

### FRANCES YATES AND THE POLISH NOBLEMAN

I learnt from few historians as much as from Dame Frances A. Yates. Her collected essays, published in 1984, shortly before her death, are a pure delight and a reservoir of fascinating raw-material. I treasured books like *Astraea, The Art of Memory* or *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* and I had already read, in an Italian translation, her comments on Shakespeare's last plays when I came upon the *Ideas and Ideals in the North European Renaissance*. I valued even more those volumes because they reminded me of the spirit of another most learned lady with whom I had the honour of being acquainted, Marie Holban, whose brilliant research on Marguerite d'Angoulême belonged to the same field of interests. As it has never been my own expertise, I appreciated the method and the elegant form, without being able to use the information. Only once I found an error and I signal it now, for proving how neglected is the history of our part of the world even by scholars of great erudition.

In 1927, the Modern Language Review published an article, *Some New Light on "L'Ecossaise" of Antoine de Montchrestien*, by Frances Yates. The play which was discussed appeared in 1601 and provoked a reply, in 1607, under the title *Le Triomphe de la Ligue*. The author of the second play signed with a pseudonym, "R.J. Nerée". His true identity, according to Paul Lacroix, "le Bibliophile", was Nicolas Rapin, a Protestant, favourable to Henry IV and hostile to the Catholic League. Frances Yates added: "It has also occurred to me that the dedication of the *Triomphe de la Ligue* to "Samuel Korecky comte de Korec" – obviously a made-up name – may also be aimed at Montchrestien, whose high sounding title of "Seigneur de Vasteville" was of rather doubtful authenticity, or so his enemies hinted"<sup>1</sup>. Actually, the dedication was addressed to a celebrated Polish aristocrat. The Korecki family was of Lithuanian origin, having as coat of arms Pogon Litewska. This princely line emerged in the 14th century, when their ancestor Olgierd was grand-duke of Lithuania<sup>2</sup>. Samuel, son of Joachim Korecki and of Hanna Chodkiewicz<sup>3</sup>, was married since 1616 to Catherine, daughter of Jeremy Movila, prince of Moldavia: after both of them were captured by the Tatars in Moldavia, she was ransomed in 1618 and died the same year<sup>4</sup>. A detailed narrative dealing with the battles fought

<sup>1</sup> Frances A. Yates, *Ideas and Ideals in the North European Renaissance. Collected Essays*, III, London, 1984, p. 169–182.

<sup>2</sup> Stefan Graf von Szydlow-Szydowski, Nikolaus R. von Pasztinszky, *Der Polnische und Litauische Hochadel*, Budapest, 1944, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Włodzimierz Dworzaczek, *Genealogia*, II, *Tablice*, 174; *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, XX.

<sup>4</sup> Iona Czamanska, *Între familie și stat. Relațiile familiale ale dinastiei Movileștilor în Polonia, în Movileștii, istorie și spiritualitate românească*, II, *Ieremia Movilă. Domnul, familia, epoca*, Sfânta mănăstire Sucevița, 2006, p. 265–267.

by the Poles in Moldavia in 1615–1616 was written by Charles de Joppecourt, a Frenchman who served under Korecki during that time<sup>5</sup>. Samuel was then appointed commander-in-chief of the Moldavian army, most of those troops being Cossack mercenaries<sup>6</sup>. When he was taken in captivity, he was imprisoned in Istanbul at Edikule, but he managed a sensational evasion from that famous fortress, with the help of the French ambassador. He escaped in November 1617 and returned to Poland via Italy and Germany in April 1618. He joined in 1619 a new order of chivalry, “the Christian Militia”, which was founded by the Pope to support the anti-Ottoman crusade planned by the duke of Nevers<sup>7</sup>. In 1620 he came again to Moldavia to fight the Turks, but, being taken prisoner for a second time, he died in Edikule till his execution in 1622. The instability and confusion of such a career did not prevent him from gaining a reputation abroad as a champion of Christendom. Another French author, called Baret, used the memoirs of Joppecourt for a sort of novel, *Histoire sommaire des choses plus mémorables advenues aux derniers troubles de Moldavie*, which was published in Paris in 1620. Therefore it seems Samuel Korecki had some connections with France even before his gloomy end and the dedication of the 1607 play could be explained on behalf of a mutual acquaintance between him and the French literary milieu. Anyway, his name was not unknown to his contemporaries.

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<sup>5</sup> *Călători străini despre țările române*, IV, ed. Maria Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu, București, 1972, p. 378–415.

<sup>6</sup> An interesting document was edited by Ilie Corfus, *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolele al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea*, III, București, 2001, p. 230–233: it is a letter addressed by Korecki in 1616 to his „brethren” of the Polish nobility.

<sup>7</sup> C.Göllner, *La Milice Chrétienne, un instrument de croisade au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Mélanges de l’Ecole Roumaine en France, XIII, 1935–1936, p. 91.

## LA LITTÉRATURE COMPARÉE ET LES ÉTUDES BALKANIQUES

Roumiana L. Stantscheva, *Sreshta s procit. Sravnitelno literaturoznanie i Balkanistika*, Ed. Balkani, Sofia, 2011, 282 p.

Les études de littérature comparée, abandonnées pendant ces deux dernières décennies dans l'espace sud-est européen pour des raisons encore inconnues, trouvent en la personne de Rumeana Stantscheva (Université de Sofia), un spécialiste dévoué et sensible. Il y a des années, elle avait fait ses débuts dans les études comparées et elle a continué dans cette voie, pour nous offrir maintenant un excellent travail sur les littératures du Sud-Est et leur rapports avec les littératures occidentales, depuis l'époque moderne jusqu' à nos jours. La thématique du volume est particulièrement riche – surtout pour ce qui concerne les littératures française et parfois allemande, vues comme modèles pour la période moderne, tandis que celles bulgare et roumaine (sans ignorer les littératures grecque et serbe) sont vues en tant que réceptacle des influences exercées par ces modèles. Le livre nous offre la satisfaction presque nostalgique d'une relecture, dans une nouvelle clé, de la littérature parcourue durant nos années d'étude, quand nous dévorions, avec avidité, sans trop méditer sur leur essence, des milliers de pages des classiques.

Relus aujourd'hui, selon les règles de la littérature comparée, les livres qu'on lisait dans notre jeunesse deviennent des individualités qui appartiennent à une famille spirituelle, à un monde plus riche, plus nuancé. Ils nous répondent à une série de questions plus complexe qu'auparavant, parce que, à présent, on reconnaît ce qui les attache à une famille européenne de thèmes, idées, types et caractères humains, passions d'une humanité riche et multicolore en permanent mouvement. Et pourtant, réintégrés dans leur famille, ils ne perdent rien de leur unicité artistique. Réflétées dans le miroir de leurs modèles, les littératures sud-est européennes avouent leurs alliances, leurs sympathies, des influences évidentes ou à peine esquissées, ou, carrément, des emprunts. Ainsi, on se rend compte que, ici, les écrivains ont construit, en parallèle avec leurs contemporains occidentaux, des typologies et des situations correspondantes à une réalité différente. Ils ont découvert des thèmes souvent oubliés dans les littératures occidentales, parce que celles-là demandaient à réagir à d'autres thèmes, à d'autres bouleversements sociaux, et mettaient en évidence une autre liberté stylistique. De sorte que le lecteur tire profit du livre de R. Stantscheva qui marque l'existence d'un immense mouvement des idées qui circulent dans divers espaces régionaux ou général européens.

Pénétrées dans la modernité un instant après les littératures occidentales, les littératures du Sud-Est européen ont toujours frayé leur route en suivant les