

COMPTEs RENDUS / BOOK REVIEWS

ANCA PARVULESCU, MANUELA BOATCĂ,
Creolizing the Modern. Transylvania across Empires, New
York, Cornell University Press, 2022, 270 p.

Bridging theories of political economy with literary criticism through the framework provided by the literary world-system has sparked interest in reassessing the literary production of cultural peripheries and semi-peripheries alike. Centring their attention on the semi-peripheral status of Transylvania, Anca Parvulescu and Manuela Boatcă return in *Creolizing the Modern* to Liviu Rebreanu's *Ion*, the first modern Romanian novel, and, thus, a pivotal part of the country's national canon, to examine how literature can reflect broader global, historical tensions. With this aim, the authors construct a complex dialogue between the concepts of inter-imperiality, creolization, and modernity to highlight how the novel's textual elements (narrative perspective, word choice, character portrayals), as well as Rebreanu's own background, has given rise to a text that engages with these ideas. Consequently, Rebreanu's work acquires a double status, analysed both as "a product of inter-imperiality and as its chronicle" (p. 11).

Taking Transylvania as a starting point implies viewing its local history as world history, and, as a result, reading *Ion* itself as world literature; an effort that the authors themselves place in line with previous studies, namely "in conversation with *Romanian Literature as World Literature*" (p. 12). A further consequence of understanding Transylvania through the viewpoint of world history is that of rethinking the timeline commonly associated with colonialism, extending its origins to encompass a time before Columbus's era (1492). The importance of a long-historical (*longue durée*) approach when writing about Eastern Europe cannot be understated. Researchers such as Laura Doyle term it necessary when examining the history of places shaped by multiple imperial and colonial interests. As such, Doyle's writing on inter-imperiality, which Parvulescu and Boatcă work with, tackles what the author of *Inter-imperiality: Vying Empires, Gendered Labor, and the Literary Arts of Alliance* (2020), paraphrasing Wai Chee Dimock, refers to as "deep inter-imperial time". This is reflected in Parvulescu and Boatcă's volume in their efforts to give a holistic overview of the successive waves of migration, and imperial influence that Transylvania experienced. While choosing to focus on the modern period, a long-historical frame provides insight into earlier waves of colonisation, going as back as the mediaeval period to shed light on Transylvania's status as "terra nullius" in premodern chronicles (p. 17). Moreover, by anchoring Transylvania in a complex network of global relationships, the authors of this volume manage to avoid "methodological nationalism" (p. 17) in lieu of a comparative approach that favours the intersection of different strands of theory: decolonial-, postcolonial-, and feminist ideas, as well as world-systems analysis.

As the *nexus* of this project, Transylvania itself becomes a "method", as Christian Moraru points out on back cover of the book, one that allows for a tripartite process of creolization to ensue. On the one hand, the creolization that Parvulescu and Boatcă argue for is rooted in the urgency to rethink the disciplinary categories underlying comparative studies, as well as broader research focused on modernity that associates this period with the idea of a linear narrative. On the other hand, the perspective afforded by creolizing Transylvania also implies the need to reimagine the region's history and cultural production outside the scope of national interpretations.

Lastly, Parvulescu and Boatcă's volume stresses the significance of creolizing theory (along the lines put forth by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih) through intersectional studies that enmesh the lived experiences of subaltern subjects in critical discourse. While the authors of *The Creolization of Theory* remark on the potential dangers of expanding the usage of "creolization" to spaces outside the Caribbean and Indian Ocean (pp. 1, 24), Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih motivate the need for a creolized theoretical perspective through the argument of pushing back against a so-called "post-

theoretical” climate. Lionnet and Shih’s broadened use of “creolization”, as well as Doyle’s concept of “inter-imperiality” (and, in turn, Parvulescu and Boatcă’s work) emphasised relationality as a guiding principle, resisting both the allegations against theory’s excessive abstractions and its irrelevance (“the death of theory”).

The structure of *Creolizing the Modern* is shaped by the thematic approach that the authors opt for. The chapters build upon one another, starting with the question of space and land in *Ion* and ending with an examination of the role of religion in Rebreanu’s novel. Each of the chapters provides a blend of macro and micro forms of analyses of the topics in question. Thus, sociological, historical, economic, political, and legal data is supplemented by passages focused on close reading; a comparative method that reflects the authors’ preoccupations with literature (Parvulescu) and sociology (Boatcă).

Following the introduction centred on Transylvania’s inter-imperial status and on outlining both the methodology behind the book, as well as the benefits that are to be gained from a project rooted in two disciplinary fields (the social sciences and the humanities), chapter one, “The Face of Land: Peasants, Property, and the Land Question”, grapples with the central issue in *Ion*: land ownership. As such, the first chapter already makes the aim of the volume, that of “creolizing the modern”, explicit. By addressing the question from a rural perspective, Parvulescu and Boatcă place their study in a wider conversation concerning the inherent tensions underlying the notion of modernity (usually associated with urban environments). Following Immanuel Wallerstein, Farshad Araghi and Marina Karides, the authors argue that the modern notion of land ownership forms an important puzzle piece in the development of capitalism.

One of the central arguments of this section, that “the inter-imperial and trans-imperial modernism of *Ion* is unmistakable spatial and geographical” (p. 26) is advanced on the idea that the novelistic significance awarded to land, as well as the literary place names that were used by Rebreanu, reflect larger historical disputes around ownership in Transylvania, conflicts tied to the subaltern status of certain ethnicities (amongst which Romanians). Therefore, *Ion*’s obsession over land is read as carrying “collective and historical weight” (p. 29), as recounting “the memory of his [Ion’s] ancestors’ living in the shadow of serfdom” (p. 31). The issue of land possession in the novel is further discussed through the rhetorical device of prosopopoeia that renders the land both “anthropomorphized” and “feminine” (p. 33). Analysing *Ion*’s wish for land through a gendered lens is pivotal in establishing the mutually generative relationship between land-woman that the novel puts forth.

If the first chapter argued for a better understanding of the interrelated development of the “rural” and the “modern”, chapter two, “Transylvania in the World System”, stresses the region’s full absorption into the capitalist world economy. Highlighting the asymmetrical nature of this process, perceived as “backwardness” (p. 49), Parvulescu and Boatcă view it as the result of Transylvania’s “inter- and trans-imperial” economic integration (p. 49). In this sense, this section further counteracts the narrative of modernity as progress by postulating peripheralization as an inherent component of the modern world economy. The four ways of Transylvania’s economic integration as semi-periphery that Parvulescu and Boatcă examine are “trade [Transylvania as an exporter of agricultural products], finance [the importance of Romanian banks in counteracting economic imperialism], bureaucracy [the colonial and imperial significance of conducting a census], and mobility [migration]” (p. 56). Moreover, this chapter delves into antisemitic discourse in Transylvania as being interconnected with Jewish discrimination in Romania. When looking at *Ion*, the authors of this volume discuss how antisemitic sentiments contribute to the construction of Avrum’s character, while also inquiring into how the spatial imagination of the novel further reinforces Jewish marginalisation.

The discussion around Jewish marginalisation provides a segway into examining Romani exclusion in chapter three, “The *Longue Durée* of Enslavement”. In this part of the volume, Parvulescu and Boatcă look into the concept of “labour” and how Western and Romantic interpretations of it have either led to the vilification of Romani nomadism or to an idealisation of Romani artistic work (viewed as *art*, not *labour*). Rebreanu’s novel engages with- and adds onto the

history of exclusion through its depiction of Romani fiddlers and the priest's servant. The literary spatial segregation of the Romani community, as well as the blend between comedy and abjection employed in the novel, amplify Rebreanu's tactics of novelistic othering.

In the fourth chapter, "Counting and Discounting Languages", the authors introduce *interglottism*, a concept central to their project of creolization. Defined as "a mode of connecting the linguistic with the political, social, and economic imperial order and its contestation" (p. 93), interglottism sheds light on the inter-imperial strata in language, aligning with Doyle's view of inter-imperial regions as palimpsestic. Parvulescu and Boatcă also trace the comparative method's origins to *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, an international Transylvanian journal led by Hugo von Meltzl and Sámuel Brassai, while critiquing his "Dekaglottismus" – a focus on ten key languages, including Hungarian – as politically driven. The chapter further explores Rebreanu's decision to write *Ion* in Romanian, despite his fluency in Hungarian and German – languages essential for his "aspirational social mobility" (p. 104). This choice, framed as an "inter-imperial invention" (p. 112), is reflected in the novel through Titu Herdelea, a character modelled on the author.

Chapters five and six offer a feminist critique of *Ion* by analysing the character of Ana (the "dowry problem") and the question pertaining to the education of women in Austro-Hungary and the novel. The fifth chapter underscores instances where the text suppresses feminine discourse through the patriarchal textual violence exerted on women, including the superimposition of Ana's character on animal figures, and the juxtaposition of the urbanised New Woman against that of the virtuous peasant girl. The most interesting of Parvulescu and Boatcă's arguments in this section refers to the conflict between different liberation movements throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. If anti-imperialism posited itself as a "universal" form of emancipation, then feminism was relegated to the particularities of women, and, thus, considered "secondary or even irrelevant" (p. 123). Studies on Romanian feminism by Maria Bucur and Ștefania Mihăilescu also point to an implicit hierarchisation of anti-oppression movements within public discourse, with nationalism occupying the first place. As such, feminists tried to use the nationalist cause to further their own liberating projects, something that Parvulescu and Boatcă point to in chapter 6 (p. 144).

The final section of the volume delves into the theme of religion in *Ion*, beginning with historical data on Transylvania's religious orientations and then turning to Rebreanu's spatial imagination to reveal the symbolism of the village cross and church. Although the village appears religiously homogeneous, a historically inaccurate portrayal (p. 171), the cross symbolises a particular mode of religious mapping. Drawing on Max Weber's theory of modernity, the authors argue that Pripas, despite being a modern village, cannot be seen as disenchanting.

To sum up, Parvulescu and Boatcă's volume manages to articulate a seamless dialogue between two approaches: one rooted in politics and sociology, and one in the close-reading practices of Rebreanu's novel. It is through a complex transdisciplinary approach that the authors of this book showcase the tensions extant within modernity, a concept that encompasses both progress and peripheralisation, emancipation and (patriarchal/racial/ethnic/religious) exclusion. Finally, through the theoretical backbone afforded by the notions of inter-imperiality and creolization, Parvulescu and Boatcă contribute to the process of reframing Eastern Europe's history and cultural production, moving beyond whitewashed perspectives, or closed-off, nationalist interpretations.

Alisa TITE
Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,
Faculty of Letters

C. ROGOZANU, *Naratorul cel rău. Un studiu despre realismul românesc: Rebreanu, Preda, Dumitriu* [*The Ruthless Narrator. A Study on the Romanian Realism: Rebreanu, Preda, Dumitriu*], Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2024, 480 p.

Naratorul cel rău [*The Ruthless Narrator*] stands out as an “exotic plant” in today’s Romanian academic field, primarily because its aim is to revisit some of the pinnacles of Romanian realism through a combined lens of narratology and class analysis. This approach yields a rewarding paradox: despite using “old-fashioned” methods (p. 45), the author delivers an unparalleled study that provides fresh perspectives on literary analysis. The introduction sets out the central aims of the volume, the most pivotal one being to address the question “Who speaks in a text?”. This inquiry leads to several related questions: “How does it speak?”; “How does this mode of speaking evolve across different historical periods?”; and “What can these narratological and ideological coordinates reveal about the transformations in realism?”. To explore these questions, Costi Rogozanu conducts a detailed analysis of the works of three “modern classics” of Romanian realism: Liviu Rebreanu (1885–1944), Marin Preda (1922–1980), and Petru Dumitriu (1924–2002). He posits that every piece of writing is supported by a narrator who is shaped by two authors: one individual, and another that is collective – and represented by “the dominant classes or the classes in ascension at certain historical moments, which significantly influence the author’s formation” (p. 15). From this foundation, Rogozanu analyzes the “political unconscious” of Romanian realism, seeking to understand how classes that have traditionally been silent in the Western bourgeois realism gain a voice.

To substantiate his inquiry beyond mere speculation, Rogozanu develops a rigorous methodological framework, extensively detailed in “Part One” of his study. He begins by addressing the historical silencing of oppressed classes, drawing on insights from Ellen Meiksins Wood, an American-Canadian scholar specializing in political theory and philosophy. Wood notes that “peasants, who formed the majority of the population throughout almost all of history [...] are mainly silent” (p. 31). Building on this premise, Rogozanu references Erich Auerbach’s observation: “For the first great realists of the century, in Stendhal, Balzac, and even Flaubert, the lowest sections of the people [...] do not appear at all; and even where they do, they are not viewed in their own lives, but from on high” (p. 77). Thus, employing Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s terminology, Rogozanu argues that a crucial aspect of class analysis within realism involves the silences of the subaltern (as depicted by Rebreanu) and the emergent voice of the subaltern (as explored in the works of Preda and Dumitriu). The author’s main tool is the “ideologeme”, first theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin (“mimesis is always ideologically mediated” – p. 64) and taken over by critical theorists such as Fredric Jameson. Nonetheless, in *Naratorul cel rău*, the concept is employed especially in a Jamesonian manner, as “the smallest intelligible unit part of the collective, essentially antagonistic collective discourses” (and, for Rogozanu, of narratology and structure) “essentially antagonistic, of the social classes” (p. 76). Ideologemes, then, are narrative codifications of class tensions: their significance is pronounced because they endure even amid a potential decline in the narratological paradigm – a phenomenon the author terms “ideological radioactivity” (p. 73). In his examination of the ideologeme, the author utilizes Pierre Bourdieu’s term “agent”, but shifts its application from an extraliterary sociological context to an intraliterary one. For Rogozanu, the agent becomes a crucial conduit for ideologies, especially within the framework of “peripheral cultural capitalism” (p. 63), acting as an intermediary in the tensions between social classes during modernization. Additionally, Rogozanu finds value in what Franco Moretti theorizes as narrative fillers – materials “with which the novelist fills the spaces between two intense points in the novel” (p. 73). He views these fillers as pivotal for exploring “the mutations of the realist novel” (p. 73), particularly enhancing his analysis of Rebreanu. Rogozanu describes how “the filling [...] is the naturalistic type of analysis, encompassing the physical description of feelings, sweating, chills” – rudimentary affections

attributed to the peasantry and representing an early form of expression for this social class (p. 74). The final sub-chapter of the theoretical discussions centres on the defetishizing role of art, as conceptualized by Georg Lukács, the theorist of realism under whose intellectual guidance Rogozanu structures his discourse. In this chapter, various theoretical strands introduced earlier converge. Initially, using Lukács's concept of social command, Rogozanu elucidates the "common impulses of the epochs" that constitute the collective author. Furthermore, he employs the process of defetishization to outline his method of critical analysis: Romanian realism is examined through its tangible achievements within the socio-historical context of its emergence, as any "transcendence is transformed into human immanence" (p. 108). Additionally, he addresses the interaction between materialist critique and aesthetics, dismissing the latter "only when it propagates various fetishizing forms" (p. 108). In the three analytical chapters that follow, the author critiques traditional criticism for its tendency to eternalize rather than historicize its inquiries. He discusses how interpretative efforts are often grounded in mystical, mythical, or religious frameworks, leading to the misidentification of supposed spiritual profundities where none exist, and the manipulation of artistic works to align with the prevailing ideologies of various historical periods.

The first case study, entitled "The Petite Bourgeoisie Tells Us", zeroes in on Rebreanu's *Ion*. Rogozanu straightforwardly unveils his central thesis: *Ion* is a landmark novel primarily because it narrates the peasantry – characterized by "a silence full of meaning" – from the perspective of the petite bourgeoisie. He asserts that this narrative angle marks a pioneering shift in Romanian literature. Initially, Rogozanu revisits the critical reception of *Ion*, highlighting the insights of critics such as Octav Botez, Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu, and Ion Negoitescu, who explored the often-overlooked dimensions of the petite bourgeoisie and class tensions. Looking further into the historical reception of the novel, Rogozanu conducts a rigorous examination of the aestheticizing interpretations by prominent figures in Romanian literary criticism, including Matei Călinescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Eugen Simion, Lucian Raicu, and Nicolae Balotă. He juxtaposes this with an analysis of the legacy and characteristics of realism and its naturalistic offshoots in Western culture, particularly through Balzac and Zola, arguing that a realist novel with a self-narrating peasant would have been inconceivable in early 20th century Romanian literature. In *Ion*, while the peasants remain silent, their stories are conveyed through the voices of petite bourgeois characters, such as the Herdelea family or the priest Belciug, who serve as small imperial officials. Rather than directly seeking out the voices of the popular masses, Rogozanu suggests that the novel seeks credible witnesses. He presents numerous arguments to demonstrate that *Ion* is fundamentally a middle-class novel that narrates the peasants' experiences. For instance, he points to narrative elements that reveal the perspective's owner, like Herdelea's observant house, which Rogozanu interprets as an almost explicit metaphor for "the identity of the main point of view in the novel" (p. 143). Thus, petite bourgeois figures like Herdelea or Belciug essentially form the narrator's voice. Once these aspects are elucidated, Rogozanu "clarifies" the "mystery of objectivity" in Rebreanu's novel. He explains that the "supreme indifference" creating the novelist's objectivity stems from the petite bourgeois observer's detachment from the world around him. Rebreanu, viewing his own class somewhat externally, thus finds the means to compellingly weave the rural theme into the semi-peripheral literature of imperial capitalism. *Naratorul cel rău* concludes that Rebreanu's strategic approach has indeed paid off, as *Ion* continues to be celebrated as "the first great modern novel of Romanian literature". Such a contextual analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which the novel achieved prominence.

In his comprehensive analysis, Rogozanu considers the entire corpus of the writer's work. However, through his ideologically informed lens, he determines that only *Ion*, *Răscoala* [*The Revolt*], *Amândoi* [*Both*], and *Gorila* [*The Gorilla*] qualify as complete novels. These works are distinguished by their ability to "isolate a narrator or perspective from a well-configured class" (p. 182). In contrast, he finds that *Pădurea Spânzuraților* [*Forest of the Hanged*] lacks a psychological depth that is supported by a collective voice, rendering it redundant; while *Adam și Eva* [*Adam and Eve*] suffers from being a pale imitation (p. 182), with Rogozanu speculating on the material

conditions that may have influenced Rebreanu to write it. Applying contextualist narratology and focusing on the ideologeme allows Rogozanu to unearth unprecedented details in Rebreanu's often-criticized novels. While the general consensus among critics is that Rebreanu's works falter when he strays from rural themes, Rogozanu argues that the true shortcoming occurs when Rebreanu deviates from middle-class perspectives – the only narratives that can authentically encode a class voice. Rogozanu also proposes other striking hypotheses: in *Amândoi*, he notes how the maid Solomia is portrayed through her mistress's perspective (p. 194), and suggests that Rebreanu casts her as a murderer because he understands her double marginalization – by gender and class – which, within the logic of the detective novel, makes her a less likely suspect due to her near invisibility. In *Gorila*, a novel criticized for its alleged collusion with the extreme right, Rogozanu offers a contrary view, arguing that “Rebreanu positions the only opposition to the ‘träirism’ [a far-right Romanian literary movement] of the time” (p. 204). Through these analyses, Rogozanu not only challenges prevailing interpretations but also highlights the nuanced ways in which Rebreanu's narratives engage with and represent class dynamics.

The third part of the volume, entitled “Marin Preda – Ugly People”, initiates with a discussion of two modernities, underscoring Rogozanu's belief that the historical context of realism's emergence is crucial. In his analysis of Preda and Dumitriu, Rogozanu engages in a contest with a prevailing tradition of anti-communist interpretation. Contrary to the views of most critics, who perceive compromises, Rogozanu identifies the first instances where the peasant achieves self-narration. Rogozanu proposes a novel categorization of Marin Preda's works, distinguishing from the typical classifications. He identifies an initial phase where the voice of the peasantry is liberated through “the crisis of the accelerated modernization of the rural countryside” (p. 233). In *Moromeții* [*The Morometes*], Rogozanu argues, Preda empowers the rural classes; with the establishment of the communist regime in 1948 and the accelerated modernization that ensued, the peasant narrative no longer requires an intermediary (p. 239). Rogozanu notes a fundamental shift in the use of free indirect speech from the first to the second volume of *Moromeții*. In the first volume, the voice of the main character, Ilie Moromete, allows “classical omniscience to be infused with language, humour, and peasant thought” (p. 239). By the second volume, the narrative focus shifts to Niculae Moromete, a proletarianized peasant and party activist, whose voice represents “part of a multitude of new voices brought to light by historical change” (p. 261). Additionally, Rogozanu provides an insightful explanation to a lingering question: why does the first volume lack a conventional plot? He suggests that the narrative's tempo in both volumes is influenced by the dynamics of private property. The “stillness” of the first volume mirrors the static nature of “owning a few acres above the average” (p. 255), whereas in the second volume, the emergence of a plot is driven by class tensions arising from the crisis in “private property, inherited from ancestors” (p. 254). This analysis not only deepens the understanding of Preda's narrative techniques but also highlights how material conditions shape literary forms. In his analysis of Marin Preda's later works, Rogozanu explores Preda's narrative evolution in the second volume of *Moromeții*, and more markedly in *Intrusul* [*The Intruder*] and *Risipitorii* [*The Wastrels*]. Rogozanu discusses Preda's “new bet” – the creation of a new, credible voice that resonates with the popular masses, now represented by the proletarian or technocratic classes of the new regime. For Rogozanu, the theme of disillusionment among communist revolutionaries serves as a significant ideologeme. This theme culminates in *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* [*The Most Beloved of Earthlings*], where Rogozanu notes the rise of a neo-petite bourgeois, characterized by a distinctly individualistic narrative voice.

The fourth part, titled “Inquisition of The People”, is dedicated to the prose writer Petru Dumitriu, marking him as the second pivotal example of finding a credible voice within socialist realism, following Marin Preda's portrayal of the peasant and peasant-proletarian. For Rogozanu, *Cronică de familie* [*Family Chronicle*] presents a cynical, judgmental voice – that of a ruthless narrator who scrutinizes from the vantage point of the dispossessed to the upper classes (p. 332), performing what Rogozanu calls the “inquisition” of the people. This is an indictment of the classes exploited in the pre-communist era by the aristocratic order of inter-war capitalism, a dynamic

enabled by the political shifts of 1948, in which the formerly dispossessed become dominant. Rogozanu notes a distinct influence of Balzac, though he argues that Dumitriu constructs this influence inversely: Balzac's fear of a conspiracy from the lower classes to overthrow the bourgeoisie is realized, and the aristocracy and bourgeoisie are satirized (p. 378). He posits, "[t]he naturalistic caricature of the peasant had to be counterbalanced by something on the scale for the upper classes" (p. 335), with the ruthless narrator adding a proletarian-moralist perspective to the Balzacian narrative style (p. 335). *Cronică de familie* and the first part of *Scrinul negru* [*The Black Commode*] by G. Călinescu are thus seen as a celebration of the old world's collapse (p. 343). Another significant work for Rogozanu is *Colecție de biografii, autobiografii și memorii contemporane* [*The Collection of Contemporary Biographies, Autobiographies, and Memoirs*], particularly for its narrative technique. Starting with the premise that documentation drives the narrative actions, a new narrator, referred to as the Editor, appears to merely "paste together biographies collected from contemporaries" (p. 352), adopting a "collective and collectivist" first-person perspective (p. 353). This highlights the documentary function, crucial in Dumitriu's work. Rogozanu observes that *Colecție de biografii* aims to "destroy the convention of realistic omniscience, and through the testimonies collected to make the judgment of the narrator and the readers no longer rudimentarily implicit as in *Cronică de familie*" (p. 354). The final part of the study on Dumitriu concerns his novel *Incognito*, published during his exile, which Rogozanu considers in the context of other works of intellectual dissidence. In *Incognito*, he writes that it is an "indictment of the abusive communist world" (p. 397), recognizing its high expressive value akin to that of *Cronică de familie*. Rogozanu is interested not in opportunism but in the force with which Dumitriu uses the techniques of socialist realism, which had gained him renown in Romania, and turns them against communism. Comparing Dumitriu with other "fugitives from the communist bloc", such as Solzhenitsyn or Czesław Miłosz, Rogozanu finds him more akin to Miłosz due to his non-acclimatization to the Capitalist West, noting that neither achieved the fame or material status they had in their native regimes. He also points out that unlike Solzhenitsyn, who adopted an "ultraconservative pattern", Dumitriu remained hostile to extreme right-wing ideas until the end (p. 412).

Rogozanu's study offers a series of critically important observations for reassessing three major authors of Romanian historical realism. He celebrates Rebreanu for innovations not previously discussed, notably the creation of class tensions facilitated by the middle-class narrative voice, the only credible form of representation amid the precarious modernization of interwar peripheral capitalism. For Preda and Dumitriu, who wrote under communism, Rogozanu highlights the efforts of socialist realism to forge credible class voices, achieving a remarkable feat given the genre's relegation to the margins by aestheticist criticism. Preda is praised for giving voice to the peasantry and later for rendering credible urban voices of a new communist middle class comprised of intellectuals and highly qualified wage-earners (p. 293). In Dumitriu, the use of a ruthless narrator effectively conveys historical judgments against both the pre-communist capitalist bourgeoisie and, from exile, the brutality of communism. Rogozanu's results stem from a thorough materialist, ideological, and narratological analysis, which he terms "contextualist narratology", firmly rooted in theoretical grounding. While this volume seems to categorize the cases of the three great prose writers, it actually opens new horizons for Romanian research and beyond.

Bogdan CONTEA

"Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu
Faculty of Letters and Arts

ANDREI DOBOȘ, *Bacovia: modernismul periferic* [*Bacovia: The Peripheral Modernism*], Cluj-Napoca, OMG/Casa Cărții de Știință, 2024, 125 p.

G. Bacovia (1881–1957), a key figure in the Romanian literature of the early 20th century, generally associated with the symbolist-decadent movement, is regarded today as one of the most important Romanian poets of all time. However, this was not always the case with Bacovia: for several decades after his debut in 1916, critics' responses seemed to develop in most divergent ways. It can be quite challenging to try sorting out these multiple and diverse reactions, yet this is one of the main topics in Andrei Doboș' new study, *Bacovia: modernismul periferic* [*Bacovia: The Peripheral Modernism*]. In fact, the author proposes two focus points: a historical exposition that puts into perspective the critics' opinions on Bacovia's poetry throughout time, and an in-depth analysis of Bacovia's works in relation to the concept of the *flâneur* (the wanderer), a concept that, according to Andrei Doboș, can be essential for a more elaborate understanding of Bacovia's poetry.

In the first chapter of his book, Andrei Doboș suggests three stages for the development of critical responses to Bacovia's poetry. Apart from chronological criteria, the author discovers similarities between the critics of a certain period that go beyond their approval or disapproval of Bacovia's works, and so manages to create a convincing distinction between the three stages. The first one is associated with a timeframe between 1916 (the year of Bacovia's book debut) and 1941 (the year when G. Călinescu – a leading figure in the Romanian criticism of the 20th century – publishes his *History of Romanian Literature*). This stage, mainly referred to as “the modernist stage” by the author, includes, as expected, the first critical reactions to Bacovia's poetry. Considering opinions from critics such as E. Lovinescu, G. Călinescu, Vladimir Streinu, Tudor Vianu, etc., Andrei Doboș concludes that most critical voices from this era acknowledged a certain originality or authenticity in Bacovia's poetry, although the overall value of his works was still being questioned. Another common approach for most critics in this timeframe (with some notable exceptions, of course) is the fact that they saw Bacovia's poetry as a “spontaneous and unconscious manifestation of existence” (p. 23), in opposition to a calculated poetic endeavor.

Things seem to take a drastic turn with the second stage of critics addressing the works of Bacovia, a time of so-called “socialist aesthetics” that spreads all the way to the late 1970s in communist Romania (with a few significant contributions, similar in their approach, up to the late 1980s). We find here, for example, that between 1949–1953 Bacovia was marginalized both institutionally and in the cultural press, a clear sign that his work was not appreciated by the communist authorities. However, this era is not characterized only by negative reactions to Bacovia, since a massive re-valuation of the poet's early works is also taking place due to several contributions from the major Romanian critics of that time. There are very many names here that Andrei Doboș takes into account, since we are dealing with probably the most active period of critical inquiries on Bacovia: Nicolae Manolescu, Marian Papahagi, Gheorghe Grigurcu, Mihail Petroveanu, Ion Caraion, etc. are just some of the authors that participated in this socialist re-evaluation of Bacovia, often building their arguments as a sort of response to their predecessors (mainly in response to Lovinescu or Calinescu's approaches).

Finally, Andrei Doboș suggests a third stage of critical reactions, a “postmodern” stage that can be traced back to the early 1980s. We find here an attempt to re-consider and re-valuate Bacovia's late works (which were generally ignored by most previous critics, if not condemned directly). Romanian culture witnessed the emergence of a new generation of writers (in fiction or poetry, as well as in literary criticism) in the early 1980s, a group generally associated with postmodernism that focused, among other things, on concepts such as everyday aesthetics, minimalism, or the so-called transitive poetry. In this framework, it is not surprising that critics from the 1980s generation (such as Gheorghe Crăciun or Ion Bogdan Lefter) take an interest in Bacovia's late poems, as they find here a

poetic approach quite relevant for the theoretical perspectives that they were trying to promote. An interest for Bacovia's late poems remains visible to this day, the most relevant example here being Paul Cernat with his monograph published in 2022, one of the most complex studies on Bacovia, according to Doboș.

The three ages of critique presented by the author, together with the supporting arguments for such a classification, manage to give the reader a sense of order in the vast chain of critical reactions to Bacovia. However, Andrei Doboș is fully aware that these categories (modernist era, socialist era, postmodern era) are highly unstable, relative, and they imply multiple exceptions, subtleties, or intersections. In his attempt to accurately describe the specifics of a certain stage of critical reception, Doboș is doubling his efforts by pointing out all sorts of deviations from an otherwise clear panoramic perspective of this literary history. While the proposed periods are both convincing and helpful to the reader, the complexity of this network of ideas will always escape conventional frames, and, fortunately, Andrei Doboș is constantly pointing out grey areas and potential inconsistencies in this setting.

The last part of the book is dedicated to the *flâneur*, a common figure in 19th century French modernism. Usually depicted as a wanderer in an urban setting (most often 19th century Paris), the *flâneur* has a long history of interpretations and depictions, with important contributions from Charles Baudelaire or Walter Benjamin (the two are the main references for Andrei Doboș' analysis as well). Doboș proposes a reading of Bacovia starting from the image of the wanderer, a reading that brings to light new perspectives on Bacovia in relation to his critical reception to date, but also in relation to the concept of the *flâneur* in general.

The author points out on several occasions that "there is a lot of walking" in Bacovia's poems. Of course, walking itself is not enough to determine a wanderer, but Bacovia's poems provide multiple other relevant features as well, and, as the author notes at some point, "for Bacovia, walking is an artistic practice" (p. 96). While providing very solid arguments for a reading of Bacovia in this *flâneur*-driven perspective, the author also points out major differences between the conventional *flâneur* and Bacovia's protagonist. Most authors see the wanderer as a figure strolling through some great city (usually Paris), so the conventional *flâneur* is actually a metropolitan one. However, this is not the case with Bacovia. As Doboș observes, Bacovia's wanderer is usually strolling along the streets of a small, almost empty, town. In other words, there is a metropolitan *flâneur* and a peripheral one, the latter being an emblematic mark for Bacovia's poetry.

Although Andrei Doboș' book is not very long, just over 120 pages, it manages to provide a very clear panoramic perspective on Bacovia's critical reception throughout the years. Within this framework, the author introduces the concept of the *flâneur* adding a new layer to Bacovia readings and a perspective that seems to have been almost completely ignored by previous authors. Himself an influential poet in today's Romanian literary scene, Andrei Doboș also advances elegant interpretations of Bacovia's poems, both famous ones, as well as lesser-known texts, and opens paths for future investigations on Bacovia, *flânerie*, symbolism, or peripheral modernism in general.

Robert CINCU

Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca Branch
"Sextil Pușcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

CLAUDIU T. ARIEȘAN, *Istoria comiculii româneșc*, ediția a 2-a revizuită și adăugită [*Histoire du comique roumain*, 2e édition révisée et augmentée], Timișoara, Editura DATAGROUP, 2022, 569 p.

Indépendamment de la diffraction et de la dynamique interne de l'esthétique, le comique a connu une série d'expressions artistiques que le célèbre classiciste Claudiu T. Arieșan analyse dans la deuxième édition de son ouvrage *Istoria comiculii româneșc* [*Histoire du comique roumain*], une véritable épistémologie du rire valorisé culturellement sous toutes ses formes – « distingué et grossier, fin ou lourd, simple ou élevé, social et intime, général [...] ou particulier » (p. 17). Cristallisant des attitudes ou sanctionnant des défauts et des vices, le rire devient une réalité gnoseologique détectable dans la phrase sentencieuse ou clairement parodique et critique, dans l'allégorie ou dans l'expression humoristique. L'humour représente le catalyseur des capacités créatives humaines, relevant à la fois de l'éthique et de l'esthétique.

Le préambule de cette herméneutique du rire, comme l'avoue l'auteur lui-même (p. 8), a été la participation au Colloque national étudiant « Mihai Eminescu » de Iași avec la présentation « ' Le sourire amer ' – les vertus compensatoires de l'humour dans le journalisme éminesque », réalisée à une époque où l'humour prenait une forme cathartique et subtile de salut spirituel face à l'idéologie étatisée du communisme, d'autant plus que le rire était tabou. Partant ainsi d'une rigueur intellectuelle, Claudiu T. Arieșan devient un véritable historien et exégète non seulement du comique roumain, mais aussi du comique universel. La précision de son esprit analytique est à la base d'autres œuvres thématiques apparentées : *Herméneutique de l'humour sympathique. Repères pour une comicologie roumaine* (1999), *Entre sourire et prière. Modèles culturels de la comicologie classique et patristique* (2004), *Genèse du comique dans la culture roumaine* (2010), volumes qui ont été appréciés et récompensés par l'Union des Écrivains Roumains.

Structuré en huit chapitres, le texte débute avec « Le sourire guérisseur chez les Roumains » (pp. 5-15), où l'auteur met en avant les vertus curatives du rire, surtout en période de grandes épreuves – la pandémie et la guerre –, l'esprit satirique et épigrammatique représentant une coordonnée spirituelle des Roumains, la ligne de force de la matrice ethnique nationale. Cette vocation montre sa vigueur dans les cris populaires immémoriaux, dans les récits facétieux des contes, mais aussi dans les grandes créations littéraires. Cependant, le domaine de la comicologie ne bénéficie pas d'études herméneutiques suffisantes et pertinentes, les histoires de l'humour étant dans l'espace autochtone une *terra incognita* (p. 9), un fait qui soit remédié par le philologue Arieșan.

Le deuxième chapitre, intitulé « Critères et repères comicologiques » (pp. 16-175), part de la nécessité de constituer une science consacrée au phénomène comique qui ne peut être vulgarisé ou inclus dans le trivial, l'universalité du rire imposant une approche holistique et interdisciplinaire du point de vue de l'esthétique littéraire, de la philosophie, de la psychologie et de la sociologie. Dans le sous-chapitre « Terminologie du rire » (pp. 16-18), Claudiu T. Arieșan estime que l'échec d'une vision scientifique minimale consensuelle concernant la comicologie est dû à sa complexité, étant donné les relations inextricables du rire avec les manifestations de la vie quotidienne et la durée intime de chacun de nous, déterminant ainsi son caractère protéique et polymorphe. Dans le sous-chapitre « Approches analytiques du rire » (pp. 19-22), on précise que le rire n'est pas exclusivement conditionné par le comique, la preuve en étant la variété des manifestations du rire, du rire expansif et vif de la redécouverte de soi dans la mentalité romaine classique au rire hellénique avec des accents religieux reflétant la joie intérieure. Mais en partant des observations de Marian Popa, l'auteur considère que l'équivalence implicite de celles-ci relève d'un certain confort théorique. En parcourant les théories d'Armando Plebe, Paolo Santarcangeli, Valentin Silvestru, Teodor Baconschi, l'auteur aborde le contenu sémantique et notionnel de la terminologie de la comicologie (rire, comique, modes du comique, etc.) et propose d'analyser dans les sous-chapitres suivants les similitudes et les

différences des diverses sous-catégories esthétiques du rire, le sourire dans le discours littéraire érudit ou l'existence de valeurs sympathiques de l'humour.

L'étiologie du rire suppose une série de composantes – psychophysiologique, psychanalytique, sociologique, philosophique, esthétique, anthropologique et religieuse – examinées dans un périple culturel et informationnel qui part de l'Antiquité gréco-latine (où la différence entre le rire et le comique était insignifiante, les rires étant considérés comme une modalité de sanctionner l'ignorance et l'infatuation, et de taxer le manque de modération et le ridicule). Cependant, les subtilités du rire sont soulignées par Platon, le philosophe faisant une distinction entre les aspects publics et privés de celui-ci, rapportables tant à soi-même qu'à l'altérité. On apprend qu'Aristote met en évidence la philanthropie associée au rire, tandis que Cicéron cristallise cette conception dans *De oratore*, « filtrée par *interpretatio Romana* de la charité » (p. 53). L'ensemble de la mesure philosophique de l'équation rire-pleurs sera mise en évidence par Juvénal. Citant ensuite Ernst Robert Curtius, l'auteur admet que la suppression des frontières entre plaisanterie et sérieux est en grande partie due aux influences de la rhétorique. L'éloquence comique et le risible reflété dans l'art du portrait ou dans les mots spirituels seront substitués à la Renaissance par les idéologies des conditionnements psychophysiologiques du corpus hippocratique, amalgamées avec le philosophique et parfois avec l'esthétique. Le rire en tant que supériorité recherchée apparaît chez Hobbes, le critique de la métaphysique cartésienne, mais aussi chez Marcel Pagnol ou André Maurois, qui associent le rire à la peur collective, le considérant une forme cathartique subconsciente de manifestation de l'homme face à l'objectivation de la peur. Immanuel Kant fonde la théorie du contraste risible, ses conceptions comicologiques n'étant pas des analyses du particulier, mais des mécanismes générant l'esthétique du rire, le risible provoquant des manifestations ébranlantes ayant en son essence des formes d'absurde selon l'opinion du philosophe. Claudiu T. Arieșan estime que l'illumineisme français imprégné d'encyclopédisme transfère la méditation philosophique liée au rire sur un terrain naturaliste avec de profondes inflexions sociales. Si la doctrine classique n'admettait pas de catégories esthétiques équivoques, séparant clairement le tragique du comique, les romantiques réaliseront un syncrétisme des catégories esthétiques et philosophiques. Le comicologue de l'époque romantique est Jean Paul, qui se montrait préoccupé par la définition scientifique du comique, avec toutes les distinctions de ses réalisations (la manifestation physique du rire est une conséquence de la délectation mentale). L'incertitude du plaisir attribué exclusivement à la manifestation du physiologique est analysée également par le Suisse J.G. Sulzer.

L'auteur expose de manière diachronique la diffraction des concepts esthétiques liés au comique et au rire et présente les conceptions de Hegel, Schopenhauer, A. Bain, Vischer, Kuno Fischer, H. Bergson, Solger, Nietzsche, en s'arrêtant sur les théories du XX^e siècle (Ch. Lalo, J. Sully, Fr. Jeanson, N. Hartmann ou Croce). Celles-ci sont considérées apporter une résurrection des théories classiques et imposer de nouvelles directions, fondées à la fois sur le ludique commun à l'esthétique et au risible. Elles offrent à ce dernier une grille de perception esthétique et intellectuelle : bizarreries, insolites, difformités et aberrations, malformations éthiques et vices, dérogations aux rigueurs disciplinaires et morales, catastrophes quotidiennes, vulgarité, trivialité, etc. Claudiu T. Arieșan analyse la dimension religieuse du rire et constate une certaine uniformité stylistique et conceptuelle des sociétés modernes qui se rapportent de manière parodique à la composante sacrée. Dans ce contexte, l'homme se libère des angoisses métaphysiques, le numineux est humanisé et le dérisoire prend une double valeur : l'une est dirigée vers le céleste, l'autre vers le démoniaque. La dynamique du rire fonctionne dans les croyances religieuses sous différentes manifestations qui y sont mises en évidence : du rire rituel des dieux du panthéon gréco-romain, avec des accents profanes profonds, – au rire aux fonctions apotropaïques du folklore, ou du sourire et de l'enthousiasme vitaliste oriental détectable dans l'Ancien Testament à travers de nombreux calembours et jeux de mots – au rire théophanique écho de la colère divine ou « réflexe de la prédestination insondable pour les esprits trop humains » (p. 133). Partant de la perspective néo-testamentaire selon laquelle Jésus-Christ n'aurait jamais ri durant sa vie terrestre, ce qui a suscité beaucoup de polémiques parmi les esprits scolastiques, deux courants dichotomiques s'étaient créés. D'une part, ceux qui soutenaient que

le Sauveur, par sa nature humaine, avait vécu la gaieté faisant partie de la nature intrinsèque de l'homme. D'autre part, ceux qui croyaient que, par l'affirmation de sa divinité, l'homme avait été substitué par Dieu qui ne pouvait plus rire, idée également débattue par T. Baconschi.

Le troisième chapitre du livre (pp. 176-214), comme le titre l'anticipe, est consacré aux deux modalités fondamentales de manifestation du comique – l'humour et l'ironie. Elles sont présentées conceptuellement, esthétiquement et historiquement. Les chapitres suivants se concentrent sur le polymorphisme de l'humour universel et roumain, et capturent le filon humoristique et les paradigmes mentaux détectables chez différentes nations : l'humour anglais, la gaieté française « entre humour et esprit » (p. 241), le rire allemand, l'humour hispanique, l'humour des steppes et celui juif, ou encore l'humour américain. Quant à l'humour roumain, on considère qu'il émerge à la fois de la littérature populaire et de la littérature savante, l'esprit autochtone possédant la faculté de surprendre et de critiquer les habitudes et les vices humains dans des contes édifiants ou des énoncés paremiologiques, mais aussi dans des œuvres savantes telles que celles des chroniqueurs, de B.P. Hasdeu, Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă ou I.L. Caragiale. Le comique est également illustré dans le journalisme national, auquel l'auteur consacre le sixième et dernier chapitre (pp. 362-381). Il propose une analyse de la presse humoristique et satirique, en ensuite une analyse de la presse culturelle et littéraire-artistique.

Possédant une vaste culture, Claudiu T. Arieșan conduit le lecteur dans un fascinant périple de l'histoire du comique, démontrant que *homo ridens* connaît toute une série d'expressions artistiques, dérivées du sens même de l'existence vécue, le comique n'étant en effet pas d'autre chose qu'une modalité d'approche esthétique, philosophique et religieuse du réel.

Diana DIMIRACHE

Université Technique de Cluj-Napoca
Centre Universitaire Nord de Baia Mare
Faculté des Lettres

ROMÂNIA ORIENTALE, 2022, 35, Roma, Sapienza
Università Editrice, 578 p.

Founded in 1988 by Luisa Valmarin, the academic journal *România Orientale* is now in its 35th issue (2022), and publishes, on this occasion, a volume of impressive breadth and quality research in linguistics, culture, and literature.

The journal includes four sections and opens with a folder dedicated to Marco Cugno (1939–2012), professor of Romanian language and literature at the University of Torino and an important translator of Romanian literature. Titled “Marco Cugno, il maestro e l'amico” [“Marco Cugno, the Teacher and the Friend”], the portfolio contains nine articles evoking the life and academic work of the scholar commemorated, authored by Roberto Merlo, Filippo Spallino, Veronica Pesce, Cristiana Francone, Barbara Pavetto, Gian Franco Gianotti, Roberto Scagno, Bruno Mazzoni, and Marta Petreu. From a researcher's point of view, these texts serve at least two purposes. On one hand, they became a space of memory, a tribute to a person who made his mark in the field of Romanian studies in Italy. On the other hand, this section may serve very well as a “behind the curtains” view of the grand literary history because it shows the dynamic influence that Marco Cugno had in his teaching years – the unquestionable truth being supported by the authors of the texts themselves, who were connected to the professor in one way or another and continued to pursue the scientific research of Romanian literature and linguistics.

The second section is the largest, mainly dedicated to scientific articles, and is interesting primarily for the variety of studies, covering centuries of literature, from the *Divina Comedia* to *Luceafărul*, in very different thematic and methodological areas: comparative studies, biographical studies (“‘Tată dragă... A D-Tale fiică respectuoasă și iubitoare, Lilica’. Per una biografia di Iulia Hasdeu nel dialogo epistolare col padre” [“Dear Father... Your Respectful and Loving Daughter, Lilica’. For a Biography of Iulia Hasdeu in Epistolary Dialogue with Her Father”], by Alessandro Zuliani), translation studies (“Quasimodo e Arghezi: traduzione anti-filologica” [“Quasimodo and Arghezi: Anti-philological Translation”], by Federico Donatiello, “Traducere și predare” [“Translation and Teaching”], by Nicoleta Neșu, or “La traduzione litteraria e le sue sfide: il caso di *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* di Carlo Emilio Gadda in romeno” [“Literary Translation and its Challenges: The Case of Romanian Rendition of *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* by Carlo Emilio Gadda”], by Harieta Topoliceanu), close-reading (“Il lessico delle emozioni nelle memorie di Lena Constante e Ana Blandiana” [“The Vocabulary of Affects in the Memoirs of Lena Constante and Ana Blandiana”], by Angela Tarantino and Luisa Valmarin), and, last but not least, etymological studies (“Rectificări și contribuții etimologice, II” [“Etymological Corrections and Contributions, II”], by Dumitru Loșonți). Due to space constraints, I limit myself to highlighting the Giovanni Magliocco’s article “Teatrul excentric al identității: masculinitatea decadentă în poezia lui Alexandru Macedonski” [“The Eccentric Theatre of Identity: Decadent Masculinity in Alexandru Macedonski’s Poetry”], in which the author employs a transnational reading of the Romanian writer’s work, given that he is a bilingual author whose “work in French has the same value as that in Romanian” (p. 259). Starting from the reception of Macedonski’s poetry, the author reveals the decadent construction of identity, articulated by the poet’s recourse to eroticism, which asserts itself not as an act of knowledge but as an act of dominance: “Macedonski sees in love the affirmation of vital energies, of the desire to dominate” (p. 261). Identifying two types of masculinity – the “hyper-viril” and the “hypo-viril”, Giovanni Magliocco concludes that all these articulations of identity denote a “homoeroticism in crisis”, because “only a masculinity in crisis always feels the need to assert itself through exhibition” (pp. 273-274). The author therefore proposes a well-articulated analytical approach, focusing on the writer’s construction of identity, which finally results in a new, fresh way of seeing and interpreting Alexandru Macedonski’s work.

The “Proposte di lettura” [“Reading Proposals”] section, a regular feature of the journal, contains annotated translations from 19th century Romanian writers (I. L. Caragiale’s *Tempora, Triumphul talentului* [Triumph of the Talent], *Bacalaureat* [Baccalaureate], proposed by Cristiana Francone), interwar and postwar writers (Vasile Voiculescu’s three sonnets from *Ultimele sonete închipuite ale lui Shakespeare în traducere imaginară de V. Voiculescu* [Shakespeare’s Last Fancied Sonnets in V. Voiculescu’s Imaginary Translation], proposed by Veronica Pesce, and Nicolae Labiș’s *Moartea câprioarei* [The Death of the Deer], proposed by Marinella Lórinzi), but also from contemporary writers (Radu Paraschivescu’s *Fluturele negru* [Black Butterfly], translated by Jessica Andreoli, and Doina Ruști’s *Fantoma* [The Phantom], from *Ciudățeni amoroase din Bucureștiul fanariot* [The Weird Love Stories from Phanariot Bucharest], translated by Barbara Pavetto). This section’s relevance is almost self-explanatory. Although it’s not composed of scientific papers, it provides the reader somewhat of a first-hand contact with Romanian literature, which is a great deal for promoting Romanian studies and serving, through translation, as a connecting bridge from one language to another. Moreover, some of the translations have an auxiliary text, in which the translator explains the choices that were made for translating the text or even describes the text in a contextualizing and analytic way.

The reviews are commenting on recent publications, both literary translations (Mircea Cărtărescu’s *Solenoide* and Matei Călinescu’s *Vita e opinioni di Zacharias Lichter*, both translated by Bruno Mazzoni), as well as specialised studies devoted to Romanian literature. The selection of books reviewed is equally varied; it covers areas and subjects such as postmodernism (Robert Cincu, *Postmodernismul în teoria literară românească* [Postmodernism in Romanian Literary Theory]), folklore studies (Ion Taloș, *Împăratul Traian și conștiința romanității românilor. Cultura orală și*

scrisă din secolele XV-XX [Emperor Trajan and Romanians' Roman Consciousness. Oral and Written Culture in the 15th-20th Centuries]), contemporary Romanian literary history (Mihai Iovănel, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane: 1990-2020 [History of Romanian Contemporary Literature: 1990-2020]*), and the history of literary ideas (Ioana Bot, Adrian Tudurachi, eds., *Dumitru Popovici*). This section is just as important for advancing Romanian literary and linguistic studies as the previous one. In this sense, the final two sections serve as a gateway that allows the reader to indirectly engage with Romanian literature and scientific research, making them easily accessible and assisting individuals who are interested in staying current with this area of study.

Why pick *România Orientale* above other scholarly publications devoted to Romance culture, one might wonder? The answer is quite predictable: this publication is nearly entirely devoted to Romanian studies, and its wide range of topics and themes greatly aids in this regard. Issue 35 continues the tradition of *România Orientale* and confirms, once again, the high standards set by the project initiated by Luisa Valmarin. It is not only a Romanian language journal in the Italian university scene but an international academic publication that enjoys a well-deserved prestige and continues to make significant contributions both in the field of philological research and in the wider sphere of culture by translating and promoting new publications from abroad.

Mihai-Cătălin POPA

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca
Faculty of Letters