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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Harald Haarmann, <i>Setting the heritage of Old Europe in perspective – cultural studies and their interdisciplinary contextualization</i> .....	107
Emanuil Ineoa, <i>Aspects from the life and activity of archpriest Zaharia Manu</i> .....	141
George Damian Mocanu, <i>Captain Ilie Birt from Brasov: ideas and ways of action to preserve Romanian identity in 18<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania</i> .....	149
Radu Baltasiu, <i>What it takes to be a conservative?</i> .....	157
Ovidiana Bulumac, <i>The movement of Romanian women from the Middle Ages to the end of the WWII</i> .....	165
Samira Cîrlig, <i>The function of dialogue in a society of isolation</i> .....	183
Narcis Rupe, <i>The Cultural Center – a gustian answer to the issues of today’s Romanian village</i> .....	195



## SETTING THE HERITAGE OF OLD EUROPE IN PERSPECTIVE – CULTURAL STUDIES AND THEIR INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTEXTUALIZATION

*Harald Haarmann*<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*The present article addresses the Old Europe concept by presenting it from an interdisciplinary perspective, focusing on its cultural heritage and meanings, but also on the cultural continuity in terms of art, spirit and aesthetics.*

**Keywords:** Old Europe civilization, cultural studies, performative art, heritage.

### INTRODUCTION: THE DYNAMIC INTERPLAY OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

The medium to find one's orientation in the world is culture, and the means of communication for organizing social relations within a given cultural framework and to create value systems is language. One can also say that language provides the instrument for the buildup of culture. The assertion has been made that the cognitive capabilities and the communicative skills in human beings are the result of a "co-evolution of language and the human brain"<sup>2</sup>.

Human beings have created culture to make sense of the world they live in.

"We live and keep our reason by virtue of the way that our minds select from the ceaseless flood of experiences that crowd around and flow past us from birth to death and arrange them into patterns for us. Those patterns and the responses that we make – fleetingly in speech and more permanently in the shape of institutions and monuments – are our culture"<sup>3</sup>.

Culture is comprehensive and it covers the whole kaleidoscope of human activities, including belief systems, values and ways of communication. The construction of culture through organizational skills enhances activities both

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<sup>2</sup> Terrence Deacon, *The symbolic species. The co-evolution of language and the human brain*, London: The Penguin Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a civilization*, London & New York: Routledge, 1989, p. 1.

manual and intellectual<sup>4</sup>: (a) the creation and use of conventional symbols, (b) the creation and use of complex tools and other instrumental technologies, (c) the creation of and participation in complex social organizations and institutions. Culture is always an organic whole, and “a society’s intellectual developments cannot be divorced from its concrete historical and social contexts”<sup>5</sup>.

Culture is intrinsically associated with those who generate it and, following Haarmann<sup>6</sup>, the fabric of culture is understood, in its widest possible extent, as being comprised of

- its material basis; artifacts (*e.g.*, stone tools, architecture, technologies),
- its network of social relationships, symbolizing in-group solidarity among the members in the community (*e.g.* kinship relations, social groupings with professional specialization and/or social hierarchies, forms of administration),
- its collective technologies of communication (ranging from the symbolism of landscape to notational systems such as numerology and writing),
- its entire constructive potential originating amidst communal life (from handicraft to music, art and oral/written literature),
- its systems of shared values and beliefs (worldview, mythology, religious cults),
- its collective knowledge and stored memory; mentifacts (as virtual and practical knowledge and as instructions given from one generation to the next to safeguard cultural continuity).

Cultural studies is an overarching concept, and the study of culture is associated with various disciplines of the humanities: *i.e.*, sociology, gender studies, education and teaching, political science, ethnography, archaeology, historical science, religion, mythology, literacy and literature, philosophy, language skills, bilingualism, sociopolitical status of minority languages.

The significance of cultural studies for the investigation of language contact situations results from the symbiotic interplay between the basic concepts that are involved, language and culture. This relationship may be best characterized as a symbiotic interplay because the functioning of the one is intrinsically intertwined with the functioning of the other.

If the functional ranges of language and culture are symbiotically interrelated, it follows that every situation of language contact is, at the same time,

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<sup>4</sup> After Michael Tomasello, “The human adaptation for culture.” in Wuketits M. Franz and Antweiler Christoph (eds.), *Handbook of evolution*, vol. 1: *The evolution of human societies and cultures*, Weinheim: Wiley-VCH Verlag, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Doyle E. McCarthy, *Knowledge as culture: The new sociology of knowledge*, London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> Harald Haarmann, *Foundations of culture. Knowledge-construction, belief systems and worldview in their dynamic interplay*, Frankfurt, Berlin & New York: Peter Lang, 2007, pp. 39–41.

a situation when different cultures are in contact. In view of this specific interplay, cultural studies offer more than mere additional information for the investigation of language contacts. Rather, they hold the key for setting situations of language contact in perspective. In the survey of case studies presented in the following, criteria for the kind of symbiotic interplay – as advocated here – are specified.

## **OLD EUROPE AND ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN FOCUS**

In order to exemplify the working of interdisciplinary contextualization, historical situations of contacts of languages and cultures will be highlighted. The discussion will focus on Old Europe which has been identified as the earliest advanced civilization in Europe<sup>7</sup>. In modern contributions to this field of study, Old Europe is alternatively called “Danube civilization”.

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## **THE FABRIC OF OLD EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION**

The first advanced civilization known to mankind grew out of all that proved itself useful and beneficial for a peaceful coexistence around 6000 BCE, in Old Europe; this became a hub for exchanges, of information, technology, creativity, world views, languages, and collaborations of all kinds.

“Old Europe” (“Danube civilization”, respectively) is a construct born of ancient history, linguistics and sociology, and designates the earliest Neolithic farming culture of prehistoric Europe. The region referred to as Old Europe encompasses all of modern-day Hungary, Croatia, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldavia, and western Ukraine.

“Old Europe” is a blanket term covering several regional cultures in southeastern Europe: Vinča, Turdaş and Tărtăria, Karanovo, Cucuteni, Gumelnița, Trypillya. These cultural complexes shared similar traditions, egalitarian community life, a worldview focusing on the cult of a female divinity, similar use of signs and symbols.

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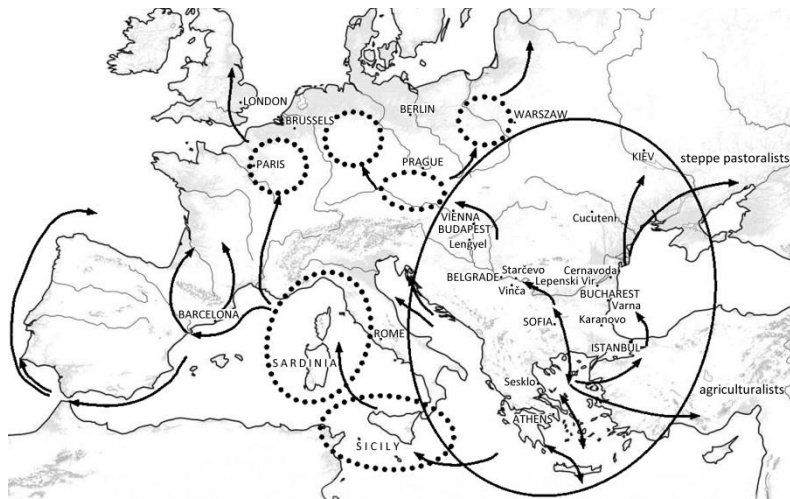
<sup>7</sup> See

1. Marija Gimbutas, *The civilization of the Goddess: The world of Old Europe*, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, for an early documentation, and

2. Harald Haarmann, *Advancement in ancient civilizations. Life, culture, science and thought*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2020a, for a comparative analysis of Old Europe in the timeline of ancient civilizations.

In the horizon of technological advancement and cultural development, Old Europe presents a series of first-time achievements:

- The world's first wide trading network, stretching for thousands of kilometers and connecting hundreds of settlements (river trade, sea-borne trade);



Map 1. The network of local and interregional trade routes inside and outside the core area of Old Europe<sup>8</sup>.

Given the geographic extension of this network of trade routes one gets the impression that major regions in Europe were included in the economic activities of the ancient Europeans to exchange trade goods on a large scale. It does not seem far-fetched to address the Old European trading network as the antecedent of the modern economic zone within the borders of the European Union.

The river trade played an important role in Old European economy<sup>9</sup>, and water as the elixir of life formed an integral part of the religious symbolism<sup>10</sup>. Judging from the assemblage of human figures in boats in imagery, it may be conjectured that the Old Europeans knew communal festivities relating to the rivers and the sea (boat processions?)<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2020a, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> See Harald Haarmann, *Das Rätsel der Donauzivilisation, Die Entdeckung der ältesten Hochkultur Europas*, Munich: C.H. Beck (3rd ed. 2017), 2011, p. 81, for a documentation.

<sup>10</sup> Marija Gimbutas, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 246, p. 292, etc.

<sup>11</sup> See:

1. Harald Haarmann, *Roots of ancient Greek civilization. The influence of Old Europe*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2014, p. 113, and

2. Harald Haarmann, "Who taught the ancient Greeks the craft of shipbuilding? On the pre-Greek roots of maritime technological know-how.", in *Mankind Quarterly* 59 (2018), pp. 155–170, for ship-building and maritime trade.



- The invention of the two-storey furnace with an upper chamber for burning ceramic ware and a lower chamber for heating;
- The invention of the potter's wheel;
- The smelting of copper (beginnings around 5400 BCE in southern Serbia);
- The working of gold (the world's oldest artifacts made of gold from Varna in Bulgaria, dating to c. 4500 BCE);
- The world's first urban agglomerations (the cities of the Copper Age in Old Europe emerged hundreds of years earlier than the first Sumerian cities of Mesopotamia);
- The world's first two-storey buildings and condominiums;
- The world's first sign system for writing numbers;
- The world's first writing;
- The world's first egalitarian society under the auspices of a high culture.

People occupied this vast area for some 3000 years, without experiencing armed conflict and destruction; they were enormously creative and productive, exchanging goods, ideas and innovations with neighboring settlements. Trade routes took them as far as the Atlantic Ocean in the West, Southern England, the present Baltic States, the Steppes of Russia, Anatolia and Northern Africa, which in turn were incorporated into the network of contacts. A trading cycle, to which all contributed responsibly, and from which everyone benefitted.

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As a consequence of several consecutive out-migrations of Indo-European pastoralists (called Kurgan I, II and III migrations) from the Eurasian steppe into southeastern Europe the period of peaceful community life came to an end. The basic assumptions, made by Gimbutas, about the movements of steppe people into Southeastern, Central and Western Europe, from the fifth to the third millennium BCE, have been corroborated, in principle, by modern archaeological and genetic studies.

The first migration (Kurgan I) was not populous and genetic research has not yet succeeded in pinpointing the exact changes in local areas. On the other hand, archaeological findings and insights from historical linguistics have produced evidence for the takeover of Varna, a major trade center on the eastern fringe of Old Europe, by steppe pastoralists. The successive migrations (Kurgan II and Kurgan III) were more populous. Genetic data are now available to document the changes in the population structure, in particular the consequences of the third out-migration (Kurgan III) that can be identified by genetic data for the period around 2500 BCE. The magnitude of those changes that occurred is confirmed in the category of "massive migration" from the steppe by geneticists<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> See:

What happened after the takeover of Indo-European people from the steppe has been addressed in a way saying that Old Europe “vanished”. This was the theme of a big exhibition in New York, in 2009, with the title “The lost world of Old Europe”<sup>13</sup>. Such descriptions, though, are misleading. The traditions of Old European coinage did not get lost. As part of the cultural heritage that made its way into subsequent generations, many traditions from the Old European era continued and experienced manifold transformations.

In their transformed profile they influenced subsequent cultures with their Indo-European fabric. Since about 3500 BCE, cultural exchange has left clear traces: “... an amalgamation of the Old European and Kurgan cultural systems is clearly evident”<sup>14</sup>.

The Greeks are not indigenous to the land that came to be called Hellas in antiquity. Their ancestors, Indo-European pastoralists, migrated to Greece from the northern Balkans, in the course of the third millennium BCE<sup>15</sup>.

In their Helladic homeland, the newcomers encountered the descendants of the ancient indigenous population (*i.e.* the Palaeo-Europeans) who, with respect to their culture and language, differed markedly from the immigrating Greeks. As to the language of the ancient Europeans it has been recently clarified that “pre-Greek is non-Indo-European”<sup>16</sup>. The Indo-European migrants merged with the local population. Many generations later, in a milieu of culture and language contacts, the tribal profile of the Greek ethnos consolidated that we know from antiquity<sup>17</sup>.

The newcomers, the Kurgan migrants from the steppe, absorbed much of the ancient knowledge of the pre-Indo-European population and the impact of the culture of the ancients on Greek civilization became manifested in the transfer of advanced technologies and of markers of high culture, for example, the know-how of wine cultivation, smelting techniques in metallurgy, architecture, ship-building, ancient rituals and cult practices (*e.g.*, the worship of the pre-Greek goddess Athena)<sup>18</sup>.

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1. Wolfgang Haak *et al.*, “Massive migration from the steppe was a source for Indo-European languages in Europe.”, in *Nature* 522 (2015), pp. 207–211.

2. Iosif Lazaridis *et al.*, “Genetic origins of the Minoans and Mycenaeans.”, in *Nature* 548 (2017), pp. 214–218.

3. Iain Mathieson *et al.*, “The genomic history of southeastern Europe.” in *Nature* 555 (2018), pp: 197–203.

<sup>13</sup> David W. Anthony (ed.), *The lost world of Old Europe. The Danube valley, 5000 – 3500 BC*. Princeton, New Jersey & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Marija Gimbutas, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 371.

<sup>15</sup> David W. Anthony, *The horse, the wheel and language: How Bronze-Age riders from the Eurasian steppes shaped the modern world*, Princeton, New Jersey & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007, p. 361.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Beekes, *Etymological dictionary of Greek*, 2 vols. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2010, p. XIII.

<sup>17</sup> Harald Haarmann, “Language and ethnicity in antiquity.” in *McInerney*, 2013b, pp. 17–33.

<sup>18</sup> See:

1. Harald Haarmann, *Ancient knowledge, ancient know-how, ancient reasoning. Cultural memory in transition from prehistory to classical antiquity and beyond*, Amherst, New York: Cambria, 2013a.

The Greeks assimilated many expressions associated with the arts and crafts, in the process of their adoption. Those borrowed terms of pre-Greek origin were integrated in the lexical structures of ancient Greek and, in Greek transformation, they were transferred to the cultural vocabulary of our modern languages. Among those linguistic indicators of the pre-Greek substratum are well-known terms such as anchor, aroma, olive, ceramics, chemistry, chimney, metal, hymn, lyre, myth, psyche, wine and others.

What happened in southeastern Europe in the third and second millennia BCE may be compared to what happened thousands of years later in the same region. In the first century BCE, the Romans conquered Greece and the Balkanic region. But Greek culture of antiquity influenced Roman culture to a decisive degree. In other words: those who had been conquered by the force of arms conquered the conqueror by the impact of their culture.

There are many features in the national cultures of the Balkanic region and of Greece that find their origin in the heritage of Old Europe. A rich body of research on the impact of cultural memory among the peoples of southeastern Europe now reveals ever more contours of a multifaceted identity, with which the people of today live and which they pass on to subsequent generations:

- through their linguistic usage: with substrate elements of the Old European language<sup>19</sup>;
- through their orally transmitted stories and songs, with variants of the Great flood story and other prehistoric narrative motifs<sup>20</sup>;
- through their folklore, with the hora or kolo dance, the ring dance from the Neolithic period, or ritual dances on the occasion of religious festivals<sup>21</sup>;
- through their craftsmanship, with the ancient building tradition of the *plinthos* wall, wattle walls plastered with mud on a stone foundation; with the use of clay stamps to apply decoration and traditional cultural symbols<sup>22</sup>;

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2. Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2014.

3. Harald Haarmann, *Plato's philosophy reaching beyond the limits of reason. Contours of a contextual theory of truth*, Hildesheim, Zurich & New York: Olms, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> See:

1. Adrian Poruciuc, *Archaeolinguistica: Trei studii interdisciplinare, [Archaeolinguistics: Three interdisciplinary studies]*, Bucharest: Romanian Institute of Tracology, 1995, p. 35.

2. Harald Haarmann, *Geschichte der Sintflut. Auf den Spuren der frühen Zivilisationen*, Munich: C.H. Beck (2nd ed. 2005), 2003, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Adrian Poruciuc, *Prehistoric roots of Romanian and Southeast European traditions*, Sebastopol, California: Institute of Archaeomythology, 2010, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Anna Ilieva and Anna Shturbanova, "Zoomorphic images in Bulgarian women's ritual dances in the context of Old European symbolism.", in *Marler*, 1997, pp. 309–321.

<sup>22</sup> Goce Naumov, "Neolithic stamps from the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula." in Dragoş Gheorghiu and Robin Skeates (eds.), *Prehistoric stamps – Theory and experiments*, Bucharest: University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2008, p. 73.

- through their familiarity with old building and construction forms with the design of ovens or with utensils and vessels that have not changed their shape for millennia<sup>23</sup>;
- through the cut of folk costumes and their accessories as well as the accompanying hairstyles, with forms and motifs known from Old European decorated figurines<sup>24</sup>;
- through their cultural symbols: with logos of certain occupational groups alluding to the motifs of neolithic clay stamps and with traditional motifs woven into textiles<sup>25</sup>;
- through customs and ritual acts at folk festivals and religious festivities, with the ritual baking of bread and the decoration of symbolic loaves of bread as votive offerings<sup>26</sup>;
- through religion based on the virgin Mary, with its allusions to the cult of ancient goddesses, the daughters and granddaughters of the figure of the neolithic goddess<sup>27</sup>;
- through burial customs, with the two-stage practice of the Orthodox Christians of Greece, *i.e.* the primary burial of the corpse; the secondary burial of the bones of deceased persons after the decomposition process is complete<sup>28</sup>;
- through all kinds of ideas about the magical effect of things or symbols, with echoes of ancient numerology, belief in witches and spirits<sup>29</sup>.

Such features are being extensively studied<sup>30</sup>. Old European cultural heritage includes material elements (that which is visible in the culture) as well as symbolic

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<sup>23</sup> See:

1. Corneliu Bucur, Cornelia Gangolea, Dan Munteanu, Irmgard Sedler (eds.), *Museum of folk technology guide book*, Sibiu: Direction of the Brukenthal Museum, 1986.

2. Margarita Vasileva (ed.), *Traditional Bulgarian calendar – Illustrated encyclopedia*, Plovdiv: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2003, p. 50.

<sup>24</sup> See:

1. Ioana Bădocan, “Gesturi sacre și profane la întemeierea familiei” [“Sacred and profane gestures at the foundation of the family”], in *Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei*, 2007, pp. 299–305.

2. Anita Komitska, Veska Borissova, Nikolov Velislav, *Bulgarian folk costumes*, Sofia: Borina Pub House, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Diane Waller, *Textiles from the Balkans*, London: British Museum Press, 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Margarita Vasileva, *op.cit.*, p. 9, p. 14, p. 41, p. 86, p. 115, p. 152.

<sup>27</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the centuries. Her place in the history of culture*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Loring M. Danforth, *The death rituals of rural Greece*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982.

<sup>29</sup> Pamfil Bilțiu, “Substratul mitico-magic al portii și funcțiile ei în cultura populară maramureșeană și românească.” [“The mythical-magical substratum of the gate and its functions in the popular culture of Maramures and Romania”], in *Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei*, 2007, pp. 243–259.

<sup>30</sup> See:

forms (the invisible elements in the culture, *i.e.*, the intellectual culture). The domain of intellectual culture is the very foundation of cultural memory, and detailed documentation has been compiled for this area in particular:

“The outlines of what was to become classical mythology can be perceived in prehistoric items unearthed by archaeologists, but such outlines also appear to be (paradoxically, from a chronological standpoint) ‘foretold’ in folk productions recorded only as late as modern times. And just as certain features of prehistoric shrines eventually evolved into basic parts of Christian churches (...), much of what we know as mythology derived, more or less directly, from the ritual-cultural life of prehistoric peasants”<sup>31</sup>.

In recent years, the search for traces has made a decisive contribution to building up new knowledge about the Old European cultural heritage. Special attention is paid to the roots of Greek civilization since documentation for that domain reaches back to the third and second millennia BCE. The cultures in the Balkanic region are much younger and early documentation is much scarcer than in the case of the Greek tradition.

The new findings are also instrumental to support the cultural self-awareness of the people who currently live in the lands where the Danube Civilization once flourished and who recognize that this Old European heritage is mirrored in their own history.

The organic whole of contact situations involving the culture and language of the people in Old Europe and the lifeways of people of Indo-European affiliation may be highly complex and may require the application of multiple interdisciplinary strategies of investigation. It is on this higher-order level that the benefits of interdisciplinary contextualization as methodology come to bear. Some case studies will be discussed in the following to highlight fundamental aspects of this approach.

### **SPECIAL BORROWED TERMINOLOGY IN THE DOMAIN OF FIGURINE PRODUCTION AS INDICATOR OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY**

In the European context, the making of small-scale sculptures (*i.e.*, figurines) has a long history, going back in time to the Palaeolithic Age. The oldest artifacts date to some 34,000 years BP (before present)<sup>32</sup>. The long-standing tradition of

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1. Adrian Poruciuc, *op. cit.*, 2010.

2. Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2011.

3. Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2014.

4. Harald Haarmann, *Plato's Sophia. His philosophical endeavor in light of its spiritual currents and undercurrents*, Amherst, New York: Cambria, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Adrian Poruciuc, *op. cit.*, 2010, p. xiv.

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas J. Conard, Harald Floss, Martina Barth, Jordi Serangeli (eds.), *Eiszeit – Kunst und Kultur*, Ostfildern: Thorbecke Verlag, 2009, pp. 244–271.

figurine-making in southeastern Europe is well-documented and its persistence throughout the Neolithic and Copper Ages is phenomenal.

The cultural chronology at Karanovo in eastern Bulgaria illustrates the continuous significance of figurines in community life over some 3500 years, from the Early Neolithic (c. 6500 BCE) to the Early Bronze Age (c. 3000 BCE). This is an enormous span of experienced time. Figurines may have been persistently attractive because they appeal to all our human senses, ranging from their visible corporeality to the most sophisticated metaphorical meaning that might be evoked in the perceptive mind<sup>33</sup>.

As part of the cultural area of the Danube civilization (Old Europe) Greece also has a long history of figurine-making.

“Another mystery of the Greek Neolithic is the meaning of the immense variety of figurines in clay and stone that have tantalized, amazed, and puzzled a generation of archaeologists. ... White marble, plain clay, and clay painted with red or brown abstract designs are the principal media used in the manufacture of figurines. The pure abstraction of the crosslike or violin-shaped marble figures changes in time to the startling realism of heads with detailed and recognizable features, painted red ...”<sup>34</sup>.

When the Indo-European pastoralists began to move south, they set in motion sociopolitical changes among the indigenous pre-Indo-European population. Under the impression of a reshuffling of customs certain traditions declined in the northern area and shifted to the south. This was the case with figurine-making, which had been of constant significance for people of Old Europe during the Neolithic and Copper Ages. Around 3000 BCE, a disruption of this tradition can be observed in the archaeological record and, seemingly, no more figurines were produced in the northern region. Figurine-making was not interrupted in the south where figurines continued to be produced even on the mainland, for example at Lerna on the east coast of the Peloponnese, during the Helladic period (third millennium BCE). The crafting of figurines continued in the ancient Aegean cultures (*i.e.*, in the Cyclades and in Minoan Crete). The Greeks became familiar with figurine-making in Hellas and adopted key terms for the crafting of these artifacts from the substrate language.

“[Figurines] ... were regularly produced throughout the Bronze Age in the Aegean, continuing an extant tradition from the Neolithic period ... While Cycladic and Minoan products develop continuously, the mainland tradition of female figurines with exaggerated body features dies out in the Early Bronze Age ... The quantity of figurines present in the archaeological record is indicative of their use. Fewer than 2,000 EC [Early Cycladic] figurines are known, produced over some 600–700 years in the third millennium BC. In contrast, at least 4,500 have been uncovered at a single site, Mycenae, dating between 1400–1100 BC”<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Harald Haarmann, *Interacting with figurines: Seven dimensions in the study of imagery*, West Hartford, Vermont: Full Circle Press, 2009, pp. 85–132.

<sup>34</sup> Curtis Runnels and Priscilla M. Murray, *Greece before history: An archaeological companion and guide*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 58–59.

<sup>35</sup> Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst, “Figurines.”, in *Cline*, 2010, p. 211.

Among the materials from which figurines were made, the following have to be mentioned: clay, stone (marble, sea pebble), bone, ivory, metal, faïence, shell. There seems to have been also traditions to craft figurines in materials that are less durable than ceramics or stone, and these traditions persisted in the mainland settlements. These perishable materials that are recorded in ancient Greek sources are wood and wax. The oldest statue (*xoanon*) of the goddess Athena that is mentioned in the sources is made of wood.

One finds references to the origins of wooden statues and that these were manufactured by the Pelasgians, the pre-Greek population in the region. In his account of southern Greece, Pausanias (second century CE) mentions Therai in the Peloponnese, the site of a sanctuary (*i.e.*, Eleusinium) dedicated to Demeter:

“Spartans say that here Heracles was hidden by Asclepius while being healed of the wounds. In this sanctuary there is also a wooden image of Orpheus, which is, they say, a piece of work of the Pelasgians”<sup>36</sup>.

There is another material for the use of which evidence can be “retrieved” only from linguistic interference of the pre-Greek (Pelasgian) substrate language in ancient Greek. Like wood, wax decays in the course of time, and there is no archaeological evidence of figurines crafted in this particular material from the Bronze Age. And yet, one finds traces of this tradition in the oldest layer of pre-Greek borrowings in the vocabulary of ancient Greek. Though only preserved in a fragmented form a terminology of specialized technical terms can be reconstructed from the ancient written sources that relate to the crafting of figurines with bee's wax (see the entries for the following terms in Beekes<sup>37</sup>:

- *dagys* “puppet (of wax)”
- *kanabos* / *kinnabos* “wooden framework around which artists molded wax or clay; block-figure”
- *keros* “wax”
- *plaggon* “wax figurine; doll”
- *koroplathos* “one who forms female figures; doll modeler”

The survival, in Greek antiquity, of a fragmented terminology of pre-Greek origin relating to the production of wax figurines clearly points to a long-standing tradition of figurine-making, dating from Old Europe and persisting through the Bronze Age and ancient Greece. The tradition continues throughout Greek antiquity, during times when other materials for figurine-crafting were re-introduced (*i.e.*, stone, terracotta, metal).

Longevity of figurines made of wax extends into the early Middle Ages. According to legend, St. Luke is credited with having created an image of the Virgin Mary with her child (Vreffokratousa) with wax, serving as an icon for the

<sup>36</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 3.20.6.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Beekes, *op. cit.*, 2010.

Christian community in Jerusalem. This image was brought to the island of Lesbos by the monk Agathona of Ephesus at the beginning of the ninth century CE.

### THE NEOLITHIC SPIRIT IN ART AND ITS TIMELESS AESTHETIC APPEAL TO HUMANITY IN GENERAL

The measure of an ancient civilization is not limited to technological domains but it also includes religious patterns, values of social conduct, worldview and, artistic trends and fashions. If one wants to specify what makes a flourishing civilization then the aesthetic appeal of art comes to mind. In a society with high-grade harmony and social cohesion, the innovative spirit of artistic creation comes to bear.

Figurative art in the Danube civilization offers a great diversity of forms, above all stylized small-scale sculptures, and all these forms are governed by the principle of a refined sense of abstractness (see below).



Figure 1. Sculptures from the regional Neolithic culture of Hamangia (Cernavodă, Romania; ca. 4800 BCE)<sup>38</sup>. Male figurine (“The Thinker”) on the left. Female figurine (“The Seated Woman”) on the right

The aesthetic appeal of the works produced by the Danubian artists differed significantly from the realism of later periods, from the doctrine of Greek art, as it was established by Polykleitos (fifth century BCE) in his book *Kanon* in which the artist determined the conventions of art styles, the “canon”, to be followed by many generations to come. This exclusive doctrine of western aesthetics remained valid beyond antiquity and well into the nineteenth century. These norms shaped “our own Greek training”<sup>39</sup> in art. Seemingly, the tradition of Neolithic art vanished into oblivion.

And yet, a sensational revival of the Neolithic spirit in art occurred. The abstract style of sculpture, so typical of Old European art, was renewed in a movement that made itself felt in the late nineteenth century. Strange as it may seem, art history has so far not succeeded in properly identifying the inspirational sources of many of the artists whose creations are subsumed under the blanket “modern art”<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Venceslas Kruta, *Die Anfänge Europas 6000–500 v.Chr.*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993, pp. 84–85.

<sup>39</sup> Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A study in the psychology of pictorial representation*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960, p. 123.

<sup>40</sup> Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 223.



The protagonist of this movement is Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957). Brâncuși was not just any sculptor. He was a true pathfinder, one who crafted a new creative space, not only by breaking away from the established canon of Western art but also by setting standards for other sculptors:

“Brâncuși played a pivotal role in developing the shifting and expanded identities that sculpture assumed in the twentieth century by shaping a body of work so imaginative, so multifarious, and so deeply felt that it has consistently drawn a sizeable audience, particularly from those most critical and attentive of all viewers of sculpture: other sculptors”<sup>41</sup>.

It is clear from Brâncuși’s biography that the main source of inspiration, during his early years, came from the prehistoric imagery of his home country Romania, what was known of it at the beginning of the twentieth century, and from traditional pottery in Oltenia and Dobrogea which continue Neolithic forms. The form and style of Brâncuși’s work both find their source of inspiration in the repertoire of prehistoric figurines from southeastern Europe and the Aegean archipelago (the Cycladic Islands, in particular).

“The Thinker of Hamangia and his female counterpart and other recent excavations of the Neolithic Age in Romania offer us an unexpected providential confirmation of the high degree of authentic inspiration that led Brâncuși to carve Ancient Figure at the beginning of 1907 and Wisdom of the Earth in 1907. Timeless contemporaneity mysteriously links Brâncuși’s work to the same source of inspiration as that of the Rumanian Neolithic Age thousands of years ago”<sup>42</sup>.

The Neolithic spirit is unmistakably present in his sculpture “Wisdom of the Earth” (1907) which reflects a unique distillation of Brâncuși’s early experiences with ancient imagery in Romania and it is a manifestation of how he perceived prehistoric society, earth-bound and with matrilinear structures<sup>43</sup>.

Brâncuși’s emphasis on the Earth as the giver of life in the mindset of the early agrarian settlers in the region was conclusive and reasonably motivated. In as much as “The Thinker” could be categorized as one of the works of modern art, “Wisdom of the Earth” could range among the pieces of Neolithic art. In his own words, Brâncuși intended to create a female figure “beyond personality” a character imbued with the mystery of a prototype of cosmic dimensions. In this again, the modern artist intuitively sensed the spirit of Neolithic imagery whose many forms bear witness to Brâncuși’s timeless endeavor<sup>44</sup>.

Perhaps the affinity of Brâncuși’s works with Neolithic imagery is not coincidental. Brâncuși grew up in Oltenia, a region that is known for its preservation of old traditions and folklore. It was in that region that the Old

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<sup>41</sup> Anna C. Chave, *Constantin Brancusi. Shifting the bases of art*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Radu Varia, *Brancusi*, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1986, p. 59.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>44</sup> Venceslas Kruta, *op. cit.*

European heritage was best preserved and continued into the Bronze Age and beyond. A distant reflection of that heritage was manifested in the traditional culture that continued into Brâncuși's days<sup>45</sup>.

The impression of Brâncuși's Neolithic inspirations reached further after 1904, once he had moved to France. The major museums for prehistoric art in Paris, the Musée du Louvre and the ethnographical collection of the Musée de l'Homme, offered insights into Neolithic imagery other than from Romania, Cycladic idols for one.

It is easy to recognize the Cycladic spirit flourishing in Brâncuși's art of his early years in France.

"Today, ... it is easy for us to observe that a work by Brâncuși resembles a Cycladic sculpture. But we may just as easily feel that a Cycladic work looks like a Brâncuși!"<sup>46</sup>.

The revitalization of the Old European aesthetic spirit in the works of Constantin Brâncuși is exceptional, and for various reasons. The revival is the achievement of one single individual, without the cooperative efforts of a group of activists. The movement of modern art became trend-setting once other sculptors felt inspired to follow the example of Brâncuși as forerunner. Another exceptional aspect is the manifestation of the cultural heritage of Old European coinage, in this case of art aesthetics, without any direct participation of language as the constructing vehicle of culture. So, this case differs from what has been said about the domain of figurine-making and its terminology (see above).

In 2019, the Romanian filmmaker Viorel Costea completed a documentary film about Brâncuși, highlighting the essence of the revival of the Old European spirit. Viorel Costea and his crew filmed at various locations in Romania (Hobita, Târgu Jiu, Craiova, Bucharest), in Paris (Brâncuși's workshop at the Centre Pompidou) and in New York (Museum of Modern Art).

## FOUNDATIONS OF WORLDVIEW AND THE FABRIC OF CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS

A testimony for the intensive contacts in which the ancient Greeks engaged with their predecessors is borrowed terminology in the domains of religion, spirituality and mythology. There is a megasymbol of ancient worldview which came to infuse religious traditions, to shape spiritual conceptualizations, eventually to permeate philosophical discourse and to open new horizons for looking at life, and this is *psyche*.

It is noteworthy that, for the key term *psyche* ("psyche" = "life; vitality; soul") in ancient Greek, no cognate parallels can be found in other Indo-European languages. According to a recent assessment of the etymological history of the

<sup>45</sup> Sanda Miller, *Constantin Brâncuși*, London: Reaktion Books, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Colin Renfrew, *The Cycladic spirit*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991, p. 174.

term, earlier suggestions for an Indo-European root are not convincing and have to be discarded<sup>47</sup>. The term is of pre-Greek origin and, therefore, forms part of the cultural and linguistic heritage of Old Europe.

Since the times when the expression *psyche* is first recorded in literary sources (*i.e.*, eighth century BCE, in Homer's *Iliad*) it is used with a great diversity of meanings. In a modern observer's view, soul relates to human beings. Contrasting with such a modern restrictive definition of the concept was the common belief of people in antiquity that a soul resides in everything living which includes animals and plants. Therefore, the following shades of meaning of the key term *psyche* have to be perceived in their unrestricted expanse<sup>48</sup>:

- “breath as the sign of life” (corresponding to Latin *anima*);
- “life, spirit, vitality”;
- “aspiration”;
- (metaphorically) of things “dear as life”;
- “the departed soul, spirit, ghost, shade” (seen as winged creature);
- “the soul or spirit (of a person)”;
- “the soul, heart”;
- “mind, understanding”;
- “appetite”;
- “butterfly”<sup>49</sup>;
- “cicada”.

“Beyond their basic biological characteristics, cicadas were associated with a number of broader concepts and myths. Their incessant sound was typically characterized as a musical ‘song’, and one that was ‘sweet’ or ‘shrill’. This gave the cicadas a connection to the Muses [as in Plato's *Phaedrus* 230c], poetry, and the rhetorical arts more generally. Other deities with whom the cicadas were associated include Athene, nymphs, and Pan, the last of these because noontime is the hour when he sleeps (and so is not to be disturbed by mortals). This connection between the cicada and divinity goes beyond just its song. The cicada itself was seen as godlike or divine, in virtue of the fact that it sheds its skin”<sup>50</sup>.

In the focal signifier *psyche* is encapsulated the code of the Old European concept of spirituality that has left its mark on the Greek mind<sup>51</sup>. A concept which is closely related to describe phases of presence (or absence) of the soul is *coma* (“state of motionlessness of the body; state of the absence of the soul”), this too of pre-Greek coinage<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Beekes, *op. cit.*, 2010, pp. 1671–1672.

<sup>48</sup> See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English lexicon*, New York: Harper & Brothers; Oxford: Clarendon Press (ninth edition, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones, 1940; with revised supplement, printed 1991), 1883, p. 2026.

<sup>49</sup> *e.g.*, in Aristotle's *History of animals* 551a14, Plutarch *Moralia* 2.3.2.

<sup>50</sup> Daniel S. Werner, *Myth and philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2013a, pp. 164-167, pp. 258–261.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Beekes, *Etymological dictionary of Greek*, 2 vols. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2010, p. 814.

Conceptualizations of spirituality in the society of Old Europe, during the period of the Neolithic and Copper Ages (fifth to fourth millennia BCE), have been extensively studied by Marija Gimbutas<sup>53</sup> in her seminal works and in projects that were inspired by her<sup>54</sup>. In fact:

“the Old European sacred images and symbols were never totally uprooted; these most persistent features in human history were too deeply implanted in the psyche”<sup>55</sup>.

This statement is crucial since it points to the heart of the problem of cultural continuity across time.

The pre-Greek origin of the term suggests that the idea of psyche had been conceptualized by the pre-Greek population and that the Indo-European migrants to southeastern Europe showed themselves impressed by the mindset of the indigenous Europeans. Eventually, the ancestors of the Greeks adopted the idea, together with the word for it.

Plato is the first philosopher to systematically discuss aspects of the soul in several of his dialogues. Central topics in his discourse are the quality of the soul to be immortal, to be tripartite and to be self-moving. According to the chronological order of their completion, the dialogues in which matters of the soul are treated form the following sequence: *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Laws*<sup>56</sup>. Plato also is the first to elaborate on the concept of the World Soul (in his dialogue *Timaeus*, 34b – 37c).

A goddess of pre-Greek origin (*i.e.*, Hecate) is personified as the source of the World Soul, its divine mother<sup>57</sup>. The association of Hecate with the World Soul is best known from the so-called Chaldean Oracles (fragmentary texts from the second century CE). The World Soul “springs from Hecate as ‘Source of Sources’ (*pege pegon, ...*)”<sup>58</sup>.

“The theory of a soul of the world (*psyche tou kosmou, anima mundi*) is almost as ancient as European philosophy itself”<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> See:

1. Marija Gimbutas, *The language of the Goddess*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.
2. Marija Gimbutas, *op. cit.*, 1991.

<sup>54</sup> See:

1. Harald Haarmann, *Das Rätsel der Donauzivilisation*, Die Entdeckung der ältesten Hochkultur Europas. Munich: C.H. Beck (3rd ed. 2017), 2011, pp. 159–176.

2. Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2013a, pp. 157–179.

<sup>55</sup> Marija Gimbutas, *op. cit.*, 1989, p. 318.

<sup>56</sup> Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2017, pp. 127–146.

<sup>57</sup> Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, translation and commentary*. Leiden, Copenhagen & Cologne: Brill, 1989, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> John D. Turner, “The Chaldean Oracles and the metaphysics of the Sethian Platonizing Treatises.” in John D. Turner and Kevin Corrigan (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its heritage*, vol. 1: *History and interpretation from the Old Academy to later Platonism and Gnosticism*, Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 221.

<sup>59</sup> Miklós Vassányi, *Anima mundi: The rise of the world soul theory in modern German philosophy*, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London & New York: Springer, 2011, p. 1.

Given the manifold shades of meaning expressed by the term *psyche* one may conclude that we deal with a key concept of ancient worldview that was chosen, as a topic, by some pre-Socratic philosophers<sup>60</sup>, later specified and rationalized by Plato and, through Plato's writings and later Platonism, found its way into the European philosophical tradition.

### **THE ORIGINS OF THEATER AS PERFORMATIVE ART – THE MERGING OF TWO CULTURAL STREAMS IN BRONZE AGE EUROPE**

The world of theater is familiar to all Europeans and, in our cultural vocabulary, we find borrowings from either Greek *theatron* or Latin *theatrum*. As part of the canon of our European education we learn that the ancient Greeks were the first to introduce the theater, including the associated terminology. This view, however, needs to be revised in light of new findings and insights in the study of pre-Greek cultures, of Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe.

Among the pre-Greek institutions that impressed the ancestors of the Greeks were rituals and festive processions. The general term for 'procession' in ancient Greek is *thiasos*, an expression of pre-Greek origin. In light of the intensive social interaction of indigenous Europeans and ancient Greeks, descendants of Kurgan immigrants to Hellas, it is not surprising that the pre-Greek ritual heritage, too, had an impact on the formative process of Greek civilization.

Rituals are at the very core of the functioning of culture. All cultures of the world, whether historical or recent, operate with a certain category of behavioral strategies that enhance in-group solidarity, maintain the rigidity of the knowledge obtained from previous generations, and reassure the sustainability of society.

“In general, a ritual is an act involving performative uses of language (for example, in blessing, praising, cursing, consecrating, purifying) (...) and a formal pattern of behaviour either closely or more loosely followed”<sup>61</sup>.

There is consensus among scholars that ritual preceded theater, that ritualistic performance provides the mind frame for the reworking of eternal human matters (*i.e.* love, hatred, liberty, power, death) projected into the fictional world of theater. If this is true, then it is reasonable to assert that theater is ritualistic healing and that the impression of a play goes far beyond entertainment, for example, with the experience of “drama as therapy”<sup>62</sup>.

“Rituals are performative: they are acts done; and performances are ritualized: they are codified, repeatable actions. The functions of theatre identified by Aristotle and

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<sup>60</sup> Malcom Schofield, “Heraclitus' theory of soul and its antecedents.” in *Everson*, 1991(1991), pp: 13–34.

<sup>61</sup> Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the sacred. An anatomy of the world's beliefs*, London: Fontana Press, 1997, p. 72.

<sup>62</sup> Phil Jones, *Drama as therapy. Theatre as living*, London & New York: Routledge, 1996.

Horace – entertainment, celebration, enhancement of social solidarity, education (including political education), and healing – are also functions of ritual. The difference lies in context and emphasis”<sup>63</sup>.

The linkage between ritual and theatrical performance in the Greek world has been investigated with some scrutiny<sup>64</sup>. However, the historical depth of this linkage has not yet been fully perceived by classical scholars. Some would look for the origins of theatrical performance but, following Vernant and Vidal-Naquet “it would be better to speak of antecedents”<sup>65</sup>.

The symbiotic interplay between drama and ritual can be reconstructed for a world where the early Greeks vividly interacted with the ancient Europeans. Processions in the archaic period were more comprehensive than in the classical era since they included theatrical performances in which both men and women participated. In ancient Athens, processions ended on the Agora which played an important role as a political meeting place and cult center. Theatrical performances, in the archaic period, marked the final phase of processions, and it is important to perceive

“the position of the «theatre» as end-point of a procession. The procession was the core of the rural Dionysia, and theatrical performances an addendum”<sup>66</sup>.

### Theater as performance

The sixth century BCE saw a breaking away from older ritual traditions and a remodeling of cultural life. The major occurrence was the separation of the theatrical performances from the organization of the processions that continued to be held. The consequences of the separation were of a formal rather than of a contextual nature. The performances remained ritualistic and religiously connotated. Inferring from observations in the study of oral literature in a traditional culture, one may conclude that the impact of the verbal strategies that came to bear in theatrical performances in archaic Greece were most probably characterized by similar functions and structures, both in the context of processions and in the newly devised space, the theater. This means that the texts were oriented at formulaic language use typical of rituals.

In the early stage of development of theatrical performance, independent of processions, the spoken texts and the scenical arrangements were much simpler

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<sup>63</sup> Richard Schechner, “Ritual and performance.” in *Ingold*, 1994, p. 613.

<sup>64</sup> See:

1. Barbara Kowalzig, *Singing for the gods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

2. Eric Csapo and Margaret C. Miller (eds.), *The origins of theatre in ancient Greece and beyond*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and tragedy in ancient Greece*, New York: Zone Books, 1990, p. 23.

<sup>66</sup> David Wiles, *Tragedy in Athens. Performance space and theatrical meaning*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 26.

than what the Greek theater produced in the classical period. Elaboration and sophistication of language use and narrative lay in the future, with great names such as Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Sophocles and Euripid<sup>67</sup>.

Even when theatrical performance had been separated from the performance of ritual processions it remained associated with the tradition of mythical narration. The ancient links with ritual processions can be readily identified in the genre of Greek tragedies. Aeschylus who is regarded by many to be the father of European drama carefully preserves the memory of the old roots of Greek theater, that is ritualistic performance of dance and song.

“Fifth-century Attic tragedy, like archaic epic poetry, took its subjects almost exclusively from myth. Tragedies on nonmythical themes were never more than experimental. ... Tragedy was also influenced by the treatment of myth in epic poetry. Even ancient authors called Homer the father of tragedy, and Aeschylus reportedly said that he worked with the crumbs from Homer's table (TrGF vol. 3, T 112a-b). The tragic poet deliberately situated himself in the epic tradition of mythical narration”<sup>68</sup>.

The theater as a space with specific functions of performance is a secondary innovation. This can be illustrated by the etymology of the Greek term *theatron*. The stem *thea* points at a word of the pre-Greek substratum, meaning “theatrical performance. The suffix *-tron* (denoting a means for achieving an effect – in this case devising a space for display) was added later, once the architectural form of theaters was introduced.

“As a literary genre with its own rules and characteristics tragedy introduces a new type of spectacle into the system of the city-state's public festivals”<sup>69</sup>.

For a modern student of ancient Greece, there is an obvious distinction between theater plays as literary works and the theatrical performance of their contents. The reality of cultural life in Athens since the fifth century BCE illustrates a different view. Priority lay with the theatrical performance and theater plays were written to be performed in the theaters that were constructed in Athens and other cities of Attica. One theater stands out because of its unrivaled attraction.

“Most, if not all, extant Greek tragedies were written for the Theatre of Dionysus Eleuthereus in Athens”<sup>70</sup>.

The popularity of theater performances in the ancient Greek world and, in Athens in particular, can hardly be overemphasized.

“Socrates is reported to have frequently attended the theaters, especially when Euripides competed with new tragedies; when the poet was competing at the Rural

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<sup>67</sup> Giuseppe Mastromarco and Totaro Piero, *Storia del teatro greco*, Milan: Mondadori (2nd ed.), 2012, p. 68, p. 94, p. 120, p. 92.

<sup>68</sup> Fritz Graf, *Greek mythology – An introduction*, Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 142.

<sup>69</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant and Vidal-Naquet Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>70</sup> David Wiles, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 23.

Dionysia in the Piraeus, Socrates even went down there. ... Beginning in the later fifth century there is evidence for an increasing number of dramatic festivals and theaters across Attica”<sup>71</sup>.

### Theater as architectural form

The layer of pre-Greek terms in the lexical domain of house-construction is extensive. And yet, there are no known borrowings relating to the construction of theaters. This is not surprising since there were no theaters in Greece before the sixth century BCE, and there are no architectural remains of earlier periods that would resemble Greek theaters. According to the traditions of the pre-Greek era, there was no need for a separate architectural form since theatrical spectacles were performed along the routes of processions.

It is not clear whether the rectangular shape of theaters is older than the theater with a circular space for the audience. In any case, it has been emphasized that the round shape was the preferred model since the period when democracy was introduced (*i.e.*, since the fifth century BCE), and this form originated in Athens<sup>72</sup>.

The circular shape of the space for the audience offers a practical as well as a symbolic advantage over rectangular constructions.

“An inward-facing circle allows maximum eye-contact; each person knows that other people know because each person can visually verify that others are paying attention”<sup>73</sup>.

Each spectator has a chance, not only to follow how the plot unfolds but to also observe the reactions of other spectators to what happens on the stage. Intervisibility is given priority, not only in the construction of theaters, but also of other public buildings.

“There is a historical association between democracy in Athens and architecture promoting intervisibility. Like the Greek theater, the *ekklesiasterion* (theater-like public meeting place for gatherings of a city assembly; in Athens, the Pnyx), the *bouleuterion* (large-scale roofed public building for a large probouleutic council), and the *prutanikon* (public building intended for public gatherings of several dozen magistrates; in Athens, the Tholos) may be Athenian architectural innovations”<sup>74</sup>.

The most perfected form of the circular theater is the amphitheater. Most of the amphitheaters of antiquity were constructed by the Romans<sup>75</sup>. The best-

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<sup>71</sup> David Kawalko Roselli, *Theater of the people. Spectators and society in ancient Athens*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> Josiah Ober, *Democracy and knowledge. Innovation and learning in classical Athens*, Princeton, New Jersey & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008. p. 200.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Suk-Young Chwe, *Rational ritual: culture, coordination, and common knowledge*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> Josiah Ober, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>75</sup> David Lee Bomgardner, *The story of the Roman amphitheatre*, London & New York: Routledge, 2000.



known amphitheater of the Roman world is perhaps the Colosseum in Rome. This monumental building, erected between 72 and 80 CE, ranges among the greatest works of Roman architecture. At the same time, it is the biggest building which Jewish people have ever constructed. Those who built the Colosseum were Jewish prisoners of war who had been brought to Italy by Vespasian after his victory over the Jewish army in Iudaea, ending the first Jewish-Roman war.

The popularity of the theater – as a place of social contact and an environment for a reaffirmation of Greek cultural traditions through artistic interaction – increased in the course of time, and this can be inferred from the growing capacities to accommodate spectators. The history of the Theater of Dionysus, located on the southern slope of the Acropolis in Athens, is quite informative in this regard. The original version of this particular theater, built in the classical period (fifth century BCE), had seats for some 4,000 spectators while the enlarged version of the Hellenistic era (fourth century BCE) offered space for a maximum of 17,000 spectators<sup>76</sup>.

#### **THE ORIGINS OF SHIP-BUILDING AND OF ITS TERMINOLOGY IN ANCIENT GREEK**

The ancestors of the ancient Greeks who entered southeastern Europe from the north had no knowledge of the ocean and they did not have any word for it. They adopted the term for sea from the natives who had lived in the coastal area of the Aegean Sea for generations and had experience in seafaring. To this day the word for sea in Greek is *thalassa* which stems from the pre-Greek substrate language. The sea was also personified by the Greeks and worshipped as Thalassa (goddess of the sea).

The first impulse to learn from the natives about marine life seems to have been the curiosity among the early Greeks to go out fishing to catch foodstuff. Catching fish from small boats stood at the very beginning of the Greeks's experience with the sea. In the ancient Greek vocabulary, a term from the substrate language has been preserved: *aspalieus / aspalous* "fisherman". In the specialized terminology of utensils needed for fishing one finds the following substrate terms: *gaggamon / gaggame* "small round net for catching oysters", *sagene* "large fishing net, trawl".

Learning the know-how of native fishermen and becoming fishermen is one thing, but setting out to sea as merchants for engaging in marine trade is quite another. The occupation of fishermen requires the knowledge to manage seaborne vessels. The native Europeans had ample experience with that. What is also required is the know-how of boat- and ship-building, and the native Europeans had much experience in this domain either.

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<sup>76</sup> Savas Gogos, *Das Dionysostheater von Athen: Architektonische Gestalt und Funktion*, Vienna: Phoibos, 2008.

We do not know how the people of Old Europe, the ancient Danubians, constructed boats and seafaring ships but they must have developed technical skills that remained unrivalled among their contemporaries. Some pictures and clay miniature models of the fifth and fourth millennia BCE show details of vessels that were used<sup>77</sup>. In the fourth and third millennia BCE boat-types were developed on the Cycladic islands that were driven by up to 25 oarsmen. Images of such boats are found on Cycladic pottery and on the plates which are known as “frying-pans”.

“The images prevent us seeing if the hull was a tree dugout or a clinker (constructed from overlapping planks); the former is possible for the small shape, but might be difficult for the larger. A notable feature is a high stern sometimes decorated with a large fish”<sup>78</sup>.

The ship-building skills in the other ancient civilizations (*i.e.*, Egypt, Mesopotamia) developed much later. Some of the useful know-how of Old European ship-builders found its way – through manifold transformations – into Greek craftsmanship, and some technical terms survived in the specialized vocabulary of ancient Greek<sup>79</sup>:

- *agkyra* “anchor”;
- *aphlaston* “curved poop of a ship, with its ornaments” (*cf.* the decorated sterns of ancient Cycladic boats<sup>80</sup>);
- *boutani* “part of the ship to which the rudder is tied”;
- *eune* “anchor stones”;
- *kalon* “wood for building ships”;
- *kanthelia* “curved pieces of wood at the back of a ship”;
- *kindynos* “bench in the prow of a ship”;
- *korymbos* “uppermost point of a ship”;
- *kybernao* “to steer (a ship)”;
- *kydaros* “small ship”;
- *laipha / laiphe* “sail made of skin”;
- *lenos* “socket into which the mast fitted”;
- *malthe* “mix of wax and pitch, used to caulk ships”;
- *paron* “light ship”;
- *ptakana* “boat mat (used in boats called *kanna*)”;
- *selis* “crossbeam of a ship”;
- *sipharos* “topsail, topgallant sail”;
- *stamines* “vertical side-beams of a ship”;
- *traphex* “board of a ship”;
- *phalkes* “board, rib of a ship”;

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<sup>77</sup> Ana Raduncheva, *Kasnoneolitnoto obshtestvo v balgarskite zemi*, Sofia: The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2003, p. 292.

<sup>78</sup> John Bintliff, *The complete archaeology of Greece: From hunter-gatherers to the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D.* Malden, Massachusetts & Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, p. 105.

<sup>79</sup> Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2014, pp. 113–115.

<sup>80</sup> John Bintliff, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

The pictures and clay models of Old European ships do not reveal many details that would help understand the principles of how Neolithic vessels were constructed<sup>81</sup>. Since those crafts were made of organic material (*i.e.*, wood) and this decays in time there are no remains of very old ships. The oldest surviving evidence dates to the Mycenaean era, to a period when the Mycenaean trade network experienced its greatest expansion, reaching as far west as southern Italy and Sardinia<sup>82</sup>.

The oldest shipwreck so far discovered in the world is the so-called Uluburun ship which was named after the site where it was found, off the southern coast of Turkey. According to dendrochronological dating, this ship sank around 1320 BCE. Something that strikes the eye of an experienced underwater archaeologist is the special kind of construction, reflecting a long-standing tradition of ship-building.

“Initial indications suggest that the Uluburun Ship was a robust and ancient example of the shell-first mode of construction that was to dominate the construction of wooden ships in classical antiquity and to influence later ship construction in that region as well”<sup>83</sup>.

It is from the Mycenaean era that we find the earliest mention of the profession of “ship-builders” (*naudomoi*, written as na-u-do-mo in the Linear B texts, derived from *naus* “ship”). Other terms referring to seafaring are “rowers, oarsmen” (*eretai*, written as e-re-ta in Mycenaean texts) and “sailor, mariner” (*pontilos*, as po-ti-ro in Linear B). Also, various personal names, recorded in Mycenaean texts, are derived from the stem *naus*: *e.g.*, O-ti-na-wo (Ortinawos), Na-u-si-ke-re-we (Nausiklewes “One who is famous because of his ships”), Na-wi-ro (Nawilos “Sailor”), O-ku-na-wo (Okunawos “Someone possessing a fast ship”), E-u-o-mo (Euhormos “Someone possessing a good harbor”)<sup>84</sup>;

## LANGUAGE SHIFT UNDER THE PRESSURE OF A LANGUAGE OF A POLITICAL ÉLITE

During the Bronze Age (fourth – second millennia BCE), Indo-European languages spread throughout Europe. This process was only partly connected to the migration movements of Indo-European pastoralists from the Eurasian steppe zone

<sup>81</sup> Ana Raduncheva, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

<sup>82</sup> Massimo Cultraro, *I Micenei: Archeologia, storia, società dei Greci prima di Omero*, Rome: Carocci editore (5th ed.), 2011, pp. 224–227, pp. 228–231.

<sup>83</sup> Richard A. Gould, *Archaeology and the social history of ships*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press (2nd ed.), 2011, p. 130.

<sup>84</sup> Petar Chr. Ilievski, *Zhivotot na mikencite vo nivnite pismeni svedoshitva, so poseben osvrt kon onomastickite i prosopografski izvodi, [The life of the Mycenaean from their own records, with special regard to the onomastic and prosopographic deductions]*, Skopje: Makedonska Akademija na Naukite i Umetnostite, 2000, p. 364, p. 369.

into southeastern and western Europe. Genetic analysis has produced insights that the majority of speakers of Indo-European languages in historical Europe share the gene pool of the prehistoric hunter-gatherers and indigenous agriculturalists, which differs from the genetic profile of the early steppe nomads, the original speakers of Proto-Indo-European<sup>85</sup>. How can this discrepancy be explained?

In the European context, the major drive for the spread of Indo-European languages was closely associated with processes of assimilation among hunter-gatherers and sedentary agriculturalists, eventually resulting in large-scale language shift. This language-shift was induced by newly established élite groups whose language became dominant because it was infused with a special kind of prestige, assumed by those in power. These élite groups who exercised political power over the ancient indigenous Europeans, the nomads from the steppe zone, were accustomed to social hierarchy and élite power. The first major takeover of a trade center in the region of the Danube civilization occurred at Varna (Bulgaria) on the western coast of the Black Sea, around 4500 BCE<sup>86</sup>.

The Indo-European migrants who moved into southeastern Europe came to dominate in the areas where they finally settled down. In view of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences between them and the ancient Europeans (of pre-Indo-European affiliation) the newcomers were in need to legitimize their status as a ruling élite. Many examples of the mythical legitimization of élite power are known from history.

The Norman conquest of England and the Frankish invasion of Gaul provide examples of immigrant groups exalting their own ethnicity after assuming power:

“... the idea that racial identity operates as a causal force in history commences with the old European myths of invasion and conquest, the Normans over the Saxons in England and the Germanic or Trojan Franks over the Gauls in France”<sup>87</sup>.

The Franks legitimized their conquest of northern Gaul as a privilege to which they were entitled by their noble descent. Similarly, the Normans believed there was a causal link between their conquest of England and their supposed noble status. In fact, there are much earlier examples of such arguments.

In the context of Indo-European culture, the earliest known example of the self-exaltation of an élite group are the Aryan pastoralists from Central Asia who invaded the Punjab in northern India around 1700 BCE. The invaders came from the area of the Sintashta culture (east of the Ural Mountains in Central Asia), which has been identified as the most likely location of the Aryan (*i.e.*, Indo-Iranian)

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<sup>85</sup> Eppie R. Jones *et al.*, “Upper Palaeolithic genomes reveal deep roots of modern Eurasians”, in *Nature Communications*, 2015, DOI: 10.1038/ncomms9912, www.nature.com/nature communications, pp. 3–6.

<sup>86</sup> Harald Haarmann, *Indo-Europeanization – day one: Elite recruitment and the beginnings of language politics*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012.

<sup>87</sup> Susan Lape, *Race and citizen identity in the classical Athenian emocracy*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 143.

homeland. At first, Aryan warriors were called to India by local Dravidian rulers as allies in military conflicts. Soon, the Aryan warrior élites assumed control and claimed territory for themselves.

In this way, an élite of Aryan (Indo-European) origin came to exercise political power over a non-Aryan (Dravidian) majority. Aryan identity was fundamentally linked to ritual and language.

“If a person sacrificed to the right gods in the right way using the correct forms of the traditional hymns and poems, that person was an Aryan”<sup>88</sup>.

And yet, there was another aspect to being an Aryan that had to do with the expression of self-esteem. In the compilation of hymns and prayers that originated between 1500 and 1300 BCE called the *Rig Veda*, we find a formulaic ending of many hymns that refers to rituals and sacrifices, as well as to the public feasting that accompanied the funeral of an important person:

“Let us speak great words as men of power in the sacrificial gathering”<sup>89</sup>.

These figures of speech may be understood as a strategy to set Aryans apart from Dravidians and as an expression of group cohesion among those who were in power.

In the variety of meanings that are associated with the name “Aryans”, ethnic connotations of racial segregation are included. Old Indic *árya-* is someone who is faithful to the Vedic religion and practices a lifeway according to the social conventions that this religion stipulates. The idea of nobleness is contained in two related expressions; *i.e.*, *ári-* meaning “kinsman; a faithful devoted person; attached to, faithful” and *aryá-* meaning “kind, true, noble, devoted, favorable”<sup>90</sup>.

It can be assumed that the Aryan mindset had developed over a longer period of experienced time in a context of élite self-identification in the hierarchical clan system of steppe pastoralists and that the same mindset had already dominated the ideological framing of élite power at Varna and, later, the immigrants to Greece professed the same kind of attitude as to the anchoring of their dominant status in mythical legitimization. Far- distant repercussions of these early manifestations of legitimization may be discerned in the Greek myths of origin, of the Athenians and Spartans in particular<sup>91</sup>.

The encounter of the indigenous Europeans with the immigrants produced patterns of a complex social networking, resulting in extensive biculturalism and bilingualism. The ancient Europeans kept their mother tongue (*i.e.*, Pelasgian, the substrate language) as first language and adopted the Indo-European dialect transferred to Greece by the migrants as second language. Bilingualism must have

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<sup>88</sup> David W. Anthony, *op. cit.*, 2007, p. 408.

<sup>89</sup> *Rig Veda* 2.12, 2.23, 2.28.

<sup>90</sup> James Mallory and D.Q. Adams (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Indo-European culture*, London & Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997, p. 213.

<sup>91</sup> Harald Haarmann, *op. cit.*, 2014, pp. 133–137.

also been a major model of communication for the early Greeks, who would have picked up at least some of the language used by those with whom they lived as neighbors. Otherwise, the transfer of hundreds of borrowings from the substrate language into the Greek vocabulary would remain unexplained and lack motivation.

The process of shift, from the native Pelasgian language to Indo-European, unfolded in various phases:

Phase 1: The adoption of the language of the élite as second language

(The population which experiences the language shift constitutes a majority, as compared with the élite minority; the process of language shift occurs in the absence of any state authority; the adoption of the élite language occurs without regular teaching, that is, as uncontrolled language acquisition; the medium of shift is speech and literacy is not involved.)

Phase 2: Emergence of an extended speech community (among the indigenous population) with the new language as second language

(The élite language has a prestige which the ordinary language of the majority lacks).

Phase 3: Increasing significance of the demographic factor, with the emergence of specifically local patterns of shift resulting from increasing demographic pressure during the course of a further extension

(Language shift involves processes of linguistic fusion, during the course of which the vanishing language of the majority leaves traces in the structures of the élite-induced language that comes to dominate).

Phase 4: Acceptance of the élite language as first language and abandonment of the former local native language

(Language shift is supported by a shift in attitude, with the élite language assuming the role of an identity marker for the majority).

The completion of the process of language shift with phase 4 marks the wholeness of what may be termed élite recruitment of language. The process of Indo-Europeanization that had started at Varna continued to unfold as a consequence of the migration of Indo-European tribes to the south, and the establishment of new local élites followed a pattern that repeated itself over and over again wherever Indo-Europeans migrated.

There is some documentary evidence from ancient Crete about the relationship of early Greeks and native Minoans in the second millennium BCE. The coming of Mycenaean Greeks to Crete was facilitated by the disastrous eruption of the volcano on the island of Thera (modern Santorini) in the Cycladic archipelago around 1610 BCE which caused a tsunami that destroyed the Minoan fleet on the northern coast of Crete. After the backbone of the Minoan

thalassocracy, their fleet, had been annihilated the Mycenaeans succeeded in occupying the northern part of Crete where they established themselves as the ruling élite over the native islanders. In the Linear B texts from the archives in the palaces of Knossos and Chania one can observe a distinction of personal names in two groups. One is the group of the “collectors”, the other that of the “shepherds”.

“If we compare the names of the ‘collectors’, men belonging to the ruling class with the exception of a few ..., are easily recognizable as Greek, the situation with the names of the ‘shepherds’, people from the social class of middle rank, is the opposite. More than half of them (200, *i.e.*, 57%) are without identification. A large number of them are very likely of non-Greek origin, born of the inhabitants of the pre-Greek population which continued to dwell in Crete together with the conquerors, the Mycenaean Greeks ...”<sup>92</sup>.

An ethnographic comparison with another example of élite recruitment in the context of stateless society may serve to illustrate more details of a process which, in the case of Pelasgian-Greek contacts, is shrouded in prehistory without surviving documentary sources. The spread of Germanic languages among Celtic tribes in the southeast of Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries CE provides a view on complex social interaction, with ethnic, cultural and linguistic features strongly overlapping.

When addressing the overlap of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic matrices in early medieval Britain one has to be aware of the problems posed by historical designations such as “Anglo-Saxon”. A closer inspection of the terminology in question suggests

“... that our modern usage of the term Anglo-Saxon is deeply flawed and ambiguous. The term Anglo-Saxon arose on the continent in the 8th century as a way of describing the Germanic inhabitants of Britain: The English Saxons as opposed to the Saxons still in Germany. In Britain itself, the terms Angli and Saxones were to some extent interchangeable, but were usually used to signify one or another subgroup by the Germanic inhabitants themselves, while the Britons and Irish regarded them all alike as Saxons (and still do). It was only in the 9th century that the compound term “Anglo-Saxon” was used within England, and this was soon replaced in the 10th century by the simple term English. Nevertheless, scholars today refer to the Anglo-Saxons in both a cultural and chronological sense to cover the Germanic inhabitants of Britain from the 5th century to the Norman conquest. This signifies a great deal more uniformity and ethnicity than actually existed at the time<sup>93</sup>.

When talking about fusion processes in Britain we have to deal with various ethnic processes. The process of fusion within the network of intertribal contacts of the invading Germanic tribes resulted in those Germanic tribes assuming a new identity (*i.e.*, from Angles and Saxons to Anglo-Saxon). The other fusion process concerns the intermingling of local Insular Celtic populations with the Germanic immigrants.

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<sup>92</sup> Petar Chr. Ilievski, *op.cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>93</sup> Donald Henson, *The origins of the Anglo-Saxons*, Hockwold-cum-Wilton, Norfolk (England): Anglo-Saxon Books, 2006, p. 35.

Roman rule in Britain ended with the withdrawal of the Roman army in 410 CE. The Roman administration and military no longer had the resources to cope with the instability caused by continuous raiding by Germanic pirates in the coastal areas of southeastern Britain. After the Romans departed, the indigenous Celts and the Romanized offspring of interethnic marriages between natives and Roman settlers were left to their own devices. The raids turned into waves of invasions of Germanic tribes that landed on the shore and moved further inland. A vacuum of political power existed for a time, which was gradually filled by Germanic élite groups that established themselves in the newly conquered territory<sup>94</sup>.

During a prolonged process that lasted from the fifth to the seventh centuries CE, the British (Insular Celts) gradually experienced a shift to the language of the élite. Since no detailed documentary evidence of the shift has survived, the dynamics of the shift can only be deduced from its result: complete assimilation. In the case of the region of Kent in the extreme southeast of Britain, experts believe a three-generation model of replacement of British speech by Germanic dialects is most likely<sup>95</sup>. According to this model, the language shift was completed by the mid-sixth century CE. In regions further inland and further north (*i.e.*, Wessex, Bernicia, Elmet), it seems probable that a time-span greater than three generations would have been required for the language shift to occur. In the case of Wessex and Bernicia, it is believed that the shift from Celtic to Germanic was completed in the seventh century CE; and in the case of Elmet, in the first half of the eighth century CE.

In the regions where early contact between Celts and Germanic tribes occurred, the number of British names for places and rivers is greater than in the areas that were conquered later by the Anglo-Saxon kings. Administration would have been more firmly under the control of the Anglo-Saxons in the border regions of Anglo-Saxon rule than in the regions in the east, where élite power initially functioned without the institutions of state organization.

“British villages would find themselves in contact with English speaking clergy, most likely English speaking estate officials, English speaking merchants and by this period English speech in such towns as preserved urban functions. Their situation would thus be different to their cousins in the east of Britain, in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, whose speech might leave more of an impact on place-names”<sup>96</sup>.

## OUTLOOK

The kaleidoscope of sample settings surveyed in the foregoing most likely illustrates the significance of cultural studies and their explanatory potential for the investigation of contact situations. It is no exaggeration to state that cultural studies

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<sup>94</sup> Peter Salway, *The Oxford illustrated history of Roman Britain*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 291–293.

<sup>95</sup> Donald Henson, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.



are a *conditio sine qua non* for the scope of interdisciplinary contextualization. So far, there is no curriculum at any university in any country which would provide guidance for students how to apply findings from cultural studies for the benefit of cross-discipline investigation. It remains in the responsibility of individual scholars to develop interdisciplinary methodology further.

It is important to shed light on the distant past the awareness of which was not lost but remains encapsulated in our cultural memory. We have to unlock it for a better understanding of our own roots, anchoring in the heritage of Old Europe. The significance of an approach to reactivate elements of an awareness of life experience of the past (associated with Old Europe), dormant in the unconscious, was vital for a famous philosopher whose world of ideas comprised the organic whole of life. This philosopher was Plato who draws on the cultural memory of highly knowledgeable intellectual women, at the oracle at Delphi (personified by the Pythia) and in the mystery cult at Eleusis. Those women still possessed much knowledge of the Old European heritage which they transferred to Plato's world of ideas<sup>97</sup>.

The earliest advanced culture in human history, Old Europe, deserves to be placed center stage, in order for this knowledge to enter the canon of education, of curriculums and schoolbooks for every new generation. The look into the past by contrasting the civilization of Old Europe with Indo-European cultures may stimulate the discussion about our present and it may inspire visions for our future.

Many visions for our future are short-lived because they lack essential ingredients for a balanced community life. Only the observance of fundamental values for social relations can guarantee prospects that last. When searching for fundamental values we are advised to observe the teachings of Old Europe. Mobilizing our cooperative spirit of communal solidarity will provide us with the means for constructing our future togetherness. For this end we have to activate a way of thinking that is dormant in our cultural memory, as an imprint of the spirit of Old Europe. What we have to engage in is "Re-thinking togetherness"<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> Harald Haarmann, *Platons Musen – Philosophie im Licht weiblicher Intellektualität*, Hildesheim, Zurich & New York: Olms, 2020b.

<sup>98</sup> LaBGC and Harald Haarmann, *Re-Thinking togetherness. Know. act. Now*, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2021.

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## ASPECTS FROM THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF ARCHPRIEST ZAHARIA MANU

Emanuil Ineoan<sup>99</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*The biography of archpriest Zaharia Manu marks the portrait of a Church servant, dedicated to his ministry, but also to certain large-scale construction works, his deeds, as well as his opinion maker personality, through the important influence he had among his parishers recommend him as an elite element of the Romanian Orthodox clergy, a reference and model of dedication and abnegation. His ability to confess his creed and to defend, without compromises, the believers living that time of great adversity under the two totalitarian regimes make the archpriest Manu an undesirable target for both the Horthy regime and the communist one.*

**Keywords:** Zaharia Manu, Dej, Romania, Horthy, Hungary.

With the arbitration in Wien, a large part of the Transylvanian region belonging to Romania was occupied by Hungary. In the surrendered land, a number of 2,603,589 persons were living, of whom, 1,304,898 were Romanians and 968,371 were Hungarians, together with other nationalities<sup>100</sup>. Under the omophorion of the only Orthodox hierarch in the occupied Transylvania, Nicolae Colan, 436 parishes remained, with 300 subsidiaries and 339,448 souls<sup>101</sup>. The Hungarian part presented only 228,800 Orthodox Romanians in the 1941-statistics, approximately 8.9% of the entire population of the occupied area<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Central National Historical Archives (hereinafter A.N.I.C.), *Fund Preşedinţia Consiliului de Miniştri [Council of Ministers Presidency Fund]*, File 37/1940, f. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Alexandru Moraru, *La răscruce de vremi o viaţă de om: Nicolae Colan, Episcopul Vadului Feleacului şi Clujului: 1936–1957: după documente, corespondenţă, însemnări, relatări, impresii, Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română a Vadului, Feleacului şi Clujului [A man's life at the crossroads: Nicolae Colan, Bishop of Vad, Feleac and Cluj: 1936–1957: after documents, correspondence, notes, accounts, impressions, Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj]*, Cluj-Napoca, 1989, p. 309.

<sup>102</sup> Balázs Ablonczy, *Transilvania reîntoarsă: 1940–1944 [Returned Transylvania: 1940–1944]*, Iaşi, European Institute Publishing House, 2014, p. 171.

Before 1940, these parishes belonged to the three Orthodox bishoprics: Maramureș 87 parishes and a subsidiary, Oradea 110 parishes and 46 subsidiaries and Cluj with 184 parishes and 42 subsidiaries, together with the 55 parishes that had belonged to the Archbishopric of Sibiu<sup>103</sup>. In 1942, there were only 186 priests left there, while 277 priests had taken refuge<sup>104</sup>.

According to the official Hungarian statistics of 1941, within the county and municipal administration, only 6.6% of the employees were Romanians, most of them holding small positions, as clerks or support staff<sup>105</sup>.

It should be noted that the canonic territory of the bishoprics did not overlap exactly over the occupied territory. Therefore, from the Eparchy of Cluj, in Romania, 201 parishes and 35 subsidiaries remained, accounting for 172,805 souls; from the Eparchy of Oradea, 210 parishes remained, amounting 175,171 souls. Besides the three eparchies of Cluj, Oradea, Maramureș, on the occupied territory, another 55 parishes and 211 subsidiaries were found, accounting for 29,692 souls, which belonged to the Archbishopric of Sibiu. The data has been taken from General Report of the Eparchy Council's meeting, of May 15, 1941<sup>106</sup>.

The relentless persecution against the Romanian Church was systematically and concentrically unleashed by all the organized and chaotic forces – army, gendarmerie, police, paramilitary organizations or unorganized bands and individuals from among the Hungarian population – as well as by the state authority in Budapest, by the media etc.

The Hencke-Rogeri Commission noted, in its report dated February 8, 1943, that of the 442 Orthodox parishes functioning in the occupied Transylvania before August 30, 1940, “not even half can be found today there”<sup>107</sup>.

The moment August 30, 1940 meant, for the Orthodox clergymen in the Transylvanian areas found under Hungarian occupation, a high-pressure situation, in which, they had to choose either to stay in their parish with their own parishioners and being, thus, as Orthodox priests, subject to very many risks from the new administration, or to leave for the free Romania, and rebuilding, practically, their life from scratch.

Hereinafter, we will address the life and activity of an Orthodox clergyman, Zaharia Manu, an archpriest. The events that took place in 1940 are captured in his reports to his hierarch, in a relevant manner for the degree of drama that this elite priest and archpriest had to overcome. His pastoral dignity and the spirit of sacrifice proven by this clergyman together with his administrative and missionary achievements, round out for us today a complex portrait of a man of the cloth, fully

<sup>103</sup> Archive of the Cluj Archbishopric, Report from 1941.

<sup>104</sup> Schematics of the Cluj Bishopric for year 1942.

<sup>105</sup> Balázs Ablonczy, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>106</sup> Alexandru Moraru, *op. cit.*, pp. 309–310.

<sup>107</sup> Vasile Pușcaș, *Dictatul de la Viena, Transilvania și relațiile româno-ungare (1940–1944)* [*The Vienna Dictatorship, Transylvania and Romanian-Hungarian relations (1940–1944)*], Cluj-Napoca, Ardelean School Publishing House, 2020, p. 280.



dedicated to the Orthodox mission, which has nothing to do with the typology of a clerical clerk who pursues, many times maybe, his own selfish interest.

### A FEW BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS

He was born in 1882 in Boiereni, Maramureș. He graduated the Andreian Theological Institute of Sibiu in 1905. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1906, he was consecrated in Sibiu by the metropolitan Ioan Meșianu, and on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1907, he was appointed priest in the parish of Bobâlna, Cluj County. Between 1911 and 1912, the priest Zaharia Manu built in Bobâlna, with the support of the parishoners and of the Romanian community from Cleveland – Ohio, the church dedicated to the Holy Trinity, a project carried out by architect Ioan Berindean, and which reenacted, to a scale of 1/3, the metropolitan cathedral in Sibiu. The sanctification of the church took place on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1926, being performed by Ioan Stroia, the bishop of the Army. In April 1921, the priest Zaharia Manu was appointed archpriest of the Tg. Lăpuș Deanery, where he would carry out his mission until 1929. In April 1929, the priest Zaharia Manu was transferred to Parish I of Dej, being appointed also archpriest of Dej, a position he held until 1949<sup>108</sup>.

### DURING THE HORTHYST OCCUPATION OF NORTH-WEST TRANSYLVANIA

Along with the Horthyst occupation that occurred after August 30, 1940, the entire Orthodox Deanery of Dej fell under the annexed area, which meant, for the archpriest Manu, but also for the other Orthodox clergymen, the beginning of a difficult period, when many of the altar servants were subject to various pressures. All these heinous acts manifested by the new Hungarian authorities restricted the religious freedom of the Orthodox Romanians, their priests being considered dangerous for the new regime. Implicitly, the person of archpriest Zaharia Manu was considered *persona non grata* by the officials. About the events that occurred after August 30, 1940, in the area of Dej, a letter belonging to archpriest Zaharia Manu bears witness, addressed to the metropolitan of Ardeal, Nicolae Bălan from Sibiu, the message being written on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940:

“I was arrested by the Hungarian authorities on October 21<sup>st</sup>, this current year, together with other 10 Orthodox priests and 12 greco-catholic priests from the county and we were admitted to the correction institute of Gherla.

Getting acutely ill under the harsh regime inside the prison, I was released. At my insistence of being sent to the hospital or to be subject to house arrest, I was informed

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<sup>108</sup> Augustin Pădurean and Teofil Herineanu, *Protopopiatul Ortodox, Român Dej-Monografie, [Romanian Orthodox Deanery of Dej-Monography]*, Cluj-Napoca, Renaissance Publishing House, 2010, p. 22.

that if I choose the Romanian citizenship, I would be set free, after I refused to make that choice and seeing that my illness only got worse to such an extent that I was succumbing without a medical treatment, they set me free. [...] Those who were released were informed that they had 15 days to leave. My children are all in Romania, five in all, of whom, 2 boys are not done yet with their university studies. I was determined not to leave, I was trying to convince and to encourage my priests who wanted to leave not to leave their places, which I managed to succeed, in part.

Now, after my arrest, many young and old priests are preparing to leave because they are horrified by the camp and advise me to leave as well. Of the 34 priests I have in my deanery, 18 are still with their parishes, of whom, according to the information I have, 6 are preparing to leave and therefore only 12, approximately, remain and they must cover the 40 parishes I have.

The Hungarian doctor attending me advises me to leave, because the atmosphere and the current against me are as such, since I have established 12 new parishes through the returning of the people to the Orthodox belief from among the congregation, starting with 1929 and in this parishes, I built beautiful churches. In Beclean, I expropriated a piece of land for the construction of a church in the heart of count Bethlen's park, in Tg. Lăpuș, where I was an archpriest for 8 years, I bought and expropriated a big house with fir trees planted on its land [...] from Eszterhazy, and in Dej, in spite of the great difficulties I had to overcome, put in my way by the congregation and the Hungarians, I won in the heart of the city a big territory for the cathedral. So, I don't have to leave.

I cannot go on hiding without knowing where I might be placed, because the hardship of such an exile I cannot bear and if I succumb during the retreat, I would only provide the new rulers with a counter-argument. [...]

I kindly ask you though not to be considered a duty deserter or a hireling, who leaves his flock, but a person who suspends his activity here, in order to resume it from where I leave it, when the time comes and with the help of our good Lord"<sup>109</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup> „Am fost arestat de stăpânirea ungurească în ziua de 21 octombrie a.c. dimpreună cu 10 preoți ortodocși și 12 uniți din județ și am fost internați în institutul corector din Gherla.

Îmbolnăvindu-mă acut în urma regimului aspru din închisoare am fost eliberat. La insistențele mele de a fi trimis în spital ori să mi se fixeze un domiciliu forțat mi s-a pus în vedere că dacă optez pentru cetățenia română atunci mă eliberează, după ce eu n-am vrut să optez și văzând că boala mi se agravează în măsură de a succomba fără tratament medical m-au pus pe picior liber. [...] Celor puși în libertate li se pune în vedere ca în termen de 15 zile să plece. Copiii mei toți sunt în România, cinci la număr, dintre cari 2 băieți încă nu sunt terminați cu studiile universitare. Eram hotărât să nu plec, pe preoții mei cari voiau să plece încercam să-i conving și îmbărbătez să nu-și părăsească locul, ceea ce în parte mi-a succes.

Acum după arestarea mea mulți preoți tineri și bătrâni se pregătesc să plece de groaza lagărului și mă sfătuiesc să plec și eu. Din 34 preoți câți am în protopopiat sunt la parohii 18 dintre cari după informațiile ce le am se pregătesc 6 să plece, deci mai rămân vreo 12 dacă rămân și aceștia pentru 40 parohii câte am.

Doctorul ungar care mă tratează mă sfătuiește să plec, căci așa e atmosfera și curentul față de mine, care am înființat 12 parohii noi prin reveniri la ortodoxie de la uniți începând din anul 1929 în cari parohii am ridicat biserici frumoase. În Beclean am expropriat teren pentru construcție de biserică în inima parcului contelui Bethlen, în Tg. Lăpuș, unde încă am fost protopop 8 ani am cumpărat și expropriat o casă mare cu teren plantat cu brazi [...] de la Eszterhazy, iar în Dej cu mari dificultăți ce

As we can see from the above testimony, but also from his missionary-administrative achievements, Zaharia Manu was one of the elite priests of the Orthodox clergy, his voice was listened to, he was a respected figure, his moral authority before the community he was shepherding was a special one. All these qualities were sketching the strong profile of a priest with an impact among his parishioners. The above-mentioned qualities and the popularity of archpriest Manu were already disturbing when the regime changed in 1940, his mere presence in Dej becoming undesirable to the new Horthyst authorities, which were animated by the plan of purging the Romanians' community leaders. As it happened in other similar typology cases, the Hungarian officials pressured him to take the decision to emigrate to Romania. His leaving for Romania was not an easy act, resulting from a selfish calculation, on the contrary, he was concerned that his gesture of leaving could be considered a defeatist one, as he himself states:

"I kindly ask you though not to be considered a duty deserter or a hireling, who leaves his flock, but a person who suspends his activity here, in order to resume it from where I leave it, when the time comes and with the help of our good Lord"<sup>110</sup>.

Archpriest Manu was aware that his failure in Romania, including his death, considering his health condition, could have been speculated by the Hungarian authorities and used as a means of propaganda against the Romanians still under occupation, who were hoping for a liberating act from Bucharest.

Even the documents of the Hencke-Rogeri Commission stated the following: "The decision to leave, implying the loss of any wealth, that native land on which they lived for generations, must have certainly been rather serious for most of the Romanian emigrants and might have been made only when they thought they had no other escape possibility"<sup>111</sup>.

## DURING THE COMMUNIST REGIME

After the Horthyst occupation was over and after North-West Transylvania's liberation, the archpriest Zaharia Manu returns to Dej from his refuge in Sibiu, where he resumes his activity as head of the Orthodox deanery and shepherd of his

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mi le-au pus în cale uniții și cu ungerii am câștigat în inima orașului un teritor mare pentru catedrală. Deci eu trebuie să plec.

Eu nu pot pleca în pribegie fără să știu unde voi putea fi plasat, căci greutățile pribegiei eu nu le pot suporta și dacă aș sucomba în refugiu aș pune la îndemâna noii stăpâniri un contra argument. [...]

Vă rog însă să nu fiu considerat dezertor de la datorie și nici un năimit, care-și lasă turma ci ca unul care îmi întrerup aici activitatea pentru ca la vremea sa cu ajutorul bunului Dumnezeu să o reîncep de unde am lăsat-o." in *Archive of the Sibiu Archbishopric*, 12437, III 553 940.

<sup>110</sup> „Vă rog însă să nu fiu considerat dezertor de la datorie și nici un năimit, care-și lasă turma ci ca unul care îmi întrerup aici activitatea pentru ca la vremea sa cu ajutorul bunului Dumnezeu să o reîncep de unde am lăsat-o." in *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Vasile Pușcaș, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

parish in the center of the town of Dej. Following a short period of apparent freedom, along with the full establishment of the communist regime in 1948, priest Zaharia Manu moves into a new period of persecutions. The archpriest of Dej quickly becomes a goal of the Communist Securitate because his critical positions against the new regime become inconvenient to the totalitarian system that wanted the rapid annihilation of any opposition. In an informative note of August 1948, a sermon with „hostile content” was reported, which was uttered on the eve of the feast Dormition of the Mother of God:

“At the end of the Liturgy, he uttered a sermon through which he said to those present, under no circumstance, to depart from the church and not to listen to those who try to destroy the church, because those who don’t believe in God, will not succeed at destroying the Church and instead the Church will destroy them”<sup>112</sup>.

Priest Zaharia Manu had a similar position in March 1949, on the occasion of a meeting of the Orthodox and the reformed priests from Dej. From the informative note, we find out that the main topic of discussion was the surrender of the parish lands to the state, because of the taxes that were impossible to pay. The attitude of father Manu was trenchant, advocating for keeping the land heritage of the Church, not believing that they should just give it away “voluntarily”:

“You don’t realize the times we are living and you don’t see that the priests are no longer paid by the state and you want to turn over the land to the state instead of having the state come over and take it, and until then we could live from the income provided by such land”<sup>113</sup>.

These critical positions against the communist regime, along with his membership of the National Liberal Party during the interwar period turned priest Zaharia Manu into an “enemy of the people”, being arrested on August 15, 1952, pursuant to order 490 of the Ministry of the Interior, which targeted all those holding leading position within the historical parties. The information on his two-month detention is very little. In an informative note of 1957, the agent, who was imprisoned together with father Manu, mentioned that he “spoke against the Romanian Popular Republic while in custody”<sup>114</sup>.

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<sup>112</sup> „La sfârșitul Liturghiei a ținut o predică prin care spunea celor prezenți ca nu cumva să se îndepărteze de biserică și să nu asculte celor ce caută să distrugă biserica, pentru că cei ce nu au Dumnezeu, nu vor reuși să distrugă Biserica, ci Biserica îi va distruge pe ei.” in Ierom. Grigorie Benea (coordonator), Andreea Dăncilă Ineoan, Emanuil Ineoan, Andreea Opreș, Adrian Nicolae Petcu, Dorin Sas, Dragoș Ursu, *Preoți din Arhiepiscopia Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului în temnițele comuniste, [Priests from the Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj in communist prisons]*, Cluj-Napoca, Renaissance Publishing House, 2017, p. 211, apud National Council for the Study of Security Archives (Archives hereinafter CNSAS), Information Fund, File 376031.

<sup>113</sup> „Nu vă dați seama în ce timpuri trăim și nu vedeți că preoții nu mai sunt plătiți de stat și vreți să predați pământul statului în loc să vină statul să-l ia, iar până atunci să putem trăi din veniturile pământului.” in Ierom. Grigorie Benea (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 212, apud National Council for the Study of Security Archives (CNSAS), Information Fund, File 376032.

<sup>114</sup> Ierom. Grigorie Benea, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

After being released from prison, father Zaharia Manu returns to his parish Dej I, where he served until his retirement in 1962. In March 1957, the Securitate filed, pursuant to order 70 of the Ministry of the Interior, a new surveillance proceeding on the father's name, in order to verify if he carries on with his „hostile” activity<sup>115</sup>. Father Zaharia Manu passed away on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1972. He also had an intense publishing activity in the pages of the magazines “Telegraful Român” – The End of the World according to the Holy Scripture, The Redemption through Christ, The Biblical Solar System, the Days of the Creation, the Day our Lord was Born, A Night in Nisan, and “Revista Teologică” – The Deluge in Tradition and the Holy Scripture, The Organization of the Presbiterial Conferences, The Moral of the Man under the Influence of the War, Christmas Evening Thoughts. Likewise, he was awarded the medal The Reward for the Work conducted for the Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> class, on May 12, 1922, and the order Coroana României (Romania's Crown), as Knight, on December 30, 1922<sup>116</sup>.

The biography of archpriest Zaharia Manu marks the portrait of a Church servant, dedicated to his ministry, but also to certain large-scale construction works, his deeds, as well as his opinion maker personality, through the important influence he had among his parishers recommend him as an elite element of the Romanian Orthodox clergy, a reference and model of dedication and abnegation. His ability to confess his creed and to defend, without compromises, the believers living that time of great adversity under the two totalitarian regimes make the archpriest Manu an undesirable target for both the Horthyst regime and the communist one.

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Augustin Pădurean and Herineanu Teofil, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

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## CAPTAIN ILIE BIRT FROM BRASOV: IDEAS AND WAYS OF ACTION TO PRESERVE ROMANIAN IDENTITY IN 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TRANSYLVANIA

George Damian Mocanu<sup>117</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*Romanians in Transylvania used the connection to the Austrian Empire during the 18th century to promote their national identity through the Greek-Catholic Church. The Greek-Catholic Romanian intellectuals of the Enlightenment come to mind when it comes to the preservation of the Romanian national identity in Transylvania, but other means were taken into considerations by the Romanians who maintained the Greek-Orthodox confessions. In the following article we will analyze the methods employed by the Greek-Orthodox Romanians of Braşov in order to preserve their national identity when confronted by the Saxon authorities of the city.*

**Keywords:** Braşov, Romanian national identity, Captain Ilie Birt, Transylvania.

Captain Ilie Birt left us the cross in the Unirii Square in Brasov, across the street from St. Nicholas Church and the cross installed in front of his house. Thirty years ago, the County Museum of History also exhibited the captain's weapons: a sword, a pair of pistols and a rifle, most probably confiscated by the Saxon authorities. Unfortunately, a complete biography of him is missing, but a review of published documents and accounts of Ilie Birt allows us to reconstruct the ways in which this picturesque historical figure took action to preserve the national identity of the Romanians of Braşov.

### SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL EXCURSION

Born in 1698 or 1706, as the son of a cattle herder, Ilie Birt enjoyed a full life until 29 December 1786. He was married to Neacşa, daughter of the merchant Vasile Găurincă, with whom he had 8 children, 6 boys and 2 girls. He could write in Romanian and knew at least German, Hungarian, Turkish and Greek in addition

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to Romanian. For half a century he was a serious nuisance to the Saxon authorities of Brasov, who called him “the head of all the naughty Vlachs in the district”<sup>118</sup>.

Ilie Birt entered the historical accounts through an investigation in 1733 when he was accused of smuggling mercury (a substance used at the time for illegal gold mining). He was acquitted of all charges, and in the documents from this investigation he appears as a merchant with connections to the Greek Company from Braşov. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ilie Birt appears in almost all documents referring to the Romanians of Brasov, from 1735 he was a juror of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Brasov until the end of his life.

### ABILITY TO USE VIOLENCE

One of the things that frightened the Saxons of Braşov was the request of the Romanians to be enlisted in the army. The idea had been circulating for some time in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>119</sup>, but Ilie Birt managed to put it into practice. It is not clear how he persuaded the Austrian Colonel Springer to enlist him as a hussar and how he obtained the rank of Rottmeister of cavalry (as it appears in official documents, the equivalent of a platoon or squadron commander, Ilie Birt permanently called himself a captain, but the rank itself is not important). What is certain is that the Austrian military authorities permanently recognized his rank and his participation in combat, issuing several documents confirming his claims and conferring a number of privileges: these diplomas were issued by Count Francisc Vallis in 1737, Prince Lobkowitz in 1738, Count Platz in 1747 and Count Traum in 1748<sup>120</sup>. On the other hand, the Saxons constantly tried to deny his military rank and to deny him the exercise of the privileges he had obtained.

Beyond his military career, Ilie Birt was a man ready to use violence in extreme situations. In 1736, during the confessional conflict within the Romanian community of Brasov, Ilie Birt was the one who settled the dispute. The Saxon authorities of Brasov had been trying for some time to get the Romanians of the city out of submission to the Orthodox Diocese of Râmnic in Wallachia, and for this purpose they used the priest Teodor Băran, who was appointed protopope by the authorities of Brasov (the Magistrate<sup>121</sup>). In 1738, after the priest Radu Tempea read in the church of Saint Nicholas the letter of bannishment of Teodor Băran issued by the Orthodox Archbishop of Belgrade, it was Ilie Birt who forcibly

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<sup>118</sup> Sterie Stinghe, *Contribuţiuni la cunoaşterea trecutului românilor din Şcheii Braşovului* [*Contributions to the Knowledge of the Past of the Romanians from Braşov*], Bucharest, 1945, pp. 19–21.

<sup>119</sup> Aurel Mureşianu, “Un împiedecător al avântului naţional al românilor braşoveni de acum 200 de ani: popa Teodor Baran”, [*A hindrance in the path of national progress of Romanians in Braşov 200 years ago: the priest Teodor Baran*] in *Ţara Bârsei*, nr. 3, May–June 1930, pp. 204–217.

<sup>120</sup> Sterie Stinghe, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>121</sup> The name Magistrate of Brasov refers to the city's leadership exercised by a senate made up of 18 members presided over by the mayor during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



removed Teodor Băran from the church<sup>122</sup>. Another testimony to Ilie Birt's capacity for violence comes from the year 1751, when the Magistrate tried to demolish the cross erected by Ilie Birt in front of his house – at that time he hit the representatives of the Magistrate and threatened to shoot them “like dogs” if they dared to touch that cross<sup>123</sup>. It should be stressed that Ilie Birt's documented violent actions are not of a criminal nature, but are related to restoring order (driving out of the church the banished priest Teodor Băran) or defending a right (protecting the cross erected in front of his house). Even so, the Saxon authorities of Brasov used these episodes to portray Captain Ilie Birt as a man of irrational violence, dangerous and disturbing the peace.

The Saxon priest Thomas Tartler gave in his diary a very unflattering account of the company commanded by Captain Ilie Birt:

“1737 October 24–2 o'clock noon the Hussars of the company commanded by Captain Ilie Birt brought 2 flags and 30 Turkish prisoners. They must have been trapped for a long time in Câmpulung and because the imperial hussars had to retreat, they were brought to Braşov. They also brought a Pasha. The Hussars in this company are all sorts of poor people and look so ragged that a Democrite would have had plenty to laugh at, some had rifles without a flint and a cock, others swords without a hilt and a few dusty horses. These Hussars also brought a few heads of Turks which they placed over the gate. On the first night died a Turkish prisoner with a head wound. The Turks brought here were imprisoned in the bastion of the Monastery Gate. These Hussars can rightly be called a band of robbers, they robbed in Câmpulung horses, pepper, spices and other things which they sold cheaply here in Blumăna”<sup>124</sup>.

This unflattering description contradicts the letters attesting to Ilie Birt's military exploits issued by the Austrian army generals mentioned above.

In 1748 the Magistrate of Brasov tried to investigate the military background of Captain Ilie Birt. A total of three witnesses were heard: two who only knew Ilie Birt, without having been part of the company he commanded, the third a real veteran. The first two gave answers to the magistrate's liking, confirming from hearsay the accusations that Ilie Birt was not in fact part of the Austrian army and that he was just a bandit. The third witness (Şerban Făgărăşanul), however, confirmed that Ilie Birt was in charge of arming Romanian volunteers, served under General Gylanyi and participated in the battle of Pitesti in 1737, where he received a head wound<sup>125</sup>. Eventually, this investigation was abandoned and

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<sup>122</sup> George Michael Gottlieb von Hermann, *Das Alte und Neue Kronstadt [The Old and New Kronstadt]*, Hermannstadt, 1883, p. 196.

<sup>123</sup> Johannes Teutsch, *Nachlese [Gleanings]*, Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt IV [Sources on the History of the City of Kronstadt], p. 455.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Tartler, *Diarium [Journal]*, in Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt VII [Sources on the History of the City of Kronstadt], p. 198.

<sup>125</sup> Sterie Stinghe, *op. cit.*, doc. 7.

remained at an incipient stage, without the Magistrate of Braşov ever invoking it in the subsequent conflicts with Captain Ilie Birt.

### **PUBLIC PRESENCE – MONUMENTS AS POLITICAL ACTION**

The Braşov Saxons did their best to remove from the public space the monuments that attested the Romanian presence. For example, after the battle of Brasov in 1611 with Szekely Moses, the prince Radu Şerban erected a cross in front of the fortress with a prayer inscribed on it, in memory of the soldiers who had fallen in battle. Contemporary to the events, Paul Sutoris described the cross erected in 1611 as follows:

“Şerban erected a beautiful wooden cross adorned in beautiful colours on which beautiful words were written in Wallachian about those buried”<sup>126</sup>.

The cross was removed by the Saxon authorities after several decades. The reason is clearly stated in one of the documents opposing the erection of Captain Ilie Birt’s trophies: the Romanians regard the crosses as boundary markers and must be removed before the Romanians can make territorial claims.

In 1714, Austrian Catholic soldiers erected a cross on Mount Tâmpa overlooking Brasov, then inhabited mainly by Lutheran Saxons. Following the anti-Austrian rebellion of 1688, Brasov was under an Austrian military governor (some of these generals indulged in real abuses against the Saxons, for example in 1717 General Schramm banned the traditional announcement of the time by a trumpet on the grounds that his parrot was bothered by the sounds of the trumpet) so no complaints were registered against the cross erected by the Austrians. But the story of the crosses erected by Romanians in Braşov was different, especially those erected by Captain Ilie Birt.

From the year 1738 a complaint of Ilie Birt to the Governor of Transylvania has been preserved, in which he accused the Magistrate of Brasov of having demolished an Orthodox cross erected by the Romanians on Mount Tâmpa at an unspecified earlier date and of having demolished an Orthodox cross erected near the church of Bod<sup>127</sup>. Most probably, before 1738 the Romanians followed the example of the Austrian soldiers and installed a cross on Mount Tâmpa, and the demolition of this cross did not calmed Captain Ilie Birt who continued to erect crosses in the town of Braşov.

In the same year that he announced the destruction of the cross on Tâmpa, Ilie Birt erected a stone cross in front of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Brasov,

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<sup>126</sup> Chronik des Paul, *Sutoris [Chronicle of Paul Sutoris]*, Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt IV [Sources on the History of the City of Kronstadt], p. 20.

<sup>127</sup> Candid Muşlea, *Biserica Sfântul Nicolae din Şcheii Braşovului [The Church of Saint Nicholas of Braşov]*, vol. II, Braşov, 1946, p. 25.

protected by four brick pillars and with a vaulted roof, painted on the inside – which exists to this day. In 1780 Captain Ilie Birt took care of the renovation of this small Orthodox chapel before his death. Strangely enough the Magistrate did not object to this cross.

In 1748, Captain Ilie Birt continued his work and erected a new cross at the corner of his house in the Șchei district. A flood caused by the rains led to the collapse of this cross and when he rebuilt it in 1751 Captain Ilie Birt faced opposition from the Magistrate who tried to demolish it. After a long legal battle that lasted until 1761, the cross near Captain Ilie Birt's house received the approval of the Magistrate of Brasov.

In 1754, a large wooden Orthodox cross was mysteriously installed during the night in front of the Catherine Gate, which secured the entrance to the city from the Romanian quarter. The Saxon chronicler Johannes Teutsch notes in October 1754 what happened to this cross:

“About this time the Vlachs erected a large wooden cross in front of the Upper Gate without the knowledge of the Magistrate. The next night one of its arms was broken, so that from a distance it looked like gallows”<sup>128</sup>.

Although this cross was not officially attributed to him, Ilie Birt accused several Saxons of desecrating a religious symbol, but the Magistrate did not open an investigation into the case, preferring to let it pass into oblivion. The remains of this cross were removed in 1761.

In 1755, the Magistrate accused Ilie Birt of inciting the gypsies to erect a large wooden cross in the cemetery they used at the foot of Mount Tâmpa, which was not authorized either and was eventually demolished.

The Saxon chronicler George M.G. von Hermann gives us the Magistrate's view of Ilie Birt's actions of erecting Orthodox crosses in Brasov:

“He did this not out of faith, because he could show his faith in the nearby Vallachian church, but to show that he was demonstrating his propriety rights over the land near his house”<sup>129</sup>.

The same argument is repeated in the official documents in this dispute, the Magistrate expressing the fear that the Romanian crosses could be interpreted in the unspecified future as boundary markers and used for possible territorial claims. It should also be pointed out that von Hermann considered the Romanians (along with other Saxon chroniclers) as foreigners, tolerated on the lands of Brasov, although the presence of Romanians is archaeologically attested before the arrival of the Saxons.

Ilie Birt's insistence on keeping to build Orthodox crosses in Brașov for almost half a century, between 1738 and 1780, indicates a programmatic approach,

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<sup>128</sup> Johannes Teutsch, *Nachlese [Gleanings]*, Quellen IV zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt [Sources on the History of the City of Kronstadt], p. 452.

<sup>129</sup> George Michael Gottlieb von Hermann, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

an intention to affirm Romanian Orthodox spirituality in the public space. The places chosen for the installation of the crosses (on Mount Tâmpa, in front of the city gate), the incitement of the gypsies to erect their own crosses, the use of violence when the crosses were endangered – all these indicate an assumed project of Ilie Birt to embellish the city of Braşov with elements of public architecture of Romanian inspiration.

### THE ROMANIAN SCHOOL

Another project in which we find Captain Ilie Birt is the construction of the Romanian school in the courtyard of St. Nicholas Church. In the spring of 1760, the Magistrate complained to the Transylvanian Government that the Romanians had demolished the old wooden school building in the courtyard of the Church of St. Nicholas and had begun the construction of a stone building<sup>130</sup>. The magistrate complains that the new building is much bigger than the previous one and will have two floors, and that the Romanians did not ask for approval for it. The reply came from Captain Ilie Birt who stated in a memorandum that the new building is erected on royal land, which rightfully belongs to Empress Maria Theresia, therefore the Magistrate of Braşov has no right to object.

On 11 August 1760 Empress Maria Theresia asked the Transylvanian governor Gabriel Bethlen to check the situation of the construction of the Romanian school in Braşov. The Magistrate of Braşov replied on 14 September 1760 stating that the building of the Romanian school was unsafe and that the land on which it was built belonged to the city and was not part of the royal land. In April 1761 the Saxons returned to the matter, claiming that the neighbors were opposed to the building of a school with two floors, the Romanian community reacted with a sworn testimony from the neighbors stating that they were not opposed to the new school. Captain Ilie Birt intervened with the commander of the Austrian troops in Transylvania, General Buccow, who was asked to intervene in support of the Romanians. On 13 April 1761 Empress Maria Theresia issued a decree asking the Magistrate of Braşov not to disturb or prevent the building of a school for the Romanians.

Throughout these administrative confrontations through complaints, memorandums and counter-memorandums, work on the erection of the new school building continued apace. The representatives of the Romanians from Braşov kept a strict record of the expenses: materials and labor cost 1290 florins, and the expenses for interventions on the powerful of the day amounted to 695 florins. Ilie Birt appears in the documents as having intervened personally in Sibiu twice to

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<sup>130</sup> Andrei Bârseanu, *Istoria şcoalelor centrale române greco-ortodoxe din Braşov [History of the Romanian Greek-Orthodox Central Schools in Braşov]*, Ciurcu&Comp., 1902, pp. 6–10.

obtain the governor's support for the Romanian school. The school building was ready, complete with roof, by the end of 1760, proof of the speed with which it was built; the main danger was the threat of the Magistrate of Braşov who did not want to accept the new building.

On 16 January 1781, Captain Ilie Birt ordered that a funeral service for Maria Theresia (who died on 29 November 1780) be held at St. Nicholas Church. Seven priests attended the service and a portrait of the Empress was displayed in the church, considered by the chronicler who remembers the event as "a merciful mother of ours"<sup>131</sup>, with good reason in regard to the Empress support for the Romanian school.

### **THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE SAXONS AND THE AUSTRIANS**

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ilie Birt practiced a risky balancing act between the Transylvanian Saxon authorities and the representatives of the Austrian Empire in order to maintain and promote the Romanian national identity. This was the general strategic line followed by the Romanians in Transylvania after the province became part of the Austrian Empire, the first to take this step were the representatives of the Orthodox clergy who accepted the union with the Catholic Church. The mechanism envisaged was to accept a compromise in favor of the Empire in exchange for economic, social and political freedoms. Such deals did not always work as they should have because of opposition from the Transylvanian political class, which was trying to preserve its previous privileges (the Hungarian nobility, the Saxon bourgeoisie and the Szekelys).

In the case of Ilie Birt, he managed to keep his Orthodox confession (along with the entire Romanian community in Brasov) because he chose another way to serve the Empire: military service. In all conflicts with the local authorities on matters of national identity, Captain Ilie Birt's final appeal is to the Austrian military authorities in Transylvania, who each time recognize his veteran status and support him in achieving his goals, whether it was the erection of Orthodox crosses in public spaces or the building of a school. Most of Ilie Birt's interventions with the imperial authorities concerned matters of community interest: apart from the crosses and the school, he also intervened in matters relating to the preservation of the Orthodox confession, the commercial and industrial rights of the Romanians of Braşov; from a personal point of view, he constantly strove to have the privileges conferred by his veteran status respected. In this case, too, he received the support of the Austrian military authorities: when the Braşov Saxons refused him the privilege of bringing wine from his vineyards in Wallachia, the Austrian army provided him with a guard of soldiers who accompanied Captain Ilie Birt's barrels of wine from the border to the gate of his house in Braşov.

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<sup>131</sup> Candid Muşlea, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

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## WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A CONSERVATIVE?

Radu Baltasiu<sup>132</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*What does it mean to be conservative (right-wing)? Here's the question of our day. A few considerations, from Nae Ionescu, Petre Țuțea and Roger Scruton. At least five coordinates define the conservative stance: nationhood-God, nuances not resentment, family-childhood-Holliday, the peasant and finally, the doctrinal clarity.*

**Keywords:** utility, God, morality, love, society, democracy, peasant.

### THE THREE FUNDAMENTALS

The conservative is fully aware he or she has something to prove of himself, to pay attention to his vocation – to multiply his gifts by serving the others.

The conservative is fully aware that his wording, speech, audible or written manifestations have a **moral utility** as a condition to be effective:

“... any viewpoint has the right to exist through the precision of its wording, through its moral utility. Otherwise, the viewpoint is insignificant”<sup>133</sup>.

In other words, words should be the path of accomplishments, according to St. Jon Chrysostom.

The third fundamental is **love, not interest**, as the basis for social interaction. Love is the basis of knowledge and doing-acting-creating things. The social fabric where this process is possible is called the community of love as a community of faith, which has two expressions: the Church and nationhood (with its smallest unit: the family). In searching for Truth within the community of love, we acquire the special *spiritual* quality of *foresight*, the basis of any good politics and governance.

From these three fundamentals, we can see the five axes around which we wove the conservative attitude/way of thinking/behaving.

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<sup>133</sup> „... orice punct de vedere are drept la existență prin precizia formulării, prin utilitatea lui morală. Altfel punctul de vedere este insignifiant.” in Petre Țuțea, *Între Dumnezeu și neamul meu [Between God and my nation]*, Bucharest, Anastasia Foundation, Graphic Art Publishing House, 1992, p. 59.

## THE FIVE COORDINATES OF BEING A CONSERVATIVE

Talking conservative about being a conservative roughly means the following:

1. Placing yourself, your personality, attitude toward everything, between your people – ethnic community and God: Being between God and your nation.

2. To be a man of nuances, a man of sacrifice and grace, not of resentment because you are a defender of life, which takes countless forms. So, defender of life and the freedom of the person are the same.

3. To protect the family and childhood, including the unborn, having the cult of the ancestors.

4. To value the village and to defend the peasant household, islands of clean and healthy economic and spiritual breath, and to integrate them into the whole economy.

5. To think doctrinally on a national and global scale *for* your country, not at the expense of your country, to look for the clarity of categorial thinking, overcoming the trifle and carry of personal opinions. (For example, do not confuse peasant and farmer, or between anarchy and totalitarianism, nationalism, and communism, etc.)

### 1. Being between Good and my nationhood

Few words about translating from Romanian.

The last four axes of being a conservative are mostly based on the first: Being between God and the nationhood. Strictly translating from Petre Țuțea's saying: "to move between God and nationhood"<sup>134</sup>. This implies the complex activity of thinking, doing, praying – whatever "is significant between the sky and the earth"<sup>135</sup> concludes Țuțea:

"I am being between God and the nation I belong to. Apart from these terms, I see nothing significant between the sky and earth"<sup>136</sup>.

In doing so, we reach other important drives:

- The mystic attitude,
- The anti-magic attitude,
- *Oikophilia* – love for the household (self-sustained family)
- Sacrifice
- The looking for the wholeness
- Shame
- The spiritual awareness (*trezvia*)

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<sup>134</sup> „mă mișc între Dumnezeu și neamul meu” in Petre Țuțea, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> „Mă mișc între Dumnezeu și neamul din care fac parte. În afară de acești termeni, nu văd nimic semnificativ între cer și pământ.” in *Ibid.*



### *The idea and the mystic attitude*

Idea means, in ancient Greek, the ability to see and to know. For Țutea, it is the only way to see the significant, that is, to have a grasp of what really matters<sup>137</sup>.

The idea is interlinked with the pursuit of wholeness and of spiritual awareness, if blessed with the mystic attitude – that is, the ability to contemplate. Only in contemplation, shows Schopenhauer, we see the wholeness of things, that is the beauty, the truth and the good.

The mystic attitude is defined by Nae Ionescu as follows, quoting from the forebears of Christianity: “I believe to know” (Anselm of Canterbury) and “I believe for it is absurd” (Tertullian).

To fully understand – that is, to grasp the significative, the wholeness of things, is to prove yourself spiritually awoke.

Spiritually awakening means that you shall not be easily diverted from reality (the significative) – this is the anti-magic attitude. You are a *religious educated* believer, not an easy prey for whatever is new, or falsely good: you know because you believe, remember?

Being a believer, having a sound thinking means that you can *sacrifice* yourself. Your job is not just *your job*, it is *your confession* to the world as a believer.

Sacrificing for the other and pursuing for the wholeness of things means, not only that you do not let down your fellow people, but you love and protect the scaffold of the wholeness: the family and its engine, the oikos – since the *oikophilia* – love of the familial framework.

Loving the other by sacrificing and confessing means changing the personal emphasis from the self-assertion towards piety, humility, and shame. If piety is the ability to listen and sacrifice to the other and to incorporate this listening into deeds, shame is one of the main checkers of persons’ integrity: you cannot look to the other as a means, but as being a whole person. Sacrifice and shame are two guarantors of *liberty*, the product of daily conduct under their umbrella.

## **2. To be a man of nuances, not of resentment**

Perceiving nuances is an ability. Resentment is an inability; it is caused by the over exposure to the various ideologies that deny the other the right to think for himself. If the nuances are the product of the *idea*, resentment is the byproduct of the excessive ideologization of reality. The men of nuances’ joy are to see the other free. Resentment strives to constrain people to fixed lines of “guidance”. The highest level of perceiving nuances is *grace* while the lowest is *resentment* that incites to hate and crime and elicits *disgust* and *horror* in the man of nuances.

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<sup>137</sup> Platon, *Opere V, Republica*, edited by Constantin Noica and Petru Creția, notes by Andrei Cornea, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1986, p. 498.

The conservative spirit is about nuances, for it understands that life comes through infinite forms. Once recognizing it, the conservative spirit agrees that the only way to fully understanding of the world is through contemplation (remember faith?).

The ability to think of nuances comes from *passion* – the essence of the beautiful man, a human type present only in Eastern Europe, since only here humanity suffered from the worst of ideologies – communism.

To be a man of nuances is to respect the other, nature and to strive being a chevalier able to preserve the Lady's Cult, without which there is no beauty in interpersonal relationships.

Nuances imply *grace*. Grace is a precise and beautiful behavior (Schopenhauer).

“The grace consists in the fact that any movement and position are executed as easily, adequately, and comfortably as possible, being therefore the absolutely appropriate expression of his intention or act of will, without anything superfluous, which would prove to be an inopportune occupation and meaningless... and without any insufficiency to give it the rigidity of a wood. Grace presupposes as a condition of a just symmetry of all components and a regular and harmonious physical conformation because only thanks to them full lightness is possible ...”<sup>138</sup>.

Grace is also *providence* (Nae Ionescu):

“The act of salvation is an act of grace, of mercy from God, on the one hand; and on the other, an act of individual initiative”<sup>139</sup>.

### **3. Family and childhood. The purity of childhood and the village. The school**

Being a man of nuances implies the ability to follow the chivalry and the Lady's cult, with all their constellation of grace, manliness, courtship, loyalty, sacrifice, fraternal and agape like love. That is, the ability to be a man or a woman. The scope on being a man and a woman, for being a knight or a lady, is *family*. In this societal reactor (the family), man and woman are *transformed* into another *one*, body and soul. The family body is made of a household of the sexually pacified bodies, and the soul of the family is its relentless pursuit of life – the tamed eros is becoming Logos.

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<sup>138</sup> „[G]rația constă în faptul că orice mișcare și poziție sunt executate cât se poate de ușor, de adecvat și de comod, fiind prin urmare expresia absolut corespunzătoare a intenției sale sau a actului de voință, fără nimic de prisos, care să vădească a fi o îndeletnicire inoportună și fără sens ...și fără vreo insuficiență care să-i dea rigiditatea unui lemn. Grația presupune drept condiție o justă simetrie a tuturor componentelor și o conformație fizică regulată și armonică deoarece numai datorită acestora este posibilă deplina lejeritate .... ” in Arthur Schopenhauer, *Lumea ca voință și reprezentare [The world as will and representation]*, vol. I, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2019, translation and glossary by Radu Gabriel Părvu, pp. 264–265.

<sup>139</sup> „Actul mântuirii este un act de grație, de îndurare din partea lui Dumnezeu, pe de o parte; iar pe de alta, un act de inițiativă individuală.” in Nae Ionescu, *Teologia. Integrala publicisticii religioase [Theology. The full text of religious publishing]*, edition, introduction and notes by Dora Mezdrea, Sibiu, Deisis Publishing House, 2003, p. 53.

Family implies purity, that is searching for and preserving the unseen truth between its members. The most palpable truth is the child, the very incarnation of purity, joy, sacrifice, and hope. The family and the child are the products of the *unseen*, where from the Truth is coming. In the early days, the village, was the center of all of these<sup>140</sup>. Holidays are expressions of metaphysical reality, too, out of which there is no social harmony.

The family is the bearer of other great metaphysical realities: the Holiday and childhood. The Holiday, a form of the sacred takes, is the total organizer of the existence<sup>141</sup>, provided it is lived communally and by the Great Tradition (“Predania”). The child and the peasant, writes Băncilă, are the only human formulas that fully live the connection with the unseen:

“The child likes nature, lives the divine, gives himself, rejoices. Then, another good circumstance is the psychology of the teacher when he was not badly influenced. Most teachers are sons of peasants. But the peasant lives the Holiday! Nowhere is the Holiday more alive than in the world of children and in the peasant patriarchal world”<sup>142</sup>.

This conception of reality puts a serious emphasis on the spiritual aspect of schooling. Schooling is not for making strong individualities, but strong complete personalities – the Eliade’s *l’homme total* – centered around vocation, as a gift to be fulfilled. *L’homme total* vs. the sexualized man is the distinction between the person vs. individual-made-of-body-parts-and-some-interests (if any).

Eco-friendliness is a byproduct of revering the unborn and the ancestors. Being a conservative is also about respecting nature. Family is not only about the husband and wife and their children. It is about the past from which the spiritual techniques of togetherness are coming and their finality – the unborn. Roger Scruton:

“There is one overwhelming reason for the degradation of the environment, and that is human appetite. In the wealthier parts of the world people are too many, too mobile, too eager to gratify their wake, too ready, in the jargon of economics, to externalize their costs. Most of our environmental problems are special cases of this general problem. And the problem can be more simply described as the triumph of desire over restraint. It can be solved only when restraint prevails over desire, ... when people have re-learned the habit of sacrifice. For what do people make sacrifices? For the things they love. And when do these do these sacrifices benefit the unborn? When they are made for the dead”<sup>143</sup>.

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<sup>140</sup> See:

1. Bernea Ernest, *Spațiu, timp și cauzalitate la poporul roman [Space, Time and Causality in the Romanian People]*, Second revised edition, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2005.

2. Vasile Băncilă, *Duhul Sărbătorii [The Spirit of Celebration]*, edited edition [and Preface] by Ileana Băncilă, Bucharest, Anastasia Publishing House, 1996.

<sup>141</sup> Vasile Băncilă, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>142</sup> „Copilului îi place natura, trăiește divinul, se dăruiește, jubilează. Pe urmă, altă împrejurare bună e psihologia învățătorului, atunci când n-a fost rău influențat. Cei mai mulți învățători sunt fii de țărani. Dar țăranul trăiește sărbătoarea! Niciăieri sărbătoarea nu e mai vie decât în lumea copiilor și în lumea patriarhală țărănească.” in *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>143</sup> Roger Scruton, *A political philosophy. Arguments for conservatism*, Bloomsbury, Dublin, 2006 – first edition, 2019, pp. 36–37.

#### 4. The peasant treasure

The peasant and the village are the only known “civilized” solutions for a sustainable society (including its economy). Ecofriendly and more important, childhood friendly, the peasant and its Anthropos – called “village” – are one of the rarest resources Romania still has and must draw upon for its revival. The peasant and the village are functioning according to consumption as needed, where need is different from pleasure. “The engine” behind is the unity between the people’s personality and sacrality:

“Always here and beyond, visible and invisible, time and eternity. The permanent presence of these terms in the human spirit prevents the overflow of the useful and the pleasant over the real ... In the real order, the useful is not confused with the necessary, the useful belonging to the ‘profane’ and the necessary to the ‘sacred’...”<sup>144</sup>.

**What is a peasant?** The peasant is the main social actor of the village. From an economic viewpoint called “subsistence economy”. The subsistence economy is an economy as needed, in the sense that the peasant is only interested in the surplus insofar as he seeks to spend the winter or participate in the small exchange of compensation (food for clothes, for example, of artisans or merchants in the city). In this sense, insofar as he still has knowledge and equipment, **the peasant can procure for himself to a large extent the basic necessities**, for living, from his own household, or through small local trade, with other peasants. We are talking about the primary division of labor, between farmers, animal breeders and craftspersons. From an anthropological perspective, the peasant is the prototype of *homo religiosus*, the inventor of agriculture with direct access to the truth revealed through faith. This complex constellation is called by Eliade *cosmic Christianity*, in the sense that nothing is accidental in the peasant’s household, in the wholeness of the village, where each is in his nature, in accordance with its purposes, with the spirit of the holiday (Băncilă). For the peasant, every gesture on earth has a correspondent in Heaven (Bernea). It is what we mean by transfiguration or *imitatio Christi*.

Being the last true rejuvenator of society (demographically and through the function of the Holiday), the village is the moral lung of the country. Romania still has about 13,500 villages, grouped into about 2,600 communes<sup>145</sup>. The number of cities in 2001 was about 265.

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<sup>144</sup> „Mereu aici și dincolo, vizibil și invizibil, timp și eternitate. Prezența permanentă a acestor termeni în spiritul omului împiedică revărsarea utilului și plăcutului peste real ... În ordinea reală nu se confundă utilul cu necesarul, utilul ținând de «profan», iar necesarul de «sacru» ...” in Mircea Eliade apud Petre Țuțea, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>145</sup> \*\*\*, The Communes of Romania, in *Comune din România*, Available at: <http://comuna.info/>, Accessed on February 12, 2021, and LAW no. 351 of July 6, 2001 on the approval of the National Spatial Planning Plan – Section IV – Network of localities), published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 408 of July 24, 2011, Hierarchy of existing urban localities by ranks, Available at: [http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis\\_pck.htp\\_act\\_text?id=28862](http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?id=28862), Accessed on March, 3 2021.

Professor Fițiu shows that in the country in 2017, there were about 12,000 true peasants<sup>146</sup>. Let's not lose them.

### 5. Think clearly, think doctrinally

To think clear is not enough to *want* to think clearly. For being myself is not enough for clarity. I must assume the context. I must be able to sacrifice myself to put things into context. Clarity is not far away from the ability to *contemplate*. Contemplation is not to stare at something. It is the ability to exceed my personal self and to *care*. To be able to do so is to have *faith*.

Thinking doctrinally is the ability to systematize the *care* for a nation. It is the political ideal transposed into ethical coordinates as lines of action. It comprises both the key points of the political discourse and the implementation of the discussed.

The ability to think doctrinally is rarer these days, when policy is more related to the hidden networks of power, disconnected from the people – as a political body to be represented. Where there is no political representativeness there is *no democracy*. Democracy is impossible without the ability to *clearly problematize* at the elites' level. The doctrine is the very foundation on which political awareness is possible. Otherwise, politics becomes a simple act of force.

Some examples include the confusion between peasant and farmer, between nationalism and communism, or anarchy and totalitarianism.

Briefly stating of the following:

1. The peasant is a self-sufficient anthropological actor, while the farmer is a capitalist interested in making a profit<sup>147</sup>.

2. Communism destroys the nationhood, since it hates any kind of tradition coming from *illo-tempore*. Communism is based on class struggle against other classes, across the nations. It is internationalist. Nationalism is based on the nation to compete with other nations for the prosperity of its own homeland. It is locally-centered, not an internationalist. Both the nation and nationalism are victims of communism.

3. Anarchy is the ideology aimed at disrupting the very idea of wholeness and order. There is almost no legitimate source of order. Totalitarianism is the ideology aimed at protecting and promoting order based on conserving the systems of the wholeness: the family, the church, the professional bodies. There is the confusion between the pervasiveness of anarchism (aiming at the total destruction of order) and the scope of totalitarianism (conserving the totality, that is, order)<sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>146</sup> Avram Fițiu, *Salvarea fermei țărănești [Saving the peasant farm]*, 2<sup>nd</sup> added edition, Arad, Sens Publishing House, 2017, p. 419.

<sup>147</sup> See "peasant" in Radu Baltasiu, in Bădescu Ilie, Cristea Darie (coord.), *Elemente pentru un Dicționar de sociologie rurală [Elements for a Dictionary of Rural Sociology]*, Bucharest, Little Wallachia Publishing House, 2011.

<sup>148</sup> See Petre Țuțea, *op. cit.*

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## THE MOVEMENT OF ROMANIAN WOMEN FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE END OF THE WWII<sup>149</sup>

Ovidiana Bulumac<sup>150</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*The present paper addresses in a schematic manner the image of Romanian women, a subject not well developed in the sociological literature. The text indicates references to the condition of women starting from the Middle Ages, continuing with early modernity time frame, following the interwar period, and ending with the communist oppression installment. This is, in fact, the first fragment of a wider study, designed in three main parts. The second one is based on research centered upon the Scânteia newspaper, the official trumpet of the communist power, documenting all the published references related to women between September 1944 and February 1954 (almost 30,000 pages), a study that will be published in 2022 in London. The third part, still under development, represents a reality check: the real herstory, that took place in the communist induced state of terror, a timeframe which was considered to be the harshest repressive regime that the country endured until the Revolution of December 1989.*

**Keywords:** Middle Ages, myths, emancipation, communism, women, herstory.

### SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW

The feminine history in the Romanian space has a long and colourful history. One might say, in a superficial note, that it was a patriarchal type of society, in which the woman had no chance of expression. In truth, the situation was quite different, and this “detail” is often times minimized, due to the precariousness of the historical sources consulted and the ideological perspective through which they are filtered. Let us start with some Middle Ages references:

“Our Ladies can be spoken of from two points of view: first from that of their origin and then from that, no less important, of the purpose they had at the Court of Parties or at the

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<sup>149</sup> The text is part of a larger study centered upon the female profile promoted in the official communist newspaper from Romania (*Scânteia*) during the first decade of the regime, book that will be published in the near future with the title “Seen and unseen”. Other significant parts can be found in the chapter Ovidiana Bulumac, “The Female Profile Promoted in Scânteia, the Official Communist Newspaper, during the First Decade of the Regime Instalment in Romania” from Martina Topić (ed), *Women and the Media in Capitalism and Socialism: An Ecofeminist Inquiry*, London: Intellect (forthcoming in 2022).

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Court of Business. Here and there the bright, vivid flowers of the characters, deeds and sufferings of these Ladies come naturally in this weft of ideas”<sup>151</sup>.

“Throughout history, Romanian women have enjoyed more rights than women elsewhere. In the Romanian Middle Ages, women had the right to own land – a supreme right in any agricultural society and which was not found in other countries that today pass as models. There were also women who actually ruled in the medieval Romanian countries – Mrs. Chiajna, Mrs. Ruxandra are some of the names of women who ruled, provided regencies for many years. And they're not the only ones. Few know that the wives of rulers in the principalities had their own budget – the lady’s pantry – from which they endowed monasteries, churches and poor girls, that they had their own seal and knew how to write. ... By law they were the sole owners of the dowry received and, in the event of marriage dissolution, they had the right to keep it; they could do business and were often richer than their husbands”<sup>152</sup>.

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<sup>151</sup> „Despre Doamnele noastre se poate vorbi din două puncte de vedere: întâi din acel al originii lor și apoi din acela, nu mai puțin însemnat, al rostului pe care-l aveau la Curtea petrecerilor sau la Curtea afacerilor. Ici și colo se prind de la sine în această bățatură de idei florile strălucitoare, vii ale caracterelor, isprăvilor și suferințelor acestor Doamnein” in Nicolae Iorga, *Viața femeilor în trecutul românesc [Women in the life of our nation – faces, customs, deeds, testimonies]*, Bucharest, Cartex Publishing House, 2014 [1910], p. 13.

Nicolae Iorga, the greatest Romanian historian known and appreciated worldwide, had other books published and conferences sustained regarding the female history. Moreover, at the parliamentary level, he registered several interventions associated with the history and status of women in Romania, through which he demanded additional rights for women, as an act of general justice, to be enshrined in the 1923 Constitution.

Other relevant publications covering gender history in the Romanian space were signed by:

1. Andrei Rădulescu, *Dreptul de moștenire al soțului supraviețuitor [The right of inheritance of the surviving spouse]*, Bucharest, 1925.

2. George Fotino, *Contribuție la l'étude des origines de l'ancien droit coutumier roumain, Un chapitre de l'histoire de la propriété au moyen âge [Contribution to the study of the origins of the old Romanian customary law, a chapter in the history of property in the Middle Ages]*, Paris, 1926.

3. Ovid Sachelarie, “Privilegiul masculinității în Țara Românească până la jumătatea sec. al XVII-lea” [“The privilege of masculinity in Wallachia until the middle of the 17th century”] in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, XXIII, 1970, 3, pp. 439–499.

4. Anicuța Popescu, “Instituția căsătoriei și condiția juridică a femeii din Țara Românească și Moldova în sec.XVII” [“The institution of marriage and the legal condition of women in Wallachia and Moldova in the 17<sup>th</sup> century”] in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 23, 1972, nr. 1, pp. 55–80.

<sup>152</sup> „Românecele s-au bucurat în decursul istoriei de mai multe drepturi decât femeile din alte părți. În evul mediu românesc femeile aveau dreptul să dețină pământ – un drept suprem în orice societate agricolă și care nu se regăsea în alte țări care astăzi trec drept modele. Au existat și femei care au condus efectiv în țările române medievale - doamna Chiajna, doamna Ruxandra sunt numele unor femei care au domnit, au asigurat regente vreme de mulți ani. Și nu sunt singurele. Puțini știu că nevestele domnitorilor din principate aveau un buget propriu – cămara doamnei –, din care înzestrau mănăstiri, biserici și fete sărace, că aveau o pecete proprie și știau să scrie.

Dincolo de orice ar spune genere studies, femeile din România medievală aveau drepturi consfințite prin lege: ele erau singurele proprietare ale zestrei primite și, în cazul de desfacere a căsătoriei, și-o păstrau; se puteau ocupa de negustorie și de multe ori erau mai bogate decât soții lor.” in George Damian, “Femeia în istoria românilor” [“Women in the history of Romanians”] in *Jurnal de Botoșani și Dorohoi*, March 8, 2011.



**The history of women from Transylvania also recorded some interesting shortcuts from a legal perspective.** For instance, the boyars who had only girls as heirs and could not pass them the fortune (which legally was transmitted only to male heirs), at their deaths the voivode could confiscate their entire fortune of the boyar. In order to change the outcome, the boyars in question would act in order to convince the voivode to agree to a legal trick that assured the family name perpetuance as well as the fortune intact: a “legal” sex-change.

“Women of noble origin knew the laws very well and exploited them in their own interest, trying to eliminate various forms of discrimination. One of the strangest medieval legal operations was ‘the settlement of a daughter instead of a son’: a boyar without male heirs could turn his daughter into a man from a legal point of view”<sup>153</sup>.

For example, **in Wallachia and Moldavia, regarding the transmission of wealth to heirs, it was equally shared regardless of sex, while women of noble origin in Transylvania** (found under the imperial power structure) **were partially excluded from the calculation** (they were given an unequal lower share compared to the male heirs). This discrepancy was often invoked by the women in question, who demanded (and sometimes succeeded) that the succession be made *jure Volachie*. The same trick was recorded by history in the case of Maria Florescu, a female boyar from Oltenia (Wallachia) that lived more than a hundred years (born at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century), which in order to keep all her estates and wealth (after burying three husbands in her lifetime), legally transformed herself in a man<sup>154</sup>.

Further, **in the society’s modernization process, history recorded multiple highly involved women, both by peaceful means (such as the struggle for the emancipation of women)<sup>155</sup> or by a direct participation in the great**

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<sup>153</sup> „Femeile de origine nobilă cunoșteau foarte bine legile și le exploatau în interesul propriu, încercând să elimine diversele forme de discriminare. Una dintre cele mai ciudate operațiuni juridice medievale era „așezarea de fiică să-i fie în loc de fiu”: un boier fără băieți moștenitori își transforma fata în bărbat din punct de vedere juridic.” in George Damian, „Cum era viața româncelor în Evul Mediu, între bătăi, urzeli și violuri” [“What was the life of Romanian women in the Middle Ages, between beatings, warps and rapes”], in *Vice*, February 12, 2016.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Adela XENOPOL (Iași, Iași County, 1861-1939), one of the most famous activists for women’s rights in Romania. She establishes the Society of Romanian Writers, whose president became, starting with 1925, the first initiative of this kind in our country.

Constanța DUNCA-SCHIAU (Botoșani, Botoșani County, 1843–1924) was a leader of the women’s emancipation movement in Romania; the first woman in Romania who managed to study abroad; the first Romanian woman to hold a certificate of ability at the Sorbonne and a certificate of Higher Pedagogical Studies at the College de France; the first woman in Romania to study, in the private library, under the auspices of Her Majesty Empress Eugenia, court etiquette; the first woman in Romania to receive membership, at the age of 18, in the “Société de gens de Lettres” in France; the first intellectual in Romania, who dealt with the education of children in the country, by organizing education for girls; the first woman whose ideas were taken into account by Prince Al. I. Cuza when drafting the Law on Public Instruction adopted in 1864; the first woman in Romania to publish a journal – “Family Friend. Letters-science-arts-pedagogy-industry”, being its editor-in-chief.

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## historical events that led to the birth of modern Romania (the Romanian Revolution of 1848<sup>156</sup>, the Union of the Romanian Principalities of 1859<sup>157</sup>, the

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Elena GHICA (Bucharest, 1828–1888) was the first woman-alpinist in the world to climb the Moench peak in the Swiss Alps, placing the Wallachian flag there; one of the first feminists in Europe, but also the first woman in the history of Greece to ever receive, by a special law adopted unanimously by the Chamber of Deputies, the title of honorary citizen of Athens; the first woman in Romania to publish a book; a child prodigy, at the age of 14 she translated Homer's Greek "Iliad" into German hexameters, a work that was published in the *Gazette Universelle* in Leipzig.

Elena POP-HOSSU LONGIN (Băsești, Sălaj County, 1862–1940) was a militant for the emancipation of women in Transylvania; had the initiative to found the "Reunion of Romanian Women from Sălaj" and the association "Reunion of Romanian Women from Hunedoara", which organized courses in sewing, tailoring, lacework, weaving, carving and pottery, being its president for 24 years.

Ella NEGRUZZI (Hermeziu, Iași County, 1876–1949) was the first woman with the right to plead in the history of Romania, a member of the Bar of Galați and Ilfov; she laid the foundations of the association entitled "Women's Emancipation" in the interwar period.

Sarmiza BILCESCU-ALIMĂNIȘTEANU (Bucharest, 1867–1935) was the first woman lawyer in Europe. The first woman to graduate in Law from the University of Paris; establishes the "Society of Romanian Ladies" (with the role of strengthening the cultural unity of Romanians and education among women) and the Superior Council of the Household Industry.

Sofia NĂDEJDE (Botoșani, 1856–1946) was the first woman to write the first novel in Romanian literature – "Patimi" and the first to lead a literary journal; activist for the emancipation of women in Romania; the first woman in Romania who was approved to take her baccalaureate in a boys' high school; the first woman of letters, who successfully challenged the opinion of the literary critic Titu Maiorescu, according to which women are less intelligent than men; she was considered the most erudite Romanian woman of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Info source: \*\*\*, *100 women*, in *Women on banknotes*, Available at [www.femeipebancnote.ro/?page\\_id=726](http://www.femeipebancnote.ro/?page_id=726), Accessed on May 12, 2020.

<sup>156</sup> The revolutionaries, through point 16 of the *Proclamation from Islaz* (June 9, 1848 which was, in fact the program of the Wallachian revolution), demanded: "equal instruction for all Romanians of both sexes". Here, history recorded as devoted fighters for the cause of the revolution women like Ana Ipătescu, Maria Rosetti, Catinca Caracaș, Maria Eliade Rădulescu, Sevastia Bălcescu, Elena Cuza, Efimia Pleșoianu, Zoie Goleșcu, Pelaghia Roșu and many others. For example, Ana Ipătescu (Bucharest, 1805–1875) was one of the greatest symbols of the Romanian Revolution of 1848 which was praised by the entire domestic and international press, being compared to the French Joan of Arc. Or Maria Rosetti (Guernsey, Scotland, 1819–1893), which was the first female publicist in Romania, founder of the weekly literary magazine "Mother and Child", the woman-symbol of the Romanian Revolution of 1848, that later on fought for the emancipation of Romanian women, setting up the "Women's Committee" etc. Sources:

1. Paraschiva Câncea, *Mișcarea pentru emanciparea femeii în România [The Movement for the Emancipation of Women in Romania]*, Bucharest, Political Publishing House, 1976.

2. Elena Georgescu and Titu Georgescu, *Mișcarea democratică și revoluționară a femeilor din România [The democratic and revolutionary movement of women in Romania]*, Romanian Writing Publishing House, Craiova, 1975.

3. Ștefania Mihăilescu (ed.), *Emanciparea femeii române. Antologie de texte. 1815–1918 [The emancipation of the Romanian woman. Anthology of texts. 1815–1918]*, vol. 1, Bucharest, Ecumenica Publishing House, 2001.

4. Mădălina Nicolaescu (ed.), *Cine suntem noi? Despre identitatea femeilor din România modernă [Who are we? About the identity of women in modern Romania]*, Bucharest, Anima Publishing House, 1996.

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**War of Independence of Romania (1877–1878)<sup>158</sup>, the establishment of the unitary national state (1918)<sup>159</sup>.**

“The Women’s Diary”, edited by Emilia Trailler, was one of the several publications that acknowledged the women’s contribution in the First World War. After the end of the conflagration, in 1922, E. Delasurpa wrote:

“The active participation made the woman give up the puppets with which she attracted the favor of men. By gradually entering all careers, by trying to penetrate all intellectual professions and by their success, they have seen that they can find their happiness in personal and independent work as well”<sup>160</sup>.

**After the 1918 Union and the formation of Greater Romania, all the experience gained by women's organizations from all Romanian provinces of**

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5. I.M. Ștefan and V. Firoiu, *Sub semnul Minervei. Femei de seamă din trecutul românesc [Under the sign of Minerva. Notable women from the Romanian past]*, Bucharest, Political Publishing House, 1975.

<sup>157</sup> Women from all provinces inhabited by Romanians supported the movement for the unification of Moldova and Wallachia. The publicist and teacher Sofia Cocea wrote countless articles signed in the unionist newspapers through which she drew the attention on the connection between the democratic reform of the Romanian society and the emancipation of women. Elena Ghica (Dora d’Istria), author of feminist studies and supporter of the union of all Romanians in a modern national state, had a similar activity. Sources:

1. Paraschiva Căncea, *op. cit.*
2. Elena Georgescu and Titu Georgescu, *op. cit.*
3. Ștefania Mihăilescu, *op. cit.*
4. Mădălina Nicolaescu, *op. cit.*
5. I.M. Ștefan and V. Firoiu, *op. cit.*

<sup>158</sup> During the war, numerous women's committees were created to help the front and care for wounded soldiers and war orphans in all Romanian provinces, coordinated by the Central Women’s Committee, based in Iasi, led by Maria Rosetti Roznovanu. Sources: *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Women's organizations came to the aid of the Romanian front during the First World War; they cared for the wounded and orphaned children with the Red Cross; the women from the country, from the factories, from the public administration have completely replaced the mobilized men, and some of them, like Ecaterina Teodoroiu or Măriuca Zaharia, have given their lives in the military confrontations. Then in March 1917 three thousand women from Bucharest demonstrated against the military occupation state. Later, in June 1917, a petition of the Romanian intellectual women demanding the granting of women’s suffrage, given their sacrifices in the war years was addressed to the Romanian Senate. On December 1, 1918, the meetings of women from all over Transylvania took place, who sent their delegates to the Great National Assembly from Alba Iulia, giving them a mandate to vote for “the union of this ancient Romanian province with the country”; in the resolution of the national assembly, among other democratic reforms, universal suffrage for both sexes was announced. Sources: *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> „Participarea activă (*n.r.* – a femeilor în „marele războiu”) a făcut ca femeia să se lese de păpușeriile cu care atrăgea favoarea bărbaților. Prin intrarea gradată în toate carierele, prin încercarea de a pătrunde în toate profesiunile intelectuale și prin reușita lor, ele au văzut că-și pot găsi fericirea și în munca personală și independentă” in Delasurpa E, 1922, in Laurențiu Ungureanu, „Portretul femeii în presa interbelică. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Ciorapii acopăr picioarele lipsite de baie’” [“The Portrait of the Woman in the Interwar Press. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Socks cover the feet without a bath’”] in *Historia*, February 1, 2014, Available at [www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-impresainterbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie](http://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-impresainterbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie), Accessed on May 21, 2020.

**the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries flourished like never before.** The women's movement became part of the social life, a current of civil society based on the establishment and consolidation of Romanian institutions. More and more, **women were seen both socio-culturally and in the media as a force and a solution to the society's issues.** Moreover, the organization and social success of the women's movement<sup>161</sup> crossed national borders and became a source of pride for prestigious international organizations<sup>162</sup>.

All this continuous activity led to interesting results in the socio-economic and cultural development of the country between the two world wars, when an accelerate development was registered in all domains. For instance, **according to data provided by the 1930 population census, Great Romania ranked first in Europe in terms of the women presence in the active population**<sup>163</sup>. From both an agricultural and industrial perspective, their number grew constantly throughout the next three decades. Several social studies and surveys of the time, mostly done by the members of the Sociological School of Bucharest led by Dimitrie Gusti, showed that in some branches of the manufacturing industry (food, textile, clothing, glassware, ceramics, etc.), women, along with minors, represented, until the outbreak of World War II, over 40% of the total staff employed. Similarly, there was a significant increase in women employed in commercial enterprises (33%) and public institutions (20,4%), confirmed by the same census<sup>164</sup>.

In the Romanian traditional society, at the popular level, the woman was the master of the household, her husband's closest advisor, and the one in charge of the children's education. In other words, she was part of the decision-making process. The only difference was that, publicly, the means of a woman's expression were somehow reduced in comparison with the man's, because the division of labour was gender based (women mastered the social and familial universe, while men were the family's representatives within the public life). However, after all these changes on the economical level and by bringing women to the forefront of social life, consequences started to appear in the familial structure. Thus, **women tried to reconcile the new changes with the old social life.** Here, it is interesting to remark that **the emancipation movement, as far as the most influential female**

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<sup>161</sup> Including the Union of Romanian Women, the National Council of Romanian Women, the Association for Civil and Political Emancipation of Romanian Women.

<sup>162</sup> Ștefania Mihăilescu, *Din istoria feminismului românesc: studiu și antologie de texte (1929–1948)* [From the history of Romanian feminism: study and anthology of texts (1929–1948)], Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2006.

<sup>163</sup> \*\*\*, *Enciclopedia României* [The Encyclopaedia of Romania], vol. III, Bucharest, National Printing House, 1939, pp. 45–47.

<sup>164</sup> See:

1. \*\*\*, *Enciclopedia României* [The Encyclopaedia of Romania], vol. III, p. 60.
2. Also, relevant info can be found in Catherine Cerkez, *Munca femeii și consecințele ei pentru familie și societate* [Women's work and its consequences for family and society], in R. Catargi, I. C., Chiriacescu, *Femeia în noua epocă a omenirii* [Woman in the new age of mankind], Bucharest, Graphic workshops Sunrise, 1929.

**leaders were concerned, was not seen in contradiction to the idea of motherhood**<sup>165</sup>, but on the contrary. The recognition of women's rights became, in turn, the gains of the entire family, and implicitly of the children by increasing their level of education. For example, in a lecture given by university professor Alice Voinescu at the national broadcasting station on Nov. 23, 1939, she stated:

“The intellectual woman transforms her family into a center of culture. Around the table, where she distributes the bodily food, according to the needs but also to the appetite of each family member, the rumors that come from the rest of the wide world receive through her involvement a concrete, intimate human meaning, on an individual measure. Peace is gathered around her, and a world of values grows, clearly, in all the souls of the blessed house”<sup>166</sup>.

**The interwar period represented the steepest jump from the status of housewife to that of lady of society, thus obtaining all the privileges of their time:** wearing pants, cutting their hair, the possibility to practice sports with men etc. And the newspapers and magazines of the epoch kept a detailed chronicle of these changes. However, the core of the changes was the moral dimension. Aura Sachelarie, the niece of Nicolae Rădescu, the last free prime minister of pre-comunized Romania, wrote, on January 4, 1930, in the “Universul” newspaper:

“Women, in turn, should not forget that their main and overwhelming role remains that of housemistress, in charge of guiding the children, who will form the new generation of those who must carry forward the torch of progress in the scientific field, but also in the moral one, especially in the moral one”<sup>167</sup>.

The actions of Romanian activists were *not a feminist* movement per se, but rather a *feminine* movement which did not turn against the very nature of women (as it is understood, unfortunately, today). Yes, demands were made regarding the political involvement, the legal status, the access to higher education or professional fields that were dominated by men. But it was also about visibility, creating a new kind of tradition (*shestory*), all this while preserving the balance between sexes, the family social unit and motherhood (maintaining the authority over the familial micro-cosmos, managing the household and taking care of the upbringing and education of children<sup>168</sup>). The idea of the movement was to make a change for the better, and not

<sup>165</sup> As often happens today, when feminism is invoked.

<sup>166</sup> Alice Voinescu, *Femeia intelectuală în familie și gospodărie [The intellectual woman in the family and the household]* in Archive of the Romanian Broadcasting Company, November 23, 1939, dossier nr. 11/1939.

<sup>167</sup> „Femeile, la rândul-ne, să nu uite că rolul lor principal și covârșitor rămâne tot acela de stăpână a căminului, de îndrumătoare a copiilor, care vor forma generația nouă a aceluia ce trebuie să poarte înaintea făclia progresului în domeniul științific, dar și în cel moral, mai ales în cel moral.” in Laurențiu Ungureanu, “Portretul femeii în presa interbelică. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Ciorapii acopăr picioarele lipsite de baie’” [“The Portrait of the Woman in the Interwar Press. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Socks cover the feet without a bath’”] in *Historia*, February 1, 2014, Available at [www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-in-presa-interbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie](http://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-in-presa-interbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie), Accessed on May 21, 2020.

<sup>168</sup> Corina Bistriceanu, *Sociologia familiei [Family sociology]*, Bucharest, Romania of Tomorrow Foundation Publishing House, 2006.

to completely shift the social, political, cultural or public spheres. And we say this because women's abilities were asserted in the social, cultural universe without eliminating those that were biologically and socially attributed to them. We refer here to the wife or mother roles. In the press of the time a great deal of information appeared regarding the meetings of the women's circles led by Alexandrina Cantacuzino, the wife of former Conservative Prime Minister Grigore Cantacuzino and, perhaps, the most ardent feminist of her time. In her fiery speeches there was a harsh critique of the objectified woman painted as the worst nightmare:

“the doll woman, the woman of pleasure and luxury, the parasitic, childish woman”<sup>169</sup>.

But her arguments did also defend the special status of the woman in the family, which had to be preserved:

“Do you think the homogeneity of the family will be better assured when the wife enters one political party and the husband in another? Women should be first of all mothers!”<sup>170</sup>.

Beyond social and civil emancipation, **the great “battle” in the interwar period was the one regarding political rights**, which was finally achieved through the 1938 Constitution<sup>171</sup>, but preceded by the principle of mandatory co-opting women in communal and county councils from 1925<sup>172</sup> and granting women's political rights under the 1929 Administrative Organization Act<sup>173</sup>.

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<sup>169</sup> Quotes from the *Universul* newspaper, in Laurențiu Ungureanu, “Portretul femeii în presa interbelică. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Ciorapii acopăr picioarele lipsite de baie’” [“The Portrait of the Woman in the Interwar Press. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Socks cover the feet without a bath’”] in *Historia*, February 1, 2014, Available at [www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-in-presa-interbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie](http://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-in-presa-interbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie), Accessed on May 21, 2020.

<sup>170</sup> Quotes from the *Universul* newspaper, Laurențiu Ungureanu, “Portretul femeii în presa interbelică. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Ciorapii acopăr picioarele lipsite de baie’” [“The Portrait of the Woman in the Interwar Press. Nicolae Iorga: ‘Socks cover the feet without a bath’”] in *Historia*, February 1, 2014, Available at [www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-in-presa-interbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie](http://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/portretul-femeii-in-presa-interbelica-nicolae-iorga-ciorapii-acopar-picioarele-lipsite-de-baie), Accessed on May 21, 2020.

<sup>171</sup> Here, Eugenia REUSS-IANCULESCU (Igești, Bucovina, 1866-1938) was instrumental. Due to her militancy, Romanian women's right to participate in the general elections was recognized, right in the year of her death. Previously, she was the first suffragette in the country, an activist of the women emancipation movement in Romania, proposing essential changes to the legal status of women in the Civil Code (their right to equal pay, unrestricted access to various professions considered strictly masculine, equal rights as men over children, legal prostitution suspension, economic independence for the married woman, etc.). In 1894, she founded the first women's organization in the country, called the “Women's League”. The 1938 Constitution of Great Romania is available at [www.constitutia.ro/const1938.htm](http://www.constitutia.ro/const1938.htm), Accessed on May 12, 2020.

<sup>172</sup> According to the legal specifications from August 1929, a maximum of seven councils could be co-opted in urban communes with 250,000 inhabitants, five in those with a population of 100,000, three in those with 50,000 inhabitants and two in the other localities see A.N.I.C, dossier XI-32, f. 8–12. The activity carried out by women counselors will prove to be extremely beneficial, targeting mainly four major areas: social assistance, public health, culture and education – see Camelia Popescu, “Lupta pentru dreptul de vot feminin în România interbelică” [“The fight for women's suffrage in interwar Romania”] in *Historia*, Available at: [www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/lupta-pentru-dreptul-de-vot-feminin-in-romania-interbelica](http://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/lupta-pentru-dreptul-de-vot-feminin-in-romania-interbelica), Accessed on June 3, 2020.

<sup>173</sup> Article 375. The law applied to women over the age of 21 who 1) were graduates of the lower secondary cycle, normal or professional; 2) worked as a state, county or commune functionary;

In the municipal, communal and county elections of 1930, women representatives of the emancipation movement divided between the already existing political parties<sup>174</sup>: some ran on the electoral lists of the National-Peasant Party<sup>175</sup>, some became candidates on the lists of the National Liberal Party<sup>176</sup>. **Over a hundred women became councilors throughout the country, while three women became mayor for the first time in the recorded political history** (Marilena Bocu in Lipova city, Arad County; Luiza Zavloschi<sup>177</sup> in Buda village, Vaslui County; and Elena Eisenberg in Cobia commune, Dâmbovița County).

Interestingly, other women decided to create a new political party. Disappointed by the political manner shown by the men-led parties, Alexandrina Cantacuzino proposed **the establishment of a women's political party that would emphasize balance and morality in public life**<sup>178</sup>. Thus, the National Group of Romanian Women was founded in April 1929, whose stated purpose was to train women:

“... so as to gain equal political justification in the state and, through the political force that they will achieve, to collaborate in leading the country in all respects, in the same conditions as the men”<sup>179</sup>.

The success was so significant, that the new organization became one of the most influential women's associations in the interwar period, with branches in all provinces of the country<sup>180</sup>.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END

“Initially, Romania shared with all communist regimes in Eastern Europe a total reliance upon terror as an instrument of political power. This terror was wielded in two stages: first to eliminate opponents in the drive to consolidate power, and second to ensure compliance once revolutionary change had been effected. In Romania’s case the first

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3) were war widows; 4) were decorated for wartime activity; 5) were part of the management of an organization with legal personality, which aimed at social demands, cultural propaganda or social assistance – See \*\*\*, *Monitorul Oficial*, nr. 170, August, 3, 1929, Available at: [www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/lege-nr-167-din-3-august-1929-pentru-organizarea-administra-iunii-locale-emitent-parlamentul-publicat-n-168809.html](http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/lege-nr-167-din-3-august-1929-pentru-organizarea-administra-iunii-locale-emitent-parlamentul-publicat-n-168809.html), Accessed on May 12, 2020.

<sup>174</sup> Ștefania Mihăilescu, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 31–31.

<sup>175</sup> Such as Ella Negruzzi, Calypso Botez, Margareta Paximade-Ghelmeceanu, Ortansa Satmary.

<sup>176</sup> Such as Sarmiza Bilcescu-Alimăneștianu or Maria Pillat.

<sup>177</sup> She was the first woman to run independently for mayor, without the support of a party, and also the first woman in Romania to obtain two consecutive terms as mayor (she modernized an isolated rural locality, organized civil status records and installed a telephone station).

<sup>178</sup> Alexandrina Cantacuzino, *Femeile în fața dreptului de vot. Programul de luptă al Grupării Femeilor Române [Women and the right to vote. The fighting program of the Romanian Women's Group]*, Bucharest, Capital City Printing House, 1929.

<sup>179</sup> \*\*\*, *Gruparea Națională a Femeilor Române. Statut [National Group of Romanian Women. Statute]*, Bucharest, “Lupta” Printing House, 1929.

<sup>180</sup> Ștefania Mihăilescu, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 25–26.

stage, roughly, encompassed the period 1945–1964, the year in which an amnesty of political prisoners was completed”<sup>181</sup>.

After the King’s *coup d’etat*, the country found itself under a lot of pressure and disorganization. Still, the political forces tried to reactivate and the women’s organizations tried to rebuild. In those moments of confusion, the Communist Party from Romania came into play, having its back secured by the recent occupation of the country by the Red Army, and proposed to all the political parties and professional organizations (trade unions, women or youth structures), etc. to unite in a National Democratic Front. The declared objective was to form a “truly democratic” government by applying the only genuine program of reforms the country needed<sup>182</sup>. Here, the article 4 of the platform stated a “complete equality of all citizens of the country, regardless of nationality, religion, sex, etc.” and was promoted on September, 26, 1944 in the *Scânteia* newspaper. Later, on October, 4, the issue regarding the female population was presented in a “project of special claims for women”<sup>183</sup> attributed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In fact, this was the first call made by communists to the women who had suffered from the “anti-Soviet” war and who were asked to help remove the fascist remnants from the state apparatus and solidify the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition<sup>184</sup>. In other words, for the first time, the communists addressed the women they labeled as *victims interested in revenge*, and offered female positions in all the communist structures trying to capitalize on the suffering as an instrument to remove any opposition might have arisen. In reality, the aim was to completely remove the opposition by dividing the political climate and installing a totalitarian regime.

In an article published on October 8, 1944 in the *Scânteia* newspaper, the party’s official trumpet, **the communists repudiated the emancipation movement done so far, describing it as a totally ineffective struggle that based upon “little churches” and “circles” which generated women’s isolation from the “great democratic current”**. It was suggested that those who did not support the platform mentioned earlier will be considered as siding with the enemies of democracy, as fascist elements (that will face legal consequences). On the other side, those which accepted the platform rules, were promoted with positions in the women’s organizations, part of the political coalition initiated and led by the communist party. As a result, the women’s sections of the main political powers refused to adhere to the newly created platform. The only joyful member was The Union of Working Women in Romania, an organization which in the interwar period was virtually inexistent, but

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<sup>181</sup> Krzysztof Persak and Lukasz Kaminski, *A handbook of the communist security apparatus in East Central Europe 1944–1989*, Warsaw, Institute of national remembrance, 2005, p. 285.

<sup>182</sup> \*\*\*, *Scânteia* newspaper, September 26, 1944, issue available at the National Library of Romania.

<sup>183</sup> *Scânteia* newspaper, October 4, 1944, issue available at the National Library of Romania.

<sup>184</sup> Eugenia Rădăceanu, *După doi ani [After two years]* in *Femeia muncitoare*, octombrie-noiembrie, 1946.



which in just a couple of months, with the full support of the Communist Party, became one of the most powerful organizations. Their aim was to infiltrate within the ranks of the women's structures that resisted to join the platform and, simultaneously, to participate in the establishment of women's commissions in enterprises and institutions. Thus, in a single year (until November 1945) the number of union members increased rapidly: out of over 1.300.000 members, 400.000 were women<sup>185</sup>.

“On January 31, 1945, the first ‘Great Conference of Working Women’ was held in the Capital ... The resolution of the Conference, consisting of 12 points, actually resumed the directives of the Communist Party presented as the only one program that can represent the real interests of women<sup>186</sup>. All women's commissions were asked to ‘clarify to their comrades and show them that the leaders of the ‘so-called historical parties’ - parties of banks and landlords led by Maniu and Brătianu - are the eternal enemies of the workers» and that they are as dangerous to the country as ‘Antonescu and the legionaries’<sup>187</sup>. The speeches at the Conference emphasized the idea that, unlike ‘bourgeois feminist organizations that fight only for women’s demands without dealing with the social problem’<sup>188</sup>, the women’s committees integrated into the new democratic platform aimed to remove the unjust order and replace it with another which no longer contained ‘misery and exploitation’. Women in the U.S.S.R. ... were considered a kind of ideal model of emancipation, worthy of following”<sup>189</sup>.

Then the installation of the first “wide democratic concentration” (aka communist) government of Petru Groza took place on March 6, 1945, and the arrival of Soviet emissaries in the country the very next day. They outlined to the communist leaders of that time (Ana Pauker, C. Pârvulescu și C. Doncea) a three-year plan for the establishment of the future Soviet-like political regime: isolation of the country from the West, removal of the monarchy, liquidation of historical parties, establishment of a repressive state and military apparatus against any opposition, agrarian reform and preparation for collectivization<sup>190</sup>. In other words, the first stage in the communist political evolution (1944–1958) was a time 1) of forceful destruction of the national structure, elite, ideology, that was labeled “bourgeois”<sup>191</sup> or “fascist”, and 2) and of undermining the national sovereignty under the regime of Soviet military occupation. In short, it was a period of “primitive accumulation of legitimacy”<sup>192</sup> by the Communist Party:

<sup>185</sup> Ștefania Mihăilescu, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 73.

<sup>186</sup> \*\*\*, *Prima Conferință a Femeilor [The First Conference of Women]*, Bucharest, January 31, 1945, C.G.M. Publishing House of Romania.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29–31.

<sup>188</sup> Eugenia Rădăceanu, *Cuvinte pentru femei [Words for women]*, 3rd edition, Bucharest, U.F.M.R. Publishing House, 1945, pp. 31–32.

<sup>189</sup> Ștefania Mihăilescu, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 73–74.

<sup>190</sup> Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român [An Honest History of the Romanian People]*, Bucharest, Enciclopedic Univers Publishing House, 1997, 457.

<sup>191</sup> See:

1. Stephen Fischer-Galați, *The New Rumania. From People's Democracy to Socialist Republic*, Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1969.

2. Stephen Fischer-Galați (coord.), *The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1979

3. Stephen Fischer-Galați, *Eastern Europe in the 1980s*, Boulder, Westview, 1981.

<sup>192</sup> Michael Shafir, *Romania. Politics, Economics, and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change*, London, Boulder, Frances Pinter, 1985, p. 56.

“Breaking through means the decisive alteration or destruction of values, structures, and behaviours which are perceived by a revolutionary elite as comprising or contributing to the actual or potential existence of alternative centers of political power”<sup>193</sup>.

“Practically, the access of communists to the main ministries (army, justice, internal affairs) was imposed under the threat of the Soviet army, through the maneuvering of Russian services and through the attitude of the Anglo-Americans that had a paralyzing effect on the reaction of the governing Romanian elite”<sup>194</sup>.

All this meant it was the beginning of the end for the entire Romanian society, including the women’s organizations that obtained such beautiful results in several decades of continuous work and enthusiastic effort. This was followed by the liquidation of all women’s and social assistance organizations that managed to survive after 1945, and the establishment of a single “mass organization” officially representing all women: the Union of Anti-Fascist Women in Romania<sup>195</sup>.

However, unofficially, it was “enslaved” to the political line of the Communist Party and used to discredit large organizations or personalities representing the old regime, to liquidate political pluralism, and to abolish the old social order. In short, **the apparent democratization brought by the communist regime regarding gender equality came, in reality, to dynamite the efforts and successes of Romanian women obtained until 1944.**

In order to maintain the population’s discontent inside the borders, the newly instated repressive regime targeted the press and started major censorship campaigns with the help of the **Article 16 of the armistice signed with the USSR in 1944 stipulated the introduction of censorship** on the press, books, printings, radio and postal services<sup>196</sup>. Until 1946, more than **2000 titles were banned, and their number rose to almost 9000 titles in 1948**<sup>197</sup>.

“In 1948, 80% of the total number of professors from the Faculty of Philosophy of Bucharest were removed, and 13,000 out of the total of 37,000 students registered at universities around the country were expelled ... In a single night (15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1948) 4,000 students from all high schools and academic centers in the country are arrested ..., a part of them being incarcerated at the Pitești Penitentiary where they entered the programs of re-education through physical and mental violence and abuse ... Between 1946–1953 and then between 1956–1959, numerous arrests take place among Romanian writers and scholars, as at the beginning of the ‘60s, there were hundreds of writers, simultaneously, in communist prisons”<sup>198</sup>.

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<sup>193</sup> Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development. The Case of Romania, 1944–1965*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1971, p. 7.

<sup>194</sup> Radu Baltasiu, Ovidiana Bulumac (eds), *Fractured modernities: elites, Romania and “Europe”*, Bucharest, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2014, p. 101.

<sup>195</sup> *Scânteaia* newspaper, April 12, 1945, issue available at the National Library of Romania.

<sup>196</sup> Anneli Ute Gabanyi, *Literatura și politică în România după 1945 [Literature and politics in Romania after 1945]*, Bucharest, Romanian Cultural Foundation, 2001, p. 14.

<sup>197</sup> Ilie Bădescu and Mihai Ungheanu, *Enciclopedia valorilor reprimare. Războiul împotriva culturii române [The Encyclopedia of repressed values. The war against the Romanian culture]*, vol. I–II, Bucharest, Pro-Humanity Publishing House, 2000, p. 12.

<sup>198</sup> Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac, 2014, p. 114.

After eliminating the freedom of the press, and especially after the massive fraud of the November 1946 elections, there was a continuous legislative amendment which legalized campaigns meant to purge “the hostile elements against the regime” from the media, army, police and gendarmerie, the judiciary system, public administration, diplomatic staff, the category of peasants and clergy. Thus, in the pages of the *Scânteia* newspaper, every other day were printed thousands of such names, lined up, in full pages, as signs of the regime’s political success. Thus, the initiation of a new program of education according to a new set of norms and rules started, which was meant to “produce the new (wo)man”, favorable to Moscow and the regime<sup>199</sup>.

Until 1964, numerous resistance acts were registered: peasant revolts, student movements, armed partisans in the mountains, resistance within the communist prisons and labor camps, the church etc. However, they were all silenced with the support of the *Securitate* (The General Direction of People’s Security), the repressive instrument of the communist leadership, which became active from the moment the Armistice with the USSR was signed on September, 12, 1944 (and instated by the August, 30, 1948 Decree nr. 221). Until 1960–1965, the top leadership of *Securitate* was composed exclusively out of Soviet secret service agents<sup>200</sup>.



Fig. 1. Places of communist detention, deportation, political executions (Sighet Memorial).

The imprisonment phenomenon reached incredible proportions in the 1949–1953 timeframe. The number of people labeled as “hostile”. The number of those labeled “hostile to the regime” was so high that the entire network of prisons and places of detention were not enough to close them all (even if they were working at triple capacity)<sup>201</sup>. Therefore, the communist regime had to find a

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>200</sup> Dennis Deletant, *România sub regimul communist [Romania under the communist regime]*, Bucharest, Civic Academy, 2006.

<sup>201</sup> Radu Coroamă, Mariana Neaguțu, Oana Ilie, *Comunismul în România 1945–1989 [Communism in Romania 1945–1989]*, Bucharest, National Museum of Romanian History, 2007, p. 41.

solution, which it did: to transform the political prisoners into workers subjected to forms of (physical and mental) extermination in construction sites, such as the famous Danube-Black Sea Canal (the place where Romania's elite was literally liquidated).

“...in Romania there were 250 detention units, different from the ones dedicated to common criminals (44 penitentiaries, 61 places of investigation, detainment and torture, 72 labor camps, 63 centers of deportation and house arrests, 10 mental asylums with a political agenda). To these we must add 93 places for executions, assassinations, common burial grounds, fights with Securitate personnel that resulted in human victims and over 100 regional and county headquarters where the investigations of Securitate took place. Thus, we arrive to the map of (see above) from the Memorial, which reveals the existence of almost 450 places of detention or repression (not including the tens of places found by means of investigating the oral history”<sup>202</sup>.

Even more than 30 years after the fall of communism, the true proportions of the disaster caused by the dictatorial regime and the number of victims who actually suffered from it could not be revealed. However, the repressive manifestation can be approximated by the following calculus:

“According to statistical data calculated after 1989, during the first twenty years of communism, **over 2 million people, namely one in nine Romanians**, were arrested for political reasons, detained in prisons and camps, deported or dislocated, and **15% of those arrested died by gunshot, torture or extermination** in prisons or labor camps, *namely every sixth detainee*”<sup>203</sup>.

“A figure closer to the truth can be deduced by reporting the average number of people in a criminal political file (five) to the number of such files numerically identified at the time: 118,000 (communicated by the president of the Romanian Association of Former Political Detainees, Constantin Ticu Dumitrescu). The number of approx. 600,000 seems, thus, the most plausible in the present state of research. And the number of administrative incarcerations (estimated as we have seen at about a third of the total number of juridical condemnations) amount to 200,000. If we add the peasants condemned for felonies masked as ‘common crimes’ (failure to pay quotas, refusal to harvest on the land of the cooperative farming unit, refusal to join said unit), the prisoners from the period of August 23rd –September 13<sup>th</sup> 1944, as the hundred thousand of deportees, displaced and evacuated one, the detainees from «house arrests», the Bessarabians and Bukovinians forcefully repatriated to the USSR, as well as the 520,000 youngsters forced to work in the so-called ‘labor fronts’ where labor was in a quasi-enforced activity, the women who died because of the demographic policy, **the numbers of the direct victims of communist repression reach 2 million. If we add the indirect victims (family members who suffered social discrimination), then the global sum of the repressed one reaches a few millions, close to half of the**

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>203</sup> Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac, *op. cit.*, 2014, pp. 105–106.

**population of the country**, which during the '50s, the peak years of terror, numbered around 16 million inhabitants"<sup>204</sup>.

There is a lost sense of proportions and women were one of the most affected segments of the population, both by being the direct victim, or by being a relative of another.

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## THE FUNCTION OF DIALOGUE IN A SOCIETY OF ISOLATION

Samira Cîrlig<sup>205</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*This material discusses the usefulness of dialogue in a lonely society. To establish its function, we first define the key concepts: dialogue and word. The definition of dialogue will be from a Socratic perspective, and we will say that it is how truth is discovered. The word on the other hand will be clarified starting from Mircea Vulcănescu who states that words contain love and implicitly faith. For this reason, we can say that through words, we assume destinies. We will then try to argue with statistical data why we start from the premise that today's society is lonely. We will mention the most important moments: the advent of smartphones in 2012 (first in the US) and the coronavirus pandemic that started in 2020. These two factors are certainly not the only ones, but they are two of the main factors that led to the shift of dialogue from face to face to online, when its (dialogue's) functions were largely compromised. We will conclude by saying that the function of dialogue in a lonely society is on one hand knowledge (knowledge of the self and knowledge of the other), and on the other hand it is the one that guaranties the quality of man as a social being.*

**Keywords:** dialogue, lonely society, destiny, sociality.

### BRIEF CLARIFICATION. ABOUT DIALOGUE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD

Dialogue is from Socrates' perspective a method for discovering the truth. For this reason, we can say that the thinker who initiated a cult of dialogue is Socrates himself<sup>206</sup>. Plato, perhaps Socrates' brilliant pupil, continued this cult of dialogue. As proof of this idea, he established a real school of thought, the prestigious school of Athens, called the *Academica*<sup>207</sup>. At this school and under the guidance of Plato, Aristotle, another "encyclopedic mind of the ancient world", was formed<sup>208</sup>. These three are the personalities, not the only ones, but probably the most important ones, who made possible the emergence of what today we call dialogue.

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<sup>206</sup> Ormenișan Laurențiu-Sorin (s.a.), "(Poate fi) Socrate un model pentru tinerii de azi?" [(Can be) Socrates a role model for young people today?], p. 267, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, nr. 3, pp. 263–280, Available at: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/viewpdf?id=601866>, Accessed on October 12, 2021.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

After Socrates, it is Plato who puts his stamp on this concept. The Greek biographer Diogenes Laertios, in his work *On the Lives and Doctrines of the Philosophers*, states of Plato's writings that the Platonic Dialogue has two general characters: "one intended for teaching, the other for research"<sup>209</sup>. In other words, dialogue makes knowledge possible. But knowledge can also be of at least two kinds: knowledge of the self and knowledge of the other. The two types of knowledge are inseparable. Dialogue is also a characteristic of man, who is a social being. Man is a social being because he is a naturally curious being, but in relation to an ideal, an idea<sup>210</sup>. In contemporary sociology, we understand man as a social being through the notion of sociality.

"[Sociality] refers to man's innate capacity to be social"<sup>211</sup>. However, the idea of sociability refers to "the extent and form in which this quality manifests itself"<sup>212</sup>.

Man's quality as a social being is:

"(..) conditioned by his ability to actualize his potential as a 'being-together', as Heidegger puts it; to be, feel and act together with another (synergy)"<sup>213</sup>.

But people can't be together if they don't dialogue. The processes of addition (growth) make up the social being and here we have fixed:

"(..) the highest gifts of the human being: soul, speech, memory, talent, vocation, heroism, martyrdom, genius and holiness"<sup>214</sup>.

As social beings, people fit into a group because they cannot live alone. Dialogue, communication, is the element that holds people together. We distinguish here between dialogue, which is meaningful discussion, which clarifies things and adds to you, and what Heidegger called "idle talk"<sup>215</sup> or meaningless, useless words, a waste of time.

Words are important because "language creates thought"<sup>216</sup>. Besides, words:

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<sup>209</sup> Laertios Diogenes, *Despre viețile și doctrinele filosofilor*, [On the lives and doctrines of philosophers], Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 1997, p. 138.

<sup>210</sup> Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în sociologie. Spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism. Considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană*, [Introduction to Sociology. Spirituality, nation and capitalism. Considerations of Romanian and Weberian sociology], Craiova, Publishing House Beladi, 2007, p. 82.

<sup>211</sup> Socialitatea „se referă la capacitatea înăscută a omului de a fi ființă socială” in *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>212</sup> „măsura și forma în care se manifestă această calitate” in *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> „condiționată de capacitatea acestuia de a-și actualiza potențialului său de «ființă-împreună», cum formulează Heidegger, adică de a fi, a simți și a acționa împreună cu un altul (sinergie)” in *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>214</sup> „cele mai înalte daruri ale ființei omenești: sufletul, *graiul*, memoria, talentul, vocația, eroismul, martiriul, geniul și sfințenia” in Ilie Bădescu, *Sistem de sociologie creștină*, [System of Christian sociology], Ms, 2001, p. 296.

<sup>215</sup> „flecăreală” in Martin-Heidegger, „Ființă și timp”, [“Being and Time”], Available at: [www.academia.edu/5678221/25309437\\_Martin\\_Heidegger\\_Fiinta\\_si\\_Timp](http://www.academia.edu/5678221/25309437_Martin_Heidegger_Fiinta_si_Timp), Accessed on October 10, 2021.

<sup>216</sup> Radu Baltasiu, “Cuvintele sunt mai puternice decât noi”, [“Words are stronger than us”], January 24, 2014, in *RaduBaltasiublogspot*, Available at: <http://radubaltasiu.blogspot.com/2014/01/cuvintele-sunt-maiputernice-decat-noi.html>, Accessed on October 10, 2021.

“... carry consequences. Facts. They are the seeds of destiny. When they are devoid of truth, when they are strictly manipulative, they empty. The speaker becomes an ideologue, and the narcotized people collapse”<sup>217</sup>.

“Words broken from the Logos are idle talk, talk in the wind, literally pollute, destroy the planet, and ‘depress’ us, etc.”<sup>218</sup>.

Noica pointed out that:

“(.) the Romanian language, properly spoken, has this rare quality among other languages of ‘making the unbearable bearable’”<sup>219</sup>.

For people, who are social beings, loneliness is unbearable because it causes alienation. Of course, loneliness, but in moderation, can be beneficial in the sense that a man who spends time with himself can reflect and discover himself. But loneliness in the long-term manifests itself as a form of isolation and leads to anxiety, depression and ultimately suicide, as the French sociologist Emile Durkheim stated in one of his most important works entitled *On Suicide*<sup>220</sup>.

The word is “a part of a meaning or is meaning in itself”<sup>221</sup>. With Mircea Vulcănescu the word is “bearer of love”<sup>222</sup> and equally “bearer of faith”<sup>223</sup>. Not doing or not being able to do what we say will have serious consequences. Constantin Noica said that the inability to do what we say is a human disease because we cannot give ourselves “determination”. This inability has become a real crisis for modern man<sup>224</sup>. Dialogue, therefore, is a method for discovering the truth, as the Greek philosophers said. Words, on the other hand, are assumed destiny. Not least, words make it possible for people to be social beings.

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<sup>217</sup> „poartă în ele consecințe. Fapte. Sunt semințele destinului. Atunci când sunt lipsite de adevăr, sunt strict manipulative, ele golesc. Vorbitorul devine ideolog, iar poporul narcotizat se prăbușește” in *Ibid*.

<sup>218</sup> „[cuvintele] rupte de Logos sunt flecăreală, vorbă-n vânt, poluează, la propriu, distrug planeta, iar pe noi ne «bagă în depresie», etc.” in Radu Baltasiu, “Un «shopping list» pentru tânăra generație” [A ‘shopping list’ for the younger generation], December 28, 2019, Available at: <http://radubaltasiu.blogspot.com/2019/12/un-shopping-list-pentru-tanara-generatie.html>, Accessed on October 12, 2021.

<sup>219</sup> „limba română, vorbită cum se cuvine, are această rară calitate între alte limbi, de «a face insuportabilul suportabil»” in Constantin Noica, *Cuvânt împreună despre rostirea românească [A word together about Romanian speech]*, s.l., Humanitas Publishing House, 1996, p. 80.

<sup>220</sup> Emile Durkheim, *Despre sinucidere, [Suicide]*, Bucharest, European Institute Publishing House, 1993.

<sup>221</sup> „o parte a unui sens, sau este sens în sine”, Radu Baltasiu, “Cuvintele sunt mai puternice decât noi” [“Words are stronger than us”], January 24, 2019, in *RaduBaltasiublogspot*, Available at: <http://radubaltasiu.blogspot.com/2014/01/cuvintele-sunt-mai-puternice-decat-noi.html>, Accessed on October 10, 2021.

<sup>222</sup> „purtător de iubire” in Mircea Vulcănescu, *Logos și Eros [Logos and Eros]*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 1991.

<sup>223</sup> “purtător de credință” in *Ibid*.

<sup>224</sup> Radu Baltasiu, “Cuvintele sunt mai puternice decât noi” [“Words are stronger than us”], January 24, 2014 in *RaduBaltasiublogspot*, Available at: <http://radubaltasiu.blogspot.com/2014/01/cuvintele-sunt-mai-puternice-decat-noi.html>, Accessed on October 10, 2021.

## WHY A SOCIETY OF LONELINESS?

### Statistically relevant data

In a lonely society people no longer can be together. We have seen that this ability is acquired and developed through dialogue. Therefore, we can say that in a lonely society the question of dialogue is problematic. We have also seen that dialogue is of two kinds: with oneself and with others. Dialogue with the other, to achieve its purpose, must occur under certain conditions. One of them, and perhaps the most important, is that the dialogue must be face-to-face. Otherwise, the dialogue risks not fulfilling its purpose. A good way to demonstrate this idea is to discuss some statistics showing the consequences of moving dialogue from face-to-face to online.

At **national level**, a survey conducted by Save the Children Romania in 2018 on a sample of 1156 children, aged between 12 and 17, revealed that 27% of subjects said that on a typical school day, they spend more than six hours online or constantly check their device used for browsing. If they have a day off, whether it's a weekend or a vacation, 48.3% of children spend more than six hours a day online. In fact, the study found that 40% of children surf aimlessly 'often' or 'quite often'. Furthermore, 31% of children said they spent less time with family or doing nothing for school to surf the Internet, and 28% said they tried unsuccessfully spending less time online. Last but not least, almost 13% of children said they 'often' skipped eating or sleeping to be online, and 23% said they felt uncomfortable when they could not stay online<sup>225</sup>.

**Internationally:** in Germany for example, in 2018, a study of 1001 children aged 12 to 17 was conducted by the German health insurance company DAK and the University Clinic Hamburg. The study showed that almost 3% of young people in Germany show symptoms of "social media addiction" given that: about 90% of young people surveyed spend about three hours online daily, 17% sleep less because of social media use, and 8% of those surveyed are depressed<sup>226</sup>. According to another study by British researchers at Imperial College and University College of London, teenagers' mental health suffers because of social networking. The study looked at lifestyle, health, wellbeing, and how young people use technology. According to another study by British researchers at Imperial College and University College of London, teenage mental health suffers from social networking. The study looked at lifestyle, health, wellbeing, and how young people

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<sup>225</sup> Salvați Copiii România, "Studiu privind utilizarea Internetului de către copii" ["Study on children's Internet use"], 2018, p. 5., Available at: <https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/sci-ro/files/92/928f0bff-bffa-447a-9a27-df979ba1008f.pdf>, Accessed on October 20, 2021.

<sup>226</sup> Dw.com, "Germania: 100.000 de copii și tineri, dependenți de Social Media" ["Germany: 100,000 children and young people addicted to Social Media"], March 1, 2018, Available at: <https://www.dw.com/ro/germania-100000-de-copii-și-tineri-dependenți-de-social-media/a-42787365>, Accessed on October 23, 2021.

use technology. The sample was nationally representative and consisted of around 10,000 teenagers in England aged 13–16<sup>227</sup>. The study showed that the risk of developing mental illness is directly proportional to the time spent online. What's more, according to the study, girls are twice as affected<sup>228</sup>.

### Problem

Why is loneliness a problem? For at least two reasons:

1. Young people are losing their ability to be social beings because they cannot have a real dialogue online. In other words, children lose their sociality online. The problem is that in the absence of dialogue social beings disappear and anarchy occurs. Thus, the idea of social order is at risk. The proof is aggressive, anxious, depressive behavior that young people develop online.
2. The health of the whole body-soul-mind disappears. Given that the three are inseparable, when the body, for example, is affected, there are effects on the other two “components”. Studies show that time spent online negatively influences young people's behavior. Here are some examples:
  - a) A US study published in 2010 in PLOS Medicine, which analyzed and interpreted 148 separate studies with data on more than 300,000 subjects, shows increased mortality due to loneliness<sup>229</sup>. Some statistical data illustrating the correlation between loneliness and mental health (based on the results of a study conducted by a global mental health company involving more than 20,000 people) showed that half of the respondents who have face-to-face interactions are in poor health, while only 12% of respondents who interact in person are in poor health. Furthermore, the researchers found that the effect of being sober on mortality is equal to 15 cigarettes smoked per day and is even more dangerous than obesity<sup>230</sup>. Another study from the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience, published in 2010, shows that loneliness impairs the functioning of the immune system

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<sup>227</sup> Alexandru Puiu, “Rețelele sociale dăunează grav sănătății mintale: care sunt argumentele unui nou studiu” [“Social networks seriously damage mental health: what a new study argues”], August 14, 2019, in *Playtech*, Available at: <https://playtech.ro/2019/retelele-sociale-dauneaza-grav-sanatatii-mintale-studiu/>, Accessed on October 11, 2021.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> Mihaela Stănescu, “De ce este singurătatea la fel de periculoasă ca fumatul” [“Why loneliness is just as dangerous as smoking – new study argues”], September 26, 2013, in *Descoperă.ro*, Available at: [www.descopera.ro/stiinta/11395771-de-ce-este-singuratarea-la-fel-de-periculoasa-ca-fumatul](http://www.descopera.ro/stiinta/11395771-de-ce-este-singuratarea-la-fel-de-periculoasa-ca-fumatul), Accessed on October 23, 2021.

<sup>230</sup> Vivian Manning-Schaffel, (2018), “Americans are lonelier than ever – but ‘Gen Z’ may be the loneliest”, in *NBCNews*, Available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/amp/ncna873101>, Accessed on September 2, 2021.

and promotes various acute and chronic diseases such as arthritis, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease<sup>231</sup>.

- b) Another study by US researchers in 2019, which looked at about 6,600 American teenagers aged 12 to 15, found that the risk of mental illness in teens is directly proportional to the amount of time spent on social media. Mental health problems were assessed using a screening method called GAIN-SS, which identifies behavioral health disorders and severity of symptoms<sup>232</sup>.

### **Yet, when and what was the “trigger”?**

The American psychologist Jean Twenge highlighted in her book called *Igen* that loneliest age group is the young, not the old. This loneliness is emerging and developing in the US when smart mobile phones appear, sometime in 2012<sup>233</sup>:

“Smartphone adoption has led to a fundamental shift in how teens spend their social time, and the growth of smartphones and loneliness has occurred at the same rate between 2012 and 2019”<sup>234</sup>.

The link between mobile phones and the loneliness young people experience is the false promise that mobile phones make through social media apps. In other words, they give us the feeling that we can be connected to each other regardless of the distance between us. This promise is false because the effect has been the opposite: instead of feeling less lonely, young people feel increasingly lonely. A few statistics show just that:

1. Jean Twenge and his collaborators analyzed a study of one million young people around the world and concluded that young people are the loneliest and therefore the most depressed age group<sup>235</sup>:

“Researchers used data from the Programme for International Student Assessment, a survey of over 1 million 15- and 16-year-old students. The survey included a six-item measure of loneliness at school in 2000, 2003, 2012, 2015, and 2018. Before

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<sup>231</sup> Mihaela Stănescu, “De ce este singurătatea la fel de periculoasă ca fumatul” [“Why loneliness is just as dangerous as smoking - new study argues”], May 14, 2013, in *Descoperă.ro*, Available at: [www.descopera.ro/stiinta/11395771-de-ce-este-singuratatea-la-fel-de-periculoasa-ca-fumatul](http://www.descopera.ro/stiinta/11395771-de-ce-este-singuratatea-la-fel-de-periculoasa-ca-fumatul), Accessed on October 23, 2021.

<sup>232</sup> Ro Health Review, “Riscul bolilor mintale la adolescenți, direct proporțional cu timpul petrecut pe rețelele de socializare” [“Risk of mental illness in teenagers directly proportional to time spent on social media”], September 12, 2019, Available at: <https://rohealthreview.ro/riscul-bolilor-mintale-la-adolescenti-direct-proportional-cu-timpul-petrecut-pe-retelele-de-socializare/>, Accessed on October 10, 2021.

<sup>233</sup> Jean Twenge, “Teens Are Lonelier Than Ever. What Do Smartphones Have to Do With It?”, August 10, 2021, in *Institute for Family Studies*, Available at: <https://ifstudies.org/blog/teens-are-lonelier-than-ever-what-do-smartphones-have-to-do-with-it>, Accessed on October 13, 2021.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

2012, the trends had stayed relatively flat. But between 2012 and 2018, nearly twice as many teens displayed high elevated levels of ‘school loneliness’, an established predictor of depression and mental health issues”<sup>236</sup>.

2. “In an earlier study, Twenge had identified 2012 as the year when smartphone ownership passed 50 percent in the United States. Before 2012, loneliness and depression had been unchanged or down for years or decades. But in the early 2010s, loneliness, depression and self-harm among teens sharply increased in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, according to studies”<sup>237</sup>.

3. In *Igen*, the author states that:

“... teen loneliness increased between 2012 and 2018 in 36 out of 37 countries around the world, including in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and North America. The trends appeared nearly everywhere, suggesting a worldwide cause rather than localized issues”<sup>238</sup>.

4. In USA, Young adults are more likely to feel lonelier than older age groups, according to a study from the Office for National Statistics in 2018:

“Across all the measures and categories, the researchers say that people aged over 75 are ‘63 times less likely to report loneliness than those aged 16 to 24 years’”<sup>239</sup>.

### **COVID-19 pandemic – an aggravating factor**

Loneliness is a problem because it is directly linked to health problems, especially mental, but also physical. If we bring the problem up to date, we see that in the context of the pandemic generated by the emergence of the coronavirus, the feeling of loneliness has increased seriously, and young people are still the most affected category. A recent study by researchers at Making Caring Common found that:

“According to May 2020 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences*, survey responses from 237 countries indicate that young people living in individualistic societies report feeling lonelier than older people living in collectivist societies. These data were collected before the pandemic as part of the BBC Loneliness Experiment. Meanwhile, in the United States specifically, 3 of 5 Americans are lonely. A January 2020 survey indicates that, within this Lonely-

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<sup>236</sup> Tara Bahrapour, “Teens around the world are lonelier than a decade ago. The reason may be smartphones”, July 20, 2021, in *Washington Post*, Available at: [www.washingtonpost.com/local/socialissues/teenslonelinesssmartphones/2021/07/20/cde8c866e84e11eb8950d73b3e93ff7f\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/socialissues/teenslonelinesssmartphones/2021/07/20/cde8c866e84e11eb8950d73b3e93ff7f_story.html), Accessed on October 13, 2021.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> Jean Twenge, “Teens Are Lonelier Than Ever. What Do Smartphones Have to Do With It?”, August 10, 2021, in *Institute for Family Studies*, Available at: <https://ifstudies.org/blog/teens-are-lonelier-than-ever-what-do-smartphones-have-to-do-with-it>, Accessed on October 13, 2021.

<sup>239</sup> Sean Coughlan, “Loneliness more likely to affect young people”, April 10, 2018, in *BBC*, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-43711606>, Accessed on October 15, 2021.

Hearts Club, it is Gen Z adults – people who are between the age of 18 to 22 years old – who have the highest average loneliness score<sup>240</sup>.

Also:

“... 36 percent of respondents to a national survey of approximately 950 Americans reported feeling lonely ‘frequently’ or ‘almost all the time or all the time’ in the prior four weeks, compared with 25 percent who recalled experiencing serious issues in the two months prior to the pandemic. Perhaps most striking is that 61 percent of those aged 18 to 25 reported high levels ... The unsettling statistic is even more troubling when combined with June data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showing that 63 percent of young people reported experiencing substantial symptoms of anxiety and depression”<sup>241</sup>.

Last but not least, Executive Director of the Global Partnership to Stop Violence Against Children, Dr. Howard Taylor said “the coronavirus pandemic has caused an unprecedented increase in screen time”<sup>242</sup>. According to UNICEF study in 2020 more than 1.5 billion children and young people were affected by school closures worldwide<sup>243</sup>. Therefore, the advent of smart mobile phones and later the coronavirus pandemic has significantly influenced people's communication. As we have already seen, the most affected group are young people. Of the two major factors that have influenced the amplification of loneliness, we can say that the Covid-19 pandemic has been the worst because it has moved people's interaction almost exclusively online. In other words, dialogue has never been more affected than during this period, and the effects have not been slow to appear.

### WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF DIALOGUE IN A SOCIETY OF LONELINESS?

For Socrates, the aim of life was “self-knowledge”, which is why he often said:

“I have tried persuading each of you to worry less about what you have and more about what you are, so that you may become as virtuous and rational as possible”<sup>244</sup>.

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<sup>240</sup> Sarah Sloat, “Young americans are lonelier than ever, and it's not because of COVID-19”, August 10, 2020, in *Inverse*, Available at: [www.inverse.com/mind-body/young-adult-mental-health-loneliness](http://www.inverse.com/mind-body/young-adult-mental-health-loneliness), Accessed on October 12, 2021.

<sup>241</sup> Colleen Walsh, “Young adults hardest hit by loneliness during pandemic”, February 17, 2021, in *The Harvard Gazette*, Available at: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/02/young-adults-teens-loneliness-mentalhealthcoronaviruscovidpandemic/>, Accessed on October 12, 2021.

<sup>242</sup> „pandemia de coronavirus a provocat creșterea fără precedent a timpului petrecut în fața ecranului”, in UNICEF România, “UNICEF: Copiii sunt expuși unui risc crescut în mediul online în timpul pandemiei de COVID-19” [“UNICEF: Children at increased risk online during COVID19 pandemic”], April 15, 2020 Available at: [www.unicef.org/romania/ro/comunicate-de-presă/unicef-copiii-sunt-expuși-unui-risc-crescut-în-mediul-online-în-timpul](http://www.unicef.org/romania/ro/comunicate-de-presă/unicef-copiii-sunt-expuși-unui-risc-crescut-în-mediul-online-în-timpul), Accessed on October 23, 2021.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> Platon, *Apologia lui Socrate [The Apology of Socrates]*, in *Opere I*, edited by Petru Creția and Constantin Noica, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1976, p. 33.



Therefore, we can understand that first function of dialogue is self-knowledge, reflection, introspection. Much of the loneliness of people today arises from their distance from themselves. Socrates believed that inner dialogue makes people “aware of their ignorance”<sup>245</sup>. These convinces were Socrates’ mission. To fulfill this mission Socrates plays the role of the ignoramus and asks everyone questions<sup>246</sup>. This way is how dialogue with others arises, which is a method of knowledge. We thus understand that the second function of dialogue is the search for truth.

The Socratic dialogue is an “examination of conscience”<sup>247</sup> because it makes you acknowledge your shortcomings and get to know yourself in depth. What is important to note from this perspective is that dialogue is a double exercise, internal and external, with yourself and with the other. Pierre Hadot, stated in this regard that to have a fruitful dialogue there must be a unity between the dialogue with myself and the dialogue with the other<sup>248</sup>:

“(..) only who is capable of a genuine encounter with the other is also capable of a genuine encounter with himself”<sup>249</sup>.

Therefore, beyond the communication you have with yourself and with others, dialogue helps you position yourself correctly in relation to the truth. With other words, dialogue helps you form the right attitude. The attitude is important because it places you correctly in the world.

Why is it important to have dialogue with ourselves? Because it makes possible the self-discovery without which the idea of truth it is not possible. Why is it important to have dialogue with others? Because people, being a social being, cannot live in isolation without becoming ill. For example, in one of his studies, Cacciopo measured brain activity during sleep in several people. He found that lonely people were:

“(..) more prone to a kind of ‘micro-tremors’, which showed that their brains were in a state of alertness even in sleep, perhaps as result of unconscious fears generated by being alone”<sup>250</sup>.

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<sup>245</sup> „conștiința de neștiința lor”, Laurențiu-Sorin Ormenișan, “(Poate fi) Socrate – un model pentru tinerii de azi?”, [(Can) Socrates (be) – a role model for young people today?], s.a., p. 267, in *Altarul Reîntregirii*, Nr. 3, pp. 263–280, Available at: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/viewpdf?id=601866>, Accessed on October 12, 2021.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>249</sup> „numai cine este capabil de o întâlnire autentică cu celălalt este capabil și de o întâlnire autentică cu el însuși” in Pierre Hadot, *Exerciții spirituale și filosofie antică [Spiritual exercises and ancient philosophy]*, Arad, Saint Nectarios Publishing House, 2015, pp. 38–42.

<sup>250</sup> „[Oamenii singuri erau] mai predispuși la un fel de «micro-treziri», ceea ce dovedea că, la ei, creierul era într-o stare de alertă chiar și în somn, poate ca urmare a temerilor inconștiente generate de faptul că erau singuri” in Mihaela Stănescu, “De ce este singurătatea la fel de periculoasă ca fumatul” [“Why loneliness is just as dangerous as smoking – new study argues”], September 26, 2013, in *Descoperă.ro*, Available at: [www.descopera.ro/stiinta/11395771-de-ce-este-singuratarea-la-fel-de-periculoasa-ca-fumatul](http://www.descopera.ro/stiinta/11395771-de-ce-este-singuratarea-la-fel-de-periculoasa-ca-fumatul), Accessed on October 23, 2021.

## CONCLUSIONS

Truth has a dialogical character. In the absence of dialogue man is condemned to isolation. Through dialogue man takes care of himself, but because he is a social being, he also takes care of others. As proof, in the absence of dialogue, dysfunctions appear at a mental, soul, and physical level. Last but not least, the fact that without dialogue people fall ill shows that people, being God's creation, can only live-in truth.

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## THE CULTURAL CENTER – A GUSTIAN ANSWER TO THE ISSUES OF TODAY’S ROMANIAN VILLAGE

Rupe Narcis<sup>251</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*The Romanian village is threatened by challenges similar to those it went through before the imposition of the communist regime. Can the cultural center, the solution conceived by the founder of the Sociological School in Bucharest as a response to the problems of the interwar Romanian village, still respond today? This material offers a possible answer. In the first part, the theoretical thinking on which the cultural centers were built and functioned will be presented. The second part is reserved for the exposition of the economic and demographic problems of today's Romanian village. Then, through an exercise of imagination, it will trace the possible solutions offered by the cultural center in solving them. What can be the contribution to the problem of the deficiency of peasant agriculture, or to the low fertility and emigration of young people from the village?*

**Keywords:** Romanian village, Sociological School of Bucharest, Dimitrie Gusti, village cultural centres, social problems.

### THE GUSTIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE SYSTEM

The University was a constant source of solutions to social problems for Dimitrie Gusti. In his leadership of the Ministry of Public Instruction, Worship and the Arts during the economic crisis (1929–1933), in the establishment of the Village Museum in Bucharest (1936) and in the work of the royal teams to raise villages, the system of social sciences that Dimitrie Gusti discovered was his guide. The village cultural center does not deviate from these rules. Therefore, before defining and characterizing the cultural center, we will set out the theoretical foundation underlying it, *i.e.*, the Gustian system of sciences.

What does the gustian scientific system consist of? The Romanian intellectual integrated sociology into a system of social sciences alongside the science of ethics and politics. At the heart of this system is the concept of the social will. Society is not just an agglomeration of people interacting without joining forces in a common activity. In contrast, for Dimitrie Gusti, society is a chain of groups or social units acting in pursuit of certain ends and using certain means. The driving force of action

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is the social will because it is the social will that motivates the members of society to achieve their goals. By willing together, they act jointly: they found firms, schools, change laws or manage a state's foreign policy:

“The whole conception [of Dimitrie Gusti] is centered on the idea of the will and on the doubted manner of its existence as a phenomenon and as a process, as a ready-made fact and as a power of doing”<sup>252</sup>.

Only together can sociology, ethics and politics study the will as a “ready-made act” and “as the power to do”. Sociology investigates people’s actual shared actions. Ethics examines the ideals that today’s society will act according to in the future, and politics discovers the ways to achieve these ideals. The circuit also works in reverse. The future action taken will be the object of study of sociology, ethics and politics:

“Social life is, in its essence, will, and everyone will generate a tendency, an attitude towards the thing explained, the conclusions of sociology are, in their turn, the object of judgment for a superordinate science of ethical and political valorisation, the former establishing the ends, the latter the means by which social life is modified towards its ideals, is reformed [and vice versa]. Once social reform has been achieved, its outcome becomes once again an object of observation for the particular social sciences, which provide new material for explaining sociology; and its conclusions provide, in turn, ethics with new material for judging”<sup>253</sup>.

Social reality is an object of study in Gustian sociology. How does it differ from other realities? The uniqueness of social reality is provided by the relative independence of the human will from the surrounding world:

“Does social reality differ from the surrounding non-social world? By the relative independence of the human will from the surrounding world, in other words, by its voluntary character”<sup>254</sup>.

Social groups or units compose the social reality which is economically, spiritually, legally and politically manifested and which is cosmically, biologically, psychologically and historically conditioned. In addition, Gustian sociology

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<sup>252</sup> „Întreaga concepție [a lui Dimitrie Gusti] e centrată pe ideea de voință și pe îndoita modalitate de existență a acesteia ca fenomen și ca proces, ca faptă gata făcută și ca putere făptuitoare” Mircea Vulcănescu, *Școala Sociologică de la București [Sociological School of Bucharest]*, Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1998 [1936], p. 46.

<sup>253</sup> „viața socială este, în esența ei, voință, și orice voință generează o tendință, o atitudine față de lucrul explicat, concluziile sociologiei sunt, la rândul lor, obiect de judecată pentru o știință supraordonată a valorificării etica și politica, prima stabilind scopurile, a doua mijloacele prin care viața socială se modifică în sensul idealurilor ei, se reformează [și invers]. Reforma socială odată realizată, rezultatul ei devine din nou obiect de constatare pentru științele sociale particulare, care oferă un nou material de explicație sociologiei; iar concluziile acesteia oferă, la rândul lor, eticei un nou material de apreciere” in *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>254</sup> „Prin ce se deosebește realitatea socială de lumea înconjurătoare nesocială? Prin relativa independență a voinței omenești de lumea înconjurătoare, cu alte cuvinte prin caracterul ei voluntar” in Dimitrie Gusti, *Cunoaștere și acțiune în serviciul națiunii [Knowledge and action in the service of the nation]*, Bucharest, Royal Cultural Foundation “Prince Charles”, 1939, p. 15.

examines the social processes (changes undergone by society in a given period) and the future trends of society:

“In short, our system of sociology states: 1) Society is composed of social units, i.e., groups of people bound together by an active organisation and a spiritual interdependence; 2) The essence of society is the social will; 3) The social will performs an economic and a spiritual activity, regulated by a legal and a political activity. 4) The social will is conditioned in its manifestations cosmically, biologically, psychologically and historically. 5) The changes undergone by society during time through its activities and under the influence of conditioning factors are called social processes; 6) The beginnings of development which we can capture in the present reality and thus predict with some precision are called social trends”<sup>255</sup>.

In the Gustian system of social sciences, the ideal of man and society are intertwined. For the individual, the good is to become a creative personality. It is through the creative activity of personalities that the ethical wish of societies can be fulfilled - to actualise to the maximum the possibilities offered by the frames.

“[To become a] maximum personality, creator of culture is, according to Dimitrie Gusti, the supreme ideal of individuals and of collectivities, to which all their activities must be subordinated”<sup>256</sup>.

“The ideal, consisting of the maximum development of all the possibilities offered by the frameworks of social life, in a living, value-creating, self-conscious unit, sympathetic to others and framed in the material and spiritual universe in which it lives ...”<sup>257</sup>.

What are the means for achieving this ideal? In the Gustian system, the answer is provided by the scientific field of politics. Politics notes that the means are specific to social units and are derived from a sociological study. Social reform (the set of means used to achieve the ideal) in the Gustian conception must be integral, i.e., it must consider all aspects of a problem.

“The law of social parallelism shows that social reality cannot be dissected into separate logs except for scientific analysis. The facts themselves form a whole with

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<sup>255</sup> „Pe scurt, sistemul nostru de sociologie afirmă: 1) Societatea se compune din unități sociale, adică din grupări de oameni legați între ei printr-o organizare activă și o interdependență sufletească; 2) Esența societății este voința socială; 3) Voința socială depune manifestări de viață: o activitate economică și una spirituală, reglementate de o activitate juridică și de o activitate politică. 4) Voința socială este condiționată în manifestările ei cosmic, biologic, psihic și istoric. 5) Schimbările suferite de societate în decursul timpului prin activitățile ei și sub înrăurirea factorilor condiționați, le numim procese sociale; 6) Începuturile de dezvoltare pe care le putem surprinde în realitatea prezentă și deci le putem prevedea cu o oarecare precizie, se numesc tendințe sociale” in *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>256</sup> „[Să devină o] personalitatea maximală, creatoare de cultură este, după Dimitrie Gusti, idealul suprem al indivizilor ca și al colectivităților, căruia trebuie să i se subordoneze toate activitățile acestora” in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 56

<sup>257</sup> „Idealul, constând în dezvoltarea maximă a tuturor posibilităților oferite de cadrele vieții sociale, într-o unitate vie, creatoare de valori, conștientă de sine, simpatizantă cu alții și încadrată în universul material și spiritual în care trăiește ...” *Ibid.*, p. 58.

an autonomous structure and a social will of their own. This allows us to draw the conclusion that social reform will have to wait, or be integral in terms of the whole of the forms of social life and its determining causes, or remain sterile”<sup>258</sup>.

Every social problem has an economic, spiritual, historical, psychological, etc. dimension and cannot be solved without intervention in all of them.

## DEFINITION AND BACKGROUND

The cultural center is part of the framework designed by Dimitrie Gusti to improve the village and is defined as follows:

“... a working unit, made up and run by locals, villagers, intellectuals and sons of the village who had left the village. It is the executive body of the Social Service. The aim of the Cultural Center is to help, strengthen and deepen the action of the Church, the School and the State authorities. It will coordinate and unify all the activities carried out in the village by the State and social bodies through harmonious development”<sup>259</sup>.

The idea of an organization that would unite the forces of the village in a common ideal was born as a result of the Gustian system of sociology, ethics and politics and the efforts of the royal teams in the development of the villages, more precisely so that the three-month effort of these teams would not be in vain. Guided by the Gustian system, they studied the village according to the monographic method in the first month, and in the following two they tried to solve the problems discovered by their studies. The teams were part of the Royal Cultural Foundation “Prince Charles”, whose founder was King Charles II. They were made up of specialists and students. Thanks to their cooperation, the knowledge of the village became integral and the social reform total. Once the campaigns were over, there was a danger that the “new spirit” brought by the teams to the village would be lost. This danger, along with the two reasons mentioned above, formed the basis of the decision to build cultural centres. The foundations of the cultural center were laid during the campaigns. Team members were asked during the campaigns to look for future members and try to familiarise them with the programme. The cultural centers attracted the village elites: teachers, priests and “leading peasants”.

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<sup>258</sup> „Legea paralelismului social ne demonstrează că realitatea socială nu poate fi disecată în trunchiuri separate decât numai pentru analiza științifică. Faptele însăși formează un tot cu o structură autonomă și cu o voință socială proprie. Aceasta ne permite să tragem concluzia că reforma socială va trebui să se aștepte, sau să fie integrală în ceea ce privește ansamblul formelor de viață socială și a cauzelor sale determinante, sau să rămâne sterilă” in Dimitrie Gusti, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>259</sup> „Căminul Cultural este o unitate de lucru, alcătuită și condusă de localnici, săteni, intelectuali și fii ai satului plecați din sat. El este organul de execuție al Serviciului Social. Scopul Căminului Cultural este de a ajuta, întări și adânci acțiunea Bisericii, a Școalei și a autorităților de Stat. El va coordona și unifica toate activitățile desfășurate în sat de organele de Stat și sociale, prin dezvoltarea armonică.” in *Ibid.*, pp. 255–256.



“... all the leaders of the village who have distinguished themselves by their prowess, regardless of the times and what separates them politically or personally”<sup>260</sup>.

To ensure that no aspect of the village was left behind by social reform, action was taken in four directions simultaneously, in the culture of health, mind, work and soul:

“The branches, in which a cultural center was established, were aimed at the four areas of culture: health, mind, work and soul: The branches, in which a cultural center works, one for the care of health, the second for improving work and economic conditions, the third for the growth of ancestral faith and good manners, and the last, the fourth, for the development of knowledge of all kinds, customs, or the gains of school, are also not merely casual divisions, being able in one place to be embraced only one and disregarded the others, according to power or only according to good will”<sup>261</sup>.

In 1939, there were 2000 cultural centers across Romania. The vast majority were managed by teachers and rural officials, and 400 by peasants. The Royal Teams' work was the biggest effort to modernise the village during the interwar period. By the autumn of 1939, the royal student teams had carried out 220 work campaigns in 150 villages. Among their achievements are: 310.000 medical consultations, 15.000 analyses, 12.000 injections, 70.000 veterinary consultations, the creation of 150 nurseries, 250 agricultural courses, 26.000 cooking and tailoring lessons, 200 building projects (homes, baths, churches), the organisation of 3,000 feasts etc.<sup>262</sup>.

## PROBLEMS OF ROMANIA'S VILLAGES

### 1. The Romanian village: definition and current situation

A village is a reality with many definitions in sociology. One relevant definition of the village was conceived at the end of the 20th century by M. Giacobbi and J. P. Roux (1990):

“... micro-society ... [with] four characteristics: 1) it is a limited, restricted, small, relatively autonomous space in which a constellation of related families, accompanied by school and church, operates in more or less conflictual relationships; 2) a certain economic specificity resulting from the predominance of

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<sup>260</sup> „... toți fruntașii satului care s-au distins prin destoinicia lor, indiferent de ori și ce i-ar despărți politicește sau personal” in *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>261</sup> „Ramurile, în care lucrează un Cămin, una pentru îngrijirea sănătății, a doua pentru îmbunătățirea muncii și a stărilor economice, a treia pentru creșterea credinței strămoșești și a bunelor purtări și cea din urmă, a patra, pentru dezvoltarea cunoștințelor de tot felul, datini sau câștiguri ale școlii, nu sunt nici ele numai niște împărțire întâmplătoare, putând fi într-un loc îmbrățișată una singură și nesocotite celelalte, după puteri sau numai după bunul plac” in *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>262</sup> Anton Golopenția, *Opere Complete [Complete Works]*, vol. I, Bucharest, Enciclopedic Publishing House, 2002.

agricultural activities and the coincidence between the peasant household and the economic enterprise; 3) relationships of acquaintance, friendship marked by customs and rituals; 4) the stability of social relations and the perception of a community identity”<sup>263</sup>.

In the case of the Romanian village, the third characteristic is missing. The peasant household is not equal to the capitalist enterprise. The Romanian peasant produces according to need, the enterprise is profit-oriented:

“From a social-economic viewpoint, the peasantry is a social segment characterised by family management of the means of production. The peasantry owns land without being rentiers (although in some cases they may rent their property) and without seeking a profit from their land, *i.e.*, they are not a capitalist social category”<sup>264</sup>.

The productive function is present regardless of its direction (towards needs or profit). Therefore, instead of the third characteristic, we can say that the Romanian peasantry tends towards a fusion between production and consumption, a fusion recorded in another definition of the village:

“In a synthesis, Mucchielli defines the rural space by the low population density ... [and by] the tendency of a fusion of the family group with the production group and the consumption group”<sup>265</sup>.

The exposure of the village to modernity, which began before the Second World War and followed by the establishment of the communist regime, changed the basic village structures. Today, the survival of this social unit is in danger due to poor economic development and lack of infrastructure (sewage, roads, water, gas, etc.). At the other end of the range are villages that have developed financially but have moved away from their own traditions and customs<sup>266</sup>.

The employment structure in the village is no longer homogeneous. In addition to peasants, there are workers with non-local incomes (pensioners, communal workers and commuters)<sup>267</sup>. Despite these, this structure remained

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<sup>263</sup> Michèle Giacobbini and Jean - Pierre Roux, *Initiation à la sociologie. Les grands thèmes, la méthode, les grands sociologues [Introduction to Sociology. The main themes, the method, the great sociologists]*, Paris, Hatier Publishing House, 1990, p. 93.

<sup>264</sup> „Din punct de vedere social-economic, țărănimea este o pătură socială caracterizată prin gestiunea familială a mijloacelor de producție. Țărănimea este *proprietară* fără să fie *rentieră* (deși în anumite situații își poate închiria proprietatea) și fără să urmărească obținerea unui *profit* de pe pământul său, adică nu este o categorie socială capitalistă” in Radu Baltasiu, “Țărănimea” [“Peasantry”], in Ilie Bădescu and Ozana Cucu-Oancea (coord.), *Dicționar de sociologie rurală [Rural sociology dictionary]*, Bucharest, Little Wallachia Publishing House, 2004, p. 612.

<sup>265</sup> „Într-o sinteză, Mucchielli definește spațiul rural prin slaba densitate a populației ... [și prin] *tendința unei fuziuni a grupului familial cu grupul de producție și grupul de consum.*” Roger Mucchielli, *Psycho-sociologie d'une commune rurale*, Paris, Entreprise Modern d'Édition – Libraires Technique, Les Éditions ESF, 1976 apud *Ibid.*, p. 454.

<sup>266</sup> Flavius Mihalache, *Mediul Rural între 1990 și 2020 [The Rural Medium between 1990 and 2020]*, Cluj, Cluj University Press Publishing House, 2020, pp. 66–67.

<sup>267</sup> Maria Mitrică, „Interviu Academicianul Ilie Bădescu: Puterea de dănuire a satelor românești e astăzi afectată de marile presiuni istorice [„Interview Academician Ilie Bădescu: The

predominantly agricultural until 2016. For the first time since 1990, this year, the number of non-agricultural workers in the village exceeded the number of peasants<sup>268</sup>. However, the reality is different in southern and eastern Romania, where agriculture continues to be the main economic activity of the villages<sup>269</sup>.

## 2. The current issues of the village

Based on the law of sociological parallelism, the problems of the village occur in each dimension of social reality, made up of frames and manifestations. In the absence of monographic research in Romanian villages, we cannot understand their problems in detail. Therefore, we will focus on the main problems, which are economic and demographic.

Ilie Bădescu, member of the Romanian Academy, drawing on the studies of the interwar economist Virgil Madgearu, identified the following problems of peasant agriculture after 1990:

- “1) The ‘atomisation of property and peasant households’ is the main handicap to the modern organisation of labour and to the increase in purchasing power through the excessive fractioning of property;
- 2) An assemblage of negative connections [derived from the first]: land fragmentation, chaotic land sale or lease prices without organic correlations, out-migration, spread of secondary agricultural occupations, low wages, low farm income rates and misery, declining pasture, grazing and sheep herds, declining cattle herds and declining gross incomes;
- 3) *Biological terror*. Very low income in relation to consumption needs and a low quality of life. The poor distribution of agriculture is reflected in malnutrition of the peasantry, widespread chronic diseases and very high infant mortality ...;
- 4) *Forced self-sufficiency*. The separation of agriculture from the other main economic branch as industry ....;
- 5) *Forced under-use*. Labour organisation and technologies were very much weaker. This problem is reflected in the "incomplete use of peasant labour power" [even agricultural tools, as Radu Baltasiu highlights, cannot be used satisfactorily because of the excessive fragmentation of property]...;
- 6) *Forced demonetisation*. Excessive taxation and the absence of a coherent credit system is another difficult problem facing Romanian agriculture... the farmer has no money because there is no adequate rural credit to make money circuits accessible to him ...;
- 7) *Forced depreciation* of the Romanian agricultural products, and, therefore, of agriculture. Under these conditions, the value of the Romanian agricultural product

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resilience of Romanian villages is today affected by great historical pressures”], June 23, 2019, in *Agerpress*, Available at: [www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2019/07/23/interviu-academicianul-ilie-badescu-puterea-de-dainuire-a-satelor-romanesti-e-astazi-afectata-de-marile-presiuni-istorice--345071](http://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2019/07/23/interviu-academicianul-ilie-badescu-puterea-de-dainuire-a-satelor-romanesti-e-astazi-afectata-de-marile-presiuni-istorice--345071), Accessed on: August 16, 2021.

<sup>268</sup> Flavius Mihalache, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

is very low, in relation to the efforts made by the peasants to produce it and to the value of agricultural production in other countries...;

8) Forced isolation of rural areas and the return of migration as a survival technique... The reaction [to the seventh problem] has been swift: the abandonment of place, a phenomenon attested to by the extremely high rate of rural emigration, the most threatening demographic phenomenon facing Romania at the beginning of this millennium...<sup>270</sup>.

What are the demographic problems of the village? Ageing is not a problem of the village, but of the country. The ageing rate is higher in urban areas than in rural areas<sup>271</sup>. The village faces low fertility rates, *i.e.*, the phenomenon of “childlessness”<sup>272</sup>. Low fertility rates, together with emigration, have also led to the “de-ageing” (absence of young people from the village) of the Romanian village.

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<sup>270</sup> „1) «Pulverizarea proprietăților și exploatărilor țărănești», constituie principalul handicap pentru organizarea modernă a muncii și pentru creșterea puterii de cumpărare, prin fărâmițarea excesivă a proprietăților;

2) Un ghem de conexiuni negative [derivate din prima problemă]: «fărâmițarea pământului, prețurile de vânzare sau de arendare a pământului haotice, fără corelații organice, emigrarea, răspândirea ocupațiilor agricole anexe, salarii joase, raporturi de venituri agricole scăzute și mizerie, regresul izlazarilor, pășunilor și ogoarelor, diminuare stocului de vite și micșorarea veniturilor brute» ...;

3) *Teroarea biologică. Venituri foarte reduse în raport cu necesitățile de consum. Calitatea scăzută a vieții.* Nivelul redus al redistribuției agricole se reflectă în subalimentarea țăranimii, răspândirea largă a bolilor cronice și mortalitate infantilă foarte ridicată ...;

4) *Autarhia forțată. Ruptura agriculturii de cealaltă principală ramură economică, de industrie ...;*

5) *Subutilizare forțată. Organizarea muncii și tehnologiile sunt foarte precare.* Această problemă se reflectă în «utilizarea incompletă a muncii țărănești» (uneltele agricole însele, subliniază Radu Baltasiu, nu pot fi utilizate în mod satisfăcător datorită fragmentării excesive a proprietății) ...;

6) *Demonetizarea forțată. Fiscalitatea excesivă și absența unui sistem de credit coerent* sunt o altă problemă dificilă cu care se confruntă agricultura românească ... săteanul n-are bani căci nu există un credit rural adecvat, care să-i facă accesibile circuitele monetare ...;

7) *Deprecierea forțată* a produsului agricol românesc și deci a agriculturii. În aceste condiții, valoarea produsului agricol românesc este foarte scăzută, în raport cu eforturile depuse de țărani pentru realizarea acestuia și cu valoarea producțiilor agricole ale altor țări ...;

8) *Izolarea forțată a ruralului și revenirea bejeniei ca tehnică de supraviețuire ...* Reacția [la problema șapte] a fost rapidă: părăsirea locului, fenomen atestat de rata extrem de ridicată a emigrării rurale, cel mai amenințător fenomen demografic dintre cele cu care se confruntă România la acest început de mileniu ...;

9) *Rolul statului. Statul fiscal ...* În locul statului-gospodar atent cu resursele și deci bun manager al proceselor, statul actual este un stat mai degrabă oligarhic, interesat precumpănitor de interesele păturilor superpuse, asupra țării reale aruncând o plasă de fiscalități sufocante, care preschimbă aparatul statului într-o simplă povară” in Ilie Bădescu and Ozana Cucu-Oancea, Gheorghe Șișeștean, *Tratat de sociologie rurală [Treatise on rural sociology]*, Bucharest, Little Wallachia Publishing House, 2009, pp. 12–13.

<sup>271</sup> Maria Mitrică, “Interviu Academicianul Ilie Bădescu: Puterea de dănuirea a satelor românești e astăzi afectată de marile presiuni istorice [“Interview Academician Ilie Bădescu: The resilience of Romanian villages is today affected by great historical pressures”], June 23, 2019, in *Agerpress*, Available at: [www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2019/07/23/interviu-academicianul-ilie-badescu-puterea-de-dainuire-a-satelor-romanesti-e-astazi-afectata-de-marile-presiuni-istorice--345071](http://www.agerpres.ro/cultura/2019/07/23/interviu-academicianul-ilie-badescu-puterea-de-dainuire-a-satelor-romanesti-e-astazi-afectata-de-marile-presiuni-istorice--345071), Accessed on: August 16, 2021 .

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

Ilie Bădescu considers that the latter is a more pressing problem than, because the migration of young people from the countryside brings changes in the movement of the whole family. A young married couple who has emigrated are attracting their parents to their migration destination. For all around, young people orbit around their parents according to the law of genealogical gravity<sup>273</sup>.

Investments in public utility infrastructure (sewage, water, gas, roads) have not been effective, although they existed after 1990. The main rural development programmes implemented (National Programme for Local Development – PNDL and National Rural Development Programme – PNDR) have not brought the expected results<sup>274</sup>.

In summary, the village today faces: depopulation, lack of economic development of agricultural activities, emigration and lack of state interest in its problems.

### **3. The cultural center – a possible solution to solve today's problems of the village**

This study is limited to the analysis of some answers that can be given by the cultural center in the problems faced by the Romanian village. The list of beneficial effects remains open. It could not be otherwise because the cultural center is designed to respond to local problems, of a single village for example, not to more general problems. Each village (being a social unit) has an unknown potential waiting to be used to solve the challenges it faces:

“Scientific, explanatory research implies, as a necessary corollary, appreciative, normative research of reality, confronting the possibilities offered by the frameworks with the actualization achieved through manifestations. The ethical ideal consists of the maximum development of all possibilities, and all research ends with a call to action”<sup>275</sup>.

Therefore, potentially, the village owns the solutions to its problems. The aim of the centre is to discover and implement them in an organised way. Below, we investigate the focus’s response to the village's problems outlined in the previous chapter.

The cultural center has failed to attract the attention of Romania’s political elites to solve the problems of the village. Instead, the cultural home would counterbalance the lack of interest of the elites “above” by increasing the interest of the elites “below”, *i.e.*, those in the village. By involving them, the cultural center would become an environment in which they could make the most of their initiatives,

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> Flavius Mihalache, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>275</sup> „Orice cercetare științifică, explicativă, presupune, ca un corolar necesar, o cercetare apreciativă, normativă, a realității, confruntare a posibilităților oferite de cadre cu actualizarea înfăptuită prin manifestări. Idealul etic constând în dezvoltarea maximă a tuturor posibilităților, fiecare cercetare se încheie cu o chemare la acțiuni” in Mircea Vulcănescu, *op. cit.* p. 101.

which, although well-intentioned, are usually unsupported. In this way, the opportunity cost of rural development programmes implemented by the Romanian state after 1990 would decrease. A short definition of the opportunity cost is:

“... the potential benefits an individual, investor, or business misses out on when choosing one alternative over another”<sup>276</sup>.

Without organised local initiative, the village will not find development solutions, and without development solutions inspired by local reality, it is condemned to pay the opportunity costs (lack of utilities – sewerage, gas, roads, etc.) of inefficient development programmes.

It is hard to believe that young people will not leave the villages if cultural centers are set up. To a small extent, the cultural center can change the attitude that drives people to leave the villages. The mindset of “no future in the countryside” can be countered by setting up agricultural cooperatives. Inherited land is transformed by the agricultural cooperative from a resource of little economic value into a source of livelihood. For young people who are not interested in farming, the cultural center can be a “vocational school” or a place where students can put into practice the knowledge they have acquired at university. In the case of students, involvement in solving community problems will produce solidarity with the village. Solidarity will not prevent them from leaving their home environment, but it will become an argument for their choice to return.

The low fertility of the villagers can be addressed by the cultural center through parental education. Parenting education is part of the activities related to the culture of mind and health. The courses can take the form of mothers with three or four children sharing their experiences with young mothers, for example. In this way, the courses would be all the more strongly appropriated by young people.

What is the cultural center’s response to the villages most pressing economic problems related to agriculture? The answer is not new. Given that peasant agriculture returned to its old problems after the communist fracture, the solution promoted by the cultural centers of the inter-war period – the economic cooperative – is still valid today. What is the contribution of the agricultural cooperatives to the problems of peasant agriculture listed in the previous chapter?

- a) In the problem of small-scale farming, cooperatives can unify them to produce on a large scale.
- b) The separation of agriculture from the other main economic branch, industry. United in cooperatives, peasants may be able to meet the demand for raw materials that industry from Romania has.
- c) Excessive taxation and lack of a rural functioning credit system – A cooperative is more likely than an individual enterprise to get loans for farming. Credit is then converted into improved operating technologies.

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<sup>276</sup> Jason Fernando, “Opportunity Cost Formula, Calculation, and What It Can Tell You”, August 29, 2021, in *Investopedia*, Available at: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/opportunitycost.asp>, Accessed on: August 16, 2021.

- d) Forced depreciation of the Romanian agricultural product – Cooperatives increase the value of agricultural products by investing in farming technologies and by building new processing capacities.
- e) The village economy is not integrated into the urban economy, migration has become a survival technique – Integrating the village into the urban economy would be possible through cooperatives as they could support the demand of the cities.

### IN THE END

This study illustrates that the Bucharest School of Sociology is a model for sociologists in Romania who believe that the science to which it is dedicated can solve a country's problems. Dimitrie Gusti teaches us that the sociologist succeeds in being useful to the society he studies only if he enters the field of ethics and politics. The approach to ethics and politics can only be made starting from sociology because sustainable solutions, such as the Village Cultural Center, can only be found through a deep understanding of social reality. Thus, the Cultural Center was not an utopia, imposed by the state through the Social Service Law of 1938, but a requirement of the needs of the most widespread Romanian reality of the interwar period – the peasant civilization.

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