

ROMANIAN PRINTS AND ROMANIAN LITERATURE TRANSLATIONS IN HUNGARY IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

The paper proposes a general presentation of the translations from Romanian literature into Hungarian, and it reflects the evolution of Romanian literature reception in the Hungarian space, connected with the political and historical tensions between the two people. The Romanian fundamental works, lexicons and encyclopedias, Mihai Eminescu's first works, the first anthologies of Romanian folk literature, the publishing activity of the representatives of the Transylvanian School are presented in the paper, in order to highlight their role in the scientific foundations of the idea of Romanian national unity.

KEYWORDS

translations, Romanian literature, Transylvanian School, Romanian folk literature, Romanian Enlightenment.

A brief presentation of the rich history of translations from Romanian literature into Hungarian is almost impossible, as it is necessary to examine several thousands of translations and an impressive number of translators. However, the paper tries to provide the reader with a general picture, which reflects the evolution of Romanian literature reception in the Hungarian space, as well as the social and political conditions of this reception. Thus, there are some fundamental works such as those of Veress Endre: *Romanian-Hungarian Bibliography*, 1.-3. k., 1931; Bitay Árpád: *A román irodalomtörténet összefoglaló áttekintése*, (A Brief Look on the History of Romanian Literature, *Scurtă privire asupra literaturii române*, 1922); Pálffy Endre: *A román irodalom története*, (The History of Romanian Literature, *Istoria literaturii române*, 1961); Kemény G. Gábor: *A szomszéd népekkel való kapcsolataink történetéből*,

(From the History of our Relations with Neighbouring Peoples, Din istoria relațiilor cu vecinii, 1962); Domokos Sámuel: *A román irodalom magyar bibliográfiája*, (The Hungarian Bibliography of Romanian Literature, Bibliografia maghiară a literaturii române, vol. I-II., 1966, 1978). Of all the important encyclopaedias containing several references to the Romanian civilisation, the following can be mentioned: *Pallas Nagy Lexikona* (The Great Pallas Encyclopaedia) made up of 18 volumes published between 1884 and 1897, respectively in 1900 and *Révai Nagy Lexikona* (Révai's Great Encyclopaedia) in 21 volumes (between 1911-1927, 1935). The 19 volumes of *Világirodalmi Lexikon* (The Encyclopaedia of World Literature) appeared between 1970 and 1996 and it includes more than 500 articles on Romanian literature.

It should be noted from the beginning that the reception of Romanian literature in the Hungarian space is closely connected with the political and historical tensions between the two peoples.

Throughout the 19th century Buda and Pesta, then Budapest, were, paradoxically, important centers of Romanian culture. Between 1777-1840 the printing house of the University functioned in Buda, and it published two hundred papers in Romanian, including Greek-Catholic religious books, sermons, Orthodox religious books containing the saints' services, important works of language history, in Latin and Romanian, school textbooks, foreign language textbooks, translations, and science books. The fundamental works of the Transylvanian School were published here, these representing the main works of the Romanian Enlightenment.

Mihai Eminescu started publishing his works at Pesta in 1866, in *Familia* magazine, which belonged to Iosif Vulcan, the one who changed the poet's name from Eminovici into Eminescu. The young poet also debuted here as a journalist in the journal of Transylvanian Romanians, *Albina* (1870), with an article about theatre. Then, he published his first political studies in Alexandru Roman's *Federațiunea* (1870). Numerous Romanian magazines and newspapers were published in Pesta and in Buda, but they did not have either a too long or too easy life: *Biblioteca românească*, 1821-1834; *Albina*, 1869-1876; *Aurora română*, 1863-1865; *Concordia*, 1861-1870; *Familia*, 1865-1880; *Federațiunea*, 1868-1876; *Gura satului*, 1867-1871, *Muza română*, 1872; *Priculiciul*, 1872; *Speranța*, 1863; *Umoristul*, 1863-1866. In the new formed Budapest were published: *Adevărul*, 1903-1917; *Cucu*, 1910, 1918; *Foaia ilustrată*, 1907-1919; *Luceafărul*, 1902-1906; *Lupta* 1906-1910; *Poporul român*, 1901-1914; *Șezătoarea*, 1875-1880; *Viitorul*, 1883-1885. Most of these magazines were definitely read in the Romanian provinces.

There were also some common magazines that wanted to support the rapprochement between the two peoples. We only mention Grigore Moldovan (Moldován Gergely)'s Cluj magazines *Ungaria* (1892) and *Román-Magyar Szemle* (1895).

At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the most elevated representatives of the Romanian culture worked together with Hungarian scholars, as censors, proofreaders or editors at the University of Buda's Printing House and this contributed to the spread of Enlightenment ideas among Romanians everywhere. The scientific foundations of the idea of Romanian national unity were laid in this 'workshop' by personalities such as Samuil Micu, Petru Maior, Gheorghe Șincai, Ion Budai Deleanu. More than 200 books were published in Romanian in this printing house in Buda between 1777 and 1848 and spread in Hungary, Transylvania, Moldova and Wallachia. According to Nicolae Iorga, the most beautiful Romanian books – from a typographical point of view - appeared here. For example, Petru Maior, in parallel with his 12 original works and translations, wrote and published almost one hundred Romanian books, out of which 44 textbooks, 22 religious works, 10 history books, 12 papers related to economy and 16 of a different kind (Galdi, 1942). Besides these, he also published five works in Latin, some being bilingual and multilingual. Romanian authors wrote the first Romanian grammars for Hungarians, and they also tried to translate the writings of the Hungarian writers into Romanian (Bota, 1836; 1847). It can be stated that one of the starting points of the Romanian scientific life was the Printing House of the University of Buda and the Romanian books were elaborated, drafted and edited by outstanding personalities of the Romanian culture who are known as representatives of the Transylvanian School.

The first Romanian grammar in Latin (*Elementa linguae Daco-Romanae sive Valachicae*, 1780) was published in Vienna in 1870, but the second edition (1805) was published in Buda, signed by Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Șincai. Its publication also meant the outline Latin trend of Blaj. Șincai himself, teacher of rhetoric at the Greco-Catholic high school in Blaj, became in 1804 proofreader of the Printing House of the University of Buda. The works in Latin and Romanian of linguistic and historical character, published here, contributed to the foundation of the Latin origin concept of the Romanian language and people and the emancipation idea of the Romanians. (Veress, 1982) Șincai published two papers at the Printing House of the University of Buda, but all of Petru Maior's works in Romanian and Latin saw the light of the printing house in Buda. Important Romanian literary works, such as Dinicu Golescu's travel journal (*Writing about My Travel*, 1826), the Romanian translations of Nicolae Beldiman (*Avel's Death*, by Salomon Gessner, 1818; *Numa Pompilie's History* by Jean Pierre Florian, 1820; *Orest's Tragedy* by Voltaire, 1820). Eufrosin Poteca published the translation of Dimitrie

Darvar's work, *The First Reading to the Knowledge of God* (1818) and *The Philosophy of Word and Vices* (1829), and Petru Maior translated some of Fénélon's writings. *The Lexicon of Buda* (with the title *Romanian-Latin-Hungarian-German Lexicon, on Which Many Authors Have Worked for Over Thirty Years*) was published in 1825, being the first dictionary of the Romanian culture in four languages. Vasile Colosse, Ioan Molnar-Piuariu, Petru Maior, Ioan Teodorovici and Alexandru Teodori worked on this dictionary. It is worth mentioning that the Orthodox Church published its famous 12 volumes of *Minei* (religious writings), between 1804 and 1807, in Buda, with Ioan Molnar-Piuariu's collaboration.

It should also be mentioned Zaharia Carcalechi's activity, a merchant of books of Greek origin from Bucharest, who published in 1821 the first Romanian literary journal, entitled *The Romanian Library (made up of 12 parts according to the 12 months, printed for the first time for the Romanian nation, 1821-1829)* in the Printing House of Buda. The magazine for readers from Moldova and Muntenia published articles of national history, literature, translations and politics. Since 1829, the magazine had a new title, which clearly explains its editor's intention: *The Romanian Library or Gatherings of Many Useful Things, Made up of 12 Parts, Firstly Interpreted by Overly Taught Men and Printed for the Romanian People, 1829-1834*. This magazine substantially contributed to the development of Romanian national consciousness.

An important stage in the reception of Romanian literature, in the spirit of Herder's ideas, was the publication of the first anthologies of Romanian folk literature. Such publications are: *Virágok a román (oláh) népköltészet mezejéről* (*Special Flowers Chosen from the Romanian Folk Poetry, Flori alese din folclorul românesc*), Translator: Ács Károly, 1858, Pesta); in 1872 the volume *Román népdalok és balladák* (*Romanian Folk Songs and Ballads, Cântece și balade românești*) translated by Grigore Moldovan, and in 1877 *Román népdalok* (*Romanian Folk Songs, Cântece populare românești*) translated by de Ember György, Iulian Grozescu, Iosif Vulcan. Then, two volumes signed by the same Grigore Moldovan were published: *Román közmondások* (*Romanian Sayings, Proverbe românești*) in 1882 and *Koszorú a román népköltészet virágaiból* (*Garland of the Romanian Folk Poems, Cunună de cântece populare românești*) in 1884, and in 1912 *Román népmesék* (*Romanian Folk Fairytales, Basmele românilor*) were published, translated into Hungarian by Gheorghe Alexici.

Eminescu's first poem translated into Hungarian was published in 1885 in the Christmas issue of the magazine *Kolozsvári Közlöny*. The first volume of Romanian short stories and stories was published in Oradea in 1881 (*Bihari román írók – Romanian Writers from Bibor, Scriitori români din Bibor*, translated by Márki Sándor); in Révai Károly's poetry books of 1907 (*Delelő*) there are

some good translations of poems written by Eminescu and other poets. The first important anthology of Romanian poetry was published in 1910 in Baia Mare and translated by Révay Károly, Brán Lőrinc (Laurențiu Bran) and Simon Aurél (Aurel Simon). In 1895 Miron Cristea, the future Patriarch of Romania (starting from 1925) defended his bachelor's thesis on Eminescu (Cristea, 1895).

In the reception of the Romanian culture and literature, lexicons and encyclopaedias, as the ones mentioned above (*Pallas* and *Révai*), played an essential part. Besides them, some fundamental historical works of Hungarian specialists such as Hunfalvy Pál, Grigorie Moldovan, and Jancsó Benedek, are strongly connected with the process of reception of the Romanian culture by the Hungarian space. It should also be noticed the publication of some Romanian language textbooks for Hungarians in the second half of the 19th century. The most famous are those of Fekete (Negruțiu) János (1852), Grigore Moldovan (1872), Gheorghe Alexici (1892). In the same period, two very important volumes were translated into Hungarian: one by Ioan Slavici: *A szerencsemalom* (The Lucky Mill, translated by Kovács János, 1898), and the other by George Coșbuc: *Költemények* (Poems, translated by Révai Károly, 1905). Queen Elisabeth, Charles' I wife, also known as Carmen Sylva as a writer, had some kind of success in Hungary with her novels written in German but about Romanian themes. She was awarded *Doctor honoris causa* by the University of Budapest. It should be recalled with curiosity that the female writer Harmath Lujza (1846-1910) published a paper entitled *Egy királyné női eszményei Carmen Sylva regényeiben* (The Feminine Ideals of a Queen in Carmen Sylva's Novels, 1891).

Even from the 18th to the 19th centuries, of course, a whole series of titles or events could have been introduced, but we tried to make a representative selection, which will continue anyway in the 20th century to the present day. The intention of the presentation was to emphasize the existence of these numerous bridges between the two cultures and literatures that although many remain, most of them, unknown. In conclusion, we can say that the two cultures: Romanian and Hungarian have built systems to reflect the achievements of each one, systems that exist until today and, despite the oscillations generated by history and times, they will exist in the future, too.

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