't sleep because of the longing./ - Go, my daughter, and sleep/ In the attic of the stables,/ Next to your sweetheart's chest./ [...] - Good idea, mother,/ [...] Shall your soul go to Heaven,/ Because you give me a good rest"¹¹.

Indoors, undoubtedly, sleeping conditions vary greatly, depending on the region, the historical period reflected in every folkloric text, the financial situation of the residents. Popular lyrics reflect this diversity. In general, we find a dichotomy between the "soft bed" and different types of hard surfaces considered unfriendly: "When I did not love,/ I would sleep where I would lay,/ I would lay on the bare stove/ And I would think it is a pillow"¹²; or: "Until I have met you/ I didn't know what a soft bed means,/ I would sleep on bricks,/ On the stove or on the porch/ And I would wake up content;/ But now, unfortunately,/ [...] I lay on pillows/ and it feels like wood"¹³. The comfortable bedding seems to be provided mainly by the existence of an object on which to "lay your head" either that it is a "doormat", a "bedside", different "pillows" and "small pillows", including those filled with "feathers", which are added "outfits" to cover, while in other texts we also meet the "bed of hay".

But how did sleepy characters sleep while squatting in these bunks? To answer this question, we interview other folk sources contain-

⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹² *Ibid.*, 318-319.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 319.

ning references to the theme of sleep and allow us to highlight the attitudes and nocturnal behaviors of peasants or, at least, fictional heroes with whom they identify.

Sleep occurs frequently in Romanian folkloric epic creations such as ballads or "songs of the elders". In many narratives of this kind, sleeping, falling asleep or suddenly awakening of the hero's constitute important episodes, sometimes decisive in the economy of the action. For example, in *The asleep stout* ballad, the hero sleeps in the shade of thick walnut (often this summing of good conditions for sleeping is outlined); his horse wakes up, squandering his dreams, which triggers the anger of the hero and provides actual plot of the ballad¹⁴. In *Ardiu-Crăișor* (as in many other similar situations), the fairy makes the king's sons fall asleep, which will prevent them, by this maneuver, to fulfill the tasks set by their father¹⁵. Novac's Gruia sleeps in his boat on the Danube (sometimes drunk), so that his servant can sell him to the Turks¹⁶. Heavy drunkenness is also the element that makes *Marcu Viteazu* fall asleep, leaving him to the discretion of the Turk; only the stratagem of his servant (this time in a positive version), who spansks him to wake from sleep, saves the hero from the clutches of death¹⁷.

The scheme according to which the awakening of the hero is the trigger of the story can be also found in scholarly traditions. A legend in the eighteenth century presents us Stephen the Great waking from the dream which foretold his victory, gathering his army ceaselessly and crushing the enemies by using the miraculous intervention of St. George¹⁸. It's a similar scenario to the folkloric one, where the hale unexpectedly wakes from sleep, usually spurred by a sign or a persistent messenger, followed, quickly, by his deeds of bravery.

A common situation is where the outlaw is caught asleep by a posse who pursue him or by other opponents (*Mihu the Child*, surprised by *Ianoș the Transylvanian*; outlaws *Comănac* or *Terente*, pursued by hireling; *Coman the Outlaw*, who sits and sleeps "for three months and a weekly" until surrounded by three posses;¹⁹ *Muscu*, the outlaw from Oltenia from the year "eighty-six" murdered in his sleep with axes, by his companions, etc.). The script also works for negative characters, such as tenant Călin

¹⁴ Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 74-75, 296-298.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76-77, 303-308.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 81, 327, 329.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 88-89, 368-370.

¹⁸ Matei Cazacu, *Minuni, vedenii și vise premonitории, în trecutul românesc* (București: Sigma, 2003), 57-58.

¹⁹ Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 593.

killed at night in his mansion, by the bondsmen led by *Ion the Great*²⁰. In the ballad of *Botea*, though the outlaw went asleep, he keeps his weapons within reach and the posse is running like hell as the hero terrifies his enemies even when sleeping “Green melilot leaf,/ Botea sleeps at the apiary,/ With his head on a roof,/ With his broadsword on his hand,/ With his matchlock on his side,/ With his musket next to his shoes... Who sees him is afraid,/ The crazy posse runs”²¹.

Undoubtedly, sleep and darkness of the night provide favorable conditions to the opponents of the popular hero, outlining a dangerous temporal interval, exceptional, when the hero may be caught off guard, despite its virtues. The circumstances mentioned are intended to highlight excellence of the hero, his almost invincible profile, because in the absence of such dangerous circumstances, at “daylight”, he would never be conquered by enemies. Just treachery, sleep, and night – preferably united – can slay him.

The idea that the night is a dangerous time, more so in the troubled and uncertain world of pre-modern eras, frequently occurs in cult expressions as chronics, whether internal or external. Sleep and darkness always generate a sense of insecurity felt by the nobles or princes who are awake at night because of their fear of conspiracies, betrayals and invasions²².

Mihai Racoviță, for example, “defending himself, did not sleep at night in the city, only during the day was on the court to manage his affairs, but at night he would run in the woods, and sometimes he would ride in the woods”²³. Unpleasant surprises during the night when sleep is sweet, also appear in stories and traditions devoted to famous battles such as the nighttime attack of Vlad Țepeș (favored by the sleep and daze of the Turks) or Battle of Baia, where the soldiers of King Matthias made to fall asleep by wine, are surprised and fall into the trap prepared by the watchmen of Stephen.

But unlike princes and boyars staying awake nights for the fear of the enemy, the hero never shuns benefactor and wished-for sleep. He always sleeps and it is this circumstance which will cause the epic episode, his extraordinary deeds of bravery.

²⁰ Ibid., 130-131, 544-550.

²¹ Ibid., 566.

²² Vezi Toader Nicoară, *Sentimentul de insecuritate în societatea românească la începuturile timpurilor moderne. 1600-1830*, vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Accent & Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2002), 250-259.

²³ Ibid., 257.

Beyond the indirectly encomiastic function attributed to the darkness and to sleep (which gives the hero the ability to triumph even in the most adverse conditions), surprising nonchalance and obstinacy with which heroes sleep like a log wherever they can, despite the known dangers, often highlighted by different warnings or premonitions. There may be a real obsession of seductive and pervasive sleep. *Tanislav*, for example, although he is caught by the Turks, with a "five hundred pounds" stone tied to the neck and thrown into the Danube, still indulges an irresistible sleep on the bottom, even in these totally inappropriate circumstances. A sleep from which he will not wake up until after some very special insistences: "He slept three days,/ And he wouldn't wake up,/ After three days he began feeling,/ The fleas biting him,/ His heart was aching.../ And a crab went to him/ With its big claw/ And grabbed him by his nostrils,/ And he woke up"²⁴. Similarly, another hero, *Badu the Innkeeper*, obstinately refuses to wake up, severely threatening those who would dare to disturb his sleep: "And Badu got so drunk,/ He's been asleep for three days,/ He swore to me,/ On his knife and drawshave:/ He will cut the head off,/ Of whoever wakes him up,/ May his mother fuck his cross!"²⁵.

In love poems, where the protagonists are not ballad heroes, but common people, we encounter similar situations. Sometime lovers are neglected due to sleep: "What could happen in this night/ My lover isn't arriving?/ Either he arrived home tired,/ Laid down and fell asleep"²⁶. Or: „Believe, my sweetheart, I didn't come/ Because a hard sleep hit me"²⁷. Sometimes, Eros and Morpheus are put on the same plane, equal, the two cardinal values in emotional horizons of the popular hero, who does not hesitate to consider himself "cross brother" with the sleep: "Mother and Father said/ I should give up sleep and laziness/ And give up on my sweetheart./ I won't give up neither sleep,/ Nor my sweetheart./ Sleep is my cross brother/ And my sweetheart is my sweet sister;/ Sleep is my star brother/ And my sweetheart is my comfort;/ During sleep I rest/ And I love my sweetheart"²⁸. In another verse, sleep seems to be valued and loved even more than the sweetheart, especially if she has disappointed: „I have no regrets,/ But about my sleep./ About my long sleep,/ And for who I've lost it"²⁹.

²⁴ Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 380.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 384.

²⁶ Ispas, Truță, *Lirica*, vol. 1, 615.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 133.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 198.

This overbid of sleep in Romanian folklore texts can be explained only by the existence of specific behaviors and peasant attitudes that the examples above reveal us. In the case of legends or heroic epic, peasants, authors and performers of those creations, overlap their own behavior over the ones of the protagonists (with whom they fully identify), giving them gestures, norms, values and their struggles, drawn from daily rural life. The behavior of folkloric heroes which condenses an ideal portrait of the villagers, shows the image of a farmer obsessed and in love with sleep, which he would give himself to whenever possible: "I became a young lad,/ I would put the saddle on the horse,/ I would sleep wherever I could,/ I didn't have a care in the world"³⁰! Or: "You can't get enough/ Like sweet wine during the summer/ And sleep during the spring"³¹.

All these things show that peasants like to sleep, and are always tempted to take a nap, wherever they are, to regenerate forces, but also to escape the endless and constraining time dedicated to the labor, to rest. They dream, with relish, to sleep in the thick shade of a walnut tree, where it is cool, in the valley, in the meadow, in the bushes, on a carpet of leaves, at the pub, in his boat, guarded by his horse, in the most varied situations and conditions. At first glance, the peasant is a person forced to work almost all the time³², but that thing predisposes him to overestimate sleep and to sleep whenever the circumstances allow him to do so.

This readiness for sleep is facilitated by the fact that Romanian peasants, like other traditional populations studied from this perspective, do not sleep continuously, uninterrupted, a certain number of hours a night. Their sleep, including at night, is always fragmented, by events and activities of the most diverse. The peasant is forced to keep himself awake, hearing the cries of children, the lowing of cattle, the crowing of cocks and countless other voices of the night. He maintains fire, gets up to feed the animals and (especially if it's winter) returns thereafter to his couch, goes to the bottom of the court, makes love ("And I wake up from my sleep/ To love my man"³³)... As frequently, he falls asleep again, thus teaching himself to rest with disruptions, a little, to doze, "to sleep with one eye open" to "steal" one "nap" as we always surprise folkloric

³⁰ Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 631.

³¹ Ispas, Truță, *Lirica*, vol. 2, 196.

³² See Sorin Mitu, *Geneza identității naționale la românii ardeleni* (București: Humanitas, 1997), 187-210.

³³ Ispas, Truță, *Lirica*, vol. 3, 383.

heroes ("I have leaned on my sword,/ And sleep closed my eyes"³⁴; "What did Muscu do?/ He went to a margin,/ Next to a bush,/ And slept a bit"³⁵; "Leaning on my sword,/ I have slept a little time"³⁶; "He stays and rests/ And sleeps like bunnies"³⁷).

In the absence of written sources "classical", folkloric creation is one of the few sources from which we can reconstruct how Romanian peasants spent their nights in pre-modern eras. The above analysis revealed the Romanian traditional company-specific traits (such as over-use of sleep, rest syncopated in short sequences, and to maximize the time allotted to rest) and confirmation of a number of these postulated in the international literature (i.e. sleep theory segmented into two halves, specific for the premodern populations, proposed by Roger Ekirch)³⁸.

³⁴ Amzulescu, *Cântecul*, 522.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 561.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 621.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 652.

³⁸ This work was supported by CNCS - UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0081.

Agathangelos dans les Pays Roumains au XIX^e siècle. Lectures et lecteurs

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Abstract: *Agathangelos in the Romanian countries in the nineteenth century. Readings and readers.* The study analyzes the circulation of a Greek writing of the eighteenth century, entitled *Agathangelos*, in the Romanian countries. This writing includes a collection of political visions and prophecies, in order to boost the Greek revival movement, stimulated by the Russian-Turkish wars. In Romanian countries, *Agathangelos* received wide circulation, printed and manuscript, until the late nineteenth century. Political ideas disseminated through the visions of *Agathangelos* were taken and adapted in specific ways by Romanian readers, according to their own ideological codes.

Keywords: political prophecies, book history, Greek and Romanian manuscripts, Greek emancipation, Romanian Principalities, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Rezumat: *Agathangelos în Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea. Lecturi și cititori.* Studiul analizează circulația unei scrieri grecești din secolul al XVIII-lea, intitulată *Agathangelos*, în Țările Române. Această scriere cuprinde o colecție de viziuni și profeții politice, menite să stimuleze mișcarea de rededeșteptare a grecilor, în contextul politic al războaielor ruso-turce. În Țările Române, *Agathangelos* a cunoscut o largă circulație, în formă tipărită și manuscrisă, până spre sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea. Ideile politice vehiculate prin intermediul viziunilor lui *Agathangelos* au fost preluate și adaptate în modalități specifice de cititorii români, în conformitate cu propriile lor coduri ideologice.

Cuvinte-cheie: profeții politice, istoria cărții, manuscrise grecești și românești, mișcarea de emancipare a grecilor, Principatele Române, secolele XVIII-XIX

Après la chute de Constantinople, les prophéties qui annonçaient la restauration de l'Empire byzantin furent une constante de la culture grecque sous la Turcocratie¹. Elles ont représenté pendant presque quatre

¹ Ch. T. Dimaras, « Οι χρησμοί στη νέα μας ιστορία », *Εκλογή* 3, 1947, p. 196-203 ; As-térios Argyriou, *Les Exégèses grecques de l'Apocalypse à l'époque turque (1453-1821)*, Thessalonique, 1982, notamment p. 93-113 ; John Nicolopoulos, « From *Agathangelos* to the *Megale Idea*: Russia and the Emergence of Modern Greek Nationalism », *Balkan*

siècles un facteur psychologique stimulateur pour les mouvements insurrectionnels des Grecs qui ont préparé la guerre d'indépendance. Vers le milieu du XVIII^e siècle, avec l'affirmation européenne de la Russie de Pierre le Grand et la guerre russo-turque des années 1735-1739, le prophétisme millénariste fut lié à l'espoir d'une libération de la Grèce et de Constantinople par les Russes et prit une dimension philo-russe.

Cette nouvelle dimension transparaît clairement dans le fameux *Agathangelos*, une collection de prophéties politiques rédigée en grec vers le milieu du XVIII^e siècle, le plus probablement entre 1745 et 1751, par le moine athonite Théoklitos Polyïdis (ca. 1690 - ca. 1760)². Théoklitos Polyïdis, un moine athonite né à Andrinople, fut vicaire des communautés grecques en Hongrie et envoyé officiel du Patriarcat œcuménique en Allemagne ; il fonda une église orthodoxe à Leipzig et rentra au Mont Athos après un séjour en Russie. *Agathangelos* a connu en Grèce une large diffusion manuscrite et une popularité exceptionnelle pendant tout le XIX^e siècle et même au XX^e siècle. Le texte, qui traduisait les espoirs de la diaspora grecque dans l'Europe centrale, contient, en douze chapitres, des prophéties sur la libération de la Grèce par les Russes, sur la défaite proche des Ottomans et sur le triomphe de l'Orthodoxie, attribuées à un moine orthodoxe, Hiéronyme Agathangelos, qui les aurait composées en Italie au XIII^e siècle. Un moine bénédictin les auraient ensuite traduit en italien et publié à Milan en 1555. L'ouvrage représente, en fait, la vision de l'Orthodoxie grecque, exposée sous forme d'oracles, sur la politique européenne de la première moitié du XVIII^e siècle. Toutefois, les allusions en sont souvent suffisamment vagues pour que les « prophéties » puissent être adaptées à des contextes politiques différents.

Hiéronyme Agathangelos, originaire de Rhodes, est censé avoir eu sa vision prophétique à l'âge de 79 ans, au dimanche de l'Orthodoxie (le premier dimanche du carême des Pâques), à Messine, en Sicile. Il vit alors un lion lui remettant un livre où était écrit le sort de l'Empire byzantin. Polyïdis évoque une pseudo-prophétie post-byzantine

Studies 26, 1985, p. 41-56 ; Marios Hatzopoulos, « Oracular Prophecy and the Politics of Toppling Ottoman Rule in South-Eastern Europe », *The Historical Review / La Revue historique* 8, 2011, p. 95-116.

² Voir N. G. Politis, « Αγαθάγγελος », *Ἑστία* 27, 1889, p. 38-40 ; Börje Knös, *L'histoire de la littérature néogrecque. La période jusqu'en 1821*, Uppsala, 1962, p. 461 ; Ch. T. Dimaras, *Istoria literaturii neogrecesti*, trad. M. Vasiliu, Bucarest, 1968, p. 166-167 et 230-231 ; A. Argyriou, *op. cit.*, p. 110 ; J. Nicolopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 45-56 ; Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Iluminismul neoleen*, trad. O. Cicanci, Bucarest, 2005, p. 153-156 ; Bruce Merry, *Encyclopedia of Modern Greek Literature*, Greenwood, 2004, p. 458-459 ; M. Hatzopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101 et 106-109.

commune selon laquelle l'Empire byzantin, fondé par un Constantin, trouvera sa fin par un autre Constantin, allusion transparente à Constantin le Grand et à Constantin XI Paléologue³. En apprenant la prophétie de la chute de Constantinople en 1453, Agathangelos tombe en larmes et déplore la captivité des chrétiens. Comme d'habitude dans ce type de textes, une prophétie *ex eventu* légitime des prédictions sur des événements futurs⁴. Un vieillard pieux est censé confirmer à Agathangelos que cette vision achève ce que les prophètes de l'Ancien Testament, Isaïe et Ezéchiel, avaient annoncé. La référence biblique représente, en effet, l'arrière-plan du texte de Polyïdis.

Le premier chapitre évoque l'apparition de Luther et, de manière allusive, les figures de Charles Quint, de son frère, Ferdinand I^{er}, et de son fils, Philippe II de l'Espagne, et annonce la fin des Habsbourg. Polyïdis prédit la chute de Vienne (une *wish-prophecy*) et flétrit la « misérable Autriche » et l'Allemagne protestante. En même temps, il célèbre l'ascension de Pierre le Grand et magnifie la maison des Romanov. Il prédit même qu'un cinquième Pierre, petit-fils imaginaire de Pierre III, prendra Constantinople. Polyïdis blâme le soutien que la France prêta à Charles VII, l'usurpateur du trône de l'Empire, et prédit l'échec de cette tentative dans la troisième année. Comme Charles VII régna précisément de 1742 à 1745, la rédaction de la prophétie doit être postérieure à cette date. Dans un long passage lyrique, la Russie est appelée à se réveiller et on lui prédit la victoire sur les Turcs et un avenir glorieux.

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Écrit dans un langage qui cherche à imiter le style des prophètes de l'Ancien Testament, *Agathangelos* eut un succès remarquable à la fois par voie imprimée et par voie manuscrite, notamment à partir du dernier quart du XVIII^e siècle, quand elle semble avoir animé les mouvements insurrectionnels des Grecs. La première édition, dont il ne reste qu'un seul exemplaire (à la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Thessalonique), fut

³ Gennadios Scholarios avait signalé cette coïncidence sans lui prêter néanmoins une signification prophétique (*Œuvres complètes de Georges Scholarios*, éd. L. Petit, X. A. Sideridès, M. Jugie, t. VIII, Paris, 1936, App. IV, p. 17*). Cf. Agostino Pertusi, *Fine di Bisanzio e fine del mondo. Significato e ruolo storico delle profezie sulla caduta di Costantinopoli in Oriente e in Occidente*, edizione postuma a cura di Enrico Morini, Rome, 1988, p. 61.

⁴ Pour les prophéties *ex eventu* dans la littérature byzantine, je me permets de renvoyer à mon ouvrage *Visions, prophéties et pouvoir à Byzance. Étude sur l'hagiographie méso-byzantine (IX^e-XI^e siècles)*, Paris, 2010 (Dossiers byzantins, 10), p. 119-134.

imprimé à Vienne, probablement vers 1790–1795 par les soins de Rigas Vélestinlis⁵, qui l'aurait utilisée comme moyen de mobilisation politique, bien que la seule source qui évoque la contribution de Rigas date des années 1830⁶. Des nouvelles éditions paraissent à Missolonghi en 1824, à Athènes en 1837 et en 1838, peut-être sur l'initiative du Père Constantin Oikonomos, l'idéologue de la faction conservatrice et philo-russe en Grèce⁷, à Bucarest en 1838, dans l'imprimerie de Ion Heliade Rădulescu et des frères Christidis et Zacharie Nenovici⁸, où sont imprimés de nombreux livres en grec⁹, de nouveau à Athènes en 1849, par Kosmas Phlamiatos, membre de la Philorthodoxos Hetaireia, et en 1853¹⁰, et à Bucarest en 1850¹¹.

Le texte semble avoir été diffusé surtout par voie manuscrite à la fin du XVIII^e siècle comme reflet de la propagande russe dans les Balkans lors des guerres russo-turques des années 1768–1774 et 1787–1792¹². En témoignent trois manuscrits grecs de la fin du XVIII^e siècle conservés à la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest : le ms. gr. 836, rédigé en 1799, est un recueil de textes prophétiques qui renferme, à part *Agathangelos*, l'*Apocalypse* du pseudo-Méthode, un fragment des *Oracles de Léon le Sage*, l'*Apocalypse* d'André Salos et le *Manifeste de la très pieuse impératrice Catherine Alexeïvna*¹³. Un autre manuscrit (ms. gr. 1095) renferme aussi un fragment d'une prophétie attribuée à Étienne d'Alexandrie, à côté de petits traités médicaux et d'un fragment de Sphrantzès¹⁴. Le troisième (ms. gr. 1086¹⁵) en a été trouvé à Bucarest, en 1831,

⁵ Le contenu de cette édition a été reproduit par Alexis Politis, « Η προογραφόμενη στον Ρήγα πρώτη έκδοση του Αγαθάγγελου. Το μόνο γνωστό αντίτυπο », *Ερανιστής* 42, 1969, p. 173-192.

⁶ Cf. M. Hatzopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 106 n. 29.

⁷ Cf. J. Nicolopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 48 et 50-52.

⁸ Voir Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae*, t. I, Bucarest, 1886, p. 489 (s.v. *Agatanghel*) ; Cornelia Papacostea Danielopolu, *Intellectualii români în Principate și cultura greacă, 1821-1859*, Bucarest, 1979, p. 132.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 82 et 123.

¹⁰ Cf. J. Nicolopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 48 et 53.

¹¹ Cf. B. P. Hasdeu, *op. cit.*, p. 489.

¹² Sur la propagande russe dans les Balkans à la fin du XVIII^e siècle, voir Radu G. Păun, *L'espace lecteur comme arène. De la propagande russe dans les Pays Roumains (1769-1830)*, dans *Imprimé et pouvoir. France, Russie, Principautés Roumaines (XVI^e-XIX^e siècles)*, textes réunis et présentés par Radu G. Păun, Bucarest, 2008, p. 67-88.

¹³ Nestor Camariano, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești*, t. II, Bucarest, 1940, p. 6.

¹⁴ Mihail Caratașu, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești (BAR 1067-1330)*, t. III, édition procurée par Emanuela Popescu-Mihuț et Tudor Teoteoi, Bucarest, 2004, p. 63-65.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 40-41. Le manuscrit ne contient qu'*Agathangelos* (fol. 2-14).

parmi les papiers du métropolitain Nectaire (1812-1819)¹⁶, qui l'avait hérité, probablement, de son prédécesseur, Ignace Babalos de Lesbos (1810-1812), métropolitain de la Valachie sous l'occupation russe dont l'attitude philo-russe est bien connue. Ignace soigna à ses propres frais soixante soldats russes blessés pendant les luttes menées contre les Turcs et organisa même une collecte pour l'entretien de l'armée russe¹⁷.

La diffusion d'*Agathangelos* dans les Pays Roumains dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle doit être mise en relation avec la propagande russe de Catherine II en Valachie et notamment en Moldavie pendant la guerre russo-turque de 1768-1774¹⁸. Plusieurs écrits philhellènes et philo-russes rédigés par ou attribués à Voltaire et utilisés par la propagande de Catherine II furent traduits en roumain à cette époque : *Traduction du poème de Jean Plokof, conseiller de Holstein, sur les affaires présentes, Le Tocsin des rois aux souverains de l'Europe, Sermon du Papa Nicolas Charisteski, Épître à l'impératrice de Russie Catherine II*, etc.¹⁹. Vers 1763 fut également rédigée la *Vision de kyr Daniel*, ouvrage aussitôt traduit en roumain, qui prédit, à l'instar d'*Agathangelos*, la reconquête de

¹⁶ Sur le métropolitain Nectaire, voir Constantin Erbiceanu, *Documente inedite*, « Biserica Ortodoxă Română » 16, 1892-1893, fasc. 3, p. 193-208 ; idem, *Istoria învățământului la români. Documente inedite*, « Biserica Ortodoxă Română » 16, 1892-1893, fasc. 3, p. 208-234 ; idem, *Note asupra istoriei bisericești a românilor pentru secolul XIX (continuare)*, « Biserica Ortodoxă Română » 28, 1904-1905, fasc. 4, p. 372-385 ; Teodor G. Bulat, *O carte de diaconie de la fostul Episcop de Râmnic Nectarie ajuns mitropolit*, « Biserica Ortodoxă Română » 41, 1922-1923, fasc. 5, p. 376-377.

¹⁷ Voir Iacobaș (métropolitain de Mytilène), *Ignatie din Lesbos, Mitropolitul Ungrovlahiei*, « Mitropolia Olteniei » 22, 1970, fasc. 7-8, p. 621-633. Cf. aussi C. Erbiceanu, *Note asupra istoriei bisericești a românilor pentru secolul XIX (continuare)*, « Biserica Ortodoxă Română » 28, 1904-1905, fasc. 4, p. 372-385 ; N. Iorga, *Mișcarea națională munteană contra mitropolitului grec Ignatie. Un capitol din luptele noastre naționale*, « Biserica Ortodoxă Română » 54, 1936, fasc. 11-12, p. 658-667.

¹⁸ Voir Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, « La guerre russo-turque de 1768-1774 et les Grecs », *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 3, 1965, notamment p. 530-533, étude reprise dans *Relații româno-elene. Studii istorice și filologice (secolele XIV-XIX)*, éd. L. Rados, Bucarest, 2008, ici p. 443-446. Pour le contexte général, voir Daniel Niță-Danielescu, *Războaiele dintre ruși și turci din secolul al XVIII-lea și implicațiile lor asupra Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din Moldova*, Iași, 2009.

¹⁹ Sur les traductions roumaines de ces écrits, préservées dans les ms. roum. 499 et 1408 de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine, voir A. Camariano-Cioran, *Spiritul revoluționar francez și Voltaire în limba greacă și română*, Bucarest, 1946, p. 139-140 ; eadem, « La guerre russo-turque de 1768-1774 et les Grecs », p. 444 ; Al. Dușu, *Explorări în istoria literaturii române*, Bucarest, 1969, p. 70-73 ; Violeta Barbu, « Cele mai vechi traduceri din Voltaire în limba română », *Limba română* 36, 1987, fasc. 6, p. 525-532 et 38, 1988, fasc. 1, p. 39-54.

Constantinople et le triomphe de l'Orthodoxie sous la forme d'une vision apocalyptique²⁰.

Comme la *Vision de kyr Daniel*, *Agathangelos* fut traduit en roumain quelques décennies plus tard. Il jouit pourtant d'une diffusion plus importante grâce à son impression à Jassy en 1818²¹, en pleine préparation de l'Hétairie et sans doute avec l'accord du prince Scarlat Kallimakis (1806-1819). De cette édition, dont un exemplaire se trouve à la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest, on tire l'information que le texte fut traduit du grec par un certain Cosmas, de l'évêché de Buzău, en 1806²², au tout début de la guerre russo-turque, peut-être quelque mois avant l'entrée des troupes du tsar Alexandre I^{er} en Moldavie. Le texte sera traduit de nouveau d'après l'édition grecque publiée à Bucarest en 1838 et imprimé la même année²³, sans doute sous l'influence de la propagande russe en Valachie, pendant le règne d'Alexandre D. Ghika (1834-1842).

Ces traductions, largement diffusées également par voie manuscrite, ont gagné rapidement une popularité remarquable²⁴, à tel point que, vers la fin du XIX^e siècle, Ion Luca Caragiale et B. P. Hasdeu pouvaient prendre en dérision ce fatras pseudo-prophétique, ce qui ne

²⁰ Voir Andrei Timotin, Emanuela Timotin, *Scrieri eshatologice postbizantine. Vedenia Sofianei, Viața lui Anastasie, Vedenia lui chir Daniil*, Bucarest, 2002 (Cele mai vechi cărți populare în literatura română, VI) ; A. Timotin, « La *Vision de kyr Daniel*. Liturgie, prophétie et politique au XVIII^e siècle », dans Konstantin A. Dimadis (éd.), *The Greek World between the Age of Enlightenment and the Twentieth Century*, Proceedings of the 3rd European Congress of Modern Greek Studies (Bucharest, 2-4 June 2006), t. I, Athènes, 2007, p. 127-134.

²¹ *Hrismos, adecă prorocie a înfricoșatului ieromonah Agathanghel a monahiceștii stări a marelui Vasilie*, Jassy, 1818, 26 f.

²² L'évêque de Buzău à cette période-là était Constandie Filitti (1793-1818), le neveu du métropolite de la Valachie Dosithée Filitti (1793-1810), un grec de Ioannina qui avait étudié à l'Académie princière de Bucarest. Voir C. Erbiceanu, « Mitropolitul Dositei Filitis, 1793 - 5 ianuarie 1810 », *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 26, 1902-1903, p. 1334-1342 ; Gh. M. Ionescu, « Biserica Ungrovlahiei în timpul ocupației rusești », *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 48, 1930, fasc. 3, p. 204-214.

²³ *Hrismos adecă Proorocie a Fericitului Ieromonah Agathanghel*, Bucarest, 1838, 67 p.

²⁴ Voir, par exemple, l'article anonyme *Cum se susțin pe la noi scrierile științifice*, « Transilvania » 6, 1873, pp. 58-59, où l'on demande le remplacement des ouvrages qui faisaient autorité par le passé, *Le Roman d'Alexandre, Les mille et une nuits, Till l'Espiègle, Agathangelos*, « tot cărți una și una, din care am tras noi bătrânii știința și înțelepciunea » (chacun d'eux des livres de choix, dont nous, les vieux, avons tiré notre science et notre sagesse) (Mihai Moraru, Cătălina Velculescu, *Bibliografia analitică a cărților populare laice*, t. I, Bucarest, 1976, no. 10). Cf. aussi C. Papacostea Danieopolu, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

prouve que trop bien la notoriété que l'ouvrage avait acquise à cette époque²⁵. Nous avons repéré treize copies manuscrites de l'édition de Jassy dans les archives de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest, auxquelles s'ajoutent six copies manuscrites de l'édition grecque de 1837. L'ouvrage fut copié surtout en Moldavie, lieu de parution de sa première édition, mais aussi en Valachie, à la fois par des moines et par des laïcs, par des Roumains et par des Grecs.

L'examen de ces manuscrits permet d'obtenir des informations sur les lecteurs et sur les types de lecture de l'ouvrage dans les Pays roumains au XIX^e siècle. L'un des traits les plus remarquables de sa diffusion manuscrite est sa circulation dans des recueils de textes pseudo-prophétiques, notamment en milieu grec, ce qui montre la dimension politique que la lecture de ces textes pouvait revêtir au XIX^e siècle, avant et après la guerre de l'indépendance des Grecs (1821-1830). À une seule exception près, tous les manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine de Bucarest contenant *Agathangelos* représentent, en effet, des recueils prophétiques. Le ms. gr. 752, du XIX^e siècle, renferme, à part *Agathangelos*, un fragment des *Oracles sibyllins*²⁶, alors que le ms. gr. 758, rédigé également au XIX^e siècle, contient également, à part *Agathangelos* reproduit d'après l'édition de 1837, des fragments de l'*Apocalypse* du pseudo-Méthode et des prophéties attribuées à Étienne d'Alexandrie et au patriarche Taraise, et le seizième *Oracle de Léon le Sage*²⁷. Un manuscrit grec copié à Craiova en 1822 (ms. gr. 789), en pleine guerre d'indépendance, renferme également, à part le texte d'*Agathangelos* selon l'édition de 1790, des fragments de prédictions et d'oracles²⁸.

Enfin, le ms. gr. 1034, rédigé toujours au XIX^e siècle, est un véritable compendium de textes prophétique-politiques, un des plus remarquables parmi ceux qui existent dans les fonds roumains de manuscrits²⁹. Il contient, à part *Agathangelos*, la *Vision de kyr Daniel* et une autre vision post-byzantine inédite, de 1739, attribuée à un certain Martin Zedec d'origine autrichienne. Les deux visions sont suivies d'une lettre apocryphe du sultan Mustafa III à l'impératrice Catherine II, avec la réponse de l'impératrice. Le manuscrit renferme également des nouvelles sur la campagne d'Ypsilantis en 1821 et sur les préparations des Grecs, un fragment de la nouvelle Constitution grecque votée par les ré-

²⁵ Ion Luca Caragiale, *Publicistică și corespondență*, édition procurée par M. Duță, Bucarest, 1999, p. 5 (chronique de 1875) ; B. P. Hasdeu, *op. cit.*, p. 489.

²⁶ Constantin Litzica, *Catalogul manuscriselor grecești*, Bucarest, 1909, p. 501.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 503-505.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 522.

²⁹ N. Camariano, *op. cit.*, p. 167-170.

volutionnaires au 1^{er} janvier 1822, une lettre du général russe Stronogoff adressée à la Porte, un manifeste adressé aux Américains par les Grecs, la traduction de la préface d'une pièce littéraire, la *Renaissance de la Grèce*, rédigée en allemand et attribuée au philosophe Wilhelm Krug, et une traduction de l'*Histoire du retour des Français de Russie*, ouvrage imprimé à Moscou en 1813.

Le manuscrit a appartenu à Ștefan Sihleanu, le frère du poète Alexandru Sihleanu, médecin et naturaliste, ayant obtenu son doctorat à Naples en 1876, professeur à la Faculté de Médecine de Bucarest, puis ministre de l'Instruction publique (1895), directeur du Théâtre national de Bucarest (1895-1900), et, dans les dernières années de sa vie, président de l'Athénée roumain (1921-1923)³⁰. Après sa mort, sa femme a donné le manuscrit à l'Académie Roumaine comme partie d'un don de 1800 manuscrits et volumes de sa bibliothèque. Une partie du contenu de cette bibliothèque remarquable avait été hérité par Ștefan Sihleanu de son père, le boyard Zamfirache Sihleanu, député de Râmnic élu en 1841, dont les accointances avec les autorités russes sont prouvées par une lettre de 1848 du consul russe Kotzebue au métropolite Néophite, auquel il recommande Zamfirache Sihleanu pour être nommé administrateur du district Râmnicul Sărat. La famille Sihleanu était apparentée aux Ghika, la bibliothèque de Ștefan Sihleanu renfermant également des livres hérités du *ban* Mihalache Ghika, le frère du prince Alexandre Ghika (1796-1862). Ștefan Sihleanu avait entretenu d'ailleurs, dès son adolescence, une correspondance suivie avec la fille du *ban* Mihalache Ghika, Hélène, mieux connue sous son pseudonyme littéraire, Dora d'Istria, et aussi avec Garibaldi³¹.

Écho des aspirations politiques des Grecs et des Roumains, la diffusion d'*Agathangelos* est également liée à la propagande russe dans les Pays Roumains, comme le montre aussi ce manuscrit prophétique-politique où la libération des Grecs est présentée comme une mission historique de la Russie. Cet effet de propagande se reflète également, de manière biaisée, dans la diffusion manuscrite de la traduction roumaine de l'ouvrage. L'un des manuscrits qui reproduisent l'édition parue à Jassy en 1818 est l'œuvre d'Élisée Cantacuzène, un membre de la branche des Cantacuzène établie en Russie au XVIII^e siècle, qui copie

³⁰ Cf. D. Bodin, « Câteva date noi privitoare la familia Sihleanu », *Revista istorică română* 3, 1933, p. 79-82 ; D. Paulian, *Un om de elită – Șt. Sihleanu (1 februarie 1857 – 14 octombrie 1923)*. Prelegere ținută la Universitatea Ateneul Român în ziua de 5 martie 1943, Bucarest, 1943.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

également deux ouvrages de Dimitrie Cantemir et traduit une petite histoire universelle des bibliothèques, qui n'est pas dépourvue d'intérêt, et deux vocabulaires français-roumain et russe-roumain, ainsi qu'une *Konversationslexicon* français en trois volumes, traductions restées en manuscrit³². Un autre manuscrit de la traduction roumaine d'*Agathangelos* est copié dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle par un certain Panaghiot Zagopol, un grec établi à Chişinău, qui fait partie de la Russie depuis 1812, mais qui avait vécu auparavant à Bacău³³.

Un autre trait notable de la diffusion manuscrite d'*Agathangelos* dans les Pays Roumains est la région de provenance de certains manuscrits, rédigés au nord de la Moldavie, en Bucovine, région annexée par les Autrichiens en 1775. Le manuscrit 1301, par exemple, est copié dans la période 1834-1836, par un certain Vasile Țintilă, enseignant dans le village de Tereblecea, à la frontière entre l'Ukraine et la Roumanie³⁴. Vasile Țintilă reproduit l'édition parue à Jassy en 1818 et fait sur le manuscrit l'annotation suivante : « En 1853 les Chrétiens vont prendre Constantinople des mains des Sarrasins, car 400 ans seront écoulés depuis que ceux-ci l'ont pris »³⁵, interprétation littérale, sans aucun doute, de la prophétie d'Agathangelos selon laquelle Constantinople restera sous domination ottomane pendant quatre siècles. Deux autres manuscrits (ms. 2858 et 2790), copiés en 1824 et 1852, proviennent de Suceava et du village Rotopănești, au district de Suceava³⁶. Le premier a été copié par Ioniță von Arhip, le fils du logothète Filimon von Arhip de Suceava, copiste d'un bon nombre de textes historiques, religieux et apocryphes³⁷. Cette diffusion du texte dans le nord de Moldavie sous occupation autrichienne n'est peut-être pas sans relation avec la tendance antiautrichienne de la prophétie d'Agathangelos elle-même, qui a pu décanter en effet les sentiments antiautrichiens des Roumains de Bucovine.

³² Ms. roum. BAR 1633 (fol. 41-46 : *Agathangel*). Voir Gabriel Ștrempel, *Catalogul manuscriselor românești*, t. II, Bucarest, 1983, p. 22.

³³ Ms. roum. BAR 3783 (fol. 102-124 : *Agathangel*). Voir G. Ștrempel, *op. cit.*, t. III, Bucarest, 1987, p. 242-243.

³⁴ Ms. roum. BAR 1301 (contient uniquement *Agathangel*, 21 f.). Voir G. Ștrempel, *op. cit.*, t. I, Bucarest, 1978, p. 282-283.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, fol. 120v-121 : « La anul 1853 au creștinii să ia Țarigradul înapoi din mâinile agarenilor, fiindcă se împlinește 400 de ani de când l-au luat ».

³⁶ Ms. roum. BAR 2858 (fol. 49-57v : *Agathangel*) ; 2790 (contient uniquement *Agathangel*, 24 f.). Voir G. Ștrempel, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 389-390 et 377.

³⁷ Sur l'activité de Ioniță von Arhip, voir Emanuela Timotin, *Legenda duminicii*, Bucarest, 2005, p. 198 et 249 ; eadem, *Descântecelile manuscrise românești (secolele al XVII-lea - al XIX-lea)*, Bucarest, 2010, p. 91 et 158.

Néanmoins, tous les lecteurs d'*Agathangelos* ne partageaient pas le même état d'esprit, et nous retrouvons, par exemple, parmi les copistes de la traduction roumaine, le pelletier Ioan Dobre, bedeau à l'église Batiștei de Bucarest, l'auteur d'une chronique des années 1802-1830 – préservée dans le même codex que la traduction d'*Agathangelos*³⁸ –, qui éprouve peu de sympathie pour les Hétéïristes et pour le mouvement révolutionnaire de Tudor Vladimirescu dans lesquels il ne voit qu'une menace à l'adresse des boyards et des commerçants du pays³⁹. À côté d'*Agathangelos*, Ioan Dobrescu copie également des charmes⁴⁰, un calendrier, un fragment de chronique et des textes religieux.

La dimension politique de la prophétie peut se diluer dans certains cas, dans le domaine vaste de la littérature religieuse, comme le montrent, par exemple, trois manuscrits (ms. roum. BAR 1698, 5503 et 1834), copiés respectivement en 1835, 1838 et 1827, en Valachie et en Moldavie. Ce sont des codex de littérature religieuse et apocryphe à usage personnel. Le premier est copié par le diacre Stan, le fils du logothète Iordache, du Perieți (en Valachie, au district de Ialomița), sur la demande du logothète Oprea (né en 1818)⁴¹. Le fils de ce dernier, le logothète Oprea Țiței, qui habitait Bucarest, laisse une annotation sur le manuscrit en 1886. Le troisième est l'œuvre d'un moine, un certain Isidore, qui insère *Agathangelos* dans un codex de littérature monacale⁴². Il s'agit d'un phénomène qui n'est pas isolé à cette époque. Nous avons pu montrer ailleurs, sur la base de l'examen des manuscrits roumains de la *Vision de kyr Daniel*, qu'à côté d'un certain usage politique de l'ouvrage, la plupart de ses versions manuscrites sont le résultat d'une reconversion religieuse du texte, opérée dans la communauté monastique de Paisie Veličkovski,

³⁸ Ms. roum. BAR 3404 (fol. 93-101 : *Agathanghel*). Voir G. Ștrempel, *op. cit.*, t. III, p. 117-119. La chronique de Ioan Dobre a été publiée par Ilie Corfus, « Cronica meșteșugarului Ioan Dobrescu (1802-1830) », *Studii și articole de istorie* 8, 1966, p. 309-403.

³⁹ La même attitude partage l'auteur d'une autre chronique des événements de 1821 (ms. roum. BAR 1313, fol. 288r-290r), qui a copié dans le même manuscrit un autre texte apocalyptique post-byzantin, la *Vision de Sophiani*. Voir Al. Ciorănescu, « O însemnare românească despre Eterie », *Revista istorică* 20, 1934, nr. 11-12, p. 308-311 ; Andrei Timotin, « Circulation des manuscrits en contexte historique. La traduction roumaine de la *Vision de Sophiani* », *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 42, 2004, p. 116.

⁴⁰ Voir E. Timotin, *Descântecele manuscrise românești*, p. 72, 81-84, 268 et 274-275.

⁴¹ Ms. roum. BAR 1698 (fol. 4-29 : *Agathanghel*). Voir G. Ștrempel, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 37-38.

⁴² Ms. roum. BAR 1834 (fol. 23-62 : *Agathanghel*). Voir G. Ștrempel, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 74.

en Moldavie, et transférée ensuite dans les monastères de Cernica et de Căldărușani, en Valachie⁴³.

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Les deux types de lecture, politique et religieuse, ne s'excluent pas mutuellement. L'époque de la diffusion d'*Agathangelos* est, en effet, une période charnière dans l'histoire des idées dans les Balkans : l'idéal de la restauration de Byzance et de l'Orthodoxie est progressivement remplacé dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle par l'idéal de la lutte pour l'indépendance (en Grèce, en particulier, par la Μεγάλη ιδέα⁴⁴). La cohabitation de ces idéaux a pu être marquée par des formes d'exclusion, comme la réaction du Patriarcat œcuménique à l'influence croissante des Lumières, mais certains éléments ont pourtant pu coexister grâce à une perméabilité remarquable à des usages différents. Un des meilleurs exemples en est précisément *Agathangelos*. L'étude de sa réception représente, de ce fait, un prisme privilégié pour étudier la dynamique des idées politiques dans les Balkans à la fin du XVIII^e et dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle. Issue du rêve de la restauration politique et religieuse de Byzance par la Russie, comme d'autres textes pseudo-prophétiques de cette époque, *Agathangelos* semble avoir changé de portée au fur et à mesure qu'il a changé de lecteurs, pour servir au XIX^e siècle la cause nationale des Grecs et des Roumains.

⁴³ Andrei Timotin, « Eschatologie post-byzantine et courants idéologiques dans les Balkans. La traduction roumaine de la *Vision de kyr Daniel* », dans *Peuples, États et Nations dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe*. IX^e Congrès International des Études du Sud-Est européen, 30 août-4 septembre 2004, Bucarest, 2004, p. 123-132.

⁴⁴ Voir Richard Clogg, « The Byzantine Legacy in the Modern Greek World: The Megali Idea », dans idem, *Anatolica. Studies in the Greek East in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Aldershot, 1996 (Variorum Reprints), no. IV, p. 253-281 ; Andrei Timotin, « Prophéties byzantines et modernité roumaine (XVII^e-XIX^e siècles) », dans Olivier Delouis, Anne Couderc, Petre Guran (éd.), *Héritages de Byzance en Europe du sud-est aux époques moderne et contemporaine*, Athènes, École française d'Athènes, 2013 (Mondes méditerranéens et balkaniques 4), p. 123-131.

Alexandru Macedonski (1854-1920): *Opiumtraum und Haschischtraum*

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Abstract: *Alexandru Macedonski: Dream of opium and dream of hashish.* The article analyses the presence of narcotics in the work of Alexandru Macedonski, one of the first Romanian authors to write about drugs and under their influence. For the symbolist poet, drugs were a way to retreat into an imaginary, oneiric universe. In this article, as in his book on the same subject (see note 15), Andrei Oișteanu shows that narcotics have also exercised a real fascination in Romanian culture.

Keywords: drugs in literature, literary symbolism, Alexandru Macedonski, oneiric literature

Rezumat: *Alexandru Macedonski: vis de opium și vis de hașiș.* Articolul analizează prezența narcoticelor în opera lui Alexandru Macedonski, unul dintre primii autori români care au scris despre stupefiante și sub influența acestora. Pentru poetul simbolist, stupefiantele reprezentau o modalitate de refugiu într-un univers oniric, imaginar. În acest articol, ca și în cartea sa pe aceeași temă (vezi nota 15), Andrei Oișteanu demonstrează că narcoticile au exercitat o adevărată fascinație și în cultura română.

Cuvinte-cheie: narcotice în literatură, simbolism literar, Alexandru Macedonski, literatură onirică

Mihai Zamfir zeigte auf, dass manche Tabus der rumänischen Literatur mit dem Werk Alexandru Macedonskis gefallen sein, der die literarischen Entwicklungen des 20. Jahrhunderts antizipierte: „Macedonski sah eine neue Ethik der Literatur voraus und beschrieb ungezügelte Sexszenen (z.B. in *Idile brutale* [*Brutale Idyllen*] und *Thalassa*), die man sich vorher nicht hätte vorstellen können in der Literatur, er verfasste vor allem einen Lobgesang an den menschlichen Körper. Er war angezogen von der Schönheit junger Männer und erlaubte sich, der erste rumänische Schriftsteller zu sein, der als Lobredner männlicher Homosexualität auftrat (es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass sie in der Gruppe Literato-

rului auch praktiziert wurde, wie einige Zeugen berichten). Er outete sich sogar diskret im Gedicht *Lui Cetalo Pol*¹.



Alexandru Macedonski, Zeichnung von Iosif Iser, 1910

Mihai Zamfir hat recht, aber nennt nur die sexuellen Tabus und lässt dabei andere literarische Tabus aus, die Macedonski sprengte. Der symbolistische Dichter war der erste, der offen Literatur über Rauschmittel oder mit Rauschmittel geschriebene Literatur schrieb. Adrian Marino ist der Auffassung, dass er „die Literatur der Betäubungsmittel als

¹ Mihai ZAMFIR: „Rivalul lui Eminescu“. In: *România literară*, Nr. 27, 10. Juli 2009. S. 16-18.

künstlerischen Prozess romantischer Art“ in Rumänien begründete. Macedonski war beeinflusst von Théophile Gautier (*La pipe d'opium*, 1838; *Le hachich*, 1843; *Le Club des hachichins*, 1846) und von Charles Baudelaire (*Du vin et du hachich*, 1851; *Les Paradis artificiels*, 1860). In einer Novelle, die er 1875, also als junger Mann, Constantin, schrieb, beschreibt er einen „Jungen mit blassem Gesicht“, der „in der Welt der Haschischträume“ schwelgt, nachdem er „eine leicht vergoldete Haschischpille“ genommen hat, die er sorgfältig in „einer kleinen Bonbonniere aus ziseliertem Silber“ aufbewahrte². Die Erzählung lag lange unveröffentlicht im Familienarchiv. Sie wurde erst 1967 posthum veröffentlicht³. Sehr wahrscheinlich ist der Junge in der Novelle *Visele hașișului* [*Haschischträume*] ein alter ego Macedonskis. Der Protagonist und Macedonski hatten das gleiche Aussehen und waren gleichaltrig, beide zweiundzwanzig Jahre alt.

Wie war Macedonski in so jungem Alter auf die Einnahme von Drogen gekommen? Vielleicht bei seinen Reisen durch Europa (Österreich, Schweiz und Italien) von 1870–1873, wo er, wie er selbst berichtet, lasterhafte Jugendliche kennenlernte, die „nur in Orgien“ lebten. Als Jugendlicher (sechzehn – neunzehn Jahre), versuchte er den Verführungen zu widerstehen: „Ich bin noch nicht einer wie die,/ die sich Geld und Gesundheit ruinieren“⁴.

Es ist ein episch und ethisch bekanntes Motiv, das er in der Zeit (und wesentlich expressiver auch Mihai Eminescu) poetisch umsetzte, wenn er sich über „korrupte junge Leute“ mit „verwirrtem Geist“, „schmutzigem Blut“ und „bewusstlosem Sinn“ und über Jugendliche mit „betäubter Leidenschaft“, „von der Orgie getötet“ und „verbrannt in der Trunkenheit“ beschwerte (*Junii corupți* [*Die jungen Korrupten*] 1869).

„Macedonski experimentierte – literarisch – sehr früh mit künstlich erzeugten Rauschzuständen“⁵. Opium war für ihn kein einfaches Euphorikum oder Stimulans der Vorstellungskraft, sondern Rückzug aus dem Realen und ein Refugium im Sinne eines „künstlichen Paradieses“, im Schlaf und im Vergessen. Schlüsselbegriffe bei Macedonski sind „Opiumtraum“ und „das Opium des Vergessens“: „Und über mein Ge-

² Alexandru MACEDONSKI: *Opere*, vol. VI. Herausgegeben von Adrian MARINO. Bukarest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1973. S. 311.

³ Ebd. S. 630.

⁴ Adrian MARINO: *Viața lui Alexandru Macedonski*. Bukarest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1966. S. 98.

⁵ Ders.: *Opera lui Alexandru Macedonski*. Bukarest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967. S. 180.

sicht im Schatten/ Zieht wie ein Traum von Opium/ Aus dem kalten Licht des Spiegels.“ (*Rondelul oglindei / Spiegel-rondell* 1919)

Macedonski suchte nach Originalität mit Tendenz zum Exotismus und entdeckte den euphorischen Wert der Betäubungsmittel relativ spät über die französische, vor allem aber der parnassischen, mit japanischen Einflüssen. Das *Rondelul opiumului* [*Opiumrondell*] ist für Adrian Marino ein Moment der kulturellen Synchronisierung mit der europäischen Kultur: „Durch ihn eignet sich unsere Poesie eine europäische Attitude an“⁶. Im *Rondelul opiumului* wird Narkose mit dem Osten (China) in Verbindung gebracht und beschreibt in crescendo die erste Phase, in der sich der Opiumsüchtige langsam von der schmerzenden Welt ablöst, sich dann seine Gedanken und Gefühle beruhigen, bis er um Mitternacht in Halluzinationen und in der letzten Phase in völlige Amnesie fällt: „Kommt des Nachts Mitte/ Und ihn in des Rausches Segen hebt/ Kommen die Halluzinationen/ An die er dann vollkommen glaubt,/ Wenn er das Opium des Vergessens raucht.“ (*Rondelul opiumului / Opium-rondell* 1920)

Macedonski beschrieb ekstatisch die lange Pfeife, die die rumänischen Bojaren verwendeten:

„An das Tischchen gelehnt wartet der traditionelle Ciubuc aus Jasminholz, mit einem kolossalen Mundstück aus Elfenbein, eingefasst in Gold und umrandet mit Türkisen und Saphiren, wartet fast erloschen darauf, von Lippen widerbelebt zu werden, damit er den Raum mit blauem Dunst erfüllen kann“⁷.

Zeugen berichten, dass auch er zu Hause ein orientalisches Mundstück verwendete, aus Ebenholz mit Perlmutter: „Macedonski rauchte viel – und keine gewöhnlichen Zigaretten. Er hatte ein längeres, dickeres Mundstück mit Perlmutter und Ebenholz für seine Zigaretten, ein spezielles Mundstück aus dem Orient, das man dort „imoma“ nennt“. Jedenfalls alle, die beschrieben, wie er rauchte, betonten die „Unersättlichkeit“ und „Sinnlichkeit“, mit der er den Rauch einatmete. Dumitru Teleor zum Beispiel beschrieb, dass der junge Macedonski viele seiner Gedichte im berühmten Bukarester Café Fialkowski schrieb, und „mit Unersättlichkeit an dem historischen Mundstück aus gelbem

⁶ Ders.: *Cultură și creație*. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort von Aurel SASU. Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2010. S. 149.

⁷ George CĂLINESCU: *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*. Bukarest: Minerva, 1986. S. 528.

Elfenbein zog“, von dem der Dichter behauptete, es habe einem polnischen König gehört⁸.

Es bleibt die Frage, welche Substanz Macedonski rauchte. Tabak? Opium? Haschisch? Tabak gemischt mit Opium oder Haschisch? Einer seiner Schüler, der symbolistische Dichter D. Karnabatt, sprach über das „göttliche Narkotikum“, ohne es jedoch zu nennen:

„[Macedonski] rauchte viel, sehr viel, und zog das göttliche Narkotikum tief ein, unersättlich, während sein benebelter Blick sich in den durchsichtigen Wolken aus blauem Rauch verlor, die ihn umgaben. Wenn er rauchte, wirkte er wie ein Pascha-Dichter, verträumt und sinnlich, aus Tausendundeiner Nacht“⁹.

Die Freundschaft Macedonskis zum Opium-aphinen Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești, selbst Mäzen und dekadent-symbolistischer Dichter, darf nicht vergessen werden. Seinen Anfang macht er in *Literatorul* zu Beginn des Jahres 1895. Er hat Macedonskis Gedichtband *Bronzes*, der 1897 in Paris auf Französisch erschien, finanziert und ein Vorwort geschrieben.

Nach langer Zeit in kommunistischen Gefängnissen veröffentlichte Adrian Marino zwei grundlegende Bände über den symbolistischen Dichter: *Viața lui Alexandru Macedonski* ([*Das Leben Alexandru Macedonskis*], 1966) und *Opera lui Alexandru Macedonski* ([*Das Werk Alexandru Macedonskis*], 1967). Im Mai 1968 las Mircea Eliade in Chicago mit großem Interesse die „exzellente Biographie Macedonskis von A. Marino“¹⁰. Der Literaturhistoriker hatte zwei Arbeiten zu Macedonski wieder aufgegriffen, die unveröffentlicht geblieben waren und die er geschrieben hatte, als er Assistent bei Călinescu am Lehrstuhl für Rumänische Literaturgeschichte der Universität Bukarest gewesen war. Das Vorbild – nämlich Călinescus *Viața lui Mihai Eminescu* und *Opera lui Mihai Eminescu* [*Leben bzw. Werk Mihai Eminescus*] – ist offensichtlich.

Von 1966–1967 gab es eine kurze Phase der „Liberalisierung“ der kommunistischen Regierung in Rumänien. Und dennoch fiel es Adrian Marino in dieser Zeit schwer, offen über das Verhältnis des Dichters zu Drogen zu schreiben. Das Thema war tabu. Das Kapitel, in dem es um dieses Thema hätte gehen müssen, nennt er *Vise și „stupefiante“* [*Träume und „Rauschmittel“*], wobei er Rauschmittel in Anführungszeichen setzt. Und er spricht verklausuliert über „künstliche Rauschempfindungen“

⁸ George POTRA: *Din București de ieri*, vol. I. Bukarest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1990.

⁹ Adrian MARINO: *Viața lui Alexandru Macedonski*. Bukarest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1966. S. 343.

¹⁰ Mircea ELIADE: *Jurnal*, vol. I (1941–1969). Herausgegeben von Mircea Handoca. Bukarest: Humanitas, 1993. S. 589.

und fügt vorsichtig hinzu, es habe sich nur um „literarische Experimente“ gehandelt und nicht um tatsächliche¹¹. Mit anderen Worten, ist die „Literatur der Rauschmittel“ bei Macedonski nur ein „künstlerischer Prozess romantischer Prägung“¹².

Dennoch gelingt es Marino an zwei Stellen, die untergehen in einem Dickicht aus Euphemismen, die Dinge beim Namen zu nennen:

„Aus dieser Richtung [Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire] kommen alle Anregungen, Traum auf künstlichem Weg zu kultivieren und zu intensivieren. Was dazu führt, dass er nicht nur indirekt, sondern ganz konkret die Poesie der Rauschmittel für die rumänische Literatur entdeckt, wo sie bis dato unbekannt war.“

Oder eine andere Passage bei Marino:

„So überwältigend und stark empfindet Macedonski das Bedürfnis zu vergessen, dass er zu extremen, radikalen, ekstatischen und künstlichen Mitteln greift. So entdeckt der Dichter – effektiv – die „Trunkenheit“ der Rauschmittel, die schwere, betäubende Träume auslösen und die Macedonski als Befreiung empfindet“¹³.

Marinos Mut, über dieses von der Zensur tabuisierte und von der „proletarischen Moral“ verurteilte Thema zu sprechen, ist bemerkenswert. Es ist bewundernswert, dass Marino in den Jahren 1966–1967 unter dem Druck der kommunistischen Zensur und der post-proletkultistischen Scham versucht hat, mal offen, mal verklausuliert, über Macedonskis Hang zu Rauschmitteln zu schreiben. Und das bereits zwei Jahre, nachdem er aus kommunistischer Gefangenschaft frei gekommen war.

Im Grunde nahm Marino manche Ideen eines Artikels wieder auf, den er in seiner Jugend über die *Poezia stupefiantelor* [Poesie der Rauschmittel] (*Vremea*, 30. Januarie 1944) geschrieben hatte. Es ist eine der sehr wenigen Arbeiten, die versucht, die „Literatur der Rauschmittel“ in der westlichen Kultur (Frankreich und England), aber auch die Einflüsse, die es auf die rumänische Literatur gab, darzustellen.

„Unsere Zivilisation kann noch kein Umfeld schaffen für diese Literatur – es fehlt noch an städtischer Agglomeration mit dem entsprechenden Verfall und auch das kosmopolitische Umfeld [...]. In der rumänischen Literatur bleibt das Motiv isoliert. «Opiumsüchtige» sind eine Rarität. Daniel Scavinski hat keine lesbaren Nachfolger gefunden bis

¹¹ ADRIAN MARINO: *Opera lui Alexandru Macedonski*. Bukarest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967. S. 161, 180.

¹² MACEDONSKI, a. a. O. S. 630.

¹³ MARINO, a. a. O. S. 176, 179.

Macedonski und danach, bis auf Odobescu, der durch einen Unfall opiumsüchtig geworden ist wie Quincey"¹⁴. Bis zu einem gewissen Grad nimmt mein Buch *Rauschgift in der rumänischen Kultur: Geschichte, Religion und Literatur*¹⁵ eine polemische Position gegenüber manchen in Adrian Marinos Artikel formulierten Ideen aus dem Jahre 1944 ein.

¹⁴ Ders.: *Cultură și creație*. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort von Aurel SASU. Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2010. S. 149–150.

¹⁵ Andrei OIȘTEANU: *Rauschgift in der rumänischen Kultur: Geschichte, Religion und Literatur*. Aus dem Rumänischen übersetzt von Julia Richter. Berlin: Frank & Timme Verlag, 2013. – Ders.: *Narcotice în cultura română. Istorie, religie și literatură*. Iași: Editura Polirom, 2014.

Investigating Infanticide in 18th Century Cluj

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Abstract: *Investigating infanticide in 18th century Cluj.* In the traditional perception, married life was unthinkable without the blessing of God, without births. Motherhood changed also the role played by women in the family, the children were seen as God's gift, and as an evidence of the wife's love and devotion to her husband. The birth has become over the centuries the most important obligation of the wife, fertility marking, in fact, her usefulness in the community. The situation was different, however, for women who had extramarital relations or had a certain sexual history, and Transylvanian laws prove that childbirth was influenced not only by divine will, but also by women. In this presentation we will discuss the violent birth as it is revealed by the Court Protocols of 18th century Cluj.

Keywords: infanticide, 18th century, Court Protocols, marginalized women, female deviance

Rezumat: *Investigând infanticidul în Clujul secolului al XVIII-lea.* În percepția tradițională, viața conjugală era de neconceput fără binecuvântarea lui Dumnezeu, adică fără nașteri. A rămâne gravidă însemna totodată îndeplinirea rolului din sânul familiei, copiii fiind priviți ca darul lui Dumnezeu, totodată dovada iubirii și a devotamentului soției față de soț. Astfel, nașterea a devenit de-a lungul secolelor cea mai de seamă obligație a soției, fertilitatea marcând, de fapt, utilitatea ei în cadrul comunității. Situația era însă diferită la femeile care aveau relații extraconjugale sau proveneau din structuri sociale mai modeste, iar legislația ardeleană dovedește că nu doar voința divină influența ritmul nașterilor, ci și femeile. În prezentarea de față vom aborda subiectul nașterilor violente prin prisma documentelor cu caracter legal păstrate în Protocoalele de Judecată ale orașului Cluj (sec. al XVIII-lea).

Cuvinte-cheie: infanticid, secolul al XVIII-lea, Protocoale de Judecată, marginalizare feminină, devianță feminină

Medieval historian Barbara Hanawalt's statement that the history of childhood struggle between those who write about tears and those who write about happiness has proven true in our research too. Over the past years, we have studied a wide range of published and unpublished 18th century biographical works, specifically correspondence, diaries and autobiographies, written by members of the political elite, nobility and

civil servants, such as György Bereczk (Vízaknai), Miklós Bethlen, Kata Csáky, Mihály Cserei, György Rettegi, László Vass, István Wesselényi and László Székely¹. Initially, we studied the history of women and children (fertility, birth)² only in privileged environments (nobility and wealthy bourgeoisie). Consequently, the image we formed of the daily realities of women and children was an incomplete and, one could easily say, simplified reflection of family life and gender in Transylvania. However, we remained aware that that picture might change once we widened our analytical field.

We researched town archives to collect information about the lives of women of modest birth and, moreover, marginalised women. The documents produced by the Court of Cluj far exceeded our expectations. In this paper, we address the issue of violent birth in the Court Protocols from the town Cluj³. We narrate stories from inquisitorial trials in order to contribute to the social, medical and legal understanding of infanticide. To avoid terminological confusions and misunderstandings, we define the term infanticide as the murder of a child (usually but not always a new-born) by his or her parents⁴.

On sources and context

Our analysis is based on legal acts issued after the restoration of the old judicial system of the town in 1712. Unfortunately, the Court Protocols of the town are only partly preserved. Many records have been lost, including the decisions and deliberations from before 1712 and other

¹ Andrea Fehér, *Sensibilitate și identitate în izvoarele narative maghiare din Transilvania în secolul al XVIII-lea*. (Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Argonaut, 2012).

² Andrea Fehér, *The Lord my God Has Given My Wife a Child. Childbirth in 18th Century Transylvania*. In *Transylvanian Review*. vol. XXI, Supplement No. 2, 2012; Andrea Fehér, *When the time is coming... Childbirth in 18th Century Transylvania*. In *Studia Universitatis „Babeș-Bolyai”*. Historia. Vol. 56, No.1, June 2011. 135-148.

³ Romanian National Archives Cluj County Branch, Cluj-Napoca (Direcția Județeană Cluj ale Arhivelor Naționale, Cluj-Napoca, hereafter cited as: Nat. Arch. Cluj), The Town Archive of Cluj (Arhiva Orașului Cluj, hereafter referred to as “TAC”), *Court Protocols* (Protocoale de Judecată, hereafter cited as: CP).

⁴ At the end of the century the Hungarian juridical literature did make a difference between infanticide and child murder, saying that the first one refers to cases when the new born is killed immediately after delivery or shortly after, while child-murder refer to the killing of a bigger child. However this separation existed only on a moral level, since both of them were punished in the same way by the law. Sándor Nagy, *A hajdúkerületi törvényszék ítélkezési gyakorlata az ember élete elleni bűncselekményekben 1757-1850*. In ed. Miklós Nyakas, *Hajdúsági Múzeum Évkönyve* 8. (Hajdúböszörmény, 1994). 28-29.

years at the end of the century. Therefore, we analyse the condition of women charged with and found guilty of infanticide and child murder without knowledge of all the Court Protocols from this century. We acknowledge that the known sources might change in the future and that our analysis is based only on the judicial sources in the archives of Cluj. It is also extremely important to mention, that unlike in earlier previous centuries, the trial documents we have studied contain only the deliberations, not the testimony of the witnesses or of the accused. Consequently, we do not know about the interrogations and only occasionally hear the voices of the defendants. We continue to discuss women from a male perspective, as men ran the legal system, and male scribes wrote all the narratives on female crime.

We wish to make it clear, that however convenient it would be to base our paper in social or cultural history or to use court records to understand gender as a social construct, we must insist on more traditional methods. We are aware that the literature on infanticide has shifted from numbers to feelings, from classes to individuals, from a quantitative to a cultural approach⁵. However, there are no researches on the 18th-century Transylvanian legal system, and only a few (of any nature) on women and children from this period. Therefore, we combine the classical and the new cultural approach and insist on the first to offer a better perspective on infanticide.

The two social actors in this phenomenon – women and children – are strongly represented in the records studied. So far, our investigation on deviant behaviour has been based on 264 cases of women accused of fornication (45%), adultery (34%), witchcraft (5%), infanticide (4%), theft and drunkenness (5%), poisoning (2%), swearing (2%) and slander (3%). In these cases, children are frequently present from the very beginning of their lives, mostly as unborn children (foetus) and bastards. We found dozens of cases on pregnant women whose sentences were postponed until after birth or even weaning, which shows a growing interest in protecting the foetus and new-born. We identified several cases indicating births outside the traditional family structure and 11 records concerning infanticide and child murder. There are also a significant amount of paternity suits, which increase during the second half of the century due

⁵ We are thinking on Peter C. Hoffer, N.E.H. Hull, *Murdering mothers: Infanticide in England and New England 1558-1803*. (New York, 1981), Anne-Marie Kilday, *A History of Infanticide in Britain c. 1600 to the Present*. (Palgrave – Macmillan, 2013), Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Dana Rabin, *Identity, Crime and Legal Responsibility in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Palgrave, 2005).

to changes in the legal system. We also found three trials on sexual abuse (rape, sexual intercourse with a minor and prostitution)⁶.

This paper is based on the mentioned 11 cases (1723–1798) found in the trial records. Most stemmed from investigations initiated against women suspected of infanticide (Borka Vargha, Kata Szilágyi, Mária Széplaki, Anna Szakács, Katalin Könich), followed by cases in which infanticide was confessed and punished with the death sentence (Erzsébet Szathmári, Ilona Kosztin, Mária Stefán). We also consider abandonment cases which resulted in the death of the child (Ilona Petro, Margit Borts) and one infanticide caused by negligence (Erzsébet Jakab).

Archetype of infanticide

The 11 cases featured only women as the accused, but we must emphasise that the 18th-century ego-documents do mention a single case of a combined murder (infanticide and crime) committed by man⁷. However, accusations of infanticide usually targeted women, as indicated not only by archival sources but also by literature⁸. Therefore, infanticide is considered a specifically female crime, and as we will see, executions in cases of infanticide were imposed exclusively on women in early modern Transylvania⁹. Another common element seems to have been women's marital status. Usually, those accused of infanticide were also prosecuted for adultery or illicit sexual behaviour. These women had negative images and were associated with sin and immorality. In the 11 cases, seven women were unmarried, and three had children from adulterous relationships. The remaining case concerned an infanticide committed by negligence, so it was not relevant whether the defendant had a husband. Therefore, we can conclude that illegitimacy had a strong relationship with infanticide. We would also like to emphasise that all women accused of infanticide, regardless of whether they received the death penalty, were convicted of adultery, fornication or debauchery, which

⁶ CP II/35: 31, CP II/35:80, CP II/45:134

⁷ "The poor priest from Leta [...] has impregnated a servant, and when he noticed that it was time for birth he tried to threaten her servant not to dare to give him away, but she would not listen. So he took a knife and thrust it into the woman's belly. But in the main time the girl sent for the midwife, who saw the stabbed woman lying on the ground, and sent immediately for the priest." György Rettegi, *Emlékezetre méltó dolgok*, ed. Zsigmond Jakó (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1970), 158-159.

⁸ Kilday, *A History of Infanticide in Britain*. 24.

⁹ Péter Tóth G., *A lázadók teste és az árulók büntetése. A pápai vallon zsoldosok kivégzése és a megtorlás hóhérszolgálatának kultúrtörténeti emlékei*. In ed. László Péter, *Pápai Múzeumi Értesítő*. 7 (Pápa, 1997). 35.

indicates that infanticide and illegitimacy could also be related to deviancy. Unlike the married woman, the unmarried, pregnant woman with a certain sexual history was always suspected of criminal intentions¹⁰.

Infanticide committed by negligence and abandonment

We start with the exception: the trial of *Erzsébet Jakab* (1731)¹¹. We have only this one case of *infanticide committed by negligence*, which does not fit the definition of a parental killing of a new-born as Jakab was accused *only* of causing the death of a child in her care. She was a servant caring for the child, not the child's mother, but we consider her case relevant as she went on trial for child murder. The protocols also refer to Péter Jakab, who likely gave brandy to the child who died of intoxication. We have no information about this man's fate, but we know that Erzsébet received corporal punishment and was expelled from the town. However, the deliberation determined that the child's death was not her fault, so she was punished only for negligence¹².

Ilona Petro (1723)¹³ abandoned her child (whose age the court records do not specify) to fornicate with a man. Although the act was classified as abandonment, the case is more about negligence and so can fit into our first category. We come to know that this case was not Petro's first encounter with the law as she had twice been accused of stealing. In this case, she was accused of theft, fornication and abandonment which resulted in her child's death. Curiously, the protocols mention the law against stealing (Approb.Const.III.R.XLVII.Art.2.) according to which she was punished: She was mutilated, her ears were cut off, and she was expelled from the town. We find this case extremely important as it is one of a few to refer to a specific law. Usually, women were sentenced, even to death, 'according to the law' without a mention of the applicable

¹⁰ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, 37. Shulamith Shahar, *A negyedik rend. Nők a középkorban* (Budapest: Osiris, 2004), 158. Rabin, *Identity, Crime and Legal Responsibility*, 95.

¹¹ June the 6th 1731. CP. II/34: 1.

¹² Drunken children or alcohol intoxication should not surprise us, we have two records in the autobiographical writings of the time, one in which the author admits that he used to drink regularly from 13 years. Rettegi, *Emlékezetre méltó dolgok*, 63. And another from one of the most famous nobles of the time Miklós Bethlen, who was only four years at his first drunkenness: "there I was made drunk, from which I suffered greatly and wept from the pain in my head, saying ceaselessly that there were ants in my head". Miklós Bethlen, *The Autobiography of Miklós Bethlen*, trans. Bernard Adams (London: Kegan Paul, 2004), 133.

¹³ November the 29th 1723. CP. II/86: 73-74.

law. The curious conclusion we draw about female criminality is a lack of legal reasoning. In this case, even the law mentioned was interpreted, as under the original version, the conviction would have resulted in death¹⁴. Thieves and robbers convicted of a third offense were to be hanged. Ilona was *only* marked with a stigma, and her life was spared.

Margaret Borts (1771)¹⁵ received corporal punishment for abandoning her new-born baby in vines. Again, we find references to a previous conviction, this in the Court of Bistrița for lust. In addition to child abandonment, Borts faced a charge of debauchery. She received a sentence of corporal punishment, 30-30 lashes in two rows.

Women accused of infanticide

The first case of this type dates from 1729¹⁶. Borka Vargha, also called the 'devil's pot', was charged with witchcraft, theft and fornication, but the review revealed a possible infanticide. The magistrates delayed their verdict and launched an investigation after receiving a letter about Vargha that mentioned a child. Vargha was imprisoned from September to February. This case shows that Transylvanian courts communicated with each other, looking for evidence in other localities¹⁷. These efforts sometimes delayed deliberations¹⁸, as in the abovementioned case of Petro, who already had a conviction in Bistrița. Returning to the case of Vargha, she seemed to have two children, one whom she gave away to a relative and another with whom she used to beg. When she arrived in Cluj, the child was missing, so immediately after receiving the response from the Court of Debrecen (Debretin), the magistrates accused her of infanticide. She was finally convicted of theft and spent six months in prison, after which she received a stigma, a mark made with hot iron on the forehead¹⁹. Although in England this stigma generally was used to punish sexual immorality²⁰, in Transylvania it was associated mostly with theft

¹⁴ *Approbatæ Constitutiones*. In *Magyar Törvénytár. 1540-1848. évi Erdélyi Törvények*, red. and trans. Sándor Kolosvári, Kelemen Óvári (Budapest: Franklin, 1900). 118-119.

¹⁵ June the 3rd 1771. CP. II/50: 39.

¹⁶ September the 2nd. 1729. CP II/33: 46.

¹⁷ We find such evidence on communication between courts especially in cases of bigamy and paternity processes.

¹⁸ Lajos Hajdu, *Bűnözés és büntetőbíráskodás Erdélyben (valamint Partiumban) a jozefinista büntetőjogi reformok előtti években*. In *Levéltári Közlemények* 1989/2. 231.

¹⁹ CP II/33: 83-84.

²⁰ Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker, *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England* (Routledge, 2004), 31.

and only occasionally with debauchery, for which mutilation was more common (cutting off the ears and nose of the recidivist sinner).

We would also like to draw attention to the relationship between witchcraft and infanticide, two female crimes widely discussed in western literature²¹, as they both generated identical fears of disorder²², and both the infanticide and the witch lived on the edge of society²³. However, our sources do not support this common assumption. In this century, witchcraft had nothing in common with child murder but did have a strong relation with midwifery²⁴. Of the 11 witchcraft trials in Cluj, only Vargha's also involved a charge of infanticide, and it had no supernatural meaning. In contrast, there are four mentions of women tried for witchcraft who had knowledge of childhood diseases and some healing experiences; of these, two had an important role in childbirth. Of course, in a century when childhood frequently ended in death, it was extremely convenient to blame the females involved.

The second case dates to 1737²⁵. Kata Szilágyi got pregnant during her divorce, and when she had not delivered, the judges suspected her of infanticide. According to the Court records, numerous inquisitions with many witnesses found her innocent of infanticide but guilty of adultery. We do not know what happened to the child, whether was a premature birth or the baby died immediately after birth. The fact is that there was not sufficient evidence, and we assume that no body was found, so she could not be condemned. The sentence was gentle. Szilágyi paid 29 forints but escaped any kind of corporal punishment, largely as her (ex)-husband also committed adultery. We think that Szilágyi was before the magistrates for the first time, as otherwise, women who commit adultery (married or about to divorce) received at least 30 to 50 lashes and usually were expelled from the town.

²¹ Witchcraft, infanticide and scolding were behaviors for which women were mostly persecuted. Jim Sharpe, *Women, witchcraft and the legal process*. In Kermode and Walker, *Women, Crime and the Courts*, 113.

²² Hoffer and Hull, *Murdering mothers*, 56.

²³ *Ibid.*, 28. According to Hoffer and Hull 62% of those who were accused of witchcraft acted at least once against children.

²⁴ In the 18th century Hódmezővásárhely from 46 witchcraft trials only 5 mention infanticide. Zita Barbara Sándor Benkéné, *Hódmezővásárhely egészségügyi kultúrája a 18. századi boszorkányperek alapján*. In *A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve: Studia Ethnographica* 4. (Szeged, 2003). 95-98.

²⁵ April the 8th 1737. *CP. II/ 38: 29-30.*

Mária Széplaki was charged with infanticide in 1746²⁶. According to the scribe, several inquisitions sought to prove infanticide, but she could not be found guilty of murder. Although traces of birth were clear, no body was found, and her crime could not be proven. She was sentenced only for fornication and received her punishment alongside another woman with the same conviction. Both were flogged by the executioner and expelled from the town. We would like to underline that, in cases of fornication and other light sexual deviances, common convictions were widespread. We are aware of several cases presented collectively, in which two to three women facing identical charges received the same sentences at the same time²⁷.

Anna Szakács's case in 1795 is extremely important²⁸. The text indicates that surgeons examined the child's body – the only mention of male medical intervention we have found in this century. In the common practice of the age, midwives examined pregnant women, young mothers and children²⁹. In Szakács's trial, the surgeons concluded that the baby was born prematurely at eight months. The child had no signs of pressure on its belly, and apparently, no intentions or acts by the mother led to the premature birth. This case resulted in the mildest sentence given to a woman accused of deviancy: Szakács was released without any reprimand.

The last case from this category dates to 1798³⁰, and unfortunately, we do not know its results. We found only one sentence referring to a wealthy bourgeois woman, Katalin Könich, accused of adultery and abortion. During the 17th and 18th centuries, abortion had different, even

²⁶ February the 4th 1746. *CP. II/44: 6-7*.

²⁷ Most of the verdicts are referring at two women, charged for the same type of sexual deviancy, but the Protocols contain also common verdicts for three women: *CP. II/33:111 (1730)*, *CP. II/34: 13 (1731)*, *CP. II/42:47 (1744)*, *CP. II/43:46-47 (1745)*, *CP. II/46:236 (1759)*, *CP. II/49:96 (1766)* and for four women too. *CP. II/44:23 (1746)*.

²⁸ March the 3rd 1795. *CP. II/71: 56-57-58*.

²⁹ There is a very suggestive article on homicide signed by Sándor Nagy, where the author, using a considerable amount of sources on infanticide realized a very helpful survey into the legal and medical practice of some privileged towns in Hungary (1757-1850). The 18th century part revealed that from 1792 most of infanticide cases involved male medical assistance, which performed in every case the dissection. The judges used only rarely the help of midwives in these crime investigations. Nagy, *A hajdúkerületi törvényszék ítélkezési gyakorlata*, 31-42. Nonetheless our research has proved that in infanticide investigation, just as in female sexual deviance cases midwives were indispensable.

³⁰ March the 13th 1798. *CP. II/74: 140*.

contradictory definitions³¹. In principle, some interventions in the first trimester of pregnancy were accepted³²; however, several judicial processes in early modern Transylvania and Hungary included sentences for early abortion³³.

Proven infanticide

The protocols from Cluj mention three cases of proven infanticide in the 18th century. Erzsébet Szatmári was sentenced to death in 1723³⁴. Although unmarried, she got pregnant and gave birth to 'a beautiful and healthy boy, [who] arrived on time'. Szatmári 'killed the child against her natural maternal obligations'. She did not deny the crime but tried to escape its consequences, stating that she killed the child because she was scared and was driven by the devil. She was found by some women who suspected her labour, as she disappeared from the household for a long time; as the scribe recounts, 'these things take time'. Szatmári was found with blood-covered hands and a strangled new-born child. The judges

³¹ Zita Deáky and Lilla Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete. A szülés kultúrtörténete Magyarországon (XVI-XX. század)* (Budapest: Osiris, 2005), 112.

³² We found two interesting cases when the women justified their act of murder referring to the inexistence of soul. In 1693: *I am not afraid of God's punishment, since [the child] was not jet with soul*, or another one from 1760: *it is no sin to kill a child while it has no soul*. In Balázs Gémes, *A magzatelhajtással kapcsolatos hiedelmek a magyarság körében*. In eds. Mária Vámos - Miklós Szilágyi, *A Szekszárdi Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve* 4-5. (Szekszárd, 1975). 237. This is however really curious, since the first mention of the law against abortion dates from 1732. Vilmos Földes, *Szemelvények a magyar igazságügyi orvostan történetéből*. In ed. Ákos Palla, *Az Országos Orvostörténeti Könyvtár közleményei* 18. (Budapest 1960.) 152.

³³ Endre Varga, *Úriszék XVI-XVII századi perszövegek* (Budapest: MOL, 1958). 34. Földes, *Szemelvények a magyar igazságügyi orvostan történetéből*, 152. Lajos Hajdu, *Bűntett és büntetés Magyarországon a XVIII. század utolsó harmadában* (Budapest: Magvető, 1985). 118. However it came from a different type of source, we must mention that we have found one case referring to an abortion occurred in a noble family. The case of Zsuzsanna Thoroczkay noted by her husband in his autobiography is an extremely important one: "My wife was terribly confused, she called a woman doctor, the wife of the Saxon priest, and since all signs indicated that she was pregnant, they followed some circumstances which lead to abortion". In *Székely László élete azaz eredetének, eleinek, születésének, neveltetésének, ifjúságának, megélemedett idejének s ez idők alatt lött világi viszontagságainak leírása*. Országos Széchényi Könyvtár. Budapest. Quart. Hung 4312. 733-734. So the medical support came from a well situated midwife, who had a privileged social status. The intervention had no legal consequence but it has an unfortunate spiritual and social one, this was Zsuzsanna's last child, her first children died and with them ended the Székely-family too.

³⁴ March the 10th 1723. *CP*. II/29: 22.

sentenced her to death by burial in a pit of thorns but changed their decision and had her decapitated, then her body thrown into thorns.

On a spring night of the year 1728, Ilona Kosztin asked for accommodations³⁵. After nightfall, she snuck out and gave birth in a chicken coop, then went back to sleep. In the morning, the host noticed traces of blood in the yard and, following them, found a child's corpse hidden in dung. All the evidence pointed to Kosztin, and she confessed that, during the night, she had given birth to a live child, who was crying. The child's body was examined, and the midwife delivered the final verdict, testifying that she found signs on the child's neck indicating violent death. The deliberation states that the mother killed her child intentionally, 'so the law' condemned her to death.

Our last case, which dates to 1750 and involves Mária Stefán, is by far the longest deliberation on infanticide we have found³⁶. It begins with the testimony of witnesses who found a dead new-born in a clay pit. The child had been strangled. The forensic description is detailed: 'After, I cut the rope around its neck, which had been so tight that when I cut it the skin from the child's throat crackled, the child's tongue hung from its mouth, its belly and stomach were blackened, having gathering traces, which are all obvious circumstances of a murder'. Stefán was confronted with the body of her baby and apparently could not resist the pressure, tearfully confessing the murder of her daughter. Stefán tried to escape punishment, saying that the child seemed to be too weak, although she breathed while she was buried. However, 'no living man or child could be lost [referring to abortion] or killed according to the law of God and Nature, therefore we found her guilty and sentenced her to death'. For her act, Stefán received a sentence of burial in a pit of thorns, but the judges wanted to prevent her despair and changed it to beheading.

As we see, death sentences were not necessarily unanimous. In the case of Ilona Kosztin, there is no mention of execution, while both Mária Stefán and Erzsébet Szatmári were initially sentenced to be buried alive into a pit of thorns (*so was the custom before*) but had their sentences eased and changed to decapitation. We looked for similar cases in the history of Cluj. László Pakó's article³⁷ examines infanticide there in the late 16th century but does not report any cases of proven infanticide and so no

³⁵ April the 5th 1728. CP. II/32: 23-24.

³⁶ November the 20th 1750. CP. II/44: 113-114.

³⁷ László Pakó, *Scurte vieți omenești. Pruncucideri din Cluj la sfârșitul secolului al XVI-lea*. In *Anuarul Școlii Doctorale „Istorie. Civilizație. Cultură”* (Cluj-Napoca: PUC, 2005). 203-212.

executions. However, Pakó also reviewed Transylvanian cases and found executions similar to the method mentioned in our Protocols imposed in Arieş, Sepsî, Mureş Seats and Alba Iulia in Transylvania during the 17th century³⁸. None of the sentences mentioned a specific law. However, one law did call for live burial in a pit of thorns. We consider that, in cases of infanticide, the judges from Cluj, as well as in all the examples discussed, applied the first body of German criminal law *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, which stipulated that women who gave birth in secret without asking for the help of midwives and then claimed that the child had died during delivery should be convicted of infanticide and executed by burial in thorns (art. 131)³⁹. German traveller Simplicissimus describes this type of execution, which he witnessed in Košice: 'I saw an infanticide, a wicked woman, buried alive, with her heart pierced with hot iron: there was a deep grave where this unfortunate sinner was lied, with her hands and feet fixed to the ground, her face was covered with thorn, they [the executioner and his help] held next to her heart a wooden stick until they buried her completely. Her head wasn't covered with ground, so she could hear the priest's consolation. When her time arrived, to deprive her of life, the executioner took the hot iron, and placed it right next to the wooden stick, a boy hit the bar with a hammer, and two others covered her face with ground. We could hear her cry, and we noticed with horror that the ground rose slightly above her body'⁴⁰. Infanticides could be killed in less frightening ways, such as drowning⁴¹ or hanging⁴², but certainly none had the same effect as

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁹ Tóth G., *A lázadók teste*, 34-35. Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete*, 106. A great help in our survey was given by the article of David L. Ransel, who made a very short and useful review of the history of the CCC. David L. Ransel, *Illegitimacy and Infanticide in Early Modern Russia*. In James B. Collins and Karen L. Taylor, *Early Modern Europe. Issues and Interpretations* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005). 271.

⁴⁰ Simplicissimus és Evila Cselebi adatai Kassáról In Béla Wick: *Kassa története és műemlékei* (Kassa: Wiko, 1941). 110-111. *Magyar Simplicissimus*, ed. József Turóczi-Trostler (Budapest: Művelt Nép, 1956), 162-163.

⁴¹ Attila Pandula, *Kivégzés, tortúra és megszegyenyítés a régi Magyarországon* (Eger, 1989). 16. István Bariska, *Locsmánd 16 századi kísérlete a pallosjog megszerzésére*. In Péter Dominkovits and Éva Turbul, *Házi Jenő emlékkönyv. Emlékkönyv Házi Jenő Sopron város főlevéltárosa születésének 100 évfordulója tiszteletére*. (Sopron: 1993). 211. Idem, *Bűn és büntetés a pártatlan bíróság és Kőszeg 15-17. századi büntető fórumain*. In ed. József Bana, *Bűn és bűnhődés. Győri tanulmányok 24* (Győr: 2001). 9-11.

⁴² In Scotland hanging was the favored punishment for women found guilty of child murder; however few suffered this fate after 1750, which shoves an identical humanization in the perception of infanticide. Christopher A. Whatley, *Order and*

burning⁴³ or burial on the multitudinous crowds willing to assist in this aggressive response to a violent act.

Constitutio Criminalis Carolina also provided that, if an infant's corpse were found, all the girls and widows were to be investigated, and those who had milk but no child were to be subjected to torture until they confessed⁴⁴. The concealment of pregnancy and birth were aggravating circumstances. In these inquisitions, the midwife had the most important role, examining all the suspected girls and widows under art. 36 of the CCC⁴⁵. Marriage seemed to be a perfect alibi; it was unthinkable that a married woman had any reason, except insanity⁴⁶, to murder her child, unlike women who did not have a steady income or a husband to support them. Therefore, we conclude that, even in this male-dominated system (magistrates and juries were always male), midwives, due to their special knowledge (and a unique *quasi-legal task*, that of asking unmarried pregnant women the name of their partner⁴⁷) were active, official participants in law⁴⁸. The midwife's role in these inquests is quite clear in our cases⁴⁹, although some studies show that midwives were not involved in such investigations in some Hungarian towns and counties⁵⁰.

Returning to execution, all death sentences in Cluj were changed to decapitation. The legal literature in Transylvania, especially in Hungary, suggests that, starting in the late 17th century, cases of infanticide were judged according to the *Praxis Criminalis*⁵¹, which provided for beheading in domestic violence-related crimes: the murder of the husband,

Disorder. In Elisabeth Foyster and Christopher A. Whatley, *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1600 to 1800* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2010), 197-198.

⁴³ In some Hungarian towns they burned the infanticide, just as they did in which trials. Gyula Szávay, *Győr. Monográfia a város jelenkoráról a történelmi idők érintésével*. (Győr: 1896). 208-209.

⁴⁴ Ransel, *Illegitimacy and Infanticide*, 271.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ Rabin, *Identity, Crime and Legal Responsibility*, 97.

⁴⁷ Kermode and Walker, *Women, Crime and the Courts*, 29.

⁴⁸ Sharpe, *Women, witchcraft and the legal process*, 119.

⁴⁹ Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete*, 110. This is also supported by the western literature too Deborah A. Symonds, *Death, Birth and Marriage*. In Foyster and Whatley, *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland*, 94. The midwives were selected not only for their skills, but also for their credibility, so the town's midwives were always respected persons of their community. Kermode and Walker, *Women, Crime and the Courts*, 15.

⁵⁰ Mária Kéring, *Pest megye büntetőbíráskodása a XVII-XVIII században*. In ed. Tibor Egey, *Fejezetek Pest megye történetéből. Tanulmányok*. (Budapest, 1990). 208.

⁵¹ István Kállay, *Városi bíráskodás Magyarországon 1686-1848* (Budapest: Osiris, 1996), 207-209.

wife or child (art. 65–68)⁵². This source could explain the final executions and suggests that both laws were known and used, even if they were not mentioned.

Events in the second half of the century are even more relevant to our research. Although there are no researches on the 18th-century Transylvanian legal system, especially homicide cases, we cannot omit a small but significant survey by Lajos Hajdu. Analysing the modernisation of the Hungarian jurisdiction, Hajdu wrote two books on the Hungarian legal system in the last three decades of the 18th century, as well as an article reporting cases of infanticide in Transylvania during the late 18th century. Juana Flora from Alba County was sentenced in 1783 to death for infanticide. She did not conceal her pregnancy but delivered in secret and then disguised herself as pregnant. The child died before neighbours and family realised the deception. The new-born was not killed but abandoned and found a few days later after being snatched by pigs. Flora was sentenced to death by beheading but appealed the Court's decision and had a new trial after five months. Flora gathered four witnesses who testified in her favour, so her initial sentence was commuted, and she received only three months in prison and 50 lashes. In 1783, Judit Hatos from Odorhei received an identical, mild sentence: prison⁵³. The court punished the negligence of Borbála Farkas (she scalded her baby with boiling water) with corporal punishment: 50 lashes in 4 rows⁵⁴.

What reasoning allowed these women to escape so easily? In legislation, the winds of changes were felt in the first half of the 18th century. We wish to stress that, in Szatmári's and Stefán's cases, we can detect an interest in feelings, especially in the description of their despair. Moreover, in the last case, the sentence was eased because of the judge's highly sensible attitude towards the accused. Therefore, we can conclude that, as in western literature, emotion invaded court rooms. However, emotion did not necessarily lead to acquittal; only at the end of the 18th century did women start to be perceived as victims, not criminals. In 1769, Maria Theresa banned the death penalty in cases of infanticide committed by mothers in order to prevent the crime. The decree ordered magistrates, counties, seats and royal towns to monitor all pregnant

⁵² György Bónis, *Buda és Pest bírósági gyakorlata a törökök kiűzése után 1686-1708* (Budapest, 1962). 141-142. Varga, *Úriszék*, 34.

⁵³ Life in prison was not easy at all, and even if these lives were spared a few years in prison could sometimes mean nothing less than a long and painful death. Hajdu, *Büntett és büntetés Magyarországon*, 418.

⁵⁴ *Idem.*, *Bűnözés és büntetőbírászkodás Erdélyben*, 261.

women, especially those who were unmarried, until the time of birth. Second, all births must take place under the supervision of a midwife. Third, a stranger with signs of pregnancy who came to town was to be subjected to interrogations. The inquisitors should inquire about the child's father, who had material obligations towards the pregnant women. Our research indicates a corresponding increase in paternity proceedings in the second half of the century. The last point of this edict is even more surprising: If the crime occurred, the city magistrates had to bear all the consequences⁵⁵. We, however, must mention that the entire judicial historiography records no case in which a judge was summoned to court for negligence⁵⁶. Joseph II added a note to these regulations on 5 April 1781, forbidding humiliating pregnant women in public as 'the reason of this tragedy is to be found precisely in shame and fear of humiliation'⁵⁷.

We can conclude that a radical change occurred in the second half of the century as magistrates came to feel that it was better to save innocent lives than to miss one criminal⁵⁸. However, as Pakó's studies showed, women escaped the death sentence in the absence of clear evidence or eyewitnesses, even in the 16th century. Deviancy, though, was always punished in one way or another; consequently, these women discussed were convicted of a number of other deviations, such as theft, fornication and adultery. At the end of the 18th century, popular perceptions of women shifted from active criminals (as during the 17th century) to passive victims of crime. Infanticide was moved from a criminal to a medical level, as judicial officials became willing to accept that fear and pain generated unexpected behaviour and strong emotions, leading to temporary insanity⁵⁹. Whenever these trials were held (in the first or second half of the century) and whatever their end, infanticide seems to have had little in common with criminal instinct or late abortion but much in common with shame and despair over social survival.

⁵⁵ Idem, *Büntett és büntetés Magyarországon*, 18-19.

⁵⁶ Hajdu has concluded that the patents given by Maria Theresa and Josef II in reality were not taken into account. *Ibid.* 258.

⁵⁷ Shame was identified even before our century as it is revealed in Shahrar, *A negyedik rend*, 158-159.

⁵⁸ Rabin, *Identity, Crime and Legal Responsibility*, 95.

⁵⁹ Deáky and Krász, *Minden dolgok kezdete*, 107-109. According to these researchers a great influence on the perception of infanticide and especially on Josef II's perception on torture, crime and punishment had the book of Cesare Beccaria, and the work of the great Austrian doctor Joseph von Sonnenfels. Rabin, *Identity, Crime and Legal Responsibility*, 102, 107.

An Image and Its Metamorphoses: The Transylvanian Romanians and the French Revolution during the 19th Century

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Abstract: *An image and its metamorphoses: the Transylvanian Romanians and the French Revolution during the 19th century.* In the present study, we intend to identify the metamorphoses that the image of the French Revolution had for the Transylvanian Romanians: from a negative one they had formed at the beginning of the 19th century through the Habsburg propaganda, to the new interpretations which throughout the century gave the new meanings to these events. In the second half of the 19th century, the liberal principles of the 1789 events were discovered and emphasized by the Romanian elite, becoming a part of the ideology that stood at the basis of the national emancipation. The study of the multiple images of the French Revolution offers us a view regarding the transformations of the political thinking of the Romanian elite and its approach to the liberal values. In our research we used the press of the time, edited correspondence and ideological literature created by Romanian intellectuals.

Keywords: Transylvanian Romanians, 19th Century, French Revolution, liberalism, political ideology

Rezumat: *Metamorfozele unei imagini: românii ardeleni și Revoluția Franceză în secolul al XIX-lea.* În prezentul studiu ne propunem să surprindem metamorfozele suferite de imaginea Revoluției Franceze la românii ardeleni, de la perspectiva negativă cu care au luat contact la începutul secolului al XIX-lea prin propaganda habsburgică, la noile interpretări care pe parcursul secolului au acordat noi valențe evenimentelor. În a doua jumătate a secolului au fost descoperite și valorizate aspectele liberale ale Revoluției Franceze, care vor intra în discursul ideologic despre emanciparea națională. Studiul multiplelor imagini ale Revoluției Franceze ne oferă o panoramă asupra felului în care gândirea politică a elitei românești din Transilvania se transformă și se apropie de reperatele intelectuale ale liberalismului european. Ca surse au fost utilizate periodicele vremii, corespondența edită a fruntașilor politici români și texte cu valoare ideologică din secolul al XIX-lea.

Cuvinte-cheie: românii din Transilvania, secolul al XIX-lea, Revoluția Franceză, liberalism, ideologie politică

The great Revolution of 1789 was considered, even from its start, as a crucial event, which definitively separated two worlds and two political

regimes. The debates over the fundamental changes it caused in Europe had their onset during the 19th century and it opposed the various images that the conservatives, the liberals, the democrats and the socialists built over the 1789 events¹. Our study aims to analyze the images that the Transylvanian Romanians have formed over this event ever since it's beginning and until the end of the 19th century². These images reflect the political culture and the ideological principles that the Romanian elites assumed in a certain moment. In our research, we will focus both on the reconstruction of the French Revolution's main events, as they appear in the Romanian writings of the time, and also on the ideological influences which it generated.

The process of affirmation which regarded the national Romanian consciousness had started at the end of the 18th century, simultaneously with the manifestation of these ideas in the countries of Western Europe³. The political ideas inspired by the French Revolution were introduced in Transylvania by the French press, with journals like the *Moniteur* (which was approved by the authorities until the years of the Terror), the main source of information for the young Unitarian students who translated its articles, and also the *Journal Général de l'Europe*, available only after 1803. There were also a few journals from Vienna that spread news about Paris and the events of 1789, like the *Wiener Diarium* or the *Wiener Zeitung*. Among the subscribers of the French journals we may even find a Romanian, the merchant Ioan Marcu, who lived in Sibiu. The first article in Transylvania about the French 1789 events was published in Martin Hochmeister's journal, *Der Kriegsbote*, in 26 of May 1789⁴. The press spread in the province news regarding the decrees of the Convention and translated debates of the French National Assembly, which caused ardent debates among Transylvanian intellectuals of all ethnicities.

¹ François Furet, *Revoluția în dezbatere*, Iași, Polirom, 2000, pp. 17-19. The book has an important chapter, *Revoluția fără Teroare* (*The Revolution without the Terror*), which compares several perspectives on the French Revolution during the 19th century at several authors of the time.

² The present topic was investigated, in a very summary form in Gheorghe Lascu, *Imaginea Franței la românii ardeleni până în anul 1918*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2000, pp. 113-115.

³ Sorin Mitu, *Geneza identității naționale la românii ardeleni*, București, Humanitas, 1997, p. 11.

⁴ Nicolae Szabó, *Influența Revoluției franceze de la 1789 asupra luptelor politice, sociale și naționale din Transilvania*, PhD thesis defended at the Faculty of History and Philosophy, under the direction of professor Camil Mureșanu, in 1993, pp. 29-33.

Research has shown that in Transylvania one could read a few important works that presented and commented the French Revolution. The French Constitution of 1791 was translated into German and could have been consulted in the library of Sámuel Teleki, who was the chief of Transylvania's Aulic Chancellery. We can also find the Constitution of 1795 and the collection of speeches held in the French National Assembly by L.S. de Ballestieux-Canilhae, published under the title *Politicon ou choix des meilleurs discours sur les sujets de politique traités dans la première Assemblée Nationale de France*. Among the important reviews about the French Revolution, we may find Thomas Payne's book, *Droits de l'homme*, which argues the opinions of Edmund Burke regarding the 1789 events. The popularity of this work among the liberal intellectuals of Transylvania is shown by the various editions of this book in the libraries. We can find the French editions of 1791, 1792 and 1793 but also several translations in Hungarian and in German. Six copies of this book may be found in the libraries of the schools from Cluj. Related to the debates about Edmund Burke's ideas, in Transylvania we may find the book of I. Mackintosh, *Apologie de la Révolution française et de ses admirateurs anglais. En réponse aux attaques d' Edmund Burke*, which was published in Paris in 1792. Another important work about the French Revolution is that of French deputy Jean-Joseph Mounier (1758-1806), an important contributor for the *Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen*⁵, *Considérations sur le gouvernement qui convient à la France*, published in Paris in 1789. This work offered the opportunity for the Transylvanian intellectuals to study directly the principles that dominated the French National Assembly in 1789, especially the principle of the national sovereignty, over which Mounier has firmly insisted⁶.

The spreading of these books prove the profound impact which the ideas inspired by the French Revolution have had in Transylvania, especially among the elites. The most numerous part of the population influenced by the revolutionary ideas was, of course, the German and Hungarian elite, but there are studies indicating that the Romanians were also inspired by the new ideas. The historian Ladislau Gyémánt analyzed the influence of the French Revolution in Transylvania and considers that certain Romanian actions that took place in the last years of the 18th century are inspired by it's principles: memoirs of the

⁵ Jean Morange, *La Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du citoyen (26 août 1789)*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1988, p. 13.

⁶ Nicolae Szabó, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-39.

Romanian officers of 1804 and 1809, the protests of the Romanian townsmen against the privileges of the other nationalities or certain peasant rebellions against noblemen and recruitment in 1790 and 1794. Among the Romanians, the distinguished scholar considers that the new revolutionary ideas were spread mainly by the Romanian soldiers and officers that took part at the wars against France, by the French prisoners which were located in Transylvania and Banat, by the French and Polish emissaries but also by the foreign merchants. The press and the books are considered to have had a little importance, due to the fact that the Romanian peasantry was illiterate in its immense majority⁷.

The first image that the Transylvanian Romanians formed about the French Revolution was a negative one, due to the Habsburg's anti-French propaganda. The historian Sorin Mitu concluded that there were three ways by which the information regarding the French Revolution could reach the peasantry: the diffusion from village to village of the social changes (like the shock of emperor Joseph II's death), the contact with the French soldiers and prisoners, and, probably the most important direction, the propaganda organized by the authorities mainly through the two Romanian confessions. In his later years, George Barițiu wrote about the image of Napoleon and his many "wonders" as reflected in the tales of the elders who fought against him in the Habsburg army⁸. The two Romanian Churches had a very important role in the propaganda against France and the French Revolution, because they were the main connection between the authorities and the people, largely composed of peasants. An information that the authorities wanted to spread would be read during the divine service in every parish, for a few Sundays, and the importance of the message would grow because it was read by the priest, who himself had a consistent authority in the Romanian villages.

The counterrevolutionary propaganda tried to stimulate the solidarity of the poor people against the French by spreading news about the behavior and describing them as enemies of the law and of the priests, persecutors of religion and grave robbers⁹. Among the Romanian elites, propaganda was made through several brochures printed at Buda, of which we can mention *Întâmplările războiului Franțozilor* (*Stories of the*

⁷ Ladislau Gyémánt, „Ecouri ale Revoluției franceze în Transilvania”, in *Crisia*, nr. 18, 1988, pp. 175-177.

⁸ George Barițiu, „Epistola adresată dl. dr. M. G. Obedenariu”, in *Transilvania*, nr. 5, 1 March 1876 (year IX), p. 50. (*Epistola*).

⁹ Sorin Mitu, „Franța și țărani ardeleni: propagandă oficială și mentalitate populară”, in idem, *Transilvania mea*, Iași, Polirom, 2006, pp. 338-342. (*Transilvania mea*).

French War, 1814), *Scurtă arătare despre luarea Parisului (A Short Description of the Occupation of Paris, 1814)*, *Napoleon Bonaparte (1815)*¹⁰. The propaganda had a lasting influence on the Romanians with the episode of the Terror entering in the political culture of their elites. We can see this in the first months of 1848, when Timotei Cipariu wrote to his good friend George Barițiu about the onset of the French Revolution of 1848: *Did you see what terrible things had happened in Paris! I'm eager to receive the next journal from Paris to see what has happened? I believe that this event shattered the entire Europe very deeply and if there will be no constitutional king in France, we may relive the times of 1793*¹¹. Later on in his life, George Barițiu wrote that in his youth, the nature of the French was considered the worst in the whole world, Paris was perceived as a modern Sodom and the preference for the French culture could ruin a young man's career¹².

In the writings of the Transylvanian Romanians during the 19th century, we will find only fragments about the French Revolution in the works of several authors, because unfortunately no Romanian intellectual ever wrote a study about this important event¹³. Despite of this, the event was considered a very important one by the Romanian elite, as we shall further demonstrate. Timotei Cipariu, the famous scholar of Blaj, published in seven numbers of his journal, *Organul luminării* (from number 14 to number 20 in 1847) several fragments from *The History of the Girondists* published by the poet Alphonse de Lamartine in that same year and which was available to the Romanian journalists of Blaj because it had also been published in the *Journal des Débats*, a French journal which counted Cipariu among its subscribers. The texts were translated by Iosif Many, who later on would confess to George Barițiu that he enjoyed the text so much that he couldn't refrain himself from publishing it¹⁴. Written in a narrative manner typical for the Romantic historiography, the fragments from Lamartine's work were part of the literary columns of Cipariu's journal, therefore they were not commented by the editors, except the first fragment which was actually a translation

¹⁰ Nicolae Szabó, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

¹¹ Timotei Cipariu, *Epistolar (1837-1877)*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 2005, pp. 242-243.

¹² George Barițiu, *Epistola*, p. 49.

¹³ For the French Revolution's influence on the Romanians from Moldavia and Wallachia a reference may be Alexandru Zub, *La sfârșit de ciclu: despre impactul Revoluției franceze*, Iași, Institutul European, 1994, pp. 50-134.

¹⁴ See the letter of Iosif Many to George Barițiu from 17 August 1847, in Ștefan Pascu et alii, *George Bariț și contemporanii săi*, vol. III, București, Minerva, 1976, p. 342.

from a French chronicle. In the seven numbers we will find the description of the escape of Louis XVI and his family to Varennes, where he was captured and then forced to return to Paris. In the first article about this book, the editors told their readers that these fragments were published in 17 and 18 March in *Journal des Débats*, and that the number of 15 March had the portrait of Mirabeau. We cannot know whether in the journal's editorial office had the fragment with the text and the portrait of Mirabeau or whether the Romanians didn't want to have it published, because of political grounds. Timotei Cipariu had many problems concerning the appearance of *Organul luminării*, a journal we wanted to edit ever since 1838, but the political authorities did not allow this to happen. When he finally succeeded to obtain all the necessary permits, in 1847, the Government of Transylvania placed it under a strict censorship, forcing Cipariu to send them two copies of each number, in order to be approved¹⁵. The translations from Lamartine's work had reminded the Romanian readers the events of the French Revolution and presented them in a far different way than that of the Imperial propaganda.

The most important events of the French Revolution were publicized among the general public by Ion Codru Drăgușanu (1818-1884), a former revolutionary in Wallachia, journalist and clerk (vice-captain) in Făgăraș county, in his travel book, *Peregrinul transilvan* (*The Transylvanian Pilgrim*) which appeared during 1863-1864 in the *Concordia* newspaper and as a book it was published at Sibiu in 1865. Later on, this book will be completed with three more chapters, published in *Familia* magazine in 1869 and 1879¹⁶. Although the travel accounts are organized in 35 letters, research have shown *Peregrinul transilvan* is a fiction work, even though it is based on a real travel diary, which testifies on the author's interests for history, ethnography and folklore¹⁷. His accounts about the French Revolution are part of a „letter” sent in June 1843 and it contains a description of the transformations which the 1789 events brought on religion: *In the time of that revolution, all the saints were prohibited and God himself was dethroned from His magnificent seat*¹⁸. In his work, Codru Drăgușanu mentions other facts that took place during the Jacobin's regime in France: the saints being replaced in the calendar with

¹⁵ Mircea Popa, Valentin Tașcu, *Istoria presei românești din Transilvania de la începuturi până în 1918*, București, Tritonic, 2003, pp. 77-78.

¹⁶ Georgeta Antonescu, *Introducere în opera lui Ion Codru Drăgușanu*, București, Minerva, 1983, pp. 35-36.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 36-38.

¹⁸ Ion Codru Drăgușanu, *Peregrinul transilvan*, Bistrița, Pergamon, 2009, p. 196.

vegetables, the clearing of the royal gardens and the planting of potatoes to feed the people. He insisted on the violence committed in the name of religion: *they were content to break the heads of several saints, to shatter the painted icons and to throw the liturgical ornaments in the mud*¹⁹. The climax of these sacrileges was reached in 1793, when the pilgrim told about the transformation of the Notre Dame cathedral in a Temple of Reason: *a woman sat on the Virgin's throne representing the fairy of Reason, to whom the people and the dictator Robespierre, who was proclaimed the patriarch of the new cult, went to worship*²⁰. It is interesting to see that the author, despite a detailed presentation of the shocking facts for the Romanian society of the time, does not comment them in any way, positive or negative. An explanation for this may be found in the influence that the French Revolution had over the books main character, the Transylvanian pilgrim and, most likely, over Ion Codru Drăgușanu himself. The ideological influence of the French Revolution will be analysed below, in the second part of our study.

In one of the most well documented history books written by a Transylvanian Romanian of the time, George Barițiu discussed broadly the French Revolution, only to show the European background for the facts he described in his *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pe două sute de ani* (*Selected Parts of the last Two Centuries in the History of Transylvania*), a major work in three volumes published between 1889 and 1891. When he wrote about the short reign of Leopold II (1790-1792), the author made a short presentation of the changes brought by the 1789 events: *a lot of blood was spilled, all the medieval privileges, civil or ecclesiastical were abolished, the aristocrats ran out the country, in 14th of July 1790 even King Louis was ordered to vow on the field of Mars to respect the new Constitution, in which the medieval privileges were worthless, the servitude was abolished and the ecclesiastical riches were confiscated*²¹.

One of the most important Romanian works from Transylvania at the end of the 19th century was *Enciclopedia română* (*The Romanian Encyclopaedia*), a collective encyclopaedia edited under the direction of Corneliu Diaconovich, which among its many articles also had a few concerning the French Revolution. Unfortunately, we won't find there an article focused only on the French Revolution, but there is information about this subject in other articles. The term *revolution* was defined by Valerian Urșian, a professor of political science at the University of

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ George Barițiu, *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pe două sute de ani*, vol. I, Brașov, Inspectoratul pentru cultură al județului Brașov, 1993, p. 495. (*Părți alese*).

Bucharest as: *the sudden and violent reversal of an old and detested state of affairs and it's replacement by a new form of government*²². In his short article about the history of France, professor Augustin Scriban, who taught French literature in Ploiești, wrote that *before 1789, [in France] there was no constitution, but only traditions and institutions at the king's will*, describing also the financial decay that took place after the death of Louis XIV. The author did not analyze the causes of the revolution, showing only the year when it began and its consequences, the series of wars whom he considered to be glorious²³. The article about the Girondists, signed by vice-archpriest (*vice-protopop*) Elie Câmpian, offers little information about this political club, without mentioning any pejorative accents²⁴. In contrast, the article about the Jacobins clearly showed the *decisive and fatal influence in a savage revolutionary spirit*²⁵, which they had on the course of events. This article was written by At. M. Marienescu, who had a Ph.D. in Law studies and was a judge at the Royal Courthouse of Oradea. The regime which the Jacobins established between 1793 and 1794 was considered by professor Titus Cerne as a reign of terror, so it was mentioned in an article about terrorism²⁶. In the last volume of the *Romanian Encyclopedia* we can find an article about the province of Vendée, that was the worst affected during the Jacobin's regime and the persecution against the royalists. The author mentioned these wars but unfortunately he did not offer details about their causes and actions²⁷. In the *Romanian Encyclopaedia* there are small biographical articles about certain personalities that played an important role during the French Revolution, like Condorcet, Danton, Louis XVI, Marat and Mirabeau.

The ideological influence of the French Revolution on the Transylvanian Romanians is different at each intellectual, according to his education and cultural background. This is the subject of this part of our study, but we are sure that our analysis will be completed in the following years with new proofs about this influence. The first text which had an ideological analysis of the French Revolution was written by George Barițiu only a few years after the Revolution of 1848 and it was published in *Foaia pentru minte, inimă și literatură*, numbers 46, 47 and 48 of 1851. Barițiu was an attentive observer of the political changes

²² Corneliu Diaconovich, *Enciclopedia română*, vol. III, Sibiu, W. Krafft, 1904, p. 761.

²³ *Ibidem*, vol. II, Sibiu, W. Krafft, 1900, pp. 460-462.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 558.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 756.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, vol. III, p. 1081.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 1203.

that took place in France after the French Revolution of 1848 and his analysis proved that he had a good knowledge of the history of France and of its political life. In his essay, *The Struggle of the Principles in France*, the great Romanian journalist wanted to present to his readers the ideological struggle of the various French political factions. His work begins with a very critical presentation of the social life in the Old Regime (the period isn't named like this), in which he exaggerates the noble's abuses against the peasants (like the right of the noble to kill a peasant when they returned from hunting) and describes the sufferings of the people, inspired by the works of Jules Michelet. The people's Resurrection is connected with the French Revolution, but this was not written directly (probably because of political grounds, the story about the beginning of the French Revolution is very ambiguous, but the author had appealed to his reader's knowledge about the French history, without which, he mentioned very clearly, nobody would understand anything from his essay)²⁸ and we only can see this by reading through the lines the proclamation of Mirabeau that *the law is the sovereign of the world*²⁹. From the point of view of Barițiu, the aristocrats were to blame for the violence of the Revolution, because they always tried to betray the people. The consequence was that the people *didn't want to know of any moderation and of any limit [...] nothing was spared, nothing was respected and nothing was considered sacred anymore*. This change generated confusion in the ideas and in the opinions so that very few knew what they could rely on. Hence the creeks of blood, the dethronement, the guillotine, the civil and the external war, the proclamation of the republic, the exile of the catholic faith and the introduction of rationalism³⁰. Barițiu's essay offers us a very interesting analysis about the character of the French Revolution and of the Terror.

Like other European authors of his time, but at a lower level, the great Romanian journalist tried to understand the effects of the Terror, without which he considered that the French Revolution would have had another result: *the celebration of the law, the Resurrection and restoration of the law and of justice*³¹. Instead, the Terror meant the lost of those generous ideals and their replacement with *the most frightful tyranny*

²⁸ George Barițiu, „Lupta principiilor în Franța”, in *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură*, nr. 46, 15 Nov. 1851, p. 354. The author asked from his readers a good knowledge of French and also world history, saying that *the one that doesn't have them, will understand only a few things from our article*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 355.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, nr. 47, 22 Nov. 1851, p. 361.

which later became *the most raging anarchy*³². The Romanian journalist considered that the cause of this change was the absence of the so called "healthy principles", which were not publicized from any social, religious or political point of view. George Barițiu insisted on one of the great paradoxes of the Terror - the fraternity on which the entire government of the Jacobins was based on - and he emphasized its lack of liberty, simply pronounced in the short conclusion: *We are all brothers or we all perish*³³. A consequence of the French Revolution was the ascent of rationalism in France, which was analyzed later on in the essay.

The future metropolitan of the Romanian Uniate Church after 1869, Ioan Vancea (1820-1892) wrote in the same period an undated work, that remained unpublished until recently³⁴, a philosophical dialogue entitled *A Dialogue Between an Uncle and his Nephew Regarding the Status of Philosophy in the 19th century*. Ioan Vancea had a great humanist culture, formed in his studies at Oradea and the Saint Barbara Seminary in Vienna, during 1841 and 1845. He knew very well the classical languages (Latin and Greek) but also modern languages like French, German and Hungarian and he had a keen interest in Theology, Philosophy and Canonical Law.³⁵ His *Dialogue* proves he had a very deep philosophical culture and his very critical views about the philosophy of his age make him one of the many theologians who tried to offer an alternative explanation towards the rationalism promoted by the Enlightenment³⁶. The hierarch severely criticized the philosophy of Hegel and the influence of the French Revolution, which he considered as pantheist: *Such pantheist principles, or we can name them better atheist, even if they weren't learned to good, they were applied with all their might, released the great revolutionary misery on France, in three times during over fifty years*³⁷. The Revolution's effects, according to Ioan Vancea, are much more than the visible transformations like the dethronement of the King and the establishment of the Republic and they will cause the profound change of the entire society. One important effect of the application of its principles is the philosophy of equality, which allows the underclass to challenge the existing social equilibrium and to promote anarchy: *Truly, not even the most renowned philosopher could have imagined a better and a*

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 362.

³⁴ Ioan Vancea, *Restituiri*, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2009.

³⁵ Ion Cârja, *Biserică și societate în Transilvania în perioada păstoririi mitropolitului Ioan Vancea (1869-1892)*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007, p. 18.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 23-24.

³⁷ Ioan Vancea, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

*more pleasant philosophy for the poor and the thieves*³⁸. Vancea's conclusions regarding communism and socialism (which he considered a milder form of communism) predict the loss of liberty for every nation who would try to apply these ideologies: *And truly, nobody could have created a much suitable principle to tyrannize mankind than the socialist ones, which prescribe not only the words and the facts of the people (how to speak and what to do) but they want to determine even the people's desires. This is truly a wonderful freedom!*³⁹. Long before the establishment of the communist regimes, when socialism at communism were at their beginnings, Ioan Vancea saw them as the surest path for the loss of liberty, through the transformations they wanted to induce in the society, which assumed its coercion and control.

The strengthening of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's powers in France after the coup d'état of 2 December 1851 resulted in a significant increase of the Transylvanian Romanian's interest concerning France and its political regime. *Gazeta de Transilvania (The Transylvanian Gazette)*, the most important Romanian journal of the time, hosted a lot of articles concerning the political changes which took place in France and in January 1852 it presented in detail the debates concerning the new French Constitution, which was promulgated the 14th of January⁴⁰. Under these circumstances, we might be surprised to see the firm conclusions of one of the editors (maybe George Barițiu himself) who, after analyzing the new Constitution, stated that *its best part, which the progressives may enjoy, is that this Constitution, like the original after which it was copied, is based on the 1789 principles, so that all the ideas and results of that remarkable era, gained with so many sacrifices, will be applied*⁴¹. This is the first positive mention we found at the Transylvanian Romanians about the most important document connected with the French Revolution, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (26 of August 1789). The tone used to describe the principles proves the journalist's attachment towards them. Several days later, the editors of *Gazeta de Transilvania* referred again to the revolutionary year of 1789 and to its principles, this time in a more explicit way. After remembering once again to their readers that the 1852 Constitution of France was based on the principles of 1789, the Romanian journalists thought that it

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 139-140.

⁴⁰ For the instalation of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte's regime and his Constitution a reference may be Alain Plessis, *De la fête impériale au mur des fédérés*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1979, pp. 19-21.

⁴¹ *Gazeta de Transilvania*, nr. 5, 16 January 1852, p. 20.

remembering them is necessary. Their list of right is quite different from the original *Declaration* and therefore we will present it as it appears, and later on we will compare it to its original.

- 1) *The nation must be always consulted about the new taxes, the maintenance of the old ones and about the state loans.*
- 2) *The financial state of the country must be attentively checked, its calculations and registers must be published so that everybody could check them.*
- 3) *The state duties and the property cannot be harmed.*
- 4) *The man's liberty and his residence have to be respected.*
- 5) *The press must be free and there must be laws against its persecution.*
- 6) *The religious freedom, the freedom of conscience and the equality of all religions must be accepted by the state.*
- 7) *All Frenchmen must be equal in front of the law.*
- 8) *All Frenchmen are accepted for the public offices (and not only the privileged ones, as it was until then).*
- 9) *There must be provincial and communal assemblies to solve the local problems.*
- 10) *The criminal causes must be judged in jury courts and the magistracy must be independent⁴².*

The upper principles are only a part of those published in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, in fact, they only cover seven of its articles⁴³. Thus, the first article from the Romanian journal has the message of the fourteenth article of the French *Declaration*, which proclaimed the right of the citizens to judge the necessity and the duration of the public taxes. The second article would correspond to the fifteenth article from the original, in which is stated the right of the citizens to demand explanations from each public clerk about his duties. The third principle is connected with the last one from the *Declaration*, which proclaims property as a *sacred and inviolable right*, while the next article may be connected both with the second one, which defined the natural law, as with the last one, that defends the property. The fifth article from the journal, dedicated to the freedom of the press, had its origins in the eleventh article of the *Declaration*, while the following corresponds to the tenth article, which allows every citizen to have the opinion he wants, as long as the law is respected. The following two principles published by the Romanian editors make together the sixth

⁴² *Ibidem*, nr. 6, 19 January 1852, p. 24.

⁴³ For our comparison, we used the translation of the *Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen* from Stéphane Rials, *Declarația drepturilor omului și cetățeanului*, Iași, Polirom, 2002, pp. 13-17.

article, that proclaim the equality of all the citizens in front of the law, and the access of all the citizens to public functions, depending on their capabilities. The ninth article of the Romanian journal was referred to the decentralization, which was not part of the original *Declaration* and in our opinion that principle is against the French Revolution which enforced the centralization by creating the departments. The last article corresponds partially with the sixteenth one, that proclaimed the necessity to separate the powers of the state, but the original had no reference to the jury courts, as the Romanian journalists wrote.

We ought to show here the articles from the original *Declaration* which don't appear in *Gazeta de Transilvania*. Thus, the first five of its articles are missing, along with articles seven, eight, nine, twelve and thirteen. From an ideological point of view, there are missing the articles about the proclamation of humans liberty and equality, the definition of the natural law (liberty, property, safety and resistance to oppression) and the obligation of each political association to protect them, the nation as the basis for all forms of sovereignty (the lack of this article is surprising, both because of the importance given to the nation by the Romanian intellectuals but also because the editors have referred to this principle when they analyzed Louis Bonaparte's coup), the definition of liberty and of the law's role in society, the arrest only in the conditions created by the law, the use of necessary punishments and only according to the law, the presumption of innocence, the necessity of a public force which should be used in the benefit of all citizens and the equal distribution of the taxes to all the citizens according to their financial possibilities. We believe that these omissions are due to the authoritarian political regime which was established in Transylvania after the end of the 1848 Revolution, especially after the Imperial Patent of 31 of December 1851, which brought a new absolutist Constitution, fundamentally hostile to the rule of law⁴⁴.

We will find a very positive image of the French Revolution in *The Transylvanian Pilgrim*, its main character being a great admirer of France during his entire diary. In a later dated February 1844, from Paris, the pilgrim wrote a few considerations about France and its place in the world: *France only half a century ago has won its freedom but it earned it for the entire world, not just only for herself. Here the revolution of the modern world was proclaimed, in here the natural rights of man were stated and from here, as from a sacred fire, will shine the rays of liberty; because the French are*

⁴⁴ Magyari András, Thomas Nägler, Ioan-Aurel Pop (coord.), *Istoria Transilvaniei*, vol. III, Cluj-Napoca, Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008, p. 386.

the most suited nation to keep the treasure of liberty, the most generous in transmitting it to other peoples and also the bravest, to be always its most powerful support⁴⁵. The pilgrim's admiration for the French Revolution is proved when he calls it *the second Salvation of the world*⁴⁶. France was seen as a keeper of liberty and of the Human's Rights but also as the most important apostle and guardian of these values. This image of France as a country willingly to help the smaller peoples may be found at other Romanian intellectuals from Transylvania. Although the Romanians from Wallachia and Moldova displayed a much profound sympathy to the French culture, we can also find in Transylvania a good reception of it, despite the profound influence of the German culture among the Romanian intellectuals. Besides Ion Codru Drăgușanu whom we analyzed above, Alexandru Papiu Ilarian is another intellectual who appreciated the French for their sympathy towards the peoples of Eastern Europe in their studies: *the German writers are the most unfair in judging the peoples of the East. By contrast, the French, who from Napoleon the Great's expedition to Egypt have continuously studied these peoples, are more honest and more profound in their judgments*⁴⁷.

In the second half of the 19th century the number of writings about the French Revolution and its ideological consequences increased among the Transylvanian Romanians. In the first volume of *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pre doua sute de ani*, published in 1889, Barițiu analyzed the changes brought by the ideas of the French Revolution. In his view, the new ideas *shook all of Europe's thrones and were preparing reversals and radical changes in all the aspects of the people's lives; the public and private law, the privileges, the diversity of the social classes and every civil and ecclesiastical authority, even religion itself, were threatened by the sword*. His conclusion was that *revolutionizing ideas caused physical revolutions and the bloodiest of the wars lasting for twenty-three years*⁴⁸. The image of the French Revolution portrayed here by the Romanian leader is dark and there is no mention of any of its positive consequences, like the *Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen*.

Two other important Transylvanian intellectuals had an interest in the French Revolution and its ideological consequences. One of them was the Romanian journalist and political theorist Aurel C. Popovici (1893-1917), who had been deeply involved in the Romanian's fight for

⁴⁵ Ion Codru Drăgușanu, *op.cit.*, p. 221.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 225.

⁴⁷ Ioan Chindriș, Iosif Pervain, *Corespondența lui Alexandru Papiu Ilarian*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1972, p. 169.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

political rights and also wrote a very interesting work concerning the federalization of Austria-Hungary, in 1906. In one of his important ideological works, *Principiul de naționalitate* (*The Principle of Nationality*), published in 1894, Popovici analyzed the transformations provoked by the French Revolution in the European history. In his view, among the consequences of the French Revolution are: the establishment of religious tolerance, the freedom of the individuals and the legal equality of the confessions. The principle of nationality, the subject of his essay, is considered to be an advanced phase of the liberal and egalitarian principles. The Romanian ideologist considers that although the French Revolution was not based on nationalism (instead having a profound cosmopolitan background), it still remains *the leading force* of the principle of nationality, which has a strong connection with the events of the 18th century⁴⁹. The idea of a bond between the French Revolution and the principle of nationality can be found in the essay *Conștiința națională* (*The National Conscience*) of the Banatian politician and intellectual Alexandru Mocioni (1841-1909)⁵⁰.

A very important article from an ideological point of view is the one dedicated to the *representative regime* in the third volume of *Enciclopedia română*, which analyzes the turning point of the French Revolution in European politics. It was written by Grigore Pletosu (1848-1934), who was a professor at Bistrița and also an important promoter of the Romanian culture in Transylvania at the end of the 19th century. He stated that *there was an Old Regime before the French Revolution and a new one, after the radical reforms it established*⁵¹. The Revolution brought the abolition of the medieval privileges, which the author considers abusive and some fundamental political changes: *it was admitted and established in the fundamental laws (Charts, Constitutions) the representative principle and the principle of the national sovereignty, the equality of the citizens before the civil laws as well as their participation, in certain conditions, to the state affairs*⁵². Pletosu's article highlights in a very appropriate way the liberal influence of the French Revolution but unfortunately it was available only to a small number of readers, who knew and used the encyclopedia it was part of.

The perception of the French Revolution at the Romanian generations who were studying in the end of the 19th century was significantly different compared to the ones that were educated in its begin-

⁴⁹ Aurel C. Popovici, *Principiul de naționalitate*, București, G. Louis, 1894, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰ Nicolae Bocșan, *Ideea de națiune la românii din Transilvania și Banat (secolul al XIX-lea)*, Cluj-Napoca, Reșița, Banatica, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1997, p. 174.

⁵¹ Corneliu Diaconovich, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 750.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

ning. If in the first years of the century the authorities made serious efforts to create a negative image of the French Revolution among the common people, during its last decades this image will modify even in the school books. A conclusive example is the school manual edited by the great patriot Vasile Goldiș (1862-1934) in 1896. In the part dedicated to the history of France, the pupils could read: *but in France there were also a good part of the landowners which were sensible and cultivated, and they said that things must change and every inhabitant of the country should be equal before the laws and nobody should have more rights than others*⁵³. By presenting the promoters of reform in France in such a positive way, we believe that the pupils formed a positive image about the French Revolution, especially because the episode of the Terror, so familiar to the Romanian intellectuals in the first half of the century, is now completely ignored. The Revolution is considered to have had beneficial consequences: *in France the servitude was abolished and all the people became equals, so they could all carry the country's burdens and enjoy its benefits*⁵⁴. Having a good knowledge of modern philosophy, which we now know he had studied at the University of Budapest in the second semester of the academic year 1881-1882⁵⁵, Vasile Goldiș underlined the importance of the French Revolution in an article about the 19th century, published in the journal *Tribuna poporului*. The 1789 events are seen as a crucial moment, which mark *the beginning of a new age in the history of mankind*⁵⁶, with profound economic and social consequences. The liberal and democratic ideas, but also the national principle, are seen as its consequences. The author proves his good knowledge of the modern times and also his honesty by also showing the antichristian side of the French Revolution, but without offering many details, only mentioning that *the revolutionaries declared the dissolution of God and in His place they declared reason as sanctity*⁵⁷.

The connection between the French Revolution and the formation of the national Romanian conscience was affirmed by Iosif Vulcan (1841-1907) in his reception speech at the Romanian Academy, about Dimitrie Țichindeal, in 1895. For the Romanian editor, the Revolution *cleaned Europe's infected air* and its consequence was *that nobody didn't want to remain*

⁵³ Vasile Goldiș, *Istoria patriei în legătură cu evenimentele epocale din istoria universală*, Brașov, N. I. Ciurcu, 1896, p. 78.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Eugen Gagea, *Vasile Goldiș (1862-1934). Monografie istorică*, Arad, „Vasile Goldiș” University Press, 2008, p. 53.

⁵⁶ Vasile Goldiș, „Secolul trecut”, in *Tribuna poporului*, IV (1900), nr. 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

*under an absolutist regime and all claimed their confiscated rights*⁵⁸. The Transylvanian Romanians *felt the life giving air of the awakening*⁵⁹, Vulcan considering that in this moment originated all the cultural works of his countrymen in the 19th century.

We found the last mention of the French Revolution before the outcome of World War I a few days after the assassination of archduke Francis Ferdinand, in the journal *Drapelul*, from Lugoj, owned by the Romanian politician Valeriu Braniște. In an article about the archduke and the Romanian nation, its anonymous author, who wrote under the name *Verox*, pleaded for the political equality of the nations that composed the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He considers that the national equality was the essence of the *spirit of Joseph II, who was born once with the ideas of the French Revolution, the abolition of servitude and the national awakening of the peoples*⁶⁰.

The Romanian's image of the French Revolution was deeply changed with the diffusion and understanding of the liberal ideas among their elites, which contributed to the transformation of the negative image in the beginning of the 19th century in a positive one. The Romanian elites, the journalists, political writers or intellectuals managed to understand the changes brought by the French Revolution in Europe and even used its ideology in their national program.

⁵⁸ *Familia*, XXXI (1895), nr. 38, p. 446.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ *Drapelul*, nr. 70, 26 June/9 July 1914.

'The Peasant's Food Is Only the Polenta': The Hygiene of Rural Peoples' Nourishment in Romania in the Medical Discourse of the Second Half of the 19th Century through the Beginning of the 20th Century

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Abstract: *'The peasant's food is only the polenta': the hygiene of rural peoples' nourishment in Romania in the medical discourse of the second half of the 19th century through the beginning of the 20th century.* The creation of national identity in the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the next one has been based on the awareness of the peasant dimension of the Romanian nation in all three Romanian countries. The Romanian national ideology has thus a strong peasant social component. The peasant becomes the Romanian by essence along the 19th century. Under these particular conditions a manifest interest for the culture and living conditions of the peasantry has been born during the period mentioned. The elite, intensely preoccupied by this huge and overwhelming rural mass that made the modern Romania, produces a multi shaped discourse upon peasant and rural world.

Keywords: elites, peasantry, nourishment, 19th century, 20th century, Romania

Rezumat: *„Singura hrană a țăranilor e mămliga”: igiena alimentației în lumea rurală din România în discursul medical din a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și de la începutul secolului XX.* În cele trei țări românești crearea identității naționale în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea și la începutul veacului următor are la bază conștientizarea dimensiunii țărănești a națiunii române. Ideologia națională românească are ca urmare o componentă socială țărănească puternică. Românul prin excelență ajunge să fie în secolul al XIX-lea țăranul. În aceste condiții particulare, ia naștere în perioada menționată un interes manifest pentru cultura și condițiile de viață ale țăranimii. Elita, intens preocupată de această imensă și covârșitoare masă rurală care alcătuia România modernă, produce un discurs multiform despre țăran și lumea rurală. În paginile următoare vom urmări una dintre temele discursului medical pe acest subiect: alimentația țărănească.

Cuvinte-cheie: elite, țăranime, alimentație, secolul al XIX-lea, secolul al XX-lea, România

After the middle of the 19th century and especially after the First Union (1859), Romanian society embarked definitively on a course of moderni-

zation. The members of the liberal professions were an active factor in this promotion. Jurists, physicians, engineers, teachers and literates were among the professions with direct links to the process of modernization and that were implicitly the most fervent supporters of it.

There were not numerous physicians in the Principalities but Alexandru-Florin Platon considers this group important enough to include it among the professional groups (next to other intellectuals: teachers, lawyers and clerks) that formed the nascent bourgeoisie in Romania in the first half of the 19th century¹. In 1862, Dr. Carol Davila tried to bring order to the Sanitary Service of the United Principalities, which showed the strict regulation and registration of the physicians that practiced in the Principalities. Through his endeavours we know today that as of February 1st 1862 in the “Romanian state,” there were 99 Ph.Ds in medicine had the right of free practice. Among these, more than one third (34) had completed their studies in Austria; if we add the ones who studied in Germany (22) then we may conclude that the majority of physicians in the Principalities were formed in the German cultural space. France comes only in fourth place with 14 physicians that got their title there, after Italy, with 18². At the middle of the century, the great majority of professionals in the medical field were foreigners; one could count on fingers the number of Romanians. The situation was identical for the other liberal professions. In the seventh decade of the 19th century the number of physicians grew rapidly, reaching 366 (PhDs. plus licensed in medicine) in 1866³. In another three decades, by October 1st 1898 there were no less than 966 Ph.Ds in medicine and another 34 BAs in medicine were practicing “their art” in the Romanian Kingdom. Important is that more than two thirds of these (679 Ph.DS in medicine and 25 BA in medicine) were Romanian⁴. By 1898, then, the medical body was already Romanized, a fact that will have a tremendous influence upon the medical discourse we describe here. Even if their number does not impress, physicians were an active part in creating modern Romania.

¹ Alexandru-Florin Platon, *Geneza burgheziei în Principatele Române (a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea – prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea). Preliminariile unei istorii*, Ed. Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 1997, pp. 309-311.

² “Monitorul. Jurnal Oficial”, 3 februarie 1862, nr. 25, p. 103.

³ Al. Obregia, *Raport general asupra igienei publice și asupra serviciului sanitar al Regatului României pe anii 1898-1904 inclusiv*, I, «Minerva» Institut de Arte Grafice și Editură, București, 1907, pp. XLI-XLIV.

⁴ I. Felix, *Raport general asupra igienei publice și asupra serviciului sanitar al Regatului României pe anii 1896 și 1897*, Imprimeria Statului, București, 1899, p. 340.

But modern Romania was made of a huge peasant mass and a thin urban layer, a sociological reality that nobody could neglect. It was in a way normal that in the process of forming the Romanian nation that the peasantry was given a central role. Under these circumstances the peasantry became the "privileged and exclusive depositary of the Romanian essence"⁵. Or, if the lands' body is identified as one with the social peasant one, it is as normal that on the road to consolidation of the Romanian national ideology along the 19th century, the interest in peasantry and its living conditions was to increase constantly. The medical discourse in the second half of the 19th century fully confirms this theory: a whole medical literature dealt almost exclusively upon the living conditions of the native peasantry and elaborated a complex discourse dedicated to the "peasant's hygiene". With this article we will deal only with one of the topics of the hygienist discourse, food hygiene.

At the peasant's table.

Above all, let us see first the global image that physicians were transmitting upon the rural population nourishment in the past three decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the next one. Among the first to study this topic is doctor Constantin Caracaș, who by 1830 synthesized a great part of the medical discourse upon the rurals' foodways: the nourishment of 'the peasants is sober, careless and irregular, since it consists more of polenta made of corn flower, that they use as bread, and on fast days only with salt, onion or garlic. Sometimes they cook meals with different herbs, just with water and some flour, or from mushrooms and wild fruits, gathered early and dried; rarely they cook beans, grain or sour cabbage. With such sober and poor nutrient they live two of the three parts of the year so that their robust bodies weaken, and the feeble ones and children get stomach aches. In the rest of the time, only three months of it, they eat something more: sour milk, cheese, eggs and fish, especially salted, that they like a lot; very rarely meat, that they cook very simple, just with water and little onion or fried. Their drink at the table is just plain water; but when go in the field or other works, some drink a little *țuică* [brandy]⁶. Over almost four decades later, Ion Ionescu de la Brad, when comparing the peasant's work and his food, wondered in astonishment: 'About half of the days of

⁵ Melinda Mitu, Sorin Mitu, *Ungurii despre români. Nașterea unei imagini etnice*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2014, p. 21.

⁶ Pompei P. Samarian, *O veche monografie sanitară a Munteniei „Topografia Țării Românești” de dr. Constantin Caracaș (1800-1828)*, Institutul de Arte Grafice «Bucovina», I. E. Torușiu, București, 1937, p. 100.

the year the Romanian is fasting; and what fast? Boiled vegetables and polenta: a vegetable diet especially ordered to weaken his powers, to mortify the body! How many men fast by eating only polenta with onion or vinegar or garlic, that is vinegar with minced garlic! The pickles and sour cabbage have an important role in the fast diet of the working man. But even when they eat for sweet, he still fasts in the meaning of western peoples; because he eats eggs, milk and cheese. With an egg our worker makes a lunch! He rarely eats meat, and when he eats, in spring it is lamb, in autumn is beef and in winter is pork. He usually eats meat as pastrami, that is dried without its juices⁷. Twelve years after the lines above were published, Doctor C.I. Istrati made a detailed analysis of the rurals' diet and reached the same conclusions - many of the morbid manifestations of the rural world have their origin in deficient nourishment: 'From all these it comes up that the peasant is fed generally with substances hard to digest, and apart from beans, very little nutritive; thus in order to feed physiologically he must ingest a huge volume, and use sour and irritant spices. Because of the diet he is abusing herbs and raw fruits and of low quality, it results a sad influence upon his physical and moral, as also upon his offspring. This is the cause of the weakness, morbidity, mortality and especially the little work resistance and even of his involuntary laziness⁸. Doctor Istrati's observations show the preoccupation with the consequences of this type of nourishment. In fact, all physicians, regardless of their topic of rural hygiene, describe the hygienic state of the peasant and its consequences regarding morbidity and mortality, while searching for the causes of this disastrous situation, and then proposing solutions for 'straightening up' the rural populace. In a way, these physicians reduced the whole society to a symbolically sick body and assert the symptoms and their social consequences in order to propose remedies. They purported to heal both individuals and also society as a whole; or at least, this was the ambition of the hygienic discourse.

In 1895 Doctor Nicolae Manolescu, after a well documented excursion through the food practices of the rural population, concluded that: 'the peasant lives with a poor diet or better said an insufficient one for the forces his life today needs. This diet is insufficient not only because the peasant eats more than half a year only from vegetal and mineral

⁷ Ion Ionescu, *Agricultura română din județul Mehedinți*, Imprimeria Statului, București, 1868, p. 203.

⁸ C. I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimporană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, pp. 267-268.

kingdoms, but also by the nourishing substances and by the little quantity of food that he takes from the animal kingdom when the religion allows it. This insufficiency in feeding is linked to the general causes that prevent the peasant to go out of misery⁹.

After 1900 research regarding food argued from a scientific basis; physicians no longer confined their comments to describe the nourishment at the peasant's meals and the way they are prepared but, transformed into true science men, started to calculate annual average consumption on types of matters and then daily rations on categories of food. In fact, even discussed the chemical principles of food, their works transforming their shapes: they became true researchers of food chemistry where experiments on animals were just one method among others. Their conclusions were not different, however, from those of their predecessors: 'Analyzing the diet of our peasant by the total quantity of food that forms the daily ration, then the quantity of nitrogen matters, fat matters and carbohydrates, each in part; the ration between the vegetal and animal origin, that enter his daily food and comparing with the values established by *Voit*, we reach to the results, some too well known and for a long time signaled: great volume, exaggerated lack of animal substances, thus the consequences of a vegetarian diet badly built, unhygienic, debilitating¹⁰. Or if they calculate the daily ration of food consumed by a sample of 150 peasants in a village from Fălciu County, as doctor Nicolae Lupu did in a paper published around the revolt in 1907, we get a list that testifies to the same debilitating regime: '1000g. corn flour; 50 g. barley flour; 20g. wheat under different forms (...); 40g. meat; 20 g. milk (one spoon); 5g. eggs (one egg in ten days)(...); 115 g. cabbage (cabbage juice); 800g. sour bran¹¹, that can be and already must be translated in terms of 'dietary principles' as follows: 'That is in the daily ration of the peasants examined by me, compared to the normal maintenance - the albuminoids are little in minus compared to the average expressed above, the fat is much in minus (20g) and the hydro carbonates are much in plus¹².

⁹ N. Manolescu, *Igiena țăranului, locuința, iluminatul și încălzitul ei, îmbrăcămintea, încălțăminte. Alimentațiunea țăranului în deosebitele epoce ale anului și în deosebitele regiuni ale țării*, Lito-tipografia Carol Göbl, Buc., 1895, p. 352.

¹⁰ A. Urbeanu, *Îmbunătățirea alimentației țăranului român*, Tipografia „Speranța”, București, 1901, p. 25.

¹¹ Nicolae Lupu, *Alimentația țăranului*, in “Viața Românească”, anul I (1906), vol. I, no. 2, p. 222.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 223.

In 1906 the Congress of Social Sciences debated not only the problem of rural dwelling, as shown in Doctor P. Cazacu's research, but also aspects of the hygiene of peasant food, as the work of Doctor G. Proca demonstrated through the most ample research on peasant food before World War I. Their ambitions were high: it even drew up a food and hygiene questionnaire that was sent to 3,480 teachers; only 12%, that is 439¹³, responded to it. Even so, the results were significant. But research on 'the peasant food, judged from quantitative and qualitative point of view'¹⁴ was not easy to achieve and the results from the questionnaires seemed sometimes unreal. Thus for 12 families in Argeş County, the calorically average of food for an adult was estimated at 4000-6000 calories per day! In Mehedinti, in 11 out of 20 families the calorically ration of an adult reached 5480 calories. Similar situations appear in Olt, Prahova, Neamţ and other communes. The conclusion was obvious: 'there has been written figures too high for the consumed quantities everywhere'¹⁵. But Doctor G. Proca did not disown the study: he simply adjusted the quantities where they seemed in excess, and took it as a given that the rest were in deficit. The conclusion was foregone even before the results had been tallied: 'the country worker is always exposed to feed insufficiently; the rural population is threaten by sub nutrition or inadequate food from quantitative point of view, not only year by year but also from one season to another'¹⁶.

No matter the language used, that of the hygienist from the last decades of the 19th century or of the chemist after 1900, physicians characterized the peasant food after the face and resemblance of the peasant of the epoch - primitive, backward and lacking in culture. Doctor A. Urbeanu, in the wake of interpretations early with two decades than those of doctor C.I. Istrati, was terrified: 'Most part of humankind has such a predominant vegetarian diet, determined by lack of means, food substances of animal origin being too expensive. But a poorer cuisine, wrongly done and more monotonous like that of our peasant cannot be found to any of the poorest people in Europe. It might compare only with the food of savage people, virgin from any culture. I declare, from the start that I could not find, on the grounds of figures, to any other people in the world whose nourishment was studied closely, a

¹³ G. Proca, Gh. T. Kirileanu, *Cercetări asupra hranei ţăranului. Înainte de Război*, in „Revista ştiinţelor medicale”, XXVII, 1938, nr. 7-8, p. 609.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 610.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 612.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 616.

nourishment manner more irrational, more primitive and more insufficient'¹⁷.

We see that from 1830 until WWI, physicians described and characterized the peasant's food approximately with the same terms, no matter if their writings were situated in the hygienist paradigm or in the older, modern one, influenced by the progress of food chemistry. The image is profoundly negative, repetitive and impregnated by the stigma of primitivism and lack of culture.

Polenta... and Polenta Again

Let us leave the general descriptions and go closer through the same physicians' observations of the table and kitchen of the peasant. After all, what can be so bad in the 'traditional cuisine' whose delights we enthusiastically relish today? But the physicians are not ethnographers and so do not frame the peasant in the paradigm of the autochthonous but in the opposite one, that of the primitive.

Generally the physicians' reproach to peasant food was that it was a diet almost exclusively vegetarian. In other words, the peasant consumes almost exclusively products of vegetal origin. That the main element of peasant food is the corn flour prepared in the form of a broth more or less consistent, was known not only by physicians; it was an obvious fact remarked upon by a multitude of observers, Romanians or foreigners. From the second half of the 18th century foreign travelers were just simply passersby; but there were also those who lived for awhile in the Romanian Principalities, like the Swiss Recordon. These observers observed that 'the corn is their main food; they make from it a thick gruel or rather a bread they name as polenta which is very good when fresh'¹⁸. In addition to being a mainstay of the table, polenta also became a social symbol: the peasant 'is often named as *mămăligar* [*polenter*]' as Doctor Manolescu¹⁹ noted. Doctor Istrati underlined with sarcasm the way the elite defined socially and symbolically the great rural mass, just by avoiding the consumption of this food: 'This is not because they find it bad in taste, or indigestible, but because it constituted the food of the people and because it is not eaten at the Grand Hotel du Boulevard des Italiens, at Paris'²⁰. Nevertheless, in the

¹⁷ A. Urbeanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Paul Cernovodeanu (ed.), *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. I (1801-1821), Editura Academiei Române, București, 2004, p. 669.

¹⁹ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 271.

²⁰ C.I. Istrati, *Op. cit.*, p. 239.

1890s through the end of the 19th century in a press inquiry upon the 'most liked food,' Doctor Iacob Felix and Doctor Nicolae Kalinderu indicated the polenta²¹. But polenta can be of many kinds and the peasant one seemed to be more consistent – it could be torn into lumps or cut into slices 'with thread'²². And there was also a food made of corn flour, as peasant as polenta, the *mălaiul*, which is in fact a kind of bread made from corn flour baked by all rules in the oven or *țest*. These products keep their place until today in the 'national cuisine': who among those reading these lines did not eat polenta in the past months? And the mălai can still be met even in the contemporary Cluj, yet transformed into a pastry product. During my childhood in Mehedinți, at the end of the 1970s, my paternal grandmother, born in 1910, still had a țest and occasionally she prepared mălai, to my great happiness; and she was also making from corn a meal asserted by Doctor Manolescu at 1895: *zăbicul*²³. With her, a whole world died.

At the end of the 19th century, corn was omnipotent in rural food. It was replaced slowly by slowly, turn by turn, by various grain competitors: the millet, that in 1895 was still cultivated and consumed only in Ialomița²⁴, Romanați and Brăila²⁵; the barley consumed still by 'many peasants in Moldavia' noted Doctor Nicolae Manolescu²⁶ or the buckwheat used in Moldavia and 'around Brăila'²⁷. Encouraging the replacement of corn were some fears about it and the nourishment based on it that produced a disease that would be famous in the past decades of the 19th century – pellagra.

But the vegetarianism of the peasant did not consist only in the quasi-exclusive consumption of polenta, but also in its seasoning, for various motifs, with a reduced number of products, still of vegetal origin. Doctor Manolescu knew them well and drew conclusions less flattering for the peasant condition: 'To eat onion with polenta, or leek with polenta, or pickles with polenta, or sour cabbage with polenta, or garlic with polenta, or gruel with polenta, or green cucumber with polenta, or plums (chiseliță) with polenta, or vine buds and sour grape

²¹ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Igiena țăranului român. Locuința, încălțăminte și îmbrăcăminte. Alimentațiunea în diferite regiuni ale țării și în diferite timpuri ale anului*, Lito-tipografia Carol Göbl, București, 1895, p. 235.

²² N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 272.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 274.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

²⁶ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 277.

²⁷ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

with polenta etc. etc., examples that are often seen in all regions of the country is to eat after a poor vegetarian diet and consequently to resemble a herbivore, that feeds with chopped, minced, or boiled vegetables'²⁸. And that the peasant was a special species of herbivores was proven by G.Z. Petrescu when he asserted in a paper that the teeth wear is a phenomenon specific not only to herbivores but also to peasants!²⁹.

Among vegetables, physicians observed that those most widely used in rural food were beans, onion, garlic, cabbage and cucumbers. On the contrary - carrots, parsley, tomatoes, turnips, cabbages and even potatoes are rarely met. Romanian peasants did not seem to be good cultivators and were constantly accused that they did not give proper attention to cultivation of a vegetable garden. Doctor C.I. Istrati vituperated, profoundly dissatisfied: 'There are villages in our country where you could hardly find an onion in the ground'³⁰, especially in Moldavia. And in Muntenia and Oltenia, the data published by Doctor Nicolae Manolescu criticized the habit of buying vegetables from the Serbian and Bulgarian villages that specialized in vegetables, or trading for them by barter. So did Barbu Ciurcu in Alimănești township, Șerbănești district, Olt County³¹ and Vasile Marin in Coteștii-din-Deal township, Dâmbovița County³², and many others like them. But the physicians were not content to describe and recommend, theoretically, they also acted as doctor I.C. Drăgescu, primary physician of Dolj County, did to provide a prescription for treatment. He noted that within the prefect of the county, the practice spread 'in the villages the culture of vegetables and bread making by Romanians'³³. Their approach from spring of 1900 is just partly successful because 'regarding the bakeries nothing was done and even today, in the villages it is still the Bulgarian that sells a detestable bread'³⁴; still in two districts of the county, the poorest ones, people are convinced to cultivate vegetables and the Bulgarians are taken off the market.' How they have convinced

²⁸ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 306.

²⁹ G.Z. Petrescu, (1905), *Tocirea dinților la om*, in „Revista Științelor Medicale”, anul I, volumul I, no. 2, p. 87.

³⁰ C.I. Istrati, *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

³¹ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 337.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 325.

³³ Dr. Drăgescu, *Raportul D-lui medic primar al județului Dolj no. 1719 din 9 septembrie 1900, relativ la răspândirea culturii legumelor și fabricarea pâinei la sate*, in „Buletinul Direcțiunei Generale a Serviciului Sanitar”, XII, 1900, no. 9, p. 259.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

the peasants from districts Amaradia and Jiul de Sus to transform into cultivators, even for their own usage, Doctor Drăgescu did not relate, but he told how they could solve many of the problems of the rural world contemporary with his advice: the sub prefects, who should be imitating that 'German praetors' in Transylvania that our doctor had seen sometime, on the occasion of a trip 'taking the peasants out of a tavern with a whip and sending them to working the land'³⁵.

If peasant nourishment is quasi-exclusive vegetarian, the physicians said, this is another way of saying that meat was rarely, too rarely found on the peasant table. Even though once in a while, especially when there was no need for it, it appeared. Still we could wonder why the problem of products of animal origin that enter the folk diet would be so important. In the scientific imagery of the epoch, the human societies and their characteristics are compared with the animal ones and since Darwin, through social Darwinism, any man of this cult knows that societies are in a perpetual 'fight for existence', where only the powerful will prevail. In the trophic chain the herbivores always become prey for carnivores; it is the same with people. At the head of his article about peasant food, Doctor Nicolae Lupu set as motto a significant quote from a French hygienist: 'Peoples with vegetarian diet are made to be conquered, just as vast herbivore families, in the animal kingdom seem to be destined to be the food for the carnivores'³⁶ and in the following pages he does not do anything else but to prove that 'our peasants go down on zoological scale; they enter in the herbivores kingdom'³⁷. A sad destiny for Romania!

And any physician, from the notions of food chemistry that he got during his studies, knew that the energy developed from the body depends greatly by the substances existent in the products of animal origin: meat, fat and milk. The diet based on animal products is equivalent with an active life, the vegetarian with stagnation and backwardness. And the mechanic metaphors enter the medical discourse; Doctor C.I. Istrati compared 'individuals or people' with an engine that develops a more or less mechanical work function to the quality of the fuel it is provided; on the linear scale of progress the individual-people or the engine will reach as far as they are fueled with

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 260.

³⁶ Nicolae Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 217.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 231.

quality products³⁸. In other words, a glorious historical destiny only the well fed peoples can have. It was not the case of the Romanian people.

If we go closer to the peasant table and we take a look through physicians' eyes, we will see that still the meat is notably absent. The peasants are not only agriculturists but are also animal breeders, of which some are destined to their own consumption. Meat was still, like bread, not everyday food but was reserved for 'holidays', that is occasionally. And not all animals existent in peasant household are brought up for food. Each culture operated a primary distinction between animals, considering some proper for food and excluding the others; the peasant culture does not make an exception. But in the system of any society's nourishment, not every kind of meat has the same value and importance. In the peasant one, the meat by excellence is pork, followed by mutton. The doublet pork (winter) - mutton (summer-autumn) was essential for peasant society in the modern epoch. The physicians assert it: Doctor Manolescu knows that the 'peasant eats a lot of mutton'³⁹ but Doctor Crăiniceanu knows too that 'the most preferred meat by Romanians is the pork'⁴⁰.

Contemporary research on the food system in a Romanian village from Transylvania proves that the doublet pork-mutton keeps its relevance until late in the second half of the 20th century. Recent overturns in the contemporary food system simply devalues mutton, creating great discontent to the peasants from the mentioned village who cannot find but hardly the most wanted mutton⁴¹. And beef does not enter the food circuit. Even in the second half of 20th century, beef has an intermediary place between the one allowed for food and the forbidden: veal is 'good to eat', beef only in exceptional cases and never the ox. What we find in the field in the first decade of the 21st century superposes almost point by point over the opinions expressed one century ago in the first ethnographic work dedicated to peasant food: "They sometimes buy beef, and when a sick cow is cut or its leg breaks etc., so as not to waste all of the cow.(...) The ox is not eaten because it is a sin. The veal, only when it is sick and they cut it, as otherwise they breed the veals'.⁴² Nothing has changed. But we may wonder why the peasants do not eat the beef. The true reason for it is offered by peasant

³⁸ C.I. Istrati, *Op. cit.*, pp. 223-224.

³⁹ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁴⁰ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁴¹ Bărbulescu Constantin, *Relația om - animal. Studiu de caz: porcul domestic*, 2011, mss., chapt. I: "Porcul și animalele gospodăriei țărănești".

⁴² Mihai Lupescu, *Din bucătăria țăranului*, Paideia, București, 2000, p. 58.

themselves, those from Bukovina of the beginning of the 20th century: 'The peasant does not eat beef, there are people that never in their lives put beef in their mouths and they would not, holding it as a sin. The cow feeds you, with the ox you work and you get rich and you want to eat it! In Horecea, a long time ago, when they saw somebody eating beef they say it is bad alien. In Mihalcea they have nausea for beef, and so they better fast. The same, in Moldavia say that if they eat its milk, they should eat its meat, too?'⁴³. As I have mentioned, the cattle seem to have been forbidden once to be eaten, at least in the peasant world: they entered with the horse and donkey in the category of auxiliary animals forbidden from consumption. From the end of 19th century there are testimonies concordant with this subject; Doctor Nicolae Manolescu thought he was entitled to assert: 'In all the country, the beef is little used by peasants, many have distaste for it'⁴⁴ and Doctor Gh. Crăiniceanu assured that only veal was consumed, and that only 'in town'⁴⁵. In Mehedinți, the rural hospital physician in Strehăia told Doctor Manolescu that there 'peasants step aside beef like Jews from pork'⁴⁶ and Doctor Crăiniceanu knew that in hospitals 'many villagers refuse to eat beef'⁴⁷. Again, C.I. Istrati delivered the most shocking assertions: 'Our peasants have a general distaste for meat, and I met many, especially in the southern part of Dolj county who declared that they do not spoil with meat, because they have never eaten it'⁴⁸. There is no point to multiply the assertions; they are numerous and concordant.

The Peasant – An Unwilling Vegetarian

As I was saying somewhere above, physicians are not interested just in describing and highlighting the 'hygienic evils' of peasant food. They always go further and look for the causes of this state of facts. They ask not only what the peasant eats but why its food is configured this way? Since the medical discourse upon peasant food like any other subject is preeminently negative, in fact they try to make an inventory of the causes of the disastrous situation found in the field. They are less in number and easily identified. Of chief importance would be poverty, then 'ignorance' and finally a custom of religious nature – the Lents, which it

⁴³ Elena Niculiță-Voronca, *Datinele și credințele poporului român adunate și așezate în ordine mitologică*, vol. I, Polirom, Iași, 1998, p. 236. First edition published in 1903.

⁴⁴ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 313.

⁴⁵ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁴⁶ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 327.

⁴⁷ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 257.

⁴⁸ C.I. Istrati, *Op. cit.*, p. 251.

is supposed the peasant strictly observes. Together with these three great causes, physicians also identify others, complementary but not of the same importance: the disequilibrium of the fragile peasant diet during agricultural works for the landlord, who offers to the workers food even worse than the one at home, to it adding the lack of cooking knowledge. Let us approach them in turn.

The profound material misery that most of population lives in is the first cause of the critical diet of the peasant. It was a poverty neighboring a famine, that the elite is not conscious enough, asserted doctor Istrati: "It something scary, for who saw closely the poverty in the peasant's garden. Go to the country, and often you will see tens of houses of those apportioned in 1864, infected and unhealthy that have no fence, where do you want them to have vegetable garden or fruits; and where from to see a cow or a pig? In the country there is a profound misery that we still don't fully realize! The misery creates to the inhabitant distaste for life; the demoralization that he has; crushing his good thoughts; everything contributed to bring him in such miserable state, that he doesn't even know what he would eat tomorrow!"⁴⁹. To live from one day to another is a peasant saying, which may also may have a food-related meaning, the physicians asserted. But the generic poverty described by Doctor C.I. Istrati, got a human shape through sub-inspector Ch. Laugier, who in 1905 reported on a collective food intoxication in Popești Township, Iași County. The protagonists of the events were the Crivei Family, whose material situation was described by Doctor Laugier in the terms like in fairy tales the modest poor character is destined a great future: "In Popești township, at the eastern extremity, in a miserable cottage lives a poor villager, 40 years old, Vasile Crivei, together with his wife and four children - Maria, eight years; Sultana, ten years; Gheorghe, five years; Dimitrie, two years"⁵⁰. And, like in fairy tales, Crivei family is so poor that they do not have anything to eat and so drink water. Because indeed, the second day of Christmas, the corn reserve of the family is finished and the traditional pork that the ethnologists call the 'house wealth' is not mentioned. Vasile addresses the inn keeper, but he cannot borrow; as for the villagers, they were 'as needy as he was'⁵¹. The situation was inescapable; and after two days of black fast the 'poor mother' resorted to the uninspired expedient of

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 265.

⁵⁰ Dr. Laugier, *Intoxicație alimentară*, in „Buletinul Direcțiunii generale a Serviciului Sanitar”, XVII, 1905, no. 1, p. 26.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

transforming the poultry food into human food: she grinds <<some rests of barley, oat and wheat together and left after the thresher that she kept for poultry>>⁵². She gets from this mixture a 'dirty, sticky, gross' flour 'that she makes a polenta'⁵³. In short time they all get sick and faint. The story ends happily at the rural hospital in Podu Iloaiei where patients recover after a powerful purgative and medical care and they are fully recovered in few days. The physician of the hospital detains them one more day 'to feed them better'⁵⁴. After the misadventures of Crivei family, the peasant poverty and under nutrition, so clamored by physicians, for me as researcher in 21st century, gets a different consistence, more credible. We no longer talk here of the generic peasant, that hides an infinite multitude of characters and situations, that physicians reduce at one prototype, but we talk of people flesh and blood that in the first day of Christmas cannot put on their table anything but polenta, the last resort. We are in Moldavia at 1905, the same Moldavia that in 1912 has a huge number of monocellular peasant dwellings. The poverty must have been terrible, at least for a great part of rural population; greatly enough to detonate the famous revolt in two years.

After poverty and not necessarily linked with it comes 'ignorance'. The peasants are an uneducated, ignorant and superstitious population. All physicians compete in describing this way the mental universe of the peasants. For the peasant world to become something else but what it was at the end of 19th century, for a real modernization, a great part of intellectual elite (except the conservatives) of the epoch agreed to follow two ways: one must ensure the economic basis of peasant economy - the apportionment - and the second should have transformed the peasant mental universe through education. In other words, the solution for the 'rural question' could synthesize very well in a slogan - land and school. Each of these two ways had its heroes: the apportionment has had Alexandru Ioan Cuza and the 'enlightenment' through school has had Spiru Haret. Anyway, in the past decades of the 19th century until WWI almost all intellectual elite of the epoch was convinced that one of the major problems of peasantry is the lack of education. And education was seen as a universal panacea of all the 'hygienic evils' of rural population. If we go back to the diet, the peasant ignorance manifests in the fact that the diet of wealthy peasants does not differ much from that of poor peasants. Either poor or wealthy, the peasants have a critical nutrition.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 27.

⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

The poor do not have anything to put on the table and the wealthy do not know what to put on the table. The peasants do not know the nutritive value of different products, complained Doctor Nicolae Lupu, a fact that made them make the weirdest (from scientific point of view) decisions, such as giving eggs for salted fish: 'I was seeing the people having measles in Nereju-Nefliu, Ilfov County, in the spring of 1904; I saw at a house five kids, each having a lump of polenta dipping into a plate with brine and a small piece of fish. It was a sweet (non-fast) day. I ask the mother what did she give for the fish. She answered nine eggs, doctor, (nine eggs contain 96 g. 47 albuminoids and 54g. 50 fat while the fish that did not have more than 100g. had 18g. 90 albuminoids and 16g. 81 fat). To my question why she didn't give them the eggs she answered that with the eggs they could not dip in. And she would seem right. But at my reply that with a spoon of grease she could make scrambled eggs, where to dip twice those kids, she raised her shoulders, and I say: here is where ignorance takes you. Besides, I do not blame her'⁵⁵. Here is clear that the meeting between physician and the peasant woman represents the meeting of the science with ignorance. That the peasant has no idea about the nutritive value of food and so he is not capable of managing rationally the few food and financial resources he owns with the purpose to bettering his nutrition is proven by the practice quite spread to buy meat under the form of pastrami or salted fish. Both products physicians say, lose an important percentage of nutritive qualities following preservation. Doctor Iacob Felix calculated in 1862 that pastrami, while three times 'more condensed than fresh meat', the latter is cheaper. Further more he knew from experience that pastrami in commerce is unhygienic: 'One day in September 1860, on the occasion of an epidemic of intermittent fever, by walking from village to village I cheated my stomach with pastrami; one piece of that lost in my luggage. At the end of September, in a day not willing for a serious work I put my <<brass buddy>> the microscope on the table to waste some time. By chance the object of observation was that piece of pastrami. What did I see? Forests of microscopic vegetation; a great part of pastrami consists of such rancid parasites. That was the first time to use the microscope for the pastrami. I got scared remembering the colossal deception for the consumers of pastrami by introducing in their stomachs but not nutritional substances. Those vegetations have not direct poisoning power but the damage they produce by decreasing the nutritive substances is considerable. In October 1860 I looked into 28 different pastramis and

⁵⁵ Nicolae Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

found 19 sorts filled with that rancid parasites⁵⁶. About pastrami and from personal experience doctor Ghe. Crăiniceanu too was terrified when he found that 'in Ialomița river the meat pieces destined to pastrami were worse treated than sheep skin, thrown through sand and mud'⁵⁷. And still doctor Crăiniceanu knew that 'fish comes often rotten in commerce'⁵⁸. But here we enter the delicate domain of food safety that the modern state tried to regulate and implicitly control: the first general regulation regarding 'the making' of food and beverages and their commerce dates from 1895⁵⁹.

And finally, one of the most important causes of the Romanian peasant vegetarianism is the fasting. All members of medical body that in their writings touch the problem of peasant food are against fasting. There is no doctor to stop condemning toughly this religious habit. An inventory of the syntagms characterizing the fasting we think as relevant: 'the most immoral astray of human fantasy'⁶⁰; 'the bloody custom of fasting'⁶¹; 'a true calamity'⁶²; 'to admit fasting (...) would mean to fulfill a crime of les-nationality, condemned by science and morality'⁶³; 'a true crime upon humanity, a true touch to our national development'⁶⁴.

All physicians assert that the fast has a negative contribution to the disequilibrium of peasant food, by stressing the main characteristic that they consider negative: the vegetarianism. But fasting is seen as a religious practice perilous and dangerous for rurals' health, for many reasons. First of all the periods of fasting are too numerous and too large:

⁵⁶ Dr. Felix, *Despre nutrimentul țăranilor*, in „Monitorul. Jurnal oficial al Principatelor-Unite”, no. 88, 21 aprilie 1862, p. 365.

⁵⁷ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ See *Regulament asupra privegheii sanitare a fabricațiunii alimentelor și băuturilor și a comerțului cu alimente și băuturi (art. 154, 155, 156 și 157 din legea sanitară)*, in Alina Ioana Șuta, Oana Mihaela Tămaș, Alin Ciupală, Constantin Bărbulescu, Vlad Popovici, „Legislația sanitară în România modernă (1874-1910)”, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 507-538.

⁶⁰ Dr. Felix, *Despre nutrimentul țăranilor*, in „Monitorul. Jurnal oficial al Principatelor-Unite”, no. 88, 21 aprilie 1862, p. 365.

⁶¹ C.I. Istrati, *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

⁶² Idem, *Postul la români*, in “Jurnalul Societății Științelor Medicale din București”, anul I, 1879, no. 20, p. 315.

⁶³ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimpurană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 277.

⁶⁴ I. S. Mendonini, *Contribuțiuni la demografia României*, Imprimeria Statului, Buc., 1892, p. 12.

Christmas Lent, Easter Lent, St. Peter Lent, St. Mary Lent, to that adding all Wednesdays and Fridays, and sometimes each Monday. Altogether it summed up an impressive number of days when the meat consumption is prohibited. Ion Ionescu de la Brad talked of about half a year⁶⁵ Doctor C.I. Istrati of 185 days⁶⁶ and Doctor Nicolae Manolescu calculated 189 days of fasting, which was more than half a year⁶⁷. Doctor A. Urbeanu calculated for 1901 no less than 194 days of fasting (including here the fast on Wednesdays and Fridays) that could climb up to 225 days⁶⁸ if it was calculated including the fast on each Monday of the week. I don't know how, but it looks as if between 1868 and 1901 the number of fast days increases! Thus: too many days of fast; and as if it weren't enough, some of the Lents, especially the Easter Lent, covered a difficult period for the peasant: the one at the end of winter and beginning of spring with the climate moods of March and April and that ends right before the beginning of spring agricultural works. Nothing can be more counterproductive but the place, duration and rigor of this Lent, asserts doctor C.I. Istrati, and not only him: 'Instead that, in spring, when weakened from winter, it starts an excessive work of seven-eight months, instead of searching to find in his food equivalents for the hay or barley that he gives to his horse, on the contrary he submits to a straw diet, of substances totally non-nutritious, for seven weeks!'⁶⁹. The alternation of Lent and sweet periods seems to be chosen expressly not to fit the dietary needs of the peasant: when he has more work to do, the peasant fasts and when the calendar of agricultural works is loose, he is in a sweet period! All culminates with the sweet of Christmas when he has the richest menu and when... he does not work at all.

Peasants observed the fasts with holiness, the physicians said. And although the image may be apocalyptic, they asserted that even young children are put to fast; they know it from other people saying - from Doctor Istrati to Doctor Sabin, who knows that 'inhabitants from Gheboiaia and Finta fast with great holiness. I found here peasant women and men telling that they rather die their children than spoil them with milk or eggs during Lent'⁷⁰. That is what is actually happening, said the

⁶⁵ Ion Ionescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 203.

⁶⁶ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimpurană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 259.

⁶⁷ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 311.

⁶⁸ A. Urbeanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁶⁹ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimpurană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, pp. 277-278.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 282.

same doctor, C.I. Istrati, after his personal experience with the practice at the children hospital in Bucharest. If we do not believe doctor Istrati, here is doctor I.S. Mendonini, who asserts: 'I personally saw that at free consultations of hospital Brâncoveanu, numerous peasant women whose milk has gone because of insufficient nutrition who came with sick children, 90% sickness of digestive apparatus, were provoked by the fast they tormented the poor unhappy beings with. Most of this emaciate children, succumb following these maladies'⁷¹. Doctor A. Urbeanu, deplored the fate of the peasant children that he considered victims of fasting and of the general dietary misery of the peasant: 'I confess that it is a torture to follow this topic more and show with figures the *summum* of the misery the peasant children must endure, these innocent beings waiting for death to have mercy and take them. And death is more merciful than the church dogmas, than our laws, than the love of the tough for the humble slave'⁷².

Besides that, the Easter Lent had influence upon mortality, as easily shown by Doctor Nicolae Lupu, using the statistic data from the 1870-1897 interval that annually calculated the monthly peak of mortality, which was invariably reached in March⁷³. This was a result of fasting, our doctor believed. These are three causal pillars of 'hygienic evils' of peasant diet. Poverty prevents the peasant from providing products of animal origin and keeps him at the margin of food misery; his ignorance opposes him in bettering his diet even when this would be possible; and religion, by fasting, condemns him more than half a year to a strict vegetarian diet. In fact, all three factors constitute a vicious circle: poverty stimulates ignorance, and ignorance fosters the religious practices. From there, it is hard to get out.

As I have mentioned above, the deficient diet of the peasant is due to secondary causes. Physicians mention here the food offered by landlords and leaseholders during agricultural works. If the peasant food is deficitary generally from nutritive point of view, the food offered by landlord is even worse! It seems that whatever is worse in the barn of the boyar or leaseholder reaches invariably on the peasant's table during summer works. Doctor Nicolae Lupu saw it with his own eyes: 'Entering afterwords in another village - another Jew leaseholder - (...), I see a rack wagon carrying a big polenta, hard as a stone and a barrel of pickled cucumbers; it was the food for the people at the thresher for a long

⁷¹ I. S. Mendonini, *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷² A. Urbeanu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

⁷³ N. Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

summer day and sweet day! The lad with the oxen told me secretly << You should come in the evening, because for the evening he has bitter polenta and dark like night, that he is ashamed to give it during the daylight!>> . But what squeezed tears of pain was an old lady going fast-fast with a pot behind that rack wagon; I stop her and ask; What do you auntie have in pot? << some milk with mush, she told me, I take is to the girl at the thresher at the boyar(!) because she can't only with the sourness in that barrel!>>⁷⁴. Touching, no doubt.

In 1895, doctor Nicolae Manolescu found more of the same with the landlords and noted from personal experience of the meals offered at harvesting, wherein each is given a lump of polenta (this being at discretion), a piece of cheese that could not have more than 50 *dramuri*, and a small onion. The cheese was very hard and salted and the leaseholder claims to be *advantageous*, that is *the peasant eats less*. Soup or meat are not mentioned. Only some of the most generous landlords make soup of bream and then the worker, because he is entitled to soup, gets a smaller piece of fish than he would get if fried⁷⁵.

The sanitary authorities studied seriously for a long time these descriptions and tried to supervise the quality of the food the peasants got during agricultural works. It was taken into consideration the quality of corn flour for the daily polenta. In 1889 Doctor Polizu sent a memorandum to the prefects and physicians in the counties by asking them to supervise through 'administrative agents' the food got by peasants during work from landlords and leaseholders so as not to happen like in Tecuci County where the corn flour was altered and following analyses it 'presented a decrease by 48.50% of nutritive substances' that could only lead to 'physiological misery' of the 'village dwellers'⁷⁶. The endless fight of administration with landlords and leaseholders on this topic, did not seem to have spectacular outcomes.

And as a last cause for the deficient nourishment of the peasants, physicians invoked the lack of culinary knowledge. The general ignorance upon the value of food products has a new aspect - their preparation. In other words - the peasant woman does not know how to cook, doctor C.I. Istrati is saying bluntly in his characteristic style: 'Regarding the culinary art, most women in the countryside have forgotten

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

⁷⁵ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 308-309.

⁷⁶ Dr. Polyzu, *Circulara D-lui Ministru de Interne no. 15.035 din 2 septembrie 1889, către d-nii prefecți și medici primari de județe, relativă la alimentațiunea locuitorilor rurali la muncile agricole*, in „Buletinul Direcțiunei Generale a Serviciului Sanitar”, I, 1889, no. 19, p. 305.

everything as they have forgot the cultivation of vegetables in the gardens and the weaving of cloth, carpets, pants etc.⁷⁷; or more precisely they have forgotten how to cook, that means that once, they knew. We see that Doctor Istrati asserts the giving up on many of the typical feminine activities in the traditional peasant household: cultivation of vegetables, weaving the cloth, the carpet. For our physician, all exterior signs of modernization, such as abandonment of house industries are a sign of rural world decadence. The autarchic village is seen as an ideal model, on the way to be dislocated at 1880 by the invading capitalism in the Romania of the epoch. But Doctor C.I. Istrati is not the only physician reminding the phenomenon; Doctor Ghe. Crăiniceanu asserts that 'in almost all regions women are accused that they do not know how to cook' even though he knows 'from my own experience numerous villages where Romanian women cook wonderfully'⁷⁸. It seems that the personal experience is not enough to clear away the accusations brought to the peasant woman. Doctor Crăiniceanu cannot influence the whole hygienist trend that analyzes and interprets some modalities of preparing the food, typically peasant, as unhygienic and as proof of ignorance in preparing. And this way we reach to the presence of bread in peasant food, or more precisely to its absence, that paradoxically is not always interpreted negatively by physicians, considering that the peasant woman does not know to prepare it. The village is not the place where you find a good quality bread: 'Now very rarely one can see bread in the countryside (...) that is very sad because it is rare when you see a well done bread'⁷⁹. The preparation of the unleavened bread - the round loaves or flat bread - are the most incriminated, upon which doctor Nicolae Manolescu says that generally the inside is not well baked⁸⁰. Doctor Istrati considers the round loaf baked in the stone/earthen lid as 'the most primitive way of baking bread'⁸¹. Now I have to confess that during my childhood, that is 1970s-1980s of the past century I have eaten 'lipie'[round loaf] baked directly on the stove lid, on one side and then the other, but also bread baked in the 'primitive' stone/earthen lids and my memories upon this product - baked on grape leaves and smeared

⁷⁷ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimpurană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 233.

⁷⁸ Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

⁷⁹ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimpurană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 235.

⁸⁰ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

⁸¹ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimpurană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 236.

with a mixture of egg and tomato juice – it is true leavened, and it has nothing to do with the descriptions of physicians from the past decades of the 19th century. My grandmother's bread in țest [stone/earthen lid] is a childhood delicacy that I am convinced I will not meet soon. And I am also convinced that my perception is not only a known psychological reflex of valuing childhood with the magic virtues of beginnings. Pure and simple such product does no longer exist on the bakery market in Romania.

Polenta, Laziness, Illness and Death

After we have seen the causes of deficient nourishment of rural population we should highlight, following the physicians, the consequences of this way of nourishing. As it was seen from quotations above, a nourishment based on vegetables, insufficient, has physiological consequences well determined and eventually social consequences as well. Firstly, the typical peasant undernourishment explains one of the characteristics of peasantry – the laziness – that few observers deny and the physicians justify⁸². Doctor Iacob Felix at the beginnings of his career as primary physician in Muscel County offers an example, he thinks, that is conclusive: 'In the summer of 1860, because of bad harvest, the peasant from many villages of Podgoria district (Muscel County) did not have corn. Next to village Leurdeni from the same district, D. Nicolae C. built a villa and, even though he paid well, he could not find workers; the villagers from Leurdeni, even if they had no food, they refused to work. Why? Because the lack of nutrition made them lazy, and took the energy needed to get out of that abnormal state'⁸³. For over more than four decades, doctor Nicolae Lupu, notices together with entire elite, that under nutrition and its pathological consequences lead to '*considerable decrease of the quantity and quality of the national work*. This fact, and this fact especially, was noticed by all who live in the countryside'⁸⁴. But he is indignant at 'our layer of elite could not find other explanation for this small quantity of work but the so-called: *laziness of the peasant*. I do not have enough words of revolt for those who generated such explanation, and I will not answer but with the words of a peasant: << You say Lazy? But then who ploughs, who step on the fields thousands and thousands

⁸² For this subject see, Constantin Bărbulescu, Vlad Popovici, *Modernizarea lumii rurale din România în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și la începutul secolului al XX-lea. Contribuții*, Ed. Accent, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, pp. 105-170.

⁸³ Dr. Felix, *Despre nutrimentul țăranilor*, in „Monitorul. Jurnal oficial al Principatelor-Unite”, no. 88, 21 aprilie 1862, p. 365.

⁸⁴ N. Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

times, who reaps, passing through their hands all the threads of the wheat, these fields as you can catch with your eyes? Well, we are, not them!>>⁸⁵.

First of all malnutrition has pathological consequences that lead to huge rural morbidity and mortality, but also to what Doctor Nicolae Lupu calls 'the precocious ageing' that he describes: 'women at 30s have the face of 50s and the same energy; men have sunken, yellow, wrinkled and earthy faces. That who depicted Romanian lads with red faces and muscles in present times made a bad service to the country. Most of them are feeble and the recruiting physicians statistics are fully proving it. From this decayed bodies comes the rotten offspring, and from these two causes, the huge mortality and weak resistance of the adults and children'⁸⁶. Consequently the peasant nourishment threatens not only the present but also the future of the country. Doctor C.I. Istrati thought the same in 1880: 'with a body badly nourished, we have less chances to have children; and especially to give birth to *viable, valid* children'⁸⁷. If both authors agree upon the consequences of the rurals' malnutrition, the national peril deriving from it is different at 1880 compared to 1906. Each of the physicians' observations probably came from their personal sensitivities and related to social fears existent in both epochs. Doctor Istrati writes during the great public debates occasioned by the emendation of article 7 in the Constitution from 1866, fears that 'the future of the country is not assured at all; and then, all the sacrifices we imposed, will serve only to raise a different nation on our corpse that will benefit alone and sure of all our little economies and improvements'⁸⁸. He is thinking here of the Jews, his work being impregnated by a fervent anti-Semitism. And with Doctor Nicolae Lupu, who published his article in the beacon journal of the poporanist current - „Viața Românească” - the social accents were more present by condemning the elite that they considered as a 'layer of superposed' without any social utility - 'they do not do anything for the existence and strength of this country'⁸⁹ - and with arrows well aimed at conservative party when he revealed that 'the beautiful equine species of Mr. Marghiloman'⁹⁰ is better fed than the millions of peasants of modern

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimporană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 269.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁹ N. Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 231.

Romania. But for him too beyond the social critique, the peasant malnutrition was only failing the chances for Romania to 'make place among the civilized peoples of Europe through thinking and work power'⁹¹. Romania presents itself categorically disadvantaged in the competition with the other European peoples! And, supreme aversion, if generally in Europe the meat consumption and other products of animal origin increase constantly along 19th century, in Romania of the last four decades of that century seem to take place an involution in rural food.

The Good Old Times

If peasant's food in their epoch was the way it was described in the pages above, our physicians are convinced that this situation is relatively recent and that in the remote or recent past the situations was different - in a good way, obviously. When he talks about bread, Doctor Istrati announces abruptly that 'in old times the Romanian peasant fed only with bread'⁹². When should we place this past? He doesn't say it, but the next sentence sends us to a remote past and towards a different peasant, more of a warrior: 'A Romanian soldier is described having white bread at the saddle bow'⁹³. That is all. After two decades and a half, Doctor Nicolae Lupu is forced to recognize that he does not have sources to describe the peasant's food in the past. Still, he is convinced too that in the past peasant's food was superior to the one contemporary with him. It is a matter of logic and of common sense to endorse that 'our courage and bravery in the past could not be the result of such diet'⁹⁴. Stephen the Great's warriors do not resemble the peasants of the end of 19th century, but they did not have the same diet: 'Stephen the Great's warriors left for the hard and perilous road of battle not only with their spiked maces and their sharp swords. The wheat bread was in the knapsack and the greasy cheese from the sheep in the mountains or in the plain was there in the purse. The milk and cheese of those times of shepherding ensured our persistence among nations and our freedom. The polenta and the onions of these times of <<great agriculture>> and <<modern organization>> will bring our death among other countries, and its subjugation to the foreigners, or to the guests inside who instead of transforming into brothers, they transform into our oppressors!!'⁹⁵. We

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

⁹² C.I. Istrati, *O pagină din istoria contimporană a României din punctul de vedere medical, economic și național*, Tipografia Alesandru A. Grecescu, Buc., 1880, p. 234.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

⁹⁴ N. Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 229.

think we recognize here the echoes of Nicolae Iorga's writings and the agitation around the celebration of 400 years since the death of the great voivode in 1904⁹⁶. Anyway, the atmosphere of glorification of the voivodal past put face to face with the capitalism misery of the present is here, the medical variant.

At 1906 still, both Doctor Lupu and Doctor A. Urbeanu, counting this time on statistical data, tried to bring arguments in favor of the thesis asserting that the past four decades of the 19th century showed a worsening of peasant food. After data published in the first number of 'Viața Românească', Doctor Nicolae Lupu found that between 1876 and 1903 the internal consumption of corn per capita decreased from 230 kilos per year to 146 kilos per year⁹⁷. This was a significant decrease. Doctor Urbeanu, using the same statistical data, but with more refined instruments of analysis, found an average decrease of food ration available for each peasant between 1860 and 1900. It was just that for corn, despite the increase of production, of export and of population, the average of the interval analyzed remained approximately the same - 675 grams per rural inhabitant per day; the available rations of the products with great deficit in peasant food, decreased: milk, cheese, pork and lamb. Even if the general image seemed even, the conclusions are as terrifiant as before: , the Romanian peasant not only that he did not evolve towards a better food, more substantial, but on the contrary he had to accomodate to a more and more reduced nourishment, inferior qualitatively and quantitatively to the one in the past, facing the cronic famine with the danger of his health (...) the food balance of Romanian peasant situates for the period of past forty years with a deficit whose size is represented by the number of pellagra and degenerate people'⁹⁸. Still, I wonder how is it possible by using official statistical data and the same algorithm, Doctor Urbeanu get for interval 1867-1903 an average of 202 kilos corn per capita⁹⁹ in Romania and the author of statistics in 'Viața Românească' found a constant decrease of the same ration from 230 kilos(1876) to 146 kilos(1903)?

⁹⁶ See the chapter „O amintire istorică” in Ion Bulei, *Viața în vremea lui Carol I*, Tritonic, București, 2005, pp. 237-241.

⁹⁷ N. Lupu, *Op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁹⁸ A. Urbeanu, *Hrana sateanului în cei din urmă 40 de ani și îmbunătățirile de adus*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1906, p. 19.

⁹⁹ Average almost constant in the interval analyzed. A. Urbeanu, *Hrana sateanului în cei din urmă 40 de ani și îmbunătățirile de adus*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1906, p. 7.

Despite the general alarming tone of the medical discourse upon peasant's food there are also voices asserting the contrary. There were not many but they are worth taking into account. Again Doctor Nicolae Manolescu, synthesizing the totality of material upon the peasant's food brought by various physician colleagues, using personal experience but also information offered by peasant themselves or teachers, reaches to the odd conclusion that 'the peasant is better nourished than in other times, and this grace to the help given through different institutions'¹⁰⁰; the statement is odd indeed because no other assertion in his paper at 1895 is concordant with the one above. The testimony of Doctor Munteanu, the physician of the rural hospital in Răducăneni, Vaslui County, asserts that in the previous 7-8 years, the living 'of the peasant changed a lot, in a good way, and this I ascribe mostly to the solicitude of those at the center to provide facilities for subsistence through agricultural credits, the agricultural law, the apportionment of many with the married law and selling the state lands in small pieces'¹⁰¹. The past 7-8 years before 1895 were the years of conservative governments when indeed many laws trying to embetter the condition of rural population¹⁰² were passed and we suspect that Doctor Munteanu was in the epoch on the good side of the political barricade. His colleagues of liberal orientation seem not to have seen the embetterments in the peasant's life.

We must wait for 1905 and the incisive pen of doctor Radu Chernbach, physician of the hospital in the township of Husi, to have for real an opinion against the trend. He simply dismissed the entire medical discourse upon the peasant food from Doctor Constantin Caracas to the current day. He asserted: 'It is a wrong idea that the food of our peasant, understanding that of the diligent peasant - not quite the front-rank - would be indigestible, bad and tasteless (...) Villagers have different kinds of meals very nutritive and if it weren't how could be explained then at the majority of them the exuberant health of their bodies, the power of resistance to work united with that solid power of the mind'¹⁰³. Was this just a common-sense assertion of just a particular situation of our physician? Hard to say; I would incline towards the first variant, but this is maybe my particular situation. Our physician

¹⁰⁰ N. Manolescu, *Op. cit.*, p. 304.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 345.

¹⁰² For the legislation of the conservative governments see Traian P. Lungu, *Viața politică în România la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea (1888-1899)*, Ed. Științifică, București, 1967, pp. 66-84, 110-138.

¹⁰³ Radu Chernbah, *Alimentația bolnavilor în spitale*, in „Spitalul”, XXV, 1905, p. 433.

continues his crusade and agrees, *horibile dictu*, even with the Lent! ' A wrong trend in public opinion made many to condemn the fasting and many who write and talk about food without calling, deplore <<gently>> the peasant who fasts, by saying that he degenerates because of the fasting. It is made a regrettable confusion because most of those who deplore have not studied solidly'¹⁰⁴. Obviously, he agrees with the fast in the light of some 'recent' scientific data that proved that there is no difference of assimilation between animal and vegetal albumins. The next year, Doctor Nicolae Lupu still didn't find about them.

Maybe it is not an incident that the positive appreciations regarding the peasant's food appear in the first decade of the 20th century, because doctor Radu Chernbach, in order to prove the richness and variability of peasant cuisine, does not resort only to medical sources but also quotes the articles published between 1899 and 1904 by Mihai Lupescu in 'Sezatoarea' journal dedicated to 'peasant's cuisine'. They are fragmented from the first ethnographic work dealing with the peasant food, destined to appear in the famous collection of Romanian Academy 'From the Life of Romanian People'. The manuscript was finished at the beginning of 1916¹⁰⁵ but the war stopped his plans of publishing and the volume will be published much later, in 2000. Still, as I was saying, a part of material will be published in the well known journal of folklore edited by Artur Gorovei in Falticeni. At a first glance the volume of Moldavian ethnographer does not seem to belong to a paradigm different from the one patronizing the medical discourse; especially when we find of the plans of Vasile Lupescu of writing an article upon peasants treating separately 'the peasant's hygiene', clothing and footwear, and finally the peasant's food in 1893¹⁰⁶. We cannot stop from noticing the resemblances between Lupescu's project and the classic works of doctors Nicolae Manolescu and Ghe. Crainiceanu: only the chapter upon the rurals' dwelling is missing; the rest is all there. Still, what differences are between the work of ethnographer Mihai Lupescu and the medical discourse? What is striking from the beginning is the neutral tone of description: no accusations anywhere, no fine ironies. The author, obviously, wishes to accomplish a most detailed description of everything that he names 'peasant cuisine': kitchenware, food, practices. But his book is not only a simple cook book with 'peasant' recipes, its ambition is greater. Each article in this rather a dictionary of folk beliefs

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 434.

¹⁰⁵ Mihai Lupescu, *Din bucătăria țaranului român*, Paideia, București, 2000, p. 14.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

and representations regarding food, opens by mentioning the peasant terminology, continues with modalities of preparation and ends with the presentation of the beliefs and representations upon the subject approached. In fact, what Lupescu proposes is an excursion in the peasant culture with the help of food products and culinary practices. The ethnographer's work frames into the autochthonous paradigm. The medical discourse, as I have mentioned is frameable to the primitive paradigm. Even if the medical and ethnographic discourses seem alike to a superficial look, in fact they peer into the peasant and the rural world from totally different perspectives. For an ethnographer the peasant is the bearer of a superior culture; he is a cultural being and has nothing inferior to those writing about him; while for the physician the peasant was nothing more than a primitive being that needed guidance, perhaps even with administrative force to the lights of modern culture that do not spring in any case from the village world. For an ethnographer the peasant is a cultural archetype, for the physician, a statistical unit.

Certainly, from the first half of the 19th century the intellectual elite built the two paradigms enounced above into a double image of the peasant and rural world that inevitably entered into competition; it seems that at the beginning of 20th century the paradigm of the primitive ceded to the paradigm of autochthonous, the positive image of the peasant becoming more and more present in the public space and thus surpassing the negative image.

Peasant Nourishment in Two Transylvanian Villages

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Abstract: *Peasant nourishment in two Transylvanian villages.* The paper presents a comparison of two communities related to the act of cooking. Even though the two villages present multiple similarities in preparing the meal, for example, there are still important differences in their daily menus: polenta and meat rolled cabbage for one community, while the other has the *zama* (soup) as the most common meal. These differences act like definitory marks for both communities. For both communities cooking is a feminine task, but it means more than actually mixing the vegetables with meat and water and boiling them all in a pot; it also means associated tasks like fetching water or wood, and both of them create or disrupt sociabilities in the village.

Keywords: food, cooking, gender, rural, meat

Rezumat: *Alimentație țărănească în două sate din Transilvania.* Lucrarea analizează comparativ practicile culinare din două comunități ardelenice. Chiar dacă satele studiate prezintă multiple similități în ceea ce privește pregătirea cărnii, de exemplu, există totuși diferențe notabile în meniurile lor zilnice: mămăliga și sarmalele pentru o comunitate, respectiv pâinea și *zama* pentru cealaltă. Aceste diferențe acționează ca mărci definitorii pentru cele două comunități. Gătirea este o sarcină feminină în ambele sate, dar înseamnă mult mai mult decât amestecarea legumelor cu carne și apă și turnarea lor într-o oală la fiert. Prepararea hranei implică și alte sarcini asociate, cum ar fi adusul apei sau al lemnelor de foc. Toate acestea creează sau distrug sociabilități în lumea satului.

Cuvinte-cheie: hrană, gătit, gen, rural, carne

“In fact, there is nothing more fluctuating than culinary art/cuisine. Alimentation is based on usage of the natural environment by human society. Cuisine/culinary art is what brings further the cooking to the most basic, a ‘language’ that the group uses and thus ‘the vocabulary’ reveals the singularity, the habits, the social relations but also the creativity and adaptability of its members. In fact, man is omnivorous and prizes variety most of all. His intelligence and pragmatism make him adopt the knowledge and the food practices that make his nourishment more agreeable, more healthy and easier. The present chain of food and cuisine reflects the enlargement of knowing the whole world

through the game of discoveries, imperialisms and changes. It seems that this knowledge is done essentially by the North and for its profit¹.

I have tried in this paper to achieve a parallel between two traditional areas from the point of view of alimentation. The two areas are Râșca² and Feiurdeni, both locales in Cluj County, situated at different distances from the city of Cluj-Napoca, Râșca at 60 km, and Feiurdeni at 18 km.

Certainly, we would expect that the closest locality to such a big city as Cluj-Napoca is to be the most subjected to renewal or innovation in the food domains. In reality, things are not like that. In fact, distance in its physical sense plays a role far less important in our case. There are other elements that become more important than simple geographical location. The most important element is the road. As there is no adequate road, Feiurdeni village, though a small distance from Cluj-Napoca, is almost completely isolated. There is no common transportation means, private cars are scarce, and the wagons are the most used when it comes to transport. As for the same reason, children in the village sometimes do not go to school; that is, either the teacher doesn't come for the I-IV forms, or the bus is not coming for V-VIII forms; therefore is less of a chance for this community to be open to new things.

The situation is totally reversed for Râșca community, where things are standing quite different. There is an adequate road; although there are no common transportation means, private cars are common; thus, children go to school regularly and they attend high schools or universities in Cluj-Napoca, a fact that brings a greater openness to the community.

Certainly, this equation of openness-closedness works at all levels and implicitly to the food one that we are concerned with here. Obviously, in both communities, the majority of aspects linked to food preparation are done by women. I say the majority, because there are situations when men either do some tasks or help with the ones that (at least in theory) belong to the feminine field. Regarding the work of securing the food, the two – man and woman – equally participate in this operation, both going in the field for agricultural work, and both wor-

¹ Suzanne Cervera, *Voyage des aliments*, in OCHA – *Mille et une bouches. Cuisines et identités culturelles*, no. 154

² Parts of field material referring to this township were also used in a Romanian variant in the book of the author *Sweet is Eaten with Bitter. Essay on Ethnology Regarding the Rural Couple*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2009.

king at meat processing. Of course, each of them has certain tasks inside these operations.

But aside from the physically demanding work of gathering food, I refer especially to *cooking*: more exactly, to food preparation for immediate consumption, thus offering nourishment to the entire family so that they can develop other activities under the best conditions, properly nourished.

The one who actually does this is the *woman*. A woman's tasks in a household are cooking, washing, breeding the animals, cleaning, gardening, sewing, weaving and nature gathering. From dawn until dusk a woman doesn't stay still for a moment; she is continuously *moving* and working. And since we talk about cooking, this cannot be done without three basic elements: *water*, *fire* and *wood*, as in both areas the most used means for cooking is the stove (a stove fuelled with wood).

There is a special connection between woman and the two opposed elements: *water* and *fire*³, both major elements in cooking. The woman is the one that manages both in her household. She is the one to fetch water in the household. Most of houses have at present tap water in the kitchen, few have it also in the bathrooms. This in the case of Râșca township, as in Feiurdeni the water is fetched from the wells that in the happiest case would be placed in her own yard. Even so in both communities a woman must carry water for animals. And so we may talk of a water 'circulation'. Regarding *fire*, the woman is again the one to manage it mostly as she is the one to make the fire each early morning. On the stove she prepares both nourishment for the family and the animals. She alone cuts the wood for fire, gathers brushwood around the house or brings them from the wood. The big logs are usually cut by the man of the family. It is strictly about wood of immediate use for fire when the woman cuts it, she cuts only as much as she needs, this operation occurring several times a day.

In the case of Râșca township, water for cooking is always fetched; for washing and watering, it is not necessary. In the old times, the laundry was done at the river. It was simple: most of people lived in the small valleys of the area. Today, they have built houses on the hills and have pipes to bring water from few springs up to their places, and so this activity of washing at the river is needed only for the few houses that are still next to the river. Moreover since they use detergent, the washing activity at the river is confined to rinsing alone and not washing. In

³ M. Segalen, *Mari et femme dans la société paysane*, Flammarion, Paris, 1980, p. 94.

Feiurdeni, the water is carried in buckets – no matter the purpose – for cooking, washing or watering, and from this circulation of water you can realize what relations the members of community have. There are but few wells considered to have good water, though this *goodness* is arguable under the circumstances when appreciation is done according to taste and color. This system supposes that in the yard of the family where the well is, permanent comings and goings would develop and that family would create social relations especially with the ones in the closest proximity who obviously use the respective well. In the circumstances when quarrels and divergences for various reasons occur, not necessarily linked to water, those persons stop coming to take water from the well of the respective family.

Further on, still regarding water, a particularity of Râșca, when compared to a rural ordinary settlement, is the presence of *tap water*. In the seventies the villagers associated on groups of dwellings and captured springs. Some of them introduced water into the yard, others in the house, and they built bathrooms with or without water closets (mostly without it). For introducing water in their household they had to pay a certain amount of money but they are happy with the investment made. It was then also a period when a certain modernization of villages was ideologically sustained. Today, even when traditional ways have lost their power, there still remains the extremely practical character of the fact: women are content that they do not *waste* so much time to bring water and they no longer make such great physical efforts to fetch it. It was also true that in the past the springs were far from home and accidents could also happen: a woman was taken by the high flood, another by an avalanche during winter. Moreover, women find it easier to maintain cleanliness as water is available in their homes. There is still a drawback to the ease of having water piped into the home: water is not as tasty as the one from the spring.

It is useless to say here how important fire and water are for a household. It is interesting that the woman uses both and that we could still find information in the field about this subject. The woman is managing these separately or at the same time, at an individual or collective level: such as the case of cooking for the individual level or the *hiertul tortului* (boiling the hemp) – at a collective level. In Râșca, cooking is not an exclusive feminine occupation such as washing, weaving or spinning. For young couples (approximately 30 years) husbands help wives at cooking by dealing with one element linked to the meal, of course the final touch being that of the woman, and so is the case with setting the table, or serving and washing the dishes. For the old couples,

the exception makes the rule, which is that the woman makes all the operations linked to cooking, setting the table or washing the dishes. During meals even if she stays together with the husband – sometimes she doesn't eat with him – she is there to serve him, he doesn't stand up for a glass of water or a fork – totally different from the young couples. We did find exceptions in the old couples. Even if they were totally 'served' by wives, the husbands were cooking alone for the entire family if the wife was away.

Thus, there was a serious reason for this transgression of tasks. Cooking didn't take much time except for the situation when the refrigerator was missing and so the woman had to cook daily. What she cooked was the *zama* (soup). *Zama* (a local term for sour soup) constitutes the constant, daily menu in the area. The grease is melted in a pot, onion, flour and in the end milk are added. This mixture is pored on the boiled vegetables (most usually potatoes but also beans, sorrel, nettle) in a big pot where usually you can find a smoked piece of meat from the pig cut on holidays.

As desert, they most typically made *pancove*, a type of donuts as big as a plate and absolutely delicious, but – very important – *easy* to cook. The deserts we know today in the urban areas, cakes, tartes, creamy cakes, as also more sophisticated meals as schnitzels, seem too complicated for the old women. Even for the winter time they are used to prepare only pickles and few stewed fruits. The jams, are for the women in the young generation who make real networks of recipes and culinary secrets. Thus for the old generation *cooking* is almost exclusively a feminine occupation with the exceptions mentioned. Men do have, though, the task of butchering the meat. They cut the pig, and this is the favourite animal for food. They breed pigs for food, and nowadays they cut two or three pigs per year, cattle are brought up for money by selling the milk and calves. The men are the ones that cut the pig – the basic meat for peasants here. The women are in charge of pig's preparation. In old times they had only one pig for a year and they have never served just meat. The meat was wrapped in lard slices and was smoked, then it was kept in the garret and they cut one slice to put in the pot with the *zama*. The lard was kept and rationed. It was needed for mowing. The pig sacrifice is still an event to be told about and sometimes stories have revealed extraordinary situations: we found out that in one winter the pig stood up and ran with the burning sheaves on it⁴.

⁴ See about this at Y. Verdier, *Façons de dire, façons de faire. La laveuse, la couturière, la cuisinière*, Gallimard, Paris, 1979, pp. 32-36.

In fact, *cooking* was learned quite early – when girls were 12, and not without ‘incidents’ (girls wanted to try to cook as they saw their mothers, but being so poor they had to do it by hiding when their mothers were not at home). If the food was good, they presented it to their parents, if not, it was buried for the fear of being discovered. And I do not think I would go too far by saying it has a connection with sexuality, as I found information regarding the French space where women learn to cook together with the beginning of sexual life⁵, or in any case there is a strong connection between the two, especially that older woman I interviewed who married when she was 13:

Food [I learned to do] when I was four-fifteen years. But nothing fancy. Some soup, potatoes... when my mother was not at home she said: 'Well, you do that, you do that stuff'. She went to work, but she was not going far from home, she used to put me make the bread (M. V., n. 1944).

It is interesting this situation of cooking learning. The girl is not practically taught to cook. As we mentioned, in the past it was the care for food: families were so poor that they could not afford the girls ‘wasting’ the resources. They tried though by hiding it or they remained helpers in the kitchen. The girl learned how to cook by trials and mistakes. She watched how and what the mother or grandmother was doing and then she tried it too, *by herself*. The reaction of the others is though very important and it is not the same with all: some praise it, some criticize it. The most powerful praise is when she is told she has cooked better than her mother. Indirectly it is an ‘attack’ to the culinary print of the mother. But once established, cooking will become compulsory for the girl when the mother is not at home. In our society the girl must know how to cook *before* she gets married.

There were certain hilarious situations as we were told with the bean soup or the noodles:

The noodles: mother went to church and father I don't know where, and I wanted to learn to make noodles, and there was down the road we had some summer cottage and we had a table there and at once I kneaded, I put one or two eggs, and when mother returned, the noodles were drying and she said: 'But you shouldn't doing it during the church time.' I replied: 'When you are at home you quarrel with me, so I did it!'. And you see, she didn't like them she said they were too soft and I gathered them again and did them again, they were so beautiful after, when father came home, 'Look what your girl did, now on Sunday!' and he said, 'Let her go, when she wanted to make soup you quarreled her, when she wanted to make noodles you quarreled her. Let her do it when she

⁵ Ibidem, p. 58.

wants to' cause with the children this is how you should do... let them do it when they want to do it, but you know, this is how things are! (V. F., n. 1943).

Once she let me make beans soup, and I, like kids, I played with the children and the water went out and the beans smoked. Well what am I to do now? And so I made a hole in the gound there and threw the beans there, I didn't give it to the pigs, and I threw it with the meat and I put myself and cooked another one. By evening I was having another beans soup. But nobody ever knew what I did. But never ever happened again something like that with me. I no longer went to play with the kids, I was careful! (V. F., n. 1943).

Regarding Feiurdeni village the situation is slightly different, as people can cultivate lots of vegetables and the culture of potatoes is not abundant; moreover, corn is prevalent and they consume *polenta* every day, wherefrom come a lot of stories about the greater satiety of polenta compared to the bread. Then they cook a lot with salami, even *parizer* (a sort of salami) instead of meat; the basic food has been a kind of stew with salami. If the Râșca village is defined by the *zama* (soup), for Feiurdeni, the defining meal is *tocana* (stew). Its preparation looks much alike with that of *zama* but it is more consistent. Obviously, but much alike Râșca, the desired meat is the pork one. In the past the situation was the same regarding its use: the classical methods of preservation being salting, smoking, drying and of course after, the meat was locked in big wooden chests and rationed for a very long period of time. Lard was here very important too as it was kept for the period when the works linked to mowing were done. In these times they cut pigs a few times a year, generally at two religious holidays, Christmas and Easter, and sometime in August, thus assuring the availability of meat for the whole year. Veal is here too seen as a source of money, though in Feiurdeni it has a greater presence in the everyday meal of the locals, compared with Râșca. Constantly on Saturdays they make meat rolled cabbage, usually without meat, and they are done in the traditional bread oven, while for the community in Râșca this meal is done only on holidays (Christmas, Easter) or other family rites (birth, wedding). Regarding desert we talk here about *plăcinte* (donuts) that can be filled with cabbage (most appreciated), salted cheese and *silvoită* (plum jam). This is all. The rest of sweets come on their tables only on holidays and only when they are brought by or produced by the relatives living in town.

Oh, my God, when my father-in-law was alive, we could not go without polenta and meat rolled cabbage... he was more than my husband... I had to make him meat rolled cabbage, and polenta, he ate everything with polenta... what

bread!? I had no comments!!! My husband wasn't saying anything, but he (father-in-law) was. I had to do it! (F.G., n. 1969).

There is for both communities a great attractiveness for almost everything that is culinary linked to town, with some exceptions. The attraction is mostly towards new products, the ones they are not used to, or that were not ever produced in the village. But there is also a rejection phenomenon, especially towards the products that are or can be produced in the village by their own means. This is the case of meat, but also milk, eggs, and vegetables. Invariably the products made inside the household are considered to be better, tastier compared with the 'bought' ones.

An interesting situation is the way they regard water. In Râșca, there are natural springs captured by villagers and brought into houses, but they prefer to drink water direct from the spring, or they buy mineral water. In Feiurdeni village, though the water is not potable being contaminated with a lot of substances mainly coming from an old industrialized agriculture that used chemical in excess, and there still persists the idea that there is no better water than the one in their wells and thus refuse obstinately to drink any other water. There is here also the belief that only some wells have 'good' water but what matters is the taste, smell or color. There is no qualified peasant to know the best place for a well as it was in the old times. The little things they know about water come from the CAP period when there was also a pipe of water from a spring outside the village.

For Feiurdeni there are no exceptions regarding cooking with the young generation, and so this remains exclusively a feminine occupation; the man does not participate in any way to it except for cutting and butchering the animals (meat) in the household. It is the same with the vegetables, which must be cultivated and cared for by women, and this might be the reason of a great presence of vegetables bought from the markets in Cluj-Napoca, in the village. Women claim they do have time or enough water to actually do the gardening.

For both communities the refrigerator is an essential item. It is present in each and every house no matter how modest. Its importance is huge from many points of view. It makes easier the task of cooking, by not doing it daily, and it helps enormously to preserve meat or other products in the long term. Because of these major changes in preparing and preserving food, many operations - that could be associated with some tastes - have almost totally disappeared.

In conclusion, the two communities seem to have the same culinary habits, but some particularities appear, such as the *potato* and *pancove*

(*donut*) in preponderance in Râșca and *polenta, meat rolled cabbage* and *plăcinte (donut)* in Feiurdeni. With all that, the image of the villagers in both communities upon their own food in present time is that of abundance (even if we cannot talk about abundance in the real terms of nutrition) compared to the interwar or post war periods. For both communities cooking remains an almost exclusive feminine occupation. The man participates just randomly and rarely to activities linked to cooking. At a comparative look the situation of cooking in Feiurdeni seems more archaic than the one in Râșca, a fact that could be explained through their way of life that generally is more archaic than the one in Râșca.

Les photos, des archives de paroles? Quelques considérations sur le rapport entre l'image et le texte dans la littérature autobiographique

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Abstract: *Photographies, archives of words? Some considerations regarding the relationship between image and text in the autobiographical literature.* The study examines the relationship between text and image, from the point of view of a historian. There are discussed specific ways through which images recompose the past. Photography language idealizes and reinterprets the past, thus expressing individual identities and biographies. For cultural history of memory, photos provide subtle and nuanced information, revealing us how our personal interpretations of the past send it to date, in rebuilt formulas.

Keywords: cultural history, history of photography, autobiographical literature, text and image, cultural memory

Rezumat: *Fotografiile, arhive de cuvinte? Câteva considerații cu privire la raportul dintre imagine și text în literatura autobiografică.* Studiul analizează relația dintre text și imagine, din perspectiva istoricului. Sunt discutate modalitățile specifice prin intermediul cărora fotografiile recompun trecutul. Limbajul fotografiei idealizează și reinterpretează trecutul, exprimând astfel identitățile și biografiile individuale. Pentru istoria culturală a memoriei, fotografiile oferă informații subtile și nuanțate, dezvăluindu-ne modul în care interpretările personale ale trecutului îl transmit până astăzi, în formule reconstruite.

Cuvinte-cheie: istorie culturală, istoria fotografiei, literatură autobiografică, text și imagine, memorie culturală

Quand nous tombons sur des inconnus dans une photo, nous la retournons par réflexe pour apercevoir sur son dos deux-trois lignes qui pourraient nous éclaircir. Mais là où s'arrête l'image commence, le plus souvent, le silence. Dans les foires des brocanteurs on expose à présent des photos muettes qui n'appartiennent plus à personne. Ce sont des cartons violacés dont le temps s'est écoulé, des objets vidés de temporalité. Et comme les souvenirs ne font plus leur effet, ces visages froissés n'ont aucun passé à promettre. Ils ne sont plus revendiqués par aucune rêverie, ne font plus vendre aucune histoire. On peut toutefois éviter l'élégie,

en se demandant avec plus d'insistance: combien d'histoire nous offrent encore les vieux clichés? Ou bien, plutôt: combien d'évocations leur devons-nous encore? D'une part, nous transformons en narration ces instantanés sans avoir l'espoir que l'histoire reviendra jamais sur ces lieux. De l'autre part, nous pensons que nos auditeurs diffuseront quand même nos dires et comme ça les mots retourneront dans les photos.

Les photos instantanées ont été et sont encore torturées par le spectre de la Peinture, disait Roland Barthes¹. Pour longtemps, prendre une photo signifiait chercher un portrait². Et le daguerréotype s'approchait, au début, de l'art du portrait du type carthésien dans lequel l'artiste ne se proposait pas de surprendre un état d'esprit passager, mais un trait emblématique³. Les portraits disaient beaucoup sur la manière de construire et transmettre l'identité d'une famille, son corps collectif, les hiérarchies de son intérieur et ses continuités généalogiques⁴. Ce n'est pas par hasard que de cette époque provenait l'habitude d'immortaliser ce qu'on pouvait perdre très facilement: les enfants, présentés comme des adultes en miniature, pour qu'ils ne deviennent pas, suite à une mort prématurée, le maillon manquant de l'histoire de la famille⁵. En plus, les représentations des hommes accentuaient les vertus publiques (sagesse, sobriété, crédibilité), tandis que dans le cas des femmes elles symbolisaient l'autorité matriarcale et la stabilité du foyer⁶. Se commander une telle œuvre était, au début, l'équivalent de l'habitude de fréquenter les salons, une preuve de bienséance et d'acceptation sociale. D'ailleurs, dès le XVIII^e siècle, on parlait de la similitude entre la manière dont était comprise une scène de théâtre et celle dont était reçue une peinture⁷. Pour des raisons techniques, les premières photos décrivaient plutôt qu'elles ne rendaient le réel, justifiant comme ça pleinement leur nom de

¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2005), p. 32.

² Quentin Bajac, Dominique de Font-Réaulx, "Le Daguerreotype français. Un objet photographique", in *La revue du Musée d'Orsay*, nr. 16/2003, p. 10.

³ Gen Doy, *Picturing the Self. Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* (London, 2005), p. 26.

⁴ Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 106-111.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133. On sait que le type des photographies post mortem a eu en vue surtout les enfants décédés. Ce subterfuge, par l'intermédiaire duquel la famille tentait de tromper la mort, devenait une mode à la fin du XIX^e siècle. Voir Robert Hirsch, *Photographic Possibilities. The Expressive Use of Equipment, Ideas, Materials, and Processes* (Amsterdam, London, New York, 2009), pp. 3-4.

⁶ Shearer West, *Portraiture...*, p. 141.

⁷ Gen Doy, *Picturing the Self...*, p. 93.

portrait⁸. Conformément aux goûts bourgeois, la créativité du photographe devait se subordonner au modèle et rendait docilement l'attitude adoptée par le client et non sa *physionomie* réelle⁹.

Le portrait en huile était une étude sur le temps tandis que la photographie ne réussissait à saisir que le moment¹⁰. Le premier rendait définitive l'image d'une personne, pendant que la seconde la réinventait périodiquement, par ses multiplications occasionnelles¹¹. La photographie n'examinait pas le visage, elle se limitait à le „voler“, à le calquer¹². Et si les portraits peints étaient réduits à leur essence, héraldiques, atemporels, les photos constituaient, quand même, des évocations visuelles des ego antérieurs, très bien datés. Peint dans un seul exemplaire, le portrait servait mieux l'idée d'individualité; quelque exacte qu'elle fût, la photographie ne stimulait pas la même perception, parce qu'elle était reproductible à l'infini¹³.

Et si notre propre histoire ne nous tient plus compagnie, quelle vérité les photos nous renvoient-elles? Quelles sont les connaissances qui nous y attendent? Et à quels souvenirs appartiennent ces gens-là? Enfin, à qui s'adressent ces images: aux invités? à nos enfants? à nous-mêmes? À la postérité? Aujourd'hui on ne se demande plus quelle est l'histoire d'une photo, mais combien de générations de spectateurs a-t-elle eues, cette photo? Certains croient que les photos ne nous aident plus à nous réjouir de la présence d'une personne, puisque nous sommes plus tentés de déplorer son absence: les images seraient des signifiants de la perte, du deuil, et soutiendraient, avec assez de parcimonie, une sorte de technologie des traces¹⁴. Les photos des albums ne „racontent“ que des histoires passagères, les divers codes culturels orchestrant les réponses que les gens donnent à ces images¹⁵. Elles enregistrent et fixent des moments précis, les extraient de l'histoire et les transforment dans des îles auto-

⁸ Dona Schwartz, "Objective Representation: Photographs as Facts", in Bonnie Brennen, Hanno Hardt (eds.), *Picturing the Past. Media, History & Photography* (Chicago, 1999), p. 166.

⁹ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography* (Amsterdam-New York, 2009), p. 51. C'était exactement ce que condamnaient des critiques tels Charles Baudelaire qui n'acceptaient pas le portrait passif comme une nature morte, préférant une œuvre active, ouverte à la créativité de l'artiste (*Ibid.*, p. 52).

¹⁰ Graham Clarke, *The Photograph* (Oxford, 1997), p. 103.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 52.

¹³ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York, 2005), pp. 129-131.

¹⁴ Jean Michel Rabaté, "Introduction", in Idem (ed.), *Writing the Image after Roland Barthes* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 3, 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

nomes de temps, sans un „avant” ou „après” : elles enregistrent et protègent seulement l’instant de leur réalisation¹⁶. Mais la détemporalisation et la typologisation des photos détruisent l’unicité et la stabilité des réalités immortalisées¹⁷. Il semble que dans chaque carton débute une série causale, une histoire absolument parallèle aux autres. Dans ce contexte amnésique, les photos invoquées dans les mémoires et les journaux sont le résultat des stratégies narratives, le souvenir d’une photo disparue se prolongeant dans les mots qui la décrivent, l’„élargissent”, l’interprètent de manière supplémentaire. Il y en a d’autres qui, au contraire, considèrent qu’en prenant des photos, nous acquérons de nouvelles formes de réel : nous nous approprions un objet et le contrôlons ; ou bien nous incluons dans notre expérience la mémoire de certains événements auxquels nous avons ou non participé¹⁸. Le daguerréotype encourageait ainsi l’inventaire des objets et des scènes du type „nature morte”¹⁹. Il prenait donc part aux projets du XIXe siècle, surtout à ceux de classification, enregistrement et transformation du monde en musée²⁰. On photographiait des gens et des lieux pour ne pas dire qu’on surveillait le temps. Les photos soit limitaient la réalité, en la rendant captive, soit l’élargissaient parce qu’on la ressentait périssable ou lointaine²¹. Les premières impressions contenaient déjà les avènements passés et puis subsistaient toutes dans ce présent continu des remémorations²². La photo contient, par conséquent, sa dose de cruauté. Sur le champ, elle nous met devant les yeux une réalité plus longévique que nous. Elle nous rend contemporains avec

¹⁶ Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*, p. 24.

¹⁷ Jean Michel Rabaté, „Introduction”, p. 9.

¹⁸ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 121

¹⁹ Il y auront toujours deux groupes différents : ceux qui croient que la photo est l’enregistrement mécanique de certains objets disposés au hasard et ceux qui sont convaincus que l’image réordonne volontairement le champ visuel, lui inculquant une signification. Les premiers considèrent que la mémoire est quelque chose de spontané : ce qui survit du passé comme expérience du présent. Les derniers estiment que c’est justement cette partie de préméditation et de mise en scène que nous trouvons dans une photo qui nous aide à comprendre la manière dont les gens codifiaient une mémoire culturelle. Alan Trachtenberg, „Through a Glass, Darkly: Photography and Cultural Memory”, in *Social Research*, vol. 75, no. 1, spring 2008, pp. 122-125.

²⁰ Elisabeth Edwards montre que les photos formaient, à la fin du XIXe siècle, un bilan visuel du monde, attribuant une valeur historique aux objets transposés en images. Le passivisme n’explique pas pourtant toute démarche à teinte patrimoniale. Ce qui comptait beaucoup était aussi la crainte que nous ayons un avenir amnésique, sans des antécédents qui l’éclaircissent. Et les gens considéraient à l’époque que la photo avait la force de ranimer le passé, de nous aider à le revivre. Pour eux, la force de ressusciter l’histoire était donnée plutôt par la *materialité* de ses traces que par la *textualisation* des sources documentaires. Voir Elisabeth Edwards, „Photography and the Material Performance of the Past”, in *History and Theory*, 48, december 2009, pp. 131-133, 136-137.

²¹ Régis Durand, *Le Regard pensif. Lieux et objets de la photographie* (Paris, 2002), p. 28.

²² Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*, pp. 12, 24.

notre propre postérité. Les descriptions, si minutieuses, de l'œuvre de Balzac semblent une sorte de photo élargie dans laquelle aucun objet ne peut être compris sans la participation des autres²³. La réalité était vue comme une série infinie de situations qui se reflétaient réciproquement, telle une écriture qui devait être décodée²⁴. Le grand écrivain français craignait les dagherréotypes parce que les images abritent des essences et la modification des apparences produit des changements importants dans la nature de la personne²⁵. C'est pourquoi, nous pouvons considérer notre propre image comme une augmentation du soi, la photo multipliant sensiblement les occasions de nous rencontrer avec nous-mêmes²⁶.

Après l'apparition de l'appareil Kodak, la photographie quitte le studio. Elle devient le principal instrument par l'intermédiaire duquel la famille se connaît et se représente elle-même, en prolongeant sa mémoire par des mots qui complètent les images²⁷. *Le mythe était, dans notre cas, une vérité sociale*, un produit qui devait répondre aux attentes du public à l'égard de la nouvelle iconographie²⁸. Avec la prolifération de la photo, le moi de chacun pouvait se manifester sur la scène de sa propre vie. Et tout se passait conformément au goût généré par le régime de Louis-Philippe: l'esthétique du *juste milieu*, celle des moyennes et de la retouche discrète, hostile aux excès et favorable aux apparences agréables²⁹. Ni réaliste, ni idéaliste, elle faisait plutôt disparaître la laideur et flattait les commanditaires. D'ici la théâtralisation du studio dont les accessoires contenaient beaucoup d'éléments de décor en pâtes maléables, en papier, des draperies etc³⁰. Les portraits n'enregistraient pas, ils interprétaient la réalité³¹. Selon la tradition du *portrait cérémonial*, la nouvelle clientèle devait être satisfaite en supprimant les imperfections dérangeantes³². C'est pourquoi, dans le produit final, pendant longtemps, l'imprimerie allait de pair avec la retouche manuelle³³. La photo modifiait plutôt que con-

²³ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 124.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Nadar, *Când eram fotograf* (București, 2001), p. 14. Une analyse critique de ce livre est faite par Stephen Bann, "When I was a Photographer: Nadar and History", dans *History and Theory*, 48, december 2009, pp. 95-111.

²⁶ Jean Prinnet, Roger Bellone, Ginette Bléry, *La photographie et ses applications* (Paris, 1945/1989), p. 109.

²⁷ Marianne Hirsch, "Introduction: Familial Looking", in Idem (ed.), *Familial Gaze* (Hannover and London, 1999), p. XVI.

²⁸ Bonnie Brennen, Hanno Hardt, *Introduction*, in Idem (eds.), *Picturing the Past. Media, History & Photography...*, pp. 4-5.

²⁹ Gisèle Freund, *Photographie et société* (Paris, 1974), pp. 63-64.

³⁰ Quentin Bajac, *The Invention of Photography. The First Fifty Years* (London, 2002), p. 61.

³¹ Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*, p. 24.

³² Quentin Bajac, *The Invention of Photography...*, pp. 61-63.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 63-64.

servait la physionomie représentée³⁴. C'était l'époque de l'image miniaturée et embellie³⁵. En tout cas, le néoportrait prolongeait cette sémiotique des accessoires également dans l'art de Nadar ou Disdéri³⁶. L'entière scénographie de la photo envisageait le fait que celle-ci devait décorer des appartements (murs, cheminées, tables) avec des images de soi ou avec des personnages préférés (hommes politiques, acteurs, savants), ce qui faisait que l'histoire de la famille soit ainsi mêlée à celle du pays³⁷. De l'intention totémique du cliché qui valorisait la figure d'un ancêtre fondateur de fabrique, on arrivait aux portraits de groupe et à la simulation de la spontanéité. Le photographe ne devait plus s'exprimer en termes passéistes, il assiégeait de plus en plus le présent. Le réel devenait ainsi une fonction de la mémoire car les photos „gelaient” le temps dans des images récupérables³⁸.

Toutes les histoires consacrées à ce sujet considèrent que l'apparition de la photographie donnait à chacun la chance d'accéder à sa propre image³⁹. Si, du point de vue scientifique, l'invention pouvait être considérée une nouvelle forme de *connaissance*, dans une perspective sociale le monde gagnait une nouvelle forme de *communication*⁴⁰. L'intérêt général pour la photographie n'était, comme on le dit, une conséquence du progrès technique, ni un caprice de la bourgeoisie. La préoccupation pour son propre visage s'était manifestée depuis longtemps et l'offre, beaucoup plus accessible, des studios photographiques ne faisait que spéculer le désir de s'identifier et transmettre aux autres certains traits spécifiques⁴¹. Par conséquent, la modernité peut être définie aussi comme un autre moyen de regarder le monde en scrutant en réalité sa propre personne⁴². En outre, la meilleure méthode de populariser une tendance élitiste – le désir d'autoreprésentation – était celle de la rendre accessible à un public très large. Personne ne voulait une vérité optique

³⁴ Gabriel Bauret, *Abordarea fotografiei* (București, 1998), p. 55.

³⁵ Quentin Bajac, *The Invention of Photography...*, p. 33.

³⁶ Gisèle Freund, *Photographie et société*, p. 65.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69; Jean Prinnet, Roger Bellone, Ginette Bléry, *La photographie et ses applications...*, p. 109.

³⁸ Alan Trachtenberg, "Through a Glass, Darkly: Photography and Cultural Memory", pp. 116-117.

³⁹ Jules Michelet se montrait mécontent de cet aspect, remarquant que les portraits n'étaient plus le monopole des grandes personnalités. Ainsi, la physionomie d'un héros ne se distinguait plus de celle d'un homme quelconque (*Ibid.*, pp. 108-109).

⁴⁰ Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historically and Now", in Idem (ed.), *Photography. A Critical Introduction* (London, New York, 2000), pp. 15-16.

⁴¹ Jean Prinnet, Roger Bellone, Ginette Bléry, *La photographie et ses applications*, p. 107.

⁴² Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historically and Now", p. 19.

cherchant plutôt une esthétisation du passé individuel⁴³. La photo prenait la place de la propre personne, devenant plus plausible que celle-ci⁴⁴. Et, pendant que les images de presse chassaient le réel stoppant sa fuite devant nos yeux, le portrait faisait tout le possible pour le complimenter et l'enrichir. La multiplication des photos interrompait la linéarité du présent, chaque instantané portant en soi une histoire en cours de déroulement⁴⁵. Du point de vue méthodologique, nous aurions plusieurs possibilités de traiter l'image: a) comme découpage de la subjectivité du photographe; b) comme produit du regard du public; c) comme texte atemporel, permettant n'importe quelle interprétation. La photo est un objet assisté par excellence, ayant trois catégories de spectateurs: a) ceux qui appartiennent à son histoire, pouvant témoigner sur le contexte de sa production; b) ceux qui lui sont étrangers et attendant qu'on leur „traduise” l'image; ils ne voient que des typologies, pas d'histoires; c) ceux qui n'ont ni interprète, ni informations et ne se basent que sur leur intuition ou imagination⁴⁶. Ce sont les discours *du dehors* de la photo qui sont le sujet de notre analyse⁴⁷. Ce n'est pas la relation de la pellicule photographique avec la réalité qui nous intéresse, mais la manière dont l'attention se déplace de *l'intention* de la photo vers sa *réception*⁴⁸. C'est pourquoi, nous préférons la vision de Mary Price laquelle croit que la signification de l'image résulte de la conjonction du *commentaire verbal avec les circonstances dans lesquelles est utilisée la photo*⁴⁹. Et Eduardo Cadava nous persuade lui aussi que le langage et la photo s'apparentent par

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Jean Prinnet, Roger Bellone, Ginette Bléry, *La photographie et ses applications*, p. 110.

⁴⁵ Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historicaly and Now", p. 19.

⁴⁶ Nous avons identifié trois catégories de spectateurs, à la différence des investigations qui préfèrent parler seulement de deux, „les utilisateurs” et „les lecteurs”. Les premiers verraient dans la photo une source d'informations. L'image est pour eux un *aide-mémoire*, un point de départ pour la récapitulation de certains faits invisibles sur la photo. Les autres ne peuvent pas passer au-delà de la surface de la photo parce qu'ils n'ont pas accès aux détails, aux informations à caractère privé. Par conséquent, ils essaient de donner un sens à la photo, en identifiant le code culturel d'où elle provient. En ce sens, on peut consulter l'article de Jens Ruschatz, "The Photograph as Externalization and Trace", in Astrid Erll & Ansgar Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 372-373. Pourtant, il n'y a qu'une chose certaine: la décontextualisation biographique / historique entraîne la recodification culturelle. Soit qu'on la reproduise, soit qu'on l'oublie, la photo subit la même métamorphose: avec le temps qui passe, elle n'informe plus, elle symbolise, en acquérant des sens atemporels (*Ibid.*, p. 375).

⁴⁷ Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historicaly and Now", p. 43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Mary Price, *The Photograph: A Strange, Confined Space* (Stanford, 1994), p. 1.

le fait que tous les deux servent l'idée de *ressemblance*⁵⁰. Dans la photo comme dans le langage, affirme-t-il, les gens et les objets se substituent réciproquement, intégrés dans un scénario des correspondances et des coïncidences.

L'usage et la contextualisation narrative donnent sens à la photo, la distance entre la perception directe et la mémoire de celle-ci abritant imaginaire qui alimente, quand même, le sens du temps⁵¹. Dans la relation avec la photo, nous, les gens d'aujourd'hui, nous formons un public du troisième degré. Pas mêmes les mémorialistes qui transforment les images en texte ne sont leurs bénéficiaires directs. C'étaient nos grands-parents qui constituaient le public-cible de ces photos. Quelle que soit la manière dont on approche le problème, il est évident que la polysémie de la photo élargit et complique beaucoup sa compréhension⁵². En tant qu'historiens, nous nous replions sur un aspect limité: sous la menace du temps, nous transformons involontairement les photos en pièces de musée, en transformant l'*image* en *objet*⁵³. Mais la photo peut-elle encore nous mettre sous les yeux des périodes éloignées, au moment où elle même devient un vestige, une „antiquité”⁵⁴? Les photos ne sont pas des „traces” fidèles de l'histoire, dans les conditions où „les empreintes” mêmes sont dans un changement continu et acquièrent une historicité propre⁵⁵.

Le présent est-il le prolongement, l'apogée d'un passé, ou bien le début, le prétexte d'un autre avenir? À partir des photos parsemées sur une table se mettent en route une multitude d'évolutions, de biographies alternatives ou complémentaires. Si elles n'ont pas de signification certaine, intrinsèque, bien entendue, comment interviennent-elles alors dans la réalité?⁵⁶ Nous voyons ce que nous cherchons, *regarder* équivalant à *choisir*⁵⁷. Nous ne découvrons pas les choses de manière innocente, ce sont les expériences du passé qui décident ce que l'œil convertira en

⁵⁰ Eduardo Cadava, *Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, 1997), p. 124.

⁵¹ Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historicaly and Now", p. 26.

⁵² Victor Burgin, "Art, Common Sense and Photography", in Jessica Evans, Stuart Hill (eds.), *Visual Culture: the Reader* (London, New Delhi, 1999), p. 48.

⁵³ Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historicaly and Now", p. 58.

⁵⁴ Joe Moran, "History, Memory and the Everyday", in *Rethinking History*, vol. 8, no. 1, march 2004, p. 58.

⁵⁵ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 10. Voir aussi le sous-chapitre "Picturing Time", de Robert Hirsch, *Photographic Possibilities*, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁶ Mary Price, *The Photograph: A Strange, Confined Space*, pp. 11, 15-16.

⁵⁷ John Berger, "Ways of Seeing", in Ashley la Grange (ed.), *Basic Critical Theory for Photographers* (Oxford, 2005), p. 2.

paroles⁵⁸. Notre hypothèse de travail c'est: une image solidement mémorisée n'apparaît pas seulement en regardant la photo: elle est engendrée par la narration qui la double; les mots sont ceux qui maintiennent vivant un certain visage⁵⁹. En racontant une image, nous perpétons et même enrichissons l'histoire qui s'y cache. Les paroles nous prescrivent ce que nous devrions voir, formant un dictionnaire explicatif des choses et des personnes d'autrefois. Dans la littérature autobiographique roumaine aussi nous voyons que la *photographie* nous offre une image, le *souvenir* de l'instantané nous mettant à la disposition un *texte*⁶⁰. L'image reste toujours ouverte aux paroles qui lui font la cour. En outre, aux phrases placées par le *narrateur* dans les photos des autres on ajoute aujourd'hui celles introduites par le *lecteur*⁶¹. Donc, nous ne regardons pas une photo, nous la *lisons* comme un texte subliminal⁶². Et si les investigations classiques recueillent des informations primaires et disparates de *l'intérieur* de l'image, nous avons la chance de la regarder *du dehors*, en comprenant intuitivement le code culturel qui se trouve à ses origines⁶³.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Michael S. Roth écrit que la rapidité, la précision, la reproductibilité et l'ubiquité des photos nous amènent à être de plus en plus indifférents par rapport à la *durée*. Le continuel espacement du temporel, par l'intermédiaire de l'image, vide notre temps de toute densité. Vu que le réel n'est plus capturé que sous son aspect épisodique, l'histoire est amincie, fragmentée, dans des instants qui semblent d'autant plus objectifs, qu'ils sont plus autonomes les uns par rapport aux autres. Pourtant, il y a aussi des motifs d'optimisme: la perception visuelle est toujours „contaminée” par la mémoire; le moment isolé capté dans l'image n'existe pas en réalité si nous ne l'incluons pas dans une expérience préalable beaucoup plus consistante. Voir Michael S. Roth, "Photographic Ambivalence an Historical Consciousness", in *History and Theory*, 48, december 2009, p. 83-85.

⁶⁰ Nous avons choisi la *littérature autobiographique* (mémoires, journaux, interviews) comme source de notre recherche parce qu'elle est beaucoup plus proche des préoccupations d'un historien. Il y a aussi des démarches, à peu près similaires, mais axées sur des textes d'une autre nature. Un exemple serait l'excellent chapitre *Photographie et énigme*, de l'ouvrage de Paul Cernat, *Modernismul retro în romanul românesc interbelic* (București, 2009), pp. 110-164. Comme il résulte du titre, le livre cité analyse la prose d'une époque précise. Mais, étant donné son degré fictionnel élevé, le roman se situe en dehors de nos compétences.

⁶¹ Vezi Pierre Taminioux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 62.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁶³ La différence d'entre les deux méthodes de travail, la *reconnaissance* (dans le sens d'identification des choses familières d'une photo) et *l'excoation discursive* (c'est-à-dire aller sur „l'arête” de l'image pour comprendre son contexte culturel et historique), a été amplement discutée par Julia Adeney Thomas, "The Evidence of the Sight", in *History and Theory*, 48, december 2009, pp. 152-155.

Parmi les genres d'écriture déjà mentionnées, la photo apparaît comme une miniature du réel, sa textualisation assurant, en revanche, l'expansion de celui-ci. Au cours de la rédaction, nous avons eu certaines hésitations liées à la politique des citations, à l'ordre dans lequel ces citations devaient être utilisées: selon le moment où elles ont été écrites, ou quand a été publié le texte que nous utilisons comme exemple?; chronologiquement, d'après l'époque historique à laquelle fait référence le mémorialiste que nous décidons citer?; ou bien d'après le besoin d'exemplification apparu dans notre commentaire, à savoir en fonction de la succession des thèmes que nous avons abordés? Étant donné que pour un chercheur ce n'est pas le moment de la prise de la photo qui compte le plus, mais celui de la narration, la dernière variante a été préférée.

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Les jours arrivent, mais ils ne veulent pas du tout nous appartenir. Ils passent vite, sans rien emporter. Ce n'est que la photo qui, d'une certaine manière, les rattrape, arrêtant, conservant les histoires des uns pour les mémoires des autres. Ainsi, les images deviennent toujours plus scripturales et les textes de plus en plus imaginatifs⁶⁴. Le 16 juin 1980, les notes de Matei Călinescu attestent la vogue de l'ouvrage *La Chambre claire* de Roland Barthes: „Ce livre sur la photo et la mort a été écrit en 1979 et a paru une semaine avant l'accident qui l'a tué. Lecture extraordinaire, soulignée par des observations qui se réfèrent à l'espace délicat d'entre la vue proprement-dite, la mémoire immédiate (qui est la forme élémentaire de l'imagination: on a regardé un objet et ensuite on ferme les yeux et on le regarde «les yeux fermés») et la mémoire de longue durée. Barthes écrit: «Il m'arrive de pouvoir connaître mieux une photo dont je me souviens qu'une photo que je vois...» et continue: «Au fond – ou à la limite – pour voir mieux une photo il est mieux d'élever ton regard ou de fermer les yeux» (s.n., A.M.)”⁶⁵. La photo nous rend-elle le passé que nous souhaitons? Selon les dires de Barthes, l'image nous maintient plutôt en marge d'une absence. De plus même: comme on ne peut pas régresser au moment de son apparition, nous sommes toujours inactuels par rapport à elle. À cause de cela, le philosophe français se dédie plutôt à *l'image comme texte* qu'à la relation entre celle-ci et son spectateur⁶⁶. On ne doit pas comprendre que Barthes fétichisait l'objet en soi et négligeait l'observation sociale. Il le prouve quand il fait référence aux photos de sa mère:

⁶⁴ Vilém Flusser, *Pentru o filosofie a fotografiei* (Cluj-Napoca, 2003), p. 11.

⁶⁵ Matei Călinescu, *Un fel de jurnal (1973-1981)* (Iași, 2005), p. 190. C'est une note du 16 juin 1980.

⁶⁶ Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historically and Now", p. 30.

„C'était l'Histoire qui me séparait d'elles (*des photos*, A.M.). L'Histoire n'est-ce pas simplement ce temps où nous n'étions pas nés? Je lisais mon inexistence dans les vêtements que ma mère avait portés avant que je puisse me souvenir d'elle. Il y a une sorte de stupéfaction à voir un être familier habillé autrement. Voici, vers 1913, ma mère en grande toilette de ville, toque, plume, gants, linge délicat surgissant aux poignets et à l'encolure, d'un «chic» démenti par la douceur et la simplicité de son regard. C'est la seule fois que je la vois ainsi, prise dans une Histoire (des goûts, des modes, des tissus): *mon attention est alors détournée d'elle vers l'accessoire qui a péri*; car le vêtement est périssable, il fait à l'être aimé un second tombeau. Pour «retrouver» ma mère, fugitivement, hélas, et sans jamais pouvoir tenir longtemps cette résurrection, *il faut que, bien plus tard, je retrouve sur quelques photos les objets qu'elle avait sur sa commode*, un poudrier en ivoire (j'aimais le bruit du couvercle), un flacon de cristal ou une chaise basse que j'ai aujourd'hui près de mon lit, ou encore les panneaux de raphia qu'elle disposait au-dessus du divan, les grands sacs qu'elle aimait..."⁶⁷. En résumant le pessimisme barthesien, nous disons que l'histoire est cette durée à laquelle nous n'avons jamais appartenu. Les photos collectionnent des destins consummés qu'il est impossible d'orienter sur d'autres voies; on ne peut plus les enregistrer; c'est à cause de ça que les photos abondent de personnages déjà disparus, dont l'écrivain avait raté la contemporanéité. En même temps, sachant ce qui allait arriver à tout le monde, le narrateur regarde les photos comme un puzzle: les cadres semblaient lui laisser une place libre, qu'il allait occuper ultérieurement. Dans ce cas, nous devons distinguer deux niveaux d'analyse: 1) le niveau autoréférentiel, celui de l'auteur qui prend probablement ses distances par rapport à l'histoire de ses parents, en remplaçant les mots „mère” et „père”, avec Il et Elle; 2) notre regard, attiré peut-être par les questions pittoresques avec lesquelles l'écrivain éveille notre curiosité. Opérant cette distinction, nous considérons que l'attitude du narrateur de photos représente une manière de *se déshabituer volontairement* de l'histoire⁶⁸. L'écoulement du temps nous est parfois favorable parce qu'il décontextualise les photos et nous permet de saisir des spécificités, contrastes, unicités, récurrences⁶⁹. Mais comme les années ne passent pas à leur profit, les images forment un „alors” définitif banni dans le passé⁷⁰. Les vieux instantanés repoussent nos regards et

⁶⁷ Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie*, pp. 61-62.

⁶⁸ Le syntagme est analysé par Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography. Debates, Historically and Now", p. 32.

⁶⁹ Gabriel Bauret, *Abordarea fotografiei*, p. 60.

⁷⁰ Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie*, p. 82.

nous renferment dans notre temps, en nous éloignant de tout ce qui a été une fois. Pourquoi ratons-nous le dialogue avec les photos?

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L'imaginaire bourgeois cherchait la perfection formelle d'un monde statique⁷¹. On construisait une vérité, une image, capables de maintenir la confiance dans un ordre pérenne des choses, au-delà du chaos des réalités sociales⁷². Pour accomplir leur fonction d'intégration, les photos exploiraient seulement la surface du monde: elles compilaient ainsi des figures, objets et événements qui appartenaient en réalité à des univers distants l'un de l'autre⁷³.

Les images de cette facture ne nous donnent pas d'informations sur un passé quelconque, mais sur la manière dont les descendants des personnes photographiées veulent les garder comme un présent emprunté, comme une actualité héritée⁷⁴. La photo entretient la confusion entre ce qui est *vivant* et ce qui est *réel*, donnant l'impression que le dernier serait éternel⁷⁵. Les mêmes personnes, mentionnées plus haut, parlent de leurs grands-parents. Leurs dires montrent qu'ils les connaissent d'après les souvenirs des autres, basés sur des photos qui faisaient que l'imaginaire acquière une note de véridicité. Toute personne capable de raconter une photo peut mimer la qualité de témoin oculaire: „... notre grand-père était très sévère. S'il arrivait qu'un enfant rie pendant le repas, il le regardait de telle manière que celui-là devait abandonner son assiette et quitter la table. Il avait un air austère, était complètement chauve, mais il portait une moustache en croc. Et il avait des yeux bleus. Je le sais des photos”⁷⁶. La précision de la description a une teinte mythologisante, étant une évidente suraddition de sens. Quelque étrange qu'il semble, le détail est la principale arme de la fiction, et non de la reconstitution positiviste. Nous admettons ainsi que le langage que nous utilisons dans la description détermine aussi les nouveaux emplois de l'image⁷⁷. La tendance de se laisser emporter par la fantaisie autour de celle-ci ne provient pas de l'exagération, mais de la manipulation du détail, qui pollue involontairement la chronologie.

Mais combien de paroles entrent en réalité dans une photo? Et, surtout, combien de temps historiques se la disputent? En parlant des

⁷¹ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 54.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁷⁴ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie*, p. 72.

⁷⁶ Victoria Dragu Dimitriu, *Doamne și domni la răspântii bucureștene* (București, 2008), p. 394.

⁷⁷ Mary Price, *The Photograph: A Strange, Confined Space*, p. 1.

grands-parents, nous nous cachons dans le passé des autres, en nous camouflant dans les restes des époques auxquelles nous n'avons pas eu accès. Les rétrospectives qui présentent l'ancienne noblesse d'entre-deux-guerres sont trop marquées par des faits semblables et par des évolutions concomitantes pour ne pas être un peu anhistoriques. Par cette manière d'autoexposition, l'homme s'exclut rétroactivement, en se repliant sur lui-même. Mary Price soulignait, d'ailleurs, l'habitude de discuter sur le moment de la prise de la photo en l'isolant d'un flux plus ample de faits à raconter⁷⁸. Nous prenons l'image photographique pour un écho, et non pour un inventaire des choses advenues. Ce n'est que l'*empreinte* de certaines histoires sans beaucoup d'épilogues⁷⁹. Toutefois, en retrouvant le portrait d'un être cher, nous pouvons encore participer à son passé, nos souvenirs délivrant d'une certaine façon la personne enfermée dans le rectangle de carton. Par exemple, les photos de nos parents à l'âge de l'enfance nous donnent l'illusion que le temps serait réversible et que nous pourrions marcher en arrière, en suivant le fil de leur histoire. Les photos encouragent un mythe sensoriel, de la connaissance et de la mémorisation tactile. Elles ne réussissent pas à nous faire les propriétaires d'un moment quelconque, mais nous mettent à la disposition des visages réutilisables.

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Nous voyons que tant la décoration de la photo que celle de l'album constituaient des suppléments de sens⁸⁰. L'aspect du dernier – „verrouillé”, d'après le modèle des livres saints, lié en cuir et avec des coins métalliques aux angles des pages – décidait aussi la modalité de le feuilleter⁸¹. Le fait de le visionner en groupe, d'habitude autour d'une table, transformait la verbalisation des images dans un rituel, dans une forme de socialisation⁸². Avec le passage du temps, ces albums construisaient rétrospectivement une communauté des états d'âme que la génération plus âgée laissait en héritage à la plus jeune. Ouverts de temps en temps, les cadres immortalisés assez de temps auparavant étaient prisés

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Le réalisme ne copie pas la réalité. Visant à provoquer un certain type d'émotion, il n'exclut pas la sélection, la métonymie, l'excès.

⁷⁹ Derek Sayer, "The Photograph: The Still Image", in Sarah Barber, Corinna M. Peniston-Bird, *History Beyond Text* (London, New York, 2009), p. 54.

⁸⁰ Elisabeth Edwards, Janice Hart, "Photographs as Objects", in Idem (ed.), *Photographs, Objects, Histories. On the Materiality of Images* (London, New York, 2004), p. 13.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 11-12. La vogue des photos richement ornementées se reflète aussi dans le fait que les écoles avaient dans le programme des classes de travail manuel pendant lesquelles les élèves pouvaient apprendre diverses modalités d'embellir l'image. Voir Cătălina Mihalache, *Școala și artizanatul. Interpretări culte ale artei populare* (Cluj-Napoca, 2007), p. 52.

comme s'ils avaient fait partie des vies de tous les membres de la famille⁸³. Des paroles des mémorialistes nous comprenons que l'éternel retour à l'œuvre de Roland Barthes n'est pas exagéré, toutes les études sur la photo s'y rapportant d'une manière ou autre. Les photos n'inventent pas de nouvelles réalités, mais réorganisent les anciennes, encourageant la confusion entre *causer* et *signifier*. Équivalant le regard avec „le balayage” ou „le scanner”, Vilém Flusser affirme „qu'il peut retourner à un élément déjà vu et transformer l'«avant» en «après»: le temps reconstruit par balayage est celui de l'éternel retour du même élément. [...] C'est alors que se constituent des complexes de significations dans lesquels un élément prête à un autre la signification et reçoit sa propre signification de la part d'un autre: l'espace reconstruit par balayage c'est l'espace de la signification réciproque”⁸⁴. La photo rend notre monde plus visible et plus familier. Mais elle ne le copie pas, elle le sauve en le récréant⁸⁵.

La textualisation de l'image survient à la „rencontre” de la personne photographiée avec son spectateur. À la différence des coutumes des autres époques, les photos encouragent les gens à gloser sur leur vie privée, non sur l'identité publique⁸⁶. Et les photos des parents décédés sont des objets transitoires qui nous amènent sous les yeux des personnes disparues depuis longtemps⁸⁷. Or, les personnes qui nous sont chères meurent toujours trop tôt. Les photos ramassent leurs traces et la présence de ces réminiscences ne fait qu'intensifier leur absence⁸⁸. Les instantanés accentuent l'injustice faite à ces biographies interrompues par le cancer: les gens reçoivent le don d'une vie, mais celle-ci leur est reprise lorsqu'ils s'y attendent le moins. Certaines photos de famille exemplifient une mémoire-blessure, la frustration causée par toute existence révoquée. *La vérité* des images provient des informations brutes qu'elles nous mettent à la disposition, tandis que leur *sens* naît de la narration des choses vues. Les plus exposées à la monumentalisation sont les photos de famille qui supplémentent les antécédents pittoresques des narrateurs. Reintroduites dans les souvenirs, les images des parents déterminent le descendant à croire qu'Elle ou Il le „voient” effectivement, ainsi l'autobiographe se sentait „regardé”, à présent, par

⁸³ Dominique de Font-Réaulx, “Galérie de photographie. L'album de famille, figures de l'intime”, in *La revue du Musée d'Orsay*, nr. 17, 2003, p. 14

⁸⁴ Vilém Flusser, *Pentru o filosofie a fotografiei*, p. 9.

⁸⁵ Derek Sayer, “The Photograph: The Still Image”, pp. 49- 52.

⁸⁶ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 138.

⁸⁷ Gen Doy, *Picturing the Self*, p. 154.

⁸⁸ Régis Durand, *Le Regard pensif. Lieux et objets de la photographie*, p. 59.

un *autre moi*⁸⁹. D'après le modèle des photos barthesiennes, le moi auctorial semble un moi post-parental. Par exemple, une jeune mère s'éteint prématurément, laissant à sa place une photo de soi à l'âge de cinq ans. Les morts sont beaucoup plus facilement récupérables dans leur aspect infantile, cette posture nous encourageant à reprendre leur histoire dès les origines. De cette manière on restitue l'avenir à la petite fille de la photo, bien qu'on sache déjà quel est son point terminus. Une biographie achevée trop tôt peut être prolongée symboliquement si nous visualisons, périodiquement, son début. Voilà pourquoi nos remémorations interviennent souvent dans les photos d'enfance. Nous les préférons incontestablement aux autres puisqu'elles sont plus accueillantes⁹⁰. Les plus anciens souvenirs de nous-mêmes, à côté de maman et papa, semblent nous protéger et, c'est pourquoi que nous y cherchons abri.

Lorsque les histoires de famille deviennent plus pauvres en images salvatrices, nous ouvrons un album de photos. Dès les premières images, nos regards atrophiés touchent encore une fois le passé. Mais comment comprend-on des instantanés qui n'ont pas été destinés à nos yeux d'enfants? Le passage des années les confronte à toute sorte de spectateurs, à de nouvelles générations d'interprétations. Le phénomène est naturel: comme les codes culturels où elles étaient nées sont disparus, les photos se retrouvent dans un perpétuel exil, dans une recherche de sens continuelle⁹¹. Et cela parce que le présent est aujourd'hui trop labile pour supporter trop longtemps le même âge d'or: chaque fois que nous regardons de tels objets, il est évident que nous ne saluons pas les mêmes années, que nous ne visitons pas la même réalité. La plupart du temps, les photos deviennent des images solitaires, évitées par tous les mots par l'intermédiaire desquels elles revenaient, d'habitude, dans l'actualité des spectateurs. Elles ne peuvent pas créer la mémoire des expériences sans ce regard avisé capable de leur donner une histoire. Et plus les images vieillissent, plus elles perdent leurs conteurs: ces personnages qui, à leur manière, font aussi partie des photos expliquées. Dans cette perspective, les grands-parents sont les meilleurs muséographes. Car la

⁸⁹ Nancy K. Miller, "Putting Ourselves in the Picture: Memoirs and Mourning", in Marianne Hirsch, *The Familial Gaze...*, p. 53.

⁹⁰ Régis Durand, *Le Regard pensif*, p. 110.

⁹¹ La *dénotation* des photos contient le quantum de réel que possède chaque pareille image. Pourtant la *connotation* des photos ne résulte pas de leur relation avec la réalité, mais de leur capacité de relationner avec d'autres signifiants. Ceux-ci ne sont jamais stables: des sujets similaires peuvent avoir des significations contradictoires, pour divers spectateurs, dans des contextes culturels différents. Nous devons faire la distinction entre ce qui *signifie* une photo et ce qu'elle *décrit*. Voir Derek Sayer, "The Photograph: The Still Image", pp. 63-64.

photo bourgeoise nous remet au monde conformément aux apparences que nous lui mettons à la disposition⁹². Et les images victoriennes obligeaient l'individu à une nouvelle forme de maîtrise de soi et de conformisme social: prendre des photos était la même chose que participer à une conversation⁹³. Elles exerçaient une sorte de contrôle visuel, leur curiosité ethnographique se manifestant librement seulement en dehors de la ville, où elles faisaient se matérialiser des espaces difficiles à imaginer⁹⁴. Le portrait photographique est, donc, une représentation complice, qui n'offre pas à l'individu la copie de son propre visage, mais l'image qu'il désirait avoir dans la société. La photo de studio avait elle aussi un contenu pas du tout négligeable de bovarisme. Elle ne cherchait pas une reproduction exacte de la physionomie, préférant une „un récit” bien retouché. Il en résultait ainsi une anatomie métaphorisante, une légende figurative. Par conséquent, le portrait photographique bordé de fleurs décoratives était une sorte de tableau votif⁹⁵. Il et Elle, le jour de leur mariage, illustraient le mythe fondateur du foyer bourgeois. Les albums étaient des généalogies portraitisées, dans lesquelles la photo d'une élève primée n'illustre pas l'enfance, mais le prestige familial auquel la fillette appartenait⁹⁶. Somptueusement encadrées, les photos de ce genre promouvaient un ego ornamental, l'image des propriétaires devenant un accessoire important dans le design de la maison. Devant le photographe les gens tenaient à jouer un certain rôle, conformément aux attentes collectives et aux ambitions personnelles. La popularité de la photographie exprimait un désir de reconnaissance, un nombre toujours plus grand de reproductions consacrant l'individu aux yeux des autres⁹⁷. Par la prise en photo on réaffirmait donc le besoin d'intégration sociale de l'individu qui voulait *ressemblait* aux autres membres de la communauté. Rien ne comptait davantage que „être comme tout le monde” et surtout comme les gâtés des photos, les gens aisés. Les photos esquissaient ainsi un espace de la similitude, la congruence des signalements étant considérée une forme d'équité⁹⁸. Les discrédances concrètes d'entre les catégories sociales étaient escamotées grâce à cette „égalité” visuelle, toute personne ayant la chance de s'offrir la représentation sociale désirée. Rien de nouveau, on pourrait dire, beaucoup plus intéressants étant pour

⁹² Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie*, pp. 16-17.

⁹³ Helen Groth, "Literary Nostalgia and Early Victorian Photographic Discourse", in *Nineteenth-Century Context*, vol. 25(3), 2003, p. 210.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁹⁵ Gisèle Freund, *Photographie et société*, p. 81.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁹⁷ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 49.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

nous les *discours* assurant à ces photos une postérité de longue durée. L'imaginaire prend parfois naissance de la dissection approfondie d'une réalité possible, jusqu'à ce que celle-ci devienne presque irréelle. Les yeux du narrateur envahissent méticuleusement l'univers de la photo. C'est l'imagination qui crée l'image, et non inversement. Seulement, nous avons besoin de la complicité du temps, celui qui fait que l'imagination perde son impondérable et acquière temporairement un profil cohérent. Se laisser attirer par l'image des aïeux suppose voler le regard des gens de la photo et devenir ce que ceux-ci auraient souhaité pour eux-mêmes.

Les instantanés semblent quand même assez rares, les photos évoquant un quotidien légèrement solennel. L'attitude théâtrale que les gens adoptaient était doublée par la scénographie du studio: ensemble, elles formaient ce que nous appelons „la bibelotisation” de la photo⁹⁹. Les images accumulaient des regards de cire, des tics ou des rigidités de mannequins, comme si les gens s'étaient transmis la même expression de l'un à l'autre. Nous voyons partout des allures pareilles et des mines redondantes. D'ailleurs, les raideurs en sépia semblaient très efficaces quand il s'agissait de dissimuler la crainte la plus profonde de nos arrière grand-pères: qu'ils ne réussissent pas à rester comme ils étaient. Les photos les protégeaient de l'avenir. Devenus reproductibles, les portraits en papier les trompaient tendrement¹⁰⁰. Ils prétendaient pouvoir geler les aiguilles de l'horloge, leur promettant une continuelle similitude avec eux-mêmes. Grâce aux petits cartons, une seconde, toujours la même, peut-être heureuse, se perpétuait à l'infini.

Les photos des classes moyennes fétichisaient de manière explicite la vie domestique, en expulsant *ab initio* toute trace de tragisme romantique¹⁰¹. La photo de cette facture prétendait que le moment transposé dans le cliché se prolongeait beaucoup de temps après la fin de la séance de prise en photo. On soutenait donc une constante visuelle et comportementale inexistente en réalité, le mythe de la stabilité bourgeoise obtenant ainsi un équivalent d'image. Les gens sont des acteurs qui choisissent une certaine posture pour montrer la joie du moment respectif. Ce sont des figures expressives, mais pas embellies, ce qui importe étant le regard complice que dirige le personnage vers l'appareil photo, pour

⁹⁹ Nous avons emprunté le terme à l'anglais: *bibelotization*. En 2009, le poste roumain de télévision „Realitatea TV” diffusait à maintes reprises le mini-reportage dédié à un photo-cabinet où le „maître photographe” Eugen Ciocan réalise des instantanés comme autrefois, en habillant ses clients dans des costumes de la Belle Époque. Le reporter expliquait que l'élément *festif* étant éliminé de notre vie quotidienne, les photos en sépia aideraient l'homme contemporain à redécouvrir son visage.

¹⁰⁰ Pour la relation entre reproductibilité, répétition, similitude et éternel retour, voir Eduardo Cadava, *Theses on the Photography of History*, pp. 31-44.

¹⁰¹ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 54.

que nous ayons l'impression qu'il s'adresse à nous: qu'aurions-nous rêvé de devenir si nous avions vécu à cette époque-là? À la place de quelle personne des photos aurions-nous voulu être? Quelle était l'image que ces gens avaient du passé et du présent? Enfin, sommes-nous encore disposés à participer à la vie d'une photo? La réponse peut être affirmative, tant que les photos nous donnent accès direct à nos époques préférées¹⁰².

De nos jours, on commercialise des photos couleur sépia qui servent comme cartes postales illustrées, souvenirs etc. Pourquoi des sépias? Celle-ci estompe la couleur, en nous suggérant une temporalité incertaine, dans laquelle quiconque peut se situer, indifféremment de l'époque à laquelle il appartient. Les photos nous proposent tel ou tel passé, au choix, un autre statut social, peut-être aussi une famille, pourtant pas une famille idéale, mais une dans laquelle on peut se reconnaître et à laquelle on aimerait appartenir. Les portraits respectifs représentent divers moments de la vie, des générations différentes, des modèles et des fascinations, des *happening*, des attitudes qu'aujourd'hui même on peut adopter facilement. Ce sont des situations, des gestes et des expressions par l'intermédiaire desquels communiquent les siècles, et tous participent à une histoire de la conservation de l'ego par des remémorations visualisées. Ces photos nous obligent de faire place dans nos souvenirs à ces petits vestiges dont notre époque veut s'en défaire¹⁰³. Elles ne nous offrent pas le présent d'une chose, mais son aspect posthume. L'image est parfois le reste d'un objet¹⁰⁴: c'est notamment le cas des bagatelles dont le souvenir respire à peine dans quelques clichés abandonnés. Comme notre démarche se concentre sur l'intégration des expériences visuelles dans une structure narrative, les images et les mots doivent être explorés comme s'ils avaient été encore des réalités matérielles¹⁰⁵.

Les photos n'attestent plus l'existence des objets décrits et étalent en fait la présence du narrateur *en* ou *à côté* d'eux¹⁰⁶. Quelles réalités allaient au-devant de la photo? Des objets peut-être banals étaient sauvés et „bibelotisés” étant transposés sur des cartons multiplicables. Ceux-ci survivaient aux objets photographiés, et les transformaient, *à rebours*, en

¹⁰² Julia Adeney Thomas, "The Evidence of the Sight", p. 151.

¹⁰³ Par l'intermédiaire des photos, „nous multiplions” ces objets intimes, en dissimulant de manière efficace l'oubli de soi. Notre mémoire entre ainsi dans une sorte de repos, les archives photographiques étant un alibi des amnésies volontaires (Régis Durand, *Le Regard pensif*, pp. 108-109).

¹⁰⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera luminoasă. Însemnări despre fotografie*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁵ Pierre Taminiaux, *The Paradox of Photography*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

symboles, sigles et totems¹⁰⁷. Les photos peuvent devenir, involontairement et en rétrospective, des mesures préventives, des préservations *avant la lettre*.

Quand nous regardons une photo d'autrefois, qu'est-ce qui se passe avec le temps du dehors? Si le présent ne se laisse pas invité dedans, il est évident que la respective image avait été depuis longtemps excluse de nos mélancolies. Le silence étant un musée des souvenirs abandonnés, les objets dont on ne parle plus sont facilement détemporalisés. Vidés des années, ils deviennent des pauvres débris qui ne coïncident plus à rien. Ils sont réduits à des objets égarés, sans feu ni lieu, dont aucune narration n'a plus besoin. Or, on sait bien que les vieilles photos ne se laissent pas facilement décrire, seulement un regard avisé les convainc de donner encore quelques mots oubliés. Quand même nous avons du mal à accepter que les traces de tant de gens subsistent à peine au fond d'un tiroir. Par conséquent, nous nous sommes demandés encore une fois: quelles sont les nouveautés que les histoires cartonnées peuvent encore apporter? Peuvent-elles encore se substituer à quelqu'un?

Les images illustrent, sans ménagements, les vérités intermittentes de la mémoire: ce ne sont que de pauvres détails, leur présence dans une relation quelconque étant due au fait que nous savons déjà sa fin. Nous continuons cependant à prendre des photos, parce que le temps n'a plus la continuité d'autrefois, et les heures ne passent pas, mais disparaissent tout simplement. Pour cette raison, le but des instantanés serait celui de monumentaliser une journée banale, lui assurant des postérités inespérées: nous conduisons l'histoire jusqu'aux bords de la photo, où l'histoire de l'autre cherche une continuation dans la nôtre. Quoi qu'on dise, on ne retournerait pas vers le passé sans y avoir rien à faire. Le fait quotidien étant toujours de passage, sa vérité ne reste pas pour beaucoup de temps sur place. C'est d'ailleurs le motif pour lequel nous valorisons tellement les photos: nous y trouvons les empreintes des histoires consommées. Dans cet article, nous nous sommes arrêtés sur la *relation d'entre l'image et le texte*, mais pas dans la perspective du sémiologue, mais de celle de l'historien. C'est pourquoi, nous avons envisagé la photo seulement comme une possible source pour ceux qui sont passionnés à étudier les différents usages de la durée. Et nous n'avons pas eu du mal à saisir que les photos espacent le temps, et convainquent les années à s'arrêter sur un visage quelconque, à remplir un portrait quelconque. Quant aux narrateurs, ceux-ci, au contraire, délocalisent les choses ramassées dans la photo, en les distribuant dans des séries factuelles autonomes. Sans le

¹⁰⁷ Derek Sayer, *œuvre citée*, p. 51.

vouloir, ils poussent les photos dans des histoires qui viennent de partout, égarées l'une de l'autre.

Sommes-nous encore à même de nous assumer un visage? Assiégées par l'agitation actuelle, toutes les photos semblent plongées dans la méditation. Ce ne sont que des instants en carton, des secondes encadrées. Y gisent des histoires de plus en plus riches en années, de plus en plus pauvres en gens. Qu'est-ce qu'elle illustre, donc, la photo: la réalité dénudée ou la narration que provoque l'image?; les photos nous donnent-elles encore accès au passé ou bien nous en expulsent?; finalement, ces régimes de la temporalité exemplifient-ils une photo? Pour les sceptiques, l'époque des instantanés avec des grands-parents n'est pas le temps des soirées et de l'étalage, mais un intervalle décoloré, piteux, enfermé dans les valises. Ce sont des flashes pendant lesquels le temps s'épuise et s'arrête. C'est pourquoi, certains regardent les photos avec le soupçon qu'ils vont en déterrer des vérités usées, des questions restées sans réponse. À leur avis, les images se renferment dans leur propre silence pour rester seules avec lui. Comme elles se laissent entourer par nos résignations, aucune rêverie ne les rajeunit: elles ont épuisé leur réserve de souvenirs, et ont renvoyé depuis longtemps leurs narrateurs. À cause de cela, les souvenirs ne nous accompagnent plus de près et nous les perdons sans nous en rendre compte. Elles forment un temps froid, sans maîtres. Personne ne le révendique plus et il ne nous cherche pas, non plus. Retiré maintenant dans les photos, il va en mourant. Ainsi que les gens sur la photo commencent à nous fuir et aucune histoire ne peut plus nous les restituer. Les images interrompent le contrat de représentation qu'elles ont avec nous, refusant d'être le substitut d'une personne, le suppléant d'une identité. De cette manière, Sanda Stolojan, Ion Vianu et Matei Călinescu mentionnent en passage une sorte de mode, assez douceâtre, de la remémoration, qui met en valeur le nostalgique laissant dans l'ombre le sujet de ses rêveries. Les trois écrivains observent que l'acte de la remémoration tend à paraître un lieu commun, une convention honorable. Beaucoup des évocations datant d'après la révolution de 1989 sont des perceptions prédéterminées du point de vue culturel, des manières de se conformer à une mélancolie-*kitsch*.

À l'avis des autres, plus optimistes, les photos causent avec nous, nous font perdre le temps et, en même temps, nous épargnent: grâce à elles, le passé retourne sous la forme des apparences aimables. L'ancienneté de l'image compte aussi: les cadres fumés isolent et protègent la sérénité de l'homme photographié et ne laissent pas qu'elle soit envahie par le présent. La photo conserve implicitement le souvenir, comme un découpage latent. En conséquence, le moi quotidien me quitte et essaie

de me proposer un autre, emprunté. Et nous devons accepter qu'il est agréable de retourner aux vieilles photos, pour vivre nous aussi les espoirs des gens d'autrefois. En faisant les efforts de nous imaginer comment était leur lendemain, nous sauvons quelques instants d'un avenir d'autrefois.

Nous avons poursuivi quelques pratiques et discours qui permettaient de théâtraliser les photos. Comme image-blason ou portrait-bijou, ce sourire „pour plus tard” apparaissait du décor des studios (antique, tropical, oriental); de l'attitude étudiée et même dramatisée du client, transformé en personnage; de son encadrement, embellissement et de son exposition dans des endroits significatifs; de leur recueil dans des albums à couverture en cuir, où les images se rejoignent et se donnent réciproquement un sens; des colonisations narratives qui les envahissent de temps en temps. Plus exactement, nous avons voulu évidencier la „bi-belotisation” de la photo, la participation des images à un scénario identitaire que chacun se permettait chez lui. Cette petite scénographie nous permet de saisir la manière dont l'individu gère son propre moi, et d'éviter soigneusement les éventuelles syncopes ou contestations. D'une part, le narrateur réinterprète à la première personne l'histoire de certaines images, en idéalisant et élargissant rétrospectivement le passé de la famille à laquelle il se révendique. D'autre part, les photos l'aident à miniaturiser et tenir sous contrôle toutes les biographies qui entrecroisent la sienne. Venant des époques éloignées, ces images complètent notre monde. Autrefois, elles attrapaient à la réalité quelques particules qu'elles lui rendent maintenant par l'intermédiaire de nos témoignages. Les photos peuvent récupérer, donc, des histoires non vécues, entendues des autres. Elles nous montrent que le temps ne s'écoule pas de la même manière pour tous, restant toutefois un ingrédient inévitable des idéologies personnelles. Elles racontent le récit de l'autre en nous donnant l'impression qu'elles nous restituent notre propre passé.

Book Reviews

Minuni, vedenii și vise premonitorii în trecutul românesc [Miracles, Visions and Premonitions in Romanian History].

By *Matei Cazacu*.

Bucharest: Sigma Publishing House, 2003, 216 pp.

The book *Miracles, visions and premonitions in Romanian history* written by the mediaevalist historian Matei Cazacu offers to its readers a review of Romanian history in terms of the report with the miracle and supernatural. Framed in the historical anthropology domain, this book proposes probing Romanian collective mentalities with the purpose of identify forms of manifestation of belief in divine miracle and, especially, the ways in which the ecclesiastical and secular authorities feed and exploit those beliefs.

Based on solid documentation, the author uses a chronological foray into the world of Saints healing, relics and miraculous icons, foreboding visions and dreams of success or disaster and, to a lesser extent, in the world of vampires and ghosts.

The earliest sources confirming the presence of premonitory signs and wonders in the Romanian space date from ancient times, during the Roman occupation and the persecutions from the early centuries of Christianity. Martyrologies (list of martyrs) and *sinaxarele* (calendars of saints) compound in the VI-IX centuries, mention martyrs who suffered and committed miracles in the Romanian space, especially in Dobrogea (as we know the province today), but also in Wallachia (i.e. Sava the Goth).

The stories about the miracles recorded in the Carpatho-Danubian multiply dramatically after the year 1000, some of which are related to the name of King Ladislaus I of Hungary (1077-1095), who was sanctified. The foundation of Moldavia binds one of his committed wonders. According to the legend, the deceased king himself participated in the battle against the Tatars in 1345, after which the Tartars conflict was rejected and the "dismounting" of Dragos occurred. After the foundation of Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia and Dobrogea and the organizing of Romanian Orthodox Church in their territory, the building of monasteries and bringing into the country of holy relics to place them at their foundation increases. Chapters 3 and 4 tell the story of "naturalization" of first saints in Moldavia and Wallachia, in the context of state centralization and the need of divine legitimization of royal power.

Age of Stephen the Great is marked not only by a long series of victorious battles against the Turks, but by a feverish activity in the ecclesiastical field, meaning building monasteries. One of the first miraculous events related to the person of Stephen the Great's foundation of the monastery Putna after a angel vision. Another vision, the appearances of St. George in the dreams of the ruler

in the Battle of Războieni (1476), who promised the victory to the king, is on the base of donation of the icon of Saint George to Zogafu monastery on Mount Athos.

Motivation of building monasteries and acquisition of relics and miraculous icons of the rulers and large landowners vary from the manifestation of sense of gratitude for divine help or the need for serious deliverance from sin to fulfillment of visions, the mere vanity or purposefulness to offer them to the Patriarchate of Constantinople or Mount Athos, or the desire to cultivate relations with Eastern Orthodoxy. Moreover, as the author writes, the Greeks from Constantinople and Mount Athos monks are the main "suppliers" of holy relics whose authenticity, although obviously questionable, is most often not questioned.

The acquisition of holy relics continues in the XVII-XVIII centuries. Competition between Matei Basarab (1632-1654) and Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) was manifested not only in the political and military field, but also cultural, including the building of places of worship and providing them with valuable relics.

Miraculous icons, as an important part of understanding the phenomenon of miracles in the Romanian space, are presented and analyzed in Chapter 10. The oldest icons of this type from Romania are at the monasteries of Neamț and Bistrița and date from the fourteenth century. The author uses the review of icons considered miraculous, adding the description of these miracles as they appear in the sources of different ages and capturing the approach of ecclesiastical and collective attitudes manifested on them.

The chronological foray into the world of Romanian miracles continues with the presentation of miraculous manifestations of the phenomenon during the twentieth century. If the beginning of the century and the interwar period are relatively rich sources and discuss the problem of vision followed by pilgrimages to the place of apparition and miraculous cures (cases from Maglavit and Vladimirești) in the communist period, due to censorship and persecution, written sources are extremely poor and the Security archives were not available at the time of the research undertaken by the author.

The book concludes with a chapter on belief in vampires and werewolves. The first official texts concerning vampires show that in the seventeenth century belief in ghosts and werewolves was widespread in Moldavia and Wallachia, metropolitans officially condemning this type of belief and classifying it as "diabolic vision". The sources of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from Transylvania and Wallachia assign plague to vampire action (ghosts, poltergeist). In nineteenth century Transylvania, numerous sources attest the existence of popular belief in vampires and intense practices condemned by the authorities and the church. Beyond concrete examples of stories about the presence of belief in vampires and the undead in Romanian society, the author discusses the origins of this belief and provides a clarification of the terms used to describe various forms of appearances of the dead in the world of the living.

Matei Cazacu's book, addresses, therefore, a less researched topic in Romanian historiography and makes a valuable contribution to deciphering the Romanian collective mentalities, the belief in the supernatural being, finally, a general human characteristic present in all times and which presents specific events in Christianity and Eastern Orthodoxy. Description and analysis of the beliefs and practices involving miraculous come to complete the picture of Romanian society over time and help to decipher the complex mechanisms that drive social history.

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Tratatul despre vis

[A Treatise on Dreams].

By *Ovidiu Moceanu*.

Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2012, 478 pp.

The field of oneirology has rarely been the subject of extensive scientific research. Dreams remained, at least in the Romanian scientific community, a somewhat exotic and, therefore, marginal research topic. Consequently, the publication of a book that proposes a scientific approach to dreams is undoubtedly welcome. *A Treatise on Dreams* is an extensive research that can included in the framework of literature, cultural anthropology, ethnology, the history of religions or the history of mentalities. It is among those books that deal with some of the most fascinating topics, essentially exploring the presence of dreams in literature from a religious perspective. Starting from the premise that "the fundamental data of an age can be determined by studying its position with respect to fiction" (p.10) and that a dream is "a homeostatic mechanism designed to protect the being" (p.10), the author explores the presence and its meanings across different historical periods, beginning with the Antiquity. However, he insists on the romantic era, the age of dreams *par excellence*.

Ovidiu Moceanu is a writer, novelist, literary critic and essayist. He studied philology at the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj and theology at the Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, earning a doctoral degree with a thesis on *Literature and Dream. Paradigms of a European Literary Topic*. He is a member of the Braşov branch of the Writers' Union, and published in many important journals and magazines in the country¹. His philological and theological training is reflected in his work, especially in this volume that abounds in references to universal

¹ *Dicţionarul general al literaturii române* (Bucureşti: Univers Enciclopedic, 2005), vol. IV, pp. 413-414.

literature and the Bible. The author's interest in researching the oneiric phenomenon has been evident since his debut and increasingly highlighted in some of his books, such as *The Dream and The Kingdom. A Theology of Dreams* (1998), *Dream and Literature* (1999, reprinted in 2002) and *A Treatise on Dreams* (2012), which structures its previous research.

A Treatise on Dreams includes six chapters. The first chapter, *Prolegomena*, is devoted to dreams in the Antiquity, focusing on the perception of dreams in ancient Greece while the second chapter, *The Dream and The Kingdom*, provides a religious perspective on dreams by investigating its presence in the Bible and Christian oneirology. The third chapter, *The Influencing Energy*, focuses on the ways in which dreams can influence what is going to happen through their status as allegories, parables and symbols that require interpretation, or as reflections of a myth. The next chapter, *The Non-Programmed Dream* explores the ways in which a dream merges with life itself, with reality. Therefore, the author investigates how dreams have become the instrument for romanticizing the world. The final chapter, *The Dream of Modern Science*, is devoted to theories and scientific perspectives on dreams. The book also includes an appendix exploring dreams, visions and prophecies in the Old and New Testaments.

Thus, the book starts by exploring dreams in the ancient world, the author arguing from the very beginning that one can speak of an "oneiric thought" whose logic is largely unknown (p.12). In discussing dreams in ancient Greece, the author distinguishes two phases, based on the distinction made by E. R. Dodds in understanding dreams: the "objective phase" in the classical period (p.19) and "a phase dominated by reason, which places the causes of dreams inside human beings, not outside of them" (p.21). The relevance of analyzing dreams in Ancient Greece comes from the fact that Greeks conveyed their own ability to understand dreams to both the Romans and the modern world. Moreover, the way dreams were perceived in Ancient Greece acted as a foundation for further ways of perceiving them.

Chapter Two, *The Dream and The Kingdom*, explores the religious perspective of dreams in the Old and New Testament. Dreams and visions in the Bible appear as "opportunities to return to God's will, and those who have true dreams and visions in the Old Testament and the New Testament become messengers of God" (p.26). From a Christian perspective, the genesis of dreams is placed in the impossibility of direct communication with God, "dreams occurring when direct communication with God was not possible, being disturbed by various factors" (p. 30). Furthermore, "dreams, revelations and visions appear generally during crucial moments in the existence of a person or a nation, as a sign of divine goodwill or wrath" (p. 31), therefore indicating divine presence and intervention in real life, acting as instruments of these interventions.

Chapter Three, *The Influencing Energy*, discusses prophetic dreams and their premonitory character, recognized in every epoch, as well as their predictive and prophetic function. In this sense, the dream is an allegory, a parable or a symbol that requires interpretation given that a dream is based on "an imagistic vocabulary" (p.105) and deciphering meanings in allegorical dreams is premo-

nitory (p. 110). From this perspective, dreams are capable of revealing significant aspects of reality.

Chapter Four, *The Non-Programmed Dream* explores the manner in which dreams tend to represent reality or to intertwine the real and the oneiric that can extend into the real. The author analyzes these issues in an interesting subchapter entitled *Quasi-oneiric avatars*. The dream attests to the expansive character of consciousness (p. 178) being, from this perspective, "a chance offered to those who cannot force the limits" (p. 178). Romantic reflections on dreams are based on the link between the unconscious and dreams. (p. 195) For the romantic, dreams mean knowledge, experience, and pushing boundaries.

In analyzing programmed dreams, the author makes a foray into the development of the oneiric imagery in the works of emblematic authors from the Romantic era, such as Eminescu, Novalis, Jean Paul, Achim vor Arnim, Hoffman, analyzed from a comparative perspective. Dreams are, in the case of romantics, an instrument of romanticizing the world. The chapter essentially explores the perception of dreams in modern times, in currents such as symbolism, which represents not only "a movement against positivism and naturalism", but also an ominous reaction pointing to the dangers that lurk poetic sensitivity in modern times, (p. 233), or surrealism, which has much in common with the former. Symbolism reactivates the interest in established oneiric themes, such as the ocean, the sea, the desert, the forest and the island (p. 243). Interesting subchapters are devoted to the surreal dream, surrealism affirming through dreams the inalienable freedom of man (p. 253), and to the dream of the Romanian avant-garde focusing on "the idea of the total freedom of imagination, the trust in the expansiveness of image associations, the cultivation of spontaneity" which are paths to interiority (p. 256). By focusing on aesthetic oneirism, the author notes that it "uses dream mechanisms as a model in order to create a reality analogous to the dream" (p. 267) but what's distancing the oneirics from romanticism and surrealism is the emphasis on lucidity (p. 268). The analysis of the oneiric group complements and completes the picture. In addition, the data on the oneiric group, together with those on the 1980s group, are extremely useful, the subchapter being mainly devoted to the Romanian space.

The last chapter of the book, *The Dream of Modern Science*, illustrates the current state of knowledge of dreams and the scientific theories of analysis, setting several stages for understanding dreams: the metaphysical stage, when dreams were gifts from the gods, which had to be seized because they were the bearers of a message, the stage of rudimentary experimentalism that lasted until the end of the last century, the psychoanalysis stage dominated by Freud's school, the neurophysiological stage dominated by experiments and laboratory data (pp.306-307) In essence, a revolution concerning the research of dream occurred once with Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis (p.314), who exerted a major influence on the modern perspective of dreams.

The book has several strengths, but also several drawbacks. The strengths of the book are reflected in the extremely interesting topic, less approached in

structural scientific research or at the level of critical analysis. Another strength is the manifold references to the Romanian area and Romanian literature on dreams. Similarly, because the author attempts to capture the specifics of the manner of dreaming in every period, highlighting its increasingly sophisticated perception over time, the book is a diachronic approach with numerous comparative notes.

Beyond these advantages, the book is very hard to absorb, not only due to its conception as a treatise, but also because the author tends to complicate the text in places, by mixing assessments on the various eras and by opening numerous brackets. The abundance of quotations from the Bible and world literature also contributes to the complication of the text, given that each idea is illustrated with quotations. Even if it is meant to be a rigorous scientific approach, none of the chapters and subchapters include conclusions. Additionally, general conclusions are completely absent as well. The methodology used, and often lack of methods, translates the lack of scientific rigor in the developing of the text.

With its advantages and drawbacks, *A Treatise on Dreams* explores the presence of dreams in literature from a religious perspective, essentially illustrating the manner and meanings of dreaming in each historical period.

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Narcotice în cultura română.

Istorie, religie și literatură

[Narcotics in the Romanian Culture.

History, Religion and Literature].

By *Andrei Oișteanu*.

Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2010 (2014), 504 (704) pp.

Narcotics in the Romanian Culture. History, Religion and Literature is one of the most popular books in the field of humanities despite (or precisely because of!) his taboo and extremely challenging subject, generally approached with reticence in the Romanian culture. The book, as a unique endeavor or, in any case, one of the few of its kind, incites curiosity and urges readers to read it regardless of their specialization. It is a detailed study that can be included in the fields of cultural history, history of mentalities and cultural anthropology, being originally published at the Polirom Publishing House (2010) and having two subsequent editions (first in 2011 and then in 2014 as an enlarged and illustrated edition launched at Bookfest). Moreover, it was awarded the Special Prize of the Writers' Union of Romania. In December 2013, it was also published in German at Frank & Timme Verlag Publishing House. The book has two parts: the first is

devoted to the religious and magical-ritual use of psychotropic plants in the Carpathian-Danubian area; the second is devoted to literature and cultural history, exploring the role of narcotics and hallucinogens in the lives and oeuvre of several great Romanian writers. The book investigates in detail the presence of narcotics, hallucinogens and psychotropic plants in the Romanian culture from the Antiquity to the post-modern era, namely from its origins to the present. Undoubtedly, *Narcotics in Romanian culture* stands as a complex and exhaustive endeavor due to its solid documentation and scientific rigor in addressing a topic largely ignored in the Romanian culture and visibly ideologized during the communist regime, mainly at the intersection points with the national communist ideology.

Andrei Oișteanu is a researcher at the Romanian Academy's Institute for the History of Religions and teaches at the Center for Jewish Studies. He is president of the Romanian Association for the History of Religions, a member of the Romanian Academy's Folklore and Ethnology Commission and of the Association for Oriental Studies. He has a complex scientific background: he majored in technical studies at the Faculty of Energetics at the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest, and then attended courses in humanities in the country and abroad: he studied Indian philosophy and culture at the University of Bucharest and European Jewish history and civilization at the Central European University in Budapest¹. Showing preference for this type of topics, the author makes no exception in this case as well, crossing certain boundaries in order to address this issue and exhibiting much courage given the highly controversial nature of this topic associated with hallucinogenic substances, on the one hand, and the general inhibition of the Romanian public as well as the prudish nature of the Romanian culture, on the other hand.

Structured into two major parts plus an *Appendix*, which includes several lesser known thematic texts, *Narcotics in the Romanian Culture* reveals an unusual approach, unique in the Romanian culture, and undoubtedly necessary. Using a diachronic perspective in the first part, entitled *Narcotics and hallucinogens in the Carpathian-Danubian area. Religious and magical-ritual use of psychotropic plants*, the author analyzes this phenomenon from the perspective of history and folklore, investigating the religious use of psychotropic plants (mandrake, henbane, hemp or poppy) in the area in the Antiquity and the Middle Ages, examining both the therapeutic and magical-ritual role of these plants, along with symbolic practices such as high fumigation, practiced by Thracians during feasts, and voluntary or involuntary intoxication with various substances of this type. Part two, *Narcotics and hallucinogens in modern Romanian culture*, approaches this phenomenon from the perspective of literary history by following the sequence of literary trends. He examines the use of narcotics in the modern Romanian culture starting from the scholars who studied the use of narcotic remedies in the Orient (Nicolae Milescu and Dimitrie Cantemir) to the young authors of the current generation. The use of drugs and narcotics is analyzed in relation to both the biographies of

¹ *Dicționarul general al literaturii române* (București: Univers Enciclopedic, 2005), p. 682.

authors who were narcotics users, and their works that are built around this topic. The *Appendix* contains four lesser-known texts written by the folklorist Simeon Florea Marian, Ioan Petru Culianu and Mircea Eliade as well as one original text from 2009, written specifically for this book by Mircea Cărtărescu.

A first mention should be made of the extremely elastic umbrella concept of narcotics that simultaneously designates psychotropic plants, folk remedies (mainly in the first part), various types of drugs and tobacco, alcohol and coffee (especially in the second part); the author describes a route from mandrake to LSD and includes in this category any substance (whether legal or illegal) that causes psycho-mental changes. In addition, it should be noted from the outset that the legal, ethical, and moral perspective of drug addiction in the Romanian area is almost absent; the author choosing to reveal only matters kept under silence or generally-ignored in the Romanian culture, without overly incriminating or intending to throw into disrepute the great Romanian writers.

In the first chapter *Narcotics and hallucinogens in the Carpathian-Danubian area. Religious and magical-ritual use of psychotropic plants*, the author describes the pharmaceutical properties and applications in folk cures of psychotropic plants from the Antiquity until the modern era by using historical and folkloric evidence (p. 17). This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the evolution of the perspective on these plants: from one predominantly medical in the Antiquity, to one predominantly sacral, magical-ritual and mystical in the Middle Ages. For example, belladonna is described as a plant that generated a number of beliefs and rituals, being considered a "sacred grass and having multiple uses, being used as an aphrodisiac, as medicine (panacea), hallucinogen, "port-bonheur" (p. 17). Apart from it, there are many other plants that have been assigned similar properties in our area: the henbane, fly amanita, poppy, horn-rye, sole-gist, sponge variegated weeds, couch grass, grape vines, ivy, wormwood, bugleweed, tobacco, just to mention a few. In describing superstitions and popular magical thinking samples, the author notes a number of aspects from picking rituals and storing to the real effects that the ingestion of these plants had on consumers, insisting on the proper dosage: overdoses, according to popular belief, were likely to have the opposite effect to the one intended, causing madness or even death (p. 24.) In this first chapter, the author covers everything that occurs in the Romanian area in the Antiquity and the Middle Ages and is related to psychotropic substances: from voluntary or involuntary intoxication and the fumigation phenomenon to their role both in the afterlife, as a means to "smooth the path of the soul in the world beyond", and during celebrations commemorating the dead and funerals. Oişteanu reminds of alleged involuntary intoxications with rye bread (bread was rarely made of wheat flour) or with ergot by drinking brandy made from it. Other types of poisoning mentioned are related to the phenomenon of involuntary intoxication with hallucinogenic mushrooms or intoxication due to consumption of bread made from wheat mixed with tare (pp. 30-31). As for the much-discussed, controversial and contested fumigation phenomenon mentioned by Oişteanu, it refers to the inhalation of smoke produced by burning seeds of certain plants (most likely hemp or poppy according to

some) during feasts and ritual ceremonies practiced exclusively by men, which caused a sort of drunkenness. This chapter also touches on the consumption of opium, teriac, hashish and even tobacco in the Romanian area in the pre-modern era (especially during the Phanariote period). In addition, the author establishes that opium consumption reached the area mainly through Turkish channels (p.79).

It is a significant chapter loaded with superstitions, legends, practices and rituals: the gathering, storage, consumption of psychotropic plants. The author reveals the presence of magical popular thought in our area in the Antiquity and the Middle Ages and shows pathways by which various practices (opium or coffee consumption) reached it in the pre-modern era. In presenting a full picture of the relationship to and consumption of psychotropic plants, the author provides many references to various stories from the Romanian and universal culture: *The Story of the White Moor*, *The Wizard of Oz* and others, where the consumption of psychotropic plants in various forms is a literary topos.

Part II, *Narcotics and hallucinogens in modern Romanian culture*, is constructed as an investigation of narcotics consumption in the Romanian culture. Writers as well as modern and postmodern scholars are categorized by taking into account the purpose of their drug use as well as the evolution of drug consumption in our area. Therefore, the author uses an essentially vertical view and lists Romanian writers who used hallucinogenic drugs for hedonistic purposes, for therapeutic purposes, as an incentive for creativity or to combat depression by taking into consideration the succession of literary trends. Oişteanu brings to light a number of things that happen outside the visual field in the private life of the writers, revealing the dark, bleak, often-concealed side of creation.

Starting from scholars who have studied the use of narcotic remedies in the Orient (Nicolae Milescu Spătarul, Dimitrie Cantemir, J. M. Honigberger and Mircea Eliade), the author reviews the Romantic period that witnessed a rise in the use of opium and an increase in the number of opium-related suicides. The examples of Daniil Scavinschi who “committed suicide at the age of thirty-two by ingesting a large dose of Mercury and opium” (p.136) and Alexandru Odobescu who, “in November 1895 tried to kill himself with a large dose of laudanum and failed, committing suicide a few days later with an overdose of morphine” (p.137) are telling. Narcotics were widely used in this period not only for medical purposes (the case of Eminescu who, in the fall of 1883, was admitted to the Bucharest sanatorium “Caritas” at 9 Plant Street, where he was treated with chlorine (hydrate) and morphine (p.147), but also as anesthetics, even some of the recipients became subsequently addicted (Carol Davila, Titu Maiorescu and Carmen Sylva). In the section devoted to symbolists, the author discusses heavy smokers, mainly poets, and those who praised tobacco (Alexandru Macedonski and Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu). He also mentions more recent examples of chain smokers, such as Mircea Eliade and Emil Cioran. Alcohol consumption was, alongside tobacco, a vice of many writers, a relevant example being Mateiu Caragiale and his son. Very interesting is the part on the *Disease and cures of love* (p.185) from which we learn that opium was considered an important aphro-

disiac together with a number of other plants: poppies, belladonna, datura, horn-rye and hemp that were widely used for this purpose.

A turning point in narcotics consumption occurred in the interwar period: "During the three decades between World War I and the installation of communism in Romania, the pattern of drug addiction and the portrait of narcotics and hallucinogenic substance consumers changed". It is no longer about the prince or aristocrats (or even the townsfolk in the Phanariot era), who "drinks opium to get in a good mood" according to the Turkish habit. It is no longer about the young Romanian progressionist who returned from his studies in France (...) Finally, it is no longer about the post-1848 student returning from the West (especially Berlin and Vienna) with the taste of morphine in his blood (...) and "the number of narcotics and drug users increased significantly in the interwar period" (p. 200). This increasing predisposition is evident in literature through the use of narcotics as a literary topos: a number of novel characters either consume these drugs or associate certain moods with drug use in the prose of Camil Petrescu, Max Blecher, Sorana Gurian, Ioana Postelnicu and Henriette Yvonne Stahl. A special category is that of poets who used drugs to enhance creativity and imagination. Illustrative is the case of the mathematician and poet Ioan Barbu who created under the influence of narcotics his entire life. Avant-gardists and modernists, "dreamers by definition", were not strangers to artificial methods of achieving "total freedom of spirit" (p. 246). Tristan Tzara, the leading representative of this literary current that includes Sasha Pană, Victor Brauner, Geo Bogza, Gellu Naum and Paul Cernat, belongs among those who used drugs to enhance their poetic message.

An interesting chapter is devoted to experiments performed by scientists in order to improve medical neuropsychiatric knowledge. It is about doctors, pharmacists, psychiatrists and neurologists, such as Gheorghe Marinescu, Nicolae Leon, Eduard Pamfil, and Nicolae Minovici, who conducted experiments with psychotropic substances, either on themselves or on various subjects in the name of science.

The list of writers who abused various substances in the name of creativity also includes great writers of the interwar period such as Cioran and Ionesco, but here it is mainly about tobacco and alcohol. Oişteanu reproduces a conversation between Cioran and Liiceanu, in which the former made certain revelations about his alcohol abuse in his youth: "[I used to get drunk] very often in those days, in my youth. I even thought that I would become a drunk because I enjoyed the state of unconsciousness and the demented pride of drunkards" (p. 311). The mixture of alcohol, tobacco and coffee acted as stimulants in his intellectual activity. Additionally, Eugène Ionesco's alcohol and drug abuse is also well-documented.

The list is completed by those who have studied the use of psychotropic plants in religious and magical-ritual manifestations (Mircea Eliade, I. P. Culiianu) and by contemporary writers from Mircea Cărtărescu (who wrote about his instant coffee abuse) to those who recounted their own experiences with narcotics (Andrei Codrescu, Alin Fumurescu and Dragoş Bucurenci).

This second chapter is a gallery of writers and characters from the Romanian culture and their relationship with various types of narcotics. It focuses on pushing the boundaries of creation and the sacrifices a writer makes in the name of creation, which implies self-abandonment, often achieved by artificial means. A writer often uses them to compensate for the misery of life and human nature in general, narcotics acting as means to escape from reality and to reach artificial paradises.

One should note in this seven-hundred-page-long endeavor, the first of its kind in the Romanian culture, the author's emphasis on both forms of narcotics use and their evolution in our area over the centuries. In analyzing the phenomenon in its progress and in a comparative manner, the author inserts numerous references to other places, thus contextualizing this process. Very often we find long open brackets that provide examples from diverse cultures, which connect the Romanian area to what occurred in the world. Furthermore, there are also brackets that capture temporal differences from the moment under discussion, by means of which the author emphasizes the continuities and discontinuities of this phenomenon in the Romanian area.

Predominantly a cultural-anthropological approach, this book also distinguishes itself through the abundance and diversity of sources, thus being a pioneering endeavor. It is a detailed and consistent research, replete with previously-hidden and even sensational biographical information, a genuine painting of people's relationship with psychotropic plants and narcotics in our area. Also noteworthy is the fine humor and the superb writing on such an unexpected, almost marginal topic in the Romanian culture.

Narcotics in the Romanian culture is a unique and much needed book. It will certainly remain a benchmark in the Romanian culture and an example of intellectual erudition.

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Hristofor, chipurile unui sfânt fără chip.

Reprezentările din cultura românească veche și sursele lor

[Christopher, the Faces of a Faceless Saint.

His Representations in Old Romanian Culture and Their Sources].

By *Silvia Marin Barutcieff*.

Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House, 2014, 391 pp.

The book, based on the author's doctoral thesis, aims to reconstruct the trajectory of St. Christopher in Romanian culture during its transition from the medieval to the modern period. With a background in literary studies, Silvia Marin

Barutcieff has integrated this subject of cultural history research along three paths of investigation, which also represent the three parts of the book: literature, popular culture and imagery.

In the first part, *The Passion of St. Christopher in Literary Representations*, the author reconstructs, on the basis of hagiography and apocryphal literature, the life of the real man, his physical identity and his martyrdom, as well as his transition to sainthood, attempting to bring clarifications on this issue, whose controversial nature stems from the precariousness of information. Through a comparative analysis of the literature written in Coptic, Egypt and Ethiopia from the fourth century onwards, of European and old Romanian literature, pertaining to a later period, the seventeenth century, Silvia Marin Barutcieff explores the similarities and possible lineages of the literary iconography devoted to the man-eating barbarian with a terrifying, canine visage. The author traces the representations of St. Christopher in Byzantine menologies, Coptic and Ethiopian synaxaria (accessed in English or French translation), in Western legends about the martyrdom of St. Christopher, as well as in Metropolitan Dosoftei's *Lives of the Saints* and *The Lives of the Saints* from Neamț, or in Romanian manuscripts of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, charting the wanderings of the cynocephalic character from the East to the West. The exegesis in these hagiographies has led Silvia Marin Barutcieff to examine St. Christopher's identity metamorphoses, which betray, in the author's opinion, the fact that the genre lends itself to intertextuality and that although the texts are constructed from other texts, following a certain pattern, their compilers sometimes gave free rein to fantasy. Hence, given these authors' aversion to boredom and repetition, the iconography St. Christopher is entwined with that of Saints Varvar and Mina. As regards the saint's conversion and martyrdom, probing the collective imaginary of torture and violence, Silvia Marin Barutcieff highlights the etymological significance of the shift from Reprebus or Reprobis (meaning the Damned), the saint's original name prior to his conversion, to Christopher (meaning the Christ-bearer).

The second way in which Silvia Marin Barutcieff discovers St. Christopher is by investigating popular culture. Convinced that the hagiographic literature inspires and is inspired from myths and legends, and that the canonical and the popular text influence one another, the author makes a foray into the medieval collective mind. She resorts, once again, to the comparative method, counterpoising the European West and the Romanian space. Thus, we are introduced in a world of myths and fairy tales populated by monsters and marginals, such as the wild man, the man of the forest, the man of the night, or the girl of the forest, with mythical figures, like giants and ogres, or real creatures, like the dog and the wolf. The investigation of these figures aims to capture the manner in which their imagery gained shape in the collective mentality and the functions they were invested with. The reading key in which these legendary characters are approached is ethical and aesthetic, focusing on the relationship between beauty and ugliness, between good and evil; it brings us closer to the metamorphoses of St. Christopher-the handsome man who deman-

ded to be turned into an ugly man-beast with the fangs of a tamed dog and was then appeased by returning to Christ. There are pages that can be considered part of a literary history of deformity, of monstrosity, noting how physical ugliness and wildness stir curiosity, are silenced and then accepted. Silvia Marin Barutcieff signals the peculiarities of these legends, their specific differences, explaining, by recourse to the texts, the images and representations of the saint, which are conveyed differently in the European West and in the eastern regions of the continent. According to the author, in the western areas, especially in the French space and in the Alps, the legend of the wildman played an important role in spreading the cult of St. Christopher. In the east, the legend attested on Mount Athos, featuring the delightful young man from Alexandria who, praying to God to make him ugly, found himself in the shape of a dog-headed man, was reworked in the Romanian space, where the version of the lamb-headed youth gained currency; the latter image obscured the original one, which rarely occurs in the sources. Like in the case of the hagiographies she has analysed, in the popular legends the author detects the contaminations between the legend of St. Christopher and that of St. John Chrysostom, which engendered, for example, in the Romanian folklore, the legend of St. John Sheep's Head.

The third manner of tracking the representation of St. Christopher is through the exploration of images. The author proposes a diachronic analysis of his representations, from the first ones preserved in Cappadocia (anthropomorphic types, dating back to the eleventh century) and in Bulgaria (the cynocephalic version, from the fifteenth century) to present-day renditions that reveal the contemporary vacillation of the saint between worship and occultation, depending on the private or the public taste, as well as on the individual or the collective sensibilities at stake. The patron saint of travellers, the protector of humans against sudden death, St. Christopher tends to be regarded as the patron saint of motorists nowadays. The diachronic analysis is correlated with a typological analysis, which distinguishes between various types of representation, their areas of dissemination and the prevalent periods of various representational images. Silvia Marin Barutcieff captures the specificity of the illustrations from the European Occident, where zoomorphic types have not yet been attested, the widest distribution in space and time pertaining to the type of the giant combined with that of the Christ-bearer, according to the text in the *Golden Legend*, an iconographic type initiated in the area of the Alps and the middle Danube, which had its peak between 1350-1530. The reference to the evolutions of these images at European level serve, this time too, to contextualize the issue in the Romanian space and to provide terms of comparison for characterizing the Romanian iconography of the saint. The author notes the typological diversity in the Romanian space, open to the influences of the western and south-eastern parts of the continent alike. She highlights the regional or provincial peculiarities, emphasizing the models reproduced and the influences exerted during certain temporal sequences. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, Transylvania and Wallachia proved to be border line spaces for various typologies of Western-Catholic origin and South-East European (mainly

Greek) extraction. From the generic model, the author descends into the specificities of the painting schools in which the engravers were trained, the notebooks with models they followed, their taste and skills. She notes that the painters enriched the *ermineia* by adding to them folk-related and hunting scenes, the parable of the unicorn from the story of Saints Barlaam and Josaphat, the wheel of life, and various representations of death.

Tracing the steps of the itinerant engravers in executing their assignments, Silvia Marin Barutciuff points out the similarities of style and iconographic programs, or the penetration of various iconographic types from one Romanian province to another. She also resorts to a quantitative assessment of the information that has led her to the conclusion that the most frequently preserved representations are to be found at the southern border between Argeş and Olt Counties, along the rivers Cotmeana and Vedea, where representations featuring the lamb-faced saint prevail. To emphasize more clearly the diversity of representations in the Romanian lands, the author has analysed the 11 types she has detected, establishing a correlation between legendary characters and images. This is the section in which, perhaps to a greater extent than in the other sections of the book, the author underscores the idea of flight, of canon transgression, which, according to her, is defining for St. Christopher. He is, according to Silvia Marin Barutciuff, a “mysterious creature” due to (or because of) the hybridization of the models, his propensity towards normality and the others’ attempts to enlist his figure under various headings; he is a “nomad in the House of the Lord” as the structure of the sacred space suggests that he can be found almost everywhere in the church, considering that the *ermineia* do not reserve him an exclusive place. Freedom of movement also means freedom of iconic association, which revolves around two thematic groups: eschatology and military saints.

The appendixes that comprise a typology of St. Christopher’s representations in the space of Western Europe and in the Romanian space reveal Silvia Marin Barutciuff’s extensive documentation effort, conducted over a span of 13 years, and the solid database on which she has built her analysis. The appendixes constitute, as such, useful references for researchers in the field. The West European typology brings to light the manner in which diverse communities and individuals have appropriated this saint, through his representation in public and private, ecclesiastical and secular spaces, ranging from the mural painting in religious and civil architecture to a pattern of cakes from the eighteenth century, a corporate bag, a brewery commercial and an election poster. The inventory of the representations in the Romanian space is compiled in keeping with the chronological and geographical criteria, including information about the founders of the churches in which representations of the saint and his painters may be encountered. It comprises a syntactic classification (by the saint’s position within the sacred space) and a morphological classification, by the type of facial representation, being a useful working tool achieved with accuracy, which the author makes available to other researchers.

This book offers a model of analysis that has been scarcely upheld, I would say, in Romanian historiography, a model based on combining text and

image, an analysis that unites the author's sensitivity to literature and the acuity of her observation in the face of art works. It is the result of a daring approach, predicated on a shift away from the comfort of the author's own domain into the midst of the challenges posed by another. It is a successful undertaking, thanks to its rigor, the interest for relevant details, and the proper balance between caution, boldness and subtlety in drawing conclusions. An imperative balance, given that the author has trodden a hazardous ground, that of popular literature, folklore and imagery, in that it is sometimes hard to tell whether a legend belongs to high or popular literature, if the text was a model for the image, or vice versa.

Written in an appealing, clear, accurate style, Silvia Marin Barutcieff's book makes for a pleasurable and exciting reading experience. The author, who has a passion for travel, which is why, perhaps not coincidentally, she has chosen Christopher as her companion, proposes an itinerary covering large spaces from Asia Minor, North Africa, Greece, Montenegro to Western and Northern Europe, eventually reaching her homeland. The reader is party to a voyage with ludic overtones: after he has managed to discern one of the saint's faces, the later metamorphoses himself, luring one to follow in his footsteps yet again; he seems to be playing hide-and-seek with his seekers, to whom he is nonetheless generous: in the western space, as an elderly man, Christopher is reminiscent of Santa, while in the eastern space he allows readers the freedom to imagine, according to their own tastes, the enticing beauty of the young man prior to his transformations.

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Primul război mondial. Controverse, paradoxuri, reinterpretări

[The First World War. Controversies, Paradoxes, Reinterpretations].

By *Lucian Boia*.

Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, 2014, 116 pp.

The publication of Lucian Boia's book *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească* [History and Myth in the Romanian Consciousness] in 1997 came as a shock. The sharp critique and the irony with which Boia revisited long held tenets of Romanian history sparked bitter controversy and indignation among historians and not only¹. During the following years Boia published several other books along the

¹ Cristina Petrescu and Dragoș Petrescu, "Mastering vs. Coming to Terms with the Past: A Critical Analysis of Post-Communist Romanian Historiography," in *Narratives Unbound. Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, ed. Sorin Antohi,

same lines. One of the last in this series is a small book printed with the occasion of the centenary of the First World War. Unlike his classical *Istorie și mit...*, this one has a narrower scope: it focuses on the interpretation of the WWI and of the formation of Greater Romania. The objective of the book is to dislodge one of the fundamental myths of the Romanian history, namely that the Romanian national state – as it emerged in 1918 – was the natural and necessary end of a linear development lasting for centuries.

The book is made of two parts corresponding to two different planes of the argument, one dedicated to the First World War and the other to the unification of Romania with Transylvania, Bucovina and Bessarabia. The first part is essentially a critique of the teleological interpretation of the Great War was the necessary and unavoidable result of some “large causes”. Lucian Boia argues – convincingly – that historical causality is much more complex and that what we name “causes” are not natural givens, but have their own causes and contexts. Some of these causes pertained to the realm of representations, which tended to exaggerate the actual threats posed by one state to another. Hence, given the complexity of historical causality and the equal strength of the Entente and the Central Powers, the outbreak, the course and the outcome of the war was far from predictable; as Lucian Boia shows, in an exercise of counterfactual history, the Great War could not have started in 1914 or started in a different way; its course could have been different from the course we know; and could have ended differently, with the Central Powers as the victorious party.

These reflections bear on Romanian history because Romania as we know it – with the exception of post-World War Two territorial loses – was born out of the Great War. So, the first part of the book forms the premise for the second part, which treats the creation of Greater Romania in the same non-teleological manner. In short, Boia contends that – like the WWI – the making of Greater Romania was not the only possible course of history; there was a great deal of circumstance and happenstance in this outcome. In spite of the obvious continuity in the line of the argument, the Romanian reception of the book concentrated exclusively on the second part. Especially the unfavorable reviews or observations cling on some of the statements made by Lucian Boia in this part. Again, like in 1997, his book was considered an expression of the foreign (read Hungarian) propaganda aiming at the destruction of the Romanian national state¹ or as

Balázs Trencsényi and Péter Apor (Budapest: Central European University Press), 323-326.

¹ See <http://www.razbointrucuvant.ro/recomandari/2014/05/01/demitizatorul-lucian-boia-romania-nu-a-avut-un-drept-istoric-asupra-transilvaniei-care-este-sensul-acestei-noi-teme-lansate-de-neoculturnicii-euroatlantisti/>, accessed on July 13, 2014 at 3.19 pm. The review is unsigned and is illustratively titled “The ‘Myth-buster’ Lucian Boia Legitimizes the Hungarian Revisionism”.

serving – unconsciously – such propaganda¹. In other words, Lucian Boia is accused of subverting – consciously or unconsciously – the Romanian identity.

However, on a closer look Boia's questioning of the official version of Romanian history is far from radical. He shows that the decision to participate in war alongside the Entente was a dangerous gamble played by only a part of the Romanian elite with a happy end for the Romanian side. Actually, Romania has lost the war and was quite close to lose a part of the pre-war territory. But in 1918 the war took a favourable turn, the Entente won the war and Romania found herself in the victorious camp. So, far from the endpoint of a long-term struggle for national unity, the making of Greater Romania was but the accidental result of a war, which could have ended very differently. Nonetheless, Boia neither denies nor derides the Romanian war effort as it is often the case but treats it with realism; he underlines both the lack of preparation for war on the Romanian side – for which the elites supposedly seeking to fulfill the national idea could be blamed – and the “practically impossible mission to cover the longest front of the war”.

The quasi-unanimity of the public opinion which supported the participation in war alongside the Entente is also questioned. In fact, an important part of the public opinion was pro-German and against an alliance with the Entente. Consequently there was also disagreement over the achievement of the “national ideal”. The best illustration of this is the choice of a partial “national ideal” in 1916: the alliance with the Entente meant the choice of Transylvania and Bucovina and the giving up of Bessarabia, a territory which at that time belonged to the allied Russia; it meant the option for a truncated “national ideal”. Only the circumstances created by the outbreak of the Russian revolution allowed for the taking of Bessarabia. Moreover, the “national ideal” represented the views of an elite, a hardly surprising fact in a rural and underdeveloped country.

Similar sound appreciations are made about the Romanians from Transylvania and their choice between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Romanian Kingdom. Boia claims that the two options were not on the same plane. The Romanian option “belonged to a virtual history” while on a more concrete plane Transylvanian Romanians have struggled – from the 18th century on – for full national rights within the Habsburg Monarchy. The unification with Romania became a feasible scenario only during the war and it remained the only one by the end of the war. The decisive moment was the proclamation of the Hungarian independent state which the Transylvanian Romanian elites regarded with maximum distrust. Of course, this does not mean that none of the Transylvanian Romanians thought about the unification, but that this idea was not a political program before the war; and it could not be since the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy was far from predictable.

The democratic deficit of the consultations regarding the unification of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania is a case in point which illustrates

¹ This was the tone of the TV show ‘Jocuri de putere’ hosted by Rareș Bogdan at Realitatea TV on April 29, 2014.

Boia's balanced judgment. Indeed, he points out that only the Romanians – slightly over 50% of the Transylvanian population – were consulted while the minorities – making up almost a half of the population and having an important cultural and economic position – were not. Nonetheless, he does not conclude that the result of the consultation misrepresented the demographic reality. In fact he admits that a referendum “would have produced the same result: the union with Romania, but with a less ‘unanimous’ score”. Finally, although critical of the Versailles system, Boia does not advocate the undoing of the arrangements made then. He argues that history has made the successor states much more homogenous than they were in the aftermath of the WWI and hence their boundaries can hardly be contested now.

In themselves, these considerations are rather banal and invite the readers to look differently at the manner in which the making of modern Romania was represented in historiography. Such critical assessments of the long held views on the national past should be common currency in any mature historiography. What can be imputed to Boia is the facile character of his book, relying on very few primary and secondary sources. Yet, this is understandable, since the book – through its very accessible prose, though not through its prize – was clearly intended for a larger audience. All in all, Lucian Boia's book is a brief essay which makes a pleasant reading. It reminds us that history takes one of several possible courses and the making of the Romanian national state in 1918 was subject to the same rule.

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