THE FIRST TEXT ON POTATOES IN THE ROMANIAN CULTURE: ÎNVĂȚĂTURĂ SAU POVĂȚUIRE PENTRU FACEREA PÂINII CEII DE OBȘTE (1818)

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Abstract: *The first text written in Romanian about the importance of the potatoes as a very nutritious food supplement was printed in 1818, in Iași. The text is very important for our old culture, because it reflects the changes in the economy of the period and highlights the cultural connections, the German original being translated into Romanian following a Greek intermediary translation. The various recipes with potatoes as the main ingredient are also important for the Romanian gastronomic literature at the beginning of the 19th century. The literary norm displayed by the text is that of the period, preserving several phonetical and morphological traits specific of old Romanian.*

Keywords: *literary norm, measure units, potatoes, recipes*

1. The potato was first domesticated in South America, from where it spread around the world, becoming a staple crop in many countries. Historians speculate that the maize and potatoes were brought in Europe at the end of the 16th century by two different ports of entry: in Spain, around 1570, and via the British Isles, between 1588 and 1593. The potato first spread in Europe for non-food purposes. Famines in the early 1770s contributed to its acceptance, as did government policies in several European countries, like France and German lands. In the German lands, Frederick the Great, King of Prusia, strove successfully to overcome farmers' skepticism about the potato, and in 1756 he issued an official proclamation mandating its cultivation. This *Kartoffelbefehl* (potato order) termed the unfamiliar tuber "a very nutritious food supplement." Subsequently, throughout Europe, the most important new food in the 19th century was the potato, which had three major advantages over other foods for the consumer: its lower rate of spoilage, its bulk (which easily satisfied hunger) and its cheapness.

2. In present day Romania, the potato was firstly introduced in Transylvania, under the emperor Joseph II of Habsburg (1741-1790), because of the famine. This crisis forced the officials to release a circular letter in 14th May 1769 in which they urged the population to cultivate potatoes. It was argued that they bring many advantages and require few resources. Potato seeds were also imported so that the cultivation of potatoes spread quite fast. At the beginning of the 19th century, the cultivation of potatoes was consolidated due to official measures (for example, the circular letter released by Gheorghe Bánffy, governor of Transylvania, in 1814) and the impact of the books on agronomy or people holding high positions. For example, Gh. Șincai, in his book *Povățuire cătră economia de câmp* (1806),

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mentions the potatoe under the regional name *crumpene* and *perele cele de pământ* (d.sas. *krumpirr*, *krumpirn*, germ. *Grundbirne*, magh. *krumpli*) and in 1814, Vasile Moga, the first Ortodox bishop of Transylvania under the Habsburgic administration, urges the priests to teach people how to grow potatoes, which he names *picioici* (magh. *pityóka*).

3. At the same period, the cultivation of potatoes spread in Moldavia under the rule of Scarlat Callimachi (1812-1819), who supervised the introduction of the potato as an extraordinary resource for nutrition. For this purpose, Callimachi entrusted Al. Beldiman with the translation from Greek into Romanian of a booklet entitled *Învățătură sau povățuire pentru facerea pâinii ceii de obște mai neagră, pentru cea albă, de casă, pentru făina cea spre întrebuințarea bucatelor, pentru hrisi și altele din cartofle, pentru sămănatul lor, lucrarea și păstrarea lor,* which was printed in Iași, in 1818. The booklet was written in German by Cristian Albert Rűckert and translated into Greek by the physician Dimitrie Samurcas. A latter edition will be published in 1829.

The booklet, which has many errors of page imposition[1], is prefaced by two texts, the former signed by Al. Beldiman, the translator from Greek into Romanian, and the latter written by D. Samurcas, the translator from German into Greek.

Beldiman praises the physician's efforts of translating the text into Greek, observing that not only did he translate the text, but he enriched it with many other useful information regarding the use of potatoes: […] *pomenitul doftor, prin ostenelile sale, nu numai au scos la lumină și au făcut știute obștiei toate acelea ce să cuprind în cartea nemțească, dar și de la sine, după pătrunzătoarea sa știință, au adaos multe din folosurile acele ce curg din înmulțirea și buna înlucrare a cartoflilor*. Beldiman also introduces Samurcas' own addition to the German original: *Adaosurile a celui de pe nemție tălmăcitoriu* (p. 21), which offers various other recipies. For example: *Alt chip mai lesnitoriu spre facerea aluatului celui meșteșugit. Ia 80 dram apă caldă, întru care topește câtva din aluatul cel obicinuit de grâu, adaoge 100 dram cartofle fiarte și pe atâta dram din făina lor, frământă-le bine și pune plămădeala întru un loc unde să fie căldura măsurată și, stând cinci sau șasă ceasuri, să oțătește și să face îndestul spre întrebuințare* (22).

From the preface signed by Samurcas, entitled *Înainte-cuvântare a tălmăcitoriului grec cătră cinstit și ales de bun neam, dumnealui marele logofăt Grigorie Sturza,* included in the Romanian translation and dated 14th February 1818, we can learn that the translation from German into Greek was demanded by the great chancellor, Grigorie Sturza: *Iată, dar, după porunca cea mie data de cătră dumneata s-au tălmăcit învățătura aceasta din limba nemțească întru cea grecească.*

4. Its utilitarian destination is signalled by the title itself: *Învățătură sau povățuire* [...], following the trend of the period: almost all didactic or science popularization texts in various fields (rural economy included) were entitled in this manner. Despite its small dimensions (30 pages), the booklet is very important for old Romanian culture because on one hand, it reflects the changes in the economy of the period, that is the transition from the subsistence economy to the very incipient industrial economy. On the other hand, the text

[1] The pages which contain the two prefaces were not included in our recounting the pages of the text.

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highlights the cultural connections, the German original being translated into Romanian following a Greek intermediary translation. Its content is relevant for the growing importance of the potato in the diet of the Europeans at the beginning of the 19th century. There are offered valuable information regarding the cultivation and preservation of potatoes, as well as various recipes of bread (white and brown), flour, dough, cheese, butter and even brandy, with potatoes as the main ingredient. We exemplify with recipes for brown bread, butter and cheese, which illustrates the two patterns used[1]:

Al treilea pentru pâinea cea neagră de casă
Făină de grâu, dram 262 pol;
Făină de cartofle, dram 262 pol;
Sare, dramuri 10;
Aluat meşteşugit topit în uncrop, dramuri 304 pol.
Plămădeala trage 2 ocă şi 35 dram.
Pâine gata dintru aceasta: 750 dram.
La 43 ocă 300 dram făină de grâu, ca să dea 125 ocă, 225 dram pâine, trebuiesc 43 ocă 300 dram făină de cartofle şi 700 dram sare (3).

Trei părţi cartofle fiarte, amestecându-le cu o parte de unt sau cu grăsime de bou ori de vacă, adăugând şi câtăva sare, să face un unt minunat, care poate să ţie multă vreme. O asemenea amestecătură (precum mai sus s-au arătat) cu lapte de oi sau de vacă, cu cartofle frecate şi fiarte, să face o brânză în care poate să ţie un an fără a să strica (21).

The book begins with a short history of the potato, which, according to the author, was brought to Europe by the English sailors in 1585. In Germany it was introduced just a few years before the publishing of the book: *Cartoflile sânt cele mai alese şi făcătoare de bine a Americii daruri. Locul lor iaste în America cea despre amiazăzi. La 1585, le-au adus englezii întru cea dintâi dineoară în Europa, de abia cu puţin ani mai înainte în Ţara nemţească, ca un lucru mult folositoriu şi de mare trebuinţă au început a le lucra. Şi văzându-să a fi o hrană mult folositoare atât pentru oameni, cât şi pentru dobitoace, s-au lăţit mai întru toată lumea, căci să fac în oricare pământ şi însuşi în munţi, unde nu rodesc alte feliuri de sămănături* (p. 1).

5. The measure units used in this translation are: *cantar* (*cântariu*), *dram*, *linguri*, *ocă* and *pol*[2].

Cantar has a sole occurrence in the recipe to obtain brandy out of potatoes. This old measure unit varied from 44 to 50 kilograms: *Dintru acestea să face rachiu minunat, trei* ***cantare*** *de cartofle dau atâta rachiu, cât dă 36 ocă de pâine albă, încât 334 pol ocă cartofle dau 10 ocă rachiu* (20). The phonetism **cântariu** is also used: *Pre lângă acestea, să mai face şi crohmoală; 223 ocă cartofle nemţeşti dau un* ***cântariu*** *de crohmoală. Dar cele*

[1] Ioan Milică and Sorin Guia offer valuable information regarding the stylistic patterns and the textual features of recipes in their study *Culinary Recipies: Orality and Scripturality* (in *Diacronia*, no 5/2017): http://www.diacronia.ro/ro/journal/issue/5/A71/en/pdf

[2] A minute analysis of the measure units used in old Romanian cookbooks is made by Mariana Neț (*Lexicul gastronomic românesc: un rezervor terminologic*, in "Limba română", LXVI, nr. 4, 2017, p. 500-509).

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leșăști 300 ocă trebuiesc la un ***cântariu****; dintru acestea să face pudră pentru cap și sirop pentru facerea zaharului* (20).

Dram is an old measure unit for weight, equivalent of 3,18 grams in Muntenia and 3,23 grams in Moldavia. It is used both in the singular and plural forms, before or after the cardinal numeral: *făină de cartofle,* ***dram*** *350* (1), *făină de grâu,* ***dramuri*** *175* (2), *sare* ***dramuri*** *10* (3), *toată plămădeala trage 2 ocă, 75* ***dram*** (2).

Lingură, a common unit measure that varies, according to the product weight, from 15 grams (a spoon of water, vinegar, oil etc.) to 25 grams (a spoon of honey or cocoa, for example). In the text it appears with the plural form: *drojdii de bere – 6* ***linguri*** *de masă pline* (4).

Ocă is an old measure unit for mass and weight, equivalent of one liter or one kilogram and one quarter. It is used only in the singular, before or after the cardinal numeral: *La 43* ***ocă****, 300 dram făină de grâu, ca să dea 186* ***ocă*** *de pâine* (2), *Pâinea cea gata dintru aceasta –* ***ocă*** *50 și până la 65 dramuri* (4).

Pol is an old measure unit equivalent which calks the old Slav *polŭ*, meaning *half*. It is used in the singular form, together with *ocă*: *La 43 ocă, 300 dram făină de grâu, ca să dea 186 ocă de pâine, trebuiesc 87* ***pol ocă*** *făină de cartofle de cele de iarnă, iară de cele de vară 39 ocă, 001 dram și 2 ocă, 250 dramuri de sare* (2); *La 43 ocă 300 dram, ca să dea 122* ***pol ocă*** *pâine, trebuiesc 28 ocă, 350 dram făină de cartofle* (4) and *dram*, after the cardinal numeral*: Făină de grău* ***dram 262 pol*** (3), *aluat meșteșugit topit în uncrop* ***dramuri 304 pol*** (3).

6. Regarding the literary norm used by the Moldavian scholar in this translation, we recorded the following phenomena:

- retention of protonic *ă* in: *năsip* (17, 19, *năsipos*, 14), *lăcuitorii* (17).
- retention of protonic *î* in *să râdică* (8).
- *î* > *u* in: *să va umfla* (9), *le umple* (16).
- *o* > *u* is generalized in the paradigm of the verb *cuprinde: cuprind* (pf., passim).
- retention of medial *e* în *ceti* (pf.).
- retention of the intact labial in *peliță* (7, 27).
- *l'* in *feliu* and its derivates: *feliuri* (1), *feliurimile* (2).
- exclusive use of phonetisms with the anticipation of the palatal element: *mâinile* (9), *pâinea* (f.t., 2).
- preservation of *ia* in: *buruianile* (14), *fiarte* (4), *nuiale* (7), *să piiarde* (23), *le priiaște* (25).
- The palatal timbre of the vibrant *r* is rendered with consistency in words derived with the suffix *–tor* or in non-derivative words: *alcătuitoriul* (1), *cuptoriu* (9), *(chip) lesnitoriu* (21), *sucitoriu* (6), *următoriul chip* (10), *tălmăcitoriu* (21), *vlăstariu* (13).
- hard s, *ș, ț*: *asămăluindu-te* (pf.), *să așază* (18), *să se deșarte* (9), *greșala* (20), *îmbogățindu-să* (pf.), *întinzându-să* (7), *să se lasă* (16, 27), *leșăști* (7), *să oțătește* (22), *să se prășască* (26), *sâtă* (5), *șasă* (14), *al șasălea* (5), *tăindu-să* (7) etc.

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- hard *r*: *răce* (6).
- preservation of the affricate č in *obicinuita* (*plămădeală*) (9), (*aluatul cel*) *obicinuit* (22).
- the affricate *ğ* is no longer preserved: *jumătate* (13), *împrejur* (14, *împrejurul*, 17, 18).
- Genitive-Dative of some feminine nouns of 1st declension in *–ii: casii* (7) and of some feminine nouns belonging to the 3rd declension in *–ei: obștiei* (pf.).
- The invariable form of the possessive-Genitive mark: *întru înaltul strămoșesc a țării aceștia scaun* (pf.), *producturi a pământului* (20), *adaosurile a celui de pe nemție tălmăcitoriu* (21).
- The Genitive-Dative of the feminine demonstrative of proximity has the form *aceștia* in the singular: *învățăturii aceștia* (1), but *acestuia* with neuter and masculine nouns: *aluatului acestuia* (9).
- The Genitive-Dative of the adjectival article is, in the feminine, singular, *cei(i)*, etymological form (< *ecce + illaei*), and not *celei*, analogic form, following the plural: *pâinii ceii de obște* (f.t.).
- Variable forms of the relative pronoun: *carea* (8).
- general use of verbal forms with altered dentals: *să se întinză* (6), *ca să rămâie* (15), *să se puie* (16), *puind* (15), *să le ție* (19) etc., but: *le va pune* (16), *să se scoată* (16).
- exclusive use of the form with etymological hiatus in the forms of the verb *primi*: *le-au priimit* (20).
- The present perfect tense has in the singular forms homonymous with the plural, etymological forms used exclusively in all literary variants of old Romanian language: *s-au tălmăcit învățătura aceasta* (pf.), *alcătuitorul îndestui ani s-au ostenit* (1), *aceasta s-au arătat* (19), *despre iunie sau iulie, când hlujărul lor începe a crește și s-au făcut de un picior de înalt* (26) etc.
- The long infinitive is quite often used, despite the fact that the general tendency of the period was to replace it with the subjonctive: *nu conteneşti a ceti cărțile* (pf.), *până va începe a dospi* (8), *până va începe a crăpa* (8), *pot a le așăza* (17), *ca să afle lesnire a se scurge apa* (18) etc.
- adjectives derived with *–icesc* are commonly used: *bărbat politicesc* (pf.), *stânjini tetragonicești* (13).
- old and regional terms: *coșciuge* (10), *crohmoală* "scrobeală, amidon"(19), *hendechiu* "șanț" (18), *hlujărul* "hlujan, tulpină" (26), *hulubii* (29), *jitniță* "groapă în pământ în care se păstrează cartofii sau grâul" (7), *mascurii* "porc" (29), *omătul* (18), *păpușoi* (5), *prostire* "cearșaf" (6), *studeniță* "plantă erbacee" (29), *uncrop* "apă clocotită" (3).
- neologic terms: *analoghia* (*după ~ aluatului îndoit*, 22), *arie* (*fața ariei*, 17), *cartofle* (*un ~*, 16, *cartoflile*, 1), *materie* (9, 28), *piramidă* (*ca un chip de ~*, 18), *polenta* (*~ italienească,* 5), *potași* "potasium" (*~ curat topit în* apă; *unul pol dram ~,* 10), *producturi* (*văzându-le că sânt niște ~ a pământului folositoare, le-au priimit de bine*, 20), *pudră* (*dintru acestea să va face ~ pentru cap*, 20), *sirop* (*~ pentru facerea zaharului*, 20), *suma* (8), *tiutiun*

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(*Sângure, numai frunzele de cartofle uscându-se, le întrebuințează bându-le în loc de ~,* 21), *zaharului* (20).

7. The text, despite its small dimensions, is rather important for the old Romanian culture, because it is the first text on potatoes, in which there are offered valuable information about their nutritive value, their cultivation, preserving and storing, as well as various recipes of white and brown bread, flour, dough, cheese, butter and even brandy, all using potatoes as the main ingredient. Of interest are also the old measure units used: *cantar (cântariu), dram, linguri, ocă* and *pol.* The text is written in a fluent language, with few neologic terms, such as *arie, cartofle, piramidă, polenta, pudră, sirop, sumă, tiutiun*. Regarding the literary norm, the translator uses some regional and old phonetic forms, such as protonic *ă*, preservation of *ia*, soft *r* in final position in non-derivative words, hard *s, ș, j,* invariable forms of the possessive-Genitive mark, the auxiliary *au* in the present perfect, 3rd person singular, verbal forms with iotacised dental, long infinitives.

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