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## Romanian Modernity Historical, Cultural, and Theological Paradigms

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Edited by  
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On the cover:  
Saint Hierarch Nicholas Orthodox Church in Densuș  
(Hunedoara County), 13<sup>th</sup> century

Photo by MIRCEA MIHULEȚ  
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*In memoriam*  
*His Eminence Bishop*  
GURIE GEORGIU  
(1968–2021)

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ROMANIAN MODERNITY:  
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL  
PARADIGMS



# The Romanity of the Romanians

## As Reflected in the Accounts of Foreign Travelers between the Years 1710 and 1810

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SORIN ȘIPOȘ

### Introduction

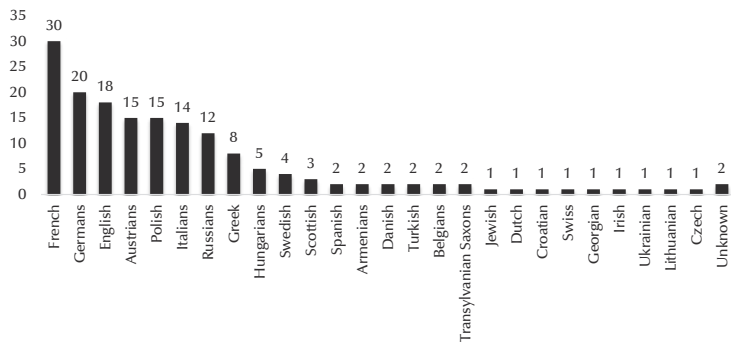
**S**TARTING WITH the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there was increasing interest in the spaces located at the periphery of the civilized world, where economic, cultural and human transfers took place. The awareness of certain western groups with regard to the space in the eastern part of the continent had already been raised, and the interest only increased with the passing of time.

The Romanian Principalities, as well as the states in their vicinity, came back to the attention of the great European powers as the territories occupied by the Turks were freed by the armies of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>1</sup> In the present work we are investigating the accounts of foreign travelers about the Romanian Principalities during the period of maximum domination of the Ottoman Empire. Broadly speaking, at that time Transylvania came under the domination of the Habsburg Empire and was subjected to a reformist experiment aimed at the modernization of the province that had, in the long term, positive consequences for the Romanians. In the current case we will focus our attention on the accounts that speak about Romanians, more specifically about their origin. The topic drew the attention of specialists, especially of historians and philologists.<sup>2</sup> The Romanity of the Romanians is part of a vaster research that seeks to identify those elements of the Romanian Principalities that place them and the Romanians in the West and in the East, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the correct identification and indication of the Roman origin of the Romanians and of their language represent an important argument in favor of placing them within the Western civilization. It is, indeed, one of the few arguments in this regard, because a great part of the political elite in the Romanian Principalities had a different cultural background, which makes the Romanians closer to the Balkan/Eastern/Oriental world.

For the period of time analyzed, namely the one between the years 1710 and 1810, we identified the accounts of 171 travelers who crossed the Romanian space.<sup>4</sup> Although their origin is not always relevant, we observe the presence at the top of the list of the travelers of French origin. France was still the main power in Europe at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The French are followed by the Germans, the English and the Austrians, important powers with major interests in the East. We also have 14 Italian travelers, but they are

present especially for commercial and religious reasons. There are also 12 Russian travelers, but their number is not very relevant since Russia also had other routes through which its representatives could reach Istanbul.

GRAPH 1. THE TRAVELERS' ETHNICITY



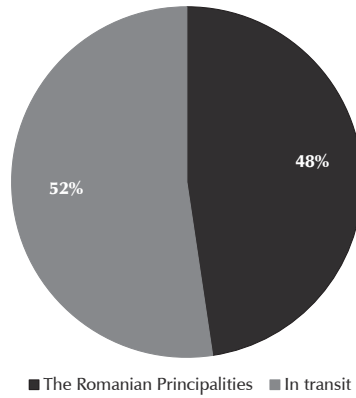
In our research, we also aim to identify the professions of the voyagers who crossed the Romanian space. Our analysis indicates that 54 of the travelers were senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (consuls, commissioners in charge of commercial affairs, diplomats) and 53 of the voyagers were officers or people with connections to the army; 24 were members of the clergy, and 22 had liberal professions and were animated by scientific and professional curiosities. We also have a tsar, and the professions of six of the travelers are unknown. The vast majority of the voyagers had higher education. The political and economic interests of the great powers in the era outweighed the scientific and personal ones, and the main avenues of professional training were still in the western part of Europe.<sup>5</sup>

GRAPH 2. TRAVELERS' PROFESSION





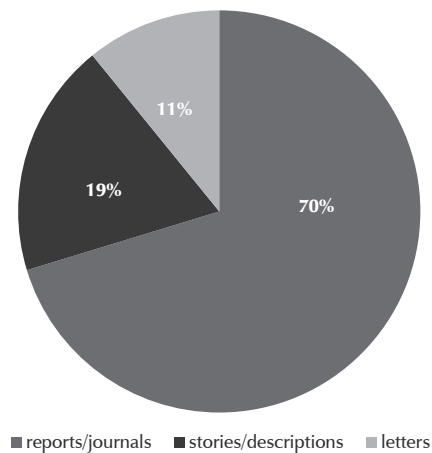
GRAPH 3. COUNTRIES CROSSED



We must also mention that among the 171 travelers about whom we have information so far, 89 only transited the Romanian space, and 81 had the Romanian Principalities as their destination. This is an important distinction, because the accounts of the travelers who only transited our country are, at least theoretically, subjective and superficial, due to the small amount of time they spent in the Romanian Principalities.

An important aspect of the research methodology is the one regarding the type of documentary sources left by the foreign travelers.<sup>6</sup> After processing the information in this regard, the following situation resulted: 123 reports/journals, 33 stories/descriptions, and from 19 travelers we have the letters sent to their recipients. From two of the travelers, two types of accounts were kept, namely reports and letters.

GRAPH 4. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES



## The Origin of the Romanians. Travel Accounts

**I**N THE period we are researching, numerous travelers transited or remained in the Romanian Principalities. Of the ones that left written accounts concerning their missions, only a small part wrote about the origin of the Romanians and their language. The small number of such accounts can be explained by the intellectual background of the travelers and the reasons for the trip. As we have already seen, the intellectual background of most of the travelers is not one pertaining to the Humanities. Consequently, the vast majority of them are preoccupied with the political realities, with the economic and religious activities. Furthermore, a significant part of the travelers are political and military representatives of the great powers, paying attention to the geopolitical realities in this part of Europe.

Given the relatively small number of accounts regarding the origin of the Romanians, our intention is to focus on all of this information, in a chronological analysis. Out of the 171 identified travelers who left documentary accounts about their trips through the Romanian Principalities, only 22 explicitly spoke about the origin and language of the Romanians. From the perspective of the intellectual background of these 22, most of them were trained in the field of Humanities.

Antonmaria del Chiaro resided for many years in Wallachia, as secretary to the voivods Constantin Brâncoveanu, Stephen Cantacuzino (Cantacuzene) and Nicholas Mavrocordat (Maurocordato).<sup>7</sup> The Florentine secretary stayed in Wallachia and familiarized himself with the realities of this country. As a result, numerous comments that he made on the history of the Romanians, in general, and on the political, social, economic realities, and daily life, in particular, are based on his personal experience, but also on the sizeable information he gathered from contemporaries and from the works on the history of Wallachia that he consulted. Starting with the spring of the year 1710, he is an eyewitness to the events that he describes, and his information is either firsthand or taken from an eyewitness worthy of trust. Quite often the information came right from the voivode, the court steward, or from the ladies.<sup>8</sup> Having received a thorough humanist education, Antonmaria del Chiaro was also interested in the Romanians' past. Even in the initial project of his research he aimed to prove, with the help of the sources of the era, the Romanity of the Romanians.<sup>9</sup> This is why we can consider him a reliable source when it comes to his information about the Roman origin of the Romanians. In his synthetic work *Istoria delle moderne rivoluzioni della Valachia* (1718), the former royal secretary writes the following:

*They call themselves, in their language, Romanians, and their country, namely Wallachia, Țara Românească [literally, "The Romanian Country"], their language the Romanian language and, in fact, if there are still some who would doubt that the modern Romanian nation comes from the Romans who settled here in the colonies, may they attentively observe their language, and they will realize that the Romanian language is nothing but simply a deformation of Latin.*<sup>10</sup>

Familiarized with the ancient and medieval sources regarding the Romanity of the Romanians and having contact with the Romanians in Wallachia, Antonmaria del Chiaro mostly addresses the foreigners, who had little information on the history of this nation located at the periphery of the eastern Roman world. Those who knew ancient and medieval history, the specialists in Romance languages, had no difficulties in understanding how the miracle of the survival of the Romanians among the non-Latin people around them occurred. The foreign travelers who had no historical or philological training and who were coming from Western Europe could hardly understand how a nation that was the successor of the Romans had managed to survive north of the Danube. Their bewilderment was even greater because the voyagers found the Romanians in a difficult economic and social situation and it was hard for them to accept that this impoverished people was descended from the most powerful people in antiquity. Antonmaria del Chiaro suspected that most of the readers would doubt his claims and he urged them, especially his compatriots, to compare the Romanian language with the Latin language and notice the similarities between the two languages.

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Friedrich Schwanz von Springfels (c. 1690–1728), originally from Transylvania, was sent to Jena by Prince Francis II Rákóczi, the leader of the anti-Habsburg revolt of the years 1701–1711, to study mathematics and military engineering. On his return to Transylvania, the political realities were different, as the Habsburgs had managed to defeat Rákóczi and to pacify Transylvania. He was one of the artisans behind the construction and modernization of the road that crossed the Carpathians to Turnu Roșu, along the Olt Valley to Cozia, called Via Carolina. He spent a few months in Oltenia, which had come under Habsburg domination, to supervise the modernization of the access route from Transylvania to Habsburg Oltenia. Beyond these tasks, Captain Schwanz von Springfels had another mission, to draw up the map of Oltenia and of the boundaries with Transylvania, Wallachia and Bulgaria.<sup>11</sup> The map is accompanied by a description of both the places recorded on it and of the inhabitants, preceded by a short historical-geographic presentation. The description was intended as an explanation to the map. It came to us in two versions: one submitted on 30 April 1723 to the authorities in Vienna but finished in 1720,<sup>12</sup> and the other one, slightly different and showing a previous stage of completion, attached in 1780 to the second edition of Samuel Köleséri's work, enriched with the description of Oltenia's subsoil by Michael Schendos van der Beck, being itself a republication of the Venice edition from 1724.<sup>13</sup> In his description of Oltenia, Friedrich Schwanz von Springfels writes the following on the origin of the inhabitants:

*Therefore, the name Vlach (Wallachian) came about as a corruption of the Slavic word Vloch, and it has remained so until today. The inhabitants prefer to call themselves Romun, that is Romanians, but the Transylvanian Saxons call them Bloch, a word that comes from an erroneous quotation and reading of the word Vloch, because Romanians use in their writing and alphabet many Greek letters and instead of V (they use) B, thus, according to this common Greek way of writing Bloch instead of Vloch, they also call the people like this; this is why there's no need to derive this denomination from somewhere else, like Enea Silvio from Flaccus, because in the times when the Dacians started to rise against the Romans,*

*Augustus had to settle with keeping them away from the Romanian lands and Principalities and to banish after a famous defeat the king of the Goths [!] back to his possessions. . . . Nobody uses the name of Flacciana. That these inhabitants are the successors of the Romans can be seen in their morals and language, the latter being more similar to Latin than any other corrupted language in Italy, France or Spain.*<sup>14</sup>

Although the author has no complex philological and historical knowledge, he tries to explain in the spirit of the era the two names under which the Romanians were known in the Middle Ages. Thus, the Romanians called themselves Rumun, which means Romans or Romanians, also bearing in their name the conscience of being the successors of the Romans. In the same way, for those who would doubt this, Friedrich Schwanz von Springfels asks them to compare Romanian with Latin and thus observe the similarities between the two, another proof of the Roman origin of the Romanians. By morals the author understands the aspects of daily life, the mentalities, customs and traditions of the Romanians. Friedrich Schwanz von Springfels criticizes Enea Silvio Piccolomini's theory from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, which explains the etymology of the name Wallachian, by which the Romanians were known by foreigners. This way, the author tries to explain why the Romanians are also called Wallachians by foreigners, especially by the Slavic people, or Bloch, by the Transylvanian Saxons, without however providing a conclusive explanation. It's important that both authors bring up as an argument the language spoken by the local population in order to demonstrate the Romanity of the Romanians.

Claude-Charles de Peyssonnel (1727–1790) was also interested in the political and economic realities of Moldavia and Wallachia from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1753, at the proposal of ambassador Roland Puchot Des Alleurs, he is appointed consul of France in Crimea. As soon as he takes this office (1754), Peyssonnel starts gathering material for a work on the peoples who lived at the mouths of the Danube and on the shore of the Black Sea. He gathers sizable information regarding the Moldavian villages under the rule of the khan, and about the political, financial and commercial relations of Moldavia and Wallachia with the Tatars.<sup>15</sup> Appointed consul in Canea (Crete), in the autumn of 1758 Peyssonnel crossed Moldavia, which had been ravaged by the Tatars of Krim Giray, who had picked up 40,000 slaves, countless cows and rich loot in the space of a week. After a short stop in Jassy, in the company of his compatriot, merchant Pierre-François Linchou, Peyssonnel heads for Wallachia, stopping in Bucharest at the end of 1758.<sup>16</sup> During this trip, Peyssonnel gathers data and information regarding the Romanian Principalities, as well as their form of government and their riches. Although he is mainly concerned with identifying the resources of the two countries, and with the earnings that France could make here, in the work *Observations historiques et géographiques sur les peuples barbares qui ont habité les bords du Danube & du Pont-Euxin* we can also find some observations on the Romanians' past and origin. Using older works, the author positions himself among the ones who consider the Romanians to be the successors of the Romans, and the Romanian language as related to Italian and other Romance languages.<sup>17</sup> In his work, published several years after visiting the Romanian Principalities, the author records that

*The Romanians bear even today the name of Romans and, exiting Focșani, a city straddling the border between Moldavia and Wallachia, I was amazed to hear a peasant respond to one of my servants who had asked him where we were: “à venit domieta la tzara roumounească,” which is: Your Grace, you have come to the Kingdom or to Wallachia.*<sup>18</sup>

Without being specifically concerned with the Romanians' past, Peyssonnel brings up as a supporting argument a personal experience that he had in Focșani, on the border between Moldavia and Wallachia, where a citizen explained to his servant that he was in Wallachia, an argument deemed sufficient by the author to claim that Romanians had the conscience of their Romanity.

Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711–1787) of Ragusa (Croatia), one of the most brilliant scientists of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, born to a mother of Italian origin and a Serbian father, accompanied Lord Porter, an English diplomat, from Constantinople through Bulgaria, Dobruja and Moldavia. He wrote a *Journal* (1784) in which he describes the places he crossed, providing us with precious information.<sup>19</sup> Crossing Dobruja, in the summer of 1752, Boscovich stayed overnight in Satu Nou, where he met “Christian residents who were speaking Romanian, a very different language from Bulgarian. It’s a mixture of various languages, especially Italian and Latin”<sup>20</sup> and when he arrived in Jassy, he wrote the following on the language of the country:

*The country’s language is a mixture of various languages. It has something from Slavic, from Turkish; but most of it is taken from Latin and Italian and one can find many of those Italian words, derived from the Latin ones, just as one can also find many Latin words that changed [even] in the same way in which the Italians inserted them in their current language. This made me believe that the origin of such great similarity between their language and Latin mustn’t be derived from the old Roman colonies or from their exiles, or from the first centuries of the church, as many told me there, but rather from the trade they made with Italians several centuries earlier, and from their colonies.*<sup>21</sup>

In this case, Roger Joseph Boscovich doesn’t challenge the Latinity of the language, but only the fact that it stemmed from the Romanization of the province of Dacia by Emperor Trajan. According to the scholar, the major influence of Latin over the Romanian language would be due to Romanians’ contact with Italian merchants in the Middle Ages; this would also explain the numerous Italian words in the Romanian language, a theory which is however not in accordance with historical truth. It’s also worth mentioning that, according to the author, the Romanians he met in Jassy had the conscience of being the successors of the Romans, and that the language they spoke had the Latin language as its foundation, an aspect challenged by the author.

Abbot François-Xavier de Feller, a member of the Jesuit Order, was born on 18 August 1735 in Brussels.<sup>22</sup> He served for a while as rhetoric professor in various cities of Belgium, in Luxembourg and Liège, and, after the suppression of his order, in 1773, he devoted himself to the career of publicist. De Feller arrived in Hungary on 15 May 1765 and settled in the following year in Monok, as a preceptor of Count Miklós Andrassy’s children.<sup>23</sup> Here he met Count d’Ybarra, general director of the mines in Transylvania,

who invited him to Bistrița (Bistritz, Beszterce), where his residence was. There de Feller would spend most of this trip. During the voyage to Transylvania, he recorded his impressions almost every day.<sup>24</sup>

Abbot François-Xavier de Feller followed the route from Szolnok to Košice, Debrecen and Oradea (Großwardein, Nagyvárad), entered Transylvania, arriving in Cluj (Klausenburg, Kolozsvár), and then in Bistrița. On the way, the Jesuit monk met the Romanians, towards whom he showed a certain reluctance, due to the advice received from the authorities.<sup>25</sup> On his trip from Oradea to Cluj, he was accompanied by some Romanians and, following the experiences of the voyage in their company, some of his negative impressions towards them would change. The Romanians often appear in the accounts of our traveler in different positions and situations, and on one such occasion he speaks about their origin and language. Thus, when entering Maramureș, the abbot writes the following in his travel journal:

*I have seen multiple times in Szolnok groups of Ruthenians and Romanians who live in Maramureș. These people are Orthodox Christians, but united with the Roman Church. . . . The other Romanians, who live in Banat and Transylvania, are mostly schismatic and much crueler than those in Maramureș. . . . Ruthenians speak the Muscovite language, which is a Slavic language. Romanians have their language, which is very similar to Italian. They claim they are a Roman colony, which is very likely.<sup>26</sup>*

The abbot is well informed about the origin and religious affiliation of the Romanians. For instance, he knows that the Romanians in Maramureș became united with Church of Rome, which made them more open to new things. They are presented in contrast with the Romanians in Banat, whom the author deems cruel. The voyager's negative image of the Romanians in Banat most likely stems from the religious movements led by Visarion Sarai and Sofronie from Cioara, connected with the Serbian hierarchy in Karlowitz. It's known that, especially after the last movement against the unification with the Church of Rome in 1759–1761, most of the Romanians reverted to Orthodoxy. The abbot's trip took place three years after the religious conscription made by the imperial authorities among the Romanians in Transylvania, and the events that had taken place were still fresh in the mind of the authorities. Our traveler manages to notice the differences between Romanians and Ruthenians, even if both peoples were Orthodox, a part of them coming under the authority of the Church of Rome. The element that differentiates them, in the abbot's opinion, is the language spoken by the two nations. The Romanians have their language, which very much resembles Italian, while the Ruthenians speak the Muscovite language, a Slavic one. A second argument employed by de Feller is the Romanians' awareness of their Roman origin, the local people claiming to be the successors of the Roman colonists.

Abbot de Feller, when entering Transylvania, probably also under the influence of the Romanian porters who accompanied him in the Criș Defile, whom he came to know better after he heard them talking and saw how they acted and thought, writes the following on the origin of Romanians:



*It seems certain that these Romanians are a Roman colony, as they say. Noi suntem romani: Nos sumus Romani (We are Romans). Their language resembles Italian, French, Latin; some words are not the same, ox, cow etc. Others are similar, like foc (from focus)—fire, apa (from aqua)—water, gât (from gutur)—neck, feintana (fontaine)—fountain, bună seara (bons soir)—good evening. In this rhapsodic language one can find Hungarian, German, Slavic, Greek, etc. words. Their greeting is “good health.” Their accent and tone are truly Italian, although less delicate. Their script is Greek, a bit modified, the way Serbians use it. In Blaj [Blasendorf, Balázsfalva], in Transylvania, there is a Romanian printing press.<sup>27</sup>*

If, when leaving Hungary, when meeting the Romanians from Maramureș, our traveler doesn't know that they are the successors of the Romans, after familiarizing himself with the Romanian population, the author becomes convinced of that. He thus declares every time about Romanians that they are the descendants of the Romans, providing as an argument the language they speak, the traveler himself comparing words from Romanian with the ones in Latin and noting that some of them are identical. The author opines that Romanians preserved their ethnic identity with the help of their language, and some of them, especially those who attended schools, among them the Roman Catholic Romanians, have the conscience of being the successors of the Romans.

From Giovanni Crisostomo di Giovanni, a Greek born in Zagora, Thessaly, who joined the Franciscan Order, we have his answer to the Propaganda Questionnaire, along with his report as prefect regarding the Catholic missions in Moldavia. From the answer provided by the author to question number 54, we find out that “Everyone speaks the Moldavian language because it is a very easy language, much more so than any other, comprised mostly of Latin and Italian.”<sup>28</sup>

François Baron de Tott (1733–1793) was the son of a Hungarian rebel who sought refuge and settled in France after the defeat of Rákóczi's anti-Habsburg movement in 1711. On the occasion of his mission to Crimea, Baron de Tott passed through Moldavia, first when he was heading towards his destination in 1767 (September), and then, when leaving Crimea, he crossed on horse the south of Bessarabia and Dobruja, on his way to Constantinople. These trips are described in the work *Mémoires du Baron de Tott, sur les Turcs et les Tartares*, published in Amsterdam, in 1784, and in Paris, in 1785. In this work, de Tott makes the following observation: “Moldavia and Wallachia were in ancient times a Roman colony. Even today people speak there a broken Latin and this language is called ‘Roumiè,’ the Romanian language.”<sup>29</sup> In this case, too, the traveler correctly notices the Romanity of the Romanians, the fact that the language spoken by them is a broken Latin; more correct would be to say that it is a type of Latin that went through the complex process found everywhere in Europe in the formation of new languages and peoples.

Ignaz von Born (1742–1791), a renowned Austrian mineralogist, was born on 26 December 1742 in Alba Iulia (Weißenburg, Gyulafehérvár), where his father was a mining engineer, but at the age of 8 he leaves Transylvania. He studies philosophy in Vienna, enters the Jesuit Order, but leaves it soon after. He then moves to Prague, where he studies law. From here, he embarks on a long journey, through Germany, France and the Netherlands, after which he returns to Prague, where he abandons law and pursues

the study of natural sciences, mineralogy and mining. Very soon after, he comes to be known in the scientific world, becomes a member of the scientific academies or societies in Stockholm, Siena, Padua and London. He didn't however limit himself to specialized studies.<sup>30</sup> He had a serious general knowledge and spoke multiple languages. Besides his scientific activity, he concerned himself with literature and even history.

At the beginning of his scientific career, in 1770, he sets off on a study trip in Banat and Transylvania. He first explores the mines in Upper Hungary, then heads towards Banat. He passes through Pest and Szeged, and at the beginning of June arrives in Timișoara (Temeswar, Temesvár), where he stays for ten days, after which he visits the rest of Banat, studying, among others, with great interest the mines in Sasca, and the foundries in Bocșa (Bokschan, Boksánbánya). In the first half of June he leaves Banat and explores the mines in Săcărâmb (Nagyág), Zlatna (Klein Schlatten, Zalatna), Baia Mare (Frauenbach, Nagybánya), and Baia Sprie (Mittelstadt, Felsőbánya).<sup>31</sup> On this trip, in the first part of his expedition, Ignaz von Born meets the Romanians from Banat. The mineralogist preferred to record his impressions in the form of the letters sent to Johann Jakob Ferber, a famous mineralogist of that time. In the third letter sent from Timișoara on 20 June 1770, he writes the following:

*The inhabitants of Bannat are Raizes, Wallachians, and a fourth part Germans. The Raizes are said to be originally a Scythian people, in former times inhabiting Dacia, now called Servia. They call themselves Srbi. Their language is a corrupt Sclavonian or Illyric dialect. The origin of the Wallachians is less certain. They call themselves Romun, a word which in their language equally signifies a Roman and a remaining man, and makes it doubtful whether they are the remnant of Roman colonies, or of a people conquered by the Romans. The Roman medals, tombs, and other monuments, found in the mountainous parts, and near the Danube, are valuable evidence of they having been in former times subjects of the Romans, in either sense. Even their language, which in greater Wallachia (Zara more) is spoken very crudely, while in Transylvania (Ardellia) has the reputation of being spoken very elegantly, is a corrupt Latin. However, I do not conceive how so many Italian words, such as aramă (copper), mâncare (food) and many more, which have no connection with Latin, came to be used by them. The termination of their words in general, and the conjugations in the Italian manner, have been mixed into the language of this nation.<sup>32</sup>*

From the records made by Ignaz von Born it doesn't result that he challenged the fact that the Romans conquered Dacia and Romanized the province. The doubts of this mineralogist with autodidactic preoccupations for history are related to the fact that the Romanians are the successors of the Roman colonists or of the conquered and Romanized Dacian population. Although he was a polyglot, the voyager didn't understand the complexity of the Romanization phenomenon in the province of Roman Dacia and in the regions north of the Danube. The archaeological discoveries of Roman and post-Roman nature, the presence of numerous words from Latin in the Romanian language, as well as the Roman conscience of the Romanians, also proved by their name, were evidence of the direct connection between Romans and Romanians. Ignaz von Born didn't



understand the complex phenomenon of the apparition of new peoples and languages in Europe, following the contact with the Slavic populations in the East and the Germans in the West. Thus, if the Romanians north and south of the Danube were born from the Eastern Roman world, the Italians, French, Spanish and Portuguese were born from the Western one. In this equation, the numerous Italian words existing in Romanian were inherited from Latin, and some of them find themselves in both Italian and Romanian. Those with no Latin origin come either from German or Slavic, comprising the superstrate of the two languages, respectively.

A record on the origin of the Romanians, nevertheless without mentioning that they are the descendants of the Romans, was made by Joseph II in the “Report on the Trip Through Transylvania” in the spring and summer of 1773. The report drafted by the sovereign is a synthesis of the problems he found in Banat, Transylvania and Maramureş, accompanied by a list of solutions proposed to Maria Theresa, but it also contains the following passage:

*These poor Romanian subjects, who without a doubt are the oldest and most numerous inhabitants of Transylvania, are so tormented and overwhelmed with injustices by everyone, either by the Hungarians or the Transylvanian Saxons, that if you truly investigate their fate, it is pitiful . . .*<sup>33</sup>

The account of the soon-to-be emperor highlights the difficult situation of the Romanians in Transylvania, subjected to the abuses of the Hungarian nobility and Saxon aristocracy, the emperor also mentioning the ancientness and number of this people. The ancientness and number of Romanians will be two of the arguments that Bishop Inochentie Micu will rely on when requesting to the imperial authorities and the Transylvanian Diet a status for the Romanians equal to that of the other nations in the province.

Friedrich Wilhelm von Bauer (or Bawr) was born in 1731 in Bieber, Germany. An officer during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774, Friedrich Wilhelm von Bauer spent some time in Wallachia and Moldavia. He drafted the project of a big geographical and military atlas, to serve as an introduction to the history of the war in which he was already participating. With the help of his staff officers, he drew the maps of the provinces on whose territory the war took place, namely Moldavia, Wallachia, Podolia, Volhynia, Crimea, Bulgaria and the Straits, as well as the main battle lines, like, for instance, the siege of the fortresses of Khotyn, Tighina (Bender), Cetatea Albă (Akkerman), Kilia, Brăila, Giurgiu etc. He also left us a description of Wallachia, *Mémoires historiques et géographiques sur la Valachie, avec un Prospectus d'un Atlas Géographique & militaire de la dernière guerre entre la Russie et la Porte Ottomane*, published in 1778. In the subchapter regarding the inhabitants, the author makes numerous considerations on their language and origin.<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm von Bauer acknowledges the Romanians' Roman origin, as a result of the conquest of Dacia by the armies led by Trajan and of the Romanization of the regions north of the Danube. Proof in this regard are the Romanians' conscience of being the successors of the Romans, the name of Roman being proudly kept by the inhabitants, as well as the Latin origin of the language they speak. The German officer notices that numerous foreign influences, especially Slavic, entered Romanian, which led

to its alteration, without however modifying its structure, as it remained a language of Latin origin. In this case, too, the historical evidence is complemented by linguistic arguments and by elements related to the Romanians considering themselves the successors of the Romans. Wilhelm von Bauer also remarks that foreigners call Romanians by the name of *Vlach* (Wallachian), a term of Slavic origin, the Romanians, like other European peoples, having two names, one by which they call themselves, and the other by which foreigners call them. Romanians call themselves by the ethnonym *român* (Romanian), of course, with the different variations *rumun*, *rumân*, etc., proof of the Roman origin of Romanians.

The Venetian Francesco Grisellini (1717–1787), a cartographer and naturalist, stayed between the years 1774 and 1776 in Banat, being the author of an *History of Banat* (1780).<sup>35</sup> The first months of his stay were devoted to excursions and study trips. In June and August 1774, he stays in Lipova (Lippa) and Caransebeș (Karansebesch, Karánsebes). In April 1775, he explores the Banat Mountains in the Caransebeș region, attentively observing, alongside the scientific and geographical conditions, the realities related to the population and its way of life. In June and July, he sails from Timișoara to Orșova (Orschowa, Orsova). In the following year, he visits the plains region. This is when he finishes the map of Banat, on which he had been working for some time. When, at the end of 1776, Joseph Karl of Brigido was named commissioner plenipotentiary (vice governor) of the Kingdom of Galicia and replaced in Banat by his brother, Pompeo of Brigido, Grisellini left Banat, too.<sup>36</sup> In the seventh letter sent to Baron Pompeo of Brigido, “On the Romanians Living in Banat,” Francesco Grisellini writes the following: “[About the name of Wallachians]. One thing is certain, that this nation never attributes this name to itself: they call themselves *rumuni* or *rumagnesch* and prove enough through their language that they are of Roman origin.”<sup>37</sup> In other words, Grisellini, who spent three years in Banat, knows that the Romanians call themselves *rumuni*, but that foreigners call them Wallachians; moreover, the Romanians prove through their language, as the other authors also observed, that they are of Roman origin. In this case, too, the Romanians’ name, as well as the language they speak, are conclusive proof of their Romanity.

Alexandre Maurice Blanc de Lanautte, Count d’Hauterive (1754–1830), during his stay in Moldavia, drafted three materials regarding this principality, namely *The Journal of the Trip from Constantinople to Jassy (February–March 1785)*, *Memoir on the State of Moldavia in 1785*, and *Memoir on the State of Moldavia in 1787*, presented to ruler Alexander Ypsilantis. In the work *Memoir on the State of Moldavia in 1785*, the author makes several considerations about the Roman origin of the Romanians and about the kinship between Romanians and Italians, starting from the language they speak.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, he also includes several entries on the origin of the Romanians in the *Memoir on the State of Moldavia in 1787*.<sup>39</sup> In the same document, the French author also talks about the language spoken by Romanians:

*It would be a pity for the Moldavian language to die, because it is the last remnant of the steadfast Roman way of life. It is the same Roman language, only not that of Cicero and of the century of Augustus. It is much older than that. The Moldavian language is that of*

*Romulus's soldiers, it has kept the roughness of their customs and all the rudeness of their behavior.*<sup>40</sup>

In his turn, the journalist Jean-Louis Carra (1742–1793) writes the following on the Romanian language:

*The Romanian and Moldavian languages are, with a few exceptions, one and the same language. This language is derived from Latin: pâine—pane (bread), mâine—mane (tomorrow), apa—aqua (water), vin—vinum, vinut (wine), and partly from Slavic and Russian: slugă = servitor (servant), prăpădit (miserable) from prapal = pierdut (lost), from Polish: voivoda = voievod, prinț (voivode).*<sup>41</sup>

General Louis Alexandre Andrault de Langeron (1763–1831), of French origin, enters the Russian service by participating in the Russo-Turkish wars waged in the Romanian Principalities. In the work *Journal of the Campaigns Made in the Service of Russia*, drafted in 1790, the general makes a few short observations on the origin of the Romanians in Moldavia and Wallachia.<sup>42</sup> The French officer acquired this information from better prepared authors who wrote about the origin of the Romanians, which he checked on the spot, in the two years he spent in the Romanian Principalities. In essence, de Langeron correctly understands the conquest and Romanization of the Roman Dacia province. He has no problem in acknowledging the Romanity of the Romanians, but disagrees with the fact that Romanians are the successors of the colonists brought in Dacia. He considers, starting from the social status of the Romanians in the principalities during the Phanariots, that the Romans who colonized in Dacia were corrupted by alien elements, especially by nomads. This accounted for the difficult social and cultural situation of the Romanians he knew. Some of the information presented in the work is not accurate, in the way it is described by General Langeron, especially the fact that the province of Dacia, conquered by the Romans, was depleted of its local population. Langeron, like the vast majority of foreign travelers who approach the problem of the Romanity of the Romanians, notices the fact that Romanians had the conscience of the fact that they were the successors of the Romans and that the Romanian language is derived from Latin.<sup>43</sup>

We find some information on the name of the Romanians in Stefano Raicevich's (1739–1792) work, *Osservazioni storiche, naturali, e politiche intorno la Valachia e Moldavia* (Naples, 1788). Discussing the origin of the Romanians, Raicevich, following Franz Josef Sulzer's point of view, considers that the political elite in Wallachia and Moldavia was of Slavic origin, and the Romanians, the successors of the Romans and Dacians,<sup>44</sup> called themselves *Roumones* or *Romani*, to distinguish themselves from the nobles, who called themselves boyars.<sup>45</sup> According to the author, the successors of the Romans had an inferior status in comparison to the political elite of Slavic origin. The theory of the existence of an elite among the conquerors and the subjects, who were descended from the Romanized population, was however ruled out by recent research.

Charles-Marie d'Irumberry, Count of Salaberry, was born in Paris, on 6 September 1766. Right after the onset of the French Revolution, he leaves Paris, on 5 October

1790, goes to Vienna and, from there, to Turkey through Hungary. After a short stay in Constantinople, which he leaves on 19 April 1791, he heads towards Malta, Naples and Marseille, where he arrives in November 1791. Salaberry published his travel impressions under the title *Voyage à Constantinople, en Italie, et aux îles de l'Archipel, par l'Allemagne et la Hongrie*, issued in Paris in 1799, in an epistolary format. He follows Raicevich in the description of the Romanians' origin.<sup>46</sup>

William Hunter and his brother passed through the Romanian Principalities in the summer of 1792, on a business trip. In the journal in which he recorded his travels we can also find some information on the local population.<sup>47</sup> The author learned from the Romanians that they were the successors of the Romans, but this unfortunately doesn't enable them to have remarkable achievements. Without having a philological preparation, William Hunter bases his claim on the information and data gathered from the locals.

Count Johann Centurius von Hoffmannsegg (1766–1849), who belonged to an old Rammenau family from Saxony, was passionate about natural sciences. At the end of July 1794, the count of Hoffmannsegg arrives in Mehadia, after a trip in which he received all the necessary permits from the military-administrative authorities, given that the region he was crossing was part of the border guard districts, being subjected to a special regime.<sup>48</sup> Johann von Hoffmannsegg's work was published in 1800 under the form of letters sent by the author to his sister, Mrs. von Kleist.<sup>49</sup> About the Romanians, the author writes the following:

*This nation, rightfully considered the successor of the old Roman colonies and which was very numerous in these regions, comprises the population of a great part of Banat and Transylvania. They [the Romanians] have their own language, which is completely unique and obviously derived from Latin, and very similar to a broken Italian. In this language, they don't call themselves Wallachians, but Romanians.*<sup>50</sup>

Johann von Hoffmannsegg, a naturalist by profession, correctly understands the complex process behind the Romanians' origin. In this case, the traveler of German origin came into contact with the Romanians from Banat and Transylvania. The evidence regarding the Romanity of the Romanians is, from the author's point of view, the language they speak, but also their conscience of being of Roman origin. Moreover, the traveler notices the fact that the inhabitants call themselves Romanian, not Wallachians, the way foreigners call them.

The classicist geologist and ancient text editor James Dallaway was born in Bristol, on 20 February 1763. After attending Trinity College in Oxford, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in theology, in 1784, he becomes vicar in Rodmarton and then in Rodborough, in Gloucestershire. James Dallaway leaves London on 20 March 1794, accompanying Sir Robert Liston, the new ambassador to Constantinople. The English delegation would arrive in the Turkish capital on 19 May 1794. At the end of April and the beginning of May, the English travelers crossed Transylvania and Wallachia. James Dallaway recorded in the work, *Constantinople, Ancient and Modern, with Excursions to the Shores and Islands of the Archipelago and to the Troad*, published in London in 1797,

the following information on the Romanians: “As descendants of the colonists of Trajan, they still call themselves Romans and their language is a mixture of Latin and Slavic, the first being very altered. At the Court, modern Greek and Turkish prevail.”<sup>51</sup> James Dallaway, a good connoisseur of classical languages, also notices the Romanity of the Romanians, having as a starting point ancient information on the conquest and colonization of Dacia, but also the direct observations regarding the language spoken by Romanians. The English scholar notices the presence of words of Latin and Slavic origin, but also the fact that the official languages and the languages of culture in the Romanian Principalities under the Phanariots were Greek and Turkish.

Andreas Wolf, a physician by profession and of German origin, a native of Transylvania, was called two times, between 1780 and the beginning of 1783, and between 1788 and 1797, by the voivodes of Moldavia to treat some members of their family.<sup>52</sup> He had the opportunity to visit the country extensively and to observe with his own eyes the local realities.

*The Romanian nation was born from a mixture of old Thracians, of Romans and Slavs . . . . Thus, their language can be considered a single main branch that bears the name of Romanian . . . I was very much surprised during the first days of my stay in Moldavia, when I heard people speaking Romanian and I was still asked: Do you speak Moldavian? And I answered: I speak Romanian, but not Moldavian. I was told, indeed, that it is the same language, only that many words differ (in subdialectal pronunciation) from those in the Romanian language of Transylvania.*<sup>53</sup>

A Transylvanian Saxon, Andreas Wolf learned Romanian and managed to identify the dialectal differences between the types of Romanian spoken in the three countries. From the humanist authors to the illuminist ones, he gathered information regarding the Romanity and ethnogenesis of the Romanians. Andreas Wolf is the only traveler who speaks in his records about the Dacian substrate, the Roman stratum and the Slavic adstrate.

Robert Murray Keith (1730–1795), a career diplomat and representative of Great Britain at the Peace Congress in Svishtov, also made reference to the Latin origin of the Romanian language, when he met the Romanians in 1790.<sup>54</sup>

Edward Daniel Clarke (1769–1822), a clergyman, naturalist, mineralogist and traveler of English origin, during a trip of professional training as a preceptor through the Tsarist and Ottoman Empires, also transits the Romanian world, on his way back home. He obtains information from the political elite in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, as well as from the numerous works consulted after returning to his homeland. On the local population in the Principalities, he writes the following:

*Nothing seemed to us more worthy of our attention than their language. It is not enough to say that it is very closely related to Latin: in many aspects, it is a clean Latin, the difference between our way of speaking Latin and their way being only the pronunciation. All the names of useful objects for travelers, especially supplies, are Latin. What is the reason behind this, if not the colonists sent by the Romans to this country? . . . The current local population call themselves Romanian, pronounce the word like the Greeks, with the Omega sound . . .*<sup>55</sup>



Edward Daniel Clarke, who crossed the Romanian Principalities in the space of several weeks, insists, like most of the travelers, on language as an element of ethnic identity. The Latin language is for the English traveler more than a mere language that Romanian descends from, it is even a clean Latin, due to the numerous words that were preserved in Romanian. The explanation for this situation is simple for the voyager, namely the colonization of Dacia by a Romanized population. Furthermore, an important element is the affiliation to the Roman civilization, preserved through the name Romanian. In other words, the Romanian language, which is overwhelmingly Latin, and the Romanians' name are evidence of the Roman origin of the Romanians.

In his turn, Vince Batthyány (1772–1827), imperial adviser, a passionate traveler with a fine intellect, roamed both the Habsburg Empire and several foreign lands and countries, arriving in Bucharest, on his way to Constantinople. In the trip undertaken in the year 1801, he passed through Transylvania and Wallachia, along the route Sibiu, Turnu Roșu, Pitești, Curtea de Argeș, Bucharest, Siliștră, Varna. The author manages to generally piece together the history of the places he crossed, as well as that of the Romanians, the majority inhabitants of the Romanian Principalities.<sup>56</sup> Afterwards, the author, relying upon direct observations made about the Romanians, makes the following considerations:

*In Comloș we were amused to see a bunch of Romanians seated in a group and playing cards, loud and quarrelsome, providing along with their language hard evidence of their resemblance to the Italians, who are always busy in the main cities of Italy.*<sup>57</sup>

In other words, Vince Batthyány, alongside the language spoken by Romanians, very similar to Latin, takes into account their behavior and attitude, similar to those of the Italians, to whom they are related. About the language, the author knows very well that it is the successor of Latin, due to the Romanization of this province.<sup>58</sup>

Adam Neale (1780–1832), a military doctor of Scottish origin, crossed Wallachia and Moldavia in 1804. He makes the following observations about the Romanian population in these provinces:

*The costume and warlike appearance of the Moldovans are striking as a picturesque, they remained almost the same as in the time when Hadrian . . . victoriously brought the Dacian ancestors to the Roman capitol, which the Roman artists carved in bas-relief on the Column of Trajan. The color of their hats distinguishes them from the Romanians in Wallachia, whose fur hats are black, while those of the Romanians in Moldavia are white. Their speech is as rough and manly as their looks, being composed of Latin words mixed with Slavic and Turkish words.*<sup>59</sup>

Adam Neale is well informed about the province's past. He knows that the province of Dacia was colonized with a Romanized population, and that the Romanians speak a language of Latin origin, with numerous Slavic and Turkish terms. Quite interesting is the use of the information on Trajan's Column regarding the garb, the traveler remarking the similarities between the traditional garb of the Dacians and that of the Romanians.

On the same note write Charles-Frédéric Reinhard (1761–1837), general consul of France, with the residence in Jassy, in 1806,<sup>60</sup> and Armand Charles, Count Guilleminot (1774–1840), a French officer sent by Napoleon to Wallachia.<sup>61</sup> Charles-Frédéric Reinhard underlines the fact that the Romanians speak a language of Latin origin, but write in Slavic, because the political and social elite is of Slavic origin.<sup>62</sup> Adam Neale, recounting his trip throughout Moldavia in 1805, erroneously considers the Romanians to be speaking Latin, due to the similarities between the two languages.

## Conclusions

**T**HE ACCOUNTS of the foreign travelers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the following century are full of observations regarding the language spoken by the inhabitants of the Romanian lands. For the period of time analyzed, namely the one between the years 1710 and 1810, we identified the accounts of 171 travelers who crossed the Romanian space. Only 27 of them refer to the origin of and the language spoken by Romanians. Of the travelers who talk about the Romanity of the Romanians, 12 have liberal professions, 8 are diplomats, 6 are officers, and one is a merchant.

All the travelers consider the Romanian language to be the successor of Latin, based on the similarities between the two. The Latinity of the Romanian language is, for this era, a fact accepted by all the travelers who write about the origin of the Romanians.

The travelers who write about the Romanian space use various documentary sources, especially historical, geographical, and philological ones. To these older sources, we can add numerous works published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially on history and geography, featuring information on the origin and language of the Romanian people. Other travelers, less instructed, gather their information directly from Romanians, remarking with surprise that this country speaks a language that many of them, especially the Italians, can understand. Therefore, most of the voyagers come to the conclusion that the Romanian language is the successor of Latin.

The scholars, those who have liberal professions, are closer to the truth, managing to understand the process of formation of the Romanian language, with its three main components: the Dacian substrate, the Latin stratum, and the Slavic adstrate. Among the voyagers that wrote about the origin of Romanians, 22 clearly established that Romanian emerged from Latin, while 21 also spoke about the origin of the Romanians, which they correctly retraced, considering them the successors of the Roman colonists settled in Dacia. For all the travelers who arrived in the Romanian Principalities, the language spoken by Romanians represents the decisive element in determining their origin. Historical data, such as archaeological sources or ancient and medieval chronicles, which talk about the Roman origin of the Romanians, are of secondary importance when it comes to identifying the Romanians as the successors of the Romans. Most of the travelers managed to correctly piece together the ethnogenesis and glotogenesis, as well as the presence of numerous Slavic and Turkish words in Wallachia and Moldavia, and of Hungarian and German ones in Transylvania. We also have five foreign travelers who

managed to distinguish between the name Romanian, used by the people themselves, and that of Wallachian, only used by foreigners when referring to them. This aspect is, in their opinion, an argument in favor of their Romanity. □

## Notes

1. See Călin Felezeu, *Statutul Principatului Transilvaniei în raporturile cu Poarta Otomană (1541–1688)* (Cluj-Napoca, 1996), 107–119; D. Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Válahorum: Din istoria formării națiunii române*, new edition, with additions and clarifications (Bucharest, 1984), 134; Mathias Bernath, *Habsburgii și începuturile formării națiunii române*, translated by Marionela Wolf, foreword by Pompiliu Teodor (Cluj-Napoca, 1994), 87.
2. See Vasile Arvinte, *Român, românesc, România*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Bacău, 2004); Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor: Istoria unei idei*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Bucharest, 2012); Ioan-Aurel Pop, *De la romani la români: Pledoarie pentru latinitate* (Bucharest–Chișinău, 2019).
3. Neagu Djuvara, *Între Orient și Occident: Țările Române la începutul epocii moderne (1800–1848)*, translated by Maria Carpov (Bucharest, 1995), 41–58; Pompiliu Eliade, *Influența franceză asupra spiritului public în România: Originile: Studiu asupra stării societății românești în vremea domniilor fanariote*, translated by Aurelia Dumitrașcu, 2<sup>nd</sup> comprehensive and revised edition (Bucharest, 2000), 121–125; Pop, 18–19; Lucian Boia, *România, țară de frontieră a Europei*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Bucharest, 2012), 27–56; Paul Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească văzută de călători străini (sec. XV–XVIII)* (Bucharest, 1973), 39–59.
4. The analysis was carried out especially based on the following documentary sources: *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 8, edited by Maria Holban (lead editor), M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest, 1983); *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 9, edited by Maria Holban, M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest, 1997); Petre P. Panaitescu, *Călători poloni în Țările Române* (Bucharest, 1930); N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor prin călători*, edited by Adrian Angheliescu (Bucharest, 1981); *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 10/1, edited by Maria Holban, Maria M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest, 2000); *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 10/2, edited by Maria Holban, Maria M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest, 2001); *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 1 (1801–1821), edited by Georgeta Filitti, Beatrice Marinescu, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, and Marian Stroia (Bucharest, 2004); *Călători străini despre Țările Române: Supliment II*, edited by Ștefan Andreescu (Bucharest, 2016); Ioan Horga and Sorin Șipoș, *De la “Mica” la “Marea Europă”: Mărturii franceze de la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea și începutul secolului al XIX-lea despre frontiera măsăriteană a Europei: Studii și documente/De la “Petite” à la “Grande Europe”: Témoignages français de la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> et du début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle sur la frontière orientale de l’Europe: Etudes et documents*, French translation by Delia-Maria Radu (Oradea, 2006).



5. Gilles Bertrand, "Voyager dans l'Europe des années 1680–1780," in *Les Circulations internationales en Europe, années 1680–années 1780*, edited by Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire and Pierrick Pourchasse (Rennes, 2010), 247. To see: Édouard Thomas Charton, *Voyageurs anciens et modernes ou Choix des relations de voyages les plus intéressantes et les plus instructives depuis le cinquième siècle avant Jésus-Christ jusqu'au dix-neuvième siècle, avec biographies, notes et indications iconographiques: Voyageurs du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1863); id., *Voyageurs anciens et modernes ou Choix des relations de voyages les plus intéressantes et les plus instructives depuis le cinquième siècle avant Jésus-Christ jusqu'au dix-neuvième siècle, avec biographies, notes et indications iconographiques: Voyageurs modernes: Quinzième siècle et commencement du seizième* (Paris, 1865); Edmond Bonnaffé, *Voyages et voyageurs de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1895).
6. An analysis of the accounts left by the French travelers to the Romanian Principalities can be found in Paul Cernovodeanu, "Les Voyageurs français en présence des réalités roumaines de la période phanariote," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 13, 5–6 (1974): 737.
7. See C. Boroiianu, "Antonmaria del Chiaro," *Studia bibliologica* (Bucharest) 3 (1969): 115–132.
8. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 8: 368.
9. *Ibid.*, 366.
10. Anton-Maria del Chiaro Fiorentino, *Revoluțiile Valahiei*, translated by S. Cris-Cristian, with an introduction by N. Iorga (Iași, 1929), 7; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 8: 366; Iorga, 314; Armbruster, 210; Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească*, 54.
11. Additional information in Friedrich Schwanz von Springfels, *Descrierea Olteniei la 1723*, edited by Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan (Brăila–Cluj-Napoca, 2017).
12. *Ibid.*, 63.
13. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 8: 43; von Springfels, 117–119.
14. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 8: 46; von Springfels, 117–119.
15. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 9: 391.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Charles de Peyssonnel, *Observations historiques et géographiques sur les peuples barbares qui ont habité les bords du Danube & du Pont-Euxin* (Paris, 1765), 192–195.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 9: 452–454.
20. *Giornale di un viaggio da Costantinopoli in Polonia dell'abate Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich Con una sua Relazione delle rovine di Troja* (Bassano, 1784), 86; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 9: 460; Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească*, 55.
21. Boscovich, 126–127; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 9: 477.
22. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 10, 242–243.
23. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 9: 556.
24. *Ibid.*
25. "The priest wanted to try out my magnifier and to inspect my medal; I told him right away, through the translator, that it was made of copper, being afraid of getting killed in the woods that I had to cross, if he knew it was made of gold; because I had been warned in this regard. But I then noticed that this fear was pointless, and vain, like others with which some tried to influence me." *Ibid.*, 560.
26. *Ibid.*, 558.

27. Ibid., 560.
28. Ibid., 450.
29. *Mémoires du baron de Tott, sur les Turcs et les Tartares*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Part (Amsterdam, 1784), 54; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 9: 609.
30. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/1: 90.
31. Ibid.
32. *Travels Through the Bannat of Temeswar, Transylvania, and Hungary, In the Year 1770. Described in a Series of Letters to Prof. Ferber; on the Mines and Mountains of these Different Countries, by Baron Inigo Born, Counsellor of the Royal Mines, in Bohemia*, translated from the German by R. E. Raspe (London, 1777), 14; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/1: 95.
33. Ileana Bozac and Teodor Pavel, *Călătoria împăratului Iosif al II-lea în Transilvania la 1773*/Die Reise Kaisers Josephs II. durch Siebenbürgen im Jahre 1773, vol. 2 (Cluj-Napoca, 2011), 92.
34. *Mémoires historiques et géographiques sur la Valachie, avec un Prospectus d'un Atlas Géographique & militaire de la dernière guerre entre la Russie et la Porte Ottomane, publiés par Monsieur de B\*\*\** (Frankfurt-Leipzig, 1778), 18–19; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/1: 149.
35. *Lettere odepориче di Francesco Grisellini . . . ove i suoi viaggi e le di lui osservazioni spettanti all'istoria naturale, ai costumi di vari popoli e sopra più altri interessanti oggetti si descrivono, Giuntevi parecchie Memorie dello Stesso Autore che riguardano le Scienze e le Arti utili*, vol. 1, edited and introduction by Angela Lasorsa (n.p., 2008), III; Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească*, 58.
36. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/1: 385.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 692; Nicolae Isar, *Mărturii și preocupări franceze privitoare la români: Secolele XVIII–XIX* (Bucharest, 2005), 17.
39. *Memoriu despre starea Moldovei la 1787 de comitele d'Hauterive* (Bucharest, 1902), 79.
40. Ibid., 253.
41. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/1: 251; Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească*, 56.
42. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/2: 939.
43. Ibid.
44. Stefano Raicevich, *Voyage en Valachie et en Moldavie, avec des observations sur l'histoire, la physique et la politique, augmenté de notes et additions pour l'intelligence de divers points essentiels*, translated from the Italian by J. M. Lejeune (Paris, 1822), XV.
45. Ibid., 4–5.
46. Charles-Marie d'Irumbery de Salaberry, *Voyage à Constantinople, en Italie, et aux îles de l'Archipel, par l'Allemagne et la Hongrie* (Paris, 1799), 105.
47. “The natives, however, are proud of their origin, which they trace back to the Romans in ancient times. It’s a pity that this pride doesn’t inspire them to undertake something worthy of such famous ancestors.” *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 10/2: 1106.
48. Ibid., 1179.
49. Ibid., 1180.

50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 1215.
52. Ibid., 1266.
53. Ibid.
54. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, suppl. II, 385; Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească*, 57.
55. E. D. Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, vol. 8, *Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (London, 1818), 250; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 1: 59.
56. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 1: 72.
57. Ibid., 80.
58. Ibid., 98.
59. Ibid., 182.
60. Ibid., 250.
61. Horga and Șipoș, 47; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 1: 363; Isar, 34.
62. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, 1: 250; Cernovodeanu, *Societatea feudală românească*, 58.

### Abstract

#### The Romanity of the Romanians As Reflected in the Accounts of Foreign Travelers between the Years 1710 and 1810

The accounts of the foreign travelers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the following century are full of observations regarding the language spoken by the inhabitants of the Romanian lands. For the period of time analyzed, namely the one between the years 1710 and 1810, we identified the accounts of 171 travelers who crossed the Romanian space. Only 27 of them refer to the origin of and the language spoken by Romanians. Of the travelers who talk about the Romanity of the Romanians, 12 have liberal professions, 8 are diplomats, 6 are officers, and one is a merchant. All the visitors consider the Romanian language to be a successor of Latin, based on the similarities between the two. The Latinity of the Romanian language is, for this era, a fact accepted by all the travelers who write about the origin of the Romanians. The travelers who write about the Romanian space use various documentary sources, especially historical, geographical, and philological ones. To these older sources, we can add numerous works published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially on history and geography, featuring information on the origin and language of the Romanian people. Other travelers, less educated, gather their information directly from the Romanians, remarking with surprise that this country speaks a language that many of them, especially the Italians, can understand. Therefore, most of the voyagers come to the conclusion that the Romanian language is the successor of Latin. The scholars, those who have liberal professions, are closer to the truth, managing to understand the formation of the Romanian language, with its three main components: the Dacian substrate, the Latin stratum, and the Slavic adstrate. Among the voyagers who wrote about the origin of the Romanians, 22 clearly determined that Romanian emerged from Latin, while 21 also spoke about the origin of the Romanians, which they correctly retraced, considering them the successors of the Roman colonists settled in Dacia. For all the travelers who arrived in the Romanian Principalities, the language spoken by Romanians represents the decisive element in determining their origin. Historical data, such as archaeological sources or ancient and medieval chronicles, which talk about the Roman origin of the Romanians, are of sec-

ondary importance when it comes to identifying the Romanians as the successors of the Romans. Most of the travelers managed to correctly piece together the ethnogenesis and glotogenesis, as well as the presence of numerous Slavic and Turkish words in Wallachia and Moldavia, and of Hungarian and German ones in Transylvania. We also have five foreign travelers who managed to distinguish between the name Romanian, used by the people themselves, and that of Wallachian, only used by foreigners when referring to them. This aspect is, in their opinion, an argument in favor of their Romanity.

### **Keywords**

Romanity of the Romanians, Romanian Principalities, foreign travelers

# *Homo valachicus orientalis*

(1716–1859)

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BOGDAN BUCUR

**I**N A LETTER sent to Emperor Leopold I of Habsburg, in Vienna, on 1 October 1688, Count and Field Marshal Federico Veterani (1643–1695) presented some strategic information regarding the province of Oltenia (Lesser Wallachia), where the Austrian troops were billeted. The cities of Craiova, Câmpulung and Pitești resembled villages, as they consisted of nothing more than ramshackle huts and half-dugout shelters. The fields were wasted and barren, and therefore useless for agriculture. There were no bridges over the main rivers (Jiu, Olt, Argeș and Dâmbovița). There were a couple of sparse monasteries in the woods and other secluded places. The villages were extremely scattered. Generally speaking, Oltenia seemed almost deserted.<sup>1</sup> On 27 April 1702, in Bucharest, the vast majority of the population lived in half-dugout shelters, covered with straw and tree bark. The shabby dens in the capital city were even compared to the English cellars.<sup>2</sup> The city was poorly paved with wooden logs. Only around the palace there were a couple of houses made of stone, although modest in size, covered with shingle, their yards surrounded by oak trunks.<sup>3</sup> Apart from a few, otherwise remarkable, cultural and architectural initiatives, this is what the Principality of Wallachia looked like during its best autochthonous government—under Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714)—before the instauration of the Phanariot reign, in 1716.<sup>4</sup> It can be easily understood that Wallachia had never been any different at any point in the past.

Wallachia belonged, wholly, to the Orient.<sup>5</sup> It was doubly subordinated to Constantinople: religiously (to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, through its tradition of Eastern Christianity) and politically (to the Sublime Porte, due to the fact that it belonged, as an autonomous principality, to the Ottoman Empire). In a nutshell, the only main notable differences between the Wallachian lifestyle and the Ottoman one were those exclusively related to the religious norms. Apart from those, there were only similarities (in apparel, food, interior decorations). Conversely, until 1829, the only physical and spiritual traces of the West in Wallachia were—apart from the Latin origin of the Romanian language (which is not relevant from the civilizational point of view)—a single Wallachian with European academic studies (the great boyar Constantin Cantacuzino studied at the University of Padua from 1667 to 1668), a single public institute for humanist studies (the Princely Academy of Bucharest, where classes were held in Greek), a few hundreds of Catholics and Protestants (residents in the Wallachian urban areas), a few Europeans settled in Bucharest (which were part of the royal court), a couple of Western books (which circulated mostly in Greek translation), a few hundreds of great Wallachian boyars who

knew a widely-spoken foreign language, predominantly Greek or French, and who, at least once in their lives, while fleeing from foreign attacks, took refuge together with their families in Braşov (Kronstadt, Brassó) or Sibiu (Hermannstadt, Nagyszeben), where they were able to borrow a couple of elements from the Western material culture. However, all of the above had a minimal impact on the civilization of Wallachia. As a matter of fact, prior to 1829, we can affirm that less than 1% of the population had contact with at least one element of the Western civilization—not that those who did could be deemed Westernized. Until 1829, the geographical and scientific discoveries, the architectural styles, the musical genres, the artistic and literary movements of the time were completely unknown in Bucharest. Wallachia was, so to speak, not part of history. As was the case in the Orient, the Wallachian society was contemplative, fatalist and traditionalist, in contrast to the Western society, which had become dynamic, progressive and more advanced.<sup>6</sup> Indisputably, *Homo valachicus* was a subspecies of *Homo orientalis*.

The chasm between the developments taking place in the Occident, as opposed to those in the Orient, had reached tremendous proportions. Until 1829, Wallachia had been completely absent from the international scientific exchanges. During that period of time no Wallachian concerned themselves with the study of formal science (logic and mathematics), natural science (biology, physics, chemistry, astronomy), or applied science (engineering, agronomy, medicine, and pharmacy). Until 1829, Wallachia wasn't able to offer the world a single astronomer, doctor, engineer, architect, mathematician, physicist, agronomist, pharmacist, painter, musician, etc. On the other hand, all of these professions—and their subsequent scientific disciplines—were well known in the West, since the Greco-Roman Antiquity, and following their rediscovery at the end of the Middle Ages. For instance, before the union of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, which took place in 1859, Wallachia had an illiteracy rate of over 90%, similar to that of Western Europe in 1450, but also similar to that of the Roman Empire.<sup>7</sup> In 1850, when the first Wallachian institution of higher education was created (the Faculty of Law, as part of Saint Sava Princely Academy, the high school in Bucharest)—the University of Bologna (1088) had been around for 762 years. Moreover, around 1500, there were already 71 universities in Europe, in all Catholic and Protestant states.<sup>8</sup> The public library was a fundamental institution for the spreading of scientific works. The first Wallachian reading cabinet (which was at the same time a bookstore) was created in 1826, on Podul Mogoşoaiei, in Bucharest, at the private initiative of the great boyar Dinicu Golescu. However, the first Wallachian public library was established as late as 1836, as part of Saint Sava Princely Academy, 400 hundred years after the inauguration of the first European civic library, the Malatestiana Library from Cesena. If we choose to look at things from a different perspective, we discover that the first paved road in Wallachia was Podul Mogoşoaiei of Bucharest, first mentioned in 1841. In addition, in 1853, the existence of the first stone bridge was confirmed. It was built in Bucharest, over the Dâmboviţa River. At that time, 1750 years had passed since Apollodorus of Damascus had built Trajan's Bridge over the Danube, in order for the Roman armies to invade Dacia. While in Bucharest, in 1853, the first stone bridge was inaugurated, a year later, in 1854, one of the world's most important engineering projects came to fruition in Austria: the Semmering Railway, which crossed the Alps through 14 tunnels



dug in the mountains, across 16 viaducts and 100 curved stone bridges. If we were to talk about visual arts, the first modern painting from Wallachia might be *Urcarea lui Mavrogheni pe tron* (The enthronement of Mavrogheni, 1786), by Iordache Venier, which is also known as *Divanul lui Nicolae Mavrogheni* (Nicolae Mavrogheni's divan). Iordache Venier, who was seemingly of Venetian origin, was the first arch-painter or headman of the painters' guild specialized in painting church interiors (*zugravi de subțire*), after their separation, in 1787, from the daubers' guild (*zugravi de gros*).<sup>9</sup> This is the moment when the rigid frames of Byzantine church painting were abandoned for the first time in Wallachia. Thus, Wallachian art started to aim towards a more realistic approach in rendering the individual traits of its characters. *Autoportret* (Selfportrait) by Nicolae Polcovnicul (1788–1842) can be seen as the first modern painting of a Wallachian painter, specialized in interior painting for churches. This painting was completed around 1800, 500 years after Giotto's death.

And, as if these examples of severe gaps in evolution between East and West weren't enough, Wallachia was affected by several political, natural, and social catastrophes between 1716 and 1859. Therefore, the Romanian premodern era, both during the Phanariot (1716–1821) and the indigenous ruling (1822–1859) periods, can be best described in terms of social insecurity, seen as a permanent feature by both the rural and the urban population.<sup>10</sup> Between 1716 and 1859, *Homo valachicus*, which is the focus of our study, was witness to and the victim of some extraordinary calamities, which permanently altered the peaceful cohabitation and durable growth in Wallachia. During this time (1716–1859), the armed confrontations between the neighboring empires,<sup>11</sup> the military invasions and abuses of the occupying armies,<sup>12</sup> the organized robbery by armed groups of thieves,<sup>13</sup> the endemic corruption and fiscal abuses of the autochthonous administration,<sup>14</sup> the territorial dismantlement,<sup>15</sup> the plague and the cholera epidemics,<sup>16</sup> the fires that ravaged the main cities,<sup>17</sup> the earthquakes,<sup>18</sup> the locust invasion,<sup>19</sup> the devastating floods,<sup>20</sup> the prolonged draught,<sup>21</sup> the rough winters with blizzards and heavy snowfall,<sup>22</sup> they all followed one another with unprecedented speed and gravely altered, due to their atrocious consequences, the quality of life in Wallachia. The extreme political, natural and social phenomena recorded in Wallachia between 1716 and 1859 led to alarming rates of underdevelopment and famine,<sup>23</sup> mortality and morbidity.<sup>24</sup> During this entire era, *Homo valachicus* had to cope with a low life expectancy (under 40 years), with the lack of food or the lack of means to buy food, with the fear of death and disease, with huge physical and food deficiencies, all leading to lives lived on the brink of survival.<sup>25</sup> *Homo valachicus*—who lived in insalubrious half-dugout shelters or in huts made of wattle (daubed with clay and covered with reeds)—lived, indisputably, a miserable life, marked by extreme poverty.<sup>26</sup>

From a political standpoint, *Homo valachicus* witnessed the corrupt practices employed during the Phanariot regime (1716–1821) throughout the entire country. This epoch was influenced by the tyrannical, arbitrary and abusive government of the foreigners who came from the Phanar, the main Greek quarter of Constantinople, in order to achieve wealth in Bucharest. Their main objective was the corrupt administration of Wallachia's public affairs, guided by their desire to seize and drain the natural and financial resources of the principality. In relation to the political authorities, *Homo vala-*

*chicus* was in a state of complete subservience; they could be abused and offended if any kind of suspicion would arise. To these administrative problems were added the social ones, such as the massive depopulation of Wallachia during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Faced with relentless waves of violence, destruction, pillaging, arson, wars and killings, endured by the locals with stoicism, their only viable alternative was fleeing into the woods, to more secluded mountain areas, or over the border, to Transylvania, and even to the south of Danube, in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>27</sup> There are the multiple causes behind these social phenomena, of which the most important is the internal uncertainty caused by the horrendous natural calamities, meteorological and epidemiologic, and, mainly, by the terrific human losses (endless wars, armed invasions, robbery and pillage). *Homo valachicus* was the innocent victim of the successive occupations and military invasions of the Austrians, Russians, and Ottomans. During these times, the Wallachian cities, churches, monasteries, merchants' shops and even the princely court were pillaged, plundered, devastated and burnt down without mercy.<sup>28</sup> Most cultural assets—manuscripts and books, which were part of the collections held in the monasteries' libraries (in small numbers to begin with)—were forever lost because of the occupying armies' thefts and destruction. The lugubrious spectacle of the devastating fires, in cities particularly, was very impressive. They caused great damage to both private and public property. *Homo valachicus* lived in a country where the plague and cholera epidemics brought death to towns and their neighboring villages, while draught and catastrophic floods, locust invasions and rough winters, which came too early or lasted too long, ruined crops and caused famine. The travelers who passed through the principality, generally from Western Europe, even during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were absolutely shocked by the fact that they were unable to receive housing or to be accommodated.<sup>29</sup> Frequently, they had to spend the night in an insalubrious hut, where the only food they received was polenta.<sup>30</sup> For all these reasons, Wallachia appeared ruined and deserted, as well as poor and undernourished in the eyes of the Western travelers.<sup>31</sup> The paradox is that the fertile lands and the paradisiacal climate should have ensured the wellbeing of the population.<sup>32</sup> An edifying example is the letter of the Italian abbot Lionardo Panzini (1 December 1776), in which the Catholic prelate talks about the Wallachian society, as it was immediately after the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774:

*The most beautiful lands, the fertility of which is beyond imagination, remain abandoned for several generations because of the lack of workers who could bring them to fruition. Many towns, marked on ancient maps, are nowadays nothing more than small and poor villages, and many townlets and villages have vanished without a trace. Târgoviște, the old capital city of Wallachia, has become nothing more than a small village, inhabited by 20 or 30 families; Buzău, one of the two episcopal seats of the country, was turned to ashes by the Russians, so the bishop is forced to live in Bucharest. This entire part of the country, which stretches from the south of Bucharest to the Danube, is almost entirely deserted and the land is barren on account of the constant invasions, killings and devastations brought about in the past by the Turks from across the Danube, who freely passed through here [in Wallachia], meaning to take slaves and to steal, while destroying through fire and flames everything in their way.<sup>33</sup>*



THESE FACTS—concerning the extreme poverty of the population—remained unchanged even half a century later. In one of his journal entries, the Finnish Lieutenant Berndt Johan Rosenström, who travelled through Wallachia in 1828, confessed that, from Bucharest to Hârşova, he had passed solely through looted and barren lands, haunted by the plague and impoverished by war. As for the towns, Helmuth von Moltke observed, in 1835, that they were half in ruins and full of debris. Slobozia, for instance, is described as “a pile of ruins.”<sup>34</sup> Basically, towards the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Homo valachicus* survived—in utter squalor—in a country in which public and private investments in common spaces and facilities were completely absent.<sup>35</sup> The explanation for this dire state is simple if we consider that, over a period of 40 years, the political elite of Wallachia fled abroad seven times.<sup>36</sup> That is why, in 1835, while going across Wallachia, from Banat or Transylvania to Bucharest, you would go through 200 kilometers of bad, unpaved roads,<sup>37</sup> through impoverished and dirty counties, in which hovels with a wooden structure were half dug into the ground and covered with twigs.<sup>38</sup> For the travelers who came down the Danube, from Vienna, heading towards Constantinople, passing through Romanian villages—in which people lived underground, like rabbits—was a truly shocking experience. This deplorable image of the rural area—reduced to a bunch of poor and insalubrious half-dugout shelters—is constant throughout the period we analyze.<sup>39</sup> The British traveler Charles Boileau Elliott gave us a picturesque description of the villages in Oltenia, situated on Danube’s shore, from that era:

*The village scene was highly amusing. All was bustle on a small scale. Fishermen were every now and then bringing in the trophies of their success. In one quarter, under a canopy of dried leaves, the only shelter from sun and rain except the miserable huts already described, might be seen the houseless host of travelers sitting on a board, which served likewise for a table, regaling themselves with slices of tonny or sturgeon fried on a skewer and eggs cooked in wood ashes; while, a little further off, a party of boatmen, squatting on the ground, sent round the black bread and acid wine with all the glee of health and appetite, nothing disturbed by the numerous dogs and pigs, each of the latter with a triangle round his neck, which surrounded them with beseeching looks and grunts. In another quarter, a half-naked girl was washing one of a dozen naked children in what resembled a hog tub, but proved to be the family utensil for all culinary and household purposes. Here, a woman might be seen slaughtering a fowl by bleeding it at the back of the neck; while, by her side, an old gipsy with grizzly hair was tossing about his legs in caricature of a dance, holding by the arm a female beggar capering with equal grace. The squalid filth, the poverty and degradation in which the people of this village vegetate can scarcely be exceeded; and, alas! it is but a specimen of Wallachian misery in general. The dress of such as are covered with anything more than rags partakes a good deal of the eastern character . . . Others appear in a cap, trowsers, and long coat of white blanketing which is soon soiled, and, being never washed, becomes in time indescribably filthy.*<sup>40</sup>

In spite of the persistent Oriental customs, after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), the political elites took part in an accelerated process of Westernization. Thus began the quick filling of the gaps between the Orient and the Occident.<sup>41</sup> A good example is Brăi-

la Raya, a port on the Danube: during the reign of the Phanariots it was simply a Turkish fortress, with a small population of only a few hundred inhabitants, but after 1836 it turned into a prosperous trading center.<sup>42</sup> Giurgiu Raya—which was almost completely destroyed during the Russo-Turkish War (1828–1829) and turned into a chaos of Oriental ruins—slowly began to achieve a Western look.<sup>43</sup> In 1838 one could find in Craiova beautiful houses, which were unfortunately surrounded by dirty half-dugout shelters and barren lands, covered in weeds. In 1835, in the capital of Oltenia, a high school was inaugurated, the second high school in Wallachia, after Saint Sava Princely Academy of Bucharest.<sup>44</sup> In 1838, in Râmnicu Sărat, one could admire the sumptuous mansion of boyar Niculescu, built in an Italian style, right next to a brick castle, built in Turkish fashion.<sup>45</sup> The town of Ploiești also made considerable progress: in 1844 new houses were being built, the streets were paved, and the public square was tidied up.<sup>46</sup> Overall, the capital of Wallachia was undergoing a fundamental change: everyone was building.<sup>47</sup> Between 1835 and 1836, in Bucharest several hospitals,<sup>48</sup> a museum,<sup>49</sup> a high school<sup>50</sup> and a public library<sup>51</sup> were opened. There were several bookshops,<sup>52</sup> “palaces, places for socializing, theaters,<sup>53</sup> seamstresses, newspapers<sup>54</sup> and luxury carriages; but as soon as you set foot outside the city, you fell right back into barbarism.”<sup>55</sup> The high society spoke French, and the Western customs were quickly borrowed. Inside the palaces of Bucharest’s elite—where, in 1838, the portrait of General Count Pavel Kiseleff could always be admired—the same elevated topics as in the drawing rooms in Paris, London and Vienna were being discussed. Only the old boyars and the lower classes kept their Oriental customs. Nevertheless, in the capital city, even in its center, the streets were poorly aligned and roughly paved. The Dâmbovița River, with its dirty and muddy shores, was so filthy that it seemed to be the main dumping site for all the trash from the riverside districts. On Podul Mogoșoaiei—the main avenue (later renamed Calea Victoriei)—the shabby, poorly made huts were right next to sumptuous palaces. The general aspect was that of a Turkish town, rather than a European one. As a matter of fact, in 1838, “the majority of the houses are nothing more than small wooden cottages eaten by termites, out of which only a few buildings with a more pretentious architecture stand out.”<sup>56</sup> The rough labyrinthine streets of Bucharest were covered with mud, which made carriages mandatory. In the center of the capital, town and village blended, and so did extreme poverty and absolute splendor, Eastern barbarism and Western greatness. There were no public squares and no pedestrian alleys. Even though Wallachia was going through an era of cultural and economic recovery, the physical progress was not (yet) visible in rural areas, and in the urban ones it was not (yet) dominant. We have an account from 1846 on the architectural changes of the world in which *Homo valachicus* lived their humble life, thanks to French Minister and Professor Saint-Marc Girardin:

*From Galați to Bucharest, on a 70–80 leagues road, I saw five villages and three trees. Truth be told, I was on the main road. Because here things are different from the way they are in other countries. In other countries the villages are built on the side of the road; here the villages shy away from the roads, because they attract the robberies and plunders of the Turks. Thus, the villages are hidden in the land. In France, when talking about a village you think of a certain amount of houses. Here there are holes dug in the ground, a*

*few shabby twigs mended with mud and manure, above a roof made of corn stalks—and there you have it: a home. After a year or two of peacefulness, the houses start raising from the ground. The walls are still made from planks and daub, but they are no longer underground. It's progress. Where we see houses made of wood we have a town, and if there are a couple of buildings made of brick, plastered and painted, then it's the capital of a district, maybe even a monastery or a diocese.*<sup>57</sup>

With all these imperfections, after 1837 the Principality of Wallachia timidly began to gain its place on the fringes of the civilized world.<sup>58</sup> In parallel, the deep traces of the Orient, still dominant, slowly began to fade, especially in the central parts of the main cities. In 1846, the capital of Wallachia experimented equally, although in different proportions, the Eastern barbarism<sup>59</sup> and the Western refinement.<sup>60</sup> This strange juxtaposition between old Oriental customs and new European tastes was striking to a foreign traveler,<sup>61</sup> even though such “discrepancies disappeared almost every day, due to the high number of new buildings that appeared almost miraculously.”<sup>62</sup> Therefore, from 1841 onward, huts and half-dugout shelters were demolished so that in their place elegant European palaces could be built.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, in 1846, the streets were still nonlinear, bordered by walls made of wattle and planks. Still, for the first time in history, the main streets were covered with gravel. The public baths—once considered dirty places—had become, in just a few years, just like those in Constantinople, having met all the criteria of “luxurious Oriental finesse.”<sup>64</sup> The majority of the houses built during this time were, nevertheless, aesthetically inexpressive. In general, they only had the ground floor and they were surrounded by barren land or gardens. The hotels, inns, hospitals and palaces were a bit taller and they had one floor.<sup>65</sup> Abbey Domenico Zanelli, who visited the capital city in 1841, thought that “Bucharest is becoming more and more beautiful, therefore it won't be long until it turns into one of the most important cities of the Orient.”<sup>66</sup> Despite the indisputable progress Wallachia had made on its road to modernization, after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), for a Western intellectual, such as the Bavarian doctor who passed through the principality in 1846, the charm of the Orient is still its cultural and architectural mark, even in Bucharest. That is why, once you “cross the border to Transylvania, you find yourself in Asia and you have to give up the customs picked up in the West, so that you may manage, given the new circumstances.”<sup>67</sup> Therefore, except for a very small part of the population—urban and prosperous—which became rapidly Westernized, *Homo valachicus* kept, between 1843 and 1845, the main Oriental features of the previous epochs.<sup>68</sup>

*I've arrived in the Orient. Even though the country I am passing through right now is, geographically speaking, part of Europe, it has been tied for centuries, historically, to the Orient, through its rigid traditions. The fickle wars have marked it deeply, therefore it will be difficult for the Western culture to completely erase its memories, which still come alive. As a matter of fact: these huts, made of wood and mended with clay, that compile in most part the capital of Wallachia; these booths shaped as tents with pointy tops, leaning one against the other like a Caravanserai, which are its focal point; these small churches with a Byzantine shape, with their domes and thick bell towers; these narrow streets, labyrinthine, in*

*which the utter, most diverse blend of people and attires mingle, don't they offer, to a rushed onlooker, the image we have of the Oriental style? And, if among these we notice modern palaces, built in an eclectic style, in the pseudo-antique style of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, if we meet elegant carriages, their passengers wearing the finest Parisian and Viennese attires, if we see soldiers in uniforms, marching with European precision, instead of seeing the tall Phanariot hat or the Turkish turban we were accustomed to: aren't we rather surprised by such visions and inclined to consider them anomalies?*<sup>69</sup>

In the spring of 1848, Princess Aurélie Ghika, a writer born in France, spouse of the son of Gregory IV Ghica, Prince of Wallachia, used—in the title of a book published in Paris, in 1850—probably for the first time in history, the phrase *modern Wallachia*, which, however, should be taken *cum grano salis*. For instance, in a provincial town such as Giurgiu, which had nothing remarkable to give, the *modernity of Wallachia* meant the apparition of the first clock, embedded in the architecture of a public building, situated in the central square. The majority of the towns in Wallachia were, in 1850, far less developed even than the humblest townlets of the most underdeveloped province in the West.<sup>70</sup> Pitești and Râmnicu-Vâlcea had recently suffered at that time from devastating fires. Apparently, only a few towns were in a better shape after 1851.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, towards 1859, the evolution and the accelerated development of Wallachia contributed to the clear modernization of even the most wretched Wallachian towns, such as Pitești and Giurgiu. In order to visit them, no matter the route, the road passed through a couple of small villages where one could see a few huts and half-dugout shelters.<sup>72</sup> Outside the cities, only the old mansions of manorial estates had a somewhat pleasant look.<sup>73</sup> In general, the land hadn't been improved by engineers; the roads weren't paved.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, in 1850, a European going through the principality felt immersed in Oriental barbarity.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, truth be told, the Oriental charm sometimes seduced foreign travelers.<sup>76</sup> As for the capital of Wallachia, it didn't resemble any European town: the streets (dirty, narrow, serpentine) and the houses (unaligned, messy, rugged) didn't follow any architectural or urban norm. In spite of the differences in size, in general, the sumptuous palaces (from the center of the town) and the poor huts (from the outskirts) were equally unaesthetic (stylistically speaking) and flimsy (in regards to their construction). In 1853 a few residential buildings and a couple of beautiful shops could be admired in the center of the city.<sup>77</sup> There were almost no sidewalks—and that was the reason why all the rich citizens only traveled by carriage.<sup>78</sup> Even though, around 1851, accommodation in a Bucharest inn cost as much as a hotel in Paris, the differences in comfort were abysmal.<sup>79</sup> Given the size of the city, trade wasn't very developed, while the industry was almost completely lacking.<sup>80</sup> In 1848, except for a few European elements in architecture and urbanism,<sup>81</sup> as seen in the center of the city, nothing else pointed to Bucharest's *Wallachian modernity*. As a matter of fact, the majority of the houses from the city's outskirts were in no way different from the rural hovels, made of wood and clay.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, the concept of *Wallachian modernity* couldn't be applied outside the centers of the main cities—particularly Bucharest—and was valid only for a social and political elite (which was extremely limited in number). Only this minority—insignificant, statistically speaking, even for the urban population of the principality, without even taking into consideration

the peasants—was consuming Western products.<sup>83</sup> In 1848, the urban upper class—consisting of Wallachian boyars and foreign bourgeoisie—was the only part of the population to attend higher education and assimilate the European manners,<sup>84</sup> while the rest of the population was still anchored in the traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy and plagued by illiteracy.<sup>85</sup> This flagrant contradiction between Oriental barbarism and Western civilization, which characterized the Wallachian society, was very well captured by the description of Bucharest in 1849, made by the German Theodor König:

*In this country, where there are almost no schools, where the children of peasants live like animals, without teachers and schooling, where the priests belong to the lower, most despised layer of society, where the very bad roads are crippling and the state of the public carriages can't even be put into words—where thousands upon thousands of square miles of the most fertile land lay barren because the people are too lazy and torpid—, in this ragged country there is an Italian opera! This is where I was first acquainted to Italian music.<sup>86</sup>*

FOR THE first time in history, Bucharest had truly entered the European cultural circuit. In 1853, the opera *Luisa Miller* by Giuseppe Verdi—which had its premiere on 8 December 1849, at the Theater of San Carlo opera house in Naples—was presented, by an Italian company, at the Grand Theater of Bucharest.<sup>87</sup> Sir Patrick O'Brien, a member of British Parliament for King's County, who had attended the event both in Naples and in Wallachia, considered that the artistic performances of the company in Bucharest were, in some regards, superior to those of the interpretation he saw at the Theater of San Carlo.<sup>88</sup> In December 1853, a British prima donna brilliantly played Beatrice di Tenda, from the homonymous opera by Vincenzo Bellini.<sup>89</sup> According to the French socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, who attended one of the performances in 1857, the Grand Theater of Bucharest outshined the Berlin Opera. At the theater's exit and in its vicinity, in 1854, the elite of Bucharest's society had access to fine chocolateries, sweetshops that sold ice cream, coffee shops with pool tables, shops that had exotic fruits, booths with mineral water, the Viennese casino and the splendid French restaurants from Hôtel de Princes and Hôtel de France. Foreign travelers could spend the night at Hôtel de Londres or Hôtel d'Europe. The fine citizens strolled through Cișmigiu Gardens and watched, on the stage of the pavilion, a variety of musical performances. The garden was designed in the English landscape style, with great taste. Also, one could dine at the restaurant situated in the heart of the park. In the evening, in the Warenberg Garden, which was splendidly lit, classical music concerts were held regularly. At the same time, in another part of town, a play would be enacted. In 1857, on both sides of Kiseleff Road—the main avenue for promenades—military music was played, to the citizen's delight. All around, the urban furnishings and the French air reminded one of the cafés on Champs-Élysées. Bucharest had become a cosmopolitan city, filled with modern drawing rooms, furnished like those in Paris, with a rich social life, with shops and bookstores where one could find merchandise from all around the world, musical, optical and mechanical instruments included.<sup>90</sup>



The overwhelming wellbeing, the grand luxury and sublime beauty seen in the center of the capital, collided with the extreme poverty, grotesque ugliness and abominable poverty of the outskirts. The sumptuous carriages pulled by gorgeous stallions, driven by festooned lackeys, dressed in quaint Hungarian costumes, passed alongside wagons filled with wood and hay, which belonged to the Wallachian peasants, dressed in sheep skins. Often, Viennese carriages were pulled by Wallachian nags, driven by a coachman in rags. Old boyars, in Turkish attire, stood beside ladies elegantly dressed according to the latest trends in Paris, while their servants wore sparkling Albanian costumes. At that time Bucharest had become an authentic carnival of human civilizations, where all the people of the Orient and the West blended. On the outskirts, the Dâmbovița River formed ponds, teeming with frogs and lizards, with the carcasses of dead dogs laying on the banks. In summer, in their dirty waters—where, most of the time, the town's garbage was dumped—children, women, men and their pets bathed together. The vacant lots in the capital city were covered by shanties and tents where the nomad population lived in utter squalor. No matter if the roads were paved with stone (in city center) or covered with logs (on the outskirts), the streets were dirty and roamed by feral dogs, hungry and aggressive. At night the streets were poorly lit. In summer they were covered in dust, in winter they were covered in mud.<sup>91</sup> In 1855, the city achieved, somewhat without merit and somehow strangely, the undeserved label of *Little Paris*. From this perspective we have a thorough description of the capital of Wallachia, made in 1855 by the Austrian military physician Stefan Dietrich:

*The cluster of buildings in the city center, the unkempt outskirts, the barren gardens and the dirty yards make out of Bucharest, which is rather large, a city that is not beautiful. The multitude of churches, monasteries, palaces and houses is useless, because there is no order; while the good and the bad mingle in great contrast. Because of a fire that took place a few years ago, part of the city is still in ruins; there are cellars caving like ravines on the busiest streets! A serpentine and rather large river, with muddy water, flows through the city, and its water is used both for drinking and cooking, although the sewers dump their waters in it as well. Its disgusting shores communicate through small, poorly made wooden bridges. The city is a true labyrinth of crooked, narrow streets, very dirty, and frequently long. In the most elegant part of the city the streets are poorly paved, as for the ones at the outskirts, such miracles are out of discussion. These streets are constantly filled with countless wagons, driving around without any regulation, bumping into each other and stopping traffic, being a constant threat for the pedestrians. Only here and there, there are sidewalks made for the protection of pedestrians, paved with blunt rocks, which, because of the rooftops that haven't got eaves, get covered by drained water, becoming thus unusable. The abundance of shiny church towers, seen from afar, builds your expectation for something poetic, all the more so because the Romanians proudly call Bucharest the Little Paris. Poor choice of words—after the disappointment of a closer look. The stranger from a civilized country prefers the modest village of his orderly homeland, to the city with mindlessly piled up riches. Indeed, there are many palaces that belong to the great boyars, laden with Oriental brilliance and western elegance; the stairs, even the halls, are covered in the most expensive carpets, adorned with gilded mirrors, bronze statues and even rare paintings. All day long, the most expensive*

*suites and carriages, lined with red velvet, pass by surrounded by the sound of clinking bells, carrying the city's elegant citizens, dressed in the latest Parisian fashion. At the balls, the ladies shine, dressed in velvet and silk, adorned with diamonds: however, this elegance and brilliance cannot hide the gypsy physiognomy of the city of Bucharest, because the palace and the hut are next to each other.*<sup>92</sup>

From the *Persian city*, as Bucharest was seen, from an Oriental perspective, in 1813, the dominant perception is fundamentally transformed, half a century later, so that the capital begins to be considered, in 1855, the *Little Paris*. However, depending on street and class, in 1857 *Little Paris* quickly transformed right back into *Little Baghdad*. In fact, Western Paris and Eastern Baghdad coexisted in a stark contradiction in Bucharest. By 1859, the Dâmbovița River had come to separate the city in two, not only geographically, but also from the point of view of its civilization. On the left bank we had *Little Paris*, rich, bright, healthy, with its palaces, restaurants and hotels, worthy of the capital of France, where the Wallachian high society, perfectly Westernized, enjoyed themselves. On the right bank we had *Little Baghdad*, poor, dirty, filled with diseases, with shabby huts and Turkish cafés, in which Bulgarians, Albanians and Tatars, dressed in Oriental clothes, sat Turkish style and smoked narghilehs or hookahs. In 1853, between *Little Paris* and *Little Baghdad*, a cobbled bridge was built over the Dâmbovița River. It was the first in the history of Wallachia., The first bridge over the Olt River, near Slatina, had been inaugurated not long before this, in 1847. In 1853, throughout the principality, there were, in total, about 40 kilometers of paved road put into use. These roads were used, in 1854, as always, by the classic Wallachian carriages, considered by the writer Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy to be worse than the Russian carts with which hay was transported. On the other hand, the Constantinople–Bucharest–Vienna telegraph line had just become operational in 1857. Throughout this period, the vast majority of the population was illiterate and lived in extreme squalor. In 1854, the best food at a provincial inn was a dry omelet, a crust of black bread, and vinegar wine. The same unpainted room served as a kitchen and living room. In a Wallachian post office, one would find only a hookah and Turkish coffee, eggs, salted Danube fish and polenta. The meal was eaten on primitive wooden benches, while sitting with your legs crossed, Turkish style. Sometimes the knife and fork were used. One also slept on a sofa covered with straw mats or blankets. One ate somewhat better in a German pub in the capital, but next to the hot meal, the wine was bad, the beer stale, and the tea bland. The villages were made up of the usual primitive huts. All the members of the family were sheltered in the same dugout room, sometimes alongside the livestock, especially in winter. Often, the only piece of furniture in a peasant house was a wooden kneading-trough, which had multiple functions: a swing for children, a container for storing supplies, a tub for washing dirty laundry, or a trough for kneading bread.<sup>93</sup>

□

## Notes

1. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 7, edited by Maria Holban (lead editor), M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1980), 476–477.
2. The lack of crops, the precarious situation of both rural and urban houses (the half-dugout shelters), as well as the small number of inhabitants, were aspects noticed by the Anglican clergyman Edmund Chishull, between 18 April and 6 May 1702, when he passed through Wallachia, as part of the retinue of Lord William Paget, the British ambassador to Constantinople (1692–1701). *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 8, edited by Maria Holban (lead editor), M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983), 195. The peasant houses were above the earth only in the mountain area. At the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, the houses were made of logs and covered with shingle (*ibid.*, 201).
3. *Ibid.*, 195–199.
4. In this context, we have to mention, of course, the “gorgeous and grand” palaces and the gardens of Târgoviște, Mogoșoaia and Potlogi (inferior in size, but resembling—through their architectural harmony and aesthetic elegance—the Western ones, superior to the Ottoman ones) in the Brâncovenian style, the churches “worthy to be seen” and the “big and beautiful” inns of Bucharest, the support offered to the printing press, the religious books published in Romanian and Greek, the generous donations for the holy places of the Christian Orient (fallen under the Ottoman rule), the monasteries that were built, the churches that were endowed, as well as the attention Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu paid to the autochthonous architectural style, which bears his name. Also, according to Antonmaria del Chiaro, the secretary of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, the Old Court was the only one to have, in 1714, an Italian garden, with the main stair made of marble, and surrounded by walls (*ibid.*, 372).
5. During this time, for a foreign traveler from the West, entering Wallachia through Transylvania and Banat meant entering the Oriental civilization. See Sorin Sipoș, “Foreign Travelers in the Romanian Lands and the Symbolism of the Borders (1710–1810),” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 18, 54 (2019): 117.
6. For a nuanced discussion on this topic see Adrian Niculescu, *1848–1989: de la Primul la Noul '48: Trei cronologii comentate* (Bucharest: Editura IRDD '89, 2018), 9–23.
7. In order to establish the illiteracy rate in Antiquity, we took as reference the Roman Empire, for which we established the average between literacy in the Greco-Roman world (where the rate of literacy was approximately 20%) and the other provinces (including the western ones), less developed (where the rate of literacy was approximately 5%).
8. The European countries that had universities in 1500 are: Italy (17), France (12), Spain (12), Germany (11), England (3), Scotland (3), Ireland (1), Sweden (1), Denmark (1), Portugal (1), Belgium (1), Switzerland (1), Austria (1), Poland (1), Hungary (1), Albania (1), Croatia (1), Czechia (1), Slovakia (1).
9. Andrea Menna, “Alla ricerca del patrimonio immateriale e identitario nella pittura moderna rumena,” *Hermeneia* 21 (2018): 92; Dan Rădulescu, “Premisele apariției artei moderne în România: Partea I: De la primitivi la pașoptiști,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca, Series Historica* 55 (2016): 327.



10. Part of the ideas laid down concisely in this paper were presented and dealt with extensively in my first book: Bogdan Bucur, *Devălmășia valahă (1716–1828): O istorie anarhică a spațiului românesc*, foreword by Adrian Majuru (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2008). In this article I wish to present the political, social and natural phenomena that marked Wallachia, for the chosen period of time, in a rather novel light, from the perspective of the impact felt by the regular person (*Homo valachicus*) of that era.
11. Between 1716 and 1859, no less than 7 armed confrontations took place between the belligerent powers around Wallachia (all openly manifesting imperial claims to control the North-Danube territory): 1716–1718 (the Austro-Turkish War), 1735–1739 (the Austro-Russian-Turkish War), 1768–1774 (the Russian-Turkish War), 1787–1792 (the Austro-Russian-Turkish War), 1806–1812 (the Russian-Turkish War), 1828–1829 (the Russian-Turkish War) and 1853–1856 (the Russian-Turkish War, with British, French and Sardinian participation). Almost all of these wars were fought (also) on Wallachian land, and had a negative impact on the long-term development of Wallachia. Moreover, as a suzerain power, the Sublime Porte asked Wallachia to pay considerable contributions for the war effort—by offering different types of resources (material, human or economic and financial)—, which weighed terribly on the inhabitants and ruined the Wallachian treasury.
12. Between 1716 and 1859, Wallachia was, partially or completely, occupied by the armed forces of the neighboring empires, during the periods of war between them, as follows: Austrian military occupation (1716–1718, 1737, 1787–1791, 1849, 1854–1856), Ottoman military occupation (1737, 1769, 1787–1789, 1806, 1821–1822, 1848–1851, 1854–1855), and Russian military occupation (1739, 1769–1775, 1806–1812, 1828–1834, 1848–1851, 1853–1854). Each time, foreign military occupations led to the requisitioning or confiscation of strategic assets and resources, which meant serious damage for the local Wallachian communities. Moreover, in the cities where an occupation army was stationed, it was often required that merchants pay additional taxes to meet the needs of the troops.
13. The reference is usually made to the Tatars from the Budjak steppe (who invaded Slam-Râmnic County in 1758) or to the Ottoman rebel soldiers from the south of Danube (who plundered Oltenia, between 1798 and 1802, and in 1808). Similar activities, but of smaller scope, were also carried out by the Ottoman troops stationed in the rayas of Brăila, Giurgiu and Turnu—in 1807, Brăila County was affected by the raids of the Turks stationed in the neighboring raya—, as well as by the Albanian mercenaries, Greeks volunteers and other South-Danube populations (in 1821, during the revolutionary movement of the Greek Philikí Etaireía) or the Oltenian pandours (in 1821, during the revolutionary movement led by Tudor Vladimirescu).
14. The period of the Phanariot rulers (1716–1821) came with a terrible increase in the financial obligations of the Wallachian taxpayers, brought about by the desire to rapidly enrich the Greek political elite, coming from Constantinople. Due to the increase in tribute, large-scale social movements took place throughout this period. For example, in 1764, the inhabitants of Mehedinți County—who fled to Muscel County to evade paying local taxes—complained to Prince Stephen Racoviță (1764–1765) that they were overcharged. In 1797, Prince Alexander Ypsilantis also increased local taxes. Between 1798 and 1799, Prince Constantin Hangerli doubled the taxes. Against this background, in 1801, social disorder engulfed Oltenia, as the periphery of Craiova rebelled.

15. In certain periods, a part of the territory of Wallachia was annexed by the neighboring empires, as follows: Oltenia was under Austrian rule between 1718 and 1739, while Dobruja (until 1878, when it was attached to Romania) and the rayas of Brăila, Giurgiu, Turnu (until 1829, when they were reintegrated into Wallachia) were part of the Ottoman Empire, starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Dobruja along with Giurgiu Raya and Turnu Raya) or the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Brăila Raya).
16. The plague (1716–1717, 1719, 1730, 1738, 1756, 1758, 1765, 1792–1793, 1795–1796, 1812–1815, 1824, 1828–1829) and the cholera epidemics (1831, 1836, 1848, 1854) brought despair and death to Wallachia. In 1796, the fire caused by the incineration of the graves of the victims of the plague led to the burning of Craiova.
17. During this period, the great Wallachian cities are, completely or partially, plundered (Râmnicu-Vâlcea and Bucharest in 1802), and set on fire (Târgoviște in 1737, Craiova in 1796, Bucharest in 1718, 1804, 1823 and 1847, Pitești in 1848).
18. Large and devastating earthquakes, with the epicenter in Vrancea, were recorded in 1738, 1740, 1790, 1829, 1838 (over 7 degrees on the Richter scale) and in 1802 (over 8 degrees on the Richter scale). They caused collective fear, significant material damage and the loss of human lives.
19. Locust invasions negatively affected crop productivity in 1738, 1746, 1779–1782, 1824–1825, 1829–1829 and 1847–1848. Often, because of the locusts, famine and food shortages set in.
20. The lack of embankments and regularization of riverbeds led torrential rains to cause, on a regular basis, the outflow of water and the flooding of villages and towns. In such extreme weather conditions, material and human losses were significant, and the deterioration of crops and the death of livestock were resignedly awaited by the local population. Floods with significant effects on the Wallachian Principality were reported in 1775 (overflow of the Dâmbovița River over Bucharest), 1797, 1814 (overflow of the rivers Jiu, in April, and Vedea, in June), 1837 (overflow of the rivers from Ialomița, in June, Bucharest and Ilfov, in July) and 1848.
21. The periods of prolonged drought recorded in 1779, 1797, 1834, 1836 and 1851 in the Principality of Wallachia also had negative effects on the life and diet of humans and animals.
22. Winters that were terribly heavy and extremely frosty (in 1740, 1795, 1808, 1812, 1823, 1841 or 1848), excessively long (winters that lasted until the spring months) or early (when it snowed in autumn during the harvest) caused the population and the livestock to starve due to the compromised crops. In such times, fodder for the livestock and human food became non-existent or only available at prohibitive prices. Extreme meteorological phenomena—such as snow blizzards and heavy snowfall—were recorded in: the spring months (1814), March (1797, 1817, 1839, 1851–1852), April (1759, 1836, 1839, 1841, 1851–1852), May (in 1810, 1824, 1829, 1836, 1841), as well as in the autumn months, more precisely in September (in 1817), October (1768, 1804, 1805, 1835, 1856), November (in 1789). In 1835, in the mountainous and hilly area, it snowed in July.
23. Testimonies have been recorded in connection with periods of famine, especially in 1718, 1739, 1795, 1811, 1817, 1834–1835.

24. During this period, about 50% of the newborns died in the first few months of their life or in the first years of childhood. Thus, the average life expectancy at birth was, for the 18<sup>th</sup> century Wallachian, less than 40 years (Bucur, *Devălmășia valahă*, 102).
25. In this context, it was noted that *Homo valachicus* survived in a social environment marked, from an architectural point of view, on the one hand, by poor shelters built underground (in small, scattered villages), and on the other hand, by abandoned and ruined houses (in urban areas) due to wars, robberies or looting.
26. *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 9, edited by Maria Holban (lead editor), M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1997); *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 10, pt. 1, edited by Maria Holban, Maria M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2000); *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. 10, pt. 2, edited by Maria Holban, Maria M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2001); *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 1 (1801–1821), edited by Georgeta Filitti, Beatrice Marinescu, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, Marian Stroia, and Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2004); *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 2 (1822–1830), edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005).
27. For the local population, the abandonment of towns and villages in the face of the invading hordes—who made them go through hell countless times during this period—was the only way to save lives and preserve some material goods.
28. For example, after the Austro-Turkish War (1716–1718), Oltenia was plundered and abandoned, Craiova destroyed, the monasteries Strehaia and Tismana burned, the royal palace at Brâncoveni (Olt County) devastated. The Old Court in Bucharest was set on fire in 1718. As a result of the Austro-Russian-Turkish War (1735–1739), Wallachia was looted, Târgoviște burned down, the Câmpulung monastery partially destroyed. During the Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774), the library of the Văcărești monastery was looted and many villages were deserted. The Austro-Russian-Turkish War (1787–1792) caused significant damage to the towns of Craiova, Buzău and Râmnicu Sărat (which were devastated), as well as to the villages of Moeciuc and Bolintin. During this period, the monasteries of Bistrița, Hurezi and Arnota were looted and burned, and the new royal palace in Dealul Spirii was destroyed by fire, in Bucharest. Between 1800 and 1801, Pazvantoglu's rebels set fire to Craiova and devastated Oltenia. During the Russo-Turkish War (1806–1812), Buzău was once again set on fire. The new royal palace in Bucharest—known as the Burnt Court—was set on fire in 1812. In 1815, the counties of Mehedinți and Gorj, together with Strehaia monastery, were looted by the Ottoman troops from south of the Danube. During the Revolution of 1821, there were recorded, throughout Wallachia, plunders committed by mercenaries from Oltenia, Albanian arnauts and Greek mavrophors. They looted and set fire to several villages and several mansions near Bucharest (including the Brâncoveanu palace in Mogoșoaia). During the Ottoman intervention against the Revolution of 1821, Gura Motrului monastery was looted and the religious books and ornaments were burned. The Russo-Turkish War (1828–1829) meant the destruction of villages and towns on the Romanian bank of the Danube (Bucur, *Devălmășia valahă*, 57–90). For example, in 1835, Giurgiu—which appeared to travelers, like many Wallachian towns, as a mixture of ruins and new construc-

- tions—“still bears the visible traces of the devastation of the last war.” *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 3 (1831–1840), edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2006), 380. The Russian-Turkish battles, fought on Wallachian territory as well, from the Crimean War (1853–1856), had terrible consequences: decommissioning bridges, destroying crops and vineyards, devastating villages, burning houses. The population had to abandon entire regions.
29. Accommodation in Wallachia (Turkish inns built mainly in Bucharest and decorated in the Oriental style) was scarce and unsanitary, and post offices (stretched across the principality, looking like some poor huts) were rare and full of fleas. Everywhere, the only piece of furniture was a rudimentary bed made of wood, covered with a mat made of raffia or straws. For these reasons, people passing through Wallachia—often forced to take shelter at night in the open air or in private homes—rightly complained about the deplorable quality of Wallachian accommodation services. In all of Wallachia there was not a single hotel in 1835, while in Craiova (the second most important city in the principality), there was not even a Turkish inn that deserved this name (*ibid.*, 391, 549).
  30. According to the testimonies of foreign travelers who passed through the Romanian villages, during this period, in the peasant huts, often, “you can find no bread, no food, no pots or cauldrons and no household items” (*ibid.*, 378). For more information about the deficient diet in the Danubian Principalities—based, almost exclusively, on the consumption of polenta—, see the study published by Bogdan Bucur, “Prolegomena to the Romanian Sociology and Historiography of Food,” *International Review of Social Research* 7, 1 (2017): 57–68.
  31. Between 1716 and 1731, the Austrian military reports show Oltenia as depopulated, with ruined households (in urban and rural areas), and barren lands. The imperial occupation armies stationed in this province were in a deplorable state, as they couldn’t find any food at all, due to the fact that the peasants had abandoned their households and taken refuge in forests or mountains, for fear of being robbed by Tatars or Austrian hussars. In all the notes of foreign travelers, even from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wallachia is considered a massively depopulated country, haunted by plagues, impoverished by wars, with almost completely ruined towns and villages and poorly exploited fields. In general, less than a fifth of the tillable land of Wallachia was cultivated.
  32. Iosif Genilie, *Geografie istorică, astronomică, naturală și civilă, a continentelor în general și a României în parte* (in Cyrillic) (Bucharest: Tipografia lui Eliad, 1835), 220; G. I. Ionescu-Gion, *Istoria Bucureștilor* (Bucharest: Mavios-Clio, 1998), 583; Ulysse de Marsillac, *Bucureștiul în veacul al XIX-lea*, foreword and notes by Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, translated by Elena Rădulescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1999), 172; Gheorghe Parusi, *Cronologia Bucureștilor: 20 septembrie 1459–31 decembrie 1989: Zilele, săptămânile, oamenii Capitalei de-a lungul a 530 de ani* (Bucharest: Compania, 2007), 105, 110; Dimitrie Papazoglu, *Istoria fondării orașului București*, edited by Marcel-Dumitru Ciucă (Bucharest: Minerva, 2000), 113, 273, 277, 480; George Potra, *Istoricul hanurilor bucureștene* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985), 59; Pompei Gh. Samarian, *Din epidemiologia trecutului românesc: Ciurma* (Bucharest: Institut de Arte Grafice E. Marvan, 1932), 30, 70, 74; Mihai Țipău, *Domnii fanarioți în Țările Române 1711–1821: Mică enciclopedie*, foreword by Pashalis M. Kitromilides (Bucharest: Omonia, 2004), 19.
  33. Bucur, *Devălmășia valahă*, 2008, 34.

34. Ibid., 43–44; *Călători străini*, 3: 376.
35. While crossing Wallachia, foreign travelers were surprised by the fact that, until they arrived to Bucharest, they did not encounter any work of landscaping or beautification of the land, such as strengthening some banks or damming rivers, arranging pedestrian alleys, sowing decorative plantations, constructing bridges or public buildings, etc. The exceptions were boyar mansions, churches and monasteries (in rural areas), as well as the central areas of the main cities (Bucharest, in particular), which began to develop timidly during the Organic Regulations, after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829).
36. In this regard, we must also take into account the memoirs of the great enlightened boyar and scholar Dinicu Golescu, first published in Buda, in 1826, according to which, due to the wars fought on Wallachian territory, “for 24 years, 4 times we left our houses and all our belongings, fleeing abroad, and when we returned, we found everything destroyed”: Dinicu Golescu, *Însemnare a călătoriei mele*, Constantin Radovici din Golești, *făcută în anul 1824, 1825, 1826*, foreword and bibliography by Mircea Iorgulescu (Bucharest: Minerva, 1977), 164. In the context of the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire, in addition to foreign military occupations, another reason for leaving the country were the looting raids ordered by the rebel governors of Turkish provinces—who dared to disregard even the sultan’s authority in Constantinople—such as Osman Pazvantoglu and Mustafa Bayraktar (governors of the Vidin and Ruschuk districts).
37. All the roads in Wallachia seemed deserted and unpaved. Even when the public road was paved with oak beams, they were always half-rotten and poorly laid, so that they made the crossing more difficult rather than easy. In general, the main roads for transportation—which crossed the mountains and connected the Wallachian capital with Habsburg Transylvania—and the bridges laid over the great rivers were very poorly maintained and had no protective fences, not even in extremely dangerous areas. Therefore, accidents were frequent, which is why many commemorative wooden crosses were erected on the side of public roads (especially in the Olt Valley).
38. *Călători străini*, 3: 310, 355–358, 376–377.
39. Ibid., 616, 701.
40. C. B. Elliott, *Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey*, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1838), 146–148.
41. The Oriental Wallachian landscapes started to be permeated by timid Western influences, after the Kuchuk-Kainarji Peace Treaty of 1774. Between 1774 and 1829, successive Russian military occupations of the Romanian Principalities meant the accommodation of the Wallachian political elite with European ways and manners, especially with regard to the Western frocks of the ladies of the royal court, the preparation of dishes and the European way of dining in the houses of the great boyars, the knowledge of the languages spoken in Europe (Italian, French, and Greek), as well as Western music, which the young boyars of the royal court began to listen to as early as the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (towards the end of the century, they also began to dance to it at the balls in the capital). Given the large population of Wallachia, all these small developments were, however, statistically irrelevant.
42. The testimonies of foreign travelers are contradictory in regards to the town of Brăila. On the one hand, it is specified that, in 1836, Brăila was a completely metamorphosed city, with a European appearance, modern buildings, paved streets and 6,000 residents (*Călători străini*, 3: 528). On the same optimistic note, a writing from 1846 attests to



- the good alignment of the buildings, along a wide street, as well as to the fact that the hotel was welcoming. *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 4 (1841–1846), edited by Paul Cernovodeanu and Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2007), 449. On the other hand, the French author Xavier Marmier confesses, in 1846, that he noticed, in the port of Brăila, only small wooden houses, scattered in complete disorder. The local population is estimated at 12,000 people (*ibid.*, 623). A similar testimony is given in 1852 by the Venetian Francesco Nardi and the British Warrington Wilkinson Smyth. The city was dusty during the warm season and muddy during the cold season. The low, humble houses were arranged along straight streets. In 1853, the best accommodation could be obtained in a Turkish wooden inn, full of insects, which had a single floor. One slept on a straw mattress and wrapped themselves in a blanket. Washing was done with the aid of a tin basin, full of water, hanging on the wall, placed in front of each room. *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 6 (1852–1856), edited by Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2010), 22, 46, 83.
43. We find out about the recent construction in 1838, in Giurgiu, of a district with modern houses on the banks of the Danube, a church, as well as a circular square, where shops and cafes were located. However, the inns were shabby, and the packs of stray dogs ubiquitous, as, in fact, in all the towns of Wallachia (*Călători străini*, 3: 613–615). Despite the urbanization process, which led to the old framework huts being demolished, on 31 March 1842, the Austrian Ida Laura Pfeiffer—in transit through Giurgiu—was disappointed by the “ugliness of this city”: “The streets and squares are full of potholes, the houses are built without the slightest care for taste or symmetry, one pushed halfway into the street, while the neighboring one is lost in the background” (*Călători străini*, 4: 207). In somewhat similar terms, Xavier Marmier talks about the city of Giurgiu, in 1846. Giurgiu is compared to a large village, where houses were spread unevenly. When it rained, all the streets became swamps. In the best local inn, the night is spent on a straw mat, in a large room with broken windows, through which swarms of mosquitoes entered (*ibid.*, 623).
  44. *Călători străini*, 3: 718, 816.
  45. *Ibid.*, 626.
  46. *Călători străini*, 4: 416.
  47. *Călători străini*, 3: 475.
  48. Colțea, Sfântul Pantelimon, Brâncoveanu, Visarion, Cișmigiu and Mavrogheni (Filantropia) hospitals. However, “the most admirable order and perfect cleanliness reigns,” with the “most careful” medical care being provided to patients (*ibid.*, 475).
  49. The Museum of Natural History and Antiquities in Bucharest, founded in 1834 by Prince Alexander Ghica, starting from the personal collection donated by the Great Ban Mihalache Ghica.
  50. Saint Sava College of Bucharest, with teaching in Greek, until 1821, respectively in Romanian, after this date. Apart from this high school, there was only one more, in Craiova. Thus begins the interest in scientific researches (*Călători străini*, 4: 229, 233).
  51. The Library of Saint Sava College in Bucharest, established in 1831. In 1836, the first organization and functioning regulation was drawn up. The Library of Saint Sava College thus becomes the first Wallachian public library. In 1843, the library had 7,000



- volumes (ibid., 230). Also, the Library of Saint Sava College had a printing press and two lithographs (ibid., 264).
52. In 1843, “the best bookstore in Bucharest is that of the Court’s bookseller, Mr. Friedrich Walbaum, who also has a reading room with German, French, English and Italian books, and is also the owner of a printing house with a lithographic institute” (ibid., 230). In another note referring to the bookstores from 1843–1845, it is specified that “Winterhalder’s is the highest recommended, as it is very well endowed in German and French literature” (ibid., 264). For books in Romanian, “the Romanow bookstore is known and, as an antique shop, Scarlat’s bookstore” (ibid.).
  53. The Small or Old Theater in Bucharest, installed in the houses of the great boyar Radu Slătineanu, on the street Podul Mogoșoaiei, in front of Sărindar monastery, which were rented or bought in 1828 by the Italian Geronimo Momolo, the former chef of Prince Gregory Ghica IV, after the burning of the Theater of Cișmeaua Roșie in 1825, which was founded in 1817 by Lady Ralu, the daughter of Prince John George Caradja.
  54. Between 1843 and 1845, *Curierul românesc* (The Romanian Courier) was printed in Bucharest (the first newspaper in Romanian, published in Wallachia, starting from 1829, under the direction of Ion Heliade Rădulescu), alongside *Vestitorul românesc* (The Romanian Herald), published by Zaharia Carcalechi, as well as a publication in German, published at Friedrich Walbaum’s typography by a Berliner named Schweder (*Călători străini*, 4: 264).
  55. *Călători străini*, 3: 379.
  56. Ibid., 617.
  57. Ibid., 531.
  58. In 1841, in Bucharest, there were elegant neighborhoods, in the central part of the city, with well-paved streets, “with spacious houses and shops that display, in beautifully embellished windows, all kinds of goods brought especially from Russia” (*Călători străini*, 4: 47). The existence, for the first time in Bucharest, of several sweetshops and cafés (outfitted according to the European fashion, but without being elegant, where you could find sweets and ice cream, newspapers and pool tables), as well as a hotel with clean and comfortable rooms (which also served as a casino, being run by a Frenchman) is confirmed. There were already two theaters: one for the French Comedy and another for the German Comedy. A marble statue was erected in honor of Count Pavel Kiseleff. All around, the people from good families spoke French. The houses of the elites were decorated in European fashion. There was also a bazaar where you could see well-placed shops, which were closed at night with iron shutters. Between 1843 and 1845, there were several important restaurants in Bucharest, where the dishes were served according to European cuisine (some of which also functioned as hotels or cultural establishments): *Momolo* (in the courtyard of the theater), *Condori*, *La Leul de Aur*, *La Cocoșul Roșu* and the *Hôtel de Valachie* (the former *Hanul Roșu*) (ibid., 47, 240–262). In 1846, decorative trees were planted along the central alleys, and the first public garden—arranged in the style of an English park—had just been inaugurated. A 15-horsepower steam engine was to be installed by a German foreman in Bucharest in order to capture, transport and drain drinking water over a distance of about 6 kilometers through 10-inch cast iron pipes (ibid., 575). In 1854, the entire system through which the city of Bucharest was supplied with drinking water was functional and in good order (*Călători străini*, 6: 195).

59. In general, the reference is made in regards to the poor and miserable consumption of the Wallachian peasantry, which meant lack of access to public education and the illiteracy of the vast majority of the rural population, poor nutrition, based mainly on excessive consumption of polenta (meat is almost non-existent in the local menu), unsanitary shelters built underground or above-ground hoses made of daub and covered with straw or reeds (whose only inventory consists of a cauldron and a few pots). The lands were cultivated only to a very small extent (less than one-fifth of the arable land), agricultural tools were rudimentary, soil fertilization techniques unknown; plus: almost non-existent plowing, neglected or impractical gardening, underdeveloped industry, and the foreigners were the ones mainly working in construction (*Călători străini*, 4: 240–243, 276–277).
60. In general, we refer to the sumptuous consumption of the urban social elite, which required knowledge of international languages (especially French, which is why the printing and circulation of books progressed), recipes inspired by Turkish and French cuisine (stew, çullama, poultry and ram, rice, jam and coffee), and less often from the English one (the tasty beef), traveling in luxurious carriages and living in richly decorated palaces (built in European fashion, with floors covered in parquet from Vienna, and filled with Parisian furniture) (*ibid.*, 240–243).
61. Around 1844, Jean Alexandre Vaillant described the Wallachian capital as a huge village, with undefined boundaries, nameless streets, mysterious slums, swamps in which toads croak, barren fields where the nomadic population of the city raises its tents, with districts that the Dâmbovița floods every spring, with muddy cobblestones, with garbage that fills the streets, with carts of wood and hay, driven by peasants dressed in sheepskins or pushed by gypsies covered in rags. This image is in blatant contradiction with the beautiful palaces and pretty houses, recently built in European style, passed by the carriages driven by festooned lackeys and powdered coachmen, pulled by beautiful horses, in which chic women and elegant dandies strolled. The contrast between misery and luxury, the juxtaposition of huts and palaces, the closeness between the rich in their carriages and the poor walking through the mud, was striking. In 1846, along with elegant ladies (dressed by the latest Parisian fashion) and shallow dandies (dressed in Viennese attire), old boyars with caftans and calpacs, dressed in Greek costumes, or servants with Turkish fez and salwars could still be seen. The Wallachian capital continued to charm its visitors with the strange mixture of European elegance and Oriental luxury, or with its strange combination of Western comfort and Asian ostentation (*ibid.*, 415, 575).
62. *Ibid.*, 467–468.
63. *Ibid.*, 47, 467.
64. *Ibid.*, 467–468, 576.
65. *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 5 (1847–1851), edited by Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2009), 30–31.
66. *Călători străini*, 4: 48.
67. *Ibid.*, 569.
68. Between 1843 and 1845, the influence of Turkish morals was still felt in Wallachia, despite the rapid Europeanization. In general, the condition of the streets in Bucharest remained unchanged from the previous period: most of them were, in 1841, muddy, dirty, poorly paved (with thick planks, which were however moldy due to the bad weather). Beneath the perishable street cover—built of thick, rotting wooden beams—the city's

sewer system was traced along ditches dug in the middle of the streets, causing, especially in summer, pestilential stench. No street was straight and regular, and the houses were unevenly built. On the streets full of potholes—where the carriages often broke down—the rivers of mud and dirt of the capital flowed, and the poor people, who had to walk, almost swam through them, as they went to their knees. Most of the accommodation—Turkish inn style—consists of unsanitary taverns, full of mosquitoes or bugs, with poor food and divans as furniture. There were also inns furnished according to European fashion, but they were considered bad and very expensive. Almost all the cafes are poor and in the Turkish style, with greasy tables and walls blackened by the thick, stifling smoke of the pipes (*ibid.*, 47–48, 240–241, 622). In 1846, about 30,000 stray dogs roamed Bucharest and posed a permanent threat (*Călători străini*, 5: 31).

69. *Călători străini*, 4: 563.
70. In Giurgiu, in 1850, there was no modern infrastructure or tourist attractions. Not even in 1854 were the streets paved. According to the Oriental style, the citizens of the city smoked their chibouks in peace, on the porch of the low white houses, which were surrounded by gardens. The timber-framed and wattle-and-daub huts were placed disorderly, as was the case everywhere, in fact, in Wallachia. As for the city of Calafat, it was, in 1851–1852, in a deplorable condition: all the houses were built absolutely chaotically, as one saw fit. Trade, however, was flourishing. Călărași, in 1854, is a dirty city of 5,000 inhabitants. In 1859, in Găești, next to some rich houses, many others could be seen abandoned by the owners and left in ruins. The city was, however, populated. *Călători străini*, 5: 563, 604; *Călători străini*, 6: 20, 207, 227; *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, new ser., vol. 7 (1857–1861), edited by Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2012), 324.
71. In 1851, Turnu-Severin—although very small—was considered very modern. In Slatina, there were already several European-looking houses and towering churches. Paradoxically, it seems that the inn in Craiova offered superior accommodation in comparison to the hotels in Bucharest. The streets in the capital of Oltenia, however, were poorly paved (or indeed covered with wooden logs), but lit with tallow candles. Instead, in Buzău, there were several modern avenues and a beautiful episcopal residence. The streets of Buzău and Târgoviște were paved with stone, and the churches and cathedrals were impressive. Târgu-Jiu is a conglomeration of countless shops and comfortable homes—including a few boyar mansions—, arranged along wide streets, which were, however, unpaved and dusty. Câmpulung had several good houses and several churches: in 1859, the streets were paved (*Călători străini*, 5: 602, 642, 647, 651–664; *Călători străini*, 6: 173; *Călători străini*, 7: 325).
72. In rural areas, villages remained, throughout this period, scattered and poor. The peasants' houses kept the characteristics known from antiquity. In general, the shelters—dug into the ground like lairs—were covered with straw or reeds and surrounded by gardens surrounded by wicker fences. However, after 1842, the peasants were encouraged to abandon their old huts and to build above-ground houses with a framework structure and adobe. But this initiative has been difficult to implement. The fields were deserted and uncultivated. As always, the food—mainly polenta—was miserable (*Călători străini*, 4: 571; *Călători străini*, 5: 150–151, 275–276; *Călători străini*, 7: 280).
73. By 1851, the boyar mansions from the countryside—surrounded by gardens and thick walls—had become as comfortable as the British residences they were inspired by (*Călă-*

- tori străini*, 5: 645). From an architectural point of view, the reference is made to the neo-Romanian style, consecrated during the revival period of Brâncoveanu's reign.
74. In particular, we should mention the beginning of the paving works on the first extra-urban road in Wallachia, between Bucharest and Craiova. In 1848, approximately 10 kilometers had been put into use. Otherwise, in 1850, in the whole of Wallachia, there was not a single stone bridge. All river crossings were still made on shaky wooden bridges, which were ruined by the first flood. Over large rivers, such as Argeș or Olt, the crossing was made on a bridge of vessels or by raft (*ibid.*, 246, 570, 601–603).
  75. With the exception of a few hotels in the center of Bucharest, which came close to the idea of relatively civilized accommodation, crossing Wallachia in 1850 involved a series of shocking experiences for a Westerner, such as: lack of staples and unsatisfactory food, uncomfortable travelling on unpaved roads, using the Wallachian carts, without springs, equipped with a bale of straw as a pillow, accommodation in rudimentary Turkish inns or in unsanitary post offices, sleeping, many people together, in miserable rooms without furniture (*ibid.*, 562–570, 601). In fact, only the minority living in the center of large towns used beds in 1848: most of the population—rural and urban alike—still slept on a sofa or on a straw mat, which remained the only piece of furniture in most houses (*ibid.*, 169–173, 276). Even in the hospital in Giurgiu, where foreigners who were traveling on the Danube and intended to enter Wallachia were quarantined, the rooms had, in 1848, as furnishings: a mat, two chairs (one made of straw and the other made of wood), a basin and a kettle (*ibid.*, 251). As for Wallachian kitchen utensils, the vast majority of the population had only a pot, in which they boiled polenta (*ibid.*, 311). Even in the private provincial houses of the people, in which foreign travelers transiting the principality were housed, the spoons were sometimes made of wood, the forks rare, and the use of bottles unknown (*ibid.*, 276). Everywhere you were greeted with jam and cold water, and in the great palaces of the boyars living in the capital, fine porcelain was used. Above all, for *Homo valachicus* personal hygiene was a completely abstract notion. In 1851, when a woman from the village of Glogova was seen washing her face, the British James Henry Skene interpreted the gesture, with black humor, as such a rare occurrence that it was worth noting, especially in his travel diary (*ibid.*, 663).
  76. In accordance with the Oriental splendor, one must understand also the ostentatious display of Western luxury products, such as Viennese carriages, expensive jewelry and the ladies' Parisian outfits, especially in Bucharest.
  77. The central sector of Bucharest, where the most beautiful houses and the best shops were located, included, in 1854, Podul Mogoșoaiei (old name for Calea Victoriei), Lipscani, Podul Calicilor (old name for Calea Moșilor) and Târgul de Afară (the old name for Calea Moșilor) (*Călători străini*, 6: 195). Most palaces in Bucharest—in the central area—had a single floor and were richly decorated. For a Westerner, the stucco friezes, pilasters and balconies of the boyar houses were painted and arranged in a somewhat strident and unaesthetic manner. Despite the bright colors in which they were painted, many boyar mansions were shabby and almost ready to fall into ruin. Outside the main streets, the houses were small and modest. They had only a ground floor and were surrounded by gardens. At times, they looked picturesque. In fact, a third of Bucharest's surface was covered in gardens (*ibid.*, 93, 212).

78. Only the poor citizens walked, through dust and mud, constantly risking being injured by carts.
79. In 1851, in the Turkish inns of the Wallachian capital—which resembled oriental bazaars—you had no servants at your disposal, the furniture in the room was scarce, and what little furniture existed was of inferior quality. Outside of Bucharest, their condition was much worse: in 1853, the provincial inns offered nothing but a divan (to sleep on) and a piece of onion (for food). In winter, it was difficult to find firewood to heat the rooms. By 1859, in all the inns of Bucharest and in the provincial towns, one faced squalor (*Călători străini*, 5: 598; *Călători străini*, 6: 100–102; *Călători străini*, 7: 290).
80. *Călători străini*, 5: 289.
81. A reference to the stone pavement in front of the palaces erected along the main streets, to the lanterns installed exclusively in the central area for public lighting, to the good conditions offered by Bucharest's hospitals, as well as to some landscaping work, among which we mention: the inauguration, in 1852, of the Grand Theater on the Podul Mogoșoaiei, the partial reconstruction of the houses ruined by the fire of 1847, the erection of barracks for the Wallachian cavalry, the installation of artesian wells on Podul Mogoșoaiei, the design of a public garden, called Kiseleff, near the northern barrier of the city (*ibid.*, 246, 690). In 1853, the Kiseleff Garden—arranged in the English style—had become the main promenade for the people of Bucharest. It was considered, due to its size, one of the most beautiful in Europe (*Călători străini*, 6: 94). However, in relation to the needs of the capital, these works of public utility, although commendable, were insignificant. Among other things, foreign travelers stressed the need to dam the Dâmbovița River—described as dirty and small—, which crossed Bucharest, as, especially in summer, swamps appeared, and they were harmful to the health of the local population (*Călători străini*, 5: 288, 467). Also, the wooden bridges over the Dâmbovița—perishable and rudimentary—had to be rebuilt.
82. With the exception of some palaces and public buildings—erected, after 1829, in European style, in the central area of the city—, in general, the houses in Bucharest were, in 1849, very ugly and badly arranged along some streets covered with rotting logs, narrow, twisted, dirty and dusty (during the warm season) or muddy (during the cold season) (*ibid.*, 467). In fact, until you got near the central area, the Wallachian capital seemed, from an architectural and urban point of view, an extension of the neighboring villages. Thus, the slums of Bucharest consisted of huts separated by abandoned terrains (*ibid.*, 288).
83. Western literature, as well as the theater and opera troupes from France and Italy which performed in Bucharest during this period (*ibid.*, 468).
84. Along with the only two high schools, which already functioned in Bucharest and Craiova, the concept of higher education meant, in 1851, the existence, in the Wallachian capital, of the first two faculties (law and mathematics) (*ibid.*, 692–693). For the Wallachian nobility, schooling and cultural training, after 1829, were also acquired in European university centers, mainly in France and Germany. In fact, most of the craftsmen who practiced in Wallachia also came from these two European countries. In 1848, the intellectual level or the cultural and gastronomic consumption of the Wallachian social elite was at Western standards. For example, at the table of Prince Barbu Știrbei, in



- 1851, there were served: truffles from Paris, oysters from Constantinople, pheasant from Vienna, wine from Burgundy and champagne from Reims (*ibid.*, 173, 466, 606).
85. In 1851, elementary education was completely inaccessible to children from rural areas, as primary schools were extremely few in number: one in each county capital, two in Craiova and five in Bucharest (*ibid.*, 692).
86. *Ibid.*, 469.
87. The Grand Theater of Bucharest was inaugurated in 1852 and resembles, architecturally, La Scala, the opera house in Milan. The cultural building on Podul Mogoșoaiei street had almost 1,000 seats and, at the time of the inauguration, was the third largest performance hall in Europe. It also benefited from excellent acoustics. In the perception of Western travelers, the theater in Bucharest was a construction worthy of a great European capital (*Călători străini*, 7: 52).
88. *Călători străini*, 6: 93–94.
89. *Ibid.*, 101–102.
90. *Ibid.*, 195–199, 211–212; *Călători străini*, 7: 58, 109–110.
91. *Călători străini*, 6: 208–228; *Călători străini*, 7: 287.
92. *Călători străini*, 6: 655–656.
93. Bucur, *Devălmășia valahă*, 274; *Călători străini*, 6: 208–228, 255, 301, 602, 655; *Călători străini*, 7: 107–109, 115, 286–291.

### Abstract

#### *Homo valachicus orientalis* (1716–1859)

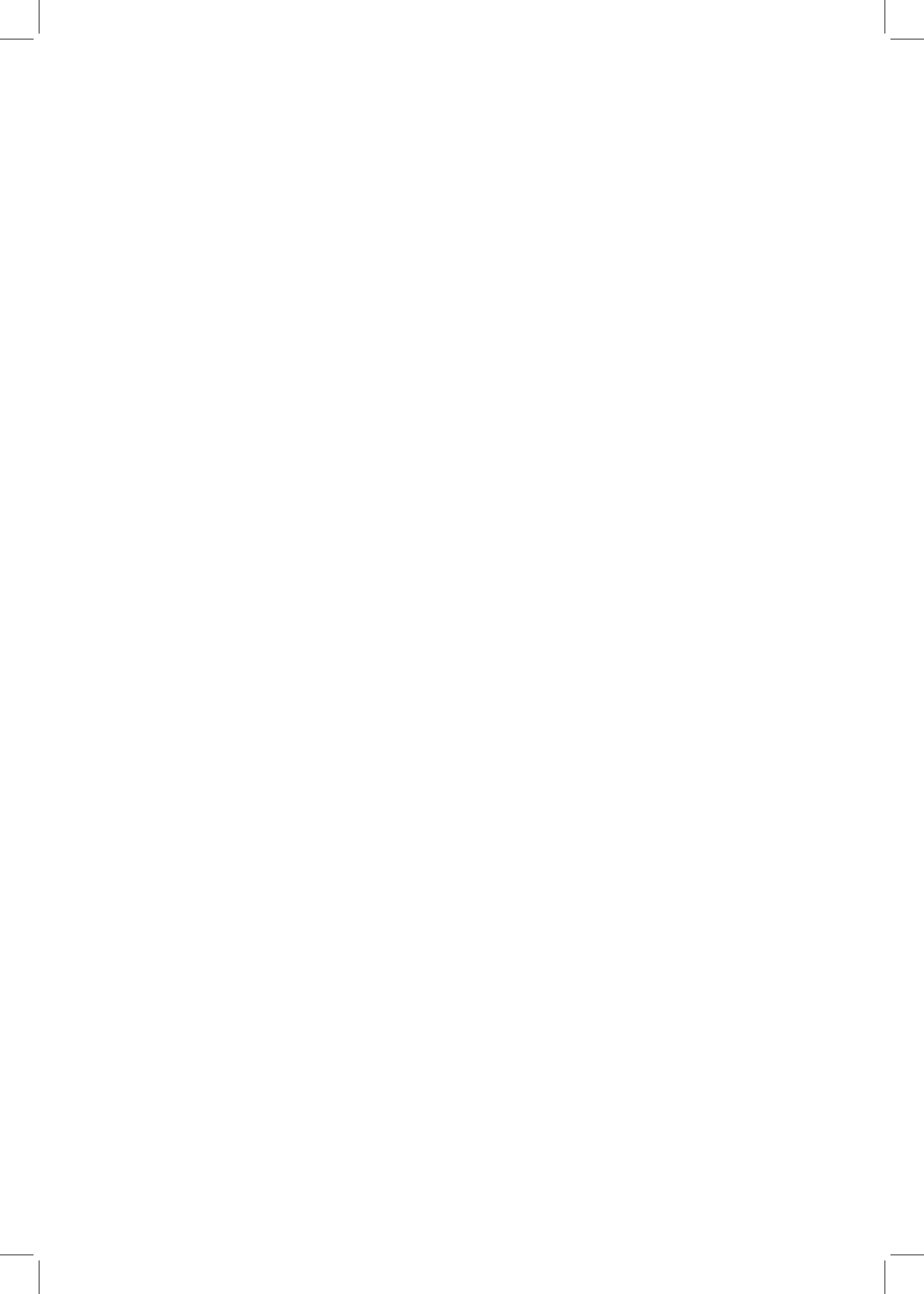
By 1829, the development gap between West and East (to which Wallachia belonged) had become abyssal. The geographic and scientific discoveries, the architectural styles, the musical genres, the artistic and literary trends of the time were completely unknown in Bucharest. The country was wholly absent from the international scientific world. During that time no Wallachian concerned themselves with the study of formal science (logic and mathematics), natural science (biology, physics, chemistry, astronomy), or applied science (engineering, agronomy, medicine, and pharmacy). Until 1829, Wallachia wasn't able to offer the world a single astronomer, doctor, engineer, architect, mathematician, physicist, agronomist, pharmacist, painter, musician, etc. On the other hand, all of these professions—and their subsequent scientific disciplines—were well known in the West, since the Greco-Roman Antiquity, and following their rediscovery at the end of the Middle Ages. For instance, in 1850, the first Wallachian institution of higher education was created as part of Saint Sava Princely Academy (which was a high school; the University of Bucharest was founded much later, in 1864). Meanwhile, the University of Bologna (1088) had been around for 762 years. In 1836, when the first Wallachian public library was established, the Malatestiana Library of Cesena (1454) had been around for almost 400 years. Until 1859, Wallachia had an illiteracy rate of over 90%, similar to that of Western Europe in 1450, but also similar to that of the Roman Empire. Also, in 1841 we learn about the first paved road in Wallachia (in Bucharest), while in 1853, the existence of the first stone bridge over a stream was confirmed (built in Bucharest, over the Dâmbovița River). At that time, 1,750 years had passed since Apollodorus of Damascus had built Trajan's Bridge over the Danube, in order for the Roman armies to invade Dacia. While the first stone bridge was inaugurated in Bucharest in 1853, a year later, in 1854,



one of the world's most important engineering projects came to fruition in Austria: the Semmering Railway, which crossed the Alps through 14 tunnels dug in the mountains, and across 16 viaducts and 100 curved stone bridges. Looking at the visual arts, *Urcarea lui Mavrogheni pe tron* (The enthronement of Mavrogheni, 1786), by Iordache Venier (who was of Venetian origin), can be considered as the first modern painting in Wallachia. *Autoportret* (Selfportrait) by Nicolae Polcovnicul (1788–1842), a painting finished after 1800, can be seen as the first modern painting of a Wallachian painter. Meanwhile, 500 years had passed since Giotto's death. In actual fact, in 1829 Wallachia was outside history.

### **Keywords**

foreign travelers, history of Wallachia, Danubian Principalities, Orient versus Occident, *Homo orientalis*, *Homo valachicus*, *Homo occidentalis*



# Historical Demography and Anthroponymy

## in the Settlements of the Bistra Valley (Bihor County), in the Urbarial Conscriptions from 1770

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COSMIN PATCA, SORIN ȘIPOȘ, LAURA ARDELEAN

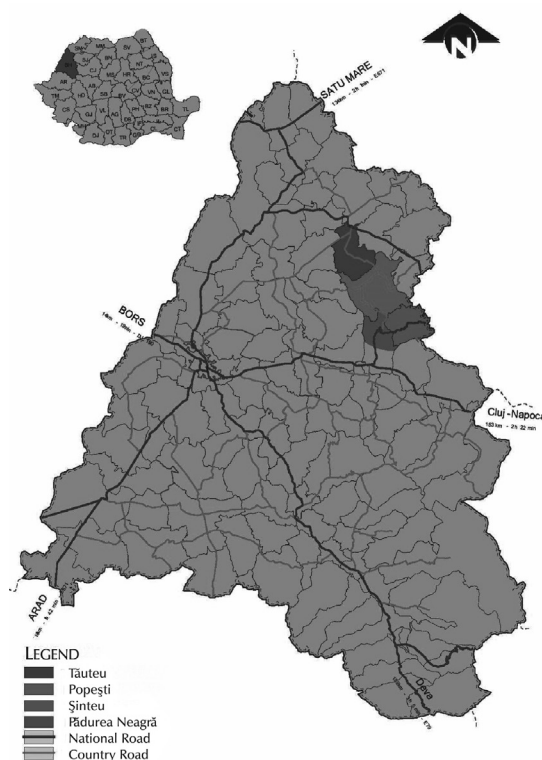
### Introduction

**A**N IMPORTANT documentary source for the historical realities from the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age is represented by urbarial documents. In the sixteenth century the urbaria were just a few, but they are more numerous in the seventeenth century and became widespread in the eighteenth century, as the political power, in this case the Habsburg Empire, became involved in the feudal relations between masters and subjects. Urbaria generally present brief, but multilateral, concrete and particularly valuable information for the reconstruction of feudal relations.<sup>1</sup> From a demographic point of view, the urbaria contain information on the number of subjected population in a manor or locality, migratory movement (runaway serfs), social and professional structure, natural movement of the subjected people, but also toponymic and anthroponymic data and therefore possible indications regarding the ethnicity and/or denomination of the inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

In this material we intend to analyze the anthroponomic structure of the settlements of the Bistra Valley, in Bihor (Hun. Bihar) County, based on the urbarial conscriptions from 1770. We will try to see what was the distribution of surnames (*cognomen*<sup>3</sup>) and first names in each locality and we will frequently use the graphic method in this regard. Through the statistical method we will try to track the population movement, and the degree of preservation of some surnames in the localities at the end of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century, as they result from other urbaria (1688, 1689, 1699, 1735). Within the limits of the existing documentary sources, but also of the available space, we will compare the data from the urbaria<sup>4</sup> with information coming from other documentary sources (confessional conscriptions and schematisms), in order to reconstruct the confessional and/or ethnic realities. We are aware of the limits of our approach, which are mainly related to the specifics of the documentary sources used here; the nominal tables do not include the entire population, but only the one dependent on the feudal lord and only the heads of families. However, they do not detract from the importance and the value of the

research. We will try to supplement the information from the urbaria with other types of sources from that time, so that the image of the ethnic and confessional realities be as true as possible.

FIG. 1. LOCATION OF THE RESEARCHED AREA WITHIN BIHOR COUNTY AND ROMANIA



The study is part of a wider research project, in which we investigate all the localities of the Bistra Valley. The villages of the Bistra Valley are situated in the northwestern part of Romania and in the northern half of Bihor County, in the basin of the Bistra River, a tributary of the Barcău River. The defining feature of this area is represented by the ethnic and confessional mosaic of the population. The settlements have been documented since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, from downstream to upstream i.e., in the direction of the penetration and conquest of the territory by the Hungarians.<sup>5</sup>

Medieval documents attest in the abovementioned area both Romanian settlements (*possessio walachalis*), and Hungarian ones (*possessio hungaricalis*). The Hungarian conquest also meant the officialization of the Catholic Church to the detriment of the Orthodox rite, represented by the large mass of the population in the Bistra Valley area. Following the Reformation and the emergence of Protestant Churches (Calvinist, Lutheran, Unitarian), the Calvinist confession spread to the majority of the Hungarian population, especially in Tăuteu. Calvinist Romanian

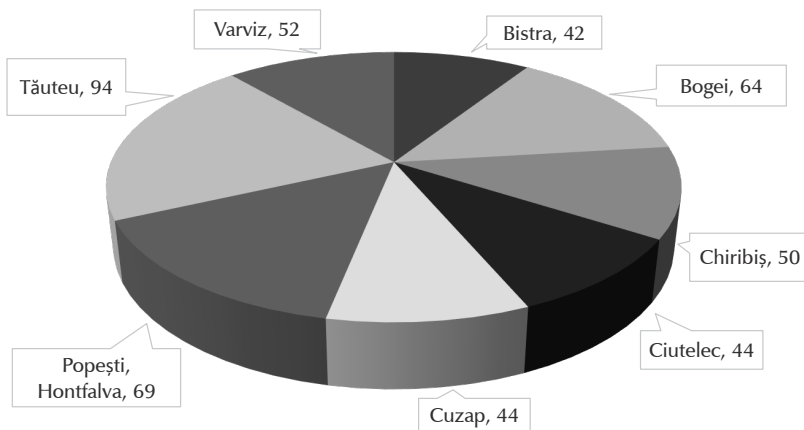
priests are also attested in Ciutelec, Popești, Bistra and Chiribiș at certain moments of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> The entry of Bihor into the sphere of Austrian influence in 1692 led to the emergence of the Greek Catholic Church, to the detriment of the Orthodox Church. The eighteenth century is characterized by a significant conflict between Orthodox and Greek Catholics in the Bistra Valley, and there are numerous numerical fluctuations within the localities, from one year to another. The Orthodox conscriptions from 1769 and 1786 mention important Orthodox communities in Chiribiș, Ciutelec, Popești, Varviz, Voivozi, Bistra and Cuzap. At the initiative of the Barany family, who ruled over these places, the settlement of Slovaks, of Roman Catholic denomination, took place at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another ethnic group, of Germanic origin (Swabians), is settled in Banat and Partium since the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth;<sup>7</sup> we do not have information about a possible presence of Swabians in the Bi-

stra Valley area during this period. Toponyms and historical-cartographic documents reveal the presence in the eighteenth century, in small numbers, of Jews (of Mosaic denomination) and Romani (they usually adopted the confession of the majority population among whom they lived).

## Anthroponymy and Demography in the Settlements of the Bistra Valley (the End of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century–the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century)

INSPIRED BY reformist ideas, Empress Maria Theresa issued on 29 December 1766 an ordinance on the introduction of the unique urbarium in six counties, an ordinance made public on 23 January 1767. Then began the implementation work in other counties, including Bihor, which lasted until 1774.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of the decree issued by Maria Theresa was the evaluation and uniform regulation of the obligations of the serfs. In the settlements of the Bistra Valley, urbarial conscriptions were made in 1770. Therefore, we will frequently use this year in graphic representations to illustrate the results of the Theresian urbarial regulations of 1767. The tables in the regulations are in two copies: in Latin (used in our analysis) and in Hungarian. They include only the heads of families, with their name and surname. We further analyze the toponymic data by localities, in order to illustrate the frequency of names in 1770, but also the movement of the population in this area. The localities considered by our analysis are: Chiribiș, Tăuteu, Bogei, Ciutelec, Bistra, Popești, *Hontfalva* (missing settlement, merged in the Popești locality), Varviz, Voivozi, and Cuzap from Bihor County.

FIG. 2. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ANTHROPNYMS INCLUDED IN THE URBARIUM OF 1767



SOURCE: Hungaricana.

The conscriptions of 1770 feature 459 names (heads of families) for the settlements of the Bistra Valley (fig. 2), distributed as follows: Tăuteu—94, Popești and Hontfalva—69, Bogei—64, Varviz—52, Chiribiș—50, Cuzap—44, Ciutelec—44, Bistra—42.<sup>9</sup> If we compare these data with those from previous conscriptions, we see some distinct features. The inventory of goods of the Mișca domain (*Inventarium Bonorum . . .*) from 1688 includes 63 names of dependent peasants: Chiribiș—9, Bistra—6, Popești—18, Varviz—11, Cuzap—10, Hontfalva—4, Voivozi—55.<sup>10</sup> The urbarium or conscription of the goods from the following year, 1689 (*Urbarium sive Conscriptio Bonorum . . .*), includes 79 anthroponyms: Chiribiș—9, Bistra—17, Popești—23, Varviz—11, Cuzap—10, Hontfalva—4, Voivozi—5.<sup>11</sup> Ten years later, in 1699, another conscription of the goods of the Mișca domain (*Conscriptio Bonorum Micskeiensium*) contains 58 anthroponyms: Chiribiș—15, Bistra—10, Popești—13, Varviz—11, Cuzap—9 (Voivozi locality appears as abandoned, *deserta*).<sup>12</sup> Another conscription from 1735 (*Conscriptio Bonorum Micske*) contains 269 anthroponyms (Tăuteu—80, Bistra—43, Voivozi—42, Cuzap—27, Chiribiș—25, Popești—52).<sup>13</sup>

The data must be understood in the general context of the second half of the seventeenth century. The Austro-Turkish military conflicts of 1685–1692 and the uprising of Francis II Rákóczi (1703–1713) had negative effects on the population of the Bistra Valley, causing material destruction, loss of life and an excessive increase in obligations.<sup>14</sup> The 1692 cameral conscription of Bihar County, made immediately after the expulsion of the Turks, mentions many localities as abandoned (*deserta*) for 7 years (Chiribiș, Cuzap, *Szuszafalva*—extinct settlement) and 4 years (Varviz, Popești, Bistra, Bogei, Voivozi).<sup>15</sup> For the most part, these data are increasingly being reinterpreted by historians and partially contradicted by tithe registers.<sup>16</sup> Most likely, the locals temporarily left their old settlements during the conflicts, retreating to the higher, forested and protected areas, but they mostly returned to the old settlements after the conflicts ended. What is certain is that a period of restoration of the domains and of the peasant households was needed. There is now a fluctuation in the population; some return to abandoned villages or settle in other places, where they find better living conditions.<sup>17</sup> To these data we add other demographic elements, provided by the confessional conscriptions, but also the schematisms from the early nineteenth century, to have an overview of the population and the ethnic and religious structure. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is known at European level as a period of strong population growth.<sup>18</sup> If until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century landlords tried to keep their serfs by granting exemptions to repopulate the abandoned farms, in the period immediately preceding the Theresian regulation of 1767 the trend is different, the landlords being more concerned with the development of the alodial economy. The deserted farms are fewer and fewer, and when they are abandoned the landlord is in no hurry to give them to the serfs, for the peasants' lots were an obstacle to the expansion of the alodium.<sup>19</sup>

### Chiribiș (Hun. Terebes)

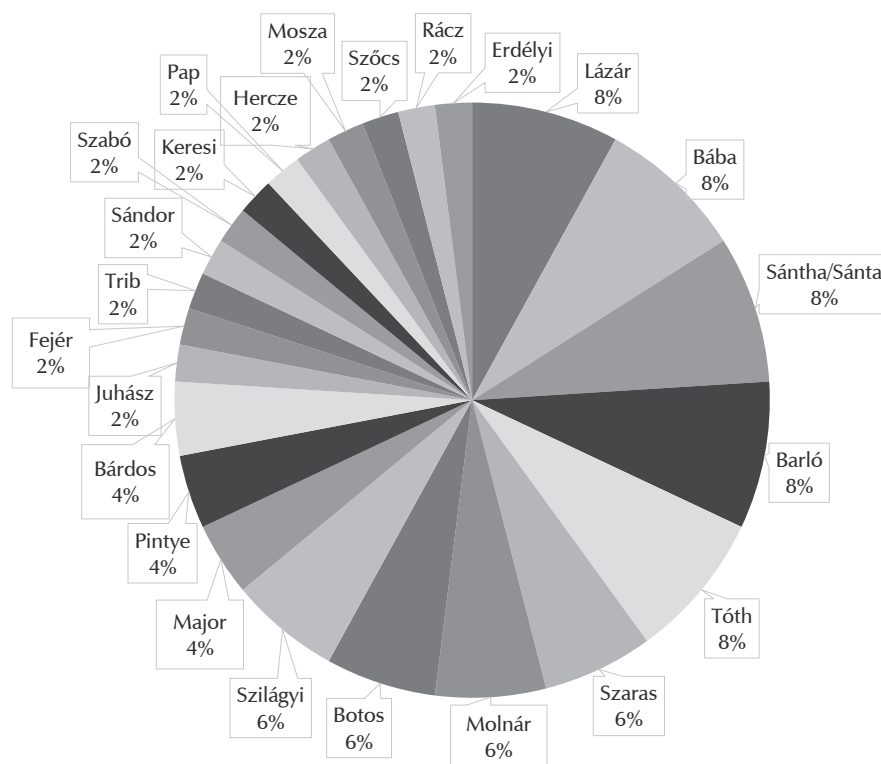
**T**HE LOCALITY is attested for the first time in the year 1219 (*villa Terebus*).<sup>20</sup> In 1692, immediately after the expulsion of the Ottomans from Bihar, it appeared among the settlements deserted for 7 years.<sup>21</sup> The Orthodox conscription of 1769 records 51



houses. In 1785 there were 12 Greek Catholics in Chiribiş, and in 1792 a number of 6 Roman Catholics and 4 Calvinists are mentioned.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the great mass of the inhabitants of Chiribiş was at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century of the Orthodox confession, and they could only be Romanians.

The urbarial regulation of 1770 comprises 50 heads of households, in accordance with the number of houses (51) in the Orthodox conscription of 1769. The names of the families and their frequency are as follows: Lázár (4), Bába (4), Sántha/Sánta (4), Barló (4), Tóth (4), Szaras (3), Molnár (3), Botos (3), Szilágyi (3), Major (2), Pintye (2), Bárdos (2), Juhász (1), Fejér (1), Trib (1), Sándor (1), Szabó (1), Keresi (1), Pap (1), Hercze (1), Mosza (1), Szőcs (1), Rác (1), Erdélyi (1). There were 24 surnames in the locality in 1770. Seven surnames (Lázár, Bába, Sántha/Sánta, Barló, Tóth, Szaras, Molnár) represented 52% of the village population. As for the surnames found in the previous urbarial documents (1688, 1689, 1699, 1735), they are 10 in number, representing a percentage of 42% of the total surnames in the locality in 1770; in other words, these surnames, approximately 42% of the total, proved the continuity of life in Chiribiş, between 1688 and 1770.

FIG. 3. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN CHIRIBIŞ IN 1770



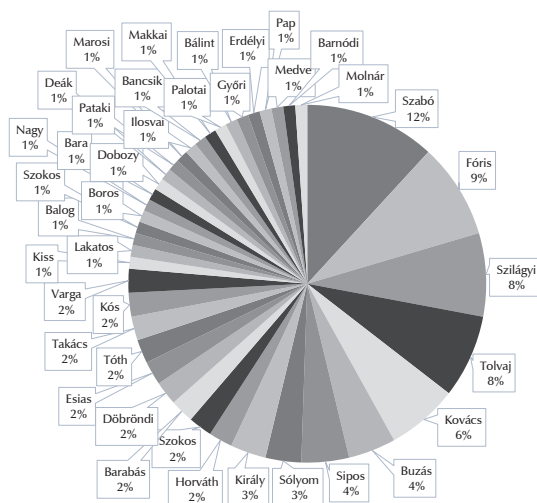
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

### Tăuteu (Hun. Tóti)

THE FIRST documentary attestation of the settlement comes from the period 1291–1294 (*villa Tóty*),<sup>23</sup> in the tithe's registers of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Oradea, proving the existence of a Roman Catholic population (most likely ethnic Hungarians). The tithe to the church was imposed in the Middle Ages only on Catholics and only exceptionally on the Orthodox. In the locality there is a church, originally Catholic, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of the Catholic community adopted the Reformed (Calvinist) denomination. Civil status registers exist in the locality since 1755 for the Calvinist confession. The Roman Catholic Schematism from 1824 attests in Tăuteu the following confessional structure: Calvinists—601, Roman Catholics—77, Unitarians—5;<sup>24</sup> by deduction, from an ethnic point of view they were Hungarians.

The urbarial conscription of 1770 includes 94 heads of family from Tăuteu. The following are the names of the families and their frequency: Szabó (11), Fóris (8), Szilágyi (8), Tolvaj (7), Kovács (7), Buzás (5), Sipos (4), Sólyom (3), Király (3), Horváth (2), Barabás (2), Döbröndi (2), Esias (2), Tóth (2), Takács (2), Kós (2), Varga (2), Kiss (1), Lakatos (1), Balog (1), Szokos (1), Boros (1), Nagy (1), Bara (1), Dobozy (1), Deák (1), Pataki (1), Marosi (1), Ilosvai (1), Bancsik (1), Makkai (1), Palotai (1), Bálint (1), Győri (1), Erdélyi (1), Pap (1), Medve (1), Barnódi (1), Molnár (1). Regarding the number of surnames existing in the locality in 1770, they were 40. Seven surnames (Szabó, Fóris, Szilágyi, Tolvaj, Kovács, Buzás, Sipos) together represented 50% of the locality's population. Regarding the surnames that can be found in the previous urbarial documents (1735), they are 26 in number, representing 65% of the total surnames in the locality in 1770. In Tăuteu we see that, between 1735 and 1770, 65% of surnames are recorded in the two conscriptions.

FIG. 4. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN TĂUTEU IN 1770



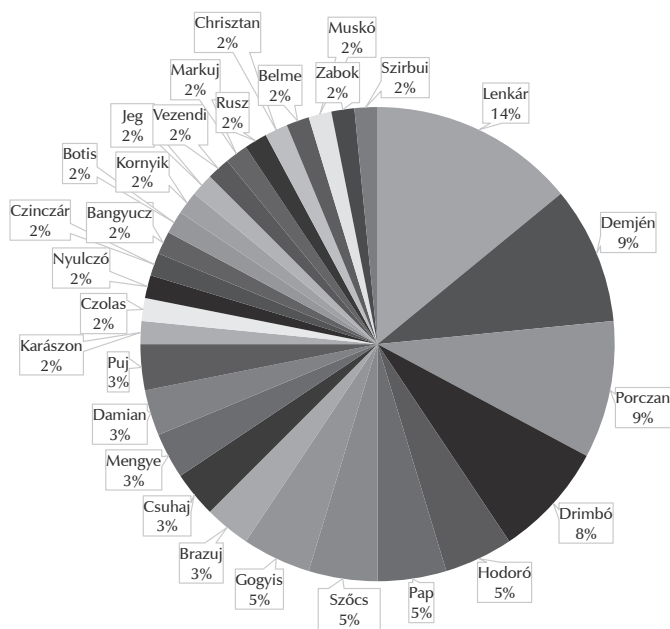
SOURCE: Szilágyi, 11–14; Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltára, IV.A, 1/d–31d.

### Bogei (Hun. Bosaj)

THE FIRST attestation comes from the year 1406, on the occasion of the first conscription of the domain of Şinteu fortress, when it appears as a Romanian possession (*poss. walachalis Bozay*).<sup>25</sup> In 1692 it is mentioned among the localities abandoned (*deserta*) for 4 years.<sup>26</sup> The Orthodox conscription of 1786 indicates 50 houses in Bogei.<sup>27</sup> The Roman Catholic schematisms of 1824, 1828, and 1835 mention only Orthodox population within the locality.

The urbarial conscription of 1770 includes 64 heads of families from Bogei, more than the number of houses (50) listed in the Orthodox conscription from 1786. We deduce from this that besides this majority Orthodox population there were other confessional groups. Here are the surnames and their frequency: Lenkár (9), Demjén (6), Porczan (6), Drimbó (5), Hodoró (3), Pap (3), Szócs (3), Gogyis (3), Brazuj (2), Csuhaj (2), Mengye (2), Damian (2), Puj (2), Karászon (1), Czolas (1), Nyulczó (1), Czinczár (1), Bangyucz (1), Botis (1), Korniyik (1), Jeg (1), Vezendi (1), Markuj (1), Rusz (1), Chrisztan (1), Belme (1), Muskó (1), Zabok (1), Szirbui (1). In 1770 there were 29 surnames in the locality. Six surnames (Lenkár, Demjén, Porczan, Drimbó, Hodoró, Pap) represented 50% of the population of the village. We could not make an assessment of the degree of preservation of surnames, because we do not have previous urbarial conscriptions for this locality.

FIG. 5. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN BOGEI IN 1770



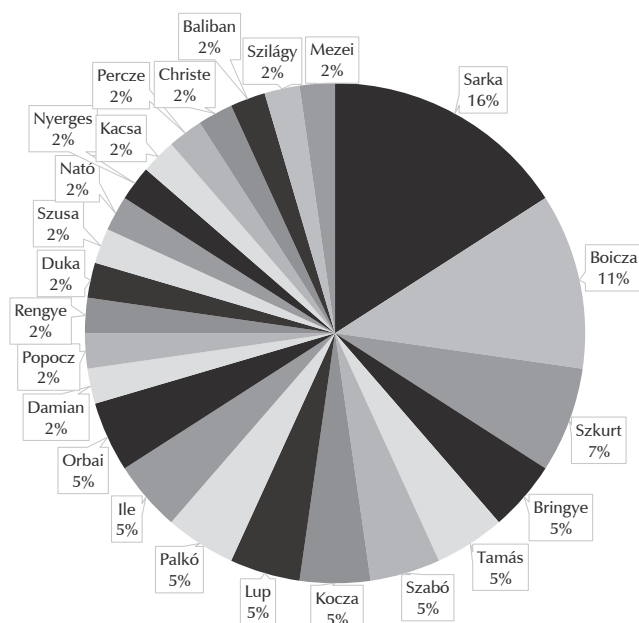
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

### Ciutelec (Hun. Cséhtelek)

**I**N 1305 it appears for the first time in documents under the name of *Cheyteluk*. Hungarian historiography links this settlement with the settlement of Slavic populations (Czech or Ruthenian) in the thirteenth century, at the urging of the Hungarian conquerors. In 1406 it is mentioned as a Romanian settlement of the domain of the Şinteu fortress.<sup>28</sup> The Orthodox conscription from 1769 mentions 50 houses in Ciutelec,<sup>29</sup> and in 1785 there were 12 Greek Catholics belonging to the Popeşti Greek Catholic parish.<sup>30</sup> The Roman Catholic Schematism of 1824 highlights the following ethnic structure: Orthodox—374, Roman Catholics—4, Calvinists—4, Mosaics—3.<sup>31</sup>

The urbarial conscription of 1770 includes 44 heads of households in Ciutelec, in relative accordance with the number of houses from 1769 (50). Here are the surnames and their frequency: Sarka (7), Boicza (5), Szkurt (3), Bringye (2), Tamás (2), Szabó (2), Kocza (2), Lup (2), Palkó (2), Ile (2), Orbai (2), Damian (1), Popocz (1), Rengye (1), Duka (1), Szusa (1), Nató (1), Nyerges (1), Kacsa (1), Percze (1), Christe (1), Baliban (1), Szilágyi (1), Mezei (1). In 1770, there were 25 surnames in the locality. Seven surnames (Sarka, Boicza, Szkurt, Bringye, Tamás, Szabó, Kocza) represent 52% of the village population. As for the surnames found in the previous documents (tithe registers from 1686, 1687, 1696), they are 9 in number, representing a percentage of 36% of the total surnames in the locality recorded in the year 1770.

FIG. 6. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN CIUTELEC IN 1770



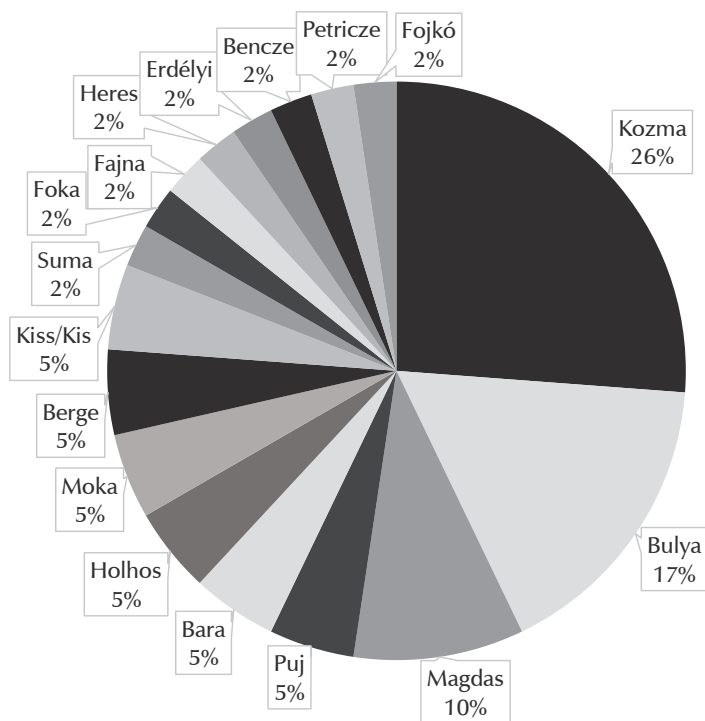
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

### Bistra (Hun. Bisztraújfalu)

**T**HE SETTLEMENT is first mentioned in 1472 as a Romanian possession (*poss. walachalis Wyfalva*).<sup>32</sup> In 1692 it appears among the settlements abandoned for 4 years.<sup>33</sup> The Orthodox conscription of 1769 shows that there were 110 houses in Sârbi and Bistra (reviewed together).<sup>34</sup> In 1785, 8 Greek Catholics and 3 Roman Catholics are mentioned in 1792. The Roman Catholic Schematism of 1824 presents the confessional structure of the locality: 115 Orthodox, 3 Mosaics (Jews).<sup>35</sup>

The urbarial conscription of 1770 includes 42 heads of families in dependence on the landowner. The following are the surnames and their frequency: Kozma (11), Bulya (7), Magdas (4), Puj (2), Bara (2), Holhos (2), Moka (2), Berge (2), Kiss/Kis (2), Suma (1), Foka (1), Fajna (1), Heres (1), Erdélyi (1), Bencze (1), Petricze (1), Fojkó (1). In 1770, there were 16 surnames in the locality. Three surnames (Kozma, Bulya, Magdas) represent 52% of the village population. As for the surnames found in previous urbarial documents (1688, 1689, 1699, 1735), they are 12 in number, representing a percentage of 75% of the total surnames in the locality in 1770.

FIG. 7. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN BISTRA IN 1770



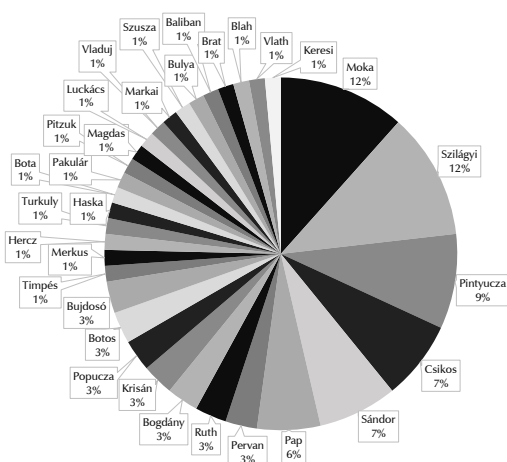
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

## Popești (Hun. Papfalva) and Hontfalva

POPEȘTI is also mentioned as a Romanian settlement in 1435 (*poss. walachalis Papfalwa*). Close to it are other settlements mentioned in the Middle Ages, which later disappeared: *villa olachalis Moch* (settlement most likely located on the border with Bistra), *poss. olachalis Hontfalua* (Romanian settlement within the domain of the Șinteu fortress in 1406), *poss. hungaricalis Hontpataka* (Hungarian settlement within the domain of the Șinteu fortress in 1406).<sup>36</sup> Of these missing settlements, only *Hontfalva* is mentioned in the urbarial regulation in 1770, reviewed together with Popești. In 1692 Popești appears among the settlements abandoned for 4 years.<sup>37</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was the first locality in the Bistra Valley to embrace the Greek Catholic confession, becoming a parish in 1759. In 1777, 226 Greek Catholics were attested in Popești; 560 are mentioned in 1785.<sup>38</sup> The Schematism of 1824 presents the confessional structure of the inhabitants: Greek Catholics—308, Calvinists—7, Roman Catholics—6.<sup>39</sup>

The urbarial conscription from 1770 includes 69 heads of families for Popești and Hontfalva (missing settlement, located within the border of Popești village), without listing them separately. Here are the surnames and their frequency: Moka (8), Szilágyi (8), Pintyucza (6), Csikos (5), Sándor (5), Pap (4), Pervan (2), Ruth (2), Bogdány (2), Krisán (2), Popucza (2), Botos (2), Bujdosó (2), Timpés (1), Merkus (1), Hercz (1), Turkuly (1), Haska (1), Bota (1), Pakulár (1), Pitzuk (1), Magdas (1), Lukács (1), Vladuj (1), Markai (1), Szusza (1), Baliban (1), Brat (1), Blah (1), Vlath (1), Keresi (1), Moka (12), Szilágyi (12), Pintyucza (9), Csikos (7), Sándor (7), Pap (6), Pervan (3), Ruth (3), Bogdány (3), Krisán (3), Popucza (3), Botos (3), Bujdosó (3), Timpés (1), Merkus (1), Hercz (1), Turkuly (1), Haska (1), Pakulár (1), Bota (1), Pitzuk (1), Magdas (1), Markai (1), Vladuj (1), Luckács (1).

FIG. 8. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN POPEȘTI AND HONTFALVA IN 1770



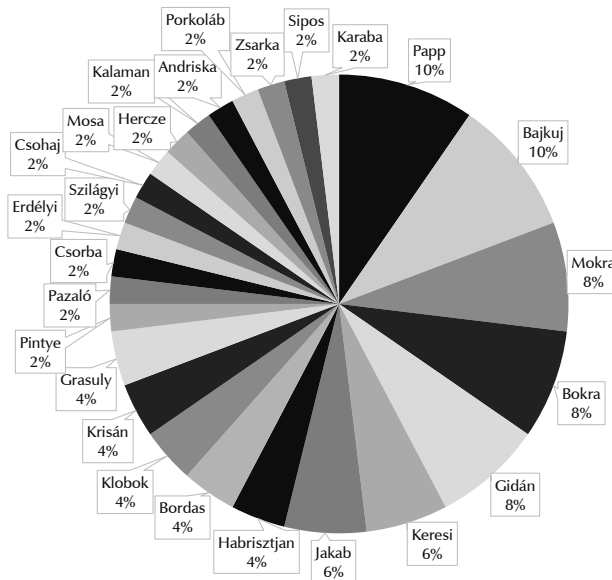
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

**Varviz (Hun. Várviz)**

**T**HE FIRST documentary attestation of the locality is from 1327 (*Warvizy*). In 1406 it is mentioned as a Hungarian possession (*poss. hungaricalis Warvizbeleke*), within the domain of the fortress Şinteu.<sup>40</sup> That is strange, as during the Modern Age the settlement was overwhelmingly a Romanian one. The Orthodox conscription from 1769 attests in Varviz 50 houses, and in 1792 a number of 4 Roman Catholics are also mentioned.<sup>41</sup> The Roman Catholic Schematism of 1824 shows us the confessional structure of the locality: Orthodox—226, Mosaics—4.<sup>42</sup>

The urbarial conscription of 1770 brings us 52 heads of families from Varviz, in dependence on the landowner, in accordance with the 50 houses of the Orthodox conscription. The following are the surnames and their frequency: Papp (5), Bajkuj (5), Mokra (4), Bokra (4), Gidán (4), Keresi (3), Jakab (3), Habrisztjan (2), Bordas (2), Klobok (2), Krisán (2), Grasuly (2), Pintye (1), Pazaló (1), Csorba (1), Erdélyi (1), Szilágyi (1), Csohaj (1), Mosa (1), Hercze (1), Kalaman (1), Andriská (1), Porkoláb (1), Zsarka (1), Sipos (1), Karaba (1), Sipos (1), Karaba (1). In 1770, there were 26 surnames in the locality. Seven surnames (Papp, Bajkuj, Mokra, Bokra, Gidán, Keresi, Jakab) represent 53% of the population of the locality. As for the surnames found in the previous urbarial documents (1688, 1689, 1699), they are 4 in number, representing a percentage of 15% of the total surnames in the locality in 1770. The very small percentage can be also explained by the fact that we do not have the nominal conscription from 1735 for this locality.

FIG. 9. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN VARVIZ IN 1770



SOURCE: Hungaricana.

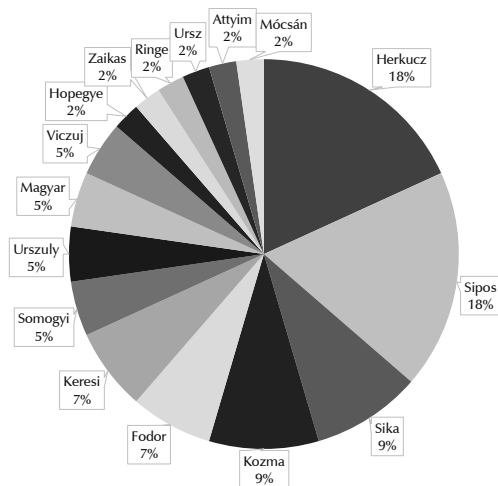


### Cuzap (Hun. Középes)

THE FIRST documentary attestation dates from 1406, when Cuzap is mentioned as a Romanian possession of the domain of the Şinteu fortress (*poss. walachalis Kivzep*).<sup>43</sup> In 1692 it appears among the settlements deserted for 7 years.<sup>44</sup> The Orthodox conscription from 1786 attests 40 houses in Cuzap, and in 1792 8 Roman Catholics are mentioned.<sup>45</sup> The Roman Catholic Schematism of 1824 presents the confessional structure: Orthodox—120, Roman Catholics—4, Calvinists—1.<sup>46</sup>

The urbarial conscription of 1770 includes 44 heads of households in Cuzap, in accordance with demographic data from the conscriptions of 1786 and 1792. The following is a list of surnames and their frequency: Herkucz (8), Sipos (8), Sika (4), Kozma (4), Fodor (3), Keresi (3), Somogyi (2), Urszuly (2), Magyar (2), Viczuj (2), Hopegye (1), Zaikas (1), Ringe (1), Ursz (1), Attyim (1), Mócsán (1). In 1770, there were 16 surnames in the locality. Four surnames (Herkucz, Sipos, Sika, Kozma) represent 55% of the population of the locality. As for the surnames found in previous urbarial documents (1688, 1689, 1699, 1735), they are 12 in number, representing a percentage of 75% of the total surnames in the locality in 1770.

FIG. 10. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN CUZAP IN 1770



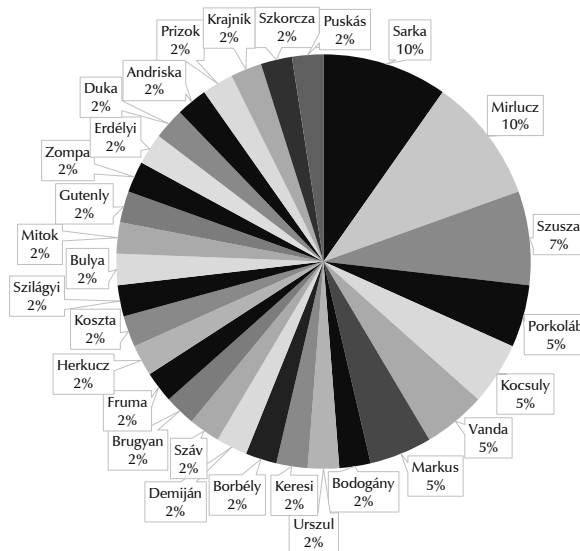
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

### Voivozi (Hun. Almaszeg)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS in the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought to light the ruins of a wall-church at *Voivozi-Bisericuță*, from the 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This evidence, together with the documentary sources from the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries, lead to the

conclusion that in the Middle Ages there existed here an Orthodox monastic center and/or a voivodship center.<sup>47</sup> In 1692 it appears among the settlements abandoned (*deserta*) for 4 years.<sup>48</sup> The Orthodox conscription of 1769 refers to 50 houses,<sup>49</sup> and in 1785, 24 Greek Catholic parishioners are mentioned.<sup>50</sup> The Roman Catholic Schematism of 1828 presents the confessional structure of the locality: Orthodox—156, Roman Catholics—34, Greek Catholics—15, Calvinists—8.<sup>51</sup> We do not have the urbarial conscription from 1770 for the locality of Voivozi. However, to illustrate the family names existing in the eighteenth century we used the data from 1735.<sup>52</sup> Here are the main surnames and their frequency: Sarka (4), Mirlucz (4), Szusza (3), Porkoláb (2), Kocsuly (2), Vanda (2), Markus (2), Bodogány (1), Urszul (1), Keresi (1), Borbély (1), Demján (1), Száv (1), Brugyan (1), Fruma (1), Herkucz (1), Koszta (1), Szilágyi (1), Bulya (1), Mitok (1), Gutenly (1), Zompa (1), Erdélyi (1), Duka (1), Andriska (1), Prizok (1), Krajnik (1), Szkorcza (1), Puskás (1). We notice the existence of some names that remind us of the old voivodship settlement: Krajnik (Crainic), Vanda (a corrupt form of the name Vayda, reminiscent of the old voivodes attested here in previous centuries), Porkoláb (Hungarian *porkoláb*, fortress commander, castellan). In 1770, there were 29 surnames in the locality. Nine surnames (Sarka, Mirlucz, Szusza, Porkoláb, Kocsuly, Vanda, Markus, Bodogány, Urszul) represent 51% of the locality population. Comparing the data from 1735 with the previous ones, we can see that in 1688 there are only 5 heads of families depending on the landowner. Of these, two left their *sessio* (Stephani Berej and Joannis Farkas). The situation is identical in the act of 1689. In 1699 the locality appears completely deserted. Of the 5 surnames, only one is on the 1735 list.<sup>53</sup>

FIG. 11. PERCENTAGE OF SURNAMES IN VOIVOZI IN 1735



SOURCE: Bihor County Service of the National Archives, Oradea, Barany coll., inv. 270, file 7, fols. 55–76.

**E**VEN IF we did not intend to perform here a linguistic analysis of the surnames, from the data presented above we can see very clearly that most names are Hungarian, names translated into Hungarian or Hungarianized. This happens not only in the Hungarian communities, but also in the communities that we know for sure were Romanian.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the linguistic analysis of surnames is not a sure indication of ethnic origin, at least not in all cases, as there are exceptions. But to what extent can the analysis of baptismal names, which were of much greater importance in the rural world than surnames, provide us with information about the ethnicity or denomination of the inhabitants? The baptismal name (*signum, nomen unicum*) is the one that was specific in the Middle Ages, since the sixth century, with the imposition of the Germanic model of single name.<sup>55</sup> Throughout medieval Europe, regardless of the ethnic origin of different populations, there is a common denominator in terms of onomastics: the absolute domination of the names of Christian saints. The Christian name triumphs undisturbed by any competition.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the Church plays a key role in imposing the baptismal name.

TABLE 1. BAPTISMAL NAMES IN THE URBARIAL CONSCRIPTION FROM 1770

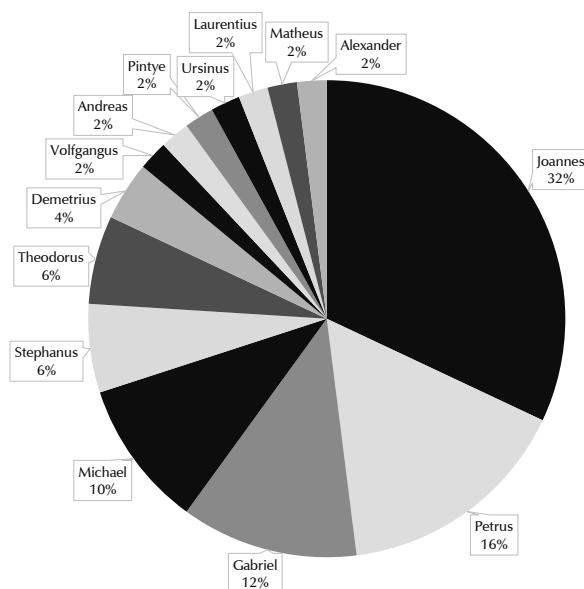
	Bistra	Bogei	Chiribiș	Ciutelec	Cuzap	Popești	Tăuteu	Varviz
Total heads of households	42	64	50	44	44	69	94	52
Baptismal name number	15	20	14	20	17	18	10	16
Most frequent names	Joannes Georgius Nicolaus Laurentius Christianus	Joannes Petrus Christianus Gabriel Theodorus	Joannes Petrus Gabriel Michael Stephanus	Joannes Elias Petrus Stephanus Georgius	Joannes Georgius Nicolaus Laurentius Thomas	Joannes Laurentius Theodorus Petrus Ladislaus	Joannes Stephanus Michael Petrus Andreas	Joannes Petrus Theodorus Laurentius Gabriel
Names less common in other villages	Paschalis Volfgangus	Lucas Pintye	Matheus Alexander	Daniel Zacharias	Nestorius Ursinus	Philippus Ignatius Samuel Damianus	Ferencz Sigmond Marton	Ursinus Volfgangus

SOURCE: Hungaricana.

For the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we identify in the researched area three main ethnic-confessional communities. The first is the Romanian community of the Orthodox faith, in the majority in almost all settlements. The second is the Hungarian community of the Calvinist denomination, specific in Tăuteu. The third is the Romanian community of the Greek Catholic denomination, crystallized in Popești with the establishment of the Greek Catholic parish in 1759 and registering temporary passages, bigger or smaller, in other Romanian settlements. In these important communities we also see small groups of Roman Catholics at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in Tăuteu, Chiribiș, Ciutelec, Popești or Varviz. In order for our comparison to be relevant, we will make a standardization of the baptismal names encountered, in the three main languages: Latin (the official language of

urbarial conscriptions), Hungarian (nominal lists also appear in Hungarian in conscriptions) and Romanian (spoken by most of the inhabitants of this area). Here are some of the most common names, with their equivalents in the Latin and Hungarian urbarial conscriptions: Joannes (Lat.)/János (Hun.)/Ioan (Rom.); Peter/Péter/Peter; Georgius/György/Gheorghe; Laurentius/Lőrinc/Laurențiu; Stephanus/István/Ștefan; Gabriel/Gábor/Gavril; Michael/Mihály/Mihail; Theodorus/Tógyer/Teodor; Christianus/Karácson/Crăciun; Nicolaus/Miklós/Nicolae; Andreas/András/Andrei; Elias/Illés/Ilie.<sup>57</sup>

FIG. 12. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN CHIRIBIȘ IN 1770

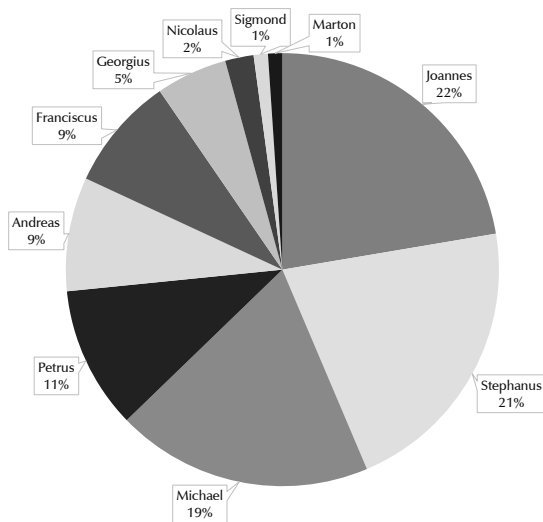


SOURCE: Hungaricana.

In Chiribiș (fig. 12), the name Joannes accounts for a very high percentage of the total heads of households, 32%. The following names, in order of their frequency, are: Petrus (16%), Gabriel (12%), Michael (10%), Stephanus (6%) and Theodorus (6%). In Tăuteu (fig. 13) only 10 masculine anthroponyms are registered in 1770. The Hungarian community in Tăuteu belonged at that time to the Calvinist confession, and the worship of saints was not a common practice. The most common name here is Joannes (22%), followed by Stephanus (21%), Michael (19%), Petrus (11%), Andreas (9%), Franciscus (9%) and Georgius (5%). If these names are also found in the other villages, the names Sigmond and Marton are found only here. In Bogeș (fig. 14), among the 64 heads of families mentioned we find 20 male baptismal names. The most common is also Joannes (23%), followed by Petrus (13%), Christianus (9%), Gabriel (6%), Theodorus (6%), Michaelis (6%). A name found only here is Lucas. In Ciutelec (fig. 15) we find 20 male baptismal names among the 44 registered heads of

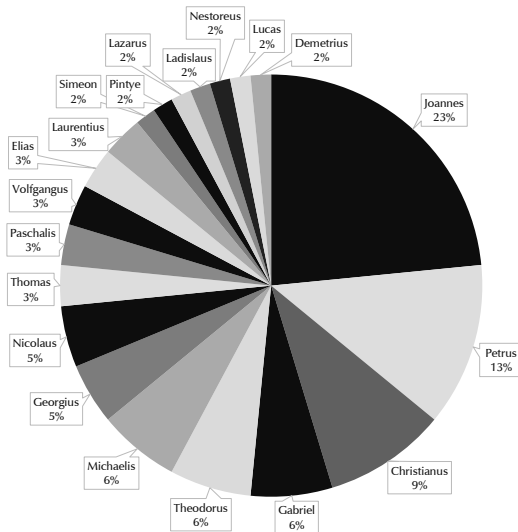
families. Alongside Joannes, which is the most widespread, Elias (9%) stands out, a name that does not show such a high frequency in any other village in the Bistra Valley area. There are also names that we do not find in other villages: Daniel and Zacharias.

FIG. 13. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN TĂUTEU IN 1770



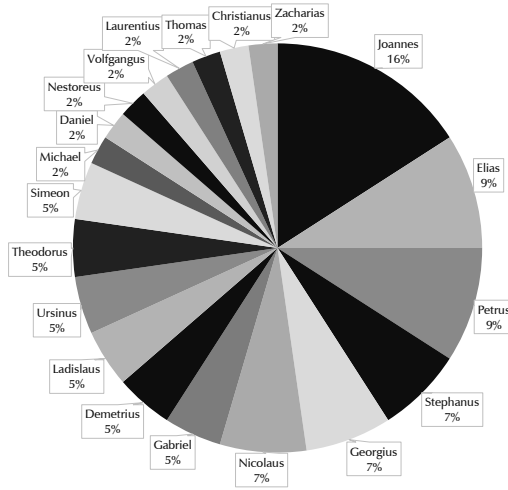
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

FIG. 14. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN BOGEI IN 1770



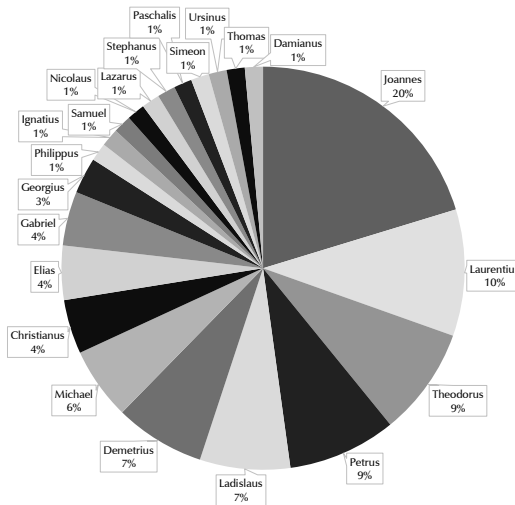
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

FIG. 15. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN CIUTELEC IN 1770



SOURCE: Hungaricana.

FIG. 16. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN POPEȘTI AND HONTEFALVA IN 1770



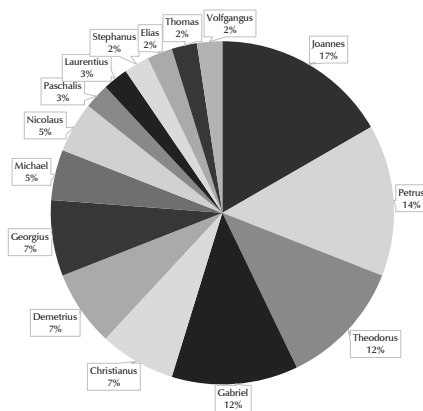
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

Among the 69 heads of families from Popești (fig. 16) we find 18 male baptismal names. The most common is Joannes (20%), followed by Laurentius (10%), Theodorus (9%), Petrus (9%), Ladislaus (7%), Demetrius (7%) and Michael (6%). There is a high percentage for the name Ladislaus, only found once in Cuzap and once in Bogei. There are other names



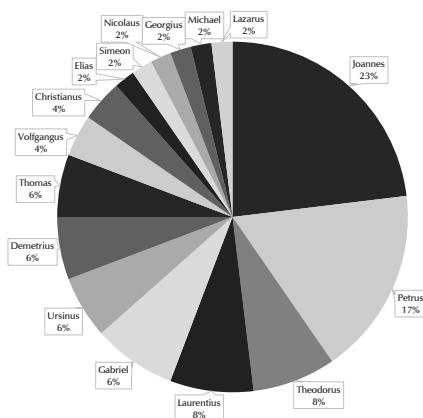
that we do not find in other settlements: Samuel, Philippus, Damianus, Ignatius. This is the locality where we meet most of the names that we do not find in the other localities and we believe that this has a direct connection with the transition of the Romanian community to Greek Catholicism in the eighteenth century. In Bistra, Varviz and Cuzap (figs. 17, 18, 19), Joannes is also the most common, but in different proportions: 17%, 23% and 25%. In Bistra, other common names are: Petrus (14%), Theodorus (12%), Gabriel (12%), Christianus (7%), Demetrius (7%), Georgius (7%). In Varviz we find Petrus (17%), Theodorus (8%), Laurentius (8%), Gabriel (6%), Ursinus (6%), Demetrius (6%), Thomas (6%). In Cuzap, Joannes is followed by Georgius (16%), Nicolaus (9%) and Laurentius (7%).

FIG. 17. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN BISTRA IN 1770



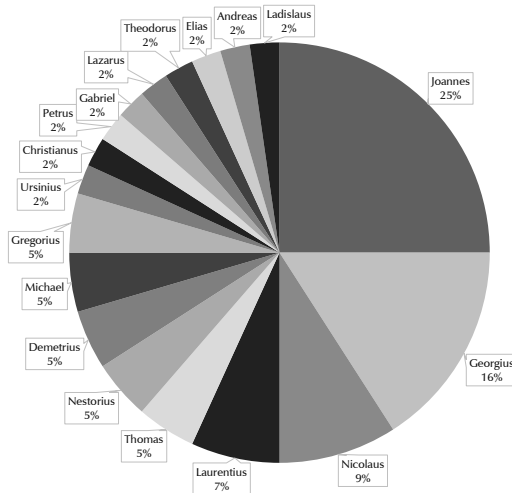
SOURCE: Hungaricana.

FIG. 18. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN VARVIZ IN 1770



SOURCE: Hungaricana.

FIG. 19. PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMAL NAMES IN CUZAP IN 1770



SOURCE: Hungaricana.

From the statistical analysis of the baptismal names, several conclusions can be drawn. First of all, we find that in all settlements, regardless of the ethnic-confessional affiliation, the most common name is *Joannes*. This is explainable, because John is dominant both for the Orthodox communities and for the Greek Catholic and Catholic communities. As for the second name, things are a little different. *Petrus* is in Bogeï, Chiribiş and Varviz; *Georgius* in Bistra and Cuzap (as in other previous analyses); *Elias* in Ciutelec; *Laurentius* in Popeşti and *Stephanus* in Tăuteu. In Tăuteu, where the community is dominated by Hungarians, the presence of the name Stephen could also be explained by the connection of the name with the first Christian Hungarian king. Other common names in these settlements are: *Michael*, *Gabriel*, *Nicolaus*, *Theodorus*, and *Christianus*. However, we find a higher frequency of the names *Andreas/András/Andrei* (in Tăuteu) and *Ladislau/Lazlo/Ladislau* (in Popeşti), less common names in the other communities. The most interesting conclusion here is related to the phenomenon of onomastic concentration, i.e., the total number of names that a community uses. Even though it has the largest community, Tăuteu uses only 10 baptismal names. The explanation is certainly to be found in this community's Reformed denomination. The communities that use the most anthroponyms are Ciutelec (20), Bogeï (20) and Popeşti (18). We also notice the presence of less common anthroponyms in other communities. Most such names are in Popeşti: *Philippus*, *Ignatius*, *Samuel* and *Damianus*; we believe that this fact has to do with the establishment of the Greek Catholic parish in Popeşti in 1759, but especially with the presence of monks from the Abbey of Melk. In Tăuteu we have *Ferencz*, *Sigmond* and *Marton*, specific names for the Hungarian community, but which are the names of some important sovereigns and dignitaries of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Principality of Transylvania; in Ciutelec, *Daniel* and *Zacharias*; in Chiribiş, *Matheus*

and *Alexander*; in Bogei, *Lucas* and *Pintye*. We believe that these less common names in other localities are directly related to newcomers. Interesting are the names Ursinus (in the Hungarian tables it appears as Ursius) and Volfgangus (in the Hungarian tables it appears as Farkas), as they appear in the conscriptions in their Latin form. They do not have a very high frequency within the localities, being found in Chiribiș, Bogei, Ciutelec, Popești, Bistra, Vărviz, Cuzap. We believe that there are names assigned to Romanians, corresponding to the names Ursu and Lupu, respectively.

## Conclusions

**T**HE VILLAGES in the Bistra Valley represent a multi-ethnic and multi-denominational space. Due to the military conflicts at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many settlements were destroyed and abandoned. The cameral conscription from 1692 mentions 3 settlements from the Bistra Valley area abandoned for 7 years and 5 settlements abandoned for 4 years. Even if these data are partially contradicted by tithe registers and reinterpreted by historians, the reality is obvious. The military conflicts caused a large population movement in the villages in the Bistra Valley at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many serfs fled from the dangers, and then in order to escape the pressure of increasingly burdensome obligations. This is evidenced by the small number of those who were dependent on the lord of the land. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century meant a spectacular increase in population throughout the European continent, as a result of a positive natural increase, but also of colonization. Urbarial conscriptions and inventories of goods highlight a continuous increase of the dependent population in the villages on the Bistra Valley, in the interval between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This fact is in agreement with the general growth of the population in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but also with the development of feudal relations and the increase of the population dependent on the landlord. The landowners did everything possible to bring back those who had gone to the old hearth and to attract new population to these settlements, and for the most part they succeeded. This is demonstrated by the urbarial conscriptions of 1770, which show values clearly superior to the previous ones.

Urbarial conscriptions do not include the entire population of a locality, but only the population dependent on the landowner and only the heads of families. The urbarial conscriptions from 1770 show us the names of the families from each locality and their frequency. Comparing the values of the dependent population from the urbarial conscriptions from 1770 with the data from the confessional conscriptions from 1769 or 1786, we find that most settlements are serf villages, most of the population being dependent on landowners (Chiribiș, Bogei, Ciutelec, Bistra, Vărviz, Cuzap). Regarding the surnames existing in the localities, the fewest are found in Bistra and Cuzap (16 surnames in each locality). At the opposite pole are Tăuteu (40 names), Popești (32 names), Bogei and Voivozi (29 names each). But Tăuteu and Popești also have large populations, 94 heads of families in Tăuteu and 69 in Popești in 1770. In general, 6–7 surnames

make up about 50% of the population of each locality. A concentration of surnames is registered in the case of Bistra (3) and Cuzap (4) localities, perhaps also due to the more remote position of these localities in relation to the main roads.

Regarding the most common surnames in the whole Bistra Valley, the following stand out: Szilágyi (21), Kozma (15), Pap/Papp (14), Sipos (13), Szabó (12), Herkucz/Hercze/Hercz (12), Bulya (9), Lenkár (9), Keresi (9). If we take into account the localities where a surname is widespread, we note the following names: Szilágyi (Chiribiş—3, Ciutelec—1, Popeşti—8, Varviz—1, Voivozi—1, Tăuteu—7), Pap/Papp (Bogei—1, Chiribiş—1, Popeşti—4, Tăuteu—1, Varviz—5), Keresi (Chiribiş—1, Cuzap—3, Popeşti—1, Varviz—3, Voivozi—1), Herkucz/Hercze/Hercz (Cuzap—8, Voivozi—1, Popeşti—1, Varviz—1, Chiribiş—1; the form Herkucz is found only in Cuzap and Voivozi).

Regarding the correspondence between surname and ethnicity/denomination, we find that towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there are localities where the vast majority of the population is of the Orthodox faith and, therefore, of Romanian ethnicity (Cuzap, Bistra, Varviz, Chiribiş). Very few families in these localities belong to other ethnicities or denominations. Therefore, the names Herkucz, Sipos, Kozma, Bulya, Bajkuj, Papp, Bokra, Mokra, Gidán, Lázár, Bába, Sántha/Sánta, Barló, Tóth or Sika, from these localities, belong to Romanian families of the Orthodox faith in 1770. The situation is diametrically opposed in Tăuteu, the population here belonging to the Calvinist denomination and, therefore, to the Hungarian ethnic group. The names Szabó, Fóris, Szilágyi, Tolvaj, Kovács, Buzás, Sipos, Sólyom, Király, Horváth, Szokos, Barabás, Döbröndi, Esias, Tóth, Takács, Kós belong to Hungarian families, of the Reformed denomination in 1770. In the case of the localities of Bogei, Popeşti, Ciutelec and Voivozi the data require a more careful analysis. We find, therefore, that the etymological analysis of surnames is not a sure indication in determining the ethnicity of the inhabitants. Many Hungarian names are found in Romanian villages, among a population we know to be Romanian. We find identical names with both the Hungarian and the Romanian population. This problem, as well as the detailed etymological analysis, requires a separate analysis.

Regarding the baptismal names, the most widespread in all localities is Joannes, regardless of ethnicity and denomination. We find the fewest baptismal names in the Calvinist community of Tăuteu, despite the fact that it has the largest population among the villages in the Bistra Valley.

Therefore, the data lead us to believe that there was a large population movement in the villages of the Bistra Valley in the period between the end of the seventeenth century and the end of the eighteenth century. But this population movement was not uniform in all settlements. The degree to which the surnames existing in 1770 are found in previous conscriptions (in any of those of 1688, 1689, 1699, 1735) leads us to believe that there were different degrees of mobility. The highest percentages are registered in the localities of Cuzap (75%) and Bistra (75%), proof that in these localities the majority of the population remained at the old hearth or returned during this period. This fact is corroborated by the small number of surnames existing in these two localities, compared to the others. The explanation is probably also found in the positioning of these locali-

ties, somewhat isolated in relation to the main roads. In Popești and Tăuteu the retention percentage is also high, of 66% and 65%, respectively. These are also the localities that register the largest variety of surnames: 40 in Tăuteu and 32 in Popești (and Hontfalva). But they are also the localities that register the largest populations at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly, the large and good quality agricultural land existing in these localities was an important cause behind the arrival of new agricultural workers. The Hungarians settled mainly in Tăuteu, where there was an important Hungarian community, and the Romanians in Popești, where the center of the Greek Catholic community would crystallize. In other localities the population mobility was higher. Most likely, many left and new people came, as evidenced by the percentages in Chiribiș (42%), Ciutelec (36%) and Vărviz (15%). The little information available for Bogei and Voivozi prevents us from drawing a clear conclusion in this regard. However, we cannot fail to notice the situation of the former voivodship residence, Voivodes, as it emerges from the existing data. In 1688 and 1689, only 5 dependent heads of household appeared, two of whom left their land. In 1699 the locality appears entirely deserted, so that in 1735, 41 heads of families are mentioned, of which only one name is mentioned above. At the same time, we observe a great variety of names, 29 in 1735. There were certainly some inhabitants who were not dependent on the landlord until then, but we tend to believe that a large part of them come from the newcomers.



## Notes

1. D. Prodan, *Iobăgia în Transilvania în secolul al XVI-lea*, vol. 2 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1968), VIII.
2. Natalia Giurgiu, “Conscriptiile urbariale ca izvoare demografice (Urbariul domeniului fiscal Gherla în prima jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea),” in *Din istoria statisticii românești: Culegere de articole* (Bucharest: Direcția Centrală de Statistică, 1969), 278.
3. *Cognomen* is understood as an official designation of a family group, having a stable form over time and inherited from the paternal side; an expression of modernity, it appears due to the increased complexity of society, of the bureaucratic refinement and stabilization, elements that, in the context of the formation of states in the Modern Age, contributed to demographic control and the establishment of the civil status register. The use of a second appellation (*cognomen*), in addition to a *nomen unicum* specific to the previous period, was adopted in the *Christianitas* between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries and became widespread in Europe after the end of the sixteenth century. See: Șerban Turcuș, coord., Adinel Dincă, Mihai Hasan, and Victor Vizauer, *Antroponimia în Transilvania medievală (secolele XI–XIV): Evaluare statistică, evoluție, semnificații*, vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2011), 11, 14.
4. For data regarding the urbarial conscriptions of 1770, we used documents from the National Archives of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Budapest, Országos Levéltára, *Urbarium of 1767*, <https://hungaricana.hu/hu/>), accessed 11 Oct. 2020 (hereafter cited as *Hungaricana*). For the locality of Tăuteu the information was taken from József

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5. Sorin Șipoș, “Valea Superioară a Bistrei—între local și regional (secolul al XIII-lea—începutul secolului al XVII-lea),” in *Satele de pe Valea Superioară a Bistrei: Schiță monografică*, edited by Sorin Șipoș (Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea, 2011), 31.
  6. Mihai Georgiță, “Biserica românească și influența calvină,” in *Monografia istorică a Comunei Derna (județul Bihor)*, edited by Gabriel Moisa and Sorin Șipoș (Oradea: Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, 2016), 62.
  7. Ioan Bolovan, “Transylvania’s Population from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Aspect Regarding Transylvania’s Ethnic and Religious Structure),” in *Ethnic and Religious Minorities and Majorities—for a Democratic Intercultural Dialogue at the European Union Border: International Summer School, July 2–8*, edited by Mircea Brie (Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea, 2012), 83.
  8. Edith Bodo, *Lumea rurală din Bihor după reglementarea urbarială tereziană (1771–1820)* (Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea, 2011), 49.
  9. *Hungaricana*.
  10. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Budapest, Országos Levéltára, E 156-a., fasc. 024, no. 043 ([Hungaricana.hu](http://Hungaricana.hu)).
  11. *Ibid.*, no. 045 ([Hungaricana.hu](http://Hungaricana.hu)).
  12. *Ibid.*, no. 048 ([Hungaricana.hu](http://Hungaricana.hu)).
  13. Bihor County Service of the National Archives, coll. Barany, inv. 270, file 7, fols. 55–76. Population growth in the eighteenth century was observed in areas of southern Bihor by Barbu Ștefănescu based on a comparison of conscriptions. Cf. Barbu Ștefănescu, ed., *Agricultură, meșteșug și comerț la locuitorii zonei Beiușului în secolele XVIII–XIX* (Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea, 2001).
  14. See Virgil Maxim, “Mișcări sociale la românii bihoreni de pe Valea Barcăului și Districtul Luncii (1692–1723),” *Lucrări științifice* (Oradea) 7, ser. *Istorie* (1973): 57–64.
  15. István Bársony, “Conscrierea camerală din 1692 a comitatului Bihor,” *Crisia* (Oradea) 22 (1992): 106.
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. Ana Ilea and Veronica Covaci, “Reglementarea urbarială din comitatul Bihor în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea,” *Crisia* 11 (1981): 125–139.
  18. Ioan Ciorba, “Aspecte ale politicii populaționiste habsburgice în Transilvania la cumpăna secolelor XVIII–XIX (cu privire specială asupra Bihorului),” *Crisia* 35 (2005): 87. To calculate the number of the population in the Modern Age, the average of 5 inhabitants for a house is considered.
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  20. Coriolan Suciuc, *Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania*, vol. 1 (A–N) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1967), 143.
  21. Bársony, 106.
  22. Cristian Apati, *Statul austriac și Biserica Ortodoxă din Transilvania și Ungaria în efortul de modernizare a lumii românești (a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea—primele decenii*



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23. *Documente privind istoria României: Veacul XIII. C. Transilvania*, vol. 2 (1251–1300), editorial committee: Ion Ionașcu, L. Lăzărescu-Ionescu, Barbu Cămpina, Eugen Stănescu, D. Prodan, and Mihail Roller (lead editor) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 340.
  24. *Schematismus venerabilis cleri Diocesis Magno-Văradinensis, Pro Anno A Christo Nato M. DCCC. XXIV* (Magno-Varadini: Typis Joannis Tichy, 1824), 72.
  25. Suciu, 1: 89.
  26. Bársony, 106.
  27. Bihor County Service of the National Archives, Episcopia Ortodoxă Oradea coll., file 1, fols. 1–1v, file 3, fols. 33–41v; Apati, 312–313.
  28. Suciu, 1: 154; Zsigmond Jakó, *Bihar megye a török pusztítás előtt* (Budapest: Sylvester Nyomda, 1940), 227–228.
  29. Apati, 308–309.
  30. Călușer, 101.
  31. *Schematismus*, 1824, 72.
  32. Suciu, 1: 81.
  33. Bársony, 106.
  34. Apati, 308–309.
  35. *Schematismus*, 1824, 114.
  36. Liviu Borcea, *Bihorul medieval: Oameni, așezări, instituții* (Oradea: Arca, 2005), 309–335.
  37. Bársony, 106.
  38. Călușer, 95, 101.
  39. *Schematismus*, 1824, 114.
  40. Suciu, 2: 238.
  41. Apati, 308–309, 494.
  42. *Schematismus*, 1824, 114.
  43. Suciu, 1: 186.
  44. Bársony, 106.
  45. Apati, 312–313, 494.
  46. *Schematismus*, 1824, 114.
  47. See Radu Popa, Dan Căpățână, and Antal Lukács, “Cercetările arheologice de la Voivozi: Contribuții la istoria Bihorului în secolele XII–XV,” *Crisia* 18 (1987): 61–105.
  48. Bársony, 106.
  49. Apati, 308–309.
  50. Călușer, 101.
  51. *Schematismus*, 1828, 105–106.
  52. Bihor County Service of the National Archives, Barany coll., inv. 270, file 7, fols. 55–76.
  53. Hungaricana.
  54. This fact was also demonstrated by D. Prodan, within the locality of Petreu (situated in the immediate vicinity of the researched area). In the urbarium from 1569, the locality appears as half Romanian, half Hungarian. The Romanian settlers often have Hungarian names. See Prodan, 2: 222.

55. Turcuş, 14.

56. Ibid., 24.

57. NamepediA.org was used for identifying the Romanian equivalent of the Latin and Hungarian names.

### **Abstract**

#### **Historical Demography and Anthroponymy in the Settlements of the Bistra Valley (Bihor County), in the Urbarial Conscriptions from 1770**

The settlements of the Bistra Valley represent a multi-ethnic and multi-denominational space. The Austro-Turkish military conflicts of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century caused great destruction and significant population displacement. The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw unprecedented population growth. The analysis of local anthroponymy based on urbarial conscriptions, in combination with other sources specific to the eighteenth century, highlights the evolution of the population, aspects pertaining to the ethnic and religious structure in the villages of the Bistra Valley at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age.

### **Keywords**

Bistra Valley, anthroponymy, urbarial conscriptions, historical demography, 18<sup>th</sup> century



# The Eastern Orthodox Church in Bessarabia

## Uniformization and Russification Processes in the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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ION GUMENÂI

**I**N 1812, the Russian Empire annexed Bessarabia, a territory with an Eastern Orthodox majority population, and incorporated it into an empire with the same dominant religion,<sup>1</sup> a situation different from other examples in history, when a superior power annexes a territory with a religiously heterogeneous population.

But the Russian Orthodox Church—the main exponent of Orthodoxy in the Russian Empire—and Tsar Alexander I, by approving in 1813 the founding of the Archdiocese of Chişinău and Khotyn, headed by Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, thus rendered null and void the customary and well-known canons of the Orthodox Church, which recognized the right of national Churches to self-organize on ethnic principles and to self-govern independently from another nation's Church. These canons mandated that

*no bishop shall incorporate a different diocese which was not before and from the very beginning under its or his predecessors' authority. And if someone should incorporate a foreign diocese and forcefully place it under his authority, he should give it back, so as not to breach the canons of his forefathers, and not to allow the pride of the worldly power to take hold, under the guise of godly work.<sup>2</sup>*

The imperial authorities, although they had brought under their rule a majority Orthodox population, in order to avoid surprises and to be sure of their firm control over the system, began a process of uniformization of the administration and of the management, mirroring that of the Russian Empire, and started with the Orthodox majority. Incorporation of all local ecclesiastical structures into the imperial ones, and the breaking of ties, if they existed, with the representatives of other religious entities from outside the empire, had been the main goal of the religious policy of the Russian Empire in Bessarabia, enacted immediately after the annexation of this territory into the empire.

Compared to the Russian Church, the presence of the dicastery (which nevertheless existed for only a short period), was the only difference in the administrative structure of the Orthodox Church in Bessarabia. On 18 May 1832, by imperial decree, the dicastery

was transformed into a spiritual consistory. As the document explains, the reason was the need to align the Church to the rest of the empire.<sup>3</sup>

Archbishop Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni (1746–1821), at the time of the creation of a new ecclesiastical structure, in order not to provoke too much resistance from the local population, wrote to the Holy Synod that he wanted to build a Metropolitan Church considering “the clergy’s and the people’s propensity to respect and trust more the Metropolitan See.”<sup>4</sup>

Archbishop Bănulescu-Bodoni also focused on the organization of the clergy. Following a number of visitations, he concluded that in many places, on holidays and Sundays, instead of performing the religious services the priests preferred to go to the fairs that were held during these days. This happened because there was a large number of priests in a parish, and it was customary among the clergy to engage in a sort of “vagrancy.” Usually, priests were wandering from one village to another, because many of them did not have their own parish. For these reasons, the archbishop proposed to the Holy Synod the establishment of a fixed number<sup>5</sup> of two priests per church. In fact, in this case, Archbishop Bănulescu-Bodoni only made a hybrid of the parish distribution system implemented in the Principality of Moldavia with that of the Russian Empire, which strictly regulated the number of clergymen.

The financial situation of the clergy was not faring any better. The major source of income, during the time of Archbishop Bănulescu-Bodoni, was the fee collected from the laypeople for performing various religious services. For this reason, the hierarch had to systematize and establish a certain fee for the religious services provided by the priests. According to the new regulations, they charged the following amounts for “recitation of the Gospel verse”—20 bani; “reading from the Psalter”—1 leu; “big burial”—1 leu; “small burial”—20 bani; “wedding service for young people”—1 leu; “wedding service for widowers”—1 leu, 20 bani; “Mass”—10 bani; “small consecration”—10 bani; “Te-Deum” or bidding prayer—10 bani; “prayer on birth”—5 bani; “prayer on the 8<sup>th</sup> day from the birth”—3 bani; “baptism”—10 bani; and “prayer on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after birth”—6 bani.”<sup>6</sup>

It should be also mentioned that Bănulescu-Bodoni was the one who pleaded for the raise of the intellectual profile of the local priests (according to the official version), and he invited in priests from Russian eparchies, with whom he replaced the Romanian priests. For instance, at Chişinău Cathedral in 1812, 16 out of 18 priests came from Russia.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the administrative changes, quickly implemented, a series of ideological and propagandistic actions also occurred as a consequence of the founding of the Archdiocese of Chişinău and Khotyn. The goal was to replace the traditional and local religious beliefs with those of the Russian Orthodoxy. Here we refer to the countless number of Russian saints and martyrs, as well as the complicated Russian traditions and unfamiliar customs, little understood by most of the local population.

This situation had immediate repercussions and Archbishop Bănulescu-Bodoni, in an introduction to a book published at the Chişinău Eparchy Publishing House, wrote:

*Last, we consider it necessary to announce to all our subjects loved by Christ in our Eparchy that by publishing this book, under the instructions we have received, following all the rules for the translation of prayer books published in Russia, we have added according to our duty*

*all the saints which are honored by the Highest Orthodox Russian Empire . . . Now after the Merciful God has freed us by the hand of Emperor Alexander I from agrarian oppression and united us to other Orthodox lands of the Russian Empire under the protection of God, our Duty is, alongside other Orthodox peoples of Russia, to celebrate and pay homage to the Saints that served God in Russia.*<sup>8</sup>

From this perspective, placing the Tsar Alexander I in the front and equating him to the saints created the premises for the development of a “cult of personality” around the tsar and his family, which is specific to the Russian-Slavic space. Moreover, in 1817, the following book had seen the light of print at the Eparchy Publishing House: *Rânduiala panichidei* (Panikhida’s ordinance), for the great lords, emperors, and empresses: for tsars and tsarinas of all of Russia and their High Family, translated into the Romanian language from Slavic for the use and facilitation of Moldovan priests of the Chişinău Eparchy, in 1817. Later, in 1818, the *Чин о поминовении царской семьи* (Rite of commemoration of the imperial family) was printed. The purpose of these books was to offer guidance to priests regarding the rituals which had to be performed in honor of the imperial family.<sup>9</sup> So, the exarch, apart from the first attempts to transfer the pantheon of saints of the Russian Empire, went to considerable lengths to legitimize the cult of the tsar and his family.

The founding in Chişinău in 1817 of a branch of the Russian Biblical Society, through which the Romanian versions of the New Testament and the Bible were published in 1817 and 1819, respectively, served the same purpose. In order to rewrite a Romanian version of the Bible, Archbishop Bănulescu-Bodoni proposed a new translation based on older Greek and Slavonic versions done under the supervision of Archimandrite Varlaam Cuza, the abbot of Dobrovăţ monastery. Since this project was to take a long time to complete, and the Bible needed to be published as soon as possible, the text of the Romanian Blaj version of the Bible from 1795 was used, with some linguistic adjustments. This version of the Bible was widely distributed in Bessarabia, but also, at the request of archbishops Veniamin Costache and Grigorie Dascălul, copies were sent to the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. A Romanian text published in Transylvania was used as a Romanian Bible in Bessarabia, which, later, was also sent to these principalities.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, due to the opening in May 1814 of the Eparchy Publishing House by Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, an influx of books published in the Romanian language occurred, which helped preserve the tradition and Romanian as the language in which religious services were conducted in many churches in Bessarabia.<sup>11</sup>

But the printed products were used to for the propaganda of the structure and ideology of Russian Orthodoxy, as I have noted above, and also to promote the image of the Russian autocrat and his family. This is best illustrated in the introduction to the Bible published in Saint Petersburg, which had the following message:

*Unto the glory of the Holy Maker of all Living and Inseparable Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. By order of the true-believer and our only master the Lord Emperor Alexander Pavlovich of All Russia, and his righteous consort Empress Elizabeth Alexeivna and of his mother Empress Consort Maria Feodorovna and Tsarevich and Grand*



*Duke Konstantin Pavlovich and his wife Grand Duchess Anna Feodorovna, and Grand Duke Nikolay Pavlovich and his wife Grand Duchess Alexandra Feodorovna, and Grand Duke Alexander Nikolaevich and Great Duke Michael Pavlovich and Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna and her husband, and of the Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna and her husband and Madame Maria Nikolaevna with the blessing of the Holy Synod of All Russia.*<sup>12</sup>

We believe it necessary to draw attention to the form of address used in this text, namely: “By order of the true-believer and our only master the Lord Emperor,” in which we can identify a combination of older and newly published texts. We refer to the fact that Bănulescu-Bodoni used the form of address “true-believer and our only master the Great Emperor” instead of just using the title of emperor. Since this form of address was not yet familiar to the public, the publisher used the form “Lord Emperor” instead.

It not possible to overlook the educational activity conducted by the archbishop. Under his supervision, the Theological Seminary opened in Chişinău in 1813.<sup>13</sup> A progressive action, this was the first such institution opened in Bessarabia, especially taking into account that later on this institution would have great authority and would be renowned not only on the territory between the Prut and the Dniester rivers but also throughout the whole southern part of the Russian Empire and in the Balkans.

Yet, the Chişinău Theological Seminary would carry out the Russification of the clergy. The same Archbishop Bănulescu-Bodoni requested on 31 January 1813, at the opening ceremony of the Chişinău Theological Seminary (where children of the clergy were to study), that among the mandatory study subjects there would be:

*With priority and mandatorily, the Russian language as the dominant language; the national language, Moldovan, also Latin (as the national language descended from it and it can enrich the national language), and Greek, since many teachings and dogmas of the Christian faith were written in it, the other could be chosen optionally.*<sup>14</sup>

It is noteworthy that Bănulescu-Bodoni did not ask for the Romanian language to be taught at the seminary, but limited his request to just “the national language, Moldovan” as a study subject, the Russian language being the official language of communication.

The extraordinary efforts of the exarch to open a seminary within the eparchy were praiseworthy, but we need to consider his undeniable self-interest. We are referring to the fact that the existence of a theological institution within the newly created bishops would have led to a much higher position and higher rank. The Orthodox churches between the Dniester and the Bug rivers were also brought under the authority of the Chişinău and Khotyn bishops, which allows us to qualify the exarch as the “unifier of Romanian Orthodox Churches” between the Prut and the Dniester rivers. In effect, his efforts would ultimately bear fruit after his death. On 3 July 1821, Tsar Alexander I approved the elevation of the bishops of Chişinău and Khotyn to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> category bishops.<sup>15</sup>

Also, at Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni’s initiative, schools under the Lancasterian system, for children from the lower strata of society, were opened in Bessarabia. The exarch also attempted to organize the missionary activity of the Orthodox Church, for which

purpose Pavel Karasev, a missionary whom Bănulescu-Bodoni knew from the time he had been archbishop of Kyiv, was invited to Bessarabia to carry the mission among the Lipovans, in the hope of bringing them back to Orthodoxy, or at least of making them adhere to the Omopist Church.<sup>16</sup>

We believe that this is too a case of adoption of some experiences from the Russian Empire, because the Lipovans from the Principality of Moldavia, attested since the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had faced no pressure from missionaries, as the archbishops from the Principality of Moldavia had been more tolerant to this religious ideology.<sup>17</sup>

The missionary activity was directed not only towards the Old Believers but also other religious faiths, such as Jews and other minorities. We believe that just as Russia saw Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni as a tool for promoting its policies in the Romanian space, the high clergyman thought that by supporting the Russian policies he might become the head of a Romanian Orthodox Church. The promotion of the Russian administrative-ecclesiastic form of organization and of monastic life was seen by Bănulescu-Bodoni as the only way to achieve concrete results, considering that often many aspects of ecclesiastic and administrative life in the principalities, throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were managed arbitrarily and abusively, by both ecclesiastic and state authorities.<sup>18</sup>

Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni's death created an additional problem, causing a battle for the archbishop see of Chişinău. Iov (Potyomkin), the archbishop of Ekaterinoslav and Tavrida, a relative of Count Potyomkin, pleaded ardently with the Holy Synod to grant him the Eparchy of Bessarabia. The members of the Holy Synod had a different plan, and on 11 June 1821 they appointed Dimitrie Sulima, a former aide and disciple of Archbishop Gavriil, to this position.<sup>19</sup>

His appointment largely came due to the support of the governor of Bessarabia, Ivan Inzov, and to the letter he addressed to Count I. A. Kapodistrias, detailing the arguments in favor of his appointment given the situation in the eparchy, and to the support he had from all social strata in Bessarabia.

Dimitrie Sulima<sup>20</sup> continued the direction inaugurated by his predecessor, which focused on finishing the organization and aligning the eparchy to the administrative and church model of the Russian Empire, and the continuation of the slow Russification of the entire Orthodox population of Bessarabia.

If we refer to the first element, a first change was made concurrently with the appointment of Sulima as the head of the Chişinău and Khotyn Eparchy, when the post of vicar was eliminated. In 1834, this issue was discussed again when the Holy Synod tasked the archbishop with finding a place of residence and financial means for a new vicar. The solving of this problem was postponed, and in 1837, the position of the bishop of Kherson was created, and the churches between the Dniester and the Bug rivers were taken away from the administration of the Chişinău and Khotyn Eparchy, being put under the authority of the newly created Church entity. The restoration of this function was removed from the agenda, considering the decreasing territorial and numerical trends in the eparchy.

In 1830, in the spirit of his predecessor, the new archbishop decided to organize the monastic life, by introducing the requirement of communal life for all monasteries. Two

years later, on 18 May, following the Decree issued by the Senate at the imperial request, the spiritual dicasteries of the Chişinău, Kyiv, and Chernigov eparchies were transformed into consistories. For a better functioning, in 1841 the Regulation of spiritual consistories was adopted, which, with minor amendments, became the principal law of this Church body, in 1883.<sup>21</sup>

Alongside the organization of the consistory's activities, religious life became more centralized and thoroughly controlled. All the decision-making authority in the eparchy was concentrated in the archbishop's hands. The role of the deans and blagochins (church administrators in a sub-district) also changed. Thus, by the instruction drawn up by Dimitrie Sulima at the Holy Synod's request, the low-rank or circuit blagochins had under their supervision 10–15 churches. They reported to a senior or district blagochin elected by the consistory from among the best deans or priests; the archbishop endorsed the religious appointments. This way, senior blagochins became the link between the priests and the eparchy leadership, and through them most issues concerning the eparchy and the parishes were solved.<sup>22</sup>

Referring to the Orthodox Church officials, we find that the Russian model was copied and imposed here too. Starting with 1823 it was decided that the children of the deceased priests should take their places. If they were minors, the parishes were held on their behalf, and had the obligation to provide financially for the widows and the orphaned children of the priests (the same obligation applied to foreign priests too, if they were dispatched to parishes where there were widows and orphaned children of priests). But the archbishop advised the young men who wished to become priests to marry only women "from priest families."<sup>23</sup> This way the clergy became, as in the other parts of Russia, a distinct social class, which had certain privileges regarding every facet of social life. The foundation of this class were the privileges it had, not property or the economic activity. This segment of society included all the descendants of the clergy and deans, and even if they abandoned their theological activity, they continued to benefit from privileges granted to the clergy when applying for jobs and services.

Later on, the financial situation of the priests improved. In 1829, the authorities issued an order according to which all parishes across the Russian Empire which had a priest and a church singer were to grant them for personal use at least 33 desyatina of land (the equivalent of 2.7 acres). In Bessarabia, after this order, the churches in the villages located on state land were given 99, 120, or 240 desyatina. The situation was different, however, in the villages located on the boyars' estates.<sup>24</sup>

The activity of Dimitrie Sulima in the educational field was as productive as that of his predecessor. He continued his efforts regarding the establishment of an educational model fashioned under the Lancasterian system, which he had begun while still holding the post of auxiliary bishop. Agreeing with the Minister of the Interior, Viktor Kochubey, he dispatched to Saint Petersburg three church officials from the eparchy (Ghinculov, Bobeico, and Cunitchii) to learn about the Lancasterian educational system, for whose allowance 1,675 rubles were spent.<sup>25</sup> The archimandrite supervised this form of education until 1836 when these schools were transferred under the administration of the curator of Odessa's educational district.

A specific situation was that of the Theological Seminary of Chişinău, which was reorganized after 1823 to comply with the Regulation of theological schools in Russia. Since many students were Romanian, the archbishop requested that, both at the seminary and in other schools, only teachers who could speak Romanian were to be appointed. At the same time, Sulima also requested that during lessons and the breaks, students should speak only Russian. Despite all Dimitrie Sulima's efforts, by the Regulation on the functioning of seminaries of 1840, which was implemented by him, Tsar Nicholas I dictated that all disciplines would be taught in Russian,<sup>26</sup> thus in effect nullifying all the progress made by the archbishop.

Beginning with 1839, due to the educational concept adopted across the Russian Empire, parish schools were founded and placed under the supervision of a dean or a church singer, becoming an essential aid to the imperial educational system. The eparchy of Chişinău and Khotyn was part of this process, Dimitrie Sulima continuing to hold the view that the "Moldovan" language should be used in these schools.<sup>27</sup>

If we are to refer to the other facets of his cultural activity, he continued from where Bănulescu-Bodoni left off, having a fruitful book publishing activity. During his tenure as archbishop, he translated, printed, or guided the publication of books such as: *SerVICES*, *Teachings*, *Instructions*, *Grammar Book*, *Catechesis*, *Forms of Litany*, *Customs*, etc.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast to his predecessor, Sulima took as a model the books printed in the Russian Empire, and published a series of works by Russian hierarchs, such as Georgije Koninski, Partenije Sopkovski, or Philaret Drozdov.

In 1823–1825 he was summoned to appear before the Holy Synod in Saint Petersburg, where, besides other functions, he was appointed as the head of the Biblical Society branch for Bessarabia. In this capacity, he received many copies of the Bible and the New Testament, in Romanian, Old Church Slavonic, Bulgarian, Armenian, French, Polish, and Turkish-Armenian, which were to be distributed in Bessarabia. The copies were given to the poor free of charge, and for the well-off the price was set at 2.85 rubles for a Bible and 85 copecks for the New Testament.<sup>29</sup>

During Dimitrie Sulima's tenure, the works on the episcopal cathedral devoted to the Lord's Birth and the bell tower were finished, and thus another dream of his predecessor was fulfilled. The cathedral was built in the Byzantine style, according to the blueprints of the architect Abram Melnikov. The interior walls were painted by the Russian painter Kovsarov. Besides the building of the cathedral, the archbishop, as all his predecessors, took part in the reconstruction and construction of new churches, so 40 new stone churches were built during his tenure.

As to the missionary activity, on 12 November 1836 Dimitrie Sulima received from the Holy Synod an order regarding primary education in villages, which was to be applied throughout the empire. According to that order, this process had to be started first by attracting "Orthodox" children and then children from Old Believers families, who were to study together. Thus, all blagochins had to give information about the localities and parishes where Lipovans lived and to appoint church officials who were to be responsible for the management of such schools. For instance, the blagochins of Orhei and Baltaga reported that Lipovans lived in the villages of Sarcovca, Fuzovca, Teleneşti, and Orhei, but no church representatives wanted to take upon themselves such a mission.

The archbishop responded by issuing an order which requested the appointment of capable persons to open and manage the activity of primary education church schools or implied the relocation from the respective parishes. The following deans were appointed: Dimitrii Lushevici (Orhei), Ivan Muranevici (Sarcova), Zinovii Zaletchii (Fuzovca), and Andrei Timosevshii (Telenești). Of these, only the latter had graduated from the Theological Seminary from Chișinău, the rest were educated in village primary schools.<sup>30</sup>

So, we see a verbatim transposition of the model adopted in the rest of the empire, with no regard to the particularities of the territory between the Prut and the Dniester, which generated opposition from the local clergy, who knew neither the new way of working nor the language in which they were to teach (the Lipovans were of Slavic ethnicity and speakers of Russian). This explains why the appointed priests seemed to be of Slavic descent and native speakers of Russian.

This way, according to Onisifor Ghibu, the Bessarabian Church continued naturally the Moldovan tradition during the tenure of Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, a Romanian from Transylvania, and his successor, Dumitru Sulima who, although a Russian, had a good command of the “Moldovan” language and promoted it both in church and in schools. Even though the Romanian tradition continued, there was a latent but continuing process of involving the local Orthodox parishioners from the moral point of view, but especially of administrative alignment to the Russian Orthodox model.

**A**FTER DIMITRIE Sulima’s death, Irinarh Popov succeeded him as pastor of the Chișinău and Khotyn Eparchy.<sup>31</sup> In Bessarabia, he was a typical representative of the centralism and bureaucracy of Russian church life, imposed by the High Commissioner N. A. Protasov (1836–1855).<sup>32</sup> During his office, the organization of the Orthodox Church in Bessarabia according to the Russian model was completed. Under Irinarh, Chișinău Eparchy was more precisely organized, by reducing the duties of the deanery, the concentration of the decision-making power in the incumbent hierarch’s hands, and by the complete removal of the parishioners from church affairs. During his office, the religious service was conducted in Romanian, but the trend towards the Russification of the church prevailed over the cultivation of religious development. Many Moldovan deans and blagochins were replaced with Russian priests brought from other parts of the empire.

Because of the replacement of a part of the senior blagochins (replaced either for breach of the church law, bribery, or for not speaking Russian), between them and the priests brewed an obvious conflict. The tense situation existed because the blagochins viewed the priests as a mass of uncultured people, savages who needed to be brought under control and under complete dependence from the blagochins.

In effect, the blagochins split into two factions, one with a very hostile attitude towards the priests and church clerks, which wanted to begin a campaign of repressive actions towards the clergy, and the other, shedding light on the deplorable state of the clergy, which was the proponent of measures aimed at improving their station in life.



The main problem, which was highlighted in the reports submitted by the blago-chins, and which made Archbishop Irinarh pay close attention, was that a large part of the clergy lacked any formal education. For instance, in the 4<sup>th</sup> district of Chişinău County, out of 128 priests and church clerks, only 2 had studied at a seminary, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district, only one out of 47 priests had graduated from the Theological Academy and only eight had primary theological education.

A similar situation could be seen among the children of priests and church clerks. Thus, in the 4<sup>th</sup> district, mentioned above, out of 140 boys, only 5 studied at theological schools, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district, 30 children of priests were left out of any educational process. Archbishop Irinarh noted that this situation led to an infringement of the law, since many children of the clergy were replaced with other children in ecclesiastical positions for which one had to prove knowledge of the required subjects. For these reasons, the archbishop tasked the blago-chins with the supervision of the educational process and with drafting documents describing the profiles of candidates running for vacant posts.<sup>33</sup> However, Irinarh did not take into consideration and did not mention that the children of priests mostly avoided getting an education because the studies were conducted in Russian, which they did not speak at all.

Regarding the parishioners, apart from the fact that, according to Irinarh, they did not know any prayers, to a large extent they did not attend the church service, and their presence in churches was scarce. The churches, which were mainly made of wood, were criticized for being overcrowded and in poor condition.<sup>34</sup>

We consider that this matter was mentioned on purpose by the archbishop of Chişinău and Khotyn, to stress the importance of the “civilizing Slavic” element for this territory, and he said nothing about the estrangement of the parishioners from the Church after bringing in Russian priests and about the fact that the religious services were conducted in the Russian language, which the locals did not understand.<sup>35</sup>

Nonetheless, Irinarh continued the church-building activity begun by his predecessor. In 1858, at the end of his tenure, there were 865 churches in the eparchy, of which 314 were made of stone and 551 in wood, plus 38 chapels and 34 churches on the premises of the 21 monasteries of that time.<sup>36</sup>

During Irinarh’s tenure, the following books saw the light of print: *Catechesis* (1844), *Litany* (1849), *Catechism* (1852), and *Pentecostarion* (1853). In the same year 1853, plans were made for the publication of a Gospel according to Romanian editions. Two years later, the *Gospel* (1855), was published in Chişinău, a copy of the *Gospel* published in Buda in 1812. The following books were published next: *Christian Catechesis in Detail* (1854), *Prayer Book* (1855), *Pastoral Letter* (1855), in 1856 the *Customs* was re-printed according to the 1816 edition printed at Iaşi, *Instructions to Church Starost’s* (1857), *Psalter* (1857), *The Blago-chins’ Instructions* (1858), etc.

Irinarh had his residence mainly at Hârjauca monastery, where on 17 March 1858 he received the news of his transfer to the Kamenets-Podolsk eparchy, and from there to Ryazan, where he passed away on 25 September 1877. He was laid down to rest at Holy Trinity Monastery in Ryazan.<sup>37</sup>

Major changes marked the 1860s for the Church in Bessarabia. Following the Crimean War (1853–1856) the south of Bessarabia returned to the Principality of Moldavia,

as dictated by the peace treaty signed in Paris (1856); this meant the removal of this territory from the jurisdiction of the Synod of the Russian Church and its inclusion under the jurisdiction of the Moldavian Metropolitan Church. From the point of view of the church organization, this territory was organized separately in a “spiritual consistory” with the see in the town of Izmăil. After the unification of the Romanian Principalities (on 24 January 1859), Prince Al. I. Cuza signed the decree for the establishment of the Lower Danube Bishopric on 17 November 1864. The new bishopric comprised the counties of Izmăil, Bolgrad, Covurlui (taken from the Huși Bishopric) and Brăila (taken from the Buzău Bishopric). Cahul County was made a part of the Huși Bishopric. The founding of this bishopric with counties from the three Romanian provinces strengthened the Romanian administrative and Church influence in the Lower Danube region. The see of the bishopric was granted to the erudite Bishop Melchisedec Ștefănescu (with the title of bishop until 10 May 1865). Several buildings were transferred to serve as headquarters for the bishopric and the administrative body, and a theological seminary was founded in Izmăil, where the teaching was conducted in the Romanian language.

After the Russian-Romanian-Turkish War of 1877–1878, as a result of the Peace Congress held in Berlin, the south of Bessarabia was again annexed by the Russian Empire. The political and administrative changes led to administrative and ecclesiastical changes. Cahul, Izmăil, and Bolgrad counties returned under the jurisdiction of the Chișinău Eparchy, and Archbishop Pavel Lebedev, in record time reinstated the Church leadership and administrative model implemented in the Bessarabian Governorate. The priests who studied at Izmăil, Huși, and Socola-Iași Seminaries could keep their parishes provided that they learned the Russian language in two years. The Izmăil Seminary was closed down, and graduates of the Russian Chișinău Eparchy schools were brought for the instruction of pupils in the parish schools.<sup>38</sup>

**I**N CONCLUSION, we can affirm that the period of the three archbishops of the Chișinău and Khotyn Eparchy was a period of change for the Orthodox Church of Bessarabia, from a Romanian to a Romanian-Russian one. This can be seen even at the level of the hierarch at the helm of this eparchy, Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni who was Romanian by birth. Dimitrie Sulima was a Maloross, but a good connoisseur of local traditions, and, finally, Irinarh Popov was a Russian bishop of Riga, from where he was sent away due to the discontent of the local Latvians, because he attempted converting them to Orthodoxy.

From the point of view of faith and traditions, the parishioners remained loyal to their old beliefs, despite all the attempts made by the leadership of the eparchy, but from the point of view of the organization and functioning of the Church, it was homogenized and structured as an administrative and religious unit, as in the rest of the Russian Empire.

Irinarh Popov sought to complete the process of structural uniformization of the imperial institution, creating a hybrid body, a Romanian-Russian Church, i.e. on the one hand, Romanian parishioners, and, on the other, an administrative and religious makeup as in the rest of the Russian Empire.



Practically, this period can be considered as the time leading up to the activity of Anthony Shokotov (1858–1871) and Pavel Lebedev (1871–1882), when the Orthodox Church of Bessarabia was under tremendous pressure to Russify and transform into an obedient instrument implementing the political orders of the Tsarist administration. Regarding the Orthodox parishes in the south of Bessarabia, which returned for a brief period under the Romanian rule, they had a moment of respite and were sheltered from the pressure of forced Russification. □

## Notes

1. During the occupation of the Romanian Principalities by the Russians (1806–1812), Tsar Alexander I (1801–1825) issued an imperial decree in 1808 by which he ordered the founding of an Exarchate for the Metropolitan Church of Moldavia and Ungrovlachia. By placing this exarchate under the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in Saint Petersburg, the goal was to break the canonic ties between the Romanian Churches and the Ecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople. The office of exarch was given to Archbishop Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni. Nicolae Chifăr, “Cultura românească din Basarabia sub ocupație țaristă,” *Analele științifice ale Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași*, new ser., *Teologie* 5 (1999–2000): 143–158.
2. <http://nomocanon.com/canoanele-sinoadelor-ecumenice/>. Even the name of the newly created religious entity denoted its artificial character. It is a known fact that the founding of the Chișinău Bishopric was owed to its central geographical location, while that of Khotyn was added to its name to explain an older bishopric on this territory. And since such a center did not exist, and since Khotyn was for a time the seat of the Proilavia Metropolitan Church, they added this name to the title of the new eparchy. The breach was not only administrative, if such a thing was possible, but also in content and ideological. Such a lack of understanding for such a sensible and complicated aspect shows that the role played by the Orthodox Church for the Romanian Orthodox population was, even to this day, quite duplicitous. If we are to add to this the interpretation given by some historians of the spiritual life in Bessarabia only in black and white hues with no nuance or differentiation, we arrive at what we have at the moment, i.e. a series of research papers which denote the important role played by the Orthodox Church in safeguarding the national identity, and, paradoxically, studies that show the nefarious role of the Orthodox Church in the process of denationalization of the local Romanian population in Bessarabia, which is also true.
3. *Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire* (in Russian), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, vol. 7 (Saint Petersburg: Printing house of the Second Branch of His Own Imperial Majesty’s Chancellery, 1832), 318. Thus, the new eparchy had the following administrative structure: Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, holding the titles of exarch and archbishop, was at the head of the eparchy, aided by Dimitrie, bishop of Bender and Akkerman. On 30 September 1813, the activity of the newly established dicastery had to abide by the Church Regulation for All Russia, ukases of the Holy Synod, its dispositions, and resolutions. The consistory later replaced this institution (the difference is in name only). The Church Consistory supported the archbishop’s activity. The Consistory Chancellery had four office directors, a cashier, a registrar, an archivist, six chancellery clerks, and 26 copyists (their number varied). The district deans—the principal aides to the archpriests in the Church administration—selected the candidates

- to become priests and deans; they investigated cases of abuse perpetrated by the members of the clergy, and represented the priests' interests before the laypersons. In every deanery, there was an eparchy auditor, and the deans had one or two assistants. See: Octavian Moșin, "Viața spirituală din Basarabia în perioada țaristă (1812–1918)," accessed 19 Nov. 2019, <http://documentar-ortodox.blogspot.com/2012/10/viata-spirituala-din-basarabia-in.html>.
4. Cf. *Journal of the Church Historical and Archaeological Society of Bessarabia* (in Russian) (Chișinău) 1 (1909). It is necessary to consider the fact that Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni wanted to elevate the newly created Church to the rank of metropolitan Church for reasons of personal ambition, since it was a known fact that he was the Archbishop of Poltava and Kyiv, a member of the Holy Synod, exarch of Principality of Moldavia and Principality of Wallachia.
  5. Cf. Nicolae Popovschi, *Istoria Bisericii din Basarabia în veacul al XIX-lea subț ruși* (Chișinău: Tipografia Eparhială "Cartea Românească," 1931). N. Popovschi considers the setting of a limit on the number of priests per parish as being a progressive measure carried out by Bodoni, in comparison with the lack of order and the chaos that existed before that.
  6. Constantin N. Tomescu, "Diferite știri din arhiva Consiliului eparhial Chișinău," *Arhivele Basarabiei* (Chișinău) 9, 1–4 (1937): 19.
  7. Grigore Costin, "Un reprezentant de frunte al clerului românesc basarabean: mitropolitul Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni (1746–1821)," accessed 5 March 2020, [http://www.dacoromania-alba.ro/nr49/un\\_reprezentant.htm](http://www.dacoromania-alba.ro/nr49/un_reprezentant.htm).
  8. More so, insisting on the opening of an Eparchy Publishing House and on the printing of religious books in the "Moldovan" language, Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni had to petition the Holy Synod to print the religious books under the Moldavian customs. The major difference that the archbishop pointed out were the differences existing between the Romanian and the Russian Orthodox tradition, for which reason he requested the printing of church books, following the old canons of the land, presumably in order not to alienate and not to cause opposition among the locals. Unfortunately, these requests were met only during Bănulescu-Bodoni's life.
  9. Igor Cereteu, "Contribuție la bibliografia românească veche: Rânduiala panhidei familiei împărățești, Chișinău, 1818," *Apulum* (Alba Iulia) 56 (2019): 177–182.
  10. Chifăr.
  11. The first religious book published in 1815 in Chișinău was the *Litourgikon* (The book of divine services for the priest and deacon), decorated with engravings and vignettes, after the model of old Romanian printings. Then *The Catechism* (1816) was published, a translation of the *Catechism* written by Archbishop Platon Levsin of Moscow, printed in 1775. Then came *The Book of Prayers* (1815, 1816), *The Horologion* (1817), *The Psalter* (1818), *Menaion* (1819), *The Prayer Book* (1820), etc. Total circulation for each book was 1,200 copies, except for *The Psalter*, of which 1,600 copies were printed. See: Ștefan Ciobanu, *Cultura românească în Basarabia sub stăpânirea rusă* (Chișinău: Editura "Asociației Uniunea Culturală Bisericească din Chișinău," 1923), 37–51.
  12. <http://www.moldavica.bnrm.md/bibliemo?e=d-01000-00---off-0carti--00-1---0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-----0-11--11-ro-50---20-about---00-3-1-00-0-0-11-1-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL1.2&d=JD4264.3>, accessed 10 May 2020.
  13. Some historians support the idea that Archbishop Gavriil founded this school as early as 1812 when he was in Iași. As he was preparing to move to Chișinău, he had this idea because of the local seminary. By order of 20 September 1812, Archbishop Gavriil opened, for the time being, just 2 classrooms: preparatory and "grammatical" (see Chifăr).

14. Boris Buzilă, *Din istoria vieții bisericești din Basarabia (1812–1918, 1918–1944)*, foreword by Antonie Plămădeală (Chișinău: Editura Fundației Culturale Române; Întreprinderea Editorial-Poligrafică Știința, 1996), 182.
15. Dinu Poștarencu, *O istorie a Basarabiei în date și documente (1812–1840)* (Chișinău: Cartier, 1998), 11.
16. Iosif Parhomovich, “A Brief Historical Sketch of the Anti-Raskolniks Mission in Chișinău from 1813 until 1910” (in Russian), in *Trudy Bessarabskogo tserkovnogo istoriko-arheologicheskogo obshchestva*, vol. 3 (Chișinău, 1910), 13. We cannot say anything about T. Karasev’s successes, except maybe for the passing in 1838 of all parishioners of the Church of the Holy Veil (Deposition of the Robe) from an Only faith Church to Orthodoxy, which was credited to him.
17. Cf. Ion Gumenăi, *Comunitățile romano-catolice, protestante și lipovenesti din Basarabia în secolul al XIX-lea* (Chișinău: Lexon Prim, 2016).
18. Teodor Candu, “Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni—unele aspecte ale politicii monahale în perioada 1806–1812,” in *Tradiții istorice românești și perspective europene: In honorem academician Ioan-Aurel Pop*, edited by Sorin Șipoș, Dan Octavian Cepraga, and Ion Gumenăi (Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea; Chișinău: Editura Universității de Stat din Moldova, 2015), 250–274.
19. <https://orasulmeuChișinău.wordpress.com/2011/03/09/mitropolitul-Dimitrie-Sulima/>.
20. Daniil Sulima was born in 1772, in Novaya Vodolga in Kharkov Governorate. His family was well known in Malorossiya (Little Russia) for bravery in the military campaigns of olden times. He studied in Kharkov at a college and at the theological seminary in Ekaterinoslav. In 1795 he graduated from the seminary and became professor at the seminary. In 1798 he was promoted to the position of prefect, and after a year he was ordained as a priest. In 1800, he was again promoted, this time to the rank of parish priest and transferred to the Boguslavsk cathedral, in the eparchy of Kyiv. Later, in 1806, he was transferred to the Admiralty Cathedral in Nikolayev, with his appointment as a professor at the Navigation School in the same town. During this period he was tasked with carrying out various missions in the Romanian Principalities, predominantly in Iași. By 1811 he was elected as a member of the consistory. After the death of his wife, in the same year, Daniil Sulima was nominated to become bishop of Bender and Akkerman, a vicariate of the Moldovan Metropolitan Church. On 17 April 1817, he received this nomination, and in May he was ordained into monkhood with the name of Dimitrie, on 13 June nominated, and on 16 June ordained/consecrated as bishop. He continued his activity in the eparchy founded by Archbishop Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni for the rest of his life. On 11 June he was elevated to the rank of archbishop and appointed to lead the Chișinău and Khotyn eparchy until he died in 1844. According to [https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc\\_biography/20594/%D0%94%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B9](https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_biography/20594/%D0%94%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B9), accessed 20 May 2020.
21. Cf. *The Charter of the Spiritual Consistory* (in Russian) (Saint Petersburg: Synod Publishing House, 1843), 7.
22. Popovschi, 38–39.
23. Mircea Păcurariu, *Basarabia: Aspecte din istoria Bisericii și a neamului românesc* (Iași: Trinitas, Editura Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, 1993), 67.
24. *Ibid.*, 66.
25. A. Silin, “Archbishop Dimitrie Sulima” (in Russian), *Kishinevskie Eparhial’nye Vedomosti* 20 (15 Apr. 1868): 454.

26. Chifăr.
27. Păcurariu, 64–65.
28. Paul Mihailovici, *Tipărituri românești în Basarabia de la 1812 până la 1918* (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională, 1940), 4.
29. Silin, 496–497.
30. Parhomovich, 15.
31. Irinarh Popov was born in 1790 in the village of Dolgoe, in Kursk County, in the family of a priest. In 1804 he began his studies at the Seminary in Kursk, and in 1814 was admitted to the Theological Academy of Saint Petersburg. On 1 July 1817 was ordained as a monk, and on 6 August of the same year was anointed as monk-deacon. The following year he was appointed as an inspector at the Theological Seminary in Orel and raised to the rank of magister in September of the same year. Between 1818 and 1831 carried out a series of missions to Italy. In 1831 he was summoned back and appointed as archimandrite of the Tolgsk monastery in Yaroslav. Two years later he was again sent abroad on a mission, this time to Greece. He returned in 1835 and was awarded the Order of St. Vladimir, Third Class. On 3 May 1836, was consecrated as bishop of the Vicariate of Staretsa of Tver Eparchy. On 15 September 1836 he became bishop of Riga and vicar of Pskov bishops. Here, he carried out an intense activity aimed at converting Old Believers to either the Orthodox Church or to the Omopist Church. At the same time, he carried out an active policy of converting the Latvians to the Christian Orthodox faith, which arose the dissatisfaction of the German landlords in the region. Because of the reports and complaints submitted by the latter, he was fired from his post and he had to leave Riga. On 7 October 1841 he was appointed as vicar bishop of Ostrogorsk in the Voronezh Eparchy, and the following year, he was appointed as bishop of Vologodsky Eparchy. On 12 November 1844, he was appointed as bishop of the Chișinău and Khotyn Eparchy, and on 15 April 1845, he was raised to the rank of archbishop. In 1858 he was transferred to the episcopal chair at Kamentsk-Podolsk, and in 1863 to that of Ryazan. He passed away on 25 September 1877. <https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/34432>, accessed 20 May 2020.
32. N. A. Protasov founded a series of new institutions and eliminated many of the roles played by the synod, which became just a simple body of the central state authority, a strictly bureaucratic body which dealt only with church administrative affairs and not with the spiritual life of the clergy and the laity. See Păcurariu, 68.
33. G. Evfimov, “Brief Biographical Information about His Holiness Irinarh Archbishop of Chișinău and the State of Affairs at Chișinău Eparchy during his Tenure” (in Russian), *Journal of the Church Historical and Archaeological Society of Bessarabia* 6 (1911): 14–16.
34. *Ibid.*, 23–24.
35. Ion Gumenăi, “Aspecte ale vieții religioase în Basarabia în secolul al XIX-lea,” in *Basarabia după 200 de ani: Lucrările Conferinței Internaționale “Basarabia după 200 de ani” Iași, 12 mai 2012*, edited by Mihail Baciu and Silvia Bocancea (Iași: Institutul European, 2012), 233–255.
36. Popovschi, 53–54.
37. Nicolae Fustei, “Arhiepiscopul Irinarh Popov,” *Curierul ortodox* (Chișinău) 8 (2013): 6.
38. Chifăr, 149.

**Abstract****The Eastern Orthodox Church in Bessarabia: Uniformization and Russification Processes in the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The topic, approached from a diachronic point of view, focuses on the pastorate of the diocese led by Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, Dimitrie Sulima and Irinarh Popov. In this period, both the policy of the tsarist authorities and the actions of the diocesan leaders tried to completely transform the institution of the Orthodox Church in Bessarabia into an instrument similar to the Russian Orthodox Church, which was primarily intended to fulfill the function of Russification. The black-and-white treatment of the role of the Orthodox Church in the history of Bessarabia did not allow highlighting all the nuances related to the role of this institution and its leaders for the spiritual-cultural life in the region. For these reasons, we propose an analysis of the behavior of the three leaders of the ecclesiastical-administrative unit established in 1813, and their vacillation between the local Orthodox tradition and the requirements and pressures coming from the leadership of the Russian Empire. These eventually led to the establishment of a hybrid “body”—a Romanian-Russian Church (we refer to the existence in the Orthodox Church in Bessarabia of a majority of Romanian believers and of a Russian imperial Church and administrative leadership). A meticulous analysis of the actions undertaken by either Bodoni or Popov is quite necessary, both in terms of their sympathies with the Romanian parishioners and in terms of personal interests and the fulfillment of instructions received from the Holy Synod of St. Petersburg, as an exponent of the autocratic regime.

**Keywords**

Bessarabia, Orthodox Church, Gavriil Bădulescu-Bodoni, Dimitrie Sulima, Irinarh Popov



# National and Ecclesial Legitimacies between Austro-Marxism and Revolutionary Discourse at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Romania

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OVIDIU PANAITE

## 1. Argument

**T**HE PRESENT study contains a significant challenge related to the need to reinterpret the concept of identity by valuing and acknowledging a type of non-urban spirituality without radicalizing attitudes. The rural spirituality, the so complex portrait of the rural man, creates the premises of a memory-type Christianity, representing the national spine and understanding the national identity in a more extensive frame than the situational offer.

A crucial issue is the proper use of the operational terms: nation, faith, nationalism, identity, patriotism, ethnic and ecclesial unity, sociology and national becoming. In a classic definition, the nation is a stable community, historically constituted as a state, based on linguistic, territorial, economic, and psychological unity, manifested in the national cultural specificity and in the awareness of common origins and destiny. The question of how the Romanians have ethnically identified in time can receive multiple answers.<sup>1</sup>

The definition of a nation can lead to controversy. There are two main outlooks on nation: the first one considers the nation to exist in the concrete reality, while the second one considers the nation a cultural artefact, which cannot be considered a virtual existence (the theory of nation as an invented community). There are also two main theories in defining a nation: the French theory equals *state* and *nation*, while the German theory states that *parts of a nation can live outside a state's borders*.

We find definitions of national states in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Croatia, three new states self-defined as national, in the ethnic meaning of the word, in order to defend themselves. The second group of states, the civic nations, do not define themselves as national states, but they regulate the nation's right by using constitutional regulations, stating that the power comes from the nation. Such states are Belgium, France, Poland, and Slovakia. Other states differentiate between nation and people, for example, Spain, Estonia, Hungary, and Greece. Some states do not mention the nations on their territory, but the people living there: Andorra, Czechia, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Fin-



land, Portugal, and Sweden. A last group of states do not define themselves as national and do not speak in the name of people: Bosnia, Herzegovina, Cyprus, Denmark, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Identity: Historical, Experienced, Acknowledged and Accepted

THE NATIONAL identity has a genesis that a historian can rigorously reconstruct, and it is not at all a myth. The recourse to *national specificity* (a way of being and feeling, the people's nature, traditions, etc.) was compromised many times in history. For the Romanians, the most recent compromise occurred during Ceaușescu's regime, when the *Romanians' nature* was invoked to create the impression that democratic forms are not appropriate for the Romanians. The national identity is not a feature similar to other national features, but something that exists and manifests itself in the other features. Concerning this aspect, Father Dumitru Stăniloae writes that religion is not a surface element; it is an element conferring deep meaning to the entire national heritage: *the entire life of a nation bears the seal of religion*. Father Stăniloae prudently highlights the nation's contents as a concept; the premises of his approach is that the nation, a natural given, becomes an authentic spiritual existence within Christianity. The world is made of nations, natural entities, but they contain a supernatural component, as God's creations restored by Jesus Christ. Contradicting other authors, Father Stăniloae expresses his disagreement with the fact that a nation is defined only by language and territory. He does not deny these essential elements: *the language, as ideas, ideals, and feelings specific to people, is a vital element for a nation by mirroring a specific type of soul. A Romanian will express a specific soul even in a foreign language, while a foreigner speaking Romanian cannot express things as Romanians do until they acquire a Romanian soul*.<sup>3</sup> The specific soul structure is essential in depicting a nation. Any historical, geographical, and hereditary element in this soul structure determines its later development. Equal to the intensity of various needs, we feel the need for being ourselves, expressing a specific identity, with the self and with others. We satisfy this need by placing ourselves in a space (a particular place) and within a time (a specific history). The nation is not determined by social, political, or economic heredity; the foundation layer is understood and defined in spiritual, theological heredity: *the fathers ate sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on the edge*, Eucharistic consanguinity.

Søren Kierkegaard transformed the cultural acknowledgement of identity into the key to understanding human life. The identity passes from individualizing *personal existence* to individualizing *communal existence*. Herder highlighted the cultural specificity of nations and set it as a cornerstone to the interpretation of history. Identity is invoked to criticize specific groups (the Germans are rigid, the Englishmen are gentlemen, or the Romanians always get by). Some uses of *national identity* are *ideological*. To say that a nation loves freedom but chooses tyrants, that it wants justice while it tolerates poverty, that it is creative when it does not solve its issues, or to say that a nation is united,

when some individuals pass to another community on the first occasion, all these are ideological uses. Constantin Noica coined the phrase *the Romanian sense of being*.<sup>4</sup> We observe the fact, also confirmed by the historical and psycho-sociological research, that identity does not appear suddenly either for a person or for a community. Christianity is the eyes with which Romania sees the world. To establish policies according to the spiritual portrait of a nation means a guarantee of duration, the path for the political act to become an actualization and propagation frame for the asynchronous factors and an order in harmony with divine guidance, as the sociologist Ilie Bădescu shows.<sup>5</sup> Related to the construction of the concept of identity, Vasile Băncilă contended that *the nation (the homeland) is a time shaped by history*.

There are many examples of group identities. To show how the Romanians' identity emerged, we need to define it first. The simplest definition may be: the identity is the Romanians' common way of being and feeling, based on several characteristics: language, faith (Christianity), origins, culture (spiritual creations and adjacent institutions), territory, and traditions.<sup>6</sup>

According to facts, we must distinguish between the *experienced identity*, depending on the historical events, the *identity assumed* by a community, and the *identity recognized* by others. Often hijacked by ideological controversies, the national identity must be always based on accurate facts. These facts are the nation's test. Another difference exists between the *historical identity*, based on past facts, and the *present identity*, is based on new facts. The present identity mostly depends on the historical identity, sometimes as a prolongation thereof, other times as an occultation through discontinuities. The national identity emerged as a historical outcome through interaction in time and as a way to perceive and assume history.<sup>7</sup>

### **3. The Romanians between the Non-Identity Austro-Marxism in the West and *Homo Sovieticus* in the East**

**T**HE 20<sup>th</sup> century is the century of social doctrine. At the beginning of the century, revolutionary ideas were not circulating. In Europe, the Treaty of Vienna (1815) temporarily restored the privileges of authoritarian monarchies. However, the supporters of the revolution remain active, even if clandestine or exiled. For them, the political revolution in 1789 gave people the illusion of change. It led to plutocracy, a profoundly unequal political system governed by significant fortunes based on human exploitation.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it was necessary to continue preaching a *social revolution*, the new movement for the future configuration of European development. Limited in the beginning to some conspiracy theorists, faithful to the thinking of Gracchus Babeuf, the revolutionary path started to gain adepts. We refer here to authors such as Louis Auguste Blanqui (a political agitator determined to destroy the bourgeoisie) and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

(who wanted to defend the total freedom of the individual against the authorities and to achieve a socialist democracy, seen as a workers' democracy). Karl Marx, ten years younger than Proudhon, found inspiration in these visions.

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's main feature are the *revolutionary speeches*, starting from Nietzsche's scepticism to an extensive range of activism. These attitudes' adepts gather around a common creed: *the source of all injustice is maintaining authority structures with an arbitrary influence on people and natural groups*. They instigate not only to fight against the bourgeoisie, but also to destroy the political, social, economic, and cultural institutions, which, in their vision, alienated the human freedom: the state, the Church, the property regime, the army, the academies, all the authorities enslaving the humans.

Intellectuals like Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche express this new attitude in philosophy. The anarchist movement characterizes the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. When moving toward the realities of the Romanian people's evolution in such a complicated religious, political, and economic European landscape, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Great Union's process appears in a new light, which shows a powerful connection between people and faith and between Church and nation, an aspect not met in Europe at that time. Moreover, the Austrian socialists were the authors of a very original Marxist interpretation, *placing the nation at the core of the revolutionary project*. This popular current in the Austro-Hungarian Empire is called Austro-Marxism. Its representatives are Karl Renner (1870–1950) and Otto Bauer (1881–1938), contemporary with the Romanian Great Union. Austro-Marxism proposes *the separation between nation and state* and between Church and state. In their opinion, the solution resides in *eliminating any territorial reference from the nations* and creating *open communities* grouped around cultural, social, or religious affinities but lacking a defining criterion. Following the theory of self-determination, each person would have had the possibility to choose their nation.

Therefore, to the West the Romanians encountered the so-called open non-identity communities, a sort of federalism, with no territorial reference. In exchange, in the East there began to emerge the mutations of an entire world and of a whole century caused by the revolutionary Marxism and, after 1917, by the Bolshevik revolution.

#### **4. Between Criticism and Construction: Rădulescu-Motru, Blaga, Stere and Culianu**

**I**OAN PETRU Culianu (1950–1991) formulates a critique called the *enemies of capitalism*, where he does not hesitate to single out renowned scholars. The Romanian historical studies, says Culianu, did not factor in the work of Max Weber. He contends that there was only one historical school in Romania, belonging to N. Iorga (1871–1940), who supported the idea of a primordial socio-cultural tradition and historical devolution: in the beginning, the honest and enterprising Romanians lived in harmony, and were later undermined, infested and, in the end, destroyed by foreign interventions

(Hungarian, Turkish, Russian, Jewish, etc.).<sup>9</sup> The diversification of the fundamental principle of cultural tradition takes three distinct and independent forms: to the left, the *Poporanism* (nativism), in Culiianu's opinion, a derivation of socialism identifying the national identity with the cultural identity; in the center, the vision of Iorga's *Sămănătorul* (The Sower) journal; the extreme right is the Iron Guard, which, combining the socialist Poporanism, Iorga's reformism, Orthodoxy and anti-Semitism (reduced to its non-racial, economic and cultural dimension), intended to create the New Man, a *restitutio ad integrum*, at the beginning of history, uncorrupted by foreigners.<sup>10</sup>

A moment occurred at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and coloring the Romanian landscape concerns the political refuge of Constantin Stere (1865–1936) from Bessarabia. Arrived in Iași in 1892, Stere establishes the Poporanist movement (the translation of the Russian *narodnichestvo*). Stere cooperates with the magazine *Contemporanul*—suspended in 1891 and reinvented in 1893 as *Evenimentul literar* (The Literary Event)—, forbidden in Russia for supporting the peasants' revolutionary ideas. The aim was to enlighten the masses and support moral art. Unlike Marxism, Poporanism was not a political and economic doctrine. In Stere's vision, Poporanism is a disposition of the soul involving *unequalled love for the nation* because it is the only one that is correct in any historical circumstances. Starting with 1906, together with G. Ibrăileanu, Stere publishes a crucial review, *Viața românească* (Romanian Life), which together with *Evenimentul literar* will become a program melting the differences between the political and cultural groups.<sup>11</sup> The quintessence is as follows: *for a representative culture and political life, we must address the sovereign nation, which is a cultural entity, not an ethnic entity*. This affirmation is the source of the effort to define the cultural constants that are the essence and the distinctive features of the Romanian nation: from the simple remark that something *exists* to establishing that *something*.<sup>12</sup> The accent falls more on the rural communities' presentation (also the rural parishes, built on the same inner algorithm) as *natural groups*.<sup>13</sup>

The literary jewel of *Viața românească* was *Sămănătorul*, built within Iorga's spiritual and cultural environment. The historian was chairman of *Sămănătorul* from 1903 to 1906. The program supported the achievement of a culture affirming a nation's soul in a form adequate for the culture of that time: a national culture in synchronicity with Western culture. The adepts of Poporanism and Sămănătorism interpret Romania's moves in a cultural key: since the peasants are the significant population, the national soul is rural, and its expressing culture must go toward rurality.<sup>14</sup> This type of vision will be assimilated by the interwar cultural elite, becoming a program. Lucian Blaga will express it in 1937 in his reception speech to the Academy.

N. Iorga, talking about Mihail Kogălniceanu, found the best formula to define Romanian thinking: organic realism. This formula will become an interpretative matrix for future generations of researchers, scholars, and philosophers, and an exigency for the relation between hermeneutics and the concrete geographical space. Nae Ionescu, five years older than Blaga, C. Rădulescu-Motru's assistant, fruitfully determined the passage from Maiorescu's and P. P. Negulescu's academic philosophy to a Romanian philosophy capable of offering Eliade and Cioran to the world.

In 1936, Lucian Blaga (1895–1961) became a member of the Romanian Academy with a reception speech delivered one year later, on 5 June 1937. He chose a topic that resonated with him and caught King Carol II's attention (Carol II chose Blaga's speech from three proposed speeches). The speech highlighted *the village's spiritual structure* (our stylistic matrix) to Dumitru Stăniloae, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Nicolae Iorga and Nae Ionescu. The village is perceived as a living and dynamic organism, internalized as inner experience:

*The village lives in me more vividly, as a living experience . . . In its most hidden layers, my soul was formed under the influence of those anonymous powers, which I scholarly name "stylistic determinants" of the collective life.*<sup>15</sup>

The relation between childhood and village is expressed in terms of maximum interiority:

*Childhood in the country seems the only great childhood . . . the childhood and the village complete each other . . . because, while it is true that the village is the most appropriate and fecund childhood environment, it is also true that the village, in its turn, supremely blossoms in the child's soul.*<sup>16</sup>

Organized around the Church and the graveyard:

*I saw the village . . . around God and the departed ones . . . Each village is the center of the world, similar to each man placing himself at the world's center. It is the only way to explain the vast horizon of folk creation in poetry, art, and faith, a feeling participating in everything, the certainty of creation, the abundance of subtexts and nuances, the infinite resonant implications, and the continuous spontaneity.*<sup>17</sup>

In Blaga's consciousness, the village is in the center of the world and continues a myth in a cosmic destiny; this is its latent consciousness. Concluding the antithetical comparison between the urban and the rural civilization, Blaga remarks:

*To live in the city means to live in a fragmented space, . . . to live in the country means to live in the cosmic horizon and within the consciousness of a destiny coming from eternity . . . I thought that at night the stars come closer to the village . . .*<sup>18</sup>

In his studies, Blaga constantly expounds a Romanian sense of destiny.

While the 19<sup>th</sup> century represented the legitimization of nations as substances manifesting national sovereignty, the 20<sup>th</sup> century became the time for the nations' struggle for historical existence.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, discourses place two elements face to face: *legitimation* and *selection*. In this context, in 1936, C. Rădulescu-Motru (1868–1957) asked if the concept of Romanian spirituality is legitimized in relation with other similar elements: nationalism, irredentism, patriotism, autochthonism, ethnicism, etc. because it was another element manifesting the organic reality of spirit and nation. Europe changed in the

19<sup>th</sup> century into a continent of spiritual dilettantism, its nations competing in building a future inspired by contemporary times. Therefore, this century amounts to baseless national spirituality. Romanian spirituality is not of this type.<sup>20</sup> It has a new nature, with no precedent in our history. As C. Rădulescu-Motru shows, *spirituality is the unique soul climate containing the tendency towards a transcendent absoluteness*,<sup>21</sup> while Romanian spirituality is *a manifestation of the Romanian historical reality*.<sup>22</sup>

## 5. From Autocephaly to Patriarchy

**T**HE STATE unity achieved on 1 December 1918 also brought modifications in the ecclesial organization. The most critical issue to be solved was connected to the ecclesial administrative unification under the Bucharest Holy Synod's coordination. On 23 April 1919, the Orthodox hierarchy of the Metropolitan See of Transylvania declared the Transylvanian Synod's dissolution, asking for inclusion in the Synod of Bucharest. This event required identifying the new organization and functioning principles of the Church to ensure the solving of all ecclesial issues. The commission that dealt with the proceedings worked the entire year of 1919 to devise a future ecclesial organizational regulation. The Organic Statute (1868) of Andrei Șaguna attracted the commission's attention. The Statute had two fundamental principles: autonomy from the state, protection from any secular authority, and synodality (cooperation between the clerics—1/3—and laypeople—2/3—in deciding on ecclesial matters).<sup>23</sup>

In parallel with the commission's works, the first Transylvanian Priest' Congress after the union of 1918 took place, after preparations made by a committee run by the historian Ioan Lupaș (1880–1967), a dean of Sălișteța Sibiului. The Congress met on 6–8 March 1919, with an impressive number of clerics and laypeople. Among the papers presented there, we highlight the work of Dean Gheorghe Ciuhandu (1875–1947), who, for the first time, firmly affirmed the necessity of a Romanian Patriarchate: “The unification of Romanian Orthodox Churches in a single Romanian Orthodox Church and its relation to the State.”<sup>24</sup>

The hierarchical Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan See of Transylvania decided:

*I. The Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania, Banat and the Romanian lands in Hungary, with great joy, returns to the Romanian Orthodox Church . . . , from which it was separated in difficult times, and renews its unity with the Metropolitan See of Ungrovlăchia, desiring to be part of the mother Church of Romania united to Bessarabia and Bukovina.*

*II. In this regard, our episcopate reverently asks the episcopal Holy Synod in Bucharest to welcome with brotherly love all the bishops in our Metropolitan See among the members of the Episcopal Synod, in their hierarchical order.*

*III. Our Synod takes note of the necessity for a uniform Church organization in the entire country, introducing an autonomy perfected on the basis of 50 years of ecclesial-constitutional experience. We also recognize the necessity to admit laymen in the administrative,*



*cultural, financial, humanitarian, social and electoral ecclesial formations and support the priests', bishops', and ecclesial synod's hierarchical rights as the supreme authority of the Church.*

*IV. Until a uniform organization, our Metropolitan See shall maintain its organization based on the Organic Statute and as an integral part of the Romanian Church in the unified Romanian state.state.<sup>25</sup>*

During the debates of June 1919, the commission from Sinaia presided by the Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu of Moldavia established the following crucial points:

*I. To declare the hierarchical and canonical unity of the Romanian Orthodox Church in all reunited provinces of the country and begin its work with the supreme forum of ecclesial leadership, the Holy Synod.*

*II. Based on the reunification principle, to summon to the following meeting of the Holy Synod all the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church, from all the provinces, as members with historical rights.*

*III. To start the debate over the canonical and autonomous ecclesial organization, from representative, administrative, legislative, and jurisdictional points of view, from the Organic Statute of the Transylvanian Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan See.<sup>26</sup>*

The Holy Synod meeting in Bucharest on 30 December 1919 acknowledged the commissions' work and approved the desideratum of hierarchical and canonical unity of the Romanian Church. Besides the ecclesial organisms' efforts towards ecclesial unification, several cultural personalities contributed to clarifying some issues important for the future of the Church.<sup>27</sup> In this regard, N. Iorga,<sup>28</sup> Alexandru Lapedatu and Simion Mehedinți constantly supported the necessity of a Romanian Patriarchate based on considerations outside the ecclesial sphere.<sup>29</sup> In 1919–1924, the voices supporting the idea of future Patriarchate became more numerous.

The Holy Synod met in Bucharest at the end of 1924 and completed the discussions only in February 2005; it debated transforming the Romanian Church into a patriarchy. Based on the entire file documenting this issue, and especially on the proposal of Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu of Moldavia, the Synod members unanimously approved the Patriarchate. Nectarie Cotlarciuc of Bukovina expressly stated:

*The Metropolitan See of Ungrovlahia, with the Metropolitan residing in Bucharest, must become a Patriarchate; the Metropolitan of Ungrovlahia, who is also the president of the Holy Synod, must be the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the residence in Bucharest.<sup>30</sup>*

The civil state authority also approved the proposal; in the end, Vartolomeu Stănescu, the bishop of Râmnic (1875–1954), read the Official Founding Act of the Romanian Patriarchate. On 1 November 1925, Miron Cristea (1868–1939), the former Archbishop and Metropolitan of Ungrovlachia, became the first Patriarch.



## 6. Orthodox Priests from Alba de Jos (Alsó-Fehér) County As Titular Delegates to the Great Union

**T**HE DOCUMENTS list 36 delegates from Alba de Jos County, among which seven Orthodox priests, twelve lawyers, four landlords, one furrier, one ensign, one praetor, one Greek Catholic priest—Alexandru Nicolescu, one professor, one botanist, one engineer, one physician, one pharmacist, two miners, one economist; the archpriest of Alba Iulia was Ioan Teculescu.<sup>31</sup>

1. *Electoral circle of Vințu de Jos*: Iuliu Maniu, Ph.D., lawyer, Blaj; Zaharie Muntean, Ph.D., lawyer; Ioan Marciaș, Ph.D., lawyer; Vasile Hațegan, Ph.D., landlord; Virgil Hațegan, Ph.D., landlord, all from Alba Iulia.

2. *Ighiu circle*: Ioan Pop, Ph.D., lawyer, Alba Iulia; Mihail Costea, landlord, Sohodol; Pompiliu Piso, landlord, Cărpiniș; Emanuil Beșa, landlord, Zlatna; Ioachim Totoian, landlord, Micești; and as substitute: Francisc Botean, landlord, Barabanti.

3. *Aiud circle*: Candin Suci, priest, Măjina; Aurel Sava, Ph.D., praetor, Teiuș; Alexandru Nicolescu, Ph.D., canonic; Ștefan Dragoș, industrialist, both from Blaj; George Bărbat Jr., administrator, Blaj-Sat; and as substitutes: Nicolae Radu, administrator, Tâmpahaza; Gavriil Rațiu, landlord, Teiuș; Victor Macaveiu, Ph.D., professor; Dănilă Sabo, Ph.D., lawyer, both from Blaj; Ioan Pușcaș Jr., administrator, Blaj-Sat.

4. *Abrud circle*: Laurențiu Pop, Ph.D., lawyer; Alexandru Borza, Ph.D., physician; Candin David, Ph.D., lawyer, all from Abrud; Mateiu Morușca, landlord, Presaca; Alexandru Vasinca, miner; Alexandru Bureștean, miner, both from Roșia Montană.

5. *Electoral circle of Alba Iulia*: Joachim Fulea, lawyer; Virgil Vlad, pharmacist; Alexandru Fodor, Ph.D., physician; Aurel Stoica, engineer; Camil Velican, lawyer; and as substitutes: Nicolae Cadariu, priest; Antoniu Cricovean, landlord, all from Alba Iulia.

6. *Ocna circle*: Ioan Dordea, Ph.D., lawyer; Nicolae Cristea, Ph.D., lawyer; Isaia Popa, priest; Alexandru Vidrighinescu, landlord; Eugen Pantea, landlord, all from Ocna.

7. *Mureș-Uioara circle*: Iuliu Morariu, Ph.D., lawyer; Petru Roșea, priest; Marian Dregheci, ensign, all from Uioara; Ștefan Roșian, professor; Ionel Pop, Ph.D., lawyer, both from Blaj.

We present a set of synthetic information aiming at building micro-biographies of some personalities actively involved in the discussed history. They represent a mentality which includes the contemporary components: national project, confessional project and others.

**Emanoil Beșa**, an Orthodox priest from Zlatna, Alba de Jos County, delegated by the Ighiu circle, originating from Prundu Bârgăului, born in 1870 and died on 7 February 1919. He was born in Prundu Bârgăului (Bistrița-Năsăud). He attended primary school in his native locality, and then he enrolled in the military high school in Năsăud. He completed his university studies at the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu. He started his professional activity as a schoolmaster in Poiana Sibiului, being later ordained and settled as a priest in Zlatna, where he worked between 1896 and 1919. He strongly asserted himself here as a good scholar and lover of Romanians. The Hungarian authorities pursued him for a

very long time for this reason. On 1 October 1916, he was arrested, together with his son Eugen, escorted by four gendarmes to Abrud, where they walked them on the city's streets for eight days, to be jeered, spat at and mocked. From here, they took them to Odorhei prison. At the trial, on 2 January 1917, he was accused of nationalist attitude during a deputy election from 1904 and convicted to 6 months in prison; he was imprisoned in Becicherecu Mare (Zrenjanin). He was released on 1 July 1917, but his heart disease contracted during detention ended his life too early (he died on 7 February 1919).<sup>32</sup> In light of his activity, Emanoil Beșa was elected among the five titular delegates of the Ighiu circle.

**Ioachim Totoian** (12 September 1874–30 March 1919) was born in Micești commune, Alba County. He was a priest in his native commune. His merits as a priest and a Romanian were widely recognized in the region. He was selected among the five titular representatives of the Ighiu electoral circle at the Great National Assembly from Alba Iulia for these remarkable merits. He died soon after the Great Union, on 30 March 1919, in Micești commune.

**Candin Suciu** (1 January 1872, Măgina, Alba County–1958, Măgina), participated at the Great Union as a titular delegate for the Aiud circle. Born as the son of Constantin Suciu, the Orthodox priest from Măgina, Candin Suciu attended primary school and the first high-school classes at Bethlen High-School in Aiud. He continued his high-school studies in Blaj, and then he enrolled at the Theological Academy in Sibiu, being ordained a priest on 6 December 1901. Between 1893 and 1901 he was a schoolmaster at the village school, and from 1902 until 1943, when he retired, he served at the parish church in Măgina. He married Maria Truță from Sâncel and had nine children: three boys and six girls.

After the ordination, he asserted himself as a distinguished scholar. The leading Romanian Transylvanian writers and poets from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century cherished him, some of them also being his friends. Besides this, there was an address of the ASTRA Association Aiud-Teiuș Department, asking the priest Candin Suciu on 13 November 1908 to teach an “educational course to illiterate adults in order to teach them to read and write.”

Before the First World War and during it, he compensated for the lack of teachers at the village school. Moreover, in this period, he worked as a teacher of religion (catechist) at Bethlen High-School in Aiud. He actively fought against the national oppression policy promoted by the government in Budapest by participating in manifestations occasioned by the Memorandum activists' trial held in Cluj in 1894. Because of his political-national attitude, he was arrested in 1916 and placed in internment close to Sopron, until the fall of 1918. He was one of the titular delegates of the electoral circle of Aiud to the Great National Assembly from Alba Iulia. After the Great Union he continued to carry out a valuable Romanian patriotic activity, as Orthodox priest in his village. Noting the lack of teachers, after fulfilling the national goal, he worked as a teacher, simultaneously administering the newly founded Orthodox Parish of Aiud. At his initiative and with the villagers' contribution, the village's elementary school opened in 1920 on land donated by the Orthodox Church in Măgina. In 1920, again at the priest's initiative, a monument was built to the fallen heroes of the First World War. The current parish church was built due to the efforts of the same priest Candin Suciu, between 1931 and 1940, on the old stone church

site from 1790. After retiring, he continued to serve the altar, together with the new parson, Father Vasile Avram, a son of the village, until 10 September 1958, when he died.<sup>33</sup>

**Matei Morușca** (19 February 1890, Cristești village, Întregalde commune, Alba de Jos County–16 January 1979), a priest in Presaca Ampoiului, was one of the delegates who represented the Abrud circle. Before being appointed as a full-time teacher, Matei Morușca served as a substitute priest in the Orthodox parish of Șeica Mică, Sibiu County. Later, he was a teacher in Presaca Ampoiului, Alba de Jos County, where he worked within the Teachers' Association, which he represented at the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia, as a rightful member. His elder brother was the first bishop of the Romanians in America, Policarp (Pompei) Morușca (1883–1957). A younger brother, Aurel Morușca, participated in the Great Assembly of Alba on 1 December 1918.<sup>34</sup> Through his mother, Ana, born Cado, he comes from another family of Transylvanian priests that continues up to German Popoviciu, who was a parson in Pâclișa between 1762 and 1784. His wife, Aurelia, born Nicola, comes from the family of Nicola Ursu (Horea). Between 17 October 1946 and 30 April 1947, he secretly held the writer Nichifor Crainic in the parish house from Iclandul Mare, because he was the object of an arrest warrant.

**Alexandru Nicolescu**, Greek Catholic priest, born in Tulgheș (Gyergyótölgyes), Ciuc (Csík) County, currently Harghita County, on 8 July 1882. He studied in Reghin, Blaj, and in 1898–1904 in Rome, at the Propaganda Fide College, where he earned his Ph.D. in Theology and Philosophy. He returned to Blaj; then, he was sent as a missionary in North America. He was a moral theology professor at the Theological Academy in Blaj and a canon in the archbishopric chapter. During the First World War, he refused to sign the Declaration of loyalty to Austria-Hungary, so he was considered a traitor by the authorities. In 1919, he was sent as an ecclesiastical and political missionary at the Paris Peace Conference, and, on this occasion, he had significant contributions to the delineation of the current western borders of Romania. He was fluent in English, French and Italian. His disease, the beginning of the Second World War in August 1939, and the loss of Northern Transylvania in the summer of 1940, sped up his death. On 5 June 1941 (the Thursday before Pentecost), he died a little before the war in the east began on 22 June.

## 7. Conclusions

**T**HE INTRODUCTION of modern culture with the individualist type in the religious experience has, as a consequence, a subjective relation between Christianity and the religious tradition. Michel de Certeau and Jean-Marie Domenach characterized the new cultural relation caused by secularization, which appears as a tension between faith and institutional affiliation. Supposedly, through the long process of secularization, the religious function of symbols disappears. In that case, they are still valid, but valued in other fields: the development of aesthetic creations, the legitimization of some political movements, the participation in the definition and orientation of cultural domains, and the justification of some ethical positions, without this corpus of symbols, attached to some religious significations.<sup>35</sup> Modern religiosity, under the sign of indi-

vidualism, spread widely in Europe. The French case proves the orientation of this type of individualism towards vibrant communities or a new laicity. In this perspective, God is no longer a person, but only an impersonal and superior force, and the adhesion to Christianity is the acceptance of a code that might contain a set of moral values.<sup>36</sup>

The case of Belgium is similar; we witness here a restructuring of the faith, starting from the same data of individualism, scepticism and relativization. Studies in the sociology of religion proved the existence of some combinations between the traditional practices of faith and various mystical-esoteric movements, in which the decisional act is at the periphery of an individual's freedom, offering numerous options. All of them build collective systems of significations, which will manifest later in an autonomous mode, creating some cultural faiths, similar to those imagined by Grace Davie: "believing without belonging."<sup>37</sup>

Empowerment creates a favorable climate for the proliferation of micro-groups or micro-communities based on systems of social, cultural, and spiritual interest. We can identify the character of cultural modernity behind such options, which does not accept Church-type groups, the individual's freedom manifesting itself in the cult-type spirituality. This persistence of the antimodern protestant dimension follows the parallelism determined by the apparition and evolution of new religious communities in Europe and by the economic, social, and cultural crisis of 1970. All these practices are part of a modern and rational logic of *do ut des*, oriented toward *Wertrationalität* (rationality oriented towards value) more than toward *Zweckrationalität* (rationality oriented towards aims). Romania evolved in a mottled landscape, if we consider the Great Powers' interests in the area. Whether we speak about the pressure of non-identity Austro-Marxism in the West or the constraints to accept the revolutionary discourse from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the East, the rural spirituality was the catalyst, the coagulant of the Romanian people's energies. Blaga captures, perhaps the best, the essence of these types of energies capable of creation, stability, and perspective.



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### **Abstract**

#### **National and Ecclesial Legitimacies between Austro-Marxism and Revolutionary Discourse at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Romania**

The national identity has a genesis that a historian can rigorously reconstruct, and it is not at all a myth. Identity is closely related to spirituality. Rural communities have best preserved spirituality. This study aims to analyze the Romanian society in the context of a double pressure: the non-indigenous Austro-Marxism in the West and the revolutionary discourse in the East. In the same context of the twentieth century, the Romanian Orthodox Church would become a patriarchy.

### **Keywords**

Austro-Marxism, rural communities, revolutionary discourse, identity



# Hunedoara Orthodox Monastic Establishments

## History and the Present-Day Situation

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FLORIN DOBREI

**U**NDER THE influence of hermitages and monasteries in Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor,<sup>1</sup> monasticism—both eremitic (a hermit lifestyle) and cenobitic (a communal lifestyle)—, organized according to the rules known and preserved throughout the Orthodox East, penetrated and developed beginning with the fourth century, first in the Roman province of Scythia Minor—eloquent examples are the cave complex of Basarabi (Constanța County) and the communal lifestyle establishments where theologians John Cassian (360–435), Dionysius Exiguus (470–545) and the “Scythian monks” were trained—, and then throughout the whole intra- and extra-Carpathian territory. Therefore, after the year 1000, numerous Romanian monastic centers are reported in various sources.<sup>2</sup>

For Hunedoara (Hunyad) County in the medieval period, the beginnings of monasticism are considered to be both the ancient hearths of hermits in the Râmeț and Cib gorges (both in Alba County), and in neighboring Banat and Oltenia, connected to the southern Danube area, from where the phenomenon spread, first in hermitage form, especially in the piedmont regions.<sup>3</sup> Later, these simple ways of monastic life were the nuclei for recruiting monks for future sketes and monasteries with a communal lifestyle.

In its eremitic form, it is considered that Hunedoara monasticism flourished in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries and then in the period immediately following 1550, when, due to the confessional-ethnic alienation of the descendants of the first founders of the ancient cenobitic establishments, the monks had to take refuge in more secluded places. However, the number of hermitages cannot even be approximated, as long as they evaded any local administrative authority that could have attested to their existence. The only sources for their detection in the field remain, therefore, old records, legends, local traditions and, at the very best, the results of archaeological research.<sup>4</sup>

As for the cenobitic (communal lifestyle) monasticism, due to the harsh historical circumstances, the transition from the hermit form of organization to the monastic one was much slower than in the extra-Carpathian space, the Hungarian royalty considering the transition as a disguised way of strengthening Orthodoxy and, implicitly, the national sentiment. However, the number of Hunedoara cenobitic establishments,



which in reality probably did not exceed the level of modest hermitages,<sup>5</sup> must have been just as high. This is evidenced by a deed of donation from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, according to which, in a small area, namely the properties of the Kendeffy noble family from Râu de Mori, in the Land of Hațeg, several “cloisters and monasteries” were listed, without being named, on 3 April 1579.<sup>6</sup>

At least for the Hațeg communities, a special role in the organization and existence of local Orthodox hermitages, monasteries and sketes must have been played by the monasteries of Vișina and Tismana in neighboring Oltenia. Unfortunately, we have no concrete information about them or their inhabitants dating back to before the second half of the fourteenth century. After this date, although numerous monastic establishments appear in history scattered throughout the present-day county, however, with rare exceptions, medieval diplomacy, archeology, toponymy, or local traditions can only provide vague details. Therefore, the information referring to the beginnings and duration of their functioning still remains uncertain.

Many of the servants of the holy monasteries led an exemplary spiritual life, and the aura of holiness was unofficially conferred onto them by the people during their lifetime or shortly after their death; this is the case of the Pious Saint John of Prislop, who lived at the turn from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was canonized by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1992 and has been celebrated ever since on 13 September every year;<sup>7</sup> also from Prislop, “The Saint of Transylvania,” the hieromonk Arsenie Boca (1910–1989), is expected to be canonized. Other monks fiercely opposed any attempts at denationalization through the Church by the Vienna Court. The reprisals were harsh; the walls of their monasteries along with their places of worship, cells and outbuildings, fell prey to the cannons and barbarous acts of the Austrian General Adolf Nikolaus von Buccow’s soldiers, their only wealth—namely their dowry of books, icons and modest but precious ecclesiastical objects and sacerdotal attire—being scattered. Although they went on the long road of wandering, the names of monks such as the Pious Saint Sophrony of Cioara, Theodosius of Plosca, or Ephraim of Prislop were carved into the marble of eternity.

**R**EGARDING THE old Hunedoara hermitages, the first known eremitic establishment seems to have been located at the southern edge of the present-day hamlet of *Cheile Cibului* (commune of Almașu Mare, today in Alba County); in the medieval period, the locality was incorporated into the Geoagiu de Jos estate, a fiefdom of the princes and boyars from Wallachia;<sup>8</sup> then until 1968, it was included in the Hunedoara County and then in the Hunedoara Region. Under the rock called “Piatra Chiliei” (The Rock of the Cell), in the historical schematism of the Uniata Diocese of Lugoj from 1903, traces of modest monastic rooms were found for the first time.<sup>9</sup> Subsequent archaeological excavations, based on the recovered ceramic material, dated its beginnings back to the twelfth century,<sup>10</sup> thus placing it in the category of the oldest Romanian cave hermitages.<sup>11</sup> However, no documents have been preserved regarding the history of this eremitic establishment. It is only believed that, during its centuries-old existence, a modest wooden church was built, in which all the inhabitants of the cells dug in the surrounding limestone massifs met on holidays.<sup>12</sup> Gradually abandoned

in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the hermitage seems to have finally completed its mission in 1846, when, according to tradition, the last Orthodox monk in the area retired to a neighboring monastic establishment in the Glod Gorge. As early as 1793, the land had come into the possession of the villager named Onu al Ursului, who gave it to the Uniates of Cib, in order to build a new church.<sup>13</sup> Monastic life has been revived in the area after 1990.

At the edge of the former village of *Remetea* (*Rimecea*), the Hungarian toponym *Kethremethege* (in translation: hill of the two hermits),<sup>14</sup> was recorded in a document from 1390, the oldest written record of the existence of a hermitage in the district of Hațeg. The hill, known as Florușu Hill, is located on the border of Bucova (the commune of Băuțar, Caraș-Severin County); in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for fear of the Turks, the villagers took refuge in the area of Timișoara, and the settlement was abandoned but it was re-established after 1700 under the present-day name;<sup>15</sup> until 1950, it belonged to Hunedoara County. Neither the exact location of the hermitage nor the duration of its existence are known today, but the anti-monastic policy promoted by the Reformation supports the hypothesis of its disappearance during the seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the original name of the village, derived from the Hungarian “remete” (the hypothesis of the reverse derivation of the Hungarian “remete”<sup>17</sup> from the Romanian “râmeț”<sup>18</sup> has also been put forward), having the meaning of “hermit” or “loner,” has a strong monastic resonance. And this is not the only case in which toponymy reveals monastic realities long lost in the mists of medieval history. Thus, the presence of the names *Remetea* (a hamlet incorporated in the village of Rovina, the commune of București), *Rimetea* (attested in 1847 on the edge of Balomiru de Câmp village, belonging to Alba County since 1968;<sup>19</sup> the location could not be established) and *Remetea Hill* (a hill in the village of Petreni, Băcia commune), suggests the existence of three other oases of prayer in Hunedoara County.<sup>20</sup>

The toponym “Peștera” (Cave), spread throughout Romania, might also indicate the presence of possible medieval hermitages. If this hypothesis is accepted, then at some point, a monk known for his needs by the neighboring believers might have lived within the villages of *Paroș-Peștera* (commune of Sălașu de Sus) and *Peștera* (commune of Băița), rich in karstic phenomena, and his hermitage might have transferred its name to the nearest locality.<sup>21</sup> Also, *Pământul Boșorogului* (Old Man’s Brook) (“Poru Boschorogu”), a hydronym from the Șureanu Mountains (in the southeastern part of Orăștioara de Sus commune, mentioned on the Josephine topographic survey from 1769–1773), may also refer to an old anchorite, living a life of seclusion in those remote places.<sup>22</sup> Finally, we can add the toponym *Chiciora Călugărului* (The Monk’s Peak) from Romos commune<sup>23</sup> and the hydronym *Vălea Iordanului* (The Jordan Valley) in Hațeg, recorded in documents around 1400.<sup>24</sup>

Along the same lines, we mention two local traditions. According to the first one, the little ancient wooden church in the village of Lăpușnic (commune of Dobra), built by the side of the road to Rădulești, in the place called Valea Morii, was moved, sometime in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to Piatra Albă, and in it served a hermit, living in seclusion in a neighboring cave, dug in the side of Albiuța.<sup>25</sup> And in the neighboring village of *Dumbăvița* (commune of Ilia) sometime in the medieval period, a hermit

*as old as the world lived, who fed on roots and herbs and would not to talk to anyone, and when he spoke, very rarely, he said everything about the past, present, and future of the one in front of him. He lived in seclusion in a cave in the forest so that he could talk to God and was ready to flee from the vanity of men.*<sup>26</sup>

In fact, eremitic lifestyles are known in Hunedoara area even in the contemporary period. Thus, at the turn of the twentieth century, in one of the caves in *Ardeu* gorge, an anonymous elderly monk lived the life of a hermit; he used to go down to the village church only on Sundays and holidays to receive the Eucharist.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the hermit Vasile Demian lived in a cell dug in the ground at the edge of *Cucuiș* village (commune of Romos).<sup>28</sup> The example of the latter was followed by the believer Mircea Munteanu from Oraștie, retired—in 1993—in a similar cell inside the Saint George skete, built by his family; later, he became a monk on Mount Athos.<sup>29</sup>

In the past, there were many cenobitic monastic establishments, identified—in general—based on the same toponyms, hydronyms, and local traditions. Regarding the toponym “Mănăstire” (Monastery), found in several parts of the county, we find a first example in the case of the famous *Prislop* medieval cenobitic monastic establishments from the Land of Hațeg, where, about 200 m from the present-day stone church, to the northwest, the memory of the elders placed Mănăstirea Bătrână (The Old Monastery), an ancient hermitage,<sup>30</sup> whose material traces were preserved until the last century.<sup>31</sup> This establishment was built either before the arrival of Saint Nicodemus of Tismana in the area of Hațeg, or it represents the original place itself, founded by the well-known South-Danube monk;<sup>32</sup> aware of the need to strengthen religious life in the region of Hunedoara, he supposedly initiated, at the turn from the fourteenth century to the fifteenth century, with the support of the Wallachian ruler Mircea the Elder (1386–1418) or one of the powerful local Romanian princely families, the construction of a lasting stone church (the only triconch religious monument in the whole of medieval Transylvania), rebuilt around 1564 by Princess Zamfira, daughter of Prince Moses of Wallachia, to thank God for healing her of a disease she had suffered from.<sup>33</sup> Nicodemus himself recorded his visit at the Hațeg hermitage, when he stated that he copied his famous Slavonic *Four Gospels* “in the Hungarian Country, in the sixth year of persecution, and from the beginning of the world we count 6000 and nine hundred and 13” (1404/1405).<sup>34</sup> In order to piece together the history of the monastery, besides the preserved documentary sources and the results of archeological research, of capital importance is the versified chronicle *Plângerea Sfintei Mănăstiri a Silvașului din eparhia Hațegului, cea din Prislop* (The complaint of the Holy Monastery of Silvaș in the diocese of Hațeg, at Prislop),<sup>35</sup> written in 1763 by the hieromonk Ephraim, who was living in exile in Wallachia. The fragments of the mural painting preserved both inside and outside the place of worship, superimposing an older medieval iconographic decoration, date back to 1759 and bear the unmistakable “seal” of the artistic talent of the “priest” Simeon Zugravul from Pitești. The proof of the spiritual and cultural prestige enjoyed by the monastery in the medieval period is the fact that one of the Orthodox archpriests of Transylvania, namely Ioan II of Peșteana, lived at Prislop; three other hierarchs came from the community of the monastery, namely the metropolitans Gennadius I and John III, and bishop Theophilus of Vad. Alienated in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the

cenobitic establishment was returned to the Eastern Church around 1744, but was set on fire in 1762 at the order of General von Buccow; then, it came again under the jurisdiction of the Uniate Diocese of Făgăraș with the see in Blaj (after 1853, under that of the Diocese of Lugoj). Abandoned after 1800, it was reactivated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gradually becoming a well-known place of pilgrimage for Greek Catholic believers. In 1948, Prislop Monastery regained its original Orthodox affiliation. Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan of Transylvania (1920–1955) is responsible for establishing a new monastic community by bringing in young monks, among whom was the hieromonk Arsenie Boca. After Hunedoara County, and therefore implicitly the Prislop monastery, came under the administrative-canonical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Arad, as a result of the difficult postwar conditions and as there were few monks (a few had left), in April 1950, Bishop Andrei Magieru (1936–1960) decided the transformation of this cenobitic establishment into a nunnery. In the following decade, under the guidance of the abbess Zamfira Constantinescu and the priest-confessor Arsenie Boca, a “cooperative” was set up inside the monastic establishment dealing in weaving, knitting and tailoring; several buildings for cells and workshops, the bell tower, as well as some outbuildings were erected. In 1954, extensive restoration and consolidation works started on the monastery church that was included on the list of Romanian historical monuments. Unfortunately, in 1959, as a result of enforcing the State Decree no. 410, the community of this cenobitic establishment was scattered by the communist authorities, and an old people’s home was established in its outbuildings. It was not until 1 October 1976 that the Ministry of Religious Denominations gave its approval for the reopening of the old monastery. In 1985, work began on the Brâncoveanu-style building, intended for the cells of the monastic staff.<sup>36</sup>

The hydronym “Valea Mănăstirii” (The Monastery Valley), a testament to the existence of an ancient and flourishing cenobitic establishment destroyed by the cannons of the General von Buccow’s soldiers on 5 June 1762, refers to another contemporary monastic community, namely that of *Plosca (Teliuc)*,<sup>37</sup> on the place of the altar of the former small church of the monastery, there is a stone cross, erected in 1802 by a local.<sup>38</sup> After the community had been scattered, at least one of the monks seems to have taken refuge in the neighboring village of Ghelari. Re-established under the jurisdiction of Blaj, as evidenced by the mention of the Romanian school that “is located between Plosca and Ghelari, at the monks of the so-called monastery [which] is in the middle of the forest”,<sup>39</sup> the cenobitic establishment was abandoned in the early nineteenth century, and the buildings disappeared, either destroyed by rains and by the two streams that framed the former establishment, or intentionally demolished, in order to recover and reuse the building material to raise the outbuildings of the new monastery, located downstream, about 3 km from the old site. At the edge of a wide plateau, a small part of the walls of the former “monks’ house” can still be seen among the weeds. In time, around this monastic complex, a hamlet appeared, fully united until 1948, named after the spiritual center around which the whole community revolved: Mănăstire (Monastery); the few existing households are currently incorporated in Ghelari communal center.<sup>40</sup>

Also on a “Valle[a] Monasteri[i]” (Monastery Valley), a hydronym indicated on the Josephine topographic survey of Transylvania (drawn up between 1769 and 1773),<sup>41</sup> another

well-known Romanian cenobitic establishment, namely *Cerna (Negoiu)*, had existed at the edge of the present-day hamlet of Negoiu (commune of Lunca Cernii de Jos) in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>42</sup> Its ruins were discovered in 1984–1985 on a plateau surrounded by hills with steep slopes, during archaeological excavations coordinated by the historian Adrian Andrei Rusu, a site that accurately showed the entire layout of the establishment.<sup>43</sup> The monastery is mentioned in documents only at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when the tolerant religious policy of the Báthory Catholic princes had allowed a certain freedom for the Orthodox building initiatives.<sup>44</sup> The attestation was occasioned by the takeover of the estate of Francis Mursinai, the last descendant of the local nobles from Răchitova, by the nobleman John Gálffy of Cucerdea, who was in the employ of Prince Sigismund Báthory, among which “Chiarna Zarda,” that is, the Cerna monastery, was listed on 13 March 1585. Other than that, except for one written yet undated source, the series of mentions of the monastery comes exclusively from external, direct, or indirect sources.<sup>45</sup> The founders of the establishment are undoubtedly the members of the noble family Mușina or Mânjina from Răchitova, the owners of the feudal domain of Lunca Cernii and its surroundings. The important cultural-ecclesiastical role that this cenobitic establishment played in the ecclesiastical past of Transylvania is amply demonstrated both by its rich old book collection and by the election of two of its former abbots to the episcopal see of Vad: John (circa 1599–1605) and Spiridon (1576–1599, 1605–1614).<sup>46</sup>

Previously, there was a monastic establishment at *Suseni-Colț* (commune of Râu de Mori), a medieval cenobitic establishment, served to this day by an ecclesiastical edifice architecturally individualized by the presence of its strong fortified stone tower (provided with three levels and a pyramidal helmet of slabs), supported on two buttresses, raised above the altar. This bizarre place of worship, used as a seasonal stable during the communist period (it was restored only in 1996–1998), was at the core of a heated debate among specialists regarding its original destination. If Vasile Drăguț assumed that the church had served as a place of worship for the soldiers from the garrison of the fortress,<sup>47</sup> Radu Popa believed it had served as a chapel for the adjoining princely court, identified a few hundred meters downstream,<sup>48</sup> on the other hand, I. D. Ștefănescu, Adrian Andrei Rusu and Cristian Moisescu pleaded for its monastic destination,<sup>49</sup> an opinion found in both the old Uniate<sup>50</sup> and Orthodox historiographies.<sup>51</sup> A valuable pictorial ensemble, preserved only fragmentarily, once adorned the entire interior surface of the walls; the iconographic decoration had been made by an anonymous South-Danube errant artist at the turn from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The history of the cenobitic establishment ended in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; with the consent of the Kendeffy family (formerly Cândeia), Hungarianized, Catholicized and then Calvinized, a small monastic community continued to live sporadically here until after 1700.<sup>52</sup>

In the Zarand part of the county, there is the medieval monastery of *Vaca* (present-day *Crîșan*). The original monastic complex, consisting of a rotunda-type place of worship, painted in fresco, and several outbuildings, all within a small perimeter, was discovered following archaeological excavations in 1990–1991 and 2001. It is assumed that the establishment was founded by the small monastic community expelled from neighboring Ribița, and benefited from the support of Wallachian ruler Michael the Brave (1593–1601). Its cultural role, as well as the prosperity it achieved, are demon-



strated by the rich dowry of books it owned and the school that functioned intermittently on the premises. This prosperity, however, disappeared in the first decades of the eighteenth century, with the cessation of the supposed substantial material aid from abroad. In addition, archaeological evidence has shown traces of a large fire. The events that followed the abusive dissolution of the Transylvanian Orthodox Metropolitan See in 1701 do not seem to have bypassed Vaca monastery either, although the documentary sources do not explicitly mention it. Passed under the authority of the Uniate Diocese of Făgăraș (with the see in Blaj), the cenobitic establishment, transformed into an affiliate of Prislop monastery, was renovated in 1759. But, following landslides, it was completely abandoned at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, being re-established only on 28 June 1992.<sup>53</sup>

In order to identify other ancient monastic establishments in Hunedoara County, we have at our disposal, as mentioned before, toponyms, hydronyms, local traditions, the text of Slavonic inscriptions, or some architectural features of some medieval churches; archival sources rarely confirm their presence. Thus, in the northwestern part of the village of *Răchitova*, in the place called “La Ciliu” (At the Cells), faint traces of a former medieval monastery have been preserved until today. Archaeological excavations carried out in 1986 led to the discovery of a cell in the shape of a slightly deepened pit (3 × 4.20 m), dug in the rocky side of the terrace of a tributary of the Măciș brook; in front of it, a path that followed the contour line could be clearly seen. The cenobitic establishment seems to have appeared around 1650, following the dissolution of neighboring Cerna. Its precise period of existence is unknown, and it might have disappeared by the end of the same century.<sup>54</sup> The toponym “Valea Chiliilor” (The Valley of the Cells) on the edge of the locality of *Bucium-Orlea* (commune of Sântămăria-Orlea) in the Land of Hațeg, refers to the presence of another Orthodox monastic establishment, abandoned in the medieval or modern period;<sup>55</sup> so does the toponym “La Ciliu” from the *Lelese* commune located in “Ținutul Pădurenilor” (The Country of Forest Dwellers).<sup>56</sup>

Referring to the beginnings of the medieval establishment in the village of *Galățu* (commune of Pui), Uniate Vicar Ștefan Moldovan wrote on 30 November 1852:

*Regarding its age, it is said that it was built by some monks as a monastery centuries ago; however, the evils of the world led to their disappearance. There didn't use to be a village here, but only a forest, and a shepherd, who, wandering with his goats in these parts, stumbled upon these walls, which then the Christians covered and rebuilt the church . . .*<sup>57</sup>

The tradition was then taken over by other Greek Catholic historians.<sup>58</sup> The ruins of the place of worship, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, were unearthed in an archeological site between 1 and 20 July 1990.<sup>59</sup>

At the edge of *Băiești* village (commune of Pui) there seems to have been, until the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, another Orthodox cenobitic establishment of an uncertain age. The only known information is provided by the same Uniate vicar of Hațeg. Following the canonical visit made on 1 December 1852, he recorded:

*To know better the status of this parish, an old man, Peter Halmagi, says that, in olden times, within his village, across the Strei, to the northwest, in the place called Șiglău, there used to be a monastery, traces of which can still be seen today in the vineyards.*<sup>60</sup>

According to tradition, in the annexes of the noble castle at *Nălațvad* (city of Hațeg) in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there functioned an Orthodox or Catholic cenobitic establishment, which the Hungarian owners called “barátok” (a term derived from the term “brotherhood,” in the sense of monastic congregation). If the preserved information is authentic, then, based on an archaeological discovery (a stone “chest” containing 200 coins, a censer, and a golden chalice from the time of the Wallachian Michael the Brave), monastic life could have started here around the year 1600.<sup>61</sup> The small community was probably scattered in the following decades, through the agency of the members of the same Hungarianized and Calvinized Naláczi family, the descendants of the former local Romanian princes.

Near the locality of *Zeicani*, the same Uniate historiography records the presence of another medieval Orthodox monastic community, which seemingly disappeared during a Turkish incursion from Banat to Hațeg through the “Iron Gate of Transylvania.” Thus, according to the tradition recorded by vicar Ștefan Moldovan, in 1479, fearing the Turks, the inhabitants

*withdrew under the mountain, where, at the bent of the hill toward the west into the so-called valley of Hațeg, above the rectory, at the place called “Progadea Vêche,” they built another wooden church, exactly in the place where it is said that there used to be a monastery in ancient times.*<sup>62</sup>

The Schematism of the Diocese of Lugoj from 1903 also conveys the detail that the present-day place of worship “would have been built on the site of an old monastery.”<sup>63</sup>

Among the founders of the old place of worship “The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel” of *Ghelari*, “built and painted on 17 June 1770,” a “hieromonk Ștefu” is mentioned; he is an Orthodox monk who must have fled from neighboring Plosca, devastated by General von Buccow in the summer of 1762. Indeed, the hypothesis of re-establishing a small monastic community must be taken into account; if it existed, it disappeared in the context of the Josephine anti-monastic policy of 1783–1787.<sup>64</sup>

In the fragmentary inscription kept in the altar of the “Annunciation” church in *Micănești*, reference is made to the service in that place of two hieromonks: “Any priest who will serve at the Holy Liturgy shall mention these names: Hieroschemamonk Cozma, hieromonk Ștefan; Father Teodor, Father Ioan, Father Ștefan . . . , 1761.”<sup>65</sup> We consider that they are either hieromonks who had served in the church in the past, in the absence of parish priests, or—more likely—hermits, retreated to one of the surrounding valleys and joining the community only on Sundays and holidays to receive the Eucharist.

In addition, in the diptych of the medieval church of Saint Hierarch Nicholas in Hunedoara, among the serving clergy, some hieromonks are mentioned: Pavel (15<sup>th</sup> century), Iosif (15<sup>th</sup> century), Anastasie (16<sup>th</sup> century) and Macarie (17<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>66</sup> The monastic tradition was continued in the “city of iron” by a Uniate monastery, built around 1738, when, on March 14, in a letter of archpriest Zaharia Cioca of Hunedoara (1734–1761), a building initiative of this kind was mentioned.<sup>67</sup> Less than three decades later, however, another document, from 1765, refers to a “dissolved monastery” (“monasterium



cassatum”),<sup>68</sup> which certainly disappeared during the devastation ordered by General von Buccow in 1761–1762.

According to tradition, another monastic community existed in the village of *Ocolișu Mare* (commune of Bretea Română), liturgically served by the forerunner of the imposing present-day stone church of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel, located on the outskirts of the town; it may have ended its existence either in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or in 1865, when a devastating fire severely affected the place of worship.<sup>69</sup>

The Uniate historian Zenovie Păclișanu also lists among “the monasteries untouched by the destructive fury of General Buccow” the one in *Deva*.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, in the upper part of the Ciurgău Valley above the city, the toponym “Bisericuța” (Little Church) has been preserved,<sup>71</sup> which could support the hypothesis of the existence of a monastic community, scattered towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the context of Josephine anti-monastic measures.

A monastic establishment seems to have existed within the village of *Bretea Mureșană* (commune of Ilia), tradition providing the information that, on the place of the Hungarian cemetery on the hill on the edge of the locality, in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a modest skete, destroyed by order of General von Buccow. The records of the time do not mention its presence, only the memory of the elderly has preserved the toponym “La Bisericuța” (At the Little Church).<sup>72</sup>

The same documentary scarcity is found in the case of the cenobitic establishment that once existed on the northern border of the village of *Câmpuri-Surduc* (commune of Gurasada), an establishment indicated by the toponym “La Mănăstire” (At the Monastery). Thus, near or inside the old Dacian fortification (1<sup>st</sup> century BC–2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), built on an isolated promontory, with steep slopes,<sup>73</sup> a small monastic community, later on scattered by the vicissitudes of the times, might have existed either in the medieval period or in the modern one. The toponym “Bescheritz Berg” is recorded on the Josephine topographic survey of Transylvania (1769–1773),<sup>74</sup> in the vicinity of the present-day church.

The information regarding the cenobitic establishment that once existed in the village of *Nojag* (commune of Certeju de Sus) is similarly scarce. It is believed that the holy establishment was destroyed by the Austrian cannons in 1761–1762; in 1952, the former parish priest Aurel Vrăbiescu noted the following on a page of a Cyrillic *Gospel*: “Before the union of 1700, in Nojag, there was a monastic skete with several monks, in the place called ‘La Chilia’ [At the Cell], which was burnt down by order of General Buccow.”<sup>75</sup> Another tradition links the disappearance of the monastery to the passage of General Joseph Bem’s troops on the edge of the locality during the Revolution of 1848–1849.<sup>76</sup> It seems that lithic material recovered from the ruins of the former cenobitic establishment was used to build the bell tower of the medieval church in Bârsău, a construction site dated back to 1888 on the basis of the exterior inscription above the entrance.<sup>77</sup>

On the abovementioned topographic survey, a group of buildings and the toponym “Beszerikutza” (Little Church) appear in the vicinity, on a wooded peak in the north of the village of *Hondol* (commune of Certeju de Sus).<sup>78</sup> The only information about the existence of the monastic establishment dates back to 1783–1787, when the Austrian authorities ordered the dissolution of the monastery; its monks and possessions were to be moved to the nearest village, Hondol, where John Popovici, archpriest and vicar general

of the Transylvanian “Non-Uniate Greek-Eastern Diocese” on several occasions, served at that time.<sup>79</sup>

Another toponym of this kind, recorded in the form “Piserika” (Church) in the same cartographic source, is found to the east of the village of *Fintoag* (commune of Lăpușiu de Jos).<sup>80</sup> Also, to the west of the present-day spa resort of *Geoagiu-Băi* (on the Josephine topographic survey, Baad von Gyöggy) the toponym “Poiana Monastery” (The Meadow of the Monastery) and the hydronym “Font Monaster” [“Izvorul Mănăstirii” (The Spring of the Monastery)] are mentioned, both referring to the existence of another medieval monastic establishment that must have disappeared in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so prior to the map.<sup>81</sup>

Near the town of *Cugir* (belonging to Hunedoara County until 1968), to the east, the toponym “La Mănăstire” (At the Monastery) has been preserved to this day, identified on the Valley of the Ghișag, on the slope of a wooded hill below Glodu peak. Although no information about the existence of any monastic establishment could be obtained by archeological and documentary means,<sup>82</sup> its existence is beyond any doubt, since, on the same Josephine topographic survey, the indicative “monasterium” appears accompanied by the graphic representation of a place of worship.<sup>83</sup>

To the north of *Renghet* village (Geoagiu town), in the same cartographic source, the toponym “Diallo Grecilor” (The Hill of the Greeks) is mentioned.<sup>84</sup> The information, correlated with another local toponym, namely “La Cilizii” (At the Cells),<sup>85</sup> refers to the presence of a medieval monastery of “Greek” monks (Orthodox, in the religious language of the time). And they were supposedly scattered either during the Reformation or during the anti-monastic persecutions in the second half of the eighteenth century. Likewise, the hydronym “Pârâul Grecului” (The Greek’s Brook) (“Poru Grecului”) and the toponym “Piscul Grecului” (The Greek’s Peak) (“Pisku Grecului”) from the southeastern part of Orăștioara de Sus commune, mentioned in the same cartographic source,<sup>86</sup> may refer to “Greek” anchorites, retired to remote places for meditation and prayer.

In the southern part of the old Saxon seat of Orăștie (Broos), in the village of *Sibișel* (commune of Beriu), in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was also a monastic establishment

*in the upper part of the village, on the right, on the Strâmbava, a valley between Mount Negrița and Pleșul . . . , a monastery built by Ilisie from Sibișel, who sold his possessions to build cells, [but], since he led a secular life, Metropolitan Andrew Șaguna called him to account, asking the authorities to dissolve the monastery.*<sup>87</sup>

Indeed, on 11 October 1873, the Sibiu Consistory submitted to the archpriest Nicholas Popovici of Orăștie a circular letter requesting that “regarding the dissolution of the eremitic establishment, known under the name of ‘monastery of the monks from Sebeș[el],’ this illegal establishment should be dissolved for moral and political reasons.”<sup>88</sup>

Other medieval monastic presences come to light from the texts of the inscriptions of the time. Thus, on the eastern wall of the bell tower of the church in *Streisângeorgiu* (town

of Călan), inside the nave, there is the votive painting of the family of Prince Căndreș, the donor of the painting from 1408, accompanied by a Slavonic inscription:

*Servant of God, Lord Lațco, servant of God Lady Nistora, the founder Lord Chenderes, God's servant Vlaicu, the son of Chenderes, dedicated the monastery to Saint George, their grandfather . . . , in the days of Jigmon [Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437)] the king, the Transylvanian voivodes Ioaneș and Iacov [John Tamási and Jacob Lackfi, 1403–1409] year 6917, October 2.<sup>89</sup>*

Analyzing this inscription, Adrian Andrei Rusu came to the opinion that, at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a few monks might have lived around this church, thus giving the place the status of a monastery.<sup>90</sup>

The same opinion exists in the case of the fragmentary text of the inscription of the church of Saint Hierarch Nicholas in *Ribița*:

*With the will of the Father and with the help of the Son and with the deed . . . , master Vratislav and mistress Stana and their son . . . and with his brother, master Miclăușu, and with his mistress, Sora . . . , the monastery of St. Nicholas . . . was built to the Heavenly Father and painted in the year 692(?) [1414 or 1417], in the month of July 15, was finished and painted by hand.<sup>91</sup>*

It is believed that a small number of monks, with the support of the local princely family, might have lived in a separate wooden building near the church.<sup>92</sup> At the turn from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the Hungarianization and Calvinization of the descendants of those founders, the monks were expelled, thereafter founding the cenobitic establishment in nearby Vaca (present-day Crișan), with the help of Prince Michael the Brave (1593–1601).<sup>93</sup> Echoes of this monastic establishment are identified through history until later, since in 1763, the “monastery of Ribița” is mentioned in a document entitled *Specificatio aggraviorum dioecesis Fogarasiensis*.<sup>94</sup>

The votive inscription of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin church in *Crișcior* from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is also about a cenobitic establishment, the text painted next to the founder of the place of worship being as explicit as possible: “The servant of God, the founder master Bălea [/Bălea], presents the *monastery* of the Most Holy Mother of God, the eternal Virgin Mary.”<sup>95</sup> Adrian Andrei Rusu concluded again that the specification regarding the parallel monastic destination of the edifice is not a literary artifice, since in 1411, the church might have also sheltered around it some Orthodox monks, later scattered by the hardships of history. In support of this view, there would be the mention of the disappeared medieval establishment called “Kalugier,” attested in 1600,<sup>96</sup> as well as the present-day toponyms “Dealul Ciliilor” (Hill of the Cells)<sup>97</sup> and “Mănăstire” (Monastery).<sup>98</sup>

Inside the Saint Hierarch Nicolae church in *Leșnic*, a fragment of the fresco on the south wall of the nave shows the well-known scene of the two soldiers.<sup>99</sup> Below, there is a Romanian-Cyrillic sgraffito with uncial characters, rendered as “monastery” (ignored by

specialists so far), which could refer to a temporary monastic destination that the building might have had sometime during its centuries-old existence.

References to the medieval monastic realities are also provided by the construction details of four well-known Hunedoara religious establishments. Thus, in the case of the church in *Densus*, the presence of the two rooms attached to the southern wall of the nave made the historians N. Iorga<sup>100</sup> and Iacob Radu,<sup>101</sup> a century ago, claim that there was a monastic community around this place of worship sometime in the medieval period. In support of this view, there is a Slavonic sgraffito from December 1473 that mentions the Father “Daniil” and Mother “Stanca.”<sup>102</sup> Indeed, the name of the priest is an onomastic rarity for the country of Hațeg, but very common in the monastic environment. Then, the appellative “Mother” should be understood as “maică” (nun); so, next to the hieromonk Daniil, there would also have been a nunnery.<sup>103</sup> From this perspective, the space in question was thus identified as a cell.<sup>104</sup>

Another architectural detail led to the association of another place of worship, namely the church in *Strei*, with the cenobitic way of life. According to the archeological research undertaken in the years 1969–1970 and 2000, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a spacious “narthex” was added near the western entrance—it also included the present-day bell tower—, disused around 1717, when, on the north side of the church, an ephemeral Reformed chapel appeared. This large porch, actually an enclosed quadrilateral courtyard, without a roof, with access from inside the building, was considered to be part of a small monastic complex, having as its core the old princely religious establishment.<sup>105</sup>

The art historian Cristian Moisescu, putting forward the hypothesis of the contemporaneity of the three-bay narthex of the church of Holy Archangel Michael in *Gurasada* communal center, with its original layout in the shape of a four-leaf clover, includes this princely religious establishment in the category of Orthodox monastery buildings, referring to the well-known letter of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) of 16 April 1204, for the establishment’s period of activity.<sup>106</sup> In 1930, archaeologist and restorer Rudolf Wagner put forward the same hypothesis, based on the floor plan of the original building from the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, at the southern border of *Zlaști* village (Hunedoara municipality) there are the ruins of a medieval stone construction, whose quadrilateral foundations, demarcating two distinct interior spaces, were unveiled more than a decade ago, in the southeastern part of the locality, in the place called “Dumbravă.” The ceramic material—the fragments of two glazed tiles, presenting numerous analogies with those from the ruins of the monastic complex at *Văca* (Crișan)—and the bone object, discovered during the archeological excavations from 1999, date the construction (supposed to be a monastic establishment) back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>108</sup> However, the ecclesiastical censuses of the time do not record its existence.

Officially, only the monasteries of *Văca* (Crișan) and *Prislop*, though totally depopulated in the following decades, survived the anti-monastic policy promoted in Transylvania by General von Buccow and the Emperor Joseph II;<sup>109</sup> if the dust of oblivion had settled over the former, a small Greek Catholic community was re-established in the latter at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For this reason, only the monasteries of *Prislop* (returned to the Orthodox Church in 1948) and *Afteia* (in present-day Alba County, then located between

the borders of the Hunedoara Region) were subject to the State Decree no. 410 of 1959, which provided for a drastic reduction in the number of Romanian monastic establishments and their inhabitants (in fact, aiming at their dissolution).<sup>110</sup>

**A**S A NEW freedom dawned after 1989, besides the monastic establishment of Prislop (nunnery), other 21 monasteries and sketes gradually (re)opened their gates. As such, in the Hunedoara area there are currently nine monastic communities of monks, namely the monasteries of *Crișan* (established in 1991) and *Deva* (established in 2015), the sketes *Cucuș* (established in 1993), *Poiana Muntelui–Vulcan* (established in 1992), *Straja* (established in 1999), *Bălata* (established in 2011), *Nandru* (established in 2013), *Ohaba* (established in 2013) and *Ardeu* (established in 2015), as well as thirteen monastic community of nuns, namely, the monasteries of *Prislop* (the oldest monastic establishment from Hunedoara County), *Crișcior* (established in 1992), *Măgureni* (established in 2010), *Măgura* (established in 2014) and *Jieț–Groapa Seacă* (established in 2011), the sketes *Ghelari* (established in 1992), *Suseni-Colț* (established in 1995), *Râu de Mori–Retezat* (established in 1999), *Băița* (established in 2003), *Gnădiștea de Munte* (established in 2010), *Câmpu lui Neag* (established in 2015) and *Văța de Sus–Bujoara* (established in 2019), and *Alun*, the metochion of Ghelari skete (established in 2011). In all these monastic establishments, there have been numerous and varied achievements, especially when it comes to buildings.<sup>111</sup>

In retrospect, it can be stated that the monastic establishments of Hunedoara County have been a continuous presence in the ecclesiastical space of Hunedoara, some monasteries and sketes surviving through the centuries to this day; others have been established in the past three decades, especially after 2009, when the Diocese of Deva and Hunedoara was established. Oases of peace of mind and communion with God, they have made an important contribution to restoring the religious and moral life of the faithful in the surrounding localities, to helping each other, to the spiritual strengthening of people in times of hardship or to their emancipation through the light of authentic Romanian culture. □

## Notes

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**Abstract**

**Hunedoara Orthodox Monastic Establishments:  
History and the Present-Day Situation**

For many centuries, monasticism has been a favorite spiritual way to attain spiritual perfection through fasting, prayer, and contemplation. In the wilderness, in dark caves or deep in the heart of forests, all those who have chosen to devote their lives to God have found the peace and quiet necessary for a clear conscience and an uncorrupted heart. The Hunedoara space has been connected to these spiritual realities since ancient times, as evidenced by the multitude of eremitic or cenobitic monastic establishments that still come to light from chancellery documents, various notes on old religious books, toponyms, hydronyms, or local traditions. Without claiming to be original or exhaustive, this paper aims at nothing more than a brief presentation of all those past and present monasteries, sketes, and hermitages that have enriched the map of Romanian Transylvanian spirituality in general and that of Hunedoara County in particular.

**Keywords**

Orthodox spirituality, Eastern monasticism, Transylvanian monastic establishments, Hunedoara County, Prislop monastery





# Religious Jurisdictions and Pluralization of Legal Adjudication in Modern Romania

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**T**HE ISSUE of religious courts of law activating in Romania is by no means an absolute novelty. Seen from the perspective of the history of law, their jurisdiction over *rationae materiae* and *rationae personae* dates back to the Middle Ages. Aside from the judicial duties they fulfilled in the royal courts as members of the royal entourage, metropolitans and bishops often received from the sovereign special powers to rule on certain civil and even criminal cases. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that the king was able to judge cases which would normally fall under the incidence of the Church and, at the same time, had the authority to retry lawsuits already settled by religious courts but appealed against. The lord of the land could, if he so chose, judge offenses committed by clerics and was even in the position to dismiss the leader of a religious court when it was proven that the leader in question had favored one of the parties in settling the action.

Romanian kings would often seek out the highest possible religious authority in order to rule on the most onerous cases. The mandates granted to representatives of the Orthodox Church to hear cases, take evidence and attest legal documents were much more numerous and made up a certain undisputed law of the land of the old practice. At times, religious leaders carried out their judicial duties with the help of certain noblemen and high public servants. On other occasions, the leaders of the Church would delegate clerics to complete some of their judicial duties. Given that religious leaders exercised judicial duties by royal mandate, their legal books were drafted very similarly to royal books and subject to royal approval, which was always granted. Cases judged by Church leaders were open to appeal to the royal court, unless the ruler decided otherwise.

Along the centuries, not only religious leaders and parish clergy exercised judicial duties, but monks also. Abbots and friars from monasteries performed, in the past, judicial duties, but this monastic justice had a certain patrimonial character. The ruler would grant monasteries the right to settle all legal issues brought before them by the dwellers of villages, towns and market towns ascribed to each monastery and these rights came as a culmination of material privileges they enjoyed over these communities.

All matters concerning marriage fell under the jurisdiction of ecclesial courts, as did all other civil cases for the trial of which the lord of the land granted, on a case-by-case basis, special powers to the leaders of the Church. The Church leadership was in a better position to hear and pass judgment because they brought to the case the Christian spirit of conciliation. Additionally, testimonies exist that the Church was granted and exercised its right to serve justice sometimes in an effort to protect the poor and oppressed. Stephen the Great, by rescinding the secular public servants' right to pass judgment over the downtrodden living in the villages and market towns of the metropolitan see, grants this right to the metropolitan, archpriest or the person delegated by the metropolitan to serve justice in his stead.

The *ratione personae* jurisdiction had always been granted by the king via a special empowerment bestowed on the religious leaders whenever he deemed it necessary, in order to settle conflicts arising between clerics or laymen, or via a charter granting a bishop or monastery the right to pass judgment over the inhabitants of certain villages and market towns.

Regarding the *ratione materiae* jurisdiction, it was also determined by the king. Documents of the time lead to the conclusion that pursuant to a royal mandate, the clergy was invested with the authority to rule on civil and criminal offenses. The documents through which the king would grant clergy, depending on the case, the authority to pass judgment in civil matters, paint a picture of metropolitans and bishops trying cases of testamentary succession, *ab intestat* succession, marriage and partition affairs and conflicts over borders, while seeking to appease the parties.

This historical presentation of the courts of law of the Romanian Orthodox Church is designed to help us better understand the current situation and the conflicts arisen in certain cases.

## **The Resolution of Disputes: The Practices and Norms of Religious Communities**

**I**N ROMANIA, the relationship between state and religious organizations is regulated by the Constitution of Romania and by the Law number 489/2006. According to article 23(2) of Law number 489/2006 concerning religious freedom and the general regime of religious organizations,<sup>1</sup> “the personnel of religious organizations shall face disciplinary action for violating the doctrinal or moral principles of the faith, according to its own statutes, canonical codes or regulations.”

Article 26(1) recognizes the religious organizations' right to “establish their own religious courts for internal disciplinary problems, in accordance with their own statutes and regulations.” Pursuant to paragraph 2 of article 26 of the law, “For matters of internal discipline, statutory and canonical provisions are exclusively applicable.” The following paragraph states that the existence of their own judicial bodies does not exempt religious organizations from the application of national legislation concerning misdemeanors and felonies (article 26(3) of the law).

The provisions in articles 23–26 of Law no. 489/2007 (situated in chapter II, section 3, bearing the name “Religious personnel”), as well as the regulations specifying the statute of each of the officially recognized religious organizations (regarding the legal work relationship of its personnel) constitute *special norms* of labor law, norms which are supplemented by the common labor law (the Labor Code, principally), under the conditions established by article 1(2) of the Labor Code (“This Code shall also be applicable to work relationships regulated by special laws, but only to the extent in which they do not contain specific derogatory provisions”).

## Courts of Law of the Romanian Orthodox Church

PURSUANT TO article 148 of Government Decision no. 53/2008 concerning the recognition of the organizational and functional Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church,<sup>2</sup> the religious disciplinary courts and religious courts of law with jurisdiction over non-monastic clergy, priests and deacons, active or retired, as well as singers, in doctrinal, moral, canonical and disciplinary issues are:

a) *The Archpriestal Disciplinary Consistory*<sup>3</sup> and the *Archdiocesan Consistory*,<sup>4</sup> as a court of first instance;

b) *The Metropolitan Consistory*,<sup>5</sup> as a court of appeal, for pleas of appeal admitted, in principle, by the Metropolitan Council<sup>6</sup> and the Holy Council.<sup>7</sup>

c) *The Metropolitan Council*, which can, in principle, admit or reject appeals against judgments issued by an archdiocesan consistory for cases of deposition of title and the *Holy Council*, which admits or rejects, in principle, appeals to sentences of defrocking,<sup>8</sup> issued by an archdiocesan consistory, are the bodies that can rule on the admissibility of pleas of appeal. In cases where they do admit, in principle, the plea for appeal, these bodies instruct the forwarding of the case to the Metropolitan Consistory for trial.

Judgments issued by the Archpriestal Disciplinary Consistory and the Archdiocesan Consistory become definitive subsequent to their approval by the diocesan bishop, while judgments issued by diocesan disciplinary and trial courts only become enforceable after the diocesan bishop had ruled in favor of their enforceability.

Judgments issued by the metropolitan consistory are subject to the approval of the metropolitan of the land before they become final and enforceable. Decisions made by courts of appeal become enforceable subsequent to their approval by the metropolitan or Patriarch, depending on the case.

Article 156(6) of Government Decision no. 53/2008 stipulates that, by virtue of the religious autonomy guaranteed by the law and because of their specific competences, religious courts are charged with settling issues of internal discipline and therefore judgments issued by religious courts at all levels *are not subject to appeal before civil courts*.

## Religious Disputes: The Approach of the State

THE EXAMINATION of the normative acts through which the aforementioned organizations, subject to this analysis, have been recognized, would lead to the conclusion that a member of a religious organization affected by sanctions enforced due to disciplinary transgressions is unable to take legal action in appeal before civil courts. Moreover, even in cases where the civil court could be seized by the plaintiff with a plea of appeal, the action would have to be rejected as inadmissible, because investigating such an action does not fall in its sphere of jurisdiction.<sup>9</sup>

The provisions contained in the aforementioned statutes are grounded in the text of article 26 of Law no. 489/2007 concerning freedom of religions and the general regime of confessions, whose entire content is as follows:

*Article 26–(1) Confessions may have their own religious courts of law for matters pertaining to internal discipline, according to their own statutes and regulations.*

*(2) For matters of internal discipline, the canonical and statutory provisions are the only laws applicable.*

*(3) The existence of their own judicial bodies does not exempt them from the application of the national legislation in matters of misdemeanors and offences.*

In comparison to the provisions of the legal text quoted above, corroborated with the provisions of the statutes of the confessions recognized through Resolutions issued by the Government of Romania concerning disciplinary jurisdiction of clerical personnel, some clarifications—listed below—become necessary.

In cases where (recognized) confessions can be considered *public authorities* on grounds that, while they indeed count as private legal persons, according to the law, they enjoy a “public utility status”<sup>10</sup> and therefore all examined jurisdictions are unconstitutional because any special administrative jurisdiction<sup>11</sup> is, pursuant to article 21(4) of the Constitution of Romania, optional and, from an examination of all analyzed statutes, the mandatory character of the respective jurisdictions becomes apparent.

Furthermore, even if the different bodies of jurisdiction of (recognized) religions present in Romania were to be considered as forms (structures) of *private jurisdiction* (whose archetype is private arbitration pursuant to article 340 and a direct consequence of the New Code of Civil Procedure), *in this case also all jurisdictions mentioned would be unconstitutional.*

Indeed, in order to ensure that a form of private jurisdiction does not infringe on the fundamental right of *free access to justice* (article 21(1 and 2) of the Constitution of Romania, republished), it is necessary for the law to specify explicitly and unmistakably that such jurisdictions are predicated on the sine qua non condition of judging the litigations they had been invested to settle and that they function under an *agreement (consent)* of the parties, *granted for each litigation separately*, an agreement that is *unspecified (inexistent) in all examined statutes*, statutes which, in their entirety, establish the *mandatory* jurisdiction of the jurisdictional bodies examined in this paper.

It is implied that all statutes are a fortiori unconstitutional (except for that of the Reformed Church of Romania) which, directly or indirectly, deny the defendant the right to ultimately seek justice before state jurisdiction. Lastly, the unconstitutionality of jurisdictions under discussion also resides in the fact that the statutes of the recognized religions establish neither procedural norms, nor (certain) hearing time frames for issuing the disciplinary judgment.

The fact that Law no. 489/2006 stipulates, in article 26(2), that: “For matters of internal discipline, the statutory and canonical provisions are exclusively applicable” while the legislation of the Romanian state is only incidental “with regards to offenses and crimes” (article 26(3) of the same law) leads us inexorably to the conclusion that the statutory provisions are in compliance with Law no. 489/2006 but, at the same time, infringe on the provisions of the Constitution: article 21(4) or article 21(1–2), depending on the case.

All the aforementioned ideas, supported by certain members of the Romanian judicial system,<sup>12</sup> had been disproved by two consecutive rulings of the Constitutional Court: Decision no. 506/6 May 2008 and Decision no. 640 of 10 June 2008,<sup>13</sup> respectively. The Constitutional Court had overruled the exception of unconstitutionality of provisions of article 26(1–3) of Law no. 489/2006 on the following grounds:

a) The state does not exercise public functions in the field of internal activities of religious organizations and, therefore, “the legal rules issued by the state concerning labor discipline are not applicable to the personnel of religious organizations.”

b) The existence of “individual statutes” does not deny the employees (to whom such statutes are applicable) the right to benefit from free access to the state legal system (article 21 of the Constitution), as religion cannot represent grounds for discrimination (article 4(2) of the Fundamental Law).

Free access to justice is regulated constitutionally as a fundamental right of every citizen. In this vein, article 21(1–2) stipulates that “any person may appeal to justice for defense of his legitimate rights, freedoms and interests,” while “no law shall restrict the exercise of this right.” Similarly, pursuant to article 6 of Law no. 304/2004<sup>14</sup> concerning judicial organization, republished, “any person may appeal to justice for defense of his legitimate rights, freedoms and interests in exercising his right to a fair trial. Access to justice shall not be restricted.” That being said, justice is only served by the High Court of Justice and the other courts specified by the law.

The impossibility to appeal in the legal system against judgments issued by religious jurisdictional bodies may represent, in fact, a suppression of the imperative of access to justice. It is worth pointing out that certain statutes regulate the possibility of appealing against the decisions made by one religious body before a hierarchically superior one. One such example is the Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, recognized by Government Decision no. 53/2008, which stipulates the possibility to appeal against judgments issued by the Archpreistal Disciplinary Consistory and by the Archdiocesan Consistory before the Metropolitan Synod or the Holy Synod, respectively and paves the way for a new trial carried out by the Metropolitan Consistory, provided that the plea for appeal had been accepted. The Statute of the Old-Rite Orthodox Church, recognized

by Government Decision no. 398/2008, stipulates the possibility of appeal against judgments issued by the Archpriestal Judicial Court before its superior court, which is the Metropolitan Judicial Commission, or, by way of escalation, appealing against a judgment issued by the MJC before its superior court, which is the Grand Council—article 60 section a, article 66 and article 158(9); The Statute, recognized by Government Decision no. 58/2008, stipulates the right of the Council of the Union to settle appeals against judgments issued by the community of churches or by the Council of the Hungarian Baptist Convention; the Statute, recognized by Government Decision no. 186/2008, stipulates the possibility of appealing against judgments issued by the court of first instance before the hierarchically superior disciplinary commissions or appealing against a definitive decision which instructs the dismissal of a priest from the ranks of the clergy, before the Disciplinary Commission of the Synod; the Statute, recognized by Government Decision no. 399/2008, stipulates the possibility of appealing before the Executive Committee of the Union against judgments issued by the committees of conferences and by bodies subordinated to the Union—we consider these bodies to be neither independent and impartial, nor in the position to guarantee free access to justice, as its members are people subordinated to the leadership of the church or denomination, respectively. As mentioned in the European regulations, if a court of law counts among its members a person who is in a subordination position relative to one of the parties, the independence and impartiality of that person may, understandably, be questioned.<sup>15</sup>

Concerning the activity of religious courts of law in general and those of the Romanian Orthodox Church in particular, it can be said that the interdiction to seek justice before civil courts is supported from a canonical point of view, but cases exist where said interdiction infringes upon the rights and liberties of the defendants. As a case in point, we would like to mention abuses committed by bishops, who are evidently in control of these courts, as every plea for appeal against a judgment issued by an inferior court needs to be lodged with an exponentially higher court, which tends to consist exclusively of bishops, going all the way to the Supreme Court, which is made up of all active bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church. An event worthy of being mentioned is the Tanacu case, where the priest and nuns of a monastery in Moldavia had stood trial for performing an exorcism ritual on another nun from the same monastery, subsequent to which she passed away. The courts of the Church had been surprisingly quick in issuing a ruling, defrocking the priest and dismissing the nuns from the monastery on charges of manslaughter, while the civil courts prosecuted them a lot later, but for other infringements, when it was determined that the death of the nun in question had occurred as a consequence of inadequate medication and epilepsy.

## Doctrinal Disputes, Disciplinary Cases

**T**HROUGH DECISION no. 640/10 June 2008, The Constitutional Court overruled the exception of unconstitutionality of article 26(1–3) of Law no. 489/2006. The argumentation supporting this decision qualified as unfounded the claim of un-



constitutionality on grounds of infringement of article 21 of the Constitution regarding universal access to justice, as the civil courts of law do not have the jurisdiction to pass judgment on religious matters concerning aspects of internal discipline, because judicial responsibility in said matters is not regulated by legal rules of common law, but by legal norms established by each confession. On the other hand, the Constitutional Court also ruled that the provisions of paragraph 3 of the article in question guarantee access to justice for all members of the clergy in case of committing offenses and crimes—in other words, in case of committing antisocial deeds, punishable by general rules. This ruling established that civil courts of law do not have the jurisdiction to carry out justice within religious organizations in matters of internal discipline and that it is just and equitable for religious courts to be charged with the discipline of the clergy, as they are the most fit to decide if a breach of discipline is compatible or not with the spiritual role of the church.

The Court of Appeal of Iași<sup>16</sup> ruled that the enforcement of disciplinary sanctions by confessional courts, for matters of internal discipline, bears effects onto the individual labor contract of the priest. In these terms, defrocking can be perceived as the withdrawal, by the competent body, of the authorization necessary in order to exercise the profession of priest, which, in turn, entails the termination of the labor contract, as stipulated by article 56, section h of the Labor Law.

Pursuant to article 26 of Law no. 489/2006, civil courts of law do not have the jurisdiction to settle litigations concerning disciplinary offenses perpetrated by the personnel of religious organizations.<sup>17</sup>

Civil sentence no. 247/7 March 2008, issued by the Court of Constanța,<sup>18</sup> admitted the exception of general non-jurisdiction of civil courts in settling a claim concerning the annulment of a decision of transfer to another parish (the plaintiff dropped the case after the initial appeal).

Regarding the issue of admitting an appeal grounded on the provisions of the Labor Law against a disciplinary decision issued by superior religious bodies, the court had established that the provisions of article 26 of Law no. 489/2006 concerning religious freedoms and the general regime of religions are not subject to common, civil courts of law. For matters of internal discipline, the statutory and canonical provisions are exclusively applicable, as the faiths have their own bodies of religious judgment. Given that, upon taking the ecclesiastical oath, parish priests are aware of the possibility of disciplinary sanctions being leveled against them, sanctions against which no avenue of appeal is provided by the canonical legislation, yet they agree to serve as parish priests and undertake to obey and uphold the rules of the church included in its statutes and regulations, the civil court of law is of the view that this does not represent a violation of the right to free access to justice.<sup>19</sup>

In the context created by occurring work conflicts and the case of *The Good Shepherd v. Romania*, it is necessary to mention that, according to Romanian law, the legal relationship between the parties is an atypical one, stemming from the provisions of the Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Constitution envisages free access to justice as the right of any individual to seek justice in matters of defense of his rights, freedoms and interests, while at the same time

it guarantees that exercising this right may not be restricted by any law. This method of regulating the free access to justice is in line with the European stance on the issue, as, in the understanding of the Convention, the exercise of the right of free access to justice implies precisely ensuring the access of every individual to a court of law, namely guaranteeing a judicial due process that would make possible the effective exercise of this right. The logical interpretation predicated on the *per a contrario* argument leads to the conclusion that the legal provisions in matters of sanctioning disciplinary offenses listed in the Labor Law are not applicable (and that only those present in statutes of canonical codes are). However, that would mean being oblivious of the fact that the provisions of the Labor Law are indeed applicable, but only for matters of offenses and crimes. Pursuant to the explicit provisions of article 26 of Law no. 489/2006, the Court of Appeal of Constanța had ruled that the civil court does not have the authority to settle litigation concerning disciplinary offenses committed by the personnel of religious organizations.<sup>20</sup>

Bearing in mind the legal provisions and the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, of the ECHR, as well as the fulfillment, by the disciplinary procedure, of all jurisdictional stages, the Court of Appeal of Brașov had ruled that, given its position as a court of common law, it lacked the competence to settle the plea for appeal, as it was inadmissible. Consequently, considering the provisions of article 137 of the New Code of Civil Procedure, the exception of general non-jurisdiction of the court shall be accepted and, therefore, that of inadmissibility of appeal.<sup>21</sup>

## Religious Perspectives on State Approaches to Religious Disputes

**A**S IT was made clear above, it is the religious organizations which cite legal and statutory provisions when dealing with appeals against disciplinary decisions before courts of common law. In the last few years, several complaints have been lodged by disgruntled priests, dissatisfied with judgments issued by ecclesiastic courts and the position of the religious organization in question had been to postpone a final ruling (at the Holy Synod, in the case of the Orthodox Church) until the civil settlement of the action. This fact may be due to the haste of certain bishops to request investigation of priests from this dioceses by the religious courts of their respective churches, as well as due to imposing drastic measures onto priests, who are often left defenseless before an ecclesiastical tribunal controlled by a bishop.

The position of the religious establishment can only be a negative one for cases where judgments contrary to those issued by religious courts are made, by citing the already-mentioned jurisprudence, as well as the principle of autonomous organization of religious organizations within the State.

Regarding the situations mentioned above, the mass media only gets involved when there is a scandalous or sensational story to report, more often than not siding with the priest in question and hardly ever with the religious organization involved. In case of a

sensational story, it is reported both on TV and in the newspapers. Regarding *The Good Shepherd v. Romania*, the mass media positioned itself against the ruling of the First Chamber of state authority, as did many representatives of the academic legal sphere. It is worth pointing out the lack of elementary knowledge of canonical law displayed by law professors, who sided with the first court of the ECHR, without considering the special position of priests who do not perform their duties based on a work contract, but based on a mission they freely accepted and consented to.

Criticisms leveled against the Orthodox Church (but not limited to it) are mainly due to the profound secularization of Romanian society, especially visible in the segment of population with a higher-than-average cultural level, but also due to the decisions made by the leadership of the Church, which are considered wrong by the vast majority of the population—who are, in fact, the believers (for instance, the decision to build the Cathedral of the Salvation of the Nation in full economic crisis, the constant construction of new churches, the increasingly contested association with politics etc.).



## Notes

1. Published in *Monitorul Oficial al României* (Official Journal of Romania), part I, 11 (8 Jan. 2007).
2. Published in *Monitorul Oficial al României*, part I, 50 (22 Jan. 2008).
3. Pursuant to article 150 of the Statute recognized by Government Decision no. 53/2008, the Archpriestly Disciplinary Consistory functions as a disciplinary and trial court for religious singers and as a reconciliatory body for all conflicts arisen among Church personnel, as well as between laypeople and their priest. Where the parties are not satisfied with the judgment issued by the Archpriestly Disciplinary Consistory, the case is ultimately transferred to the Archdiocesan Consistory. Decisions made by the Archpriestly Disciplinary Consistory regarding Church singers become definitive subsequent to their approval by the Diocesan bishop and cannot be appealed at the Archdiocesan Consistory, except for those cases where said decision orders their dismissal.
4. Such bodies are attached to every diocese and archdiocese.
5. Attached to every metropolitan see.
6. The Metropolitan Council, as a body ruling over the admissibility of pleas of appeal, deliberates under the leadership of the metropolitan of the land. This body receives and examines appeals filed by clergy deposed of title by an archdiocesan consistory belonging to the metropolitan see. Appeals admitted, in principle, by the metropolitan council are forwarded to the metropolitan Consistory for trial and the sentence is approved by the metropolitan (article 154 of the Statute recognized by Government Decision no. 53/2008).
7. The Holy Council, as a body ruling on the admissibility of pleas of appeal, receives and examines appeals filed by clergy defrocked by an archdiocesan consistory. Appeals admitted, in principle, by the Holy Council are forwarded to the metropolitan Consistory for

- trial and its judgment is approved by the Patriarch (article 155 of Government Decision no. 53/2008).
8. Church sanctions must serve the same purpose as the Church itself, namely salvation. Among the punishments inflicted onto clergy, the last and most serious is defrocking, which entails the loss of the right to teach, sanctify and minister to the flock. According to the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, *defrocking* represents the action of dismissal of a priest. This punishment is similar to the sanction of disciplinary termination present in the Labor Code.
  9. As an exception, the Statute of the Romanian Reformed Church explicitly stipulates, in article 11(3), the right of a person with a vested interest to appeal before a court of common law against a definitive sentence issued by a church body.
  10. Pursuant to article 2(1) section b of Law no. 554/2004, a legal person which, according to the law, was granted “public utility status” can also serve as a public authority. In this sense, article 8(1) of Law no. 489/2007 stipulates clearly: *All recognized religious organizations are legal persons of public utility.*
  11. Pursuant to article 2(1) section e of Law no. 554/2005, special administrative jurisdiction is the activity performed by an administrative authority which has, according to the special organic law, jurisdiction over settling a conflict concerning an administrative document, following a procedure founded on the principles of contradictoriness, ensuring the right so self-defense and the independence of the administrative-jurisdictional activities.
  12. See Gabriela Cristina Frențiu, “Competența soluționării acțiunilor promovate împotriva sancțiunilor disciplinare aplicate personalului cultelor religioase,” *Dreptul* (Bucharest) 10 (2008): 56–77, where she presents all these aspects in an incomplete manner, without a minimal analysis and documentation concerning the jurisdictional competence of religious courts which function on the basis of the principle of religious autonomy stipulated in national and international legislation in the field. The article written by Mihail C. Barbu and Dana Barbu, “Posibilitatea clericilor ortodocși de a-și exercita drepturile în calitate de subiecți de drept procesual în virtutea unor acte normative noi,” *Noua Revistă de Drepturile Omului* (Bucharest) 4, 2 (2008): 28–47, falls in the same category.
  13. Published in *Monitorul Oficial al României*, part I, 506 (4 July 2008).
  14. Republished in *Monitorul Oficial al României*, part I, 827 (13 Sept. 2005).
  15. See Corneliu Birsan, *Convenția europeană a drepturilor omului: Comentariu pe articole*, vol. 1, *Drepturi și libertăți* (Bucharest: C.H. Beck, 2005), 490.
  16. The Court of Appeal of Iași, Decision no. 853/19 Oct. 2010.
  17. The Court of Appeal of Constanța, Civil Section, Civil decision no. 653/Labour Conflicts and Social Insurance of 20 August 2008.
  18. The Court of Appeal of Constanța, Civil Section, Closing no. 562/Labor Conflicts of 1 July 2008.
  19. The Court of Appeal of Bucharest, VII<sup>th</sup> Civil Section, Civil decision no. 4128/R/2009.
  20. Court of Appeal Constanța, Civil Section, Decision no. 653/CM/2009
  21. Court of Appeal Brașov, Civil Section, Civil decision no. 810/R/2009.

**Abstract**

Religious Jurisdictions and Pluralization  
of Legal Adjudication in Modern Romania

The ecclesiastical courts of Wallachia and Moldavia had a rich activity especially in the field of family law, heritage and even criminal law. They have a long history since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and they are still active in modern Romania. They function on the basis of the autonomy principle and they were contested in their *rationae personae* and *rationae materiae* activity. We present here some cases and court decisions which actually recognize the existence and the competence of these courts, which are a sign of legal pluralism.

**Keywords**

ecclesiastical justice, Middle Ages, labor law, legal culture, legal pluralism





# L'antica poesia popolare romena e la modernità

I "canti del morto" di Ilarie Voronca

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DAN OCTAVIAN CEPRAGA

**L**A SCOPERTA del folklore nazionale da parte delle *élites* intellettuali romene avviene, come è noto, per opera dei patrioti e scrittori romantici attivi fra il 1830 e il 1860. Si tratta dell'onda lunga delle idee herderiane, che avevano innescato in tutta l'Europa occidentale il grande movimento di scoperta delle tradizioni popolari, procurando già dai primi decenni del XIX secolo le prime grandi raccolte di poesia e di canti popolari, come il celebre *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* di Achim von Arnim e Clemens Brentano, allestito tra il 1806 e il 1808, oppure la monumentale raccolta dei canti epici serbi di Vuk Karadžić del 1814-15 e l'importante traduzione di Charles Fauriel dei *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne* (1824-25). Tuttavia, come ha osservato acutamente Paul Cornea, la scoperta del folklore è più intensa e produce risultati molto più spettacolari proprio nei paesi dell'Est e del Sud-est europeo, dove il folklore assume fin da subito una forte connotazione identitaria, costituendo uno dei pilastri che sorreggono gli ampi e tumultuosi processi di *nation building*.

Per la Romania, come per tutte le altre nazioni del Sud-est europeo, la scoperta del folklore rappresenta

*una vera e propria riscoperta di sé stessa: esalta e incanta, libera la giovane letteratura e l'intera cultura nazionale, ancora in fase di formazione, dal complesso di inferiorità, offrendo un termine di paragone propagandistico e un modello estetico, entrambi di insuperata forza creativa.*<sup>1</sup>

Per questo motivo, a partire dalla loro fondazione ottocentesca da parte di Alecsandri e degli altri *pașoptiști*, l'etnografia e la folkloristica romena si sono sviluppate sotto il segno dell'ideale identitario e patriottico, studiando le tradizioni orali delle comunità contadine principalmente all'interno dell'orizzonte nazionale. Non è un caso che proprio il folklore e la poesia popolare siano stati al centro del progetto ideologico del nazionalcomunismo romeno, del suo armamentario propagandistico e pedagogico, dei suoi rituali collettivi, delle sue 'tradizioni inventate', fondate sulla sacralizzazione di «valori arcaici e di presunte forme 'originarie' ed esclusive di creatività folklorica, inserite in una complessa 'mitologia romena'» perenne e ancestrale.<sup>2</sup>

Ci sono stati, beninteso, tentativi diversi e contrari, che hanno provato a collocare le testimonianze del folklore romeno in una prospettiva più ampia rispetto alla valutazione strettamente nazionale ed etnografica, che se ne offre di solito. Non si può non ricordare, a questo proposito, lo straordinario lavoro di Lazăr Șăineanu sulle fiabe romene, uno dei frutti più alti e originali del comparatismo e della folkloristica romena di fine Ottocento, in cui il repertorio narrativo popolare romeno è studiato all'interno di un amplissimo quadro comparato, che tiene in conto tutta la tradizione europea, a partire dalle testimonianze antiche, provenienti dal mondo classico greco-latino.<sup>3</sup> I più interessanti e proficui incontri del folklore romeno con le altre culture europee sono avvenuti, tuttavia, all'infuori del recinto disciplinare dell'etnografia e della folkloristica, nel momento in cui la modernità novecentesca scopre la bellezza poetica e la complessità dell'immaginario fantastico delle testimonianze popolari della Romania.

È questo il caso di una piccola raccolta di canti popolari romeni, testimoni di antichissime tradizioni funebri, che ha attraversato l'Europa del Novecento. La loro poesia strana ed enigmatica, di folgorante e primordiale bellezza, ha affascinato scrittori e intellettuali, segnando l'incontro della modernità con il volto più antico e insondabile della cultura tradizionale europea, con un 'primordiale' e un 'arcaico' che non provenivano da un Altrove esotico, distante nel tempo e nello spazio, ma che si erano perpetuati in forme vive e integre nel cuore di una cultura rurale contemporanea dell'Europa orientale.

I canti erano stati raccolti da Constantin Brăiloiu, grande studioso e teorico della musica popolare, nel corso delle campagne etnografiche condotte nell'estate del 1930 nel Sud-Ovest della Romania, nei villaggi dell'Oltenia settentrionale.<sup>4</sup> Brăiloiu aveva iniziato la propria attività di raccolta del folklore musicale in seguito all'incontro e al sodalizio con Dimitrie Gusti e Henri H. Stahl, i fondatori della famosa Scuola sociologica di Bucarest, che proprio in quel periodo stavano promuovendo grandi ricerche sistematiche sulle comunità rurali della Romania. Erano gli anni d'oro dell'antropologia romena, che all'epoca era all'avanguardia in Europa per la novità del metodo etnografico e per l'ampiezza e la solidità dei risultati raggiunti. La sociologia rurale di Gusti, invece di inseguire come Malinowski i lontani argonauti del Pacifico occidentale, preferiva rivolgersi alle proprie "Indie interne", all'alterità ancestrale delle comunità contadine romene. Le inchieste condotte da Brăiloiu, assieme all'équipe di Gusti e Stahl, porteranno alla luce importanti reperti della musica e della poesia tradizionale, facendo conoscere alcuni dei generi popolari più antichi e conservativi, come il cosiddetto *canto lungu* di Gorj, le *hore* vocali dell'Oltenia (canti lirici di antica tradizione) e, appunto, i canti rituali della sepoltura, fra le creazioni più originali, per forma e contenuti, del folklore romeno. Di questi ultimi, Brăiloiu allestirà una breve raccolta di tredici testi, intitolata *Ale mortului din Gorj* (I canti del morto del distretto di Gorj), che pubblicherà nel 1936 in una plaquette dell'Archivio di Folklore di Bucarest, senza commento e senza intenti scientifici, unicamente «per la loro straordinaria bellezza letteraria».<sup>5</sup>

I canti del morto pubblicati da Brăiloiu sono canti rituali di tradizione orale, che accompagnano le diverse fasi della cerimonia funebre, dalla veglia al trasporto del defunto verso il cimitero, all'inumazione. I testi dei canti parlano del viaggio del morto verso l'Al-dilă, mettono in scena l'erranza e le pericolose peregrinazioni che, secondo la mentalità

tradizionale, il defunto deve affrontare nella fase di passaggio fra la condizione dei vivi e quella dei morti, fra il momento del decesso e la sua definitiva integrazione nella comunità ultraterrena. Il morto, il «bianco viandante», si prepara per il difficile viaggio, parla con le donne venute all'alba a cantare al suo capezzale, impara a riconoscere la via giusta e a non smarrirsi su quella sbagliata, attraversa dogane e guadi pericolosi, incontra animali benevoli, come il lupo o la lontra, che lo guidano verso l'Altro mondo, mentre la strada verso il colle del paradiso si illumina di improvvise e miracolose apparizioni, in cui la Madonna ha le sembianze di un salice in fiore e gli angeli gridano come uno stormo di galletti.<sup>6</sup>

Come molte altre manifestazioni del folclore romeno, i canti del morto sono un esempio singolare di sopravvivenza delle tradizioni religiose precristiane, testimonianza viva della permanenza di temi, simboli e scenari arcaici, altrove scomparsi o presenti in forme ridotte e disgregate. Al di là del loro interesse puramente scientifico, Brăiloiu ne aveva apprezzato anche la bellezza letteraria e aveva saputo guardare i testi non solo con gli occhi dello specialista, valutandone l'importanza anche all'infuori del loro contesto immediato di circolazione. Il grande etnomusicologo aveva preso parte all'esperienza della Scuola sociologica di Gusti e aveva condiviso la sua originale idea di etnologia rurale, affermandosi come uno dei migliori conoscitori della cultura popolare tradizionale del villaggio romeno. La sua formazione e i suoi punti di riferimento culturali avevano nondimeno un respiro internazionale, essendo ben radicati nel cuore del modernismo europeo. Aveva studiato a Vienna, Losanna e Parigi, era stato allievo di Béla Bartók ed era amico di Maurice Ravel, era insomma un uomo sensibile alle idee più avanzate del proprio tempo ed era stato fra i primi a intuire la profonda fascinazione che i materiali folclorici romeni potevano esercitare sulla coscienza dei moderni. La prova sta nel destino speciale e sorprendente della sua raccolta di canti della sepoltura, che attraverserà la cultura europea, riaffiorando in nuovi e inattesi contesti.

**N**ON È un caso, forse, che i canti del morto giungano in Occidente, a Parigi, nelle valigie di un poeta d'avanguardia. E non di un poeta qualsiasi, ma di uno dei protagonisti dell'avanguardia romena degli anni Venti e Trenta, come Ilarie Voronca. All'anagrafe Voronca si chiamava Eduard Marcus ed era un ebreo romeno, nato sul Danubio a Brăila nel 1903, in una famiglia della piccola borghesia ebraica cittadina. Negli anni Venti si affermerà come uno dei più infaticabili animatori della vivacissima scena artistica e letteraria dell'avanguardia bucarestina. Fondatore di riviste, come il celebre numero unico di *75 HP*, inventore di manifesti e di azioni poetiche, come la *Pittopoesia*, Voronca era amico e sodale di Tristan Tzara e di Victor Brauner, di Eugen Ionescu e di Constantin Brâncuși, trovandosi a vivere in uno dei periodi di più intensa e vertiginosa creatività della cultura romena. È un poeta originale ed esuberante: i suoi versi visionari, che traboccano di immagini, mescolano con disinvoltura le diverse sollecitazioni della sua epoca, dal surrealismo al dadaismo dell'amico Tzara, al costruttivismo futurista, senza aderire, in fondo, ad alcuna corrente. All'inizio degli anni Trenta, per sfuggire al clima pesantemente antisemita, che sempre più si andava affermando in Romania, Voronca decide di espatriare e di stabilirsi a Parigi, reinventandosi una nuova carriera di poeta in lingua francese.<sup>7</sup>

E probabile che in uno dei suoi numerosi viaggi tra Bucarest e la Francia, Voronca abbia portato con sé l'opuscolo di Brăiloiu con i canti del morto, che forse considerava dei

buoni compagni di strada sulla via difficile e dolorosa del suo esilio. Nel 1939, con l'aiuto dell'amico critico d'arte Jacques Lassaigne, traduce in francese i canti romeni e li pubblica, preceduti da una breve presentazione, su una rivista all'epoca celebre e importante come «Mesures». <sup>8</sup> Voronca sceglie la strada di una traduzione semplice e quasi disadorna, si potrebbe dire una traduzione etnografica, che si mantiene il più possibile fedele alla lettera del testo popolare. Si leggano, ad esempio, alcuni estratti con il testo a fronte delle varianti che mettono in scena il mito del 'grande viaggio' del defunto verso l'Aldilà, con le voci delle esecutrici rituali che consigliano il morto e gli insegnano la strada giusta da percorrere, lo mettono in guardia dai pericoli e dagli incontri che farà lungo la strada, lo istruiscono ad attraversare le varie *dogane* che lo separano dal regno dei morti, lo aiutano a riconoscere gli aiutanti e gli animali guida e ad integrarsi infine nella comunità dell'Aldilà: <sup>9</sup>

\*

*Nainte să mergi,  
Să nu te sfiеști.  
Dacă mi-ei vedea  
Răchită-mpupită,  
Nu este măchită,  
Ci e Maica sfântă.  
Nainte să mergi,  
Să nu te sfiеști.  
Dacă mi-ei vedea  
Un pom înflorit,  
Nu-i pom înflorit,  
Ci e Domnul sfânt.  
Nainte să mergi,  
Să nu te sfiеști.  
Dacă-i auzi  
Cocoșii cântând,  
Nu-s cocoși cântând,  
Ci-s îngeri strigând.*

\*

*Seara va-nsera,  
Gazdă n-ai avea  
Și-ți va mai ieși  
Vidra înainte,  
Ca să te spăimânte.  
Să nu te spăimânți,  
De somă s-o prinzi,*

\*

*Va droit devant toi  
Et ne prends pas peur  
Si tu aperçois  
Un ormeau en fleurs ;  
Ce n'est ne pas un ormeau fleuri,  
C'est la Vierge Marie.  
Va droit devant toi  
Et ne prends pas peur  
Si tu aperçois  
Un arbre fleuri ;  
Ce n'est pas un arbre en fleurs,  
C'est Notre Seigneur.  
Va droit devant toi  
Et ne prends pas peur  
Si tu entends  
Les coqs chanter:  
Ce ne sont pas coqs qui chantent,  
Mais Anges qui crient.*

\*

*Le soir devient soir  
Tu n'auras pas d'hôtes.  
Et alors viendra  
La loutre vers toi  
Pour te faire peur.  
Mais ne prends pas peur,  
Prends-la pour ta sœur,*

Că vidra mai știe  
 Seama apelor  
 Și-a vadurilor  
 Și ea mi te-a trece,  
 Ca să nu te-nece,  
 Și mi te-a purta  
 La izvoare reci,  
 Să te răcorești  
 Pe mâini până-n coate  
 De fiori de moarte.  
 Și-ți va mai ieși  
 Lupul înainte,  
 Ca să te spăimânte.  
 Să nu te spăimânți,  
 Frate bun să-l prinzi,  
 Că lupul mai știe  
 Seama codrilor  
 Și-a potecilor.  
 Și el te va scoate  
 La drumul de plai,  
 La-un fecior de crai,  
 Să te ducă-n rai,  
 C-acolo-i de trai;  
 În dealul cu jocul,  
 C-acolo ți-e locul;  
 'N câmpul cu bujorul,  
 C-acolo ți-e dorul.

Car la loutre sait  
 L'ordre des rivières  
 Et le sens des gués,  
 Te fera passer  
 Sans que tu te noies  
 Et te portera  
 Jusqu'aux froides sources  
 Pour te rafraîchir  
 Des mains jusqu'aux coudes  
 Des frissons de mort.  
 Paraîtra encore  
 Le loup devant toi  
 Pour te faire peur ;  
 Mais ne prends pas peur,  
 Prends-le pour ton frère,  
 Car le loup connaît  
 L'ordre des forêts,  
 Le sens des sentiers,  
 Il te conduira  
 Par la route plane,  
 Vers un fils de roi,  
 Vers le paradis :  
 Où il fait bon vivre,  
 La colline aux jeux :  
 Là-bas est ta place,  
 Le champ aux pivoinies :  
 Là-bas est ton cœur.

La semplicità della versione francese mette in risalto la bellezza e l'alterità del testo originale, latore di contenuti rituali che prefigurano un immaginario mitico e simbolico primordiale, appena sfiorato, se non completamente estraneo al Cristianesimo e alla tradizione letteraria colta. Si può affermare che la traduzione etnografica di Voronca renda giustizia al particolare statuto non letterario dei canti romeni, che pur dotati di evidente forza espressiva ed evocativa, si collocano ben al di qua della funzione poetica, orientando semmai le loro strategie retoriche verso l'efficacia noumenica della parola, il nudo protocollo del rito.

Questa dimensione arcaica e rituale dei 'canti del morto' deve aver giocato un ruolo decisivo nella loro prima ricezione occidentale. La rivista «Mesures» non era, infatti, una sede qualunque: fondato nel 1935 da Henri Church, mecenate americano stanziato a Parigi, e diretto da Jean Paulhan, in parallelo con la «Nouvelle Revue Française», il trimestrale era tra i più importanti periodici *engagés* dell'epoca. Del comitato di re-

dazione facevano parte Bernard Groethuysen, Henri Michaux e Giuseppe Ungaretti. Sulle sue pagine scrivevano regolarmente, fra i tanti altri, Raymond Queneau, Georges Bataille, Michel Leiris, Roger Caillois. La rivista era un punto di riferimento per i letterati e antropologi che gravitavano attorno al gruppo del *Collège de Sociologie* e della 'congiura sacra' di *Acéphale*. Erano gli anni del surrealismo etnografico dei «Documents» di Bataille, dei saggi sul sacro, sulla festa, sul caos primordiale di Roger Caillois, dell'*Afrique fantôme* di Leiris e del suo *Abanico para los toros*, suite di poesie sulla tauromachia dedicate a Picasso, pubblicate proprio su «Mesures» nel 1938, l'anno precedente ai canti del morto di Voronca. È all'interno di questo fecondo intreccio fra avanguardia, etnografia, surrealismo, passione per l'irrazionale e l'Estremo, per le zone Altre ed estranee alla tradizione occidentale, che bisogna inquadrare anche la ricezione e la scoperta della bellezza arcaica e selvaggia dei canti del morto romeni.<sup>10</sup>

Dai remoti villaggi dei Carpazi, dimenticati dalla storia, la poesia popolare romena approda in questo modo nel cuore delle tensioni ideologiche e spirituali della moderna cultura europea. Per molte vie, in quel medesimo periodo, le *Pathosformeln* dell'antica civiltà contadina romena stavano già arricchendo l'immaginario dell'avanguardia artistica internazionale. Negli stessi anni Victor Brauner, amico e collaboratore di Voronca, nonché apprendista per un breve periodo nell'*atelier* parigino di Constantin Brâncuși, convogliava nella sua pittura segni, forme e simboli dell'arte popolare romena e dei suoi miti figurativi. Nel 1939, quando Voronca pubblica i canti del morto in francese, Constantin Brâncuși è appena tornato a Parigi, da più di trent'anni suo domicilio abituale, da un lungo giro per gli Stati Uniti: è un artista famoso e ammirato ed ha già realizzato la maggior parte dei suoi capolavori, dagli *Uccelli nello spazio* alle *Colonne senza fine*, al complesso monumentale di Târgu-Jiu, capisaldi della scultura e dell'arte novecentesca. È lui che, nella maniera più radicale ha portato nel cuore dell'avanguardia europea, l'arte sapienziale dei contadini dei Carpazi, che ha «aperto una povera succursale di Tismana», il monastero vicino al villaggio natale di Hobița, in *impasse* Ronsin a Parigi, dove ha il suo atelier-abitazione, frequentato dagli amici avanguardisti Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Erik Satie. In certe serate per i suoi ospiti, accompagnato da un rudimentale violino, Brâncuși cantava antichi canti popolari romeni. Sicuramente conosceva, per averli uditi nella sua infanzia, i canti del morto raccolti da Brăiloiu proprio nella sua regione natale. In un saggio giustamente famoso Mircea Eliade ha dimostrato l'influenza profonda che i miti e le immagini racchiuse nella poesia popolare romena hanno esercitato sull'arte di Brâncuși, sulle sue forme quanto sulla sua ispirazione concettuale. In questo modo, ad esempio, il motivo della *Colonna senza fine*, ricodificato nel complesso di Târgu-Jiu ai fini di una originale mitologia civile, rimanderebbe all'immagine della 'colonna del cielo', di cui Brâncuși avrà sentito parlare nelle colinde, i canti rituali del solstizio invernale, del villaggio natale in Romania o «nell'ovile dei Carpazi, dove ha fatto il suo apprendistato da pastore». Le colinde romene che parlano della creazione del mondo sono, infatti, l'unico testo folclorico europeo che abbia conservato fino ai nostri giorni il ricordo del grande archetipo religioso dell'*axis mundi*, il pilastro cosmico piantato al centro del Mondo, che sostiene e allo stesso tempo collega Cielo, Terra e Mondo sotterraneo. Allo stesso modo, *Măiastra*, l'uccello sacro realizzato nel 1915, progenitore degli innumerevoli *Uccelli nello spazio* successivi (il



«Brancusi's bird», ricordato anche da Ezra Pound) è direttamente ispirato alla mitologia popolare romena e all'uccello incantato e invulnerabile (*pasărea măiastră*) che compare in numerose fiabe tradizionali della Romania. «Io col mio nuovo vengo da qualcosa che è molto antico», ha scritto Brâncuși, che altrove aveva fatto l'elogio della sapienza dei contadini romeni che «sanno ciò che è bene e ciò che è male». <sup>11</sup>

Gli strani canti funebri romeni, che sembravano provenire da un mondo senza tempo, di sicuro non avevano lasciato indifferenti i loro primi lettori occidentali. Un'ulteriore prova dell'interesse suscitato dalla versione francese dei canti del morto è anche la loro costante fortuna successiva. Il 21 luglio 1943, Eugen Ionesco, che conosceva e ammirava Voronca, legge i *chants du mort* assieme ad altre poesie popolari romene a Radio Marseille, nell'ambito della trasmissione letteraria che organizzava per conto del Ministero della Propaganda romeno nella Francia di Vichy. Voronca era già alla macchia a Rodez, in procinto di aderire alla Resistenza antinazista e Ionesco proteggerà l'amico poeta, non rivelando il nome del traduttore dei canti. Dopo la guerra, nel 1947, Albert Camus ripubblica i *chants* tradotti da Voronca in un volume della collana «Poésie et théâtre», che dirigeva presso l'editore Edmond Charlot. <sup>12</sup> Anche Roger Caillois si ricorderà a lungo dei canti del morto e molti anni più tardi includerà alcuni dei testi tradotti da Voronca nella sua antologia della poesia universale. <sup>13</sup> È indubitabile, infine, la fortuna italiana dei canti del morto. Come ho già avuto modo di dimostrare, Franco Fortini, una delle voci più importanti della poesia italiana del Dopoguerra, deve avere avuto tra le mani il numero di «Mesures» con le traduzioni francesi di Voronca e deve aver letto con particolare attenzione e con il senso di una intima consonanza poetica ed esistenziale i tredici enigmatici canti funebri romeni, decidendo di tradurre alcuni testi in italiano. Con il titolo suggestivo di *Consigli al morto* queste traduzioni entreranno a far parte della sua prima raccolta poetica, *Foglio di via*, pubblicata dall'editore Einaudi nell'aprile del 1946. <sup>14</sup>

Esistono, tuttavia, anche altri intrecci, più segreti ed esistenziali che legano i canti popolari al destino umano e all'opera poetica originale di Ilarie Voronca. L'edizione dei canti di Constantin Brăiloiu era preceduta da una breve prefazione, che Voronca traduce parzialmente in francese, facendola precedere alle sue versioni. Al suo interno c'è un passaggio che deve aver attirato l'attenzione del poeta esule, in fuga dalla sua patria e impegnato nel difficile compito di ritagliarsi una strada all'interno di un'altra lingua e di un'altra tradizione poetica. Questo è il testo di Brăiloiu, tradotto in italiano:

*Di tutti, i più notevoli sono i canti del cammino, cioè i canti in cui si parla dell'itinerario del morto. Nelle credenze popolari il morto intraprende un viaggio difficile: "Al ponte c'è il traghettatore / Alla guardia il guardiano / Alla dogana il doganiere". Ha bisogno di guide e di incoraggiamenti. Per questo motivo i canti "raccontano bugie all'anima del morto", secondo la bellissima espressione di una contadina, "finché non la fanno arrivare al luogo di riposo" e la portano: "Alle porte del paradiso, / Al giudizio del mondo".*

E questo è il riassunto che ne offre Voronca in francese:

*Dans la croyance populaire, le mort suit un chemin très difficile et très rude : il a besoin de guide et d'encouragement. C'est pourquoi les chants n'hésitent même pas, si c'est utile, à « tromper l'âme », suivant l'expression d'une vieille paysanne que rapporte M. Brailoiu, pour l'amener plus aisément à son lieu de repos, aux portes du paradis.*

Nelle prime raccolte poetiche scritte in francese, come *Permis de séjour* del 1935 o *La poésie commune* dell'anno successivo, testimonianze straordinarie dell'esilio e del dispartio dell'autore, uno dei motivi ricorrenti è proprio quello dell'erranza e del viaggio, del disorientamento del viandante, che attraversa luoghi e terre ignote, diretto verso una meta incerta. Sono molti i punti in cui sembrano risuonare in filigrana proprio i canti del morto, con la figura del 'bianco viandante' (*dalbul de pribeag*), che si sovrappone a quella dell'io poetico. Si leggano, ad esempio, nella doppia versione d'autore, francese e romena, i seguenti versi, tratti da *Permis de séjour*:

<i>Il me faudra d'ici te quitter ombre, frère, Je laisserai ces mots, ces chants inachevés.</i>	<i>Vă trebui de-aici să te părăsesc umbră, frate, Voi lasă aceste cuvinte, aceste cântece neterminate.</i>
<i>Le souffle est là tout près qui mélange les terres</i>	<i>Suflarea este colea foarte aproape, ea amestecă pământurile</i>
<i>Et nos regards, nos mains et nos sommeils. Je vais</i>	<i>Și privirile noastre, mâinile noastre și somnul nostru. Mă duc</i>
<i>Sans savoir où. Et toi, aussi ombre, pareille</i>	<i>Fără să știu unde. Și tu, de asemenea, umbră, la fel</i>
<i>Au souvenir, oiseau qui dans l'air se dissout Le soir est là tel un vaisseau qui appareille</i>	<i>Cu amintirea, pasăre ce se dizolvă-n aer, Seara e aici ca un vas care se pregătește de plecare</i>
<i>Nous séparant de tout ce qu'une fois fut « nous ».</i>	<i>Despărțindu-ne de tot ceea ce a fost odată «noi».</i>
<i>Déjà nos yeux ne sont dans ces perdus royaumes</i>	<i>De pe acum ochii noștri în aceste regate pierdute</i>
<i>Qu'un peu de brume. Et nous marcherons à tâtons</i>	<i>Decât un pic de brumă. Vom merge pe dibuite</i>
<i>Sans nous parler. La vie et la mort en nos paumes</i>	<i>Fără să ne vorbim. Viața și moartea în palmele noastre</i>
<i>Mélangent leurs lignes. L'âme ainsi qu'un blanc faucon</i>	<i>Își amestecă liniile. Sufletul ca un șoim alb</i>
<i>Nous conduira vers cette immatérielle chasse</i>	<i>Ne va conduce către această imaterială vânătoare</i>
<i>Vers ce commencement ou bien vers cette fin [...]</i>	<i>Către acest început sau către acest sfârșit [...]</i>

O ancora, nella medesima raccolta:

*Et ces tristes, oh ! Ces tristes nuits dans un hôtel de passage,*      *Și aceste triste, ah! Aceste triste nopți într-un hotel de trecere,*  
*(Enfant, j'avais un lit très blanc et le visage*      *(Copil, aveam un pat foarte alb și chipul*  
*De ma mère se penchait telle une flamme sur moi).*      *Mamei se apleca asupra-mi ca o flacărmă).*  
*Puis ce furent des mains étranges, des bras froids,*      *Apoi venină mâini străine, brațe reci,*  
*Qui me portèrent vers une autre nuit, une autre face,*      *Mă purtamă spre altă noapte, o altă față,*  
*J'étais dans ce compartiment de 3<sup>e</sup> classe*      *Eram în acel compartiment de clasa a 3-a*  
*Parmi des gens innombrables, mais que je ne voyais pas,*      *Printre oameni nenumărați dar pe care nu-i vedeam,*  
*De même qu'on n'entend, quand on marche, ses propre pas,*      *Așa cum nu auzi, mergând, propriii tăi pași.*

*Et tout à coup me voilà dans ces rues étrangères*      *Și deodată iată-mă în aceste străzi străine*  
*Où je ne sais comment me tenir. Nulle présence chère*      *Unde nu știi cum să mă port. Nici o prezență scumpă*  
*Pour me guider, pour me conseiller. Et nulle lueur.*      *Ca să mă călăuzească, să mă sfătuiască. Și nici o licărire.*  
*Où marchais-je ainsi ? J'étais seul, j'avais peur.*      *Încotro mergeam astfel? Eram singur, mi-era frică.*

**N**ELLA SUA poesia francese successiva, Voronca si impegnerà strenuamente a cantare la bellezza abbacinante del mondo, la gioia avvenire della libertà e della rivoluzione. La sera del 4 aprile 1946, dopo aver terminato di scrivere il suo ultimo fluviale, giubilatorio poema intitolato *Petit manuel du parfait bonheur*, il poeta si toglie la vita. I canti del morto avevano molto probabilmente accompagnato Voronca nel corso dei suoi viaggi e del suo esilio, aiutandolo nella difficile, fatale lotta con l'Indicibile. Quel medesimo Indicibile da cui verrà sopraffatto, molti anni più tardi, un altro grandissimo poeta proveniente dall'Est come Paul Celan.<sup>15</sup> Come era scritto nell'introduzione alla raccolta dei canti, «dans la croyance populaire, le mort suit un chemin très difficile et très rude : il a besoin de guide et d'encouragement. C'est pourquoi les chants n'hésitent même pas, si c'est utile, à "tromper l'âme"». I materiali offerti dall'ancestrale folklore romeno trovavano in questo modo ripercussioni profonde in molte delle esperienze artistiche e spirituali più innovatrici e radicali della modernità, anche grazie alla complessità, integrità e perfezione formale dei suoi prodotti poetici. Di tutto questo ci parlano le vie tortuose percorse dagli antichi canti del morto.



## Note

1. Cfr. Paul Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc: Spiritul public, mișcarea ideilor și literatura între 1780-1840* (București: Minerva, 1972), 498, di cui si veda tutto l'importante capitolo dedicato alla *Scoperta del folclore*, 498–509.
2. Cfr. l'importante articolo di Roberto Scagno, *Desacralizzazione e totalitarismo: la Romania come caso emblematico*, in *L'irrazionale e la politica. Profili di simbolica politico-giuridica*, a cura di Claudio Bonvecchio (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2001), 39–65.
3. Per il volume, pubblicato nel 1895, si veda ora l'edizione Lazăr Șăineanu, *Basmele române în comparațiune cu legendele antice clasice și în legătură cu basmele popoarelor învecinate și ale tuturor popoarelor romanice*, ed. Ruxandra Niculescu, pref. Ovidiu Bîrlea (București: Minerva, 1978). Su Șăineanu e le fiabe romene si possono leggere, da ultimo, le acute osservazioni di Nicola Perencin, *Lazăr Șăineanu: fiabe romene în prospettiva comparata*, in *De la istorie locală la istorie națională*, a cura di Sorin Șipoș et al. (Oradea: Editura Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, 2020), 149–160.
4. Per un profilo bio-bibliografico di Brăiloiu vedi André Schaeffner, *Bibliographie des travaux de Constantin Brăiloiu*, «Revue de musicologie» 43, 1 (1959), 3-27 e Tiberiu Alexandru, *Constantin Brăiloiu (1893-1958)*, «Revista de etnografie și folclor» (Bucarest) 13, 6 (1968), 457-80. Una scelta importante dei suoi studi è stata pubblicata in Italia a cura di Diego Carpitella e Giorgio R. Cardona, per cui cfr. Constantin Brăiloiu, *Folklore musicale*, 2 voll. (Roma: Bulzoni, 1978-1982).
5. Constantin Brăiloiu, «*Ale mortului*» din Gorj (Bucarest: Societatea Compozitorilor Români, 1936), «Publicațiile Arhivei de Folklore» 7.
6. In generale, sui canti rituali della sepoltura romeni cfr.: Mihai Pop, *Le mythe du 'grand voyage' dans les chants des cérémonies funèbres roumaines*, in *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, 11 October 1966*, vol. II (Paris-Hague: Mouton, 1967), 1602-09; Ovidiu Bîrlea, *Cântecelul ritual funebre din Ținutul Pădurenilor (Hunedoara)*, «Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei pe anii 1968-1970» (Cluj), 361-407; Ioana Andreescu e Mihaela Bacou, *Mourir à l'ombre des Carpathes* (Paris: Payot, 1986), in particolare pp. 36-57; Ion H. Ciubotaru, *Marea trecere. Repere etnologice în ceremonialul funebru din Moldova* (București: Grai și Suflet – Cultura Națională, 1999); Nicolae Panea, *Gramatica funerară* (Craiova: Scrisul Românesc, 2003). Di recente, una delle più interessanti indagini antropologiche sui riti funebri romeni è quella condotta nel volume di Cosmina Timoce-Mocanu, *Antropologia ritualului funerar. Trei perspective* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2013). Otto testi della raccolta di Brăiloiu si trovano tradotti in italiano nell'antologia di Marco Cugno e Dumitru Loșonți, *Folclore letterario romeno* (Torino: Edizione Regione Piemonte, 1981), 27-29 e 149-166. Noi stessi, infine, abbiamo pubblicato l'intero volume di *Ale mortului* con traduzione italiana e testo a fronte in Constantin Brăiloiu, *Consigli al morto/Ale mortului*, cura e traduzione di Dan O. Cepraga (Viterbo: Stampa alternativa, 2005).
7. Della vasta bibliografia su Voronca e l'avanguardia romena segnaliamo in particolare gli importanti lavori di Ion Pop, *A scrie și a fi. Ilarie Voronca și metamorfozele poeziei* (București: Cartea Românească, 1993) e id., *Avangarda în literatura română* (Chișinău: Cartier, 2017).
8. Cfr. *Chants du mort (folklore roumain)*, recueillis par C. Brăiloiu, traduits du roumain par I. Voronca et J. Lassaigne, «Mesures», 15, 4 (1939), 86–93.

9. Per il testo francese mi permetto di rimandare alla mia recente edizione commentata dei *chants du mort*, dalla cui introduzione ho ripreso qui alcune idee: *Les chants du mort*, recueillis par Constantin Brăiloiu, préface et notes de Dan Octavian Cepraga, postface de Madeleine Leclerc (Genève: La Baconnière, 2018).
10. Per il concetto di surrealismo etnografico e in generale per la ricostruzione dei profondi legami fra etnografia e avanguardie poetiche e artistiche è imprescindibile il volume di James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA-London: Harvard University Press, 1988), di cui si veda anche l'ottima edizione italiana: *I frutti puri impazziscono. Etnografia, letteratura e arte nel secolo XX*, traduzione di Mario Marchetti (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1993), in particolare le pp. 143-82.
11. Mi sono già occupato di tali questioni in Dan Octavian Cepraga, *Attualità dell'arcaico. Accostamenti alla poesia popolare romena*, «Quaderni del Premio Letterario Giuseppe Acerbi» 6 (2005), 61-67, da cui ho ripreso qui alcune idee. Sui rapporti tra Brâncuși e il folklore romeno vedi il fondamentale saggio di Mircea Eliade, *Brancusi e le mitologie*, in id., *Spezzare il tetto della casa. La creatività e i suoi simboli*, introduzione e traduzione di Roberto Scagno (Milano: Jaca Book, 1988, 11-17). Per le citazioni cfr. Constantin Brancusi, *Aforismi*, a cura di Paola Mola (Milano: Abscondita, 2001).
12. Cfr. *Les chants du mort*, recueillis par C. Brăiloiu, traduits du roumain par Jacques Lassaigne et Ilarie Voronca (Paris: Edmond Charlot, 1947), «Collection Poésie et théâtre dirigée par Albert Camus».
13. Roger Caillois e Jean-Charence Lambert, *Trésor de la poésie universelle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), 58-60.
14. Ho ricostruito la ricezione italiana dei canti del morto in Dan Octavian Cepraga, *Edipo in Transilvania: tracce del folklore romeno nel Novecento italiano*, «Transylvanian Review» 20, suppl. 3 (2011), 209-225.
15. Si legga, in questa prospettiva, anche il bellissimo saggio di Giovanni Rotiroti, *Les "chants du mort" et la splendeur noircie de la vie qui résiste*, «Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai – Philologia» (Cluj-Napoca) 62, 3 (2017), 127-146.

### Abstract

#### Ancient Romanian Folk Poetry and Modernity: Ilarie Voronca's "Songs of the Dead"

This article concerns the reception of Romanian folk poetry within the European modernity of the twentieth century. The case under consideration is that of a small collection of Romanian folk songs which circulated all over Europe in the twentieth century. Their strange and enigmatic poetry, of dazzling and primordial beauty, has fascinated writers and intellectuals, marking the meeting of modernity with the most ancient and unfathomable face of traditional European culture. The songs were collected by Constantin Brăiloiu, a great scholar and theorist of popular music, in 1930, and were translated into French by Ilarie Voronca, one of the main authors of the Romanian avant-garde of the interwar period.

### Keywords

Romanian folk poetry, Ilarie Voronca, Constantin Brăiloiu



# Verso un'altra modernità

## I linguaggi urmuziani per una critica dell'umano

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**S**IA DAL punto di vista storico che dal punto di vista culturale, la modernità in Romania ha avuto un percorso assai lento se paragonato al mondo occidentale. Mentre a ovest andava incrementandosi l'innovazione tecnologica, il progresso, la razionalità e tutto ciò che rompeva con gli schemi del pensiero tradizionale, nel paese di Eminescu continuava a prosperare uno stile di vita molto vicino al mondo rurale. Se da una parte però questo ritardo storico – colmato anche grazie al contributo degli stranieri<sup>1</sup> – ha significato per la Romania un difficile avvicinamento alle strutture economiche e filosofiche della civiltà europea, dall'altro, questo ha permesso, allo stesso tempo, un lento avvicinamento a quel “disincanto del mondo”, di cui scrive Max Weber nel saggio *La scienza come professione* del 1919.

Il maggior interprete in senso radicalmente critico di questo “disincanto del mondo” in Romania è stato senza dubbio Urmuz. Infatti, agli inizi del secolo, mentre nel campo delle lettere gli scrittori romeni erano impegnati nella ricerca di una propria “specificità nazionale”, allo scopo di riempire il grande vuoto rappresentato dalla tragica e prematura scomparsa di Eminescu – ricorrendo a un'ideologia tradizionalista e nazionale, come ad esempio il “seminatorismo” di Iorga, oppure, come nel caso di C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, provando a introdurre idee socialiste desunte dal marxismo e dal populismo russo – Urmuz, pseudonimo di Demetru Dem. Demetrescu-Buzău (1883-1923), costituiva, da questo punto di vista, un vero e proprio “corpo estraneo nel panorama letterario del suo tempo”.<sup>2</sup> Egli occupava una posizione realmente eccentrica rispetto al pensiero dominante perché, come scrive Ion Pop:

*Lo scrittore marginale, non riconosciuto dall'“ufficialità”, autoescludendosi dalla vita come ultima protesta contro gli stessi limiti della condizione umana, aveva tutte le ragioni per mantenere una tale posizione. Per questo i suoi successori potevano avvertire il suo operato come un atto riparatore con cui sfidare indirettamente l'opinione pubblica conformista: attraverso Urmuz si pronunciava la voce della rivolta, dell'opposizione di fronte alle norme stabilite, il non sottomettersi alla logica dominante della creazione culturale. Su di lui potevano essere trasferite le stesse aspirazioni dei giovani iconoclasti.<sup>3</sup>*

Urmuz ha scritto pochissimi testi,<sup>4</sup> che però sono stati più o meno segretamente rivisitati da coloro che sarebbero stati più tardi i suoi eredi soprattutto all'estero: Tristan Tzara,



Eugène Ionesco, Paul Celan e Gherasim Luca, per citarne alcuni.<sup>5</sup> Considerato come un pioniere da parte dei surrealisti romeni, il cancelliere – mansione che svolgeva presso l’Alta Corte di Cassazione di Bucarest, dopo essere stato prima giudice di provincia – è stato uno scrittore non conformista, contraddistinto da uno stile rigoroso e apparentemente classico, volto a denunciare il lato morboso, corrotto e spietato del genere umano. Ionesco, forse l’unico ad aver dichiarato pubblicamente l’importanza della influenza urmuziana sulla sua scrittura, lo definirà come il “precursore della rivolta letteraria universale”.<sup>6</sup> Bisognerà però aspettare in Romania la fine degli anni ’60 affinché studi critici come quelli di Matei Călinescu, Ion Pop, Adrian Marino, Nicolae Balotă (con la sua monografia del 1970) e Marin Mincu, in seguito, anche quelli di ricercatori più giovani (come Paul Cernat, Ovidiu Morar, Corin Braga, Adrian Lăcătuș), rimettano in circolazione le *Pagine bizzarre* di Urmuz, indicandolo come un fondamentale punto di riferimento della letteratura moderna, che anticipa, sulla linea di Jarry e Kafka, l’opera di Tzara e Ionesco in Europa.<sup>7</sup>

Il primo grande interprete della produzione letteraria di Urmuz è stato Nicolae Balotă, il quale riteneva che l’autore avesse capovolto un’intera visione estetica dei canoni classici letterari, in un secolo in cui la borghesia iniziava a porsi come “rappresentante” dell’Umanità, facendosi portavoce dei diritti e della natura umana. Nell’era moderna, che coincideva con la grande crisi dei valori, Urmuz aveva ritratto in maniera mostruosa e con forme distorte i suoi personaggi per esprimere i dubbi che nutriva nei confronti dell’universo umano in vista del suo progressivo deterioramento, contrapponendosi così a tutti i grandi prosatori della tradizione classico-ottocentesca.<sup>8</sup> La critica dell’umano, sotto forma di “farsa”, costituisce una delle grandi innovazioni della scrittura dell’autore. Urmuz propone al lettore del suo tempo una versione rovesciata, fondamentalmente negativa e dissonante nei confronti del sapere classico umanistico. Dotato di una straordinaria consapevolezza estetica delle forme della scrittura, Urmuz ha fondato una dimensione singolare del “canone” letterario romeno, divenendo il primo autore in Romania ad aver realizzato una sorta di linguaggio dell’irreale, come *topos* determinante della modernità “deviata” del periodo interbellico, e punto di riferimento per un certo tipo di letteratura che si fa carico dell’irrazionale.<sup>9</sup> Il genio urmuziano trova il suo fondamento nella sua capacità di “giocare” tra la realtà e la finizione, tra il significato e il significante, realizzando uno spazio in cui le regole della rappresentazione e della finzione vengono totalmente trasformate allo scopo di riprodurre un’immagine – impenetrabile tramite i comuni mezzi dei rapporti mimetici – volutamente distorta della realtà.<sup>10</sup> Come scrive Corin Braga:

*Nell’opera di Urmuz l’arbitrarietà del segno linguistico, che caratterizza la relazione tra significante e significato, è minata alla sua base, cioè sul segno fonetico e su quello grafico. Urmuz focalizza la sua attenzione sulle caratteristiche in sé dei significanti, “dimenticando” che questi ultimi sono solidari con alcuni significati. Selezionando e associando le sonorità e gli aspetti grafici delle parole, egli procede a un lavoro complicato di sinestesia, simile a quello attraverso cui Rimbaud deduceva l’anatomia sensoriale delle Vocali. La disposizione spaziale delle righe, la forma grafica delle lettere, l’acutezza o la gravità dei suoni, lo stridore o la melodia di base delle sillabe sono elementi attentamente osservati dallo scrittore. Egli lascia a questi segni l’energia di irrigare i vasi comunicanti dell’inconscio, di provocare loro delle iridescenze e una luminosità, che poi scopre sulla retina dell’immaginazione. La sua fantasia*

*funziona come una specie di "camera a bolle" in cui vengono segnalate le radiazioni cosmiche secondo le tracce che queste lasciano nella nube di vapore. I ritratti dei personaggi urmuziani non sono altro che delle immagini sviluppate da queste traiettorie sinestetiche imprevedibili. Partendo dalle suggestioni di un nome, lo scrittore materializza e mette insieme le componenti anatomiche di alcune figure più o meno arcimboldiane.*<sup>11</sup>

La scrittura di Urmuz e il suo stile totalmente "antiletterario",<sup>12</sup> che tende a minare il simbolo della tradizione spiritualistica e idealistica, sono da ascrivere al campo dell'arbitrario, del non senso, dell'assurdo, dove il legame tra significante e significato si presenta vuoto e irrimediabilmente svincolato da qualsiasi contenuto referenziale e oggettivo.<sup>13</sup> Anche altri scrittori, provenienti da diversi orizzonti culturali, come ad esempio Kafka, Mann, Joyce, Proust e Musil, hanno espresso in vario modo, la necessità di superare le tradizionali convenzioni letterarie, svelando il complesso rapporto tra l'io e il mondo moderno, che ormai non poteva più essere rappresentato attraverso le linee rassicuranti della narrativa ereditata dal secolo precedente. Sfruttando una ricca varietà di stili e scelte strutturali, la letteratura di Urmuz, insieme a quella di questi ultimi grandi autori, ha dato voce alle perplessità e alle contraddizioni di un'epoca alle prese con un principio d'evoluzione tecnologica che inevitabilmente ha coinvolto anche il mondo della cultura.

La radio e il cinema muto, infatti, sono i simboli tangibili di questa trasformazione che ha messo in discussione i desueti canali di incontro tra il pubblico e l'autore, il cui linguaggio ha dovuto reinventarsi in funzione di un lettore meno elitario, come accade ad esempio nelle ricerche del gruppo Bauhaus in architettura, o con Eisenstein nella cine-matografia, con il teatro di Brecht, oppure ancora con la poesia di Majakovskij. L'opera di Urmuz (come quella di altri scrittori d'avanguardia) non è tuttavia volta a declinare la propria ricerca in nome di un più ampio incontro con il pubblico, poiché il suo stile è, e vuole rimanere rigorosamente cifrato, comprensibile solo a coloro che vogliono realmente misurarsi con il messaggio racchiuso nelle *Pagine bizzarre*.

Le immagini evocate dalle prose di Urmuz realizzano infatti un collage fuorviante e apparentemente privo di senso, che secondo Corin Braga, sembra sopprimere completamente la significazione, mentre la logica interna che domina i suoi scritti è stata spesso interpretata come un'attitudine dadaista, basata sull'associazione aleatoria dei temi e dei personaggi. Per questi motivi, i critici romeni del periodo interbellico, come Perpessiciu, G. Călinescu, Pompiliu Constantinescu, Tudor Vianu, hanno avuto grosse difficoltà nel decifrare l'opera di Urmuz e hanno dichiarato assurda la base dei suoi scritti.<sup>14</sup>

In realtà, la scrittura di Urmuz poteva essere considerata assurda soltanto da un pubblico isolato nell'estetismo esasperato della perfezione delle forme o in un positivismo contrario a ogni pensiero che non fosse razionale o autenticamente scientifico, un pubblico, in sostanza, non avvezzo alle asimmetrie, alle contraddizioni e alle forze liberatrici dell'inconscio, di cui si faranno sostenitori, ma soltanto più tardi, i surrealisti francesi.

Con Urmuz accade però molto di più: oltre alla sua incontestabile capacità di anticipare le tendenze letterarie dei decenni successivi, si assiste nella sua opera ad una confluenza di linguaggi diversi, da quello filosofico a quello letterario, da quello giu-ridico a quello scientifico, oltre alla presenza di un'innovativa commistione dei generi letterari, e ciò rappresenta un'assoluta novità nell'ambito della letteratura romena. Si tratta di una caratteristica

originale che non segue però il canone della modernità incentrata sull'ideologia positivista. Al contrario, con Urmuz il pensiero scienziasta viene continuamente messo in discussione e addirittura deriso. La sua opera di sovversione sembra rivolgersi verso una modernità altra, cioè una modernità che si potrebbe qualificare “idiosincratca”<sup>15</sup> che supera non solo i confini geografici romeni (ancora legati al mondo rurale), ma anche i confini temporali dell'Occidente (dove nasce realmente la modernità), mettendo insieme linguaggi e generi letterari diversi al fine di parodiarli per portare avanti un discorso altro e alterato, ibrido e spurio sul genere umano.

Anticipando per molti versi l'epoca postmoderna,<sup>16</sup> Urmuz si adopererà esattamente in un'opera di contaminazione dei generi letterari. Secondo la tradizione, un genere letterario è un concetto categoriale che permette di classificare le produzioni letterarie tenendo conto di vari aspetti che vanno dal genere pittorico a quello narrativo e drammatico, ma anche a partire dal contenuto o dal tipo di registro: drammatico, tragico, comico o altro. La codificazione dei generi comportava un fondamentale elemento di normatività estetica, secondo cui gli scrittori erano obbligati ad adeguarsi ai modelli e venivano giudicati sulla base della maggiore o minore conformità a questi. La situazione si complicherà quando, di fronte al nuovo assetto dei saperi scientifici e delle forme di vita della modernità avanzata, i vecchi confini tra le discipline e i divieti di contaminare i generi non solo non avranno alcuna ragione di esistere, ma dovranno essere anche programmaticamente infranti e superati. Fattori di questo cambiamento di prospettiva, come sottolinea Michel Foucault nel suo libro *Le parole e le cose*,<sup>17</sup> sono Hegel e Nietzsche, poi Marx che ha voluto farla finita con la filosofia, e infine Freud, l'inventore di una nuova disciplina, la psicoanalisi. Tutto questo ha implicato delle straordinarie conseguenze: la filosofia si è accorta che con la modernità crolla il fondamento su cui si era tradizionalmente poggiata, ossia la metafisica classica e quindi ora è costretta ad aprirsi a ciò che è altro da sé, ovvero alla letteratura. D'altro canto, la letteratura, che d'ora in poi non potrà più essere classificata o etichettata dalla grammatica e dalla retorica, deve prendere atto che non può più assolvere al compito che quella tradizione le affidava, cioè di condurre alla perfezione – attraverso la creazione dell'opera – l'uso della lingua ordinaria per validare la regola dell'arte cui si rifaceva e da cui era guidata. A questo punto con Urmuz accade qualcosa di molto singolare alla letteratura. Essa inizia a coincidere con il linguaggio, cioè con il suo assurdo delirio e con la sua impossibilità di essere rinchiuso in regole stringenti, e decide di non sottomettersi più a quegli imperativi della tradizione dei generi, che stabilivano ciò che si poteva dire e ciò che invece andava taciuto. È come dire che alle soglie del Novecento, la letteratura inaugurata in Romania con Urmuz rompe radicalmente con l'arte dell'eloquenza e decide di diventare *scrittura* nel senso pieno del termine come indica la sua etimologia. Con Urmuz nasce dunque il genere della scrittura che disloca tutti gli altri generi letterari tradizionali, senza per questo abolirli, e qui avviene lo straordinario incontro tra la filosofia e la letteratura.<sup>18</sup> Ciò significa che il “mondo vero”, come scriveva Nietzsche nel *Crepuscolo degli idoli*, è diventato “favola”:

*E che il mondo sia diventato favola non significa affatto che nel mondo tutto è sogno e privo di realtà, tutto è insignificante e insensato, niente è vero. Chi pensasse così, penserebbe ancora a partire dall'idea di verità, sia pure di una verità che si è ritirata in un suo mondo altro rispetto a questo, ma che tuttavia resta il paradigma in base al quale questo mondo appare insensato*

*e falso. Penserebbe, insomma, dall'opposizione vero-falso, reale-irreale, ecc. invece con la verità è tolto anche il mondo vero, e con il mondo vero anche il mondo falso.*

*Che cosa resta, dunque? Resta il mondo. Resta il mondo così com'è, in ogni suo punto, sia dello spazio sia del tempo. Dunque il mondo così com'è, qui e ora, ma anche sempre altro da sé, nello spazio infinito e nel tempo infinito.<sup>19</sup>*

Infatti, ne “il romanzo in quattro parti” di Urmuz, *Bálnia e Stamate*, è possibile vedere che il mondo è raffigurato come una monade dove è evidente la parodia del pensiero filosofico-economico-storico e scientifico nelle costanti allusioni ad Aristotele (“i sette emisferi di Tolomeo”), Leibniz (“camera-monade senza porte né finestre”), Kant e Schopenhauer (“la cosa in sé”), Marx (il “tavolo” spettrale “senza gambe” del *Capitale*), Darwin (“due uomini discendere dalla scimmia”) in uno scenario onirico, di straordinaria densità simbolica, che sembra derivare direttamente dalla lettura dell'*Interpretazione dei sogni*, dove, per Freud, il vero segreto del sogno non è il suo contenuto onirico latente, ma la forma stessa:

*Un appartamento ben aerato, composto di tre vani principali, più una terrazza a vetri munita di campanello.*

*Davanti, il salone sontuoso, la cui parete di fondo è occupata da una biblioteca in quercia massiccia, sempre strettamente avvolta in lenzuola fradice... In mezzo, basato su calcoli e probabilità, un tavolo senza gambe sorregge un vaso che contiene l'essenza eterna della “cosa in sé”, uno spicchio d'aglio, una statuetta raffigurante un pope (di Transilvania) che tiene in mano una sintassi e... 20 soldi di mancia... Il resto non presenta alcuna importanza. Bisogna tuttavia tenere presente che questa camera, eternamente penetrata dalle tenebre, non ha né porte né finestre e comunica con il mondo esterno solo per mezzo di un tubo, che lascia talvolta uscire del fumo, attraverso cui si possono vedere, nel cuore della notte, i sette emisferi di Tolomeo, e, durante il giorno, due uomini discendere dalla scimmia e una successione finita di semi secchi, accanto all'Auto-Cosmo infinito e inutile...<sup>20</sup>*

Altro riferimento filosofico è possibile trovarlo nella *Fuchsiade*, testo che ha come sottotitolo “poema eroico-erotico e musicale, in prosa”. Qui Urmuz chiama ironicamente in causa anche la figura metaforica dell'uomo che vive nel cosiddetto “nichilismo attivo”, liberato dai falsi valori etici e sociali della vecchia filosofia socratica, in altre parole, l'*Übermensch*:

*Il nostro eroe mentre vagava smarrito nel Caos prese allora una decisione eroica. Dichiarò di accogliere il favore di Atena secondo la condizione che gli era stata imposta; tuttavia, quando si accorse di essere vicino alla terra, tanto fece che virò un po' sulla destra, cadendo proprio in quel quartiere, piuttosto sospetto, donde era partito, e dal quale si sentiva particolarmente attratto.*

*Sentendosi ormai pronto, avrebbe voluto apprendere e mettere in pratica qui quello che fino ad allora non aveva saputo adempiere, per poi richiedere, una volta completamente iniziato, udienza a Venere e tentare di riabilitarsi al meglio in merito alle faccende per le quali aveva molto lasciato a desiderare. In tal modo, si diceva, si renderà possibile la creazione*

*di una nuova stirpe di superuomini e sarebbe stato così anche dispensato di fare sulla terra quell'impossibile corvée che gli si imponeva.*<sup>21</sup>

Se con il discorso filosofico, Urmuz sembra quasi voler entrare in dialettica – non disdegnando allo stesso tempo di parodiare –, con il discorso scientifico pare che vi sia da parte dell'autore una chiara intenzione di farne una caricatura, come si legge ad esempio in *Pálnia e Stamate*:

*Purtroppo, più tardi, il sentimento paterno prevalse, e Stamate, grazie ai suoi calcoli e alle sue combinazioni chimiche, riuscì ad ottenere che nel tempo, grazie ai prodigi della scienza, Bufty occupasse laggiù un posto di vicecapo ufficio,*<sup>22</sup>

oppure, come avviene in *Ismail e Turnavitu*:

*Ismail è composto di occhi, favoriti e una veste, e solo con molta difficoltà oggi lo si può rintracciare. Tempo fa cresceva anche nell'Orto Botanico e più tardi, grazie al progresso della scienza moderna, si è riusciti a fabbricarlo uno per via chimica, mediante sintesi.*<sup>23</sup>

In queste righe, Urmuz, come un vero artista postmoderno, è scettico e ironico nei confronti della scienza.<sup>24</sup> Rifiutando le ideologie moderniste improntate allo scientismo, l'autore mette in discussione i vari postulati della logica e della razionalità, proclamati dal pensiero positivista e in particolare deride la prosecuzione della specie sulla terra, facendosi beffa dello stesso umano, che con l'avvento del modernismo cominciava a perdere i suoi tratti più specifici, trasformandosi nella figura dell' "uomo-macchina", così come l'aveva prefigurato Cartesio o La Mettrie. L'atteggiamento irriverente nei confronti della scienza, producono una scrittura cinicamente metafisica e a tratti nichilistica in cui l'umano, seppur inutile e senza scopo, può tuttavia "distuggere lo snobismo e la viltà del pensiero dell'arte" soltanto mediante un atto di volontà.

Oltre ai riferimenti riguardanti il discorso scienziato e la parodia dell'ideologia positivista, un altro aspetto che sembra caratterizzare particolarmente le *Pagine bizzarre*, è l'impiego da parte di Urmuz di un linguaggio giuridico che si richiama evidentemente al mondo del foro, come è possibile leggere ad esempio in *Pálnia e Stamate*:

*E senza perdere il sangue freddo, si mise a gettare qualche manciata di terra sull'imbuto e una volta rin vigorito con un po' di decotto di erba pazienza, si prosternò diplomaticamente con la faccia a terra, rimanendo così in uno stato totale di incoscienza, tempo otto giorni festivi, termine necessario, come egli credeva, per entrare in possesso dell'oggetto, secondo la procedura civile.*<sup>25</sup>

A partire dal diritto di possesso, che vede il suo coronamento nel diritto di proprietà che, come si sa, comporta il godimento e la disposizione di un bene in modo pieno ed esclusivo, secondo la più nota definizione del Codice Napoleone (l'art. 544 dà la definizione con il sintagma: "la propriété est le droit de jouir et disposer des choses de la manière la plus absolue", che sarebbe poi entrato nel Codice civile romeno con l'articolo 555),

Urmuz sembra voler prendersi gioco del discorso forense nella sua pretesa universalizzante, proprio come fa attualmente Gheorghe Schwartz in Romania nei suoi romanzi,<sup>26</sup> mescolando il diritto civile, che, come è noto, disciplina le norme giuridiche che regolano i rapporti tra i privati – e tra questi rientra anche il diritto di proprietà e il possesso – e il codice di procedura civile, che costituisce il corpo organico di norme strumentali a quelle di diritto civile. Tuttavia, più che di una vera titolarità sull'oggetto, Urmuz parla qui di possesso,<sup>27</sup> ossia della situazione in cui ci si trova quando non si ha un diritto sull'oggetto nei confronti del vero proprietario, quando cioè non si ha lo *ius possidendi*, ma si ha soltanto lo *ius possessionis*. Non sarà inutile osservare che in passato questi due diritti erano spesso confusi. D'altronde la stessa etimologia del latino *possidere*, che sembra comune a quella di *possum*, indica la potestà di fatto, tenuto sempre presente che la giurisdizione romana si basa naturalmente, come quella italiana del resto, sul diritto romano.

Dal possesso si può ottenere la titolarità e quindi anche il godimento del bene. E tale questione, cioè quella del godimento – che rientra a pieno titolo tra i mezzi attraverso cui l'uomo afferma la propria libertà, poiché richiede per la sua piena attuazione la possibilità da parte sua di assicurarsi i mezzi necessari alla vita senza dipendere dagli altri<sup>28</sup> – sembra acquisire con Urmuz ancora un'altra valenza: innanzitutto Pálnia, l'Imbuto, ha la funzione di supplemento simbolico. Essa afferma cioè la supremazia della forma sul contenuto in un'ottica perversa. Urmuz punta soprattutto la sua attenzione sull'aspetto feticistico dell'oggetto, sul carattere contemplativo della cosa, che in questo modo acquisisce un altro valore, contribuendo allo sdoppiamento essenziale del soggetto nel rapporto con l'oggetto.<sup>29</sup> L'oggetto diventa dunque feticcio nel valore che gli viene attribuito, è come una merce, ma allo stesso tempo è anche un bene immateriale e astratto il cui godimento è impossibile se non attraverso l'impossessamento e l'acquisizione del diritto di proprietà su di esso.

Sulla questione dello *ius*, è possibile ancora ritrovare nelle *Pagine bizzarre* altri riferimenti piuttosto ironici e innovativi su ciò che Kant chiamava il *caput mortuum* del giurista, ossia il concetto del diritto propriamente detto. Si legge, ad esempio, in *Dopo il fortunale*:

*La felicità tuttavia non fu per lui di lunga durata... Tre viandanti, che all'inizio gli si erano presentati come amici ma che alla fine giustificarono il loro arrivo in quel posto come inviati dal Fisco, cominciarono a fargli ogni sorta di angherie, contestandogli in primo luogo perfino il diritto di starsene arrampicato sull'albero...*

*Tuttavia, per manifestare la loro rettitudine e per non ricorrere direttamente ai rigori messi a loro disposizione dalla legge, tentarono allora di usare qualsiasi mezzo diversivo per costringerlo a lasciare l'albero... innanzi tutto promettendo di fargli regolarmente delle lavande gastriche e, infine, offrendogli sacchi in affitto, aforismi e trucioli di legno.*

*Egli, però, restò impassibile e freddo di fronte a tutti questi allettamenti, accontentandosi semplicemente di tirar fuori il suo certificato di indigenza che quel giorno il caso volle avesse su di sé e che, tra le altre esenzioni e prerogative, gli riconosceva anche il diritto di starsene accovacciato sui rami di un albero, assolutamente gratis e per tutto il tempo che avesse voluto...*<sup>30</sup>



La presenza di enormi quantitativi di volumi e di biblioteche contenenti opere sul diritto, di luoghi dediti all'amministrazione della giustizia, oltre alle innumerevoli organizzazioni sia scolastiche che universitarie consacrate agli studi giuridici, non riescono a circoscrivere in maniera esaustiva il concetto di diritto, del resto il problema non è semplice e né si può risolvere con una singola definizione accademica. Di questo Urmuz era ben cosciente, dal momento che la questione ha da sempre perseguitato la coscienza e il giudizio degli individui che si sono posti quest'interrogativo. Basti pensare al già menzionato Kant, quando si chiedeva: *Quid ius?*, nella *Metafisica dei costumi* nel 1797.

Secondo quanto si legge nel libro di Trabucchi il diritto è:

*L'ordinamento per la regola dei rapporti umani [...] ubi societas, ubi ius [...]. Il cittadino chiede al diritto non solo il rispetto, ma anche la collaborazione degli altri cittadini. Per raggiungere tali scopi viene costituito [...] un ordine da rispettare, ordine che si impone obbligatoriamente nei rapporti tra gli uomini.*<sup>31</sup>

Da questa prospettiva, dunque, si ritiene necessaria la collaborazione dell'altro, il quale però può sempre decidere di non cooperare e di ledere o addirittura appropriarsi del diritto altrui, come è il caso di questo racconto urmuziano. Qui il diritto del protagonista, cioè quello di starsene "accovacciato su un albero", viene facilmente minacciato dai tre viandanti, cioè da tre sconosciuti qualunque. In questo modo, Urmuz fa vedere ironicamente come lo *ius* abbia in realtà una consistenza piuttosto imprevedibile, fragile e vulnerabile che può essere agevolmente messa in discussione.

Allo stesso modo, la questione del diritto appare ridicolizzata in un brano di un altro racconto, *Algazy e Grummer*:

*A causa di questo procedimento illegale di Grummer, Algazy, che ha quasi sempre dispiacere e discussioni con i clienti, ti corre dietro pregandoti di rientrare per prenderti la meritata soddisfazione, e ti dà il diritto – se hai comprato un oggetto più caro di 15 soldi – di... annusare per un po' il becco di Grummer.*<sup>32</sup>

Infatti, il "procedimento illegale", messo in atto da Grummer, che consiste nell'aggreddire i clienti che entrano nel negozio, darebbe il diritto a questi ultimi di "annusare" il suo becco. In altri termini, se il cliente incassa le percosse e spende almeno 15 soldi, può avere diritto a qualcosa che è totalmente privo di valore, o addirittura sgradevole, come quella di annusare una parte del corpo di Grummer. In cosa consiste dunque il concetto di diritto in una pratica del genere? Dal momento che la legge, come si diceva, non riesce a circoscrivere il campo intorno al concetto di diritto, l'individuo dunque può sempre trovare il modo per far passare come diritto le sue personali interpretazioni di quest'ultimo, o addirittura, può trasformare le proprie manie e perversioni in diritti, come fanno i personaggi urmuziani.

A partire da queste brevi considerazioni, è possibile osservare come Urmuz, impiegando diversi linguaggi – che vanno dalla filosofia alla scienza, dalla giurisprudenza alla neonata psicanalisi, combinate tra loro con perfida e sagace ironia – crea in Romania un testo senza precedenti, mettendo in evidenza tutte le tracce che sono state impresse sui



linguaggi dei vari saperi che hanno contribuito al progresso o al regresso della civiltà umana.

Occorre ricordare che in Romania all'epoca di Urmuz, il panorama letterario era separato grosso modo da due categorie di scrittori: da una parte vi erano coloro che prendevano parte ai nuovissimi movimenti letterari dell'Europa occidentale e che ambivano a sperimentare nuove forme d'espressione, e dall'altra vi era una categoria di scrittori che preferiva continuare a seguire lo stile tradizionale, religioso e metafisico degli anni precedenti. Il villaggio rurale restava per loro una fonte fertile d'ispirazione, anche se con alcuni scrittori come Tudor Arghezi, è avvenuto effettivamente un cambiamento nella forma e nella lingua romena, con la comparsa di neologismi e di commistioni di termini arcaici e rurali con altri provenienti dal gergo urbano. Del resto non va dimenticato che proprio Arghezi ha fatto scoprire al pubblico romeno Urmuz – il cui pseudonimo è un'invenzione del poeta munteno –, facendo pubblicare sulla sua rivista "Cugetul românesc", in due numeri separati, *Pîlnia e Stamate* e *Ismail e Turnavitu* nel 1922.<sup>33</sup>

Già in queste categorie Urmuz occupava una posizione eccentrica, poiché il suo stile non aveva nulla in comune neanche con quell'innovazione linguistica che è possibile ritrovare in Arghezi, né è presente quella ricerca dei principi primi e quella contrapposizione della magia della vita nei villaggi con quella meccanica della moderna società romena che si può ritrovare in Lucian Blaga. Non emerge neppure quella liberazione dai contenuti informativi e dalle connessioni sintattiche e logiche al fine di restituire un'opera di pura suggestione tipica della poesia di Ion Barbu, e infine, non c'è una prosa scarna, diretta che rivela il gioco delle grandi forze sociali e biologiche che sovrastano i destini degli uomini, caratteristica delle dure prose realistiche di Liviu Rebreanu (gli scrittori qui citati rappresentano, come si sa, alcuni dei capisaldi della letteratura romena contemporanea di Urmuz).<sup>34</sup>

**S**UL VERSANTE occidentale la scrittura urmuziana era altrettanto eccentrica, poiché essa non era neppure in linea e non elogiava le moderne trasformazioni della società occidentale, al contrario, la società industriale e la crescita dell'urbanizzazione degli inizi del secolo XX, venivano parodiate nelle forme reificate dei personaggi delle *Pagine bizzarre*. La tendenza del pensiero progressista dell'epoca, che affermava il potere degli esseri umani di creare, ottimizzare e trasformare il loro ambiente con l'aiuto della ricerca, della scienza e della tecnologia, viene sistematicamente ribaltata nell'opera urmuziana per mostrare il suo lato oscuro, attraverso la caricatura e tramite l'uso di una parola sorgiva, ma attentamente scelta, che non poteva non apparire scandalosa per la spudoratezza con cui restituiva al lettore tutte le assurde ambizioni, tutte le insensate credenze scientiste e tutte le crudeli perversioni e prepotenze del genere umano.

In linea con l'ideologia postmoderna, come riconosce anche Mircea Cărtărescu,<sup>35</sup> Urmuz critica la modernità con i suoi toni pacati e, allo stesso tempo, terribili del *non-sense*, anzi, fa molto di più: deride una modernità del futuro, una modernità che non avrebbe mai vissuto, e lo fa in maniera chiaramente distopica, dove gli individui sono costruiti con pezzi di scarto, resti, avanzi di quelle che sarebbero state le esplosioni delle guerre mondiali. Urmuz contrappone dunque l'uomo e la tecnica nel tentativo di ripensare la stessa natura sia fisica che psichica dell'essere umano in relazione all'ambiente

circostante, poiché il progresso della scienza e delle tecnologie, che prosegue ancora oggi con l'informatica, la biologia, le biopolitiche e le bioinformatiche, hanno dimostrato che non c'è limite all'avanzare di questo "uomo nuovo", uomo non umano, "postumano":<sup>36</sup> non nel senso di un individuo nato dalla sintesi di un divenire nomade che nella sua transitorietà si costruisce attraverso processi biologici e inorganici, sociali e non umani, un individuo critico e non unitario, in altri termini, un "soggetto relazionale determinato nella e dalla molteplicità, che vuol dire un soggetto in grado di operare sulle differenze ma anche internamente differenziato, eppure ancora radicato e responsabile"<sup>37</sup> come ben auspica Rosa Braidotti. Il "postumano" urmuziano è tutt'altro; qui – come in altre esperienze contemporanee del postumano – è possibile osservare una pseudo-regressione dall'umano all'animalità, un mostruoso ritorno della cultura alla natura che fa saltare in aria il binarismo logico tradizionale, secondo un processo che inverte quello della civiltà (essendo questo il risultato, secondo il paradigma umanista, di una serie di progressi resi possibili dalla padronanza degli istinti distruttivi e dall'uso della razionalità). Il "postumano" prefigurato da Urmuz, in fondo, incarna il soggetto nato dalla logica del profitto, che oggi può offrire una nuova conoscenza ontologica dell'essere umano, dopo il crollo dell'umanesimo eurocentrico e androcentrico. Con le *Pagine bizzarre* il lettore si trova in sostanza davanti a un senso ibrido, terzo, mescolato che costituisce tuttavia un valido interrogativo da cui partire per riflettere sui diversi aspetti inquietanti della vita sociale, politica, scientifica, giuridica e filosofica contemporanea e sulla "nuda vita" nei suoi aspetti non umani e articolati in un divenire-macchina deleuzo-guattariano.<sup>38</sup>



## Note

1. L. Boia, *De ce este România altfel?* (București: Humanitas, 2013), 46-58.
2. G. Rotiroti, "Introduzione", in Urmuz, *Pagine bizzarre*, a cura di G. Rotiroti (Roma: Salerno, 1999), 7.
3. I. Pop, *Avangarda în literatura română*, ed. III (Chișinău: Cartier, 2017), 48.
4. La sua opera è composta da alcuni racconti assurdi e fiabe stravaganti: *Pîlnia e Stamate*, *Ismail e Turnavitu*, *Algazy e Grummer*, *Emil Gayk*, *La partenza per l'estero*, *Cotadi e Dragomir*, *Fuchsiade*. Cfr. Urmuz, *Pagini bizare*, a cura di S. Pană, București (București: Minerva, 1970). Più di recente è apparsa una nuova edizione delle *Pagine bizzarre* a partire da un manoscritto autografo ritrovato: Urmuz, *Schițe și nuvele aproape... futuriste*, a cura di I. Pop (București: Tracus Arte, 2012).
5. Cfr. G. Rotiroti, "Când soarele ajunge la solstițiu". *Urmuz și scriitorii de avangardă din exil* (Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, 2020).
6. E. Ionesco, "Précurseurs roumains du Surréalisme", «Le lettres nouvelles» (Paris), 13 (1965), 71-82.
7. In Romania sono apparse le seguenti monografie dedicate all'opera di Urmuz: N. Balotă, *Urmuz* (Cluj: Dacia, 1970); Anagaia, *Pelicanul sau babița (Introducere în urmuzologie)* (Baia Mare: Umbria, 1998) e, della stessa autrice, *În subteranele textului. "Pîlnia și Stamate" (Introducere în urmuzologie II)* (Baia Mare: Umbria, 1999); A. Lăcătuș,

- Urmuz. Monografie, antologie comentată, receptare critică* (Braşov: Aula, 2002); C. Burtică, *Urmuz avant Dada. Urmuz sau originile dadaisto-suprarealiste* (Craiova: Didactica Nova, 2003); C. D. Błaga, *Urmuz și criza imaginarului european* (Timișoara: Hestia, 2005); C. Cubleșan, *Urmuz în conștiința criticii* (București: Cartea Românească, 2014).
8. Balotă, *Urmuz*, 43.
  9. Cfr. G. Glăvan, *Urmuz și instituirea canonului singular*, in ead., *Viraj în ireal. Modernități particulare în literatura română interbelică* (Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, 2014), 65-108.
  10. *Ibid.*, 107-108.
  11. C. Braga, *Psihobiografii* (Iași: Polirom, 2011), 35.
  12. G. Ionescu, *Anatomia unei negații* (București: Minerva, 1991), 106.
  13. Cfr. G. Rotiroti, *Il piacere di leggere Urmuz. Indagini psicanalitiche sui fantasmi letterari delle 'Pagine bizzarre'* (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli L'“Orientale”, 2010), 7.
  14. Braga, *Psihobiografii*, 9-30.
  15. *Hot Black Ink: Modernist Idiosyncrasies: Urmuz-Mateiu-Blecher-Fondane-Naum*, a cura di Erwin Kessler, «Plural: Culture & Civilization» 3.19 (2003) (Bucharest: The Romanian Cultural Institute, 2019).
  16. Cfr. M. Cărtărescu, *Postmodernismul românesc* (București: Humanitas, 1999).
  17. Cfr. M. Foucault, *Le parole e le cose. Un'archeologia delle scienze umane*, con un saggio critico di Georges Canguilhem, traduzione del francese di Emilio Panaitescu (Milano: Rizzoli, 1967).
  18. Rotiroti, *Când soarele ajunge la solstițiu*, 129-130.
  19. Sergio Givone, *Trattato teologico-poetico* (Genova: Il Nuovo Melangolo, 2017), 53.
  20. Urmuz, *Pagine bizzarre*, 31.
  21. *Ibid.*, 65-66.
  22. *Ibid.*, 37.
  23. *Ibid.*, 38.
  24. “In *Pagini bizare*, the favourite target of Urmuz’s parody is scientific discourse – with its ‘truth’, argumentative logic, precision of terms and ascetic syntax. Urmuz was fascinated by sonorous neologisms and exploited their disruptive potential.” Cfr. E. Parpală, “Rhetorical Acts, Performative Acts: Urmuz and the (Meta)Manifestos of Romanian Avant-Garde”, in *Manifestazioni. I manifesti avanguardisti tra performance e performatività*, a cura di A. Catalano, M. Mauriziow e R. Merlo (Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2014), 65.
  25. Urmuz, *Pagine bizzarre*, 35.
  26. Cfr. G. Schwartz, *Justiția suverană sau adevărulul Tratat de drept procedural. Curs practic cu pilde edificatoare (Vocalize în mi minor). Roman* (Iași: Junimea, 2016).
  27. Cfr. E. De Martino, *Del possesso, Art. 1100-1172, Libro III, Della proprietà. Della denuncia di nuova opera e di danno temuto*, quarta edizione (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1970).
  28. A. Trabucchi, *Istituzioni di diritto civile*, quarantesima terza edizione, a cura di G. Trabucchi (Padova: CEDAM, 2007), 542-545.
  29. J. Lacan, *Il seminario. Libro XI. I quattro concetti fondamentali della psicoanalisi 1964*, a cura di A. Di Ciaccia, traduzione di A. Succetti (Torino: Einaudi, 2003), 145; J.-A. Miller, *I paradigmi del godimento*, a cura di A. Di Ciaccia (Roma: Astrolabio, 2001), 13 (si veda il capitolo “I sei paradigmi del godimento”).
  30. Urmuz, *Pagine bizzarre*, 54.
  31. Trabucchi, *Istituzioni*, 2-3.

32. Urmuz, *Pagine bizare*, 69-70.
33. G. Bogza, "Biografie", in Urmuz, *Pagini bizare*, 90-93.
34. Cfr. D. Micu, *Istoria literaturii române. De la creația populară la postmodernism* (București: Saeculum I.O., 2000); N. Antonescu, *Scriitori și reviste literare din perioadă interbelică* (București: Editura Revistei "Convorbiri Literare", 2001); E. Ivancu, T. Klimkowsi e G. Orian (edd.), *Fascinantul interbelic: idei, oameni, cărți* (Alba Iulia: Aeternitas, 2015).
35. Cfr. M. Cărtărescu, *Postmodernismul românesc*, cit.
36. Per un approfondimento del tema, si vedano i seguenti testi: M. Dery, *Velocità di fuga: Cyberculture a fine millennio*, traduzione di M. Tavosanis (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1997); E. Alfano Miglietti, *Identità mutanti. Dalla piega alla piaga: esseri delle contaminazioni contemporanee* (Genova: Costa & Nolan, 1997); R. Marchesini, *Post-human. Verso nuovi modelli di esistenza* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002); P. L. Marzo, *La natura tecnica del tempo. L'epoca del post-umano tra storia e vita quotidiana* (Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2012).
37. R. Braidotti, *Il postumano. La vita oltre l'individuo, oltre la specie, oltre la morte*, traduzione dall'inglese di A. Balzano (Roma: DeriveApprodi, 2014), 75.
38. Si veda A. Scerbo, *Il divenire in Deleuze-Guattari. La resistenza alla macchina astratta di surcodificazione* (Firenze: Emmebi Edizioni, 2015).

### Abstract

#### Towards Another Modernity: Urmuzian Languages for a Critique of the Human

The aim of this article is to analyze the confluence of languages and the mixture of literary genres in Urmuz's *Bizarre Pages*, a strongly original and innovative work, which does not follow the canon of modernity of the early twentieth century. Urmuz's writing opts for a different modernity, which goes beyond not only the Romanian geographical boundaries (still linked to the rural world), but also the temporal boundaries of the West, bringing together the philosophical, scientific and legal discourse in order to parody them and to shape a different and altered discourse, hybrid and spurious, on the human.

### Keywords

Urmuz, modernity, Romanian literature, critique

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ROMANIAN MODERNITY:  
CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL  
PARADIGMS





# Modernity versus Postmodernity in a Local-Regional Variant Pastoral Reflection Paradigms

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† GURIE GEORGIU

**O**UR WORLD is experiencing huge mutations, which we must first be aware of; secondly, we must approach them creatively, cleansing them of anything that can be harmful; thirdly, we must fertilize them by the transfiguring power of God's grace. In this research, we will focus on some postmodern mutations that perplex all representatives of traditional modern culture and can paralyze any social and pastoral actions that do not take into account the internal mechanisms at play in our world.

Postmodernity is a new era in human history, defined by the following coordinates: 1. post-industrial society; 2. centralization of information and communication (the transition from the "Gutenberg revolution" to the television image and that of virtual existence, centered on the computer);<sup>1</sup> 3. new types of relationships between a man and a woman (with all that feminism entails); 4. the tension between globalisms of all kinds and local cultural identities;<sup>2</sup> 5. a new relationship of a person with his/herself (through self-awareness mediated by self- (psycho) analysis; 6. relativization of values and certainties under the hypnosis of nihilism (the parodic approach to history); 7. experiential religiosity, typically postmodern.

The priest must do everything to know and "read" the surrounding reality from the church perspective, to see it "with the eyes" of God, interpreting the cultural tendencies at play "in a spiritual way," in order to explore their positive potential and inhibit the negative dynamics. For this, on the one hand, it is necessary to know the positive tendencies of today's culture (identifying the operating logic in contemporary society), and, on the other hand, it is necessary to identify in advance (and quantify) the possible aggressions against Christianity; the analysis will help him to assess the shortcomings of contemporary Christianity, the degree of maturity of the laity and the regenerative potential of pastoral action.<sup>3</sup> The Church must respond with "firm pastoral care" to the "fragile thinking" (the logic specific to contemporary Western culture seems explicitly inspired and guided by the philosophical current of "fragile thinking")<sup>4</sup> in culture.

## 1. The Prestige Crisis of “Patriotism”

CONCEIVED BY the Church as a form of extension of people’s love, unfortunately, patriotism has often become aggressive nationalism, an affirmation of extremism (and even chauvinism), as a form of expressing hatred of one’s fellow human beings. For 2,000 years, the Church has been fighting to spread the love of one’s fellow human beings in the world, regarding “nationalism” as a legitimate form of spreading love, and not a form of limiting it. So today, the Romanian people are at the opposite pole: we have reached a collective self-contempt, we are in a crisis of self-esteem, caused overwhelmingly by the inability of the economy to develop properly and in record time.

The Romanian priest carries out his pastoral activity in a cultural space with a vast Christian-Orthodox history: “Deep Romania.”<sup>5</sup> Deep Romania is a spiritual Romania, of discreet people who live through God, who have turned around their lives, who have returned to God, who have discovered the Church as a “force” capable of transfiguring their destiny. This “deep Romania” is the opposite of the “5-o’clock-news Romania.”<sup>6</sup>

*It is not necessarily folkloric, pășunist [from “pășune” = pasture], it is not only rural, but also urban, consisting of small craftsmen, small entrepreneurs, segments of the liberal professions, the priesthood, teachers. Deep Romania is the Romania of honest people who stubbornly refuse polarizations and extremisms. It is the Romania that cannot be seen, that is ignored, not presented in the news. Going toward this Romania of suffering, joys, and Christocentric freedom, we leave the horizontal plane of false dilemmas and discover what the real priorities are. Then we start from concrete realities, “in the field,” not from false priorities.<sup>7</sup>*

The Romanian spirit can be characterized—as Priest Dumitru Stăniloae said—by a balance of maximum amplitude of the “content” and a formal “elasticity.” This balance is a continuous act of consciousness and will, which is not specific to mediocrity, which, with subtlety and self-control, leads to continuous progress. The conscious and voluntary maintenance of this balance is achieved through reasonableness, and this, tempering the many extravagant tendencies, manages to maintain the collective health of character. Through it, the Romanian people have learned not to allow themselves to be enslaved by reckless passions or adventures in a passionate sense. Thus, a “moral order,” generating mental comfort, would be specific to the Romanian collective unconscious, in opposition to the individualistic West that does not sympathize with personal balance and is contrary (or indifferent) to social cohesion.

“Deep Romania” is the Romania to be found deep under the confusing asperities, conceptually described by Father Dumitru Stăniloae and secretly existing—in our opinion—in the European Romania of the third millennium. It is the resource from which the parish priest of our times can start. Father Stăniloae proposes a personalistic and liturgical conception of the cosmos, developed in the spiritual sense of Byzantium, especially that of St. Maximus the Confessor, in which the universe was enriched and defended by the people’s mutual love and the Christian liturgical spirit that conforms to the cosmic rites.

For the Romanian, the surrounding nature, the country, the whole universe was deeply personalized, being a festive familial environment, favorable to happy communion and meetings with loved ones (that is, happy and truly successful interrelationships). Contrary to this conception, Western religious thinking would focus only on “anthropological exclusivism.” That is why colonial imperialism is based on a tendency to take over a territory by force, in order to exploit it economically, thus losing the intimate connection and the innate capacity for communion with a nature that man ought to protect and elevate together with himself.

Pastoral care involves working with the fallen, degraded man, a victim of the evil in the world, and not with an idealized one. The idealized man can function as a paradigm, as a landmark of reflection, but not as a reality that is constantly embodied in everyday life. Nor should the decadent, destroyed man, totally crushed under the pressure of evil, constitute the working model, but must also be reduced to a paradigm of maximum failure, something to be avoided at all costs, the anti-pastoral model.<sup>8</sup> The priest works with a cultural “aggregate” of synthesis, the model commonly encountered in everyday life, the man waiting (consciously or not) to be spiritually re-modeled according to the Christic paradigm. The pastoral work of the priest is very important because the restoration of Romania must (and can) start (only) from the Church.

## **2. Postmodernity Comes with an Offer of Permissiveness and Anti-Authoritarianism**

**O**UR SOCIETY is marked by a so-called “new morality,” resulting from a different vision of values and the world than the traditional one, generated over several centuries of Christianity. Today, secular culture is based on the legal culture of human rights: “Not the rights of the real individual, compensated by duties, but abstract rights, elevated to an absolute status, before which there is nothing else.”<sup>9</sup> Gradually, the individual has felt liberated from his national, social, and religious affiliations.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, the predisposition to sacrifice<sup>11</sup> has been greatly attenuated, almost to the point of disappearance. The individual ends up asking with outrage: “What can my country do for me?” (not “What can I do for my country?”), as if, in the past, individuals had done too much, and now compensation is demanded, and the collectivity must be silent in front of the individual who was excessively used, instrumentalized in the past.<sup>12</sup>

So, the sense of national belonging has become enormously dulled: the individual, his rights, and his needs prevail in the individual-country relationship. The country must be in his service, not he in the service of the country.<sup>13</sup> And if the country cannot meet his needs, he leaves it and fulfills his needs in another country. Religious affiliations have also been affected by the great mutations.<sup>14</sup>

The postmodern man wants to get rid of any constraints imposed in the name of the collectivity. The new culture puts society in the service of the individual, the latter representing an insurmountable horizon.<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, this falls into the category of excesses. From one extreme to the other. If communism (with its failed modernity) tyrannized

through its obsession with collectivity, our age is no less tyrannical on account of its obsession with the individual.

Computer communication has increasingly taken the place of the classical media specific to the modern world. This metamorphosis has profoundly changed the type and quality of the culture transmitted. Christianity, born as a “religion of the word,” of the “Book” and of the historical-religious memory passed on through generations, is nowadays in contact with radically different communicative structures, which have plunged our inherited formative-pastoral capacity into a crisis. In order to be truly aware of the difficulty of acting on today’s multiple cultures, it is useful to carefully analyze the mass culture and the impact of the new forms of communication on contemporary mentalities.

Nowadays, the web space is an extremely effective means for pastoral intervention. The media have long been agents of production and transmission of mass culture that have greatly conditioned conscience, revolutionized values and mentalities, so that at first, the family, school and churches felt threatened in their traditional way of educating the younger generations.

The “computer and audio-visual” generation is deeply marked by the electronic world in which young people grow up with ease and familiarity. In fact, the audio-visual perception, the integration of the affective and the imaginary, intuition and reasoning by analogy are the fundamental characteristics of the intuitive, global, artistic “new culture,” in which “tasting” precedes “understanding,” and sometimes replaces “learning.” We are witnessing a new way of being and thinking. And in order to characterize the relations between two generations, one ascending and one descending, the mind’s eye sees two ships crossing in the distance, emitting mutually undeciphered signals, rather than the image of a traditional battle.

*This new cultural universe, in which the senses and the affectivity, the abundance of information and the fragmentation of reflection predominate, leaves adults with a sense of loss of the power of concentration and a spread of superficiality, together with increased passivity, a loss of the critical sense and reasoning they were used to.*<sup>16</sup>

The web universe can certainly be a producer of culture, but also a revealer of today’s collective consciousness with its typical values, tastes, and aspirations. Here is a new uncultivated pastoral “perimeter” and another type of civilization that challenge responsible Christians.

### 3. “Dogmatic” Concepts in Postmodernity: “Tolerance,” “Discrimination”

**A**NOTHER MANDATORY reference in postmodern culture is tolerance. Its preeminence is indisputable, non-negotiable: it is invoked in the speeches of politicians, philosophers, and teachers. It is a landmark in the press. Permissiveness, which has become an ideology, encourages the violation of all taboos. The right to revolt and blas-

pheme has become universal, it is ubiquitous, and—in addition—it has become a “moral requirement.”

*To overthrow, to change, to innovate, to challenge, these are the slogans that must be followed. It is not subversion that scandalizes, but stability, continuity. If it should survive, conservatism does not do it as a creed, but as a sin!*<sup>17</sup>

The apogee of contestation has reached a paroxysm that would have been unimaginable in the past:

*Différence is more than a right, it does not even have to be called as such. Since everything has the same value, no detail about age, sex, origin, belongingness to a country, culture or religion should hinder the project that any individual makes for his life. To differentiate<sup>18</sup> according to any criteria would mean to practice discrimination!<sup>19</sup>*

Many European states have conformed to the new culture and have turned the new “requirements” of culture into laws. This is because these tendencies, imperatives, even “intransigencies,” we might call them, are not content to “float in the air,” but impose, entail practical applications. So, certain public bodies have been set up to act in the desired direction.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Radical Mutations Have Taken Place Within the Institution of the Family

**T**HE INSTITUTION of the family has moved from the traditional family to “unconventional” forms of cohabitation. This mobility has also generated the crisis of the “traditional” family: the disappearance of the extended patriarchal family and the current quantitative predominance of mono-nuclear families (with only one child), with the perspective of uncontrolled multiplication of non-nuclear families (without any children); subsequently, there has been a massive emergence of the “single” family, a galloping increase in the rate of abortions, divorces and, in general, a high level of familial and social pathologies; In addition, urban crime rate, the ethical-formative indifference of the school (and many others) provide a framework for the axiological chaos thus created.

More and more, alliances are established between children and parents, with the “father-friend” and the “mother-friend,” who do not forbid their children anything, according to the slogan of the '60s: “It is forbidden to forbid!” Father-friends and mother-friends have established a relationship of equality with their children. Slowly but surely, the authority in the family has disappeared; in the past, conventions had the same goal: to mark the hierarchical relationship between generations.<sup>21</sup> But when it comes to education, is it possible to travel permanently by negotiation? The family has become a “kingdom” of the child-king, to whom we owe infinite “respect.” In the past, respect was due to adults, and now the relationship has been reversed.<sup>22</sup> From the family, new norms and practices have

permeated into society: etiquette has disappeared, addressing everyone by their first names and a casual dress code regardless of the situation have become widespread. The “sprawling generation” includes specimens that do not sit down, but throw themselves down, then trickle down against the back of the chair. Sprawling is the postmodern reaction to the traditional parental imperative: “Sit up straight!”<sup>23</sup>

## 5. Nonconformist Expression of Violence

**T**HERE IS NO restraint anymore, only neglect. The vocation of being a “punk” is also born in the family: aggression is trivialized. People are always on edge: behind the wheel, on the bus, in the shops, at the doctor’s. Insults are uttered for no apparent reason, and are sometimes accompanied by obscene gestures. A journalist’s conclusion: there are “savages” in suits and ties among us!<sup>24</sup> In addition, punctuality has become optional.

Previously, modernity operated the transition from agricultural civilization to the post-industrial, digital civilization. The type of “work” has changed radically. It has gone from the preeminence of agricultural work to the industrial one, to finally reach the “third sector,” specific to the computer era. These changes have had profound consequences for religiosity. Suffice it to think of what the harmonious birth and development of Christianity meant for it in the context created by a rural civilization, in syntony with nature and the cosmos. Religious art, time, liturgical worship, the need for heavenly protections against natural disasters, intellectualist theology, etc.—they are realities that have entered a deep crisis caused by the radical change of lifestyles,<sup>25</sup> specific to postmodernity.

For the European Christian, the transition from a situation of generalized pauperism to a high standard of living (which degenerated into consumerism) and the subsequent collapse of the framework of ethical and religious values involved radical mutations.

## 6. The Disappearance of the Principle of “Authority”

**T**HE SCHOOL has become a “temple” of a new pedagogy, overstating the rights of the individual and despising his duties. The adults have overwhelmingly abandoned any attempt to enforce rules and civilize the public space. A climate has prevailed in which there are no more rules: no one can define them and no one dares to mention them.<sup>26</sup> Teachers are confused because students no longer perceive their authority as more justified than their own.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, no authority relationship is accepted, “Who are you to impose on me what to do and how to behave?”—it is the students’ reaction. To forbid seems to be an attack on the person, and not an invocation of the general interest. In other words, there is a contorted mutation: it is not that one authority replaces another, but the very principle of “authority” disappears, with teachers, judges, police officers, priests, owners, etc. in its wake.<sup>28</sup>



Postmodern learning has become anti-hierarchical and non-authoritarian, compelling, seductive and instantaneous; the slogan would be, "The light of knowledge nourishes, does not oppress!" The structure of classical education was hierarchical and authoritarian, in the sense that certain visions ordered from the top had to be respected and learned. Compliance was rewarded, the rebellion of different thinking was discouraged, independent attitudes disavowed.

Postmodernity comes with a different perspective: an independent position always hides a relevant aspect, ignored by the majority; therefore, this should not be underestimated either, if we fight for an enriching holistic vision. Also, the rebellion of different thinking hides some different accents, which can be very useful in new cultural contexts: so, different thinking is not an enemy, but a friend in other situations, structurally different from the current ones.

Then, hierarchical and authoritarian thinking is one that highlights the needs of the moment, doing the thinking for us, proclaiming current priorities, but it is a corporate, inflexible thinking, which can be cumbersome, tense, unfocused on the essential in new contexts. Therefore, the new pedagogical paradigm promotes the principle of equal opportunities, an anti-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian principle. This means tolerance for the impartial ones and for those who think differently, as their thinking hides a resource that can be used in the future. Students and teachers regard each other as people, not as social statuses and roles. They are not generators and receivers of information, but together they build a science that is useful to all. Their interaction gives rise to complexity.<sup>29</sup>

This belief of today's pedagogy has made the relatively rigid structure, with a mandatory curriculum and an inflexible curricular path, to be relativized. Some knowledge can be acquired in multiple ways, through fertile debates on current issues of interest, the opinion that there are several ways and means of teaching a given topic becoming predominant, and the structure of education must be relatively flexible.

In the old paradigm, only the teacher was a "transmitter" of knowledge: the instructive-educational flow was one-way; in the new paradigm, the teacher ceases to be a "transmitter" of information, and—likewise—the student ceases to be a receiver of content. The teacher becomes more human, the teacher himself learns from the students, thus establishing reciprocity of continuous learning in the teaching process. The teacher is sometimes amazed by the insight of the students, by their intuitions, by the vanguardism of their ideas, and the students are fortified in their intuitive discoveries by the teacher's life experience, his overall vision, his emotional balance. It was often pointed out in the past that the father confessor confesses himself during the confession, that the minister sanctifies himself by ministering, that the preacher enriches himself by disseminating teachings from the height of the pulpit. And this reality is confirmed today by psycho-pedagogy.

In addition, in the new context, the belief that all knowledge must be acquired at the same pace by all, that uniformity is a universal rule, that progress must be prescribed, articulated in every detail, has entered a crisis. The focus placed on the right age for certain activities and the separation of ages has dissolved. Therefore, the new pedagogy aims at integrating the ages, being very flexible. The student is no longer automatically linked to certain topics according to his age, but what matters to a huge extent is his IQ, his life



context, the practice to which his own past has subjected him, his specific life experiences; the pace of progress in what concerns school subjects can vary greatly.

In his weekly catechesis, the priest can constantly see how true this principle is: how many believers appreciate, for example, the work *Immitatio Christi*? This work is suitable for a certain spiritual age, and if the recipient has not reached a certain spiritual age, he cannot understand the message of the book. The same is true for the Patericon. Instead, what matters to a huge extent is the thirst for spiritual advancement of the beneficiary of a catechesis.

Consequently, if the institutions or ideas that deviated from the general beliefs used to be disavowed, disapproved, stigmatized, in the new paradigm, if the deviations are in a constructive sense, they are promoted as part of the creative process.

Postmodernity favors a new type of society, a fragmented, individualistic, emotional one, seduced by the ephemeral and consumerism, exhausting itself in the immanent. These phenomena express and lead toward a type of society that is an easy prey to egocentric models, with the prominent social hegemony of economic rules, with a tendency toward the ephemeral and consumerism. The credibility of religion has been attenuated by the current consumerist model, which confines Western man to the narrow logic of two principles (“to consume more in order to produce more” and “to produce more in order to consume more”), tending to stimulate *ad infinitum* man’s material needs in order to satiate him with material goods to the point of annihilating any spiritual aspirations; thus, spiritual and religious questions are no longer asked.

Under such circumstances, it is extremely difficult to pay attention to the Christian religious discourse. Religion does not provide instant gratification, as postmodern man expects. Material well-being, on the other hand, brings about immediate bodily satisfactions.

## 7. “Mutation”—Perceived As a Value in Itself

THERE HAS also been a transition from sedentary lifestyle and “territorial fidelity” to radical, multifactorial mobility. The population has experienced such an intense multifactorial mobility (urbanism, emigration, tourism), as well as social mobility (starting from humble birth and reaching the highest social levels) that the traditional structure of the territory (the country, the city, the means of communication, the space, etc.) on which the religious (parish and diocesan) life and the traditional organization (few property owners and few educated people, many poor and illiterate) had been based for centuries have been shaken to the core.<sup>30</sup>

Postmodernity has come with a new mentality. It is generally believed that in order to make the student work, it is necessary to offer him amusement.<sup>31</sup> Boredom would be one of the reasons for students’ suffering, and therefore the cause of violence during breaks. In addition, the teachers’ “authoritarianism” would mean the humiliation of students. No constraints, only pleasure! As a result, there are no longer grades (or there are only “rigged” grades, all of the students deserving 10!). There is a tendency to bring everyone to the level of the poorest student.<sup>32</sup>

We have experienced a transition from a static, “settled,” stable world to a new world, in which “mutation” is conceived as a value “in itself.” Since today’s culture is radically oriented toward “mutation,” conceived as a value in itself, everything that used to refer to a static world (habits, social control, gerontocracy, order) is inexorably overturned by phenomena that are dynamic, such as fashion, public opinion, permissiveness, etc. Given the fact that religions are essentially entities based on a collective memory, i.e. tradition, from which they extract their prescriptions for any type of collective action (legal, artistic, ritualistic, liturgical, devotional, familial, pastoral, ecclesial), active in previous cultures (such as the rural and working class ones), we must admit that the new culture risks causing the collapse of the entire pre-existing structure (the traditional one). Pastoral care has the task of making a remedial, corrective and hallowing intervention.

## **8. Prioritizing the Person over Educational Performance**

**H**OW DO we identify the charisma that leads to the salvation to each of us? The metamorphosis of the old pedagogical paradigm has also led to a very important mutation: a transfer from efficiency, success (well quantified, carefully calibrated, and rigorously dimensioned), performance, to the person, to the human being that generates performance. In other words, the priority of the self, of personal value, of identity is proclaimed. It is not knowledge that matters, but how much a person has changed while absorbing it. The word carries energy, as does the thought. How much has certain knowledge changed a person for the better? Postmodern pedagogy is much more attentive to the person than to the information itself, emphasizing the self rather than the informational message. The content can only be declared “valuable” insofar as it substantially reshapes the person, not as an autonomous repository.

Therefore, the inflexible preoccupation with norms, with didactic strategies and intervention techniques (specific to traditional pedagogy) has been replaced by the preoccupation with the individual’s performance within the limits of his own potential. Everyone has his own charisma, talents, gifts, which must be put to work. So, the interest for testing the external limits, for exceeding the identified limits predominates. The goal is growth rather than following a once-functional methodological framework. Therefore, we suggestively call the new orientation in pedagogy beyond the norms.

The purpose of education and spiritualization is to identify in each man the hallowing charisma, a charisma that, once activated, will reshape that man’s whole future, carrying him on the paths of salvation, turning him into a hub of life (for a certain existential perimeter), involving innumerable hallowing energies in the people around the subject; salvation is not only an individual enterprise, but also a collective, community, social one. In fact, throughout its history, Orthodoxy has placed great emphasis on this truth of the communal dimension of salvation. This means that each “social plot” has an epicenter that generates holiness, grace, goodness, and this epicenter is the priest in a sacramental sense,

but in other respects it can be any of the believers who have identified their own charisma and activated it.

Postmodernity seems to be spreading a strange “prestige of delinquency.” Should the school have any other role than that of instructing, training, polishing, preparing for life? And yet, we see in students a galloping regression of civility. Thousands of frauds are practiced in everyday life (traveling without a ticket, fake medical leaves of absence, fake health cards, etc.). Delinquent behaviors have become quite common. This is because the individualistic morality of “I, and only I!” triumphs in society.<sup>33</sup>

All these mutations constitute the backbone of the psycho-emotional universe of the postmodern world in its firm distance from the previous, modern world. All need to be approached pastorally and corrected by a gentle but firm observance of the requirements of bimillennial Christian doctrine. Only a philosophical-Christian orientation of the Romanian culture can guarantee a bright future for our society.

Therefore, we hope that theological reflection will soon point out some pastoral emergencies and formulate some methodological directions in order to avoid new crises in tomorrow’s society and to guarantee an upward linear evolution, which will generate a general climate of harmony,<sup>34</sup> peace, self-esteem, collective mental comfort and economic prosperity.

## Conclusion: New Ways of Communicating Faith

**W**E HAVE a pastoral obligation to express love in a permanently new way, regardless of which paradigm we follow: modernity or postmodernity. The priest has a duty to constantly discover new ways of communicating the faith. Believers from all corners of the country, in turn, regardless of generation, must learn to discern the values in their culture. They must discover how to nourish themselves and how to nourish others within the Church, in order to reach a mature faith, corresponding to the complexity of today’s world.

The plurality of experiences gives rise to a certain pastoral wisdom about how faith should be communicated today. Talking about God effectively in our world involves gathering all pastoral experiences and using them. We communicate God indeed, when we are not limited to words only in order to express ourselves. In order to communicate the faith today, we must constantly give priority to expressing love in a new way.

The Church considers that the man it aims at and who must be helped to evolve toward his maturity and full humanity, regardless of the culture or civilization in which he was born, is a value of incomparable dignity, created in “the image and likeness” of God. He can be formed and can mature only by assimilating the absolute values proposed by the Church. The very future of man depends, above all, on the conception of himself and of his destiny that he acquires, and it is precisely at this level that we find the decisive and specific contribution of the Church.

Man is the only creature God wanted for himself. Contemporary postmodern man, the product of the germination between the culture of the Enlightenment and the remi-

niscences of medieval Christian civilization, seems to be hesitant, oppressed by his own past, anxious about his future. “His needs would be to strengthen himself in freedom, to grow in responsibility, to act in solidarity.”<sup>35</sup> Yet, this cannot be accomplished without the essential factor called “love,” which has its origin in the Church.

More than conceptual clarity, we need to stay in touch with converted lives, with existences that have been transformed by the experience of meeting God. God does not cease to speak to humanity, not only through prophets and saints, but also through changing the lives of some people, through changing the personal and communal, parish life, nourished by the fullness of life in Christ.



## Notes

1. The internet is the most surprising innovation in the field of communication technology. It can be used in a harmful manner, requiring constant vigilance on the part of the Church. It is not only about the morality of its use, but also about its completely new consequences: the loss of the “specific weight” of the information, the flattening of the messages (which are reduced to pure information), the absence of inherent reactions to network messages from those responsible, the effect of mistrust regarding interpersonal relationships. However, the enormous possibilities of the internet can undoubtedly provide significant help in spreading the Gospel, as demonstrated by some promising ecclesiastical initiatives that open up pastoral horizons for action. The question is: How can we not be present and not use the information networks whose screens fill the houses, in order to convey the values of the gospel message in this medium too? Cf. Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura, “Per una pastorale della cultura” (Rome: Città del Vaticano, 1999), 12.
2. The “global village” is a fast, anarchic, polychromatic, interconnected world which affirms its uniformity to the detriment of local cultures, promoting the mutual knowledge of geographically distant cultural and religious spaces by removing them from the anonymous regional and declaring them legitimate forms of plurality belonging to the human cultural heritage. The global village standardizes: the streets, the clothes, the TV programs, the music from the discos, the movies, the drinks; they all become similar, thus undermining and diluting local identities, which can no longer be kept “in their pure form.” The super-communication via the internet mediates the inferior problematization, often through a tragic disturbance, which comes from the encounter with the other, with the other culture, with the other religious ethos. We can speak of the phenomenon of man’s “disinsertion” from the immediate reality, and the gradual loss of the sense of objective reality. Cf. Vasile Vlad, “Nihilismul postmodern și apofatismul creștin: O încercare de dialog,” *Țabor* (Cluj-Napoca) 3, 6 (2009): 14.
3. “It would be very wrong to look at the presence of the Church in today’s world according to the medieval paradigm, even if, within the Church, some consider this perspective to be realistic and opportune. Some wonder: Don’t restoring the sense of transcendence and regaining the preeminence of the person over the structures mean a repetition of the medieval cultural-civilizational experience? The realities of the contemporary world are profoundly different. There have been acquisitions of modernity that have become irrevers-

ible, such as the pluralism of cultures and visions of life, the awareness of autonomy and the ‘secularity’ of social life, etc. These realities make impossible the cultural homogeneity typical of medieval Christianity, which was based on the coincidence between the universe of faith and the socio-political reality. Moreover, the awareness that the Church has its own nature and mission has matured to such an extent that the medieval way of perceiving Church-world relations has become obsolete.” Cf. Bartolomeo Sorge, “I cristiani nel mondo postmoderno: Presenza, assenza, mediazione?” *La Civiltà Cattolica* 134, 2, 3189 (1983): 249.

4. The preeminence of the fragment and the fragmentary over the whole and the totalizer seems to be a product of this type of thinking. This mutation is realized against the background of the imposition of “fragile thinking”, of superficial values, of precarious affiliations. All this, in contrast to the emergence of the “digital society,” which, with its “artificial intelligence,” opens new horizons towards a new and unique “strong thinking.” Today, cognitive and value logic is beyond good and evil, the logical and the illogical, because the hunger for the ephemeral and the thirst to “possess” and “experiment” have become insatiable, while at the theoretical level the “indifference culture” is taking precedence. Hence, the exasperated “permissiveness” that characterizes postmodernity, in which all values seem to be in a crisis, causing the most vulnerable categories to behave inappropriately: young people and women, as well as the educators of the previous era: the family and the school. Cf. Paul Poupard, “Fede e cultura nei mutamenti del nostro tempo,” *Il Regno–Documenti* 7 (1986): 220.
5. “Romania’s depths are amputated, especially at the top. We have some cultural ‘heights’ without any depth. Therefore, Romania is stuck on the horizontal of false dilemmas: we are told that if we do not want to unite with Rome, we must then be united with Moscow. That if we do not want the capitalism of global multinationals, we are communists. That if we no longer want communism, we must witness the demystification of our national history and the mockery of great authors. There is a constant slipping toward the extremes: either cosmopolitan, with a hybrid identity, new-age-ist, uprooted, consumerist, or illiterate, a member of the secret police, a national-communist.” Cf. “De la letargie la liturghie: Un dialog despre normalitate: Interviu realizat de Paul Siladi cu Mircea Platon,” *Tabor* 3, 1 (2009): 90.
6. 5-o’clock Romania is exactly the opposite: it is a superficial Romania, concocted by television, newspapers, a weak education system, the emigration of parents forced by economic circumstances to leave their children in order to support them. This Romania is created by the false political-economic-intellectual elite. This Romania is enslaved to passions and instincts, it is the Romania of horizontal “falls.” The priest must be the one who prepares thoroughly the re-“birth” of deep Romania. How? Mircea Platon gives us a metaphorical answer: “Romania stumbles over trifles. We live lazily, in old dilemmas, ontologically bent from the spine of dignity. We lack the courage to choose the dynamics of the paradox. We are the victims of a false choice, which we stubbornly keep contemplating, because it is horizontal; because we can recline to one side. Because we know that crucifixions (and only) crucifixions are vertical. Deep Romania is the one we received through Baptism in the Orthodox Church. It is the one we carry with us, the one we see with the corner of our eye and love with the corner of our heart. It is the edge of truth from which freedom comes. It is an icon in a corner of the room. Deep Romania is not ‘on the screen,’ but in

the ground. In the dust from which we are made, into which we will return and which is destined for Resurrection.” *Ibid.*, 91.

7. *Ibid.*
8. The Romanians’ defining traits of generosity and harmony, obtained “through extraction” from the warm environment in which they lived, have faded away, because nature has been systematically/chaotically and angrily destroyed. The environment has begun to smile crookedly, as is the greedy grin of those who have destroyed the forests, contaminated the water and polluted the air, making people, animals, and plants sick, and played “God” through genetic mutations, modifying the cultures that represent the everyday food of the Romanians. The well-known saying “The forest is the Romanian’s brother” has become devoid of any meaning and contradicted by the actions against forests taken by the postmodern Romanian. Overwhelmed by the aggressions of the new way of relating to reality (hungry, distorting, deadly), the national being has managed to survive, but it has not survived triumphantly as it ought to have happened, if the picture outlined by Priest Dumitru Stăniloae had had granite stability and disarming fidelity to reality. Cf. Nicolae Leasevici, “Adevăr și exagerare în reflecțiile despre spiritualitatea poporului român la Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae,” *Țabor* 4, 4 (2010): 14.
9. Jean Sévillia, *Corectitudinea morală: Căutăm cu disperare valori*, translated by Alina-Daniela Marinescu and Paul Marinescu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2009), 14.
10. Why did this mutation occur? There were many excesses in the past: the two world wars meant the death of tens of millions of people, taken to war in the name of the “common interest,” of the homeland, of the collectivity. Today, on certain landmark dates, the cemeteries of the unknown heroes, be they Russian or German, witness festivities in praise of the soldiers from both camps, although they killed each other. Time has healed the wounds and proved their death superfluous. Then, the collectivity asked the ultimate sacrifice from them. So today, the individual refuses to be “enlisted,” sacrificed for alleged collective needs, for the public good, for the good of others, for the good of his descendants.
11. “In fact, if there are no cognitive certainties or ontological validity of options or renunciations, what’s the point of sacrifice and involvement? If the Christian eschaton is uncertain, why not be content with an aesthetic exploitation of the present?”—the postmodern man wonders. See Piersandro Vanzan, “Quali linee e soggetti per una nuova evangelizzazione del mondo postmoderno?” *La Civiltà Cattolica* 139, 2, 3309, 4 (1988): 250.
12. We remember that, indeed, during the communist regime, the same thing happened: the individual had to constantly yield to collective interests: sacrifice for the common good, hours on end when the electricity was cut off to favor large industrial consumers, hunger in order to favor exports, to pay the foreign debt, sacrifices in order to build the People’s House, etc. The individual was constantly sacrificed for the “common good.” Later on, action was taken to dismantle private agricultural property and include it into collective agricultural cooperatives. So, in postmodernity, the individual is no longer willing to make any sacrifices on behalf of the collectivity, and expresses this unwillingness in a rebellious, totalitarian, neurotic manner.
13. Social affiliation has also been enormously “damaged.” In the 1960s, the industrialization and urbanization involved large population movements, when farmers became workers in factories, villagers became townspeople living in blocks of flats, and there was an unprecedented cultural uprooting. Thus, the “social codes” slowly disappeared. A person’s social identity became fluid. In addition, more recently, this social “lability” has been accentuated



- through continuous job mobility, through the almost perpetual “professional reconversion,” through the absence of long-term loyalty to any job. Cf. Sévillia, 27.
14. The definitive abandonment of the native village, the contact with people who live and express their faith differently, the differentiated and hyper-abundant religious offer in the urban environment, the invasion of new religious movements, religious and confessional pluralism, greatly expanded their religious offer available to the individual. The individual has a wide range of alternatives, so he chooses, discarding his religious “heritage,” i.e. the religion acquired at birth, thanks to his belonging to a certain cultural context.
  15. Sévillia, 14.
  16. Poupard, 218.
  17. *Ibid.*, 15.
  18. According to the dictionary definition, “to discriminate” means “to differentiate.” And it is “to differentiate” that has become immoral. Cf. Sévillia, 16.
  19. Hence, the situation—ridiculous for the advocates and supporters of modern culture—when a mother in Germany refused to have the sex of her son stated in the birth certificate, claiming that it is he who should choose it when he grows up! It is as if an obvious biological identity can be negotiated. So German law has complied, approving that a third possible option should exist for registration in the Registry of Civil Status. “Undifferentiated” sex—the third option.
  20. “The official transposition of this semantic and conceptual upheaval is the creation, in 2005, in France, of the High Authority Against Discrimination and for Equality” (HALDE), responsible for monitoring any discrimination related to physical appearance, age, sex, sexual orientation or origin. Having as a starting point a good abstract intention (reparation of individual injustices), this authority will develop a policy that will lead to the desire to erase any differences, which is practically impossible, and will lead to the denial of the principle of non-difference (to differentiate has become abusive!). Because “everyone deserves everything, as they wish”—this is the absolute rule! Sévillia, 16.
  21. The rules of politeness have constantly evolved: children used to be taught how to behave, when to keep silent (not to speak uninvited), to respect the elders and their superiors, or how to behave at the table.
  22. In a certain cultural environment, the word “respect” expresses a balance of power: the one who demands respect announces not that he wants to be respected, but that he has the means by which he can be respected by others. In traditional settings, it was self-evident that we owed love to our child—indefinitely more than respect—but that in the name of love you must also impose some constraints. The child is too young to know what is really useful to him, perceiving as negative everything that is somewhat uncomfortable. That is why education must help him to face the uncomfortable with a lot of courage, and not to perceive it as negative. Sévillia, 20.
  23. *Ibid.*, 28.
  24. *Ibid.*, 29.
  25. The preeminence of technology over ethics seems to be a dogma of post-industrial civilization. Postmodern reasoning postulates the principle according to which “everything that is technically possible would be morally legitimate as well.” As a result, if atomic explosions are possible, they are also legitimate (even if they cause serious imbalances in the ecosystem); if genetic manipulation (or engineering) is possible, it is also legitimate from a practical point of view (even if it can have monstrous repercussions for human beings).



In past eras of humanistic culture, the answer would have been different, because there was in the consciousness of humanity a preeminence of the being and a metaphysical thinking that prevented certain dehumanizing slips. Today, on the other hand, the scientist and the technocrat advance unhindered in their experiments, simply because they live in a culture in which metaphysics has atrophied (that is, the *forma mentis*, capable of perceiving the being beyond the phenomenological and the absolute beyond the relative, has dissolved). Cf. Vanzan, 245.

26. “What surprises us—looking at the atmosphere during a school break—is the fact that no rules have been followed for a long time. The students smoke, although smoking is forbidden, hats are no longer taken off, no one can punish a jostle or a fight! Teachers are overwhelmed by this civic decay . . . civilization is learned. It’s an endeavor that both teachers and students have given up.” Cf. Sévillia, 18.
27. After discipline has been outlawed, the reforms are also radical in terms of the content of education: the student must be the author of his own knowledge!?! However, do students have the value orientation to achieve this? Can we claim that they are already formed, rooted axiologically, when this should be the product of the pedagogical approach? A pedagogical slogan reads, “We must not train in order to pass on knowledge, but in order to teach someone how to learn!” Yes, but this kind of education has produced people who can read, but do not know what is worth reading. That is, it has dulled any sense of value, it has leveled everything while losing the criteria.
28. What is certain is that behind contemporary postmodern official pedagogy there is an ideology. Today, we seek to avoid constraints at any cost, even if the price paid for it involves giving up any selection, any form of elitism, opening the way to mediocrity. Thus, schools have become “temples” of the new pedagogical ideology, in a continuous reformulation and reformation. The problem is that before noticing the disasters or the benefits of the new positions, they are reformed further, continuously, without knowing then which decision has had a positive effect, which a negative one, because they are intertwined. Sévillia, 19.
29. Here, we can highlight an enriching nuance for both Orthodoxy and Protestantism, born (or made visible) after centuries of controversy: Orthodoxy has always stated (through elementary catechisms) that three things are necessary for salvation: grace, faith and good deeds, while Protestantism has emphasized *ad nauseam* the principle of “sola fide,” only the faith is sufficient, for it will bring grace. The current reconciling position is that good deeds are necessary because they reshape a heart, that is, they radically change a man’s inner being; they are not to be taken separately from man, as a force that would press God to save someone because they have accumulated good deeds. Obviously, they cannot become an instrument to oppress, to coerce God. However,—and we ask from the classical perspective of Protestantism—who can restore himself inwardly, renew himself, be filled with love, without good deeds? This is how this nuance has settled a centuries-old interfaith conflict, revealing that both denominations were right in a sense when they maintained a doctrinal truth, but also that their positions met the needs of a particular historical and cultural, axiological and moral context.
30. Silvano Buralassi, “Evangelizzare la cultura: utopia o realtà possibile?” *Aggiornamenti sociali* 49, 6 (1998): 487.

31. “Slowly but surely, spelling has been sacrificed. It has been “baptized,” pejoratively described as a “random method of writing,” which is a clear proof of sovereign indiscipline and lack of any vigilance in the written presentation of ideas.
32. In France, one-third of fifth-graders cannot read and count. Following a dictation test based on the 1970 correction criteria, 56% of high school students under examination obtained 0 (zero) points in 2006. Cf. Sévillia, 19.
33. The culture of the Enlightenment believed that man had the inner resources to enable him to act according to the principle of love, without resorting to religion, without appealing to God. However, the Church warns that this claim of rationalist humanism has been explicitly refuted by the events of the last centuries. In the age of secularization, trusting exclusively in his own strength and refusing any dependence on God, man—more so now than in the past—has become a slave to his lowest and most ferocious instincts, outlining the physiognomy of that being called “homo brutalis” by philosophers. Man, renouncing the principles of reason, has allowed himself to be tyrannized by the passions of pleasure, power, wealth, domination, aggression, and violence. Cf. Burgalassi, 477.
34. Therefore, the overall picture of today’s world is a mosaic. The priest is responsible before God for a certain “plot,” that is, for the parish for which he was ordained, and not for the whole ensemble. As a result, he must focus all his attention on knowing the cultural universe specific to his own parish, which, in the countryside, overlaps with a village or a locality. The first duty of the priest is, therefore, to know the local culture of his parish. After fulfilling this first task, he has to do a corrective reading of reality, i.e. to make a selection between the values proclaimed at the local level and the pseudo-values that dominate in the local public space: he must eliminate prejudices, create an increasingly deeper attachment to Christian values, strive for the Christian vision of the world and life to become dominant in his parish. He works with an already existing cultural environment in his parish, which can be very toxic to spiritual life or, on the contrary, it can be beneficial to its development.
35. Sorge, 249.

### **Abstract**

#### **Modernity versus Postmodernity in a Local-Regional Variant: Pastoral Reflection Paradigms**

Our research is intended to be an exercise in lucidity and a plea for true values, the only ones that can bring peace, harmony, and prosperity to contemporary society. The transfer from modernity to postmodernity has also been achieved in the Romanian space of life and culture, and the duty of the Church is to demonstrate its roots in the present, when it comes to pastoral interventions, and to exercise its ability to guide the culture and civilization of our time in the direction desired by God.

### **Keywords**

postmodern mutations, permissiveness and anti-authoritarianism, tolerance, hypertrophy of revolt, pastoral paradigms, late modernity

# The Romanian Village between Idealization and Reality

## And Yet Eternity May No Longer Be Born (Just) in the Village

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† IGNATIE TRIF

**I**CAN well imagine that until about one hundred years ago, the Romanian villages must have in fact represented for people of every age something that today they still mean only for children. Surely, following the direct and indirect deforming contact with the civilization of the time, the Romanian village has also departed itself, sometimes quite foolishly, from the circumscribing definition we are attempting here. It is also equally true that in all Romanian regions one can still find today villages which remind us, in their spiritual structure, of the “village idea.” The “village idea” is the village that considers itself “the center of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

*The idea that eternity was born in the village is a well-liked saying for the people prefer to replace thinking with an interjection. There is indeed a village metaphysics, but that is something else. Ant yet metaphysics was born “in the city.” The village, which like every village, has an axis of the world in itself, has a cosmic center in the center of it where the village’s hearth and home is formed, where the church and the cemetery is; that will no longer exist in traditional, legitimized and creative forms and there would probably be some peripheral varieties favoured, more or less, by private commerce and the easy ways brought about by technology and thus we may also see in villages disco and sexy clubs, as we have . . . in Bucharest, pubs, where we could have whiskey instead of traditional plum spirit, which is not progress in any way. However, unfortunately the village is disappearing.<sup>2</sup>*

*The loss of the peasant civilization is no less serious than the loss of the national language.<sup>3</sup>*

As regards the discourse about the Romanian village, there are at least two major tendencies, each of them being in a process proper to low and high tide: “the village idea,” to use Lucian Blaga’s phrase, and the “real village.”

There was a time in the diachronic history of the Romanian people when the “village idea” had won the day and it had partial or quasi total correspondence with the “real village.” In fact, the “village idea,” the one idealised, imagined, not in the sense that it had not existed, but in the sense that it is an elaborate construct of the sharp thinking

of philosophers or writers, has its starting point, at least supposedly, in the knowledge gained through sophisticated sociological investigations and inquires of the “real village,” which gave birth to the third type of village, the “ethnographic village.” Today’s world trend, which applies ideology to everything, tries to discredit, almost through all possible means, the “village idea” and to overestimate the benefits of urbanization, which, we must firstly say, is not necessarily the synonym of hell. Excessive ideology leads to troublesome polarizations: the village is paradise and the city is hell, village means communion and city anonymity, the village is identity whilst the city only becomes the symbol of otherness, the village is the “stylistic matrix” of faith whilst the city becomes the place of generalised apostasy, the village is associated with calm, with the time that does not move,<sup>4</sup> whilst the city is the environment proper to perpetual movement, which had transformed the time in a preference for all that is ephemeral, the village is dying whilst the city beams with life and is blossoming. In short, an insurmountable conflict is installed between the idealized “beauty” of the village and the concrete “ugliness” of the city, a “class war” between rural and urban in the sense that the latter is sabotaging, “intelligently” and “consistently,” the former, the result being the ingurgitation of the village by the great dragon of the city.

I consider that the wisest thing is to get out of this useless and dizzying ideological whirlpool.<sup>5</sup> I believe the truth lies elsewhere: the Romanian village had been profoundly mutilated by communism, which in the words of Father André Scrima is “the Gospel of God’s inexistence” and “the greatest catechism of darkness (to this day).”<sup>6</sup> This mutilation had been carried out in such a deceiving way that we do not realize its fatal and lethal consequences. One of those is the transformation of faith into superstition and of the Romanian peasant into a “husbandry worker.”<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, those consequences had become implacable for some peasants and villages for whom they acquired the value of a Sisyphus destiny.

## **“Eternity Was Born in the Village”: “Immovable” Temporality**

**W**E MUST be (a little bit) disconnected from reality to preach with such enthusiasm the Blagian aphorism “eternity was born in the village” without sensing the past tense of the verb. I do not think that the sense of this addition connotes a reference to the fact that intrinsically and naturally the rural life is saturated by special metaphysical experiences or exceptional spiritual elevations. The sense ought to be sought out elsewhere.

As a passing remark, according to literary criticism, Lucian Blaga cannot even be included in the lot of the “Sămănătoriști,”<sup>8</sup> whose undoubtedly emblematic representative was N. Iorga, nor among the Poporaniști,<sup>9</sup> whose acknowledged exponent was Constantin Stere, but he must be included among the “great writers” of modernism.<sup>10</sup>

As we could infer from the context, the phrase “eternity was born in the village” does rather connote a subjective perception of time, namely that in the village everything is

governed without much ado. Nothing enters under the urging burden of trepidation. Everything is consumed in slow motion without the agitation proper to urban time.<sup>11</sup> In the universe of the village, the time becomes the eon that St. Maximus the Confessor talks about: “the age or eon is a motionless time,” or to put it in the majestic exegesis of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, “the eon is the eternity filled with the experiences of time or the time filled with eternity.”<sup>12</sup>

As such, this “eternity” is, in fact, a temporality unaffected by immediate and efficient functionality—the hallmark of the consumerist society—a temporality that “also signifies the perception of the relation between the time of action and the time of flourishing.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, the time is not man’s enemy but a duration of patience and of love, “the interval between God’s call addressed to our love and our answer to God’s love. It is the time of man’s response.”<sup>14</sup> We are not sure if this is what Lucian Blaga understood by the expression “eternity was born in the village,” but we have the certainty that the peasant (still) experiences the time in this fashion. The peasant has the exercise of awaiting an answer either if we speak about the communion with his fellow villagers or about the harvest or indeed when it comes to prayer or one’s faith relationship with God, or when learning a trade, or regarding the dying of a wish, or when losing a loved one, or when catching a glimpse of a success, or when lives within the blessed cycle of Christian feasts or when it is about one’s family life. As a result, we are sure that the peasant dies with the disappearance of this culture of awaiting an answer without useless and redundant interrogations, without forcing the appearance of a premature and weary result, without the wish to obtain superficial and short-lived experiences. Now a fundamental question is posed, which is meant to snatch us from an idyllic perspective of the village—is the horizon of the universe of the village still traversed by the spirit of an intelligent and full of vitality anticipation, which is neither stupid nor lethargic by any means? Is it not however that the world of the village is condemned to a slowness generating poverty and precarious education as well as a moral decline through the abyss of vices? One can find an eloquent answer in the words of Patriarch Daniel: “Today, the Romanian village is somehow crucified *between a nostalgic idealization and abandonment in real terms, between traditional identity and precarious survival.*”<sup>15</sup> It follows that the Blagian “eternity” has metamorphosed under the vicissitudes of history under the pressurized “moment” of moral, and more especially, material survival. The actual needs of the Romanian peasant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have catapulted him or her under the millwheel of the feeling that he or she is abandoned and derided by those who sing permanently his or her requiem.

### Towards a “Post-Peasant Society”?<sup>16</sup>

**T**HE WORD among the anthropologists is that the “peasant is dead.”<sup>17</sup> Others tell us that it is not possible for the peasant to die as long as death had been “abolished” by Christ’s resurrection.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that the peasant civilization is on the course of extinction or that the Romanian peasant is rather a “survivor” than a defunct person.

Unfortunately it is quite difficult to still speak about the presence of a real and authentic peasant life in our villages, identified through a theocentric vision of existence and a special relation with the cosmos and the environment. There are multiple causes. I will only examine two of those: a) the weakening of the moral character and b) the state's premeditated neglect of the village.

Many Romanian villages are depopulated or on the way of desertification from a demographic point of view. The land is not worked. There are deserted houses, a fact that coincides with the extinction of peasant life. Faith is robustly sabotaged by religious lethargy or superstition, which tend to become the center of the way that spiritual life is conceived. In the past, the church and the public house were

*the two gathering centers of the village, where the personality of the individual is dissolved in that of the group, where ideas and collective representations were born, where mental interaction finds not only a most favourable framework, but also the safest one, from a repetition point of view (frequenting the Church happened at least weekly and the bar perhaps daily).<sup>19</sup>*

Despite that, today it seems that the public house has a monopoly on the presence of the inhabitants of a village, including on Sundays and feast days.

God and the traditional values, which constituted the centrality of peasant life, have today become marginal, being swollen or eliminated by vices and religious ignorance. Any form of distancing from God and spiritual life contains implicitly an inconsideration of the land as source of feeding and material dependence, understood as the Creator's gifts for his people. Therefore, the thinning of the spiritual character in the rural environment is directly proportional with the volatilization of the peasant civilization.

Despite the fact that thirty years have passed since the fall of the Iron Curtain of communism, we are guilty of the same reflexes which the "red regime" had towards the rural world: the village does not represent a priority for public investment. It should be left in disarray or if it recovers and it seemingly prospers that is accomplished in a parasitic way and only because it has the lack of being geographically positioned in the proximity of a big city. If not, it continues to be a place of poverty, of educational abandonment, of an increasing number of divorces and of children born outside religious marriage.

The mass migration of rural inhabitants to cities is a clear sign that the roots are no longer stable. Those are shattered or uprooted by the vicissitudes of the times and the precarious state of the spiritual and economic life. Because of that, the peasant does no longer feel bound to the land and is not in love with the tranquillity of the skies and of the earth, but is attracted by blocks of concrete and the buzz of urban agglomerations, which paradoxically provide an inner balance induced by financial stability. Hence from a being oriented spiritually and vertically in the materiality of the world, the peasant becomes a biological entity hypnotized by a horizontal materiality lacking a spiritual garment.

The splitting between urban and rural is also an avatar of the communist totalitarian class war. The obsession with a forced urbanization had as a real direct consequence



the instauration of a depreciation and inconsiderate attitude for the peasant world and implicitly for the peasant. Probably, because of that, current ways of speaking record negative and contemptuous connotations of expressions such as “oi, you peasant” or “you are a stupid peasant.” The rural world is associated with moral decadence and a major lag in relation to the technological advances specific to the industrial and digital époque of the civilised world.

The solution to get out from this regrettable peasant metamorphosis is to attempt a spiritual renewal of the horizon of the peasant world by returning to a life centred on God and the values of the tradition as well as by an urgent implementation of a legislative package giving priority to the economic environment of the rural world. If we do not act concretely in this regard, the words of the ethnologist Șerban Anghelescu may become prophetic:

*Ideologically supra-dimensional, miserable and innocent, an illiterate savant, a poor metaphysician, a gold producer martyr, land bound, with a heavenly soul, a living sacrifice that unanimously bears the country on his or her back, our common ancestry, an ignored deity, an innocent drunkard, a debauched who observes the old world order, the eternal ancestor and child of ours, we hold his or her hand and teach him or her to write, to read, to look after his livestock, to vote as he or she should, to not be magical, to forget myths and yet still tell us stories, an innocent victim from whose body we feed, because the land is him or her, the wheat came from his or her sweat and blood, a Christ a little bit pagan, the nations' eternal soul, unalterable, identical with oneself and yet changing with the first blow of wind, pure as a tear and quickly tempted by bad people, a Latin who lost to the Dacians or a Dacian led by Latins, a Pelasgian made a Turk, a candid barbarian, a harsh gentleness, a spring hidden to oneself, quicker dead than alive, created by us from top to bottom, from hair to nail, a mirror we created to show us the face and the back, we are the Romanian peasant, ploughmen and shepherds of fantasies.<sup>20</sup>*

## **The Village, “an Utopian Otherness” for City Dwellers:<sup>21</sup>**

### **The City Peasant and the Peasant City Dweller**

**A**NY IDEOLOGY has nostalgia as a surviving ingredient from which utopia is born accordingly. The latter forces permanently the territory of correlation. This is how we arrived at the formation of a rural correspondence with things specific to the urban. In this sense, it is worth bringing to attention a small but eloquent example:

*Even today the country life is extended producing honeycombs in the city's blocks of flats. One can see small gardens with flowers or vegetables in front or at the back of blocks (and even hen or pig houses). Here and there, a feeble grapevine climbs on the exasperated greyish of buildings, coming out from the fief of an apartment so that in the autumn the absence of*



*a single ripped bunch of grapes, guarded until then as the apple of one's eye, could trigger a big scandal, especially between the neighbours of upper floors. The interior stairs of blocks, someone wrote, is the vertical correspondent of the once upon a time village lane. The time when the sky was the only cinema of humans was long forgotten and forests of TV aerials have invaded the skies of the city. The suspended circular tower, transparent (or not), tower of glory and observation point, as a family good, the balcony is the old wooden crate from the front of the gate and the taller brother of the country house porch. The balcony is either a small animals farm, a dry room or a car garage, here are aligned the jars with pickled vegetables and the onion and garlic strings, here wine and spirits are made, here gossip takes place, a game of cards and gammon is thrown, the politics of the country is done on the balcony, governments rise and fall, here in the balcony, not far from the ground level, but also neither close to heaven, a spark from the "meadow of Iocan"<sup>22</sup> has landed.<sup>23</sup>*

The above text speaks plainly about the nostalgia (legitimized or not) of the peasant, who was forced to move to the city, witnessing to the physical death as well as to the oneiric resurrection of his or her village in their soul. It is a way of urban ruralization, that is, the real peasant becomes a city dweller in the spirit or a city peasant. This metamorphosis is possible without tainting ideologically the conception of death with Romanians as death, according to a British journalist in love with Romania, "is lived more beautifully by the Romanians."<sup>24</sup> Perhaps in the framework of this logic we may wish any kind of death, including that of the village or of the peasant, to be a cosmetic one, eliminating any kind of tragedy or dramatization from its content. It is the farce which the grave diggers of the Romanian village managed to set in motion, the assistants of the red devil. We believe that this urbanization of the Romanian peasant was also possible due to the fact that in the collective memory that certain characteristic need of the urban had won, which could be expressed synthetically as follows: "to be different from the others."<sup>25</sup> That is a tyranny of otherness over specificity.

The post-December 1989 period places us in front of a change of direction: the city inhabitants fall irremediably in love with the world and the peace of the village. No matter how much the city dwellers would wish to metabolize the spirit of peasant civilization, even if they move into the village they will only be at best ruralized locals. The fact that one wears popular costumes, eats organic, lives on minimal means, away from the benefits of the industrial or digital technology, cannot automatically transform us in authentic peasants. Speaking in today's language, I would dare to say that a city inhabitant moving to a village is a disguised peasant, who rather adopts a "lifestyle"<sup>26</sup> than plunging into the heart of the peasant civilization.

We cannot ever understand the beauty and depth of the peasant world without the spirituality and values in which the peasant, unadulterated by vices or the malady of some ideology, believes. It is a terminology contradiction to speak about atheist peasants. If they exist, it is clear that they have been poisoned by communism, altering their conscience and atrophying their innate thirst for the transcendental heaven. Consequently, not the urbanized peasant nor the ruralised city dweller could save the Romanian village, but the real love of peasants, which could be translated into an effort of

spiritual renewal, of re-centring the evangelical values and of communion with nature devoid of ecological euphoria.

The Romanian peasant sees God's presence and protection in all things. He prays to God to keep and comfort his livestock, in which he also senses a feeling. The peasant sees God in the mystery of nature. A beautiful landscape is a true paradise for the peasant. It is said in the Miorița (The little ewe) ballad: "Near a low foothill / At Heaven's doorsill." In the forms of peasant art, a young man inscribes the spinning wheel of his beloved and a husbandry man the gate wooden pillar and his tools with drawings which do not imitate nature, but they mirror its transfiguration. The peasant feels the people are so close to God, to the Mother of God, so that he or she uses for them diminutives such as "cutie God," "God's Mummy." This is a sign of a warm humanization.<sup>27</sup>

## **The Solution? The Tabor of Transfiguration and the Jerusalem of Pentecost**

**I**T IS a truism that neither the idealisation of the village nor the demonizing of the urban will save the peasant civilization. If we witness a massive migration from villages to cities, it is the time to focus more intensely the attention of clergy on the spiritual aspects of our world. The impregnation of the urban horizon with the evangelical spirit will have as one of the possible consequences the awakening of a special love for the peasant and the village.

The event of the Transfiguration took place on the mountain, the symbol of retreat, a place of peace, of the earth being orientated towards heaven, a place of perspective, of effort, of decoupling from the buzz proper to the world at the foot of the mountain. All witnesses present at the revelation of Christ as Light divine and uncreated have been changed or transfigured into capable beings able to partake of the uncreated divine energies so that they themselves may become people of light: "In Thy light we shall see light" (Psalm 35:9, the Septuagint).

The event of Pentecost or of the Descent of the Holy Spirit took place in the ambient of a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic city, in the Jerusalem of diversity and of difference. The Holy Spirit descends on the apostles as a roar and in the shape of tongues of fire to unify those who are so diverse culturally, ethnically and linguistically. Hence, the city could be unified through the Pentecost of the Spirit, the grantor of unity and communion. Only the junction between Tabor, as symbol of peace and retreat, which is so arduously sought out by city dwellers, and the city of Jerusalem, as a symbol of diversity, although not an ideologized one, but concrete and personal, not a group one, could save the village of tranquillity and of retreat through transfiguration, and the pluralistic city through unification and not uniformity. Thus, in order to resurrect the village needs the spirit of transfiguration of the peasant world, and the city, in order to be complementary and not in conflict with the rural, needs unification and communion.

Two words, two realities, capable of doing something concrete for the Romanian village: the transfiguration of mentalities (economic, cultural, spiritual) through the elimi-

nation of prejudices about peasant civilisation and the unification of contrasts through sedating any attempt at ideologizing diversity as a lethal weapon for natural specificity (biological, ethnic, linguistic and religious).

The transfiguration of otherness and the unification of diversity constitute the surviving breather of the postmodern world in which, unfortunately, the stress falls on group interests and not on that of the person or of the community as a reality formed by unique and unrepeatable persons.



## Notes

1. Lucian Blaga, "Elogiul satului românesc: Discurs rostit la 5 iunie 1937 în ședință solemnă, cu răspunsul lui I. Petrovici" (Bucharest: Monitorul Oficial; Depozitul General și Imprimeriile Statului; Cartea Românească; Imprimeria Națională, 1937), 9.
2. Alexandru Paleologu, "Azi nu mai există țărani," *Transilvania* (Sibiu), new ser., 24, 3–4 (1994): 68.
3. Paul H. Stahl, "Prezentare," in Henri H. Stahl, *Povestiri din satele de altădată*, with illustrations and commentaries by Paul H. Stahl (Bucharest: Nemira, 1999), 8.
4. Lucian Blaga, "Sufletul satului," in *Opera poetică*, foreword by Eugen Simion and George Gană, edited by George Gană and Dorli Blaga, foreword by George Gană (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), 116: "Little girl, put your hands on my knees. / Eternity I believe was born in a village. / Here every thought is slower and your heart throbs at a quieter pace, / as if beating not in your chest / but deep in the earth somewhere" (translation adapted from Leonard Druso and Romanian Poetry websites).
5. Alain Besançon, *Nenorocirea secolului: Despre comunism, nazism și unicitatea "Șoah"-ului*, translated by Mona Antohi (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 37: "You cannot stay intelligent under the empire of ideology."
6. André Scrima, *Ortodoxia și încercarea comunismului*, edited by Vlad Alexandrescu, translated by Vlad Alexandrescu, Lucian Petrescu, and Miruna Tătaru-Cazaban (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2008), 158.
7. <https://jurnalspiritual.eu/vintila-mihailescu-satul-romanesc-imaginar-cunoastere-si-politica/>, accessed 10 March 2021: "Having inherited the Bolshevik distrust of peasants, it started by uprooting peasantry from villages leaving those without their means of production and it continued by trying to mould the peasants into the homogenous mass of 'the working people.' Approximately three million people were pushed/ attracted into cities and industry. The transformation of peasants into proletariat had only been partially successful as those often organised themselves into what I like to term 'diffuse husbandry,' that is, whilst a part of husbandry remained stable in the village another worked or moved into the city, but keeping their relationships and redistributing the work, resources and consume, let alone counting the emotional support. Through what Gerald W. Creed names 'the domestication of industry,' a part of the urban and industrial resources promoted by communism against peasantry was thus returned to the village and used in the interest of the husbandry. The result was what sociology named the 'peasant worker' or 'the husbandry worker,' as I personally prefer to call him or her. The peasant society, in

- the proper sense of the term, started its process of dissipation.” Cf. Vintilă Mihăilescu, “Principiul gospodăriei,” in *Etnogeneză și țuică* (Iași: Polirom, 2018), 29–33.
8. “Sămănătorism” was a literary current at the beginning of the twentieth century which had as its goal the cultural education of peasants and the cultivation of the lasting values of the past, which could be found especially in the world of the Romanian village. The name of the literary current comes from the magazine of this movement, *Sămănătorul* (The Sower), which was published between 1901 and 1910.
  9. “Poporanism” was a social and literary current which proposed an approach that valued a realistic, non-polished, vision of the Romanian village. It was against any tendency to idolise the Romanian village. The “poporanist” ideas were published in the magazine *Viața românească* (Romanian Life).
  10. Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române: 5 secole de literatură* (Pitești: Paralela 45, 2008), 677–686.
  11. Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua: Tălcuiri ale unor locuri cu multe și adânci înțelesuri din Sfinții Dionisie Areopagitul și Grigorie Teologul*, translated, introduction and notes by Dumitru Stăniloae (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1983), 61.
  12. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2010), 349.
  13. † Daniel [Ciobotea], *Satul românesc: Izvor de spiritualitate și cultură populară* (Bucharest: Basilica, 2019), 51.
  14. Dumitru Stăniloae and M.-A. Costa de Beauregard, *Mica dogmatică vorbită: Dialoguri la Cernica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, translated by Maria-Cornelia Ică Jr. (Sibiu: Deisis, 2000), 173.
  15. † Daniel, 54.
  16. Vintilă Mihăilescu, *Scutecel națiunii și hainele împăratului: Note de antropologie publică*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 196.
  17. *Ibid.*: “Since I started to work in the museum with this name, I repeated as many times as in as many interviews that ‘the peasant is dead’ that I started to suspect myself of necrophilia.”
  18. Costion Nicolescu, “Satul meu. Țăranii mei,” *Transilvania*, new ser., 24, 3–4 (1994): 133: “The peasant has died, but that had been said even before about God. How could he or she died as death had been abolished? The peasant is eternal if we are not to measure everything only by the terrestrial units of measurement. He or she only ‘moves’ in another place. There are still peasants and peasants are still being born. This is not triumphalism, it is a belief and like any strong belief it transcends any science and any calculations.”
  19. E. Constantiniu, “Aspecte ale mentalului colectiv sătesc în societatea medievală românească,” *Studii și materiale de istorie medie* (Bucharest) 7 (1974): 83.
  20. Șerban Anghelescu, *Farmecul discret al etnologiei: Eseuri* (Bucharest: Tracus Arte, 2013), 182.
  21. *Ibid.*, 90.
  22. The “Meadow of Iocan” from a novel (*Moromeții*, 1955) by the writer Marin Preda was a real village agora, where people gathered daily to get information and exchange opinions.
  23. Ion Mircea, “Țăranul român sau cât e, totuși, ceasul în istorie,” *Transilvania*, new ser., 24, 3–4 (1994): 7–8.

24. Mihăilescu, *Scutecele națiunii*, 189: “Some years ago, my mum asked me where I wanted to be buried. Without too much thinking, I perplexed her with my answer: ‘In Romania.’ Death is experienced more beautifully by Romanians.”
25. Vintilă Mihăilescu, “Două sate în tranziție: Tipuri strategice dominante în lumea rurală,” *Revista de cercetări sociale* (Bucharest) 3, 3 (1996): 11.
26. Mirel Bănică, “Gânduri despre satul românesc: Schimbare, transformare, adaptare,” *Horreb: Revistă anuală de spiritualitate și actualitate* (Huși) 1 (2019): 33: “We no longer figure into a line of family ‘succession,’ but it is rather about the result of a life choice linked to a lifestyle change (something between ‘conversion’ to nature and ‘personal choice,’ a gesture somehow subscribing to the secularized logic of the modern world.”
27. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Opere complete*, vol. 9, *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului român* (Bucharest: Basilica, 2018), 164–165.

### Abstract

#### The Romanian Village between Idealization and Reality: And Yet Eternity May No Longer Be Born (Just) in the Village

The present article endeavours to treat, in a comparative style, two ways of positioning oneself towards the discourse about the Romanian village: one idyllic (“the village idea”) and the other realistic (the real village). The inflation of the “village idea” has inevitably led to the ignorance of the concrete problems with which the “real village” is confronted. Any form of dichotomy between the two visions is counterproductive. The way out of this ideological whirlpool could become possible only if we take into account the spiritual dimension of the peasant civilisation as well as the need to implement some intelligent public policies to redress the Romanian village. The rural and the urban must not be thought of in a Manichean way, but complementarily. The salvation of the Romanian village from disappearance could only be ensured if we pay heed to two fundamental aspects: the spiritual renewal of the rural and of the urban coupled with a heightened attention from state authorities in regard to the real and concrete problems of the village. Any other approach which ignores this perspective risks remaining only in the territory of senseless ideology. We must avoid free idealization as well as the tendency to ideologically “set alight” the village. The only and unique modality of saving the Romanian peasant and the village is to discover again the *culture of expectation* as the duration of patience and love so characteristic to the peasant civilisation—patience as otherness and love as union. It is only in this way that the village and the city will reciprocally discover the joy of finding out that the spiritual, cultural and economical interdependence constitute the most appropriate ambient of survival for both of them.

### Keywords

Romanian village, communism, migration, post-peasant society, peasant civilization

# “Christian Culture” and the Contemporary Romanian Social Life

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THE KEY term of this paper, as reflected in the title, is “Christian culture.” The way one understands the concept determines a specific perspective. Despite its apparent clarity, the interpretation given by contemporary analysts may lead us to specific conclusions as a diagnosis of the present, as well as a prospect for the future. There are two main paradigms one can easily identify. A first one describes Christian culture as one of the multiple forms of culture, accepted as part of a legacy, individual as well as communitarian, manifested in specific circles (generally ecclesiastical, or connected with them), studied together with some other cultures. A second one, proclaimed and supported for a long time in European history, describes culture in terms of Christianity, recognizing the role of the Gospel in the construction of the cultural and social life. This second perspective is less accepted and even banned in contemporary times.

## Culture, a Possible Semantics

FOR A CLEAR analysis, it is necessary to resort to the dictionary in search of the meaning of “culture.” Firstly, the *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the concept as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.” In the *Romanian Explanatory Dictionary*, a more detailed definition is provided:

*the totality of material and spiritual values created by humankind and the necessary institutions for the communication of these values; possessing a wide range of knowledge in various fields; a set of activities and patterns of behavior specific to a given social group, transmissible through education.*

The first definition seems to have a limited application to a specific group of people, proposing therefore a quite subjective and variable content of culture. The latter enlarges its relevance and application to wider area, indicating a specific common substance for culture in its diversity, based on human life in general.

Three levels are present in the definition of culture given above, illustrating its complex and extensive application. Firstly, it points to a set of values gathered over time,



transferred from one generation to another. Thus, it reflects a dynamic existence, called tradition, as a depository, not in an archaeological sense, but connected with life itself in its dynamic evolution. It also reflects the institutions established in order to apply it. This first level has a retrospective-synthesizing character. The key expression here is “communitarian dimension.” The second level refers to an individual assumption of this set of values, as personal and permanent becoming, within and conditioned by them, in a specific context, geographical and historical, and in a dialogical variant with the society to which it belongs and which generates it. The third level corresponds to its transmission by means of education, which becomes a way of communicating culture. It is here that one may find its pedagogical component.

I will argue that there are mainly two components of culture: a substance—a nucleus, a set of founding values, a common substrate—and its manifestations, which occur in various areas of human life (arts, literature, science etc.). There is a mutual dynamics between the core of culture and its fields of manifestation, an interaction of various intensities, which may, however, escalate into conflicts, even destructive competitions. The obvious and immediate effect could be the change, even the reversal of roles, to the point of isolating areas that could have once played a founding role. This way, what was once generally accepted, playing a central role, could today very well acquire niche value or even be banned. The core area seems to be disputed and insecure.

This rapid, unpredictable and profound change is quite obvious in today’s society. The various fields of culture meet and carry out a dialogue, but not always from equal positions. That is why the encounter between them and the changes that this situation implies, when they do not occur organically, but forcibly, might turn into cultural and religious aggression. This can take place starting from a reductive understanding of what culture means—“as an abstract reality, as a mental-intellectual structure, as a kind of independent mechanism from which certain elements, certain concepts can be extrapolated, certain values, certain meanings to replace them with others.”<sup>1</sup> In these situations, we can speak about real cultural dramas, which may also cause essential changes in anthropology.<sup>2</sup> This occurred in the totalitarian regimes, and yet the postmodern capitalist regimes are no strangers to this danger.

### **Christian Culture and the “Recent Man”<sup>3</sup>**

**R**EGARDING THE addition of “Christian” to culture, I will argue the second position evoked in the introduction. “Christian culture” is not simply a specific culture, among various other types, but it is a fundamental component of the large concept of culture, visible or diffuse (in contemporary terms, secularized forms).

For a long time in history, Christianity has been referred to as a substance of culture, sometimes manifesting its original role in a destructive hegemonic form, at least in certain specific geographies and theologies. Different sectors of culture reflected a certain path depending on the founding value of the Gospel. This is true for the arts, education, printing, philosophy, music and so on. But this relationship gradually changes with the



advent of modernity. The Christian message loses its central place and becomes one of its forms of manifestation. This direction finds its maximum development in contemporaneity, when religion seems to be isolated from the public to the private space (or virtual space, as a new category), a reality described by the concept "privatization of faith."<sup>4</sup> Culture must be "liberated" from the religious element. This is the thesis often proclaimed in the public space. The construction of such a vision seems to be based on an "ungrateful reaction" to the founding role of Christianity and an intentional amnesia underpinning the "recent man," without memory and tradition, religious or cultural, in general. In this regard, I will quote V. Ivanov, who describes this tendency and identifies certain effects that this change might have:

*Forgetting tries to organize itself on the basis of radical denial of spirituality, at a material level, counterfeiting true culture, which is the organization of spiritual memory. After all, those who predict oblivion undermine religion, while, on the other hand, the destroyers of religion are, inevitably, in terms of culture, iconoclasts and falsifiers.<sup>5</sup>*

It is not my intention to adopt an offensive or even a defensive attitude, but rather to argue the precarious assumption of the Gospel in social life, coming closely to the Romanian area. I will make a short 'methodological' retrospective commencing from this premise—one might find in history a cultural signification of theology and, the other way round, a theological signification of culture. In other words, one might find a cultural conditioning of theology and a cultural role of theology. That is the presence of a spiritual perspective upon world and life, in general, given by the "divine light," which used to give "the clarity of the mind." Early modernity had this very idea in the mind when describing the transformation as "Enlightenment" and "Renaissance," both originally Christian concepts. It is also true that at that very stage culture and spirituality seem to have divorced, following different paths.

The Gospel had at the core of its substance the resurrection of Christ (the Son of God), a dogma that used to be an epistemology of life and living, generating a specific culture, which we referred to as "Christian culture." In its original meaning, this teaching described a methodology on two levels—cataphatic and apophatic—that is, something which can be understood and expressed and something mysterious, accessible to be experienced and less to be communicated. World and life meant facts, but also mystery, natural revelation and its correspondent knowledge and superrational revelation (spiritual) and its specific form of knowledge. Later on, the declaration of God's death, while making the cross the final state, had concrete repercussions in culture. The Author disappeared, so the mind consecrated gods instead of Him, by the fear of the voids, manifested in different atheistic ideologies. In this time, an antitheological perspective was generated, based on the transformation of God's identity—"I am Who I am" (Gen. 3:15) in "I am Who I am not," by declaring God's death.

Paradoxically, even this antitheology bases itself on a theological (Christian) perspective, by means of antithesis. It is a semantic condition given by the "obsession with sense." At this very level, one can grasp the logocentric character of culture, based on the cataphatic dimension of the word. Thus, even in a secularized understanding, culture

shows its theological foundation. Everything is constructed “on sense,” that is “theologically.” Thus, the development of culture and social life, in general, in Europa Christiana is conditioned by the Gospel, validating its Christian origin, but also pointing to some serious ulterior differences. Culture, in a secularized application (on the “dogma” of the death of God) reflects the cataphatic sense of the human world and life (natural knowledge), while the Christian culture, cataphatically and apophatically expressed, brings the human to completion (natural and spiritual knowledge). Everything down in the world is an icon of the spiritual realities, up in God’s Kingdom, including the human element. So, it is not simply about imitating, but more about “iconizing” the original reality.

## **Assuming Christian Culture in Romanian Social Life in Recent Times**

**T**HERE ARE TWO recent periods that I will refer to regarding Romanian social and ecclesiastical life. We have the communist regime (1945–1989), manifestly atheistic and anti-ecclesial, and the period following the Romanian Revolution of 1989, which seems to split into two different stages.

Christian culture during the communist regime mainly showed discernment. The gospel intensively illuminates in the middle of darkness (Jn. 1:5). During that time the distinction between good and evil in terms of moral behavior was well represented, not so much quantitatively, but rather qualitatively. The facts were a matter of choice—to collaborate with the regime so as to have a comfortable life, or to stand firmly in faith and moral behavior until the point of facing punishment, prison, and even death (martyria).

To live with and within Christian culture during that time meant to be able to intuit signs, symbols, phrases colligated with life, read in an ultimate sense. That is, in between life and death. There were three essential questions: “How can man behave in difficult times?” “How could man know what is good and bad?” and “What about suffering? Is it an ultimate reality?” It was all about significations, but especially about facts. The Romanian society during this period brought together both behaviors—collaborators with the regime (evil) as well as martyrs in both senses (confessing and dying for the faith). Christian culture manifested itself in denouncing the evil and proclaiming the Cross amid harsh living conditions, in the numerous prisons<sup>6</sup> and in daily social life, “in a hidden way” (Col. 3:3). One may speak about Church life, manifesting itself partially and under restrictive conditions, and more about Christian life, spiritually orientated in private, occasionally, in the Church, or in a ‘disguised’ way in the social area.

The visible challenge of that time or any difficult period was the courage to paradoxically follow “a Mortal God,” mirroring the philosophical and ideological proclamation of God’s death. The cross and death were not to be admired, but to be followed.<sup>7</sup> And this was a way of living that we call “Christian culture.” Moreover, one may find the “Christian variant” of the “new man,” “new life” and “new world,” announced by the

book of Revelation (21: 1–5), face to face with the “new man” and the “new world” proclaimed by the Marxist ideology. Similar concepts, but with a completely different content and orientation. The ideological “new man” was an anthropological-social construct, while the biblical “new man” goes towards a Person—the God-Man Jesus Christ, and from here the theanthropic construction of life. In this project of creating the “new man” and anticipating by that the “new world,” each person becomes part of the divine renewal, when, in the end, evil will be defeated. During this period a specific literature was produced, describing the spiritual experiences lived out especially in prisons, but not exclusively there.<sup>8</sup>

One may observe here the deep and the “serious” character of Christian culture. It was lived out mostly implicitly, but also explicitly, by strong personalities, facing suffering and death. In fact, the very content of Christian faith is suffering itself. This is why it is not at all commercial, entertaining, or comfortable. For the Church and for Romanian social life, this period reflects Christian culture as a way of survival, the metaphysical orientation was the necessary component of life, which strengthened humans to face the absurd times they were obliged to pass through.

The second period, following the fall of the communist regime, as mentioned above, brought with it, in the first phase, an explicit opening towards religious life and the Church. The social movements of 1989 were accompanied by Christian songs and prayers—“Our Father,” “God is with us,” “God exists,” “we’ll die and we’ll be free,” “freedom, we love you, either we’ll be victorious, or we’ll die” were shouted out on the streets. This was the dominant direction throughout the first two decades following this historical moment. The major religious reforms were correlated with the introduction of the discipline of Religion in the school curriculum, the reestablishment of the Greek-Catholic Church, the financial support for priests and non-clerical employees by the state, the construction of numerous churches and social institutions run by the Church. Then there was an extensive process involving the publication of religious books, the founding of theological seminaries and faculties, religious foundations and schools, and the organization of a large network of pilgrimages in and outside the country. All along, politics was visibly oriented in favor of the Church institution and its representatives. It was quite fashionable to see politicians next to Church leaders attending great festivals. This was the visible explicit manifestation of Christian culture, which went along with the implicit Christian behavior. If before ’89 religious knowledge was scarce, acquired in the family or in the social rural space, lacking any religious education, the period that followed offered the possibility of confessionally studying Religion in school. This was doubled by different catechism programs run in the Church. So, theoretically, one can observe a generous access to Christian culture by all these means.

The second phase of this period is marked by a change of direction, generated by the different influences of progressive nuances, manifestly against the Christian perspective. This reconfiguration seems to be of great interest especially for the young generation, which feels it necessary “to free” itself from tradition, old customs, religious or cultural discrimination, in the name of “a new society,” presumably honest and pure, freed from any political adultery, associated with the former political regimes.

There is a serious change of mentality underpinning the concept of culture which is nowadays reaching Romania. Regarding the area of interest for this paper, this sub-period proclaims “a culture of freedom” or, as a consequence, “the democratization of culture.”<sup>9</sup> One can identify here a shift between culture as quality, achieved by education, individual and social progress, in a way attributed to the elites, to culture as a way of life, with everything it entails. This latter variant refers to quantity, belonging to the masses. In a way, this culture has the duty to accommodate or even to entertain the people. In the same framework, one proposes the concept of “free culture,” in the sense of offering it without any struggle, not inestimable, but “without a price,” that is, without quality. The same marketing drive towards the mass of the people, promoting a quantitative perception. This may reveal an “axiological disorder,”<sup>10</sup> as Teodor Baconschi puts it. In the same line, its “global” vestment is visible day by day, systematically neglecting or denying its specific dimension. Occasionally, it may also serve a specific ideology, making propaganda by means of the mass-media. Lastly, I will add a new contemporary proposal regarding culture. It is about “culture as information,” hence the “infomania” and the “news culture” developed in the public square, accessible to everybody. Because of its quantity and rapid movement, of the lack of truth criteria paired with the weak interest to verify it on the side of the receptor, one may easily conclude that “news is a vehicle for human error.”<sup>11</sup>

The religious component is not very often present within what we might define today as culture, but rather, occasionally, the attitudes reflect a visible opposition regarding its presence in its formulation—literary, artistic, musical, and so on. It is no longer “fashionable,” because of its formulated objective criteria in reading and living out the individual or the social life. In this context, I will mention three challenges regarding Christian culture and faith in the public space as they occurred in the last years in Romania.

The first one took place in 2006. It was about the initiative to remove the icons from the public schools. After the fall of the communist regime, instead of the president’s picture, icons were introduced in public schools. It was a victory of what we referred to as “Christian culture.”

The second moment to mention is the project to eliminate Religion from the curricula of public schools in 2014. There was a long discussion as to whether students should learn Religion confessionally, the History of Religion, or even Ethics instead of it. Again, a victory of a democratic society that was highly Christian-oriented after ’89 was put into question. This initiative reflected the change in mentality—Religion was no longer associated with life, in general (religious, ethical, and ethnic), but was seen as a field, next to other social domains, present in the school curricula. Finally, by the will of the majority of parents, it remained as part of the core curriculum, with students having the possibility to renounce studying it following the submission of a written request.<sup>12</sup>

The third one is well represented in the campaign against the modification of the Constitution by referendum which took place in 2018, regarding the definition of the family in traditional terms, “between a man and a woman.”<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that the majority of the population is still “traditionally” oriented regarding this topic, after a

strong politicization and a confusing journalistic campaign, the initiative failed because of the low turnout.<sup>14</sup>

These examples help us understand the transformation of the Romanian mentality regarding “Christian culture” in a visible, public way. And yet, this external manifestation extends its effects in reference with inner life as well and the capacity of discerning things. Christian culture mostly presupposes or presupposed a kind of “methodology” and a specific set of instruments to read reality and to interpret it. What is visible more and more in this framework is not simply the lack of a minimal religious education, but rather of the elements necessary to interpret life. It is also true that culture, throughout time, tried to take place of religious culture, and it partially managed to do so in the past. But, unfortunately, in our days, it is even more difficult for it to read the signs of the present, because of its transformation and association with all it presupposes, “the culture of life” as a mass-reality, without any clear axiological principles to define its essence.

The aim of my paper in this context is to indicate the role that “Christian culture” and its specific “methodology” may play in (post)modern times. Our contemporary society urgently needs “objective criteria” for interpreting and constructing life, presumably the transcendence of the world and life. I will call it, more specifically, “spiritual culture.”

## The Necessity of Recovering Christian Culture in Today’s Social Life

**A**FTER THIS long diagnosis of the Romanian contemporary mentality and social life, the next section of this paper will be dedicated to a prognosis, in the sense of prophetically trying to offer some directions from the perspective of maintaining, recovering and proposing a “Christian culture” as a means of reading and interpreting life; if not presumably confessional, at least accepted as spiritual, in the broader sense of the word.

We are invited to accept both dimensions of culture, high and low, in order to achieve a more complete image of the meaning of this concept and its possible role in nowadays society. On one hand, culture means message, proclamation, education, intellectual position, high standards, deep understanding and orientation. On the other hand, culture means ethnicity, language, customs, behavior, profession. This latter signification comes closer to the meaning of world and life, in general. A balanced position will take into consideration both senses as two dimensions of one reality, necessarily interconnected. It is about transformation and progress, from bottom to top, but at the same time it has to reflect and affect life, from top to bottom. Culture means information and formation and consequently, concrete life. The high level creates an intertexture for the mentality of and about life and, finally, for life itself.

Christian culture reflects what European identity is. The nations of the European Union are historically Christian and the very idea of Europe is the result of Christian civilization.<sup>15</sup> This is reflected in behavior, language, music, arts, architecture, stories, folk traditions or ethics. In fact, the European story is a “spiritual drama impelled by

religious convictions, not by geography, economics or technology,”<sup>16</sup> despite the fact that “the framers” of the EU Constitution refused to remember Christianity in the text as foundational for Europe’s life and its development. Unfortunately, it is no longer a visible part in the future of Europe, but it has also been taken out from its very past.

The role that Christianity played in the past and in understanding history reflects the basic role Christian culture might have had. It is impossible to understand literature, arts, music, architecture or other areas without being initiated into Christian culture. It is not about being religious at this point, but one refers to contents of knowledge, “cultural contents,”<sup>17</sup> what we might call “religious literacy” so to be able to grasp meanings in the culture and civilization we live in. It is about being educated in Religion, as theoretical knowledge. One refers here to basic religious education, part of a general cultural formation that shouldn’t be discriminatory for anybody, but rather necessary for any honest and complete education.

The next level at which Christian culture might be localized in nowadays society will be described as “Christian texture” in the structure of the mentality, on one hand, and, on the other hand, as “spiritual knowledge” in interpreting the world and life. It is firstly about accepting Christian insights regarding the order, the functioning of this world and a specific anthropology that stands at its basis, and, secondly, it refers to a recourse to Christian instruments for interpreting life, personal as well as communitarian. One can grasp here the historical dimensions of culture, the heritage, with an implicit role and, occasionally with an explicit one as well, and yet part of daily life, reflecting its dynamic character. Then, a second perspective, oriented towards the construction of the future, generates a specific understanding of the world and of life, consonant with the past, panoramic and holistic, which may bring to the “actual man” a deep orientation towards the future.

We come to the specific case of the contemporary Romanian situation. Retrospectively, one can clearly assert that the Romanian society displays a prominent religious character and, implicitly, it is tributary to a Christian culture. Ten years ago, at the last census, almost 100% of respondents declared themselves Christians (among them, more than 86 percent Orthodox). This means Christian culture also has to do with the present times. Thus, so as to understand Romanian history, one is invited to pursue a religious education that encompasses knowledge of Church history, architecture, arts, behavior, customs, and so on. I call that a “necessary level of cultural literacy about Christianity.” Likewise, as it has to do with the present, one needs to be introduced to Romania’s typology of life, to Christianity in particular. There is an ongoing growing tendency to import models in pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and so on, without, unfortunately, taking into consideration Romania’s particularities in all these matters. Therefore, overlapping or even superimposing any foreign paradigms, presupposing “new postmodern ideologies,” without locally adapting them, in particular, to the religious key of reading reality, might bring difficulties in their application, radical transformations, painful clashes, or even social catastrophes. Europe is based on unity, but always in diversity, which means respect for specificity. The Christian culture of the Romanians, despite the



visible secularization present today, is part of the different sectors of life in both forms, high, reflecting orientation, as well as low, referring to organization.

It would be useful to mention, at this point, the Romanian diaspora<sup>18</sup> and the influences it has in Western Europe. More than four million Romanians now reside in Italy, Spain, Britain, Germany, France and other European countries (and on all five continents).<sup>19</sup> Leaving Romania, they took with them their specific culture, ethnicity, and religious beliefs. Thus, we have four Orthodox Metropolitan Sees, four archbishoprics, ten bishoprics, nine representative centers and communities, 1,337 parishes and 1,245 clerics,<sup>20</sup> not to mention the ecclesiastical structures of the other confessions. The Romanian culture, high and low, gets into contact with different ethnic and religious communities and, occasionally, penetrates the local cultures. In a way, one can appreciate its transnational and interreligious character. Its specific character is clearly visible, a Latin culture intertwined at its origin with the Byzantine faith, West and East together in a mixture that may transform itself into a new and fresh offer for the social life of Western Europe.

## Christian Culture and the Spiritualization of Society

**T**HE LAST point to deal with has a prominent theological character connected with the so-called “theological transformation” that Christian culture might bring in society nowadays, in general, and in the Romanian area, in particular. At a first reading of reality, this issue might be interpreted as obsolete, superfluous and un-natural, in the sense that it goes against the general contemporary trend in mentality and action. One can easily spot an anti-ecclesial and anti-clerical attitude in nowadays society, especially coming from the young generation, and a scarce interest regarding religious practice. It is not about a lack of religious interest, but rather an allergic reaction at the religious practice(s) and institutions.<sup>21</sup> One may identify at this point the necessity of restarting religious life, regardless of the Christian confession involved, and, in consequence, the renewal of the Christian message, adapted to contemporary needs and preoccupations, proclaimed in an accessible language of the time, with an immediate application.<sup>22</sup> The Christian message and Christian culture lost their freshness and actuality mostly because the incapacity of real communication and true reflection of the problems experienced by people.<sup>23</sup>

In this frame, I will further argue the place that the “Christian offer” might have in creating a new vision regarding life and the world in nowadays mentality, overlapped with the new situation of contemporary society. To be theologically precise, I will call “Christian culture” as its core—“spiritual culture”—so as to respond to the contemporary accent given to religion, in general, and Christian life, in particular. Spiritual culture does not want to break into the profane culture, to manifest certain hegemonic tendencies, and yet, it offers its resources, methodology and tools in order to achieve a holistic understanding of reality. It may bring about a “spiritualization of culture.”<sup>24</sup> Its methodology may bring depth, freshness, a panoramic and organic understanding, overcoming



the material instruments, “through an inspiring enlightenment, the fruit of a spiritual intuition that presupposes congeniality with the Spirit immersed in the becoming of the world.”<sup>25</sup> This way, spiritual culture becomes “the testimony of the victory over fragmentation, atomization, separation, and isolation.”<sup>26</sup>

I will highlight three important effects this reality may have in our society. Firstly, what comes out from this perspective is the generation of “an inner habitus,” “a texture in within” that may re-establish the process of knowledge in the ancient paradigm of the “perception of reality” by means of mystery.<sup>27</sup> We might call this methodology a “deepening of mystery as a horizon of the interpretation of reality.”<sup>28</sup> Secondly, it communicates the metaphysical sense of the world and life in perceiving reality—an “obsession with sense/signification.” This expresses the logocentric dimension of culture; everything is constructed on signification. And thirdly, spiritual culture is able to outline new semantics for the arts, literature, music and lifestyle, in general, offering the “measure of quality.”<sup>29</sup> The new man’s reconstruction has to start from these theological presuppositions.

This leads us to the practical conclusion that recognizing and creating a space for Christian culture in Romanian social life means, on one hand, respecting its history and, finally, its identity, Christian since its inception. One can identify here a necessary continuation of its existence until today. On the other hand, in order to understand the Romanian mentality, manifestations and outlook on life, one has to take into consideration Christian culture, at both levels—information and formation.

Finally, regarding the foreign attitude, one has to pay attention to the specific Romanian identity in Europe. By its accession to European Union in 2007, Romania proved to be open to the common democratic values at the very basis of this structure. But, at the same time, its existence and lifestyle prove a continuity of identity given by Christian culture, implicitly and explicitly. In this paradigm, Romania may bring an important contribution to progress in Europe, in its native territory, as well as in the diaspora, well represented in Western Europe.

## Conclusions

**T**HE QUESTION expressed throughout this paper reflects the eventual and potential association of “Christian culture” to the “recent man,” in particular with reference to the Romanian people. There is a continuous discussion in the contemporary agora regarding the concept of culture, in both its variants—high and low—and, going further, a continuous polemic when it comes to Christian culture. In a “culture of protest” against tradition, and implicitly, against European history, Christian culture is timidly proclaimed by its supporters and, at the same time, it is aggressively challenged by means of reductive, contextual and incomplete interpretations, by the “progressive parties,” in the process of (re)creating the “new man.”

The theological perspective proposes the creation of the “new man” and, consequently, the “new world,” by means of Christian culture (Bible and tradition), be it

high, something to be achieved (the new creation, *kaine ktisis*), and low, reflecting daily life, permanently open to progress (in all its sectors) and change. It means information, obligatory for taking part in the history and identity of Europe, as well as formation, in the ethical sense. Christianity is part of culture and, at the same time, culture is conditioned by the Christian message. This mutuality is well expressed in Romanian social life. Finally, this local reality might be an important input Romania can give to the European contemporary reality: one identifies a conversion—the recent protester may become the new man, respecting and, occasionally, living out the presumably Christian culture.



## Notes

1. Marko Ivan Rupnik, “Lectura spirituală a realității,” in Tomáš Špidlík and Marko Ivan Rupnik, *Teologia pastorală: Pornind de la frumusețe*, translated by Ioan Milea (Târgu-Lăpuș: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2007), 40.
2. In the case of major changes, one can observe a real danger regarding identity (individual, of societies or even of nations), while questioning fundamental categories and concepts such as ethics, esthetics, religion or epistemology. All these will affect emotions for a long time, the affective life and the spirit in general. For details see Diana Câmpan, “Rostul bun al culturii din pridvorul Bisericii,” in *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, edited by Mihai Hîmcinschi and Răzvan Brudiu (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, Aeternitas; Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020), 309–316, here 310.
3. Horia-Roman Patapievi, *Omul recent: O critică a modernității din perspectiva întrebării “Ce se pierde atunci când ceva se câștigă?”* 6<sup>th</sup> edition, illustrations by Mircea Cantor (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2020).
4. Mihail Neamțu, *Bușnița din dărnătăuri: Insomniile teologice în România postcomunistă*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Iași: Polirom, 2008), 379.
5. V. I. Ivanov and M. O. Gerșenzon, *Corrispondenza da un angolo all’altro*, edited by Nilo Pucci (Piombino: Aktis, 1991), 43.
6. See the different types: correctional and for conversion to the communist ideology—Suceava, Pitești, Gherla, Târgu-Ocna, Târgșor, Brașov, Ocnele Mari, Peninsula; for the extermination of political and intellectual elites—Sighet, Râmnicu Sărat, Galați, Aiud, Craiova, Brașov, Oradea, Pitești; labor camps—Canalul Dunăre-Marea Neagră (Peninsula, Poarta Alba, Salcia, Periprava, Constanța, Midia, Capul Midia, Cernavodă, etc.), work colonies at Balta Brăilei; transit prisons—Jilava, Văcărești; investigation prisons—Rahova, Malmaison, Uranus; women prisons—Mărgineni, Mislea, Miercurea-Ciuc, Dumbrăveni; prisons for minors—Târgșor, Mărgineni, Cluj; hospital prisons—Târgu-Ocna and Văcărești 12.
7. See the distinction Søren Kierkegaard makes between admirers and followers, as disciples of Christ: “The admirer never makes any true sacrifices. He always plays it safe. Though in words, phrases, songs, he is inexhaustible about how highly he prizes Christ, he renounces nothing, gives up nothing, will not reconstruct his life, will not be what he admires, and will not let his life express what it is he supposedly admires. Not so for the

- follower. No, no. The follower aspires with all his strength, with all his will to be what he admires. And then, remarkably enough, even though he is living amongst a ‘Christian people,’ the same danger results for him as was once the case when it was dangerous to openly confess Christ. And because of the follower’s life, it will become evident who the admirers are, for the admirers will become agitated with him. Even that these words are presented as they are here will disturb many – but then they must likewise belong to the admirers.” Søren Kierkegaard, *Training in Christianity*, quoted in *Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter* (Maryknoll, NY: Plough Publishing House, 2003), 59–60.
8. I will mention some authors and titles belonging to the memorial literature: Nicolae Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericirii* (1991), Richard Wurmbrandt, *Cu Dumnezeu în subterană* (1994), Iuliu Hossu, *Credința noastră este viața noastră: Memorii* (2003), Dumitru Bacu, *Pitești, centru de reeducare studențească* (1963), Paul Goma, *Gherla-Lătești* (2008), Dumitru Bordeianu, *Mărturisiri din mlaștina dispenării* (1992), Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea la Hristos: Document pentru o lume nouă* (1982), Virgil Ierunca, *Fenomenul Pitești* (1990), Viorel Gheorghită, *Et ego—Sărata, Pitești, Gherla, Aiud: Scurtă istorie a devenirii mele* (1994), Octavian Voinea, *Masacrarea studențimii române în închisorile de la Pitești, Gherla și Aiud* (1995), Eugen Măgirescu, *Moara dracilor: Amintiri din închisoarea de la Pitești* (1994), Neculai Popa, *Coborârea în iad: Amintiri din închisorile României comuniste* (1999), Aurel Vișovan, *Dumnezeul meu, Dumnezeul meu, pentru ce m-ai pânăsit? Reeducarea de la închisoarea Pitești* (2006) and others.
  9. Mario Vargas Llosa, *Civilizația spectacolului*, translated by Marin Mălaicu-Hondrari (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2016), 23–27.
  10. Teodor Baconschi, “Cultura gratuită,” in *Darul desăvârșit: Gânduri despre civilizația creștină* (Iași: Doxologia, 2018), 173–176.
  11. Teodor Baconschi, “Știrile ca vehicol al erorii umane,” in *Cetatea sub asediu: Însemnări despre credință, rațiune și terorism* (Iași: Doxologia, 2016), 296–301.
  12. See two opposite positions: in favor—not studying Religion is “a cultural error”: Adrian Papahagi, “Religia în școli,” in *Creștinul în cetate: Manual de supraviețuire* (Iași: Doxologia, 2017), 175–187, 186; against—“The subject Religion does not make you more ethical”: Mircea Miclea, “Orele de Religie nu sporesc numărul credincioșilor,” accessed 10 January 2021, <https://transilvaniareporter.ro/opinii/mircea-miclea-orele-de-religie-nu-sporesc-numarul-credinciosilor/>.
  13. Article 48, line 1.
  14. Beyond any pessimistic or triumphalist positions, there were some balanced positions of Christian intellectuals such as Teodor Baconschi, Adrian Papahagi, Mihail Neamțu, or Sorin Lavric. See also the intervention of Bishop Ignatie Trif: “Biserica, referendum, resetare,” in *Maladia ideologiei și terapia Adevărului* (Huși: Horeb, 2020), 39–46.
  15. Despite the fact the European Union leaders refused to mention the Christian presence, historically or presently, in the Constitution.
  16. Robert Louis Wilken, “The Church As Culture,” *First Things*, April 2004, 31–36, here 31.
  17. Papahagi, “Religia în școli,” 182–183.
  18. The migration severely affected the social and the religious life of the Romanians. Specific vocabulary has been generated in this frame as localization, dislocation, glocalization. Cf. Vasile-Octavian Mihoc, “Identitatea religioasă ca narațiune în spații în constantă reconfigurare,” in *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, 165–196, here 166.

19. For details see "Talent Abroad: A Review of Romanian Emigrants," accessed 20 January 2021, <http://www.oecd.org/fr/publications/talent-abroad-a-review-of-romanian-emigrants-bac53150-en.htm>.
20. A recent book has been published by Basilica Publishing house regarding the Orthodox presence in the diaspora: *Diaspora Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* (Bucharest: Basilica, 2021).
21. See the concept 'believing without belonging': Grace Davie, "Believing Without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain," *Social Compass* 37, 4 (1990): 456–469.
22. Postmodernity proclaims a syncretic religiosity, dispersed, extemporaneous, difficult to systematize, in between occultism and irrationality, paganism and diluted Christian elements. This expresses "the wish of the postmodern individual to construct and personalize his own religion": Gabriel Noje, "Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările religiozității postmoderne," in *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, 221–233, here 224. This phenomenon is assimilated to 'a super religion' and, as a consequence, to a 'super culture,' formed of fragments borrowed from different religions, relativized according to individual options, without considering its eventual divine origin. For details see Dumitru Popescu, *Hristos. Biserică. Misiune: Relevanța Misiunii Bisericii în lumea contemporană* (Galați: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Dunării de Jos, 2011), 104. At the same line, one may find expressions like 'religious bricolage' or 'religion as a candy store,' see: Nicolae Achimescu, *Religie, modernitate și postmodernitate* (Bucharest: Trinitas, 2013), 434.
23. For a panorama of the contemporary situation, see my analysis: "One can identify in the mentality of the time a shift in understanding religion, in general, and Christianity in particular. It seems that there is a 'fatigue,' a 'weariness' of the contemporary man towards a set of beliefs/values, proposed and interpreted dogmatically, and understood in the version 'liberated' from their initial metaphysical meaning. The paradigm shift is generated precisely by this reaction. Inspired religion seems to gradually turn into a religiosity, otherwise characteristically conditioned human, with which contemporary man can get used more easily and quickly. Religion is transformed and dissolved into a free spirituality, which is rooted in a form of religiosity, even partially dogmatically expressed, and yet without being circumscribed to it. One identifies here a kind of 'allergy' to a dogmatic expression of religiosity, towards any kind of institutional organization, in favor of a freedom to understand the feeling of religions and its subsequent manifestation. This transformation of understanding is often associated with an 'open,' postmodernist, universalist-progressive, and in a way 'reparative' view of the Church's supposedly hegemonic-dogmatist position over specific periods of time, in history and in a certain geography. Our century, as André Malraux would say, continues to exist in a religious format, but, especially, in its spiritual component, even mystical, beyond the ambiguity of the term. The spiritual seems to be the component of the much 'lighter' religion, freed from the bonds of dogma, of institutionalism, and read in an inclusive, slightly ecumenical key, of relative and apparent acceptance, contextual, but also syncretist-globalizing, and, in particular, accessible to those who want it, regardless of their social status or cultural background—as 'spiritual culture.' Spirituality or mysticism can be confessional, but they can also be non-confessional, beyond the borders of faith communities, on the grounds that it reflects and proposes experience, as a constant of social-religious life. Thus, the paradigm of 21<sup>st</sup> century religiosity seems to be linked to a personal, un-institutionalized, a-dogmatic practice, which, through its presupposed freedom, seems to be attractive and tender in the face of the search for the Absolute, in response to questions

- on the human condition.” See: † Benedict (Vesa) Bistrițeanul, “Sarcina mistică a Teologiei ortodoxe și religiozitatea omului actual,” in *Biserica Ortodoxă și provocările viitorului*, 41–56, here 48–49.
24. See here the relation between the cultural signification of Theology and the theological signification of Culture.
25. Rupnik, 54.
26. “Paștele culturii,” in *Teologia pastorală*, 472.
27. There are many interventions on the role of mystery as a ‘methodology of reading reality,’ but I will mention here only one essential work: Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot*. This novel reflects the intersection between two mentalities—exact scientific knowledge and theological knowledge, which is always spiritual. Unamuno speaks about it in terms of full method, epistemology, aesthetic, logic, ethics, and religion; which is to say, a whole economy of the eternal and the divine, a whole hope in the irrational absurd. Cf. “Doi nebuni exemplari,” accessed 10 January 2021, <https://razvan-codrescu.blogspot.ro/2008/02/don-quiote-i-prinul-mkin.html>.
28. Rupnik, 37.
29. Constantin Noica asserts: “Culture is similar to an ongoing Medicine. I do not refer to culture as taking care of oneself, but about culture as identifying the maladies of reality of any kind, without any attempt at recovery. You only highlight the precarious dimensions of reality and give them a name...” *Jurnal de idei*, text established by Thomas Kleininger, Gabriel Liiceanu, Andrei Pleșu, and Sorin Vieru (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991), 230.

### Abstract

#### “Christian Culture” and the Contemporary Romanian Social Life

There is an ongoing debate and process regarding the place of Christian culture within the European identity. Challenging individual and institutional positions urge theology, in particular, to re-evaluate the role Christianity might have in the contemporary cultural landscape, in both dimensions, high and low. As a result, one finds it necessary to repropose Christian culture in an adapted current form so as to reflect the dilemmas and issues of the context, proving its validity nowadays. The analysis is developed in a theological key, in three important sections: after a conceptual analysis, the paper dwells on the relation Christian culture–profane culture in the European framework and, finally, the discussion is applied to the Romanian space. The conclusion highlights some possible inputs the Romanian situation may offer to the contemporary European context.

### Keywords

high and low culture, Christian culture, recent man, Romanian identity, spiritualization of culture

# The Human Person, Facing the Spiritual and the Social Crises

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## Introduction

**S**INCE THE Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declared the year 2021 as the Solemn Year of the Pastoral Care of Romanians outside Romania, we thought of a missionary approach to the social challenges faced by the Romanians who emigrated abroad and of the spiritual crisis which the Romanian society is experiencing, and also of the Romanians estranged from their native country.

In the last thirty years, the world has been facing numerous transformations, and people moved from one country to another to live a better life. Therefore, the family has been challenged to adapt and to adopt changes in its attitude. Definitely, life and death are two different states which man chooses freely and conscious of his calling from nothingness to existence on an earthly world as a place for preparation for the eternal life or eternal death.

The human existence between life and death brings many trials, crises, achievements, and moments of searching for life's meaning, in a confused, consumer, and individualistic world dominated by the media.

The Covid-19 pandemic deepens these social and spiritual crises and faces the people with situations which affect their health, spiritual life, communion, communication, and understanding. Taking care of the earthly life is natural, and the care for the soul is normal, but we still have to consider the human person's value before God. The theology of life and death passes through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is "The Way, the Truth, and the Life," and He was Resurrected from death for our salvation.

Nowadays, more than ever, the media speak and write about *crises*, and their diverse forms of manifestation within human society. Indubitably, the world and the people have gone and are going to through several crises, due to the historical context which was actually caused by them. Crisis means sufferance, shortages, material and spiritual poverty, so we consider what our Savior Jesus Christ said: "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). Therefore, people could overcome any crisis with God's help, in the faith that if they do His will, they will overcome the difficult moments of their earthly life.



## The Spiritual Crisis from Person to Family and Community

**T**HE SPIRITUAL (Christian) crisis is caused by man's secularization, in the sense that he wants to live without God, only by his own powers, and according to what his reason dictates. It is self-evident that the spiritual crisis influences the social one, and vice versa. These crises can influence and determine one another. However, a social crisis can bring man closer to God, especially when he realizes that life on earth is transient, and his professional and material achievements are ephemeral.

Therefore, we can understand that a materialistic-scientific society without God, or which excludes God, is in a spiritual crisis. Of course, in this information era, we are tempted to see the consequences of the social and spiritual crises rather than their causes; and not because we ignore these crises, or because our generation is not aware of the motives which these crises are triggered by. Collapses of empires, natural calamities, uprisings, wars, the exploitation of other peoples, embargoes, the fall of governments, terrorist attacks, informational war, the deeper gap between rich and poor, the lack of jobs and low wages, totalitarian ideologies, these are some of the reasons for social crises during the history.

The first people's fall into sin, the "wandering" of the chosen people, religious formalism, persecutions, heresies, iconoclasm, crusades, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, religious fanaticism, Satanism, the sexual revolution, or spiritual relativism are some of the causes which have been determining the spiritual crises within society, group, and family. All these crises were overcome, while some of them have come returned among the religious preoccupations, but we notice they have left wounds in the mysterious body of Christ which is the Church. Thus, throughout history, and besides the One, Holy, Universal, and Apostolic Church, a multitude of Christian confessions and "small" churches appeared.

The family crisis<sup>1</sup> is the source of these crises, sometimes of personal nature. This is the conclusion the Church's servants and the Christian laymen also agree, no matter the social positions they occupy and the political affiliation they have.

Due to the two World Wars and to the creation of political spheres of influence, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there took place extraordinary mutations and changes at international level: a democratic Western Europe, and Central-Eastern Europe placed under the influence of socialist-communist regimes.

*The relation between religion and other components of religious life had a different trajectory in Romania and in the other ex-communist countries, compared to Western Europe . . . The secularization in this region is not only a result of the modernization, but also of the policies undertaken by the communist regime. The result was the elimination of the Church from the public and political life, since the socialist state built up the most bureaucratic, centralized, and secularized society which ever existed.<sup>2</sup>*

In comparison to other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania is the least secularized country.<sup>3</sup> After 1990 the situation changed and, apart from the spiritual crisis from the Western Europe, the former communist countries from Central-Eastern Europe face “other negative factors which strike the family: poverty, unemployment, proselytism of the sects, violence, an uncertain future, and emigration to richer countries.”<sup>4</sup>

After Romania and other countries joined the European Union, the social crisis was not solved, and the spiritual crisis even less so. On the contrary, if we compare the historical periods in our country, we cannot speak about a major spiritual crisis, but about an accentuated secularization of Romanian religious life. This social-political action of joining the European Union has created risks and has offered opportunities: the risks of globalization, the deterioration of tradition, the decrease in productivity and the increase in consumption, along with Christian secularization. But there were also opportunities for economic development, for promoting the Christian-Orthodox values, and for conveying the cultural traditions.

The crisis of the Christian family in our country is due to parents or children abandonment, to the increased number of divorces, abortions, violence, juvenile delinquency, to consumerist advertisement, migration, and other factors. The spiritual crisis drives to desacralization, to the cessation of working the Holy Spirit’s gifts, depersonalization, and even to religious intolerance.

Nevertheless, the consumerist society, egotism, the total sensory bombardment, the decay of interpersonal relations affect the friendship amongst people and the possibility of founding an authentic Christian family. This happens because

*The today world lives in an era placed under the sign of individualism. To the individualistic spirit, “the other one” has nothing to say, but only to give. The “self” becomes a savage and solitary entity, animated by the fire of a dynamism having a sole finality: discretionary freedom. The individualist person does not want to think, or to change his self. It is enough to survive every day, to “vegetate” in an ephemeral world; he prefers isolation, and to ignore his own identity, he prefers the death of enthusiasm, indifference, the eclipse of life’s meaning, the trivialization of existence etc.*<sup>5</sup>

The decrease in the Christians’ faith in God and in the trust amongst people has led to the decrease of communion and to the accentuation of individual life and egotism. People’s loneliness brings them a lot of sufferance and despair, and that it why there are more suicides. His Eminence Bishop Gurie has approached the problem of the people’s communion, saying that the lack of communion represents “one of the great crises of today’s world.”<sup>6</sup>

In such situations, the Christians are urged to be open to the Church, and to Christ’s help, to pray, and understand that they are not alone. They are together with the Saints, with the holy people, with our Friend Christ, Who said: “You are My friends, if you do what I command you . . . This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 15:14, 12).

In the difficult moments of life, “the friend is a witness, and a landmark, he is a hope, and a source of trust or a powerful motivation for continuing the fight till sacrifice. When people are not alone, they can bear any sufferance, pain, or trial more easily.”<sup>7</sup> Even more, there must be love, balance, understanding, mutual support, communion, and completion in works within the family.

The manipulation of both man and family deepens the gap between people, and leads to a decrease in trust and to antisocial attitudes. The world offers what belongs to itself: materialism, passions, temptations, and perishable beauty, but the Church wants to defend the Christians against: death, sin, division, darkness, and falling, for it partakes God to us, who is the Source of our existence and the Creator of all things, seen and unseen.

The Prayer of Jesus from the Garden of Gethsemane reflects the condition of the world, and the struggle between grace and sin, good and evil, Divinity and devils:

*And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one . . . I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. (Jn. 17:11, 15)*

The past world and the world of today means that which opposes God, what resists His work and does not obey the Son of God:

*In this respect, the word “world” is equivalent to secularism. Secularism is man’s disfiguration by the spirit of flesh and by passions. Secularism means that our life is penetrated by passions, and by the world of injustice, but we still live within the Church and we believe, trying to be theologians of this kind. Secularism means the estrangement from God, our exit from the communion with God, our attachment to material things and seeing all things and problems in our life as outside the will of God.<sup>8</sup>*

If we analyze only what the media present, we can see that many Romanian Christians are in the situation above. Man’s exploitation by man, drugs and alcohol addiction, verbal and domestic violence, the exacerbated desire of enrichment and power are some of the impediments which cause the social and spiritual crises and which endanger the efforts to overcome them. The new tendencies, non-values, and practices of the modern society attack the Christian tradition, and the Christian and Romanian identity. Some persons regard the Christian tradition as obsolete and outdated. We have passed from a dictatorial regime to a free society. We have freedom and responsibility. Irresponsible freedom and the disregard for the social laws lead to corruption and theft, to destruction, disorder, deceit, lies, mistrust, etc.

Without much exaggeration, we as a society might say that we have reached a valley of tears, as Jean-Pierre Denis stated:

*Our freedom is paid, consequently, with a sentiment of increasing unreality; we have never taken so much care of our own person and neither the identity has seemed so fragile before;*

*if studied, the development in itself could appear even equally irrational and even more despaired than the faith in God; everything goes towards fiction, even inside us.<sup>9</sup>*

Confusion, stress, the lack of prayer, superficiality, superstitions, relativism, religious syncretism, Satanism, indifference and others are the cause of personal crises which are reflected in family and society.

If we uttered more often and properly understood the prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian: “O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant,”<sup>10</sup> it would diminish the challenges of human crisis. The Christian Church confesses the importance of the faith in God in order to defend us against the idols of this world: love of power, pride, enrichment at all costs, rapid success, and idleness.

## **The Social Crisis in Connection with the Spiritual Crisis**

**T**HE SOCIAL crisis is caused by other crises: economic, financial, military, political, domestic etc. The surveys show that we live in a consumerist world, which takes great care of physical and material consumption. If in 2005 the number of active Christians increased,<sup>11</sup> after we joined the European Union their number decreased considerably. Behavioral changes appeared in personal life, which modified the hierarchy of social values and religious orientations. The modernization of Romanian society, the job crisis, the Romanians’ migration, and the secularization of religious life led to a decrease in practicing the faith. Despite the fact that there are more churches than in 1990 and these churches are filled with believers on Sundays and on holidays, we have to admit that the parish churches in the rural areas are almost empty. The main causes of this situation are that the young people went to foreign countries, and many of those who remain feel no interest in Church worship. On the other hand, one can notice that the churches of the Romanian parishes from abroad are full of children and young people. Most marriages and baptisms are celebrated in those communities.

From the Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican West, the spiritual crisis stretches towards East too, because some Christians no longer want to meet God in Church and in prayer.

*This is because they do not really search for God; modern man is content with a precarious faith, which is rather reduced to a presupposition of His existence, and it is not a perpetual, real, and conscious experiencing of His presence.<sup>12</sup>*

The people have changed their way of thinking and their attitudes. “Contemporary society has acquired an ethos quite different from that of the societies in which the

established traditional religions arose.”<sup>13</sup> Eliminating the fasting, not attending the Church religious services, the technologization of society, new religious movements, and a freedom full of immorality have changed the traditional rules which were normal and useful to both family and society.

*The modern man did not want to be either anti-pagan or Christian, so he refused both nature and grace, cosmic order and the law of God and His divine plan. Foreign both to the natural ancient city and to the supra-natural city of God, the modern city wants to be only a “man’s city,” a new political body, created by the man’s autonomous will which replaces the authority of the natural or of the supra-natural good.*<sup>14</sup>

This finding brings to mind the states that enact laws against the truth, Christian morality, family protection, etc. Man’s liberty to do whatever he wants, even to issue immoral laws, generates long-term consequences.

*The free-wheeling sense of freedom in the moral sphere has profound social consequences, and it is perhaps to the issue of personal responsibility, and the attempt to find new paths to social order, that the new religious movements particularly address themselves. For we have a curious hiatus between the apparent freedoms from the old moral controls associated, especially in the work sphere, and the constraints imposed by the new technological order itself. Whilst technology has freed men from the arbitrariness of ancient and perhaps anomalous local custom, it has imprisoned them within a new set of exacting obligations and demands. And these new constraints appear, in large part, so much less humane than those of the past; for, whereas the old morality was mediated by known persons, who could buffer the exactions of custom by human concern and sympathy, in the new situation the law behaves with impersonal coldness, and often with a new and quite arbitrary force, conditioned by statistical procedures, computers, and other inhuman, and often inhumane, apparatus. Society becomes increasingly abrasive, and sensitivity, moral awareness of each other, and interpersonal caring concern is given less place in the conduct of our affairs.*<sup>15</sup>

It is true that after 1990, the Romanian people experienced an enrichment of religious life through the programs and projects implemented by our Church. Worship has been freely practiced, without any restriction, the clergy have had access to public institutions, and the thirst for Christian life had been fueled up by the multiplication of parishes and of monasteries, by the construction of churches and by missionary, cultural-educational, and social-philanthropic activities.

Despite all these, lately, the Romanian’s lack of relating to the Gospel and to its teachings has led to material enslavement and it tends to transform the Romanian society in a lifeless mechanism. Facing the spiritual crisis, the Christians are called upon to take an attitude.

This is why, after the fall of the communist regime, the Romanian Orthodox Church has been undertaking a multitude of actions in order to spiritually revitalize the Romanian society, and it continues this sanctifying work. The spiritual problems

cannot be solved only with the help of psychology or other humanistic disciplines, but mainly through the grace of God.

Introducing religion in schools, organizing catechesis in schools, building churches, granting religious assistance in the army, in hospitals, and penitentiaries, founding the *Lumina* (The Light) newspaper, the Trinitas radio-television stations, multiplying the seminaries and the faculties of theology, with double specializations in social-theology, sacred art, didactics and history, carrying out cultural, educational, social-philanthropic activities, all of these were planned and desired in order to support the Romanian Christians during their life on earth, as preparation for the heavenly life.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our Church's high hierarchy had the conscience of its mission in a state of freedom:

*In order that hope become a cultivated and fruitful gift within our Church, we need programs of catechesis and pastoral assistance for children and families in crisis within parishes and eparchies, catechesis cycles preparing the young people for marriage, pastoral catechesis for the newly married and for their parents, so that the preparation for marriage is not reduced only to the beautiful ceremonial of the wedding. We need a program of catechesis for godparents, in order to involve them in continuously upholding the families for whom they witness at the wedding. Through all these programs we must affirm and cultivate the holiness of marriage, organize the solidarity within family and amongst families, affirm the dignity of maternity and paternity, of filiation and brotherhood, as gifts of God's love which must be cultivated.<sup>16</sup>*

All of these must be strengthened with much prayer, which we can achieve through the power of love, we can forgive, and reconcile with one another, and we can give, endure, and sacrifice ourselves. The prayer means also a request: "I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 16:24–25). The dialogue with God (through prayer) and with people, the exchange of gifts and the reconciliation consolidate the communion, solidarity, and personal identity of the filiation to Christ.

Through the Church's work (the Holy Liturgy, the Holy Mysteries, and the other religious services), the Son of God shows us the purpose of His coming into the world: "I have come in order they have life, and they to have it plentifully" (Jn. 10:10). Thus,

*the fundamental message of the holy 'gesture' of God that is descending into history as man, is that God considers man a priceless being . . . He is a 'God for people,' and not One opposed to the inwards aspirations of man, it is a God Who makes out of man's life and happiness the most eloquent expression of His glory. He is a God Who finds His supreme delectation in man's happiness and in his existence as full of achievements as possible.<sup>17</sup>*

God descends, He humbles Himself, He heals the man of death, and He builds up a ladder to the heavens for man. Actually, God is continuously descending to His creature—He is in a continual kenosis.



The Christians relation to the imperishable values of life within the Church protects man against the world's temptations and challenges.

*It is well known that there are two great books of the mankind: Nature and the Scripture. Both of them lead the one who lives in asceticism to "read" them, namely, to "know" and "understand" them towards worship, culture, and science, activities which elevate the spirit and the quality of life through the truth, good, and beauty which they convey . . . The love for God, for the fellow humans, and for the entire creation, the preservation and the experience of the ancestral faith, the preservation and the valuing of the traditions shelter us against the temptations of the age we are living in: faithlessness, carelessness, and forgetfulness. They prepare us for confession and for partaking of the Holy Mysteries towards the true life, useful to our fellow humans and pleasant to God.<sup>18</sup>*

Rev. Prof. Ioan I. Ică Jr. made an interesting statement: "The paradox of the modern and postmodern man is that he affirms a will lacking ontological content, and a struggle of liberty against the truth."<sup>19</sup> Does man know the truth he fights, or does he only ignore the truth? It happens sometimes that he fights against the Lord's words: "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn. 8:32).

## Conclusions

**T**HE CHRISTIAN experience shows us that any spiritual crisis causes suffering both to the body and to the soul (cf. Mt. 9:2–8; Mk. 2:1–12). The Christian's suffering can be considered as a pedagogical measure taken by God, or it can determine an uprising against the world and the Creator within man. For two millennia, the Christian Church's martyrs were models to be followed for their reaction in especially difficult moments of their life on earth.

In our days, the Christian (in general) in the Romanian society faces diverse anxieties, he asks questions about his destiny, he takes an interest in the zodiac and the future, in his job, and social justice, in fulfilling his requests... This is why we believe he should not forget Christian love, faith in God, prayer, and be rather preoccupied with establishing a hierarchy of his main objectives on a long term, according to the words of our Savior Jesus Christ: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Mt. 6:33).

The earth is full of graves and common graves, watered by the martyrs' blood and the sacrificial spirit of the people, but some persons are in crisis, are prey to a narrow vision and despair, loneliness, fear, and insomnia, intrusive thoughts, and other problems. The solution for solving the crises can be found in our powers of believing in change and of asking for God's help. Faith, good deeds, prayer, and communion with other persons help the man who is in a crisis in order to find the way to heal more quickly. The personal crisis is not solved by looking at the past, but by living realistically in the present in God's love.

We can already notice the consequences of isolating people in their homes, of the restrictions against attending the Church's religious services, of online schooling, and of wearing masks etc. The struggle for normal survival continues.



## Notes

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### **Abstract**

#### **The Human Person, Facing the Spiritual and the Social Crises**

The present study covers several aspects regarding the human person who has experienced and will experience diverse crises occurred in society, namely social and spiritual crises, and it also includes aspects related to families which suffer because of the crises which emerge in the world, in the country, and in the community. The spiritual (Christian) crisis is caused by man's secularization, namely, by his desire to live without God, only through his own forces, and according to what his rationality dictates. In an extended statement, we notice that the social crisis is determined by other crises: economic, financial, military, political, the crisis of the family, etc. Nowadays, these crises are deepened by the Covid-19 pandemic, by the restrictive measures taken in order to stop the pandemic from spreading. Through the Holy Church, God offers solutions to the people in order to surpass the spiritual crises: faith, prayer, alms-giving, and love. The social crises can also be overcome through communion, sacrifice, trust, and wisdom. The Christian, the family, the Church, the School, and the community have experienced and will experience crises which thoroughly challenge our love of God and of people. If people are anchored in the imperishable values of life, this will create real possibilities for overcoming the crises emerging into the world.

### **Keywords**

crisis, Church, Christian, family, secularization

# **The Labor of Transferring from Modernity to Post-Modernity a Landmark Theological Discipline in Orthodoxy: Pastoral Theology**

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TEOFIL TIA

## **Fundamental Theology A “Science of Credibility” of Faith Pastoral Theology**

### **A “Science of Credibilization” in the Public Space of the Ascent to God About the “Cultural Dignity” of a Life Lived with God**

**I**N THE THEOLOGICAL education after the Second World War, Theology—being aware of the mutations recorded at the “recipient” level (which were radical, profound and predictably with long-term effects)—accepted the metamorphoses claimed by Apologetics (which was at risk of abolition, had it not undergone a reform), including changing its name to Fundamental Theology. The changes affected not only its name, but also the content, working method and identity of the discipline. Furthermore, they also clarified the distinctions between it and Pastoral Theology, as well as the “bridges” of communication. Despite self-reformation, Fundamental Theology has failed in its (hesitantly) stated ideal<sup>1</sup> of converting.<sup>2</sup>

Another subsequent stage of total crystallization of identities is one when Fundamental Theology redefined itself through the privileged instrument that defines it: the exclusive use of reason to be credible for and acceptable to those who are content with (and are reduced only to) this instrument for the analysis of reality (but only after the faith has already been “acquired”). It is therefore not a simple “philosophy of faith,” as it is not centered on the subjectivity of the philosopher, but on the certainty from the heart of the faithful analyst, with all speculative approaches starting from a consistent, persistent and definitive conviction.

It aims to demonstrate the correctness of the choice of faith from a human perspective. Pastoral Theology, on the other hand, is defined precisely by the emphasis on a weighted and not exclusive use of reason, being aware that faith always has an emotional

coefficient, born after a “meeting” with Christ, a meeting that reorients the whole path of life. Pastoral Theology wants to overwhelm through the outpouring into the world of a transfiguring experience of the encounter with God, of a real contact with the divine, of a continuous “sensing” of God. It seeks to continually work with this experience for its inception and perpetuation in the lives of others.<sup>3</sup>

## **A Modernist Tendency of Some Pastoralists: Towards a Sacred “Pantology”?**

### **The Sectors of Interest of Pastoral Theology, Its Adjacent Fields and the Dialogue with the Bordering Theological Sciences: The Necessary “Transversal Skills” of the Shepherd of Souls**

**C**ONTEMPORARY PASTORALISTS emphasize one aspect: Pastoral Theology is not just a “discipline” among other theological disciplines, but is a dimension of theology in general, each path of theological research having a pastoral applicability. On the other hand, as an autonomous discipline, it has a content and some obligatory thematic areas, which multiply under scrutiny, being “confiscated” at first glance from other disciplines: sectology (which for a long time was part of Missiology/Missionary Guidelines), History and Philosophy of Religions (more precisely, Christian Theology of Religions) because in the parish (and especially in the diaspora) the faithful come to interact with exponents of other religions (Muslims, Buddhists, etc.); ecumenism (since they interrelate daily with Christians of other denominations in both urban areas and villages); the psychology of religion (which provides pastoral theology with a platform able to identify patterns of behavior and differentiated reactions to religious offers, group dynamics and psychological techniques) with religious psychopathology (because often believers with mental problems seek therapy “in” the Church, not outside it); philosophy (philosophical thinking goes in tandem with the theological one: it produces language, methods and analyses that are indispensable to pastoral thinking, outside of which, if it were situated, it would be sterilized; philosophy represents the highest expression of the cultural formation of contemporary individuals; it determines the orientation of culture; pastoral theology is validated and capitalized in direct confrontation with contemporary philosophy),<sup>4</sup> cultural anthropology and sociology (which professionally delineates the real economic/social/cultural conditions in which man lives, identifying the dominant instances: progressive secularization, increasingly differentiated structure of society, the hegemony of utilitarianism, the growing emancipation, the discrediting of ideologies, the atomization of the religious phenomenon, etc.).

Only at first glance do we witness a “rapture,” because the method of research, the reason for the approach, the purpose and the vision are different in pastoral theology: they fall within its competence insofar as the priest confronts them in his territory, in his own area of pastoral responsibility. The discipline broadening process does not lose sight of its specificity. In addition, as stated, Pastoral Theology prioritizes its covered topics, it is contextual and focused on a certain cultural space where the future priest will act.<sup>5</sup>

**The Auspicious Context of Affirmation (and the Urgency of Manifestation) for the New Identity of Pastoral Theology  
 “Ritorno del Sacro” and the Chaotic and Confusing Postmodern  
 “Resacralization,” a Sign of Religious Vitality Despite the Current Pro-  
 Secularizing and Transcendent Horizons Amputated European Climate  
 The Collapse of an Enlightenment Thesis,  
 That of the Irreversibility of Secularization**

**T**HE FIRST observation of a demanding and nuanced pastoralist while reading contemporary realities concerns the voluptuous survival of the religious in the contemporary self-sufficient and late-modern immanent culture. In this context, it is good to accurately identify the features of a disintegrating society (resulting from the abandonment of moral rigors and the axiological confusion specific to our age) and to ask to what extent secularism (as a theoretical analytical reflection on secularization) can be an indisputable paradigm in reading contemporary social life. There later emerged an irreparable loss in relation to the pre-industrial era: the collective psychological comfort which was defining for the pre-modern period and was “delivered” to the public space by religion (which had an indisputable dominant authority) was replaced by a disarming collective mental vulnerability, a clear result of the expulsion of religion from the public space, the “work” of modernity.

The radical anthropocentrism specific to modernity brought the world to its knees under the (disguised) terror of an angry and totalitarian rationalization, which led to the complete loss of control over the collective emotions, which remained at the unsated disposal of an invertebrate “sacred” characterized by frivolity, incoherence, an outburst of the decayed human unconscious represented by the new religious movements (the only ones that acted on this existential and cultural level, in fierce competition with the traditional, official, historical churches whose credibility was constantly eroded, being permanently discredited, themselves slipping into rationalization, emphasizing the doctrinal, rational part to the detriment of inner feelings, mystical life, spiritual experiences). Therefore, we rhetorically ask ourselves—together with the great missionary Ion Bria—whether the new religious movements constitute a revitalization of religion or a trivialization of it?

The pastoral-theological concept of “cyclical re-sacralization” expresses scientifically the very credible hypothesis that throughout history there have always been increases and decreases in society’s emphasis on religion: the historical relevance of the sacred to society has not been uniform, monotonous and without outbursts, but experienced variations in intensity. The pastoral conclusion generating optimism is therefore that—in this situation, these being the data of the problem—secularization itself can be read as a failed attempt to cut off the metaphysical depths of existence.<sup>6</sup> The postmodern and post-Enlightenment society will return with interest to Religion, albeit showing more appetite for its therapeutic potential at the psychic level and for the collective conscious and subconscious, than for the eschatological soteriology it proposes.



## Possible Pastoral Solutions: Axiological Refocusing Through Theocentrism

**T**HE POST-ENLIGHTENMENT observation is that religion possesses some balancing resources for the individual psyche and for the collective unconscious that so far have been counterproductively ignored and insufficiently investigated by the academia. This openness to the explicit or hidden potential of religion must be “exploited” from a pastoral point of view: we must come forward into the public space with a religious to meet exactly the existing appetite: a religion with a great balancing, fulfilling, and mentally comforting force.

We must emphasize the spiritual, inner dimension of the mystical experience of religion. Orthodoxy works with an unseen, supernatural, therapeutic energy, the energy of grace that is completely ignored by modernity. We live in an age where there is a great openness to experiencing this energy. In today’s post-Enlightenment era, religion slowly but surely draws the conclusions over the monopoly period of secularization of the social order, and argues its belief that only by re-enacting it into the construction of the social order can we achieve the desired climate of harmony, peace and collective psychic comfort, revealing the truth about secularization: a failed experiment! Orthodoxy implicitly comes with an offer of axiological refocusing through theocentrism: placing God at the center of existence, the only Being who can imbue human existence with meaning. The severing of the transcendent layer of the world has led to meaninglessness, axiological confusion, ontological inconsistency, collective mental discomfort, and the vulnerability of individuals and society at all existential levels. The time has come for a historical correction through the conscious option for resacralization.

New Age—a pathological and opportunistic “resacralization.” In the new context, Pastoral Theology must not be confiscated by the past and “burdened” by the challenges of the present. Instead, it must be prophetic, offering a perspective, future-oriented, prophylactic, i.e. able to avert and defuse in advance the harmfulness of anti-Christian currents in the future. In this respect, it cannot be indifferent to the new religiosity emerging in the Euro-Atlantic space, compellingly and mysteriously entitled “New Age.”<sup>7</sup> The postmodern reality that New Age speculates in its own interest is the “subjectivization” of faith, the option for an individualistic, psychological religiosity, i.e. the uncontrolled spread of the belief that in matters of faith everyone is free to operate a selection—having personal sympathies as criterion—to “doctrinal” beliefs, and this while being presented with the world panorama of religions, accessible thanks to globalization and the internet. The “subjectivization of faith” obviously constitutes the religious variant of the postmodern phenomenon of universal relativization. We have therefore witnessed a slow and progressive loss of legitimacy and plausibility of the ecclesial institution throughout the Euro-Atlantic space and a crisis of confessionalism in the public sphere.<sup>8</sup>

The natural pastoral reaction: the official churches must no longer advocate for a tense, rigid, inflexible, opposed, antithetical, polemical confessionalism, because it is not attractive to believers and cannot be a social binder (otherwise it will be brittle). The sensible pastoral strategy is to make believers aware of the fact that religion is an element that gives you a

firm identity in a world of dissolutions, precarious affiliations, uprooting and loss of identity. This is done not by contrasting it with other identities, but by awareness and increasing inner motivation. The effect will be to increase the public plausibility of the interventions and positions of the ecclesial establishment (and not to dilute its presence). It should not be overlooked that traditional churches in Europe are still the beneficiaries of a consistent public consideration, despite modernity eroding their credibility. The pastoral path is the inner “differentiation” in the community to the detriment of homogeneity, proclaiming the parish as a “strong” resource for community integration (and for the attenuation of tendencies to subjectivize the faith).

Sects and new religious movements: a failed attempt to revitalize religion by the trivialization of the religious (in general); a “preface” of de-Christianization? At the end of modernity, certain sects and religious movements with extremist outbursts compromised themselves, at the same time discrediting the general idea of “religion” in the collective mind. The new religious movements sought to meet the existing appetite for direct spiritual experience, and did so by proposing “meditative techniques” as an expression of their own process of searching, experimenting, verifying the “truth.” Many new religious movements became very attractive through their very emphasis on inner feelings, emotional experiences, “experiences” of the individual, to the detriment of doctrine and intellectual reflection.

The hyper-rationalist extreme (specific to modernity) gave birth to another extremism, hyper-emotionalist and oversentimental. One excess was answered with another: extremism gave birth to extremism. The Church has the wonderful task of promoting the balance between reason and feeling, between mind and heart, between psyche and spirit, between intellectual and spiritual life, and it does so by proposing to all the path of hesychasm embodied in urbanity.<sup>9</sup>

## **A Theological Science of the Present**

### **Complementary Pastoral Tools for Communicating the Message of Christ to the Contemporary People**

**T**HE CHURCH knows how to see beyond the drama of contemporary man, towards the destiny of man in God’s plan. Awareness of the cultural dimension of human existence<sup>10</sup> gives rise to a special attention to this new “field” of pastoral theology. Anchored in Christian anthropology and ethics, the pastoral of culture desires to outline a “Christian cultural project” that will give the chance of Christ—the Redeemer of man, the Center of the cosmos and history—to renew the whole life of people, opening to His saving power widespread domains of culture. The pastoral of culture is applied to concrete situations, in order to open them to the universal message of the Gospel. Through pastoral care, the Church is looking for the most appropriate and effective ways of communicating the gospel message to the people of our time, combining useful “tools”: renewal of humanity, Christian testimony, explicit proclamation, adhesion of the heart, communion, and apostolic initiatives. These elements may appear contrasting and even mutually exclusive, but in reality they are complementary and mutually enriching.<sup>11</sup>

The absolute priority: converting the heart and exercising the discernment of the believers: promoting a faith with “relevance” and cultural-existential amplitude. The living conditions of contemporary man have changed so much that we are talking about a new era of human history, the post-industrial era (“post-modern,” “computerized,” “post-ideological,” etc.), when the Church discovers another “kairos,” another favorable time for a new impetus of the mission, in which new aspects of culture constitute challenges. In today’s dominant cultural situation across different countries of the world, subjectivism predominates as a measure and criterion of life. Positivist proposals regarding the progress of science and technology are being discussed. After the spectacular failure of atheist collectivist Marxism-Leninism,<sup>12</sup> the rival ideology of liberalism shows its inability to bring about the happiness of mankind. A practically anthropocentric atheism, an ostentatious religious indifference, an invasive hedonistic materialism marginalizes the faith, which becomes more and more fragile, without cultural consistency or relevance, within a “predominantly scientific and technical” culture.<sup>13</sup>

By affirming the dignity of the human person, the Church strives to purge social life of many plagues, such as: violence, social injustices, abuses suffered by street children, drug trafficking, etc. In this context, and affirming its preferential love for the poor and marginalized, the Church has the duty to promote a culture of solidarity at all levels of social life: government institutions, public institutions and private organizations. Declaring itself in favor of the unity between people, societies and nations, it will be associated with the efforts of people eager to create an increasingly dignified world. Doing so will help to “reduce the negative effects of globalization, such as the domination of the strong over the weak (especially in the economic field) and the loss of the local cultural values in favor of a misunderstood homogenization.”<sup>14</sup> Today, endemic religious ignorance fuels the various forms of syncretism between the old disappeared cultures, new religious movements and the Christian faith. These social, economic, cultural and moral evils serve as a justification for the new syncretistic ideologies, whose circles are actively present in different countries. The Church proposes to accept these challenges, especially among the poorest, to promote social justice and to Christianize traditional cultures as well as the new cultures that emerge from the great metropolises.<sup>15</sup>

## **Outstanding Pastoral Demands Proclaimed by Pastoral Theology**

**A** FIRST REQUIREMENT would be the firm choice for transparency in doctrine and increasing the expressiveness of language. Today, people want transparency in doctrine. While certain experiences are vital in determining readiness to “listen,” the hunger for significance of people in the contemporary world must be conjugated with a gradual presentation of Christian doctrine. It is even necessary to have a Christian “initiation plan” that favors a staged evolution towards a Christian vision of life. Post-modern society is one of “language crisis”; it is characterized by the inability of social culture to communicate through words, to use meaningful words, witnessing an erosion of language

(including liturgical language). The words have lost their fidelity to the reality which they refer to. There are no more words to fertilize reality. This is because words, through a long and irresponsible use, are exhausted, drained of their evocative force. In pastoral contacts and encounters, the priest must be aware of this. He must carefully select his words so that they favor communication and not hinder it.<sup>16</sup>

Increasing the impact of ecclesiastic language. We, the leaders of the faith, must be very considerate towards the language we use to spread the faith, to proclaim our beliefs, to communicate to others the inner states of grace. Often the language we use is insufficiently communicative, uncorrelated with today's cultural realities, split from the people's daily concerns; as a result, it is imperative to update the language, correct very old, obsolete or even wrong terms in the religious books, and eliminate those that have a different meaning today than in the past; on the other hand, a careful selection of the terms used during the sermon is necessary, avoiding both the excess of neologisms and the rancid, flat, irrelevant language with reduced communication potential.<sup>17</sup>

The fracture between today's culture and the language of the Church leads to a lack of (or a very limited) reflection of religious realities in the media and in the world of the arts (theater, television, cinema and literature). There is a discrepancy, a rift between today's culture and the language of the Church. This is one of the reasons why theology is closed in on itself, it lacks the impact it should have on contemporary culture.<sup>18</sup> A firm movement is needed for Theology to become a public "science" communicable to all. Truths that can be communicated in plain language must be communicated so; it is mandatory to communicate clear things in a clear manner, without superfluous artifice. Only for the truths of great finesse, for subtle nuances, it is necessary to intervene with a more sophisticated, complex language, resorting to neologisms. Understanding the Christian message is greatly hampered by the recourse to pretentious language, crammed with "technical" terms. Let us not forget that the Savior never claimed to be acknowledged by His contemporaries as part of the "intellectual elite" of the time. However, no one today can deny that He had a culturally gigantic stature.<sup>19</sup>

We are obliged to unite the mind with the heart, to identify the mind as the gateway to the heart. We have the duty to communicate the experience of meeting God through preaching (kerygma) and catechesis (teaching, critical reflection). Pastoral care raises not only the issue of theological language (notions, definitions, style, biblical references, symbols) and terms used during liturgy (and other public services), but also the issue of knowing, understanding, and communicating God with objectivity and competence. The preaching priest must beware of impromptu speeches, of linguistically corrupt words, of terms exhausted of any cultural relevance, of "wooden language." What word must the priest use? Not a superficial one, not a pompous language, but a word full of spirit, full of wisdom and intelligence. He must not speak in an artificial style, in a sophisticated way, but with deep ideas and from his own experience, because only in this way will language have substance. Then it will enrich consciences.

*The idle word is demagoguery. Why is the Liturgy not celebrated in the mind? Because the liturgical word is a work. The church has remained the only repository of true words, of words that really name, that work, that can be spoken out loud.<sup>20</sup>*

An elementary pastoral duty is the meaningful communication, explicit and without confusing references (with detours), of the Christian message. Another fundamental requirement would be the recognition of the role of reason as a (possible) instrument of access to faith. A renewed Apologetics is needed, which considers the latest positions of Fundamental Theology. The role of reason as a strategy for the access to faith has long been unjustifiably neglected. It is possible to identify new paths that lead to faith, starting from the daily life and experience of the people, in a language that can greatly communicate with today's man.<sup>21</sup> The responsibility for the proclamation of God by priests in our world is accompanied by a fear: it is no longer the fear of punishment (and imprisonment) by communist regimes, but the fear of failing to reach the hearts of the people, many of them being very distant to the Church.<sup>22</sup> To reach their hearts, it is first necessary to conquer their minds,<sup>23</sup> for the mind is the gateway to the heart. And the instrument that enters the human mind is reason; it is a sword that, if properly handled, opens the way to the heart.

### **Conclusions: The Church Must Provide Tools for Criticism and Discernment**

**T**HIS MEANS theological and spiritual reflection on the problems of today's people (such as, for example, on the models of urban family life proposed by the media). Believers must be helped to practice critical thinking, which selectively picks up messages from the media. Our culture (more precisely the mass sub-culture transmitted through the media) shows signs of the dehumanization of human goals and aspirations, manifesting a subtle opposition to religion, not a militant one. It subtly erodes Christian values, discrediting them, mocking them, discreetly ridiculing them, and not "wrestling" with them, because following an honest rational confrontation, it would lose the fight. And the theological science that has the duty to sum up all these reflections and to find the ideal way to apply them is Pastoral Theology; it managed the sensitive transition from modernity to postmodernity, paying attention to local specificities and endemic accents.



#### **Notes**

1. Millions of readers have read the treatises on Fundamental Theology (and the previous ones on Apologetics) without converting. Therefore the discipline could be accused of "infidelity" towards its own goals, and failure. Its approach and perspectives were only speculative, rational-cerebral, while the acceptance of the faith proved to be a further existential, religious, personal act with emotional intensity, the product of an inner adhesion; this acceptance of the faith does not come so much after reading scientific books and articles,

- but after an innovative and transfiguring encounter. And this type of destiny-changing encounter is facilitated only by Pastoral Theology and Missiology (not as sciences, but through their practical correlation: pastoral care and missionary activity).
2. In another stage of awareness regarding its own identities, Fundamental Theology reformulated its objectives: faithful to its origins (Apologetics), it defined itself as a coherent, practiced and disciplined system of defense against opponents; for centuries it organized “crusades,” the polemical tone defining it ontologically. This aggressive tone survived in sectology and was “transported” into Pastoral Theology in the chapters of “defending the herd” from harmful intrusions. So it was a negative science, “anti,” “against,” which needed an opponent in order to exist. This spirit was contagious, it survived in Pastoral Theology, sometimes putting it on a false track of “war” with imaginary opponents, not present in the territory. The essence of the Pastoral responsibilities is not aggression (not even oriented towards the universe of the unconverted), not only the “keeping” of the parishioners in the unity of the flock, but towards their spiritual “growth,” inner renewal towards the “stature of the perfect man,” that is, their deification.
  3. Fundamental theology is thus a science of credibility of faith (trying to prove that the Christian religion deserves to be believed); Pastoral Theology is a science of the veracity of living with God and of guaranteeing an infinite mystical ascent of the believer towards God, with immanent beginnings and eschatological extension (trying to demonstrate that the Christian religion in general and Orthodoxy in particular deserve to be lived, not just believed). Pastoral Theology is a continuous invitation to the sacramental universe, not a limitation to the rational-cerebral one. From these two different visions and identities also emerge different working methods.
  4. We mention the reference episodes from the relatively recent reality: Karl Rahner and the existentialism of Heidegger, Metz and the Marxism promoted by Bloch; a certain confrontation is still insufficiently practiced, the one against nihilistic thinking (nihilism, which has progressively infiltrated large stretches of thought, determining the forms of contemporary atheism) underlies the contemporary conception about the world and life (“Weltanschauungen”). The philosopher (and theologian) Nicolae Turcan from Cluj continuously practices this confrontation.
  5. Pastoral theology: a science that has as its objective and subject of analysis the correct Church–world relationship. Since the faithful in the Church are also the “citizens” of the State, Pastoral Theology cannot evade this relation. That is why it constantly reminds that history is part of eternity, that time is a segment of eternity, that the meaning of history is not inside it, but beyond it; that without transcendence the temporal is suffocating and meaningless; through pastoral care, the Church permanently verifies the loyalty to its mission; history is the space in which God intervenes and the place of becoming—with eternal consequences—for man.
  6. We can also notice that secularization accepted the survival of a strictly philosophical, rational-cerebral intellectual interest in religion (accepted the strictly phenomenological, empirical-descriptive perspectives on religion, reducing it to the status of a simple anthropomorphic cultural product), but rejecting it as an inner attitude, outlook on life, existential relation; “the relationship with God,” the connection with Him, the knowledge of Him, is, however, the “vocation” par excellence of Religion, and ignoring this fact is a disguised attempt to abolish it. Defining for secularization are also some discrete absolutisms, camouflaged totalitarianisms: it was the promoter of a hidden but radical militancy,



of an intolerance cut out of the world of pathological religion (therefore it was metaphorically claimed that secularization was a “religious” act originally, but anti-religious as a result), operating the aggressive substitution of theocentrism with anthropocentrism; it had an implied monopoly over the social and institutional order in society; it was a desperate attempt to continually ignore man’s ultimate destiny, thus dissolving any transcendent horizon and stubbornly promoting an autonomous culture opposed to the pre-existing theonomy. These limited (and limiting) absolutisms and visions must be debunked, since they became sources of collective anxiety and destructuring. Secularization has criticized the “absolutism” of religion to secretly replace it with another of its own, a “source of rottenness.” Only religion, which works with the heavenly “Absolute,” with firm values, with an imperishable axiological universe, can convey “incorruptible” concepts.

7. Some pastoralists considered this a postmodern retort to secularization, a form of “resacralization” specific to the times that “exhausted” the experience of secularization. It is not a “religion” in the classical, traditional, consecrated sense, but rather an attitude, a different way of relating to the sacred: a new and seductive way of thinking that is spreading. So we considered a “pastoral autopsy” of the New Age phenomenon mandatory; is it the “superlative religious,” as it self-proclaims, the maximum achievable in religious matters? What is certain is that the New Age is a new way of living, “consuming” and proclaiming religion, marked by the spirit of today’s era: the dictatorship of utilitarianism, a “savior” message which superficially proposes a cure to world’s contemporary “crises,” but its intervention seems to only be epidermal; it is an explicit promoter of syncretistic individualism. It is “thesist,” and therefore ideological, its “central” theses being “the formation of a new man,” specific to the postmodern cultural context. Its strong point, however, is the emphasis on “mystical experience,” on “inner feelings,” but feelings “piloted” only by a naive, invertebrate and disoriented subjectivism. From a pastoral perspective, the New Age can be described as a religion of naive optimism, with a frivolous (and—the future will prove—unconfirmed) claim to replace all other religions. Aldo Natale Terrin, *New Age: La religiosità del postmoderno* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2000).
8. In the current confusion of religious offerings, the Church can propose a spirituality focused on the meaning of life, on man’s appetite for happiness, and only secondarily on “objective religious truth,” on a “doctrinal purity” that can be perceived as repressive (before having a consistent spiritual experience). From a pastoral-missionary point of view, this shift in emphasis (and interest) is not anti-religious, but only a step in the direction of man’s total return to God: a search for the meaning of life will inevitably lead the person concerned to discover the eschatological meaning of existence (if the quest and search are sincere and profound).
9. For a demanding pastoralist, terminological clarification (“churches,” “sects,” new religious movements) and professional classification (sects, gnosés and “psi” groups) are necessary. It is very important for Pastoral Theology to analyze and inventory the reasons for the attractiveness of the new religious movements, making a “spiritual evaluation” of the new religious movements: sometimes they are authentic fraternal communities; they often emphasize the discovery of the inner dimension of faith. However, we emphasize that they remain an objectionable and ambiguous search for God: most often, followers discover them too late as exclusivist and depersonalizing communities, where authoritarianism is practiced and the (hysterical) exaltation of the figure of a founder is achieved. What is certain is that they had a devastating effect on the perception of religion in postmodern

- culture, globalization having not only the effect of favoring their dissemination, but also giving worldwide visibility to the religious discrediting operated by them.
10. “Culture is an adornment for the happy and a refuge for the unhappy,” said Democritus. “Culture determines our vision of the world,” said F. Mayor. “Culture creates us; but we, in turn, create culture, through our double belonging, to a specific social space and to a certain historical epoch,” concludes Achiel Peelman. Culture is a creative way of “being” (anthropos), of responding to the daily needs of an organized community (ethnos), together with a common history, understood as a life experience (chronos), according to a shared framework of environmental references and common values (oikos). Apud Teofil Tia, *Descreeștinarea: O “apocalipsă” a culturii* (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2009), 91.
  11. Authentic pastoral care allows the community to receive, celebrate, live and express its faith in its own culture, in communion with the universal Church. At the same time it expresses the absolutely new character of the revelation in Jesus Christ and the exigency for conversion that springs from the encounter with the one Savior: “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5). This shows the importance of the mission specific to theologians and pastors in terms of pastoral discernment and the correct understanding of the faith. The sympathy with which they must approach cultures, using the concepts and languages of different peoples, the “idioms” of different local groups, to express the message of Christ, cannot rule out an engaging discernment in the face of great and serious problems that arise from an objective analysis of contemporary cultural phenomena, whose weight cannot be ignored by pastors, since it is about the conversion of people and, through them, of cultures, that is, the Christianization of the ethos of people. Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura, *Per una pastorale della cultura* (Rome: Città del Vaticano, 1999), 19.
  12. Post-communism. Countries that have regained their freedom, long suffocated by the atheist Marxism-Leninism in power for decades, remain with the consequences of the violent “deculturalization” of the Christian faith: artificial relations between people, the collective subconscious denial of the creature’s dependence on the Creator, the dogmatic truths of Christian revelation and its ethics are fought against. This violent “deculturalization” was followed by a radical questioning of core Christian values. The reductionist effects of secularism, which spread to Western Europe in the late 1960s, are consolidating the confusion of Central and Eastern European countries. *Ibid.*, 13.
  13. In reality, the judgment criteria assumed by believers are often presented in the context of a very de-Christianized culture, foreign or even opposed to the gospel. Adaptation to cultures requires a prior conversion of the heart and, if necessary, ruptures with ancestral customs incompatible with the Christian faith. This requires serious theological, historical, and cultural instruction and sound judgment, to discern between what is necessary or useful, and what is useless or dangerous to the faith. *Ibid.*, 14.
  14. But it is not enough to say one thing to also be understood. When the recipient was in perfect synchrony with the message, due to his traditional culture permeated by Christianity, and at the same time willing to accept the message due to the favorable socio-cultural context, he could receive and understand what was proposed to him. In the current cultural plurality, the message must be correlated with the cultural context in which it must be accepted. The success of this action requires continual discernment, in the light of the Holy Spirit, invoked in prayer. It is also required, through adequate preparation and proper instruction, to use simple pastoral means—homilies, catechesis, popular pilgrimages, evangelistic schools—correlated with means. *Ibid.*

15. The new challenges that “inculturated pastoralism” must accept, starting from the cultures shaped by two millennia of Christianity and from the pillars identified in the heart of the new cultural areopagus of our time, require a renewed presentation of the Christian message, anchored in the living tradition of the Church and supported by the testimony of the authentic life of Christian communities. To filter, to think of everything new through the prism of the Gospel, proposed in a renewed and convincing way, becomes a main requirement in pastoral care. The pastoral of culture has as its main objective the insertion of the vital lymph of the Gospel in cultures, to renew from within and transform in the light of revelation the perspective of society on man, a vision that shapes cultures, the conception of man and woman, of family and education, of school and university, of freedom and truth, of work and “fun,” of economics and society, of science and arts.” Ibid.
16. The priest must avoid both verbal clichés and archaisms, as well as neologisms. Or, if he uses archaisms and neologisms to give flavor and originality to his own expression, to permanently parallel them in speech with clear and expressive synonyms for the interlocutors. Sometimes, a spiritually immature priest wants to exhibit the fact that he is on another intellectual “level” compared to his parishioners by resorting excessively to neologisms. It is a harmful and offensive practice for the faithful, as a man’s inner nobility is not given by the accumulated anniversary diplomas, but by his inner wealth and his power to love: “A simple peasant who thinks disinterestedly of the good of his village is also part of the national elite!”—N. Iorga warned us.
17. † Gurie Georgiu, “Urgențe pastorale în confruntarea cu fenomenul expansiunii grupărilor neoprotestante din România: 7 pași spre recuperarea ‘Ortodoxiei integrale,’” *Ortodoxia* (Bucharest), 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., 4, 4 (2012): 17.
18. The term “culture” has a whole range of meanings: on the one hand, when we refer to the “culture” of an individual, we understand his expression, his way of thinking, his style of communication; on the other hand, when we speak of the “culture of a nation” we refer to its specific lifestyle, heritage, dominant habits, etc.
19. The Savior: the leading exponent of the “intellectual life” of His time? Some priests want to be considered by their parishioners personalities of great intellectual caliber, to have their great cultural-intellectual authority recognized. That is why they practiced ever since school at a cerebral-rational level, but forgot the emotional load of the rational. Without realizing it, they become the promoters of an arid, barren rationality, which does not lead to the heart, but is locked in the brain, forgetting that the Savior did not want to be a leading exponent of the intellectual life of his time. And in spite of this, His stature was gigantic, and the effects of His activity in time, unmatched. Where did His power hide? Precisely in the emphasis on the mystical-emotional component of His message. He had a critical attitude toward the “intellectuals” of his day (scholars and Pharisees) because he sensed the rift between word and deed, that is, their hypocrisy.
20. “De la letargie la liturghie: Un dialog despre normalitate: Interviu realizat de Paul Siladi cu Mircea Platon,” *Tabar* (Cluj-Napoca) 3, 1 (2009): 92.
21. Regarding apologetics, it is necessary to emphasize the new, positive relationship between science and faith, outlined in recent decades (paradigmatic is the case of Galileo Galilei). The old tensions between faith and science had their roots in an overly pragmatic and empirical model of science. But today, within the scientific methodology, an extremely “humble” epistemology has developed, which no longer has the “visible” as the only criterion of truth. Old scientism is no longer in vogue (i.e. the arrogant claim that science will be able

- to solve all man's problems discredited itself, as much as atheism). The world is aware that there are many things we do not know ("There is something above us..."). Michael Paul Gallagher, "Parlare di Dio nella cultura di oggi," *La Civiltà Cattolica* 145, 2, 3455 (1994): 448.
22. It is, in fact, a contemporary version of the parable of the sower, with three harmful factors that hinder the germination of the seed: irresistible forces that remove the word, the land dried out by heat and the countless distractions that petrify the "heart" of man and generate a superficial thought, away from the Christian "path." The lifestyle of modern man (fascinated by TV) is an "incarcerated" one, sterilizing in man the disposition to faith. Just as no intelligent human being is free from prejudice, so at the collective level, the culture in which we live may predispose ("to") or impede access to the knowledge of God. The parable of the sower speaks of different degrees of soil fertility, which condition the "rich harvest." *Ibid.*, 442.
23. Today, many Christians are skeptical towards reason, believing that the gospel should be proclaimed as "pure faith," which must be accepted on the basis of God's word alone, and by virtue of a strong and peaceful religious experience to which the follower is lead. It must be emphasized that this irrationalist and fideist attitude is dangerous. As has been rightly pointed out, "the sleep of reason produces monsters," and despised reason sooner or later takes its revenge. In fact, adherence to the Gospel is by no means the decision made at the end of a purely rational reasoning: it is therefore not based on human reason, but on the Word of God. However, in order to be solid, beyond God's grace, this decision cannot but have a rational foundation—that is, serious and compelling reasons to believe—not as causes of the act of faith, but as an aid to fulfilling it. "Editoriale: Inculturare il Vangelo nell'Europa di oggi," *La Civiltà Cattolica* 143, 1, 3398 (1992): 137.

### Abstract

#### The Labor of Transferring from Modernity to Post-Modernity a Landmark Theological Discipline in Orthodoxy: Pastoral Theology

The current study attempts to record the metamorphoses of Pastoral Theology, a discipline pertaining to theological education. This discipline must take into consideration all the cultural fluctuations of an era. It is a science connected to Apologetics and Missiology, but the reality in the field forces it to be much more attentive than all the others to the variations in the territory. We are attempting to outline the challenges it encounters while fulfilling its duty, especially during the sensitive times of transition from modernity to postmodernity, when its adaptation potential was greatly put to the test, since the new mutations were unpredictable and radical.

### Keywords

cultural dignity of religion, transversal pastoral skills, postmodern resacralization, invertebrate and frivolous sacred, terminological fertilization of reality



# Recovering Life in a Post-Pandemic Era

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EMIL JURCAN

**T**HE TOPIC of life and death has fascinated humanity since creation.<sup>1</sup> This was the impetus for man to turn away from God, because he wanted a quick touch of immortality and a way out of the fear of death. Death has always been the anguish of humanity, because we have never known how to perceive it as a transition to eternity. We felt death as the greatest enemy of man and creation because we did not have the belief that death is in fact an angel, a call to true life with God and not a prolongation of suffering here on earth.

Man has always lived in fear of sickness and suffering, although in all of them God has shown his own pedagogy, they being in the divine eyes the sign of eternity. When these divine eyes were no longer transparent to man, then fear and anguish appeared, a permanent fear of the unknown. Or this unknown is considered by God to be the expectation of eternity. That is why Christ said in the Last Supper prayer: “this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (Jn. 17:3). An ascent into the mystery of God, into the ignorance we will know forever. In other words, there is no fear of death because through it we enter into the eternity of knowing and loving God.

But man, being a body as such, being doubtful, does not have the depth of faith and does not understand the mystery of knowing in ignorance of God. Eternity is in fact the mystery of the knowledge of God’s apophatism. What we dogmatically know now about God is so little that we can speak of ignorance rather than dogmatic knowledge of Him. Dogmatics is at most a set of guidelines, which will then continue in eternity, because “to know You the true God” is a process of eternity. Man’s return to this essential knowledge means coming out of myths, from “the spell of the world.”<sup>2</sup>

The knowledge of the divine eternity does not only mean the knowledge-ignorance of divine being, which in any case cannot be known completely, but is also means the knowledge of the mystery of creation in its totality. Eternity will provide all the answers to the human search. To be more precise, what is being tried at the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva (where the name “God particle” was erroneously used) is only a tiny fraction of the knowledge of how God set the subatomic world in motion. I have said that the name is false, because it defines almost nothing of what God is or does. This particle would need the prefix “post” (post-God particle), meaning something that would come after God made the world out of nothing. However, we



do not know how God began the creation of the world, by what methods, if it was a collision or something else. But before the subatomic collision, it was necessary to create the atom and the subatomic particles. Then after this clash, another problem arises, namely, how the life and harmony of creation were realized, if there was no God the Creator. Everything is very obvious.

In all this heavenly divine-human complexity, disease had no purpose and no place. Illness, like death, were the unfortunate accidents of Adam's fall. Man has never become accustomed to them in his history and as such has rejected them as something unnatural and antihuman. And yet they appeared by the fall of the first fathers of mankind. A whole history of human suffering that has crushed the world. Human suffering has disfigured humanity. We can say, like Henri de Lubac, that in such a man "there is no stability or depth . . . this man has literally been dissolved."<sup>3</sup> The consumer society<sup>4</sup> offered comfort to the body, but also a great drama of the soul.

*Many of the Christian denominations have fallen prey to inner chaos, due to their conformity to the image and likeness of liberal cosmopolitan moral commitments. We are witnessing a immanentization of the faith surrounded by a neo-pagan culture dialectically oriented against the Christian past.<sup>5</sup>*

The painful part of these stories of human suffering has always been amnesia. People quickly forgot about their suffering and its causes and reiterated it in another form. Suffering in God's eyes has always been pedagogical. It had to shape the soul beautifully, which through the patience with which it assumed the suffering began to live its eternity from the earth. The pedagogy of the disease<sup>6</sup> was aimed at heaven, at eternity, because the sick and suffering man had to feel much closer to eternity, to God or to real life, than the healthy one, who was often deceived by the illusion of his eternity on the ephemeral earth. Sickness was the sign that God was waiting for Him and that real life was not here but only after the angel of death called him to heaven.

We find it very difficult to accept this pedagogy of eternity through suffering, and we are more inclined to speak of suffering as divine punishment. Just as in the case of the man born blind: the apostles asked the Savior, exactly according to the mentality of the time, "who sinned: he or his parents were born blind."<sup>7</sup> In any case, this was the mentality of the world, because everyone saw disease as a divine punishment for who knows what sins committed by the ancestors or the sick. In the depths of the faith, the disease should be a revelation, namely the revelation of the eternity to which God calls you. Through it man becomes much more sensitive and transparent to eternity.

There were people (albeit not many) who assumed the disease as a confession or as a canon of eternity. They felt that suffering ennobles you and does not hate you. These were the martyrs, who saw in their death not pain or a state of panic, but a door to eternity alongside God. They were the seed that shaped the world, and through their death the Church of Christ was strengthened, and Christians took courage to live in the midst of threats. I was the model of an authentic relationship, without compromise with society: love and firmness in faith. However, as they said in Latin, *non multa sed multum*, not the quantity but the quality of the Christian life shaped society and

offered the martyr's paradigm. The suffering of the saints became the reason for the optimism of Christians on the path of sacredness.

Let us remember Saint Ignatius Theophorus who did not want to be pardoned but to be given to the lions, like the wheat that becomes flour for the eucharistical bread of Christ. This is the martyr. Totally different from the Islamic shahid, who wants to die while killing others. The Christian assumes the suffering out of the eternal love for God. The assumption of suffering made them holy, because it was not a fatalistic assumption but the desire for eternity with Christ. When God is a real part of your life, then death is also with Him and can be considered a gateway to eternity. Assuming suffering means the beginning of holiness.

Unfortunately, the lack of genuine faith has made us less confident in God and, as such, more desperate in the face of sickness and suffering. From the lack of faith we no longer felt suffering as the agapic pedagogy of eternity, because our whole existence was reduced to the ephemerality of the earth and life here. Science became the god of contemporary man, who blindly believed in it, waiting for it to offer him the eternity of matter and life here. That is why God in His divine pedagogy has allowed (not created) the sufferings of the world throughout history. Therefore, it is not God, but man who is the author of the current pandemic, and God has left man free, even to do evil, because that is the only way he could prove His divine love.

As such, it is not God who is the author of the current pandemic, for everything is in the hands of man, but it has been catastrophic, as many times in history when the human mind has generated wars and atrocities. The hand and mind of man without God created this virus, which led to this pandemic. And then he turned to fear. Fear has shown that we do not have the depth of faith. We wrap fear in all kinds of packaging but it is also called fear. For some it is the fear of disease, for others the fear of vaccines, the fear of war or calamity, or even of authoritarian regimes. I never thought that a world could become so fearful or that it could be so easily ruled by fear.

Fear is the opposite of the phrase "dare!" ("... for I have overcome the world..."). God came into the world to redeem man and especially to give him the courage to walk along the vector of eternity. The depressed man does not have the power of ascension, because fear puts a barrier in his existential path. Let us remember that the term "panic" comes from the demonic Pan, who produced fear when he appeared. Fear has become a social policy today. I am not talking about occult world organizations, but about a current called neo-Marxism, which tries through forcible laws and threats to lead the world to a universal moral ambiguity.

The world has thus entered an "age of fear," so that no one has courage and confidence, but each is afraid of the other. The mask on the face means protection, but also separation from the other, fear or flight that often turns into hatred. Never before have people looked at each other with more division and even hatred. I am not convinced that we are witnessing a "medical dictatorship," but the permanent fear or phobia of the other, with medical arguments, has led humanity to a fear of the other, which I call the "phobia of otherness." I think that the expression "homophobia" applies more correctly here and not to those who want the moral normality of life. I became homophobic through medical separation from the other, technically called "social distancing."

The expression “social distancing” is also false. Etymologically and semantically, these two words are excluded and cannot form an expression, because I am “social” when only when I approach my fellow man and I am “antisocial” when I distance myself from him. So you cannot be socially distanced but rather antisocial or counter-social. They probably thought of cosmeticizing the flight from the other or the distance from him and for this they added the term social, to make this flight, fear or distance seem milder. It is the exact opposite of the Christian line, which requires agape or love of the other, as the foundation of life in Christ.

Distance (social or antisocial) means the loss of the other’s face and this leads to the loss of dialogue and agapic relationship. The moment we lose face and dialogue we lose ourselves, as God’s unique creation, set on the highest existential standard. Multimedia socialization does not offer the form of dialogue that does not only mean the transmission of images and words, but in which everything becomes sacred and pneumatic. In the authentic Christian dialogue between people, everything is pneumatic. The word is no longer a simple combination of letters that conveys information, but it is an exchange of feelings and outpourings of depth through the grace that animates our lives. A graceful dialogue thus becomes a sharing of the other’s being. People in Christ become... the chalice of communion and communion. Thus the people of the faith become Eucharistic, for they receive Christ and then give Him through the logos and being to others.

How could the post-pandemic world recover from the universal fear that paralyzed humanity? It is a question that must be asked and solved otherwise the hiatus between people will widen even more. Who or what can bring the human community together to rebuild a face-to-face dialogue? This face-to-face dialogue has strengthened the communion between people throughout history. The Christian conscience, the consciousness that we are beings created by God and called to communion, has given people axiological verticality. The awareness that we are the only vertical beings in the love of God must make us worthy in the face of society, in which authoritarianism and dictatorship of any kind (medical, political, minority, etc.) must no longer be accepted. Man, through creation, is a free, conscious and upright being before God and creation.

The Christian conscience is at the same time the consciousness of the philo-creation and the recovery of the dignity of any man. The human person becomes upright before God and society not when he is constantly blamed and feared, but when he is loved and must also love and emanate love. And where should man feel the deepest state of love? In the house of God, where expressions like “to love one another, to confess in one thought...” are repeatedly heard. The church is the place of the formation of deep consciousness. The agapic recovery of human consciousness can be done not through a humanistic philosophy or ideology, but through the love of God poured out to us through the sacrifice of Christ.

It is also necessary on the part of the Church to bend to a new approach to man, who must feel the full love received as a gift and which is given further. Love must be given so that the world becomes an agapic paradigm, a space of love of heaven and earth, thus overcoming all the tensions of the world. Even religious tensions must be

overcome through agape and prayer. The struggle with heresy must be turned into a prayer for revealed truth. Good must be affirmed as a reflection of absolute good.<sup>8</sup>

There have been too many struggles for faith, of which I personally am not proud. Faith is not defended with the sword and heresy is not punished by fighting and killing. Only prayer for the revealed truth is the only answer to the otherness of faith. If we read carefully, Christ spoke of the example (“Even so let your light be shining before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven”: Mt. 5,16), and when the sword appears He rebukes (“Put back your sword: am I not to take the cup which my Father has given to me?": Jn. 8,11).

The relationship of the Church with the man of the third millennium must be an eminently agapic one, of awareness. Only in this way will the secularist and globalist man, infested by neo-Marxisms, feel that he has eternal value. The world with all its ideologies has been put to the test, that is, it cannot be more than it has shown in history: either slavery, or feudalism, capitalism, or communism. It comes back every time. It is now trying to make a combination of communism and consumer society, calling “neo-Marxism.” See? It can’t do more and it has no chance.

**I**F MARX became the new model of society in the third millennium, then we are deplorable. But unfortunately we do not see this or we do not have the verticality and dignity to recognize that what we are offered we have experienced before: communism without God with all its atrocities, now still preached by the intellectual world. These missionaries of Marxism can carry a laptop under their arm and not the sickle and hammer as before, for it is the same. Neo-Marxism can be taught in universities and imposed through the media and multimedia, because it is also about man against man and never about man for man or man with man for eternity.

Society can be, in their view, either capitalist or communist (or neo-communist) but never communionist and communitarian. The world for them is at most social, but not communion. Maybe they don’t even understand what this term means and how deep it is. What does communion mean for a man of secularist horizontality? Nothing but a gathering of people, of beings without dialogue, because they do not feel that every human being is a *prosopon* or a face in dialogue. It’s too little and too low.

For both offers of current politics (capitalism and neo-Marxism) man is only a number or a percentage in polls and statistics. Only in dialogical communion can we talk about dialogue and the person, about the faces through which souls speak. *Animus in oculis habitat* is a reality and not a simple word of wisdom. The soul speaks through the eyes and the face. Otherwise we remain rows of biological beings, counted and stored in statistical bases. In divine communion man is a pinnacle of nature, of creation and not an evolving link. Man is thus a partner in dialogue and not in obedience, a dialogue between himself and God, between himself and humanity, between himself and creation in general. Man with a sacred conscience can build a society in which each party matters and not just the ruling one, in which he is the sublime divine creation that must deify everything through its own sacredness.

Man thus becomes a priest of creation and humanity, in which each is equal to the other in their ascension to beauty, goodness and truth. In fact, these are the qualities of God: Good, Truth, and Beauty, in the superlative way. A society that imitates these qualities will also be divine through its vocation. Man, expressed in these parameters, becomes a syndesmos and not a link in the evolutionary chain, a more or less social animal (*zoon politikon*), unless he is imposed a “social distance.”

So only the agapic recovery of human consciousness will be able to restore humanity, which could be understood from the experience of the pandemic, its path to transcendence. We could then talk about the sign and meaning of the pandemic, as a re-awareness of the path we are taking. At that time we can use the expression “pandemic theology” or “pandemic theophany,” because the rediscovery of consciousness during this disease means the reunion with God. Man in his religious-moral conscience meets God and through Him he relates to the world and society. As such, a religious consciousness in the pandemic space is, in fact, the assumption of life with all its states, in the name of God.

I have said many times that life here is not life, but the road to life, and as such the road does not matter, but its end is important: reaching the eternity of life. The road remains a road, with its beauties, its landscapes but also its roughness. It is the way home, because we have left eternity and we return to it. Returning to eternity is in fact the path of life through matter. It is the theology of seeking and returning to God from where we left through disobedience. It is the mystery of search and retrieval. Man who has just reached eternity is found to be in essence, for until then he is dispersed in matter.

We have not yet reached the consciousness of divine providence, to feel that everything has a meaning and we go through these meanings to eternity. The consciousness of divine providence makes us understand the telos of creation, with its pluses and minuses, and how to overcome them, finding their meaning. Understanding the divine message, we will see that both good and evil have a pedagogical meaning, which can lead us to divine eternity. On the way to God man can meet both good and evil, but the end is important: the attainment of eternity in the divine mystery. For better or for worse, if we want we can discover the divine wisdom and through it we find the mystery of human existence on earth, even the meaning of suffering.

We live this mystery without understanding it or in most cases we only understand what we want. The disease has its mystery that goes beyond the earthly meaning. There are several phases in the course of suffering and the Church must expose them to the people. The first phase of the disease begins with the question: “Why?,” “Why me?” It is like a rebellion against God, telling Him that there are other sinners who need to be punished. It is the shock of the man who sees himself ill and who had many plans in life. Man will understand in time why this is happening, only when he realizes that his life is connected to heaven and not to earth.

Here appears a theology of disease that we see permanently as the retribution for sins. And in the case of the man born blind, the strange question was, “who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” He or his parents?” (Jn. 9:1–3). The

question is thus falsely asked, because if a child is born blind, how can he sin to receive such a punishment? The Savior answers that He is blind to reveal in Him the power of God. In other words, there is a disease in which the transparency of God can be seen.

In other words, we can accept sickness in order to show in it the power of God, but only when we feel that our life is connected with eternity. What does God's power mean in the helplessness of disease? It is a mystery that goes beyond our reason or the logic of the human mind. In the disease there is a theophany that the person affected by the suffering can feel. Here I am talking about the experience of many who have converted in these moments of tension of the disease. They felt closer to God when they suffered than when they were happy and healthy. So there is a much deeper encounter in suffering with God than in health and joy.

Only in this way can you understand the mystery of suffering and especially its transcendental pedagogy. The pandemic has a transcendental pedagogy that must be discovered by everyone, because everyone understands it in their own way. As such, there is a personal heuristic of this state, in which God is at the end. Everyone discovers transcendence in their own way, in the atmosphere of the disease. Unfortunately, there are many who discover nothing or almost nothing: at most a self-victimization and an accusation for what happened.

Recognizing Europe means returning to true values.<sup>9</sup> Obviously, there were false values in history that distorted the European spirit. Even Christianity has had in history its moments of deviation from the depths of the faith. All must be assumed and for possible mistakes one can ask forgiveness from history and from God. But what needs to be restored is the deep state of agapic Christianity, which sees the other as a gift from God. We need this recovery of depth so that we can rediscover the meaning of a united Europe. United Europe has many advantages, as it brings people closer together, eliminating the disjunctions of far-right nationalisms.

Every people is called to preserve its ethnic and national values, because only through them does that wonderful people remain in a united Europe. National value must not be annihilated, but neither can it be transformed into extremism and ethnic exclusivism. You can't love your people until you come to hate other people. The competition of nations should become their complementarity, because each nation can complete the other through the depth of feelings. Tolerance, love and complementarity between peoples are the signs of an authentic Christian conscience. When the expressions "pride of being..." (Romanian, German, French, etc.) disappear and are replaced with the depth "joy of being," then people will have a beautiful perception of the value of the other.

Certainly, we are at an impasse between asserting ourselves and being asserted by others. If I assert myself, I'm in competition with others. If the other person appreciates me and affirms me, we are in a complementarity. We live in this state of misunderstanding the other because we cultivate a feeling of narcissism, so damaging in the relationship with the other. The consciousness of otherness can make us forgiving and happy for others. The great Christian mystery is to enjoy the presence of others around you and to see them as gifts given by God for communion with you. However, the



state of competition that would generate progress is false. It is not through envy of the other that progress is born, but through the awareness that we work “as for God, not as for men.” Unfortunately, this mentality of the heavenly consciousness in us does not exist or is so easily annihilated by the materialist and empiricist conception that dominates us. The world needs the re-awareness of the sacred in us, in order to put on a clear basis the social relations that have been damaged.

Christian morality is truly authentic, and no one can contradict or complete this deep ethical line. It is the most extensive social program, because it realizes the deepest connection between people. Nowhere in any law do phrases like “love your neighbor as yourself” appear (Mt. 22:37). Here the law is overwhelmed by the divine depth. People are no longer partners or statistical figures, quantified and coordinated by civil or criminal codes, but are brothers in creation and soteriology. It is the highest level that man can aspire to: eternity lived in immanence. In such a society, no one has enemies but the one who sabotages the happiness of heaven (the devil). Recovery from this post-pandemic depression is no longer about drugs and vaccines, but about the awareness of the Christian depths, through which people live the relationship of brotherhood in creation. The return to that sacred towel with which people look at themselves and through which they transmit their feelings of love and respect, can only be made by the one who feels in the other the iconic reality of the Creator, that is, the divine image we each carry within us.

Far from being a return to dogmatism, Europeans must rediscover their simple roots of authentic, agapic Christianity. Knowing God does not mean memorizing dogmatic definitions, but first and foremost discovering the sacred and loving reality of God’s presence in true revelation. After gaining this awareness of sacred reality, which makes us change our perspective on the whole of creation, we resume a new process of recovery of man and of the society in which we live. Society must not become theocratic or ecclesiocratic in order to reach the consciousness of divine holiness. The mission of the Church of Christ is not to become a parliament, but to transform parliaments into spaces of faith, where leaders are aware of the divine presence and the agapic relationship between people. Then the expression “fear of God” will translate into love for Him and fear of upsetting Him out of love. Then people will not work because there are laws and cameras, but out of conscience. Truly then we will speak of the thing that is “well-done,” not as an electoral slogan, but as a norm of life, which has an aspect, namely from the “well-done” thing to the “profoundly done” thing, culminating in the “sacredly made” thing.

**I**N CONCLUSION, without an authentic Christian conscience, the world cannot recover itself and regain its historical, spiritual and cultural values. Without this consciousness we will live in such a damaging pseudo-history, pseudo-culture and atheist neo-Marxism. Our children will accuse us of destroying their roots and spirit, leaving them without the power to stand upright in the face of the nebulous future. Without the divine consciousness in them, people will live without roots and without a future, transformed into electoral, impersonal masses, threatened and organized without their will by all kinds of world interests, without knowing where they are

going. In the lie in which we stubbornly lived, we destroyed our descendants, leaving them without a spine. A world without a sacred conscience is a dead world. □

## Notes

1. There are a number of other works that address the topic of a world of suffering, which, however, did not understand much of this pain. About these issues, see: Lawrence Knorr et al., *After the Pandemic: Visions of Life Post Covid-19* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Sunbury Press, 2020); James Ball and Kristie Brown-Lofland, *Autism after the Pandemic: A Step by Step Guide to Successfully Transition Back to School and Work*, preface by Temple Grandin (Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, 2020); Ion Bria, *Ortodoxia în Europa: Locul spiritualității române* (Iași: Trinitas, Editura Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, 1995); Andrei Marga, *Religia în era globalizării* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2004); Gheorghe Popa, *Comuniune și înnoire spirituală în contextul secularizării lumii moderne* (Iași: Trinitas, 2000); Vasile Răducă, “Grija Bisericii față de mediul ambiant,” *Studii teologice* (Bucharest) 62, 3 (1990): 105–119.
2. See Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, with a foreword by Charles Taylor, translated by Oscar Burge (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
3. Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, translated by Edith M. Riley, Arne Englund Nash, and Mark Sebanc (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 66.
4. About the consumerist man, Viorel Rotilă says: “The new man has appeared! He is the man of consumption! It is the individual who feels like a stranger in nature if he does not carry with him the objects of consumption that mediate even his relationship with himself. He is appaled to sit on the grass, he is afraid of the creatures that swarm around him, united as if by a plot aimed at undermining his comfort, and his physiological needs become almost insurmountable problems. He needs the sound and visual ambience of the eternally on television set, the rustle of nature being accessible to him only through the mediation of technology, in a sterilized version that removes any dirt. His nose, grown in the olfactory spectrum of designer perfumes and various types of fragrances, perceives only possible similarities with them.” Cf. Viorel Rotilă, *Omul societății de consum: În așteptarea unei noi ideologii* (Iași: Institutul European, 2011), 33.
5. Nichifor Tănase, “A treia ispită: ‘Cetățeni de credință’ a unei ‘religii civile,’” in *Postmodernismul—o provocare pentru creștinismul contemporan*, edited by Vasile Vlad, Radu Trifon, and Alexandru Vlad (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea; Deva: Editura Episcopiei Devei și Hunedoarei, 2015), 285.
6. Everything thus becomes suffering, including the present culture. “The drama of secular culture consists in the complete abandonment to the private consciousness of the problem of truth and the expulsion from public debate of the ultimate anthropological questions.” Cf. Teofil Tia, *Descrăștinarea: O “apocalipsă” a culturii* (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2009), 339.

7. However, the question was false, for he could not sin and then be born blind. When to sin if he was born blind? Before what? Of his procreation? So there was a sophistry in this false question.
8. The rev. prof. says in this regard: “A reason that does not serve the good becomes absurd.” Cf. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos lumina lumii și Îndumnezeitorul omului*, edited by Monica Dumitrescu (Bucharest: Anastasia, 1993), 26.
9. There is a need for the “unconditional Christian responsibility for humanity and creation,” as Professor Stăniloae says in the study “Responsabilitatea creștină,” *Ortodoxia* (Bucharest) 22, 2 (1970): 185.

### **Abstract**

#### Recovering Life in a Post-Pandemic Era

The study focuses on the idea of a confused society, which seems to have no meaning after the pandemic. The world is not the same as before and unfortunately it is experiencing depression and moral confusion. It is therefore necessary to return to the consciousness of values and this can only be found in Christianity. We are now living the drama of an isolated humanity. I am convinced that the isolation of people did not happen now, during the pandemic, but before, through selfishness and self-isolation in consumerism. Social networking sites have been and remain just ways to present our isolated “happiness” in our comfort. Our only goal has been our economic comfort. The pandemic changed our scale of values for a moment, but it still did not take us out of the isolation of our selves. Only a re-awareness of our vocation as religious, Christian beings can bring us back to real communion.

### **Keywords**

pandemic, consciousness, consumerism, depression, communion

# The Reform of the Romanian Liturgy at the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

## Anthim the Iberian and His Legacy

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WITHOUT GETTING into historiographical disputes regarding the chronological boundaries delimitating modernity according to generally valid concepts and events,<sup>1</sup> the present paper uses the term ‘modernity’ in its fundamental sense of *current, contemporary*, in opposition to *classical, traditional*. It would be difficult to find a generally accepted definition, as defining modernity involves perspectives, context and the angle from which one approaches the issue; even in the same epoch, the artist, the philosopher, the politician or the theologian may have different views on modernity. Therefore the term can be applied to different periods, to various milieus and perspectives, the only condition being to keep the antithetical tension “old-new.”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, all the events or processes that conspicuously change the classic paradigms can be considered landmarks in establishing the boundaries of modernity (or premodernity). For instance, the landmark for the *leitourgia*<sup>3</sup> of the Romanian Church can be ab initio the appearance of the first formularies printed on the territory of the Romanian Principalities (1508–1512), regarding this technical, as well as cultural event as the cause of this *revolution* which imposes change and initiates the process of unification and homogenization of these formularies. For a chronology of the modernity of the Romanian liturgy one should take into account the process of translating liturgical texts into Romanian. Undoubtedly, this dissociation of the local events from the universal trends and macro events might appear as a sort of Balkan autarchy. However, local realities have always been asynchronous to the universal main trend. Consequently, defining a kind of modernity in the Romanian Orthodox Church must attend to the specific context and to those landmarks which can be included in the antithetical binomial classic (old)–modern (current).

## 1. The Romanian Orthodox Church and Its Own Modernity

LATE FEUDALISM, the governing system and the lack of a powerful identity and national consciousness made Romanians experience modernity later than Western countries. Analyzing the political and cultural events of Romanian society diachronically, it could be argued that the Romanian Orthodox Church entered modernity only at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, from a liturgical point of view, we will mark the start of the modern epoch in the year 1885, when the Church gained autocephaly, an event which created an absolute and definitive canonical and especially liturgical independence for the Romanian Orthodox Church.

After establishing this chronological landmark, in a natural and logical way, the previous period must be included in what would be called the ecclesial premodernity of the Romanian Church,<sup>5</sup> that era of reforms without a Reform.<sup>6</sup> The present paper will identify those structural and general elements which define and characterize this period from a liturgical point of view, highlighting the manner in which adopting some unique euchological models contributed to the emergence of a unitary ecclesial and confessional conscience, which was in some ways almost adverse to the historical and political realities that made Romanians live in separated principalities.

In this period, in the absence of some clear chronological milestones, we can still distinguish a few stages marked by cultural and liturgical realities which determined significant alterations compared to the previous epoch:

a) The period of translations as private initiatives (from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century)—characterized by the appearance of unsystematic manuscript texts with various, non-homogenous formularies. In this period, either under the influence of personal needs or under the influence of the Reformation (in Transylvania), local initiatives determined the emergence of a specific language of the Romanian *leitourgia*. The manuscripts circulated in parallel with officially printed editions that were still too expensive and were accessible only with difficulty. Identifying the sources is quite difficult for this period, because the lack of information makes it almost impossible to clarify whether a manuscript reproduces a printed text or the other way around. However, this is the moment when there appeared a technical liturgical language; the liturgical expressions and formulae acquire greater and more uniform consistence and stability. For example, even if for the same formulary one can identify different sources, the formulas of ektenes/litanies etc. are permanent and contribute decisively to the uniformization of the liturgical language.<sup>7</sup> Under the pressure of the neighboring models, the three Romanian regions produced translations and/or printed editions from various sources: Slavic-Ruthenian, Middle-Bulgarian, Serbian or Greek. This epoch is also characterized by the awareness of the necessity of some unifying formularies, liturgical directives and rubrics.<sup>8</sup>

b) The liturgical reform of Anthim the Iberian, the unification of liturgical formularies and the generalization of the Anthimian editions (the eighteenth century). Starting with 1706, the year when Anthim published the Great Euchologion in Râmnic (with the three Liturgies), and up to the end of the eighteenth century, the Euchologion of

Anthim the Iberian imposes itself on the entire territory inhabited by Romanians. Under one form or another, due to historical circumstances, all the editions of the Euchologion and of the Hieratikon in this period are versions of Anthim's editions. Sometimes the similarities even include the repetition of errors in successive editions.<sup>9</sup> The contemporary Romanian Euchologion is still tributary to the Anthimian one.

c) The period of the introduction of the Latin alphabet (1859–1885). This period is more relevant for the history of literature than for the history of the *leitourgia*, in the sense that it was the time when the supradialectal norms of the literary language were introduced. For the Church, the only notable fact is the introduction of the Latin alphabet for written texts. As a result, this period is at the very most in the epoch of the premodernity of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Autocephaly ended this period and placed the Romanian Orthodox Church in a new context of ecclesial history.

## 2. Anthim's Euchologion: An Instrument of the Unification and Homogenization of the Romanian Liturgy

IT MAY appear exaggerated to call Anthim the Iberian's editorial project a reform; Violeta Barbu has no doubts in this respect.<sup>10</sup> However, she does not analyze the issue in detail, limiting her observations to a few criteria of the Anthimian reform to support her allegation: the use of several sources (the selection of printed texts and the use of Romanian texts in the autochthonous manuscripts) and the adoption of the biblical-canonic argumentation for the use of the vernacular language (1 Cor. 14.6—Coresi's argument and the commentary of Theodor Balsamon on the freedom to use the vernacular languages—the argument of Dosoftei). We do not know whether he was aware of the reforming role of his endeavor. However, it is certain that Anthim the Iberian had a unique influence on the worship of the Romanian Orthodox Church. His ascension to the episcopal see of Râmnic and then to the Metropolitan See of Wallachia marks the changing of the liturgical paradigm (at least for the Euchologion and for the Hieratikon), as the basic source of the text published by him in 1706 is no longer of Slavonic origin, like the majority of the editions he printed, but of Greek origin, as stated in the title—*Euchologhion, adică Molitvenic, acum întâi într-acesta chip tipărit și așezat după rânduiala celui grecesc* (Euchologion, now in this way printed and organized according to the order of the Greek one)—and it is reinforced by Anthim himself in an endnote, which indicates the edition of Nikolaos Glykis, printed in Venice in 1691, as its main source (fol. 233r). According to Chițulescu, the editor's preference for the liturgical Greek tradition, to the detriment of the Slavonic one can be explained by taking into account Anthim's cultural background in the Greek ecclesial milieu in Constantinople, as well as the lack of trust in the liturgical books of Slavonic origin, impregnated with Latin theological influences, visible in the books of Peter Mohyla, completely removed by the reform of Nikon.<sup>11</sup>

Our arguments demonstrate that the changes brought about by Anthim through his Euchologion were fairly radical ones (especially in certain liturgical Offices), marking an



important shift in liturgical practice in all three Romanian provinces at the beginning of the eighteenth century. We will compare the formularies of the Holy Mysteries included in the Euchologion from Râmnic, 1706 (= RÂM) to the ones included in the four editions of the Euchologion printed in the Romanian territory in the seventeenth century: the Slavic Euchologion from Câmpulung—1635 (= CL), the Romanian Euchologion from Iași—1681, edited by Metropolitan Dosoftei (= DOS), the Romanian Euchologion from Bălgrad—1689 (BLG) and the bilingual Euchologion (Slavic-Romanian) from Buzău—1699 (= BUZ). CL, BLG and BUZ follow the Slavic liturgical tradition, while DOS represents a synthesis of the contemporary Slavic and Greek practice.

## 2.1. Baptismal Rites

**I**N ALL Euchologia the prebaptismal rites begin with the Ordo on the first day after a woman has given birth to a child. In RÂM and DOS the rite contains only the three prayers for the accouchée (and child), the same as in the Greek Euchologion and the received rite (“O Master, Lord Almighty, Who heals every sickness...,” “O Master, Lord our God, Who was born of our Most-holy Sovereign Lady...,” “O Lord, our God, Who was well-pleased to come down from heaven...”). In addition to these, CL, BLG and BUZ had prayers for the midwife and the other women who helped during the labor and afterwards. The Rite at the naming of a child on the eighth day after birth does not suffer significant differences in the studied Euchologia. Regarding the Rite of churching on the fortieth day after childbirth, in RÂM the ordo is placed before the Office of Holy Baptism, as in the Greek Euchologion, while in the other Slavic-Romanian Euchologia (except DOS) it is placed after Baptism. RÂM settles the rite of bringing the male child into the sanctuary, a practice which is not mentioned by BUZ and other Slavic-Romanian manuscripts from the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries (although it is indicated in CL, BLG and DOS).

Regarding the Office of Baptism, RÂM sets permanently the formulas for the prebaptismal anointing, indicated by the Greek Euchologion and previously in DOS, whilst CL and BLG contained only the formula “The servant of God *N* is anointed...” and BUZ had more elaborate formulas also found in the Trebnik of Peter Mohyla<sup>12</sup> (except the last one for the anointment of the feet).

After the threefold immersion, RÂM, just as DOS and BUZ, indicated the triple recitation of Ps. 31, followed by the vesting of the neophyte, while CL and BLG mentioned first the vesting and afterwards the recitation of the Psalm just once. All documents have the present vesting formula, but RÂM, just like DOS and BUZ, specify the chanting of the troparion “Give unto me a shining robe...,” while CL and BLG have instead the scriptural formula: Is. 61,10.

RÂM includes the Rite of ablution in the Office of Baptism, just as DOS and the Greek Euchologion, whereas CL, BLG and BUZ prescribe this rite for the eighth day after Baptism and Chrismation. Moreover, in these three Euchologia the Rite of tonsure was attached to the Office of Baptism; however, in RÂM, after the scriptural readings a rubric prescribed the *ektene* and the dismissal; then, another rubric, absent from the Greek Euchologion,

allowed the celebrant to follow the ancient custom of performing the ablution and tonsure on the eight day, or immediately after the Office of Baptism and Chrismation, according to the local practice.

## 2.2. Betrothal, Coronation and Digamia

**A**CCORDING TO CL, BLG and BUZ, the rite of Betrothal is described as follows: the initial blessing, the litany, the prayer “O God eternal, Who bringest them that are divided unto unity...,” the exchange of rings with the present formula (“The servant/handmaid of God N is betrothed...”), dextrarum iunctio (in BUZ), the kefaloklisia “O Lord our God, Who hast espoused the Church...,” the ektene and dismissal.<sup>13</sup> RÂM, just like DOS, indicates the exchange of rings after the kefaloklisia and adds the prayer “O Lord our God, Who didst accompany the servant of the patriarch Abraham...,” as in the received rite.

Regarding the Ordo of Coronation, there is a large diversity of redaction in the documents.<sup>14</sup> Although the office begins with Ps. 127 in all Euchologia, the responsorial interpretation (with the refrain “Glory to Thee...”) is mentioned only in DOS, BLG, and RÂM. Then, all documents prescribe the litany. After that, CL and BLG provide only two prayers: “O God most pure, and the Fashioner of all...” and “O Holy God, Who didst form man from the dust...” while DOS, BUZ, and RÂM add another between the two: “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God...” Next, according to CL and BLG the priest crowns the spouses, making with the crowns the sign of the cross over their heads and saying a formula taken from Ps. 8,5b–Ps. 20,3b<sup>15</sup> and joining their right hands. DOS mentions the present formula, “The servant/handmaid of God N is crowned for the handmaid/servant of God N, in the name of the Father...,” said only once for each spouse; then, the sponsor exchanges their crowns three times, an act which is not mentioned in the Greek Euchologion. The dextrarum iunctio is not recalled. BUZ has a shorter and older formula than DOS, “The servant/handmaid of God N is crowned in the name of the Father...”<sup>16</sup> followed by the dextrarum iunctio. According to RÂM, the priest says the present formula three times for each spouse, makes the sign of the cross with the crowns over their heads and blesses them, chanting three times “O Lord our God, crown them with glory and honor,” as in the received practice. In all 17<sup>th</sup> century Euchologia the crowning is followed by the ancient prayer “O Lord our God, Who didst crowned Thy holy Martyrs...,”<sup>17</sup> which is absent in RÂM and fell into disuse. Regarding the scriptural readings, CL, BLG and BUZ prescribe the apostolic lesson according to 1 Cor. 7,7–17, proper to the Slavic tradition,<sup>18</sup> while DOS and RÂM have the current reading according to Eph. 5,20–33. The gospel according to Jn. 2,1–11 is present in all the documents. It is succeeded by an ektene, followed in CL and BLG by the prayer “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God...,” the litany with aiteiseis, the kiss of peace (after the model of the Eucharistic Liturgy), and the Lord’s Prayer; conversely, in DOS, BUZ, and RÂM, the ektene is followed by the kefaloklisia “O Lord our God, Who in Thy saving providence...,” the litany with aiteiseis and the Lord’s Prayer. After the “Our Father,” CL and BLG mention the call to Communion and the communion of the spouses; this act is re-

garded as optional in BLG. The rite of the common cup follows, which in DOS, BUZ, and RÂM is prescribed right after the Lord's Prayer. Only CL mentions the Pauline exhortation (Phil. 4,4–6).<sup>19</sup> After the spouses have partaken from the common cup, according to CL, BLG, and BUZ, followed the chanting of the Prokeimenon Ps. 79,15–16, accompanied in CL and BLG by the verses: Ps. 111,1a; Ps. 111,2a; Ps. 111,2b–3a and in BUZ only by Ps. 111,2. The liturgical “dance” is not explicitly stated in these three Euchologia. After the Prokeimenon other troparia are provided: “O holy Martyrs, who fought the good fight...,” “Glory to Thee, O Christ God...” and “O Virgin, who only are pure and undefiled...” RÂM, much like DOS, indicates the liturgical “dance” and the three troparia currently in use: “Rejoice, O Isaiah...” and the first two from above. In CL the removal of the crowns is prescribed during the recitation of the prayer “O Lord, our God, Who didst come to Cana...,” which is instead preceded in BLG, DOS, BUZ and RÂM by the current exhortations for the groom and bride (“Be exalted, O bridegroom...” etc.). CL mentions then a procession to the home of the newlyweds, where the priest places the crowns and recites a prayer “for adorning the bride,” which is, in fact, an ancient Palestinian prayer for the blessing of the bedchamber.<sup>20</sup> The rite concludes with the dismissal. Although the prayer is also mentioned in BLG, its initial purpose has been lost; thus, a rubric prescribes that the celebrant recites it in church, not at the house of the newlyweds. After the crown-removal prayer, BUZ instructs the priest to make an exhortation to the spouses and dismiss them, while DOS and RÂM prescribe the prayer “May the Father, and the Son...,” after which the sponsor kisses the newlyweds and the priest dismisses them. The Rite for the taking off the Crowns on the eight day is absent from all the documents, although it is present in the Greek Euchologion.

The most significant changes introduced into the Romanian practice by RÂM can be seen in the case of the Office of Digamia. This ordo does not appear in DOS, but in CL, BLG and BUZ it is described as follows: the initial blessing, the Trisagion prayers, the troparion and condakion of the day, the litany, the prayers “O Master, Lord our God, Who sparest all...” and “O Lord Jesus Christ, Word of God...,” the coronation of the spouse who has not been married previously (if it is the case), the readings (Apostle: Eph. 5,25–33; Gospel: Mt. 19,3–12), the prayer “O Lord, our God, Who didst called Abraham friend...,” the *ektene* and dismissal.<sup>21</sup> In RÂM, for the first time in the Romanian Euchologion, are included the Scroll of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (who states that one married for a second time must not be crowned—as in the old Slavic-Romanian practice), and the Reply of the blessed Nicetas of Heraclea, who allows the coronation of those marrying a second time, according to the practice of the Great Church. These are the primary changes introduced by RÂM: a) the Betrothal is celebrated; b) the first two prayers of the Office of Digamia mentioned above are followed by the third prayer from the Rite of Coronation; c) the crowning of the spouses takes place even if they were married in the past; d) from the scriptural readings onwards the rest of the office is the same as that for a first marriage. The crowning, the rite of the common cup and the liturgical “dance” introduced in the Office of Digamia were, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, major innovations for Romanian liturgical practice. All these rites expressed a festive and sumptuous flavor, improper for the more penitential and sober character of the old office.

### 2.3. The Office of Confession

**I**N THE case of this Office RÂM also brings significant changes to the Romanian liturgical practice. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century CL, DOS, BLG, and BUZ described a complex ordo, which had the following form: initial blessing and prayers, Ps. 50, Ps. 4, the prayer “O Lord, God of our salvation, Merciful and Compassionate, Long-suffering and Greatly-merciful, Who didst bow the heavens...,” Ps. 6, the prayer “O Master Lord Almighty, Who call the righteous to holiness...,” Ps. 12, the prayer “O God, our Savior, Who by Thy prophet Nathan...,” the priestly exhortations to the penitent and the confession, the prayer “O Lord our God, Who didst forgive the sins of Peter and the Harlot...,” the scriptural readings (Apostle: 1 Tim. 1,15–17; Gospel: Mt. 9,9–13), the dismissal; if the penitent was worthy of receiving Communion, the priest recited the absolution prayer “May God Who pardoned David through Nathan...,” but if he was unworthy and assigned a penance at the end of the period of exclusion from Communion the penitent returned to the priest who recited two prayers “O Deeply-compassionate and Merciful Lord, Who art Good and Lover of Mankind, Who for Thy compassion’s sake, didst send Thine Only-begotten Son into the world...” and “Our Master and Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst command to His disciples and apostles...”<sup>22</sup>

Starting with RÂM, this complex office falls into disuse. RÂM has only two prayers for those who repent, just as the Greek Euchologion, namely “O God, our Saviour, Who by Thy prophet Nathan...” and “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, the Shepherd and the Lamb...” Both prayers are found among the prayers for various needs. The Romanian editor of RÂM, although eager to align the Romanian practice to the contemporary Greek one, is aware of this major change and, at the end of the Euchologion, inserts a short teaching containing the conditions that which must be respected by the spiritual father and a short description of how the rite must be celebrated:

- a) the priest and the penitent stand before the icon of Christ;
- b) the priest says the opening blessing and the initial prayers, followed by Ps. 50;
- c) the priest sits “with honor, as he represents Christ,” while the penitent kneels and bows his head with fear of God and humility;
- d) the priest addresses the penitent: “Behold, child, Christ invisibly stands here...” and the confession follows;
- e) the priest recites the penitential troparia and the two prayers mentioned above;
- f) the rite concludes with an ektene and the usual dismissal.

For the first time in RÂM is included the warning “Behold, child, Christ invisibly stands here...,” which is not part of the Greek practice, but is found in the Trebnik of Mohyla (1646) and of Patriarch Nikon (1658). The Romanian editor did not, however, include the declarative formula of absolution (“May our Lord and God, Jesus Christ... forgive you... and I, an unworthy priest through His power given unto me forgive you and absolve you...”), known in the contemporary Slavic tradition. However, unfortunately, the editor did not maintain the ancient prayer for forgiveness “O Lord our God, Who didst forgive the sins of Peter and the Harlot...” which from this point on, was no longer part of the Romanian Ordo of Confession.

## 2.4. The Office of Anointing the Sick

**R**EGARDING THE Office of Anointing the Sick RÂM and DOS have some differences when compared to CL, BLG<sup>23</sup> and BUZ, such as:<sup>24</sup>

a) within the enarxis the responsorial chanting of “Alleluia” is indicated rather than “God is our Lord...” (as in the Slavic-Romanian Euchologia);

b) the Katavasia “Raise up Thy servant...,” prescribed in CL, BLG, and BUZ after each ode of the Canon, is suppressed;

c) the exapostilaria “In mercy, O Good One...” is added after the Canon;

d) RÂM adds in the Romanian practice the blessing “Blessed is the Kingdom...” before the litany of the sanctification of the oil;

e) RÂM replaces definitely in the Romanian practice the eight troparia on each tone dedicated to the Theotokos and chanted during the recitation of the Prayer of the Oil by each priest, proper to the Slavic tradition, with the current troparia dedicated to the Lord, the Theotokos, the Apostle James and other Unmercenaries Healers and Wonderworkers Saints;

f) RÂM, as well as DOS, prescribes the current selection of readings and definitely suppresses the alternative Gospel lessons for the case when the sick is a woman, proper to the Slavic tradition. The differences between RÂM and DOS and the other 17<sup>th</sup> century Slavic-Romanian Euchologia can be observed in the following table:

		CL, BLG, BUZ	DOS, RÂM
Group 1	Apostle	Jm. 5,10–16	Jm. 5,10–16
	Gospel	Jn. 5,1–15	Lk. 10,25–37
	Gospel (woman)	Mt. 10,5–8	X
Group 2	Apostle	Rm. 15,1–7	Rm. 15,1–7
	Gospel	Lk. 19,1–10	Lk. 19,1–10
	Gospel (woman)	Mk. 6,7–13	X
Group 3	Apostle	1 Cor. 12,27–31; 13,1–8	1 Cor. 12,27–31;13,1–8
	Gospel	Mt. 10,5–8	Mt. 10,5–8
	Gospel (woman)	Lk. 9,1–6	X
Group 4	Apostle	2 Cor. 6,16–18; 7,1	2 Cor. 6,16–18; 7,1
	Gospel	Mk. 6,7–13	Mt. 8,14–23
	Gospel (woman)	Mt. 9,18–26	X
Group 5	Apostle	Gal. 2,16–20	2 Cor. 1,8–11
	Gospel	Jn. 14,28–31; 15,1–7	Mt. 25,1–13
	Gospel (woman)	Mk. 5,24–34	X
Group 6	Apostle	Col. 3,12–16	Gal. 5,22–26; 6,1–2
	Gospel	Lk. 7,36–47	Mt. 15,21–28
	Gospel (woman)	Lk. 8,41–56	X
Group 7	Apostle	Eph. 6,10–17	1 Thess. 5,14–23
	Gospel	Mt. 6,14–21	Mt. 9,9–13
	Gospel (woman)	Mt. 8,14–23	X

g) of the seven prayers heptadic system, CL, BLG, and BUZ offer the abbreviated form of the first four, according to the Slavic tradition,<sup>25</sup> whilst RÂM maintains only the short version of the first prayer, the others being written in their full form, as in the current version (DOS is the only Euchologion which gives the elaborated version of all the prayers).

### 3. Why Did Anthim's New Paradigm Succeed?

THE EUCHOLOGION from Râmnic is not the first Romanian edition seeking to change the liturgical structures according to the Greek model. In certain aspects, Dosoftei's Euchologion is even more faithful to the Greek model than RÂM. The difference between the two is that Metropolitan Dosoftei did not abandon in a radical way the liturgical Slavic-Romanian local tradition, which can be clearly seen in the case of the formulary for the Confession of sins.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, Metropolitan Anthim assumes a radical change, which he suggests in an endnote where he justifies abandoning the formulary for the *Quick Administration of Communion to the Sick* through the fact that this is not to be found in the Greek practice (RÂM, fol. 442r).<sup>27</sup>

Another difference between DOS and RÂM consists in the impact these two Euchologia had on the Romanians' *leitourgia*. Although similar, the two endeavors had different results: whereas Dosoftei's initiative had a very small influence on Romanian liturgical practice, Anthim's definitively changed the euchological models. Some complained about the clumsy, immature language, full of too many regionalisms,<sup>28</sup> others about the tendency to preserve certain local traditions—the possible reason behind these reactive attitudes towards the practices put forward by Dosoftei.

However, perhaps the most important difference between the two Euchologies regards the social, political and ecclesial context in which they were printed. First, from a liturgical point of view, the process of weakening and even abandoning some liturgical practices belonging to the old Slavic-Romanian tradition acquired a powerful character. Influences of the contemporary Greek Euchologia had started to be perceived, either directly or through the revised Slavic Trebniks, favored by the liturgical reforms of Peter Mohyla, the Metropolitan of Kiev, and by Nikon, the Patriarch of Moscow.

Second, Metropolitan Anthim the Iberian worked in a period already acknowledged as “the pinnacle of old Romanian culture in Wallachia,”<sup>29</sup> in a Romanian province that acquired under the auspices of the reign of Constantin Brâncoveanu

*the position of patron of Orthodoxy, an important characteristic of this epoch being the powerful cultural and ecclesial Greek influence (directed by the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Dositheos and Chrysanthus) on the leading group, but also on the autochthonous local clergy.*<sup>30</sup>

The Greek trend became more emphatic in Wallachia, after the reign of Brâncoveanu, as well as in Moldavia, through the Phanariot rule, which undoubtedly had consequences for the large scale acceptance of the Greek euchological models to the detriment of the Slavic ones.



Third, the Greek theological model (including the liturgical model) represented in the epoch a guarantee of the loyalty to Orthodoxy,<sup>31</sup> since Uniation had appeared in Transylvania, but also in the context of the weakening of the Ruthenian ecclesial centers, troubled by theological disputes, by Latinizing influences and by the liturgical reform of Nikon, which ended up in a schism, unsolved to the present day.

Fourth, the innovative pressure of the political and cultural trends coming from Europe, including the reforming ones of the newly appeared Reformed Church—whose single goal seemed to be to renounce the past and to establish new paradigms, but also the problems in its own structures determined the need for an internal reform of the Romanian Church. Besides the problems of discipline and of immorality of the clergy and of the faithful, of superstition or of absenteeism,<sup>32</sup> there was also the old problem of the lack of understanding of the Slavonic liturgical language by the clergy and by the people, a problem which had reached unacceptable limits.<sup>33</sup> Whether Anthim had in mind or not the idea of worship reformation is less important, but the result of his action was obvious. His endeavor—the equivalent of a snowball rolling—initiated a complex and irreversible process. This new historical and liturgical reality allowed Violeta Barbu to assert that

*the duty of the liturgical reform was to readjust the liturgical system (in terms of culture and discourse) to a new social and cultural situation to the extent in which it should correspond completely to the experience of faith of a community. It is exactly what the Romanian society wished for at the end of the seventeenth century: an active, communal, orderly and unitary celebration.*<sup>34</sup>

We find it obvious that Metropolitan Anthim the Iberian accomplished a complex work of reformation and renewal of the life of the Church, aiming both to discipline and educate the clergy<sup>35</sup> and to catechize the faithful,<sup>36</sup> but especially to translate service books. The direct intervention on the liturgical formularies by cautiously adopting Greek contemporary models had a decisive importance for the Romanian liturgy. Thus, in the case of the Euchologion (but also of the Leiturgikon) all the successive editions are reprints of Anthim's editions,<sup>37</sup> with a few additions or fragments from the previous old Slavic-Romanian euchologies.<sup>38</sup>

## 4. Conclusions

**T**HE LITURGICAL renewal accomplished by Anthim the Iberian should not be exaggerated by comparing it with that of Peter Mohyla, in whose gravitational range it nevertheless was. However, due to the prudence he showed, Anthim did not create the premises for a liturgical “revolt” such as that of Patriarch Nikon. By recognizing most common liturgical practices, such as Baptism, Confession, Crowning of the bride and groom, or Anointing of the Sick, priests and believers found in Anthim's editions known but simplified ordinances, with unified rites. While not

always the most appropriate liturgical models had been selected, they were better able to understand their intent and logic. Of course, to establish exactly the true facts and the real extent of the liturgical renewal of Anthim the Iberian, an exhaustive analysis of the entire content of his Euchologion, and of the old Slavic-Romanian Euchologion, would be necessary.

Without neglecting the old editions and manuscripts (Slavic-Romanian), but also without a critical and detailed analysis of texts, relying only on a Greek Venetian edition (we do not know how it was selected), Anthim managed to offer a remarkable liturgical model, which, despite its weaknesses, succeeded in bringing together all the fruits of a reforming program, offering a unitary and stable paradigm for all the future generations. Or, from this point of view, Anthim's *revision* caused or settled the definitive abandonment of some practices, liturgical formulae or archaic prayers, which is why his liturgical work can be included among the endeavors that anticipated the modernization of the Romanian Orthodox Church. □

## Notes

1. Depending on authors and purpose, the landmarks of modernity have been different. The revival and delimitation from absolute religiosity, the Reformation and the Counterreformation, the industrialization and the urbanization, the colonization and the new geographical discoveries, the French revolution, the appearance of national states and of democratic governing systems or the World Wars are only a few milestones put forward as chronological boundaries in delimitating modernity or premodernity. In this avalanche of *milestones*, new concepts have been created, concepts such as post-modernism or *beyondism*, in such a way that we acknowledge that defining the concept of modernity eludes some unanimously accepted criteria; for more details regarding the concept modern-modernity see Adrian Marino, *Modern, modernism, modernitate* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1969); Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism Avant-Garde Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); for the concept of postmodernism see, for example, Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, translated by Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988). For *beyondism* see Radu Cernătescu, "Ateism, postmodernism, beyondism," *Revista de filosofie* (Bucharest) 67, 1 (2020): 37–40, term previously suggested by Raymond Cattell.
2. Jean Baudrillard, "Modernité," in *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, vol. 12 (Paris: Encyclopaedia Universalis France, 1985), 424–426.
3. We will use the term *leitourgia* (liturgy) in its wide, universal sense, that is, the totality of liturgical formularies.
4. Some Romanian historians consider that the modern period starts in Moldavia with the ascension of Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi (1803–1842), in Wallachia during the time of Metropolitan Grigorie Dascălul (1823–1834) and in Transylvania with the reforms of Andrei Șaguna (1848–1873). See Alin Albu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române: Evenimente, personalități, instituții*, vol. 1 (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2013); Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria*

- Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, vol. 3 (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1993).
5. Thus, for Violeta Barbu the liturgical modernization in the Romanian Principalities started with the printing of the liturgical books at the time of the ruler Matei Basarab. See Violeta Barbu, *Purgatoriul misionarilor: Contrareforma în Țările Române în secolul al XVII-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2008), 447.
  6. Ana Dumitran, *Religie ortodoxă—religie reformată: Ipostaze ale identității profesionale a românilor din Transilvania în secolele XVI–XVII*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oradea: Ratio et Revelatio, 2015).
  7. On the emergence of the Romanian ethnic conscience through the unification of liturgical norms and formularies, see: Dumitru A. Vanca, “Antecedentele unității românilor: Aportul edițiilor liturgice ardelene la formarea normelor limbii literare: Molitfelnicul lui Ioan Zoba ca sursă a Molitfelnicului lui Antim Ivireanul,” in *Centenarul unirii românilor și Europa de azi: Religie și geopolitică*, edited by Alin Albu et al., vol. 1 (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană; Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2018), 353–370. See also Ciprian Streza, “The Translation of Liturgical Texts into the Oral Language Within the Seventeenth Century Transylvanian Liturgical Tradition: The Emergence of the Romanian Euchologion amid Culturally and Confessionally Challenged Times,” *Teologia* (Arad) 66, 1 (2016): 10–42.
  8. See the preface to Zoba’s Euchologion, *Molităvnic (Euchologion), Bălgrad 1689–2009*, edition, introduction and glossary by Ana Dumitran, Alin-Mihai Gherman, and Dumitru A. Vanca (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2010); Paul Brusankowski, “Curentul bisericesc reformat din secolul XVII și începutul românizării cultului în BOR,” *Tabor* (Cluj-Napoca) 1, 7 (2007): 40–50.
  9. Dumitru A. Vanca, “Liturghierul lui Antim Ivireanul și funcția sa unificatoare a limbii române,” in *Slujind Adevărul, slujim pe Dumnezeu și pe oameni: Aspecte ale cercetărilor doctorale actuale*, edited by Viorel Sava, vol. 11 (Iași: Doxologia, 2019), 510–522.
  10. Barbu, 462–474.
  11. Policarp Chițulescu, “Liturghiile românești tipărite de Sfântul Antim Ivireanul: 300 de ani de la apariția *Liturghierului* românesc de la Târgoviște (1713),” *Revista română de istorie a cărții* (Bucharest) 10, 10 (2013): 16.
  12. Трєбник Митрополита Петра Могили, Київ, 1646, т. I (Київ: Інформаційно-видавничий центр Української Православної Церкви, 1996), 58–59.
  13. For a detailed analysis and comparison with other Slavic-Romanian Euchologia see Mihail K. Qaramah, “The Rites of Betrothal, Coronation and Digamia, According to the Slavo-Romanian Euchologia (16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Century),” *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 11, 3 (2020): 136–143.
  14. *Ibid.*, 143–164.
  15. For this formula see ms. Sin. Gr. 973 (1152–1153) in Gabriel Radle, “The Rite of Marriage in the Archimedes Euchology & Sinai Gr. 973 (a. 1152/1153),” *Scripta & e-Scripta* 12 (2013): 192–193.
  16. For this 12<sup>th</sup> century formula originated in Calabria, see Stefano Parenti, “The Christian Rite of Marriage in the East,” in *Sacraments and Sacramentals*, edited by Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 264.
  17. For this prayer see Gabriel Radle, “The Standardization of Liturgy in the Late Byzantine Period: The Case of the Rite of Marriage in South-Slavic Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions,” in *Studies in Oriental Liturgy: Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, New York, 10–15 June 2014*, edited by Bert Groen et al. (Leuven-Paris-Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2019), 286.

18. Михаил Сергеевич Желтов, “Чины обручения и венчания в древнейших славянских рукописях,” *Palaeobulgarica* 34, 1 (2010): 38–39.
19. The exhortation is first mentioned in Sin. NF/M10, fol. 33<sup>v</sup> (11<sup>th</sup> c.), but in the Ordo of Betrothal (Radle, “The Standardization,” 281, n. 15). It is found in the Office of Coronation in ms. E.B.E. 662, fol. 158<sup>v</sup> (13<sup>th</sup> c.). Cf. Miguel Arranz, *L’Euclologio Costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI: Hagiasmatarion & Archieratikon (Rituale & Pontificale), con l’aggiunta del Leiturgikon (Messale)* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1996), 330.
20. Gabriel Radle, “The Development of Byzantine Marriage Rites As Evidenced by Sinai Gr. 957,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 78, 1 (2012): 139–144.
21. Qaramah, “The Rites of Betrothal,” 164–166.
22. A detailed analysis in Mihail K. Qaramah, “Rânduiala Mărturisirii păcatelor și alte rugăciuni de iertare în Molitfelnicele slavone din spațiul românesc (sec. XVI–XVII),” *Mitropolia Olteniei* (Craiova) 1–4 (2020): 218–237.
23. For this Office in BLG, see Dumitru A. Vanca, “Rânduiala Tăinei Sfântului Maslu în secolul XVII în Transilvania: Considerații pe marginea Molitfelnicului de la Bălgrad, 1689,” *Annales Universitatis Apulensis: Series Theologica* (Alba Iulia) 4 (2004): 82–124.
24. For a detailed analysis of the Office of Anointing the Sick according to the Slavic-Romanian Euchologia see Mihail K. Qaramah, “Molitfelnicul românesc: Evoluția structurilor și formularelor liturgice: Sfintele Tăine,” chapter V, Ph.D. thesis (in progress), 1 Decembrie 1918 University (Alba Iulia, 2021).
25. About the abbreviated form of these prayers see Иоанн Реморов, “Чинопоследование таинства Елеосвящения в византийской традиции,” in *Православное учение о церковных Таинствах*. Москва, 13–16 ноября 2007 г., vol. 3 (Москва: Синодальная библейско-богословская комиссия, 2009), 311.
26. Certainly, only an exhaustive analysis of the content of RÂM can reveal all the interventions and personal transformations of the Romanian editor; this, however, was not the aim of our paper, as we sought to present arguments to support the hypothesis regarding the reforming character of Anthim the Iberian’s Euchologion.
27. Nevertheless, even RÂM presents a few variations from the Greek model, the most conspicuous one being the presence of the warning of the spiritual father to the penitent: “Behold, child, Christ invisibly stands here...,” which represents, unquestionably, a Slavic practice with Latin nuances.
28. According to Ch. Auner, “Les versions roumaines de la liturgie de saint Jean Chrysostome,” in *Χρυσόστομος: Studi e ricerche intorno a S. Giovanni Crisostomo a cura del comitato per il XV centenario della sua morte, 407–1907* (Rome: Libreria Pustet, 1908), 743 and more recently Dumitru A. Vanca, *Paradigme liturgice în sec. 17: Ioan Zoba din Vinț și evoluția liturghiei românești* (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea, 2016), 88.
29. N. Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, vol. 3 (Bucharest: Fundația Regele Mihai I, 1945), 205.
30. Antim Ivireanul, *Opere*, critical edition and introduction by Gabriel Ștrempel (Bucharest: Minerva, 1972), IX; see also Antim Ivireanul: *Dumnezeieștile și Sfintele Liturghii: Târgoviște 1713*, edited, introduction, philological linguistic study, note about the edition and word index by Alina Camil, afterword by Eugen Munteanu (Bucharest: Basilica, 2015), 24 sqq.
31. Founded in 1690, the Greek printing house in Bucharest first published a series of works having a dogmatic character, against the Calvinist and Catholic trends. Also, between 1697 and 1705, Anthim himself printed several Greek books of service (Antim Ivireanul, *Dumnezeieștile și Sfintele Liturghii*, 23).

32. According to Dumitran, 161.
33. The problem of the liturgical language was pointed out even by Anthim the Iberian in the preface to the Slavonic grammar of Meletius Smotrytsky, which he printed in Snagov: “In the divine Churches we grew accustomed to read in Slavonic. But not knowing this language, which is foreign to us, we can often make mistakes.” Cf. Gabriel Ștrempel, *Antim Ivireanul* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1997), 99.
34. Barbu, 474.
35. Among the printings dedicated to the training of priests we mention *Învățătură pre scurt pentru taina pocăinții* (1705), *Învățătură bisericească la ceale mai trebuincioase și mai de folos pentru învățătura preoșilor* (1710) and *Capete de poruncă la toată ceata bisericească* (1714).
36. We mention his famous “Didahii,” 28 in number. These sermons are preserved in mss. BAR rom. 3460, BAR rom. 524 and BAR rom. 549.
37. Vanca, “Liturghierul lui Antim Ivireanul,” 517.
38. Ioan Floca, “Molitfelnicul ortodox: Studiu istorico-liturgic cu privire specială asupra molitfelnicului românesc până la sfârșitul secolului XVIII,” *Mitropolia Ardealului* (Sibiu) 7, 1–2 (1962): 105–113; Teofil Ștefan Grosu, “Molitfelnicile românești în raport cu originalele lor grecești: Studiu istoric, filologic și teologic,” Ph.D. thesis, Al. I. Cuza University Iași, 2013, 128.

### **Abstract**

#### The Reform of the Romanian Liturgy at the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Anthim the Iberian and His Legacy

From a diachronic perspective, the Romanian Orthodox Church entered the modern era in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it gained autocephaly. Establishing this chronological landmark, naturally and logically, the preceding period represents the premodern ecclesial era of the Romanian Church. This paper aims to demonstrate that an important stage of this period was represented by the church reform of the Metropolitan of Wallachia, Anthim the Iberian, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a reform that also had important liturgical implications. The primary piece of his liturgical reform is the Euchologion published at Râmnic in 1706 entirely in Romanian. The authors highlight the most significant changes that the Euchologion of Anthim brought into Romanian liturgical practice regarding the celebration of the Sacraments in order to demonstrate that Anthim’s liturgical reform contributed decisively to the abandonment of Slavic liturgical practices. This new euchological paradigm, adopted during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, anticipated the modernization of the Romanian Church.

### **Keywords**

Romanian Orthodox Church, Euchologion, liturgical revision, Slavic-Romanian liturgy, premodern ecclesiastical era

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V A R I A





# Restauration et Réforme

## La maison d'Autriche et les évolutions pré-modernes d'un projet politique médiéval

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FLORIAN DUMITRU SOPORAN

**L**ES MULTIPLES significations qu'implique la relation entre l'histoire de la Monarchie des Habsbourg et les expériences modernes des nations central-est-européennes ou le rôle de cette structure politique dans le maintien de l'équilibre politique en Europe continuent à faire débat en historiographie, réunissant des contributions des historiens de l'époque moderne, des réflexions sur l'histoire du nationalisme moderne ou des réinterprétations réalisées par des spécialistes intéressés par les préliminaires des projets d'intégration européenne. La sphère des interprétations a évolué depuis la vision critique d'une construction étatique tributaire d'un paradigme conservateur et incapable de répondre aux exigences des habitants à des réévaluations générées par l'intérêt croissant pour la Mitteleuropa, qui négligeaient les commencements médiévaux de la carrière politique de la maison d'Autriche.

L'étude de cette étape de transition dominée par des provocations défensives par rapport à la proximité mongole ou ottomane et par des efforts d'adaptation aux circonstances sociopolitiques locales met en évidence une série de constantes de la conduite politique et des options institutionnelles qui se soustraient à la périodicité avec laquelle opèrent les historiens et à la spécificité issue des options personnelles des souverains. Le processus d'édification, vers le milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, d'une structure de pouvoir légitimée par l'interprétation partielle de la juridiction patrimoniale médiévale ne peut pas se réduire, pour ce qui concerne ses préliminaires, aux options royales de 1526 ni aux arrangements de famille qui les avaient précédées. Ces évolutions ont commencé plutôt dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, par le transfert de la base territoriale des Habsbourg de la région des Vosges et de Suisse dans l'ancienne Marche orientale de l'empire, en même temps avec leur ascension à la dignité impériale dans le contexte du Grand Interrègne de 1254-1273.

La position de Rodolphe en Autriche ressemble beaucoup à celle que Ferdinand I<sup>er</sup> aura plus tard en Bohême et en Hongrie. La légitimité du nouveau pouvoir est contestée avec véhémence par la noblesse locale, qui tient à conserver les libertés que lui avaient assurées la domination des derniers Babenbergue et la succession du roi Ottokar II de Bohême (1253-1278). Le succès de la cause des Habsbourg est dû moins à la victoire remportée sur le champ de bataille et surtout à la position de Rodolphe

de mandataire de l'ordre impérial, légitimé par les résolutions de la Diète et le mandat du pape ainsi que par ses propres efforts d'aboutir à un compromis avec les élites locales. L'accord non-écrit était fondé sur l'équilibre entre les attributions du souverain et celles des états et sur un besoin de stabilité dans une région où le danger mongol qui avait secoué les royaumes apostoliques de proximité et les troubles de l'empire imposaient le rétablissement de l'ordre légal comme l'unique solution de survivance des acteurs politiques et économiques que le conflit entre le sacerdoce et l'empire avait rendu vulnérables. La victoire de l'empereur élu par la Diète sur un vassal rebelle qui avait usurpé un fief impérial a acquis des significations importantes pour le discours identitaire germanique, éloignant la possibilité de consolidation d'un pôle de pouvoir nullement négligeable aux confins orientales, la Bohême de la dynastie des Přemyslid. La succession des Babenbergue ouvrait des opportunités à des initiatives politiques en Europe centrale et en Italie.

Le moment de l'ascension de Rodolphe I<sup>er</sup> en Autriche est intéressant aussi sous l'aspect des manifestations de solidarités corporatives et ethniques. Dans la phase décisive du conflit contre la Bohême, les souverains ont bénéficié du support d'une sorte de confédérations des nations, l'alliance germano-hongroise s'imposant sur celle tchéco-polonaise. Ces solidarités allaient partiellement fonctionner pendant les conflits baltiques et même dans certains moments de la révolution hussite. La réalisation tardive des projets des Habsbourg est due à la modification des rapports de force en Europe à la suite de la révolte suisse et de l'assassinat du successeur de Rodolphe I<sup>er</sup>, l'empereur Albert I<sup>er</sup> de Habsbourg, en 1308. Les difficultés rencontrées par la génération suivante de la maison d'Autriche dans l'administration de ses propres domaines laissent place à des tentatives d'unification européenne sous l'égide du roi de France ou à des initiatives pontificales.

Pour l'histoire d'Europe centrale, la période soumise à notre analyse est dominée par la déshérence des dynasties fondatrices des royaumes apostoliques et par la succession des familles d'Anjou et de Luxembourg, sous les auspices du Saint-Siège et par l'appel à la descendance des saints dynastiques, en Hongrie et en Bohême, par la formation de l'État polono-lituanien sous l'autorité formelle de la dynastie de Jagellon. Pour les Habsbourg, l'intervalle chronologique délimité par l'assassinat d'Albert I<sup>er</sup> et le couronnement de Frédéric III en 1440 marque une régression dans les préoccupations de politique extérieure, qui sera compensée en partie par des succès administratifs remportés dans les régions alpines. La famille est divisée du point de vue patrimonial, la position des différentes branches a tendance à descendre au niveau de petits possesseurs de fiefs impériaux et d'auxiliaires auprès de divers compétiteurs pour la Couronne. Pour le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le seul fait notable est l'apparition du danger ottoman qui réclame la convocation de la Diète de l'Autriche supérieure en 1397. Le revirement politique de la maison d'Autriche pendant le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle est le résultat de la solidarité de sa branche albertine avec l'agenda de l'empereur Sigismond de Luxembourg qui, conformément aux usages de l'époque, s'est matérialisée en une alliance familiale. L'empereur laissera à son gendre la couronne impériale et celles de la Hongrie et de la Bohême, consacrant pour la première fois l'unification de l'Europe centrale sous l'autorité d'un souverain autrichien, une œuvre politique qui deviendra la raison

d'être des Habsbourg jusqu'en 1918. La mort prématurée du souverain et l'incapacité de Friedrich III de gouverner les vastes domaines qui lui revenaient de droit n'ont pas altéré la légitimité de pareilles prétentions, qui pourront être réactivées à des moments opportuns. La politique du nouvel empereur – contestable sous plusieurs aspects – a assuré, grâce à sa durée et à sa conséquence, l'intégration du programme universaliste véhiculé dans les milieux humaniste, impérial et pontifical dans le patrimoine familial. Il a eu le grand mérite d'avoir reconstitué, grâce aux mêmes arrangements matrimoniaux qui avaient déjà plusieurs fois sauvé l'Autriche, les positions de la famille dans la région rhénane, par l'intégration de l'héritage bourgogne de Charles le Téméraire. Il était important de ressusciter le prestige impérial à un moment où le Saint-Siège relançait l'idée de la Croisade tardive au Concile de Mantoue. Cette idée n'a pas eu de conséquences immédiates à cause surtout de la situation en Europe centrale, où le camp ultraquiste de Bohême et de Hongrie proposait des solutions nationales pour contrecarrer l'offensive ottomane, qui seraient couronnées de succès dans le cas de la Hongrie. Même si ces victoires sont compromises par les rivalités entre les souverains, elles auront d'importantes significations politiques dans la formation de la spécificité identitaire hongroise et tchèque et pourront légitimer les mouvements et la propagande anti-habsbourgeoise durant les deux siècles à venir.

Le gouvernement des Jagellon n'aura pas les ressources nécessaires pour liquider les conflits intérieurs, compromettant les chances de résister devant les dangers extérieurs. La mort de Mathias Corvin et la vacance du trône de Buda permettent à Maximilien I<sup>er</sup>, le grand espoir de la maison d'Autriche, de s'impliquer dans la politique de l'Europe danubienne par la revendication de la succession albertine. Bien que cet épisode fût traité par l'écrit historique comme une cavalcade typiquement Renaissance, en raison surtout de l'échec lamentable subi par le prétendant germanique, il offre une image prospective de l'infrastructure politique de la région. Les actions militaires habsbourgeoises, arrêtées pour des raisons financières, sont précédées des efforts de la diplomatie de constituer un système d'alliances anti-Jagellon avec Ivan III, le grand prince de Moscou, et avec Étienne le Grand, le prince régnant de la Moldavie. Si Moscou était surtout préoccupée par la rivalité avec la Lituanie, Étienne le Grand visait la formation d'un front anti-ottoman avec l'implication des puissances européennes, ce qui le déterminerait à se réconcilier avec le nouveau roi de Hongrie, Vladislas Jagellon. Apprécié par ses sujets de Bohême pour la modération dont il avait fait preuve pendant son règne commencé en 1471, surtout pour ce qui concernait les aspects confessionnels, celui-ci a représenté tout de même une expérimentation institutionnelle fondée sur l'expertise locale du gouvernement effectif en vertu du partenariat entre le souverain et les états. Son autorité est mise en cause par la résistance des états, qui tendent à transformer les monarchies hongroise et tchèque en des régimes oligarchiques, légitimés par des privilèges nobiliaires et citadins et renforcés plus tard à la suite de l'institutionnalisation du pluralisme confessionnel. L'historiographie hongroise, se basant sur des documents de la Diète et sur le caractère régulier de ses réunions, considère ce moment comme une première ère parlementaire hongroise. Bien que certains spécialistes estiment qu'un tel régime aurait favorisé les manifestations du pluralisme politique, on ne saurait pas

ignorer l'incapacité de l'État de mobiliser les ressources nécessaires pour assurer la sécurité de ses habitants, que les décennies de guerre allaient épuiser après 1526.

**P**OUR LES Habsbourg, la période de 1490 à 1526 se caractérise par les tentatives échouées d'étendre leur influence sur la Bohême et la Hongrie. La signature d'un pacte de famille en 1515 et le double mariage de Vienne devaient assurer à Ferdinand la succession des deux royaumes. Sur le plan économique, nous assistons à l'affirmation des intérêts de la famille de Fugger d'Augsbourg, les crédateurs de la dynastie impériale devenus les principaux promoteurs du capitalisme dans la région. Ils prennent à bail des mines appartenant à la Couronne et assurent les moyens financiers à la Cour, leur influence croissante provoquant l'opposition de la faction nationale de la noblesse hongroise, qui demande à la Diète de prendre des mesures contre les étrangers. La mort de Maximilien I<sup>er</sup> en 1519 et l'élection comme successeur de son neveu, Charles Quint, le roi d'Espagne, place la maison d'Autriche en position d'hégémon du monde chrétien, évolution peu favorable à l'espace central-européen, qui devient un aspect secondaire dans ses préoccupations politiques centrées sur l'Italie et la France. En 1521, Charles cède les territoires héréditaires habsbourgeois, à l'exception du Tyrol, à son frère Ferdinand, qui par le traité de Bruxelles de 1522 deviendra le maître de tout le patrimoine germanique de la famille, après avoir été reconnu lieutenant de l'empereur par la Diète impériale. Cependant, sa position ne lui assure pas les moyens nécessaires à une intervention en faveur de son beau-frère, Louis II de Hongrie, qui se voit obligé d'opposer à l'armée du sultan des troupes, incapables de soutenir une longue guerre. La défaite de Mohács mettra fin à la vie du souverain et à l'indépendance du royaume hongrois. Les disputes entre les différentes factions sont intensifiées par la présence ottomane, le groupement national, absent de Mohács, proclamant son leader, Jean Zápolya, roi dans la diète de Székesfehérvár du 10 novembre 1526. Descendant d'une famille qui reprend la base sociale de la famille de Hunedoara (Hunyad), le nouveau monarque assume une politique anti-habsbourgeoise en collaboration avec la France et la Pologne, clairement exprimée par son adhésion à la Ligue de Cognac qui réunissait tous les adversaires européens de la maison d'Autriche et qui avait prouvé son efficacité pendant des guerres italiennes.

La réaction des Habsbourg a été prompte. La diète convoquée par la reine veuve Marie de Pozsony a décidé l'élection comme roi de Ferdinand, que la Diète de Prague avait déjà élu roi des Pays tchèques grâce à l'habileté de ses émissaires et à la loyauté de ses sujets envers les anciens souverains. Il devait ainsi maintenir l'autorité impériale en Allemagne dans les conditions des disputes avec les protestants, consolider la position politique du souverain devant les états et, surtout, maintenir intact l'héritage hongrois qui était contesté par le sultan et par une partie des sujets. La tâche du souverain était apparemment facile, compte tenu de la taille de toutes ses possessions et de leur potentiel militaire et démographique. Une analyse plus profonde dévoile les nombreuses carences de cet ensemble, dont surtout son caractère hétérogène et l'absence d'un agenda commun de la société que la Couronne puisse assumer, sans parler du manque d'expérience du souverain que même ses proches collaborateurs ont longuement considéré comme un étranger.

Ces obstacles ont été partiellement surmontés au bout de quelques décennies de transformations institutionnelles. Le premier pas a visé l'administration, qui a été réformée par une centralisation politique et par une uniformisation modérée. Cette réformation a été plus facile à accomplir dans les territoires héréditaires où Maximilien, de plein accord avec les états, avait réussi à mettre en place les instruments d'une administration efficace, dans le cadre de politiques plus larges de réformation des institutions de l'empire. Formé à la Cour de Ferdinand d'Aragon, son neveu s'est investi dans la même démarche. Étranger à ses sujets à la fois par la langue qu'il parlait et par son éducation, Ferdinand a trouvé les moyens de créer un mécanisme d'État capable de mettre à sa disposition les ressources nécessaires à la défense des territoires de la Hongrie occidentale, sans provoquer la révolte générale des états. Les premières mesures qu'il a prises étaient destinées à mettre en place les organismes d'une gouvernance centrale. Par l'ordonnance du 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1527 étaient créés le Conseil impérial, le Conseil privé, le Conseil impérial de guerre et la Chancellerie impériale. Le conseil impérial (*Hofrat*) avait juridiction sur tous les sujets de Ferdinand et représentait une tentative d'affirmation de l'autorité du souverain qui devenait ainsi l'ultime instance d'appel. C'était le procédé bien connu par lequel, deux siècles auparavant, les souverains capétiens avaient imposé leur autorité sur tous les habitants de France. Cependant, le rôle de cette institution allait graduellement se restreindre aux possessions héréditaires des Habsbourg, pour servir au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle comme cadre d'affirmation de la suprématie de la maison d'Autriche dans l'empire, dans les conditions des contestations venues de la part des princes du territoire. Le Conseil privé réunissait les officiels invités par le souverain, qui avaient des compétences générales, et ses résolutions avaient un caractère consultatif. La Chancellerie comprenait les fonctionnaires spécialisés, avec des compétences préétablies pour les possessions héréditaires, pour les pays de la Couronne de Bohême et pour la Hongrie. Le modèle de cette institution a été fourni par le soi-disant *letrados* que le souverain avait connus pendant son séjour en Castille.

Ces institutions ont assumé certains attributs des institutions équivalentes locales, sans toutefois en diminuer l'importance. La Chancellerie de Bohême et celle de Hongrie continuent à fonctionner, elles gardent une partie de leurs fonctions juridiques et leur rôle dans la correspondance diplomatique. Par l'intermédiaire du Grand Tribunal de Prague, du Petit Tribunal – aux compétences modestes – et du Tribunal de la Table – instance d'arbitrage dans les litiges foncières –, la Couronne de Bohême a préservé son autorité juridique, une situation qui allait changer après la révolte protestante de 1618. En 1548, le souverain a limité l'autonomie des villes, de Prague en particulier. Dans le royaume hongrois, les actions de Ferdinand n'ont eu qu'un but militaire. La proximité du théâtre de conflit avec la Porte ottomane l'a obligé à ménager les susceptibilités des états et à maintenir une position politique solide dans les territoires qui reconnaissaient l'autorité du roi de Vienne. L'institution du palatin, qui cumulait des attributions juridiques et militaires et dont le représentant était le lieutenant du souverain, resta sans titulaire et fut remplacée par le Conseil de Lieutenance. Face aux réticences des Ordres hongrois qui boycottaient les institutions communes, le pouvoir central soutient l'autonomie de la Croatie. Le gouverneur (le ban) garde ses



attributions, dont surtout celles militaires, qui acquièrent de nouvelles valences dans le contexte des affrontements permanents aux frontières. La noblesse croate s'était dès le début montrée favorable au nouveau roi, qu'elle avait reconnu dans la diète de Cetin en janvier 1527. La solidarité entre les Croates et la maison d'Autriche représentera d'ailleurs l'une des caractéristiques politiques de l'Europe danubienne, que le catholicisme militant des deux parties ne fera qu'accentuer. Ces circonstances ont déterminé les autorités à mettre en place un système de frontière militaire (*Militärgrenze*) entre Kraïna et la mer Adriatique, un système de fortifications étendu sur 1 000 km environ, pourvu de garnisons militaires de jusqu'à 10 000 militaires. Les actions de brigandage de nombreux réfugiés serbes colonisés dans le sud ont fait accroître les tensions dans la région.

**U**NE INSTITUTION blâmée pour son inefficacité a été le Conseil impérial de guerre (*Hofkriegsrat*). Formé de fonctionnaires civils et militaires, celui-ci évaluait les besoins de l'armée en temps de guerre ou de paix. Ses propositions devaient être approuvées par les Diètes locales, qui se montraient en général hostiles aux demandes financières. Ces institutions répondaient aux objectifs du pouvoir central en fonction de la situation économique de la monarchie, les dépenses militaires et celles de la Cour générant un déficit annuel de quelques centaines de milliers de florins, qui était au début financé par des emprunts aux banques d'Augsbourg. Comme la dette ne faisait qu'augmenter, les institutions responsables locales ont dû faire appel à des contributions générales. La chambre de la Bohême assurait deux tiers des dépenses de la monarchie, le reste provenant de collectes dans les territoires héréditaires. Les mines d'argent de Bohême et celles de fer et de sel d'Autriche inférieur et de Tyrol, des monopoles royaux traditionnels, connaissent pendant cette période une exploitation intensive, quelques-unes étant séquestrées par la maison Fugger, au compte des anciennes dettes non-honorées.

L'administration locale n'a pas connu de changements significatifs, les structures des comitats et les Diètes de la Bohême et de la Hongrie continuant à représenter les bastions des élites politiques et ecclésiastiques qui veillaient au respect des privilèges juridiques et des libertés confessionnelles et qui formulaient des critiques à l'adresse de la politique royale. Une action qui devait conduire à l'apparition d'une institution représentative commune pour toute la monarchie a été initiée par Ferdinand en 1542, lorsqu'il a convoqué à Vienne les états généraux de toutes ses possessions. Étant donné l'intérêt de préserver l'autonomie légale des États incorporés dans la monarchie, cet événement n'aura pas de suites, les représentants de la noblesse et du patriciat urbain cherchant, par contre, à renforcer les fonctions des institutions locales. Les Diètes régionales de Moravie et de Silésie sont devenues des bastions des libertés confessionnelles, alors que les comitats nobiliaires de la Hongrie habsbourgeoise ont évolué vers de véritables républiques nobiliaires, peu disposées à répondre aux appels du roi de participer à la défense du pays. Pour ce qui concerne les relations avec ses sujets, les actions de Ferdinand ont remporté des victoires limitées. Il n'a pas réussi à assurer une base solide à son pouvoir, devant faire face à des contestations à l'Est et sur tout le territoire de l'empire, situation qui a duré jusqu'à la paix d'Augsbourg en 1555. Un

aspect favorable de sa politique a été le sentiment d'unité des habitants placés sous l'autorité d'un seul souverain et que le danger ottoman n'a fait qu'augmenter. C'est un thème qui a joui d'une large circulation dans les écrits du temps. On ne saurait toutefois affirmer que le règne du premier Habsbourg aurait été vraiment populaire dans la région.

Sans avoir le caractère spectaculaire de la politique de Charles Quint, le règne de Ferdinand s'est avéré plus efficace à long terme, l'Europe centrale devenant plus cohérente du point de vue institutionnel, ce qui était indispensable pour contrecarrer le danger ottoman. Les juristes formés dans les universités allemandes et italiennes ont pu accéder dans l'administration d'État et gérer les affaires publiques, stimulant les transformations au niveau de la noblesse locale. Même si la translation partielle des paradigmes français ou espagnols en Europe danubienne a eu ses limites, le système collégial étant peu adéquat à des décisions rapides, elle a permis l'apparition d'une bureaucratie en évolution vers la noblesse de compétence, solidaire avec les intérêts de la Cour. C'est du sein de cette catégorie sociale que sortira au début du siècle suivant la faction par laquelle les souverains styriens allaient subordonner les états à leur politique dynastique. Une solidarité de perspective au cours de l'édification de la monarchie a été établie entre le souverain et l'Église romaine, essentielle au moment de l'institutionnalisation des alternatives théologiques protestantes. Ferdinand s'est montré un souverain tenace sur le plan confessionnel également, attaché à la foi catholique mais réussissant à maintenir un équilibre entre les intérêts de l'État et les options de la société. Bien que dans sa qualité d'empereur il eût assuré la mise en pratique des stipulations de la paix d'Augsbourg, les circonstances ne lui ont pas permis d'appliquer le principe *cuius regio, eius religio* dans ses propres possessions, même si les mesures répressives antiprotestantes avaient été prises bien avant, à la suite des succès remportés par ses partisans dans la guerre contre la Ligue de Smalkalde. Les démarches destinées à assurer la survivance des centres monastiques ont été faites dans le même sens de la Contre-réforme. On pouvait déjà sentir l'influence que l'esprit post-tridentin allait avoir sur l'éducation dans la région, jusqu'aux réformes josphines et à l'impact de l'*Aufklärung*.

Après 1550, les autorités ont créé le cadre qui allait assurer le succès de la Réforme catholique en Europe centrale par la ressuscitation de la dévotion populaire et des ordres monastiques, par l'appui porté à la mission jésuite de Pierre Canisius et par l'amélioration des rapports avec les régions rhénane et bavaroise. Leur contribution dans la cristallisation d'une identité catholique au Moyen Danube a été décisive, compte tenu des carences éducationnelles et administratives que l'Église de la région avait ressenties pendant le Moyen Âge, saisissables surtout dans la réformation du clergé paroissial. Dans les relations avec Rome, Ferdinand a réussi à conférer à la maison d'Autriche l'image d'une véritable championne dans la défense de la civilisation européenne et a soutenu les projets diplomatiques de la papauté visant la reprise des croisades. Pour bien estimer l'importance de ces transformations pour l'évolution de la future monarchie des Habsbourg, il faut se rapporter à deux réalités comparables, les possessions gouvernées par Charles Quint et les territoires hongrois restés en dehors de la juridiction de la Couronne. Dans le premier cas, l'absolutisme de l'empereur-roi

a dû faire face à l'opposition des villes et des Cortès espagnoles regroupées dans les soi-disant *hermandades* et s'imposant manu militari après 1520. Les circonstances de son ascension au trône d'Espagne ont d'ailleurs eu l'apparence d'un coup d'État aux yeux des contemporains. Les rapports avec la Diète impériale ont été difficiles, la situation n'a pas permis d'innovations dans la sphère institutionnelle, Charles étant surtout préoccupé par des questions de politique extérieure, alors que Ferdinand était engagé dans ses possessions danubiennes. La tendance a été au compromis avec les princes laïcs et ecclésiastiques. Malgré ses grandes dimensions, l'empire habsbourgeois de Madrid s'est heurté à l'incapacité de l'État de répondre aux exigences sociales en Italie et surtout aux Pays-Bas. En Hongrie ottomane et en Transylvanie autonome, l'évolution institutionnelle a été beaucoup plus lente, selon les spécialistes, elle a été tributaire de la tradition médiévale et a porté l'empreinte du provisorat. Les élites étaient sensibles aux modèles polonais, sans pourtant évoluer vers le *liberum veto* ou l'organisation de confédérations. Des similitudes sont visibles au niveau des institutions consultatives pendant les décennies de guerre civile. Les assemblées des états en Transylvanie, qui avaient auparavant des attributions essentiellement juridiques, acquièrent une signification politique expresse, l'idée de privilèges consacrés par la tradition et par des arrangements plus récents assurant la clé de voûte de la survivance de la nouvelle principauté. Le modèle administratif et politique édifié par Ferdinand s'est avéré efficace à long terme, grâce surtout au mélange qu'il a su garder entre le centralisme et l'autonomie, ses successeurs mettant l'accent sur l'un ou l'autre des deux directions. □

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**Abstract**

Restauration and Reform:

The House of Austria and the Pre-Modern Evolution of a Medieval Political Project

The importance of the Habsburg Monarchy for the European balance of power in the modern age and equally for the development of national identities in Eastern Europe justifies the interest for the medieval preliminaries of the House of Austria's presence in this region. The translation of territorial base operated in 1278 by Rudolf I, Holy Roman emperor, was consolidated by his successors through political achievements and matrimonial alliances. The reign of Ferdinand I in the Austrian Lands and his election as king of Bohemia and Hungary mean the beginning of a mix of policies of building an institutional infrastructure which assured the dialogue between power and the legal society which preserved the local specificities in the former apostolical kingdoms.

**Keywords**

Austria, Habsburg monarchy, Ferdinand I

# The Confessional Landscape of Roma Communities in Post-Socialist Romania

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## Introduction

**T**HE NEWLY found freedom of expression regarding the ethnic and confessional affiliation in post-communist Romania (after 1990) triggered a set of spatial and structural reconfigurations of the Roma communities. These changes are relevant not only in terms of population growth, but also at local and regional level, where social, cultural and demographic dynamics were observed (Muntele 1998; Preda 2002; Zamfir and Preda 2002; Ghețău 2007; Crețan et al. 2008; Vasile and Dobre 2015; Ghețău et al. 2016). Research shows that Roma communities in Romania form a specific ethno-confessional landscape shaped by the national, regional or local particularities of each religion (Rotar and Hodor 1993; Crețan 1999; Bodocan 2001; Nicoară 2006; Pop and Bolovan 2013), by the relationship with the majority ethnic group, and by environmental and social conditions (Sandu 2003; Frunză 2004; Healey 2006; Ilieș et al. 2020).

The main objective of this study is to analyze the evolution and features of the Roma communities in Romania, in order to outline the spatial distribution of confessional groups. Therefore, the research looks at the demographics of the Roma minority in Romania, considering the official censuses from 1992, 2002 and 2011 at county level.

The last census (in 2011) revealed that a total number of 621,573 inhabitants had declared themselves as part of the Roma community, with a large variety of religious beliefs, from the traditional religions and denominations (Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant) to the neo-Protestant ones (Pentecostal, Baptist, Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Church of the Gospel/Plymouth Brethren, and the Romanian Evangelical Church). Compared to the previous censuses, confessional structural changes had occurred, with an increasing trend for the latter. At county level, the Roma minority accounts for less than 10% of the general population, but at local scale, communities are relatively compact, which favored the diffusion of newer religious practices, more successful than the traditional churches in adapting their rites to the cultural and social

All authors have contributed equally to this article.



specificities of the Roma. This contributed to the complex confessional landscape of the Roma communities, with a specific focus on the neo-Protestant religions. Unlike the other ethnic minorities in Romania, where a less complicated confessional structure is dominant, with one or two main religions, and with a homogenous spatial distribution, the confessional mosaic of Roma supports the social role of the church.

## Methodology

**C**ONFESSIONAL STRUCTURES are usually approached within the concept of confessional space or landscape, with data grouped by religion. Therefore, the religious community classes are derived from the guide developed by the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs (2018) and from the scientific literature on the types of existing ethno-confessional combinations (Bolovan and Bolovan 2010; Preutu and Enache 2018). First, the confessional structure of the Roma communities was analyzed using two major groups: traditional and neo-Protestant. Then, each group was broken down into specific religions, resulting six classes, and ultimately compared against the general population data for the territory of reference.

The census data with ethnicity and confession entries was processed using spatial analysis algorithms, mostly treated in GIS environment (Gartner and Huang 2016; Robinson et al. 2017). For optimal visualization, statistical mapping techniques were applied (Ilieş et al. 2010; O'Brien and Cheshire 2015; Ilieş et al. 2016; Griffin et al. 2017). The input data resolution was at the specific Romanian nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), at level NUTS 3 (counties), for each of the post-socialist censuses (1992, 2002, and 2011).

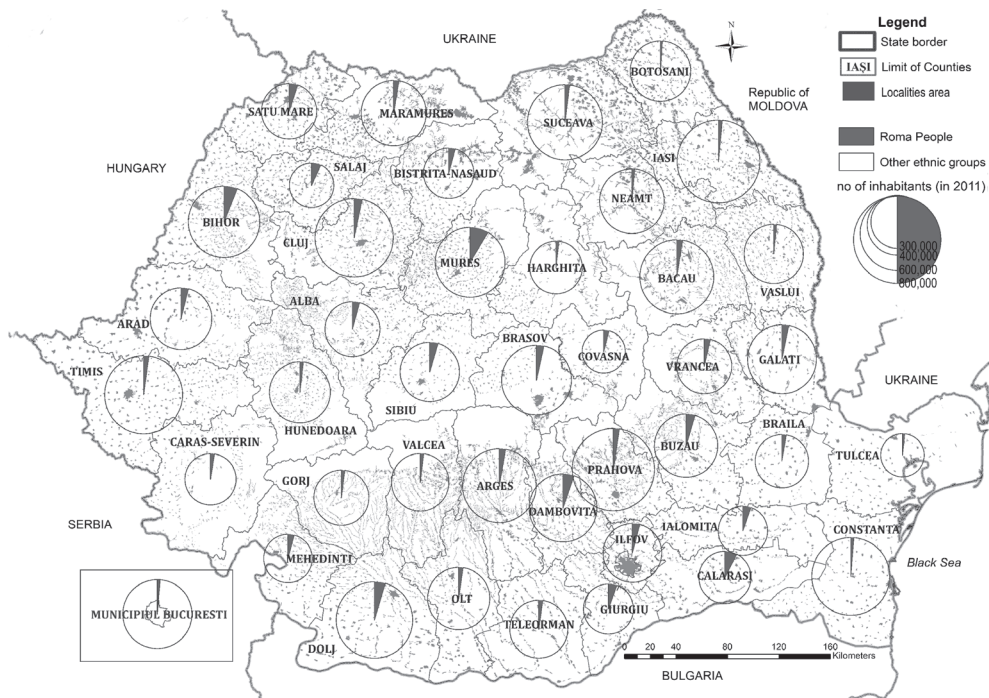
## Current Demographic Features of the Roma Communities in Romania

**R**OMA COMMUNITIES are one of the important ethnic minorities in Romania, accounting for 621,573 inhabitants and 3.1% of the total population of Romania (in 2011), characterized by a high growth rate (+55% within the 1992–2011 period), contrary to the negative trend (–11,8%) of the population at national level. These communities live mostly in rural areas (63%). Our and other research shows several social features related with the demographic patterns: poor economic background, low standard of living (Ilie 2002), poor access to education and health services (Surdu 2002), young age for first birth and marriages (Sima 2002), as well as discrimination and acceptance issues (Voicu and Şerban 2002; Sandu 2005; Creţan and O'Brian 2019). Therefore, the adherence of the Roma population to the general religious practices of the rural communities in which they lived was the norm. After 1990 this challenging social status created a favorable environment for the new religions, more sensitive to the

customs and cultural traditions of the Roma communities, especially the neo-Protestant churches.

Explaining to a large extent the religious affiliation and the confessional diversity of the Roma communities, specific particularities are observable across the historical provinces, counties, ethnographic areas, and localities on the Romanian territory. The spatial distribution in 2011 outlines a territorial mosaic with the most important communities in the following counties (figs. 1 and 3): Mureș 46,947 (8.5%); Bihor 34,640 (6%); Dolj 29,893 (4.5%); Dâmbovița 27,355 (5.3%); Călărași 22,939 (7.5%); Cluj 22,531 (3.3%); Buzău 20,376 (4.5%); as well as in the city of Bucharest 23,973 (1.3%), etc. On the other hand, Tulcea 3,423 (1.6%) and Botoșani 4,155 (1%) are the counties with the smallest Roma communities.

FIG 1. SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF ROMA COMMUNITIES IN ROMANIA, AT COUNTY LEVEL, IN 2011



SOURCE: Secretariatul de Stat pentru Culte. 2018. *Statul și cultele religioase*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, rev. and enl. Bucharest: n.p. [Litera]. Accessed 3 February 2020. <http://culte.gov.ro>.

At the scale of the administrative territorial units (municipalities, cities and communes), Roma communities do not form majorities, reaching at most 10% of the general population, with a diffuse presence in marginal districts and neighborhoods (Sandu 2005, 5, 43), with modest, small dwellings, chaotically displayed and without an initial urban planning, also present within informal settlements.

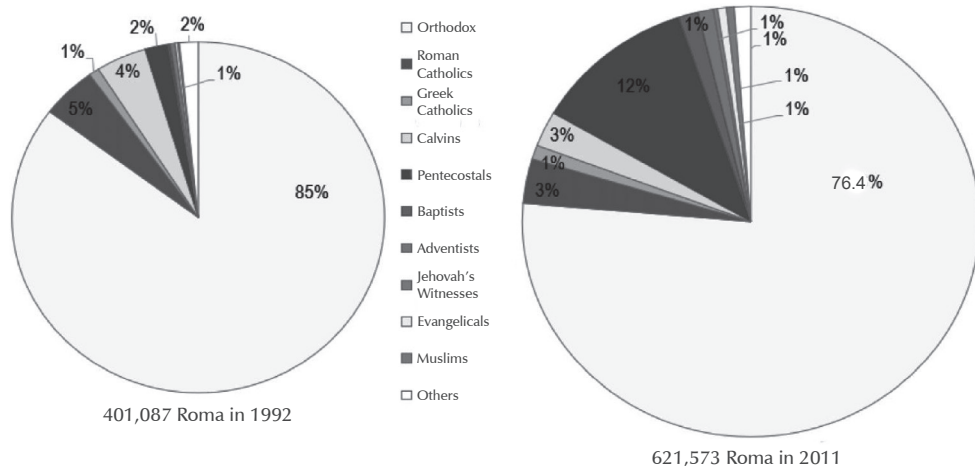
## Dynamics of the Confessional Structure of Roma Communities

**T**HE FREEDOM of religious expression of the population in post-socialist Romania has generated a competition between the traditional churches and the new neo-Protestant ones, both with self-preservation strategies, attracting or maintaining as many parishioners as possible from the country's population. The Roma were the most targeted ethnic group, now almost entirely religiously converted, especially through family affiliation and a sense of "clan." Nevertheless, there is still a small and constant number of atheists, people without religion and people with no declared religion (less than 1%).

The structural changes in the confessional landscape are obvious at national level (tab. 1). In 1992, census data shows that the 401,087 Roma were mostly affiliated to the traditional churches (Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant)—96%, and only 2.8% declared their belonging to the neo-Protestant churches (fig. 2a). Looking at the traditional churches, 85% were Orthodox, 5% Roman Catholic and 4% Calvinist. Two decades later, in 2011, the proselytizing success of the latter narrowed the gap against the traditional churches, involving up to 15% of the Roma population. The spectacular increase in numbers is also due to the social and dogmatic support offered by the neo-Protestant communities to young families with traditional Roma values and with a specific cultural behavior, encouraging large families and fostering harsh family planning/antiabortion practices.

In 2011, the confessional structure of the Roma ethnic group was more diversified (fig. 2b): Orthodox (76.4%), neo-Protestant (14.9%), Catholic (4.4%), Protestant (2.7%), and Muslim (0.14%). Also, the group without religious options reached 0.8%.

FIG. 2. THE CONFESSIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ROMA POPULATION IN ROMANIA, IN 1992 (A) AND 2011 (B)



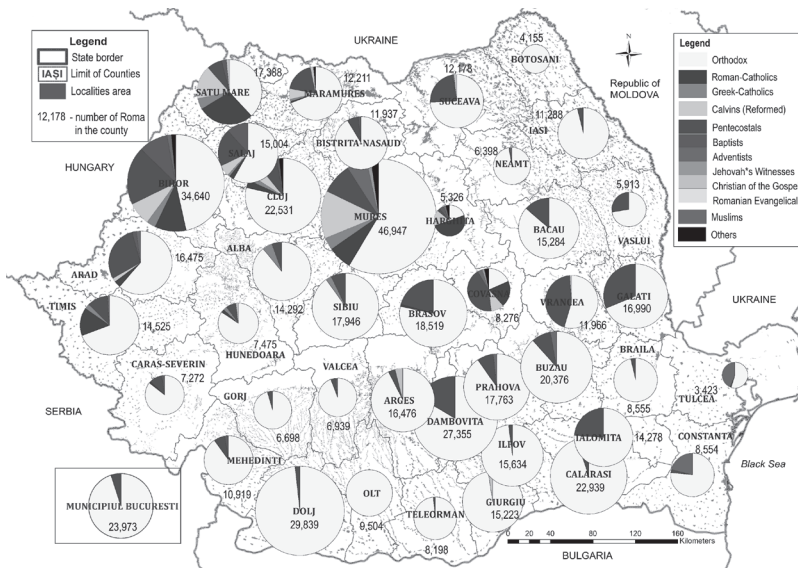
SOURCE: *Statul și cultele religioase*, <http://culte.gov.ro>.

TABLE 1. ROMA ETHNO-CONFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES IN ROMANIA

Religious affiliation	Year						% of Roma in ethnic structure of the confession			Growth rate (%)
	1992		2002		2011		1992	2002	2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	%	%	%	
Orthodox	342,130	85.3	438,162	81.88	474,603	76.36	1.73	2.33	2.91	38.7
Catholics	22,844	5.7	26,458	4.94	27,332	4.4	1.65	2.17	2.68	19.6
Roman Catholics	19,275	4.81	20,310	3.80	20,821	3.35	1.66	1.98	2.39	8.0
Greek Catholics	3,569	0.89	6,148	1.15	6,511	1.05	1.60	3.21	4.32	82.4
Reformed	17,598	4.39	16,385	3.06	16,487	2.65	2.19	2.34	2.74	-6.3
Muslims	583	0.15	805	0.15	3,356	0.54	1.04	1.20	5.22	475.6
Neo-Protestants	11,465	2.86	46,449	8.68	92,532	14.89	2.50	7.65	13.94	707.1
Pentecostals	7,919	1.97	34,449	6.44	71,262	11.46	3.59	10.62	19.67	799.9
Baptists	932	0.23	4,749	0.89	8,815	1.42	0.85	3.75	7.81	845.8
Seventh-day Adventists	1,694	0.42	4,622	0.86	6,793	1.09	2.18	4.93	8.39	301.0
Jehovah's Witnesses	—	—	—	—	1,818	0.29	—	—	3.65	—
Christians of the Gospel	920	0.23	2,029	0.38	2,973	0.48	1.84	4.56	7.00	223.2
Romanian Evangelicals	—	—	600	0.11	871	0.14	—	3.30	5.61	45.2
Without religion	3,438	0.86	1,902	0.36	2,223	0.36	0.87	2.99	1.47	-35.5
Others	2,294	0.57	3,587	0.67	7,263	1.17	9.92	8.90	5.61	216.6
TOTAL Roma	401,087	100.0	535,140	100.0	621,573	100.0	—	—	—	55.0
% of TOTAL population	1.76		2.47		3.09		—			—

SOURCE: *Statul și cultele religioase*, <http://culte.gov.ro>.

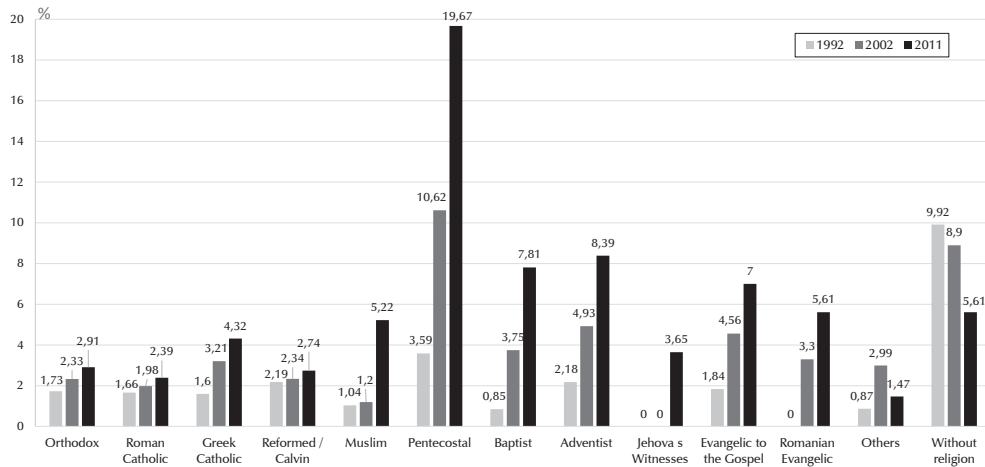
FIG. 3. NUMBER AND CONFESSIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ROMA POPULATION IN ROMANIA BY COUNTIES, IN 2011



SOURCE: *Statul și cultele religioase*, <http://culte.gov.ro>.

The confessional mosaic is relevant at county level (fig. 3). The 2011 data shows that there are relatively homogenous areas in the southern and eastern counties, with a dominant Orthodox and neo-Protestant combination. Interesting is the Muslim Roma community in Dobruja. In the central, western, and northern parts of Romania, the confessional landscape is very complicated, with large shares of neo-Protestant population.

FIG. 4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROMA ETHNIC GROUP IN ROMANIA, SHARES IN THE ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE DENOMINATIONS



SOURCE: *Statul și cultele religioase*, <http://culte.gov.ro>.

### Traditional Churches Within the Confessional Landscape of Roma Communities

THE PRESENT study defines the traditional churches as religious groups officially recognized before 1990, also including the Greek Catholic church, which has historical significance for the northwestern part of Romania. In this respect, four ethno-confessional groups were defined: *Orthodox Roma*, *Catholic Roma* (Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic), *Protestant Roma* (Reformed), and *Muslim Roma*.

*The Orthodox Church* remains the first religious option of the Roma ethnics according to tradition, history, number, and share. The confessional group of the Orthodox Roma is widely distributed in almost all localities within the Romanian space. They live in homogeneous groups on the outskirts of localities, generally having the same religion as the majority population (Romanians, Ukrainians, or Serbs). The spatial analysis shows that the most important Orthodox Roma communities, in terms of number and share in the confessional structure within the ethnic group, were in (fig. 5): Dolj 28,736 (96.3%), Mureș 26,879 (57.3%), Dâmbovița 27,355 (82.1%), Bucharest 22,304



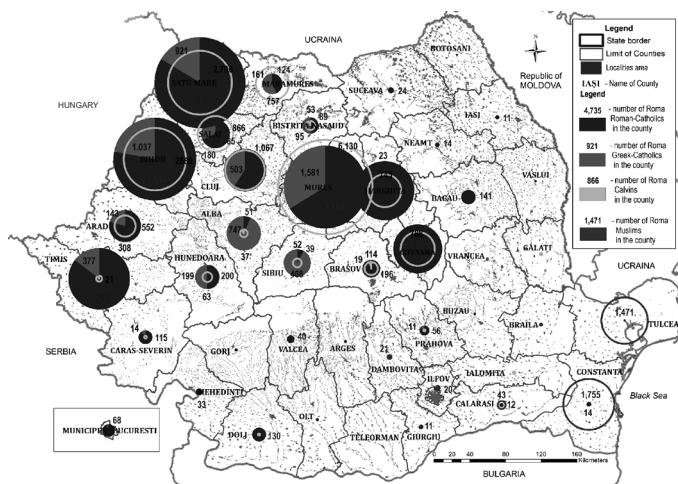


*The Catholic community* consists of two confessional groups: *Roman Catholic Roma* and *Greek Catholic Roma*, parishioners of the two traditional churches, both groups with a specific spatial regional distribution (fig. 6). With a growth rate of 19.6%, Catholic Roma parishioners (27,322) accounted for 4.4% of the confessional structure of the ethnic group (in 2011).

*The Roman Catholic Church*, in just two decades, dropped from the second position as a religious option for the Roma in 1992 (19,275) to the third position in 2011 (20,821 parishioners). Amid the negative demographic trend of the general Roman Catholic community (-25%), the modest growth rate of the Roman Catholic Roma population (8.0%) is more accentuated in urban area (15.1%) and lower in the countryside (2.5%). Data shows a more abrupt decrease within the Roma community, from 4.8% to 2.7%, than within the general Roman Catholic community, from 4.8% to 3.4% (fig. 4). Regarding the rural-urban distribution, there is an ascendant trend in urban areas, from 43.8% to 46.6% of Roman Catholic Roma, in spite of the high rural percentage (53.4% in 2011).

The distribution of the Roman Catholic Roma is a regional one, due to their living space overlapping with one of the other minorities, in localities in Banat, Crişana, Transylvania, and Moldavia, where they live alongside Roman Catholic Hungarians, Germans, Slovaks, Croats, Romanians etc. Six counties concentrate 85% of the Roman-Catholic Roma (fig. 6): Satu Mare 4,735 (22.7% of the Roman Catholic Roma in the country and 27.2% of the Roma in the county, in villages shared with Hungarians and Germans); Bihor 3,642 (17.5% and 10.5% in villages with Hungarians and Slovaks); Mureş 3,104 (14.9% and 6.6% in villages with Hungarians); Harghita 2,365 (11.4% and 44.4% in villages with Hungarians), Timiş 2,208 (10.6% and 15.2% in villages with Hungarians, Germans, Croats, etc.), and Covasna 1,634 (7.9% and 19.8% in villages with Hungarians).

FIG. 6. TOTAL NUMBER AND CONFESSIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT AND MUSLIM ROMA POPULATION IN ROMANIA, BY COUNTIES, IN 2011



SOURCE: *Statul și cultele religioase*, <http://culte.gov.ro>.

*The Greek Catholic Church*, banned during the communist period and restored after 1990, had registered the largest number of parishioners in 1992 through the “return” of the traditional ones, but also through new followers. From this ‘peak’ until 2011, the Greek Catholic community in Romania recorded a continuous decline in number (–32.5%). In 1992, with 3,569 parishioners, it was the fourth religious option for the Roma community (0.9%). Against the general regressive background in the period 1992–2011, the Greek Catholic Roma recorded a growth rate of 82.4%, higher than that of the ethnic group, more significant during the first decade (72.26%) and lower during the second one (5.9%), and the highest among traditional churches, being surpassed only by the neo-Protestants. In this situation, the Greek Catholic Roma community reached 6,511 parishioners, but regressed to the seventh position in the confessional structure of the Roma ethnic group, where, however, as a share, it increased slightly from 0.9% to 1.1% (figs. 1, 2 and 6). Likewise, within the ethnic structure of the Greek Catholic Church, given their higher growth rate compared with other ethnic groups, it increased in share from 1.6% to 4.3% (fig. 4).

In general, the Greek Catholic Roma population is a predominantly rural community, with declining trends, from 60% to 58.6%, an evolution specific to the Catholic community. The “urbanization” trend is supported by the growth rate, higher in urban areas (+88.9%), also reflected in the positive evolution of the share of Roma population in the urban Greek Catholic community, from 2.6% to 6.5%. In rural areas, with a lower growth rate (+78.1%), the migration from the countryside is also reflected in the share of the Greek Catholic rural environment, oscillating from 0.9% in 1992 to 1.1% in 2010 and 0.98% in 2011.

Greek Catholic Roma have a regionally shaped residential area, dominant in Transylvania, in homogeneous groups and in localities where there are important communities of Romanian ethnics (majority), or Hungarians, Ukrainians, and Germans of the same religion. They are present in 19 counties, of which 3 concentrate 55%: Mureş 1,581 (24.3% of the country and 3.4% of the Roma in the county), Bihor 1,037 (16% and 3.0%), and Satu Mare 921 (14.2 % and 5.3%) (figs. 3, 6).

*The Protestant community*, identifying with the *Reformed/Calvinist Church*, officially recognized in Transylvania in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is the third religious option of the Roma population in Romania in 1992. It was gradually overtaken by the Pentecostals, losing one position in 2011. The negative evolution of the entire Reformed community (–25.1%) is found, to a lesser extent (–6.3%), also at the level of the Reformed Roma population. They are the only ethno-confessional community belonging to the Roma population with a negative demographic trend and a decrease of the share in the confessional structure of the ethnic group, from 4.4% to 2.6% (figs. 2 and 3). However, this negative growth rate, lower than that of the Reformed Hungarians, usually the majority in the joint living habitat, has contributed to an increase of the Roma share in the ethnic structure of the Reformed religious structure (predominantly Hungarian), from 2.2% to 2.7% (fig. 4).

The Reformed Roma community is predominantly rural (76.3%), with an upward trend. In explaining this trend, even if the general one is regressive, the deficit is lower in rural areas (–1.2%) than in urban areas (–19.7%).

The spatial analysis is reflected at the level of counties in terms of evolution, number and share within a regionally defined residential area, usually in localities with a Reformed

Hungarian majority (figs. 3 and 6): Mureş 6,130 parishioners (13.1% of the Roma in the county and 37.2% of the Reformed Roma in the country), Satu Mare 2,796 (16.1% and 16.9%), Bihor 2,660 (7.7% and 16.1%), Cluj 1,067 (4.7% and 6.5%) etc.

*The Muslim community*, established on the current territory of Romania since the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a well-defined area in Dobruja, had only 583 Roma parishioners in 1992, representing 0.14% in the confessional structure of the ethnic group (figs. 2 and 3) and 1.04% in the Muslim community (fig. 4). With a growth rate of 475%, the Muslim Roma reached 3,356 parishioners in 2011, representing 0.54% of the Roma population and 5.22% of the Muslim community.

Unlike other confessional communities, Muslim Roma live predominantly in cities, where the trend is regressive, from 80.6% in 1992 to 65.8% in 2011. This trend is supported by the high and differentiated growth rate on environments (+296% urban and +362% rural), especially in the period 2002–2011. In 2011 (figs. 3 and 6), in the confessional structure of the Roma ethnic group by counties, the Muslim Roma represented 20.7% in Constanţa (1,775) and 43% in Tulcea (1,471).

### **Neo-Protestant Churches Within the Confessional Landscape of Roma Communities**

**T**HE NEO-PROTESTANT *community* started to be present on the Romanian territory with the second wave of Protestantism, specific to the nineteenth century, through the following churches: *Pentecostal*, *Baptist*, *Seventh-day Adventist*, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, *Christians of the Gospel (Plymouth Brethren)* and *the Romanian Evangelical Church*. Banned during the communist period, they were gradually officially recognized after 1990. After two years of democracy and freedom of religion, the six neo-Protestant churches had 457,985 parishioners (2% of the total population) in Romania, with a large distribution at national level (figs. 2, 3 and 6) and usually without dominant majorities at the level of localities. Of these, only 11,465 were Roma, representing 2.86%.

Compared to the traditional churches, there are many similarities between the demographic behavior of the neo-Protestant communities across the world and the Roma communities: high natural growth and high birth rates, many young families with early age at first birth and marriage (14–16 years), the average number of children exceeding 3–4. To these is added the 'migration' of a large contingent of parishioners, especially in rural areas, from traditional churches to neo-Protestant ones, promoting families with many children and banning abortion.

In contrast to the accentuated demographic regression of the Romanian population (–11.8%), both communities, neo-Protestant and Roma, are on an upward trend. The differences in growth rate and demographic behavior between the neo-Protestant ethno-confessional communities are also reflected in the evolution of the confessional structure of the Roma ethnic group.

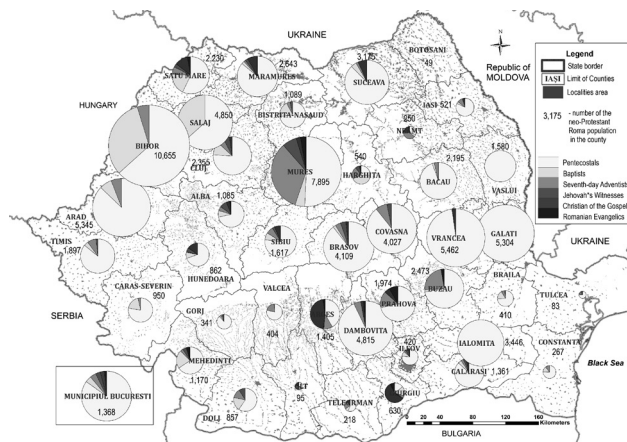
The neo-Protestant Roma, with the highest growth rate in the analyzed period (+707.1%), reached, in 2011, 92,532 parishioners, representing 14.9% in the confessional structure of the Roma ethnic group.

The parishioners of the *Pentecostal Church* were first recorded in 1922 in the village of Păuliș, in Arad County. During 1992–2011, Pentecostal Roma were the most important in terms of number (from 7,919 to 71,262), share (from 69.1% to 77%) and growth rate (800%) in the neo-Protestant group, and the fourth option in the confessional structure of the Roma ethnic group in 1992 (fig. 2). As their growth rate is clearly higher than that of the Pentecostal community (64.1%), the share of Roma population has increased dramatically, from 3.6% to 19.7%, in the ethnic structure of the Pentecostal Church. Increasing its share in the confessional structure of the ethnic group from 3.6% in 1992 to 11.5% in 2011 (fig. 4), the Pentecostal Church became the second religious option, after the Orthodox one (figs. 2 and 3).

At national scale, the Pentecostal Roma community remained predominantly rural, increasing to 73% in 2011. During the same year, within the confessional structure of the Roma population in the countryside, Pentecostals accounted for 13.3% and only for 8.4% in urban areas.

In general, Pentecostal communities are ethnically homogeneous. They are spread over the entire territory of Romania and usually without majorities at the level of localities, which are mostly inhabited by Romanians. For the majority of them, there may be several such churches grouped according to “families,” in which pastors preach in Romanian or Romani. The most important communities are in the northwest (figs. 3 and 6): Bihor 6,714 (19.4% of the Roma in the county) representing 9.5% of the Pentecostal Roma in Romania, Arad 4,694 (28.5%), Sălaj 3,007 (20.1%), Maramureș 2,253 (18.5%), Satu Mare 1,274 (7.3%); in eastern Transylvania: Mureș 4,007 (8.5%), Brașov 3,664 (19.8%), Covasna 3,549 (42.95) etc.; in the south of Moldavia: Vrancea 5,278 (44.1%), Galați 5,258 (31%), Bacău 2,057 (13.5%), Vaslui 1,553 (26.3%); Dâmbovița 4,437 (16.2%), Ialomița 3,401 (23.8%), Suceava 2,771 (22.8%) etc.

FIG. 7. TOTAL NUMBER AND CONFESSIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE NEO-PROTESTANT ROMA POPULATION IN ROMANIA, BY COUNTIES, IN 2011



SOURCE: *Statul și cultele religioase*, <http://culte.gov.ro>.

*The Baptist Church* appeared for the first time in Romania in Bucharest, in 1856. In 2011, it was second in number and share (9.6%) within the neo-Protestant Roma community (fig. 2). Compared to the year 1992, when it was the sixth confessional option for the ethnic group (0.23%), the Baptist Roma population recorded the highest growth rate, of 845%, during 1992–2011. By means of this trend, they exceeded in number the Adventist Roma population, reaching 8,815 parishioners in 2011, representing 1.4% and the fifth option in the confessional structure of the ethnical group. A spectacular increase, within the same interval, was experienced by the Roma individuals in the ethnic structure of the Baptist community, from 0.8% to 7.8% (fig. 4).

At national level, this is a dominantly rural community, experiencing a decline from 73% in 2002 to 66.8% in 2011, with tendencies of “urbanization.” The living area is regional, in localities with a low ratio, usually where there are other Baptist ethnic groups (especially Hungarians and Romanians). The most important communities are in the counties situated in the west and northwest of the country (figs. 3 and 6): Bihor with 3,384 (9.8%) parishioners, representing 38.4% of the Baptist Roma in the country, Sălaj 1,733 (11.6%), 19.7% by country; Satu Mare 416 (2.4%), Arad 373 (2.3%) etc.

*The Seventh-day Adventist Church* was officially recognized in 1925. Given its growth rate during 1992–2011 (301%), its number (6,793) and share (from 0.4% to 1.1%) in the confessional structure of the ethnic group (fig. 2), it surpassed only by the Baptists, becoming the sixth religious option in 2011. Gradually, the Adventist Roma increased in share, both within the ethnic structure of the Adventist community—from 2.2% to 8.4% (fig. 4)—and in the neo-Protestant religious structure, from 8.1% to 9.5%.

During the same interval, it remained a mainly rural community (57.6% in 2011), but with a downward trend in favor of the urban environment, whose share increased from 41.4% to 42.4%. Scattered throughout the country, the most important of these otherwise small communities are in the counties (figs. 3 and 6) Mureș 2,630 (5.6% of the Roma), Buzău 563 (2.8%), Bihor 506 (1.5%), Arad 321 (1.9%), Covasna 296 (3.6%), Prahova 278 (1.6%), etc.

*Jehovah’s Witnesses*, although they also functioned “illegally” during the socialist period, with an official status in Romania recognized only later 2003,<sup>2</sup> were included in the census for the first time in 2011. With a contingent of 1,818 Roma parishioners, this church accounts for 0.29% of the confessional structure of the ethnic group (fig. 2), meaning 3.65% in the ethnic structure of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Romania (fig. 4) and 1.98% in the neo-Protestant Roma community. It is a confessional group with a share of 56% in rural areas. They were not registered in 7 counties, and the most numerous are in (figs. 3 and 6): Mureș 528 (1.1%), Brașov 140 (0.8%), Cluj 124 (0.6%), Covasna 127 (1.5%), etc.

*The Christian Church of the Gospel (Plymouth Brethren)*, officially recognized in 1933, had in the 1992 census 49,393 parishioners of which only 1.8% were Roma (920). With a lower growth rate within the Roma community compared to other religions (223%), it had 2,973 parishioners in 2011. The same positive trend is registered as a share in the confessional structure of the ethnicity, from 0.23% to 0.48% (fig. 4). Instead, their ratio decreased from 8.0% to 3.2% in the neo-Protestant Roma community. Similarly to the



other neo-Protestant Roma communities, the growing rural community is dominant, with a share of 71.6% in 2011. In Romania (figs. 3 and 6), they are missing in 5 counties, while the most important communities are in the southern counties: Argeş 632 (3.8% in the ethnic structure), Giurgiu 358 (2.4%); in Suceava 213 (1.7%) and in the northwest: Satu Mare 253 (1.5%) and Maramureş 215 (1.8%), etc.

*The Romanian Evangelical Church* broke away in 1990 (officially since 1992) from the Christian Church of the Gospel, and the first parishioners were registered during the 2002 census. With a growth rate of 45%, it currently has a small number of Roma parishioners, only 871 in 2011, locally grouped and representing 0.14% of the confessional structure of the Roma community (fig. 2). With a dominant residential area in the countryside (67%) and with tendencies of “urbanization,” at the level of the neo-Protestant community they represented 1% and 0.14% of the Evangelical community in Romania (fig. 4), the most numerous being in Mureş 216 (0.5%) and Prahova 162 (0.9%) (figs. 3 and 6).

In 2011, *Roma belonging to other religions* represented 0.4% of the Roma community (2,425 persons) compared to 1992, when they were 0.6% (2,294).

Within the confessional structure of the ethnic group, a special category is represented by the *Roma population without a declared religious preference*, a category which registered a decrease from 4,173 (1.0% of the Roma people) in 1992 to 2,633 (0.78%) in 2011, of which 285 were atheists and 1,938 had no religion (figs. 2 and 3).

## Conclusions

**I**N POST-SOCIALIST Romania, against an obvious demographic decline, the neo-Protestants and the Roma communities are on a positive trend, due to their social and religious practices triggering a certain demographic behavior. Structural changes could be observed at regional and county level, outlining the confessional landscape of the Roma communities.

The twelve confessional groups have their own particularities differentiated according to: (1) the trend towards a positive growth rate, with a wide gap, between 845% for the Baptist Roma, 800% for the Pentecostal Roma and 8% for the Roman Catholic Roma, the only community with a negative trend being the Reformed Roma (–16%); (2) the living environment: dominant in the rural area (between 53.3% Roman Catholic Roma and 72.9% Pentecostal Roma), the only majority urban community being that of the Muslim Roma (65.8%).

First and foremost, an interesting phenomenon is the “urbanization” trend in seven rural communities and the opposing accentuated ruralization in other four rural communities. Second, the structural shift towards the neo-Protestant churches at the expenses of the traditional churches—Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Calvinist—, offset by growth in nine smaller communities. Third, the share of Roma within the structure of the confessions is on an upward trend in all communities due to the higher growth rate compared



to other ethnic groups, except for the Roman Catholics (in this case being overtaken by other ethnic groups such as Slovaks, Croats etc.).

The most heterogeneous structures of the Roma ethnic group (fig. 3) are in the counties of Mureș, Bihor, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Arad, Covasna, Harghita, etc., and the most homogeneous communities, predominantly Orthodox and Pentecostal, are in the southern part of the country and in Dobruja (Orthodox and Muslims).

Although the data shows a spatial distribution of this ethnic group in almost all administrative territorial units of Romania, the ethno-confessional landscape is complicated. Regional ethno-confessional homogeneity is correlated with an obvious homogeneity with the Roma community as well, while complex ethnic melting pots favored a heterogeneous confessional structure of the Roma communities.



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### **Abstract**

#### The Confessional Landscape of Roma Communities in Post-Socialist Romania

Post-socialist Romania is experiencing increasing religious tolerance, leading to the diversification of religious choices. Gradually, the banned religions were officially recognized, restructuring the confessional landscape with several ethnically-related specificities. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyze the evolution and features of the Roma communities in Romania, in order to outline the spatial distribution of ethno-confessional groups. Data provided by the official censuses from 1992, 2002 and 2011, processed using spatial analysis at county level, show a certain adherence of Roma communities to the newer churches (especially neo-Protestant rites such as Pentecostal, Baptist, Adventist), alongside the traditional ones (Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, Protestant), outlining a confessional landscape with a specific social, cultural and demographic behavior.

### **Keywords**

ethno-confessional landscape, confessional structure, ethnicity, Roma communities, neo-Protestantism, traditional churches, Romania

# Les bergers, vecteurs précurseurs de la diffusion et la consolidation du roumanisme

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ALEXANDRU PĂCURAR, GEORGE-BOGDAN TOFAN

## Introduction

L'ÉLEVAGE DES moutons en Roumanie et la vie pastorale qui en découle et y est intrinsèquement liée ont constitué dès le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle des sujets d'étude de prédilection pour des chercheurs de domaines divers – l'ethnographie et le folklore, l'histoire, la géographie humaine, l'histoire économique –, ainsi que pour des auteurs de mémoires, de monographies et de notes de voyage. L'Écossais William Lithgow (1582-1645), précurseur des globetrotteurs modernes, était frappé par le nombre de moutons en Transylvanie et notait ses impressions du voyage qu'il avait effectué dans cette région à la fin de la première décennie du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Ogden 2000, 18). Un peu plus tard, l'érudite voyageur turc Evlia Çelebi (1611 – après 1672) racontait que, lors de sa visite, dans les années 1652-1653, les bergers aroumains des alentours des montagnes de Vitocha avaient des centaines de milliers de moutons groupés en 3 000 troupeaux et descendaient en hiver dans les régions environnantes de Thessalonique, Serrès et Kavala (Vuia 1964, 184-185). Près de deux siècles plus tard, en 1787, le comte français Blanc d'Hauterive, dans son mémoire sur l'état de la Moldavie, consignait sa première impression sur la Valachie en évoquant l'élevage des moutons :

*À mesure qu'on s'éloigne des pays turcs, la Valachie s'embellit et se peuple; il n'y manque que des arbres et des pierres. Des herbes de huit pieds de haut, serrées comme le foin et grosses à proportion de leur hauteur; des troupes de chevaux et de juments toutes pleines, des bœufs comme ceux d'Auvergne, des moutons hérissés et gros comme des buissons...* (D'Hauterive 1902, 318)

Quelques décennies plus tard, le consul d'Angleterre dans les Principautés roumaines, William Wilkinson, écrivait :

*Les Principautés ont beaucoup de bovins et d'oiseaux. Chaque année, elles envoient à Constantinople 250 000 béliers et 3 000 chevaux. Les bœufs se vendent à des prix fort avantageux, mais tous les produits et les marchandises nécessaires à la capitale de l'Empire sont achetés à presque un quart de leur prix et à un sixième de leur valeur en Turquie...* (apud Ionescu-Dobrogeanu 1936, 230)

Après la période des descriptions faites par les voyageurs et les diplomates impressionnés par le grand nombre d'animaux domestiques, y compris d'ovins, à partir de la seconde moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'administration plus rigoureuse des Principautés danubiennes commence à inventorier la population de moutons. Ainsi, d'après une statistique remontant à 1849 (Soutzo 1849, 94, 100), en Moldavie, il y a 682 500 chevaux en 1840, le prix d'une ocque de viande de mouton et/ou d'agneau est, en 1838, de 22 paras à Suceava, de 16 paras à Jassy et de 30 dans le département de Covurlui et, en 1847, de 24, 28 et respectivement 35 paras sur les mêmes marchés. La même statistique (*ibid.*, 115) nous apprend que, sur la propriété du prince Moruzi située à Svorîştea (Dorohoi), les premiers moutons mérinos ont été importés en 1838 et qu'en 1847 les troupeaux comptent 5 000 têtes, dont on avait obtenus 10 tonnes de laine vendue au prix de 80 florins le quintal. Depuis le port de Galaţi, en 1840, on a exporté 228 000 ocques de laine, ce qui représente 798 000 piastres sur un total de 42 543 598, soit 1,87 % de la valeur totale des exportations (*ibid.*, 141).

S'agissant d'une activité ancienne, des représentations graphiques des bergers roumains apparaissent déjà dans de soi-disant « albums » dès le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Spirescu et Macovei 2011, 188-192). Quelques exemples à cet égard sont les aquarelles de 1692 d'un auteur allemand resté anonyme, publiées dans *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgen*, ou celles de Franz Neuhauser, reprises par William Ellis. Le peintre et graphiste transylvain Károly Pap Szathmári (1812-1887) fait, après un long voyage en Transylvanie, les portraits de plusieurs personnages féminins roumains du village de Sălişte et des pays de la Bârsa et du Haţeg. Pure coïncidence ou non, ce sont justement les régions roumaines les plus importantes du point de vue de l'activité d'élevage des moutons.

L'étude de « l'économie du mouton » connaît son apogée à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et dans les premières décennies du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Cette activité est analysée sous toutes les coutures : ses reflets dans la création populaire – par exemple, dans l'ouvrage d'Ovid Densusianu *Vieaţa păstorească în Poesia noastră populară* (La Vie pastorale dans la notre poésie populaire) (1922-1923) – et/ou par rapport à d'autres peuples, comme dans *Păstoritul la popoarele romanice* (L'Élevage des moutons chez les peuples romans) du même auteur (1913) ; l'ethnographie, dans des études comme celles de János Földes – *Az oláh erdei pásztornépről* (Du peuple des bergers transylvains) (1907), de Ion Diaconu – « Păstoritul în Vrancea » (L'Élevage des moutons en Vrancea) (1930), de Simion Mehedinţi – *Oameni de la munte* (Gens de la montagne) (1919), de Theodor T. Burada – *O călătorie în satele moldovenesti din Gubernia Cherson (Rusia)* (Voyage dans les villages moldaves du gouvernement de Kherson, Russie) (1893) et *O călătorie la Românii din Gubernia Kamenitz-Podolsk (Rusia)* (Incursion chez les Roumains du

gouvernement de Kamianets-Podilskyï, Russie) (1906) ou de Dimitrie Dan – *Stâna la românii din Bucovina* (La Bergerie chez les Roumains de Bucovine) (1923).

Un cas à part est celui des recherches sociologiques complexes qu'ont entreprises les équipes royales d'étudiants organisées sous le patronage de l'école de sociologie de Dimitrie Gusti et qui ont donné lieu à des monographies telles « Stâna din Munții Făgărașului » (La Bergerie dans les montagnes de Făgăraș) de Traian Herseni (1934) ou *Clopotiva. Un sat din Hațeg* (Clopotiva. Un village du Hațeg) par Ion Conea (1940) ; à des études sur la toponymie générale et la toponymie pastorale, telles que *Românii în veacurile IX-XIV pe baza toponimiei și a onomasticeii* (Les Roumains du IX<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles du point de vue de la toponymie et de l'onomastique) (1933) et *Toponimie și istorie* (Toponymie et histoire) (1928) par Nicolae Drăganu, « Numiri toponimice păstorești în Munții Bârsei, Buzăului și ai Vrancei » (Toponymes d'origine pastorale dans les montagnes de Bârsa, de Buzău et de Vrancea) (1928) par Sabin Opreanu ; à des études historiques concernant la vie pastorale, comme *Păstori ardeleni în Principatele Române* (Bergers transylvains dans les Principautés roumaines) (1925) par Ștefan Meteș, « Păstoriul Ardelenilor în Moldova și Țara Românească (până la 1821) » (L'Élevage des moutons pratiqué par les Transylvains en Moldavie et en Valachie (jusqu'en 1821)) (1927) par Andrei Veress, ainsi que celle d'Alexandru Doboși sur la tradition du don chez les Roumains transylvains : *Datul oilor (Quinquagesima ovium). Un capitol din istoria economică a Românilor din Transilvania* (La taxe sur le mouton – Quinquagesima ovium. Un chapitre de l'histoire économique des Roumains de Transylvanie) (1937).

Nous soulignons que, dans le domaine de la géographie, l'impulsion et les grandes directions d'étude en ce qui concerne l'élevage des moutons en Roumanie ont été données par deux grands spécialistes : Emmanuel de Martonne, le scientifique français qui a remarqué la taille, l'importance et les particularités de cette activité sur le territoire roumain, et respectivement George Vâlsan, qui a observé son rôle de vecteur précurseur de l'unité nationale. Emmanuel de Martonne décrit la vie pastorale roumaine dans plusieurs études de référence, parfois de grande envergure, telles que *La Valachie. Essai de monographie géographique* (1902) ; « La Vie pastorale et la transhumance dans les Karpates méridionales : leur importance géographique et historique » (1904) ou « Vieața păstorească în Carpații Români » (La vie pastorale dans les Carpathes roumaines) (1912). Parmi les études de George Vâlsan à ce sujet, nous citons « O fază în popularea Țărilor Românești » (Une étape dans le peuplement des Principautés roumaines) (1912) et « Mocanii în Dobrogea, la 1845 » (Les bergers *mocani* en Dobroudja en 1845) (1928). Cet auteur synthétise magistralement, avec une intuition brillante, le rôle du berger dans l'histoire de des Roumains :

*Calme randonneur séculaire de ces terres, guidé par les étoiles du ciel, avec son bâton pour arme et sa vieille pelisse pour bouclier et abri, avec son troupeau de moutons pour armée, le berger mocan, n'a pas conquis que les plaines des laboureurs autour des Carpates, mais aussi l'ensemble de la steppe autour de la mer Noire. Il a tracé de nouvelles routes à travers le royaume des herbes, frayé des passages, creusé des puits, créé des parcs à moutons et bâti des habitations, découvert la valeur de précieuses terres désertées, puis fondé des villages et*



*peuplé de sa race saine tout un pan du pays de manière plus solide et plus louable que toute colonisation officielle.*

*Anticipant les aspirations nationales roumaines dès une période trouble et sans connaître les accomplissements du passé, le berger a façonné les frontières de l'État qui devait héberger sa nation à l'époque de la virilité. Grâce à ses voyages annuels dans les recoins les plus reculés du romanisme, il a réalisé et renforcé l'unité nationale, prouvant ainsi que ni les Carpates ni le Danube ne sont un obstacle ethnique et que la vie roumaine ne peut être pleinement et harmonieusement réalisée qu'en s'appuyant sur les rivages les plus larges de la mer. S'établissant depuis les temps anciens près des vagues de la mer, baptisant de noms roumains tant d'endroits dans la région, il a répété l'histoire oubliée et a créé pour nous, de nouveau, des droits sur des terres disputées par les voisins réveillés trop tard. (Vâlsan 1928, 41)*

À l'exhortation des deux grands géographes, Nicolae Dragomir a entrepris en 1926 la première étude détaillée sur l'élevage des moutons dans sa région d'origine – Mărginimea Sibiului [la frontière de Sibiu], la plus importante du pays pour cette activité. Cet auteur est devenu ainsi un pionnier de l'étude complexe de cette occupation et il nous a légué trois ouvrages d'envergure, qui constituent aujourd'hui de véritables documents de géographie humaine (Dragomir 2014, 272). Son exemple a été suivi par d'autres géographes qui, dans l'entre-deux-guerres, se sont penchés sur le phénomène de l'élevage des moutons dans différentes régions roumaines.

Parmi eux, il convient de retenir : Romulus Vuia, « Țara Hațegului și Regiunea Pădurenilor » (Le Pays du Hațeg et la région des bergers) (1926) et *Tipuri de păstorit la români* (Types d'élevage des moutons chez les Roumains) (1964) ; Emil Precup, *Păstoritul în Munții Rodnei* (L'Élevage des moutons dans les montagnes de Rodna) (1926) ; Laurian Someșan, « Vieața pastorală în Munții Călimani » (La Vie pastorale dans les montagnes de Călimani) (1933) ; Tiberiu Morariu, « Câteva contribuțiuni la oieritul evreilor maramureșeni » (Quelques contributions concernant l'élevage des moutons chez les juifs de Maramureș) (1931) et *Vieața pastorală în Munții Rodnei* (La Vie pastorale dans les montagnes de Rodna) (1937) ; Sabin Opreanu, « Contribuțiuni la transhumanța din Carpații Orientali » (Contributions concernant la transhumance dans les Carpates orientales) (1931), ainsi que Ștefan Manciuța, qui touche le sujet de manière tangentielle dans « Contribuții la studiul elementului românesc din Câmpia Tisei și Carpații Nordici » (Contributions à l'étude de l'élément roumain dans la plaine de la Tisza et dans les Carpates du Nord) (1931) et dans « Câmpia Tisei » (La Plaine de la Tisza) (1938).

Les géographes de Bucarest qui ont étudié la vie pastorale et ses implications sociales et économiques sont Mara N. Popp, auteure de plusieurs études de grande qualité, telles que « Drumul oilor pe Valea Prahovei, Doftanei și Teleajenului » (La Route des moutons dans les vallées de Prahova, de Doftana et de Teleajen) (1929) ; « Ciobănia la Ungurenii din dreapta Oltului » (L'Élevage des moutons chez les bergers transylvains du côté droit de l'Olt) (1932) ; « Contribuțiuni la vieața pastorală din Argeș și Muscel. Origina Ungurenilor » (Contributions à la vie pastorale d'Argeș et de Muscel. L'origine des bergers transylvains) (1934) ; « Urme românești în vieața pastorală a

Carpaților polonezi » (Traces roumaines dans la vie pastorale des Carpates polonaises) (1935) ; « Păstoritul în câmpie în cadrul vieții românești în genere » (L'Élevage des moutons dans les plaines dans le cadre de la vie roumaine en général) (1942) ; « Ungureni » (Les Bergers transylvains) (1942) ; respectivement Ion Conea, avec « Din geografia istorică și umană a Carpaților. Nedei, păstori, nume de munți » (Éléments de géographie historique et humaine des Carpates. Fêtes, bergers, noms de montagnes) (1936) et « Pe urmele descălecatului din sud » (Sur les traces de la colonisation dans le Sud) (1939). D'autres auteurs ont signé des études tout aussi importantes : Gheorghe Marinescu, « Câteva observații asupra stânelor și colibelor din Parâng » (Quelques observations sur les bergeries et les huttes dans les montagnes de Parâng) (1932) ; Vladimir Kubijovyč, « Păstoritul în Maramureș » (L'Élevage des moutons dans le Maramureș) (1934), une excellente étude synthétique. Des géographes ont également émis des considérations sur l'élevage des moutons : Victor Tufescu, « Rolul economic al României în cadrul Europei Noi » (Le Rôle économique de la Roumanie dans le contexte de la nouvelle Europe) (1942) ; Vintilă Mihăilescu, « O hartă a principalelor tipuri de așezări rurale din România » (Une Carte des principaux types de communes rurales en Roumanie) (1927) et Nicolae Popp, « Câteva cuvinte despre oile karakul din România » (Brèves considérations sur les moutons carakul en Roumanie) (1935).

La littérature de facture monographique et commémorative à caractère nostalgique et documentaire, qui dépeint l'atmosphère de la vie dans les familles et les villages de bergers mérite une mention particulière. Des auteurs comme Victor Păcală – *Monografia satului Rășinari* (Monographie du village de Rășinari) (1915), George Moroianu – *Chipuri din Săcele* (Visages de Săcele) (1938), Octavian C. Tăslăuanu – *Sposedanii* (Confessions) (1976) ou Sextil Pușcariu – *Brașovul de altădată* (Le Brașov d'autrefois) (1977) ont écrit des pages mémorables. Il convient également de retenir le nom de Vasile Băncilă, qui tente une explication philosophique de la transhumance des bergers transylvains dans la plaine du Bărăgan, qu'ils soient, selon leurs villages ou zones d'origine, des *mărgineni*, des *mocani*, des *țuțuieni* ou des *bretcani*. Notre étude serait incomplète sans la description de l'élevage des moutons chez les Roumains de la péninsule balkanique. Nous rappelons ici les études de Theodor Capidan, *Românii Nomazi. Studiu din viața Românilor din sudul Peninsulei Balcanice* (Les Roumains nomades. Étude de la vie des Roumains du sud de la péninsule balkanique) (1926) et « Românii din Peninsula Balcanică » (Les Roumains de la péninsule balkanique) (1941), les notes de Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Călătorii la Români din Macedonia și Muntele Atos sau Santa-Agora* (Voyages des Roumains de Macédoine et du mont Athos ou de Santa-Agora) (1863), de Francis Lebrun et Ion Voinescu, *Macedonia* (Macédoine) (1911), ainsi que les études d'Irina Nicolau, « Les Caméléons des Balkans » (2001) et d'André Scrima, « Les Roumains et le Mont Athos » (2001) etc.

Après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, avec l'influence soviétique et le processus d'étatisation de l'économie roumaine, y compris de l'élevage des moutons, cette occupation ancienne a perdu son éclat. Cependant, il restait sur la carte du pays quelques « enclaves » d'élevage traditionnel, que nombre de chercheurs, comme, par exemple, Nicolae Dunăre, Constantin Popa, Ion Donat, Ion Vlăduțiu, Valer Pop, Petru Dan Idu, Ioan Augustin Goia et Victor Voicu, ont analysé avec passion.

## Facteurs favorables au développement de l'élevage des moutons

UN CERTAIN nombre de conditions environnementales avantageuses des Carpates, ainsi que la « psychologie » des Roumains, leur amour de la nature et de la liberté, ont favorisé le développement de « l'économie du mouton », comme Nicolae Dragomir se plaisait à appeler l'élevage ovin. Effectivement, le cadre naturel des Carpates est particulièrement propice à cette activité, à « l'économie du bétail » en général. Tout d'abord, il s'agit de *la parfaite proportionnalité des principales formes de relief* – montagne, plateau-colline, plaine – chacune occupant un tiers de la superficie totale du pays. Associée à leur disposition en marches d'escalier et aux régions climatiques, cette proportionnalité a conduit à un zonage biogéographique de l'espace roumain, très favorable à l'élevage ovin. Il s'agit, dans l'ordre, de: pâturages alpins – forêts – sylvo-steppe – steppe, ainsi que des marais du Danube, qui ont imposé un calendrier saisonnier spécifique, du plus simple – le déplacement pendulaire saisonnier local – au plus complexe – la *transhumance*. La superficie relativement grande de la région montagneuse qui se trouve dans la partie centrale du pays sous la forme d'une chaîne de montagnes ininterrompue, telle une épine dorsale – les Carpates roumaines – était l'élément central de l'élevage des moutons. En outre, « les Carpates n'appartenaient qu'à nous », c'est-à-dire qu'elles avaient leur propre vie organisée d'un côté et d'autre, sur les deux versants, « elles constituaient l'élément morphologique que les conquérants éphémères de cette terre n'ont pas pu approcher » (Popp 1942b, 181-182), donc les Roumains ont mis en place une « activité connectée à la montagne et animée par celle-ci », ainsi que typiquement roumaine: l'élevage des moutons. Les facteurs qui favorisent le déroulement de cette activité dans les Carpates roumaines sont :

- leur extension maximale, du nord-ouest au sud-ouest du pays, avec des hauteurs allant de 800 m à 2 547 m ; leur accessibilité notamment grâce aux nombreux passages situés dans les vallées et sur les sommets, auxquels s'ajoutent les dépressions carpatiques ;
- en raison de leur évolution géologique, elles présentent de grandes surfaces lisses, couvertes de pâturages et de prairies naturelles, qui ont engendré la vie pastorale la plus intense et la plus évoluée de l'espace géographique roumain; dans la terminologie roumaine populaire, ces zones portent différents noms (dans les Carpates orientales, on les appelle *plaiuri* [plaines], dans les Carpates méridionales, où les caractéristiques alpines sont plus évidentes, *poduri* [ponts] et, dans les Carpates occidentales, aussi bien *plaiuri* que *poduri* ;
- la multitude de sources dans les Carpates ; l'eau, élément indispensable à l'élevage des ovins, à la vie humaine en général, rend ces montagnes encore plus propices à cette occupation ancienne ;
- le climat moins rigoureux et surtout la division en régions climatiques du territoire roumain constituent un autre élément qui favorise amplement l'élevage ovin ;
- le tapis végétal disposé en fonction du climat et de l'altitude est à son tour favorable à l'économie pastorale, en raison de la composition floristique particulière ;

• enfin, le degré élevé de peuplement des Carpates roumaines, d'où a commencé l'expansion de « l'économie ovine ». Plus exactement, pour les habitants des nombreux villages situés en contrebas de la montagne, l'élevage des moutons était l'activité de base.

Le peuplement des Carpates a été possible aussi grâce à l'accessibilité de ces montagnes, étant donné la multitude de vallées qui les traversent et qui, pour « l'économie ovine », étaient des « routes des moutons » intensément circulées. Cet aspect ponctuel a été saisi pour le cas du segment des Carpates formé par l'arc de montagnes Bucegi-Leaota-Baiului-Grohotiș-Ciucaș-Siriu, qui montre que, pour ces montagnes, les vallées de Prahova, de Doftana et de Teleajen jouaient le rôle d'« aires de drainage des troupeaux venant des montagnes environnantes » (Popp 1929, 301-304).

Mais le cadre naturel carpatique, si favorable à l'élevage des moutons, ne finit pas avec les Carpates. Il continue avec la zone de collines et de plateaux, constituée elle aussi d'éléments des Carpates et occupant un tiers de la surface du pays. Il s'agit d'une zone intermédiaire, de transition vers plaine, qui est à son tour une aire d'élevage importante. Toutes ces formes de relief majeures constituent des gradins d'altitude décroissants et concentriques.

*La montagne et la plaine ont représenté deux zones de polarisation alternative dans l'histoire ethnique et économique du peuple roumain. La plaine est l'aire de paix propice à l'agriculture dans les moments de détente ; la montagne, quant à elle, est le territoire de défense lors des moments de détresse et c'est là qu'est née une vie pastorale intense. (Someșan 1941, 546)*

Le vaste domaine de plaine, très bien adapté aux activités d'élevage ovin des Roumains, se termine, à l'ouest, par les larges vallées de la Tisza, moins favorables à cette activité à cause des marais ; au sud, par le Danube et sa vaste vallée couverte de marais de jusqu'à 30 km de large, d'une superficie totale estimée à environ 5 000 kilomètres et très propice à l'hivernage ; et, à l'est, par le Dniestr, frontière et pont entre deux mondes, que les bergers n'ont pas hésité à franchir dans leur recherche de pâturages. Cette présentation du cadre naturel carpatique doit inclure aussi la Dobroudja, cette quintessence du relief roumain, où se déroulait une vie pastorale intense, faisant penser aux Roumains du sud du Danube (les Valaques ou les Aroumains), qui, indépendamment de leurs frères du nord du Danube, ont su développer une belle économie ovine, similaire à bien d'égards : des noms des ustensiles employés, en passant par l'organisation et la vie à la bergerie, et jusqu'à ce phénomène grandiose de la transhumance et du nomadisme, sans oublier la « reconversion » des bergers en commerçants et artisans habiles. Tout comme chez les bergers transylvains (Dragomir 2014, 288).

## L'élevage des moutons – une pratique ancestrale des Roumains

**E**NTRE LA montagne et la plaine, éléments majeurs du cadre naturel où se déroule « l'économie ovine », ont eu lieu depuis la nuit des temps les déplacements périodiques des troupeaux menés par les bergers à la recherche de nourriture, dans un aller-retour permanent qui s'appelle *transhumance*. Victor Tufescu en a vu les sens profonds :

*la transhumance, c'est-à-dire les mouvements des troupeaux des montagnes vers les plaines et viceversa, a contribué pendant des siècles au maintien de l'unité de la langue, des coutumes et du folklore des Roumains de partout. Les bergers de la Transylvanie méridionale (les *mocani* dans la région de Braşov, les *breţcani* dans la région Trei Scaune [Trois Sièges], les *brăieni* à Bran, les *mărgineni* dans la région de Sibiu etc.) descendaient avec leurs troupeaux jusqu'aux plaines périphériques pour y passer l'hiver : la plaine Roumaine, les Marais du Danube, la Dobroudja, la plaine de la Moldavie, le Boudjak ou les parties méridionales de la Transnistrie (le *Yedisian*) et même la Crimée. Ce va-et-vient constant et séculaire entre les régions alpines et les pâturages des steppes, suivant les saisons, montre lui aussi l'étroite interdépendance entre les différents secteurs économiques du pays, ainsi que, partant, la nécessité naturelle de complémentarité entre ces derniers. (Tufescu 1942, 243)*

Outre l'environnement naturel si propice à l'élevage des moutons, il faut noter l'inclination des Roumains pour cette activité. Ovid Densusianu trouve que « le peuple roumain est un peuple de bergers » et que « l'élevage des moutons est une occupation typiquement roumaine » (Densusianu 1922-1923, 129). Il donne comme arguments les coutumes, le mode de vie et le penchant inné pour l'élevage des moutons. André Scrima (prenant l'exemple des bergers du sud du Danube) et Andrei Veress (à partir du cas des bergers de Transylvanie) démontrent qu'il s'agit de l'une des plus anciennes occupations roumaines, surtout par rapport aux peuples voisins, comme les Hongrois, les Saxons et les Slaves.

L'ingénieur forestier János Földes pense que le penchant des Roumains pour l'élevage des moutons provient de leur « amour infini pour la nature » et note qu'il n'y a

*personne qui connaisse aussi bien les endroits les plus reculés des forêts que ce peuple, qui donne des noms parlants même aux plus petites crêtes de montagne ou aux ruisseaux les plus frêles ; en plus, les plus belles de ses chansons portent sur les moutons, de sorte que ses chants sur des brebis perdues et retrouvées reflètent fidèlement son caractère. (Földes 1907, 3, 40)*

*La pratique de l'élevage est inscrite dans l'être même du peuple roumain; c'est elle qui a forgé sa mentalité, inspiré ses chants, ses contes et ses légendes magnifiques, qui est à l'origine de bien de ses coutumes. La tradition riche, les traces que gardent encore la toponymie, la*

*nomenclature, la poésie populaire, tous ces éléments s'accumulent et sont des preuves de son ancienneté.* (Popp 1942a, 288)

L'élevage des moutons était considéré comme une occupation majeure. À l'appui de cette affirmation, nous citons Laurian Someșan qui, dans une étude sur la vie pastorale dans les montagnes de Călimani, observait que « l'élevage des moutons est considéré comme l'occupation la plus honorable », la richesse des habitants étant calculée « d'après le nombre de têtes d'animaux possédés » et le fait de « faire paître les animaux devant les villageois étant vu comme l'occupation la plus honorable » (Someșan 1933, 323-324). Pour sa part, Nicolae Dragomir écrit à propos des bergers *mărgineni* qu'ils se considéraient une véritable caste fermée : « la véritable région de Mărginimea Sibiului est petite [...] elle se limite à quelques villages [...] qui refusent les autres [...] où ne vivent pas des gens de la montagne, mais des gens des prés... les *coldani* » (Dragomir 1938a, 160), dénomination péjorative marquant l'infériorité. Enfin, sur le plan individuel, l'appartenance au « peuple des bergers » est fièrement assumée. Un bel exemple à cet égard est celui de Vasile Băncilă, qui cherche, trouve puis assume volontiers son statut de membre d'une communauté honorable de gens de la montagne, comme on l'apprend dans des pages mémorables publiées par la revue *Manuscriptum* (n° 3-4, 1998).

L'économie ovine a été un moyen de s'enrichir pour les bergers, mais aussi un moyen d'assurer le bien-être public, car cette activité très rentable apportait des recettes constantes aux administrations. Pour les bergers transylvains, l'élevage dans les Principautés roumaines était « la profession traditionnelle et, en même temps, la source de revenus et d'existence » (Veress 1927, 205).

Les moutons et les produits dérivés constituaient un article d'exportation important, en particulier pendant la domination de la Sublime Porte, ce qui a encouragé cette activité. Ștefan Manciulea constatait à cet égard que, si jusqu'en 1526 on élevait peu de moutons dans la plaine de la Tisza (Manciulea 1938, 136), après ce que la Hongrie est tombée sous la domination ottomane, les Turcs, grands consommateurs de viande de mouton, ont stimulé cet élevage (Păcurar 2012, 223). L'armée ottomane en consommant elle aussi, de grands effectifs étaient envoyés à Constantinople, ainsi qu'à Vienne et dans le nord de la Hongrie. Après l'entrée de la Transylvanie dans la sphère d'influence autrichienne (1686), Marie-Thérèse et Joseph II ont encouragé cet élevage, surtout pour assurer la laine indispensable à l'industrie des draps. Dans le même ordre d'idées, Popp (1942b, 196) nous montre comment les bergers transylvains sont entrés en contact avec les autorités ottomanes qui ne les ont aucunement empêchés d'exercer leur profession en Valachie et en Moldavie, car les Ottomans étaient de gros consommateurs de viande, de beurre et de laine. Chaque année, « 500 000 moutons, pour ne prendre qu'un exemple, étaient exportés à Constantinople » depuis la Principauté de Valachie.

L'amour des Roumains pour cette activité se faisait sentir même chez les élites nobles, chez les boyards. Amour et ancienneté, ce sont les principales caractéristiques de l'élevage des moutons pratiqué par le peuple roumain. Les deux sont magnifiquement



incarnées par Mircea Ciobanul (le Berger), souverain de la Valachie (1545-1552, 1553-1554, 1558-1559), au sujet duquel Constantin Gane écrivait :

*En souvenir de ses jeunes années, où il élevait dans nos montagnes les troupeaux qui ont fait de lui un homme, les Roumains, tout en sachant que le voïévode Mircea était un « aristocrate » qui avait voyagé à Istanbul, l'ont surnommé « le Berger ».* (Gane 1941, 79)

Les troupeaux parcouraient les Carpates, y compris les Carpates boisées, jusqu'en Moravie et, au sud du Danube, toutes les montagnes étaient sillonnées par des Aroumains (ou Valaques), qui descendaient de la montagne vers la plaine pour y passer la saison froide sous des formes diverses, des plus simples – hivernage à côté des habitations – aux plus complexes – la transhumance la plus étendue et la plus intense, presque une forme de nomadisme. À l'ouest, dans la plaine Pannonienne, lors de l'arrivée des Hongrois (IX<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècles) – environ 200 000 âmes selon les estimations des historiens – la plaine de la Tisza, « en particulier, la partie située du côté gauche », n'était pas déserte : il y avait des villages de pêcheurs et de bergers roumano-slaves, reconnus par la tradition historique (Manciulea 1931, 129-143). Ce fait est prouvé par « les noms des eaux et des régions », tels Tisza, Timiș, Bega, Caraș, Nera, Mureș, Criș, Someș, Crasna, qui sont des noms roumains ou roumano-slaves.

Au cours des XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles, si les villages étaient rares dans les plaines, plus on s'approchait des collines de l'Est, plus les *villae olachales* (villages des Valaques) étaient nombreuses. Une fois le système politique renforcé et l'organisation de la vie économique et sociale en Hongrie devenue plus rigoureuse, on a imposé aux éleveurs roumains de moutons et de chèvres une série de taxes spécifiques liées à leur activité ancienne, comme la *vigesima ovium*, taxe enregistrée en tant que telle en 1584 à Turóc ou, depuis 1427, à Vlachovo (Győr), dans les « listes des obligations fiscales ». Dans les Carpates boisées, mentionnées ci-dessus, vers la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, des Roumains ont commencé à s'installer. Il s'agissait de bergers arrivés de la région de la Tisza supérieure avec de nombreux troupeaux et qui se sont établis « surtout dans les zones favorables à l'élevage ».

À quelle époque remonte le début de l'élevage des moutons chez les Roumains ? Il n'est pas possible d'avancer une date certaine, mais, dès les IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles, on mentionne souvent les « bergers valaques » de la région située au sud du Danube ; en 1214, les bergers aroumains, *celnici*, étaient déjà appelés dans les documents dalmates *pastores seu celnicos* (Capidan 1926, 150). Le linguiste Cicerone Poghirc avance l'idée selon laquelle, « étant donné que le principal travail des Valaques a toujours été l'élevage de moutons, leur nom est devenu au fil du temps, dans les langues des Balkans, synonyme de 'berger nomade' » (Poghirc 2012, 17). Les Albanais, qui utilisent eux aussi le mot *vllah* (valaque), les désignent parfois par un mot d'origine turque, *çoban*, *cioban* (berger) en roumain. En Transylvanie, l'une des premières mentions documentaires de l'élevage des moutons chez les Roumains est le contrat de la ville et du siège de Sibiu, conclu le 13 janvier 1383 avec les Roumains des environs. Un peu intrigués par la différence de 300 à 400 ans entre les attestations documentaires de l'activité pastorale chez les Roumains du sud du Danube et chez ceux de la Transylvanie – les principales deux régions d'où s'est répandue cette activité – nous nous rallions à l'explication

de Popp (1942a, 288) : malgré l'ancienneté de la profession, les documents la concernant ne sont apparus en Transylvanie qu'au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, donc relativement retard, car « c'était une tradition du pays, donc on n'en parlait pas comme de quelque chose de spécial ».

Ion Conea est convaincu que « les débuts de l'élevage des moutons chez les Roumains doivent remonter aussi loin que les débuts de la nation elle-même » (Conea 1936, 79). Ses arguments sont la terminologie pastorale roumaine, qui provient du grec ancien et du latin, ainsi que les vestiges qui indiquent les activités des Daces. Les recherches récentes (2004) de Thomas Krefeld, professeur de philologie romane à l'Université de Munich, montrent que, chez les peuples qui ne disposaient pas de céréales, comme les Géo-Daces, l'élevage ovin était la base économique qui assurait la vie quotidienne. Il est certain que l'élevage des moutons remonte à la nuit des temps dans l'espace roumain, mais pour combien de temps a-t-il été pratiqué dans ses formes traditionnelles? La réponse nous est fournie par Popp (1942a, 283-284) :

*émancipés et devenus sédentaires plus tard que les autres peuples latins pour lesquels la vie pastorale avaient été, à l'origine, la principale occupation, les Roumains sont le dernier peuple qui déroule cette activité selon le rythme ancien, presque archaïque et original.*

Pour eux, cette occupation est « comme une tradition préservée et pratiquée avec une sorte de quasi-piété et qui est difficile à abandonner » (Popp 1942a, 283-284). En Roumanie, à partir du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'élevage des moutons atteint l'apogée en termes d'expansion et de développement, mais commence en même temps son déclin irréversible. L'ancienneté de cette activité est prouvée par la langue roumaine elle-même.

Dans le vocabulaire de la vie pastorale, il n'y a aucun mot essentiel et indispensable qui ne soit d'origine latine. Quelques exemples :

*les animaux, bou [bœuf], vaca [vache], taurul [taureau], vițelul [veau], juncul [bou-villon], calul [cheval], armăsarul [étalon], mânzul [poulain], porcul [cochon], scroafa [truie], purcelul [porcelet] et oaia [brebis], berbecul [bélier], mielul [agneau], noatinul [agneau d'un an], terțaul [agneau de trois ans], capra [chèvre], iedul [biquet], que le păcurar [berger] réunit dans son turmă [troupeau], dont il tunde lâna [tond la laine] et mulge laptele [trait le lait] pour en faire du bon unt [beurre] et du caș [fromage à la pie]. Tout aussi anciens et toujours d'origine latine sont, sauf exception, les mots qui concernent la vie de berger : brânză [fromage], urdă [fromage blanc], smântână [crème fraîche], chiaz [caillette], mioaia [brebis], strungă [case de traite], stână [bergerie] et l'indispensable fluier [flûte]. (Meteș 1925, 293-294)*

La terminologie pastorale roumaine est également utilisée dans les zones situées en dehors des frontières actuelles, notamment dans les Carpates boisées (les Carpates polonaises), dans la plaine de la Tisza et dans la péninsule balkaniques. Son ascendance roumaine – qui prouve l'origine roumaine de tous ceux qui travaillaient comme bergers partout dans les Carpates – est soutenue par les termes suivants : staja-stâna (bergerie), szalas-sălaşul (logis), koleba, kolyba-coliba (hutte), strunka-strunga (case de traite), ochil-ocol (enclos),

*komorka-cămară* (garde-manger), *waty-vatra* (foyer), *jintica-jintița* (fromage fait avec le deuxième petit lait), *burda-urda* (fromage blanc), *smetana-smântâna* (crème fraîche), *kulesza-culeșa* (polenta), *wloska polenta-mămăliga* (polenta), *pasterz-păstor* (berger) etc. (M. N. Popp 1935, 215-217).

Les bergers hongrois, eux aussi, ont emprunté aux Roumains de nombreux termes et coutumes liés à la vie pastorale – *sztromga-strungă* (case de traite), *esztena-stâna* (bergerie), *bronza-brânză* (fromage), *czáp-tap* (bouc), *miliora jub-oaie mioară* (brebis) – car les troupeaux des Roumains de Transylvanie et des Principautés venaient pâître dans la plaine de la Tisza en été, en hiver ou « toute l'année », le plus souvent « selon l'entente entre les bergers et les propriétaires des pusztas » (Manciulea 1931, 145-146). En ce qui concerne la terminologie pastorale de la péninsule balkanique, les descriptions de l'élevage des moutons chez les Aroumains en offrent de nombreux exemples. Toutes ces données nous mènent à conclure sur l'origine et le caractère roumains de l'élevage des moutons, en particulier dans les Carpates, fait également démontré par les études linguistiques de Nicolae Drăganu et de Grigore Nandriș.

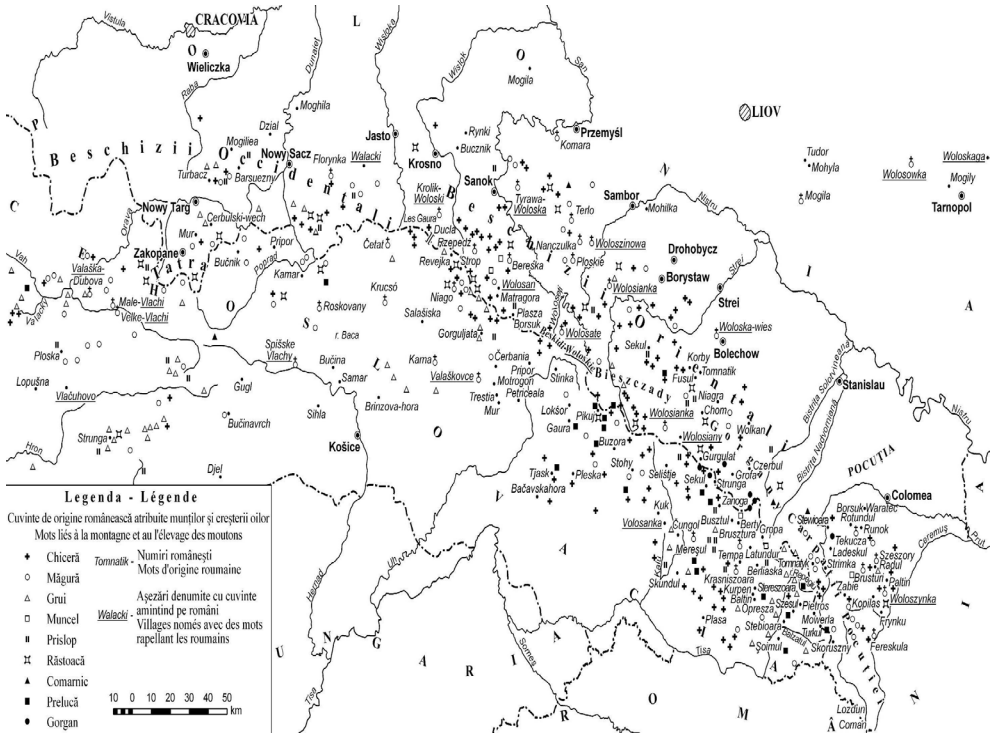
L'activité pastorale se reflète aussi dans l'historiographie des bergers les plus connus – les *ungureni*, des Roumains transylvains. Emmanuel de Martonne écrivait au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle :

*La majeure partie des bergers même sur le versant Roumain [des Carpates] sont aussi des Transylvains. On estimait leur nombre il y a trente ans à au moins 10 000. [...] De retour dans la plaine, ces gens formeront réellement une petite société à part. Même lorsqu'ils ont renoncé à la vie de berger pour s'établir définitivement dans un village au pied de la montagne, on les désignera en Roumanie sous le nom d'Ungureni, rappelant le fait que la plupart d'entre eux sont d'origine transylvaine, et ce terme enveloppera à la fois quelque mépris et quelque crainte dans l'esprit du sédentaire qui n'a jamais quitté son village. En fait le berger ungurean est généralement d'esprit plus ouvert, plus actif, parfois aussi moins scrupuleux. (Martonne 1904, 232-233)*

Ștefan Meteș (1925, 296-297) précise que les bergers transylvains, qui, « poussés par les besoins de leurs troupeaux, parcourent la plaine de la Hongrie », sont mentionnés au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle à Kecskemét, d'où « ils partent pour les montagnes riches en pâturages », du nord de la Hongrie (les comitats de Liptó, Árva, Trencsén), où ils avaient trouvé abri dès le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Une partie de ces bergers transylvains sont arrivés au Moyen Âge en Moravie et on parle en 1638 « d'une rébellion valaque là-bas » ; d'autres, à travers les voies de passage dans les Carpates, sont arrivés en Pologne « dès le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle ». Les preuves les plus éloquentes sur la transhumance des bergers transylvains en Hongrie, en Moravie et en Pologne sont les termes liés à l'élevage que les Hongrois et les Slaves ont empruntés aux Roumains. Au sud du Danube, dans la péninsule balkanique, « les bergers roumains sont omniprésents » – connus sous le nom de Valaques ou celui d'Aroumains –, pratiquent la transhumance avec leurs nombreux troupeaux et « traversent les prés et les montagnes couverts de pâturages de la Macédoine », ayant « deux habitations, l'une d'été et l'autre d'hiver ».

FIG. 1. LA DISTRIBUTION DES MOTS D'ORIGINE ROUMAINE CONCERNANT LA MONTAGNE ET L'ÉLEVAGE DES MOUTONS ET LEUR FRÉQUENCE DANS LES CARPATES SLAVES



SOURCE: M. N. Popp 1935, après la page 220.

François Pouqueville faisait en 1820 une admirable description des allers-retours entre la montagne et la plaine des Aroumains d'Albanie et d'Épire, ainsi que de la fête (cérémonie) de départ. Si nous mettons en miroir la célébration du départ « vers le pays » des bergers de Mărginimea Sibiului, telle que décrite par Nicolae Dragomir, avec celle des Aroumains du Pind, décrite par Pouqueville, nous avons l'image complète de ces frères qui, bien que séparés, ont les mêmes coutumes, les mêmes pratiques d'élevage. Pendant des siècles entiers, les bergers aroumains ont parcouru la totalité de la péninsule balkanique ; on les retrouvait avec leurs troupeaux en Bulgarie, en Serbie, en Dalmatie – où la tradition du compter les moutons en roumain s'est conservée jusque dans les années 1930 –, en Croatie, puis en Hongrie de l'Ouest, dans les comitats de Vas, Sopron, Veszprém et Baranya. Bien sûr, au fil du temps,

*se séparant du tronc robuste de leur nation et de la terre ancestrale, les Aroumains se sont particularisés et ont évolué différemment dans la mer d'étrangers qui les ont remplacés dans ces*

*endroits où les bergers de notre peuple avaient autrefois élevé leurs troupeaux.* (Meteş 1925, 296-297)

Dans l'espace roumain, « l'économie ovine » était spécifique à la population des montagnes, en particulier sur les versants et dans les dépressions de Transylvanie : *Marginea* (la marge), avec les villages de Sălişte, Galeş, Tilişca, Poiana Sibiului, Rod, Jina ; *Mocăniştea*, c'est-à-dire la région de Braşov : Săcele ou *Şapte Sate* (Sept villages) – Satu-lung, Cernatu, Turcheşu, Baci, Zizin, Tărlungeni et Purcăreni, dont les bergers sont également connus sous les noms de *săceleşi* et *bărsani* ; *Bran* avec ses neuf villages : Bran, Poarta, Simon, Sohodol, Moeci, de Jos, Moeci, de Sus, Fundata, Şirnea et Măgura, les bergers d'ici étant aussi appelés *moroeni* ; dans la dépression de Târgu Secuiesc, les principaux bergers étaient les *covăşeni* et les *breţcani*. Ces trois grands groupes ont développé l'économie ovine la plus active, la plus belle et la plus ample en termes de volume et d'extension, une économie dont les effets se sont fait sentir, grâce à une entente tacite, dans les régions environnantes aussi, comme dans le cas d'une véritable colonisation. La population vivant à la lisière des montagnes de Maramureş, de Rodna, de Căliman et des Carpates occidentales a pratiqué, elle aussi, un élevage actif, mais sur de petites superficies, tandis que les *moşi* (habitants des Carpates occidentales), ainsi que les habitants des montagnes de Căliman, s'occupaient plutôt de l'élevage bovin.

Dans l'espace roumain, on pratiquait *l'élevage local et de montagne*, *l'élevage transhumant* – que l'on peut considérer des formes traditionnelles d'élevage roumain – et *l'élevage nomade*, la forme la plus ancienne. Un type spécial d'élevage nomade est celui qu'exerçaient les bergers aroumains de la péninsule balkanique et qui impose des contraintes sur la vie quotidienne, des contraintes déterminées par les régions géographiques uniformes du point de vue du relief, du climat et de la végétation. Sa caractéristique est l'instabilité des éléments humain et animal, c'est-à-dire un aller-retour incessant, un déplacement presque permanent à la recherche de pâturages et d'eau », sans trop d'impact sur le paysage géographique. Dans les temps très anciens, avant que la population ne devienne sédentaire ou pour de courtes périodes de détresse, on pratiquait cet élevage archaïque au nord du Danube. Les Aroumains y recouraient parce que transhumance saisonnière impliquait « toute la communauté », seules quelques familles restant dans les villages pour s'occuper des maisons. C'est ce qui explique cette forme de nomadisme (Capidan 1926, 8-20).

Les bergers aroumains voyageaient périodiquement sur les routes difficiles et dangereuses, emportant avec eux avec tous leurs biens et leurs troupeaux de moutons, organisés dans de longues caravanes. Ils partaient vers la montagne à la Saint-Georges (le 23 avril) et revenaient dans les plaines à la Saint-Démétrios (le 26 octobre). Dans son témoignage, le voyageur anglais Henry Holland fait état des grandes dimensions des troupeaux. Lors de son périple à travers les Balkans, il avait croisé les troupeaux des Aroumains, qui descendaient à Prévéza s'étalant sur plusieurs kilomètres et accompagnés de près de 1 000 chevaux chargés de toute la fortune des bergers (Capidan 1926, 51). Un siècle plus tard, Capidan est lui aussi impressionné par la taille des troupeaux et rapporte que, dans le village de Livădz d'Almopie, il y avait 150 000 têtes de moutons (*ibid.*, 62). La transhumance complexe des Aroumains s'est développée à partir de la



transhumance simple, pendulaire – été en montagne, hiver dans les plaines – suite aux contraintes et aux abus économiques et politiques imposées par l'administration ottomane locale, comme celle d'Ali Pacha de Ioannina, ainsi que par la pression croissante des Albanais, des Grecs et des Bulgares.

Les toponymes pastoraux sont présents dans toutes les zones de transhumance hivernale – la plaine d'Olténie, la plaine Roumaine, le Boudjak, la steppe de Dobroudja – de même que dans de nombreuses villages fondés par les bergers de Transylvanie. Capidan (1926, 155-160) montre qu'

*il suffit de feuilleter brièvement le Dictionnaire géographique pour y trouver de nombreux noms de localités rappelant un héritage pastoral : Stânișoara, Urdă, Urdari, Urdești, Strunga, Măgura. Dans la péninsule balkanique, ils ne manquent pas [...] ces noms doivent être encore plus nombreux.*

Il y a effectivement des villages tels que *Masú, Stana, Stanile, Stanișor, Strunga, Strungula, Vârful Caprara* etc. Les bergers des Carpates occidentales, ainsi que des *mărgineni* et des *mocani* se sont dirigés vers l'ouest, vers la plaine de la Tisza.

Ils « descendaient » vers le Banat et la Tisza, dans les vallées des Someș et Mureș. La chronique d'*Anonymus Belae* les mentionne en tant que *pastores Romanorum*. Vers le nord-est, vers les steppes de Moldavie, « ce sont surtout les *mocani* qui se dirigeaient » (Popp 1942a, 292). Lorsque les terres leur étaient insuffisantes, les bergers de Transylvanie allaient jusqu'en Crimée et dans le Caucase, où, en 1885, ils étaient environ 5 000, émigrés pour des raisons politiques et économiques suite à la guerre des douanes entre la Roumanie et l'Autriche-Hongrie (Opreanu 1931, 235-237).

Leur fortune était constituée de 200 000 moutons. Plus tard, en 1904, il y avait environ 1 million de moutons de Bârsa en Crimée, leurs bergers provenant des alentours de Sibiu, des villages de Săliște, Rod, Tilișca, Săcel, ainsi que de Săcelele Brașovului, de Poiana Sărată et même de Dobroudja. Dragomir (1926, 197) nous fournit des dates précises en ce qui concerne l'intensification de la transhumance vers la plaine pour l'hivernage : l'année 1718, après la paix de Passarovitz.

À partir de cette date, les bergers *mărgineni* étaient présents dans la vallée du Danube, en Dobroudja, voire, d'après certains auteurs, au sud de la Bessarabie, dans la région des villes de Bolhrad, Reni et Izmaïl. En 1766, après un long procès avec les Saxons de Transylvanie, ces bergers « perdirent 13 des 25 montagnes héritées de leurs ancêtres » (Dragomir 1926, 197).

## « Voyageurs » en route vers les lieux d'hivernage. La transhumance. Les lieux d'hivernage

**L**ES ROUTES des bergers vers les lieux d'hivernage « différaient en fonction de l'endroit où se trouvaient les montagnes et de l'endroit où les bergers souhaitaient passer l'hiver ». Ceux qui allaient « au pays », c'est-à-dire en

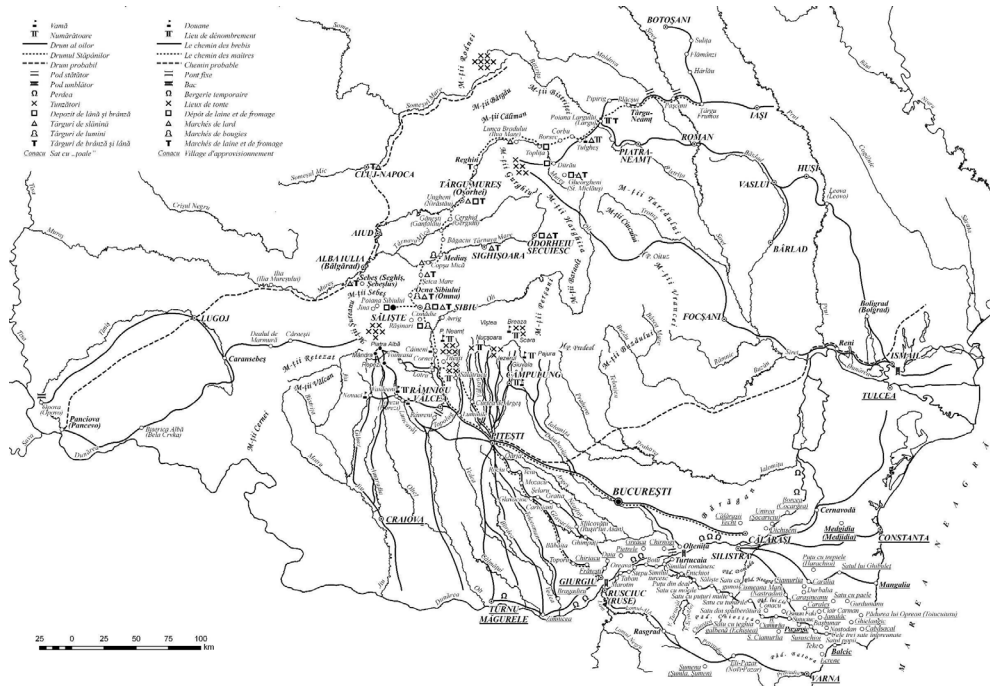


Valachie (plus tard, en Roumanie), dans les « marais d'Olténie », suivaient trois itinéraires. Ils partaient de la région de Piatra Albă, à l'ouest des monts de Lotru, descendaient par la vallée du même nom, traversaient par les monts de Căpățâna pour arriver ensuite à Vaideeni, où l'on comptait les moutons et les bergers recevaient le laisser-passer roumain (appelé *năghia românească*) et, à l'époque moderne, le laisser-passer hongrois (*năghia ungurească*) aussi. De là, les bergers *mărgineni* descendaient par la vallée de Luncavăț jusqu'à la rivière d'Olt, puis suivaient « la route de l'Olt » vers le sud jusque dans la Baltă, c'est-à-dire la vallée du Danube. Parfois, ils faisaient un détour vers Craiova, s'arrêtant en dehors de la ville, où ils « recevaient du fourrage et la permission d'utiliser les pâturages [...] en général de la part des boyards, très rarement de la part des villages ou des paysans » (Dragomir 1926, 227). La deuxième route partait toujours de la région de Piatra Albă, passait de l'autre côté du pic de Tâmpa (1 522 m), où avait lieu le « décompte roumain », puis le sentier traversait le pic de Mândra (2 529 m) des montagnes de Parâng et descendait à Novaci-Horezu-Craiova. Les bergers s'arrêtaient là où ils recevaient du fourrage et la permission d'utiliser les pâturages et ne descendaient qu'occasionnellement jusque dans la vallée du Danube.

La troisième route partait elle aussi de la région de Piatra Albă, suivait le cours de la rivière de Lotru jusqu'à Voineasa, où avait lieu le « décompte roumain », puis continuait au long de la vallée de l'Olt jusqu'au Danube. Un quatrième chemin, « battu surtout par les bergers du village de Poiana », passait par « Cumpăna, la Porte de Fer de Transylvanie, près de Caransebeș, et de là arrivait dans le Banat, continuant jusqu'à Pančevo », car « c'était serré à la maison et on ne pouvait pas garder plus 2-3 vaches et un cheval. Par contre, là, c'était la 'puszta' et il y avait assez de place » (Dragomir 1926, 227). Les bergers *mărgineni* quittaient donc pendant la saison froide les huttes situées à proximité des villages et « commençaient à se diriger vers les plaines, où ils trouvaient des conditions meilleures pour l'hiver ». Ainsi, ceux qui se trouvaient dans les montagnes d'Olt et de Făgăraș allaient près de Craiova, Segarcea, Bistreț, jusque dans la vallée du Danube près de Calafat, d'où ils se répandaient « jusque loin, dans la région de Galați » (Dragomir 1938a, 164). Une fois arrivés au Danube, une partie d'entre eux allaient en Dobroudja, descendant jusqu'à la vallée de la Batova ou même plus loin, jusqu'à Varna. D'autres pénétraient « dans la partie occidentale du pays turc », c'est-à-dire dans la Bulgarie d'aujourd'hui, en traversant le Danube pour se rendre à Corabia. En 1878, lorsque les Bulgares, « délivrés aussi grâce au sacrifice de sang des fantassins roumains », ont fermé la frontière ne permettant plus la transhumance des bergers roumains, certains de ceux-ci sont revenus dans la « Dobroudja roumaine », où

*où la plupart d'entre eux n'ont pas pu se détacher des terres et, dans l'attente du moment favorable, ils se sont installés à l'endroit où ils vivaient, en particulier dans le Quadrilatère, où la continuité de l'élément roumain a été préservée depuis que celui-ci est entré dans l'histoire sous ce nom. (Dragomir 1938b, 137)*

FIG. 2. LES ROUTES DE TRANSHUMANCE VERS LES PÂTURAGES D'HIVER DES BERGERS DE SĂLIȘTE AU MILIEU DU XIX<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLE, D'APRÈS LES RÉCITS DES VIEUX BERGERS



SOURCE: Dragomir 1926, Carte VI.

Ceux qui passaient l'été dans les montagnes de Hațeg, respectivement dans les montagnes de Rodna, de Călimani et de Tibleș « traversaient la plaine, passaient par la vallée du Danube dans la région du Banat, à côté de Pančevo et d'Opovo » (Dragomir 1938a, 164), allant parfois plus loin, jusqu'en Croatie ou au plateau de Cuman, entre le Danube et la Tisza, ou « vers la Bosnie » et vers l'ouest, vers « dans les comtés hongrois Sopron, Veszprém et Baranya ». De cette manière, ils ont acquis « le grand mérite d'avoir contribué à l'unification spirituelle de tous les Roumains et, partant, à la création de la Grande Roumanie, dont ils avaient indiqué les frontières pendant des siècles par leurs routes » (*ibid.*, 165).

Le Bărăgan et le Marais du Danube étaient préférés par les bergers *mărgineni*, car, dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, ils étaient presque déserts. Le passage vers la Dobroudja a eu lieu peu de temps après ce qu'« ils ont commencé à aller dans le Marais du Danube ». Nicolae Dragomir avance comme date certaine le début du XVIII<sup>e</sup>, après la paix de Passarovitz de 1718, et se demande s'ils y étaient allés avant aussi, compte tenu des conditions hivernales favorables de la région. Une fois en Dobroudja, les bergers de Mărginimea Sibiului payaient la taxe de pâturage au « manoir », c'est-à-dire

à la douane, aux autorités ottomanes. Ils payaient 50-60 *bans* par mouton et donnaient un mouton pour tous les 500 moutons, les chevaux étant libres de taxes. Les meilleurs endroits pour passer l'hiver se situaient autour de Dobritch, des vallées de la Batova et du Baltchik du Loudogorié, autour de Šumla et même de Varna. On considérait que l'hivernage en Dobroudja était facile, car « il y avait assez de place, des forêts avec des abris bien entretenus et des pâturages très riches en herbes nourrissantes ; la neige ne tombait que rarement et encore en petites quantités ». En outre, l'hivernage en Dobroudja était « tranquille » aussi, car « les Turcs étaient des gens honnêtes et pacifiques » (Dragomir 1926, 243), qui toléraient même les chicanes des bergers *mărgineni*.

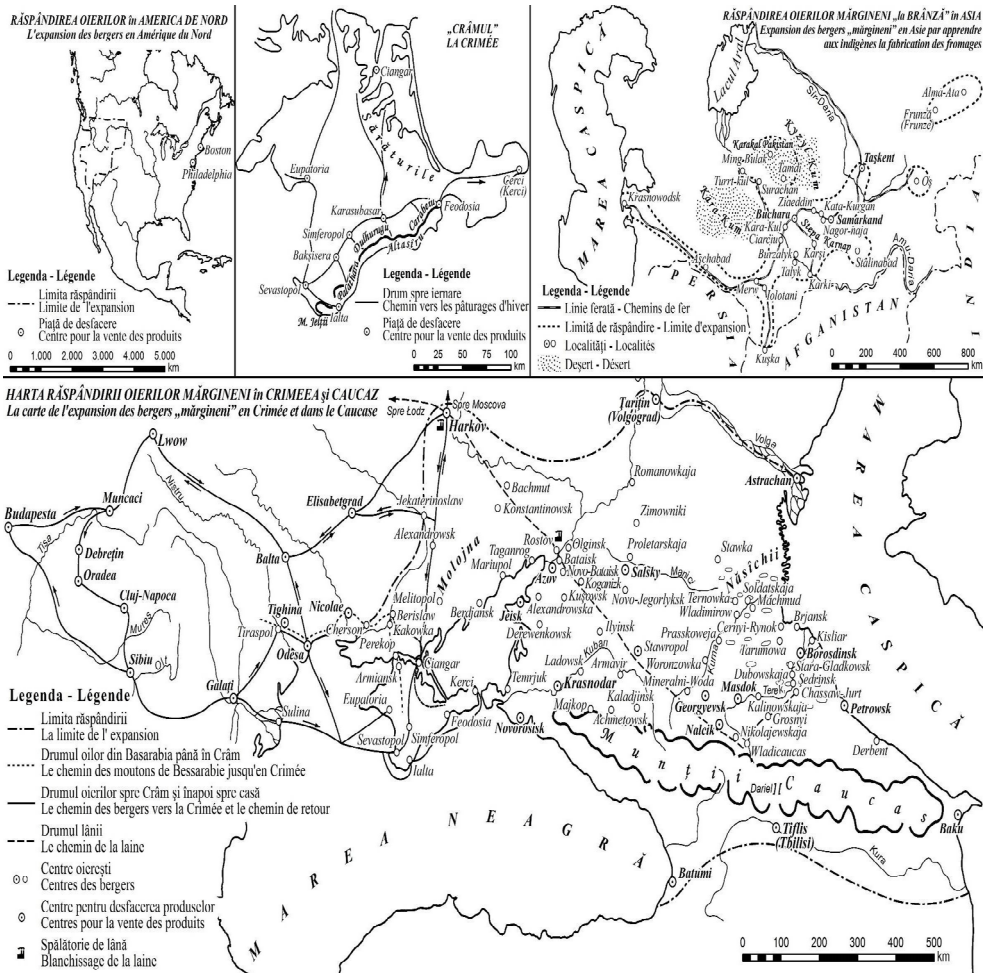
La diminution des pâturages et les difficultés croissantes sur les routes vers les lieux d'hivernage ont entraîné un rétrécissement des troupeaux de moutons, les bergers étant contraints de vendre leur bétail et de chercher d'autres occupations. Reconvertis en marchands et habitués qu'ils étaient aux voyages, les bergers de Săliște « ne se sont pas limités à faire du commerce en Olténie, Munténie, Dobroudja et Bulgarie [...], mais parcouraient avec leurs charrettes même la Bessarabie » (Dragomir 1938a, 187). En plus des marchandises habituelles, les bergers *mărgineni* emportaient en Bessarabie, région annexée par la Russie en 1812, une « marchandise d'une importance infiniment plus grande : des livres visant à fortifier les âmes, des ouvrages religieux aussi bien que d'autre nature » (*ibid.*, 188). En Bessarabie, les bergers *mărgineni* sont allés « en général après 1870-1880, connaissant les pâturages riches et les routes vers les endroits d'hivernage », car, jusqu'en 1812, personne ne les empêchait de traverser le Prut. « Il n'y avait qu'une seule Moldavie, de la montagne jusqu'à la mer et au Dniestr » (*ibid.*, 211). Plus encore, les autorités tsaristes ont encouragé les bergers transylvains à faire paître leurs troupeaux en Bessarabie, comme en témoignent l'histoire orale locale et les cartes russes de 1836 à 1852, qui « signalent beaucoup de parcs à moutons appartenant à des Roumains dans le Sud de la Bessarabie », ainsi que des rapports que le consul autrichien de Jassy avait adressés au chancelier Metternich de 1813 à 1815. Après 1870-1880, la Bessarabie est devenue

*le seul endroit où l'élevage pouvait se dérouler sans contraintes, le nombre de parcs à moutons a augmenté si rapidement qu'au début de la Première Guerre mondiale la Bessarabie est devenue ce qu'était autrefois la Dobroudja : un immense parc à moutons des mocani.* (Lazăr 2012, 212)

Au début, la plupart des bergers *mărgineni* – nous dit Nicolae Dragomir – sont entrés en Bessarabie comme bergers travaillant pour des boyards. Ils possédaient des troupeaux de 5 000 à 6 000 têtes, étaient appréciés pour leur travail et avaient le droit d'élever aussi leurs propres moutons, parce qu'ils en recevaient 25 par an en guise de rémunération. Ainsi, ils ont mis sur pied des parcs indépendants avec jusqu'à 2 000 moutons, répartis dans toute la Bessarabie, de la ville de Bălți jusqu'au Sud, dans le Boudjak. Au fil du temps, sous l'influence des Aroumains, des Grecs et des Arméniens, ils ont commencé à

préparer le fromage qui s'appelle *telemea* (une sorte de caillé), nécessitant plus de travail que le fromage ordinaire, qu'ils vendaient aux marchands venu de Cetatea Albă, Tighina (Bender), Chişinău, Odessa et de petites villes plus proches. Ils leur vendaient également des agneaux et de la laine, qui étaient ensuite envoyés en Russie centrale. En Crimée, les bergers *mărgineni* sont arrivés à cause des sécheresses fréquentes et suivies d'hivers rigoureux en Bessarabie et en Dobroudja, qui les ont obligés à se déplacer plus à l'est à la recherche de pâturages et d'un climat hivernal plus clément.

FIG. 3.



SOURCE: Dragomir 1938a, Carte VI.

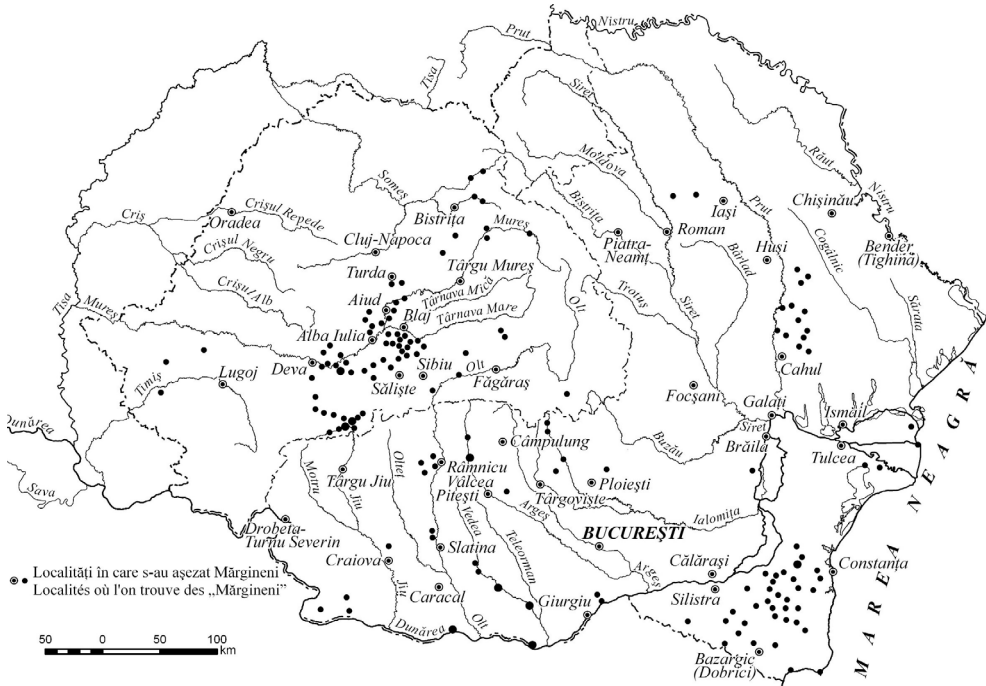
D'autres causes ont été la baisse du prix des moutons et des produits dérivés, ainsi que l'espace « généreux » qui attiraient les bergers, car, « après leur passage en Bessarabie, paraît-il, l'élevage a pris un tel élan que le territoire de cette région n'était plus suffisant » (Dragomir 1938a, 221). Les premiers à faire ce déplacement ont été huit bergers qui « se sont associés, car ils avaient peur des Tatars et de l'inconnu » et se sont rendus en Russie, en 1890. Ils y sont restés la première fois pour 4 ans et demi, hébergés par « des Bulgares », et, après, ils ont mis sur pied leur propre bergerie avec laquelle ils se sont installés en Crimée, dans la région de Simferopol en 1894 ou en 1895. Ils ont dû sans doute affronter les difficultés inhérentes à tout début. Ils avaient eu du mal à valorifier le fromage, car « les Russes ne savaient ni traire les moutons ni fabriquer et manger du fromage ». La situation était la même en Crimée, dans le Caucase, en Turkestan et en Sibérie, où ces bergers transylvains sont parvenus (*ibid.*, 226-227).

La vie pastorale en Crimée n'était pas sédentaire comme en Bessarabie. Elle comportait le même mouvement pendulaire entre la montagne et la plaine, comme dans le « pays », entre les Carpates et le Marais du Danube et/ou la Dobroudja, mais « elle n'était pas aussi spectaculaire et peut-être ni aussi grandiose » (Dragomir 1938a, 230). Après seulement trois mois en montagne, le 1<sup>er</sup> août, commençaient les voyages vers les lieux d'hivernage et les troupeaux descendaient. Certains quittaient la Crimée et se rendaient dans la plaine du Dniepr se dispersant autour d'Ekaterinoslav (c'est le cas notamment des bergers *tilișcani*, qui y passaient l'hiver avec jusqu'à 60 000 moutons) Selon N. Dragomir, en Crimée et à proximité de l'embouchure du Dniepr, il y avait plus de 300 parcs appartenant à des *mărgineni*, soit entre 300 000 et 500 000 moutons.

Immédiatement après la guerre (1918), ces bergers se sont associés en créant des coopératives dont les statuts défendaient ouvertement leurs intérêts en ce qui concerne la location des pâturages, l'achat des fourrages, la vente des produits, l'amélioration des races ovines et, tacitement, « la préservation des intérêts nationaux roumains de la Russie bolchevique » (Dragomir 1938a, 240). Avec le temps, « le nombre de moutons ayant augmenté excessivement, la Crimée est devenue trop petit e » et « les bergers ont été contraints de chercher de nouvelles terres », donc ils se sont tournés vers la région du Caucase, « qui offrait des conditions des plus favorables pour l'élevage des moutons, les espaces vastes qu'ils recherchaient, des pâturages presque vierges, avec peu de terres labourées et des terrains bon marché » (*ibid.*, 255). Les produits de l'« économie ovine » étaient vendus dans les villes du Caucase et de la Transcaucasie, la saumure et la *telemea* à Krasnodar sur le Kouban, à Astrakhan sur la Volga, à Stavropol près de la Kouma, à Vladikavkaz, à Mozdok et Kizliar sur le Terek, puis dans les ports de la mer Caspienne – Petrovsk, Derbent et Bakou – et de la mer Noire – Novorossiysk et Batoumi, ainsi qu'à Tbilissi sur la Koura. Ils vendaient également des béliers et de la laine à des marchands (avant la guerre) et à des coopératives (après la guerre). La laine était acheminée vers Kharkiv, puis vers Rostov-sur-le-Don, puis vers Moscou et Łodz, mais aussi vers Berlin et Vienne.



FIG. 4. EXPANSION DES BERGERS MĂRGINENI DEVENUS COMERÇANTS SÉDENTAIRES ET PROPRIÉTAIRES DE TERRAINS



SOURCE: Dragomir 1938a, Carte 3.

La belle évolution de l'élevage pratiqué par les *mărgineni* en Crimée et dans le Caucase a été interrompue par la tournure dramatique des événements en Russie suite à l'avènement du communisme. Telle a été la saga de ces bergers de Mărginimea Sibiului,

*Pun des éléments constitutifs les plus vivants et les plus précieux de la Nation roumaine. De par les voyages qu'ils ont effectués dès les temps anciens, ils ont non seulement grandement contribué à l'unité de l'âme roumaine et indiqué, ce faisant, les frontières d'un futur pays promis à un bel avenir; la grande Roumanie, mais aussi, lors des voyages aux pays étrangers, ils ont partout témoigné de l'intelligence, de la supériorité, de l'application, du zèle et de la dignité du peuple roumain dont ils sont issus. (Dragomir 1938a, 294)*

## Conclusions

**L'**ENVIRONNEMENT NATUREL généreux et favorable à l'élevage ovin et à la vie pastorale en général, ainsi que leur penchant tant pour cette activité et ce mode de vie ont amené les Roumains à embrasser cette occupation depuis des temps immémoriaux



et à la pratiquer dans toute la région carpato-balkanique. Dans ce vaste territoire, pour les Roumains, la vie pastorale « a longtemps été une priorité par rapport aux autres activités », y compris la culture des plantes, l'agriculture. La ballade *Miorița* (La Brebis), « brillant monument de la sensibilité populaire » (Jinga 1995, 24), illustre descendant des bergers du village de Săcele, représente la quintessence du binôme constitué de *l'espace roumain* et du *peuple*, exprimé par le génie populaire – et ce n'est pas un pur hasard – à travers l'image des « trois troupeaux d'agneaux accompagnés de leurs trois bergers ».

Les géographes Emmanuel de Martonne et George Vâlsan ont également remarqué l'importance de la l'élevage des moutons dans la vie du peuple roumain et ont exhorté à l'étude scientifique de ce phénomène. George Vâlsan, appelé à Cluj pour poser les bases de l'enseignement géographique roumain, a synthétisé les conséquences de l'élevage des moutons chez les Roumains, sous ses formes pendulaires et transhumantes :

*Anticipant les aspirations nationales roumaines dès une période trouble et sans connaître les accomplissements du passé, le berger a façonné les frontières de l'État qui devait héberger sa nation à l'époque de la virilité [...], il a réalisé et renforcé l'unité nationale [...], il a conquis non seulement les plaines autour des Carpates, mais aussi toute la région de steppes autour de la mer Noire. Il a frayé de nouvelles voies, des passages [...], colonisé [...]. (Vâlsan 1923, 41)*

Il existe des textes qui synthétisent le rôle joué par les bergers dans :

- la réalisation de l'unité nationale et linguistique des Roumains ;
- les déplacements des bergers transylvains dans les Principautés roumaines, notamment dans les Subcarpates Gétiques, le Bărăgan et en Dobroudja, déplacements qui ont eu pour conséquence l'homogénéisation de la population roumaine et la valorisation économique du territoire ;
- le renforcement de l'élément roumain en Bessarabie, notamment après son annexion en 1812 ;
- la pose des bases du commerce roumain et de l'industrialisation dans la Petite Roumanie, phénomène décrit par le géographe Nicolae Dragomir.

Le rôle des bergers (« les vikings roumains », selon l'expression de Ion Simionescu) dans la réalisation de l'État roumain a également été reconnu par des spécialistes étrangers, tel Jacques Ancel, pour qui « l'État roumain actuel est la conclusion d'un fait de géographie humaine ». Il continue dans la même lignée et affirme que

*ce sont les bergers des Carpates qui ont infiltré l'ethnie roumaine depuis la forteresse intérieure jusqu'aux eaux de frontière, ce sont eux qui, le long de ces routes comme des rayons, ont semé l'étincelle de l'énergie ancestrale, coagulant l'unité de race, de langue et d'âme des Roumains! (apud Conea 1939, 59)*

Theodor Capidan observe les conséquences tout aussi importantes de l'élevage aroumain, tout particulièrement sur les autres peuples des Balkans, « en termes d'élevage, vêtements, langue et civilisation ». L'établissement des bergers transylvains, *ungureni*, « dans le pays » s'est fait de deux manières : d'une part, lentement, de manière non organisée, lorsque les bergers et leurs familles se sont installés à différents endroits des Principautés, où

ils ont trouvé des opportunités pour leur « économie de moutons » ; d'autre part, en conséquence des contraintes auxquelles ils avaient été soumis, de manière organisée, en plusieurs vagues, suite auxquelles ils se sont installés dans différentes régions des Principautés roumaines (Popp 1942b, 183). Ils sont d'abord restés dans les Subcarpathes, où l'élément hongrois s'est superposé à la population autochtone ; il y a eu ensuite la « colonisation » de la vallée du Danube et de la Dobroudja et, enfin, de la plaine Roumaine, en l'espèce des plaines de Vlăsia et de Bărăgan.

Outre l'établissement des villages doublets dans la plupart des communes de la région des Subcarpathes Gétiques et, dans une moindre mesure, dans la plaine, les bergers transylvains, de par l'exercice de leur profession, ont contribué à l'augmentation des communes par l'établissement de villages dans les plaines notamment grâce aux parcs à moutons dans les zones de plaine, alors que la Dobroudja s'est peuplé naturellement. D'autre part, la dispersion progressive de l'élément roumain dès le Moyen Âge dans toute la plaine de l'Ouest, jusqu'à la rivière de Tisza, a obligé nombre de ces bergers à s'installer dans des villes ou des villages – Debrecen, Szeged, Kecskemét ou Tokaj – où ils sont devenus propriétaires de maisons et de terres.

La transhumance a permis à l'unité spirituelle des Roumains de se maintenir pendant des siècles, favorisant l'échange d'idées, la langue, les emprunts de coutumes et de chants. D'autre part, leur installation de l'autre côté des Carpathes, dans les collines et les plaines, a renforcé l'élément autochtone, plus sujet aux vicissitudes et qui a pu ainsi préserver sa nationalité (Popp 1942b, 184). Jinga (1995, 24) considère que

*la transhumance a aiguisé la conscience de notre espace national. Les frontières du roumanisme ont été continuellement atteintes et élargies par les bergers partis des tréfonds des montagnes et qui, avec leurs troupeaux, franchissaient les eaux, les steppes et les frontières, comme si toute la terre leur appartenait.*

La richesse de la terminologie pastorale dans la plaine est une preuve suffisante et parlante de la colonisation pastorale et de l'établissement de villages d'*ungureni*, dans les conditions où l'élevage des moutons était une occupation généralisée dans toute la région roumaine. En témoignent des termes tels que : *Drumul Untului, Gura Baciului, Fântâna Cășăriei, Rădurea Putineiului, Măgura Berbecilor, Plaiul Stâni, Lacul Ciobanului* etc., tous des références à la vie pastorale. Des toponymes comme *Fântâna Țuțuiianului, Movila Mocanului, Gârla Mocănească, Dealul Bârsanilor*, toujours d'origine pastorale, rencontrés dans la zone de la plaine de steppe, indiquent l'aire couverte par les bergers transylvains lors de leurs voyages vers les lieux d'hivernage. Les toponymes montrent la richesse et l'effervescence de la vie pastorale du passé, ainsi que l'établissement des Transylvains dans la plaine : *Fântâna lui Vönica, Crucea Poenarul, Târla lui Gane, Stâna lui Bădilă, Puțul lui Jiga Mocanul* etc.

L'élite dirigeante roumaine ainsi que l'élite artistique ont accepté et assumé fièrement cette ascendance de l'élevage comme occupation principale des Roumains, tout comme le rôle de cette activité dans la coagulation de la société et de l'État roumain.



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### **Abstract**

#### **Romanian Shepherds, Precursor Vectors of the Dissemination and Consolidation of Romanianism**

The Romanian Carpathian area, harmoniously arranged in several major categories of relief—mountains, hills and plateaus, plains—, a perfectly proportionate triptych covered in rich vegetation, as well as the Romanians' nature and inclination for sheep breeding were the main elements that led to the beautiful evolution of the "sheep economy." The natural geographical context played a crucial role also in shaping the inhabitants' character, according to the rules of what is called "geographical determinism." Not surprisingly, the largest sheep economy developed on the northern slopes of the Southern Carpathians. During their long voyages with their flocks along the alpine pastures, shepherds had an overall view on the Carpathian space, which, when descending to the valleys and the plains, they sought to occupy to its natural limits, corresponding to the last deposits of the Carpathian sedimentary materials.

### **Keywords**

national identity, "sheep economy," transhumance, doublet village, toponymy of pastoral origin





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