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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword ● 7



BOB JARVIS (University of Sussex)

Shifting ground at the edge of Europe –aspects of travel in the evolution of Romanian art.

● 11

MĂDĂLINA DIACONU (University of Vienna)

The symbolism of the mountain in the modern Romanian culture ● 43

ROXANA CIOLĂNEANU (University of Lisbon)

A short overview of the Romanian Semiotics in the last 100 years ● 53

MARINA-CRISTIANA ROTARU (Technical University of Civil Engineering,
Bucharest)

“Regele Palaelibus” by Isac Ludo: History and Fiction as Ideological Representations

● 65



CĂTĂLIN CONSTANTINESCU (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași) ● 79

The Necessity of Comparing and Contextualizing - Myth, Music and Ritual. Approaches to Comparative Literature, Rodica Gabriela Chira, Emilia Ivancu, Gabriela Chiciudean, Natalia Muntean. (Eds.) Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018.



FOREWORD

The Finnish Journal for Romanian Studies (FJRS) focuses on different aspects of Romanian culture, mainly as reflected outside Romania, while researchers from around the world are invited to publish, the interdisciplinary dialogue between researchers in the field being heartily encouraged.

We thus express our sincerest thanks to the contributors of the current issue for their novel perspectives brought to the field of Romanian studies as well as to the reviewers of the articles.

The Editors



SHIFTING GROUND AT THE EDGE OF EUROPE –ASPECTS OF TRAVEL IN THE EVOLUTION OF ROMANIAN ART.

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ABSTRACT

The extent to which art and culture are shaped by geography is only now being given its proper due with the development of ‘Kunstgeographie’ - the geography of art- an approach which is little used in English language art historical research. This essay looks at different ways in which the visual art of Romania has been shaped by the relationship between the changing Romanian territories (‘Romania’ is itself an invention of 19th Century nationalism) and their neighbours, rulers and invaders. The essay discusses the impact of physical and political geography, changing transport routes and the religions cultures and that they bring with them. In the case of Romania the difficulties posed by distance, the Carpathian mountains and the ‘Iron Gorge’ are discussed. The span of the easy ranges from Trajan and the Dacians, to the Ottoman, the German and Austro-Hungarian expansions and colonization, and the influence of Ceausescu and concludes with a discussion of the margins of Romanian art and culture in Roma and DADA art. By ‘placing’ art in this way this work opens up new and stimulating themes for research, some of which are now being explored in the author’s researches into “Art in Post-Communist Romania – the of influence social and environmental contexts”.

KEYWORDS

Common place cultural observation, Physical geography – links and barriers, Political Geography, Minorities – Jewish culture, Roma culture

INTRODUCTION

This paper originated as an exploration of ‘Art and Travel’ as a term paper in Art History at Sussex University. The general approach implied and the tutors interests were the context of an island with clear boundaries and an expansive,

Imperial world view from which ‘explorers’ or ‘colonists’ had sailed forth to document and bring back trophies, evidence, exotic specimens or (to be colloquial) booty. This essay turns this conceptual background on its head and discusses the influence of ‘travel’ (and its implications and limitations) on an almost landlocked country which has been part of several empires and only established ‘national’ boundaries in the 19th Century: Romania.

Byron’s remark on Albania “though within sight of Italy, is less known than the interior of America” (Belcher, in Chard and Langdon 1996: 50) applies as much today about Romania and Romanian art and served to prompt this essay. Although Romania has a Latin-based language, and since emergence of nationalism in the mid 19th century has been a ‘European’ country it is still one of the least known parts of Europe. Apart from popular connections with Dracula legends, it is frequently omitted from current lists and surveys of EU countries. Romania has been a member of the EU since 2007 and in 2019 will hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU for the first time.

The general argument running through this paper will be that the current easy/everywhere culture that underlies the globalization of art and imagery is a very recent pattern. Against that this study of Romania and Romanian art will discuss how travel into and out of this large but isolated and least known part of Europe has left a complex legacy. Though ‘Romania’ has only existed politically since the mid-19th century a ‘Romanian Consciousness’ (Boia, 2001) can be traced back (and argued for as a continuous cultural tradition) for two millennia. This essay argues that its cultural and artistic development is permeated with the travelling and transportation of artistic ideas and artefacts.

This essay will be illustrated with discussion of art and architecture and how these barriers and facilitators of travel have influenced them. It will first examine how some frequent common place cultural observations have influenced travel and exchange, and then the effects of the links and barriers created by physical geography. The political geography of Romania is complex and by no means a stable continuum and this too has shaped the travel geography of art. Finally there is an overlay of the two substantial and influential cultural and racial minorities in Romania – Jews, whose culture was a substantial influence on DADA (Sandqvist, 2008) and Roma¹ who have their own boundaries and patterns of travel and influence, as Boia discusses. The gypsies he notes are ‘the Romanians principal obsession’ (Boia, 2001: 208-15, and 215-219).

¹ This is the currently preferred spelling rather than ‘roma’ Confusion is often caused as the word ‘*Tigan*’(gypsy) is pejorative and the word ‘*romi*’ (*Rroma*) is the word they use to identify themselves – a word which to the outsider is very close to ‘Romanian’ though from different roots.

GENERAL AND COMMON PLACE CULTURAL OBSERVATIONS

Ulysse de Marsillac, one of several French commentators on (and enthusiasts for) the newly forming Romania in the mid 19th Century made this off-hand and misleading remark: “I asked my fellow-traveller, what distance is between Paris and Bucharest? Three centuries, sir! was his answer,” (Onescu, 2007). This unkindly emphasises the cultural differences and similarities between Romania and Western Europe. Romania has been described as a ‘Latin island in a Slavic sea’, its capital city, Bucharest lying somewhere between orient and occident (Majuru 2003 and Harhoiu, 2005) – a cultural transition zone visible today: you can pick up a regular service bus to Istanbul and the architecture is an eclectic mix of styles and sources. As western influences grew it came to be called the “Paris of the East” (fig 1) as architects and artists from Paris were given commissions and Romanian architects and artists studied in France and Western Europe. But for that they needed to be able to travel easily.

Yet despite the western influences and material cultures from the Roman Catholic west and the Ottoman east, Romania preserved an Orthodox Christianity (of its own) through 400 hundred years as a part of the Ottoman Empire and 40 years of Communism. Though this has caused disputes with the Roman Catholic church:

“For in disregarding the Roman Church, they receive all the sacraments not from our venerable brother, the Cuman bishop, who is the diocesan of that territory, but from some pseudo-bishops of the Greek rite” (Pope Gregory IX, 1234)

Though exact details for the origins of Christianity in Romania and its constituent parts are disputed the imagery and architecture (as well as its form) are for the most part closely integrated with other orthodox churches, their architecture and decoration until the 19th Century.

In their *History of Romanian Arts* (Dragut and Grigorescu ,1990) note the way Orthodox iconography had restrictions and traditions that allowed little or no flexibility or interpretation and Romanian painting was held under the influence of Byzantine models and suggest an eastward looking network of influences and ideas. which continued well into the modern period (fig 2). Villiers (1990: 167-183) discussing the wooden churches of Maramures and their decoration note how the painters worked around Northern Transylvania while Cantacuzino in his review comments how the Carpathian Mountains served to protect the Romanians from western influences and also retained their independent status in the Ottoman empire a theme which is discussed in the next section of this essay (Cantucazino, 2009, p118).

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY – LINKS AND BARRIERS

Travel has real physical constraints, even distances across a flat and favorable terrain is limited by facility and capacity. The reality of South-eastern Europe is not flat and the conditions are far from favorable. This has shaped the transfer of culture and art into and across Romania: as well as being on “the other side of Europe” (at least from the Franco/Italian/British cultural axis) it is separated from all this by the Carpathian Mountains (Fig 3) a formidable mountain range-which has few passes and has proved impassable in winter warfare (Fig 4). The most important mountain passes are (starting from the Ukrainian border): the Prislop Pass, Rodna Pass, Tihuța Pass, Tulgheș Pass, Bicz Canyon, Ghimeș Pass, Uz Pass and Oituz Pass, Buzău Pass, Predeal Pass (crossed by the railway from Brașov to Bucharest), Turnu Roșu Pass (1,115 ft., running through the narrow gorge of the Olt River and crossed by the railway from Sibiu to Bucharest), Vulcan Pass, Teregova Pass and the Iron Gates (both crossed by the railway from Timișoara to Craiova)

From the late 1100’s German settlements were established as defensive boundaries against invaders from the Eastern steppes and to use the mining skills of their new settlers to exploit the natural resources of the region (Jenkins, S. 2009). These areas still retain Germanic cultural and artistic connections: Romania’s recent literature Laureate – Herta Muller who wrote and published in Germany is perhaps the most famous, but Germanic patterns run through architecture and costume and decoration which are proudly celebrated on the website (even to the language of its web address - www.siebenbuerger.de) extracts from which are shown in Fig 5.

Though the Danube River flows in a series of narrow gorges through these mountains the effect of the narrow and long gorge was an obstacle to shipping. Until engineering advances in the late 19th Century this was impassable – “The Iron Gates”. Plans to make the gorge navigable started in 1831 but it was not until 1896 after extensive rock clearances and explosive engineering that the ‘Sip Channel’ was completed allowing easy navigation downstream where previously complex and dangerous. The chronology of attempts runs from the 1st century AD and the projects of Roman engineers, through the construction of medieval defensive fortifications, shipbuilding at the time of the Principality of Serbia, the hydro-constructional works made throughout the 19th century, until the grand enterprise of modern engineers - hydroelectric power plants Djerdap I and Djerdap II. Arrangements for towing and transshipment were needed and wrecks commonplace (Fig 6).

Along the Black Sea coast, the virtually uninhabited Danube Delta, the second largest in Europe presents another barrier, this one against the Ukrainian steppes. The lower reaches of the Danube have sometimes dried up to the extent that they were un-navigable. Even in fair conditions skilled pilotage was

needed² and is still subject to special rules (Ardeleanu, 2013), and Galati Lower Danube River Administration (2010) (Fig 7).

The European revolutions of the 19th Century combined with the growth of railway connections across Europe radically re-orientated and developed the 'Europeanization' of Romanian art and culture. The railways brought fundamental cultural changes right across Europe. In Eastern Europe The Orient Express (fig 8) is the most famous link across 19th century Europe but it was only possible because of the gradual consolidation and connection of disparate national railway networks at a standard gauge outside Russia and the Iberian Peninsula.

More recently transcontinental road connections with the recognition of the European Highway network (CEDR, undated) and European air travel again though UK budget airlines hardly touch Romania Wizz Air and Blue Air operate from Stansted, along with the entry of Romania into the EU in 2007 with all the freedoms of travel, both for artists and works of art, these encourage.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

The territory called 'Romania' today has been part of many political empires and cultures. Each of has facilitated or restricted travel and left traces of their art in the 'Romanian' canon and architecture in the modern landscape.

a.- The Dacian Kingdom and its defeat by the Romans

The hold of 'Dacia' on Romanian culture – most well know is the for the branding of Romanian automobiles- is considerable. Although material remains are slight from records and maps it seems that the 'Dacians' settled in the lower Danube region and developed distinctive styles of pottery and metal-work using the local mineral wealth of the area. (fig 10 and 11) and by 1 CE Dacia was the third largest military power in Europe, after the Romans and Germans. The wars, economy, and traditions of this Transylvanian land permeate the geopolitics of today's Balkan countries (Koch, 2005, Grumeza, 2009)

The best-known record of Dacian civilization is in the commemoration of their defeat by Trajan in the massive spiral carving of his campaign which although the original is a column, a casting is displayed as a continuous horizontal sequence in the Romanian National Museum (fig 12)³. Further research has suggested that these invasions moulded the Balkan and Eastern European nations they continue to redraw their borders and impose ethnic domination on each other in a way that can be traced back to this (Grumeza, 2009)

³ The National Geographic site has an animated explanation Trajan's Amazing Column | National Geographic www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/article.html

b. The Ottoman Empire with all the aspects of ‘the orient’ that it implies.

Even to the casual visitor ‘Romania’ seems an ‘eastern’ country and one of most frequently cited works describes Bucharest as ‘a city between orient and occident’ (Harhoui, 2005). Vasile Florea comments in his *Romanian Painting* (Vasile, 1983) that the defeat of the Ottoman armies at Vienna in 1683 although it still covered a vast area, brought about changes which had a fruitful effect on the arts and new ideas spread from the west. Romania was still bound in the Ottoman system of feudal relationships. Although with greater contact with the west new ideas spread they were not fully assimilated and there was an ambiguity in these what can be seen as ‘eclectic approaches and half hearted experiments’ (Vasile, 1983: 48) and a truly secular art had not emerged. Nevertheless, the religious frescoes were far more varied and dynamic than the older traditional ones (fig 14).

Following this theme Marjuru (Marjuru, 2003) notes how Romania being situated at the crossing of commercial routes in south eastern Europe and is linked to large markets beyond. On one side was the Ottoman world – even larger than Russia and on the west the economic and cultural vitality of central Europe through which it found itself linked organically. Romania was a melting pot of commerce and cultures with a polyglot human and architectural townscape in the early 19th Century. (Fig 15)

c. The Austro-Hungarian empire, of which Transylvania was a part until 1919

The history of Transylvania is complex with waves of successive invasions and occupations (fig 16). In the 18th Century what is now Romania straddled the boundaries of two great European empires (Fig 17). The Grand Principality of Transylvania nominally had separate status within the Habsburg Empire, originally granted in 1691, but this was a formality as Transylvania was still an administrative area of Hungary. Westernization spread across the whole cultural spectrum. Even Bukovina, on the Ukrainian borders, was opened to Western influence.

The absence of political boundaries facilitated the exchange of men and ideas. Workers in stone, metal, oils and wood came from all parts of the empire as did instrumentalists, artists, teachers and singers. Romanians and Ukrainians from Bukovina studied, worked, and travelled in the West, bringing back with them new economic, political, and cultural concepts. The nationalities had their own cultural institutions, foremost among these, the schools by which their native language and heritage could be transmitted. With increased literacy came a viable press with journals, newspapers and periodicals in Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish, Yiddish, and German.

The influence of Catholic traditions and imagery can be seen especially in the church architecture of these regions of Romania. Distinguished Austrian architects worked in the country including Fischer von Erlach designed the new Catholic cathedral in Timisoara, Franz Anton Hillebrand in Oradea, stylistic influences that continued into the 20th Century (fig 18). (Dragut V and Grigorescu, D, 1990: 114)

d) The rise of nationalism in the 19th Century and the European nation in the first part of the 20th Century

Inventing 'Romania' involved substantial borrowing and importing of artistic styles especially to match the emergence of 'Greater Romania' with the addition of Transylvania after 1919 following WW1. A consolidated 'Romania' which saw the revival of historical nationalistic styles and connection back to native styles. Dragut and Grigorescu (1990: 122) give many details of the way the history of Romanian art in this period is the history of travel across Europe and the assimilation of different cultures and styles and how many Romanian architects, painters, sculptors and engravers studied and worked abroad⁴.

Architects trained in Vienna, Paris and imported styles began to appear (fig 19). Painters studied in Paris, Italy and Vienna of whom the most significant is perhaps Nicolae Grigorescu (1838- 1907) who worked with the Barbizon (fig 20) school after studying with Sebastian Cornu and Charles Gleyre (who trained Monet, Renoir, Sisley and Whistler). Ion Andreescu's work in France developed impressionist influences in colour and brushwork (Florea, 1983: 80) and Gheorghe Petrascu took the experiments he saw in Paris to paint in Venice, Spain and France (fig 21).

e) The 'Iron Curtain' with the closing off of the West (varying with time and politics)

The Communist years marked a huge shift in freedom – to paint and to travel. "Artists were commissioned only to deal with themes of "social struggle, liberated labour and heroic deeds" (Florea, 1983: p 123). The complexities and necessities of 'collaboration' have been documented by Catherine Preda (Preda, 2015). Travel abroad was restricted to those who could prove that they would return: "Romanian "border jumpers" tried to flee the Communist regime, often paying with their lives. After 26 years, this issue remains a black hole in the history of the country" (balcanicaucaso.org, n.d.)

Touristic travel was carefully controlled and directed inwards (Light, n.d.) and travel outside Romania was regulated in the extreme. A collection of Romanian paintings published in 1964 shows nothing of external influence and the

⁴ Since the book is unillustrated and the translation somewhat eccentric it is difficult to be precise.

paintings are wooden and static, whether industrial scenes or figures. Though the introduction to the volume notes how the artists are endeavoring to represent social significance but there is no reference to a world beyond Romania's tightly controlled borders (Ion Petrescu (ed) 1964).

The personal accounts collected by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant record some of the absurdities of being able to cross freely to Bulgaria at weekends (Martor 2002: 32), even friendships with people in other Communist countries were disallowed (Martor 2002: 70) as were visits to relatives abroad (Martor 2002: 143): only party members were allowed to travel abroad (Martor 2002: 67). Maria Asavei notes the importance of rare exchanges of western art periodicals which for a while was possible there was a short period between 1965 and 1980 when underground art in communist Romania meant a freer traveling of artists, of artworks and sometimes of ideas (Asavei, 2007).

Important contemporary artists left Romania in this period notably Paul Neagu (in 1970, first to France, then UK) while the concentration of artists and activities of the Sigma Group in Timisoara which was centered around Stefan Bertalan⁵ was an isolated example dependent on a few determined personalities.

The exception to influences from abroad is to be found in the megalomaniac and destructive projects personally imposed by the "architect", "celestial body" "demiurge", "secular god" "fir tree", "Prince Charming" "genius", "saint" "miracle", "morning star" "navigator" "saviour" "sun" "titan" and "visionary" the "Conducator" or "the leader"⁶ who himself travelled widely and feted as a 'friendly' communist in in the west⁷ and was especially influenced by what he saw in N. Korea to impose on Bucharest's layout on his return (Fig 22). Some argue that the sudden fall of Ceausescu (the only Communist leader to be executed, only four days he was airlifted from the government buildings in Bucharest) was not so much a "revolution" but an internal coup.

f) The fall of Communism

Imagine you wake up one day belonging to another countryalmost everything has changed: the space of experience, the radius of activity, holiday plans, even life plans...people have started to build a new logic for the future through routines of co- existence, of exchange, of everyday life (Nastac, 2011)

⁵ These are shown in a film by Gheorghe Sfaier {5 Jun 2013}
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d4xUjztyDg> (Accessed Feb 2017)

⁶ List of titles ascribed to or assumed by Nicolae Ceausescu, taken from Dennis Deletant (1995), Roper, D. (2000)

⁷ A video of Ceausescu's visit to N Korea is at
<http://visitromania.tv/tv/watch.php?vid=c11357bec>

After a few years of uncertain adjustment and especially after the new Romania joined the EU⁸, in 2007 opened travel and the flow of art and artists to and from not only ‘the west’ but also other former Communist countries. A central agency in this exchange is the *Institutul Cultural Roman* (ICR) which has offices in 18 cities outside Romania and as well as presenting various events around Romanian art and culture offers various residencies to Romanian artists. A recent example is that of Anca Benera who traced and made visible the hidden streams of London (fig 23).

MINORITIES – JEWISH CULTURE, RROMA CULTURE

There are two significant ethnic groups in Romania who are less bound by territorial rootedness and regard pan-European travel as part of their cultural and artistic heritage: the Jewish and the Rroma⁹.

A distinct Eastern European Jewish language and culture united them across Eastern European state boundaries (fig. 24) and so facilitated travel and exchange - Yiddish. The influence of this on art and culture has been traced by Sandqvist (Sandqvist, 2006) in *DADA EAST – The Romanians of Cabaret Voltaire* where he notes the complex international Jewish roots (fig 25) of DADA adds to its international but essentially Romanian roots. Even one of its best-known Romanian founders adopted a name (Tristan) Tzara that means, in Hebrew, one exiled from the community "Tzara'at". In Romanian, it means "sad in the country." A distinctive attitude of DADA was the crossing of borders, and this had a uniquely emancipating role: by suspending traditional social norms, it opened the way to artistic self- realization without borders. DADA dispensed with the questions of origin, religious background, women’s role stereotypes or even formal artistic training. It removed the moral barriers to asking previously inconceivable and provocative questions concerning artistic creation and reception, institutions, society and public taste in general. Dada was a symptom of the decomposition of the old world. Its radical language had an impact even on artists who never called themselves ‘Dadaists’.

What did avant-garde artists use DADA for in East-Central Europe during the 1910s and 1920s? Certainly to commit systematic border incursions. The borders were those between languages, majority and minority identities, politics and anti-politics. (Petőfi Literary Museum - Kassák Museum, 2016)

⁸ Though not the Schengen countries which would facilitate even freer movement

⁹ “Why Rroma with two Rs? Rroma can actually be written with one or two Rs. In some dialects, this is pronounced differently. And originally, this “Rr” was the Sanskrit retroflex D, which phonetically changed into an R. So, with one or two Rs, both are valid options.” <http://rroma.org/en/overview/> (Accessed Feb 2017)

The Roma's origins are in the east and they started to migrate to Europe in the fourteenth century under pressure from Islam. In 1416 Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor, granted them freedom to travel across Europe which gives rise to their nomadic culture. But their 'life without a state' soon cast them as an underworld, segregated from settled peoples and their regular patterns of movement were curtailed in Romania (Ionescu, 2008: 74 and 133-4). They were suppressed under Fascism before WWII which continued under Communism has only recently begun to develop a unique position in the arts. In architecture the building skills learned working abroad have been applied home to build 'palaces' (Andresoiu, B, Coicazanu, A and Bonciocat, S, 2008) (Fig 26). Their music has a strong influence in Romanian dance culture whether and its 'Gypsy' roots are pan-European with bands travelling widely across the EU.

Since 2007 there has been a Roma Pavilion at the Venice Biennale which is a significant recognition and dissemination of the emergence of 'art' from their nomadic patterns. The first Roma Pavilion was in 2007 with 16 artists from 8 countries (Orta, 2010:127-33). By 2011 the Roma Pavillion was well established regular exhibitor, characterised by bright colours and informal shapes and patterns¹⁰. Additional events and talks and discussions with artists and philosophers explored the situation of the Roma and Roma art as emblematic for the world today, in order to speculate, in solidarity, about more hopeful futures (Call the witness, 2011)

CONCLUSIONS

The approach to art history through seemingly mundane and material themes has been well established in recent years as an important technique—cost and availability of materials, methods of payment, attitudes of commissioners. This essay has explored another: the effects of geography and travel, on art – 'kunstgeographie' as its German title has it (Kaufman, 2004). Applied to a country that has been little studied in English research and situated at the other side of Europe from the UK, land locked (apart from a short Black Sea coast) and with shifting boundaries (rather than an island), and no great tradition of exploration and discovery though strong believers in Romanian culture and history might dispute this¹¹. However, this geocentric approach to art history has demonstrated a distinctive pattern to Romanian art and culture.

¹⁰ Catalogues are on line at:

http://www.bakonline.org/en/Research/Itineraries/CallTheWitness/Call_the_Witness?parent=Who%2FMaria

¹¹ Though strong advocates and believers in Romanian culture and history might dispute this and some artists have been mentioned in this paper. In music and literature there are many that could be cited – the composer Enescu, the playwright Ionesco, the writers Herta Muller and Mircea Cărtărescu.

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Fig1 Paris of the East – in architecture:



Fig 2 The unique architecture and decoration of Romanian Orthodox churches



Fig 3 The Carpathians



Fig 4 The Carpathians as defensive boundary



Source: <http://greatwarproject.org/2015/03/02/wretched-conditions-in-the-carpathians/>

Fig 5 Transylvania or Siebenbuergen?

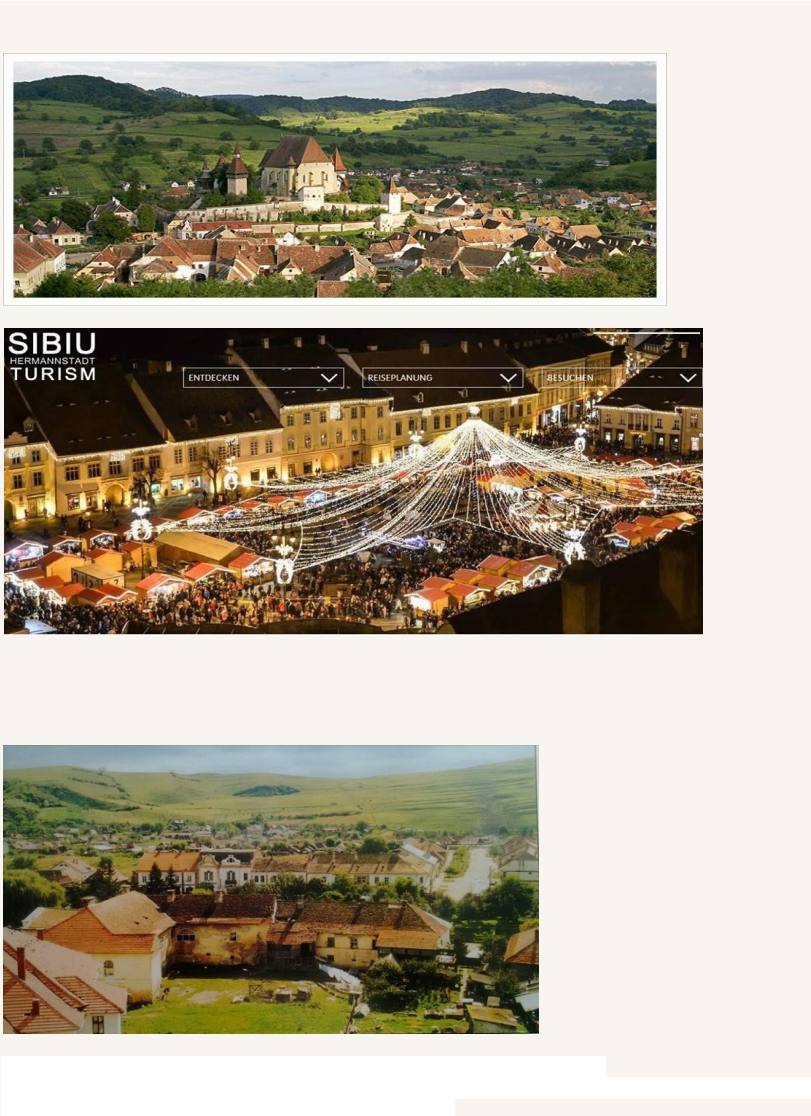


Fig 6 The Iron Gates – wrecks and new road construction in 1966



Wrecks of two Hungarian barges that had snapped their tow going downstream. At this point the bed of the river was broken by large rocks and a rock shelf extending almost the full width.



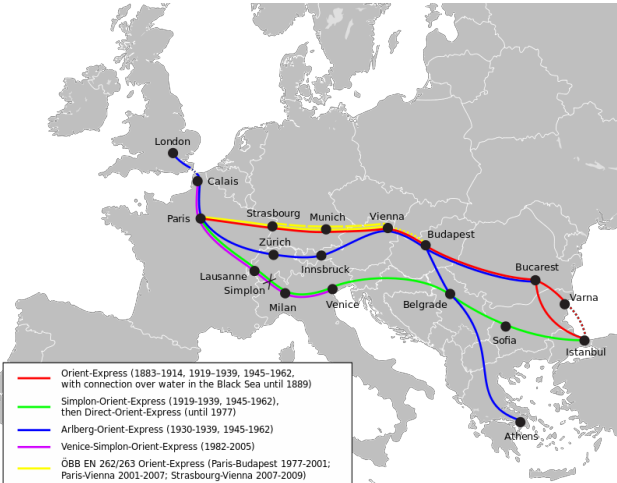
Romanian E 70 between Drobeta Turnu Severin and the New Orsova.)

Fig 7 The Lower Danube: Navigation and traditional architecture



Inland waterway transport can be an environmentally friendly alternative to road or rail transport, and contributes to the decongestion of the overloaded road network in densely populated regions. Can sustainable waterway infrastructure projects create win-win solutions for the environmental needs of the river?

Fig 8 Transcontinental Rail travel



Historic routes of Orient Express — the cross denotes the Simplon tunnel

Source

:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orient_Express (accessed jan 2017)

Fig 9 Post 1989 –a new geography for art and artists



Fig 10 The Dacians



Fig 11 Trajan's Column



<http://www.crystalinks.com/trajanscolumn.html>

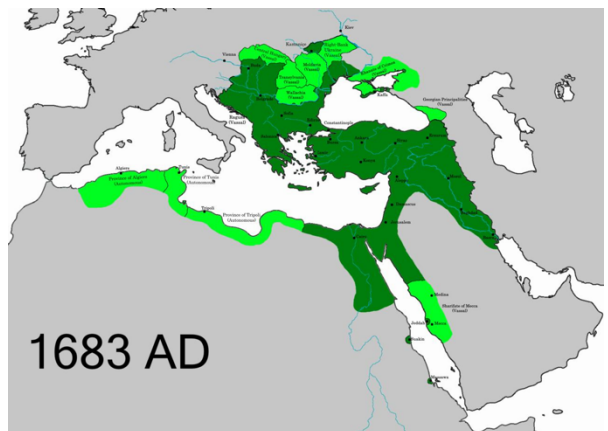


Fig 12 The extent of the Ottoman Empire

Fig 13 The new style of painting Sucevita Monastery, 16th Century.



Fig 14 The polyglot social and architectural landscape

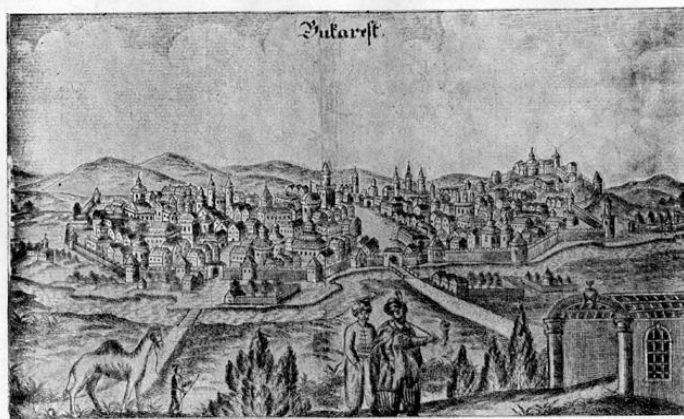


Fig 15 Changing boundaries in Transylvania

16.1 Map of Central Europe in the 9th century before arrival of Hungarians



Fig 16: Romania's territorial losses in the summer of 1940



Fig 17 The Austro-Hungarian Empire: Ethno-linguistic map and religions of Austria-Hungary, 1910



Fig 18 Catholic traditions and imagery in church architecture



Fig 19 Styles for the new Romania



Princely Palace, Iasi ; Singurov , 1841 – 1843 (www.Shutterstock Accessed Feb 2017)



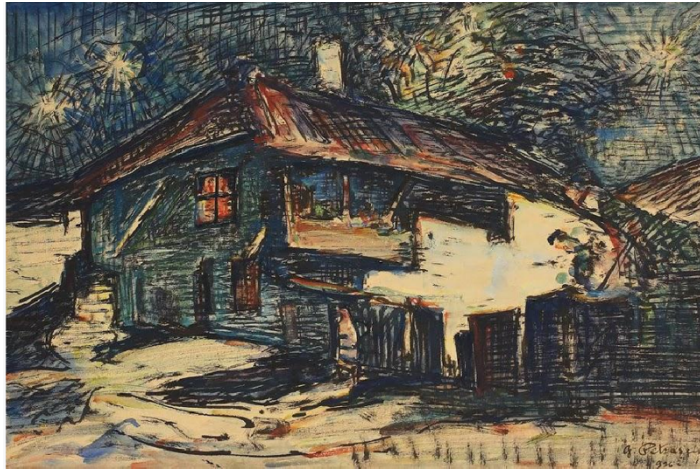
Sutu Palace, Bucharest , Vitiul and Konrad Schwink 1831-

Fig 20 Barbizon comes to Romania



Nicolae Grigorescu: Ion Andreescu at Barbizon. 1879-80

Fig 21 Romanian Impressionism



Gheorghe Petrașcu – Nocturnă (Case la Turtucaia) (Source: <https://g1b2i3.wordpress.com/2009/11/20/galerie-de-pictura-gheorghe-petrascu/> Accessed Feb2017)



Ion Andreescu : Stejarul (the Oak) Source:http://www.wikiwand.com/ro/Ion_Andreescu

Fig 22 Ceausescu-ismus –“Korea for me is everything”



Source : https://twitter.com/e_amyna (accessed Feb 2017)

Fig 23 A Romanian artist rows along London's hidden streams



Source: <https://www.camdenartscentre.org/whats-on/view/anca-benera-residency-exhibition>. (Accessed Feb 2017)

Fig 24 Yiddish dialects of Eastern Europe



The pale of settlement territory where Jews were restricted to permanently live during the Russian empire

Source

<http://kehillalinks.jewishgen.org/golynka/maps/YiddishRegionalMap.png> (accessed Feb 2017)

Fig 25 From Romanian/Jewish masks to Dada



Fig 26 Kastello – Palate ale Rromilor din Romania



Source <http://www.bzi.ro/public/upload/photos/52/Palat4.jpg> Accessed Feb 2017

Fig 27 Rroma Art Pavillion – Preview in Bucharest



THE SYMBOLISM OF THE MOUNTAIN IN THE MODERN ROMANIAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

In the modern Romanian philosophy, mountains are relevant for the Romanian identity only indirectly, in relation to undulating movements, permeable borders, seeking refuge from history and living in an intimate relation with the environment. 1. *Undulation*: Lucian Blaga and Dan Botta assigned an undulating movement to the Romanian mental geography; even before them, Vasile Conta's ontology was based upon a universal wavy pattern. Blaga recalls in this respect the beginning of the pastoral ballad *Miorița*, which the German translation places in a mountainous landscape. However, a closer look at the ballad and Blaga's own interpretation emphasise that its rolling landscape is rather hilly than mountainy. 2. *Isolation and archaism*: The isolation in the mountains enabled the survival of archaic cultures not only in the Carpathians (Mircea Eliade). In particular the aforementioned *Miorița* would suggest a 'cosmic Christianity' and a particular attitude to destiny, which Eliade considers to be typical for the Romanians. 3. *Circulation over borders*: Nevertheless, the physical geography of the Carpathians did not impede the circulation of people, animals and ideas. Classical in this respect is the legend about the foundation of the principality of Moldavia, which emphasizes the continuity between a hunting culture and a pastoral one (Eliade). 4. *Refuge and retreat*: Also Romanian intellectuals (Constantin Stere, Liviu Rebreanu) currently associated the Carpathians with a safe refuge from invaders and repression, from the eve of the Middle Age until the anti-communist resistance. The crossing of the mountains, that had been the previous response to political or religious persecutions, lost its meaning after 1918. Finally, like in other cultures, the mountain is a suitable place for the *quest for wisdom or holiness* (Nicolae Steinhardt, Constantin Noica, Rafail Noica).

KEYWORDS

symbolic geography, Carpathians, identity, Romanian philosophy, undulation

Romanian schoolbooks describe the country as being situated between the Carpathians, the Danube and the Black Sea ('țară carpatică, dunăreană, pontică și central-europeană') and use to compare the Romanian Carpathians with an arc or amphitheatre (Popescu, 2006: 3). Already the metaphor of the amphitheatre suggests the relation between the physical geography and its population, which is supposed not to be separated by mountains, but enclosed by them into a community. Geographical forms are thus interpreted and conveyed convenient meanings. In particular, the imaginary of the Carpathians expresses the Romanians' self-perception and is essential for a symbolic geography, which cannot be superposed exactly over the physical one¹. In the following I will argue mostly on examples from modern Romanian philosophy that mountains are related by Romanians to undulating movements, to permeable borders, to the regressing movement that seeks refuge from history and to a life led in symbiosis with the natural environment.

UNDULATION. WAVES AND MOUNTAINS

In 1936 Lucian Blaga published the book *Spațiul mioritic* in which – under the influence of C. G. Jung and of the morphology of culture, mainly Leo Frobenius' and Spengler's –, he ascribed to cultures specific styles that reproduce configurations of a collective unconscious matrix. This matrix is at its turn made up of several categories, the first of them being the 'spatial horizon.' In particular, the mental geography of the Romanian culture (mainly folklore) is pervaded by an undulating movement Blaga called 'the mioritical space.' This unconscious spatial horizon of the Romanians was paradigmatically found by him at the beginning of *Miorița*, the pastoral ballad that was collected in the 19th century and was declared in the interwar period one of founding myths of the Romanian culture. Comparing a few translations of the first verses, it appears that the German and the Portuguese translators placed the narrative in a mountainous landscape:

Pe-un picior de plai,
Pe-o gură de rai,
Iată vin în cale,
Se cobor la vale,
Trei turme de miei,
Cu trei ciobănei.

In einer Bergesschlucht,
in einer Himmelsbucht,
siehe, den Weg dahin,

¹ In Romania there are also other mountains than the Carpathians (the Dobrușcha mountains), which however are not invested with symbols of identity, and the metaphor of the Carpathians as an amphitheater corresponds *sensu stricto* only to Transylvania.

siehe, zu Tale ziehn
drei Herden Schafe klein
mit ihren Hirten drei'n.²

(German translation by Alfred Margul-Sperber, 1968, quoted by Eliade, 1990: 238).³

However, a closer look at the Romanian text of the ballad and Blaga's own interpretation emphasize that this alternation between peak and valley, high and low, is somewhat soft, that is, rather hilly than mountainy, being likely to correspond to the Subcarpathian landscape Blaga had spent his childhood in. The strictly mountainy relief is more appropriate to the 'Alpine,' which however Blaga associates with the Gothic style and interprets as the expression of the individual's will to conquer the heaven. The repetition in Blaga's philosophy of culture of the same wavy, up-and-down pattern in relation to the feeling of destiny suggests that the 'mioritical' dynamics is basically an undulation.

Blaga's theory of the 'mioritical space' corresponded at that time to the identity quest of Romanians after 1918 and thus it was soon adopted by traditionalist intellectuals; also the idea remained unquestioned after 1965 and it still represents one major pillars of the Romanians' self-understanding. Its success in the 1930s was not even affected by Dan Botta's accusation in the journal *Gândirea* that Blaga had tacitly took over the idea of an undulating movement from Botta's essay "Undulation and death"⁴. Botta himself described the Romanian culture as a synthesis between a harmonic-static orphic element and a vital-dynamic Dionysian one. Together they create the vision of a 'living cosmos' and of 'an undulating world' Botta ascribed to a Thracian heritage⁵. At the same time, Vasile Băncilă, to whom Blaga had dedicated *The mioritical space*, put into perspective the generalisation of the wavy pattern for the whole Romanian culture, yet without inquiring Blaga's own method or its underlying essentialism. Băncilă called for a Romanian philosophy that would be inspired by ethnopsychology and drew the program of a future autochthonous culture (Băncilă 2009: 205 sq.). However, he was born in the plain of the Bărăgan and followed almost obsessively between the 1930s and 1970s his project on a mental geography of the Bărăgan. Băncilă compared this plain with the desert, the steppe and the prairie, and regarded it as an infinite, mysterious, comforting

² On the contrary, Jules Michelet preferred in 1854 to translate 'plai' with 'cols fleuris' (quoted by Eliade, 1990: 236), and William Snodgrass opted in 1972 for 'low foothill' (*The little eve*).

³ See also the begin of the Portuguese translation: 'No sopé da montanha, / Qué no Céu entranha' (*Miorița*, Portuguese).

⁴ On the polemical exchange in the press between Botta and Blaga, see Botta 1941 and Botta, 1995: 289-337.

⁵ Botta, 'Frumosul românesc', in Botta, 1995: 28-34, here 34. See also 'Unduire și moarte', *ibid.*: 35-43.

space, the dweller of which is ‘deeper, more mystical, more ontological, but somehow linear’ (*ibid.*: 126; my transl., M.D.). Also in a letter from 1971 he described the experience of Bărgan as a simultaneous presence of contrasting categories: finite and infinite, local and ubiquitous, free and determined, centripetal and centrifugal, immobile and elementary, geometrical and diffuse, identical without being monotonous, fragile and reassuring, quiet and musical, one and multiple, etc. (Băncilă, Letter to Constantin Georgiade, 8 Dec. 1971, *ibid.*: 332-335).

The contemporaneity of the aforementioned intellectuals may nurture hypotheses regarding alleged or explicit genealogies of topics; however, it does not suffice to explain also why the idea of a universal wavy pattern reappeared periodically in the Romanian philosophy, even in different contexts and with various philosophical backgrounds. Such examples are provided by Vasile Conta’s *Theory of universal undulation* (1876-1877) and Vasile Pârvan’s *Historical ideas and forms* (1920). For Pârvan, the cosmos undergoes a permanent undulatory movement between rationality and intuition, determinism and freedom, and historical phenomena are interwoven into a universal rhythmicity⁶. Unlike Conta’s materialist ontology, Pârvan’s philosophy of history is based on the assumption of a duality between the passive matter and the spirit; the latter is subject to rhythmical evolution and “teaches” the matter how to structure and organise itself into patterns of rhythmical harmony. Scholars describe Pârvan’s ontological and cosmological system as a version of spiritualism and a ‘relatively coherent’ conception, even if the spirit eventually represents only a hypostasis of material-energetic forces (Zub, 2005: 196). Whether it is formal, primarily spatial and thus imaginable, like Blaga’s weaving space, or subject to metaphysical speculations regarding the evolution of the universe and history, undulation reappears with a certain regularity in the intellectual history of Romania. However, it would imply a mere speculation to use this possibly only coincidence in order to develop the leitmotif of undulation into a specific feature of an alleged Romanian soul or mind – and thus regress to an essentialist view of culture.

2. ISOLATION AND ARCHAISM

The ideologue of Poporanism, Constantin Stere, resumed the history of the Romanians as the tragedy of a people that was for centuries isolated within his mountains from the rest of the mankind (Stere, 2005: 267). From an ethnological perspective, it is well-known that the cultures of mountainous regions are in general more conservative than settlements situated in the plain, on the border of navigable waters or at the intersection of commercial routes.

⁶ ‘Fenomenele istorice sînt o parte integrantă din ritmica universală. Aceleași legi cosmice determină viața umană și cea extraumană, pe pămînt, ca și viața lumilor nesfîrșite, în Univers.’ (Pârvan, 1920: 49)

According to Mircea Eliade, the isolation in the mountains enabled the survival of archaic cultures, including in the Carpathians; in particular the same aforementioned pastoral ballad *Miorița* would suggest a specific Romanian attitude to destiny and a ‘cosmic Christianity’ (‘Das weissagende Lämmchen’, in Eliade, 1990: 235-267, esp. 262). The text of the ballad describes at length the transfiguration of a common murder into a cosmic wedding, with the stars, the forest and animals among the celebrants and the ‘mountains high’ as priests⁷. During the interwar period several intellectuals praised this symbiosis between humans and their environment, as it was reflected in the popular culture, but some of them put it down to pre-Christian (mainly Dacian) traditions, like Eliade himself and Mircea Vulcănescu, whereas others, such as Ovidiu Papadima, anchored it in a popular Christian vision of the world (Papadima, 1995). In spring 1941, Vulcănescu, at that time member of the Antonescu government, initiated a series of conferences on the Dacians. In his own lecture on ‘The Dacian temptation’, he contrasted the pastoral and mountainous element, which would descend from the Dacians, with the psychology of the peasant in the plain, which would have rather a Slavic origin (Vulcănescu, 2005). Even if – according to Vulcănescu – the Romanian ‘spiritual being’ would consist of both, the lecturer prompted the audience to rediscover mainly the ethos of the mountains, which he associated with military virtues such as courage, strength, and spirit of sacrifice, but implied also fraternisation with the forest and attunement to celestial harmony. At the end of his lecture, Vulcănescu called for sending the youth in the mountains not only for archeologic research on the Dacians, but also ‘in order to convey it a mountainous soul’ (*ibid.*: 972). A month later Romania entered the World War II.

3. CIRCULATION OVER BORDERS

The same ballad *Miorița*, which circulated in several versions in all regions of Romania, brings evidence also for the transhumance, a phenomenon implying that the geography of the Carpathians did not impede the circulation of people, animals or ideas. Classical in this respect is the legend about the foundation of the principality of Moldavia by a landlord who came from Maramureș, on the other slope of the Oriental Carpathians, which according to Mircea Eliade emphasises the continuity between a hunting culture and a pastoral one (‘Fürst Dragoș und die “rituelle Jagd”’, in Eliade, 1990: 139-170). Also legends put down the founding of the principality of Wallachia to a prince who crossed the mountains coming from Transylvania. The circulation between the medieval

⁷ ‘I have gone to marry/A princess – my bride/Is the whole world’s pride./ At my wedding, tell / How a bright star fell, / Sun and moon came down / To hold my bridal crown, / Firs and maple trees / Were my guests; my priests / Were the mountains high; / Fiddlers, birds that fly, / All birds of the sky; Torchlights, stars on high.’ (*The little ewe*).

countries populated by Romanians is of major importance for the Romanian modern historiography in its endeavour to argue the unity of the Romanian culture and nation. This exchange over the Carpathians included in the Middle Age territorial possessions over the mountains (e.g. in the south of Transylvania during Mircea cel Bătrîn) and punitive expeditions (of Hungarian princes of Transylvania in Moldavia in the 15th century). The contacts over the state border of the Carpathians increased throughout the 19th century: Transylvanian intellectuals first contributed to the founding of the superior education in Moldavia and Wallachia before and after 1848 and were then attracted by the academic opportunities offered by the independent Kingdom of Romania. The crossing of the Carpathians was for a long time the response to political and religious persecutions; in addition to this, in the 19th century this gesture was interpreted by Romanians as a preparation for the political unity, the direction of Romanian migration being overwhelmingly from the provinces ruled by other states to the Romanian Kingdom. The situation changed somehow in the new political context after 1918, yet the mountains continued to serve for retreat in unpropitious historical situations.

4. REFUGE AND RETREAT

Since Miron Costin in the 17th century, Romanians complain about their unfavourable geo-strategical position at the crossing of migration waves and between states that practised an expansionist politics. Later on, in the 19th and 20th century, this idea served to justify the drawback of the Romanian principalities in comparison to the Western European countries. The same discourse was stressing the importance of the Carpathian Mountains throughout the history as a safe refuge from invaders, in particular during the Migration Period, and developed into a stereotype of Romanian self-understanding, starting with Nicolae Bălcescu, who at the middle of the 19th century explained the maintaining of the ‚nationality and independence’ through the retreat in the Carpathians.⁸ A century later, Mircea Eliade assigned an essential role to the mountains in the Romanian ethno-genesis in his compendium of Romanian history: ‘Mountains and forests have enormously contributed to guarantee the Dacian-Roman continuity in Dacia. At those times, one could cross the whole country, from the Carpathians to the Black Sea, without even leaving the forest.’ (Eliade, 1992: 11; my transl., M.D.)⁹

⁸ Here is the full quotation: ‚Așezată la porțile împărăției și în trecătoarea barbarilor, Dacia noastră mai mult de opt secolii îi văzu trecând și retrecând pe pământul său. Colonii romani din această țară nu pregetară a apăra cu bărbăție țara lor și chiar împărăția ce îi părăsise. Și când se văzură copleșiți de numărul dușmanilor, ei se traseră în Munții Carpați, unde își păstrară naționalitatea și independința lor.’ (Bălcescu, 1986: 13)

⁹ The symbolism of the forest itself in the Romanian culture would deserve a special investigation. See Eliade further on: ‘Despre influența pădurii în viața poporului român s-ar

Also in May 1940, on the occasion of being elected as a member of the Romanian Academy, Liviu Rebreanu praised the Romanian peasant who had survived the barbarian invasions by fleeing temporarily with his entire family and animals into the forest and in the mountains. At that time these 'were still providing enough secure refuges for the autochthonous population who wished to remain neutral' (Rebreanu, 1993: 117; my transl., M.D.). In the mountains sought refuge also the Romanians who after 1947 were persecuted by the communist authorities, like Nichifor Crainic, and in the same mountains small groups organised an armed anti-communist resistance till the middle of the 1950s.

In other contexts, the mountains attract in all cultures individuals who seek for *wisdom or holiness*. Traditionally, religious hermitages are situated in wild and inaccessible places; in addition to this, Păltiniș and Rohia in the Carpathians hosted since the 1970s the so-called 'resistance through culture'. Păltiniș, near to Sibiu, is not only the second highest mountain resort in Romania, but also the place where Constantin Noica found retreat after his retirement. After Gabriel Liiceanu, one of Noica's disciples, published 'The Diary from Păltiniș', this name was transferred to a group of scholars who form a prestige group and after 1990 are most influential among conservative intellectuals. As for Rohia in Maramureș, in its monastery found reclusion Nicolae Steinhardt after 1980, after having discovered its peace grace to his friends Constantin Noica and Iordan Chimet. Both Păltiniș and Rohia served to withdrawal and intellectual work, and became destinations of cultural pilgrimage for those who were looking for an alternative to the official ideology.

The revival of spirituality after 1990 enhanced this use of mountains as places of retreat, this time for hermits, one of them being Constantin Noica's own son, Rafail Noica, who had left Romania as a child, lived as a monk in an Orthodox monastery in England and – after returning to Romania in 1994 – secluded himself from the world as a hermit in the Apuseni Mountains. At the same time, in the 1990s esoteric legends were launched regarding the sacredness of some mountain peaks, such as Ceahlău or Omu, considered as the *omphalos* of the entire world, and pseudo-historic legends proliferated about subterraneous tunnels that would perforate the Carpathians since the Dacians. It is not the place to analyse the reasons for the success of these myths in the media, in the context of a renewed identity crisis and of a general social anomy. From the point of view of the history of ideas it is more important to underscore that such myths enjoy a certain tradition in Romania. To mention only an example, the ethnographer Romulus Vulcănescu had emphasized in 1985, during a politically supported rediscovery of the pre-Roman roots of Romanians, that

putea scrie multe volume' (Eliade, 1992: 11), as well as Constantin C. Giurescu's *Istoria pădurii românești* (1976).

some mountains were considered sacred by the Dacians (Vulcănescu, 1985: 113 sq.). Besides, the symbolism of the mountain as *axis mundi* is well-known in several traditional cultures.

An interesting enrichment of the symbolism of the mountains in Romania, if not the very ‘modern turn’ of this symbolism, is more recently linked to the civic movement that opposed the exploitation of Roșia Montană, in the Western Carpathians, by a Canadian consortium. In the new economic context, mountains achieved (or retrieved?) the meaning of a natural resource that ought not to be privatized, let alone to be sold to foreign investors. The case Roșia Montană was not only thoroughly documented by Romanian journalists (e.g. Goțiu, 2013), but also drew the attention of international media and anti-globalisation public intellectuals. In their confrontation, both supporters and enemies of the exploitation project made use of the power of imaginary symbols in their rhetoric: While the investors focused on the gold as sign of wealth, the protesters emphasised the richness of local traditions, from the popular culture to the local miners’ resistance to other foreign investments in the past. The movement did not even shy away from ironically reinterpreting the *Miorita* itself, as when Tudor Barbu published in the journal *Dilema veche* (nr. 686, 13-19 April 2017) a cartoon of the ‘little ewe’ recommending the shepherd to ‘resist’ instead of resigning (Barbu, 2017). The public debate around Roșia Montană made clear that the famous ‘boycott of the history’ by the Romanians (Blaga, 1944: 301) is not possible anymore when the place of refuge itself is being assaulted, and that the stereotype of living in harmony with the environment has to be adapted to our times.

To conclude, in general the mountains have in Romania the same symbolic connotations as in other cultures, with peculiarities that concern their topology (more or less in the centre of the country) and the history of the Romanians, given that the Carpathians marked an interstate border before 1918.

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A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE ROMANIAN SEMIOTICS IN THE LAST 100 YEARS

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ABSTRACT

Inspired from the 2018 Romanian Centenary, this paper focuses on some tendencies in the development of Romanian semiotics in the past 100 years as they were reflected in the work of three important names of our culture: Emanuel Vasiliu, Eugeniu Coșeriu and Solomon Marcus. This idea also appeared as an answer to the necessity of giving the Portuguese students an accessible and, at the same time, a fairly wide perspective on the history of semiotic ideas in the Romanian context. Consequently, following Emanuel Vasiliu, the main key concepts in the semiotics of the 20th century are revisited. Then, with Eugen Coșeriu, the linguistic analysis is conceived as a model of investigating other non-linguistic signs as well; additionally, the concept of linguistic relativity is discussed starting from the idea that languages, by means of their own signification systems, represent a specific and particular configuration of reality, thus impacting translation and translation studies in a particular way. Last but not least, with Solomon Marcus mathematics becomes the catalyst between linguistics and other fields of knowledge, and the mathematical instruments prove to be very useful in analysing various aspects of human communication (e.g. the analysis of the smile as an act of social communication).

KEYWORDS

semiotics, linguistic sign, symbol, linguistic relativity, mathematical semiotics, transdisciplinary approach

1. INTRODUCTION

The title above was inspired by the whole dynamics and enthusiasm that dominated 2018, the year in which Romania celebrated its 100th year of existence as a unitary modern state. It was precisely in 1918 when the *Great Romania* came into being encompassing all the historical Romanian regions. Almost every public event that took place last year was placed under the sign of the Romanian Centenary. This is why a short presentation and discussion of the main ideas that have dominated the Romanian semiotics in the past 100 years was thought to be appropriate. In my capacity as a lecturer of Romanian in Portugal, it is my duty to promote Romanian culture and language abroad; consequently, the present article was also thought of as a useful instrument to disseminate, to my fellow colleagues and students, information about how linguistics (and, in this particular case, semiotics) developed in Romania. There has been felt a lack of knowledge about Romanian linguistics in the Portuguese academic environment, and this article is only one attempt to narrow this gap and bring the two academic worlds closer.

The practice of interpreting signs is as old as the history of humanity itself since the human being has been permanently subject to perceptions that needed to be interpreted and communicated to others. However, semiotics as an autonomous field is not as old at least in Europe; actually, it started with the name of Ferdinand de Saussure in the beginning of the 20th century.

The Romanian semiotics closely followed the theories that dominated the 20th century semiotics. A series of previous studies referred to and informatively approached this issue (Golopenția-Eretescu, 1986 and Neț, 1986 among others). Given the limitations of the present study, I have chosen to focus only on the contributions of three 20th century representative figures: Emanuel Vasiliu, one of the reference names in Romanian linguistics, unfortunately little known abroad, Eugen Coșeriu, maybe the best known Romanian linguist abroad, and Solomon Marcus, first a mathematician, and then a linguist. All three of them were born in the second decade of the past century, and their contributions were in line with the great changes brought about in the 20th century linguistics and linguistic studies.

2. ROMANIAN CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF SEMIOTICS

2.1. Emanuel Vasiliu's view on semiotics

Emanuel Vasiliu (1929 – 2001), who is one of the most important 20th century Romanian linguists, introduced the generative-transformational approach in the Romanian linguistics, following Chomski's work *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. His joint work with Sanda Golopenția-Eretescu, *The Transformational Syntax of Romanian*, is the first approach of this type to Romanian Syntax. He also published various books in the field of semantics, among which: *Outline of a*

semantic theory of kernel sentences or *Sense, analytic truth, knowledge*. He was very much interested in unveiling bridges between linguistics and logic. An explicit link between linguistics and semiotics is established in *Elements of language philosophy*, his last book on theoretical and philosophical aspects of language.

In *Introduction to the Theory of Language*, Professor Emanuel Vasiliu makes a systematic and critical presentation of the fundamental concepts that defined the changes in the linguistic thinking paradigm under the influence of Saussure's *Course on General Linguistics*. He discusses at large the concept of *sign* as an object that, irrespective of its nature, "represents" a certain state or a certain object. Vasiliu lists the three essential conditions that a sign must meet: 1. there is a constant relation between the sign and the reality it designates; 2. the relation is familiar to the person who perceives the sign; and 3. there must be somebody to use the sign and somebody to interpret it, hence implying that the sign does not exist outside a group of individuals.

By the famous example of the traffic lights, Emanuel Vasiliu makes it clear that people take account of the reality that surrounds them either directly or indirectly. For instance, it is a direct *taking-account-of* when someone has to cross the street and there are no traffic lights: first, he/she must observe the traffic to make sure that there is no danger of getting hit by a car and only then can he/she start crossing the street. When there are traffic lights in place, what people need to do is observe the colours and start crossing the street only when the green light pops up. This is an example of the *indirect taking-account-of* reality. To avoid danger, they need to be aware of the color-coding signals.

In the example above, the traffic lights act as a sign: red means "stop", green means "proceed" and orange, "prepare to stop". If this relation changed and had no constant meaning, the people would be in danger. There is no natural relation between colours and what they mean, we know them by a convention that the whole community is aware of.

The process by which something functions as a sign is called *semiosis* in Emanuel Vasiliu's theory and the general theory of signs, *semiotics*¹ or *semiology*². He adds that the *semiosis* process may be investigated from three points of view: i) the relation between signs and their interpreters (*pragmatics*); ii) the relation between signs and the objects they refer to (*semantics*); iii) the relation between the signs (*syntax*).

As far as linguistics is concerned, Emanuel Vasiliu states that the lexical unities of a language/the words are nothing else but signs, and the speaking process is actually a *semiosis* process that falls under the incidence of semiotics. The

¹ The terms *semiosis* and *semiotics* were coined by Charles Morris.

² *Semiology*, a synonym for *semiotics*, is Ferdinand de Saussure's term. However, *semiotics* was the name that has become the standard term throughout the time.

investigation takes place at the already mentioned levels (pragmatic, semantic and syntactic), which traditionally belong to linguistics. Hence, linguistics is not only a subfield of semiotics, but also the most elaborated of all its subfields. He advertises the idea of identifying a “unifying principle” in the conceptual diversity that characterises the field of linguistics and claims that the general theory of signs may act as the long-time looked-for “unifying principle”. Consequently, one of Emanuel Vasiliu’s greatest contribution is looking at languages as “particular cases” of “sign systems”, which reconfigured the way in which the linguistics field was conceived.

The relation between linguistics and semiotics is better explained in his last book, *Elements of language philosophy*, in which he focuses on the relationship between language and the universe in which language functions as a semiotic system. He underlines the fact that, first of all, it is the language users, who are also part of this universe, that establish this relationship. Secondly, this relationship is possible due to the very nature of the elements that form the language, i.e., the signs that are employed by their users. E. Vasiliu reinforces the double nature of a sign: first, it is an object in itself, like any other object that exists in nature, and the users perceive it as such; second, its particularity consists in its function of signifying the objects of the surrounding world. This is why, in the *semiosis* process, the agents/the users of a language take account of reality indirectly, by means of double-natured signs.

2.2. Eugen Coșeriu’s view on semiotics

The second name that left an important mark on the 20th century linguistics is Eugeniu Coșeriu, a Romanian linguist in exile³, who was born in Bălți⁴ in 1929. He is the founder of the first linguistic school in South America (Montevideo/Uruguay) and of the linguistic school in Tübingen, Germany, where he remained until the end of his life. He is one of the most important linguists of the 20th century, whose name is present in the prestigious Oxford’s *Encyclopedia of Semiotics* (edited by Paul Bouissac, 1998), a fundamental reference book that looks at semiotics as “a credible blueprint for bridging the gaps between disciplines and across cultures”, “one of the main attempts – perhaps the most enduring one – at conceiving a transdisciplinary framework through which interfaces can be constructed between distinct domains of inquiry” (Bouissac, 1998: ix).

His work is impressive and comprises more than 50 volumes and thousands of pages of exegesis; he is the author of new theorises on philological fundamental

³ He did his studies in Iași, then he left Romania in 1940 for Italy, where he worked as translator and art critic and also did his PhD studies (he wrote a thesis in philosophy and another one in Romance philology).

⁴ A city that nowadays is situated in the Republic of Moldova, but which, at that time, belonged to Romania.

principles, and he made a huge contribution to improving the methodology of linguistic disciplines. There are only a few of his books published in Romanian, most of them being published in Italian, Spanish, French, German etc. However, according to his own words, he used to write poetry in Romanian, prose in Italian, and linguistic studies in Spanish, French and German.

Eugen Coșeriu advertises the same idea of linguistics being a subfield of semiotics, as Emanuel Vasiliu does. He insists on the special character of linguistics as a semiotic system, adding that we should reflect more on Hjelmslev's thesis according to which the language is the semiotic system in which all the other semiotics can be transposed, but which cannot be fully transposed in any other semiotics. Another idea that Eugen Coșeriu borrows from Hjelmslev is that language and the linguistic sign serve as models for all the other semiotic systems.

As far as the definition of the sign is concerned, Eugen Coșeriu makes the difference between a simple indication and a sign, saying that, for instance, clouds indicate that it may rain, but they were not produced intentionally to mean rain, so they are not real signs. In the area of interpretation, in various fields of science, these indications play an important role, but they are not signs because a sign implies double intentionality: a productive one, of the one who produces the sign, and a "non-productive" one, of the one who is available to perceive the sign and to interpret it. Consequently, clouds are not signs, because there is no intention in producing them, but the person who perceives them has the intention to interpret them as possible rain.

Regarding the linguistic sign (normally considered to be a word), Coșeriu states that there are three types of content: *designation* (activity of referring to something that is extralinguistic), *meaning* (the content that is given in a particular language, e.g. Romanian, German, Portuguese etc.) and *sense* (the content expressed in a particular text, discourse).

For example, the verbs *a veni* in Romanian and *vir* in Portuguese⁵ (en. *to come*) refer to the same extralinguistic situation: "somebody comes in". Their *meaning*, however, is somehow different in the two languages and they cannot replace each other in any situation because in Romanian *a veni* is "to move into the direction where the first and the second person are or can be", whereas in Portuguese is "to move into the direction of the first person only". Consequently, a perfectly correct sentence in Romanian like "Vin mâine să te văd" cannot be translated into Portuguese as "Venho amanhã para te ver"; the verb *vir* has to be replaced by *ir* ("Vou amanhã para te ver"), whose equivalent in Romanian is *a merge*.

⁵ Eugen Coșeriu compares the Spanish verb *vir* to its Italian counterpart *venire*; however, for the purpose of this study, a comparison between Romanian and Portuguese (the situation is comparable) was thought to be more appropriate.

Eugen Coșeriu insists on the idea that the big difference between linguistic signs and other types of signs is the fact that the natural language starts from meanings, whereas the other systems of signs start from things. The natural language is not a designation system, it is a signification system, this is why the world created through language is not only a world of concrete things, it is also a world of possibilities. It is worth mentioning here Coșeriu's ten theses about the essence of language and signification⁶ (2016b: 529 - 532):

1. Coșeriu declares *the absolute priority of language*, which he considers, following Hegel, to be one of the two dimensions of the human existence (the other one is *work*). The human being is the only being that works and speaks: through *work*, the physical world is created; through *language*, a spiritual, full of possibilities world is imagined.

2. *Language and culture*: the language is a creative activity and, hence, an ongoing cultural activity.

3. *The language universals*: there are five language universals: *creativity*, *semanticity* and *alterity*, which are fundamental/primary universals, and *historicity* and *materiality*, derived/secondary universals. Coșeriu explains this division as follows: the language *creates meanings* that are intended to *the other*. The implied creative activity takes place under the form of individual languages that characterise a certain *historical* community that also determines that specific language's *material* signifiers.

4. *Communication and community*: from the point of view of the community, the language is much more than a social product (comparable with other social institutions); it is, due to the *alterity* universal principle, fundamental to any human association.

5. *To name and to say* are the two essential functions of the language, loosely corresponding to the distinction between *lexis* and *grammar*; whereas the former (i.e. designation) is completely language, the latter (i.e. saying) is, besides the semantic modality of expressing the intended relations, science, practical activity, art etc.

6. *Saying* encompasses *designation* (i.e., the reference to extralinguistic objects, states, phenomena), *signification* (i.e., the objective possibility of designation through linguistic signs) and *sense* (i.e., the result of any discourse expressed through the *signified* and the *designation* in a given *context*).

⁶ The ten theses shortly presented here are a tentative summary of Coșeriu's text "Dix thèses à propos de l'essence du langage de du signifié", sent to the International Colloquium "Perception du Monde et Perception du Langage", Strasbourg, 7 – 10 October 1999, translated into Romanian ("Zece teze despre esența limbajului și a semnificației") and published in *Mic tratat de teorie a limbii și lingvistică generală* (2016b: 529 - 532).

7. **Language and poetry:** the language means *signification* which is produced by a subject endowed with alterity, whereas poetry is the work of art of an absolute subject. However, the poetic language is language in its functional plenitude.

8. **Signification and existence:** the signification of a name is always universal since it does not name well-identified *entities*, but the infinite possibility of their *existence*.

9. **Signification, truth, existence:** the signification (and, consequently, the language) is neither false, nor true; it comes before the distinction between truth and false because it represents a virtual possibility of existence (hence, the *deictic character* of the language). Only the *sense* (i.e. saying) can be true or false.

10. **Language and things:** the language does not create *the entities*, but their *existence* (e.g. the language does not create the trees, but the idea of *being a tree* in opposition to other plants or other species). Hence, the language leads us to an ordered world of things allowing us to recognize *entities* that belong to some *existence* patterns previously established through language, and also empowering us to operate new categorizations in the world of things.

Leaving the language seen as a *signification* system (i.e. *langage*) and moving now to the concept of natural language (i.e. *langue*), Coşeriu (again following Hegel) makes it very clear that no language is translatable into another because each and every language represents a particular configuration of the world. That means that we cannot transpose the meanings of a language into another language, what we actually do is designate the same things, the same “way of saying” thorough various meanings/significations into various languages.

In other words, we do not translate languages, but what is said by those languages; we do not translate what a specific language says, but what has been said in that particular language, so we do not translate meanings, but what has been designated by those meanings. Meanings are an instrument and not an object of translation. There is no direct transposition from the meanings of the source-language into the meanings of the target-language; the process obligatorily goes through the extra-linguistic *designatum*. Translation, from this point of view, is first “de-composition” through language, and then “re-composition” through language. All these being said, Eugen Coşeriu refers to the rapport between translation and contrastive linguistics by saying that the former could be a continuous source for contrastive linguistics studies, and could result in a “translation grammar” and “translation dictionary” (Coşeriu, 2016c: 1127).

2.3. Solomon Marcu’s view on mathematical semiotics

Solomon Marcus (born in 1925), the oldest of the three prominent figures who outlived the other two (he passed away in 2016), has somehow a different scientific background and profile, starting as a mathematician and then

developing linguistic studies among other many research interests. For him, mathematics was pure culture and, consequently, he was against the way mathematics is nowadays taught in school considering that it prevents children from grasping its poetical side. Among his many books, it is worth mentioning *The Poetics of Mathematics*, *Introduction to Mathematical Linguistics*, *The Semiotics of Folklore. A linguistic and mathematic approach*, *The Mathematical Semiotics of Visual Arts* etc.

What is remarkable in his case is his universalist and highly encyclopaedic profile, his impressive capacity to look at things and concepts from an integrative point of view and organise knowledge in well-defined and coherent paradigms. His 2011 huge book, *Paradigme universale* (en. *Universal Paradigms*), which integrates five of his previously published books, accounts for Solomon Marcus' impressive capacity to spot the general lines behind the concrete aspects of the world in all its manifestations.

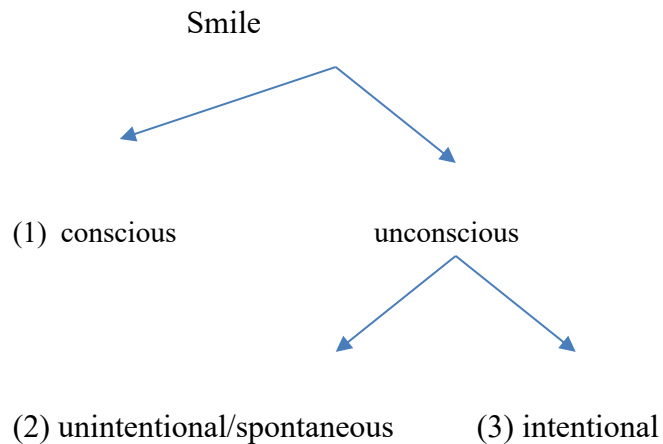
As far as semiotics is concerned, the author integrates it into a larger picture and presents it as an alternative perspective of analysing symbols, that may complement and better inform the hermeneutic perspective. Unlike Eugen Coşeriu, who argues the distinction between a simple indication and a sign, Solomon Marcus goes even further and, from an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective, discriminates between symbols and signs. He states that “the symbol implies the homogeneity of the signifier and the signified, in the sense of an organizing dynamism, whereas the sign is based on an arbitrary convention” (Marcus, 2011d: 203). In another study, entitled *The Indicators*, he analyses the social indicators in particular and shows their signification content as signs (e.g. the numbers that reflect the population's health state or the crime rate signify the people's degree of satisfaction) and also their symbolic force (e.g. by repetition, words such as *strike*, *unemployment*, *terrorism*, *pollution*, *nuclear accident*, *famine*, *violence* etc. become symbols meant to draw people's attention to the major dangers that exist in nowadays' society) (Marcus, 2011f: 229). Marcus draws the conclusion that social life is a sign trade in general, and a symbolic sign trade in particular.

Solomon Marcus was interested in all forms of communication and all types of semiotics, e.g. he identifies and describes the autoreferential semiotics of mathematical machines, and he claims that “a machine, in the absence of any semiotic process, does not exist because any input becomes somehow a sign of a possible output” (Marcus, 2011b: 111). What Solomon Marcus demonstrates is that the semiotics of a machine is different from any other semiotics because the machine generates its own meaning, and cannot be attached to a pre-existing meaning (Marcus, 2011b: 111).

Nonetheless, Solomon Marcus is also interested in other types of semiotics and, consequently, dedicates a very interesting article to the study of human smile.

He emphasises, first of all, its phatic function that helps us establish, maintain and control the contact with the interlocutor. He also mentions that nowadays the smile has become so social that it turned, for many people, into a professional obligation.

Solomon Marcus (2011c: 196 - 198) quantifies the types of smile taking into account its semiotic functions and the subject's attitude, and classifies them as follows:



Each of these three types may take various semiotic values, e.g. happy/sad: happy conscious smile, happy unintentional unconscious smile, happy unconscious intentional smile, sad conscious smile, sad unintentional unconscious smile, sad unconscious intentional smile. He adds up some other variables (e.g. the attitude that the person has to his/her interlocutor, i.e. he/she is nice or ironical, the presence of the interior smile, even the lack of a smile etc.), thus getting to 36 ways of codifying the smile, which multiplied to 36 possibilities of decodifying the smile results in 1296 possible relations. Out of these, only 36 represent perfect matches, leaving 1260 of possible mismatches and misinterpretations in the communication act.

Solomon Marcus organises all these findings into a mathematical framework, and what he calls a semiotic of the 1st order is actually the interpretation of a smile taking into account only the source, the person who smiles. The 2nd order semiotics is based on both the sender and the receiver, the 3rd order semiotics, on the way the receiver decodes the smile, the 4th order semiotics includes the receiver's response, etc.

The obvious conclusion is that such a basic communication act, an exchange of smiles between two people, may get so complicated in its analysis because, as Solomon Marcus says, as far as the human competence is concerned, the capacity to analyse and interpret is endless. However, when we are talking about

concrete instances of communication, the interpretation depends on the real ability of analysing and interpreting that each and every person has. This is why, when a person is not able to evaluate their partner's capacity of analysis and interpretation, communication many times fails. The analysis model that S. Marcus proposes is not especially tailored for communication through smile, it can also be applied to any kind of human communication.

It goes without saying that Solomon Marcus' interpretation is essentially mathematical. He was actually a convinced defender of the idea that mathematics is a sort of catalyst in relating linguistics to other disciplines from a transdisciplinary perspective (Marcus, 2011e: 220).

3. TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The main objectives of the present paper revolve around theoretical and pragmatic issues related to fundamental ideas of the Romanian semiotics and the way they have been reflected abroad in the last 100 years.

From a theoretical point of view, the aim is to revisit some of the main concepts and orientations of the 20th century Romanian semiotics as they were defined and employed by three reference names in the field: Emanuel Vasiliu, Eugen Coșeriu and Solomon Marcus. The vehicle-concepts used to express the fundamental ideas that lay the foundations of linguistics as a science at the beginning of the 20th century (illustrated here mainly by Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev) are critically discussed and employed by the three Romanian scientists, who also brought their own contribution to the development of the field: for instance, Emanuel Vasiliu takes the linguistic analysis as model for the whole semiotic analysis; Eugen Coșeriu critically discriminates between *designation*, *meaning* and *sense* and employs concepts of linguistic relativity in discussing the translation process as a decoding and encoding process; Solomon Marcus looks at symbols, signs and indicators through mathematical lens which he considers to be the link between linguistics and other sciences from a transdisciplinary perspective.

From a pragmatic point of view, the paper is meant to introduce the field of Romanian semiotics to the Portuguese students and fellow colleagues, and present to them some important names that belong to a period in which the relations between Romania and the Western world were not very open. Apart from Eugen Coșeriu, a name very well known worldwide, the other two are almost completely unknown in Portugal despite their important contribution to the development of linguistic ideas that dominated the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. There are many bridges that can be created among linguistic school across Europe, in general, and between the Romanian and the Portuguese linguistic schools in particular, and papers like the present one are only pretexts to initiate and develop a fruitful dialogue between them.

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“REGELE PALAELIBUS” BY ISAC LUDO: HISTORY AND FICTION AS IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to show how historic personalities of the Romanian interwar age are represented in Isac Ludo's novel *Regele Palaelibus*, which is an ideological representation of the ten-year reign of King Carol II of Romania. This representation is circumscribed to a specific ideological framework in Romanian historiography, the communist framework, advocated by Mihai Roller, a Stalinist historian who falsified Romanian history in order to serve the interests of the new Russian-supported communist elite. The Romanian personalities analyzed in the paper include King Carol II and leading politicians (party leaders and prime ministers) who influenced political life during the interwar period, such as Iuliu Maniu, Ion Mihalache, Nicolae Iorga, Octavian Goga and Alexandru C. Cuza. Additionally, the paper includes an analysis of the title of the novel, *Regele Palaelibus*, a name linked to one of the greatest corruption scandals in Romania's interwar history, the "Skoda Affair", which rocked the political establishment and the Romanian throne at the time. In our analysis we approach the text not in its strict sense (the words of a written statement or document) but in its broader sense of any type of representation which generates meaning, including pictures.

KEYWORDS

Palaelibus, text, representation, ideology, intertextuality

INTRODUCTION

Historical fiction in Romanian literature was manifest both before 1947, the year of the abdication of King Mihai I and the proclamation of the Soviet-supported popular republic, and afterwards, serving various purposes in each age. If, before 1947, historical fiction was used as a vehicle for national emancipation and an expression of the crystalization of a Romanian ethos, after 1947, historical fiction was subjected to a new process of ideologization circumscribed to the Soviet hegemony. The main representative of the Romanian historical fiction is Mihail Sadoveanu, an acclaimed fiction writer, founder of the Romanian historical novel, as well as an opportunist in politics, vacillating between political views of the Right and of the Left. An initial supporter of Marshal Averescu's party, the People's League, Sadoveanu later joined a faction of the Liberal Party. An advocate of King Carol II and of the king's party, the Front for National Renaissance and of the king's authoritarian rule in the late 1930s, Sadoveanu did not hesitate to join the communists once the country turned into a popular republic and supported the Soviet-inspired Romanian constitutions of 1948 and 1952.

After the communist regime came to power in the late 1940s, historical fiction raised the interest of several writers who were willing to serve the new political establishment with their works. One of these writers was Isac Ludo, a Romanian writer of Jewish descent, the author of *Regele Palaelibus* (King Palaelibus). He was also a prolific journalist, mainly known for his great ability as a lampoonist, and a skilled translator of Yiddish literature into Romanian. His collection of humorous short stories, *Hodge Podge* (1928) – an illustration of the provincial life of the Jewish population in Romania – and his novel *Mesia poate să aștepte* (1934)¹ are characterized by an authentic jocular liveliness, which made him enjoy literary success at the time. As a novelist, he is known for his series entitled *Paravanul de Aur* (The Golden Screen), which is a satirical illustration of the political life in Romania between the two world wars, and comprises five novels: *Domnul general guvernează* (1953)², *Starea de asediu* (1956)³, *Regele Palaelibus* (1957)⁴, “Salvatorul” (1959)⁵ and “Ultimul bastion” (1960)⁶. In spite of numerous reprints of *Paravanul de Aur*, the novels do not manifest a genuine aesthetic and literary value, which may partially explain why *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, authored by George Călinescu, shortly mentions Isac Ludo and only for *Mesia poate să aștepte*, which is described as “a book full of verve”

¹ My translation (Messiah Can Wait).

² My translation (The General Governs).

³ My translation (The State of Siege).

⁴ My translation (King Palaelibus).

⁵ My translation (The Saviour).

⁶ My translation (The Last Bastion).

(Călinescu, 1985: 796).⁷ When the political regime changed in Romania in 1947, Isac Ludo embraced the communist cause and the series *Paravanul de Aur* is the expression of his support for the new communist establishment.

The novel *Regele Palaelibus* was meant to be “a chronicle in prose”⁸ (Sandache, 2011: 241) in line with the tenets of the socialist creed, of the reign of King Carol II, scrutinizing the political and economic corruption manifest at top decisional levels and the attempts of the Extreme Right to control the country. But the classification of the five parts of *Paravanul de Aur* as novels should be considered a simple convention since the works proved to be merely “long sarcastic outbursts or characterization, turned into falsity, of the main political actors and of the old monarchic Romania”⁹ (Sandache, 2011: 239). The caricatures placed at the beginning of each chapter, signed by Eugen Taru (many of them of an authentic aesthetic value, unlike Ludo’s text) are used to make a statement and indicate the real purpose of the book: mainly to satirize the interwar Romanian political establishment and its main actors.

In novels, characters are, generally speaking, complex constructions that evolve either in a positive or negative manner. In *Regele Palaelibus*, the characters are rather static, undergoing little or no change. In fact, they enter the scene with a preordained profile which remains unchanged throughout the novel as suggested by the dialogues they have. Yet, this fixity is not accidental, but the result and manifestation of an ideologically invested text. The second half of the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s, the time when *Paravanul de Aur* must have been put on paper and then published, are circumscribed to the first phase of the communist discourse in Romania, known as “the anti-national phase” (Boia, 2001: 70), characterized by “an attempt to wipe out all that was nationally Romanian” including the name of the country turned from *Romania* into R.P.R. (Republica Populară Romîna – The Romanian Popular Republic) – “an anonymous set of initials after the model of the Soviet republics” (Boia, 2001: 71). The Romanian language also suffered an ideological revamping when “the Latin linguistic affiliations so carefully recreated by the nineteenth-century linguists were obscured in 1953 by an orthographic change, which substituted the Russian derived î for the latinate â – even in the name of the country, making “Romînia” out of the once-Latin “România” (Verdery, 1991: 104). The new Soviet-inspired spelling is manifest throughout Ludo’s novel. The entire past of the country was re-written under the supervision of the chief Stalinist ideologue Mihai Roller – “the conductor of the new historiography” (Boia, 2001: 71). Hence, the monarchic age (clearly assimilated with the national ideal

⁷ My translation (o carte plină de spirit).

⁸ My translation (o cronică în proză).

⁹ My translation (îzbucniri sarcastice, ori caracterizarea dusă până la falsitate a principalilor actori politici ai vechii României monarhice).

in Romanians' collective memory – independence being won by King Carol I in 1877 on the battlefield and the union of all Romanian historical provinces as Great Romania being achieved under the sceptre of King Ferdinand I in 1918) had to be first discredited and then annihilated.

It is not far-fetched to suggest that the manner in which Isac Ludo names the characters in *Regele Palaelibus* is an attempt to discredit the real historic personalities that the characters are associated with. Their present profiles are, in fact, ideological representations which are generated throughout the novel in a consistently uniform manner. Text as discourse presupposes that various processes (including participants and actors in and circumstances of these processes) are manifest at text level. The ways these elements are constructed in text become representations of an event, or part of a discourse. There are various ways of representing social actors, each choice indicating a particular intent. The leading politicians depicted in *Regele Palelibus* are given fictional names, with the exception of the members of the royal family and some top members of the political establishment such as Nicolae Titulescu (several times the Minister for Foreign Affairs) and Ion Antonescu (the general who replaced King Carol II as head of State in 1940). But neither the former, nor the latter category of characters escapes sarcastic portrayal. The purpose for giving fictional names was not to hide their true identity, but to ridicule the historic personalities and create a comic effect. Drawing upon Ion Luca Caragiale, who names his characters in a way that achieves its intended comic effect in mastery manner – a mark of Caragiale's genius – Ludo must have intended to produce a similarly comic effect. The names coined by Caragiale come from common nouns and their purpose is to associate the character that is given that specific name with a concept. Take, for example the name Nae Cațavencu from Caragiale's play *O scrisoare pierdută*.¹⁰ The surname, Cațavencu, may come from the noun "cațaveică", which is a short fur coat traditionally made of fox fur, which can be worn on both sides. In Romanian popular literature, the fox is a sly, deceitful animal. Hence, the fact that *cațaveica* can be worn on both sides and is made from the fur of a cunning animal is used to create a particular profile of the man that goes by the name Cațavencu: cunning like a fox, double-faced (Ibrăileanu, 1968: 152). The name Cațavencu may also be inspired by the common noun "cață" which describes "a mean and nagging person" (*Dictionarul explicativ al limbii române*, 1984: 127).

Drawing on Caragiale's manner of naming his characters, Ludo uses common nouns in order to attach a particular meaning to his characters' profiles. The new names of some of Ludo's characters can be correctly associated with the real personalities because the real nicknames of some politicians are turned into characters' names. In *Regele Palaelibus*, Viziru is the Liberal Ionel Brătianu, several

¹⁰ My translation (A Lost Letter).

times Prime Minister of Romania, nicknamed Viziru by his political opponents for the authoritative manner in which he ran the National Liberal Party. The name comes from the noun “vizir”¹¹, a name given to ministers and high officials in the Ottoman Empire. Gheorghe Viziru is the name given to Ionel Brătianu’s son, Gheorghe Brătianu who, unlike his father, supported Carol II. The fact that the real personalities can be identified behind the names of some characters is not arbitrary. The author wanted these real actors to be more easily identified by the potential readers so that the denigration aimed at by the communist discourse have real targets, people in flesh and blood, not imaginary individuals. A similar reasoning can be applied to the members of the royal family whose real names are kept.

The profile of King Carol II, the main character of *Regele Palaelibus*, is often grotesquely exaggerated. Though many aspects of the king’s portrayal are supported by facts historically documented, they are often amplified in an unjust and embarrassing manner. For instance, the proclamation of Carol II as king on 8 June 1930 before the joint assembly of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is described with mockery and derision, the king being portrayed as mainly interested in the elegant ladies present in the stands, who came to witness the event.

Whenever history and fiction are blended, striking the balance between fact and imagination is often a matter of one’s own intentions. The presence of various voices in the narrative (the characters’ voices and the author’s voice) underlines the intertextuality of the story being told, and discriminating between fact and fiction may not always be an easy task. Let us analyze, for example, an important moment in the reign of Carol II, the appointment, in 1931, of the government led by Nicolae Iorga, a moment which Ludo chooses to describe. The government was meant to be a government of national union, with ministers coming from various parliamentary parties. Apparently, the king’s decision was explained by the desire to stabilize political life. Without oversimplifying things, the king may have been trying to gather together ministers who could not work with the Prime Minister in order to prove the uselessness of political parties in troubled times and pave his way to an authoritarian regime run by himself. Apart from appointing his former teacher as head of the government of union, Carol II also handed his Prime Minister the list with the members of the government. In Ludo’s book, the scene is depicted as follows: the decree appointing the Prime Minister is, in the words of Ludo’s Carol II, “a small present” (Ludo, 1957: 189)¹² while the list with the members of the government is, in Iorga’s apparent words (uttered, in fact, by the omniscient narrator) “a

¹¹ My translation (vizier).

¹² My translation (o mică atenție).

present that could have only been inspired by a king's generous hand" (Ludo, 1957: 189)¹³.

Constitutionally speaking, the king's gesture of presenting the Prime Minister with the list of the Cabinet represented the first time when the monarch meddled into politics, ignoring the status of political neutrality which he was expected to defend and dragging the Crown into political strife, with critical consequences for country and dynasty. It may also be interpreted as Carol II's purpose to show the political class that the country could still be ruled without political parties. The king's selection of the members of the government marks the moment that ministerial appointments became "the sovereign's unrestricted prerogative" (Stanomir, 2010: 16).¹⁴ At the level of text production, intertextuality "stresses the historicity of texts" (Fairclough, 1999: 84). In other words, intertextuality indicates how a newly conceived text is built on and adds new meaning to previous texts. This is the case for Ludo's interpretation of the appointment of Iorga's cabinet in 1931. Drawing on sources from the past (possibly the press of the age) in order to improve the credibility of his account, Ludo adds his own voice to other voices from the past. In terms of factual data, what he describes is true (the appointment of Iorga and the list with the Cabinet's members). How he chooses to describe the scene can be suspected of a manipulative intent since he re-contextualizes a past event into his book by first de-contextualizing it (taking meanings out of their context) and re-contextualizing (putting meaning in new contexts) (Fairclough, in Lassen, Strunck and Vestergaard, 2006: 26). The meaning of the event (explained above as a flagrant violation of the Constitution) is ignored by Ludo (the meaning is de-contextualised and fully ignored) and re-contextualised in the book: the breach of constitutionality is regarded as "a small present [...] inspired by a king's generous hand". Hence, Ludo ridicules the constitutional practice of appointing the Prime Minister (a royal prerogative) by describing it as a gift offering at the pleasure of the king. Behind Ludo's approach, one can guess the ideologically-invested goal of representing constitutional monarchy as a form of government and the Romanian dynasty as scraps of history.

There are various ways of representing social actors in discourse. Theo van Leeuwen proposes a socio-semantic approach to representation by means of which social actors can be, for instance, represented generically, as classes or specifically, as recognizable individuals. Or they can be represented either by their names or by the professional category they belong to, to mention but a few of the variables identified by van Leeuwen (Van Leeuwen, in Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 2003: 32-70).

¹³ My translation (un dar care putea fi inspirat numai de mâna generoasă a unui rege).

¹⁴ My translation (prerogativa neîngrădită a suveranului).

Iuliu Maniu, Prime Minister of Romania several times and the leader of the National Peasants' Party is identified in the text as Dacu, being introduced, in the first pages of the novel, as "Mr. Dacu, the President of the Council of Ministers".¹⁵ (Ludo, 1957: 5). Here, the social actor is represented by nomination, "typically realized by proper names" (Van Leeuwen, in Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 2003: 53) – Dacu – followed by the political position of Prime Minister. In addition, Dacu (translated as The Dacian, in English – the inhabitant of the ancient state of Dacia, which included present-day Transylvania, is a clear hint to the real person, Iuliu Maniu, born in Transylvania. Sometimes, the text depicts Iuliu Maniu as "Dacu from Bădăcin"¹⁶, Bădăcin being Maniu's place of birth. Reference to Bădăcin is another way of representing the social actor called "objectivation" – "by means of reference to a place or thing closely associated either with their person or with the activity they are represented as being engaged in" (Van Leeuwen, in Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 2003: 59). Reference to the place of Maniu's birth is a specific form of objectivation called spatialisation of social actors, which presupposes "reference to a place with which they are, in the given context, closely associated" (Van Leeuwen, in Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 2003: 59).

Sometimes Iuliu Maniu (aka Dacu, in the text) is represented in metonymic fashion as "this tall and stiff collar"¹⁷ – a hint at Maniu's style of dress (also depicted in the caricature at the beginning of the first chapter). The intention to mock Iuliu Maniu is clear and is further stated by a peculiar depiction of the Prime Minister. Received by Carol II the night the prince returned to Romania to seize the throne from his son, the underage King Michael, Maniu is congratulated by Carol for the untroubled manner in which he was received. Ludo described Maniu's reaction as follows: "Suddenly, President Dacu brightened up and, had he not been aware of his weighty State responsibility, he may have even allowed himself a smile. In haste, he pulled a face brush out of the box he was holding in his waistcoat pocket and powdered his nose [...]" (Ludo, 1957: 7).¹⁸ A similar description is found again on page 135. Ludo's portrayal of Maniu runs counter to the Prime Minister's personality, a sober and reserved man, sometimes rigid and stubborn in his decisions, whose inflexibility is alluded to by reference to the tall and stiff collars that he used to wear. The oddity of the gesture of powdering one's nose is meant to ridicule Maniu's individuality.

¹⁵ My translation (domnul Dacu, președintele Consiliului de Miniștri).

¹⁶ My translation (Dacu de la Bădăcin).

¹⁷ My translation (gulerul ăsta înalt și tare).

¹⁸ My translation (În grabă, își scoase din cutiuța pe care o ținea în buzunarul de la jiletcă, un pământuf și-și pudră nasul [...]).

Another personality mocked at in the text is Ion Mihalache (named Jugănar in the text). Mihalache was a member of the National Peasants' Party and one of Maniu's closest collaborators, and for a while replaced him at the helm of the party. He was an agrarian, supporting the peasants' cause and dedicating his political career to the improvement of the peasants' lifestyle and advocating their values, such as the popular dress, which he often used to wear, even on official occasions. Mihalache's mockery springs from his very fictional name, Jugănar, a Romanian surname which may come either from the word "jug" (yoke), an wooden piece bound to the neck of an ox which pulls the cart for various farming works or from the verb "a jugăni" (to castrate). "Jugănar" is thus the man responsible for castrating animals. As a leading representative of the peasants' class, Ion Mihalache may have been named differently but Ludo's choice indicates, once more, his aim to deride not only individuals but also an entire social class by means of farming practices which, though natural, imply a degree of roughness. Indirectly, Mihalache is portrayed as an uncivilized individual. Later in the text, Mihalache is directly described as a rough person: "unrefined and rude", "filthy peasant who cannot be the head of the government" (Ludo, 1957: 146).¹⁹ The sarcasm of the portrayal turns into insult, which thus cancels the ironic effect that the author may have intended to produce.

Nicolae Iorga, Romanian historian and university professor, member of the Romanian Academy, supporter of King Carol II and Prime Minister between April 1931 and May 1932, also appears in the text as Professor Arghir. The juxtaposition of the surname Arghir and his university title makes Iorga easily identifiable in the text. Iorga was also one of the teachers responsible for the education of Prince Carol, later King Carol II, which may explain the association. So far there is no manifest mockery, apparently. But the surname Arghir comes from the word "arghirofilie" (a word with a neo-Greek etymology) which means "greed of money" (*Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, 1984:).²⁰ The greed suggested by the surname Arghir may not be of a pecuniary nature. Iorga was a politician with clear views who was not afraid to criticize his colleagues in Parliament or the monarch. Like any top politician, he was eagerly looking for an acknowledgement of his views, this acknowledgement being considered another capital worth having.

Octavian Goga (aka Traian Săpunaru in the text) is another leading politician criticised by Ludo, but with some justification, although the reasons for introducing Goga as Săpunaru may not be self-evident. In Romanian, Săpunaru is a surname that is derived from the common noun "săpun" (soap). Săpunaru refers to a soap maker. What could be the logical connection between Goga, the

¹⁹ My translation (necioplit și obraznic) and (țăran nespălat, care nu poat fi șef de guvern).

²⁰ My translation (lăcomie de bani).

real politician and Săpunaru, his literary representation? The answer may be found in some of Goga's political decisions. A renowned poet and playwright from Transylvania, Goga becomes a politician and assumes an anti-Semitic attitude, protesting against the growing dominance of other ethnic groups, Jews mainly, in the Romanian economy (Nedelea, 1991: 135). As Prime Minister, the government led by Octavian Goga issued a decree law on the revision of citizenship granted to Jews, a decree by which the Jews were required to prove, with legal documents, that they met the conditions for receiving Romanian citizenship. The decree never came into force because Goga's government had to resign, but the measure was meant to diminish the Jews' access to citizens' rights (Scurtu, 2001: 222). In xenophobic terms, the decree aimed to decontaminate the society from unwanted elements. Soap is a substance used for washing and cleaning. Hence, the surname Săpunaru disguises Ludo's contempt for Goga and his measure against the Jews population.

Alexandru C. Cuza (aka Cață in the text), an advocate of anti-Semitic measures, is another politician ridiculed by Ludo. His surname Cață comes either from the common noun *cațaveică* or *cață*, the meanings of which have been explained above. Hence, Alexandru C. Cuza is portrayed as a double-faced politician, a demagogue and a pestering individual.

The title of the book, *Regele Palaelibus*, is also worth investigating since it hints at a major bribery scandal of the age, known as the "Skoda Affair", which revolved around a contract signed between the Romanian government and the Czech Skoda Works, for the supply of ammunition and weapons necessary for equipping the Romanian army. The contract was signed in March 1930 by the government led by Iuliu Maniu. The scandal broke on the first pages of all the Romanian central dailies when it was revealed that the representative of the Skoda Works in Romania, Bruno Szeletski, was spying Romanian officials and bribing them. While the official investigation found no culprits except Bruno Szeletski, who was sentenced to imprisonment, the Romanian press carried out detailed investigations in order to identify the bribed officials. Breaking the code of Szeletski's messages to his superiors, Romanian journalists at the time sent messages which often mentioned code names such as "Palaelibus", - one of the hottest topics of investigation for.

The scandal cast a shadow of doubt and distrust over King Carol II himself, whose close collaborators and friends, known as Camarila (or clique) were involved in numerous other business scandals linked to onerous military contracts for Romania. Even Prime Minister Maniu was suspected (with the help of the king, who was trying to get rid of him) of some kind of involvement in the affair, which practically led to the resignation of his cabinet. In their memoirs, some contemporaries of the scandal claimed that Maniu was one of the bribed people. Radu Lecca, a civil servant in charge of the General Commissariat for the Jewish Issues during Ion Antonescu's regime, claims to

have been told by a German official working for the German Legation in Bucharest, Hermann von Ritgen, that “that famous ‘Palaelibus’, which had been talked about for years because it was the main bribed person, was the conventional name for Maniu and Mihai Popovici”(Lecca, 1994: 128).²¹ But Lecca’s position should be taken with a pinch of salt since his collaborator, Hermann von Ritgen, “chief of the political and intelligence department of Germany’s Legation” was “at the same time a notorious businessman” (Buzatu, Stela Acatrinei, Gheorghe Acatrinei, 2011: 451).²² Others, such as journalists investigating the scandal at the time, concluded that “Palaelibus” was the codified name of a top secret bank account which was used for paying high commissions to leading representatives of the Romanian State (Marele „tun” cu tunuri: „Afacerea Skoda”, Chirvasiu, 2013).

Whoever or whatever “Palaelibus” really was is more or less irrelevant for the purpose of this paper. Our investigation focuses on Ludo’s own interpretation of the code name “Palaelibus”. Ludo draws on the interpretation provided by the journalists who investigated the scandal in the 1930s and concludes that “Palaelibus” stands for commissions paid to Romanian officials and groups these commissions into two categories “palaelibus baroque”²³, meaning “substantial bribe”²⁴ and “palaelibus baby”, meaning “small bribe”²⁵ (Ludo, 1957: 310). Whether the bribes were called in this manner or not is, again, less relevant, but the fact that Ludo chooses to introduce these qualifications in his book indicates the vivid imagination of a public captivated and equally puzzled by the affair. Furthermore, Ludo does not omit to point the finger at King Carol II and his Prime Minister, Iulia Maniu, for their presumed involvement in the scandal. In fact, Ludo mentions it in the very first pages of the book: having just returned from his exile, Carol (still prince) receives the Prime Minister, Iuliu Maniu, and inquires about the recently revealed Skoda affair. Ludo describes their reactions as follows: “The prince and Dacu looked at each other – and they both turned their heads in the opposite direction. They had read each other’s thoughts. One knew something about the other. Carol knew about the Prime Minister’s relations with Skoda from Czechoslovakia and Dacu knew about Skoda’s role in the return of the prince” (Ludo, 1957: 16-17).²⁶

²¹ My translation (acel faimos ‘Palaelibus’, despre care s-a discutat ani de zile, pentru că era principalul mituit, era denumirea convențională a lui Maniu și Mihai Popovici). Mihai Popovici was the Minister of Justice in Maniu’s cabinet at the time.

²² My translation (șeful departamentului politic și de informații al Legației Germaniei) and (în același timp afacerist notoriu).

²³ My translation (palaelibus baroc).

²⁴ My translation (șperț mare).

²⁵ My translation (șperț mic).

²⁶ My translation (Privirile prințului și ale lui Dacu se încrucișară - și amândoi întoarseră în același timp capul spre o direcție opusă. Își citiseră reciproc gândurile. Fiecare știa câte ceva

The fact that the code name “Palaelibus” is included in the title of the book as part of a royal name (Regele Palaelibus) is a limpid allusion at the king’s involvement in the Skoda affair. If “Palaelibus” is a code name invented by Skoda representatives in order to secretly manage the bribery of Romanian officials, why then did they think of this code name and not another? Were they interested in pointing the finger at a particular person especially while protecting someone else’s identity? It is hard to say, but “Palaelibus” as a word hints at the king. Let us analyse the parts that make up the code name, which may indicate how they refer to Carol II. These are just our assumptions, but they are worth the effort. “Palaelibus” can be divided into two parts: “pala” and “elibus”. “Pala” refers to two Latin words. The first one is “pala”, which means “shovel” or “spade” (*Dicționar latin-român*, 1962: 500). The second Latin word is “palla”, which means: “1. mantle, cloak (worn especially by women or tragedy actors). 2. a woman’s garment (worn under the mantle). 3. curtain” (*Dicționar latin-român*, 1962: 501).²⁷ The “elibus” part of the code name is much more cryptic than the “pala” part in “Palaelibus”. One may associate the part “eli” with the Hebrew name Eli, meaning “a Hebrew judge and priest” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, 1994: 463). The name points to someone occupying a high position in society. In the context of Ludo’s book, the person occupying a high position may have been a State official, a minister or another member of the political establishment or even a member of the royal family. “-eli” may also be a form derived either from “helio”, a Greek word meaning “sun”, or from the name “Helios” – “the ancient Greek god of the sun [...] represented as driving a chariot across the heavens” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, 1994: 658). While the part “-bus” in “elibus” may refer to the English noun “bus” which, in its informal use, means “a passenger automobile or airplane” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, 1994: 200). But none of these references make sense unless they are presented against the background of the arrival of Prince Carol in Romania in 1930 in order to dethrone his son, the underage King Michael, and be proclaimed king in the latter’s stead. Carol managed to enter the Romanian airspace on board a plane which, after an adventurous flight, landed in Bucharest late at night on 8 June 1930. “-eli” from “helio” may not suggest the sun, but the sky on which the sun shines and “Helios” (driving his chariot) refers to someone flying a plane (a modern chariot) and welcomed with a reverence not far from that worthy of a god. Prince Carol managed to be made king because more and more politicians, parliamentarians and army representatives considered that the country would be much better served by King Carol II than a dysfunctional regency, which was vulnerable to political

despre celălalt. Carol cunoștea relațiile primului ministru cu firma Skoda din Cehoslovacia și Dacu cunoștea rolul jucat de Skoda în întoarcerea prințului.)

²⁷ My translation (1. manta, mantie [purată în special de femei sau de actori în tragedii]. 2. Veșmânt de femeie [purat sub manta]. 3. perdea).

pressures. Therefore, there were many people in the country who were looking forward to Carol's return with eager anticipation.

Another detail which, in Ludo's view, hints at Carol II's involvement in the Skoda affair is the segment "pala" in the name "Palaelibus". The Latin name "palla", introduced and explained above, is a direct hint at the royal connection with the scandal. The mantle alluded to may represent the mantle of the uniform of the knights of the order "Mihai Viteazul", a Romanian military order established by King Ferdinand I in 1916. During the age of constitutional monarchy, the head of the order was the sovereign. King Carol II is often shown in photos or video footage wearing the white mantle, the military clothing item characteristic of the order. However, since the dictionary explains that the Latin noun "palla" means a mantle worn by a woman or a woman's garment, "Palaelibus" may well refer to the king's mistress, Elena Lupescu, a key member of the Camarila, involved in numerous controversial affairs. Furthermore, the third meaning of "palla", that of "curtain" may symbolically represent "Palaelibus" as the curtain behind which the Skoda affair and many other similar affairs were handled. Furthermore, the curtain suggested by the segment "pala" in the code name "Palaelibus" makes the connection with *Paravanul de Aur* (The Golden Screen), the name given by Ludo to his series of five books which includes *Regele Palaelibus*.

The illustrations on both covers of the book are also indicative of Ludo's assumption that King Carol II must have been one of the top officials of the country involved in the affair. The front cover illustrates the profile of a man wearing a white mantle and a sword, the tip of which is visible under the white mantle. A curious pillar with what looks to be a hatchet on its top stands for the head of the man, covered by a feathered helmet. On the floor, one can see blood stains as if the man left traces of blood behind him. The white mantle and the feathered helmet represent King Carol II, who was deeply interested in military uniforms and designed many uniforms for the Romanian army himself. Ludo mocks at this royal activity calling it "a matter of state" (Ludo, 1957: 153)²⁸. He describes the king as a busy person who "had many things to do, but the uniforms were what he would have liked to provide the country with, first and foremost" (Ludo, 1957: 153).²⁹ Ironically, the king is depicted as a sovereign more interested in designing uniforms than in providing his army with efficient military equipment and weapons so that the country be properly defended if need be. The hatchet that stands for the king's head is a metaphor which translates a conclusion: the king, unable to take care of the army whose head he was, became his executioner. In fact, numerous historians have come to the

²⁸ My translation (munca de stat).

²⁹ My translation (Avea de făcut multe, dar ceea ce ar fi vrut să asigure în primul rând țării erau uniformele.).

conclusion that Romania's impossibility to defend its territories and borders following the Soviet ultimatum of 26 June 1940 and the Vienna Diktat of 30 August 1940, was caused by a serious military incapacity, for which the king was partly responsible. The illustration on the back cover completes the one on the front cover. There are several traces of blood leading to a throne at the back of a room (reference to the Throne Room in the Royal Palace in Bucharest). A white, unrecognizable silhouette sits on the throne, possibly a metaphorical representation of someone who failed to be an authentic sovereign.

Ludo's series *Paravanul de aur* is one of the books which served the new communist power by spreading the Soviet ideology and the Soviet interpretation of Romania's past into the masses. Moreover, it is directly linked to one of the measures taken by the communist regime through its Department of State Security, better known as *Securitatea*: the continuous surveillance of King Michael and his family while in exile. It is worth mentioning that this close surveillance was carried out throughout the king's exile and was officially stopped in the early 1990s. Although exiled, King Michael tried to maintain links with his country and his people by means of his annual New Year's Message broadcast by Radio Voice of America and Radio Free Europe with some interruptions in the 1970s. In order to counteract the potential influence of the king's message on numerous Romanians who were secretly and illegally listening to these foreign radio stations (putting their lives in danger if caught), several anti-dynastic and anti-monarchic books were published regularly. Ludo's *Paravanul de Aur* was published in the 1950s. *Hohenzollernii în România*, signed by Gheorghe Țuțui and Mircea Popa, was published in 1962, and Virgiliu Ene's *Adevărul despre regi. Scrieri din literatura română antidinastică* was published in 1977. The *Securitate* kept a vigilant eye on both the exiled King Michael and his people, trapped behind the Iron Curtain.

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THE NECESSITY OF COMPARING AND CONTEXTUALIZING

Myth, Music and Ritual. Approaches to Comparative Literature

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The two parts of the volume – *Reflections on Myth* and *Myth, Music, Ritual* – comprise various studies on a wide range of themes and issues as sexuality, sensuality, rituals, myths, archetypes, imagery, dance, profane. Anna Caiozzo (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), Corin Braga (Babeş-Bolyai University), Diarmuid Johnson, Hyacinth Madondo Sibusiso (University of South Africa) guided and supervised the two parts, focused on myth and its contemporary reflections, and respectively on the multiple connections between myth, music and ritual. These studies reflect the areas that are researched and the fields of interest of academics and researchers associated with the Speculum Centre of the Imaginary (University of Alba Iulia, Romania).

Very heterogenous and derived from multiple perspectives, the studies are revealing the multifaceted occurrence of myths as fictions, narratives, explanations, manifestations, disguised messages, even as metamorphosis of themes in different periods of time. It is a truly multifarious endeavour, but not without reason: the interdisciplinary challenge of the contemporary comparative studies is a necessity.

Some of the studies included in the first part, *Reflections on the myth* are mainly descriptive and contextual approaches of some myths (the myth of Electra) or so-called myths (the myth of possession). A notable and nuanced exception may be considered the study in French of Corin Braga, *Les Bacchantes. Sacrifice du taureau et sublimation de la Libido. Mythe, rite et psychanalyse*, as it follows the paths of C.G. Jung, Carl Kerényi, Maria Daraki in investigating the archetypal images on psychoanalysis grounds. Braga is demonstrating again that “archetypology” may be a beneficial approach in the field of comparative literary studies.

Curiously, the reflections *on* the myth in this chapter are in fact reflections *of* the myth.

For example, the myth of Electra is highlighted in details, seen by author Gabriela Chiciudean in a process of transformation, adaptation and reinterpretation in literary and theatrical works. The staging of the myth in *Orestia II-Choeforele* by Aurel Stroe and directed by Lucian Pintilie for the Avignon Festival in 1979 calls out for an analysis of the musical layering and acting. Also, other contexts of different (re)enactments of the ancient myth are mentioned and the comparative readings lead to the idea of a long history of creative receptions of the Aeschylus' tragedy of Oresteia in Romanian theatre. A not so special contribution as it lacks the contextualization of the specific discourse in an extended framework, both theoretical and theatrical.

A various range of approaches are to be found in the first part of this provocative volume: sexuality, femininity and eroticism (Horia Lazăr), the anthropological approach of the Builder myth and its representations in Romanian drama, especially in Lucian Blaga's *Meşterul Manole* (Cristian Stamatoiu), the exploration of the "Spirits" in Shōjo culture, with a focus on Japanese anime and comics (Alice Teodorescu), finding mythological archetypes in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, the mythical archetype of orphaned hero (Monica Hătegan), though is a literary myth, I would say, instead of archetype. Also, a myth of possession (by witchcraft and spirits) in speculative fiction (*Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury 1984 by George Orwell and *The Hunger Games* by Susanne Collins) and in television is worth to be considered and scrutinized (Rodica Gabriela Chira).

The second part of the volume, *Myth, Music, Ritual*, incorporates various studies focused on the particularities of rituals including myth and music or dance. Synchronic perspectives are possible, as in the Western and Eastern cultures one may find various and hugely different conceptions of music, dance, rhythm. As all phenomena are rhythmic manifestations able to be captured not only in art, the human life is also a complex set of rhythms of all kinds joined to the cosmic rhythms and this the main conclusion of the Maria Noel Lapoujade's outline (*Music and Rhythm as Vibrations inherent in Human Being*). The mechanical musicality of the profane and the seduction of sacredness are examined by Petru Adrian Danciu in a study on the process of transfer from profane to sacredness, as it is met in *The Queen of Fairies*. The author is interested in observing some possible Gnostic myths and in the way in which the profane and its history-time manages to store temporality as "an expression of the material world unknown to the sacred world".

Hélène Savoie Colombani examines in her study the universal symbols of dance (*Pilou* – round dance): life, chaos, trance and magic, also circle and night (darkness), focusing on the Kanak music and dance, pointing out the links between the narrative myth and its expression in song and dance (*Imagery and Symbol of Former Kanak Myth bound to the "Round Dance" and Its Rites*). The link between music, ritual and myth is also an issue for Graciela Ormezzano and

Fabiane Burlamaque, aiming to interpret the St. Ignatius Mass in trying to understand the symbols, archetypes and myths of Paraguayan reductions (*Imaginary of Missions: Music, Ritual and Myth*).

Myth, song and ritual in the Modern World by Liliana Floria Danciu actually refers to Mircea Eliade's *The Forbidden Forest*, revealing the *daimonism* of the creation that marks the characters of the novel, an imitation of the primary creation and, also, revealing the link created by Eliade between the rhythm of *Symphony No. 5 (Symphony of Destiny)* by Beethoven and the rhythm of the door knockings at Ștefan's secret room, the rhythm of a Romanian song-incantation, and the rhythm of the other door knockings of Bibicescu's drama *The Return from Stalingrad*.

Kanteletar or the State of Song by Emilia Ivancu and Tomasz Klimkowski is a survey of the collection of texts *The Kanteletar*, giving the reader the opportunity to investigate the vocabulary that brings together music and poetry, having in mind the etymology: *kantele* is a Finnish instrument that makes the link between the bard songs and poems. Actually, the conjecture is that the double signification music – poetry seems to be one of the oldest realities in the old languages, and it seems to be a predictable situation due to its archetypal essence.

This volume published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing proves itself a valuable contribution to the study of literature in the context of cultural studies, emphasizing once again the importance of adopting plural perspectives and methodologies in revealing the locations of literature and the locations of cultures.