

MARTOR



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Quirks...

Ioana Popescu

It seems that ethnologists and anthropologists have more of these than the rest of the world... In fact, all the creators and collectors are haunted by similar ideas and obsessive projects. If so, it is worth mentioning that ethnologists, particularly “museum ethnologists” are concurrently creators and collectors – of both objects and stories.

Every year the Peasant’s Museum anthropology review publishes the results of the most important research of the year. It is sometimes difficult to say which research has been most interesting or original since the arguments provided by each research team are equally valid. On other occasions – this year, for instance – nobody thought that a specific project could be published since it did not near completion. Then Carmenⁱ came up with a proposal entitled *unpublished quirks*, which was unanimously accepted because everybody felt that they had many things to say apart from the topics they researched. Symptomatic for the way in which we understand the joy of freedom seems to be the fact that it was Carmen herself who did not find anything in her desk drawer, or she simply did not want to unravel a content that was not sufficiently ordered... Anyway, some brought to light in-depth analyses resulted from their ongoing and long-term research, others had only sketches

of forthcoming serious studies that were still a long way from going to press, whereas others kept texts whose publication process faced hostile circumstances. However, as it usually happens in real life, the texts were accepted by some publishing houses only after they had been forwarded to the *Martor* review. Finally, the preliminary meetings meant to titillate recent memory led to the re-emergence of the always resumed project on our memories of Irina Nicolau, a friend and mentor who left her deep and touching mark on each of us. Irina taught me that every thought, every text, every book has its own destiny, that they will not be published or that they will be published, regardless of their author’s insistence, in an opportune moment that should be neither outrun nor ignored. Maybe this was the opportune moment for the first collection of memories. Once again we realized, as Ainaⁱⁱ herself says in her text, that we know all sorts of things about Irina but we do not know anything for sure, so as to be able to say, ‘*that’s how she was*’. In this respect, we make use of all the drawings of Mihaela Schiopu who, thanks to the generosity with which Irina shared her wide array of ideas and creations with everyone, kindly put them at our disposal. Unfortunately, space constraints compelled us to select only a few.

Whenever we get involved in a team editorial project, we make recourse to well-known collaborators and friends. A working group – always in *stand-by* – ready to take action immediately has thus been set up over time. So we asked for the help of our friends, former colleagues and professors. Only apparently at random, some topics have thus been sketched. I somehow expected the themes to be generally related either to re-

cent history and present-day issues or to village and city matters, faith, communism, transition, etc., for we know each other's interests very well. At the end of this explanatory note I am wondering whether one can make a connection between these unpublished texts stored in a drawer and the Romanian public's weakened interest (and, consequently, poor selling) in contemporary phenomena.



Notes:

¹ Carmen Mihalache, coordinator of MAR-TOR Publishing House

² Aina Safarica, the younger sister of Irina Nicolau and Iorgu's grandmother