

DISCIPLINARY CHALLENGES IN FOLKLORE STUDIES IN ROMANIA AFTER 1945. TWO CASE STUDIES FROM THE CLUJ FOLKLORE ARCHIVE (ARHIVA DE FOLCLOR DIN CLUJ)

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this paper is to adequately understand the shifts produced after 1945 in Folklore Studies (Ethnology) in terms of research topics, methodologies, approaches, and scientific policies, in connection with the new political and ideological context. In particular it aims at discussing how, why and to what extent the Cluj Folklore Archive could be defined as a cultural institution playing an important role at the regional level whilst contributing to a correct socio-cultural understanding of Transylvania in relation to the other Romanian provinces. Content analysis will be the main methodology used, whereas the intricate connections and relationships among archives, memory, and territorial and cultural identities shown in the sources will support the process of understanding, deepening, and widening the researched topic.

Keywords: totalitarian regime, research policies, regional cultural identity, political control, ideology

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGICAL CLARIFICATIONS

On Cluj (Romania) Folklore Archive in turbulent times

Most of the already published studies on Folklore Archives in Romania, and broader in Eastern Europe, are approaching the role and contributions of traditional culture in the processes of national identity construction, definition, and representation (Mishkova, 2009; Baycroft & Hopkin, 2012; Bula & Lime, 2017). They explore mainly how and why folklore studies – through their representatives – were substantially engaged in crystallising the national ideologies, especially in the late 19th-early 20th century contexts, when attempts to document rural immaterial and material cultural facts started to manifest (Grosu, 2017). Promoting a diachronic perspective, the studies analyse the role of Folklore Archives in depositing the national cultural memory (Nora & Kritzman, 1996; Szabo, 2018), starting from the premise that this is to be found in rural areas (Assmann & Short, 2011).

The necessity to institutionalise Folklore Studies, as well as to create Folklore Archives, is also addressed in the studies relating to the interwar period context in Romania (and other East European countries), underlining the role of the discipline in the process of consolidating the

national ideology and its significance for the newly born Romanian state (Muşlea, 2005). However, the Folklore Archives existence, functional mechanisms, the researchers' methods, and paths to survive in times of ideological pressures and extreme control under a totalitarian regime have been less discussed – at least in the Romanian academic milieu – leaving space for further analysis. In fact, in the framework of post-totalitarian studies, specific/national case studies should be urgently investigated, also in a comparative frame, making the topic more understandable within the larger picture of the discipline situation in the ex-Soviet Block.

In particular, the role of the regional Folklore Archives created in the interwar period in Romania (especially in the regions that became part of the newly born Romanian state after the First World War, such as Transylvania) and their specific functions, meanings, and dynamics in the national-state context are understudied research issues. Then, the main goal of this paper is to understand adequately the shifts produced after 1945 in Folklore Study (Ethnology) in terms of research topics, methodologies, approaches, and scientific policies and to place these attempts in the new political and ideological contexts. Meanwhile, this text aims to discuss how, why and in which limitations the Cluj Folklore Archive could be defined as a cultural institution, playing an important role at a regional level, and contributing through its research staff to an adequate socio-cultural understanding of Transylvania also in relation to other Romanian provinces.

Using various articles, studies, and institutional reports, I will first attempt to reconstruct the history of the Archive, and then illustrate its activities between 1968 and 1973. At this level, the reports of the researchers' team meetings of the Archive and the Yearbooks published during the period will be of help, offering details about fieldwork campaigns and other types of socio-cultural documentation on rural sites. Content analysis will be the main methodology used, whereas the intricate connections and relationships among archives, memory, and territorial and cultural identities shown in the sources will support the process of understanding, deepening, and widening the researched topic (Radstone, 2000; Kumar, 2011).

In a text published in 1981, entitled *50 Years of the (Cluj) Archive Existence* (Romanian Academy, 1981), Ion Taloş (Romanian ethnologist, leading at that time the research "colectiv" (team) working at the Archive, then emigrated in Germany in 1985) presents an overview of the history and activities conducted around the Institution, underlining its role in the Romanian folklore research. Being published in 1981, during years of strict ideological control, political pressure and vigilant censorship, the text could not be an in-depth analysis of the roles and goals of the Archive, of its specific place in cultural/ethnic identity representations, and of how and why its continuities and discontinuities have been triggered and aggregated under Ceauşescu's regime. Even if the author's analytical capacities are obvious, the text was just a presentation of the history of the Archive and its main achievements in the previous 50 years (1930-1981). However, from a historiographical point of view, it offers a good occasion to briefly present the Institution I am writing about, reconstructing the time, space, and goals of its foundation in 1930, and the ways in which it has developed.

In the interwar period, the Cluj Folklore Archive, founded with the support of Sextil Puşcariu (the first Rector of Cluj University, member of the Romanian Academy, manager of the Museum of the Romanian Language, involved in politics in interwar Romania), and under the wise guide of the leading Romanian folklorist Ion Muşlea, was conducting folklore research on the basis of 14 questionnaires meant to document various aspects of the traditional family customs of the rural calendar, as well as of five "circulare"/ "circulars" regarding *Mioriţa*, the famous Romanian ballad to be analysed in its variants and interpretations. These questionnaires, together with the research on *binding the vineyards* done in several rural areas, constituted the core of the Archive researchers' and their collaborators' enthusiastic effort between 1930 and 1945. As results, 520

answers from Transylvania, 407 from Moldavia, 234 from Wallachia and Oltenia Provinces of the Romanian State (all in all 65,000 folkloric documents) were collected and classified in the Archive, organised in such ways to be used both by native and foreign researchers. In this courageous, general documentation process, targeting various places and corners of the Romanian newly born state, were involved 159 primary school teachers, 122 pupils from pedagogical high schools, 43 high school pupils, 38 university students, 18 professors, 11 priests, and 4 agriculturists, who were encouraged, after short term trainings, to apply the questionnaires and to send their answers to the Archive.

Meanwhile, the institution organised several fieldwork campaigns to be conducted by highly qualified specialists. In the same overview, Taloş (1981) mentions the outputs of these research covering the following areas (mostly from regions incorporated in the new Romanian national state such as Transylvania, Banat, and Bukovina): Oaş Ethnographic Area, Gurghiu Valley (I. Muşlea), Apuseni Mountains (E. Petrovici and R. Todoran), the Southern part of Bihor County (Gh. Pavelescu), Tîrnava Mică, Jiu Valley (V.I. Oprea), Sebeş Valley, Bergheiu Valley (I. Pătruţ), and Arad vineyards, Botoşani, Dorohoi (T. Găluşcă). All research results were published between 1932 and 1945 in seven volumes of the *Yearbook of the Folklore Archive* – considered by I. Bianu “a model of folklore publication”, or a collection of “relevant works” by H.H. Stahl, while M. Eliade stated that “the yearbook replaced dilettantism” (Taloş, 1981, p. 291). Both research and publications were financially supported and promoted by the Romanian state, making clear the relation between national ideology and folklore studies.

With the system and institutional changes produced after 1945, the Archive was incorporated in the Literary History and Folklore Subsidiary of the Cluj Institute of Linguistics and Literary History and Muşlea lost his leading role. Folklore documentation through indirect questionnaires was replaced when his efforts were directed to the structuring of the bibliography of Romanian folklore, and the increasing of Archive materials through copying the responses to Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu’s questionnaires (Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu – Romanian scholar, philologist and folklorist, encyclopaedic spirit, introducing and promoting questionnaires as an indirect research method in studying various aspects of rural life).

Already installed in 1948, the communist regime in Romania intervened through specific educational and cultural institutions, through specific agents, and using specific methods in the life of the Cluj Archive, as well as in these or other prestigious institutions created in the interwar period, generating fear and anxieties among the researchers, destabilising them, and causing ruptures and discontinuities in their work, as well as in the team research projects. For instance, in 1950, a new Institute of Folklore was founded in Bucharest, the one in Cluj becoming its subsidiary, the “collective” of folklore art becoming part of the Art History Subsidiary. Then, in 1964, these three small institutions were unified, constituting the Ethnography and Folklore Subsidiary of the Romanian Academy. The leadership of the new subsidiary was assigned to Muşlea – showing that in 1964/1965 started the rehabilitation processes of those intellectuals who had been either marginalised, excluded or sent to totalitarian prisons (*to die*).

By 1981, as mentioned by Taloş:

“The Ethnology and Sociology Centre for Social Sciences of the Babeş- Bolyai University ‘collective’ (Team) is constituted by 20 folklorists (literary and folklore music specialists), choreologists, of Romanian, Hungarian and German (Saxon) origins and 15 ethnographers of Cluj-Napoca, Baia-Mare and Oradea. Most of them are active in the framework of the Ethnology and Anthropology Subsidiary of the Socialist Republic of Romania Academy” (Taloş, 1981, p. 293).

The research and publications made at the time privileged certain areas – Gurghiu Valley, Jiu Valley, Bîrsa Ethnographic Area, Meseş-Plopiş, Apuseni Mountains, Bistriţa (Saxon folk music) (all placed in Transylvania) –, as well as the work on typologies (mainly of Romanian and Hungarian Ballads, secular carols, Hungarian fairy tales) and the creation of *A Corpus of the Romanian Folklore riddles*. The specialised Archive gathered 500,000 folkloric and ethnographic documents (manuscripts, phonograph cylinders, photographs, and cinema films-cylinders).

This is the Archive image as presented in this retrospective approach of the 1981, which supports us, in its disruptions and discontinuities, to further explore some episodes of the tumultuous history of this institution and of *Folklore Studies in Romania*. The two case studies I propose are illustrative in this respect.

CASE STUDIES AND DISCUSSIONS

On archive founding fathers, disruptions, and the totalitarian regime in Romania. A few considerations

The first case study focuses on the Cluj Archive situation in the period 1948-1953 (i.e., when the new regime was installed, and the Stalinist control imposed various institutional changes and budget constraints). All Romanian institutions – including the cultural ones – were much affected and often the new forms of centralisation destabilised the pre-existing institutional logics and the dynamics between local, regional, and central hubs. Under these new circumstances, many cultural institutions (with their documentary/scientific funds) were literally transferred to or put under the control of the Bucharest (capital, central) ones. In the Cluj Archive, several conflicts (politically and ideologically imposed and instrumentalised) raised between the representatives of the Folklore Studies domain from Bucharest and Cluj.

In the following part, in particular, I will analyse Muşlea's huge efforts to maintain the regional and individual profiles of the Cluj Folklore Archive, despite Bucharest pressures, showing how and why the professional vanities and polemics were entertained and clearly controlled, also having damaging follow-ups and disruptions in Folklore Studies.

The scientific and intellectual legacy of the most prominent representative of Ethnology Studies in Cluj – Ion Muşlea (1899-1966) – illustrates, in many respects, the very evolution of socio-humanistic research during the interwar period and the first years of communism in Romania. In fact, a retrospective look at the destiny of this eminent Romanian ethnologist retains, just like an extremely sensitive historical seismograph, all the important events of the evolution of the traditional Folklorist research. Muşlea's character shows, in plain sight, both the richness of aspirations and scientific achievements of the first seventeen years at the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy in Cluj, as well as the survival attempts during the terrible years of the 1945 new regime establishment, resulting in political purges, the abusive removal from scientific circles or the marginalisation of tens and hundreds of intellectuals, the abolition of the Romanian Academy's autonomy and the partial severance of direct research at the Folklore Archive, transforming it into an instrument for the assertion of the new Soviet-inspired ideology, eventually hosted by the Institute of Linguistics in Cluj, led by Emil Petrovici.

Between 1948 and 1953, upon Stalin's death, Muşlea, former director of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy and of the Central Library of the King Ferdinand I University, lived under the permanent threat of a possible political arrest and imprisonment, like many other professors

in Cluj. He had not been involved in politics between the two wars, he founded a research institute focused on the values of traditional culture, published a recognised scientific bulletin – *The Yearbook of the Folklore Archive* –, and was appointed, in 1947, corresponding member of the Romanian Academy. He was going to collaborate with the most important ethnological syntheses of this scientific forum: *The Corpus of Romanian Ballads and The General Bibliography of Romanian Ethnography and Folklore*, while continuing the editing work of the *Yearbook of the Folklore Archive*, together with other great scholars such as Dumitru Caracostea, Theodor Capidan, Constantin Brăiloiu, Petru Caraman, Alexandru Rosetti, and Ion Diaconu (among others).

From such a height, the legitimate successes and aspirations collapsed suddenly with the advent of the Communist Regime, bringing the institutional and personal projects down with them. The fears and anxieties of the former Archive and University Library director and the natural concern for his own destiny and that of his family were not as big as those related to the uncertain fate of his most important institutional and scientific achievements: The Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy, his own research projects (area-focused ethnographic monographs based on fieldwork, comparative studies on various European folklore themes, and a history of Romanian ethnological research in Transylvania), and, in particular, the *General Bibliography of Romanian Ethnography and Folklore*, of which he was the coordinator from its beginning (1932) until the completion of the first volume. His memorial study retains the tragic nature of the situation, at times bordering the absurd, in which the liberal-minded intellectual Muşlea found himself during those difficult years.

In the autumn of 1948, when “the reorganisation of the [Romanian] Academy and its transformation into a state institution” took place, after Caracostea was no longer a member of the new Academy and I myself was no longer a corresponding member (Muşlea, 2003, p. 183), his first concern was the institutional setup of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy, which he had worked on for nearly two decades. Before anything else, he wanted to protect it from communist destruction: “What would happen to the Folklore Archive?” This was the question he asked Petrovici, the new academician in charge with organising the Cluj branch of the Romanian People’s Republic Academy. Fortunately, they were in good terms:

“Almost a university colleague, research fellow during my investigation in Oaş Country [ethnographic region in Northern Romania], a collaborator for two of the *[Folklore] Archive Yearbooks*, he used to consult me when editing the *Dialectic Texts* (that comprised much folklore). He told me to wait until the Cluj branch of the Academy was going to be organised, and I convinced him – without much difficulty – that the Archive must remain in Cluj. And so it happened. I was appointed ‘scientific collaborator’ at the Association of Literary History and Folklore in Cluj, working alone for two years and later with other colleagues (for literary history). I was assigned to work at the Faculty of Letters of the ‘Victor Babeş’ University, within the Department of Modern Romanian Literature History, where I also transported the cabinets with the manuscripts and books of the Archive (in 1951 they went to the Library of the Academy branch, so back to the Cluj University Library building)” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 183).

In 1945 started a period of almost two years of direct confrontations with the management of the Literary Section of the Romanian Academy, whose president was Professor Dumitru Caracostea. He wanted to transfer the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy to Bucharest and, urged by some of his disciples, had set up a real “campaign” against the one who, in 1930, founded and developed one of the research institutes that helped include the values of Romanian traditional spirituality in the wider cultural heritage of the country. The denigrating campaign, initiated by Gheorghe Vrabie, was aimed at attracting Caracostea, the most influential member of the Romanian Academy, on the side of the Bucharest group of young ethnologists

and folklorists who constituted a Circle of Folkloric Studies around an ephemeral publication – *Folklore Research* – whose only issue was published in 1947 (the workshop on Folklore Studies had been active between 1945 and 1947, led by a committee of specialists such as Geoge Georgescu Breazu, Olga Greceanu, Ovidiu Papadima, Gheorghe Vrabie and Romulus Vulcănescu, but also Alexandru Bistrițeanu, I. C. Chițimia, Apostol Culea and Mircea Tomescu).

Caracostea was easily manipulated by the researchers of Bucharest and drawn into a treacherous and immoral action against the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy hence demanding, on 15 May 1946, the transfer of the Folklore Archive in Bucharest. Under hidden scientific pretexts, namely claiming that the seven volumes of the institutional publication of Cluj had not been published “under the direct supervision of the Academy”, that “today’s times require modern working tools and new methods” (Mușlea, 2003, p. 117), the official publication of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy, under the management of Mușlea, came to an end. Since 1932, when the first tome appeared, until 1945, Mușlea, as Archive manager and editor of its newsletter, managed to publish seven volumes accounting for a total of 1,830 pages: I (1932), 254 pp.; II (1933), 250 pp.; III (1935), 280 pp. IV (1937), 268 pp.; V (1939), 216 pp.; VI (1942), 426 pp.; VII (1945), 200 pp. Volume VIII was announced but never published.

In the 90-year history of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy in Cluj, 1946 was the first year of trials and tribulations. Thus, less than a year after his return from the Sibiu refuge (1940-1945), Mușlea was desperately seeking financial support for the resumption of those research projects that had suffered during the war and the 4-year absence from Cluj: the continuation of direct and indirect field investigations, the recovery of networks that brought scholars together, the elaboration of the current bibliography on Folklore and the preparation of the general, retrospective one, the inclusion of new generations of correspondents among the normalists (pedagogical high schools pupils), the systematisation of his manuscript materials into thematic-typological and geographical sections.

On 4 May 1946, Mușlea addressed a memorandum to the National Council for Scientific Research, chaired by Dimitrie Gusti, requesting the necessary funds for the publication of the 8th volume of *The Folklore Archive Yearbook*, grants of one million lei for three new field investigations, and four million lei for the monthly fees of the director and secretary of the Archive (Mușlea, 2003, pp. 136-138). Mușlea underlined the that the manuscripts drafts contained 1,140 inventoried answers from:

“the 19 questionnaires and circulars sent to correspondents, [...] gathering also the manuscripts with the profile of a miscellaneous; from the direct inquiry conducted, 28 area monographs resulted; out of them 11 had been published, the entire documentary heritage being classified/organised and offered to researchers. Native specialists, as well as those from abroad (Baltic Countries, England, Yugoslavia, Germany, Italy, etc.) asked for information and material. We could be at the foreign specialists’ disposal as, from the very beginning, since 1930, the first year of the Archive existence, we organised the publication of a systematically structured bibliography of Romanian folklore” (Mușlea, 2003, p. 136).

The very existence in Cluj of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy was threatened when, at the end of February 1946, Secretary General Alexandru Lapedatu communicated the following to Mușlea:

“Considering the suggestion of D. Caracostea, the Academy decided to conduct a field investigation and check the study of Mrs. Tatiana Gălușcă entitled ‘Mocanii - a dramatic folk dance of Romanians from Dobruja’, published in 1945 in the 7th volume of *The Yearbook of the Folklore Archive*. The investigation was carried out by Mr. Gh. Vrabie, whose report on the findings we have enclosed here, in the original. We are, at the same time, sending you the letter from the teacher in Bașpunar,

kindly asking you to return these documents to the Academy once examined. Secretary General (ss) A. Lapedatu” (Muşlea, 2003, pp. 174-175).

In a period of increased ideological-political instability (1945-1946), but especially after the establishment of the Petru Groza Government, on 6 March 1945, Muşlea could not expect a privileged treatment despite all his scientific merits and the recognition of his contribution to the institutionalisation of ethnological and folklore research. After the conflict caused by the intrigues of Gheorghe Vrăbîe, the founder of the Cluj Archive felt that his prestige was deeply affected:

“by this ‘literary affair’, which is still so far from the great scientific fraud applied by Verkovitch to the Bulgarian folklore – for instance –, although I acted in complete good faith, I was left with the impression that my authority as the official folklorist of the Academy has been shaken to some extent” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 176).

The withdrawal of Puşcariu, the generous protector of the Cluj Institute, as director of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Berlin in 1944, followed by his later illness and death in Bran, did not foretell anything good. The threat posed by Caracostea’s intention to move the Cluj Archives to Bucharest and to take over both the management and the coordination of the *Yearbook* prefigured completely different relations, not at all amiable between the centre and the province, between the tutelary forum and the Cluj institute for the study of ethnography and folklore – although the latest had become well-known across the country and abroad, unanimously considered the most important contributor to the professionalisation of the field and the modern promotion of ethnological and folklore studies at the Romanian Academy.

When in a meeting that took place on 15 May 1946, as anticipated, Caracostea imperatively asked the Literary Section of the Romanian Academy “to bring the Folklore Archive to the capital of the country, as requested by the foreign congresses of folklore such as the one in Lund” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 177), everything seemed to have reached a final conclusion, even if the well-known scientist considered, concisely, that a section of the academic Archive could continue to be active in Cluj, in order to carry out field research [in Transylvania] and to continue the annual bibliography of folklore. The Cluj “Section” was to be joined by two others, in Iaşi and Focşani. Totally lacking transparency and any ethical justification – “Many things I knew absolutely nothing about” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 177) – the decision to “relocate” the Archive was an abuse. More than this, a Statute was drafted for the ghostly *Literary Folklore Archive* in Bucharest, which stipulated that:

it “has its headquarters in Bucharest, at the Romanian Academy, which will set up a special section dedicated to folklore within the manuscript storage space [of the Romanian Academy Library], comprising all the collected material, up to the date of the present Statute of the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 177).

Stunned by these “measures” and “restructuring”, Muşlea stated briefly:

“It seems there were two folklore archives of the Romanian Academy at some point in time since, in the meeting of 8 June 1946, it could be seen that an amount of 10,000,000 [ten million] lei was voted in the budget of the National Council of Scientific Research for the Folklore Archive [Literary, in Bucharest] [...] which had to be passed on to the National Council of Scientific Research, which financed all research projects” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 177).

It was then that Muşlea was forced to transfer the original copies of the first 100 manuscripts of the 1,000 plus that were inventoried to the Romanian Academy Library, preserving some hastily typed copies in Cluj. An academic institution of folklore research, which hosted the materials resulting from the indirect investigation coordinated for a decade and a half, and which

comprised eleven published area monographs, the first scientific bibliography of this domain of research, was to be practically closed down, since the dowry of new materials, of tens of thousands of documents for which Muşlea had elaborated a system of classification and thematic-typological indexing, had to be “submitted” to the Romanian Academy Library “in original”, to be made “available to researchers, first of all to draw up a Corpus of Romanian Folk Poetry”, as it was stipulated in the Statute of the Literary Folklore Archive in Bucharest (Muşlea, 2003, p. 179).

Giving in to official pressures, Muşlea agreed to send the first 100 manuscripts of the Cluj Archive, but not before he had completed the typing of their transcription. Later, he wrote:

“It is true that in March 1947, I had to hand over to the Manuscripts Section of the Academy Library 100 manuscripts of the Archive. It wasn’t easy for me, but I did not have any alternative. I knew they needed to be copied, in such a way that the absence of the original pieces was not to be perceived as a loss. Then, I felt that they are not lost for Cluj, and indeed, in 1952, I could bring them back” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 179).

Around mid-June 1947, in an environment defined by an outstanding common sense, Caracostea and Muşlea directly confronted each other regarding this ruthless “proposal” that abusively annihilated an institution built with so much effort and sacrifice in Cluj. Here is how the latter described the great “battle” in his well-known memoir:

“[Caracostea] welcomed me in the impressive library with great courtesy. He told me some of the things we had talked about earlier, showing me how much he appreciated my work and expressing his wish to have a close collaboration with me, while at the same time stating that the Archive should be brought to Bucharest. I replied that I would be very pleased if this collaboration meant doing a service to Romania’s folklore” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 179).

“However, when it came to transferring the Archive to Bucharest, I was totally against it: it was a creation of Cluj, it mainly contained Transylvanian material and it had to remain where it already was” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 179).

Finally, confronted with Muşlea’s strong arguments, Caracostea realised he could neither hit the research institute in Cluj so hard, nor the one who had built it with numerous sacrifices: “My decision impressed him. I had won a battle in favour of the Cluj folklore research” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 179). In exchange, Muşlea committed himself to copy from the Cluj manuscripts the versified folklore material “necessary to compile the *Corpus of Romanian Folk Poetry*, and send it to Bucharest” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 179), part of which was to be sent by November 1, 1946.

Eventually, instead of suffering reprisals for his fierce attitude, in the autumn of the same year, Muşlea was co-opted by Caracostea to be a member of the Folklore Commission of the Romanian Academy. Knowing Muşlea’s experience as a bibliographer, Caracostea asked him to assume the identification and extraction of the Transylvanian versions of the Romanian ballads from the periodical publications of this historical province, and through this collaboration, which was more and more profound, the Bucharest professor could discover the cultured Transylvanian scholar with whom he could debate, in the most serious way, the “composition, contents and other details” of the next great work, to which Muşlea devoted himself entirely, helped by the Secretary of the Archive, Ion Mărcuş:

“On 30 June 1947, he wrote to me about ‘the speciality that brought me closer to your soul ... You are one of those people who loves his profession to a degree that, one day, should bring you recognition’. A month earlier he had asked for a detailed list of titles and papers. I sent it to him without being able to suspect what he needed it for” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 180).

In fact, on 23 May 1947, upon the proposal of the same academic representative, the founder of the Cluj Archive was appointed corresponding member of the Romanian Academy. In the Report in which he nominated and supported Muşlea for inclusion in the Romanian Academy, Caracostea acknowledged that the folklorist from Cluj was the creator of an important research institute:

“The Romanian Academy established, in 1930, a significant body: the Folklore Archive, entrusted to Ion Muşlea [...] Since 1930, his main activity has been dedicated to the Archive [...] where he gradually built a centre for folklore studies and information, not only for the country but also for abroad” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 181).

Moreover, he added that the Literary Section needed, without a doubt, his work and competence in order to carry out the two projects: *The Typology of Romanian Ballads* and *The General Bibliography of Romanian Ethnography and Folklore*. From this warm recommendation, there are a few lines to note:

“In the May 1946 session, I nominated Constantin Brăiloiu as the most important representative of our music folklore. In the May 1947 session, I presented – and the Literary Section unanimously elected – Ion Muşlea as representative of the literary folklore. A significant call awaited him here especially for that *Corpus Carminum Romaniae*, which our distinguished forerunners had dreamed of, and we are now striving to accomplish, knowing too well that not us but the younger ones will get to see this promised land. For his proven successes and with a view to this major work, the Literary Section unanimously nominates Ion Muşlea corresponding member of the Romanian Academy” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 184).

After a bit more than a year later, however, everything felt apart because, as Muşlea wrote toward the end of his life:

“In the autumn of 1948 came the reorganisation of the Academy and its transformation into a state institution. Professor Caracostea was no longer a member of the new Academy. And I wasn’t a corresponding member either [...] I didn’t see him for five years, during which time he was a political prisoner in Sighet. After 1955, I looked for him again. Although past the age of 75, he had started work on a study about the origins of the *doina*. The cataract surgery, which he underwent in 1960, did not allow him to finish this interesting work. I would like to add that, in 1961, he confessed to me [...] that he deeply regretted the fact that, in 1946, he had wronged me due to some biased information” (Muşlea, 2003, p. 185).

Only after 1964, two years before his premature end, the full “rehabilitation” of Muşlea began, starting from his appointment as Head of the Ethnography and Folklore Department of the Cluj branch of the Romanian People’s Republic Academy, but without the acknowledgment of the scientific title he was granted in 1947.

1968-1973 and the Cluj Folklore Archive. A case study

The meetings’ reports I analyse in this second part of the paper are a window on the institutional life, problems, threats, and opportunities the research of the Folklore Archive had to face in the 1968-1973 period, including the ways in which the researchers were obliged to conduct research and to restrain to specific research topics. While reporting on the everyday life of the “collective” of scholars, I will show the ways in which ideology, politics, and totalitarianism had been present, impacted and controlled the academic environment developed around the Institute. In particular, I will focus on how the researchers of the Folklore Archive reacted to them, what specific responses had been given in the context, what coping and rejecting strategies they had

developed and why, and to which extent they had been functional. The power relations created and promoted in a regime officially based on equalitarian principles, and the resulting tensions will be examined as well as the language used in the reports (the so called “wooden language”: its specificities and “flavour”, its nuances, the ways in which it is created, and how and why it has its role in producing, reproducing, and representing power relations in the Cluj Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy).

The 1968-1973 period is, at the macro-level, one of an illusionary opening of the communist block: in the speech on the 21st of August 1968 (Palace Square, Bucharest), Nicolae Ceaușescu, at that time General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and President of the State Council of Romania, condemned the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, accusing the Soviet Union of the invasion of Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany and Poland and symbolically supporting Alexander Dubcek’s reformist ideology. The statement was received by intellectuals and Romanian educated public in a positive way, making them more willing to collaborate with the Communist regime. The Western Block particularly appreciated these symbolical gestures of dissidence from Moscow (and more generally, the Eastern Block), soon valued and described in positive terms by Western media and political discourses (Betea, 2009).

However the so called “July Theses” presented in brief in a public speech given on the 6th of July 1971, before the Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (“Proposed measures for the improvement of political-ideological activity of the Marxist-Leninist education of Party Members, of all working people”) marked a mini-cultural revolution of Maoist inspiration, severely limiting the cultural autonomy of Romanian institutions, promoting socialist realism, ideological control and conformity in all humanities and social sciences, in order to marginalise or exclude those intellectuals not willing to obey the system rules and ideology. Culture, in all its layers and understanding became just a tool for political propaganda. Many vocational, highly skilled intellectuals started to be seen with suspicion, often being replaced in several institutions by pro regime agitators (Macrea-Toma, 2009).

These general tendencies (of opening and closures) can be followed in the micro context of several Romanian cultural institutions. My intention here is to analyse, at least partially, how the macro, political, social/cultural context affected the “micro” research activities conducted around the Cluj Folklore Archive and the researchers’ collective and individual works and lives. The investigation will also show how the identity of the discipline has been maintained alive in difficult times, through a subtle and continuous effort to combine “compromise” and “resistance” strategies. In order to protect the identities of the people involved, I will only address them using the initials of their names or surnames, as I strongly believe this is the correct deontological approach in dealing with such sensitive topics. A chronological perspective has been chosen to restructure and identify the turns and shifts produced by research policies and power relations on the institutional environment, as well as to identify the “approved” and “encouraged” research issues.

The meeting’s report of 23.01.1969 focus on the analysis of the research plan of the Cluj Archive of Folklore/Romanian Academy in the year 1968 and the launch of the 1969 one (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 23.01.1969). The report starts with an almost “ritualistic” way of communicating who are the “official” persons present and leading the meeting: Comrades R.R., the president of the Cluj Academy Subsidiary (Branch), P., corresponding member of the Romanian Academy, and M.T., in his quality of Secretary of the Party committee. The meeting questions are all addressed by Comrade R., with the main purpose to check if the research plan had been accomplished, and to identify the vulnerabilities in the research “collective”/team. The answers are given by the collective’s/team members

following a specific protocol: the first one answering is the “responsible” (“head of the subsidiary” in the language admitted and promoted in the period/team manager), whilst the other researchers intervene afterwards. The places, goals, and research plans of 1968, as well as the difficulties the researchers faced when conducting fieldwork are made explicit:

“The last year plan focused on Bîrsa area (South-East Transylvania). It is to be mentioned that instead of folk/traditional costume, due to objective reasons (such as the extra-plan contributions to Buciumi-Sălaj monograph) and to the lack of graphic material, the plan was changed” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 23.01.1969, p. 2).

Further on, it states:

“It is also to be mentioned the fact that it has been impossible to elaborate Cașva’s monograph. Instead, other works have been prepared and elaborated: for instance, a study which is going to be published in *Ethnographia* (Ethnographia), the Budapest scientific bulletin, and papers which have been published in the written press and presented over radio” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 23.01, 1969, p. 2).

Quite often, this strategy was adopted by the researchers to elude the research topics imposed top-down, either through one year or five years plans, and to deepen and widen research themes of real interest to them, or considered of relevance for folklore in those years. On the other hand, in many circumstances, the Archive scholars were more willing to continue investigation lines launched in the interwar period.

Then, “Comrade President” urges the necessity to declare “the changes of the plan to the superior forum in order to be approved” and that “if the plan was approved, it has the power of the law” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 23.01.1969, p. 4). This excerpt is relevant in what concerns the ways in which hierarchies have been constituted, how and why institutional power relations have been structured as such, following certain, but little clear rules. In particular, it is interesting to see how the mentioned “Comrade President”, empowered to decide on the functions, goals, opportunities and threats of the “approved research plans”, was trained in a domain very different from the one she was called to monitor. It is also relevant because it shows the hypocrisy and duplicity of a regime promoting only at the surface level equalitarian principles (Kligman, 1998). Moreover, how and why the “approved research plan” has “the power of law”, as stated, is not made specific in the discourse, suggesting that the only role of the sentence was to intimidate and threaten the researchers.

Among other topics tackled in the meeting, reference is made to a researcher of Saxon origin (belonging to the Transylvanian German speaking community), and more precisely to her way of conducting her “research plan”, and, eventually, succeed. Her research focused on the storytelling for Saxon children around Reghin. Direct questions are addressed to her by “Comrade President”, and she justify herself stating that she has accomplished her task but that the materials have not been handed over to the Archive yet. From these targeted questions and from others, addressed in the same manner to other researchers belonging to “minority” ethnic groups of Transylvania, one can notice the “special” interest the regime agents had in these investigations, as well as in the ways in which researchers belonging to ethnic groups managed to accomplish their work. Clearly, the regime agents’ intention was to discourage the researchers’ attempts to focus on topics related to their own ethnicity/ culture and to take control over their entire activity. It is well known and already analysed how and why the totalitarian regime in Romania was systematically developing nationalist perspectives and homogenisation policies, including the research ones (cf. Brubacker et al., 2006).

Besides the obsession of accomplishing or not the tasks of the research plan, to which every single researcher is asked to respond, the other issues covered in the meeting concern the power relations among colleagues, that reproduced at the micro scale the macro level dynamics. For instance, S. complains about the ways in which another colleague has given instructions to her, with a deep, authoritarian attitude. I., an external collaborator, being directly asked how he perceives the whole internal environment declares that “the researchers are only connected by the common research theme and plan”, stressing on the fact that young researchers are not enough involved in the work of the “collective” and being convinced that “it would be wise and of great help for everyone to value their work” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 23.01.1969, p. 5). In particular, I. admits and underlines how much frustrated he is regarding his exclusion from the final research stages, the articles’ elaboration and writing process. Being challenged and personally touched, Comrade N. (directly in charge with this part of the work) replies:

“Each external collaborator has a chapter in this final work, although the researchers are too young and do not have experience in the final writing and editing processes’, continuing to underline that he has asked Comrade I. a text regarding the working-class house interiors” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 23.01.1969, p. 5).

The tensions between different colleagues are quite obvious in the reports, apparently triggered by researchers who played the roles of agitators, either being infiltrated in the “collective” by surveillance/monitoring institutions (the so called “informants” in the language of the period) or being close to people inside them. For example, although at the time it was impossible to prove his association with the Securitate, V.’s entire behaviour, his daily routines and attitudes pointed at showing that his main task was to destabilise the work of the research “collective”. Because of such tensions resulting into an environment full of conflicts, the research activity could be controlled quite easily, and discontinuities and disruption in the research work were obvious. Being more absorbed in conflicts, and then less interested in research processes and conducting fieldwork, the researchers’ trajectories could be easily controlled, and the surveillance mechanisms and ideology of the regime could be easily implemented.

For instance, several reports from meetings which took place in 1968, and also on the 1st of February 1969 (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 1.02.1969), clearly demonstrate that the main problem of the whole research collective became V.’s presence and behaviour, so much so that the Romanian, Hungarian and Saxon researchers were all convinced that he was an intruder:

“irascible, suspicious, fiery, considering all opinions different from his own as proofs of personal hatred, unable to accept neither critical views regarding his scientific work, nor the one in the organisation, Comrade V. replied impolitely to his colleagues and transferred scientific disputes to the political and ideological spheres in order to intimidate his opponents” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 1.02.1969, p. 1).

Moreover “he used a folklore material recorded and prepared by another colleague from the ethnomusicology team (E.). He published the folklore recordings in a book edited by himself, and he was also remunerated for it” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 1.02.1969, p. 1).

Especially in the reports of the 1968-1969 meetings (in the period when the Communist Party and its leadership was more positively perceived by Romanian intellectuals), the researchers have substantially changed their “language”, when trying to find arguments to demonstrate V.’s unhealthy institutional behaviour:

“He committed errors, ignoring the statutory principles of the party, as well as the institutional principles, disinforming the superior decision forums (including the municipal Committee of the Romanian Communist Party) in what concerns certain aspects of the Party duties and life, and in several problems of professional life as well” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 1.02.1969, p. 2).

Then, referring to V. and his ally N., they stressed on the fact that:

“they presented in a false way the situation of the Section to the Commandment of the Subsidiary and also to the Party organs, they instigated arguments and scandals in the collective, they tried to make alliances with the newcomers of the section, pretending that only themselves follow the Party rules” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 1.02.1969, p. 3).

The main accusation was that:

“in the period when party commandment had been entrusted to V., together with N. they tried to undermine the authority of the Archive founder, when he was still alive” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 1.02.1969, p. 4).

As mentioned above, especially in the report of the 20.01.1968 (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 20.01.1968) it is demonstrated the researchers’ willingness to expose an infiltrated agent of the surveillance institution, sent to the Archive to destabilise the whole atmosphere, to break the internal, embedded rules and scientific deontology. For sure, these openly presented attitudes and perspectives could have been possible only in a broader and apparently more open political and ideological context (1968). I reproduce below some excerpts of this report, without making specific comments:

“Although he has been working in the field for 7 years, he has not published anything, he gave no contributions to scientific bulletins. The only paper that could be mentioned in this respect is the *Songs of New Life Style*: specifically he published 40 songs, although most of them cannot be labelled as folklore. He has also presented a few papers at different conferences but only one of these could be published. He was involved in the political field, as organiser of the party group. He made abuse of his political quality. Any complaints regarding his uncovered work duties had been interpreted as objections to his quality of the party organiser. He irritated all his collaborators, seeing them all as enemies. He always aspired to a special regime, to protect himself from work requirements. He was never on the side of colleagues in the collective he works in” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 20.01.1968, p. 1).

“If comrade V. does not have perspectives to become a good scientific researcher, he could be a good fieldworker, could transcribe and organise the scientific material, therefore being useful to the domain to a certain extent. For this, passion, hardworking and perseverance are needed, as well as good intention and discipline. He is required to demonstrate modesty and polite behaviour with his colleagues” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 20.01.1968, p. 1).

Besides all this, the meetings’ reports are precious to show the “wooden language” used in the period, imposed as a norm, and adopted as a commandment by everyone in the public sphere, as well as, at a deeper level, the pressure of Communist ideology on all levels and layers of the system and the subsequent social duplicity. Under the accusation of having supported – to a certain extent - the “turbulent” researcher before 1968:

“Comrade President of the Cluj Section of the Romanian Academy R. mentions the fact that his attitudes are to be judged and convicted. Meanwhile, Comrade President insists on the fact that the work should be seriously and correctly planned. She underlines she has not been the one supporting and recommending V. for this position but, on one hand, there are internal organisations of research; in general, a principal researcher must coordinate the activity of other researchers. If comrade V. has been unable to lead until now, this means we must see what it is going to be in the future. In three months’ time, we’ll organise another analysis meeting, and have

the chance to ascertain the qualities and deficiencies in this situation” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 20.01.1968, p. 2).

On the other hand:

“she announces that the new building of the Section of the Romanian Academy is going to be inaugurated officially when celebrating twenty years since its founding. Comrade President mentions we need discipline in our work and the leaders’ examples are decisive. We need to be patient with those making mistakes, giving them time to improve their behaviour” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 20.01.1968, p. 2).

The last meeting report on the same topic I attempt to tackle is the one dated 22.02.1973 (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 22.02.1973). A commission gathering three researchers (A., L., and V.) has been asked to clarify the situation of the texts borrowed from the Archive by the same V., principal researcher. It is mentioned that:

“he has borrowed, under signature, 67 texts; although asked to return them, and warned a few times, he has returned 57 only. The remaining 10 texts have not been given back, Comrade V. pretending that he does not know anything about them” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 22.02.1973, p. 1).

On the other hand, the same report mentions and warns that 820 texts from the Archive are missing, and they all have been collected by Comrade V., either individually or in collaboration:

“Initially, he has declared that they are not in his possession. Finally, under pressure, he has given back a number of 503 texts while there are no clues about the others, and in any circumstances, he declares he is the one who is going to build on them first. Finally, he promises to return the texts until January 31st, 1973, meanwhile accusing the Subsidiary leadership of trying to disunite the ethno-musicology collective and to forbid his collaboration with other members of the collective, which are groundless accusations” (Romanian Academy, Cluj Folklore Archive - meeting report, 22.02.1973, p. 1).

These are just few examples of the difficulties, challenges, and threats that the researchers of the Cluj Folklore Archive had to face during totalitarian times, as well as the how and why they have developed simultaneously coping and rejecting strategies, when facing ideological pressures and constraints.

CONCLUSIONS

The broader issue of intellectuals, of cultural elites, coping or completely rejecting the ideological pressure of totalitarian regimes was analysed on multiple occasions, in the literature on post-socialism, both by “internal” and “external” specialists from various fields, through various lenses: historians, political studies specialists, cultural/social anthropologists, literary studies specialists, through quantitative and qualitative methods. They tackled these topics, either within the frames and borders of their domains, or attempting to promote interdisciplinary research (Macrea-Toma, 2009).

The aim of this article, as mentioned from the very beginning, was to explore the ways in which specific institutions and entities of the Romanian totalitarian state developed strategies to control the intellectuals’ work through different mechanisms, actions, and using specific methods and tools. It is obvious that, when facing these challenges, both recurrent and “irregular” responses had been given, as well as levels of “compromise” and “resistance” appeared (Verdery, 1994), which specifically developed in different decades of the 1948/1950-

1989 period. These mechanisms and the derived strategies are to be studied in relation with the peculiarities of the Romanian totalitarian apparatus, with its internal developments, being generated in and by specific historical, political, socio-cultural contexts and international pressures, and in the dynamics of the Cold War (Larres & Lane, 2001; Harbut, 2002). It is indeed necessary to analyse these topics in an applied way, considering the peculiarities of each decade, or even following the one-five years cultural/institutional plans proposed by the Regime (corresponding to different cases in terms of research topics, methodologies, regional/national relations and team-work atmosphere): in this way, one will avoid generalisation and foster an adequate reconstruction, giving space to a clearer picture of what was going on in each specific institutions through time.

The aim of this article was to see how, under ideological pressures, surveillance mechanisms, financial constraints, the Cluj Folklore Archive functioned; how in such circumstances was its independent existence possible, how the dynamics between centre and periphery worked. On the side, more information emerged regarding the research themes/plans and methodology used, and how they were perceived by folklorists under the Regime. The same continuity of the Cluj Folklore Archive, mostly as an independent institution, proves that, despite centralisation attempts, infiltration of Security agents, and several regime agents' attempts to destabilise the research environment – the Folklore studies contributors/representatives were able to find and develop specific resistance mechanisms. But more needs to be done and explored, as the materials and the sources analysed so far cover only a small part of the long, contrasted and mostly ignored relations between Folklore and the Communist Totalitarian Regime.

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