

BOOK REVIEWS

N. Iorga

Cuza Vodă Fondator al României, Ediție Inedită, Prefață și Postfață de Stelian Neagoe [N. Iorga, Cuza Vodă Founder of Romania, Unpublished Edition, Foreword and Afterword by Stelian Neagoe], The Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017, 453 p.

Methodical and true to the historical course, the acribios step bearing the signature of Stelian Neagoe, Historian and Researcher, must be approached not only as a finality of the decisive manifesting and consolidation activity of the historiographer, placed as the descendant of “scholars passionate about political history,” but, mostly, as an expected result of the intensive mission of revealing the cardinal marks that compose and define national history. In fact, it is an act of nuncupative stages coverage that points *The Union's Via Sacra*, a rite/ritualist itinerary of highlighting *a prodigal/triumphant vertebrality*, of examining precisely the places/data imprinted by/with History and Faith – from the *Forum* and higher part of the *Capitolinus*, to the *Jupiterian* temple: the 1859-Union Generation era, the 1918 Great Union; Cuza Vodă and Nicolae Iorga. The route, directed in this manner is subsumed under an actionable scenario, able to note “judgment values regarding the Union Idea” and meant to re-invigorate the contemporary ideas and theories scene (in times for celebration or in daily/ordinary context), reinstating “the mission and responsibility to keep, perpetuate and reunify the unionist inheritance of testamentary legacies of our illustrious predecessors, country makers, defenders and affectionate(s)” (pp. 14-15).

The Edition: *N. Iorga, Cuza Vodă Founder of Romania*, amplifies its ritualist perspective and displays its original value – *the unpublished* – by means of a triple, re-establishing constitutive appeal.

A first level envisions the celebration of the fundamental act of union consecration, the festive marking of an historical event with its crucial-determinative valences – the celebration, on January 24th 2017, of the 155th anniversary from founding Romania. The present tome is ready to be launched for welcoming the Great Union Centennial celebration 1918-2018, the research fixating as main interest point the 1859-1909 Union semi-centennial year, a moment that confirms the emblematic status of Cuza Vodă, appreciated as “one of the most beloved Romanian rulers, by N. Iorga, *historian and man*” (p. 17).

A second constitutive-methodological level envisions the significance of the double tribute brought by N. Iorga to Cuza Vodă, affirmed and celebrated by means of antalogating and printing Iorga's speeches and writings, reproduced by primary sources (except the article provided with three clarification annotations afterwards – *Cuza's Statue*, transcribed from *Oameni care au fost*, vol. I, 1934, from the conference held at the Bucharest Cultural League, on February 27th of 1915, *Napoleon third party within the Principate's Union*, a text considerably revised by Iorga and the part *Administration under Cuza Vodă's ruling* – Ateneul Român, November 27th of 1910, whose stenogram was never published). The method used consists in studying History's crossing conducting substance's flow, launching together essential knots, proving not only content and sense but also reporting to the main founders : *the creator-hero, emblematical* Cuza Vodă, “maker and heroically chivalric guardian of the Romanian Union” (Iorga, 1908, p. 30) and *the prodigal savant, national history wise man* Nicolae Iorga: “royal edition,” the tome “is twice special – having as author the national historian Nicolae Iorga who, at his turn, has Cuza Vodă – founder of Romania as his main hero” (p. 16). But, moreover, the present step demands to be integrated into the declamatory register “of rising ancestors back to the times when they were able to talk to the Gods” (Iorga, 1939, p. 36) – *Stichomythia* that depicts the Homeric Historian's wish to listen again, *uplifting and convincing*, the Goddesses' Achilles Peleus chant.

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In the spirit of the “Present greeting Tradition (...) in the light of gratitude and glory” (Iorga, 1908, p. 30), Stelian Neagoe proclaims himself as more than the knowing bard of History’s wilderness, defines himself as a Historian involved in a public manner into continuing the accomplishment of sense giving significance – *A statue to Cuza Vodă!* – (“we confess that, continuously writing the second tome of *History of the Romanians Union under Cuza Vodă*, we are obsessed by the sad image of Bucharest without the statue of the first and only earthly Ruler of Romania, Alexandru Ioan Cuza” – p. 401), and designer of an “Odyssey of the absence of the great Ruler’s statue.” *His admonishment* (in the spirit of Iorga, 1910, p. 152) on thorough, justificatorily documenting attached to the memoirs, proposals and projects, or to open letters addressed to Romania’s post-December political decendants, reconfirms Iorga’s imperative on ritualizing, (as *duty* and *joy* – Iorga, 1910, p. 158) remembering, by means of monument cult, of ritually placing the “Gods in the Romanian historic Olympus” (Iorga, 1903, p. 22).

The relatively late research made by Iorga to Cuza Vodă emblemizing features but also the consistency on reporting and referring to the named model, emerged on the 1903 issuing background (postponed at its turn) of the tomes *Cuza Vodă Ruling* published by Alexandru D. Xenopol, a publishing event responsible for triggering not only the act of constituting an initiative committee dedicated to raising funds for building a statue of Cuza in Piața Unirii (Union Square) of Iași, but also with establishing an inaugural landmark for the series of Iorga’s articles, studies, books, conferences, speeches and valedictories. All these arguments are found in the strategy of overcoming the professorial pattern (*old historian Xenopol*), but also the form of re-dosing a not so vigorous project that lacked, “instead of a rational praise, the warm breath of understanding sympathy” (Iorga, 1903, p. 24) [Iorga will denounce even the lack of writings regarding Cuza’s autopsy, referring to the quickness in researching, in this sense, of the biographic-historians – A. D. Xenopol and C. C. Giurescu – p. 130]. Balanced in the hope of harmonizing Cuza’s pleas with the significance of representative historic figures and their integration in the historic relevant models (the significance of May 10th is aimed), geared up to the *impetuous* flow of *triumphant orator* – Kogălniceanu’s speech –, of preventing the official-commemorating indifference and absence (“big and mighty temporaries” – Sturdzas, Brătieni or Hohenzollerns), of issuing a critical attitude addressed to the cuzofobic politics of popularizing and pricing the fundamental moments, crucial in Romanian’s history, reference to a peaceful context, reported to the objectives and conflictual scenarios of the moment (the first Balkan war, international context and conjunctures – the 1935 January 24th Conference prepares the Great Union Romania of 1918, in order to resist outside revisionist – revanchard dangers) – Iorga’s un-syncope step certifies its continuum-continued attribute of evoking, (by means of a constant chronology – annual or multi – between 1903-1940; except the nine years spent in January in Italy and France – 1924-1927; 1929-1931; 1933; 1926 and the years/periods of acute implication in the political course of the period – 1904-1906, 1917, 1928 and 1938).

The commemorative destiny and the imperious need of moving and maintaining – as a personal and collective consciousness awareness act – within a *serene world*, is dosed by Nicolae Iorga and re-interpreted by Stelian Neagoe, by means of correlating the events and reference to glorious historic knots able to mark in a solemn way the historic-relevant moments. Pleading for celebrating on January 24th of 1909 the semi-centennial of Moldavia and Muntenia Romanian Principates, the parliamentary speech of Nicolae Iorga evokes the process of constituting the national unitary state and accomplishing of a Romanian *uncut* process, by founding Romania as an unique state recognized by Europe – “the anniversary of founding a country cannot be celebrated anyhow but by appealing to common sense” – granting an important role to the *anniversary celebrations* (Iorga recalls the anniversary, in 1906, of forty years from establishing the Dynasty in Romania and the celebration, in *solemn* way of 1848 and *glamorous* of 1866) granting a particular significance – of celebrating with *dignity*, the anniversary dedicated to the Principates Union. The just commemoration of the anniversary context represents a sign of people’s sanity and marks a moment of pious reflection, of remembering the “great days,” “of questioning the past,” of researching the generation’s soul that lives related to the past generation’s breath, a symbolic gesture of memory appreciation; in fact, underlined the thought’s trajectory, subsumed to the duty of re-envisioning and perpetuate the people’s union and moral unity, both founded on justice and culture.

The organization/conducting of commemorations (*Transylvanian Gazette*, November 19th 1920, pp. 268-269) cannot be delimited from the active patriotic conscience and the report present-past-future, accepting by the present “the only reparation without the being,” absorbed by the “past in which all happened” and “loaded with value and open to the future’s perspective”: “to speak about the past is therefore to weigh the present and prepare the future. There is no other better education. From the present you cannot take out what is offensive and upsets, what damages; from the past remains the durable fact, the dominating or characteristic figure,” sole retrospective appeal that “spiritually strengthens and whole(s)” (p. 269).

The national holidays ask to be conceived if not – following a classical model “totally citizen-like,” at least in the area of a mature official politics, able to “distance itself from the moment’s necessities and adding-up perspective,” by detachment from a vague ideological pressure: “we unite the Principates in each and every moment in which, with a serious spirit, with that sentimental atmosphere that never spoils the serious spirit, we take care of this fact. The events never finish, they are in an eternal becoming, the function of all following generations” (pp. 279-280). But, moreover, it is proper to be correlated to a double reporting to the things which the present does not possess and to the aspects of which the past – without its own will – did not enjoin (p. 281), all these being coordinated and monitored by the actual strict context of the *now*, by the duty to “search for interpreting the events in which the people’s being is comprised,” by “the unstopped coming back on accomplished things” (p. 371), prepared and carried out with patience. The stake is reaffirmed also by situating the year of 2018 under the Centennial sign – an accomplished historic generational project, resonating to Iorga’s optimistic idea who imagined and hoped for – another/new generation capable of doing and giving (the same as) much and decided to dedicate itself with (the same) disposal, (only to) the good!

Viorella Manolache

Alexandru Marghiloman

Unirea Basarabiei cu România Mămă, 27 Martie 1918, editor Stelian Neagoe, Bucharest, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale “Ion I. C. Brătianu” al Academiei Române, 2018, 218 p.

In the year celebrating the Centenary since the Great Union, the Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy initiated a special collection of works devoted to this major event in national history. And the first volume of this collection is a book honouring the first 100 years of union for the first Romanian province – Bessarabia – on March 27, 1918 with Romania.

The historian Stelian Neagoe is the editor of the book “Alexandru Marghiloman, Union of Basarabia with Romania, March 27 1918,” the first book in the collection, a salutary initiative to publish a volume dedicated to Alexander Marghiloman, who served as a prime minister at the moment of declaration of the Union with Romania by the province which was snatched from Moldavia by the Tsarist Empire in 1812. Who can offer the most eloquent testimony to the historical events if not the one found at the highest level to manage internal and external affairs of the Romanian State at the time!

The volume comprises several parts, the first of which, introductory, is a brief bio-bibliographic presentation “Alexandru Marghiloman, a prime minister sacrificed on the altar of the Greater Romania,” reviews the main landmarks of the political life of the political man who played an essential role, but a sacrificial one, towards the end of the First World War. The second part looks at all the speeches and commentary concerning Alexandru Marghiloman and the political event with which he has linked his name eternally, within national history. Here are followed also the excerpts from the Prime Ministers’ Political Notes on the events in Bessarabia from the pre-union period and

until the resignation of the Marghiloman Cabinet, accompanied by annexes with official documents from Alexandru Marghiloman's archive, as well as extracts from the parliamentary speeches he held in the June-October 1918 period and a speech at the anniversary banquet held in Bucharest on 27 March 1924.

A convinced philo-German politician, Marghiloman came as the head of the Romanian government under widely known historical conditions. He was a "bad weather jacket for the State, the Dynasty and the Army" (p. 8), as the editor of the volume characterizes it. But he knew how, under the harsh conditions of the war; to skilfully manage the situation created by the beginning of the Russian Revolution and to meet the desire of the Romanians from Bessarabia– the one that once was "the jewel in the Moldavian Crown (p. 41) – to unite with the country. In the political speeches and notes (published two years after his death but which were withdrawn and suppressed by the authorities of time) (p. 11), Marghiloman recalls all the events he has patronized as prime minister and explains the decisions he has made concerning Bessarabia. He was the one who, as he judged in one of the speeches, had a major contribution to the "first ray of light (the unification of Bessarabia with Romania, *our note*), which turned the black and gloomy sky that had pressed for 18 months over the whole of Romania, it was the drop of dew which fell on the shivering dry lips of the bleeding Romania. And above all it *heralded that the resurrections are always possible*" (p. 74).

Part three of the volume contains "The historical annotations of the editor," regarding the history of Bessarabia starting with 1812, when a part of Moldavia was torn away to be given away to the Tsarist Empire, analysing the territorial exchanges that affected the area, as they were decided in the negotiations among the great powers of the time. Only after 106 years, Bessarabia returned to the homeland, following the "national resurrection," which took place within an internationally favourable context, capitalized on by Romanian politicians from the right side of the Prut River, supported by the great mass of the inhabitants of Bessarabia, who were of Romanian ethnicity. The national resurrection, as the historian Stelian Neagoe calls it, includes all the events that took place in Bessarabia, starting with the proclamation of autonomy, continuing with the proclamation of the independence of the province and which has culminated with the declaration of Union with Romania. In this chapter are revealed all the events that took place to the right side of the Prut River until the proclamation of the Union and the festivities that took place following the enactment of this historical act. These are events springing from all strata of Bessarabian society – soldiers, professors, students, pupils, priests etc. – who, despite the forced Russification process to which Bessarabia was subjected for more than a century, succeeded in maintaining their consciousness of national identity and of belonging to the Romanian people. The act of the Union of Romania with Bessarabia was afterwards enacted by the Parliament of Romania, the solemn meeting dedicated to this moment being captured in the third subchapter of this part, which ends with the presentation of the text of the Treaty signed in Paris, at the 20th of October 1920, by which the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan recognized the new Eastern border of Romania.

This novel volume is completed by the publication of facsimiles of important documents of the celebrated moment, among which pages from the minutes of the first meeting of the Country Council, an official address of the Council of General Directors of Bessarabia for the ministry of War of the government of Romania, the Resolution of the Moldovan Block concerning the union of Bessarabia with Romania, the declaration of the Country Council concerning the union of Bessarabia with "Mother Romania" etc. Numerous illustrations of good quality from the time of the events taking place in Bessarabia and of the political leaders of the moment from the right side of the Prut River have the role of fulfilling this anniversary volume. A volume that has the merit of resituating Alexandru Marghiloman among the political figures who have made Greater Romania, through his contribution to the union of Bessarabia with the Mother-Country.

Cristina Vohn

Dan Dungaciu, Petrișor Peiu

Reunirea. Realități, costuri, beneficii, Litera Publishing House, Bucharest-Chișinău, 2017, 264 p.

The Republic of Moldova – a space without cardinal points

Victor Bârsan

(Diplomat, former Ambassador of Romania to the Republic of Moldova)

Dan Dungaciu and Petrișor Peiu's monograph of an unfortunate and complicate love: that between Romania and the Republic of Moldova. We know, from the very first lines of *Ana Karenina* that all the happy couples are happy in the same way; but each unhappy couple is unhappy in its own way. And we are unhappy and this in an atypical and extremely entangled manner. Even more, the authors explain, this unhappy love should, apparently, end in a marriage.

As contrived marriages often become stable unions, if not even successes, there is the hope that unhappiness should alleviate or even disappear, asymptotically. However, until then, the situation is bad; the Republic of Moldova appears as a space without cardinal points, where nothing could be built. The Bessarabians could not find in the Republic of Moldova a national identity (the matter is seriously analysed in the book and the conclusion is indubitable), but merely a regional one. Nothing more normal since the identity of the Bessarabians cannot be found there were the Bessarabians have their roots, namely, within the global Romanian space. Thus, the only solution for the stabilization of the Republic of Moldova seems to be the union with Romania – the reunion.

Indifferent to what the future should have in store for us, this matter of reunion should be lucidly analyzed; exactly what the authors do, in a rigorous, competent, complex manner, unaffected by the monomania of "political correctness." And this is a question to be approached with responsibility and patriotism. In essence, the reunion is – according to the analytical perspective of the authors – a game within which all the good-willed players win. The book is an incentive to approach this game with optimism and to be prepared for it, when that time shall come.

The reunion and the eyes of Bessarabia

Gheorghe Pârja

(Writer, journalist at *Graiul Maramureșului*)

In the Centenary Year I attempt to clarify for myself what is going on with Bessarabia? These books are extremely useful. They have taught me that "when we are speaking about the past, we should not camp there," which appeals to me the most. The recent appearance of the book entitled *Reunirea. Realități, costuri, beneficii* by Dan Dungaciu and Petrișor Peiu (Editura Litera, Bucharest-Chișinău, 2017) tells us what is going on with us as Romanians, and how we relate to Moldova Republic.

Yes, this is a book about the end of hypocrisy. That is, between Bucharest and Chișinău (Kishinev) there is not going to be a discussion about the Union of 1918, during the Centenary of the Great Union. Dan Dungaciu stated in an interview that there is no project planned by the government of Moldova Republic to celebrate this event. That gentleman, Dodon, president of republic, proved to be the usual suspect number one in ignoring the Union of Bessarabia with Romania in 1918.

But let me return to the book, which is acknowledged by two academicians: Ioan-Aurel Pop and Nicolae Dabija. The historian Pop encourages us with an appropriate thought for the Centenary: "We are condemned to Union and Reunion by our very Romanian calling." Nicolae Dabija notices that "at this time, Bessarabia is the child stolen and abandoned," stating that the Romanian nation depends on where the borders of the European Union extend: to the Prut River, to the Dniester River, or beyond it. The two authors, Dungaciu and Peiu, open their book with a statement which

is difficult to accept for many: “The only, but the only solution for European integration for the Republic of Moldova remains unification with Romania. The rest is self-delusion or throwing dust in one’s eyes.” To this answer the authors analyzing the realities (without hypocrisy), the costs, realistically balanced and the benefits, with maximum lucidity. Yes, this is the back-bone of the book: the union as an exercise of lucidity.

This book published on the threshold of the Centenary places the relations between the two states in front of its readers through an identity matrix. It emphasizes the concepts and the perspectives which ease the understanding of this extremely complicated situation from over the Prut River (the first two parts). Then, there is an analysis of the economic situation in the Republic of Moldova, especially after 2014 (the next two parts). And third, we are going through the costs for the reunification of the two states, made after the German model. This fastidious approach, with quotes and references avoided, works in exchange for a smooth, accessible and clarifying text. The Euro-Atlantic extension towards the East is the story of the gradual transformation of the border frontier. At Chişinău until today there are two groups which interpret the *Declaration of Independence*. Some believe in an independence from Russia, the others, in an independence from Romania. The most unequivocal position was that of the Romanian Orthodox Church. At the 27th of August 1991, Patriarch Teoctist addressed the Parliament at Chişinău a message by which the whole of Orthodox Christianity “is close to their brothers and sisters of [the same] language, of nation and of faith. [We are] Determined to decide freely their future and to proclaim their total independence from the USSR.” Grey-headed Toader, an interlocutor of Mister Dungaciu, said: “Fortunate is to be Bessarabia when it was sanctified by the Steps of its Patriarch.” Maybe in the year of the Centenary we will witness the first visit of a Patriarch of Romania over the Prut River. The authors consider also the international perceptions of the correlations between the two Romanian States. My attention was caught by an exceptional American document, the 148 Resolution, by which the American Senate “decides that the USA Government should support the efforts of the Republic of Moldova in the negotiation about the reunion of Romania with the Republic of Moldova” (28th of June 1991). Self-determination refers to North Bukovina. Reference is made to Paris Peace Treaty of 1920. The only difference was that those who have taken the power in Romania had no intention of doing anything – on the contrary, they have decided “not to address the problem of Bessarabia.”

Then the founding myths of the Moldova Republic are presented: the territory, the nation, the language, the history, the national symbols, the economy, social cohesion. They underline the roles of the two voyvod in Maramureş, Dragoş şi Bogdan, in the formation of the independent State, Moldova. Political and public discourses are reviewed. It examines a pro-Russian speech, a Soviet Moldovan speech, the new poly-ethnic and multicultural discourse. Unionist Moldovanism, this political oxymoron, is reflected in discursive strategies found in numerous political declarations. The essential episode for the understanding of the identity phenomenon is not analysed, “The Moldova Republic Census” financed by Romania. The results delayed for almost three years. Confusions well-handled were also instilled. The data from this census, despite the lack of credibility, shall constitute the bases of future policies and messages of the leaders from Chişinău or Moscow toward Bucharest. “It is profoundly regrettable, the authors state, that such an extremely useful census for the Republic of Moldova be used as an instrument of manipulation.” We are shown with arguments that any discussion about Union or Reunion can be conducted only in the terms of international agreements and legislation, including under the terms of the Helsinki Agreement (1975).

The stakes of Moscow in Chişinău are discussed – maintaining of the Euro-Atlantic border on the Prut River. The Transnistrian problem is approached in detail. What does Russia want? Transnistria is like a suitcase without a handle. The two authors do not forget their sociological training and fully exercise it. This gives the analysis a supplementary credibility in what concerns the potential union, the union of the heart, the union of the mind and passive union. With the following observation: for Bucharest, in the year of the Centenary serious challenges are to come and these should be met accordingly. There is a suggestive metaphor associated to a reality: the smart calf sucks from two cows. It is the expression of ambiguity. Maybe there are even more nourishing springs if we are to count Europe, too. The mysterious stolen billion is as mentioned. Its search became a confrontation without prisoners. Looking also at the leaders involved in the political life at Chişinău, the authors arrive at the conclusion that it is not the money that buys power in the

Republic of Moldova, but power is money! The crisis of pro-European governance is discussed, which is more obvious after 2014. There are no official visits to Chişinău, the marching bands go silent and the European flags ostentatiously fluttered in 2009 were removed. It is a crisis of political projects, inclusive of unionist projects on both sides of the Prut River. The Republic of Moldova should opt either for Romania or for Russia, as the European Union, for now, is out of discussion. To put it more literarily, we come to notice the factual state, the grey area “where neither the angels are entirely white, nor the devils entirely black.” Chişinău enters the axis Moscow-Budapest. Hence the provocations addressed to Romania. In Dodon’s vision “everybody knows that a part of Romania’s territory is Moldovan territory,” or the affirmation that “Romania appropriated the territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina.” We receive the advice that Romania should not “hastily get involved in a game it cannot win.” A separate chapter is dedicated to the reign of the binomial Plahotniuc-Dodon. That is, those who, in tandem, are ruling the Republic of Moldova nowadays. Against this background, the media is invaded by Russia. The binomial functions at maximal levels and defy anyone attempting to oppose it. It defies the official European representatives. This is a Russian model. At this moment, the unionist electorate from the other side of the Prut River has no place to discharge its electoral will.

The chapter dedicated to the lucidity of a vision for tomorrow is structured around the Project of Reunion and economic debate. We are reminded of the euphoric period (natural, I’d say) in 1990 when there were bets on the natural rebirth and the Reunion of the Romanian nation. But the two Romanian States continued in opposite directions. Romania went toward the West, while Moldova Republic attempted to trick life.

Now the authors are encouraging us to answer a series of questions. Why would Romania propose the union? Why would Moldova Republic accept the union? The authors have their answers. We are presented with the economic problematic of reunion. To draw the correct conclusions there is the comparison with the data concerning the reunion of Germany. Or, there are the data concerning the reunion of the Korean Peninsula where there is a Minister of reunification. Romania needs expansion to ensure the growth of its own industry. The Republic of Moldova needs investment and financial assistance. The authors advance a bold, but realistic proposal: the realization of a national project generated and sustained by Bucharest. And this support should be independent of the regional evolution of events. Romania as a State on the edge of the Euro-Atlantic border should have its eyes wide open toward the East. The eyes of Bessarabia should look toward the places from where history speaks to the world. The authors of this book offer a discussion about what is going on to the left of the Prut River. This is a vision characterized by a lucid optimism in what concerns Reunion. There are arguments such as “as long as eight out of ten inhabitants between the Prut River and the Dniester River are of Romanian ethnicity (even though they call themselves Moldovans) and as long as three quarters of the population between the Prut River and the Dniester River declare Romanian language to be their mother tongue (although some call it Moldovan) the option of the Reunification of Romania with Moldova Republic is available anytime.” The appeal of the Romanian academicians to the Romanian people resonates [with the previous argument]: “Let us honour our heroes, let us be at their higher level, leaving for the following generations, for all the inhabitants of Romania, a united country, a sovereign country, lovingly-bound to its past and to its history, with self-respect, master of its own land, educated and prosperous, a country of the European Union, but with its own, Romanian identity.”

Reunirea. Realităţi, costuri, beneficii is a book emanating trust. For it includes information and arguments, but also because it was thought by Dan Dungăciu, sociologist, professor at Bucharest University, director of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy and by Petrişor Peiu, PhD, from the Bucharest Polytechnics University, with economic and diplomatic responsibilities. Some are asking: Who is to write this national project? How many people should be in the street to accomplish the Union? This book stares straight in the eyes of Bessarabia. And it stares into the eyes of Romania, as well as in the eyes of the world.

Translations by Henrieta Anișoara Șerban

Angela Botez, R.T. Allen, Henrieta Anișoara Șerban (ed.)

Lucian Blaga – Selected Philosophical Extras, Vernon Press, Delaware, 2018, 175 p.

Structured in 11 chapters of particular importance, the volume entitled *Lucian Blaga – Selected Philosophical Extras* aims to present, for the first time in book form, a series of representative extracts from Lucian Blaga's work in order to emphasize the extent, depth, originality and continuing philosophical importance of the Romanian philosopher who was to change the world's vision of metaphysics.

Formulated as a mixture between autobiographical elements and sequences extracted from a progressive career path, the introductory chapter, *Life and Philosophy*, aims to familiarize the reader with both Blaga's life and work. Born in Transylvania on May 9th 1905, Lucian Blaga becomes a defining symbol for the Romanian culture of the 20th century, influencing poets who wrote at that time and contributing decisively to the development of a national conscience by introducing new elements such as the metaphysics of knowledge, the philosophy of unconscious categories and the philosophy of cultural styles.

The originality of Blaga's system lies precisely in the theorization of the method of antinomy, by joining and exploring dual and complementary concepts such as *consciousness* and *unconsciousness*, *enstatic* and *ecstatic intellect*, *Kantian* and *abyssal categories* as duplicates, *Luciferian* and *paradisiac types of knowledge*. Thus, placed under the sign of mystery, style and culture, the four trilogies (the *Trilogy of Knowledge*, the *Trilogy of Culture*, the *Trilogy of Values* and the *Cosmological Trilogy*) propose the investigation of the cognitive dimensions of science through a multifaceted, ontological, cultural, historical and axiological context.

The *Philosophical self-presentation*, a lecture delivered at the University of Cluj in 1938, comes with an unprecedented approach to the metaphysical vision of existence, highlighting the similarities that exist between Blaga's thinking and the structure of a multi-cupola church. In Blaga's *Trilogies*, leitmotifs transcend space-time boundaries. As a result, they tend to interweave and return from one study to another in rhythmical alternation. The idea of *mystery* becomes an eloquent example as long as we perceive it both as a vital element for the material existence and as a defining element in the formative process of human entities' consciousness. In order to support his theory, Blaga brings into discussion an antinomy duet and highlights both the differences and the similarities that lie behind those concepts. The *paradisiac knowledge*, linked to the perceptible world, opposes *Luciferian knowledge*, a symbol of mystery, of unconsciousness, whose existence depends on the presence of so-called revelatory metaphors.

The *Dogmatic Aeon* (1931) reveals another philosophical motif identified in Blaga's philosophical system, more precisely the *new spirituality* that emerges on the background of a metaphysical and spiritual crisis. This concept brings into discussion the resemblance between our age and the Hellenistic one, both producers of aeons. The aeon, a long historical period, is based on a notable advance of human consciousness, its aspirations being placed under the sign of universalism and ecstatic intellect. Blaga asserts that, during those times, life was driven from a spiritual center. In order to make things clear, he provides examples such as Asia's Buddhism and Europe's Christianity. In essence, by introducing the concept of a dogmatic aeon, the Romanian philosopher invests the concept of *dogma* with epistemological and methodological valences, trying to reconcile, as far as possible, the philosophy with religion and theology.

Moreover, *The Divine Differentials* (1940) aims to present an original cosmogony theory in which the Great Anonym, a unitary, extramundane and autarchic entity, plays a key role. In order to avoid the occurrence of a cosmic anarchy caused by the presence of many Gods, the Great Anonym limits rather than uses his creative potential to the maximum. Hence, he manages to ensure the infinity of the theological process. By self-limiting, the Great Anonym brings to life those so-called *divine differentials*, minimized segments of his substance or, more precisely, infinitesimal particles of Godhead. According to Blaga's point of view, this Divine being cannot be considered a creator if we take into consideration the ability of 'self-reproducing' himself *ad infinitum*, in an identical way.

Transcendental Censorship (1934), the fifth chapter of the volume mentioned above, brings into discussion the leitmotif of mystery, already known to be the center of Blaga's thinking. The mystery is perceived as a metaphysical nucleus of knowledge, encompassing the epistemological horizon a whole *mundus conoscendi*, respectively the Luciferian world. Unlike other philosophers who tried to annihilate or to deny the presence of the mystery, Lucian Blaga proposes its intensification, translated subsequently into intellectual exaltation.

The extract from *Luciferian Knowledge* (1993) aims to complete the types of knowledge identified and presented in Blaga's previous works. The philosopher brings into play two new concepts, respectively *plus – knowledge* and *minus – knowledge*. If the first type of knowledge is related to the sphere of the perceptible things, the second one is conditioned by the existence of a progressive and visionary thinking. *Minus-knowledge* has no correspondence in the factual universe. However, it cannot be said that this type of knowledge is anti-logical. In fact, it presents a wide range of metalogical features thanks to the mixture between antinomy terms and the rejection of intuition as an instrument of research. According to Lucian Blaga, *minus-knowledge* does not deny, but uses perceptions in order to draw the lines of a new logic. More specifically, it extends the unknown and defines it with various formulas.

Science and Creation (1942) aims to highlight the difference between man and animal, having as a starting point the types of knowledge specific to each of them. Unlike animals which own a type of awareness, concrete and directed towards bodily needs, man is able to live in a universe full of mystery and to express revelatory acts. But man's type of knowledge cannot exist in the absence of the abyssal or stylistic categories whose main goal is to guarantee its verisimilitude. The abyssal categories are related to man's inner universe and, implicitly, to his unconscious truths. Taking into consideration their interdependence, the abyssal categories give the measure of the *stylistic field* and assign to it the role of modeling works of art, metaphysical conceptions and scientific doctrines.

Through the study entitled *The Genesis of Metaphor and the Meaning of Culture* (1937), Blaga develops his theory of the *ontological mutation*, produced by cultural creations in the process of the birth of revelatory. The philosopher draws attention on two types of metaphors, namely manufactory and revelatory. While manufactory metaphors belong to the concrete world, revelatory ones break away from the human existence, intensifying the meaning of the object to which it joins and trying to reveal its hidden dimension. Man, in order to become 'Man' in the true sense of the word, has undergone both a mutation in his biological structure and an ontological mutation. If animals possess only a functional intelligence that allows them to create non-stylistic and non-temporal civilizations, man overcame his status of Divine creation and became a creator of culture. Thus, he was endowed with the ability to lay the foundations of a civilization, variable in stylistic and historical terms.

Horizon and Style (1935) focuses on *style*, one of Blaga's fundamental categories. According to Lucian Blaga, because man exists in a cultural world, styles pervade all his work. From this standpoint, style becomes the permanent medium in which we breathe even when we do not realize it. In this extract, the philosopher demonstrates the existence of a stylistic unity manifested at the level of human creation as well as at the level of a culture or of a spiritual period. Lucian Blaga notices that one of the most pressing issues that arise in the sphere of knowledge is to define the phenomenon called *style* through its ontological object status. As long as a work of art, a moral principle or a mathematical idea can be perceived as phases of intentional consciousness, human manifestations need a different element, in this case, the so-called *abyssal categories* that give the measure of the *stylistic matrix*. As a consequence, Blaga introduces into philosophy a new discipline named *abyssal noology*, whose main goal is to deal with the structures of the unconscious mind.

The volume entitled *Lucian Blaga – Selected philosophical extracts* ends with an excerpt from The Trilogy of Culture, namely *The Mioritic Space* (1936), one of the most famous Romanian philosophical works. Blaga proposes a unitary stylistic vision of Romanian culture, giving *doina* a key role. In this instance, the horizon goes beyond its primary sense that of demarcation line between telluric and cosmic space. Afterwards, it becomes, in a phenomenological expanded sense, a phenomenon that defines a certain form of experience. From Blaga's point of view, *doina*, the

Romanian folk song, is the supreme expression of the unique *spatial matrix*. That undulated *mioritic* space, related to the hill/valley alternation, is the finest expression of the Romanian soul, always able to be reborn from its own ashes. The feeling of destiny, marked by ups and downs, can find a correspondence in the depths of the subconscious. *Plaiul*, the connecting bridge between man and nature, becomes a witness to the Romanian people's *fatum*, an aspect clearly revealed in *Miorița (The Ewe Lamb)*. However, Blaga's notion of space, integrated into a spiritual setting, becomes the place where the soul achieves its fulfilment. More than this, it is also embodied in a sense of destiny like the wind in the sails of a ship.

Georgiana Chivescu

Ion Dur

Cioran. According to the original, Bucharest: Tritonic, 2016, 194 p.

Cioran, the "Knight of the Nothingness"

After launching in 2000 a first volume dedicated exclusively to Cioran, *The paper of turnsole. Cioran unedited*, the professor and philosopher Ion Dur publishes at the end of 2017 *Cioran. According to the original*. The book reviews the controversies surrounding the philosopher, the ways in which he was commemorated, and also the manner in which his writings in the Romanian and French spaces were perceived. Another important aspect of Ion Dur is that related to the attack upon Cioran's criticism. He synthesizes the abundant studies about him and analyses them combatively, focussing on the issues addressed, all in a bold, but deferential process to the one who was the "knight of the nothingness" (Dur, 2016, 79-83). The approach is all the more important as it works with some of Cioran's manuscripts, but also with some of his correspondence.

From the perspective of the title, the volume announces a particularly courageous act of choosing to analyse *Cioran, according to the original*. Relativity essentially hangs on its original version, but also on the various interpretations that have orbited around his writings. The game of dissimulation – towards himself and towards readers or those close to him – makes Cioran one of the hard-to-define figures, but it exerts a strong attraction on everyone, as if there is in each a definitively interrogating part resonating with the author.

Originating from "the attenuated people's country" (Cioran apud Dur, 2016, 93), the philosopher being no exception himself, Ion Dur's impression is that Cioran has an infinitesimal predisposition for hope and an incalculable Nihilist dimension. Under this latter aspect he is frequently similar to his German homologous, Friedrich Nietzsche.

"Alone, lonely and singular" (Dur, 2016, 32), as the author says, Cioran experiences in himself the pain of insomnia, community loneliness, agnostic agitation, ethnic non-rooting, anti-racist disgust and intuitionist drawbacks. These refusals of conformism of any kind are meticulously dissected in the book by Ion Dur, an author who raises many questions and gives few answers, precisely to deny the existence of Cioran personally to each reader. Cioran is polysemantic and may exist in different versions; his lyricism contains expressions still unfinished as nuances and interpretations.

Although suffering, Cioran is not an ascetic because the ascetic tortures himself to punish the wandering of life, Cioran is tortured to compensate the wanderings of death. According to the author, Cioran is a moral loner with a power of hardly imagined mercy. From the pain he feels, he fears "not to become a saint" (Cioran, *The Book of Delusions*, 12). Ion Dur tries to explain Cioran as the one engaged between "God's time" and "the time of the Devil" (Cioran apud Dur, 2016, 107), he explains the perversion of Cioran's faith and unbelief through the exclusively tragic approach to life. Exalted by the "tremor of individuality" (Cioran, *The Book of Delusions*, 19), man can observe spiritual values at a higher level. Will Cioran's argument condescend to unity? Ion Dur suggests that this may be possible.

The author captures the nuances of Cioran's flesh and blood, most probably rightly, the premise that Cioran was not a defeated, but a man in revolt in the manner of Camus. He is considered in this analytical approach as a patient healed by the pursuit of writing, which is not meant to take the artist out of isolation and to show his resemblance to others, as is the case of Camus, but, on the contrary, as a channel of expression of his intimate fragility. For Cioran writing is the instrument that helps him to live on, it has a distinctive role, not a Universalist, and it represents *therapy* (I would dare to say *Therapy*), as Ion Dur suggests.

Cioran's melody – "I hear life" (Cioran, *The Book of Delusions*, 8) – vibrates with extremes and turns its incapacity to ignore the unreality of earthly mirages into "a pleasant chaos" (Cioran, *The Book of Delusions*, 6). Ion Dur describes Cioran penetrated by the metaphysical sadness that precedes the man (the so-called "tragic anthropology" (Cioran, *The Book of Delusions*, 187), reaching "the negative limit of life" (Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, 24), where death merges with life, where fear and grief reach obsessive dimensions. The pain of immanence of death, that pain about which Ionesco said "to have been cried so much, so loudly in so many languages" (Ionesco, 2011, 260), led Cioran to a progressive and paroxysmal introspection upon the feeling of perdition so death is not only the end of life, the fall of man in nothingness, but it is also a persistent pulse, complementary to that of experiencing: "every step in life is a step in death" (Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, 36).

In other words, Cioran contradicts the conventional view of death and theorizes its imminent intervention in everyday life. Moreover, Ion Dur suggests that the death rises as a leitmotif in the philosopher's biography: Cioran dies as a citizen when deciding to become a stateless person, dies as a fiancé when he chooses not to offer a status to the woman in his life, dies as a thinker when pronounced as anti-elitist, dies merciful when trivializing the Christian God. As for this latter aspect, Cioran cultivates an acute methodical relativism; the existence and mode of manifestation of divinity alternatively are arguments by which he justifies his agnosticism or means by which he trivializes Jesus' Christhood and how he has transformed the Christian world.

If we follow Ion Dur's line of argument, Cioran does not deny the existence of divinity, but refuses to subordinate the individual to an abstract entity; he does not come to "methodical denial," but only practices "methodical doubt" (Dur, 2016, 74). Man is himself a contribution to universal disorder, and laws are flexible. Jesus' sufferings have redeemed the sins of the mediocre, who have the ability to generalize biblical stories, while those who hold Klages' *vital principle* (Dur, 2016, 92-93) cannot console their torments that bind them through the invincible existence of a supreme foreordained.

A large part of Ion Dur's book revisits Cioran's most controversial writing – *The Transfiguration of Romania*. By comparing the original version of the book with the revised one, Ion Dur points out that those corrections made by Cioran are not decisive in the economy of the text, and even more, some may even be negligible. At the same time, some of Cioran's manuscripts are explained, and we find attached the chapter on *National Collectivism*, which he excludes in the 1990 version, published by Humanitas.

Romania during the time of Cioran seemed to the philosopher a prematurely aged crowd. The shame of being Romanian is long analysed by Ion Dur, who tries to come to his defence. He claims that Cioran borrowed the language, but not the spirit of French space. The issue of Cioran's spiritual affiliation is intensely debated in the book. According to the author, France would have given Cioran only a linguistic asylum, being merely "a metaphysical stateless person" (Dur, 2016, 42). Melancholic to the child's locus but critical of Romanian society, Cioran avoids contact with the Romanian diaspora in France and refuses to return to the country after 1990. In order to strengthen the argument of these ideas, Ion Dur evokes even his personal memories with Cioran.

Returning to the ideas of Cioran's texts, Ion Dur analyses how the philosopher relates to Romanian society of his time. Cioran considers the Orthodox orientation of Romania in the 1930s a decline of culture, when you can basically rely only on religion (which should remain individual and contemplative), it means that a cultural death is close. According to Cioran, distrust and suffering ensure the progress of culture, contrary to Eliade who at the end of the 20's held in *Spiritual*

Itinerary that doubt can mean the decimation or even the death of culture. Cioran revolted against what he considered to be the social homogeneity of interwar Romania, which was the gravity and melancholy, boredom and hesitation. Dur's analysis starts from the premise that there is also an essential psychic level in configuring Cioran's vision of Romania. Is Cioran a deserter? The pros and cons confirm and disable the hypothesis at the same time.

Despite the title which could give rise to controversy, Ion Dur's approach is to accept Cioran's polyvalent potential and the fact that his lyricism contains expressions that are not yet exhausted as nuances or interpretations. The only firm conclusion that emerges from Ion Dur's approach is that Cioran has gathered the pain of the world, as he himself declares: "Is there any reason for anyone else to suffer after me?" But not to save it, but to cancel it – "does my existence make useless of the further existence of this world?" (Cioran, *The Book of Delusions*, 18). This makes him an authentic *knight of the nothingness*.

[Bibliography: Cioran, Emil, *The Book of Delusions*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991; Cioran, Emil, *Essays*, Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1988; Cioran, Emil, *On the Heights of Despair*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1990; Cioran, Emil, *The Transfiguration of Romania*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1990; Ionesco, Eugène, *No*, Humanitas, Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011].

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