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Author: Ana Pascu

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4) In Dumitru Sandu's article, Constantin Argetoianu's *Însemnările zilnice* [Daily Reflections] are cited as „Argetoianu și Neagoe...”, but the latter was only the post-1990 editor of Argetoianu's journal. Argetoianu was a politician and one of the most interesting personalities of the interbellum period. In the same article, a study authored by Antonio Momoc is absent from the final list of references. Unfortunately, there are more examples in the same vein.

But what is indeed bothersome is the neglectful aspect of the citation style. There are articles that lack a list of references (those of Alvarez-Pereyre and Florentina Țone), while in others the references are confused or do not appear in the final list⁴.

Translated by Ion Matei Costinescu

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Smaranda Vultur, *Francezi în Banat, bănățeni în Franța. Memorie și identitate* [The French in Banat. People of Banat in France. Memory and Identity]. Timișoara: Marineasa, 2012.

Reviewed by Ana Pascu

It is almost 20 years since Smaranda Vultur, professor at the Faculty of Letters, History and Theology of the West University of Timișoara, has been researching - using predominantly the methods of oral history - the issues of interculturalism, the identity dilemmas and the ambiguities of the memory of different ethnic communities from Banat, focusing primarily on Swabians of German origin and Jews¹. Smaranda Vultur's in-depth research extends on the horizontal spatial axis, in various towns, even going beyond the borders of the Romanian Banat, but also on the vertical temporal axis, covering a century of local multicultural history.

Smaranda Vultur and the team of researchers and students she coordinates are interested mainly in the specific cultural model of Banat, but also in the dynamics of the relationships between memory and identity. Thus, they are considering the study of memorial practices as means of reinventing the traditions of local ethnic communities and their re-

lationship with the other cultural practices (folkloric, literary, historiographic, political) of the respective communities. At the same time, she tries to capture the social dynamics, the mentalities and behaviours associated to memorial practices, the way in which they enact identity. And this is because the various groups' competition for memory implies regularly revisiting and recreating the symbolism of the past.

Smaranda Vultur studies the sinuosities of the memory of the generations at the beginning of the century, but she does not shrink from researching the Communist period, the deportations to Bărăgan or the former USSR, the 1989 Revolution of Timișoara, the collectivization, the memory of urban life in Banat, the theme of old age or death, relationships, and more recently, the memory of the war refugees from Bessarabia and Bucovina, who, thanks to the quirks of history, ended up all the way in Banat.²

1) From this point of view, seminal are the following works by Smaranda Vultur, *Germanii din Banat prin povestirile lor* (Germans of Banat in their stories) (Editura Paideea: Bucuresti, 2000); *Memorie salvată. Evreii din Banat, ieri și azi* (saved memory. The Jews of Banat, yesterday and today) (Polihrom: Iași, 2002).

Why is Banat so interesting for the study of memory and identity? Banat is a multiethnic, multi-religious and intercultural region, whose current aspect has its roots in the 18th century: after having defeated the Turks and being under the protection of the Austrian emperor, it was subject to a gradual colonization, with colonizers of different ethnicities and from different countries, up to a number of 20 ethnicities (Romanian, Serbian, German, Hungarian, Jewish, Romani, Slovakian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian, Turkish, Tatar, Czech, Greek, Armenian, French, Russian and Arabic) and eight religious denominations (Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Judaic, Neo-Protestant, Islamic). The colonization occurred due to economic reasons (Banat was a barely inhabited, swampy region), but, at the same time, all ethnicities had an equal status, and the economic situation improved. Apparently, the policy of religious tolerance, the literacy program in all languages and capitalization of the work ideal led to a specific lifestyle and created the myth of Banat as an interethnic paradise in the collective imagination of each ethnic group.

An interesting consequence of this specific model of Banat was that any interethnic persecutions in moments of historical tension were not usually of a violent nature. Nevertheless, the historic events that affected 19th century Europe (firstly, the two wars and secondly, the violent institution of Communism in Romania and Yugoslavia, where the second largest part of the historic Banat is) did impact the communities of Banat: in 1945, a segment of the German community was deported in the USSR, and, until after 1990, Hungarians, Germans and Jews migrated massively, in successive waves.

The tension accumulated in the almost 50 years of Communism, grafted on the model of Banat, characterized by social and cultural emancipation, led, perhaps not haphazardly, to the 1989 Revolution of Timișoara, the capital of the Romanian Banat, having as consequence the fall of the Romanian Communist regime.

The most surprising outcome of the history of Banat was the creation of a distinctive, regional, trans-national and trans-religious, intercultural identity based on: tolerance, multilingualism, together with the rejection of extremism and an accentuated marking of identity.

If many inhabitants of today's Romanian Banat are deliberately re-enforcing, ad nauseam, their regional identity, another form of this identity is discovered and revealed by Smaranda Vultur in one of her latest works, *Francezi în Banat, bănățeni în Franța. Memorie și identitate*. In this volume, the author reconstructs history and follows the process of identity construction of a lesser known ethnic group: the French of Alsatian and Lorrainian origin that colonized Banat at the end of the 18th century.

For a better incorporation of the studied phenomenon, Smaranda Vultur experiments - in her collective and individual works - a variety of description and analysis methods. Documents, informers' portraits, genealogies come to complete the rough information of the transcription of the life stories and the author's competent comments, in an attempt to transpose complex, tri-dimensional life phenomena, successive or simultaneous in time and space, disparate or convergent, in the limited and two-dimensional space of the book where facts cannot be presented other than successively.

The same work methods, refined by extensive practice, were also applied in the study dedicated to the French inhabitants of Banat, published by Marineasa in Timișoara in 2012.

The book draws attention right from the title, which proves, after a reading, to be not only suggestive, but also highly accurate: the destinies and the symbolic imagination of two ethnic communities (the descendants of the Alsatian and Lorrainian colonizers - generically called French - from Banat and the inhabitants of Banat of French origin living in France) are examined in parallel, through similarities and convergences.

As a research method, Smaranda Vultur concentrates on a community from the Ro-

2) See Smaranda Vultur, *Lumi în destine. Memoria generațiilor de început de secol din Banat (1910 -1930)* (București: Nemira, 1999); *Istorie trăită, istorie povestită. Deportarea în Bărăgan. 1951 - 1956* (Timișoara: Amarcord, 1997); "Etricitate și colectivizare în Banat: cazul comunei Tomnatic, 1949 - 1956" in Dorin Dobrinu, Constantin Iordachi (eds.), *Tărănimea și puterea. Procesul de colectivizare a agriculturii în România (1949 - 1956)*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2005, 210 - 230; "Împărțășirea memoriei în România postcomunistă: cadru, reprezentări, valori" in *Istoria recentă în Europa: obiecte de studiu, surse, metode* (New Europe College: București, 2001).

manian Banat, of unquestionable Alsatian and Lorrainian origin, namely, the village of Tomnatic and researches in parallel the community of people who have settled in the village of La Roque-sur-Pernes from Vaucluse, in southern France; next, she completes the testimonies of the survivors with information from historic works, manuscripts, statistics and archives, family and aide-mémoire documents of the community, all gathered from her own research or taken from competent historians, bringing to light valuable works that have been forgotten and succeeding in reproducing the sinuous thread of the history of a community whose identity was hardly known, not just by Romanians, but also by its own members.

In the first chapter, *Between memory and history*, Smaranda Vultur reproduces, with the aid of information collected from competent historians, a possible history of the refugees from Banat who were welcomed to France after 1948.

According to some statistics, the number of Lorrainians and Alsations present in Banat in 1940 was of 521.000 out of a total of 1.740.000 inhabitants. Between 1944 and 1945, Romanian or Yugoslavian citizens from Banat, considered of German origin (Swabians) at departure, but many of whom were of Alsatian or Lorrainian origin, arrived in today's Austria as war refugees. In 1950, 199.600 people had arrived in Austria and Germany. Around 10.000 refugees from the Romanian Banat (and not only) settled in France. The remaining refugees stayed in Austria or went to Germany, the U.S.A. and Australia. Only 30 families from Banat settled in La Roque-sur-Pernes, in Vaucluse, 26 kilometres from Avignon, starting a new life and making a future for themselves.

Between 1999 and 2010 Smaranda Vultur came back again and again to La-Roque-sur-Pernes to retie the threads of the two destinies, following particularly the relationship between memory and identity, more precisely, the fashion in which memory discourses participate in the construction of the identity of the French people of Banat. According to Eric

Hobsbawn, this is a dynamic, forgotten, partially reinvented identity, hasting through from time to time, as waters of a desert river. Although they have forgotten their language ever since the beginning of the 20th century (though there are still some people who remembered, as a last vestige of a forgotten identity, *Our Father* in French), the French origin still bursts out now and then, becoming an instrument of political manipulation.

Smaranda Vultur identifies the moments when, under the pressure of history, the French identity and the will to differentiate oneself from the Swabians of German origin storm in; for instance, at the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) when the division of Banat between Romania, Yugoslavia and Hungary was decided. That was when the delegates of the French people of Banat requested the establishment of a Lorrainian canton under French protection or an independent state of Banat or, if not, that Banat be annexed to Romania, a state with a renowned Francophile tradition. During the Second World War, when the German Ethnic Group was forcefully enrolling the Transylvanian Saxons and Swabians from Romania (German ethnic groups, although not entirely) in the German army, the French, supported by a political elite of French Swabians and of Romanians too, reacted and defended their right to refuse enrolment due to their French origin.

The approach of those who helped settle the people of Banat in France was double: since the French did not take kindly to Germans, they had to be convinced to welcome them, especially in the rough post-war years, because, although they were of French origin, the refugees spoke German. The creation of a favourable environment was attempted via scientific works and the mass-media, the origin being perceived as the essential nucleus of identity. Pierre Guillot's doctoral thesis of 1953 speaks about the return of the French to their homeland, that is, of the descendants of those who colonized Banat in the 18th century. The parallel between the two colonization histories becomes a pattern of his doctoral thesis:



“...The Alsatians and the Lorrainians emigrated two centuries ago in order to colonize Banat and now they have returned to France.” (Guillot, 1952-1953:2). The people of Banat were represented as colonizers by vocation and it is this image – related to the universal myth of the civilizing hero – that accompanied the French Swabians to France. Upon their arrival, a part of them were saluted as saviours of a dying village, La-Roque-sur-Pernes, which indeed they managed to revive. Under the sign of this identity, as colonizers, the histories of the two communities, that of the French colonizers and their descendants from Banat returned to France, meet.

It is remarkable that the myth of the good colonizer is supported by the Swabians themselves who do not forget to mention about the colonization of Banat even when they are talking about their lives, just like Smaranda Vultur noticed in other interviews, in another volume (Vultur 2000). Therefore, the depiction of a triptych to represent the return to their homeland in 1960 in Vaucluse, work elaborated symmetrically with that of painter Ștefan Jäger representing the colonization of Banat in the 18th century, is proof that the people of Banat from Vaucluse have assumed and perpetuated the French identity of their colonizing ancestors.

Under the pressure of history, the identity of Banat appeared between the French and the German identities, serving probably as an interface and a life buoy. Upon their settlement in France, this identity facilitated their integration, protecting them from negative labelling. Nowadays, it appears in commercials and helps the perpetuation of the memory of the community.

When asked by the author, the descendants living in La Roque-sur-Pernes said they were French since they had accepted to live in this country. So, they are oscillating between an organicist conception of identity, tributary to their origins, and a dynamic conception, tributary to the idea of a contract with the nation. The question Smaranda Vultur poses, after having examined in detail the history of the

Swabians of French origin from Banat, is still connected to the collective identity, but also to the game of personal commitment: by declaring themselves to be French, have the old inhabitants of Banat become the French of Banat or have they always been that?

In order to answer this question, the author makes a case study in four extensive chapters, analyzing the discourses and the memorial practices of the two communities, focusing on the way in which they propose and use references and models to attribute an identity. The analysis is sustained in a modern manner, taking into account the researcher's subjective involvement in her field. The analysis is done with transparent sources and the subchapters entitled “Documentary”, together with the annexed documents, texts written by the author and transcriptions of interviews taken in France, complete, justify and prove the author's theoretical assumptions, generating, at the same time new sources of reflection for the readers.

Smaranda Vultur extends her analysis to the various levels at which the battle for the recognition of the French origin of a part of these people, whether Germanized or Magyarized by the politics of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, occurred: first, at the level of the elite who organized the French Swabians and searched for sustaining documents and records, emphasizing even the transformation of the original French names into German ones, which led to the acceptance of these families of French origin from Banat in France, tactfully handling the identity discourses; secondly, at an individual level, of those who lived the traumas of their displacement to France; thirdly, at the level of the community, where the *Heimat* has become a memorial practice, the annual meeting of the former members of a community ensuring the perpetuation of the collective memory, together with the monographs of the villages and the works on genealogy.

The second chapter, *The Nationality and/or the ethnic origin. Or from affirming the difference to the mythological projections of identity*,



presents Etienne (Stefan) Frecôt and Emil Botiș, the political figures who, trying to demonstrate the French origin of a part of the Germanized population of Banat, skilfully handled the French identity to convince even the members of this community, who had almost forgotten their origin, to assume it.

Most information about Etienne Frecôt is taken from one of Emil Botiș's works, a Romanian researcher and a fervent defender of the rights of these French Lorrainians to have their own identity; therefore, the available information on Frecôt might have been partially subjective and manipulated. Emil Botiș talks very appreciatively about Stefan Frecôt, stressing the latter's constant concern for the recognition of the French identity, for the clear-cut delimitation from the German Swabians based on genealogical and name proof, despite the replacement of the French mother tongue with German because of a process of forced Germanization (according to Frecôt). The manner in which Stefan Frecôt presents the French identity in Tomnatic, convincing the members of the community to assume it, is interesting, to say the least. His fight for the French identity was not without an immediate interest, as it would rescue the French Swabians from forced enrolment in the German army and deportation to Russia, reserved to German ethnics. Nevertheless, Emil Botiș views it not as opportunism, but as an effort not to miss the chance to affirm the French identity, an identity never completely forgotten.

Emil Botiș's opinion was supported by a similar discourse of Jean (Hans) Lamesfeld, a native of Mașloc, of Lorrainian origin (from Thionville), who organized a Committee of the French of Banat in Vienna and, with Robert Scuman's help, took the natives of Banat to France. In his discourse on identity he uses the image of the colonizers returning to their homeland. But Jean (Hans) Damas, one of the participants actively and directly involved in the claim of the French identity, admits, in an interview given to Smaranda Vultur, that there was indeed a dose of opportunism in the efforts to recognize the French

identity, as the stake was the salvation of innocent people from the oppressions of war: "We intervened then in order to move to France, but not because of political reasons; we have never indulged in politics. Only for personal reasons, that is, to escape deportation and then expropriation, you know... there was an advantage" (p. 139).

Emil Botiș's efforts were also materialized, amongst other things, in setting the criteria according to which someone can assume one identity or another; these criteria led to the shaping of an identity model that served as guideline in the behaviour of Swabians in their process of assumption / reaffirmation of a French identity. This also required a reorganization of personal memory, part of the familial memory, a means of access to the group memory.

In the following chapter, *Conflict or the consensus of identity discourses: German or French?*, in the community of Tomnatic (the biggest Romanian community of Swabians of French origin), the author discovers, beyond the personal history, beyond an interesting oscillation between the German identity - supported by language and the members of the families settled in Germany - and the French one - established by genealogical documents and records - a process of coalescence, a circuit between the oral memory and the written sources, between individual and collective, modelling the memory discourses. The encyclopaedic document of the blacksmith and the monographs written by the inhabitants are a stimulus of the locals' memory, whose discourse it models. However, they can be used only to a certain extent to prove both the French and the German identities. The same happens with the names, Germanized in time, which also become an object in the negotiation of identity.

The interest of the inhabitants of Tomnatic for their own identity is materialized in memorial practices: after 1990, they organized a small local museum, printed a local paper and made a book of the deceased; there are such museum-rooms in many houses. They and

other inhabitants of Banat, settled in other parts of the world, turn to memorial practices to perpetuate the collective memory: monographs and memory books, especially Heimatfest, the celebrations of the native village, a memory and identity connector for those scattered around the world, a means of periodical revival of community solidarity. The Heimat as a memorial practice for both French and German Swabians is discussed in the fourth chapter, *The Heimat – memory and identity connector*.

After a thorough analysis of the types of discourses and identity practices used by the people of Banat, in order to provide a contrast, the last chapter, *The Banat of La Roque-sur-Pernes*, investigates the memories the Swabians settled in the French village have of Banat. Smaranda Vultur interviews six survivors, three from the Yugoslavian Banat and three from the Romanian Banat, born between 1923 and 1935. The chapter discusses their settlement in La Roque and the suffering of starting life over. The historical data are replaced by the lively faces of Swabians, fortunately completing the theoretical exposé.

The book offers an exemplary model of analysis of an ethnic community's process of

assuming an identity under the pressure of history, but one must avoid the generalization of conclusions, as the community of Swabians from La-Roque-sur-Pernes represents only a small percentage of the 10.000 Swabian refugees from France. The study of other communities of Swabians from Banat (who were not part of the current study) might have revealed other aspects of the process of assuming an identity, other memorial practices and discourses. All we can hope for is that the subject of the French Swabians will be resumed by the author in another study, in a grand gesture of recovering an almost unknown part of the memory of Banat.

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Translation by Alina-Olimpia Miron

History and Anthropology. Special Issue: Politics and Performance in South-Eastern Europe (guest editors Rozita Dimova and Ludmila Cojocar), vol. 24, issue 1, March 2013, 183 p.

Reviewed by Stelu Șerban

The volume is dedicated to the performative and ritualistic dimensions of the identity processes in the post-Soviet and post-Yugoslavian space and focuses on the three republics of former Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia / FYROM, Montenegro, together with Moldova, a former republic of the Soviet Union. The materials are

part of an international research project „on the processes of the construction of the national identity in South-Eastern European countries after 1945” (p. 10). Rozita Dimova and Ludmila Cojocar, the editors of the volume, inform from the very first pages of the introductory article - Contested Nation-Building within the International “Order of