

*Sebastian Ștefănuță*

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## Foreword\*

The fifth issue of the *Yearbook of Prahova County Society for General Anthropology* honours its initial intentions in establishing this magazine: a meeting place of some concerns of anthropological nature from the Prahova county area, but also from a wider area, both national and international. From the Prahova county area firstly, which is in fact happening in this issue; most of the contributors are connected through strings of different nature to this county or its residence, Ploiești. We named Marian Nuțu Cîrpați, Ioana Alexandra Cosma, Smaranda Jilăveanu, Constantin Marin, Cristian Mușă, Leonard-Mihail Rădulescu, Sebastian Ștefănuță and Mihai Vasile. The national opening of the magazine is certified by the contributions of Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată and Anca Gorgan, and the international one by those of Desislava Pileva (Bulgaria) and Eleni Grompanopoulou (Greece). From Prahova county or from outside, the contributions ensure to the authors the automatic belonging to the informal group called the *Prahova county society for general anthropology*, a group with no ideological or political orientation. Group whose meeting is held in particular on the occasion of the “Colloquiums of the Prahova county society for general anthropology”, occasioned by the release of the yearbook, usually at the end of February, under the organization of the Prahova County Cultural Centre, an institution in whose custody the magazine was and is issued. Not only the “Colloquiums” should be mentioned here, but also other reunion events, such as the Christian Camp of Anthropological Conversations<sup>1</sup> in Maliuc (Tulcea County), which has reached the eleventh edition, organized every summer (July or August) at the initiative of Father Bogdan-Costin Georgescu from Blejoi, Prahova County. Regarding the contributors to the magazine and the membership of this group, we should also mention Alexandra Badea and Ioana Antoaneta Stancu (both from Ploiești), as well as Mariá Hasápi-Siderá (Greece) or Natalie Adele Winter (England), with contribution to the

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\* Translated from Romanian by Alexandra Badea (Ploiești).

<sup>1</sup> Previously entitled “Camp of Christian Cultural Anthropology”. From 2019 the camp took the mentioned name following the suggestions of Mr. Prof. Gheorghiță Geană.

translation or revision of some texts in English.<sup>2</sup>

The concerns and the mentioned group were sometimes spoken of as a phenomenon. From the outside, the *Yearbook of Prahova County Society for General Anthropology* seems to be the concrete expression and the tangible historical trace of this phenomenon. From the inside, however, things are soon revealed differently. Although the Prahova area, Ploiești in particular, seems to be very receptive to the anthropological fashion of our day, both at the level of what we have informally called “the Prahova county society for general anthropology” and at other levels, namely institutional or individual, the trends have been and remain centrifugal. One of the most visible signs appears when it comes to the very “society” mentioned above: some core members seem to be hardly interested in the vitality of the publication, not considering whatsoever as being among their priorities to publish some of the results of their scientific-cultural activity in the above-mentioned yearbook. The causes are multiple, there is no reason to analyse them here. With such centrifugal tendencies – each, either individual or institution, seeming to perform its activity rather by ignoring the others – it is difficult to speak of a phenomenon, orientation or school in the Romanian culture or human sciences. For the moment, all these people or institutions can be put together as if they are in the same horizon of concerns, that being the most of it.

Returning to the publication, in contrast to the third and fourth issues, the current issue is no longer thematic. Although, the text of Mihai Vasile or Desislava Pileva, the translation from Robert Hertz, seem to resume the theme of the human body corresponding to the fourth issue. Or, the thematic concern for the “Romanian village”<sup>3</sup> seems to be a common denominator in the texts proposed by Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată, Anca Gorgan, Cristian Mușa and Leonard-Mihail Rădulescu. Despite of this, the issue rather honours the label of “general anthropology”, the reader being convinced as soon as reading the texts proposed by Marian Nuțu Cîrpaci, with a reassessment of some Romani identity issues in the ways of linguistic analysis and archaeology, the reviews of Sebastian Ștefănuță referring to a Pontico-Balkan social anthropology, or the text of Eleni Grompanopoulou, about two traditional forms of ownership and association in Greece. Honouring the label of “general anthropology” can ultimately only send to the meta-theme of identity, in the absence of which any anthropological discourse would be dissolved. The

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<sup>2</sup> Other people contributed indirectly to the publication of the magazine. Regardless of this, they were of invaluable help. I mention in this context my colleague Mr. Prof. Robert Gavrilă-Stadler from the “Constantin Cantacuzino” Technological High School, Băicoi, Romania, who, taking over for year after year the administrative-bureaucratic tasks corresponding to the department of socio-human disciplines, offered me the opportunity to take care of efforts to edit the yearbook without this aspect competing in terms of time and energy allocated to professional duties.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance to the cultural, scientific and social preoccupations of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 2019, widely disseminated in the Romanian society.

meta-theme can be found directly in the articles of Marin Constantin and Ioana Alexandra Cosma, the first with indications of some ethnic identities revealed by paths of serendipity, the other with the sociological analysis of some attitudes the individual has towards his own person and the others, corresponding to a group of students from Bucharest.

As in the previous issues, the ideal of scientific anthropological knowledge takes precedence in the authors' efforts. The impression of epistemic imbalance through the superiority of this form of knowledge is mitigated by the text of Mihai Vasile, due to its extension. The reader is carried on dozens of pages through the maze of a theatrical anthropology, from its first beginnings to the fruit it could give in the field of dramatic creation. The place of scientific knowledge is taken this time by the artistic knowledge, with inflections from the mythical one, often supported, though, by a scientific methodology.

Regarding the methodology, especially in the area of scientific knowledge, this is of paramount importance. Thus, the author is often required to specify the path at the end of which he/she added extra-value to the knowledge. Noteworthy in this issue is the multitude of methodological approaches: the case study, with the interview as a research tool, in the case of Desislava Pileva, in order to establish the significance of the head coverings for women for certain religious and social identities, as well as the voluntary adherence to this habit; the online survey, used by Ioana Alexandra Cosma, as a way of studying individualism in the case of a group of students from Bucharest; the bibliographical study, doubled by the use of observations from one's own life experience in trying to establish the interrelation between religion and magic corresponding to the Romanian people, in the text of Anca Gorgan; the bibliographical study, the study of documents, conversations with people especially selected, in the monographic sketch of the city of Băicoi, Romania, offered by Leonard-Mihail Rădulescu; the conversations with non-combatant survivors of World War II, in an attempt to reconstruct the perceptions of this war "behind" its front, in the text of Cristian Mușă; the linguistic archaeology, meticulously realized by Marian Nuțu Cîrpaci, thus overthrowing the established etymological theories regarding the origin of some words from the Romani language; the study, but also a long bibliographical and didactic experience, in the synthesis having as object the monographs realized by Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată. It is interesting that the lack of method, in which the guide is precisely the unforeseeable, the "serendipity", can generate certain scientific extra-value, as it happens in the text of Marin Constantin.

Anthropology in the wide world is also present in the pages of this issue, either in the form of translation or as a review. In the first form, by the translation from Robert Hertz, performed by Smaranda Jilăveanu. R. Hertz's essay on religious polarity, the source of the common left-right polarity, represents a masterpiece of socio-cultural anthropology of French

tradition. In the second form, through the long reviews by Sebastian Ștefănuță. These are the reviews of three volumes, each trying to portray, in its own manner, realities of the Pontico-Balkan region. Thus, the volume coordinated by Eleni Sideri and Lydia Efthymia Roupakia, brings together religion and migration, analysing the mutual influences suffered by them in the last years in the Black Sea region; the one by Ildikó Bellér-Hann and Chris Hann explores ethnographically the forces that shape values, ideas and social behaviour in a region in north-eastern Turkey, as the latter ones could be perceived during the late decades of the last century; finally, the volume coordinated by Vasilis K. Gounaris, Iakovos D. Mihailidis and Giorgos Angelopoulos, attacks from different perspectives, some outside the anthropological approach itself, the problem of Macedonian identities in the Greek land. The last volume requires that the reader is already familiar with some internal realities of the mentioned space<sup>4</sup>, in the absence of which reading the review may seem cumbersome.

As it is already a tradition, the magazine also contains a DVD, which is attached to the third cover. As opposed to the other issues, though, this time we go outside the ethnographic domain. This time, the DVD contains a collage with selections from four theatre performances, representing a perfect parallel with the texts written by Mihai Vasile in the beginning of the yearbook. Therefore, the reader has a chance to get used (both auditive and visually) to the results of the theatrical research made by the author, who is also a scenographer and a director.

One last remark is related to the linguistic specificity of the publication. From the reading of the table of contents, it is observed that most of the texts are only in Romanian, others only in English, and others have versions in both languages. The bilingualism of the yearbook is part of the tradition established in the previous issues, and is subsumed to an ideal of maximum circulation and accessibility of the yearbook, both national and international.

We conclude by expressing our hope that future issues will also include texts from other branches of “general anthropology” that are less or not represented so far. For example, in the field of physical anthropology or palaeoanthropology, as branches of scientific anthropology; or in the field of literary anthropology (understood as a reflection on man in the ways of literary criticism) or of anthropological philosophy (understood as philosophizing about man), as branches of speculative anthropology, etc. We are, therefore, looking forward to your contributions at known addresses!<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>In the absence of this familiarity, the phrase “Macedonian identity” is rather related not to Greece, but to “Macedonia” (by almost everyone now recognized as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [F.Y.R.O.M.]).

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