

BOOK REVIEWS

Alexandru Surdu

Monumente pentru eroii culturii române [*Monuments for the Heroes of Romanian Culture*], Ardealul Publishing House, Târgu Mureș, 2018, 197 pp.

The guiding idea of the book entitled in a very expressive manner *Monuments for the Heroes of Romanian Culture* is a call to due attention given to Romania, the past, the present and the future of the country, as well as to the spiritual, cultural and national values enrooted in tradition, representing crucial and compulsory “food for the soul”. This is the ninth volume within a series of “monumental” pocket books meant for the heart pocket, as (virtual) cultural eternity measuring “pocket watches”.

Within this series the readers find *Vocații filosofice românești* [*Romanian Philosophical Callings*], 1995; *Confluente culturale-filosofice* [*Cultural-Philosophical Confluences*], 2002; *Mărturiile anamnezei* [*The Confessions of Anamnesis*], 2004; *Comentarii la rostirea filosofică* [*Comments on the Philosophical Utterance*], 2009; *Izvoare de filosofie românească* [*Romanian Philosophy Roots*], 2011; *A sufletului românesc cinstire* [*The Honouring of the Romanian Soul*], 2011; *Pietre de poticnire* [*Stumbling Stones*], 2014; *La Porțile Împărăției* [*Before the Kingdom's Gates*], 2016.

This book has part of its roots in the Heideggerian concept *Sorge*, with special philosophical significance associated with the concept of “care” as being *in* the world, but also *toward* the world as an idea and a fact of *being open*. However, the concept is relevant as well within the ethical area of the philosopher’s reporting on the current dimensions of cultural existence, enriching this existence with *care* for a thesaurus of ideas, achievements, Heroes, theoretical-speculative dimensions and values that cannot be left to vanish into oblivion. This ethical approach of remembrance is also a national thesaurus, an attempt to find again the national being – indeed, a great monument.

The symbol of the union and of the open road towards infinite, captured by the cover of the work in the famous representation of the Gate of Kiss (*Poarta sârutului*), part of a sculptural ensemble paying homage to the Romanian heroes of the First World War, realized by the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși, the father of modern language in contemporary sculpture, evoking explicitly the idea of openness, well-grounded spirituality of an actualization of value associated with the cultural reunion path of a nation.

Choosing the way to go (*he hodos*) is equally important for one man as well as for a whole nation, and in this sense; survival by tradition is actually a continuation, a way of faith. On the road of faith and faithfulness to national and spiritual ideals, as Alexandru Surdu tells us, the signs of tradition, shining brightly in legendary places such as Șcheii Brașovului or Maramureș, remind us of the national spiritual values, thus restructuring our national being through an intimate spiritual feeling: “God is with us” (pp. 16-20).

Traditional and popular Romanian manifestations are not just expressions of the sacred and of cultural spirituality, but Christian manifestations that have suffered either under the dictatorial communist dictatorship or during modernization and globalization, but which continue to support a specific glow of the achievements in Romanian culture.

In the light of contemporary accomplishments, as constituted in the horizon of the consciousness of academician Alexandru Surdu, there are also selected contemporary heroes: Ionel-Valentin Vlad “a patriot by participation” (pp. 37-44), Adrian Rezeanu “poet of our toponyms”, His Highness Laurențiu Streza, honorary member of the Academy Romanian, “with whom I celebrated Constantin Noica at Brâncoveanu Monastery, in the City of God, at the Heart of Transylvania” (pp. 45-58).

Within this context we also find that the author mentions actor Dorel Vișan, who opens through art the transition from “vanity to wisdom” for the Romanian public (pp. 59-61) and whose name

remains bound (as is that of the author, the academician Alexandru Surdu) by the name of our national Hero, poet and thinker, Mihai Eminescu.

Economist theorist Anghel Rugină (pp. 73-86) “rung the bell of our concern in the Auditorium of the Romanian Academy”, and Professor Eugen Stănescu stressed, for example, that “in one year in Romania, the equivalent of 2,600 tons of gold was wasted, twice as much as there was removed from the Romanian territories by the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire and the Russian Empire together for 460 years.” (pp. 9-10)

Under the same flag of the “Romanian Homeland celebration” Professor Alexandru Surdu identifies also institutional heroes: the Romanian Academy, the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Romanian People’s Culture (ASTRA), the Library of the Romanian Academy (pp. 87-92, 93-104), the Universities of Bucharest, Cluj and Jassy, the symposiums dedicated to the Romanian philosophers ... and the list can continue.

The same ideal values’ auspices accompanied Dimitrie Cantemir’s philosophy, the philosophy of Titu Maiorescu, the founder of our modern culture, and Ion Petrovici, P. P. Negulescu, Mircea Florian, and Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, a “Maiorescian, [that is, an alumni of the founding Titu Maiorescu’s virtual School of direction and heritage in Romanian philosophy] one of the most important personalities of the Romanian cultural and political life between the two World Wars”, other philosophers such as Mircea Vulcănescu, “one of the first exegetes of the Romanian philosophy”, Nae Ionescu and his extraordinary School of philosophy, Lucian Blaga, “who wrote about our *ewe-lamb space*”, and who is memorialized with special consideration and pride, traditionally, at Sebeș (p.180), but also at Lančrâm (his birthplace) and, quite often, at Târgu-Mureș, too.

Continuing this privileged chain of festive events, giving Romanian philosophy its bright celebration profile, we should emphasize the series of symposia dedicated to Constantin Noica, whom we are honouring annually through the events series titled the National Symposium “Constantin Noica”, traditionally organized in collaboration by the Romanian Academy’s “Constantin Rădulescu-Motru Institute of Philosophy and Psychology” and various personalities of culture and institutions of culture in Romania; and which reached a moving anniversary moment in 2018, at the tenth edition, with the theme “The Romanian Sentiment of Being”.

The commemoration evocation of Titu Maiorescu marking the centennial since his death highlights his role as a founder of the Romanian culture, as well as his outstanding philosophical role, especially as a creator of a disciplinary philosophical system, on the one hand, and a philosophical school creator, on the other (pp. 141-178). Being characterized by “hyper-exactness”, Titu Maiorescu succeeded in imparting a specific direction to both culture and Romanian language, militating for linguistic liberation from unnecessary neologisms. He founded logic and was the first Romanian neo-Aristotelian thinker, followed by Athanase Joja.

Titu Maiorescu’s discipline system is twofold: from the perspective of defining philosophy as “science of concept processing”, Maiorescu’s system is a triad established by logic (“primary and distinct”), metaphysics and aesthetics (the latter two being “*general* and *particular*, or *applied*” and from the perspective of philosophy as a “science of relationships”, its system is structured in four parts, “from conceptions to concepts”, which places psychology first, followed by logic, aesthetics, and metaphysics.

The heroes of the Romanian philosophy are landmarks and fortunate “stumbling obstacles” for thought on any personal route toward a speculative truth. They are “reporters” (Constantin Noica) of the meditative and revelation path taken in Romanian philosophy, accountable for that path and given this philosophical duty, the great personalities of Romanian philosophy were indicating not only origins and finalities, but also valuable speculative openings.

A special hero at the anniversary is Vasile Goldiș, President of ASTRA, the symbol of a distinct cultural, national intellectual intellect from Arad city, who sustained “the idea of the Great Assembly in Alba Iulia, in remembrance of the Great Voyvod of all the Romanians, Michael the Brave” (p. 179). His dream of raising a monument to the Great Union remains yet to be fulfilled.

And perhaps the best conclusion to this exercise of recalling and retrieval is also a fragment of the philosopher’s train of thought, which needs highlighting and a national and even an

international echo: “But you must not forget, precisely in these moments, it would be appropriate to think about creating monuments in honour of the Heroes of the Union and about other Romanians, who sacrificed their lives for the ideal of Union under Michael the Brave, yet, about others, who followed the sacrificial example, again and again, for the consolidation of reunion ‘in thought and feelings’ and especially those who have built up during our historical past and have strengthened the National Conscience of Romanians. They did not die on the battlefield, but they gave their last drop of life and soul to Romania and the Romanians. We could call them ‘Heroes of the Romanian Culture’, Heroes with the capital letter, H, as appropriate, and we should raise the proper (cultural) monuments for them. Not dug in stone, not poured into brass, but imprinted in our thoughts ought these monuments to be, and bringing them to a larger public instead of flower crowns, culture and creation should form our bouquets of remembering and gratitude. This kind of monument we try to raise every year to Constantin Noica, our deeply endeared philosopher, who wrote about the feeling of being Romanian, one atypical ‘monument’ in the form of symposium, held in one or another of our large cities, especially, in those cities that he loved the most; or, for our philosopher Lucian Blaga, who wrote about our *ewe-lamb space*, bringing him over our due flowers of gratitude every year, to Sebeș, Lančrăm and Târgu-Mureș, and also to Constantin Rădulescu-Motru who was writing about the Romanian Ethnicity and about the Romanian specific (Romanianism). The fact that, unfortunately, we are the only ones doing that should not surprise, because the monuments of the Union Heroes have not been raised yet and the Grand Monument of the Union that Vasile Goldiș dreamed of has not been built, until now, either!” (Alexandru Surdu, “Contemporanul. Revistă națională de cultură, politică și știință”, no. 12, 18th December 2017)

Our celebration is not just ours, but it is *in, toward* and *for the world*, for national spiritual values are an actualization of *he theoretike aletheia* and their celebration welcomes each and every spiritual being, or, each aspiring spiritual being. However, the duty to acknowledge and remember is ours and ours alone. The national spiritual values are a facet of *he theoretike aletheia*, they are our contributions to *nous theoretikos*, to the spiritual theoretical (as in “speculative”) etymologies of the universal truth – *mas theoretike aletheia* (“our theoretical truth”).

We have the unique privilege to be, as celebrators (contemporary *theoresis*, contemporary participants to the “spectacle”) bringing offerings (*theora* or *speculae*, in Latin) to those fit to bear them (*theoros*, or *speculator*) in the noblest cultural performance, the one that keeps people on *via sacra* (*kaleia*, *cale* in Romanian), toward purification (*katharsis* in Greek), as the archaeologists of meanings privileged to forge *nous, aletheia*, the opposite of *latheîn* (of whatever is hidden, or, forgotten, as in the Heideggerian interpretation of *aletheia*) via a *theoresis* (through spectacle) of amazement, pleasure, the more tragic feelings, or, admiration and love. This is the reason why *Wahrheit*, the mere word “truth”, should make anyone’s heart beat faster, as Hegel said. (p. 189)

Consequentially, on the same gilded spiritual path of the etymologies we encounter also *specus*, that is, cavern, where from the echo of God’s voice comes, as in Alexandru Surdu’s interpretation, or, in our view, as a representation capturing the *idea* of the path towards the depths and towards the realms beyond, specifically as a reconfirmation of the idea of *ale thea*, of the sacred path to truth, which is the truth (*aletheia*): *He hodos, he aletheia kai he zoe*, or, “I am the Truth, the Path and the Life” [and it is significant that continues by “No one comes to the Father except through Me”, John 14:6, which is as well a strong confirmation for this etymological interpretation of the philosophical resources of *truth*].

In such memorializing remembrance stays much of the “force” to go forward, primarily in philosophy, but also, in history. Paradoxically, or not, we are able to “go further” especially on the basis of an already acknowledged eternity of “our speculative truth” (pp. 187-197).

Let us not forget, therefore, to get as close as possible to the meanings of the cultural monuments raised by the heroes of Romanian thinking, because ours they are and through this privilege they remain ours, preserving the Romanian feeling of our being.

Henrieta Anișoara Șerban

Stelian Neagoe (ed.)

Alexandru Marghiloman. Unirea Basarabiei cu România Mumă, 27 Martie 1918 [*Alexandru Marghiloman. The Union of Bessarabia with Mother-Romania, 27th March 1918*], Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, 218 pp.

Stelian Neagoe

Unirea Bucovinei cu România-Mamă [*The Union of Bucovina with Mother-Romania*], Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, 266 pp.

Historian Stelian Neagoe offers the readers, upon the occasion of the anniversary of the Centennial of the Great Union in 1918, two interesting and substantial volumes documenting the events which led to the fulfilment of Romania in 1918. The books published by Stelian Neagoe may be appreciated as illustrations of a classical dictum, which we owe to Cicero (*De Oratore*, II, 9): *Historia magistra vitae* (paraphrasing, we can translate it capturing the following idea “History offers us life lessons”). However, many of the books published by the historian Stelian Neagoe entwine, the ample historical information, supported by documents, with the author’s obvious interest in the human aspect, in the character and destiny of the characters analysed. This acknowledgement applies to the two books recently published by Stelian Neagoe as a tribute, of course, to the Great Union in 1918.

Indeed, the two volumes published by Stelian Neagoe at the Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy provide the reader interested in this period with historical documents that sometimes set in a new light the events and historical personalities who have participated in the Great Union in 1918. A good example is that of a great sacrifice for the history of the Great Romania’s replenishment, that is, the sacrifice of Alexandru Marghiloman (1854-1925), the President of the Council of Ministers, signatory of the contested and blamed peace at Buftea-Bucharest on April 24 / May 7, 1918 (the respective treaty was ratified by the Parliament but never promulgated by King Ferdinand). Alexandru Marghiloman, whose political speeches and writings were published in Stelian Neagoe’s editions (see, for instance, *Note politice/Political Notes*, 3 volumes, 1993-1995, *Discursuri parlamentare/Parliamentary Speeches*, 2 volumes, 2014) is the central character of a documentary volume devoted to the historical act of the 27th March 1918.

Alexandru Marghiloman’s contribution to the Union of Bessarabia with Romania is presented by Stelian Neagoe in a volume that includes a brief recapitulation of his impressive political career, with all its sides of success and bad luck, under the title: *Alexandru Marghiloman, the Union of Bessarabia with Mother-Romania*, March 27, 1918 (Stelian Neagoe, editor). The succinct presentation of Marghiloman’s career gains, under the quill of the historian Stelian Neagoe, the tone of a romantic biography: “As it happens many times in life, in the post-war years, people too easily overpassing the immense services that the head of the government of sacrifice had brought to the country, Alexandru Marghiloman had his share of ingratitude from many contemporary political leaders. He was labelled as ‘traitor’, ‘outlaw’, not for the sake of unjust accusations, but for calculations of political paltriness: so that the fearful ostracized could have permanently the access blocked toward the political arena of the new Romania”, writes Stelian Neagoe, allying the historian’s analysis with the judgment of the moralist. However, any sort of objective history is indebted to mention in the most favourable way the name of Alexandru Marghiloman in connection with the unification of Bessarabia with Romania. The way he has chosen to stay in the second plane of events, leaving the fore to the Bessarabian Unionists, is admirable and wise, at the same time. Perhaps a less wise political man would have strained to attribute himself the main merit to the historical fact, which later would have given his opponents the opportunity to talk about a presumptive “Romanian occupation of Bessarabia”. In a world where historical truth is difficult to separate from propaganda, this wise restraint of Marghiloman is entirely meritorious.

Several pages of this volume, in fact, give us the opportunity to reconstruct the events of 1918 in a more vivid, less conventional light.

To this contributes plenty, as well, the detailed illustrations that accompany the documentary anthology consecrated by Stelian Neagoe to the return of Bessarabia (or Moldavia, from over the Prut) to the architecture of a Romanian State that already included, after the union of 1859, the remnant of the Moldova unoccupied by the Russian Empire at the occasion of that illegal and shameful Russian-Ottoman trades in 1812 that drove away a good portion of the territory and the population. An extensive section of the facsimiles of formerly documents, along with vintage photographs, provide the reader the opportunity to reconstruct in imagination something of the colour of that epoch. It is an indisputable merit of this quoted volume that brings to the reader's attention the photographic portraits of personalities often mentioned such as Ion Inculeț, Pan Halippa, Alexei Mateevici (the author of a memorable poem dedicated to Romania), Constantin Stere, but also the ones less known to the public, Pantelimon Erhan, Daniel Giugureanu, Petre Cazacu, Ion Pelivan, Nicolae Alexandri, or Elena Alistar, the first woman deputy in the Bessarabian Country Council, along with photos of some important edifices and places related to the Union.

A second volume authored by Stelian Neagoe, *The Union of Bucovina with Mother-Romania*, 28 November 1918, addresses a complementary subject to the former one, perhaps a topic less known to the general public. Stelian Neagoe recalls, in a "Short Historical Itinerary", the unfortunate story of Bucovina, related to another illegitimate and immoral event, the negotiation among three empires, the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire and the Russian Empire, which re-established the geopolitical balance in the area. The Ottoman Empire, which was already "the sick man of Europe", bought some time by abandoning Bucovina (perhaps with the hidden thought of provoking a clash of the two successive powers), trying to postpone an inevitable collapse that would only come a century later. Stelian Neagoe, with a specific interest, as I have mentioned, in the human side of the historical event, too, uses the occasion to evoke the figure of a patriotic gentleman who lost his head in the attempt to preserve the integrity of Moldova, a region from which the "Land of the Beech Woods", Bucovina, has been taken away: Grigore the IIIrd Ghica (1724-1777).

Also, another fascinating historical colour stroke is the evocation of the corruption of Turkish officials by the Austrian negotiator, Baron Thungut, as well as the assessment of a second historical act of sultan's revenge, described in the chronicler's tone: "Finding out Sultan Abdul Hamid the news of betrayal, he sought out a cruel revenge: Costache Moruzi being beheaded by a smaller rank Ottoman captain's yataghan." Within the historical context of the end of the First World War, marked by the 14 points of President Woodrow Wilson's Declaration of 8 January 1918 (the declaration being reformulated in the autumn of the same year in the sense of grounding the principle of self-determination of the peoples, and in the sense of acceptance of the constitution of independent successor states of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires), the Romanians in Bucovina went to a new stage of their struggle for national liberation, catching in the historical events the glimpse of the possibility of reunion with the motherland.

The epos of this struggle is described by historian Stelian Neagoe in several chapters accompanied by rich illustrative material, facsimiles and vintage photographs. The material presented in this volume is far too rich to be summed up here in just a few lines. As a general impression, however, this volume proves to contain precisely those 260 pages of information necessary to reconstruct the historic event of the Union of Bucovina with Romania, in its complexity, not only in its political and administrative aspects, but also in terms of the human destinies surprised at a crucial moment for their (human) existence.

A significant place within this historical narrative is, of course, held by the role performed by Alexandru Marghiloman at the occasion. The most noteworthy documents are present in this volume: the Union Decision with Bucovina, adopted at the General Congress of Bucovina, the documents reflecting the activity of the government led by Marghiloman for unification, the minutes of the debates in the Romanian Parliament which ratified the union, the text of the Treaty from Saint-Germain, which affirms the international recognition of the Union, as well as the report of the work of the Romanian National Committee in Bucovina as preliminary to the Union. Three biographical sketches dedicated to the most important unionist leaders (Iancu Flondor, Ion Nistor

and George Grigorovici or Grigoroviță) confirm the interest of historian Stelian Neagoe for the human aspect of the history of the Union.

An impressively very rich illustrative material accompanies the volume. Here are the rare facsimiles and photographs, the reunion of which necessitated, of course, no small effort from the author. Particularly, the volume overwhelms by the attention given to set the historically record straight, historically retrieving relatively unknown personalities, but which deserve the full gratitude of the survivors for the activity, often surmounting notable dangers, to serve the unconditioned reunion with Romania. The two volumes published by historian Stelian Neagoe on the occasion of the anniversary of the Centenary of the Great Union in 1918 constitute an important contribution to knowledge, through documents gathered with scientific rigor and much accuracy, both about the circumstances in which the reunification of Romania took place – an internationally recognized national unitary state – and about the revival, at this anniversary date, of the image of momentous historical personalities for a new generation of readers.

Ion Goian

Gabriela Tănăsescu

Europa și problemele construcției identitare. Studii (Europe and Identity Building Issues. Studies), Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, Bucharest, 2018, 301 pp.

Conceived following the studies addressing the most relevant aspects of the European Union project, the book written by Gabriela Tănăsescu is rendered unitary through the central theme: the identity of this political construction.

What impresses from the very beginning is the flexibility of the approach, on the one hand, and the multiple angles from which the European identity is defined, on the other.

Published in an individual research program that Gabriela Tănăsescu has assumed, the chapters of the volume illustrate both the complexity of the problems of the European identity construction, the rigor and the depth with which they can be treated, starting from the reference works in the field, but also entering into the theoretical depth of some publications that only connoisseurs can invoke. The seven chapters of the paper, written between 2005 and 2018, have been the subject of several presentations and studies whose variants have been enriched from year to year.

Affirming that “European identity can be expressed as a political identity, that is, as a set of political and social values and principles wherewith Europeans self-identify and that circumscribe the framework within they pursue their interests and goals,” (p. 11) the author offers in her “Considerations on the European Paradigm” “not only the conceptual and theoretical framework created for debating the desirable evolutionary patterns of Europe until 1989 and for addressing the problems of Western Europe after the abandonment of the post-war political arrangement – based on the division of Germany and Europe and the hegemony of the United States in securing the Western security policy –, but also the trajectory of a European paradigmatic evolution: dealing with the problems of peace, security, economic developments, markets, etc. in terms of common interests, solid economic and security arrangements, of guaranteeing the stability and cooperation.” (p. 13)

In the first study referring to the “Integration Condition”, based on the works of John Gray (*Beyond Liberalism and Conservative*) and Andrei Marga (*The Philosophy of European Unification*), the author draws attention to the character of the process of negotiation the integration and of integration “determined by the change in the post-war politics, namely the transformation of a bipolar world power arrangement into a single military planetary power arrangement, the efficiency of organizational principles, the force of innovation in all spheres of life, communication and observation from the satellites and the ground, as it is often said, the only

force capable of supervising the whole Earth globe and intervening rapidly at any point of it.” (pp. 21-22) Emphasizing that “A reasonable conception of the cultural, national, ethnic, historical, and linguistic diversity in the context of the integration process appears in the elegant formula used by the French philosophers: *unitas multiplex* which concentrates the axiom of ‘complexity’ that does not suppress the peculiarities” (p. 28), the study concludes with the idea of an optimistic philosophical vision, “the only one able to decode a complex political-social-cultural-religious synthesis that deliberately transcends the technical and legal considerations schematized according to the narrow patterns of *Realpolitik*.” (p. 29)

Naturally, this leads to a debate centred on the issue of European identity, “a major challenge” for political philosophy, “given the reference unit that it seeks to transgress: the model or logic of national identity that still dominates a world system of nation-states, in the context in which Europe already has a substantially integrated market, an integrated administration network, but not an integrated public sphere or media relevant for another type of ‘lines’ [structures] than national ones” (p. 30), and this is discussed in the second chapter of the paper.

Researching the specialized writings to decrypt the most relevant data and discourses that can provide the image of a possible “reconstruction” of European identity “whether cultural, civilization, economic or political”, Gabriela Tănăsescu remarks in the inspired and interrogative text entitled “European identity – a ‘reconstruction’?”, (pp. 31-82) the “diffuse and imprecise” aspect of this idea, a feature maintained by the very documents of the Union and also due to oversized expectations regarding “the functioning of the European Union.” If the “club” perspective is based on interests, the “community perspective” privileges the identity because it “represents the collective values that underpin the community.” Despite its frequent use, the phrase “European identity”, considers Gabriela Tănăsescu, “appears to be inconsistent, lacking its own substance” and the demand for “reconceptualization” can be summed up “by what Hall called the ‘articulation process’ of an individual life, never stable, fixed or unified, through fragmented and structured identities, never a single identity but a multiplicity built up by different, often intersected and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions.” Gabriela Tănăsescu also notices how “identity and individuality are distinct” by the fact that “individuality appears as an ensemble of identities, while identity reflects the individual’s position in the social space by virtue of its various identities.” On this background, Gabriela Tănăsescu believes that “insofar a common European identity is conceptually grounded by transcending national identities, inherited national and political cultures, namely insofar it is built on non-cultural factors, it expresses a strictly instrumental-institutional and functional dimension of the Union and implicitly reflects a multicultural, multiethnic, multi-religious reality of the European continent – in essence, the lack of unity of the cultural and spiritual heritage of Europeans – and perhaps, the ‘maximum’ of the unity that Europe can achieve in its dynamics.” And in the last decade marked by critical economic issues, as well as by stronger trends to define Europe from a political view, Gabriela Tănăsescu considers that, besides the “strictly functional” dimension, the “‘maximum’ of the spectacularity of European ‘architecture’ – which would attract the admiration, if not the appropriation by the ‘European man’ and European state communities – would be to the sense of dignity conferred by a maximum *rule of law*, by the lack of tolerance of abusive (beyond political parties) practices, by eliminating ‘unethical benefits’ and corruptive ‘hidden levers’” (p. 79).

The third study in the volume presented here aims to examine the “relevance of the Habermasian normative model in the theorization of public sphere in a transnational context, mainly its relevance for the formulation of a theory of European public sphere” (p. 83). In this respect, the author recalls, after 1989, “One of the ‘additional steps’ that Habermas considered necessary to produce a theoretical framework through which the issue of the ‘general interest, where the public opinion could find out its measure’ under the conditions of ‘pluralism of competing interests’ was the ‘deepening’ of the ‘normative foundation of the critical theory of society’” (p. 102). Therefore, it is concluded in this respect “Habermas was able to argue not only the importance of democratic participatory procedures to justify or legitimize laws and decisions at national, transnational and regional (European) level, thus revealing the moral value of deliberation based on equality of right of participation, but also the importance of the ‘rational’ construction of deliberation, of its epistemic value.” And “Such a synthesis, particularly rare in contemporary political thinking, beyond

its utopian yet prominent measure, is 'the maximum' in terms of communicative and deliberative requirements that could compete for the correction of EU's 'deficit of democracy', for the building of an interactive relationship between the European institutions and the citizens of Europe resulting in 'rational results' from a democratic and emancipatory-political perspective." (p. 121)

Considerations on the "perfect storm" and the "transformations of European strategic culture," following subtle conceptual delimitations resulting from the analysis of the reference bibliography of the field and considering the opinions of contemporary politicians, focuses on the idea that "EU military strategic culture in forming, like that practised interventionist of the US, has metamorphosed to a considerable extent." And this phenomenon "comes after a time when the institutions and the Euro-Atlantic order are eroded" and given that "the universal principles and agreed values have weakened." Also, in addition to the conflicts opened in the last decade, closer to the EU's borders, "new social and economic crises emerged that oblige to 're-engaging in domestic affairs' on both sides of the Atlantic, to EU returning to the geopolitical issues of the neighbourhood", so that the EU to be able to return to "self-reconstruction, to the usual and harmonious 'accords' of peace and to the 'music' of Europe's principles of strategic culture" (pp. 151-152).

Dedicated to Romania and to European kinds of semi-presidentialism, the following chapter presents the "European extension of semi-presidential regimes on the basis of a widely accepted notion" and places the Romanian semi-presidentialism "from a constitutional and practical point of view (...) as the *differentia specifica* in the *genus proximum* of the 'dual executive regimes,' wide-spread in the former communist countries of Europe", also circumscribing "the thesis that Romania's constitutional option for semi-presidentialism, for a radical model of the balance of powers, was decisively motivated by the need to substantiate from a dispositional point of view the democratic functioning of the Romanian state through the distribution or the division of power and, by implication, to eliminate the risk of authoritarian tendencies and autocratic presidential behaviour."

What has particularly attracted my attention here is the pertinent approach of the "imbalance generated by certain presidential leadership styles in the diarchal functioning of the executive power – specific to the *premier-presidential* type of semi-presidentialism adopted by Romania – and in the democratic functioning of power as a whole." (p. 155)

The outline of the new central and eastern European axiology of politics, its aetiology and its implications are the subject of the ample chapter V of the book, in which – after a thoroughly treating of some subjects with attractive titles such as "The Transition to Democracy. Implications for the political axiology of the CEE countries" (with the subchapters "Political Democratization", "Economic Reform and Privatization", "Political Post-Socialist Cleavages", "Governance between Internationalization and Denationalization", "New Strategies of Communication and of Power Personalization", "Power Presidentialization"), "Europeanization, Europeanism, Europeanity", "The framework and the directions of the political axiology of the CEE countries: A sketch" (with subchapters "Delimitation and division of the executive power – semi-presidentialism", "Reporting to the state authority", "Erosion of confidence in national government and democratic functioning of the EU") – is stated that "Among the most prominent aspects of the new axiology of CEE policy are: the internalization of a mixture of the typical democratic values, of the relevant European values and of paternalistic values; the adoption, to a significant extent, of the Western values and mentality such as individualism and competition; the attachment to the materialist part of democratic development, with a particular emphasis on economic development and, to a lesser extent than in EU countries, on respect for security and solidarity, to the detriment of freedom of expression and pluralism; the decreasing attachment to the nation-state as a factor in international politics; low trust in national political institutions and European institutions; the weakening ideological attachments and party loyalty of the citizens to a lesser extent than in the West" (p. 270).

The last chapter of the volume presented here refers to "Rethinking the European Project. Multi *-speed, -paces, -intensities* Europe" rounding this exemplary volume with a conclusion promising new approaches as well grounded as those previously highlighted: "The abandonment of the current form of institutional and operational 'European architecture' completion, which set a common target even with the recording of different rhythms and intensities of integration, would mean practically the opening entropic possibility for different groups to set different targets and to

follow directions, *i.e.* the possibility of disintegration of the Union's general framework, as personalities such European Commissioner Pierre Moscovici and German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel were concerned. The Romanian analysts in the field have rightly stressed that the establishment of a multi-speed Union would reflect the lack of a genuine European leadership, of a valuable European vision and of the ability to formulate a high-power strategy" (p. 292).

As the transition from the communist regime to the democratic regime meant a paradigm shift for Romania (as for other former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe), and this change, which means *inter alia* the adoption of the "European paradigm" (Andrei Marga) presupposes the summation (or even the assumption) of the European identity, structured by the values of "economic Europe, political Europe and social Europe" but also of a "European solidarity," the significance of this volume's publication in the centenary year (2018) is obvious because we cannot talk about the cultural and political identity of Romania, ignoring the European identity.

Gabriela Tănăsescu's work is a successful demonstration of the importance of theory in the practice of European political construction and in defining its identity, despite the crises that have affected it in the recent years.

Lorena Stuparu

Lorena Stuparu

Simbol și recunoaștere la Mircea Eliade: semnificații religioase, politice și estetice (Symbol and recognition in Mircea Eliade: religious, political and aesthetic meanings), 2nd edition, Bucharest, The Publishing House of "Ion I. C. Brătianu" Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations, 2017, 273 pp.

This new, revised and added edition of the book, published by Lorena Păvălan Stuparu 11 years ago, is dedicated to celebrate 110 years since the birth of Mircea Eliade, the "Romanian thinker who became universal" and who enjoyed – in a huge bibliography – by the "glory" of recognition of his hermeneutical and categorial renewals. The reconstruction of the "vast and multiforme" creation of the historian and phenomenologist of the religions and, of course, of the writer Mircea Eliade, starting from his conception on symbol, has been the theme of Lorena Stuparu's doctoral thesis which was structured mainly depending on the relationship between "sacred" and "aesthetic". The manner in which the author has researched this relationship and the arguments put forward in support of it have been remarked, after a reading of the manuscript before publication, by Mac Linscott Ricketts, an eminent translator of an important part of Mircea Eliade's prose and biographical writings and editor of several volumes devoted to his life and work. The resort of this structuring was the "decipherment" in Eliade's discourse on the symbol of an "aesthetic «sympathy» unconfessed directly" which the author "attempted to communicate" by referring to "the relationships that can be established between «sacred» and «aesthetic», between the «religious symbol» and the «artistic symbol», «religious experience» and «aesthetic experience»", as well as by the "adequate presentation of the «aesthetical attitude» of one [author] fond of religions, who speaks about the soteriological reason of acceptance the sacred, which can be associated with the Dostoevskian idea of the beauty that will save the world" (p. 12). Lorena Stuparu's work also includes "an attempt to sketch a «phenomenology» of politics" on "whose «nadir latent»" has been "seen in Eliade's writings, among the heights of the sacred exploration that alternates with the depths of the study of religion, with the ineffable of aesthetic (or poetic) emotion, with the gravity of political «emotion»..." (*Ibidem*).

An important specification, I think, is that Lorena Stuparu explores Eliade's work – "beautiful by both its own achievement and by the reader's participation in an inter-subjective meeting within the books read shed some of their overflow into a form that is only then created: through

imaginative and speculative mechanisms that it puts into function, by the generosity with which it receives («completing») other notions and perspectives, through the openings it makes possible, through the quality of the symbol of the work itself” (p. 9) – not only in terms of “the beginning of a self-constructive route”, but also in those of some “still valid (as problematizing) answers to the questions of the time we live” (p. 13).

The second edition of the book preserves the structure of the 2006 edition, the completions focusing mainly on the reference interpretations of the recent eliadology. The five chapters of the book are preceded by extensive and branched “Methodological considerations,” intended to circumscribe the “ways of access” that Eliade’s work opens to “culture and spirit” and those through which researchers can develop analyzes and arguments from his writings. The author prevents about “ambiguities, enigmas and contradictions,” “essential” in the sphere of myth and spiritual life and, of course, incompatible with “clear definitions and linear developments,” as well as about the difficulty of cutting “a precise horizon” of the notion of symbol (p. 16). The author emphasizes the formula by which Carl Olson identified the “first presupposition of Mircea Eliade’s method,” namely “the presupposition of unity,” of sacred “as a structural element of human consciousness,” of fundamental unity of religions understood as “indivisible unity of the history of human consciousness” (p. 19). Lorena Stuparu considers that this unity based on conscience is the basis of all religious experiences and has implications for the continuity of religious experience and attitude, for the “dialectics of the sacred” – “expressible through the dialectic of hierophany: when the sacred manifests itself (through hierophany), at the same time something of it hides, is undecipherable, because “by the simple fact of appearing, the sacred is hidden” (p. 56) (“Eliadian theory of «the unrecognizable miracle» and at the same time recognizable among the signs of this world”) – and for “the spontaneous and complete rediscovery of the old religious values, regardless of the historical period.” (p. 20) The “methodological considerations” reveal the defining aspects of the Eliadian philosophy of religions, mainly the “original hermeneutical program” which follows the “existential interconnections between the subject and the object of the study” – depending on which “the meaning,” as “«an ontological and existential construct»,” “must not be discovered, but proposed,” “created at one time” – and which is realized as “unity between experience and method” and as a basis for what David Cave called “the participatory morphology” of “the new humanism” proclaimed by Eliade. (p. 22) The author emphasizes as being important for the location of Eliade’s method and conception that the history of religions he has promoted, fundamentally as a philosopher, “it was not a science in a rigorous sense, but an non-falsifiable system in which the main notions were considered as postulated” and that many exegetes “argued the scientific importance and the humanistic and soteriological value in the philosophical dimension of the history of religions practiced by the Romanian scholar.” (p. 29)

It is underlined the conclusion, supported by numerous exegetes, that Eliade’s work validates “the hermeneutic circle” around the concepts of *sacred* and *profane*, opposing and, at the same time, bringing together “the archaic and the modern in defining the human identity rooted in sacredness.” Eliade’s thesis is that unlike “the archaic man”, who, as “a member of the traditional society, lived in accordance with the imitation and repetition of archetypes (sacred models or paradigms) through which he could understand «the meta-historical» meaning of his condition,” “the modern man,” different by the psychological, cultural and political coordinates of his personality, “lives his existence under the sign of the terror of history” (p. 29) and of “the spiritual struggle with the terror of history (finally a terror of politics).” (p. 30) The signifying of these theses and the analysis of the symbol as “a part that leads us to the whole” and which “summarizes the relation between diversity and unity” (p. 27), as an object of the phenomenological and hermeneutic-comparative approach, but also as “an instrument” through which the relationship between sacred, aesthetic and political can be observed (p. 35), is made in the book, as Lorena Stuparu specifies, by alternating the extensive method with an in-depth analysis of texts, especially those of literary writing.

Chapter I offers an admirable “positioning within discourses about the symbol,” “by inputs in and outputs from Mircea Eliade’s horizons, accompanied by interdisciplinary bibliographic

references” – Antoine Delzant, Renné Alleau, L.M. Chauvet, Johan Huizinga, André Jacob, Ernst Cassirer, Peter Caws, Jean Baudrillard, Gilbert Durand, Emmanuel Levinas, Guy de Tervarent, Gaston Bachelard and others –, configuring the symbolic order as “the order of recognition, even when it does not reveal, but rather hides the cipher of a secret.” The symbol is considered both in its classical sense, as “sign of recognizing”, and in the sense of “a system of communication.” The author points out that for Mircea Eliade religions, especially in their elaborate expressions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam – generate not only theology but also mentalities modelled by the idea of a symbolic order. As “communication systems,” the symbols maintain a system of relationships and constitute “elements of purely differential, distinctive and opposing value” and, at the same time, they establish “complex relations of communication between different levels of reality,” the meaning being found in what they “evoke, namely in something other than the object invested with meaning – by virtue of the invisible connection with the ultimate reality (as in religion) or with the virtual reality (as in art).” (pp. 39-40) The prime acceptance of the principle of symbolization, that of positioning “in the order of recognition in order to have access to knowledge,” that of maintaining “in the horizon of remembrance in order to recompose the original truth in its fullness, and to communicate its strong impression” – namely “the prime level of interpretation associated with the symbol understood as a «sign of recognition» in the literary order – is put in correspondence in a spiritual order with a “sacred level whose steps are measured according to the way in which is realized the connection between entities staying in different regimes – «the numinous alliance» with the primordial model in which any of the deeds of nature and culture enter through symbolic investiture.” (p. 45) The author considers Eliade’s vision as a “pan-symbolist” one, since the symbol is present in all his theoretical works, in his literary books, “populated with characters whose existence is elucidated through (and sometimes even dependent on) the deciphering of certain symbols,” in autobiography (*Memorii, Jurnal, Convorbiri* cu Claude-Henri Rocquet – *Memoirs, Diary, Talks* with Claude-Henri Rocquet) “which is symbolically conceived by the author, who understanding his whole life as a labyrinthic initiation,” in the intention testified in *Jurnal* (Diary) to write a book called *Man as a Symbol*, in order to point out “«the need of man to live according to the symbol, to the archetype»,” insisting on “the function of spiritual technique, fulfilment, balance, fruitfulness of the imagination” (p. 54). There is analyzed “the universe of symbols” – as “the meeting place of the archaic man with the modern man,” since, for Eliade, “whatever is not directly consecrated by hierophany becomes sacred by its participation in a symbol” –, the symbol as “man’s effort to build a world of significance,” the symbol “capable of expressing a whole reality for the understanding of which no other manifestation of the spirit has sufficient heuristic force or the required expressive valances,” (p. 60) the symbol “solidarity with an ontology” or the symbol “capable of expressing a coherent thought about the existence of the World,” religious and at the same time ontological symbols, “the character of multi-valence of the symbol,” the coherence of the symbol and the function of expressing paradoxical situations (p. 63).

Chapter II, “The Sacred and the Aesthetic,” depicts, on the one hand, Eliade’s original perspective on “the manifestation of the sacred” as a dialectical process that generates “the significant world in which man lives;” on decryption of symbols that “are always religious” and orientate “the meaning of existential adventure;” on the “positive relationship between sacred and profane,” considered “the deepest religious issue that Mircea Eliade’s work and method have highlighted,” since, “indeed, the manifestation of the sacred itself is profane;” on hierophany as a “junction between the plan of the sacred and the plan of the profane” and as a solution to the paradox of “camouflaging the sacred into something that he is not, in something opposite to his essence” (p. 74); on the “dialectic of hierophany” by which “the profane turns in sacred;” on the ontological postulate of the sacred (the phenomenological postulate) expressed in the idea of the sacred irreducibility; on philosophical anthropology based on the comparison between religious man and non-religious man.

Chapter III, “Artistic Symbol and Religious Symbol,” is devoted to a broad debate of the artistic symbol and symbolism, starting from the idea that for Mircea Eliade, as it results from the interpretation of novellas *În curte la Dionis* (*Dionysos’ garden*) and *Nouăsprezece trandafiri*

(*Nineteen roses*), art, poetry in particular, “in the concentrationary regimes, deformed not so through technique but through politics, it is the only one that has the purpose of saving, namely of bringing beauty. In a world dedicated to politics, its role is to save politics by putting it in brackets.” (p. 110) “The crossing points between the artistic symbol and the religious symbol,” as there are outlined by Lorena Stuparu, illustrate the thesis that the religious symbol “binds each individual to a wider religious community,” in the formulation of Michel Meslin, as “the artistic symbol is a sign of recognition between the artist’s inner universe and the religious universe, more or less assumed.” (p. 115) The author considers that Eliade’s literature is largely devoted to “the epiphanic structure of human existence which unfolds in the midst of seemingly trivial things, but which, looked carefully, reveals signs with the help of which the receiver has access to the mysteries of the symbolically ordered universe.” (p. 123)

Under the title “Hermeneutics and aesthetic attitude,” chapter IV deals with the “hermeneutical circle” of those who re-lecture – set in motion, as Adrian Marino showed, by a “revelation,” an original intuition of the global solution, an intuition “cultivated” and sustained by erudition, by the “cohabitation” with the facts researched, by a rational, objectified and consolidation in documents reflection – and hermeneutical synthesis, which “absorbs the distance between the horizon of the past and that of the present.” There is revealed “as a method a possible «hermeneutical key»” suggested by Ioan Petru Culianu to Matei Călinescu: “the deduction by which the usual assumptions in the case of the Eliadian textual analysis (hiding and revealing of the sacred in the profane, of the miraculous in the banal, of the event in the daily, the capacity to recognize or the opacity to «signs») are particularized to Romanian history and its «mythologies» of the twentieth century,” the true access “key” or “deciphering” key of a destiny at the same time individual, historical, generational or collective of the population of a country (p. 142) and of “fantastic reconstruction of the world with the help of symbolic imagination.” (p. 151)

In the last chapter of the paper, entitled “Symbolism and Politics: Variations on Eliadian themes,” of particular interest is the analysis of “the journalistic epiphany” which “illustrates the condition of epiphany par excellence: the appearance of «something» other than the visible in the actions of people, of the citizens. Since, any newspaper may display something «hidden» in everyday life, although sometimes these things are «flimsy», as the aesthetic fact itself.” (pp. 203-204) Thus, to Eliade, the journals – “profane symbols of modern society” – are for the citizens (“profanes”) “the vehicles through which the political power (possessing the appearances of «the sacred») becomes intelligible, «vehicles» through which the unknown (amazing as event or as a fact) becomes cognoscible to those who have some interest in this. And the journalist would be, in the same system of reference, (...) an emissary, a militant of transparency; a mediator between an «occult» reality and the simple reader – citizen.” (p. 204) The last chapter also contains references to the “encyclopaedic” function of Eliade’s *Journals* and *Memoirs* and is followed by a “Closing Word” and an excellent synthesis study: “Au lieu d’un résumé. *Mircea Eliade: epiphanie et vie initiatique.*”

In the short characterization I made in December 2004 to Lorena Stuparu’s doctoral thesis, sustained at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Bucharest – a highly appreciated the thesis which, since 2006, as an editorial appearance, has enjoyed of good reception – I noticed mainly the competent analysis, the originality of interpretation and of refining an impressive bibliography, the passion of wording and the special sense of nuance. In the doctoral dossier it was appreciated, too, the manner in which the author built the theoretical framework, in which she approached the theme by bringing to light the religious and aesthetic dimension of the symbol in Mircea Eliade and in which she articulated them in the category of beauty, conceived as symbolic mediator between sacred and aesthetic. What I would add now, after 15 years, after the recent re-reading of the book and of some fragments from Mircea Eliade’s works and from Ioan Petru Culianu’s interpretations of Eliade’s work, is that Lorena Stuparu’s book is a remarkable contribution in the current research on Mircea Eliade’s thought and on Eliadic conception of the symbol.

Gabriela Tănăsescu

Bogdana Todorova

Obektivirane tona Islama [*The Objectification of Islam*], Avangard prima Publishing House, Sofia, 2018, 192 pp.

Bogdana Todorova is an authoritative researcher and scholar who, for more than three decades, researches the very complex and even ignitive thematic matter related to the history and contemporary transformations of Islamic religion and its reflections in secular life. From her past research and publications it is evident that she is responsible, systematic, consistent and deeply connected to this delicate matter, enriched with her personal creative style and interpretive signature. For this reason, her new monographic work, *The Objectification of Islam*, quite accordingly captures the attention and the theoretical interest of scientists as well as the general public.

This work is something completely new and exquisitely different compared to what Bulgarian scholarly literature has already offered in relation to such important issues.

High-grade research should be provided in relation to scientifically correct and original statements concerning the historical mutations, transformations and realizations of the individual strands or sects of Islam in the last decades of apology and intrusion of neoliberalism, postmodernism, multiculturalism in the world.

The semantic and interpretative borderlines that Professor Bogdana Todorova examines and analyzes in relation to the mentalities and manners within a range of various Muslim fields, as well as their evolutions in their specific profilings and contemporary (Islamic, fundamentalist, radical and extremist) phenomenologies are fascinatingly captivating (hence the temptation to translate the title also as *The Enlightenment of Islam*).

An emphasis has been put over the dependence between the West and the Middle East. The author's contribution can also be examined within the careful and precise portrayal of conceptual visions and behavioural biographies of some of the most emblematic, even cult figures of Islam, Islamism, fundamentalism, radicalism and extremism, something that is absent in today's modernity and which certain theoretical stereotypes lack.

Well-deserved admirations should be given for the analyses and interpretations provided by Bogdana Todorova in relation to nature, especially when discussing the important role and need of Islamic revolutionary logic and technology in order to provoke radical changes in the social system. The author demonstrates creative courage and consistency by trying to reveal the true nature and significance of such dramatic and radical phenomena in history.

Interesting and valuable is the analysis of the divergent factors, catalysing or obstructing particular models of de / constructivism in the Middle East. In this aspect, the fragment of the Mutations of Truth, of its relativistic versions, provoked, served by Islam, expands as intriguing topic.

The author's views on the correlations between democracy and visions for Muslim or Islamist reformation are also very interesting and practical. The well-presented and analysed modes of compatibility or, on the contrary, the incompatibility between democracy and Islam are enriched by meaning and provocative with conclusions, which is undoubtedly a positive side and success deriving from the creative intentions of the author.

In the context of modern dramas or convulsions of convertible currencies, it is quite fascinating to analyze the theory and the ideology of the so-called "golden dinar". Nevertheless, equally intriguing is the work devoted to the "Tauhideconomy", especially from the point of view of its correlations and resources to spiritually which revive and strengthen the Islamic existence.

The enriched and further developed, known from previous publications of Bogdana Todorova, topics for the different types of taxes and levies as well as the life of the faithful, deserve positive evaluations. Undoubtedly, the analysis of geopolitical chess games or battles between "red" and "azure" Islam in today's Middle East and their resonances in closer or distant regions, countries or peoples will be interesting. The monographic work presented by B. Todorova does not only bring indisputable informative value, but also provides a real, practical, scientific and social functionality.

I can only admire such type of publication and I sincerely express my recommendations to all readers interested in such topics.

Maxim Mizov