

POLIS

REVISTĂ DE ȘTIINȚE POLITICE

Volum XIII, Nr. 2 (48), Serie nouă, martie-mai 2025

Revista POLIS
©Facultatea de Științe Politice și Administrative
Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași
ISSN 12219762

SUMAR

EDITORIAL	7
Romania and Romanians in the eyes of Albania	7
Oltzen GRIPSHI, Sabin DRĂGULIN	
ALBANIA. REPERE ISTORICE, CULTURALE ȘI POLITICE	23
Where's the sword, there's religion: Local Elites, Ottomans, and Islamization Among Albanians during the 15th Century	23
Caka EDUARD	
The iconographic school of Berat	39
Adriana QAFA, Andrea LLUKANI	
Travellers in Albania during the first half of the XIX Century	59
Lida MIRAJ	
Albania and Albanians in foreign graphic novels	109
Oltzen GRIPSHI	
The poetry of dritero agolli has left deep traces in Albanian tradition	127
Rovena VATA MIKELI	
The influence of cinema in Albanian-speaking territories: from its beginnings to her children, the unrecognized first Albanian film	143
Milkani ENO	
Can the last grip of frost be chipped away? Albanian theater in the communist aftermath	159
Anxhela ÇIKOPANO HOXHA, Albert ÇELOALIAJ	
The right to information in Albania	183
Joniada MUSARAJ, Edvana TIRI, Blerina MUSKAJ	
Public interventions and urban evolution in Tirana (2005–2025): the case of the 1.60insurgent space project	191
Stefano ROMANO	

Studies on the relations between Albanian and Romanian as an indicator of the connections between the two peoples and the advancement of knowledge of the common language and history	209
Manjola ZAÇELLARI	
Echoes of the past: folklore connections between Albania and Romania	221
Drita ISUFAJ, Viola ISUFAJ	
The history of two Romanian artworks	229
Suzana VARVARICA KUKA	
INTERVIU	245
Interview with Mr. Minister Taulant Balla, Minister of State for Relations with Parliament in Albania	245
Interviu realizat de Sorin BOCANCEA	
Interview with Ms. Enkeleda Mërkuri, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Romania	249
Interviu realizat de Ioana CRISTEA DRĂGULIN	
VARIA	257
Diplomația culturală franceză și zorii științei politice din România	257
Cristian PREDA	
„Mintea captivă” nu este doar titlul unei cărți	297
Anton CARPINSCHI	
Marxism fără totalitarism. Noi marxisme, noi ficțiuni?	309
Dragoș DRAGOMAN	
Justificare ideologică și discurs ficțional în economia planificată centralizat	331
Otilia BĂLINIȘTEANU, Cristian MANOLACHI, Gabriel MURSA	
Imperii în frământare	345
Mădălina Virginia ANTONESCU	
Political Security. <i>Idealistic product or concrete reality?</i>	361
Adrian GHENADE	
EVENIMENT	377
Dezbateră Fenomenul tehnologiilor autonome	377
Conferința Internațională <i>Mens sana in corpore sano</i>	381
Dezbateră Elitele politice la rotativa istoriei. Alegerile din 2024	387
Secțiune realizată de Sorin BOCANCEA, Andrei CUCU și Lavinia PRUTEANU	

RECENZII	391
Jean-François Braunstein, <i>Religia woke. Cum a căzut pradă Occidentul unei mișcări iraționale</i>	391
Gelu SABĂU	
Cătălin Augustin Stoica, <i>Turul doi care n-a fost. Autopsia sumară a unui moment electoral (sperăm unic)</i>	399
Ciprian Constantin IFTIMOAEI	
Cristian Preda (coord.), <i>Cum a rămas România fără președinte ales. 7 răspunsuri posibile</i>	409
Ionela GAVRIL	
Daniel Humelnicu, <i>Arbitrajul privat intern în reglementarea actualului Cod de procedură civilă al României</i>	417
Cristian BOCANCEA	
Kati Marton, <i>Doamna Cancelar: Remarcabila odisee a Angelei Merkel. Angela Merkel, Libertate. Amintiri 1954 - 2021</i>	423
Bogdan GHEORGHITĂ	
Notes about the Authors	429
Instrucțiuni pentru autori	443
Instructions to authors	446

EDITORIAL

Romania and the romanians in the eyes of Albania

Oltzen GRIPSHI
Sabin DRĂGULIN

Abstract: *This editorial/research paper explores the historical, cultural, and political relations between Albania and Romania, with a particular focus on how Romania and the Romanian people have been perceived within Albanian historical and cultural memory. The ties between the two nations have been built upon a solid foundation of friendship, cooperation, and mutual respect bonds that have withstood the test of time and various historical challenges. In this context, Romania has not merely been regarded as a neighboring country within a geopolitically and politically complex region, but as a significant actor in the internal developments of Albanian society, especially during crucial periods such as national formation, the support of Albanian Renaissance (Rilindja) activists in the quest for Albania's independence, and cultural emancipation, including the establishment of the first Albanian-language newspapers in Bucharest.*

The study examines the role played by Romanian institutions particularly those in the fields of education and culture in supporting Albanian intellectuals and students, and the impact this support had on the formation of the Albanian national elite in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Additionally, it addresses the political dimension of Albanian-Romanian relations in the broader context of efforts to preserve national identity and affirm Albanian statehood on the international stage.

Through an interdisciplinary analysis grounded in historical sources, archival documents, and relevant literature, this paper aims to highlight the importance of these bilateral relations in Albania's development, while also contributing to a broader understanding of inter-Balkan relations and cultural interconnectedness in South-eastern Europe.

Keywords: *Albania, Romania, culture, Albanians, Aromanians, Vlachs, history, art, politics.*

The relations between the Albanian and Romanian peoples have a long and often intertwined history over the centuries, built on feelings of

friendship, cooperation and mutual respect. In the Albanian historical and cultural memory, Romania has not only been seen as a neighboring coun-

try in a region with a complicated fate, but also as a cultural, educational and political partner that has had a considerable influence on shaping some aspects of Albanian development, especially in important periods of our national history.

I. Romania in Albanian historiography

The bilateral relations between the two peoples, the Romanian and the Albanian, are very distant in the twilight of time. Albanians are descendants of the Illyrians and Romanians are descendants of the Dacians, who according to the Romanian polymath Nicolae Iorga: *“The earliest ancestors of the Romanians (Dacians) were the Illyrians themselves, aboriginal population of the Balkan Peninsula and the Carpathians, where only the Transylvanian Sarmatians, who contained Slavic elements, represented in smaller numbers a foreign race. The Illyrians lay on the Adriatic coast and Rome had to fight a difficult battle to overcome the fierce resistance of the Illyrian kings such as Teuta, Agron, etc., from the Illyrians the Romanians inherited most of their culture and folk art, the importance of which has only just begun to be appreciated”*¹.

The Gjika dynasty is a *historicum momentum* of Albanian princes at the head of two provinces of Romania; Wallachia and Moldavia.

One of the most prominent Albanian families that had an important political role in the present-day territories of Romania was that of

the Ghica dynasty. The founder of the political branch of the family was Gjergj Gjika (Gheorghe Ghica, 1600–1664), who settled in Moldavia and managed to become ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, to be later appointed prince of Moldavia during the years 1658–1660². His son, Grigor Gjika I (Grigore Ghica I) would be the heir to the Moldavian throne, while his grandson, Matei Gjika (Matei Ghica) served as dragoman of the Sublime Porte, playing a key role in diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. Mateu's son, Grigor Gjika II (Grigore Ghica II), took over Moldavia again in 1726 and later became Prince of Wallachia in 1733³.

Other members of the Gjika dynasty, such as Skarlat Gjika (Scarlat Ghica), Aleksandër Gjika (Alexandru Ghica), Grigori III (Grigore III) and Grigori IV (Grigore IV), continued to rule the Romanian principalities until the Russian military intervention in 1828–1834. During this period, Aleksandër Gjika II held the title of Prince and then Regent of Wallachia until 1858, representing one of the last figures of this dynasty of Albanian origin in the local government of Romania before the unification of the principalities⁴ into a single Romanian constitutional monarchy on March 13, 1881.

Early modern documents attest to a significant Albanian presence in the territories of present-day Romania. According to a report by the Habsburg Empire, in 1595 about 15 000 Albanians were allowed to settle north of the Danube River, marking one of the

earliest waves of Albanian migration to the northeastern Balkans⁵. By 1628, an organized Albanian community had been established in Bucharest, most notably Vasil Lupu (Vasile Lupu), an Albanian originally from the city of Kavaja⁶, who ascended to the throne of Moldavia in 1634 and ruled until 1653⁷.

During this period and beyond, Albanians in present-day Romania were known in local terminology as *Arbănasi*, a term that derives from the Albanian self-designation “arbër” and also as *Arnăuți*, a form borrowed from Ottoman Turkish (*Arnavut*) referring to Albanians⁸.

The Albanian community experienced further expansion during the Phanariot period (1711–1821), when many Albanians were integrated into the commercial and social life of Wallachia. They opened up economic activities, especially in the retail and confectionery sectors⁹. In Bucharest alone, in 1820, around 90 merchants from *Arnavutköy*^[tr] (an Albanian neighborhood in Istanbul) were registered as owning confectionery shops. Albanians also enjoyed a special status as elite bodyguards of the Wallachian princes, serving as part of the personal security structures and the military guard¹⁰.

In this long historical, cultural, political and bilateral journey between Albania and Romania, the most significant historical period to be highlighted is the one that has marked the most, which is related to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. A historical period when

Albanians fought for national awareness and independence from the Ottoman Empire, Romania served as an important refuge for Albanian patriots of that time. Bucharest, which in Albanian means “It is beautiful”, became a center where the most famous figures of the Albanian nation such as Sami Frashëri, Jani Vreto, Naum Veqilharxhi and Elena Gjika (Dora d’Istria) had contacts, published works, and acted politically on the Albanian issue, publishing in 1844 the first Albanian dictionary. In 1888, the Albanian intellectual and patriot Visar Dodani founded the first Albanian-language newspaper in Bucharest, entitled “Sqipetari” (*Albanezul*^[ro]), which continued to be published until 1903. 1884 was the year that the well-known Pogradec merchant Nikolla Naçi founded the first Albanian Cultural Society named “Drita”, located in Bucharest, which in its beginnings was composed of representatives of the Romanian community in order not to be noticed by the Ottoman ruling circles in Istanbul. Its leadership, according to contemporary records, included V. A. Ureke as chairman, D. Butkulescu as vice chairman, and Dr. Leonte and M. Deshliu as secretaries, all of Romanian origin. Most of the members of the representative committee were Romanians as well^{11, 12, 13}.

However, in 1889, an important change occurred in the internal structure of the Albanian Cultural Society “Drita”, as a result of the proposal of the Albanian founder Nikolla Naço. Sultan Abdyl Hamiti was declared the “High Protector” of the Society, an act

that gave it a new form of legitimacy and political support in the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, the former president and former vice-president who were Romanians were appointed its honorary members, while the new leaders were elected from among the Albanians: V. Batan became president and Naço himself was appointed vice-president. Thus, the Albanian representation in the governing bodies of the Society became the majority¹⁴.

Moreover, since 1887, “Drita” managed to establish other branches in various cities of Romania such as Braila, Focșani, Calarasi and Marashest. Its main activity was focused on publishing school literature and periodicals in the Albanian language, with the aim of spreading the culture and national language among Albanians outside the homeland. According to article 4 of the Society’s statute, the alphabet used in these publications was the Latin one, specifically the variant used by the temporary “Dituria” of Istanbul, a magazine with wide influence in Albanian intellectual circles of the time^{15, 16}. During this period, the “Drita” society published the most famous works of the great Albanian national poet Naim Frashëri, such as: “*Bagëti e Bujqësi*^[al]” (*Cattle and Agriculture*), a poetic hymn dedicated to the Albanian people and nature (1886), “*Histori e përgjithshme*^[al]” (*General History*, 1886), “*Dituritë*^[al]” (*Knowledge*, 1888), “*Lulet e verës*^[al]” (*Summer Flowers*) (1890), “*Parajsa apo fjala*^[al]” (*Paradise or Word*, 1894), “*Fjalë të urta*” (*Proverbs*, 1894), “*Qerbelaja*^[al]”

(*Qerbelaja*, 1898) and “*Historia e Skënderbeut*^[al]” (*History of Skanderbeg*, 1898).

In 1891, also in Bucharest, the well-known “*Apel à nos frères albanais*^[fr]” was published, of particular importance for Albanian national consciousness, which aimed to awaken national consciousness and mobilize Albanians on the path of emancipation and national unification¹⁷. While in 1897 another newspaper called “*Shqipëria*^[al]” (Albania) was published for the first time, directed by Visar Dodani, while a year later in 1898 another newspaper “*Ylli i Shqipërisë*^[al]” (Star of Albania) was founded, which was distinguished by the fact that it was published in three languages: Albanian, Greek and French. This multilingual approach aimed not only at communicating with Albanian communities with different religious and cultural affiliations, but also at promoting the Albanian cause in the international arena, especially in French-speaking and Greek-speaking European circles^{18, 19}.

Another very important daily in the Albanian language was the publication of the newspaper “*Shqipëria e Re*” (*Albania Nouă*^[ro]), which was founded in 1919 and continued to be published continuously until 1935, as part of the national popular organ with director Mihal Sotir Xoxe. This publicistic initiative aimed to affirm the common Illyrian origin of Albanians and Romanians, as well as to promote political cooperation between the two peoples in the context of their national aspirations for freedom and independ-

ence²⁰. In this sense, Romania was seen as a friendly country, where the Albanian national movement could breathe freely and operate without censorship.

In 1893, the Albanian community in Romania numbered around 30 000 individuals, reflecting a strong presence of Albanians during and after the Ottoman period²¹. In this context, the first movements for Albanian independence began precisely in Romania, led by Albert Gjika, who as heir to the Gjika dynasty claimed to ascend to the throne of the kingdom of Albania after independence, thus accelerating Albanian national aspirations. The movement had an important development in 1912, when a pan-Albanian congress was held in Bucharest, chaired by Ismail Qemali. That congress served to approve the first resolution that paved the way for the national consciousness of Albanians for Albania's independence from the Ottoman Empire²².

A key figure during the year of independence was Aleksandër Stavre Drenova (Asdreni), an emigrant from Korça to Bucharest, who was the lyricist of the Albanian national anthem, "*Hymni i Flamurit*^[al]" (Hymn of Flag). This anthem, which expresses the national aspirations of the Albanians, was first sung to the notes of the Romanian composer Ciprian Porumbescu, who adapted the music to express the Albanian unity in a single and indivisible nation²³.

After Albania was annexed by the Ottoman Empire, among the first countries to recognize its independ-

ence in 1913 was Romania. Meanwhile, on December 16 of the same year, Romania established diplomatic relations with Albania. The recognition of Albania's independence by Romania marked an important historical act in the bilateral political and cultural relations between Albanians and Romanians²⁴. The well-known Albanian poets Viktor Eftimiu and Lasgush Poradeci would be the two central figures in the spread and support of Albanian culture and identity in Romania²⁵.

Other central periods in this fraternal relationship between the two peoples are those of the reign of King Zog I and later that of the communist regime, where ties with Romania continued to be present, especially in the fields of culture, education and diplomatic exchanges. During the regime of Enver Hoxha, relations with Romania had their ups and downs, but there was no lack of cooperation in various fields, especially in socialist art and cinematography.

II. Cultural Perceptions of Romanians in Albania

In terms of culture, Romania is seen as a country with rich folkloric traditions, music similar to that of the Balkans, and a literature that has aroused interest over the years. Important personalities of Romanian literature such as Mihai Eminescu, Lucian Blaga, or Mircea Eliade have been translated into Albanian and are read with respect in Albanian intellectual circles.

On the other hand, Albanian figures such as Asdreni, Konstandin Kristoforidhi, or Thoma Avrami have had important contacts with Romanian cultural circles, bringing mutual influences and building intercultural bridges. One of the most special poems of the Aromanians or Vlachs (*Vllahët*^[al]) in the Korça area is the following in the language of the Romanians of Albania, naturally composed of Albanian, Greek and Italian words²⁶, where the Pharsaliot shepherds sang these verses in chorus with the usual music of their songs:

*Ciudie laie ciudie,/Çi s'façe tu Rrmânie,/Doi ficiori di-arbinišie,/ Pitricuți-li di Vlăhie/Ianina, tu puliție,. S' revizuiască laia șculie;Li băgară tu filăchie/Li pitricum ti lucre bune,/ Osman pașa li feaçe surghiune/ Surghiune tu Italie,/Tu Italie portul Brindiz,/Păn s' li ghină văr aviz;/Un Andrei al Balamaci,/Exilați doili cu Taci;/Pădianu agudi hiru/Ta s' lia hăbare Viziru,/Ștepsu çi feaçe Valiu;/ Agudi telu Sultanu,Valilu s' lia lirtare la Pădianu;/Al Pădeanu di Vlăhie li scriară,/S' clidă poarta din afară;/ Pădianu a Valilu li zaci;/Ma s' vrei s' nă lirtăm doili,/Pitriaçi s' aduci ficiorili;/ Valilu aștiptă cu banda/ Când ișiră revizorli Saranda,/Ordin dà Valilu pi la tabori,/Si s' veagliă doili ficiori/S' nu pată civa pi cale,/Că di Pădianu nu vra scăpare;/Andrea cu Tacit doili cu frați,/Ninti ș' napoi cu sufaraçi;/Când viniră tu puliție,/ Grecili s' făcea mare ciudie,/Că s' turară dit exurie;/ Osman pașa mulți avea exilată,/Ma di văr nu' ș-u avea affată,/Di aești el ș-u pățà,/Ca lirtări el căftă*²⁷.

III. Aromanians/Vlachs in Albania: history, culture and status of a community

Aromanians, an ethnic group closely related to the Albanians. They have long had a stable presence in the territories of Albania and consequently have interacted and interacted with each other. The Aromanians or Vlachs are a people as ancient as the Albanians themselves as direct descendants of the Illyrians in the Illyrian Peninsula, which after the Ottoman conquest was called the "Balkans". Although the Aromanians are scattered in several Balkan countries, including Greece, Serbia and North Macedonia, Albania has a special role in the development and preservation of their culture over the centuries, making them an integral part of its own national culture. The Aromanians speak the Aromanian language, a Latin dialect that is a form of Latin and that carries numerous influences from the Ottoman period and Balkan culture as a whole²⁸.

3.1. Origin and History of the Aromanians in Albania

The Aromanians are also known as "Vlachs" (*Vllahët*^[al]) in Albania and are considered a people full of rich traditions and diverse folk costumes, maintaining a strong ethnic and cultural identity over the centuries. During the Ottoman period, the Aromanians were often engaged in economic activities, especially trade and livestock, and therefore settled in various areas of Albania, mainly in the south,

in regions such as Dropull, Çamëri, and Pogradec²⁹. During the period of the Ottoman Empire, many Aromanians served as traders and representatives of the Ottoman administration, a key factor that helped strengthen their ties with the state structures of the time³⁰.

3.2. Aromanian Language and Cultural Identity

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the Aromanians is their language, which represents a mediation of Roman and Balkan culture. The Aromanian language is a Latin dialect, similar to Romanian, but with pronounced influences from Albanian, Greek and Turkish³¹. During the 20th century, the Aromanian language has been subject to strong pressure for assimilation from other languages of the region, including Albanian and Greek, affecting the decline of its use in everyday life. However, a part of the Aromanian community has strongly preserved its language and cultural traditions, inheriting it through their families and rites.

3.3. The Status of Aromanians in Albania and Their Role in Society

In Albania, the Aromanians are recognized as one of the minority communities, and, although they have a long history of integration into Albanian society, they have experienced various periods of exclusion from Albania's political and development decision-making. After World War II,

many Aromanians were involved in the fight against the communist regime, and after the fall of communism, the Aromanian community resumed preserving more of its ethnic and cultural identity³².

In recent years, the Aromanian community has sought formal recognition of its status as a national minority. Although the Aromanians constitute a small proportion of Albania's population, they have a significant impact on cultural and social life, particularly through their music, folklore and traditions, which are often shared with those of the Albanians³³.

Since the 1990s, Albania has seen Romania as a close European model for reform and development, particularly in the fields of education and technology. A significant number of Albanian students have studied at Romanian universities, where they have been welcomed with friendship and integrated into local society.

In popular culture, the Romanians are perhaps not mentioned as often as the Germans or Italians, but in academic, diplomatic and historical circles, they are valued as a close people, with whom we share not only a geographical region, but also a common memory of Balkan solidarity at important historical and developmental moments of the Albanian state.

The Aromanians in Albania represent an important part of the cultural heritage of the Balkans, with a rich history and an identity that continues to be preserved and developed, despite the challenges of assimilation and social change. Their culture remains an

important element in understanding the ethnic and cultural pluralism of Albania. Despite the challenges they face, the Aromanians continue to contribute to Albanian society and maintain a strong connection to their historical and linguistic identity, which has led to Romania and Romanians being seen as a brotherly people in the eyes of Albanians and the Albanian nation.

IV. Cultural diplomacy and political science magazine *Polis*, from Iași

In order to continue and develop bilateral relations, the editorial staff of *Polis* magazine decided to produce a thematic edition dedicated to the history of Albania. Its production was entrusted to Oltzen Gripshi and Sabin Dragulin.

The corpus dedicated to the history and culture of Albania comprises twelve contributions. The approaches are diverse and come from historiography, event history, art history, sacred and profane art, theater, film, architecture, poetry and cultural interferences, the published texts being signed by specialists in the field from Albania.

The ordering of articles and studies was carried out according to chronological and thematic criteria.

Looking at the history of the last half millennium, it is easy to see that the expansion of the Ottomans in the Balkans and Central Europe, which led to the conquest of Constantinople (1456), Belgrade (1521) and Buda (1541), also consecrated the entry of the territories inhabited by Albanians

into the empire. Of course, changes in state, economic, social, religious realities, etc., will be achieved over time, but will have major implications up to the present day. The Albanian case is suggestive, given that a Christian society and culture, anchored in the economic and geopolitical realities of the area for millennia, will gradually transform, as a result of the influences and pressures of the Ottomans.

The coordinators' intention was to identify specialists in different fields, who would cover through their contributions both the period of the last five centuries of local history, placing less emphasis on the eventual element and, especially, on that of culture, which will have and will reflect the influences of the different political regimes that succeeded each other during this period, as well as the historical, linguistic and cultural links between the inhabited territories and Albanians and Romanians.

The contribution entitled "Where's the sword, there's religion: Local Elites, Ottomans, and Islamization Among Albanians during the 15th Century", signed by Caka Eduart, presents the consequences that followed the conquest of Albania in terms of the Islamization of the population. To explain how the conqueror applied a policy of Islamization, the author used both Ottoman cadastral registers and Western archival documentation. Throughout the text, the stages through which the Ottoman conquest took place in the 15th century and its direct consequence, as I stated previously, the triggering of the Islamization process, are presented.

The study concludes that the Ottomans used the same method applied in Constantinople and other Byzantine cities. The process of Islamization began with the local elites and later spread throughout the territory to the population.

The second article, proposed by Adriana Qafa and Andrea Llukani, is entitled "The iconographic school of Berat". The text brings to the attention of specialists the internal cultural reaction of the Christian cultural space, in the face of the process of Islamization, with the development of Albanian iconographic art in the 16th-17th centuries. The great master of this art is Onufri from Neokastra (Elbasan). A school developed around him, from which the authors of the approach emphasized the activity of Onufri's son, Nikolla, along with his collaborator Joani, Onufër the Cypriot, as well as many other icon painters who preferred to remain anonymous.

The study "Travellers in Albania during the first half of the XIX Century", signed by Lida Miraj, presents us with a very important period in the process of reconnecting the Albanian territories with the Western space. The period identified by the author is 1796-1815, which overlaps with the Napoleonic Wars. Practically, after three centuries, from the moment when the Albanian territories became part of the Ottoman Empire (1478), after a heroic resistance led by Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, we begin to have information that comes from the accounts of foreign travelers. The approach is important because it allows

those interested to look into the past through the "eyes" of foreigners. The information provided is very important because it allows us to understand the internal organizational system of these territories, the dynasties that ruled them, the cultural centers, the cities, the way in which power passed through generations, the main occupations of the population, etc.

Oltsen Gripsi, through his study "Albania and Albanians in foreign graphic novels", comes to complete the previous study. Various foreign authors published works of this type in the 19th and 20th centuries, in which they highlighted the rich Illyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman cultural heritage of the territories inhabited by Albanians. Oltsen combines historical chronological aspects with comparative analysis, exploring the creativity of the authors of these graphic novels that allowed young readers around the world to know the temperament of Albanians and the history of Albania through visual description.

With Rovena Vata Mikeli and her contribution "The poetry of dritero agolli has left deep traces in Albanian tradition", a series of themes are opened regarding the way in which Albanians identify themselves through their own culture. Mikeli emphasizes the poetic creativity of Dritëro Agolli, who in a difficult period for the history of Albania tries to escape from the present by creating a work that has as reference elements the ideals, qualities and roots of the ancestors. Returning to the past is a mission and is achieved

through the emotional feelings transmitted in and through his verses. The nation, the country, the tradition, the language, the territory, the homeland are identified by appealing to documents, rites, cults, myths, rituals, ballads and legends from the corpus of Albanian folklore.

Milkani Eno, through his contribution "The influence of cinema in Albanian-speaking territories: from its beginnings to her children, the unrecognized first Albanian film", presents the role of cinema in the process of transforming a society with a deeply oriental mentality, towards Western visions and practices. This change was a natural movement for Albanians, from the declaration of independence to the first stages of industrial capitalism in the late 1930s. The effect of visual propaganda on Albanian society, through cinema, demonstrated the fundamental role that was exercised in different historical periods. The communist period represented the major moment of expression of censorship in cinema, marking the moment of the end of artistic freedom and the implementation, through propaganda, of the vision of the single party, on society.

Anxhela Çikopano Hoxha and Albert Çeloaliaj, through their contribution "Can the last grip of frost be chipped away? Albanian theater in the communist aftermath", come to complete the way in which the communist regime developed its censorship within the theaters of Albania. The regime's action was facilitated by the fact that before the communist period there were no professional actors, screen-

writers, directors, etc. In order to create a new social category, future specialists were sent to the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, even to the USSR, who had the opportunity to come into contact with different experiences, which exceeded the limited space of socialist realism. Returning to the country, they were confronted with an increasingly rigid attitude from the agents of the communist system, which caused a major crisis in the 1980s. The fall of communism allowed a return of freedom in all fields and as a result in creation, with directors having the opportunity to explore any type of genre. The new formulas identified and applied by the directors brought the theater-loving public back to the theaters.

The study signed by Anxhela Çikopano Hoxha and Albert Çeloaliaj makes the transition from the communist period to the democratic one, while the theoretical contribution made by Joniada Musaraj, Edvana Tiri and Blerina Muskaj entitled "The right to information in Albania" devotes topics specific to the democratic period. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania is a fundamental document, a pillar of the indigenous democratic regime. The usefulness of the study lies in the fact that this contribution is a natural consequence of the others shown previously in which human rights violations by the communist regime were presented that were found at all levels. In this context, a study of the Constitution of the democratic period of Albania is very important because it demonstrates the

change in mentality, in the way in which the citizen relates to power and the state. Statements such as: “The right of access to information is a fundamental human right. Therefore, respecting this right is synonymous with that of human dignity” and reflect the existence of an attitude of moral verticality in relation to the state and other forms of power.

Stefano Romano, through his study “Public interventions and urban evolution in Tirana (2005–2025): the case of the 1.60insurgent space project”, shows us how innovations in the urban art space have begun to find their place in the capital of Albania, Tirana. The concept proposed by Romano is that within urban art there should be a new type of interaction between traditional and unconventional art spaces. The idea of the project was that in Tirana, a city where the communist influence on urban architecture was decisive, exhibition spaces should be set up that would last only one day. One of the messages that the curator of this project wanted to convey was to offer those interested the perception that art can serve as a catalyst for change in shaping our perception of urban spaces. Obviously, time, this fundamental element of the evaluation of artistic creations, plays an important role in assessing the impact that Romano's proposed project has had on the life of the city.

Manjola Zaçellari, through her contribution entitled “Studies on the relations between Albanian and Romanian as an indicator of the connections between the two peoples and the

advancement of knowledge of the common language and history”, offers us an analysis that reveals the linguistic similarities between Albanian and Romanian. According to the author, these are found at three levels: lexical, grammatical and phonetic, and are deep and complex. The explanation for the depth and complexity lies in the common historical periods and mutual influences, due to the Thracian-Illyrian period. Etymological and comparative studies show that historical and cultural connections played an important role in the formation of these similarities. The relations between the two languages represent a rich and important field of study for understanding their historical and linguistic development and the ethnogenesis of each people.

Drita Isufaj and Viola Isufaj continue with their contribution “Echoes of the past: folklore connections between Albania and Romania”, the analysis of the historical and cultural ties between Romanians and Albanians. The study aims to explore the complex relationship between Albanian and Romanian folklore, examining common motifs, characters and narratives that illuminate their intertwined cultural heritage. Based on the comparative analysis of folk tales, legends and traditional customs, this research investigates the similarities and divergences between the folkloric traditions of both nations. Furthermore, the research deepens the linguistic connections between the Albanian and Romanian languages, searching for common vocabulary, linguistic structures, sym-

bolism and mythology within their respective folklore. Ultimately, this exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics in the Balkans and highlights the enduring legacy of shared folkloric traditions between Albanians and Romanians.

Suzana Varvarika Kuka concludes this cultural and political journey with the study “The history of two Romanian artworks”. The research aimed to highlight the special significance of two Romanian artworks, owned by the National Gallery of Art in Tirana, their artistic qualities, aesthetic and technical attributes, as well as the conservation and restoration approaches applied to them. The artworks in question are: “Landscape”, signed by Nicolae Grigorescu and “Portrait”, which was created by Magdalena Rădulescu, a Romanian modern art painter. Through these works of art, the author of the study aims to develop certain aesthetic reflections, with a focus on the life, creative work and importance of the two renowned Romanian artists. At the same time, the study will examine their recognition within the Albanian artistic system and the position their work occupies in the international visual arts scene.

Conclusions

In general, the perception of Romania and Romanians in Albania has long been very positive and supportive, considering the Romanians as “brothers” while never forgetting what they did on the eve of the establish-

ment of the new Albanian state before and after 1912.

Nikola Naço (1843–1913), one of the most prominent figures of the Albanian diaspora in Romania and later advisor to the President of the Albanian Republic, Ahmet Zogu, clearly articulated the feelings of gratitude and brotherhood towards the support that Albanians received from the Romanian intellectual and political elite during the late 19th century. In an editorial published in the newspaper “Shqipëtar”, no. 16, year 1888, Naço wrote:

“At a time when the sons of Albania are removing their olive branches, noble men, great people of Romania, with true brotherly love, embrace us warmly, give us shelter for salvation, encourage us in our enterprise, donating to us, at the same time, money, so that we can continue the work we have begun”.

This fragment, preserved in the Albanian language of the time and with a visible influence of the diaspora dialect, represents not only an expression of gratitude, but also an important historical document that testifies to the solidarity of Romanian intellectuals with the Albanian national cause³⁴. In a period when Albanians faced political repression, cultural assimilation and lack of representation, Romania's moral and material assistance played an essential role in the preservation and development of Albanian national identity outside ethnic borders³⁵.

Naço was among the first to understand the importance of cooperation with foreign elites, especially the

Romanian one, to internationalize the Albanian issue, making it part of the broader European discourse on the rights of stateless nations.

For Albania and Albanians, Romania stood out as one of the most welcoming countries to the patriotic activity of the Albanian diaspora, demonstrating a favorable political and cultural stance, despite constant pressure from the Ottoman Sublime Porte. The Romanian authorities, instead of fulfilling the demands of the Ottoman Empire to ban Albanian national activity, chose to tolerate and support the activity of Albanian societies and intellectuals established in their territory.

The understanding and protection that the Albanian community enjoyed from the Romanian authorities was also highlighted in the diplomatic reports of the time. In an official communication dated July 4, 1903, the Austrian diplomat in Istanbul, Margrave Leopold von Pallavicini, reported to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a conversation between King Carol I of Romania and the representative of the Austro-Hungarian legation in Bucharest, Baron von Flotow. In this conversation, King Carol I described the Albanian patriot Nikola Naçon as “*an honest and cool-headed man*”, whom he had known for more than 27 years, and at the same time expressed his deep admiration for the Albanians of Bucharest, emphasizing their moral virtues, loyalty and honesty. According to the king, the Albanians “have never made a mistake, nor have they

crossed the permissible limits”, which testifies to the respect that this community had earned in the Romanian society of the time³⁶. King Carol I also emphasized that, although the Ottoman government had on several occasions requested the expulsion of Naçon from Romania and the closure of all Albanian newspapers and cultural societies, such a thing could not happen “according to the will of the Sultan”, implying the autonomy of Romanian domestic politics from external pressures³⁷.

In this historical context, this country has offered assistance, hospitality and cooperation. Romanian culture has been viewed with interest and has been integrated into the Albanian cultural landscape through translations, long-term political-diplomatic cooperation and cultural exchanges, the most recent of which was Romania’s participation in 2024, with artist Maria Bordeanu, in the First Edition of the International Biennale of Contemporary Art of Durrës. At a time when the region is striving to build more bridges and fewer walls, Albania’s historical relationship with Romania serves as an extraordinary example of good neighborliness and cultural coexistence.

Therefore, in this special issue of the International Scientific Journal “Polis”, a publication of the “Petre Andrei” University of Iasi, the reader, Romanian intellectuals and researchers will get to know Albania and Albanians better and more deeply in various scientific fields throughout the centuries.

Notes

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ALBANIA. REPERE ISTORICE, CULTURALE ȘI POLITICE

Where's the Sword, There's Religion: Local Elites, Ottomans, and Islamization Among Albanians During the 15TH Century

Caka EDUARD

Abstract: *The stages through which the Ottoman conquest of Albanian territories took place during the 15th century and the process of Islamisation that followed later remain topics of curiosity for Albanian and foreign scholars. Unlike other neighbouring nations, who accepted Ottoman hegemony but continued to adhere to their traditional confession, among Albanians we observe a gradual change in religious affiliation that began with the settlement of the Ottomans in this area. Thus, both Ottoman cadastral registers and Western archival documentation testify primarily to a portion of the elites who had converted to the Islamic faith by becoming part of the Ottoman administration and military class, letting us understand that the trend of conversion came from the upper classes towards the common people. The spread of the Islamic faith among Albanians during this time also marked the shaping of their religious map, where the population of this geography now consisted of three major religious groups: Roman Catholic, Christian Orthodox, and Muslim.*

In this article, we will analyse the relations of Albanian elites with the Ottomans during the phase of establishing Ottoman rule in Albanian territory, as well as the impact that this relationship had on the process of Islamisation of Albanians. The analysis and the study will focus mainly on the Ottoman cadastral registers (Tahrir Defterleri) of the 15th century for the lands inhabited by the Albanian population.

Keywords: *Albania, Islamisation process, Local elites, Ottoman rule, Ottoman Tax Registers.*

Introduction

The religious composition of Albanians in general and the process of Islamisation in particular continue to

remain delicate issues in Albanian public opinion, where intellectuals and clerics approach the topic with great caution as a result of the fragility that it presents in itself.¹ On the other

hand, these two important issues have been a constant topic of curiosity for local and foreign scholars, who aim to understand the social dynamics and economic and political factors that influenced the creation of this reality as well as the historical processes through which these important changes occurred. While in the chronological context, the origin of this “scientific curiosity” dates to the 15th century when the traditional faith of Albanians, Christianity, which was present among the local population, both with the Catholic version in one part of it and the Orthodox one in the other, was added a new faith, that of Islam.

With the spread of Islam in the Albanian lands, a different social reality now appears, where the local population that had lived for centuries under different rulers while maintaining its continuity in the confessional aspect now faces a continuity and stability in the political and administrative aspect but undergoes changes in the religious one. This reality has continued to be so throughout the period of Ottoman rule, when the Ottoman society, of which the Albanian one was also a part, has functioned within the framework of the system of the millets. However, unlike other neighbour nations who mainly maintained their traditional beliefs, the Albanians who spoke the same language and had the same customary codes coexisted with each other divided into three faiths. Seen in this light, the religious diversity among Albanians has been seen by travellers, diplomats, and foreign writers as a phenomenon that is both

unique and “strange²,” which has led to this aspect finding a place in the works of many of these authors who visited the Albanian space during the period of Ottoman rule, and especially in the 19th century.

Although there is still no in-depth study on the conversion of Albanians to Islam during the period of Ottoman rule, it should be noted that different authors have treated this phenomenon from different perspectives. One approach was that of political changes, where the spread of the Islamic faith in the Albanian lands is followed in parallel with the extension of Ottoman rule and its institutions in this geography.³ An important thesis was also that with an economic context, where different historians have focused on taxes as one of the main instruments that influenced the conversion of the local population to the Islamic faith.⁴ Other studies have treated it in a chronological context by following the process of Islamisation in time, which seems to have gained extensive proportions, especially after the second half of the 16th century.⁵

Although external factors such as the political, economic and cultural context, which belong to the social dimension, that is, the society to which the individual belongs, have their importance and weight, the conversion process is equally individual and is related to psychological stages through which a person must overcome. Of course, such approaches force the historian to overcome the rigid boundary of the document and history as a scientific discipline and to

approach other disciplines that deal with man and society, such as psychology and sociology, to enable a broader and more objective elaboration of the phenomenon. But, when it comes to the Middle Ages, the factors that must be considered in such transformations differ from those of later centuries. As we clearly see from the archival and documentary sources of the time, this process seems to have occurred mainly among the social and political elites, to subsequently spread to the wider masses of society. In this context, we must emphasise that regarding this issue it is possible to see a detailed panorama in the Ottoman cadastral registers of the 15th century for the Albanian lands, in which we also encounter the first cases of conversions to the Islamic faith.

The process of Islamisation among Albanians during the 15th century

The establishment of Ottoman rule in Albanian territory includes a time frame that begins with the first Turkish incursions into this area in the last decades of the 14th century and ends with the conquest of coastal cities that were under Venetian rule, such as Durrës, which was invaded in 1501. During this period, which covers a period of time that goes more than a century, Albanian relations with the Ottomans went through several phases, such as that of vassalage⁶, the uprisings of the 30s of the 15th century⁷, the great resistance during the time of Skanderbeg⁸, and the great Ottoman-

Venetian war that ended with the withdrawal of Venice from Albanian territory and the complete establishment of Ottoman rule in this geography.

The cadastral registers (*Tahrir Defterleri*) also constituted the official document that symbolised the establishment of Ottoman rule in a certain territorial space.⁹ Regarding the territorial space that includes the territory of today's political Albania, it can be said that there are four cadastral registers for this century, through which we are able to follow the phases of the establishment of Ottoman rule in this area, the political and military turbulences that occurred, demographic movements, the progress of the economic element but also the way in which the process of Islamisation developed. While the *Tahrir defters* that contain a reflection of the entire Albanian population of the time, which today extends to areas that are part of the territorial map of the countries neighbouring Albania, are more numerous in number. By using these texts, local historians have managed to obtain interesting data regarding the process of Islamisation among Albanians during the 15th-16th centuries¹⁰. Thus, the first element that emerges from their study is related to the fact that Islamisation initially occurred in urban centres and then spread to the suburban areas. This is because cities, towns or large villages were mainly areas that were part of the timars of the pashas and beylers, i.e., high Ottoman officials, where officials and military troops were stationed and

there was interaction with the surrounding areas as a result of the economic and commercial activities that took place there. This was also the reason that these urban centres were even more in contact with the Islamic faith.

However, if we take a look at the mentioned cadastral registers, we will see that apart from the military and administrative caste established in these cities, who were Muslims, the spread of Islam was extremely slow. This consideration doesn't include only the Albanian space, but it includes the entire Ottoman territory that was part of the eyalet of Rumelia. According to the *jizya* registers for this area for the years 1488-1491, in this entire geography only 300 cases of conversion to Islam per year are observed¹¹. This process of Islamisation was observed mostly in the regions of Bosnia, while in the Albanian parts the cases were much fewer. More specifically, the Ottoman tax registers let us understand that during the 15th century, important demographic centres for the time, such as Berat, Gjirokastra, Përmet, Kruja etc., were entirely with Christian populations, while in other cities, such as Shkodra or the newly re-founded Elbasan, they had Muslim populations within them. In these urban centres, in addition to the settlers brought by the Ottomans, we also observe residents who are newly converted to the Islamic faith (*nev-i müslim*) as well as craftsmen who practised their professions in these cities while a part of them were Islamised¹².

The gradual spread of Islam in cities conditioned the expansion of this phenomenon in rural areas also, for which urban life served as an orienting model. This is because the Ottoman urbanisation policies during this century, which aimed at the establishment of new urban centres, also created nuclei of absorption of residents of various rural areas, which became part of a larger community society where the guiding role was constituted by the new political, economic, and even religious culture, which in this case was the Islamic one. Such cases of the foundation or re-foundation of new cities, in the part of today's Albania, can be mentioned in those of Elbasan and Korça, while in the entire Balkans, such examples are much greater in number¹³.

The panorama will change during the 16th century, when, in parallel with the demographic and economic growth of urban centres, there will also be changes in the Islamisation processes, where we already notice that Muslim neighbourhoods create dominance in centres like Elbasan and constitute a significant portion of the city's population in other settlements. For example, in 1583 Gjirokastra had 65 Muslim houses (*hane*) out of 369 such that the city had, while in Berat the ratios were 650 to 400 houses, elements that showed the rapid changes that were taking place in the religious configuration of urban centres¹⁴. Such a panorama is not observed only in Albanian cities but in the entire Ottoman territorial space that was part of the Rumelia eyalet. The demo-

graphic statistics of the Ottoman chancellery for the first half of the 16th century count a number of 1,111,799 houses for the entire province, where Muslims accounted for 194,958 houses, which consisted of 18% of the total number of inhabitants of this part of the empire¹⁵.

A second aspect that emerges from the use of these sources is that which has to do with the profile and status of the people who converted to Islam. Thus, if we observe the categories of people who converted, we will see that the majority of them were individuals who were part of the *timar system*; that is, they belonged to the military and ruling caste. Most timars were given to the administrative and military class, but a significant category was also made up of Albanian timar holders who had converted to Islam. Among the latter, a significant part were the scions of the great Albanian families of the time.

Both the Ottoman cadastral registers and the later studies carried out on these sources show that with the consolidation of Ottoman rule in the Albanian space, the main part of the elites converted to the Islamic faith and were integrated into the Ottoman state apparatus, serving as commanders and government officials in their homeland or in different parts of the empire. For example, one of the sons of Theodore II Muzaka, Kasem Bey, is found in the post of Sanjakbey of Arvanid during the years 1438-41, while Isa Bey Skura in 1444 is found in the post of Beylerbey of Anatolia, and Hasan Zenebishi served as *subash*

of Fener that today is located in Greece¹⁶. Meanwhile, in the second half of the same century, Albanians converted to the Islamic faith are found in the highest positions of the Ottoman state. Such is the case of Zaganos Pascha, who held the post of Grand Vizier (*veziriazam*) during the reign of Mehmed II¹⁷.

This integration of local elites into the Ottoman military and administrative structures was based on two very important institutions on which Ottoman power was based during this time. More specifically, we are talking about the system of *Ghulams* that was installed during the reign of Bayezid I and that of the *Kapikulu* later. Through these structures, the Ottomans not only maintained control of the areas they ruled but also generated manpower for their army and, thus, replaced the existing Turkish aristocracy, minimising any threat to the absolutist power of the sultan. On the other hand, such a policy was also of interest to the Albanian nobles, who, through integration within their state structures, initially maintained their social and economic status in their own areas but also became part of the echelons of power.

Another element that should be emphasised regarding the policies that the Ottomans followed during their penetration into the Albanian lands in terms of the relationship with the local elites is that of the division of timars among Christian timariots, a practice that we do not encounter in the following centuries. This is related to the methods that the Ottomans used dur-

ing their penetration into certain regions during this period, an aspect clearly addressed by Halil Inalcık in his articles and writings¹⁸. As long as the timar holders were committed to the conditions that had to be fulfilled to the Sultan, this property remained with them as a possession, and there were cases when their sons also inherited it, who, this time, chose not to remain in their previous faith but to convert to Islam. Such was the case of Mesir Pavli in the 1431 register for the areas of Përmet and Korça, respectively for Leskovik, which now passed to his sister's son who had converted to Islam, Muhammed¹⁹. This was not a limited case, but in the cadastral registers we see numerous examples where the Timar clans have converted to the Islamic faith, or it is the second generation, that is, their sons, who have converted²⁰.

In conclusion, seen in a summarised manner, it can be said that, in the Ottoman cadastral registers for the 15th century that belong to the area of present-day Albania, the ratio of timars owned by Christian timariots varied, as showed in the following statistics: 16% in the Arvanid sanjak (56 out of 335 timars); 27.9% in the areas of Përmet, Korçë and Konica (38 out of 136); 18% in the part of Dibra (19 out of 105 timars), and; 8.3% in the sanjak of Shkodra (15 out of 120 such)²¹. What attracts the most attention in this case, too, has to do with the fact that timars were also distributed to priests²².

Factors that influenced the process of Islamisation

This tendency of Islamisation among Albanians that is observed in the sources of the 15th century, while such a phenomenon is not observed among neighbouring nations, excluding here the Bosnians, leads us to think about the causes that influenced these confessional changes among the Albanian population. In this regard, it must be said that there are several factors of a geographical, political, social and customary character which distinguished this population from its neighbours, letting us understand that they may have also influenced this religious transformation.

Geographical factor

The penetration of the Ottoman armies into the Balkans, followed by the installation of their rule in this area later, comes out as an element which also implies the extension of the Islamic element in this geography occurred in a very short period of time. Thus, if we take into account the crossing of the Dardanelles (1354) by the Turks in the middle of the 14th century to reach their victory in the Battle of Kosovo (1389), it is clear that this progress of theirs occurred within a few decades. Whereas in just one century, that is, around the middle of the 15th century, almost the entire Balkans had turned into a Turkish empire, where large urban centres, such as Sofia, Edirne, Thessaloniki, etc., served as the headquarters of the

central and local Ottoman administration. Two factors can be mentioned as influencing the rapid course of events: the geographical position of this space, which had been a constant transit zone and therefore the object of the conquest intentions of various political and economic powers, and the fragmented political-military powers that had failed to ensure continuity in this geography²³.

Among the major political formations observed in this part of the Balkans during the period of Ottoman penetration, one can mention Byzantium and the Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian kingdoms, but also Venice, which was initially established in the Morea and which later spread along the eastern coast of the Adriatic as a result of the increasing Ottoman threat. The Ottoman invasion of the Balkan areas, part of which were also the lands inhabited by the Albanian population, coincides with such a regional political panorama, where, unlike other neighbouring countries that had established state formations, the Albanians were governed by local elites. This situation, on the one hand, aroused the appetites of various kingdoms and powers to include these local dignitaries within their states, while on the other hand, it also conditioned the approach of the Albanian nobility to the new political balances that were being built in the region. Another political actor who played a role in the Albanian lands during the 15th century, especially during the period of the resistance led by Skanderbeg, was also the Kingdom of Naples,

which played a special role in supporting the Albanians during their resistance against the Ottoman invasion²⁴.

Of course, the main factor influencing the rivalries for the possession of this space was the geographical position that the Albanian lands had had throughout the centuries. As the well-known Ottoman historian and jurist of the 19th century, Ahmed Cevdet Pascha, expressed it, Albania was the westernmost tip of Rumelia²⁵, where the Adriatic served as a natural border between the Ottomans and Europe, Islam and Christianity. This geography, which had been part of the route of the famous *Via Egnatia* road that connected Rome with Constantinople, during the 15th century still continued to serve as the shortest point from where the Ottomans could march towards Rome²⁶, or as the first eastern terrain from which the crusades against the Ottomans would start.

Local elites

The lack of a genuine existing state formation, as was observed among its neighbours, meant that the Albanians were not united in the face of the political-military changes that occurred in the Balkans during the Late Middle Ages. Precisely for this reason, we find the local elites positioned on the side of states that had the potential to become regional actors. This reality also explains the fact that during the 14th-15th centuries we see the local nobility linked to the Serbian royal court, engaged as soldiers and com-

manders in Byzantium, as citizens and allies of Venice, Ragusa and Naples and, finally, as vassals of the Ottomans.

The moderated policy used by the Ottomans during the period of vassalage was nothing more than a transitional phase that would end in the uprisings that engulfed the entire territory during the first decades of the 15th century. During this period, the Ottomans left the Albanian nobles the exploitation of the areas they governed while integrating their own administrative and military structures here, while on the other hand, they took the sons of the Albanian nobles as *iço-glan's* in Edirne, a phase that would also bring with it the transformation of the elites.

In the Ottoman cadastral registers for the 15th century, we note that the possessions of Albanian nobles who were vassals to the Ottomans are mentioned by their names. Such are the possessions registered with the name of the related noble, such as *vilayet-i Kastrioti*, *Zenebishi*, *Muzaka*, *Araniti*, *Ashtini*, etc., an element that clearly shows the fact that the Ottomans recognised them as important local actors and recognised their attributes. However, with the passage of time and the centralisation of power during the reign of Murad II, the Ottomans began to reduce the possessions of the Albanian nobles by dividing parts of them into timars that were divided among the military castes, an element that caused a harsh reaction among the Albanian elites, where the most significant reflection of this dissatisfaction

is the uprising launched by Gjergj Araniti in the 30s of the 15th century²⁷.

There were two factors that changed the situation on the ground: the first, the power vacuum among the Ottomans after the Battle of Ankara (1402) until the accession to the throne of Mehmed I and especially Murad II, while the second aspect was related to the establishment of Venice in the cities of the Albanian coastline as well as the plans for a possible crusade that was organised by the Vatican as the capital of all Christian states of Europe²⁸.

Precisely in such a politically fluid situation, the Albanian nobility seems to have chosen to remain in relations with all parties, with the aim of positioning itself on the side of the winner. A contemporary source that describes in detail the position in which the local elites found themselves during this period is the chronicle of Gjon Muzaka, who shows the difficulties that the local nobility went through in this time of turbulence, where some were forced to emigrate away from Arbëria²⁹.

The fact that almost half of the members of each of the Albanian noble families of the time converted to Islam suggests that this was more of a political decision than a conversion process. If it were the opposite, we would be faced with the complete Islamisation of one or several of them, while the other families would remain in their previous faith. But, in this case, Islamisation is observed in all these families, and, in a controlled

manner, some of them continued to remain in their traditional faith.

On the other hand, the Islamisation of local leaders had a direct impact on the peasants, who, based on the moral and customary codes of Albanian society, did not see the issue of conversion as heresy. An illustrative case of all this, namely the nobleman who is a vassal of the Ottomans but who remains in his own faith, of his son who preserves his father's territory but chooses to convert to Islam by becoming part of the ruling and military caste, as well as of the local population who follows the path of their "lord", can be seen in the case of a timar of the vilayet of Pavlo Kurtik, part of the Arvanid sanjak. As can be seen from the name of this territorial unit, the vilayet belonged to Pavlo Kurtik, whom the Ottomans also recognised with the status of local lord, thus naming the area in question. However, according to the entry in the register, the timar was given to his son, Isa Bey³⁰. As is evident from the title of bey that the Islamised Isa held, we can suppose that he held an administrative-military position in the Ottoman governing structures. Finally, one of the villages of Pavlo Kurtiku's vilayet that was part of the cited timar, namely the one called Zhilema, had a total of 40 houses, of which 17 were Muslim and served to the subash³¹.

Religion

The geographical position that made this area a bordering space, as well as the instability in the political-

administrative aspect that characterised the Albanian lands starting from the Middle Ages until the time of the establishment of Ottoman rule, were elements that also influenced the configuration and religious life of this area. In terms of confession, before the 15th century, the local population belonged to the Orthodox and Catholic Christian rites, where, while the Catholics were dependent on the Vatican, the Orthodox population was found partially dependent on the Archbishopric of Ohrid for those areas that were under Byzantium and the rest connected to the Patriarchate of Peja as a result of the Serbian expansion towards Albanian areas, especially during the period of Stefan Dushan's rule³².

The lack of an autochthonous state with its own institutions, in which the functioning of religious life would be sanctioned, meant that church life and organisation in the Albanian lands were conditioned by the political powers that managed to establish their hegemony in this geography. Schmitt clearly highlights this approach when he discusses the way Venice dealt with the churches at the time it took possession of the main Albanian coastal cities, where he emphasises that the Venetian governors had been extremely careful to preserve the political interests of the *la Serenissima* in this space, even when it came to their relationship with religious institutions, that is, the churches³³. Of course, this panorama affected the influence that the church had not only on community life but also on the relationships of elites and individuals with the clergy.

It is precisely this influence of politics on religion that conditioned the behaviour of local elites towards religion, where this was seen as a means or instrument to adapt to the power of the time. One case that can be mentioned here is that of 1369, when the three Balsha brothers abandoned the Orthodox faith to convert to Catholicism, a genuine political step that would bring them closer to the Papacy and the Catholic world in general³⁴. Such an explanation, that of the “conformist” approach of smaller elites towards much larger powers only with the aim of preserving their privileges or building political-military alliances aiming to grow politically and economically, would also make clearer the explanation of why the Albanian nobility during the 15th century preferred to partially side with the faith of the new dominant of this space, the Ottomans.

Another aspect which influenced the Islamisation processes that took place in the Balkans was Bogomilism, which was mainly observed in the areas of Bosnia, i.e., near the coast of Dalmatia. As a fraction considered heretical, which had doctrinal and ethical changes towards Christianity, propagating the reformation of the church and its return to the form of the apostolic period, Bogomilism created a kind of vacuum in the doctrinal and moral aspects, which seemed to have served as a space through which a new faith that was spreading in the Balkans together with the Ottomans, that of Islam, would penetrate. Bosnian scholars in particular, who have

used Ottoman cadastral registers of this period, express that Bogomilism and its reformist and puritanical nature had influenced the spread of Islam in this geography³⁵. Although there are no genuine studies regarding the presence of Bogomilism among Albanians, the fact that it was spread in a geographical area close to Albanian lands and that economic, cultural and human interaction between the inhabitants of this geographical area has been continuous leads us to think that it was not foreign to Albanians.

The weak state of religious institutions as a result of political instability but also of the social configuration where customary norms were respected more than religious sermons has produced ignorance but also negligence among people towards religion in general, an element that did not consider conversion to another faith as a “great sin”. This element is highlighted both by the phenomenon of crypto-Christianity that would appear in Albanian spaces after the 16th century and also by the numerous testimonies of foreign travellers, diplomats and historians. An interesting testimony in this regard is that of Wortley Montague, wife of the English ambassador in Istanbul in the second half of the 18th century, who stated that: “The Albanians are not able of speaking about which religion, Christianity or Islam, is better for them. They do not reject any, but on Friday go to the mosque and on Sunday to church”³⁶.

Social structure

Another important factor that influenced the Albanians' conversion to Islam, but which is also related to the elements we mentioned above, was the social structure and customary codes that belonged to this population, which were unique and not observed among other surrounding areas and nations. What we mean more precisely has to do with the family structure among Albanians throughout history, the close ties and strong relationships that existed between people with blood ties, and the great importance that the tribe had in the social context, that is, in the functioning and progress of social life.

In the family and clan structure of the Albanians, it was the word of the head of the house or tribe that also meant the final decision on a certain relationship. Not only the family and clan but all the codes and norms of the social life of the Albanians during the pre-Ottoman, Ottoman and modern periods were sanctioned by a corpus of customary norms known as *Kanun*, among which the most famous was that of Lekë Dukagjini, who functioned in the northern areas of Albania, known as *Gegeria*. These unwritten norms, though known by everyone, were respected by the local population with more precision and rigour than the norms of religious institutions or political powers that ruled in this geography. This element is also highlighted by Ahmed Cevdet Pascha in 1861, when he states that, although the empire had long called for people

to break away from the *Kanun* because it conflicted with *Sharia*, the main part of the highlanders still acted on the basis of this customary code³⁷.

Finally, the importance of the customary code in individual, family and social life, especially in the northern areas where Albanians lived, seen in the context of the approach to religion in general and Islamisation processes in particular, is clearly highlighted through the following narration that Ahmed Cevdet Pascha conveys in his notes on the case of the conversion of the Malziu neighbourhood in the vicinity of Puka:

*"The population of Malziu, which once belonged entirely to the Catholic rite, recently converted to the Islamic faith. Thus, one Sunday they were late for mass, and when they arrived at the church, they asked the priest to "bless the bread and wine for us again". But the priest refused them, saying that "repeating the liturgy is not allowed". After this, they insisted on reading the liturgy again, but the priest refused them again. Finally, the inhabitants killed the priest. After this development, this time the bishop excommunicated those who, angry with the bishop, had converted to the Islamic faith and, to this day, continue to hold this faith"*³⁸.

Conclusion

The issue of the Islamisation of Albanians is also one of the main problems that stands as a challenge for local and foreign historians. Although various articles and writings have

been written on this topic, it can be freely said that there is still no complete work that analyses the dynamics and processes that influenced the transition of Albanians to the Islamic faith. This is precisely the starting point of this article, which aims to understand, analyse and discuss those developments that influenced the Islamisation processes in a very important period of time for the history of Albania in particular and the Balkans in general, such as the 15th century, which coincides with the establishment of Ottoman power and the beginnings of Islamisation in this geographical area.

As is evident from the sources of the time, which, in this case, are mainly Ottoman tax registers, local elites played an important and determining role in the social, political and reli-

gious changes that occurred in the Albanian area during this time. More specifically, in the processes of conversion of the peoples of these lands to the Islamic faith. Thus, both the political-military elites in the case of the noble families of the time and the local elites in terms of leading families and tribes, which had a direct impact on ordinary people, with the transition to the Islamic faith and integration within the administrative structures of the empire, seem to constitute the main examples of what would happen on a wider scale during the following centuries. The fact that the Albanians did not have a consolidated state, but also a single church seems to have made the role of these elites decisive in terms of their influence on the ordinary population.

Notes

¹ In one of his articles on beliefs in Albania, Father Anton Harapi emphasized the fragility of this topic at the beginning of the article, starting his text with the words: "Forgive me for my courage: I want to face the most delicate issue in Albanian life..." For the full article, see Anton Harapi, "Çashtja e elementavet fetarë në Shqipëri", *Hylli i Dritës*, no. 5 (1944), p. 1.

² A Franciscan missionary, Fra Cherubino who visited Gjakova in 1637, related to his superiors regarding the Albanians attitude toward religions, describing this phenomenon with the words: "They seemed do glory in this diversity of religions, as if they were wiser than the other people of this world." See Noel Malcolm, *Rebels, Believers*,

Survivors: Studies in the History of the Albanians, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 56.

³ D. Egro, *Islam in Albanian Lands during the First Two Centuries of the Ottoman Rule*, Ankara: University of Bilkent, 2003; Zhelyazkova, A., "Islamization in the Balkans as an Historiographical Problem: The Southeast-European Perspective", *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, Ed. Fikret Adanır, Suraiya Faroqhi, Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 223-266.

⁴ This is mainly about the *jizya* tax that was collected from Christians living in Islamic states. For more details on these claims, see Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*, Leiden: Brill, 2004,

- pp. 10-11; Georg Stadtmüller, "Die Islamisierung bei den Albanern", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Bd. 3 (1955), pp. 404-429.
- ⁵ From the examination of the cadastral registers for the sandjak of Vlora of the early 16th century, Inalcık concludes that the spread of Islam in the territorial space that included this administrative unit remained in extremely modest figures. Thus, the ratio of Christian to Muslim houses for the years 1506-1507 in the Vlora district is 14 304 Christian families and 1 206 Muslim. While for Gjirokastra, mentioned tax registers give a balance of 12 257 Christian houses with 53 Muslim ones. Halil Inalcık, "Stefan Dušan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna: XV. asırda Rumeli'de hıristiyan sipahiler ve menşeleri", Fuad Köprülü Armağanı, İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1953, p. 229. Gjithashtu, shih Ferit Duka, "XV-XVIII. Yüzyllarda Arnavut Nüfusunun İslamlaşma Süreci Üzerine Gözlemler", *OTAM*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1991), pp. 63-71.
- ⁶ Regarding the period of vassalage and how the Ottomans used this practice to extend their rule into new territories, see Halil Inalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica*, no. 2 (1954), pp. 103-129; Eduart Caka, "Yıldırım Bayezid Dönemi ve Arnavutluk ile Münasebetler", *Uluslararası Yıldırım Bayezid Sempozyumu*, Ed. Hasan Basri Öcalan, Yusuf Ziya Karaaslan, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2019, pp. 149-157.
- ⁷ *Lufta shqiptaro-turke në shekullin XV (Burime osmane)*, përg. Selami Pulaha, Universiteti Shtetëror i Tiranës, Instituti i Historisë dhe i Gjuhësise, Tiranë, 1968.
- ⁸ Frashëri Kristo, *Skënderbeu: Jeta dhe vepra (1405-1468)*, Botimet Toena, Tiranë, 2002; Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skënderbeu*, përkth. Ardian Klosi, Tiranë: Fjala Publishing, 2008; Halil Inalcık, "Arnavutluk'ta Osmanlı Hâkimiyetinin Yerleşmesi ve İskender Bey İsyanının Menşei", *Fâtih ve İstanbul*, C. I, sy. 2 (1953), pp. 153-175.
- ⁹ For the importance of cadastral registers in the study of the early Ottoman period, defterology as a scientific discipline, and registers pertaining to the territory of Albania in the 15th century, see Heath W. Lowry, *Studies in Defterology: Ottoman Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1992; Nicoară Beldiceanu, *XIV. Yüzyıldan XVI. Yüzyıla Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tımar*, çev. Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay, Ankara: Teori Yay., 1985; *Hicri 835 Tarihli Süret-i Defter-i Sancak-ı Arvanid*, neşr. Halil Inalcık, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1954, pp. XI-XII. For the Albanian translation, see *Regjistri i sanxhakut të Arvanidit i vitit 1431*, përg. Në turq. Halil Inalcık, përkth. nga Mykerem Janina, red. Eduart Caka, Tiranë: Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, 2017. Also see Selami Pulaha, *Pronësia feudale në tokat shqiptare (shek. XV-XVI)*, Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, 1988; Eduart Caka, "The Cadastral Register of Përmet and Korça as a Source for the History of Southeastern Albania during the First Half of the XV Century", *Studia Albanica*, no. 1 (2020), pp. 60-61.
- ¹⁰ S. Pulaha, *op. cit.*, pp. 411-413; D. Egro, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-215.
- ¹¹ H. Inalcık, H., *Devlet-i 'Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar*, I, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yay., 2002, p. 201.

- ¹² Such is the case of Shkodra, where we note the presence of six houses newly converted to the Islamic faith. See D. Egro, *op. cit.*, p. 216. Also see F. Duka, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.
- ¹³ For Ottoman urbanization policies during the 15th century, see Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City, 1400-1900*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1983, p. 47.
- ¹⁴ *Regjistri i sanxhakut të Arvanidit*, p. XXXVII.
- ¹⁵ İnalcık, H., *Devlet-i 'Aliyye*, p. 201; N. Todorov, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
- ¹⁶ Idem, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar I, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi*, Ankara, 1954, pp. 146-148, 162; S. Pulaha, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.
- ¹⁷ F. Emecen, "Zağanos Paşa", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, C. 44, İstanbul: TDV Yay., 2013, pp. 72-73; H. İnalcık, *Arnavutluk'ta Osmanlı Hâkimiyetinin Yerleşmesi*, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
- ¹⁸ For Ottoman policies of integrating Christian spahis into the Ottoman timar system, see H. İnalcık, Stefan Dušan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna, pp. 230-231.
- ¹⁹ Defteri i regjistrimit të Përmetit dhe Korçës i vitit 1431, përkt. Vexhi Buharaja, përg. Eduart Caka, Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë, 2018, p. 23. A similar case is that of Arnavut Hamzai, who was the son of Petro Mavri but who had converted to Islam and already owned part of the timar, namely Dranova in the vilayet of Berat. See Regjistri i sanxhakut të Arvanidit, p. 111.
- ²⁰ One of the timariots in the Dibra area was a newly converted Muslim named Jakub, who had also captured one of Skanderbeg's collaborators, Moisi Golemi. See Defteri i hollësishëm për zonat e Dibrës i vitit 1467, përkt. Vexhi Buharaja, përgatiti për bot. Eduart Caka, Tiranë: Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, 2019, p. 44; H. İnalcık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler*, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
- ²¹ For more details, see D. Egro, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.
- ²² *Defteri i hollësishëm për zonat e Dibrës*, p. XV.
- ²³ To illustrate the fragility of political and military stability in these areas during the period of Ottoman incursions into the Western Balkans, it is enough to mention the statement of the Croatian historian, Milan Šufflay, when he states that Durrës had changed hands a full 31 times within a period of 400 years. E. Caka, *Yıldırım Bayezid Dönemi*, p. 149. Also see A. Minkov, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- ²⁴ For more details on the political actors competing for hegemony in this space, see Peter Bartl, *Ballkani Perëndimor ndërmjet monarkisë Spanjolle dhe Perandorisë Osmane*, përkt. Pëllumb Xhufi, Shtëpia botuese Dituria, Tiranë, 2011, pp. 46-48; Pëllumb Xhufi, *Arbërit e Jonit. Vlora, Delvina e Janina në shek. XV-XVII*, Onufri, Tiranë, 2016, pp. 32-36.
- ²⁵ *Osmanlı Arşiv Belgelerinde Arnavutluk*, Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, İstanbul, 2008, p. 252. For the Albanian version of this text, see *Relacione të Ahmet Xhevdet Pashës për sanxhakun e Shkodrës*, përg. Eduart Caka, Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë, 2022, p. 44.
- ²⁶ We should remember here the Otranto expedition of Ahmed Gedik Pasha from Vlora to Puglia in 1480, who took the fortress and positioned himself here for a period of several

- months. See Metin Ziya Köse, "Otranto Seferi", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, C. Ek-2, İstanbul: TDV Yay., 2019, pp. 382-384; P. Xhufi, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-246.
- ²⁷ Regjistri i sanxhakut të Arvanidit, p. XII-XIII.
- ²⁸ On August 15, 1646, Pope Pius II, who had arrived here to organize a crusade against the Ottomans, would die suddenly in Ancona, an effort that would be interrupted because of the death of the head of the Vatican. See Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Arbëria Venedike (1392-1479)*, shqip nga Ardian Klosi, Fjala Publishing, Tiranë, 2014, p. 551; P. Bartl, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.
- ²⁹ G. Musachi, *Breve Memoria de li Discendenti de Nostra Casa Musachi*, Chroniques Greco-Romanes, Ed. Charles Hopf, Berlin: Librairie de Weidmann, 1873, pp. 270-340.
- ³⁰ In 841 (1437-38) the timar had passed to Sinan Bey, the subash of Ilica. See *Regjistri i sanxhakut të Arvanidit*, p. 166.
- ³¹ The village in question was located south of Tirana, right on the banks of the Erzen river. For more, see *Regjistri i sanxhakut të Arvanidit*, pp. 166-167.
- ³² For more information about the state of the Orthodox and Catholic churches during the time of Venice's establishment in Albanian territory, see Milan Šufflay, *Situata të Kishës në Shqipërinë Paraturke: zona e depërtimit ortodoks në "digën katolike"*, përkth Edmond Malaj, Shkodër: Botime Françeskane, 2016. Also see O. Schmitt, *Arbëria Venedike...*, pp. 534-535.
- ³³ Schmitt, O., *Arbëria Venedike...*, pp. 539-542.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- ³⁵ A. Minkov, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.
- ³⁶ D. Egro, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
- ³⁷ *Relacione të Ahmet Xhevdet Pashës...*, p. 167; D. Egro, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
- ³⁸ *Relacione të Ahmet Xhevdet Pashës...*, p. 49.

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The Iconographic School of Berat

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Abstract: *The Iconographic School of Berat developed during the 16th-17th centuries. It is based on the artistic spirit of the great master of Albanian iconography, Onufri from Neokastra (Elbasan). This school played an important role in Albanian iconographic art during the 16th and 17th centuries, with Onufri's followers, among whom stood out Onufri's son, Nikolla, along with his collaborator Joani, Onufër the Cypriot, and many other iconographers who preferred to remain anonymous. Onufri's artistic activity in Albania is immortalised in the frescoes and icons of churches: "Saint Kolli" in Shelcan, "Saint e Premtes" in Valësh, in Shpat of Elbasan, "Saint Todri", "Annunciation," and "Saint Mitri" in the fortress of Berat. Onufri is thought to have been from Elbasan. There is little information about his family background. Only his son, Nikolla, is known, who learnt the art of iconography from his father. Onufri was a clergyman, holding the title "Protopapas," meaning "First Priest". The data provided by the church inscriptions reveal that Onufri carried out his activity in the 16th century. Onufri was a married priest and had children, of whom only one became well-known. This was Nikolla, who continued the family tradition. This is confirmed by an inscription written by Nikolla himself on the western door inside the church of "Saint Mary Vlachern" in Berat. The inscription says that the painter is Nikolla, the son of Onufri. Another iconographer who dignifiedly represents the "Iconographic School of Berat" is Onufër the Cypriot, who was of Greek origin but carried out his activity in the churches of Berat. Seven icons of his works have survived, which contain inscriptions providing his name, surname, and the year of painting. There is no information regarding his date of birth, but scholar Vitaliotis believes that in 1570, Onufër the Cypriot was wounded during the siege of Nicosia, where he lost one of his hands. In these circumstances, in 1582, the Cypriot left his birthplace and settled in Venice. It is believed that in 1591, he came to Berat.*

Keywords: *The Iconographic School of Berat, Onufri, Nikolla son of Onufri, Onufri the Cypriot.*

The Iconographic School of Berat

The Iconographic School of Berat developed during the 16th-17th centuries. It is based on the artistic spirit of

the great master of Albanian iconography, Onufri from Neokastra (Elbasan). This school played an important role in Albanian iconographic art during the 16th-17th centuries,

with Onufri's followers, among whom stood out his son Nikolla, along with his collaborator Joani, Onufër the Cypriot, and many other iconographers who preferred to remain anonymous¹.

Onufri

Some scholars, such as Viktori Puzanova², Theofan Popa³, Moikom Zeqo⁴, Dhorka Dhamo⁵, etc., identify Onufri as a representative of the Berat School⁶. Onufri's artistic activity in Albania is immortalised in the frescoes and icons of the churches: "Saint Kolli" in Shelcan, "Saint e Premtes" in Valësh, in Shpat of Elbasan, "Saint Todri", "Annunciation," and "Saint Mitri" in the fortress of Berat⁷.

Onufri is believed to have been from Elbasan⁸. There is little information about his family environment. Only his son, Nikolla, is known, who learnt the art of iconography from his father. Onufri was a clergyman, holding the title of "Protopapas" which means "First Priest". According to the data provided by church inscriptions, we learn that Onufri carried out his activity in the 16th century.

The earliest inscription where Onufri signs his name dates back to 1535. It was found on the southern wall between the scenes of "Saint Constantine and Helena" and the strategists "Saint Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratilates" in the church of the "Transfiguration of the Saviour" at the monastery of Zerze in Prilep⁹. Also, in Prilep, in 1535, Onufri painted the church of "Saint Nicholas". On the

"Deesis" icon, under the feet of Saint Mary, the year 1535 is written. In 1537, Onufri painted the church of the Moldavica Monastery in Moldova¹⁰. In 1547, Onufri painted the frescoes of the church of the "Forty Martyrs" in Kostur, financed by the Muzaka family. In an inscription found on the northern wall of the church, it is written: Ο ΙΣΤΟΡΙΣΑΣ ΟΝΟΥΦΡΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΓΙΤΗ ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΛΑΜΠΙΠΟΤΑΤΗΣ ΠΟΛΕΩΝ ΒΕ(PATI)ON — "Painted by Onufri, recently arrived from the glorious city of Berat"¹¹.

According to Dhorka Dhamo, Onufri's artistic activity can be summarised in the itinerary: Berat, Prilep, Kostur, Shpat. His starting point is Berat, appearing in 1535 in Prilep, then in Kostur¹² in 1547, and later in Shpat in 1554. It is believed that after 1554, he returned to Berat¹³ again.

In 1951, an expedition by the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum¹⁴, discovered an inscription by Onufri in the church of "Saint Kolli" in Shelcan¹⁵ (a village in the Shpat region, Elbasan County). The inscription is written in Byzantine Greek by the hand of the great master Onufri and is located on the northern wall of the church, near the altar table. The text of the inscription was translated by Theofan Popa: + Όταν εις Θ(εο)ν εκπετασις / τας χειρας σου ω Θ(εο)υ θυτα, / μνησθητι κ(αι) εμου του αμαρτωλου / και αμαθους Ονουργριου ζωγραφου When you raise your hands to God, O priest of God, remember also me, the sinner and ignorant painter, Onufri"¹⁶.

The content of this inscription suggests that Onufri at that time had not yet been ordained as a clergyman, as he is asking the priest to remember him during the preparation of the sacred offerings. It is believed that this inscription must have been written before 1554, because based on another inscription by Onufri in the church of “Saint e Premtes” in the village of Valësh in the Shpat region, there is also this addition:/ μνησθητι καμου του αμαρτωλου / Ονουργριου ιερεος, ζωγραφου κ(αι) πρωτοπαπα Νεοκαστρου”..... “remember also me, the sinner, Priest Onufri, the painter and Protopapas of Neokastra”¹⁷.

On the southern part of the western wall of the church is the inscription, through which we learn that the village of Valshakë dedicated this church to the great martyr Saint e Premtes, and the painter was Onufri. Ουτος ο αγιος ναος τής αγιας μεγαλομάρτυρος Παρασκε / υης ...πόθου της αύτης χώρας, ει...λιδε / ...κ.ό ζωγράφος Ονουφριος...” This holy temple of the great martyr Saint e Premtes... by the will of this village.²⁶ painted by Onufri...”¹⁸.

The church of “Saint e Premtes” in the village of Valësh in Shpat was painted at the expense of priest Gjergj Logotheti in 1554. This is confirmed by the inscription painted on the northern part of the western wall of the church, from which we learn that Gjergj Logotheti was the priest of the church of “Saint Friday”. The inscription also informs us that he paid in “oblla,” a type of currency used in Byzantium¹⁹.

In 1956, an expedition from the Institute of Sciences discovered six frescoes by Onufri in the church of “Saint Todri” in the fortress of Berat, which do not contain any inscription by the author. According to Dhorka Dhamo,” ... *Onufri is a painter of high talent, who skilfully masters the brush and artistic expression. In Onufri's paintings, the scenes appear lifelike. Alongside the general realistic tendencies in his work, we also find many details from everyday life. In the scene of the Nativity of Christ, the shepherd's pumpkin and the embroidery reflect the ethnographic background of our country. His coloring is distinguished by its purity and resonant tone. By working with 5-6 basic tones, he achieves perfect combinations of colors*”²⁰.

In addition to his mural paintings, Onufri also created numerous movable icons, among which we can highlight those from the “Vangjelistra” church, the “Holy Trinity,” and “Saint Mitri” in the fortress of Berat. In the composition of his icons, Onufri strictly adheres to the Byzantine tradition and the canons of the church. What sets him apart is that in the modelling and arrangement of the details of biblical scenes, we encounter many life-like elements. Onufri's scenes are composed in real positions, with lively movement and expressions. This is evident in scenes with saints, such as “Saint Constantine and Helena”²¹, “Saint Demetrius of Mirrovli”²², etc. His icons depict biblical passages, such as “The Nativity of Christ,” “Ipapandia”²³, “The Entry of the Blessed Virgin Mary into the Temple,” “The Transfiguration”,

etc²⁴. The iconographic art of Onufri is created with striking tones, filled with light, where his unique red stands out. The scenes of the feast icons painted by him are mesmerising in terms of the painting mastery. The decoration and the rich colouring of Onufri's icons have their own surprising magic. The icons are created in such a way that they invite the believer to meditate within them, to venerate them, and to be captivated by their expressive power. Onufri's icons can today be found in the museums of Albania. In the post-Byzantine icon pavilion at the National Historical Museum, an icon by Onufri is exhibited: "The Entry of the Blessed Virgin Mary into the Temple," which originates from the church of the "Annunciation" in Berat²⁵. At the National Museum of Mediaeval Art in Korça, eight icons by Onufri are exhibited²⁶. The most perfect work is the Beautiful Doors²⁷ of the iconostasis of the church of the Annunciation in Berat, where Onufri has poured all his talent. Additionally, at the "Onufri" National Museum in Berat, eight icons by Onufri are exhibited²⁸.

"Christ Pantokrator" by Onufri represents the classical type according to the pictorial canon. He is depicted from the waist up in a frontal position. His portrait is surrounded by a metallic aureole with a cross and his initials (IC XC). Christ blesses with his right hand and holds an open book (the Gospel) with golden letters near his chest in his left hand. This is a traditional type of Christ dating back to the time of Justinian (6th century) and remains one of the most beautiful

icons created in Albanian iconography. The icon of Christ Pantokrator by Onufri of Cyprus (16th-17th century) and other icons of this type are examples of this tradition.

In the collection of the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana, there is an icon titled "Shestja"²⁹, which is part of the twelve icons depicting the main feasts of the church.

The icons of Onufri are harmoniously composed in terms of colours. Onufri stands out for his perfect form in the creation of the image, establishing a colouristic balance with the dominance of red, which he uses in a highly masterful way³⁰. Onufri was the first iconographer to use golden ribbons in decorating the garments of the saints. The icons painted by Onufri are distinguished by powerful light, vivid colours, and the dynamism of the characters. In the realisation of the details of the saints' figures, deep psychological expressions are evident, which the artist achieves with powerful graphic tools, using illuminating lines. By using strong light in the eye area, he reflects the psychology of the saints' portraits. The depiction of figures in Onufri's icons is characterised by lively expressions, movements, and powerful spiritual expressions³¹. His followers in their works were greatly influenced by him, but they did not reach the heights of Onufri's mastery³².

Nikola, the son of Onufri

Onufri was a married priest and had children, one of whom became well-known. His name was Nikola³³

who continued the family tradition. This is confirmed by an inscription³⁴ written by Nikola's own hand on the western door inside the Church of "Saint Mary of Vllaherna" in Berat³⁵.

The inscription states that the painter is Nikola, the son of Onufri, the year 7086 according to the Byzantine calendar and 1578 according to the Gregorian calendar. In this case, Nikola is identified as the son of Onufri. We can assume that by 1756 Onufri had passed away, and his son Nikola appears as the continuer of the work of the great master of Albanian iconography. On the northern wall of the church, near the niche of the prothesis, in the apse of the Church of "Saint Mary of Vllaherna," there is another inscription.: +Οταν εἰς Θε(ε)ν ἐκπετάς(ης) τὰς χεῖρας ὁ θ(εο)ύ θύτα μνή / σθιτη κάμου (τού) ἀμαρτολού / καί αμαθούς ζωγράφου / Νικολάου. ἀμίν. "When you raise your hands to God, O priest of God, remember also me, the sinner and ignorant painter Nikola. Amen"³⁶. In the summer of 1960, an expedition led by Theofan Popa discovered an icon of Saint Mary in the Church of "Saint Mary of Vllaherna" in Berat. On the back of the icon, there was an inscription by Nikola along with his autograph: "... Nikola of Onufri". Next to the inscription, Nikola had also drawn a sketch of a saint.

Also, in Kurjan, Fier, in the Church of "Saint Nicholas"³⁷ the theologian Theofan Popa discovered an inscription in which Onufri's son Nikola, in 1561, painted the church with the help of another iconographer,

Joan. +Οταν εἰς Θεών ἐκπετά / σης τὰς χεῖρας ὡς Θε(ο)ύ θήτα μνή / σθιτη κάμου ἀμαρτολού κ(αί) αμά / θούς Ιωάν(ω)ου κ(αί) Νικολά / ου. Εύχεσθε (δ)ιὰ τών Κ(ύριο)ν ἀμίν. "When you raise your hands before God, O priest of God, remember also me, the sinner and ignorant Joani and Nikola. Pray for the Lord. Amen"³⁸.

Nikola is the second most prominent iconographer of the Iconographic School of Berat, who painted the following churches: the Church of "Saint Nicholas" in Kurjan, Fier; the Church of "Saint Mary of Vllaherna"³⁹ in Berat, the Churches of "Saint Stephen" and "The Presentation of the Virgin" in Dhërmi, and the frescoes of the Church of "Saint George" in Arbanas, Bulgaria⁴⁰.

In his iconographic work, Nikola tends to imitate the compositional scheme of the iconographic art of Onufri, his father, even in the way he composes the icons. However, Nikola never achieved the artistic values, the dramatic intensity, and the magical colouring power of his father's work. Painter Nikola created the frescoes and icons of the Church of "Saint Mary of Vllaherna" (1597) as well as several icons for the churches of the Berat Fortress.

The icons of Nikola, such as "The Nativity of Christ", "Saint Mary with Christ", and "Saint Michael" are distinguished by a warm colour palette with contrasts. In the icon "The Nativity of Christ" although painter Nikola follows the same compositional scheme as his father Onufri, he was unable to achieve the monumentality, elegance, the plasticity of the figures, and the beauty of the colour contrasts.

In Nikolla's icon "The Nativity of Christ" (National Museum "Onufri", Berat), compared to the analogous one by Onufri, we clearly observe the imitation of the scene but also some differences, such as a) the massive inclusion of elements from the real landscape, such as trees, grasses, and animals, and b) the enlargement of the dimensions and the increase in the number of figures. These changes made by the painter Nikolla have led to the loss of the grandeur of the rocky landscape in the background of the icon and the fading of the graphic contrast that is evident in the analogous icon by Onufri. Nikolla's icon has a decorative effect and is realised within a combination of warm colours: shades of red, ochres, and greens. In the icon created by Nikolla, the centre of the icon – the figure of Mary in the reclining position – is placed on the opposite axis compared to the Virgin in Onufri's icon and has been slightly shifted to the right. The colour red dominates in this icon, while the specific scenes and characters depicted in this theme, which is one of the most important in Christian iconography, are closer to the viewer and "devoid" of the "Onufrian" mystery, as executed by Onufri, who created the same iconographic theme.

The icons of Nikola are currently on display in the pavilions of the national museums of Albania. In the National Museum "Onufri" in Berat, several icons by Nikola are exhibited⁴¹. In the National Museum of Mediaeval Art in Korça, several icons painted by Nikola are displayed⁴².

According to Dhorka Dhamos, a characteristic of Nikola's painting is the internal and melancholic focus of the figures, with expressions of humility and a dreamy gaze that dissolves into space. The characters he portrays are distinguished by their portraiture, positioning, and gestures: the elderly are painted as thoughtful, while the young are full of grace, with lively movements. Nikola's artistic figures stand out due to their unique silhouettes. Nikola works by cherishing every mark left by his brush, revering every line that shapes the serene oval of the saints' faces, which convey a penetrating gaze. The eyes of the saints are calm and wise, bringing an inimitable note of poetic lyricism⁴³.

The icon "Holy Mary Hodigitria" by Nikola has achieved, above all, coloristic harmony. It is created with warm colours, and the characters stand out for their spiritual human communication. The transition of colours from light to shadow is more graphic than in the icon from the 14th-15th century of Maliqi, Korça.

Onufri of Cyprus

Another iconographer who dignifies the "School of Berat" is Onufri of Cyprus, who was of Greek origin but carried out his work in the churches of Berat. Onufri of Cyprus was born in Cyprus. This is confirmed by the signatures he left on his icons, such as Κυπραίος, which means "the Cypriot". Onufri of Cyprus is the first iconographer in Albania to leave inscriptions on icons. Seven icons with in-

scriptions by him have been preserved, on which his name, surname, and the year of the icon's painting are provided. He was the son of Afksenti. This fact is signed on the icon of "Holy Mary Eleusa" with inventory number 3656, which is located in the National Historical Museum: ΧΕΙΡ ΟΝΟΥΦΡΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΙΠΡΙΟΥ Αυξεντηου ("Hand of Onufri of Cyprus, son of Afksenti"). This is the only case where Onufri of Cyprus mentions his father's name, Afksenti. There is no information about his exact birthdate, but the scholar Vitaliotis believes that in 1570, Onufri of Cyprus was wounded during the siege of Nicosia, where he lost one of his hands. Under these circumstances, in 1582, Onufri left his homeland and settled in Venice⁴⁴.

In 1591, it is believed that he arrived in Berat. This is evidenced by the signature he left on the "Beautiful Doors" of the iconostasis of the "St. Nicholas" church in the castle of Berat: ΧΕΙΡ ΟΝΟΥΦΡΙΟΥ ΚΙΠΡΕΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΣ /ΑΦΖΑ "The hand of Onufri the Cypriot, year 1591". According to the scholar Mustafa Arapi, the "Beautiful Doors" of the "St. Nicholas" church were later adapted to the "St. Mary" church of Vllaherna. The "Beautiful Doors" are currently displayed in the post-Byzantine icon pavilion of the National Historical Museum⁴⁵ with inventory number 3658/1/2. In 1591, the Cypriot artist also painted the frescoes of the "St. Nicholas" church in the castle of Berat. Additionally, in the "St. Nicholas" church, the Cypriot artist painted the icon of "St. Nicholas with

scenes," which is believed to have been placed on the icon screen. The artistic quality of these two works by Onufri the Cypriot attests to his skill as an iconographic painter. This fact is confirmed by the depiction of scenes from the life of St. Nicholas. On the icon of "St. Nicholas with scenes," there is an inscription: Νικολαιε πανενδοξε Χριστου θεραπων τους τερπνον...την σιν / οικονα...και...τους εν βρω τερπνην ανταμνησιν / αυτης παρ(ας)χου και προστατην φανθει εν τι μελουσι κρισι εγραπτε / επι ετους αφγδ Χ(ριστο)υ εν μην(ι) νοεμβριου... (1594) / Προσδεξε αγιε δεη(ση)ν τους δουλους του Θ(εο)υ Κουμνηνου συν το / αδελφω Ανδρεα και Νικολαιου και της ληπξς σικκενης και για να / γινοςκετε σιχορησατε αυτους. Χειρ Ονουφριου Κυπρεου. "All-glorious Nicholas, servant of Christ... those who bow before your icon with joy... grant them a pleasant reward for as long as they live, and be their protector in the coming judgement. It was painted in the year 1594 of Christ, in the month of November... Accept, O saint, the prayers of God's servants, Komninus along with his brothers Andrew and Nicholas and other relatives, and may they be commemorated. The hand of Onufri the Cypriot"⁴⁶.

In the collections of the National Historical Museum, we have been able to identify two icons, which are believed to have been painted by Onufri of Cyprus. The icons belong to the church of "St. Nicholas" in the castle of Berat; "The Dormition of the Theotokos" with inventory number 5655 and dimensions 43 x 35 cm; "The Resurrection of Lazarus" with

inventory number 5586 and dimensions 65.5 x 41.5 cm.

In 1596, Onufri of Cyprus painted the icon "Deisis"⁴⁷ for the iconostasis of the church of "St. Nicholas" in the village of Paftal, Berat. The icon is currently displayed in the post-Byzantine icon pavilion of the National Historical Museum, with inventory number 3653. In the lower part of the icon, near the feet of St. John, it is written in Byzantine Greek: Χειρ Ονουφριου Κυ(πρεου) "The hand of Onufri of Cyprus"⁴⁸. Below the parchment held by the Virgin Mary, the year 1596 is written. In 1596, he painted the icon of "John the Theologian"⁴⁹ for the iconostasis of the church of "St. George" in Berat.

In 1599, Onufri of Cyprus painted the icon of "John the Baptist" for the iconostasis of the church of "St. Constantine and Helena" in Berat⁵⁰. In 1604, Onufri of Cyprus painted the icon of "Christ Pantocrator" for the iconostasis of the church of "St. Constantine and Helena" in the castle of Berat⁵¹. Also in 1604, Onufri of Cyprus painted the icon of "Deisis" and two side panels with saints for the iconostasis of the church of "St. Constantine and Helena" in the castle of Berat. In the collections of the National Historical Museum, there is also the cross that was placed above the iconostasis of the church, with inventory number 5467, as well as the icon of "Deisis" with inventory number 5615 and dimensions 75 x 18 cm.

Around 1604, Onufri of Cyprus painted the icon of "Christ Pantocrator"⁵² in the church of "St. Mary of Vlacherna" in the castle of Berat. The

icon is currently displayed in the Museum of Mediaeval Art in Korça with inventory number 3626. Onufri of Cyprus also painted the icon of St. Demetrius in the church of the Holy Trinity in Berat. The icon measures 49 x 36 cm and dates to the 16th century. In the lower part of the icon, beneath the feet of the horse, it is written in Byzantine Greek: Χειρ Ονουφριου Κυ(πρεου) "The hand of Onufri of Cyprus". The icon is currently displayed in the Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg Museum in Kruja⁵³.

Around 1605, Onufri of Cyprus left Berat and settled in the villages of Gjirokastër, in Pogon, Lunxhëri, and Dropull. In 1614-1615, Onufri of Cyprus painted the icons for the church of the Monastery of the "Transfiguration" in Catistë, Pogon, Gjirokastër. The iconostasis of the church of the "Transfiguration" has five large icons and nine small ones depicting the feasts of the Lord, all of which were painted by Onufri of Cyprus.

On the icon of "St. Mary with Christ," there is the inscription: +Αλλον ουρανον ορω και κοσμιμενον την σεπτην οικονα σου Θεοκηγητορ ηπερ καθη / στορισεν απλετο ποθω Γαβριηλ ιερομοναχος και θειτης. Χειρ δε ηπαρχει Ονουφριου Κυπριου..... "I see another heaven adorning your honoured icon, O Theotokos, which was painted with great desire by the priest-monk Gabriel. The hand is that of Onufri of Cyprus...."⁵⁴. Above the icon of Christ, it is written: Ο βασιλευς των βασιλευόντων και κύριος των κυριευόντων και μέγας / αρχιερεύς κριτής. Δεησις Ιακώβου Μητροπολίτου του Ζυχνών. / Χειρ

Ονουφρίου Κυπρίου Α Χ Ι Ε (=1615)
χ υ. "King of those who reign and
Lord of those who dominate and great
high priest, righteous judge. Prayer of
Jacob, Metropolitan of Zihna. The
hand of Onufri of Cyprus 1615". This
inscription refers to Christ as the King
and Judge, while also acknowledging
the prayer of Metropolitan Jacob of
Zihna and the signature of Onufri of
Cyprus with the date 1615"⁵⁵.

Also in 1615, Onufri of Cyprus
painted the icon of the "Transfigura-
tion." Above the icon, it is written:
Δησις Δανηλ Μητροπολίτου
Νεβροκόπου – ετους Α Χ Ι Ε (=1615).
Χ(ριστο)υ. Χει(ρ) Ονουφρίου Κυπρίου
"Prayer of Daniel, Metropolitan of
Nevrokop, year 1615 (from) Christ.
The hand of Onufri of Cyprus"⁵⁶. This
inscription refers to the prayer of
Metropolitan Daniel of Nevrokop,
with the date 1615, and acknowledges
the artist's signature, Onufri of Cyprus".

In 1622, Onufri of Cyprus painted
the frescoes of the church of "St.
Mary" in Vrahogoranxi, Gjirokastër.
This fact is confirmed by an inscrip-
tion found on the southern wall of the
church. The inscription is damaged
due to the plaster falling off.
Ανακενησθη...? ημον Θεοτοκου κε
αυπ (αρθενου Μαρίας) /...τατου ημον
κυρου.../ οστης αυτης μονης.../μοχθου
και εξοδου τον.... /(Ο)νουφριου
Κηπρεου κε Αληβιζιου.../αχκβ
(=1622). "It was painted... of the The-
otokos and ever-virgin Mary... of the
Lord... of this monastery... with the
labour and expenses of... Onufri of
Cyprus and Aliviziu... 1622."

Alivizius Fokas was born in
Cephalonia⁵⁷.

In 1623, Onufri of Cyprus painted
the icons for the church of "St. Mary"
in Vrahogoranxi, Gjirokastër: "Christ
Pantocrator," "St. Mary with Christ,"
"John the Baptist," "The Gathering of
the Archangels", "The Transfigura-
tion," and the "Beautiful Gates" of the
iconostasis. In 1625, Onufri of Cyprus
painted two icons for the iconostasis
of the church of "Prophet Elijah" in
Stegopul, Gjirokastër: the icon of
"Christ Pantocrator" and the icon of
the "Baptism."

In 1630, Onufri of Cyprus painted
the icons for the iconostasis of the
church of "St. Nicholas" in Saraqin-
isht, Lunxhëri. Some icons from this
church are displayed in the post-
Byzantine Icon Pavilion of the
National Historical Museum: "St.
Mary with Christ"⁵⁸, with inventory
number 3656, "Christ Pantocrator",
with inventory number 3657, "The
Dormition of St. Mary"⁶⁰, with inven-
tory number 3660, and "The Baptism
of Christ"⁶¹, with inventory number
3661. The icon of John the Baptist⁶² is
part of the collection of the National
Gallery of Arts in Tirana.

Onufri of Cyprus is the first icono-
grapher in Albania to apply the tech-
nique of stucco-relief. The figures he
created are imposing. They are ren-
dered with warm colouring and with-
out strong graphic contrasts. Onufri is
praised for his fresh and luminous
colours. He paints the figures on the
ground, skilfully using floral orna-
mentation on golden backgrounds
with stucco-relief.

In 1634, Onufri of Cyprus painted
the icons of "Christ Pantocrator" and
"St. Mary with Christ" for the iconos-
tasis of the church of "St. Mary" in

Upper Peshkëpinë, Gjirokastrë. In 1635, he painted the icons of "Christ Pantocrator"⁶³ and "St. Mary with Christ" for the iconostasis of the church of "St. Mary" in Spile, Tranoshisht, Lunxhëri. The traces of Onufri of Cyprus are lost after 1635, following around 40 years of presence in the Albanian regions. Onufri of Cyprus painted about 30 movable icons.

According to Dhorka Dhamos, the painting of Onufri of Cyprus appears calm. It has a lot of balance. There is a silent agreement between the painted surface with red, yellow, green, ochre, and blue spots. The colour and drawing are used in equal measure as harmonious components⁶⁴.

Conclusions

The influence of the Iconographic School of Berat, represented with dignity by Onufri and his followers, extended into the 18th century. The

churches of the Berat castle became ateliers where the great masters of Albanian iconography practised mediaeval Byzantine art. Alongside the features that enriched the ornamentation, Onufri and his followers created new variants and subjects, making compositional choices within the Byzantine tradition, thus giving local iconography a new characteristic. They founded the Iconographic School of Berat⁶⁵. Another phenomenon is also observed in their work: their skill and talent were not devoted to painting grand cathedrals, but they preferred the small churches of the villages of Shpati. In the following years, iconography experienced a noticeable decline because there was a lack of true masters who would continue the tradition left by Onufri, his son Nikola, Onufri of Cyprus, and many other anonymous monk iconographers.

Notes

- ¹ A. Qafa, A. Llukani, *Mitropolia e Beratit qendër besimi dhe edukimi*, Shtëpia botuese Print AL, Tiranë, 2022, pp. 154-174; A. Llukani, Y. Drishti, *Arti i ikonografisë në Shqipëri*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, 2021, pp. 36-58.
- ² V. Uzanova, „Piktori shqiptar i shekullit të XVI: Onufri nga Neokastra (Elbasan)”, *Buletin për shkencat shoqërore*, Tiranë, nr. 3, 1953, pp. 2-22.
- ³ Th. Popa, „Onufri, pikturor i madh shqiptar i shek. XVI”, *Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës*, seria shkencat shoqërore, nr. 1, pp. 208-219; Idem, „Onufri, pikturor i madh

shqiptar i shek. XVI”, *Puna*, 18 tetor 1960; Idem, „Onufri, pikturor i madh mesjetar në Shqipëri”, *Zëri i Rinisë*, 28 tetor 1961; Idem, „Pikturor Onufri dhe gjendja e artit të pikturës gjatë mesjetës”, *Nëntori*, nr. 4, 1962; Idem, „Onufri, ikonograf i shquar shqiptar”, *Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës*, seria shkencat shoqërore, nr. 1, 1962, pp. 54-75; Idem, „Të dhëna të reja rreth pikturor Onufrit”, *Studime historike*, nr.1, pp. 141-145; Idem, „Pikturor Onufri, personalitet i rëndësishëm i pikturës mesjetare shqiptare”, *Studime shqiptare*, nr. 1, 1996; Idem, „Rreth veprës së Onufrit”, *Monumente të kulturës në Shqipëri*, nr. 2, 1975, pp. 72-74; Idem, *Onufri dhe biri i tij Nikolla*, Ngjallja, shtator 1995, p. 9.

- ⁴ M. Zeqo, „Meditime Onufriane”, *Drita*, 27 dhjetor 1998, pp. 14-15; Idem, „Meditime Onufriane”, *Drita*, 10 janar 1999, pp. 14-16; Idem, „Onufri, bashkëkohësi ynë i përjetshëm”, *Shekulli*, 27 janar 1999, p. 16; Idem, „Onufri-kryemjeshtri i artit dhe kombit”, *Albania*, 13 shkurt 1999, p. 10; Idem, „Onufri-artist gjenial i penelit edhe vjershëtor”, 55, 16 shkurt 1999, p. 7; Idem, „Onufri dhe arti i kombit”, *Republika*, 21 shkurt 1999, pp. 8-9; Idem, „Ikonomia shqiptare dhe Onufri i madh”, 55, 8 shtator 1999, p. 13; Idem, *Onufri*, Tiranë 1998; Idem, *Mes laokontit dhe Krishtit, Medaur*, Tiranë, 2000; Idem, „Të dhëna të reja për piktorin Onufri (Shek. XVI)”, 2000 vjet art dhe kulturë kishtare në Shqipëri, Tiranë, 2003, pp. 203-207.
- ⁵ Dh. Dharmo, „Onufri figurë e shquar e artit mesjetar shqiptar”, *Studime Historike*, nr. 1, 1980; Idem, „Piktorët shqiptarë të shek. XVI-XVIII dhe vepra e tyre në Shqipëri dhe vise të tjera të Ballkanit”, *Studime Historike*, nr. 3, 1985, pp. 166-173; Idem, „Pasuesit e Onufrit në Berat”, *Studime Historike*, nr. 1, 1987, pp. 169-184; Idem, „La peinture murale du moyen age en Albanie, *Piktura murale e mesjetës në Shqipëri*, Shtëpia botuese 8 nëntori, Tiranë, 1974, pp. 14-15.
- ⁶ A. Sadikaj, „Onufri dhe shtegëtimi i shpirtit bizantin në Europë”, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, 25 gusht 2001, pp. 12-13.
- ⁷ Th. Popa, „Rreth veprës së Onufrit”, *Monumente të kulturës në Shqipëri*, nr. 2, 1975, pp. 72-74.
- ⁸ V. Puzanova, „Mbi artin bizantin dhe post-bizantin shqiptar”, 55, Tiranë, 2005, p. 33; Idem, „Piktori shqiptar i shekullit të XVI: Onufri nga Neokastra (Elbasan)”, *Buletin për shkencat shoqërore*, Tiranë, nr. 3, 1953, pp. 2-22.
- ⁹ Zerza is a village about 45 km away from Prilep. The monastery of the

“Transfiguration of the Saviour” was built in the year 1400. The founder of the monastery was the abbot Germanos. The church of the “Transfiguration of the Savior” is of the basilica type. Its front part, the apse, and the northern and southern walls were painted by Onufri in 1535. Some of the scenes include: the scene of the three strategists “Saint Mercury”, “Saint Demetrius”, “Saint George”; the scene “Deesis”, etc. Onufri decorated the church with three bands of frescoes. The upper band has square-shaped scenes such as: “The Descent from the Cross”, “The Descent of Christ into Hell”, “The Vision of Peter of Alexandria”, “Saint Theodore Tyron and Theodore Stratelates”, “The Resurrection”, etc. The middle band consists of medallions depicting saints in bust. In the apse are the scenes of the four evangelists. Onufri painted the church frescoes from 1535 to 1540.

M. Zeqo, *Të dhëna të reja për piktorin Onufri (Shek. XVI)*, 2000 vjet art dhe kulturë kishtare në Shqipëri, Tiranë, 2003, pp. 204-205.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 203-207.

¹¹ According to the researcher Mustafa Arapi, the inscription is written on the northern wall of the church, beneath the scene “The Crucifixion of Christ”, in the row of medallions. The inscription is written in seven lines. It is surrounded by an octagonal border. The inscription measures 48.5 x 168 cm. In the first six lines, prayers and dedications are written, while in the seventh line it is written: “on July 23 under the rule of the first throne of Kostur, Lord Methodhios, the painter Onufri..., from the glorious city of BE...TION, pray and do not curse in the name of the Lord.” This is where the issue lies. The researchers Theofan

- Popa and Dhorka Dhomo read it as VERATION, thus BERATION, while Orlando and Mustafa Arapi decipher it as VENETION. The frescoes of the Church of the Forty Saints are preserved in good condition. There are about 54 scenes painted by Onufri. M. Arapi, „Onufri dhe misteret e tij”, *Art & trashëgimi*, nr. 1, 2011, pp. 61-64.
- ¹² In the Church of the “Forty Saints” in Kostur, he uses the same inscription that he used in the Church of Valsh: + Οταν εις Θ(εο)ν εκπετασις / τας χειρας σου ω Θ(εο)υ θυτα, / μνησθητι κ(αι) εμου του αμαρτωλου / και αμαθους Ονουγριου ζωγραφου κ(αι) πρωτοπαπα Νεοκαστρου. “When you raise your hands to God, O priest of God, remember also me, the sinner and the ignorant Onufri, the painter and Protopope of Neokastra.”
- ¹³ Dh. Dhomo, „Piktorët shqiptarë të shek. XVI-XVIII dhe vepra e tyre në Shqipëri dhe vise të tjera të Ballkanit”, *Studime Historike*, nr. 3, 1985, p. 168.
- ¹⁴ The frescoes were discovered in October 1951 and were studied in detail in July 1952. V. Puzanova, „Piktori shqiptar i shekullit të XVI: Onufri nga Neokastra (Elbasan)”, *Buletin për shkencat shoqërore*, Tiranë, nr. 3, 1953, pp. 2-22; Idem, *Mbi artin bizantin dhe post-bizantin shqiptar*; 55, Tiranë, 2005, p. 11.
- ¹⁵ In the spring of the year 2000, I was privileged to visit the churches of the Shpati region, in the district of Elbasan. I was particularly impressed by the frescoes painted by Onufri in the Church of Saint Nicholas in Shelcan. A. Llukani, *Ikonografia*, Trifon Xhagjika, Tiranë, 2018, pp. 70-78.
- ¹⁶ Th. Popa, „Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri”, *Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë*, Tiranë, nr. 7, 1988, p. 52; A. Llukani, Y. Drishti, *Ikonostaset e Shqipërisë*, Kristalina-KH, Tiranë, 2024, pp. 28-29.
- ¹⁷ Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, *op.cit.*, nr. 14, p. 55; A. Llukani, Y. Drishti, *Ikonostaset e Shqipërisë*, *op.cit.*, pp. 30-31.
- ¹⁸ Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, *op.cit.*, nr. 15, p. 56.
- ¹⁹ In the year 1554, “obllat” were no longer in circulation, and the coins in use were akçes, aspers, or Venetian ducats. In this case, “obllat” referred to commemorative coins, that is, gold coins inherited from a treasure taken from Constantinople after the departure of the Logothetis family. According to the researcher Moikom Zeqo, Onufri’s work was paid for with this quantity of “obllat.”. M. Zeqo, *Onufri*, Medaur, Tiranë, 1998, p. 40.
- ²⁰ Dh. Dhomo, *La peinture murale du moyen age en Albanie, Piktura murale e mesjetës në Shqipëri*, *op.cit.*, p. 15.
- ²¹ The icon of “Saint Constantine and Helen” comes from the Church of “Saint Constantine and Helen” in Berat. It measures 87.5 x 58 x 3.2 cm. The icon is exhibited at the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë with inventory number 69. E. Δρακοπουλου, *op.cit.*, pp.74-77; Y. Drishti, *The Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Icons in Albania*, Davinci, Tirana, 2003, pp. 19-20.
- ²² The icon of “Saint Demetrius the Myrrh-Gusher” comes from the Church of “Saint Constantine and Helen” in Berat. It measures 96 x 55 x 3.7 cm. The icon is exhibited at the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë with inventory number 61. The icon was painted by Onufri in the 16th century. E. Δρακοπουλου, *op.cit.*, pp. 78-79.
- ²³ The icon of the “Presentation of the Lord” comes from the churches of

- Berat. It measures 57 x 36.5 x 4.5 cm. The icon is exhibited at the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë with inventory number 3637. The icon was painted by Onufri in the 16th century. E. Δρακοπουλου, *op.cit.*, pp. 68-69.
- ²⁴ In the icon "The Transfiguration," Onufri's mastery in creating the light-shadow contrast stands out. This is clearly seen on the jagged rocks and on the figures depicted in the icon. Th. Popa, *Icones et miniatures du Moyen age en Albanie, Ikona dhe miniatura mesjetare në Shqipëri*, Shtëpia botuese "8 Nëntori", Tiranë, 1974, pp. 12,13, 62, 63.
- ²⁵ The icon "The Entry of the Virgin Mary into the Temple" was painted by Onufri in the 16th century. Th. Popa, (1974), *Icones et miniatures du Moyen age en Albanie, Ikona dhe miniatura mesjetare në Shqipëri*, *op.cit.*, pp. 68-69; Y. Drishti, *Icons, Colection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries)*, Mali Pleshti, Tirana, 2017, p. 24; M. Labi, *Guidebook of National Historical Museum of Albania*, National Historical Museum, Tirana, 2016, pp. 128-129; D. Koçi, S. Bushi, A. Llukani, *Treasures of National Historical Museum*, Tirana, 2018, pp. 84-85; D. Koçi, S.A. Llukani, *Post-Byzantine Icons in the National Historical Museum*, Tirana, 2023, pp. 16-17.
- ²⁶ "Lazarus' Resurrection," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 54 x 34.5 cm, inventory number 3676; "The Nativity of Christ," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 53.5 x 34.5 cm, inventory number 3673; "The Transfiguration," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 54 x 34 cm, inventory number 3678; "The Resurrection," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 54.5 x 35.5 cm, inventory number 3679; "The Baptism of Christ," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 54.5 x 34.5 cm, inventory number 3675; "The Beautiful Gates," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 132 x 42 cm, inventory number 3693/94; "Christ Pantocrator," from the Church of the "Holy Trinity" in Berat, measuring 130 x 75 cm, inventory number 3682; "Saint Demetrius," from the Church of "Saint Demetrius" in Berat, measuring 95.5 x 54.5 cm, inventory number 3681; "Saint Constantine and Helen," from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 88 x 51 cm. Y. Drishti, *The Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Icons in Albania*, Davinci, Tirana, 2003, pp. 11-19; E. Drakopoulou, *Icons from the Orthodox Communities of Albania*, Thessaloniki, 2006, pp. 58-79; A. Llukani, Y. Drishti, *Ikonoastet e Shqipërisë*, Kristalina-KH, Tiranë, *op.cit.*, pp. 14, 16.
- ²⁷ "The Beautiful Gates" come from the Church of the "Annunciation," Berat. Their dimensions are: 132 x 43 x 5.5 cm for the left door and 132 x 41.5 x 4.5 cm for the right door. "The Beautiful Gates" are exhibited at the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë with inventory numbers 63 and 64. They were painted by Onufri in the 16th century. Th. Popa, *Icones et miniatures du Moyen age en Albanie, Ikona dhe miniatura mesjetare në Shqipëri*, *op.cit.*, pp. 58-59; E. Δρακοπουλου, *op.cit.*, pp. 58-64.
- ²⁸ "Deisis" from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 87 x 98 cm, inventory number 25; "John the Baptist" from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat,

- measuring 72.5 x 110 cm, inventory number 92; "Christ Pantocrator" from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat, measuring 78 x 129 cm, inventory number 12; "Saint Mary with Christ" from the cathedral "Dormition of the Virgin Mary," measuring 75 x 129 cm, inventory number 1; "The Annunciation" from the cathedral "Dormition of the Virgin Mary," measuring 73 x 106 cm, inventory number 22; "Theodore Tyron and Theodore Stratelates" from the Church of "Saint Theodore" in Berat, measuring 52 x 75 cm, inventory number 2; "The Entry of Christ into the Temple" from the Church of the "Holy Trinity" in Berat, measuring 43.5 x 54 cm, inventory number 9; Part of "The Beautiful Gates," from the collection of the Institute of Cultural Monuments in Berat, measuring 50 x 54 cm, inventory number 9. L. Çika, Y. Drishti, *The Icons of Berat*, Mali Pleshti, Tirana, 2003, pp. 54-64.
- ²⁹ The icon "The Procession" is attributed to Onufri and dates back to the 16th century. The icon measures 51 x 34.5 cm and has inventory number 7. It originates from the Church of the "Annunciation" in Berat. Until 1966, it was part of the collection of the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë. In 1966, the icon became part of the collection of the National Art Gallery in Tirana. Y. Drishti, *Le icone albanesi XIII-XIX secolo*, op.cit., pp. 44-45.
- ³⁰ *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, Akademia e Shkencave, Instituti i Historisë, Vol. I, 2002, Toena, Tiranë, p. 718.
- ³¹ Th. Popa, *Icones et miniatures du Moyen age en Albanie, Ikona dhe miniatura mesjetare në Shqipëri*, op.cit., p. 13.
- ³² Idem, *Onufri, piktor i madh shqiptar i shek. XVI*, Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës, seria shkencat shoqërore, nr. 1, 1955, pp. 208-219; Idem, *Onufri, piktori më i madh shqiptar i shek. XVI*, op.cit.; Idem, *Onufri, piktori më i madh mesjetar në Shqipëri*, Zëri i Rinisë, 28 tetor, 1961; Idem, *Piktor Onufri dhe gjendja e artit të pikturës gjatë mesjetës*, Nëntori, nr. 4, 1962; Idem, „Onufri, ikonograf i shquar shqiptar”, *Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës*, seria shkencat shoqërore, nr. 1, 1962, pp. 54-75; Idem, *Të dhëna të reja rreth piktor Onufrit*, op.cit., pp. 141-145; Idem, *Piktor Onufri, personalitet i rëndësishëm i pikturës mesjetare shqiptare*, op.cit.; Idem, *Rreth veprës së Onufrit*, op.cit., pp. 72-74.
- ³³ Idem, (1995), *Onufri dhe biri i tij Nikolla*, Ngjallja, shtator, p. 9; M., Arapi, *Nikolla, biri i Onufrit dhe jo i Onufër Qipriotit*, Monumentet, Tiranë, 2005, pp. 87-96.
- ³⁴ In the summer of 1956, an expedition from the Institute of Sciences discovered in the Church of Saint Mary Vllaherna in Berat an inscription through which we learn that the church was painted by Nikola Onufri in the year 1578. + Ουτος ο θεός κ(αί) πάνσεπτος ναος τής Υπεραγίας Ενδόξου Δεσπ(ο)ίνης ἡμ(ών) / Θ(εοτό)κου κ(αί) αείπαρθένου Μαρίας τής επονομαζομένης Βλαχέρνα εστήν πε / παλεωμένη κ(αί) πεφθαρμένη κ(αί) ανεκένησεν κ(αί) ανηστόρισεν μετα πόθου κ(αί) εξωδου / ο εβλαβέστατος εν ιερυση παπά Κονσταντ(ι)νος μετα τών αδελρών αυτου επονομαζ(ο)μένη Προτωσήγγελη / δειά ψυχικήν σ(ωτη)ρ(ι)α(ν) κ(αί) τών κτητόρων αυτης καί οί θεωρούνταις ευχεστε διά τών Κ(ύ)ρ(ι)ο(ν) κ(αί) τών κτητόρων αυτης καί οί θεωρούνταις ευχεστε διά

- τών Κ(υ)ρ(ι)ο)ν κ(αί) ο ηστωρι(ο)γράφος Νικολα(ος) υος Ονουφρίου ετους Ζ Π ΣΤ (7086 = 1578). "This divine and most holy temple of our most holy and glorified Lady, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, called Vllaherna, had aged and deteriorated, and it was renewed and painted willingly and at the expense of the most devout among the priests, Father Kostandin, together with his brothers; and you who behold it, pray for their souls; and the painter is Nikola, son of Onufri, year 7086 (=1578)". Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, nr. 92, 1988, pp. 86-87; Idem, *Piktorët mesjetarë shqiptarë*, *op.cit.*, p. 40.
- ³⁵ V. Puzanova, *Mbi punimet e piktorit Nikollit në kishën Vllaherna (në kështjellën e Beratit)*, Buletin për shkencat shoqërore, Tiranë, nr. 1, 1957, pp. 64-72; Dh. Dharmo, *Pasuesit e Onufrit në Berat*, *op.cit.*, p. 169; Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, nr. 93, 1988, pp. 86-87.
- ³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 87-88.
- ³⁷ Idem, "Piktura të tjera të piktor Nikollës, zbuluar në Kurjan të Fierit", *Buletin i Universitetit Shtetëror të Tiranës*, seria shkencat shoqërore, nr. 4, 1960, pp. 223-229.
- ³⁸ Idem, (1988), *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, nr. 94, p. 88; POPA, Th., *op.cit.*, p. 43.
- ³⁹ In the Church of "Saint Mary of Vllaherna" in Berat, Nikola painted the icon of Saint Mary Eleusa. It measures 97.6 x 67.5 x 3.8 cm. The icon is exhibited at the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë with inventory number 3688. The icon was painted by Nikola, son of Onufri, in the 16th century. E. Δρακοπούλου, *op.cit.*, pp. 82-83.
- ⁴⁰ Dh. Dharmo, *Mbi disa vepra të panjohura të piktorit shqiptar të shek. XVI Nikollës*, Monumentet, nr. 2, 1971, p. 67; Idem, "Piktorët shqiptarë të shek. XVI-XVIII dhe vepra e tyre në Shqipëri dhe vise të tjera të", *Ballkanit, Studime Historike*, nr. 3, 1985, p. 169.
- ⁴¹ "Christ Pantocrator," from the Church of "Saint Demetrius" in Berat, measuring 54.5 x 79.5 cm, inventory number 42; "The Nativity of Christ," from the cathedral "Dormition of the Mother of God" in Berat, measuring 47 x 70 cm, inventory number 3; etc. L. Çika, Y. Drishti, *The Icons of Berat*, *op.cit.*, pp. 65-66.
- ⁴² "Saint Demetrius," from the State Collection in Berat, measuring 80 x 51.5 cm, inventory number 3688; "Saint Mary," from the Church of "Saint Mary Vllaherna" in Berat, measuring 98 x 66.5 cm, inventory number 3688. Y. Drishti, *The Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Icons in Albania*, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-20; E. Drakopoulou, *Icons from the Orthodox Communities of Albania*, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-83.
- ⁴³ Dh. Dharmo, "La peinture murale du moyen age en Albanie, Piktura murale e mesjetës në Shqipëri", *op.cit.*, p. 15.
- ⁴⁴ I. Vitaliotis, *Onuphre le Chypriote, peintre post-byzantin en Albanie (vers 1591-1625)*, une esquisse de son activite artistique a tavers le corpus de son oeuvre, Paris, 2016, pp. 667-692.
- ⁴⁵ "The Beautiful Gates" were part of the iconostasis of the Church of "Saint Nicholas," in the Berat castle. Years later, they were adapted for the Church of "Saint Mary" of Vllaherna in Berat. "The Beautiful Gates" date back to the

- year 1591. They were painted by Onufër Qiprioti. Under the feet of the Archangel Gabriel, Qiprioti inscribed his name: ΧΕΙΡ ΟΝΟΥΦΡΙΟΥ ΚΙΠΠΕΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΣ / ΑΦΖΑ "The hand of Onufër Qiprioti, year 1591". M. Arapi, *Onufër Qiprioti. Ikonograf i shekullit të XVI-XVII, op.cit.*, p. 98; Y. Drishti, *Icons, Colection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries), op.cit.*, p. 33; D. Koçi, S. Bushi, A. Llukani, *Treasures of National Historical Museum, op.cit.*, pp. 86-87; D. Koçi, S.A. Llukani, *Post-Byzantine Icons in the National Historical Museum, op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.
- ⁴⁶ Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri, op.cit.*, nr. 96, p. 89.
- ⁴⁷ This icon is part of the iconostasis of the Church of "Saint Nicholas" in Pafal, Berat. It depicts the scene "Deisis" or "The Prayer." At the lower part of the icon, near the feet of Saint John, it is written in Byzantine Greek: ΧΕΙΡ ΟΝΟΥΦΡΙΟΥ ΚΙΠΠΕΟΥ "The hand of Onufër Qiprioti," while below the scroll held by Saint Mary is the year 1596. *Mostra di icone albanesi*, (1998), Roma, Vicolo Valdina, 6-24 febbraio / 8 marzo; Y. Drishti, *Icons, Colection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries), op.cit.*, p. 29; M. Arapi, *Onufër Qiprioti. Ikonograf i shekullit të XVI-XVII, op.cit.*, pp. 98-99; D. Koçi, S. Bushi, A. Llukani, *Treasures of National Historical Museum, op.cit.*, pp. 88-89.
- ⁴⁸ Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri, op.cit.*, nr. 99, pp. 90-91.
- ⁴⁹ The icon of "Saint John the Theologian" comes from the Church of "Saint George," Berat. It measures 97.5 x 62 x 2.5 cm. The icon is exhibited at the Museum of Medieval Art in Korçë with inventory number 3634. The icon was painted by Onufër Qiprioti in the year 1596. Above the icon is the inscription: α φ υ σ τ – απο Χριστου. Χειρ Ονουφρηου Κυπρεου "1596 "(from) Christ, the hand of Onufër Qiprioti." *Ibidem*, nr. 97, p. 89; E. Δρακοπουλου, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-85.
- ⁵⁰ On the icon of "John the Baptist," this inscription is found: Αλλον ουρανον ορω καικοσμημενον τ(ην) σεπτην οικοναν σου / Προδρομε μακαρ η νπερ καθηστορισεν απλετο ποθο Ανδρεας ταχα και / ιερε(υ)σ και κτητορ. Χειρ δε υπαρχι Ονουφρηου Κυπρεου επι / απο του Χ(ριστο)υ αφυθ εν μηνι σεπτε(μ)βριου "I see another heaven adorned, your honored icon, blessed forerunner, which was painted with full desire by Andrea, also a priest and founder. The hand is that of Onufër Qiprioti, the year from Christ 1599, in the month of September." Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri, op.cit.*, nr. 98, pp. 89-90.
- ⁵¹ Above the icon is the inscription: Δεησις του δουλου του Θ(εο)υ / Χριστου ιερεος μετα της / συ(μ)βιου κ(αι) το(ν) τεκνον αυτου. / Ετη απο του Χριστου αχδ. / Χειρ Ονουφριου Κυπρεου "Prayer of the servant of God, priest Christos, with his wife and daughters. Year from Christ 1604. The hand of Onufër Qiprioti." *Ibidem*, nr. 99, pp. 90-91.
- ⁵² Y. Drishti, *Icons, Colection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries), op.cit.*, p. 34.
- ⁵³ Idem, *National Museum Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, Kruja*, Publishing House Paper, Tirana, 2012, p. 62.
- ⁵⁴ Th. Popa, *Mbishkrime të kishave në Shqipëri*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, *op.cit.*, nr. 537, pp. 225-226.
- ⁵⁵ Idem, nr. 538, p. 226.
- ⁵⁶ Idem, nr. 539, p. 226.
- ⁵⁷ Idem, nr. 547, pp. 229-230.

- ⁵⁸ In the icon, there is a version of the typology of Saint Mary. Η ΕΛΕΟΥΣΑ "Eleusa" (The Merciful). An important feature of Qiprioti's artistic style is the technique of stucco relief, with a golden background and decorative elements. At the lower part of the icon is the inscription: ΧΕΙΡ ΟΝΟΥΦΡΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΙΠΡΙΟΥ Αυξεντηου "The hand of Onufër Qiprioti, son of Afksenti." In this case, the iconographer Onufër Qiprioti mentions his father's name, Afksenti. This is the only instance where Onufër Qiprioti mentions his father's name. *Mostra di icone albanesi*, (1998), Roma, Vicolo Valdina, 6-24 febbraio / 8 marzo; *Tresors dart albabais. Icones byzantines et post-byzantines du XII au XIX siecle*, (1993), Musee National Message Biblique Marc Chagall, Paris, p. 78; DRISHTI, Y., (2017), *Icons, Collection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries)*, Mali Pleshti, Tirana, p. 31.
- ⁵⁹ *Tresors dart albabais. Icones byzantines et post-byzantines du XII au XIX siecle*, (1993), Musee National Message Biblique Marc Chagall, Paris, p. 76; *Mostra di icone albanesi*, Roma, (1998), Vicolo Valdina, 6-24 febbraio / 8 marzo; Y. Drishti, *Icons, Collection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries)*, op.cit., p. 32.
- ⁶⁰ *Mostra di icone albanesi*, op.cit.; Y. Drishti, *Icons, Collection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries)*, op.cit., p. 35.
- ⁶¹ The icon "The Baptism of Christ" was created by the iconographer Onufër Qiprioti in the 17th century. It belongs to the iconostasis of the Church of Saint Nicholas in Saraqinisht, Lunxhëri, in the district of Gjirokastër. The icon depicts the scene of Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, *Mostra di icone albanesi*, op.cit.; *Tresors dart albabais. Icones byzantines et post-byzantines du XII au XIX siecle*, Musee National Message Biblique Marc Chagall, Paris, 1993, p. 77; M. Arapi, op.cit., p. 118; M. Labi, *Guidebook of National Historical Museum of Albania*, National Historical Museum, Tirana, 2016, pp. 130-131; Y. Drishti, *Icons, Collection of the National History Museum (14th-19th centuries)*, op.cit., p. 30.
- ⁶² The icon of "John the Baptist" measures 86.5 x 61.5 cm and has inventory number 36. Y. Drishti, *Le icone albanesi XIII-XIX secolo*, Collezione della Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Tirana, Tirana, 2000, pp. 36-37.
- ⁶³ The icon of "Christ Pantocrator" measures 124 x 72 cm and has inventory number 31. The icon is part of the collection of the National Art Gallery in Tirana. *Ibidem*, pp. 32-33.
- ⁶⁴ Dh. Dhamo, *La peinture murale du moyen age en Albanie, Piktura murale e mesjetës në Shqipëri*, "Shtëpia botuese 8 nëntori", Tiranë, 1974, p. 16.
- ⁶⁵ ***, *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, Akademia e Shkencave, Instituti i Historisë, Vol. I, 2022, Toena, Tiranë, p. 719.

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Travellers in Albania during the first half of the XIX century

Lida MIRAJ

Abstract: *Coloniae Juliae Augustae Dyrrachinorum, the most strategic city in the Adriatic coast, one of two principal gates of Christian diffusion into Balkans (the other is Salona), was a main centre of a province, part of a large region, often named Dysrrahia always within the limits of the Macedoine Province.*

In the late-antique period, a series of large-scale works were carried out, including the construction of basilicas, villas, the round forum or macellum, the chapel in the amphitheatre, the sewer system, etc.

Often, during the excavations for the new construction of the city, are discovered fragments of these villas decorated with frescos, mosaics, etc. One of the interesting mosaics, excavated years ago, is Roman Polychrome one with the floral motives and the inscription: MARTINIA. It decorated a villa where one of the rooms paved with mosaics has an apse.

Another mosaic is composed with the figure of Orpheus which is surrounded by both animals and vegetations. Around this principle 'icon' the mosaic is composed by geometrical and floral motives. After that city began the new type of life and the new construction, although both paganism and Christianity faced difficult cultural choices in both the third and the fourth centuries.

One of the very interesting Early Christian constructions is the chapel adapted on the structures of the amphitheatre. There are not data about the precise date of the abandonment of amphitheatre, but of course this happened in the second half of IV century, after the earthquake of 345/346 A.D.

The chapel is mostly known for the VIth century mosaics on the walls. These mosaics are composed with eikons in three panels, on the two different and quite perpendicular walls, under the sloped construction of the amphitheatre's vomitorium that was part of the nave.

The other monument is the Early Christian Basilica, dated in the Vth or VIth century, dedicated to Saint Michael and located in Arapaj, a village 6 kilometres south-east of Dyrrachium city. This Basilica is known for the beautiful and very special mosaic. The surface of the mosaic is 54 m², situated at the side funerary or martyrodom. This polychrome mosaic is composed with two emblems: one with Eucharistic scene, and the other with Bucolic scene.

The mosaics discovered in Durres are very fine examples of the Early Christian period and demonstrate the importance of the city as the principal gate into Balkans.

Keywords: *Early Christian, Dyrrachium, Durrës, Roman Empire, Albanian Cultural Heritage.*

The historian and journalist, Jill Lepore wrote:
*"Getting too close to your subject is a major danger,
 but not getting to know her well enough is just as likely."*¹.

The major period of foreign travellers in Albania occurred in connection with the Napoleonic Wars,² (1796-1815), and even more under the subsequent rule of Ali Pasha of Tepelenë, the Albanian ruler from southern Albania, known by Sultan as the Pasha of Trikala and Ioannina³. The Napoleonic Wars,⁴ abruptly canceled all bookings on the 'Grand Tour'⁵. Travellers became more snobbish than ever. Meanwhile the social organization of the Albanians increased the confusion. Albania fell into hands of local tribal chieftains. One such chief, Mehmet of Bushat, founded a dynasty around 1760 that ruled upper Albania from Scutari (Shkodra) for several generations. At the beginning of the 18th century, Epirus was governed by three pashas, whose respective headquarters were at Ioannina, Delvina, and Paramythia, although many districts enjoyed practical independence. Ali Pasha was in power from 1788, when he was recognized by the Ottoman Porte as ruler of the Pashalik of Janina, to 1822, when he was taken down by Sultan Mahmud II's forces, following a two-year violent struggle. He became an Albanian ruler known by the Sultan as a Pasha of Trikala and Ioannina.⁶ Centered in Ioannina, Ali Pasha carved out his own territory, which stretched from the Adriatic to the Aegean, from Elbasan in the north to Trikkala to the south of Pindus Mountains. Shkodra and Ioannina

were important economic, political, and cultural centers. The Venetians, on the other hand, needed good relations with all of the Albanian pashas for their survival. The same happened with the French after their arrival in Corfu on June 27, 1797⁷. In 1797 the extravagant Ali Pasha of Tepelena – the vezir nicknamed by Byron 'The Ottoman Napoleon' – brought Butrinti under his control. Though the entrance to Butrinti appears to have been fortified, the city now primarily functioned as a source of good fishing and hunting, not the least for the vezir himself and his international guests.

The first concrete impact of the French Revolution upon the Balkans came with the signing of the Campo Formio Treaty,⁸ following Napoleon's Italian campaign⁹. Two years previously, after the Treaty of Campo Formio, France had annexed all the possessions of the Venetian republic, and thus turned into a Balkan power, although Dalmatia, the Ionian islands and a few outposts on the Epirus coast like Butrinti were to change hands several times for the next two decades. The complicated fortunes of war meant that western Europeans began visiting the Ottoman Empire either as representatives of the Great Powers or simply as travellers, since the 'Grand Tour' in France and Italy was no longer possible¹⁰.

The first period of French rule in the Ionian Islands lasted from June

1797 to March 1799. The French general, Antoine Gentili,¹¹ looking to expand French power on the Albanian coasts, met Ali Pasha 'on the ruins of Butrinti', a place that was quite deserted and where the historian of the expedition, Arno, had seen only a Turkish man and only one Albanian¹². Ali Pasha proposed to anchor his ships in Corfu Bay and also to reside in Butrinti, but the General refused these proposals¹³.

Throughout his career, Ali demonstrated great skill in playing off the religious and class differences among his subjects and enemies against one another. Until the Greek rebellion launched by the Philiki Etairia in March 1821, Mahmud II, who had succeeded Selim III in 1806, and the Porte administration had dismissed the old organization as inconsequential. According to them, the chief obstacle preventing the restoration of Ottoman authority in the Balkans was Ali Pasha. In contrast, Ali had realized the significance of the Greek revolutionary movement and had begun to explore possible cooperation with it. As the Sultan advanced preparations for a frontal assault on Ali's stronghold in the town of Ioannina in southern Epirus, the Pasha underwent an opportunistic conversion to Hellenism¹⁴.

In Ottoman Europe the vast bulk of the population – probably around 80 per cent of the total – remained Christian. Even where Islam made inroads into the countryside, it rarely carried the Turkish language along with it: Bosnian Muslims still spoke their native Slavic; Ali Pasha of Ioan-

nina spoke Albanian and Greek but not Turkish. He had a Greek Christian wife, for whom he was reputed to have built a chapel¹⁵. He was the most formidable and durable Sultan's disobedient provincial governors in the early nineteenth century. The venerable looking but ruthless Albanian whose reach extended from his base in Ioannina as far east as the Vardar River and as far south as the Gulf of Corinth. In the course of his lengthy struggle with the Porte, and amid complex double-dealings with British and French diplomats, Ali contemplated using the Greeks¹⁶.

In 1782 the Hungarian, Karl Gottlieb von Windisch (1725-1793), (who only signs with his last name) published an article in the Hungarian Review under the title 'Die Klementiren in Smyrmien'. He writes about Kelmendi tribe, north Albanians, who moved to Slovenia in 1737 and 1738 and established the villages of Nikinc and Hrtkovc, near the river Sava. They chose to immigrate to those regions which were under Austrian rule, to escape the Ottoman occupation¹⁷.

Thomas Hope (1769-1831) was a British painter who traveled throughout the Mediterranean towards the end of the 18th century. During his travel he composed hundreds of drawings of landscapes, monuments and national costumes of Albania, Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria, which are preserved in the Benaki Museum, in Athens¹⁸.

Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul, called Auguste de Choiseul-

Gouffier (1752-1817), member of the Académie Française and French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1784 until the fall of the French monarchy. He lived at the end of 18th century and the beginning of 19th and traveled to the Balkans. On his way to Greece, he painted Albanian landscapes and Albanians dressed in national costumes¹⁹.

In 1797, following the collapse of the Republic of Venice, its dominions were divided between the Habsburg Empire and France. During the end of 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, the French, the British and the Russians agonized over control of the Mediterranean. At the same time, all three regarded the Ottoman lands as a potential annex of influence²⁰.

The Italian fellow, Saverio Scrofani (1756-1835), traveled in Greece between 1794 and 1795 and published his memoirs in three volumes, and they were translated from Italian into French, in 1801²¹. In the same year, Charles Sigisbert Sonnini (1751-1812) published a book in two languages, French and German, about his travels in Greece and Turkey, including Albania, where he went on orders from Louis XVI²².

For much of the 18th century, the intellectuals' dreams of political emancipation rested – as Voltaire's did – upon an enlightened despot coming to their rescue, a Platonic philosopher-king, a modernizer, in the mold perhaps of Catherine the Great or Joseph II. The Russians remained a source of potential aid, notably during the 1806-1812 Russo-Turkish war,

which brought Russian troops south of the Danube, and made it look as if 'Grandfather Ivan' would liberate Balkan lands. However, it was the French Revolution which first suggested that emancipation might come through the action of the masses themselves. The toppling of the French monarchy, the rise of Bonaparte and above all, his invasion of Ottoman Egypt in 1798, radicalized the political thought of Balkan Christian intellectuals²³. The first two decades of the nineteenth century were turbulent years throughout Europe, with the upheavals caused by the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath; they were also years of social upheaval for Ottoman society, as the ideas of the Enlightenment crept in. Disruptive forces were felt within, while Russia, the British and the French vied for influence and possessions in the Mediterranean. The merchant class contended with a greater share of political power.

It was this period that Dimo Stephanopoli (1749-1821) a Corsican cavalry officer, botanist and naturalist, descended from Mani, and his nephew, Nicolo Stephanopoli, visited Epirus and Mani. As botanist, Dimo is credited with the discovery of helminthohorton, an alga reputed to combat helminthiasis. He was also descended from the last Greek emperor of the Trebizond Empire, and when Louis XVI recognized this fact, Stephanopoli added Comnenos to his surname (Démétrius Stephanopoli de Comnène). Officially, the purpose of their journey was to collect sea flora and in search of medicinal herbs, but

in reality, they intended to collect information on the inhabitants' political inclinations, on behalf of Bonaparte. They left Paris in 1797 and traveled through Italy to visit the Morea. In Milan, Dimo met Napoleon²⁴, who hired him to travel from Ancona to Corfu, and after meeting with the French general, Gentile he had to stay for a time and gather information about the political situation. Also, he had to gauge different opinions people expressed about the French position. Bonaparte mentioned that he would pay the travel expenses for both Dimo and his nephew.

After accepting this task, Dimo Stephanopoli arrived first in Corfu and then in the Morea. In Corfu, he met with Ali Pasha to gain permission from Gentile to use his three ships around Corfu's waters. After a visit to Preveza, ruled by the French, Dimo returned to Corfu and from there he went back to France. He met Bonaparte again, and reported about Albania, Rumelia, and the Morea, and that the inhabitants were waiting for him to grant their independence. In the end, he informed Napoleon that Butrinti (Small site with a fortress and some families six miles from Corfu), Parga (forty miles from Corfu, and with 300 families), Preveza (seventy miles from Corfu with 14 000 inhabitants and a small fortress) and Vonica (a small city near Arta) were still under French rule²⁵.

After their return, Dimo and Nicolo Stephanopoli composed reports with their observations and impressions. The account of their voyage

written by Antoine Serieys, professor at the Prytanée, was based on these memoirs. Aside from historical and cultural information, undoubtedly of great importance, especially regarding Mani before the Revolution, the texts present extraordinary stylistic and narrative interest. Two identical editions were published simultaneously in London and Paris²⁶.

According to Ali's secret service, French general, Gentile, was working to create a military base near the Vivar, a zone with a strategic interest. When Ali discovered this fact, the alliance and all relations with France were broken²⁷.

Early in 1803 Ali Pasha sent word to the British embassy in Constantinople/Istanbul requesting that the British send to him an emissary, so that he might be given advice regarding the best course of action vis-à-vis the impending resumption of war between Britain and France. This petition resulted in a visit from William Hamilton, the secretary of the British embassy²⁸. The attention of the British Foreign Office was thus directed to the Albanian potentate, and at the beginning of 1804, John Philip Morier (1776-1853), a member of a Huguenot family settled in England, was sent out to Albania, the Morea, and the adjoining countries in the capacity of British Resident and Consul-General, with instructions to impress upon the governors of those districts the indispensable expediency of employing to resist the plans of France, and of not allowing themselves to be deceived by any attempt by the

French Government to deny the existence of such plans. Morier was also directed to employ every means to obtain the most precise information concerning the state of the country, the military means of repelling invasion, and the disposition of the inhabitants. After having an audience with the pasha of the Morea, Morier planned to carry out the main purpose of his mission, which was, a diplomatic visit to Ali Pasha. Soon after his arrival, he found himself acting as mediator between the Russians and Ali out of necessity and of endeavoring to hold together these two ill-suited allies. At the beginning of 1806, Morier returned to Ioannina from a visit to Salonica and Constantinople, and found the French Consul-General, Pouqueville installed in Ali's capital. Morier did not doubt that his appointment was a measure already planned between the pasha and the French, who had obtained a firman from the Porte for that purpose. Ali assured Morier that Pouqueville had made no proposals of nature. Morier was inclined to suspect, and that he was merely charged with the superintendence of commercial concerns. At a further audience held a day or two afterwards, Ali further confirmed to Morier that Napoleon had sent him a verbal message offering him any assistance in men and ammunition that he might require, if he would permit a landing on his coast from Otranto for the purpose of attacking Corfu²⁹.

The Prussian diplomat, Jakob Ludwig Salomon Bartholdy (1779-1825), traveled in Morea and Greece

in 1803 and 1804 and wrote a book about his travels. The book was translated from German into French and published in Paris in 1807³⁰. From his drawings and the description of Ali Pasha's wars, which were copied from the book of the British traveller, William Eton,³¹ in his *Survey of the Turkish Empire*, it appears that Bartholdy might have visited Ioannina. He drew three Albanian figures: an Albanian soldier in Morea, an Albanian lady in Athens, and an Albanian young lady in Lithada³².

Balthasar de la Motte Hacquet (1739-1815), French descent, the Carniolan physician and professor of anatomy in Laibach (now Ljubljana), traveled throughout Austrian Empire, including travels in the eastern part of Adriatic Sea. He published a book, with two volumes, about Illyria and Dalmatia³³.

At the beginning of 1806, an ominous change began to take place in the attitude of the Porte towards Great Britain and Russia, her partners in the Triple Alliance formed in 1798 to resist the schemes of Napoleon. This change in attitude was a result of the battle of Austerlitz and the Peace of Pressburg (1805), since, in that treaty, Dalmatia was handed over to France, and the Napoleonic Empire was brought into the immediate neighborhood of Turkey, as the Reis Effendi (the Ottoman Foreign Minister) was reminded by Talleyrand's letter with its politely veiled threat. John Philip Morier's mission ended in 1806. His youngest brother, David Richard Morier (1784-1877),³⁴ also a diplomat that had accompanied John Philip, in

November 1807 wrote a letter to George Canning, the British Foreign Secretary (1807-1809) and described him the new policy³⁵.

The officer of the British Crown, writer, topographer engineer and diplomat, the young and energetic Lt. Col. William Martin Leake (1777-1860), who received his training at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich (London), was named as a British agent to renew a political friendship with Ali Pascha.³⁶ In 1804 he was entrusted with the task of surveying and collecting information about the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire and he travelled from 1804 to 1810. Leake's first trip to the region was in December 1804 when he journeyed through southern Albania, describing Vlorë, Kanina, Saranda, Delvina, Gjirokastra, Tepelena, Kardhiq, Finiq, Himara and Ksamil. The second great Albania trip, in June 1805, took him from Macedonia to Devoll, Korça, Voskopoja, Berat, Apollonia, Këlcyra and Përmet. He continued touring Albania and Greece until February 1807.

Captain William Martin Leake had been on a military mission to Ali Pasha during the period of Morier's consulship and had given the former useful advice regarding the fortification of his country. Towards the end of 1807, Leake was instructed to approach Ali and to ask him whether, in the event of the Ottoman Government being driven out of Europe, he was willing to assert his independence; if his answer was in the affirmative,

Leake was to promise him the naval assistance of Great Britain against the menacing power of France and Russia. Being aware that the Pasha was surrounded by agents of the French Government, Leake concluded that even if he should be favorable disposed towards the British, Ali would not enter into any written communication without the greatest secrecy, and therefore thought it important to gain his confidence by convincing him that the same caution would be observed on his part³⁷. Leake's reports are extremely full and informative, and his description of Epirus is invaluable to any study of the area. The first volume of his book begins with the description of Vlorë, where he arrived by boat on December 9, 1804, and describes the coasts. He landed in Tepelena and saw the people wearing Albanian costumes. He visited Feniki (Phoinike) and described its history as the capital of Epirus. Captain Leake then arrived at Preveza in February 1809, and from that time until about March 1810, he made either Preveza or Ioannina his headquarters. Leake mentions that Hadrianopolis was constructed during the reign of Hadrian and that, in the seventh century, a bishopric center might have been located in the ruins in Drinopoli and ancient Fanota in modern Kardhiq. He describes in his book the Albanian coasts: Himara, Nivicë, Lukovë, Piqeras, Qeparo, Vuno, Dhërmi, Dukat, and Pilur. He also writes that he visited Butrinti and, in January 16, left Saranda for Corfu. In that period, Butrinti was known as

a place where boar and other games could be caught for replenishing ships' stores, and was occasionally visited by tourists from Corfu, either for hunting or to see the ruins. After staying five months in Corfu, he traveled to Etoli and Akarnani and returned to Preveza on June 22. He stayed in Korça for a while, and from there, he went to Berat and then to Voskopoja. The visits to Amantia, Byllis, Apollonia, and the monastery of Ardenica were brief³⁸.

Captain Leake was clearly the most suitable agent that Great Britain could send to Ali, and among the Leake papers is a George Canning's letter (dated October 21, 1808), appointing him special envoy to the Pasha's Court, and placing him in charge of the supply of artillery and stores intended for use against the French³⁹. He was the best informed of the early writers on Albania, when arrived in Ioannina in 1809 as British representative at the court of Ali Pasha. Anglo-French rivalry for Ali's support in the unstable political environment of the eastern Mediterranean was mirrored in a personal hostility between Leake and the French representative at Ioannina, François Pouqueville. He later also wrote at length about the area though much less reliably⁴⁰.

Actually, among those who did not immediately benefit from the altered politics of the eastern Mediterranean was the French physician to the Commission on the Sciences and Arts, François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville (1770-1838), a member

of the scientific commission that accompanied Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. Poor health forced him and two other officials to return to France, but on his way back to France, on November 25, 1798, he was captured by pirates and sent to Navarino in the Peloponnese, where he was imprisoned and held for ransom by the Turks. He visited Tripoli, Patras, Argos, Nauplia and Albania before he was removed to Constantinople, where he was again given a good deal of freedom but was held for over two years before being permitted to return to France⁴¹. Thanks to his knowledge of medicines, Pouqueville gained the favor of Mustafa Pasha and then his freedom in 1801, but Mustafa Pasha was vague concerning the conditions of Pouqueville's release. His three companions at the time of his capture remained with the pirates longer and were not so well treated, but they too eventually arrived in Constantinople and were freed. They put their notes at his disposal, and Pouqueville wrote his observations concerning the customs and curiosities of Albania, Greece and Turkey. It was in prison that he began writing his first travel memoirs, which were dedicated to Napoleon and published, in Paris in 1805, the three-volume edition: *Voyage en Morée, à Constantinople, en Albanie et dans plusieurs autres parties de l'Empire ottoman pendant les années 1798, 1799, 1800 et 1801*⁴². The book, translated into German, English and Italian, was exceptionally successful and attracted the attention of the French go-

vernment, which appointed him as consul general in Ioannina, to the court of Ali Pasha Tepelena, where he served for ten years. Traveling to Ioannina in September of 1806, he described his travels from Sazan Island to Borshi, Lukovë, Nivicë, Delvina, and Muzina. He arrived at Ioannina on March 19, 1807. He remained in Epirus from 1806 to 1815, had a close personal relationship with the 'Lion of Janina' and was able to travel widely in the region. Later he traveled extensively through Albania. Describing Durrës, he mentions both the luxury of the city in antiquity and the destruction⁴³. He further mentions that the French consulship in this important city had existed since 1640 and the trade from it was approximately 30% with France and 70% with Spain. Pouqueville then describes a number of archaeological sites, such as the ruins of Dodona, the Venetian fortress and the ruins of Butrinti, and the ancient cities of Apollonia and Byllis⁴⁴. Pouqueville also took note of all British travellers who visited Ali Pasha, observing with a degree of jealousy, the new connections that pasha was forming with England rather than France⁴⁵.

The Venetian policy of sowing division among the local governments of Albania was reversed, and everything was done to encourage the growth of Ali's power even to the extent of allowing his ships to navigate the Adriatic and thus to begin his attacks on the independence of the Christian Khimariots on their rocky promontory. For a time, Ali appeared

to welcome the assistance of the French Republic, and committed himself to projects of a treasonable nature against his sovereign; but when at length the Sultan broke with Bonaparte over the Egyptian question, Ali decided that it was more in his interest to show himself a loyal and enthusiastic subject of the Sultan, and thus turned against the French⁴⁶.

A peace treaty was signed between Great Britain and Turkey on January 5, 1809, but by September Ali was growing nervous, although Sir Robert Adair, the British Plenipotentiary and Ambassador at Constantinople, assured Leake that he had no intention of leaving the pasha to cope single-handed with France, and on October 13, in a letter marked 'private', he writes that Ali has been insinuating that his services have been inadequately rewarded. Leake's retirement from Ali's Court in 1810 appears to have been rather sudden and unexpected. Mr. G. Foresti, a young Greek, and son of Spiridion Foresti, the former British consul in the Ionian Islands, succeeded him⁴⁷.

Angelo Masci (1758-1821) was the Italian Arbëresh jurist and scholar. In 1807, his best-known work *Discorso sull'origine, costumi, e stato attuale della nazione Albanese* was published in Naples. Using mostly classical works as sources, Masci grouped Illyrian, Macedonian and Epirote into one language family, which he considered the Ursprache of Albanian, but didn't name and identify it. His work influenced Conrad Malte-Brun,⁴⁸ who republished it with the title *Essai sur*

l'origine, les moeurs et l'état actuel de la nation albanaise in his *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*. In turn, Malte-Brun's essays partially influenced Giuseppe Crispi,⁴⁹ who wrote the first monograph on the Albanian language, however, unlike Masci, Malte-Brun and Crispi identified that language family with Pelasgian. In his book Masci discusses the origins, costumes and present situation of the Albanian nation and his book was reprinted 40 years later⁵⁰. Travels in Albania are not mentioned concretely, however from the contents of the book one may suppose that he visited Albania before writing it.

The British scholar, Edward Dodwell,⁵¹ after traveling throughout southeastern Europe, returned in London and he published a book there in two volumes which consisted of 1100 pages and numerous illustrations. His book is particularly important for classical archaeology. Traveling from Venice to Greece, he stayed in Albania. He was in Durrës, Kruja, Vlorë and other coastal cities included Acroceraune mountains. He was in Himara in May 26, and after that he left for Corfu. From Corfu, he visited Parga, Preveza, and the ruins of Nicopolis. He as early as 1804 had paused on Corfu and had drawn the landscapes of the island and the views to Butrinti. In his book he includes views of Albanian cities, such as Valona, Kruja, Durazzo, including Acroceraunian landscapes as well as Albanians dressed in national costumes⁵².

According to Caterina Beschi Spestieri, all the illustrations in Dodwell's book are by Simone Pomardi, a painter who accompanied Dodwell on his trip. Pomardi himself published a book after Dodwell's with different drawings and different notes that he took during their travels⁵³.

Another British scholar, Guillaume de Vandoncourt, traveled in Albania in 1807. In his book he describes Albanian folk costumes and states that, in his opinion, they derive from Roman military dresses⁵⁴.

One of the most prominent foreign travellers to Albania was the well-known Romantic British poet, George Gordon – Lord Byron (1788-1824). He was approximately 21 years old when he set out on a grand tour of the Mediterranean in 1809. Because of the Napoleonic wars he could not follow the conventional 'Grand Tour', but instead he sailed with his ever-protective friend John Cam Hobhouse,⁵⁵ from Falmouth to Lisbon, Malta, Greece, Albania and Turkey. His visit to Albania in the autumn of that year made a lasting impression on him and is reflected in the second canto of the poem 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage', that catapulted him to fame as a writer in 1812⁵⁶.

*In marble-paved pavilion, where a
spring/Of living water from the center
rose,/Whose bubbling did a genial
freshness fling,/And soft voluptuous
couches breathed repose,/Ali reclined,
- a man of war and woes./Yet in his
lineaments ye cannot trace,/While
gentleness her milder radiance
throws/Along that aged venerable*

face. /The deeds that lurk beneath and stain him with disgrace.

Byron's *Childe Harold* (1812) Canto II, Stanza 62.

It was Lord Byron who consolidated a growing fashion for Albanian travel. Attracted by the possibility of meeting Ali Pasha, he went to Ioannina with John Cameron Hobhouse in October 1809. They finally encountered Ali farther north, in Tepelenë, and Byron wrote proudly, With the exception of Major Leake... no other Englishmen have ever advanced beyond [Ioannina] into the interior'. Byron's fantasy of Albania, as one of the world's wild places, has been the mainstay of most English travel writing about the country ever since: *Land of Albania! Let me bend mine eyes/On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!* (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto 2, lines 338-339)

The publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* in 1812, and their instant success, placed Albania firmly on the imaginative map of Europe.

In the four cantos of the autobiographical *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, he memorialized this trip and further travels with a complete seriousness that is puzzling in one so full of life and good humor in his letters. His style of travel was luxurious, and he was prepared for any hardship. Sailing from Preveza to Patras on a ship provided by Ali Pasha, he lay down on deck amidst the chaos of a storm and

the struggles of incompetent sailors, wrapped himself in his Albanian capote, and went to sleep. In canto II of *Childe Harold*, he portrays the much-admired Albanians as 'noble savages', and, in accompanying notes, he favorably compares Albania to Scotland, its inhabitants to Scottish Highlanders, and the scenes a Highland novel by Walter Scott.

'The Albanians in their dresses (the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long *white kilt*, gold worked cloak, crimson velvet gold laced jacket & waist coat, silver mounted pistols & daggers), the Tartars with their high caps, the Turks in their vast pelisse and turbans, the soldiers & black slaves with the horses, the former stretched in groups in an immense open gallery in front of the palace, the latter placed in a kind of cloister below it, two hundred steeds ready caparisoned to move in a moment, couriers entering or passing out with dispatches, the kettle drums beating, boys calling the hour from the minaret of the mosque, altogether, with the singular appearance of the building itself, formed a new & delightful spectacle to a stranger'⁵⁷.

John Cameron Hobhouse or Lord Broughton was educated at Westminster School and attended Trinity College, Cambridge, where he founded the Whig Club and an Amicable Society. It was at Cambridge that he met and became an intimate friend of the poet Lord Byron, with whom he travelled in 1809-1810 to Albania, Greece and Turkey, in particular to Janina (Ioannina) and as far

north as the court of Ali Pasha in Tepellenë (Tepelenë)⁵⁸. Hobhouse later became a member of parliament, served as secretary for war in the cabinet of Earl Grey in 1832 and held positions in later governments. The memoirs of his travels to Albania with Byron (whom he does not mention) were published in the volume *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople during the Years 1809 and 1810*, London 1813⁵⁹.

Both Byron and Hobhouse were delighted by the fineness and exoticism of Eastern clothes. An entry in Hobhouse's diary shows him getting up at ten o'clock and trying on 'Albanian suits', while Byron writes to his mother telling her that he has bought some 'very 'magnifique' Albanian dresses'.

Byron and Hobhouse had been assigned a fine apartment in the palace. They noticed English carpets in the rooms used in winter, whilst the long gallery reminded them of the top story of an English inn. The day after they arrived, they were received by Ali Pasha, Byron, having dressed for the occasion 'in a full suit of staff uniform with a very magnificent saber & c'. The state room was paved with marble, with a fountain in the center. Scarlet ottomans were placed around the walls. The Vizier, in his late sixties, 'very fat, & not tall, but with a fine face, light blue eyes and a white beard', paid Byron the compliment of receiving him standing, then invited him to sit down on Ali Pasha's right. The polite small talk began with the

question of why Byron had left his country at such an early age.

Why was this powerful despot so attentive to Lord Byron? Ali Pasha was a devious, sophisticated potentate, intent on playing his own diplomatic power games with the British and French, as well as with the Turks. He may have imagined that Byron could be useful in his delicate maneuvers. At this juncture his interests coincided with English policy in the Ionian Isles, which was aimed at dislodging the French. Captain Leake had informed him that Byron came of an important aristocratic family. He may have overestimated his political influence. Besides, to this elderly and self-indulgent tyrant, Byron's person was evidently irresistible.

Hobhouse noted how he looked a little leeringly at Byron, asking how he could have had the heart to leave his mother. Caressingly he told the young man that he could tell he was well born because he had 'small ears, curling hair, & little white hands'. He had observed already the peculiarity of Byron's ears, which had almost no lobes. Ali Pasha was effusive about Byron's looks and clothes and told him to regard him as a father while he was in Turkey. 'Indeed', Byron told to his mother, 'he treated me like a child, sending me almonds & sugared sherbet, fruit & sweetmeats 20 times a day. He begged me to visit him often, and at night when he was more at leisure'. That first meeting ended with coffee and Turkish pipes.

Byron saw Ali Pasha three more times. It has been suggested that Ali

Pasha made a conquest of Byron. This is unlikely. Byron was not susceptible to older men. But he was certainly responsive to the flattery of such a powerful figure and held by the ferocious strength of will behind Ali Pasha's urbanity of manner: 'he is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave & so good a general, that they call him the Mahometan Buonaparte'. There was a horrid fascination in Ali's most un-English practice of impaling and then roasting his enemies.

Even in the early weeks of Byron's travels he was referring to them as a pilgrimage. A pilgrim's journey it had now indeed become as he explored both his inner nature and the landscape and history, psychology and politics of other countries in Europe and the East. Captain Leake in Ioannina was aware of his propensity to turn aside 'from the contemplation of nearer objects and from the conversation of those about him, to gaze with an air *distract* and dreamy the distant mountains'. This impression may have been romanticized by hindsight, but there is evidence that Byron's poetic travelogue *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was gestating at this time.

On October 22, while they were still in Tepelena at Ali Pasha's palace, Hobhouse recorded: 'Byron is all this time engaged in writing a long poem in the Spenserian stanza'. Byron himself gives an official starting date of October 31, by which time they had returned to Ioannina. He had now embarked on his own more ambitious counterpart to Hobhouse's journals, a

verse narrative written 'amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe'. These scenes are filtered through the tormented sensibility of the young traveller, originally named 'Childe Burun', responsive to yet alienated from his surroundings by some undisclosed and undisclosable wrongdoing. This was to be a pilgrimage of the divided self.

But while Byron was describing his journeys he was also, at Hobhouse's insistence, covering his tracks. In Albania, as regards his records for posterity, there was loss as well as gain. On one of their stops while they were on their travels, a pile of manuscript sheets fell out of Byron's portmanteau. Hearing that this was an account of Byron's early life, presumably including reminiscences of his love for Eddleston, the wary Hobhouse persuaded him to burn it. "For", he warned, 'if any sudden accident occurs they will print it, and thus injure your memory'. Later, Byron appears to have regretted this destruction, telling Thomas Moore that the loss of the manuscript had been 'irreparable'.

In early November Byron and Hobhouse were traveling south again, heading towards Greece, with an enlarged entourage. Besides Fletcher and Andreas Zantachi, his Greek interpreter, he now acquired an Albanian servant, Vassily, assigned to him in Tepelena by Ali Pasha, and a young Muslim, Dervish Tahiri, one of the guards of forty or so Albanian soldiers whom Ali Pasha had directed to accompany Byron and his party to protect them from the robbers in the region.

Fletcher, on the contrary, was turning out to be a burden. He was not a resilient traveller. Ali Pasha had provided an armed galliot to take them by sea from Prevesa to Patras. The crew was incompetent. A storm drove them off course.

'Fletcher yelled after his wife, the Greeks called on all the saints, the Mussulmen on Alla, the Captain burst into tears & ran below deck telling us to call on God, the sails were split, the mainyard shivered, the wind blowing fresh, the night setting in, & all our chance was to make Corfu, which is in possession of the French, or (as Fletcher *pathetically* termed it) 'a watery grave',⁶⁰.

As a memory of Byron's visit, the well-known painter, Thomas Phillips, produced later, on 1914, the portrait of the poet dressed in Albanian costume entitled: 'Byron in Albanian dress', residing in the Gallery of Portraits, in London. It is strange that Pouqueville laughed with Byron and Broughton and wrote several letters to General Donzelot on October 9 and November 15, 1809. In these letters he mentions facts about the 'so called lords' who 'ware Albanian dresses'⁶¹. John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Byron's companion on the trip, published memories on his journey through Albania and other provinces of the Turkish Empire⁶². He described Nicopolis and mentioned that a number of archaeological objects found in this city Ali Pasha had given to the British officer in Ioannina, Col. William Martin Leake⁶³.

Ali's power on the mainland of Albania continued to grow, in July

1810, he felt strong enough to forge a 'firman' from the Porte, appointing his son, Mukhtar, to the government of Berat and Valona, in place of Ibrahim Pasha, the existing governor, and an old rival.

During the first two decades of the 19th century Ioannina comprised a regional economic, administrative, military and cultural center. It was inhabited by an ethnically and religiously diverse population consisting predominantly, but not solely, of Greek, Albanian, and Turkish subjects-all Ottomans⁶⁴.

In 1806, Danish archaeologist and philologist, Peter Oluf Brønsted (1780-1842)⁶⁵ and his friend Georg Hendrick Carl Koës⁶⁶ (1782-1811), set out on a grand European tour that finally led them to Greece and Albania⁶⁷. Along their way, they traveled through Germany, and took part in Goethe's wedding festivities⁶⁸. These young enthusiasts met in Rome in 1809 some other young intellectuals, architects, artists and traveled together to Greece and Albania. The team was composed by two Danes, two Germans, the architect Johann Carl Christoph Wilhelm Joachim Haller von Hallerstein (1774-1817)⁶⁹ from Nürenberg, the landscape painter Jacob Linckh (1786-1841) from Württemberg, and an Estonian baron with artistic interests, Baron Otto Magnus von Stackelberg (1786-1837) from Tallinn. They arrived in Greece in July 1810 and after that Brønsted met in Athens the British architects Charles Robert Cockerell⁷⁰ (1788-1863) and John Foster⁷¹ (1786-1846)⁷².

The British architects and friends of Brøndsted, Charles Robert Cockerell and John Foster, traveled in southern Europe and the Levant. They excavated in Athens and its surroundings as well as the Temple of Athena at Aegina⁷³. Charles Robert Cockerell drew Ali Pasha in his palace, representing him with an authoritarian look and imposing stance⁷⁴.

The young people started Xeneion, a fraternity of antiquarians, whose hallmark was 'enthusiasm for Greece, ancient literature, and the fine arts'. They all reached Corfu in late July 1810 and on August 25, they arrived at Prevesa. Two days later, they visited the ruins of Nicopolis. On August 30, they left for Patras and arrived in Athens on September 14. In Greece Brøndsted met and Lord Byron. In a letter to Francis Hodgson on January 20, 1811, Byron noted: 'I have contracted an alliance with Dr. Brøndstedt of Copenhagen, a pretty philosopher as you'd wish to see...'. In another letter to John Cam Hobhouse on March 5, 1811, he wrote: 'I am at present out of spirits having just lost a particular friend; poor dear Dr. Brønstedt of Copenhagen (who lost half his rixdollars by our cursed bombardments) is lately gone to Copenhagen; we used to tipple punch and talk politics...'⁷⁵.

In the winter of 1811-1812 Brøndsted excavated on the island of Kea, and in the spring of 1812, he was working at Aegina and Salamis. In June, he joined Haller in his excavations of the temple of Apollo near Phigalia (Bassae). Brøndsted, accom-

panied by his friend, the count of Capodistrias, Nicolo de Lunzi, reached Preveza on December 12, 1812, and met there with Ali Pasha⁷⁶. Brøndsted spent January and half of February of 1813 in Ioannina, the capital of Ali's pashalik, and from there, he returned to Denmark. He wrote of his interviews with Ali Pasha, attempting "*to represent him himself such as he saw him*" and his manuscript is preserved in the Royal Library of Copenhagen (folder KB NKS 341c)⁷⁷.

The Danish scholar described Ali Pasha as an 'extraordinary old man' and the apartment in which he found the pasha as 'of middling dimensions, but very lofty, and richly decorated in the Turkish style, without being overcharged. The ceiling oval, or rather inclined in the elliptic form, was painted in deep celestial blue, with a number of stars in relief, gilt and of various sizes'⁷⁸. Ali, after saluted in the Turkish fashion-of bowing the head, and bringing the right hand to his breast, invited his guests to sit, and asked Brøndsted for his name, country, what the object of his travels was, all while proposing to communicate without an interpreter. Brøndsted described Ali's smoking of a nargileh and his dress, comparing him to Ulysses. During their discussion, Ali asked him about the Danish monarchy, how far to the north it extended, and where Norway began; he was especially interested in the Icelandic volcano of Hekla, as he was not sure if this island belonged to Denmark, or England. Ali expressed his wish to see a volcano, such as Etna or Vesuvius, but not Hekla, which was too far away.

Another point of their discussion, according to Brøndsted, was the ancient monuments, and Ali mentioned to him that other visitors had given a large sum of money to his son Veli Pasha of the Morea for permission to excavate. Ali was happy that Brøndsted was 'well skilled in *old stones*' and proposed to visit the ancient sites of Albania. Ali added that "...if you have a mind to excavate some parts in Albania, I will furnish you with as many people as you wish for nothing; but it is to be understood that I will have my share of the marbles, and *precious things* that we find..."⁷⁹. Brøndsted records that Ali mentioned his displeasure with lord Elgin. Two days after this discussion with Ali, Brøndsted and, Nicolo de Lunz visited the ruins of the ancient city of Nicopolis. Ali asked the Danish archaeologist about the details of fortifications, while admiring the fine masonry, the small and great theaters, and other objects. He also asked Brøndsted where they might begin an archaeological excavation. Brøndsted proposed to excavate in two areas in the interior of the city, which he believed had been temples. Ali assisted in this small excavation. Together they found three fine square marble slabs that the Danish archaeologist described as part of the ancient pavement of the building. Pasha placed the slabs with great care upon a type of rolling/sedan-chair (*chaise roulante*) and covered them with straw, so they could be conveyed to Prevesa. They also discovered two insignificant bronze medals, and Ali gave one to the archa-

eologist and pocketed the other himself, laughing at this "*augmentation of his treasury*"⁸⁰. Brøndsted wrote notes about the ruins of Nicopolis, and in them, he mentions that a large quantity of marble columns and other movable building materials from the ruins had been dragged away during previous years on the orders of Ali to be used for the building of the two palaces of the Pasha and for mosques in Prevesa⁸¹.

The German painter and Brøndsted's friend, Carl Haller von Hallerstein visited Nicopolis in the summer of 1810. In August 1810, he drew views of Preveza and Nicopolis⁸². Carl Haller died very young in 1817, in the valley of Tempe, where he had been hired by Veli Pasha, the son of Ali, to construct a bridge⁸³. His portrait, drawn by Otto Magnus von Stackelberg on Zakynthos in 1814, is preserved in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen, in München.

In 1815, Jean Baptiste Joseph Breton (1777-1852), translated and published in Paris the book of the German scholar Belsazar Hacquet (1739-1815) focused on the ethnographic observations of inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula that includes thirty-two hand-colored lithographs to illustrate Hacquet's studies⁸⁴.

There are three British fellows, Henry Holland⁸⁵, Thomas Smart Hughes⁸⁶, and Robert Townley Parker⁸⁷ that traveled in Albania during the first half of the second decade of the 19th century and published books about their travels.

Holland's book has 552 pages in a large format, and at the very beginning of it, he describes the Albanian people dressed in their national costumes. Landing in Prevesa, in 1812, the young traveller wrote: 'Entering these regions, the scene is suddenly shifted, and you have before your eyes a new species of beings, with all those gaudy appendages of oriental character and scenery which have so long delighted the imagination in the tales of the East. The uniform habits of the Turk, derived from his religion and other circumstances, render this change almost as remarkable in the first Turkish town you may enter, as in those much further removed from the vicinity of the European nations'⁸⁸. After Prevesa or Nicopolis, he visited, Arta and Pesë Puset (Five Wells) and then arrived in Ioannina. After Ioannina, he traveled to Salonica and before returning to Albania, as he had promised Ali Pasha. In February 1813, he met Ali Pasha in Preveza. Following that visit, he went to the fortress of Suli and met Mouctar Aga, 'a fine-looking man, between 50 and 60, of pleasing manners and much politeness'⁸⁹. Ali pasha proposed him twice to stay as his personal physician and suggested him to travel to the north of Ioannina. Holland accepted this suggestion and began a trip that included Gjirokastra, Tepelena, Gradishtë (where he visited the ruins of Byllis), Pojan (where he drew the column of the temple in Shtyllas), and Vlora (where visited the mine of bitumen in Selenicë). Holland's profession as a physician gave him a certain

objectivity; the fact that he was Ali's doctor perhaps made him unduly sympathetic to his patient. Ali's government has been seen as beneficial, notwithstanding the faults and evils of despotism. The Albanians were proud of him and serve him gladly; the Greeks served him out of fear, habit or interest, while the Turks, that enjoyed no particular privilege or interest, were not so prone towards Ali. Holland contrasts Ali's artifice and cruelty with his temperance and geniality, his political intelligence with his inadequate education⁹⁰. In his last meeting with Ali Pasha, on April 7, Holland mentions that Ali accompanied him to the entrance gate and kissed him on both cheeks⁹¹.

As mentioned above, Reverend Thomas Smart Hughes left England, being the traveller tutor of Robert Townley Parker a young boy and later became Member of Parliament for Preston 1837-1857.

For about two years, the two young men travelled through Spain, Italy, Sicily, Greece and Albania, the Mediterranean countries, 'those theatres of the most interesting events recorded in the annals of history'. They visited Sicily at the end of 1812. There, in Messina, they met a number of Albanians and afterward traveled with them to Zante, the Morea, Patras, Argos, and Corinth.

Hughes began the Albanian part of his journey in Preveza which at the time marked the border between Albania and Greece and continued on to Arta and Janina (Ioannina). They arrived in Preveza on December 27,

1813, and visited Nicopolis, to see the quarries of marble and limestone being used for the Ali Pasha's fortresses in Preveza and Arta. The Albania he describes is thus primarily Epirus, the realm of Ali Pasha Tepelena, of whom he leaves us a good biography. From Janina, he then provides us with a detailed account of his excursion to the north of Albania (in modern terms, actually the south of Albania), i.e. to Libohova, Gjirokastra, Kardhiq, Tepelena, Berat, Këlcyra, Përmet, Konitsa and back to Janina. They stayed in Ioannina from January 1813 to May 1814, where they became acquainted with the local elite and were given the chance to converse with Ali Pasha several times. During the stay there, they were accompanied by the architect and antiquity smuggler Charles Robert Cockerell, who sketched the views of the city that supplemented Hughes's works. At Ioannina they met with the British lieutenant-colonel, Richard Church⁹², who proposed to visit Ali Pasha in Litharica. In the mid-January 1814, Hughes and Parker continued their travels, visiting the ruins in Dodona, and Dervican, before the returning back to Ioannina. Hughes stayed five months in the city and met Ali Pasha several times. He commented on Ali Pasha's seraglio in the Castle: "*The serai stood in an open space, near the south-east angle; a vast irregular pile of building, surrounding nearly three sides of a large court. The effect of its architecture and decorations were very striking at a distance; but less so on a closer inspection, when the*

coarseness of its work and the perishable nature of its materials impressed upon the mind ideas only of barbarous magnificence and ephemeral power".

The results of this extensive Mediterranean journey were published in the two-volume book⁹³.

Hughes, traveling and writing a little later than Holland, is slightly less enthusiastic about Ali, who is first mentioned in a hostile fashion when Hughes is in Greece⁹⁴. In his published book is a drawing of Cockerrell with some Albanians in 1812-1813⁹⁵.

There are interesting travel account memories of the French general, writer and military historian, Frédéric Guillaume de Vaudoncourt (1772-1845)⁹⁶. Vaudoncourt casts his net widely, serving Napoleon in several campaigns, including the Hundred Days of 1815, and writing about them. Walton's translation refers to the author enigmatically as being in the Italian service, not mentioning the fact that after Waterloo he had been condemned to death by the restored French monarchy. Vaudoncourt had served in the Balkans, helping Ali Pasha to fortify Preveza in 1807, but his book is clearly not very accurate. His portrait of Ali balances praise with blame. There is a long and rather tedious account of road journeys through Ali's domains, which by their very nature would not seem to derive from personal experience⁹⁷.

Cultivated man and freedom fighter, General Frédéric Guillaume de Vaudoncourt left his Memoirs for

his activity in fifteen years (*Quinze années d'un proscrit*), in which he traces with talent his atypical itinerary, that of a soldier of the Republic become general of Napoleon, continuing his liberal quest across the continent. He is the author of a very large number of military works, including his memories on the Ionian Islands and the life of Ali Pasha. His book is translated into English by William Walton⁹⁸ with the title *Memoirs on the Ionian Islands including the life and character of Ali Pasha*⁹⁹.

The commercial relations of Durazzo/Durrës and the Republic of Venice, under Ottoman occupation, are described in a book written by Giovanni Antonio Maria Morana, the Venetian Consul in Durrës. This book is published in Venice in 1816¹⁰⁰. He had published earlier another book about the commercial reports of Aleppo and other sites of Siria and Palestina with the Republic of Venice, when he has been Venetian Consul there¹⁰¹.

George Stockli, the British painter, visited Albania in 1818 and painted a number of landscapes and cities' landscapes¹⁰². Another important traveller of adventure in this period is Adolphe Cerfbeer, known as Ibrahim Manzour Effendi¹⁰³, who became a commandant in the service of Ali Pasha. In 1813, he went in Skopje, where he lived in the house of Suleyman Pasha, who protected him. While there, he became friends with Suleyman's son, Ibrahim, and because of him changed his name to Ibrahim. He stayed there for less than a year.

After traveling around the region, he arrived in Ioannina and became a commandant in the service of Ali Pasha for three years, from June 1816 to the end of July 1819. Eight years later he published a book with his memoirs. In the second part of the book he provides geographical descriptions of Albania and descriptions of Albanians¹⁰⁴.

In 1817, because of an agreement signed between the British diplomat Sir. Robert Liston (1742-1836)¹⁰⁵ and the Porte, it is decided that a commissioner from the Porte should be sent to Ioannina, to work with a commissioner Sir Thomas Maitland (1759–1824)¹⁰⁶. As Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, Thomas Maitland played the chief part in an affair which brought intense odium upon himself and upon the name of Great Britain. Ali Pasha soon afterward sent a deputy to Corfu, to inform Maitland that the Ottoman commissioner had arrived to Ioannina. After an interview with this deputy, Maitland considered it necessary to reinforce the garrison of Parga in order to prevent any attempt by Ali to surprise the fortress. In pursuance of the intention of the treaty, Maitland sent Mr. Joseph Cartwright (1789? -1829)¹⁰⁷, the British Consul at Patras, to Ioannina in the post of British Commissioner, who was in fact merely a passive agent of Ali Pasha. Towards the end of 1817, Maitland had an interview with the Pasha, as a result of which another English Commissioner and other Turkish and Ionian agents, were sent to Parga in April¹⁰⁸. Sir Thomas

Maitland traveled in Albania in March 13, 1819, and visited Butrinti accompanied by the French painter Louis Dupré (1789-1837)¹⁰⁹. Dupré published portraits of Ali Pasha and his grandsons in his book of 1825¹¹⁰. Another book of traditional Albanian Costumes was published in 1822 by the English marine painter Joseph Cartwright. After being Consul at Patras, he served on Corfu in the British Navy and from there he may have traveled and visited Ali Pasha.

The British painter, Hugh William Williams (1773-1829)¹¹¹, traveled in Italy, Albania and Greece in 1819. A year later, he published in London a book in two volumes about this trip and described virtually everything he saw, having an interest in the monuments of foreign cultures¹¹². The book is illustrated with his engravings and in the second volume included an Albanian fighter in national costume. Ten years later, in 1829 he published the two-volume album (*Album with selected views from Greece*) with selected views of the countries he visited. In the pages facing engravings on Albanian theme, Williams published verses from 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage', which mention Albania and Albanians.

A cooperative venture, in 1818, under the command of Captain William Henry Smyth (1788-1865) surveyed the whole of the eastern Adriatic seaboard¹¹³. The resulting published charts, the *Chart of the Channels of Corfu with the Adjacent Coast of Albania*, published in 1825, and the massive Austrian/Naples atlas: *Idrografia Generale del Mare*

Adriatico also of 1825, remained standard works for the first half of the 19th century¹¹⁴. The great *Carte Physique Historique de la Grèce* of Comte Guilleminot (Royal Geographical Society), published in 1826, incorporated a series of small scale detailed maps of harbors including Butrint. Despite its small size, this map, utilizing information from Francis Pouqueville, is a fine piece of cartography, and is still probably the most attractive map of Butrint produced before Arthur Lukis Mansell's work. It was reproduced in 1829 in Weiss's *Carte der Europaischen, Türkei* (Royal Geographical society Europe)¹¹⁵. Commander Arthur Lukis Mansell produced a survey map of Corfu and the Albanian coast, published in 1865 as *Channels of Corfu with the adjacent coast of Albania*; it replaced Smyth's earlier chart¹¹⁶.

Charles Robert Cockerell (1788-1863), born in London, was a British architect, archaeologist and writer who is remembered for his works of Georgian architecture in Britain and for his role in the excavation of the temples of Aegina and Bassae. From 1810 to 1817 he travelled extensively in Greece, Albania, Turkey and Italy. In 1819, he was leading architect of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London and in later years was made President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It was in January 1814, during his travels in Greece, that he ventured northwards to Albania (that began in Preveza) to visit the realm of Ali Pasha, where he made several vivid sketches¹¹⁵.

John Heaviside Clark (1771–1863) was a Scottish aquatint engraver and painter of seascapes and landscapes. He was also known as Waterloo Clark, because of the sketches he made on the field directly after the Battle of Waterloo. One of his paintings, dated in 1818, has a Soldier of Albania¹¹⁸. Clark exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy between 1801 and 1832. He was the author of *A practical essay on the art of Colouring and Painting Landscapes*, with illustrations, published in 1807, and *A practical Illustration of Gilpin's Day*, with thirty colour plates, in 1824¹¹⁹, based on monochrome studies representing different times of day by William Gilpin¹²⁰.

Amongst the different travellers and visitors of Albania were two British painters, Henry Cook (1819–1890) and Captain George de la Poer Beresford (1826–1865)¹²¹. Henry Cook drew the triangular fortress, near Butrinti, in 1820 and two views from Shkodra Lake. In the text written in his paintings he copied the lines of Byron about Albanians¹²². Captain George de la Poer Beresford drew, among twelve other sketches, the Vivari Channel and fortress¹²³.

In 1821, the high Porte mounted a campaign to crush Ali and sent troops against him to Ioannina. Ali's defenses in Epirus were finally breached in early 1822. He met his death at the hands of a fellow vizier in February 1822. He was killed on the island in the Lake of Ioannina, in a cell of the monastery of Saint Panteleimon, near the place called Five Wells and, on the order of the Sultan the 'Rebel's head'

was sent to Constantinople, while everything else He possessed was burned¹²⁴.

French Baron, Louis-Auguste-Félix de Beaujour (1765–1836), graduated in diplomacy and military studies, was one of the first travellers who took a trip through the Ottoman Empire for a specifically military purpose, and he published a book with two volumes, afterward with the description of the frontiers and principal defended sites either natural or constructed. He visited southern Albania and Ali Pasha's Palace after the death of Ali Pasha. He admired archaeology and antiquities very much, but because of war he was obliged only to do some military researches. He wrote his memories and was afraid that United Kingdom might use his studies for the military aim. So, his book, with two volumes, was published much later in Paris. The memories, about Albania and Ali Pasha, are in the third book of the first volume. He described the topography, the physical geography, mountains, and rivers, in each city or village of the Ottoman Empire. He began his trip in Greece and continued into Albania. For his visit to Durrës, he provides a brief description of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey¹²⁵.

Baron Otto Magnus von Stackelberg (1787–1837), the French painter from Alzasa, traveled through different countries of Europe and in 1825 he visited Albania. In an album he with thirty colored engravings, two of them are from Albania: 'Albanian officer' and 'Albanian Janissary'¹²⁶.

Scottish political figure and writer, David Urquhart (1805-1877), travelled to Greece in 1827 with Lord Cochrane to champion the Greek cause in the war of independence there, and in 1831 he was appointed to Sir Stratford Canning's mission to Constantinople to settle a border dispute between Turkey and Greece. When arrived in Greece, the text of the protocols of London had confirmed the independence of the country. From Albania had come news of the revolt. In such conditions he left Argos to go to Ioannina and described the land of Pirros, Scanderbey and Ali Pasha. In November 1831 David Urquhart sailed from Corfu to Saranda and visited Gjirokastra, Tepelena, Berat and Kavaja. After getting lost along the Erzen River and being saved by a Vlach shepherd. He stayed for some time days in Durrës, as a friend of the governor, and later he visited Shkodra. David Urquhart was the author of six books. Of Albanian interest is his two-volume, *The Spirit of the East, Illustrated in a Journal of Travels through Roumeli during an Eventful Period*, London 1838. His descriptions of Albania reveal a stagnant country languishing under the weight of a decaying Ottoman Empire¹²⁷.

The Italian fellow, Carlo Grassini, published a book about the history of Ali Pasha with 3 portraits¹²⁸.

William Purder, a Scottish painter traveled in Albania and except the prepared illustrations for the works of Lord Byron, he painted the Ali Pas-

ha's Palace in Tepelena that is the only evidence of this building¹²⁹.

Sir William Allan (1782-1850) was a distinguished Scottish historical painter known for his scenes of Russian life. He became president of the Royal Scottish Academy and was a Royal Academician. Lord Byron in a Turkish Fisherman's House after swimming across the Hellespont, is a painting that he made in 1831. It was mentioned that he made some paintings with subjects from Albania¹³⁰.

The young British fellow, Benjamin D'Israeli¹³¹, is another traveller who made a three year trip (1928-1931) to Spain, Malta, Albania (by which he meant southern Epirus), Greece and the Middle East¹³². He left England on August 1830 and, after visiting Spain and Malta, he arrived in Corfu on 10 October, where he met with a Bey of Vlora¹³³. In an energetic letter to his father, dated in October 25, 1830, he recorded his impressions of "this savage land of anarchy" and his vast enjoyment of 'the now obsolete magnificence of Oriental Life'. Much of the letter subsequently passed into his novel *Cantarini Fleming* (1832). D'Israeli was so inspired by him, he sailed from Corfu in Ioannina the next day and met William R. Meyer, the British Consul in Albania, to whom he had a recommendation letter¹³⁴. On the morning of the fourteenth accompanied by six armed horsemen, he arrived in Arta¹³⁵. There he visited Kalio Bey, the Albanian Governor, 'smoking an amber mouthed chibouque, drinking coffee'¹³⁶. He described Arta as a town that was

once as beautiful as its location, but was in ruins - whole streets had been razed to the ground and, with the exception of the Consulate House, which had been rebuilt since, scarcely a tenement was not a shell. Not only was Arta like this, but Ioannina consisted of ruined houses, mosques with only their minarets standing, and streets utterly raised according to D'Israeli. He described the great heart of the city as a sea of ruins. Arches and pillars, isolated, and shattered here and there jutted forth, breaking the uniformity of the desolation, and turning the horrible into the picturesque. D'Israeli describes the great bazaar, itself a small town, as having been burnt down only a few months after the death of Ali Pasha. D'Israeli mentioned in a letter to his friend, Edward Lytton Bulwer, that, at Ioannina he had spent ten of the most extraordinary days of the life¹³⁷, and he described the Albanians as 'costume loving people'¹³⁸.

Much of what D'Israeli saw and experienced in southern Albania was used in the Scanderbeg novel, '*The Rise of Iskander*', that he wrote in Bath two years after the Albanian tour. His letters from Albania convey the sense of awe he felt at entering the divan of the Great Turk. He actually is the last traveller in the period of Ali Pascha, although some years latter of his death.

Heinrich Christoph Gottlieb Stier (1825-1896) was a German historian and philologist, who published studies on Albanian language, although are not data that he visited Albania. His writings include historical and mostly educational writings, which occasionally also extended to the fields of philosophical science, philology and architecture. One of his studies, published in 1853, is about the Albanians in Italy and their literature¹³⁹ and a year later another study about Indo-European origin of Albanian language, published in the same review¹⁴⁰.

Notes

¹ J. Lepore, *Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography*, *The Journal of American History*, 88,1 (June 2001) p. 129.

² See D. A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, New York (2008).

³ See K. E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: diplomacy and orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1999.

⁴ This series of wars lasted between 1792 and 1815 during which France fought against shifting alliances of other

European powers and established a brief French hegemony over most of Europe. The revolutionary wars, which may, for convenience, be considered to have been concluded by 1801, were originally undertaken to defend and then to spread the fruits of French Revolution. With Napoleon's rise to absolute power, France's aims in war reverted to simple aggrandizement of influence and territory.

⁵ The 'Grand Tour' was the traditional trip of Europe, undertaken by mainly upper-class European young men of means in an effort to broaden their horizons and learn about language, architecture, geography, and culture in an

experience. It served as an educational rite of passage. The custom flourished from about 1660. The French Revolution in 1789 marked the end of the Grand Tour for in the early nineteenth century, railroads totally changed the face of tourism and travel across the continent in the 1840s and was associated with a standard itinerary. The term Grand Tour was introduced by the Roman Catholic priest and a travel writer, Richard Lassels (in France, *Lascelles*) (c. 1603–1668) in his book *Voyage to Italy*, published posthumously in Paris in 1670 and then in London. Lassels was a tutor to several of the English nobility and travelled through Italy five times. In his book, he asserts that any truly serious student of architecture, antiquity and the arts must travel through France and Italy, suggesting that all ‘young lords’ make what he referred to as the ‘Grand Tour’ in order to understand the realities of the world. In his introduction he listed four areas in which travel will benefit them: the intellectual, the social, the political and the ethical (by drawing moral instruction from all that the traveller sees). See Lassels, R., *Voyage to Italy*, Paris, 1670; Trease, G., *The Grand Tour*, Yale University Press, 1991.

- ⁶ Ali Pasha of Tepelenë (1740–1822), one of the most colorful of the Ottoman rulers, known as the ‘Lion of Ioannina’, was a key figure in Epirus at that time. He was one of several over mighty subjects who challenged the Porte early in the nineteenth century. Born in 1740 and famed for his ruthlessness, he was quick to rise the Ottoman ranks and by 1788 was Pasha of Ioannina. He was of the Toskë’s tribe, and his ancestors had for some time held the hereditary office, bey of Tepelenë. His father, a man of mild and peaceful disposition,

was killed when Ali was fourteen years old, by neighboring chiefs who seized his territories. His mother, Hanko, a woman of extraordinary character, thereupon formed and led a brigand band, and strived to inspire the boy with her own fierce and indomitable temper, with a view to avenge and the recovery lost property. In this wilderness school, Ali proved an apt pupil. A hundred tales, for the most part probably mythical, are told of his powers and cunning during the years he spent among the mountains as a brigand leader. In 1787 he took part in the war with Russia and was rewarded by being made pasha of Trikkala in Thessaly and ‘dervendgi-pasha’ of Rumelia. It now suited his policy to suppress his former allies, and to begin persecution of both the klephts and armatoli. His power was already considerable; and in 1788 he added to it by securing his nomination to the pashalik of Ioannina by his characteristic tricks. Taking advantage of the war against Napoleon, he attempted to conquer the ex-Venetian coastal territories of Epirus. In 1797, Napoleon destroyed the republic of Venice and occupied the Ionian Islands (which he afterwards called ‘the key to the Adriatic’) as well as the Venetian possessions on the mainland of Albania with French garrisons. In 1798, acting within an Anglo-Russian and Turkish alliance, Ali Pasha seized Butrinti from the French. With Butrinti lost, it was not long before the French abandoned Corfu, leaving the allies to declare the Ionian Islands an independent entity. The joint Turkish and Russian expedition against the Ionian Islands in 1799 completed the work of expelling the French from the neighborhood of Albania; but to Ali’s mortification, not only was a joint Turkish and Russian protectorate in 1800

imposed on the Ionian Islands, but also the mainland towns of Parga, Preveza, Vonitza and Butrinti, which had been formerly subject to Venice, and which Ali had hoped would be handed over to his sway as a reward for his loyalty, were placed under the direct suzerainty of the Turkish Government and were accorded certain special privileges. A period of convoluted diplomacy between Russia, Turkey, France and Britain followed, and by 1807 the Ionian Islands were back under French control. Diplomats from both France and Britain were assigned to Ali Pasha's court to try to secure his allegiance. François Pouqueville was the French consul, accompanied at a later stage by Louis Dupré; John Morier and Colonel William Martin Leake formed the British mission. Leake went to extraordinary lengths to keep the Pasha's favor, including presenting him with 800 cannon balls and various other arms. British cannon that can still be found in the castle of Butrinti were almost certainly part of Leake's gift. Although Ali Pasha did not spend much time in Butrinti, preferring his capital of Ioannina, the French and British diplomats all visited Butrinti and have left wonderful descriptions of the settlement and area. Dupré's painting of Ali Pasha on Lake Butrinti was made during a picnic and hunt in 1819. Leake, who had a particular passion for antiquities, kept private notebooks on the archaeology of the area which, on his retirement, he published in four volumes. In this period Butrinti was still important fishery but was occupied throughout the year only by a custom official and a handful of fishermen. In 1814, much to Ali Pasha's annoyance, the British took control of the Ionian Islands. In response, Ali Pasha built a cas-

tle at the mouth of the Vivari Channel as a demonstration of his resistance to the British dominion over the islands. On February 24, 1822, he was executed on the island in a cell of the monastery of Saint Panteleimon. See Grassini, C., *Storia di Ali Tepelen*, Bascià di Iannina, Milan 1829.

⁷ On May 1, 1797, Napoleon declared war and on May 12, Venice surrendered. The last commander of Venice in Corfu was Charles Avrilius Widmann. The Venetians were incapable of defending their colonies. Napoleon had the advantage to take over all of the colonies. He also sent the Corsican Commander Enselm Gentili. On June 27, the French fleet arrived in Corfu, which was being welcomed with enthusiasm, as Gentili declared that the French had come to establish Democracy. The temporary Town Hall, which was established as the greatest authority, consisted of all the social classes and religions. Eight committees were created with executive powers: 1) Public Security, 2) Health, 3) Provisions, 4) Commerce and Art, 5) Economical, 6) Police, 7) Public Education and 8) Military. The 5th of July saw the Tree of Freedom planted in the square of Corfu and the flag of Saint Marc (of the Venetians) was burned and replaced by the 3coloured flag, symbol of the equality and brotherhood's liberty. On 6th of July, the Libro D'Oro was also burned as well as the aristocratic diplomas, titles and emblems. After that, the nobles were being accused of the disaster of the Tree. On 1st of November 1797, the adjutant of Napoleon, Evgenios Beauharnais, arrived in Corfu and, during the same day, the annexation of the island to the French Democracy was announced by the temporary Town Hall. Napoleon ordered the administra-

tive division of the islands. The prefecture of Corfu included the islands of Paxos and Antipaxos, Othoni, as well as Vouthroto and Parga of the mainland. Corfu was under the French rule from 1797 to 1814. See J. H. Rose, 'Napoleon and Sea Power', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 1 (2) (1924), pp. 138–157.

- ⁸ The Treaty of Campo Formio was signed on October 18, 1797 (27 Vendémiaire, Year VI) near Campo Formio, a village near Udine, then in Venetia, by Napoleon Bonaparte and Philipp, Count von Cobenzl (1741–1810) as representatives of revolutionary France and the Austrian monarchy. The treaty marked the victorious conclusion to Napoleon's campaigns in Italy, the collapse of the First Coalition, and the end of the first phase of the French Revolutionary Wars. The treaty generally ratified the preliminary Peace of Leoben, signed at the conclusion of Napoleon Bonaparte's Italian campaign. Bonaparte signed for France, Count Cobenzl for Austria. Austria ceded its possessions in the Low Countries (the present-day Belgium) to France and secretly promised France the left bank of the Rhine, pending later ratification by the estates of the Holy Roman Empire. The republic of Venice, invaded despite its attempts to maintain neutrality, was dissolved and partitioned; all Venetia E of the Adige, as well as Istria and Dalmatia, passed to Austria; the present provinces of Bergamo and Brescia went to the newly founded Cisalpine Republic; the Ionian Islands went to France. See G. Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, Volume II, from 1793–1799, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, pp. 199–201.

- ⁹ In autumn 1792, several European powers formed the First Coal-

tion against France (1792–1797). The Italian campaigns of the French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802) were a series of conflicts fought principally in Northern Italy between the French Revolutionary Army and a Coalition of Austria, Russia, Piedmont-Sardinia, and a number of other Italian states. See J. G. Lockhart, *Napoleon Buonaparte*, London 1927.

- ¹⁰ Tom J. Winniffrith, *Badlands ~ Borderlands. A History of Southern Albania / Northern Epirus*, London 2002, p. 113.

- ¹¹ On 26 May 1797, Napoleon ordered his fellow Corsican, the general de division, Antoine Gentili, to begin preparations for a military occupation of the Ionian Islands. The ships flew the Venetian flag of St. Mark, since Gentili was ostensibly merely the representative of the new, pro-French Provisional Municipality of Venice, and the expedition intended to avoid possible secession of the colony from the metropolis. In reality, Napoleon instructed Antoine Gentili to encourage the local inhabitants to pursue independence, by reminding them of the glories of Ancient Greece; the scholar Antoine-Vincent Arnault was sent along as observer for Napoleon and a political advisor and propagandist. See N. Moschonas, 'Τα Ιόνια Νησιά κατά την περίοδο 1797–1821', *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους, Τόμος ΙΑ': Ο ελληνισμός υπό ξένη κυριαρχία, 1669–1821* (Athens 1975), pp 382–402. ('The Ionian Islands in the period 1797–1821', *History of the Greek Nation, Volume XI: Hellenism under foreign rule, 1669–1821*).

- ¹² A. Boppe, *Napoleoni dhe Ali Pasha*, Tirane, 1999, pp. 7–8.

- ¹³ Ibidem.

- ¹⁴ See M. Glenny, *The Balkans 1804–1999. Nationalism, War and the Great*

- Powers, London, 2000), pp. 27-28. See also Skiotis, D. N., 'Ali Pasha's Last Gamble', *Hellenism and the Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830): Continuity and Change*, Thessaloniki, 1976, p. 97. (Greek Revolution broke out because the Ottomans mistakenly decided to humble the one man-Ali Pasha-who could have prevented it).
- ¹⁵ M. Mazower, *The Balkans. From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day*, London, 2001, pp. 58, 70.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 90.
- ¹⁷ Gottlieb von Windisch, K., 'Die Klementinern in Syrmien', *Ungarisches Magazin oder Beyträge zu ungrischen Geschichte, Geographie, Naturwissenschaft und der dahin einschlagenden Litteratur* (Pressburg, Bratislava 1782) pp. 77-89. See also J. Kastrati, *Historia e Albanologjisë*, Tirana, 2000, pp. 404-407.
- ¹⁸ K. Gottlieb von Windisch, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-279.
- ¹⁹ A De Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, Paris, 1782, 1809, 1822); Idem, *Voyage pittoresque dans l'Empire Ottoman, en Grèce, dans la Troade, les Îles de l'Archipel et sur les cotes de l'Asie Mineure*, Paris, 1842.
- ²⁰ R. Paxinou, *Western eyes on Jannina. Foreign narratives of a city recorded in texts and images (1788-1822), The City in the Muslim World. Depictions by Western Travel Writers*, (Edited by Mohammad Charipour and Nilay Özlü), 2015, pp. 143-168.
- ²¹ S. Scrofani, *Voyage en Grece, fait en 1794 et 1795*, Paris et Strasbourg, 1801.
- ²² Ch. Sonnini, *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie fait par ordre de Louis XVI*, Paris, 1801. Charles-Sigisbert Sonnini was traveling in the Middle East during the reign of Louis XVI, who held the French throne from 1774 to 1793. He published his travels, in French, between those two dates and after that made other publication on his discovery of the manuscript. The manuscript itself was translated into English and published sometime late in 1799 and was available around 1800. The manuscript was found interleaved in a copy of Sonnini's *Travels in Turkey and Greece* and purchased at the sale of the library and effects of the late Right Hon. Sir John Newport, in Ireland, whose family arms are engraved on the cover of the book. This book had been in the possession of the family for more than thirty years – along with a copy of the firman of the Sultan of Turkey, granting to C. S. Sonnini permission to travel in all parts of the Ottoman dominions.
- ²³ The emergence of Balkan nation-states after 1830 whittled away Patriarchal power further. Self-governing peoples in south-eastern Europe could not tolerate (any more than the Russians had done in the seventeenth century) the supreme religious direction of their citizens remaining in the hands of an Ottoman government official. 'The eastern church is everywhere joined to the state, never being separated from it, never divided from the sovereigns since Byzantine times, and always subordinated to them', wrote one partisan of the new Church of Greece, which was formed in Athens in 1833 – without the approval of the Patriarch in Constantinople. Others followed suit: the Bulgarians (even before they had gained an independent state) won a church of their own in 1870 – the so-called exarchate – after a long quarrel with the Patriarch over the need for priests who could conduct services in Slavonic. The following year, an autocephalous Romanian church was established. A draft law National Assembly

in Ankara in 1921—the logical culmination of the same process. A separate Albanian orthodox church followed in 1929. Only the Serbs went the canonical route and obtained Patriarchal authorization in 1879 to set up a church of their own. Each of these acts resulted in rupture with the Constantinople Patriarchate, which saw its flock gradually dwindling; in each case, the Patriarchate was eventually obliged to bow to new political realities. In exactly a century, the Patriarch's flock shrank dramatically from the entire Orthodox population of the Balkans and Anatolia to a few tens of thousands of believers, mostly in Constantinople itself. The most powerful, wealthiest and successful Christian institution of the Ottoman Empire was virtually destroyed by the rise of Christian nation-states. See M. Mazower, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-85, note pp. 44-51.

- ²⁴ Bonaparte, N., (1769-1821), a French general, was first consul and then emperor of the French and carried out many reforms that left a lasting mark on the institutions of France and of much of western Europe. According to Davies, like Hitler and Stalin, Napoleon was a foreigner in the land which came to dominate. He was born at Ajaccio in the island of Corsica on August 15, 1769, one year after Louis XV had bought the island from Genoa. A reader of Voltaire and of Rousseau, Napoleon believed that a political change was imperative, but as a career officer he seems not to have seen any need for radical social reforms. His driving passion was the military expansion of French dominion. The Revolutionary legacy for Napoleon consisted above all in the abolition of the ancient régime's most archaic features—'feudalism', seigneurialism, legal privileges, and

provincial liberties. No matter how aristocratic his style became, he had no use for the ineffective institutional abuses of the ancient régime. A series of wars erupted between 1792 and 1815 in which France fought against shifting alliances of other European powers and that produced a brief French hegemony over most of Europe. The political map of Europe, which had been so complicated before 1796, was now greatly simplified. Napoleon abdicated on June 22, after his final defeat at Waterloo on June 16-18, 1815, and the Bourbon monarchy was restored in the person of Louis XVIII shortly thereafter. On October 15, 1815, Napoleon disembarked in Saint Helena with those followers who were voluntarily accompanying him into exile. See Norman Davies, *Europe. A History*, Oxford, 1996, p. 725.

- ²⁵ M. Frashëri, „Dimo & Nicolo Stephanopoli”, *Diturija*, nr. 7, (1927), pp. 241-250. See also L. Skëndo, *Udhëtarët e huaj në Shqipëri gjer në fund të shekullit XIX*, Tiranë, 1999, republished in 2012, (Prepared for the publication from L. Malltezi and Sh. Delvina) pp. 32-39.
- ²⁶ D. Stephanopoli, N. Stephanopoli, *Voyage de Dimo et Nicolo Stephanopoli en Grèce pendant les années 1797-1798. D'après deux missions, don't l'une du gouvernement français, et l'autre du général en chef Buonaparte, rédigé par un des professeurs du Prytanée, avec figures, plans et vues levés sur les lieux. Paris, de l'imprimerie de Guillemert et an VIII*, 2 vol., London, 1800. See also A Boppe, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- ²⁷ I. Koçollari, *Spëunazhi nëpër shekuj... Sigurimi*, Tiranë, 2000, p. 50.
- ²⁸ K. E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte. Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pa-*

- sha's Greece, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1999, p. 105.
- ²⁹ A. Boppe, *op. cit.* pp. 9-10.
- ³⁰ J. Bartholdy, *Voyage en Grèce fait dans les années 1803 et 1804*, Paris, 1807.
- ³¹ W. Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire. In Which Are Considered I. Its Government ... II. the State of the Provinces ... III. the Causes of the Decline of Turkey ... IV. the British Commerce with Turkey ... with Many Other Important Particulars*, London, 1801.
- ³² M. Frashëri, J. Bartholdy, Diturija, nr. 12 (1927), pp.361-365. See also L. Skëndo, *op. cit.* pp. 91-92.
- ³³ *Ibidem*. See also B. de la Motte Hacquet, *L'Illyrie et la Dalmatie ou Moeurs, usages des leurs habitants* (Translated from German into French), Paris, 1815.
- ³⁴ In January 1804, at age 20, David Richard Morier was appointed secretary to the political mission sent by the British government to Ali Pasha, to the Turkish governors of the Morea and other provinces, with a view to counteracting the influence of France in south-east Europe. In May 1807 he was ordered to take entire charge of the mission, but the continuing rupture of diplomatic relations between England and the Ottoman Empire defeated his negotiations.
- ³⁵ J.W. Baggally, *Ali Pasha and Great Britain*, Oxford, 1938, pp. 20-30.
- ³⁶ Leake, W. L., was a British military officer and classical scholar specialising in reconstructing the topography of ancient cities. Captain Martin William, a military missionary in Istanbul in 1799, was in Egypt in 1800 and later he was near Ali Pasha till 1810. He was a founding member of the Royal Geographical Society and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1815.
- After his retirement in 1815, he devoted the rest of his life to topographical and classical studies. He first published in 1835, the accounts of his four extensive journeys across Greece between 1804 and 1810. Using the form of a travelogue, Leake discusses the contemporary Greek and Turkish culture and provides detailed descriptions of ancient archaeological sites and geography. Leake's precise observations and detailed descriptions were influential in shaping the study of classical topography, with these volumes providing valuable information for the ancient sites and contemporary culture of the region. Volume 4 contains the conclusion of his fourth journey between 1809-1810. See William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, 4 vols. (London 1835).
- ³⁷ L. Skëndo, *op. cit.* p. 31.
- ³⁸ W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, 4 vol., London, 1835, pp. 95-105. (Reprinted in Amsterdam 1967); Idem, *Researches in Greece*, London, 1814. See and L. Skëndo, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-119.
- ³⁹ J. W. Baggally, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- ⁴⁰ S. Menta, *Literature of Travel and Exploration. An Encyclopedia*, (Jennifer Speake ed.), Volum 1, A to F, New York & London, 2003, pp. 9-10.
- ⁴¹ *He spent two years in prison in Istanbul and returned to France in 1801.*
- ⁴² F. Pouqueville, *Voyage en Morée, à Constantinople et en Albanie et dans plusieurs autres parties de l'Empire Ottoman, pendant les années 1798, 1799, 1800 et 1801*, Paris, 1805. This book was translated later in Italian (*Viaggio in Morea a Constantinopoli* ed in Albania, non che in molte altre parti dell'Impero Ottomano negli anni 1798-1801) and was published in Milan in 1816 and in Torino in 1829. See also

Pouqueville, *Travels in Epirus, Albania, Macedonia and Thesaly*, London, 1820; Idem, *Travels in Southern Epirus, Acarnania, Aetolia, Attica and Peloponnesus, or the Morea, etc. in the years 1814-1816*, London, 1822; Idem, *Geschichte der Wiedergeburt Griechenlands 1740 bis 1824. Deutsch herausgegeben von I. P. von Horthald*, Heidelberg, 1824-25). See and L. Nadin, *op. cit.* p. 66.

- ⁴³Our course lay first south-east until we came off Durazzo, the ancient Dyrrachium and Epidamnus, a port and fortress memorable in various periods of history, particularly for the operations in its vicinity between Cæsar and Pompey, previous to the decisive action of Pharsalus. There the Albanian coast runs southward to the entrance of the bay of Valona [Vlora], where the Sirocco, or south-east wind setting in strong, we came to anchor under the protection of Saseno [Sazan], an island lying before it. The wind threatening to continue for some time, as it generally does in winter in the mouth of the Adriatic, we passengers landed in a small sandy bay on the north-east part of the island, the only spot where it is accessible. Knowing it to be uninhabited we carried on shore an old sail, with which we constructed a sort of tent. We had also on shore our Tartar and a Wallachian of Epirus, whom Aly had sent along with him, to serve as our guide and interpreter when we should land in his territories. We soon, however, discovered that we were not alone in Saseno. Smoke rose up in several places, and in a little time appeared a number of Albanians in arms, observing us with keen attention. The strangers were shepherds from the adjoining coast, who are in the habit of transporting to the island large numbers of sheep and

cattle in winter. Intercourse being opened with them through our interpreter, we procured some sheep for ourselves and for the people on-board the privateer; and a fire being kindled the Albanians with admirable dispatch fitted one of the sheep for the spit. In the night the south-east gale grew tempestuous with heavy rain and long and vivid lightning; well reminding us of the Ceraunian or thunder-stricken mountains in our near vicinity. It was with the greatest difficulty that our vessel kept her place..... The English translation of Pouqueville's, *Travels in Epirus, Albania, Macedonia, and Thessaly*, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-66.

- ⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 34-35.

- ⁴⁵ A. Boppe, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

- ⁴⁶ J. W. Baggally, *Ali Pasha and Great Britain*, Oxford, 1938, p. 8.

- ⁴⁷ Leake arrived in Malta from Ioannina on his return to England in 1810. He was granted a pension of 600 pounds a year, and he was only thirty-three years old. See. J. W. Baggally, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

- ⁴⁸ Malte-Brun, C., (1775-1826) was a Dano-French geographer and journalist. He is best remembered for coining the name for the geographic region Oceania (Océanie) around 1812. Malte-Brun's *geography treatise, Géographie mathématique, physique et politique de toutes les parties du monde*, is in 6 vols, was written with the other geographer, Edme Mentelle (1730-1816) and published between 1803 and 1812.

- ⁴⁹ Crispi G., (1781-1859) was an Italian philologist and priest of Arbëresh descent. One of the major figures of the Arbëresh community of Sicily of that era, he wrote a number of works on the Albanian language. Crispi's best-known work is *Memorie sulla lingua*

- Albanese, first published in 1831 in Palermo. Partially influenced by Conrad Malte-Brun's studies, it constitutes the first monograph on the Albanian language. Crispi considered Albanian closely related to Pelasgian, Phrygian, Macedonian and 'proto-Aeolian'. The monograph influenced other Arbëreshë authors like Giuseppe Schiro, who first possibly used it as a point of reference in his 1834 paper *Rapporti tra l'Epiro e il Regno delle due Sicilie*.
- ⁵⁰ A. Masci, *Discorso sull'origine, costumi e stato attuale degli Albanesi nel Regno delle Due Sicilie*, Naples 1807, 2nd ed. 1847.
- ⁵¹ The well-known archaeologist Edward Dodwell (1776-1832) was elected an honorary member of Berlin's Royal Academy in 1816, Dodwell had been educated at Cambridge, toured France and Germany, and lived in Rome and Naples. Writing extensively on Greek antiquity, he made three tours of Greece, where he produced hundreds of drawings, recording in particular the Athenian Acropolis and the city walls of Argos. He also collected coins and discovered or acquired many valuable artefacts, notably bronzes and vases.
- ⁵² E. Dodwell, *A classical and topographical tour through Greece during the Years 1801, 1805 and 1806*. 2 Vols., London, 1819.
- ⁵³ In the spring 1994, with a grant to the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin, I met a Greek scholar, Caterina Spetsieri Beschi Spetieri, the wife of the well-known Italian professor of archaeology in Rome and Florence, Luigi Beschi. Caterina was writing a research paper of Pomardi and kindly informed me of Pomardi's works. Among the many descriptions of villages with Albanians, and such, I enjoyed very much the detailed description of the wedding ceremony of two Albanians in Athens. Many thanks for Caterina Spetsieri Beschi, who gave me this information. I published an article, many years ago, in Albanian newspapers. See L. Miraj, „Simon Pomardi për shqiptarët: Fragmente nga libri”, *Viaggio nella Grecia negli anni 1804, 1805 e 1806*, „Zëri i Popullit”, Tiranë, 10. 12. 1995, p. 10.
- ⁵⁴ G de Vandoncourt, *Memoirs on the Jonien Islands, etc.*, London, 1816, p. 317.
- ⁵⁵ Hobhouse, J. C., ennobled much later, in 1856, as 1st Lord Broughton de Gyfford (1786-1869), was an English politician and diarist. L. Byron, *Selected letters and journals in one volume, from the unexpurgated twelve volume edition*, (Edited by Leslie A. Marchand), London, John Murray, 1982, pp. 41-42. J. C. Hobhouse, *A journey through Albania and other provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople, during the years 1809 and 1810*, London, 1813.
- ⁵⁶ The publication of Childe Harold in 1812, with its portraits of the venerable but sinister Ali Pasha, the wild but beautiful mountains of Epirus and their romantic but dangerous inhabitants, was an instant success and deservedly so. See Tom J. Winniffrith, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
- ⁵⁷ See F. Maccarthy, *Byron. Life and Legend*, London, 2002, p. 103.
- ⁵⁸ See J. C., Hobhouse, *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople during the Years 1809 and 1810*, London, 1813, re-edited as *A Journey through Albania*, New York, 1971, pp. 101-113. In his book he describes his meeting with the formidable Ali Pasha of Tepelena in October 1809 and includes an account of the pasha's life.

⁵⁹ Byron and Hobhouse were given a sumptuous send-off from London by Charles Skinner Mathews, 'a most splendid entertainment' to which they did 'ample justice'. They arrived in the Cornish port of Falmouth by June 21, 1809, lodging at Wynn's Hotel. The original plan to take the Malta packet was abandoned when the ship for Malta was delayed for several weeks. Instead, they decided to sail to 'that there *Portingale*', as Byron's Nottinghamshire servants called it, taking the *Princess Elizabeth* to Lisbon. They were departed on July 2, 1809, and arrived at the mouth of the Tagus after a journey of four and a half days. From Lisbon they made an expedition out to Cintra, a village set in a mountain range some fifteen miles north of the city. After their 'gentle Gallop of four hundred miles without intermission' from Lisbon they reached the port of Cadiz on July 29. The next day, at Puerto Santa from Lisbon they reached the port of Cadiz on July 29. Passing Cape Trafalgar and glimpsing the coast of Africa, they landed in Gibraltar on August 4, 1809. Byron was observed in Gibraltar by John Galt, a Scotsman. Galt sailed on the ship, the *Townshend* packet that took Byron to Sardinia. When the ship reached Cagliari on the southern tip of Sardinia Byron and the ship's captain rode out into the country. On August 20, they embarked for Malta, still in the *Townshend* packet, sailing past the southern coast of Sicily. By noon on 31 August, they were approaching Malta harbour. On the recommendation of the Governor of Malta, Hobhouse organized their passage on the British warship *Spider* which was escorting a convoy of British merchant ships to Prevesa in Albania. On the morning of September 23, 1809, as they travelled up

the channel between Cephalonia and Zante, Byron and Hobhouse had their first sight of the Ancient Greece of their imagination. Byron was a guest in the Monastery of Zitsa in Epir. He praised the region's wines and beauties. The place is mentioned in Childe Harolds's Pilgrims and was a place visited by many other English travellers due to the fame that received from the poem. They sailed up the west coast of Greece towards Albania and landed at Prevesa on September 29. Albania was a more truly foreign country, remote on account of its mountainous terrain, the reputed 'savage character' of its natives and its eruptive and complicated politics. Sir Alexander Ball, the Governor of Malta, had provided an introduction to William Leake. It seems that Leake had alerted Ali Pasha to the young Englishmen's arrival. Ali Pasha himself was not in Ioannina, and Byron and Hobhouse were presented to two of Ali Pasha's grandsons, Hussein Bey and Mahmout Pasha. At the time, Ali was seventy-five miles to the north, at Tepelena settling grudges, but before he left, he had prepared accommodations for the Englishmen and invited them to come and join him if they wished. Byron and Hobhouse travelled in 1809 from Preveza to Ioannina, the court of Ali Pasha, passing *en route* the remains of Ali's enemies hanging from trees at the outskirts of town. Byron greatly admired the panache of Ali's Albanians, the magnificence of his court, and the whole exotic scene. In Ioannina, a week after leaving Ali, Byron began the narrative poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* that was, between other poems, to make Byron famous.

- a. Byron was to be away from England for two years. Hobhouse was with him for the first year, returning home from

Greece in July 1810. For the time they were together it is Hobhouse who provides the factual details of their travels. Hobhouse too was a rising literary figure, though he was never to approximate the fame of Byron, a disparity that sometimes led to tensions between them. He intended to write a travel book on his return, the book that became *A Journey through Albania*, and Byron slyly noted the 'wordy preparations' for this task, the '100 pens two gallons Japan Ink and several vols best blank' paper for recording his impressions. Against Hobhouse's conscientious narrative Byron's letters stand in brilliant counterpoint. See MacCarthy, *F. Byron, Life and Legend*, London, 2002, pp. 89-125.

⁶⁰ See F. MacCarthy, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-106.

⁶¹ G. de Vandoncourt, *op. cit.* 78, note p. 18.

⁶² J. C. Hobhouse, *A Journey Through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople During the Years 1809-1810*, London, 1813; Idem, *Travels in Albania*, 2 Vol., London, 1858; Lord G. Byron, Byron ed. by J. J. McGann. (The latest edition of Childe Harold and Don Juan), Oxford University Press, 1986.

⁶³ M. Frashëri, „John C. Hobhouse”, *Diturija*, nr. 9, 10, 11 (1927), pp. 321-329. See also L. Skëndo, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-67.

⁶⁴ See R. Paxinou, *Western eyes on Jannina. Foreign narratives of a city recorded in texts and images (1788-1822)*, *The City in the Muslim World. Depictions by Western Travel Writers*, (Edited by Mohammad Charipour and Nilay Özlü), 2015, pp. 143-168.

⁶⁵ Danish archaeologist, Peter Oluf Brøndsted, was born in Fruering near Aarhus in Denmark and studied theology and philology at the University of

Copenhagen. In the winter of 1811-1812 Brøndsted conducted excavations on the island of Kea. He also dug on Aegina and Salamis and then, with Haller, excavated the Temple of Apollo in Bassae (Arcadia). In September 1812, he travelled to Zante (Zakynthos) to see the tomb of his friend Kows, who had died on the island of pneumonia. His companion thereafter was the fifteen-year-old Count Nicolo de Lunzi, son of the Danish consul on Zante. On 12 December 1812, on their way back to Denmark, Brøndsted and Lunzi stopped over in Preveza, which at the time was the southern border of Albania, to visit the tyrant Ali Pasha of Tepelena. Brøndsted returned to Copenhagen with Lunzi in 1813 and was made professor of Greek and philology at the university. In 1818 he served as Danish envoy to the Holy See in Rome and helped buy antiquities for the king of Denmark. He was in Sicily and the Ionian Isles in 1820-1821 and in London in 1826 to study the Elgin Marbles. From 1828-1832 he lived in Paris where he oversaw the publication of his major work “Voyages dans la Grèce accompagnés de recherches archéologiques” (Paris 1826-1830), also printed in German as “Reisen und Untersuchungen in Griechenland” (Paris 1826-1830) and returned to Copenhagen where he was appointed director of the museum of antiquities (Møntkabinettet). In 1842, he became rector of the University of Copenhagen but died soon thereafter in a riding accident. Brøndsted provides a good account of the Lion of Janina in his edition, *Reise i Graekenland i Aarene 1810-1813* (Journey to Greece in the Years 1810-1813) (Copenhagen 1844). The English-language version of this account, ‘Interviews with Ali Pacha of Ioanina in the Year 1812,’ was first

published in 1999 by the Danish Institute in Athens.

- ⁶⁶ Kows, G. H. C., the Danish philologist studied classical philology, writing pioneering works of textual criticism on ancient Greek works, including Homer, whose work he demonstrated to be by more than one writer (*Specimen observationum in Odysseam criticarum, acc. commentatio de discrepantiis quibusdam in Odyssea occurrentibus*, Copenhagen 1806). He visited Paris in 1806 with his friend Peter Oluf Brøndsted and there two years. After that they went together to Italy. Both were zealously attached to the study of antiquities and the tastes and interests they held in common led them, in 1810, to join an expedition to Greece with Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, Carl Haller von Hallerstein, the German painter Jakob Linckh, and the then Austrian consul in Greece George Christian Gropius. He died of pneumonia in Athens in 1811, when he was only 29 years old.

- ⁶⁷ See P. O. Brøndsted, *Interview with Ali Pacha of Joanina, in the Autumn of 1812; with Some Particulars of Epirus, and the Albanians of the Present Day*. Edited with an introduction by Jacob Isager, The Danish Institute at Athens, Athens, 1999, pp. 34-77. (Ali of Tepeleni, a man who by his extraordinary qualities, as well as by his crimes, exercised during more than half a century, an unbounded influence over the finest provinces of Greece, and upon the recent events which have changed the face of those countries, once so beautiful, and even still so interesting — was, unquestionably, one of the most remarkable personages in the vast Ottoman Empire, the downfall of which prepared for a century past, has only been delayed to our days by the

reciprocal jealousy, and the want of energy and moral dignity in the rulers of Europe. This man, whom history will, doubtless, distinguish as a kind of physiological phenomenon, descended from a Musselman family of Albania, if not of obscure at least of middling rank. Notwithstanding innumerable obstacles, he established himself as the absolute despot over the finest European provinces of the Turkish Empire, and a population of two million inhabitants. Daring, and fertile in resources, he knew how to support his usurpations, and his crimes, by an army of about thirty-five thousand men — excellent troops, at least for carrying on war in those regions, and against the Turks, — and by all those means which immense treasures supply in every country, but more particularly in Turkey.

- a. Ali Pacha, the most consummate Albanian of his time, alone knew how to solve a problem extremely difficult — that of uniting under his banners a people the most savage and the most marauding in Europe, divided before his days into a thousand distinct and independent tribes, who plundered and murdered each other without ceasing. He alone was the first who knew how to overawe them all, to terminate their particular feuds, and to subjugate them all beneath his sceptre of iron, so that it would be strictly true to say — that Ali Pacha, for the last twenty years of his long career, was the sole robber in his states, and that there was more personal security in travelling there than in most of the southern countries of Europe. After all, it appears to me, that a single privileged plunderer is better than a multitude of subaltern tyrants, not only for travellers, but also for the inhabitants of any country whatever; at least some arrangement can be made with

one only, but there is no stipulating with a host of petty plunderers; besides, despotism, though in its nature monstrous and sterile, still occasionally produces something good, whilst anarchy, the pest of all social order, never brings forth anything profitable whatsoever. This truth, I fear, must serve as a consolation, not only beyond the Adriatic, but even elsewhere. Thus, it was that Ali Pacha, his exploits and his family were, during my stay in Greece, one of the principal themes of the popular songs, which we often heard and in almost all the provinces of Greece and Epirus; from Taygetus to Olympus and the Acroceranian mountains as far as Carystos in Euboea.

- b. If I had seen Ali Pacha on my first arrival in Greece, I should not have known, perhaps, either to have comprehended him well, or to have drawn any advantage from it for my own meditations. But I saw him on my return from a stay of three years in that interesting country, when I had but too well learnt to understand the great influence of that extraordinary person throughout the whole of Greece. Speaking then, with some facility, the modern Greek, I had occasion to converse with him during several days without the aid of an interpreter and even under circumstances sufficiently *piquantes* and, I own, I was then struck with the originality of the man. I will attempt here to give some parts of these conversations, preceding them by a few brief observations on the Albanians of the present day, and on the life of Ali Pacha, up to the period I saw him at Prevesa, towards the end of the year 1812.
- c. It is indubitably an effect of the extraordinary talents of Ali Pacha, that this race of men, singularly active, bold and warlike, have, in the last half century, been converted from a people of robbers and semi-savages into a nation of warriors, who play in the present day a remarkable, and even brilliant part amongst the tribes inhabiting the vast Ottoman Empire. For the renown of the Albanians for bravery causes them to be sought after by the Turkish governments, even from the remotest provinces, for the purpose of enrolling them amongst their troops, or in their guards, and as the Swiss were formerly, and still are in many countries of the west; so, in the present day, the Albanians are established in the Levant, not only in several provinces of European Turkey, but, also, in Asia-Minor, in Syria, in Egypt, and elsewhere.
- d. These successes have rendered up, so to express it, the Albanians of our time to the historic page; and several English travellers have lately devoted themselves to research on the origin of this people. These researches, besides being very difficult from the deficiency of all national literature of those tribes, do not enter in the plan of this work. I merely observe that, from a careful comparison of the migrations of the Middle Ages into those countries, with the present idiom of the Albanians, it would, according to my idea, result that the present inhabitants of Epirus are descended from a mixture of the natives (before and during the establishment of the ancient Greeks in Epirus) with the Illyrian tribes, who came from the north, as by degrees the provincial Roman government, emanating from Constantinople, fell into decacy. I should even believe that the beginning of the emigration of the
- e. Illyrians into Epirus dates from an epoch much earlier, that is from the dreadful destruction of Epirus by the

Roman army, after the conquest of Macedonia by Aemilius Paulus.

- f. On leaving Prevesa for the interior of Albania, I had with me an Albanian of the Vizier's guard, who had been ordered by the latter to attend me, wherever I chose to go, and to be careful to my interest. This soldier was called Dimo of Argyrocastro, a fine courageous young man, and equally intelligent as faithful. I afterwards dismissed him at Sajades, perfectly satisfied with his services. As he was a Christian and spoke the Greek very well, I often conversed with him of the Pacha's actions, and of the events in Albania, which he was well acquainted with. His two first campaigns had been made against the troops of Ali, but having been taken prisoner at the capture of Argyrocastro, his native place, he obtained the Pacha's pardon and entered into his service. This gallant young man often recounted to me, without the smallest reserve, all the horrors which had been perpetrated at the capture of Argyrocastro, by the soldiers of the conqueror. The whole of his family, his mother, his two sisters, and his eldest brother, had been massacred in the sacking of the town: his uncle was beheaded eight days after, by order of the Vizier. Above all, he spoke with an emotion, truly touching, of the deplorable fate of his mother and his two sisters — whom he tenderly loved. Who would not have imagined that horrors like these which had filled the soul of this honest man with bitterness and sorrow, would at the same time have filled it with an unconquerable hate against the tyrant — the principal cause of so many losses? I was much astonished to observe quite the contrary. The disasters of his country, and of his family, had so struck and bewildered his imagination, that he ra-

ther accused the obstinacy and mad perseverance of his countrymen, than the Pacha's cruelty, as the cause of them. In short, the fall of Argyrocastro had fully persuaded him that the Vizier was invincible and had a just title to the domination over the whole of Albania. A little time after, he kissed the blood-stained hand of the destroyer of his country and became his man. He spoke of all this with tears in his eyes, but with the sincerest resignation, evidently confounding the will of heaven with that of the Pacha! It may easily be conceived that, in my then situation it was not for me to combat this gross confusion in the head of a worthy and honest young man, who served me so well.

- g. It is, especially, from the study of the dialects of the *Skipetarik* (as the Albanians themselves term their idiom) that elucidations might be looked for on the subject, and it would be very important for the history of this people, that the interesting researches, commenced by Colonel Martin Leake were continued. In other respects, there is not much inducement to study an idiom, which offers absolutely nothing resembling an appearance of literature; since the *Skipetarik* or language of the Albanians is completely oral, and they are obliged to make use of Greek characters in writing it.
- h. Every Christian Albanian who has enjoyed any education understands the modern Greek, often better than his native langue. All literary instruction, in the religious and other schools, is conveyed in modern Greek, except with some tribes, who for many centuries have embraced Islamism, to which, by the by, they do not adhere very strictly. Notwithstanding the total change in the political relations which anciently subsisted between the two people; in gen-

eral, the moral affinity of the Albanians with the Greeks of our days yet bears much resemblance to those of the Epirotes with the ancient Greeks. For the Greeks are still their instructors in everything that regards civilization, or relates to the resources, feeble and poor, without doubt, of a cultivated state in this country. The absolute defect of attempts to elevate the language in question to the rank of a written language, or at least, to make of it a depository of opinions and of individual ideas, — a defect so sensibly felt amongst a race of men, consisting of more than a million individuals, in constant intercourse, political or otherwise with two great nations (the Greeks and the Turks), each of which possesses a literature of its own — this moral phenomenon evidently announces a peculiarly remarkable absence of perception and of ideas, a great sterility of mind; it also appears to me that a disposition of the intellectual faculties to civilization, a certain aptitude of the soul or rather, according to the phraseology of a modern system, the organ of perfectibility, forms the inestimable prerogative of the Greek as opposed to the Albanian; and if, after the manner of the ancients, I may here avail myself of a comparison I would say — that the latter resembles the former as the wolf resembles the dog of a certain species. The Albanian is prudent, dexterous, and active in all the ordinary relations of life, in all the combinations and affairs which do not exceed his intelligence; he is faithful, sure and persevering in the service of him who has known how to recognize his attachment, and that in a manner which surpasses belief; but he is deep, cunning, dissimulating and cruel as a tiger towards his enemies.

- i. These traits seem to me the most national and the most universal in respect to the character and physiognomy of this people in general. What can be done with them, particularly in war, has in our days been put in dreadful evidence by Ali Pacha, the most perfect model of the Albanian that ever existed, and, if I may so express it, the flower of Albanism.
- j. We have lately seen that head fall bleached with years of crime and charged with the execrations of thousands of his victims amongst the Greek population of his states; — but it was not the crimes of Ali Pacha that conducted him to his fate, — that, indeed, would have been consoling to humanity, — unhappily quite the reverse, for it was the well combined, and constantly followed system of his offences which had elevated him, by degrees, to the power of a formidable oriental despot; one sole vice ruined him — his *avarice*; for that was the true cause of the catastrophe of Ali Pacha. It rendered him blind to such a degree, that, when shut up in the Castle of Joanina with a handful of his faithful followers, he still nourished the mad hope of extricating himself, without opening his treasures to the Greeks and the Albanians, who were equally capable of saving or selling him for gold.
- k. The circumstances that led to the fate of the modern tyrant of Epirus, absolutely remind me of those which preceded the fall of the last unworthy tyrant of ancient Macedonia — Perseus, whose sordid avarice caused, accordingly to Plutarch, the good fortune of Aemilius Paulus and his Romans; just as the blind obstinacy of Ali Vizier lately affected that of Courshid Pacha and his Turks, who were too feeble to chain the old royal tiger of the Albanians, if this

vice, his domestic demon, his veritable *Kakodaemon* had not come to their aid.

1. After the two interesting narratives given us by Mr. Holland and Mr. Pouqueville, I should not be able to relate anything new on the life of Ali Pacha. I shall merely proceed to enumerate some facts of it, amongst the most remarkable and the most adopted to display the character of that surprising man, since *to represent him himself such as I saw him*, is my principal design here.)

⁶⁸ He visited Goethe again in September 1818 and was very happy to see the 'old eagle' again and to discuss with him a topic of common interest: Greek art. See J. Isager, "Introduction", in Peter Oluf Brøndsted, *Interview with Ali Pacha of Joanina, in the Autumn of 1812, with Some Particulars of Epirus, and the Albanians of the Present Day*, the Danish Institute at Athens, Athens, 1999, p. 20.

⁶⁹ Hallerstein studied architecture at the Carlsakademie in Stuttgart and then at the Berliner Bauakademie under David Gilly. He was then engaged in 1806 as a royal building inspector in Nuremberg. He visited Rome in 1808 to study its early Christian architecture. In June 1810 he accompanied Jakob Linkh (1786–1841), Peter Oluf Brøndsted (1780–1842), Otto Magnus von Stackelberg (1787–1837) and Georg Kows (1782–1811) to Athens, via Naples, Corfu and Corinth. In 1811 in Athens, he met the English architects Charles Robert Cockerell and John Foster (1758–1827), with whom he studied Athens's ancient buildings. In 1811 he, Linkh and von Stackelberg discovered the temple of Aphaia on the island of Aegina, a part of whose sculptures are in the Munich Glyptothek as a result. In the same year, the German

architect, Johann Carl Christoph Wilhelm Joachim Haller von Hallerstein (with Gropius, Linckh, Stackelberg, Brøndsted and Foster) excavated the ruins of the temple of Apollo in Bassae, whose relief frieze was taken to the British Museum by Charles Robert Cockerell. Sadly, Haller's drawings were lost at sea. (See William Bell Dinsmoor, 'The Temple of Apollo at Bassae', *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 4.2 (March 1933), p. 205. Later he led yet more excavations on Ithaca and in the ruins of the theatre on Milos. See von Hallerstein, H. H., *Und die Erde gebar ein Lächeln, d. erste dt. Archäologe in Griechenland Carl Haller von Hallerstein 1774 – 1817*, Süddeutscher Verlag, München, 1983.

⁷⁰ Cockerell, C., is a highly successful British architect, archaeologist and writer who is remembered for his works of Georgian architecture in Britain and for his role in the excavation of the temples of Aegina and Bassae. He was architect of the Ashmolean Museum and Taylorian Institute (1839–1842) in Oxford. He had a great interest in antiquity and showed at the Royal Academy restoration of classical buildings, and also writing on the subject, and discovering the reliefs from the temple of Phigalia, now in the British Museum. *From 1810 to 1817 he travelled extensively in Greece, Albania, Turkey and Italy. In 1819, he was leading architect of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London and in later years was made President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It was in January 1814, during his travels in Greece, that he ventured northwards to Albania (that began in Preveza) to visit the realm of Ali Pasha, where he made several vivid sketches.*

⁷¹ JOHN Foster, Junior was an English architect, born and based in Liverpool, his buildings were generally in the Greek Revival style, his main works were public buildings and Anglican churches. In succession to his father, he was Surveyor to Liverpool Corporation (1824-35). John Jr. displayed three designs at Royal Academy of Arts, in 1805 a design for a Mausoleum, in 1806 a design for a National Museum and in 1807 a Public Library or National Gallery. In 1809 with Peter Oluf Brøndsted travelled in the eastern Mediterranean. During 1810-11 with Charles Robert Cockerell and the German archaeologists Haller and Linckh, participated in the archaeological excavation of the temples at Aegina and Bassae.

⁷² On Peter Oluf Brøndsted see Bodil Bundgaard Rasmussen, ed., 'Peter Oluf Brøndsted (1780-1842), A Danish Classicist in His European Context', Acts of the Conference at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Copenhagen, 5-6 October 2006, Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter 31, Copenhagen, 2008. On Haller von Hallerstein see Klaus Frässle, *Carl Haller von Hallerstein 1774-1817*, PhD diss. Albert Ludwigs Universität zu Freiburg, 1971; see also H. Bankel, ed., *Carl Haller von Hallerstein in Griechenland, 1810-1817: Architekt, Zeichner, Bauforscher/im Auftrag der Carl Haller von Hallerstein Gesellschaft, exh. Cat.*, Berlin, 1986. On Otto Magnus von Stackelberg see Gerhart Rodenwaldt, *Otto Magnus von Stackelberg: Der Entdecker der griechischen Landschaft, 1786-1837*, Hrsg. Vom Deutschen Archäologischen Institut, Munich, 1957; Baroness Natalie von Stackelberg, *Otto Magnus von Stackelberg: Schilderung seines*

Lebens und seiner Reisen in Italien und Griechenland, nach Tagebüchern und Briefen.....Mit einer Vorrede von Kuno Fischer, Heidelberg, 1882; Carl Hoheisel, *Otto Magnus Freiherr von Stackelberg, als Mensch, Künstler und Gelehrter. Eine biographische Skizze*, Riga, 1864. On his collections see *Catalogue d'une riche collection d'antiquités.....de méailles....de peintures, ...de feu... le baron O. M. de Stackelberg*, Dresden, 1837. On Charles Robert Cockerell see Pieter B. F. J. Broucke, 'The Archaeology of Architecture: Charles Robert Cockerell' in *Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810-1817*, New Haven, 1993; Samuel Pepys Cockerell ed., *Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810-1817: The Journal of C. R. Cockerell, R. A.*, London, 1903). See also Charles Robert Cockerell, *The Temples of Jupiter Panhellenius at Aegina, and of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae, near Phigaleia in Arcadia*, London, 1860; Samuel Pepys Cockerell ed., *Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810-1817: The Journal of C. R. Cockerell, R. A.*, Edinburgh, 1904.

⁷³ C. Cockerell, *Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant 1810-1817. The Journal of C. R. Cockerell*, ed. by G. Hunt with a biographical sketch, London, 1823.

⁷⁴ F. Hudhri., *Shqipëria dhe Shqipëtarët në Vëpra të Piktoreëve të huaj*, Tiranë, 1987, p. 40.

⁷⁵ J. Isager, J., 'Introduction', in P. O. Brøndsted, *Interviews with Ali Pacha*, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ The French expedition to Egypt, under Bonaparte, and the consequent hostilities of the Porte against France, led Ali to take possession of Prevesa, (the most important point upon the terra firma, which was still, as an ancient Venetian

dependency, occupied by the French). Towards the end of the year 1798, with a force numerically superior, he gained a victory over the French near the ruins of ancient city of Nicopolis; he took the town of Prevesa and sent to Constantinople as many heads as he could cut off, from the French and the Greeks, who had fought against him.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 13-23.

⁷⁸ P.O. Brøndsted, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 63.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 68-77.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 79-81.

⁸² The Serail of Ali Pasha in Prevesa, View of the ruins of Nicopolis, View from the great theatre towards the Island of Leukas, and Part of a wall in Nicopolis (Aug. 28th, 1810) are all preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire de Strasbourg. See also H. Bankel, *Carl Haller von Hallerstein in Griechenland 1810-1817. Architekt, Zeichner, Bauforscher. Im Auftrag der Carl Haller von Hallerstein Gesellschaft*, Berlin, 1986.

⁸³ J. Isager, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁸⁴ B. Hacquet, *L'Illyrie et la Dalmatie, ou Moeurs, usages, et costumes de leurs habitants et de ceux des contrées voisines*, Paris, 1815.

⁸⁵ *Sir Henry Holland (1788-1873) was British traveller; physician and writer. He studied medicine in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Holland was a passionate traveller from an early age. After completing a first touring attempt in Iceland, he travelled to Greece, arriving in Ioannina in November 1812, returning several times until April 1813. The Holland described the city of Ioannina itself, as well as commenting on its society. In his preface, Holland recognized the impact of previous travellers and focused on the supplemental nature of his own observations. His*

*narrative was sober, and, without omitting ancient history and archaeology altogether; he focused rather on contemporary issues and literature. While in Ioannina, he offered his medical services to Ali Pasha and his sons, gaining their trust and being given the opportunity to converse with the ruler on numerous occasions. He wrote a detailed biography of Ali Pasha and a fascinating account of his meeting with the tyrant, as well as a description of his journey from Ioannina (Janina) to Tepelena. See Holland, H., *Travels in the Jonian isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, etc. during the Years 1812 and 1813*, London, 1815.*

⁸⁶ Hughes, R. TH. S., (1786-1847) was a Cambridge scholar of ancient Greek and Latin, cleric, historian and travel writer. In December 1812, after graduating with a B.A. (1809) and a master's degree (1811), he accepted the post of travelling tutor for the wealthy young Robert Townley Parker of Cuerdon Hall, Lancashire. See Thomas Smart Hughes, *Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania, Illustrated with engravings of maps scenery plans &c.* 1st ed., 2 vols., Cambridge, 1820, 2nd ed. London, 1830.

⁸⁷ Parker, R. T., (1793-1879) was a Unionist Member of Parliament for the United Kingdom House of Commons constituency of Preston. In 1812 with his tutor, Thomas Smart Hughes, they travelled in Spain, Italy, Sicily, Greece, and Albania.

⁸⁸ H. Holland, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-79.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁰ See Tom J. Winniffrith, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

⁹¹ M. Frashëri, „Henry Holland”, *Diturija*, nr. 12 (1927), pp. 361-365. See also L. Skëndo, *op. cit.* pp. 68-74 and Boppe, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁹² Church, S. R., (1784–1873), was a military officer in the British Army and general in the Greek army during the last stages of the Greek Revolution after 1827 and elected politician in Greece, member of the Greek Parliament in 1843, member of the Greek Senate. In the summer of 1809, he sailed with the expedition sent to occupy the Ionian Islands. Here he increased the reputation he had already gained by forming a Greek regiment in British pay. It included many of the men who were afterwards among the leaders of the Greeks in the War of Independence. Church commanded this regiment at the taking of the island of Santa Maura (Lefkada), on which occasion his left arm was shattered by a bullet. During his slow recovery he travelled in northern Greece, and Macedonia, and to Constantinople. In the years of the fall of Napoleon (1813 and 1814) he was present as British military representative with the Austrian troops until the campaign which terminated in the expulsion of Murat from Naples. He drew up a report on the Ionian Islands for the congress of Vienna, in which he argued in support, not only of the retention of the islands under the British flag, but of the permanent occupation by Britain of Parga and of other formerly Venetian coastal towns on the mainland, then in the possession of Ali Pasha of Ioannina. After the Treaty of Tilsit, where Napoleon granted the Czar his plan to dismantle the Ottoman Empire, Ali Pasha switched sides and allied with the Britain in 1807; a detailed account of his alliance with the British was written by Sir Richard Church. His actions were permitted by the Ottoman government in Constantinople. Ali Pasha was very cautious and unappeased by the emergence of the new Ottoman

Sultan Mahmud II and his despotic Turkish yoke in the year 1808. See Lane Poole Stanley, *Sir Richard Church*, London, 1890.

⁹³ The results of this extensive Mediterranean journey were published in the two-volume *Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania*, London 1820. The two-volume account of their travels, illustrated with plates from the drawings of the architect Charles Robert Cockerell (1788–1863), was first published in 1820. Volume 1 traces the journey from Gibraltar, through Sicily, to many important classical sites in Greece. Volume 2 begins in Epirus, moves through Albania, and covers the return to England via Italy and France. Hughes notes important historical events that took place at each location and describes the local legends, habits and customs. He quotes freely from other travel writers of the time, as well as from ancient authors and inscriptions encountered on the tour. Included also are anecdotes which render this account vivid and readable, allowing the author's personality and opinions to reveal themselves. A second edition of this work, covering 1,024 pages, was published in 1830. Hughes began the Albanian part of his journey in Preveza which at the time marked the border between Albania and Greece and continued on to Arta and Janina (Ioannina). The Albania he describes is thus primarily Epirus, the realm of Ali Pasha Tepelena, of whom he leaves us a good biography. From Janina, he then provides us with a detailed account of his excursion to the north of Albania (in modern terms, actually the south of Albania), i.e. to Libohova, Gjirokastra, Kardhiq, Tepelena, Berat, Këlcyra, Përmet, Konitsa and back to Janina. See Th. S. Hughes, *Travels in Sicily,*

Greece and Albania (1813-1814), London, 1820, and 2nd ed. in 1830.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 117.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁶ De Vaudoncourt, F. F. G., after having served the Republic, then the Empire in the army of the Kingdom of Italy (1805-1814), he engaged with energy in the European liberal revolutions, in particular in that of Piedmont where he commanded in chief the army constitutional (1821), then in Spain where he attempted an insurrection against the French royal army. On June 18, 1806, he took command of the field artillery park of the French army in Italy, and command of the Place de Pavie. In 1807, he went to the beys of Bosnia and the pashas of Scutari (Shkodër) and Jannina, succeeded in thwarting an English expedition, in creating two important fortresses in Janina and Prevesa, and yet, despite the series of services rendered, he gets no advancement. The distinguished services he rendered during this campaign earned him the rank of brigadier general, the title of baron of the Kingdom of Italy and an endowment in Tiro. See and '*Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains*', *Dictionnaire Historique des hommes vivants et des hommes morts depuis 1788 jusqu'à nos jours, qui se sont fait remarquer par leurs écrits, leurs actions, leurs talents, leurs vertus ou leurs crimes*. Publiés sous la direction de MM. Rabbe, *Vieilh de Boisjolin et Sainte-Preuve*, Paris, 1836, pp. 846-847.

⁹⁷ Tom J. Winniffrith, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

⁹⁸ Walton, like all the other English writers named previously, gets a mention in the Dictionary of National Biography, although his principal area of expertise seems to have been Latin America.

⁹⁹ de Vaudoncourt, F. F. G., *Memoirs on the Ionian Islands, Considered in a Commercial, Political, and Military*

Point of View; in Which Their Advantages of Position Are Described, as Well as Their Relations with the Greek Continent, including the Life and Character of Ali Pacha, the Present Ruler of Greece (Translated from the Original MS. by William Walton) (London 1816).

¹⁰⁰ G. A. M. Morana, *Saggio delli commerciali rapporti dei Veneziani colle ottomane scale di Durazzo ed Albania e con quelle d'Aleppo, Siria e Palestina*, Venezia, p.181.

¹⁰¹ Idem, *Relazione del Commercio d'Aleppo ed altre scale della Siria, e Palestina*, Venezia, 1799.

¹⁰² F. Hudhri, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

¹⁰³ de Médelsheim, A. C., (ca. 1777-1826), was born in Strasburg, and while in the service of France, he was sent to Egypt with letters for Bonaparte, but he was captured at sea by the British and was sent to Palermo, before being freed to leave for Paris. There, he was persecuted as a monarchist, and in 1803 he went to Istanbul, where he enrolled in the new army of Sultan Selim III. He married soon after becoming Muslim and changing his name to Ibrahim Manzour. In 1810, he returned to Paris, but did not stay there long. From 1814-1817, he was at the court of Ali Pasha Tepelena in Janina where he served as a military advisor. In later years, under his Muslim name, he published an extensive French-language history of the deposed Ali Pasha, based in good part on his personal experience, the 512-page '*Mémoires sur la Grèce et l'Albanie pendant le gouvernement d'Ali-Pacha*' (Memoirs of Greece and Albania during the Rule of Ali Pasha), Paris, 1827. He committed suicide in Paris in 1826 and, as such, did not live to see the book for which he is remembered by posterity. In the said work,

- Cerfbeer has left us an interesting, but by no means flattering description of the Albanians as he encountered them. See E. Jacques, Edwin, *The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, McFarland & Co., North Caroline, 1995, p.215. See and R. Elsie, *Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History*, I. B. Tauris, 2013.
- ¹⁰⁴ I. Manzour, *Mémoires sur la Grèce et l'Albanie pendant le Gouvernement d'Ali-pacha*, Paris, 1827. See also L. Skëndo, *op. cit.* pp. 104-109 and Midhat Šamić, *Les voyageurs français en Bosnie a la fin du XVIII siècle et au début du XIX et pays tel qu'ils l'ont vu*, Paris, 1960, pp. 160-161.
- ¹⁰⁵ The distinguished diplomat spoke ten languages fluently and had held senior appointments in Madrid, Stockholm and Washington.
- ¹⁰⁶ Lieutenant-General Sir. Thomas Maitland was a British soldier and colonial governor. He also served as a Member of Parliament for Haddington from 1790–96, 1802–06 and 1812–13. He was made a Privy Councillor on November 23, 1803. Maitland served as Governor of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) during 1805 to 1811. In early 1812, Arthur Wellesley, Earl of Wellington began the campaign that resulted in his victory at the Battle of Salamanca on July 22. Maitland was appointed governor of Malta during 1813–1824, where he became known as 'King Tom' by the Maltese. He also served as Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian islands during 1815 to 1823, while the islands were a British protectorate between 1814 and 1864. The seat of administration was at Corfu. See C. W. Dixon, *The Colonial Administrations of Sir Thomas Maitland* Longmans, London, 1939.
- ¹⁰⁷ Cartwright, J., worked for the navy in a civilian capacity. When the Ionian Islands came into the possession of the British, sometime after the Treaty of Paris in 1815, he was appointed paymaster-general of the forces at Corfu, a position he held for some years. The nature of his post gave him many opportunities for making sketches of those islands and the neighbouring coast of Greece. On his return to England, he published a volume entitled *Views in the Ionian Islands*, and from then on devoted himself to art, and especially to painting marine subjects and naval engagements. He exhibited many pictures at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the Society of British Artists, and obtained a great reputation in his particular field. In 1825 he was elected a member of the Society of British Artists. See Joseph Cartwright, *Selected Costumes from Albania and Greece*, London, 1822; Idem, *Views from Ionian Islands*, London, 1821.
- ¹⁰⁸ J. W. Baggally, *op. cit.* p. 66.
- ¹⁰⁹ L. Dupré, was especially noted for his travels in Greece and the Ottoman Empire and his numerous paintings with Orientalist and Philhelene themes. His visit to Greece was on the very eve of the Greek War of Independence.
- ¹¹⁰ L. Dupré, *Voyage à Athènes et a Constantinople, ou collection de portraits, de vues et de costumes Grecs et Ottomans. Peints sur lieux, d'après nature, lithographiés et coloriés. Accomagné d'un texte orné de vignettes*, Paris, 1825.
- ¹¹¹ Williams, H. W., worked in watercolor from the early 1790's and organized exhibitions in Edinburgh from 1800. In 1809 he was a founding member of the Associated Artists in London, exhibiting with them and with a similarly named group in Edinburgh until 1816. He painted for some years highland landscape, and in 1811–12 he published six large engravings of scenes in the

north, while many of his early topographical drawings appeared in the 'Scots Magazine'. In 1816, the Scottish landscape painter set off on a two-year Grand Tour that included a short stay in Ioannian Islands; it changed his life. He published a two-volume account of his travels in 1820, written in the form of letters, and dedicated to John Thomson (1778–1840) of Duddingston, the avowed intention of the work was not to enter into disquisitions upon archaeology and history, but to describe the countries, scenery, and peoples as they appeared to him. The illustrations were engraved by Lizars from original drawings by the author. In 1822 Hugh William Williams held an exhibition of watercolors, also the result of his tour, which attracted much attention and was greatly applauded by the critics of the day. Depicting as they did the splendid ruins and famous scenes of Greek history, they fell in with the taste of the time, and the catalogue teems with quotations from the classics and the great English poets. Between 1827 and 1829 his 'Select Views in Greece' appeared in numbers, each containing six plates. Although he painted a few oil pictures, his principal and more characteristic work was executed in watercolor, which he handled in broad washes of transparent color over a carefully drawn pencil design. In the National Gallery of Scotland, he is represented by between twenty and thirty typical examples and, in the historical collection at South Kensington by five drawings, three of which are dated before 1807, and represent his earlier style. Hugh William Williams was an original member of the Associated Artists in Watercolor (1808), and an associate of the Royal Institution, Edinburgh; but towards the end of his life, he took a great interest in the proposed amalgamation of the Scottish Academy and the

artist associates of the institution, an arrangement which was completed a month after his death.

¹¹² H. W. Williams, *Travels in Italy, Greece and Ionian Islands*, London, 1820.

¹¹³ Admiral Smyth, W. H., (1788–1865) was an English naval officer, hydrographer, astronomer and numismatist, noted for his involvement in the early history of a number of learned societies, for his hydrographic charts, for his astronomical work, and for a wide range of publications and translations. A lunar mare was named Mare Smythii in his honour. His obituary in the *Monthly Notices* of the Royal Astronomical Society noted: *As President of the Astronomical Club, he was always genial & courteous, ever keeping things in happy order; and by his ready wit and flow of humour compelling the maintenance of good fellowship. He used to fill his pockets with new half-pennies to distribute to any children he met in his daily walks. Whatever he did, he did it with his might.* See and O. J. Gilkes, *op. cit.*, p. 22, Fig 4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, Fig. 5 and 6.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, Fig. 9.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, Fig. 8.

¹¹⁷ C. Cockerell, *Travels in Southern Europe and the Levant, 1810-1817*, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-245.

¹¹⁸ Soldier of Albania, plate 26 in the book *The Military Costume of Turkey. Illustrated by A Series of Engravings, from Drawings made on the Spot.* (London 1818).

Plate XXVI

Soldier of Albania

The Albanian soldier entertains a very nice sense of honour; a blow, even amongst themselves, being revenged by immediate death. For military transgression, he is never beaten; the only punishments, in use, being either hang-

ing or beheading. The Albanians have long been ranked as the best troops in the Turkish armies, in which, indeed, they are on all occasions considered as the 'serdenguetchy', or forlorn hope.

Scanderbeg, who is the hero of so many romances, was a native and prince of a district of Albania; assisted by his brave countrymen, he threw off the Turkish yoke, and resisted the whole weight of the Ottoman power, then at its zenith, for the space of twenty three-years; after his death, his sepulchre was violated by the conquerors of his country; and a certain proof of his valour may be inferred, from the circumstance of the Janissaries having worn his bones encased in bracelets. The Albanians have frequently proved powerful opponents to the Russian troops, and such is the love of glory inherent in them, that when they contemplate a long interval of tranquillity in their own country, they enrol themselves in the service of the Pachas of any of other parts of the Turkish dominions, for the purpose of gratifying their military ardour.

¹¹⁹ M. Bryan, 'Clark, John Heaviside', *Graves, Robert Edmund (ed.). Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (A-K). I (3rd ed.)*, George Bell & Sons, London, 1886.

¹²⁰ Gilpin, W., (1724-1804) was an English artist, Anglican cleric, schoolmaster and author. He is best known as one of those who originated the idea of the picturesque. He is known as a big traveller. See Michael Symes, *William Gilpin at Painshill* (London 1994).

¹²¹ DE LA POER BERESFORD, G., was the Irish army official. Very little is known of his studies, career and personal life. In 1855, at the age of thirty, he published a series of lithographs with views of southern Albania and Epirus. Beresford probably visited the

region, which was formerly part of Ali Pasha's territory, as member of a military mission. The drawings of the album were done by Beresford himself. The plates, some of which show rare subjects, are accompanied by explanatory texts on the incidents which took place in the region.

¹²² H. Cook, *Recollection of a tour in the Ionian Islands, Greece and Constantinople* (London 1853). See also F. Hudhri, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

¹²³ G. de la Poer Beresford, *Twelve Sketches in Double-tinted Lithography of Scenes in Southern Albania by Captain G. de la Poer Beresford*, London, 1855. See also F. Hudhri, *Shqipëria dhe Shqipëtarët në Vëpra të Piktoreve të huaj*, Tiranë, 1987, p. 203 and N. Ceka, *Butrint A Guide to the city and its Monuments*, London 1999, p. 23, fig. 8, 9

¹²⁴ An official report of the death of Ali by Khurshid Pasha (who succeeded Ismail Pasha Bey as Turkish Commander-in-Chief) to Sir Thomas Maitland is dated in April 7, 1822. See also Baggally, J. W., *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

¹²⁵ L. A. F., De Beaujour, *Voyage militaire dans l'Empire Ottoman ou description de ses frontières et de ses principales defenses, soit naturelles, soit artificielles*, Paris, 1829, pp. 288-330. See also M. ŠAMIĆ, *op. cit.*, p. 141 and L. Skëndo, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-119.

¹²⁶ O. M. von Stackelberg, *Costume et usage des peuples de la Grèce moderne*, Paris, 1828.

¹²⁷ D. Urquhart, *The spirit of the East*, 2 vol. 2nd ed., London, 1839. See also L. Skëndo, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-169.

¹²⁸ C. Grassini, *Storia di Ali Tepelen, Bascià di Iannina*, Milano, 1829.

¹²⁹ F. Hudhri, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 201. See and A. Rosin, *Kennedy, The subject paintings of Sir*

- William Allan (1782–1850), University of Edinburgh, 1994.*
- ¹³¹ Benjamin D'Israeli (1804–1881) count of Beaconsfield was politician, writer, and well-known British prime minister. The Conservative government under D'Israeli had come to power in 1874. Benjamin D'Israeli's achievement in becoming prime minister was seen by many as a sign of British enlightenment concerning Jews. D'Israeli had long criticized the 'splendid isolation' policy of his predecessor Gladstone. He demonstrated the new spirit behind British foreign policy. In 1875 he purchased the Suez Canal shares of the khedive of Egypt. The following year he arranged a series of magnificent celebrations in India, culminating in the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. See B. Disraeli, *Cantarini Fleming. A Psychological Auto-Biography*, 1832; Lefteris Stavros Stavrianos, *The Balkans, 1815-1914*, New York, 1963, p.401 and Steven Beller, *Antisemitism. A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 15-16.
- ¹³² B. Disraeli, *Lord Beaconsfield's Letters, 1830-1852*, London, 1887; D. Sultana, *B. Disraeli, in Spain, Malta and Albania, 1830-32. A Monography*, London, 1976; J. A. W. Gunn, J. Mattheuws, D. M. Schurman and M. G. Wiebe, eds., *Benjamin Disraeli Letters*, vol.I: 1815-1834, Toronto, 1982, pp. 162-175.
- ¹³³ This Bey was, perhaps, Ismail Bey or Beqir Bey. See *Ibidem*, p. 164, note 3.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 165.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibidem*. Letter to his father, Isaac, from Prevesa, dated in October 25.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 166
- ¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 179. Letter to Edward Lytton Bulwer, from Constantinople, dated December 27, 1830: '.... I certainly passed at Yanina ten of the most extraordinary days of my life, and often wished that you had been my companion'.
- ¹³⁸ After this visit to the 'Grand Vezir', he published an article in *The Court Journal*. See B. D'Israeli, „A visit to the Grand Vizier", *The Court Journal*, nr. 92 (29 January 1831), pp. 66-67. With two other companions: James Clay and George Meredith, on 18 October, he hired a yacht, 'as the only mode of travel for the interesting sea, where every headland and bay is the site of something memorable, and which is studded with islands which demand a visit', and he eventually arrived in Nauplia. From there, he then sailed first to Athens and later to Constantinople, where he stayed for Christmas. See Idem, 173, the letter to Benjamin Austen, dated in November 18.
- ¹³⁹ Heinrich Christoph Stier, „Die Albanesen in Italien und ihre Literatur", *Allgemeine Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft und Literatur* (1853), pp. 864-874.. Idem, „Ist die albanesische Sprache eine indogermanische?", *Allgemeine Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft und Literatur* (1854).
- ¹⁴⁰ Idem, „Ist die albanesische Sprache eine indogermanische?", *Allgemeine Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft und Literatur* (1854).

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Albania and Albanians in Foreign Graphic Novels

Oltsen GRIPSHI

Abstract: *Albania, in comparison to other Western countries, was late in practising and developing the artistic genre of the graphic novel. It is enough to remember that the first Albanian graphic novels were created in 1960 by the well-known painters Safo Marko and Agim Faja. In addition to this delay in the cultivation of this artistic genre, it is worth noting that Albania and Albanians have been the central theme of many graphic novels created by foreign authors outside Albania for many years.*

The inspiration for the creation of these graphic novels with Albanian themes has been manifold, starting from the ancient history of the Illyrians, the geographical location of Albania between East and West, the most famous Albanian characters who have left their mark on European history and culture, anthropology, ethnography and the wild nature that characterises the entire Albanian geography.

The methodology used to conduct this scientific study is a combination of the facts of historical chronology and comparative analysis, exploring the creativity of the authors of these graphic novels who have made known to young readers around the world the temperament of Albanians and the history of Albania through visual description.

At the conclusion of this scientific study, what stands out has to do with the recognition of Albania and Albanians in a period when Albania was at the crossroads of political, economic, social, cultural and identity systems. The variety of themes treated by foreign illustrators, the styles of graphic novels used and the impact they have had on the European and world reader in getting to know Albania and Albanians.

Keywords: *Albania, foreign graphic novel, Agim Faja, visual art, children's illustrations, history, art history, anthropology of art.*

Introduction

Albania, compared to other Western countries, was late in practising and developing the artistic genre of the graphic novel. It is enough to remember that the first Albanian graph-

ic novels were created in the early 1960s by painters Agim Faja and Safo Marko. In addition to this delay in the cultivation of this artistic genre, it is worth noting that Albania and Albanians have been the central theme of

many graphic novels created by foreign authors over the years.

The inspiration for the creation of these graphic novels with an Albanian theme has been manifold, starting from the ancient history of the Illyrians, the geographical location of Albania between East and West, the most famous Albanian characters who have left their mark on European history and culture, anthropology, ethnography and the wild nature that characterises Albanian geography as a whole.

The authors of these novels have made known to young readers all over the world the temperament of Albanians and the history of Albania through visual description. The graphic novels created by these authors sometimes show us stories based on reality and sometimes scenarios invented by the imagination, highlighting not only elements that belong to Albania and Albanians, but above all, they introduce us to characters created on paper, where the entire visual narrative extends and is interpreted in Albania. Of a small country, but with a great history, located on the Balkan Peninsula, washed by the Adriatic Sea to the north and the Ionian Sea to its south. Inhabited by the Illyrians and coexisting for centuries with the ancient Greeks to the south, with the Dacians and Thracians to the east, in the north with the Celts, and across the Adriatic with the Romans. The land where many characters were born who wrote the history of Europe during the time they lived. The Latins have long called it "*La terra delle aquile*"^[it]— The Land of the Eagles".

Therefore, this scientific study opens a new chapter for the tracing and analysis of the way foreign artists have described and imagined Albania and Albanians through the artistic genre of the graphic novel. The study examines various iconographic aspects for the decomposition of images, using the methodology of comparative analysis through research of various archival documents and the exhaustive consultation of the rich foreign scientific bibliography.

In the notes and impressions of foreign travellers who visited Albania at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

Indeed, Albania has aroused the curiosity of many writers, painters, poets, historians, archaeologists, linguists, anthropologists and foreign travellers over the centuries, seeing the land of eagles as a mysterious place with an ancient culture and with a completely unique language similar to no other language in Europe. The land, where several great empires intersected, is full of traditions and colours and rich in cultural heritage from the Illyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman. A land which, in the eyes of foreigners, resembled that of Arnold Böcklin's "Island of the Dead", or as Faik Konica called it, "The Rock Garden of Europe"¹. Plagued by silence and immersed in a past unknown to them.

But who were these strangers who stepped into the land of eagles shrouded in mystery, the breathtaking

beauty of the rugged mountains and the majestic men dressed in white dresses and gold-embroidered robes, or even the women dressed in magnificent folk costumes, adorned with the most amazing jewellery and devoted to their family who seemed to convey a “divine” beauty, from north to south and from east to west? Undoubtedly the most prominent were Evliya Çelebi (عليا چلبی^[otal]), Henry Holland, François Pouqueville, William Martin Leake, George Gordon Byron (Lord Byron), John Cam Hobhouse, Thomas Smart Hughes, Edward Lear, Louis Dupré, Emilio Salgari (who wrote two stories and two novels dedicated to Albania and the Albanians, describing their clothing, traditions and life in an impressive way). All this without ever setting foot on Albanian soil but only browsing the atlases of the time in the Library of Verona, where he also worked as its librarian², Mary Edith Durham, Jan and Cora J. Gordon, Aubrey Herbert, Benjamin Disraeli, Leo Freundlich, Thomas Smart Hughes, George de la Poer Berestford, Edmund Spencer, Charles Robert Cockerell, Aleksandre Gabriel Dekamps, Justin Godart, Gabriel Louis Jaray, Franz Baron Nopcsa, Karl Otten and many others who, with their travels in Albania between the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century, aroused great curiosity for many others in Europe, turning attention towards Albania and Albanians. An attention that was deepened in the identification and description of how Albanians lived: what were the

customs, traditions, and beliefs of this ancient and little-known people at that time? How did they dress and what was their history?

Albania and the Albanians were first described by François Pouqueville in his book of memoirs “*Voyage en Moree, a Constantinople, en Albanie et dans plusieurs autres parties de l’Empire othoman, pendant les années 1798, 1799, 1800 et 1801*”^[tr] – *Travel in Moree, in Constantinople, in Albania and in many other parts of the Ottoman Empire, during the years 1798, 1799, 1800 and 1801*”, published in 1804 in Paris. In fact, the memories described in this book are not Pouqueville’s direct memories but rather the memories narrated by three of his companions who were taken prisoner by Ali Pasha Tepelena. This is because Pouqueville himself would come to live a few years later in Albania, as French consul in Ioannina between 1804 and 1813. Ioannina, which according to the well-known American newspaper “The San Francisco Call”, in its number 138, volume LXXXI (81), published on Saturday, April 17, 1897, was the capital of Albania, where on the front page of this newspaper an artistic graphic with a view of Ioannina and an Albanian soldier dressed in a frock, with the description below it: “*This is one of the most picturesque cities in European Turkey. It is situated on a peninsula extending into a lake of the same name. It has been reported that irregular Greeks have been observed near the walls of the city and only a few days ago the telegraphic commu-*

nication between Ioannina and Elassona, the Turkish headquarters, was destroyed"³.

What Pouqueville brings us as evidence of Albania and the Albanians of that period, thanks to the accounts of his three friends, was: *"If the country ruled by Ali Pasha is still barbaric, it should nevertheless be noted that Albania is the most prosperous land of the Ottoman Empire in brave people, in fighting men and with good agricultural products"*, describing the Albanians as soldiers of Alexander the Great and George Kastrioti⁴.

Among the first and most influential travellers in the Western literary world to travel to the lands of southern Albania was Lord Byron. A poet of the Romantic period, who arrived in Ioannina in 1809, then the capital of Albania (according to many engravings and paintings by the most prominent foreign artists of that time), where he was received by Ali Pasha Tepelena in his palace. The stay in southern Albania and especially in Ali Pasha's palace left a great impression on Lord Byron, who during this stay was accompanied by his close friend John Cam Hobhouse. The stop in Albania came after a long journey that he had undertaken to get to know new countries and cultures, starting from Portugal, Spain, Malta and then Albania. A journey that would inspire the English poet of the vanguard of European literature to write his narrative poem *"Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"*, first published in 1812 in England. Byron was so surprised by Albania that he described it thus:

*"Albania, where Iskander was born -/ Song of youth, beacon of the wise!/ And another Iskander, who crushed/ Forever his enemies with his brave cord./ Albania, let me turn my eyes/ Upon you, O stern mother of wild men!"*⁵.

(Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Canto II, lines 334-339).

In these verses Byron describes three very important figures in the history of Albania and Albanians, referring to Alexander the Great for the first Alexander, George Kastrioti for the second Alexander and Ali Pasha Tepelena when he says: – *over you, stern mother of wild men. "The dawn rises: with it the shores /of Albania are rising, the rock of Suli,/and the mist-clad lark of Pindus, Washed with snow-white/roots With a masculine, reddish colour./And as the clouds begin to disperse, The highlanders' voices are heard: /Here the wolf howls – Albanian sharpens its beak – Birds – beasts – wild men appear / Storms around shake the weather that is ending"*⁶. (verses 370-379).

Undoubtedly, his verses do not only describe the beauties and geographical characteristics of southern Albania, but also those about the temperament, character, stereotype and ethnography of Albanians when he says, *"See the strict Albanian with his frock/ And his clothes embroidered with gold,/His weapons washed with gold, how beautiful!"*⁷./ *"And he took the road to prolong/The prince of Albania, whose order/ Is a law without law, because*

with blood on his hand/He rules a rebellious, brave people;/Here and there some brave tribe/Resists him, and from the tower of the rock/He is angry and obeys no one, except gold⁸". (verses 417-423).

Another very important figure of European culture who travelled extensively through Albania was the English poet and artist Edward Lear, who made a trip between 1848 and 1849. During the discovery of Albania, Lear became acquainted with many traditions, cities, costumes and the temperament of the Albanians, and he wrote all his impressions and experiences in a diary which was published in 1851 by Richard Bentley in London. This diary of Edward Lear comes as a living testimony of Albania in the middle of the 19th century. In this diary, the English poet describes to us in detail Albania in every aspect, where between the lines he writes: *"As I passed under the cliffs of the gorge and entered the bazaar street that runs through the middle of the city, I was struck once more by how different the dress was in this Tosk area. Instead of the purple dress, red vest, black jacket, and short frock of the Gegë, here everything is white, or made of a light gray-green cloth, with long, pleated frocks, and most of them wear white qileshes instead of red turbans. Beyond the numerous, crowded shops is a wide, open area near the river, from which the view of the dark gorge of Beratino, the castle, and the city, is wonderfully beautiful. On one side of this square or market is a large, new inn. There I took a room in the corner*

of the building, overlooking the lively scene that stretched to the foot of the hill. In the space before me there were always a hundred figures of people sitting for painted, without causing suspicion and without restrictions. There you saw dervishes with their large white or green hats; Mohammedan women, but also Christian, dressed in wide, blue veils, and with their faces covered⁹".

The harshness of the steep Albanian mountains and the sparkling whiteness of the Albanian men's skirts could not help but attract the attention and curiosity to step on and touch them up close during his journey through Albania, the English writer Edmund Spencer, who published his memories and impressions of this journey in the book *"Travels in European Turkey, in 1850, through Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania and Epirus; with a visit to Greece and the Ionian Isles"* in the year 1851 in London. The English writer remains surprised by the beauty of the Albanian geography, but he is more amazed by the beauty of the white frock worn by Albanian men from north to south, describing it as, *"The dress of the old chieftain (of Mirdita) and indeed of the inhabitants of these mountains of both genders was similar to that of those tribes of the same race which we have already described during the journey to Peja and Prizren on the other side of the mountains of Upper Albania. The many-layered fistan (fistani) made of white basma had a special and picturesque effect when they were on horse-*

back and made a stunning contrast with the red vest, the red fez and the long Arnaute (Albanian) weapon¹⁰".

A vivid narrative about Albania and the Albanians on the eve of independence comes to us from Karl Otten, who travelled to the territories of northwestern Albania in the summer of 1912. A journey where the German poet describes in detail the character and life and how the Albanians dressed in the early 20th century. Among other things, at one point in his book *"Die Reise nach Albanien"*^[de] – describes the appearance of two Albanians: *"Among the soldiers stood two Albanians, standing a head above them. Serious, almost sad, they sat on their knees. Their hair fell to their shoulders, which, like all Albanians, were covered by a short black cloak, as a sign of mourning for Skanderbeg, their prince, who had ruled their country hundreds of years ago¹¹".*

His memories also include the Shkodra bazaar after arriving in this city from Tivar via Buna, describing it as: *"The market of Shkodra! A labyrinth of small, broken alleys, partly roofed, so that all colours and faces suddenly blur into darkness. Then the midday sun falls perpendicularly and brightly and all colours flare up all around to the cries of people and animals. On the contrary, the Albanians do not care at all about us, tall and thin, with long hair, they move around without feeling, strangers to the world, and expose their superiority over others so openly that everyone avoids them. While their women are short, with cropped hair, black cloth-*

ing of woolen fabric, woven so thickly and densely that the short skirt stands open like a dancer's. What is most striking in their costume is the wide belt of sheet iron, which reaches to the chest and where the dagger and tobacco box are caught in small rings. The Albanians also smoke in street. The pure Albanians are all Catholics. In fact, they are very few compared to the others and the majority belong to the highlander tribe, which lives in the mountains above Shkodra. They are the fiercest enemies of the Turks and live according to the laws of their hero Skanderbeg in large families. They tell each other the bravery of Alexander the Great, they are the descendants of his people, the pre-Greeks, the autochthons; the Pelasgians. Their language is the most ancient and purest in Europe and perhaps even the most beautiful. They are tall as oaks, among the highlanders I did not see a single short person. Whereas the Mirdit people, whose capital is Kruja, where Skanderbeg was born, are fierce as cats, small in stature and stubborn¹²".

The same impression of Albania and Albanians was also had by the French traveller Gabriel Louis Jaray, who first arrived in Albania in 1909. He travelled to all Albanian regions, starting from Skopje and then through Prishtina, Mitrovica, Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, Kukës, Lumë, Mirditë, Tirana, Durrës, Vlorë, Elbasan, Struga and up to Resen. A trip that would familiarize him better with the landscape, traditions, costumes, character, temperament and life of the Albani-

ans, who he describes with great truth when he says: *"the Albanian fights the Montenegrin, drives away the Serb, gets rid of the Greek, skilfully plays with the opposing ambitions of the Austrian and the Italian. He stands up to everyone, everywhere, and seeks with great insistence only one thing: freedom and his "rifle in the mountains". No one has been able to defeat him, subdue him and no one will be able to rule him without making extraordinary sacrifices, which will undoubtedly not be rewarded. To become the lord, the ruler, of Albania you will have to empty its inhabitants of even the last of their eagle nests and you will even have to destroy them one by one. What a job it is!*

A warlike, independent and backward people; impetuous, resourceful and fearless mountaineers; Muslims and Christians who above all seek to be free, to live according to their traditional laws, who oppose any external authority, who are not necessarily distrustful and hostile towards foreigners, but full of suspicion towards the actions carried out by these foreigners; people who lived in isolation, who spoke different dialects and who until 1912 had not understood each other¹³". Jaray's descriptions were based on a lived and tangible reality directly experienced by him. In a close relationship with Albanians, where he learnt and recognised many unknown things about Albania and Albanians in the French culture of the time. This made him not only constantly delve into discovering many things during his trip through Albania but also

amazed him with what this people represented for the history of Europe.

Jan and Cora J. Gordon were a married couple, one a painter and the other a writer from England who, in 1927, after a long trip through Albania in 1925, summarised in a publication their memories, notes, sketches, drawings and paintings made during that trip, entitled *"Two Vagabonds in Albania."* A journey as impressive as it was full of challenges, with many surprises and surprises that they encountered in getting to know the Albanians. What impressed them was the "code of living", the social organisation, the social hierarchy, describing that reality as very different compared to that in England, because in their eyes *"the Albanian Bey was the "scapegoat" of Albanian politics. On his shoulders are laid all the ills of the country. He is a conservative, as any landowner would be from his position, but his conservatism has much to justify it. Roughly speaking, Albania is divided as follows:*

First, the peasantry which has no sense of nationality, which wants nothing but private property, without any interference, without any taxes and freedom to emigrate its sons to America;

Secondly, the conservative Muslim politicians who are strongly oriented towards Turkey, who wish to preserve all the old privileges, seek offices to benefit from them, steal as much as they can and are actually having a good time in the Oriental style;

Thirdly, the progressive Christian politicians who, being people without privileges, aim to destroy all the old privileges, to banish the old aristocracy and to model the country as much as possible on American principles (not without corruption, of course);

Fourthly, a party drawn from all faiths and classes, who, horrified by the experiments of amateur politicians, would be content for the country to be for years under a foreign, preferably English, tutelage;

Fifthly, those despairing ones who see no salvation anywhere and who await the fearful moment when Albania will be torn apart by oligarchs and demagogues and divided between Serbia, Greece and Italy¹⁴”.

A British couple, who were looking for adrenaline, adventure and getting to know a people far from their reality. After arriving in Albania, they were accompanied on their journey by Mislim Haxhia, an elderly local man, who travelled with them for a month through Albania. A completely random trip and without any preparation about where and what they would see with priority and more specifically! For Jan and his wife Cora, this trip was just for pleasure, to discover a territory and reality unknown to them before. This is perceived and read from the first lines of their book with memories from Albania. After arriving first in Durrës, they travelled to the new Albanian capital, Tirana, where, after leaving this city, they carried with them their feelings and memories, where they express:

“Ultimately, we liked Tirana in its own way. From our point of view, it was a splendid city. We are basically lazy travellers. We let life come to us and so it approaches us sweetly in the most natural way. As for our evening entertainment, there were two cafes where the Yevgjit/Gipsy orchestras played strange and fascinating music and where the Yevgjit/Gipsy girls danced the most banal and uninspiring dances we have ever seen. What fascinated us about them was their panties, which could well be called “monstrous cotton balloons the colour of red pomegranates and black plums.” Young Albanian beauties flirted with the Yevgjis/Gipsy and tried to remove their headscarves; while, sitting at the feet of the violinist, clarinettist and drummer, the haggard old women beat their tambourines and let out piercing cries in the atmosphere of melodies interesting objects produced by stringed instruments.¹⁵”.

In this perspective, the English couple for today's Albanian reader and scholars were not simply two adventurous foreign travellers but two extraordinary witnesses to the reality and truth of how they lived and what the social, economic, cultural and anthropological life of Albania at that time was. What impressed them most during their stay in central Albania were the joy and fun that the locals organised with the dancers of the Egyptian community dressed in panties decorated with tulips. The British couple liked that atmosphere so much that they made a drawing which they later reproduced with the graphic technique

of woodcut. A genuine work of art, which presents a party scene with Albanian folk music, with a dancing girl in the centre, who is surrounded by six other figures. Among them are two elderly women sitting on the ground, where the one in the foreground plays the tambourine, while the other sits silently with a stoic look towards the audience. The other two are younger in age and also sit on the ground around the table, singing and playing the tambourine. To the left of the Egyptian dancer are two men, one sitting playing the mandolin and the other standing playing the clarinet. This is a scene that testifies to the simplicity of Albanian life at that time, but above all to the joyful and melodramatic, almost seductive atmosphere of Albanian men dressed in white robes and headscarves. In addition to the captivating sounds of stringed instruments of central Albania, the Gordon couple drew and painted 42 images of Albania and Albanians, so much so that on their trip to northern Albania they were attracted by another element among Albanians, that of large, thick moustaches and cut in the most diverse ways. An aspect so manly that they had not encountered anywhere before in the places they had travelled in the Balkans. In the memories of the British couple, Albanians in general, but especially those of the northern highlands, the moustache had an important element of male pride to seduce the female gender.

Among the many drawings and paintings they made during their trip

to northern Albania, where the moustache and the severity of the typical facial expressions of a mountaineer are most evident, is the portrait made with oil paints and coloured pencils on paper which, according to the notes of Jan and Cora Gordon is Gjeloshi, the son of the village elder of Bogë, Marashi. A very characteristic portrait, part of a stereotype that has accompanied the image of Albanian mountaineers to this day. Tough and tall, with a body packed with muscles, very manly and handsome.

Their trip was enriched even more with beautiful images from Albania when they visited the city of Gjirokastra, with its cobblestone streets and large houses like majestic towers surrounded by high stone walls, which immediately attracted the curiosity of the two British people. The stay in Gjirokastra amazed the artist couple, as they stated that, *"There is hardly another city in the world like Gjirokastra. The city has elements of a fairyland, of a ruined fairyland that had once seen better days. The magical side of Gjirokastra's qualities is the residential part. On all the hillsides and slopes stand three-story houses surrounded by high walls."*

In the same years, the French academic Jacques Bourcart also visited Albania, who, after a long stay in our country between 1917 and 1920, published in 1921 his memoirs summarised in a book *"L'Albanie et les albanais"*^[fr] – Albania and the Albanians". A book that brings us an extraordinary testimony about Albania and the Albanians of the early 20th

century. He describes the Albanians with superlatives, stating that *"I can only say the best words and praise this distinguished people. In him I found the rarest qualities in the Balkans, disregard for money, respect for honour and for keeping one's word. And these in the Albanians are combined with courage, bravery, activity and a lively and outgoing spirit."*

The Albanians... belong to one of the most beautiful races in Europe and their moral virtues, among the rarest in the East, are worthy of their physical beauty. Among all the Balkan races, only the peoples of the Illyrian races have suffered foreign invasions without damage and have often put up fierce resistance to the invaders and especially, the most savage invasion, Turkish rule. Neither the Bosnians, nor the Montenegrins, nor the Albanians have ever been rajas. ...

...for the historian, ethnographer or sociologist, Albania is a country inhabited by one of the oldest peoples of Europe, which has miraculously preserved its language and customs, which are contemporary with Greek antiquity.

...in none of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula do we encounter such manly virtues as those we observe among the Albanians. The Albanian peasant, mountaineer or soldier, with whom I lived and ate bread, in whose house I resided, seems like a great gentleman if we compare him with his Balkan neighbours.

...what touched us Frenchmen the most was the ardent patriotism of all the Albanians we knew. And, when the

entirety of the Albanian lands was at stake, then all divisions disappeared, special interests, hostilities between families and classes, cultural, party or religious differences and contradictions were overcome¹⁶."

Thanks to the impressions and memoirs published in Italy, England, France and Germany by these well-known figures who travelled through Albania, a more complete identity was formed about Albania and Albanians in European culture. Although often unconsciously, they created stereotypes and clichés^{17, 18} about the nature, character and temperament of *"Homo Albanicus"*. Elements that would inspire many years later in the 20th century, various illustrators, to reflect Albanians and the geography of Albania in their graphic novels.

One of the most qualitative authors in terms of writing the script and telling the story of the Albanian canon through the graphic novel is Jack Manini, who, together with the illustrator Michel Chevereau, published in different years four volumes dedicated to the phenomenon of blood feud in northern Albania: *"Albanie, la loi du Kanun; I. Dette de sang^[fr] – Albania, the law of Kanun; I. "La loi du Kanun; II. L'Amazone^[fr] – Kanun Law; II. Amazona", 2006, "La loi du Kanun; III. Albanie^[fr] – Kanun Law; III. Albania, 2008, "Albanie, la loi du Kanun^[fr] – Albania, the law of Kanun, 2010. The four volumes are a true testimony of an Albanian social phenomenon, where within them the authors have interwoven the actuality of the blood feud still present among the*

Albanians of the north and its imagination in the 1960s. The entire scenario of the four volumes takes place in Albania, which is confirmed by the typical Albanian landscape, where all the scenes take place, and elements of cultural heritage such as the Mesi Bridge in Shkodër and the majestic stone towers characteristic of the north.

In the first volume, "*Albanie, la loi du Kanun; I. Dette de sang*", the author narrates the life of a thirteen-year-old boy named Leka (who ironically shares the same name as Lekë Dukagjini, the lawmaker of the Kanun), who lives in Albania under the care of an alcoholic and violent Russian man named Nykita. Thirteen-year-old Leka's difficult childhood is filled with various crimes, from stealing bicycles to kidnapping children. Nykita's mistreatment and his wandering life impress the Hila family, to whom he delivers eggs every Monday. Given Leka's extremely difficult situation, the Hila family shelters him in their home, separating him from Nykita's violence and exploitation.

In the bosom of the Hila family in which he took refuge, the minor discovers a passion for American films and falls in love with Sosa, the daughter of the family, for whom his feelings become stronger every day. But at the same time, little Leka also discovers the rules of the Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini. Of a corpus of customary laws which, in his judgment, were macabre and absurd, expressing: "*These lead to ever greater blood debts...*"!

The summarised narrative of the Kanun begins with a prologue by the main character of the graphic novel, which raises a series of questions about where the story takes place thirty years later. In fact, Leka, who is also the narrator of his life, tells us about the main moments that preceded this fatal moment, starting from the thirteenth year of his birthday.

Jack Manini writes a script where the protagonist is faced with crucial and difficult choices: to obey his stepfather, risking falling even deeper into crime and losing the family principles he cherishes, or to betray him despite his presence during his childhood, unlike his biological father, who abandoned Leka at a very young age after having to flee as a result of a blood feud?

The story is perfectly constructed, and the sequences that make up the graphic novel follow each other seamlessly. Reading this story told through the graphic novel makes you quickly fall in love with the young Leka, despite his actions, and with the Hila family, although their life is cantered within the fence that surrounds the house where they live. A fence, which is their confinement, precisely according to the rules of the canon.

The first volume clearly addresses the concerns of adolescents and the harsh reality of life in Albania in the 1960s. Michel Chevereau's drawings, graphic solutions and choices for the division and structural construction of the scenes extremely highlight the time, place, temperament, character, drama and tragedy for the visual de-

scription of this Albanian social phenomenon. The various scenes of the siege are particularly convincing. Likewise, the characters portrayed within the graphic novel reflect with great accuracy and truth the life and character of real people who were unfortunately involved in the blood feud but also of Albania as a whole at that time. The figural compositions are realised with the technique of water paints on paper. A technique which maintains a freshness with its typical stains in the painting of the characters. The pastel colours and the predominance of cold blue or ochre tones, depending on the scene, create different atmospheres in accordance with the situation.

The second volume continues the story of the thirteen-year-old boy, delving even deeper into the presentation of the rules of the canon... In northern Albania, Leka and a group of friends, not very old in age, discover the legendary library of the Dukagjin prince, hidden within the walls of the fortified tower where they live. A rare book, "The Book of Blood", written by the prince's guardian, contains the list of victims as a result of the rules of the canon, including the names of three members of the Hila family. The book also includes the name of Leka Golivina; he is the sole heir to the revenge according to the canon. He recalls the dramatic events that led to the expulsion of the Hila family, for which he is solely responsible...

The construction of the scenes in the second volume is also magnificent, with a variety of plans and deep

perspectives on the horizon. All the scenes of the graphic novel in this volume are coloured in monochrome with cold tones of blue. On the cover of the second volume we see Stalin portrayed, evidence of the close relations until 1961 between the People's Republic of Albania and the USSR (*Союз Советских Социалистических Республик*^[ru] – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). The landscape remains typically Albanian, harsh and with steep mountain slopes, as well as majestic stone towers similar to mediaeval castles, inevitably highlighting the architectural heritage of the mountain people's houses in northern Albania.

The narrative continues in the third volume, where screenwriter Manini asks the questions: – What do you think of Leka, the orphan boy adopted by Nykita, the Russian immigrant? That thirteen-year-old boy who sometimes sells eggs to his neighbours? A sincere face, with a thin silhouette and a bright and charming look - everything to attract the trust of others around him. And yet... nevertheless, in that Albania of the 1960s, "socialised" to the depths of the soul, almost to excess, Leka does a strange activity..., completely reprehensible together with his stepfather Nykita. Under the violence and mistreatment of Nykita, he deals with the kidnapping of children to then sell them to rich Italian families in search of adoption! A reality, which travels in parallel in two different worlds, where on one side is the Albanian with the little Leka orphaned by the death of his mother

during his birth and his father, who abandoned him as a baby in the hands of his friend Nykita. While on the other side is a completely different reality, that of Italian society in support of life to adopt Albanian children! It must be said that Leka's childhood was filled with great difficulties which gradually led him towards ruin and the abyss of criminality. Little Leka's stepfather, Nykita, like all officials of the Bolshevik propaganda machine, was sent by the USSR to Albania to train the future elites of the Albanian Communist Party.

However, when Khrushchev broke off all cooperation and bilateral relations with the "secessionist"¹⁹ country (Albania), all these Russians returned to their homeland, with the exception of Nikita, whose homosexual morals and alcoholism had led to his expulsion from the Russian Communist Party. Consequently, when Leka's mother died giving birth to him, the latter, out of the friendship he had with his biological father, decided to take care of him. With the consequences we know. However, the meeting with Sosa, the beautiful daughter of the young doctor of the Hila family, where he later took refuge, could counterbalance this harmful influence of Nikita on Leka before it is too late. – Because here in northern Albania (the author writes), as in the whole country, despite the great efforts of the Albanian Communist Party to undo the rules of the canon, it still prevails over the laws of the state. A law outside the law, the law of revenge and silence, the one that with

the force of tradition makes blood flow...

The Law of the Kanun is a "seduction" for the author, not only to recognise it as a code, which has regulated social relations among the Albanians of the north for centuries, but above all an inspiration to create a fantasy through the graphic novel. In all four volumes, the visual language used is extremely refined both in aesthetic and stylistic terms. This large series of graphic novels brings to attention, under the guise of the Kanun, the period of change experienced by future organisations, dubbed by the misunderstanding of the Albanian mafia, as a pretext to kill their opponents. The character of Leka returns to her past, without complacency. A story that sheds light on this little-known period and region thanks to an attractive "plot" and a drawing that is both classic and dynamic, which shapes and characterises the entire graphic novel.

Killing one person for another...

- Your father killed mine.

- So, I will kill you in return.

- And I know that one day someone will come and kill me to get revenge.

- This is the law of the canon, which has codified the honour of Albanian families since ancient times.

A law that forced the young Sose to declare the Oath of the Virgins, the only way for a woman to participate in revenge, as long as she completely renounces her female identity and from now on will live as a man. After killing her childhood love to get revenge while preserving the honour of

her family, Sose transforms herself, from a woman to a man, moving to a small village, deep in Albania. With a boyish hairstyle, dressed as a man and with a new name, Aleks. This is a way to universally respect the Virgin's Oath. Despite the complete transformation of her being, it is still not so easy to escape the law of the canon. Part of the loss of her former traces before the Virgin's Oath, she brought another woman closer to her, who also made the oath, welcoming the young Tomas, or rather Vesna, a woman dressed as a man, with whom Sose (Alex) will soon fall into horror again...

In this third *opus*^{[la]20} the graphic novel develops both in the substantive aspect of the dialogues between the characters and in the graphic one. The range of colouring remains the same, monochrome, but with magnificent extensions of planes and perspectives. The composition of the protagonist characters is transformed into an extraordinary game of interaction full of mystery, liveliness of movements and diverse angles of view. Illustrator Chevereau follows the characters step by step, bringing them as real and close to us as possible. It seems as if our eyes observe them silently, almost as if we spy on them without seeing them. A graphic game that manages to establish direct communication between the reader and the characters on paper. This is because, first, this volume ended in a determined way, and everything seemed resolved. But in reality, the way Jack Manini has built the entire narrative in this graphic

novel continues to surprise us, weaving his successive plots so that they always make us hold our breath in suspense: what will happen next?! A curiosity that never fades; on the contrary, it increases from scene to scene.

The cover of the third volume speaks more than words, as we see Sosa, the young daughter of the Hila family, portrayed on it, who now takes on the role of the main character. Undoubtedly, the essence of this graphic novel series is the treatment of the phenomenon of female revenge, which forces her to "abandon" herself, transforming into a "man" to achieve her goal. This is because only men can take blood according to the canon! Manini and Chevereau have masterfully intertwined the word with the image. The graphic novel series penetrates deeply into the temperament of the two young people, embodying the psychology of the story of Sosa and Leka. Meanwhile, the illustrator does not forget at any moment the graphic elements of contrasts, clean lines and the focus of the reader's eye in successive sequences in pursuit of the characters. Elements were used in previous volumes, but in this volume, he develops and perfects them with dynamics and rich expressions of facial expressions.

Michel Chevereau's drawings are nothing more than the transformation into pastel-coloured images of the text of the screenwriter Manini, where he skilfully highlights every depth and surprise of this story that is as intimate as it is violent.

The scope of the graphic novel continues in the last volume of this four-volume series, delving even deeper into the story of the phenomenon and the bloody consequences of Lekë Dukagjini's Kanun. Albania in the 1960s... despite the Stalinist regime that banned the use of the Kanun, this bloody custom resurfaced from the past as a curse for Albanian society, especially in the northern regions. In this regard, the young boy's story is conveyed to the reader with *πάθος*^[grc]-*pathos*²¹ a lot of pathos when he says, *"At the age of thirteen, I am already a criminal. It is my "teacher" (stepfather) Nykita, that dirty Russian, who forces me to do bad things! Until I met Sosa. With her, her brother and her father, I feel like I am a real family! Sosa is my little angel and if one day we have to get married I will have to become honest and worthy of her. For this reason, I must kill my worst demon. Yes, I must kill Nykita!"*. In fact, nothing scares the younger Leka... For Sosa and Leka, children of this country tormented and isolated by the laws of the canon and the communist regime, peace does not exist. This is because the legacy of revenge will reach them one day!

This is the bloody conclusion of a "fascinating" and horrific Albanian revenge.

Conclusions

This study presents a new and necessary approach to the analysis of cultural representations of Albania and Albanians in the increasingly present

and influential medium of the graphic novel. At a time when Albania itself had a late start in the development of this artistic form – with the first texts illustrated in this genre in the early 1960s by the painter Agim Faja – it is particularly significant to note the prominent presence of Albania and its identity elements in the graphic novels of foreign authors.

The fact that these authors have found inspiration in the ancient history of the Illyrians, in the country's unique geography, in historical figures with European influence, and in Albanian ethnography and anthropology speaks of a sustained and very large-scale interest in this cultural space. Through visual narratives, these works have mediated the knowledge of Albania for the international public, constructing images and narratives that often combine historical truth with artistic fable. These representations, although created by foreign screenwriters and illustrators, shape the way Albanians are perceived by Western culture and have played an important role in the articulation of a cultural identity in cross-cultural contexts.

The importance of this scientific study lies in the fact that it not only offers an analytical look at the representation of Albania and Albanians in the artistic genre of the international graphic novel but also contributes to the broader academic discourse on the role of art as a means of cultural connection, as well as on the way in which the "other" interprets the "self" in a global context. Through an in-

depth and comparative analysis of these graphic novels, this research highlights the dynamics of identity construction and the confrontation between the created image and historical reality, as well as the powerful mechanisms of visual intercommunication that the foreign graphic novel enabled for the image of Albania and Albanians to the foreign reader in the 21st century.

This academic reflection on the representations of Albania in foreign graphic novels not only enriches the existing literature on this artistic genre

but also raises awareness of the importance of critically treating cultural images that circulate globally, especially for peoples and cultures that are often on the periphery of world attention. In this sense, the current study takes on value as a necessary act of documentation, analysis and interpretation of an aesthetic and cultural phenomenon with a significant impact on shaping contemporary identity discourses, thanks to the interpretation that foreign authors have made of Albania and Albanians through the artistic genre of the graphic novel.

Notes

- ¹ F. Konica, *Shqipëria kopshti shkëmbor i Evropës Juglindore dhe shkrime të tjera*, Vatra, Boston, 1957, pp. 186-187.
- ² O. Gripshi, *Emilio Salgari e i suoi romanzi illustrati da Alberto Della Valle*, Aemme Edizioni, Verona, 2011, p. 20.
- ³ <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1897-04-17/ed-1/seq-1/> Publisher Charles M. Shortridge, San Francisco, California, p. 1.
- ⁴ K. Frashëri, *Bajroni në Shqipëri dhe takimet me Ali Pashë Tepelenën*, Botimet Dudaj, Tiranë, 2009, p.13.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p.24.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p.25.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p.36.
- ⁹ E. Lear, *Edward Lear in Albania / Edward Lear në Shqipëria; travel diary 1848-1849*, translated by Majlind Nishku 2008, Shtëpia Botuese Plejad, Tiranë, 1851, pp. 135-136.
- ¹⁰ E. Spencer, *Travels in European turkey, in 1850, through Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania*

and Epirus; with a visit to Greece and the Ionian Isles, vol. II, Colburn and CO., Publishers, London, 1851, p. 90.

- ¹¹ K. Otten, *Die Reise durch Albanien / Journey through Albania 1912*, translated into Albanian by Anila Omari 2005, Dituria, Tiranë, 1913, p. 31.
- ¹² *Ibidem*, pp.38-39
- ¹³ G. Louis Jaray, *L'Albanie inconnue / The Unknown Albania*, translated into Albanian by Asti Papa, 2006, Dituria, Tiranë, 1913, pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁴ J. & C. J. Gorgon, *Two Vagabonds in Albania*, translated by Edgar Frashëri 2014, Botimet Jozef, Durrës, 1927, pp. 186-187.
- ¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 26-27.
- ¹⁶ J. Bourcart, *L'Albanie et les albanais / Albania and the Albanians*, translated into Albanian by Asti Papa 2004, (cover), Shtëpia Botuese Dituria, Tiranë, 1921.
- ¹⁷ G. Vigni, *Glossario di biblioteconomia*, Editrice Bibliografica, Lampi di Stampa, Milano, 1999, p. 35.
- ¹⁸ *Cliché* – is a term that refers to an onomatopoeic sound, or a repeated action, word and meaning. In the past, the word cliché was associated with

the zincographic matrix for the serial reproduction of the image of artistic graphics. Clichés were also considered typographic blanks for printing book texts in series. A cliché is a zinc plate on the surface of which a figure is engraved in relief in negative, used as a matrix for the typographic reproduction of drawings and images. This technique was invented by Scottish goldsmith and typographer William Ged in 1725. Over time, the word cliché has become a metaphorical term for any set of ideas repeated identically or with only minor modifications.

- ¹⁹ Secessionist – a term derived from the Latin word *secessus*, *secede*, meaning “to separate”. A secessionist wants to secede, is associated with, or supports secession (the act of becoming independent and no longer part of a country, area, organization, etc.).

- ²⁰ *Opus* [la] – a word derived from Latin and meaning “work”.

- ²¹ *Πάθος-pathos* [grc] – term, derived from ancient Greek and meaning “suffering” / “pain”. Pathos according to ancient Greek thought is the force that governs the human soul. The term itself is the opposite of *logos*, which is the rational part of thinking. The term *πάθος-pathos* was first used by the Greek sculptor and architect Skopas, who through his works had the merit of conveying to the public emotions that until then were not perceived. Pathos corresponds to the irrational part of the soul. The surface of this feeling in a work of art shows a complex reaction that evokes emotion and at the same time makes you identify with the character or situation expressed. Pathos is one of the three elements in Aristotle’s “Rhetoric”, which identifies three artistic modes of persuasion: *λόγος*^[grc]-*logos*-tell, *πάθος*^[grc]-*pathos*-pain, and *ἦθος*^[grc]-*ethos*-temperament.

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Vocabulary

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Publisher Charles M. Shortridge, San Francisco, California, p. 1.

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The poetry of Dritëro Agolli has left deep traces in albanian tradition

Rovena VATA MIKELI

Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to contextualize Dritëro Agolli's poetic creativity within the remnants of the Albanian tradition, as well as his inclination to revisit traditional literature and folklore stories to bring them back to life in his poetry through creative means. In his poetic inventiveness, Agolli straddles the line between mission and emotion. His poetic verses about his return to the source symbolize a return to ancestors' ideals, qualities, and roots.*

The goal of the study is to locate, evaluate, and disseminate Agollian poetic lines in the context of literary analysis to raise awareness of their poetic qualities on a global scale through the power of verses that are devoted to many subjects, including nation, country, tradition, language, territory, homeland, and generation. The idea of folklore, which Agolli used as a source of inspiration to enhance his poetry and elevate it to the status of artful emotional experience in literature, unites all these components of Agollian poetic verse.

Methodology: To carry out this study, a fundamental combination of theoretical, qualitative, and analytical methodologies will be used, occasionally supplemented by historical data to incorporate the historical-cultural interpretative method.

Results: Dritëro Agolli, a personality of Albanian letters, naturally fused his poetic inspiration with traditions, documents, rites, cults, myths, rituals, ballads, and legends from the corpus of Albanian folklore. It was not without reason that Agolli traced deeply into the popular psychology of the Albanian nation, listening to and studying oral narratives, Albanian myths and legends, folk poetry and songs, and old Albanian tales and motifs, where he enriched the Albanian language through words and expressions. phraseology of his hometown, Devolli.

Discussion: Agolli lived and wrote at the time of socialist realization. He had the main merit that he 'knew' and 'could' go beyond the rules that this literature needed, going to man, nature, the earth or the spiritual states of the individual, being always ready to give the right advice for man and his people, whom he loved all his life. His escape from the framework of the literature of the time was through the use of motifs, ideas, themes and heroes, which Agolli took from the national historical memory and Albanian folklore.

Recommendations: Textual analysis and scientific research should be combined to investigate Dritëro Agolli's lyrical inventiveness. Reading, discovering, debating, rereading, and drawing conclusions from textual analysis will guide us

toward the accomplishment of our investigation into Dritëro Agolli's poetic imagination.

Keywords: *Dritëro Agolli, Albanian letters, Albanian folklore, poetry, Albanian literature.*

Introduction

Dritëro Agolli's inventions and the poetic patterns he established throughout the years in Albanian literature are crucial to the definition of fulfilled Albanian poetics. However, who is Dritëro Agolli? With a long history in this subject, Dritëro Agolli is a significant figure in Albanian letters. He died in Tirana on February 3, 2017, after being born on October 13, 1931, in Menkulas of Devolli, close to Korça. His early education was in his hometown, he pursued his education at the Gjirokastra gymnasium, and eventually, he was allowed to attend St. Petersburg to study philology. He returned home in 1957 after completing his studies, working for approximately 15 years as an editor and journalist at the newspaper "Zëri i popullit", during which he penned a number of articles in the journalistic domain. Dritëro Agolli is a multitasking writer who writes not only poetry but also prose and drama.

As a student, Agolli debuted Albanian literature through articles published in periodicals and newspapers such as "Voice of Youth" and "Pionieri".

His closeness to his readers is evident in his poetry, which marked his entry into Albanian literary history.

He sang of the love of his native country, the simplicity of the human race, the Albanian language, human communication in all its sincerity, spiritual sentiments and human virtues (love, faith, hope, kindness, joy, generosity, passion, boredom, abandonment, loneliness), as well as the stages of a person's own life, including childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and death.

Agolli primarily went to folk poetry to realize this new poem in Albanian literature.

Agolli's poetic landscape also encompasses a mosaic of concepts and topics that depict life's journey and the inner and outside worlds of the individual.

Because Dritëro Agolli characterizes the deepest human emotions as universal experiences, love in his poems thus becomes a cult. Agolli, his literary muse, can be found in every region of Albania. His poetry is consistently filled with spiritual coziness.

His ability to maintain the poem's emotional resonance and artistic uniqueness even when he switches up his technique is impressive.

The presence of folklore culture in Agolli's poetry

"I did not imitate other poets on my long way,/ Although I once valued more than myself;/ I treasured them

like you, and after the tracks I followed Naim,/ He once conquered my soul and thought like a saint”¹. Agolli, Dritëro.

In Agollian poetic verses we find elements of history, folklore, geography, ethnography, pedagogy, philosophy, ethics and linguistics, where the lexicological and semantic aspect of the Albanian language is quite rich, which means that: “Ethnopoetics seen as an interweaving between poetry and anthropology, where the poet stands within the relations of language, communication and culture of his ethnicity”².

For Agolli, poetry was an inspiring muse, evocative lullaby and spiritual food, where among other things: “Popular literature has been the first school of many creators of great literary works”³.

This is because poetry and the poet in Agolli have such a natural rapport with one another; they are supportive and comforting, give and receive, inspire and abound in emotion—sometimes the poet is the poem, and other times the poem is the poet. Thus, “Agolli remains one of the peaks of Albanian literature”⁴ may be stated with confidence.

For millennia, “the relationship that the poet has with poetry, regardless of genre or metrical forms” has been the focus of scholarly inquiry⁵.

The titles of his poems and poetic lines, such as “For poetry,” “The poet’s song before death,” “Poet and death,” “Rebellious poet,” “Poetry,” “Poet and souls,” and “Hope of po-

ets,” reveal this link with Agolli. “Two words to the poets who come”, “Wrath of the poet”, “Travel with the poets”, “Poetry hut”, “Old poet”, and so forth.

“I have eaten myself with my teeth many times, but I do not want to lie in agony in front of people. The poetry I have been searching for has been hidden beneath a heavy shield. However, when I have finally managed to lift the shield and find the hidden poem, I have seen myself sweating, and I have understood myself.”⁶.

In his statement, “For Dritëro Agolli, poetry is a song...”⁷. Kosovar researcher Ali Aliu makes an intriguing claim about the impact of poetry on Agolli. Agolli himself expresses himself in verses such as this: “I know them all: the song, the pain, the sadness,/And I try to know them all more and more./I grow old-I grow old, we end the endless war”⁸.

Because of his intimate relationship with poetry, Agolli was able to go on a lengthy creative journey that resulted in more than 60 years of work in Albanian literature.

Agolli “...on the previous poetic tradition...” since he modeled his poems after Albanian poets⁹, primarily using its motifs. “Literature and mythology in the history of the survival of myths and in the life of literature have been forced into a relationship with each other, primarily because fiction is the daughter of popular culture in its most important types, while mythology, because of cultural developments, mental evolution, technology had to survive”¹⁰.

The motif employed by Agolli is identified following the titles of these poems, as in the following cases: "Radonec Faucet-From an old song", "Mike with gold in the throat-From the people", "Pashë una beku-From the people", "Starting-song with the chorus", "Brother, how much wait!-Brotherly conversation", "Rock-landscape", "Moon with the sea" -Fairytale", "Lapidary-Ode", "Moon with the sea" -Fairytale", and "Moon with the sea" -Fairytale.

Dritëro Agolli adhered to traditional literature in line with folklore culture, and his poetry reflected these literary influences. After examining the works of traditional writers such as Naim Frashëri, Lasgush Poradeci, Anton Zako Çajupi, and others, Shaban Sinani concludes that "Dritëro Agolli's poetry has direct influences from popular poetry, from the art of Naim Frashëri and of Lasgushi"¹¹.

Nearly all of Albania's writers have been drawn to the creative richness of folklore culture, as "Albanian literature, in all stages of its development, has been characterized by the close connection with the tradition of folklore"¹².

Thus, the poems with the titles "Respect for the "Words of the Candle," "Between the Tigris and the Euphrates," "Frashëri," and "The Paths" of the Law this thinking are the foundation of the new values that are embodied in the interior of Agollian poetry. "Strong connections with Naimian poetry are clear and visible through these motifs and settings"¹³.

"Naimi and Migjeni night after night/The verses came to me/Naimi spoke: "The trip is long/Me and Migjeni will say this too!" wrote Agolli himself¹⁴.

In his work "Traditions, of course, but not stamps"¹⁵, Dritëro Agolli expressed his critical viewpoint on the process of creating poetry or the meter of verses. Agolli, an expert on Albanian literature, emphasized that "the poet must be innovative, he must always seek and not use the same artistic tools that his predecessors used"¹⁶.

As a poet, he would use lines such as "And there comes a moment when you return,/And you sit full of longing in the hearth,/The house will open its wings,/So that you sit like a bird blue" to convey the same idea¹⁷.

In Agolli's poetry, the "norms, practices, artifacts, and symbols that make up ethnicity" represent the values of the Albanian tradition¹⁸.

His influence from this tradition is evident in the titles of several of his poems: "Fire-ballad," "Trace," "River," "Call," "Mountain," "Sea," "Song of the Earth," "Hearts," "Assembly of stones," "History document," "Devoll, Devoll," "Early traces," "Tradition," "Sacred stone," "Stone clock," "Wedding moment in Devoll," "The Bride," "Honor," "The Call of the Homeland," "The Awakening of the Ballads," "Hospitality," "The Foundations," "Bread," "The Pain of the Stone," "In the Ancient City," "Ballad of the Mountains," etc. In particular, Agolli writes: "I go to Grzeghe and wake up ballads,/And

the ballads of the mountains remained alive,/Because they planted long roads,/History poured out in waves..."¹⁹.

It is important to note that beginning in the 1960s, folklore began to exert a new influence on cultivated poetic creativity. This development was influenced by the poet himself, who found purpose in the rich stone of Albanian folklore when he first began to create poetry.

Not without intent, Agolli's early poetic creations were grounded in the rich tapestry of Albanian folklore.

He used commonplace themes in his poems. In the moments when this poetry was emancipated, Agolli's poetry was directly influenced by folk poetry, the art of Naim Frashëri Lasgush, Burns, and others. In a sense, literary thought was also stimulated by this competition²⁰.

In the verse "To think", he states, "There are many curses for evil people,/As there are also congratulations for friends"²¹.

This is the point at which our poetry advances to a new, higher level of growth, distinguished by the deepening of its artistic and ideological content.

N. Frashëri's poetry started a tradition, but A. Z. Çajup, N. Mjeda, F. Noli, and L. Poradec's poetry enhanced it. A tradition was established by Migjeni's poetry, but it was enhanced by the poetry of the thirty-year-old generation²² and others.

By creating new forms of artistic expression, it has the chance to delve deeper into the phenomena and reali-

ties of modern life, into the inner lives of our people, and into the endeavors to provide a more thorough and all-encompassing mirror of life. "Where did the cell go that sat like a bud on the couplet/And brought honor and peace between the rooms?"²³.

Folklore, where poets delivered the artistic wealth of the people from the perspective of the new demands, which were placed before them by time and the rise in the artistic level of the readers, was unquestionably one of the sources of enrichment and refinement of poetic expressions. "He preserved one of the most accomplished values of traditional poetry—the folk spirit"²⁴.

"She was betrothed when she was born,/And she remained betrothed all her life./This great sad story,/Binajke can only have legend"²⁵.

This new phase of poetry development "gave way to the use of new elements of folklore"²⁶, where Agolli writes the poem "In my creases": "*An archaeologist digs in the creases/You will find the shells of legends from the grandparents eaten/On old tables, the legend was that the lute was crying/Under the smell of a cemetery sprinkled by the moon*"²⁷.

This was a widespread tendency during the first phase of the development of poetry.

One can clearly see Agolli's influence on Albanian songs and rituals in his creative poetry. Even the poet himself fails to achieve this when he writes these lines: "I imitated weddings, songs, joys and joys,/I imitated the deaths, the horrors, the pains, the

lamentations.” We discover rites for death, rules and behavior for the birth ritual, and conventions for the wedding ceremony in his poetry²⁸.

As the ethnologist and researcher Mark Tirtra correctly noted, “Myths, rites and beliefs about death, about the dead, for the graves, for the afterlife,” for what we call the “Cult of the ancestors” and “their connection with the fates of the living in rural communities,” occupy a special and very significant place in the totality of the historical-cultural phenomena of the tradition, syncretized in the spiritual life of our people²⁹.

Edlira Çerkeçi, a researcher, continued, “The reports and the cult of the dead is one of the oldest cultures of humanity”³⁰.

The poet is able to portray the spiritual culture passed down from generation to generation with the aid of all these traditional Albanian elements.

The lines “Your verses are mixed with the crumbs of the earth/And it seems to us that they have merged with our being” are written by Agolli in the poem “Naim Frashëri”³¹.

In Agolli’s poems, folk psychology is clearly present. The mother lulls her child to sleep and desires for them to grow up and see the sea. Therefore, “Agolli maintained stable links with history and historical “myths”³².

One wonders whether Agolli was also a scholar or maybe a collector of folklore or whether these vivacious verses were the product of a fleeting inspiration.

“D. Agolli stands out for the strong connection with the national tradition,

for the national type of thinking, for the popular spirit and healthy humor, for the clear expression and where the depth does not go to the detriment of the depth,” according to researcher Bardhosh Gaçe, describing Agolli’s relationship to the Albanian tradition³³.

Agolli provides us with the following lines: “Only rarely does a fire suddenly warm me,/From the holy hearth of poetry./And I say to myself like a hermit monk:/May this hearth that still emits a spark be blessed!”³⁴.

Since the wedding itself was for Agolli joy, happiness, motivated organization, beautiful emotions, spiritual and family connections, the promotion of Albanian music and dances, renewal, etc., Agollian lyrical poems also encourage the wedding ceremony, a life-giving factor.

He describes the entire process of Albanian wedding development in the poem “Chast dasme in Devoll,” stopping at the dance and the dress: “Fifteen dresses were opened on the ground,/Fifteen dresses rose between the floor and the ceiling,/Fifteen dresses fell on the ground again,/And the glasses on the table were grabbed and shouted!”³⁵.

It is impossible to overlook traditional Albanian motifs or components connected to ethnicity, land, birthplace, village, nature, history, stories, food, and the poet’s deep love for the Albanian tradition in Dritëro Agolli’s creative creations.

The cult of the earth inspiration of Agollian poetry

*"Dear Earth,
I want to know,
I understand,
I find myself in you"*³⁶.

As "it is known that in the first periods of the formation of any literature, poetry prevailed as the main type, which was conceived much earlier than other types"³⁷, Dritëro Agolli began his creative process with verses of Albanian poetry. Agolli used these verses to express all the magic of his poetic words. In Dritëro Agolli's poetry, the religion of the earth plays a significant role. As the researcher Agim Vinca correctly notes, "he trusts only one museum - the Muse of the Earth, which gives him inspiration, song, and poetry"³⁸.

"Agolli wrote poems that are permeated by the cult of the birthplace, the land, the bread, the plow, the family, the parent, and the father." He has performed to this cult more than any other poet from Albania³⁹.

Additionally, as noted by Albanian literary scholar Bashkim Kuçuku, "the earth is a metaphor for all kinds of puzzles, it is rather a geographical and historical-national puzzle that is revealed little by little"⁴⁰.

Through poetic hues and artistic phrases, Agolli has so masterfully expressed the cult of the earth, giving it a vibrant, vibrant sense of life. However, where was Agolli's land? The earth appears as land, land, mud, wish for the earth, trace, name, plow,

prayer, road, house, root, bread, beloved, muse, stone, dream, puzzle, blood, motherland, depth, and hope throughout his lyrical verses. "Homeland, I feel you in every cell of my land"⁴¹.

Agolli, however, also saw the ground as a woman, stating in one of his writings, "The earth smells of water like a woman after a bath"⁴².

Agolli believed that the earthly worship was also associated with eternity; in the poem "Life," he experienced his death as a second coming. "What about me when I entered the ground,/When people gathered in the room,/I would like friends and comrades to think:/He has gone with service and comes later..."⁴³.

We saw fields, meadows, oaks, plains, mountains, hills, plants, birds, trees, oaks, and everything else that was a part of the poet's upbringing and early years inside the religion of the soil. "They all chew,/They chew everywhere: on the streets, in the gardens, in the fields"⁴⁴.

He considered himself to be the topic of the shepherd and the farmer, the peasant and the scholar, the climber and the thinker, in this poetry. He upheld the public spirit, one of the most accomplished qualities of traditional poetry⁴⁵.

Agollian poetry titles like "Tears of the earth", "Kurbatka", "When it snows", "Song of the earth", "Devoll, Devoll", "New Psalm for the Earth", "In the fields after the rain", "In my country", "The call of the homeland", "Work", "O master work", "Fires", "Night in the fields", and so on, all

allude to the cult of the earth. In the Agollian verses, the cult of the earth is explained as follows: "The earth looks white and white,/The earth evokes the world of the fairy tale"⁴⁶.

"The poetry of Dritëro Agolli is an example of all Albanian poetry of all times, both in terms of quantity and quality, both in terms of form and content"⁴⁷.

Speaking to Devolli as though he were conversing with a friend, the author claims that because of this, Devolli's dirt is carried about and even gets inside the woolen bag that Agolli always carries. *"Your mud, your thick grass,/I'm your whole fold,/And a piece of uncarved rock"*⁴⁸.

He demonstrates how his birthplace, his land, which they missed despite its filth, is constantly with him. *"The religion of the birthplace, the land, the bread, the plow, the family, the parent, and the father permeates his poems. It is governed by the natural world, the field, prosperity, holiness of nature, and spiritualization of the surroundings"*⁴⁹.

"The gendarmes shot at the bird with rifles,/And the bird fell on the partisan's gills./And they both remained on the frosty grass,/The great earth beneath them breathed" is how the poet described the world, believing it to be alive and breathing just like a man⁵⁰.

In Agolli's poems, the cult of the land also referred to his birthplace, to which he dedicated the most exquisite verses: *"To speak, He planted the first sounds in my heart,/He made me a poet in books of verses. Here I meet*

*you with my village Menkulas,/In front of the Rrahimi Stream and on the edge of Devolli"*⁵¹.

Gjovalin Shkurtaj, an academic, would write *"The most dense word, certainly the most beloved and the most representative, for this poet is clay: the clay of the fields, the beloved clay of his Devolli, the sweet clay of our Albania"*⁵².

"The strong connection with the birthplace, mainly Devolli and Menkulas, has reflected also because of a strong relationship that the poet had with his family, where the mother and father stand out, for whom the poet has written emotional verses"⁵³.

The lines *"I took the stone in my palm calmly,/And said tiredly, deep in thought:/I almost cursed you, O desolate stone, If it were not from My hometown"* illustrate the poet's connection between the stone of his origin and the cult of the ground⁵⁴.

As his father had taught him, the poet never cursed the earth. *"I like to go out before dawn./I like to go among the fields,/There comes such a good wind,/In the morning when the seed is thrown"*⁵⁵.

*"The poet brings a realistic reflection about his father and his father's generation, a generation that has carried great burdens on its shoulders, but has passed on to us an irreplaceable tradition and heritage"*⁵⁶.

Two instruments that are used to work the soil and make it fertile and fruitful are the plow and the plow. The poem *"Learn, biro, the alphabet,/All the alphabets,/Where the folds raise their backs,/After the plow and behind*

the oxen” is a result of the poet drawing inspiration from these tools⁵⁷.

*“In Dritëro Agolli, the poetic clarity stands out through the internal message”*⁵⁸.

The poet claims that his father taught him how to do his craft and that he also provided him with education and information. *“He stayed with the earth day and night,/In the heat, wind and fog,/That is why from my descendants./He was looking for sweat and order”*⁵⁹.

The benefit will vary depending on how it is handled. *“My father loved the land very much,/As he loved a mother and a wife,/For the land he was tired and groaned,/And he sweated and itched”*⁶⁰. *“Dritëro Agolli has created in his poetry, the symbol of the earth-woman on the ruins of a very early archetype, inherited from very distant archetypal depths, or what is called collective consciousness, to introduce a symbol into Albanian culture you are individual and unusual”*⁶¹.

With love and longing, the earthly poet speaks and prays to her. *“And he sat down on the ground to pray to the sea,/Like a dervish on the threshold of the masjid,/Under the olive trees a tear fell from the desert,/Under the olive trees a tear fell like dew,/And on the ground he sat down to pray to the sea”*⁶².

Everybody has to submit to the ground since it is the source of all nourishment, the grain. *“And the earth put on the dress again/Of the green wedding, /And took the lilac flower/Under the old shelter”*⁶³.

Mankind should not become sick from humanity. *“They found the earth sick/Filled with thorns and thistles;/They had thrown stones on it,/It had wounds on its back”*. (Agolli: 1987, p.245). *“Dritëro Agolli is the poet of the proclamation of the human weakness of the creator for everything he experiences”*⁶⁴.

“Oh Earth, do not freeze my forehead, /Open me, please, your herbal book, /The only book I read without glasses,” the poet begged the planet while he was lost in meditation⁶⁵.

Since the earth provides you with food and needs to be treated with love, care, and attention, it was not insulted. *“You see that I’m not so tranquil, dear earth. “Day by day, I strive to suffer, I battle with my lonely self, I battle with my friend, and I fight for you even when I’m not sure how to cook your dough”*⁶⁶.

The poet claims to have learned human virtues such as work, kindness, dignity, ancestors’ roots, and love from the clay of the land. *“What did I do for you? /I plowed./ I planted and reaped/ to comb you with a comb of nobility?/ With my hands like a comb I pulled out the evil roots/ I inhaled the steam of love from you”*⁶⁷.

He claims to have called me the mouth of history, suggesting that either this may be Agolli’s time to further his studies or that he could defend his nation.

*“I am a speck of the great earth,/ However, I create and discover everything.../In myself sleeps a worldly story full of noise,/ I walk, I do not stop, I transform...”*⁶⁸.

*Agolli intended to record the history of generations using the cult of the earth, precisely like the earth with its strata and the history of generations with the events that took place. "We will take the ashes of the history of the elders,/ Throw it to the fields, remove the excess acid from the soil"*⁶⁹.

He even demonstrates how cemeteries exist on the earth, but the soil tends to them as well; in fact, it even remembers that cashew flowers sprout on damp ones. *"Tormentors! — a blood on foot, blood on foot in the Earth's arteries:/ Strong, feeble, exhausted, red, and pale; with fingers behind the head and claws out; with full embraces, resentments, and curses;/ Protected and utterly desolate"*⁷⁰.

Agolli addresses every subject, attempting to give everything an earthly beauty and resonance. *"It rains and the earth moans like a woman with a burden"*. As Ali Aliu noted⁷¹, *"...the poetry of Dritëro Agolli is self-revealing"*⁷².

The character of Agolli, his love of the country, his birthplace, the ancestors' roots, blood, the tribe, the mountain, the field, the oaks, the crops, and the Albanian nation's name are all shown in these lyrics.

Conclusion

Upon concluding our investigation, we can state that Dritëro Agolli continues to be a remarkable figure in Albanian culture and literature, recognized for his work as a poet, prose writer, essayist, publicist, and critic.

His inventiveness spans a wide range of literary genres and forms; in Albanian literature and culture, he even founded an entire school of writing and aesthetics. He was also notable for his social and political involvement. Dritëro Agolli served as the president of the League of Writers and Artists of Albania from 1973 to 1992. He also served as a representative in the Albanian Parliament for more than 30 years.

Dritëro Agolli continues to be the dominant character in Albanian poetry in the latter part of the 20th century. He has been called one of the most significant members of the 1960s generation. Dritëro Agolli is a member of the group known as the "Generation of the 60s" in the history of Albanian literature. This group, along with Ismail Kadare and Fatos Arapi, introduced a new literary spirit to Albanian literature in the latter half of the 20th century. This spirit tended toward a higher quality of literature in terms of the artistic form's elements as well as expanding the enrichment of literary themes.

We recall that during that time, socialist realism was the dominant literary style in Albanian literature, giving works a stronger ideological and political bent. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, Agolli was able to infuse Albanian literature with true artistic and literary values. The future of Albanian poetry was transformed by the innovative poetry of Dritëro Agolli.

Thus, Dritëro Agolli made his literary debut in Albania, where he distinguished himself as a poet who was

intimately familiar with the reader and who integrated ordinary philosophy with the universal emotions of joy, anguish, and despair.

Dritëro Agolli, as a writer, embodies the finest creative tradition in Albania and adds authentic literary and cultural value to it. The land of his birth, the common man, the Albanian language, sincerity and human communication, spiritual feelings and human virtues such as love, faith, hope, kindness, joy, generosity, passion, boredom, abandonment, and loneliness, as well as the stages of man's life, childhood, youth, maturity, old age, and death, are all themes that Agolli sang about in his poems.

Agolli wrote his poetry in a suburban, or noncitizen, setting with the hamlet, the farmer, and the peasant serving as the main subjects of his verses. Agolli primarily relied on popular poetry to bring this new poetry to Albanian literature, drawing direct inspiration from traditional literature, particularly works by Naim Frashëri, Lasgush Poradeci, and Anton Zako Çajupi.

His lyrical landscape was a patchwork of themes and ideas that depicted life's journey and the inner and outer world of the individual, the common man, who subsisted on daily labor in fields, meadows, harvests, etc. Agolli saw poetry as his spiritual sustenance, evocative lullaby, and inspired muse. His literary works' philosophy and messages were intimately linked to his function, mission, and enthusiasm in the advancement of Albanian society.

As a poet, his attention was drawn to the remnants of Albanian culture, mostly drawn from national memory and Albanian folklore for inspiration on ideas, reasons, topics, and heroes. This allowed him to break out from the socialist realism literature.

The poetic verses of Dritëro Agolli, an Albanian writer, merge several fields within Albanian literature, starting with archaeology and continuing with history, geography, ethnology, folklore, sociology, and cultural anthropology.

Agolli became a poet, employing new literary devices and adhering to the Albanian tradition. Agolli's poetic imagination is bold, vibrant, and incredibly motivating. The thoughts of a lyricist with an exquisite taste are portrayed in his poetry lyrics, where the talent of a refined artist is evident and who feels obligated to elegantly engrave the Albanian word.

Through poetic hues and artistic phrases, Agolli masterfully expressed the cult of the earth, giving it a vibrant, vibrant sense of life. However, where was Agolli's land?

For Agolli, the earth was made of dirt, land, muck, soil, name, trace, road, house, root, bread, lover, muse, stone, dream, riddle, blood, motherland, depth, and hope. The Agollian lyrics contain a cult of soil that includes fields, meadows, oaks, mountains, hills, plants, birds, trees, oaks, and everything else that existed during the poet's early years.

According to the poet's creative and spiritual vision, which lived and breathed similarly to that of man, the

Earth was alive. The author claims that man and the earth are inextricably linked.

Under the influence of revivalists, the religion of the land in Agolli's poetry entered Albanian literature as a national symbolism, which the author

connected to both the abundance of cultural allusions drawn from the dough of tradition and ethno-psychological symbolism. Thus, Dritëro Agolli transformed the earthly language into a poetic hymn through his poetic imagination.

Notes

- ¹ D. Agolli, „E thjeshtë, e vërtetë dhe e vështirë”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr.11, marr nga libri: “Udhëtoj i menduar”, 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 97.
- ² Ch. Jourdan, K. Tuite, *Language, culture, and society*, University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p. 207.
- ³ F. Syla, „Karakteret njohës dhe edukues i letërsisë popullore”, në: *Gjurmime albanologjike-Folklor dhe etnologji*, Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, Prishtinë, 1982, p. 124.
- ⁴ A. Aliu, *Urtia e fjalës*, Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Botime të Veçanta CLXXI, Seksioni i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, Libri 59, Prishtinë, 2018, p. 102.
- ⁵ M. Coyle, P. Garside, M. Kelsall, J. Peck, *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, London, 1991, p. 7.
- ⁶ D. Agolli, „Për poezinë”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 3-Fjala gdhend gurin, 1977, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 85.
- ⁷ A. Aliu, *Urtia e fjalës*, Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Botime të Veçanta CLXXI, Seksioni i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, Libri 59, Prishtinë, 2018, p. 101.
- ⁸ D. Agolli, *op.cit.*, p. 79.
- ⁹ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁰ E. Çerkezi, *Mitet dhe raportet me letërsinë artistike*, Shtëpia botuese “Maluka”, Tiranë, 2024, p. 142.

- ¹¹ Sh. Sinani, *Vëpra e Dritëro Agollit dhe Brezi i viteve 1960*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, 2019, p. 29.
- ¹² B. Koço, „Vëzhgime mbi ndikimin e folklorit në poezinë e sotme shqiptare”, *Letërsia dhe koha-Studime*, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1982, p. 66.
- ¹³ B. Gaçe, „Dritëro Agolli në udhëtimin e tij poetik si pelegrin”, *Letërsia Bashkëkohore Shqiptare-Poezia*, Shtëpia botuese “Maluka”, Tiranë, 2023, p. 94.
- ¹⁴ D. Agolli, *op.cit.*, p. 44.
- ¹⁵ ¹ Idem, *Arti dhe koha-artikuj kritikë*, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1980, p. 121.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 130.
- ¹⁷ Idem, „Thirrje”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 3-Fjala gdhend gurin, 1977, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 129.
- ¹⁸ Ch. Barker, *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, Thousand Oaks-New Delhi, SAGE Publications London, 2004.
- ¹⁹ D. Agolli, „Zgjimi i baladave”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 3-Fjala gdhend gurin, 1977, *op.cit.*, p. 42.
- ²⁰ B. Gaçe, *Dritëro Agolli në udhëtimin e tij poetik si pelegrin*, në: “Letërsia Bashkëkohore Shqiptare-Poezia”, *op.cit.*.
- ²¹ D. Agolli, „Të mendoresh”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoj i menduar”, 1987, *op.cit.*, p. 130.
- ²² Idem, *Arti dhe koha-artikuj kritikë*, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

- 23 Idem, *op.cit.*, p. 185.
- 24 Sh. Sinan, *Vepra e Dritëro Agollit dhe Brezi i viteve 1960*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, 2019, p. 23.
- 25 D. Agolli, „Baladë malesh”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 3-Fjala gdhend gurin, 1977, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 93.
- 26 B. Koço, „Vëzhgime mbi ndikimin e folklorit në poezinë e sotme shqiptare”, *Letërsia dhe koha-Studime*, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1982, p. 66.
- 27 D. Agolli, poezia: „Në rrudhat e mia”, *Lutjet e Kambanës-Poezi të zgjedhura*, Shtëpia botuese “Toena”, Tiranë, 1998, p. 212.
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- 29 ¹ M. Tirta, *Panteoni e simbolika-Doke e kode në etnokulturën shqiptare*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Kulturës Popullore, Tiranë, 2007, p. 142.
- 30 E. Çerkezi, *Mitet dhe raportet me letërsinë artistike*, Shtëpia botuese “Maluka”, Tiranë, 2024, p. 76.
- 31 D. Agolli, „Naim Frashëri”, *Lutjet e Kambanës-Poezi të zgjedhura*, Shtëpia botuese “Toena”, Tiranë, 1998, p. 263.
- 32 B. Gaçe, *op.cit.*, p. 92.
- 33 A. Vinca, „Aspekte të poezisë së sotme shqipe. Mendimi kritik i rilindësve mbi letërsinë gojore”, *Studime dhe kritikë letrare, nga autorë shqiptarë të Kosovës, Maqedonisë e Malit të Zi*, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1983, p. 227.
- 34 D. Agolli, „Vatrat”, *Lutjet e Kambanës-Poezi të zgjedhura*, Shtëpia botuese “Toena”, Tiranë, 1998, p. 268.
- 35 Idem, „Çast dasme në Devoll”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoji i menduar” 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 170.
- 36 ¹ Idem, „Jeta”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 3, Marr nga libri: Fjala gdhend gurin, 1977, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 17.
- 37 K. Bihiku, *Probleme letrare*, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1979, p. 122.
- 38 A. Vinca, A., *op.cit.*, p. 141.
- 39 B. Gaçe, B., *op.cit.*, p. 94.
- 40 B. Kuçuku, Pashënien në veprën: Dritëro Agolli, *Lutjet e Kambanës-Poezi të zgjedhura*, Shtëpia botuese “Toena”, Tiranë, 1998, p. 353.
- 41 D. Agolli, „Atdhe”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoji i menduar” 1985, Naim Frashëri, Tiranë, 1987, p. 21.
- 42 Idem, „Peizazh në fund të vjeshtës”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoji i menduar” 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 26.
- 43 Idem, „Jeta”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 3, Marr nga libri: Fjala gdhend gurin, 1977, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 17.
- 44 Idem, „Për stinën e mollëve në fshat”, *Ibidem*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoji i menduar”, 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 32.
- 45 ¹ Sh. Sinani, Sh., *op.cit.*, p. 23.
- 46 D. Agolli, „Kur bie dëborë”, *Vepra letrare*, nr. 1-Marr nga libri: “Hapat e mia në asfalt”, 1961, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 140.
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- ⁴⁸ D. Agolli, „Devoll, Devoll”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 1-Marr nga libri: “Shtigje malesh dhe trotuare”, 1965, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 261.
- ⁴⁹ ¹ Sh. Sinani, *op.cit.*, p. 31.
- ⁵⁰ D. Agolli, „Elegji për një partizan e për një zog”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoj i menduar”, 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 136.
- ⁵¹ Idem, “Udhëtoj me poetët”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoj i menduar”, 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 197.
- ⁵² Sh. Sinani, *op.cit.*, p. 133.
- ⁵³ B. Gaçe, *op.cit.*, p. 94.
- ⁵⁴ D. Agolli, „Guri”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoj i menduar”, 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 56.
- ⁵⁵ Idem, „Fara”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Udhëtoj i menduar”, 1985, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 63.
- ⁵⁶ B. Gaçe, *op.cit.*, p. 98.
- ⁵⁷ D. Agolli, „Kënga e parë”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri: “Poemë për babanë dhe për vete”, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 205.
- ⁵⁸ A. Aliu, *Libri i jetës (Për 85 vjetorin e lindjes)*, Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Botime të Veçanta CXCI, Seksioni i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, Libri 72, Prishtinë, 2020, p. 111.
- ⁵⁹ D. Agolli, *Kënga e parë, op.cit.*, p. 204.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 203.
- ⁶¹ B. Çapriqi, *Simboli dhe rivalët e tij*, Shtëpia botuese “Kosova Pen Center”, Prishtinë, 2005, p. 118.
- ⁶² D. Agolli, „Kur më pushtoi malli për detin”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 11-Marr nga libri *Poemë për babanë dhe për vete*, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1987, p. 91.
- ⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 245.
- ⁶⁴ Sh. Sinani, *Vëpra e Dritëro Agollit dhe Brezi i viteve 1960*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë, 2019, p. 33.
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- ⁶⁶ Idem, „Psalm i ri për tokën”, *“Lypësi i kohës”—Poezi*, Shtëpia Botuese Enciklopedike, Tiranë, 1995, p. 203.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 195.
- ⁶⁸ Idem, „Kënga e njeriut”, *Vëpra letrare*, nr. 3-Marr nga libri *Fjala gdhend gurin*, 1977, Shtëpia botuese “Naim Frashëri”, Tiranë, 1981, p. 79.
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- ⁷⁰ Idem, „Lëvizja e madhe”, *Lutjet e Kambanës-Poezi të zgjedhura*, Shtëpia botuese “Toena”, Tiranë, p. 3 4.
- ⁷¹ A. Aliu, *Libri i jetës (Për 85 vjetorin e lindjes)*, *op.cit.*, p. 110.
- ⁷² D. Agolli, „Psalm i ri për tokën”, *Lypësi i kohës-Poezi*, Shtëpia Botuese Enciklopedike, Tiranë, 1995, p. 37.

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The influence of cinema in Albanian-speaking territories: from its beginnings to her children, the unrecognized first Albanian film

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Abstract: *“Her Children” – The First Albanian Short Film, but Not Recognized as the First Albanian Film. The impact of cinema on Albanian-speaking territories, and later on Albanian society, from 1897 to the release of the first Albanian short film, “Her Children” (1957), which is recognized as the first Albanian short film but not as the first Albanian film.*

Cinema and its profound influence on a society with a deeply oriental mentality, its role in transforming this society—rooted in an imperial past—towards embracing a Western vision and practices. This shift was a natural movement for Albanians, from the declaration of independence to the early stages of industrial capitalism in the late 1930s.

Albanians became victims of visual propaganda, shaped by social-political and historical conditions, and influenced by the optimistic imagery coming from the former socialist bloc and the implementation in Albania’s own cinematography.

The education of the first Albanian filmmakers, who documented the reality of a specific period, reflected both the need and the desire to consolidate cinema as an art form—not just as a political tool, but as a social necessity. However, the propagandistic misalignment with the censorship mechanism of the time marked the final moment of artistic freedom and the beginning of a state-controlled, one-party artistic expression.

Keywords: *Albanian film, cinema, Albanian cinematography, industrial capitalism.*

Introduction

The influence of cinema in Albanian-speaking territories and later in Albanian society, from 1897 to the release of the short film *Her Children* (1957) — known as the first Albanian short film, but not as the first Albanian film — marks a profound cultural and ideological transformation in a society

with an Oriental mindset and an imperial past. Cinema, from its earliest screenings at the end of the 19th century, had an immediate impact on Albanian society, which was just beginning to shape its national identity and detach itself from the influence of the Ottoman Empire. With the declaration of independence in 1912 and through ongoing contact with the

West — primarily via Italy — Albanian society began to orient itself toward a more modern, urban, and secular vision. Cinema became an important element in this process: it influenced lifestyle, fashion, behavior, and, later, even civic consciousness.

During the monarchy period and later under the fascist occupation, cinema in Albania functioned primarily as a tool of propaganda. However, it also represented a form of visual enchantment for a population with a high rate of illiteracy. Through films, Albanians not only experienced different geographical and cultural realities, but also began to construct new images of themselves and of the world. After World War II and the establishment of the communist regime, the influence of cinema became institutionalized. Albanians, as part of an isolated world ideologically aligned with the East, were exposed to optimistic and idealized images of the socialist bloc, which began to be absorbed into the emerging local cinema as well. The formation of the first Albanian filmmakers coincided with this period. They documented the realities of the time, often driven by the need to construct a collective memory that supported the new order. However, the early efforts to develop cinema as an independent form of art—one that aimed for more than just propaganda—could not escape censorship. Instead of becoming a space for creative expression, Albanian cinema was drawn into a system controlled by the Party, where every narrative had to conform to the official ideology.

The 1957 film *Her Children* marks not only the official beginning of film production in Albania but also the end of a relatively experimental era and the start of a period in which cinema would become the voice of propaganda — an art form that displayed only what was permitted to be shown.

When did cinema arrive in Albania?

On December 28, 1895, the day the Lumière brothers held their first projection in the “Indian Salon” of the Grand Café in Paris, in the Albanian-speaking territories still under the Ottoman Empire, the art of photography had already been present for over thirty years in the city of Shkodër thanks to the Italian Pietro Marubi, who arrived there as a Garibaldian persecuted by the Austro-Hungarians.

Tirana, which would become Albania’s capital 25 years later, was far from embracing the art of photography or having similar studios. Despite the particular social and political context, in Albanian-speaking regions struggling with issues of national identity—through education, the establishment of the first Albanian-language schools, economic conditions, and high illiteracy rates—the first public film projections took place only two years after the birth of cinema. *These projections occurred mainly along the Durrës–Elbasan–Korçë–Florina–Bitola–Skopje axis, but also in other cities like Shkodër and Vlorë*¹. The first question that arises is: how were film projections possible in cities

where electricity didn't yet exist? The Lumière brothers' device, called the "Cinématographe," used a carbon arc lamp system powered by a portable battery as its light source. This made the projector functional without needing a direct electricity connection, making it more practical than other similar devices of the time.

It is important to understand that these were not projections in dedicated cinema halls, nor were they fully-fledged films. These screenings (we avoid the word "shows" so as not to imply theatrical performances, which were more common though not professional) were typically organized on special occasions—often tied to religious holidays, folk festivals, or by small entertainment groups traveling from one city to another. These rudimentary projections began with lantern or candlelight shows, using mirrors or projected photographs to narrate a story out loud by actors or, in some cases, accompanied by music. This type of activity did not take place in specialized venues but rather in tavernas, cafés, parks, and similar informal settings.

Political-Social Situation 1900–1912 and the "Cinematographic Adventurers"

In 1900, while Germany was producing the first "Mercedes" car and Max Planck was publishing the "Quantum Theory," the southeastern part of Europe, the Balkans, was facing state-building problems. In 1900, Albania (still not independent) was

driven by a strong desire for identity and greater autonomy from the Ottoman Empire after more than four centuries of rule. Armed clashes and small revolts in the Dibra region, with the highlanders fighting against Ottoman military units, were also tied to religious affiliations, further fueling the sense of independence among the local population. After the 1908 Congress of Monastir, the teaching of the Albanian language became one of the most important activities of intellectuals and prominent figures of the time. The Ottoman Empire, weakened by internal conflicts, was trying to maintain its balance in the Balkans.

A more accurate piece of information comes visually from the photographs of the German historian and archaeologist Karl Patsch, who traveled through several Albanian cities such as Vlora, Berat, and Myzeqe. In these photos, the inhabitants are mostly dressed in self-made clothes, and the main activity is agriculture with some trade.

These photos also reflect traveling musicians, suggesting that live music was one of the most common forms of entertainment. We should not forget the fact of a rich folk musical heritage, ranging from polyphony to the use of various musical instruments. Additionally, there is a wide variety of different musical forms within a relatively small geographic area. *Geographically, Albania has always been at the crossroads of empires and civilizations, even though it also has often been isolated from the mainstream of European history. In the Middle Ages,*

*Albania was once again a buffer zone, this time between Catholic Italy and the Byzantine Greek Empire. After its definitive conquest by the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century, it formed a bridgehead between Christian Europe and the Islamic Orient*². In short, this would be the picture of an Albania divided between those who were beginning to feel nostalgic for the Ottoman Empire and those who were thinking about independence from this empire.

In this atmosphere, some “adventurers” would attempt to introduce the latest invention of the Lumière brothers, for entertainment and profit by selling tickets. We can truly call them adventurers because their investment in these lands, which were already focused on breaking away from five centuries of Ottoman rule, could also result in financial failure.

*One might deem Albania a western outpost of the Ottoman Empire and end it at that. Or one might consider the Albania of the League of Prizren, which brought Albanian national interests to the outside world, or of the 1908 Congress of Monastir, which standardized the Albanian alphabet. After 1912, Albania could have referred to the confines of independent Albania or to the broader Albanophone territories*³. The first cinematographers of the Balkans were the Manaki brothers, Janaki Manaki (1878–1954) and Milton Manaki (1882–1964).

In the capital of Romania, we learned that cameras capable of making still photos move were being

*sold in France and England. Janaki could not escape the idea of returning to Bitola/Manastir with a motion-picture camera. Even in his sleep, he dreamed of it. When I returned, he set off for London, where he bought a “bioscope camera.”*⁴ This is what Milton Manaki recounts in one of his interviews. A decade after the Lumière brothers, the Manaki brothers would bring and begin filming with their Bioscope camera, model 300, in the Balkans.

*Their first film, possibly shot in the spring of 1907 in Avdella (Greece), depicts their grandmother Despina among a group of women spinning wool*⁵. There is much debate over the origin of the Manaki brothers—whether they were Albanian, Greek, Romanian, or Macedonian—but this is not important, as today their photographic and historical heritage within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire is a Balkan treasure. They left behind evidence through their films, showing the Vlach population of Avdella, identified by their traditional dances and clothing, as well as footage from Monastir/Bitola, Thessaloniki, Dibra, Ohrid, etc. Even though it was a politically “heated” period, people still had time for entertainment.

What is most important is the positive approach of the population toward public screenings. In the footage taken during that period, it is interesting to see the relationship between people and the camera. They were somewhat familiar with the art of photography, where one had to go to a studio dressed in their best clothes to

have a photo taken as a memento. However, with the camera now going out into the streets, this relationship changes. The camera that films goes out into the streets and captures people as they are in their daily lives. Decades later, and even today, the curiosity that people feel when a camera is shooting is palpable. At the beginning of the 20th century, everyone around the camera and the cameraman, who is turning a crank, has one thing in common: they all look at the camera. Some with astonishment, trying to understand what is happening, others with a smile. There are also those who try to avoid it because they are afraid of this new and strange device. Those who look with surprise may not even understand the function of this box standing on a tripod. Those who smile know that their image is being captured on celluloid, and some of them take a posed position, making sure they are properly positioned before it.

We are dealing with the establishment of a new form of communication or language, which over the years will further develop. This will be the “Language” of cinema, which will try to communicate with the audience. A language that, after more than 100 years of history, continues to evolve. In some archival footage that I have used in a documentary, it is clear that at one point, on a marketplace street, a young Muslim girl, half-covered with a scarf, when she notices the presence of the camera, shows a look of surprise, and then quickly turns her back on the camera and walks away. Per-

haps this girl had heard of this strange device, which can capture your image, and she might also have heard that if you stand before it, it could even steal your soul.

According to researcher Abaz Hoxha, in Albania, as early as 1902-1903, the representatives of the British company Charles Urban Company were the first to film in Albanian territories, until 1912-13, during the Balkan Wars. In the Central State Film Archive, three to four frames dated 1913 are probably the first films shot in Tirana. One of these frames identifies the Et-hem Beu Mosque, indicating that the filming took place in the center of Tirana on a rainy day, even before it was declared the capital. In 1920, during the Congress of Lushnja, Tirana was declared the capital of Albania. These films are certainly linked to the independence of Albania, which was declared in 1912. In these frames, some passersby look directly at the camera lens, but their posture is very serious, reflecting a time when this form of visual communication was still something new and unfamiliar to many people.

In the footage filmed by a cameraman from the “Pathe” company in 1913 in Shkodra, the same phenomenon can be observed. The scenes are related to the entry of the Montenegrin army into Shkodra after they had repelled the Turkish forces from the city and the fortress. At different moments during the filming, a Montenegrin soldier aboard a “Neptune” ship, moving on Lake Shkodra, draws the attention of other soldiers, making

them aware of the presence of the camera. The soldier stands, adjusts his uniform, and assumes a military stance. This is also noticed by a few women sitting on the ground, who turn their heads for just a few moments.

What is more interesting is the fact that the Albanian Highlanders who fought in support of the Montenegrin forces, after the battle, pose proudly in front of the camera. It is difficult to say where they learned how to pose in front of the camera. Perhaps it was from the presence of the “Marubi” studio, which left thousands of photographic negatives taken over the years.

Yes, Albanians knew how to position themselves in front of the camera, and they also learned from what they had seen and heard by the end of the first decade of the 20th century. *Just who was making films and who was viewing them? Such is the puzzle that surrounds the mere notion of an Albanian cinema. Defining Albanian cinema of the early years of the twentieth century would be as tricky as defining the Balkans themselves! And even if we arrive at a definition, there is yet another hindrance⁶:*

This is because, from Korça and Dibra to Shkodra and down to Saranda, until 1912—before the creation of what would later be called the Albanian state—the region was merely the farthest outpost of a shrinking empire, weakened by internal conflicts and the growing resistance of Balkan peoples seeking independence from the Ottoman Em-

pire. Albania was a remote corner of the empire, geographically closer to Italy and Europe, and more exposed to their economic influence. Trade and the movement of people by sea were becoming more frequent, and along with various goods, Italian, German, and British cinematographers arrived by ship, filming short newsreels and occasionally organizing film screenings.

1912-1939: Major Social and Political Changes

In 1912, on November 28, Albania declared its independence under the leadership of Ismail Qemali in Vlorë, even though Turkish forces were still present on the territory. There are no film recordings of this historic event—only a single photograph exists, and even that was taken the day after the official declaration of independence. The years following independence were marked primarily by an increase in film screenings across various Albanian cities, though these were mostly accessible to a selected and privileged audience. The influence of cinema during this period was undoubtedly strong. Wealthy families, inspired by the films they watched, began imitating actors in their clothing, makeup, and lifestyle—adopting a way of living different from before. Previously, this kind of cultural aspiration came through literature, but now it arrived with greater intensity through cinema.

This growing demand prompted merchants to increase their trade vol-

ume, primarily importing from Italy clothing, perfumes, soaps, sewing machines, fabrics, automobiles, sanitary products, and many other goods related to daily consumption. In the main cities, the *alla-franga* fashion (European-style fashion) became highly important. It was a way for individuals to express and showcase a new social status. *At these screenings, the primary attendees were individuals with a high economic status, members of the diplomatic corps and their families, political and military figures, merchants, and others*⁷. And all this influence was still innocent, not yet with a certain kind of propaganda. Very quickly, within just a few years, the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union would understand the power of cinema, and with the rise of Fascism to power, massive investments would be made in building a propaganda apparatus through both documentary and feature films.

Very soon, short educational films began to circulate—primarily focused on the importance of disinfection, protective measures against typhoid, and collective hygiene.

*But the detailed portrayal of the disinfection process depicted in the film echoes the visual approach of multiple exhibitions prepared in the 1920s. This approach was utilized in other documentary films disseminated in Balkan countries with a predominance of Muslim populations, such as Turkey and Albania*⁸.

The screening and projection of many films in the following years would become increasingly tied to the

opening of public venues that could facilitate this experience. The first public cinema in Albania was opened in Shkodër in 1912 by an Austrian, housed in Kol Idromeno's residence, and continued operating until the start of World War I. The First World War somewhat slowed this trend due to political instability within Albanian territory.

Nevertheless, foreign groups continued filming, though primarily focused on military formations moving through Albania, producing newsreels to capture, among other things, the consequences of these battles. With the rise to power of the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership, film production would become the most powerful tool of propaganda. Lenin understood that the language of cinema is universal—an ideal medium for a vast country like the Soviet Union, with millions of inhabitants and a high rate of illiteracy. Initially, he saw cinema as a means to unite people, and later as an essential instrument of propaganda.

*Lenin was the first political leader of the 20th century to recognize both the importance of film as propaganda and its power to communicate quickly and effectively. He understood that audiences did not require literacy to comprehend a film's meaning and that more people could be reached through mass-distributed motion pictures than through any other medium of the time*⁹.

Until 1939, many cinemas were opened in various cities of Albania, largely due to the strong friendship

and growing exchanges with Italy. This was made possible by Ahmet Zogu, a controversial figure who initially served as Prime Minister of Albania from 1922 to 1924, then as President from 1925 to 1928, and later as self-proclaimed King until 1939. His actions also facilitated this development, as Ahmet Zogu worked to build a European profile for Albania. In 1937, by a parliamentary decree, he passed a law banning the use of the *ferexhe* (a traditional Islamic garment worn by women). This was a sign of Ahmet Zogu's Western-oriented tendencies, as he had lived in Austria, but his reforms were half-hearted, and he led Albania into economic dependence on Italy and Mussolini. Private initiatives flourished during Zogu's reign, mainly due to the physical presence of Italians in Albania. With their money, many roads and bridges were built, partly for military purposes, but cities like Tirana, Durrës, and Shkodër began to take on an urban profile. Still, the figure of the Albanian filmmaker was missing, although various groups filmed across Albania.

In 1925, *the first Albanian film company was established in Tirana by the Beshiri brothers, named the National Cinema-Theater Society. They requested the removal of customs duties on equipment and a subsidy of 20,000 francs. Their repeated requests were rejected by a decision of the Council of Ministers and the Chamber of Deputies. However, the society achieved its goals a year later*¹⁰.

Mainly, the films were shot by Italians, and Italian films were also

shown in Albania. With the arrival of the communists to power, everything belonging to this family was confiscated, and the heirs were persecuted by the communist regime. Although they continued to live in a small house on Barrikadave Street near the "17 Nëntorit" cinema, which had once been their property, they were not interned like many other merchants. In 1922, Mussolini came to power, and two years later, the "Luce" Institute was established, where all of its creative output was put at the service of the fascist regime.

*For the inauguration of the new headquarters of "Istituto Luce", an Italian film corporation created in 1924, the Fascist regime prepared a large backdrop showing Mussolini behind a camera, with these words below: 'Cinematography is the strongest weapon'. In a country where the illiteracy rate exceeded 35% and very few people read newspapers, cinema immediately became a very effective means of spreading information, a means that fascism would use with obsessive attention*¹¹.

Under the umbrella of a strong friendship between Ahmet Zogu, initially as Prime Minister and later as King of Albania, such propaganda films began to be shown in Albania. This was also due to the fact that the communist influence, which had penetrated Albania, clashed with the regime of Ahmet Zogu. The films, where the villains were the communists and the communist movement, were just as effective as other films. Such films, often in the form of

newsreels, were shown in cinemas before feature films. This marked a new phase in the relationship between the audience and the film. The film had its dedicated time, schedule, and announcements were made through posters, and its length had increased. Thus, the audience began to savor, reflect, critique, adopt, or even despise the film. However, it had started to become a form of spiritual nourishment that made you dream, hate, love, and identify with the deeds, heroism, or events that came to the screen through various films and actors.

The relationship between Mussolini and Ahmet Zogu also became like a film with many behind-the-scenes twists. Ahmet Zogu, as King, opposed Mussolini's expansionist plans, which escalated tensions between Albania and Italy. On April 7, 1939, the Italian army invaded Albania, and after a brief resistance in Durrës, they entered Tirana within 24 hours without facing any significant opposition. Ahmet Zogu and his people fled to Greece, where he stayed for a few days in Florina before leaving, never to return. The Italians would remain in Albania until 1943, when Fascist Italy surrendered.

Over the years, Italy has invested in Albania, as mentioned earlier, with both military and economic goals in mind. They built roads and bridges and established a small industry in Albania, primarily focused on exploiting natural resources like oil and chrome. To strengthen this friendship, the Italians filmed a movie with Italian actors that had an Albanian theme.

"The Knight of Krujë" (1941) is the first film shot in Albania. Most of the scenes were filmed outdoors. The plot takes place during the Italian occupation of Albania, where an Italian journalist falls in love with an Albanian girl. Unknowingly, he becomes a blood brother with her brother, as per Albanian customs, by drinking each other's blood. When the girl finds out that the Italian has become a blood brother with her biological brother, she is devastated, and the Italian journalist realizes that according to Albanian customs, they cannot be together. However, this obstacle is overcome by the Italian occupation of Albania, and their love triumphs. In the September 7th edition of the newspaper *"Tribuna"*, the article written about the film emphasizes that, for the first time, the Italian audience saw the customs and culture of the people on the other side of the Adriatic Sea.

*Rich in genuine local color, popular festivals and rituals, dances, and songs, they are here and there the backdrop and commentary to the story — the film seemed to fully meet the intentions of its creators as well as the expectations of the audience, which was to see for the first time, in the vivid function of the screen, side by side, our people and theirs*¹².

According to researcher Abaz Hoxha, the film was shown only once in Tirana, and its screening was contested by antifascist youth. Up until now, according to Abaz T. Hoxha, between 1920-1939, around 1,600 films were shown in Albania, with ticket sales reaching about 500,000.

This is considered a small number of sales due to the limited number of theaters available for screenings. However, the “damage” caused by the influence of these films was significant. Tirana was a city that had started to establish its identity as a preferred place to live. This was due to the fact that many foreigners had settled in the city. Not only Italians but also doctors, engineers, and teachers from Macedonia and Greece settled in Albania. Dr. Kristo Kristidhi, born in Bitola (Macedonia), after studying medicine in Austria, chose Tirana in the 1930s, between Thessaloniki and Tirana, for the opportunities it offered to practice his profession. Going to the cinema was also very important for him to learn from the kino-journals about what was happening in the world and the advancements of the Italian army in Abyssinia and elsewhere. The Disney film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* would arrive in Albania after being shown in Italy and would remain in the minds of the children who saw it in the cinema. In 1942, the film company “Tomorri” was established, which produced several documentary films. Mihallaq Mone, the first Albanian filmmaker, directed the film *Takim në Liqen* (Meeting at the Lake). It is a short film featuring actor Kristaq Antoniu and actress Merita Sokoli. This film is the first Albanian film produced by the “Tomorri” film company. Unfortunately, to this day, there is no copy of this film. A copy may have been taken by director Mone to the United States, or it might have been

destroyed after 1944 by the communists when they came to power. Currently, there are only testimonies about this film and some photographs. It may have been intentionally destroyed or lost because Mone had previously directed a documentary titled *Bijtë e Shqipërisë* (The Sons of the Eagle), which praised fascism. If director Mihallaq Mone had remained in Albania for this film, he would have been sentenced by the communists, just like many other intellectuals and entrepreneurs. In September 1943, Italy capitulated, and its place was taken by Nazi troops.

The content of the newsreels in the cinemas that were still operating regularly was replaced with German army newsreels from the frontlines of the war. The cinemas continued their work, but the Germans created the Albanian Cinema Owners’ Union. This was a movement to establish control over the films that were to be shown in Albanian territory. On November 29, 1944, the last German army units left Albanian territory. Control of Albania was taken over by the National Liberation forces. In December 1945, the Democratic Front, represented by the Communists, organized elections, denying the opposition participation in the vote. The people voted only for the candidates selected by the Democratic Front. Forty days later, on January 11, 1946, the People’s Republic of Albania was established with a one-party system, led by the Communist Party of Albania.

1946-1953, the beginnings of Albanian cinematography.

After the Communist Party's consolidation of power, focused on establishing dominance in every sector, including cinema. However, there was a lack of experts in the field. As part of the country's reconstruction efforts, many Italians, including prisoners of war, engineers, topographers, and simple soldiers, were engaged. Due to the strong personal ties between Enver Hoxha and Stalin, many young people were sent to the Soviet Union for further training. In just a few years, the number of young people studying in socialist countries exceeded 3,000. Some of them went to Moscow to study cinematography and become specialists in the field.

In November 1944, the Photo-Cinematographic Service was established within the Ministry of Press, Propaganda, and Popular Culture of Albania. Less than three years later, the Albanian Cinematographic Enterprise was founded¹³.

Endri Keko, a former partisan, along with a group of young people, traveled to Moscow in 1950. Among them was Xhanfise Çipi, who would later become Endri Keko's wife and one of the best directors in Albanian cinema. This group was sent to Moscow to specialize in the production of newsreels. Endri Keko became a director, Xhanfise Çipi worked as a film editing director, Petraq Lubonja was a camera operator, Koço Tollko worked as a sound operator, and Mihal Çarka specialized in film labor-

atory work. This group marked the first formation of professionals who would lay the foundations for what would later become Albanian cinema and the film industry. Initially, the newsreels were shot in Albania, and the processing and editing of the films took place in Moscow. Once edited, the newsreels were sent back to Albania and shown in cinemas in various cities. The propaganda apparatus was put into action to fill the visual vacuum. Radio and newspapers were the only means of communist propaganda after the liberation of the country. Now, this propaganda was being supplemented by a visual aspect. The new Albanian state was investing with determination in this field, with the help of the Soviets. With Soviet assistance, the construction of Albanian film studios was also financed. In 1952, the "New Albania" Kinostudio was inaugurated by Enver Hoxha himself. In 1951, the filming of "Skanderbeg", directed by Sergey Jutkevič, had already begun. This was a major film production for Albania, which at that time only had a few actors for the leading roles, with workers and locations such as Durrës, Petrelë, and Krujë. The film had a huge impact on strengthening national pride among Albanians. The film won two awards at the Cannes Film Festival in 1954. After 1960, following the breakdown of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the film was sporadically broadcast on Albanian state television until the early 1970s. It was later suppressed from domestic production. "Skanderbeg" began to

be shown again in cinemas after the 1990s for a short period, and today it is one of the most watched films on YouTube, often commented on with great pride by viewers. The first news-reel produced at the Albanian Kinostudio was shown on the day of the studio's inauguration. It was not yet an artistic film, but it was a film that was conceived, filmed, printed, and edited in Albania by Albanian authors. *Kinozhurnal No. 1* was shown on July 10, 1952.

The film “Her Children” – the first Albanian film

Seven years after the inauguration of the facilities of the “New Albania” Kinostudio, Hysen Hakani, a student from Prague, decides to shoot his graduation film in Albania. The script was written in Prague in 1956. On the first page, it is stated that it is a subject and script prepared for the graduation film. Looking at the film today, the locations, actors, and the story make it a difficult film to shoot in Czechoslovakia. Educated with the spirit of Italian neorealism, Hakani could not modify it to shoot outside of Albania. Perhaps, for its time, a courageous act, because the Kinostudio still did not have the human experience and specialized departments to assist in the shooting of an artistic film. With the limited experience gained from shooting newsreels and working as the first assistant director on the film “Skanderbeg” by Soviet director Sergei Yutkevič, director Viktor Stratobërdha, in addition to the

two short documentaries he shot, also made several mini-films with educational themes. For the first time, we see the staging of amateur actors who also have dialogue. They are directed by the camera and speak. However, there was a prevailing impression that Albania would never be able to produce a truly 100% Albanian feature film.

*The two directors before me and Hysen, V. Stratobërdha and G. Erebara, had an unfortunate fate, the former's being completely tragic. After completing studies in Moscow, working as an assistant on the film “Skanderbeg,” directing two documentaries, and creating a short news-reel with the demands of a true artistic film, after the infamous Party Conference in Tirana in 1956, he was sentenced and permanently removed from the film industry*¹⁴.

The history of Albanian cinema recognizes “*Tana*” (1958), directed by Kristaq Dhamo, as the first full-length Albanian film. It has a script, professional actors, and is considered a significant milestone in the country's cinematic history. On the other hand, “*Fëmijët e saj*” is only a short film, not a full feature. *From a cinematic perspective, Her Children marks a midpoint between the news-reels and documentaries that characterized the early films of communist Albania and the debut feature of Kinostudio*¹⁵.

Yes, *Fëmijët e saj* can certainly be considered the first Albanian film, but it is true that it was overshadowed when the film *Tana* was made later.

The reality depicted in *Fëmijët e saj* does not meet the standards of agit-prop cinema. The film presents a very naturalistic atmosphere compared to *Tana*, where the main character walks in white sandals with high heels on the muddy streets of a village. Director Hakani chooses to tell an educational story but does not attempt to polish or idealize the reality. The message in this fiction is somewhat similar to that of educational films from the 1920s, which focused on hygiene and disinfection.

Synopsis of the film

The first shot is of the mountains in the north. Then we see a children's garden in a meadow. Fatimeja, a peasant woman (played by Marie Logoreci), is holding a child in her arms who refuses to be vaccinated, causing him to cry. A man and a nurse stand by a table where vaccination materials are placed. When the nurse asks the woman if the child is hers, she lowers her head and tells her that she has no children. The teacher (Naim Frashëri) tells the nurse what has happened to the woman. There is a transition between the teacher's portrait and a mountain shot.

Two small children, dressed in torn clothes, are standing at the threshold of a house. The older girl is feeding a younger one sitting on the ground. Suddenly, a woman appears, shouting, "The dog is mad!". The woman quickly ushers the children into the house. Three villagers with sticks in hand are chasing after the

dog. The dog runs after a small boy and bites him. The teacher comes to his aid and takes him home to his mother. He advises her to take him to a doctor, but at first, she refuses, thinking the doctor will amputate his hand. Eventually, she is convinced. She sets off with the boy on a donkey, and on the way, she meets another villager who advises her to take the boy to a woman who may be able to heal him through magic. The woman changes her mind and takes her son to the folk healer. At the healer's house, who practices magic with smoke and words, the woman is convinced her son will be cured.

With a jump cut, we switch to the teacher, who is running and stopping a passing car. He pleads with the driver to take him to the city to see a doctor, as a child needs saving. At home, the woman is taking care of the boy, but when the doctor arrives, the child has passed away. The teacher is convinced the child was cured by a doctor, but the woman, upon hearing this, reveals the truth. She admits that she never took him to the doctor. She collapses on the ground, and once again, with a merging shot, we see the woman on the ground, but now she is playing with children. The teacher concludes the story by saying that thirteen years have passed since that time. Since then, the woman has taken care of the children in the kindergarten and calls them her own.

Told in this way, the story is quite naive, and in general, the events unfold as if commanded by the script. From the beginning, the villagers

chasing the dog seem as though they are after and want to kill some kind of lion or tiger. Their goal is reinforced by the teacher's words to chase and kill the dog, claiming he will take care of the child. The idea of a rabid dog causing death had a strong impact on the Albanian audience. Even many years after the film was released, parents would advise their children to stay away from stray dogs, fearing that they might be rabid. Similarly, children would discuss rabid dogs among themselves, even though they had never seen the film. Until the late 1990s, the relationship of Albanians with dogs and other animals, in general, was not very friendly, largely due to the influence of this film. The film was met with great enthusiasm when it was re-shown in 1995. It was re-released to remind people of it, as it had been forgotten during the years of communism. At the time the film was produced, there was still no well-established censorship structure. Although it was a production of the Kinostudio "Shqipëria e Re," it was a film whose script did not go through the usual artistic councils and reviews, because it was a diploma film. Eriona Vyshka, an Archive Specialist at the AQSHF, explains that there is no official report for this film, only a script and four photos from the film. However, Vyshka says that this film has three important elements: first, the transition from documentary to artistic fiction film; second, the acting performance, transitioning from theater interpretation to camera interpretation; and third, it is a film produced at the

beginnings of the Albanian film industry, with a 100% Albanian contribution. Therefore, it was produced independently from studios or laboratories in Moscow. The investment in building the Kinostudio was based on creating a new propaganda apparatus and did not take into account that this industry could also produce artistic films. Director Hakani's "experiment" opened a new door for the production of long artistic films. A year later, "Tana," directed by Kristaq Dhamo, would lay the foundation for the beginning of Albanian film production. A few years later, in 1961, Director Hysen Hakani, along with Director Gëzim Erebara, would produce the film *Debatik*, a film centered on the theme of war. If you didn't know it was Hakani's second film, you might easily think it was produced by an Italian or Soviet neorealist director. The Albanian audience was eager to go to the cinema, especially when it came to a film in the Albanian language. This was also thanks to the publicity given by newspapers and radio stations, which highlighted the achievements of Kinostudio "Shqipëria e re" as part of the successes being accomplished under the leadership of the Communist Party, later known as the Party of Labour of Albania.

The illiteracy that existed in 90% of the population at the time of the end of World War II made films in the Albanian language even more accessible and beloved by the audience. Thus, being the only spiritual nourishment, this type of production, sup-

ported by the propaganda of the time, became the sole and best food for the people. In the early 1970s, the output of Kinostudio would increase to 14 artistic films per year, along with an equal number of documentary films and animated films, a production that lasted until the end of the 1990s. After the 4th Plenary on culture and arts, influenced also by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, most foreign film screenings were stopped, and thus the Albanian audience was forced to watch and re-watch only Albanian

films. Films like *Fëmijët e saj* and *Tana* lost their shine as film production grew and became more artistically and historically refined, although it operated within the ideological and aesthetic constraints of Socialist Realism. The directors of these films succeeded in creating high-quality art. Despite the presence of propaganda and schematism, a “handful” of films managed to become so beloved by the Albanian public that they are still watched today with great nostalgia.

Notes

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Can the Last Grip of Frost Be Chipped Away? Albanian Theatre in the Communist Aftermath

Anxhela ÇIKOPANO HOXHA
Albert ÇELOALIAJ

Abstract: *At the beginning of professional theatre in Albania, there were no trained professionals, so directors and writers were sent to study in the Eastern Bloc, particularly the Soviet Union. Those who studied in Moscow reported being exposed to various theatrical traditions, from Brechtian theatre to ethnic African performances. However, they were never permitted to apply this aesthetics in Albania, despite Brecht's work being considered progressive and revolutionary – markedly different from Stanislavsky's approach. In the 1970s, an effort was made to ban all foreign plays, leaving only the strict framework of socialist realism. With no alternative aesthetic movements, by the late 1980s, Albanian theatre had fallen into a deep crisis, as even official critics acknowledged.*

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Albanian theatre entered a new era. Theatre became entirely free to explore, and directors gravitated toward absurdist theatre, a genre that had been forbidden until 1990. Beckett, Ionesco, and later Sartre were among the most frequently staged playwrights. While directors embraced their works, audiences—accustomed to a more conventional approach—were less receptive. New elements such as dance and body expression entered the theatrical scene; at the Academy of Fine Arts, a previously unknown form emerged—a scriptless étude collage that built simple narratives; in 1997, Albania saw its first staged musical; and an experiment with anthropological theatre was also introduced, but it failed to resonate with audiences. All these stand in contrast to the large-scale productions traditionally claimed by the National Theatre.

However, as director Agim Qirjaqi observes, after experimenting with absurdist theatre and modern Albanian dramatisations, it is classical works—such as those of Shakespeare and Ibsen—that have been best received by directors, actors, critics, and audiences alike. Having been accustomed to socialist realist theatre for decades, the Albanian audience, even after the “socialist” aspect was removed, continued to favour classical realist drama. Over time, additional artistic elements have been incorporated, enriching performances with a distinctive theatrical essence.

Keywords: *Theatre genres, Albanian theatre, alternative theatre, realism, Socialist Realism*

The ice is giving way

It was in the mid-to-late 1930s that the first professionally trained theatre practitioner arrived in Albania. His name was Sokrat Mio, and he had studied music and declamation at the Paris Conservatory. From his arrival until the end of 1944—when the last Nazi troops left the country—he worked extensively as a theatre director within the para-professional Albanian theatre scene. The end of 1944 marked the rise of the communist regime, which sought to consolidate power by all means, including the introduction of a new theatrical model—one deliberately detached from the Catholic schools, where theatrical activity had flourished. As for other para-professional troupes, they were neither stable entertainment ventures nor substantial enough to be considered bourgeois theatre, particularly since Albania lacked the cultural infrastructure found in countries where bourgeois art was actively opposed.

Agitprop theatre, introduced by communist groups and performed by amateurs for political purposes or within partisan units,¹ initially shaped the direction of Albanian theatrical art. For a very brief time, this direction followed Yugoslavian influence under Boža Nikolić, who had been contracted as director and organiser of the Albanian National Theatre². Sokrat Mio, the first official director of the State Theatre—later known as the Popular Theatre and then the National Theatre—was primarily influenced by the French education and style he had

received. After 1945, he made efforts to align with leftist, anti-bourgeois themes. Despite Mio's shift toward socialist themes, his own productions were apparently still considered unsuitable for the emerging aesthetic standards³. As a result, the Albanian state decided to invite Soviet directors and educators trained in the Stanislavsky system,⁴ beginning with Dudin Vladimir Fyodorovich⁵ and followed by several others. Sokrat Mio reportedly did not embrace the Stanislavsky method, viewing it as merely one among many acting approaches. Nonetheless, the Stanislavsky school and its focus on realism have remained central to Albanian theatrical education to this day⁶.

By the 1960s, there were efforts to introduce Brechtian writing and theatrical style in Albania⁷. In some instances, these experiments fell short of achieving high artistic standards⁸. Nevertheless, any such innovation was abruptly curtailed following the infamous 4th Plenum, held from June 26 to 28, 1973, during which all experimentation in art, literature, and theatre was officially suppressed⁹. From that moment on, socialist realism—with its pronounced agitprop features—established itself as the prevailing theatrical form, resulting in a total freeze of artistic innovation. This shift was particularly reinforced during the banning of foreign plays deemed “uneducational” for the younger generation, as part of the Ideological and Cultural Revolution inspired by the Maoist model¹⁰. As a consequence, Albanian theatre experi-

enced a severe shortage of quality dramatic works, leading to a genuine crisis by the late 1980s¹¹.

In 1989, the National Theatre staged *Kush e solli Doruntinën? (Doruntine)*, an adaptation of Ismail Kadare's novel, itself based on an ancient Albanian legend. The production incorporated choruses—an element used only once before in Albanian theatre, in the politically banned 1968 play *Njollat e murrme (The Dark Spots)*—as well as folkloric motifs blended with realistic acting, resulting in a performance with a notably sombre tone. The play did not fully align with the conventions of critical realism or revolutionary romanticism¹². Most strikingly, it featured a clear parallel between the resurrection of Doruntine's brother and that of Jesus Christ—a particularly sensitive comparison in a country that, by the late 1960s, had been officially declared atheist¹³.

By early 1990, an artistic magazine had already begun to discuss alternative forms of theatre, such as Living Theatre and Panic Theatre¹⁴. In this climate of cautious experimentation, *Frikë dhe mjerim në Rajhun e Tretë (Fear and Misery of the Third Reich)* by Bertolt Brecht was permitted—part of a broader attempt to reintroduce Brechtian and other innovative theatrical expressions through a studio affiliated with the National Theatre¹⁵. Up to that point, the only Brecht play allowed in Albania had been *Arturo Ui (The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui)*, staged in 1971—but only after intense debate and scrutiny, narrowly surviv-

ing the rigid standards imposed by the Ideological and Cultural Revolution¹⁶. Although *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* is an explicitly anti-fascist cycle of short playlets, only two—*Kryqi i bardhë (The Chalk Cross)* and *Spiuni (The Spy)*—were staged. While overtly critical of fascism, these pieces could easily be read as veiled critiques of the communist regime in Albania, particularly in their portrayal of surveillance and arbitrary political persecution—features that defined Albanian life for decades. That was precisely the intention of the young director at the time, Arben Kumbaro. However, the play was quickly suppressed. No media outlet reported on it, and it was allowed to disappear in silence, without any public acknowledgment.

To counterbalance such bold allegory, the next production, *Shkallët (The Stairs)*, became a widely discussed theatrical event. For the first time in Albania, a play was staged in the format of a live discussion, resembling an open forum with the audience. A social drama that explored the ethical dilemmas faced by those who ascend to power, the performance blurred the boundaries between theatre and the political meetings so common in communist Albania—only now transformed into an artistic experience¹⁷. Spectators were invited to sit on stage; actors performed without makeup; the *mise-en-scène* was minimal; and the unsettling, especially composed music underscored the departure from traditional staging. These were all deliberate and bold directorial choices¹⁸. Ironically, the production

echoed Brecht's "alienation effect", although the term itself was never explicitly invoked. Despite its critical acclaim, *The Stairs* also attracted institutional criticism. Dritëro Agolli, then chairman of the League of Writers and Artists of Albania, argued that the protagonist lacked proper character development. According to Agolli, the central figure's dilemmas remained superficial: his position was journalistically provocative but artistically underdeveloped. Agolli contrasted this portrayal with the "positive heroes" and "martyrs" emblematic of socialist realism—revealing the ideological rift between emerging directorial voices and the entrenched cultural leadership¹⁹. It is important to note that *The Stairs* was not an overt act of dissent against the system. Rather, it represented an effort to introduce new directorial methods within the ideological framework of socialism—still orientated toward confronting and resolving social issues in a communist context²⁰.

What was perceived at the time as a direct blow to the system was *Natë me hënë* (*Moonlit Night*), a stage adaptation by director Edmond Budina of a novella by Ismail Kadare. At the heart of the play is a young woman who must prove to the Party secretary—and to all those who resent her for being different and standing out—that she has not committed a moral transgression, such as sleeping with an engaged man. Forced to demonstrate her virginity, she spirals into a deep personal and psychological crisis. This was portrayed on stage, for the first

time in Albanian theatre, through ballerinas representing the different personas within her and modern choreography. The play powerfully exposed the invasive control of a repressive state apparatus that extended its reach even into the most intimate aspects of individual life.

Premiering on October 14, 1990, *Moonlit Night* struck a nerve with audiences who had already begun to rebel. Only months earlier, in July 1990, more than 5,000 Albanians had stormed foreign embassies in a desperate attempt to flee the country. The performance of the vice-director character in *Moonlit Night* was particularly provocative. Portrayed by actress Yllka Mujo, the character deliberately mimicked, in a few lines, the distinctive rhetorical style of the late communist leader Enver Hoxha. Dressed in a dark green suit and shirt resembling a military uniform, the character drew an unmistakable parallel between her authoritarian posture and the broader repressive apparatus of the regime—one that was now being openly challenged. Despite its significance, none of the major newspapers of the time reported on the performance. Only the local paper, *Tirana*, published an interview with the director. While the article carried a bold headline—*When Powerful Thoughts Are Conveyed*—the content remained cautious and refrained from openly confronting the system²¹. It wasn't until 1991,²² after political pluralism had been officially declared, that other media outlets began to write about the play. After the outbreak of student revolts in early

December 1990, the decades-long socialist freeze slowly began to give way.

You can't make spring bloom before its time

Anyone was now free to create the kind of theatre they had always envisioned. But what kind of theatre would that be? Which plays? Which school of thought or aesthetic approach? Several directors had recently attended courses abroad—mostly in France—but their foundational training remained unchanged: rooted in the Stanislavsky method and shaped by socialist realism. Letting go of those deep-seated influences was no simple task; the ideological ‘ice blocks’ could not be chipped away overnight.

A series of structural and political steps had to be taken first. Most urgently, a Ministry of Culture needed to be established. Since 1946, the arts had been managed by the Committee of Culture and Arts under the Ministry of Education. It was time for the arts to have a dedicated institution²³. At the same time, art had to begin to be treated as a “consumer good”—a notion previously unimaginable for Albanian society and especially for artists accustomed solely to state support. In response to the fear of a total collapse of cultural institutions, some proposed a new model: not simply artist and consumer, but a tripartite relationship—artist, state, and consumer²⁴.

Another issue was the shift from quantity to quality. Of the ten state

theatres operating across Albania, only the National Theatre in Tirana was deemed worth preserving in its existing form. The others, seen as unsustainable and no longer financially viable,²⁵ were expected to learn to self-finance²⁶. In July 1991, then-Minister of Culture Preç Zogaj publicly advocated for the development of a network of private cultural institutions, including theatres²⁷. Yet even today, in 2025, Albania still lacks a healthy private cultural sector.

By 1991, the National Theatre found itself in a state of what was widely described at the time as “inexplicable confusion.”²⁸ Many actors were missing—some had left the country—while key approvals from the Committee of Culture and Arts were no longer forthcoming. The only play still running was *The Stairs*, already long in the repertoire. The same director staged Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s *Vizita e damës plakë* (*The Visit*) in late March 1991. The work’s only discernible rebellion against the repressive cultural past was its very genre—a social and psychological drama²⁹—and its casting of a once-outcast actress, Edi Luarasi, whose husband had been detained in the 1970s for espousing directorial approaches seen as dangerously liberal.

Interestingly, neither the directors of *The Visit* or *Valsi i Titanikut* (*Titanic Waltz*) by Tudor Mușatescu (1990), nor the audience fully grasped the deeper allegorical warnings embedded in these plays. Messages about the cost of prosperity, the moral compromises of justice, and the vulnera-

bilities of democracy to corruption and decay remained largely undetected. Even today, their significance remains underexplored.

What followed was a string of productions that lacked directorial or dramaturgical innovation. Among them were *Dasmë gjaku* (*Blood Wedding*, 1991) by Federico García Lorca, *Besa* (*The Oath*, 1992) by Sami Frashëri, and *Zgjimi* (*Awakening*, 1992) by Konstandino Marko. In 1992, a revival of *Dhëlptra dhe rrushtë* (*The Fox and the Grapes*) by Teixeira de Figueiredo—first staged in 1961—tried to contemporise the production. The performance opened with the sound of Italian television channels being zapped through, included a refrigerator on stage, a soda can, modern clothing for the maid, who at some point bordered on striptease—unprecedented on the Albanian stage, and soundtracks by the Scorpions and the lately released AC/DC's *Thunderstruck*. The goal was to embed popular consumer culture and music into the staging. Yet, audiences preferred the 1961 version. The powerful calls that had once imbued the final monologue with emotional gravity emphasising freedom—so strong that it led to the production being banned from further staging—had now been reduced to a theatrical gimmick, even though paired with *Wind of Change*, a song then emblematic of hope and transformation.

In March 1992, the theatrical company *Iliria*—mentioned only once in historical records—was launched under the direction of Leka Bungo. The

company's sole production was *Lugati* (*The Ghoul*), a play written and directed by Bungo himself. The production was completed in just sixteen days, with two actors stepping into their roles only in the final four days, as others dropped out. The production was declared by the author as the first explicitly anticommunist play in post-socialist Albania³⁰.

The year 1992 closed with a new production of Shakespeare's *Rikardi III* (*Richard III*), directed by Agim Qirjaqi. The same director had, in 1991, published a provocative manifesto titled *Teatri Kombëtar – Teatri “Evropa”* (*The National Theatre – Theatre “Europe”*), subtitled: “Rather than a manifesto, this project is an endless dream to enter into the theatre of Europe”³¹. In this text, Qirjaqi praised avant-garde figures such as Adolphe Appia, Antonin Artaud, and even Daniel Craig for their efforts in dismantling traditionalism. He argued that modern Albanian theatre should not merely break from the ideological and aesthetic dogmas of socialist realism but embrace a wide range of philosophical and artistic trends—from absurd to existentialist drama. His vision was a theatre *with a European heart*, one that stood against oppression, falsehood, and the inhuman. A theatre for the audience, not for power. And yet, even in this vision of artistic liberation, the call for state support remained. Theatres, directors, and actors alike faced immense challenges in this transitional period-economic hardship, political instability, and the absence of a private cultural infra-

structure. While the ideological barriers had been torn down, the path toward a sustainable and pluralistic theatrical landscape remained uncertain³².

It is true that all theatrical schools and movements that emerged globally after the Second World War were effectively banned in Albania. However, the rush to recover lost time in the early 1990s sometimes led to missteps. Theatre scholar and critic Kudret Velça was particularly clear on this point: although Albanian theatre had come late to the absurdist tradition, he encouraged a pluralistic approach. According to Velça, Albanian theatre needed to quickly move through the stages it had missed while never abandoning the national dramatic tradition. He therefore praised the well-executed production of *Në pritje të Godosë* (*Waiting for Godot*) by Beckett, staged in 1993 by Arben Kumbaro with the Experimental Theatre of the Academy of Fine Arts³³.

Indeed, many directors turned with enthusiasm to absurdist theatre during this period, as seen in productions such as *Kush vjedh një këmbë ka fat në dashuri* (*Who Steals a Foot Is Lucky in Love*, 1992) by Dario Fo, *Fando dhe Lis* (*Fando and Lis*, 1993) by Fernando Arrabal, *Leksioni* (*The Lesson*, 1993, performed by students of the Academy of Fine Arts) by Eugène Ionesco, *Këngëtarja tullace* (*The Bald Soprano*, 1994) by Ionesco, *Lavirja e denjë për respekt* (*The Respectful Prostitute*, 1994, Theatre of Gjirokastra) by Jean-Paul Sartre, and *Me dyer të mbyllura* (*No Exit*, 1994,

Migjeni Theatre of Shkodra) by Sartre. Yet the road to a European-style theatre was not smooth.

As Vladimir Avrami notes, Albanian art endured decades of isolation from global cultural developments, and artists had been trained to create ideologically driven work³⁴. The sudden pivot toward the grotesque and the absurd often remained confined to artistic circles, leaving audiences—accustomed to realist theatre and coherent, meaningful dialogue—largely unprepared and unreceptive to such experimentation. Attendance dwindled after initial curiosity wore off, as many spectators rejected performances in which words seemed to lose their meaning³⁵. For this reason, plays that leaned toward a more classical or conventional form found greater resonance with the public. Notable examples include *Tetë persona plus* (*Eight People +*, 1994) by Ferdinand Radi—a light contemporary-themed comedy—and *Fernand Krafi më ka çuar këtë letër* (*Fernando Krapp Wrote Me This Letter*, 1994) by Tankred Dorst, both of which achieved considerable popularity.

As Albanians embraced long-forbidden forms of entertainment,³⁶ theatre began to lose its appeal. The stage felt increasingly detached from the public, offering performances shaped by the absurdities artists themselves faced³⁷—absurdities not yet shared by a society freshly stepping into freedom. The audience did not relate to existential dilemmas or post-war traumas portrayed on stage.

In fact, freedom in the theatre space became more precarious. In 1991–1992, several violent incidents were reported in theatres: intoxicated individuals would enter the audience, climb onto the stage mid-performance, shout over the actors,³⁸ assault staff who intervened,³⁹ and even fire pistols⁴⁰—turning spaces of art into zones of chaos.

Meanwhile, in August 1991, National Theatre actors went on strike, demanding fair compensation from Kinostudio—the state film studio employing actors from the National Theatre and other theatres—which failed to establish a hierarchy of payment based on role or contribution, especially now that films were expected to generate income⁴¹. Beyond poor pay, artists faced the painful loss of moral recognition and audience respect and growing institutional instability. The National Theatre was plagued by legal and administrative issues and declining audiences⁴².

At the same time, at the Academy of Fine Arts, a new generation of students in 1992 demanded curricular reform and greater accountability from professors,⁴³ marking the start of what could become a more stable and open-minded artistic institution in the future.

It is curious how in 1993 the general manager of the National Theatre, Neritan Alibali, positioned Albanian theatre alongside its European and Western counterparts, stating that “the Albanian theatre is in a state of shock;

it has descended into a free arena, still unarmed. Maybe this is the logic of the time. Some foreign critics claim that theatre in Eastern Europe is dying, while in the West it faces huge difficulties. What will happen? I think that in Albania theatre might not die and will not die.”⁴⁴ He then called for radical reforms to create an art market supported by private funds, media accreditation, and advertising⁴⁵.

And then in 1994, he claimed that the National Theatre had passed the point of mere survival, despite an ongoing campaign against it, fuelled by articles criticising the lack of Albanian plays⁴⁶—an issue that sparked a prolonged public debate⁴⁷. The shortage of Albanian dramaturgy⁴⁸ remains a persistent issue, with Stefan Çapaliku standing out as the only notable playwright since 1995. As Arben Kallamata aptly remarked, “They say that Albanian drama is suffering a crisis. I do not know any period when it hasn’t”⁴⁹.

While Albanian plays continued to feature in theatre repertoires after communism,⁵⁰ many directors favoured foreign works⁵¹ due to many problems with the domestic drama. The 1994 Festival of Albanian National Theatre demonstrated that the sheer quantity of Albanian dramas, many of low quality, was not an achievement in itself⁵². The problems largely stem from the absence of formal education in playwriting and screenwriting in Albania. The older generation of playwrights remained entrenched in schematic forms inherited from socialist realism, often at-

tempting to present universal themes through forced allegory rather than grounded artistic realities—resulting in works that resembled propaganda more than theatre.

Another ongoing challenge is the lack of critical engagement. During state socialism, criticism was shaped by professional and ideological constraints, producing largely affirmative and politically correct commentary that lacked substantive argumentation and broad cultural knowledge⁵³. Instead of rigorously challenging art, criticism tended to reinforce the legacy of auto-censorship⁵⁴. Reflecting on the 1990s in Albania, we like to describe this period as the “*Quo Vadis?*”, “*O tempora, o mores!*”, and “*Ars longa, vita brevis*” era—Latin phrases widely used by artists and intellectuals of the time to express their frustration.

It’s a turbulent ride, but theatre persists

As problems in the deteriorating National Theatre mounted—among them power outages,⁵⁵ the decay of already outdated technical equipment,⁵⁶ a crisis of directors, low income, fear of commercialisation,⁵⁷ a lack of clear and renewed organisational structures, aesthetic confusion, and disorientation in modes of expression⁵⁸—there was also little time to prepare premieres due to their small number⁵⁹ and minimal funding⁶⁰. Combined with a broader social, political, and moral crisis,⁶¹ the situation appeared increasingly bleak.

In contrast, the Academy of Fine Arts grew bolder and more provocative, staging performances such as *Viktimat e detyrës* (*Victims of Duty*) by Eugène Ionesco, directed by Arben Kumbaro, which introduced nudity and a rape scene on stage for the first time in Albania. The production drew harsh criticism, was interrupted,⁶² and the actors protested by performing the play outdoors, in front of the Academy itself. Critics hailed this as the moment when Albanian theatre entered “real Western theatre,”⁶³ yet this radical boldness was part of a deeper phenomenon emerging within the Academy.

Since 1965,⁶⁴ when the university program for directors was launched, it had produced around seven directors per year, who were typically appointed to local or national theatres, houses of culture, or other cultural institutions. But the post-communist transition and economic restructuring—coupled with shrinking budgets of the National Theatre,⁶⁵ the closure of regional theatres, and the collapse of cultural infrastructure—left entire generations of stage artists with no guaranteed employment and no mechanisms to ensure they could survive through theatre in the new market economy. Gëzime Kame, director, artistic director of the National Theatre, and professor of the Academy of Arts, proposed hybrid models of public-private theatre ventures, suggesting that companies move away from full-time troupes to project-based contracts,⁶⁶ thereby creating opportunities for emerging artists.

Such a venture would be Armando Bora's, who founded the theatre troupe *Bardhë e Zi (Black and White)*, composed of students from the Academy of Arts. Bora explored anthropological and polyphonic theatre. Although inspired by the theatre anthropology of Eugenio Barba—often misunderstood and misused in the Albanian context—Bora retained the spoken word in his productions, arguing that his realist theatre training made him reluctant to deprive the actor of language⁶⁷. While some professors led students toward alternative forms such as plastic theatre and pantomime,⁶⁸ others remained committed to the realist method, insisting that only by mastering realism could actors safely experiment with other styles. Without this foundation, they argued, performers risked being artistically unprepared for the future⁶⁹.

Caught between the need to gain popularity with the audience—since a stable institutional theatre career was no longer guaranteed—and the urge to discard the old theatre, namely socialist realism or realism in general, in favour of alternative forms,⁷⁰ the Academy of Fine Arts became a true hub of experimentation. Eager and insatiable for knowledge of world theatre and its methods,⁷¹ it embraced this transitional moment with boldness. So open were the debates within its walls that when the annual Festival of Albanian National Theatre 1995 was suddenly relocated from Tirana to the coastal city of Vlora, many at the Academy claimed it was a deliberate move to exclude students, who were

seen as the most non-conformist and critical part of the audience. They lamented that Tirana's public, which might have recognised and supported emerging talents, would now miss out⁷².

The generational clash grew sharper. There were fewer venues, audiences, and financial resources to go around⁷³. One telling example was *Gënjeshitari (The Liar)* by Carlo Goldoni, staged at the Experimental Studio of the National Theatre. It introduced *commedia dell'arte* to Albanian audiences but was given only four days of on-stage rehearsal and limited support. Young actors, perceived with suspicion by the older generation, were generally offered little encouragement⁷⁴.

Knives were already sharpened⁷⁵ as the Academy of Arts entered the Theatre Festival as a contender for the very first time with *Victims of Duty*. Ten invitations were sent to the students of the Academy, yet their presence was seen as controversial⁷⁶. The generational divide deepened: the older generation insisted on what they called 'realist vs. modernist theatre,'⁷⁷ while the younger ones framed their work as 'a challenge to real naturalism and traditionalism'⁷⁸. Although the Experimental Studio narrowly missed official competition status, it still participated as a guest production, alongside *Në katin e dytë është parajsa (Heaven Is on the Second Floor)* by Ilir Bezhan, presented by *Kafe-Teatër I*⁷⁹. But what exactly was *Kafe-Teatër I*?

Earlier this year, in May 1995⁸⁰, the first private theatre in Albania,

Kafe-Teatër 1, came into existence. Former actor Petraq Xhillari, having earned good money between 1990 and 1995, decided to invest in his passion by building a theatre with a 60-person capacity, featuring a 4x4 m stage suitable for six actors,⁸¹ and an attached bar and restaurant to cover expenses. His plan was to give all the earnings to the troupes, especially those open to experimentation,⁸² while he would “oversee the artistic quality.”⁸³ However, just one month after the opening, Xhillari reported having many incoming projects but also complained about poor technical conditions that he could not support financially through his own businesses, hoping for a subsidy from the Ministry of Culture⁸⁴. It opened with *Shoku Zylo (Comrade Zylo)*, a dramatisation from the novel *The Rise and Fall of Comrade Zylo* by Dritëro Agolli, staged by Alfred Bualoti and Andon Qesari⁸⁵.

In July 1995 students of the Academy of Arts performed *Histori kafshësh (The Zoo Story)* by Edward Albee on this stage⁸⁶. But it was the production, which took part in the festival, that sparked issues for *Kafe-Teatër 1*. Ilir Bezhani, playwright and director of *Heaven Is on the Second Floor* decided to stage it at the National Theatre, Xhillari accused the National Theatre of “stealing” the production, while Bezhani accused Xhillari of fraud—claiming that although Xhillari took sponsorships from the Ministry of Culture for the performance, he neither paid Bezhani as author or director nor had a legal contract with him⁸⁷.

By 1999, *Kafe-Teatër 1* is mentioned as having staged *Epopëja e supës (The Epic of the Soup)* by Vangjel Kozma, directed by Naun Shundi, and was reportedly preparing a production for the year 2000,⁸⁸ but no further information is available from this point on.

From 1996, the Academy of Fine Arts mostly returned to realist theatre for their semester performances, growing fed up with absurd theatre⁸⁹ and also pressured by the rector, who insisted that artists should not be instructed in only one direction⁹⁰.

As the proposal to have an alternative theatre festival raised doubts about whether there were enough productions to justify such a contest,⁹¹ the National Theatre welcomed back former theatre figures purged during state socialism, such as playwright Kasem Trebeshina with *Tiranozauri (Tyrannosaurus)*, staged by Gëzim Kame, and director Mihallaq Luarasi⁹² with *Hekurat (The Bars)* by Árpád Göncz. However, these productions were disappointing⁹³. Luarasi himself claimed, “I felt like I was right back where I had left things 23 years ago,”⁹⁴ referring to the time when he was jailed for his avant-garde directing — only now that style was no longer avant-garde but rather old-fashioned.

Kumbaro continued stirring controversy by proposing to stage *Ballkoni (The Balcony)* by Jean Genet at the National Theatre, which was

declined. Instead, he opted for a lighter Genet play, *Shërbëtoret* (*The Maids*), staged for only two nights at the National Theatre of Opera and Ballet. The troupe, which the director called *Theatre... without theatre*, was financed by the French Embassy and the newspaper *Koha Jonë*,⁹⁵ but many claimed that the performance was not suitable for the Albanian audience⁹⁶.

The Experimental Studio of the National Theatre—a platform that challenged the system as theatre should in 1989, which stopped in 1990 and restarted in 1994—should have given young directors the chance to work with seasoned National Theatre professionals. Over these years, professors from the Academy of Fine Arts, new directors, and recent graduates became involved. However, by 1996 it had completely shifted, used by Gëzim Kame and young actors to stage *Lojëra në oborrin e pasmë* (*Games in the Backyard*) by Edna Mazia⁹⁷.

However, the theatre manager Sulejman Dibra saw this studio as a tool for the younger generation to exert pressure through art on the older generation and for the first to make space in the National Theatre⁹⁸. The idea was quite unrealistic, considering the limited job opportunities and the fact that the Experimental Studio lacked a formal administrative structure, operating on a very low budget and relying mostly on volunteer artists⁹⁹. Even working in the National Theatre was no bed of roses, as artists often faced institutional constraints, limited resources, inconsistent politi-

cal support and human resources¹⁰⁰. Yet, during this time, actors' wages did double, partly because the National Theatre rented some spaces for a Bingo, generating additional income.

This was the peak of 1996, a year when Ponzi schemes flooded Albania's market with money. Some Ponzi scheme investors even financed theatre productions¹⁰¹—until it all collapsed in 1997, plunging Albania into civil war.

Quo Vadis? opened the 1997 season, written and directed by Serafin Fanku. However, after the first performance, the actors refused to continue playing because, for three months, they had not received the 90% share of ticket sales required by law¹⁰². All promises of reforms at the National Theatre—including contracted actors¹⁰³ and a 76% increase in the culture budget by 1997 compared to 1993¹⁰⁴—vanished into thin air as everyone struggled to survive.

During the state curfew, Gëzim Kame collaborated with Mirush Kabashi to stage the monodrama *Apologjia e vërtetë e Sokratit* (*The True Apology of Socrates*) by Kostis Varnalis, which became a signature role for Kabashi for years to¹⁰⁵. Although remarkable, this production controversially took the invitation to the experimental theatre contest in Egypt,¹⁰⁶ which was originally intended for young actors from the Academy of Arts. The Academy students had prepared *The Fantastics*, the first Albanian musical show performed in English under an American

director,¹⁰⁷ but couldn't compete that year.

Other plays included the Experimental Studio's *Don Zhuani* (*Don Juan*) by Molière, staged by Artan Imami, whose run was cut short by the civil unrest, and *Mashtrimi* (*Fraud*) by Ilir Bezhani, addressing the Ponzi schemes,¹⁰⁸ was difficult to craft and absorb effectively, having been released too close to the turmoil when both the author and the public were still too affected to engage with it reflectively. Despite the difficult circumstances, it was still possible to hold a National Drama Festival,¹⁰⁹ rather than the usual Festival of the Albanian National Theatre, which—despite grand promises of financing by Ponzi-scheme backers alongside an alternative theatre—could not take place in 1996. During the festival, even among theatre makers, the social tensions were reflected in roundtable discussions, which often became harsh and heated debates¹¹⁰.

Can the new much-awaited spring be sweeter than the last?

In 1998, promises emerged for a new theatre building¹¹¹ funded by donors, sponsors, and contributions from the capital's citizens¹¹². However, with Edi Rama's appointment as Minister of Culture, serious concerns began to cast a shadow over the National Theatre. Rama, who once called it "The Last Bastion of Socialist Realism,"¹¹³ soon became a source of tension among theatre artists. His ongoing conflicts with the theatre com-

munity—first as Minister of Culture, later as Mayor of Tirana, and eventually as Prime Minister—sparked prolonged debates and protests.

The year 1999 began with strict restrictions imposed by the ministry: the theatre was allowed to operate only three days a week, with a maximum audience of 400 per show, and any sign of trouble could lead to immediate closure¹¹⁴. From that moment on, Rama declared the building dangerous, despite it having withstood even the 6.4-magnitude earthquake of 26 November 2019 without any damage. Nevertheless, on the last day of the COVID curfew, 17 May 2020, Rama ordered the demolition of the National Theatre amid fierce protests and a violent show of state force.

Amid these challenges, *Kopshti me dallëndyshe* (*The Garden of Swallows*) by Babis Cikuropulos, directed by Kiço Londo,¹¹⁵ marked the start of a very long series of less refined comedies—still favoured by the director. Meanwhile, Harvin Çuli's planned staging of *Zonjusha Zhuli* (*Miss Julie*) by August Strindberg through the Experimental Studio turned into a private venture¹¹⁶.

Regarding other private initiatives, writer Selman Vaqarri revealed in an interview that he had acquired a licence for a room theatre where he intended to stage and film some of his plays,¹¹⁷ though no productions came to fruition there.

Regarding the National Theatre, it is revealing how opportunities were perceived, considering that Andeta Radi and Bojken Lako—both children

of artists affiliated with the National Theatre—were given chances to direct *Revizori* (*The Government Inspector*, 1998) by Nikolaj Gogol and *Ditë vere* (*Summer Day*, 1998) by Sławomir Mrożek,¹¹⁸ while similar chances were not extended to other young directors from the Academy of Fine Arts or the Experimental Studio.

The limitations imposed on the National Theatre, along with a proposed new theatre law supported by Xhevdet Ferri—as well as by director Altin Basha and actor-turned-journalist Alban Dudushi¹¹⁹—introduced a radical reform aimed at transitioning from a centralised National Theatre to a system of theatrical companies. These companies were envisioned as the foundation for the future face of the National Theatre. This reform led to the resignation of director Gëzim Kame, renowned actor Roland Trebicka, emerging director Hervin Çuli, and sparked strong reactions from the National Association of Theatre Artists and the Union of Theatres of Albania¹²⁰.

In 1999, the stage of the Academy of Fine Arts became a focal point for performances by young generations of actors, directors, and their professors. But the venue also attracted the interest of other directors, such as Kiço Londo with his ill-received comedies,¹²¹ and Gëzim Kame, who staged *Darka e të marrëve* (*The Dinner Game*) by Francis Veber. Kame challenged Minister Rama and the artistic board of the National Theatre, which had not approved the production, by forming his own theatre company,

Publimedia, alongside producers Agim Xhafka and Dritan Kaba. The company also hired renowned actor Robert Ndrenika. In retrospect, Kame's resignation and transition to *Publimedia* appear to have been a deliberate element of the broader strategy to fulfil the minister's reform agenda¹²².

Similarly, Altin Basha, together with Gazmend Gjoka and Rezart Aga, created the company *Oaz*, primarily composed of students and young actors from the Academy of Fine Arts. *Oaz* brought a fresh approach to the stage with non-scripted and etude-based shows such as *Ars Longa, Vita Brevis* (1998), directed by Basha and Gjoka, and Shakespeare's *Nata e dymbëdhjetë* (*Twelfth Night*) (1999), directed by Basha¹²³. However, despite these artistic efforts, applied management and marketing, the company could not sustain itself past 2003, as neither state nor private funding could support an annual budget.

In the same year, Leka Bungo established a private theatre called *Rubairat*¹²⁴ in the foyer of the National Theatre. Despite lasting three years, it faced harsh criticism¹²⁵ for operating within a public institution's premises. It was intended as a studio for young artists¹²⁶ but was also used as a night pub called *Bretkosat* (*The Frogs*) and as a studio for a private television channel. *Rubairat* closed in 2002 when the National Theatre building went under construction¹²⁷.

As you may have noticed—or perhaps overlooked—toward the end, the focus of this article shifted away from

generational clashes and theatrical directions. Politics had successfully shifted the spotlight from artistic debates to management issues, and suddenly, the National Theatre lost its artistic focus. The young artists from the Academy of Fine Arts saw a flicker of hope in the emerging third pole of private productions, but to this day it is still a flicker. Throughout 1999, productions like *Ëndrra e një nate dimri* (*A Dream of a Winter Night*) by Ismail Kadare, directed by Armando Bora¹²⁸; *Absurditet Antik* (*Ancient Absurdity*) by Kasem Trebeshina, directed by Drini Ajdinlli; *Twelfth Night* and *Summer Day*¹²⁹—all driven by young generations—occupied the National Theatre stage. Meanwhile, Gëzim Kame and many from the “old guard” performed on the Academy of Arts stage. Whoever wrote the article *Rrokada e madhe* (*The Great Swap*) was probably right—the seasoned professionals were performing at the Academy of Arts, and the students took over the National Theatre stage¹³⁰.

But this should fool no one. No battle was won; rather, both stages were downplayed. The audiences, loyal to one or the other, became confused and eventually lost. Soon, even the artists themselves would feel the loss—in the prolonged struggle to secure a proper National Theatre building, improved artist status, abundant Albanian drama, and meaningful criticism. These goals remain unachieved to this day.

Should the last grip of frost be chipped away?

We have written about a decade marked by research and experimentation in Albanian theatre, caught between clashing forces: the early approach of experimentation seen as a springtime of creativity and the later communist social realism, a persistent frost. The renowned Albanian director Pirro Mani was right to say that we have no true school of alternative theatres; even those who studied abroad in the 1950s and 1960s brought influences from different artistic traditions but ultimately contributed to shaping a distinctly Albanian theatre¹³¹. The same was true for Sokrat Mio in the 1930s. After decades of experience both abroad and at home and 25 years of cultural exchange, the final hold of realism still endures.

Arben Kumbaro remains somewhat controversial to this day; unfortunately, Agim Qirjaqi passed away prematurely and was unable to realise his dream of *Theatre “Europe”*; although Gëzim Kame began by breaking theatrical conventions like the fourth wall, he never fully left realism and traditional theatre behind. Many rebellious actors and directors from that decade—too numerous to mention individually—continue to present variations of realist theatre, although it is clear that they remain adaptable to different styles and visions from various schools.

Albanian theatre has its own face — whatever that may be — and the main reason for this is probably the

academic commitment to preserving the best of the Albanian methodology for teaching theatre fundamentals. So,

let us keep some ice — to savour a fresh, prosperous, and stable summer.

Notes

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- ³ *Idem*, *Memorandum: On a reorganization of the State Theatre* [Fund 513 / Committee of Culture and Arts, Year 1946, File 7, sheets 1–2, 1949, October 19].
- ⁴ *Idem*, *Request to the Legation of the Soviet Union* [Fund 566 / Ministry of Press, Propaganda and Popular Culture, January 24, 1946, File 121, sheets 1].
- ⁵ *Idem*, *Agreement with Dudin Vladimir Fyodorovich* [Fund 513 / Committee of Culture and Arts, Year September 1, 1947, File 37, sheets 4–9].
- ⁶ B. Merkaj, „Our directing school with a realist orientation”, *Drita*, 12 November 1997.
- ⁷ B. Kosova, *Gjigandë të artit botëror: Shekspir, Tolstoj, Dostojevski, ... etj.*, Male, Tirana, 2016. pp. 78–80.
- ⁸ Interview with actor Niko Kanxheri (personal communication).
- ⁹ Institute of Marxist-Leninist Studies at the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania (1978). *Report delivered by the First Secretary of the CC of the PLA, Comrade Enver Hoxha: “Let us deepen the ideological struggle against foreign influences and liberal attitudes towards them,”* June 26, 1973 / *Decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania: “Let us deepen the ideological struggle against foreign influences and liberal attitudes towards them,”* June 28, 1973, in *Main Documents of the Party of Labour of Albania*, Vol. 6, 1971–1975, pp. 346–367, 400.
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- ¹¹ A. Çikopano, *Kode zakonore në dramaturgjinë shqipe* (pp. 129–130), Shtëpia Botuese Morava, 2020, pp. 129–130; Anonymous, „Drama and theatre have lost their authority. Let us support and encourage them”, *Drita*, 1 April 1990.
- ¹² M. Kelly, *Gorky, Aragon and Socialist Realism. The Crane Bag*, 7(1), pp. 108–111, 1983, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30060556>.
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- ¹⁴ P. Sinani, “Living Theatre and Panic Theatre,” *Skena dhe Ekrani*, No. 2, 1990; Please note that the falling of the Albanian communist state would start by the beginning of December 1990.
- ¹⁵ G. Resuli, *Tomorrow: Premiere at the National Theatre*, Tirana, 11 January 1990.
- ¹⁶ N. Prifti, *Teatri në kohën e krizës*, Horizont, Tirana, Albania, 2001, p. 42.

- 17 Anonymous, „Like an open meeting in the theatre stage”, *Drita*, 25 March 1990.
- 18 Idem, „A staging marked by directorial originality”, *Drita*, 25 March 1990.
- 19 Idem, „Drama and theatre have lost their authority. Let us support and encourage them”, *Drita*, 1 April, 1990.
- 20 Anonymous, „The Show Is Over, But the Drama Goes On”, *Zëri i Popullit*, 25 March 1990.
- 21 A. Dymi, *When powerful thoughts are conveyed*, Tirana, 18 October, 1990.
- 22 P. Dhimitri, *Moonlit night in the National Theatre*, Bashkimi, 9 February 1991.
- 23 B. Mema, „A broader conception of the work of the Arts Committee”, *Drita*, 7 April 1991.
- 24 A. Kallamata, „Art and the Market Economy”, *Ibidem*, 24 March 1991.
- 25 Anonymous, „A means of livelihood but also a risk of impoverishment”, *Ibidem*, 15 September 1991.
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- 28 Idem, „What will we see during 1991?”, *Ibidem*, 13 January 1991.
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- 39 V. Koçi, „To begin with... at the edge of knives”, *Drita*, 28 July 1991.
- 40 Interview with director Alfred Bualoti (personal communication), referring to an incident during *Besa*
- 41 I. Zhilla, „Actors on strike”, *Drita*, 18 August 1991.
- 42 Anonymous, „Theatre must restore its own dignity”, *Drita*, 26 April 1992; B. Skendaj, „The absurd fate of the Albanian actor”, *Drita*, 17 May 1992; V. Koçi, „The National Theatre is not a tavern”, *Drita*, 31 January 1993; The most tragic event occurred in 1992 when an actor was assaulted and beaten into a coma by unknown assailants for reasons still unknown, ultimately resulting in his death.
- 43 I. Zhilla, „Arts students present urgent demands for school reform”, *Drita*, 5 April 1992.
- 44 F. Kongoli, „It is very dangerous to be the last one left”, *Drita*, 19 September 1993.
- 45 *Ibidem*.
- 46 N. Alibali, „Art – a free space”, *Drita*, 11 September 1994.
- 47 E. Makri, „For an open and honest debate”, *Ibidem*, 6 November 1994.
- 48 F. Kongoli, „The National Festival of Albanian Professional Theatres”, *Ibidem*, 28 November 1993; K. Velça, „About the National Festival of Theatres”, *Ibidem*, 5 December 1993.

- ⁴⁹ A. Kallamata, „Theatre confronting drama and intrigue”, *Drita*, 25 September 1994.
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- ⁵⁶ A. Marku, „Behind the Scenes”, *Ibidem*, 6 May 1995.
- ⁵⁷ A. Dudushi, „The State Speaks, the Artists Remain Silent”, *Ibidem*, 1 April 1995.
- ⁵⁸ Idem, „The Actor Is Part of the Elite and Should Be Treated Accordingly”, *Ibidem*, 8 April 1995.
- ⁵⁹ Idem, „I Entered Art with the Advantage of Being Blonde”, *Aks*, 17 June 1995.
- ⁶⁰ Idem, „Theatre on the Eve of the Season”, *Ibidem*, 2 September 1996.
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- ⁶² A. Vogli, „Art Under Attack in Its Own House”, *Ibidem*, 15 April 1995.
- ⁶³ F. Slatina, *op.cit.*, pp. 141.
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- ⁶⁷ Idem, „An Anthropological Experiment Takes Place in Albania as Well”, *Aks*, 15 July 1995.
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- ⁷² A. Dudushi, „Theatre Festival in Vlora: Pros and Cons”, *Ibidem*, 1995, 14 October 1995.
- ⁷³ K. Çipi, „Theatre Students in Search of Themselves”, *Ibidem*, 16 December 2025.
- ⁷⁴ Anonymous, „The Liar, a Touchstone”, *Ibidem*, 11 November 1995.
- ⁷⁵ The Academy of Fine Arts also organized a week of student performances immediately following the festival, during which the students openly challenged “the old” generation.
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- ⁷⁷ B. Skëndaj, „As the Festival Curtain Was Rising”, *Albania*, 25 November 1995.
- ⁷⁸ E. Hasimja, „Tendencies Toward a New Theatrical Expression”, *Drita*, 1995, December 24.
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The right to information in Albania

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Abstract: *The Right to Information is considered a fundamental human right, as acknowledged by various international agreements and also stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania. The right to access information is a core human right. Consequently, upholding this right is synonymous with honouring human dignity. The right to information acts as a guiding principle for individuals whose interests are impacted by administrative decisions, ensuring that they are aware of the types of decisions made regarding their concerns and that they can appeal those decisions. The right to information is a cornerstone of democratic health and a beacon of transparency for the public. It is not merely a key human right; it serves as a vital precondition for realising other fundamental rights, such as the freedom of expression.*

The Albanian Constitution now guarantees the right to information as part of its essential fundamental rights, signifying an important transformation in the country's governance. Since ratifying the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in 1996, the Constitution clearly states that any restrictions on human rights must align with the provisions set forth by the ECHR. The adoption of the Law "On the Right to Information" brought significant advancements in transparency and the availability of information. This law regulates the right to access information produced or maintained by public authorities, thereby establishing a framework that fosters transparency in government activities.

Keywords: *right to information, constitution, European Convention on Human Rights, human rights.*

Introduction

Every person has the right to access public information, without having to explain the reasons. The right to information has ancient roots. The first act that provided for it was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms of 1948, which provided for it in its article 19. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights

and Freedoms of 1948] Another act that guarantees the right to information is the European Convention on Human Rights. It provided for it in its article 10 related to freedom of expression. [European Convention on Human Rights.]

In preparing the draft program of transparency for information, the public authority takes into account the best interest of the public and in par-

ticular: a) ensuring maximum familiarity with public information; b) making as much information as possible available without request, in order to reduce the need for individual requests for information. Transparency symbolizes a mechanism for promoting good governance and thus increases the public's trust in a democratic and modern public administration.

In democratic countries and modern public administration, the principle of transparency is a controlling element against maladministration and a promoter of good governance and accountability towards the protection of the public interest and the rights of citizens. In this regard, the principle of transparency can be considered as a protector of legitimacy and accountability in the administration, establishes a mutual trust between the government and the citizens and guarantees the ease of access to information.

In the past two decades, governments around the world have enacted access to information laws at a pace unlike any other time in history. Governments in the world's two most populous countries – China and India – have enacted regulations and legislation, respectively, to demonstrate transparency, and more than four dozen countries have enacted laws that have traditionally represented efforts to advance government openness. Globalization has played a key role in the international movement to promote access to information legislation and institutions (ATIs), which, in theory, are designed to advance the flow of government information and government accountability.

Transparency is often seen as essential to government accountability, but its measurement remains elusive. Transparency, as broadly defined, relates to the full flow of information within a state. A long literature emphasizes the importance of providing information to the population to ensure government accountability, and thus emphasizes the role of transparency as a determinant of government performance¹.

Transparency under the Right to Information Law

1. All institutions must implement transparency programs, an obligation arising from the law on the right to information. Institutions are obliged to make public the information that the law provides as mandatory to be made public without the request of individuals.

The public authority, no later than 6 months from the entry into force of this law or from its creation, shall implement an institutional transparency program, which determines the categories of information that is made public without a request and the manner of making this information public².

2. In preparing the draft transparency program, the public authority shall take into account the best interest of the public and in particular:

- a) ensuring maximum access to public information;
- b) making as much information as possible available without request, in

order to reduce the need for individual requests for information;

c) the models approved for the category of public authority by the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Personal Data Protection, pursuant to Article 6 of this Law³.

The Commissioner for the Right to Information and Personal Data Protection shall approve and distribute models of transparency programs for different categories of public authorities, in accordance with the legislation in force on the protection of personal data, within 3 months from the entry into force of this law.

Transparency means relevant, accessible, timely and accurate data that authorities make available to the public to assess government action (accountability), to exercise a voice in decision-making (scrutiny) and to unlock social and economic value for (public reuse)⁴.

Information should be:

- Relevant, meaning tailored to the specific needs of different audiences;
- Accessible, meaning understandable and in a format suitable for reuse;
- Timely, meaning up-to-date, accurate and complete

A North American nation is among the 10 most transparent countries in the world in the eyes of many people, while European countries hold the other nine spots⁵.

National acts that provide for information

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania has provided for the right

to information in its article 23, this right is expressly sanctioned, representing one of the most important rights for the progress of democracy in the country. First of all, it is sanctioned with the aim of protecting the general interest in informing the public and presupposes that in a democratic regime, the operations carried out by the government should be made public.

Government officials and social organizations are called to participate in the political, economic and social organization of the country. But only through the right to information are they acquainted with the various procedures for finding fair solutions. Respecting the right to information in all its aspects provides certain results for good governance, for a healthier and less corrupt society⁶. In its Article 23, the Constitution provides for the right to information, as a fundamental right, which consists of the obligation for transparency of public administration bodies and persons exercising state functions.

Transparency is also provided for in the *Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania*, which expressly stipulates:

Electoral entities are free to present their electoral programs in any legal form and manner.

The Code of Administrative Procedures operates on the basis of the principle of information, according to which every person has the right to request public information related to the activity of a public body, without being obliged to explain the reasons, in accordance with the legislation in

force regulating the right to information.

Law on Public Notification and Consultation and the impact of Law No. 119/2014 “On the Right to Information”

Law No. 146/2014 “On Public Notification and Consultation” establishes the procedural rules that must be implemented to guarantee transparency and public participation in policy-making and decision-making processes by public bodies. Within the framework of the implementation of this law, the Electronic Register for Public Notification and Consultation (ERPC) has also been created, which is a portal that serves as a central consultation point, through which access is ensured and the possibility of communication is offered to all interested parties with the public body.

This form ensures and strengthens equality in terms of access to information and services, taking into account the specific needs of certain persons or groups⁷. Not every act of public decision-making is subject to public consultation⁸.

Law No. 119/2014 “On the Right to Information”

This is the basic law that regulates the right to information in Albania, regulates the right to access information produced or held by public authorities, and aims to guarantee the public’s access to information, within the framework of exercising individual rights and freedoms in practice, as

well as forming views on the state of the state and society⁹. This law provides for the obligation of every public administration institution at the central and local level. Persons who do not respect the right to information are sanctioned with a fine by the relevant authority. The law has created space to ensure a transparency that was not even imagined before. It is in the interest of the entire society that this law becomes the best example of a weapon given to the public to fight precisely its manufacturer, with the aim of cleansing it of every corrupt cell¹⁰.

Regulation of the Right to Information in the European Union

Transparency is one of the fundamental principles of the EU. It requires the EU to disclose information on policy-making and planned spending and to respect the principle of freedom of information. These principles are enshrined in the EU treaties¹¹. The right to access the acts of the institutions was initially recognised by Declaration No. 17 annexed to the Maastricht Treaty, through which the Commission is obliged to take measures to increase citizens’ access to information held by the institutions. In order to implement this declaration, the Commission and the Council adopted a Code of Conduct on public access to documents¹².

Article 10 of the Treaty on European Union provides that the decision-making process must be trans-

parent and brought “as close as possible to the citizen”. According to Article 11, both citizens and representative associations must have the opportunity “to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action”. The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU extends the scope of these points by stipulating that the EU institutions are required to act publicly and to ensure that natural or legal persons residing or having their registered office in an EU country have access to documents (Article 15). Freedom of information is not unlimited. The real limits of this freedom are set out in principle in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which states: “2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or sanctions as are provided by law and are necessary in a democratic society”¹³.

Conclusions

Considering the great challenge facing Albanian society and our state, the major objective of integrating into the European community is inevitable. Highlighting the need for high standards for transparency, standards that have been established in European Union countries, respect for fundamental human rights, the right to good administration of information and access to official documents. With the issuance of the new law on the right to information, the legal regime of the right to information has been im-

proved. Promoting and protecting the freedom to seek, receive, publish and disseminate information related to corruption¹⁴.

Access to information has long been recognized as a prerequisite for transparency and accountability of governments to voters and taxpayers, for consumers’ ability to make informed choices, and for enabling citizens to challenge mismanagement and corruption. This has led to a growing number of countries adopting right-to-information laws in the last two decades¹⁵.

Freedom of information appears in two aspects: the freedom to be informed and the right to seek information¹⁶. Freedom to communicate is legitimized so that the public can freely participate in political and public activities.” Despite the tendency to close off to the public, studies have demonstrated the importance of the independent existence of two autonomous rights, although very closely related, for the very fact that the right to information is the basis for forming a correct public opinion as a necessary component to transfer “the formation of political consciousness from traditional places to the media field” and as “the basic principle of political processes in representative democracies”¹⁷. The right to information appears in the dual meaning of subjective situations consisting of the freedom to inform and the freedom to be informed; instead, as regards the second, it is an expression that can be used to specifically indicate a subjective situation that derives from the right to infor-

mation such as the freedom to receive information¹⁸.

Is public consultation and information in Albania a genuine exercise of participatory democracy or simply a facade? By making comparisons with the conception of this process in different European countries, the report presents figures to understand to what extent public participation in decision-making processes is welcomed by the government. In essence, it is noted that public consultation and information in the last two years is not of interest to the government, but also to the public itself. A large number of

drafts are not consulted at all, while for another part of the consultations are only facades. In a small number of cases, consultation has been valuable for both parties, but the number of organizations that are usually engaged is small, while the general public has not shown interest. The electronic register created to facilitate public communication with the government has not been used¹⁹. Every public body is obliged to take all measures to create the opportunity for citizens and interested parties to participate in the consultation and information process.

Notes

- ¹ Hollyer, J. R., December 2013 Article. <https://hrvtransparency.org/JRHPersonal/PARvisionsTransparencyDraft3.pdf>
- ² Law No. 119/2014 ON THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION.
- ³ *Ibidem*.
- ⁴ O. Huss, M. Beke, J. W. Brigitte, *Slot Handbook of good practices in the fight against corruption*, 15 February 2023 Europea Commission p. 25.
- ⁵ <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/most-transparent-countries>
- ⁶ A. Anastasi, L. Omari, *Constitutional Law*, Dajti Publishing House, Tiranë, 2017, pp. 119-120.
- ⁷ DECISION No. 47/2019 ON THE APPROVAL OF THE STRATEGY FOR LEGAL EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC 2019-2023.
- ⁸ D. Matija, A. Kurti, E. Alexandridis, I. Dule, *COMMENTARY of Law No. 146/2014 "On Public Notification and Consultation"* "Res Publica" ISBN 978-9928-4337-3-2 March 2017, 2017.
- ⁹ DECISION No. 47/2019 ON THE APPROVAL OF THE STRATEGY FOR LEGAL EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC 2019-2023
- ¹⁰ D. Matija, D., *RESPUBLICA National Endowment Democracy for Supporting freedom around the world*, Botues: Qendra Res Publica, Tiranë, 2015, p. 66.
- ¹¹ Europea Unione https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/access-information_it
- ¹² J. E. Relly, M. Sabhainol, *Perceptions of transparency of government policymaking: A cross-national*, study volum 26 Januar 2009 Article.
- ¹³ D. Matija, D., *op.cit.*, p. 44.
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- ¹⁵ Matija, D., *op.cit.*, p.7.

¹⁶ I. Baraku, *The right to information and the means of its realization in the republic of Albania*, Tiranë, 2012, p. 11.

¹⁷ Po aty.

¹⁸ Libertà di informazione e principi costituzionali

<https://www.ibs.it/pdf/9788892113329.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.puleaks.al/konsultimi-publik-ne-shqiperi-2017-2018/>

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Liberta di informazione e principi costituzionali

Public interventions and urban evolution in Tirana (2005–2025): The case of the 1.60 insurgent space project

Stefano ROMANO

Abstract: *Public art is a unique category of art that is fundamentally different from urban art. The idea of engaging with the “non-conventional” spaces of the city — unprotected spaces, unlike traditional art venues such as museums and galleries — poses a challenge for the artwork while simultaneously creating a more “complex” relationship between the artwork and the architecture or public space it interacts with.*

Between 2005 and 2006, Stefano Romano conceived a curatorial project on art in public space in the city of Tirana, titled 1.60insurgent space. The project was itinerant, with each intervention designed to last only one day. This methodology allowed the artworks to establish a fleeting yet provocative relationship with the spaces that hosted them, by emphasizing the radical changes taking place in the city of Tirana. At a time when no other exhibition spaces existed apart from the National Gallery, this pioneering project shifted the focus and reflection onto the city itself and the transformations it was undergoing. After 20 years, how has the image of the city changed? How have the spaces where some of these artistic interventions took place been transformed?

This paper will analyse whether and how some of these spaces, used for artistic interventions, have changed over a twenty-year period since the project began. It will seek to understand whether art can serve as a catalyst for change in shaping our perception of urban spaces. Through an analysis of a selection of the most significant interventions carried out within the project 1.60insurgent space, and employing a post-phenomenological approach based on the concept of temporality as a flow inspired by Bergsonian memory—interwoven with the notion of “capitalist realism”—this study will draw parallels with the transformation of public and architectural spaces in the same areas of the city.

The paper will attempt to highlight how the relationship between art and architecture can create a perception of the city’s image that transcends spatial relationships. Instead, this perception becomes layered on a temporal level, shaping how we experience and perceive the city’s vertical and horizontal spaces.

Keywords: *art in public space, architecture, city landscape, contemporary art, time dynamics, flux.*

Preamble

In the last ten to fifteen years, we have often heard the term “site-specific” used – not only in contexts strictly related to visual arts. What do we mean when we talk about a “site-specific” production? We mean an artwork that has been conceived, designed, and created specifically for a particular place, taking into account its characteristics. The term was initially used only in reference to the structural characteristics of the artwork and then – over the decades – due to how art itself was transforming in its techniques and practices, the term came to also indicate the social, community, and political characteristics of a place. Each place is composed of a certain combination of specific elements that make it unique: its dimensions, the shape of the spaces that delimit it, the proportions of the space, the surrounding buildings, or green spaces, the conditions of light and shadow, ventilation, distinctive topographical elements, the people who frequent it, its use, its symbolic, social, or political value, and so on. This way of conceiving the artwork from a new epistemological point of view emerged starting in the sixties-seventies (initially in the United States), as a reaction to minimalism and modernism in general. The idea of the aseptic, white museum space, which estranges itself from the surrounding reality leaving the artwork in a limbo detached from any other external element, is radically challenged by the materiality of the natural landscape or the impurity of

the urban landscape. “The uncontaminated and pure idealist space of dominant modernism was radically displaced by the materiality of the natural landscape or the impure and ordinary space of the everyday. And the space of art was no longer perceived as a blank slate, a *tabula rasa*, but a real place”¹. Consequently, the artwork transforms into an object that must be experienced in a specific place and time, through the physical presence and gaze of each subject, through a sensory approach based on physical immediacy and the temporal duration of the individual experience. Thus, beginning to also build a distinction between public art, which until that moment was represented by the classic idea of a sculpture positioned in a city space, and which often could be an interchangeable space; and art in public space, a new artistic category for which artworks must have unique characteristics specifically linked to the place chosen for their realization. In addition to an epistemological change in the form and realization of the artwork, this approach also contributes to a change in the artist’s vocabulary, who, in order to create their work, must adopt a new set of terms necessary for the understanding and development of the work itself. In addition to the existing verbs: drawing, sculpting, rolling, folding, cutting, etc., the artist now had to start from other verbs such as: negotiating, coordinating, compromising, organizing, interviewing, visiting, etc. This approach ensures that the artwork goes beyond the object we are observing,

the parameters can no longer be only aesthetic, mostly related to the relationships of form and materials used by the artist, but must extend, including something that is difficult to visualize a priori, without having had direct experience of the artwork. This is what art critic Suzanne Lacy will affirm a few decades later at the presentation of one of the most iconic projects related to the production of art in public space “Culture in Action”, realized in Chicago in 1993 and which Lacy herself defines as “new genre public art” and that: “what exists in the space between the words public and art in an unknown relationship between artist and audience, a relationship that may *itself* be the artwork”². What is emphasized here is the birth of an almost personal relationship between the artist, the artwork, and the public and, we add, the space in which the artwork has been installed (or performed).

Visions from a Past Future

At the end of 2003, the author of this paper decided to move to Tirana, initially, just as a life experience, with the intention of returning to Italy later. What immediately struck him was the absence of spaces dedicated to art; at that time, the only exhibition space in Tirana was the National Gallery³. Tirana back then was a very different city from the one we experience today. Without delving into whether it was a better or worse city, as that would be a long debate, let's just say it was a city dealing with different

problems compared to today. And it was – as it is today – a city undergoing significant changes that were transforming it from an infrastructural point of view and, consequently, also from the perspective of its own image. Most artists frequented the National Gallery, which was effectively also a meeting point due to a kiosk located right in its garden, more or less where Fujimoto's “The Cloud” is situated today. However, the exhibition offerings of the National Gallery were usually disappointing. Not that the quality of the artists wasn't interesting, but compared to the changes taking place in the city, what was happening inside the spaces of the National Gallery was, in our opinion, not as interesting. Our gaze was attracted to the city and how its image was changing, and in some way, it was in search of its new identity.

Edi Rama (the current Prime Minister) was the mayor of Tirana at that time, in his first term. His impact on the city's transformation was massive, starting with the now-famous project of coloring and re-signifying the facades of the facades of buildings in the city center – a project later adopted by various editions of the Tirana Biennale – to the demolition of illegal kiosks that filled the “*Parku Rinia*” and the rehabilitation of the “*Lana*” river. The city's building rehabilitation project gradually transformed over time into a gentrification project that today affects not only the center of Tirana but also its metropolitan area and its periphery⁴.

At that time, however, the city was living in a sort of new precarious balance, and it was precisely this aspect that caught our attention. Thus, at the end of 2004, the *1.60insurgent space* project was born.

The project aimed to be a sort of urban investigation carried out through the contributions of invited artists. Local and international artists, whose artworks had to interact each time with a space in the city that the project appropriated only for the duration of the event. All events could last a maximum of 24 hours, regardless of the type of artwork proposed by the artist, thus equipping the artworks with what we had called at the time an “impermanant citizenship” because it was ephemeral, extending only for the span of a day at most.

Why create ephemeral events instead of proposing to the municipality of Tirana to change the use of some city spaces? Because at that moment it seemed important not to appropriate a space and transform it into an art production center or an exhibition center, but rather to show the creative or imaginative potential of spaces that people used daily for their activities, errands, or leisure. Considering an approach to “art as a system of social actions and considers artefacts *like* people, that is, endowed with the power to affect and be affected and hence as relational beings”⁵.

This approach recalls that particular relationship – previously mentioned and clarified by Suzanne Lacy – that is established between the viewer, the artwork, and the space in

which the work is installed or performed. A relationship that, according to the American artist and theorist, can itself become the subject of the artwork and is of interest to us because it generates a particular temporality, derived from various factors, which we could summarize in the idea of *encounter*, in the sense of an almost casual appointment between viewer and artwork; what we might also call an *epiphany*, the revelation of the essence of things. A temporality based on the idea of “*duration*” according to Henri Bergson’s notion. According to the French philosopher, the time measured by scientists through increasingly sophisticated machinery is a spatialization of time, a homogeneous repetition of identical units. *Duration*, as understood by Bergson, is instead what living beings experience in the form of a continuous internal flow and transformation, it is pure consciousness, “Inner duration is the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present”⁶.

According to the vision of the French philosopher, time is thus distinguished into external or spatialized time, that is, quantitative, and internal time, or duration, that is, qualitative. We will use this vision as the basic notion on which to build our methodological approach for the analysis of the artworks created during the *1.60insurgent space* project and the subsequent transformations – still ongoing – of those same spaces in the city of Tirana where the project’s events were held.

Spaces, Actions and Transformations

1.60insurgent space lasted exactly 20 months, from January 2005 to September 2006. 47 events were realized in various locations throughout the city, at a rate of approximately 3 events per month (excluding August of both years). The areas where the artworks were created ranged from the city center to the outskirts. The spaces were chosen differently depending on the invited artist; sometimes they were directly suggested by the artists, especially when they were Albanian artists, in other cases, they were chosen by us. The selection was made according to various criteria; they could be spaces that had symbolism within the city's memory (the base of the Stalin statue in the square in front of the textile factory named after the Soviet politician in *Kombinat*, in the western outskirts of Tirana); or spaces that were used daily and for this reason were "popular" spaces (such as the city's large market, *Tregu i madh*), or spaces that were already undergoing change (the ruins of a bar in the garden of the Academy of Fine Arts of Tirana demolished by the Municipality because it was illegal).

In this paper, we will analyze four events held during the *1.60insurgent space* project, which involved various areas of the city. Areas that have a precise significance in the history of the city and its socio-political developments.

The projects analyzed in this paper were all carried out along the longitu-

dinal axis of the Boulevard, which extends from the university campus in the south to the point where, until a few years ago, the railway station stood, now demolished to make way for the extension of the Boulevard that connects to the new ring road. We have decided to highlight the events and architectural and urban changes along this axis because this is the symbolic place of most of the events that have marked the modern history of Albania and not just Tirana.

The first event we analyze is the artwork titled "*Memory*" created by the Italian artist Salvatore Falci on September 19, 2005, in Skenderbeg Square. The project originates from an autobiographical fact about the artist, whose mother was Albanian from *Shiroka*. The woman, married to an Italian Navy officer stationed in Albania during the Italian occupation of Albanian territory, follows the man to Italy, never to return to Albanian soil. The artist thus uses the concept of memory as the basis of his project. He asks to work with a group of students from the Academy of Fine Arts of Tirana (now the University of Arts), selected through a call. He makes the students reflect on the meaning of memory and the idea of memory that the city itself contains, not only as in Lynch's vision of a "time machine"⁷ due to the juxtaposition of buildings constructed in different eras; but above all as personal memory, what Bergson defines as "qualitative time"⁸, a time that is closely linked to our personal life experience and mediated by our body, by our being in space. In

fact, “the body stabilizes the mnemonic data through habit and intensifies it through emotions that can be considered ambivalent in themselves: they can indeed serve as a guarantee of authenticity, as well as a reason for falsification”⁹.

For this reason, the artist is accompanied around the streets and neighborhoods of Tirana by the group of young girls and boys, asking them to share their memories of those spaces. Where they had their first kiss, where they meet with their friends, where they go when they want to be alone, where their parents took them to buy sweets, and so on. Subsequently, he asks the students to draw these mnemonic maps, which transform a city into their own city, a space that is no longer public in the sense collectively defined by the UN Habitat, in *The Charter of Public Space*, which defines Public Spaces as “all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive”¹⁰. But a space that transforms almost into a private, personal, intimate space, and it doesn’t matter if the mnemonic data is incorrect. The “other” is a fundamental element in Falci’s production and in this case, it is present as a conscious and intense relationship between the artist and the participants. The artwork is closely tied to their relationship, to the trust that will be established between them, in that famous unknown and unfathomable data mentioned earlier. The artwork will be this relationship, visualized through “impermanant maps”, drawn on the pave-

ment of Skanderbeg Square with chalk first and then traced with water afterward. The water used over the chalk erases it, making those maps visible only until they dry completely. Once erased, those moments and those Tirana will exist only in the minds of those who participated in this experience.

The place chosen to visualize these maps and return them – albeit for a very short period of time – to the public and to the people who happened to be passing through the square at that moment is not accidental. During the days of work with the artist and the students, careful thought was given to what could be the ideal place to hold the event, and the choice of Skanderbeg Square has to do with the history of the place and its symbolism. Throughout its history, the square has changed its shape and structure many times. During the performance conceived by Salvatore Falci, Skanderbeg Square was a sort of elongated oval that opened in the northern part of the axis created by the Boulevard that connected the University Campus (southern end) with the Train Station (northern end). In this oval surrounded mostly by public buildings, we find the corpus of some ministries built in the 1930s, continuing along the western part there is the Puppet Theater and the National Bank, and in the northwest part of the square, the National Historical Museum. On the other side of the Museum, in the northeast part of the square, is the Tirana International Hotel (built in 1979 and modernized in 2001), con-

tinuing clockwise we find the Palace of Culture (inaugurated in 1963), followed by the Et'hem Bey Mosque and the Clock Tower (both completed in the 19th century), closing the square, we find the building that houses the offices of the Municipality of Tirana.

The inner part of the square was a sort of large space that opened in the south with another semi-oval used as a green space that ended with the equestrian statue of the Albanian national hero, Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu (built in 1968). The center of the square was a sort of empty, pedestrian space, closed on the sides following the perimeter of the semi-oval of the green space – in order to prevent car circulation inside – and ended with a superellipse that contained a series of fountains arranged according to a sort of secondary axis within the main axis of the Boulevard.

The “impermanent maps” were created precisely in that empty space, and in our view, it is significant that this space was chosen, considering the transformation of the square at the time of writing this article (2025); thus becoming a sort of anticipation of the urban form that the square would take, a space erased that persists only in the city’s memory. “To discuss how urban forms anticipates means to distinguish the technical and the political on the one hand and reveal their composition or tendency at certain junctures on the other, through a retroactive reading of what did *not* have to *necessarily* happen”¹¹. Indeed, there are a series of technical and political reasons that led to the definition of to-

day’s Skanderbeg Square. The urban plan by Armando Brasini in 1925 – which followed the first urban plan of the city of Tirana by two years, created by Austrian architects and engineers – was the first to redesign and reconceptualize the city center, designing it as a sort of walled city along the perimeter of the main axis. Brasini’s plan also included the design of today’s Skanderbeg Square, which the architect designed inspired by St. Peter’s Square in Rome, as a large empty space surrounded (at the time) by neo-Renaissance style buildings. Despite the small transformations that occurred during the communist regime and the subsequent alternating urban plans, Skanderbeg Square has always maintained this semi-oval structure surrounded by buildings. In 2008, the Belgian studio 51N4E, in collaboration with the Albanian artist Anri Sala, won a public competition for the renovation of Skanderbeg Square. Although the project was aborted following a change in the city’s administration¹², it was later resumed (with the Socialist Party’s victory in the 2015 municipal elections) and completed in 2017. The project involved transforming the entire surface of the square, about 40,000 square meters, into a pedestrian space surrounded – or perhaps better said, isolated from the rest of the city – by plants and trees and made with a variety of stones from different areas of Albania, whose juxtaposed pattern creates a sort of mosaic, with openings functioning as ground fountains. The entire square has the shape

of a flat pyramid that, in Sala's original idea, was supposed to bring citizens, at its peak, to the same height as the equestrian statue of the national hero. For technical reasons, the maximum height of the pyramid is actually 1.8 meters from the base, so not enough to really reach the height of the statue, although in the description of the square on the architectural studio's website, the role of the pyramid is shifted as a counterbalance to the architecture "The oppressive monumentality of communist architecture is counteracted by the ample and low pyramid making up the square: when standing as its tip, the citizens find themselves on a par with the authoritarian architecture of the past"¹³. It is clear how the analysis of the square was hasty and superficial, because it is actually a stratification of different eras, times, and architectural styles, which cannot all be traced back to communist architecture. Moreover, surprisingly, the paving of the square, in the mosaic-like pattern, produces an image, a pattern, that exactly recalls that type of "authoritarian" architecture that the project intended to demonize.

Another consequence of this – presumed – visual reset produced by the square¹⁴ is the rise – just like an earthquake causing a tsunami – of a series of new buildings all around the square itself, which make the void even more evident, in mathematical terms, the negative of Skanderbeg Square's level. These buildings are explicitly a consequence of the new vision of the square, as cited by the architects

themselves "The green belt around the square is made up of 12 gardens, each of them linked to one or more of the public or private institutions lining the square"¹⁵. The effect of preparation for this rise indeed extends well beyond the perimeter of the pedestrian area of the square, and the effects are visible transversely, both along the west side and the east side.

Precisely in the eastern part of Skanderbeg Square, on May 22, 2006, the German artist Kirsten Pieroth performed a piece as part of the *1.60insurgent space* program events. The peculiarity – as happened in other events of the project – is that the performance was an almost private gesture with no invited audience, no inauguration, or scheduled time. The performance in this case is a fortuitous appointment with a place and time, dealing with the concept of "contingency", which overturns the reassuring idea of reason and rationality: "instead of thinking of contingency as a modality of or an exception to the necessary, one must think of necessity as the becoming-necessary of contingent encounters"¹⁶, as expressed by Louis Althusser. By reversing the formula, it is the idea of a contingent encounter, with a person, a place, or an event, through which we can expand our perception of reality and what we consider "coherent." This is a necessary premise to understand the artistic research and performance carried out in Tirana by the German artist Kirsten Pieroth, which is, in fact, the continuation of a similar and opposite action that the artist performed at the

First Tirana Biennale in 2001. On that occasion, the artist transferred water from a puddle in Berlin to Tirana, pumping rainwater from a common puddle on a street in the city's outskirts into several large jerrycans, which she then transported to Tirana and poured onto the floor of one of the Biennale's exhibition spaces. The work in this case had a well-defined place and time, those of the National Gallery of Tirana during the exhibition period; despite maintaining its invisible nature because it blended well with the surrounding environment. The puddle indeed seemed to have been naturally caused by water leaking from a damaged roof.

Five years later, when the artist was again invited by *1.60 insurgent space* to develop an artwork in the city of Tirana, a puddle took the opposite direction. On the chosen day, the artist brought three large empty jerrycans and a pump purchased in Tirana and began to wander around the city in search of the magical encounter. The encounter happened precisely along the transverse line east of Skanderbeg Square, right near the point in the city then known as "*Ushtari i Panjohur*" (the unknown soldier), which also became the title of the artwork. Here, the artist found a large puddle that she decided was the right one for the performance. After an hour of performance, the puddle was emptied and the jerrycans were filled with water. The puddle from Tirana was then subsequently shipped to Berlin and poured again onto the floor of an exhibition space.

In her artistic practice, Kirsten Pieroth uses everyday objects, situations, and activities, isolating them from their original environment and placing them in a different context. This displacement causes a shift in the interpretation of objects or situations in our reality, making us lose the certainty of the habitual perspective that has been attributed to them. In the words of Nikola Dietrich, the curator invited to curate that specific event of *1.60insurgent space*, "The displacement and transportation of something short-lived, taken out from the domestic environment seems to be an absurd attempt of preserving a specific landscape formation – as if a shadow would be mentioned as something specific for a geographic environment"¹⁷. The objects born from Pieroth's actions can no longer be identified based on their shape, function, or use; instead, they refer to multiple readings, strange systems of reference, and absurd chains of associations.

That point in the city, "*Ushtari i Panjohur*", was used by the citizens of Tirana as a reference point for people who needed a worker. A sort of open-air employment office, where those looking for work would go, some even equipped with their own tools, to offer their labor to those in need. The *tsunami* caused by the transformation of Skanderbeg Square also changed this place, which is only 260 meters from the square. Today, the monument that identifies this spot in the city has been almost entirely engulfed by the buffer zone of trees that isolates

Skanderbeg Square from the rest of the city and has completely lost its function. One might argue that this could be seen as a moment of qualitative growth in the city's social life, and certainly, this objection would be valid if Albania had improved the basic social conditions of its citizens and workers in the meantime. In reality, like being swept away by the force of a wave, the people who sold their labor have only been pushed further away, to a less central area.

The consequences of the transformations of Tirana's image, this "dark side" of its changes, always fall on a certain category of people, once referred to as the "class dimension" – a term now deliberately put out of use in political language – since it is usually the marginalized or the poor who pay the highest price for these transformations. "The absorption of surplus through urban transformations also has a dark side. It has indeed involved numerous phases of urban restructuring through "creative destruction"¹⁸. This notion of "creative destruction" systematically used by Georges-Eugène Haussmann when Bonaparte entrusted him with the direction of urbanization works in Paris in 1853, is absolutely visible – with due scales and proportions – in the contemporary transformation of Tirana's image. Everything starts and develops from the south-north axis of the Boulevard, and from Skanderbeg Square, it expands in the form of disturbance brought by the wave propagation caused by the square's transformation.

Moving along the southern axis, we find the Pyramid, originally conceived as a museum for the dictator. Erected in 1988 (three years after Hoxha's death) and co-designed by Enver Hoxha's son-in-law Klement Kolaneci along with Pirro Vaso, Vladimir Bregu, and the dictator's daughter Pranvera Hoxha. In 1991, the Pyramid was used as a congress center named after Pjeter Arbërori¹⁹, in 1992 it became the National Cultural Center, and in the following years, it hosted various fairs and also several private commercial activities, such as a radio station, the studios of a private Albanian television, and in the 2000s, even some bars on the south side of the building.

From above, the Pyramid has a plan that extends from a circular center, at the top of which there was a star (symbol of the Communist Party), with rays of varying lengths that seem to mimic the irradiation of light from the center. This structure allowed natural light to enter from all sides of the building and also from a dome at the top, which filtered additional light through its glass cover. The entire building is made of reinforced concrete originally covered with white marble and has a maximum height of 21 meters at the center. The sides of the pyramid, interspersed with cuts filled with a system of rectangular windows, which also follow a radial composition around a central axis of rotation, develop following a slope, also variable, which in the front part of the structure directly connects the base of the pyramid with its center at

the top, as Kolaneci himself explains in an interview “In a classic building we have a roof and vertical lines, which are the walls. We simply joined the diagonals and what in a classic building is a wall, here starts as a wall and ends as a covering”²⁰. The building has a strong connection between the exterior and interior despite its strong visual presence, “Observing the pyramid, especially from above, we made sure it harmonized with the shape of Mount Dajti. At the same time, it was not built as a building with a limited function, but as an open shell from the inside”²¹.

Its presence in the urban fabric has always sparked debates about its intended use, until 2010 when the then Democratic Party government led by Sali Berisha decided to demolish it to make way for a building that would house the new Albanian Parliament. An international ideas competition was announced, welcoming various proposals for the construction of the new parliament building, but at the same time, protests against the demolition of the pyramid multiplied. The Socialist Party led by Edi Rama rode the wave of protests, making the renovation of the Pyramid one of the programmatic points of its government should it win the political elections to be held in 2013. When the Socialist Party indeed won those elections, the first Rama government²² repealed the decree-law previously approved by the Berisha government for the demolition of the Pyramid, promising its renovation and new intended use. In this case too, an inter-

national ideas competition was announced, the winner of which was the Dutch studio MVRDV (Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs, and Nathalie de Vries).

The intervention of the Dutch studio, although it maintained the original plan of the Pyramid, completely revolutionized its structure, especially through the addition of several parallelepipeds around, inside, and above the pyramid itself. The boxes give the impression of a temporary and almost random installation, seeming to follow no rhythm, no proportion to the original architecture, with no attempt to make them dialogue even from the point of view of pure geometric forms. The choice of flashy colors for the boxes reinforces the sense of loss of the symbolic strength that this place emanated. After all, on the homepage of the MVRDV website, we are greeted with this statement “We create Happy and Adventurous Places”²³, and there is no doubt that this building is “adventurous” in its being a mix of shapes and colors, which has – creatively – destroyed the symbolic strength that the Pyramid emanated.

On June 29, 2005, Spanish artist Alejandro Vidal carried out his intervention for *1.60 insurgent space*, right in the square in front of the pyramid. The project titled “*Disrupted Noise Terror*” was a reflection on the original tension between street violence, nationalistic wars, and electronic subcultures that claimed to be buried along with the totalitarian regimes that characterized not only Albania but the entire Eastern European bloc. The

event included the projection of a video on a screen, already positioned at that time above the entrance of the pyramid, which was used by night-clubs for the projection of soccer matches and music videos. The video depicted a fight between two boys, slowed down to dramatize and make visible the violence present in the everyday gestures of contemporary society, bringing the viewer into the folds of that violence. Parallel to the video projection, a performance was also taking place. During the performance a mix of Turbo-Folk songs was heard from the lowered windows of a Mercedes-Benz 300TD W123 Station Wagon driven by two boys dressed in military camouflage. Every visual element of the performance had a symbolic reference to the Balkan world and more generally to the Eastern European bloc. The Mercedes represents one of the stereotypes for identifying people from the Balkans, the soldiers are another symbol of militarization and the continuous fratricidal wars that characterized the late 90s and early 2000s, especially in the territory of the former Yugoslavia; Turbo-Folk music represents the capitalist trivialization of popular music “Extremely mediatic, Turbo-Folk is one of the faces with which the supposed internationalization and Opening of the cultures of the East conceals the processes of economic and symbolic domination from the West under the promise of overcoming the post-Yugoslav cartographic isolation”²⁴. As in all political and social struggles, the inversion of the symbolism of the pyr-

amid is the spectacle of resistance to our contemporary world, rather than the glorification of its past.

The last intervention we will analyze in this article starts from what – as mentioned earlier – until a few years ago, was the northernmost point of the south-north longitudinal Boulevard of Tirana, the railway station (*Stacioni i trenit*). The artwork is titled “*Next Text*” – part of a larger series titled “*The Walking Project*” conceived by Macedonian artist Verica Kovacevska²⁵.

The performance took place on August 30, 2006, and the starting point was the Tirana Railway Station. The action unfolded as follows: the artist – on her first-ever visit to Tirana – chose the railway station as the starting point because the bus from Skopje ended its route there. From that moment on, for a predetermined period of two hours, anyone could send an SMS to the Albanian number provided to the artist, which was printed on flyers inviting people to interact with the project. In a bar in the ex-block neighborhood (ish Blloku²⁶), through a map updated in real-time, the public could follow the artist’s movements through the city and, at the same time, send an SMS with a direction the artist should take. The SMS texts were simple, containing only the direction: “forward, backward, right, left”. The artist wanted to reflect on how “In today’s society the concept of personal freedom is often being disputed. On the one hand we feel free, but on the other hand we feel limited by different factors such as nature, technology,

other people, society and its institutions. We often feel like puppets, being controlled by these factors in the way we think, feel or act”²⁷. These are indeed some of the themes around which Verica Kovacevska’s research develops: urban design, inclusion, and technology. During the action, the artist literally transforms into a puppet in the hands of the audience, who decide where to make her go and how to move within the city. For example, for over twenty minutes, the artist remained “stuck” along *Rr. Fortuzi*, a small street that cuts across *Rr. e Durrësit*, because people enjoyed making her reach the end of the street and then go back and forth. Except for these moments of blockage, the performance was an opportunity for the artist to see parts of the city that – on a guided tour – she would never have seen. Alleys, neighborhoods, glimpses that are part of the essence of what was the atmosphere of Tirana in those years. A sort of Situationist *dérive*, but dystopian, because the journey within the city is dictated by the will of others, while in the Lettrist/Situationist practice, this type of city exploration serves to free oneself from the imposed image of modern cities, to find moments, places, and spaces perceived and consequently used by people in an absolutely personal way. In the definition of psychogeography given by Guy Debord and defined as “The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously or not) on the emotions and behavior of individuals”²⁸ this transformation of the perception of the

surrounding environment, in our specific case, the urban environment, transforms the city into a space where even distances assume a relative value, linked to internal emotions, rather than metrically measurable data: “One measures the distances that actually separate two regions of a city, distances that may have little relation with the physical distance between them”²⁹. Therefore, the performance, more than a journey within the “known” space measured by the daily actions repeated in the urban space, should be read as a sensory investigation, where space and time are in an altered relationship due to the perceptions of the contingent moment, even if guided by someone else.

The performance – as mentioned earlier – starts from the Railway Station and then continues along the Boulevard in a southerly direction, subsequently developing in the neighborhoods of Tirana, ending at Wilson Square (*Sheshi Wilson*) in a southwest direction from the Boulevard. The first direction sent via SMS to the artist was – almost – mandatory, at least perceptually “forward”, because in front of the artist the axis of the Boulevard opened up, while behind her the direction was closed due to the fact that behind her was – indeed – the Railway Station.

In the overlapping of Masterplans designed over its 105 years of history as the capital of Albania, the one proposed by the English studio Grimshaw proposed the demolition of the Railway Station and the consequent extension of the Boulevard for an ad-

ditional three kilometers, in order to connect the artificial lake, located at the end of the Boulevard axis to the south, behind what is now the university corpus, with the artificial lake of Paskuqan, positioned north along the Boulevard axis, in order to transform Tirana into “a city of two rivers, and two lakes”³⁰ as stated in the master-plan project proposed by the English studio.

That masterplan will not be fully realized, but the idea of extending the Boulevard will be implemented during Erion Veliaj’s first term as mayor of Tirana, in 2015. Today, that section of the Boulevard is undergoing urban redevelopment and transformation, which quickly turned into gentrification. After the end of the communist regime, in fact, the various Albanian governments never attempted to invest in the development of an efficient railway network to favor the large private economic interests of the oil companies operating in the country. The informal urban area that developed over the years right in the area of the former Railway Station is now being dismantled piece by piece to make way for new residential buildings at prices inaccessible to the people currently living in that area – and for most people living in Albania today – increasingly pushing masses of people outward, bringing with them situations, markets, small shops, and so on.

Conclusions: Temporal Atlas

This look from the future through which we have analyzed some events carried out within the *1.60insurgent space* project and the consequent transformations of those city areas allows us to make some reflections about the city and our perception of it. Starting from the very definition of “space” according to the sensory approach described by Arnheim, according to which “Although space, once is established, is experienced as an always present self-sufficient given, the experience is generated only through the interrelation of objects. [...] Space perception occurs only in the presence of perceivable things”³¹. Space appears to be an element we can experience only through “perceivable things”, thus physical elements with which we can interact, through which we can “position ourselves” both phenomenologically, through our physical presence in that place, and imaginatively through what the environment itself returns to us in terms of memory and emotions.

In this sense, the relationship that develops between a work of art specifically designed for a place (whether ephemeral or permanent) goes beyond a physical relationship of harmony of proportions or dialogue of materials and forms. This relationship is also structured at the level of “time”, not mechanically measurable through a clock, but, as previously clarified in this article, through the “*duration*” of the relationship we establish with the work of art and the architectural ob-

ject or urban environment where the artwork is placed. This space-time relationship coincides with what Lefebvre defines as social space, “(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder”³². It is precisely in the interrelation between artwork, architectural object, urban space, and human presence that their coexistence becomes the perception of a “*duration*”; in other words, it is in our prolonging the memory of the perception of that contingent encounter that we have the possibility of making the past coexist in our present. Only in this way can we have the possibility of rereading the changes taking place in the city of Tirana through the liminal space left open by the artistic interventions that have followed one another on it, on a cartography of which now remains visual memory only through the images we can recover – and use – from our memory.

All the artworks we have analyzed in this article, although site-specific, already suggest different times and spaces from the space (and time) in which they were realized. Think of “*Memory*” by Salvatore Falci, the collective artwork created with the collaboration of a group of students from the Academy of Fine Arts of Tirana. Drawing on the pavement of Skenderbeg Square maps a Tirana that exists only in connection with the

emotions that the participants experienced in certain areas of the city shifts the public’s perception to spaces and times that no longer coincide with the space and time of the performance. Kirsten Pieroth’s private action, “*Ushtari i Panjohur*”, realised precisely in the place from which it takes its title, already has in its origin the displacement of a *genius loci* from one place to another, with the consequent overlapping of different levels of time and space from those of the original, making us reflect on those “perceivable things” that belong to certain places and times and the fragility of this statement. Alejandro Vidal’s artwork “*Disrupted Noise Terror*” overlays a place – the pyramid – which in its genesis was supposed to represent the idea of the “immortality” of the Albanian dictator, with various symbols, the soldiers, Turbo-Folk music, the slow-motion fight in the video, which visualize spaces and times that are not properly functioning at the moment of the performance. This creates a sensory shift in relation to our position and our being in a specific place and time; the same process set in motion by Verica Kovacevska’s performance “*Next Text*” in her forced exploration of the city of Tirana, dictated by the will of other people who are in another place, but who determine the times of her movements and her waits.

What, then, is the role of art in redefining the image of a city? Or more specifically, of a city like Tirana, at the center of enormous real estate speculation and strong gentrification? We believe that it is precisely the abil-

ity to create those liminal spaces that are the true generators of that “*duration*”, which allows us to overlay the levels of urbanization with another level whose characteristics of transparency and adaptability function like a gravitational field. A field that acts

among the “perceivable things” with the ability to attract them, push them away, modify them; thus drawing a perceptual palimpsest, thanks to which we can see – and use – even the now erased levels of the city in which we move every day.

Notes

- ¹ M. Kwon, *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002, p. 11.
- ² S. Lacy, *Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys*, Edited by Suzanne Lacy, Bay Press, Seattle, 1995, p. 19.
- ³ At the time of writing this paper, the National Gallery is closed for restoration and redesign of its spaces following damage from a major earthquake that struck Albania in November 2019.
- ⁴ At the time of writing this paper, Edi Rama is Prime Minister and the mayor of Tirana is Erion Veliaj, On February 10, 2025, he was arrested by SPAK on 9 charges of corruption and money laundering, and is currently being held in the Durrës Detention Center.
- ⁵ M. Mollona, *Art Commons - Anthropology Beyond Capitalism*, Zed Books, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., London, 2021, p. 3.
- ⁶ H. Bergson, *An introduction to Metaphysics*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York and London, 1903, p. 44.
- ⁷ K. Lynch, *L'immagine della città*, Marsilio Editori, Venezia, 1964 [2006].
- ⁸ H. Bergson, *An introduction to Metaphysics*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York and London, 1903, p. 46.
- ⁹ A. Assmann, *Ricordare. Forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2002, p. 22.

- ¹⁰ Biennale Spazio Pubblico, Biennale Spazio Pubblico, May 16, 2013, (Accessed March 29, 2025). <http://www.biennalespaziopubblico.it/outputs/the-charter-of-public-space/>.
- ¹¹ S. Luarasi, “The Life and Death of Skanderbeg Square: A Chronicle of an Undoing Foretold, in a Hundred Years”, *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation History, Theory, and Criticism*, 19 (1): 2022, pp. 126-148.
- ¹² In the period from 2011 to 2015, the city was under the administration of the Democratic Party, and namely by Lulzim Basha.
- ¹³ 51N4E, Skanderbeg Square, 2018. Accessed March 29, 2025. <https://51n4e.com/projects/skanderbeg-square>.
- ¹⁴ The author owes this idea of visual reset to PhD. Skender Luarasi, which he expressed in his illuminating article: “The Life and Death of Skanderbeg Square: A Chronicle of an Undoing Foretold, in a Hundred Years”. Also quoted earlier in this article.
- ¹⁵ 51N4E, Skanderbeg Square, 2018. Accessed March 29, 2025. <https://51n4e.com/projects/skanderbeg-square>.
- ¹⁶ L. Althusser, quoted in (J. Till, *Architecture Depends*, The MIT Press, Cambridge/London, p. 55) originally quoted in J. Read, “A Universal History of Contingency: Deleuze and Guattari on the History of Capitalism,” *Borderlands* 2, no. 3, 2003.

- ¹⁷ From the Press Release of Kirsten Pieroth's event for 1.60insurgent space, 22 May 2006.
- ¹⁸ D. Harvey, *Il capitalismo contro il diritto alla città*, Ombre corte, Verona, 2013, p. 26.
- ¹⁹ Pjeter Arbnori (Durrës, 18 January 1935 - Naples, 8 July 2006) was an Albanian politician, writer and activist.
- ²⁰ Kolaneci: Forma e Piramidës, në harmoni me malin e Dajtit. n.d. Wayback Machine. Accessed April 4, 2025.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20140224113116/http://www.balkanweb.com/gazetav5/newsadmin/preview.php?id=55071>
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² At the time of writing this article, Rama is running for his fourth term in office, in the general election to be held on 11 May 2025.
- ²³ <https://www.mvrdv.com/>
- ²⁴ Joaquin Barriendos R, from the Press Release of Alejandro Vidal's event for 1.60insurgent space, 29 June 2005.
- ²⁵ <https://www.kovacevska.net/the-walking-project> For the sake of completeness, on 15 September 2006, another artist, the Italian Emma Ciceri, realised a performance entitled "Rails" right along the tracks of Tirana Railway Station. The performance was part of the day of events that closed the 1.60insurgent space project.
- ²⁶ An area of the city of Tirana to which, during the regime, access was forbidden to the entire population, because it housed the residences of the dictator and the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party.
- ²⁷ Verica Kovacevska, from the Press Release of the event, 30 August 2006.
- ²⁸ G. Debord, in K. Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*, Edited by Ken Knabb, PM Press, Binghamton, New York, 2024, p. 52.
- ²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 66.
- ³⁰ Grimshaw, Architects, Tirana master plan / Grimshaw, 2015. Accessed April 13, 2025. <https://grimshaw.global/projects/master-planning/tirana-master-plan/>
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Studies on the Relations Between Albanian and Romanian as an Indicator of the Connections Between the Two Peoples and the Advancement of Knowledge of the Common Language and History

Manjola ZAÇELLARI

Abstract: *The linguistic similarities between Albanian and Romanian are numerous. They belong to three linguistic levels: lexical, grammatical and phonetic. Although both Albanian and Romanian are Indo-European languages with different group statuses, researchers have concluded that these languages have “the same subject” but with two “different forms”. The linguistic relations between them are deep and complex, as they were formed during common historical periods and mutual influences. Both languages share many common elements, mainly due to the Thracian-Illyrian period. Etymological and comparative studies show that historical and cultural connections have played an important role in the formation of these similarities. The relations between the two languages are a rich and important field of study for the understanding of their historical and linguistic development. These relations are a topic of in-depth research for many Romanian and Albanian scholars, who have analysed linguistic similarities and differences, linking this field not only with issues of etymology and grammar but also with the problems of ethnogenesis and the formation of the two populations. Through a comparative approach and critical interpretation of the existing literature of Albanian and Romanian authors that shed light on the relations of Albanian with Romanian, this paper aims to highlight the depth and nature of these relations, highlighting the structural similarities, common sources and historical-cultural influences that have influenced their formation.*

Keywords: *Albanian, Romanian, linguistic overlaps*

Introduction

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Romania, especially cities such as Bucharest, Braila and Constanța, became important centres for the patriotic and cultural activity of Albanians in exile. They played a decisive

role in the development of the movement for Albanian language, education and national independence.

The Albanian colony in Bucharest, as noted by Çabej¹, served as a centre of organisation and publication, helping to create the first Albanian primers and to spread Renaissance ideas.

Naum Veqilharxhi, one of the earliest figures of this period, published in Bucharest in 1844 the primer *Evëtori Shqip Fort i Shkurtër*, which represents one of the first attempts to write Albanian in a separate alphabet². The “Drita” and later “Shpresa” associations, which operated in Romania, contributed significantly to the support of Albanian schools, the publication of books in Albanian, and the distribution of patriotic literature in Albanian territories. These organisations raised funds, published newspapers and primers, and created an atmosphere of solidarity for the national cause³.

The Frashëri brothers also had a close connection with the Albanian colony in Romania. Naim Frashëri, during his stay in Bucharest, published his most important works, such as *Bagëti e Bujqësia* and *Historia e Skënderbeut*, using Romanian printing presses and taking advantage of the freedom of the press that this country offered⁴. On the other hand, Nicolae Iorga, a Romanian historian and Albanologist, actively supported the Albanian cause and stated that Albanians and Romanians are “a tribe of the same blood”, emphasising the cultural and historical affinities between the two peoples⁵.

At the time of the declaration of Albanian Independence (1912), Romania maintained a positive stance towards Albanian aspirations for statehood. Romanian political and cultural elites expressed understanding and sympathy for Albanian independence, diplomatically supporting the

Albanian position in international conferences of the time⁶.

In this context, it is also worth mentioning the close and rich cultural and scientific relations, especially in the field of linguistics, dating back to the 19th century. This cooperation between the two countries has helped create a friendly atmosphere, deepening especially after World War II, when many young Albanians went to study in Romania. Therefore, we have today an important legacy that continues to influence studies and relations between Albania and Romania.

Scientific cooperation has also been enriched by well-known figures in Albanian and Romanian linguistics, who have played an important role in advancing these studies. Personalities such as Aleksandër Xhuvani, Eqrem Çabej, Mahir Domi, Shaban Demiraj, Iorgu Iordan, and many others have contributed to strengthening the ties between the two peoples and advancing knowledge of the common language and history.

Linguistic relations between Albanian and Romanian

The relations between Albanians and Romanians go beyond political support. There is a deeper connection between them, which stems first from the similarities between these two languages and from a historical connection between the two countries. This fact is supported by numerous studies that have investigated the relations between Albanian and Romanian. Studies on this aspect belong to three

linguistic levels: lexical, grammatical and phonetic. Although both Albanian and Romanian are Indo-European languages with different group statuses, researchers have concluded that these languages have “the same subject” but with two “different forms”⁷. The linguistic relations between them are deep and complex, as they were formed during common historical periods and mutual influences. Both languages share many common elements, mainly due to the Thracian-Illyrian period. Etymological and comparative studies show that historical and cultural connections have played an important role in the formation of these similarities. The researcher A. Rosseti⁸ has emphasised that Albanian, as a descendant of Illyrian, has had historical contacts with other Balkan languages, such as Thracian and Daco-Mesian, which have influenced its formation and that of Romanian. This influence, according to him, has led to the creation of common words and grammatical structures, which have been evidenced during various studies. The researcher G. Brâncuș⁹ emphasises that the similarities between the two languages are related to a common Thracian-Illyrian substrate, which has influenced the linguistic development of both peoples. According to him, the common Romanian-Albanian element was conceived in this area of the Thracian-Illyrian encounter”¹⁰. Other Romanian scholars, such as I. Russu¹¹, C. Poghiric¹², A. Vraciu¹³, examining the relations of the Albanian language with Romanian, the etymology of words, and the

common elements in the linguistic fund, have also emphasised the importance of the substrate as the source of these common elements.

Linguistic relations of Albanian with Romanian

The linguistic similarities of Albanian with Romanian are an important field of study, which testify, among other things, to a common Illyrian-Thracian heritage. Nicolae Iorga¹⁴, a Romanian historian, literary critic, Albanologist and poet, claimed that Albanians and Romanians are “a tribe of one blood”, emphasising the deep cultural and linguistic ties between the two peoples. On the other hand, the Albanologist Grigore Brâncuș¹⁵ in his detailed analyses of the relations between Albanian and Romanian noted that the phenomenon of rhotacism, a characteristic element that separates the dialects of Albanian, especially those of Gheg and Tosk, is similar to Romanian. He explains that the rhotacism of -n- is a phonetic phenomenon that has occurred in several Romance languages and Albanian and has influenced the formation of phonological variations in these languages. In Romanian, rhotacism is closely linked to the development of different dialects of the language, such as Dacorumanian and Istro-Romanian. In Dacorumanian, the nasalised “r” coexists with the oral “r” to this day, while in Istro-Romanian and Albanian, the “r” was completely de-nasalised. This phenomenon occurred during the period of contact with Slavic, where rhotac-

cism did not affect the Slavic elements borrowed from these languages. The rhotacism of the –n- ending in Romanian and Albanian occurred during the period of contact with Slavic, reflecting the phonetic changes that occurred in the way words were formed. This process has been described by a number of scholars such as Meyer-Lübke¹⁶ and Densusianu¹⁷, and supported by other scholars such as Gjiniari¹⁸ and Çabej¹⁹, who suggest that rhotacism may have occurred as early as the 14th century, reflecting particularly in toponyms and words borrowed from Greek, Italian and Slavic.

Comparative studies between the two languages have also touched on the lexical level. In fact, what initially attracted attention, a reason to later make observations on other linguistic levels such as phonetics and grammar, is the common corpus of some old words. This lexical phenomenon was first identified by Miklosich²⁰ from the mid-19th century. XIX (1861), where he notes that we have lexical units with similar phonetic and semantic construction.

The lexical similarities between Albanian and Romanian have been interpreted by various researchers as a consequence of a common source, which most of them link to the Thracian substrate. This idea is also supported by several other authors who have examined the similarities between these two languages. What makes this lexicon special is the fact that the corresponding words cannot be traced back to classical languages such as Latin or ancient Greek, nor to

languages that later influenced the region, such as Slavic or Oriental languages. This has led to the emergence of several hypotheses on the origin of this lexical fund.

Some scholars believe that the source of these words should be sought in an early linguistic layer of the Balkans, specifically in Thracian or a form of Thracian-Dacian. According to this thesis, Albanian could represent a continuation of this language, which would also explain the similarities with Romanian. Meanwhile, some other authors suggest that these lexical elements were borrowed from Romanian through Albanian or a language that preceded it in an earlier period, before the influence of Slavic languages²¹.

Researchers Jashari and Bello²² claim that “regarding the source of this common lexicon in Albanian and Romanian, we do not have and hardly can come up with a common and clearly and accurately argued opinion. Different researchers give different figures for the number of old words shared between Albanian and Romanian: Russu²³ mentions about 70 words, while Brâncuș²⁴ reaches up to 90 units. However, it is widely accepted that this lexicon was once wider and testifies to early linguistic relations with pre-Slavic roots. According to Jashari and Bello, determining the origin of these words remains a fundamental issue for Balkan linguistics. Meanwhile, researcher A. Vehbiu (2020), states that Albanian and Romanian share close links in phonetics, morphology, syntax and lexicon. A

number of old words in Romanian, which cannot be explained through Latin, have clear correspondences in Albanian. The two languages also share similarities in the way words of Latin origin have evolved phonetically. Based on these correspondences, some Albanologists, such as Norbert Jokli, have suggested that the ancestors of Albanians and Romanians once coexisted in a common space, perhaps in the heart of the Balkans. According to Vehbiu²⁵, these linguistic connections are often used as an argument by supporters of the Thracian hypothesis for the origin of Albanian since Romanian is thought to have been built on a Thracian substrate. Likewise, those who believe that Albanian was formed further inland in the Balkans, away from the coast and the influences of ancient Greek, use these correspondences to support their position. However, it should be mentioned that there are also scholars, such as Çabej²⁶ or Cimochofski²⁷, who have treated Albanian-Romanian relations seriously, even though they are supporters of the hypothesis of the Illyrian origin of Albanian.

Of the two dialects of Albanian, Tosk is the one that shows the most similarities with Romanian, especially at the phonetic level, for example, in the replacement of nasal vowels with open *ë* or *a* and in the phenomenon of rhotacism (where in Romanian the *l* is rhotacised, while in Albanian the 'n' is rhotacised).

Two languages – a common history

Studies on the linguistic relations between Albanian and Romanian, as we mentioned before, have included prominent Romanian and Albanian linguists, such as Alexandru Rosetti, Eqrem Çabej, Shaban Demiraj, Sextil Pușcariu, Grigore Brâncuș, Seit Mansaku, Bardhyl Demiraj, and many others. In this paper we will present some of their main contributions, emphasising the fact that the study of similarities between the two languages highlights the depth and nature of these relations, pointing out the structural similarities, common sources and historical-cultural influences that have influenced their formation.

Research by A. Rossetti

Alexandru Rosetti²⁸, one of the most prominent Romanian linguists of the 20th century, has treated in depth the linguistic relations between Albanian and Romanian in his monumental work *Istoria limbii române*. In this work, he analyses the mutual influences and structural similarities between these two languages, placing them in the broader context of the Balkan languages. Rosetti notes that Albanian and Romanian share a number of common phonetic, morphological, and syntactic features that are not found in other Romance languages. These similarities are attributed to a common Balkan substratum, particularly influences from the Thracian or Daco-Thracian languages. He empha-

sises that these similarities are the result of a long coexistence and close interaction between Albanian and Romanian communities in the Balkan region. Rosetti argues that many of the so-called “Balkanisms” in Romanian can be traced back to common substratum influences, which are also present in Albanian.

These include grammatical and lexical structures that are not common in other Romance languages, suggesting a deep influence from the prehistoric languages of the region.

E. Çabej's views

In his work *Introduction to the History of the Albanian Language*, Eqrem Çabej²⁹, one of the most important figures in 20th-century Albanian linguistics, opens the treatment of the relations between Albanian and Romanian with a clear assessment of the depth of these connections. He states that: “Romanian and Albanian have very close connections between them. The history of these connections has remained unclear to this day; their explanation constitutes one of the main problems of Balkan linguistics”³⁰. According to him, the similarities between the two languages are not limited to one aspect but include numerous areas of linguistic structure: phonetics, grammar (nominal inflection and the construction of verb forms), lexicon, word construction, as well as phraseology and proverbs. These similarities are so pronounced that, in his words, “we have before us a single linguistic subject, which ap-

pears in two different forms”. Thus, Çabej concludes that “the Albanian and Romanian peoples were once geographically closer to each other in their history; in some places they may even have been in coexistence (symbiosis)”³¹. According to R. Ismajli³², “Çabej’s entire vision is related to relations of the nature of Balkan contact (convergence) or symbiosis, leaving aside aspects of genetic inheritance”.

Shaban Demiraj's perspective

The scholar Shaban Demiraj has also addressed the issue of the relations between Albanian and Romanian, although he reached conclusions that did not fully match those of Çabej. Demiraj³³ considered the presence of common words between Albanian and Romanian to be important, especially because these similarities were also supported by similarities in the grammatical system. From the grammatical elements, he mentioned the early tendency of both languages to place incomplete determiners after the noun, as well as other features that are also found in other Balkan languages, such as the postposition of the definite article, the construction of the future tense with the auxiliary verb *dua*, the unification of the dative case with the genitive, etc.

Regarding the common vocabulary, Sh. Demiraj referred to the early observations of F. Miklosich³⁴, who had evidenced the presence of similar words in both languages, both in phonetic and semantic terms. According

to Demiraj, these words were inherited from the most ancient periods, which was evidenced by old phonetic developments. In this way, he followed a somewhat different path from that of Çabej, approaching more closely the approach of Romanian scholars. Demiraj analysed those lexical units that could potentially originate from another language, namely from a substrate language, but he left this issue open due to the uncertainty in the chronological stratification of this lexical fund in both languages. He estimated that sometimes, through old phonetic phenomena, an earlier layer can be distinguished. If this layer belongs to a period that precedes the formation of Albanian and Romanian as separate languages, then there can be no question of borrowings from Romanian into Albanian, but on the contrary, in some cases one can think of a possible influence in the opposite direction.

Studies by E. Pușcariu

In Emil Pușcariu, one of the most famous Romanian linguists, a special emphasis is put on the linguistic and historical connections between Albanian and Romanian, especially in the context of the South Danubian origin of Romanian. In his work *Limba Română Î*³⁵, Pușcariu notes that phonetic and lexical coincidences have been used by various scholars as an argument to assert the coexistence of the precursor Romanian and Albanian communities south of the Danube. He quotes P. Skok³⁶, who emphasises that

the similar way of treating the group a + nasal in both languages, as well as the treatment of the groups cs, ct in Albanian, Romanian, and Dalmatian, suggests a common geographical space for these populations in the Illyrian region. Further, Pușcariu also refers to M. Friedwagner³⁷, who believed that the external factor that gave Romanian its special features may have been precisely the ancient Albanian, with an influence that developed mainly in Dardania. Pușcariu himself concludes that: “The Albanisms of Romanian, together with other similarities with Albanian, make us certain of one thing: our ancestors lived together with the ancestors of the current Albanians. Since we have neither records nor indications that Albanians lived north of the Danube, we are forced to accept that at least a part of the old Romans lived south of the river”³⁸.

G. Brâncuș on the relations of Albanian with Romanian

In his study “Romanian-Albanian Linguistic Relations” Grigore Brâncuș³⁹ analyses the affinities and similarities between the Romanian and Albanian languages, including all linguistic levels: phonetics, morphology, lexicon, syntax and onomastics. Brâncuș argues that the connections between Albanian and Romanian are deeper than mere lexical borrowings, including the basic structures of the language. He emphasises the importance of a thorough historical and comparative analysis to understand

this relationship. The author supports the thesis that the many similarities between these two languages come from a common Balkan substrate — specifically Thracian-Dacian for Romanian and Illyrian-Thracian for Albanian. This idea is presented as an alternative to explaining the similarities through later borrowings. In his work, an important place is also occupied by the analysis of phonetic and morphological phenomena common between the two languages. Analysing issues such as the vowel ě (voiceless), rhotacism (changing *n* to *r*), palatalisation of the sounds *t* and *d*, the formation of affricates (such as *ç*, *xh*), the use of the postpositioned prominent node, the researcher claims that these phenomena suggest a common development in a certain geolinguistic context.

Brâncuş also highly values the contribution of Albanian Albanologists such as Eqrem Çabej, Shaban Demiraj, Aleksandër Xhuvani, and others, considering them as founders of a serious scientific school that has treated this topic with objectivity and depth.

Discussions by S. Mansaku

Sei Mansaku's discussions on the relations between Albanian and Romanian present a sober and contemporary approach, far from the 19th century concepts that often considered the languages as isolated units with a uniform origin. In his analyses, Mansaku⁴⁰ emphasises that Balkan Latin does not have a homogeneous

source — a conclusion that he considers natural, given the duration of Latin influence in the Balkans and the multiethnic and multilingual composition of the region. He supports the idea of a convergent development of Latinity in the Balkans, which is manifested in the lexical correspondences between Romanian and Latin elements in Albanian. These correspondences were later emphasised even more strongly in order to support the thesis of the Thracian origin of Albanian and the possible coexistence of the predecessor populations of Albanians and Romanians in the area of the Niš–Sofia–Skopje triangle.

B. Demiraj on the relations between Albanian and Romanian and a critical analysis of Brâncuş's work

In his review of G. Brâncuş's work, Bardhyl Demiraj⁴¹ presents a critical analysis of the author's approach to the linguistic relations between Albanian and Romanian, highlighting the difficulties and limitations of the method used. He describes the supposed substratum of Romanian as "the darkest and least clarified area in the history of that language" (Demiraj, p. 196), noting that the connection between the non-Latin vocabulary of Romanian and the Indo-European component of Albanian is problematic, especially if it is based on the hypothesis of a Thracian element in the etymological structure of Albanian,

given that Thracian remains an unknown language.

Demiraj emphasises two important issues:

1. The role of comparisons – He claims that for Albanian, internal historical reconstruction is the basis for understanding linguistic development, while comparison with Romanian has only auxiliary value. The opposite is true for Romanian. He follows in the footsteps of Eqrem Çabej, emphasising the importance of the internal reconstruction method for languages with late documentation such as Albanian.

2. Criticism of the *satem*/*centum* classification – Demiraj opposes the division made by Brâncuș of the *satem* element of Albanian as Thracian and the *centum* element as Illyrian, considering this to be in contradiction with the conclusions of Albanology, according to which:

“Albanian in its constitutive elements was an immediate continuation of a *satem* language of the Balkans”⁴².

Overall, Demiraj appreciates the need for methodological caution and approaches more based on well-attested data, avoiding hypothetical constructions that have no solid basis in historical linguistics.

Conclusions

Studies on the relations between Albanian and Romanian shed light not only on the linguistic affinities between the two languages but also on a common history of coexistence and mutual influences between the two

peoples. From the analysis of the contributions of various linguists, it is clear that these relations are built on multifaceted foundations: from a common Balkan substrate, from early historical contacts and from parallel linguistic developments in a common geolinguistic environment. These studies not only serve to better understand the structure and history of the two languages but are also important indicators of the cultural and ethnic ties that unite Albanians and Romanians. From the analysis of the mentioned researchers, it is clear that the linguistic relations between Albanian and Romanian are extremely complex. Despite differences in approach, such as Çabej's emphasis on cultural symbiosis, Rosetti and Brâncuș's focus on the common Balkan substratum, or Shaban and Bardhyl Demiraj's more critical stance on methodological difficulties, all acknowledge the existence of a deep connection between these two languages. This connection is manifested in the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical similarities that distinguish Albanian and Romanian from other languages of the respective family, including them in a common Balkan geolinguistic area. The comparative view of these researchers helps to illuminate an important chapter in the history of Balkan languages and shows that the study of interlingual relations requires a measured, multifaceted approach supported by clear historical and linguistic evidence.

Notes

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Echoes of the Past: Folklore Connections between Albania and Romania

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Abstract: *The historical and cultural connections between Romanians and Albanians, two peoples in the Balkan Peninsula, have spurred linguistic, historical, and folkloric studies. This study aims to explore the intricate relationship between Albanian and Romanian folklore, examining shared motifs, characters, and narratives that illuminate their intertwined cultural heritage. Drawing upon comparative analysis of folktales, legends, and traditional customs, this research investigates the commonalities and divergences in the folkloric traditions of both nations. It also examines historical contexts, such as the Middle Ages and the Ottoman era, that have shaped the folklore of both regions. This study also considers the impact of Romanian academics on Albanian culture, and how the two cultures depict themselves and each other. Furthermore, the research delves into the linguistic connections between the Albanian and Romanian languages, searching for shared vocabulary, linguistic structures, symbolism, and mythology within their folklore. By analyzing these elements, this study seeks to reveal the extent of the ethno-spiritual relationships between the Thracian-Romanian and Illyrian-Albanian cultures. Ultimately, this exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics within the Balkans and highlights the enduring legacy of shared folkloric traditions between Albanians and Romanians.*

Keywords: *Albanian folklore, Romanian folklore, kulshedra, zmeu, Balkan oral tradition, comparative mythology.*

Introduction

The Balkan Peninsula is often described as a crossroads of cultures, where the clash of civilizations, the ebb and flow of empires, and the interplay of religious and linguistic systems have created a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Albania and Romania, though geographically sepa-

rated by rugged mountains and valleys, share deep and meaningful folkloric connections that transcend their linguistic and historical differences. These connections are grounded in shared Indo-European origins and are shaped by common historical experiences, especially under Ottoman rule, as well as the in-

tertwinning of Christianity with pre-Christian beliefs.

Romanian and Albanian folk traditions, both deeply rooted in oral culture, have preserved unique stories, mythological figures, and symbolic motifs. While the languages spoken by the two peoples—Romanian, a Romance language, and Albanian, a member of the Indo-European language family but distinct from its neighbors—may seem distant, their folklore reveals profound similarities. These similarities suggest a historical interaction, a shared cultural history, and, in some cases, the survival of ancient, pre-Roman and pre-Christian beliefs that have been adapted and modified over centuries of foreign occupation and societal transformation.

This study seeks to delve deeper into the common folkloric threads that link Albania and Romania, examining the shared motifs, mythological figures, and narrative structures. By doing so, we reveal the enduring connections between these two Balkan cultures and explore how their folklore contributes to the maintenance of a collective Balkan identity¹.

SHARED FOLKLORIC MOTIFS AND ARCHETYPES

The Heroic Outlaw: Kreshnik and Haiduc

One of the most powerful and evocative archetypes found in both Albanian and Romanian folklore is that of the heroic outlaw—figures

who defy the established social order in order to protect their communities and uphold justice. The *kreshniks* in Albanian folklore are semi-mythic warriors who fight for honor, kin, and homeland. These figures appear prominently in the epic poetry of the highland regions, where they are depicted as strong, brave, and often supernaturally endowed. The *kreshniks* are typically engaged in struggles against foreign invaders, particularly the Ottomans, as well as against mythical monsters and even internal threats like treachery or betrayal. In the epic “Muji and Halili,” the two *kreshniks* battle against Ottoman forces, demonstrating both physical strength and cleverness in their struggle for freedom².

In Romania, the parallel figure is the *haiduc*, a heroic outlaw who robs from the rich to give to the poor, embodying a defiant spirit against social injustice. The *haiduc* often represents a form of resistance against foreign or corrupt rulers, particularly during the Ottoman and Phanariot periods, when the Romanian peasants faced heavy taxation and oppression. Figures such as Iancu Jianu, who fought against the Ottoman and Phanariot elites in the 19th century, have become legendary in Romanian folklore and continue to symbolize national pride and resistance. Both the *kreshniks* and the *haiduc* are characterized by their deep sense of justice and are often portrayed as individuals of great moral clarity. These figures are typically accompanied by loyal companions—brothers, comrades, or even magical

beings—that underscore the importance of fraternity and solidarity in their missions of resistance³. This shared motif reflects not only a common heroic ideal but also a shared value system in both Albanian and Romanian cultures, where heroism is tied to the defense of the community and the fight against tyranny.

Mythical Monsters: Kulshedra and Zmeu

Both Albanian and Romanian folklore feature terrifying and destructive mythical creatures that embody chaos and evil—figures who must be vanquished in order to restore balance to the world. The *kulshedra*, a multi-headed dragon or serpent, is a central figure in Albanian mythology. In the epic tales, the *kulshedra* causes destruction by blocking rivers or consuming livestock, threatening the survival of entire communities. Only a hero with supernatural strength or divine favor can defeat this creature, typically through combat or the performance of specific tasks. The *drangue*, a hero with the power of thunder, is often the one chosen to confront and defeat the *kulshedra* in these stories⁴.

In Romanian folklore, the *zmeu* serves a similar function. The *zmeu* is a dragon-like figure who kidnaps beautiful maidens and hoards treasure. The most famous Romanian hero tasked with confronting the *zmeu* is *Făt-Frumos*, a handsome and courageous young man who sets out on a quest to rescue a captive princess.

Like the *kulshedra*, the *zmeu* symbolizes destructive forces that threaten the natural and social order⁵. The myth of the *zmeu* is deeply rooted in the ancient Indo-European dragon-slaying mythos, which represents the cosmic struggle between order and disorder. Both the *kulshedra* and the *zmeu* are often linked to the natural world—rivers, mountains, and forests—highlighting their roles as forces that disrupt the harmony of the world. Their defeat, by brave heroes, symbolizes the restoration of order, justice, and balance⁶.

Nature Spirits and Supernatural Women

Both Albanian and Romanian folklore contain numerous references to supernatural beings, particularly feminine figures associated with nature and the wild. The *zana* in Albanian folklore are female nature spirits who are often depicted as ethereal, beautiful, and powerful. They inhabit remote areas of the mountains, forests, and springs, where they serve as protectors of the natural world. In some tales, the *zana* is seen as a benevolent figure who helps warriors or travelers, while in others, she can be vengeful, punishing those who disrespect the land or its sacred rules. The *zana* often possess the ability to bestow blessings or curses, depending on how they are treated by humans.

Romanian folklore also contains similar figures, such as the *zână* and *iele*. The *zână* is a fairy-like figure, a guardian of nature, beauty, and fertil-

ity. She is often portrayed as a healer or protector of the wilderness. The *iele*, on the other hand, are more mysterious and dangerous beings, frequently associated with the forces of nature that are untamed and wild. They are known to dance at midnight in the forest, and those who see them may face dire consequences. The *iele* embody both the nurturing and destructive powers of nature, reflecting the duality inherent in natural forces.

Both the *zana* and the *zână* as well as the *iele* are associated with liminal spaces—forests, mountains, and rivers—that are seen as boundaries between the human world and the divine or supernatural realm. These figures underscore the ancient connection between the feminine, nature, and the spiritual forces that govern life and death, creation and destruction. They also reflect a deep reverence for nature and the idea that the natural world is both sacred and dangerous, requiring respect and humility from those who interact with it.

Historical Contexts and Cultural Influences

The Ottoman Empire, which controlled much of the Balkans for several centuries, left a profound impact on both Albanian and Romanian folklore. The lasting influence of Ottoman rule can be seen in the recurring themes of mission against foreign invaders, particularly Turkish pashas and other Ottoman figures. In both Albanian and Romanian folklore,

these figures are often portrayed as tyrants or oppressive rulers who are ultimately overthrown by local heroes. The moral of these stories is often clear: the Ottoman rulers represent injustice, while the native hero embodies the spirit of resistance and the quest for freedom and justice⁷.

The process of Christianization also left a lasting imprint on both Albanian and Romanian folklore. Many pre-Christian deities and spirits were assimilated into Christian beliefs, resulting in the creation of syncretic figures that combined elements of pagan and Christian traditions. For instance, in both cultures, Saint Elijah (Shën Ilia in Albanian, Sfântul Ilie in Romanian) became a powerful figure associated with thunder and lightning, replacing earlier pagan gods of the storm. This transformation reflects the broader trend of Christianization in the Balkans, where older beliefs were often absorbed and reinterpreted within the framework of Christianity⁸.

Moreover, the influence of neighboring cultures, such as the Slavs and Greeks, further enriched the folklore traditions of both Albania and Romania. Folklorists have long noted the cross-cultural exchanges that occurred throughout the region, with shared themes, motifs, and characters emerging across different traditions. This cultural blending helped shape the distinctive but interconnected folklore of the Balkans, a region that remains a tapestry of diverse cultural influences.

Linguistic Parallels in Folkloric Language

Despite the linguistic divergence between Romanian and Albanian, there are significant linguistic parallels that emerge in the study of folklore. Both languages belong to the larger Indo-European language family, and over the centuries, they have shared cultural and linguistic contact, particularly in areas with mixed Vlach and Aromanian populations. As a result, certain words, expressions, and phrases in their folk speech show evidence of borrowing and convergence.

One of the most intriguing examples of linguistic overlap is the term *drac*, meaning both “devil” and “dragon” in Romanian. This word has an almost identical counterpart in Albanian: *dreq*, which also refers to an evil spirit or devil. These terms appear frequently in folk prayers, curses, and legends, where they are invoked to ward off evil or explain misfortune. The shared linguistic roots of these terms suggest not only ancient Indo-European connections but also the cultural diffusion between the two peoples, particularly during times of trade, migration, and occupation.

Other common elements of language and mythological symbolism further support the idea of a shared cultural heritage, as both cultures preserve ancient Indo-European archetypes and linguistic features. These connections reveal the ways in which folklore can act as a linguistic and cultural bridge, allowing us to trace the development and evolution of both languages and cultures.

Case Study: The Captive Maiden Motif

A striking example of the shared folklore between Albania and Romania is the *Captive Maiden* motif. This motif appears across a wide range of folktales, where a young woman is kidnapped by a dragon, demon, or other monstrous creature and imprisoned in a remote, often perilous location. The hero of the story—often a handsome prince or a valiant warrior—embarks on a quest to rescue her, overcoming numerous obstacles and completing tasks that prove his bravery and worth.

In Albanian tales such as *The Three Brothers and the Captive Princess*, the heroine is often a figure of immense beauty or divine significance, and her liberation requires not only strength but also cleverness and strategic thinking. The hero may receive help from magical creatures or supernatural allies along the way. Similarly, in Romanian tales such as those involving *Făt-Frumos*, the hero battles the *zmeu* or other monstrous figures to free the captive maiden, who symbolizes both the ideal of feminine beauty and the continuity of cultural values.

The shared *Captive Maiden* motif reveals much about gender roles and societal values in both cultures. The heroine is often portrayed as both a victim and a repository of hidden wisdom or power, and her rescue represents not only the restoration of order but also the reaffirmation of traditional values. The hero’s journey,

which is often fraught with dangers and moral challenges, represents the pursuit of justice and the triumph of good over evil.

Conclusion

Through a deeper exploration of shared folkloric motifs and archetypes, it becomes clear that the folklore traditions of Albania and Romania are not isolated but intertwined by centuries of cultural interaction, historical experience, and shared mythological heritage. From the heroic outlaws—the *kreshniks* and the *haiduc*—to the mythical monsters—the *kulshedra* and the *zmeu*—these figures serve as powerful symbols of resistance, justice, and the struggle against evil. Furthermore, the presence of supernatural female figures, such as the *zana* and *zână*, highlights the deep reverence for nature and the sacred role of women in both cultures' mythological systems.

Both cultures, while developing distinct national identities, preserve ancient Indo-European myths and symbols that continue to resonate in their modern folklore. The shared linguistic features, such as the words for “dragon” or “devil,” reveal not only common linguistic origins but also the lasting cultural bonds between the two peoples. Ultimately, the folklore of Albania and Romania continues to be a vibrant expression of their shared past, offering us a window into the mythic consciousness of the Balkan peoples and reminding us of the power of oral traditions to preserve and transmit cultural values across generations.

In exploring these interconnected traditions, we not only gain insight into the cultural soul of the Balkans but also come to appreciate the ways in which folklore can transcend borders, creating a shared sense of identity that endures despite the passage of time and the complexities of modern geopolitical realities.

Notes

- ¹ Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Indiana University Press, 1955, Motif G303.1.
- ² Edith Durham, *High Albania*, Phoenix Press, 2000 (originally published 1909), p. 239.
- ³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, Harcourt, 1957, pp. 128–130.
- ⁴ See Eqerem Çabej, „Studime gjuhësore dhe folklorike” in *Studime Filologjike*, 1965, p. 93.

- ⁵ Vladimir Georgiev, „The Balkan Linguistic Union”, *Slavonic and European Review*, 1959, p. 83.
- ⁶ Eric Hamp, *The Position of Albanian, Ancient Indo-European Dialects*, 1966, p.125.
- ⁷ Robert Elsie, *Albanian Folktales and Legends*, Dukagjini Publishing, 2001, tale #8.
- ⁸ Ion Creangă, *Povești*, Bucharest, 1879, p.130.

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The history of two romanian artworks

Suzana VARVARICA KUKA

Abstract: *At the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana, alongside thousands of works by Albanian and foreign artists, two pieces of Romanian art have been preserved and conserved in its collection for over 70 years. The management, curatorial, and research staff of the NGA has given special attention to these works, considering them unique, highly valuable, and categorizing them as particularly significant.*

The study text titled “The History of Two Romanian Artworks” will reveal various aspects related to the presence of these two artworks in the collection of the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana, their position among the works of foreign artists within this collection, as well as scholarly insights concerning the two pieces and their creators. The artworks belong to two distinguished Romanian artists: the piece “Landscape” is by Nicolae Grigorescu, Romania’s national painter, while “Portrait” is by Magdalena Radulescu, a painter of modern Romanian art. The study will outline the process undertaken to verify the authenticity of these works through contacts with the National Museum of Romanian Art in Bucharest.

This research aims to shed light on the particular significance of these two Romanian artworks, their artistic qualities, aesthetic and technical attributes, as well as the conservation and restoration approaches applied to them.

Through the development and organization of aesthetic reflections on these two artworks, special and extensive attention will be dedicated to the lives, creative work, and importance of the two renowned Romanian artists: Nicolae Grigorescu and Magdalena Radulescu. Most importantly, the study will examine their recognition within the Albanian art system and the position their work holds in the international visual arts scene.

The text will be based on archival sources from the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana, documentation provided by the National Museum of Romanian Art in Bucharest in 1996, as well as verified and reliable written and photographic records obtained electronically via the internet.

Keywords: *Art history, Albanian art history, painting, Romanian painters, Nicolae Grigorescu, Magdalena Radulescu.*

Introduction

The text titled: “*The History of Two Romanian Artworks*” is a research text with a historical character.

It is written with the purpose of informing and raising awareness about two paintings by two Romanian artists, which are preserved and conserved in the collection of foreign art-

ists' artworks at the National Gallery of Arts (GKA) in Tirana.

The content of the text is structured into five chapters. The last two chapters each include two subchapters. The journey of the location of the two works in the GKA, the description of their technical qualities, the distinction of aesthetic values and historical importance of the two Romanian artworks determine the developmental approach of each chapter and the line of thought followed and elaborated in this text. The first chapter delves into the history of the birth, growth, and enrichment with artworks of the GKA, highlighting the entry period into its collection of the two works: "*Landscape*" by Nicolae Grigorescu and "*Male Portrait*" by Magdalena Radulescu. The second chapter addresses the diplomatic, cultural, and social relations between Albania and Romania, emphasizing the integration of dozens of Albanian intellectuals and artists who were educated and worked in Romania from the 18th to the 20th century. The following chapter discusses the working visit of two GKA researchers to the National Museum of Art in Bucharest during the period of April 2–11, 1997, during which the authenticity of the two works was confirmed. The fourth chapter highlights the importance of the renowned artist Nicolae Grigorescu and his work "*Autumn*." Meanwhile, the fifth chapter describes the significance of the modern artist Magdalena Radulescu and her work "*Male Portrait*."

The chapters are rich in facts, which were researched during the academic investigation into the lives of the two Romanian artists. They enrich and emphasize the extraordinary value of the two Romanian artworks within the collection of foreign artists' works, which is part of the large collection of artworks of the GKA, in Tirana, created during the 20th century.

Grigorescu and Radulescu at the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana

Today, the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana (GKA) is the most important cultural and exhibiting institution of visual arts in Albania. It is a state institution, which has its own history of creation and development. Before the 20th century, the existence of such institutions was unknown. Artworks were created, sold, and bought by elite families. They were exhibited inside living spaces. In their villas and buildings, the first collections were created. These are evidenced by academic research into the early functioning of the Art Pinacotheca and later the Art Gallery in Tirana, which are the two early names of the GKA in Tirana.

During that period, their absence made it known that the historical development of visual arts exhibiting institutions began immediately after WWII with the initiative of the Albanian communist state. For the first time, the program of collecting artworks for the purpose of exhibition began in the mid-1940s. A direct initi-

ator and follower was the young painter of those years, Andon Kuqali (1925–2005). Later on, he became the first historian of visual arts. The Albanian state, starting from the end of 1944—which also marked the end of the war in Albania—began to systematize, purchase, and nationalize artworks that had been left behind in abandoned institutional buildings of a state that had been overthrown. The first works were nationalized along with the buildings where they were located. In 2005, on the eve of his passing, Andon Kuqali testified: *“Almost at the end of the war and around the middle of 1945, the first works of the Art Pinacotheca’s collection were gathered in the attic of a villa-type building constructed in the 1920s–30s, on Elbasan Street.”*

On the website of the Municipality of Tirana, it is written that: *“The building from before 1945 represents a mix of eclectic architecture with oriental influences and a small dose of ‘Art Nouveau’. It served as the headquarters of the Italian Embassy.”*

Today, Elbasan Street is named “George W. Bush” and the building serves as the headquarters of the Institute of Former Politically Persecuted Persons in Albania. I mention this fact because these were among the few buildings in Tirana, built by wealthy families, which were also the first homes where cultivated art was exhibited, purchased by their owners in various European countries. This art later became the first state collection.

After the end of World War II and into the year 1945, the new organization of the state and its governing institutions began. In 1946, one of them was the Committee of Arts. Its leading staff decided to form the Art Pinacotheca. One of the points in its mission was the purchase and collection of artworks. To date, there is no documented evidence for the year when the painting *“Landscape”* by Nicolae Grigorescu (1838–1907) was purchased. It is thought that alongside the group of works systematized by Andon Kuqali, in the villa on Elbasan Street, was also the painting *“Landscape”* by the famous Romanian artist, since in the archival inventory list of the GKA it bears Inv. no. 4. This fact confirms the early gathering of the first works that formed the collection of that pinacotheca and the time of arrival of Nicolae Grigorescu’s work into its collection.

From 1946 and for about ten consecutive years, dozens of artworks were bought and collected, which were exhibited in the Art Pinacotheca, the first exhibiting institution in Albania. Year after year, the Art Pinacotheca enriched the collection and increased the number of works. Also, the year 1949 stands out in its archival documentation as the year when works by foreign authors were purchased. And on January 11, 1954, the 8th year of the proclamation of the Republic of Albania, the Art Pinacotheca changed its name and was promoted as the Art Gallery (GA). It became an official, open, exhibiting space serving the public. Its

first collection, which contained a group of mostly family icons, works by anonymous foreign painters, works by Italian, French, Swiss, and Romanian painters—created through nationalization—was enriched with works purchased from the leading Albanian artists of the time such as: Kol Idromeno (1860–1939), Murat Toptani (1866–1918), Theohar Gjini (1878–1952), Vangjel Zego (1880–1940), Andrea Kushi (1884–1959), Simon Rrota (1887–1961), Vangjush Mio (1891–1957), etc. Together, they created the first collection composed of 122 works.

In 1955 until 1956, the management of the Art Pinacotheca was taken over by Nexhmedin Zajmi (1916–1991). He was a young painter who had studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. In the archival documentation of the GA, it is written that: *“Nexhmedin Zajmi was the initiator of the collection of some works by foreign authors, and their exhibition in the pinacotheca...”*. This fact and inventory number 4 in the archival notebook confirm that the work *“Autumn”* by Nicolae Grigorescu was exhibited for the first time to the public during this period. After the work of Nexhmedin Zajmi and over time under the direction of other prominent individuals, the continuous enrichment of the collection of the Pinacotheca and later the GA did not stop. In the mid-1980s, the Art Gallery through the Ministry of Education and Culture purchased several artworks by foreign authors, some of which were donated and some offered for sale by

individuals who had them in their families. Among this group of works was the piece titled: *“Male Portrait”* by the Romanian painter Magdalena Radulescu (1902–1983).

The mission of the GA was to operate as actively and transparently as possible in exhibiting artworks to the public. The occasional expansion and increase in the number of artworks was a permanent objective. The opening of the Higher Institute of Arts, today the University of Arts, brought an increase in the number of professional artists, who continuously created and exhibited their works in national exhibitions. In this atmosphere, it became possible to build a dignified building for the GA, with several floors and many exhibition spaces. The building was inaugurated on November 29, 1974. It had three floors and several modern exhibition halls and is located on the “Martyrs of the Nation” boulevard. Its spaces, until 1991, served to exhibit art that supported the propaganda demands of the time.

Before the 1990s, although the GA’s art fund conserved around 300 works of art by foreign authors and anonymous works, they were not exhibited for a long multi-year period. Only in 1984, when a new generation of artist administrators, who had been trained in the art academies of Eastern Europe, took the lead of the NGA board, was it made possible through a decision of this board to exhibit some of the foreign artists’ works in a special hall. Among them were exhibited the works of Romanian artists: “Land-

scape” by Nicolae Grigorescu and “Portrait of a Man” by Magdalena Radulescu. The “Foreign Authors” Hall, or the Red Marble Hall as it was called in the jargon of the time, followed the exhibition of the “Albanian Renaissance” art hall and was followed with devoted interest by visitors¹.

In 1992, the Art Gallery was declared the only national institution that protects and promotes the interests of Albanian visual arts². This designation led to the name change from the Art Gallery (GA) to the National Gallery of Arts (NGA). It also allowed for the functional expansion of the administrative structure of human resources and the creation of restorative, research, curatorial, and artistic opportunities. In its exhibition operations, the NGA underwent a complete transformation, giving importance to the selection, curation, and exhibition of contemporary Albanian and foreign art.

Romania, a cultural haven for Albanian artists and beyond

Albania gained independence on November 28, 1912, and Romania was the first country to recognize its independence. This was by no means a coincidence, since even earlier, during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the relationships between Albanians and the welcoming Romanian state were positive and active. The Gjika family, of Albanian origin and settled in Romanian lands since the mid-15th century, was and is very well known for the high political and social posi-

tions held by its members. The launch of several newspapers in the years 1889–1897, the opening of an Albanian school in 1905 in Constanța, and several cultural associations are historical expressions of the existence of Albanians in Wallachia or the Romanian Land, referred to in Romanian as Țara Românească.

In the diplomatic history of the two countries, the date December 16, 1913, marked the beginning of formal diplomatic relations between Albania and Romania. In these relations, cultural ties and patriotic values held a primary place. This important date was re-evaluated a century later by both countries, when on December 7, 2013, the Honorary Consulate of Romania was inaugurated in Korçë. This was a legitimate reason, as dozens and dozens of young men and intellectuals from Korçar families, from the late 18th century and even earlier, had emigrated to Romanian lands, formed families, studied, and fully engaged their patriotic tendencies for the good of both nations. Through cultural and patriotic associations, they preserved and cultivated the language, created an important social heritage potential, and prepared a favorable situation for both countries in building proper political-diplomatic relations. The events held in Bucharest on December 16, 2013, in memory of the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, were and remain an expression of that social and cultural potential formed, preserved, and respected for centuries between the two peoples.

The ties between Korçë and Pogradec with Romania, through emigration, are very close—indeed, inseparable—as they form part of the biographical history of many families from the two cities. Albanian emigration to Romania continued during the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. It was a social, patriotic, cultural, and educational emigration. They formed the largest community in the entire Albanian diaspora worldwide. The time of the Albanian National Renaissance in the last decades of the 19th century was the golden era of the Albanian people's efforts for national independence. Through numerous intellectuals who lived and contributed in the diaspora, primarily in Romania, they made the Albanian people part of the modern history of the peoples of the Southwestern European Peninsula, who fought, won national independence, and escaped Ottoman rule. Initially Naum Veqilharxhi (1787–1864), and later Dora d'Istria or Elena Gjika (1828–1888), Jani Vreto (1822–1900), Naim Frashëri (1846–1900), Aleksandër Stavre Drenova or Asdreni (1872–1947), Ilo Mitkë Qafëzezi (1889–1955), and others, will always be prominent representatives in the history of the Albanian National Renaissance. Through their intellectual activities in Albanian cultural associations, centers, and foundations on Romanian soil, they stimulated the patriotic awakening of Albanians and created healthy cultural and social layers.

In the first half of the 20th century, dozens of other young men from

Korçë and Pogradec, and not only, went to Romania, mainly Bucharest and Constanța, to pursue studies in various fields, although studies in philology, literature, and art predominated. Vangjush Mio, Lasgush Poradeci, Mitrush Kuteli, Kristaq Antoniu, and dozens of others were part of the first generation to be educated in Romanian universities in the early decades of the 20th century, or after 1912 for independent Albania. In Romania, they found the warmest social and educational refuge. There they elevated their professional dignity, through which they contributed to ensuring that socio-political and cultural-artistic developments in Albania followed the path of processes with Western tendencies.

Vangjush Mio studied painting and in Bucharest acquired the qualities of a true Impressionist artist. In the history of Albanian art, he is the most important professional painter of realistic and impressionist representation of seasonal nature landscapes, where autumn and winter prevail; of the emotional atmosphere that emerges as an organic interplay of the artist's fresh and positive feelings with the beauty of Mother Nature, the environments, and views of the alleys of Korçë city, the lake of Pogradec, and the Ionian and Adriatic seas.

Lasgush Poradeci (1899–1987), the poetic pseudonym of the well-known poet-writer and humanist critic from the city of Pogradec, Llazar Sotir Gusho, who became familiar with Romanian culture at the Monastery Lyceum and later at the National

School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, studied painting passionately for one year. He left a rich poetic and painterly legacy.

Mitrush Kuteli (1906–1967), the literary pseudonym of the renowned writer, economist, critic, and essayist Dhimitër Pasko, who was born and raised in Pogradec, was educated at the Academy of Higher Economic Sciences in Bucharest. In the history of 20th-century Albanian literature, he is considered one of the founders of modern Albanian prose. Kristaq Antoniu (1909–1979), a well-known musician and concert performer, a film actor of Korçë origin born in Romania, was educated at the College of Dramatic Mime in Bucharest. In Albania, he stood out as an operatic and folk singer.

This article, seemingly disconnected from the core of this historical and scholarly text, brings attention not only to the diplomatic relations of the two states, and the socio-cultural relations of the two peoples, but above all, it invites and encourages art researchers to discover that the existence of two Romanian artworks on Albanian soil is not a coincidence. It shows that the art lovers and collectors of Albania's wealthy elite in the first half of the 20th century recognized the highest values of Romanian art, a fact evidenced by the existence of two works by two of Romania's most prominent artists.

The collection of foreign artworks and the visit to the

National Museum of Art in Bucharest, April 2–11, 1997

Before the 1990s, the GA's art fund preserved about 250 artworks by foreign authors and anonymous artists. Their works date from the 16th to the 20th centuries and were purchased in the period from 1950 to 1990. They were exhibited during the initial opening period of the Art Pinacotheca from 1954 to 1969 and then remained unexhibited until 1984. First, because until 1974 the new building was under construction, and second, because until 1984 the GA staff focused on the exhibition of propaganda art or the method of socialist realism, while not excluding the display of the first secular and realist Albanian artists who emerged at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1984, the managerial and leadership staff of the GA decided that some of the foreign artists' works in the collection would be re-exhibited in a special hall. Included in this group of works were the two paintings by Romanian artists: "Autumn" by Nicolae Grigorescu and "Portrait of a Man" by Magdalena Radulescu. The hall remained open until 1996, the year when the general exhibition line of the NGA was closed, as reconstruction and curation of the halls began with defined curatorial concepts—something that had never happened before. During this period, priority was given to studies on artworks and creative periods. Special emphasis was placed on research into the for-

foreign artists' collection, both anonymous and those with known authors.

With the political system changes in Albania after the 1990s, the NGA's administrative and exhibition structures underwent fundamental transformations. Within its structure, in 1995, the Department for the Study of Artworks was established, whose specialists began research to supplement each foreign and anonymous artist's work with historical and aesthetic data. In the NGA's archival files, notes and reports are preserved regarding a work trip carried out by Eleni Laperi and Suzana Varvarica Kuka to the National Museum of Art in Bucharest, during the period April 2–11, 1997. The trip had several goals. First, to verify the two works by the well-known Romanian authors: "Autumn," a landscape in oil on canvas by Nicolae Grigorescu, and "Portrait of a Man," oil on leather by Magdalena Radulescu. Second, to become more broadly acquainted with the creativity of the two artists. Third, to explore the possibility of verifying and exchanging views with Romanian art researchers about the anonymous foreign authors' works that the NGA in Tirana held in its collection.

Presentation of the two works before the Sector for the Study of Romanian Painting and in the presence of its specialist Livia Karp was fruitful. She acknowledged that the work "Autumn" was an authentic work by Nicolae Grigorescu and made it possible to better understand the author through written materials and some of his original works. Meanwhile, Dr.

Florenta Ivanuic, specialist at the Museum of Collections, one of the authors of monographs and scholarly texts on the work of Magdalena Radulescu, accepted the work "Portrait of a Man" as an authentic work of the Romanian artist.

Even though this trip was fruitful, evidential, and important for the authenticity of the two works, it remained an ongoing and open working visit, as both works need to be enriched with additional important data.

The importance of Nicolae Grigorescu and his work "Autumn"

The work "Autumn" by Nicolae Grigorescu is one of the most important works in the collection of foreign authors at the GKA. It gives the collection artistic, aesthetic, and historical value and quality. This opinion is justified for dozens of reasons. Two of them are the name and fame of the artist, as well as the time and place in which the work was created.

About the painter Nicolae Grigorescu

Nicolae Grigorescu in 1860 at the age of 19. Photo of the time³

Romanian painter Nicolae Grigorescu is one of the best-known artists in the history of Romanian art, who also occupies a special place in the history of European Impressionism. He has been referred to in Romania as the "national painter," a very high recognition for the artist. In the biographical documentation preserved in the GKA

archive, which was established in 1997, some known facts about the artist are disclosed, which are briefly mentioned in this text. Additionally, to broaden the knowledge about the artist's personality, information found online has also been used.

Nicolae Grigorescu was born on May 15, 1838, in the village of Pitaru, Romania, and was the sixth child of the family of Ion and Maria Grigorescu. His uncle connected and encouraged him with the art of drawing and painting. Initially, during the period 1848–1850, he learned to paint icons in the workshop of Czech painter Anton Chladek (1794–1882), who was well known as a portraitist of the European imperial style. Nicolae Grigorescu painted frescoes and icons for several monasteries, among which the Agipa Monastery stands out, where he painted from 1958–1961.

The young artist's painting impressed Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1863), a lawyer and historian, and at the same time, the Romanian prime minister of that era, who in 1861 awarded the young painter one of the study scholarships abroad from the Principality of Moldavia.

With the dream of going to Paris, the art capital of that time, he began to diligently practice in the studio of Swiss painter and Paris resident Charles Gleyre (1806–1874). At the age of 23, he won the competition and a scholarship to attend the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He eagerly pursued academic education in seminars led by portrait and icon painter Sebastian Cornu (1804–1870), a col-

league of Auguste Renoir (1841–1919). He persisted and studied drawing and composition for about a year and a half, as he felt deficiencies in his technical and artistic formation. He visited the Louvre Museum dozens of times, observing and studying the achievements of his favorite painters. Rembrand (1606–1669), Rubens (1577–1640), Gericault (1791–1824), Prud'hon (1758–1823), from whom he elevated his own level of perception about color and composition. In 1863, he stood out in a themed competition “to paint a tree” and won the right to paint directly in nature, in Barbizon and later in Marlotte, two villages frequented by realist and impressionist artists. In this period, 1863–1869, he distinguished himself in landscape painting and seemed to become strongly tied to the life and atmosphere of the rural world. At that time, he admired the paintings of Diaz de la Peña (1807–1876), Jean-François Millet (1814–1875), Théodore Rousseau (1812–1867), Camille Corot (1796–1875), Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), etc.

In 1867, he began to exhibit. In 1868, he became well known at the exhibition of painters from the Barbizon School, and one of his paintings was purchased by Emperor Napoleon III. That same year, two of his paintings were accepted into the Paris Salon. **(2)** In 1870, after exhibiting dozens of works in the “Exhibition of the Living” in Bucharest, he became well known and respected as one of the most distinguished artistic personalities in his country. In this exhibition,

he won the gold medal for the portrait of the Romanian general and philanthropist Constantin Năsturel-Herescu (1798–1879).

During the War of Independence of 1877–1878, Nicolae Grigorescu, as a painter, joined the General Staff of the Romanian Army. At that time, he sketched many battle scenes and later painted them into canvases that are very well known in Romanian visual culture. At the turn of the 20th century, he was a very well-known painter and honorary member of the Romanian Academy. At the end of his life, he left Bucharest and settled in the city of Câmpina, where he also passed away. Since 1954, his house in that city has been turned into a national museum.

Romanian criticism distinguished Grigorescu's creativity and praised it as work with national inspiration and extraordinary aesthetic quality. He was singled out as the first Romanian artist to develop his painting with the traits of the art movement known as Impressionism and practiced en plein air. In the exhibition catalogue opened in 2011, with 95 artworks by Nicolae Grigorescu and titled "The Time of Impressionism in Romania", the artist is described as *"The first painter of his country to work in the open air, and founder of modern painting in Romania. He managed to develop an extraordinary synthesis between the assimilation of the avant-garde, with which he came into contact during his travels through Europe, and local characteristics..."*⁴.

Foreign critics, notably Henri Focillon (1881–1943), wrote:

*"Nicolae Grigorescu is the Master who set the tone for the last generation, he is Romanian in soul in every aspect of his work... he is not an isolated figure... He had imitators and followers. He created a school..."*⁵.

Nicolae Grigorescu began his creative work as an icon painter for Romanian churches; later he practiced academic portrait painting. But the greatest wealth of his creation lies in the vivid and dynamic scenes of the daily life of his country. Villages, people and their homes, herds, lakes, forests, and fields inspired him more than anything else. Paintings that depict rural life, scenes of work, the nature of the Romanian village, and radiant light that conveys the atmosphere of Romanian nature earned him recognition. Even today, he is known worldwide as one of Romania's most respected painters and as one of the representatives of the Impressionist art movement.

Livia Karp, a specialist in the study of Romanian painting at the National Museum of Art in Bucharest, testified that the work "Autumn" belongs to the Barbizon period. (5) The Barbizon period is also referred to as the Barbizon School, which for each participating painter was an encounter with nature and a direct execution of the landscape as a sole and independent subject. They had an essential requirement to exhibit these paintings in the conservative Salon of Paris. The painting "Autumn", by being defined as a work of the Barbizon period, seems to reflect a tree trunk from the forest of Fontainebleau and is an im-

portant example of the artist's impressionist creativity. The subject of the painting clearly expresses that Nicolae Grigorescu made nature deeply the object of his painting. Alfred Sensier (1815–1887), a French art historian, close friend, and biographer of the Barbizon painters Théodore Rousseau and Jean-François Millet, wrote about the romantic attraction of the Forest of Fontainebleau for artists: *"They had reached such an excess of emotion that they were not at all able to work... They were, in fact, overtaken by the proud majesty of the old trees, by their pristine state and beauty..."*⁶. Based on these facts, I may cautiously take the liberty in this text to express my opinion on the period when the work "Autumn" was created. In 1863, Nicolae Grigorescu stood out in a themed competition "to paint a tree" and earned the right to paint in nature, in the village of Barbizon and specifically, in the famous impressionist forest of Fontainebleau during the years 1863–1869. The subject of the work is related to the figure of a tree trunk. Could it be, always a speculation, that the work was created during these years as a sketchy and quick composition? Why not!

The work "Autumn" appears to have been created in the village of Barbizon, which was more than a place; it was an all-encompassing motive for realist and impressionist artists; it was an inspiring and educative site. Through the painting "Autumn", we understand that the village of Barbizon, for the famous Romanian painter who originated from a village,

was the pull of the metaphorical power of the landscape. His work shows that the artist was at a stage where landscape painting no longer subjected itself to historical painting. For Nicolae Grigorescu, painting the landscape in Fontainebleau was his independence from other genres and he had begun to create his own history. The tree object, in the landscape "Autumn", positioned almost at the center of the canvas, has turned into a sole character, which has been painted directly from nature. The artist is immersed in the nature of autumn. He is expressed with intense emotional sensitivity. He has reflected the tonal qualities of the diverse golden, yellow, umber, brown, red, and green colors. Through loose and short brushstrokes, he has realized a textured surface upon which the softness of form resonates. This work is very special and important for the collection of the GKA in Tirana, as it testifies to the direct timing of the emergence of impressionism in Europe; it testifies to the existence of the creativity of the Barbizon School and becomes a factual confirmation of the artist's name as one of the founders of modern Romanian painting.

The Importance of Magdalena Radulescu and Her Work "Portrait of a Man"

In the collection of GKA in Tirana, the name of the Romanian artist Magdalena Radulescu and her work "Portrait of a Man" stand out as significant and are considered a marked

and added value to the entirety of the collection of works by foreign authors. There are several reasons that certify the importance of this painter's existence in such a collection. One of the most important is because the name of the artist in the history of Romanian art and in European art holds a special place in the developments of 20th-century modern painting, particularly in the middle of the century.

About the Artist Magdalena Radulescu

Magdalena Rădulescu was born on February 12, 1902, in the city of Râmnicu Vâlcea / Olteni, in the South of Romania. The Radulescu family was connected to the music of the classical era, and her mother played piano pieces by famous German and Austrian composers. She spent her childhood years up to the age of 18 in the city of Constanța, where she completed both primary and secondary school.

At the age of seven, she painted portraits of small Tartars. At an older age, she painted landscapes from the coastal city of Balcic, which, from 1913 to 1940, belonged to the Kingdom of Romania. Magdalena Rădulescu studied art for about two years in two European cities, Munich and Paris. Initially, her family environment and then the environment of these two cities influenced her artistic education and social formation. In 1920, at the age of 18, she left Romania for Munich and studied art

for about two years with Prof. Angerer. Later, Magdalena Radulescu went to Paris and studied for some time at the Grande Chaumière Academy, founded in Paris in 1904. She was a student of French painter and illustrator René François Xavier Prinet (1861-1946) and French painter, sculptor, illustrator, and interior decorator Bernard Boutet de Monvel (1881-1949).

At the age of 24, in Paris, she met, got to know, and married Italian painter and journalist Massimo Campigli (1895-1971). Together they traveled to Italy, Romania, and France. During their travels, she met and got to know famous artists of the time in Montparnasse, including renowned sculptors Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) from Romania and Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) from Switzerland. After marrying Massimo Campigli, she became more of a housewife than an active painter. This situation began to trouble her bohemian, lively, and creative spirit. In one of the days after marriage, in 1939, she divorced Massimo Campigli. She devoted herself to painting and participating in exhibitions. Her first success came in 1929 and 1933 when her paintings were exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris, formed by the Société des Artistes Indépendants on July 29, 1884. The salon was led by the slogan "*Exhibition without jury and without awards.*" This participation was not only important but became an open door to her artistic life in some of the most prestigious European environments.

Magdalena Radulescu lived several years between France and Romania. During this period, she worked as a scenographer at the National Theater of Bucharest. She was invited by Viktor Eftimui (1889-1972)⁷ the first Romanian director of this theater, with Albanian roots. Magdalena Radulescu created the first stage curtain for the theater⁸. She eventually settled in France in 1947, a year that marked the end of her first creative period, during which she created many portraits and several self-portraits. During this period, she painted the work "Portrait of a Man," which is owned by the GKA in Tirana. In 1957, Magdalena Radulescu organized an exhibition in Bucharest and was praised by Romanian critic Petru Comarnescu (1905-1970). She exhibited in the surrealist technique of "grattage"⁹ in Monaco, Milan, and Paris in 1965, and in Bucharest and London in 1970 and beyond. She passed away on March 4, 1983, in Paris.

In the second period of her creative career, she lived in Paris amidst a world of great 20th-century artists. She followed their methods but chose her own forms of creation, which even today stand out as unique and original. She painted by drawing inspiration from her childhood memories. Romanian studies on her art express that "the city of Constanța, where she grew up, gave her subjects, themes, and color tones of both Byzantine and Eastern atmosphere." In Romanian culture, she focused on scenes of carnivals. In her art, with a burning interest in movement, drama, and rhythm,

she created her favorite scenes of folk dances and horsemanship through delicate color nuances.

Contemporary Romanian critics, through studies by Dr. Florenta Ivaniuc and Romanian art historian Christian Robert Velescu, value the work of Magdalena Radulescu "for its roots in folkloric themes and rich with simplified figures full of movement, with wild horses that are constantly swirling in a circular and chaotic gallop." In Romanian figurative culture and the history of Romanian art, her works are very important, holding a central place and representing the European artistic movement Expressionism, which annexed and overthrew Surrealism, the avant-garde style of the 1920s.

About the work "Male Portrait"

The artistic creation of Magdalena Radulescu expresses a fruitful and uninterrupted artistic activity. The exhibition and sale of her works worldwide have enriched numerous museum collections and dozens of private collections. It is fortunate that GKA also has one of her works. The evaluation of Magdalena Rădulescu as "a unique phenomenon among Romanian and European painters" by the post-impressionist and expressionist Romanian painter Nicolae Tonitza (1886-1940) and the opening, today, of several exhibitions featuring the artist's works, curated by contemporary art critics and historians from the central museums of Romania and the Multicultural Center of the University

of Transylvania, reflect the high value and primary importance of the work “Male Portrait” in the collection of artworks preserved in GKA, Tirana.

The work was exhibited in the foreign artists’ hall until 1996. On its card, the monetary valuation, dimensions, year of completion, technique, material, price in LEK, and the note “*donated to GKA*” are marked. Other significant details were made known during the visit to the National Museum of Art in Bucharest, from April 2nd to 11th, 1997, where Dr. Florenta Ivaniuc testified that the work “Male Portrait” represents the image of the artist’s grandson, Marius or Mihai Radulescu, an orchestra member in the Vienna Philharmonic. The Romanian artist painted dozens of portraits of well-known Romanian personalities, and the work “Male Portrait” belongs to that period which seems to have ended in the late 1940s, after which the artist would paint with an expressive fervor, in a circular form, mythical people of the dances.

The Romanian artist has portrayed an elegant man, dressed in the ceremonial costume of the philharmonic orchestra, enhanced with two typical elements: the bowtie and the white handkerchief in the jacket pocket in blue. The figure is depicted up to the

middle of the body, sitting or supported, with hands tied in the classical style similar to “Mona Lisa” by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). Such a position, for well-known figures, has been painted by the artist several times. The emotional reflection we get from the image of the work is a model of a man aware of his social position. In Romania, she was appreciated as an artist who “*She easily integrated into the world of French and Romanian intellectuals, and the portraits she created in fact illustrate the social circles in which she found support*”¹⁰.

Magdalena Radulescu, through a skilled, free, confident brushstroke and fresh, transparent colors, presents in an expressive way the figurative and realistic image of a man with dark hair, a high forehead, and a clear gaze. He conveys dignity, calmness, and positivity. He looks ahead with large eyes. He is painted with touches of expressive colors on leather, a technique that is known but quite rare. The three essential colors—blue, white, and ochre—although applied thickly in some areas and seemingly spread with a spatula, are separated from each other by a black line that slides in several secure dimensions, individualizing each painted surface.

Notes

- ¹ “*Foreign authors’ file*”, archive of the NGA, in Tirana.
- ² DCM no. 350, dated 10.08.1992.
- ³ The GKA archive file, titled: “The collection of foreign authors, file: “Nicolae Grigorescu”, folder no. 10;

The archived document from “Archivele Statului, Ministerul Instrucțiunii Publice, dosar nr. 533, Botosani, 13 iulie 1864”.

- ⁴ The Salon of Paris at that time was the most important exhibition in the world.

- ⁵ Abstract, “Nicolae Grigorescu (1838–1907), *The Age of Impressionism in Romania*”, edited by Monica Enache, Valentina Iancu, National Museum of Art of Romania.
<https://en.silvanaeditoriale.it/libro/9788836621644>
- ⁶ The GKA archive file, titled: “*Nicolae Grigorescu*”; document: “*Nicolae Grigorescu (1838–1907)*, author Henri Focillon, article ‘La peinture au XIXe et XXe siècle. Du réalisme à nos jours, 1928’”.
- ⁷ Testimony given by Dr. Florenta Ivaniuc at the 1997 meeting.
- ⁸ File: “The Romanian Painter Magdalena Grigorescu,” GKA Archive, Tirana. Catalog “National Museum of Art of Romania / Magdalena Radulescu Art Collection, painting and graphics,” Bucharest 1994.
- ⁹ Grattage - a surrealist painting technique involving scratching the oil paint.
- ¹⁰ Exhibition catalog: “*Magdalena Rădulescu. 120 years of bohemian grace*”.

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INTERVIU

Mr. Minister Taulant Balla:
Maybe it is easier for me in Romanian:
Deșteaptă-te, române! Acum ori niciodată
să dați dovezi la lume!



Sorin Bocancea: *Mr. Minister, I would like to begin our dialogue with a brief exploration of your personal history. Few people are aware that Romania represents another “home” for you, having been a scholarship recipient of the Romanian state, graduating in Political Science from “Al. I. Cuza” University in Iași, class of 2002, and earning your doctorate in Political Science from the same university. Thus, a young individual from a former communist country came to study in another former communist country. How did young student Taulant Balla perceive Romania at that time? What*

similarities and differences were there between your mother country and the one that hosted you for studies in 1998?

Taulant Balla: My dear professor, thank you very much for this interview and this great possibility to communicate about one of the most beautiful parts of my life, the university studies. After finishing high school, I wanted to go and study outside of Albania. My first choice was the US and I got accepted at one university there, but my family couldn't provide the bank guarantee to cover the expenses and fees. Therefore, I had to look to another possibility to study abroad. I saw an announcement on the national TV broadcaster that the Ministry of Education is offering five full scholarships in Romania. Immediately the next day I presented my application as many others did. Some weeks later, on the same TV, my parents heard the news that I was one of the five winners. Based on the bilateral agreement between Albania and Romania, we arrived in Bucharest on the first days of November. At the Ministry of Education in Bucharest, we were told that for the

preparation year, meaning six months of intensive Romanian language learning, they had decided to send us to Iasi, more than 400 km away from Bucharest. Honestly, we even didn't have any idea about Iasi. One of the girls, part of five, started even crying. Nevertheless, on the same day late at night we departed from Gara de Nord towards Iasi by train. And arrived there very early in the morning, it was cold and even a little snowy. This was the only difficulty because the rest for the next five years was amazing. Great and welcoming people, very good professors, very helpful colleagues and delicious Moldovan food.

S. B.: *Romania played an important role in the history of your country, a fact little known by the general public in Romania. How well-known is this fact among Albanians?*

T. B.: The historical relationship between Romania and Albania is rooted in cultural ties, political solidarity, and mutual support during their respective national movements in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. During the Albanian National Renewal, Romania played an important role as a cultural and political supporter of Albanian independence efforts. Bucharest served as a hub for Albanian intellectuals, writers, and nationalists who were active in promoting Albanian identity and the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. The Albanian Society of Bucharest was founded in Romania in 1890 to promote Albanian language and culture. Romania provided publishing resources and printing presses for Albanian-language materi-

als at a time when such publications were banned in the Ottoman Empire. We, Albanians, are always thankful to Romania and its political leaders of the time who fully supported the Albanian independence, which was declared in 1912. Also, the national anthem was composed by Ciprian Porumbescu, a renowned Romanian composer.

S. B.: *What similarities and differences do you consider existed between the communist regimes of our countries?*

T. B.: Dictatorships are always the same, but never forget that the Hoxha's regime in Albania was more brutal. The only good thing was that the economic links and ties with Romania didn't stop. One of the most appreciated cars on our streets was ARO, and also Romanians liked Albanian cigarettes (DS) and cognac (Scanderbeg brandy) a lot.

S. B.: *Is there nostalgia for communism in Albania?*

T. B.: Albania is the most pro-European country in Europe, with more than 90% supporting Albania's journey towards EU membership. This is a statistical answer to your question. No nostalgia for the past, too many hopes for the EU future.

S. B.: *Does Albania have a memory policy in place so that especially young people can accurately perceive what communism entailed?*

T. B.: As a long-term member of Parliament since 2005, I appreciate a lot the role of the Authority for Infor-

mation on Former State Security Documents and the contribution of the Institute for the Study of Communist Crimes and Consequences. These two institutions are focused on documenting and researching crimes committed under the communist regime. They publish books, testimonies, and reports, and hold public events to educate citizens and promote historical awareness. The authority has declassified thousands of documents: the digital archive now includes around 160 thousand pages, with microfilm and physical records, and continues robust digitisation efforts. Families of the victims can request access to their files; researchers and journalists can also access them under certain conditions.

S. B.: *In November 2024, I conducted an academic mission in Albania, an activity supported by your assistance, for which I thank you here as well. The “Petre Andrei” University of Iași established partnerships with two universities at that time, and we had meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Education and two institutions specialised in the study of communism. In your office, we held a discussion during which you provided an assessment of Romania from a political scientist’s perspective. We then discussed your viewpoint with my colleagues, which we found to be accurate. I will not disclose the substance of that discussion, and I kindly request you, to the extent that your political status allows, Dr. Taulant Balla, to provide a succinct SWOT analysis of Romania: what are its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?*

T. B.: Dear Professor Bocancea, although I left Romania in 2002, I continue to have a great interest in everything happening in Romania: economy, politics, culture, and sports. You can’t imagine how happy I am to see Romania being one of the fastest-growing economies in the EU over the past decade, with the last year’s growth rate around 2.5–3.5%, driven by domestic consumption, EU-funded infrastructure, and a strong services and IT sector. Bad interferences and some fluctuations have happened due to inflation, energy prices, and global economic conditions, but still, economic growth above the EU average. There has been another actor with not a good impact on the economy of the country: lack of sustainable and durable governments. Most of my friends are in PSD, but I also have good friends in PNL and the civil society of Romania. And I always say to them: “you are changing governments very often”. The only stabilising and effective moment during the last 15 years happened in between 2012 and 2015 with Victor Ponta as Prime Minister, and since then Romania has had a new government every six to twelve months. Romania needs now a time of less political fight and longer stability in the governing process. Also, Romanian voters have to understand that the ballot has a great role; you cannot make experiments with unknown people. Such experiments during the last years have also contributed to this political instability.

S. B.: *After completing your studies, you entered into high-level politics in Albania. Did you have a preference regarding your country’s relations with*

Romania? Have you initiated projects aimed at developing the bilateral relationship between the two countries?

T. B.: I meet regularly with the Ambassador of Romania in Tirana, and I follow closely the cooperation between our countries. We now have very good and strong diplomatic relations between our two countries, but we have to understand that economic exchanges, exports and imports are far below the real opportunities. The number of Romanian tourists choosing Albania for holidays is increasing, and we also have direct flights from Bucharest to Tirana and soon, from Bucharest to Vlora. Romanian investors in tourism need to discover Albania and invest. It is a great opportunity; we are expecting more than 13 million tourists this year.

S. B.: *Albania is a country that emerged from a communist regime and is currently in the process of accession to the European Union. Romania has undergone a similar path. What are the most challenging issues Albania must address to successfully undertake this journey?*

T. B.: The journey is almost the same with the same challenges. Since officially opening accession negotiations in October 2024, Albania has made tangible and steady progress with a total of 24 chapters (out of 33) opened in just eight months. Such rapid advancement reflects both Albania's commitment to reform and the EU's renewed emphasis on enlargement as a strategic priority. Albania's unwavering commitment to EU integration will

act as a catalyst to bring the country faster towards EU membership and further strengthen Albania's economic growth by narrowing the gap between us and the European Union member states.

S. B.: *What is Taulant Balla's message to Romanian politicians?*

T. B.: To the Romanian politicians? For sure they are not the same. I know some of them; we are very good friends, and I think that they are very professional, with high experience and ready to serve effectively the great and beautiful Romania. You have now a new President whom I wish not to play and repeat the same mistakes of his predecessors, to stay out of the daily politics and represent the unity and the interest of the people. The President in Romania has an important role to play. You will also have another big coalition government, which I hope will be successful, but it is a mistake not to have one of the traditional parties in opposition. Never forget the opposition is very important.

S. B.: *What is Taulant Balla's message to the Romanian citizens?*

T. B.: It is very difficult to find the right message on this question. Maybe it is easier for me in Romanian: Deșteaptă-te, române! Acum ori niciodată să dați dovezi la lume!

Interviu realizat
de Sorin BOCANCEA

Enkeleda Baduni Mërkuri:

History has shown us and continues to show us that peoples, nations and states can coexist together if they share the same typology of values. Moreover, European civilization is the product of a phenomenon of contamination and learning from other cultures different from ours



Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: *It has already been a year since you moved to Romania. What are your first impressions? What were the positive surprises and the difficulties you encountered?*

Enkeleda Baduni Mërkuri: During my 25-year career in diplomacy, for a long period, I have been engaged in regional cooperation. With the appointment in Bucharest, in December of 2023, after several years of working in Central Europe, I felt like I was “returning home”. It seemed very familiar to me, and I can even say that I have missed the region. After the

first 3-4 weeks, as soon as I settled in my new place of residence, I felt very good. The high intensity of meetings, activities, visits, and numerous delegations between the two capitals made time fly by very quickly. I can’t believe it has been a year and a half already...

“Although I have been to Bucharest 2-3 times in the early 2000s to participate in mainly regional activities and events, I still have to emphasise that Bucharest surprised me and won me over from the first month as a city full of life and with wonderful environments. You will undoubtedly agree with me that Herastrau Lake is one of the most relaxing and attractive places in the city. Same with Calea Victoriei, not only for its wonderful history and architecture but also for those nice promenades. Then the Palace of Parliament, with all the surrounding infrastructure, including the Old Town with its rich cultural heritage. Likewise, the numerous parks around the city that give Bucharest a special beauty and charm”.

In the professional context, my arrival in Bucharest coincided with a very

important moment in the framework of our bilateral relations. The year 2023 constitutes a milestone in the bilateral context, as it marked the 110th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In 2024, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the opening of the embassies and the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship. In this context, despite the fact that 2024 was a busy electoral year, in the bilateral framework, the dynamic of visits, contacts and exchanges was maintained in various dimensions and sectors of mutual interest, such as parliamentary and diplomatic ones, in the fields of justice, security and internal affairs, education and science, and tourism, as well as academic and cultural ones.

The relations between our two countries have expanded and deepened day by day, where the political dialogue remains intense and of a high level. It is enough to mention here all the meetings held during the official visit of the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, Mr. Igli Hasani, to Bucharest on 4-5 June 2024, where the common political will was reaffirmed at the level of the former President, Mr. Klaus Iohannis, at the Parliamentary level, by the head of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Senate of Romania, Mr. Titus Corlatean; at the government level, undoubtedly by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Luminița Odobescu, as well as various ministers, one of the Interior, the other of Labour and Social Affairs, etc. We are currently paying special

attention to the economic dimension, which currently continues to not be far from our expectations, as well as the opportunities and capacities offered by our two countries.

I. C. D.: *The embassy, for each country, represents an interface with a new reality. Please tell us about the priorities of your mandate in terms of strengthening relations between our countries.*

E. B. M.: I felt very honoured and privileged for the trust and appreciation that the Albanian government has placed in me to represent my country in Romania, assessing it as a mission of particular importance in a friendly and important partner country, as well as with the same regional affiliation.

Likewise, from a specific historical background of the relations between the two countries: Romania occupies a special place in the group of friendly countries of Albania, as the first country to recognise the independence of Albania, with which we have deep historical roots, where we have a diaspora, one of the oldest and with great patriotic activity; where our national anthem was composed; where the first Albanian language primer was published; where many Albanian associations flourished, with publications of newspapers and periodicals. In this context, many prominent Albanian personalities stood out.

With this rich heritage, even today, coming into the last three decades, bilateral relations develop on the basis of a solid foundation, such as the

Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighbourliness between Romania and the Republic of Albania, signed on May 11, 1994, and entered into force on April 26, 1995.

Over the years, Albanian-Romanian bilateral relations have always been important. Albania considers Romania as a strong NATO ally and a partner country in its journey towards EU integration. Strengthening our relations, intensifying our political dialogue and further increasing bilateral cooperation with Romania remain among the priorities of Albania's regional foreign policy. Albania continues to work closely with Romania within international and regional organisations on issues of concern to the region, our continent and beyond.

The Action Plan for 2024-2025, signed by the foreign ministers in November 2023, during the visit of the former minister Odobescu to Tirana, is a document that commits our countries to increase not only political dialogue but also sectoral cooperation in order to advance the bilateral agenda in areas such as education, culture, energy, tourism, infrastructure, etc. During 2024, an important agreement was signed in the field of social protection/pension, which will directly affect and benefit our citizens, and a MoU, on diplomatic training between the two MFAs. In the meantime, we are negotiating to finalise agreements in the fields of education and culture and energy and agriculture, as well as an action plan between our two ministries of health.

I would like to share with you the very positive trend of the tourism sector. With the establishment of direct flights between Tirana and Bucharest, during 2023 the number of tourists coming from Romania increased by 62%, and during the past year, 2024, it increased by 170%. We are committed to strengthening this spirit of cooperation in other sectors as well, with the belief that tourist exchanges will also influence the increase of interest in exploring Albania more as a destination of interest to increase trade - economic, scientific - academic, cultural exchanges, etc.

I. C. D.: *What are, in your opinion, the main cultural differences as well as similarities between Romania and Albania?*

E. B. M.: Referring also to what was mentioned above, I would like to focus more in my answer on the second part of the question, namely on the multiple similarities and connections that have brought our two countries closer and continue to do so today, which are undoubtedly much larger than those that may be different between us.

Albanian-Romanian relations constitute a beautiful and rich history, starting from the Thracians, Dacians and Illyrians, who had a similar vocabulary and traditions, and fate continues to bring us together in the course of history with more recent events that shaped us as peoples.

There were important figures in the political and cultural field of Romania,

such as Nicolae Iorga and Ciprian Porumbescu, who participated in these historical moments, as well as those in the political and social field of Albania, such as Vasile Lupu, Viktor Eftimiu, and the Gjika family, but also Aromanians who furthered these relations, such as Gujdu Emanuel, Papahagi, Caramitru and others.

The well-known Romanian historian N. Iorga considers Albanians in his work as descendants of the Illyrians who were influenced by the Thracian language. The highlighting and clarification of the origin of the common linguistic features of Albanian and Romanian is also related to the problem of the ethnogenesis (origin) of the two respective peoples. But today it is a fact that there are some similarities and old parallels between the Romanian and Albanian languages. As a result of these close relations in contact, it is thought that a common spiritual constitution was also conceived that was expressed in language, customs, rites, ways of singing and, undoubtedly, in phraseological expressions and proverbs.

Following on what I mentioned above, I would like to highlight with pleasure that the national anthem of Albania was composed by the great Romanian musician Ciprian Porumbescu and that the Movement for the Declaration of Independence of Albania led by Ismail Qemali began in Bucharest. Romania was not only the first country to recognise Albania but also offered the first budget for the new Albanian state in 1912.

The old Albanian diaspora in Romania constitutes one of the most important settlements, which participated in the birth of the Albanian state, and in the strengthening of the Albanian national movement, without which the renaissance of national feeling would not have been possible. Among the prominent figures of the early Albanian community, with particular pride and pleasure, I would like to highlight the contribution of the Romanian princess of Albanian origin Elena Gjika, a historian, philologist, and ethnologist who helped the movement through her correspondence with the Albanian renaissance figures, as well as other important individuals who participated in those events, among whom was the philanthropist Vangjel Zhapa, who financed the publication of the primer of Naum Veqilharxhi, who himself was also residing in Romania at that time.

With regards to Albanian-Romanian relations, various prominent historians have consistently described them as “the friendliest that Albanians have had in the course of modern history with neighbouring peoples and countries in South-Eastern Europe, in general”, based on two connecting bridges: “the community of Albanians in Romania and the Aromanians in Albania”.

This spirit of friendship that comes from the past continued in modern history, as it is what has given Albanian-Romanian relations a new content and a new dimension, even due to the fact that both countries emerged from the era of communist dictator-

ships, some of the most severe that Southern Europe has known.

All of this best evidences this kind of closeness between our two nations; in spite of the fact that they are not today neighbouring each other, the bridges of cooperation are such that they continuously show this common contribution between our two peoples and countries.

Even at the beginning of this new century, Albania and Romania are very close to each other, in good and difficult times. It is important to mention that Albania received the invitation to join NATO at the Bucharest Summit in March 2008, together with Croatia, becoming a full member on April 1, 2009. Today, as two NATO allies, Albania and Romania share the same security concerns and invest in their defence, remaining committed to a comprehensive approach to international security, which we both believe is essential to addressing threats from all sides.

Romania has been and remains a strong supporter and advocate of accelerating Albania's EU integration processes. We are working closely with Romanian experts and civil servants to support with technical assistance the negotiation process that Albania has begun with the European Union.

I. C. D.: *The Republic of Albania has embarked on the path of integration into the European Union. What are the priorities of the Albanian state in this area, and what role could Romania play in supporting you?*

E. B. M.: At all political levels in Albania, it has been repeatedly emphasised that for us, EU membership is much more than a political ambition; it constitutes an existential life choice.

Currently, Albania, which is at an important stage of the integration processes, such as the opening of negotiations with Brussels, is reliably on the path towards membership in the European Union. In just eight months, Albania has opened negotiations for 27 areas. The fourth Intergovernmental Conference was held on April 14 in Luxembourg, where the group chapter on the internal market was opened.

Meanwhile, just a few days ago, on June 11, Albania received the green light to open negotiations with Group Chapter 4 – “Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity”, as an important group chapter, which specifically includes transport, energy, trans-European networks and environment and climate. This decision by the EU countries confirms our preparation and concrete progress on the path towards the European family.

The Albanian government aims to open all chapters by 2025 and conclude negotiations by 2027, with the aim of Albania becoming a full member of the EU in 2030.

Progress in key areas such as the rule of law, democratic governance and public administration has created a solid foundation for the progress we have achieved in this process. We remain committed to accelerating these reforms, particularly in the areas

of integrity and justice, economic modernisation and institutional strengthening. While the process itself is demanding, it offers a transformative framework for the modernisation of the institutions of our economy, as well as the building of a resilient democratic society.

Of course, no progress to date, including the official start of Albania's EU accession negotiations in July 2019, would have been possible without the positive national stance of friendly countries and supportive European partners, among which Romania has played an active role. Politically, Albania relies on Romania's help and unwavering support in the future in the Council, while we are grateful for the lobbying made towards maintaining the EU's priorities of the enlargement package, as well as for accelerating the integration processes of the Western Balkan countries, including Albania.

With the opening of the above-mentioned group chapters, technically, we hope to cooperate closely with Romanian experts and civil servants to support our process with technical assistance, transferring expertise and know-how in many areas

We are on a good path with several institutions, which also include certain committees of the Romanian Senate, such as the Committee on Laws or the Committee on Culture, Foreign Policy, etc. We are also in close communication with the Romanian MFA and other institutions to determine at the level of your administration where the greatest interest is in contributing to

the negotiation and integration process of Albania into the EU, from the perspective of your national development cooperation. We have currently exchanged concrete suggestions and proposals at the level of the ministries of agriculture, education and science, justice and internal affairs, without forgetting academic institutions as well.

I. C. D.: *The image of the two countries is often closely associated with their own past. In your opinion, is our heritage a burden or a resource for the future?*

E. B. M.: Without wishing to repeat what I have expressed above, I would just like to underline the fact that the ties between our countries are based on a strong tradition where history merges with a common cultural heritage and close interpersonal ties, also included through the lens of our related minorities that create solid bridges between our countries, beyond geographical considerations.

Romania has a long historical, traditional and friendly relationship with Albania, with a strong contribution to the deep common historical roots and with an active role of the Albanian diaspora. Today, friendship and mutual respect are defining elements for the deepening of our political and economic ties, promoting bilateral cooperation in all areas of common interest that enrich the common Romanian-Albanian heritage every day. This has been and remains a source of constant inspiration for the genera-

tions that are growing up, with the desire to know each other better, to create new bridges of connection, communication and cooperation. In this context, this heritage cannot be a burden at all. On the contrary, it is a great asset that feeds the desire to bring our peoples and countries even closer every day.

History has taught us that by getting to know each other better and only by multiplying the "connecting threads" of communication and cooperation, we narrow the spaces for prejudices, stereotypes or misunderstandings. Especially today, when successive crises and global challenges call into question many things that have been good for us for many decades, it is imperative, more than ever, to understand and utilise our entire bilateral, regional and global arsenal to be on the right side of history and to find the right solutions to face these challenges in defence of the rights of our citizens and for a better and safer future for our children and families.

I. C. D.: *Romania and Albania are countries that have had very strong historical and cultural ties in recent centuries. As is known, culture has the ability to act as a bond between civilizations. What is the status of bilateral cultural relations and cooperation? In what direction should it head, and how should it be expanded?*

E. B. M.: An important dimension in all the historical wealth inherited from the strong and close relations between our two countries is dedicated to cul-

tural exchanges as a free space for expressing closeness, feelings, thoughts and the voice of the soul. The fate of the two nations has willed that our peoples have had many meeting points at certain moments in the history of the two countries, meeting points that have left their mark and enriched the cultural exchanges between our peoples.

I have mentioned above that prominent names in the artistic and cultural life have contributed to both our countries in the fields of literature, music, painting, ethnography, linguistics, and archaeology. Prominent names, contributors in these fields, have left behind numerous works, written in both languages, as an extraordinary wealth that once again proves the closeness, similarities and diverse and very rich national identity of our two countries. It is enough to mention here a remarkable constellation of well-known Albanian figures, such as Lasgush Poradeci, Mitrush Kuteli, Ibrahim Temo, Elena Gjika, Victor Eftimiu, Nikolla Naço, and Gjon Mili, who have contributed to both countries over the years, from the end of the 19th century to the present day.

Nowadays, among the many artists and creators who debut in various cultural fields, I would briefly mention the contribution of the Kycyku family: the father - Professor Kopi Kycyku and son - Dr. Ardian Kycyku; as a concrete contribution towards the "inseparable literary ties between Albania and Romania". Through the European literary publication

Haemus, (whose archive now has over 7,000 pages of publications and excerpts from the works of over 300 European writers, thinkers and intellectuals and beyond), both father and son have brought to the Albanian and Romanian public numerous authors from both countries; classics and contemporary, thus creating a literary platform without borders for conversation between our two peoples.

All this spiritual and cultural wealth has been preserved in the funds of important institutions, such as national libraries, in the golden music fund, and art galleries, being the focus of researchers in the relevant fields and of educational programmes for the new generation.

With a common political will, today we are coordinating with our Romanian colleagues in further enriching the bilateral legal framework in order to create further expansion and deepening of cooperation and exchanges in the field of culture and cultural heritage by initiating new cooperation protocols between the ministries of culture and education, in light of the

new regional and European context. Similarly, a series of other acts of cooperation have been initiated between museums, theatres, publishing houses, archaeological parks, media, and public and private radio and television. With an open spirit of cooperation, we are working to channel these exchanges and collaborations towards the establishment of new cultural institutions (cultural centres or institutes) focused on the promotion and advancement of national cultural, literary and artistic values, as well as activities aimed at deepening Albanian-Romanian ties, further strengthening all shared values, and preserving and enriching the artistic and cultural diversity in both countries.

Undoubtedly, all this commitment will create the right environment to further activate exchanges in every cell of artistic life between the two countries and to further recognise and enhance the spirit and cultural wealth between Albania and Romania.

Interviu realizat
de Ioana CRISTEA DRĂGULIN

VARIA

Diplomația culturală franceză și zorii științei politice din România

[French Cultural Diplomacy and the Dawn of Political Science in Romania]

Cristian PREDA

Abstract: *The article analyzes the creation of the field of political science in Romania, at the beginning of the 1990s, and the influence of French cultural diplomacy on this process. The author used archives that have not been exploited until now: it is about the diplomatic correspondence between the French embassy in Bucharest and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the debates in the Senate of the University of Bucharest from 1990-1995.*

Keywords: *cultural diplomacy, political science, Romania, France, post-communism.*

La câteva ore după fuga lui Ceaușescu din clădirea Comitetului Central al PCR se constituia Consiliul Frontului Salvării Naționale, un organism revoluționar care a proclamat abandonarea monopartitismului, organizarea de alegeri libere, separația puterilor și restructurarea economiei, ținte atinse în anii imediat următori, ajungând apoi și la o chestiune care frământă până astăzi societatea românească, și anume „reorganizarea învățământului românesc potrivit cerințelor contemporane”¹. Acesta era cel de-al șaselea punct al documentului adoptat pe 22 decembrie 1989, iar el indica,

mijlocul care ar fi rezolvat problema, și anume „reșezarea structurilor învățământului pe baze democratice și umaniste [prin] eliminarea dogmelor ideologice care au provocat atâtea daune poporului român”². Articolul de față studiază felul cum a fost realizată o asemenea reorganizare, ce promitea construirea educației pe o temelie non-ideologică. Am luat în seamă un caz particular, dar deloc nesemnificativ, fiindcă este vorba despre crearea unui nou domeniu academic, cel al științei politice, în cadrul celei mai importante educative instituții românești din acele vremuri, Universitatea din București (UB).

Chestiunea a fost deja abordată de mai mulți autori români. Daniel Barbu a pus în evidență nașterea, după 1989, a două modalități de instituționalizare a investigării politicii – una post-marxist-leninistă, asumată de foste cadre ale Academiei Ștefan Gheorghiu, grupate în Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative, și o alta, neo-weberiană, pe care ar fi croit-o chiar el la UB, cât a fost decan³. Formată ca medic și cu un doctorat în psihologie socială, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi a descris și ea trecerea de la o pretinsă „știință politică” totalitară ce forma activiști de partid la o comunitate academică veritabilă, dezvoltată în mai multe universități, însă abia după 1995⁴. Lavinia Stan a demonstrat foarte convingător influența modelelor politologice nord-american și, respectiv, francez în construcția programelor de studiu din centrele universitare București, Cluj și Iași⁵. Una dintre absolventele primelor generații de politologi din UB, Luciana Ghica a denunțat un bovarism universitar, care ar fi întreținut ideea că specialiștii români din acest câmp disciplinar nu au depășit un complex provincial, căci – în opinia ei – știința politică românească a fost dintotdeauna sincronizată cu cea din alte părți ale Europei, inclusiv în vremea regimului comunist⁶. *Last but not least*, Laurențiu Vlad a reconstituit istoria primilor ani din predarea științei politice în franceză la UB, într-un volum care cuprinde, de asemenea, câteva interviuri interesante despre aceeași perioadă, realizate cu opt profesori⁷.

Am completat aceste incursiuni în trecutul politologiei autohtone exploatând câteva noi surse și, în special, detaliind modul cum diplomația culturală franceză a influențat procesul de fondare a științei politice în România post-decembristă. Am arătat astfel că instituțiile academice pot fi nu doar agenți de diplomație culturală⁸, ci și produse ale acesteia. Am urmărit, pe de altă parte, să analizez rezultatul transferului cultural operat: avem oare de-a face, în cazul studiat, cu o „periferie independentă” sau doar cu un „receptacol al unor tendințe” care pierd prestigiul în locul de origine, dar care, odată conservate în alt loc, dau naștere la reinterpretări sau inovații radicale? Acestea erau cele două variante imparate de Michel Espagne, atunci când a analizat alte schimburi culturale ce au produs efecte în științele umane⁹. Întrucât am luat în seamă atât actori interni, cât și actori externi aflați în competiție pentru a fabrica politologia, sursele mobilizate în analiza de față sunt extrem de diverse¹⁰. Am putut astfel să urmăresc un proiect care a eșuat după un an – cel al Facultății de Înalte Studii Politice –, și un al doilea, care a dus la crearea Faculté Internationale de Sciences Humaines și care produce efecte până în prezent.

UB, între convertiri politice, ruptura de trecut și influența externă

Imediat după Revoluția română, în interiorul UB, discuțiile despre

schimbare sunt purtate pe un ton mult mai tranșant decât în restul societății, în primul rând grație studenților¹¹, care jucaseră un rol determinant în mobilizarea de stradă din decembrie 1989 și erau socotiți adevărați „eroi”. În schimb, în majoritatea lor, profesorii din cea mai mare universitate a țării intră în logica larg răspândită în întreaga societate, una definită de convertiri rapide și de relativizarea vinovățiilor. Așa se face că, în locul celei PCR, este creată și-n UB – ca peste tot în țară – o organizație a Frontului Salvării Naționale, ce va dispărea abia când puterea revoluționară hotărăște ca FSN să se organizeze ca partid și să participe la alegeri¹². Și mai elocvent e faptul că, imediat după răsturnarea lui Ceaușescu, profesorii din UB afirmă ruptura de trecut și democratizarea deciziei, dar, cum s-a observat deja, gesturile lor nu ilustrează aceste principii, așa că „de cele mai multe ori realitatea este diferită”¹³. Pe scurt: continuitatea e regula, schimbarea și ostracizările sunt o excepție marginală.

O vădesc deja primele dezbateri din Senatul UB, când pe agendă e pusă problema gestionării facultăților după destituirea regimului totalitar. În ședința acestui for deliberativ din 27 martie 1990, studentul Marian Munteanu cere ca, vreme de 1-2 ani, profesorii „cu funcții de conducere în PCR” să se abțină de la ocuparea unor poziții în decanat. Cei vizați resping ideea. Există, totuși, nuanțe. De pildă, Nicolae Manolescu precizează că ar trebui să stea departe de funcții exclusiv cei care au făcut rău

„de când s-a degradat situația”; Lazăr Vlăsceanu afirmă că mulți membri ai UB n-au avut un comportament care „să fie caracterizat ca procomunist”; Zoe Petre merge și mai departe, explicând că toți colegii săi au avut responsabilități în cadrul PCR, fiindcă doar astfel puteai rămâne în facultate, așa că situația se va putea schimba doar dacă vor veni profesori noi, de pildă, din institutele de cercetare, unde puteai să lucrezi fără constrângeri atât de rigide; la rândul lui, decanul de la Limbi Străine, Iancu Fischer, care nu fusese membru de partid, propune să se meargă vreme de doi ani cu cei aleși, căci pentru ce a fost în comunism „cu toții avem o parte de vină numai prin faptul de a fi acceptat situația”. Doar Eugen Simion este de partea studentului Munteanu, arătând că nu-i firesc ca o persoană care, până-n 1989, își îndoctrinase colegii să devină membru FSN, apoi să fie desemnat șef de catedră. Criticul literar nu oferea nume care să ilustreze acest parcurs, dar nici n-a fost solicitat s-o facă, semn că descria o realitate pe care colegii săi nu o tăgăduiau. Până la urmă, cei aleși decani în facultăți sunt validați de Senat în unanimitate, excepție făcând doi dintre ei, care au parte de câte o abținere. În schimb, în facultăți sunt profesori contestați, iar unica sancțiune la adresa lor a fost aceea că n-au mai putut ține examenele, fiind înlocuiți de colegi ce nu fuseseră trecuți pe listele negre alcătuite de către studenți. În ceea ce privește reorganizarea învățământului, tot M. Munteanu introduce discuția,

relatând că studenții au cerut asta ministerului, care a făcut o comisie, la care însă inițiatorii nu s-au mai dus, căci li s-a părut că era mai important să „se termine cu comunismul și cu securitatea [și] să fie pedepsiți criminalii”¹⁴. Caragiale nu era prea departe.

Profesorii sunt, în acele vremuri, mai degrabă prudenți decât revoluționari, iar faptul că tocmai dintre ei s-a desprins și a intrat în politică, foarte devreme, Emil Constantinescu, care avea să fie în 1996 președintele tranziției, e un soi de compensație a circumspecției ce domina spiritele în interiorul UB și, de asemenea, în mediile intelectuale mai largi. Ce-i drept, interesul personal prima, cum se vede urmărind dezbaterile despre concursurile didactice, care ocupă majoritatea ședințelor Senatului UB. Îndreptățirea acestui comportament e dincolo de orice îndoială. Cum regimul Ceaușescu blocase în deceniul al optulea promovările, mulți angajați cu experiență rămăseseră la gradul de lector – de pildă, ca să ne limităm la trei exemple, Emil Constantinescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Zoe Petre aveau acest grad didactic în 1989 –, așa că o prioritate a fost, pentru cei care acumulaseră ani mulți de predare și de cercetare, trecerea rapidă de la lector la conferențiar, apoi, tot așa de accelerat, la un post de profesor. Abia în 1991-1992 încep angajări pentru debutanți, adică pentru preparatori și asistenți. Pentru a avea o idee mai precisă, trebuie arătat că numărul de concursuri organizate între 15 martie 1990 și 15 martie 1992 a fost enorm:

sunt nu mai puțin de 1055 de competiții deschise, dintre care 131 – pentru poziții de profesori, 260 – pentru conferențieri, 246 – pentru lectori, 304 – pentru asistenți și 114 – pentru preparatori¹⁵. Ascensiunea didactică e bazată pe criterii profesionale, care încep să fie standardizate, dar mai ales pe buna reputație a profesorilor în breasla fiecăruia. Foarte rar sunt invocate opțiuni politice din perioada comunistă. O asemenea excepție îl privește pe Ilie Bădescu: N. Manolescu spune despre el e că „a abordat sociologia ca propagandist”, iar Eugen Simion – că a fost „principalul ideolog al revistelor *Săptămâna* și *Luceafărul*”¹⁶. În ciuda rezervelor, viitorul patron spiritual al naționalismului postcomunist trece și el concursul de conferențiar în aprilie 1990.

Reforma instituțională rămâne astfel pe planul al doilea și singura noutate semnificativă este extinderea rețelei de facultăți. Dacă în 1989, UB cuprindea șase facultăți, un an mai târziu, sunt deja șaisprezece și, așa cum vom vedea mai jos, e timp suficient nu doar pentru a crea unele prin scindarea celor existente, dar și pentru înființarea prin decret guvernamental a unor specializări ce fuseseră desființate de Ceaușescu, ca și a unor facultăți cu totul noi în peisajul UB, ba chiar și pentru desființarea uneia proaspăt create chiar în domeniul care ne interesează¹⁷. Mai trebuie notat și că extinderea UB are loc în contextul în care sunt create de la zero universități întregi, de stat sau private. De câte ori aveau de ele, membrii Senatului UB erau iritați. De

pildă, în ședința din 24 mai 1990, Viorel Iftimie de la Matematică și Angheluță Vădineanu de la Biologie își declarau opoziția față de ideea înființării unor noi „instituții de învățământ superior”, cum li se zicea pe atunci, cel de-al doilea profesor argumentând că pentru „baza materială” a unei facultăți trebuie investit „enorm” și că nu are sens să crezi una nouă, dacă nu ai calculat mai întâi foarte riguros costurile. Chiar dacă rectorul Nicolae Cristescu preciza că unele universități s-au înființat după ce autoritățile locale le-au promis sprijin financiar, colegii săi nu cedau, temându-se evident de concurență¹⁸, cum se întâmpla în mare parte din societate. În plus, membrii UB aveau sentimentul că, deși lucraseră în condiții foarte grele, mai cu seamă în anii 1980, erau cei mai buni din țară și că, de aceea, dispuneau de un soi de drept de veto asupra oricărei inițiative venite din provincie sau din mediul privat. În același spirit, atunci când aceiași profesori din UB sunt solicitați, în aprilie 1990, de către ministerul de resort să recomande studenți pentru a da concurs la Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, decanii din patru facultăți – de limbi străine, de drept, de istorie și de filosofie – trimit 30 de candidați, singurii din țară ce li se păreau a fi demni de a intra într-o profesie așa prestigioasă precum diplomația¹⁹.

Ideea cooperării cu străinătatea este, de altfel, îmbrățișată fără obiecții. Propunerile vin din orizonturi foarte diferite. În mai 1990, Universitatea din Moscova lansează ideea de a

colabora cu UB, așa că rectorul cere propuneri concrete din toate facultățile²⁰. Mai rapidă decât sovieticii fusese o fundație privată, creată la București de filantropul american George Soros, care le prezentase deja studenților și profesorilor din UB, pe 1 februarie 1990, oferta sa de burse²¹. Aceeași fundație caută tot atunci să se asocieze cu ambasada Franței, promițând, la un an de la revoluție, sprijin financiar pentru studenți români din domeniul științelor umane și sociale interesați să facă o Diplôme d'Études Approfondies, cum se numea pe atunci masterul, cu condiția ca tinerii respectivi să fie scutiți în Franța de plata taxelor de școlarizare²².

Franța nu era o alegere întâmplătoare. Căci interesul acestei țări pentru România a fost enorm în 1990 și în anii imediat următori. Asta și pentru că revoluția a venit după o perioadă în care cooperarea româno-franceză de toate felurile scăzuse foarte mult, regimul de la București fiind considerat de către diplomații de la Quai d'Orsay ca unul ce putea fi numit „despotism obscurantist”²³. Ambasada din Capitala României încercase să folosească, totuși, competențele locale – în 1986, existau 400 de traducători profesioniști din franceză în română și alți 1000 ocazionali –, pentru a scoate măcar niște cărți apărute în Franța în română, dar autoritățile comuniste refuzaseră nu doar cheltuirea de deize pentru a plăti drepturile de autor, ci și oferta de a primi aceste drepturi gratuit, temându-se de sporirea influenței franceze în România²⁴. Bugetul acti-

vităților științifice și culturale se diminuase, de aceea, de la an la an, iar diplomații francezi trimiși în post la București și care căutau să mențină, totuși, cooperarea pe tărâmul francofon erau tratați ca spioni, așa că în jurul lor mișunau zeci și zeci de informatori ai Securității²⁵. Francofonia nu era, de altfel, prea bine înțeleasă în România nici în sensul multilateral, ca o cooperare între țări care folosesc drept mijloc de comunicare franceza, și nici măcar în sens mai îngust, bilateral, ca o colaborare franco-română, cum va fi acceptată abia după Revoluție, mai ales în medii culturale²⁶.

Pe de altă parte, Revoluția nu se vedea venind în 1989, chiar dacă, așa cum va scrie mult mai târziu Sandrine Kott, în ultimul deceniu al dictaturii ceaușiste, critica radicală a capitalismului era delegitimată, iar internaționalismul comunist pierdea foarte mult teren în fața „globalismului”, înțeles ca „ideologia care privilegiază concurența generalizată, inclusiv între statele-națiuni”²⁷. Franța a căutat în acea perioadă să mențină relația cu regimurile comuniste, François Mitterrand având grijă să întâlnească întotdeauna și opozații, nu doar liderii din Est pe care-i vizita sau pe care i-a invitat la Paris: excepția e România, pe care nici președintele francez, nici miniștrii săi de externe nu o vor vizita înainte de 1989²⁸. Unul dintre motive era pur ideologic: Mitterrand a fost atât de obsedat de Bicentenarul Revoluției Franceze, încât a forțat o apropiere între 1789 și iminența surpării regi-

murilor comuniste, la exact două sute de ani mai târziu²⁹.

Imediat după eliberarea României de totalitarismul roșu, Roland Dumas vine la București. Vizita sa din primele zile ale lui ianuarie 1990 marchează deja o voință clară de cooperare culturală cu această țară francofonă din Est. În memoriile sale, ministrul de externe al lui Mitterrand amintește că i-a întâlnit atunci pe membrii triumviratului puterii feseniste – Ion Iliescu, Petre Roman și Dumitru Mazilu –, dar și pe intelectualii și disidenții Doina Cornea, László Tőkés, Mircea Dinescu, Ion Caramitru, Dan Petrescu, Ana Blandiana și Andrei Pleșu, ba chiar că, împreună cu Alexandru Paleologu, viitorul ambasador al României la Paris, a discutat despre transformarea Bibliotecii Franceze – redeschise după vizita lui de Gaulle la București –, în ceea ce fusese înainte de 1947, și anume un Institut des hautes études françaises en Roumanie³⁰. Proiectul nu s-a materializat, Biblioteca fiind transformată într-unul din cele aproape 130 de institute culturale franceze din lume, dar semnalul colaborării dintre Paris și București era puternic. Iar el se va materializa foarte repede. În mai 1990, guvernul francez informează misiunea din România, ca și toate celelalte posturi diplomatice din țările ex-comuniste, că hotărâse să aloc, în acel an, nu mai puțin de 200 de milioane de franci pentru cooperare culturală, științifică și tehnică cu țările din Est, eliberate de comunism. Prioritățile fixate de Quai d'Orsay vizau, în pri-

mul rând, acordarea de burse de studiu – iar România va primi 250 din cele 700 atribuite esticilor pentru anul universitar 1990-1991!³¹ –, dar și „crearea de filiere bilingve (de la liceu la Universitate), renovarea sistemelor educative locale, formarea profesorilor, cooperarea între universități”³².

Bursele sunt pomenite încă de la primele contacte ale serviciului cultural francez cu noile autorități. Chantal Colleu-Dumont, care gestiona acest serviciu și care fusese tratată de comuniști ca „spion cu grad de maior”, discută cu profesorul Paul Cornea, ce devenise secretar de stat la Educație, sub ministeriatul lui Mihai Șora: acesta e încântat de oferta franceză și îi spune interlocutoarei sale că bursele de la Quai d’Orsay s-ar putea dovedi la fel de eficace precum cele germane sau austrice, promise și ele tot atunci³³, dar care vor fi amânate *sine die* după mineriada din iunie 1990. Cornea, invitat la Paris în primăvara lui 1990, în fruntea unei delegații ce cuprindea rectori de diverse specializări³⁴, era profesor de istoria literaturii, dar și un susținător entuziast al renovării câmpului științelor sociale: în cursul vizitei în Franța, el a solicitat ca profesori francezi de sociologie, drept, filosofie și psihologie să vină la București să predea, promițând salarii de 10 mii de lei pe lună pentru asemenea profesori, ceea ce depășea până și salariul unui ministru român; atent la detalii, ambasadorul Le Breton, care-l însoțea pe Cornea, preciza, în telegrama trimisă șefilor săi, că suma respectivă era echivalentul a 2200 de franci pe

lună³⁵. Merită menționat, în acest context, că un student bursier al guvernului francez primea, în toamna lui 1990, aproape de două ori mai mult pe lună³⁶.

Renovarea științelor umane era complicată, căci unele discipline fuseseră amputate mai grav, altele supraviețuiseră onorabil, dar exista și o categorie, unde totul trebuia luat de la zero³⁷. E vorba despre știința politică. O disciplină al cărei statut era încă mult disputat. Așa stăteau lucrurile chiar în Franța. Într-o lucrare care se ocupa tocmai de modul de a preda o asemenea disciplină în anii '90, Pierre Favre sugera că, dacă la nivelul studiilor de licență, să predai știința politică seamănă mai mult cu expunerea literaturii, în schimb, la DEA și la doctorat, disciplina începe să semene mai mult cu fizica; un alt specialist francez, Jean-Baptiste Legavre, a cerut în acea vreme de la 36 de profesori care țineau cursuri din acest câmp teoretic planurile de lucru și a descoperit că tradițiile științifice de la care se revendicau aceștia erau diferite și că nici măcar numele disciplinei nu era același, variind între *sociologie politică*, *sociologia politicii*, *viața politică franceză*, *introducere în studii politice*, *introducere în științele sociale și politice* și altele; la rândul său, Jacques Lagroye sublinia că și afilierea instituțională a științei politice era incertă, fiindcă ea era predată și în facultățile care ofereau diplome juridice, nu doar în Institutele de Studii Politice³⁸.

Pe lângă punerea sub semnul întrebării a modului de a preda disci-

plina, demersului de a investiga politica în chip științific i se reproșa și o inevitabilă dimensiune „ideologică” sau, cel puțin, percepută așa. De ce? Fiindcă discreditarea marxismului și răsturnarea regimurilor comuniste au însemnat o delegitimare a stângii, care a reacționat negând tot ce nu reproducea paradigma sa fundamentală. În acest context, afirma stânga politică, euforia post-revoluționară a introdus în universități – tocmai prin intermediul științei politice – o viziune politică liberală, care nu era percepută ca sinonim al modernității, ci ca una din formele ideologice cu ajutorul căreia puteau fi strânse voturi. Degeaba au explicat unii cercetători că opera lui Tocqueville este importantă mai degrabă pentru „forța sa critică” decât pentru „versantul ei constructiv”³⁹, căci convingerea că liberalismul ar putea ajunge să impună o gândire unică și care să influențeze în rău restructurarea educației universitare a rămas⁴⁰.

Cu mult înainte de căderea regimului totalitar, diplomații aflați în post la București încurajaseră domeniul „științelor politice”, pe care-l includeau în cadrul mai larg al „științelor umane și sociale”, propunând burse pentru cercetări⁴¹ sau comandând reviste despre politică precum *Commentaire*, *Débat* sau *Esprit*, pentru cititorii care frecventau Biblioteca Franceză de la București⁴². Regimul Ceaușescu blocase, însă, tot. Abia după 1989 se poate trece la fapte. O notă a ambasadorului Le Breton din 30 ianuarie 1990 către Quai d’Orsay menționa importanța

unor stagii de formare la ENA pentru români, ca și a atribuirii unor burse la IEP Paris sau la cele din provincie⁴³. Oferta era detaliată pe 27 februarie 1990, atunci când o scrisoare a secretarului general al Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP) descria ce programe de licență, de DEA, de doctorat, ba chiar și ce diplome pentru formarea continuă ofereau Institutele de Studii Politice din Paris, dar și din Aix-en-Provence, Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lyon, Strasbourg ori Toulouse⁴⁴. Cu o zi înainte, o telegramă diplomatică trimisă la București de secretariatul de stat de la MAE francez cuprindea lista universităților și jurnaliștilor care urmau să vină în Capitala României în acele zile: pe ea figurau și politologii Maurice Duverger și Serge Hurtig, acesta din urmă fiind, de asemenea, și secretarul general al FNSP⁴⁵.

La București luase deja ființă o instituție care ar fi urmat să se ocupe de materia politică.

Facultatea de Înalte Studii Politice

Actul de înființare a ei este o hotărâre de guvern, ce poartă numărul 55 și a fost adoptată pe 19 ianuarie 1990⁴⁶. Ideea le-a aparținut lui Vasile Secăreș, Ioan M. Pașcu, Ovidiu Trăsnea și Constantin Ene, primul dintre ei făcând, după propria mărturisire, eforturi ca să-l convingă pe Petre Roman să ia o asemenea decizie⁴⁷. Acea HG avea, de fapt, o dublă dimensiune, fiindcă pornea de la desființarea Academiei de Studii Social-

Politice (ASSP)⁴⁸, școala de cadre a PCR, dar – pe de altă parte – crea pe ruinele acesteia, trei facultăți, ce erau incluse în UB, ca și un institut de cercetare, care rămânea în subordinea ministerului Învățământului. Era vorba, mai întâi, despre o facultate de Psihologie și Sociologie, domenii ce fuseseră marginalizate și diminuate începând din a doua parte a anilor 1970, câteva cursuri fiind, totuși, predate de un mic număr de profesori, afiliați la catedre din cadrul Facultății de Filosofie-Istorie, dar care lucrau și cu studenții altor facultăți din UB. A doua facultate zămislită prin HG nr. 55 e cea de Jurnalistică, domeniu care fusese gestionat exclusiv de Academia de Studii Social-Politice, căci regimul de partid unic controla cu mare grijă formarea gazetărilor. Spre deosebire de aceste două facultăți, care urmau să formeze timp de patru ani „psihologi și sociologi” și, respectiv, „cadre necesare formării sociale prin mijloace de comunicare în masă”, în cea de-a treia facultate, parcursul formativ dura doar doi ani, căci era vorba numai despre un „profil postuniversitar”, iar ținta profesională pe care i-o fixa guvernul în articolul 3 al HG era aceea de a „asigura pregătirea necesară activității pentru expertiză specializată în instituțiile centrale ale statului, la nivelul partidelor politice, al Ministerului Afacerilor Externe și în învățământul superior”. Acestei instituții i se dădea un nume inedit în peisajul universitar de la noi: i s-a zis Facultatea de Înalte Studii Politice (FÎSP). Ea mai era deosebită de ce-

lelalte și pentru că admiterea urma să se facă pornind de la zero: altfel spus, FÎSP nu recupera, precum Jurnalistică, studenții înscriși la fosta academie de partid, care trebuiau să dea un „examen de verificare”, și nici nu beneficia, precum Sociologia și Psihologia, de un anumit număr de studenți deja înmatriculați la Universitatea din București. Într-adevăr, ceea ce HG nu menționează e faptul că UB a îngăduit studenților care, dacă nu venea Revoluția, ar fi încheiat parcursul de licență în anul universitar 1989-1990 la Facultatea de filosofie-istorie, să poată absolvi cu diplome de psihologie sau sociologie: soluția a fost adoptată în condițiile în care, încă din decembrie 1989, studiile universitare au fost prelungite cu un al cincilea an de studiu, iar într-un prim moment, adică în perioada ianuarie-iunie 1990, Sociologia și Psihologia au fost integrate ca secții în cadrul Filosofiei⁴⁹. Fiind student al respectivei generații, am ales să susțin licența în domeniul filosofie, dar șapte sau opt din cei 20 de colegi pe care-i aveam s-au îndreptat spre sociologie ori psihologie și au obținut diplome în aceste domenii⁵⁰. Adaug acestei mărturii una care privește o altă prevedere a HG nr. 55: aceasta cerea ca absolvenții fostei Academii Ștefan Gheorghiu să aibă oportunitatea unei atestări a studiilor urmate la fosta școală de formare a cadrelor PCR. Procesul a durat destul de mult, fiindcă în septembrie 1991, invocând un ordin al ministrului Învățământului și Științei, directorul general Ovidiu Ianculescu

aproape că soma UB să organizeze examene de diferență, până cel târziu la 1 martie 1992, pentru că altfel, menționa înaltul funcționar, respectivilor absolvenți nu li se vor mai recunoaște studiile făcute înainte de 1989 la școala de partid⁵¹. Demersurile de recuperare a acestor foste cadre ale PCR începuseră încă din ianuarie 1990. Dacă HG nr. 55 prevedea că examenele de diferență pentru studenți se dădeau „în fața unei comisii formate din reprezentanți ai presei, culturii și Ministerului Învățământului”, în privința atestării diplomelor deținute de absolvenți, nu era nimic fixat. UB a improvisat o soluție. Am făcut parte din „comitele revoluționare” care au fost alcătuite în facultatea de Filosofie și care asociau profesori și studenți, în primăvara lui 1990: oameni în toată firea veneau la un soi de judecată, organizată pe holurile Universității, pentru a asigura o transparență deplină evaluării trecutului. În fine, în 19 ianuarie 1990, prin aceeași HG, guvernul crea Institutul de teorie socială și politologie (ITSP), ce primea biblioteca fostei ASSP, imprimeria, o parte din clădire, ca și un director – Radu Florian, care predase socialism științific la UB. Spre deosebire de cele trei facultăți, ITSP nu era afiliat la UB, ci rămânea subordonat ministerului Învățământului, pentru ca ulterior să ajungă în rețeaua institutelor Academiei Române⁵².

Dacă reinventarea – sau revenirea în UB a – sociologiei și a psihologiei este bine primită, între altele fiindcă mai mulți absolvenți ai acestor speci-

alizări din anii 1960-1970 predau deja în diverse facultăți, în schimb, parașutarea de către guvern a FÎSP e primită cu reticență. Totul pornește, și-n acest caz, de la foarte sensibilele concursuri didactice. Într-adevăr, prima menționare a Facultății de Înalte Studii Politice poate fi găsită în procesul verbal al ședinței Senatului din 7 iunie 1990, când face referire la ea un profesor ce predase sociologie și pedagogie în UB și înainte de 1989, Lazăr Vlăsceanu. Acesta enumera, de fapt, facultățile ce trebuiau amenajate integral, iar FÎSP apărea între ele, alături de Jurnalistică și de o secție de bibliologie și știința informației. Discuția s-a tensionat atunci când s-a ajuns la un concurs de la facultatea de Jurnalistică pentru o poziție de conferențiar, pentru care candida o persoană care nu fusese înainte lector, dar care era deja angajat ca decan, Mihai Coman. Prorectorul Vlăsceanu explica o parte a dispozitivului legal în care era plasată discuția despre noile facultăți: „Jurnalistica a existat, a funcționat la Academia Ștefan Gheorghiu. S-a desființat aceasta, [iar] prin hotărârea 55/1990, s-a reînființat Facultatea de jurnalistică în cadrul Universității din București. Conform aceleiași hotărâri, toate cadrele didactice de la Academia Ștefan Gheorghiu au fost date afară. Facultatea de jurnalistică urma să funcționeze pentru că existau studenți, urmau să participe la selecție (*sic!*). Ministerul a hotărât să numească pe post de suplinitor un cadru didactic care să se ocupe de punerea în funcțiune a acestei facultăți și care

să aibă cunoștințe în domeniul jurnalisticii. În acest sens, dl. Coman a fost numit prin vrerea ministerului ca decan interimar și pe post de conferențiar suplinitor”. L. Vlăsceanu nu detaliază și situația FÎSP, fiindcă pe agendă era doar concursul de la Jurnalistică, el mulțumindu-se să spună că facultatea cealaltă are „profil post-universitar”. De fapt, discuția e importantă, fiindcă doi senatori de la Litere – Eugen Simion și Nicolae Manolescu – sunt împotriva intrării în UB a cuiva din afară direct pe poziție de conferențiar sau profesor⁵³, iar această poziționare va influența în mod semnificativ opinia colegilor lor senatori, când vor ajunge la dosarele de concurs de la FÎSP.

Tot Lazăr Vlăsceanu este cel care vorbește despre aceasta, în reuniunea din 29 septembrie 1990, când precizează că, în calitate de prorector, fusese mandatat să se ocupe de FÎSP. El menționează că examenul de admitere s-a ținut și că a inclus două probe, ambele în limbi străine – redactarea unui text și analiza orală „a unor probleme cu caracter politic”. Cum nu sunt profesori angajați, adăuga Vlăsceanu, au fost contactați – prin ambasadele occidentale sau prin diverși amici – cercetători din SUA, Franța, Anglia, Germania, ca să predea încă din semestrul I al anului 1991-1992. Decanul Corneliu Bîrsan de la Drept era nemulțumit, fiindcă facultatea sa nu fusese consultată în privința programei de „administratie” propusă de FÎSP, alături de cea de „analiză politică” și de o a treia – de „relații internaționale”, ce figurau în

planul general. Un student neidentificat se arăta și mai critic decât profesorul de la Drept, folosind chiar un termen total neacademic: „cum se înființează [FÎSP] dacă nu avem politologi în țară, cum pot fi scoase niște dosare de concurs ale unor oameni care nu aveau pregătire de specialitate la nivel mondial. [...] Mă îndoiesc de posibilitatea existenței unei asemenea școli care a apărut ca o idioțenie”. Profesorul Mircea Flonta, de la Filosofie, susținea că, dacă se dăduse concurs, era musai să fie găsită o soluție de amenajare practică, iar Emil Constantinescu – care folosea expresia „școală națională de studii politice” – afirma că ea trebuie să fie în UB. Discutase despre FÎSP și cu atașatul cultural al SUA la București, care i-ar fi promis „tot sprijinul” pentru ca un asemenea „institut postuniversitar” să fie organizat în sânul UB, nu altundeva. Viitorul președinte înșira și alte ajutoare primite sau promise, care nu erau foarte convingătoare, căci nu era clar mereu în ce constau: erau menționate un „material filmat din Marea Britanie”, un „material de la Sorbona”, „doi lectori din SUA care vor preda timp de doi ani – un politician și unul în administrație juridică – la Drept și la această școală de studii politice”. La final, Constantinescu adăuga că ar fi bune și contacte cu „cei din fostele țări socialiste”. Cel mai sever în intervenții a fost, însă, N. Manolescu, care vedea în FÎSP o încercare de a reînființa Academia Ștefan Gheorghiu „sub alt titlu”, ceea ce risca să aducă UB pe prima pagină a gazetelor,

întrucât ar fi putut lăsa impresia că era recuperată, de fapt, vechea școală de partid. Lui Manolescu i s-a raliat și un student de la Filosofie, care le-a spus membrilor Senatului UB că, împreună cu Marian Munteanu, el i-ar fi semnalat, pe 20 ianuarie 1990, lui Iliescu că Liga studenților nu vrea această facultate în UB, dar că președintelui nu i-a păsat. Vlăsceanu încearcă să salveze FÎSP, argumentând că nu UB a cerut o asemenea instituție în sânul ei, că e nevoie de studii de politologie, că Secăreș n-a fost nomenclaturist, chiar dacă a lucrat la Academia Ștefan Gheorghiu. La finalul discuției, Constantinescu a propus ca o comisie să evalueze programele elaborate de FÎSP: propunerea e acceptată, iar în comisie sunt numiți Corneliu Bîrsan, Ioan Mihăilescu, Zoe Petre, Nicolae Manolescu și studentul în Filosofie Daniel Oghină⁵⁴.

Pe 1 noiembrie 1990 se ține o altă reuniune a Senatului UB, pe agendă fiind iarăși concursuri didactice. Când se ajunge la cel pentru un post de conferențiar la FÎSP, intervin doi studenți de la Filosofie, care se adresează direct candidatului, și anume lui Vasile Secăreș, invitat la discuții, întrucât era decanul respectivei facultăți. Ambii studenți erau lideri ai Ligii conduse de Marian Munteanu. Primul dintre ei, Cătălin Avramescu, azi profesor la FSPUB și director al Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale al Academiei Române, îl întreabă pe Secăreș: „ce funcție dețineți în prezent?”, acesta fiind obligat să răspundă că era consilierul lui Ion Iliescu, ce nu se bu-

cura de prea multă simpatie în sânul UB, după ce minerii devastaseră clădirea rectoratului în vara aceluia an. Celălalt student, Oghină, deja menționat, e și mai casant: „Cum de v-ați schimbat atât de repede convingerile politice de la comunism la democrație?”, îl întreabă el pe Secăreș. Acesta se apără zicând următoarele: „am funcționat la un lectorat în Statele Unite, unde am predat Relații Internaționale est-vest, nu am propagat ideile ceaușiste în acest domeniu”. Rectorul întrerupe dialogul și anunță că problema va fi tranșată prin vot. Din cei 65 de membri ai Senatului, sunt prezenți la vot 46 și doar 23 votează cu Secăreș, care e astfel respins⁵⁵.

În ședința următoare, din 10 ianuarie 1991, discuția despre posturile de la FÎSP e reluată. Profesorul Corneliu Bîrsan de la Drept propune ca numele facultății să se schimbe în Institutul de Studii Politice Internaționale și Administrative (ISPIA). Rectorul Cristescu precizează, la solicitarea lui Eugen Simion, că unii dintre cei care susțineau concurs vor fi profesori asociați, fiindcă ocupă și funcții ministeriale⁵⁶. Pe 24 ianuarie e votată iar o lungă listă de posturi scoase la concurs: sunt 36 la Matematică, 26 la Biologie, 21 la Limbi și Literaturi Străine, 11 la Sociologie, Psihologie și Pedagogie, 6 la Geologie și Geofizică, 3 la Filosofie și unul la Drept. FÎSP are și ea 5 posturi propuse. Profesorul Mircea Flonta se arată din start reticent: „toți candidații de pe lista acestei facultăți au răspun- deri mai mult sau mai puțin impor-

tante în cadrul guvernului sau al altor organe ale puterii [...]. Toți sunt angajați într-o politică activă de partid”, remarcă specialistul în epistemologie. „Întrebarea este următoarea: este potrivit totuși ca oameni care sunt angajați politic să predea academic teoria politică și dacă sunt într-o poziție potrivită să facă acest lucru?”. Rectorul Cristescu sugerează că, formulând întrebarea respectivă, chiar Flonta s-ar fi pus în situația de a face politică. El îi reproșează că vrea să le taie „creanga de sub picioare” unor candidați făcând ce se făcea în epoca lui Ceaușescu, adică judecând „un om pe chestiune de dosar, de orientare politică”. Colegul lui Flonta, profesorul Alexandru Valentin, întreabă și el „cum se face că pe această listă [de candidați la concurs] sunt numai oameni dintr-un partid? Este facultatea partidului sau a Universității?”. Se alătură din nou discuției studentul Avramescu, ca și profesoara Zoe Petre: primul propune verificarea singurei lucrări publicate de unul dintre candidați, Virgil Măgureanu, care era directorul SRI, iar a doua observă că toți cei înscriși la concurs, dincolo de faptul că erau membri ai unui partid, ocupau funcții înalte în stat și nu puteau astfel să fie „judecați atât de obiectiv cât ar trebui”. La concursurile de la FÎSP s-au prezentat șase candidați și doar unul singur a fost acceptat. Astfel, la postul de conferențiar poziția 1 de la catedra de analiză politică, Virgil Măgureanu a primit 13 voturi pentru și 30 împotrivă; la postul de conferențiar poziția 2 de la aceeași catedră,

Adrian Severin s-a confruntat cu Constantin Crișan, primul obținând 34 de voturi pentru și 9 contra, în vreme ce al doilea a adunat 43 de voturi împotrivă; la postul de lector poziția 4, de la catedra de relații internaționale, Dan Mircea Popescu a fost respins, cu 29 de voturi contra și 14 pentru, iar la concursul pentru conferențiar poziția 2 de la aceeași catedră, Ioan Mircea Pașcu a strâns 23 de voturi în favoarea lui și 20 împotrivă. Pe Măgureanu l-au costat probabil cuvintele studentului C. Avramescu, care a relatat că directorul SRI se întâlnise cu Marian Munteanu și cu Mihai Gheorghiu, liderii Ligii studenților, ca să le reproșeze că fusese contestat de studenți: era o vreme în care cei trei studenți inspirau încă teamă noii elite politice⁵⁷. În schimb, Severin a trecut cu ajutorul viitorului său coleg de guvern din 1996-1997, Alexandru Athanasie, cu care fusese și coleg de grupă în facultate. Postul lui Secăreș e pus iar la vot și pică din nou, deși acesta strânge 32 de voturi *pentru* și 11 *împotrivă*, întrucât i-a lipsit un vot din totalul cerut de majoritate⁵⁸.

Câteva zile mai târziu, într-o nouă ședință de Senat, rectorul Cristescu propune înființarea unui „fel de consiliu științific” al FÎSP, alcătuit din 5 profesori – Corneliu Bârsan, Mircea Flonta, Alexandru Athanasie, Zoe Petre și Alexandru Valentin – și un student, al cărui nume nu e stabilit, coordonați de Ioan Mihăilescu. Tot rectorul anunță că începuseră discuții cu universități belgiene, pentru a aduce profesori de științe sociale care

să predea la FÎSP, însă nu știm care erau acelea⁵⁹. Una dintre ultimele mențiuni ale FÎSP în arhivele UB privește desemnarea, în februarie 1991, a doi studenți pentru a participa la Senat⁶⁰. O lună mai târziu, facultatea e desființată, tot printr-o hotărâre de guvern, care creează simultan Școala Națională pentru Studii Politice și Administrative, cu secții diferite de cele croite la FÎSP, dar cu cei respinși de Senatul UB instalați fără probleme în fruntea noii instituții⁶¹. Lua astfel sfârșit o activitate care a durat un singur an și care urmasese trei direcții.

Într-adevăr, în statele de funcții ale Facultății de Înalte Studii Politice, semnate pe 29 octombrie 1990 de către directorul Ovidiu Ianculescu de la ministerul din strada General Berthelot, figurează planul de studii de la trei specializări: studii politice, relații internaționale și administrație publică. Cele două catedre care propuneau ore se numeau de „analiză politică” (cu 13 poziții, dintre care 2 de conferențiar, 9 de lector, una de asistent și una de preparator) și, respectiv, catedra de „relații internaționale” (cu 16 poziții, dintre care 5 de conferențiar, 6 de lector și 5 de asistent). În dreptul unora dintre cursuri sunt trecute și câteva nume, unele fiind șterse cu pastă de corecție, cum se folosea în acele vremuri în care se foloseau mașini de scris, căci calculatoarele nu ajunseseră în prea multe birouri, astfel încât în două cazuri se mai zăresc doar prenumele titularilor. Cursurile propuse în cei doi ani de studii, în ordinea din cele două state

de funcții⁶², erau 27 la număr, și anume: *Istoria gândirii politice* (atribuit lui Virgil Măgureanu); *Drept civil și comercial comparat*; *Drept diplomatic și consular*; *Dreptul internațional al afacerilor*; *Teoria și practica negocierilor*; *Conjunctură economică mondială și comerț internațional*; *Sisteme politice contemporane*; *Drept constituțional comparat* (acest curs ca și cel precedent având drept titular pe Dan Mircea Popescu); *Filosofie politică*; *Istoria vieții politice și a instituțiilor politice din România*; *Sociologia puterii*; *Metode de cercetare sociologice*; *Știința administrației*; *Teorie economică contemporană*; *Informatică*; *Marketing*; *Retorică*; *Politica mondială*; *Istorie universală contemporană*; *Filosofia culturii*; *Teoria relațiilor internaționale*; *Marile teme ale politicii mondiale actuale* (curs ținut, ca și cel precedent, de Vasile Secăreș); *Teoria relațiilor și a organizațiilor internaționale*; *Probleme politice militare și de dezarmare* (curs atribuit, ca și cel de dinainte, lui Ioan Mircea Pașcu); *Drept internațional public*; *Drepturile omului: dimensiuni interne și internaționale*; *Diplomația: știință și artă*. Se adăugau cursuri de limbi străine – franceză, engleză, germană, spaniolă –, ca și unul facultativ de stenodactilografie. Responsabil pentru întreg proiectul, alături de Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Ovidiu Trăsnea și Ioan Alexandru, Vasile Secăreș își amintește în 2025 de un curs ținut pentru prima generație de la FÎSP, de către Dinu Patriciu, sub titlul *Politică urbană*, care nu figurează însă în do-

cumentele de la UB. Fostul rector al SNSPA e sigur că arhitectul devenit politician a predat la FÎSP, fiindcă o parte dintre studenții primei generații au fost recrutați ulterior ca activiști sau ca funcționari ai PNL, partidul la care se afiliase și el: cel mai cunoscut dintre aceștia e Ludovic Orban, premier în perioada 2019-2020. Tot Secăreș își aduce aminte că a predat cursuri de economie Ulm Spineanu⁶³. În acest proiect a fost implicat și Constantin Bușe, probabil pentru cursul de *Istorie universală contemporană*, pe care-l ținea și la Istorie⁶⁴.

Instituția creată de guvern la o lună de la răsturnarea lui Nicolae Ceaușescu a atras atenția diplomaților francezi de la București. O vădește faptul că, în negocierile din toamna lui 1990, în vederea încheierii unui acord de cooperare culturală, educativă, științifică și tehnică, partea franceză introduce în secțiunea despre „construirea unui stat de drept” proiectul creării, după modelul a două instituții de referință pentru Franța – École Nationale d’Administration și, respectiv, Institut d’Études Politiques, – a unor replici românești, sub numele „școală națională de administrație și institut de studii politice”⁶⁵. În acordul încheiat, e clar că proiectul avut în vedere privea, de fapt, FÎSP, căci în text se vorbea despre sprijinirea, în cadrul UB, a unei École post-universitaire de Hautes études politiques, care să conducă finalmente la o „Școală națională de administrație cu vocație interministerială”⁶⁶.

Cu puține zile înainte de reuniunea comisiei mixte ce avea să discute

asemenea chestiuni, directorul ENA îi scrisese lui Adrian Severin sugerându-i invitarea lui Vasile Secăreș la Paris, ca să profite de pe urma expertizei ENA și, „dacă ce vede corespunde obiectivului pe care-l are guvernul”, să creeze o „școală superioară de administrație”⁶⁷. Decan al FÎSP, Secăreș îl cooptase pe vicepremierul Severin în proiectul său, iar acesta, din înalta poziție guvernamentală pe care o deținea atunci, își ajuta decanul, care era și consilierul președintelui statului. Nu era, deci, o întâmplare că profesori precum M. Flonta sau A. Valentin se întrebau dacă FÎSP e facultate sau școală a noii puteri instalate. Un alt ministru care sprijină cauza facultății nou create este, de altfel, Sergiu Celac, titularul portofoliului Afacerilor Externe: pe 9 iunie 1990, el îi spusese ambasadorului Le Breton că Parisul ar trebui să creeze în țara noastră instituții care să formeze „nu câteva sute, ci câteva zeci de mii de funcționari pentru evoluția spre democrație, stat de drept și economia de piață”⁶⁸.

Relațiile lui Secăreș și ale altor consilieri ai lui Iliescu sau ai premierului Petre Roman cu diplomații francezi debutaseră devreme: pe 9 ianuarie 1990, ambasada Franței la București cerea la Quai d’Orsay ajutor pentru a transmite Consiliului Frontului Salvării Naționale 21 de lucrări de drept public, ce-i fuseseră solicitate pentru a amenaja tranziția la democrație⁶⁹. Pe de altă parte, trebuie menționat că FÎSP nu era singurul proiect avut în vedere de partea

franceză: în 1990, dar și în primăvara anului următor, se discută mult despre un institut franco-român de gestiune, dar și despre filiere universitare, adică despre departamente sau facultăți în care să se predea în franceză: prima și cea mai des menționată în documentele Ambasadei franceze era cea care urma să fie creată la Politehnică⁷⁰. Să fi fost așa, pentru că Petre Roman venea de acolo? Evident. Erau, însă, avute în vedere și alte filiere⁷¹. FÎSP n-a putut fi așa ceva: profesorii din UB nu au vrut să-i coopteze pe liderii FSN în corpul universitar⁷², iar franceza nu era punctul forte al acelui grup ce provenea de la fosta academie de partid. Abia venirea președintelui francez la București va conduce la o soluție.

Faculté Internationale de Sciences Humaines

Vizita lui François Mitterrand din 18-19 aprilie 1991 a fost una controversată. Și-n România, și-n Franța, prima descindere a unui șef de stat occidental la București este văzută ca una „ambiguă”⁷³. Cotidienele de la Paris, atât cele de stânga, cât și cele de dreapta, au subliniat că decizia președintelui francez de a vizita țara care scăpase de dictatură prin vărsare de sânge îi întărea poziția lui Ion Iliescu, nemulțumind astfel opoziția anticomunistă⁷⁴. Alți corespondenți de presă arătau că și democrația, și reformele economice urmau să fie făcute cu sprijinul Franței⁷⁵. Dimensiunea europeană nu lipsea din dis-

cuții, Mitterrand promițând – destul de vag, de altfel – că România va fi într-o zi parte a unui „viitor comun” în Europa⁷⁶. Dar pentru ziariștii francezi, europenizarea nu era asociată cu omologul lui Mitterrand de la București, ci cu intelectuali precum Doina Cornea și Andrei Pleșu⁷⁷.

Dialogul româno-francez a avut loc într-un moment special. Cu două săptămâni înainte de a-l primi pe locatarul de la Élysée, Iliescu fusese la Moscova pentru a semna un tratat de cooperare cu URSS⁷⁸. Surprinși de acest gest, care nu le fusese adus la cunoștință, diplomații de la Quai d’Orsay hotărâsc ca vizita prezidențială să aibă o componentă politică diminuată – de pildă, semnarea unui tratat e amânată – și aceasta să capete un conținut cultural mai consistent. Francofonia începea astfel să dobândească un profil mult mai bine conturat. Publicului din Franța i se explică, de altfel, că prezența președintelui Mitterrand la București era justificată de „francofonia viguroasă”⁷⁹ pe care o poate descoperi oricine ajunge în România. Un politolog avizat va spune mai târziu că Franța a încercat să construiască în regiunea Balcanilor o contrapondere la influența exercitată de nemți în Europa centrală pe două căi: „prin francofonie și prin deschiderea economică și politică”⁸⁰.

Din punctul de vedere care ne interesează, vizita are un rezultat colosal de important: dacă până în aprilie 1991, singura filieră francofonă despre care se vorbea era cea de la Politehnică, cu mai puțin de două săptămâni înainte de sosirea lui François

Mitterrand la București, în documentele oficiale apare și o alta, ce urma să fie deschisă la UB⁸¹. În cuprinsul unui prim dosar al vizitei de stat pregătit de Quai d'Orsay se găsește o fișă dedicată unei „filiiere française à l'université de Bucarest”⁸². Numele folosit pentru a o desemna în dosarul operațional înmănat ulterior președintelui e diferit: „Faculté des sciences humaines en langue française à l'Université de Bucarest”⁸³. Așa apărea și într-o conversație purtată de rectorul UB cu consiliera culturală Colleu-Dumond, în care profesorul Cristescu indica disponibilitatea instituției pe care o conducea de a primi 250 de studenți în prima promoție, care ar fi putut fi înscriși, se gândea el, și la alte facultăți din UB sau chiar să fi fost absolvenți ai altor discipline „și dornici de a-și îmbogăți cunoștințele în domeniul culturii franceze și al științelor umane”. Același Cristescu cerea profesori francezi care să vină câte două luni la o asemenea nouă instituție și care să predea în patru domenii-cheie: istorie, filosofie, sociologie și economie⁸⁴.

Numele filierei se impune greu: într-o singură telegramă din primăvara aceluși an, facultatea care urma să fie creată apare fie ca „filière francophone en sciences humaines”, fie ca „filière francophone en sciences humaines et sociales”, fie ca „faculté de sciences humaines et sciences sociales”⁸⁵. Chiar și la un an după ce decolase de pe agenda președintelui Mitterrand și aterizase în realitatea bucureșteană, ea era menți-

onată în documentele diplomatice franceze trimise de la București la Paris fie ca filieră de „drept și științe sociale”, fie ca filieră de „științe sociale și umane”⁸⁶. Poate că unul dintre motive era obscuritatea legată de aspectul strict juridic al înființării ei. Într-adevăr, dacă semnalul politic dat, de la cel mai înalt nivel, cu ocazia vizitei din 18-19 aprilie 1991, este foarte clar, instituționalizarea proiectului e, până azi, un mister. În aceea perioadă, crearea unei facultăți se făcea printr-o hotărâre de guvern, de care era nevoie în multe alte cazuri, de la stabilirea cursului leu-dolar la crearea unei societăți comerciale sau a unei gazete. De pildă, prin decretul 238 din 29 martie 1991, guvernul lui Petre Roman hotărâ că de la 1 aprilie un dolar SUA urma să nu mai fie schimbat contra 35 de lei, ci contra 60, după ce, cu câteva săptămâni mai devreme, în 14 februarie, executivul hotărâse să creeze societatea comercială Humanitas; a doua zi după vizita lui Mitterrand, o HG e dedicată creării săptămânalului *Lumea*⁸⁷; tot cam pe atunci, alte hotărâri de guvern înființau Facultatea militară de educație fizică sau Institutul teologic romano-catolic de grad universitar⁸⁸. În schimb, o decizie similară privitoare la Faculté Internationale de Sciences Humaines (FISH) e de găsit⁸⁹.

A observat-o deja colegul meu L. Vlad, atunci când afirma în studiul consacrat FISH următoarele: „nu am găsit până acum un document / moment fondator”⁹⁰. Dacă nu se găsește o HG, atunci poate e de căutat un

ordin de ministru, mi-am zis. La solicitarea pe care am făcut-o Direcției Generale de Învățământ Universitar din actualul minister, mi s-a răspuns, pe 11 februarie 2025, că nu a fost identificat niciun ordin de ministru din 1990-1991 care să vizeze crearea unei specializări universitare în limba franceză la UB. Am ajuns eu însumi în arhivele din strada General Berthelot, beneficiind de sprijinul unui ministru înțelegător⁹¹. Nimic referitor la crearea FISH în primăvara lui 1991 nu se află în registrul ordinelor de ministru. Am dat, în schimb, peste un ordin din 12 aprilie 1991, prin care era creată atunci o „ramură” francofonă la Institutul Politehnic București, alăturată uneia cu predare în engleză ce exista deja și alteia în germană creată tot atunci⁹². E evident vorba despre filiera pomenită în corespondența diplomatică franceză, deja citată. Nu am dat peste ceva asemănător pentru o filieră din UB, între ordinele de ministru apărând, în schimb, unul care statua numirea ca rector provizoriu a lui Vasile Secăreș la SNSPA⁹³.

În arhiva UB, am găsit totuși o urmă: e vorba despre o adresă trimisă pe 10 mai 1991, de către un prorector, al cărui nume nu este precizat, către ministerul de resort cu subiectul „înființare facultate cu predare în limba franceză”⁹⁴. Cu trei zile înainte, profesorul Lazăr Vlăsceanu de la UB, care era de puțin timp și secretar de stat la Educație⁹⁵, se întâlnise cu Chantal Collet-Dumond, consiliera culturală a Ambasadei Franței la București. Aceasta relatează că interlo-

cutorul său român îl recomandase pe Radu Toma drept coordonator al proiectului unei „filii francofone în științe umane”. Profesorul Toma era prezentat și ca fondator al Editurii Babel, iar Vlăsceanu preciza că UB va contribui la proiectul despre care ministrul de externe Roland Dumas discutase cu rectorul Nicolae Cristescu, oferind clădiri și cursuri ținute de profesori de istorie, sociologie ori filosofie. Prima promoție, zicea el, ar fi fost de 60 de studenți, recrutați nu doar din România, ci din întreaga regiune și cărora ar fi fost bine să li se poată adresa profesori francezi, cărora UB se arăta dispusă să le plătească salarii în lei. În telegrama sa, Collet-Dumond menționa importanța unui ajutor care să vină din Franța până la 1 octombrie 1991 și care să conștie în manuale, tratate, cursuri fundamentale, pentru ca ulterior să se constituie și o bibliotecă⁹⁶. Și consiliera de la ambasada Franței, și Vlăsceanu îl cunoscuseră pe Toma înainte de Revoluție: profesorul de la catedra de franceză fusese invitat adeseori la recepțiile și expozițiile organizate la Biblioteca Franceză sau la reședința diplomaților din strada Emile Zola nr. 6, iar cu sociologul ajuns secretar de stat R. Toma se știa de la debutul anilor optzeci⁹⁷.

În 2016, Vlăsceanu își aducea aminte foarte clar că inițiativa creării FISH a venit de la partea franceză cu puțin înainte de vizita lui Mitterrand și că nu trebuie să ne mire absența unei HG sau a unui ordin de ministru în cazul punerii în practică a unei idei formulate de primul „lider occidental

de anvergură globală” care vizita România, căci, în acele vremuri, „tot ceea ce părea rezonabil se realiza cu o viteză uimitoare, nimeni nu se împiedica de nu știu ce proceduri birocratice”⁹⁸. Radu Toma a pregătit, într-adevăr, o machetă de cursuri foarte repede – mai precis, „în câteva zile”⁹⁹ – folosind documentația de la Biblioteca Franceză din București despre institutele de studii politice și acceptând sugestia făcută de prorectorul C. Bușe de a folosi mai degrabă numele „științe umane” decât cel de „știință politică”, pentru a separa FISH de ce fusese FISP, dar și pentru că voia să sublinieze cât de importantă e interdisciplinaritatea¹⁰⁰. Amintirile lui Bușe, un sfert de secol mai târziu, nu erau așa limpezi, el fiind, de pildă, convins că filiera a fost creată când „s-a primit un act de la Petre Roman”¹⁰¹.

Un act s-a făcut. Dar nu la guvern, ci, așa cum am notat mai sus, la UB, în primăvara anului 1991, când un prorector – fie Ioan Mihăilescu, fie Constantin Bușe – au trimis, cum sugera Radu Toma, „o cerere către minister. Însotită de justificare. În afară de machetă, adresa către minister trebuie să fi fost formulări de genul: având în vedere că..., avem nevoie de..., propunem înființarea unei facultăți de 4 ani, care să...”¹⁰². Din păcate, nu am găsit nici la arhiva UB, nici la cea de la ministerul educației dosarul respectiv.

E, în schimb, relativ bine documentată prima admitere la Facultatea Internațională de Științe Umane, care se ține la începutul lunii iulie 1991¹⁰³.

Anunțul public e interesant din mai multe puncte de vedere. În primul rând, atrage atenția justificarea generală: scopul creării FISH ar fi fost, potrivit organizatorilor, „formarea de specialiști necesari unei mai rapide integrări europene”. În al doilea rând, facultatea anunța licențe în patru domenii: drept, sociologie, istorie, filosofie. În fine, examenul avea trei probe: una orală și eliminatorie, care era descrisă un pic ambiguu – „limbă franceză și aptitudini intelectuale” – ea fiind urmată de un test scris la franceză și un altul, tot scris, la alegere – pornind de la un subiect de filosofie ori de istorie universală. Proba orală fusese concepută de R. Toma împreună cu Danielle Omer, sosită la București ca lector de franceză înainte de 1989. Examinarea era ceva cu totul inedit pentru școala românească și a rămas în memoria primelor 7-8 generații, căci, așa cum va povesti mai târziu primul decan al facultății, era verificată „capacitatea intelectuală a candidatului; nu numai franceza, ci și capacitatea de înțelegere, de sinteză. Pentru oral, aveam nevoie de cel puțin 70 de subiecte distincte, care trebuiau să fie din literatura foarte actuală și fiecare subiect pentru sinteze avea echivalentul a două-trei pagini standard”¹⁰⁴. Cum am participat, începând din 1992, la numeroase asemenea examene, îmi amintesc surpriza candidaților care descopereau că, la proba orală, li se cerea să improvizeze un discurs în limba lui Voltaire pornind de la teme precum „Mamaia sau Sinaia?”, „Peisaj industrial”, „Pepsi și Coca-Cola”

ori „Punctualitate”. La fel de original era, comparat cu ce se făcea atunci în alte facultăți, testul scris de franceză, care pornea de la texte la prima vedere, mai precis de la un fragment de articol sau de carte publicate recent, din domenii precum istoria mentalităților, filosofia ori studiile politice, candidații trebuind, mai întâi, să rezume textul în circa 50 de cuvinte, apoi să scrie un eseu de o pagină pornind de la una dintre temele tratate în fragmentul respectiv. Condițiile erau descrise și într-un interviu acordat Taniei Radu de către Radu Toma, pentru suplimentul cultural al unui cotidian, cu puțin timp înainte de primul examen de admitere: Toma se recomanda „decanul unei facultăți care încă nu există” și definea ceva mai precis decât găsim în alte părți specializările pe care le viza noua facultate, și anume dreptul comunitar (pentru aria de studii juridice), relațiile Est-Vest (pentru specializarea istorie), sociologia europeană comparată (în privința sociologiei) și modernitatea (în domeniul filosofic). El adăuga că diplomele FISH „vor fi omologate imediat, cel puțin în toate țările francofone”¹⁰⁵.

Pe fila din arhiva UB care descria admiterea e scris, de mână, că au fost scoase la concurs 50 de locuri, că înscrierea candidaturilor urma să se facă între 5 și 7 iulie, prima probă fiind programată pe 8, iar cele scrise – între 15 și 17 iulie 1991. Au intrat la FISH, până la urmă, 24 de studenți, așa cum o arată o statistică internă din acel an făcută de UB, din care mai aflăm că nouă locuri fuseseră

ocupate de persoane „de sex feminin”, una dintre ele nefiind româncă, și că șapte din cei admiși nu erau din București¹⁰⁶. Examenul a creat ceva emoții între responsabili UB, fiindcă în acea vreme, la admitere, domnea încă o atmosferă cazonă, iar când Radu Toma a hotărât să formuleze un subiect separat pentru candidata care nu studiasse în România, i s-a reproșat că în acest fel nu asigurase condiții egale concurenților¹⁰⁷. Din registrul de corespondență al UB – e prima mențiune a FISH în actele instituției –, aflăm că un candidat pe nume Mircea Nicolae Dobrescu contestase rezultatul concursului de admitere¹⁰⁸.

Nu știm nici cum, și nici când s-a obținut finanțarea pentru studenții din noua facultate. Pe 26 aprilie 1991, când un responsabil din UB discută cu secretarul de stat de la Educație Lazăr Vlăsceanu planul de școlarizare pentru anul I din 1991/1992, cifra totală propusă de UB era de 3.480 de locuri, repartizate între 15 facultăți din cadrul ei, între acestea nefiind însă menționată și cea de științe umane¹⁰⁹. Ce este sigur e că, la începutul anului universitar, mai precis pe 7 octombrie 1991, rectorul Cristescu trimitea o adresă către Magazia UB (*sic!*), cerând ca 27 din cele 5000 de carnete de student de care avea nevoie Universitatea să fie distribuite către științele umane¹¹⁰.

O lună mai târziu, întemeietorul facultății, Radu Toma, e în Senat ca reprezentant al FISH, dar și ca unul dintre candidații la un post de conferențiar la catedra de literatură franceză, unde își va continua activitatea

didactică¹¹¹, întrucât la FISH nu a predat nici măcar un curs. În trecut fie zis, ședința din 21 noiembrie 1990 e una în care se discută primele dosare de conducători de doctorat de la Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă: cererile veneau de la 13 profesori sau conferențieri ce urcaseră treptele carierei didactice până atunci „cu aprobarea Sfântului Sinod și a Secretariatului pentru Culte”. Aproape toți candidații erau preoți sau diaconi și solicitau aprobarea Senatului pentru a adăuga pozițiilor didactice pe care le dețineau din 1978-1990 și îndrumarea de doctoranzi. Situația trezește întrebări – unele despre studiile teologice făcute în anii '50, altele, despre modul cum e făcut doctoratul în acest domeniu. Zoe Petre și Alexandru Valentin, viitori profesori la FISH, ca și rectorul Nicolae Cristescu le iau apărarea teologilor, cerând „mai multă înțelegere” pentru specificul domeniului, ce se voia reintegrat în Universitate. Toți cei 13 candidați sunt acceptați, deși unul avea deja 73 de ani¹¹². Spre deosebire de teologi, FISH nu avea un corp didactic propriu și nici o „bază materială”. Așa că ea primește ajutor de la câteva facultăți: profesorii veneau de la Filosofie, Istorie și Drept, iar cursurile se țineau în clădirile de la Limbi Străine și de la Litere, situate în strada Pitar Moș și în strada Edgar Quinet, dar și într-un amfiteatru de la Istorie ori în clădirea Grupului pentru Dialog Social din Calea Victoriei nr. 120.

Un sprijin material semnificativ e asigurat încă din vara și toamna anului în care facultatea e înființată, grație demersurilor făcute de ambasada

Francei. E vorba despre o finanțare generală pentru filiere – intrau aici FISH și sora ei un pic mai mare de la IPB – de 300 de mii de franci francezi, pentru burse și stagii de vară, ca și pentru echipamente informatice, formarea unor bibliotecari sau misiuni pedagogice ale unor profesori din Franța¹¹³. De fapt, încă din 6 iunie 1991, când admiterea încă nu fusese organizată, o telegramă diplomatică trimisă de la București la Paris insista asupra nevoii ca, pe lângă sprijinul logistic, să fie organizată predarea unor cursuri la FISH de către specialiști francezi, adăugând că „nevoile concrete vor fi precizate de îndată ce conținutul programelor va fi definitivat”, dar că ar fi fost bine să fie avute în vedere una sau două catedre-duble¹¹⁴.

O parte din aceste misiuni de predare vor fi asigurate cu sprijinul agenției universitare a francofoniei, ce purta atunci numele AUPELF-UREF¹¹⁵. Sosit la București, Michel Guillou, rectorul acestei rețele, propunea afilierea universităților din România la asociație – pe banii lor, preciza el, cu mare grijă la asemenea detalii. Rectorul francofonilor din întreaga lume sublinia că, în acest fel, AUPELF-UREF putea oferi mai multe forme de sprijin pentru filiere: fiecare student primea cadou trei cărți, câte zece studenți din fiecare filieră puteau face un stagiu de câte șase săptămâni în Franța sau în Belgia, profesorii francofoni aveau la dispoziție misiuni de durată medie la UB încă din 1992, iar colegii lor români erau integrați ca experți în co-

misiile de evaluare constituite în cadrul rețelei universitare¹¹⁶. Așa cum notam deja, termenul „francofonie” nu are un sens foarte clar în lumea românească: el începe, totuși, să fie utilizat în interiorul UB pentru a desemna facultatea internațională de științe umane, al cărei profil era legat de „pregătirea studenților pe anumite valori culturale”. Expresia – pe care unii ar asocia-o cu limba de lemn – îi aparține prorectorului Ioan Mihăilescu, care voia, de fapt, să sublinieze noutatea specializărilor din UB, fiindcă o asocia cu alte posibile programe de licență sau de master organizate în germană sau japoneză ori de crearea unei specializări în drept american¹¹⁷. Pe de altă parte, predarea în franceză nu purta cu ea doar ambiția renovării, ci și pe cea a „păstrării unei diversități culturale, ca și a schimburilor dintre diverse tradiții intelectuale”, obiective care au fost atribuite ulterior și programelor Erasmus¹¹⁸. În orice caz, pentru FISH a contat nu doar sprijinul financiar, ci și cel „afectiv”, invocat de rectorul AUP ELF-UREF după ce a descins prima dată la București: Guillou visa atunci ca filierele deschise aici să participe într-o bună zi, alături de cele din Bulgaria și Ungaria, la crearea unei „mari universități internaționale a francofoniei”¹¹⁹.

Planul de studii cu care pornea la drum noua filieră era foarte diferit de ce propusese în anul universitar anterior FISP. O variantă parțială a acestuia se găsește în arhiva UB, într-un dosar ce conține statele de funcții pentru toate facultățile¹²⁰. Numele

cursurilor erau, pe o primă pagină, scrise la mașină, iar pe o a doua – de mână, în vreme ce titularii erau menționați cu creionul, totul fiind redactat în română, după cum urmează: *Istoria ideilor și faptelor în raport cu evoluția dreptului și a instituțiilor* – pe semestrul întâi cursul și seminarul fiind ținute de Zoe Petre, iar pe al doilea – de Daniel Barbu; *Istoria comparată a civilizațiilor europene* – curs și seminar de două semestre, asumate de Alexandru Duțu; *Introducere în filosofie* – curs și seminar ținute, în ambele semestre, de Alexandru Valentin; *Elemente de psihologie și introducere în psihosociologie* – curs și seminar de un semestru atribuite lui Ioan Mihăilescu; *Elemente de sociologie și introducere în sociologia politică* – curs și seminar de un semestru pe care le avea în grijă Ioan Mihăilescu; *Istoria dreptului* – curs și seminar de un semestru în sarcina lui Octavian Căpățână; *Limba franceză* – curs și seminar de două semestre ce le reveleau Daniellei Omer și lui Viorel Vișan. Alte două cursuri – *Probleme sociopolitice contemporane* și, respectiv, *Modele sociopolitice ale statului* – nu au un titular indicat¹²¹. Așa s-a pornit la drum.

Merită precizat că statele de funcții și planurile de studii erau aprobate în acel an, și vor mai fi o bună bucată de timp, la minister. Centralizarea era enormă. Și, în acest fel, și corupția, Devenit decan după plecarea lui Radu Toma, Daniel Barbu mi-a relatat umiliința la care era supus, alături de decanii celorlalte facultăți din țară,

atunci când trebuia să stea la coadă, ore-n șir, pe culoarele din clădirea situată în strada General Berthelot. Fiecare decan venea, de altfel, cu cadouri, pentru a căpăta ilustra semnătură a directorului general: cartușele de țigări Kent și sticlele de whisky își prelungiseră în postcomunism statutul câștigat în comunism.

Până la înlocuirea lui R. Toma cu D. Barbu, FISH cunoaște câteva schimbări importante. În primul rând, încep să se facă angajări ale unor titulari. Căci, inițial, toți cei care predau erau fie titulari în alte facultăți ale UB sau angajați în institute ale Academiei Române, fie „colaboratori externi”, printre aceștia din urmă numărându-se, pe lângă cei menționați mai sus, Pavel Cîmpeanu, Neagu Djuvara, Nicolae Tanașoca, Alin Teodorescu sau Vintilă Mihăilescu¹²². Inclusiv plata lor era complicată: Radu Toma a povestit că unii colaboratori au primit bani prin „diverse artificii: fie plată cu ora partajată, cu persoane care îndeplineau condițiile formale, fie plata pe drepturi de autor, prin intermediul Editurii Babel”¹²³.

Primele concursuri pentru titularizare se fac la FISH abia în ianuarie 1993: e vorba despre două posturi de profesor, cu discipline istorice, ocupate de doi cercetători de la Institutul de Studii Sud-Est Europene, Alexandru Dușu și Daniel Barbu, și de un post de preparator, ce cuprindea *Introducere în filosofie* și *Filosofie politică*, post ocupat de Cristian Preda. Cum facultatea nu avea vreun angajat și, în consecință, nici Consiliu, dosarele sunt votate direct în Senat¹²⁴. La fel

stau lucrurile în iunie 1994, când alte două posturi cu profil istoric sunt scoase la concurs: unul de conferențiar e ocupat de un cercetător de la Institutul Nicolae Iorga, Ștefan Andreescu, iar celălalt post – de asistent – e câștigat de un absolvent al secției de Istorie de la UB și al unui master în același domeniu la EHESS Paris, Dan Petre¹²⁵.

FISH intra în rândul lumii. În decembrie 1993, era deja imaginat modul de susținere a examenului de licență: studenții urmau să dea două probe scrise și una orală, apoi să prezinte o lucrare în fața unei comisii, media finală fiind calculată cu pondere egală pentru examene și susținerea publică¹²⁶. O hotărâre de guvern – prima în care găsim numele filierei, ce-i drept, în română, nu-n franceză! – recunoștea profilul *științe umane*, cu specializarea *științe umane în limbi străine*, cu durata studiilor de 4 ani, în urma cărora se obținea titlul de *licențiat în științe umane*¹²⁷. De fapt, diplomele acordate primilor absolvenți în 1995 vor fi unele de științe politice, nu de științe umane. Negocierea cu ministerul a fost făcută de Daniel Barbu, care preluase funcția de decan în 29 septembrie 1994¹²⁸. El a reușit să-l convingă pe Liviu Maior, ministrul educației, că FISH făcuse ce făcea în acea vreme un Institut d'Études Politiques în Franța¹²⁹. Ceea ce era perfect adevărat, fiindcă așa fusese croită macheta de studiu, cum am notat deja. În iulie 1995, FISH devenea, prin hotărâre de guvern, Facultatea de Științe Politice și Administrative¹³⁰. Iar Emil Constantinescu

se putea felicita și spune, în deschiderea ședinței de Senat, din aceeași lună, că „odată cu înființarea Facultății de Științe Politice, tot ceea ce ne-am propus în alegeri [pentru funcția de rector] s-a realizat”¹³¹. Din perspectivă francofonă, facultatea rămânea o filieră cu patru ani de studiu. O fișă despre învățământul bilingv, alcătuită în 1996 de biroul de cooperare lingvistică și educativă al ambasadei Franței de la București, menționa că la FSPA – se preciza că ea continuă FISH – erau 204 studenți: 55 în primul an, 63 în al doilea, 47 în al treilea și 39 în anul al patrulea, ultimul de la programul de licență¹³².

Tot la întâlnirea cu ministrul Maior, Barbu a acceptat ca predarea științei politice să înceapă și în română¹³³. Într-un mod paradoxal, această decizie sincroniza FISH cu mișcarea francofonă, inclusiv în sens mai larg, politic. Într-adevăr, rectorul AUELF-UREF din acel moment făcea din această mișcare un instrument de încurajare a limbilor naționale. Pentru el, francofonia era, de fapt, o alternativă la Europa unită. Guillou se temea de „dispariția națiunilor”, pe care ar putea-o provoca construcția europeană, și credea că solidaritatea și diversitatea vor fi salvate de o organizație în care se vor vorbi limbile naționale – mai numeroase decât cele utilizate în UE – și-n care franceza ar fi fost a doua limbă a tuturor. Viitorul politicii ar fi urmat să fie stabilit de o deliberare făcută nu în Parlamentul European, ci în cel

al Francofoniei, mandatat să voteze bugetul ansamblului țărilor ce aveau „franceza în comun”¹³⁴. Doi ani mai târziu, același autor ducea exagerarea pe culmi și mai înalte, căci înfățișa Francofonia drept a doua putere mondială, după Statele Unite ale Americii, care exercitau atunci o hegemonie cvasi-absolută pe scena internațională¹³⁵.

Când privim realitatea din teren, cel puțin din România, descoperim că Francofonia e mai degrabă un fapt cultural decât unul politic sau diplomatic. Iar cultural înseamnă, în primul rând, universitar. Ceea ce nu exclude – dimpotrivă! – un impact asupra societății politice. Iar dacă am pornit de la ipoteza că filiala francofonă ar fi putut să fie, cu termenii lui Michel Espagne, fie o margine autonomă, fie un receptacol al unor tendințe în declin redefinite în urma unui transfer, ce am descoperit e că sprijinul dat unei filiere de științe umane în franceză a creat altceva: un soi de „instrument de conectare”, de sincronizare cu un spațiu public european, căci limba franceză a stimulat nu doar apariția unei prime versiuni a științei politice în această limbă, în 1991, ci și a altor două – în română, începând din 1995, și, doi ani mai târziu, în engleză. În acest fel, franceza a devenit mediator pentru europeanizare, nu alternativă la ea. În momentul când închei redactarea acestui articol, ambasadorii României la UE, la NATO și la Națiunile Unite sunt toți trei absolvenți ai acestei instituții, în care au studiat – unul în vremea FISH, iar ceilalți doi, în vremea FSPA.

Note

- ¹ Prezentul articol a fost scris pe baza unei documentări în cadrul unui proiect Horizon Europe al UE, proiect intitulat NARDIV și finanțat prin grantul nr. 101095171 și grație unor stagii de cercetare la Paris și la Nantes din septembrie 2024 și din martie 2025. Le mulțumesc lui Gabriel Liiceanu și Sorin Antohi pentru lămuririle cu privire la acțiunea diplomației culturale franceze în România înainte și după 1989.
- ² Extras din „Comunicatul către țară al CFSN. 22 decembrie 1989”, în Domnița Ștefănescu, *Unsprezece ani din istoria României. O cronologie a evenimentelor: decembrie 1989-decembrie 2000*, Editura mașina de scris, București, 2011, pp. 905-906.
- ³ Daniel Barbu, „From the Politics of Science to the Science of Politics: the Difficult Make Up of the Romanian Political Science”, în *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review*, vol. II, nr. 1/2002, pp. 273-295.
- ⁴ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, „Political Science in Post-Communist Romania: a Discipline from Scratch”, în E. Rainer and L. Pal (eds.), *Political Science in East-Central Europe: Diversity and Convergence*, Farmington Hills, MI: Barbara Budrich, 2010, pp. 221-230.
- ⁵ Lavinia Stan, „Romanian political science since 1989”, în *European Journal of Political Research*, 35/1999, pp. 507-532.
- ⁶ Luciana Ghica, „Academic bovarism and the pursuit of legitimacy: canon-building in Romanian political science”, *European Political Science*, 13/2014, pp. 171-186.
- ⁷ Laurențiu Vlad, „O istorie a Facultății Internaționale de Științe Umane a Universității din București (1991-1995””, în Laurențiu Vlad (coord.), *Un moment din istoria Facultății de Științe Politice a Universității din București: filiera socio-umană francofonă (1991-1995)* [volum citat de acum înainte LV-FȘPUB], Editura Universității din București, București, 2016, pp. 13-60. Interviuurile din volum au fost realizate de Anca Dohotariu (cu Emil Constantinescu), Ionela Băluță (cu Lazăr Vlăsceanu și cu Radu Toma), Laurențiu Vlad (cu Constantin Bușe și cu Zoe Petre) și Ruxandra Ivan (cu Daniel Barbu, cu Cristian Preda și cu Dan Petre); ele sunt precedate de un text al Ionelei Băluță ce justifică utilizarea istoriei orale în cercetarea respectivă. În completarea volumului coordonat de L. Vlad, un altul a acoperit o perioadă mai lungă din evoluția științei politice la UB: Ionela Băluță, Dan Drăghia, Octavian Sofronea, *Facultatea de științe politice a Universității din București: după 25 de ani / The Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest: 25 years after*, Editura Universității din București, București, 2016.
- ⁸ Afirmația îi aparține Ioanei Popa, „Diplomaties culturelles occidentales en conjonction de détente. Le lancement d'un programme d'échanges académiques Est-Ouest à la 6ème section de l'EPHE”, *Relations internationales*, 169 (1), 2017, p. 70. Autoarea distinge diplomația culturală și diplomația publică, subliniind că a doua poate fi văzută ca o formă de propagandă.
- ⁹ V. Michel Espagne, *L'ambre et le fossile. Transferts germano-russes dans les sciences humaines XIXe-XXe siècle*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2014, p. 15.
- ¹⁰ Este vorba despre volume și articole de știință politică, dar și despre inter-

- viuri cu protagoniști ai evenimentelor din perioada 1985-1995, ca și despre arhive. Documentele din arhiva Universității din București apar citate sub sigla AUB; documentele din arhivele diplomatice franceze de la Centre des Archives Diplomatiques – sub sigla CADN, urmate de numărul cutiei, de cota de înregistrare a dosarului și, după caz, precedate de numele documentului și de data redactării sau înregistrării lui.
- ¹¹ E și perspectiva îmbrățișată de Ioan Pânzaru, Bogdan Murgescu și Matei Gheboianu în introducerea capitolului „Universitatea din București după 1989”, din lucrarea coordonată de Ovidiu Bozgan și Bogdan Murgescu, *Universitatea din București. 1864-2014*, Editura Universității din București, București, 2014, pp. 371-378.
- ¹² Domnița Ștefănescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.
- ¹³ Claudia-Maria Udrescu, *Universitatea din București. Modele și traiectorii postcomuniste*, Editura Universității din București, București, 2011, p. 73.
- ¹⁴ AUB, dosar 315 – Senat 29 III, 5 IV, 24 V, 31 V 1990, ședința Senatului din 29 martie 1990, pp. 2-4, 2/1-2/2 și 4/1.
- ¹⁵ Cifrele sunt extrase din „Raport privind situația Universității București în intervalul 15 martie 1990 – martie 1992”, p. 4 – în AUB, dosar 494 – Senat (9 IV 1992 – 21 V 1992). Facultățile create prin scindarea unora existente sunt cele de Istorie și, respectiv, de Filosofie, desprinse din una care reunea cele două domenii; tot în urma Revoluției, Facultatea de Biologie, Geografie și Geologie s-a împărțit în trei facultăți distincte, iar Facultatea de Filologie s-a rupt în două entități: Facultatea de Litere și, respectiv, Facultatea de Limbi și Literaturi Străine.
- ¹⁶ AUB, dosar 315 – Senat 29 III, 5 IV, 24 V, 31 V 1990, ședința Senatului din 5 aprilie 1990, pp. VIII/2-VIII/3.
- ¹⁷ Câteva detalii la Claudia-Maria Udrescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-110.
- ¹⁸ AUB, dosar 315 – Senat 29 III, 5 IV, 24 V, 31 V 1990, ședința Senatului din 24 mai 1990, pp. 2-3. Despre raportul universității publice – universități private în România post-comunistă, v. Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, „Les <centres d'excellence> en sciences humaines et sociales et leur insertion dans les communautés scientifiques émergentes en Europe de l'Est”, în Catherine Durandin (sous la direction de), Magda Cârneli (avec la collaboration de), *Perspectives roumaines : du postcommunisme à l'intégration européenne*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004, pp. 161-162.
- ¹⁹ AUB, dosar 315 – Senat 29 III, 5 IV, 24 V, 31 V 1990, ședința Senatului din 5 aprilie 1990, p. I/1. Solicitarea e prezentată de prorectorul Constantin Bușe.
- ²⁰ AUB, dosar 315 – Senat 29 III, 5 IV, 24 V, 31 V 1990, ședința Senatului din 24 mai 1990, p. III/3.
- ²¹ Informația e înfățișată de către rectorul Nicolae Cristescu în reuniunea Senatului din 24 ianuarie 1991 – v. AUB, dosar 260 – Senat 24 I 1991, p. 1.
- ²² Télégramme Diplomatique (de acum înainte TD) Bucarest 753, 27.02.1991 – CADN 124PO/4/60, dosar FR II.3.8.1. Pornind de la ideea că George Soros era concurent, nu partener al diplomației culturale franceze, o autoare franceză care a contribuit foarte mult la renovarea științelor umane din România l-a prezentat pe filantropul american ca pe un „papă al artiștilor și al umaniștilor, mecena al științelor sociale, furnizor de fonduri, agitator de idei și

- de contracte, creator de institute și de universități, fondator al unui impozant imperiu al științelor sociale în toate țările din Europa centrală după 1989” – cf. Rose Marie Lagrave, *Voyage dans les pays d'une utopie déçue*, Paris, PUF, 1998, p. 107.
- ²³ Detalii în articolul meu „Cine-l poate înlocui pe dictatorul român? Câteva răspunsuri ale diplomaților francezi din anii '80”, *Polis*, volum XII, nr. 4 (46), serie nouă, septembrie-noiembrie 2024, pp. 131-146.
- ²⁴ TD Bucurest 1640, 29.11.1988 – CADN 124PO/4/57, dosar FR II.3.1
- ²⁵ Detalii în articolul meu „Pourquoi et comment présenter une <France moderne>“ à Bucarest en 1989?”, *Polis*, volum XIII, nr. 1(47), serie nouă, decembrie 2024-ianuarie 2025, pp. 293-331.
- ²⁶ Pentru un tablou al abordărilor confuze ale francofonie, v. lucrarea colectivă Ramona Bordei-Boca (sous la direction de), *Francophonie roumaine et intégration européenne*, actes du colloque international qui s'est tenu à Dijon du 27 au 29 octobre 2004, Université de Bourgogne, Dijon, 2006. Coordonatoarea volumului distinge patru francofonii: cea lingvistică (legată de împărțirea limbii), cea instituțională (adică „Francofonia scrisă cu majusculă”), cea geografică și cea „spirituală”. Volumul le amestecă în doze imposibil de separat.
- ²⁷ Sandrine Kott, *Organiser le monde. Une autre histoire de la guerre froide*, Paris, Seuil, 2021, pp. 178, 181 și 190.
- ²⁸ Pentru poziția adoptată de Mitterrand, v. Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande. De Yalta à Maastricht*, Odile Jacob, Paris, 2005, pp. 393-394, nota 53. Pentru poziția urmată de Roland Dumas, v. cartea sa *Le Fil et la Pelote. Mémoires*, Plon, Paris, 1996, p. 381. Chestiunea politicii lui Mitterrand față de Europa de Est a fost abordată și de Jacques Rupnik, „La France de Mitterrand et les pays de l'Europe du Centre-Est”, in Samy Cohen (sous la direction de), *Mitterrand et la sortie de la guerre froide*, PUF, Paris, 1998, pp. 189-222.
- ²⁹ E teza lui Bernard Lecomte, expusă în articolul „François Mitterrand et l'Europe de l'Est: le grand malentendu”, *Commentaire*, 75/1996, p. 578.
- ³⁰ Roland Dumas, *op.cit.*, p. 382.
- ³¹ Faptul că 250 din cele 700 de burse de studii acordate de guvernul francez au ajuns la români e menționat și în articolul lui Jean-Baptiste Naudet, intitulat „La France au sixième rang des investisseurs” – *Le Monde*, anul 48, nr. 14380, sâmbătă 20 aprilie 1991, p. 8. Chantal Colleu-Dumond mi-a vorbit despre obținerea acestor burse pe 23 septembrie 2024.
- ³² TD Diplo Culturel 3481, 14.05.1990 – CADN 124PO/4/57, dosar FR II.3.1. Crearea de filiere universitare era menționată și în TD Diplo Culturel 2400 din 04.04.1990 (aflată în același dosar), diplomații de la Quai d'Orsay recomandând, pentru a pregăti proiectul, invitarea în Franța a responsabililor din universitățile românești.
- ³³ TD Bucurest 392, 29.01.1990 – CADN 124PO/4/61, dosar FR II.3.8. Telegrama îl confundă pe Paul Cornea cu fiul său, filosoful Andrei Cornea. Dar nu acesta, ci tatăl său ocupa poziția de secretar de stat.
- ³⁴ TD Bucurest 1194, 14.05.1990 și TD Bucurest 1170, 11.05.1990 – CADN 124PO/4/60, dosar FR II.3.8.

- ³⁵ TD Bucurest 1340, 29.05.1990 și TD Bucurest 1568, 22.06.1990 – CADN 124PO/4/61, dosar FR II.3.8.
- ³⁶ Bursa guvernului francez pe care am primit-o eu însumi, ca student la Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, în perioada octombrie 1990 – septembrie 1991 era de 4000 de franci pe lună.
- ³⁷ Lagrave rezuma diversitatea situațiilor zicând că istoria era cea mai puțin sinistată, nu și cea contemporană, că etnologia era folclorizantă, sociologia – cantitativistă, psihologia – interzisă, în vreme ce filosofia avea doar un picior, cel marxist (Rose Marie Lagrave, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-42).
- ³⁸ Cele trei observații sunt extrase din articolele scrise de către Pierre Favre, „Quelques considérations sur la démarche et les finalités de l'enseignement de la science politique”, Jean-Baptiste Legavre, „Une discipline en chaire. L'initiation à la science politique dans les cursus universitaires au milieu des années quatre-vingt-dix” și Jacques Lagroye, „L'enseignement de la science politique dans les universités”, publicate în volumul Pierre Favre et Jean-Baptiste Legavre, *Enseigner la science politique*, Harmattan, Paris, 1998, pp. 17, 41 și 292. V. și articolul aceluiași Pierre Favre, „La question de l'objet de la science politique a-t-elle un sens?”, in Pierre Favre, Olivier Fillieule, Fabien Jobard (sous la direction de), *L'Atelier du politiste*, La Découverte, Paris, 2007, pp. 17-33.
- ³⁹ E vorba despre Françoise Mélonio, „Une toquevilliade à l'Est”, in *Le messenger européen*, Gallimard, Paris, 1994, pp. 37-38. Autoarea justifica astfel inițiativa diplomaților de la Quai d'Orsay și a filosoafei Évelyne Pisier, responsabila Direcției cărții, de a-l traduce pe Tocqueville în limbile central și est-europene, ca și organizarea unor colocvii Tocqueville între 1991 și 1994 la Novi Sad, Praga, București, Sofia, Cracovia, Moscova, Budapesta, Zagreb și, la final, Valognes, acolo unde văzuse lumina zilei marele liberal francez. Între participanții francezi la aceste colocvii îi regăsim pe François Furet, Luc Ferry, Pierre Manent, Robert Legros, Evelyne Pisier, Philippe Raynaud, Pierre Grémion, Françoise Mélonio, Pierre Hassner, Ran Halevi, Claude Lefort, Olivier Duhamel, Jean-Claude Casanova sau Alain Finkelkraut.
- ⁴⁰ V. de pildă Ioana Cîrstocea, „Les restructurations de l'enseignement supérieur en Roumanie après 1989. Apprentissage international de la gestion, professionnalisation de l'expertise et politisation de l'enjeu universitaire”, *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, 45 (1), 2014, pp. 125-163.
- ⁴¹ Mențiunea apare într-un document fără antet, dar datat 4 mai 1981 și adresat MAE român, pentru a-i prezenta prioritățile – v. CADN, 124PO/4/58. Pe lângă „științele politice”, în domeniul „științe umane și sociale” mai erau cuprinse, în ordine, „geografia fizică, geografia economică, științele juridice și științele administrative”. Pentru domeniul „științe politice” erau propuse 8 luni de bursă de cercetare.
- ⁴² Informație dintr-o statistică făcută în primăvara anului 1989 de angajații Bibliotecii Franceze de la București și intitulată “Année 1989 – janvier – février – mars. Salle de lecture. Abonnements payés soit par la Bibliothèque Française soit par les Services culturels” – CADN, 124PO/4/60.

- ⁴³ TD Bucurest 412, 30.01.1990 – CADN 124PO/4/57, dosar II.3.1.
- ⁴⁴ Documentul de la FNSP din 27 februarie 1990 era intitulat „Offres de coopération avec les institutions universitaires et culturelles roumaines” și se află în CADN 124PO/4/60, dosar FR II.3.8.
- ⁴⁵ TD Diplomatie 3887, 26.02.1990 – CADN 124PO/4/60, dosar FR II.3.8. În același dosar se află și TD Diplomatie 3577 din 20 februarie 1990, în care Maurice Duverger era recomandat pentru domeniul drept, iar Serge Hurtig – pentru politologie.
- ⁴⁶ Hotărâre a Guvernului nr. 55 privind desființarea Academiei de Studii Social-Politice, publicată în *Monitorul Oficial*, anul II, nr. 13, pp. 4-5.
- ⁴⁷ E mărturisirea făcută de Vasile Secăreș în interviul pe care mi l-a acordat pe 13 februarie 2025: el și-a reamintit că documentația a fost pierdută de un membru al CFSN pe nume Gheorghe Manole, dar că Ioan Mircea Pașcu a găsit o copie și a salvat astfel situația.
- ⁴⁸ Pentru structura și evoluția acestei instituții, v. cartea lui Cosmin Popa, *Intellectualii lui Ceaușescu și Academia de Științe Sociale și Politice (1970-1989)*, Litera, București, 2018, ca și articolele lui Florin Răzvan Mihai, „Academia de Științe Sociale și Politice a RSR” și, respectiv, „Academia Ștefan Gheorghiu” din Dan Cătănuș (ed.), *România 1945-1989. Enciclopedia regimului comunist. Instituții de partid, de stat, obștești și cooperatiste*, Editura Institutului Național de Studiere a Totalitarismului, București, 2012.
- ⁴⁹ Câteva detalii pot fi găsite în volumul Ioan Mihăilescu, Zoltán Rostás, *Dialog neterminat*, Curtea veche, București, 2017, pp. 229-233.
- ⁵⁰ Doi dintre colegii mei care au început secția de Filosofie-Istorie în 1986 și vor deveni cunoscuți de publicul larg în anii 2000, Marius Pieleanu și Hanibal Dumitrașcu, au ales în 1990 să-și facă lucrările de licență în domeniul Sociologie și, respectiv, Psihologie, primind diplome de absolvire cu aceste specializări marcate în mod explicit.
- ⁵¹ V. adresa trimisă de Direcția Generală a Învățământului Superior sub nr. 10649/30.IX.1991 – AUB, dosar 252 – Corespondență 1991, nepaginat. În aceeași dosar se află Hotărârea de guvern nr. 10560 din 09.09.1991, prin care Petre Roman le mai acorda încă 6 luni foștilor absolvenți ai fostei academii a partidului unic, pentru a-și echivala studiile.
- ⁵² Institutul de Teorie Socială și Politologie a fost redenumit în 2001 Institutul de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale „Ion C. Brătianu” – v. <https://ispri.ro>.
- ⁵³ AUB, dosar 325 – Senat 7 VI 1990, ședința Senatului din 7 iunie 1990, pp. 2-3. Mihai Coman, candidatul de la Jurnalistică va fi votat conferențiar în ședința Senatului din 12 iulie 1990 – AB – dosar AUB 319 Senat 19 VI, 21 VI, 12 VII 1990. Din același proces-verbal, aflăm că la Filosofie exista o catedră de politologie, care organizează un concurs la care se prezintă trei candidați – Ioan Mesaroș, Ion Constantin și Dan Oprescu – toți trei fiind respinși.
- ⁵⁴ AUB, dosar 320 – Senat 29 IX 1990 (1 și 2) – ședința Senatului din 29 septembrie 1990, pp. 1/4-1/7, 2/1, 3/1-3/2.
- ⁵⁵ AUB, dosar 320 – Senat 29 IX 1990 (1 și 2) – ședința Senatului din 1 noiembrie 1990, pp. 3/2-3/3 și 4/3 verso. Pe o filă distinctă și nenumere-

rotată din același dosar, figurează o listă cu posturi scoase la concurs la FÎSP, printr-o decizie a Biroului Senatului din 20 iulie 1990: este vorba despre două posturi de conferențiar, unul de lector și unul de asistent la catedra de analiză politică, ca și de alte două posturi de conferențiar și unul de asistent la catedra de relații internaționale. În componența comisiilor de concurs figurau și sociologi (precum Cătălin Zamfir, Ioan Aluș și Ioan Mihăilescu), juriști (ca Ioan Muraru, Francisc Deak și Raluca Beștelu), istorici (precum Gh. Căzan ori Ioan Scurtu) sau foști profesori de socialism științific (Mihai Pișcoci, Dionisie Petcu, Nicolae Kallos) ori de economie politică precum Viorel Cornescu, ceea ce sugerează diversitatea domeniilor avute în vedere, ca și rețeaua celor pe care se baza V. Secăreș în construirea FÎSP.

⁵⁶ AUB, dosar 239 – Senat 10 I 1991, ședința Senatului din 10 ianuarie 1991, p. 2/2. Pe două file din acel dosar, apar comisii de concurs pentru două posturi de conferențiar și unul de asistent la catedra de relații internaționale și două posturi de lector și unul de preparator la catedra de analiză politică, aprobate în ședința respectivă de Senat. Printre membrii comisiilor sunt mulți dintre cei incluși în lista ce fusese aprobată în iulie, dar și unii noi, precum juristul Octavian Căpățână, economistul Mugur Isărescu, sociologii Gh. Onuț și Ilie Bădescu.

⁵⁷ În discuția avută pe 2 mai 2025, Cătălin Avramescu mi-a relatat că, împreună cu Marian Munteanu și Mihai Gheorghiu, fusese chemat pe 20 ianuarie 1990 la sediul Guvernului, unde Petre Roman și Ion Iliescu i-au discutat cu privire la manifestația pe care Liga studenților

o organiza a doua zi. Colegul meu își aduce aminte că, tot atunci, i-a cerut socoteală lui Ion Iliescu pentru crearea, cu o zi înainte, prin HG 55, a Institutului de Teorie Socială și politologie, în care el vedea o continuare a Academiei Ștefan Gheorghiu, iar șeful statului i-a replicat că Radu Florian, directorul nou-numit și amic cu Iliescu în anii 80, nu ar fi fost niciodată ceaușist, ci marxist.

⁵⁸ AUB, dosar 260 – Senat 24 I 1991, ședința Senatului din 24 ianuarie 1991, pp. 5/1-5/4, 7/1-7/2 și 8/1. I.M. Pașcu fusese unul dintre membrii „fondatori” ai Institutului de Științe Politice și Studierea Problemei Națiunii, creat în 1975 – v. Cosmin Popa, *op.cit.*, p. 231. Virgil Măgureanu a ocupat până la urmă un post de conferențiar în vara lui 1995 la catedra de sociologie de la Facultatea de Sociologie, Psihologie și Pedagogie – AUB, dosar 601 – Senat 13 VI, 19 VI 1995, ședința Senatului din 13 iunie 1995, p. 7. Un alt fost profesor de la ASSP și colaborator al lui Iliescu la începutul anilor '90 – Paul Dobrescu – trece concursul de lector de la Jurnalistică, având 36 de voturi pentru și 11 contra, dar nu se mai angajează, preferând să aibă cartea de muncă în altă parte – AUB, dosar 594 – Senat 29 I 1991 (1&2), partea a II-a, p. 4/2. Câteva luni mai târziu, Dobrescu a cerut să rămână colaborator extern, fiindcă era mai bine plătit în afara Universității, la *Curierul Național* și la Institutul de științe sociale, argumenta Mihai Coman, decanul de la Jurnalistică – v. AUB, dosar 217 Senat 10 X, 17 X, 7 XI, 21 XI, ședința Senatului din 21 noiembrie 1991, pp. IV/1-IV/2. Era o problemă care-i viza și pe alții, cercetători în institute ale Academiei,

- de pildă, mai bine plătiți ca titulari în afara Universității.
- ⁵⁹ AUB, dosar 594 – Senat 29 I 1991 (1&2), ședința Senatului din 29 ianuarie 1991, partea I, pp. 1-2. O parte din disputele legate de FÎSP sunt reluate în articolul Ralucăi Stroe-Brumariu, „Învățământul ideologic, ieri și azi. Ce a fost Academia Ștefan Gheorghiu? Ce este Facultatea de Înalte Studii Politice?”, în *România liberă*, XLIX, 14478, serie nouă 444, 18 iulie 1991, p. 4
- ⁶⁰ Cf unei adrese nr. 176/21.02.1991, semnate de conf. Vasile Secăreș și aflate în AUB, dosar 594 – Senat 29 I 1991 (1&2), partea a II-a, fără pagină indicată. Cei doi studenți se numeau Mihai Ciubotaru și Ștefan Popescu.
- ⁶¹ Planurile de studiu pentru 1991/1992, pe care le-am obținut de la Vasile Secăreș, căruia îi sunt recunoscător pentru ajutor, prevedeau cinci catedre – de științe politice (cu 14 posturi, din care 4 de profesor, 4 de conferențiar și unul de asistent), de științe administrative (7 posturi – 3 de profesor, 3 de conferențiar și unul de lector), de management (10 posturi – 2 de profesor, 6 de conferențiar și câte unul de lector și de asistent), de pregătirea și perfecționarea magistraților (cu 30 de membri, din care 13 experți, 8 profesori, 5 conferențieri, 3 lectori și un asistent) și de relații internaționale (cu 14 posturi prevăzute, dintre care 5 de profesor, 1 de conferențiar, 6 de lector și unul de asistent) – cf unui recapitulativ obținut tot de la V. Secăreș. Planurile au fost aprobate pe 9 septembrie 1991 de către directorul Ianculescu din ministerul Educației: în cele patru pe care le-am putut consulta, între care nu se află tocmai cel de la științe politice, figurează numele lui Bucur Ionescu (la catedra de management), ale lui V. Secăreș și I.M. Pașcu (la relații internaționale), ale lui Alexandru Negoită, Ioan Alexandru și A. Severin (la științe administrative). Așa cum se observă, SNSPA pornea la drum cu ideea de a pune un accent deosebit pe formarea și perfecționarea magistraților, Secăreș bazându-se, pentru a implementa un asemenea proiect, pe Valeriu Stoica: într-un interviu pe care mi l-a acordat pe 19 februarie 2025, V. Stoica mi-a spus că nu a fost niciodată de acord cu ideea formării și perfecționării magistraților în cadrul universității, motiv pentru care a refuzat cooperarea cu SNSPA: de altfel, a adăugat Stoica, în timpul ministeriatului său, Institutul Național pentru Pregătirea și Perfecționarea Magistraților (creat prin HG 48/1992) a fost înlocuit de Institutul Național al Magistraturii (legea 142/1997), care se ocupă de recrutarea și pregătirea magistraților, inclusiv după intrarea în profesie.
- ⁶² Reproduc informațiile din documente care mi-au fost puse la dispoziție de istoricul Valentin Maier, care le-a identificat într-un dosar din AUB, înregistrat sub nr. 231/1990.
- ⁶³ Informații din interviul făcut de autor cu Vasile Secăreș pe 20 februarie 2025.
- ⁶⁴ C. Bușe își amintea că a predat la FÎSP, dar detaliile erau confuze – v. interviul pe care i l-a acordat lui Laurențiu Vlad pe 1 noiembrie 2016 și reproduș în LV-FȘPUB, p. 98.
- ⁶⁵ Propunerea e inclusă în documentul folosit pentru lucrările celei de XI-a sesiuni a comisiei mixte de cooperare româno-franceză, ce au avut loc între 24 și 28 septembrie la Paris – v. CADN 124PO/4/57, dosar FR II.3.2.1, p. 3/09.
- ⁶⁶ E un extras din art. 2 al documentului intitulat „Programme de coopération franco-roumain dans les domaines de la culture, de l’enseignement, de la

- science et de la technique, pour les années 1990, 1991 et 1992, signé à Paris le 27 septembre 1990 + Annexes”, în CADN 124PO/4.57, dosar FR II.3.2, p. 6. Un alt articol din același acord – cel cu nr. 16 – prevedea și inițierea unui „atelier de formare a tinerilor cercetători în științe sociale” și saluta intenția unei colaborări între EHESS Paris și Academia Română. Proiectul a fost realizat un an mai târziu. Un raport prezentat în decembrie 1994 consiliului de orientare al Institutului Francez menționează la p. 15 că au fost create *Ateliers en Sciences Sociales*, organizate de EHESS în colaborare cu Academia Română și UB. Acestea, se spunea, au fost inaugurate în noiembrie 1991 și în fiecare an s-au ținut opt ateliere, însoțite de conferințe: în 1991-1992 – sub titlul *L'état des lieux en Sciences Sociales*; în 1992-1993 – sub titlul *Changements sociaux: régulations, conflits, violence*; iar în 1993-1994 – sub titlul *Culture et Politique*. Începând din 1994-1995, preciza raportul, acest atelier e transformat într-o școală doctorală administrată direct de AUELF-UREF – v. CADN 124PO/4/61, dosar FR.II.3.7.
- ⁶⁷ V. scrisoarea lui René Lenoir, directorul ENA, adresată lui Adrian Severin pe 21 septembrie 1990 – CADN 124PO/4/61, dosarul FR-II-3-8.
- ⁶⁸ TD Bucurest nr. 1509, 18.06.1990 – CADN 124 PO/4/57, dosar FR II.3.1.
- ⁶⁹ O scrisoare a ministrului francez de externe adresată pe 18 ianuarie 1990 ambasadorului Franței la București cuprinde cele 21 de lucrări selectate pentru a răspunde cererii făcute de Consiliul FSN – CADN 126PO/1//82 [Bibliothèque française 1969-1990. Correspondance générale avec l'ambassade (service culturel) et avec le département].
- ⁷⁰ V. documentul „Programme de coopération franco-roumain dans les domaines de la culture, de l'enseignement, de la science et de la technique, pour les années 1990, 1991 et 1992, signé à Paris le 27 septembre 1990 + Annexes”, în CADN 124PO/4.57, dosar FR II.3.2, p. 21.
- ⁷¹ În interviul acordat Ancăi Dohotariu, Emil Constantinescu îi face un elogiu rectorului Politehniciei, V.N. Constantinescu, pentru contribuția sa la dezvoltarea francofoniei și crearea de filiere francofone în România – v. LV-FȘPUB, p. 77.
- ⁷² Ultima referință la FÎSP în arhivele UB datează din iulie 1991, când se plăteau încă orele unor colaboratori: într-adevăr, o însemnare în registrul de corespondență din 25 iulie 1991 menționează plata cu ora pentru un referat din semestrul I al anului 1990-1991 – v. AUB, dosar „Registratura Univ. București 1991 iunie – noiembrie nr. 6543-12345”, nr. crt. 8108.
- ⁷³ Expresia „vizită ambiguă” folosită pe prima pagină din *Le Monde*, anul 48, nr. 14378, 18 aprilie 1991, care anunța voiajul prezidențial ce urma să înceapă sub titlul „M. Mitterrand en Roumanie. Une visite ambiguë”. În numărul de a doua zi, pe p. 1 și cu continuare pe p. 7, Jean-Baptiste Naudet publica articolul „La douloureuse transition roumaine. M. Mitterrand est le premier dirigeant occidental à se rendre à Bucarest”.
- ⁷⁴ V. titlul de pe prima pagină din *Le Figaro*, 19 aprilie 1991, nr. 14511 – „Mitterrand en Roumanie. Pour l'opposition, cette visite renforce la position, très critiquée, de M. Iliescu”, ca și articolele de la p. 2 – „Roumanie : le cadavre bouge encore” (semnat de Patrice Wajzman) și de la p. 6 – „Paris fait confiance à Iliescu” (semnat P.G.). În *Libération*, nr. 3084,

- din 20 aprilie, p. 18, jurnalistul Pierre Haski sublinia mai ales sprijinul dat de președintele francez regimului Iliescu, articolul său intitulându-se „Mitterrand fait crédit à Bucarest”.
- ⁷⁵ E perspectiva cultivată de *La Croix*, în articolele din ediția sa cu nr. 32875 din 19 aprilie 1991: gazeta titra pe prima pagină „Mitterrand rompt l'isolement roumain”, iar alte patru articole, găzduite de pp. 2-3 și semnate de Jacques Molenat („Aller-retour en Roumanie”), Jean-François Bouthors („Une démocratie qui reste à construire” și „Du bout des doigts”) și V.F. („Plongeon dans les réformes économiques”), accentuau nevoia de schimbări politice și economice.
- ⁷⁶ V. articolul lui Jean-Pierre Langellier „La fin de la visite officielle du chef de l'État. M. Mitterrand a promis de faciliter l'ancrage de la Roumanie à l'Europe”, în *Le Monde*, nr. 14381 din 21-22 aprilie 1991, p. 3.
- ⁷⁷ V. de pildă, prima pagină din *La Croix*, nr. 32876 din 20 aprilie 1991 unde o fotografie cu François Mitterrand, Andrei Pleșu și Doina Cornea era așezată sub titlul „Mitterrand: <La Roumanie est en Europe et nulle part ailleurs>”.
- ⁷⁸ Vizita la Moscova a lui Iliescu prilejuiește o reflecție despre moldoveni, deșirați între Moscova și București: Jean-Baptiste Naudet, „Les nationalistes moldaves ont choisi de se rapprocher à petits pas de Bucarest”, *Le Monde*, nr. 14368, 7-8 aprilie 1991, p. 4.
- ⁷⁹ E expresia folosită de Sylvie Kauffmann, „M. François Mitterrand à Bucarest les 18 et 19 avril. Les ambiguïtés d'une visite présidentielle”, *Le Monde*, anul 48, nr. 14378, 18 aprilie 1991, p. 7.
- ⁸⁰ Jacques Rupnik, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
- ⁸¹ TD Bucarest 1299, 07.04.1991 – CADN 124PO/4/32, dosar FR. II.1.1.2.
- ⁸² Aceasta e menționată la poziția 17 în secțiunea „operațiuni” – v. TD Bucarest 1439, 16.04.1991 – CADN 124PO/4/32, dosar FR II.1.1.2.
- ⁸³ Dosarul operațional al vizitei este intitulat „Visite d'État de Monsieur le Président de la République en Roumanie (18-19 avril 1991), iar numele „Faculté des sciences humaines en langue française à l'Université de Bucarest” apare menționat la p. 19.
- ⁸⁴ TD Bucarest 1295, 05.04.1991, dosar FR II.3.8.1. În cuprinsul telegramei, Cristescu e numit ba rector al UB, ba rector al IPB, dar din context este evident că-i vorba despre prima universitate, nu despre cea de-a doua.
- ⁸⁵ Este vorba despre TD Bucarest 1786, 07.05.1991 – CADN 124PO.4.61, dosar FR II.3.8.1.
- ⁸⁶ V. comunicarea de la MAE francez către ambasadorul Franței la București, înregistrată sub nr. nr. 447 FR/92, din 26 martie 1992 și intitulată „Mission de Monsieur le Recteur de l'UREF en Europe Centrale et Orientale du 26 février au 7 mars 1992”, p. 3, ca și TD Bucarest 846, 11.03.1992 – ambele documente se găsesc în 124PO/4/61, dosar FR II 3.8.7.
- ⁸⁷ HG nr. 295 din 20 aprilie, publicat în *Monitorul Oficial*, partea I, anul III, nr. 107, 17 mai 1991, p. 17.
- ⁸⁸ Facultatea militară de educație fizică se înființează în baza HG nr. 317 din 27 aprilie 1991, publicată în *Monitorul Oficial*, partea I, anul III, nr. 114 din 24 mai 1991, pp. 2-3, iar Institutul teologic romano-catolic de grad universitar – prin HG nr. 484 din 12 iulie 1991, publicată în *Monitorul Oficial*, partea I, anul III, nr. 161, 29 iulie 1991, p. 3.

- ⁸⁹ În text voi folosi abrevierea FISH, pornind de la denumirea franceză a filierei, sau FIȘU, acronimul de la Facultatea Internațională de Științe Umane, traducerea în română a numelui ce a fost folosit în administrație.
- ⁹⁰ Laurențiu Vlad, „O istorie a Facultății Internaționale de Științe Umane a Universității din București (1991-1995”, în *LV-FȘPUB*, p. 17.
- ⁹¹ Este vorba despre Daniel David, ministru al Educației în al doilea guvern Ciolacu. Îi mulțumesc și șefului de cabinet al lui D. David, prof. Răzvan Mustață de la UBB.
- ⁹² E vorba despre ordinul de ministru nr. 5242 din 12 aprilie 1991, pregătit de Ovidiu Ianculescu, sub titlul „Crearea în cadrul Departamentului de Științe Inginerești de la I.P. Buc. a unor ramuri cu predare în limbile franceză și germană alături de cea deja existentă cu predare în lb. engleză”. Ordinul e menționat în dosarul „1991. Ordine ale ministrului. Volumul I – 4001-8140”, la fila ce debutează cu ordinul 5240 din 12 IV 1991.
- ⁹³ Ordinul respectiv, sub nr. 5428 din 29.IV.1991 figurează în „1991. Ordine ale ministrului. Volumul I – 4001-8140” la fila ce începe cu ordinul 5423 din aceeași zi.
- ⁹⁴ Însemnarea, cu nr. crt. 4543 din 10 mai 1991, e preluată din registrul aflat în AUB, dosar „1991. Registratura Univ. București, ianuarie – iunie 1991, nr. 337-6342”, ce se află la fila care începe cu nr. crt. 4534 din 10 mai 1991.
- ⁹⁵ O aflăm din procesul-verbal al ședinței Senatului UB din 24 ianuarie 1991, când el e și înlocuit din funcția de prorector, pe care o ocupase până atunci, cu colegul său Ioan Mihăilescu – v. AUB, dosar 260 – Senat 24 I 1991, p. 3.
- ⁹⁶ TD Bucarest 1786 din 7 mai 1991 (trimisă la Paris a doua zi) – v. CADN 124PO/4/61, sub cota FR II 3.8.1.
- ⁹⁷ „De prin 1981-1982”, preciza R. Toma în interviul acordat Ionelei Băluță și inclus în volumul LV-FȘPUB, p. 118. În interviul pe care mi l-a acordat pe 13 martie 2025, Chantal Colleu-Dumond mi-a confirmat că desemnarea de către UB a lui R. Toma i-a dat încredere că proiectul filierei se va realiza.
- ⁹⁸ Pasaj extras din interviul făcut de I. Băluță cu L. Vlăsceanu – v. LV-FȘPUB, p. 88.
- ⁹⁹ Cf. mărturiei sale, reprodusă în LV-FȘPUB, p. 105.
- ¹⁰⁰ Informații de la Radu Toma dintr-un interviu de cercetare pe care l-am făcut pe 6 august 2024.
- ¹⁰¹ Expresie folosită de C. Bușe în interviul pe care l-a făcut cu L. Vlad – v. LV-FȘPUB, p. 99.
- ¹⁰² Pasaj extras din interviul cu R. Toma din LV-FȘPUB, p. 118.
- ¹⁰³ Informația provine din două file, fără titlu și nedatate, ce se găsesc în AUB, dosar 208 – 1991 Admitere.
- ¹⁰⁴ Fragment extras din interviul cu Radu Toma din LV-FȘPUB, p. 114.
- ¹⁰⁵ Interviul luat de Tania Radu lui Radu Toma a fost publicat sub titlul „Editura Babel și literatura ultimului deceniu * Un dicționar la nivelul standardelor internaționale * O facultate co-diplomantă: decan, lector univ. dr. Radu Toma”, în *Litere, Arte, Idei*, supliment cultural *Cotidianul*, anul I, nr. 6, 17 iunie 1991, p. 4. Toma anunța și demararea unui „prim ciclu de studii aprofundate (postuniversitare), care va fi realizat în colaborare cu Institutul Francez din București și cu École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales din Paris”. Respectivul program nu a

- demarat în acel an. Îi mulțumesc Taniei Radu pentru ajutorul pe care mi l-a dat pentru a regăsi textul acestui interviu.
- ¹⁰⁶ Informații preluate din fila completată de FISH pe 25 noiembrie 1991 și înregistrată sub nr. 156 în AUB, dosar 567 – SC1 1991/1992 SC2 1991/1992.
- ¹⁰⁷ V. interviul acordat Ionei Băluță și publicat în LV-FȘPUB, p. 115. În textul său introductiv la același volum, L. Vlad menționează că au fost admiși doi studenți congolezi în anul 1991-1992 – *ibid.*, p. 46.
- ¹⁰⁸ AUB, dosar „Registratura Univ. București 1991 iunie – noiembrie nr. 6543-12345”, nr. crt. 8469 din 6 august 1991. Contestatarul e admis – lista studenților din această primă generație, ca și din următoarele trei, a fost publicată în anexa 8 din LV-FȘPUB, pp. 237-240.
- ¹⁰⁹ „Plan de școlarizare pe anul universitar 1991/1992, anul I de studii”, in AUB, dosar 252 – Corespondență 1991. Facultățile indicate în document erau, în ordine, următoarele: Matematică; Fizică; Chimie; Biologie; Geografie; Geologie și Geofizică; Istorie; Filosofie; Psihologie, Pedagogie și Sociologie; Jurnalistică; Drept; Litere; Limbi și literaturi străine; Teologie Ortodoxă; Teologie Baptistă.
- ¹¹⁰ Înregistrată sub nr. 10467/07.10.1991, adresa se găsește în AUB, dosar 252 – Corespondență 1991.
- ¹¹¹ Numele său apare la poziția 20 în lista de prezență la ședința Senatului din 21 noiembrie 1991 – AUB, dosar 217 Senat 10 X, 17 X, 7 XI, 21 XI. La p. I/3 a procesului-verbal apare menționarea explicită de către rector a cooptării în Senat a lect. dr. Radu Toma ca decan, fără a se indica numele facultății; la p. I/5, numele lui R. Toma apare ca unic candidat la un post de conferențiar de literatură franceză, ce fusese validat în cadrul Facultății de limbi și literaturi străine cu 28 de voturi pentru și 2 contra; Senatul validează concursul în unanimitate. Primul reprezentant al studenților de la FISH în Senatul UB a fost Petre Guran, azi un reputat cercetător – numele lui apare prima dată la poziția 85 a listei de prezență la reuniunea de alegeri din 26 martie 1992 – v. AUB, dosar 494 – Senat (9 IV 1992 – 21 V 1992), ședința Senatului din 26 martie 1992, pp. 3 și II/9. În aceeași ședință, R. Toma e ales decan de către Senat, căci facultatea nu avea titulari și, în consecință, nu putea organiza alegeri.
- ¹¹² AUB, dosar 217 – Senat 10 X, 17 X, 7 XI, 21 XI, ședința Senatului din 21 noiembrie 1991, pp. V/2-V/5. Pe 1 februarie 1992, alți 13 asistenți și lectori de la aceeași facultate erau validați de Senat – AUB, dosar 510 – Senat 30 I, 11 II [1 și 2 (11 III)] [1992], ședința Senatului din 11 februarie 1992, partea a doua, p. V/1.
- ¹¹³ TD Bucarest 3334, 30.11.1991 și TD Bucarest 3538, 17.09.1991, ambele fiind cuprinse în CADN, 124PO/4/61, dosar FR II.3.8.1.
- ¹¹⁴ TD Bucarest 2237, 06.06.1991 – CADN 124PO/4/61, dosar FR II.3.8.1. Sprijinul de care avea nevoie FISH era subliniat și de către Chantal Colleu-Dumont în al său „Rapport de fin de mission juillet 1988 – aout 1991” – CADN, 124PO/4/65, dosar FR II.3.22, p. 16.
- ¹¹⁵ AUPELF-UREF e strămoașa Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF).
- ¹¹⁶ TD Bucarest 846, 11.03.1992 – CADN 124PO/4/61, dosar FR II.3.

- 8.7. La reuniunea AUPELF UREF din 15 aprilie 1992, convocată de Guillou, din partea UB participă rectorul Emil Constantinescu și decanul FISH Radu Toma.
- ¹¹⁷ AUB, dosar 510 – Senat 30 I, 11 II [1 și 2 (11 III)] [1992], ședința Senatului din 11 februarie 1992, partea a doua, p. I/2.
- ¹¹⁸ Expresiile au fost utilizate în contextul european menționat în text de către Christophe Charle, „Universités françaises et universités européennes face au défi de Bologne”, in Christophe Charles et Charles Soulié (dir.), *Les ravages de la <modernisation> universitaire en Europe*, Éditions Syllepse, Paris, 2007, p. 30.
- ¹¹⁹ Ideea e menționată în raportul despre vizita lui Guillou din februarie-martie 1992 în România, Bulgaria și Ungaria, raport deja citat. Aveam să reiau eu însumi proiectul unei universități francophone central și est-europene, în 2005-2007, când m-am ocupat de organizarea unui sommet de la Francophonie la București: guvernul român condus de C. Popescu-Tăriceanu și președintele Jacques Chirac l-au susținut, dar agenția universitară francofonă nu l-a dorit.
- ¹²⁰ AUB, dosar 555 – State de funcții 1991-1992. Doar două file sunt rezervate Facultății Internaționale de Științe Umane. Prima dintre ele poartă o viză din 14 VIII '91. Informații despre planurile de studii din toți anii sunt prezentate și în anexa nr. 5 a volumului LV-FȘPUB, pp. 223-224.
- ¹²¹ În dosarul 555 – State de funcții 1991-1992 din AUB, se află un document elaborat de Direcția Generală a Învățământului Superior, înregistrat sub nr. 25476 din 3 februarie 1992 și primit la UB sub nr. 1411 din 4 II 1992. Sub semnătura directorului DGÎS, Ovidiu Ianculescu, documentul e adresat Rectoratului UB și confirmă aprobarea pentru ca „Modele socio-politice ale statului” și „Probleme sociopolitice contemporane”, prevăzute în semestrul 1 al anului 1991/1992, să fie ținute pe al doilea semestru.
- ¹²² Alte nume, în articolul lui L. Vlad din LV-FȘPUB, pp. 39-41.
- ¹²³ Extras din interviul acordat de Radu Toma Ionelei Băluță și cuprins în LV-FȘPUB, p. 110.
- ¹²⁴ AUB, dosar 764 – Senat 4 II 1993, ședința de Senat din 4 februarie 1993, p. 4/1. Votul e cvasi-unanim: 71 de voturi *pentru* și unul *împotrivă* în cazurile lui A. Duțu și C. Preda; 70 *pentru* și două *contra* lui D. Barbu. Începusem să țin, încă din toamna lui 1992, cele două discipline din postul scos la concurs – de fapt, seminarul de *Introducere în filosofie* și, împreună cu Aurelian Crăiuțu, cursul și seminarul de *Filosofie politică*. A. Crăiuțu a plecat în anul imediat următor în Statele Unite, pentru studiile sale doctorale, așa că am rămas singurul titular, deși eram doar preparator. Radu Toma mă invitase să țin ore încă din 1991, dar împrejurări legate de continuarea studiilor mele doctorale în Franța m-au împiedicat să dau curs invitației fostului meu profesor de franceză din facultate. Am scris despre organizarea cursului de filosofie politică împreună cu Crăiuțu în „Prefața” volumului Friedrich Hayek, *Drept, legislație și libertate: o nouă formulare a principiilor liberale de justiție și economie politică*, traducere de Gabriel Mursa, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2013, pp. 7-10.
- ¹²⁵ AUB, dosar 657 – Senat 16 VI, 11 VII, 11 X 1994, ședința Senatului din

- 16 iunie 1994, p. III/4. Pe o filă separată din același dosar, nenumărată, e consemnat rezultatul votului: candidatul la postul de conferențiar a primit 62 de voturi *pentru* și niciunul *împotriva*, în timp ce candidatul la poziția de asistent a fost susținut de 61 de membri ai Senatului, iar unul a fost *contra*.
- ¹²⁶ AUB, dosar 765 – Senat (2 VII 1993 – 9 XII 1993), ședința Senatului din 9 decembrie 1993, p. III/2.
- ¹²⁷ HG 283/1993 „Hotărâre privind unele măsuri referitoare la desfășurarea învățământului în anul școlar (universitar) 1993-1994, anexa 3 [„Nomenclatorul specializărilor din învățământul superior de lungă durată”], în *Monitorul oficial* partea I, nr. 171/ 22 iulie 1993, p. 19.
- ¹²⁸ AUB, dosar 657 – Senat 16 VI, 11 VII, 11 X 1994, ședința Senatului din 29 septembrie 1994, pp. III/3-III/4. Radu Toma își dăduse demisia pe 25 august, după ce prevenise în privința plecării pe 31 martie 1994. În aceeași ședință a Senatului este votată asocierea a doi juriști – Teodor Meleșcanu și Șerban Beligrădeanu – pentru a preda drept internațional public și, respectiv, dreptul muncii. Primul e susținut de 57 de membri ai Senatului, iar 5 sunt împotriva asocierii lui; cel de-al doilea primește 61 de voturi *pentru* și unul singur *contra*. Noul decan precizează că la FIȘU erau angajați cinci titulari.
- ¹²⁹ Pentru relatarea negocierii cu Liviu Maior, v. interviul acordat de D. Barbu Ruxandrei Ivan și reproduș în LV-FȘPUB, pp. 132-139.
- ¹³⁰ HG 568/22 iulie 1995 „Hotărâre cu privire la acordarea autorizației de funcționare provizorie, în conformitate cu prevederile Legii nr. 88/1993, privind acreditarea instituțiilor de învățământ superior și recunoașterea diplomelor” în *Monitorul oficial* partea I, nr. 185/ 16 august 1995, pp. 1-40. Între cele 73 de universități care prezentaseră dosare și care primeau „autorizație provizorie” pentru instituții, facultăți, colegii și specializări, UB era la poziția 31 și avea 11 facultăți cu dosare aprobate. În rubrica „instituția (facultatea, colegiul) solicitantă” FISH apărea ca Facultatea de Științe Umane, ea primea ca „denumire în perioada de autorizare” [coloana a 3-a din tabel] Facultatea de Științe Politice și Administrative, cu două „profiluri autorizate” [coloana 4], și anume Științe politice și, respectiv Științe administrative, la primul profil indicându-se [coloana 5 – specializarea, forma de învățământ, durata studiilor autorizate] „științe politice – zi, 4 ani “ și „științe politice (în limba franceză) – zi, 4 ani, respectiv „Administrație publică – zi, 4 ani”.
- ¹³¹ AUB, dosar 657 – Senat 16 VI, 11 VII, 11 X 1994, ședința Senatului din 11 iulie 1995 [sic!], p. 1.
- ¹³² Fișa e inclusă într-un dosar intitulat „Enseignement du français 1981-1996”, aflat în CADN - 124PO/4/61. Instituțiile partenere indicate în fișă erau Rennes 1 și 2, IEP de Reims – de fapt, era vorba tot despre Rennes! –, Paris 3, Rouen. Erau menționate, de asemenea, două parteneriate avute în vedere: Paris 1 și IEP Strasbourg.
- ¹³³ Pentru detalii, v. interviul cu Daniel Barbu, în LV-FȘPUB, pp. 139-141.
- ¹³⁴ Michel Guillou, *La Francophonie, nouvel enjeu mondial*, Hatier, Paris, 1993, pp. 20, 49, 76 și 125.
- ¹³⁵ Idem, *La mangue et la pomme. Voyages en Francophonie*, John Libbey Eurotext, Paris, 1995, p. 139.

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Czesław Miłosz la București **„Mintea captivă” nu este doar titlul unei cărți**

[*Czesław Miłosz in Bucharest*
“The Captive Mind” is not just the title of a book]

Anton CARPINSCHI

Abstract: *“The Captive Mind” is not just the title of the famous book written by the Polish poet, thinker and anti-communist dissident Czesław Miłosz following the fall of Eastern Europe under Soviet domination at the end of World War II. As then, in the times of crossroad that we are living today, under the pressure of the reconfiguration of the global order by the great imperialist-revisionist powers, the phrase “the captive mind” should be perceived as a warning-metaphor. Against the backdrop of the crisis of liberal democracy, the warning-metaphor “the captive mind” is an exhortation to awareness and counteracting one’s own limits and errors, fears, prejudices and obscurantisms maintained through the hybrid war of disinformation and propaganda manipulations directed by the sovereignist-isolationist forces in a world where “the law of force” begins to defy “the force of law”.*

Keywords and phrases: *the captive mind: a warning-metaphor for every citizen; the captive mind: phenomenon and syndrome; the captive mind: the “sounding box” of the propaganda spectacle.*

În toamna anului 2011, Facultatea de limbi și literaturi străine din București și Asociația slaviștilor din România a organizat un Colocviu internațional dedicat centenarului nașterii marelui poet, eseist și dizident polonez Czesław Miłosz. Invitat de distinsul profesor Constantin Geambașu, traducătorul în limba română a uneia dintre cele mai cunoscute cărți a lui Czesław Miłosz, *Gândirea captivă*, am avut onoarea să susțin cu acel prilej o comunicare

despre *Mintea captivă și failibilitatea umană*. Materialele colocviului au fost publicate în anul următor în volumul intitulat, *Czesław Miłosz la București*. În acele zile însorite de octombrie am avut ocazia să discut cu reputați cercetători ai vieții și operei lui Czesław Miłosz despre fenomenul gândirii captive și, mai ales, despre experiențele fiecăruia dintre noi în vecinătatea acestuia, căci, sindromul gândirii captive transcende epocile, diferențele de gen, vârstă,

etnie sau rasă, cunoscând simptome variate, mai grave sau mai puțin grave, uneori pe nesimțite, alteori în mod intempestiv, și nu numai în regimurile politice nedemocratice și societățile conservatoare. Mi-au revenit atunci în minte circumstanțele unei întâlniri de demult care avea să îmi marcheze întreaga viață: întâlnirea cu eseu lui Czesław Miłosz dedicat minții captive.

O întâlnire spirituală care mi-a marcat viața

Pe la mijlocul anilor 1970, departamentele de filosofie și sociologie ale Universității din Iași au beneficiat de vizita profesorului Jean-William Lapierre, reputat cercetător în arealul filosofiei politice și sociologiei puterii. Intellectual distins, spirit progresist, profesorul francez a avut atunci generozitatea de a ne împărtăși din bogata sa experiență profesională și de viață. Desigur, ne-au impresionat prelegerile sale docte și profunde despre analiza sistemică a vieții politice, dinamica subtilă a formelor preetactice ale puterii și inovației sociale în comunitățile tribale din Valea Nilului sau despre maladiile și contracțiile democrațiilor occidentale. Dintre lucrările profesorului francez, eram familiarizat cu *L'analyse des systèmes politiques* pe care o valorificasem în elaborarea tezei de doctorat. Dar, mai important este faptul că în mai multe întâlniri private, pe lângă neprețuitele sugestii vizând teza mea de doctorat, profesorul Jean-William Lapierre – combatantul

din Rezistența anti-nazistă, personalitatea investită cu responsabilități în construcția democratică a celei de a V-a Republici franceze – a vorbit despre rezistența civică în vremea dictaturii. Drept „studiu de caz”, profesorul Lapierre l-a prezentat pe Czesław Miłosz, scriitorul polonez dizident care publicase la începutul anilor 1950 la editura pariziană Gallimard o carte cu un titlu pe cât de atractiv, pe atât de ciudat: *La pensée captive. Essai sur les logocraties populaires*⁵. Cuvintele profesorului Lapierre sunau, atunci, cumva din depărtare și totuși de aproape pentru un tânăr universitar în formare, trăitor în zodia minții captive.

Tulburătoare mărturie a unui intelectual care, străduindu-se să-și apere identitatea morală, refuză să abdice și să servească „Noii Credențe” venite de la Moscova, *Mintea captivă* este, totodată, o superbă lecție de conștientizare și decodificare a mecanismelor de capturare a gândirii și „înrobire a intelectului”. Apreciată de Karl Jaspers în *Prefața* la ediția originală drept, „un document și totodată o interpretare de prim ordin”, probând „un sens al justiției refuzând orice alibi”, *Gândirea captivă* îi apărea prestigiosului filosof german drept relevarea plină de autenticitate a variantei poloneze de aservire a spiritului prin instrumentele totalitarismului comunist și, totodată, un avertisment la adresa sofisticii și subterfugurilor gândirii ce și-a abandonat condiția morală¹. Mi-am dat seama însă, de atunci, că eseu lui scriitorului polonez, bogat în reflecții și referiri

autobiografice, nu ar trebui privit doar ca o superbă lecție de conștientizare și decodificare a mecanismelor de dominare și insecurizare, dezinformare și manipulare din perioada comunismului stalinist. Mai mult, *Gândirea captivă* nu este numai o carte! „Gândirea captivă” este o *metaforă-avertisment*, iar „dincolo de gândirea captivă” o chemare subiacentă adresată tuturor celor care, resimțind gravitatea acestui fenomen, își dau seama de riscurile aservirii (in)voluntare și creșterii insecurizării interpersonale.

Mărturiile intelectualilor captivați cândva de mesajul idealizat și antiplutocratic al unei stângi politice romantice și cosmopolite dar care, decepționați de distorsionarea principiilor și valorilor morale în timpul dictaturii staliniste, au avut curajul recunoașterii publice a propriilor greșeli și amăgiri începea să devină atunci, la începutul anilor 1970, o temă cunoscută unora dintre noi. Aventura politică a intelectualilor, artiștilor, poeților, muzicienilor, sinceri și valoroși, bine intenționați, dar de multe ori naivi, captivați de mituri ideologico-politice înșelătoare și insecurizante era resimțită dureros în sufletele unora dintr noi. Mărturisirea lui Czesław Miłosz se înscria – alături de cele ale lui André Gide, Leszek Kołakowski, Arthur Koestler sau ale românului Panait Istrate – în familia spirituală a acelor idealști care, simpatizând sau aderând în tinerețe la un ideal justițiar, au trăit dezamăgirea provocată de distorsionarea principiilor și valorilor morale

prin represiunea și teroarea stalinistă, oportunismul politicianist și manipularea propagandistică.

Tema *minții captive* avea să mă însoțească pe parcursul vieții, modulând laitmotivul gândurilor mele în perioada regimului comunist și mult timp după aceea. Nu întâmplător, peste ani, într-un eseu probabil prea optimist intitulat, *Eliberarea „gândirii captive” sau ieșirea din totalitarism* scriam astfel: „Czesław Miłosz a optat. După amăgiri și ezitări, la începutul consolidării comunismului în țara sa, atunci când realitățile au dezmințit brutal propaganda, dar mai ales propriile valori și principii, Miłosz a ales libertatea. Și-a autoanalizat meandrele gândirii, cu o exemplară putere intelectuală și morală și-a mărturisit public greșeala și, astfel, și-a salvat sufletul”² ai tristă și împovăratore mi se pare, însă, soarta acelor dintre noi care, născuți în comunism, îndoctrinați în spiritul ideologiei marxiste dar cultivați, în același timp, la marile surse ale gândirii universale, conștienți de aberațiile comunismului, nu am avut curajul, nici puterea de a ne elibera sufletul *atunci*, denunțând public erorile și ororile comunismului!

Trecători grăbiți prin pasajul vieții, mai avem răgazul să reflectăm la ce înseamnă „mintea captivă”?

Trecători grăbiți prin pasajul vieții, consumatori avizi ai spectacolelor propagandistice, mai avem răgazul să reflectăm la cât de prezentă este

„minte captivă” în viețile noastre? Dacă ne-am îngădui acest răgaz, am descoperi că „minte captivă” nu numai că ne vizează pe fiecare dar, de cele mai multe ori, cei mai mulți dintre noi rămânem captivi în greșelile, limitele, temerile și prejudecățile noastre fără să ne dăm seama, uneori, de-a lungul întregii vieți. Lucru deloc întâmplător deoarece, din spatele acestei metafore-avertisment, ne pândesc o serie de pericole generate nu numai de propriile blocaje cognitive, slăbiciuni morale și pusee emoționale. Blocajele, slăbiciunile și puseele sunt întreținute de forțe politice și centre de putere interesate în manipularea gândirii și conștiinței noastre prin discursuri ideologice și aparate propagandistice tot mai insidioase.

Dar, am mai descoperit ceva important din punctul meu de vedere: faptul că mintea captivă se poate metamorfoza, în anumite circumstanțe, dintr-un *fenomen* perceput din exterior într-un *sindrom* frustrant, resimțit prin *simptomele* sale ca o experiență personală traumatizantă agravată, de pildă, în comunism și postcomunism prin absența curajului recunoașterii sindromului și contracarării simptomelor. Gândindu-mă la experiențele din anii studenției și la formalismul sedințelor ideologice din perioada comunistă, mi-am dat seama cât de important este *modul în care ne raportăm* la mintea captivă. Dacă ne raportăm din poziția observatorului *ne-implicat*, atunci ne referim la gândirea captivă ca la un *fenomen* la distanță care nu ne vizează și nu ne

atinge. Ne putem referi, astfel, într-o manieră obiectivă, documentar-jurnalistică, științifică la o serie de evenimente politice și experimente ideologico-propagandistice tragice de înăbușire a gândirii personale și colective prin mijloace variate. Îmi vin acum în minte, nazificarea societății germane în timpul regimului hitlerist; sovietizarea maselor proletare în Rusia sub regimul bolșevic; îndoctrinarea populației, în special, a tinerețului Chinei comuniste în perioada revoluției culturale maoiste; terorizarea și masacrarea populațiilor tribale în războaiele civile dintr-o serie de țări africane.

Analitică și impersonală, abordarea observatorului *ne-implicat* poate oferi o serie de referințe și explicații utile despre manifestările minții captivă în asemenea circumstanțe, fie că este vorba despre blocajele mentale ale liderilor politici și militari în jocurile puterii, delirul maselor manipulate propagandistic prin promisiuni deșarte, terorizarea persoanelor și colectivităților prin gestionarea fricii generalizate, impactul nociv al politicianismului și corupției în viața publică pe fondul sărăciei, analfabetismul de masă în statele eșuate și societățile subdezvoltate etc. Vorbim, așadar, în aceste situații despre mintea captivă ca despre un *fenomen*, altfel spus, o *stare de insecuritate, dependență și aservire (in)voluntară cognitivă, emoțională, volitivă a persoanelor și colectivităților percepută de la distanță de un observator ne-implicat*.

Observând, însă, manifestările fenomenului gândirii captive din imediata vecinătate, sau chiar din interiorul acestora, putem obține prin procedeul transfocării atenției, precum în cinematografie și televiziune, *efectul transfocator al apropierii și transpunerii în situație*. Observatorul implicat/angajat se transpune în situație ajungând să resimtă *fenomenul* minții captive prin propriile (re)trăiri ca un *sindrom* personal. Astfel, spre deosebire de observatorul ne-implicat din Oklahoma sau de acela din Rovaniemi, pentru care fenomenul minții captive în România comunistă sau România vremurilor noastre este ceva îndepărtat și fără consecințe pentru propria persoană, eu, născut și educat în România comunistă, observator plasat în proximitatea fenomenului gândirii captive, *am trăit drama minții captive la fața locului*. Din această poziție „privilegiată”, am observat cum din obișnuință, comoditate, neatenție, dezinformare, din temerea de a greși, din frica de a spune ceva neconform cu ideologia oficială sau de a rata o situație favorabilă, putem cădea oricând și cu mare ușurință în capcana formulărilor ideologice simplificatoare și a lozincilor atractiv ritmate și obsesiv repetate.

Dar, am mai observat că se poate întâmpla și altceva. Mă refer la „trezirea” din letargia gândirii amăgite de iluzii și promisiuni propagandistice, o trezire însoțită de dezamăgire și furie neputincioasă față de trăirea unei experiențe atât de frustrante. Dar, se mai poate întâmpla, chiar în cazul

observatorului implicat -- căci și personajul denumit „observatorul implicat” poate trăi acest sindrom -- ca ieșirea din gândirea captivă să se producă într-un mod spectaculos printr-un fel de „revelație laică” în stare să îi aducă acestuia în fața „ochilor minții” realitățile complicate și adevărurile neplăcute din spatele propagandei. Prin transpunere în situație și trăire personală, observatorul implicat poate „lua pulsul” gândirii căzute în captivitatea erorilor, prejudecăților și resentimentelor, sau în aceea a disfuncționalităților comportamentale și a carențelor caracteriale.

Trecerea de la *demersul impersonal*, obiectiv, pozitivist din exteriorul fenomenului gândirii captive spre *demersul personalizat*, (auto)reflexiv din interioritatea sindromului gândirii captive permite observatorului implicat explorarea simptomelor și, implicit, prefigurarea terapiei. Auto-analiza și auto-evaluarea sindromului gândirii captive prin explorarea simptomelor acestuia -- de la inflexibilitatea gândirii și voluntarismul decizional în postura conducătorilor până la dependența mentală și aservirea (in)voluntară în postura supușilor -- ajută observatorul implicat să se apropie de înțelegerea profundă și cuprinzătoare a sindromului minții captive. Observatorul implicat/angajat ajunge, astfel, să își explice sindromul minții captive prin *neregăsirea conștiinței de sine, absența dialogului cu celălalt* și, implicit, *insecurizarea propriei persoane expuse tot mai mult dezinformării și manipulărilor propagandistice*. Con-

știentizând efectele dezastruoase ale dezinformărilor și manipulărilor asupra propriei persoane, ravagiile confuziilor și ambiguităților întreținute prin difuzarea repetată a știrilor false și scenariilor conspiraționiste pot, însă, să fac primii pași spre autodepășire prin reflecție, comunicare și acțiune.

Conchizând, interșanjabilitatea pozițiilor observatorului ne-implicat și ale observatorului implicat favorizează complementaritatea perspectivelor: *impersonală* asupra fenomenului minții captive, *personalizată* asupra sindromului minții captive. Complementaritatea perspectivelor caracterizează *demersul ideatic dublu calibrat al acestui eseu, impersonal și personalizat totodată, în funcție de poziționarea față de fenomenul minții captive*. Un eseu în care, după cum s-a putut observa deja, o serie de observații și analize impersonale referitoare la fenomenul minții captive se întrepătrund cu explorarea personalizată a simptomelor minții captive resimțite în diferite circumstanțe de-a lungul timpului și readuse la viață prin mici narațiuni autobiografice. Un asemenea demers ideatic impersonal și personalizat (atunci când este cazul), ar putea conduce spre un scenariu pentru contracararea simptomelor minții captive. Dar, înainte de conturarea unui asemenea scenariu terapeutic, ar trebui să ne întrebăm de ce intrăm atât de ușor în rezonanță cu „atrakțiile” spectacolului propagandistic.

Mintea captivă: „cutia de rezonanță” a spectacolului propagandistic

Alchimia minții captive recurge la un cocktail cu ingrediente propagandistice atractive și amăgitoare în stare să amortească gândirea personală, critică și, concomitent, să stârnească pulsunile emoționale individuale și colective. Iată câteva dintre acestea: „lupta de clasă este motorul istoriei”; „ascuțirea luptei de clasă dintre proletariat și burghezie duce la revoluția socialistă”; „fără teorie revoluționară nu poate exista mișcare revoluționară”; „dictatura proletariatului asigură victoria revoluției socialiste”; „proletarii n-au de pierdut în această revoluție decât lanțurile. Ei au o lume de câștigat”; „dreptul reprezintă voința clasei dominante ridicată la rangul de lege.

Dreptul comunist reprezintă voința maselor ridicată la rangul de lege”; „de la fiecare după capacități, fiecăruia după nevoi”; „religia, opiul popoarelor”. Acestea sunt câteva ingrediente propagandistice atrăgătoare promițând pe un ton peremptoriu ceea ce politologul britanic de origine română, Ghiță Ionescu, denumea „sistemul comunist al fericirii politice”³. Mai târziu, atunci când am reușit să îmi procur cărțile „spectatorului angajat” și gânditorului exemplar care a fost Raymond Aron, am înțeles că acest cocktail propagandistic — „opiul intelectualilor” seduși de ideologia marxist-leninistă — amesteca mesaje și sloganuri care funcționau ca „bilet de trecere” prin diferite

medii sociale sensibile în fața unor promisiuni pe cât de atractive, pe atât de vagi și înșelătoare⁴.

Și Czesław Miłosz, scriitorul și gânditorul dizident anticomunist, a descris ingredientele ideologico-propagandistice menite să inducă simptomele minții captive. Apelând la teme și termeni proprii civilizațiilor orientale, el s-a referit la „tabletele Murti-Bing” – după numele unui imaginar filosof mongol despre care se povestea că reușise să găsească un mijloc de transmitere organică a fericirii prin consumarea unor pilule – și la „Ketman”, acel stil al vieții duble trăite în minciună, supunere și ipocrizie, asumat și practicat până la perfecțiune sub tirania despoțiilor orientale. Folosind aceste expresii, gânditorul polonez se referea, într-o manieră metaforică, la o metodă generalizată de „spălare a creierelor” și inducere a unei stări artificiale de fericire⁵. Administrate sistematic în ritmul alert al propagandei de partid, aceste ingrediente ideologice cu efect psihotrop ic întrețineau ceea ce Jean François Revel a denumit mai târziu „tentația totalitară”, acea fascinație pentru puterea politică totală resimțită din plin atât de cei îmbătați de exercitarea puterii totale cât și de cei care, paralizați de temeri și neputințe, ajung să se abandoneze cu frenezie Conducătorului suprem perceput ca „Salvatorul”, altfel spus, soluția finală și universală⁶. Stări emoționale opuse, dar exercitând un puternic impact negativ, „beția puterii” în cazul dictatorilor, „frica de libertate” și responsabilitate⁷ în cazul maselor

coabitează în tentația totalitară ce bânuie încă în mintea unora dintre noi. Euforia exercitării nelimitate a puterii s-a dovedit un narcotic politic fatal, până la urmă, în cazul lui Mussolini, Hitler, Ceaușescu, Saddam Hussein sau Muammar Gaddafi, dar fiecare dintre acești dictatori a profitat din plin o perioadă de timp de fascinația maselor pentru puterea totală a Conducătorului și, totodată, de frica și nepriceperea (auto)întreținută a acestora în asumarea responsabilității politice.

Dar, alchimia ideologică plină cu ingrediente propagandistice care alimentează „tentația totalitară” și revizionismul imperialist continuă să facă victime și astăzi, în zilele însângerate ale invaziei armatei Federației Ruse în Ucraina. Pe fondul infernal al războiului, în societatea spectacolului propagandistic, la televiziunea rusă, dar și la televiziunile din România care rezonază cu mesajul acesteia, asistăm la un delir ideologic întreținut printr-o alchimie propagandistică în care se combină nostalgia față de grandoarea Uniunii Sovietice ca superputere mondială; naționalismul și militarismul proprii imperialismului rusesc disprețuitor față de organizațiile internaționale, țările mici și mijlocii; ostilitatea față de principiile și valorile democrației liberale și civilizației occidentale; recursul la mistica mesianică pravoslavnică în promovarea deformată, agresivă și militaristă a valorilor creștin-ortodoxe; apărarea familiei tradiționale dar și a prejudecăților și obscurantismelor în care aceasta este menținută și controlată.

Atunci când mă gândesc la păreri politice ale unei bune părți a oamenilor obișnuiți care au trăit în URSS, îmi vine în minte o experiență pe care am trăit-o la începutul anilor 1990 în conversațiile cu mai mulți interlocutori din Republica Moldova, proaspăt independentă. În acea perioadă, în cadrul programelor de colaborare cu instituțiile de învățământ superior din fosta republică sovietică, țineam cursuri de științe și doctrine politice la Universitatea de Stat din Chișinău. Discutând cu colegii de acolo am sesizat, uneori, mândria nostalgică a unora dintre ei atunci când vorbeau despre faptul că, altădată, în calitate de cetățeni sovietici, cetățeni ai unei superputeri, se simțeau importanți când intrau în contact cu străinii, sau atunci când puteau călători ca specialiști în diferite misiuni la Berlin, Budapesta, Ulan Bator, Phenian sau Havana. În mințile puternic îndoctrinate ale unora dintre interlocutorii mei deslușeam încă, precum într-o „cutie de rezonanță”, refrenele mesajelor și lozincilor propagandei comuniste despre măreția Uniunii Sovietice și virtuțile omului sovietic. Era și aceasta o reminiscență a sindromului minții captive ce se manifesta la niște oameni frustrați și dezorientați pe fondul crizei post-sovietice, iar în spațiile de tradiție nedemocratică pierderea reperului întruchipat de puterea absolută a partidului și cultul conducătorului este unul dintre cele mai importante simptome ale patologiei minții captive.

„Împăratul e gol !”, dar multora le plac „hainele noi” ale împăratului și, oricât de amăgitoare ar fi acestea, ele trebuie mereu înnoite, iar minciunile mereu retogolite

Eșafodajul ideologico-propagandistic pe care se clădesc mișcările și regimurile dictatorial-totalitare sau cele autoritare de ieri și de astăzi devitalizează cultul personalității Conducătorului, iluzia infailibilității puterii politice totale, disprețul față de libertatea persoanei și puterea societății civile. Dar, ca orice lucru omenesc limitat și vulnerabil prin natura sa, și infailibilitatea puterii politice totale se dovedește, mai devreme sau mai târziu, o iluzie. „Împăratul e gol!” exclama în sinceritatea lui copilul din faimosul basm al lui Andersen, *Hainele cele noi ale împăratului*. Și, totuși, s-ar putea ca unii dintre noi, chiar știind acest lucru, să beneficieze de comercializarea iluziilor politice și de profitabila complicitate cu deținătorii puterii. Precum sfetnicii slugarnici ai împăratului care se întreceau în cumpărarea hainelor tot mai costisitoare și tot mai inexistente, nici noi nu încetăm să ne îmbătăm cu amăgitoarele iluzii politice și cu diversele scenarii conspiraționiste răspândite prin megafoanele populismului demagogic, naționalismului agresiv și forța de impact a rețelelor sociale. Și aceasta cu atât mai mult cu cât, nu puțini dintre noi, refuză asumarea judecății lucide și responsabilității publice, preferând ipocrizia, oportunismul și aservirea voluntară

percepute ca mult mai comode și profitabile. Din câte se poate observa, este mult mai ușor să reproducem mecanic sloganuri patriotarde și xenofobe decât să gestionăm economia, sănătatea, educația pe baza unor proiecte raționale și a unor licitații corecte. Pentru întreținerea acestor iluzii este suficientă lansarea periodică a unor noi promisiuni în cadența lozincilor mobilizatoare și a sloganurilor acuzatoare căci, *multora le plac hainele noi ale împăratului, oricât de amăgitoare ar fi acestea*, așadar, *hainele amăgitoare ale împăratului trebuie mereu înnoite!* Atunci, dacă multora dintre cei căzuți în capcanele comodității minții captive le place spectacolul politico-mediatic plin de promisiuni neîmplinite, acuzații la adresa altora și sustrageri de la propriile obligații și responsabilități, de ce să nu le fie oferit, în locul dezbaterilor publice tematice cu adevărat importante realizate sub autoritatea competenței și profesionalismului, spectacolul facil al imposturii, politicianismului steril și prostului gust?!

Vorbind, în acest context, despre amalgamul confuziilor și ambiguităților gândirii mă refer, de fapt, la fenomenul *înstrăinării și aservirii gândirii* la care au participat și continuă să participe toate straturile societății. Într-o sarabandă amănunțită menită să descurajeze exercițiul liber al gândirii critice și creatoare și-au dat mâna în vremurile de răscruce ale zilelor noastre, într-o Românie în care democrația este amenințată de asaltul dictaturii și imposturii, agitatori și activiști (pseudo)fanatizați,

guvernanți cinici, clientele lacome, intelectuali aserviți puterii consemnați la rubrica „trădarea cărturarilor”⁸, companii de presă și platforme mediatice aservite, dar și indivizi obișnuiți, mai mult sau mai puțin ignorați, mai mult sau mai puțin naivi și creduli, vulnerabili însă în fața dezinformărilor și manipulărilor populist-demagogice, naționalist agresive, antieuropene, xenofobe. Prinse într-o agitație propagandistică regizată din interiorul României dar și din afara granițelor acesteia, mentalul individual și mentalul colectiv se lasă captivate de comoditatea stereotipurilor verbale și a lozincilor golite de conținut, dar pline de promisiuni deșarte. Mentalul individual și mentalul colectiv intră, astfel, în captivitatea *răului public* întruchipat de capcana minții captive devenită „cutia de rezonanță” a manipulărilor propagandistice în societatea spectacolului generalizat.

În loc de concluzii. „Mintea captivă”: o metaforă-avertisment în vremuri de răscruce și nu numai

„Mintea captivă” nu este doar titlul celebrei cărți scrise de poetul, gânditorul și disidentul anticomunist polonez Czesław Miłosz în urma căderii Europei de Est sub dominația sovietică la sfârșitul celui de al II-lea război mondial. Ca și atunci, în vremurile de răscruce pe care le trăim astăzi, sub presiunea amenințătoare a reconfigurării ordinii globale de către marile puteri imperialist-revizioniste, sintagma „mintea captivă” ar trebui

percepută ca o metaforă-avertisment de fiecare cetățean din orice colț al lumii. Pe fondul crizei democrației liberale, metafora-avertisment „min-tea captivă” este un îndemn la conștientizarea propriilor limite și erori, temeri, prejudecăți și obscurantisme întreținute prin războiul hibrid al dezinformărilor și manipulărilor propagandistice regizate de forțele populist-demagogice și izolaționiste într-o lume în care „domnia forței” sfidează „forța dreptului”.

Atunci când afirm că sindromul minții captive ne pândește în permanență prin propriile limite, erori și prejudecăți, dar și prin manipulările propagandistice ale centrelor de putere, am în vedere faptul că șansa

împăcării sufletului prin limpezirea gândirii depinde, fie că suntem cetățeni obișnuiți sau deținători vremelnici ai puterii, de capacitatea fiecăruia dintre noi de a-și asuma propriile erori, limite și prejudecăți, de a lupta cu ideile fixe, emoțiile negative, iluziile populiste, tacticile demagogice și tentațiile politicianiste. În ce mă privește, pe drumul împăcării sufletului prin limpezirea gândirii pornesc de la propria poziționare ca observator al fenomenului minții captive, de la caz la caz, neimplicat sau implicat și, în funcție de circumstanțe, de la asumarea minții captive ca un sindrom personal.

Note

- ¹ Miłosz Czesław, *La pensée captive. Essai sur les logocraties populaires*, Préface de Karl Jaspers, Gallimard, Paris, 1953/1988, p. 9,13.
- ² Anton Carpinski, *Deschidere și sens în gândirea politică*, Institutul European, Iași, 1995, p. 131.
- ³ Ghiță Ionescu, *Comunismul în România*, Editura Litera, București, 1994; Idem, Ghiță Ionescu, *Politica și căutarea fericirii*, editura ALL, București, 1999.

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- ⁴ Raymond Aron, *Opiul intelectualilor*, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2007.
- ⁵ Miłosz Czesław, *Gândirea captivă. Eseu despre logocrațiile populare*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1999.
- ⁶ Jean-François Revel, *La Tentation totalitaire*, Les Éditions Robert Laffont, Paris, 1976.
- ⁷ Erich Fromm, *Frica de libertate*, Editura Teora Universitas, București, 1998.
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Marxism fără totalitarism. Noi marxisme, noi ficțiuni?

[Marxism without Totalitarianism: New Marxists, New Fictions?]

Dragoș DRAGOMAN

Abstract: *The left-wing denial of the political murders, social catastrophe and the economic failure of the Socialist experiment in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union not only fuels the other kind of denial, that expressed by some extreme right-wing authors and fringe political small parties, yet it keeps the door open for a renewal of its failed attempt. The relativization of the past experience, the permanent justification and the renewed hope for a subsequent success, fuels the current attempt to building a brand new world. Yet the new Marxist movement seems to have abandoned the material social inequality practical issues and seems willing to address the prerequisites of an ecological paradise, of an equality engulfed in the broader framework of the „One Planet”. However, the new Marxist ideology will be forced to solve the same dilemma as the previous attempt, namely the use of mere violence by the modern bureaucratic state, put to work for achieving the same ideal goals of a perfect, symmetric, rational planned economy and confined human nature.*

Keywords: *Marxism, left-wing politics, totalitarianism, ecologism, capitalism.*

Introducere

Într-o serie de cursuri ținute la Sorbona între 1955 și 1957, Raymond Aron făcea distincția dintre democrație și totalitarism utilizând comparația dintre țările occidentale și Uniunea Sovietică. În primul ciclu de prelegeri, cel despre modernitatea economică, Aron arăta cum ambele sisteme politice sunt produse ale modernității europene, orientate către eficiență, performanță și modernizare economică¹. Deși diferite, metodele economice capitaliste și cele sovietice, de comandă, produceau rezultate

foarte asemănătoare, anume rate mari de creștere economică, industrializare accelerată, inovație tehnologică, cuplate cu învățământ de masă de calitate, urbanizare și creșterea nivelului general de trai. Folosind metoda centralizării și planificării, economia sovietică avea chiar rate de creștere mai susținute și performanțe economice mai mari în intervalul de timp comparat, reușind să reducă în mod accelerat decalajul istoric de dezvoltare față de țările capitaliste.

Deși spiritul epocii înclina înspre predicții privind convergența cvasi-inevitabilă între cele două forme mo-

derne de organizare economică, mai ales din cauza dorinței occidentale de a spori eficiența prin control mai centralizat și comandă, Aron insistă, în cursurile ulterioare, asupra diferențelor dintre cele două sisteme politice și specificului lor inevitabil. Pe de-o parte, o societate de tip sovietic ce se dorește fără clase nu poate funcționa fără un grup elitist la putere, ce prezintă tendința inevitabilă spre stratificare, consolidare și monopolizare a puterii, apoi spre dominare și osificare². Prin aceste tendințe, structura de putere sovietică nu este radical diferită de organizarea elitistă a structurii de putere capitalistă, ce concentrează capital economic, politic și cultural, dar care reușește să evite, prin anumite concesii de putere, prin recompense monetare ale muncii, o veritabilă luptă de clasă.

În final, ceea ce diferențiază cele două sisteme politice moderne, atât de asemănătoare în performanțele lor economice, este ideologia, anume rațiunea lor de a trăi și a prospera³. Ideologia este cea care dictează scopurile și mijloacele cele mai adecvate de a le atinge. Ca atare, socialismul revoluționar inspirat de marxism nu se poate lipsi de mijloacele radicale de putere, necesare pentru a remodela, din rădăcini, o nouă societate, regândită conform unui plan radical, perfect rațional și profund utopic. Prin radicalism, voluntarism și lipsă de sensibilitate, cele două sisteme politice duc la rezultate diferite. Modelarea „omului nou” de către noua putere a sovietelor, conform moștenirii ideologice marxiste, pe baza in-

strumentelor de putere derivate din excepționalismul revoluționar, aceasta este invenția teribilă a modernității socialiste. Folosind logica revoluționară moștenită de la Revoluția Franceză, socialiștii sovietici au transformat societatea în concordanță cu ideologia Omului Nou, specifică unui nou început. Aceasta este credința nestrămutată că Revoluția este începutul unei noi ere istorice, nemaiîntâlnite în dezvoltarea socio-economică și politică occidentală și că Națiunea franceză, respectiv Partidul bolșevic, sunt agenții privilegiați, aleși de Istorie, pentru a pune în operă această Revoluție⁴.

Negaționismul de stânga

Distrugerea fără precedent a identității, voinței, libertății și umanității din oameni, cu instrumentele statului totalitar, a reprezentat elementul definitoriu al secolului XX. Existența unui sistem totalitar extins, dotat cu imensă putere, dedicat transformării societății și a naturii umane în esențe ei, a fost cu greu recunoscută de intelectualii de stânga din Occident⁵. A fost nevoie ca dovezile irefutabile să se acumuleze până la depășirea nivelului critic, pentru ca această cantitate de dovadă să se preschimbe în conștientizare, în transformarea unor idei și atitudini față de idealurile Revoluției bolșevice, în acceptarea imens de dureroasă că un ideal sublim al umanității a fost compromis de sistemul de putere sovietic. Mai ales în Franța, unde mitologia legăturii istorice dintre Revoluția Franceză și Revoluția

Sovietică era cel mai greu de rupt, a devenit vizibilă această diferență de abordare: idealul sublim al egalității perfecte a fost pervertit de dorința excesivă de putere a lui Stalin, sau transpunerea în practică a unui ideal în lumea determinată a limitelor ome-nești nu face decât să distrugă chiar esența libertății și demnității oamenilor?

Această dilemă nu a fost pe deplin tranșată, de unde și supraviețuirea, mai ales în Franța, a unui negaționism de stânga, gata oricând să justifice derapajele totalitare cu speranța salvării idealului sublim al egalității perfecte. Ascunderea originii și motivelor ideologice ale totalitarismului sovietic nu fac decât să perpetueze dorințele, veșnic reînnoite, pentru egalitate? Cum de au supraviețuit revendicările egalitariste, devenind tot mai virulente, în Franța? Un răspuns poate fi dat de apetența pentru comunism, ce a marcat atât de mult mentalitățile. În exprimarea lui Wolton, „faptul că trunchiem trecutul, că negăm cele petrecute, că mințim în legătură cu natura acestei ideologii totalitare care a însângerat secolul trecut ne supune silit la ceea ce trăim astăzi și ne orbește cu privire la ceea ce ne așteaptă”⁶. Iar mecanismul politic, cultural și ideologic ce ascunde crimele imprescriptibile ale socialismului sovietic este bazat pe compromisuri istorice și pe orbiri intelectuale.

Pe de-o parte, este procesul de la Nürnberg, cel care i-a judecat pe marii criminali de război naziști, trecând cu vederea cele petrecute în tabăra sovietică, asasinarea, exterminarea,

înrobirea⁷. După cum scrie Wolton, recunoașterea dimensiunii criminale a regimului stalinist ar fi însemnat pentru Alianții occidentali să admită o parțială complicitate⁸. De aceea, aceștia au trecut cu vederea Pactul de neagresiune germano-sovietic din august 1939, invadarea Poloniei de către Armata Roșie în septembrie 1939, împărțirea Poloniei între naziști și sovietici, deportarea sutelor de mii de polonezi în URSS, distrugerea fizică a elitelor militare poloneze la Katîn, enumeră Wolton motivele de acuzare a sovieticilor⁹. Sacrificiul uman și material, eroismul Războiului patriotic sovietic și capitularea Germaniei naziste, apoi procesul de la Nürnberg, toate exonerează comunismul stalinist, așa cum cere dreptatea învingătorilor¹⁰.

Pe de altă parte, negaționismul este anterior procesului de la Nürnberg. Orbirea voluntară a Occidentului cu privire la crimele sistematic înfăptuite după 1917 și intensificate în anii 1930 cauționează ajutorul oferit de partidul bolșevic partidului nazist pentru preluarea puterii. După 1933, orbirea face Occidentul să ignore lichidarea anarhiștilor și a stângii spaniole ne-comuniste de către NKVD în timpul războiului civil spaniol¹¹, sesiunile de instruire pe care NKVD le oferea ofițerilor SA (apoi SS), pe care aceștia le-au folosit pentru organizarea „eficientă” a lagărelor de exterminare¹². La fel, lipsa de voință de a vedea realitatea îi face pe occidentali să treacă cu vederea alianța dintre extrema stângă și extrema dreaptă din Germania primilor anilor interbelici,

când comuniștii germani din KPD s-au aliat valului naționalist, cu acordul și la îndemnul Moscovei, deci partidului lui Hitler, care se opunea ocupației franceze a regiunii Ruhr¹³. Ulterior, KPD și NSPAD, partidul condus de Hitler, au făcut front comun împotriva guvernului social-democrat de la Berlin, în speranța (comună și rivală) că vor răsturna Republica de la Weimar¹⁴.

Ce este de remarcă, este perpetuarea orbirii occidentale după 1945, atunci când Uniunea Sovietică a făcut tot posibilul ca propriile crime să nu intre sub incidența dreptului internațional. Așa se explică de ce a fost adoptat și folosit termenul de „genocid” de către Convenția pentru prevenirea și reprimarea crimei de genocid de către Adunarea Generală a ONU din 1948. Distrugerea sistematică a unui grup etnic (armeni de către Imperiul Otoman, tutsi în Rwanda etc.) nu poate fi atribuit crimelor sovieticilor, pentru că ele sunt interne, împotriva membrilor propriului corp politic. Acesta este cel mult un „politicid”, datorită caracterului preponderent politic al justificărilor care au dus la eliminarea a milioane de ființe umane¹⁵. Iar din perspectivă cultural occidentală, „politicidul” nu e chiar nejustificat, din moment ce el face parte din bagajul (violent al) Revoluției Franceze, este chiar consubstanțial cu Revoluția¹⁶. Este suficient să citim despre Revoluție în perioada ei Termidoriană și să intrăm în atmosfera epocii, plină de suspiciune, teamă și violență politică dezlănțuită, pentru a simți natura „politicidului”, devenit

oarecum „inevitabil”. Doar nu putea fi un bal de caritate, totuși, doar era o revoluție, asta este replica stereotipă pe care o vei primi, notează Wolton¹⁷. În contrast, genocidul, a-ți ucide seamănul, chiar din altă „rasă”, încalcă spiritul Iluminismului aflat la baza valorilor republicane franceze, anume că toți oamenii se nasc egali¹⁸. De aceea, caracterul criminal al comunismului e încă pus sub semnul întrebării, iar chiar și atunci când este recunoscut, ideologia marxist-leninistă este, cel mai adesea, disculpată, lucru de neimaginat atunci când vorbim despre ideologia ce a condus la Auschwitz¹⁹.

Propaganda sovietică, intensă și sistematică, a reușit după 1945 să estompeze amintirea cârdășiei roșii-brune, ce a culminat cu Pactul Ribbentrop-Molotov din 1939. Participarea decisivă la înfrângerea Germaniei naziste a permis URSS să treacă de partea bună a istoriei, alimentând astfel iluziile de nevinovăție ale stângii occidentale. Astfel, orice reamintire a ororilor sistemului totalitar sovietic se lovește de strategii de apărare ale stângii. Orice creație intelectuală sau artistică dedicată Gulagului se lovește de protestele stângii, care acuză o tentativă de a trece sub tăcere drama sclaviei sau actele de violență ale colonialismului occidental. În versiunea cea mai radicală, stânga exacerbează critică „privilegiului rasei albe” și „hegemonia rasei albe” pentru a rescrie istoria²⁰, ocultând definitiv crimele sistemului totalitar sovietic. În final, o „Cortină de Fier a memoriei” desparte Estul și

Vestul Europei. Sacrificiul comunist din timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial rămâne argumentul forte care disculpă ideologia marxistă și pe adeptii ei de vinovăția totalitarismului²¹, dar produce, prin educația de masă și prin patos ideologic socialist, ocultarea crimelor naziste din teritoriile ocupate după 1941, concentrându-se asupra marelui Război de Apărare a Patriei. Astfel, Vestul uită de crimele sovieticilor, Estul de distrugerea sistematică nazistă a evreilor, chiar în teritoriile care au ajuns sub ocupație sovietică după 1945, odată cu mutarea frontului războiului spre vest²². Nu este de mirare, deci, că o legislație specifică pentru condamnarea negaționismului legat de crimele comunismului, propusă de șase state membre ale Uniunii Europene (toate provenite din vechiul bloc comunist, de altfel) a fost respinsă de Comisia Europeană în 2010²³.

Insistând asupra relativismului, cel care vine ca o reacție a stângii vest-europene și care spune că nu trebuie evidențiate crimele sovieticilor până nu dăm atenție și crimelor comise de sistemul colonial capitalist, Wolton reamintește că relativismul introduce o concurență a categoriilor de victime care nu servește nici uneia dintre cauzele apărute²⁴. Mai mult, dacă totul e la fel, nimic nu e la fel, cei vinovați și cei nevinovați se confundă la fel cum se confundă călăii și victimele, sistemele politice totalitare cu democrațiile liberale. Deși acest relativism nu e deloc acceptat în cazul nazismului, unde politica memoriei insistă asupra unici-

tății Shoah-ului²⁵, acest fel de a privi lucrurile nu supără pe nimeni când vine vorba despre comunism. Cum sintetic formulează Wolton, relativismul a ajuns otrava istoriei, pentru că pune totul pe același plan, tulbură mințile, debusolează, contrazice morala cea mai elementară și, în cele din urmă, trădează fundamentele umanismului²⁶.

Și este de înțeles o astfel de cerință de unitate în condamnarea tuturor crimelor, inclusiv a celor sovietice, atunci când apar astfel de argumente, precum cel evidențiat de Wolton, apărut în revista franceză *Esprit*, numărul din februarie 1950 și semnat de un colaborator al revistei. De ce atâta încrâncenare împotriva lagărelor de concentrare din Uniunea Sovietică? Oare nu ar fi mai bine să vedem mai întâi situația internă franceză, cea a muncitorimii din orașele industriale? Orașul muncitoresc Montreuil ar fi, în concepția colaboratorului la revista franceză, un lagăr plin de deținuți, ce s-a bucurat degeaba în 1936, la fel și în 1945²⁷, crezându-se eliberat. Imediat după această dată, consideră colaboratorul revistei, gardul de sârmă ghimpată e ridicat din nou, posturile de observație din nou ocupate și, dincolo de ele, invizibila armată a forțelor sociale recucerește poziție după poziție²⁸. Între timp, conchide Wolton, conștiințele s-au trezit și au evoluat și nimeni nu ar mai putea compara azi Gulagul cu Montreuil, acest cartier muncitoresc parizian. Totuși, relativismul, ce înseamnă a pune pe același plan toate nenorocirile din

lume, a confunda tipurile de rău și regimurile politice, rămâne arma preferată a negaționiștilor de stânga²⁹. Totuși, această confuzie, acest truc, nu se aplică niciodată dictaturilor de dreapta. De aceea, ura față de democrație, capitalism, liberalism, imperialism, acest sentiment răspândit rămâne cel mai bun atu al negaționismului pentru a atenua, minimaliza, justifica ceea ce e de nejustificat³⁰.

Pe de altă parte, strategia stângii este de a nega chiar evidența, anume bilanțul catastrofal al comunismului, ceea ce este mai greu de acceptat chiar decât victimele omenesii³¹, crede Wolton³²: dezastrul economic, paragina ecologică, disperarea umană, golul cultural, serviciile sociale cangrenate de situația generală deplorabilă a acestor țări ajunse anemice, ce erau mai aproape de Lumea a Treia subdezvoltată (în ciuda speranțelor inițiale) decât paradisul de lumină, bunăstare și pace promis³³. Ca să nu vorbim despre pierderea suveranității acestor țări și despre zdrobirea revoluțiilor anti-comuniste de la Budapesta și de la Praga³⁴. În Franța, subliniază Wolton, nici un președinte al Partidului Comunist nu s-a scuzat (cu atât mai puțin să-și ceară iertare) pentru ceea ce comuniștii francezi au acceptat să cauționeze de-a lungul totalitarismului sovietic și est-european³⁵. Ei nu au scos nici un cuvânt despre dictatura asupra nevoilor, cea care a redus popoarele întregi la o dependență totală. Această dictatură asupra nevoilor este acel *nec plus ultra* din arsenalul tota-

litar, folosită pentru a controla viața cotidiană a fiecărui individ³⁶. Prin lipsuri abil dozate, acest sistem sinistru poate ușor ține un popor într-o subdezvoltare cronică, în care obsesia supraviețuirii să ocupe mintea oamenilor și să-i împiedice să se mai gândească la altceva³⁷. Dar comuniștii francezi nu au spus nimic nici despre tâmpirea minților prin care cetățenii erau împiedicați să gândească pentru a-i face să se supună³⁸, nici despre asasinarea culturii, artelor și științelor în numele „realismului socialist”³⁹, nici despre pretenția de a construi un „om nou” prin controlul exercitat de la naștere până la moarte de partidul-stat atotputernic⁴⁰.

Pentru a ieși din această situație vinovată, comuniștii francezi se văd nevoiți să afirme că socialismul real, pus în practică de Stalin și de acoliții lui din țările Europei de Est, nu are nimic de-a face cu Marx, că „adevăratul” comunism n-a existat niciodată și că el trebuie construit ori chiar trebuie să pretindă că „circumstanțele” sunt cele vinovate pentru crimele comise⁴¹. Cum remarcă Wolton, aceste scuze nu păcălesc pe nimeni, dar îi mulțumesc pe cei mai mulți⁴², pe cei ce s-au lăsat pradă orbirii voluntare dincolo de Cortina de Fier. Mai mult, învinovățirea adversarului și justificarea contextuală completează această strategie. Astfel, oameni de cultură precum Claude Lanzmann, găsesc scuze sistemelor totalitare prin accentul pus pe contextul Războiului Rece. Implicarea americană în Războiul din Coreea, cu grozăviile bombardamentelor ameri-

cană cu napalm, ar justifica excesele de care s-a făcut vinovat regimul din Coreea de Nord, țară pe care Lanzmann o vizita în 1958, invitat fiind alături de alți intelectuali francezi pentru a admira realizările comunismului asiatic⁴³. La fel s-ar putea argumenta, crede Wolton, că bombele aruncate de avioanele americane asupra Cambodgiei în anii 1970 ar justifica cruzimea khmerilor roșii. În această operațiune, morții nord-coreeni se adaugă celor cambodgieni și tuturor crimelor colonialismului occidental, pentru a trece cu vederea crimele comuniștilor⁴⁴. Acesta este, crede Wolton, un caz clasic de negaționism, în care circumstanțele pot fi invocate pentru a evita o confruntare cu realitatea. Desigur, completează Wolton, ne-am putea imagina furia și indignarea, de altfel justificate, ale aceluiași Lanzmann, dacă cineva ar fi îndrăznit să spună că războiul purtat împotriva Germaniei naziste (și eșecul militar de la Stalingrad) ar fi cauza lagărelor de exterminare⁴⁵.

Această problemă a vinovăției oculate este astăzi agravată de uitarea specific omenească, de memoria istorică selectivă ce ne afectează în prezent. Desigur, o doză de uitare e inevitabilă, subliniază Wolton, mai ales că fiecare generație se vrea liberă de povara moștenirii generațiilor anterioare⁴⁶. Clișeele care rămân tra-sează imaginea unui comunism care rimează întotdeauna cu egalitate, progres, pace, inteligență, deci cu valori umaniste despre care ni se spune că au fost prost aplicate sau că

n-au fost înfăptuite, așa cum proclamă negaționiștii de stânga⁴⁷. Invocându-l pe Milosz⁴⁸, Wolton reamintește de paralela sinistă dintre arestarea minților pe o parte a Cortinei de Fier și orbirea inteligențelor din vest, pe partea cealaltă a Cortinei de Fier⁴⁹. Poliția politică pe de-o parte, dezertarea morală pe cealaltă parte făceau amândouă jocul asasinilor culturii⁵⁰. Acum, însă, e rândul memoriei să fie captivă și al istoriei să pătimească din această cauză, cu precădere prin banalizarea trecutului dominat de comunism și introducerea lui în patrimoniul nostru⁵¹.

Mai ales în Franța, un întreg imaginar comunist format din nume de străzi, stații de metrou, instituții culturale, școli și licee, toate înlesnesc înflorirea negaționismului de stânga, cel care relativizează catastrofa și justifică ororile comunismului⁵². Motivele indulgenței de care beneficiază comunismul le știm, efectele, însă, mai puțin⁵³. Memoria captivă este cea care banalizează răul când ar trebui să-l expună. Astfel, negaționismul „soft”, cultural, moștenire a deceniilor de cultură comunistă, tulbură granițele moralei⁵⁴. Dacă cuvintele ar putea uide, crede Wolton, atât Aragon cât și Céline ar fi niște asasini⁵⁵. Totuși, nimănui în Franța nu i-ar trece prin minte că aceștia ar fi comis greșeli egale. Comunistul stalinist notoriu Aragon e celebrat, ucenicul nazist Céline e ținut la distanță⁵⁶. Nici un glas nu s-a ridicat (sau a fost repede înăbușit) ca să ceară schimbarea numelui stației pariziene de metrou „Aragon”⁵⁷.

Aceeași banalizare a răului comunist are loc și în alte domenii ale vieții cotidiene, cum sunt moda și suvenirurile. „Costumul Mao”, cu gulerul său croit în așa fel încât să devină simbol de clasă și de rasă, încât să-i fie imposibil de aplicat cravata, semn al luxului burghez (clasă) și al vestimentației occidentale (rasă), deși intens admirat în Occidentul capitalist (revista *Taylor and Cutter* din Londra desemnându-l în 1971 pe Mao drept unul din oamenii cel mai elegant îmbrăcați)⁵⁸, nu a fost decât un instrument suplimentar de masificare. Astfel, costumul elimina diferențele dintre sexe și dintre clase, de unde admirația Occidentului⁵⁹. Diferențele de culoare (albastru, gri, verde) ale costumului indicau diferențele de funcții sociale, poporul muncitor și complet supus, elita de partid și militarii atotputernici, în timp ce distrugeau orice urmă de feminitate⁶⁰. În realitate, în ciuda admirației occidentale, acest costum reprezenta pentru chinezi opresiunea, teroarea Gărzilor Roșii, brutalitatea armatei și reușea ceea ce nici măcar ideologii staliști nu au reușit în Uniunea Sovietică, anume uniformizarea unei națiuni întregi, stadiul ultim al totalitarismului⁶¹.

La fel se întâmplă cu toate obiectele vestimentare sau accesorii ce idealizează trecutul comunist în lumea capitalistă occidentală, unde antreprenori mai mari sau mai mici, case de modă celebre și mărunți anticari vând simboluri comuniste: hanorace cu secera și ciocanul, costume de muncitori și de militari de la Balenciaga⁶², tricouri cu chipul lui

Che Guevara, „Cărticica roșie” a lui Mao, trabucuri à la Fidel Castro și multe altele. În cele mai multe democrații occidentale, legea interzice răspândirea sau vânzarea de scrieri și obiecte naziste. Nimănui nu i-ar trece prin minte să aplice o astfel de lege și obiectelor și scrierilor comuniste. Succesul modei comuniste pe meleagurile occidentale pline de libertăți, notează Wolton, stă mărturie pentru indiferența occidentală pentru toată povestea comunistă, precum și pentru ignoranța occidentală pentru acest trecut pe care, crede Wolton, negaționismul de stânga îl răvășește în mod intenționat⁶³. De fapt, comerțul cu brelocuri marxist-leniniste întreține banalizarea răului de care profită chiar cei care neagă Gulagul⁶⁴. Banalizarea răului se conjugă acum cu relativismul, anume cu capacitatea de a pune totul pe același plan, lucru care șterge perspectivele istorice și anihilează aptitudinile morale⁶⁵. Principiul „Fiecare cu adevărul lui”, pe care negaționismul îl cultivă prin ocolirea faptelor și a unicității lor, le conferă indivizilor o putere discreționară asupra istoriei, privilegiu ce-i aparținea mai demult doar sistemului totalitar⁶⁶. Banalizarea marxism-leninismului, împreună cu negaționismul ce derivă din aceasta, par să pună capăt unei lungi perioade de speranță revoluționară, ce apune, în forma consacrată, odată cu guvernările partidelor socialiste în țările Europei Occidentale. Compromisul necesar cu funcționarea capitalismului, adaptarea socialismului conformist la cerințele mecanismului politic și

economic occidental, deschide însă alte perspective. Noile capitole ce încep să fie scrise sunt cele ale teologiei eliberării de rasă, de gen și de natură.

Noile marxisme și ficțiunile lor

Conform lui Derrida, el însuși un marxist îndoliat, marxismul ce a fost odată nu mai este decât o stafie, un spectru ce bântuie lumea, un „lucru” descompus în alte lucruri: doliu, generații/generări de spirite (în logica influenței lui Kant asupra lui Hegel, a lui Hegel asupra lui Marx etc.), transformări, travaliu, muncă ce transformă⁶⁷. Cele trei lucruri provenite din descompunere bântuie în continuare vechea Europa, în căutarea împlinirii. Nu este deloc întâmplător că eseul lui Derrida menționat mai sus este scris în 1993, atunci când orizontul experienței marxist-leniniste mondiale se îngustase dramatic, odată cu prăbușirea socialismului real existent în Europa de Est. Astfel, adaptarea curentelor istorice marxiste, revoluționare, troțkiste, maoiste, guevariste, castriste, la noile realități sociale, economice și politice, nu putea să întârzie prea mult. În exprimarea lui Derrida, spectrele lui Marx sunt legate nu doar de el, ca autor, ci și de testamentul, de moștenirea sa, umbra lui Marx fiind cea pe care atâtea voci se ridică azi ca să-i conjure reîntoarcerea⁶⁸. Acești orfani ai marxismului oficial sunt noile spirite generate prin travaliul ce transformă, sunt noile speranțe puse în acțiunea tiermondismului, ecologis-

mului, feminismului, antirasismului, identității de gen, în acțiunea eliberării de toate opresiunile lumii.

De fapt, adaptarea curentelor marxiste la noile realități este chiar un fenomen anterior căderii comunismului. Anti-imperialismul extremei stângi din Franța se transformă prin îngemănare cu antirasismul, dând orfanilor troțkismului o nouă rațiune de a fi în anii Mitterrand, când colapsul comunismului sovietic făcea ca marxism-leninismul să-și piardă rolul mobilizator⁶⁹. Astfel, antirasismul a devenit o marcă a stângii⁷⁰, anti-imperialiștii condamnând capitalismul și liberalismul, în timp ce feminisții și militanții minorităților sexuale îl condamnă pe bărbatul alb, heterosexual, căsătorit și tată. O ură de sine adânc înrădăcinată în mentalul colectiv occidental se revarsă azi asupra celor care, afirmă ei, împiedică egalitatea fără limite și mențin dominația unor forme de putere pe care le doresc repede depășite. Aceasta este ficțiunea „woke”⁷¹, noul curent cultural și politic occidental ce regroupează ideile orfane ale marxism-leninismului muribund.

Deloc surprinzător, „wokismul” nu mai este interesat de rezolvarea practică a problemelor de inegalitate economică, din moment ce socialiștii occidentali s-au adaptat cu succes sistemului de producție capitalist și valorilor sale culturale, iar socialismul real existent a eșuat în țările lagărului comunist. Deși inegalitățile economice și sociale nu au făcut decât să crească în urma prăbușirii socialismului de stat în Europa de Est,

odată cu expansiunea neîngrădită a capitalismului ce domină astăzi lumea, transformând totul în marfă ce se vinde și se cumpără⁷², noua stângă extremă este acum mai puțin legată de valorile materiale, cât de valorile post-materiale. Într-un fel, stânga radicală de azi este cea care a realizat, împreună cu întreaga societate capitalistă occidentală, tranziție de la valorile materiale la valorile post-materiale⁷³. De aceea, noua stângă radicală occidentală neglijează inegalitățile reale, materiale⁷⁴, pentru a se îndrepta către toate inegalitățile percepute ca atare.

Pentru a le eradica, stânga radicală își imaginează mecanisme birocratice suficient de coercitive pentru a-i descuraja și pedepsi pe cei care nu se conformează măsurilor de aliniere la idealul imaginat de ea. Ca atare, negaționismul de stânga devine periculos tocmai pentru că reînvie puterea covârșitoare a statului pentru a transforma societatea, iar, la nevoie, chiar natura umană, în conformitate cu scopurile idealizate ale unei societăți perfect egalitare. Deloc întâmplător, elite ale stângii radicale, precum Sartre, îi admirau pe revoluționarii francezi de la 1793 pentru lipsa lor de ezitare în aplicarea „Terorii” ca metodă de schimbare socială. Regretul lui Sartre, citat de Wolton, este că revoluționarii nu și-au menținut constant această orientare, această determinare de a transforma lumea prin violență. Un regim revoluționar, credea Sartre, „trebuie să se debaraseze de anumiți indivizi care-l amenință și eu nu văd alt mijloc decât

moartea. Din închisoare se poate totuși scăpa. Revoluționarii din 1793 n-au ucis îndeajuns, probabil”⁷⁵.

Negând eșecurile, erorile și distrugerile umane ale socialismului real existent, stânga radicală se pregătește, din nou, să transforme lumea și natura umană. Scopurile nu mai sunt stabilirea unei egalități materiale și egalizarea statutului social, așa cum își propusese marxism-leninismul, ci transformarea societății printr-o egalitate dată de acțiunea într-o lume colectivă. Pentru Marx, egalizarea condițiilor nu devenea posibilă decât printr-o revoluție universală, ce ștergea diferențele dintre exploatare și exploatați din momentul încetării exploatării. Lumea nouă, construită pe baze raționale, nu putea fi decât una colectivă, deci interdependentă și interconectată. Ce împiedica egalitatea era, în logica marxist-leninistă, individualismul liberal capitalist, cel care-i dădea individului, luat separat, dreptul și puterea economică de a se diferenția, de a se îmbogăți, de a se bucura, izolat, de faimă, succes și bunăstare. Deloc întâmplător, ceea ce etica socialistă combătea în anii socialismului de stat era chiar tendința burgheză de diferențiere orgolioasă, de separare egoistă și de posesiune indecentă. Proprietatea, vestimentația, comportamentul și formulele de politețe erau toate transformate pentru a favoriza, pentru a celebra o lume colectivă, comună, nediferențiată, complet uniformizată.

Astăzi, idealul egalității reînvie prin contopirea tuturor în lumea colectivă. Colectivizarea este, deci, fe-

nomenul pe care elitele stângii radicale îl promovează cu asiduitate. O formă pe care o ia colectivizarea este idealizarea traiului în comun, în „casa comună”, care este Natura, Lumea, Pământul. Acest trai în comun nu poate fi conceput fără colectivizarea tuturor domeniilor, fără o „singură sănătate”, fără o „singură securitate”, fără o „singură bunăstare”. Pentru că această „casă comună” este amenințată de acțiuni individuale egoiste, birocrăția pe care se bazează ideologiile stângii radicale trebuie să ia măsuri de protecția sau chiar de salvare a ceea ce lumea colectivă reprezintă. Iar ceea ce afectează cel mai mult „casa noastră comună” este proprietatea privată. Eradicarea ei nu mai e decât indirect un scop al egalității socialiste, din moment ce joacă în principal rolul de păstrare intactă a Naturii. Astfel, dictonul propovăduit la nivel global de World Economic Forum („Nu vei avea nimic și vei fi fericit”) ajunge să fie adaptat și folosit în contexte locale, precum alegerile parlamentare din România, unde Oana Maria Bogdan, candidata alianței „Uniunii Salvați România” – „Partidul Libertate, Unitate și Solidaritate” (USR-PLUS), vicepreședinte PLUS, îl folosește ca atare. Speranța înscrisă de candidata USR pe afișul său din 2020 este că „un pas important al omenirii va fi renunțarea la proprietate. Eu am încredere că acest lucru se va întâmpla în timpul vieții mele”. De profesie arhitect, secretar de stat în Guvernul Dacian Cioloș (2015-2016) la Ministerul Culturii, ea pledează pentru locuire cu chirie în

spații locative comune, care să pună capăt proprietății imobiliare tradiționale, dând prioritate dreptului la locuire de calitate în fața mecanismelor pieței, deci proprietății⁷⁶.

Dar și alte slogane promovate de World Economic Forum (WEF) în 2016 ajung să fie preluate de candidați, partide și guverne din Uniunea Europeană. Sloganul „vei mânca mai puțină carne; (grătarul) va fi o excepție, nu o obișnuință. Pentru binele mediului înconjurător și sănătatea noastră” se regăsește deja în politicile publice promovate în țări din Europa occidentală⁷⁷. Astfel, ministrul pentru energie din guvernul Marii Britanii, Ed Miliband, cere reducerea consumului de carne și lactate cu până la 50% pentru a putea atinge obiectivul „net zero”⁷⁸, adică de a face Marea Britanie o țară fără emisii de dioxid de carbon, conform angajamentelor luate de statelor europene în 2015 prin Acordul Climatic de la Paris⁷⁹. Ca atare, Comitetul britanic pentru Schimbări Climatice recomandă guvernului să reducă efectivul de animale, dar sunt necesare și acțiuni pentru schimbarea comportamentului alimentar, pentru a evita o „catastrofă climatică”⁸⁰.

Reducerea efectivului de animale se crede că ar reduce contribuția agriculturii la poluarea planetei, deci Greenpeace cere Uniunii Europene să reducă consumul de carne cu 71% până în 2030 și cu 81% până în 2050⁸¹. Asta pentru că aproape 60% din gazele cu efect de seră ar fi produse de agricultură⁸². Pentru a se asigura că Uniunea Europeană se con-

formează, Greenpeace cere Comisiei Europene o lege europeană largă pentru „sistemul alimentar durabil”⁸³. Deja Comisia Europeană a elaborat o strategie de alimentație europeană, numită „Farm to Fork”, ce vizează producția și lanțul de distribuție alimentar. Pentru a reduce consumul sunt necesare, conform stângii radicale, atât reducerea ofertei, cât și reducerea cererii. Cea din urmă poate fi făcută prin educația publicului, de exemplu, prin interzicerea reclamelor la produse din carne în spații publice, cum ar fi stațiile de autobuz și mijloacele de transport⁸⁴. Astfel, carnea devine, în ochii ideologilor ecologiști, la fel de nocivă ca țigările, cele care au fost primele interzise la publicitate.

Carnea se adaugă unei întregi liste de produse vegetale și alte produse animale care, se afirmă în mod hotărât, contribuie la emisia de gaze cu efect de seră⁸⁵. Iar pentru a se asigura că oferta de carne este împiedicată fizic să persiste sau să crească, guvernul Marii Britanii a instituit o taxă pe moștenirea fermelor de 20% din valoarea lor, pentru fermele valorând peste 1 milion de lire⁸⁶. Cum o fermă medie, cumulând mijloacele de producție agricolă, terenul și clădirile, depășește ușor această sumă, moștenitorii sunt forțați să se împrumute ca să achite taxa sau să renunțe la producția de carne. De altfel, guvernul britanic se inspiră aici din practica guvernului olandez, cel care răscumpără fermele de animale din țară oferind 120% din prețul lor de piață, oferta fiind însă limitată la o scurtă

perioadă de timp⁸⁷. În fața opoziției proprietarilor de ferme, guvernul olandez le reamintește că, în lipsa unui acord voluntar pentru conversie, relocare sau abandon pentru compensare, guvernul poate folosi „instrumente obligatorii”, anume exproprieri, pentru a atinge obiectivele de mediu stabilite, respectiv închiderea a 11 200 de ferme până în 2030⁸⁸. Scopul general al guvernului olandez este conversia agriculturii printr-un contract social zootehnic ce respectă bunăstarea animalelor, prin taxarea prin certificate de carbon și prin taxarea poluării cu azot⁸⁹. La fel de radical, ministrul german al sănătății, Karl Lauterbach a cerut reducerea cu 80% a consumului de carne, chiar și prin taxarea excesivă, care să facă ca acest produs de consum să devină mai puțin accesibil publicului larg. În compensare, crede Lauterbach, stimulente fiscale ar trebui acordate producătorilor de carne „alternativă”, sintetică, precum și celor care adoptă o dietă vegetariană și vegană⁹⁰. La fel, Danemarca a instituit deja o taxă pe flatulența animalelor din ferme, ce fi va fi plătită începând cu 2030, anume 40 de euro pe tona de metan, inclusiv pentru vaci și porci, iar din 2035, taxa va fi de 100 euro pe tona de metan degajat⁹¹. La aceasta, ar putea fi adăugată o taxă pe carnea tocată, estimează ministrul danez al economiei⁹². Prin comparație, deși consumul de carne este mai mic în România, el trebuie totuși redus, insistă Greenpeace, cu 62% până în 2030 și cu 75% până în 2050⁹³.

Alarmismul climatic legat de consumul de carne este corelat cu alt slogan WEF, anume că „va exista un preț global pus pe carbon; acesta va face carburantul fosil să aparțină trecutului”. Sloganul acesta definește politicile energetice actuale promovate de Comisia Europeană, de Organizația pentru Cooperare și Dezvoltare Economică, de Banca Mondială. Politicile au fost adoptate de multe guverne naționale, cu accent pe eliminarea completă a emisiei de gaze în atmosferă prin taxare excesivă. De altfel, educația tinerelor generații cu sloganele stângii radicale este o țintă prioritară. Deloc întâmplător, ministrul educației din România din guvernul format de Partidul Național Liberal (PNL) – Partidul Social Democrat (PSD) – Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România (UDMR), Ligia Deca, promovează educația radical ecologistă în școli, încurajând participarea la întreceri pentru „net zero”, observând că „schimbările climatice afectează educația”. Tematica combaterii schimbărilor climatice se va reflecta și în curricula pentru liceu, spune ministrul, pentru că „tot mai mulți elevi consideră că schimbările climatice reprezintă cele mai importante amenințări la nivel global”, așa cum declara Ligia Deca la Forumul M100 pentru neutralitate climatică, la care ministrul este co-organizator⁹⁴. Astfel, angrenarea școlarilor în proiecte ideologice amintește de mobilizarea realizată de sistemul totalitar comunist, cel ce organiza competiții între organizațiile de partid pentru copii,

pentru tineret, pentru oamenii muncii din întreprinderi și din cooperativele agricole de producție. În același spirit colectivist și voluntarist, 10 orașe și 16 municipii s-au alăturat, prin intermediul Hub-ului Național M100, la Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania – Misiunea Oglinadă a Uniunii Europene „100 de orașe inteligente și neutre climatic”.

Green Deal este, de altfel, politica europeană ce răspunde așteptărilor activiștilor de mediu, cei care au devenit coloana vertebrală a stângii radicale europene. Aceștia militează în Scoția pentru interzicerea totală a consumului de carne până în 2040⁹⁵, iar în Germania pentru creșterea vertiginoasă a taxelor pentru a opri activitatea economică și a contracta PIB-ul, pentru eliminarea automobilelor, interzicerea construcției de clădiri noi și re folosirea celor vechi, raționalizarea și controlul consumului personal, limitarea deplasărilor personale cu trenul pe distanțe „rezonabile”. Aceasta este viziunea lui Ulrike Herrmann, unde doar ce este reciclat primește dreptul de a mai fi bun valid de consum. Modelul ei preferat este capitalismul de stat practicat de Marea Britanie aflată în război începând cu 1940, un capitalism bazat pe planificare birocratică și pe restricții personale severe, capabile să pună capăt capitalismului, „dovedit” incompatibil cu idealurile radicale ecologiste⁹⁶. Altfel spus, în loc de „creștere verde”, sfârșitul capitalismului trebuie să însemne „contractie verde”, o restrângere fără precedent a activității economice capitaliste occidentale

iraționale și o trecere spre un comunism luminat, rațional, atent planificat. De altfel, creșterea constantă a impozitării consumului și proprietății din Marea Britanie (creșterea taxelor este de 40 miliarde de lire pentru anul fiscal 2025) pare să se îndrepte chiar în această direcție, o limitare tot mai accentuată a consumului și „risipei” prin stimularea inflației și scăderea puterii de cumpărare generale⁹⁷.

În România, pactul verde european (Green Deal) înseamnă suprataxarea producției de energie electrică din arderea gazului și a cărbunelui, producție posibilă doar prin achitarea unui certificat verde ce variază, pe bursa certificatelor, în jur de 90 de euro/KWh. Companiile de electricitate distribuie acest cost în facturile emise consumatorilor casnici și industriali. Din 2025, Guvernul României nu mai intervine administrativ în plafonarea prețului la electricitate, transformând electricitatea, un bun de consum accesibil pentru multe generații începând cu primele decenii ale secolului XX, într-un bun pe care doar unii consumatori și-l pot permite. Mai mult, creșterea generală radicală a taxelor din România în 2025 este menită să acopere și „taxa pe carbon” pe care fiecare gospodărie o datorează guvernului, dar și „taxa pe carbon” plătită de utilizatorii de automobile pe benzină, motorină, gaz lichefiat, așa cum a recomandat guvernului Fondul Monetar Internațional⁹⁸. Nu în cele din urmă, Pactul Verde european înseamnă și obligația României de a face mai ușoare, din punct de vedere legal-birocratic,

scoaterea din circuitul agricol a terenurilor (actualmente pășuni, fânețe, terenuri arabile) pentru construcția de centrale eoliene și fotovoltaice⁹⁹, concesionarea luciurilor de apă din lacurile de acumulare și demolarea barajelor (începând cu cele învechite sau scoase din uz) pentru facilitarea migrației piscicole¹⁰⁰, ca urmare a acțiunilor ONG-urilor grupate în „Dam Removal Europe” și conform Regulamentului UE privind „restaurarea naturii”¹⁰¹. Aceste măsuri vor reduce și mai mult producția agricolă, punând presiune asupra prețurilor de consum.

Concluzii

Negaționismul de stânga, prin incapacitatea sau voința de a trece sub tăcere eșecul economic, catastrofa culturală și crimele socialismului real existent, nu face doar să țină ușa deschisă negaționismului de dreapta, pe care-l încurajează astfel de multe ori, așa cum arată Wolton în cazul francez. Fără precauții sau fără remușcări, el pregătește terenul pentru reluarea istoriei ca tragedie sau farsă. Apărând o ficțiune, aceea a legitimității încercării politice a socialismului de stat, o idee bună ce-a fost prost pusă în practică sau un sistem de idei bune ce-au fost denaturate de voința de putere a lui Stalin, Mao și Pol Pot, negaționismul de stânga cauționează alte ficțiuni, cum este ficțiunea „woke”. Pe latura sa eco-marxistă, noua ideologie a stângii radicale se confruntă, inevitabil, cu aceeași constrângere cu care s-a confruntat și cea dinaintea ei,

constrângere derivată de ciocnirea dintre utopia socialistă și realitatea indestructibilă a lumii reale, permanent existentă.

Pentru a-și pune în practică ideile politice, stânga radicală trebuie să facă apel, din nou și din nou, la constrângerea statului modern birocratic. Readucerea permanentă a economiei capitaliste la stadiul economiei de război britanice de la începutul anilor 1940, așa cum își dorește Ulrike Herrmann, va avea de rezolvat aceeași dilemă ridicată de Hayek¹⁰²: este oare posibilă planificarea economiei și centralizarea resurselor economice fără centralizarea resur-

selor politice? Altfel spus, atunci când oamenilor li se va cere să renunțe la preferințele lor individuale, la libertățile lor economice și la proprietate, statul modern birocratic puternic militarizat va folosi forța fizică în atingerea idealurilor politice sublimale ale eco-marxismului? Dacă ne uităm la răspunsul dat de Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, Pol Pot, Kim-ir Sen sau Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej și nenumărați alți reprezentanți ai stângii radicale din secolul XX, el este „da”. De ce ar fi diferit acum, când visul comunismului a prins din nou putere?

Note

- ¹ Raymond Aron, *18 lecții despre societatea industrială*, trad. rom. Simona Ceașu, București, All, 2003.
- ² Idem, *Lupta de clasă*, trad. rom. Giuliano Sfichi, Iași, Polirom, 1999.
- ³ Idem, *Democrație și totalitarism*, trad. rom. Simona Ceașu, București, All, 2001.
- ⁴ François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française*, Gallimard, Paris, 1978, p. 28.
- ⁵ François Fejtő, *Histoire des démocraties populaires. L'ère de Staline, 1945-1952*, Seuil, Paris, 1952.
- ⁶ Thierry Wolton, *Negaționismul de stânga*, trad. rom. Georgeta-Anca Ionescu, Humanitas, București, 2019, p. 15.
- ⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 19.
- ⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 20.
- ⁹ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁰ *Ibidem*.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 21.
- ¹² *Ibidem*, p. 28.

- ¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 43.
- ¹⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 25.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 26.
- ¹⁸ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 30.
- ²⁰ Jean-François Braunstein, *Religia woke. Cum a căzut pradă Occidentul unei mișcări iraționale*, trad. rom. Emanuela Jalbă-Șoimaru, Humanitas, București, 2024.
- ²¹ Thierry Wolton, *op.cit.*, p. 36.
- ²² *Ibidem*, p. 33.
- ²³ *Ibidem*, p. 37.
- ²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 52.
- ²⁵ Alain Besançon, *Nenorocirea secolului. Despre comunism, nazism și unicitatea „Shoah”-ului*, trad. rom. Mona Antohi, Humanitas, București, 2015.
- ²⁶ Thierry Wolton, *op.cit.*, p. 52.
- ²⁷ Pentru prima dată în istoria Franței, un guvern socialist a ajuns la putere în 1936 cu mandatul de a îmbunătăți

- condițiile de muncă și de viață precare ale muncitorimii franceze. Legislația adoptată atunci a reprezentat un mare pas înainte pentru viața și demnitatea acestor oameni. Anul 1945 se referă la eliberarea Franței și la capitularea Germaniei naziste, deznodământ fericit la care a contribuit și Rezistența franceză, din rândurile căreia făceau parte și mulți muncitori simpatizanți și activiști comuniști.
- 28 Thierry Wolton, *op.cit.*, p. 59.
- 29 Ibidem.
- 30 Ibidem.
- 31 Victimelor represiunii totalitare, Wolton le-a dedicat un volum special din istoria dedicată comunismului. Vezi Thierry Wolton, *O istorie mondială a comunismului. Încercare de investigație istorică*, vol. 2 „Când moare corul. Victimele”, trad. rom. Wilhelm Tauwinkl, Mariana Piroteală, Elena Ciocoiu, Adina Cobuz, Emanoil Marcu și Vlad Russo, București, Humanitas, 2018.
- 32 Idem, *Negaționismul de stânga*, *op.cit.*, p. 75.
- 33 Ibidem.
- 34 François Fejtő, *Histoire des démocraties populaires. Après Staline, 1953-1971*, Seuil, Paris, 1972.
- 35 Thierry Wolton, *Negaționismul de stânga*, *op.cit.*, p. 81.
- 36 Ibidem, p. 125.
- 37 Ibidem, p. 126.
- 38 Artur Koestler, *Întuneric la amiază*, trad. rom. Sanda Aronescu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008; Czesław Miłosz, *Gândirea captivă*, trad. rom. Constantin Geambașu, Humanitas, București, 2008.
- 39 Isaiah Berlin, *Mintea sovietică. Cultura rusă sub comunism*, trad. rom. Marina Vraciu, Humanitas, București, 2023.
- 40 Thierry Wolton, *Negaționismul de stânga*, *op.cit.*, p. 81.
- 41 Ibidem, p. 82.
- 42 Ibidem.
- 43 Ibidem, p. 125.
- 44 Ibidem.
- 45 Ibidem.
- 46 Ibidem, p. 102.
- 47 Ibidem.
- 48 Czesław Miłosz, *op.cit.*
- 49 Thierry Wolton, *Negaționismul de stânga*, *op.cit.*, p. 102.
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Justificare ideologică și discurs ficțional în economia planificată centralizat

[Ideological justification and fictional discourse in the centrally planned economy]

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Abstract: *Over the history, the prevailing view of society has been that social phenomena, in general, and economic phenomena, in particular, are the result of a conscious, deliberate project designed and implemented to improve the material condition of the common people. This view has its origins in Plato's political philosophy and dominated the humanities until the second half of the 18th century. After a relative decline for a century, the idea of central planning became popular again in the early 20th century, amid the rise of the socialist movement in Europe, as the only acceptable method of truly improving the human condition and eliminating the excesses of the capitalist system in the Western world. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that, despite its claims, the centralized economic planning has proven to be a failure, both theoretically and practically, its supposed benefits being the fruit of propaganda and fictional discourse used by governments in communist countries, especially those in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. The role of mere rhetoric was to save the chimera of centralized planning, to show the alleged superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist one.*

Keywords: *planned economy, socialism, capitalism, fictional discourse, ideology.*

Introducere

Până în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea, optica predominantă în științele sociale era constructivismul sau concepția conform căreia societatea, în diferitele ei dimensiuni (economice, politice etc.), constituie rezultatul așteptat al unui proiect de-

liberat, conceput *ex ante* cu ajutorul rațiunii și impus în practică, pe baza unui plan vizând obiective concrete. Timp de două milenii, intelectualii au rămas prizonieri ai viziunii filosofice formulate de Platon, în *Republica* și *Legile*, conform căreia interacțiunile umane, concretizate, în cele din urmă, într-o structură societală, tre-

buie reglate sau ordonate conștient, pe scară largă, sub ghidajul insubstituibil al unei minți atotcuprinzătoare, cu calități excepționale, aflate în posesia unui individ cu descendență divină. Platon a avut privilegiul de a trăi și de a scrie în epoca de zenit a Atenei antice, recunoscută în mod aproape unanim ca fiind veritabilul leagăn al civilizației occidentale, o eră caracterizată prin schimbări revoluționare, sintetizate în disputa dramatică a războiului peloponesiac, în care se confruntau, de fapt, două lumi, cea veche, întruchipată de cetatea spartană – arhaică, autarhică, xenofobă, dictatorială, comunistă – și cea nouă, cetatea ateniană – modernă, deschisă, cosmopolită, în curs de liberalizare și democratizare. În evul ei de deplină măreție, Atena începea să recunoască drepturile individuale, proprietatea privată, libertatea de exprimare în piața publică și posibilitatea (limitată) de participare la administrarea afacerilor obștești. Ea accepta rezidenți străini, făcea schimburi cu străinătatea, în special în bazinul mediteraneean, încuraja inițiativa particulară și, mai ales, devenea o societate complexă, de aproximativ 400.000 de persoane¹, complet diferită de arhetipul lumii vechi, reprezentat de o structură socială simplă și ermetică. Or, Platon, incapabil să înțeleagă și să explice noul tip de ordine socială, sofisticat, dinamic și abstract, unul cu minime caracteristici capitaliste, considera transformările sociale, economice și politice din vremea sa ca fiind o decădere, o degenerare, o îndepărtare fatală de

Vârsta de Aur a omenirii, acolo unde s-ar afla modelul cetății ideale, schițat în lucrările sus-menționate. Structura socială descrisă de el, pretins perfectă, este una statică, închisă, fondată pe egalitarism și pe proprietatea comună asupra bunurilor de capital și consum, planificată central și orânduită de regele-filosof, omniscient și omnipotent². Speriat de “instabilitate”, detestând schimbarea, prin esență rea, din punctul său de vedere, Platon confunda tranziția la ordinea socială deschisă, pluralistă, cu un veritabil proces de corupere a unei forme perfecte, ideale de societate, imobilă prin definiție. Practic, considera revenirea la societatea tribală, autarhică și egalitară, specifică unui trecut presupus edenic, ca fiind modalitatea concretă de stopare a declinului, de evitare a prăbușirii în haos, de a înlătura colapsul.

Deși diferite în detalii sau nuanțe, toate modelele socialiste ulterioare³, unele dintre ele, autodeclarat utopice⁴, inclusiv cele mai multe din secolele al XIX-lea și al XX-lea, se bazează pe ordinea socială planificată propusă de filosofia politică a lui Platon, cu câteva deosebiri neesențiale. Scopul fundamental al acestui demers de inginerie socială constă în instaurarea unui adevărat rai terestru. În ultimă instanță, idealul socialismului modern, văzut ca o veritabilă religie secularizată, este formulat în mod simplu și clar de Moses Hess, unul dintre mentorii lui Friedrich Engels, atunci când susține că, „noi, [comuniștii], vom aduce raiul pe pământ”⁵, prin „curățarea pânzei”

(Platon), adică printr-o schimbare dramatică, revoluționară a fizionomiei ordinii sociale, prin crearea unui „stat nou și mai bun, ca și cum i-am pune de la început temeliile”⁶. Deși el însuși tindea să ridiculizeze metodele planificării centralizate, considerându-le utopice, preferând așa-zisul socialism științific, Marx se apropia de Platon prin aceea că transformarea radicală a ordinii sociale viza, în cele din urmă, eliminarea rarității resurselor, prin modificarea statutului proprietății, în realitate, un demers emnamente utopic, și întronarea raiului mundan prin înlăturarea „anarhiei producției de mărfuri”, oarecum similară haosului indus, din punctul de vedere al autorului *Republicii*, de trecerea la o societate deschisă, complexă, fondată pe libertate individuală, proprietate privată, dorință de înavuțire și urmarea interesului personal, adică, la orânduirea capitalistă.

Evident, obiectivul ultim al unei revoluții socialiste mondiale îl constituia eliminarea completă a rămășițelor societății capitaliste – haotică, inechitabilă, antagonică – și instaurarea unei lumi armonioase, fondată pe relații fraterne, nu pe exploatarea „omului de către om”, o posibilitate, care, deși cât se poate de plauzibilă pe termen lung, era considerată greu de acceptat pe termen scurt, din diverse motive, care îi separau, spre exemplu, pe marxiști de alți socialiști. De aceea, „reorganizarea” bazată pe virtuțile rațiunii omnipotente, devenită obsesie pentru secta saint-simoniană⁷, viza, pe termen scurt și mediu, înlocuirea, în anumite țări, a

economiei de piață cu planificarea centralizată, demonstrarea superiorității intrinseci a socialismului în raport cu sistemul capitalist și, prin forța exemplului, înlocuirea definitivă a celui de-al doilea cu cel dintâi, pe toată suprafața globului pământesc.

Economia planificată centralizat. Experimentul de tip sovietic

Practic, marile speranțe ale socialismului au început să prindă contur odată cu Revoluția rusă din 1917. Pentru prima dată în istorie, visul socialist părea să fie transpus în practică și pe scară largă, ceea ce depășea inclusiv ambiția lui Platon. Autorul *Republicii* și al *Legilor* își imaginează o societate planificată, însă o face cu o doză mare de scepticism, limitându-și structura socială ideală – egalitară și esențialmente comunistă – la un număr de 5040 de persoane sau familii – din acest punct de vedere, autorul nu se dovedește foarte precis, având în vedere că el considera femeile și copiii simple „unelte cuvântătoare” –, intuind că ordinea construită deliberat, în conformitate cu un plan conștient, nu poate depăși mărimea unei cetăți ordinare. Altfel spus și spre deosebire de socialiștii secolelor al XIX-lea și al XX-lea, recunoștea tacit limitele imanente ale rațiunii umane în efortul de a planifica, edifica și controla o structură socială complexă. Or, acest scepticism platonician avea să fie înlocuit cu optimismul socialiștilor moderni, suprastimulat de avansurile

mai mult decât încurajatoare ale științei. În consecință, Revoluția rusă deschidea orizonturi enorme de reorganizare a societății, pe care nici o altă epocă istorică nu le făcuse posibile, cu făgăduința unei vieți paradisiace, conform principiului marxist formulat în *Critica programului de la Gotha* (1875), mai precis al trecerii de la era socialistă, ghidată de sloganul „de la fiecare după capacități, fiecăruia după muncă”, la era propriu-zis comunistă, ghidată de sloganul „de la fiecare după capacități, fiecăruia după nevoi”. În mintea socialiștilor din primele decenii ale secolului al XX-lea, planificarea centralizată, pe lângă faptul că elimina anarhia capitalistă detestată de Marx și inegalitățile flagrante de avere, făcea posibilă, în sfârșit, revenirea la acea Vârstă de Aur a omenirii visată de Platon, din care cei mai mulți oameni au fost expulzați prin întronarea capitalismului, la fel cum Adam și Eva fuseseră excluși din raiul tihnit și îmbelșugat și obligați să trăiască la marginea unui deșert, fiind pedepsiți cu raritatea și sărăcia. Or, acest lucru însemna nu doar realizarea unui obiectiv legitim al mișcării muncitorești, ci și câștigarea întrecerii cu sistemul capitalist, considerat capabil să genereze bunăstare doar pentru o pătură foarte restrânsă de privilegiați, care își obțin avuția prin exploatarea celor mulți. Pierzând cursa cu socialismul, capitalismul avea să fie declarat nu doar imoral, așa cum era deja, ca urmare a faptului că oferea bogăție doar prin însușirea samavolnică a mijloacelor de producție și prin îm-

pilare nemiloasă, ci și inefficient în raport cu sistemul fondat pe planificare centralizată.

Rusia sovietică din primii ani postrevoluționari nu urmărea doar modernizarea sistemului economic al țării – înapoiat, slab productiv, fondat pe relații de tip feudal –, ci viza, simultan, câștigarea confruntării ideologice cu sistemul capitalist, al cărui exponent erau Statele Unite ale Americii. În 1959, la peste patru decenii de la declanșarea acestei dispute, președintele Hrușciiov anunța că procesul de edificare a societății comuniste se apropie de sfârșit și că, în următoarele două decenii, nivelul de prosperitate al cetățeanului din URSS. îl va ajunge treptat pe cel al americanului de rând, urmând să-l depășească de departe, cu toate că promisiunea lui constituia, în realitate, o amânare a datei de proclamare a paradisiului terestru, în raport cu făgăduințele predecesorilor săi⁸, deși, cu doar șase ani în urmă, în 1953, producția agricolă a țării era mai scăzută decât cea din 1913. În 1961, Programul Partidului Comunist al URSS anunța că pâinea și transportul vor ajunge gratuite în anul 1980, ca primă consecință a sosirii raiului comunist mundan⁹. Profund convins de virtuțile planificării centralizate, ajutată de avansul (pretins) uriaș al științei controlate de stat, aceiași conducători ai URSS, cu Hrușciiov în frunte, promiteau lămâi polare și cultivarea porumbului sau a cartofului dincolo de cercul polar de nord, inclusiv în regiuni precum Chukotka¹⁰, învecinată cu Alaska. Planificarea

centrală promitea eradicarea șomajului, considerat o maladie incurabilă a economiei capitaliste, acces democratizat la bunuri de consum, eliminarea sau măcar reducerea semnificativă a inegalităților de venituri și, mai ales, un nivel de trai superior celui din lumea occidentală, deși, la începutul anilor 1970, cetățeanul sovietic beneficia de o putere de cumpărare ce reprezenta mai puțin de o treime din cea a cetățeanului din Statele Unite.

În realitate, economia planificată eșua atât în plan teoretic, cât și în practică. Ea devenise una a penuriei cronice, cu cauze sistemice, după cum bine avea să demonstreze János Kornai¹¹ la începutul anilor 1980, ceea ce confirma concluziile dezbaterii despre imposibilitatea calculului economic în socialism, desfășurată în anii 1930¹², dar prefătată de Ludwig von Mises, la începutul anilor 1920¹³. Incapacitatea ei de a furniza bunăstare, dovedită din plin încă din timpul primului experiment sovietic, din perioada 1919-1921, încheiat cu un dezastru recunoscut cu jumătate de gură de oficialii de la Moscova, se resimțea din plin în viața de zi cu zi a oamenilor simpli, mai ales acolo unde principiile planificării erau aplicate cu obstinație, împotriva tuturor evidențelor¹⁴. Însă, după cum susține Platon, „conducătorii noștri vor trebui să se folosească adeseori de minciună și înșelăciune pentru binele supușilor”¹⁵, își pot minți supușii pentru binele statului, pot adultera adevărul, dacă scopul suprem constă în salvarea unei himere.

De la planificarea economică la ingineria socială: simetria ideologiilor totalitare

Alain Besançon ne arată că, dincolo de măștile lor ideologice, fascismul, ca „artist” fascinat de grandilocvența estetică și de voința de putere națională, și comunismul, ca „virtuos” autoproclamat al justiției sociale și al internaționalismului, reprezintă expresii ale aceleiași viziuni distopice. Deși își revendicau o fundamentare „științifică”, doctrinele lor erau clădite pe noțiuni de lemn, rigide, artificiale și complet rupte de realitate, iar eșecul era înscris chiar în logica lor internă: comunismul s-a prăbușit mai târziu doar pentru că și-a disimulat scopurile prin mijloace mai perfide, (aparent) mai raționale¹⁶.

Ambele regimuri au recurs la violență fizică pentru a-și impune proiectul mesianic: fascismul, pe criterii rasiale, comunismul, pe criterii de clasă¹⁷.

Extinzând perspectiva lui Raymond Aron și Alain Besançon asupra „neno-rocirii secolului al XX-lea”, observăm că, privite structural, cele două totalitarisme sunt aproape identice și, în esență, socialiste: comunismul abolea proprietatea privată, în timp ce fascismul o tolera formal, dar o subordona complet statului corporatist¹⁸, transformând capitaliștii și ierarhia de partid în complici privilegiați – o castă echivalentă cu nomenclatura comunistă.

Totodată, mai remarcăm faptul că fascismul s-a născut ca o reacție anti-comunistă – cazul lui Mussolini fiind

emblematic –, însă comunismul însuși a fost nevoit, pentru a-și salva legitimitatea insuficient argumentată prin lupta de clasă, ca o ironie a sorții, să recurgă la resursele naționalismului: de la patriotismul rus ortodox mobilizat de Stalin în timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, până la formele hibride de național-comunism, precum „național-ceaușismul” din România.

Astfel, dincolo de nuanțele care țin mai degrabă de stil decât de esență, cele două ideologii se dovedesc, în fond, una și aceeași: expresii ale aceleiași vis totalitar de a remodela omul, de a-l uniformiza și de a-l supune colectivului, în totală disonanță cu spiritul său liber, dobândit prin naștere.

Retorica economică, model de justificare a ideologiei socialiste

Pornind de la remarca lui Alain Besançon că, „în socialism, politica economică și economia politică coincid și legile statului (sau directivele sale) sunt una cu legile obiective ale socialismului”¹⁹, încercăm să urmărim modul în care discursul economiei planificate a urmat pașii unei strategii comunicaționale de legitimare a ideologiei socialiste.

Definit ca o doctrină a mântuirii pe fundamente științifice, conceptul de *ideologie* își găsește cea mai bună reflexie în marxism-leninism. Psihiatrul american Robert Jay Lifton, specialist în psihologie politică, cunoscut pentru studiile sale privitoare la efectele totalitarismului și ale ideologiei asupra individului, sublinia ideea

că, în regimurile totalitare, ideologia era „știință sacră”²⁰, situată dincolo de orice îndoială, având pretenția de adevăr absolut. Este, deci, explicabil și de ce în spațiul sovietic discursul ideologic nu urmărea să demonstreze ceva, pentru că marxism-leninismul demonstrase deja tot ce era necesar. Discursul nu era destinat antrenării minții, spiritului critic, schimbului de idei, argumentării logice. Singura sa funcție era aceea de a ocupa spațiul public, de a-l umple. Instrumentul care s-a pliat perfect pe acest obiectiv a fost *limba de lemn*. Limba de lemn a fost o necesitate majoră pentru partid, pentru clasa conducătoare, „pentru întreținerea ficțiunii ideologice”²¹. Urmare a utilizării continue a acesteia, „gândirea a părăsit vorbirea”²², nu a mai rămas „nimic de gândit; sistemul este pus la punct o dată pentru totdeauna”²³. Pentru că are sens unic, discursul de lemn nu admite replică. Trebuie crezut și nu cercetat.

Bazată, în general, pe industrie (grea) și pe agricultură, centralizată și rigidizată prin controlul resurselor și al prețurilor, economia socialistă planificată din spațiul sovietic a încetinit în anii '70, devenind apoi complet ineficientă²⁴. Același tip de eșec s-a înregistrat, succesiv, în statele-satelit ale URSS, în care, deși au experimentat forme adaptate la un specific local al socialismului, economiile s-au hrănit tot din ideile fondatoare ale marxism-leninismului.

Eșecul nu putea fi, însă, recunoscut oficial. În socialism, la fel ca în societatea descrisă de Orwell, nu

existau greșeli. Existau doar erori, dar ele puteau fi corectate, inclusiv prin rescrierea istoriei, ceea ce făcea Winston, personajul principal din 1984, la Ministerul Adevărului. Acolo unde realitatea și statisticile nu erau în acord cu proiecțiile statului privitoare la economie, ele trebuiau revizuite. Se ajunge, după cum arată Besançon, nu la „planificarea producției, ci la planificarea cifrelor de producție”.

Discursul economic oficial, un discurs al ficțiunii

Discursul economic oficial devine un discurs al ficțiunii, al escamotării, al manipulării cifrelor, al mistificării, al falsificării subtile. Mecanismul de construcție a discursului de așa manieră încât să fie utilizat cu succes într-o strategie de comunicare menită să convingă că adevărul reprezintă minciună și că minciuna constituie adevăr este similar celui utilizat astăzi în redactarea așa-numitelor *fake news*. Nucleul este un firav sâmbure de adevăr, deliberat îmbrăcat într-o serie de informații false, cu scopul de a manipula comunicarea în funcție de interesul emițătorului. „Puțin adevăr insinuează mult fals”²⁵ a fost principiu călăuzitor în construcția discursului economic socialist oficial.

Însă între retorică și realitate existau discrepanțe uriașe. Pentru modelarea discursului economic în favoarea puterii, sovieticii au folosit toate mijloacele limbii de lemn²⁶. Aceasta a devenit cadrul perfect pentru clădirea ficțiunilor care să vali-

deze, în practică, doctrina socialistă. „În economie, ea completează acțiunea planificării”, explică Françoise Thom, forțând societatea „să trăiască încetinit, să vegeteze în forme primitive”²⁷.

Mai întâi, discursul este gândit în termenii unei opoziții evidente, ai unei lupte continue, din care nu poate rezulta decât un singur învingător – ideologia socialistă: „noi” în război cu „ei”, „socialiștii” în conflict cu „imperialiștii”, „economia socialistă” în competiție cu „economia capitalistă”. De altfel, foarte mulți dintre termenii folosiți, mai ales în presă, pentru a trata subiecte de ordin economic, sunt preluați din registrul militar: *campanie, fronturi, bătălii, atacuri, luări cu asalt, strategie, tactică*. „Imagistica războinică se extinde până la domeniile tradiționale cele mai bucolice: mulsul vacilor sau culesul cartofilor”²⁸. *Planul* este privit ca proces al luptei. Lupta contează, nu finalizarea ei, pentru că ține pe toată lumea într-o mobilizare continuă.

Imperativul, marcă evidentă a limbii de lemn, are același rol de a pune în gardă, de a menține societatea în alertă permanentă, gata să acționeze. Am ales pentru exemplificare câteva titluri de primă pagină din ziarul „Scânteia”, oficiosul Partidului Comunist Român: „Semănatul porumbului terminat grabnic în toate județele!”²⁹; „Secerișul grâului în timp cât mai scurt, cu maximă răspundere, pentru evitarea pierderilor de producție!”³⁰; „Făurim neabătut societatea socialistă multilateral dezvoltată!”³¹.

Într-o economie funcțională, crizele constituie un element reglator. Deși în practică economia socialistă a înregistrat criză după criză, în plan discursiv termenul „criză” a lipsit cu desăvârșire. Conotațiile negative pe care acest termen le-ar fi putut sugera erau considerate mult mai periculoase decât crizele existente în plan real. În retorica partidului, economia planificată urma doar o curbă ascendentă. Nu existau sincope, fluctuații sau perioade dificile, momente de declin, scăderi, iar limba de lemn deținea resursa perfectă pentru a accentua ascensiunea economiei: „Marile recolte, expresie a superiorității agriculturii noastre socialiste”³².

Hiperbola devine „unitate de măsură” a progresului economiei socialiste. Producția este întotdeauna „depășită”, planurile se dovedesc prea mici pentru capacitatea economică a statului și pentru energia „omului nou”. Jurnalistul american Hedrick Smith oferă cel mai bun exemplu al „gigantomaniei planificatorilor sovietici” – Uzina de camioane Kama River, „un simbol al credinței sovietice că mai mare înseamnă mai bine și al hotărârii sovietice de a avea cel mai mare cu orice preț”³³. Considerat cel mai important proiect al planului cincinal 1971-1975, a fost și printre cele care au arătat o problemă cronică a economiei sovietice planificate: neputința de a genera suficientă tehnologie modernă și de a o transforma rapid în producție.

Folosirea modelelor a fost, de asemenea, una dintre tacticile propagandistice de stimulare a productivi-

tății, de motivare a muncitorilor în a-și depăși sarcinile impuse de plan. „În timp ce alte forme de comunicare (informarea, spre exemplu) servesc doar la formarea de atitudini, propaganda conduce la ceea ce poate fi numit un răspuns-acțiune”³⁴. Portretul stahanovistului³⁵, împrumutat și personalizat în toate țările socialiste, a constituit o modalitate de a convinge că „omul nou” este, de fapt, un supraom. Trebuie doar încurajat să-și descătușeze energiile și să le pună în slujba muncii și întrecerii socialiste.

Explicitând modul în care ideologiile sovietici au construit limba de lemn, Françoise Thom amintește de vocabularul restrâns al acesteia, care obliga la uzul în exces al aceluiași cuvinte. Prin folosirea unui fond lexical limitat, limbajul își pierde din vigoare, din putere, din prospețime, obligând destinatarul să fie atent nu la conținut, ci la formă, întrucât gândirea ideologică trebuie să funcționeze în circuit închis³⁶. Discursul economic de lemn nu se abate de la acest principiu. Fidel ideii de progres permanent, folosește doar termeni care nu permit conotații negative: *consolidare, înflorire, accelerare, depășire, avânt, progres, culme, înfăptuire, cutezanță, entuziasm, efervescență*. Presa socialistă românească abundă în astfel de mostre³⁷. Verbele și construcțiile verbale impersonale contribuie, de asemenea, la delimitarea atentă a acestui circuit închis. „Trebuie”, marcă definitivă a limbii de lemn, exercită, în discursul economiei planificate, nu doar rolul de a anihila precizia temporală, ci și pe acela de a mobiliza.

Planul, instrumentul central al politicii economice socialiste

Utilizarea obsesivă, la nivel discursiv, a termenului *plan* creează senzația că acesta joacă rolul celui mai eficient catalizator al vieții economice. Depășirea continuă a planului întreține public iluzia evoluției fulminante, a întâietății economiei socialiste în raport cu economiile occidentale.

În România, termenul „plan” se regăsea pe numeroase documente de uz administrativ, precum și pe tipizate utilizate în perioada colectivizării agriculturii. Existau formulare speciale³⁸ intitulate „Plan de cultură”, „Plan de dezmiriștire”. În cazul în care „gospodăriile chiaburești”, așa cum erau numite în limbajul epocii, nu cultivau suprafața impusă în „planul de cultură”, erau pasibile de a fi acționate în instanță și acuzate de sabotaj³⁹.

În limbajul presei comuniste românești, „planul” era omniprezent: „Au îndeplinit planul producției industriale pe primii doi ani ai cincinalului. Industria județului Sibiu”⁴⁰; „Stadiul actual al îndeplinirii cincinalului impune și mai ferm respectare strictă a tuturor indicatorilor planului”⁴¹; „Planul pe întreaga economie realizat integral – până pe 23 august pe opt luni, până la Congresul al XIV-lea pe întregul an!”⁴².

Planul devine „o incantație a vieții obișnuite, cu inflexiuni aproape mistice”. Invocarea lui obsesivă îl conduce pe „omul nou” către ceea ce sculptorul Ernst Neizvestii numea

„conștiința vâscoasă”⁴³. Este vorba despre acea stare indusă de repetarea/citirea/auzirea unui cuvânt sau a unor sintagme în spatele cărora lipsește reprezentarea. Conștiința vâscoasă este cea care se lasă fermecată nu de obiecte exterioare, nu de reprezentări ale discursului, ci de greutatea unui limbaj lipsit de semnificație. Gândirea este amorțită, contează doar „beția de cuvinte”.

Dar, în fond, cum se făcea planificarea?

În *Anatomia unei stații*, Alain Besançon susține că, în economia sovietică, planificarea avea, simultan, funcțiile de a organiza și, paradoxal, de a dezorganiza. El explică acest lucru exemplificând prin felul în care, în ultimele două decenii ale socialismului sovietic, au funcționat industria grea și colhozurile, marcate de „exodul îngrozit către oraș, scăderea bruscă a salariilor, risipa și jaful generalizate, foametea”⁴⁴: ordinele primite prin plan au devenit inexecutabile (nu puteau fi realizate sau erau formulate de așa natură încât se contraziceau), prin urmare organizarea sugerată de plan a lăsat loc haosului, impreciziei, impredictibilității. Ceea ce s-a întâmplat în practică a devenit, însă, o problemă minoră pentru puterea de rezolvare discursivă a lucrurilor. „Se trece la un montaj contabil grație căruia planul este realizat pe hârtie, cu depășirea planului, ea însăși prevăzută de plan. În al treilea timp, pe baza acestei realizări falsificate, organisme confecționează un nou plan, ceva mai irealizabil decât primul, căci datele sunt

falsificate cu un grad în plus. Înclinația naturală a planificării, în măsura în care ea se prelungește în timp și în care se perfecționează sau se extinde, este, deci, de a părăsi progresiv terenul realității și de a constitui o economie-ficțiune, care se autonomizează în raport cu producția reală”⁴⁵.

Pe măsură ce între producție și economie se produce acest hiatus, „planul se apropie de a fi legea fundamentală a țării”⁴⁶. Bunurile sunt produse pentru a îndeplini planul, nu pentru a servi cererii. „În capitala armeană Erevan, am găsit o cantitate mare de acordeoane, dar localnicii s-au plâns că lipsesc de săptămâni întregi lingurile sau samovarele de ceai”, scrie Hedrick Smith, în volumul *The Russians*.

Concluzii

Încă din cele mai vechi timpuri, planificarea centralizată s-a dorit a fi metoda preferată pentru organizarea activităților economice, plecând de la pretinsa ei superioritate în raport cu metodele alternative. Secolul al XX-lea a fost martorul încercării de a crea ceea ce intelectualii socialiști denuneau raiul pe pământ, prin extinderea acestei metode la structurile sociale complexe, cuprinzând un număr mult mai mare de indivizi decât cel avut în vedere de Platon, în Antichitate. Or, teoria și practica ultimului secol au arătat că planificarea economică centralizată se dovedește incapabilă de a atinge obiectivele stabile de susținătorii ei. Dezbaterile privind imposibilitatea calculului economic în

regim socialist sau colectivist și primele experimente din URSS confirmau această concluzie. Însă, pentru a-și salva țelurile himerice, conducătorii din țările socialiste au apelat la tehnici de fardare a realității, folosind retorica găunoasă, minciuna sistematică, al căror obiectiv nedeclarat era acela de a face astfel încât realitatea să se adapteze ficțiunii.

Retorica economică a constituit un model de justificare a ideologiei socialiste, fiind puternic marcată de propagandă și de tendința de a ascunde realitatea. Propaganda a fost utilizată atât ca instrument de comunicare, cât și ca mijloc de presiune psihologică asupra populației. Prin intermediul acesteia, „maximalele ideologiei”, după cum le numește Thom, au putut zdrobi orice. Devize precum „Predarea cotelor către Stat este o datorie patriotică!”, imprimată pe obligațiunile de predare a cotelor, și „Luptăm pentru plan și pace!”, vizibilă pe toate documentele de uz birocratic și administrativ, indică intenția de a menține o mobilizare permanentă. Mai mult, folosirea majusculei pentru cuvântul „Stat” sugerează nu doar un anumit raport de forțe, ci mai ales ideea că prezența statului e ubicuă. Planul nu trebuie doar îndeplinit, trebuie să lupti pentru îndeplinirea lui.

Discursul mobilizator, lozincile, limba de lemn, promovarea mitului hărniciei excepționale a „omului nou”, care stabilește recorduri de producție, discursul glorificator („muncitori fruntași”, „eroi ai muncii socialiste”, „întreprinderi fruntașe pe ramură”) au creat stereotipuri de gândire și de

acțiune, acoperind zgomotos eșecurile economiei planificate. În spatele scenografiei maiestuoase a planificării, după cum o numește Hedrick Smith, nu a existat decât ficțiune și o luptă de uzură pentru realizarea producției.

Note

- ¹ Murray Rothbard, *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith: An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought*, vol. I, Ludwig von Mises Institute, Auburn, Alabama, 2006, p. 6.
- ² O descriere clasică a concepției lui Platon se găsește în Karl Popper, *Societatea deschisă și dușmanii ei*, vol. I, *Vraja lui Platon*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2005.
- ³ Spre exemplu, cel expus de Tommaso Campanella în *Cetatea soarelui*, Editura Științifică, București, 1959.
- ⁴ A se consulta Thomas Morus, *Utopia*, Editura Științifică, București, 1958.
- ⁵ Citatul este preluat din Moses Hess, *Communist Confession of Faith* (1946) și este folosit ca *motto* al cărții Joshua Muravchik, *Raiul pe pământ*, Editura Brumar, Timișoara, 2004. Pentru edificare deplină, îl reproducem în totalitate: „Creștinul... își imaginează un viitor mai bun pentru om... sub forma bucuriei cerești. Noi, pe de altă parte, vom aduce raiul pe pământ”.
- ⁶ Platon, *Statul (Republica)*, Casa Școalelor, București, 1923, p. 121.
- ⁷ Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne*, Les presses françaises, Paris, 1925, p. 6: „nici o măsură publică nu se va lua înainte ca ea să fie demonstrată cu întreaga rigoare a *metodelor logice* (subl. ns.) că ea este bună și înțeleaptă”.
- ⁸ A se consulta Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the*

În esență, comunismul și fascismul au urmărit același scop totalitar: remodelarea omului și a societății după un plan abstract, impus prin violență, în dispreț față de natura umană, libertatea individuală și libertatea economică.

Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev, University of North Carolina Press, 2007, în special, paginile 172-183.

- ⁹ Date foarte interesante privind funcționarea economiei planificate centralizat, cu referire expresă la sistemul sovietic, pot fi găsite în François, Seurot, *Las economia socialistas*, Fondo de Cultura Economica, Ciudad de Mexico, 1986.
- ¹⁰ William, Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, Abbott Gleason, (ed.), *Nikita Khrushchev*, Yale University Press New Haven & London, 2000, p. 114.
- ¹¹ Pentru detalii, a se consulta studiul clasic scris de János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*, North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam -New York - Oxford, 1980.
- ¹² Ideile esențiale ale dezbaterii referitoare la imposibilitatea calculului în sistemul socialist se regăsesc în Friedrich Hayek (ed.), *L'economie dirigée en régime collectiviste. Études critiques sur les possibilités du socialisme*, Librairie de Medicis, Paris, 1939.
- ¹³ A se consulta Ludwig von Mises, *Socialismul. O analiză economică și sociologică*, Editura Institutului Ludwig von Mises România, București, 2022. Imposibilitatea teoretică a planificării centralizate a constituit obiect de studiu pentru intelectuali de marcă, precum Karl Popper, în *Mizeria istoricismului*, ALL, București, 1996, care, în prefața ediției engleze a cărții, scrie, la pagina XIX: „Deși critica filosofiei istoriciste a istoriei (spre deosebire de cercetarea

- istorică) alcătuiește cadrul cărții, conținutul său depășește acest cadru, pentru că am încercat să cuprind și să expun conexiunile care există între viziunea istoricistă și cea utopică, cea reprezentată de năzuința de a aduce pe pământ împărăția cerurilor. Aceasta m-a dus în continuare la critica ideii utopice de planificare și de economie planificată - nu din punctul de vedere al productivității, ci din cel logic al posibilității realizării lor și din cel uman al consecințelor acelor încercări de a face imposibilul posibil. Asemeni predecesorilor mei, am ajuns la concluzia că ideea unei planificări sociale utopice la scară mare este o fată morgana care ne atrage spre pieire. Hybris-ul care ne îndeamnă să încercăm realizarea împărăției cerurilor pe pământ ne poate face să transformăm pământul în iad, un iad cum nu mai oamenii știu să-I facă pentru semenii lor”.
- ¹⁴ În legătură cu efectele reale a planificării economice, asupra vieții de zi cu zi a cetățeanului, a se consulta, spre exemplu, ***, *Anii '80 și bucureștenii*, Editura Paidea, 2003 și Gheorghe Florescu, *Confesiunile unui cafegiu*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008.
- ¹⁵ Platon, *Legile*, Editura IRI, București, 1995, p. 129.
- ¹⁶ Alain Besançon, *Nenorocirea secolului*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2014.
- ¹⁷ Raymond Aron, *Istoria și dialectica violenței*, Editura Babel, București, 1995, pp. 255-256, 287- 288.
- ¹⁸ A se consulta Mihail Manoilescu, *România. Stat corporativ: De ce și cum trebuie transformat Statul nostru*, Tipografia Modernă, București, 1933.
- ¹⁹ Alain Besançon, *Anatomia unei stafii*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2014, p. 33.
- ²⁰ Robert Jay Lifton *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism. A study of “brainwashing” in China*, The University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill and London, 1989, p. 427-429.
- ²¹ Lavinia Betea, „Comunicare și discurs în «limba de lemn» a regimului comunist”, *Argumentum, Caietele Seminarului de Logică discursivă, Teoria argumentării și Retorică*, Nr. 2004, p.46.
- ²² Françoise Thom, *Limba de lemn*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1993, p. 77.
- ²³ Ibidem.
- ²⁴ Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, Ballantine Books, New York, 1979, p. 290. Autorul, correspondent american al „The New York Times”, considerat unul dintre cei care au surprins fidel realitățile sovietice, arată că planurile cincinale, lansate de Stalin pentru a forța ritmul industrializării, au dus, potrivit statisticilor oficiale, la multiplicarea producției de 50 de ori, din 1913 până în 1973, și au construit coloana vertebrală a economiei sovietice. Însă, după 1973, semnele prăbușirii economiei rusești au fost evidente.
- ²⁵ Françoise Thom, *op.cit.*, p. 86.
- ²⁶ Sintagma „limbă de lemn”, explică Françoise Thom, are la origine sintagma rusească „dubovii iazik” (limbă de stejar, trad.), utilizată pentru a descrie stilul administrativ, greoi, în perioada țaristă.
- ²⁷ Ibidem, p. 141.
- ²⁸ Ibidem, p. 48.
- ²⁹ *Scânteia*, Nr. 12.962, 1984, p.1.
- ³⁰ Ibidem, Nr. 14.279, 1988, p.1.
- ³¹ Ibidem, Nr. 8.150, 1969, p.1.
- ³² Ibidem, Nr. 14.681, 1989, p.1.
- ³³ Hedrick Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
- ³⁴ Lavinia Betea, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- ³⁵ Minerul sovietic Aleksei Grigorievici Stahanov a fost prototipul perfect pentru crearea de către propaganda so-

- vietică a unui *fake news* care s-a dovedit greu de demontat. A fost glorificat drept un muncitor cu o capacitate de muncă ieșită din comun, care a depășit norma prevăzută în planul individual de paisprezece ori, extrăgând peste 100 de tone de cărbune în doar șase ore. În realitate, „recordul” a fost generat de diviziunea muncii în echipă. A se consulta Ioan T. Morar, *Fake news în epoca de aur*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2020.
- ³⁶ Françoise Thom, *op.cit.*, p. 109.
- ³⁷ Ediția cu numărul 8.136 din 1969 a ziarului *Scântea* constituie un exemplu.
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- ³⁹ A se consulta Dorin Dobrințu, *Colectiviza-re-a agriculturii din România: inginerie socială, violență politică, reacția țărănimii. Vol. I: 1949-1950*, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iași, 2017 pp. 7-12.
- ⁴⁰ *Scântea*, Nr. 10.974, 1977, p.1.
- ⁴¹ *Ibidem*, Nr. 10.218, 1975, p.1.
- ⁴² *Ibidem*, 14.607, 1989, p.1.
- ⁴³ Françoise Thom, *op.cit.* p.165-168.
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Imperii în frammegrare

[Empires in fragmentation]

Mădălina Virginia ANTONESCU

Abstract: *The classic definition of empire borrows, at the beginning of XXIst century, new meanings, under the influences of new hybrid concepts as globalization, fragmentation, hierarchy, neo-medievalism, global governance. The first section of our study is interested in exploring old and universal-known meanings about empire, in order to better understand within the second section, nature and intensity of challenges and changes brought by complex order of the XXIst century, inclusively for international relations theory field and for global studies, as well, by shaping new structures of authorities and overlapping loyalties, far away from classical concepts of state, empire and international organization.*

Keywords: *political structures, international relations, empire, globalization, neo-medievalism, heterarchy, fragmentation*

Concepția tradițională asupra imperiului din perspectiva relațiilor internaționale

La începutul sec. al XXI-lea, conform doctrinei, imperiul apare ca o “atingere la ordinea suverană a globalizării economice”, ivit pe fondul unei crize generale a conceptului de stat-națiune, care lezează sistemul westphalian de state, afectând cele mai importante prerogative de putere ale statului în sensul său clasic (militare, monetare, culturale)¹.

În opinia cercetătorilor, rolul structurilor imperiale este de a răspunde *nevoii de ordine* la nivel internațional și regional, în absența aces-

tora popoarele, comunitățile etnice, semințiile, luptându-se între ele pentru preeminență politică²; această nevoie de ordine universală care a stat la baza apariției, consolidării și expansiunii imperiilor este o realitate istorică cu o vechime de 2000 de ani. Imperiile au fost cele mai puternice entități politice în decursul istoriei, în ultimele 2000 de ani, ele apărând odată cu *uniunile democrațiilor militare* conduse de un rege (arché-ul lui Burebista; ligile corintheană și ateniană, ca alianțe ale unor state-cetăți grecești sub hegemonia unei cetăți dominante, Sparta, Corint, Atena, Teba)³. Alte imperii au apărut pornind de la o *entitate inițială* (cetate,

regat) precum regatul macedonean (devenit stat de nucleu imperial pentru construirea prin expediții militare și expansiune continuă, a unui imperiu trans-continental, de către Alexandru Macedon); altele s-au format prin expansiuni ale unor companii comerciale ale statului-metropolă (Compania engleză a Indiilor orientale, Compania olandeză a Indiilor, companii franceze etc.)⁴ în teritorii colonizate *manu militari* sau cumpărate ori dobândite prin schimburi teritoriale cu alte imperii sau state sau prin alianțe matrimoniale (Imperiul Habsburgic, Imperiul Spaniol al lui Carol al V-lea), prin anexiuni teritoriale și cuceriri militare (Imperiul Țarist) sau prin formarea unor uniuni politice sau comunități de state gravitând în jurul unui stat-nucleu ce păstrează monopolul decizional *de facto* sau *de iure*.

Termenul de „imperiu” este considerat în doctrină ca fiind derivat din lat. *imperium*, desemnând puterea instituției împăratului asupra teritoriilor supuse jurisdicției sale⁵; modalitatea clasică de construire în istorie a unei astfel de structuri a fost cucerirea militară, aceasta fiind caracterizat printr-o stăpânire a numeroase populații și teritorii prin intermediul puterii militare, în mod prioritar și a celei legislative⁶. Treptat, imperiul își formează, pe măsura consolidării sale asupra teritoriilor stăpânite, un greoi aparat birocratic și bugetar pentru recoltat taxe și impozite, pentru tribut și tot felul de dări având ca destinație visteria statului-nucleu al imperiului; împărțirea imperiului se realizează în

prima fază în regiuni *militare* (nome, satrapii, provincii militare conduse de guvernatori militari) iar în etapele următoare, acestora li se adaugă și atribuții administrativ-fiscale sau civile, pe măsura sporirii complexității competențelor pe care imperiul și le arogă în relațiile cu periferiile sale integrate complet, semi-integrate, în curs de integrare sau rebele⁷.

Nevoia de ordine și de stabilitate politică a ordinii universale necesită apariția și consolidarea imperiilor, existând justificări pentru „legitimitatea de tip imperial” și o întreagă geopolitică imperială bazată pe împărțiri de teritorii și pe negocieri ori lupte pentru teritorii între mai multe imperii aflate în diferite stadii de dezvoltare. Așa cum remarcă doctrina, Roma, Istanbul, Veneția și Londra guvernau asupra mai multor comunități politice distincte în epoca anterioară statului-națiune, în sec. al XVII-lea; până în al doilea război mondial, puterea globală se consolidase în aproape șase imperii, aproape toate europene⁸, ceea ce și-a pus amprenta pe dreptul internațional, considerat în mod preeminent „un drept european al Directoratului” sau al „Concertului de puteri europene” ce se înțelegeau asupra organizării teritoriilor și componenței lor etnice prin întruniri de tip conferințe sau congrese (până în sec. al XIX-lea, inclusiv). Decolonizarea provoacă dispariția unor politici imperialiste (duse de mici națiuni guvernând prin diferite forme coloniale și neo-coloniale teritorii trans-continentale) dar nu și la dispariția ideii de „imperiu”⁹ care

continuă să fie explorată și în lumea democrațiilor și a drepturilor omului, specifică sec. al XX-lea și începutului sec. al XXI-lea. Li s-a reproșat imperiilor faptul că ele sunt forme distructive de guvernare și structuri agresive, expansioniste, care se luptă între ele pentru putere; mărimea imperiilor impune în unele cazuri și puterea lor de proiecție economică, politică, militară; în alte cazuri, este suficient să se dețină zone strategice din anumite puncte ale globului spre a se putea vorbi de „state exercitând o putere imperială” (de exemplu, asupra Europei de Est și Centrale, constituind Heartlandul, în opinia geopoliticianului H. MacKinder, teoreticianul *Pivotului geografic al istoriei*)¹⁰. Imperiile se bazează pe exercitarea dreptului de a cucerii și a dreptului de a stăpâni (tratatul de la Tordesillas, din 7 iulie 1494, prin care două imperii coloniale comerciale în curs de afirmare, Spania și Portugalia, își împărțeau Lumea Nouă după cucerirea sa de către Columb)¹¹.

După cum remarcă doctrina, sistemele imperiale au dominat istoria formării statelor de-a lungul secolelor, în special prin mărime și grandoare; condiția menținerii imperiilor a fost acumularea constantă de teritorii, concentrarea mijloacelor coercitive - în special a mijloacelor militare și de război; declinul imperiilor survine odată cu diminuarea acestei capacități¹². După Giddens, desfășurarea puterii militare a însemnat pentru imperii crearea și menținerea frontierelor în ciuda faptului că erau fluctu-

ante și variau sub influența alianțelor, invaziilor și rebeliunilor¹³.

Pentru un imperiu tradițional, crearea sa a însemnat expansiunea începută de la un nucleu imperial, de la baze inițial restrânse. Sistemul tributar susținea un aparat militar și administrativ costisitor, precum și cheltuielile cu mituirea potențialilor atacatori pentru a se asigura pacea și stabilitatea la frontierele imperiale considerate vulnerabile¹⁴.

În relațiile internaționale, termenul de „imperiu” are în vedere un tip de structură politică definită prin: anumite imperative strategice, sete de putere, onoare, proiectare la distanțe mari a prestigiului (adesea vorbind de imperii transcontinentale), prin manevre diplomatice¹⁵ având capacitatea de a influența unilateral la nivel regional și global scena politică, prin folosirea invențiilor tehnologice pentru expansiune teritorială, precum și printr-o asumare a unei misiuni specifice de a civiliza teritorii care au culturi distincte de cea asumată oficial de statul-nucleu decizional (cel care *propagă* ideea sa de imperiu în ordinea politică a unui anume moment istoric sau se străduie să o mențină în ciuda schimbărilor din această ordine (*status-quo* imperial)). Forme ale imperiilor de tip nou, după cum se arată în doctrină, ar fi efecte ale unui sistem internațional multistatal *anarhic* (în viziunea realistă) sau ar îmbrăca *noi* dimensiuni, acționând la nivel cultural, economic și structural¹⁶.

Doctrina geopolitică efectuează o distincție între imperii și mari puteri,

aplicând criteriul cronologic: până în epoca modernității (sec. al XIX-lea) putem vorbi de imperii iar din sec. al XX-lea (când începe vastul proces al decolonizării) putem vorbi de mari puteri¹⁷; odată cu prohibiția universală instituită de documentele ONU după 1945 asupra fenomenelor de imperialism, hegemonism, neo-colonialism, se folosește în ordinea juridică internațională bazată pe Carta ONU termenul generic de ”state” sau „națiuni”, asociate principiului egalității juridice între toate statele, tocmai ca o garanție juridică (*ius cogens*) împotriva unei ordini politice imperiale sau hegemonice. În realitate, practici hegemonice sau neo-colonialiste continuă să se manifeste într-o ordine juridică internațională specifică sec. al XX-lea, depășit de amploarea, rapiditatea și multitudinea actorilor și fenomenelor globaliste, trans-statale. Dacă în trecut imperiile se remarcă printr-o politică de cuceriri teritoriale, în epoca contemporană acest lucru fiind pus sub prohibițiile ONU, se preferă practica unor dominații de tip informal (cultural, economic, ideologic) fără a exclude și dominația de tip politic sau militar (prezența bazelor militare ale unei mari puteri, pe teritoriile unor state, la nivel trans-continental), ca expresie a unui statut de mare putere raportat în termeni *hard power*¹⁸, la capacitatea de a purta război (deoarece imperiile și marile puteri au intrat în decursul istoriei și în prezent, în diferite relații conflictuale pentru a își lărgi ariile de influență).

Un sistem internațional bazat pe forță, funcțional din epoca antică

până în prezent, are la bază, în opinia specialiștilor (Wallerstein), două tipuri de organizare a relațiilor inter-statale: structura imperială (o singură entitate politică exercită controlul, domină întreaga zonă), corespunzându-i hegemonia, și structura multi-statală (când mai multe unități politice își dispută între ele controlul zonei în cauză) din care derivă echilibrul de putere. Este astfel folosit termenul de *imperiu mondial* sau *economie-lume*¹⁹. În această concepție se asimilează structura imperială cu tipul hegemonic de organizare a relațiilor între state, accentul punându-se pe existența unui singur centru de putere (imperiul) suficient de puternic spre a își impune voința în raporturile internaționale (dându-se ca exemplu Imperiul Roman/*pax romana*, Imperiul Britanic/*pax britanica* sau Imperiul Antic Chinez și poziția sa de control politic asupra Drumului Mătăsii/*pax sinica*).

Pentru Wallerstein, lungul secol al XVI-lea mărturisește emergența unei economii-lume distincte și capitaliste care a fost o entitate economică, nu doar politică, în comparație cu imperiile, cetățile-state și cu națiunile-state. Acest tip de imperiu mondial sau economie-lume adună în frontierele sale alte imperii, cetăți-state și națiuni-state. În trecut, pentru Wallerstein, imperiile s-au format plecând de la economii-lume bazate pe un sistem de schimburi comerciale care au depășit jurisdicții particulare²⁰. Imperiile se caracterizează prin convergența a trei piloni: ierarhie, ordine și expansiune (privită îndeosebi sub

forma *manu militari*). Imperiile conectează spațiul stăpânit cu o anume viziune asupra lumii, dezvoltând concepții personale asupra organizării lumii în funcție de ele însele (*ombe-lico del mondo*) și tinzând să modeleze conform viziunii lor, alte părți ale lumii²¹. Imperiile au generat în trecut forme specifice de viziune asupra lumii (Imperiul Otoman a generat noțiunea de *umma*, Imperiul Spaniol a stat la baza ideii de *respublica christiana*, Imperiul Bizantin a produs ideea imperială *oikumene*, așa cum republica romană a stat la originea noțiunii de *imperium*)²². Concepțiile despre ordinea imperială sunt condiții pentru stabilitate, autoritate legitimă și un sens al apartenenței la imperiu (superioritatea cetățeniei imperiale și beneficiile aduse de aceasta). Imperiul generează o bunăstare specifică pentru nucleul său dar și pentru periferiile sale, măsurabilă în termeni de *civilizație* (infrastructură publică, norme juridice, limbă oficială imperială, instituții comune culturale-religioase, obiceiuri, monede comune, flote, aparat administrativ imperial, elemente specifice unei ordini imperiale). Norma imperială este impusă, în cazul majorității imperiilor, prin constrângere și război (imperialismul fiind definit ca o politică specială "*empire-building*" dar și ca o politică activă de extindere și de impunere a normelor și instituțiilor imperiale în teritorii noi, rebele sau semi-integrate).

Imperiile sunt legate de noțiunile de expansiune, ordine și supunere (în epoca contemporană folosindu-se

noțiunea de "nouă ordine mondială"), la origine, în structura republicană imperială romană, termenul de *imperator* fiind acela de comandant militar al legiunilor romane. Este deci, o legătură directă administrativă între conducătorul structurii politice și capacitatea militară a acesteia de a fi transformată în instrument militar-politic de impunere a legilor, a obiceiurilor, voinței centrului decizional (un centru militar conducând un centru statal sau urban- cetatea statalizată, tribul dominant-) în epoca tinerelor democrații militare patriarhale care au generat imperii expansioniste (precum Roma imperială). Capitalele imperiale devin microcosmosuri, concentrând instituțiile imperiale de putere și de bogăție, exercitând regulile imperiale și deciziile asupra teritoriilor și populațiilor îndepărtate²³.

Imperiul se definește prin caracterul sau aspirațional-expansionist (o voință de expansiune fără limite); particularitatea imperiului este de a cuprinde în interiorul său granițe și frontiere între numeroasele sale popoare, seminții și de a nu avea frontiere externe; orice structură imperială se distinge de alte tipuri de puteri sau entități politice, indiferent că ar fi de natură statală sau nu (ligi de cetățitate, uniuni federale de state, confederații, uniuni monarhice personale etc.), prin frontiere imperiale non-fixe, non-exclusive, imprecise, în mișcare²⁴. Conform doctrinei, politica imperială înseamnă o proiecție deliberată de putere în afara ariei inițiale de jurisdicție a imperiului, având

drept scop crearea unei unități coerente politico-administrative plasată sub control hegemonic²⁵. Pentru alți autori²⁶ imperiile clasice acoperă societăți diverse ale unor spații geografice limitate care nu au fost guvernate ci plasate sub conducerea nominală a unui împărat (existând un anumit grad de flexibilitate în interiorul acestor tipuri de imperii, permițând existența unor autorități inter-conectate și multiple, de la variatele niveluri infra-locale, locale, regionale, trans-continentale ale structurii imperiale, precum în cazul Sfântului Imperiu Roman de Națiune Germană)²⁷. Pentru imperiile din antichitate, o strategie des întâlnită a fost cea de utilizare a forței pentru a obține bogății materiale și teritoriale, pentru a impune propagandistic imaginea splendei (*potenza*) unei dinastii, pentru construirea reputației imperiale, pentru înlăturarea amenințărilor politice, care împreună au dus la construirea structurilor imperiale²⁸. După Robert Cooper, imperiul este asociat în epoca antică ideilor de ordine, cultură și civilizație, opuse zonelor din afara periferiilor sale, caracterizate prin barbarie, haos și dezordine. În această concepție, există două lumi separate, care nu interferează și se contestă reciproc, lumea din afara imperiului auto-calificându-se drept o ordine a libertății, a legitimității identității non-imperiale, și definindu-se ca fiind anti-imperială, adică îndreptată împotriva asupririi, exploatării și constrângerii imperiului; este un model dualist, aflat într-o luptă permanentă pentru

teritoriu, care se dă la ultimele frontiere imperiale. Pe de altă parte, imaginea imperiului despre sine însăși este asociată intrinsec cu ideea de legitimitate celestă, aprobată și susținută de voința divină sau de alte valori (drepturile omului, democrația ca regim politic perfect). Imperiul generează în toate epocile un concept utopic pe care îl susține prin aparatul său de propagandă, prin nenumărații săi funcționari și prin ideea de *Invincibila Armada*.

Unicitatea centrului decizional imperial care radiază în jurul său o ordine a păcii, a stabilității și a splendorii imperiale²⁹, poate duce la faze de rigiditate instituțională și politică, la sistematizarea și cronicizarea politicilor de exploatare, de asuprire a periferiilor, creând o prăpastie între nivelul ultim, decizional, al elitei centrului imperial și straturile inferioare (dacă am imagina tipul ierarhic de structură imperială ca pe o piramidă). Pentru acest autor, într-o lume a economiilor globale este nevoie de o *ordine globală politică*, exprimată prin ideea de *neo-imperiu*, ca model valabil pentru a scoate guvernele slabe dintr-o situație de haos economic și politic ce ar face printr-un efect de domino, vulnerabile și slabe, porțiuni tot mai largi din actuala ordine internațională.

Transformarea ordinii onusiene într-una de tip neo-imperial s-ar justifica, în opinia autorului de mai sus, "printr-un efort de neo-colonizare, ca singură modalitate de a gestiona haosul și extinderea sa la nivel mondial"; zonele de risc și turbulență ar nece-

sita intervenția rapidă de tip *manu militari*, a imperiului, ele neputând fi administrate pe termen lung decât cu costuri uriașe, dacă nu fac parte din structura periferiilor imperiului, dacă nu sunt supuse în prealabil efortului de colonizare. Aceasta este o viziune pledând pentru un nou tip de imperialism, care să fie bazat pe asumarea și extinderea valorilor drepturilor omului și pe valori cosmopolitane, având ca scop reducerea instabilității mondiale (state eșuate, state rebele, cvasi-state, zone disputate de mai mulți actori politici, proliferarea actorilor non-statali de tip rețea sau corporații care nu au responsabilitate juridică în planul actual juridic onusian, precum statele).

Un alt tip de imperialism mai este calificat și “imperialismul de vecinătate” (manifestat la granițele unei ordini imperiale stabile și prospere, prin eșecul guvernării, prin violența etnică și contestări teritoriale) la care imperiul răspunde prin mijloace adecvate (monitorizare și organizarea alegerilor, corpuri tehnocratice de judecători, ofițeri de poliție, bancheri etc). Cooper, consilier al lui Tony Blair, este teoreticianul tipului de „*imperiu cooperativ*”, în care există un centru decizional impunând norma imperială, birocrăția imperială urmărind implementarea și respectarea protecției drepturilor omului la toate nivelurile acestei structuri tehnocratice³⁰.

După cum remarcă alți autori³¹, în prezent, puterea migrează de la monopol la piață, marile puteri (calificabile și ca imperii folosindu-și simul-

tan capacitățile militare, economice și politice pentru a construi sfere de influență în jurul lumii) intrând în competiție pentru constituirea piețelor și pentru răspândirea cutumelor. După George Kennan, inegalitățile de putere dintre state afectează suveranitatea lor; cu cât sunt mai multe state în lume, cu atât este mai ușor pentru imperii să le antagonizeze și să le cucerească³².

Definirea imperialismului este raportată la relația de hegemonie dintre un stat și alte state, națiuni și popoare subordonate controlului său; politica imperială este privită ca o proiectare deliberată a puterii statului dincolo de zona inițială a jurisdicției sale în scopul de a forma o unitate politico-administrativă aflată sub controlul hegemonului. Imperiul este complet integrat economic și politic sub forma unei entități supranaționale, pe când coloniile se definesc mai degrabă ca entități separate și subordonate; istoria a arătat însă că în practică, imperiul și colonialismul se suprapun³³. În America de Sud și în Lumea a Treia, interdependența este privită ca un sinonim pentru „*imperialismul structural*” sau „*neo-imperialism*” (considerându-se că Nordul a impus Sudului o dependență de capitalul, tehnologiile și piețele sale, profitând de țările sărace din Sud)³⁴.

Interdependența crescută dintre părțile unui sistem politic internațional duce la o creștere a stabilității unui *imperiu ca întreg*³⁵ din moment ce apreciem conceptul de „imperiu” în termenii de creare și consolidare, de expansiune a stabilității, ordinii și

civilizației imperiale într-o lume haotică, turbulentă și liberă; conceptul de „civilizație” este astfel, opus celui de „libertate”. Ceea ce pentru lumea non-imperială este definit ca un sistem autonom, funcționând în baza principiului non-ingerinței, a libertății politice, economice, militare, pentru imperiu se definește ca fiind o amenințare la adresa stabilității frontierelor sale, necesitând impunerea, extinderea civilizației imperiale într-o zonă haotică. Percepția imperiului este că lumea de dincolo de ultimele sale frontiere este una haotică, turbulentă, necontrolată, generând haos, deci amenințând cu focare de violență stabilitatea acestor ultime granițe și tinzând să se infiltreze în cadrul periferiilor sale îndepărtate, spre a le contamina cu haos; lupta imperiului cu regiunile *de graniță non-imperiale* este o luptă pentru *supraviețuirea* imperiului, deoarece el *se identifică* cu însăși ideea de expansiune teritorială și de ordine, de stabilitate. Dacă privim în termenii teoriei interdependenței (Keohane and Nye, 1977) relația dintre imperiu și regiunile non-imperiale, de lângă ultimele sale frontiere, observăm existența paradoxală *a unor relații* între sistemul ierarhic și regiunile haotice sau semi-ierarhice (triburi războinice organizate în democrații militare, ligi de cetăți-orașe rivale imperiului, coaliții de state, alte imperii în diferite stadii de evoluție -unele în declin accentuat și în plină fragmentare și contestare, ceea ce duce la o expunere a periferiilor disputelor cu alți actori; alte periferii fiind în

consolidare și expansiune-). Cu alte cuvinte, așa cum autori precum Keohane and Nye ne invită să privim mișcările interne ale unui sistem politic internațional, *există numeroase legături* între actori imperiali în ascensiune, în declin, și lumea haotică sau liberă, non-imperială care îi influențează pe fiecare în parte, astfel că o anumită acțiune ce se întâmplă unui actor produce consecințe asupra altor actori din același sistem internațional politic; cu cât sunt mai mulți actori, mai multe locuri și mai multe ocazii, cu atât este mai mare interdependența, consideră Keohane and Nye (1977).

După neo-realiști de tipul lui Kenneth Waltz, încercarea de a controla interdependențele dintre actorii unui sistem ar produce o creștere a gradului de conflict și instabilitate pentru întregul sistem; cu cât este mai mare asimetria din cadrul sistemului (imperiul împotriva a numeroase zone din afara sa, marcat de haos, instabilitate sau de pretenții de rivalitate- unul sau un grup de actori politici în ascensiune coalizați pentru a contesta imperiul-), cu atât este mai mare gradul de instabilitate la nivelul întregului sistem. Un singur imperiu duce la un singur sistem politic internațional adică doar unipolaritatea și condițiile de super-putere (sau imperiul global) ar duce la o situație de înlăturare a instabilității și posibilității intrinseci de conflict³⁶. Definind și fenomenul integrării, se admite în doctrină că, realizată prin forță și coerciție, aceasta este și un proces (imperialism) dar și o stare finală (starea

de imperiu, în sensul său clasic); alți autori admit și ideea de *integrare prin cooperare*, prin punere în comun a competențelor statale, fiind un proces voluntar și consensual, care ar defini o formă de *neo-imperialism*³⁷.

După alți autori, în identificarea structurilor imperiale sunt importanți trei factori: voința expansionistă (emanând de la conducători politici sau militari, de la industriași și bancheri ai unei entități politice, interesați de o expansiune comercială, militară, financiară spre teritorii noi, bogate în resurse strategice sau considerate noi piețe potențiale de desfășurare a produselor nucleului imperial, apărând conceptul de „piețe captive”, odată cu cel de „teritorii subordonate” sau „captive” voinței imperiale); integrarea progresivă a unor regiuni într-o economie în expansiune; inegalitatea repartită a puterilor (aparitia imperiilor fiind favorizată de disparitățile interesând populațiile, bunurile sau capitalurile)³⁸. Pentru un imperiu, soliditatea sa internă se justifică prin identificarea unui inamic exterior, ceea ce duce la o concentrare de eforturi, resurse și coeziune internă către atingerea scopului comun; singurul mijloc de a controla o frontieră turbulentă este de a cuceri mai întâi teritoriile pentru a termina cu acea cauză de insecuritate³⁹.

Pentru alți autori, epoca pre-modernă (acoperind o perioadă extrem de lungă, începând acum 11 000 de ani) cunoaște imperii ce și-au dezvoltat progresiv capacitatea de a se angrena în proiectarea puterii la mare distanță și în comerțul la distanțe și

mai mari, fiind o epocă a interacțiunilor imperiale în cadrul Eurasiei): principalii agenți ai globalizării pre-moderne sunt imperiile politice și militare, religiile mondiale și mișcările migratoare ale popoarelor nomade dar și ale popoarelor agricole în extindere teritorială⁴⁰. Este o epocă în care rețelele militare și politice nu sunt capabile să mențină relații *de guvernare* reglementate pe distanțe cu adevărat globale (cu excepția rețelelor culturale și economice ale comerțului trans-eurasiatic și peste Oceanul Indian și lumea islamică trans-continentală); alte structuri precum califatul islamic timpuriu și imperiile mongole din sec. al XIII-lea nu au reușit implementarea unor astfel de rețele globale de guvernare proprii (ele fiind fragile, în aceste două cazuri)⁴¹.

Tipologia imperiilor este una *diversă*, în funcție de epocile istorice la care ne raportăm, ordinea în curs de globalizare contemporană fiind, în concepția noastră, caracterizată de noi forme imperiale extinse teritorial, inclusiv trans-național, *în afara* controlului statelor-națiune sau *controlând* în unele cazuri, pârgghiile de autoritate ale statelor-națiune (imperii private, imperii corporatiste, imperii mafioate sau underground, imperii post-istorice și imperii pseudo-politice, bazate pe structuri ierarhice non-statale, sau de tip rețea care pot subordona inclusiv unele paliere ale autorității infra-locale, locale sau central-administrative ale puterii de stat)⁴². Așa cum apreciază doctrina, conceptul de „imperiu” a cunoscut o

etapă de revenire în atenția comunității academice în perioada post-război rece, încercând să explice impactul momentului 1989 asupra cadrului noțional și conceptual al științelor politice⁴³.

Conceptele de „fragemgrare” și „heterarhie” din prisma guvernării globale

Pentru o parte a doctrinei, *guvernarea globală* s-ar apropia de o formă de neo-medievalism, întrucât primul termen ar presupune multiple niveluri implicând lipsa autorității centrale și necesitatea cooperării/coordonării între guverne și actorii non-statali pentru încurajarea bunelor practici și realizarea unor obiective comune pe agenda globală (Gordner, Weiss, cf. Colas, 2002)⁴⁴. Termenul *de guvernare globală* apare la unii autori (Baylis și Smith, 1999) definind forme sub-statale de guvernare precum orașe, provincii, regimuri, localități; forme suprastatale (instituții multilaterale și agenții transnaționale); piața (prin instituții de reglementare și monitorizare); societate civilă (grupuri, asociații, organizații civice)⁴⁵. Pentru unii cercetători, *guvernarea multi-nivel* trebuie să fie pusă în relație cu regimul politic democratic și cu conceptul de „legitimare politică” față de cetățeni; în viitor ar trebui întărit nivelul normativ de reprezentativitate politică al cetățenilor (baza guvernării globale de tip multi-nivel democratice) prin instituirea unei „constituții a lumii”⁴⁶, alături de Declarația universală a drepturilor omului (ceea ce ar presupune și acor-

darea cetățeniei globale de către instituții statale legitimate deja politic din prisma unui regim politic democratic sau din partea unor instituții politice globale, odată cu consolidarea unui nivel global de instituții). Pierderea unor mecanisme de guvernare adecvată duce la o scădere a legitimizării politicilor globale, consideră autorii sus-citați, viitoarele provocări continuând să adâncească prăpastia dintre „*fragmentarea politică*” și integrare dar și să crească nevoia de democrație și legitimizare a politicii globale din interior, într-un posibil cadru de guvernare globală⁴⁷. Termenul de „*fragmentare locală*” este pus în opoziție cu procesul de integrare regională de tipul UE, pornind de la sintagma lui Anthony Giddens, a „transformării locale ca parte a globalizării, ca extensie laterală a conexiunilor sociale peste timp și spațiu”⁴⁸. Cu toate acestea, doctrina se îndoiește asupra posibilității unei structuri-cadru a guvernării globale de a funcționa în viitor, dat fiind existența fragmentărilor politice, a inegalităților în creștere și a sărăciei. O autentică guvernare globală ar trebui să includă, în diferite instituții și structuri decizionale la nivel global (precum G7, comunitatea de afaceri globală sau comunitatea științifică occidentală – într-un fel de think-tank global-) și grupuri de persoane reprezentând popoarele native, femeile din regiunea Anzilor sau amazoniană, ca parte a sistemului de guvernare globală de care se bucură în prezent structuri precum cea a afaceriștilor din NY City pe Wall Street⁴⁹.

Conceptul „*glocal*”, contracție din subst. „global” și „local”, semnifică faptul că produsele concepute pentru piața globală pot fi adaptate cerințelor specifice ale unei piețe locale⁵⁰; pentru a defini „*glocalizarea*”, doctrina folosește dimensiunile culturale, sociale, îndeosebi, identificând două sensuri în care conceptul poate fi înțeles: dintr-o primă perspectivă, globalizarea are limite și trebuie să se adapteze la constrângerile de la nivelul local; din alt punct de vedere, impune ca nivelul local să nu fie perceput ca entitate amorfă ci ca una capabilă să modeleze după nevoile și identitățile sale multiple, locale, fluxurile globalizării⁵¹.

În concepția doctrinei, dezvoltarea instituțiilor regionale este un fenomen a globalizării, exprimând *interconectarea* și nu *insularizarea* (fiind dat ca exemplu UE); conform lui Holsti (1994), „*fragmentarea politică*” este definită ca fiind un fenomen identitar în contextul globalizării. Unii autori fac conexiunea dintre fragmentare și localism, de unde ajungem la explicarea noțiunii de „*fragmegrare*”. Astfel, cultura cosmopolitană ar fi definită prin faptul că „tot mai mulți oameni încep să gândească global și să acționeze local”, în special din prisma temelor socio-economice și bunăstării⁵². Putem privi definirea „*fragmegrării*”, și prin prisma definiției date globalizării de Nye (rețele mondiale ale interdependenței, Nye/2003) sau ca o intensificare a relațiilor sociale mondiale legând localități aflate la distanță, astfel încât întâmplări locale sunt de-

terminate de evenimente petrecute la depărtare și invers (Giddens, 1990 apud Baylis, Smith, 2001)⁵³. Se mai folosesc termenii de „*glocalitate*” sau de „*relații glocale*”⁵⁴ pentru a sublinia interdependența dintre nivelul infra-local de luare a deciziilor care împuternicește individul la nivelul bazic al comunității organice-sociale în care este integrat, și nivelul global, alcătuind comunitatea globală de indivizi interesați de identificarea și de soluționarea împreună a unor probleme globale (satul global). După I. Wallerstein, asistăm în prezent la o reorganizare a sistemului internațional datorită tipologiei relațiilor rezultate din reorganizarea economiei globale, a evoluției vechilor și noilor alianțe politico-militare și eventualității avansării ori revenirii unor ideologii⁵⁵. Așa cum reamintește doctrina, noțiunea de „*statalitate*” a fost aplicată în mod diferit atât politicilor de la nivel sub-statal cât și celor de la nivel supra-statal⁵⁶; astfel, Georg Jellinek a introdus un termen special, „*Staatsfragmente*” (fragmente de state)⁵⁷ pentru a descrie trăsăturile specifice de statalitate ale provinciilor și teritoriilor care nu sunt suverane dar se bucură de o puternică autonomie politică; după Michael Keating, în aceste cazuri s-ar folosi sintagmele de „*state parțiale*” sau „*state incomplete*”, incluzând între acestea și situația specială a unei statalități incipiente a UE⁵⁸. În opinia lui Armando Marques Guedes, procesele sociale în desfășurare, precum procesele universaliste cosmopolitane, nu ar trebui privite ca având loc în mod

liber, independent de procesele simultane de fragmentare și rezistență. Mai mult, omogenizarea nu poate fi analizată separat; individualismul și cosmopolitanismul sunt interconectate⁵⁹.

După cum afirmă H. Bull, „*noul medievalism*” ar reprezenta un echivalent modern și secular al unui tip de organizare politică universală ce a existat în evul mediu în creștinătatea europeană occidentală, model în care niciun conducător sau stat nu erau suverani în sensul de a fi supremi ci fiecare trebuia să împartă autoritatea cu vasalii –la nivelul de dedesubt- și cu papa- și (în Germania) cu împăratul Sfântului Imperiu Roman- la nivelul de deasupra⁶⁰. O ilustrare a conceptului de „entitate neo-medievală” sau de „imperiul neo-medieval” ar fi UE constituită din autorități suprapuse și loialități contestate, exponentă a unei ordini mondiale neo-medievale, în care spațiul politic și comunitatea politică sunt conturate însă nu exclusiv, de limitele teritoriale ale suveranității statale⁶¹.

Așa cum apreciază doctrina, lumea sec. al XXI-lea este o lume în care granițele politice contează tot mai puțin iar economiile se integrează; re-desenarea hărții lumii se face nu doar ca efect al voinței unei singure mari puteri sau a unui grup de actori politici statali⁶²; des-statalizarea lumii devine o etapă de formare a unei noi structuri, post-statale, caracterizate de ascensiunea unor actori trans-statali sau non-statali, precum metropolele, megalopolisurile, corporațiile, rețelele, organi-

zațiile regionale supranaționale, asociațiile profesionale sau sindicale intra-locale sau trans-naționale etc. Cercetătorii realizează o distincție între noțiunea de „*fragmentare*” și cea mixtă, de „*fragemegrare*” în care prima reflectă un proces de *sciziune* politică a coloniilor față de metropolele lor, proces produs la scară universală, la sfârșitul celui de-al doilea război mondial, ca efect al unei *implozii* a structurilor imperiale de tip colonial sub impactul mulțimii mișcărilor de emancipare politică a teritoriilor subordonate. Noua eră a *fragmentării politice* bazată pe principiul auto-determinării etnice ca răspuns la structurile de agregare de tip imperial (regionale, trans-continentale sau universale, precum cele ale Marii Britanii, Spaniei sau Portugaliei ori cazul URSS după 1989) debutează la sf. sec. al XX-lea-începutul sec. al XXI-lea odată cu sporirea numărului de țări la aproape două sute de state, fiecare comunitate etnică din cadrul fostelor imperii dobândindu-și un stat propriu, o monedă proprie și un loc în cadrul ONU⁶³.

În alte opinii⁶⁴ se poate realiza o distincție între conceptul de „*imperiul*” (cu o vechime de aprox. 4 500 de ani, din neolitic, când s-a produs prima sciziune culturală majoră, cea între civilizațiile sedentare, agricole, pașnice, bazate pe organizarea ginților matriarhale și culturile tinere, în ascensiune, distructive, ale păstorilor nomazi) și conceptul de „comunitate terestră”, opus imperiului, bazat pe un model biofil (în sensul de non-

corporatist, anti-mercantilist, bazat pe dezvoltarea ecologică a comunităților locale, a *nivelurilor infra-local și local sau trans-local* de cooperare comunitară).

Termenul de „*glocalizare*” este definit prin antiteză cu omogenitatea globalizării, și ar trebui înțeles din prisma caracterelor sale de diversitate și varietate pe care le produce tocmai din pricina nivelului local și infra-local generator de schimbări dar și de identități multiple. Este un termen ce ne conduce a imagina modalitățile unei reglementări politice locale a fluxurilor globale sau transnaționale, accentul căzând pe schimbările la scară infra-națională și nu pe cele de la scară națională⁶⁵. Conceptul de *glocalizare* este pus în conexiune și cu un alt concept, de *fragmentare spațială* care ar defini diferențele și tensiunile dintre teritoriile câștigătoare și teritoriile pierzătoare ale metropolei mondializate, între spațiile conectate la rețele economice și sociale și spațiile lăsate în afară. Este un concept care surprinde inclusiv procese de segregare a unor orașe sau cartiere în cadrul unor comunități locale, generate de efectele negative ale unor rețele transnaționale locale, ceea ce ar trebui să impulsioneze autoritățile publice să evalueze costurile sociale și spațiale ale acestei dinamici pentru a evita orice formă de *secesiune*, consideră doctrina⁶⁶.

Globalizarea însă generează și procese de conglomerare instituțională *dificil de definit*, deoarece sunt departe de a fi exclusiv unele de tip statal sau exclusiv suprastatal (fără

nicio legătură cu nivelul de autoritate al statelor și nici cu legitimitatea tradițională ce leagă în baza contractului social statul de cetățenii pe care-i reprezintă și cărora le aplică monopolul forței sale). Instituțiile reprezintă, în opinia doctrinei, un concept interdisciplinar, vag, care nu are o definiție unanim acceptată⁶⁷, de unde și dificultatea de a le măsura după criterii științifice; ar fi și controversat a măsura un concept care nu poate fi descris în termeni clari⁶⁸.

În doctrina relațiilor internaționale s-a introdus termenul de „*heterarhie*” spre a defini realități structurale diferite de cele tradiționale, ierarhice explicând în mod clasic termenul de imperiu; pentru unii autori, conceptul de „*heterarhie*” ar integra nu doar organizări sistemice *opuse ierarhiei* (unui imperiu tradițional) dar ar acoperi și modele structurale imperiale *subtile*, flexibile, de tipul celor neo-medievale (Sfântul Imperiu Romano-German)⁶⁹. Pentru alți autori, neo-medievalismul este explicat ca fiind un model în care autoritățile de stat sunt influențate de multiple (și uneori competitive) autorități non-statale sau sub-statale, configurate în web-uri și în contra-weburi, ca rezultat al unei lupte pentru supremație între ele sau cu statele⁷⁰. Ordinea internațională, în concepția acestui autor, interpenetrată de rețele controlate de actori privați, creează riscul disipării și fragmentării ordinii westphaliene⁷¹. În concepția lui Jan Zielonka, modelul imperiului neo-medieval a apărut din nou la suprafața ordinii politice a sec. al XXI-lea, printr-o reluare a

ideii imperiale occidentale⁷² precum Sfântul Imperiu Roman medieval, într-o formă postmodernă precum UE. Zielenka apreciază că neo-medievalismul (implicit și structura UE) ar fi opuse structurii de tip westphalian bazate pe concentrarea puterii, pe ierarhie, suveranități și identități bine definite, pe granițe clare, pe impunere militară⁷³. Sau, după cum apreciază doctrina, argumentul lui Zielenka asupra naturii neo-medievale a UE în care paradigma europeană necesită o funcționare mult mai largă decât cadrul westphalian, fiind inspirată de modelul Sfântului Imperiu Roman, trebuie luat în seamă⁷⁴.

În loc de concluzii

Epoca globalizării se caracterizează prin transformări la toate nivelurile și în toate domeniile, sub impactul dezvoltării tehnologiilor comunicaționale, informaționale, a infrastructurilor și circulației globale

a fluxurilor de capital, de idei, de mărfuri, de persoane, care formează progresiv ceea ce poate fi denumit o “comunitate globală” ce își definește treptat și elemente politice suprastatale. Nivelul de integrare regională dezvoltă inclusiv ordini de tip neo-medieval cu suprapuneri de autoritate politică și interconexiuni multiple între nivelurile infra-local, național, regional și global; în ciuda caracterului lor vag, termeni precum *fragmente*, *glocalitate*, *heterarhie* care ar merita să fie analizate pe larg în studii trans-disciplinare, trebuie să fie luate în seamă în definirea noilor forme de structuri politice sau post-politice generate de sec. al XXI-lea. Conceptul de „*imperi*” este și el unul în curs de re-inventare ținând cont de forme noi de proiecție a puterii politice la distanță, de contextele globale ce se dezvoltă, de noile relații între marile puteri care depășesc cadrele clasice de reglementare ale dreptului internațional sau ale realismului.

Note

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- ¹⁴ David Held *et alii*, *Transformări*, 57.
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- ¹⁶ *Ibidem.*
- ¹⁷ Silviu Neguț, *op.cit.*, p. 39
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- ¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp.41-42
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- ²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 31
- ²² *Ibidem*, pp. 32-33.
- ²³ *Ibidem*, p. 7.
- ²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 19.
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- ²⁶ David Held *et alii*, *op.cit.*, p. 58.
- ²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 109-110
- ²⁸ Robert Cooper, „Why we still need empires”, *The Observer*, Sunday, April 7, 2002
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Political Security

Idealistic product or concrete reality?

Adrian GHENADE

Abstract: *In the context of the tragic events taking place on the international arena and observing the ephemeral desire of states to return to the specific real-politik approaches, this article is primarily a plea for the return to the ephemeral principles specific to human security and the restoration of human well-being and security as an epicenter of the concerns of states. Constituting one of the 5 dimensions of security on the basis of the acceptance of the principles of the Copenhagen School, political security addresses institutional stability and functionality as elementary principles for the existence of the state. Within the article, we will be able to see how many states that are labeled as „failed states” have poor political security with poorly developed political institutions. This paper is structured in two sections: one theoretical and one practical. At the level of the theoretical part, the theoretical and conceptual dimension of political security is approached, addressing in this respect the main tools and ways in which it is realized and perceived as a section in the security process. At the level of the practical part, a case study is conducted in which the author opted for an analysis on the political security of Romania. At the level of the practical part, by using relevant indexes on the relevant component parts in political security (peace, governance, fragility of public institutions, perception of corruption), the author wants to test the idea of whether Romania is an institutionally stable state, respectively, whether the Romanian state has inclusive or extractive institutions on governance over the population. At the end of the paper, a conclusion is expressed that is meant to summarize the whole process drawn up in the following pages.*

Key words: *security, policy, political, index, international relationship, Romania.*

“Political repression, systemic torture, ill-treatment or disappearance of individuals” were still a reality in 110 countries according to the 1994 Human Development Report. Prepared by Pakistani Mahbub-al-Haq under the auspices of the United Nations, the HDR represents the first

document in that the term political security will be used¹.

Defined as the prevention of government repression, systematic violation of human rights and threats from the military, the concept of political security will enjoy little attention in the aforementioned report, with ap-

proximately 400 words devoted to it. We note in this sense that its definition is summarized and ambiguous, not addressing a lot of essential dimensions that must be covered in the realization of this process².

Other approaches define political security as the organizational stability of states, governance systems, and ideologies that give governments and states their legitimacy³. Also, another definition regarding political security belongs to Takashi Inoguchi who states that political security can be defined as the reasonable liberalization of action that allows the pursuit and achievement of objectives that national actors consider essential to defend, even in the potential/actual presence of external actors⁴.

Although we identify a differentiation in terms of nuances within each definition, we nevertheless note that, within each, the state and the notion of statehood constitute the common elements of the 3 definitions. Starting from the basic idea that political security is an extension and necessity of the notion of the state, we issue the following 2 questions: to what extent is political security congruent with the notion of identity and social identification of the community on which it occurs? and political security is a product of classical state institutions, or are state institutions a product resulting from political security? Based on the 2 questions formulated, I will approach the idealistic dimension of the concept of political security, reporting on it based on theories from the sphere

of liberalism and realism, with the aim of looking at it from different angles and perspectives.

Later, using quantitative data, I will analyze the main 5 indices that I consider relevant for the analysis of the concept of political security, so as to identify its main dimensions that can be applied in the concrete world, exemplifying the data through a state. Thus, we will identify the best way in which this process is carried out and the main characteristics of countries that show a failure, respectively a failure, in carrying out this process, so that we understand the best way in which this security product can be produced.

Part I

According to Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention concerning the State from 1933⁵, in order for a state to be considered a legal entity it must meet 4 basic conditions: permanent population, defined territory, an executive power of the government and the ability to enter into relations with other states.

As we stated in the previous lines, in the first part we will approach the concept of political security from an ideational point of view, trying to capture its ideological dimension.

To begin with, I believe that it is necessary to frame the concept of political security in a paradigm of academic and political thinking that allows us to follow and frame its main dimensions. The end of the Cold War marked the entry into a

new paradigm of thinking about the functioning of international relations. The new optics will also be reflected in the related environments, thus producing repercussions in the political, academic, social economic and military environment.

As there is an interconnectivity at the level of the previously listed environments, the new current of thought will also have repercussions on the security field, enjoying increasing popularity in this sense the concept of human security, which will thus mark the transition towards focusing on threats of a hybrid nature at the expense of threats of a military nature. The new threats occurring in the international arena will thus require the creation of a new practical approach, and theoretically, thus imposing the need to create new operational concepts, respectively new strategies to combat hybrid threats.

Thus, in this context, at an academic and scientific level, we observe that the end of the 90s in terms of security will be marked by the concept of human security, a concept that was strongly animated by the principles of the Copenhagen School. As we already know, this school of thought claims that human security must be approached and ensured at a sectoral level, thus requiring the delimitation of 5 dimensions of security: military, economic, environmental, societal and political.

In this sense, I propose that we first analyze the concept of political security from a lexical-grammatical point of view, analyzing separately

the 2 terms that make it up: political and security

According to the dictionary issued by Palgrave⁶, the term political is a term used in at least two important ways, first in the distinction between the political and the social, in which political means, roughly, pertaining to the state and its institutions; secondly in the distinction between political and other models of government political and other models of government.

Security is defined as the guarantor of safety, the political arrangements which make war less likely, which provide for negotiations rather than belligerence, and which aim to preserve peace as the normal condition among states.

In this sense, analyzing the value of the two terms that make up the concept of political security, we can frame it as the prevention of any threats to the main political institutions of a state from internal and external threats so that the population on which the governing act is drawn up there are no threats to life and liberty⁷.

In this sense, I propose that in this essay we refer to political security by means of two terms taken from the economic sphere.

The first belongs to Francois Quesnay⁸ which related to the economy as a system, similar to that of the sago vessels. In this sense, we can thus relate to political security, as it is based on the proper functioning of the foundations of a state.

The other term is institutionalism, being proposed and produced by the American economist Douglas North⁹, which specifies that the institutions of a state that have some strong foundations will ensure the smooth functioning of a performing economic system. Extending Douglas North's approach and extrapolating it to all the political dimensions that ensure the functioning of the state, we observe that the liberal institutionalist approach is a component intrinsically linked to the concept of political security. In this sense, we note that political security is closely aligned with state institutions. Starting in this sense from this assumption, we return to the first question posed at the beginning: is political security a product of classical state institutions, or are state institutions a product resulting from political security?

Why Nations Fail¹⁰ by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, is an essential landmark for our attempt to provide an answer for the above question. They start from the idea that the difference between rich and poor countries lies in the fact that institutions provide different incentives for individuals and firms. These incentives are provided by economic institutions, but they are based on laws and political rules. Applying a principle also found in the 1994 HDR report, they state that in a developed country no one can expect to be taken from their home in the middle of the night without a clear reason, and the government cannot take pur and simpku, the house or business. But

they identify the biggest discrepancy between rich and poor countries as being constituted by the idea of opportunities. The opportunities and type of governance are the direct product of inclusive institutions (which have a democratic regime and include the people in the current government) or extractive institutions (which use the people for the benefit of a few elites).

Thus, adopting a taxonomic system taken from Takashi Inoguchi's model (which offered a taxonomy of political security at the internal-external level, later continuing to report on this concept through 8 types of approaches to political security), I propose to refer to the concept of political security by means of two dimensions: political security specific to states with inclusive institutions and the political security of states with extractive institutions, also adopting Takashi Inoguchi's taxonomy regarding the internal-external dimension.

Before moving on to the taxonomic system proposed above, I consider it essential to define the terms of identity and to identify yourself.

The term identity was introduced by Erick H. Erikson, psychoanalyst, clinician, trained in the Freudian tradition, who developed a line of research towards the end of the 1930s and during the Second World War, having a remarkable contribution to the issue of development and the socialization of children and the remnants of their identification with their parents. In Erickson, we note that the

conceptualization of identity combines his interest in the psychological development of the individual in relation to the impact of historical and socio-cultural factors on the extent of their awareness.

In the attempt to define identity, it was stated that it is the embodiment and location of the psycho-social, that it provides a way of thinking about the links that exist between the person and society. That it represents a set of meanings that define who a certain person is who occupies a specific role in society, as a member of a group or who possesses certain characteristics that classify him as a unique person¹¹.

The taxonomy of political security that I am going to make starts from the same assumption used by Takashi Inoguchi in his distinction between internal political security differentiated from external political security. This exemplifies the fact that at the level of power exercised by a government, in some situations, the population internal does not identify with the ruling class, for the latter, political security can mean one's own security or the security of power.

The political security of inclusive type institutionalism is a product of states that first of all want the political institutions of which it is formed to ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens on their territory, this being their main desired. In such a state, citizens automatically identify with the institutions that represent them, the security of the state being in full accordance with their principles.

The political security of the extractive type of institutionalism puts a pronounced emphasis on the character of identifying and not on the identity of the citizens, in such a state, the political security being as a whole the security of the ruling and elitist class, which does not identify with the several times with the people over whom they exercise control. In this meaning, the exercise of power by the ruling class is directly proportional to its political security, the diminution of power being the direct equivalent to the diminution of its political security (which is the equivalent of its remaining in government).

Thus, based on this taxonomy, we observe that the people are not always the direct beneficiaries of political security, sometimes identifying more with the political institutions that make up the government apparatus.

Thus, the answer given to the first formulated question determines the need to provide an explanation for the second question: is political security a product of classical state institutions, or are state institutions a product resulting from political security?

In the work *On Democracy in America*¹², Alexis de Toqueville exemplifies the fact that American democracy and European democracy had two different routes, which thus conferred the birth of two democratic systems that present differences. In this sense, Toqueville explains the fact that democracy in America was born in a territory where previously

there were no political institutions, a fact that allowed a different evolution of democracy. In this sense, it is noted that the American institutions were a direct result of the people, they were built and composed based on their character. Thus, we can ask the question: has there been political security for the American people in the absence of political institutions?

Seen from the perspective of institutional liberal ideology, the answer is negative, since political security is achieved through institutions. Viewed instead from the perspective of realism, the political security of the American people was tied to its very identity, it being equivalent to its survival. Also, the existence of representatives of and from the people, the existence of a legal system, the existence of a national army to which certain government institutions can be added (although not understood in the modern sense as the Presidency, Congress) represented some elements through which the new American state born enjoyed all the eligibility criteria of the Montevideo Convention. Thus, the answer to this question was there political security for the American people in the absence of political institutions? It is an affirmative one. Also, referring to the birth of modern political institutions in the USA and the way in which the component states of the union (which through negotiation will make the transition to federalism) negotiated the future political space of the American state offers us proof that the political security of a state can

also exist as a precondition of institutionalism. As we stated at the beginning, political security is intrinsically linked to the security of the state and even to its *sui generis* existence. At the same time, referring to Takashi Inoguchi's approach, he identifies 3 basic elements through which political security can exist: the existence of national objectives, the existence of threats (which must primarily be external) and the existence of freedom of action. In this sense, we infer that the political security of a state can exist in the absence of an institutionalism.

However, the dimension of existence must also be complemented by the dimension of the quality of political security, which, as we will see in the second part of the paper, is extremely varied.

Part II- The qualitative and quantitative dimension of political security

As I said, in the second part of the present paper I want to refer to political security from a practical point of view.

As can be deduced from the first part, we note that political security is equivalent to the existence of the state. Whether it is carried out on behalf of the population or a limited number of individuals, political security can be seen as the lifeblood of the state, upon which the existence of the state depends.

In addition to the previously offered definitions related to political

security, I would like to add a few more related to threats to it.

Examples of political security

At the level of the notion of the concept of political security, we observe the fact that it has evolved over time since the 1994 report as a result of the new realities appearing on the international scene determined by terrorism. Thus, following the war declared by the US and its allies on terrorism and the applicability of the Law of Armed Conflict¹³, based on Art.51 of the UN Charter¹⁴ terrorist detainees can be captured without trial, with the aim of preventing their re-entry into combat, in this sense the provisions of the Vienna Convention¹⁵ are not applied, which applies to the rest of the prisoners of war.

Also, another innovative tool that resulted from political security was the founding of the United Nations Security Council established under resolution 1267¹⁶ in 1999, as a result of the fight against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The novelty of this council lies in the fact that its founding took place with the aim of guiding UN members to direct their efforts against individuals and groups suspected of terrorism. The novelty consisted in the fact that the definition of aggressors was directed against groups, and not against countries.

Also, at the level of political security, the category of failed states also enters, where the traditional and traditionally recognized form of political governance is replaced by the

seizure and exercise of power by illegitimate groups, which manifest illegitimate governance. Failed states are marked by flagrant human rights violations. From the perspective of governance, relevant in this sense is the perspective of Jean-Germain Gros who suggests that the conceptualization of failed states has essentially the inability or unwillingness of public authorities "to carry out the end of what Hobbes called long ago contract" and provide public services on a wide range of welfare issues¹⁷.

Likewise, at the level of political security, there are detente zones or liberated zones that are geographically and politically characterized as territories without a form of government or public services. These areas are characteristic of the favela of Rio de Janeiro, cities in Africa or the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as guerrillas in Colombia.

The notion of a failed state is also complemented by the notion of the failure of selective governance, or simply put, weak governance. In weak governance, the central authority exercises its power over the territory, respectively the population, but due to corruption, incompetence, they cannot exercise their power completely due to the existence of certain organized groups that thus create a parallel system of social and political relations. This is represented by mafia-type organizations that create the phenomenon also known as state within state, or parallel state.

Romania's political security As a case study for the second part, I decided to report and analyze Romania's political security.

I chose Romania as a case study for two reasons: one emotional, because it is the country where I live and it is much easier for me to relate to the concrete reality of everyday life. And a second criterion related to how the concept of political security can make the transition from extractive institutions to inclusive institutions, a transition that has been going on for 34 years. Compared to the political security characteristic of states with extractive institutions, the case of Romania is more than interesting because in communist Romania there was the most repressive state apparatus directed against the citizens, the Security as an intelligence service being the most brutal of the entire communist bloc of the Pact from Warsaw. An idea of the brutality of this mechanism can be inferred from the simple fact that many historians consider the Pitesti Experiment more horrific and sinister than the Gulag Archipelago.

Returning to the current times, in the analysis of Romania's political security I decided to use 6 indices that I considered relevant for reflecting the level of political security of a country.

But, to begin with, I want to offer a few lines related to the way the Romanian state evolved throughout its political transition.

we consider it necessary to analyze the Amnesty International report from 1994 in order to observe how certain elements relating to Romania's political security were listed and to compare them with the 2023 report¹⁸.

We specify that in the respective report the elements listed are more from the sphere of human security, including certain elements from the sphere of political security at the internal level, the emphasis being more pronounced on societal security.

The report states that the Romanian state was at the level of 1994¹⁹ one of the countries that had ratified the European Convention on Human Rights, this taking place on June 20, 1994, and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which Romania had ratified on September 30, 1994.

These conventions thus placed Romania outside the 110 states that did not have provisions in this regard.

Also, in the report, it was specified that in 1992 Romania, along with other former communist states, received advice from the High Commissioner of the CSCE regarding national minorities.

At the country level, it is also mentioned that the attempt by the president of the Republic of Moldova, Mircea Snegur, to organize a referendum to unite with Romania failed, the two states being considered separate political entities.

As negative aspects, the report states that five men were imprisoned

because of their homosexuality, while two Roma people were killed, this act taking place with the apparent consent of the police, a fact that still shows the existence of a system that does not fully work in the benefit of citizens, there being strong discrimination.

At the same time, the report also criticizes the Judiciary Reorganization Law, which entered into force in July of that year. The main criticisms were that the independence of the judiciary had been compromised due to the criteria for the appointment and grading of judges. Another criticism brought was represented by the fact that the courts had a very high power to interfere with the work of the judges. Another criticism was that the said law maintained the strong role of prosecutors and military courts as parallel justice systems, a fact that goes against certain human security principles listed above. The report also noted that complaints regarding certain police abuses could only be made to the military prosecutor or the Ministry of the Interior, a fact that also limited a large part of citizens' rights.

Thus, according to the report, Romania in 1994 was a country that wanted to go on a path of democratization, but which knew serious deficiencies at the level of justice and public institutions, which were still not able to defend their citizens and which refused to work entirely in the public interest.

At the level of 2023, according to an Amnesty International report, we observe the fact that Romania had evolved quite a lot compared to 1994.

At the level of homosexuality, Romania had meanwhile repealed article 200 of the criminal code, this act took place during the government of Adrian Năstase in 2001, on dated June 22²⁰. Regarding the Roma problem, we identify the fact that Romania is one of the states where hatred, physical harassment and violence against the Roma has decreased, according to the estimates made by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

At the level of critics, we find the unjust fine (according to the ECHR) of a peaceful protest regarding the realization of a mining project, the non-recognition of marriage and civil partnership between persons of the same sex (contrary to European norms from 2018 following the decision of the Court of Justice regarding the need to harmonize the national law with European law) and the increased number of cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

Thus, although we have not yet found an ideal Romania, we can conclude that the Romania of 2023/2024 is substantially improved compared to the period of the 1994s, our country succeeding in the meantime in its integration into NATO and the EU.

Political Security²¹

As we have noticed, the concept of political security is a volatile one, it has in its composition a multitude of variables. In this sense, in order to be able to measure the level of political security as well as possible, I

think it is essential to take into account several indices that measure different constituent elements of this concept. Thus, in the analysis below, we referred to indices that measure the level of political stability, the level of peace, governance, state fragility and perception of corruption.

The Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism Index measures the perception of the likelihood that a government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically motivated violence or terrorism. This index is an average of several indices from the Economist Intelligence Unit, World Economic Forum and Political Risk Services. It reflects the possibility of a disorderly transfer of governmental power, armed conflicts, violent demonstrations, social unrest, international tensions, terrorism, as well as ethnic, religious, or regional conflicts. The source of the points measure is the World Bank, the value being between -2.5 (which is the weakest) and 2.5 (which is the strongest). The index takes into account 193 countries, the average being -0.07. Analyzing the data, we note that the highest values were recorded in Lichtenstein (1.64), Andorra (1.63), Singapore (1.49), Aruba (1.47) and New Zealand (1.44). At the opposite pole, we observe that the states that have the lowest values are states known generically as failed states such as Iraq (-2.4), Afghanistan (-2.53), Yemen (-2.59), Syria (-2.66) and Somalia (-2.68).

At the level of Romania, we note that it occupies the 68th position out of 193 countries, its index having a value of 0.53 points, which places it above the world average, which is -0.07. Also, according to the index, Romania presents greater political stability than countries like France (0.37). These values can be attributed to internal and external factors that our country enjoys.

At the domestic level, we can mention the constitution, which provides a precise and fair delimitation of the principle of separation of powers in the state, which makes it practically impossible for a single person/political formation to hold absolute power, helping the functioning and continuity of a somewhat stable democracy political view. Also, at the internal level (except for certain isolated episodes regarding the clashes with ethnic Hungarians), Romania is a successful model regarding the integration of ethnic and religious minorities on its territory, there being no large-scale secessionist/separatist movements. The external causes are complemented by the external ones that reside in the membership of NATO and the European Union, which gives Romania guarantees in terms of military and political security, being at the same time institutions that ensure its democratic course. Another reason is represented by the efficiency of the intelligence structures, which until now have managed to eliminate a multitude of potential terrorist attacks on the territory of the

country and which make Romania a safe space from this point of view.

As a note, we specify that the index measures data for the period 1996-2021

Peace Index²²

Produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the global peace index is the most important measure of global peace worldwide. The Global Peace Index covers data from 99.7% of the world's population and is calculated using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators. This index measures the level of peace in 3 areas: the level of safety and social security, the extent of ongoing internal and international conflict, and the degree of militarization.

The data are made for the year 2023, taking into account 163 countries. The measurement scale is from 1 to 5, with a lower score reflecting that the country is peaceful.

The global average of this index is 3.14 points, the lowest values (implicitly also the most peaceful countries) being achieved by Iceland (1.124), Denmark (1.31), Ireland (1.312), New Zealand (1.313) and Austria (1.316). At the opposite pole are countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (3,214), South Sudan (3,221), Syria (3,294), Yemen (3,35) and Afghanistan (3,448).

Within this index, Romania occupies the 31st position, registering a score of 1.65 points, a fact that places it well above the average of the world's countries.

According to the index, the factors that determine these values are the perceived low crime in society (2.198/5), the police system (2.282/5), homicides (1.73/5), the population in prisons (1.965/5), access to weapons (3/5), political instability (2/5), political terror (1.5/5), terrorist activity (1.274/5), deaths in internal conflicts (1/5) or safety and security 1.744676471/ 5. The certain high value in these measurements is found in relations with neighboring countries (3/5), which indicates certain negative effects produced by the conflict in Ukraine which is in full conflict with the Russian Federation.

Also, another relevant index in this sense is the WorldWide Governance Index used by the World Bank

World Wide Governance²³

This index is made up of values that measure the level of corruption, government stability or law enforcement. Analyzing each country separately, the index does not provide an ordinal ranking of countries.

Having the most recent data until 2022, we note that Romania has an estimated control of corruption of 0 points, registering in this sense a percentage of 55.7%. At the level of governmental effectiveness, Romania had registered 0 points, having a percentage of 53.3%. At the level of political stability, Romania registered a value of 0.5 points, having a percentage of 60.8%.

At the level of compliance with the law, Romania obtained 0.4 points.

Also, another relevant index to measure Romania's political security is the Fragile State Index

Fragile States Index (FSI)²⁴

It is an index produced by the Fund for Peace (FFP). This is an essential tool in highlighting the normal pressures that all states are under. It marks the highlighting of relevant vulnerabilities that contribute to the risk of state fragility. The index—and the social science framework and data analysis tools on which it is based—makes political risk assessment and conflict early warning accessible to policymakers and the general public.

The index regarding the fragility of states has in its composition the analysis of 12 variables which are essential elements (such as demography, security, trust in public institutions) that are part of the dimension of political security.

In this sense, each analyzed dimension has values between 0-10, the final score obtained by each country being generally the total sum of the values obtained in each separate section. The higher the amount, the more fragile and unstable the respective state is. The index was made on a sample of 179 countries.

In this sense, we note that the highest values were obtained in the states of Somalia (111.9), Yemen (108.9), South Sudan (108.5), the Democratic Republic of Congo (107.2) and Syria (107 ,1). At the opposite pole, the countries that recorded the lowest score

are Switzerland (17.8), New Zealand (16.7), Finland (16), Iceland (15.7) and Norway (14.5).

At the Romanian level, we note that it ranks 129 out of 179, with a score of 53 points. On the positive side, we note that with regard to the security component, Romania ranks very well, with a risk score of 1.9/10, being safer than Germany or Canada, and even surpassing in this respect Finland (which holds 2/10), but which unfortunately has values of 4-5 points for the rest of the components that make it up. Also, at the level of Romania, we observe certain vulnerabilities among the labor force and brain drain components where it has a score of 5.6, respectively the factionalization of the elites, where it registers a score of 5.7 points. Although the values are moderate compared to some countries in the ranking, these factors constitute some elements that, if not mitigated, may affect our country in the future.

Another index relevant to political security is the corruption perception index

Corruption Perception²⁵

In this sense, the first positions at the level of 2022 were occupied by Denmark (90 points), Finland (87), New Zealand (87), Norway (84), Singapore (83).

At the opposite pole, the countries where the highest level of corruption was recorded were Yemen (16), Venezuela (14), South Sudan (13), Syria (13) and Somalia (12).

Within this index, Romania occupies the 63rd position out of 180 countries worldwide, obtaining 46/100 points.

Arriving at the final part of the presentation, based on the theoretical information and comparative analyzes carried out previously, we will create a political security profile of Romania.

Starting with the strengths, we note that Romania enjoys a high level of internal security. The lack of terrorist attacks or secessionist movements proves that our country enjoys stable intelligence/defense institutions, which are professionals in carrying out their duties.

Another factor that contributes to Romania's political security is represented by the political system. In this sense, he observes that, except for the first part of the 90s, Romania enjoyed a political pluralism, which always made possible the existence of the opposition and which thus managed to consolidate the main political institutions necessary for the realization of the democratic act.

Also, at the domestic level, we note that although some civil rights are still violated, civic rights have mostly been respected. As I said in section I of the presentation, internal political security can know certain variables when the people no longer identify with the representatives who form the executive/parliamentary apparatus through which the governing act is carried out. Relevant in this regard, I consider the case of the fall of the Ponta and Dăncilă Governments, which following popular pressure, respectively ranking second in

the parliamentary elections (which legally did not have a direct effect on the internal structure of political power) decided to dissolve.

Externally, we note that Romania is one of the states that, since the end of the Second World War, has not been in an active, direct military conflict with any other state. This thus allows Romania to strengthen its main political institutions and pursue its national objectives in the short, medium and long term. Also, at the military, economic and political level, Romania knows the unique chance to be part of NATO and the EU, institutions that represent some important guarantees regarding the political security of our country.

At the level of vulnerabilities, we observe the fact that one of the biggest diseases of Romania is represented by internal corruption, a phenomenon that weakens state institutions, thus substantially reducing their efficiency. Another problem is constituted by the inefficiency of justice, a fact that produces a decrease in trust at the level of institutions among the population.

Externally, the major problem regarding political security is the aggressiveness of the Russian Federation, which constitutes a danger both from a military point of view and from the point of view of hybrid actions aimed at destabilizing institutions at the domestic level.

Finally, after the theoretical, conceptual and statistical analysis we made of the concept of political security, we would like to end the presentation with a conclusion taken from

the work *Why Nations Fail?* In this sense, we observe that political institutions are of 2 types: inclusive and extractive through their relation to the population. Throughout history, the most stable countries that have had regime continuity have always been the countries capable of creating inclusive institutions for their citizens. Thus, we believe that the main way in which political security will be achieved and constantly improved will be through the ability to integrate the direct beneficiaries of the security product, the citizens, in the process of its realization, by facilitating an institution-citizen partnership.

Conclusions

Having reached the end of the paper, I want to present some deductions that I made along the way regarding the notion and concept of political security.

First, unlike other security sectors that are able to provide concrete quantitative data, political security is

a variable field, which it knows different valences for each individual state, which can be approximated, but by no means accurately reproduced.

Second, political security and the existence of a state are two inseparable notions, the existence of the two being determined by their mutual existence. In this sense, a relevant principle seems to me to be that of quantum physics related to the postulate according to which two particles that, at the origin, come from the same atom (in the present case the state) continue to form a single entity, even though they are separated in space and time

Thirdly, I conclude with an idealistic conclusion, in which I express my desire that in the future, political security will be achieved primarily for the people, because, in essence, political security is, before anything else, a branch of human security, security that considers the most important security, human security!

Notes

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- ³ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-540-75977-5_42, (accesat 02.01.2024).
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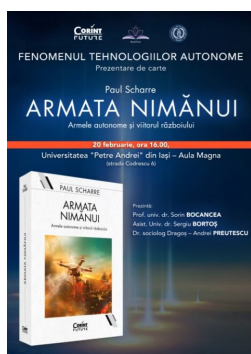
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EVENIMENT

Dezbateră *Fenomenul tehnologiilor autonome*



Pe 20 februarie 2025, Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași a găzduit dezbateră *Fenomenul tehnologiilor autonome* și prezentarea volumului *Armata nimănu*. *Armele autonome și viitorul războiului*, de Paul Scharre, apărută în Colecția Corint Future.



Evenimentul a fost organizat în parteneriat cu Editura CORINT și „Idei și Efecte”, un proiect cultural al cărui scop urmărește promovarea cititului, și a fost moderat de Dr. sociolog Dragoș-Andrei PREUTESCU.

În deschiderea evenimentului acesta a spus: „Am ales, ca lună de lună, să organizez câte o dezbatere și prezentare de carte pentru că nevoia de cunoaștere și informație trebuie să fie de bună calitate și pentru un public cât

mai extins. Titlul cărții lansată astăzi este unul greu, dar mai ales în actualul context internațional. Paul Scharre, care a fost soldat în armata de elită a Statelor Unite ale Americii, expert militar, a scris această carte în 2018,

înainte ca războaiele din Ucraina și Fâșia Gaza să izbucnească. Probabil că azi ar fi comentat într-o altă manieră, în mod special, această armă autonomă, dronele, folosite în războiul din Ucraina”.

Cartea „Armata nimănui. Armele autonome și viitorul războiului” a fost prezentată de Asist. univ.dr. Sergiu BORTOȘ și de Prof. univ. dr. Sorin Bocancea.



Asist. univ.dr. Sergiu BORTOȘ a transmis că a lecturat cartea cu ochii

unui novice: „volumul este un foarte bun companion, care reușește să introducă, în acest univers, aproape SF, o persoană care nu are cunoștințe tehnice în domeniul militar sau al Inteligenței Artificiale. Aș începe totul de la momentul publicării cărții, anul 2018. Trebuie să raportăm tot conținutul la nivelul cunoașterii din momentul respectiv. Am încercat să parcurg cartea cu această referință. Poate, miza cea mai mare o reprezintă, având în vedere că jumătate din carte este alocată acestui subiect, definirea autonomiei. Este o distincție pe care autorul o face: vrea să facă o diferențiere între automat, automatizat și autonom. Aici discută de drone, dar

nu ca fiind autonome. Autorul ar discuta de drone doar în momentul în care omul este scos din bucla de de

cizie, adică omul nu mai controlează, ci drona, în baza unui algoritm, decide dacă acționează sau nu”.



Prof. univ.dr. Sorin BOCANCEA a precizat că acest volum se citește foarte ușor, iar autorul este un foarte bun pedagog, care știe să lămurească lucruri care nu sunt simple.

„Computerele sunt făcute să nu își rateze protocolul, obiectivul lor este să ducă la bun sfârșit ceva, ele nu judecă oportunitatea. Cu Inteligența Artificială obții doar ceea ce introduci, singurul câștig este viteza cu care ea vine

cu o anumită soluție. Dar nu este euristică, este un algoritm care combină mai multe variante decât o poate face mintea umană. Ceea ce îi lipsește Inteligenței Artificiale este adaptarea în context, pe care doar mintea umană o poate face. Atunci când a creat Inteligența Artificială omul a avut în față creierul uman. Ne întoarcem la veșnica întrebare a lui Platon: cum gândim?”.



Conferința Internațională *Mens sana in corpore sano*



În perioada 8-9 martie 2025, la Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași s-a desfășurat prima ediție a Conferinței Internaționale *Mens sana in corpore sano*



Speakerii conferinței au fost: Prof. univ. dr. Daniel DAVID, Universitatea „Babes-Bolyai” Cluj Napoca, Ministrul Educației și Cercetării; Prof. univ. dr. Marius TURDA, Dr. Hc., Profesor la Departamentul de Istorie, Filosofie și Religie, Universitatea Oxford

După cum a declarat coordonatoarea, Lect. univ.dr. Lavinia Pruteanu, Președinta Senatului UPA, „Conferința este un eveniment științific interdisciplinar și transdisciplinar, la intersecția științelor sociale și a medicinei, care își propune să valorifice realizările trecutului și să exploreze provocările viitorului”.

Brookes, Marea Britanie; Prof. univ. dr. Bernd KARDORFF, Dr. Hc., Profesor Dr. med. Director, Șeful Departamentului de Piele la Haut-Allergie-Venen-und Laserpraxen, Germania; Prof. univ. dr. Gabriel DIACONU, Dr. Director Medical MindCare, Psihiatru Senior MedLife.



În prelegerea sa, Prof univ. Dr. Marius Turda s-a referit la manifestările eugeniei în România comunistă: „Sfârșitul războiului în 1945 a adus cu sine nu numai înfrângerea militară a Germaniei, ci și condamnarea aproape universală a eugeniei rasiste germane. În România, situația s-a schimbat fundamental după 30 Decembrie 1947. La fel ca-n Uniunea Sovietică, eugenia și genetica umană au fost declarate ca fiind «în slujba»

intereselor «imperialiste» americane și a rasismului global. Ca urmare, termenul «eugenie» a fost treptat abandonat însă gândirea eugenică era deja adânc răspândită în societate, cultură și politică. Drept urmare eugenia – adică programul de protejare biologică a societății, precum și nevoia de creștere demografică și de reînnoire etnică a națiunii prin politici familiale – și-a regăsit «sensul» în ambiția noului regim politic de a construi o Românie socialistă. În Europa de Est, eugenia s-a despărțit de rasism, însă nu a dispărut niciodată din politicile de sănătate și educaționale introduse în anii 1950 și 1960. Știm mai multe despre cum eugenia a supraviețuit în vestul democrat al Europei și în SUA (politicile de sterilizare au continuat până în anii 1970), însă nu știm măcar puțin despre felul în care gândirea eugenică a continuat să existe în esutul comunist al Europei”.

Una dintre secțiunile Conferinței a fost organizată în colaborare cu Institutul de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului și Memoria Exilului Românesc (IICCMER) și s-a intitulat

„Politica pronatalistă în regimul Ceaușescu și consecințele sale”, fiind moderată de Prof.univ.dr. Daniel ȘANDRU, Președintele executiv al IICCMER



În deschiderea secțiunii, istoricul Mioara ANTON, cercetător științific și Director al Institutului de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga” la Academiei Române, a susținut prelegerea *Statul, familia, morala. Politica pronatalistă a regimului Ceaușescu*. „La mijlocul anilor 1960, statul comunist român a pornit un demers de creștere a natalității printr-o legislație restrictivă care limita dreptul femeilor la avort. Potrivit evaluărilor oficiale, rata scăzută a natalității, incidența ridicată a avorturilor, numărul mare de divorțuri, abandonul familial și celibatul amenințau fundamentele morale ale societății comuniste. Eu analizez strategiile publice inițiate de regimul Ceaușescu în favoarea maternității și a nașterii unui

număr cât mai mare de copii. Drept urmare, „egoismul tinereții” trebuia să fie subordonat datoriei civice de a da naștere unor noi generații care urmau să construiască socialismul”.





Dr. Luciana JINGA, cercetător științific la IICCMER, a susținut prelegerea *Explozia cazurilor de SIDA pediatrică în România (1990–*

2000). „Obiectivul principal al lucrării mele, având ca suport o cercetare extinsă în arhive, presă și interviuri orale, este de a analiza relația simbiotică dintre ONG-urile umanitare occidentale și presa internațională. Într-o primă etapă, voi discuta activitatea la firul ierbii a organizațiilor umanitare și acțiunile acestora în sprijinul copiilor cu SIDA din România. Un al doilea obiectiv este de a analiza reacția presei internaționale, narațiunea pe care aceasta a construit-o și, nu în ultimul rând, care dintre elementele acestei narațiuni s-au dovedit corecte în timp”.



Dr. Florin S. SOARE, cercetător științific IICCMER, a susținut o prelegere despre *Investigarea abuzurilor împotriva minorilor instituționalizați în timpul regimului comunist din România.*



Prof.univ. dr. Sorin BOCANCEA, de la Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din

Iași, a susținut prelegerea *Nostalgia după comunism. Ignoranță, revoltă, „sindrom Stockholm” sau propagandă?*, în care a arătat că „această nostalgie este activă în coagularea maselor de susținători ai mișcărilor populiste de astăzi, ceea ce a dus la obținerea a 32% din locurile din Parlamentul României. Aceste rezultate au fost analizate din perspective diferite pentru a identifica posibilele cauze ale fenomenului. Unii sociologi consideră că polarizarea socială este cauza; psihologii identifică o manifestare specifică vârstei

(mulți dintre cei nostalgici se află la senectute); unii politologi consideră că o anumită formă de propagandă a generat acest sentiment; se poate recunoaște o manifestare a „sindromului

Stockholm”, în care victima încheie un pact cu călăul; fenomenul este considerat, de asemenea, a fi cauzat de lipsa de cunoaștere a ceea ce a însemnat regimul comunist.”

Dezbateră Elitele politice la rotativa istoriei. Alegerile din 2024



Pe 28 martie 2025, la Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași s-a organizat dezbateră cu tema *Elitele politice la rotativa istoriei. Alegerile din 2024*, prilejuită de lansarea numărului 47 al revistei *Polis*, ce abordează aceeași temă.

Organizatorii și-au propus să analizeze rolul elitelor politice în definirea parcursului României, de la tranziția post-decembristă până în prezent, să ofere perspective asupra dinamicii politice actuale și viitoare și să realizeze o analiză a alegerilor

organizate în luna noiembrie a anului 2024. La eveniment au participat autori ai articolelor din cel mai recent număr al revistei, politologi, sociologi, reprezentanți ai partidelor politice și studenți.



În deschiderea dezbaterii Profesorul Anton CARPINSCHI a catalogat acest număr al revistei *Polis* drept unul „greu”: „*Polis*-ul nu se dezmințe, iar acest număr cuprinde nume importante ale politologiei românești din București, Cluj, Timișoara. Acest joc al elitelor politice la roata istoriei și aventura alegerilor din România, din anul 2024, îmi declanșează un val de întrebări care mai de care mai deconcertante: cum germinează sămânța naționalismului demagogico-populist sub straturile adânci ale ignoranței, indolenței și corupției unei clase politice năvălită în rele și a unei populații slab educate? De ce trebuia să apară un personaj precum Călin Georgescu în țara unei revoluții anticomuniste avortate? De ce mulți dintre noi suntem atât de lipsiți de încredere în noi și între noi? De ce a prins atât de bine

mitul mioritic al fatalismului pe plaiurile Carpato-Danubiano-Pontice? Cum poate contracara coaliția democrațiilor europene valurile provocărilor și amenințărilor dictaturilor și autoritarismelor venite din direcții opuse?”



În intervenția sa, Profesorul Gabriel MURSA a răspuns, la fel ca-n articolul semnat în revistă, la întrebarea „ce înseamnă să fii naționalist-suveranist astăzi?” „Am pornit de la teza că această gândire naționalistă a existat în România și a influențat viața politică și socială. Elitele politice ale României sunt cele pe care le vedem și trebuie să fim realiști și să ne raportăm la ceea ce poate să ofere România la acest moment din punctul de vedere al elitelor politice. Ceea ce astăzi numim „suveranism” este o etichetă politică nouă pentru o mișcare destul de veche, care a existat inclusiv în perioada comunismului. De aceea, multe dintre ideile acestei mișcări

intitulată „suveranistă” erau practicate și în regimul comunist”.



Sociologul Costel Marian DALBAN a avut o intervenție pe tema dinamicii formării politice și a omului politic. „Indiferent dacă vorbim despre o filosofie politică sau despre zona de economie politică, un geografism politic, indiferent de determinării pe care i le arondăm politicului, eu mă întorc la omul politic. Când vrei să studiezi despre această fenomenologie a politicului, trebuie să studiezi individul. Asta am și făcut de ceva vreme, dar mai concret, printr-o analiză pe care o realizez în teza de doctorat despre cum ajungi om politic în România. Aceasta a fost și întrebarea la care încerc să răspund, constatând că trăiesc o tantalizare,

adică într-o situație în care îmi dau seama că niciodată nu voi ajunge la cunoașterea totală a unui fapt social”.



Statisticianul Vicențiu Robert GABOR a prezentat tematica dezbaterei dintr-o perspectivă a geografiei electorale în înțelegerea fenomenelor politice. „În general, geografia electorală este un domeniu interdisciplinar care încearcă să facă o conexiune între rezultatele votului și spațiu. De-a lungul timpului, s-au observat o serie de tipologii. În mediul urban electoratul este mai liberal, comparativ cu cel rural care are tendința de a fi mai conservator. În urma alegerilor din noiembrie 2024, erau o serie de idei conform cărora tinerii nu prea participă la procesul electoral. Dar trebuie să înțelegem și ce se află în spatele acestor date. Dacă ne uităm la piramida

vârstelor pentru țara noastră, observăm că populația cu vârsta cuprinsă între 30 și 40 de ani este cea mai numeroasă”.



Evenimentul a fost moderat de Ciprian IFTIMOAEI care a și coordonat numărul 47 al Revistei

Polis. „În urmă cu 30 de ani, numărul patru al Revistei *Polis*, din 1995, era dedicat elitelor politice, cu un

editorial semnat de sociologul Călin Anastasiu, care vorbea despre revenirea acestui concept în actualitate. Și în acel număr au semnat articole sociologi, politologi, istorici. Iată că, la trei decenii distanță, am reunit o serie studii și articole pe această temă, în conexiune cu alegerile din 2024. De ce? Pentru că într-o democrație elitele sunt produsul acestor alegeri”.



La eveniment a fost prezent și Sorin BOCANCEA, directorul Revistei de Științe Politice POLIS care l-a felicitat pe Ciprian Ifțimoaei pentru coordonarea primului număr din postura de membru al colectivului de redacție.

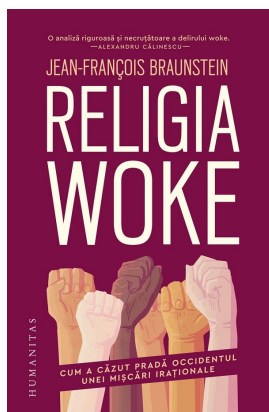
De asemenea, au fost prezente la eveniment și Rectorul Teodora-Liliana PRELIPCEAN, Prorectorul Georgeta CONDUR (membre ale redacției) și Lavinia PRUTEANU, Președinte al Senatului universitar.



Secțiune realizată de
Sorin BOCANCEA, Andrei CUCU și Lavinia PRUTEANU

RECENZII

Woke, anti-woke



Religia woke. Cum a căzut pradă Occidentul unei mișcări iraționale, Jean-François Braunstein, traducere de Emanuela Jalbă-Șoimaru, Editura Humanitas, București, 2024, 224 p.

Cartea filosofului francez Jean-François Braunstein, apărută în urmă cu doi ani în Franța și tradusă recent în limba română, este o critică radicală a mișcării woke și a ideilor susținute de stânga culturală occidentală în ultimii 50 de ani. Deși cartea a fost tradusă relativ repede după apariție, contextul apariției variantei originale este totuși radical diferit față de cel al traducerii românești. În 2020 Uniunea Europeană asuma la nivel

oficial că egalitatea minorităților sexuale devine un obiectiv strategic al său, iar SUA, prin intermediul administrației Biden, se erija în protector al drepturilor comunității LGBTQ la nivel internațional, ca o componentă importantă a strategiei de politică externă. Azi, după preluarea mandatului prezidențial de către Donald Trump, politica internă și externă a SUA s-a reorientat cu 180 de grade. În prima zi de mandat, președintele SUA a semnat un ordin executiv prin care decreta că în SUA nu mai există decât două genuri: masculin și feminin. Chiar dacă întorsătura politică e evidentă și denunțarea în contextul actual a „dictaturii” woke pe care o face autorul francez nu mai are aceeași relevanță ca în urmă cu doi ani, totuși tematica abordată este în continuare relevantă în cultura occidentală. De aceea cred că subiectul merită toată atenția.

Teza lui Braunstein este una radicală, cel puțin surprinzătoare în primă instanță: woke nu este nu doar o mișcare pentru susținerea drepturilor politice și sociale ale diferitelor minorități, ci este pur și simplu o religie. Este noua religie a elitelor, americane în special, care au exportat-o și pe

continentul european. Miza evidentă a lui Braunstein este de a lega mișcarea woke de spiritul protestantismului american, și de a-i „disculpa” pe intelectualii francezi de a fi stimulat și hrănit acest curent de gândire. „E destul de dificil să reconciliem wokismul cu French Theory” (p. 19), afirmă explicit autorul. Termenul însuși, care a devenit popular în cadrul mișcării Black Lives Matter (de la îndemnul *stay woke* – rămâi treaz), trimite la trezirile spirituale din tradiția protestantă (*awakenings*), din secolele al XVIII-lea și al XIX-lea. Revendicarea filiației protestante a acestor mișcări nu este nouă, ea a mai fost susținută și de istoricul american Joseph Bottum, în cartea intitulată *An anxious Age. The Post-Protestant ethic and spirit of America*. Teza lui Braunstein este că acest spirit a cucerit cultura occidentală datorită dimensiunii sale iraționale, absurdul fiind văzut ca semnul unui adevăr mai profund. Autorul face paralela cu expansiunea creștinismului în primele secole după apariția sa și cu atracția exercitată de religia creștină datorită misterului său de nepătruns pe cale rațională, sintetizat în formula lui Tertulian „*credibile est, quia absurdum est*”. Misteriosul are putere de atracție. În mod similar „religia woke” ar poseda niște „taine”, respectiv adevăruri imposibil de pătruns în mod rațional. Teoria genului este „adevăratul mister, în sens spiritual, al acestei noi religii” (p. 23). „Misterul” constă în faptul că teoria genului neglijează natura biologică a corpului, singurul adevăr

fiind dat de conștiință. Din acest motiv autorul îi aseamănă pe adepții woke cu marcioniții și sectele gnostice din primele secole creștine, care neglijau dimensiunea materială a existenței și contestau întruparea concretă a lui Hristos. Dacă acesta ar fi nucleul central al doctrinei, există, tot la fel ca în gnosticism, o clasă a „aleșilor”, activiștii woke, care provin în general din clasele sociale înstărite, cu studii la cele mai bune universități, și care cred cu adevărat în misiunea lor. Există ritualuri de absolvire – îngenuncherea pe stadioane sau spălarea picioarelor activiștilor de culoare – și păcate (privilegiul rasei albe), care însă nu trebuie iertate, ci înfierate. Religia woke nu are o eschatologie, căci nu are o perspectivă asupra viitorului, viziunea lor asupra naturii umane fiind una pesimistă, fără speranță în viitor. Cam acestea ar fi, pe scurt, aspectele acestei „religii” schițate de Braunstein. Voi reveni ulterior asupra subiectului.

Gândirea woke este prezentată în trei aspecte importante ale sale: teoria genului, teoria critică a rasei și epistemologiile punctului de vedere. După cum am spus, teoria genului este considerată nucleul central al gândirii woke, „dogma” acestei religii. Motivul este dat de faptul că vine într-o flagrantă contradicție cu datele obiective ale realității: existența biologică a celor două sexe. Conform teoriei genului, nu contează sexul cu care te-ai născut (deși cazurile de hermafrodiți la naștere sunt de 1 la 100 000), ci contează ceea ce simți din punct de vedere al orientării se-

xuale, sau sexul pe care dorești să ți-l alegi pe parcursul vieții tale. Schimbarea sexului este văzută ca un punct suprem al eliberării personale (eliberarea de condiționarea biologică), fiind consonantă și cu mitul american al omului realizat prin propriile forțe (*self-made man*). În acest caz vorbim chiar de o realizare demiurgică a propriei ființe. De aceea, persoanele transsexuale sunt văzute ca o împlinire supremă a idealului iluminist al emancipării, iar din punct de vedere religios, schimbarea sexului este precum o a doua naștere, similară nașterii spirituale în urma botezului. Această perspectivă de raportare la realitatea corporală are efecte și asupra limbajului, în sensul în care limbajul nu mai este o simplă reflectare a realității, ci își propune să construiască realitatea. De aici și impunerea pe cale oficială a unor sintagme șablon: „sexul atribuit la naștere” în loc de „sexul noului-născut”, „persoane însărcinate” în loc de „femei însărcinate”, „lapte parental” în loc de „lapte matern” etc. În aceeași categorie intră și decizia ca fiecare persoană să poată fi apelată în funcție de pronumele pe care și-l alege în mod voluntar: *he*, *she*, sau *they*.

În același timp, efectele se resimt și asupra sistemului de justiție, prin obligativitatea de a atribui unor persoane în acte identitatea pe care și-o doresc. Statul român a pierdut deja la CEDO pentru că nu a permis unor solicitanți modificarea actelor de identitate, înainte de efectuarea operației de schimbare de sex. Aici sunt cel puțin două aspecte de discutat. În

primul rând, modificarea actelor de identitate poate fi obținută pe baza unor certificate medicale care atestă identitatea psihologică, tratamente hormonale urmate, intervenții chirurgicale sau, în unele țări, sterilizarea. Este așadar o situație în care știința medicală intervine pentru a modifica datele naturale. Apoi, există recomandări din partea ONU în sensul recunoașterii identității de gen pe baza principiului autodeterminării, fără a mai solicita certificate medicale sau psihologice. Aspectul problematic care intervine aici e dat de faptul că normele juridice, care trebuie să fie universal valabile, ajung să depindă de percepțiile subiective ale unor persoane. Putem să ne punem din această perspectivă întrebarea, care mai poate fi rostul rațiunii juridice dacă ajungem să extindem acest model al unor decizii ale instanțelor care se bazează pe percepția subiectivă a unor persoane față de propria lor realitate?

Al doilea aspect abordat în carte se referă la teoria critică a rasei. Teoria critică a rasei propune înțelegerea relațiilor sociale pornind de la rasă. Aceste idei au fost vehiculate mai întâi în Facultățile de Drept din SUA, pentru a fi extinse ulterior la întreg sistemul de învățământ, iar apoi în companiile americane. Aici trebuie făcută în primul rând distincția între rasism și rasialism. Dacă rasismul are în vedere discriminarea la care albi supuneau persoanele de culoare, rasialismul caută să țină cont de realitățile rasiale pentru a înțelege relațiile sociale. Dacă adepții primei gene-

rații de militanți antirasisti erau neutrii cu privire la rasă (*color blindness*), cea de-a doua generație consideră că rasa nu poate fi ignorată. Ei denunță „privilegiul rasei albe”, socotit un păcat prin naștere, și consideră că cei care au suferit anterior trebuie să aibă acum parte de anumite avantaje. De aceea Braunstein afirmă că rasialismul celei de-a doua generații de militanți este o formă de „rasism inversat” (p. 132), iar acordarea de avantaje persoanelor care au suferit anterior de pe urma rasismului e o nouă formă de discriminare. Este adevărat că aici există o dispută în cadrul societății americane, între cei care consideră că nu trebuie ținut cont de culoarea pielii în politicile antidiscriminatorii, și cei care consideră, dimpotrivă, că aceste măsuri nu pot fi echitabile, dacă se ignoră culoarea pielii. Putem spune că avem de-a face, într-un anumit sens, cu o formă a relației dialectice stăpân – sclav, într-o țară în care până la mijlocul anilor ‘60 ai secolului trecut rasismul exista, nu doar în mentalitatea socială, ci era legalizat și la nivel oficial. Putem vorbi în acest sens o „revanșă a sclavilor”, cu observația că dominația și formele de discriminare pozitivă pe care le solicită actualmente militanții woke sunt totuși incomparabile cu discriminările și umilințele la care au fost supuși sute de ani înaintașii lor.

Epistemologiile punctului de vedere sunt cel de-al treilea aspect abordat în carte. Ele se referă la tendința contemporană tot mai puternică de a pune sub semnul întrebării obi-

ectivitatea științifică și ierarhia cunoașterii, în sensul în care există forme de cunoaștere care sunt mai relevante din punct de vedere epistemologic decât altele. Autorul compară această situație cu perioada stalinistă, când în Uniunea Sovietică, un biolog pe nume Trofim Lîsenko desființa genetica pe motiv că ar fi o „știință burgheză”. De altfel, autorul consideră că, nu în mod întâmplător, oameni de știință care provin din fostele țări comuniste sunt printre cei mai vehemenți în a contesta noile realități academice americane: matematicianul de origine română Sergiu Kleinerman, chimista Anna Krylov sau farmacologul Michael Vanyukov, ambii din fosta Uniune Sovietică, sunt câteva exemple. S. Kleinerman face și paralele între ideologia comunistă și ideologia woke. Dacă în comunism dictatura ideologică era una dură, noua „dictatură” este blândă, cei care se opun nefiind sancționați cu închisoarea, ci prin demascare, oprobriu public, inducerea sentimentului de vinovăție și, în general, prin izolare socială. Apoi, dacă comuniștii erau favorabili cunoașterii științifice, erau materialişti și considerau că realitatea obiectivă există, în noile epistemologii tocmai realitatea obiectivă este pusă de cele mai multe ori sub semnul întrebării. Pe cale de consecință, și posibilitatea unei cunoașteri științifice „obiective”. Știința este de asemenea denunțată pentru că a fost implicată în sclavie, colonizare, și pentru că a susținut practici rasiste sau eugeniste. Braunstein afirmă că astfel de epistemologii nu își au ori-

ginea în Foucault, ci mai degrabă la autori precum Thomas Kuhn, David Bloor și școala de sociologia științei de la Edinburg sau Bruno Latour. Consecințele lor asupra universității sunt nefaste, deoarece, în măsura în care rolul universității este tocmai acela de a produce cunoaștere științifică, un astfel de discurs erodează însuși temeiul cunoașterii științifice și, deci, autoritatea universității.

Cam acestea ar fi foarte pe scurt aspectele importante ale cărții. Chiar dacă autorul ne prezintă poate unele aspecte în mod simplist sau exemplele alese sunt mai excentrice, totuși impresia generală este a unei diferențe destul de mari între mediul cultural și instituțional din Occident, față de cel autohton. Există și la noi anumite norme oficiale și programe finanțate din fonduri europene, care privesc probleme ale minorităților sau chestiuni legate de incluziune, dar cred că acestea nu au un impact semnificativ la scară macro, atunci când nu sunt făcute doar pentru a fi „bifate”. Din acest punct de vedere mentalul nostru colectiv este unul profund conservator, iar „pericolul” woke pândește mai degrabă doar la nivelul unor grupuri infime de intelectuali.

În continuare voi reveni asupra aspectului de „religie” al gândirii woke, pe care îl susține autorul. Dimensiunea „doctrinară” schițată mai sus, și celelalte aspecte de tip religios, cred că sunt insuficiente pentru a vorbi despre o religie în adevăratul sens al cuvântului. Desigur, unele analogii se pot face cu existența unei

religii (crența oamenilor în dreptatea cauzei lor, dorința de ispășire etc.), dar cu toate acestea cred că putem vorbi despre o „religie” cel mult în mod metaforic. Este adevărat că există un etos protestant, care a fost preluat de activiștii woke, dar totuși o bună parte din instrumentele intelectuale au venit de la intelectualii francezi (Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard etc). Braunstein contestă această filiație, și notează diferențe semnificative între intelectualii francezi și militanții woke: primii sunt teoreticieni puri, nu militanți pentru diverse cauze politice sau sociale. Din acest punct de vedere, modelul intelectualului public activist a fost mai degrabă epuizat în Franța după Sartre. Apoi, unii autori consideră că mișcarea woke este o formă de „postmodernism aplicat” (p. 20), în timp ce Lyotard ar considera absurdă o astfel de sintagmă, din moment ce postmodernismul semnifică sfârșitul marilor narațiuni, fapt ce implică suspendarea acțiunii politice. În același sens, autorii francezi sunt critici constanți ai noțiunii de identitate (a subiectului, a omului), în timp ce activismul pentru drepturile minorităților se bazează pe tocmai pe o politică a identității și pe o formă de subiectivism. Din aceste motive Braunstein consideră că mișcările woke sunt din multe puncte de vedere opuse lui *French Theory*, și că între ele nu poate fi susținută o filiație legitimă.

Desigur, trebuie să notăm că această diferență, pe alocuri chiar opoziție, între postmodernismul teoretic inspirat de autorii francezi și

postmodernismul aplicat, există într-adevăr, numai că Braunstein ignoră felul în care s-a făcut trecerea de la teorie la practică. Acest lucru este demonstrat, spre exemplu, de Helen Pluckrose și James Lindsay, într-o lucrare pe aceeași temă, carte pe care deși Braunstein o citează, pare totuși să-i ignore demonstrația. Apoi, cu siguranță aceste curente de gândire sunt mai vechi decât postmodernismul, feminismul având rădăcini în secolul al XVIII-lea, iar începutul mișcărilor pentru abolirea sclaviei în SUA situându-se în secolul al XVII-lea. Cu toate acestea, nu se poate ignora că studiile umaniste și literare din SUA, din a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea, ajunseseră într-un relativ impas, nemișcând să trezească interesul, până în momentul în care au fost galvanizate de ideile autorilor francezi, care au reușit să le pună într-o nouă lumină și să le ofere o nouă miză. Așa se va naște acest imens șantier intelectual care va duce la apariția tuturor temelor ce stârnesc azi dispute în cadrul studiilor umaniste.

Braunstein afirmă explicit că religia woke este „prima religie care a luat naștere în mediul universitar” (p. 29). Din acest punct de vedere mi se pare relevant faptul că printre problemele cele mai semnificative ridicate de gândirea woke sunt totuși cele de natură conceptuală. Căci, în teoria genului, întemeiată după cum ne spune Braunstein de psihologul behaviourist John Money, disputa „natură” versus „cultură” este esențială, în sensul în care Money credea

că aspectul cultural este cel care primează asupra celui natural – de unde și tentativa sa de a transforma un băiat, al cărui organ sexual fusese secționat din greșeală, în fetiță. Dezbateră este legată deci de natura realității ultime, care este „dată”, adică „naturală” sau, dimpotrivă, „construită”, adică este produsul mediului cultural. Desigur, aceste distincții ne pot duce mai departe cu gândul la disputele sofistilor cu privire la *physis* (natură) și *nomos* (normă, convenție), spre exemplu dacă zeii există în realitate sau sunt o invenție umană, sau dacă normele sociale sunt date de la natură sau au fost construite de oameni. Din acest punct de vedere observăm că problematica este mai degrabă una filosofică, și ea nu este deloc nouă, ci are mai bine de 2500 de ani vechime, când teme similare erau dezbătute de sofști în Grecia Antică. Astfel de debateri au avut loc și în epoca contemporană, vezi spre exemplu Foucault versus Chomsky despre natura umană sau Vattimo versus Girard despre relativism în antropologie. De aceea am putea spune că trăim într-o epocă similară celei a sofștilor, în sensul în care nu există posibilitatea de a stabili un consens cu privire la realitățile ultime. De aici și împărțirea în tabere, care sunt mai degrabă în dispută și destul de departe de un consens. Dar, repet, această chestiune mi se pare mai degrabă una filosofică, și nu religioasă, deoarece în general religia presupune revelația *unui* Adevăr ultim, recunoscut în unanimitate de comunitatea credincioșilor. Apoi, mai există și

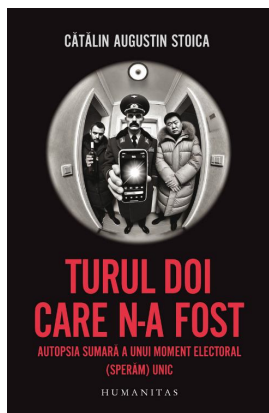
aspectul valoric legat de militantismul woke. Acesta are legătură și cu valorile promovate în educație (dreptul la educație, egalitatea de șanse, echitate etc.) și de aceea este normal ca aceste discuții să influențeze universitatea. Militanții sunt direct implicați din acest punct de vedere, unii susținând chiar că educația trebuie să servească unui astfel de activism. Așadar, conceptele acestor dezbateri sunt elaborate în universități, militanții activează în cadrul universităților, dar de aici până la a susține că ar fi vorba despre o „religie care a luat naștere în universitate” mi se pare totuși o cale destul de lungă.

Aș încheia această discuție despre mișcările woke cu o ultimă remarcă: în cartea lui Braunstein și, în general, în cadrul acestor curente nu se remarcă critici semnificative ale modelului economic capitalist. Acest fapt este cu atât mai surprinzător, cu cât societatea de azi este influențată

în mod decisiv de acest tip de economie. Multe aspecte ale vieții instituționale sau culturale, dacă nu se reduc la realitatea schimburilor de mărfuri, sunt totuși influențate de acestea. Dacă criticăm diversele forme de dominație (dominația masculină, dominația rasistă, dominația științelor obiective etc.), totuși modelul suprem al dominației de azi este cel capitalist, iar acest fapt este valabil la nivel global. De aceea, este cu atât mai surprinzător să nu putem nota, mai ales din partea unor mișcări care se autoproclamă de stânga, poziții critice semnificative la adresa modelului capitalist actual. În acest context ne întrebăm dacă nu cumva sintagma de „capitalism woke”, semnalată și de Braunstein în cartea sa (p. 13), nu este în substanța sa un simplu oximoron, la fel cum ar fi realitatea unui cerc pătrat?

Gelu SABĂU

O analiză sociologică a alegerilor prezidențiale din 2024



Cătălin Augustin Stoica, *Turul doi care n-a fost. Autopsia sumară a unui moment electoral (sperăm unic)*, Editura Humanitas, 2025, 245 p.

Cătălin Augustin Stoica este profesor universitar doctor la Școala Națională de Științe Politice și Administrative (SNSPA) din București, unde susține cursuri de „Metode și tehnici de cercetare în sociologie și psihologie”, „Metodologia anchetei sociologice”, „Stratificare și inegalități sociale”, „Antropologie economică”, „Teorie socială”. Este doctor în Sociologie al Universității Stanford din SUA, unde a și predat, în calitate de doctorand, cursuri de „Introducere în sociologie”, „Sociologia societăților socialiste și post-socialiste”. În perioada 2007-2015 a fost Director

General al Centrului de Sociologie Urbană și Regională (CURS). Printre studiile publicate se numără: *Suspicious Minds in Times of Crisis: Determinants of Romanians' Beliefs in Covid-19 Conspiracy Theories* (co-autor Radu Umbreș, 2020), *Our Martyrs of 1989 Did Not Die for This!': Political Capitalism in Post-Communist Romania* (2012), *Old Habits Die Hard? An Exploratory Analysis of Communist-era Social Ties in Post-Communist Romania* (2012), „Fațetele multiple ale nemulțumirii populare: o schiță sociologică a protestelor din Piața Universității din ianuarie 2012” (2012), *Once Upon a Time There Was a Big Party: The Social Origins of the Romanian Communist Party* (2005, 2006), *From Good Communists to Even Better Capitalists? Entrepreneurial Pathways in Post-Socialist Romania* (2004). Este autorul volumelor „România continuă: Schimbare și adaptare în comunism și postcomunism” (Humanitas, 2018) și „Introducere în studiul stratificării și mobilității sociale: teorii, măsuri și modele de analiză” (Tritonic, 2022). Alături de Vintilă Mihăilescu a coordonat volumul „Iarna vrajbei noastre: Protestele din Romania, ianuarie-februarie 2012” (Paideia 2012). A tradus în limba română, îngrijit și prefăcut volumul „Societate și

economie: cadru și principii teoretice” de Mark Granovetter (Editura Art, 2022).

Cu profesorul Cătălin Augustin Stoica am avut plăcerea să exersez tehnicile de comunicare la o Școală de comunicare organizată de Fundația Hans Seidel – filiala din România, în 2014, pentru comunicatorii politici/ purtătorii de cuvânt. Am apreciat în mod deosebit stilul său direct, aplicat, sugestiv în a preda noțiuni de știința comunicării publice, la care pare că toată lumea se pricepe, dar când vine vorba despre o situație reală/ concretă/ oficială de comunicare, lucrurile nu mai par așa simple. Chiar dacă aveam exercițiul comunicatorului public încă din perioada în care am exercitat funcția de prefect al județului Vaslui (2007-2009), am învățat o mulțime de trucuri care m-au ajutat în șlefuirea competențelor deja dobândite. La această școală am învățat să citesc de pe teleprompter, controlându-mi minica, gestică, tonul. Ulterior, am urmărit postările lui Cătălin A. Stoica (mini-analizele sociologice) de pe rețeaua Facebook, formulate la obiect, concise, cu date din cercetările cantitative, în special din sondaje de opinie la care are acces.

Alături de Bogdan Voicu (Institutul de Cercetare a Calității Vieții), Mircea Comșa și Norbert Petrovici (Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca), Claudiu Tufiş și Marian-Gabriel Hâncean (Universitatea București), Cătălin Augustin Stoica (SNSPA) formează, probabil, cea mai prestigioasă „echipă” de sociologi cantitativiști din România de

astăzi, care merge pe urmele unor sociologi prestigioși ca regretatul Traian Rotariu (Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca), Septimiu Chelcea și Dumitru Sandu (Universitatea București), Adrian Netedu (Universitatea „Al. I. Cuza” din Iași). În mod evident, aserțiunea anterioară este subiectivă, „echipa” poate fi completată și de alte nume de sociologi cu competențe avansate în culegerea, procesarea, analiza și diseminarea datelor din cercetările sociale. Nominalizarea mea are în vedere articolele și studiile publicate, cursurile predate, dar și prestațiile de la conferințele științifice la care am participat de-a lungul anilor în care am încercat să învăț și eu „meseria de sociolog” din prelegerile celor mai avansați/ înaintați decât mine în acest șantier științific.

La o simplă căutare a autorului Cătălin Augustin Stoica pe platforma Google Scholar, vom constata că numele său însumează 1047 de referințe bibliografice, un h-index de 14 și i10-index de 17. Evaluarea sa cantitativă trebuie neapărat completată de o evaluare calitativă a articolelor și cărților publicate. Titlurile lucrărilor sale sunt formulate *catchy*, stârnesc interesul consumatorului de lumi/ clarificări/ explicații asupra fenomenelor sociale, politice, culturale, economice, curiozitatea cititorilor. Are un condei fluent și prietenos cu cititorul, uneori ai senzația că te afli în fața textului unui povestitor, explică fenomene și procese complicate pe înțelesul tuturor. În lucrările sale se vede stilul american de re-

dactare cu care Cătălin Augustin Stoica a luat contact în perioada studiilor sale masterale și doctorale de la Central European University și Stanford University. Aici e vorba despre o combinație de rigoare științifică și o bună marketizare a textului sociologic. Cu siguranță, cărțile sale au succes la public, altfel n-ar fi publicat de Editura Humanitas. Anterior articolului de față, am recenzat și cartea sa „Introducere în studiul stratificării și mobilității sociale: teorii, măsuri și modele de analiză”, apărută la Editura Tritonic, București, 2022, care este un veritabil curs de stratificare și mobilitate socială, printre puținele contribuții românești la această temă de cercetare¹. Această lucrare este ceva mai tehnică, abundă în considerații teoretice și metodologice, e scrisă mai degrabă pentru specialiști, studenți și cercetători interesați de modul în care operează inegalitatea în societățile din toate timpurile, de ierarhiile sociale și mobilitatea în interiorul acestora.

Pe 24 noiembrie 2024, la ora 21:00, am început activitatea în cadrul Stației tehnice a Direcției Județene de Statistică Iași – structură teritorială a Institutului Național de Statistică, pentru procesarea rezultatelor înscrise pe procesele verbale ale primului tur al alegerilor prezidențiale. Pe la ora 11:00, au început să sosească președinții secțiilor de votare din comunele limitrofe municipiului Iași, care finalizaseră procesul de numărare a voturilor și consemnarea rezultatelor în procesele verbale (2 exemplare), inclusiv procesul ver-

bal-date completat în format electronic pe tabletele furnizate de Serviciul de Telecomunicații Speciale (STS). Subsemnatul a făcut parte din echipa de „verificatori” – statisticienii care verifică datele înscrise pe cele două procese verbale (exemplarele originale) –, dacă există eventuale neconcordanțe între cele două exemplare ale proceselor verbale originale și procesul verbal-date (*listing-ul*) generat de Sistemul informatic de centralizare a proceselor-verbale (SICPV). Aici, important este ca toate „cheile legale de control sau de validare” să fie respectate astfel încât să nu fie erori și/sau atenționări.

Pe măsură ce verificam corectitudinea întocmirii proceselor verbale de consemnare a rezultatelor din primul tur de scrutin al alegerilor prezidențiale, nedumerirea mea creștea: candidatul Călin Georgescu avea cel mai mare număr de voturi inclusiv în secțiile de votare din comunele conduse de primari PNL sau PSD cu cel puțin două mandate la activ. Din când în când, mai întrebam președinții secțiilor de votare „cine este Călin Georgescu”, iar ei îmi răspundeau aproape invariabil: „nu știm cine este acest personaj, dar așa a ieșit la numărătoare”. Atunci mi-am dat seama că suntem martorii unui fenomen unic în analele proceselor electorale din România postcomunistă. Și mi s-a făcut teamă. Știam cine este Călin Georgescu, orientarea sa politică și interesele pe care le reprezintă în România, că zburase sub radarele sondajelor electorale și că luase altitudine în ultimele săptămâni de cam-

panie, fiind propulsat în topul preferințelor electoratului mai ales de platforma socială TikTok. Și, totuși, părea neverosimil ceea ce se întâmpla sub ochii noștri, era ca-n poveștile cu Făt Frumos, care creștea într-o săptămână cât alții în zeci de ani. Cineva, cumva, cândva îi dăduse candidatului Călin Georgescu să mănânce jar, precum calului lui Făt Frumos din poveste.

Ce a urmat știm cu toții. Printr-o decizie a Curții Constituționale a României (CCR) s-a dispus renumărarea voturilor din turul I de scrutin pentru alegerile prezidențiale. Am participat și la această procedură de renumărare, într-o echipă mixtă, formată din reprezentanți ai Instituției Prefectului, Direcției Județene de Statistică și Autorității Electorale Permanente, supervizați de membrii Biroului Electoral Județean. N-au fost diferențe semnificative între rezultatele numărării voturilor din primul tur de scrutin și rezultatele renumărării voturilor din același tur. A fost o muncă contra-cronometru, ce a durat două zile și care s-a terminat chiar înainte de alegerile parlamentare. Pe data de 6 decembrie 2024, CCR a anulat întregul proces electoral pentru alegerea președintelui României pe motiv că „procesul electoral privind alegerea Președintelui României a fost viciat pe toată durata desfășurării lui și în toate etapele de multiple neregularități și încălcări ale legislației electorale care au distorsionat caracterul liber și corect al votului exprimat de cetățeni și egalitatea de șanse a competitorilor

electorali, au afectat caracterul transparent și echitabil al campaniei electorale și au nesocotit reglementările legale referitoare la finanțarea acesteia”. Societatea românească părea ajunsă la paroxism. Decizia CCR calma lucrurile pentru o perioadă. Era clar că ostilitățile dintre forțele proeuropene și forțele suveranismului naționalist se vor relua cu și o mai mare intensitate în primăvara anului 2025, când era programat întreg ciclul electoral pentru alegerea președintelui României.

Cartea „Turul doi care n-a fost” reprezintă o radiografie (sinteză) sociologică a alegerilor prezidențiale din noiembrie 2024, „...unul dintre cele mai stranii și imprevizibile momente electorale din istoria recentă a României”, după cum mărturisește profesorul Cătălin Augustin Stoica. Pe măsuri ce ne aprofundăm în paginile acestei cărți, aflăm explicații plauzibile despre cum Călin Georgescu, personajul care făcea *raiting* pe TikTok este votat de peste două milioane de români, fără ca aceștia să-l fi văzut în „format fizic” prin orașele și satele patriei sau în dezbateri publice cu alți contracandidați. Călin Georgescu era un produs al platformelor digitale/ rețelele de socializare. Acest candidat nu participase la întâlniri publice, dezbateri televizate cu alți candidați, nu acordase interviuri mass media. Practica o comunicare unidirecțională (candidat – electorat) cu un discurs eterogen în care erau amestecate de-a valma cunoștințe de dezvoltare durabilă, elemente pseudoștiințifice, ideologie *New Age*, orto-

doxism, putinism și euroasianism, suveranism și antiglobalism, alimentație naturistă, medicină tradițională. Călin Georgescu servea un borș electoral cu de toate pentru toți.

În paginile cărții aflăm direct de la un profesionist al sondajelor de opinie (Cătălin A. Stoica a fost directorul general al CURS în perioada 2007-2015) despre tehnologia estimărilor sociologice de tip exit poll, limitele sondajelor de opinie în evaluarea intențiilor de vot pentru diferite tipuri de alegeri, rolul conspirațiilor politice în campaniile electorale, utilizarea TikTok-ului și a celorlalte platforme de socializare, controversa implicării serviciilor secrete în politica autohtonă. Paginile în care îi portretizează pe protagoniștii primului turul de scrutin al alegerilor prezidențiale din noiembrie 2024 sunt absolut savuroase:

- „Călin Georgescu și-a jucat cu aplomb rolul de vizionar apocaliptic, un amestec de Casandra modernă și profet de suburbie, predicând sfârșitul unui sistem corupt, fără a lăsa să se întrevadă începutul a ceva, fluturând himere de legionarism, fundamentalism religios și geopolitică de mahala” (p. 7);
- „Marcel Ciolacu, cu aerul solemn al unui logofăt resemnat, aflat etern în expectativă, părea convins că destinul său era nu să câștige, ci să conserve mediocritatea ca virtute politică supremă” (p. 7);
- „La USR, Elena Lasconi, uimită și ea de performanța realizată (Noroc chior? Mă iubește

Dumnezeu? Poate n-am purtat crucea aia de gât de pomană?) și un pic paranoică vizavi de posibilele malversațiuni la care s-ar putea deda la numărarea voturilor reprezentanții din secții ai pesedepenele-aur-oameni hârșăiți în rele, desigur, și-a încheiat patetic discursul cu *nu mă lăsați singură!*” (pp. 15-16);

- „La sediul AUR, George Simion părea uimit și oarecum furios. Avea aerul perplex al unuia care a aflat că soției de care tocmai a divorțat (Călin Georgescu, fost membru AUR) îi merge nu bine, ci excepțional” (p. 16);
- Nicolae Ciucă (alintat Bunelu) „stârnea tot atât entuziasm, cât o programare la stomatolog” (p. 18).

Autorul admite că sondajele electorale l-au sub-estimat pe Călin Georgescu („candidatul aflat sub radar”), în timp ce candidații Marcel Ciolacu, George Simion, și Nicolae Ciucă au fost supra-estimați. Elena Lasconi a fost sub-estimată de sondajele celorlalți și supra-estimată de un sondaj efectuat de echipa sa. Potrivit sociologului Cătălin A. Stoica, în afară de posibilele erori de eșantionare, eșecul sondajelor preelectorale poate fi explicat de următoarele fenomene: (1) ratele diferite de participare la sondaj (ori ratele de răspuns) ale votanților unor candidați; (2) efectul de dezirabilitate socială; (3) manifestarea spiralei tăcerii. Marea problemă a estimărilor intențiilor de vot de la alegerile prezidențiale din 2024 a fost faptul că cetățenii/ respondenții au refuzat să parti-

cipe la cercetările sociologice de tipul sondajelor electorale. E un fenomen cu care sociologii se confruntă de ce vremea. Din experiența mea de la Direcția Județeană de Statistică Iași pot să confirm acest trend crescător al refuzului de a răspunde la anchetele statistice, mai ales din gospodării: ancheta calității vieții (ACAV), ancheta bugetelor de familie (ABF), ancheta forței de muncă în gospodării (AMIGO).

Profesorul Cătălin A. Stoica scrie despre impactul refuzului de a răspunde la chestionare (refuzul de colaborare) care induce așa-numita distorsiune cauzată de nonrăspunsuri (*non-response bias*). Cu alte cuvinte, sondajele preelectorale se confruntă cu problema sub-estimării sau supra-estimării intențiilor de vot pentru unii candidați din cauza refuzului de participare. O altă cauză a erorilor produse de sondajele electorale este efectul dezirabilității sociale (*social desirability effect*) care, în esență, înseamnă că respondenții furnizează răspunsuri la întrebările din chestionar anticipând oarecum ceea ce este acceptabil social. A treia cauză a erorilor din sondaje este efectul spiralei tăcerii (cf. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann) care se referă la situația în care oamenii cred că știu care este părerea majorității celorlalți și, constatând că sunt în dezacord cu aceasta, preferă să se autocenzureze. Sociologul mărturisește că s-a confruntat cu efectul spiralei tăcerii atunci când efectua sondaje preelectorale și exit-polluri în perioada în care era în vogă Dan Diaconescu cu al său Partid al

Poporului. Impactul celor trei efecte (surse de eroare pentru sondajele electorale) este analizat pe baza datelor furnizate de Centrul de Sociologie Urbană și Regională (CURS). Astfel de efecte au influențat și estimările privind intențiile de vot la alegerile prezidențiale din 2024 și au făcut posibil „miracolul electoral” Călin Georgescu.

Cartea lui Cătălin A. Stoica conține și un ghid practic de descifrare a teoriilor conspirației aplicate la fenomenele sociopolitice. Este vorba despre acele situații în care, pe fondul lipsei unor informații/ explicații veridice, complete, credibile, oamenii încep să creadă în tot felul de zvonuri, „știri improvizate”, *fake news*-uri, condimentate cu discurs instigator la ură, populism, și extremism de tot felul. „De obicei, teoriile conspirației invocă forțe obscure și malefice, mereu orientate împotriva poporului inocent, și – extrem de important – sunt complet imune la dovezi empirice, respingând cu o nonșalanță suverană orice explicație alternativă, oricât de rațională, științifică sau bine argumentată” (p. 47). Cei care cred în teoriile conspirației identifică drept responsabili pentru situația lor sau situația în care se află țara „sistemul”, forțele globale, serviciile secrete, masoneria, „complotul iudeo-masonic”, comunitatea LGBTQ, birocrăția de la Bruxelles, americanii care știu ei ceva despre forțele extraterestre dar nu vor să ne spună și nouă și tot așa mai departe. Cine sunt cei care cred în teoriile conspirației? Potrivit sociologului Cătălin A. Stoica, „cei care

sint că nu au niciun control asupra vieții lor sunt printre primii care adoptă viziuni conspiraționiste” (p. 48). La această categorie sociologică, mai adaugăm și pe cei cu educație precară, care nu au încredere în știință și/sau în instituțiile publice, care se informează doar de la anumite surse (canale mass media și social media), care sunt afectați de stările de incertitudine, crize de tot felul, suferă de anxietate, care pun ceea ce li se întâmplă exclusiv pe seama unor „forțe exterioare necunoscute”. Conspirațiile electorale ale anului 2024 indetificate de C.A. Stoica sunt următoarele:

- eșecul lui candidatul PSD Marcel Ciolacu se datorează sprijinirii lui candidatul AUR George Simion de către PSD, ignorând ascensiunea independentului Călin Georgescu;
- candidatul Călin Georgescu a făcut parte dintr-un plan de subminare a lui George Simion și sprijinire a candidatului PNL Nicolae Ciucă;
- Călin Georgescu este manevrat de o facțiune a serviciilor secrete din România care îmbrățișează convingeri suveranist-naționaliste;
- victoria înregistrată de Călin Georgescu în primul tur de scrutin al alegerilor prezidențiale din 24 noiembrie 2024 face parte dintr-un plan ascuns al partidelor politice de rotație a cadrelor;
- Călin Georgescu este produs exclusiv al unei operațiuni desfășurată de serviciile secrete ale Federației Ruse cu scopul subminării apartenenței României

la NATO și UE, respectiv de a plasa țara noastră într-o poziție de neutralitate între comunitatea statelor euro-atlantice și comunitatea statelor afiliate geopolitic la Federația Rusă (comunitatea statelor independente);

- ascensiunea și rezultatul neașteptat obținut de Georgescu în primul tur de scrutin nu este altceva decât un element din planul global al administrației SUA condusă de Donald Trump de a instaura lideri simpatizanți MAGA (*Make America Great Again*).

Capitolul dedicat „implicării” serviciilor secrete/ serviciilor de *intelligence* în alegerile prezidențiale din 2024 este citit cu un soi de suspans, asemenea unui roman de spionaj. Relația dintre politică și serviciile secrete este una extrem de complicată și controversată, mai ales când vine vorba despre România. Oricum, acest capitol este o continuare a celui dedicat teoriilor conspirației din politica românească. Profesorul Cătălin A. Stoica reține atenția cititorilor cu „problema pensionarilor din sistemul de apărare națională, ordine, securitate și justiție”. Această chestiune îmi aduce aminte de un eveniment la care am participat cu ceva ani în urmă, împreună cu prefectul județului Iași, organizat de Asociația cadrelor militare în rezervă și retragere din județul Iași. Cu acel prilej, am audiat o serie de intervenții ale unor generali și coloneli în rezervă, care au servit în sistemul de securitate și apărare națională, extrem de critice la adresa

NATO și UE, cu accente naționaliste, presărate cu elemente nostalgice față de perioada comunistă în care era ordine și disciplină, se respectau valorile naționale, nu ca acum.

Cătălin A. Stoica aduce în atenția noastră câteva episoade referitoare la „inacțiunea (care) poate fi pusă și pe seama incompetenței, alături de alți factori, precum conflictele interne” din serviciile secrete, implicarea în negocierile politice a unor șefi ai structurilor de informații, participarea acestora la evenimente sportive sau de divertisment (ex: plecarea șefului SIE Gabriel Vlase, între cele două tururi de scrutin, la Formula 1 de la Abu Dhabi) în timp ce țara ardea. În acest capitol este tratat și „sentimentul de dezamăgire la lectura rapoartelor desecretizate” – „un eșec sistemic și sistematic” al serviciilor de informații. Cât de mult și-a băgat coada Rusia în politica românească și în alegerile prezidențiale din 2024 va rămâne mult timp o problemă insuficient lămurită, care în mod evident va întreține o parte din teoriile conspirației despre care profesorul Stoica a discutat în capitolul anterior.

Pornind de la raportul Expert Forum (EFOR, 2024) care precizează că, la finalul anului electoral 2024, platforma TikTok avea 7,4 milioane de utilizatori în România – cel mai mare număr din țările UE –, Instagram deținea 7,8 milioane de conturi de utilizatori, iar Facebook contabiliza un număr de 12,2 milioane de utilizatori, Cătălin A. Stoica analizează impactul platformelor sociale asupra configurării intențiilor de

vot și, în final, a rezultatelor de la primul tur de scrutin al alegerilor prezidențiale din 2024. Din paginile acestui capitol, mai aflăm că EFOR a trebuit să apeleze la autoritatea de reglementare în comunicații din Slovenia pentru a obține date privind utilizatorii de platforme sociale, când acest lucru s-ar fi putut face și cu concursul ANCOM – autoritatea românească. Un detaliu-cheie despre campania dusă pe platforma TikTok este *hashtag*-ul #CalinGeorgescu care a înregistrat 120 milioane de vizualizări în intervalul septembrie-noiembrie 2024. Platformele companiei META (Facebook și Instagram) au fost exploatate la maximum în campania electorală prin intermediul rețelelor de pagini de promovare care acționau în mod coordonat, fiind asociate unui website de știri aparent independent politic. Cu siguranță această temă va fi „exploatăată” științific de sociologi, politologi, experți în comunicare digitală în articole, studii, cercetări doctorale și post-doctorale.

În cartea lui Cătălin A. Stoica am aflat și despre un episod din campania de promovare a lui Călin Georgescu în care a fost implicat canalul media „O Chilie Athonită”. Cred că merită aprofundată printr-o investigație sociologică implicarea unor monahi români din schiturile de la Muntele Athos, cum este Schitul Lacu, care a beneficiat de donațiile lui Gigi Becali. În mod analog, se poate aprofunda și implicarea BOR și a cultelor neoprotestante (penticostali, bapțiști și adventiști) în promo-

varea lui Călin Georgescu. E suficient să ne uităm peste rezultatele pe care acest candidat le-a obținut în anumite regiuni și localități în care sunt comunități neoprotestante omogene din punct de vedere religios pentru a avea îndivii serioase despre implicarea unor biserici în promovarea lui Georgescu.

Ultimele capitole ale cărții lui Cătălin Augustin Stoica analizează profilul sociodemografic, educațional, teritorial, politic al votanților de la alegerile pentru președinția României din noiembrie 2024. Sociologul formulează o serie de ipoteze de lucru cu privire la motivele care i-au determinat pe unii alegători să-l prefere pe candidatul Călin Georgescu. Analiza este contextualizată lunând în considerare factori de ordin social, economic și politic care au făcut ca mesajele lui Georgescu să sensibilizeze publicuri diferite. Votul pro-Georgescu configurează o serie de clivaje profunde care acționează în societatea românească. Profesorul Stoica apelează la date din cercetările sociologice pentru a demonstra că nu există o falie profundă între euroatlantici și suveraniști în România. Dimpotrivă, această falie este mai mult închipuită, populația țării noastre fiind în majoritatea sa proeuropeană și pro-NATO – fapt confirmat de rezultatele de la alegerile prezidențiale din mai 2025, câștigarea turului II de scrutin de către candidatul

independent Nicușor Dan, actualmente președintele României.

Închei această recenzie chiar cu întrebarea din finalul cărții lui Cătălin Augustin Stoica, pe care o recomand tuturor celor care au plăcerea de a citi, sociologi sau ne-sociologi: „Întrebarea este: cine îl va însoți pe câștigător la Cotroceni și ce (menu) se pregătește? Fiindcă la Cotroceni nu se țin doar discursuri, se țin și ospete. Și ghiciți cine e la masă, și cine e pe masă? Mai ales, cine e în menu? Spun acest lucru pentru că, așa cum ați intuit, *noi* suntem în menu”. Nu numai câștigătorul contează, ci și echipa cu care vine la conducerea țării și rețelele acestora care se prelungesc în comisii parlamentare, ministere, agenții guvernamentale, servicii de informații, organizații guvernamentale, partide politice și fel de fel de asociații profesionale. Deocamdată, democrația românească a fost salvată de victoria lui Nicușor Dan, dar de rezultatele președinției acestuia și ale guvernelor pe care le va gira politic va depinde soarta României peste cinci ani. Dacă reformele dure de reajustare macroeconomică (reducerea deficitului bugetar) care se anunță nu vor începe cu reducerea privilegiilor celor privilegiați (elitelor), să nu ne mirăm de ceea ce va dori poporul (masele) la alegerile din 2030.

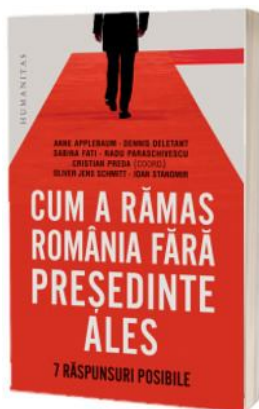
Ciprian Constantin IFTIMOAEI

Notă

- ¹ Ciprian Iftimoaei, Introduction to the Study of Stratification and Social Mobility: Theories, Measures and Models of Analysis (recenzia cărții lui Cătălin Augustin Stoica, Introducere în studiul stratificării și mobilității sociale:

teorii, măsuri și modele de analiză, Tritonic, București, 2022), in *Scientific Annals of the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași. New Series Sociology and Social Work Section – XV-th Volume*, No.2/2022, <https://doi.org/10.47743/asas-2022-2-704>.

Anularea alegerilor din noiembrie 2024 - spre ce tip de auto-apărare ne îndreptăm



Cum a rămas România fără președinte ales. 7 răspunsuri posibile, (coord. Cristian Preda, Humanitas, 2024), Editura Humanitas, 2025, nr. pagini???

Volumul coordonat de Cristian Preda, "Cum a rămas România fără președinte ales. 7 răspunsuri posibile" (Humanitas, 2025), după cum indică și titlul, este legat de cea mai recentă și controversată criză politico-instituțională postcomunistă, și anume anularea scrutinului prezidențial de către Curtea Constituțională a României la 6 decembrie 2024. Curtea a motivat că a fost încălcat caracterul liber exprimat al votului prin faptul că alegătorii au fost dezinformați, iar unul dintre

candidați a beneficiat de o promovare agresivă. Curtea a mai invocat faptul că un candidat a încălcat legislația electorală referitoare la finanțarea campaniei pentru alegerile prezidențiale și că a fost afectată egalitatea de șanse a competitorilor electorali¹.

Volumul reunește articole ale șapte specialiști români și străini, într-un demers ce apare ca necesar, atât din perspectiva unei societăți lăsate polarizate, dar mai ales din perspectiva democrației, fragilizate, punctual în 2024, de elemente precum decizia de anulare a alegerilor fără dovezi clare sau de către gestionarea defectuasă de către guvern a procesului electoral în ansamblu.

Jurnalista americană Anne Applebaum critică ceea ce numește „Noul Obscurantism”, o mișcare promovată de elita politică la nivel mondial, plasându-l pe candidatul român la prezidențiale, Călin Georgescu, în această zonă. La rândul său, într-un stil mai liber, scriitorul român **Radu Paraschivescu** reclamă „mesianismul parodic” al lui Călin Georgescu, într-un articol intitulat „Scurtul drum de la 'exotic' la 'e toxic'”. Arătând, în cazul lui Călin Georgescu, că acest drum de la exotic la toxic e scurt. Dincolo de argu-

mentația sa privind “toxicitatea” lui Călin Georgescu, Radu Paraschivescu lasă deschisă întrebarea în ce măsură eliminarea sa din cursă nu încalcă jocul democratic.

Dennis Deletant, istoric britanic specialist în istoria României, consideră că decizia Curții Constituționale de anulare a alegerilor este una fără precedent și fără fundamentare juridică solidă. Explică, de asemenea, ascensiunea lui Călin Georgescu printr-o serie de factori precum: nemulțumirile populației legate de incapacitatea administrativă a României raportat la absorbția de fonduri, indicele de percepție a corupției, lipsa de transparență a instituțiilor (ex: CSAT).

Jurnalista română Sabina Fati trece în revistă istoria serviciilor secrete din România după 1989, scoțând în evidență o serie de relații între actorii politici români de la vârf (președinți și premieri) și actori din zona de intelligence și consideră instituții vulnerabile cu o cultură îngustă. În privința ascensiunii lui Călin Georgescu și a anulării alegerilor, analiza se menține în zona speculației, autoarea întrebându-se dacă serviciile secrete din România nu au fost capabile sau nu au vrut să anticipeze un astfel de pericol.

Istoricul elvețian specializat în istoria Europei de Est, **Oliver Jens Schmitt**, plasează cauzele fenomenului radical-populist din România în naționalismul ortodoxist și etnicist din rândurile unei părți a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, precum și din rândul Academiei Române. Propune,

în același timp, o serie de măsuri de reformare a acestor instituții, exprimându-și speranța că, în timp ce o reformare a Academiei ar fi posibilă, o restructurare a Bisericii rămâne mai degrabă utopică.

Articolele care atacă într-o manieră directă semnificația momentului noiembrie-decembrie 2024, precum și legătura cu democrația, sunt profesorii români, Ioan Stanomir și Cristian Preda.

Profesorul Ioan Stanomir introduce în discuție conceptul de democrație militantă, pentru a explica decizia Curții Constituționale din 6 decembrie 2024 de anulare a scrutinului prezidențial. Democrația militantă fiind un concept ce își are rădăcinile teoretice în anii '30 și care presupune mecanisme de auto-apărare ale unei democrații în fața unor mișcări considerate antidemocratice. Astfel, spune autorul, “spre a-și ocroti valorile și instituțiile, statul român, în calitate de democrație militantă, este obligat să acționeze în clipa în care acte sau fapte ar pune în pericol acest eșafodaj”. Punerea în mișcare a democrației militante fiind chiar continuitatea democrației înseși. Dintr-un punct de vedere strict teoretic, actul anulării alegerilor este văzut de autor ca un act potențial legitim. Doar că, nuanțează autorul, din pricina lipsei de credibilitate și a partizanatului tribunalului constituțional de la noi, anularea alegerilor, ca act al înfăptuirii democrației militante, nu are legitimitatea necesară. În același timp, democrația militantă nu poate fi credibilă și eficientă decât în măsura în

care amenințarea este precis definită - lucru care nu s-a întâmplat în România, mai atrage atenția profesorul Ioan Stanomir.

Nu în ultimul rând, **profesorul Cristian Preda** demonstrează că România a ajuns la criza severă din decembrie 2024, ca urmare a involuției sistemului de partide în ultimii 13 ani (începând cu anul 2012), moment din care nu s-a mai produs alternanța la putere - considerată regula de bază a democrației de tip electoral. Identifică, de asemenea, că două ar fi elementele care au contribuit la producerea gravei crize democratice date de evenimentele din decembrie 2024. Unul este sporirea semnificativă a influenței electorale a CCR, iar al doilea informațiile publice conform cărora PSD ar fi transferat voturi candidatului AUR, George Simion, iar PNL ar fi plătit pentru o campanie avantajoasă pentru C. Georgescu.

Cristian Preda mai arată că momentul decembrie 2024 s-a constituit într-o criză democratică gravă, dar că aceasta este doar un punct culminant al unei crize ce și-a avut începuturile în 2012, odată cu imposibilitatea de a mai avea alternanța la putere (cine a organizat alegerile nu a fost trimis în opoziție). Lipsa alternanței la putere este o critică majoră pe care Cristian Preda o aduce, adăugând că președintele Klaus Iohannis a fost cel care a girat această stare de fapt, prin acceptarea guvernărilor PSD+PNL în intervalul 2021-2024. Profesorul Cristian Preda mai identifică instalarea fenomenului de cartelizare a partidelor din România și critică meca-

nismul rotației politice la nivelul premierilor, instituit de PNL+PSD+UDMR în noiembrie 2021.

Concluzii: spre o democrație militantă excluzionistă sau spre modele alternative mai incluzionist-integratoare ?

Cei mai mulți dintre autorii care au contribuit la volumul coordonat de Cristian Preda au adus în discuție relația evenimentelor din decembrie 2024 cu conceptul de democrație, existând un oarecare consens cum că, prin cele întâmplate, democrația a fost fragilizată. Atenția celor mai mulți dintre contributori a fost îndreptată mai degrabă pe istoria politică recentă (ultimii 10-15 ani) și mai puțin pe momentul propriu-zis al anulării alegerilor din decembrie 2024. După cum o arată Raportul urgent al Comisiei de la Veneția din februarie-martie 2025, precum și Indexul Democrației pe 2024, democrația a fost fragilizată punctual și prin anularea alegerilor prezidențiale, dar și prin erodarea încrederii populației în ideea de alegeri libere și corecte. Gradul de erodare democratică a fost mai accentuat punctual, prin evenimentele din 2024, pentru că momentul nu a presupus doar slăbirea democrației substantive (maximaliste), ci a presupus erodarea a ceea ce numim democrație electorală (minimalistă), adică minimum de condiție, pentru ca un regim să fie considerat democratic.

În plus, într-o viziune mai empirică asupra conceptului de democra-

ție, ilustrată, de exemplu, de indexurile anuale ale democrației (publicate de *The Economist*), sunt scoase în evidență fisuri ale calității democrației românești tocmai pe componenta aceasta a momentului anulării alegerilor - decizie despre care Raportul *The Economist* spune că a fost luată cu dovezi discutabile². Indexul pe 2024 al democrației nu se referă la istoria politică recentă a României, ci observă că, în 2024, ca urmare a anulării scrutinului prezidențial, România are un scor scăzut de la 6,45 (2023) la **5,99**, fiind surclasată de la statutul de democrație deficitară la cel de regim hibrid. Iar indicatorii la care România a fost penalizată în 2024 au fost „procesul electoral și pluralismul” (de la 9,16 în 2023 la 8,45 în 2024) și „funcționarea guvernului” (de la 6,43 în 2023 la 5,36 în 2024). Raportul indicat mai atrage atenția asupra faptului că eventuale acțiuni ale guvernului în direcția schimbării regulilor electorale pe social media pentru a împiedica șansele de victorie pentru un candidat anti-establishment, nu arată semne de în-sănătoșire democratică pentru România³. Cu alte cuvinte, acolo unde unii „răsuflă ușurați” că au scăpat de candidați radical-populiști, din perspectiva acestei măsurători scalare a democrației, există îngrijorări.

Analiza crizei din 2024, pusă în dezbatere în volum, a atacat ideea de democrație, dar ea a fost plasată într-o mai mare măsură sub semnul îngrijorării față de ascensiunea fenomenului radical-populist decât sub cel al îngrijorării față de democrația

însăși și a rezilienței acesteia la diverse tipuri de criză.

De aceea, interogarea legitimă în privința ascesionii fenomenelor și mișcărilor extreme/radical-populiste, ar trebui dublată și de o interogare teoretică și practică asupra unor mijloace prin care democrația ar putea fi mai rezilientă la diversele tipuri de criză. Luând alte două exemple ale unor crize recente cu care s-a confruntat România, începând cu 2020 (pandemia, războiul din Ucraina), indexurile democrației arată că și aceste crize au lăsat în urmă deficite democratice, ca urmare a modului în care au fost gestionate (scăderea scorului în 2022 și 2023 față de 2020-2021). Așa cum, de exemplu, pandemia a trecut, dar a lăsat în urma sa o democrație mai fragilă, la fel și criza din 2024 lasă în spate o democrație încă și mai fragilizată, în încercarea a se auto-apăra (ilustrarea conceptului de democrație militantă).

După cum am arătat în prima parte, cei doi autori care au atacat direct conceptul de democrație au fost profesorii Ioan Stanomir și Cristian Preda, ambii considerând că democrația românească a fost afectată de momentul decembrie 2024, dar că acest moment este unul care doar a încununat un eșec democratic, ce își are rădăcinile în anii istoriei postcomuniste recente.

a) Legat de critica adusă de **profesorul Cristian Preda**, potrivit căreia, democrația în România ar fi ajuns să fie una „mimată”, acesta spune că democrația a fost afectată, într-un mare grad, de lipsa alternanței

(începând cu anul 2012) și mai puțin de momentul propriu-zis al anulării alegerilor. Sigur, ideal ar fi să avem o oarecare alternanță a partidelor la putere, dar în același timp trebuie observat și că lipsa alternanței este rezultatul mai multor factori, unii dintre ei independenți de acțiunea actorilor politici și care țin de eșafodajul instituțional existent în prezent: sistemul electoral de tip reprezentare proporțională; noul peisaj politic în care nu mai avem două blocuri mari de partide, ci unul mai fragmentat, ce face mai dificilă formarea de guverne în configurații care să asigure alternanța. Cristian Preda identifică apariția a trei astfel de blocuri politico-electorale: „partidele guvernamentale” (PSD+PNL+UDMR); blocul “anti-UE și anti-sistem” (AUR, SOS, POT); blocul „anticartel și liberal” (USR). Într-un peisaj politic fragmentat și diferit de perioadele în care alternanța era posibilă, ipoteza potrivit căreia Klaus Iohannis a girat lipsa alternanței este parțial explicativă, atât timp cât, în conformitate cu imperatiile constituționale, președintele trebuie să desemneze un premier din partea partidului cu majoritate absolută sau, dacă nu există o astfel de majoritate, din partea patidelor parlamentare. Dacă nu există voința politică de a forma un guvern care să aibă în componența sa acele partide ce ar permite alternanța, președintele este pus în fața situației de a accepta acea variantă ce vine cu o propunere consensuală.

b) Legat de conceptul de **democrație militantă**, pus în discuție în

volum de profesorul Ioan Stanomir, acesta oferă un cadru explicativ pentru decizia Curții de anulare a alegerilor prezidențiale din România, deschizând pista unei posibile dezbateri despre modelele de auto-apărare democratică (democrație defensivă), de care poate dispune un stat democratic pentru a contracara actori politici considerați antidemocratici. Astfel, cea mai mare parte a literaturii de specialitate din perioada recentă, considerând democrația militantă clasică elitist-excluzionistă, s-a focusat pe o versiune reînnoită, aceea a democrației neo-militante, ce presupune contracarări mai blânde ale eventualelor pericole interne la adresa democrațiilor liberale contemporane: ca de exemplu, interdicții doar pentru acțiuni considerate antidemocratice, nu și pentru declarații considerate antidemocratice⁴, ce ar interfera, de exemplu, cu libertatea de gândire. Alți autori, precum Anthoula Malkopoulou sau Ludvig Norman, considerând modelul democrației militante și neo-militante elitist, unde elitele politico-juridice sunt singurele care se erijează în protectori ai democrației, au pus în discuție fundamentele democrației militante, propunând dezbateri pe marginea unor modele alternative de democrație de tip self-defence, precum modelul procedural (bazat pe incluziune politică)⁵ sau cel social (bazat pe internalizarea conflictului)⁶.

În contextul în care atât practica politică a democrațiilor liberale, cât și literatura de specialitate din prezent alocă un spațiu mult mai generos

democrației militante / neo-militante și manifestă un interes mult restrâns față de modelele alternative de auto-apărare democratică în raport cu fenomenul radical-populist, modelele alternative amintite, ambele bazate pe incluziune și internalizarea conflictului și nu pe excluziune, ca în cazul democrației militante, pot apărea ca opțiuni posibile sau măcar analizabile și interogabile.

Este adevărat că în tabloul democrațiilor defensive din Europa, din punct de vedere legal-formal, România se numără printre statele cu un grad ridicat de auto-apărare (alături de Franța, Austria⁷). Dar chiar dacă, din punct de vedere normativ, unele state au acoperire legală în direcția militantismului, acestea, între care și România, pot opta să nu facă uz de ele, în mod practic. În România, posibilitatea ca CCR să interzică un partid politic sau posibilitatea anulării alegerilor fac din acest stat o democrație militantă, cel puțin din punct de vedere formal-legal. Însă, până la finalul de an 2024 astfel de măsuri nu au fost aplicate. Măsurile de democrație militantă recente includ: decizia în cazul Diane Șoșoacă din octombrie 2024, decizia de anulare a alegerilor din decembrie 2024 și poate chiar și Decizia recentă a CNA nr. 187 din data de 26.03.2025⁸ - care pune dreptul la o informare corectă deasupra libertății de exprimare.

Fiecare dintre cele trei modele de apărare a democrației (militant, procedural și social) are avantaje și dezavantaje. Punctul comun al celor trei

modele constă în faptul că toate pleacă de la premisa că democrațiile liberale contemporane trebuie apărute. Principala critică adusă apărării de tip militant este componenta sa elitistă și excluzionistă, ca urmare a faptului că presupune limitarea participării și un grad semnificativ de dominare, în numele apărării democrației constituționale.

Modelul pluralist/procedural de apărare susține că incluziunea politică poate tempera, treptat, fenomenele radical-populiste⁹, dar este criticat, spunându-se că este utopic să credem că actorii radical-populiști se vor modera prin includerea lor în dezbaterile politice și chiar în formule parlamentare și guvernamentale. Modelul social consideră conflictul politic și securitatea socială ca părți intrinseci ale democrațiilor, dar este criticat pentru că ar ideologiza nepermis de mult democrațiile, adăugându-se că este utopic să credem că, într-o situație de criză, atenția poate fi îndreptată înspre elemente precum securitatea socială a cetățenilor.

Cu limitările sale, modelele social și procedural (spre deosebire de modelul militant) au avantajul că presupun incluziunea și nu excluderea, toleranța și nu discursul de incitare la ură. Din acest punct de vedere, chestionarea teoretică, dar și empirică a acestor modele și alternative de apărare merită extins. Pentru că, prin măsuri militante, actorii radical-populiști pot fi eliminați, dar electoratul lor rămâne și, prin interdicții, mesajul transmis acestor alegători este că ei

votază defect și, prin urmare, ideea de excludere se transferă asupra lor. Își poate găsi această dilemă un răspuns strict în măsuri militante sau

putem combina cu măsuri alternative de auto-apărare?

Ionela GAVRIL*

Note

- O variantă prescurtată a fost publicată, sub titlul *Starea democrației în România: cu ce rămânem după tumultuosul final de an 2024*, în <https://www.contributors.ro/starea-democrației-in-romania-cu-ce-rămânem-dupa-tumultuosul-final-de-an-2024/>, 28.03.2025.

¹ Hotărârea Curții Constituționale nr. 32 din 6 decembrie 2024 privind anularea procesului electoral cu privire la alegerea Președintelui României din anul 2024, *Monitorul Oficial nr. 1231 din 06.12.2024*; https://www.ccr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Hotarare_32_2024.pdf, accesat la 30 martie 2025.

² "Democracy Index 2024", *The Economist*, februarie 2025; https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/?utm_campaign=MA00001582&utm_medium=paid-search&utm_source=eu-google&utm_content=&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwqIm_BhDnARIsAKBYcmtEaAAdaHztWjNbqva28SZ60hUB-GpENaQJ_5E6LbF-S3-T2IU99csaAiC5EALw_wcB<<, (accesat la 30 martie 2025).

³ Democracy Index 2024, *The Economist*, februarie 2025. pp. 63.

⁴ Angela K. Bourne și Fernando Casal Bértoa, "Mapping 'Militant Democracy': Variation in Party Ban Practices in European Democracies (1945-2015)", *European Constitutional Law Review*, Volum 13, Issue 2, iunie 2017,

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-constitutional-law-review/article/mapping-militant-democracy-variation-in-party-ban-practices-in-european-democracies-19452015/31EEBB9E09D06398E78788741979B4E0>

⁵ Sofia Näsström, "Democratic self-defense: bringing the social model back in", în *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 22, 2021

⁶ Anthoula Malkopoulou, Ludvig Norman, „Three Models of Democratic Self-Defence: Militant Democracy and Its Alternatives”, în *Political Studies*, 2018, Vol 66(2), pp. 442-458; <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0032321717723504>

⁷ Țări precum Suedia, Danemarca, Olanda sunt considerate state cu grad mediu de auto-apărare și care combină elemente de democrație militantă cu elemente de securitate socială (mai ales Suedia); Beimenbetov Serik, "A Comparative Analysis of 'Defensive Democracy': a Cross-National Assessment of Formal-Legal Defensiveness in 8 Advanced European Democracies", 2014, publicat online pe site-ul University of Exeter, <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bits/tream/handle/10871/17661/BeimenbetovS.pdf?sequence=1%26isAllowed=1>, (accesat la 7 aprilie 2025).

⁸ Decizia nr. 187 din 26.03.2025 privind ordinul de eliminare a conținutului ilegal încărcat și distribuit pe platforma de partajare a materialelor video YouTube,

https://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/Decizia_ORDIN_187_YT.pdf, (accesată la 7 aprilie 2025).

- ⁹ Nancy L. Rosenblum, “Pluralism and Self-Defense”, în *Liberalism and the*

Moral Life (ed. de Nancy L. Rosenblum), Harvard University Press, 1989, pp. 207-227.

Unde mergem să ne rezolvăm litigiile civile? Varianta non-etatică a arbitrajului



Daniel Humelnicu, *Arbitrajul privat intern în reglementarea actualului Cod de procedură civilă al României*, Editura Institutul European, 2024, 298 p.

Cartea lui Daniel Humelnicu, *Arbitrajul privat intern în reglementarea actualului Cod de procedură civilă al României*, publicată în colecția Academia a Editurii Institutul European din Iași, în 2024, tratează o instituție juridică veche de peste două milenii în lumea europeană și cu o existență atestată documentar de cel puțin două secole în dreptul românesc modern: *arbitrajul*.

Parte a efortului doctrinar pe care îl fac civilişti noștri, de peste trei decenii, pentru a construi sau reconstrui instituții juridice adecvate modelului liberal și democratic de societate,

volumul scris de colegul nostru – cadrul didactic la Facultatea de Drept a Universității „Petre Andrei” din Iași –, este o monografie cu certe calități științifice și didactice, fără a neglija, totodată, aspectul substanțial și stilistic al accesibilității pentru un public mai larg decât casta juriștilor. În fapt, din această carte (care a fost mai întâi o teză de doctorat), un om cu pregătire medie și o cultură decentă poate afla că, atunci când nu vrea să piardă timp și bani în justiția de stat, poate folosi, în anumite situații clar delimitate, alternativa arbitrajului.

Daniel Humelnicu evocă lunga istorie a acestei *instituții*, de la *Manualul lui Donici* (1814) și *Codul moldav* al lui Scarlat Calimachi (1817) sau cel valah al lui Caragea (1818), până la *Codul de procedură civilă* din 1865, arătând cum s-a rafinat ea ca *jurisdicție convențională voluntară*, alternativă la justiția de stat, menită a soluționa litigii preponderent comercial-patrimoniale.

Pe acest traiect bi-secular, având o legătură esențială cu lumea liberală a proprietății private, arbitrajul a ajuns, la un moment dat, în situația de a fi marginalizat, în perioada comunistă. Fără a fi eliminat, totuși, în mod formal din legislația vremii, el a glisat spre o formă etatizată, aplicabilă litigiilor dintre titulari ai dreptului de

proprietate de stat și ai celei co-operatiste. De asemenea, vrând-nevrând, statul socialist român a menținut arbitrajul în relațiile comerciale pe care le avea cu lumea capitalistă, însă considera această instituție un atavism juridic, atunci când era vorba despre relațiile dintre cetățenii proprii.

Abia după căderea comunismului s-a reluat *activitatea arbitrarială ad-hoc*, prin *Decretul-lege nr. 139/1990 privind Camerele de comerț și industrie din România*. De aici încolo, instituția în discuție va cunoaște și la noi o traiectorie specifică în materia comerțului internațional, dar și una proprie soluționării alternative a litigiilor dintre persoane particulare.

Urmând analitic această ultimă direcție, autorul cărții evidențiază modul în care arbitrajul a trebuit să-și câștige „dreptul de cetate” prin diferențierea sa de alte proceduri alternative, precum: *tranzacția* (prevenirea unui litigiu sau stingerea procesului civil prin acordul părților – conform art. 438 din *Codul de procedură civilă*; respectiv art. 2267 din *Codul civil*), *concilierea* (specifică dialogului social în sfera muncii, conform *Legii 62/2011*, ulterior conform *Legii 367/2022*), precum și *medierea* (reglementată prin *Legea 192/2006* și promovată destul de puternic în deceniul trecut).

Deși este un subiect juridic tehnic, arbitrajul nu sperie prin jargonul de specialitate; dimpotrivă, am putea observa cum poate să fie contaminat de limbajul comun și de cunoașterea comună, de aici rezultând și un soi de

„familiaritate”, dar și un risc de disoluție a rigurozității semantice.

Iată, spre exemplu, în limbajul cotidian, termenul de *arbitraj* este frecvent folosit: de la jocurile copiilor de pe ulițe sau de la scara blocului, până la meciurile de pe stadioane, *arbitrul și funcția sa convențională de a decide a cui este dreptatea*, într-o situație specifică, sunt uzitate ca atare fără nicio dificultate de înțelegere. Ba chiar se pliază cu mare flexibilitate pe sinusoidalele *ethosului* societății, care înclină (după cum sunt vremurile) uneori spre rigorismul etic – adică spre o hiperbolizare a corectitudinii –, iar alteori spre o relaxare a normativității, până în miezul aceluși fenomen pe care noua limbă de lemn a zilelor noastre îl definește drept corupție. Așa ajungem să vorbim despre arbitri și arbitraje corecte, dar și de unii / unele de o calitate îndoilenică sau vizibil părtinitoare.

În cartea de față, există destule referințe la *ethosul social* și la *moralitatea publică* ce întemeiază un proces de arbitraj, preponderent în capitolul I. De exemplu, aici găsim definiții sau maxime filosofico-juridice atribuite lui Aristotel („arbitrajul vizează echitatea, iar justiția statală legea”) și lui Cicero („arbitrajul este mijlocul prin care nu poți câștiga complet un proces bun, dar nici pierde complet un proces slab”).

Dar *substanța analizelor* lui Daniel Humelnicu se găsește în zona juridicului propriu-zis, cu trimitere specifică la dreptul intern, respectiv la *Codul de procedură civilă (Legea nr. 134 din 1 iulie 2010, cu modificările*

și completările ulterioare). Mai precis, fondul problematic al acestui volum se circumscrie Cărții a IV-a din *Codul de procedură civilă* (C. pr. Civ.), articolele 541-621. În respectivul cod vom găsi definiția arbitrajului ca o *jurisdicție alternativă cu caracter privat*, la care pot să recurgă persoane care au capacitatea deplină de exercițiu, dar și statul și autoritățile publice, în situații bine delimitate.

De ce ar dori cineva să apeleze la arbitraj? Răspunsul formulat de autor este convingător: „Având în vedere faptul că justiția statală este o instituție costisitoare, cu un grad ridicat de imobilism și sofisticare, arbitrajul, prin beneficiile care îi sunt aduse de câteva dintre punctele sale forte, reprezintă opțiunea favorită a mediilor de afaceri internaționale. Printre acestea, una din caracteristicile menționate (...) este libertatea părților de a-și alege arbitrul (judecătorul). De asemenea, părțile, care optează pentru arbitraj au întotdeauna în vedere caracterul *privat, nepublic*, asigurat de această alternativă la justiția statală. Arbitrajul reprezintă, de asemenea, un mod rapid de soluționare a unei dispute între părți, spre deosebire de procedura greoaie și costisitoare a justiției statale. Părțile își pot stabili singure o procedură suplă, eficientă, care să le satisfacă necesitățile, putând, în același timp, reduce și costurile implicate de o acțiune la instanța de judecată”. Mai adaugă apoi autorul alte două motive pro-arbitraj: *caracterul său contractual* (exprimat prin voința părților) și libera alegere a sistemului de

drept care va guverna contractul și procedura arbitrală.

Dacă din punct de vedere al celerității, discreției și costurilor este mai convenabil să apelăm la arbitraj (ca procedură derogatorie de la dreptul comun), trebuie să ținem seama că unele litigii civile nu pot fi tranșate printr-o astfel de procedură: este vorba, în esență, despre cele care privesc „starea civilă, capacitatea persoanelor, dezbaterea succesorală, relațiile de familie, precum și drepturile asupra cărora părțile nu pot să dispună” (art. 542, alin. (1). În rest, se poate apela fie la un *arbitraj organizat de părțile litigante* (ad-hoc), fie la unul *instituționalizat*.

Diferența dintre ele este prezentată în cartea de față în felul următor: „arbitrajul instituționalizat se constituie și funcționează în mod permanent. Deci, spre deosebire de arbitrajul organizat de părți, care este un arbitraj *in concreto* (ad-hoc), menit să soluționeze doar litigiile dintre două sau mai multe persoane aflate în diverse raporturi contractuale, arbitrajul instituționalizat este un arbitraj *in abstracto*, având rolul de a soluționa diverse litigii dintre diverse persoane fizice sau juridice”.

Pe tema impostazei instituționale a arbitrajului, vom găsi în acest volum numeroase critici ale unor formulărilor din câteva articole ale *Codului de procedură civilă*, în raport cu care autorul face propuneri *de lege ferenda* menite să elimine neclaritățile, lacunele și posibilele reglementări contradictorii.

O amplă analiză este rezervată procedurii arbitrale, inclusiv chesti-

unii intervenției instanței de judecată în această procedură, o intervenție extinsă față de prevederile vechiului *Cod*: „Spre deosebire de art. 342 alin. (1) din vechiul *Cod de procedură civilă*, care dădea în competența instanței de judecată numai «înlăturarea piedicilor ce se puteau ivi în arganizarea și desfășurarea arbitrajului», art. 547 alin. (1) *C. pr. civ.* adaugă și «îndeplinirea altor atribuții ce revin instanțelor judecătorești în arbitraj» (...): soluționarea cererilor de recuzare a arbitrilor [art. 563 alin. (2)]; încuviințarea măsurilor asiguratorii și a măsurilor provizorii (art. 985); dispunerea unor măsuri de constrângere și aplicarea de sancțiuni martorilor și experților [art. 589 alin. (3)]; obligarea autorităților publice de a pune la dispoziția tribunalului arbitral a informațiilor scrise cu privire la actele și acțiunile acestora care au legătură cu litigiul supus arbitrajului [art. 590 alin. (2)]; păstrarea dosarelor arbitrale și a dovezilor de comunicare a hotărârilor arbitrale (art. 607)” (p. 71).

Al treilea capitol al cărții prezintă *in extenso* tema convenției arbitrale, sub aspectul *clauzei compromisorii* (care dă naștere la drepturi și obligații reciproce și interdependente pentru ambele părți), al *compromisului* (referitor la un litigiu concret), al *desemnării arbitrilor* și al *cerințelor pentru validitatea convenției arbitrale*, precum și sub aspectul *efectelor pe care le are convenția arbitrală*.

În același capitol, sunt reiterate litigiile care pot fi supuse unei soluționări arbitrale și cele care nu pot fi soluționate în acest fel. Cu acest prilej,

autorul administrează o critică pertinentă substituției de termeni între arbitraj și tranzacție, operată în art. 542 alin. (1) din *C. pr. civ.*, ca și altor expresii și prevederi incomplete (mai ales în chestiunea „drepturilor”). Pentru clarificarea, sunt amplu prezentate litigiile ce nu pot fi rezolvate prin arbitraj (parte din ele deja amintite mai sus): litigiile privind drepturi asupra cărora părțile nu pot să dispună, cele de stare civilă, cele privind capacitatea persoanei, dezbaterea succesorală, raporturile juridice de familie, litigiile pentru care există o procedură legală specială, litigiile de natură penală, litigiile din materia contenciosului administrativ, răspunderea administrativ-contravențională, litigiile fiscale, litigiile privind drepturile de autor și drepturile conexe, precum și din materia brevetelor de invenții.

Capitolele IV și V prezintă toată canavaua organizării tribunalului arbitral și a judecării arbitrale, sub aspectul conținutului și procedurii, pentru ca în al VI-lea capitol să fie examinată hotărârea arbitrală (sub aspectul naturii, formei, conținutului și obiectului, dar și al efectelor sale). Toate acestea sunt realizate în detaliu, cu menținerea constantă a rigorii semantice și a criticilor cu care autorul ne-a obișnuit pe parcursul celor aproape 300 de pagini de text.

Desigur, pentru un demers de o asemenea complexitate, a fost utilizată o impresionantă literatură de specialitate și o relevantă jurisprudență, ce denotă capacitatea lui Daniel Humelnicu de a găsi calea unui raționament juridic de maximă claritate,

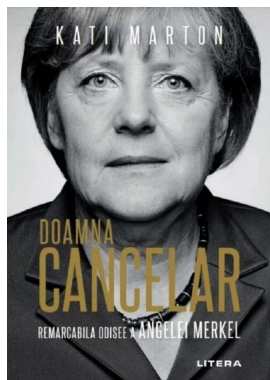
printre întortocheatele cărări ale legislației noastre mai vechi sau mai noi.

O mostră de astfel de raționament este însăși fraza de final a cărții: „«proliferarea arbitrajului privat» în România nu ține atât de «cadrul legislativ» care, oricum, este generos,

cât mai ales de un anumit nivel al «culturii civice și juridice» a justițiabilului roman”.

Cristian BOCANCEA

Blânda Doamnă de Fier a Europei. Odissea spre libertate a Angelei Merkel



Kati Marton, *Doamna Cancelar: Remarcabila odisee a Angelei Merkel*, Editura Litera, București 2022

Ne putem apropia de domeniul politicii prin studiul instituțiilor și al comportamentelor electorale, de exemplu. Dar, în egală măsură, carierele oamenilor politici ne pot spune multe despre acest domeniu fascinant. De multe ori, carierele sunt meteorice și nu ne dau posibilitatea de a înțelege lucrurile în dinamica lor. Uneori, această posibilitate e întregită și de perspectiva personală, înțelesul politicianului cu privire la evenimentele care i-au jalonat cariera. Cel mai bine e atunci când avem posibilitatea de a urmări cariera din mai multe unghiuri: deciziile și măsurile propriu-zise, o privire „din afară” – cum ar fi o analiză, o biografie realizată de un anume autor și o privire „din interior” – introspecția

sau perspectiva politicianului respectiv cu privire la cariera sa.

O doamnă cu ochi albaștri, blajini, fiică de pastor luteran, născută în Hamburg, dar relocată, împreună cu familia, în fosta Republică Democrată Germană, chimistă ajunsă la conducerea CDU (Uniunea Creștin-Democrată) și Cancelar al Republicii Federale Germania (2005-2021) - așa am putea-o descrie pe Angel Dorothea Krasner, singura femeie care a deținut poziția puternică de Cancelar în Germania. Acest mozaic de caracteristici pare a se suprapune peste tot ce putem considera ca fiind Germania. Angela Merkel, pare că ia toate aceste valori și le topește într-un creuzet personal, pentru a-și construi personalitatea politică de mai târziu, o femeie cu un discurs așezat, cu mișcări reținute, cu o privire pătrunzătoare, rezilientă și stăpână pe sine chiar în situații mai puțin comode. De curând, două cărți traduse și în românește descriu evoluția personajului politic Angela Merkel. Prima, este *Doamna Cancelar. Remarcabila odisee a Angelei Merkel*, scrisă de Kati Marton (apărută la Editura Litera în anul 2022). Cea de-a doua este scrisă chiar de Angela Merkel, alături de Beate Baumann, consiliera care a însoțit-o îndeaproape pentru o lungă perioadă de timp și poartă titlul *Libertate* (apărută în 2024 la Editura Litera).



Angela Merkel, *Libertate. Amintiri 1954-2021*, Editura Litera, București, 2024

Așa cum afirmam mai sus, ca să înțelegem politica, cu deciziile și provocările ei, ne poate fi de folos perspectiva unei cariere politice importante. Angela Merkel a avut o astfel de carieră. Cu proveniență est-germană, intră în politica Germaniei unificate sprijinită de Herr Kohl, un titan al politicii germane. Atunci când Helmut Kohl este implicat în scandalul finanțării partidului, Angela Merkel publică un text care sugerează ruptura partidului de artizanul reunificării Germaniei. Acel articol a însemnat pentru unii o trădare. Pentru alții, a reprezentat semnalul că lucrurile trebuie să meargă mai departe, că CDU nu se poate opinti, că partidul nu (mai) înseamnă doar un lider, fie și de calibrul lui Kohl. Despărțirea de Kohl și ascensiunea Angelei Merkel la conducerea CDU se făcea în lumina unui curaj al contextului: „nu avem altă opțiune decât să ne luăm viitorul în propriile noastre mâini”.

Fostul cancelar nu mai era un cal care să tragă partidul spre putere, ba mai mult, scandalul fondurilor îl făcea chiar un cal pierzător. În vremuri tulburi, Angela Merkel își asumă povara rupturii cu trecutul, se desprinde ea însăși de moștenirea lui Kohl, dar nu îl va uita niciodată pe mentorul său. Anii maturității politice încep în 2000, iar din 2005 Angela Merkel se confruntă cu toate dificultățile care au marcat Germania, Europa și lumea: criza euro, valurile de migranți, pandemia, războiul din Ucraina. Până în 2021, anul retragerii Blândeii Doamne de Fier a Europei, Angela Merkel avea să își exerseze capacitatea de a lua decizii în urma felului personal de a cântări lucrurile, punctând, de fiecare dată, avantajele și dezavantajele unei decizii, într-un fel rece, teutonic, cu mai puțină emoție adăugată.

Cele două lucrări merită citite în oglindă. Kati Marton ne oferă o imagine dinspre *în afară spre înăuntru*, iar cartea Angelei Merkel completează imaginea cu o privire dinspre *înăuntru spre în afară*. În timp ce *Doamna Cancelar* jalonează reperele politicii Angelei și rațiunile presupuse ale deciziilor, *Libertate* ne prezintă resorturile intime care au animat deciziile, trăirile și argumentele folosite în momentele cruciale. În ambele, o idee comună: o politiciană care nu și-a făcut un scop din a fi iubită de public, ci care a cântărit atent deciziile, uneori asumându-și întârzieri în hotărârile luate, dar o politiciană fără regrete majore. Teama de a nu greși a fost mai puternică decât

dorința de a străluci. Poate tocmai de aceea nu a apreciat liderii entuziaști, cei cu priză la mase. Calculul rece și firea analitică sunt trăsături teutonice, dar au fost întărite de formația chimistei ajunse cancelar. Știința și folosirea datelor, dar și argumentarea au ajutat-o pe Angela Merkel să convingă partenerii europeni sau din afara Europei, de justetea unor decizii.

Dacă începutul carierei politice se leagă de sprijinul lui Helmut Kohl, momentul în care se cristalizează personalitatea de politiciană a Angelei este Conferința de la Berlin cu privire la schimbările climatice (1995), cea care a pregătit Protocolul de la Kyoto. În ciuda lipsei de experiență, în pofida oricăror probleme lingvistice, Angela Merkel reușește să aducă „pe aceeași pagină” țările în curs de dezvoltare, dar și țările dezvoltate, iar, în urma negocierilor grele, participanții reușesc să adopte poziții comune cu privire la reducerea emisiilor de gaze cu efect de seră. Conferința a fost un succes, iar „fata lui Kohl” își începea ascensiunea în politica mare.

Relația cu președinții americani ocupă spațiu important, atât în cartea Angelei Merkel, cât și în cea a lui Kati Marton. Parteneriatul cu George W. Bush se remarcă prin apropierea rapidă dintre cei doi oameni de stat. Împreună cu Joachim Sauer, soțul mai puțin vizibil al Angelei, cancelarul acceptă invitația președintelui Bush la ranch-ul acestuia din Texas. Gestul făcut de George Bush la o reuniune a șefilor de state și de guvern, când o atinge pe umeri pe Angela, a arătat apropierea dintre cei

doi. Germania a fost un aliat fidel al Statelor Unite, iar acest lucru s-a văzut inclusiv în relațiile cordiale pe care cancelarul german le-a avut cu președinții George Bush și Barack Obama. În mod deosebit, relația cu primul președinte afro-american al Statelor Unite merită o discuție aparte. La început, Angela i-a refuzat viitorului președinte american rugămintea de a vorbi lângă poarta Brandenburg. I s-a părut, așa cum a considerat întotdeauna de-a lungul carierei sale cu orice alt politician, că tânărul Obama era prea bun orator, că putea să electrizeze mulțimile, dar că nu probase încă - prin decizii sau acțiuni - calitatea sa de lider adevărat. Parcă ne și putem imagina ciobul de scoică, ostrakon, pe care Angela scrisese numele lui Barack Obama, într-o metaforă despre democrație. Relația dintre cei doi a evoluat însă, iar mai târziu, parteneriatul cu Statele Unite a fost cimentat de consultările permanente sau de coordonarea atentă în diferite chestiuni internaționale.

Relațiile germano-ruse au jucat și ele un rol extrem de important în istoria continentului european. Vladimir Putin cunoștea foarte bine realitățile germane, el activând în Dresda ca angajat al KGB. Cunoștințele de limbă rusă ale Angelei Merkel, din perioada studiilor din Germania de Est, dar și cele de literatură și cultură rusă, au fost bazele pentru dicuțiile de început dintre cei doi lideri. Putin a încercat să o provoace de multe ori, așa cum a fost episodul în care câinele său a fost lăsat liber în apropierea cancelarului

german, știut fiind faptul că aceștia din urmă îi era teamă de câini. Deși echipa sa a fost extrem de tensionată în urma situației, Angela a găsit puterea de a-i liniști. Înțelesese că este o femeie într-o lume a bărbaților și că aceștia o provoacă pentru a-i testa limitele și pentru a o face să greșescă. În contextul războiului din Ucraina, Angela Merkel a încercat să păstreze legătura cu președintele rus, credincioasă principiului său că diplomația este cea mai bună soluție la probleme. Nu a reușit, iar regretul se simte puternic în paginile cărții sale care tratează acest subiect.

Mai mult spațiu este dedicat confruntării cu valurile de migrație în Europa. Deopotrivă Kati Merton, dar și Angela Merkel rezervă pagini importante pentru acest moment. Alternativa pentru Germania (AfD) a apărut ca o reacție la politicile Angelei Merkel. Într-un anumit sens, AfD este un rezultat al anilor în care Angela a condus Germania. Cartea Angelei Merkel punctează trist acest lucru, iar introspecția politicianei de după retragere clarifică poziția sa: nu e ceva ce și-ar fi dorit, dar e ceva ce a apărut într-un anume firesc al contextului. De altfel, de-a lungul cărții Angelei, sesizăm reflexul introspecției. Nu pare să găsim multe regrete în paginile cărții, poate tocmai datorită felului în care cancelarul german a luat deciziile: cântărind întotdeauna avantajele și dezavantajele, înclinând spre ce a fost mai consistent. Angela Merkel a știut întotdeauna că deciziile politice sunt complicate. Farul călăuzitor în ceea ce o privește, l-a

constituit întotdeauna analiza cu privire la ce înclină balanța: numărul și consistența avantajelor sau numărul și consistența dezavantajelor. Un fapt important în economia cărții este episodul cu Reem, fetița palestiniană de paisprezece ani, care a plâns la auzul vorbelor cancelarului Germaniei. Vorbele Angelei o avertizau că nu toți migranții pot rămâne în țară și că unii vor trebui să plece. Criticile pe care Angela le-a primit imediat după acest moment emoționat, acuzele de insensibilitate, lipsa empatiei sunt toate tratate în *Liber-tate*. Angela nu se justifică, dar explică reacția sa. La fel, introspecția scoate la lumină un caracter politic puternic, dar sensibil. Peste ani, gestul său capătă noi semnificații: vorbele sale sunt tari, dar nu lipsite de umanitate; reacția sa este rece, dar nu lipsită de corectitudine. Explicația politicianei de azi este că, la acel moment, nu avea altă perspectivă și nu a dorit să mintă, ori să evite răspunsul doar pentru a cădea în politicianism. A fost o reacție poate puțin calibrată, dar o reacție a unei femei de stat.

Kati Merton, rezumă moștenirea politică a Angelei prin creșterea notorietății Germaniei în relațiile internaționale. Să nu uităm că a vorbit în Knesset, fiind primul șef de guvern care s-a adresat parlamentului din Israel. Vorbind în limba germană, după ce a mulțumit pentru onoare în limba ebraică, Angela Merkel a menționat faptul că Shoah „ne umple pe noi germanii de rușine” și că Germania și Israelul sunt pentru tot-

deauna într-o relație specială. Într-o lume a bărbaților, Angela Merkel a știut să observe fără enervare „împănarea” politicianilor de toate felurile și a lucrat determinat pentru a-și atinge obiectivele.

Ultima perioadă de mandat a adus lupta cu pandemia și necesitatea de a coordona acțiunile guvernului federal cu cele ale landurilor. De altfel, războiul purtat cu noul virus a adus în prim-plan latura de om de știință a cancelarului. Folosind modelarea matematică și instrumentarul științific, Angela Merkel a reușit să argumenteze pentru soluții nepopulare dar corecte care au limitat răspândirea virusului și au salvat vieți. Așa cum recunoaște, nu au fost discuții ușoare. Dar determinarea cancelarului a fost puternică, iar perspectiva omului de știință a prevalat.

Odiscea politică a Angelei Merkel, crescută în RDG, cu un doctorat în chimie și intrată în politica germană sub auspiciile lui Helmut Kohl, ne arată că hotărârea, determinarea și analiza corectă și rece sunt ingrediente foarte bune pentru succes. Deciziile sale, în calitate de lider al CDU și de cancelar al

Germaniei, au fost întotdeauna dificile într-o lume a politicii dominată de bărbați, dar au poziționat Germania ca voce importantă în lume și motor al Europei. În toate discursurile sale, d-na Merkel a punctat faptul că Europa poate reuși doar împreună. Dar, credincioasă idealurilor și principiilor sale, Angela Merkel nu doar a vorbit. Așa a și acționat: în cazul crizei euro, în cazul valurilor de migranți, în timpul pandemiei. Femeia din Est devenită cancelar a parcurs un drum greu. De la politiciană care îi inventaria lui Tony Blair, în 2005, problemele sale: „sunt femeie, nu am carismă și nu sunt un bun comunicator”, până la ultima zi de mandat, în 2021, Angela Merkel a parcurs numeroase etape. Firul roșu al carierei, punctat atât de bine de ea însăși și de Kati Marton, a fost analiza riguroasă și urmărirea obiectivelor planificate, în pofida oricăror obstacole. Dacă e să rămână o moștenire a Angelei Merkel în politică, aceasta ar putea fi lecția curajului în condiții de incertitudine, dar după o analiză riguroasă.

Bogdan GHEORGHITĂ

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Taulant BALLA was born on 12 August 1977. Since July 2024 he serves as Minister of State for Relations with Parliament. Before assuming this task, Taulant Balla served as Minister of Interior from July 2023 to July 2024. He was first time elected Member of the Parliament of Albania on 2005 and has been re-elected for the sixth time on May 11th, 2025. He has held very important positions such he positions of Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Socialist Party and Co-Chairman of the EU-Albania Stabilization Association Parliamentary Committee EU - Albania. T. Balla completed his studies in the Department of Political Sciences at the "Al.I.Cuza" University in Iasi, Romania, and later completed a Doctorate Degree with a dissertation thesis entitled "The Reform of Decision-Making System in the European Union". In 2002, he joined the Socialist Party's Department for International Relations. He has been part of the political staff as an advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Integration, the Minister of Finance and later member of the political staff of the Prime Minister of Albania. In October 2017, he was elected Secretary General of the Socialist Party, a political position he kept until September 2021. Since September 2024, Taulant Balla is leading the branch of the socialist party for all the albanians who live in diaspora.

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Ioana CRISTEA DRĂGULIN has a degree from the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest (1998), a master's degree in Museology, Heritage and Tourism from the Faculty and Geography of the Hyperion University of Bucharest (2010) and a PhD in Political Sciences, within the Faculty of Political Sciences of University of Bucharest (2015). She published several articles and specialized studies in political science journals such as the *Sphere of Politics*, *South-East European Journal of Political Science*, *Cogito* or *Polis*, articles in the journal of culture and politics *Timpul*. She is the first female doctor in political science from Romania, with a thesis on the political thinking of Antonio Gramsci. She is currently part of the cultural project that aims to translate the fundamental work of the Italian theoretician Antonio Gramsci (*Prison books*) in Romania. At the same time, she is a historian - museographer within the Cotroceni National Museum in Bucharest.

Latest books published: Drăgulin Ioana (coord.), *Interbelicul o epocă a contrastelor*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, Bucharest, 2024; Drăgulin Ioana (elaborated catalogue), *Ordine, medalii și plachete din patrimoniul Muzeului Național Cotroceni*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, Bucharest, 2024; Drăgulin Ioana (coord.), *Constituții și regimuri politice din statele europene în sec. XI-XX*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, Bucharest, 2023; Drăgulin Ioana (coord.), *Democrație și totalitarism în Europa secolului XX*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, Bucharest, 2022; Ștefania Dinu and Ioana Drăgulin, *Muzeul Național Cotroceni - trei decenii în spațiul cultural românesc*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, Bucharest, 2021; Drăgulin Ioana, *Decorații acordate de președinții României în perioada 1991-2019*, Editura Muzeului Național Cotroceni, Bucharest, 2021; Lazăr Mariana, Dinu Ștefania, Drăgulin Ioana, *Cotroceni arc peste timp*, Bucharest, 2019; Drăgulin Ioana (ed.), *Lucrările Colocviului Național de Istorie, Edition XXI. Comunismul între ideologie și practică*, Editura Adenium, Iași, 2019; Drăgulin Ioana (ed.), *Proceedings of the National History Colloquium, Edition XX. Volume dedicated to The Centenary of the Great Union (10 - 11 May 1918). Stat și Societate în Vremea Marelui Război*, Editura Pro Universitaria, Bucharest, 2018; Drăgulin (Cristea) Ioana, *Caietul 19.1934-1935, Risorgimentoul italian*, Editura Meridiane Publishing, Iași, 2017; Drăgulin (Cristea) Ioana, *Crearea statului italian în viziunea lui Antonio Gramsci*, Editura Adenium, Iași, 2015. In 2025, as a museographer at the Cotroceni National Museum, she was decorated by the President of Romania with the Order of 'Cultural Merit' in the rank of Knight, category E-'National Cultural Heritage'.

Sabin DRĂGULIN is a professor at “Petre Andrei” University of Iași. He has two bachelor's degrees, the first (1997) at the Faculty of History, the second (2008) at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Bucharest, a PhD in history (2007) at the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, and a postdoctoral degree (2013), Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest. He carried out research and documentation internships in the field of migration phenomena in Italy (2012) at the “La Sapienza” University of Rome and the “Aldo Moro” University of Bari. In the academic year 2001-2002 he was an Erasmus student at the Faculty of Political Sciences, at the University of Perugia. He is the coordinator, together with Ioana Cristea Drăgulin, of the collection „Biblioteca Gramsciana” at Editura Timpul from Iași. Since 2013, he has been the Executive Director of Polis. Political science journal and editor of the BDI indexed journal, Cogito. Latest published volumes: Sabin Drăgulin, Mihai Milca, *Naționalismul și extremismul politic de dreapta*, Editura Pro Universitaria, Bucharest, 2024 and Dan Mihalache & Sabin Drăgulin (coord.), *Regimuri politice totalitare și autoritare. Italia și Europa Orientală în perioada interbelică*, Editura Curtea Veche, Bucharest, 2024.

Adrian GHENADE graduated International Relations and European Studies from the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, being licensed in 2020, with the bachelor thesis *The role of the United States in the foundation and ascension of the Bretton Woods System*. Both during the studies and after their completion, the author participated in a multitude of academic conferences, publishing works in prestigious magazines such as Intelligence, Military Bulletin or the Scientific Bulletin of the Polytechnical University of Bucharest. During the contest organized by Youth for RO-US Strategic Partnership, he received the award for academic rigor, with the paper work *The role of Romania's strategic position in developing the Partnership with the USA*. The academic training allowed him to follow a series of practical internships in renowned institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Romanian Diplomatic Institute, the Bureau of the European Parliament in Romania and the Romanian Parliament (Cam of Deputies). He is currently working in the Romanian Parliament, serving as a parliamentary adviser. His area of interest is Euro-Atlantic security, Romania's security and the foreign policy of the United States.

Bogdan GHEORGHÎȚĂ is a lecturer at the “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Department of International Relations, Political Science and Security Studies, where he teaches political science. He is interested in topics such as the theory of democracy, political marketing, political ideologies and political parties. He has published books as sole author, co-author or editor, book chapters in Romanian and foreign publishing houses and studies in specialized journals in Romania and abroad. He has participated in various research projects with teams from Romania or abroad. His most recent book is *Reinventarea politicii. Concepte, actori și reglare socială* (2020).

Ph.D. Oltzen GRIPSHI he is an artist, lecturer, essayist, curator of contemporary art, museologist, historian and art critic and founder of the Durrës International Biennale of Contemporary Art. After high school graduation in the Artistic Lyceum “Jan Kukuzeli” of Durrës he continued his studies at the painting of Fine Arts Academy G. B. Cignaroli of Verona, Italy where he is excellently graduated in 2006. In 2009, he mastered the Master Degree Post Lauream in the “*Aesthetic and Art Critique for Pedagogy in Iconography Reading*”, at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at State University of Padua, Italy. In 2012, the II Degree in Specialisation School (Laurea Doctus) in the “*Contemporary Art History and Show Disciplines*”, at the Academy of Fine Arts G. B. Cignaroli of Verona, Italy. In 2017 Ph. D. (Philosophiae Doctor) he is very well graduated in the “*History of Albanian Art*”, at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology Studies on Art at the Academy of Albanological Studies (ASA) today part of the Albanian Academy of Sciences. Recently, he is part of the Academy of Sciences of Albania for the writing of the Great Encyclopedia of Albania in the section dedicated to art and cultural heritage. From 2009-2010 he has worked at State Library of Verona in the archive and restoration of the antique books as well as categorization of literary fund of “Giuseppe Tucato”. He is a Guest Lecturer of Ancient-Medieval Art History and Archaeology, Art and Visual Culture at the “Aleksander Moisiu” State University, Durrës, Guest Lecturer of Semiotic Interpretation of Children’s Drawings at the “Luigi Gurakuqi” State University of Shkodër and Specialist for Education, Art and Culture (Museums, Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Parks) in the Prefecture of Durrës Region. He is the author of many monographs and scientific studies and has lectured at many national and international scientific conferences on visual arts, pedagogy and Albanian cultural heritage. 2021 Award “Best Paper Award 2021” for the best study of the year, published in the Scientific Magazine “UNICART” 2021, awarded by the Scientific Committee of International Academic Research Centre during the International Scientific Conference UNICART 2022 at Calabria State University, Italy.

Publications: 2025 - “*Shpëtim Garuci: The interpreter of the black and white photographic works of the Marubi in painting*”, Botimet Shkodra, Shkodër, ISBN: 978-9928-370-66-2;

2024 - “*Edi Rama: Neuroaesthetics of an artist*” (Albanian-English), Lilo Printing House, Tiranë, ISBN: 978-9928-157-51-5; 2023 - “*Fatbardh Marku: drawings and graphics 1972-2022*”, Botimet Jozef, Durrës, ISBN: 978- 9928-811-23-3; 2023 “*Phenomenology of the contemporary archetypal image*”, catalogue of the Albania-Austria contemporary art exhibition (Albanian, German, English), Lilo Printing House, Tiranë, ISBN: 978-9928-157-39-3; 2021 - “*Helidon Haliti: Synthesis of the dream, here and there of existence*”, Lilo; 2019 - “*Self-portrait, the Intological Antropocentric Embryo*” (Albanian-English), catalogue of the International Biennial of Self-Portrait, Lilo Printing Publishing House, Tirana, pp. 6-13, ISBN: 978-9928-149-82-4; 2018 - “*Different: the portrait and nudity in the paintings of Pashk Përvathi*”, Mali Pleshti Printing House, Tirana, Albania; 2017 - “*Imago Animus Naij*”, publication: Art and Activities at the National Gallery of

Arts 2017 – Artistic Education Atelier, pp. 48-49, ISBN: 978-9928-355-76-8; 201-
“The Physiognomy of Nature in the Macchiaioli Landscapes of Qamil Grezda”,
 artist catalogue entitled: “Qamil Grezda 1917-1992” (published in English), Mali
 Pleshti Printing House, Tirana, Albania. ISBN: 978-9928-147-38-7; 2017 -
“Polyhedricity of Dhimitër Theodhori, the embodiment of a great artist”, part of the
 book entitled “Dhimitër Theodhori”, co-author of the volume with Luan Rama,
 Artan Shabani, Gjegji Xhuvani, Gent Grafik Publishing House, Tirana, Albania.
 ISBN: 978-9928-202-45- 1; 2011 - *“Emilio Salgari and his illustrations by Alberto
 Della Valle”*, Aemme Edizioni Publishing House, Verona, Italy. ISBN: 978-8897-
 201-03-8.

Ciprian Constantin IFTIMOAEI is a Senior Lecturer with a PhD in the Faculty of
 Law, Economics, Political and Administrative Sciences of "Petre Andrei" University
 of Iași. He has published 4 books, over 60 articles and studies in WoS, BDI indexed
 journals and in collective volumes. He has contributed papers to 5 international
 conferences held abroad, 45 international conferences held in the country, 30
 national conferences and scientific communication sessions. He has participated as a
 member, expert and coordinator in 28 research projects and consultancy grants. He
 is a permanent contributor to the „Opinii” of *Ziarului de Iași*, of *Adevărul* and at the
 online platform/magazine *România Socială*. In 2021, he received the special award
 from the National Institute of Statistics for his contribution to the dissemination of
 official statistics and the promotion of statistical culture. His most recent published
 work is *Sociologia elitelor. Abordări clasice și contemporane*, Editura Institutul
 European, Iași, 2023.

Dr. Drita ISUFAJ, is a dedicated scholar and educator specializing in Albanian
 literature and folklore. She earned her PhD from the University of Tirana with a
 dissertation on erotic codes in Albanian folk literature. Her academic journey also
 includes a second-level Master’s in Literature—focused on comparative epic
 traditions—and a degree in Albanian Language and Literature Teaching. Since 2011,
 Dr. Isufaj has been a full-time lecturer at the University “Aleksandër Moisiu” in
 Durrës – Albania, where she teaches Ethnofolklore, Modern Albanian Literature, and
 Literature Teaching Methodologies. Drita is multilingual—fluent in English, Italian,
 French, and Spanish—and actively engages in international academic circles. She has
 presented at numerous conferences, focusing on themes such as exile in Hispanic
 poetry, literary translation as cultural mediation, and symbolism in Albanian folklore.
 Her academic contributions include co-authoring high school literature textbooks and
 participating in the Erasmus+ teaching mobility program at Danubius University in
 Galați, Romania, further enriching her international experience.
 Passionate about Albanian cultural heritage and literary studies, Dr. Isufaj continues to
 shape the academic field through her teaching, research, and global collaborations.

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Viola ISUFAJ, was born in Durrës in 1980. She is a writer and a
 professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of Tirana, (where she has

contributed on Albanian literature studies for twenty-two years) and is, as well, a continuous collaborator with the Academy of Sciences of Albania. She has a large number of papers published and has presented her work at many national and international scientific conferences.

Viola Isufaj is the author of monographs and full study books: 2023 - "*Baladë dritash për Zorbën*"/*Ballad of Lights for Zorba*", Academy of Sciences of Albania; 2016 - "*Kadare në letrat e sotme franceze*"/"*Kadare in Contemporary French Literature*", UET PRESS; 2014 - "*Përpara kohës*"/"*Before Time*" - *studim në Mjegullat e Tiranës/A Study in the Mists of Tirana (Kadare/Isufaj)*", Onufri; 2013 - "*Rikthimi i mitit*"/"*The Return of the Myth*", Onufri. Viola Isufaj has been recognized for her unwavering contribution to Albanian literary historiography, especially in the revival of its damaged pages during Socialist Realism. She is the recipient of several national and international awards: "*Ballad of Lights for Zorba*", Academy of Sciences of Albania, she won the Olcinium Prize in Montenegro, 2024; -additionally, the prestigious award for the Best Study Work at the 2024 Tirana Book Fair. She was honoured "Character of the Year", by Albanian Public Television - on New Year's Eve, 2024.

Viola Isufaj is the author of artistic books: 2015 - "*Adamah*", poetry collection, Ombra; 2008; "*Days of No One*", novel, Ora; 2005; "*The Snake Saga*", novel, Ora; 2004 - "*To Mr. M., a Letter*", novel, Onufri. "*Adamah*" won the award for the Best Poetry Volume for 2016 at the Pristina Book Fair, Kosovo; with her poetry, the author also won the "Surprise of Poetry" award at the "Korçare Nights" Festival in Albania, 2017, and most recently, received a special honour at the International Poetry Festival "Days of Naim," in Tetove, North Macedonia, 2021. Viola Isufaj has been a member of several editorial boards and significant committees in the Albanian world and beyond, such as a member of the Directorate of the Seminar for Albanian Language, Literature, and Culture in Pristina; part of the presidency of the Martin Camaj Gesellschaft in Lengries, and has given lectures on issues of Albanian literature at universities in Western Europe (at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, the University of Regensburg, and others).

Suzana VARVARICA KUKA, born in Tirana, July 19, 1955. She graduated from the University of Arts in Tirana, where she studied sculpture from 1974 to 1979. From 1995 to 2015, she worked as an art researcher and curator at the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana. She is the author of 15 monographic books on Albanian artists from Albania, Montenegro, and Kosovo, contributing significantly to the documentation and promotion of Albanian visual art. Throughout her career, she has curated numerous national and international exhibitions at institutions such as the National Gallery of Arts in Tirana, the National Gallery of Kosovo in Prishtina, as well as in Tuz (Montenegro) and Skopje (North Macedonia).

Andrea LLUKANI was born in Tirana, December 18, 1966. Higher studies has finished in National University "Kapodistria" of Athens. He also studied in the Goethe Institute and is specialty in "Orthodox Academy", Czech Republic. During the years

1998-2002, it was lecturer in History of the Christianity, while in 2001-2002 it was director of the radio "Ngjallja". Currently is responsible of the Sector Management the Collections in the "National Historical Museum of Albania". From the year 2002 is member at the International Federation of Journalists and in 2006 member the "League of the Writers the Albania". Andrea Llukani has published 50 books. He also wrote articles in scientific magazine within and outside country: "Global Challenge", "Discussions", "Museological Studies", "Dritëhije", "Emanthia", "Albanon", "Pelegrin", "Alternative", "Medieval Art" etc. Andrea Llukani is member the editorial of the scientific journals "Museological Studies" and "Dritëhije". From years is editor in chief the gazette bilingual Albanian Italian "Rrënjët", "Le Radici". From 2017, Andrea Llukani is member the board scientific the "National Historical Museum of Albania", as also member the Technical Secretariat the National Board the Museums.

Enkeleda Baduni MËRKURI has been the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Romania since January 22, 2024. From 2016 to 2023, she served as the ambassador of the Republic of Albania to the Slovak Republic. In September 2015, she was Charge d' Affairs a.i. at the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Bratislava, Slovakia. From 2010 to 2015, she was the Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Athens, Greece, responsible for political and economic issues. She held the position of Counsellor in the General Directorate for Regional Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2006 to 2010. Between 2003 and 2006, she was the First Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Athens, handling political relations and press issues. From 2001 to 2003, she was the Second Secretary in the UN Department, Sector of Multilateral Initiatives, responsible for CEI, the Stability Pact, BSEC, and AII. From 2000 to 2001, she was an attaché in the United Nations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, between 2005 and 2007, she lectured on 'International Relations' and 'Public Relations' at the University 'Aleksandër Xhuvani' in Albania.

From the point of view of professional training, Ms. Enkeleda Baduni MERKURI graduated: April – October 2018 an Online specialization in Economic Diplomacy for Albania, at the Building State Capability, Centre for International Development, at Harvard University; September 2007 – June 2008 – Master's in International Relations and Diplomacy, at the Faculty of History and Philology of Tirana; 2001-2002 - Studies in Multilateral Diplomacy, Haute Etudes Institute of International Relations, UN, Geneva, Switzerland; 1998-2000 - Master's degree in 'Leadership, Administration and Management', National School for New Leaderships, ASPHER, Athens; 1988-1992 - University of Tirana, Faculty of Foreign Languages, (BA French).

Dr. (cand) Eno MILKANI, graduated at University of Arts Tirana with a Master Degree in *Theatre Directing* in 1992. From 1993 to 1994 studied at the European Film College Ebeltoft, Denmark. His first debut short "*Abandoned Eden*" had its world premiere in official competition documentary section at the Karlovy Vary IFF

in 2003. The film won Jury Diploma as Best Short at the Molodist Kiev IFF, Tirana IFF, Aster Fest, and had a special premiere in Sarajevo IFF. He coo-directed and edited with Piro Milkani *"Sorrow of Mme. Shnajder"* 2008, starring Michele Placido, Anja Geislerova and Nik Xhelilaj. The film was the Albanian selection for the Academy Awards in 2009, and won Best Screenplay at Alexandria Film Festival in Egypt and Philosophical Film Festival in Krakow Poland. In the same year, he directed the short film *"She, the Saint"* All films are multi awarded in different International Film Festivals. Since 2007 he did over 20 documentaries covering nature, stories, and people. The short films he produced are *"Beyond the river"* 2011 directed by Sabir Kanaqi, *"Ana"* 2015 directed by Ajola Daja and *"The professional"* 2021 directed by Atina Laco. In 2012 for the one hundred year of Albanian Independence he produced the documentary *"Song of a nation"* directed by Petrit Ruka awarded as the best national documentary from the Cult Academy in 2013. In 2018 he produced and directed the documentary *"The dead generals of Albania"* by having an exclusive interview with Luciano Tovoli and his adventurous story in realizing the film *"The general of the dead army"* back in 1981, based on Ismail Kadare, starring Michel Picoli and Marcello Mastroiani. His latest film as producer *"Open door"* 2019 Directed by Florenc Papas has its premiere at Sarajevo Film Festival and was the Albanian Selection for the Academy Awards in 2021. For 2022 he produced the animation film *"Man"* directed by Artur Dauti and in process for the feature film *"Sage"* written and to be directed by Gentian Gjokopulli. Eno Milkani has directed more than 20 documentaries for Tv covering social issues, history and nature, like *"travelling"*, *"The old gate"*, *"The pledge"* and the serial *"The great attentats"* etc. In the last 17 years he teaches Film Directing/ Film History/ and Film Editing at "Marubi" Film Academy and the University of Arts in Tirana. He was member of the board of the Albanian Film Archive from 2014 until 2018. He is member of the Forum for the Protection of the Authors of Audio visual FAAD. In 2011 he cofounds the "Balkan Film Food Festival" that annually takes place in Pogradec near the Ohrid Lake, and he is the Artistic Director of the Festival. Since 2019 he is working with different producers for the development of his upcoming film project *"Sex cut"* written and to be directed by Eno Milkani. Since 2016 is an Associated Art Professor at the University of Arts of Tirana, in the Department of Film and Tv, Directing.

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Rovena VATA MIKELI, has completed her studies of *"Linguistics and Literature"* at the University of Tirana, Faculty of History-Philology, in 2008. She has also completed Master of Science Studies at the same university with the profile: *"General and Comparative Literature"*, in 2010. Dr. Rovena VATA is a Researcher-Albanologist. On June 17, 2013 she received the "Doctor" degree in Literary Studies, in the *"Literature and Mythology"* specialty at the Centre for Albanological Studies in Tirana. She has participated in 150 national and international conferences and symposia, in the field of Linguistics, Literature, Communication Sciences, Education, Cultural Anthropology and Law. She has published over 80 study articles in scientific-academic journals in: Albania, Kosovo,

Montenegro, Macedonia, Italy, Sweden, Romania, Canada, USA. She has been selected on leading boards of scientific and academic journals such as: *Alternativa* (Slovenia), *Anglisticum* (Macedonia), *Global-Challenge*, (Diplomatic Academy of Albania- Tirana), *Ditura* (Sweden), *Kuvendi* (USA), *Mirëdita* (Tirana). She is the author of two scientific monographs. Since 2010 she is a lecturer at universities in and outside the country for the following subjects: *Study and Academic Writing*, *Methodology of Albanian Language (Morphology)*, *Methods of Scientific Research in Education*, *Critical Thinking Development*, *Scientific and Artistic Methods*, *Writing and Legal Reasoning*, *Family Pedagogy*, *Education Management and Administration*, *Learning Methods*, *Curriculum Development*, *Education Policy and Education Legislation*, *Albanian History*, *Literary Albanian in the XVI-XVIII Century*, *Arbëresh Literature*, *Albanian drama*, *Training in Information etc.* She works at the Academy of Sciences of Albania in Tirana.

Prof. Dr. Lida MIRAJ graduated in *Architecture* from the State University of Tirana in 1977. In 1982, she obtained a second university degree in *Archaeology and Ancient History of Albania*, also from the State University of Tirana. In 1988, she earned the title of Doctor of Science in *Archaeology* from the Institute of Archaeology at the Academy of Sciences of Albania. During 1996–1997, she pursued postdoctoral studies at the French School in Rome; the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin; and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., a research institute affiliated with Harvard University (<http://www.doaks.org>, 1996–97, Byzantine Fellows List, Dumbarton Oaks). Prof. Dr. Lida Miraj is the author of numerous books and scientific articles published in academic journals both in Albania and internationally, focusing on issues in archaeology, architecture, and history. She has directed archaeological excavations and surveys, led monument restoration projects, designed architectural plans, conducted urban planning studies, and has been involved in the implementation and supervision of numerous construction projects since the 1990s. Prof. Dr. Miraj currently serves as President of the Albanian Association for Byzantine Studies; is a member of the Council of Europa Nostra (The Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe, affiliated with the European Commission and headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands) (<http://www.europanostra.org/council>); Vice President of the Albanian Association of Consulting Engineers, a member association of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC); member of the Albanian Association of Architects; and former Secretary General of the Albanian Archaeological Association. Over the years, she has taught History of Architecture and Architectural Restoration at various universities in Tirana. She is currently a full-time professor at the European University of Tirana, in the Department of Engineering and Architecture.

Gabriel MURSA is a professor of economic theory and history of economic thought at "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași, with activity in the field for over a quarter of a century. In 2011, he became the founding president of the Friedrich von Hayek Institute in Romania. Over time, he has written six books as a co-author, translated

fifty specialized works and coordinated the publication of many other works in the field. His main field of interest is related to the history of ideas, mainly economic ones, with an emphasis on those of liberalism. The favourite field of his professional efforts is economic education, especially among young people.

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Joniada MUSARAJ completed her university studies in 2007 in the Law Department at the Non-Public University “Luarasi” in Tirana. In 2009, she completed her Master’s studies at the International University of Struga, where she earned the title of Master in Legal Sciences, in the field of fundamental human rights and freedoms. In 2017, he received the scientific degree “Doctor of Science”, Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, University of Tirana, in the field of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In 2022, he completed his studies in the International Post Doctorate Program in “New Technologies and Law” offered by the “Mediterranea International Centre for Human Rights Research (MICHR)”, at the “Mediterranean” University, Department of Law, Economics and Human Sciences, Reggio Calabria (Italy). Then, in 2023, he received the title of “Associate Professor” at the University of Tirana. She has held the position of Head of the Department of Justice and later Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs at the Faculty of Political Sciences and Law, as well as Deputy Rector of the Aleksandër Moisiu” University of Durrës. In 2008 and onwards, Prof. Musaraj is engaged as a full-time lecturer at the Department of Justice where she holds the position of Head of the Department of Justice at the Faculty of Political Science and Law, University: Aleksandër Moisiu” Durrës. Her research activity is focused on the field of constitutional law. She is the author and co-author of several publications in scientific journals, regional, national and international conferences.

Publications: 2025 - *“The Albanian perspective under the spirit of European law for the protection of health at work”*, Journal: Revue Européenne du Droit Social, Issue Year: 66/2025; 2025 - *“The right to a fair legal process in European and electoral conventions”*, Journal: Revue Européenne du Droit Social, Issue Year: 66/2025, ISSN 2393 – 073X • ISSN–L 1843 – 679X; 2024 - *“Juveniles between crime and justice”*, Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development (IJRD), Vol. 11 Nr. 1 S1, ISSN: 2410-3411 E-ISSN: 2313-058X; 2021 - *“Legal Education and the Ethic of Order,”*, 23rd International Conference on Interdisciplinary Studies “The Post-Pandemic World: Towards a Digital Society,” April 2–3, ISBN 978-163877623-9, Brussels, Belgium. *“The Practice of the European Convention on Human Rights Regarding the Right to a ‘Reasonable Time’ in Civil Proceedings. The Impact of the Activity of Executive Offices in Albania,”*, International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, Vol. II, No. 2, ISSN 2286-4822, European Academic Research, Romania.

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Blerina MUSKAJ, completed her university studies at the University of Tirana in 2007, Faculty of Law. In 2010 she received her license as a lawyer, National Bar Association of Albania, Tirana. In the period 2010-2012 she completed her Bachelor's studies in “Diplomacy”, “Justiniani I” University, Faculty

of Diplomacy, Tirana. In 2011 she completed her MND studies in Civil Legal Sciences at the University of Tirana, Faculty of Law. In the period 2013-2014 she completed her Professional Master's studies in Public Law, Faculty of Law "Justiniani I" University, Tirana. In the period 2007-2010 she worked as a Diplomat - Consul at the Albanian Embassy in Rome. In 2010 she started working as a first lecturer at the "Aleksandër Moisiu" University in Durrës. In 2017, she was awarded the title of "Doctor of Science" at the University of Tirana, Institute of European Studies with excellent results of doctoral studies. In July 2023, she was awarded the academic title of "Associate Professor". Her academic and pedagogical experience includes activity as a lecturer at several universities in the country. She has participated in a considerable number of international symposiums, conferences and congresses and has published the results of scientific research in domestic and foreign scientific journals. She is the author of the text "European Law".

Publications: 2025 - "*The principle of non-discrimination at work as one of the fundamental human rights*", Journal: *Revue Européenne du Droit Social*, Issue Year: 66/2025; 2024 - "*The European Ombudsman. Frontex and Fundamental Rights*", *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, January – April 2024 Volume 9 Issue 1, ISSN 2414-8385 (Online) ISSN 2414-8377 (Print); 2024 - "*The Role of Frontex and Easo in the Field of Asylum Policies and the Guarantee of Respecting People's Rights and Integrity*", Vol. 11 No. 1 S1: April 2024, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)*; 2024 - "*The role of the European Union in the future prospects between employed and self-employed work*", Journal: *Revue Européenne du Droit Social*, Issue Year: 65/2024.

Cristian PREDA is a professor of political science at the University of Bucharest, where he has been teaching since 1992. Between 2009 and 2019 he was a member of the European Parliament. Latest publications: *Robul succesului* (Humanitas, 2022); *Rumâni fericiti. Vot și putere de la 1831 până în prezent*, ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită (Polirom, 2021); *Tiranul cu nas mare și cu suflet foarte mic. Lirică politică, sloganuri electorale și versificații satirice de campanie* (Polirom, 2020); *De ce ațipesc parlamentarii* (Humanitas, 2020). Also at Humanitas, the volume: *Ideologii și ideologi în România contemporană* is set to be published in 2025.

Ph.D. Stefano ROMANO, artist, curator and researcher. At the core of his research is the need to express the fragilities and contradictions hidden within the folds of society, often explored in relation to architecture, urban, and social contexts using a post-phenomenological spatiotemporal process. He graduated at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bergamo (Italy), then completed a Master's degree in *Landscape Design* at the Polis University in Tirana (Albania). He obtained a Ph.D. in Architecture and Urban Planning in a joint program between the University of Ferrara (Italy) and Polis University in Tirana (Albania). He currently works as a researcher at the Albanian Academy of Sciences, in the Centre for Art Studies, where he also serves as the scientific coordinator of the journal *Art Studies*. He's

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Revista *Polis* publică studii redactate în limbile **română și engleză**. **Toate articolele în limba română trebuie însoțite, obligatoriu, și de traducerea integrală în limba engleză**. Articolele trebuie să respecte normele general valabile pentru redactarea lucrărilor științifice, conținând în mod obligatoriu o parte introductivă, capitole / secțiuni distincte și concluzii, având dimensiuni cuprinse între **20.000 – 40.000 de caractere cu spații** (10-20 de pagini standard). Articolele vor fi redactate utilizând paginarea standard a programului Microsoft Word, folosind fontul **Times New Roman, 12 pct**, cu **spații de 1,5**, fără a lăsa spații libere între paragrafe. Prima pagină a lucrării va conține, obligatoriu, următoarele informații: titlu, autor (afiliere instituțională și adresă de corespondență), rezumat de 200-350 de cuvinte și 4-6 cuvinte cheie.

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Rezumat în limba engleză, 200-350 de cuvinte. Rezumatul va prezenta, pe scurt, conținutul lucrării, menționând metologia utilizată în cercetare, principalele premise, argumentele folosite și concluziile articolului. Vă rugăm să verificați corectitudinea gramaticală și lexicală a rezumatelor în limbi străine și să evitați folosirea programelor de traduceri automate. Ne rezervăm dreptul de a refuza rezumatele cu greșeli flagrante de traducere.

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Bibliografie

CARPINSCHI, Anton, BOCANCEA, Cristian, *Știința politicului. Tratat*, Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, Iași, 1998.

PETREU, Marta, *De la Junimea la Noica. Studii de cultură românească*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2011.

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Resurse electronice

STAN, Liliana, „Elemente ale metafizicii idealului la Petre Andrei”, *Transilvania*, Nr. 11, 2011, http://www.revistatransilvania.ro/nou/ro/anul-editorial-2012/cat_view/45-anul-editorial-2011.html, p. 60 (accesat pe 23 februarie 2013)

NOTĂ: Tabelele și figurile vor fi incluse în textul articolului și numerotate în ordinea apariției, după modelul de mai jos. Vă rugăm să nu folosiți tabelele și figurile în mod excesiv.

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Tabelul 1: *Model de tabel*

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Exemplu:

[...] Este o chestiune pe care politologul român Mattei Dogan o prezintă atât în studiile sale interbelice, cât și în lucrările recente¹. [...]

¹ Mattei Dogan, *Comparații și explicații în știința politică și în sociologie*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, 2010, pp. 241-261.

Bibliografia finală a lucrării reunește toate sursele citate în notele de subsol, listate în ordine alfabetică. **Resursele bibliografice consultate de pe Internet vor fi menționate într-o secțiune separată.** Citarea acestor resurse va respecta regulile generale privind citarea surselor electronice, precizând data la care documentul electronic a fost accesat de către autorul articolului.

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The *Polis* Journal of Political Science publishes articles and studies written in **Romanian and English**.

All articles should comply with the general standards of academic and scientific writing, and they must comprise an introductory part, distinct chapters / sections, and conclusions. The texts should have **20.000 to 40.000 characters with spaces** (10 to 20 standard pages).

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The first page of your article should include the following information: article title, author(s) name(s) (institutional affiliation and e-mail), an abstract of 200-350 words, and 4-6 keywords.

Please use the following template to format your paper.

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First name(s) SURNAME
Institutional affiliation
E-mail address

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Abstract in English, 200-350 words. The abstract should summarize the paper's content, mentioning: the research methodology used, the main hypotheses, the main arguments developed and the paper's conclusions. Please check the grammar and lexis of articles written in English if you are not a native speaker of this language and avoid using programs for automatic translation. We reserve the right to reject articles with flagrant translation mistakes.

Keywords: 4-6 keywords in English

All articles must comprise **an introductory part**, a section devoted to **the paper's content**, divided into chapters and subchapters – in which the research hypotheses mentioned in the introduction should be argued for or against -, and a section of **conclusions**.

Bibliography

- BELL, Daniel, *The End of Ideology. On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., 2001
- FREEDEN, Michael, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Claredon Press, Oxford, 1996
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NOTE: Tables and figures should be inserted in the text and numbered in order of appearance, according to the model below. Please do not use tables and figures in excess.

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Table 1: *Table model*

CITATION STYLE

The *Polis* Journal uses the reference style recommended by the Romanian Academy. In this system, the bibliographical resources quoted in the text are cited in footnotes.

Example:

[...] In is a matter that the Romanian political science scholar Mattei Dogan describes both in his interwar studies and in his recent works¹. [...]

¹ Mattei Dogan, *Comparații și explicații în știința politică și în sociologie*, Editura Institutul European, Iași, 2010, pp. 241-261.

The paper’s final **bibliography** assembles all the sources cited in footnotes, listed in alphabetical order. **The bibliographical resources consulted on the Internet are to be listed in a separate section.** These resources should be cited in agreement with the general rules relative to the citation of electronic bibliography by mentioning the day on which the electronic document was accessed by the author.

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Bun de tipar: 2025 • Apărut: 2025 • Format 16 × 24 cm



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