ION CUCEU

SEXTIL PUŞCARIU AND THE FOLKLORE

Given the excessive historiological and historiographical orientation regarding the evolution of the scientific researches in Romania, it is almost a paradox the fact that there are so few and insignificant results, and when one tries to understand a problem, one always has to turn to the primary sources. Not even the top personalities can enjoy the comprehensive editions of the works, which could spare the researcher from the overwhelming documentary effort of the continuous research of theoretical and methodological fundaments, buried in periodicals, or of "abandoned and unfinished walls", to use a damnation metaphor for the Romanian science.

It is, unfortunately, the case of the founders of education and research institutions, of direction givers in the Romanian ethnology, in the physical and cultural anthropology, in anthropogeography and geopolitics, in other scientific fields. Many of them were, between 1919 and 1948, members of the university of Cluj, founding institutes and chairs, prefiguring fruitful investigation directions, trying to "keep up" with the traditional European universities and institutes. Related to these personalities, we do not have the collections of founding documents, the memoirs and the institutional correspondence, the periodical assessments and the self-evaluations, the conference proceedings and the communications, the pragmatic texts, from which their theoretical perspective and their general view over one field or another may be detached. Such document collections have to be gathered by the descendants in order to be properly studied. Certainly, there are exceptions. As such, one could notice Vasile Bogrea's two editions of studies, owed to Mircea Borcilă and Ion Mării (Bogrea 1971) as well as to Mircea Borcilă and Vasile M. Ungureanu (Bogrea 1973); or Ion Muşlea's edition owed to Ion Taloş (Muşlea 1971–1972); or Romulus Vuia's edition – only half of it published – edited by Mihai Pop and Ioan Şerb (Vuia 1975, 1980), and more recently George Vâlsan's edition by Ion Cuceu (2001). No one has yet edited the ethnobotanical work of Alexandru Borza, the anthropological contributions of Iuliu Moldovan and Valeriu Bologa, the folk art works owed to Coriolan Petranu.

It is even more difficult to have access to secondary works from the scientific oeuvres of these outstanding founders of schools and research centres, to their correspondence, memoirs, reports and essays that, most of the times, conceal initiatives and new groundings, bold ideas, in-depth and conclusive analyses, new perspectives or theoretical and methodological surprisingly encouraging and innovative in the era. Such studies, conferences, articles, reviews or simple notes clarify more profound aspects of some founding initiatives or emphasize indirect contributions of the highest interest; they should not be of interest only to the biblio-

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graphers, the authors of monographs or those committed to the editing of as complete as possible critical editions. As it is well known, most exegetic efforts of this type is concentrated almost exclusively on the domains considered to be "fundamental" from the activity and oeuvre of certain scholars, neglecting, as was the case of George Vâlsan in the edition of *Opere alese* of 1971 and even of Sextil Puşcariu, the direct or indirect contribution to the scientific approaches that marked, at their time, the destiny of humanities in Cluj.

This is why a series of aspects of a certain renewal, discovery, promotion of marginal discipline at first, which will gradually affirm their autonomy, consolidating the epistemological fundaments, remain somewhat overshadowed, when in fact they deserve our greatest attention. Moreover, one could consider that, without knowing them thoroughly, a synthesis of the historical evolution of the respective scientific branches is, most of the times, impossible.

It seems, yet again, a paradox the fact that the activity of personalities with a vocation of founders and with founding accomplishments may be neglected by the lexicons and histories of some new sciences, as the ethnological and anthropological continue to be considered in Romania.

Sextil Puşcariu's ethnographic and folkloric preoccupations are, unfortunately, little known, and his name is unfairly omitted by the histories of ethnology and folklore, or neglected in the most recent dictionaries and encyclopaedias. As such, Ovidiu Bârlea fugitively mentioned his merits (Bârlea 1974), especially in relation to the foundation document of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy, considering him only an "administrator", a "supervisor" of this first institute of ethnographic research from Cluj, and secondly an open-minded intellectual, who has generously supported – apart from the philological and linguistic studies – the affirmation of investigations on the traditional culture, completely forgetting about his profound considerations on arts and folkloric literature from conferences, studies, and articles, as well as from the *Istoria literaturii române. Epoca veche*, 1st edition (Puşcariu 1921). In this manner, in relation with Ovid Densusianu, from linguistics, for instance, or with George Vâlsan, from the field of geography, the merits acquired by Sextil Puşcariu, including in the field of ethnological sciences, are overshadowed to say the least, if not completely opacified by the narrow perspective and the unequal measurement unit. *Dicționarul folcloriştilor* Datcu 1979), recently become *al etnologilor* (Datcu 1998–2000)[1], preserves the same attitude, although Iordan Datcu consecrated a quite wide article compared to those dedicated to other folklorists.

Such perspectives, slightly deforming, are cultivated not only in the lexicographical practice, but also in the historiographical and monographic research, especially through the habitude of processing, in a minor register and somehow eccentric, the ethnographical and folkloric preoccupations of historians, philologists, sociologists, somehow in accordance with the precarious status of ethnology

[1] The article about S. Puşcariu, in vol. II, pp. 175–176.

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in higher education and in the network of the Romanian research institutes: *Nicolae Iorga şi folclorul*, *Dimitrie Gusti şi cultura populară*, *Iuliu Moldovan şi începuturile antropologiei la Universitatea din Cluj*. In such approaches, one loses sight of the holistic, integrative visions from the sciences regarding the human being and the society, and one finds himself/herself overwhelmed with the variety of disciplines or branches serving this wide and unique field, not giving the right entitlement to those who actually transcend "the field margins".

Brought up in the multicultural area of Braşov, where he went to high school, trained in Germany, France and Austria, just like George Vâlsan, Romulus Vuia, Nicolae Petrescu, Dimitrie Gusti, Iuliu Moldovan, in the invigorating environment at the beginning of the 20th century, Sextil Puşcariu founded at Cluj a University next to which he also seen the necessity of a network of institutes. He founded the Museum of the Romanian Language, being, as it is well known, also the president of the Organising Committee, therefore the co-founder of the Ethnographical Museum of Transylvania, vice-president of the Romanian Ethnographical Society, as well as the tutor of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy. Undoubtedly, he played a decisive role in the creation of the first and, unfortunately, the only ethnographical and folklore chair within a Romanian university, before 1992, which functioned between 1926 and 1950.

Usually, Sextil Puşcariu's merits are recognised, especially at festive occasions. They are, undoubtedly, great, but such a method of recognising them, without trying to evaluate them in the context of the global scientific concept, of his theoretical and methodological vision regarding the converging destinies of the humanistic disciplines leads to superficial appreciations. Sextil Puşcariu's contributions to the familiarity with the folklore were first emphasized by Mircea Vaida in his study *Sextil Puşcariu, critic şi istoric literar* (Vaida 1972), in the chapter *Literatura populară*, and, partially, in the chapters *Specificul național al literaturii române* and *Istoria literaturii române. Epoca veche*.

In 1977, one hundred years since S. Puşcariu's birth, the professor Dumitru Pop delivered a speech (*Sextil Puşcariu şi cultura populară*), which would lay the foundations of a study (Pop 1977) to reconsider the place of folklore "in its multiple and varied scientific and cultural preoccupations", his actual contribution in the field, in an organic connection with his integrative scientific vision.

A speech delivered by the researcher Doina Grecu, in 1999, revealed, based on materials from the Bran archive, the existence of a folklore compendium made by Sextil Puşcariu when he was young (Grecu 1999).

Little has Sextil Puşcariu written about the folklore, and some ideas formulated in 1921, in *Istoria literaturii române. Epoca veche*, were reassumed in two ulterior, more significant contributions, and then in the introductory pages to the well-known *Antologia română* elaborated together with Ion Breazu (Puşcariu–Breazu 1938). The substance of these ideas and their rooting in the scientific vision of the great scholar have to be brought again into discussion. No appeal will be made here

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to thoughts mentioned in notes, reviews, or academic reports, setting the limit to the so interesting observations S. Puşcariu made in his confessed attempts to systematically present the value of the folkloric poetry to students in philology, after having taken over the management of the chair of Romanian language and literature at the Cluj University.

Generally, in the cases of such encyclopaedic spirits, there were only fugitive mentions about what they had written about the folkloric culture or literature, about the traditional art, about some of their categories, as if the opinions of such personalities did not really matter in the end.

The essay *La letteratura romena*, published by S. Puşcariu in a foreign review, "L'Europa Orientale" (Puşcariu 1923), translated into Romanian in a popularisation collection (Puşcariu 1925) two years later, reassumed, from the very beginning, some of the ideas presented in the first edition of *Istoria literaturii române* (1921), underlining the importance of studying arts and folklore, which he considered to be more edifying than the factual history. The Romanian folklore still preserves numerous mysteries and from its analysis several disclosures may appear. "The compared folklore reveals several things to us. As for most of the neighbouring peoples, the life of the Romanian peasant has been intertwined with artistic manifestations until today. The motifs in the art of decoration or in music, the movements in dances, as well as the topics of literary produces are often amazingly similar from the Romanians and their neighbours. They prove, on the one hand, common influences, especially Oriental, and, on the other hand, the easiness with which the motifs and the topics travel beyond the ethnical and linguistic borders" (*ibidem*, p. 6). He who has been studying, since his youth, the oral culture of the Romanian groups at the south of the Danube, in their contacts with the culture of southern Slavs, does not let himself fooled by such ethnographical conclusions pertaining to the common sense and appreciates that, at a closer look, there might appear among the different cultures in contact "essential differences, less in invention and more important in the artistic attitude, in the handcrafting and in the conceiving of what is beautiful" (*ibidem*).

Sextil Puşcariu risks, however, another quite nebulous statement referring to an intertwining between an element of cultural tradition inherited from the Thracians, a certain *mysticism in their exuberant fantasy* and a "sense strongly outlined for harmony, inherited from the Romans", which, in a symbiosis, have marked the "artistic manifestations of the Romanian people". This was an intuitive attempt to identify the imponderable traits of the ethnical creativity, which preoccupied the sociologists, the philosophers, and the historians. Through these traits, one could distinguish "what was Romanian" in the south-eastern and central European folklore. A proven fact is that "the same decorative details one notices in the fabrics, seams, wood engravings, drawings on the painted eggs and ceramics made by the Serbians, the Greeks, the Bulgarians, the Russians, or the Hungarians are

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often found in the Romanian folklore, without being able today to mention the exact centre of dissemination" (*ibidem*, p. 7).

Just like Caracostea, the linguist from Cluj seeks, in the stylistics and expressivity of the forms of art, the possibilities to make ethnical differentiations, somewhere beyond the common cultural background. Yet again, the Romanian artistic values are appreciated in an extremist and in an ethnocentric manner. "Only at the Romanian peasant can one find so much discretion in the choice of neutral colours – with a predilection for black – especially regarding the placement of the ornament on large fields, which remain uncoloured or without ornaments, so that the eye can always find peace; the impression of overload, mugginess, or of blatancy and insinuation lacks completely. In the same way, the dances, so rich in movements that require great elasticity and virtuosity, are also models of eurhythmy" (*ibidem*).

In the aesthetical evaluation of *Miorița*, "preserved until today in tens of versions in all the Dacian-Roman lands", S. Puşcariu – intuiting the essential poetic motif – believes the folkloric poet was not interested in giving epic and dramatic details. Their *epic seed* was of use "only to render, in short verses, of five-six syllabi, the most beautiful apotheosis of death, imagined as a wedding of the individual with the surrounding nature, as well as the most tender expression of the filial love" (*ibidem*).

It has been said that *Miorița* was created as a result of a "poetic instinct", which had only been seen before in the "sacred scholars of the art". Therefore, its text is remarkable not through the mastery of the figures of style, but through a denudation of any poetical artifices. As such, in its crystalline development, one may see the work of art appeared "many centuries before our present day, in the loneliness of the mountains, where the Thracian-Roman-blooded shepherds wandered all along the Middle Ages, with their numerous flocks of sheep" (*ibidem*, p. 8).

A "medallion" of this outstanding pastoral creation, born in the settled village in the fields, would be, according to S. Puşcariu, the ballad on the topic of the dead brother with his sister (Voica). Under the pressure set by the mother's curse, the old mother is not taken down by the plague, as she had "a mission stronger than death: to live with the regret of having destroyed her daughter, marrying her with a foreign rich man" (*ibidem*, p. 9). Amazed by the force with which a faith in the endogamous marriage was embodied in that work, S. Puşcariu considered that, unlike *Miorița*, that ballad "was not born in the wide mountains, but in one of the hidden villages, inhabited by exhausted farmers haunted by all evils, as were the villages where the Romanian nation was preserved in the Middle Ages" (*ibidem*), continuing to evaluate the evocative strength and the concision placing the poem in the constellation of the Norse ballads, i.e. the Eddas.

The anthropological considerations on the epic poem also include some generalising references. As such, S. Puşcariu reveals the double modality to interpret the ballads. They are sometimes "interpreted on monotonous songs or recited". The

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thematic repertoire includes actual legends (as the one about the *Argeş Monastery*) or mythological topics (as in *Soarele şi luna*). However, most of the times, the "epic seed – an impressive event – serves as a reason for the characterisation of a deep feeling" (*ibidem*, p. 13), an assertion about which he will write later on.

S. Puşcariu supported the old romanticist idea according to which "folkloric poems – even in their altered form in which they have been collected for about eighty years", certainly after the appearance of the folkloric science – would still hide "countless treasures". He briefly characterised the oral lyrics, a category he considered to be dominant in the folkloric literature, with its common form (the ballad – *doina*), and with its most wide-spread motifs: *love* ballads, followed by those related to *dor*, *urât*, love of nature, to which, "understanding their beauties", to which he raises "hymns of gratitude for their gifts".

As other fervent supporters of folk poems, Sextil Puşcariu also believed that the Roman peasant was at peace with the thought of death, "which did not prevent them from finding the tenderest tones in the threnodies used to say the last good bye to their dear ones" (*ibidem*, p. 11).

In the "simple" philosophy, resulted from the "sum of life experiences", through which the peasants pass "with their eyes wide open", being governed by "a deep observation spirit", an original optimism is released, as well as a reconciliation with the world, a wisdom strengthened by that "note of healthy humour. This healthy humour can be noticed in their literary works and it even cools down their satire (cruel, as in all primitive literary attempts), as it results from the epigrams they improvise during their dances – known as *hore* (horas), *strigături* or *chiituri* (shouted couplets) – or from the anecdotes in which, with a forgiving sympathy, they mock the gypsies" (*ibidem*, p. 11–12).

The "myths inherited" or the historic traditions created, as well as the borrowings of the "most widely-spread oriental motifs, combined with the exuberant fantasy" of folk artisans, generated many more new legend topics and subjects. "His Christianity is full of delusive faiths of several sects created in the Middle East during the Middle Ages; the calendar full of saints halting the work; the domestic and wild animals, the birds, and the bugs all have their own story; the shape of a river, of a flower has its own legendary explanation" (*ibidem*, p. 13). It is underlined here, in an indirect way, the documentary and historical importance of studying the magical and religious universe, the systematic research of beliefs and mythological representations, "of disenchantments and charms", spread in the Middle Ages not only by the "village's older women", but also by the priests "just as superstitious as the villagers", just as obsessed of the "eternal fear of the devil", which was not a joke at that time as it is today (Puşcariu 1930, p. 53).

The richness of the national repertoire of cosmogonist legends is also attributed to cultural influences, such as the bogomilism, which strongly influenced the faiths, and nourished the fantasy in the folkloric narrations. "As such, of bogomilic origin are also the folkloric legends about the *Devil*, which made the human body (while

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God gave him the spirit), or about the creation of earth through the cooperation between God and Satan. Also, of bogomilic origin are those legends about the antagonism between the principle of good and evil lying at the basis of the creation of animals, plants, or even domestic tools. The horse, the sheep, the dove, the nightingale, the swallow, the bee, the wheat, the grape are the creations of God; the bat, the owl, the wasp, and the thistle are the made by the Devil. The cart comes from God; the Devil made it sparkle" (*ibidem*).

Sextil Puşcariu finds important the research of mythical and religious sources of the folkloric creations. That is why he insists upon the age of various mythical layers, some of them being obviously pre-Christian (such as the topics of fairy tales, the anthropophagus monsters, the metamorphoses, as well as the pre-Christian ethical behaviours). The reaction of the woman over which two fairy tale or ballad heroes fight for would reflect "a way of thinking that has not yet been touched by the Christian ethics: the woman looks at the life and death fight of the two rivals, without being moved by the cry for help of the weaker one, being determined to go with the stronger one" (*ibidem*). From the religious point of view, the overlapping of a Christian layer over the previous ones is of great importance in the research of the traditional narrations. Most of the times it leads to a bizarre mixture of characters, to confusions of names and roles. Roman deities such as Diana gave the *Fairy* for the Romanians, "who, for other Romanic people, came to mean *witch*". The god of light and of celestial fire transmits his attributes to the Holy Sun, as Saint Ilie inherits them from Jupiter, the god of thunder.

These ideas and reflections were brought again into discussion and developed by S. Puşcariu in a conference delivered within the "Extension of the University of Cluj", under the title *Ce e românesc în literatura noastră* (Puşcariu 1929). In this article, the great philologist and linguist tried to determine "the static element of our ethnical structure" or the "inherited spiritual plot". Otherwise said, "the generating powers within a people's soul" that, identified, could help one differentiate between "what is a race heritage and what has been acquired through a prolonged contact with the environment", even if he was convinced the task was an extremely difficult one "in the Europe of all mixtures of peoples" (*ibidem*, p. 1–2).

He identified three traits that could explain some particularities of the Romanian culture and literature: *individualism*, *adaptability*, and the *extremely developed sense of harmony*. The individualism as an ethnical trait appeared to have characterised our entire history as people. Although our people was familiar with the model of the flourishing Roman civilisation, still it "had settled for centuries to lead a primitive life of shepherds", turning their backs on "the advantages of a society with a superior organisation" and cherishing "the liberty offered by their lives as shepherds, who listen only to God and are afraid only of the forces of nature" (*ibidem*, p. 3). This is where it results that force of expansion, always greater than the force of cohesion. "Spread on a territory too wide for the small number of the population, a part of our ancestors was lost among the masses of allogeneic popula-

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tions" (*ibidem*). He gave here the example of the Romanians scattered in Pind, in Istria, on the entire northern part of the Balkan Peninsula, in the northern Carpathians in Moravia. Further, he evoked the great historical actions of Burebista and Mihai Viteazul, destroyed by the "irrepressible longing for freedom" of come individuals "with faith in their own forces" and with no "consideration for the collective needs". Then, S. Puşcariu mentioned the architectural aspect of the capital city, with its "houses with gardens arranged according to the owner's will, with no concern for alienation and with no attention paid to the neighbour's necessity of light" (*ibidem*, p. 4). This led to the cherishing of loneliness and to the love for the nature in the folkloric poetry, where the cuckoo – "the bird with no companion" – is a ubiquitous presence.

There is, however, a Romanic, Mediterranean heritage. Continuing to discuss about this "difficult heritage", which had come from our ancestors described by Herodotus and not from the Romans with their powerful civil sense, S. Puşcariu appreciated that "this consciousness of the lonely individual made the Romanian's observation spirit more agile, sharpened their innate intelligence and sharpened their sense of direction" (*ibidem*, p. 5).

This is the only explanation for the rich repertoire of proverbs, with their bright and deep human philosophy, their clear vision, their focus on discretion and violence rejection, and, particularly, "that complex of qualities contained in the word humanity" (*ibidem*, p. 6). S. Puşcariu is convinced that not only physical vitality, but also a certain "power of resistance inherent to his ethnic being", made the Romanian people unable to be incorporated, but to incorporate, neither with the "violence of the conqueror, nor with the prestige of its culture or the mirage of its blooming economic situation, but with the power of attraction that was given by the superiority of its intelligence and its physical and spiritual beauty" (*ibidem*, p. 7).

Next, S. Puşcariu reflects on the hospitality and on the prestige that the foreigner enjoys in the eye of the Romanian, hence the massive lexical borrowings, and also on its *capacity of adaptability*. In this context, we can notice that in folklore, "the predominant element is the lyric one, because lyrics gives the opportunity to the individualist poet to approach his or her own personality" (*ibidem*, p. 9). In the old songs, in ballades, whether of mythological inspiration or of familial essence, we can often notice the lyrical influence" (*ibidem*, p. 10), as, many times, the epic framework is interrupted when an echo of spiritual life, of intense feelings, is released. *Miorița* is the most relevant example and S. Puşcariu goes back to the demonstrating of 1923, showing that "all the attention of the poet is focused on the shaping of a pantheistic image of death and returning to the basic idea. "And, still, death is not for this fatalist son of the woods and of the bald cliffs, accustomed to face danger and ready at every moment to face the danger and ready at every moment to cross the supreme boundary, a simple fall from the charm of life to the eternal peace, but it breaks in a painful way the intimate connections

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with the living" (*ibidem*). Elaborating the analysis, S. Puşcariu focuses on the significance of the leitmotif of the *little old mother* and on the description of the beauty of her son, where the entire tragedy of his "early death" originates, his untimely passing (*ibidem*).

S. Puşcariu also goes back to the other example of the ballad, of the wide European Lenore type, underlining the intensity of how a mother perceives the heritage that even the death respects, which gets to unimaginable symbolic heights.

Regarding the lyrics, it highlights some traits of *doina* (a Romanian musical tune style), where the motif of love is predominant, but he notices that "rarely is it emphasized as much as in our case *the right of youth to love*", it underlines the frequency of the feelings of *dor* and *urât*, "two words that cannot be translated in other languages" (*ibidem*, p. 12), and it shows, in this case as well, the "simple and serene philosophy, with a strong note of optimism, that springs not only from the amount of experiences that life has given to our peasant, but from its innate harmonic nature(*ibidem*, p. 10)". Rarely can the religious and patriotic feelings be identified, even if a certain religiosity, doubled by the love for the homeland "feel like a fundamental tone" of the folk poetry(*ibidem*).

Trying to synthesize his idea, S. Puşcariu shows that the "Essential difference from the neighbouring folk literatures resides in treating the topics, in the predilection of the Romanian popular poet for certain forms of expression, in his biggest thirst for clarity, characteristic to the Roman peoples: the crystal-clear image reveals itself with the same natural simplicity that, at the slightest movement, the crystal occurs from a saturated liquid" (*ibidem*, p. 13).

More concentrated and more rigorously analysed, all this synthetic display reappears, as we have previously shown, in the preamble to the Romanian Anthology of 1938. This fact proves not only the firmness and the organic character of his opinions, but especially the important role that he gives to the popular culture in his wide anthropologic perspective.

We insisted more on these interpretative endeavours in order to underline, once again, that the "support" and the "protection" given to folklore and to ethnography are not attitudes of scholarly circumstance in the case of S. Puşcariu.

His solid intellectual formation at the University of Leipzig (1895–1899), where he was educated by Weigand, novelist and expert in dialectology, concerned by the oral cultures, K. Brugmann, indo-Europeanist, Wilhelm Wundt, ethno psychologist, then in Paris (1899–1901), where he took part in the course of Gaston Paris and Jules Gilliéron, and, lastly, in preparing his doctorate at the University of Vienna, under the instruction of the famous Romanist philologist Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke and of other great specialists in Slavic studies, offered S. Puşcariu the most fruitful connections to the philological and linguistic elite of those times. None of his teachers neglected the European folk cultures, promoted by the great German ethnological school.

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In the vision of his mentors, the language and culture phenomena interact and influence each other, so that they cannot be thoroughly explained and understood, unless they are put under the light of linguistic (dialectological), historical, ethno psychological, sociologic analyses, based also on the written documents and of the oral ones, containing materials of annals and other medieval texts, and also on the folklore collections, that they use and promote in the publications they coordinate.

The years of intellectual formation of Sextil Puşcariu coincide to those of a shift of paradigm in the studies dedicated to the folk cultures, by the ascension of those of rural sociology and of ethnology, but particularly by the great European projects of institutionalizing the researchers: the consolidation of scientific traditions and of the publications in this domain from Germany, France, Austro-Hungary, Italy and Romania, remarkable progresses in the Scandinavian countries and the advancement of the Finnish school and of this geographical-historical methodology, the creation of the international school of folkloric investigation (1909), the elaboration of comparative working tools.

The inspired appreciations made by Sextil Puşcariu in November 1926 to Vasile Bogrea regarding that "spirit of such pronounced universality, for which linguistics, history, ethnography, folklore and literature composed the different facets of the same ensemble: cultural history" (Puşcariu 1924–1926) are, in great measure, the merit of the one who founded or "protected" within the University of Cluj at least four institutes of research, hoarding and systematization of the values of Romanian traditional cultures: the Museum of Romanian Language (1920), the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania (1922), the Department of Ethnography and Folklore (1926) and the Archive of folklore of the Romanian Academy (1930), to the one that founded and constantly led publications of ethnological interest: "Dacoromania" and "Cultura", where the first generation of researchers of these values after 1919 stood out.

But Sextil Puşcariu left behind direct ethnological and folkloristic contributions, folklore corpora, and, particularly, working instruments so valuable to every researcher of the folk culture: *linguistic atlases*.

Thinking and stating that S. Puşcariu was just a "protector", a "supervisor" appointed by the Academy, an organizer and supporter of this institution, *an honorary*, in other words, it seems profoundly unjust. First of all, Sextil Puşcariu contributed to the formation and affirmation of well-known founders: Romulus Vuia, in ethnography, and Ion Muşlea, in folklore. The latter was one of the first generation students at the University of Cluj, being supported by Sextil Puşcariu in his preparation as a specialist and pragmatically coordinated in letters. In 1925, young Muşlea received, in Paris, clear guidance that directed his destiny: "What I find more important in our case, at the moment, is collecting folkloristic material until the songs completely perish... So, think, as long as you have the possibility to consult rich libraries, to also meet the specialists, in a scientific and methodical programme, as folklore should actually be collected" (Muşlea 1980, p. 15).

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Folk culture is seen, together with the language, as a fundamental constitutive element of the spiritual being of every nation, in defining their ethnical identity, in the purest ethnological and anthropological horizon of the west-European world, this is why for Sextil Puşcariu and for Vâlsan as well, four components have been considered to be essential:

– founding research institutes and departments in Western universities;

– training specialists in the country that undertook studies in Western universities;

– launching ample projects of field investigation;

– bibliography and systematization studies of the existing folkloric materials.

All the initiatives of S. Puşcariu are characterized by these pragmatic desiderata and they target, contrary to the common belief according to which they were a continuation of the old programmes of postromantic influence, an interruption and a re-foundation on the investigations on other theoretical-methodological parameters.

In a permanent and vivid rivalry with Ovid Densusianu, he was working, since 1915, on an academic report on the ethnographic and folkloric field research, as we can conclude from his correspondence with Bianu, and in 1917, having in mind the future of the Romanian Language Museum, he was stating, in his journal, some interesting things regarding field research "to which an ethnographer would take part, to gather their objects or photos, for all historical and folk terms, that have a Romanian specificity. In the summer, he would travel with this purpose in al Romanian regions, collecting the necessary material, and, with his elaborated questionnaires, sent to all the corners of the country, he would collect, little by little, all the Romanian specific terminology, collecting in this manner the material [the evidences] necessary for the geographical spreading of some words. His collaborator would have been a draughtsman that should illustrate all these objects […]" (excerpt from an older communication of Magdalena Vulpe).

The idea of research though direct, filed observation was a recurrent and obsessive one for George Vâlsan and Sextil Puşcariu, throughout the second decade of the last century. At the beginning of the third, in 1920, then in 1924, Densusianu launched his own reform project and redirected the systematic studies on folk culture, in two daring memoires, that damaged his relations with the Romanian Academy. More pragmatic, S. Puşcariu was tenaciously following his plans hoping to be able to extend the sphere of investigations of the Language Museum, as, in 1925, he wrote to his former student, Ion Muşlea, about the intention of developing the Romanian Language Museum, so that his area or interest covers folklore as well. "Particularly if we make, as we desire, the *Linguistic Atlas*. Then, the teams that we are going to send at the scene could collect, aside from the linguistic facts, folkloric and ethnographic material as well. But these – adds the great scientist, with the scepticism that all Romanian researchers have experienced

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and still experience – *are dreams for the future* – adding the so current – depending on material support that we are going to receive" (Muşlea 1980).

Making reference to a common European orientation of that time, S. Puşcariu highlighted in 1921: "Modern linguistics researches started, for 15 years, particularly in this direction, of explaining linguistic facts based on the exact knowledge of the objects denominated by the words" (*ibidem*). Towards the end of the third decade, after having supported the creation of the first department of ethnography and folklore at the University of Cluj, S. Puşcariu considered that the ethnographic and folkloric investigations must be made at the Romanian Language Museum, in collaboration with the Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania, quivering between the best place for such Archive of Folklore to function, but being firmly convinced, just as Densusianu in 1924, that the *Atlasul lingvistic român* is necessary to be doubled by an "folkloristic ethnographic atlas", that would enter in the long-term programme of the future Archive of Folklore of the Romanian Academy.

Widening the sphere of field investigations by including in the team other specialists ("an ethnographic-folkloristic investigator and a researcher of our onomastic") would have widened the perspective, but he did not ignore the inter-institutional cooperation either.

Direct ethnographic and folkloristic researches, anticipated by S. Puşcariu, occupied a leading position in the attention of the Archive of Folklore of the Romanian Academy, due to these *Monographs of the Archive of Folklore*, published at the beginning in the "Annual of the Archive of Folklore", and then being edited in a parallel series to the above mentioned news bulletin (*ibidem*).

The second important directive introduced by S. Puşcariu referrers to the comparative research of traditional culture values, towards which all endeavours of field investigation, collection and ethnological and linguistic systematization of information were aiming. On this scientific track, we meet S. Puşcariu, on the same synchronizing, modern, pro-European positions as Vasile Bogrea and George Vâlsan, followed, most that by anyone else, by Ion Muşlea, by the generation that followed them. Occidental cultural models had a saying here as well.

Even from the period of his studentship in Leipzig, S. Puşcariu was troubled by the idea of an "ethnographic society", where students from different counties could share „their knowledge about our nations, (about) their customs and occupations". For the young professor, reciprocal cultural knowledge has a clear scientific purpose, and, in this respect, two schools should be mentioned, the German and the French one. We have seen that, even from the pages of the first edition of *Istoria literaturii*, but particularly in the "final" one (1930), Sextil Puşcariu insisted on the necessity of promoting *comparativism* in the ethnographic and folklore studies, when he valued the importance of writing about all cultural layers and all perceivable influences. This directive of the great philologist was clearly understood by Ion Muşlea, unlike his other student, Romulus Vuia, much more influenced by the ethnocentric reactions.

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Even though he could clearly see this canvas that was giving an organic character to the relation between language and folklore, "as many threads lead from language to folklore", S. Puşcariu was convinced of the deeper European roots of the oral cultural phenomena and was recommending to his young students and collaborators the comparative perspective. The motifs and topics of national folk literature are related, in his opinion, to a common corpus; they often go beyond "the ethnic and language borders", and for their knowledge competent comparative endeavours are necessary.

The Archive of Folklore of the Romanian Academy and his scientific bulletin "Annual of the Folklore Archive", owe him more than we can possibly know today. In his memorial, made public in 1980, recognizes his merits, together with those of Ion Bianu, considering them to be protective gods for the institution that he founded in Cluj in 1930.

(*Translated by Roxana Gâz şi Delia Flanja-Pop*)

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SEXTIL PUŞCARIU AND THE FOLKLORE
(*Abstract*)

The ethnographical and folkloristic pursuits of Sextil Puşcariu are little known and his name is unjustly omitted from the histories and lexicons of these fields. The accomplishments of this great philologist in the study of traditional culture was not limited to the role of supporter and protector of the four institution created in Cluj: *The Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania* (1922), *The Romanian Ethnographic Society* (1923), *The Department and the Archive of Folklore of the Romanian Academy* (1930). The study reveals a series of observations and acknowledgements on the values of folk culture, drawn from the linguistic of literary history works of the philologist from Cluj: philosophical interpretations of the messages of some texts, the emphasis on the importance of some thematic repertoires, the role of questionnaires in the linguistic and folkloristic researches. Also, light is shed on the significance of the interdisciplinary study of folk culture and language.

Cuvinte-cheie: *instituții de cercetare, instrumente de lucru, domenii umaniste, limbă, cultură, filosofie populară, contexte istorice*.
Keywords: *research institutions, work methods, humanities, language, culture, folk philosophy, historical contexts.*

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