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Bucura Dumbravă’s historical novels. Two cases of cultural retro-translations

Abstract: The sophisticated Fanny Szekulicz (1868 – 1926), better known by her pen name Bucura Dumbravă, was a complex and atypical figure of the Romanian literature and society at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Born in Bratislava, her mother tongue was German when she became a lady in waiting for the Queen Elisabeth of Romania, an established writer herself, known by her pen name Carmen Sylva. A great, pioneering mountaineer within a rather conservative and gender-limited milieu, Bucura Dumbravă embedded herself into the deep layers of the Romanian mythology, folklore and history and laid the foundations of the local chapter of the Theosophical Society.

My paper intends to analyze two related cases of complex, cross-cultural retro-translations. Bucura Dumbravă’s historical novels, *Der Haiduck* (1908) and *Der Pandur* (1912) were initially published in German, outside Romania, and represented a trans-cultural challenge for the targeted, German speaking reader, because their texture and ethos were exclusively related to a historical knowledge and folklore rather unknown to the audience. Therefore, in order to ease the access to her specific Romanian message, the author was obliged to “translate” the plot of the two books into an internationally accepted, very popular literary structure, namely the Robin Hood type heroic outlaw saga.

When translated into Romanian, the two novels became instantly bestsellers and were introduced into the school curricula, as being representative for the patriotic fervor of an audience whose ideology consisted in a widely accepted cultural and literary rhetoric based

on Romantic re-writings of history. The ethnocentric match proved to be so perfect, that nobody cared about the alien origins of the author or about the fact that the two Romanian versions were actually translations. On the contrary, the author got laurels for her “genuine”, Romanian authenticity, and we mustn’t forget that this happened in a social milieu whose upper class still used French as its way of everyday communication.

Keywords: Romanian literature, historical novels, Bucura Dumbravă, Robin Hood novels, outlaws in literature, Theosophy, cultural translation

Born in nowadays Bratislava, called Pressburg at that time, on the 28th of December 1868, Ștefania Seculici (or Fanny/Stefanie Szekulicz, a.k.a Františka Jozefiny Szekuliszovej according to her birth certificate) (Marinescu, *Bucura Dumbravă Sur les routes de l’Inde* 159), Bucura Dumbravă moved to Bucharest in 1873, to join her father who was the executive of the *Dacia Română* Insurance Company and one of King Carol I’s advisors. The chance of being in the entourage of the royal family provided the newcomer a quick social prestige and a nuanced intellectual and spiritual elevation, because she became Queen Elisabeth’s lady in waiting. The queen was a writer herself, publishing under the pen name of Carmen Sylva; under her guidance Bucura Dumbravă deepened her interest in literature and in the various aspects of the Romanian folklore and spirituality, also becoming one of the first female mountaineers of the country. Her passion for high altitudes resulted in a mountaineering guidebook, *Cartea munților (The Book of the Mountains)*, published in 1920 and in the foundation of the first mountaineering society of Romania. A high lake and a peak in the Romanian Carpathians, both called *Bucura*, still celebrate her achievements.

Bucura Dumbravă was also the founder of the Romanian chapter of Helena Blavatsky’s Theosophical Society. She learned to use spiritual keys to interpret the world, wrote books and texts dedicated to the necessity of the spiritual transfiguration and translated a selection of *Jiddu* Krishnamurti’s teachings, published in 1924 under the title *La picioarele învățătorului (At the Teacher’s Feet)*. She died by an epidemic fever in January 1926 in Port Said, Egypt, while returning from a theosophical congress held in Adyar, India a month earlier.

The intellectual drive directed Bucura Dumbravă towards the spiritual aspects of the Romanian history and ethnology, and she became a member of the so-called *Chindia Society*, which reunited several ladies from Queen Elisabeth's entourage, dedicated to promoting the rural domestic folklore and the dances of the peasantry. The knowledge of folklore also helped Bucura Dumbravă to deepen her research aimed to conceive two historical novels, *Der Haiduck* (Romanian *Haiducul*; *The Hajduk*) (1908) and *Der Pandur* (Romanian *Pandurul*; *The Pandur*) (1912), which were parts of a unfinished trilogy entitled *Spărgătorii de valuri* (*The Wave Breakers*), written initially in German and then translated into Romanian by Teodor Nica and Elisa I. Brătianu, two of the author's closest friends. A few years later Bucura Dumbravă produced an improved Romanian version of *The Pandur*, while, in 1912, a second German edition of *The Hajduk* was printed with a preface signed by Carmen Sylva.

The two novels – and explicitly the *The Hajduk* – are novels with hajduks (romane haiducești in Romanian), meaning regional versions of the more general typology of the historical novel, that is the Robin Hood type novel with outlaws. In her seminal *The True Story of the Novel*, Margaret Anne Doody (295) notices that although a lot of great novels of the 19th century were historical, towards the meeting period of the two centuries one can see a degrading shift towards sensationalism, making these novels being more adventurous and boisterous than truly historical. Margaret Anne Doody also asserts that any historical novel – including those offered to the consumer culture – is in any case an interpretation of the objective historical truth, which often challenges the sacred stereotypes of the official historical discourse.

The typical protagonist of these novels is the hero-outlaw, or the so-called *noble criminal*, whom Eric J. Hobsbawm dedicated a whole book in 1969, entitled *Bandits*, preceded by *Social Bandits and Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, published by the same author in 1959. In an entry written for *The Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, Paul F. Algolillo (*Noble Criminal* 915-918) says that the imaginary prototype of these types of narratives was the Robin Hood story, also shared by the Romanian *hajduks*, who were the typical guerilla fighters of the 16th-19th centuries in the Central and South-East Europe. Especially popular in the Balkans, the *hajduks* rapidly converted into the epitomes of heroism, aggressiveness and masculinity, called by Lucien J. Frary *andrismos* (*Russia and the Making of the Modern*

Greek Identity, 1821-1844 69). The strict etymology of the word refers to the military, the Hungarian *hajdú* (pl. *hajdúk*), being the mercenary soldier. The root of the word is uncertain but it might have designated a cowboy, a man responsible to move a herd from one place to another. The Turkish word is *haïdud*, designating a mercenary of a Hungarian origin. Related terms are *gaïdúk* in Russian, *hajduk*, in Bulgarian, Polish, Serbian and Czech, or *haïdút* in Albanian.

The *hajduks* were a dear topic of the Romanian consumer culture, especially in the legends disseminated by the popular ballads. The *Hajduks* or the *Jiens* [Jieni] are the constant figures of the popular, secular theatre within the second half of the 19th century (Rece, *Istoria teatrului românesc și a artei spectacolului* 72-76). The representations encapsulated popular songs and a wide range of colorful outfits, and they were directed to the subliminal, rebellious drives of the onlookers, by providing them vivid fantasies of how to punish the bad or how to replace the overwhelmingly social injustice with a compensatory well-being.

The enthusiast popular demand generates a new literary subgenre, whose central protagonist is Iancu Jianu, captain of the thieves, presented for instance a very popular play written by Matei Millo and Ion Anestin by the mid of the 19th century. Similar to Robin Hood's (Knight, *Robin Hood. An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism* XIX), who functions as the prototype of this type of outlaw hero-bandit, the widespread popularity enjoyed by Iancu Jianu is first of all emphasized by his noble pedigree, as he was the offspring of a wealthy boyar living in Wallachia in Prince Ioan Caragea's years (1812 – 1818). Setting aside his privileges, Iancu is later converted into the defendant of the poor by a profound sense of social justice.

We cannot step further without asserting the tremendous popularity of this type of literary scenario, because no fewer than approximately eighty different hajduk novels were published in between 1855 and 2000 in Romania according to *The Chronological Dictionary of the Romanian Novel* (*Dicționarului cronologic al romanului românesc*). The time peaks were 1892-1916 and 1970-1978, both being characterized by a boost of the national patriotism and pride, since – according to Margaret Anne Dooddy again – the universal patterns of the narrative are diluted by a localizing process called «domestication» (*The True Story of the Novel* 292), which designates the replacement of the universal narratives with elements provided by the domestic, national historical pool. Let's also reflect upon the two time gaps

mentioned above: their aim is similar (increasing patriotism, national pride), but the peculiar social and historical agendas are nevertheless different, because the interval ending in 1916 targeted the pre-war ideal of the Greater Romania, while the second grow wave was a purely ideological one, triggered by the nationalist manipulations of the Communist dictatorship.

Being a precisely historical figure, who lived between 1787 and 1842, Iancu Jianu provides Bucura Dumbravă an ideal pretext to fictionalize the period of the Phanariot rulers, and to embed it into more or less utopian patriotic scenarios. There is also a subliminal spiritual program in the way the three novels were planned to belong to a progression. The title of the German version of the second novel, *Der Pandur. Geschichte des Rumänischen Volksaufstandes im Jahre 1821* (*The Pandur. History of Romanian Popular Uprising of 1821*) explicitly suggest the historical timing and evokes Tudor Vladimirescu, the military leader of the 1821 revolution, while the protagonist of the first novel, *The Hajduk*, is an outlaw, a hajduk, Iancu Jianu, that is a rebellious fighter living outside the social norm. The third, unwritten part was planned to center around Gheorghe Lazăr, a teacher responsible for founding the first Romanian schooling system in Wallachia, and so the progressive, theosophical program of the construction becomes more than obvious, the transformation of the hajduk into a commander and later into a sage being underpinned by the idea that history evolves from what is material to what is spiritual.

Therefore the protagonist of the first novel embodies the elementary force of the revolt, the second one the organized, disciplined form of it while the beacon of the whole edifice would be the spiritual metamorphosis, that is the transformation of the raw forms of rebellion into a spiritual self-fulfillment, equaled with patriotism and with the Romantic will to promote national culture as a means of collective refinement and improvement. There's no need saying that the patriotic echo of the cycle was tremendous: the Romanian version of *The Hajduk* is reprinted in ten huge popular editions in between 1908 and 1947, equaled in popularity only by the *The Pandur*. Theosophy is, of course, gradually forgotten.

The plots of the first two novels written by Bucura Dumbravă are deeply permeated by the historical research. Iancu was a young boyar from Romanați, a region of S-E Wallachia, who became one of the most feared hajduk leaders ever existed, by putting together an army of 1000-2000 rebels, which proved to be really menacing within the versatile social and political realities of the Phanariot era. Iancu turned his back to his ancestry and

became the protector of the poor, being acclaimed by legends and songs. When captured he escaped by relying to an unwritten law of those times, which said that even a thief could be redeemed by marrying a maiden who wants him. Iancu's choice was a beautiful girl, Sultana Gălășescu, who belonged to Princess Ralu Caragea's princely escort. After a short period of marital tranquility, Iancu took up his sword again in order to engage in Tudor Vladimirescu's heroic revolution (1821), was jailed and then liberated, but after Vladimirescu's defeat he retreated home again, dying of natural causes far away from the calling sirens of history. Bucura Dumbravă's *The Hajduk* depicts Jianu's deeds up to his salvation story by marrying Sultana Gălășescu, while in *The Pandur* he becomes a behind a scenes protagonist within the author's interest in presenting the revolution as the exemplary fulfillment of the national destiny.

A secondary hero of *The Hajduk*, the wise boyar Vasile Moangă provides the best psychological definition of the hajduk during his conversation with Tudor Vladimirescu: he has a deep sense of justice, is an instinctive warrior, is symbolically married to the woods and is appreciated and protected by the peasants, but the boyar also warns Vladimirescu concerning the erratic military virtues of the *hajduks*.

Boyar Moangă's canonic definition insists on the essential element of the hajduk's way of life, namely the attachment to the forest. Similar to the English model represented by the Robin Hood legends, the Romanian folklore depicts the *hajduks* as outlaws who prefer to live deep inside the forest, by building a harmonious, pure and organic group philosophy which is ostentatiously opposed to the nasty challenges of the outer worldly civilization. The life in the woods nurtures no dubious or unfair laws, but it is a world entirely governed by fraternity, friendship and mutual dedication, that is by values reserved only to those who are excluded from society.

Far from being depicted as a bloody wrongdoer, Iancu Jianu decants his essence from his certain spiritual superiority, being recognized as a *Captain*, similar to Vladimirescu, who is *The Lord*, both of them living the exemplary existence of a savior who is capable to harmonize perfectly the ups and downs of the life energy and the heroic self control mastered by a high sense of justice. Iancu Jianu internalizes the urge to combine redemption and historical necessity when listening to Friar Damaschin's stories about Horia, one of the leaders of the 1784 Transylvanian peasant uprising. Therefore, in a pure Orthodox understanding of the spiritual call,

the martyr Horia (he was publicly tortured and executed) functions as Iancu Jianu's inner *brother* or *icon*.

The divine investment has to be, obviously, a precious part of the savior. By reaching the highest level of power within his fellow warriors and the peasants – Bucura Dumbravă asserts – Iancu Jianu takes over from The Lord the privileges of the punisher and the giver, and does all these from an *avant-la-lettre* theosophical perspective, which sweeps aside the doctrine of reincarnation, but presents Jianu as the pure, uncontaminated and naïve embodiment of the social justice, who shares the belief that there cannot be an effect without a cause, cannot be punishment without guilt, nor fair deed without a subsequent reward.

Iancu Jianu's and his outlaw fellows' milieu is the unjust social and political environment governed by the Phanariot rulers. During Prince Ioan Caragea's heavy dictatorship (1812 – 1818), many Romanians managed to share the ideals of the Greek War of Independence, heralded by a secret society called Hetairia (The Society of Friends), whose historical consequences will animate the basic ideology of Bucura Dumbravă's second novel, *The Pandur*. In their European background we can find the Napoleon Bonaparte crusades and the Congress of Vienna, which puts an end not only to the Hetairia, but to any national liberation struggle in the Balkans. *The Hajduk* features a pro-Greek group of boyars, members of the Hetairia, led by boyar Samurcaș, whose idol is the famous Greek bard Rigas Feraios Velestinlis, *the founder of the Hetairia* as he is called, whose hymn – «Fili mu simpatriote, / Dulinametha, os pote, / Ton achrion Musulmanon / Tis Elados ton tyranon?» (Dumbravă, *Haiducul* 230) – is chanted by Iancu while being a prisoner in the salt mines of Telega, in order to electrify the Greek patriots who jump to liberate him. The hymn is quoted in the both language versions of the novel, but the German edition has an explanatory annotation¹ (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 228), while from the second German edition of *The Pandur* (Dumbrava, *Der Pandur* 191) the translation is omitted. Tudor Vladimirescu's alleged Hetairia membership is stipulated in *The Hajduk* and taken for granted in *The Pandur*, where the hero is executed – this is the strict historical truth – by the same secret society whose membership allegedly he shared.

1. «Geliebte Landesleute, bis wann werden wie die Sklaven der graufamen Osmanen, der Tyranen von Helas, bleiben?)/ «Beloved contrymen, until when will we remain the slaves of the cruel Ottomans, the tyrants of Helas?»

In the Romanian collective memory the Phanariots are labeled as being extremely outrageous and inhuman, the main accuses listing a large variety of political and moral indictments like generalized corruption, open robbery and fiscal obscenity. Further wrongdoings include the orientalizing mimicry of the everyday life (habits, morals, clothing or food) as well as the savage exploitation of the peasants by a bunch of alien, non-Romanian oppressors. The list ends with the terrible pest cutting hundreds of thousands of innocent lives during Prince Ioan Caragea's reign.

A structural negative mirror image provides a psychological explanation for Iancu Jianu's transformation into a *hajduk*, the hero's *dark ghost* being a Phanariot aristocrat called Pervanoglu, who is constantly presented as maleficent and grotesque during the plot of the novel. Pervanoglu abducts a young girl, Ileana Golfineanu, tries to assassinate and then captures Iancu Jianu, the long list of atrocities being sufficient to determine Iancu Jianu to abandon his class and to take over the tasks of a famous former local *hajduk* called Mereanu. But being wise and systematic, he decides to undermine the system from within, so he accepts boyar Moangă's advice to become temporarily the chief tax collector (*zapciu*) of his region, a position which allows him to get a deep insight into the hidden mechanisms of the Phanariot administrative and punitive system.

The folkloric elements are massively inserted in the text. Iancu is always accompanied by his mythical projection, as it happens in the Telega prison, where his arriving is preceded by the aura of his legendary deeds. For instance, there's a common belief that he possesses a magical herb, the so-called *grass of the beasts* (*iarba fiarelor*) which is capable to undo any lock. It is also in Telega where Iancu hears a heroic song about himself. The plot of the song is actually soteriological, speaking about someone who resurrects following a short staying among the dead.

The German edition of the book provides the translation of the song resembling Iancu Jianu to Christ, as a man who *comes back* to life from the *death* of the prison. Further spiritualistic interpretations are provided by Bucura Dumbravă's theosophical insights. Theosophy interprets enlightenment as a powerful, individualistic rise from the handcuffs of the bleak material world. In order to symbolize this, Jianu is initially presented as sharing an amorphous social mass, which he transcends because of his deep sense of responsibility and justice, which are spiritual values. Furthermore the rise is presented as shift from darkness to light, mediated by the green belt of the forest. The thesis of the intermediary belt

is emphasized by an open eulogy to the Bucegi Mountains, the abode of Bucura Dumbravă's passion for mountaineering.

The Hajduk also hides a secret autobiography code of its author. One of the most notable figures of the already mentioned Phanariot era was Princess Ralu Caragea, Prince Ioan Caragea's art loving daughter, who laid the foundations of the very first theatre in Wallachia, the so-called *Red Fountain Theatre* (Cişmeaua Roşie) and introduced into the country the modern, Western cultural values. She was so attracted to the modern conquests of civilization that she imported the very first hot air balloon of the region, which was risen in Bucharest amidst the vivid stupor of the locals. In Bucura Dumbravă's fiction Ralu is encircled and protected by artistry (for instance she summons Western musicians in order to play Beethoven), while the novel mentions the otherwise true detail that Princess Ralu owned the only pianoforte existing at that time in Wallachia. To sum up the key: Princess Ralu is a foreigner who uses art as a subtle expression of her local dedication. By formulating the image in this way, it is obvious that the author projected onto the princess her own subliminal ideals of patriotism and dedication.

The dynamic of the narratives is pretty the same in the both linguistic versions of the novels, excepting the hasty fragmentation of the Romanian sentences, which are unable to reproduce the elaborate amplitude of the German phraseology. The basic assumption is that, although both original versions were written in German, the author started her work by having in mind a specifically Romanian ethos, decanted from the folklore and the everyday customs, which she mould into a her native language environment, namely German. It is also obvious that the author closely supervised both subsequent Romanian translations, done by friends whom she used to work with. The main differences nevertheless consist in the retro-translation of the archaic and regional Romanian terminology, in spite of the author's constant preoccupation to preserve the peculiar local scent of the universe involved.

A further, linguistic difficulty consists in the transliteration of the proper names, especially of those containing diacritics. Therefore, the Romanian *ă* (ə) becomes *a* (Bucura Dumbrava; Moánga), while the frequent *ț* is directly replaced by *z* (Crețescu = Krezesku; Crețeasca = Krezeaska), while *Frau* systematically replaces the Romanian *cucoana* (Madam). The names of the places with a special significance or symbolism are transliterated and

annotated, like «*Malamoc*» /«*Malamok*» – «*ein Kloster, das als Irrenhaus dient*» (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 39) – a monastery that served as a madhouse in Wallachia, Malamoc being, at that time, the institutional equivalent for Bedlam.

Many Romanian phonetic transliterations are explained by the German editions of the novels intra-textually. A typical example is *pridvor* (*veranda* in English): «Den Pridwör, diesen baulicher Charackterzug am echt rumänischen Wohnsitz, sei er Hütte oder Palast, deckt die Verlängerung des Schindeldachess...»² (*Ibid.* 4). The Romanian alterations are generally endorsed by the syntax of the phrase, but several archaic turns have a mere aesthetic justification: «La fiecare locuință Rumânească, fie o mică căscioară, fie un palat, pridvorul constituiește o parte arhitectonică caracteristică. El este o prelungire a învelitoarei...» (Dumbravă, *Haiducul* 1).

When describing the *hora* (the word is never translated), a traditional choreography danced by men and women forming a circle, the German version enlists the entire choreography of the dance, with inverted commas related to the gender («Frauen-», «Männerart», «Heldenart»³ (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 31) while they appear only partially in the Romanian versions – «bărbătește», «ci ca cu nevestele», «voinicește» (Dumbravă, *Haiducul*, 30). The last word, meaning sturdy or vigorously, has a slightly different meaning in German and therefore it's not easy to reproduce. It is also interesting to note that, although the German topic is thoroughly respected, the basic discourse of the two novels seemed to have been conceived in Romanian as many Romanian phrases are translated *ad litteram* into German. An example is «to drink tobacco»: «bea tutun» (*Ibid.* 5) and «trank Tabak» (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 7), used to designate the habit of smoking hookah. A similar logic explains the *ad litteram* transposition of the phrase «cu ocaua mică» (Dumbravă, *Haiducul* 200): «mit der kleinen Oka» (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 198) which designates a proven fraud or extortion. The *oca*, from the Turkish *okka*, was an Ottoman mass of measurement roughly equivalent to 1.280 kilograms. The small oca, «ocaua mică» was a lighter, secretly modified unit of measurement. So a *prinde cu ocaua mică* means to catch someone while practicing the fraud.

Another practice is to rely on footnotes. For instance «Nenea» is reproduced *ad litteram* in German together with an annotation: «eine

2. Each Romanian house, be it a small hut or a palace, has a peculiar architectural front part called *pridvor*, which functions as an extension of the roof...

3. Ladylike, manly, heroically

Anrede für ältere Brüder und Verwandte»⁴ (*Ibid.* 8). «Lăutari» (folk, usually Gypsy musicians) appears as «Lautári», while the footnote explains that they were «Lautenschläger, Musikanten» (*Ibid.* 295). The interjection «de!», meant to introduce remarks containing feelings of remorse, disbelief, uncertainty or irony has a binary annotation, being translated by «Je nun!» or «Ja!» (*Ibid.* 7), while the famous «Aferim!» is bluntly explained as coming «aus türkisch: Bravo»⁵ (Dumbrava, *Ibid.* 25). The Romanian word «Ciocoi», which designates a vast array of human negativities, like being obsequious, upstart, flunky etc., is phonetically transliterated into German («Tschokois») while the explanation pin-points the derogatory shade of the term.

The ranks of the bureaucracy and military are transliterated directly and explained through footnotes. «Slugerul» / «Sludjer» was the the army supplier, explained as «ein Adelstitel dritten Ranges»⁶ (*Ibid.* 8). «Cârc Sărdar» (Dumbravă, *Haiducul* 32) / «Kerk Serdar» is explained as «Befehlshaber der berittenen Polizeitruppen»⁷ (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 33), while the «Mare Spătar» (Dumbravă, *Haiducul* 18) / «Großspatar» als «Kriegsminister» (Dumbrava, *Der Haiduck* 19). The Ciohodar / «Tschohodar» (*Ibid.* 139) used to fulfill different courtly tasks, the Agă / «Aga» was the Prefect of the Police, «Polizeiprefekt» (*Ibid.* 200), while Beizadea / «Beysadeá» was the prince's heir, born into purple: «der im Purpur Geborene, Titel des Fürstensohnes» (*Ibid.* 393). There are also terms, like *Arhonda*, which do not appear in German, but are inserted into the Romanian text in order to highlight the flavour of the epoch. Teodor Nica alone uses the variation *Archonda*, especially in *The Pandur*, to designate a formula of politeness used for men within the Phanariot society of the two Romanian principalities.

Apart from the rather difficult task to mould a Balkan historical reality into the structures of the German language, Bucura Dumbravă's novels succeeded to introduce to the Western world the image of the Romanian outlaw, the *hajduk*, who is by all means recognizable when one thinks of the Robin Hood cycle, but also bears the strong peculiar imprints of the Romanian national identity. The critical reception of the novels was pretty notable. In an article published in a 1908 issue of the *Mercure de France*, Marcel Montandon (*Lettres Roumaines* 350-352) analyzed the creations as constituent parts of a full swing literary emergence, based on a peculiar

4. a salutation for older brothers and relatives

5. from the Turkish «well done!»

6. a third-rate rank

7. commander of the mounted police forces

sense of aesthetic associated to the powerful ideology of the national revival. He also discussed the generous German audience of *The Hajduck*, by also mentioning the popular speculation that the real author of the novels was actually Carmen Sylva, the Queen Elisabeth of Romania. Montandon was also attracted by the documentary background of the novels, praised the use of the archaic, especially Turk terminology, as well as the way the protagonists have been constructed and the minute reproduction of the architectural details: «Les Haïdouk, c'est la vie du plus fameux capitaine, Iancu Jianu, de ces bandes de paysans, en révolte contre les exactions des derniers régnes fanariotes, que le désespoir et la vengeance firent s'ériger en justiciers et qui furent les premiers patriotes roumains»⁸ (*Ibid.* 351).

In Transylvania, a region which was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at that time, the critic Ilarie Chendi considered that the second edition of the *The Hajduk* was an improvement of the first one, because it had less German lest and was closer to the popular style of story telling than the previous edition. Let's reproduce in the end Ilarie Chendi's words:

Și mă umpluse de mândrie ideea, că o femeie străină a știut să ne popularizeze cu atâta artă o epocă dintre cele mai romantice din trecutul țării românești, cu un erou din cei mai simpatici, din câți au fost cântați prin baladele noastre haiducești. Am văzut apoi cum în Germania, unde s-a tipărit ediția originală, critica i-a făcut cea mai înțelegătoare primire și cum însuși un spirit superior ca al Ricardei Huch [by mistake the Chendi says *Auch*], autoarea cunoscutei cărți *Die romantische Schule*, a salutat acest roman în termeni cu totul entuziaști⁹. (*Dări de seamă* 214)

8. *The Haiduk* tells the story of the most famous captain, Iancu Jianu and of his fellow country men who raised against the abuses of the last Phanariot; their despair and sense of revenge turned them into vigilantes who were the earliest patriots in Romania.

9. I was proud to see that a woman foreign to us managed to transmit with so much artistry one of the most Romantic epochs of the Romanian history, with one of the dearest heroes of our popular ballads. I also saw that in Germany, where the initial edition was printed, the literary critics commented it with a sympathetic benevolence, and that even a superior spirit like Ricarda Huch (by mistake the Chendi says *Auch*), who wrote the well-known *Die romantische Schule*, saluted the novel in a most enthusiastic tone.

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