

## FEW HISTORIC, STYLISTIC AND TECHNICAL GUIDE MARKS OF SOME ROMANIAN ARTISTS'S PRESENCE IN THE XIX<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IN ITALY

Doina Pungă

The evolution of the Romanian art in XIX<sup>th</sup> century determined and it is still raising many questions. Reporting the fine art to the general effort of modernizing the Romanian society, the emergence and the evolution of the new artistic techniques, the awareness of the status of independent artist and the configuration of the artist-citizen profile as well as the sinuosity of the effort to synchronize with the Occidental art, all represent as many lines of investigation as the results of which novelty might be at least anticipated.

In comparison with painting, drawing, aquarelle and xylography, the lithography, the engraving and the etching were less studied. Materialized in imprinting on the paper the energy and the artistic sally leaded by fantasy and at the same time representing records of our history, culture and civilization, the lithography and etching evolved in different circumstances with specific communicational and esthetical finality imposing to the Romanian artists diverse specializations within important centres from Rome, Paris, Vienna or Munich and at the same time foreshadowing distinct areas of interests in the field of specialized research.

In accordance with the language characteristics and the historic, social and cultural reality of that time, the study of the beginnings, the evolution, the moments of glory and even of fall of the painting, sculpture, lithography, engraving and etching in the three Romanian Principalities must follow on the compared analysis of those interferential paragraphs constituted by the synchronizing and obvious correspondence with the great conquests, lines and certitudes of the European art – Italian, French, German or Austrian.

The innovating revolution of the lithography, after the public recognition of Alois Senefelder<sup>1</sup> invention<sup>2</sup>, emerged on the basis of reorganizing the thinking

---

<sup>1</sup> Alois Senefelder (Prague 6.11.1771- Munich 26.02.1834) was the son of a theater actor from Prague. Between 1797-1798 periods he invented the chemical imprinting of a drawing made on lithographic stone, replacing the mechanical imprinting. In 1799 he was granted "Privilegium exclusivum", for 15 years from the duke Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria. After he left Vienna, in 1801, Senefelder's invention was recognized in England and Scotland. To Alois Senefelder, the specialists grant a small number of plates, for sure several musical compositions and, probably, lithography made in nib illustrating the manual *Zeichenbuchs der Strick-und Nüharbeiten für Anfänger mit 27 meist illuminirt Kupfertafeln*, from 1805 to 1806.

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Schwarz, *Die Anfänge der Lithographie*, Bearbeitet von Elisabeth Hermann-Fichtenau, Böhlau Verlag, Wien, Köln, Graz, 1988, p. 66, notes 367 and 368: George Caspar Nagler considers as rivals Alois Senefelder and Simon Schmid on regard to the invention of lithography. In 1821

and artistic vision in XIX<sup>th</sup> century and affected the order and the hierarchy of the traditional values, determining a new esthetical attitude and provoking qualitative mutations of the artistic language. Thus, the acceptance of the lithography in the official circles of the European art was slow, had a processional character and needed the accreditation coming from some of the well-known figures of the time such was, for example, Johann Wolfgang Goethe<sup>3</sup>.

The legacy of Alois Senefelder, known also during his life as the lithography inventor - as it stays written on his lithographed portrait by the Italian artist G. Casabona- was not dispersed in time. If the first workshop was founded by Senefelder in Munich, in 1799, the city Offenbach am Main from Germany becomes shortly the center of lithography in the entire Europe. The brothers of his associate, Johann Anton André, founded the first lithographic workshops in London (1801), Paris (1802) and in Berlin (1803-18004). Between 1807-1810 periods, the lithography was introduced in Rome, Zurich, Weimar and Prague. Assumed by the American artists, the new technique was applied in Philadelphia and New York (1818-1819), so thus in 1821-1829 to penetrate also Romanian territory, in Sibiu, Iasi and Bucharest, through the work of Franz Neuhauser the Young, Michael Bielz, Gheorghe Asachi and Ion Heliade Rădulescu.

The first Italian lithographic workshop was established in Rome by Giovanni Dall' Armi in 1805, at Via della Croce 78. Contemporary with Dall' Armi were Batistelli Workshop attended by the Romanian Constantin Lecca (1807-1887) and the Institute "Ape Romana", which activity was well known by another important mentor of the Romanian modern culture, Gheorghe Asachi.

The beginnings of the lithography in Moldavia are related to the name of **Gheorghe Asachi** (1788-1869). Renaissance's spirit, universal, all-inclusive thinking and having ample preoccupations, Gheorghe Asachi, the Romanian savant who initiated the artistic study<sup>4</sup> and promoted the theatre and the media in Romanian language, was constantly animated by the noble thought of reviving the glorious past of our national history and culture.

School creator both in the field of painting as well as lithography, educated in the rational spirit of classicism, his complex personality gathered also romantic features under the sign of the belief that art has the capacity to contribute to awaking the national dignity by illustrating the historical events and praising the nation's heroes.

---

Goethe himself, handling lithography, appreciated that an invention can benefit from parallel contributions.

<sup>3</sup> Heinrich Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p. 17, note 19.

<sup>4</sup> Gheorghe Asachi (Herta 1788- Iasi 1869). After the class of engineering from Lwov (Poland), he studied astronomy in Vienna and archeology and art in Rome, where he attended the workshops of the sculptor Antonio Canova and met his friend Bianca Milesi. Creator of the national school of art, he founded "the painting class" at the Academy Mihaileana from Iasi (1835-1843), where, among others, taught also the Italian painter Giovanni Schiavoni (1837-1838, 1841). Gh. Asachi was painted during this period by Giovanni Schiavoni, in his office surrounded by books and plates engraved or lithographed.

Within the artistic atmosphere of Rome, where he arrived in 1808, Gheorghe Asachi understood the efficiency of the lithography as an artistic technique with valances of cheap multiplication of the image and appreciated the importance of working "in the nature", just like we can see from his notes written on the drawings made in Italy during this period or later<sup>5</sup>. In the same time, he made his first steps in studying history.

Attending the workshop of the sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822) and of the "Emulation Academy of Fine Arts" led by the painter Michael Köck as well as the friendship with Bianca Milesi, put him in touch with famous artists of that time, authors of lithography<sup>6</sup>.

He thus met Andrea Appiani (1754-1817), commissioner for Lombardy and Venice of Napoleon and Vincenzo Cammuccini (1775-1844). He also was a friend of Bartolomeo Pinelli (1787-1835) the one who illustrated "Divina comedia" of Dante, "Freed Jerusalem" of Torquato Tasso and the "The Fiancés" of Alessandro Manzoni<sup>7</sup>.

Within the paper "Litografia italiana dal 1805 al 1870", Leandro Ozzola mentions that the first lithographic workshop created in Rome in 1805 belonged to Giovanni Dall'Armi<sup>8</sup>, physics and chemistry professor. Contemporary with the workshop of Dall'Armi were the workshop of Batistelli and Litografia dell'Ape Romana<sup>9</sup>. Gheorghe Asachi, for sure, attended these workshops the name of the last one inspired him for the gazette and for the hypo-typographic institute "Albina Românească" from Iasi. The institute from Iasi was established in 1828 and the journal "Albina Românească" issued in 1829, had the main page decorated with the lithographed vignette accompanied by the motto "Este Albinei dor și lege/ Din flori miere a culege" (Is Albina miss and law/ From flowers honey to collect).

Being in Rome, Gheorghe Asachi studied the records and the vestiges related to the history of the Romanian people, he travelled and made a series of drawings in aquarelle and pencils, drawings (**Photo 1**) that we can witness in the patrimony of the Romanian Academy's Prints Cabinet in Bucharest or in the patrimony of the Museum of Porțile de Fier Area from Drobeta-Turnu Severin. The landscapes, portraits, allegories and the scenes of genre, signed in accordance with

---

<sup>5</sup> Pavel Chihaiia, *New data regarding the activity of Gh. Asachi in Italy*, in "Studies and researches in the history of art", 2, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1963, p. 450, note 6: A drawing of Gheorghe Asachi from 1819 is entitled *Une scène d'après nature*.

<sup>6</sup> Gheorghe Asachi met in Rome the first maestros of the Italian lithography: Andrea Appiani (1754-1817), Giuseppe Longhi (1766-1831), Vincenzo Camuccini (1775-1844), Bartolomeo Pinelli (1787-1835).

<sup>7</sup> Leandro Ozzola, *La lithography italiana dal 1805 al 1870*, . *Seconda monografia della rassegna d'arte antica e moderna, diretta da Corrado Ricci*, Editori Alfieri et Lacroix, Roma, 1923, p. 36, cat. N°. 91: *Illustration to "the fiancés"* by Alessandro Manzoni; nib lithography; signed and dated: Pinelli fece 1830. Roma Lit. Delle Belle Arti. Via Clementino, 91-A.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem, op.cit.*, p. 6: Giovanni Dall'Armi died in Rome in 1829. Around 1830, his lithographic workshop still carried his name was situated on Via della Croce no.78 and was propriety of Settimio Rossi.

<sup>9</sup> Litografia dell'Ape Romana published among others also a series of 24 plates reproducing antique monuments, architectonic and decorative fragments, lithographed by Luigi Maria Valadier.

the trend of the time with pastoral names like "Alvaro", "Alvaro Dacico" were sketched after the nature or had as model known engravings from XVIII<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, it is important his work as collector<sup>10</sup>. Gheorghe Asachi has brought in the country numerous drawings and engravings of the artists that he met in Rome, along with series of engravings of wide circulation like "Nuova raccolta di Roma e sue vicinanze...da celebri incisori"<sup>11</sup>.

Gheorghe Asachi returned from Rome to Iași in 1812. He met again with the lithographic production of the European workshops later, in 1823, when he was sent to Vienna as diplomatic agent. His activity in the capital of Italy and later in Vienna animated the idea to set up his own lithographic workshop and to realize the first lithographic drafts having preponderantly an historic theme.

Gheorghe Asachi believed in the necessity to spread the historic painting through lithography, directing the lithographic production towards the classic academism of which norms were similar also in Moldavia with the program of political and social ascertaining the Romanian nation, in the European context of that time, of reawakening the national consciousness by remembering historical data and forming the esthetical values.

The series of the big historic plates that he initiated started with the lithography "*Ștefan cel Mare's Mother*"<sup>12</sup>, work in which the lithographer Iosif (Joseph) Müller, from Vienna, interpreted an oil sketch of the Italian neoclassical painter Felice Gianni<sup>13</sup> from Rome in 1812, after the original idea of Gheorghe Asachi from 1811<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Pavel Chihaia, *op.cit.*, p. 437: A part from the painting and graphic works made by Gh. Asachi in Italia, as well as the works of some friends, Italian painters, that he collected and that were part of the fund of Mr. C. I. Istrati, are part of the patrimony of the Portilor de Fier Area Museum from Drobeta-Turnu Severin.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, p. 449-450.

<sup>12</sup> Remus Niculescu, *Gheorghe Asachi and the beginning of lithography in Moldavia*, in "Library studies and researches", I, Publishing House Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1955, p. 83-87: At Gh. Asachi request, the one who discovered the legend according to which the mother of ruler Ștefan cel Mare refused to accept her son defeated by ottomans in Cetatea Neamtului, the Italian painter Felice Giani illustrated this image making an oil composition and a bigger replica purchased in Rome by the French general Miollis. The initial scene, remained in the possession of Gh. Asachi, is considered to be the prototype of lithography in 1833. Another composition aving the same theme was painted in 1812 also by Bartolomeo Pinelli, under the guidance of. The smaller composition of F. Giani and the painting of B. Pinelli were brought to Iași by Gh. Asachi in 1813, being admired by his students. The plate lithographed in 1833 was copied either in the lithography technique, during the Principalities Union, or in the engraving one, in wood, after drawings of several foreign artists. Such an engraving in wood illustrated in 1863 an article of Ubcini, favorable to Alexandru Ioan Cuza's ruling, published in the French publication "Magasin Pittoresque".

<sup>13</sup> *Idem*, *op.cit.*, p. 84: Romantic painter and interior designer, Felice Giani worked in Italy and in France. Gheorghe Asachi met him in Rome, in 1812, probably in the workshop of his drawing teacher, Michael Köck, along with whom Felice Giani established "Accademia d' emulazione delle Belle Arti, detto della Pace".

<sup>14</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Gheorghe Asachi as typographer and editor*, in "Annals of the Literary Section, XXXIX, Romanian Academy, (without year), p. 745, note 2; Remus Niculescu, *op.cit.*, p. 87: in a

The foreign lithographers, called by Gheorghe Asachi to teach at "the class of painting" of the Academy Mihăileană from Iasi, assured and supported the debut of the lithography with historic theme. Thus, imprinted in 1839 after the drawing of Italian painter Giovanni Schiavoni (1804-1848), professor at Academy Mihăileană, the lithography "*The Fairy Dochia and the Emperor Traian*"<sup>15</sup> occupies a well defined place in the history of the Romanian lithography, although was severely criticized even at its publication by the historian Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817-1891). The historic brochure that accompanied the lithography was published in 1840, the image of the two "founders" of the Romanian people being reassumed also by other publications from that period.

Considering insufficient the training under the coordination of the foreign professors appointed at the Mihăileana Academy, Gheorghe Asachi followed and enhanced, constantly, his educational program. Among the first generation of Romanian artists, students at this Academy, **Gheorghe Lemeni** and **Gheorghe Năstăseanu**, sent to Rome with a scholarship, focused their attention also on practising painting and lithography.

The young **Gheorghe Lemeni** (1815-1848), the son of the priest Ioan Lemeni from Suceava met the Italian art while being a student in Iași, just before leaving to Rome, when he draw and lithographed the "icon" of *Archangel Michael*, after a painting of Guido Reni (1575-1642).

Within the document from 1842 issued by the Church of Public Education from the State Archive in Iași, it is shown that Lemeni, student at the Academy Mihaileană, being 27 years old, is sent to the Academia di San Luca in Rome for 2 years<sup>16</sup>, for studying thoroughly his skill. The premature death of the painter and lithographer Gheorghe Lemeni interrupted a reference career for the Romanian history of modern graphic art.

The activity as lithographer of the Romanian painter **Gheorghe Năstăseanu**<sup>17</sup> (cca. 1812-1964), an artist close to romanitism, is, at the same time, less known. Gheorghe Năstăseanu met for the first time lithography in Iasi at the Academy Mihaileană, where he was accepted as student in 1839. From this period it is dated the lithography *Holy Family*, interpreted after the composition made by Carlo Maratta (1625-1713) in Rome, in 1662.

---

letter published in "Icoana Lumii", Gheorghe Asachi underlines the fact that „the first paintings are mine and were made under my coordination was made in Rome, in 1811".

<sup>15</sup> "Albina Românească", XI, 1840, p. 65-66; "Curierul Românesc", XI, 1840, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> State's Archives, Iasi, dos. 1006/ 1842.

<sup>17</sup> Gheorghe Nastaseanu (around 1812-Rome September 1864). Portraitist painter and lithographer distinguished through the romantic trends of his art. After graduating Mihaileana Academy from Iasi, he left in 1843 with a scholarship to Rome where he was attracted by Michelangelo's frescoes and Caravaggio's painting. Gh. Nastaseanu took part at the 1848 Revolution on Rome's barricades along with the Italian national movement. He left Paris in 1853 and returned in the country in 1860 and he was sent again to Rome for making several copies designed to the National Paintings Gallery from Iasi.

Beside this lithography<sup>18</sup> quoted by Professor George Oprescu, the media of 1843-1848 periods refers also to other plates, today lost, that prove the fact that the artist, left to Rome, continued to make interpretation lithography which later on was imprinted in the country at the Albina Română Institute. At this institute, for example, was imprinted the plate *The Saint Magdalena* after Giacomo Palma the Old (1480-1528).

It is known the fact that the artist worked in Rome between 1843 – 1848 periods. We can assume that the preparatory drawing for his lithography and even the lithographic stone, made in Rome, were sent to Iași for imprinting. It is certain that after 1848, year when he took part in the Revolution on Rome's barricades, Gheorghe Năstăseanu stopped being interest in lithography.

**Alexandru Asachi** (1820-1875 or 1876), the son of Gheorghe Asachi, was a colleague of Gheorghe Lemeni and Gheorghe Năstăseanu at the Mihăileana Academy. Representative of the documentary art<sup>19</sup> and a military man, he assumed the art of drawing and the lithography technique at the same Academy. Even before leaving to Italy and Switzerland, Alexandru Asachi cooperated to the most important lithographic projects of his father.

The young artist distinguished himself even from his youth years as author of native landscapes, worthy to be notice for the spontaneity of the feelings and the authenticity of the vision. He thus contributed to the iconography of the Cetatea Neamțului from Moldavia, with an undated aquarelle, which reassumed the images from nature issued by Michel Bouquet within the *Album Moldo-Valaque ou guide politique et pittoresque à travers des Principautés du Danube*. The same historical fortress is represented in the work of Felice Giani or Bartolomeo Pinelli as an imaginary stronghold.

From the analysis of the works dated 1839-1843 periods, we can conclude that Alexandru Asachi reached an acceptable level of the lithographic skill even before the study period from Italy<sup>20</sup>. He certainly was in Italy before 1845, the year during which a request to extent the passport signed by his father is kept in the State Archive in Iași. In Italy, it is possible that he might have met also Gheorghe Lemeni, who was in Rome since 1842.

Few impressions from Italy existent in the patrimony of "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library are dated "1845". The sketches made in pencil, aquatint ink and aquarelle, *Woman from Bologna*, *Sailor in Livorno harbour* or *Piazza San Marco from Venice*, define a matured personality, attracted especially to

<sup>18</sup> George Oprescu, *Romanian graphic in XIX<sup>th</sup> century*, Foundation for Art and Literature "King Michael I", Bucharest 1942-1945, I, p. 109: the lithography is deposit at the collection of the "V. A. Urechia" Library from Galatzi.

<sup>19</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Art and document, Documentary art in XIX<sup>th</sup> century in Romania*, Publishing House Meridiane, Bucharest, 1990, p. 232.

<sup>20</sup> Dr. C. I. Istrati, *Alexandru Asachi, military man and painter*, p. 6.

landscapes but also to folk\_types<sup>21</sup>. In the opinion of several specialists that studied his work, A. Asachi stayed in Italy until 1847.

During his researching travels he recorded, in keys filled with verve under the romantic impulse unleashed by the encounter with the unprecedented, surprising and picturesquely aspects of the Romanian or Italian civilization and landscape.

From the forward written for *the Album of Romanian historic costumes*<sup>22</sup>, published in 1871, we find out that in 1850 he travelled again to Italy. Confessing his preoccupations and the area of interest, a true representative of the European documentary influenced by the patriotic ideals of his father, Alexandru Asachi explains his profession of faith: "Being in a leaf in Italy where I dealt with archaeological studies and draw, after nature, monuments and national costumes, I stayed to look for the similarities that I found in the custom and costumes of the habitants, around Rome in Apennine Mountains as well as in Albano, Sabinia, Tivoli, Netuno, Sobiaco and our habitants from Carpathians mountains, where the classic feature of our Roman ancestors was kept".

The sequence *The National folk costume and those from around Rome* from the mentioned album prove an intense work of research in Italy, dedicated to restoring within the public consciousness the Latinity of the Romanian people. In addition to the plated from 1854-1855 periods, reassumed in a new edition, he, himself, draw a new series of folklore types which he compares with the Italian folk costume. And, "so thus the connoisseurs of fine arts to be able to notice the small differences between our mountain habitant's costumes and those from around Rome", the artist put together, in parallel, within the second part of the *Album* from 1871 also a "copy of the specific costumes from around Rome". When he did not use his own sketches, he used the drawings made by his father, Gheorghe Asachi, while he was a student. The drawing *Spadelino, capo assassino de la Teracina Napoli*<sup>23</sup>, made by Gheorghe Asachi in 1812, existent in the collection of the Prints Cabinet of Romanian Art's National Museum, lithographed by

---

<sup>21</sup> *Idem, op.cit.*, p. 7: Within the collection of doctor. C. I. Istrati there is an album with 57 sketches and studies among which 27 represent different folk costumes made in aquarelle.

<sup>22</sup> Album of Romanian historical costumes from several eras, composed by different documents by **G. ASAKI and designated by A.G.ASAKI. Book I, Albina Institute, 1871.** It was part from the library of Prince Carol I of Romania, Romanian Academy's Library, Stamp Cabinet, inv. IV 206. Second part. Book III and IV consist: "**Romanian national folk costumes and those from around Rome, from Italy**"<sup>1</sup>. *Singer from Galu, Suceava county and Pfiferaro de la Sobiaco (Apenini mountains, Roma, Italy); 2. Peasant hunter from Ceahlau, hunter from Teracina (Italy); 3. Habitant from Vrancea and one from Sora near Neapole; 7. A Shepard from Rarau, Tivoli shepard, near Rome; 11. A monk from Rarau, a capuchin monk from Araceli monastery, Rome; 12. A nun from Agapia, a catholic charity sister; 13. The Bandit Ioan Pietraru, Neamtzu county, the bandit Spadolino capo assassino, de la Teracina, Neapole; 17. Milkman from Moldavia and the Ricotta sellers from Rome.*

<sup>23</sup> *Spadolino, capo assassino de la Teracina, Neapole.* Conté; 0,383 x 0,253; signed right bottom: G. A./ (George Asaki); autographic note, center bottom: Spadelino capo-brigante/ fucilato a Roma 1812. Romanian National Museum of Art, inv. 25923/ 1333.

Alexandru Asachi, is showed near the Romanian bandit *Ioan Pietraru* in the “IV book” of the *Album*.

These lithographs representing folk types were assumed also in the illustrations *The calendar for the Romanian people* issued in Iasi.

The analysis of the wide production that the Romanian lithography history owes to Alexandru Asachi led to the discovery of an artist, who urged by his father travelled around Italy looking for our Latin roots, handling with skilfulness the nib, the chalk as well as the pencil. But, overwhelmed by the diversity of his preoccupations and responsibilities, Alexandru Asachi remained tributary to a certain conventionalism of academic nature, missing the expressivity.

Lithography ascertained and developed not only in Moldavia. The historic circumstances led also in Țara Românească to the growth of the need to know and to communicate, to store and sent the information, a characteristic of the modern renaissance of the Romanian nation. The emergence of the lithography first of all in Bucharest, Țara Românească, it is fully and entirely related to the golden age of XIX<sup>th</sup> century of which intellectuals educated in the atmosphere of emulation within the national schools, but trained in the important universities and Occidental libraries, militated for the acknowledgement of Romanian nation's Latinity and personality in Europe.

It also worth mentioning that the publication *Romanian Library*, the first Romanian publication illustrated in the technique of lithography and edited by the humanist Zaharia Carcalechi in Budapest, presented to its readers the lithography called *Romulus the Romanian's ancestor*.

In 1829 *Romanian Library*, which program stipulated that each issue to be illustrated with an “icon” of the Romanian princes, published also the first lithography of the young painter **Constantin Lecca** (1807-1887), who went to Budapest to study painting in 1827.

Returned in the country, in Craiova, where he was a drawing professor at the Central School, Lecca also made lithographed portraits of some dignitaries and figures of the Romanian public life, published in the *State Almanac*<sup>24</sup>, 1833-1848.

Some biographers<sup>25</sup> of the artist claim that he stopped in Rome, between 1829 and 1830, before settling in Craiova. In June 1844, Lecca left for sure to Rome, where he stayed almost a year until June 1845, when he returned home and started to sign his paintings and lithographs “Lecca”, doubling the consonant “c”.

*The portrait of Barbu Știrbei*, as “Minister of Interior Affairs”, lithographed on a good quality paper (Chine appliqué), was made in Rome, in the well-known

<sup>24</sup> "State's Almanac from the Principality of the entire Terra Românesca". Elaborated and edited by Zaharia Carcalechi, the editor of "Romanian Library", appeared in Budapest (1836-1837, 1846) and Bucharest. It illustrates as lithography signed among others by Constantin Lecca, the period of Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, Gheorghe Bibescu and Barbu Dimitrie Știrbei ruling.

<sup>25</sup> Barbu Theodorescu, *Lecca*, Romanian Academy, Publications of the Elena Simu Founds, II, 1988, National Imprinting, Bucharest, 1938, p. 43-44, note 1.



lithographic workshop of Battistelli<sup>26</sup>. A didactic lithography from the private collection of Lecca, representing a snake, imprinted in the workshop of the same Battistelli after a drawing of Carolus Ruspi<sup>27</sup>, entitles us to state that the artist knew this workshop even before 1833, during a probable short passing through Rome. Also in Battistelli workshop from Rome was done *The portrait of the Voivode Gheorghe Bibescu*, signed in inscription: "After Nature and lithographed by K. Lecca".

Even if Constantin Lecca learned the art of lithography in Budapest, his relation with one of the most famous workshops of Rome proves that Italy represented also for him an opportunity to improve in the mysteries of Alois Senefelder discovery.

The study of Constantin Lecca's lithography allows the identification of the centres and workshops where the imprinting was done, different as format, in many editions and numerous copies. The artist continues to resort to the workshops and engraving shops from Rome in order to multiply in a special manner the historic compositions. Reproduced in numerous copies, dedicated especially to the rule of Mihai Viteazu, this engraving had as main purpose to awake the national consciousness, psychologically preparing the act of Unification of the Romanian Principalities. Thus, the historical painting *The death of Mihai Viteazul*, "invented and draw" by Professor Constantin Lecca, was reassumed in Rome in the engraving of G. Mocheti<sup>28</sup>.

Representative of the Biedermeier portrait, just like Constantin Lecca, **Petre Mateescu** (1825-?), whose life and work are less known<sup>29</sup>, studied painting at Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, where he tried "first of all to paint the portrait with pencils and aquarelles". After the loss of his protector, the former Minister of Justice from that period, he couldn't continue his study in the art of painting in Italy and also due to the lack of money. His experience as portraitist, trained in Italy and also as lithographer was useful during 1849-1855, when he was a student at the Saint Ana Academy of Art from Vienna. Within the documents from "Otto Wagner" Archive from Vienna in 1849<sup>30</sup>, it is mentioned that "earlier he painted portraits as lithographer".

He came back to Florence in 1868. From here, he wrote to the painter Gheorghe M. Tătărescu, another Romanian artist educated at school of Italian academism, about the fact that he wanted to return home, as a professor of drawing.

---

<sup>26</sup> Contemporary with the workshop opened in Rome, in 1805, by Giovanni Dall' Armi, were the workshops of Battistelli and Litografia "Ape Romana", known by Gh.Asachi. Among the first Italian lithographic artists were Andrea Appiani (1754-1817) and Giuseppe Longhi, active during the 1807-1813 periods, specialized in reproduction lithography after the drawings of old maestros.

<sup>27</sup> *Snake. (Coluber Vividi-flavus)*. Lithography colored in aquarelle and ink; 0,379 x 0,274; signed and dated, lithographed, left bottom: Carolus Ruspi Rom. des.; right bottom: Lith. Battistelli 1833; inscription lithographed, center bottom: Colubes Vividi-flavus. Romanian Academy's Library, Stamp Cabinet, inv. 40162.

<sup>28</sup> The historical painting "*Death of Mihai Viteazul*" was "engraved in Rome" by G. Mocheti. Romanian Academy's Library, Stamp's Cabinet, inv. 668.

<sup>29</sup> J. Wertheimer- Ghica, *Tattarescu*, Publishing House Meridiane, Bucharest, 1971, p. 141-142, note 157.

<sup>30</sup> Otto Wagner Archiv, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Dos.M. 745, 591/ 2/ 27, 43; I. 1851/ 52.

The painter **Gheorghe M. Tătărescu** (1818-1894), nephew and pupil of a church painter familiarized with the traditional canons of the Byzantine Erminy, arrives in Rome in 1845<sup>31</sup>, with a scholarship granted by the church authorities of that time and with the support of a high dignitary.

Choosing Italy was not randomly for the mentality of the art protector and the Romanian church circles from that period. In Romanian Principalities, as well as in the Occidental Europe there is the belief that no artist could be considered as completely matured unless he would travel and study in Rome.

Arrived in Rome, at Accademia di San Luca, where the rational doctrine of neoclassicism was taught by professors almost forgotten today, Gheorghe M. Tătărescu, first of all, learned to draw. Giovanni Silvagni (1790-1853), Natale Carta (1790-1884), Pietro Gagliardi (1809-1890), guided him in order to learn a skill and a convenient artistic technique.

As it mentions the letter of the young Romanian painter Petre Alexandrescu (1828-1899), scholar in Italy between 1851-1856 periods, Tătărescu lived in Rome at 99 Via Frattina<sup>32</sup>.

Within his numerous study books, being in the collection of the Bucharest City Museum, are comprised studies of anatomy, drapery, studies after antique moldings and ornaments of plaster stone, landscapes, portraits, sketches of composition with religious or literary theme. Made in pencil and nib, sometime in aquarelle, these notebooks prove the diversity of the young Romanian's preoccupations, eager to assimilate as much as possible and to progress rapidly.

During his often visits to the Italian museums and monuments, he admired Rafael, Guido Reni, Paolo Veronese, Luca Giordano, Correggio, Salvator Rosa, Natale Carta (**Photo 2**) after whom he made numerous copies which decorated for a long time his workshop in Bucharest<sup>33</sup> and which were presented within the art shows opened in this city during the second half of XIXth century.

His wish to travel also in other artistic centers of Italy, "to study in different schools", determined the request to extra fund his scholarship with 50 ducats<sup>34</sup>. It is worth mentioning that this request was supported by a group of young progressives preparing the Revolution from 1848 in Romanian Principalities. Thus, the artist's books from the study period in Italy consist also postcards from Florence and Venice.

Tătărescu was not only attracted by the important monument of the Italian Antiquity or Renaissance. He sketched just like Alexandru Asachi, with a realistic attention for the exact detail, landscapes and the costumes of the habitants. At the same time, he was attracted by the expressive possibilities of the portrait. The

<sup>31</sup> Ion Frunzetti, *Romanian art in XIX century*, Publishing House Meridiane, Bucharest, 1991, p. 173.

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*, *op.cit.*, p. 182.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, *op.cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, *op.cit.*, p. 175-176.

paintings *On Gianicolo (Photo 3)*, *View from a terrace from Monte Pincio (Photo 4)*, from the collection of the Bucharest Municipality Museum or *Nude, Old lady Head, Franciscan monk, Portrait of a peasant woman from Italy*, from the patrimony of Romania's National Museum of Art, represent just few examples.

For the portraits of women he chose the beauties from Albano, Frascati and Sorento (**Photo 5, 6**). *The woman with tambourine (Photo 7)*, painting belonging to the Bucharest City Museum, represents a proof of assuming a realist line, indeed, in the regard of the academism it belonged to. Within *Il Pifferaro (Photo 8)* and the *Portrait of a peasant woman from Italy*, it is easily recognized the identity of the environment and of the age that personalize at the same time also the human being. The Italian peasant woman from the portrait, honest, voluntary, warm and loving, recalls one of the figures through which the literature of the first Italian realism from XIX century or the romanticism of Alessandro Manzoni<sup>35</sup> is characterized.

His successes within the official contests of the Academy prove a serious assimilation of the mysteries of drawing and painting. In 1850 at the contest organized by the Accademia di San Luca, he wins the big prize and the first class medal for the Biblical composition *Simeon and Levi rescuing their sister, Dina, kidnapped by Sichem and Henor*. The participation at this contest was initially rejected due to the fact that he was not "Italian and catholic", being accepted finally, thanks to the intervention of the philo-Romanian cardinal Mezzofanti<sup>36</sup>. The painting was exposed in 1881 in Bucharest, at the fourth Exhibition of the living artists, the last public events that the artist attended.

The young painter was not a stranger to the era's restless and he got closer due to 1848 Revolution hoping that his art will be in the benefit of the country he was born in. Yet, he was not a fighter on Rome's barricades as another Romanian painter was, Gheorghe Năstăseanu, but he served the ideal of liberty through the message of several emblematic allegories of wide dimensions.

Made in Rome in 1848, the composition *Romania's Rising (Photo 9)* clearly expresses the feelings of the arts on regard to the revolutionary movement. The work drew Italy's attention over the drama taking place in the Danube's Principalities. Multiplied through lithography, the painting was reproduced in papers like "Album" being accompanied by comments. Publicists like Luigi Abati or Quirino Leoni wrote on this occasion about the painter and about his painting<sup>37</sup>. "Mr. Tătărescu, in one of his paintings - wrote Leoni - wants to present symbolically the renaissance of the new and sustainable - we hope this - civilization of Walachia, his country. In a wide valley traversed by Danube, to clearly marked a country that has to be understood, on which you can see vestiges of the famous bridge built here

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem, op.cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem, op.cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem, op.cit.*, p. 178-179.

by emperor Traian and which it is surrounded by the far Carpathians... lays a noble figure of a woman... over the defeated standard; - a chain and a broken chain at her feet, signify the slavery that oppressed this victim ... few ruins of monuments here and there and the cornucopia near the figure, help to confirm the antic civilization, its fertility and wealth: while few groups of poor and wondering families make obvious the contrast of misery and abandonment that followed that fruitful status of the province. Her attitude is one of a person who being down tries to get up. An angel, beautiful as a messenger of hope...was raising the allegoric veil of ignorance and of heroes in which the slavery sinks the oppressed nations, discovers the splendid face and the being of the symbolic woman, while with the right hand she points the height of the sky..." In the upper record of the work we can see "on a throne of clouds a woman covered with a white mantle and holding a cross and "on her right a child with a face of an angel holding an Evangel open" and "on the left a glob, books and emblems of the fine arts...chosen to become the culture of the genius and intellect".

Even he, himself, did not use the pencil or the lithographic chalks Tătărescu painted and draw in the view of the lithography which virtues he appreciated. ***Romania's Rising*** had a special destiny in the historic and European and Romanian social context. The circulation of the allegory in the Italian and Romanian environments is owed especially to the reproduction of the lithography executed by the maestros of this technique. Tătărescu sent the composition to the Voievod Barbu Știrbey, at București. Donated in 1850 to the Painting Gallery of Saint Sava College, the painting, today lost, was transposed in the lithographic technique of the artist from Vienna **August Strixner** (1820-1862), settled in Țara Românească. The image of this work with significant historic connotations preserved in later versions, small-sized or in the pages of the publications from that period. The poems of Alexandru Pelimon, "the Deeds of the heroes", are illustrated in 1857 with lithography after the painting "***Romania's Rising***".

"***Romania's Rising***"<sup>38</sup>, work "which brought the artist's fame since the beginning" often quoted by the time's chroniclers as the peak of Tătărescu's work, was one of the creations sent by Romania to the Universal Exhibition from Paris in 1868 as well as the International Exhibition from Vienna in 1873.

By the end of his work in Italy, in the spring of 1851, in Venice, before leaving to Paris, Tătărescu made the portraits of some personalities who played an important role during the 1848 Revolution in Țara Românească, fact which confirms, once again, the connection of the artist with the revolutionary movement from the country. ***The Portrait of General Gheorghe Magheru***, who met in Venice, dated "1851 Venice", thus has as background a recognizable landscape from Venice.

The progress of the Romanian art, as a consequence of the human and social dramatic experience from 1848, when the young painters lived these moments and transposed them into emblematic images, is clearly exemplified also

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem, op.cit.*, p. 199-200.

through the work of Gheorghe M. Tătărescu. Returned home, in 1852, the artist continued to paint portraits, important compositions with allegoric, religious or historical subjects. He devoted himself, just like the painter Theodor Aman, to the Romanian artistic study and he elaborated the first project to establish in Bucharest the School of Fine Arts and of the National Paintings Gallery. The media of the period praised, often, his "classic brush" calling him the "Romanian Michelangelo".

At the exhibition from 1864, taking place in the halls of Saint Sava College in Bucharest, Tătărescu presented many of his works made in Italy, mostly, copies after famous paintings of the Italian Renaissance or after the painting of his mentors from Rome: *the Coronation of the Virgin* after Rafael, *the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ*, *Aurora*, *the Portrait of Beatrice Cenci*, *Diana* after Correggio, *Costume from Mettuno* after Natale Carta, *Saint Ekaterina* after Bartolomeo Schidoni.

As a result of the studies from Italy and of the contact with the occidental painting, Gheorghe M. Tătărescu, artist trained in the constant conservatory Byzantine spirit, he brought in his country a new vision and artistic language. He was a professor and he trained the pupils in the spirit of European culture. Author of some academic and portraitist compositions, he used the knowledge accumulated in Italy for the important scenes with historic connotations and patriotic message designed for spreading through lithography. Tătărescu illustrates a moment of glory of the academic art in Romania, a moment of optimism and trust in the resources of the Romanian painting school, which was passing an obvious stage of synchronizing with the European academism also thanks to the assimilation of the academic norms of the school from Rome and to the discovery of the Renaissance in the important museums of Italy.

The engraving in aqua fortis (etching) is represented during the second half of XIX century by two important artists - the painter Theodor Aman (1831-1891) and the sculptor **Carol Storck** (1854-1926).

If the artistic destiny of Theodor Aman was marked by the studies and journeys to Paris, Carol Storck rather preferred Italy. After the graduating the Evangelic School from Braşov, the oldest son of the sculptor Karl Storck attended, starting from 1871, the classes of the Royal Academy of Art from Florence, at the sculpture course taught Augusto Rivalta (1837-1925)<sup>39</sup>, known as the representative of the academism of realist-naturist tradition.

Urged by his father to study so thus when he will become an artist not to be placed among the last one, Carol Storck was appreciated by his Italian professors being rewarded with prizes and medals for the seriousness and progress that

---

<sup>39</sup> Ott Günther, *Sculptors from Stock family*, Romanian Academy, The publications of Elena Simu Founds, V, National Imprinting, Bucharest, 1940, p. 15, note 2: Augusto Rivalta (Alessandria 1837 or 1838- Florence 1925), professor and friend of Carol Storck, is known as representative of the realist-naturist academism. Within the collection of the former Museum Simu from Bucharest is present with two mythological sculptures: *Hercules and the Centaurus* and *Faun and the Nymph*.

distinguished him<sup>40</sup>. The documents released by the Royal Academy from Florence confirm the presence of Carol Storck in Italy from 1871 until 1875. At the same time, these documents bear out the fact that "Mr. Carol Storck from Bucharest... was granted the Bronze Medal for his studies during the scholar year 1873-1874 at the special class of sculpture" and "the award of Italian liras 3000" at the final contest of sculpture from August 1875.

Trained as sculptor in Italy an adventurous destiny carried him over the ocean in America. So, in 1876 he was in Philadelphia, where he will teach drawing, he will attend the evening school of drawing after nature and of sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts from this center of American ideal of Independence. Surprisingly, he will get closer to the etching, fascinated by this artistic technique adequate to the direct, breathing and spur-of-the-moment expression of the creative thought. This new orientation in the life of the artist has the origin in the influence that his enthusiastic friends and colleagues from the Academy had over him, as well as in the emergence in the United States of the European taste for the art of etching.

Full of sally and optimism, Carol Storck, trained at the school of Italian Florentine academism, lived and worked intensively in a new environment, yet open to academic realism, with deep implications of the pragmatism dominated in philosophy. He brought from Florence, the taste for anecdotic small sculpture genre<sup>41</sup>, as a form of expressing the European academism which belonged to the American trend "art of everyone". In Philadelphia, remaining faithful to the years of study in Italy, he will continue to approach the small sculpture genre which he makes on request or exposes for selling in the art galleries from the city. Sometime he will reassume these genre compositions in his engraving of interpretation such is, for example, the work *Violinist tuning his violin*. His father, the old Karl Storck, admired "the lyricism and expressivity of the picture" in a letter from 15 September 1878<sup>42</sup>.

Still connected with the realities of the Italian art, he transposed in an engraving the painting *Franciscan monk resting on a bench* by Gabriele Castagnola

<sup>40</sup> Doina Punga, *Considerations regarding several engravings signed by Carol Storck*, in the volum "Pages of modern and contemporary art", Țării Crișurilor Museum, Oradea, 1996. Carol Storck expressed his interest for genre sculpture in a letter sent to his father to Florence on 7 April 1875: "After graduating Academy I will make small statues from terra-cote and I will sell them. For example, I will make a yoghurt man because such a think it is not known". The letter is deposit at the Romanian Academy's Library, Manuscripts, S 9(48)/ CCCXXXIV.

<sup>41</sup> Romanian Academy's Library, Manuscripts, Carol Storck Archive, I Acta 104, 105, 106: Documents issued by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts from Florence confirm the presence of Carol Storck in Italia from 1871 until 1875. At the same time it is also confirmed that "Mr. Carol Storck from Bucharest...was granted the Bronze Medal for the studies carried out by him during the scholar year 1873-1874 at the special class of sculpture" and the "prize of Italian lira 300" at the final contest of sculpture from August 1875. At the Romanian Academy's Library it is deposit the legalized translation of these documents issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 21 July 1911.

<sup>42</sup> Doina Punga, *op.cit.*, p. 3; George P. Nedelcu, *A Romanian sculpture in America (1876-1880)*, p. 117-118, 124: Karl Storck recognized the statue from the pictures sent by his son from Philadelphia. The old Storck was nor fully satisfied by the realist vision that kept Carol from studying the greatest artists.

(1828-1883)<sup>43</sup>, artist who worked a lot in Florence and probably Storck also met. The engraving is distinguishing through the care of truly representing the composition scheme imagined by the painter. Thus, Carol succeeded by using another graphic language through delimitations and successive interventions on the metal plate to distribute the areas of shadow and light and to approximate the intermediary influences of the chromatic pallet.

Disciple of classic artists, seduced by the romantic feeling and realistic attitude towards the reality show, the sculpture artist Ioan Georgescu (1856-1898) visited Italy in the years 1884-1885. From that period of time dates back some aquarelles from Toscana at Florence, and in Massa-Carrara province (**Photo 10-12**). The artist was interested by the specific of architecture, integrated in the lightening atmosphere, suggested by sheer brush lines. In the same time, Ioan Georgescu was attracted by the picturesque landscape, populated sometimes with small size characters, captured in various attitudes.

The brief presentation of several Romanian painters, sculptors, drawers or lithographers for whom Italy meant a new horizon of creation has the main goal to underline the XIX<sup>th</sup> century Italian school of art contributions to the evolution of the modern Romanian art.

## **FEW HISTORIC, STYLISTIC AND TECHNICAL GUIDE MARKS OF SOME ROMANIAN ARTISTS'S PRESENCE IN THE XIX<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IN ITALY**

- Abstract -

The evolution of the Romanian art in XIX<sup>th</sup> century determined and it is still raising many questions. Reporting the fine art to the general effort of modernizing the Romanian society, the emergence and the evolution of the new artistic techniques, the awareness of the status of independent artist and the configuration of the artist-citizen profile as well as the sinuosity of the effort to synchronize with the Occidental art, all represent as many lines of investigation as the results of which novelty might be at least anticipated.

In accordance with the language characteristics and the historic, social and cultural reality of that time, the study of the beginnings, the evolution, the moments of glory and even of fall of the painting, sculpture, lithography, engraving and etching in the three Romanian Principalities must follow on the compared analysis of those interferential paragraphs constituted by the synchronizing and obvious

---

<sup>43</sup> Gabriele Castagnola (Genoa 1828 - Florence 1883). Italian School. He lived and worked for a long time in Florence where he also met, probably, Carol Storck.

correspondence with the great conquests, lines and certitudes of the European art – Italian, French, German or Austrian.

Within the artistic atmosphere of Rome, where he arrived in 1808, **Gheorghe Asachi** (1788-1866) understood the efficiency of the lithography as an artistic technique with valances of cheap multiplication of the image and appreciated the importance of working “in the nature”, just like we can see from his notes written on the drawings made in Italy during this period or later.

Among the first generation of Romanian artists, students at the Mihaileana Academy, **Gheorghe Lemeni** (1815-1848) and **Gheorghe Năstăseanu** (cca. 1812-1964), sent to Rome with a scholarship, focused their attention also on practising painting and lithography. **Alexandru Asachi** (1820-1875 or 1876) certainly was in Italy before 1845, the year during which a request to extend the passport signed by his father is kept in the State Archive in Iași. In Italy, it is possible that he might have met also Gheorghe Lemeni, who was in Rome since 1842. Some biographers of the painter **Constantin Lecca** artist claim that he stopped in Rome, between 1829 and 1830, before settling in Craiova. In June 1844, Lecca left for sure to Rome, where he stayed almost a year until June 1845, when he returned home and started to sign his paintings and lithographs “Lecca”, doubling the consonant “c”. Representative of the Biedermeier portrait, just like Constantin Lecca, **Petre Mateescu** (1825-?), whose life and work are less known, studied painting at Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, where he tried “first of all to paint the portrait with pencils and aquarelles”. The painter **Gheorghe M Tăttărescu** (1818-1894), nephew and pupil of a church painter familiarized with the traditional canons of the Byzantine Erminy, arrives in Rome in 1845, with a scholarship granted by the church authorities of that time and with the support of a high dignitary. Tăttărescu illustrates a moment of glory of the academic art in Romania, a moment of optimism and trust in the resources of the Romanian painting school, which was passing an obvious stage of synchronizing with the European academism also thanks to the assimilation of the academic norms of the school from Rome and to the discovery of the Renaissance in the important museums of Italy.

After the graduating the Evangelic School from Brașov, **Carol Storck** (1854-1926), the oldest son of the sculptor Karl Storck, attended, starting from 1871, the classes of the Royal Academy of Art from Florence, at the sculpture course taught Augusto Rivalta (1837-1925), known as the representative of the academism of realist-naturist tradition.

The brief presentation of several Romanian painters, sculptors, drawers or lithographers for whom Italy meant a new horizon of creation has the main goal to underline the XIX<sup>th</sup> century Italian school of art contributions to the evolution of the modern Romanian art.