

THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL BYZANTIUM  
AND THE RECEPTION OF BYZANTINE TRADITION IN THE ROMANIAN CULTURE

*Abstract*

Since 2008, after the defence of my Ph.D. thesis at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, I have worked on six major interconnected topics: religious and social history of medieval Byzantium; Byzantine dream-books; Byzantine tradition in Venetian culture: political pseudo-prophecies (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries); reception of Byzantine tradition in Romanian culture; universal history and historical geography in 18<sup>th</sup> century Romanian culture; the Romanian heritage abroad.

After 2008 I developed a research project on the religious dimension of regional identities in the Byzantine Empire between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, materialized in a series of articles and a synthesis work.

I was also deeply interested in the Byzantine dream-books, a popular genre of divination, which enjoyed wide dissemination in Byzantium. Between 2008 and 2010, I completed, in the Institute of South-East European Studies, a still unpublished work consisting of the annotated translation of three Byzantine dream-books. This work has been the basis of several articles. The annotated translation will be published in the years to come.

In the last decade, my research also dealt with the reception of the Byzantine tradition of political prophecies in Venetian culture during the Renaissance and early modern times. These researches were carried out in two individual projects at the Institute of South-East European Studies, between 2011 and 2017. They have partially been published in five articles, mainly in *Revue des études sud-est européennes*. The publication of this work as a book is part of my objectives in the near future.

A permanent field of my research is the reception of Byzantine tradition in Romanian culture, which I explored especially through apocalyptic literature. Other topics of this field to which I have recently devoted some of my research work are the ceremonial literature and the transformation of some Byzantine religious texts in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian manuscript sermons.

My research on the Romanian apocalyptic literature dates back to the end of the 90's, when I discovered in the Library of the Romanian Academy several manuscripts containing unpublished and largely unknown texts, such as the *Vision of Sophiani* and the *Vision of kyr*

*Daniel*, texts written in Greek in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and soon after translated into Romanian. I returned to the topic after the completion of my Ph.D., and I published a monograph, *Profeții bizantine și postbizantine în țările române (secolele al XVII-lea – al XIX-lea)* (Bucharest 2015), comprising the edition and study of several less known writings with apocalyptic content, which have circulated in Wallachia and Moldavia since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They have been translated, copied, sometimes printed, read and interpreted, thus forming an important part of the history of the religious and political ideas at the beginning of the Romanian modernity.

Another aspect related to the reception of Byzantine tradition in the Romanian culture that I have dealt with is the ceremonial literature, within a research project to which I took part between 2015 and 2017. Within this project, I published several articles on Gheorgachi's *Book of ceremonies*, on some texts regarding court ceremonies in a manuscript from the Library of the Romanian Academy, and on a text about the coronation ceremony of the Holy Roman Emperor.

My interest in universal history and historical geography in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian culture is illustrated by several articles, and is related to the edition of the *Universal History* (1763) translated from German by Vlad Boțulescu of Mălăiești, a first volume of which appeared in 2013 (in collaboration with E. Timotin). The edition will be continued in the following years.

Finally, my concern about indexing the Romanian heritage abroad is illustrated by the collaboration at the edition of the new series of *Mărturii românești peste hotare* (Romanian traces abroad), a work initiated by Virgil Cândea and continued since 2007 at the Institute of South-East European Studies under the direction of Dr Ioana Feodorov. The edition of the new series was practically completed with the appearance of the seventh volume (VI/2) in 2018, including the Romanian traces in Hungary. An index of the entire work will appear in 2020. This project will be continued as a permanent program at the Institute of South-East European Studies, aiming to identify and study the Romanian heritage abroad (documents, manuscripts, old books, art objects, etc.).