LANDMARKS OF THE MODERN ROMANIAN SOCIETY OPENNESS TO THE INFORMATION ON SINIC CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

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Abstract:
The purpose of this article is to show and explain, where possible, the mechanisms of modernRomanian society regarding its attitudes and actions towards the outside world, the extent of its receptivity, the reasons behind it, as well as the reference areas and fields. We cannot discuss China's image without discussing *who* receives it and in *how* it is received, who do we relate it to, this being the Romanian society.

Keywords:
Modern Romanian society, sinic culture and civilization, openness and receptivity, informations, perceptions

1. European perceptions of Orient and China

The Far-Eastern and Mediterranean areas did meet (occasionally and as commercial exchange activities), from the very times of the Late Roman Empire[1]. Given the considerable distance between Western Europe and Far-East, the contact between the two civilization spaces was made with the mediation of other factors and spaces. The nature of these factors and spaces is a dynamic and enterprising one; another important feature, which is worth mentioning, is that, somehow, these factors we are talking about, culturally

[1]Probably even much earlier, the first direct "connection" between East and West takes place during the conquests of Alexander the Great, 3rd century BC (the communication was developing actually within the same state, between Greek and Indian provinces). With the help of this Empire, there were commercial activities involving spaces in the Far East. Also see Helmut Uhlig, 2008, *Drumul Mătăsii. Cultura universală antică între China şi Roma* (*Silkroad. Ancient Universal Culture between China and Rome*), Bucharest: Saeculum Publishing House IO, p. 6.

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speaking, are somehow consistent with either of the two civilizations, which it actually connects.

As mediating factors, as well as mediating spaces, we will refer, in chronological order, to the Byzantines, the Persians, the Arabs, the Mongols and the Ottoman Turks. These cultures and peoples (except for the Byzantines and some of the Mongol peoples) are Muslims and had contact, quite early and frequently and profoundly enough, both with the Christian Western world and the Celestial Empire. The Silk Road is, undoubtedly, a lasting synthesis factor for the cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, for those in Central Asia and for those in the Far East[2].

Mediators include those submitted to or under the occupation of the Empire in Central Asia (coming from Tang or Qing dynasties). However, the mediators' list does not end here: in the last three centuries, Russia (just as its forerunners, the Mongols, and using the same route[3]) link the East to the West. Moreover, during the last years of the Qing dynasty, new and modern ideas enter China also with the help of the post-Meiji Japan (starting in 868).

First of all, we have to say that the commercial relationships, be they direct or indirect, have governed the entire history of the meetings between the West and the Far East, from the very Roman Empire.

Later on, the Muslim conquest (starting with the 7th century) in the Eastern Mediterranean Area (including the Holy Land, namely Jerusalem), North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula represented a first profound contact between Asia and the Western World. In connection with the above mentioned, between the 11th and the 13th centuries, the eight classical crusades took place, during which the Western World, at its turn, led by religious, military or economical reasons, took the lead. In fact, this was 'preparing the ground' for a soon to come tendency of the West to explore and expand towards the East. Nevertheless, there were still belonged, like a red thread, to the Muslims, similar to others on Europe (the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula, the Ottoman Turks, Mongols or Tartars, as they were often called).

The political and diplomatic relations had a notable start mainly during the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), when, on the one hand

[2] Uhlig, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[3] We believe that the Mongols' contribution to strengthening of the relations between Europe and Asia, not only during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) but before that as well, should not be underestimated.Please see Uhlig, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

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there were the Mongols controlling or even ruling over territories near the Black Sea down to the Pacific Ocean, and on the other hand, there were the Western Christian powers that perceived these Mongols (belonging to the Lamaist Buddhism) as potential allies against Muslims that were threatening to enter Europe.

The cultural relations, an exchange of technical and scientific ideas were possible with the help of the same Mongols[4]. As a relevant fact, we are mentioning the gunpowder, which was brought to Europe by the Mongols, after being invented by the Chinese (first reference was made in 1044). The first time the use of guns in Europe (by the Mongols in Hungary, in Sajo) is mentioned was in 1241.

The Mongols can be considered conquerors both of the East, and the West, at least as long as they put through fire and sword territories within Central Europe.

From the beginning of the 13th century, these semi-nomadic, horseback riding, steppe populations proved to be militarily very efficient, widespread all over the Eurasian area. Despite their mobility and force, they represented only a small minority among the large and diverse peoples they had subjugated, and they did not own a system to administer the enormous subordinated territories. That is why they used the services of the elite groups and, occasionally, those of the conquered peoples' troops. Over time, they did manage, following foreign examples (exemplary followed: 'you can conquer the world on horseback, but you cannot govern it from there'[5]), to organise and exploit the conquered territories.

The Mongols start conquering the Chinese territories towards North: in 1215 Beijing falls, the whole North is being conquered by 1234, and in 1279 they finish off conquering the South. The capital is moved from Karakorum to Hanbalîk (Beijing), and from 1271 onwards, the Mongols will adopt the dynastic name of Yuan, of Chinese origin, of course for legitimating purposes.

[4] A classification of the Mongols, based on where they used to settle, but mainly based on their confession, shows us three distinct branches: Christians, based in the Russian steppe tenures, Buddhists based in what we call today the Mongolian Lands (Inner Mongolia-within China, and Outer Mongolia – independent, the Russian territories in the Far East), and Muslims, based in Central Asia.

[5] Jacques Gernet, *Lumea chineză* (*The Chinese World*), Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1985, vol. II, p. 26.

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The Mongolian occupation has the merit of re-evaluating, intensifying and invigorating the links between different regions of Beijing and those under the Mongolian occupation, towards North, with Russia, Iran and the Mediterranean area.

It was the Mongols who started the commercial relations between the Far East and the Italian merchants (mainly Genoese and Venetians), and further on, steadily, with their help, they started off relations with other Europeans too. One of the most famous Italians that travelled to China during the Yuan dynasty was Marco Polo.

European kings and popes from the epoch of the last crusades (first half of the 13th century) and from the period shortly after, send Franciscans over to Karakorum and Beijing, with diplomatic intentions (the formation of alliances between the West and the Mongols, alliances against the Muslims, after the Christians' failures during the crusades) and with religious intents as well (the desire to convert the Mongols to Catholicism).

The existence of Christians in China will be closely related to missionary activity. Signs of China meeting up with Christianity are relatively old: the Chang'an Nestorian-Christian Stele (781 AD); Nestorianism was some sort of Christianity with Persian influence. This religion, during the given era, could not withstand the Buddhist fierce competition, which was so fashionable during the Tang dynasty (618-907) or the Islamic offensive, which was clashing with the Chinese one in Central Asia. The Mongol Yuan dynasty (in 1271, when they took over China) proved to be tolerant with the merchants and with the Christian clergymen, who had been sent over as diplomats by the European states and slightly to a lesser extent during this stage, as missionaries into Beijing capital, between 1245-1342. They belonged to the catholic Franciscan and Dominican orders. This was also the background for Marco Polo's long and lasting trip.

The set-up of the Company of Jesus, in 1534[6], had as main purpose 'converting the pagans'. As a matter of fact, beside poverty, chastity and obedience, the fourth Jesuit vote is significant for the missionary activity: 'to travel to the Holy Land, if not, to make themselves available for the Pope to send them as ministers to pagans and barbarians[7] anywhere in the world". As one can note, the successful Jesuit experiment of missionary

[6] Herve Yannou, *Iezuiţii şi Compania* (*The Jesuits and Company)*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, p. 27.
[7] *Ibidem*.

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action came after the previous ones - Nestorian, Franciscan and Dominican -, which had failed[8].

The event coincides with the beginning of Western World's economical and commercial expansion on sea, with the progress of sciences and with the inventions related with navigation science and technique. The Jesuits reached the Far East (China and Japan), through South, starting from the second half of the 16th century. We can correctly consider the Jesuits a 'geopolitical' order[9], whilst we can call China 'the symbol of the Jesuit adventure'[10]. Among the Jesuit missionaries, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) [11]is the most notable figure. After several years, he settles in Beijing (1598). Further on, under the Manchurian Qing dynasty, the Jesuit missionary movement keeps on implanting itself, despite Vatican's official intransigence towards 'Chinese superstitions' (via a Papal Order in 1705; in 1707, anathema is laid on these 'superstitious practices'). The Jesuits, as a characteristic of the order itself, are scholars and polyglots, experts in sciences, thus being sought after and respected by some of the local aristocrats and by the Court. As a matter of fact, the pioneers of the Western sinology will be recruited from among the Jesuits.

The exchanges of technical, scientific and artistic ideas between the two parties are mutually beneficial. At the same time, they will lead to vast letter exchange between some of the Jesuits and certain European scientists and philosophers of the time. We are mentioning here the case of Leibnitz (1646- 1716), who became - following the information received from the missionary Verjus - a Sinophile and a great admirer of Chinese writing, which he considered to be 'a logical and mathematical language'.

In 1773, the Company of Jesus is dissolved, following a Papal Order (apparently it had to do with the missionary movement in Far East or, to be

[8]*Ibidem*, p. 224.
[9]*Ibidem*, p. 207.
[10]*Ibidem*, p. 224.
[11]*Ibidem*, p. 228. Matteo Ricci succeeded, probably unlike other Christian missionary before or after him, in speaking very good Chinese, being accepted at the Chinese Imperial Palace and remaining for a long time in China (1583-1610). The converting method he used needs to be mentioned, that is the "accommodation method", based on compatibility between Christianity and Confucianism, but also based on the adaptation of the Evangelistic approaches to the "target culture". Also see August Franzen, 2009, *Mică istorie a Bisericii* (*Short History of the Catholic Church*), Bucharest: Galaxia Gutemberg Publishing House, p. 386.

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more exact, due to the alleged failure of this missionary movement; it will be set up again 41 years later, i. e. in 1814).

From the beginning of the 19th century, the missionaries will accompany the conquerors, almost invariably, and they will contribute to the latter's colonization work.

While the European missionary of the 16th to 18th centuries was a cultivated tolerant person, open to dialogues with the intellectual and political Chinese elites, the ones in the 19th century up to the beginning of the 20th century show little interest for a civilization that is flagrantly in contradiction with the information they possess about the world[12]. The new missionaries did not have the patience, or the tolerance or the culture their forerunners had. The object of their converting actions and contact is a population situated in the suburbs of the society (with its misery, even with its flaws, and with some sort of decay); without being in itself a worthy or founded reason, this will arouse their contempt and make them preach in a climate of mutual misunderstanding and mistrust.

Humanism and the Renaissance ideas, generous and generating great open-mindedness in every field of activity, will transform the Western person into a daring, enterprising and inventive one. One should mention that "the road to the Indies" (to be fair, this is a general denomination for the fabulous and wonderful East) had been searched for both on land and sea, within the campaigns called "The Great Geographic Discoveries".

The Europeans' urge to be open to new worlds, to travelling, to knowledge was present since ancient times. Especially coming from ancient Greece, as abstract scientific sources. We are talking here about two theories thatwere going to contribute to the desire and materialization of travelling around the world: the theory of a round earth (which was born and developed for the first time in Graecia Magna, in South Italy, with followers of Pythagoras'), and the one about a unique global ocean (most clearly postulated by Aristotle[13]). Calculations were made for this purpose, some of them really clever, most of them based on logic, part of them based on real facts, such as Eratosthenes's (approximately 40. 000 km). Yet, what was surprising and encouraging the trips around the world were not the correct

[12] Yannou, *op.cit.*, p. 238.

[13] S. Goldberg and S. Belu, 1971, *Epoca Marilor Descoperiri Geografice* (*The Age of the Great Geographical Discoveries*), Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică (Scientific Publishing House), p. 21.

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calculations, but a certain incorrect one, belonging to Ptolemy: he considered that the circumference of the earth was only 33, 000 km long, therefore a route that seemed definitely shorter and subsequently much easier to cover[14]. We should mention here, together with the trips and the discovery made by the Spanish and the Portuguese in the 15th century, the competition between them, which was translated into the Tordesillas Treaty (1494): having been barred from travelling towards the East (only the Portuguese were allowed to do this), the Spanish find themselves "forced" to discover new lands by travelling towards the opposite direction, that is towards the Atlantic. However, at the same time, other ways to explore were still open for the other European nations, that did not acknowledge the Treaty[15].

Along with these "scientific incentives", no matter how subjective they were, there came practical achievements related to the navigation technique (between the 11th and 13th century): the Europeans either took over and developed other peoples' inventions (mainly Chinese) [16], or they invented new elements of a vessel and new elements of the navigation principles: the helm, the compass, the anchors, the standing rigging, the winch, the keel boat, the meteorological and geographical calculations (useful to find out latitude, longitude, the astrolabe, the marine charts) [17].

One can say that the 19th century is exceptionally the century of European colonization of Asia (Africa as well, but the latter has less relevance for our topic here). If right after the Great Geographical Discoveries, the Spanish and Portuguese fleets were expanding their sea routes (in the 15th and 16th century), the Dutch were catching up, outnumbering or replacing them, in the 17th century, then later on the English and French, starting in the 17th century. Russia will become a great power starting in the second half of the 17th century, and started conquering on land, eventually reaching the Pacific. During the 19th century, England, France and Russia continued their colonialist and expanding politics. Germany and Italy, once their states had been unified, following the same politics, joined them. Of course, it had to do with the establishing of European political and territorial order, it had to do with "the balance of the

[14]*Ibidem*, p. 22.
[15]*Ibidem*, p. 218.
[16]Anna Eva Budura, 2008, *Diplomaţia chineză. Premise istorice şi spirituale* (*Chinese Diplomacy. Historical and Spiritual Assumptions*), Bucharest: Top Form Publishing House, p. 71.
[17] Goldberg and Belu, *op.cit.*, pp. 24, 25, 31, 35, 37.

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forces" stipulated by the Congress in Vienna (in 1815, following the Napoleonic Wars in Europe), on new grounds and new terms, which meant that the European powers could express their expansion out of the Old World. By the end of the century, the interests and actions in the Far East and China complicated: there came two new expansion-oriented countries, non-European, but essentially holding the same political and military profile: namely the U. S. A. (a few years after the Civil War, 1861-1865) and Japan (after the Meiji Era took over, in 1868).

The 19th century (and the first half of the following century as well) represents an extremely unfavourable period for China. The country had to withstand – with little success - the Western military attacks and economical and political pressure. Since it usually came out defeated from the military conflicts with the Western World, China found itself with no choice but to conclude what the history will define as "unequal treaties"[18]. These treaties contain disadvantageous provisions for China: disproportionate compensation to foreign powers, the obligation to open up new harbours for them, "renting out" sea zones (which meant in fact the occupation of those territories situated on the Eastern, South-Eastern or Southern Coast), awarding them the right to extraterritoriality. England, France, Russia, Germany and Japan at the beginning, and later on, to a lesser extent the Austrians, Belgians and Italians will enclose or lease territories from China, mainly those situated on the North-East, East or South-East Coasts.

2. The Romanian society: embracing the modernity, evolution of receptivity

Given the fact that the period we are referring to here is approximately the one between 1840-1940, which was a time of profound changes within the Chinese society, but specifically within the Romanian one, we acknowledge "the Romanian society" as the recipient of this depiction. It is the time when the Romanians are fighting for national emancipation and for setting up the national state; it was only after obtaining the independence of their country that the Romanians were able to read "Romania" on international formal papers. As for the term "modern" (which we are trying to highlight in the present study, as in tradition-modern dialectical approach), it has multiple meanings: a dynamic way of perceiving external

[18] Budura, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

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data, the increasing connection of the Romanian society to the "heartbeat" of the Western populations, Romanians' expressing themselves in front of the outer world (opening up), the interaction of a society stepping further into modernity (we have mentioned here the Romanian one) with a different society, which also was trying to adjust to the new current; both of them making a progress, based on their specificity, faster in some areas or slower (or no progress at all) in others.

However, modernism means better communication and better and faster transport, which allows spaces and cultures, even at great distance, to relate with each other to a greater extent. We are talking about a period, when only over a few decades, the new technical inventions struck, sometimes aggressively, the communities, even in their most discreet aspects.

And this is because, for example, the Romanian and Chinese spaces were in no physical proximity with each other; up to the middle of the past century, they had not been in any proximity with each other from a cultural point of view either.

3. The beginning of the information flow. News on events in China during the first half of the 19th century.

As far as we know, there is no news on China in the first half of the 19th century that reached us by means of official, diplomatic channels. This sort of news would only appear in the Romanian press of that time.

The timeline of The First Opium War (1839-1842) represents the milestone, or somehow a starting point in the information flow from the Far East and China into our space. It is the type of event, the first one to have such a role, to show us the Far-Eastern areas through the eyes of the major European powers, mainly the Great Britain, who had colonial interests.

"Albina Românească" (*The Romanian Bee*) in Iaşi, "Curier Românesc. Gazeta politică şi comercială" (*Romanian Courier. Commercial and Political Gazette*) in Bucharest, "Gazeta de Transilvania" (*The Gazette of Transylvania*) in Braşov and "Organul Luminării" (*Paper of Enlightening*) in Blaj offer us more frequently and in more detailed news. We will try to grasp the style in presenting, rendering, interpreting this sort of news, no matter how scattered the information is. Most of it was adapted mainly after the English periodicals and, to a lesser extent, after the Russian, Prussian and French ones. Consequently, the news bears the style and the propagandistic load of the external politics belonging to the respective

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power. We will, at the same time, note "the propagandistic duel" of the two parties, having different discursive registers, the Chinese one – faithful to the lasting, glorious tradition related to its magnificence (which had become more part of the past rather than present reality), being more successful in keeping up appearances, ratherthan succeeding on political, military or commercial levels.

In terms of time, the news started to arrive shortly before the First Opium War (1839-1842), proportionate to the amplitude given to the events in China by the Western European press and mainly by the British one gave to the events in China.

4. Levels and dynamics of the Romanian perception

The quantity and the quality of the information a specific society reflects, depend both on its configurations or actions, and on the extent to which the receiving society perceives it.

After reviewing the communication factors between the two spaces (Romanian and Sinic), we will note several things worth considering during our historical imagology process. We need to clearly set the following parameters:

a). The direction of the information flow;

b). The transmitter and the receiver, as communication parts;

c). The dynamism of the information flow (stages, speed, quantitative landmarks);

d). Types of communication (if we succeed in firmly pointing out that we are talking about real communication process);

e). The channels of the flow, ways and means in which the information travels from the transmitting society to the receiving one;

a). The direction of the information flow

The direction of the information flow is *from* China *towards* the Romanian society.

During the years we are referring to (approx. 1840-1920), practically this flow of information is exclusively unidirectional. We can state there is no data exchange, not even an unbalanced one (e. g. "exports" outrunning "imports" or the other way round), not to mention a symmetrical or mutual one. This becomes even more evident when we see a global image of China, reflected in the Romanian publications, especially at the beginning of the

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time referred to in the study[19]. This information sounds more like coming from the imaginary, as we can understand from the following significant passage:

"We do not know of the existence of any other state on the face of the earth to be the subject of so many fables and short stories as China is. China is a mysterious empire, every little thing inside it is extraordinary, every little thing is old and nothing is new. Long time ago, it was believed that the Chinese Emperor had a silver palace, that their libraries were the most precious, because they stored the oldest writings, and that gold and gems were all over the place there – just the way we have sand all over our place [...]

No one was able to travel to their country for a certain period of time, and this is why so many fables about them came to spread so much"[20] .

b). The transmitter and the receiver, as communication parts

The transmitter and the receiver in this communication are China and the Romanian society. There is no much deliberate and direct communication between them, and this happens – as we will see, towards the second half of the period. The roles do not change too much during the analyzed time. China is the transmitter, while the Romanian society is the receiver, and this remains so without exception (until we reach the time of the exchange of messages between the two states, on the occasion of our country's independence[21]).

Additional subjective grounds would be the way Chinese Empire related to other countries (and generally with every country it has relations with), bearing an intense sense of its own status and importance, that of a great and ancient culture and civilization. This aspect was noticed by our

[19] We will see how this vision adjusts as we proceed, relatively quickly (shortly enough, if comparedto the long lasting "silence" that had been present up to that given moment, the beginning of the 19th century), and yet with no significant inertia. As an example, see *Conductu solemnu în China (High Level Celebration in China)*, in Familia (The Family) 1870, no. 156, Pesta, p. 156.

[20] *Ibidem.*

[21] Ion Buzatu, [no year recorded], *Istoria relaţiilor României cu China din cele mai vechi timpuri până în zilele noastre The History of the Relations between Romania and China from Ancient Times toPresent*), Bucharest: Meteor Press Publishing House, p. 182-183. Also see Relaţiile româno-chineze (The Romanian-Chinese Relations) 1880-1974. Documents, 2008, Bucharest: Foreign Affairs Ministry and The National Archives, coordinated by Romulus Ioan Budura. The team that created the documents edition: Romulus Ioan Budura, Iolanda Ţighiliu, C. Moraru, Constantin Moraru, C. Ionescu, p. 153-154.

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society (and we cannot ignore some similarities to the ancient Greek), as the following excerpt from Gazeta Transilvaniei shows:

"Yet [...] as for those parts [...] of Asia, that we call *barbaric* [...] it is curious that most of the countries from the East, that we over here like to call *barbaric*, they themselves honour us with the same nice epithet of "barbaric"[22].

We cannot help noting that what was actually missing for a whilefrom the „ammunition" of our perception of China, was not the sharpness in understanding „the Other", but the technical means, the physical and cultural proximity, political or economical interests.

c). *The dynamism of the information flow (stages, speed, quantitative landmarks)*

We can state, somehow subjectively and without losing sight of the Romanian society receptivity and changes, that there are several stages from the point of view of the information flow dynamism.

These stages could be as follows:

- up to 1847/1848 (landmark for the Romanian culture and history);

-1848-1879: the latter date refers to the beginning of a new era after obtaining the national independence;

- 1880-1911; the latter date is a landmark in Chinese history (the abolition of the Qing dynasty);

- after 1912: Republican China.

We need to mention here the fact that the image, as a whole and on different levels and fields, is dynamic and not static.

One can notice at least seven stages in the Romanians' approach to China (we will include here, but without insisting on them, the one preceding the dawn of the 19th century, as well as those between 1949-1989, 1989-present) "the disruption" caused by The First Opium War (1839-1842), which correlates both with Great Britain's involvement in that conflict[23] and with the increasing visibility of the same great power in our press and society; here is an eloquent excerpt:

"In the end, the English broke down the Mandarin walls, and their lives, unknown until then, became known in more details. The walls of the Imperial Palace were no longer silver, but of porcelain; the abundant gold

[22] In: Gazeta Transilvaniei, 14th April 1864, pr./ May, 2nd, no. 35, Braşov, p. 139.
[23] *Conductu solemnu In China (High Level Celebration in China), loc. cit.*, p. 156.

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and gems disappeared, while the precious writings became less illustrative; but the inhabitants, up to present, have remained the same as before".

"Phase shifts" should also be mentioned here, inevitable for the two peoples, histories and societies, being understandable for either of these cultures, since they had their own pace, therefore their own different stages of progress.

d). Types of communication (if we succeed in firmly establishing it is real communication we are talking about); it is necessary to keep in mind the spatial, political, economical and cultural distances (prominently distinct) that separate the two cultures and societies.

Talking strictly about space, the distance between the two geographical areas is huge.

From a cultural point of view, we could also say that the distance is big, but on different coordinates. We have never been in close proximity; we have never had any cultural exchanges throughout the relatively lengthy history.

As far as politics, diplomacy and/or military fields are concerned, China and the Romanians/ Romania, were never involved together in the same context (not until 1941, when Romania associates with the Nanjing government and with the one in North-East China (Manchuria), and when our country joins China's adversaries in the war[24]). We did not have any alliances or political relations, or diplomatic relations (or consular relations) [25]; neither did we have any military ones (either conflicts or military alliances).

Great ancient and medieval empires did create superficial connections, and were not directly related to the Romanians: the Roman or the Byzantine Empires, or the Mongolian one, or the Ottomans. We could note that during the Yuan dynasty (Mongolian) in China (1271-1368) the Mongols did travel to Europe, up to Hungary and Austria (see the ones that took place in the middle of the 13th, especially in 1241). However, the very fact that the Mongols reached this area (with devastating effects on the European

[24] Gheorghe Bâgulescu is appointed Romanian minister in Japan (May, 6th, 1939) and at the same time, attached to the pro-Japonese regime in Manchuria; Romania also recognizes the government in Nanjing (July, 1st, 1939). These steps will lead to the declaration of interrupting the diplomatic relations between China and Romania (July, 21st, 1939).

[25] It was only on the 26th of May 1939 that we can say the foundations of diplomatic relations between China and Romania were laid, when Lone Liang, China's minister in Prague, will be also appointed as a Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Ambassador to King Carol II. Please also see *Relaţiile româno-chineze* (The Romanian-Chinese Relations), p. 51.

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inhabitants of the time, including the Carpathian-Danube area), did not mean that there was a direct contact between China and the Romanian space and society: the Yuan Chinese dynasty did have political and military Mongolian elites.

e). The channels of the communication flow

It is important to mention that during the time we are referring to (approx. 1840-1920) the communication is not direct, but *mediated* (there is one exception though, which we have already mentioned, an attempt to establish diplomatic relations, but it was only a project and it remained so - 1880-1881).

The communication was done in writing, through the press that belonged to certain powers, influential powers, who had military, political and economical interests in the area (England, France, Russia, Germany, Japan, etc). Similarly, these influential powers were at the same time great cultures, that had a long journalistic tradition. These are the information sources of the Romanian press in the 19th century (but especially during the second half) and during the first two decades of the following century.

We should also consider that during this period (or most of it), communication was possible on land or on sea; there were no planes, telephones or radio connections, and this was also the case in the Romanian area.

But we should ask ourselves: was there any *communication*?

The answer may be affirmative and negative at the same time.

If we consider that the cultural and civilisation events and actions convey to other areas and cultures information about a certain people (namely, the collective "ego" of a particular society), then the answer is affirmative. It is important to understand that a certain culture and civilization, that has a long history, and that we do not hesitate to label as being major in world's history, does deliberately choose to stand out as landmark and beacon of its own culture for other spaces (situated in proximity or not) that it wishes to influence or is already influencing. China is a culture overwhelmed by itself, by the age and the magnificence of its culture, civilization and history. We could even say that it almost feels it compulsory to stand out as a cultural and civilization leader for other peoples (just the way the Romans or the British did only by following their own path), which had already happened, especially for other countries in the area.

From a different perspective, as long as there is no specific target (a space, a culture), deliberately and consciously chosen, we cannot talk about

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communication in the way the classical scientific theories define it. During the time we are referring to (approx. 1840- 1920) China did not want to specifically let the Romanians know what it was, what it had or what it was doing. Maybe it did not want to transmit anything in particular to the expansionist, big powers either (to the European ones, plus Japan and the United States of America).

We would rather say that it was self-sufficient, it shut everybody out, it wanted to preserve this *status quo* and it was forced to react, more or less efficiently, to the various repeated invasions (be they political, economical, religious missionary or ideological) that were coming from the invading powers we mentioned. It has always passed on the message of a "country that was in the centre" (*zhongguo*), just the way it has its own cosmological elements, a centre *the others* need to relate to, and not the other way round[26].

5. Image indicators and sub-indicators[27]

Maybe such a study might escape at least in part the tyranny of the events and of some imponderable elements, if all these events and data could be integrated into and become the subject of an analysis frame, in terms of a potential historical imagology.

Based on the information received from primary sources (Romanian publications starting from 1840 to the interwar period, that appeared in all historical regions, and from all relevant backgrounds), to each topic (related to the most important aspects in life and society) we allocated one set of image indicators and sub-indicators.

We define the *image indicator* as the element belonging to the structure of the image, which defines it, makes it particular and allows it to be investigated. There were some criteria we used in order to establish the indicators and the sub-indicators.

In the case of the indicators: the relevance for the analysed image (that of China), the relevance for the reference environment (the Romanian

[26] In that sense, the following are suggestive: "[...] but they stay away from the Europeans' culture; nevertheless, they believe they are the most cultivated in the world, they boast about their culture, history and origins". In: *Conductu solemnu in China (High Level Celebration in China), loc. cit.*, p. 156.

[27] Ion Chiciudean and Bogdan Alexandru Halic, 2003, *Imagologie. Imagologie istorică* (*Imagology. Historical Imagology*), Bucharest: Comunicare.ro Publishing House, p. 126-127.

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society), the likelihood of being measured in positive/negative terms and finally the clear wording for that indicator, so that it is suggestive.

In the case of the sub-indicators, on top of the criteria specific to the indicators (which apply to the sub-indicators as well), we also picked up the feature according to which each of these, individually, indicate one single dimension.

The stages of an image profile-based project should be the following:

- assessing the sources;
- establishing the indicators and sub-indicators system;
- making up the index list, this is recording the number of references for each indicator or sub-indicator.

Based on the above mentioned, once the sources are assessed, a list of indicators can be made, that will correspond to just as many *reference fields* (important issues in life and society).

In order to define the total number of references corresponding to a specific indicator, we used the term *reference system.*

If we are to go on with the research, the calculations and interpretations that might follow are based, on one hand, on the matrix representation, under the form of tables, and on the other hand, on the creation of image profiles. *The image profiles* have been created by associating certain indicators (with the corresponding sub-indicators) or, sometimes, by associating sub-indicators that belonged to different indicators.

The following profiles may be used:

a. The level of interest of the modern Romanian society in China, for each specific field

b. The level of relevance of the sub-indicators references, within each indicator (field). A ranking scale for the indicators (reference fields) included in the references register for the level of relevance.

c. The image type, for each specific field

d. The global image type

e. Levels of perception and understanding of data on China

Immediate level of perception and understanding

Intermediate level of perception and understanding

Profound level of perception and understanding

f. The degrees of interest on each level

g. The image dynamics, as a whole, during the studied period

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Under *Levels of perception and understanding* of data on China we believed it was necessary to distribute the fields based on how abstract the Romanian society finds each field in particular.

The conclusion is dedicated to some findings (and maybe to some regrets related to it): imagological analysis is a laborious task, which takes years, with incomplete, inconsistent and vague tools, where one can never say they actually have enough quantitative and qualitative data. The spectre of overlapping "filters" or overlapping subjectivities, which are partially foreseen but impossible to control, is continuously stalking. Besides, there is the difficulty in adapting two or more methods, if this is the correct thing to do.

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